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THE APOCALYPSE OF ST. JOHN

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THE APOCALYPSE OF ST. JOHN

A COMMENTARY ON THE GREEK
VERSION

BY

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PREFACE

IN January 1906 the present writer published a book on "The Apocalypse, The Antichrist, and The End," and in 1908 a supplementary book of "Essays on the Apocalypse." These books were designed to show that the Revelation was given in the year 67, that the Letters to the Seven Churches were predictions concerning the Seven Ages of the Church of Christ, and that the Jewish and Roman themes of the book were historic forecasts, which have come true. These works were so well received and favourably reviewed, notwithstanding their many shortcomings, that the author ventures now to publish a "Commentary" on the Greek text of the Apocalypse. Further study especially of the original Greek of S. John has strengthened the conclusions reached in the works above mentioned.

The usual custom has been followed of giving the Revelation its ancient title, "The Apocalypse." But that word seems to have had an obscuring influence on the study of the book. Its real title is "The Revelation of Jesus Christ." Many of those who have neglected "The Apocalypse," as being a difficult and mysterious book, would have felt compelled to read "The Revelation of Jesus Christ."

A slight sketch of the Book and its period will enable the reader to appreciate its contents.

We pass over the Preface and the Letters to the Seven Churches, and come to the first or Jewish theme. This is a dramatised representation of the end of the Jewish Dispensation. At the time of writing, *i.e.*, in the year 67, this climax was in sight. The armies of Nero were marching on Jerusalem. In the eyes of S. John and his brethren it was an epoch of transcending importance. The establishment of the Kingdom of Christ preached by our Lord and His Apostles was immediately looked for. It was the turning-point of religious history, when Christianity took over the inheritance of the Jews.

Delivered from its earliest foe, Judaism, Christianity was next imperilled by the hostility of the Cæsars evidenced by Cæsar worship. Nero's persecution of the Church was in progress when S. John went to Patmos. Nero's extraordinary prominence in the history of the Church as the destroyer of the Ancient Temple and bloody persecutor of the nascent Church invested him with peculiar horror in the eyes of Hebrew Christians. He was looked upon as a kind of demoniacal manifestation. Christians and heathens alike thought that there

was something supernatural about him. Traces of this feeling will be noticed in the Roman theme of the Apocalypse, in which Nero appears as the great protagonist of paganism. The Roman theme is a dramatised version of the history of Cæsar worship and the punishment it brought upon Rome and the Cæsars, symbolically rendered. It ends with the fall of Rome about the beginning of the sixth century. Then follows a prediction of a thousand years of peace for the Church. After which we are told the Devil must be loosed for a little time.

The predictions of Revelation have been marvellously fulfilled as history shows us. The Chosen People were given prophets to warn them of the future. It is natural to suppose that the people chosen to replace them would be given a like advantage. No one can study this Revelation without seeing that the mantle of prophecy has fallen on S. John. He is our Christian prophet, and this Book contains his predictions, meant for the guidance of the Chief Bishops of the Church, down to the end of time.

The last two Popes have been moved to ordain a special searching of the Holy Scriptures. Leo XIII. wrote: "Let Catholics cultivate the science of criticism, as most useful for the right understanding of Holy Scripture. They have our strenuous approval. Nor do we disapprove if the Catholic interpreter, when expedient, avails himself of the work of non-Catholics. . . . There are a few things concerning which Holy Church has yet made no certain and definite statement. In regard to these it is lawful to each Catholic scholar to hold and to defend his own opinion" (Brief *Vigilante*, 30th October, 1902). The Apocalypse is precisely one of those parts of Holy Scripture about which the Church has as yet made no certain and definite statement.

As will be noticed later, our present Holy Father, Pope Pius X., writing to Mgr. Le Camus, Bishop of La Rochelle, encourages the pursuit of Scriptural exegesis in similar terms. (See p. 83.)

This brings me to the question of the "Imprimatur" of the Diocese of Westminster, placed on this Book. Some reviewers of my previous works, which also bore this imprimatur, concluded that my books set forth "the Roman view" of the Apocalypse officially. But there is no Roman view. The "Imprimatur" means that the book has been read by a censor deputatus, who has given it a *nihil obstat*, that is a certificate that it is free from heresy. The imprimatur conveys no official approval of the book whatever.

My very sincere thanks are due to the Rev. Francis J. Sheehan, Blackheath, for his kindness in helping me to correct the proofs of this book.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
PREFACE - - - - -	vii
BIBLIOGRAPHY - - - - -	xi

INTRODUCTION

I. LIFE OF S. JOHN - - - - -	I
II. HISTORY OF THE BOOK - - - - -	22
III. HISTORIC NOTES - - - - -	47
IV. THE DATE OF REVELATION - - - - -	83
V. THE SEVEN CHURCHES OF ASIA - - - - -	96
VI. THE PLAN AND SYMBOLISM OF REVELATION - - - - -	111
VII. THE TEXT - - - - -	119

COMMENTARY

PART	
I. PREFACE TO THE REVELATION - - - - -	123
II. LETTERS TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES - - - - -	139
III. THE JEWISH THEME - - - - -	187
IV. THE ROMAN THEME - - - - -	267
V. THE MILLENNIUM - - - - -	361
VI. THE GENERAL JUDGMENT - - - - -	373
VII. THE NEW JERUSALEM - - - - -	377
 EPILOGUE - - - - -	 392
 INDEX - - - - -	 401

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“SEA DREAMS”

THE Sabbath, pious variers from the church,
To chapel ; where a heated pulpiteer,
Not preaching simple Christ to simple men,
Announced the coming doom, and fulminated
Against the scarlet woman and her creed.
For sideways up he swung his arms, and shriek'd
“ Thus, thus with violence,” ev'n as if he held
The Apocalyptic millstone, and himself
Were that great Angel ; “ Thus with violence
Shall Babylon be cast into the sea.”

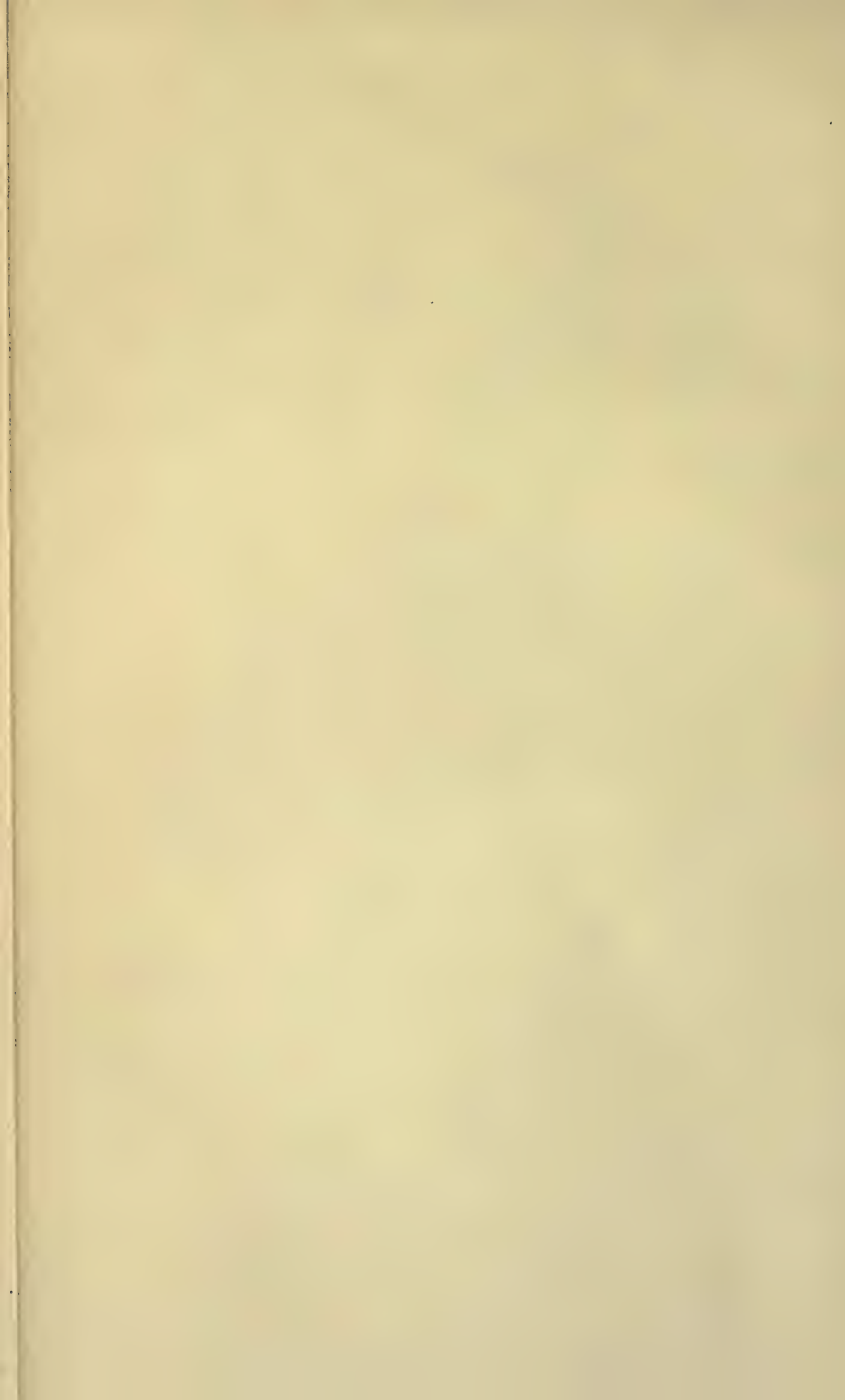
ALFRED TENNYSON.

ABBREVIATIONS

R.	= "The Revelation," "The Apocalypse."
Jhn.	= Gospel of S. John.
O.T.	= Old Testament.
N.T.	= New Testament.
H.E.	= "Historia Ecclesiastica," Eusebius.
B.M.	= "Book of Martyrs," Eusebius.
S.	= Dr. H. B. Swete.
Bd.	= Dr. Brandscheid.
Anls.	= "Annals," Tacitus.
Ants.	= "Antiquities," Josephus.
Ezech.	= Ezechiel (Ezekiel A.V.).
Zach.	= Zachariah (Zechariah A.V.).
Osee	= Osee (Hosea A.V.).
Vg.	= Vulgate.
D. and F.	= "Decline and Fall," Gibbon.

ERRATA

- Page 10, for "Niokorate" read "Neokorate."
 .. 14, for *Ψίος* read *Τίος*.
 .. 41, for "Mopsoestia" read "Mopsuestia."
 .. 66, for "Clements" read "Clemens."
 .. 111, for "sign of the Cross" read "baptism."
 .. 123, for *ἀγγέλον* read *ἀγγέλου*.
 .. 134, after "septem" read "candelabrorum aureorem."
 .. 139, for "Simon" read "Simeon."
 .. 145, for "the Church" read "each Church."
 .. 155, for "Thome" read "Theme."
 .. 179, for "correspond well" read "correspond with."
 .. 210, for *δουκρίveis* read *δου κρίveis*.
 .. 240, for "Empires" read "Empire."
 .. 278, for "his prerogative" read "His prerogative."
 .. 354, for *βόσσινον* read *βόσσινον*.
 .. 358, for "Parmonian" read "Pannonian."
 .. 384, for "1,72,8000" read "1,728,000."



THE APOCALYPSE OF S. JOHN

INTRODUCTION

I

LIFE OF S. JOHN

THE Apocalypse of S. John is in the canon of the Bible, recognised by the Church as the Word of God. It describes itself officially as "The Revelation of Jesus Christ." The precise nature of its revelation is a question that has been asked and has been variously answered for eighteen hundred years. The Book was written in a cypher, the Key of which was lost at the end of the first century.

Experience teaches us that the best guide to exegesis lies in the study of the environment of the writer. A clear realisation of his position in relation to surrounding forces will best indicate his thoughts and designs, the aim and object of his writings.

To apply this method to the study of the Apocalypse we begin with a review of the life of its author, S. John the Evangelist, his relation to the "Son of Man;" his sufferings, travels, experiences, anxieties, outlook, aims, and all other contemporary matters which may throw light on the Revelation that bears his name.

The name John, in Hebrew, signifies "Jehovah hath been gracious." We gather from his Gospel (i. 35-42) that S. John was originally a follower of the Baptist, and that he walked with Jesus as a disciple for a time, before his final call to the Apostleship (Jhn. ii. 12, iv. 8). When our Lord chose from the hardy fishermen of the Sea of Galilee, the companions of His ministry, He called S. John to be one of His great Apostles. John, the son of Zebedee and Salome, was mending nets in his father's ship with his brother James, when our Lord called them. "Forthwith they left their nets and father and followed

him" (Matt. iv. 21-22). S. John was probably of the tribe of Zabulon, derived according to Genesis (xxx. 20), from the sixth son of Liah. The verse offers two etymologies of the name Zabulon, from the roots Z B D, "give," and Z B L, "inhabit" (Encyc. Brit. Zebulun). Son of Zebedee seems to claim the root Z B D. The eastern boundary of the country of Zabulon was near the Lake of Galilee. The sons of Zabulon were a seafaring people. "Zabulon shall dwell on the sea shore, and in the road of ships" (Gen. xlix. 13). Cetron was within its boundaries (Judg. i. 30). S. Matthew writes: "And leaving the city of Nazareth he came and dwelt in Capharnaum on the sea coast, in the borders of Zabulon and of Nephthalim" (iv. 13). The sea coast referred to is that of Galilee.

S. John and his family seem to have been fairly well to do. Zebedee employed hired servants. Salome contributed to the support of our Lord. S. John was part owner of his ship (Luke v. 10). His "ship" was a large open boat with lateen sails, capable of holding more than a dozen men (Matt. viii. 23). The same kind of ship still sails the sea of Galilee.

S. John was the chosen friend and companion of our Lord. His innocence, his sublime faith and strength of character, seem to have conduced to this privilege. He was probably also about the same age, or but little younger than our Lord, as parity of age is one of the recognised causes of companionship. Besides, resolute and seasoned men were wanted to help in the labours and privations of the ministry; men in the prime of life, fit to carry the cross to the ends of the earth, and able to preach the Gospel. The Apostles were chosen as preachers. "He made that twelve should be with him and that he might send them to preach" (Mark iii. 14). The Jews were very exacting as regards the age of preachers or teachers, wherefore it is at least probable that S. John was not much under thirty years of age, when he was called.

S. John and his brother S. James, were early named Boanerges, "which is the sons of thunder" (Mark iii. 17). Some modern philologists equate the word with "filled with the rushing Spirit of the Holy Ghost," connecting it with the idea of prophecy—as John, "the prophet." In the Book of Revelation, S. John is twice saluted as a prophet, by an angel (R. xix. 10, xxii. 9). Both S. James and S. John were given an official preference by our Lord. S. John seems to have been placed on a level next to S. Peter, above the rest of the Apostles. These three went up with Jesus on a high mountain, apart, and witnessed the Transfiguration (Matt. xvii. 1-2). Some reflection of this vision will be found in the description of the Son of Man, in the Revelation (R. i. 13-15). Again, apart,

they heard from our Lord the Temple prophecy. He told them of the destruction of the Temple and of the signs which would presage that event. And with an eye on S. John, perhaps, who was destined to see those days, He said, "Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, and those who are in the midst thereof, depart out; and those who are in the countries, not enter into it" (Luke xxi. 21). S. John took these instructions to heart.

Bossuet remarks that prophecies have always been fulfilled by natural means, so that the living actors in the events predicted, have been too preoccupied with their parts to notice their relation to prophecy. When Titus besieged Jerusalem the Jews failed to recognise that their hour had come. Even Simeon and the Nazarene Church needed a warning to flee to Pella. That warning they received from S. John, in the Book of Revelation, which was sent to them early in the year 67 A.D.

S. Peter and S. John went forward to prepare the last supper. When our Lord said to the Apostles that one of them would betray Him, S. Peter beckoned to one of the disciples who was leaning on the bosom of Jesus, whom Jesus loved, and asked him to inquire who was the betrayer. "He therefore leaning on the breast of Jesus said to him. Lord, who is it? Jesus answered. He it is to whom I shall reach bread dipped. And when He had dipped the bread, he gave it to Judas Iscariot" (Jhn. xiii. 24-27). This episode shows the extraordinary privilege of S. John.

S. John walked with our Lord. He noted the murderous hatred of the Jews, and frequently alludes to it in his Gospel (Jhn. v. 18, vii. 1, viii. 37, 59, x. 31, xi. 53). On the night of the Agony, he was in the garden of Gethsemane. He followed our Lord to the court of Annas, and entered it, as he "was known to the high priest." "But Peter stood at the door without." He spoke to the portress and brought S. Peter in. (Jhn. xviii. 15, 16.) This action naturally suggests that S. John was a superior person. But in the Acts we are told that he and S. Peter were both looked upon as "ignorant men" (Acts iv. 13). S. John's writings show him to have been a man of culture, on a par with Josephus. Later, outside the hall of Pilate, he heard the Jews cry out, "Not this man but Barabbas" (Jhn. xviii. 40). "Crucify him, Crucify him" (Jhn. xix. 6). He witnessed the sufferings on the Cross. Our Saviour seeing "his mother and the disciple standing, whom he loved, he saith to his mother, Woman behold thy son. After that he saith to the disciple Behold thy mother. And from that hour the disciple took her to his own" (Jhn. xix. 26-27). Our Saviour conferred upon

S. John the supreme honour of being His substitute on earth in regard to the care of His Mother.

After the death of our Saviour S. John saw the soldier open His side with a spear. This action he recalls in the Revelation (R. i. 7) and in his Gospel (xix. 34).

All these things, related by S. John, in his Gospel, must have coloured his mental outlook as regards the Jews. The note of vengeance is prominent in the Apocalypse. We shall recur to that hereafter.

SS. Peter and John were informed by Mary Magdalen that the tomb of our Lord was empty, and these two went to examine it. (Jhn. xx. 2, 4.) After the Resurrection, once more upon the shore of Galilee, the disciple whom Jesus loved followed Him, and S. Peter asked, "Lord what shall this man do? Jesus saith to him, So I will have him to remain till I come." This saying, therefore, went abroad among the brethren that that disciple should not die. (Jhn. xxi. 20-23.) It is evident that the brethren did not think that S. John would live for centuries. They thought that the second Coming would not be long delayed, and that it would occur in S. John's lifetime. After the Resurrection the Apostles asked our Lord, "Lord wilt thou at this time restore again the Kingdom to Israel?" (Acts i. 6).

The early Church at Jerusalem, retained most of the distinctive customs of the Jews, such as circumcision, kosher meats, the Jewish Sabbath, the Jewish rites, and worship of the Temple. Our Lord, Himself, lived the exterior life of a Jew, even so far as the observance of Jewish religious customs was concerned. The early Church of Jerusalem followed His example. The Jews looked upon the Hebrew Christians in Jerusalem simply as a Jewish sect, which they called the sect of the Nazarenes. Tertullus, pleading before Felix, the Governor, described S. Paul as "the author of the sedition of the sect of the Nazarenes" (Acts xxiv. 5). S. John was a leader of the Nazarenes. He is said by Polycrates to have worn the *πέτάλον* or sacerdotal headpiece of a high priest. It was a plate of the finest gold having engraved upon it, "The Holy of the Lord" (Exod. xxxix. 29). This shows his position in the Nazarene Church, and the Jewish complexion of that Church.

S. John celebrated the Christian Pasch on the 14th day of the moon, agreeing as to time with the Jewish "Passover" (S. Irenæus I. iii. 12, Euseb. H. E. v. 24). The early Hebrew Christians looked upon themselves as true Jews and upon their brethren who rejected the Messiah as false Jews. They were not called Christians at Jerusalem (Acts xxiv. 5). That name was assumed or acquired by the Gentile disciples at Antioch. So long as worship according to the Old Law continued in the

Temple, it claimed their allegiance. This state of affairs continued until the year 67, when the exodus of the Church of Jerusalem to Pella took place. After that, in the year 70, the Temple was destroyed. Then a new era appeared, that of the Messianic Kingdom. Jesus preached the Gospel of the Kingdom (Matt. ix. 35). The Apostles were sent to preach it. It is generally recognised that God's Church is His Kingdom—Church Militant and Church Triumphant. When the Temple and Judaism fell, Christianity stood alone, and the primacy of the Church passed away from Jerusalem. S. John's life was spared to chronicle these events and their relation to the Kingdom. This is a part of his Revelation.

“When the days of Pentecost were accomplished, the Apostles were all together in one place. . . . And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they began to speak with divers tongues, according as the Holy Ghost gave them to speak” (Acts ii. 1, 4). Besides the Aramaic of his native Galilee, it is probable that S. John knew Greek, which was the *lingua franca* of the East. Greeks are not mentioned amongst those surprised at the Apostolic display of the gift of tongues. “But Parthians and Medes and Elamites and inhabitants of Mesopotamia,” are mentioned (Acts ii. 9). There is reason to believe, as we shall see presently, that S. John spent some years preaching “the Kingdom” in Mesopotamia, where he would have amongst his hearers, Parthians, Medes and Elamites.

S. John seems to have prayed regularly in the Temple, as an orthodox Jew. “Now Peter and John went up into the Temple at the ninth hour of prayer. And a certain man who was lame from his mother's womb was carried” to the gate of the Temple. “He when he had seen Peter and John about to go into the Temple asked to receive an alms. But Peter with John fastening his eyes upon him, said, Look upon us” (Acts iii. 1, 4). Whereupon S. Peter lifted him up and made him sound of limb, miraculously, in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. “And as he held Peter and John all the people ran to them to the porch, which is called Solomon's, greatly wondering” (Acts iii. 11). S. John was associated with S. Peter in the performance of this great miracle, and shared with him in the honour of it. S. Peter took the opportunity of preaching Jesus Christ to the assembled crowds. In this also he appears to have been helped by S. John. “And as they were speaking to the people, the priests and the officer of the Temple and the Sadducees came upon them. . . . And they laid hands upon them and put them in hold till the next day, for it was now evening” (Acts iv. 1-3). They were both imprisoned for the night, and next day they were tried before “Annas the high

priest and Caiphas and John and Alexander and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest" (Acts iv. 6). "Now seeing the constancy of Peter and of John, understanding that they were illiterate and ignorant men, they wondered." . . . "They charged them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answering said to them. If it be just in the sight of God to hear you rather than God, judge ye." . . . "But they threatening sent them away, because of the people" (Acts iv. 13-21).

As the result of other miraculous cures wrought by S. Peter, the Apostles were put in prison. "And they laid hands on the Apostles and put them in the common prison" (Acts v. 18). This was S. John's second imprisonment. "But an Angel of the Lord by night opening the doors of the prison and leading them out, said, Go, and standing speak in the Temple to the people, all the words of this life" (Acts v. 19). Accordingly we find S. John preaching in the Temple with the other Apostles. They were again arrested and brought before the Council, who were so cut to the heart by Peter answering, that they thought to put them to death. But Gamaliel, a member of the Council, dissuaded them from it. Instead of killing them, they scourged them and dismissed them with orders not to preach Jesus. S. John experienced the lash as well as imprisonment. Nevertheless he and the other Apostles every day ceased not in the Temple, to teach and preach Christ Jesus (Acts v. 26-42). Not long after this S. Stephen was martyred, and a great persecution was raised against the Church of Jerusalem, so that Christians were dispersed through Judea and Samaria, except the Apostles. "Now when the Apostles who were in Jerusalem had heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John" (Acts viii. 14), showing that these two great Apostles were looked upon as colleagues. Some time after this, when the Church had peace throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria, S. Peter went visiting all the Churches (Acts ix. 31, 32). It seems that on this occasion S. John stayed in Jerusalem. In the meanwhile S. Paul had been converted and had spent some years evangelising the Gentiles with great success. However, some disciples from Judea who believed in the necessity of complying with the Old Law, came amongst them and taught them, "That except you be circumcised after the manner of Moses, you cannot be saved" (Acts xv. 1). This led to Paul and Barnabas, who objected to putting such an imposition on the Gentiles, going up to Jerusalem to get the matter settled by the Apostles. A council was held at which S. John was present. S. Paul says, "And when they had known the grace that was given to me,

James and Cephas and John, who seemed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas, the right hands of fellowship, that we should go unto the Gentiles and they unto the circumcision" (Gal. ii. 9). This was about the year 52 A.D.

Clement, in the ninth book of his Institutions, says that Peter and James and John, after the Ascension of our Saviour, though they had been preferred by our Lord, did not contend for the honour, but chose "James the Just" as Bishop of Jerusalem (Euseb. H. E. ii. 1). James, the brother of John, was beheaded for his faith by Herod Agrippa, c. 42 A.D. (Acts xii. 1 f.). S. Paul recognised James the Just, S. Peter and S. John as pillars of the Church of Jerusalem. And he agreed with them that he should go unto the Gentiles and they unto the Circumcision. S. Peter had but lately returned from Rome, where there was a very large colony of Jews. He seems to have been forced to leave by the edict of Claudius expelling Jews from Rome, c. 51 A.D. He returned to Rome later. The next period of S. John's life is not well documented.

Here we may pause and review some conditions in the Nazarene Church, which appear to be reflected in the Revelation of S. John. When our Saviour died the Apostles, according to Apollonius (c. 180 A.D.), remained in Jerusalem for twelve years (Euseb. H. E. v. 18). The Blessed Virgin was there, and it may be supposed that all those who were connected by ties of kindred or marriage to the Holy Family and the Apostles, were also there and formed the nucleus of the Nazarene Church. Thousands of other converts were made by the Apostles. See Acts ii. 41 and iv. 4, where eight thousand altogether are mentioned. "And the word of the Lord increased and the number of the disciples was multiplied in Jerusalem exceedingly, a great multitude also of the priests obeyed the faith" (Acts vi. 7).

When S. John refers to "the elect," he has in his mind the Nazarene Church, in which he had many friends, and possibly relations. All these converts looked to him, especially, for guidance as a pillar of the Church, for he was longer associated with Jerusalem than S. Peter or any other Apostle.

In its early days, the Nazarene Church shared its possessions and held all things in common. "Continuing daily with one accord in the Temple" (Acts ii. 44 f. and iv. 32 f.). S. John refers to this in the Revelation as the "first charity" of the Church (R. ii. 4).

"In those days the numbers of the disciples increasing, there arose a murmuring of the Greeks against the Hebrews for that their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations" (Acts vi. 1). The words used are τῶν Ἑλληνιστῶν πρὸς τοὺς Ἑβραίους. These Greeks were Hellenised Jew converts from Alexandria, the

great cities of Asia Minor, the Isles of Greece, and the continent of Europe. Seven officials were appointed to superintend the distribution, one of whom was Stephen, the first martyr, and another, Nicolas, a proselyte of Antioch. The name of this Nicolas was drawn into the explanation of parts of the Ephesian and Pergamon Letters of the Apocalypse by early Exegetes. (See Commentary on Rev. ii. 6 and 15.)

A fierce persecution of the Nazarene Church took place at the time of the martyrdom of S. Stephen. "Saul made havock of the Church entering from house to house and dragging away men and women, committed them to prison." "And they were all dispersed through the countries of Judea and Samaria" (Acts viii. 1 f.). Living from hand to mouth the Church was free to leave Jerusalem at a moment's notice. The scattered disciples sowed the seed of Christianity in the countries of Judea. So that there was a considerable number of Jewish Christians outside Jerusalem when the Roman army of invasion appeared in Judea. These also must be warned in time to fly to Pella. The Revelation was sent by S. John in time to warn them. We shall have more of this in the Commentary.

To come back to the life of S. John. It is probable that not long after the Council of Jerusalem he set out to preach to the Jews of Mesopotamia. He spent the next ten years of his life wandering about the valley of the Euphrates and Tigris. We have more than one reference to the Euphrates in the Revelation. Here he would be constantly in touch with Parthians.

There is a tradition that S. John spent some years in Parthia before taking up the Apostolate of the cities of Asia Minor. There are references to Parthia in his Revelation. In S. Augustine's *Quæst. Evang.* (I. 3, c. 39), the first epistle of S. John is addressed "ad Parthos." The same appears in some Latin MSS. Venerable Bede supports this tradition. Alban Butler affirms that some missionaries before his time, 1750, reported that the inhabitants of Bassora (a city at the mouth of the Tigris and Euphrates), related a tradition, received from their ancestors, that S. John planted the Christian faith in their country. Layard, in his wanderings between Mosul, on the Tigris, and Lake Van in Armenia, found two rock-cut tablets at the mouth of a cave near the village of Gunduk. The cave is called Guppa d' Mar Yohanna, or the "Cave of S. John," by the Nestorian Kurds who inhabit the district. One of these bas-reliefs appears to be of Christian origin (Nineveh and Babylon, p. 188). The patriarch of the Nestorian Kurds lived at a place called Kotchannes, a name apparently derived from Yohannes. This place is on the foot-hills of the highlands of Armenia. In S. John's wanderings in the region of the Persian Gulf he would

be in frequent contact with Parthians, Armenians, and Hindus, many of the latter bearing, painted on their dark foreheads, a red or yellow mark, the insignia of their Gods. The talk of the Mesopotamian bazaars would be of Roman defeats and Parthian victories. For more than a hundred years Parthia and Rome had been at war with varying results. The celebrated defeats of Crassus and Anthony had lowered the prestige of Rome. The Parthians no longer looked upon Rome as invincible. For many years the struggle had been for the possession of the Kingdom of Armenia. In the year 52, Tiridates, the Arsacid, was placed on the Armenian throne by Parthia. War followed. Cæsenius Pius, the Roman General, was defeated and capitulated in the year 62. As the outcome of this defeat, it was agreed that Tiridates should go to Rome to be crowned King of Armenia by Nero, as if the gift of the crown came from Nero. These events took place during S. John's mission in the East. We find a picture of Tiridates, symbolising a conqueror of Rome, in the Revelation, with the remark, "and a crown was given to him" (R. vi. 2).

About this time, A.D. 62, S. James, called the Just, was put to death at the instance of Ananus the younger (Josephus Ants. xx. 9, 1). He was Bishop of the Nazarene Church of Jerusalem (Acts xxi. 18).

Eusebius says that there is a report that the Apostles and disciples, who were then living, went to Jerusalem to choose a successor to James, in the headship of the Church, and elected Simeon, the son of Cleophas (H. E. iii. 11). This would probably have caused S. John to return from the East. His solicitude for the Church at Jerusalem is well known. The time required for his journey from Mesopotamia and stay in Jerusalem would bridge the interval between the death of S. James, and the appearance of S. John at Ephesus, about the year 64.

It is generally admitted that S. John was not at Ephesus when S. Paul wrote from Rome his Epistles to the Colossians, Ephesians, and to Timothy. S. Paul founded the Church of Ephesus and placed Timothy there as Bishop. In his Epistles he writes with the transparent freedom of one in a position of unchallenged authority. He so completely ignores the existence of another apostle at Ephesus, that we may infer that the great Apostle S. John was not living there then. In the year 64, before Nero's persecutions broke out, S. Paul left Rome on a Missionary tour in Spain. It is probable that S. John arrived at Ephesus later in the year 64.

S. John's movements do not appear to have been affected in any way by Roman persecution up to this time.

S. Paul, we have seen, was accused by the Jews, before Felix, the Governor of Judea, of being the author of the seditious sect of the Nazarenes. He nevertheless boldly preached the Christian faith to the Governor, who found no wrong in him, but kept him bound to please the Jews. Two years later, Festus, the new Governor, was besought by the Jews, who wanted to kill S. Paul. Festus brought him to trial, but as S. Paul, a Roman citizen, appealed to Cæsar, the Governor decided to send him to Cæsar. This Cæsar was Nero. King Agrippa and his wife, Bernice, in the company of Festus, again examined S. Paul, before he left for Rome. Again S. Paul publicly preached Jesus of Nazareth. "And Agrippa said to Paul, In a little thou persuadest me to become a Christian. And Agrippa said to Festus, This man might have been set at liberty if he had not appealed to Cæsar" (Acts xxvi. 28 f.). This happened about A.D. 61. It shows that no edict of Nero's against Christianity was then known at Jerusalem, or consequently at Ephesus. S. Paul when at Rome was allowed to dwell by himself with a soldier that kept him. Here he wrote his epistles and preached the Gospel of Christ, "without prohibition" (Acts xxviii. 30, 31).

When S. John came to Ephesus a new civilization opened out before him. He found a city in which the arts of Greece and Rome were wedded to the gorgeous inspiration of the East by wealth and power; a city steeped in luxury and vice. Its temple of Diana was one of the wonders of the world. Several of its hundred columns were adorned with life-size figures, sculptured in bold relief. On its altars were statues by Praxiteles and Phidias. It had its stadia, baths, basilicas, temples, and private mansions, rivalling those of Rome. Great streams of commerce flowing west to Rome, passed through its port, merchandise of gold and silver, precious stones and pearls, fine linen and silk, purple and scarlet, vessels of ivory, brass, and iron, etc. (R. xviii. 12).

Smyrna and Pergamos rivalled Ephesus in wealth and magnificence. This rivalry was especially marked as regards the *Niokórate*. The title of *Νεωκόπος* was conferred by the Senate upon a provincial town which erected and dedicated a temple and games to the Imperial Gods. Smyrna, Pergamos, and Sardis had each in turn obtained the *Niokórate*. When S. John came upon the scene all the great cities around him were devoted to Cæsar worship. The Hellenised Asiatics were used to hero worship. They liked it. They even clamoured for the honour of erecting temples to the Cæsars, as soon as their apotheosis came into view. S. John saw that Cæsar worship was the chief obstacle to the spread of Christianity. It

not only identified the Imperial religion with loyalty to the Empire. It subjected both religion and loyalty to the sway of one whose vices were hallowed by the honour which clothes a divinity.

S. John's Revelation shows how he was moved to fight against it with all the energy and fire of prophetic denunciation. The time was at hand when the conflict between Cæsar worship and Christianity would soak the stadia of Rome with Christian blood. At the close of the year 64 news reached Ephesus of startling events at Rome; how the Christians were accused of having set fire to Rome, and were being massacred by order of Nero: and how the chief of the Apostles, S. Peter, was first among the slain.

Some two years later, at the beginning of 67, S. John is believed to have been arrested at Ephesus and banished to Patmos "for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus" (R. i. 9). Persecution spread slowly from Rome to Ephesus. The charge of arson which gave rise to the attack on the Christians of Rome, and gave some apparent justification to the severity of their treatment, could not be laid against their co-religionists in the Province of Asia. Religious persecution was in those days contrary to the foreign policy of the Empire. The Roman world was getting tired of the tyranny of Nero. The frequent executions of Christians, who were for the most part Italians or barbarians, produced a reaction against Nero. The formidable conspiracy of Piso, which took place in the year 65, showed that public opinion was turning against him. Tacitus puts it on record that "It was evident that they (the Christians) fell a sacrifice, not to the public good, but to glut the rage and cruelty of one man" (Anls. xiv. 44).

The circumstances of S. John's banishment to Patmos are not exactly known. His own statement, "I John . . . was in the island which is called Patmos, for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus" (R. i. 9) is open to the interpretation that he went to Patmos to receive the Revelation. But there is the unanimous tradition of the early Church that he was banished to Patmos for the word of God as an act of persecution. If Nero's edicts regarding Christians were enforced in Asia Minor that might be. But Nero was at that time, the end of A.D. 66, so proud of his Olympian successes, that he enfranchised the Greeks, who were high in his favour. But Hellenised Asia was to Greece what Canada is to England, and persecution there would not be in harmony with Nero's attitude towards Greece.

It is very important to note the chief political and social events which impressed S. John's mind when he was exiled to

Patmos. They gave him his last impressions of the world beyond his prison. They were fixed as a photograph on his mind, and would naturally be reflected in his writings.

Tiridates, the Arsacid, had just gone to Rome to be crowned King of Armenia. Nero strove to turn this incident into a Roman triumph by a lavish display of pomp and pageantry. The signs of the impending fall of Jerusalem were as the writing on the wall at Baltassar's feast. In the year 65 Gessius Florus, the Roman Procurator of Jerusalem so maltreated the Jews that he tried to procure them to make a revolt (Josephus Wars ii. 15). In the year 66 he seized the Temple treasure and crucified many of the Jews. Seditions and fighting followed. Florus was driven out of Jerusalem. Then Eleazar, Governor of the Temple, refused to offer up the customary sacrifice for Cæsar. Josephus says, "This was the true beginning of our war with the Romans" (Wars ii. 17). Late in the year 66, Cestius appeared before the walls of Jerusalem, with an army. These were the signs foretold to S. John, of the fall of the Temple (Luke xxi. 20). For two long years the bitter cry of the martyrs of Rome, "How long O Lord," had been ringing in his ears. S. Peter was dead. S. John stood alone, the last of the Apostles, who had seen and handled the Word of life (1 Jhn. 1). The burthen of the Church seemed to rest upon his shoulders. The contest between Cæsar Worship and Christianity had reached the shores of Asia. He was a prisoner, sentenced to exile. The outlook of the Church was of the blackest. But the darkest hour comes before the dawn. The magisterial decree which transferred S. John from the stress of Church leadership at Ephesus to a lonely island in the neighbouring Ægean Sea, was in the design of Providence a preparation for his great Revelation.

Whether owing to persecution, or not, S. John went to Patmos at a most important crisis in the history of the Church. We must look for the genesis of his Revelation in the circumstances of the time. His life had been spared by our Lord, in order that he might warn the Nazarene Church of the advent of the great catastrophe which was to befall the Temple and the Jewish race. It was about to come to pass. The Revelation is addressed to the Servants of God, the Jewish leaders of the Church, "to make known to his servants the things which must shortly come to pass" (R. i. 1). That appears to be the immediate cause of the Revelation. The denunciation of Cæsar worship seems to have been its secondary cause.

Victorinus, in his Latin Commentary on the Apoc. (c. 300) says that S. John was condemned to "the mines of Patmos" in *metallum damnatus*. This would indicate hard labour. A

visitor to Patmos, some twenty-five years ago, found stone quarries of uncertain date, in the hills in the north of the island, but no trace of mines (T. C. Fitzpatrick, *Christ Coll. Mag.*, 1867). The Romans had two forms of banishment, one *deportatio*, which was for life, with loss of rights and property. This sentence was reserved to the Emperor and the City Prefect of Rome. The other, *relegatio*, was not always for life, and did not interfere with civil rights and property. S. John was not banished from Rome, or by direct sentence of the Emperor. The Romans were not banished to Patmos. He therefore suffered *relegatio*. Tertullian twice applies the term *relegatio* to the banishment of S. John (Apol. 5 *De Praes Haeret* c. 36) and S. Jerome uses the same word. There is reason to believe that exiled Bishops of the early Church were allowed a good deal of latitude. Dionysius of Alexandria was permitted to preach the Gospel to the Libyans, whilst suffering banishment (Euseb. H. E. vii. 11). It is possible that S. John, at Patmos, had equal freedom.

S. John's first care, at Patmos, would be to warn his beloved Nazarene Church to flee from Jerusalem. On the Lord's day, or Christian Sunday, he sought guidance in fervent prayer. He was in the Spirit and heard behind him "a great voice" which gave him this Revelation (R. i. 10). He was told of the completion of the martyr's roll, of the destruction of the Temple and the punishment of the Jews, of the ruin of Rome and fall of the Empire. And he was ordered to write a Book about it. "Write therefore the things which thou hast seen and which are and which must be done hereafter" (R. i. 19). This Book, "the Revelation," contained so much matter that would be considered treasonable by Roman magistrates, that he veiled its meaning in a cypher of Old Testament symbolism, intelligible to the Servants of God, but unknown to the Roman world.

The Book was a manuscript, written on papyrus, a paper made on the banks of the Nile from the Egyptian paper reed. The Apocalypse formed a bulky volume. It was laboriously inscribed in Greek uncials, or capital letters, and must have taken a long time to write. Papyrus paper was very awkward to manipulate, requiring the smooth support of a board or table on which to write. It would not lend itself to hurried or secret writing. S. John's book and his labours upon it must have attracted public attention. Under no system of Roman discipline could his writing have passed unchallenged. It is probable that some of S. John's guards and fellow exiles were converted to Christianity and with their aid the book was written and smuggled off to Ephesus. The passage of ships from the safe harbour of Patmos to the neighbouring port of Ephesus,

would facilitate the transmission, and changing guards and the release of exiles would afford the opportunity. The Book was sent to S. John's followers at Ephesus, probably with verbal instructions to keep it a profound secret. It was a dangerous charge. If its meaning leaked out it would involve everyone in any way connected with it, in the penalty of death.

A copy of it should be sent at once to the Churches of Jerusalem and Rome. That was not an easy task, for Jerusalem was at war with Rome, and Rome was at war with the Church. There is evidence, however, that the Book was despatched and reached Jerusalem and Rome early in the year 67 A.D.

In the month of June, 68, Nero died by the sword, hated and despised. S. John was released from Patmos and returned to Ephesus. He probably then took the safe custody of his book into his own hands. The denunciations of Cæsar worship in it are but thinly veiled. Although persecutions ceased, the institutes of Nero—*Institutum Neronianum*—regarding Christianity, remained unrepealed and constituted a species of outlawry against Christians (Tertullian *Ad Nat.* i. 17). For the time being a dead letter, they might easily be revived if the passions of the mob were again inflamed against Christians. There were Hellenised Jews in the Cities of Asia, who could understand the Revelation, and who would gladly wrest it to the destruction of Christianity.

There was a custom observed in the early Church of concealing from unseasoned Christians as well as from pagans the more intimate mysteries of religion. Political dangers as well as the fear of sacrilege prompted this secretiveness. It rested also on the words of our Saviour (*Matt.* vii. 6). S. Paul alludes to it in *1 Cor.* iii. 1-2 and in *Heb.* v. 12-14. It was known as "the Discipline of the Secret." Catechumens were not taught the doctrines of confirmation, holy orders, and the Holy Eucharist until they were considered worthy of being made full members of the Church. The graphic art of the early church illustrates the same law. It was symbolism of the most recondite character. A common symbol was a fish. The Greek word for fish is ἰχθύς. These Greek letters form the initials of a sentence. Ἰησοῦς Χριστός Θεοῦ Ψιὸς Σωτήρ. "Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour." A fish painted over a tomb signified a baptised christian.

Apart from political and religious motives of secrecy, there were insuperable difficulties in the way of explaining the Apocalypse to the men of the first century. They could not understand events which were to happen centuries after their time. Even the "Servants of God" could not know anything

about the Kings of the Goths, the Huns, the Vandals, and others, who were to conquer and partition the Empire. Rome was a solid and imperishable fact in the first century. Christians were touched with the pride of Empire, and felt the honour of the "*Civis Romanus sum.*"

It is not probable that more than three copies of the Apocalypse existed before the year 96, viz., one at Jerusalem, one at Ephesus, and one at Rome. We know that the Church of Jerusalem was warned in time and fled to Pella. We know that the Book reached Rome before Hebrew Christians ceased to have influence in the Church there. S. Paul may have been there in the year 67. There is evidence that the Book was understood. S. Irenæus of Lyons tells us (c. 170 A.D.) that amongst the copies of the Apocalypse he found in the West, some had the number of the Beast inscribed as 616, instead of 666. The name of Nero Cæsar, in Latin, written in Hebrew letters, makes in gematria, 616. Some Hebrew Latin scribe, acquainted with that fact, must have made a marginal note to that effect. To know that Nero was the Beast was to understand the political allusions of the Book, and that, at Rome, would necessitate its being kept in concealment.

Soon after S. John's return from Patmos the prophecies of the O.T. regarding the Jews were fulfilled. In the year 70 the Temple was destroyed, Jerusalem sacked, and the people enslaved. The cleavage between the Old Law and the New, was complete. The Kingdom of Christ stood alone. A great part of the prophecies of Revelation was accomplished, and what remained related chiefly to the political forecast regarding Rome. S. John locked these things up in his own mind. His Hebrew brethren died out, and left him alone in the midst of a Gentile Church. He had no inducement to expound the Apocalypse to Gentile Christians.

We gather from a book by S. Clement of Alexandria (c. 150, 215 A.D.), "Who is the rich man that shall be saved," that when S. John returned to Ephesus from Patmos he led a strenuous missionary life. Clement says: On the death of the tyrant S. John returned to Ephesus. The title *tyrant*, belonged to Nero pre-eminently.

It may be noted that Clement's statement concerning the Apostle's missionary activity after his return from Patmos is not a mere passing assertion, but is based on a detailed account of an episode which, if only substantially true, would go far to establish the point that S. John was banished long before old age had disabled him from missionary effort.

This well-known legend is quoted at length by Eusebius (*H. E.* III. 23). Clement begins:

“Listen to a story that is no fiction, but a real history, handed down and carefully preserved, respecting the Apostle John. For after the tyrant was dead, coming from the Isle of Patmos to Ephesus, he went also, when called, to neighbouring regions of the Gentiles; in some to appoint bishops, in some to institute entirely new churches, in others to appoint to the ministry some one of those that were pointed out by the Holy Ghost.” “When he came, therefore, to one of those cities, at no great distance, of which some also give the name, and had in other respects consoled his brethren, he at last turned towards the bishop ordained [appointed] and seeing a youth of fine stature, graceful countenance and ardent mind, he said, ‘Him I commend to you with all earnestness, in the presence of the Church and of Christ.’ The bishop having taken him and promised all, he repeated and testified the same thing, and then returned to Ephesus. The Presbyter, taking the youth home that was committed to him, educated, restrained and cherished him, and at length baptised him. After this he relaxed exercising his former care and vigilance, as if he had now committed him to a perfect safeguard in the seal of the Lord; but certain idle, dissolute fellows, familiar with every kind of wickedness, unhappily attached themselves to him, thus prematurely freed from restraint.

“At length, renouncing the salvation of God, he contemplated no trifling offence, but having committed some great crime, since he was now once ruined, he expected to suffer equally with the rest. Taking, therefore, these same associates, and forming them into a band of robbers, he became their captain, surpassing them all in violence, blood and cruelty. . . .

“Time elapsed, and on a certain occasion the bishop sent for John. The Apostle, after settling those other matters for which he came, said, ‘Come, bishop, return me my deposit, which I and Christ committed to thee in the presence of the Church over which thou dost preside.’ The bishop at first, indeed, was confounded, thinking that he was insidiously charged for money which he had not received, and yet he could neither give credit respecting that which he had not, nor yet disbelieve John. But when he said, ‘I demand the young man, and the soul of a brother,’ the old man, groaning heavily and also weeping, said ‘He is dead.’ ‘How, and what death?’ ‘He is dead to God,’ saith he; ‘he has turned out wicked and abandoned, and at last a robber, and now, instead of attending the Church, he has beset the mountain with a band like himself.’ The Apostle, on hearing this, tore his garment, and beating his head, with great lamentation, said, ‘I left a fine keeper of a brother’s soul! But let a horse now be got ready, and someone to guide me on my way.’ He rode as he was, away from the Church, and, coming to the country, was taken prisoner by the outguard of the banditti. He neither attempted, however, to flee, nor refused to be taken, but cried out: ‘For this very purpose am I come; conduct me to your captain.’ He in the meantime stood waiting, armed as he was. But as he recognised John advancing towards him, overcome with

shame, he turned about to flee. The Apostle, however, pursued him with all his might, forgetful of his age, and crying out: 'Why dost thou fly, my son, from me, thy father, thy defenceless, aged father?'

The upshot of this pursuit was that the robber captain yielded to S. John, and was converted again to a life of Christian piety.

Such is the story told as "*no fiction but a real history*" by Clement of Alexandria, and enshrined by Eusebius, the historian of the early Church, in his collection of historical facts. Clement tells us elsewhere that some of the immediate successors of the Apostles SS. Peter, James, John, and Paul, "have lived down to our time, to shed into our hearts the seed which they had received of the Apostles, their predecessors" (*Strom.* i. l. p. 274; and *Euseb. H. E.* v. 11).

Clement was much esteemed by the ancients. S. Jerome calls him "the most learned of our authors." According to Theodoret, "That holy man surpassed all others in the extent of his learning."

There is a school of exegetes who hold that S. John was exiled to Patmos in Domitian's reign, about the year 96. At that time S. John was about 100 years of age! The commonly received date of our Lord's Nativity, found by Dionysius Exiguus, in the 6th century, has long been known to be incorrect. The early Fathers, Irenæus, Clement of Alexandria, and Hippolytus, put it at what we must now call 3 B.C. But the latest researches show that our Lord was born about 7 B.C. C. H. Turner, M.A., "Chronology, Biblical" in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 1902, dates the Nativity at 7-6 B.C. Dom Howlett, M.A., in the *Catholic Encyclopædia* (1908), "Chronology," summing up his article on this subject says, "Tertullian and Irenæus are nearer to the truth with the years 2 or 3 B.C.; but it must be placed still further back, and probably the year 7 B.C. will not be found to be much astray." Colonel Mackinlay, who has made a special study of this subject, in his book, "The Magi," 1908, puts the date at 7 B.C. Assuming, therefore, that S. John was three years younger than our Lord, he was about one hundred years of age in Domitian's persecution of 96.

We need not insist on the point that if S. John returned from Patmos at the end of Domitian's reign he was quite incapable of the strenuous missionary labours above described.

One of the great troubles of S. John's missionary career was the prevalence of false teachers, men who taught heresy, claiming to have received the Holy Ghost, and even to have been followers of our Lord. Our Saviour warned the Christian world of the advent of such men (*Matt.* vii. 15; xxiv. 11;

Mark xiii. 22). S. Peter refers to them (2 Peter ii. 1), and S. John in his Epistles, "Dearly beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits, if they be of God, because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (1 Jhn. iv. 1). S. John calls them Antichrists. He refers to them in the Apocalypse (R. ii. 2). They are liars (R. xxi. 8, 27; xxii. 15).

S. Irenæus in his third book, "Against Heresies," relates a story told by S. Polycarp, a disciple of S. John. "And there are those still living who heard him relate that John, the disciple of the Lord, went into a bath at Ephesus, and seeing Cerinthus within, ran out without bathing, and exclaimed, 'Let us flee lest the bath should fall in, as long as Cerinthus, that enemy of truth, is within'" (Euseb. H. E. iv. 14). In another place Eusebius says that S. John "leaped out of the place and fled from the door" (H. E. iii. 28). S. Irenæus probably refers to himself as one of those "still living" who heard this from S. Polycarp, for he was a hearer of S. Polycarp. This Cerinthus was a gnostic, Ebionite heretic, who denied the Divinity and virgin birth of Jesus Christ. He made a distinction between the man Jesus and the Christ, God. He was an Egyptian who conformed to the Jewish law. We shall hear much of him later, in connection with the millennium, and the authorship of the Revelation, which has been attributed to him! S. John's Gospel is said to have been published partly with a view to refuting him.

S. John's first Epistle, sometimes called the Epistle to the Parthians, seems to have been written at Ephesus, in the darkest hour of his ministry, after the death of S. Peter. A Roman army stood before the walls of Jerusalem. The fulfilment of the Temple prophecy was at hand and the end of all things seemed to be in sight. He begins by declaring that he had seen and handled the Word of Life. Afterwards he goes on to the consideration of Antichrist, who was expected by the Jews to appear towards the end of the world. He says, "Little children, it is the last hour, and as you have heard that Antichrist cometh, even now there are become many Antichrists, whereby we know that it is the last hour. . . . And now little children, abide in him, that when he shall appear, we may have confidence and not be confounded by him at his coming" (1 Jhn. ii. 18, 28).

In this Epistle to his Parthian followers, S. John settles the question of Antichrist for us. There is no mention of Antichrist anywhere in the Sacred Scriptures except in this Epistle. S. John sets the whole weight of his authority against the view that Antichrist will be a demon incarnate or a man possessed of the devil, wielding supernatural powers. He goes on to say,

“Who is a liar but he who denieth that Jesus is the Christ. He is Antichrist who denieth the Father and the Son” (1 Jhn. ii. 22). “And every spirit that dissolveth Jesus is not of God and this is Antichrist of whom you have heard that he cometh and he is now already in the world” (1 Jhn. iv. 3). According to S. John, Antichrist is a movement rather than a man.

It will be observed that S. John calls him *a liar* who denies that Jesus is the Christ. He has in mind the false prophets of his day. In the Revelation he shows hell to be their portion. The same type of ψευδέσι still exists in our day.

S. John's second and third Epistles are very short, because he looked forward to meeting his friends again at Ephesus. These Epistles appear to have been written at Patmos, after the Revelation, at the end of his sojourn on the Island. He writes to Gaius, “I had many things to write unto thee, but I would not by ink and pen write to thee, but I hope speedily to see thee, and we will speak, face to face” (3 Jhn. 13 f.).

The second and third Epistles were written to personal friends at Ephesus in a somewhat familiar vein. They open with the words, Ο ΠΡΕΣΒΥΤΕΡΟΣ—“The Presbyter,” “To the lady elect,”—“To the dearly beloved Gaius.” Presbuteros meant a *superior*. Ὁ Πρεσβύτερος was an *elder* of the Jewish Council. It seems that S. John was familiarly known at Ephesus as the Presbyter. Papias who collected “the sayings of our Lord” from the followers of the Apostles, and who lived at Hierapolis in S. John's province, called him “the Presbyter” in his book, written early in the second century. He wrote of “John the Presbyter” in connection with the other Apostles.

The second and third Epistles of S. John are free from all “parousial” influence, as we should expect them to be if they were written after the Revelation. But Cerinthus and his kind were working evil, and S. John refers to them in his second Epistle, “To the lady.” “For many seducers are gone out into the world who confess not that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh, this is a seducer and an Antichrist” (2 Jhn. 7). S. John repudiates the Antichrist anthropomorphic tradition, again, after receiving his Revelation.

There is a tradition that S. John's Gospel was written ten years after the Apocalypse. That would be about the year 77. Eusebius quoting S. Irenæus, and Clement of Alexandria says, “John's Gospel was published at Ephesus in Asia, at the request of his friends to supplement the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke.” Also to confute Ebion and Cerinthus (H. E. I. 6, 14. S. Hier. in Cat.). In the year 77, S. John was about eighty years of age, still in the enjoyment of vigorous life and

unimpaired memory. His followers were anxious to obtain his Gospel before age and infirmity told upon him. His Gospel differs in one respect very remarkably from that of the other Evangelists. They relate the signs which will precede and warn the Hebrew Christians of the destruction of Jerusalem. He omits that prediction, although he alone of the four Evangelists, heard it from the lips of our Lord. The conclusion is permissible that they wrote before the fall of the Temple. Whereas he had warned the Nazarene Church by means of the Revelation, and wrote his Gospel long after the event.

S. John died when Trajan came to the throne in the year 98. S. Irenæus says that he lived till the time of Trajan. "And all the presbyters of Asia that had conferred with John the disciple of our Lord testify that John had delivered it (sound doctrine) to them; for he continued with them until the time of Trajan" (Cont. Hær., B. ii.). Again, "But the Church in Ephesus also, which had been founded by Paul and where John continued to abide until the time of Trajan" (Cont. Hær., B. iii.). S. Jerome relates that age and weakness grew upon S. John so that he was no longer able to preach or make long discourses to the people. He used always to be carried to the assembly of the faithful by his disciples, with great difficulty; and every time said to his flock only these words; "My dear children, love one another." When his audience wearied with hearing constantly the same thing, asked him why he always repeated the same words, he replied: "Because it is the precept of the Lord, and if you comply with it, you do enough" (S. Hier. in Galat., c. vi. See Jhn. xiii. 34, and xv. 12).

Here it is worthy of note that there were no churches in those days. Assemblies of the faithful were held in private houses, in which the Apostles, generally, lived. It is therefore probable that S. John was so enfeebled in the year 98, that he had to be carried from one part of the house to another.

S. John was, and is, greatly revered by Greek Christians, who call him "The Divine."

His feast is kept by the Church on the 27th December, and by the Greeks on the 26th September.

He died and was buried at Ephesus. Eusebius says, "the place of his burial is shown from the Epistle of Polycrates, who was bishop of the Church of Ephesus, which Epistle he wrote to Victor, bishop of Rome." In this Epistle he writes: "Moreover, John that rested on the bosom of our Lord, who was a priest that bore the sacerdotal plate, and martyr and teacher, he also rests at Ephesus" (H. E. iii. 31). Polycrates was bishop of Ephesus A.D. 190.

S. John was buried in the mountains above the town of Ephesus. His tomb attracted many pilgrims, and became a famous shrine. Miracles were wrought there. Even the dust of his tomb was venerated as holy, and carried away into far countries by pilgrims (S. Aug. Hom. 124, in Joan; S. Ephrem. Ant. Ap. Phot. Cod. 220; S. Gregory, Tur. de Glor. Mart., c. 30). There could be no mistake or doubt about his tomb. If other Johns were buried at Ephesus, the famous tomb of S. John had no rival. Justinian, A.D. 500, built a Basilica, called the Church of S. John, over the tomb.

Ancient Ephesus was ruined by the Seljuk Turks in 1090 A.D. It was rebuilt on the heights surrounding the Basilica, by the Byzantines, and renamed Hagios Theologos, "The Divine Theologian," S. John's title in the Greek Church. A hundred years later the Turks again took it and converted the Basilica into a mosque. In the year 1403, the hordes of Timur Leng destroyed Ephesus altogether.

II

HISTORY OF THE BOOK

It has been assumed in the biography of S. John, that on his return from Patmos, he took the custody of the Apocalypse into his own hands and kept a vigilant guard over it. The Neronian decrees were alive in principle, though dormant in practice, and there was that in the Apocalypse which would revive persecution if its contents were known.

Nothing happened to disturb this state of affairs for the rest of S. John's active life. But towards the close of the year 96, when he was in extreme old age, startling rumours of Roman persecution reached Ephesus from Corinth. It was rumoured that the Emperor Domitian, in a dynastic panic, had put to death almost all those who were eminent for virtue at Rome, and that many Christians were involved in this persecution.

Clemens Romanus, the fourth Pope, who was then at Rome, wrote an Epistle to the Church at Corinth (see "Historic Notes"), in which he referred to persecution as impending, or begun, at Rome. He even compared the persecution with that of Nero, suggesting that it was the outcome of new and fierce Antichristian legislation. Domitian died in the month of September A.D. 96. The Epistle was written about that time. It gave rise, at Corinth, to an alarm of persecution, and the news spread quickly to the East. Rumour, like a river, gathers volume as it flows. We may be sure that when the news reached Ephesus, at the end of 96, the leaders of the Church consulted anxiously together, to prepare for the coming persecution.

It was known that the Revelation of S. John, written in the time of Nero, was a help to the persecuted Church. His Revelation was sought and found. S. John apparently refrained from explaining its esoteric meanings. His reasons for doing so were as strong as ever. Besides, he was too old to take an active part in this exciting rally. He died of old age, two years later. Churchmen copied the Apocalypse freely, both at Ephesus and Rome. They circulated it to the Churches of the East and West. But the meaning of it was lost. This multiplication of

copies shows that the dangers lurking in the political allusions of the Apocalypse were quite unknown.

The old Hebrew Servants of God were dead, "The kingdom" had passed into the hands of the Gentiles. On the fall of Jerusalem, the primacy of the East passed to Antioch, a Gentile Church, where first the followers of Christ were known as Christians. At Rome, Linus, a native of Volterra, succeeded S. Peter. He was followed by Cletus in the second year of Titus, A.D. 81 (Euseb. H. E. iii. 13). Cletus was a Roman by birth. Clemens Romanus, the fourth Pope, living in the year 96, was also a Roman. The bishops of the Church in that year were everywhere, except at Jerusalem, men of Gentile birth. Even the Church of Jerusalem was drifting into the hands of Gentiles. Eusebius says of Hadrian's war with the Jews (A.D. 134): "Since this event we have shown that this Church consisted of Gentiles after those of the circumcision, and that Marcus was the first Bishop of the Gentiles that presided there" (H. E. v. 12). It seems probable, moreover, that the Gentile leaders of the Early Church were out of sympathy with the Jews and their religion. The Hebrew Scriptures were disliked as Jewish. The O.T. cypher of Revelation must have entirely escaped the knowledge of these men. It is certain that only those who were well acquainted with the verbal details of the Hebrew prophecies of the Old Law, could unravel the mysteries of the Apocalypse.

We assume that the Book was published and disseminated widely towards the close of Domitian's reign, and that later writers would connect the Book with that date.

Cerinthus, the Gnostic, of Ephesus, made the first attempt at Exegesis. He was not in the least likely to have seen the Book before this time. "That enemy of truth," as S. John called him, was the last person to whom he would have shown his Revelation. Cerinthus was deeply impressed with the parousial views of the first century. He seized upon that part of Revelation containing the passage, "They lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years" (R. xx. 4), and gave it a grossly material interpretation. Caius, a Roman Presbyter, who lived about a hundred years later, tells us something about him. "But Cerinthus said that after the resurrection there would be an earthly Kingdom of Christ, and that the flesh—*i.e.*, men—again inhabiting Jerusalem, would be subject to desires and pleasures, that there would be a space of a thousand years for celebrating nuptial festivals" (Euseb. H. E. iii. 28). This Cerinthian view of a chiliad of years of sensual pleasures got the name of "Chiliasm." It was accepted, with modifications

as to the nature of the earthly happiness, by a large and ever-widening circle, whose chastened view of the thousand years of terrestrial pleasure was known as Millenarianism.

Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis, early in the second century was a Millenarian. His Book, "Logion Kuriakon Exegesis," has perished, but portions of it are found in the works of Eusebius and other writers. Eusebius says that Papias relates some matters "rather too fabulous." . . . "In them he says there would be a certain millennium after the resurrection, and that there would be a corporal reign of Christ on this very earth." . . . "He was the cause why most of the ecclesiastical writers, urging the antiquity of the man, were carried away by a similar opinion, as for instance Irenæus" (H. E. iii. 39). We may anticipate a little here by saying that Eusebius was one of the strongest opponents of Millenarianism.

S. Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch 109-115 A.D., wrote letters to S. Polycarp, the Ephesians, Smyrnians, Philadelphians, Magnesians, Trallians, and Romans, in which there are no references to the Revelation of S. John, although the Revelation contains "Letters" addressed to three of these churches by name, viz., Ephesus, Smyrna, and Philadelphia. Assuming that he had seen the Apocalypse, he evidently did not see the connection between the warnings and the Churches named.

S. Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, a follower of S. John, wrote a letter to the Philippians in which there is no reference to the Apocalypse. He endorsed S. John's teaching as regards Anti-Christ. "Everyone who hath not confessed that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is Antichrist" (Epist. to Philippians).

Montanus, a Mysian student of the Apocalypse, c. 136 A.D., proclaimed himself a prophet, and predicted that Christ was coming down quickly to Pepuza in Phrygia, to begin his millennial reign. He called upon all Christians to get ready for the second coming by repairing to Pepuza, there to lead lives of self-denial, abstinence from marriage, etc. He accepted the Cerinthian Millennium and applied it to his own time and country. He obtained his ideas from a literal interpretation of the "Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia." In the Letter to the Angel of the Church of Philadelphia we read: "Behold I come quickly, hold fast that which thou hast that no man take thy crown" (R. iii. 11). And in the Letter to the Angel of the Church of Laodicea, we read, "Behold I stand at the door and knock. . . . To him that shall overcome I will grant to sit with me in my throne, as I also have overcome, and have sat with my Father on his throne" (R. iii. 20, 21). These passages were taken by Montanus as foretelling an earthly kingdom to be established in the region of Philadelphia and Laodicea. His

own town of Pepuza, lying to the east of those cities, he claimed as the seat of the throne of the new kingdom.

The avoidance of marriage would seem to flow as a precept from the vision of the followers of the Lamb, in R. xiv. 4: "These are they who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins."

"Montanism" spread rapidly in the East and developed into a serious heresy, threatening the Church with schism.

Orthodox leaders of the Eastern Churches were revolted by the sensuality of Montanist aspirations, its egotistical pretensions, its exaggerated spiritualism, its withdrawal of Christians from missionary work, and its arrest of the development of the Christian family. Moreover, on the death of Montanus, the movement passed into the hands of female leaders, who had trances, and pretended to be inspired. It fell into disreputable ways (Euseb. H. E. v. 18).

Montanism continued to flourish, however; and in the long run it led to the rejection of the Revelation of S. John by the Eastern churches. The Western church was not much affected by it. The Bishop of Rome with the majority of the Bishops were against it, and opposed it more and more effectively as they gained in authority, and the organisation of the Church crystallised into form.

Justin Martyr, born c. 100 A.D. visited Ephesus, and wrote there, according to Eusebius, his "Dialogue with Trypho the Jew." In this he argued in favour of a spiritual millennium as opposed to Cerinthian Chiliasm. "Moreover, since even among us, a certain man, John by name, one of the Apostles of Christ, in the Revelation made to him, prophesied that those who believed in our Messiah, should spend a thousand years in Jerusalem." He quotes S. Luke against the nuptial views of Cerinthus. "And of the resurrection from the dead, shall neither be married nor take wives" (Luke xx. 35).

Melito, Bishop of Sardis, c. 170 A.D., wrote two books on "The Devil," and "The Apocalypse of S. John," according to Eusebius (H. E. iv. 26). His books have perished, but it may be inferred that he found Antichrist in "the Beast," as did S. Irenæus, a few years later. His views of the Millennium are not known. We get the date from the only surviving fragment of his writings, an *Apologia* addressed to Marcus Aurelius, c. 170 A.D.

Theophilus, Bishop of Antioch, c. 170 A.D., made use of testimony from the Revelation in his book. "Against the heresy of Hermogenis" (Euseb. H. E. iv. 24). Eusebius does not give any extracts from this work.

Apollonius, Bishop of Ephesus (?) wrote against the Montanists, c. 190 A.D. Eusebius writes of him as follows. "He

quotes also the Revelation of John as testimony, and relates also that a dead man was raised by the Divine power, through the same John, at Ephesus" (H. E. v. 18). Eusebius quotes Apollonius at considerable length as against Montanus, "that called Pepuza and Tymium, little places in Phrygia, 'a Jerusalem,' in order to collect men from every quarter thither, etc. Who provided salaries for those that preached his doctrine, that it might grow strong by gormandising and gluttony" (H. E. v. 18). Apollonius says many scathing things of the venal prophetesses of Montanism, "receiving both gold and silver and precious garments." His writings have disappeared with the exception of those quoted by Eusebius (H. E. v. 18).

S. *Irenæus*, Bishop of Lyons, c. 185 A.D., wrote a book against Heresies, in five volumes, in Greek. In the fourth volume he gives an extract from the first Chapter of Revelation, and says that S. John the disciple of the Lord saw these things in the Apocalypse (xx. 11). He repeats this formula several times practically in the same words (v. 26. iv. 24. 3, v. 35. 2, v. 36. 3). That he attributed the authorship of the Book to S. John the Evangelist is made clear in iii. 1. where he says "S. John wrote his Gospel afterwards."

In his fifth volume he recapitulates the heresies he has refuted, and goes on to make some remarks about Antichrist, whom he assumed to be the Beast of the Apocalypse. He noticed that some copies of the Book gave the number of the Beast as 616, instead of 666, but considered the latter number distinctive of genuine copies. "As matters are thus and the number is thus found in all the genuine and ancient copies, and as they who saw John attest, reason itself shows that the number of the name of the Beast is indicated by the Greek letters which it contains" (Hæres. v. 33). He proposes three names as possible solutions of the gematrial value of the number 666. ETANΘΑΣ, ΛΑΤΕΙΝΟΣ, and TEITAN. The first he does not defend. The second he thinks probable as referring to the Roman Empire. But the third he prefers, because it consists of six letters; it has two syllables of three letters each; and because Teitan was a giant who assaulted the Gods, and might therefore be put for Antichrist.

S. *Irenæus*'s testimony as to the authorship of the book, a matter of fact within the knowledge of his early friend S. Polycarp, is very strong. His testimony as to the meaning of the book shows very clearly that the Key to the book was lost.

From the above quoted writings of S. *Irenæus* the following conclusions with regard to Revelation were drawn by Medieval writers. A. A personal Antichrist will appear on earth, whose name is contained in the number 666 in Greek letters. B. The

Revelation was given to S. John about the end of Domitian's reign. C. (consequent upon B) There was a severe persecution of the Church about the end of Domitian's reign.

These conclusions rest, in the last resort, on the above quoted words of S. Irenæus. There is no other authority for any of them. They have had an obscuring influence on the elucidation of the Apocalypse.

Clement of Alexandria was a contemporary of S. Irenæus, and wrote about the same time. He frequently quotes the Apocalypse in his "Stromata." We have seen that he shows in his "Who is the rich man who shall be saved," that he is a firm believer in the Neronian date of the Book. (See p. 16.)

The Alogi. In the last quarter of the second century, a sect of men arose in Asia Minor, who denied the manifestation of the Paraclete and rejected the *logos* teaching of the Gospel of S. John and of the Apocalypse. Hence they were called the Alogi. They were strongly opposed to the Montanists. Seeing that Montanism was based on the Revelation, they decried the Book. They denied the existence of Thyatira, one of the seven Churches of Asia, to which a special letter in the Apocalypse is addressed. And they attributed the authorship of the Book to Cerinthus, the heretic! (Epiphanius, Hær. I. 1. 3).

Caius, a Roman, who wrote against Montanism at the beginning of the third century (202-210) took the same polemical line, denying S. John's authorship of the Apocalypse. He disputed with the Montanist, Proclus, in the time of Pope Zepherinus (See Euseb. H. E. iii. 28). His views are gathered from certain passages of the work of Hippolytus "Contra Caium," published by Dr. Gwynn. These show that Caius also attributed the Book to Cerinthus.

The Epistle of the Churches of Vienne and Lyons to the Churches of Asia (c. 177), refers to the Apocalypse five times as canonical scripture (Euseb. H. E. v. 1). This reflects the Western or Roman view of the period.

Tertullian, of Carthage, who wrote about the beginning of the third century, made liberal use of the Revelation of S. John in many of his controversial works. In "*Advers Marcion*" he shows that Marcion rejected the Book, partly, on account of its Old Testament style (iv. 5). In all his works he showed that he accepted and upheld the Johannine authorship of the Book. According to S. Jerome, he referred S. John's exile to Nero (Adv. Jovin i. 26). In his later years Tertullian, alarmed by the laxity of the Church, fell under the influence of rigorous Montanism. But many of his works, "*De Pudicitia*," "*De Resurrect*," "*De Anima*," "*Præscript Hæres*," "*Advers Judæos*,"

were written before that time. He looked upon Babylon as Rome, and the Beast as Antichrist.

The Muratorian Fragment. A Latin fragment published by Muratori in his "*Antiq. Ital.*" (iii. 854), attributed to the early part of the third century, writes of the Apocalypse of S. John as being received in the Canon of the Church.

It says that "Paulus sequens praedecessoris sui, Johannis, ordinem, non nisi nominatim septem ecclesiis scribit ordini tali" (C.F. Schmid. *Offenbarung Johannis*, p. 101, f.), showing that at that period S. Paul was supposed to have followed the model of the Apocalypse in writing his Epistles. But as S. Paul died towards the close of Nero's persecution, 67 A.D., it follows that in the opinion of the author of the fragment, S. John wrote the Apocalypse before that date.

The Shepherd of Hermas was written about this time. The Muratorian fragment refers to it as having been written in Rome, "*nuperrime temporibus nostris.*" It uses a symbolism which appears to have been taken from the Apocalypse. The expression ἡ θλίψις ἡ μεγάλη, taken from Rev. vii. 14, occurs twice in it (Vis. ii. 2, 7, iv. 1. 3).

Hippolytus, a Roman Bishop, who lived in the early part of the third century, wrote a work on Christ and Antichrist, in which he quotes extensively from the Apocalypse. Like S. Irenæus, and probably Melito of Sardis, he looked upon the Apocalypse as relating to an anthropomorphic Antichrist tradition. He recognised the Beast from the Sea as the Roman Empire; the woman in Rev. xii. 1-3, as the Church; Babylon as Rome; and the two witnesses (R. xi. 3) as Enoch and Elias. He also expressed millenarian views. This book S. Jerome names in his catalogue of the works of Hippolytus (Cat. 61). Photius also says that he read it. It shows an advance in exegesis.

S. Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage c. 250 A.D., was a pupil of Tertullian. He made frequent references to the Apocalypse of S. John in his writings and treated it as a part of the Canon of Scripture.

Origen (c. 185-254), was a pupil of Clement of Alexandria. His reputation as a teacher stands high. He took a mystical view of the Apocalypse generally, and objected to Chiliasm as Jewish. He studied Hebrew for the purpose of his Hexapla (Euseb. H. E. vi. 16). In his exposition of the Gospel of S. Matthew he remarks, "What shall we say of him who reclined upon the breast of Jesus, I mean John? who has left one Gospel, in which he confesses that he could write so many that the whole world could not contain them. He also wrote the Apocalypse, commanded as he was, to conceal, and not to write the voices of the seven thunders" (Euseb. H. E. vi. 25).

In a Commentary on S. Matthew he says, "The King of the Romans, as tradition teaches, condemned John, who bore testimony on account of the word of truth, to the island of Patmos. John moreover teaches what concerns his testimony, not saying who condemned him, for he speaks thus in the Apocalypse," then follows a quotation Rev. 1-9 (Edt. Wirccp. p. 300 f.). This was written, probably, between the years 230 and 250. The phrase "The King of the Romans as tradition teaches us," shows that Origen had Nero in view, or he would not have written "The King." Throughout the East the Julian Cæsars were looked upon as a royal line and hailed as Kings. The Cæsars from Julius Cæsar to Nero the sixth, King of the Apocalypse (R. xvii. 10), were blood relations. Nero was the last of them. After him came the successful generals raised to the purple by their legions. They took the title of Cæsar, but prefixed it to their own names. They reigned by virtue of their leadership of the Army. The official title of Domitian illustrates both these points—"Imperator Cæsar Domitianus Augustus." Origen was a pupil of Clement of Alexandria, who taught that S. John was exiled in Nero's reign. He would naturally accept the Neronian tradition so clearly set forth in Clement's tradition of "Who is the rich man who shall be saved?" Origen's further expression that S. John does not say "who condemned him," may have reference to his condemnation and exile from Ephesus. He was tried and condemned at Ephesus by the Provincial Governor, or Asiarch. There is no mention of him in the Revelation.

Origen read books with avidity and dwelt for many years in Palestine. If there had been a Domitian tradition of S. John's exile, he would have heard of it. He would have observed that it was at variance with the teaching of the school of Alexandria, of which he was so great an ornament. And in all probability he would have taken some notice of it when penning the above lines.

Victorinus, Bishop of Pettau in Upper Pannonia, about the middle of the 2nd century, wrote a Commentary on the Apocalypse in Latin. It has been preserved to our day in an expurgated recension, said to have been made by S. Jerome (Biblioth. Max Palt. vol. iii.). It still retains traces of Chiliasm.

Nepos, a learned and pious Bishop of the Egyptian Church, wrote, in the first half of the third century, a book called the "Refutation of the Allegorisers." This was written in defence of the literal chiliastic interpretation of the Apocalypse, as against the mysticism of the Alexandrian school. He quoted the Apocalypse extensively in support of his views, which were gaining many adherents in Egypt (Euseb. H. E. vii. 24).

Dionysius of Alexandria, an ardent Antimontanist, whose influence on the Book rivals that of S. Irenæus, was at Alexandria about this time. He wrote in the middle of the third century. S. Athanasius calls him, "Teacher of the Church." Basil says that "he was a man of canonical authority." He was known subsequently as "St. Denis the Great." He wrote two books called "The Promises," against the teaching of Nepos.

In the second book he enters into a discussion on the Revelation of John, where, in the introduction he makes mention of Nepos as follows:

"But they produce a certain work of Nepos upon which they lay great stress, as if he advanced things that are irrefragable, when he asserts that there will be an earthly reign of Christ. . . . When I was at Arsinoe, where, as you know, long since, this doctrine was afloat, so that schisms and apostacies of whole churches followed, after I had called the presbyters and teachers of the brethren in the villages, when those brethren had come who wished to be present, I exhorted them to examine the doctrine publicly. When they had produced this book as a kind of armour and impregnable fortress, I sat with them for three days, from morning till evening, attempting to refute what it contained" (Euseb. H. E. vii. 24).

Dionysius shows what injury Montanism was doing to the Church. He shows how it depended upon the misinterpretation of the Revelation of S. John, which was the real fortress on which Nepos rested his book. And he shows his own zeal and energy in opposing it. Presently we shall see that his line of argument was to undermine the authority of the Book by saying that it was not written by John the son of Zebedee, and that, therefore, it was not canonical. Consequently Chiliasm was based upon a work of no great authority, and could not stand against the other Scriptures.

The influence of Dionysius was so great that Montanism was declared heretical at the Synod of Iconium, in the year 253. His writings throw a very strong light upon the position of the Apocalypse in the minds of Churchmen, in, and before this time, especially in the East.

He says in the second book on "Promises":

"But it is highly probable that Cerinthus, the same that established the heresy that bears his name, designedly affixed the name (of John) to his own forgery. For one of the doctrines that he taught was that Christ would have an earthly kingdom. And as he was a voluptuary, and altogether sensual, he conjectured that it would consist in those things that he craved in the gratification of appetite and lust, *i.e.*, in eating and drinking and marrying, or in such things whereby he supposed these sensual pleasures might be

presented in more decent expressions ; viz., in festivals, sacrifices, and the slaying of victims" (Euseb. H. E. iii. 28 and vii. 25).

He continues :

"For my part, I would not venture to set this book aside, as there are many brethren that value it much ; but, having formed a conception of its subject as exceeding my capacity, I also consider it to contain a certain concealed and wonderful intimation in each particular. For, though I do not understand, yet I suspect that some deeper sense is wrapped up in the words, and these I do not measure and judge by my private reason ; but allowing more to faith, I have regarded them as too lofty to be comprehended by me, and those things which I do not understand, I do not reject, but I wonder the more that I cannot comprehend. . . . For 'blessed,' says he, 'is he that keepeth the words of the prophecy of this book, and I, John, who have seen and heard these things.' I do not, therefore, deny that he was called John, and that this was the writing of one John. And I agree that it was the work also of some holy and inspired man. But I would not easily agree that it was the apostle, the son of Zebedee, the brother of James, who is the author of the Gospel, and the General (Catholic) Epistle that bears his name" (H. E. vii. 25).

A little further he adds :

"But John never speaks as of himself (in the first person), nor as of another (in the third), but he that wrote the Apocalypse declares himself immediately in the beginning. . . . But neither in the second nor third Epistle ascribed to John (the Apostle), though they are only brief, is the name of John presented. But anonymously it is written, *the presbyter*. But the other did not consider it sufficient to name himself but once."

"That it is a John that wrote these things we must believe, since he says it, but what John it is, is uncertain. For he has not said that he was, as he often does in the Gospel, the beloved disciple of the Lord. . . . I am of opinion that there were many of the same name with John the Apostle. . . . I think, therefore, that it was another one of those in Asia. For they say that there are two monuments at Ephesus, and that each bears the name of John. . . ." (Euseb. H. E. vii. 25).

In these passages Dionysius reveals the prejudice that is in his mind in dealing with the authorship of the Apocalypse. He does not deny its value. But he will not allow that it is written by S. John the Evangelist, because he will not have that great name used as a shield by Montanists or Millenarians.

Dionysius admits that the Book was not understood in his time, or by any writer before it. The Key was lost. The O.T. Hebrew references were not recognised as a cypher. On the contrary, the Book was disparaged on account of its peculiarly

O.T. style. The extent of the confusion may be measured by the fact that so great a man as Dionysius attributed the work to the Ebionite heretic, Cerinthus! The Revelation, as we shall see, insists repeatedly on the Divinity of Jesus Christ, and his equality with God, the Father Almighty.

Basing himself on Papias, who was supposed to have referred to two Johns, as co-existing at Ephesus, in Apostolic times, Dionysius argues that the Revelation was written by the second John, not the Evangelist. He strengthens his case by the mention of two tombs at Ephesus, each dedicated in the name of John.

It will appear, presently, that Papias did not say that there were two separate Johns, though he would have said so plainly if that was what he meant to say. For he laid himself out to be the collector of the Apostolic traditions of his time.

Eusebius, in his *Ecclesiastical History*, throws some light upon this question of the two Johns.

Eusebius begins by saying, "There are said to be five books of Papias." He does not seem to have had any of "the books" of Papias before him, since he does not specify any one of them. He relies, apparently, on S. Irenæus for his information about the works of Papias.

He quotes from Papias as follows :

"But I will not hesitate to record for thee, together with the interpretations, all the things which I once learned well from the Presbyters, and kept well in my memory, that so I may confirm their truth. For I took pleasure, not in those who are great talkers, as the multitude do, but in those who teach the truth; not in those who relate alien commandments, but in those who record such commandments as were given by the Lord to the faithful, and spring from the Truth itself. If, therefore, anyone came who had been a follower of the Presbyters, I would ask him about the words of the Presbyters; what Andrew, or what Peter said, or what Philip, or what Thomas or James, or what John or Matthew, or any other of the disciples of the Lord. And as to the things which Ariston and 'John the Presbyter,' the disciples of the Lord, say, for I did not think that the things which are contained in the books were as much use to me as what came from a living voice still remaining among us" (Euseb. H. E. iii. 39).

Eusebius comments on this as follows :

"Where it is also proper to observe that the name of John is twice mentioned. The former of which he mentions with Peter and James and Matthew, and the other apostles, evidently meaning the evangelists. But in a separate point of his discourse he ranks the other John with the rest not included in the number of apostles, and placing Ariston before him, he distinguishes him plainly by the

name of presbyter, so that it is here proved that the statement of those is true who assert there were two of the same name in Asia, that there are also two tombs at Ephesus, and that both are called John even to this day, which it is particularly necessary to observe. For it is probable that the second, if it be not allowed that it was the first, saw the revelation ascribed to St. John. And the same Papias, of whom we now speak, professes to have received the declarations of the apostles from those that were in company with them, and says also that he was a hearer of Ariston and the presbyter, John. For as he has often mentioned them by name, he also gives their statements in his own works" (Eusebius, H. E. iii. 39).

In addition to this comment Eusebius devotes a whole chapter of his *History* (vii. 25) to the "Apocalypse of John," in which he quotes Dionysius extensively against S. John's claim to the Revelation. In this chapter Eusebius repeats the remark about the two Johannine tombs at Ephesus, quoted above. "For they say there are two monuments at Ephesus, and that each bears the name of John." Eusebius, Bishop of Cæsarea, historian and traveller, many years after Dionysius, reintroduces the story of the two tombs, still as an *on dit*, and then claims that it is capable of being proved to be true, because Papias mentions a John by the name of "John the Presbyter"; "placing Ariston before him he distinguishes him plainly by the name of Presbyter, so that it is here proved that the statement of those is true, who assert that there were two of the same name in Asia!"

It will be observed that neither Dionysius nor Eusebius furnishes any details in connection with their mention of the story of the two tombs at Ephesus; they do not enter into any historical discussion as to the origin or credibility of the legend, nor do they appear at all solicitous concerning its accuracy.

We have seen that Polycrates, Bishop of Ephesus, at the end of the second century, wrote that: "John, who rested upon the bosom of our Lord, is buried at Ephesus" (Euseb. v. 24). There does not seem to have been any question of two tombs or two Johns at Ephesus then, or Polycrates, writing of S. John's burial-place, would have been obliged to particularise. He wrote a letter "to Victor and the Church of Rome" about the proper time of the observance of Easter (Euseb. v. 24). Pope S. Victor succeeded S. Eleutherius in the Pontificate in the year 192 and died A.D. 202. Hence Polycrates stands as a witness half a century earlier than Dionysius.

Considering the unique position of S. John as the beloved Apostle of our Lord, one would expect his tomb to be well known and held in great reverence. We have seen that S. Augustine, S. Ephræem and S. Gregory, hand down a tradition that it was a

well-known shrine visited by pilgrims from "far countries" (p. 21). S. John was highly venerated by the Greeks, who call him *the Divine Theologian*. Justinian built a Basilica over his tomb. It is very remarkable that neither the Alogi, nor Caius, earlier writers than Dionysius, knew anything of the second John. They were obliged to attribute the Book to Cerinthus for want of any other putative author. So illusory is this other John, even in the mind of Dionysius, that he says that "it is highly probable that Cerinthus forged the name of John to his own work."

But Papias goes on to make it quite clear that he meant S. John the Evangelist all through. It has been shown by Professor Drummond that Papias refers, in the first part of the above fragment, to the *living voice* of the Apostles, including the presbyter John, as handed down to him by their followers; and, in the second part, to *the writings* of Ariston and "John the Presbyter."

It may be remarked, in passing, that Papias did not put the Apostles in the order of their rank, since he puts Andrew before Peter.

Papias knew that S. John, in his Epistles, described himself as the Presbyter. Eusebius notices, in this same chapter, that "Papias made use of testimonies from the first Epistle of John." So that Papias had the writings of S. John before him, as well as the recollection or tradition of his living voice, and was comparing them together.

S. John's two minor Epistles begin: "The Presbyter to the elect lady and her children," "The Presbyter to the dearly beloved Gaius." The Presbyter was evidently the title by which he was commonly known. "John the Presbyter," or "the Presbyter John," would point to him, and to him only.

But there is another fragment from Papias in this same thirteenth chapter of Eusebius. It reads as if it were a part broken off from the first. It is this:

"And 'John the Presbyter' also said this: 'Mark being the interpreter of Peter, whatsoever he recorded he wrote with great accuracy, but not, however, in the order in which it was spoken or done by our Lord, for he neither heard nor followed our Lord, but, as before said, he was in company with Peter, who gave him such instructions as was necessary, but not to give a history of our Lord's discourses; wherefore Mark has not erred in anything by writing some things as he has recorded them; for he was carefully attentive to one thing, not to pass by anything that he heard, or to state anything falsely in these accounts!'" (Eusebius, H. E. iii. 39).

Here we have "John the Presbyter," according to Papias, passing judgment in the most authoritative way possible on the

Gospel of S. Mark. John the Presbyter does not say that he has heard this, or that he believed it. He says of his own knowledge, decisively, that "whatsoever he [S. Mark] recorded he wrote with great accuracy, but not, however, in the order in which it was spoken or done by our Lord," Papias evidently accepted this statement of "John the Presbyter" as coming from one whose evidence on the point was final. Only an eye-witness and constant follower of our Lord was qualified to make such a comment on the Gospel of S. Mark. There was no John but S. John the Evangelist, the constant companion of our Lord, who was in a position to make it.

The whole statement of "John the Presbyter," as recorded by Papias, reveals the mind of one who was intimately associated with our Lord. Who else could say that S. Mark's records are not all related in the order in which it was spoken and done by our Lord, nevertheless he has not erred in anything, or stated anything falsely?

From all of which it may be fairly argued that Papias had but one John in his mind, and that one S. John the Evangelist.

Dionysius notes that John of the Apocalypse mentions his name more than once, whereas the Evangelist in his Epistles simply calls himself "the Presbyter." We have seen that "John the Presbyter" was the commonly acknowledged title of S. John the Evangelist (pp. 19, 31 f.).

The Apocalypse was an extraordinary production, requiring ample confirmation as to the authenticity of its character as a direct revelation from God to S. John. Accordingly we find that S. John mentions His name no less than five times, three times in the beginning of the book, and twice towards the end (Rev. i. 1; i. 4; i. 9; xxi. 2; xxii. 8). He sent it to Ephesus, where his disciples dwelt, in these terms, "I, John, your brother and sharer in tribulation and in the kingdom and patience in Christ Jesus" (Rev. i. 4). Such a message coming from Patmos, where S. John lived in exile, could only be attributed to one author, and that was S. John the Evangelist.

Another argument brought forward by Dionysius in favour of attributing "the Revelation" to an unknown John, is the difference of the Greek in the Gospel and in the Revelation. The latter is written in a Greek more akin to Hebrew than the former. It is distinctly Hebraic in some of its idioms and grammatical constructions.

If we take it as written during Nero's persecution, in the year 67, soon after S. John came to reside at Ephesus, we should expect the writing to be flavoured with Hebraicisms. If we admit that the Book was written at Patmos, where S. John was a prisoner, that it was written under the eyes of his

jailers, we should expect it to be veiled in Hebraic symbolism. If we admit the tradition that the Gospel was a later work, written at ease, at Ephesus, we should expect to find it written in more polished Greek (as, in fact, it is), yet on these natural differences of style rests the theory that S. John the Evangelist could not have written both books, the Gospel and the Revelation.

Dionysius, as quoted by Eusebius, says :

“For the Gospel and Epistle mutually agree. . . . And, altogether, throughout, to attentive observers, it will be obvious that there is one and the same complexion and character in the Gospel and Epistle. Very different and remote from all this is the Apocalypse, not even tending, or even bordering upon them in the least, I might say not even containing a syllable in common with them.”

“We may also notice how the phraseology of the Gospel and the Epistle differs from the Apocalypse. For the former are written not only irreprehensibly, as regards the Greek language, but are most elegant in diction, in the arguments and the whole structure of the style. It would require much to discern any barbarism or solecism, or any odd peculiarity of expression at all in them; for, as is to be presumed, he was endued with all the requisites for his discourse, the Lord having granted him both that of knowledge and that of expression of style. That the latter, however, saw a revelation, and received knowledge as prophecy, I do not deny; but I perceive that his dialect and language is not very accurate Greek, but that he uses barbarous idioms, and in some places solecisms, which it is now unnecessary to select” (Euseb. H. E. vii. 25).

Dionysius says that in complexion the Epistle and Gospel of S. John resemble each other, but the Apocalypse is very different and remote from them. “I might say not even containing a syllable in common with them.”

We shall see that this is not a fair estimate. In the Revelation, when our Lord appears leading His forces to the final battle which is to rout the armies of paganism, it is said, “And he was clothed with a garment sprinkled with blood, and his name is called the Word of God” (Rev. xix. 13).

It is universally recognised that we have here a very important literary idiom, connecting the Apocalypse with the Gospel and Epistle of S. John (1 Jhn. ii. 14; 1 Jhn. v. 7). The Gospel begins, “In the beginning was the word, and the word was God.”

Again, the Lamb of God is a peculiarly Johannine form of expression, found only in the Revelation and in the Gospel of S. John as an emblem of our Lord.

In the most dramatic scene of the Revelation, the opening of

the book with the seven seals, Christ appears as a Lamb, and takes the book and opens the seals. Thereafter the Lamb appears at frequent intervals as a figure of Christ (R.v. 8, 12, 13; vi. 1, 16; vii. 9, 14, 17; xii. 11; xiii. 8; xiv. 1, 4, 10; xv. 3; xvii. 14; xix. 9; xxi. 9, 14, 22, 23, 27; xxii. 1, 3, 14).

In S. John's Gospel we have the same symbolism. "Behold the Lamb of God" (Jhn. i. 29, 36). These expressions, the "Word of God," and the "Lamb of God," are peculiar to S. John. They are found only in his writings, and their occurrence in the Revelation and in his Gospel seems to many modern critics to place him in an unassailable position as the writer of both books. Again, S. John's is the only received Gospel which mentions the piercing of our Lord's side, "But one of his soldiers with a spear opened his side, and immediately there came out blood and water. And he that saw it hath given testimony, and his testimony is true. And he knoweth that he saith true that you may believe. For these things were done that the scriptures might be fulfilled. . . . They shall look on him whom they pierced" (Jhn. xix. 34, 36). S. John himself, as he says, witnessed the piercing of our Lord's side with the spear, and, remembering the prophecy in the Hebrew Scriptures (Zach. xii. 10), solemnly testifies to its fulfilment. The same event is noted in the Apocalypse as a mark of identification of our Lord, "Every eye shall see him, and they also that pierced him" (Rev. i. 7).

Professor Moses Stuart makes the following comment on verse eleven in the first chapter of the Revelation. The verse begins, "Saying, what thou seest write in a book." He says, with regard to *εἰς βιβλίον*, R. I. 11:

"We say copied *into* a book but written *in* a book, and in accordance with the latter phrase is the usual idiom of the Greek; but in Jhn. viii. 6, 8 (if the genuineness be allowed), we have two cases of *ἔγραφεν εἰς*—showing, at least, a resemblance in minutiae between the Gospel and the Apocalypse, for the idiom is found nowhere else in the New Testament" (*Com. on the Apoc.* Vol. ii., p. 41).

Again he says: "The syntax of the verb and participle, it has often been alleged, is frequently violated in the Apocalypse. (a) The Present tense is put for the Praeterite. . . . The *historic Present* (as grammarians call it) belongs, of course, to all animated narration; and it is to be found unusually often, both in the Gospel of John and in the Apocalypse. In reading through both these books, I have noted one hundred cases in which it is employed in the Gospel, and forty cases in the Apocalypse. Of the one hundred, however, some sixty-five belong merely to the word *λέγει*, singular or plural; and a large portion of the others to

ἔρχεται and some other common verbs of motion. The numerous cases of λέγει belong almost entirely to the frequent dialogues which the Gospel exhibits. In the Apocalypse, but few dialogistic passages occur; and in these there is just the same frequency of λέγει as in the Gospel. As to other cases, I have noted thirty-five in the Gospel, and thirty in the Apocalypse, which exhibit a similarity of usage in both, that deserves special notice, inasmuch as they are some indication of the same hand in both. For the rest, I would merely remark, that although the *historic Present* is everywhere to be found in the New Testament, yet nowhere is it employed with so much frequency as in the writings of John. As the Hebrew has no appropriate form for the Present, this must be put to the account of the *Greek*, and not of the Hebrew idiom." (*Op. cit.*, i. 388.)

Dionysius says, we do not find in the Apocalypse the Johannine words ζωή, φῶς, ἀληθεία, χάρις and κρίσις; all of which are found in the Apocalypse, ἀληθεία being replaced by its adjective ἀληθινός. (See "Historical introduction to Study of N.T." G. Salmon, D.D.)

Dr. Swete, Regius Professor of Divinity at Cambridge, points out several resemblances between the Gospel of S. John and the Apocalypse.

The book begins, "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave to him, to make known to his servants." "That the Son receives what he is and has from the Father is the constant teaching of the Gospel of S. John (iii. 35; v. 20, 26; vii. 16; viii. 28; xii. 49; xvi. 15; xvii. 2). Bede says, *Johannes more suo filli gloriam ad patrem referens.*" . . . "Μάρτυς, μαρτυρεῖν, μαρτυρία are frequent in the Apocalypse as in other Johannine books," . . . "νικᾶν is a characteristically Johannine word (Jhn. xvi. 33; 1 Jhn. ii. 13; iv. 4; v. 4), and specially frequent in the Apocalypse (ii. 7, 11, 17, 26; iii. 5, 12, 21; v. 5; xii. 11; xv. 2; xvii. 14; xxi. 7). . . . Τηρεῖν (a Johannine word, Ev. 18, Ep. i. 7, Apoc. 11)" (See *The Apocalypse of S. John*, pp. 1, 2, 29, 46).

Dionysius concludes that "he [St. John] uses barbarous idioms, and in some places solecisms, which it is now unnecessary to select."

It is admitted by all that the Greek of the Apocalypse is not so scholarly as that of the Gospel. From the pedagogic point of view it is an inferior Greek composition. This tells very much in favour of its having been written in the year 67 A.D.

A very complete command of Greek was required to deal with the visions of Revelation. Accordingly we find the strange visions of the book described in language full of fire and emotion, which breaks through the trammels of unaccustomed Greek and falls back upon Hebraic linguistic constructions.

Dr. Swete writes :

“Whatever may be thought of the explanations which are offered in his defence, it is evident that he has not erred in all cases through ignorance, and it is possible that he has not done so in any instance. His eccentricities of syntax are probably due to more than one cause, some to the habit which he may have retained from early years of thinking in a Semitic language, some to the desire of giving movement and vivid reality to his visions, which leads him to report them after the manner of shorthand notes, jotted down at the time ; some to the circumstances in which the book was written. But from whatever cause or concurrence of causes, it cannot be denied that the Apocalypse of John stands alone among Greek literary writings in its disregard of the ordinary rules of syntax, and the success with which syntax is set aside without loss of perspicuity, or even of literary power. The book seems openly and deliberately to defy the grammarian, and yet, even as literature, it is in its own field unsurpassed. No judge who compared it with any other Greek apocalyptic work would hesitate to give the palm to the Canonical Apocalypse.” (*Op. cit.*, p. cxxiii.)

The Hebraic mind of S. John is seen in both his Scriptures, by his habit of introducing Hebrew names with their Greek equivalents. Thus in his Gospel, “Who said Rabbi, which is to say, being interpreted master” (Jhn. i. 38). “Thou shalt be called Cephas, which is interpreted Peter” (Jhn. i. 42). Pilate . . . sat down in the judgment seat in the place that is called Lithostratos, and in Hebrew Gabbatha. “He went forth to that place which is called Calvary, but in Hebrew, Golgotha” (Jhn. xix. 13, 17). And in the Apocalypse, “And all the tribes of the earth shall bewail themselves because of him, even so=(*vaì*). Amen” (R. i. 7). In which, *vaì*, Greek, is interpreted by its Hebrew equivalent, Amen. “The angel of the bottomless pit whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in Greek, Apollyon” (R. ix. 11). “And the great dragon was cast out, the old serpent who is called the Devil and Satan” (R. xii. 9), where *Σατανᾶς* is Hebrew, and *Διάβολος*, Greek. “And he shall gather them together into a place which is called in Hebrew, Armagedon” (R. xvi. 16). Armagedon, a Hebrew proper name, had no Greek equivalent. Finally the number of the Beast *ἑξακόσιοι ἑξήκοντα ἕξ* (*χξς'*), though written in Greek, has to be converted into Hebrew for the purpose of its gematrial interpretation.

All this leaves out of account the fact that the book was purposely obscured by the use of Old Testament symbolism to form a Hebraic cipher. Though written in Greek, it was not intended to be read or understood by the Greek-speaking Asiarchs of Asia Minor.

L. Cæcilius Firmianus Lactantius, a rhetorician and Christian Apologist of Nicomedia, who died about A.D. 330, wrote a book entitled, *Divinarum Institutionum*, in which he shows Chiliastic tendencies (L. xvi. 7). He accepted the Revelation as written by S. John. In his Epit. c. 42, he refers to Rev. xix. 12, "a name written which no man knoweth but himself," "*sicut docet Joannes in Revelatione.*"

Methodius, Bishop of Olympus, in Lydia, about the same time, took a mystical view of the Apocalypse. The seven heads of the dragon he took to be the seven deadly sins; and the Beast, the empire of lust. In this exegesis he had many followers. He belonged to the school of Allegorists.

Eusebius, Bishop of Cæsarea, in Palestine, already noticed, wrote an Ecclesiastical History, which he finished about the year 324. It is a wonderful store-house of all kinds of facts concerning the early history of Christianity. As the quotations from his history, printed above, show, he was in sympathy with Dionysius of Alexandria, in his antimontanist polemic.

He was a prominent figure in the Christian revival under Constantine whose friendship he enjoyed. He sat beside the Emperor at the Council of Nicea, and was honoured by him for many years, both in private life and in public ceremonies. His influence, therefore, was much greater than that of an ordinary Bishop, and that influence was exerted against the Canonicity of the Apocalypse. He tells us in his "Life of Constantine" (iv. 36, 37), that by order of that Emperor he prepared fifty sumptuous copies of the Bible for the Church of Constantinople. From these he excluded the Apocalypse. Thus it came to pass that when Byzantium, renamed Constantinople, became the Metropolitan Church of the East, it was endowed from the beginning with an Antimontanist Bible, and with a large number of sumptuous spare copies for presentation to the Eastern Churches under its influence. The Bible of Eusebius completed the work of Montanism and its opponents in discrediting the authority of the Apocalypse in the East.

At the celebrated Council or Synod of Laodicea held in the year 360, many of whose Canons are still revered, the Eastern Bishops dropped the Apocalypse out of the Canon of Scripture. It is not found in the Peshitta or original of the Syrian New Testament. Gwynn believes that it was unknown to the Syrian Christians for four hundred years, with the exception of those who could translate Greek. Nor does it appear in Canon 85 of Apost. Const. (Zahn. ii. 177 ff., 197, 190 ff.).

Cyril of Jerusalem (d. 386), excluded the Apocalypse from public and private use (Catach. iv. 31, 36).

Gregory of Nazianzum, 330-389 A.D., left it out of his Canon.

Theodore of Mopsoestia omits to quote it.

Theodoret fails to quote it.

Chrysostom omitted it from his *Synopsis Scripturæ Sacræ*.

Nicephorus omitted it from his Chronography, and List of Books.

The Apocalypse was not generally reinstated in the Eastern Church till the 6th century. The Armenians continued to exclude it till the 12th, and the Jacobites till the 13th century. A curious instance of this Eastern prejudice was noticed as far West as Spain. At the Synod of Toledo A.D. 633, the Apocalypse was ordered to be read in Church under pain of excommunication. The Visigoths, who settled down in Spain, had brought an Eastern Bible, and Greek traditions, with them. Some of the leading Bishops of the East, however, even in the fourth century, gave the Apocalypse a canonical position.

Athanasius, the great Bishop of Alexandria (c. 326), placed it definitely in his list of canonical Scriptures.

Ephræm of Edessa, who died in the year 378, quoted it as canonical.

Epiphanius, Bishop of Constantia, in Cyprus (c. 367), insists on its Canonicity. In his "Panarion" 25 and 51, against the Alogi and Nicolaites, he places the Apocalypse and Gospel of S. John on the same level. He states that the Alogi rejected the Apocalypse, partly because there was no Church at Thyatira. He says (Hær. I. 33): "εἶπε πάλιν Γράψου τῷ ἀγγέλῳ τῆς ἐκκλησίας τῆ ἐν Θυατείροις, καὶ οὐκ ἐνὶ ἐκεῖ ἐκκλησία Χριστιανῶν ἐν Θυατείρῃ· πὼς οὖν ἔγραφε τῇ μὴ οὕσῃ." (See "Gospels as Historical Documents," Stanton, p. 209.)

He twice refers the date of the Apocalypse to Claudius. This singular departure from earlier writers, has caused general surprise, because Claudius Cæsar's date A.D. 52 is an impossible one. Dr. Hort points out, however, that Nero is often called in old inscriptions, Nero Claudius, or Claudius Nero Cæsar, or Claudius Nero.

It is very likely that Epiphanius, who was a great translator of books, found this rendering in old works of Hippolytus and other writers, and reproduced it.

Suetonius in his work on the "Twelve Cæsars" gives the title heading of Nero's reign as "Nero Claudius Cæsar." That was his official title. He was a member of the Claudian family. His uncle Claudius Cæsar, adopted him and gave him the name of Claudius.

Basil, The Great, Bishop of Cæsarea, who died in 379, quoted the Apocalypse as the work of S. John the Evangelist.

Tyconius, the Donatist of Africa c. 390, took the Book as symbolising the struggle between good and evil, and applied it to his own times. He explained it generally, in a spiritual sense. He was a præterist and had many followers.

Hilary of Poitiers, who died in 368, accepted the Apocalypse as canonical.

Ambrose of Milan, who died in 397, in his *De Virginibus* (iii), and *De Poenitentia* (c. 2) quoted the Book as Holy Scripture.

Ruffinus, a contemporary writer, does the same.

The Codex Clarvontanus does the same.

The Synod of Hippo, A.D. 393, in canon xxxvi, explicitly favours the divine authority of the Apocalypse (*Mansi. Nov. Coll. Council iii. p. 924*).

The Third Council of Carthage, A.D. 397, treats the Book as Canonical.

The Fifth Council of Carthage, A.D. 419, does the same.

Pope Innocent, in the year 405, sent a list of the Canonical scriptures to Exuporius, Bishop of Toulouse, in which he included the Apocalypse.

Augustine, Bishop of Hippo (d. 430), quoted the Apocalypse freely as Canonical Scripture. In his great work *De Civitate Dei* (A.D. 413-426), he explained its millenarian passages as referring to the peaceful expansion of the Church for a period of a thousand years. This, the Tyconian, and the true explanation, was well received. The genius of S. Augustine dazzled and impressed the age in which he lived. After him, millenarianism dwindled and disappeared.

S. Jerome, the greatest of the Latin Doctors of the Church, was a contemporary of S. Augustine. He undertook the revision of the Holy Scriptures at the request of Pope Damasus, and completed it by A.D. 385. He prepared himself for the task by the study of Hebrew, and executed it with the help of Hebrew scholars. He is practically the author of the Vulgate or Latin Bible. It is not certain, however, that he revised the Apocalypse.

He accepted the Apocalypse as the work of S. John the Evangelist, and placed it in the Canon of the New Testament. In Ep. iii. 4, he writes of it as Sacred Scripture, and in Ep. xxxi. 3, "The Saviour Himself is the Apocalypse of S. John says . . ." In his letter to Paulinus, A.D. 394, he says "The Apocalypse of John has as many mysteries as words." In his Epistle "Ad Dardanum," he shows that he knew of the campaign against the Apocalypse in the Greek Church, but that he preferred the testimony of the older writers. He says "Quod si eam (viz. the Epistle to the Hebrews) Latinorum consuetudo non recipit inter Scripturas canonicas, nec Græcorum.

quidem ecclesiae Apocalypsin eadem libertate suscipiunt; et tamen nos utrumque suscipimus, nequaquam hujus temporis consuetudinem, sed veterum scriptorum auctoritatem sequentes." By the combined action of S. Augustine and S. Jerome the Apocalypse was securely fixed in the Canon, as is abundantly proved by later testimonies.

The Decree of Gelasius, A.D. 494, placed the Apocalypse in the Canon.

Bede, Beatus, Cassiodorus, and Primasius, followed Origen and Tyconius, in mystical exposition. The Latin commentary of Primasius still exists.

Oecumenius, a Greek, Bishop of Tricca, in Thessaly, wrote a commentary, c. A.D. 600, which is still extant. He took Rome to be the sixth King, and Constantinople the seventh.

The Council of Constantinople, A.D. 692, admitted the Apocalypse to the Canon of Scripture.

Andreas, Bishop of Cæsarea, in Cappadocia (7th century) divided the Book into twenty-four parts, corresponding with the twenty-four Ancients in Rev. iv. 4. Each part he made into three chapters, in accordance with the threefold nature of man. These seventy-two parts have formed the basis of all subsequent divisions. Andreas believed in the spiritual character of the Book and allegorised to a great extent. But he explained parts of the Revelation, as a præterist, with reference to his own times. He was a convinced believer in the Antichrist exegesis. His work has left its mark on subsequent commentaries. He noticed that the early chapters of the Book had been interpreted by ancient writers, as referring to the destruction of Jerusalem under Titus, thus showing forth the Neronian tradition.

Berengaud, in the 9th century, adopted the Irenæan view that the Beast was Antichrist, and the Hippolytan view that the two witnesses were Enoch and Elias. But he identified "the ten horns" with the Barbarian Kings, who destroyed the Roman Empire. In this we begin to see the guidance of history.

Arethas, Bishop of Cæsarea, early in the tenth century compiled a scholia on the Apocalypse, in which he made great use of his predecessor, Andreas. His work is still extant, but the MSS. vary considerably. In his exegesis of Rev. vii. 4, he says, "When the Evangelist received the oracles the destruction in which the Jews were involved, was not yet inflicted by the Romans," showing that, following Andreas, he believed in the Neronian date.

Stephen Langton, Archbishop of Canterbury, when he was a Doctor of the University of Paris in the year 1225, divided the

Apocalypse into our present chapters, many of which follow the copious headings of Andreas.

Joachim of Flora, of the Friars Minor, wrote a commentary on the Apocalypse in the 13th century, in which he identified the wounded Beast with the Moslem Power, and in view of disorders in the Church in his own time, he identified Babylon with Papal Rome. John of Parma, General of the Order, 1247-57, a strong supporter of the rigorous party, shared these views. *The Liber Introductorius*, a collection of the writings of Joachim, was solemnly condemned by Pope Alexander IV., Nov. 1255.

The Albigenses and Waldenses, in France, in the same century, and for the same reason, viz. the scandalous lives of many of the Clergy, took a similar præterist view of the Apocalypse.

Then followed the "Black Death," a visitation plainly foretold in the Book of Revelation (R. ii. 23), whereby the Clergy were swept away from the greater part of Europe. The chaos resulting from this plague, together with the great Schism of the West, led to the troubles which resulted in the Reformation. Large branches were broken away from the Church; but there was not as yet a reformation in the parent stem. That came later with the counter Reformation.

The Reformation was an event of great importance in the elucidation of the Apocalypse.

Martin Luther at first denied the authority of the Apocalypse. The Rev. Moses Stuart, Professor of Sacred Literature in the (Protestant) Theological Seminary of Andover, Mass., says: "This Reformer, when he published his German translation of the New Testament, thrust the Apocalypse from the canon, and printed it merely in the way of an *Appendix*, and an apocryphal book. His main reasons were that the book was unintelligible, and that there was 'no Christ in it.' Subsequent critics, more keen-sighted in exegesis than Luther, found, or thought they had found, good reason for applying John's description of the beast to the Pope and his adherents. As the contest waxed warmer, Luther perceived the advantage of such an ally; and it was not long before consent was given to a reception of the Apocalypse. Thus the book was restored to its place of honour at the close of the canon, and John was converted into one of the most formidable assailants of the Romish camp." (Commentary on the Apoc. Vol. I, 206.) In England an extensive school of exegetes arose who assumed the Pope of Rome to be the scarlet woman *and* the beast! With this key to the mystery of the Apocalypse some writers ventured to prophesy the exact date of the end of the world. As their dates all

passed away without any disturbance of the usual course of events, their works are now discredited.

This polemical strategy gave rise to a flood of controversial literature on the subject of the Apocalypse. Many learned Catholics turned their attention to the Book and studied it *de novo*, on their own account.

Alcazar, a Jesuit of Seville (c. A.D. 1554), showed that the Apocalypse contained two themes, one a Jewish theme, and the other a pagan Roman theme, in which the troubles and triumphs of the Church, at different periods, are revealed.

Cornelius a Lapide, S.J. (c. A.D. 1625), wrote an exhaustive Latin commentary on the Apocalypse. He gave a synopsis of the opinions of almost all the principal writers on this subject, before his time. He quoted *Alcazar* freely, but did not adopt his opinions. He followed the Antichrist and mystic tradition and applied it extensively in his exegesis.

Grotius and Hammond (c. 1644) supported the ideas of *Alcazar*.

Holzhauser, a German Priest, who wrote in the year 1646, explained the Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia as addressed to the Seven Ages of the Universal Church. In other respects he followed a fanciful exegesis and the Antichrist tradition. He died, unfortunately, before completing his work, which stopped at Rev. xiv. 4.

Bossuet, the great Bishop of Meaux, a man trained in Hebrew, Greek, and Scriptural learning, wrote a book on the Apocalypse, about the year 1670, in which he placed the exegesis of *Alcazar* in such a clear and convincing light, that unprejudiced scholars everywhere admitted that the Roman theme related to the struggles of the early Church with Rome of the Cæsars. This led to a fresh inquiry as to the meaning of the number 666, usually ascribed to Antichrist. It was not till the nineteenth century that the great discovery was made, in Germany, that the number 666, in Hebrew "gematria" spelt *Καισαρ Νερον*, and that the alternative number 616 found in some of the oldest MSS., spelt *Nero Cæsar*, as written in Latin. This discovery at once solved the chief difficulty of the Apocalypse—the meaning of the Beast, and paved the way for an intelligible exegesis. We now know that S. John was writing about the Neronian persecution of his own time, and not about Antichrist.

Moses Stuart, an American Presbyterian Clergyman, before noticed, wrote a "Commentary on the Apocalypse," in the year 1845. He also was a Hebrew, Greek, Scriptural, and German scholar. His work is a monument of learning and of painstaking research. He presents us with the views of the German writers, "the higher critics," who did so much at

Tubingen, and elsewhere, during the 18th and 19th centuries to throw light on this subject. Moses Stuart strongly supported the Neronian date and the Authorship of S. John. He wrote the first volume and part of the second volume of his book, to vindicate these opinions. His exegesis is, however, conventional.

A. Harnack, D.D., wrote an article on the Apocalypse in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* (1883), in which he says:

“All impartial scholars are now agreed that in chapters xiii. and xviii. of the Apocalypse we must look for the key to the comprehension of the book, as well as to the question of the date of the composition. That the beast (xiii. 1 *et seq.*; xvii. 3 *et seq.*) is the Roman Empire, that the seven heads are seven emperors, that the woman (xvii. 3, 9) is the city of Rome, that the ten horns (xiii. 1; xvii. 3, 12 *et seq.*) are imperial governors—all this is now beyond dispute” (*Encyclopædia Britannica*, Revelation xx., p. 499).

Swete, H. B., D.D. Regius Professor of Divinity, Cambridge, published a book in 1906, “The Apocalypse of S. John,” an exhaustive work on the text of Revelation, with a valuable introduction and notes. He does not offer an English version of his own, but his apparatus criticus shows that he holds conservative views. His name appears frequently in this book.

Dr. Hort, of Cambridge, left a posthumous work, edited by Dr. Sandys of Oxford in 1908. It is very valuable for its scholarly introduction and apparatus criticus. Unfortunately it only goes as far as Chapter iii. of the Apocalypse.

In conclusion, it may be said that although 20th century writers are agreed as to the meaning of the Roman theme of the Apocalypse, there is still great divergence of opinion on other points. The Letters to the Seven Churches are still taken to refer to the local Churches of Asia. The meanings of the seals and trumpets in the first or Jewish theme, and of the vials in the Roman theme, are variously interpreted. There is no agreement as to the exact meaning of the millennium. There is a strong tendency to find Antichrist in the Book, and the tradition of the middle ages respecting the Domitian date of the Book, still lingers on.

III

HISTORIC NOTES

FOR centuries before the birth of Christ the monotheism of the Jews had eaten into the old pagan cults, and left them hollow and insincere. "Idols of gold and silver, and brass, and stone, and wood, which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk" (R. ix. 20), had multiplied to such an extent that they were discredited in the eyes of educated men. In the reign of Augustus the decadence of the old paganism was remarkable. Horace and Propertius tell us that cobwebs veiled the altars, that sacred images were blackened with smoke in crumbling shrines. Central temples, *foci* of religious life, were falling into decay. Jupiter Foretrius was unroofed, Juno Sospita, filthy and deserted. The world was ripe for a more reasonable cult of the Divine.

Then Christ appeared upon Earth, and Christianity began to spread over the Roman Empire. Satan baffled by the progress of the early Church and the decline of the old paganism, sought in Cæsar worship a new lease of his rule on earth. That is how the Roman Theme of Revelation begins (Ch. xii. xiii.). The Cæsars began to take themselves as Gods, and Cæsar worship, cunningly entwined with politics, came to the rescue of dying paganism. It became the settled policy of the Roman Senate, and hierarchy, to encourage the worship of the Cæsars with a view to the stability of the Empire, and the permanence of its religious orders. Cæsar worship was identified with the power and majesty of the Roman Empire. It swept aside all other cults, and reigned supreme in the hearts of those who were Imperialists. Sacrifice to the Emperor became the touchstone of loyalty as well as of religion.

This was no new or untried experiment. Rome borrowed Cæsar worship from the East. The Egyptians identified the Pharaohs with their Gods. Alexander the Great by his conquests in Egypt, became an Egyptian Divinity. His Greek subjects addicted to Hero worship, added him to the roll of their Gods. And so the evil spread to Hellenised Asia, where many Royal Divinities appeared, of whom the most noted

were Ptolemy I. "Soter," (Saviour), Antiochus IV. "Epiphanes" (God Manifest), and Seleucus, "Zeus Nikator" (Conquering God).

Julius Cæsar was placed amongst the Hero Gods, c. 45 B.C. With him the Roman line of Royal Gods began. His statue was put up in the temple of Quirinus, with the inscription "To the invincible God." Subsequently a temple was dedicated to him as Jupiter Julius, and a special priest offered sacrifice in his honour (Dion Cass. *xlvii.* 18, 33). His successor, Octavius Cæsar, was raised to the altar by slow and cautious steps.

About the year 27 B.C. Octavius accepted the title of Augustus, meaning "consecrated to God." His worship was not pressed at Rome. But the ultra loyal cities of the Province of Asia, were encouraged to erect temples to Augustus—Augusteum Cæsareum. Tacitus says, "A mortal man was adored and priests were appointed to pay him impious homage" (*Annals I.* 10). Tiberius, who followed, was honoured with temples erected to his Divinity in Asia. Then Rome itself became familiarised with the new Cult. From Ephesus, Smyrna, and Pergamos, the tide of Cæsar worship flowed back upon the capital. Caius Cæsar, (Caligula), who succeeded Tiberius believed himself to be a God, and tried to force the worship of his image upon the Jews in the Temple of Jerusalem. Claudius, who followed, erected a Temple to the "Divine Claudius" at Camuldonum = Colchester. Suetonius tells us that he was numbered amongst the Gods. Nero, the sixth, and reigning Cæsar when our history opens, was accorded divine honours both at Rome and in the Provinces. His worship was nowhere more prevalent than at Ephesus. Inscriptions found at Ephesus, show that he was worshipped as "Almighty God," and "Saviour." Such titles were given to the Roman Emperors in temple inscriptions, found at Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, and Sardis (*Fiddes Owens Coll. Hist. Essy., p.* 6).

The longest theme in the Apocalypse extending from the 12th to the 20th chapter is devoted to the exposure, condemnation, and punishment of Cæsar worship.

In S. John's day the Jews had considerable influence at Rome. Large colonies of Jews had long been settled in the chief cities of the Empire. At Alexandria there were over a million Jews. There were large Jewries at Rome. Julius Cæsar and Augustus sought to purchase their political aid by many favours. Josephus mentions twenty-eight decrees in favour of the Jews after B.C. 49 (*Ants. xiv.* 10). A special decree gave them the right to send their annual subsidy to the Temple of Jerusalem, and to use their own laws and customs (*Ants. xvi.* vi. 6).

Herod Agrippa, an Idumean Jew, was the friend of Drusus, and the companion of Caligula. A decree granting privileges to the Jews throughout the Empire, dated between A.D. 41 and 44, is headed "Tiberius Claudius Cæsar Augustus Germanicus, High Priest, Tribune of the people, chosen Consul the second time, ordains thus. Upon the petition of King Agrippa, and King Herod, who are persons very dear to me" (Ant. XIX. v. 3).

Some twelve years before Nero's persecution the Jews were so enraged at the rapid growth of Christianity in the City of Rome, that they opposed its teaching by force. S. Peter's open-air preaching in the Nomentian Way, was interfered with, by hostile crowds with noisy rioting. Rome would not tolerate public disturbances. Accordingly Claudius Cæsar issued an edict expelling the Jews from Rome. We find S. Paul at Corinth, meeting Aquila, one of the expelled Jews. "And finding a certain Jew, named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with Priscilla, his wife, because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome" (Acts xviii. 2). It seems that S. Peter was also expelled from Rome. He went there in the reign of Claudius, and preached the faith publicly to the Romans (Euseb. H. E. II. 14). In those days Christians were taught in the public cemeteries. Burial clubs and funeral associations, as well as graveyards, cemeteries and catacombs, were held sacred by the Romans, and enjoyed the privilege of sanctuary, down to the time of Valerian. As time wore on the cleavage between Jews and Christians in manners, appearance, faith, and practice became more and more apparent to the Roman world. As Gibbon remarks, The Jews were a *nation*; the Christians were a *sect* (D. and F. xvi.). In the Imperial City the great majority of the Christians were Romans, mostly plebeian freemen and slaves. S. Paul in his epistle to the Philippians, written from Rome, c. 62, says "All the saints (*ἀγιοι*) salute you, especially they that are of Cæsar's household" (iv. 22), showing that Christianity had many adherents even in Nero's palace.

On the death of Claudius, in the year 54, many of the Jews who had been expelled, returned to Rome, their enmity to Christianity sharpened by their banishment. They soon regained their former influence, and their position was strengthened by Nero's marriage in the year 62 with Poppæa Sabina, a friend of the Jews. When Felix was procurator of Judæa, Josephus went to Rome. He says, "I became acquainted with Alityrus, an actor of plays, and much beloved by Nero, but a Jew by birth, and through his interest became known to Poppæa, Cæsar's wife" (Life, sect. 3). The Jews lived under the protection of the Emperor, in their own quarters of the city.

On the 19th of July, A.D. 64, a great fire broke out in Rome in the direction of the Circus Maximus, and spread to the Forum, the Velabrum, and part of the Palatine. This conflagration lasted for six days, and was followed by another on the opposite side of the city which destroyed the Campus Martius, the Quirinal and the Viminal. Ten out of the fourteen districts of the city were burnt down. By a strange chance, the Porta Capena and the Trastevere, two Jewish quarters, escaped the fire!

When the Roman citizens recovered from the shock of this calamity and had time to reflect upon its cause, their suspicions fell on Nero. Knowing the character of the man, the conviction grew that Cæsar himself had set fire to Rome to make a new sensation, or that he might rebuild the city on a scale of grandeur suitable to his taste. Murmurs arose, and a sedition threatened the throne. Then Nero accused the Christians of having set fire to Rome, and incited the mob to violence against them.

It is noteworthy that Gibbon conjectures that the persecution of Nero was contrived by the Jews. He says:

“ Tacitus very frequently trusts to the curiosity or reflection of his readers to supply those intermediate circumstances and ideas which, in his extreme conciseness, he has thought proper to suppress. We may, therefore, presume to imagine some probable cause which could direct the cruelty of Nero against the Christians of Rome, whose obscurity, as well as innocence, should have shielded them from his indignation, and even from his notice. The Jews, who were numerous in the capital, and oppressed in their own country, were a much fitter object for the suspicions of the Emperor and of the people; nor did it seem unlikely that a vanquished nation, who already discovered their abhorrence of the Roman yoke, might have recourse to the most atrocious means of gratifying their implacable revenge. But the Jews possessed very powerful advocates in the palace, and even in the heart of the tyrant: his wife and mistress, the beautiful Poppæa, and a favourite player of the race of Abraham (Alityrus, the mime), who had already employed their intercession on behalf of the obnoxious people. In their room, it was necessary to offer some other victims, and it might easily be suggested that, although the genuine followers of Moses were innocent of the fire of Rome, there had risen among them a new and pernicious sect of Galileans, which was capable of the most horrid crimes. . . .” (D. and F., i. 16).

The Roman citizens would not have awaited Nero's orders if there had been any evidence in July that the Christians were guilty of setting fire to the city. They would have massacred them at once. Christians were already looked upon with disfavour as belonging to an atheistical and secret society, shunning

their fellow men. But a long delay took place, from July to November, before any steps were taken, showing that the criminal charge was an afterthought, born of Nero's danger and Jewish hatred of Christianity.

Suetonius and Dion Cassius both attribute the burning of Rome to agents employed by Nero for that purpose. Tacitus gives the following account of these events :

“ A suspicion prevailed that to build a new city and give it his own name was the ambition of Nero. Of the fourteen quarters into which Rome was divided, four only were left entire, three were reduced to ashes, and the remaining seven presented nothing better than a heap of shattered houses, half in ruins. . . . The next care was to propitiate the Gods. The Sibylline books were consulted and the consequence was that supplications were decreed to Vulcan, Ceres, and to Proserpine. . . . But neither these religious ceremonies, nor the liberal donations of the prince, could efface from the minds of men the prevailing opinion that Rome was set on fire by his own orders. The infamy of that horrible transaction still adhered to him. In order if possible to remove the imputation, he determined to transfer the guilt to others. For this purpose he punished with exquisite torture a race of men detested for their evil practices, by vulgar appellation commonly called Christians. The name was derived from Christ, who in the reign of Tiberius, suffered under Pontius Pilate, the Procurator of Judæa. By that event the sect of which he was the founder, received a blow, which, for a time, checked the growth of a dangerous superstition. But it revived soon after and spread with renewed vigour, not only in Judæa, the soil that gave it birth, but even the city of Rome, the common sink, into which everything infamous and abominable flows like a torrent from all quarters of the world. Nero proceeded with his usual artifice. He found a set of profligate and abandoned wretches, who were induced to confess themselves guilty, and on the evidence of such men a number of Christians were convicted. Not, indeed, on clear evidence of having set the city on fire, but rather on account of their sullen hatred of the whole human race. They were put to death with exquisite cruelty, and to their sufferings Nero added mockery and derision. Some were covered with the skins of wild beasts, and left to be devoured by dogs; others were nailed to the cross; numbers were burnt alive; and many covered with inflammable materials, were lighted up, to serve as torches during the night. For the convenience of seeing this tragic spectacle, the emperor lent his own gardens. He added the sports of the circus and assisted in person, sometimes driving a curricule, and occasionally mixing with the rabble in his coachman's dress. At length the cruelty of these proceedings filled every breast with compassion. Humanity relented in favour of the Christians. The manners of that people were no doubt of a pernicious tendency, and their crimes called for the hand of justice; but it was evident that they fell a sacrifice, not for the

public good, but to glut the rage and cruelty of one man only” (Anls. xv. 40-44).

Tacitus was about twelve years of age at the time of Nero's persecution. He was a man of good family, educated at Rome, in touch with those who knew the truth. His “Annals” were written in the reign of Trajan, when he had no interests to serve, save those of historic accuracy. He says that the Christians were convicted, not so much for the crime of setting fire to the city as for their hatred of the human race. *Odio humani generis convicti*. That is, for their “religion,” or the aspect of it most displeasing to Rome, their aloofness from the vicious pleasures of the world.

Mob violence would have exhausted itself before the lapse of many days, but under the guidance of Nero, the casual vengeance of the Romans was directed against the Christians as a sect. What began as a massacre ended in a persecution. Nero resolved to convert the Christians by force, or extirpate them from his capital. In this we may suspect the working of Jewish influences behind the throne, for zeal for religion was not one of Nero's characteristics. Christians were offered the choice of death or worship of the national Gods.

Persecution broke out at Rome in November, A.D. 64. It was the policy of the Romans in times of persecution to seize the Christian leaders first and make an example of them. S. Peter was at Rome, a well-known leader, hated by the Jews. He must have perished amongst the first. Bishop Le Camus, in his “Life of Christ,” assigns S. Peter's martyrdom to the year 64.

The horrors of Nero's persecution recoiled upon his own head. The cup of his iniquity was filled. He had already murdered his mother and his wife Octavia. In the year 65 he killed his wife Poppæa. “She died of a kick on her womb, which Nero gave her in a sudden passion, though she was then advanced in pregnancy” (Tacit. Anls. xvi. 6). The tyrant was hated by all the better class of Romans on account of his insatiable thirst for human blood. The formidable conspiracy of Piso broke out and had very nearly dragged Nero from the throne, but for the usual betrayals. In this conspiracy Seneca and Lucan the poet perished, and many others of the best blood of Rome.

In the year 66 the affair of Tiridates the Arsacid gave a temporary stay to the growing hatred of Nero. Tiridates came to Rome to receive at the hands of Nero the crown of the kingdom of Armenia. According to Dion Cassius, who was Consul in A.D. 220, Tiridates left Armenia with a suite of Armenian nobles on horseback, and rode all the way to the

Ionian and Illyrian Sea. He took nine months on this journey. The cities through which he passed were splendidly adorned, and received him with acclamation. The people furnished him with everything.

“Nero was then at Naples, and in that city, the eastern prince was admitted to his presence. The spectacle was magnificent. It served at once to gratify the pride of a Roman emperor, and for a time to soothe the affliction of the people. . . . Nero proceeded with a grand cavalcade to Rome, where the most splendid preparations were made for his reception. The whole city was illuminated and the houses decorated with garlands and laurel wreaths. The people crowded together from all quarters and rent the air with shouts and acclamations, while the emperor, with Tiridates and the Parthian nobility in his train, made his triumphal entry. A day was fixed for the coronation. Nothing could equal the pomp and splendour with which that ceremony was performed” (Tacit. App. to Anls. xvi. 2, Murphy).

The prodigious magnificence of the public spectacle is described by Suetonius, in “Nero,” 13. Pliny mentions the decorations of the theatre and the vast display of gold on that occasion, Lib. xxiii. 3. So does Dion Cassius, Lib. lxxiii. It was the chief event of the year 66, when S. John was sent to exile. It is referred to in the Apocalypse. In the year 67 Nero absented himself from Italy, and gathered laurels, by an unscrupulous use of power, at the Olympian games in Greece. He came back to Rome and was accorded a triumphal entry, and hailed as a God (Dion, “Nero”). In the meantime a storm had been gathering in Gaul. Julius Vindex, the Governor of a Province in Gaul, openly rebelled and called upon Galba, the Governor of Hither Spain, to assist the liberty of mankind by accepting the Imperial throne. As the result of this conspiracy, Nero found himself before long abandoned on all sides. He was condemned by the Senate. “With one voice they declared the tyrant, who had trampled on all laws human and divine, a public enemy, and by their sentence condemned him to suffer death” (Tacit. App. to Anls. xvi. 13, Murphy).

Nero fled to the villa of his freedman (Phaon) about four miles from Rome, and there died by the “sword.” “Nero seized his dagger and stabbed himself in the throat. The stroke was too feeble, Epaphroditus lent his assistance, and the next blow was a mortal wound” (Tacit. App. to Anls. xvi. 14, Murphy).

Josephus, who went to Rome in the train of Titus, two years later, says that “Nero, deserted by all his guards, ran away with four of his most trusty freedmen, and slew himself in the suburbs of Rome” (Wars iv. 9, 2). Dion Cassius gives the same account of Nero’s death, attributing it to the sword, his own or his attendant’s. See R. xiii. 10.

Nero's superlative wickedness made an extraordinary impression upon the men of his own and succeeding generations. It was commonly believed that there was something supernatural about him, and that he would come to life again and triumph over all his enemies. Many Christians thought he would return again as Antichrist. There is an allusion to this superstition in the Apocalypse.

We must turn now to the Jewish war which ran *pari passu* with these events. It ensued on the seditions and revolts of the year 66, when S. John was exiled to Patmos. Nero foreseeing a great war impending in Judæa, sent Vespasian, a general who had acquired fame in Britain, to take command of the Army in Judæa. Vespasian set out for the seat of war in the year 66.

He sent his son Titus to bring up the fifth and tenth legions from Alexandria, whilst he himself entered Syria, where he gathered the Roman forces, together with a considerable number of auxiliaries from the kings in that neighbourhood (Josephus, Wars III. i. 1). In the spring of 67 the Roman General flooded the Jewish land with troops (see Rev. xii. 15). First, Vespasian marched on the city of Gadara, which he captured. "He came then into it, and slew all the youth, the Romans having no mercy on any age whatsoever. . . . He also set fire, not only to the city itself, but to all the villas and small cities that were round about it" (Josephus, Wars III. vii. 1). Then he laid siege to Jotapata, a strong fortress where Josephus had gathered together his army. The siege of Jotapata stayed the tide of invasion for forty-seven days, when it was betrayed, and taken by Vespasian (see Rev. xii. 16). The inhabitants were slaughtered, with the exception of women and infants, who were led away captive, and the city and fortifications burnt down. Josephus was taken prisoner, and accompanied the Roman army to Jerusalem. In the meanwhile Simon, a Jew, with a large band of robbers, ravaged the country in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, and inflicted terrible woes upon the Jews.

Next the Roman legions destroyed Joppa and Taricheæ and Gamala. The city of Gischala was taken. From here one John of Gischala, the incarnation of wickedness, according to Josephus, managed to escape, with a band of robbers, to Jerusalem.

This John, gathered to himself the headstrong zealots, who were at feud with the pacific elders in Jerusalem. With their aid he seized upon the Temple, which he made his headquarters. He also appointed the high priest. From the Temple he waged incessant war upon the rest of Jerusalem,

carrying fire and sword throughout the city and polluting the Temple with every form of vice.

Vespasian marched to Antipatris, to Lydda and Jamnia, accepting the submission of these cities, and laying waste and burning the villages on the way. He destroyed Bethlethephon and the neighbouring places by fire, and captured Betaris and Caphartobas, villages of Idumea, and slew the inhabitants (see R. viii. 7).

He was about to march upon Jerusalem, when the death of Nero changed his plans. That was about the end of June 68, as Nero died on the 11th of June in that year. He, therefore, waited events.

At this time one Simon, a robber, was actively carrying on a civil war in Idumea. Driving that nation before him, he compelled the greater number to enter Jerusalem, which he encompassed with his army, so that he became a greater terror to the place than the Romans (Josephus, Wars IV. ix. 7). The people of Jerusalem, suffering death at the hands of John of Gischala and one Eleazar, who had separated from him, invited Simon to enter the city. He did so, and for a time the city was divided into three factions fighting against each other. Then all combined against the unfortunate inhabitants. The result of this fighting about the Temple is related by Josephus :

“For those darts that were thrown by the engines came with that force that they went over all the buildings, and the Temple itself, and fell upon the priests and those that were about the sacred offices ; insomuch that many persons who came thither with great zeal from the ends of the earth, to offer sacrifices at this celebrated place, which was esteemed holy by all mankind, fell down before their sacrifices themselves, and sprinkled that altar, which was venerable among all men, both Greeks and barbarians, with their own blood ; till the dead bodies of strangers were mingled together with those of their own country, and those of profane persons with those of priests, and the blood of all sorts of dead carcasses stood in lakes in the holy courts themselves. And now ‘O most wretched city, what misery so great as this didst thou suffer from the Romans ?’”

In the year 69 Vespasian was called to the throne. He left his son Titus to finish the war.

Titus began the siege of Jerusalem in the spring of 70. This had the effect of uniting all the rebel forces in Jerusalem. The resistance he encountered was so great that he built a wall round the city, with a view to reducing it by famine. Here we may note that at the feast of the passover A.D. 65 there were 3,000,000 Jews present in Jerusalem. Josephus says :

“Now of those that perished by famine in the city the number was prodigious, and the miseries they underwent were unspeakable; for if so much as the shadow of any kind of food did anywhere appear, a war was commenced presently; and the dearest friends fell a-fighting, one with another, about it, snatching from each other the most miserable supports of life. Nor would men believe that those who were dying had no food, but the robbers would search them when they were expiring, lest anyone should have concealed food in their bosoms, and counterfeited dying; nay, these robbers gaped for want, and ran about, stumbling and staggering along like mad dogs, and reeling against the doors of the houses like drunken men; they would also, in the great distress they were in, rush into the very same houses two or three times in one and the same day. Moreover, their hunger was so intolerable, that it obliged them to chew everything, while they gathered such things as the most sordid animals would not touch, and endured to eat them; nor did they at length abstain from girdles and shoes, and the very leather which belonged to their shields they pulled off and gnawed: the very wisps of old hay became food to some” (Wars VI. iii. 3). (See the “black horse,” R. vi. 5.)

In August A.D. 70 the Roman soldiers forced an entrance into the Temple, which was burnt down. The upper city was taken on the 7th September 70; then the whole of Jerusalem was given up to fire and slaughter. Many of the unfortunate Jews who survived the siege were put to death. The rest were sold into slavery, or taken to Rome to grace the triumph of Titus and the public spectacles of the amphitheatres (The second and third woes, R. xi. 14). The city was levelled with the ground. Thus perished after 600 years the Temple of the old law, the centre of true religion before the coming of Christ. It perished in the same month and on the same day, the 10th of August, on which the former Temple, of Solomon, was burnt by Nebuchadnezzar.

Later on the Jews managed to return in great numbers, and occupy the city again. In the course of time, before the close of Trajan's reign in 117, they felt themselves strong enough to rebel against Rome again. A second army of Roman legions descended upon them with fire and sword. When they had recovered from this punishment, their obstinacy again led them into rebellion, in the reign of Hadrian, A.D. 134. It was during this reign that one Barcochebas, calling himself the Messiah, gathered about him the remnant of the Jewish race. They flocked to his standard from all parts of Judæa.

We read in S. John's Gospel (v. 43): “I am come in the name of my Father, and you receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him you will receive.” Jesus said this to the Jews, who sought to kill Him. And so it happened,

Barcochebas, coming in his own name as a Messias, was received. He preached the gospel of rebellion, thinking to found that earthly kingdom which the Jews both longed for and expected. The consequence was a third and last catastrophe. Hadrian sent a large army against them, under the command of Tinnius Rufus and Julius Severus, who in the space of two years, 134 to 136, destroyed 985 towns and 50 fortresses. 580,000 Jews perished by the sword alone. Many more perished by fire, sickness, and famine. Those who escaped death were dispersed, and sold like cattle about the Empire. In no country were they afterwards greater strangers than in Judæa. A ploughshare was drawn over the consecrated Temple ground as a sign of perpetual interdiction.

After the destruction of Jerusalem by Hadrian, a new city, called Ælia, after the Emperor, Ælius Hadrian, was built upon its ruins. This was inhabited by pagans, also by Roman and Syrian Christians. Jews were not allowed to come within three miles of it for about three centuries. Tertullian informs us that they paid large sums to be permitted to come near and behold at a distance the ruins of their former city.

In the year 134, Marcus, a Gentile, was made Bishop of Jerusalem. The Church was then composed mainly of Gentile Christians, who were not affected by Hadrian's edict of expulsion. Its adherents were able to point out to S. Helena, the Mother of Constantine, the sites of the crucifixion and of the Holy Sepulchre; but they were too weak to prevent the Romans from covering them up with soil. Eusebius in his "Martyrs of Palestine," mentions Procopius, a Christian of Ælia, showing that Christians dwelt in Jerusalem up to the time of Constantine. (See "Acts of the Passion of Procopius.")

The Nazarene Church warned by the Revelation of S. John, fled from Jerusalem and the neighbouring parts of Judæa, to Pella, when the siege of Jotapata held back the forces of Vespasian. This Church was apparently a small body. Its movements are not noticed by historians. Epiphanius says in his book, "*de Ponderibus et Mensuris*," that the disciples of Christ, being warned by an angel, removed to Pella; and afterwards, when Hadrian rebuilt Jerusalem, and renamed it Ælia Capitolina, they returned thither.

The fall of Jerusalem, the destruction of the Temple and the dispersal of the Jews, constituted a religious upheaval (earthquake the Apocalypse calls it, R. xi. 13) of an extraordinary character. This was the event looked forward to and predicted by the prophets of the O.T. It was a reversal of the spiritual policy heretofore existing between God and man. The covenant with the Jews was finally broken, and replaced by the Kingdom

of Christ. Up to that time the Temple had been the chief place of worship frequented by our Lord and the Apostles. After that time Judaism was dropped and Christianity reigned supreme.

Gibbon saw the epoch making character of the event, when he drew attention to "The holy instruments of Jewish worship, the gold table and the gold candlestick with seven branches, originally framed according to the particular instructions of God Himself, which were placed in the sanctuary of His Temple . . . and ostentatiously displayed to the Roman people in the triumph of Titus" (D. and F., chapter xxxvi.). It is an event which enters largely into the subject of the Revelation. We shall look back upon it frequently from the pages of the Commentary.

When Nero died, civil wars broke out between pretenders to the throne, and the empire was deluged with Roman blood. Galba reigned but a few months. Otho, proclaimed Emperor by his legions, attacked Galba and slew him in the Forum. Then Vitellius, proclaimed emperor by the German legions, attacked Otho. Four considerable battles were fought between them, before Otho, defeated near Cremona, stabbed himself to death. After that Vespasian was hailed Emperor by his legions at Alexandria. He marched against Vitellius, defeated and slew him at the gate of Rome. Rome became a scene of slaughter, and the Capitol was reduced to ashes. All these things, which marked the beginning of the end of Rome, came to pass a few months after the Apocalypse was written. ("The things which must shortly come to pass," R. i. 1.) Vespasian was followed by his son Titus. This very remarkable man was known as "the delight of mankind." It is said of him that, having once passed a day without doing some good action, he said: "My friends, I have lost a day" (The star, R. viii. 10). In his reign the volcano in Mount Vesuvius was in violent action. The cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum were completely destroyed by streams of lava, and the greater part of Italy was covered with ashes. To this cause was attributed the great plague which devastated the country, and, it is said, carried off daily for a considerable time 10,000 persons in Rome alone (The "white horse," R. vi. 8).

Titus was followed by Domitian, the author of the second persecution, which lasted a short time, and ended with his death, in 96.

We have noticed that a casual remark of S. Irenæus—viz., that the Apocalypse was seen at the end of Domitian's reign, gave rise to an opinion in the Middle Ages, that there was a great persecution in Domitian's reign, and that S. John was exiled to Patmos at that time.

The Domitian persecution is a question of first-class importance as regards the date and exegesis of the Apocalypse. If it can be shown that the Domitian persecution was not severe and did not reach Ephesus, where S. John dwelt, it will be evident that the medieval interpreters of S. Irenæus, read into his casual remark, a meaning that he did not intend to convey. Fortunately for our enquiry this period of history is illuminated by the writings of many contemporary historians. Tacitus, who was Consul in the year 97, wrote a "History" of the Emperors, and "Annals" of their reigns, Suetonius who was afterwards Chief Secretary to the Emperor Hadrian, and who was a frequenter of the law courts of Domitian, wrote "The lives of the twelve Cæsars," from Julius Cæsar to Domitian. Juvenal was preparing his "Satires" on the vicious state of Roman society at the end of the first century. Quintilian was teaching rhetoric at Rome. Martial was publishing his poems. Josephus was resident at Rome, publishing his "Wars of the Jews" and other books. Pliny, the younger, was President of the military tribunal at Rome, and Clemens Romanus the oldest of the Fathers of the Church was Bishop of Rome. He has left us in his Epistle to the Corinthians his view of the Domitian persecution. All of these contemporary writers give evidence on the events of that time, the cumulative effect of which is strongly against the view that Domitian persecuted the Church.

Titus Flavius Domitian was the younger son of Vespasian. He was a member of the Flavian family, specially chosen by God to execute His judgments on the Jewish race. His father Vespasian and his brother Titus were instrumental in the fulfilment of the prophecies of the Old Testament. They were, both of them, remarkably good men, as good men were reckoned in those days. Domitian was destined in a way to complete the punishment of the Jews, by fleecing them of their money. One would not expect any member of this family raised up to the throne of the Cæsars, with the divine mission of punishing the Jews, to persecute also the children of the Kingdom of Christ.

Domitian succeeded his brother Titus, A.D. 81. For many years he reigned wisely. He was of studious and literary tastes and appointed a college and priests of Minerva. He erected temples to the Gods. He reformed the administration of justice both at home and in the provinces. Suetonius, who was a young man at the time, gives him a very good character at this period of his reign, in his "Lives of the XII. Cæsars" (Dom.). He was generous as well as just. He refused estates left to him as legacies by those who had children. He put a stop to treasury prosecutions got up by informers, and discouraged their vicious trade. Suetonius tells us that magistrates and

governors of provinces never were so just and impartial as they were in Domitian's day. Quintilian calls him "*sanctissimus censor*" (Inst. Orat. iv. Pro.). His vigilance extended to the morals of the people. He interdicted the making of eunuchs and the worst forms of vice. He banished vestal virgins who were peccant, and buried alive one, more profligate than the rest. Martial congratulates him on restoring the temples to the Gods, and morals to the people. Suetonius says that he restored at great expense the Libraries which had been destroyed by the fire, and sent scribes to Alexandria to copy the books in the great Library there (Dom.).

With all this solicitude for public rectitude and morality, Domitian was, in private life, according to Tacitus and Juvenal, a debauchee. History, however, tells the same tale of other great men, who had not the excuse of paganism.

Like his predecessors on the throne, Domitian was more or less impressed with the idea of his divinity. But Mommsen holds that Aurelian was the first Emperor to assume divinity, officially.

In the year 93 an event took place which seems to have completely altered his character. Antonius Saturninus, a general who commanded the legions in Upper Germany, revolted with two legions and was joined by the Germans. He was defeated by a Roman army under Norbanus. Treasonable correspondence involving noble families at Rome was found upon him. These incriminating papers are said to have been destroyed by Norbanus (Dion. "Dom."). But Domitian could not forget that Nero, Galba, Otho, and Vitellius, had lost their thrones and lives through similar revolts. He suspected the Roman nobles about him of a plot against his throne and life, and was cast into a paroxysm of rage and fear. He shut himself up in his palace and walked alone in a marble gallery, whose black walls, highly polished, reflected objects behind him. He became the prey of informers who saw their opportunity had come again, and multiplied themselves accordingly. He put to death a great many of the senators. Amongst them Civica Cerealis, Pro-Consul of Africa, and Salvidienus Orfitus, and Acilius Glabrio, while in exile, on pretence of their designing an insurrection (Suet. Dom.). Glabrio, who was Consul in the year 91, is, for no apparent reason, claimed as a Christian. Ælius Lamias was put to death for old and harmless jests; Junius Ruficus for publishing a treatise in praise of Thræseas and Helvidius; the son of Helvidius, a friend of Tacitus, for a stage allusion to divorce. Salvinus perished for having celebrated the birthday of his Uncle Otho; Metius Pomposianus because he was born under a constellation which promised him

a throne; Lucullus, for having invented a lance which he called by his own name; Flavius Sabinus, because a herald, by mistake, proclaimed him Emperor instead of Consul; Epaphroditas, Domitian's secretary, because he was one of those who fled with Nero, and helped him to kill himself (Suet. Dom., Dion. LXVII. 2). Many others were put to death with torture, in consequence of the revolt, amongst these the prætorian prefects in the time of their magistracy. Tacitus says that in the latter end of his reign Domitian, not at intervals, but by one stroke, as it were, aimed at destroying the commonwealths. These actions wear the appearance of having been caused by the madness of fright. Informers were everywhere. Men feared to speak or even to listen in public. All those who could do so abandoned Rome and fled to country villas.

One of Domitian's earliest victims was his cousin Flavius Clemens, who had been recently his colleague in the Consulship. This man stood so near the throne that his sons were adopted by Domitian as his successors, for he was childless. Flavius Clemens was put to death, suddenly, without trial, according to Suetonius.

This is the testimony of Suetonius. *Denique Flavium Clementem, patruelem suum, contemptissimæ inertiae (cujus filios, etiam tum parvulos, successores palam destinaverat, et abolito priore nomine, alterum Vespasianum appellari jusserat, alterum Domitianum), repente, ex tenuissima suspicione, tantum non in ipso ejus consulatu interemit (Dom.).*

Nothing is known of what became of these two boys, re-named by Domitian, Vespasian and Domitian. But Domitilla the wife of Flavius Clemens, Domitian's sister's child, was banished to Pandataria, one of the Pontian Islands, in the Mediterranean Sea: a place reserved for the peccant ladies of the families of the Cæsars. Julia the daughter of Augustus, Agrippina, the widow of Germanicus, and Octavia the wife of Nero, were previously banished there.

Here another witness comes in, Dion Cassius, who was born in Bithynia, about A.D. 155. He rose to a high position in the Roman world, becoming Senator in 180, Consul in 220, and again in 229. He wrote a history of Rome, about a hundred years after these events, in which he says the pretext made use of to condemn Clemens was that he and his wife Flavia Domitilla were guilty of atheism. To those on the spot it appeared that the suspicion of treason was sufficient, and it probably was at the first period of Domitian's outburst. But there is evidence that Domitian was raising money from his Jewish subjects by extortion, and from wealthy Romans on the plea that they were Judaisers.

Dion Cassius, who wrote in Greek, uses the expression, *ἐγκλημα ἀθέοτητος*—"the accusation of Godlessness." He says that many were punished who had embraced the custom of the Jews—*τὰ τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἤθη*.

To understand the real significance of this statement we must look into the condition of Domitian's exchequer. He had increased the pay of the soldiers and embarked on a vast programme of public building at Rome, which exhausted his ordinary revenues. He rebuilt the Capitol, burnt down in the Civil Wars. He erected a temple to Jupiter Custos. According to Plutarch he spent twelve thousand talents, about £2,500,000, in gilding this temple. He built the forum of Nerva, and finished the Temple of the Divine Augustus, begun by Livia. He erected a Temple in honour of his father Vespasian, and his brother Titus, in the year 94, the columns of which still stand on a lofty platform. The Curia Julia which was damaged by fire in Nero's time, he repaired. The arch of Titus was probably built by Domitian, as Titus is given on it the title of *Divus*, showing that he was dead. The huge Colosseum, begun by Vespasian in the year 72, was finished by Domitian. The Stadium of Domitian was another of his great works. The Palace of Domitian, one of the finest which covered the Palatine Hill, was begun by Vespasian and finished by Domitian. Its pavements were made of serpentine, porphyry, and other precious marbles. From the Triclinium opened out a Peristyle, covering an area of 3,600 square yards. Columns of *porta-santa* formed a colonnade around it; and the walls of black marble were so highly polished that they reflected objects, like a mirror. To complete these works, Suetonius tells us, estates of the living and the dead were seized upon, on any pretext. "Above all others the Jews were miserably mauled by the confiscation of their estates." Writing as an eye-witness, he says that rich Jews who endeavoured to save their money by denying their faith were examined as to the evidence of circumcision, which settled the question for them. But the poorest Jews were not exempt. Domitian revived and rigorously enforced against all Jews the law of his father Vespasian, which diverted to the State Coffers, the ancient temple tribute of a didrachma, formerly sent by every adult Jew annually to Jerusalem. This tribute, about two shillings of our money, was exacted even from the poorest, with merciless rapacity. To this we will return.

Some pretext was required for fleecing those Romans who were conspicuous by reason of their wealth. And here the accusation of following Jewish customs was made by informers, a class of people who made their living by this ancient form of

black-mail. The accusation of Godlessness was brought against the Jews because they were monotheists, and would not worship the Gods of Rome. The same charge was brought against Christians. Some fifty years later, Justin Martyr, in his "Apologia," wrote, "They call us Atheists" (Apol. ii. 3). There is evidence that many cultured Romans in the first century were attracted by the monotheism of the Jews. In Nero's time Queen Helena, of Adiabene, travelled from Assyria to Jerusalem to be instructed in the religion of the Jews. Josephus says that he wrote his "Antiquities of the Jews" partly for the instruction of a noble Roman, Epaphroditas by name, who was inquiring into the religion and customs of the Jews (Pref. to Antiqs.). In the conclusion of his second book, "Against Apion," written after the death of Domitian, Josephus states,

"Nay further the multitude of mankind itself have had a great inclination, for a long time, to follow our religious observances; for there is not any city of the Grecians, nor any of the barbarians, nor any nation whatsoever, whither our custom of resting on the seventh day, has not come; and by which our fasts, and lighting up lamps, and many of our prohibitions as to our food, are not observed" (Sect. 40).

These things were novelties and innovations in the eyes of Rome, and Roman families which adopted them were sufficiently guilty in the eyes of the Emperor, who was Pontifex Maximus, to deserve punishment. They formed an adequate pretext for extortion, confiscation of estates, and even death itself, in a season of despotic violence. Lying informers were at work, and many noble Roman families suffered in one or other of these ways. Wealthy Jews were despoiled of their property, and the tax-gatherers exacted the Temple tribute from Jews and Christians alike. Indeed the Christians of the lower classes were entirely at their mercy. They were for the most part freedmen and their families, or slaves. They rested on the Lord's day, abstained from sacrificial meats, followed private forms of worship, and refused to worship the national Gods. Pagans by birth they appeared to be extreme Judaisers, and nothing could save them from plunder and even death itself but prompt apostasy. There is evidence in the Epistle of Pope Clement to the Corinthians, that a great many of them died for the faith.

Judging from contemporary history, however, it does not appear that these accusations had anything to do with the wholesale slaughter of noble Romans which took place after the discovery of the conspiracy of Saturninus. Nor were they the result of a religious persecution aimed at Christians.

Dion Cassius agrees with Suetonius in fixing on Domitian a special animus against the Jews.

Josephus, the historian of the Jews, then living at Rome, was one of the accused. He was a well-known Jew who had been general of the Jewish armies in Judæa. Taken captive by Titus, he had rendered him certain services as an intermediary between the hostile armies. He had also predicted the elevation of Vespasian to the purple. He was brought to Rome by Titus, and established as a guest in the suburbs. He was made a Roman citizen by Vespasian and received a pension from him and grants of land in Judæa. He says that Domitian who succeeded (Titus) "still augmented his respects to me. For he punished those Jews that were my accusers; and gave command that a servant of mine, who was a eunuch, and my accuser, should be punished. He also made that country I had in Judæa, tax free" (Life of Flav Jos., Sect. 76).

A fragment of Hegesippus, written about A.D. 150, preserved by Eusebius, seems to show that Domitian had no animus against Christians as such. It came to his knowledge that descendants of the Royal House of David were still living in Palestine. He sent for them.

"He asked them whether they were of David's race, and they confessed that they were. He then asked them what property they had, or how much money they owned. And both of them answered that they had between them only nine thousand denarii (about £400), and this not in silver but in the value of a piece of land, containing only thirty-nine acres, from which by their own labour, they supported themselves and paid taxes. Then they showed their hands, exhibiting their hard muscles and their horny hands, as evidence of toil. When asked also respecting Christ and his Kingdom, what was its nature and when and where it would appear? They replied that it was not a temporal nor an earthly kingdom, but celestial and angelic. That it would appear at the end of the world, when coming in glory Christ would judge the living and the dead and give to every one according to his works. Upon which Domitian despising them, made no reply, but treating them with contempt as simpletons, commanded them to be dismissed, and by a decree ordered the persecutions to cease" (Euseb. H. E. iii. 20).

Hegesippus apparently believed in a Domitian persecution of Christians. But these grand-children of S. Jude were confessed Christians. If their offence was Christianity and if Domitian was looking for Christian blood, the last thing one would expect him to do would be to dismiss them. But seeing that he could get no money out of them and that their claims to a throne were visionary, he sent them home. That was not the way of persecuting Emperors. It tallies very well how-

ever with the other evidence before us that Domitian's obsessions were dynastic, anti-Jewish, and monetary, but not anti-Christian. Persecuting Emperors aimed at the total suppression of Christianity. And the more important the witnesses were, the more anxious were the Emperors to procure their conversion to pagan worship. The Christian descendants of the Royal House of David would have been put to death; but not till every means had been exhausted of persuading them by kindness or the reverse, to offer sacrifice to the Gods.

Tertullian agrees with Hegesippus in saying that persecution ceased before the end of Domitian's reign. He says: "Domitian was in fact a limb of Nero, for cruelty. But I think because he had yet some remains of reason he very soon suppressed the persecution, even recalling those whom he had exiled" (Euseb. H. E. iii. 20). Tertullian wrote at the end of the second century and beginning of the third. He followed Hegesippus. Eusebius, whose Ecclesiastical History was written about the beginning of the fourth century, quotes them both. It is probable that all these writers took their information from the Epistle of Clemens Romanus to be noticed presently. They supply no real evidence of persecution.

The contemporary historians Tacitus and Suetonius who deal very fully with Domitian's reign never once mention Christian persecution. And this is all the more remarkable as they were in no way withheld from doing so by any sentiment of shame, or other cause of reticence. Tacitus has left us a long and harrowing account of Nero's persecution, which occurred in his youth. He wrote his "Annals" about the year 115, long after the end of Domitian's reign. In his account of Nero's persecution, he shows a great antipathy to Christians; but at the same time a strange want of familiarity with their creed. He calls the Christians of Nero's persecution "A race of men detested for their evil practices, commonly called Christians" (Anls. xv. 44). He looks back upon the Christians as a sect of the past and not as one holding a position of interest, in the eye of the public of his own day. He was a keen historian of his own times. Yet he not only never mentions Christian persecution in the reign of Domitian, but he writes of Christians as a curious and little known sect, in language which reminds one of Pliny the Younger's letter to Trajan, to be noted presently.

Suetonius in his "Life of the Twelve Cæsars," says of Nero's reign: "The Christians too were severely punished, a sort of people given up to a new and mischievous superstition." But although he attended the Courts of Justice in Domitian's reign and witnessed the fleecing of the Jews, he makes no mention of

Christian persecution. His language about the Christians, too, has a curious ring of aloofness about it.

When the stress of Domitian's exactions fell upon the poorer classes, the popular sentiment of Rome turned against him. The outraged nobles took courage to protect themselves. Towards the end of the year 96, Domitian meditated a cruel act of treachery. He included his wife Domitia, Norbanus, his faithful general, Patronius Secundus and Parthianus, in what proved to be a final list of the proscribed. This came to the knowledge of Domitia and the others condemned with her. In consequence, Domitian was assassinated in his own room by Stephanus, a freedman of Flavius Clemens, on the 18th Sept., A.D. 96. Juvenal puts it on record, that "when the common people were assailed, Domitian who had slain so many nobles with impunity, was himself overthrown" (Sat. iv. 150). His edicts were repealed and his exiles recalled by his successor, Nerva (Suet. Dom. 17, Pliny Epist. iv. 22).

We now come to the testimony of Clemens Romanus, postponed to this point because it is not certain whether it was given before or after Domitian's death.

The only evidence we have of persecution in Domitian's reign is found in the Epistle written by Clemens Romanus, Bishop of Rome, who is believed to have resided in the city in the period under review. He was the fourth Pope.

He received a petition from the Church at Corinth, in the year 96, asking him to put a stop to dissensions which were injuring that Church. There is no mention of persecution at Corinth in his Epistle. When persecution falls, dissensions cease. Owing to the panic at Rome, there was a long delay in answering the Corinthians. Clemens accounted for the delay by referring to "sudden and repeated calamities and reverses" at Rome. He deals with the religious questions before him, and incidentally refers to the martyrdom of SS. Peter and Paul, which he introduces thus, "Let us come to those champions who lived very near our time. Let us set before us the noble examples which belong to our generation." After mentioning the deaths of the two great Apostles, he goes on to say, "Unto these men of holy lives was gathered a vast multitude of the elect who through many indignities and tortures, being the victims of jealousy, set a brave example among ourselves." This refers to Nero's persecution. He continues: "We are in the same lists, and the same contest awaits us." These last words are taken to mean that Domitian was at that time persecuting the Church.

Taken by itself, the Epistle of Clements to the Corinthians would lead to the conclusion that persecution had broken out

or was expected at Rome. The Corinthians took that view and spread the alarm of persecution to the East. But taken in connection with what we know of Domitian's reign, it is likely that Pope Clement anticipated persecution when the stress of Domitian's exactions fell upon the lower orders of Rome, and poor Christians as well as Jews were tortured to death. Clement seems to have belonged to the class affected. "Probably he was a freedman, or the son of a freedman of the Emperor's household, which included thousands or tens of thousands" (Don. Chapman, Encyc. Cath.). The date of this Epistle is very important. "It is now universally acknowledged, after Lightfoot, that it was written about the last year of Domitian (Harnack); or immediately after his death in 96 (Funk)," (Dom. Chapman, Encyc. Cath.). As Domitian died in September, 96, and his edicts were at once repealed, it may be assumed that the religious persecution which Clemens awaited, never came to pass.

It will be noted that Clemens Romanus does not mention the names of Flavius Clemens or Acilius Glabrio, who have since been claimed as Christians. He goes back to the time of Nero to find examples of martyrdom in his own generation. He himself survived Domitian and lived till the third year of Trajan. It is evident therefore that such persecution as there was in his day, was not aimed at the chief witnesses to Christianity, as in other persecutions. In the tranquil reign of Nerva, which followed that of Domitian, Clemens might have put on record the names of the more distinguished martyrs of his own time. But he did not do so. Neither in the martyrology of S. Jerome, nor in either of the *Depositiones* of the year 354, do we find the name of Flavius Clemens, or any other Domitian martyr. On the whole, the evidence of Clemens Romanus, is against the view that Domitian directly persecuted the Church.

A very important witness comes before us now, Pliny, the Younger, who lived through the Domitian reign of terror. He was an acute lawyer, famous as a pleader in the courts of the *Centumviri*, in the Julian basilica, in the Senate, and in public prosecutions. His abilities were recognised by frequent promotion. He was made a Senator in the year 82, Quaestor, in 89, Tribune in 91, and Prætor, by Domitian, in 93. In 94 Domitian made him President of the Military Tribunal. He was at Rome, holding this official position, when Flavius Clemens and other great men were put to death. He was amongst the number of those who retired before the end of Domitian's reign, to the obscurity of a country villa. Amongst the papers of the deceased Emperor, was found an information against Pliny, signed by Metus Carus, a noted informer.

Pliny and Tacitus were great friends. Helvedius, a friend of Tacitus, was put to death by Domitian on the accusation of Publicius Cortus, a very influential informer. After the accession of Nerva, Pliny resolved to avenge this outrage. He accused Publicius before the Senate and had him suspended from his office and deprived of further promotion. These incidents reveal the real character of Domitian's persecution.

In the year 100, Trajan made Pliny Consul, and eleven years later sent him to Bithynia as Governor of the Province. He found in Bithynia numerous persons calling themselves Christians, against whom accusations were laid by informers. As the accusation and crime of Christianity were new to him, he wrote the following letter to Trajan :

SIR,

"It is my constant method to apply myself to you for the solution of all my doubts, for who can better reply to my hesitancy or instruct my ignorance. I have never been present at the examination of Christians; therefore I am ignorant of the nature and extent of the punishment due to them, and the judicial proceedings. Nor are my doubts small whether there be not a distinction to be made between the ages, and whether tender youth ought to have the same punishment with strong men? Whether there be not room for pardon on repentance? or whether it may not be an advantage to one that has been a Christian, that he has forsaken Christianity? Whether the bare name, without any crimes besides, or the crimes adhering to that name, be punishable? In the meantime I have taken this course about those who have been brought before me as Christians. I asked them whether they were Christians or not? If they confessed that they were Christians, I asked them again, and a third time, mingling threatenings with the questions. If they persevered in their confessions, I ordered them to be executed; for I did not doubt but, let their confession be of any sort whatever, their positiveness and inflexible obstinacy deserved to be punished. There have been some of this mad sect whom I took notice of in particular as Roman citizens, that they might be sent to that city. After some time, as is usual in such examinations, the crime spread itself, and many more cases came before me. An accusation was sent to me, though without an author, containing many names. These denied that they were Christians now, or ever had been. They called upon the Gods and supplicated to your image, which I caused to be brought to me for that purpose, with frankincense and wine; they also cursed Christ; none of which things, it is said, can any of those who are really Christians, be compelled to do; so I thought fit to let them go. Others of them that were named in the accusation said they were Christians, but presently denied it again; that indeed they had been Christians, but had ceased to be so, some three years, some many more; and one there was that said he had not been so these twenty years. All these worshipped your image and the images of

our Gods ; these also cursed Christ. However, they assured me that the main of their fault or of their mistake, was this : That they were wont on a stated day to meet together before it was light, and to sing a hymn to Christ, as to a God, alternately ; and to oblige themselves by a sacrament not to do anything that was ill ; but that they would commit no theft, or pilfering or adultery ; that they would not break their promises, or deny what was deposited with them, when it was required back again ; after which it was their custom to depart, and to meet again at a common but innocent meal, which they had left off upon that edict which I published at your command, wherein I had forbidden any such conventicles. These examinations made me think it necessary to inquire by torment what the truth was ; which I did of two servant maids, who were called *Deaconesses* : but still I discovered no more than that they were addicted to a bad and extravagant superstition. Hereupon I have put off my further examinations, and have recourse to you, for the affair seems to be well worth consultation, especially on account of the number of those that are in danger ; for there are many of every age and every rank and of both sexes, who are now and hereafter likely to be called to account and to be in danger. For this superstition is spread like a contagion, not only into cities and towns, but into country villages also, which yet there is reason to hope may be stopped and corrected. To be sure the temples which were almost forsaken begin already to be frequented, and the holy solemnities which were long intermitted, begin to be revived. The sacrifices begin to sell well everywhere, of which very few purchasers had of late appeared : whereby it is easy to suppose how great a multitude of men may be amended if place for repentance be admitted."

The most important part of this letter from the point of view of our enquiry, lies in its opening sentences :

"Sollenne est mihi, Domine, omnia, de quibus dubito, ad te referre. Quis enim potest melius vel cunctationem meam regere, vel ignorantiam instruere? Cognitionibus de Christianis interfui nunquam, idio nescio, quid et quatenus aut puniri soleat, aut quaeri."

It is probable that Pliny in his dealings with the Christians of Bithynia was acting under the authority of the institutes of Nero, still extant, against Christianity. But of recent proceedings against them, he was ignorant. *Cognitiones* was a legal term referring to proceedings before the Senate. On this letter Gibbon makes the following fair comment :

"Pliny had never assisted at any judicial proceedings against the Christians, with whose name alone he seems to be acquainted ; and he was totally uninformed with regard to the nature of their guilt, the method of their conviction and the degree of their punishment. . . . We may assure ourselves that when he accepted the government of Bithynia there were no general laws or decrees of the Senate in force against Christians . . . and that whatever proceed-

ings had been carried on against Christians, there were none of sufficient weight and authority to establish a precedent for the conduct of a Roman magistrate" (D. and F., I. xvi.).

We may go beyond that and say that Pliny could not have written this letter if Domitian's outbreak had been directed against Christians in the way of religious persecution. He was an able lawyer and had been appointed Prætor, or Chief Magistrate of Rome by Domitian. He was present there when Flavius Clemens, and the other victims of Domitian's fury were slain. If their crime had been the profession of Christianity, Pliny would have known all about the nature of the crime, the legal proceedings in connection with it, and its punishments. His ignorance of these matters is clear proof that Domitian's persecutions were not levelled at Christianity.

Trajan's answer to Pliny's enquiry discloses the fact that no fixed laws were at that time in existence against Christians. Trajan wrote :

" MY PLINY,

" You have taken the method which you ought in examining the causes of those that had been accused as Christians, for indeed no certain and general form of judging can be ordained in this case. These people are not to be sought for ; but if they be accused and convicted, they are to be punished ; but with this caution, that he who denies himself to be a Christian and makes it plain that he is not one, by supplicating to our Gods, although he had been so formerly, may be allowed pardon on his repentance. As for anonymous informations, they ought to have no place in any accusation whatever, for that would be a thing of very ill example, and not agreeable to my reign."

This rescript of Trajan's became the law as affecting Christians until the time of Marcus Aurelius, who was an active persecutor of the Church.

Neither in Greece, nor in Bithynia, do we find a trace of Domitian's persecution. In the reign of Marcus Aurelius, 161-180 A.D., when Servilius Paulus was Proconsul of Asia, Melito, Bishop of Sardis, wrote to the Emperor a letter (referred to by Eusebius in H. E. iv. 26) protesting against the severe persecution ravaging Asia. His Asia comprised the great cities of Asia Minor, Ephesus, Pergamos, and the rest, in which group Sardis was situated.

Writing officially to the Emperor Aurelius, who had enacted fresh laws against the Church, he denies that there had been any persecutions in Hellenised Asia, before his time. Aurelius had the official records of previous reigns in his possession. But, apparently, there was no record of persecution in Asia Minor.

In recent years Roman Archæology has thrown some fresh light on Domitian's persecution. The cemetery of Domitilla, one of the largest and oldest of the Roman Catacombs, still stands visible on the Via Ardeatina. Its spacious vestibule and wide halls show the wealth of its owners. As Northcote and Brownlow remark, "It shows the sense of liberty and security under which it was erected" (I. 126).

It may have been built by Domitilla on her release and return from Pandataria, in the reign of Nerva, to contain the remains of Flavius Clemens. It bears her name. De Rossi and others have thoroughly investigated the contents of this Catacomb. There is nothing in it to recall the Domitian persecution. On the contrary it appears that it was called for many years the cemetery of Nereus and Achilles, in honour of the first martyrs who were buried in it. These two men were not Domitian martyrs. They were servants of Domitilla, who were put to death in Trajan's reign.

We have seen that there is no record of Domitian's persecution in the early martyrologies. The catacombs of Rome tell the same tale. Acilius Glabrio, the supposed Christian, is said to be interred in the Catacomb of S. Priscilla, on the Via Salaria. De Rossi found there, the place of interment of the line of the Acilii. It included "not only consuls and magistrates of the highest order, but also priests and priestesses, and even children, who were members of the idolatrous college, to which only patricians and their sons were privileged to belong (Allard, Ten Lectures, p. 191). There was no evidence there of Glabrio's Christianity. In the cemetery of S. Nicomedes on the Via Nomentana there is the *loculus* of the saint, said to be a Domitian martyr, by Alban Butler, who refers us to the Acts of SS. Nereus and Achilleus, Trajan's martyrs.

The fact is the Domitian martyrs were poor men, who were buried without ceremony, anywhere. There was no reason for concealment. The bodies of martyrs were given up to their friends and they could bury them or burn them, as they chose. The slaves and freedmen of Domitian's day, reaped the laurels of Domitian's persecution. But few men besides the martyrs themselves and Clemens Romanus, Bishop of Rome, thought that there was a persecution.

There is nothing in this history to justify the conclusion that S. John was exiled to Patmos in Domitian's reign.

Nerva, who succeeded Domitian, repealed his edicts. He reigned but a few months and passed the sceptre on to his adopted son Trajan. Trajan permitted rather than encouraged persecution. He was involved in Parthian wars which have been described as brilliant failures. A revolt of the Jews at this

period, characterised by brutal massacres in Cyprus, where 240,000 men are said to have been put to death, led to retaliatory massacres, in which large numbers of Jews perished. Trajan was followed by Hadrian, 117-138 A.D. His exterminating war on the Jews has been related. He was followed by Antoninus Pius (138-161 A.D.) who took the part of the persecuted Christians.

It is possible that persecutions of a sporadic and local kind took place from time to time, after the reign of Trajan, whose rescript remained in force.

Marcus Aurelius succeeded Antoninus (160-180 A.D.). He is said to be the author of the fourth persecution. In the year 174, his army, caught in the passes of the Bohemian mountains, was saved from dying of heat and thirst by the prayers of the twelfth legion composed of Christians. A severe thunderstorm brought coolness and water to the Romans and dismayed the enemy, who were beaten. The twelfth got the name of the "thundering legion." Dion Cassius mentions this event and it is recorded on the Antonine pillar at Rome. It put a stop to persecution for a time. The next Emperor to claim attention is Septimus Severus (193-211), author of the fifth persecution. In the year 202 he issued a new edict against Christians, who were very severely persecuted, especially in Africa. Christianity had spread so greatly at that time that Tertullian could write to the Emperor, "We fill your cities, your towns, your Senate, and your armies; we leave you only your temples and theatres." Caracalla and Heliogabalus, who followed Septimus (A.D. 211-222) disgraced the throne and empire. They were murdered—the usual fate of the Cæsars. Alexander Severus, who followed (222-235) saw the rise of Persia and the fall of Parthia. He in his turn was murdered. Maximin came next (235-238) the author of the sixth persecution. Maximin's persecution was directed against the leaders of the Church, those who "taught" and "governed" it. He was murdered by his soldiers and his body given to the vultures. Gordian and Philip followed. The latter was slain by Decius. At the end of Philip's reign there was a sporadic outburst of persecution at Alexandria. Decius, General of the revolted troops, reigned next, A.D. 249-251. He was the author of the seventh persecution. The Rev. Patrick Healy in the "Catholic Encyclopædia" says of this persecution,

"The object of the Emperor was not the extermination of the Christians but the complete extinction of Christianity itself. Bishops and priests were unconditionally punished with death. To all others was given an opportunity to recant . . . the unexpectedness of the attack, coupled with the fact that an appalling amount of laxity and corruption had manifested themselves during the long peace which

the Church had just enjoyed, produced the most deplorable effect in the Christian fold. Multitudes presented themselves to the magistrates to express their compliance with the imperial edict, and to these apostates, tickets were issued attesting the fact that they had offered sacrifice (*sacrificati*), or burned incense (*thurificati*), while others without actually performing these rites, availed themselves of the venality of the magistrates to purchase certificates attesting their renunciation (*libellatici*). . . . The Decian persecution was the severest trial to which the Church at large had been subjected up to that time and the loss suffered by the Church in consequence of apostasy was almost as great as the loss by martyrdom " (Decius).

There is a direct reference to Apostasy in the Apocalyptic vision of Christian persecutions. "And the stars from heaven fell upon the earth, as the fig tree casteth its green figs when it is shaken by a great wind" (R. vi. 13). The Decian persecution was followed by a severe pestilence which devastated the empire. It is described by Dionysius of Alexandria.

The Goths invaded the Empire twice in the reign of Decius, inflicting great losses. On the second invasion the camp of the Romans was surprised, and pillaged, and the Emperor fled in disorder. Later in the same war the Roman army was manœuvred into a bog. "In this morass the Roman army, after an ineffectual struggle, was irrecoverably lost, nor could the body of the Emperor [Decius] ever be found" (D. and F., I. x.). Decius perished A.D. 251.

"This is the first considerable occasion in which history mentions that great people who afterwards broke the Roman power, sacked the capital and reigned in Gaul, Spain, and Italy" (Gibbon, *op. cit.*).

Gallus who succeeded Decius, continued the persecution. He perished miserably after a reign of eighteen months. Æmilian who followed reigned only four months. Then came Valerian (253-260 A.D.) author of the eighth persecution. At first Bishops of the Church were banished. St. Cyprian, who was banished to Curubis wrote to nine other bishops who were working in the mines of Noumedia, and sent them money. Dionysius of Alexandria was banished to Kephro in Libya Nomos. As illustrating the conditions of banishment at that time, we may relate what happened to him.

"Æmilianus the prefect said, 'I perceive that you are at the same time ungrateful and insensible to the clemency of our Cæsars. Therefore you shall not remain in this city, but you shall be sent to the parts of Libya, to a place called Kephro. For this place I have selected according to the orders of our Cæsars. But neither you,

nor any others, shall in any wise be permitted either to hold conventions or to enter what you call your cemeteries'" (Euseb. H. E. vii. 11).

Dionysius goes on to say that when he reached his place of banishment,

"But neither did we keep aloof from assembling ourselves by divine assistance. . . . But in Kephro a large congregation collected with us, partly of the brethren that accompanied us from the city, partly of those that joined us from Egypt, and thus God opened a door for the word likewise there. And at first, indeed, we were persecuted, we were stoned; but, at last, not a few of the heathen, abandoning their idols, turned to God, for the word was then first sown among them, as they had never before heard it" (Euseb. H. E. vii. 11).

From Kephro, Dionysius was moved on to Colluthion, in the Mareotis in lower Egypt. He did not like the change at first, but consoled himself with the thought that as it was nearer to Alexandria "we should more frequently enjoy the sight of those that were really beloved and most dear to us. For they would come and would tarry, and as if in the more remote suburbs, there would be still meetings in parts. And so it was" (Euseb. H. E. vii. 11).

By Valerian's orders, Æmelianus prohibited the use of "what you call your cemeteries." In the sure hope and belief in the Resurrection, Christians called their burial places, *κοιμήτρια*, the Greek word for dormitory, signifying "sleeping places." The metaphor of "the open door" for the Church, will engage our attention in the Commentary on Philadelphia (R. iii. 8).

In the year 258 a sharper edict was issued by Valerian condemning bishops, priests, and deacons to death by the sword; senators and knights were to forfeit their property, and the rank and file, if still obstinate, were to be condemned to death. Women of rank were banished. St. Cyprian and St. Lawrence perished in this persecution, S. Cyprian by the sword. It appears from the acts of the martyrs that they were implored to change their religion, and could have saved their lives by doing so. Valerian was defeated and taken prisoner by the Persians, whose king, Sapor, used him as a footstool in mounting his horse, and forced him to run by his side in chains. When Valerian died his body was flayed, and his skin, stuffed and painted red, was hung up in a Persian temple, to the lasting disgrace of the Roman Empire.

Gallianus succeeded his father as emperor. He published edicts of toleration of Christianity, and restored their cemeteries to the Christians (Euseb. H. E. vii. 13). Persians and Goths

invaded and devastated the Roman empire in his day, and earthquakes, famine and pestilence added to the misery of the Roman people. In Rome alone, the plague for a time carried off 5,000 persons a day. Gallianus was killed by his officers, A.D. 268.

Claudius who followed was occupied during his short reign—268-270 A.D.—repelling an army of 320,000 Goths, who invaded Macedonia. There were persecutions during his reign, of a sporadic kind. Claudius died of the plague.

Aurelian, a great general, then came to the throne, A.D. 270. He was the author of the ninth persecution. At first he protected the Christians. He decided that the Church buildings at Antioch should belong to those Christians who were in union with the bishops of Italy and of the city of Rome. Towards the end of his reign A.D. 275, he issued persecuting edicts. Lactantius says that these edicts had not reached the remoter provinces before his death, which took place the same year. "Tradition refers to his reign a large number of *Acta Martyrum*, none of which is considered to be authentic (Dom Butler, "Journal of Theological Studies," 1906, vii., 306)."

Tacitus (275-276), and Probus (276-282) followed Aurelian. There was no persecution in their reigns. They were both killed by their own troops.

Diocletian came to the throne, A.D. 284, and associated with himself as Cæsar and Governor of the East, Galerius, a man intensely prejudiced against Christianity. In the year 303, at the instigation of Galerius, persecution was decreed. Maximian, Governor of the West, joined heartily in this persecution, which was almost universal in extent and as cruel as Nero's in severity. Churches were pulled down, the Holy Scriptures were sought out and burnt, and men and women put to death by torture. Lactantius says, "all the earth, from East to West, was drenched in blood." S. Alban, a citizen of Verulam, perished at this time. The persecutors boasted that they had abolished Christianity. But in the year 305, both Diocletian and Maximian were dethroned by Galerius. They both died miserably. Galerius repealed the persecuting edicts in April 311, and died a few days afterwards of a gangrenous ulcer of the abdomen. Eusebius, who witnessed the tenth persecution, says,

"But when by reason of excessive liberty we sank into negligence and sloth, one envying and reviling another in different ways, and were almost as it were on the point of taking up arms against each other, and were assailing each other with words as with darts and spears, prelates inveighing against prelates, and people rising up against people, and hypocrisy and dissimulation had arisen to the

greatest height of malignity, then the divine judgment which usually proceeds with a lenient hand, whilst the multitudes were yet crowding into the church, with gentle and mild visitation began to afflict the episcopate. . . . But some that appeared to be our pastors, deserting the law of piety, were inflamed against each other with mutual strifes, only accumulating quarrels and threats, rivalry hostility and hatred to each other, only anxious to assert the government as a kind of sovereignty for themselves" (H. E. viii. 1).

Stripped of its paraphrase Eusebius says that hierarchical pride brought the Church to grief. He gives a long account of the tenth persecution in his "Ecclesiastical History." "Vast numbers, however," he says, "broken and relaxed in spirit by timidity before the contest, voluntarily yielded at the first onset" (H. E. viii. 3).

When Constantius Chlorus died at York in the year 306, his son, Constantine the Great, was proclaimed Cæsar by the northern troops.

At this time the Empire was divided into three parts, the better to defend it against the constant incursions of the barbarians (R. xvi. 19). Licinius reigned in the East, Maxentius at Rome and Italy, and Constantine in the West. Maxentius declared war on Constantine. In this war (A.D. 312) Constantine is said to have invoked the aid of Christ, and to have carried His emblem, the cross, at the head of his troops. Gibbon says:

"The learned Eusebius has ascribed the faith of Constantine to the miraculous sign which was displayed in the heavens whilst he meditated and prepared the Italian expedition."

"The same symbols sanctified the arms of the soldiers of Constantine; the cross glittered on their helmet, was engraved on their shields, was interwoven into their banners. . . ."

"But the principal standard, which displayed the triumph of the cross, was styled the Labarum. It is described as a long pike intersected by a transverse beam. The silken veil which hung down from the beam was curiously enwrought with the images of the reigning monarch and his children. The summit of the pike supported a crown of gold, which enclosed the mysterious monogram, at once expressive of the figure of the cross, and the initial letters of the name of Christ" (D. and F., cap. xx.—from Eusebius in Vit. Constantine, and Baronius' Eccles. Annals).

There is still extant a medal of the Emperor Constantius, whereon the standard of the labarum is accompanied by these memorable words: "By this sign thou shalt conquer."

Constantine defeated Maxentius, with great slaughter of the Italian legions, in the Roman province. Finally, in the attack on Rome itself, "the dismayed troops of Maxentius, pursued by an implacable enemy, rushed by thousands into the deep and

rapid stream of the Tiber. The Emperor Maxentius himself was forced into the river and drowned by the weight of his armour"—A.D. 312—(Gib. *op. cit.* xiii.).

Constantine immediately suspended or repealed the edicts of persecution, and granted the free exercise of their religious ceremonies to all professed members of the Christian Church. (The Edict of Milan.) The Roman world was now divided between Constantine in the West and Licinius in the East; and in a few months they were fighting many bloody battles for supremacy, in which Constantine was the gainer. Constantine founded a new Rome on the Bosphorus. He gave it his own name, Constantinople, and removed the seat of government there in 330. This was a great blow to pagan Rome and the Senate.

It would be a mistake to suppose that by the Edict of Milan, published jointly by Constantine and Licinius in the year 313, the old forms of paganism were disestablished and disendowed. Much more so to conclude that Christianity was compulsorily imposed upon the Roman people. The edict itself, an edict of tolerance, refers to the deity enthroned in heaven. Constantine aimed at monotheism; but identified the deity with the Sun-God. He abolished all forms of divination and magic, but retained the office of Pontifex Maximus, and shortly before his death confirmed the privileges of the priests of the ancient gods. He allowed such expressions as "the divine emperor," "the altar of the emperor," and "the sacred chamber," although he withdrew his statue from the temples. The Hierarchy, the Senate, and the Roman people, clung to paganism for another hundred years. In the year 394 Theodosius closed the gates of the Temple of Vesta and extinguished the sacred fire, thus ending the worship of Vesta. S. Leo the Great, who turned aside the wrath of Attila A.D. 451, says that it was the custom of many Christians in his day to worship the sun by obeisance and prayers from the steps of S. Peter's at Rome (Leo I., *Serm.* xxvi.).

At the death of Constantine his three sons, Constantine, Constantius, and Constans, divided the kingdom into three parts. Constantine attacked Constans, and was slain. Constans was assassinated by Magnentius, who in his turn was defeated by Constantius.

Constantius defeated the Germans at the battle of Mursa. In this Pyrrhic victory the Romans lost the equivalent of a whole army—50,000 men—A.D. 353.

Constantius was succeeded by his cousin, Julian, known to history as *the Apostate*. He reopened the pagan temples, and even attempted to restore the Temple of Jerusalem. But it is

said that the builders were repeatedly foiled by earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, and whirlwinds. The attempt was abandoned. Julian perished in the Persian war, A.D. 363. The brothers Valentinian and Valens came to the throne in 364, governing the West and East respectively. In their reign the Goths, under Hermanianus, King of the Ostrogoths, to the number of 200,000, were forced across the Danube by the pressure of the Huns, Tartar and Scythian hordes, from beyond the great wall of China. They settled in the Roman provinces with the consent of Valens, but revolted, and slew him at the battle of Adrianople (A.D. 378), in which engagement 40,000 Romans were slain. Gibbon calls this "the disastrous period of the fall of the Roman Empire, which may justly be dated from the reign of Valens" (D. and F., c. xxvi.).

At one and the same time the Suevi, Alani, and Franks invaded Gaul, and the Persians overflowed the Euphrates. In the second year of this reign the greater part of the Roman world was shaken by a violent and destructive earthquake. Then followed the reigns of Gratian, Valentinian II., and Theodosius (A.D. 379-395), filled with domestic and foreign wars.

Theodosius was the last Emperor who saw all the Roman provinces united under one sovereign. His seat of empire was Constantinople. The fifth century saw the downfall of Rome itself, through the invasion of barbarian hordes. Two numerous armies of Goths, under Alaric, crossed the Julian Alps, and conquered the provinces of Istria and Venetia. Alaric was defeated in 402, but returned in 410, when he took Rome, and delivered it to the fury of his soldiers. "Now the long-haired Goths, with Vandals, Suevi, Burgundians, and Alani marched from the shores of the Baltic almost to the gates of Rome, and never afterwards retreated. This may be considered as the fall of the Roman Empire beyond the Alps" (D. and F., cap. xxx.).

The siege of Rome by Alaric, in the reign of Honorius, gave rise to a famine, which is described by Gibbon :

"The unfortunate city gradually experienced the distress of scarcity, and at length the horrid calamities of famine. The daily allowance of three pounds of bread was reduced to one half, to one third, to nothing; and the price of corn still continued to rise in a rapid and extravagant proportion. The poorer citizens, who were unable to purchase the necessaries of life, solicited the precarious charity of the rich. . . . The progress of famine invaded the marble palaces of the senators themselves. . . . The food, the most repugnant to sense or imagination; the aliments, the most unwholesome and pernicious to the constitution, were eagerly devoured and fiercely disputed, by the rage of hunger. A dark suspicion was

entertained that some desperate wretches fed on the bodies of their fellow-creatures whom they had secretly murdered; and even mothers (such was the horrid conflict of the two most powerful instincts implanted by nature in the human breast)—even mothers are said to have tasted the flesh of their slaughtered infants. Many thousands of the inhabitants of Rome expired in their houses or in the streets for want of sustenance; and as the public sepulchres without the walls were in the power of the enemy, the stench which arose from so many putrid and unburied carcasses infected the air; and the miseries of famine were succeeded and aggravated by the contagion of a pestilential disease" (D. and F., xxxi.).

In the meanwhile the Suevi, Alani, and Vandals fought their way through Gaul and Spain, where they settled, in 409—the Suevi in the north, the Alani in the west, and the Vandals in the south. The Goths settled down in the provinces close to the Pyrenees. These petty kings, who held their places and power with the consent of Rome, often subsequently joined the Romans in their wars (see R. xvii. 12-16). Boniface invited the Vandals into Africa to aid him with their army. The Vandals finally settled there, A.D. 432.

In the year 451 Attila, King of the Huns, invaded the western provinces with an army of 500,000 men, who had not long before invaded and plundered the eastern provinces. The Romans, calling the Goths, Franks, and other kings to their aid, met and stopped him on the plains of Chalons: 180,000, some say 300,000, dead bodies were left on the field. The following year (452) Attila again invaded Italy, plundering and laying waste all the Roman cities on his line of march, and reducing them to ruins. The battle of Chalons seems to have been prefigured in the great battle described in chapter xix. of the Apocalypse, the battle of Armagedon.

In the year 455, the Romans being at civil war, Eudoxia, widow of the murdered Valentinian, called to her aid the Vandals from Africa. They came across in fleets, under Genseric, and captured Rome, which was given up to pillage for fourteen days and nights; but the principal buildings, and the lives of the citizens, were spared, at the prayer of Pope St. Leo. The Vandals, under Genseric, stretched from Tangier to Tripoli. Their fleets at Carthage claimed the empire of the Mediterranean. In the spring of each year they returned to the pillage of Italy, sometimes crossing the Straits of Gibraltar, and invading Italy from the west. The treasures and spoils of Rome were transferred to Carthage.

In the year 476 Odoacer, King of the Heruli, conquered Italy, and captured Rome. He pensioned off Romulus Augustulus, the last of the emperors of the west, and proclaimed

himself King of Italy. So ended the last of the Roman emperors. The dynasty of "the beast" came to an end with Romulus Augustulus, two names which stand for the City and Empire of Rome!

"I have now accomplished the laborious narrative of the decline and fall of the Roman Empire, from the fortunate age of Trajan and the Antonines to its total extinction in the west, about five centuries after the Christian era" (Gibbon, *op. cit.* cap. xxxviii.).

In the year 489 Theodoric of the East Goths, or Ostrogoths, invaded Italy, and added it to his dominions. He reigned A.D. 493-526. Totila, one of his successors, completed the ruin of Rome in 546. The Roman citizens again suffered the terrible agonies of famine during the siege of Rome by Totila. He ground it down under the iron heel of despotism, and left no spark of life in it.

"After a period of thirteen centuries the institution of Romulus expired; and if the nobles of Rome still assumed the titles of senators, few subsequent traces can be discovered of a public council or constitutional order" (A.D. 553). (Gibbon.)

We have now seen the end of the Roman Empire (A.D. 476) and of the proud city of Rome (A.D. 546). It is very important that we should bear these dates in mind, for they fix the period of the end of the "Roman theme" in the Apocalypse, the fall of "Babylon," and the beginning of the "millennium" which followed.

Gibbon in his "Decline and Fall" shows that all the barbarian tribes which marched across the stage of his history at first in conflict with Rome, were afterwards used as allies. They fought in the Roman ranks, from time to time, against each other, and helped to prop the tottering power of Rome, whose motto was *divide et impera*. But they almost all settled down in the long run on Roman soil and built up kingdoms for themselves upon her ruins. The Visigoths settled in Spain, the Goths and Ostrogoths in Gaul and Italy, the Alani in Gaul, the Burgundians in Burgundy, the Armoricans in Brittany, the Franks on the Rhine, the Thuringians and Suevi in Germany, the Saxons in Britain, the Huns in Thrace, and the Vandals in Carthage. These things are foretold in the Revelation of S. John. An angel declares—"And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, who have not yet received a kingdom, but shall receive power as kings one hour after the beast. These have one design, and their strength and power they shall deliver to the beast. . . . And the ten horns which thou sawest on the beast, these shall hate the harlot (Rome), and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh and

shall burn her with fire. For God hath given into their hearts to do that which pleaseth him, that they give their kingdom to the beast until the words of God be fulfilled" (R. xvii. 12, 13, 16, 17).

We can see now how impossible it would be to explain in the first century such matters as the rise of kingdoms then unknown. This part of Revelation must have been an enigma to all, down to the middle ages. In the meantime the exegetical efforts of the ancients had crystallised into a tradition concerning Antichrist, which claimed assent by reason of its antiquity.

The transfer of the seat of Empire from Rome to Constantinople brought about a train of ecclesiastical events which enters into the study of Revelation. Constantinople was solemnly proclaimed the capital of the Roman Empire by Constantine in the year 330. He endowed it with magnificent buildings which he embellished with treasures taken from the rest of the Empire. It was his idea that "New Rome" should be the seat of the civil and ecclesiastical governments of the Empire. Although Antioch succeeded Jerusalem in the Primacy of the East, we find Eudoxius, Bishop of Antioch in 360, leaving his see for that of Constantinople. The second Œcumenical Council, A.D. 381, gave the Bishop of Constantinople first place, after Rome. Constantinople claimed primacy over the Churches of the East, and by the Council of Chalcedon, A.D. 451, it was allowed the primacy over 420 dioceses. Constantinople was in constant conflict with Rome, and was in fact setting itself up as an autonomous and rival Church, as it is now.

Jesus Christ, in the book of Revelation, addressing the angel or supreme Bishop of the Church in the third era of its existence, called by the name of Pergamos, says, "I know where thou dwellest, where the seat of Satan is, and thou holdest fast my name and hast not denied my faith" (R. ii. 13). Foreseeing the event our Lord declares Rome to be the seat of the head of His Church in the third age which extended from the Edict of Milan, 312, to the sixth century. Rome held fast to the name and faith of Jesus Christ, which were assailed in this age by many heresies, for the most part bred in the Sees under Constantinople. The Arian heresy, which denied that Christ was co-equal and co-eternal with the Father, devastated the Church of the fourth century. Constantine, towards the close of his reign, his son Constantius, and other Roman emperors favoured Arianism.

The Arian heresy was condemned at the Council of Nicæa, A.D. 325. The Macedonian heresy, which impugned the divinity of the Holy Ghost, was broached by Macedonius, Bishop of Constantinople, A.D. 360. The Pelagian heresy regarding grace and original sin appeared about the year 400 A.D. Later

(A.D. 420) Nestorius, Bishop of Constantinople, taught that the Blessed Virgin was not the mother of God, but of the man Christ. Later again (A.D. 440) Eutyches, the superior of a monastery near Constantinople, taught that there was only one nature in Christ. These were the great heresies which tormented the early Church, and often led to persecution and bloodshed. They came to an end in the beginning of the sixth century, perishing with the fall of the Empire and of pagan Rome.

The political forecast of Revelation stops at the destruction of the city of pagan Rome.

From the sixth century onward to the sixteenth the Revelation predicts a period of a thousand years in which Satan will be chained up, as regards bloody persecution of the Church. At the end of that period it is predicted that he will be loosed again for a short time. These things, in point of fact, have happened. The Revelation further predicts that in the last days Satan will seduce the nations, and they will go up and surround "the Camp of the Saints," *i.e.*, Rome, and "the beloved city," the *Civitas Dei*, of S. Augustine, *i.e.*, the Church. And after these happenings the day of judgment will appear.

If we depended solely upon the close of the Book of Revelation for eschatological knowledge, we might well expect the end to come quickly, for the "Camp of the Saints," Rome, is surrounded, and the Church is attacked on all sides. But in the Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia, we get further information as to the last days. We are told that three ages intervene between the millennium and the end of the world. The penultimate age of the Church (in which we live) will be characterised by a remarkable series of conversions to the Church, especially of the clergy of its erstwhile persecutors. We are told also that the last age of the Church will be characterised by extreme indifference; that it will be wanting both in the fear and love of the Lord.

Opinions will probably differ as to whether the Church at present exhibits these characteristics of the last age or not.

IV

THE DATE OF REVELATION

THE date of the Book of Revelation is of paramount importance as regards its exegesis. The great majority of modern scholars of every shade of religion, and of unbelief, adopt an early date for the Apocalypse, *i.e.*, before the fall of the Temple. Catholic writers, almost alone, support the theory that the Book was written in Domitian's reign. This is all the more surprising as the Book is full of dogmatic Christian teaching, which gains in authority as it approximates to the time of Christ. Nearly the whole of the Apostles' Creed is contained in the Book of Revelation, including the Communion of Saints. It is the only case in which the higher critics insist on an earlier date than that claimed by Catholic Churchmen. A correct view of the date of the Book is essential to its interpretation and to the appreciation of its eschatological teaching.

Dr. Barry, in his manual for priests and students, on *The Tradition of Scripture*, published in the year 1906, says: "No view of the date, compilation, or literal meaning [of the Apocalypse] has ever been sanctioned by authority" (p. 198).

The present Holy Father, Pius X, in his letter to Bishop Le Camus, dated 1906, adverts to Scriptural exegesis, as follows.

"As we must condemn the temerity of those who, having more regard for novelty than for the teaching authority of the Church, do not hesitate to adopt a method of criticism altogether too free, so we should not approve the attitude of those who in no way dare to depart from the usual exegesis of Scripture, even when, faith not being at stake, the real advancement of learning requires such departure. You follow a wise course, and show by your example that there is nothing to be feared for the sacred books from the true progress of the art of criticism; nay, that a beneficial light can be derived from it, provided its use be coupled with a wise and prudent discernment" (Sept. 29, 1906).

The road is left open for reconsideration and research. Catholic writers cling to the Domitian date of the Book as a matter of tradition. Let us examine this tradition carefully,

and compare it with other traditions. The Domitian date of Revelation rests entirely on a casual remark of S. Irenæus, Bishop of Lyons, who was born in Asia Minor of Grecian parents "between the years 115 and 125, according to some, or according to others, between 130 and 142." In the year 190 or 191, he interceded with Pope Victor on behalf of "communities in Asia Minor which persevered in the practice of the Quarto-decimans in regard to the celebration of Easter." "Nothing is known as to the date of his death, which must have occurred at the end of the second or beginning of the third century. In spite of some isolated and later testimony to that effect, it is not very probable that he ended his career with martyrdom" (A. Poncelet, S. J. Cath. Encyc.). S. Irenæus' occasional lapses into casual writing detract somewhat from his authority as a chronicler of historic facts. For example, in his third book he says :

"And Polycarp, a man who had been instructed by the Apostles and had familiar intercourse with many that had seen Christ, and had also been appointed Bishop by the Apostles in Asia, in the Church at Smyrna, whom we also have seen in our youth" (Euseb. H. E. iv. 14).

Here we may notice that S. Polycarp was put to death, according to the Chronicles of Eusebius, in the year 166, in the persecution of Marcus Aurelius. On the day of his martyrdom S. Polycarp announced in the Stadium that he was eighty-six years of age. This would place his birth in the year 80, and he would consequently be only eighteen years of age when S. John, the last of the Apostles died. But Waddington, followed by Harnack, places the Smyrnian persecution, in which he was executed, in the Proconsulship of Quadratus, in the year 155-156, in the reign of Antoninus Pius. Against this date we have the Rescript of Antoninus Pius admonishing the Governors of the Provinces not to trouble the Christians at all unless they made attempts against the Roman Government, and the letter of Melito, Bishop of Sardis, to the Emperor Marcus Aurelius, stating that there was no persecution in Asia Minor before his time (161). "What indeed never before happened, the race of the pious is now persecuted" (Euseb. H. E. iv. 26). It is not easy to reconcile the statement of S. Irenæus that Polycarp was made Bishop by the Apostles in Asia, with these data concerning the age of Polycarp.

S. Irenæus was acquainted with the writings of Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis. He says: "These things are attested by Papias, who was John's hearer and the associate of Polycarp, an ancient writer, who mentions them in the fourth book of

his works" (Euseb. H. E. iii. 39). Eusebius points out that S. Irenæus made a mistake in saying that Papias was S. John's hearer, as Papias himself wrote, "If therefore anyone came who had been a follower of the Presbyters, I would ask him about the words of the Presbyters" (H. E. iii. 39). S. Irenæus held that the active ministry of our Lord occupied a period of from ten to fifteen years (Haer. II. xxii. 3 f.). He read the Apocalypse and accepted the *millenarian* view. He was interested in the question of Antichrist, as we have seen at page 26. He noticed that the number of "the Beast" was given as 666 "in all the genuine and ancient copies." He says "and as they who saw John attest, reason itself shows that the number of the name of the beast is indicated by the Greek letters which it contains" (Euseb. H. E. v. 8). In these remarks he shows that he held an anthropomorphic view about Antichrist, at variance with the teaching of SS. John and Polycarp. He was mistaken, moreover, in saying that the name of "the Beast," erroneously assumed by him to be Antichrist, would be indicated by the Greek letters which it contained, for the name is found with corresponding letters of the Hebrew Alphabet. The whole passage, both as regards Antichrist and the Greek clue as to the name of the Beast, has been a stumbling block to exegetes for centuries. If they who saw John attested that, it is evident that S. John did not explain the Revelation to them.

We must bear in mind that S. Irenæus was not writing about the date of the Apocalypse. He was writing about "the Beast," "We therefore," says he, "do not venture to affirm anything with certainty respecting the name of Antichrist. For, were it necessary that his name should be clearly announced to the present age it would have been declared by him who saw the Revelation" (*ἡ ἀποκαλύψις*). "For it has not been long since it was seen, but almost in our own generation, about the end of Domitian's reign" (Euseb. H. E. v. 8; Iren. v. 30, 3).

ΑΠΟΚΑΛΥΨΙΣ, signifying the "Revelation," is the first word in the Book. "The Apocalypse" was the name of the Book in the time of S. Irenæus, as it is still. S. Irenæus wrote, "For it has not been long since it (the Apocalypse) was seen." He did not say that S. John was exiled, or that his Revelation was given, or that he saw the visions, or that the Book was written about the end of Domitian's reign. He makes no mention of a Domitian persecution. He says, "*οὐ πρὸ πολλοῦ χρόνου ἐώραθή.*" If we take *ἡ ἀποκάλυψις* as the subject of *ἐώραθή* it is open to the construction that he meant to refer to the Book, which we have reason to believe was copied and published in the Church for the first time about the end of Domitian's reign.

This is the nucleus of the Domitian theory as to the date of the Book. Dr. Chase, Bishop of Ely, points out that "Irenæus wrote the third book of his great work when Eleutherius was Bishop of Rome" (III. iii. 3), *i.e.*, between 175 A.D. and 190 A.D. and the fifth book cannot be of an earlier date. Domitian was murdered in 96 A.D. Hence, if the Apocalypse was "seen" at the close of Domitian's reign, nearly a hundred years had elapsed when Irenæus wrote his fifth book. Nevertheless S. Irenæus wrote of the close of Domitian's reign as being almost in his own generation. On this Dr. Chase founds a theory that S. Irenæus' "words imply that the Book was written a considerable time before the close of Domitian's reign" (Journal of Theological Studies, April, 1907, p. 433).

There is a tradition that S. John was exiled in a period of persecution, and that the Revelation was given to him partly as a panacea against persecution. There are said to have been two persecutions in S. John's lifetime, one under Nero, and the other at the end of Domitian's reign. Nero's persecution is a well-established fact. We have shown, in the Historic Notes, that Domitian's persecution is not well attested. It is not easy to understand why a poor and feeble centenarian like S. John should be exiled by Domitian. We have seen in the Historic Notes, p. 64, that Domitian sent to Judea for living scions of the Royal House of David, confessed Christians, and finding that they were poor, and aspired only to a celestial Kingdom, dismissed them with contempt.

One of the most striking and important visions of the Revelation of S. John is that which contains the cry of the martyrs: "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and revenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth" (R. vi. 10). On this cry, as a text, much of the Book is written. What occasion was there for this harrowing appeal to Heaven at the end of Domitian's reign?

Many Christian men and women of fifty years of age and over, living in Domitian's reign, had witnessed the persecution of Nero, had seen the assault on the Church fail and recoil upon the head of the tyrant, who died, disgraced, by his own or by an assassin's hand. They were salted, as it were, by persecution; and the whole Church, young and old, had for thirty years flourished on the oft-told tale of Nero's abortive persecution and punishment. They had seen persecution end, abruptly, on the death of Nero and the accession of Galba to the purple. There was very little chance of their being cast into an extreme of terror or dismay by the short-lived, and, so to speak, oblique persecution of Domitian. His edicts were not aimed at Christians, as such.

It was not altogether a question of physical terror, there must have been an intellectual dread too. What of the promise of Christ?—"I shall be with you all days, unto the end of the world. . . ." "The gates of hell shall not prevail against you" (Matt. xvi. 18). To all appearance, at Rome, the Christian Church was drowning in its own blood in Nero's reign. We must consider the feeling of the ordinary Christian—the man in the street, so to speak—and look at it from his point of view. In later persecutions men had got to know that the Church could survive the furious edicts of Rome. But that was just the doubt which presented itself to the mind of the average Christian man in Nero's time.

Promises unfulfilled are apt to unsettle faith. The average Christian perhaps doubted, as well as feared. It was a critical time. The fate of the Church seemed to hang in the balance. Christianity was at stake. When the Emperor himself assisted at the orgies of blood and cruelty under which the Church was groaning, when S. Peter was slain and the rock on which the Church was built disappeared, the promises of God to His Church seemed about to fail, the psychological moment had arrived for the publication of this Revelation. Then it was that S. John rapt into heaven received this message of hope to the bleeding Church. It proclaims the speedy end of persecution. It promises the rewards of eternal life to the constant in suffering and the white robe of glory to the Christian martyr. It foretells the decline and fall of the Roman Empire. That there was urgent need for this Revelation to allay the growing fears of Christians in the persecutions of Nero seems to be certain. That there was any such call for it in the time of Domitian is very improbable.

The Domitian theory is hardly reconcilable with the fact that S. John was about one hundred years of age, at the end of Domitian's reign. It is not reconcilable with the tradition that for some time before his death, in 98, he was too feeble by reason of old age to walk or preach, and had to be carried into Church, that is from one chamber to another. It clashes altogether with the tradition that S. John wrote his gospel after writing the Apocalypse, a tradition that is generally accepted and is vouched for by S. Irenæus. If S. John wrote his Book of Revelation at the end of Domitian's reign and wrote his Gospel afterwards, he wrote the latter when over a hundred years of age, in the paralysis of senile decay. No one accepts that. The tradition is that he wrote his Gospel about ten years after writing the Apocalypse, which is wholly incompatible with the Domitian theory, for he died two years after Domitian. The Gospel tradition is borne out by the fact that the Greek of S. John's Gospel is more correct and polished

than that of his Apocalypse. It is necessary to recall for a moment the polemic of Dionysius of Alexandria against S. John's authorship of the Book (see p. 36). He points out that the Greek of the Apocalypse is inferior in style to that of the Gospel. The latter work shows that long residence at Ephesus had made S. John an accomplished Greek scholar. This tells very much in favour of the early date of the Book. The two propositions that S. John wrote the Apocalypse in Domitian's reign and wrote the Gospel soon after that seem to be mutually destructive. Moreover these propositions held together would confirm the contention of Dionysius that the difference of style of the two books, shows two different authors. If one was written in the year 96, and the other in the year 98, there should be no difference of style. At the end of Domitian's reign S. John's Greek education was complete, and his style formed.

There is an omission from the Gospel of S. John, compared with the synoptic Gospels, which throws light on this subject. The prediction of our Lord with reference to the fall of the Temple of Jerusalem, found in Matt. (xxiv.), Mark (xiii.), and Luke (xxi.), is altogether omitted by S. John. This shows that S. John's Gospel was written long after his Revelation, which warned the Nazarenes of the fall of the Temple. The prediction was fulfilled. No Temple existed.

The Domitian theory is hopelessly at variance with the Clementine tradition that S. John led an active missionary life after the death of "the Tyrant," on his return to Patmos.

Clement of Alexandria was a contemporary of S. Irenæus and a reliable authority. He vouches for the tradition enshrined in his "Who is the Rich Man?" in this way: "Listen to a story that is no fiction but *a real history handed down and carefully preserved respecting the Apostle John*" (italics ours).

This story, which we have already printed in full at page 16, so completely cuts the ground from under the Domitian date, that it has been allowed to rank as a pious legend. Clement of Alexandria was known as a writer before the time of Pope Victor, A.D. 188. He was therefore living at the same time as S. Irenæus. Eusebius calls him "a disciple of the Apostles." He was a man of great learning. S. Jerome says that he was "The most learned of our authors" (Catal et Ep. ad Magn). Theodoret says, "That holy man surpassed all others in the extent of his learning" (Hær. F. E. I, 8). A proof of this is that Clement succeeded Pantænus in the headship of the great Catechetical Christian School of Alexandria, about the year 190. His story of S. John's return to Ephesus on the death of the Tyrant, and prolonged missionary career afterwards, is one of the best preserved of his writings. No one

challenges its authenticity. Eusebius in the same chapter in which he stated that S. John returned from exile on the death of Domitian, quoted this story in full, as an excellent and profitable discourse (H. E. iii., 23). He overlooked the fact that it is absolutely incompatible with the Domitian date of S. John's exile.

So far as correlated traditions go, the Domitian tradition has an unhappy knack of disagreeing with them all. We know its origin. Let us see its patristic authority. Clement of Alexandria writing at the same time as S. Irenæus, and writing about the life of S. John, deliberately places his exile in Nero's reign. Origen, a pupil of Clement's, adds the title King to that of "Tyrant" used by Clement, saying, "as tradition teaches us." The tradition taught him would be that of his teacher Clement (as we have pointed out at p. 28). Tertullian knew only the Neronian date. The author of the Muratorian Fragment is in the same case, as also the author of the Syriac versions. Epiphanius attributed S. John's exile to Claudius, meaning Nero Claudius, since the Emperor Claudius died in A.D. 54, and there was no persecution in his time. We now come to Eusebius who finished his Ecclesiastical History, c. 324 A.D. He interpreted the remark of S. Irenæus, that the Apocalypse was seen towards the end of Domitian's reign, as referring to the visions of S. John. But in the same page he quotes the story of Clement which makes that interpretation impossible. S. Jerome in his book "De Script Eccl.," written about A.D. 382, follows Eusebius, but puts the exile in the year 84, ten years before there was any sign of a Domitian persecution.

So far as the early Church is concerned, the reader can see on which side the weight of testimony lies. In the early middle age, Andreas, 7th, and Arethas, 8th century, point out that the destruction of the Temple of Jerusalem was found in the Apocalypse by ancient writers, showing a traditional belief that the Book was written before the year 70 A.D.

That brings us to the internal evidence of the Book, which unquestionably points to the Neronian date in many ways. 1st. The destruction of the Temple is foretold, as a revelation of the future. 2nd. Persecution was raging when the Book was written. 3rd. Nero is shown to be the reigning King when the Book was written. 4th. Tiridates, the Parthian, who made his triumphal progress to Rome in the year 66, is brought in as an illustration. And 5th, the note of vengeance belongs to the days of vengeance, when the Temple fell in the year 70.

The point, that the Temple is written about as still existing, is not disputed. The words of the Book are as follows: "And there was given to me a reed like unto a rod, and it was said to me: Rise and measure the temple of God, and the altar and

them that adore therein. But the court which is without the temple cast out and measure it not, because it is given to the Gentiles, and the holy city they shall tread underfoot forty-two months" (R. xi. 1, 2). This must have been written before the year 70 A.D. After that there was no Temple, and no altar, and no Court of the Gentiles. No one would give directions at the present day for the measurement of the throne-room and courtyard of the Palace of the Tuileries, ruined in 1870 and pulled down shortly afterwards. How, then, can we date these directions, given in the Apocalypse for measuring the Temple, as written in the year 96, twenty-six years after its fall?

The Temple prophecy in Revelation is accompanied by references to the flight of the Nazarene Church to Pella, and the coming of Christ's Kingdom. It is backed up by frequent references to prophecies in the O.T. relating to the event, and by a wealth of symbolism taken from the sacred instruments and ritual of the Temple.

2nd. The cry of the martyrs which forms the central motive of the book, "How long, O Lord," denotes a period of intense and prolonged persecution. Nero's persecution alone could account for it.

3rd. S. John does not say that Nero was the reigning King, at the time of his Revelation, for reasons known to the reader. But he works out the cryptic symbolism of his identity with marvellous ingenuity and clearness. All this will be found in the exegesis. At the cost of repetition we must review the evidence here.

First, we have a beast coming out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten diadems (R. xiii. 1). This is Daniel's fourth beast, the Roman Empire. To show that he is the fourth beast, S. John compounds the Beast of the three empires he devoured and broke up—viz., the Chaldean, Persian, and Grecian Empires. He makes him like a leopard, with the feet of a bear and the mouth of a lion (R. xiii. 2). The lion the bear and the leopard were Daniel's symbols for the above mentioned empires. Then S. John saw that one of his heads—heads consequently of the Roman Empire—was wounded to death and his deadly wound was healed, and all the earth wondered at it (R. xiii. 3). The heads of the Empire were the Emperors. There is an esoteric allusion to Nero in the Emperor who was wounded and recovered. There was a widespread belief in Nero's reign that he would be killed and come to life again. Suetonius mentions it (Nero 40-57). Tacitus alludes to it in his "History" (ii., 8). Dion Chrysostom (c. 117) refers to it (Orat. d. Pulchrid, p. 371). So does Lactantius, and S. Augustine in his *De Civit. Dei*, xx., 19. One of the Sibylline

Books records it plainly: "He who shall obtain the mark of fifty (*i.e.*, whose name begins with N = 50) will be Lord, a horrid serpent breathing out grievous war; who will destroy the outstretched arms of her who bore him . . . he shall be secretly destroyed. Then shall he return, making himself equal to a God" (Lib. v., p. 574). Nero destroyed his mother. In the ten years following Nero's death there appeared two pseudo Neros among the Parthians, and two in Asia Minor, showing the influence of the belief in Nero's revival, in those times.

S. John says that the beast "blasphemed God and his tabernacle," meaning that he was proclaimed a God and had temples erected to him with blasphemous titles inscribed thereon. Then he says that it was given to him to make war with the saints and overcome them. *Τῶν ἁγίων*, "the saints," was the name given to Christians at that time. Nero was permitted by God to persecute them and overcome them, in the sense of slaying them, even to SS. Peter and Paul. "And all that dwell upon the earth adored him" (R. xiii. 6 ff.), an allusion to Cæsar worship and the deification of Nero.

We go on now to Chapter xvii., for S. John does not put all his marks of identification in one place, lest the evidence should betray him to the ruling emperor Nero.

An angel comes to S. John in Chapter xvii., and explains to him the meaning of the symbols. First he shows him a woman drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And she had on her forehead a name written, "Babylon the Great." Babylon was the well known symbolic name for Rome, amongst Christians in S. John's day. Then the angel says, "Here is the understanding that hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, upon which the woman sitteth, and they are seven kings" (R. xvii. 9). The expression "mountains" has a double significance, since great potentates were sometimes symbolised by mountains in the O.T.; and, as a matter of fact, the woman, Rome, was built upon seven hills, and was known in literature as *Septicollis Roma*. The angel goes on with reference to the seven heads, or Kings. "Five are fallen, one is, and the other is not yet come, and when he shall come he must remain a short time, and the beast which was and is not, the same is also the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into destruction" (R. xvii. 10 f.). We are told that "the seven heads are seven Kings," the title Basileus or King was distinctive of the heads of the Empire in Nero's reign. "Five are fallen." The five fallen were Julius Cæsar, Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, and Claudius. "One is." One is alive—*viz.*, the sixth King, Nero. Then comes a further allusion to Nero's reincarnation. A seventh King must reign for a short

time. Then "the one that was," referring to "One that is" above, the same will come back as the eighth King.

We go back now to Chapter XIII., where the principal mark of Nero, the beast, is found. It is introduced by a similar call for wisdom and *understanding*. "He that hath understanding let him compute the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man and his number is six hundred and sixty six" (R. xiii. 18).

S. John explains that the beast is a man, that his number 666 will disclose his name by gematria, if the matter be studied with wisdom and understanding. This was addressed to the Servants of God, the Hebrew leaders of the Church in S. John's time, to Simeon of Jerusalem, and perhaps to S. Paul at Rome. It is supposed that the latter died some time in the year 67.

It was a common custom in S. John's time to denote men by the numbers found in the letters composing their names, considered as numerals. Amongst the Hebrews it was a literary fashion.

Seeing that S. John was a Hebrew, whose Greek, in the Apocalypse, has a very strong Hebraic flavour, it occurred to Benary, Hitzig, Reuss, and Ewald that he had in his mind Hebrew letters when penning this passage (Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible, 1902). Now, the name of Nero appears in the Talmud and other Rabbinical writings in two forms—one in which it is written in Hebrew, after the Greek analogy, thus קסר נרון (Neron Kaiser). The numerical value of these letters is 666, made up as follows:

$$\aleph = 50, \daleth = 200, \varepsilon = 6, \zeta = 50, \kappa = 100, \delta = 60, \zeta = 200 = 666.$$

This very remarkable discovery was made in 1835.

S. John wishes to convey to his brethren a definite name. He makes use of gematria, or the science of numbers, with which they were familiar, and uses Greek letters to conceal his meaning from Nero and his officers.

Recent researches have shown that, in the Hebrew writings of S. John's time, the name of Nero is spelt with a mark, called the Yod, equal to ten in gematria—thus קיסר, which would make the number of his name 676, not 666. But this does not detract from the value of the discovery, for it is felt that קסר, without the Yod would be recognised as Nero by the brethren, as every other indication pointed to Nero. Dr. Hort says, "The absence of the Yod is nothing, there is excellent authority for that" (p. xxxi.). Dr. Swete says, "But the abbreviation is perhaps allowable in a cypher, and it is not without example" (Renan *L'Antichrist*, p. 415; *op. cit.* p. 176, note 4).

It will be remembered that S. Irenæus found in the more recent, and probably Latin copies of the Apocalypse, at Lyons, the number of the beast given as 616. This is fortunate, as it shows the Roman recipient of Revelation understood the meaning of the Beast, and marked his copy accordingly. The Latin name *Nero Cæsar*, expressed in Hebrew letters, and worked out to numerals by gematria, gives the number 616.

Some have denied that Nero was the sixth King. They begin the line of Cæsars with Augustus. We have to go back to the time of S. John to see how the Romans and Jews of the period reckoned the line of kings.

Suetonius, who lived a few years after Nero's time, begins the list with Julius Cæsar, in his work "The Twelve Cæsars." Dion Cassius does the like. In the fourth book of Esdras, written by a Jewish Christian at the close of the first century, an angel, explaining the vision of the Roman eagle, says, that twelve kings shall reign in it, the second of which (Augustus) shall reign longer than any of the twelve (xii. 13 *et seq.*). In Book V. of the Sibylline Oracles, written not long after the destruction of Jerusalem, in an enumeration of the Roman emperors, Julius Cæsar is placed first, and Nero sixth. The emperors are not named, but are marked by a number corresponding to the initial letter of their official names. "He whose name signifies *twice ten* stands at the head of the series," meaning *Καῖσαρ*, or Julius Cæsar—K=20. Next follows: "He whose name is first of the alphabet"—*i.e.* Augustus; and sixth, 50=N—Nero.

Josephus, who lived in the reign of Nero, and who was a contemporary of S. John, makes Julius Cæsar the first of the Cæsars, and Nero the sixth.

When we consider that the principal object of the Roman theses was to set forth the crime and punishment of Cæsar worship, that Julius Cæsar was the first of the Cæsars, that he was the first of the Cæsar Gods, that he gave his name to the line of the Cæsars, that the name of Cæsar is part of the name of the Beast, it seems unreasonable to exclude him from consideration.

The Revelation foretells the overthrow of the Roman power by hostile armies. But Rome, Mistress of the World, was held by all in Nero's reign to be invincible. A symbol of a conquering power, threatening Rome, was required. It was chosen from Parthia.

For more than a century Parthia, in defiance of Rome, had proudly upheld the banner of the lion in the broad lands beyond the Euphrates.

For many years the struggle had been for the possession of

the kingdom of Armenia. In the year 66, Tiridates, a Parthian of the royal line of Arsacid, came to Rome to receive at the hands of Nero the crown of the kingdom of Armenia.

Tiridates was received with great splendour and the crown was given to him by Nero.

We turn now to the Apocalypse. The action of the book begins at verse two of Chapter vi. where our Lord appears as a conqueror. "And I saw and beheld a white horse, and he that sat on him had a bow: and a crown was given to him, and he went forth conquering, that he might conquer."

What is the significance of this symbolism? The bow in those days was just as much a weapon of warfare as the rifle is to-day. The Romans had ceased to use it, but it was the chief weapon of their enemies, the Parthians, who used it, moreover, on horseback. The Parthian army was composed of mounted archers, whose battle tactics are so well known that "a Parthian shaft" has passed into a proverb. White was the sacred colour of the Persians, with whom the Parthians were confounded at Rome. The Roman poets of the Augustan era used the expressions Parthia and Persia indifferently. A sacred white horse accompanied a Persian army. Kings of Persia who led their armies to battle were mounted on white horses. Parthian coins of the years 42-65, just before S. John's exile, show the King, Artabanus III. mounted on a white horse. The regular reverse type on Parthian coins shows the King deified as Apollo, armed with a bow, as a symbol of military power (Ramsay, *Letters to the Seven Churches*, pp. 58-61). The Apocalypse makes use of both sides of the coin in this symbolism.

The horseman is identified as our Lord, later in the Apocalypse, when He appears at the head of His forces in final battle. He is "the Word of God" (R. xix. 13). Moreover, we are told that "He hath on his garments and on his thigh written, King of Kings and Lord of Lords" (R. xix. 16). Now Phraates II. adopted the title of "King of Kings," which came into general use as the title of the Parthian kings from the time of Orodes, 38 B.C. It was the title of the Parthian kings when Tiridates came to Rome.

A Greek inscription was found at Bisutun, in which Góterzés, a Parthian monarch who reigned A.D. 41-51, is called Satrap of Satraps, equivalent to Lord of Lords. He was chief Satrap of Parthia, and assumed the title of King of Kings, later on, when he came to the throne.

It will probably be admitted that this is Parthian symbolism and that it throws light upon the date of the Apocalypse. The book was written, apparently, when Parthian politics in relation

to Rome deeply interested all parts of the Empire, as in the year 66.

In all the thirty years that elapsed between the time of Tiridates' visit to Rome, and the persecution of Domitian, in 96, peace with Parthia reigned supreme. There was no Parthian question in Domitian's reign. The memory of the Parthian war had been blotted out by a succession of startling events at home and abroad.

It is not probable that either Jewish or Parthian symbols would be familiar to the Servants of God in the year 96. The old Hebrew leaders of the Church were dead. The Kingdom of Christ had been long established. The primacy of the Church had passed to Rome, when Gentile Bishops ruled the Church. There was no one left to read the riddle of the Apocalypse aright. Papias, Justin Martyr, and Irenæus were all Millenarians. The mere fact that the Revelation was not understood in the year 96, shows that it was not written at that time or for that generation. Dating the Book in Domitian's persecution is tantamount to saying that it fell flat and was not understood.

5. There is a note of vengeance running through the Book which seems out of harmony with the placid character of S. John's old age and the nature of his teachings late in life. On the other hand, before the fall of the Temple, the fulfilment of prophecies was in the air. The Nazarene Church had inherited Jewish ideals, and believed in the *lex* or *jus talionis*. "The Lord is a jealous God and an avenger and hath wrath, the Lord takes vengeance on his adversaries" (Nahum i. 2. See Exod. xxi. 24, and Levit. xxiv. 20). The Book itself is in a great measure a revelation of God's vengeance on Jew and Pagan. The day of vengeance had come. The scroll of vengeance was unrolled in the sight of the Seer, and he was told to write it down.

We can hardly imagine S. John, carried into church, and preaching brotherly love as the one thing needed (p. 20), and in the same period of his life breathing forth the fire and slaughter of the Apocalypse, and painting its pictures of vengeance. The Domitian date is not patristic. It clashes with early and well established traditions. The internal evidence of the Book rules it out of court. It seems most probable, therefore, that the Apocalypse was written in the Neronian persecution, early in the year 67.

S. Irenæus, the supposed author of the Domitian date, makes no mention of Domitian persecution.

THE SEVEN CHURCHES OF ASIA

A FOREWORD is needed as to the meaning of the Letters addressed to the Angels of the Seven Churches of Proconsular Asia, viz., Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea. Many have thought that the Letters were intended for the above-named local Churches. Montanus of Phrygia thought so, and paved the way to schism.

On the other hand some have thought, even in early days, that the Letters were addressed to the Church at large.

Victorinus, Bishop of Petavio, A.D. 303, the earliest commentator on the Apocalypse, says: "What John addresses to one Church he addresses to all. Paul has first taught us that there are seven Churches in the whole world, and that the seven Churches named mean the Catholic Church" (Bib. Max. Patrum, Tom. iii., p. 414 ff.). Andreas of Cappadocia agreed with this. Grotius and Vitringa held that the letters to the seven churches revealed the condition of the Church in the successive ages of its existence down to the end of the world (see Vit. in Apoc., p. 32). The Ven. Holzhauser specialised on this subject, to which he devoted a great part of his book, "The Interpretation of the Apocalypse" (A.D. 1646). He found in these Letters a prediction of the spiritual state of the Church of Christ in the seven ages of its existence; and he attempted to map out the seven ages from the pages of history.

Far-reaching consequences hang upon this inquiry. If we find that the letters were not intended for the local Churches of Asia Minor, but for the universal Church of all time, the messages will have to be re-examined and closely scrutinised from the point of view of history. From data already obtained, we may be sure that this will lead to most important conclusions respecting the past and future of the Church, the millennium, and the position of the Church of the twentieth century in the secular scale.

It seems probable that the early Church took the Letters to be symbolical; the note of symbolism is so clearly stamped

upon the whole Book of Revelation. If we look at the "History of the Book," we will find that S. Polycarp in his Letter to the Philadelphians made no mention of the Letters. S. Ignatius of Antioch in his Epistles to Ephesus, Smyrna, and Philadelphia ignored the Letters. Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis, close to Laodicea, made no reference to them. Neither did any other early writer of Asia Minor, or elsewhere. The Apocalypse was known. Its millenarian passages had given rise to Chiliasm. But there is a significant silence about the Letters. If the letters were written in the Hebraic metaphoric style, which veils the political predictions of the Book, one could understand this silence. But they are not. They are written almost entirely in plain language. If their warnings came home to the individual Churches, and the truth and application of each was generally recognised, we should hear of it. It would have entered into the prolonged controversies as to the merits of the Book. The Seven Churches of Asia would surely be found ranged with the supporters of the Book. As a matter of fact, there is no mention of the Letters in the polemic about the authorship of Revelation. They seem to have been taken by both sides as symbolic and incomprehensible. The mere fact of there being seven Churches would have arrested the attention of S. John's Hebrew compeers. Seven, as we shall see in the next chapter, was a sacred Hebrew symbol, signifying completeness, or the full cycle of the things denoted by that number. In the seven days of creation and the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost, we have characteristic illustrations of the meaning of the number seven.

But to the numerical symbol we have added, in this particular instance of the Seven Churches, a most elaborate symbolical introduction. The Seven Churches are seen in a vision as "seven golden candlesticks" (R. i. 12). Our Lord explains to S. John that "the seven candlesticks are the Seven Churches" (R. i. 20). These candlesticks were familiarly known to the Hebrew Servants of God. They were the seven lamps of the Tabernacle of the Temple of Jerusalem, lamps which branched from a common stem uniting them all into one solid lamp of gold.

This lamp was designed by God, and the orders for its construction are given in Exodus xxv. 31 ff. It was a peculiarly sacred object. Even the oil burnt in it, was prescribed for its use by God (Levit. xxiv. 2). The light of the Tabernacle symbolised the Light of the Old Law. When the Temple was destroyed the Light of the Old Law was extinguished. The sacred candlestick was taken to Rome to adorn the triumphal procession of Titus; and its shape and form are sculptured upon his Arch, at Rome. The accompanying sketch, which

does not profess to be correct, was taken partly from the Arch of Titus and partly from the details in Exodus. It will serve to illustrate the symbolism of the Seven Churches.

The seven golden candlesticks of the Tabernacle are made use of by Jesus Christ to symbolise His Church, through which He shines, as the Light of the World.

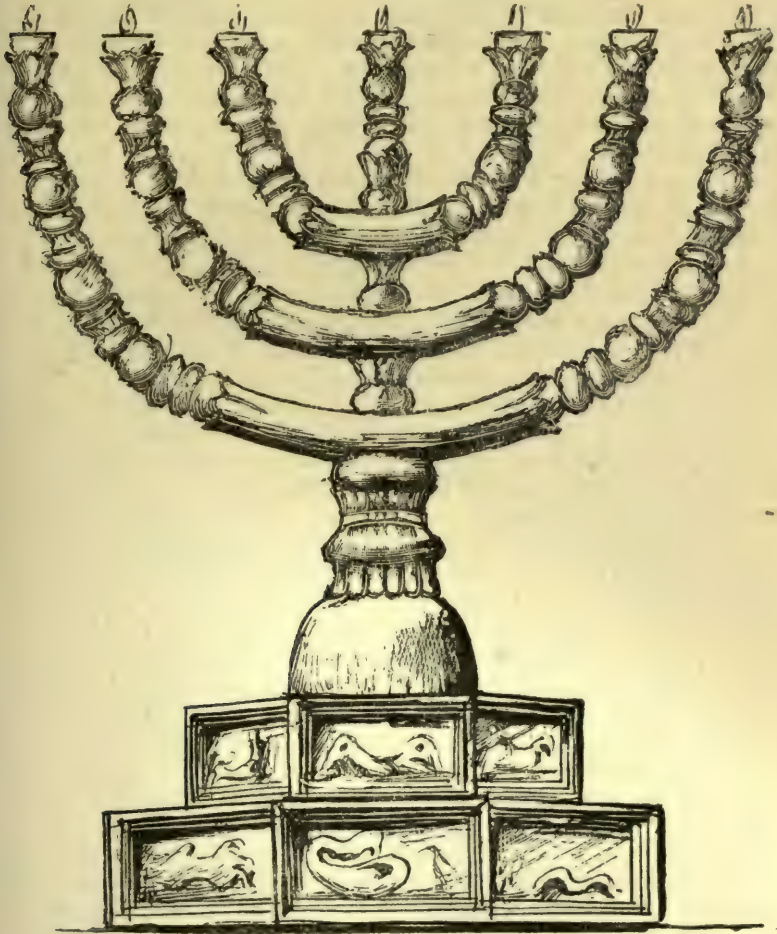
The Candlesticks and Churches appear in the first chapter of the Book and are introduced in this way. "The Revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave to him to make known to his servants the things which must shortly come to pass, and signified sending by his angel to his servant John" (R. i. 1). A revelation of the future was given to John to make known to the Servants of God. We may anticipate the exegesis a little by saying that the "Servants" of God form the hierarchy of the Church. Then follows, "John to the Seven Churches" grace and peace from the Father, the Holy Spirit, and Jesus Christ who has made us a kingdom and priests to God.

"I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, saying: What thou seest write in a book; and send to the seven churches which are in Asia, to Ephesus, and to Smyrna, and to Pergamos, and to Thyatira, and to Sardis, and to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea. And I turned to see the voice that spoke with me: and being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks. And in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, one like unto the Son of Man. . . . And he had in his right hand seven stars. . . . And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying: Fear not: I am the first and the last. . . . Write, therefore, the things which thou hast seen, and which are, and which must be done 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 are the seven churches" (R. i. 10-20).

The first and most important point to notice is that this is a vision of the future. S. John was ordered to make known to the servants of God "the things which must shortly come to pass." It is a revelation in the sense of a prediction or prophecy. S. John heard *behind* him a great voice, and "turned to see the voice," and being turned "saw seven golden candlesticks," corresponding to the Seven Churches.

This imagery places the Seven Churches in the future. The prophets looked upon history as a procession of events. As in a procession the leader must turn round and look behind him to see what is coming after him, so the prophet turns round to see the events which follow after him in point of time. Looking behind him into the future, S. John saw seven golden candle-

sticks, which our Lord tells him, "are the seven churches," subsequently named, from Ephesus to Laodicea. He saw "in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks one like unto the Son of Man." This vision confirms the promise made by our Lord to His Church. "Behold I am with you all days even



to the consummation of the world" (Matt. xxviii. 20). And our Lord had "in his right hand seven stars" which He tells us are "the Angels of the Seven Churches." The Angels of the Churches are the Chief Bishops of the Church, the successors of S. Peter, to whom it was said, "Thou art Peter and upon

this rock I will build my Church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. xvi. 18). This promise is also confirmed by the vision.

Some writers have held that the Angels of the Churches are not flesh and blood, but spiritual beings, in charge of the Churches, as guardian angels. Our Lord held visible stars in His right hand, and He tells S. John that these are the "angels" of the Seven Churches. Spirits are invisible and intangible, and do not correspond to the symbolism. Moreover, these angels of the Apocalypse are admonished, warned, praised and encouraged, according to the state of their Churches.

It is not probable that God would grant visions to S. John, and order him to write a book about them and send it to supernatural beings.

We may anticipate the exegesis a little by saying that "angels" and "apostles" are derived from two Greek words, having the same meaning, "a messenger" or "one sent." We assume that the Angels are the successors of the Apostles, who as Chief Bishops, rule the Church.

The introduction to the seven Churches contains one other important note for our guidance. Our Lord refers to "the mystery" of the seven stars, and the seven golden candlesticks. He draws attention to the fact that this vision veils a mystery, and He lifts but a corner of the veil.

The Key to the mystery lies in the seven candlesticks which symbolise the seven churches. As the seven-branched lamp of the tabernacle formed but one lamp, so the seven churches are one church, the complete cycle of the Church of Christ in its secular aspect. The seven lamps of the Tabernacle in their union with each other, through their foundation and support, represent the union of the Church in all its ages with its founder and supporter Jesus Christ. This invests every one of the Seven Churches of Asia with a symbolic significance. Collectively they stand for the universal Church of all time. Individually they stand for its seven successive periods.

It is generally accepted that the history of the Church, as it lies before us, falls naturally into seven divisions, each having its special characteristics. First, "the Apostolic Church. Second, the Church of the Martyrs. Third, the Church of the Confessors and Doctors. Fourth, the wide-spreading Church of the Middle Ages. Fifth, the Church of the Reformation period. Sixth, the present day Church of the open door. Seventh, the Church of the last days."

Holzhauser thought that the seven churches from Ephesus to Laodicea were selected because their names indicated the

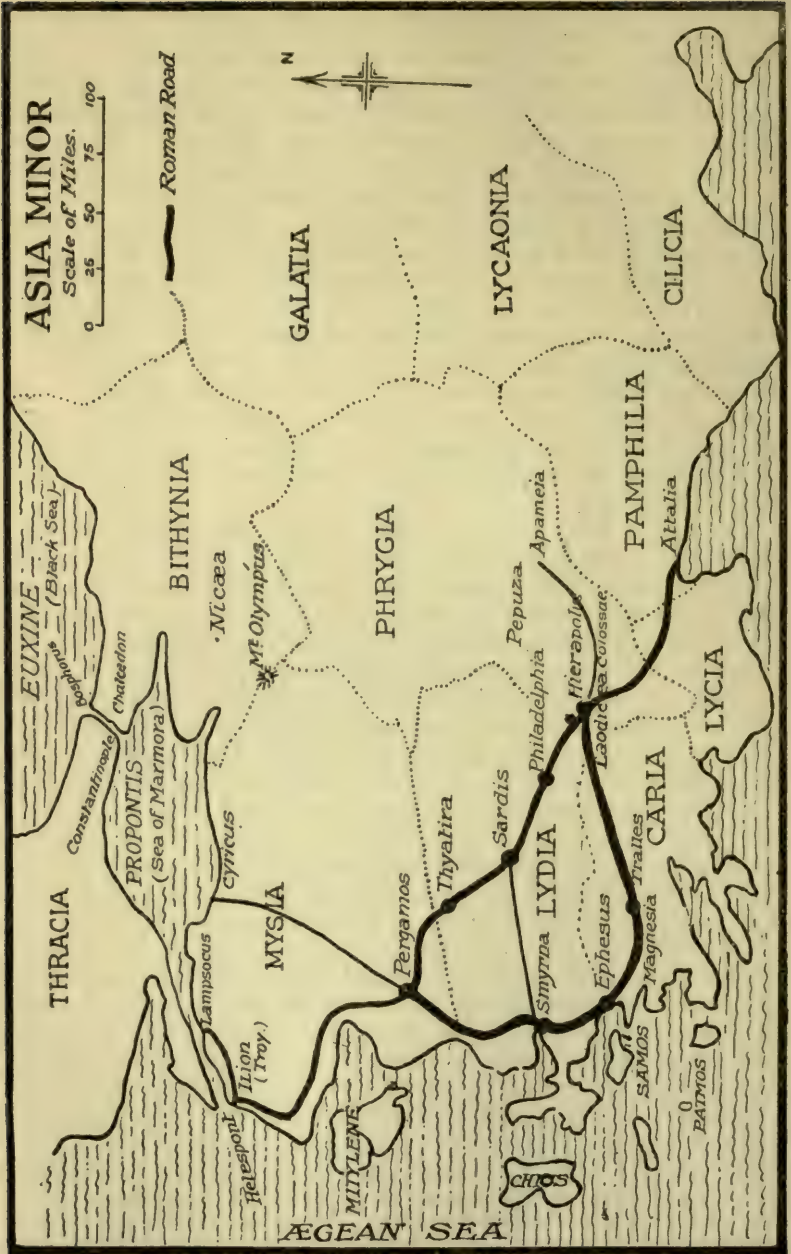
chief characteristics of the different ages of the Church. Thus, Ephesus means "counsel," "my wish" and "great distinction." The first age witnessed the will of God in the new counsel of Christianity. It also witnessed the abolition of the Old Law and the advent of the Kingdom of Christ. Smyrna means "canticles," or "myrrh." Myrrh is an emblem of blood. It characterises the martyrs' age, which ended in the canticles of the Church triumphant (R. vii. 10). Pergamos means "dividing the horns." It witnesses to the separation of truth from heresy, which took place in the third age; also the division of the Church into East and West. Thyatira means "to be lighted up." It is a symbol of the conversion of the nations, which took place in the fourth age. Sardis signifies, "the origin or cause of beauty," referring to the Reformation persecution, which renewed the strength and beauty of the Church in the fifth age. Philadelphia means, "brotherly love," the characteristic of the present or sixth age. And Laodicea means "vomiting," significant of the last age of the Church.

The Seven Churches to which the Book of Revelation was sent, were situated on the main Roman road circling in S. John's district of Proconsular Asia in the same order in which they are named by S. John. This will be seen in the accompanying map. Starting from S. John's headquarters at Ephesus and travelling north, one came first to Smyrna, and then to Pergamos, where the road turned south-east, then to Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea.

There is a peculiarity in the selection of these names which gives colour to Holzhauser's theory. A glance at the map will show that the seventh city on the Roman road was Hierapolis. But that Church was passed over in favour of Laodicea, because Laodicea signifies vomiting. Of this Church our Lord says, "But because thou art lukewarm and neither cold nor hot I will begin to vomit thee out of my mouth" (R. iii. 16).

The Letters were not Epistles from S. John to his flock, although the Churches addressed were in his Apostolic charge. They are unlike any of the Canonical Epistles. They come direct from God. Their opening words are prophetic and their concluding words show that they are the outpourings of the Holy Spirit. Every letter ends thus, "He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith to the Churches."

Dr. Swete makes a comment on the Greek text with which these letters begin, which confirms the above conclusion. He says: The formula *τῷ ἀγγέλῳ . . . γράψον: Τάδε λέγει* is not epistolary, but prophetic; for *γράφον* cf. i. 11, 19; xiv. 13; xix. 9;



xxi. 5. *Τάδε λέγει* announces a prophetic message, as frequently in the LXX ("The Apocalypse of S. John," p. xli, Note 4).

The Letters are distinctly a part of the Revelation of S. John, and they are put in the forefront of his Book. The reader will find that they relate exclusively to the interior state of the Church. There are predictions as to the punishments of the wicked and the rewards of the just, also as to persecution; but the general tenor of the Letters is a survey of the moral condition of the Church, accompanied by advice and warning, and guidance from the Holy Spirit. As addressed to living local Churches, one fails to understand how they could be taken as a prediction.

The repetition of warnings and threats of punishment remind one of the prophecies of the Old Law. The predictions of the prophets were given to the chosen people to encourage them to virtue and especially to warn them of the final doom of impenitence. It is natural to suppose that a similar concession would be made to human weakness in the new Dispensation. The Revelation or Prophecy of S. John stands to the Church of Christ in the same relation as the prophecies of the Old Law stood to Judaism. It reveals the future, warns the Church, and proclaims the final judgment. This will appear more distinctly in the detailed exegesis of the Letters.

The importance of the Seven Churches in the scheme of Revelation is not limited by the Letters. The Book of Revelation as a whole was intended for them. The Command of God was thus expressed to S. John, "What thou seest write in a book and send to the seven churches" (R. i. 11, where see notes).

"What thou seest" relates to the visions which come on after the Seven Letters, which visions contain the revelation of the future, down to the end of the world. Philadelphia, the sixth Church, is warned of the near approach of the second coming of Christ, "Behold I come quickly" (R. iii. 11). Laodicea, the seventh and last church, is warned that the second coming is at the door, "Behold I stand at the door and knock" (R. iii. 20).

"The last words of the Apocalypse, based on two passages of Deuteronomy, place the Apocalypse on a level with the Torah, and anticipate a place for it among the Scriptures of the Church. It is evident that S. John anticipated that it would go down to posterity as a book for the warning and comfort of the whole Church to the end of time" (Swete, *op. cit.*, p. xcviij).

We read in the last words,

"For I testify to every one that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book: If any man shall add to these things, God shall add

upon him the plagues 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 these things which are written in this book. . . . Surely I come quickly: Amen" (R. xxii. 18-20).

There is evidence here that the book was sent to Churches which will last to the end of the world. It is a prediction. It foresees the abundant apocalyptic literature of the seventeenth and later centuries, and it warns us not to tamper with the words of the book.

So far we have examined the Letters without reference to the special circumstances of the local Churches of Asia. We turn now to compare one with the other. The result would be astonishing if it were not foreseen. There appears to be very little connection between the Letters and the Churches.

When the Revelation was given, in the year 67, the Seven Churches of Asia were newly formed. Some of them barely existed.

When S. Paul went to Ephesus, about the year 54, he found certain disciples there, but they had not been either instructed or baptised. He asked them:

"Have you received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? But they said to him: We have not so much as heard whether there be a Holy Ghost. And he said: In what then were you baptised? Who said: In John's baptism. . . . Having heard these things they were baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had imposed his hands on them, the Holy Ghost came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied. And all the men were about twelve" (Acts xix. 2, 7).

This was, practically, the foundation of the Church of Ephesus. Twelve men were baptised and confirmed by S. Paul. It would appear that they received, in Confirmation, the same gifts which the Apostles received on the day of Pentecost, for they spoke with tongues and prophesied; that is, preached as the mouthpieces of God. They were not bishops in the modern sense of the word, with mitre and ring, and with a titular diocese. In the first century, "ancients," or "presbyters" of the Church were placed in charge of Christian groups, large enough to require supervision. These men had not the dignified position acquired by bishops of the Church in later times. But their existence in Asia Minor and their office as overseers of the Churches, is made clear by the "Acts of the Apostles" and the Epistles of S. Paul. About three years after S. Paul had consecrated the twelve men of Ephesus, he was shipwrecked at Malta on his way to Jerusalem. He sent to

Ephesus for the ancients of the Church, presumably these same twelve men. "Sending from Miletus to Ephesus, he called the ancients of the Church" (Acts xx. 17). And thus he addressed them: "Take heed to yourselves and to the whole flock, wherein the Holy Ghost hath placed you overseers [ἐπίσκοποι] to rule the Church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood" (Acts xx. 28).

It appears, from the Acts of the Apostles, that the Church of Ephesus, the mother Church of the Province of Asia, was founded by S. Paul some thirteen years before the Apocalypse was written. We do not know when the other Churches, mentioned in the Letters, were founded. There is no evidence that S. Paul himself visited any of them. They were converted by missionaries, who spread out from Ephesus in the course of time. They were, therefore, founded later than A.D. 54.

The exact dates of the acts of S. Paul are not known. The only fixed point we have is the date of the death of Portius Festus, the Roman Governor, which took place in the year 62. He it was who sent S. Paul to Rome for trial by Nero. This is supposed to have been about the year 61. Before that, S. Paul had been imprisoned at Cæsarea, for more than two years, by Felix the governor. And so we work back to the other dates approximately.

It is plain, at all events, that all of the Seven Churches of Asia were recently founded when the Letters were written, and that some of them were in their infancy as Churches.

It is well known that there was no organised "church," in our sense of the word, in any of the cities of Asia Minor in the year 67. There was no public worship, no religious building, and no united congregation of the faithful. Christians were not allowed church buildings until the third century. In a great city like Ephesus, there were, at that time, small gatherings of the faithful, held privately, in the houses of leading Christians. Each of them was known as a church. S. Paul speaks of "Nymphas and the church, that is in his house" (Col. iv. 15). Judging by the "Acts," the Apostles lodged in these so-called churches from time to time. "Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house; with whom I also lodge" (1 Cor. xvi. 19). The epistle to Philemon is sent, not only to Philemon, but also "to the church which is in thy house" (Phil. 2).

Writing generally of the history of the seven Churches, it may be said that they became infested with the Montanist and Arian heresies, which arose in the East, and tormented the Church of the first centuries. When the seat of Empire was transferred from Rome to Constantinople in the fourth century, they came

under the Byzantine influence, and at the end of that century passed into the hands of the Greek Church. In the fifth century these Churches espoused the cause of Eutyches and embraced the Monophysite doctrine. Various dissensions arose in consequence, but all the forms of Eutychianism were united in the Jacobite Church by the monk, Jacob, in the sixth century. In the seventh century (636) the Arab conquest of Syria brought continual misfortunes upon that part of Asia. As members of the Orthodox Greek Church they shared in the conflicts between the Greeks and the Catholic Church: they denied the supremacy of the Pope and the procession of the Holy Ghost from the Father and the Son. They were finally excommunicated with the rest of the Greek Church, by Leo IX. in the year 1054. In the same century they were overrun by the Seljuk Turks. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the district of the Seven Churches of Asia Minor was devastated by Islamic hordes of wandering nomads, with whom the Byzantine power was unable to cope. At the end of the thirteenth century Mohammedanism reigned supreme in the whole district, and it does so still. The Sultan of Turkey is now lord of Asia Minor. Some of the Churches of the Apocalypse have disappeared entirely. Others survive as Orthodox Greek, or Jacobite Churches. Some even of the great cities, which gave their names to the Churches, are gone from the face of the earth. Ephesus and Laodicea are mere heaps of ruins. The first and the last, and also the greatest of the Churches, have long since disappeared. This sad historic record points to the conclusion that the Seven Churches of Asia were but vanishing symbols of the ages of a Church which is imperishable.

When we compare the Letters with the Churches in the exegesis, we shall find remarkable divergences. The statements made regarding them do not generally fit in with their condition as primitive Churches. But the things omitted are, if possible, still more surprising. Here we have Churches that were later more or less infected by Arianism and the other heresies which ravaged the Greek Church. There is not a word about heresy in any one of the Letters. On the contrary, Pergamos, the third Church, which we take to symbolise the third age, or age of heresies, is told, "I know where thou dwellest, where the seat of Satan is, and thou holdest fast my name and hast not denied my faith" (R. ii. 13). We can understand this as addressed to the Church of Rome, but not as addressed to the Church of Pergamos in Asia Minor. There is not a word about the extinction of the Churches. Quite the reverse. They are treated as guardians of the Book of Revelation till the end of

time. To the last Church it is said, "Behold I stand at the door and knock." This message was sent to Laodicea more than eighteen hundred years ago, and Christ has not come yet. More than that, Laodicea disappeared long ago. Its ruins are found near the village of Denizli, formerly called Denizli Ladik.

Of positive divergences between the Letters and the Churches to which they are nominally addressed, it will be sufficient to mention here two glaring instances. Others will be found in the detailed exegesis. The longest Letter of the series is addressed to Thyatira. This Church is assumed to be of long standing and renowned for its good works. Our Lord says, "I know thy works, and thy faith, and thy charity, and thy ministry, and thy patience, and thy last works, which are more than the former" (R. ii. 19). What are the facts? The city of Thyatira was the smallest and least important of the seven. Its Church is unknown to history. Eusebius, the early Ecclesiastical Historian, does not mention it. Its early converts seem never to have gained sufficient strength to form a Church. The Alogi, who were very prominent Antimontanists, made it one of their strongest arguments against the authority of the Apocalypse, that there was no Church at Thyatira. They lived in Asia Minor towards the end of the second century, and were in a position to know. Controversialists of those days were very acute. If there had been a Church at Thyatira, we should have heard something about it. But the statement of the Alogi remains to this day uncontested.

Again, take the case of Laodicea. This Church is assumed to be the worst of the seven, so bad, indeed, that our Lord threatens to vomit it out of His mouth (R. iii. 16). As it happens, we know more about this Church than any other, because it rose to be a well organised and zealous Church, in fact, the Primatial Church of the District. Eusebius mentions it frequently. It has left its mark upon history, and all that we know of it leads to the conclusion that it was one of the best Churches of the Seven.

Putting all these facts together we will do well to range ourselves with the early Church in considering these Letters as symbolical. If they symbolise the Christian Church in its seven ages, then their meaning is clear, and this forecast of Church history splendidly accurate. For example, Thyatira, the middle Church of the seven, becomes the Church of the Middle Ages, and its Letter depicts its condition and trials accurately, with the far-seeing eye of prophecy.

How comes it then that these Letters were addressed to the Seven Churches of Asia? S. John had a prophetic revelation to make to the "Angels," or chief Bishops of the Christian

Church of the future. That Church he foresaw was divisible into seven periods, each requiring a separate message of warning. The problem was an extremely difficult one. The chief thing to be *avoided* in warning the Churches of the future was to give them names that would rivet attention on local Churches. If the Letters had been addressed to the leading Churches of S. John's time, Jerusalem, Rome or Antioch, for example, it would be difficult to escape the conclusion that they were intended for those Churches. The system adopted, of giving the Churches the names of the cities met with in sequence on the Roman road circulating in S. John's district, was so obviously conventional, that it would tend to dissipate the idea that the Letters were meant for the local Churches. If these cities had names corresponding in a way with the chief characteristics of the Churches of the future, that was an advantage. If the local Churches named, were to work out a record unlike that of Revelation addressed to them, and were to be extinguished in the Middle Ages, that would be an additional advantage. They could not then be mistaken for the Churches of Revelation. We know the prophetic warnings concerning them follow the analogy of the prophecies of the Old Law as regards mysteriousness. And we know also that we are warned at the end of each Letter to study them deeply, as a mystery to be unravelled, for that is the meaning of "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the Churches."

The question arises, how would the followers of S. John and the servants of God, in his own day, take the Letters? They were men who knew Greek, but thought in Hebrew. They appreciated the esoteric character of the whole Book, and would be prepared to take the Letters as symbolic. Besides they knew the condition of the Churches named, how they were recently formed, immature Churches, without any special history, in some places without chief bishops corresponding to the Angels of the Churches. They knew also the conditions of the cities, how they were pagan cities in which the idolatries and vices of Greece and Rome were unhappily blended. Practically the Christians in all those cities were subject to the same environment and the same temptations. One circular letter would have sufficed for them all. It is commonly believed that S. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians, was, in fact, a circular letter to the local Churches. "The words, *ἐν Ἐφέσῳ*, in the first verse of the Epistle do not belong to the primitive text" (P. Ladeuze, *Ephesians* in *Cath. Encyc.*). This Epistle, written probably about A.D. 62, does not moreover correspond in any way with the Revelation Letters of A.D. 67.

A very curious thing happened to S. Paul, not many years

before the Letters appeared, which would in a manner have prepared the brethren to question the importance of the Seven Churches of Asia.

When S. Paul and Barnabas went forth to preach to the Gentiles, having "passed through Phrygia, and the country of Galatia, they were forbidden by the Holy Ghost to preach the word of God in Asia. And when they were come into Mysia, they attempted to go into Bithynia: and the spirit of Jesus permitted them not" (Acts xvi. 6, 7).

This very startling incident in the history of the early Church had been reported to the "brethren" at Jerusalem. It was well known to all. And there must have been some speculation amongst them as to the reason why S. Paul was turned away from the country of the Seven Churches of Asia. A mysterious mark was placed against those Churches. It was a mystery to the brethren, and it prepared them for the mystery of the Churches. . . . τὸ μυστήριον . . . τὰς ἑπτὰ λυχνίας (R. i. 20).

The brethren knew that the Letters were symbolical. But it is not probable that they understood their true significance, excepting those to whom the Book was sent—S. Simeon of Jerusalem, and S. Paul at Rome. Could S. John explain to the brethren that the local Churches, from Ephesus to Laodicea, in which they were zealously labouring, were destined to fall into heresy and decay? Could he reveal the heresies of the future to them? Could he tell them of the Moslem Power that would destroy these Churches in the middle ages, not only the Churches, but the great cities of Ephesus and Laodicea? The curiosity of the Brethren once aroused would prompt these and a host of other questions.

There is no evidence that S. John told anyone about the meaning of the Letters. The most illuminating incident in the history of these Letters is furnished by the attitude of the local Churches, from Ephesus to Laodicea, towards them. A celebrated Council of the Church was held at Laodicea in the year 360, when these Churches had attained their full development. It was attended by the Bishops of Asia Minor, amongst them the Angels or Bishops of the Seven Churches to whom these Letters were addressed. They had ample time to study the connection between the Letters and the Churches. An opportunity was then afforded them of showing how they valued the Letters. They dropped the whole Book of Revelation, Letters and all, out of the Canon of the Scriptures. The Apocalypse of S. John does not appear in Canon 60 of the Synod of Laodicea (C. 3, 606). The meaning of that is plain. The men on the spot, who had the best means of testing the Letters, and who from their position as Bishops of the local Churches, were

bound to examine the question reverently and closely, came to the conclusion that the Letters were not intended for the Churches. These Letters are a Christian Prophecy comparable to that given to the Jews by the Prophets of the Old Law. So far as the Church is concerned the Letters are the most important part of the whole Book of Revelation. The events foretold in the Jewish theme, the Roman theme, and the millennium have passed away. But the Letters to Philadelphia and Laodicea concern the present generation.

The Letters are drawn up on a common sevenfold plan, comprehensive in character. They are the only portion of the Book, dictated to S. John, word by word, by God.

First. They are addressed to the Angels or bishops of the Churches, in prophetic style.

Second. They are introduced by some very significant attribute, taken from the vision of our Lord in the Preface.

Third. Every Letter continues, "I know thy works" or "thy labours," or some other distinguishing character of the Church addressed.

Fourth. The chief characteristics of the Church, good or bad, are briefly outlined.

Fifth. Praise or blame is meted out to the Churches, and rewards or punishments are predicted for them.

Sixth. The Churches are exhorted to do penance or hold fast the faith they have received.

Seventh. Every Letter ends thus, "He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith to the Churches."

VI

THE PLAN AND SYMBOLISM OF REVELATION

THE Revelation of S. John is divisible naturally into seven parts. 1. The Preface. 2. The Letters to the Seven Churches. 3. The Jewish Theme. 4. The Roman Theme. 5. The Millennium and final struggles of the Church. 6. The Judgment. 7. Paradise. It ends with an Epilogue.

Part I. Consists of the Title Page of the Book; its general preface and a special preface to the Letters to the Seven Churches. (Chapter I.)

Part II. Contains the Letters to the Angels of the Seven Churches. (Chapters II. and III.)

Part III. Relates chiefly to the Jews. It has interludes, as will be seen from the following synopsis of its Chapters.

Chapter IV. Vision of the throne of God. The Jewish prophecies are contained in a book with Seven Seals.

Ch. V. The first four seals are opened disclosing our Lord as a Conqueror, followed by war, famine, pestilence, and death. We are invited to notice that these are the active agents of God's wrath in the following Chapters of the Book.

Ch. VI. The fifth seal shows the martyrs crying to heaven for vengeance. They are told to wait till their roll is complete. Then follows the Sixth Seal, a vision of the completion of the martyrs' roll.

Ch. VII. An interlude in which Hebrew Christians are protected by the sign of the Cross from the vengeance which is about to fall upon the Jews.

Ch. VIII. The Seventh Seal relates to vengeance upon the Jews. From it proceed seven woe trumpets. The first four trumpets bring dire calamities upon the Jews.

Ch. IX. The fifth trumpet looses the spirits of the bottomless pit upon the Jews. Then follows a vision of vengeance upon Rome, contained in the sixth trumpet.

Ch. X. Continues the Roman interlude. S. John is given a little open book and is told to digest its contents, and to prophesy about many nations and peoples and tongues and Kings.

Ch. XI. Takes us back to Jerusalem, where two witnesses appear and exhort the Jews to repentance. They are slain. An earthquake destroys the city. The Seventh Angel sounds his trumpet, and the end of the Jewish Covenant is indicated.

Part IV. Cæsar worship and the punishment of Rome.

Ch. XII. The Roman theme begins with a preface of its own—a vision of the Church as a woman in labour, and Satan, the dragon, trying to destroy her. The woman is saved and Satan departs to make war on the rest of her seed.

Ch. XIII. A Beast arises from the sea, typifying the Roman Empire. The dragon gives him his own strength and power. A lamb-like beast, typical of the pagan hierarchy, arises from the earth, and makes the earth worship the Beast, whose number is 666.

Ch. XIV. The martyrs appear in heaven rejoicing. Their cry for vengeance on Rome is heard. Angels proclaim the hour of judgment on Rome. The Son of Man appears with a sickle. The harvest of the pagan Empire is reaped, and the winepress of God's wrath is trodden down and overflows with blood.

Ch. XV. Seven angels appear with the seven last plagues of God's wrath upon Rome. The martyrs sing a song of triumph.

Ch. XVI. The vials of God's wrath are poured out upon men having the mark of the Beast, upon the Beast, and upon his throne. They blaspheme God, and repent not. The Dragon, the Beast, and the False-prophet, collect armies for a final effort, the battle of Armagedon.

Ch. XVII. One of the seven angels explains the meaning of the symbols. The woman, "Babylon" is Rome; the Beast is the line of Cæsar Gods, particularly Nero; and the horns of the Beast are Kings who shall destroy Rome.

Ch. XVIII. A glorious angel proclaims the fall of Rome. A picture of the burning and desolation of Rome follows. Heaven, the apostles and prophets are told to rejoice because God has executed His judgment on Rome.

Ch. XIX. The martyrs rejoice, because the Church is free. The Church appears as a bride. Heaven is opened and the Lord and His army ride forth to the battle of Armagedon. The Beast and the False prophet are taken and cast into hell.

Part V. The Millennium and afterwards.

Ch. XX. Satan is chained up for a thousand years, and then loosed for "a little time." He causes the nations to surround "the camp of the saints" and "the beloved city." He is cast down to hell and his armies destroyed.

Part VI. The General Judgment.

Ch. XX. Verses 11 to 15.

Part VII. The New Jerusalem.

Ch. XXI. and Ch. XXII. Verses 1-5.

Epilogue.

Ch. XXII. Verses 6 to 21.

Viewed in this synoptic form the Book is easily understood. It will be noticed that the Chapters formed by Cardinal Stephen Langton about seven hundred years ago agree, as a rule, with the divisions of the Book.

The Seven Parts of the Book, although separate in detail, are united by threads of continuation running through them all. The promises made to the Angels of the Seven Churches in the beginning of the Book are repeated towards the end. The throne of God in Chapter IV. which forms the preface to the General Revelation, is shown to be in permanent session throughout the action of the Book. Angels come and go from it, to execute the commands of God. There is a distinct verbal connection too. The same words and expressions are used in different parts of the Book, to show that they relate to the same events. This is better seen in the original Greek than in translations. Examples of this will be found in the exegesis. To give one value to one and the same word is a leading principle of hermeneutics.

The greater part of the Book is written in a cypher of symbolism derived from the Old Testament, which forms its code. In a general way it may be said that the esoteric meaning of the Book can be discovered by following up its O.T. references.

It has been shown in the Biography of S. John that the Roman invasion of Judæa, the Neronian persecution, and Cæsar worship, were the principal subjects heavily weighing on his mind when he went to Patmos. The synopsis of Revelation given above, shows that they formed the leading themes of his Book. The Jewish theme and the Roman theme necessarily contained many political allusions to Rome, some of which certainly would be considered treasonable.

The Book needed a cypher known to the Servants of God alone, to keep it from recoiling on the heads of its friends. The symbolic style of the prophets Isaias, Jeremias, Ezechiel, and Daniel, formed a vehicle of communication exactly suited to the occasion.

Dr. Swete says :

“The writer of the New Testament Apocalypse has made large use of the Apocalyptic portions of the Old Testament. He refers to the Book of Daniel in some forty-five places . . . and the Books of

Isaias, Ezechiel, and Zacharias are used with almost equal frequency, while other prophets, the Psalter and the Pentateuch are often in view. No book in the New Testament is so thoroughly steeped in the thought and imagery of the Hebrew Scriptures" (*Op. cit.* liii.).

Westcott and Hort have calculated that of 405 verses in the Apocalypse, 265 contain Old Testament language, and there are 500 references to the same Scriptures in the Book.

Amos, Joel, and Osee, are laid under contribution, and there are references to Genesis and Exodus.

The prophets of the Old Law foretold the woes of the people of Israel for their constant relapses into idolatry, symbolised as harlotry. They are full of the symbolic vocabulary of punishments in store for the Jews, and for the Gentiles, especially the Babylonians. This language lent itself admirably to the purpose of S. John, whose Jewish and Roman themes deal with the punishment of the Jews and Romans.

But the prophets of the Old Law uttered many predictions which were in process of fulfilment when the Revelation was written. S. John shows great care in selecting extracts from the O.T. with the double object of explaining the context of his Book, and showing forth the fulfilment of prophecies.

It was S. John's aim to gather the prophecies of the Old Law, and focus them on the event and prove that the things foretold by the prophets came literally true. A part of his object in writing the Apocalypse was to demonstrate the truth of the Messianic prophecies, which all hang together, whether they relate to the Messiah, to His kingdom, or to the extinction of the old Judaism. If the prophets foretold truly the destruction of Jerusalem, they were inspired by God in all things, throughout.

S. John's plan was to write the Book of Revelation as a continuation of the Prophecy of Daniel, from the point where it broke off, and was closed and sealed. Daniel's prophecy related to the destruction of the Temple. That was known to the Hebrew Servants of God. When the Apostles asked our Lord about the destruction of the Temple, He answered, "When therefore you shall see *the abomination of desolation*, which was spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the Holy place . . . then they that are in Judæa let them flee to the mountains" (Matt. xxiv. 15 f.). When Daniel heard, "And when the scattering of the band of the holy people shall be accomplished, all these things shall be finished," he wanted to know more, and was answered, "Go, Daniel, because the words are shut up, and sealed until the appointed time" (Dan. xii. 9). This abrupt and tantalising ending of the prophecy of Daniel had prepared the Apostles for another prophecy, breaking the seals, when the time appointed should arrive. That time had come.

Rome had declared war on the Jews, and her legions were on the way to Jerusalem. What could be more appropriate than to throw the second and supplementary prophecy into the form of a sealed book, of which the seals should be broken one by one, as a continuation of the prophecy of Daniel?

It was not only appropriate itself and enlightening to the Servants of God, to whom the Revelation was sent, but it struck at once the note of O.T. symbolism which forms the key to the cypher of the Apocalypse.

The prophecy of Daniel looked beyond the fall of the Temple, and foresaw the rise of the New Kingdom of Christ. As that shrewd exegete, John Henry Newman, pointed out, Daniel foretold the kingdom.

“Nay holy Daniel himself is in no small measure employed on this very subject. He it is who announces a fifth kingdom like ‘a stone cut without hands,’ which broke in pieces and consumed all former kingdoms, but was itself to ‘stand for ever.’ . . . He saw in the night visions, and behold one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven and came to the Ancient of Days, and there was given to Him dominion and glory and a kingdom that all people, nations, and languages should serve Him” (“Essays Crit. and Hist.,” vol. ii. p. 174).

The reader will find loud echoes of these prophecies of Daniel reverberating through the Revelation of S. John.

The woe trumpets of the Jewish theme lead up to the proclamation of the Kingdom. When the seventh trumpet sounded, “there were great voices in heaven saying, The Kingdom of this world is become our Lord’s and his Christ’s, and he shall reign for ever and ever, Amen” (R. xi. 15). We are told previously that when the seventh angel “shall begin to sound the trumpet, the mystery of God shall be finished, as he has declared by his servants the prophets” (R. x. 7). That mystery had reference to the destruction of the Temple and the Kingdom of Christ. These passages show the close connection between these events in S. John’s mind. And they show the period of his Book, viz., not long before the fall of the Temple of Jerusalem, which synchronised with the rise of the Kingdom of Christ. S. John was chosen as the prophet of the New Law when our Lord said, “So I will have him to remain till I come” (Jhn. xxi. 22). The mantle of the prophet Daniel fell upon him. An angel addresses him in the Book as “thy fellow servant and of thy brethren, the prophets” (R. xxii. 9). And he says to him, “Seal not the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand” (R. xxii. 10). Thus contrasting the prophecy of S. John with that of Daniel in words pregnant with meaning, taken from Daniel’s prophecy.

The Book of Daniel was not concerned with the fall of the Roman Empire. It was necessary therefore before beginning the Roman theme, to provide another book, from which to draw the thread of narrative. This is done by introducing a little open book at Chapter X., in an interlude, before the close of the Jewish theme.

The Roman theme, as dwelling much on Cæsar worship and the decline of Rome, has a closer veil of symbolism than the rest of the Book. But it is of the same Scriptural type.

The most important symbols in the Book are clearly explained, viz., the Seven Candlesticks and the Seven Stars. In the Roman theme an angel explains to S. John and, through him, to us, the meaning of many of the chief symbols. The leading character in the Roman theme, Nero, is as strongly and clearly portrayed as is compatible with a cypher. The names of the chief localities in Revelation, as Jerusalem and Rome, are stamped upon them by distinguishing marks (R. xi., 8, xvii. 5, 9, 18). From time to time the saints and martyrs in the standing vision of the Court of Heaven, by their prayers and hymns, throw a strong side-light on the nature and progress of events. They fulfil the office of the chorus in Greek drama.

There is also a symbolism of numbers.

The number seven is largely used in the Old Testament as a complete number, fully satisfying the mind as regards the context. It does not mean literally seven. Take the case of the seven days of creation in Genesis. It does not mean only seven days. It means the number of days required. The Holy Scriptures neither retrospectively nor prophetically give exact information as to numbers which correspond with dates. Professor Moses Stuart points out in his Commentary on the Apocalypse (*op. cit.* vol. ii. p. 425) that the gods of the ancients were threefold, that a trinity was a sacred form. Three stood for the divine power, the creator, and four for the created—north, south, east, and west; the four corners of the earth; spring, summer, autumn, and winter; the four elements—earth, air, fire, and water. Seven, formed from the union of the divine three and created four, stood for completeness, amplitude, or universality, especially in a religious sense.

S. Augustine says the number seven signifies the union of God with creation (Civ. Dei. xi. 31). The Jews were especially sensible of the import of the number seven. Not only the Sabbath day was sacred, but every seventh month. Every seventh year was the Sabbatical year in which cultivation was forbidden. Seven times seven was their Jubilee year.

We shall find seven often occurring in the Book of Revelation, as in the seven seals, the seven trumpets, the seven vials, and

the seven thunders. The number seven stands for the totality of the things concerned, by no means limited to seven.

Three and a half has also a mysterious significance, as we gather from the missionary life and death of our Lord, as related in the Gospels. It was the period of the Jewish War, and it was the period of Nero's persecution. Both of these latter events are alluded to in the Apocalypse by this symbolism of time. Three and a half is not to be taken strictly; it means more than three and less than four.

Again, ten as a Scriptural number does not mean precisely ten. It is the sum of the digits of both hands, the basis of notation. It exhausts that basis and stands for a series of at least ten. In the Revelation we have the ten days of tribulation (R. ii. 10), and the ten Kings (R. xvii. 12). It follows that a thousand, which is a multiple of ten, is not strictly limited to that figure. It may mean more than a thousand; but it is not an indefinite period, as in 2 Pet. iii. 8.

Every word in the Apocalypse has a definite meaning. A thousand years is put in the Book of Revelation for the period of expansion of the Church, after the fall of the Roman Empire, and we know from history that that period, called the Middle Ages, lasted about a thousand years.

The number twelve and multiples of twelve occur often in the Jewish theme and in the description of Paradise. The connection of these numbers with the twelve tribes of Israel and the twelve Apostles is made manifest by the context.

The events predicted in the Book are placed in their correct historic perspective. Nero's persecution began in the year 64 and ended in the year 68, hence the seals of the martyrs come first (R. vi. 9-17). The Jewish cataclysm began in 66 and ended A.D. 70. It is taken next (R. viii. 1 to ix. 12). After the death of Nero, the wars of Galba, Otho, Vitellus and Vespasian, deluged Rome with blood and carried fire and sword into the Capital A.D. 68-69. Accordingly the Jewish theme is interrupted, and we get a vision of the slaughter of Roman armies (R. ix. 13-21). Then Titus besieged Jerusalem, and we get a picture of the fall of Jerusalem (R. xi. 1-15), after which comes the fall of the Roman Empire (R. xiii.-xix.). Then the thousand years of the middle ages and a glimpse of later times. Then the Day of Judgment (R. xx.).

The visions of Revelation are linked together from first to last, not only in subject, but in minor details, by close and accurate workmanship. They reveal the careful labours of a mind filled with knowledge, conveying to others, by means of symbolism, the Divine message of Revelation. There is evidence in the Book that S. John had some freedom in its

composition. He was told to write a book about his visions with special commands to write in it certain things (Rev. i. 11, x. 11, xiv. 13, xix. 9, xxi. 5). The Letters to the Seven Churches alone were dictated by God. It places them on majestic heights.

The Seer of the first century saw and described correctly, as history testifies, the relations of the Church with the world, through a period of over eighteen hundred years. That is proof sufficient of the Divine Authorship of Revelation. The value of the eschatological revelations in the Book, in Chapters iii. and xx., may now be appreciated.

VII

THE TEXT

THE original MS. of the Apocalypse was written by S. John on papyrus paper, in Greek uncials, or capital letters, without stops or breathings.

Papyrus paper was made from the Egyptian "paper-reed." Manuscripts of the Apostolic Age were written on this material with a reed, dipped in cuttle fish ink, or other colouring matter. Pliny tells us that the stem of the reed, consisting of pith enclosed in a hard rind, was sliced into long strips, which were placed on a board, in two layers, one at right angles to the other. The sheets so formed were then soaked in Nile water, till soft, when they were pressed together and dried in the sun. The writing surface was then smoothed and polished with ivory or shell. The paper reed grew freely, and was cultivated commercially, on the delta of the Nile, where papyrus paper was almost exclusively manufactured (Pliny, N. H. xiii. 11, 13). It has been estimated that the Apocalypse would cover a roll of papyrus fifteen feet in length (Kenyon, Text Crit. p. 30). To form this length several pieces were pasted together and rolled on a staff. Such a "book" unrolled and let go, would by elastic reaction, roll up again. When S. John wrote, "and the heavens withdrew as a book rolled up together" (R. vi. 14), he had in his mind the book under his hand. These things have to be borne in mind in considering the question whether S. John wrote the Apocalypse during his visions, or afterwards. Of that more, hereafter, in the Commentary.

Papyrus paper became dry and brittle with age. It had to be unrolled and pinned down for the convenience of readers and copyists. It soon perished. No papyrus copies of the Apocalypse have come down to our time. The papyri of our museums were preserved in the tombs of Egypt, the ruins of Herculaneum, and like resting places. Our oldest existing copies of the Apocalypse are on parchment or vellum, and date from about the end of the fourth century.

Considering that the Apocalypse was addressed to the Hebrew Servants of God in the first century, who spoke

Aramaic, one may ask, Why was it written in Greek? That, like its Hebraic cypher, was probably a measure of secrecy. Greek was used as the official language of the early Church. Rome was the enemy. As the catacombs shielded the bodies of the early Christians from persecution at the hands of Rome, so the Greek language shielded their intimate thoughts from Roman inquisition. The Apostles took the Greek language with them to Rome. S. Paul wrote his Epistles to the Romans and to the Hebrews in Greek. S. Mark wrote his Gospel in Rome, for the Romans, in Greek. The ritual of the early Church was Greek. So were the inscriptions in the Catacombs of Rome. The great majority of the Roman Christians were poor persons, ignorant of Greek, yet the Church of Rome held to the official use of Greek until the days of persecution were over.

The literary quality of the Greek of the Apocalypse, we have seen, is peculiar. It reveals a mind well stored with Greek, but too strongly charged with Hebrew thought to give that Greek classical expression. It is evident that S. John had not been long in Hellenised Asia Minor when he wrote his Book. Moreover he was intent on infusing the Revelation with a current of Hebrew thought and symbolism, taken from the O.T., wherewith to convey his message to the Servants of God, unnoticed by pagan readers.

The unbroken series of Greek uncials which originally composed the Book was divided by Andreas, in the sixth century, into seventy-two *κεφάλαια*, or "headings." Stephen Langton, Archbishop of Canterbury, gave us our present chapters. The versification of the Book dates from the era of the printing press and follows the stichometry, or lines, of the MSS. copies. Bearing in mind the vague and often fanciful exegesis of former times, it is wonderful how closely, chapter and verse accommodate themselves to the new meanings which have been found in Revelation. No one, however, claims that the modern Book is perfect in these respects.

Three MSS. of the Apocalypse have come down to us in the original Greek uncials. The Codex Sinaiticus—symbol \aleph . This is written on parchment without accents or breathings, only occasional points. In all probability it is as old as the time of S. Jerome. The Codex Alexandrinus—symbol A. It is written on parchment and dates from about the fifth century. The Codex Ephraemi—symbol C. Also fifth century, and very imperfect. Chapters ii., iv., vi., xii., xiv., xv., xvi., xvii., xx., xxi., and xxii., are missing, and the rest fragmentary.

Besides the above, there are Greek Commentaries extant and quotations from the Apocalypse in the writings of the early Fathers of the Church.

In Latin we have the Codex Amiatinus—symbol Am—written stichometrically in uncials, without punctuation, on leaves of vellum. It is believed to have been made in Northumberland at the beginning of the 8th Century, and it is supposed to be derived from some old Latin copy, possibly the Itala, through the Codex Grandior of Cassiodorus, c. A.D. 540. This Codex was taken to Rome by Ceolfrid and presented to Pope Gregory II. about the year 720. It is considered by Catholic theologians that it gives the best rendering of the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures generally. It was decreed by the Council of Trent to be the authentic and official Latin version of the Bible. It is the original of the Vulgate.

There is also a Syriac version of the Apocalypse, lately printed by Dr. Gwynn, Regius Professor of Divinity, T.C.D., which dates from the beginning of the 6th Century.

Latin Commentaries by Primasius and other writers have come down to us.

The present Commentary is based upon a Greek version prepared by Frederic Brandscheid, a German Catholic, who produced it in 1893. It is practically a recension of the oldest and best codices, collated with the texts of Tischendorf, Westcott and Hort, and other scholars. It has the approval of the Bishop of Fribourg and is dedicated to Pope Leo XIII.

Dr. Swete of Cambridge in his book on the Apocalypse, has printed a Greek text which he prepared from a collation of Westcott and Hort with Tischendorf, Gregory's prolegomena, Dr. Gwynn's Syriac versions, and two Athos minuscules. These two Greek texts agree generally with each other and with the Latin Vulgate, showing that the Apocalypse has been remarkably well preserved. Where the Vulgate occasionally differs from the Greek, Brandscheid follows the Vulgate, which he holds in great veneration. What slight differences there are between Dr. Swete and Brandscheid are shown in notes, in which S. stands for Swete, and Bd. for Brandscheid; Vg., the recognised symbol, stands for the Vulgate.

The Latin text is not printed in this book. There is no need to print it in full, as it is faithfully reflected in the English version, attached to the Greek. The English version is taken from the Rev. Geo. L. Haydock's Douay Bible, published in 1852, and from Richard Coyne, Maynooth Douay Bible, published in 1829. One supplements the other. For instance Haydock omits the word "flying" at R. iv. 7, "like to an eagle flying"—Vg. *Aquilæ volanti*. Coyne's version supplies it. But, the differences between the versions, Greek, Latin, and English, are unimportant.

COMMENTARY

PART I

PREFACE TO THE REVELATION

CHAPTER I

1. Ἀποκάλυψις Ἰησοῦ χριστοῦ, ἣν ἔδωκεν αὐτῷ ὁ Θεὸς δεῖξαι τοῖς δούλοις αὐτοῦ ἃ δεῖ γενέσθαι ἐν τάχει, καὶ ἐσήμανεν ἀποστείλας διὰ τοῦ ἀγγέλου αὐτοῦ τῷ δούλῳ αὐτοῦ Ἰωάννῃ.

1. The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to make known to his servants the things which must shortly come to pass, and signified sending by his angel to his servant John.

Ἀποκάλυψις is a Greek word which means a revelation of the future. It is used in this sense by S. Paul 2 Cor. xii. 1, and eschatologically, in Rom. ii. 5.

This reading is confirmed by R. i. 3 and xxii. 10, in which the Revelation is referred to as "the words of this prophecy." At R. xxii. 9, an angel says I am ". . . of them who keep the words of the prophecy of this book." And at R. xxii. 18, 19, a solemn warning is issued against tampering with "the prophecy of this book" and "the book of this prophecy." The Apocalypse, or "Revelation," is a prophecy, in the sense of a prediction of Jesus Christ. That is its first note.

"Which God gave to him to make known to his servants," follows the teaching of the Gospel of S. John in which the Son derives revelation from the Father (Jhn. v. 20, vii. 16, viii. 28).

"To make known to his servants," raises the question who were the Servants of God. Much light is thrown on this point by the Revelation, and especially by the concluding words of this passage, "his servant John." S. John is given to us as an example of the individuals meant by "servants." The Apostles commonly used this title. The Second Epistle of S. Peter begins, "Simon Peter, Servant and Apostle of Jesus Christ." S. Paul's Epistle to Titus begins, "Paul a servant of God, and

an Apostle of Jesus Christ." These two great Apostles make "servant" their first title. See also Philippians and Romans (i. 1). The Catholic Epistle of S. James begins, "James the Servant of God and of our Lord, Jesus Christ." That of S. Jude begins, "Jude the Servant of Jesus Christ." In R. x. 7, there is reference to "His Servants, the prophets," a very common phrase in the O.T. At R. xix. 10 an "Angel," who is also a prophet (R. xxii. 9), declares himself to be a fellow servant of John. The dignity of the expression survives in the title of the Popes, who style themselves officially, "The Servant of the servants of God" (see Jhn. xv. 20).

The Revelation was not sent to everybody in the Church, in the year 67. It was, for grave reasons, confined to the safe hands of the Servants of God, who were men of Apostolic character, leaders of the Church. The denunciation of Cæsar worship, and the political forecasts of the Roman Empire required this precaution. The immediate object of the Book was to reveal the fate of Jerusalem and Rome to the servants of God. "The things which must shortly come to pass," were the fall of Nero in A.D. 68, and the fall of Jerusalem and the out-standing of the Kingdom of Christ in A.D. 70. It does not mean that everything foretold in the Book must shortly happen. Though it does mean that the chief predictions of the Book would begin to come to pass quickly. The death of Nero was followed by Civil wars of opposing Imperators, which led to the crumbling of the Empire.

"And signified sending by his Angel to his Servant John." Prof. M. Stuart points out that *ἐσήμανεν*, "signified," is derived from *σημα* = *σημειον* a "sign" or "symbol" indicating symbolic representation. An angel appears and interprets the symbolic visions at R. xvii. 1 and xix. 10.

This angel seems to have been S. John the Baptist. We read in the Gospel of S. John, "There was a man sent from God whose name was John. This man came for a witness to give testimony of the light" (Jhn. i. 6, 7). He preached the gospel of penance "for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand (Matt. iii. 1), Behold I send my angel before thy face" (Mark i. 2). He is referred to at R. xxii. 16, "I, Jesus, have sent my angel." And he declares himself to be a fellow servant of S. John, and one of his brethren the prophets (R. xix. 10, xxii. 9). S. John recognises him apparently as his old teacher, the Baptist, and falls down before him.

When Epiphanius wrote "The disciples of Christ being warned by an angel, fled to Pella," he seems to have had R. i. 1 in view. That would explain his reference to Claudius.

These opening lines form the title page of the Book. We might appreciate them better perhaps if they were displayed in accordance with modern custom, as thus :

THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

WHICH

GOD GAVE UNTO HIM,

To make known to his servants the things which must shortly come to pass, and signified

SENDING BY HIS ANGEL

TO

HIS SERVANT JOHN.

Here we see at once the title of the Book, its source, its Author, its object, its subject, the Intermediary, and the Writer—John.

The real title of the Book, “The Revelation of Jesus Christ,” commands our attention.

2. Ὃς ἐμαρτύρησεν τὸν λόγον τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ τὴν μαρτυρίαν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὅσα εἶδεν.

2. Who hath given testimony to the word of God, and the testimony of Jesus Christ, what things soever he hath seen.

Ἐμαρτυρεῖν—“to bear witness”—and μαρτυρία—“evidence” are words frequently found in the Apocalypse. S. John says of himself “Who hath given testimony—Ἐμαρτύρησεν—the aorist refers to the past. He gave testimony in the past “to the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ,” by preaching and example, and by his Epistles, one or two of which were written before this time. “What things soever he hath seen” would seem to limit this testimony, to his knowledge of “the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.” But μάρτυς—“a witness”—in the early Church also connoted suffering for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. Hence the word “martyr” in English. S. John had suffered many things at the hands of the Jews for the testimony of Jesus. He was scourged and imprisoned in common with the other Apostles. Writing to his intimate followers at Ephesus, S. John takes it

for granted that no one will question the testimony of John. The brethren knew he was at Patmos, whence this Revelation came. Possibly they knew that he went there to receive it. (See R. 1-9 notes.)

Our Lord said to the Apostles "You shall be witnesses unto me"—*ἔσεσθέ μοι μαρτυρες*—" . . . even to the uttermost parts of the earth " (Acts i. 8). Dr. Swete remarks, "It may be doubted whether the word *μάρτυς* had acquired a technical sense at the end of the first century" (*Op. cit.*, p. 36). The doubt is greater in regard to the year 67.

3. *Μακάριος ὁ ἀναγινώσκων καὶ οἱ ἀκούοντες τοὺς λόγους τῆς προφητείας καὶ τηροῦντες τὰ ἐν αὐτῇ γεγραμμένα· ὁ γὰρ καιρὸς ἐγγύς.*

3. Blessed is he that readeth and heareth the words of this prophecy ; and keepeth those things which are written in it. For the time is at hand.

There are many correspondences between the beginning and the end of Revelation. We have in the last chapter "Blessed is he that keepeth the words of the prophecy of this Book" (R. xxii. 7). *Ἀναγινώσκω* means "to recognise," "to distinguish," "to discern." It does not mean ordinary reading. Our Lord addressing His Apostles with reference to the destruction of the Temple, said, "When you shall see the abomination of desolation standing where it ought not, he that readeth let him understand" (Mark xiii. 14). Where the Greek for "he that readeth" is *ὁ ἀναγινώσκων*, precisely as above, meaning the interpretation of the signs of the coming fall of Jerusalem and the Empire. The fact that the angel sent to John, declared himself John's fellow servant, "and of those who keep the words of the prophecy of this Book" (R. xxii. 9), would seem to indicate that those "who kept the words," were a limited and exalted class.

The Book is to a great extent a cryptograph, requiring labour and intelligence to discern its meaning. Hence, blessed are they who labour patiently to solve the mystery. "He that heareth" has an esoteric meaning, and refers to one who, by the exercise of reason, gets to know things recondite. "He that heareth," is again referred to at R. xxii. 17, 18. And at the end of each of the Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia, we find, "He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith to the Churches." (See R. ii. 7, notes.)

The Book claims to be a Revelation of future events. Blessed are they who understand and keep this revelation in mind.

Why? For the time is at hand. What time? The fall of the Temple of Jerusalem, the symbol of the Old Law, and the establishment of the Kingdom of Christ. This warning appears to have been addressed particularly to the leaders of the Nazarene Church, which was in danger. S. John uses the verb *τηρέω*, "to give heed to," "to watch narrowly," in his Gospel several times (viii. 51, xiv. 23), e.g., "Remember my word that I said to you . . . if they have kept my word they will keep yours also" (Jhn. xv. 20).

4. Ἰωάννης ταῖς ἑπτὰ ἐκκλησίαις ταῖς ἐν τῇ Ἀσίᾳ· χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη ἀπὸ τοῦ ὄντος καὶ τοῦ ἦν καὶ τοῦ ἐρχόμενου, καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν ἑπτὰ πνευμάτων ἃ ἐνώπιον τοῦ θρόνου αὐτοῦ.

4. John to the seven churches which are in Asia. Grace be unto you and peace from him that is and that was, and that is to come, and from the seven spirits which are before his throne.

S. John opens his address to the Seven Churches in the Apostolic Style. Paul an Apostle of Jesus Christ . . . to the Church of God that is at Corinth, 2 Cor. i. 1, Gal. i. 1, 1 Th. i. 11, We have considered the meaning of the Seven Churches elsewhere. Seven is a mystic number and these are mystic Churches. In the N.T. Asia means Mysia, Lydia, Caria, Lycia, and Phrygia, which constituted Roman or Proconsular Asia, see Map, p. 102. "From him that is and that was," is from God the Father. In Exodus iii. 14 Moses enquiring by what name he should announce God to His people, is told, "I am, who am." "That is to come," *ὁ ἐρχόμενος*, is a Hebraic usage. It refers to Jesus Christ. We have *ἔρχομαι ταχύ*—"I come quickly," at R. iii. 11, and R. xxii. 7, and *Ἴδὸν ἔρχεται*—"Behold he cometh" at R. i. 7, and *Ἴδὸν ἔρχομαι*—"Behold I come" at R. xvi. 15. At the close of the Book, a kind of recapitulation occurs in which we find *Ἴδὸν ἔρχομαι ταχύ* at R. xxii. 7, again at R. xxii. 12, and again at R. xxii. 20.

S. John invokes a blessing on the Church from the Father, Son, and from the Seven Spirits, where the Seven gifts of the Holy Spirit (Isa. xi. 2), are put for the Holy Spirit. S. John here affirms the doctrine of the Trinity. He lays stress on the coming of the Holy Spirit in his Gospel. "But the Paraclete, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things" (Jhn. xiv. 26). See also xiv. 16, 17, and xv. 26. The Seven Spirits are again referred to at R. iv. 5 and v. 6.

5. Καὶ ἀπὸ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὁ μάρτυς ὁ πιστός, ὁ πρωτότοκος τῶν νεκρῶν καὶ ὁ ἄρχων τῶν βασιλείων τῆς γῆς· τῷ ἀγαπῶντι ἡμᾶς καὶ λούσαντι ἡμᾶς ἐκ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν ἐν τῷ αἵματι αὐτοῦ.

5. And from Jesus Christ who is the faithful witness, the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the Kings of the earth, who hath loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood.

We must suppose a full stop at the end of the last verse. Καὶ—"and"—begins a new thought frequently in the Apocalypse; which use of καὶ shows a Hebrew writer steeped in the O.T. scriptures. It goes back to continue and unfold "The Revelation of Jesus Christ" (R. i. 1).

"Thou shalt call his name Jesus; for he shall save his people from their sins" (Matt. i. 21). "Christ," is—"the anointed." Ο μάρτυς ὁ πιστός, the faithful witness, where μαρτυς connotes witnessing for the faith by martyrdom. Accordingly we read, "who hath loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood." He washed away the stain of original sin, and opened the gates of heaven to the waiting saints of old. He descended into Limbo, and was the first to arise therefrom. Therefore is He, "the first begotten of the dead." "Prince of the Kings of the earth"—ἄρχων—"chief over all." "Lord of Lords and King of Kings" (R. xvii. 14). This leads to the consideration of His Kingdom.

6. Καὶ ἐποίησεν ἡμᾶς βασιλείαν, ἱερεῖς τῷ Θεῷ καὶ πατρὶ αὐτοῦ, αὐτῷ ἢ δόξα καὶ τὸ κράτος εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων· ἀμήν.

6. And hath made us a Kingdom and priests to God and his Father, to him be glory and empire for ever and ever. Amen.

"The kingdom" comes into view. "And hath made us a kingdom and priests to God and his Father" marks the transference of the promises of the Old Law to the Church of Christ. "And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests" (Ex. xix. 6). Under the Old Law the priesthood was confined to the tribe of Levi. Under the New Law, S. John of the tribe of Zabulon is made a priest. He is said to have worn, occasionally, the petalon of a high-priest. "But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood" (1 Pet. ii. 9). S. John, writing to the Servants of God, reminds them that they are

priests. Another indication of their high position. "To God and his Father" recognises the Son, as God. *Κράτος* is from *κρατέω*, "to be mighty," "to conquer," "to hold sway." "For ever and ever" is a Hebrew phrase expressing endless time.

7. Ἴδου ἔρχεται μετὰ τῶν νεφελῶν, καὶ ὄψεται αὐτὸν πᾶς ὀφθαλμὸς, καὶ οὔτινες αὐτὸν ἐξεκέντησαν, καὶ κόψονται ἐπ' αὐτὸν πᾶσαι αἱ φυλαὶ τῆς γῆς· ναὶ, ἀμήν.

7. Behold he cometh with the clouds and every eye shall see him, and they also that pierced him. And all the tribes of the earth shall bewail themselves because of him. Even so. Amen.

"Behold he cometh with the clouds," expands the phrase at R. i. 4, "that is to come." Daniel says, "One like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven" (vii. 13). "And they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with great power and majesty" (Matt. xxiv. 30). It is made evident that the *χάρις ὑμῶν*, of R. i. 4, comes from the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

There is reference to the day of Judgment here, when all the tribes of "the earth"—*τῆς γῆς*—(denoting Antichristians in the Apocalypse) shall bewail themselves because of him. But especially those that pierced him—the Jews. This portends that the Jews will remain unconverted to the end. The connection between the writer of S. John's Gospel and of the Apocalypse is seen here. In the Gospel we read "One of the soldiers opened his side with a spear" (Jhn. xix. 34). S. John stood by the cross and witnessed this deed, which he alone mentions. He identifies the Son of Man in His glorious second coming by this dreadful wound, and puts it to the account of the Jews. Notice his solicitude for the fulfilment of the O.T. Scriptures. "Again another Scripture saith they shall look on him whom they pierced" (Jhn. xix. 37). The other Scripture is found in Zach. xii. 10. In the verse above we have *ναί*, Greek, interpreted by *ἀμήν*, Hebrew.

This passage is apparently expegetical of R. i. 4. It does not indicate a speedy second coming. There is no word to that effect. It contrasts with the warning to the penultimate and last stages of the Christian Church. "Behold I come quickly" (R. iii. 11). "Behold I stand at the door and knock" (R. iii. 20).

8. Ἐγὼ εἶμι τὸ ἄλφα καὶ τὸ ὦ, ἀρχὴ καὶ τέλος, λέγει Κύριος ὁ Θεός, ὁ ὢν καὶ ὁ ἦν καὶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος, ὁ παντοκράτωρ.

8. I am alpha and omega, the beginning and the end, saith the Lord God, who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty.

(S. omits ἀρχὴ καὶ τέλος. Bd. follows the Vulgate "*principium et finis.*")

Aleph and Tau, the first and last letters of the Hebrew Alphabet, are the first and last letters of the Hebrew sacred word "Truth"—(Emoth), the Hebrew symbol of God. The Seer, writing in Greek, uses the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, with a Hebrew meaning; as at R. xiii. 18 he uses Greek numerals with a Hebrew meaning. In the O.T we have, "I am the first and I am the last and besides me there is no God" (Isa. xlv. 6). The question arises whether God the Father is the speaker, here, or Jesus Christ. Κύριος, "Lord," is applied to both the Father and the Son in this Book. R. iv. 8, xi. 4, 8, xvii. 14, xix. 16, xxii. 20, 21. The Almighty, "ὁ παντοκράτωρ," recurs at R. iv. 8, xi. 17, xv. 3, xvi. 7, 14, and xix. 15, with reference to God the Father. And at R. xxi. 22, where we read, "For the Lord God Almighty is the lamp thereof and the Lamb." On the other hand Christ says at R. i. 17, "I am the first and the last," and at R. xxi. 6, "I am Alpha and Omega." And at R. xxii. 13, "I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end." Ὁ ἐρχόμενος, "who is to come," seems to point to Christ as the speaker. He it is who makes known the Revelation to His servants. And the context preceding and following verse 8, supports this view. We shall find that the Seer throughout the Book maintains the equality of the Father and the Son. Hence the appellation, "the Almighty," is consistent with the view that Jesus Christ is the speaker.

9. Ἐγὼ Ἰωάννης, ὁ ἀδελφὸς ὑμῶν καὶ συνκοινωνὸς ἐν τῇ θλίψει καὶ βασιλείᾳ καὶ ὑπομονῇ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, ἐγενόμην ἐν τῇ νήσῳ τῇ καλουμένῃ Πάτμῳ διὰ τὸν λόγον τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ τὴν μαρτυρίαν Ἰησοῦ.

9. I John your brother and sharer in tribulation, and in the Kingdom and patience in Christ Jesus, was in the island which is called Patmos, for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus.

(S. omits Χριστῷ. Bd. follows the Vulgate.)

S. John further discloses his identity and that of the personages to whom he sent his Book. A servant of God, he sent

his Revelation to Servants of God (R. i. 1). And to priests (R. i. 6). He addresses them now as "your brother and sharer in tribulation." He had shared in the sufferings—*Θλίψιν*—foretold for the Apostles (Jhn. xvi. 33). So had the brethren he addressed. They are therefore men of Apostolic standing. *Θλίψις*, meaning "pressure," is put metaphorically for oppression, and suffering. In this Book, it stands for persecution (see R. vii. 14). *ὑπομονή*—"patience"—chimes with this thought. It is exemplified in the letter to the Apostolic Church at R. ii. 3. "And thou hast patience and hast borne for my name, and hast not failed." "Sharers"—"in the kingdom," assumes that "the Servants" knew about the kingdom.

S. John was in the Island, called Patmos, one of the Sporades, in the Ægean Sea, about twelve miles S.W. of Ephesus. It is a rocky and barren place, but it has an excellent harbour. It is now known as Patino, and has about 4,000 inhabitants.

"S. John was at Patmos for the Word of God and for the testimony of Jesus." These expressions correspond with those used in the opening sentence of the Book. (R. i. 2). *Διὰ τὸν λόγον τοῦ Θεοῦ* would seem to show that he was at Patmos for the purpose of receiving his revelation. Professor Van den Biesen, S.T.D., in the "Catholic Encyclopedia," says, "It is true that the more probable meaning of this phrase is 'in order to hear the word of God,' etc., and not 'banished because of the word of God,' etc." (Apocalypse). S. John does not say anywhere that he was banished or exiled. But at R. xx. 4, we have the phrase, "beheaded for the testimony of Jesus, and for the Word of God"—*πεπελεκισμένων διὰ τὴν μαρτυρίαν Ἰησοῦ καὶ διὰ τὸν λόγον τοῦ Θεοῦ*. This refers to the martyrs. It is held by some writers that it shows that *διὰ τὸν λόγον*, above, connotes suffering. But that does not necessarily follow. The Revelation was signified by an angel to John, where *ἐσήμανεν* (signified) means explained. This angel explains at R. xix. 10, "that the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy"—"*μαρτυρία Ἰησοῦ ἐστὶν τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς προφητείας.*" And at R. xxii. 9 the same angel explains "I am of thy brethren the prophets." He speaks of "the prophecy of this book," showing that he refers to "prophets" in the O.T. sense, and that he salutes S. John as a prophet by reason of the prophecy of this Book, written at Patmos.

10. Ἐγενόμην ἐν πνεύματι ἐν τῇ κυριακῇ ἡμέρᾳ, καὶ ἤκουσα ὀπίσω μου φωνὴν μεγάλην ὡς σάλπιγγος.

10. I was in the spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet.

In the spirit means rapt in the spirit, in a state of trance. Prof. M. Stuart says, "That John means to assert, in the case before us, that he was in a *pneumatic state*, i.e., under peculiar and extraordinary divine influence, seems philologically certain" (Com. on the Apoc.). This state is described in the Acts of the Apostles as ἐν ἐκστάσει—"in ecstasy," a suspension of the functions of the natural senses, whilst absorbed in the contemplation of the supernatural. So Ezechiel, "The spirit took me up and I heard behind me the voice" (iii. 12). See also Ezech. iii. 14, viii. 3, xi. 24, and xl. 2; Jer. xxiv. 1; Amos vii. 1, 4, 7, viii. 1; Zach. iii. 1. In S. Paul's second Epistle to the Corinthians we have an account of the condition of ecstasy: "I know a man in Christ above fourteen years ago (whether in the body I know not, or out of the body, I know not, God knoweth), such an one rapt even to the third heaven" (2 Cor. xii. 2). The state of prophetic rapture was physically exhausting as we know from Ezech. iii. 14, 15, 23; and Dan. vii. 15, 28, viii. 27. Accordingly we find indications in the Book that the Revelation was given to S. John at intervals, in successive raptures, viz., here, and also at iv. 1, at xvii. 3; and at xxi. 10. Prof. M. Stuart thinks that μετὰ ταῦτα—"after these things"—indicates a fresh ecstasy, as well as a new phase of Revelation, at vii. 1, 9, xv. 5, xviii. 1, and at xix. 1.

The Lord's day is not mentioned elsewhere in the N.T. Bishop Melito of Sardis, c. 170 A.D., wrote a discourse "On the Lord's Day," according to Eusebius (H. E. iv. 26). S. Chrysostom tells us that "It was called the Lord's day because the Lord rose from the dead on this day" (Com. on Ps. cxix.). It was the first day of the week, the Christian Sunday, an appropriate day for a vision of the risen Lord.

"Behind me" in prophetic language means, "after me" in point of time, and refers to the future.

The "voice of the trumpet" is heard in Exodus, in connection with the vision which God gave to Moses on Mt. Sinai (xix. 16 f.).

11. Λεγούσης. Ὁ βλέπεις γράψον εἰς βιβλίον καὶ πέμψον ταῖς ἑπτὰ ἐκκλησίαις, εἰς Ἐφεσον καὶ εἰς Σμύρναν καὶ εἰς Πέργαμον καὶ εἰς Θυάτειρα καὶ εἰς Σάρδεις καὶ εἰς Φιλαδέλφειαν καὶ εἰς Λαοδικίαν.

11. Saying, What thou seest write in a book, and send to the seven churches (which are in Asia), to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamos and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea.

What thou seest refers to the whole series of visions. They were to be written down in a book for the benefit of the Seven Churches. βιβλίον denotes a papyrus MS. as distinguished from a parchment MS. See 2 Tim. iv. 13. Γράψον εἰς, is found in this usage, only here and in the Gospel of S. John. It indicates a command to write a book about the visions (see R. i. 19). We have seen, in the foreword, the meaning of these Churches, and the symbolism of seven. Christians were not allowed to build churches for public worship till the reign of Septimus Severus, A.D. 211 (Gib. D. and F., c. xvi.). The words "which are in Asia," are not in the Greek codices. Brandscheid and Swete omit them. They emphasise the literal or local interpretation of the Letters. The Churches S. John had in view were not in Asia. Asia is put for futurity.

12. Καὶ ἐπέστρεψα βλέπειν τὴν φωνὴν ἣτις ἐλάλει μετ' ἐμοῦ· καὶ ἐπιστρέψας εἶδον ἑπτὰ λυχνιάς χρυσᾶς,

12. And I turned to see the voice that spoke with me, and being turned I saw seven golden candlesticks.

So in Exodus, the people saw the voice of the trumpet (xx. 18). S. John turning to see what lay behind him—i.e., in the future, saw seven golden candlesticks, which we are told later (verse 20) are the seven churches. The seven golden candlesticks were made by Moses and the Israelites after a pattern explained by God (Exod. xxv. 31, 40). They were placed in the Tabernacle of the Temple. They were the light of the Temple. Jesus said of his disciples, "Ye are the light of the world" (Matt. v. 14). The Church of Christ is the light of the world. The Seven Churches, symbolised by the seven candlesticks, are the Light of the World foreseen by S. John. The importance of these seven lights of the future is seen as the Revelation progresses. Λυχνία is a lamp-stand. Candles and candlesticks are modern. See Illustration, p. 99.

13. Καὶ ἐν μέσῳ τῶν λυχνιῶν ὅμοιον υἱὸν ἀνθρώπου, ἐνδεδυμένον ποδήρη καὶ περιεζωσμένον πρὸς τοῖς μαστοῖς ζώνην χρυσοῦν.

13. And in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks one like unto the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.

(S = χρυσᾶν.)

“One like the Son of Man,” is put by Daniel for the Messiah (Dan. vii. 13). Jesus Christ called Himself the Son of Man frequently to mark the fulfilment of prophecies. The expression occurs many times in S. John’s Gospel (Jhn. i. 51, iii. 13, 14, v. 27, vi. 27, 53, 62, viii. 28, xii. 23, 34, xiii. 31). The garment coming down to the feet and the girdle, indicate the sacerdotal office of the High Priesthood (Exod. xxviii. 4). The verb ἐνδύω means “to get into” a garment, and may have reference to the seamless robe of the Son of Man.

It will be noticed that the English version differs from the Greek. The Greek runs, “in the midst of the candlesticks,” the English, “in the midst of the *seven golden* candlesticks.” The Vulgate has *In medio septem*; but Bd. and S. both omit seven golden.

14. Ἡ δὲ κεφαλὴ αὐτοῦ καὶ αἱ τρίχες λευκαὶ ὡς ἔριον λευκόν, ὡς χιών, καὶ οἱ ὀφθαλμοὶ αὐτοῦ ὡς φλόξ πυρός.

14. And his head and hair were white, as white wool and as snow, and his eyes were as a flame of fire.

In Dan. vii. 9, “the Ancient of days” is clothed with a garment “white as snow,” with hair “like pure wool.” The Seer gives attributes of the Father to God the Son frequently. See R. i. 8, notes. “His head and hair were white” = “λευκαί.” The same word is used at R. xiv. 14 for the cloud on which the Son of Man is seated. SS. Matthew and Luke use the same word in describing our Lord’s transfiguration which S. John witnessed (Matt. xvii. 2; Luke ix. 29). It means shining white. In Daniel’s vision, we have “behold a man clothed in linen, and his loins were girded with the finest gold. And his body was like the chrysolite, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as a burning lamp, and his arms and all downward even to the feet, like in appearance to glittering brass, and the voice of his word like the voice of a multitude” (Dan. x. 5, 6).

15. Καὶ οἱ πόδες αὐτοῦ ὅμοιοι χαλκολιβάνῳ ὡς ἐν καμίνῳ πεπυρωμένῳ, καὶ ἡ φωνὴ αὐτοῦ ὡς φωνὴ ὑδάτων πολλῶν.

15. And his feet like unto fine brass, as in a burning furnace, and his voice as the sound of many waters.

(S. πεπυρωμένης.)

“The voice of a multitude” and the “voice as the sound of many waters,” are practically the same simile. “Many waters” are put in this book for many peoples (R. xvii. 15).

“Feet . . . like the appearance of glowing brass,” is found also in Ezech. i. 7. Daniel’s prophecy is chiefly in view here. He interprets the vision of the statue with feet part of iron and part of clay (ii. 33, 42), as the Roman Empire, “breaking in pieces and treading down the rest with his feet” (vii. 7). He gives the vision of the Lord with, “feet like in appearance to glittering brass” (x. 6), apparently as the antithesis to the feet of clay. More powerful than the feet of the Beast, to trample down his enemies. Trampling is a figure used by Ezechiel also at xxv. 6, and by Isaias lviii. 3, “I have trampled on them in my indignation.” See R. xiv. 20, where the wine-press is “trodden.”

16. Καὶ ἔχων ἐν τῇ δεξιᾷ χειρὶ αὐτοῦ ἀστέρας ἑπτὰ, καὶ ἐκ τοῦ στόματος αὐτοῦ ῥομφαία δίστομος ὀξεία ἐκπορευομένη, καὶ ἡ ὄψις αὐτοῦ ὡς ὁ ἥλιος φαίνει ἐν τῇ δυνάμει αὐτοῦ.

16. And he had in his right hand seven stars ; and from his mouth came out a sharp two-edged sword ; and his face shone as the sun shineth in its full strength.

The seven stars are explained later, “The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches” (R. i. 20). The prophet Daniel says, “But they that are learned shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that instruct many to justice as stars for all eternity” (xii. 3). These stars “instruct many to justice.” They are upheld in the right hand of God. Their importance could not be more clearly indicated. The two-edged sword represents sentence of eternal reward, or punishment. “The sword of the Spirit which is the word of God” (Eph. vi. 17). “For the word of God is living and effectual and more penetrating than any two-edged sword” (Heb. iv. 12). “And his face shone as the sun” is reminiscent of the Transfiguration (Matt. xvii. 2). “And his face as the appearance of lightning” (Dan. x. 6).

17. Καὶ ὅτε εἶδον αὐτόν, ἔπεσα πρὸς τοὺς πόδας αὐτοῦ ὡς νεκρός· καὶ ἔθηκεν τὴν δέξιάν αὐτοῦ ἐπ' ἐμὲ λέγων Μὴ φοβοῦ· ἐγὼ εἰμι ὁ πρῶτος καὶ ὁ ἔσχατος.

17. And when I saw him I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me saying, Fear not. I am the first and the last.

In Daniel viii. 17, 18 and x. 7-10, we have a similar vision. Daniel was afraid and fell on his face, but was touched and sat upright. S. John recognised Jesus Christ glorified, and "fell at his feet as dead." In like manner, after the Transfiguration, S. John fell and was raised up by our Lord (Matt. xvii. 6, 7).

"I am the first and the last" connects with R. i. 8, "I am Alpha and Omega."

18. Καὶ ὁ ζῶν, καὶ ἐγενόμην νεκρὸς καὶ ἰδοὺ ζῶν εἰμι εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων, καὶ ἔχω τὰς κλείς τοῦ θανάτου καὶ τοῦ ᾄδου.

18. And alive and was dead and behold I am living for ever and ever, and have the keys of death and hell.

Our Lord tells His beloved disciple that He is the same Jesus Christ who died upon the cross, and yet lives for ever and ever; who has conquered death and hell, and holds the keys of death and hell. Keys are the symbols of power. At Rev. vi. 8 we are told that death and hell follow after Him—*i.e.*, are in His power. And at Rev. xx. 14, "the general judgment," we are told that death and hell are cast into the pool of fire. Ὁ ζῶν. The living God is taken from the O.T. "Living for ever" is also O.T. Deut. xxxii. 40.

19. Γράψον οὖν ἃ εἶδες καὶ ἃ εἰσὶν καὶ ἃ μέλλει γίνεσθαι μετὰ ταῦτα.

19. Write therefore the things which thou hast seen, and which are, and which must be done hereafter.

Write "the things which thou hast seen"—*i.e.*, the past visions; "which are," the events in progress—*viz.*, the Jewish war, and Nero's persecution; "and which must be done hereafter," the coming revelation of the future—the latter, extending

to the day of judgment, for the information and guidance of the Seven Churches.

S. John was commanded to write down past events, present events, and future events. It has been supposed by some that he wrote down our Lord's words as he heard them, and the Angel's words, and the visions as they passed before him. But that is not the word of command, and the reference to past events seems to preclude the idea. "What thou seest write in a book and send to the seven Churches" (R. i. 11) conveys the idea of writing a book about the visions, which could not be done at one sitting. The question is a very important one, as it touches the composition of the Book of Revelation. If the Seer wrote down his visions at once, he must have been prepared beforehand with papyrus, pen and ink, and a table to write on. It would take many hours to inscribe a papyrus roll, about fifteen feet long, with Greek uncials. His writing could not keep pace with passing visions, interspersed with a running commentary by saints and angels. Hence the question arises, were the visions seen at different times? As we have seen at R. i. 10, the exhausting effect of prophetic ecstasy may be inferred from Dan. vii. 15, 28, viii. 27 and x. 8. The visions may have been given at separate times. A second ecstasy is indicated at R. iv. 2. The Seer says, "I was in the spirit (*ἐν πνεύματι*) on the Lord's day" (R. i. 10). If *ἐν πνεύματι* means "prophetic ecstasy" S. John would have been unable to write whilst the visions were in progress. Further light is thrown on this question at R. x. 3, 4. The Seer heard the voices of seven thunders. "And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write." But he was ordered not to write the things which the seven thunders had spoken. The seven thunders comprised a considerable revelation, not intended for publication. They were evidently listened to and remembered by S. John. Afterwards he "was about to write." In like manner his other visions may have been memorised and written down afterwards. It seems that S. John was given clear and precise knowledge of the future, and was told what to write, and what not to write, without restriction as to time. The result is this Book, written under Divine guidance, at Patmos. The composition of the Book bears out this conclusion. S. John conveys to the Servants of God the knowledge intended for them, by means of visions and extracts from the Old Testament prophecies, which form a cryptograph, intelligible to them, but not to outsiders.

20. Τὸ μυστήριον τῶν ἑπτὰ ἀστέρων οὓς εἶδες ἐπὶ τῆς δεξιᾶς μου, καὶ τὰς ἑπτὰ λυχνίας τὰς χρυσᾶς· οἱ ἑπτὰ ἀστέρες ἄγγελοι τῶν ἑπτὰ ἐκκλησιῶν εἰσιν, καὶ αἱ λυχνίαὶ αἱ ἑπτὰ ἑπτὰ ἐκκλησίαι εἰσίν.

20. 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 are the seven churches.

Μυστήριον means a hidden mystery. It prepares us for the mysterious symbolism of the Churches. The mystery of the seven stars and the seven golden candlesticks is thus explained. First as to the stars. They are the Angels of the Churches. Angels and Apostles have much the same meaning in Greek. *Ἄγγελος* means "one sent"—"a messenger." *Ἀποστολος*, from *Ἀποστέλλω*, "to send forth," also means "a messenger." The Angels are living men to correspond with living Churches. They are the successors of the Apostles. "Thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build my Church" (Matt. xvi. 18). "Feed my lambs," "feed my sheep" (Jhn. xxi. 16, 17). These men are held in the right hand of God as regards the true faith (R. i. 16). The number seven indicates the whole series of Angels. They are held responsible for the spiritual condition of the Church, and that responsibility filters down, through the Bishops, to the other Clergy.

The seven golden candlesticks are the seven churches, all united together on a common stem like the lamp of the Tabernacle. And God is in the midst of them (R. i. 13) according to His promise, "I am with you all days, even till the consummation of the world" (Matt. xxviii. 20). Again, "I will ask the Father, and he shall give you another Paraclete, that he may abide with you for ever, the Spirit of Truth" (Jhn. xiv. 16, 17). See later, "He that has an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith to the Churches" (R. ii. 7, notes).

The reader will note that the object of the Book is to make known the future to the Servants of God, men of Apostolic character; that the Angels of the Churches are the successors of the Apostles; that the Seer was ordered to write the Book of Revelation and send it to the Seven Churches (R. i. 11); and that the Seer addresses the Book to the "angels" of the Seven Churches in the name of the Holy Trinity.

PART II
LETTERS TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES

CHAPTER II

EPHESUS.

Ι. Τῷ ἀγγέλῳ τῆς ἐν Ἐφέσῳ ἐκκλησίας γράψον· Τάδε λέγει ὁ κρατῶν τοὺς ἑπτὰ ἀστέρας ἐν τῇ δεξιᾷ αὐτοῦ, ὁ περιπατῶν ἐν μέσῳ τῶν ἑπτὰ λυχνιῶν τῶν χρυσεῶν.

1. To the angel of the church of Ephesus write: These things saith he who holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks.

(S. Τῷ ἐν Ἐφέσῳ.)

In the introductory foreword, "The Seven Churches of Asia," we have shown that the predictions were not intended for the local Churches. "Ephesus" stands for the first or Apostolic age of the Church, which began with the preaching of Jesus Christ, and ended with Nero's persecution. The Nazarene Church of Jerusalem which held the primacy until it fled to Pella, during Nero's persecution, must be taken as the first or Apostolic Church. The line of demarcation between one Church and the next, though not sharply cut, is distinct. The second or martyr's age began with Nero's persecution.

"To the Angel of the Churches of Ephesus, write." When this was written we may assume S. Simon of Jerusalem to have been the Angel of the Church of Ephesus—*i.e.*, the first Church of Christ. S. John may be looked upon as the "angel" of the local Church of Ephesus. He would not have written to himself, nor would he have written to another, who he was going to see, soon. (See his second and third Epistles.)

Our Lord identifies Himself at the head of this message, as "He who holdeth the seven stars in His right hand" (R. i. 16). Κρατῶν, "holding," is much stronger than ἔχων, "having," at R. i. 16. And "He who walketh in the midst," "περιπατῶν ἐν μέσῳ," is stronger than "ἐν μέσῳ," at R. i. 13, as it suggests vigilant supervision. This opening symbolism is applicable to all the Churches. It is not special to Ephesus.

2. Οἶδα τὰ ἔργα σου καὶ τὸν κόπον καὶ τὴν ὑπομονήν, καὶ ὅτι οὐ δύνη βασιτάσαι κακοῦς, καὶ ἐπίρασας τοὺς λέγοντας ἑαυτοὺς ἀποστόλους, καὶ οὐκ εἰσίν, καὶ εὔρες αὐτοὺς ψευδεῖς·

2. I know thy works and thy labour and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear evil men; and thou hast tried them who say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars.

The message to the Apostolic Church opens with great praise. *Οἶδα*, "I know well" thy works. *Ἔργα*, "works," is put in this Book for any kind of works. See the works of the Nicolaites (R. ii. 6). But these are good works, the work of the Apostles, preaching "the Gospel of the Kingdom" and "teaching all nations" (Matt. xxiv. 14, xxviii. 19). They are again referred to at R. ii. 4, as "thy first charity." See also R. ii. 5. Thy "labours"—*κόπον*—occurs again at R. xiv. 13. "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord . . . that they may rest from their labours." Patience—"*ὑπομονήν*"—we have had before at R. i. 9. It is specially referred to in the next verse, which is epexegetical of patience.

"Thou canst not bear evil men," definitely, "those who say they are Apostles and are not." This remark restricts this Church to the Apostolic age. No one could pretend to be an Apostle in later times. A false Apostle was one who asserted that he had walked with the Lord, and had a commission from Him to teach. There were many such after the Ascension. Justin Martyr wrote, "And after the Ascension of our Lord into heaven, certain men were suborned by demons, as their agents, who said they were Gods" (Euseb. H. E. ii., 13). Menander gave himself out to be the Saviour returned to the world (Euseb. H. E. iii., 26). There were many others. "For such false Apostles are deceitful labourers, transforming themselves into the Apostles of Christ" (2 Cor. xi. 13). Our Lord had warned this first Church of these men. "Beware of false prophets who come to you in the clothing of sheep, but inwardly they are ravening wolves" (Matt. vii. 15). These men were a great trial to the Apostles. See 2 Cor. ii. 17, iii. 1, xi. 4-5; Gal. i. 7, ii. 4; Phil. iii. 2-3; 1 Jhn. iv. 1; 2 Jhn. 10. A distinction is made between false Apostles and false prophets in this Book. The latter persisted long after the Apostles—*e.g.*, the Montanist prophets, and the heathen oracles.

Note these men are *ψευδεῖς*—"liars." The word occurs again in a context less illuminating as regards its meaning. We may take liars to be false apostles and false prophets including the heathen hierarchy, and all heresiarchs. Their portion is hell.

See R. xxi. 8, 27, xxii. 15. "Who is a liar, but he who denieth that Jesus is the Christ"? (1 Jhn. ii. 22).

The works, the labours, and the patience of the *local* Church at Ephesus, scarcely call for comment. Founded by S. Paul about the year 54, it was still an infant Church when the Apocalypse was written, in 67. Nor is there any record of false Apostles at Ephesus. Cerinthus, who comes into view at a later period than A.D. 67, did not pretend to be an Apostle. No one could do so successfully in the presence of S. John, who was known to have been the constant companion of our Lord. Cerinthus denied the Divinity of Christ.

3. Καὶ ὑπομονὴν ἔχεις, καὶ ἐβάστασας διὰ τὸ ὄνομά μου, καὶ οὐκ ἐκοπίσασας.

3. And thou hast patience, and hast borne for my name, and hast not failed.

(S. = οὐ κεκοπιακες.)

The first Church suffered many things for the name of Jesus. The apostles were scourged and imprisoned and put to death by both Jew and pagan. They bore all things with patience and without fail. Very great praise is given to this Church. No other Church, but Thyatira, gets such praise. There was no persecution of the local Church at Ephesus before the year 67. S. Paul's preaching was so successful that the sale of images of Diana of Ephesus fell off. Demetrius, a silver-smith, felt the consequent loss of trade, and caused a tumult of the people, saying that not alone at Ephesus but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul had persuaded many that gods are not made with hands (Acts xix. 26). Owing to this disturbance S. Paul left Ephesus. Other persecution there was none.

It is possible that S. John, like S. Paul, may have been sent away from Ephesus owing to disturbances due to a falling off in the trade of silver images.

4. Ἀλλὰ ἔχω κατὰ σοῦ ὅτι τὴν ἀγάπην σου τὴν πρώτην ἀφήκες.

4. But this I have against thee, that thou hast left thy first charity.

Ἀγαπην πρώτην—"first charity." The early Church had, already, after thirty-three years, fallen away from that high standard of love and charity, described in the Acts. "And all they that believed were together, and had all things in

common . . . their possessions and goods they sold and divided them to all, according as every one had need. . . . Praising God" (Acts ii. 44, 47). "And the multitude of the believers had but one heart and one soul, neither did any one of them say that of the things which he possessed, anything was his own, but all things were common to them" (Acts iv. 32). This remarkable charity characterised the first Christians of Jerusalem, whose fervour was inflamed by the preaching and example of our Lord and the Apostles.

There was nothing of the kind at Ephesus. See Acts, Chapter xix., and S. Paul to the Ephesians.

5. Μνημόνευε οὖν πόθεν πέπτωκας, καὶ μετανόησον καὶ τὰ πρῶτα ἔργα ποιήσον· εἰ δὲ μὴ, ἔρχομαί σοι καὶ κινήσω τὴν λυχνίαν σου ἐκ τοῦ τόπου αὐτῆς, ἕαν μὴ μετανοήσῃς.

5. Be mindful therefore from whence thou art fallen and do penance, and do the first works ; or else I come to thee and will move thy candlestick out of its place, except thou do penance.

(S = πέπτωκες.)

"Be mindful from whence thou art fallen" argues a great falling off from fervour, in the early Church, by the year 67. "Do penance, 'μετανόησον,'" is insisted upon in this Book. See R. ii. 16, 21, 22, iii. 3, 19, ix. 20, 21. "Do the first works" explains "thy works" at R. ii. 2, works of love and charity. *Τὰ πρῶτα ἔργα* is not the same expression as *τὴν ἀγάπην σου τὴν πρώτην*, "thy first charity" (R. ii. 4). The first communism of primitive Christianity could not well be restored in the altered conditions of the Church; but the falling away could be stopped and recovered. "Or else I will move thy candlestick out of its place." Its place as an illuminant is where it is visible and sheds its light around the world. Our Lord does not say that He will extinguish it. It is the light of His Church. "Except thou do penance" again shows the efficacy of penance. It seems that the first Church did not resume its first works, or did not do sufficient penance. Its light was, for a time, removed out of its place. The Nazarene Church fled to Pella where it remained for some years. The Church of Rome, the leading Church of the Gentiles, which inherited the primacy through S. Peter, was forced by persecution into the Catacombs, where also its light was hidden for a time.

The local Church, at Ephesus, seems to have made constant progress in the faith. S. Ignatius of Antioch praised it highly. It escaped the Neronian and Domitian persecutions. Finally

its candlestick was not "hidden," but extinguished, by the Turks, in the fourteenth century. *Λυχνίαν* means a lamp. The lamp of Ephesus shared the fate of the lamp of the Tabernacle.

In considering these admonitions it is well to bear in mind that the penance of the early Church, which is in view here, was much more severe than that which passes for penance in our day.

6. Ἄλλὰ τοῦτο ἔχεις, ὅτι μισεῖς τὰ ἔργα τῶν Νικολαιτῶν, ἃ καὶ γὼ μισῶ.

6. But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaites, which I also hate.

The early Church is marked out for special praise because it hated the deeds of the Nicolaites, which God also hated. The Church, like its founder, hated the sin, but not the sinners. We take *τα ἔργα*, "the works" of the Nicolaites, to refer to sin, for God hates sin (Prov. vi. 16, viii. 13; Ps. xcvi. 10). It is assumed here that the expression "the works of the Nicolaites," needs no explanation. The reference is therefore to something well-known to the Servants of God, in the year 67. There is a general consensus of opinion that "the deeds of the Nicolaites" were immoral in kind. S. Irenæus, the first Christian writer to notice them, thought that the Nicolaites were followers of Nicolaus, the Deacon (Acts vi. 5): and that they believed in the lawfulness of promiscuous intercourse with women, and the eating of things offered to idols (Adv. Hær. i. 26). Hippolytus concurred in this view. But Clement of Alexandria denied that Nicolaus held such views (Euseb. H. E. iii. 29); and Epiphanius agreed with Clement (Hær. xxv.). Tertullian noticed that they had ceased to exist in his time, c. 230 (De Præscript Hær. c. 33).

The Nicolaites are mentioned again at R. ii. 14, in connection with the doctrine of Balaam, "who taught Balac to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat and commit fornication." Balaam is a Hebrew word signifying "to destroy people." *Νικόλαος* is a Greek word derived from *νικάω*, "to conquer" people. The words have practically the same root idea, and refer to the destroying power of lust (see 1 Tim. vi. 9). The first Church was reared in the unclean atmosphere of idolatry. At the first Council of Jerusalem, touching Jewish and Gentile observances, it was decreed as follows, "For it hath seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us, to lay no further burden upon you than these necessary things. That you abstain from things sacrificed to idols, and from

blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication" (Acts xv. 29. See also Acts xxi. 25). These things were a serious menace to the first Church. The servants of God, who were born Hebrews, hated these things. The local Church at Ephesus, of Gentile birth, probably did not hate these things.

When S. Paul wrote to Ephesus, from his Roman prison, somewhere about the year 62 A.D., he thought it necessary to give the Ephesian Christians this solemn warning: "But fornication and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not so much as be named among you, as becometh saints: Or obscenity, or foolish talking, or scurrility, which is to no purpose; but rather giving of thanks. For know ye this, and understand, that no fornicator, or unclean, or covetous person, which is a serving of idols, hath inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words. For because of these things cometh the anger of God upon the children of unbelief. . . . And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness; but rather reprove them. For the things that are done by them in secret, it is a shame even to speak of" (Eph. v. 3-13).

7. Ὁ ἔχων οὖς ἀκουσάτω τί τὸ Πνεῦμα λέγει ταῖς ἐκκλησιαίς. Τῷ νικῶντι δώσω αὐτῷ φαγεῖν ἐκ τοῦ ξύλου τῆς ζωῆς, ὃ ἐστὶν ἐν τῷ παραδείσῳ τοῦ Θεοῦ μου.

7. He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith to the Churches. To him that overcometh I will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of my God.

"He that hath ears to hear let him hear" was an expression used by our Lord after relating the parable of the sower. And the Apostles asked Him the meaning of the parable, and He answered them, "Because to you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given" (Matt. xiii. 9, 11, Mrk. iv. 9, 12). S. Luke adds, "that seeing they may not see and hearing they may not understand" (viii. 10), showing that "the letter" has an esoteric meaning and is not to be taken as a message to Ephesus. When the Apostles asked our Saviour about John the Baptist, He said, "And if you will receive it, he is Elias that is to come. He that hath ears to hear let him hear" (Matt. xi. 15). So also in connection with the parable of salt (Luke xiv. 35). See also Matt. xiii. 43. Some meaning deeper than the surface, requiring consideration is indicated. Here it applies to what the Spirit says to the Churches, ταῖς ἐκκλησιαίς, plural—the Churches of the Apostolic age. The Spirit is the Holy Ghost, which our Saviour said the

Father would send in His name, to teach the Church all things (Jhn. xiv. 26) The same words are found at the end of each of the prophecies, indicating that the Letters are not to be taken literally. There is a mystery about them. *Τὸ μυστήριον τὰς ἑπτὰ λυχνίας*, the mystery of the seven candlesticks (R. i. 20). "To him that overcometh"—*νικῶντι*, is a word frequently used by S. John in his Epistles, gospel, and in the Apocalypse. In this context it relates to the victory of constancy, even unto death, over persecution. It connotes martyrdom at R. ii. 11, iii. 21, xii. 11. This Book is written in view of persecution. The verb *νικάω*—"to conquer"—is used in connection with our Saviour's death upon the Cross. "*Ἐγὼ νενίκηκα τὸν κόσμον.*" "I have overcome the world" (Jhn. xvi. 33). The reward is eternal happiness. "The tree of life" refers the reader to the end of the Book where "the tree of life bearing twelve fruits" is seen in a vision of the new Jerusalem—"the paradise of my God" (R. xxii. 2). At the end of every one of these messages there is a promise "to him that overcometh," and this promise is an allusion to some passage towards the close of the Book, showing the close relation existing between these warnings and the rest of Revelation. The tree of life is mentioned in Genesis (iii. 22). Adam is put out of paradise, "lest perhaps he put forth his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever." It is the symbol of heavenly immortality.

The ancient town and Church of Ephesus disappeared centuries ago. A village called Aya Solouk occupies its site. But the name remains in the Apocalypse as a symbol of the first or Nazarene age of the Church, and so has become immortal.

The last state of the Church is an index of the first state of that which follows it, as one merges into the other.

SMYRNA.

8. Καὶ τῷ ἀγγέλῳ τῆς ἐν Σμύρνῃ ἐκκλησίας γράψου. Τάδε λέγει ὁ πρῶτος καὶ ὁ ἔσχατος, ὃς ἐγένετο νεκρὸς καὶ ἔζησεν.

8. And to the angel of the church of Smyrna write : These things saith the First and the Last, who was dead and liveth.

(S = τῷ ἐν Σμύρνῃ.)

Τάδε λέγει—"these things saith"—is prophetic.

Smyrna stands for the second or martyrs' age of the Church,

which extended from Nero's persecution to the edict of Milan, A.D. 313. Smyrna is a Greek word meaning myrrh, a reddish aromatic gum resin, bitter to the taste, used for making incense, and for embalming the dead. It fitly symbolises the blood of the martyrs. The Bishop of Rome governed the Church in this age and is the angel addressed. Our Lord presents himself to this age as "The first and the last," "And alive and was dead" (R. i. 17, 18), a very appropriate introduction to the martyrs' age. The Apostolic Church fell away from its first charity and was condemned to the removal of "its candlestick." Its candlestick was removed to the catacombs in this Smyrnian or second age (R. ii. 5). Grace was recovered, and the candlestick restored to the Church, through persecution.

There was no Bishop, known to history, in the local Church of Smyrna, in the year 67.

9. Οἶδά σου τὴν θλίψιν καὶ τὴν πτωχείαν, ἀλλὰ πλούσιος εἶ, καὶ τὴν βλασφημίαν ἐκ τῶν λεγόντων Ἰουδαίους εἶναι ἑαυτούς, καὶ οὐκ εἰσίν, ἀλλὰ συναγωγὴ τοῦ σατανᾶ.

9. I know thy tribulation and thy poverty, but thou art rich; and thou art blasphemed by those who say they are Jews and are not, but are the Synagogue of Satan.

Instead of "I know thy works," the opening sentence runs, "I know thy tribulation and thy poverty." The work of the Church, in its second age, was to suffer and do penance and thereby regain the light. Its candlestick was hidden because it had fallen from grace. Referring to the martyrs of this age, an "Ancient" tells S. John: "These are they who have come out of great tribulation" (ἐκ τῆς θλίψεως τῆς μεγάλης R. vii. 14). A vision of the martyrs of this age is given in Chapter VI.

Smyrna was given the bitter medicine of persecution, symbolised by Myrrh. In this way it became rich spiritually. "Blasphemed," *i.e.*, persecuted "by those who say they are Jews." S. Paul uses the expression with reference to Jewish persecution (Acts xiii. 45; xviii. 6; Rom. ii. 24). The Jews opposed the spread of Christianity in every way. They stirred up persecution, and when persecution arose they joined heartily in it. When S. Polycarp's life was threatened at Smyrna, the Jews furiously demanded his condemnation by the Proconsul; and when he was sentenced to death, they ran for fuel to burn him. They even tried to prevent his body from being given up to his followers (Euseb. H. E. iv. 15). Nero's persecution, with which the age of Smyrna opened, was in-

stigated by the Jews. But these Jews who rejected and crucified their Messias were no longer true Jews; they were "the Synagogue of Satan" (see Rom. ii. 17, 28). S. John relates in his Gospel, that the Jews boasted to Christ that they were the seed of Abraham, and He answered them, "If you be the children of Abraham, do the works of Abraham. . . . You are of your father the devil. . . . He was a murderer from the beginning" (Jhn. viii. 39-44).

10. Μηδὲν φοβοῦ ἃ μέλλεις πάσχειν. ἰδοὺ μέλλει βάλλειν ὁ διάβολος ἐξ ὑμῶν εἰς φυλακὴν, ἵνα πειρασθῆτε· καὶ ἔχητε θλίψιν ἡμερῶν δέκα. γίνου πιστὸς ἄχρι θανάτου, καὶ δώσω σοι τὸν στέφανον τῆς ζωῆς.

10. Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer. Behold the devil will cast some of you into prison that you may be tried, and you shall have tribulation ten days. Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life.

(S = μὴ φοβοῦ.)

"Fear none of these things which *thou shalt suffer*," is in itself a prediction. It leads up to a more definite one. "Behold the devil will cast some of you into prison, that you may be tried. And you shall have tribulation ten days." *Θλίψις*, "tribulation" stands for bloody persecution (R. vii. 14), and ten days for ten periods. This warning was given to the Church of the second age to help it to bear with fortitude the sufferings which were in store for it. Sufferings foretold are easier to bear than those which come unexpectedly upon the weak. "The devil will cast some of you into prison" refers to the "great red dragon" at R. xii. 3. He is the power behind Cæsar, who instigated that "whoever will not adore the image of the beast should be slain" (R. xiii. 15). He joins with Cæsar in promoting Cæsar worship by persecution.

Prison stands for all manner of sufferings. Christians left prison to undergo exile, scourging, torture, exposure to wild beasts and death in other forms. "That you may be tried." This was done of God's set purpose that the Church might be purified.

Ten days or periods of persecution need not be strictly ten. Ten, in Scripture prophecy, is a round number denoting at least ten. It is a remarkable coincidence, however, that historians refer to the ten persecutions. Nero's persecution was in progress when the Revelation was written. At least nine others followed, attributed to Domitian, Trajan, M. Aurelius,

Severus, Maximin, Decius, Valerian, Aurelian, and Diocletian. There were other minor persecutions.

Be thou faithful *unto death* reveals the severity of the “*θλίψις*.” Christians of the second age must be ready to die for the faith. “And I will give thee the crown of life.” *Στέφανος*, means the crown of laurels, the reward of victory in the contests of the arena. It is put in this book as the martyr’s crown, perhaps, because they also gained it in the arena (1 Cor. ix. 24). S. James refers to “the crown of life, which God hath promised to them that love him” (Jas. i. 12)—*τῆς ζωῆς* = eternal life (see R. iii. 11). There is no evidence that the local Church at Smyrna suffered ten persecutions. It escaped those of Nero and Domitian, and what persecutions it did suffer were common to all the Churches of the district.

11. Ὁ ἔχων οὖς ἀκουσάτω τί τὸ Πνεῦμα λέγει ταῖς ἐκκλησiais. Ὁ νικῶν οὐ μὴ ἀδικηθῆ ἕκ τοῦ θανάτου τοῦ δευτέρου.

11. He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith to the Churches. He that shall overcome shall not be hurt by the second death.

The Spirit is the teacher of the Church. “And the things that are to come he shall show you” (Jhn. xvi. 13).

Here the reader is referred to the end of the Book. We read at R. xxi. 8, “But to the fearful and unbelieving . . . their portion shall be in the pool burning with fire and brimstone, which is the second death,” where *δειλοῖς* stands for those who are afraid—“cowards.” “He that shall overcome shall not be hurt by the second death.” The passage at R. xxi. 8 refers to cowards who fall into idolatry, and worship Cæsar, through fear of death.

Smyrna was about thirty-five miles north of Ephesus. It was evangelised later than Ephesus and therefore was a younger Church. The city of Smyrna was one of the richest in Asia, and remains so still. Owing to the silting up of the river Cayster, the trade of Asia Minor was diverted from Ephesus to Smyrna.

The interpretation of these messages requires that the special events predicted for each Church should be special to each and not common to all. No one supposes that Smyrna had a greater share of persecution than the neighbouring churches; or that the Synagogue of Satan troubled it more than Laodicea, for example, which had the largest Jewish population. There were 7,500 adult Jewish freemen in Laodicea, according to

Sir W. Ramsay (Letters, p. 420). At present Smyrna has about 250,000 inhabitants, nearly half of whom belong to the Russo-Greek Church; with the exception of a few Catholics, the rest are Mohammedans, and the place now belongs to the Turks.

PERGAMOS.

12. Καὶ τῷ ἀγγέλῳ τῆς ἐν Περγάμῳ ἐκκλησίας γράψον, Τάδε λέγει ὁ ἔχων τὴν ῥομφαίαν τὴν δίστομον τὴν ὀξείαν.

12. And to the angel of the church of Pergamos write; These things saith he that hath the sharp two-edged sword.

Pergamos was situated about thirty miles north of Smyrna on the great Roman road. There is no record of its conversion to Christianity. Missionaries, pushing north from Smyrna, probably evangelised it. There was no "angel" there in the year 67, known to history.

The Speaker identifies Himself, as "he that hath the sharp two-edged sword," taken from R. i. 16. It is a threatening introduction. The threat recurs at R. ii. 16.

The third age of the Church, called Pergamos, extended from the edict of Milan, A.D. 313, to the fall of the Roman Empire in the beginning of the sixth century. Exact dates are out of the question, but Pergamos ended, according to this Book, with the millennium, when Satan was chained up for a thousand years.

The word "Pergamos" means "the dividing of the horns." Horns are O.T. symbols of kingdoms opposed to each other. Constantine the Great gave two horns to the Church. He ambitioned a new Rome on the Bosphorus, which should bear his name, and be the metropolis of the spiritual and temporal powers of the Empire. At the feast of dedication of the city, a column of marble was erected by Constantine, inscribed with the title "New Rome" (Zozom I. ii. 2). In the third age of the Church the Greek Patriarchate became so great as to threaten the primacy of Rome. At one time it governed more Churches than Rome, because there were in early days more Churches in the East than in the West. Professor Vailhé Siméon says:

"In any case, if a superior jurisdiction over these twenty-eight provinces did not belong *de jure* to the Bishops of Constantinople from 381 to 457, it is quite certain that *de facto* they exercised such jurisdiction" ("Cath. Encyc." vol. 6, p. 757). The rivalry of the Greek Church led it to doctrinal independence.

Great heresies were enkindled in the East, and gradually extinguished in the West (see p. 82). There is no reference to heresy in this message, because the message is addressed to the Angel of the Church of Rome, and that Church has never been guilty of heresy. The Church is "the pillar and the ground of the truth" (1 Tim. iii. 15).

13. Οἶδα ποῦ κατοικεῖς, ὅπου ὁ θρόνος τοῦ σατανᾶ· καὶ κρατεῖς τὸ ὄνομά μου, καὶ οὐκ ἠρνήσω τὴν πίστιν μου καὶ ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις ἐν αἷς Ἀντιπας, ὁ μάρτυς μου ὁ πιστός, ὃς ἀπεκτάνθη παρ' ὑμῶν, ὅπου ὁ σατανᾶς κατοικεῖ.

13. I know where thou dwellest, where the seat of satan is; and thou holdest fast my name and hast not denied my faith. Even in those days when Antipas was my faithful witness, who was slain among you, where satan dwelleth.

(S. omits *ἐν αἷς* and writes *ὁ πιστός μου*. Vg., *Et in diebus illis Antipas, testis meus fidelis.*)

It is significant that God, who knows all things, should begin His revelation to the third Church thus: "I know where thou dwellest." The meaning of it is that He wishes all to know where the Angel of His Church dwelt in the third age, and calls attention to it. "Where the seat of Satan is." The seat of idolatry was the seat of Satan. Rome was the headquarters of idolatry, therefore Rome was the seat of Satan. The Revelation shows Rome, and Satan, and the Beast, allied together in defence of Cæsar worship. Rome was "the mother of fornications and abominations of the earth" (R. xvii. 5).

"And thou holdest fast my name and hast not denied my faith," is another indication of Rome. The faith was assailed by many heresies of the East, but especially by the Arian heresy, which denied that Jesus Christ was God. Arius was a Greek. He was helped by the sons of Constantine. His heresy was widespread. The Ostrogoths, the Visigoths, the Vandals, and the Suevi, were all, for a time, Arians, and persecuted the Church for holding fast the Divinity of Jesus Christ. The Angel, or Bishop of Rome, is praised for holding fast the faith in the midst of heresies and persecutions.

But it is important that there should be no mistake as to the seat of God's Church. A witness is called. "Antipas, my faithful witness, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth." Antipas is mentioned in connection with the Seat of Satan, to identify it. So at R. xi. 8, where there is question of Jerusalem, we read, "the great city which is spiritually called

Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified," to identify that great city with Jerusalem. Antipas is assumed by the Speaker to be well known to the Servants of God, as a martyr of Rome. There was no persecution in or before the year 67, except that of Nero, at Rome. Therefore Antipas was slain at Rome in Nero's persecution. We are in this difficulty that no man of that name is known to have been slain at Rome in the first, or any other, persecution.

That seems strange, for Antipas was evidently a well known man. He is picked out as the chief witness to the faith in the first persecution. He is held up to the veneration of posterity in the Book of Revelation. But the names of persons and places in the Book are carefully concealed by symbols. We must not expect the ordinary name of this great witness to appear, for one such real name might reveal too much to the Roman authorities.

S. Peter was the chief witness for Christ in the first persecution, and there are several important clues which go to identify him with Antipas. First, the date. According to Dr. Swete, *εν ταῖς ἡμέραις*, throws the time of the martyrdom of Antipas back some years before the writing of the Apocalypse (*op. cit.* p. 35). S. Peter was slain by Nero in the year 64, three years before this message was written. Second, the place. S. Peter was slain at Rome, "where the seat of Satan is." Third, the cause. He was slain for the testimony of Jesus, that is implied in *ὁ μάρτυς μου*. Fourth, his rank. Our Saviour calls Antipas "*ὁ μάρτυς μου ὁ πιστός.*" He is Himself *ὁ μάρτυς ὁ πιστός*, at R. i. 5 and iii. 14. He gives Antipas his own title of "faithful and true," qualifying it by "*my*;" evidently a man specially dear to God. S. Peter was our Lord's chosen witness. "Jesus saith to them, 'But whom do you say that I am?' Simon Peter answered and said, 'Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God.' And Jesus answering said to him, 'Blessed art thou, Simon-Bar-Jona, because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but my Father, who is in heaven'" (Matt. xvi. 15 f.). Fifth, symbolism. Antipas in this connection is a symbol. It was the abbreviated name of Herod Antipatros, frequently used by Josephus. S. Peter's name and the fame of his death at Rome were so well known, that to mention his name would be equivalent to calling Rome by its proper name. Hence the name of Peter must be cloaked in a familiar symbol. Besides leaders of persecuted movements have generally a code name concealing their identity. Sixth, the name itself, Antipas. There was a custom amongst the Jews of calling men by the name of the district to which they belonged. S. Peter was a Galilæan of the tetrarchy of Antipas. He could not be called "the

Galilæan," for that name was given to our Lord. There remained the name of his tetrarchy, Antipas. James and John were called Boanerges, showing the use of familiar names amongst the Apostles. Judas Iscariot—Ish-Karyoth—means Judas of Karyoth; Simon the Cananean (Matt. x. 4). Thomas, one of the Twelve, called Didymus (Jhn. xx. 24). Seventh, there is an evident assumption that the name of Antipas conveyed its meaning to "the Servants" of God, who were of the Apostolic class, as of the name of one belonging to that class. If we assume, as we have every reason to do, that Antipas was a Christian martyr, and that Rome was the Seat of Satan, it seems probable that S. Peter is the witness referred to. His martyrdom at Rome, in the year 64, was known to the Brethren. In the Roman theme of Revelation, the dragon (Satan) is said to give the Beast (the Cæsars), his own throne—*τὸν θρόνον αὐτοῦ* (R. xiii. 2). Here our Lord says "I know where thou dwellest—*ὅπου ὁ θρόνος τοῦ σατανᾶ*—where the seat of Satan is." These two verses are linked together epeexegetically. The object of this sentence is to place the angel of the third age of the Church at Rome. The Angel, or Bishop, of the Church of Rome is held responsible for the state of the Churches in the third age. Notwithstanding the some-time preponderance of the Churches under the jurisdiction of Constantinople, the primacy is given by God to Rome in this prediction.

14. Ἄλλ' ἔχω κατὰ σοῦ ὀλίγα, ὅτι ἔχεις ἐκεῖ κρατοῦντας τὴν διδαχὴν Βαλαάμ, ὃς ἐδίδασκεν τῷ Βαλακ βαλεῖν σκάνδαλον ἐνώπιον τῶν υἱῶν Ἰσραήλ, φαγεῖν εἰδωλόθυτα καὶ πορνεῦσαι.

14. 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 and to commit fornication.

15. Οὕτως ἔχεις καὶ σὺ κρατοῦντας τὴν διδαχὴν Νικολαϊτῶν ὁμοίως.

* 15. So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaites.

These two passages may well be taken together. It has been pointed out that the Hebrew and Greek words, Balaam and Nikolaos, have one and the same meaning, and relate to the soul-destroying sin of lust (see R. ii. 6, notes). Also that in the Apocalypse Hebrew words are often explained by their Greek

equivalents. We know from Num. xxiv. 1-2, and xxxi. 16, what were the sins of the Balaamites. Balaam advised Balac to ensnare the children of Israel by tempting them with Moabite and Midianite women. By this means the Jews were led into the idolatrous customs of the Moabites—fornication and the eating of things offered to idols. The third Church, freed from the persecution of the Cæsars and corrupted by wealth, fell into sensuality. “Εἰδωλόθνητα καὶ πορνεῦσαι” were specifically condemned at the Council of Jerusalem—“εἰδωλοθύτων . . . καὶ πορνείας” (Acts xv. 29). The phraseology of St. John’s age is naturally used with reference to the things of the third age of the Church. Holzhauser writes:

“When the tribulations of the Gentiles and of the pagans ceased, the Church was at rest. From that time by the munificence of Constantine the Great, and other benefactors, the priests enjoyed considerable revenues from endowments. But the Church becoming thus enriched abandoned her creator, God, and neglected her salvation. Many of her members gave themselves up to a life of voluptuousness with women.” (L’Apoc. I. 137.)

Holzhauser seems to hold that these judgments were aimed at the hierarchy. He says that in those days of repeated falls into heresy and schism, the morality of the hierarchy of the Greek Church, especially, was at a low ebb (*op. cit.* I., 147).

16. Μετανόησον· εἰ δὲ μή, ἔρχομαί σοι ταχύ, καὶ πολεμήσω μετ’ αὐτῶν ἐν τῇ ῥομφαίᾳ τοῦ στόματός μου.

16. In like manner do penance ; or else I will come to thee quickly, and will fight against thee with the sword of my mouth.

(S. puts οὖν after Μετανόησον.)

Πολεμήσω μετ’ αὐτῶν means “I will fight against them”—*i.e.* the sinners, not the Angel of the Church.

These threats are predictions which were fulfilled. The two-edged sword has a cutting edge as well as a judgment edge. In the vision of our Lord riding forth to overthrow the Roman Empire we are told “with justice he judgeth and fighteth,” “and out of his mouth proceedeth a sharp two-edged sword that with it he may strike the Gentiles” (R. xix. 11, 15). The third or Pergamon age was the age of General Councils in which heresies were condemned and Heresiarchs and their impure following were excommunicated. In this age also the Goths, the Visigoths, the Huns, and the Vandals swept over

Europe carrying fire and sword even into the streets of Rome. Sapor II., King of Persia (c. 350) inflicted a cruel persecution on the Christians of the East, the Empire was broken up and Rome itself desolated. In the general *débâcle* of the Empire, Christians had their share of suffering (see R. xvi. 5).

17. Ὁ ἔχων οὖς ἀκουσάτω τί τὸ Πνεῦμα λέγει ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις. Τῷ νικῶντι δώσω αὐτῷ τοῦ μάννα τοῦ κεκρυμμένου, καὶ δώσω αὐτῷ ψῆφον λευκὴν, καὶ ἐπὶ τὴν ψῆφον ὄνομα καινὸν γεγραμμένον ὃ οὐδεὶς οἶδεν εἰ μὴ ὁ λαμβάνων.

17. He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith to the Churches. To him that overcometh I will give the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth but he that receiveth it.

“To him that overcometh I will give the hidden manna.” This is Hebraic symbolism. Manna was sent down from heaven to feed the Israelites. It tasted like wafers made with honey. A pot of it was deposited in the ark, as a testimony to future generations (Exod. xvi. 31, 34). The work of Balac was to eat the meat offered to idols. Heavenly food is promised to those who abstain, and a secret name, taken from the symbolism of the Lord of Hosts, who carries the two-edged sword. He had “on his head many diadems having a name written which no man knoweth but himself” (R. xix. 12). This figure of Christ the Conqueror belongs to the third or Pergamon age. The name is one of the rewards of heaven. “And they shall see his face, and his name shall be on their foreheads” (R. xxii. 4). It is the ineffable name of God.

There has been much speculation about the “white stone.” “Ψῆφος,” as a dictionary word, refers to the ancient Greek custom of using a white stone to denote the innocence of persons tried before the courts and acquitted. The stone was cast into an urn. In that light the promise would mean acquittal on the day of judgment.

Bergamo, the modern Pergamos, is now a Mohammedan town in which there are many Christians of the Greek Schismatic Rite. Its Church history is a blank. There was no persecution there before the Apocalypse was written, and consequently Antipas was not slain there. It had no special claim to be known as the seat of Satan. The expression used by S. John is ὁ θρόνος τοῦ σατανᾶ—“the throne of Satan.” It is used again as the seat of the Beast, Nero, referring to Rome—τὸν θρόνον τοῦ θηρίου (R. xvi. 10). Pergamos of Asia Minor, whether in

the first age or in the third, fails completely to reflect the lights and shades of the picture drawn.

Note the connection between the symbolism of God in this picture and in that of the conquest of Rome (Chapter xix.). "He that hath the sharp two-edged sword." And note that the Church of the third age was the Church of "the Decline and Fall." The parallelism of the historic periods, in the Roman Thome and in the Letters is shown in this way.

THYATIRA.

18. Καὶ τῷ ἀγγέλῳ τῆς ἐν Θυατείροις ἐκκλησίας γράψον· Τάδε λέγει ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ, ὁ ἔχων τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς αὐτοῦ ὡς φλόγα πυρός, καὶ οἱ πόδες αὐτοῦ ὅμοιοι χαλκολιβάνῳ.

18. And to the angel of the church of Thyatira write ; These things saith the Son of God, who hath eyes as a flame of fire, and his feet like unto fine brass.

(S. ἀγγέλῳ τῷ.)

Thyatira, the fourth age of the Church, began when the downfall of pagan Rome was accomplished and the Devil was chained up for a thousand years (R. xx. 1, 2, 3). This gives the duration of the fourth Church, and discloses its principal feature in relation to the world. It lasted a thousand years, and was free from bloody persecution. Thyatira, means to be illuminated. Freed from persecution, the Christian faith spread over the world and enlightened it. But the body of the Church, freed from the tonic of persecution, fell away from its high calling and embraced luxury. This message reveals the interior condition of the Church of the middle ages, which extended from the sixth to the sixteenth century. A thousand years in Scripture means not less than a thousand years. The angel of the Church in this age was, as a matter of history, the Bishop of Rome.

"These things saith the Son of God" is a frequent expression in S. John's Gospel, but used in the Apocalypse only here. God's attributes, chosen for this introduction, are, "Who hath eyes as a flame of fire, and his feet like unto fine brass" (R. i. 14, 15). It is a threatening preface. "All things are naked and open to his eyes" (Heb. iv. 13). Eyes like flames of fire piercing and illuminating the darkest recesses of the Church of the middle ages and searching the reins and hearts (R. ii. 23). "Feet like unto fine brass," connote trampling down (see R. i. 15, notes).

The city of Thyatira was situated about forty miles south-east of Pergamos upon the Imperial post road. When the Apocalypse was written, it was a small and unimportant place. "The smallest and feeblest, and in general estimation the least distinguished and famous of all the seven cities, except, perhaps, Philadelphia, which might vie with Thyatira for the last place on the list. . . . The history of Thyatira is a blank. . . . Its character and circumstances in the century after Christ are almost unknown" (Ramsay, "Letters," 323-332). Thyatira is mentioned only once in the Scriptures, and then as a place from whence a Jewish or pagan woman was converted to Christianity (Acts xvi. 14). If the Ephesian Church was scarcely more than thirteen years of age, a dependent and unimportant place like Thyatira, which had to wait for missionaries from Ephesus or Laodicea, would not be more than ten years of age when this warning was written. About the last quarter of the second century a sect arose in Asia Minor who rejected the *logos* teaching of the fourth Gospel and of the Apocalypse. Hence they were called Alogi. According to Epiphanius, one of the principal arguments of the Alogi against the Apocalypse was that there was no church at Thyatira (Hær. li. 3). They were living in the Province, and used this argument in serious religious controversy. It was a question of fact, and the fact was not denied.

The Letter is addressed to the Angel of the Church, but the Spirit shows that this angel, like the others, ruled over many churches (v. 29). There is a startling contrast between this "message" and the local Church to which it is nominally sent. The letter to the Church of Thyatira is the longest and one of the most important of the seven. It deals with an old and well-recognised Church, having an assured and prolonged future. There are remarkable predictions about it. And it is said that "all the Churches shall know" of the fulfilment of one of them.

If we apply this Letter to the fourth or millennial age of the Church, which lasted about a thousand years, it may be said to coincide with it from the historic point of view in a remarkable manner. This period has been called by the Church "the age of faith," and by the world "the dark ages." What the world calls "dark" from a spiritual point of view, generally means "light." But both the Church and the world speak of this period as the Middle Ages. In this it may be that we have "built better than we know," for Thyatira is the middle Church of the seven, and consequently stands as the symbol of the Church of "the Middle Ages."

19. Οἶδά σου τὰ ἔργα καὶ τὴν πίστιν καὶ τὴν ἀγάπην καὶ τὴν διακονίαν καὶ τὴν ὑπομονήν σου, καὶ τὰ ἔργα σου τὰ ἔσχατα πλείονα τῶν πρώτων.

19. I know thy works, and thy faith, and thy charity, and thy ministry, and thy patience, and thy last works, which are more than the former.

S. begins the list of virtues with τὴν ἀγάπην. Bd. follows the Vulgate as above.

This great praise reflects the result of the millennium. At R. xx. 3 we are told that the devil was chained up for a thousand years. "I know thy works"—τα ἔργα. The first works related to church building and the exterior forms of worship which would occupy the attention of a church released from persecution. Τὴν πίστιν, "thy faith," the great characteristic of "the age of faith." Τὴν ἀγάπην, we have had before at R. ii. 4, where it is put for the fraternal charity of the Apostolic Church. The Church of the middle ages was renowned for its care of the poor. Διακονίαν, "ministry," points also to works of mercy, as instruction, attendance on the sick, etc. It connotes here ministration in the sense of missionary effort. The Apostolic Church halted at the boundaries of the Roman world. The Church of the Middle Ages evangelised the barbarians of Europe and the outer world. Ὑπομονήν we have had in connection with the Apostolic Church (see R. ii. 2, 3, notes). The Church of the Middle Ages, though it escaped bloody persecution, was often sorely distressed in many ways. Its "angels" or Popes shared the fate of temporal princes in turbulent periods, and were, many of them, murdered, exiled, imprisoned, or deposed.

The Papal succession in the middle ages was influenced by the *haute politique* of Europe. There were bad Popes and rival Popes; but the miracle of the *Ecclesia Docens*, preserving unsullied the fountain of Truth, shows through it all. Rome had no heresies, nor is it charged with heresy in the Book of Revelation.

"Thy last works which are more than the former," indicate the Council of Trent, which closed the Middle Ages with a strenuous effort to put the household of the faith in order. This Council decided the Canon of the Scripture, and established firmly the doctrines and discipline of the Church. It has been called the compendium and completion of all previous Councils. It began its sittings in the year 1545, and completed them in 1563.

Οἶδα σου τὰ ἔργα—"I know thy works well"—is the same

opening as that in the message to the first or Apostolic Church. No other age of the Church is eulogised in this way. This establishes a link between these two as missionary Churches. The comparison of the "last works" with the former ones, indicates a Church, whose age must be counted by centuries.

20. Ἄλλ' ἔχω κατὰ σοῦ ὅτι ἀφεῖς τὴν γυναῖκα Ἰεζάβελ, ἣ λέγουσά ἐαυτὴν προφήτιν, καὶ διδάσκει καὶ πλανᾷ τοὺς ἔμοὺς δούλους πορνεῦσαι καὶ φαγεῖν εἰδωλόθοντα.

20. But I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest the woman Jezabel, who calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and eat of the things sacrificed to idols.

"Ὀλίγα" translated "a few things" at R. ii. 14, is not in the Greek above, which runs: But I have against thee that thou sufferest the woman Jezabel . . . to teach and to seduce my servants (Vg. *paucā*).

Jezabel, the wife of Achab, was an unchaste worshipper of Baal, see 3 Kings xxi. 25, 26. She killed Naboth, and gave his vineyard to Achab. She also slew the prophets of the Lord (3 Kings xvi. 31, xviii. 4). She is used symbolically here to denote the sins of the Church in the middle ages—avarice and lust. The Angel of the Church is reproved because he allowed (*ἀφεῖς* means *permitted*) "my servants"—"*τοὺς ἔμοὺς δούλους*," *i.e.*, the hierarchy of the Church, to be taught and seduced into fornication and the eating of things sacrificed to idols. These expressions in the year 67 had a very definite meaning, and conjured up the licentious banquets of the heathen temples in which wine and woman filled a large part. The Ven. Holzhauser says these things were permitted in the Middle Ages, by the neglect of Ecclesiastical discipline.

The material prosperity of the Church culminated in the Middle Ages. Its revenues from lands and property of all kinds, from endowments and bequests, increased enormously. It became one of the richest institutions of the world. In the train of wealth came luxury, and in the lap of luxury lay vice. "Then the concupiscence of the flesh, and of the eyes, and the pride of life extended to the clergy of the Church. These, secure of the indulgence of a corrupt age and thinking it safe to do so, gave themselves up to voluptuous living, and fell into presumption, as ordinarily happens in such cases. But these were the vices of Jezabel, the wife of Achab" (Holzhauser, *op. cit.*, Vol. I., p. 145).

Many of the Popes struggled in vain against the evils which afflicted the Church. "Pope Leo IX. (1050) exerted himself strenuously to restore ecclesiastical discipline throughout the Church. He applied himself especially to root out two monster evils which were afflicting the Church—simony and incontinence" ("Catholic Manual of Church History," p. 138). These things are freely recognised by Catholic Historians. See "The Popes of the Middle Ages," L. Pastor, and "The Lives of the Popes in the Early Ages," Rev. H. K. Mann. The Church makes no claim to impeccability, or sinlessness, either as to its head, the Pope, or as to its members individually. It is in this book revealed that many of the hierarchy would fall into gross sins in the Middle Ages. History tells us that they did so.

21. Καὶ ἔδωκα αὐτῇ χρόνον ἵνα μετανοήσῃ, καὶ οὐ θέλει μετανοῆσαι ἐκ τῆς πορνείας αὐτῆς.

21. And I gave her time to do penance, and she will not repent of her fornication.

"Χρόνον," "time," is indefinite. It means sufficient time. It is predicted that this Church would not repent of her fornication. Again, history records that it did not repent, until compelled to by the chastisements presently foretold. If we measure this χρόνος by the extent of God's mercy to His Church, it becomes a long time. We have here a Church praised beyond all others for its faith and charity and ministry and patience, and for its work of old, and for its last works. A very zealous missionary Church, corrupted in time by the luxury which came in the train of gradually acquired wealth. The historic picture seems to call for the centuries of the Middle Ages.

22. Ἴδου βάλλω αὐτὴν εἰς κλίνην, καὶ τοὺς μοιχεύοντας μετ' αὐτῆς εἰς θλίψιν μεγάλην, ἂν μὴ μετανοήσωσιν ἐκ τῶν ἔργων αὐτῶν.

22. Behold I will cast her into a bed, and they that commit adultery with her, shall be in very great tribulation, unless they do penance for their deeds.

(S. μετανοήσωσιν . . . αὐτῆς.)

Βάλλω εἰς κλίνην means to lay low in a bed of sickness, without violence, as is shown by the use of the verb in Matt. viii. 6,

βέβληται . . . παραλυτικός, "sick of the palsy." So also Matt. ix. 2 and Luke xvi. 20.

"And they that commit adultery with her." When those who have taken vows of chastity fall into concubinage they commit spiritual adultery. The harlot bed, and the bed of sickness, form an antithesis. *Θλίψιν μεγάλην* is explained at R. vii. 14, where "*θλίψεως μεγάλης*" stands for "the great tribulations" of the martyrs. The sufferings in store for the Church will be like those of the martyrs "unless they do penance." There is always a door open for repentance. But this Church will not repent. For that reason her punishments are predicted as certain to come. These are not threats; they are decrees, foretold. The nature of the sickness is next revealed.

23. Καὶ τὰ τέκνα αὐτῆς ἀποκτενῶ ἐν θανάτῳ· καὶ γνῶσονται πᾶσαι αἱ ἐκκλησίαι ὅτι ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ἐραυνῶν νεφροὺς καὶ καρδίας, καὶ δώσω ὑμῖν ἐκάστῳ κατὰ τὰ ἔργα ὑμῶν.

23. And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he who searches the reins and hearts; and I will give to every one of you according to his works.

The expression "her children" is contrasted with "my servants" in R. ii. 20 above. The charge of sensuality is made against the hierarchy of the Church. But punishment will take a wider scope and include her children. When shepherds go astray flocks follow. The whole Church is to suffer. *Θάνατος*, "death," means pestilence or the plague. It is the pale horse which follows our Lord's command (R. vi. 8, where see notes). Prof. M. Stuart says that *θάνατος* means pestilence in Hebrew, in the Septuagint, Syriac, and Rabbinic versions of the O.T. (see 2 Sam. xxiv. 13 ("Th. Apoc.," vol. II., p. 82). Dr. Swete says in a note to R. vi. 8, referring to Lev. xxvi. 23, ff., Jer. xxi. 7, Ezech. v. 12-17, xxix. 5, xxxiii. 27, and xxxiv. 28, "In these O.T. passages ὁ θάνατος is pestilence." Towards the end of the Thyatiran age, in the fourteenth century, a great pestilence called "the Black Death," appeared in the East, and spread over Europe, Asia, and Africa. The mortality it caused was enormous. It was estimated in various parts of Europe at two-thirds or three-fourths of the entire population. Hecker calculates that in Europe twenty-five millions died of it. It recurred frequently throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and appeared in London as late as the reign of Charles II. In a special manner it seems to have visited the

clergy; dioceses were left without Bishops, parishes without priests, monasteries without monks.

Abbot Gasquet, O.S.B., in his book "The Great Pestilence," gives a graphic account of this "Black Death," which should be read by all who wish to understand this message to Thyatira. Writing especially of England, he says in his preface: "In truth, this great pestilence was a turning-point in the national life. It formed the real close of the Mediæval period and the beginning of our Modern age."

He attributed the great religious upheaval of the sixteenth century in some measure to the absence of religion, due to the want of clergy. It is a strange coincidence that he should recognise as a landmark of Church history, one of the most important boundaries in the Apocalypse—the end of Thyatira.

"I am he who searches the reins and hearts," *Νεφροῦς*, "the reins," or "kidneys" symbolise concupiscence in the O.T.; and the heart, "the desires of the heart," see Jer. xi. 20, xvii. 10, Ps. vii. 10. "O Lord of Hosts, the prover of the just, who seest the reins and hearts" (Jer. xx. 12). "Eyes as a flame of fire" pierce the reins and hearts and lay bare the thoughts and desires of man.

"And I will give to every one of you according to his works," is a frequent warning in the Apocalypse. It seems to be connected here with the far-seeing eyes of God, as in Jeremias. "Whose eyes are open on all the ways of the children of Adam to render to every man according to his ways" (xxxii. 19).

The local Church of Thyatira and the other six Churches of the Apocalypse occupied an area about twice the size of Yorkshire, through which a constant stream of traffic flowed. The rules of hygiene were altogether unknown in this crowded and insanitary area. Plague or pestilence is remarkably contagious. Given an outbreak of plague at Thyatira it would rapidly involve the whole area. "In the epidemic of the fourteenth century," Hecker remarks, "Tartary, Mesopotamia, Syria, Armenia, were covered with dead bodies. . . . In Caramania and Cæsarea none were left alive. On the roads, in the camp, in the caravansaries unburied bodies were alone to be seen" ("The Epidemics of the Middle Ages," p. 21). At that time the Seven Churches of Asia had ceased to exist. According to Gibbon, the great plague, "which depopulated the earth in the time of Justinian . . . spread to the East over Syria, Persia and the Indies" ("Decline and Fall," iii., p. 162). Whatever plagues there were in that part of Asia Minor, all the Churches, we may be sure, suffered alike. Hence it appears that it is not Thyatira of Asia Minor but the fourth age of the Church that is in question.

“And all the Churches shall know.” All the Churches in communion with the “Angel of Thyatira” in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries knew of this plague—the Black Death, and knew that it was a visitation from God.

24. Ἐμῖν δὲ λέγω τοῖς λοιποῖς τοῖς ἐν Θυατείροις, ὅσοι οὐκ ἔχουσιν τὴν διδαχὴν ταύτην, οἵτινες οὐκ ἔγνωσαν τὰ βάθη τοῦ Σατανᾶ, ὡς λέγουσιν. Οὐ βάλλω ἐφ’ ὑμᾶς ἄλλο βῆρος.

24. And to the rest who are at Thyatira. Whosoever have not this doctrine, and who have not known the depths of Satan, as they say, I will not put upon you any other weight.

I say to you, “Ἐμῖν,” collectively, is not in the Latin Vulgate or the English version. Τοῖς λοιποῖς, “the rest,” means a large proportion, see R. ix. 20, and R. xii. 17, where the dragon failing to *hurt* the woman, “went to make war with ‘the rest’ (τῶν λοιπῶν) of her seed,” that is with the whole Church. “Who are at Thyatira” means who belong to the Church of the Middle Ages.

“Whosoever have not this doctrine” refers back to the teaching of Jezabel at R. ii. 20. “Who have not known the depths of Satan,” refers to the results of that teaching. “The depths of Satan” is, probably, the antithesis of τὰ βάθη τοῦ θεοῦ in 1 Cor. ii. 10. Ὡς λέγουσιν—“as the saying is,” indicates a colloquial generalisation of the same kind as the expression “the depth of wickedness” in our own day. “Doctrine” is hardly the right English word to use in connection with fornication and simony in the Church. There was no such doctrine in existence. Dr. Swete says of “τὴν διδαχὴν ταύτην,” “Doctrine” is an unfortunate rendering, suggesting a logical system rather than a heterogeneous mass of wild speculations and loose views of life (*op. cit.*, p. 45). “I will not put upon you any other weight.” The rest, who had not fallen into evil ways, were, of course, the millions of good Christians who lived in the Church of the Middle Ages.

Many great saints appeared in Thyatira:

S. Columban, S. Theodore, S. Gregory I. (Pope), S. Augustine of Canterbury, S. Gertrude, S. Wilfrid of York, S. Martin I. (Pope), S. Eugenius I. (Pope), S. Leo II. (Pope), S. Benedict II. (Pope), S. Benedict (Bishop), S. Boniface, S. John of Beverley, S. Zachary (Pope), S. Leo III. (Pope), S. Pascal I. (Pope), S. Ignatius of Constantinople, S. Neot of Glastonbury, S. Bruno, S. Odo of Canterbury, S. Dunstan of Canterbury, S. Stephen of Hungary, S. Leo IX. (Pope), S. Peter Damian,

S. Gregory VII. (Pope), S. Bernard, S. Thomas of Canterbury, S. Dominic, S. Francis of Assisi, S. Clare, S. Anthony of Padua, S. Elizabeth of Hungary, S. Louis of France, S. Edmund (Bishop), S. Thomas Aquinas, S. Bonaventure, S. Celestine V. (Pope), S. Benedict XI. (Pope), S. Bridget, S. Catherine of Siena, Thomas à Kempis, and S. Francis of Paula, etc., etc.

“Not . . . any other weight” than that caused by the Black Death. There was to be no Persecution. Persecution is symbolised by “pressure”—*Θλίψις*.

25. Πλὴν ὃ ἔχετε κρατήσατε ἄχρι οὗ ἂν ἦξω.

25. Yet that which you have, hold fast till I come.

“That which you have” refers to the “last works” which were “more than the first,” viz., the rule of faith as laid down by the Council of Trent. Hold fast the true faith “till I come.” It is a significant commentary on this that Thyatira, now called Akhissa, is a Mohammedan town containing a few Greek Orthodox Christians, and that it ceased to hold the faith centuries ago. But it may be hinted that the Church of the millennium has also passed away. It has not gone but is changed, through Sardis, into the present day Church of Philadelphia. And the admonition is changed from, “That which you have, hold fast till I come” into, “Behold, I come quickly: hold fast that which thou hast, that no man may take thy crown.”

26. Καὶ ὁ νικῶν καὶ ὁ τηρῶν ἄχρι τέλους τὰ ἔργα μου, δώσω αὐτῷ ἐξουσίαν ἐπὶ τῶν ἐθνῶν.

26. And he that shall overcome and keep my works unto the end, I will give him power over the nations.

“Overcome,” in this case, means conquering temptations and overcoming all obstacles in the way of “my works unto the end.” “My works” are those last works especially commended. In the wreck of local Churches following “the Black Death,” it was no easy matter to keep the faith alive. But to him that shall overcome, “I will give him power over the nations.” This is addressed to the Angel of the Churches, and means spiritual power. This promise has been cut into two separate verses. The next verse indicates that the gift of *τῶν ἐθνῶν*, “the

Gentiles," refers to heathen nations, not yet converted to the faith. That was the meaning of τῶν ἔθνῶν in S. John's day.

ἄχρι τέλους—"unto the end"—looks forward to the end of this Church, as the angel of the Church is addressed.

27. Καὶ ποιμανεῖ αὐτοὺς ἐν ῥάβδῳ σιδηρᾷ, ὡς τὰ σκεύη τὰ κεραμικὰ συντρίβεται, ὡς καγὼ εἴληφα παρὰ τοῦ πατρός μου.

27. And he shall rule them with a rod of iron, and as the vessel of a potter they shall be broken, even as I received from my Father.

This is the continuation of the promise made in the last verse. The rod of iron was the crook, tipped with iron, with which the shepherd ruled his sheep, and broke up the potsherds which endangered their feet. It was adopted as the crozier or pastoral staff; the symbol of a bishop's rule over his Church. Psalm ii. 8, 9, from which the symbol is taken, relate to the conversion of the heathen. "Ask of me and I will give thee the Gentiles for thy inheritance and the utmost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt rule them with a rod of iron, and shalt break them in pieces like a potter's vessel."

At the close of the Thyatiran era two great saints arose who were destined to recoup the losses of the Church. One in Europe, the other abroad—S. Ignatius Loyola, and S. Francis Xavier, 1521-1552. S. Francis Xavier and other Jesuits devoted their lives to missionary effort in India and Japan. From 1498 to 1515 Christopher Columbus, Amerigo Vespucci, Sebastian Cabot, Vasco da Gama, and Jacques Cortier, made numerous expeditions to North and South America, and a new and rich missionary field was opened to the Church. The Portuguese in Africa gave other openings to the faith, so that it may be said that what the Church lost at home, she gained abroad.

"Even as I received from my Father" is omitted from this verse, and prefixed to the next in the Vulgate. It is characteristic of our Lord's teaching, and has reference to the rod in Psalm ii. 8, 9, above.

28. Καὶ δώσω αὐτῷ τὸν ἀστέρα τὸν πρωῖνόν.

28. And I will give him the morning star.

The reward is taken, as usual, from the end of the Book, where we read: "I am the root and stock of David, the bright

and morning star" (R. xxii. 16). Showing that the Book, from beginning to end, was sent to the Churches, and is all one connected prophecy.

29. Ὁ ἔχων οὖς ἀκουσάτω τί τὸ Πνεῦμα λέγει ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις.

29. He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith to the Churches.

The mandate of the Holy Spirit to apply one's mind to the understanding of the message is especially called for here, for the fourth is the Key message of the Seven. As a chain is no stronger than its weakest link, the literal interpretation of the messages breaks down hopelessly at Thyatira. The scarcely known and long forgotten households of the faith in ancient Thyatira had no part in this wonderful forecast of the Church of the Middle Ages.

CHAPTER III

SARDIS.

1. Καὶ τῷ ἀγγέλῳ τῆς ἐν Σάρδεσιν ἐκκλησίας γράψον. Τάδε λέγει ὁ ἔχων τὰ ἑπτὰ πνεύματα τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ τοὺς ἑπτὰ ἀστέρας; Οἶδά σου τὰ ἔργα, ὅτι ὄνομα ἔχεις ὅτι ζῆς, καὶ νεκρὸς εἶ.

1. And to the angel of the Church of Sardis write ; These things saith he who has the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars ; I know thy works, that thou hast the name of being alive, and thou art dead.

The City of Sardis was situated on the great Roman road, about thirty miles south-east of Thyatira. Sir W. Ramsay says, "When the seven letters were written, Sardis was a city of the past, which had no future before it" ("Letters," p. 368). It is now a hamlet, called Sart, ruled by the Turks, and there is no Christian Church there. Nothing is known of the angel of this Church in the year 67 A.D., and very little about the Church itself. Its ecclesiastical history is almost a blank. Eusebius tells us that Melito, Bishop of Sardis (165-196), wrote a commentary on the Apocalypse of S. John. As a symbol of the fifth age of the Church it extended from the Council of Trent to

the first half of the nineteenth century, a period of about 280 years. During the greater part of this time the Church suffered persecution in one direction or another.

The Sardinian age is commonly known as the Reformation period; the Church periods, foretold by Revelation, have come to pass. The beginning of the Reformation era was characterised by a widespread revolt against the Church, accompanied by much bloodshed, settling down in some countries into a prolonged and bloody persecution of the Church.

This is distinctly foretold in that part of Revelation devoted to the history of the Church and the world. We are told that "when the thousand years shall be finished, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison and shall go forth and seduce the nations which are over the four quarters of the earth" (R. xx. 7).

The Church of Sardis, *i.e.*, of the fourth age, inherited from the Middle Ages a bad name, an enfeebled constitution, and corrupt morals. The Ven. Holzhauser, a Swiss Ecclesiastic who lived in Germany in this age, gives a deplorable account of its early condition. He says that it failed to profit by the lesson of the black death. Laxity and sin were common amongst the clergy, and a widespread impatience of doctrinal belief, which enabled the heresiarchs of that time to carry away large sections of the Church (*op. cit.*, Vol. I. p. 147, f.). "The Letters of B. Peter Canisius, S.J. (1565-1567) are still more outspoken," Braunsberger, Vol. V. pp. 80, 135, 142, 175, 402, 516, 667). Holzhauser looked to persecution to renew the strength and beauty of the Church. According to him the word "Sardis" signifies the origin or cause of beauty.

To this enfeebled Church our Lord identifies Himself as "he who has the seven Spirits of God, and the Seven Stars." He who sends forth the gifts of the Holy Ghost, and who holds the angels of the Churches in His strong right hand (see R. i. 4, 16). This opening is encouraging. It promises well for the future of the Church. It is like the introduction to the message to the Apostolic Church. "He who holdeth the Seven Stars" (R. ii. 1).

"I know thy works." Usually the good works are mentioned first, but this Church gets no praise at all. It has the name of being alive, but it is dead. Dead in a spiritual sense. "Dead in your offences and sins" (Eph. ii. 1; see also Col. ii. 13). Holzhauser puts it that there was much exterior show of piety, but that interior death was prevalent, in the shape of pride, hypocrisy and luxury.

2. Γίνου γρηγορῶν, καὶ στήρισον τὰ λοιπὰ ἃ ἔμελλον ἀποθανεῖν· οὐ γὰρ εὐρηκά σου ἔργα πεπληρωμένα ἐνώπιον τοῦ Θεοῦ μου.

2. Be watchful and strengthen the things that remain, which are ready to die. For I find not thy works full before my God.

In countries which fell away from the Church and persecuted it, the Church was ready to die for want of priests. A few things remained, however, and the Angel of the Church is told to be watchful and strengthen those things. In the Latin countries, which escaped the purifying fires of persecution, the Church was still intoxicated with the riches and luxury of the millennium; there also a few things remained. The Council of Trent, which closed the Middle Ages, influenced the whole Church for good, especially in all matters of faith. But the works were not adequate. "I find not thy works full before my God." There is relative, but not absolute, censure. There is merit, but not enough. S. John uses the word *πεπληρωμένα*, "full," in his first and second Epistles, "that your joy may be full" (1 Jhn. i. 4, 2 Jhn. 12.).

Holzhauser interprets "be watchful and strengthen," as addressed to the Angel of the Church of Sardis, in this way. Be vigilant in appointing good bishops, in correcting bad ones and supporting good ones. Be vigilant against those whose lives give scandal. Be vigilant in putting down heresies. Holzhauser's views are worth quoting, as those of an ecclesiastic on the spot. He was ordained in 1639.

3. Μνημόνευε οὖν πῶς εἴληφας καὶ ἤκουσας, καὶ τήρει καὶ μετανόησον. ἐὰν οὖν μὴ γρηγορήσης, ἦξω ἐπὶ σὲ ὡς κλέπτης, καὶ οὐ μὴ γνῶς ποίαν ὥραν ἦξω ἐπὶ σέ.

3. Have in mind therefore in what manner thou hast received and heard; and observe and do penance. If then thou shalt not watch, I will come to thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know at what hour I will come to thee.

(S. omits the first *ἐπὶ σέ*. Vg. = *Veniam ad te tanquam fur*.)

Professor M. Stuart interprets *εἴληφας* as learning—doctrinal instruction, and *ἤκουσας* as referring to oral instruction. *Τήρει*, Keep them in mind. Holzhauser develops the sense in this way, Remember why you were consecrated, the graces you have received, the teaching of the Apostles in Holy Scripture, of the Councils, especially of the Council of Trent, and the religious instruction you have received in preparation for the priesthood, etc. (*op. cit.*, 172 ff.).

“I will come to thee as a thief.” This threat is addressed to the Prelates, the Servants of God in the Age of Sardis, or Reformation period. *Γρηγορῶν* occurs again at R. xvi. 15, in a passage which has a personal significance. It is found also in a like sense in Mark xiii. 33. Where persecution existed the clergy of all grades carried their lives constantly in their hands. In Great Britain especially they were laying the foundations of the sixth Church, Philadelphia, at the risk of their lives. But the opulent Churches of the Latin races were not immune from suffering. The French Revolution and the Napoleonic wars carried death and destruction into their ranks and property. Before the age of Sardis closed, England became the refuge of many exiled priests and nuns, who helped to prepare the way for Philadelphia.

4. Ἄλλὰ ἔχεις ὀλίγα ὀνόματα ἐν Σάρδεσιν ἃ οὐκ ἐμόλυναν τὰ ἱμάτια αὐτῶν, καὶ περιπατήσουσιν μετ' ἐμοῦ ἐν λευκοῖς, ὅτι ἄξιοί εἰσιν.

4. But thou hast a few names in Sardis which have not defiled their garments ; and they shall walk with me in white, because they are worthy.

It was a common custom of writers in the first and second centuries to put *ὀνόματα*, “names,” for people. It is often found in the N.T. (See Acts i. 15 and R. xi. 13.) There were many great saints in this age, notably, S. Charles Borromeo, S. Philip Neri, S. Francis de Sales, S. Vincent de Paul, S. Francis Borgia, S. Theresa, S. Louis Gonzaga, and S. Alphonsus Ligouri, and a great company of martyrs. Many of the great reforming Orders of the Church came into being. The Jesuits’ “Society” was organised. The Oratorians, the Lazarists, the Sulpicians, the Christian Brothers, the Ursulines, and the Order of the Visitation, were established. “Which have not defiled their garments.” *Μολύνειν* stands for actual pollution with blood (Gen. xxxvii. 31, Isa. lix. 3). Here the reference is to the sins of the period. “They shall walk with me in white, because they are worthy” applies to all the saints and martyrs of this age. They were the authors of the “Counter Reformation,” which purified and rejuvenated the Church. Stainless souls, they walked in white. This promise looks forward to the Bride of the Lamb. “And to her it hath been granted that she should clothe herself with fine linen, glittering white. For the fine linen is the justification of the saints” (R. xix. 8).

But there is further reference to white garments in the next verse.

5. Ὁ νικῶν, οὕτως περιβαλεῖται ἐν ἱματίοις λευκοῖς, καὶ οὐ μὴ ἐξαιλείψω τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ ἐκ τῆς βίβλου τῆς ζωῆς, καὶ ὁμολογήσω τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ ἐνώπιον τοῦ πατρὸς μου καὶ ἐνώπιον τῶν ἀγγέλων αὐτοῦ.

5. He that shall overcome shall thus be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot his name out of the book of life, and I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.

“He that shall overcome shall thus be clothed in white garments” suggests, at first sight, martyrdom, especially as ὁ νικῶν often connotes martyrdom in this Book. But the martyrs are given “white robes,” *στολή λευκή*, at R. vi. 11; and when they appear in heaven at R. vii. 9, they are seen to be wearing “white robes,” *στολὰς λευκάς*. These “robes” are distinctive of the martyrs throughout the Revelation. “White garments” are worn by the saints in heaven. In the next chapter four-and-twenty ancients are seen in a vision of heaven, seated on thrones and clothed in white garments, *ἱματίοις λευκοῖς*, the same Greek words as above. This promise to the Church of Sardis, therefore, looks forward to the vision of the throne of God.

The promised reward of “the book of life” is taken from the vision of the last judgment. “I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and the books were opened and another book was opened, which is the book of life” (R. xx. 12). “And whoever was not found written in the Book of life was cast into the pool of fire” (R. xx. 15). It is the promise of eternal reward.

“And I will confess his name before my Father.” “Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of Man also confess before the angels of God” (Luke xii. 8). Contrast this with the opposite warning in Matt. x. 32. In the days of the Penal Laws it required great courage to confess the Catholic Faith. It was death to be a priest or to conceal a priest, or to become a convert to the Catholic Church, or to gain a convert. Fines and imprisonment were inflicted on those who neglected to attend the Protestant Church. And there were many other penal disabilities in England. In Scotland from 1560 to 1746 A.D. the persecution was worse. Refusal to attend Protestant worship was treason. Fines, imprisonment, banishment, confiscation of estates, torture and death were the lot of Catholics. In Ireland an attempt was made to exterminate the population because of its faith. The poet

Spenser relates of the province of Munster: "Out of every corner of the wood and glynns they came creeping forth upon their hands, for their legs could not bear them; they looked like anatomies of death; they spoke like ghosts crying out of the grave. . . . In a short space there was none almost left, and a most populous and plentiful country suddenly left void of man and beast" (Spenser's "State of Ireland," p. 165). They were even sold into slavery. Lecky relates how slave dealers were let loose on the land, who captured boys and girls and shipped them off to Barbadoes, where they were herded with negroes and treated as slaves.

6. Ὁ ἔχων οὖς ἀκουσάτω τί τὸ Πνεῦμα λέγει ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις.

6. He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith to the Churches.

It is difficult to make a comparison between the above message and Sardis of Asia Minor, chiefly because we know nothing about the local Church except that with the rest it passed into the hands of Greek schismatics and disappeared in the fourteenth century.

PHILADELPHIA.

7. Καὶ τῷ ἀγγέλῳ τῆς ἐν Φιλαδελφίᾳ ἐκκλησίας γράψον; Τάδε λέγει ὁ ἅγιος, ὁ ἀληθινός, ὁ ἔχων τὴν κλεῖν τοῦ Δαυεὶδ, ὁ ἀνοίγων καὶ οὐδεὶς κλείσει, καὶ κλείων καὶ οὐδεὶς ἀνοίγει.

7. And to the angel of the church of Philadelphia write; These things saith the Holy One and the True One, who hath the key of David: he that openeth, and no man shutteth; shutteth and no man openeth.

(S. omits τοῦ.)

Philadelphia is about thirty miles south of Sardis on the high road. It is one of the least important cities of the province. Pliny mentions nine cities of Asia which were centres of a *conventus* (H. N., v. 29). Philadelphia and Thyatira are not amongst the number, showing them to have been small places.

Philadelphia still exists as a Turkish town, under the name of Ala-Shehr. It is the seat of a Greek Orthodox bishop. The prevailing religion is Mohammedan. Since the fifteenth century the Crescent has dominated the Cross in Asia Minor.

This Letter, like the rest, is addressed to "the Angel" of the Period. This sixth age of the Church, represented by Philadelphia, began in the first half of the nineteenth century, and will continue until the Laodicean age, an unknown date. Philadelphia means "Brotherly love," the motto of the age in which we live.

The Ven. Holzhauser seems to have been inspired when he foretold that a saintly pope and a powerful Christian monarch would appear in the beginning of this age, and help the revival of the persecuted Church. We cannot be far wrong in coupling the names of Pius IX. (1846) and the Queen-Empress Victoria (1837) with the opening of the Philadelphian age. Pius IX. was a saintly and much-tried Pope. He was the fugitive of Gaeta, and ended his days as the prisoner of the Vatican. He stands out from the line of Popes conspicuous by reason of his having been robbed of the temporal power, and pre-eminent by reason of his having raised two doctrines of the Church to the dignity of dogmas. He it was who promulgated the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, which means that the Blessed Virgin alone of all the children of Adam was free from the stain of original sin. He also promulgated the dogma of the Infallibility of the Pope, which means that, when the Pope defines a doctrine in faith or morals to be held by the whole Church, he is guided by the Holy Ghost, and is infallible.

Queen Victoria was a contemporary of Pius IX., and fills the rôle of the great Christian monarch predicted by Holzhauser. In the Victorian era there grew up an empire such as the world has never seen; an empire upon which the sun never sets; beneath whose flag of freedom the Church has been free to expand in the four quarters of the globe. What the Roman Empire did to pave the way for Christianity, this, and much more, has the British Empire done for the Church in the Victorian era. The spirit of civil and religious liberty lives on in the descendants of the great Queen-Empress, who now reign in more than half the kingdoms of the world, *e.g.*, the British Empire, the German Empire, the Russian Empire, Denmark, Greece, Holland, Norway, and Spain.

The parallelism between England and Rome is remarkable. Both by their conquests threw open a vast field to the missionary enterprise of the Church, and both, by persecution, purified the Church and fitted it for its great mission. The likeness ends there however, for whereas pagan Rome died impenitent (see R. ix. 20) Christian England rose to a new and better life at the beginning of this era.

The Oxford movement was one of its earliest manifestations. We may date it with the conversion of Newman in 1845. The

great names of Newman and Manning fill the page of history and obscure the lesser lights, but hundreds of good men brought up in Protestant faiths gave up all and joined the despised Church. At the same time there grew up in the minds of Britons of all denominations a truer Christian spirit. Voices are even now heard pleading for the reunion of the Churches.

“And to the Angel of the Church of Philadelphia write.” The Bishops of Rome of this age are addressed as the Angels of the Churches. The local Church of Philadelphia in Asia Minor was without a bishop in the year 67. Its churches are unknown.

“Holy and true” occurs again at R. vi. 10, the martyr’s cry to God, *ὁ δεσπότης ὁ ἅγιος καὶ ἀληθινός*, where *δεσπότης* stands for the supreme despotic power. *Ἀληθινός*, “true,” occurs again towards the close of the Book in contexts meant to impress us with the certainty of the judgments, the predictions, and the promises made in this Book (R. xix. 2, 9-11, xxi. 5, xxii. 6).

“Who hath the key of David.” The prophet Isaias says, “And I will lay the key of the house of David upon his shoulder, and he shall open and none shall shut” (xxii. 22). This is a promise of dominion over the Kingdom of Judah. It connects with the angel Gabriel’s salutation, “And the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of David his father, . . . and of his Kingdom there shall be no end” (Luke i. 32, 33).

At R. v. 5 our Lord is described as “the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David.” And at the end of Revelation Jesus says, “I am the root and stock of David” (R. xxii. 16).

This encouraging opening leads up to the promise of the next verse, which predicts a great expansion of the Kingdom.

8. *Οἶδά σου τὰ ἔργα· ἰδοὺ δέδωκα ἐνώπιόν σου θύραν ἀνεωγμένην, ἣν οὐδεὶς δύναται κλείσαι αὐτήν· ὅτι μικρὰν ἔχεις δύναμιν, καὶ ἐτήρησάς μου τὸν λόγον καὶ οὐκ ἤρνησώ το ὄνομά μου.*

8. I know thy works. Behold I have given before thee a door opened, which no man can shut, because thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.

“I know thy works,” viz., “because thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my words, and hast not denied my name.” Observe how this message connects with that of Sardis. “Be watchful and strengthen the things that remain”

(R. iii. 2). The persecuted Church of Sardis did strengthen the things left to it by the "last acts" of the Middle Ages, the word of God in the Council of Trent. It is praised because it, a greatly enfeebled Church, "had a little strength," and "kept my words," and did not deny the name of Jesus. Dr. Swete remarks that Ἐτήρησάς . . . οὐκ ἠρνήσω "point to some period of trial now for the moment gone by" (*op. cit.*, p. 55). It refers to previous sufferings in the age of Sardis. The same may be said of ἐτήρησάς in the opening sentence of verse 10. It was promised to the fifth Church. "He that shall overcome, I will confess his name" (R. iii. 5).

"Behold I have given before thee a door opened, which no man can shut." The open door extends the metaphor of the key. It means that the Church will enjoy freedom in this present age and that a great many who are not of the fold will enter her portals. So God "opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles" (Acts xiv. 26). "For a great door and evident is opened unto me" (1 Cor. xvi. 9). S. Paul says again, "When I was come to Troas for the gospel of Christ, and a door was opened unto me in the Lord" (2 Cor. ii. 12). "Praying withal for us also that God may open unto us a door of speech, to speak the mystery of Christ" (Col. iv. 3). This wonderful prediction of the open door is made to the Church in this our own age. And it is made by God with a display of strength and an assurance of its certitude, that make it impossible to doubt it. It means an extraordinary expansion of the Church in this age. The next verse develops further the meaning of the promise. It means expansion by conversions.

9. Ἴδου διδῶ ἐκ τῆς συναγωγῆς τοῦ σατανᾶ, τῶν λεγόντων ἑαυτοὺς Ἰουδαίους εἶναι, καὶ οὐκ εἰσὶν, ἀλλὰ ψεύδονται· ἰδοὺ ποιήσω αὐτοὺς ἵνα ἤξουσιν καὶ προσκυνήσουσιν ἐνώπιον τῶν ποδῶν σου, καὶ γνώσιν ὅτι ἐγὼ ἠγάπησά σε.

9. Behold I will bring of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie. Behold I will make them to come and adore before thy feet. And they shall know that I have loved thee.

Διδῶ, translated "I will bring," comes from the verb δίδωμι, "to give"—*dabo* Vg. It is one of the many gifts promised to the Churches in these Letters.

This prediction corresponds with that of Isaias. "They shall worship thee, and shall make supplication to thee, only in thee is God, and there is no God besides thee" (xlv. 14).

"The synagogue of Satan" at first sight seems to refer to the Jews. But Jews, so far, have shown no disposition to become Christians, although the age of Philadelphia is far advanced. The early Church looked upon the Jews who rejected the Messiah as false Jews. As S. Paul taught, it was not the exterior observance but the inward spirit that marked the true Jew of his time. But the Jews of to-day "who say they are Jews," in point of fact, are Jews, and are accepted as such by the whole world. We may look upon the Jews in this passage as figurative. In wording a message to the nineteenth century in a book given to the first, it was necessary to employ the symbols of the first century. This promise is a continuation and specific illustration of the "door opened." It means that even those Christians who were zealous in persecuting the Church aforetime, in the erroneous belief that they were serving God, would be converted to the one true fold, and make submission to the Vicar of Christ. The *synagogue* indicates in a special manner the ministers or clergy of other faiths, a great number of whom have, as a matter of fact, joined the Catholic Church in our time.

The growth of the Church in America illustrates the open door. *The New York Journal* published statistics (in the year 1908) of the Catholic population, showing 3,000,000 in 1856, at the beginning of the Philadelphian era, and "between thirteen and fifteen millions" in 1908.

The prediction of "the open door" cannot be applied to the local Church of Philadelphia in Asia. It was never a famous, populous, or opulent Church. We have the writings of S. Ignatius of Antioch, Eusebius and others, but there is not the slightest indication of anything of the kind at Philadelphia. Quite the contrary. What missionary effort there was in Asia Minor proceeded from Ephesus, or Laodicea, and later from Antioch. Its door so far from being open was closed centuries ago. By no stretch of the imagination can we apply this letter to it. We know the broad lines of its history, how it shared in the general excommunication of the Greek Church pronounced by Leo IX., and how its door was closed by the Turks. It belongs to the past, and these predictions have not been fulfilled in its regard. But prophecies are not made void. This letter indicates the sixth age in which we live, and not the vanished Church of Asia Minor.

There is still greater difficulty in applying this prediction to the local Jews of Philadelphia. Considering all that we see in the Acts of the Apostles of the anti-Christian tone and temper of the Jews in Asia Minor in the first century; considering, also, that the synagogue of Satan is accused of "blaspheming"

the Church of Smyrna, not far from Philadelphia; considering, again, that there is no record of Jewish conversions at Philadelphia, either in Christian or Jewish writings, it does not appear that we can read this message into the history of the local Church. Besides, it is not easy to understand why Jews should recognise the Divine mission of the Church of Philadelphia and not that of the neighbouring cities with which they were in daily communication.

There is no reason why the Jews should "come and adore before the Church of Philadelphia," passing by the more imposing Churches of Ephesus, Laodicea, Smyrna and Pergamos, where in fact the Jews were chiefly congregated. The history of Antioch, which became the Mother Church of the Seven Churches of Asia Minor, is known. Antioch was noted by historians for the frequent collisions between the Jews and Christians which took place there. There was much bloodshed in these conflicts from the fourth to the seventh century (Leclercq, *Dict. d'Arch. et de Liturg.* chap. i. col. 2396).

10. Ὅτι ἐτήρησας τὸν λόγον τῆς ὑπομονῆς μου, καὶ γὰρ σε τηρήσω ἐκ τῆς ὥρας τοῦ πειρασμοῦ τῆς μελλούσης ἔρχεσθαι ἐπὶ τῆς οἰκουμένης ὅλης, πειράσαι τοὺς κατοικοῦντας ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς.

10. Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I will also keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon the whole world to tempt them that dwell upon the earth.

In verse 8, the Church is praised for having "kept my word, and hast not denied my name." This is developed here into "the word of my patience." Compare "τῆς υπομονῆς μου" with τὴν ὑπομονὴν τοῦ χριστοῦ, "the patience of Christ" (2 Thess. iii. 5), and with ὑπομονή τῶν ἀγίων, in R. xiv. 12, where the patience of the saints is explained, "as of those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus." Because of this, another recompense is promised. "I will keep thee from the hour of temptation." An hour is used in this Book to denote a long period, as at R. xiv. 7, "the hour of his judgment is come," on the Roman Empire, understood. That hour lasted more than a century.

Πειρασμός means temptation to sin of some kind, in the ordinary sense of the word. This temptation *shall come* upon the whole world. A distinct prediction of a wide-spread temptation. "To tempt them that dwell upon the earth." Ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς is put in this Book for the opponents of the

Church. There is one temptation which has spread over a great part of the world, with the sanction of legality. Divorce is its name. It would be difficult for a writer in the first century to characterise it in plain language. It means polygamy and polyandria, for those who can afford the cost of divorce-court proceedings. And the solicitude of the world in this "hour" is to make it cheaper and easier; to extend its benefits to the poor! The moral and physical ruin brought into family life by divorce is not before us, but the extent of the evil is. Its geographical extent is known. It is widespread. Its latitude, in another direction, may be gauged by an announcement in the American papers at the close of the 19th century. They chronicled the marriage of a lady to her eighth husband, and mentioned that she received the congratulations of five former and still living husbands! Thousands of divorces are granted daily in the combined divorce-courts of the world.

The Philadelphian Church, to which we belong, will be kept from this temptation by the celibacy of the clergy and by the stringent laws of the Church against divorce.

Of course this exegesis is provisional and limited to the present horizon. Some other temptation may arise in the future. It has not shown itself yet, however, although the Philadelphian age is passing into that of Laodicea.

It would be useless to inquire what was the temptation which came upon the whole world, which the local Church of Philadelphia in Asia was preserved from. That Church is not in the purview of these warnings.

11. Ἐρχομαι ταχύ. κράτει ὃ ἔχεις, ἵνα μηδεὶς λάβῃ τὸν στέφανόν σου.

11. Behold I come quickly; hold fast that which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.

"Behold I come quickly," addressed to the Angel of the last Church but one, has an eschatological significance. Sent to this particular Church, it must be taken, like the other predictions in these Letters, as a special warning to the Church addressed. No previous Angel was given this warning. The Bishop of Laodicea, the last Church, is told, "Behold I stand at the door and knock" (R. iii. 20). Even we, of the Philadelphian age, are warned that the world is nearing its end. "Hold fast that which thou hast" = "thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word and hast not denied my name" (R. iii. 8).

“Thou hast kept the word of my patience” (R. iii. 10). For these things the Church is praised, and rewards are promised to it. Hold them fast, “that no man take thy crown”—*στεφανόν*, the reward of victory in the contests of the arena. The danger comes from man. Not by way of persecutions, but in some other way, as by modernism, worldliness, wealth, indifferentism, etc. The crown we have had before as one of the rewards of the persecuted age of Smyrna, “the crown of life” (R. ii. 10). “And when the prince of pastors shall appear, you shall receive a never-fading crown of glory” (1 Pet. v. 4).

12. Ὁ νικῶν, ποιήσω αὐτὸν στύλον ἐν τῷ ναῷ τοῦ Θεοῦ μου, καὶ ἔξω οὐ μὴ ἐξέλθῃ ἔτι· καὶ γράψω ἐπ’ αὐτὸν τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ Θεοῦ μου καὶ τὸ ὄνομα τῆς πόλεως τοῦ Θεοῦ μου, τῆς καινῆς Ἱερουσαλήμ, ἣ καταβαίνουσα ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἀπὸ τοῦ Θεοῦ μου, καὶ τὸ ὄνομά μου τὸ καινόν.

12. He that shall overcome, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go out no more; and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God, and my new name.

The expression, Ὁ νικῶν, “He that shall overcome,” is used in the letters to the Churches of Smyrna, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea. Smyrna and Sardis, we have seen, were martyr Churches. We shall find that Laodicea also is marked out for persecution. “To him that overcometh,” τῷ νικῶντι, is employed in the letter to the Churches of Ephesus and Pergamos. To Thyatira alone it is said, “He that shall overcome and keep my works to the end,” indicating the manner of overcoming, viz., by works.

This forewarning to the Church of our age puts it upon its guard against temptations, and urges it to hold fast its faith. Our Church is not accused of anything. There is no mention of punishment in its message. On the contrary. It is the Church of the open door, and this promise of the “Holy One and the True One,” is incompatible with persecution. In this case the victor figures as a pillar in the temple of God. SS. Peter and John were pillars of the Church (Gal. ii. 9). “And I will write upon him the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God, and my new name.” This reference to the New Jerusalem is repeated, almost word for word at the end of the Book.

“Καὶ τὴν πολὺν τὴν ἁγίαν Ἱερουσαλὴμ καινὴν εἶδον καταβαίνουσαν ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἀπὸ τοῦ Θεοῦ” (R. xxi. 2). “And I saw and behold a Lamb stood on Mount Sion, and with him a hundred and forty-four thousand, having his name and the name of his Father written in their foreheads” (R. xiv. 1). And when the “New Jerusalem” appears, it is said of the inhabitants, “His servants shall serve him. And they shall see his face; and his name shall be on their foreheads” (R. xxii. 3-4). The connection between different parts of the book of Revelation is evident.

13. Ὁ ἔχων οὖς ἀκουσάτω τί τὸ πνεῦμα λέγει ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις.

13. He that hath an ear let him hear what the spirit saith to the Churches.

This particular warning is addressed to the Angel of the Church of our own day, and through him to us. We are all agreed that this Book is the Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave to him to make known to His Servants the things which must shortly come to pass (R. i. 1). Here and now the Holy Spirit warns us “to hear,” that is to examine carefully the mystery of this message to Philadelphia. See R. ii. 7, notes.

LAODICEA.

14. Καὶ τῷ ἀγγέλῳ τῆς ἐν Λαοδικίᾳ ἐκκλησίας γράψον. Τάδε λέγει ὁ ἄμην, ὁ μάρτυς ὁ πιστὸς καὶ ἀληθινός, ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς κτίσεως τοῦ Θεοῦ.

14. And to the angel of the church of Laodicea write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, who is the beginning of the creation of God.

Laodicea was situated on the high road, about forty miles south-east of Philadelphia. It is now a ruin, and shares with Ephesus the peculiar distinction of having been blotted out altogether by the hand of time. It is very significant that these two great cities, the first and the last of those which gave their names as emblems of the ages of the Church, should now be buried in the dust of ages. Laodicea stands for the last age of the Church. The current Philadelphian age will merge into it unnoticed. The warning is addressed to “the Angel” responsible for the Church. We know from S. Paul’s Epistle to

the Colossians that there were ἐπίσκοποι at Laodicea, viz., Epaphras and Archippus (Col. i. 7, iv. 17). "Salute the brethren who are at Laodicea, and Nymphas and the Church that is in his house" (Col. iv. 15). But the revelation of the last days was not sent to Laodicea of Asia Minor.

The forecast of the Laodicean age is of great eschatological value, for it is a prediction of the last stage of the Church militant. Before entering on any question of eschatology, however, we must first examine the predictions carefully in detail. "These things saith the Amen." "The Amen" is taken from a very significant passage in the preface, viz., "Behold he cometh, with the clouds and every eye shall see him, and they also that pierced him. And all the tribes of the earth shall bewail themselves because of him. Even so, Amen" (R. i. 7). The Amen is rendered in both Greek and Hebrew, to emphasise it. The message comes from Jesus Christ "the faithful and true witness, who is coming to judge the world." Ὁ μάρτυς ὁ πιστός comes from R. i. 5. And "the beginning of the creation of God" seems to correspond well. Ὁ ἀρχῶν τῶν Βασιλείων τῆς γῆς, at R. i. 5. The Ruler coming to judge His Kingdom. The last age of the Church is warned of the second coming in the opening lines of its prediction.

15. Οἶδά σου τὰ ἔργα ὅτι οὔτε ψυχρὸς εἶ οὔτε ζεστός, ὄφελον ψυχρὸς ἢς ἢ ζεστός.

15. I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot; I would thou wert cold or hot.

In these words our Lord refers to the spiritual condition of the Church, "I know thy works." This Church is neither cold nor hot. Ζεστός means fervour in a spiritual sense. What does ψυχρός, "cold," mean? In S. Matthew we read, "Because iniquity shall abound the love of many shall wax cold" — ψυγήσεται (xxiv. 12). Can it mean cold in that sense? The warning continues, "I would that thou wert cold or hot." Not hot or cold, but "cold or hot." Cold is placed first. It is impossible to take this warning in the sense that God wishes us to be spiritually cold. Holzhauser concludes that hot stands for the fervour of charity, and cold for the fear of God, the beginning of wisdom. The "ardour of love" and the "chill of fear" are literary expressions which have come down to us from the classics. Virgil uses cold as the symbol of fear, *calor ossa reliquit*. The fear of God we shall find is repeatedly insisted upon in this Book (R. xi. 18, xiv. 7, xv. 4, xix. 5). The most prominent characteristic of the Laodicean age will be its

indifference. Absorbed in worldly interests, it will neither fear God, nor love Him.

We understand from the Book that in this current age of ours, called Philadelphia, the Church will make enormous progress in numbers. Observation shows that we are progressing that way. Increase in numbers will bring wealth and honour, and other desirable worldly advantages to the Church. The lesson of all these warnings to the Church is that danger lies that way. We know what Eusebius said of the cause of persecution of the Church of his time; what historians say of the Church of the Middle Ages; what Holzhauser said of the Church of his day. History is apt to repeat itself. We have put before us the picture of the Church of the last age, demoralised by prosperity.

16. Οὕτως ὅτι χλιαρὸς εἶ, καὶ οὔτε ζεστὸς οὔτε ψυχρὸς, μέλλω σε ἐμέσαι ἐκ τοῦ στόματός μου.

16. But because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will begin to vomit thee out of my mouth.

Lukewarm water revolts the palate and brings on vomiting. This is very strong imagery as applied to the Church. It reveals a wide-spread indifferentism. "I will begin to vomit thee out of my mouth" is a warning rather than a prediction. Μέλλω means "to be on the point of doing," "to be about to do." It does not mean an action begun. No vomiting actually takes place. The promises of God to His Church are sacred. He walks in the midst of the Churches and holds the Angels of the Churches in His right hand. But the simile reveals the condition of the Church. We shall see presently that God loves the Church and will reclaim it by chastisement (R. iii. 19).

17. Ὅτι λέγεις ὅτι πλούσιός εἰμι καὶ πεπλούτηκα καὶ οὐδὲν ὡς χρεῖαν ἔχω, καὶ οὐκ οἶδας ὅτι σὺ εἶ ὁ ταλαίπωρος καὶ ἐλεινὸς καὶ πτωχὸς καὶ τυφλὸς καὶ γυμνός.

17. Because thou sayest I am rich and made wealthy and have need of nothing; and thou knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.

(S. omits ὡς.)

The successor and heir of the Philadelphian era of prosperity is accused of being puffed up with the pride of wealth. The

Ven. Holzhauser predicted that in the sixth or Philadelphian age, in which we now live, the world would make great strides in the knowledge of the physical sciences, in wealth, and luxury. How true that is we all know.

The victories of science will probably increase with time. The future may revel in wonders that we can scarce foresee, and the pleasures of life may be multiplied. Holzhauser forecasted the Church of Laodicea much as follows :

Its condition will be such that our Lord will begin to " vomit " it out of His mouth, will mend it by persecution, and end it with the general judgment. It will not know that it is wretched, having lost the favour of its founder, Jesus Christ our Saviour. It will not know that it is poor in grace and all spiritual gifts and virtues. It will not know that it is blind to its own faults and shortcomings, and blind to the inevitable consequences. It will not know that it is naked, that its sins are known, exposed, and a public scandal" (*op. cit.*, I. 204).

18. Συμβουλεύω σοι ἀγοράσαι παρ' ἐμοῦ χρυσίου πεπυρωμένον ἐκ πυρὸς ἵνα πλουτήσῃς, καὶ ἱμάτια λευκὰ ἵνα περιβάλλῃ καὶ μὴ φανερωθῇ ἡ αἰσχὺνὴ τῆς γυμνότητός σου, καὶ κολλούριον ἐγχεῖσαι τοὺς ὀφθαλμούς σου ἵνα βλέπῃς.

18. I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be made rich ; and mayest be clothed in white garments, that the shame of thy nakedness may not appear ; and anoint thy eyes with eye-salve that thou mayest see.

Gold tried in the fire is gold purified of dross. 'Αγοράσαι does not necessarily mean to buy with cash. Isaias says, " All you that thirst come to the waters : and you that have no money, make haste, buy and eat : come ye, buy wine and milk without money and without any price " (lv. 1). Spiritual riches are contrasted with worldly wealth.

The counsel is to purge off the dross from the corrupt gold by fire, and acquire spiritual grace in exchange. Fire is put in this Book as a symbol of chastisement. See R. viii. 5, xiv. 18, xx. 9, notes.

Compare this last age with the second or martyrs' age. Smyrna is told, " I know thy tribulations and thy poverty, but thou art rich " (R. ii. 9), rich in the graces flowing from sufferings and persecutions. These are the riches which Laodicea has not, and is counselled to buy.

" Clothed in white garments " does not exclude martyrdom, see R. iv. 4, where the four-and-twenty ancients, some of whom, like SS. Peter and Paul, were martyrs, appear in heaven clothed

in white garments. But, as *στολή*, the special robe of the martyrs, is not mentioned, we may conclude that the Church of Laodicea will be like that of Sardis, where the same expression clothed in white garments is used (R. iii. 5, where see notes). Laodicea will be reformed by suffering.

"That the shame of thy nakedness may not appear," refers to spiritual nakedness, wanting a spiritual garment. It is reminiscent of the nakedness of Adam after the fall (Gen. iii. 10, 11). It is worthy of note that the sin of lust is not charged against either the Philadelphian or the Laodicean ages, in spite of their prosperity.

"Anoint thine eyes with eye-salve that thou mayest see," is a warning to the Church to cure itself of spiritual blindness that it may see itself as God sees it.

19. Ἐγὼ ὅσους ἐὰν φιλῶ ἐλέγχω καὶ παιδεύω· ζήλευε οὖν καὶ μετανόησον.

19. Those whom I love I rebuke and chastise. Be zealous therefore and do penance.

The verb *μετανοέω*, "to repent," occurs in every one of these letters, whereby Revelation confirms our trust in the value of repentance.

God loves His Church and will not come upon it in the last days without purifying it. *Φιλῶ* denotes a personal love, as *Ἴδε πῶς ἐφίλει αὐτόν*, "Behold how he loved him" (Jhn. xi. 36). This is a prediction. As surely as God loves His Church, so surely will He rebuke and chastise it in the last age. *Ἐλέγχω* means to put to shame, to disgrace. *Παιδεύω* means primarily to teach, to educate, and secondarily to correct or chastise. It means paternal correction, and gives a strong hint of persecution, without necessarily meaning bloody persecution. That, however, is the ordinary form of chastisement, noticeable in the history of the Church. But there are other chastisements, the Black Death of Thyatira for example. In the subsequent Revelation of the history of the Church and the world, the events of the last days are summed up in Chapter xx. Satan shall seduce the nations "whose number is as the sands of the sea." "And they ascend upon the breadth of the earth and surround the camp of the saints and the beloved city" (R. xx. 7, 8), where "the beloved city" is put for the *Civitas Dei* of S. Augustine the Church. It means a general upheaval against the Church in the last days. "Be zealous therefore and do penance," read in connection with the whole context, means

kindle the fire of Divine love, and bear chastisement patiently. "My son, reject not the correction of the Lord, and do not faint when thou art chastised by him. For whom the Lord loveth, he chastiseth" (Prov. iii. 11, 12).

The spread of indifferentism and materialism in our own day, and the revolt of Portugal against the Church, are warnings of the Laodicean age.

20. Ἴδου ἕστηκα ἐπὶ τὴν θύραν καὶ κρούω· εἴάν τις ἀκούσῃ τῆς φωνῆς μου καὶ ἀνοίξῃ τὴν θύραν, εἰσελεύσομαι πρὸς αὐτὸν καὶ δειπνήσω μετ' αὐτοῦ καὶ αὐτὸς μετ' ἐμοῦ.

20. Behold I stand at the door and knock. If any man shall hear my voice and open to me the door, I will come into him and sup with him, and he with me.

"Behold I stand at the door and knock" refers to the second coming of Christ on "the" last day. It is a special warning to the Laodicean age of the Church. The warning to our age is "Behold I come quickly." S. James says, "For the coming of the Lord is at hand . . . Behold the judge standeth before the door" (Jas. v. 8, 9). In S. Matthew's gospel we read, "When you shall see all these things, know ye that it is nigh even at the doors" (xxiv. 33). In which texts the door is the sign of the imminence of the judgment. Dr. Swete admits this exegesis, "But as they stand in this context the words are eschatological" (*op. cit.* p. 63).

Even at the eleventh hour, if any man (εἴάν τις) shall hear the interior voice and open the door of his heart to God, He will come to him and sup with him. This is a promise to individuals in the distracted and possibly persecuted and disorganised Church of the last days. It connects with the triumph of the Church as the "Bride of the Lamb," depicted in R. xxi. 9. "Blessed are they who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb" (R. xix. 9). See also the Bride adorned for her husband in the vision of heaven (R. xxii. 2).

21. Ὁ νικῶν δώσω αὐτῷ κάθισαι μετ' ἐμοῦ ἐν τῷ θρόνῳ μου, ὡς καὶ γὰρ ἐνίκησα καὶ ἐκάθισα μετὰ τοῦ πατρὸς μου ἐν τῷ θρόνῳ αὐτοῦ.

21. To him that shall overcome I will grant to sit with me in my throne, as I also have overcome, and have sat with my Father in his throne.

The key to this passage seems to lie in the words, "as I also have overcome." Νικάω, to conquer, or overcome, we have

seen, generally refers to martyrdom in this Book. *Ἐνίκησα*, the historical aorist "I have overcome" refers back to our Lord's death on the cross. "To him that shall overcome" in that sense is, to him who dies for the faith, or at least who suffers violence for the faith. Apparently a period of persecution is indicated, see *Τῷ νικῶντι*, R. ii. 7, iii. 5, notes.

The promised reward is "to sit with me in my throne as I . . . have sat with my Father in his throne." In describing the New Jerusalem, the reward of the just, at the end of Revelation, we are told "the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it" (R. xxii. 3). The throne of God and of His saints, (*Ὁ νικῶν*), comes into view in the next Chapter.

22. Ὁ ἔχων οὖς ἀκουσάτω τί τὸ Πνεῦμα λέγει ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις.

22. He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith to the Churches.

The name of Laodicea has passed into bye-word. It is extremely interesting to note, therefore, that the local Church of Laodicea, in Asia Minor, so far from being the worst of the local Churches, was one of the best, if not the best of the seven. Here we are on historic ground. Something is known of the Church of Laodicea.

S. Paul in his Epistle to the Colossians, iv. 15, 16, puts that Church and the Church of Laodicea on a par, as regards religious zeal, in the year 62. The two Churches were only eleven miles apart. He was well pleased with the Colossians. Apparently he was equally pleased with the Laodiceans. So far from censuring the latter Church, he encourages intercourse with it, and says that Epaphras had much labour for Laodicea.

In later years Laodicea rose to a high position amongst the Churches of Asia Minor. In Hastings's "Dictionary of the Bible" we read of Laodicea that "it was the leading bishopric of Phrygia throughout the Christian period."

Melito, Bishop of Sardis about A.D. 170, relates that when Servius Paulus was proconsul of Asia, Sagaris suffered martyrdom. Polycrates, Bishop of Ephesus, calls him "Sagaris, bishop and martyr, who rests at Laodicea" (Euseb. iv. 26, and v. 24). The Church of Laodicea is frequently mentioned by Eusebius, Bishop of Cæsarea A.D. 310, in his "Ecclesiastical History." Thelymidus was Bishop of Laodicea, A.D. 251-254, and Eusebius 254-260. He says that the Church of Laodicea was governed by

(another) Eusebius, an Alexandrian. "He was also an amiable instance of religion among our contemporaries, as may be readily seen in those extracts from Dionysius, which we have inserted above. . . ." "Anatolius was appointed his successor, a good man, as they say, in the place of the good" (H. E. vii. 32).

Heliodorus of Laodicea is also mentioned as one of "the more distinguished Bishops of the third century" (H. E. vii. 5).

Laodicea was represented at the Council of Nicea by its bishop, Nounechios, A.D. 325. Later in the fourth century, A.D. 360, a council was held at Laodicea, showing it to have been, at that time, the leading Church of the province. The canons of this council, or synod, are still quoted by theologians with great respect.

The city of Eumenia, one of the Laodicean group, was so thoroughly Christian at the beginning of the fourth century that the great body of the people and magistrates alike took refuge in the Church in Diocletian's persecution, and were burnt alive. Apameia, another city of the Laodicean circuit, according to Ramsay, had a like fate.

All the warnings addressed to the Angels of the Churches, in each age, conclude with an exhortation to hear what the Spirit saith to the Churches, *ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις*—plural. Showing that the Spirit warns not the Bishop of a single Church, but of the Catholic or Universal Church.

Reviewing these Letters we may note (1) that the Churches they are nominally addressed to do not correspond with them; (2) that the first six Letters correspond accurately with the six ages of the Catholic Church, whose history we know; (3) that the dead Churches of Asia cannot be those in whose midst our Lord keeps guard, and whose Bishops He holds in His right hand. It follows that these Letters, in the *ipsissima verba* of God, were symbolically addressed by Him to the Chief Bishops of His Universal Church, through His chosen Prophet of the New Law—S. John. Hence, "Behold I come quickly" is written on the wall as "a sign" to us.

It is not for us to venture an opinion as to whether the Laodicean age has begun, or not. One age glides insensibly into the next, and though they are distinct enough, viewed in perspective, they are not generally recognised by those living on the stage of life. It is not given to man to know when the last age will end. "But of that day and hour no one knoweth, no not the angels of heaven, but the Father alone" (Matt. xxiv. 36). See 1 Thess. v. 1-3, 1 Cor. xv. 52. The prophet Daniel foretold of the last days, "Many shall pass over and knowledge shall be manifold." "Many shall be chosen, and made white, and shall be tried by fire: and the wicked shall deal wickedly: and

none of the wicked shall understand, but the learned shall understand" (xii. 1, 4, 10).

S. Paul says, "Now the Spirit manifestly saith that in the last times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to spirits of error and doctrines of devils" (1 Tim. iv. 1). S. Peter says, "In the last days there shall come deceitful scoffers, walking after their own lusts, saying: Where is his promise, or his coming? for since the time that the fathers slept, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation" (2 Pet. iii. 3, 4). Again, our Lord said, "And as it came to pass in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat and drink, they married wives, and were given in marriage. . . ." "Likewise as it came to pass in the days of Lot: They did eat and drink, they bought and sold, they planted and built. And in the day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man shall be revealed" (Luke xvii. 26-30).

S. John says, "Little children, it is the last hour: and as you have heard that Antichrist cometh, even now there are become many Antichrists: whereby we know that it is the last hour" (1 Jhn. ii. 18). He explains further what he means by Antichrist. "And every spirit that dissolveth Jesus is not of God, and this is Antichrist, of whom you have heard that he cometh" (1 Jhn. iv. 3). One of the surest signs of the seventh and last age of the Church will be a wide-spread denial of the Divinity of Jesus Christ, and that, too, apparently, by persons calling themselves Christians. Even now there are ominous signs that the work of "dissolving Jesus" has begun.

It is a remarkable fact that the present Angel of the Churches, Pope Pius X., has taken for his motto, "Restore all things to Christ."

PART III

THE JEWISH THEME

CHAPTER IV

1. Μετὰ ταῦτα εἶδον, καὶ ἰδοὺ θύρα ἠνεωγμένη ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ, καὶ ἡ φωνὴ ἡ πρώτη ἣν ἤκουσα ὡς σάλπιγγος λαλούσης μετ' ἐμοῦ, λέγων Ἀνάβα ὧδε, καὶ δεῖξω σοι ἃ δεῖ γενέσθαι μετὰ ταῦτα.

1. After these things I saw and behold, a door open in heaven ; and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet, speaking with me, saying : Come up hither, and I will show thee the things which must be done hereafter.

“After these things,” that is, after writing the warnings to the Seven Churches, S. John saw a door opened in heaven. How long after he does not say. But *μετὰ ταῦτα* signifies an interval of time, and marks a new departure in the Book, as at R. vii. 1, xv. 5, and xviii. 1. The imagery of the opening in heaven is Hebraic. So Ezechiel begins his vision of the throne of God, “The heavens were opened and I saw the visions of God” (Ezech. i. 1). A “door” is opened in heaven for S. John because it is said to him “Come up hither.” He heard the first voice, “as of a trumpet,” the same trumpet voice which told him, “What thou seest write in a book and send to the seven Churches” (R. i. 10, 11). The voice adds, “I will show thee the things which must be done.” “After these things,” *μετὰ ταῦτα*, again. S. John was commissioned to write these things in a Book, at R. i. 11. *Must be done* predicts certainties. “Was” in the English version obscures the connection between this passage and R. i. 10. It is not in the Greek, nor in the Vulgate, which runs, *Vox prima quam audivi, tanquam tubæ loquentis mecum*. This connection shows that Parts III. and IV. of the Book were, equally with the Letters, intended for the Seven Churches of Asia. “Hereafter” has a wide range. It is limited only in point of time by the Revelation visions, which extend to the day of Judgment.

2. Καὶ εὐθέως ἐγενόμην ἐν πνεύματι· καὶ ἰδοὺ θρόνος ἔκειτο ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ, καὶ ἐπὶ τὸν θρόνον καθήμενος.

2. And immediately I was in the spirit, and behold there was a throne set in heaven, and upon the throne one sitting.

(S. omits the first *Καὶ*, and writes τὸν θρόνον.)

"And immediately I was in the Spirit" marks a second rapture. Apparently the warnings to the Seven Churches were written in manuscript in the interval between the trances. To be wrapt in a trance in the Spirit precludes the idea of sitting down with pen, ink, and paper. In the second ecstasy the Seer was called up to heaven. He received a fresh inspiration, and relates the vision of God and of His throne. This magnificent vision is the prelude to the prophecies relating to the Church and the world, contained in the rest of the Book. The Seer now begins to employ symbolic language of his own, derived in part from Ezechiel. "The likeness of the throne was a likeness as of the appearance of a man above upon it" (Ezech. i. 26). The heavens and the throne are connected by Isaias, "Thus saith the Lord, Heaven is my throne" (lxvi. 1). See also Matt., "Neither by heaven, for it is the throne of God" (v. 34). "One sitting" the omnipotent God (ὁ Θεὸς ὁ παντοκράτωρ = R. iv. 8), whose ineffable name we know not.

3. Καὶ ὁ καθήμενος ὅμοιος ὄρασει λίθῳ ἰάσπιδι καὶ σαρδίῳ, καὶ ἶρις κυκλόθεν τοῦ θρόνου ὅμοιος ὄρασει σμαραγδίνῳ.

3. And he that sat was to the sight like the jasper and the sardine stone; and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.

This revelation of the Godhead by S. John to his fellow servants in the first century is naturally couched in Hebraic symbolism. The jasper, the sardine stone and the emerald were worn in the breastplate of the high priest of the Temple (Exod. xxviii. 17, 20). They may have had some special Hebrew significance. In the vision of heaven at the end of the Book we have its light as of jasper stone, Its first foundation jasper, the fourth an emerald, the sixth a sardius (R. xxi. 11, 19, 20).

The jasper of the Apocalypse is not the opaque crystalline silica called jasper now. It seems to have been a translucent rock crystal. *Semper translucens* Pliny calls it (H. N. xxxvii. 115). The *σάρδιον*, or "sardine stone," according to Dr. Swete,

was red in colour and derived its name from Sardis, where it was found (*op. cit.* p. 68). The conception is of a transparent crystal form suffused with a warm glow of light. See "the Glory of God," R. xxi. 11.

An emerald coloured rainbow was round about the throne. In Genesis the rainbow is put for a covenant between God and man (Gen. ix. 13). A green rainbow, emblem of peace, would rest the eyes, and form an appropriate background to the vision.

Ezechiel saw "the appearance of fire within it round about." "As the appearance of the rainbow" (i. 27, 28).

4. Καὶ κυκλόθεν τοῦ θρόνου θρόνοι εἴκοσι τέσσαρες, καὶ ἐπὶ τοὺς θρόνους εἴκοσι τέσσαρας πρεσβυτέρους καθημένους περιβεβλημένους ἐν ἱματίοις λευκοῖς, καὶ ἐπὶ τὰς κεφαλὰς αὐτῶν στεφάνους χρυσοῦς.

4. And round about the throne were four and twenty seats ; and upon the seats four-and-twenty ancients sitting, clothed in white garments, and golden crowns on their heads.

(S. omits ἐν.)

In our Bibles *θρόνους* is translated "seats," whereas *θρόνους* in this context is coupled with the throne of God, and is rendered *super thronos* in the Vulgate. The vision of the Ancients seated upon thrones comes after the promise, "to him that shall overcome" at R. iii. 21, and indicates its fulfilment. The four and twenty "ancients"—*πρεσβυτέροι*—are the twelve Patriarchs of the Old Law and the twelve Apostles of the New, as we gather from R. xviii. 20 and xix. 4. In the vision of heaven (called the New Jerusalem), near the end of the Book, we see them forming its walls and foundations (R. xxi. 12, 14). Our Lord said to his Apostles, "When the son of man shall sit upon the seat of his majesty, you also shall sit upon twelve seats, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matt. xix. 28). Here again *θρόνους* is translated "seats." *θρόνος*, as a Greek word, may mean a judgment seat. We see in this vision the promise of Scripture confirmed. The four and twenty Ancients remain in judgment throughout this Revelation of the Church and the world, and occasionally intervene, as at R. vii. 13, xi. 16, and xix. 4. They are "clothed in white garments"—*περιβεβλημένους ἐν ἱματίοις λευκοῖς*—the promised reward of "He that shall overcome," in the fifth age of the Church, the Reformation period (R. iii. 5). *Περιβέβλημαι* means "to throw round oneself," and indicates the white long cloth garment commonly worn in the East even to the present day.

A single length of cotton or linen cloth is thrown and draped over the body and finished off, as a girdle, at the waist. *Ἰμάτιον* means an outer garment, or "a cloth." It seems to have been used in Jerusalem in the time of our Lord. S. Mark mentions a certain young man who followed our Lord, "having a linen cloth cast about (*περιβεβλημένος*) his naked body" (xiv. 51). This cloth, a *σινδών*, was of fine quality, probably Indian muslin. Some of "the Ancients" were martyrs, others were not. It is evident therefore that "white garments" does not necessarily connote martyrdom, like a white robe, "*στολή λευκή*" (R. vi. 11, vii. 9).

The Ancients have golden crowns on their heads—*στεφάνοι*—the crowns of victory promised to the martyrs of the second age of the Church, "the crown of life," R. ii. 10. In their thrones, their garments, and their crowns, they exhibit three of the rewards promised to the saints of "the Churches" (R. iii. 21, 5, ii. 10).

It has been objected that S. John, one of the twelve, was still alive when he saw the visions of the twelve Patriarchs and the twelve Apostles.

But the Book professes to be a revelation of the future.

5. Καὶ ἐκ τοῦ θρόνου ἐκπορεύονται ἀστραπαὶ καὶ φωναὶ καὶ βρονταί, καὶ ἑπτὰ λαμπάδες πυρὸς καιόμεναι ἐνώπιον τοῦ θρόνου, ἃ εἰσιν τὰ ἑπτὰ πνεύματα τοῦ Θεοῦ.

5. And from the throne proceeded lightnings and voices and thunders ; and there were seven lamps burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.

The vision of the throne of God is accompanied by awe inspiring lightnings and voices and thunders, which indicate majesty. When God came down upon Mount Sinai and gave Moses the ten commandments of the Law, "all the people saw the voices and the flames and the sound of the trumpet" (Exod. xx. 18). When the temple of God was opened in heaven in the visions of this Book, "there were lightnings and voices and thunders" (R. xi. 19). So also when the Jewish catastrophe began (R. viii. 5), and at the fall of Rome (R. xvi. 18).

The seven lamps burning before the throne are *λαμπάδες πυρὸς*, "fiery torches," not stationary *λυχνιαί* (called candlesticks), which symbolised the Seven Churches. These torches connote movement. "Their looks are like torches, like lightning running to and fro" (Nahum ii. 4). The Holy Spirit descended on the Apostles in tongues of fire (Acts ii. 3). They are the Seven Spirits of God which are before the Throne. At

R. i. 4 the same language is employed to describe them, “*ἐπὶ τὰ πνευμάτων ἃ ἐνώπιον τοῦ θρόνου αὐτοῦ.*” They send grace and peace to the Seven Churches together with the Father and the Son. They stand for the Holy Spirit, the torch which lights the Church. The picture of the throne of God would be incomplete without a symbol of the Holy Spirit. The Lamb of God is presently revealed in the throne.

6. *Καὶ ἐνώπιον τοῦ θρόνου ὡς θάλασσα ὑαλίνη ὁμοία κρυστάλλῳ, καὶ ἐν μέσῳ τοῦ θρόνου καὶ κύκλῳ τοῦ θρόνου τέσσερα ζῶα γέμοντα ὀφθαλμῶν ἔμπροσθεν καὶ ὀπίσθεν.*

6. And before the throne there was as it were a sea of glass, like crystal ; and in the midst of the throne and round about the throne were four living creatures, full of eyes before and behind.

When Moses and Aaron “went up” and saw “the God of Israel” there was, “under his feet as it were a work of sapphire stone” (Exod. xxiv. 10). The vision of the ancients, seated upon thrones, requires a supporting floor. They “fell down before him that sitteth on the throne . . . and cast their crowns before his throne” (R. iv. 10). The floor is crystal, like a sea of glass, the sea representing its wide extent. Ezechiel refers to the firmament “as the appearance of a crystal terrible to behold” (Ezech. i. 22).

The four living creatures are found in Ezechiel (Chapter i.), where there is a long description of them. Ezechiel says, “I understood that they were Cherubims” (x. 20). The Cherubims are described in the O.T. as having wings (Exod. xxxvii. 8, 9, 3 Kings vi. 24). Isaias describes “the God of Israel” as seated upon the Cherubims (xxxvii. 16). In Psalms lxxix. 1 and xcvi. 1, the same expression is used. When Adam and Eve were turned out of the garden of Eden, Cherubims were placed on guard over the “tree of life.” They are represented, also in Ezechiel, as being watchful, “full of eyes, round about” (i. 18).

7. *Καὶ τὸ ζῶον τὸ πρῶτον ὅμοιον λέοντι, καὶ τὸ δεύτερον ζῶον ὅμοιον μόσχῳ, καὶ τὸ τρίτον ζῶον ἔχων τὸ πρόσωπον ὡς ἀνθρώπου, καὶ τὸ τέταρτον ζῶον ὅμοιον ἀετῷ πετομένῳ.*

7. And the first living creature was like a lion, and the second living creature was like a calf, and the third living creature having the face, as it were, of a man, and the fourth living creature was like an eagle flying.

In Ezechiel we find “And as for the likeness of their faces, there was the face of a man, and the face of a lion on the right

side of all the four, and the face of an ox on the left side of all the four, and the face of an eagle over all the four" (i. 10).

From the second century of the Christian era, the four living creatures have been adopted as symbols of the four Evangelists. The lion for S. Mark, because his gospel begins with the preaching of S. John the Baptist, which was as the roaring of a lion, "A voice of one crying in the desert" (Mark i. 3). The calf, the emblem of the priesthood for S. Luke, because his gospel begins with the priesthood. The man for S. Matthew, because his gospel begins with the manhood of Christ. And for S. John the eagle, because he soars aloft. "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God" (Jhn. i. 1).

Prof. M. Stuart points out that *μόσχω* means a young bullock, not a calf (*op. cit.*, Vol. 2, 114). It is remarkable that the fourth living creature, the emblem of S. John, is represented as alive and flying, *πετομένω*. The seer knew that in the coming time the eagle would be his emblem. See R. viii. 13 and xiv. 16, notes.

8. Καὶ τὰ τέσσερα ζῶα, ἐν καθ' ἐν αὐτῶν ἔχων ἀνὰ πτέρυγας ἕξ, κυκλόθεν καὶ ἔσωθεν γέμουσιν ὀφθαλμῶν. καὶ ἀνάπαισιν οὐκ ἔχουσιν ἑμέρας καὶ νυκτὸς λέγοντες· Ἅγιος ἅγιος ἅγιος Κύριος ὁ Θεὸς ὁ παντοκράτωρ, ὁ ἦν καὶ ὁ ὢν καὶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος.

8. And the four living creatures had each of them six wings, and round about and within they are full of eyes. And they rested not day and night, saying, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, who was, and who is, and who is to come.

Compare with the vision of Isaias, "I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne high and elevated and his train filled the temple. Upon it stood the Seraphims; the one had six wings and the other had six wings, with two they covered his face and with two they covered his feet and with two they flew. And they cried to one another and said: Holy, Holy, Holy, the Lord God of Hosts; all the earth is full of His Glory" (Isa. vi. 1-3).

The reader will understand that in describing things which are incomprehensible, S. John uses the symbolism already provided in the O.T. It is a part of his system, and it is not derogatory to him. Commentators are agreed that whatever he touches he improves. Isaias, Ezechiel and S. John describe the Cherubim in similar language, but the finished picture is not the same in each case, which shows a certain amount of independent imagination. Needless to say pure

spirits have neither heads, nor eyes, nor wings, yet the desired impression remains, that there are close to the throne of God beings of marvellous sight, knowledge, and swiftness, who serve and glorify Him ceaselessly.

9. Καὶ ὅταν δώσουσιν τὰ ζῶα δόξαν καὶ τιμὴν καὶ εὐχαριστίαν τῷ καθημένῳ ἐπὶ τῷ θρόνῳ τῷ ζῶντι εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων.

9. And when these living creatures gave glory and honour and benediction to him that sitteth on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever.

10. Πεσοῦνται οἱ εἴκοσι τέσσαρες πρεσβύτεροι ἐνώπιον τοῦ καθημένου ἐπὶ τοῦ θρόνου, καὶ προσκυνήσουσιν τῷ ζῶντι εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων, καὶ, βαλοῦσιν τοὺς στεφάνους αὐτῶν ἐνώπιον τοῦ θρόνου, λέγοντες.

10. The four-and-twenty ancients fell down before him that sitteth on the throne, and adored him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying.

11. Ἄξιός ἐστίν, ὁ κύριος καὶ ὁ Θεὸς ἡμῶν, λαβεῖν τὴν δόξαν καὶ τὴν τιμὴν καὶ τὴν δύναμιν· ὅτι σὺ ἔκτισας τὰ πάντα, καὶ διὰ τὸ θέλημά σου ἦσαν καὶ ἐκτίσθησαν.

11. Thou art worthy O Lord our God, to receive glory and honour and power, because thou hast created all things, and for thy will they were and have been created.

“He that sat” on the throne (R. iv. 3), is developed at iv. 8 into the Lord God “Almighty” (*παντοκράτωρ*), and at iv. 9, “Who liveth for ever and ever.” At R. x. 6 a further development occurs—“who created heaven and the things which are therein, and the earth and the things which are therein, and the sea and the things which are therein.”

When the living creatures gave glory and honour and benediction (*εὐχαριστίαν*) to God, the ancients fell down before him and proclaimed him worthy to receive glory and honour and power. The ancients replace *εὐχαριστίαν* by *δύναμιν*, “power.” *Εὐχαριστία*, as a dictionary word, means “thankfulness,” “gratitude.” It is not found in the O.T. It occurs again at R. vii. 12, where it is translated “thanksgiving.” Two different renderings. At R. vii. 12 we have a sevenfold doxology to God,

in which both *εὐχαριστία* and *δύναμις* appear. But in the similar sevenfold doxology of the Lamb, at R. v. 12, *δύναμις* has the first place, and there is no *εὐχαριστία*.

We may suppose that the crowns of the ancients—“*στεφάνοι*”—were crowns of laurel, oak, or bay leaf, wrought in gold.

“Because thou hast created all things” connects with “Who liveth for ever and ever” above, and at R. x. 6.

The ancients acknowledge that they have received their crowns from God.

CHAPTER V

1. Καὶ εἶδον ἐπὶ τὴν δεξιὰν τοῦ καθημένου ἐπὶ τοῦ θρόνου βιβλίον γεγραμμένον ἔσωθεν καὶ ὀπισθεν, κατεσφραγισμένον σφραγῖσιν ἑπτὰ.

1. And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and without, sealed with seven seals.

The vision of the throne of God is continued and the sealed book is introduced. It is the source of the visions in the Jewish theme, to which these Chapters iv. and v. are an introduction. It is held in the right hand of God, showing its importance: and it is sealed with seven seals, because it consisted of seven separate revelations. The seals were not made of sealing wax nor placed on the outside of the manuscript. *βιβλίον* denotes a papyrus manuscript. Our Lord is represented as “unrolling the book,” *ἀναπτύξας τὸ βιβλίον* (Luke iv. 17). There were seven manuscripts; the seventh was rolled up and carefully tied with string, the ends of which were secured in a clay seal, which hung down. The sixth was rolled round the seventh and tied up and sealed in like manner, the seal again visibly hanging down. The fifth was rolled round the sixth, the fourth round the fifth, and so on, till the first which had its own fastenings and seal. Layard found at Nineveh clay seals, with holes in them for string for sealing papyri (“Ninev. and Bab.” xiii. 71). Wilkinson found similar seals in Egypt (“Egypt of the Pharaohs”). It was the ancient way of fastening and sealing papyri. There was no difficulty in opening the seals, but it was not permissible to do so without authority. Isaias says, “And the vision of all shall be unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which when they shall deliver to one that is learned, they shall say, Read this; and he shall answer, I cannot, for it is sealed” (xxix. 11). The sealed book would

bring to the minds of the Hebrew servants of God the book of Daniel, relating to the destruction of the Temple and the scattering of the band of the holy people, "shut up and sealed till the appointed time" (Dan. xii. 9). The appointed time had arrived in the year 67. The completion of the prophecy of Daniel is contained in the seven-sealed book held in the right hand of God. The significance of seven is completeness.

The book was "written within and without." The outside writing referred to the known events of the present and of the past. The writing within contained the hidden secrets of the future, which God alone knew. The vision of Ezechiel came to him in like manner in a book, "written within and without, and there were written in it lamentations and canticles and woe" (ii. 9). Ezechiel's prophecy, like that of S. John, related to the siege of Jerusalem.

2. Καὶ εἶδον ἄγγελον ἰσχυρὸν κηρύσσοντα ἐν φωνῇ μεγάλῃ, Τίς ἄξιός ἀνοῖξαι τὸ βιβλίον καὶ λύσαι τὰς σφραγίδας αὐτοῦ.

2. And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book and to loose the seals thereof?

"Ἀγγελον ἰσχυρὸν" is translated here "a strong angel," and at R. x. 1 and xviii. 21, where the same words recur, "a mighty angel." Judging from the action of this angel, "ἰσχυρὸν" means "greatness" rather than physical strength. The "loud voice" is particularised (as we shall see in the next verse), because it has to carry to the ends of the earth, and even to the lower regions. "Who is worthy?" It is purely a question of worthiness. There is no force required to open the book. The seals are not to be broken. They are to be loosed; λύσαι comes from λυώ, "to loose," "to unfasten," "to untie."

3. Καὶ οὐδεὶς ἐδύνατο ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ οὐδὲ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς οὐδὲ ὑποκάτω τῆς γῆς ἀνοῖξαι τὸ βιβλίον οὐδὲ βλέπειν αὐτό.

3. And no man was able, neither in heaven, nor on earth, nor under the earth, to open the book, nor to look on it.

"Heaven and earth and under the earth" meant to the Hebrews, the whole world, the under-world, or "Hades" in-

cluded. No angel, or man, could open the book, because none were worthy (*ἄξιος*) to reveal the secrets of God. *Ἀνοίξαι* means to open, to undo.

4. Καὶ ἐγὼ ἔκλαιον πολὺ, ὅτι οὐδεὶς ἄξιος εὐρέθη ἀνοίξαι τὸ βιβλίον οὔτε βλέπειν αὐτό.

4. And I wept much because no man was found worthy to open the book, nor to see it.

(S. omits *ἐγώ*.)

The Seer “wept much because no one was found worthy to open the Book, nor to see it.” He recognised the sealed Book of Daniel containing the revelation of the fall of the Temple and the fate of the Jews. He wept for disappointment, because he longed to warn the Nazarene Church, then under the harrow of Rome, of the approaching catastrophe. This confession is made to the servants of God at Jerusalem.

5. Καὶ εἷς ἐκ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων λέγει μοι. Μὴ κλαῖε· ἰδοὺ ἐνίκησεν ὁ λέων ὁ ἐκ τῆς φυλῆς Ἰούδα, ἡ ρίζα Δαυεὶδ, ἀνοίξαι τὸ βιβλίον καὶ τὰς ἑπτὰ σφραγίδας αὐτοῦ.

5. And one of the ancients said to me, Weep not ; behold the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath conquered to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.

Our Lord was of the tribe of Juda (Heb. vii. 14). In Genesis we read, “Juda is a lion’s whelp” (xlix. 9). The sceptre remained with Juda till the end of the Covenant. *Ἐ ρίζα Δαυεὶδ*, according to Prof. M. Stuart is a root-shoot from the stem of David. Compare Isa. xi. 1. In this Book our Lord declares himself “the root and stock of David” (R. xxii. 16, where see notes). “Hath conquered,” *ἐνίκησεν*, refers to our Lord’s conquest by his death upon the cross. *ἐγὼ νενίκηκα τὸν κόσμον*, “I have conquered the world” (Jhn. xvi. 33). We have had the word before at R. iii. 21, *ὡς καὶ ἐγὼ ἐνίκησα*, where it is translated “as I also have overcome.” To overcome and to conquer have not exactly the same meaning.

6. Καὶ εἶδον ἐν μέσῳ τοῦ θρόνου καὶ τῶν τεσσάρων ζώων καὶ ἐν μέσῳ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων ἀρνίον ἑστηκὸς ὡς ἐσφαγμένον, ἔχων κέρατα ἑπτὰ καὶ ὀφθαλμοὺς ἑπτὰ, οἳ εἰσιν τὰ ἑπτὰ πνεύματα τοῦ Θεοῦ, ἀπεσταλμένα εἰς πᾶσαν τὴν γῆν. (S. has ἀπεσταλμένοι.)

6. And I saw and behold in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the ancients, a Lamb, standing as it were slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the Seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.

As the Seer looked, a Lamb appeared, in the midst of the throne, Ἄρνιον, an innocent Lamb. S. John the Evangelist records the exclamation of S. John the Baptist, "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world" (Jhn. i. 29). "As it were slain" refers to the death upon the cross—His propitiatory sacrifice (Isa. liii. 7). A little later the choirs of heaven acclaim the Lamb that was slain as worthy of Divinity (R. v. 12). He is the risen Lamb, standing ready to protect His Church, with seven horns. Horns are used as emblems of power in the Hebrew Scriptures; see Ps. lxxiv. 11; Dan. vii. 7, 8, 20, 24, viii. 3, 8, 9, 20, 21; Zach. i. 18. Seven has no limits. Hence, "seven horns" means unlimited power.

Seven eyes, "which are the seven spirits of God sent forth into all the earth." The Seven Spirits are put for the Paraclete. "These things saith he who has the Seven Spirits of God" (R. iii. 1). "Seven lamps burning before the throne, which are the Seven Spirits of God" (R. iv. 5). We read in the Gospel of S. John, "If I go not the paraclete will not come to you, but if I go I will send him to you" (Jhn. xvi. 7).

7. Καὶ ἦλθεν καὶ εἴληφεν ἐκ τῆς δεξιᾶς τοῦ καθημένου ἐπὶ τοῦ θρόνου.

7. And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat on the throne.

This is a symbolic illustration of the first sentence of the Book. "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave to him, to make known to his servants." The Lamb took the seven sealed book of Revelation out of the right hand of God.

8. Καὶ ὅτε ἔλαβεν τὸ βιβλίον, τὰ τέσσερα ζῶα καὶ οἱ εἴκοσι τέσσαρες πρεσβύτεροι ἔπεσαν ἐνώπιον τοῦ ἀρνίου ἔχοντες ἕκαστος κιθάραν καὶ φιάλας χρυσᾶς γεμούσας θυμιαμάτων, αἱ εἰσιν αἱ προσευχαὶ τῶν ἁγίων.

8. And when he had opened the book, the four living creatures and the four-and-twenty ancients fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of the saints.

The four living creatures as well as the four-and-twenty ancients fell down before the Lamb and acknowledged his Divinity, (see R. iv. 9, 10). *Κιθάραν*, translated "harps," refers to the zither of the O.T. (Ps. xxxii. 2). All are ready to give the music of the zither to song, (see next verse). Golden vials Prof. M. Stuart points out should be rendered golden goblets. *Φιάλη* means a shallow vessel, very different from the chemist's "phial" of our day. The dictionaries described it as a flat, shallow cup, or drinking bowl, such as was used for burning incense in the Temple of Jerusalem.

They are "full of odours which are the prayers of the saints," showing that the angels and saints of heaven both plead themselves, and offer up the prayers of Christians, *τῶν ἁγίων*, before the throne of God. *Ἁγίων* stands for the Church militant. At R. xx. 8, the camp of the saints, "*τῶν ἁγίων*," is put for the Church on earth. This doctrine of the Communion of Saints is taught again at R. vi. 10, and viii. 3, 4. (See *ἁγίων*, pp. 49, 91.)

9. Καὶ ᾄδουσιν ᾠδὴν καινὴν, λέγοντες, Ἄξιός ἐστι λαβεῖν τὸ βιβλίον καὶ ἀνοίξαι τὰς σφραγίδας αὐτοῦ, ὅτι ἐσφάγης καὶ ἠγόρασας τῷ Θεῷ ἐν τῷ αἵματί σου ἐκ πάσης φυλῆς καὶ γλώσσης καὶ λαοῦ καὶ ἔθνους.

9. And they sang a new canticle, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to take the book and to open the seals thereof, because thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God in thy blood, out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation.

Canticles were numerous in the O.T. See Psalm xxxii. The Canticle of Canticles is one of the Books of Solomon. This is a N.T. canticle, in homage of Christ, the Lamb. He is worthy because He was slain, and has redeemed us to God in His blood. There is a peculiarity about the use of the verb *σφάζεσθαι*, denoting sacrifice, in regard to our Redeemer (R. v. 6, 9, 12, xiii. 8). It is derived from the figure of

Isaias, "Led as a sheep to the slaughter" (Isa. liii. 7). It is not found elsewhere in the N.T. (Swete, *op. cit.*, p. 81). It corresponds with the death of the martyrs, whose cry to Heaven preludes the action of the Book (R. vi. 9, 10), and with the description of the death of the martyrs of Rome (xviii. 24). It is a connecting word between Christ and His martyrs, like the verb *Νικάω*, to conquer. Both words refer to the Sacrifice of Calvary, and point to religious persecutions in this Book. "Every tribe, etc.," designates the universality of the Redemption.

10. Καὶ ἐποίησας αὐτοὺς τῷ Θεῷ ἡμῶν βασιλείαν καὶ ἱερεῖς, καὶ βασιλεύσουσιν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς.

10. And hast made us to our God a Kingdom and priests; and we shall reign over the earth.

This verse connects with R. i. 6, where see notes. It seems to be voiced by the twelve Apostles who were made priests. It connects also with R. xx. 6, "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection, in these the second death has no power: but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years." The Church is His kingdom, foretold in the Scriptures; and the priesthood is thrown open to all. It is no longer confined, as in the Old Law, to the Levites. It is the promise of Isaias fulfilled. "And I will take them to be priests and Levites saith the Lord" (lxvi. 21). "And we shall reign"—in heaven—is disclosed in R. xx. 6, where those who have part in the first resurrection, "shall reign with him." See R. xx. 6, notes. The Gospel of the Kingdom is in view.

11. Καὶ εἶδον, καὶ ἤκουσα ὡς φωνὴν ἀγγέλων πολλῶν κύκλῳ τοῦ θρόνου καὶ τῶν ζώων καὶ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων, καὶ ἦν ὁ ἀριθμὸς αὐτῶν μυριάδες μυριάδων καὶ χιλιάδες χιλιάδων.

11. And I saw, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the living creatures and the ancients; and the number of them was thousands of thousands.

A further development of the vision of the throne of God is noted. The Seer heard the acclamations of myriads of angels joined to those of the ancients and living creatures. The angels formed a circle stretching away on all sides from the throne.

The words *μυριάδες* and *χιλιάδες* are taken from Daniel vii. 10, where the same numbers of attendant angels occur, in reverse order.

12. Λέγοντες φωνῇ μεγάλῃ, Ἄξιόν ἐστιν τὸ ἀρνίον τὸ ἐσφαγμένον λαβεῖν τὴν δύναμιν καὶ πλοῦτον καὶ σοφίαν καὶ ἰσχὺν καὶ τιμὴν καὶ δόξαν καὶ εὐλογία.

12. Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and divinity, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory and benediction.

The angels and saints of heaven acclaimed the Lamb worthy, not only to open the book, but to receive sevenfold gifts, that is the unlimited attributes of the Divinity. Compare this with the doxology which the angels address to the enthroned God at R. vii. 12, where see notes. *Πλοῦτον*, above, translated "divinity," is translated "riches" at R. xviii. 17. Also at 2 Cor. viii. 9. It is put here on a level with power and wisdom and strength. As a dictionary word *πλοῦτος* means "wealth." But in this context it connects with *πλούσιος* at R. ii. 9, and iii. 17, where spiritual riches are in view.

13. Καὶ πᾶν κτίσμα ὃ ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς καὶ ὑποκάτω τῆς γῆς καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς θαλάσσης ἃ ἐστιν, καὶ τὰ ἐν αὐτοῖς πάντα, ἤκουσα λέγοντας, Τῷ καθημένῳ ἐπὶ τοῦ θρόνου καὶ τῷ ἀρνίῳ ἡ εὐλογία καὶ ἡ τιμὴ καὶ ἡ δόξα καὶ τὸ κράτος εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων.

13. 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; I heard all saying, To him that sitteth on the throne and to the Lamb, benediction and honour and glory and power, for ever and ever.

(S. omits ἃ ἐστιν and puts τῷ θρόνῳ.)

The whole created world echoed the homage of the heavenly hosts, saying, "to him that sitteth on the throne and to the Lamb." Thus marking the equality of the Lamb with the enthroned God. To them be "benediction and honour and glory and power." This fourfold doxology takes us back to the vision of the throne of God, R. iv. 9-11, where the four living creatures "gave glory and honour and benediction" and the four-and-twenty ancients gave "glory and honour and power" to God. We have all these expressions repeated here

in English. But in the Greek, *εὐχαριστία* is given to God and *εὐλογία* to the Lamb (see R. v. 12). And *δύναμις* is given to God, and also to the Lamb (see R. iv. 11, notes). At R. vii. 12 there is another sevenfold doxology given to God, in which *εὐλογία* occurs, translated "benediction," and *δύναμις*, "power," again occurs. *Κράτος*, "power," above, is not a new expression. We had it at R. i. 6, where it is translated "empire." *Κράτος* as a dictionary word means "might," "strength," "force," "dominion." *Κράτος* appears in 1 Pet. iv. 11, where it is translated "empire." It is given to the Lamb at R. i. 6, in connection with His Kingdom.

Three stands for God, and four for created things, the foundation of the sacred symbolism of seven. We have "the creatures," above, in heaven, on earth, in hades, and in the seas' four locations, which embrace all created beings, offering up fourfold praise.

14. Καὶ τὰ τέσσερα ζῶα ἔλεγον, Ἀμήν, καὶ οἱ πρεσβύτεροι ἔπεσαν καὶ προσεκύνησαν.

14. And the four living creatures said, Amen ; and the ancients fell down on their faces and adored.

English Bibles have the four-and-twenty ancients, and finish off this sentence by adding, after "adored," "him that liveth for ever and ever," as in the Vulgate. S. and B. both omit it as not sanctioned by the best codices. The vision of the throne of God is the preface to the action of the Book. It confirms the origin of the Revelation, as derived from God through Jesus Christ, who is worthy to open the seals of the future. It has important connections with the rest of the book, showing its unity of design and continuity. Rewards promised to those who overcome in the seven Churches are illustrated. The vision of the throne remains in permanent session during the rest of the action of the Book. The four living creatures call attention to the importance of certain visions. The ancients help to explain matters to S. John, and proclaim the justice of God's judgments. Angels come and go, carrying out the edicts of the throne. The martyrs appear before the throne, when their martyrdom has been accomplished. The whole choir of heaven intervenes with choruses of praise from time to time, throwing a side light on events. The dramatic import of this vision should be borne in mind, as it forms the stage or background of future visions.

CHAPTER VI

1. Καὶ εἶδον ὅτε ἤνοιξεν τὸ ἀρνίον μίαν ἐκ τῶν ἑπτὰ σφραγίδων, καὶ ἤκουσα ἑνὸς ἐκ τῶν τεσσάρων ζώων λέγοντος ὡς φωνῇ βροντῆς, Ἔρχου.

1. And I saw that the Lamb had opened one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures saying as with a voice of thunder, Come.

English Bibles follow the Vulgate and print "Come and see." One of the four living creatures calls attention in a voice of thunder to the first apparition, because Christ appears and thunder is appropriate to His majesty. The word "come"—Ἔρχου—is used towards the close of the Book, as an invitation. "And the spirit and the bride say come" (R. xxii. 17); also at R. xxii. 20, "Come, Lord Jesus." It is not necessarily a categorical imperative. Particular attention is drawn to the figure issuing from this first seal, and to three others which follow, because of their importance in the scheme of action of the Book.

"Had opened one of the seven seals" means that the figure of Christ which appears on the opening of the first or outermost seal was already, and for an indefinite period, in evidence.

2. Καὶ εἶδον, καὶ ἰδοὺ ἵππος λευκός, καὶ ὁ καθήμενος ἐπ' αὐτὸν ἔχων τόξον, καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτῷ στέφανος, καὶ ἐξῆλθεν νικῶν καὶ ἵνα νικήσῃ.

2. And I saw and beheld a white horse, and he that sat on him had a bow, and a crown was given to him, and he went forth conquering that he might conquer.

Corresponding with the first seal, a figure on horseback, caparisoned as a Parthian king, appears upon the stage. When we reflect that the action of the Book begins here, and that it predicts the complete overthrow of the Roman Empire, held in the year 67 to be invincible except in the direction of Parthia, the appropriateness of the Parthian symbol to the occasion must be acknowledged. White horses were used by the Parthian Kings, leading their armies. They were in ancient times considered as omens of victory. *Candore nivali, hoc ad victoriæ omen pertinet.* They were used by victors in triumphal processions

(Virg. Aen., iii. 537). The figure is armed with a bow, a weapon of warfare used at that time by the Parthians, but not by the Romans. Parthian coins of the years 42-65, during a portion of which time S. John travelled in Mesopotamia, showed the Parthian king mounted on a white horse, on the obverse; and seated, holding a bow, on the reverse. In the year 66, Tiridates, a Parthian prince and general of armies, came to Rome to be crowned King of Armenia by Nero. We can imagine him riding through the streets of Rome, on a white horse, with the bow. "And a crown was given to him" completes the picture.

But the rider is Jesus Christ, who went forth, "Conquering that he might conquer." The symbolism is Parthian, because in no other quarter could a conqueror of Rome be found. We are not left in doubt as to the identity of the rider. Like God Almighty on the throne, he is not named at first, but introduced as *ὁ καθήμενος*, "He that sat," (R. iv. 3). "Conquering," *νικῶν*, introduces a characteristic of our Lord (see iii. 21). And the crown, *στέφανος*, is the reward of victory.

The figure appears again in the final battle, the dramatic ending of the Roman theme—Chapter xix.—where we are told, "behold a white horse and he that sat on him," *καὶ ἰδοὺ ἵππος λευκός, καὶ ὁ καθήμενος ἐπ' αὐτὸν*, word for word as in this verse, to show the connection. He was called "the Faithful and True" (R. xix. 11). And again "his name is called the Word of God" (R. xix. 13).

3. Καὶ ὅτε ἤνοιξεν τὴν σφραγίδα τὴν δευτέραν, ἤκουσα τοῦ δευτέρου ζώου λέγοντος, Ἔρχου.

3. And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, Come.

We are told that this is the second seal. Consequently that previously opened was the first. The second living creature says "come," or as the Vulgate renders it, "come and see." This special notification is addressed through S. John to students of the Apocalypse. It calls our attention to the importance of this vision.

4. Καὶ ἐξῆλθεν ἄλλος ἵππος πυρρός, καὶ τῷ καθημένῳ ἐπ' αὐτὸν ἐδόθη αὐτῷ λαβεῖν τὴν εἰρήνην ἐκ τῆς γῆς καὶ ἵνα ἀλλήλους σφάξουσιν, καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτῷ μάχαιρα μεγάλη.

4. And there went out another horse that was red, and it was granted to him that sat thereon to take away peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another, and a great sword was given to him.

The red horse is a symbol of war. That idea is reinforced by saying that "it was granted to him that sat thereon to take away peace from the earth." Τῆς γῆς refers to the Roman Empire in this Book. "And that they should kill one another" refers to the enemies of God's Church. A great sword symbolises great slaughter; so great that the statement of the armies and bloodshed will cause astonishment (R. ix. 16, xiv. 20). We have here a distinct prediction of civil wars, and wars between the enemies of the Church. There were horrible civil wars then breaking out in Jerusalem. There was warfare between the Romans and the Jews, and the death of Nero let loose civil war on the Empire. Galba, Otho, Vitellius, and Vespasian fought, and deluged Rome and Italy with blood. And all these predictions did "shortly come to pass" (R. i. 1). There was almost constant warfare in the Roman Empire until it fell.

5. Καὶ ὅτε ἤνοιξεν τὴν σφραγίδα τὴν τρίτην, ἤκουσα τοῦ τρίτου ζώου λέγοντος Ἔρχου, καὶ εἶδον, καὶ ἰδοὺ ἵππος μέλας, καὶ ὁ καθημένος ἐπ' αὐτὸν ἔχων ζυγὸν ἐν τῇ χειρὶ αὐτοῦ.

5. And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature, saying, Come. And behold a black horse and he that sat on him had a pair of scales in his hand.

From the third seal came forth a black horse. Black typifies mourning. "He that sat on him had a pair of scales in his hand." Weighing food is Scriptural symbolism for famine, as in Lev. xxvi. 26, They shall "give it out (bread) by weight, and you shall eat and shall not be filled." This, with reference to the Jews, "Behold I will break in pieces the staff of bread in Jerusalem, and they shall eat bread by weight, and with care" (Ezech. iv. 16). Food grains were not sold by weight but by measure. Hence scales indicate a time of great scarcity. The black horse represents famine.

6. Καὶ ἤκουσα ὡς φωνὴν ἐν μέσῳ τῶν τεσσάρων ζώων λέγουσαν, Χοῖνιξ σίτου δηναρίου, καὶ τρεῖς χοίνικες κριθῶν δηναρίου, καὶ τὸ ἔλαιον καὶ τὸν οἶνον μὴ ἀδικήσης.

6. And I heard as it were a voice in the midst of the four living creatures, saying, Two pounds of wheat for a penny, and thrice two pounds of barley for a penny, and wine and oil hurt thou not.

“And I heard as it were a voice in the midst of the four living creatures,” indicates the voice of God. “Saying, a chœnix of wheat for a denarius and three chœnixes of barley for a denarius.” A chœnix measured about a quart. The denarius was a silver piece equal to about eightpence of our money, and was a day’s wage (Matt. xx. 9, 10). In ordinary seasons eight chœnixes of wheat were sold for a denarius. The “voice” predicts a famine in which food grains would be raised in price about 800 per cent. Those who have had experience of Indian famines know that the severity of a famine is tested by the price of food grains, and that a rise of 800 per cent. shows a severe famine. Two pounds of wheat for a penny would indicate a time of plenty, instead of a famine, for two pounds of wheat make a four-pound loaf. But the penny in view here, as in Matt. xx. 12, equals the ancient Anglo-Saxon silver penny, which, as easterling or denarius, superseded the sceat and the Roman coinage in England about the year 775, and remained in circulation for centuries. Copper pennies were introduced in the eighteenth century.

Wine and oil may have been put here as symbols of the Nazarene Church, which was preserved from the famine of Jerusalem by flight. The verb ἀδικεῖν is used in this book at R. ii. 11, vi. 6, vii. 2, ix. 4, 10, 19, and xi. 5, with reference to personal injury, its usual sense. The wine and oil of the Temple were sacred; the latter was used for anointing the high priests. The holy name “Messias” meant, in Hebrew, “the anointed.” The lamps of the tabernacle were fed with oil by the high priests, who alone might touch them. The Seer must have foreseen the desecration of the oil and wine by John of Gischala in the Temple of Jerusalem.

Josephus says:

“This man, who was a Jew, seized on what were the donations of foreigners, and said to those that were with him that it was proper for them to use divine things, while they were fighting for the Divinity, without fear, and that such, whose warfare is for the Temple, should live off the Temple; on which account he emptied

the vessels of that sacred wine and oil which the priests kept to be poured on the burnt-offerings, and which lay in the inner court of the Temple, and distributed it among the multitude, who, in their anointing themselves and drinking, used (each of them) above an hin of them; and here I cannot but speak my mind, and what the concern I am under dictates to me, and it is this: I suppose that, had the Romans made any longer delay in coming against these villains, the city would either have been swallowed up by the ground opening upon them, or been overflowed by water, or else been destroyed by such thunder as the country of Sodom perished by" (bk. V. cap. xiii.).

Josephus, who was of the priestly order, was so shocked, by this desecration of the oil and wine, that he thought Jerusalem would have been destroyed by thunder, like Sodom. Here we get an idea of the sacredness of the oil and wine. "Hurt thou not" is either a mandate forecasting the immunity of the Nazarene Church, or a warning to the Jews that the sacrilegious profanation of the holy oil and wine would fill up the cup of their iniquity.

A "hin" was about one gallon and a half. Note that thunder symbolises the destruction of a city by Divine ordination.

7. Καὶ ὅτε ἤνοιξεν τὴν σφραγίδα τὴν τετάρτην, ἤκουσα φωνὴν τοῦ τετάρτου ζώου λέγοντος, Ἔρχου.

7. And when he had opened the fourth seal I heard the voice of the fourth living creature, saying, Come.

8. Καὶ εἶδον, καὶ ἰδοὺ ἵππος χλωρός, καὶ ὁ καθήμενος ἐπάνω αὐτοῦ, ὄνομα αὐτῷ ὁ θάνατος, καὶ ὁ ἄδης ἠκολούθει μετ' αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτοῖς ἐξουσία ἐπὶ τὸ τέταρτον τῆς γῆς, ἀποκτεῖναι ἐν ῥομφαίᾳ καὶ ἐν λιμῷ καὶ ἐν θανάτῳ, καὶ ὑπὸ τῶν θηρίων τῆς γῆς.

8. And behold a pale horse, and he that sat upon him, his name was Death, and hell followed him. And power was given to him over the four parts of the earth, to kill with sword, with famine, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.

The Greek word used above, to denote the colour of the fourth horse, is *χλωρός*, "green," to correspond with the colour of the rider. Not *θάνατος*, "death," but *ὁ θάνατος*, death personified by a corpse. In hot countries a corpse turns green and is buried within a few hours of death. But *θάνατος* has

another meaning, as we have seen at R. ii. 23. It means "pestilence." The Hebrew word "pestilence" is rendered *θανάτος* more than thirty times by the Septuagint. The combination of war, famine and pestilence, is frequently predicted as the punishment of the impenitent Jews in the O.T., as in Jer. xiv. 12, xxi. 7, xxiv. 10, xxix. 17, 18, xxxii. 36, xlv. 13; Ezech. v. 12, vi. 12, xii. 16. "For thus saith the Lord, Although I shall send in upon Jerusalem my four grievous judgments, the sword, and the famine, and the mischievous beasts, and the pestilence to destroy out of it man and beast" (Ezech. xiv. 21). These four form a natural sequence. The wolf, the jackal, the hyena, and the starving pariah dog, prowl through famine stricken districts and over battlefields, gnawing the slain. And pestilence follows the contamination of the atmosphere by the unburied bodies of the dead.

And hell followed him: *ᾗδης*, here translated "hell," is not the place of the damned. That is called "the pool of fire burning with brimstone" in this Book. A clear distinction is made between it and *ᾗδης*. Hades is a place of waiting for the general judgment. Josephus describes it in his "Discourse to the Greeks concerning Hades" as a limbo or purgatory. Hades and Death personified, above, are cast into the pool of fire in the end. See R. xx. 13, 14, notes.

And power was given to him (Death) over τὸ τέταρτον τῆς γῆς, "the fourth part of the earth." A strange limitation. Catholic Bibles rightly follow the Vulgate in translating the above "the four parts of the earth" (see R. vii. 1).

The first four seals disclose our Lord as a conqueror prepared for battle against the foes of His Church, with the symbols of His army, war, famine, and pestilence. These are the same forces with which He controlled the chosen people and their enemies. They were foretold by the prophets for the last days of Jerusalem. Those days are in view. The four living creatures draw our particular attention to these figures, because they also fulfil the judgments of God under the New Law. They are the forces with which Rome is conquered in this Book, and with which the enemies of God's Church are overcome down to the last days. When therefore we read of hail and fire and earthquakes in the pages of the Apocalypse, we may know that war, famine, or pestilence are at work.

The next verse, although it begins with *Καὶ*, "and," as usual, opens a fresh chapter, dealing with the "cause of the martyrs," one of the principal motives of the Book.

9. Καὶ ὅτε ἤνοιξεν τὴν πέμπτην σφραγίδα, εἶδον ὑποκάτω τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου τὰς ψυχὰς τῶν ἐσφαγμένων διὰ τὸν λόγον τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ διὰ τὴν μαρτυρίαν ἣν εἶχον.

9. 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.

There is no altar in the vision, as yet. But the Seer always pictures Christ and the martyrs as offered up to God sacrificially, as if on the altar of sacrifice in the Temple of Jerusalem. He has that altar, *θυσιαστηρίου* (from *θυω*, to immolate), in view. See *ἐσφαγμένων*, R. v. 6, 9, 12, vi. 9, xiii. 8, xviii. 24. But why under the altar? The altar, or rock of Abraham on which the altar stood, is now in the Mosque of Omar, where it may be examined. A channel leads from it, down which the blood of victims flowed to a cavern under the altar. "Because the life of the flesh is in the blood," ἡ γὰρ ψυχὴ πάσης σαρκὸς αἷμα αὐτοῦ ἐστίν (Lev. xvii. 11), the Seer sees τὰς ψυχὰς τῶν ἐσφαγμένων under the altar, where their blood collected.

They "were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony—τὴν μαρτυρίαν—which they held." Compare with R. i. 2, and R. i. 9, where S. John writes that he was at Patmos, διὰ τὸν λόγον τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ τὴν μαρτυρίαν Ἰησοῦ, and with R. xx. 4, where these souls are again referred to as "τὰς ψυχὰς τῶν πεπελεκισμένων διὰ τὴν μαρτυρίαν Ἰησοῦ καὶ διὰ τὸν λόγον τοῦ Θεοῦ." "The souls beheaded on account of the testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God." These passages support each other in indicating the souls of the martyrs.

10. Καὶ ἔκραξαν φωνῇ μεγάλῃ, λέγοντες, Ἔως πότε, ὁ δεσπότης ὁ ἅγιος καὶ ἀληθινός, οὐ κρίνεις καὶ ἐκδικεῖς τὸ αἷμα ἡμῶν ἐκ τῶν κατοικούντων ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς.

10. And they cried with a loud voice saying. How long, O Lord (holy and true), dost thou not judge and revenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth.

In the Vulgate the words "holy and true" are in brackets. But brackets were not in use in the first century.

The connection of the souls under the altar with the martyrs is further evidenced by the words "revenge our blood." There are many references to the vengeance of God upon His adversaries, the enemies of His chosen people, in the O.T.,

and on the Jews for their iniquities, in Isaias xxxiv. 8, Ezech. xxiv. 8. Also in the N.T., as in Luke xxi. 22, "Revenge to me, I will repay saith the Lord" (Rom. xii. 19). The martyrs' loud cry is heard in heaven. They address God as *ὁ δεσπότης*, the Supreme Power. "Holy and True," His attributes at R. iii. 7.

"Upon those"—*κατοικούντων ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς*—"who dwell on the earth." This is an important phrase, for it indicates those upon whom vengeance is called down. We will find it often repeated in connection with punishments upon the enemies of God's Church, Jew, Roman, or other. Towards the close of the Roman theme, the court of heaven cries out, "For true and just are his judgments, who hath judged the great harlot which corrupted the earth with her fornication, and hath revenged the blood of his servants at her hands" (R. xix. 2). Here the words *ἀληθινὰι, ἔκρινεν, τὴν γῆν* and *τὸ αἷμα τῶν δούλων αὐτοῦ*, all correspond with verse 10 above, and point to the accomplishment of the martyrs' prayer.

11. Καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτοῖς ἐκάστω στολὴ λευκή, καὶ ἐρρέθη αὐτοῖς ἵνα ἀναπαύσονται ἔτι χρόνον μικρόν, ἕως πληρωθῶσω καὶ οἱ σύνδουλοι αὐτῶν καὶ οἱ ἀδελφοὶ αὐτῶν οἱ μέλλοντες ἀποκτένεσθαι ὡς καὶ αὐτοί.

11. And white robes were given to every one of them one, and it was said to them that they should rest for a little time, till their fellow-servants and their brethren, who are to be slain even as they, should be filled up.

And white robes were given to everyone of them. "White robes"—*στολὴ λευκή*—are the characteristic garb of the martyrs. *Στολὴ* signifies a long robe (see Mark xii. 38). When their roll is complete, the martyrs appear "before the throne," clothed in *στολὰς λευκάς* (R. vii. 9, where see notes).

And they were told to wait—*ἕνα ἀναπαύσονται*—"to enjoy repose" for a little time. Till their fellow servants—*τῶν δούλων αὐτοῦ* (R. xix. 2), and their brethren shall be slain; even as they! They "were slain for the word of God and for the testimony"—*τὴν μαρτυρίαν* (R. vi. 9). They are asked to rest until the completion of the martyrs' roll. To rest for a little time—*χρόνον μικρόν*—which is reinforced by the expression *μέλλοντες*, the future proximate, signifying that the martyrs' roll would soon be completed. So far as history is concerned the martyrs' roll was completed about two hundred years later. But so far as the Revelation is concerned, it is completed in this Chapter

of the Book. We have *μικρὸν χρόνον* again at R. xx. 3, where see notes.

There is a distinction drawn between "servants" and "brethren." Servants in this Book hold a high position (see R. i. 1, ii. 20). Both hierarchy and laity are found in the martyrs' roll.

The next seal contains the vision of the ten persecutions. Note here that the souls of the martyrs are represented as complaining to God because of the continued sufferings of their brethren. They call him *ὁ δεσπότης*—the absolute ruler, as in a similar passage in the O.T. (Jer. iv. 10). The souls are represented as placated with the gift of white robes, and as told to wait a little time till the martyrs' roll is filled up. This explains the millennium. See R. xx. 4, notes.

The completion of the martyrs' roll fills up the cup of Roman iniquity, and brings down judgment upon her. The verb *κρίνω*, to judge, occurs often later on in the Book in response to the martyrs' prayer (*ὀυκρίνεις*), e.g., at R. xvi. 5, xviii. 8, 20, xix. 2-11.

12. Καὶ εἶδον ὅτε ἤνοιξεν τὴν σφραγίδα τὴν ἕκτην, καὶ σεισμὸς μέγας ἐγένετο, καὶ ὁ ἥλιος ἐγένετο μέλας ὡς σάκκος τρίχινος, καὶ ἡ σελήνη ὅλη ἐγένετο ὡς αἷμα.

12. And I saw when he had opened the sixth seal, and behold there was a great earthquake, and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the whole moon became as blood.

Καὶ—and—begins a new phase of the Revelation, containing a symbolic description of the ten persecutions. The four living creatures have called our attention to the real forces at the back of this vision. The red horse is at work, but his sword is temporarily in the hands of the Cæsars. The sword of persecution is "given" to them for the good of the Church. This vision looks back to R. ii. 10, the "tribulations" promised to the second or Smyrnian age of the Church.

The ten persecutions are placed in the forefront of the Book that the servants of God may know and be prepared for the sufferings in store for them. They form the justification for the terrible calamities inflicted upon the enemies of the Church described in the Book. See R. xvi. 5, 6, 7. "Thou art just, O Lord, who art and who wast, the holy one, who has judged these things: for they have shed the blood of the saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink, for they

deserved it. . . ." "Yea, O Lord God Almighty, true and just are thy judgments." See also R. xviii. 24, xix. 11.

The persecutions are symbolised in a way which the Hebrew servants of God would understand. "Behold there was a great earthquake." Earthquakes and movements of the earth are used in the O.T. as indicating political upheavals. The prophet Isaias foretold the destruction of Jerusalem as an earthquake (xxix. 6), and predicted that the wise men of the Jews would not understand the vision. "And the vision of all shall be unto you as the words of a book that is sealed" (xxix. 11). Jeremias says, "At the noise of the taking of Babylon, the earth is moved" (l. 46). Zacharias foretells the calamities of Jerusalem as of an earthquake (xiv. 4). His passages relating to the persecutions of the chosen people are in view here, as we shall see presently. The Seer describes the fall of Jerusalem as "a great earthquake" (R. xi. 13), and the fall of Babylon, by which he means Rome, as "a great earthquake, such as never hath been since men were upon the earth" (R. xvi. 18). The Church, the Jews, and Rome, each have their earthquake in this Book.

"And the sun became black as sackcloth of hair." The sun stands for the Light of the Church, which was for a time eclipsed during the persecutions; the candlestick of the Smyrnian age was removed out of its place. We have a vision of the Church under the appearance of "a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars" at R. xii. 1 (where see notes).

"And the whole moon became as blood." The Church, the *Ecclesia docens*, is clothed with the sun, and sheds light upon the whole Christian community, which reposes at her feet, and which reflects her light like the moon. Christians were stained with their own blood in all parts of the Empire during the persecutions. The prophet Ezechiel uses the sun, moon, and stars as political symbols of the land of Egypt (xxxii. 7). Isaias refers to Babylon in like manner. Zacharias says of the woes of the Jews: "And it shall come to pass in that day that there shall be no light" (xiv. 6). See Joel ii. 10, and 31. "The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood."

13. Καὶ οἱ ἀστέρες τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἔπεσαν εἰς τὴν γῆν, ὡς συκῆ βάλλει τοὺς ὀλύνθους αὐτῆς ὑπὸ ἀνέμου μεγάλου σειομένη.

13. And the stars from heaven fell upon the earth, as the fig tree casteth its green figs when it is shaken by a great wind.

Both Daniel (viii. 10) and Ezechiel (xxxii. 7) use stars as the symbols of great personages. In this Book the symbolism of stars has been specially interpreted for us. "The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches" (R. i. 20). We have seen that they are bishops. The woman, symbolic of the Church at R. xii. 1, has a crown of twelve stars, who are the twelve Apostles. Our Lord calls Himself "the bright and morning star" (R. xxii. 16). We must take stars as referring to the hierarchy of the Church. "The stars of heaven fell upon the earth" means that they apostatised; and the comparison with the fall of unripe figs, from a fig-tree shaken by the wind, shows that they were not perfect, and fell away in great numbers. We gather from S. Cyprian of Carthage, who described the Decian persecution (see p. 72), and from Eusebius, the historian, who wrote of the Diocletian persecution, that some of the Bishops were ill prepared and prone to fall. Eusebius says, "Some indeed from excessive dread, broken down and overpowered by their terrors, sank and gave way immediately at the first onset" (Euseb., B.M. 1). The Bishops of the Church were singled out for special treatment with a view to procuring their apostasy. The Cæsars would rather have their adherence to paganism than their lives. Isaias, in a passage which the Seer remembered, says: "The heavens shall be folded together as a book; and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falleth from the vine and from the fig tree" (xxxiv. 4). Multitudes of Christians, like unripe figs, were easily detached from the Church during the storms of persecution. In the Greek we have "the stars of heaven," not "from heaven" (*stellæ de cælo*—Vg.).

14. Καὶ ὁ οὐρανὸς ἀπεχωρίσθη ὡς βιβλίον ἐλισσόμενον, καὶ πᾶν ὄρος καὶ νῆσος ἐκ τῶν τόπων αὐτῶν ἐκινήθησαν.

14. And the heavens were withdrawn as a book rolled up, and every mountain and the islands were moved out of their places.

"And the heavens were withdrawn as a book rolled up." As a papyrus roll—βιβλίον—rolled up. The heavens are put here

for the visible Church, which for a time disappeared. The Papal See was vacant for sixteen months in the Decian persecution. The Emperors more than once boasted that they had wiped Christianity completely off the face of the earth. The holy Scriptures, the word of God and testimony of heaven, were diligently sought out and destroyed in the Diocletian persecution (Euseb. H. E. viii. 2).

Mountains in the O.T. are put for powers (Jer. li. 25; Ezech. vi. 3, xxxvi. 1, 4, 6, 8). We may take them to represent great Churches, such as those of Carthage and Alexandria, which were temporarily removed by persecution. Islands, following the same symbolism, are isolated Churches, in the era of paganism, similarly destroyed, as Eumenia in Phrygia.

Some of the old commentators took these symbols literally and saw in the fall of the stars from heaven, the heavens withdrawn as a manuscript rolled up, and the mountains and islands moved out of their places, a picture of the end of the world. But the symbolism of the O.T. and the context show that that idea was not in the mind of the Seer. He proceeds to describe the effect of this persecution on the generality of Christians in the next verse. We have much of this same symbolism, which is subsidiary to the horses of war, famine, and pestilence, repeated later, with reference to the retaliatory punishments on Jerusalem and Rome (see R. viii. 5, 8, 12; xvi. 20). Moreover, when the Seer does refer to the last days, as at the end of the Jewish theme, he does so in an unmistakable manner, "as the time of the dead to be judged" (R. xi. 18), and at the end of the historic revelation, even more distinctly, as the day of Judgment (R. xx. 11-14).

15. Καὶ οἱ βασιλεῖς τῆς γῆς καὶ οἱ μεγιστάνες καὶ οἱ χιλιάρχοι καὶ οἱ πλούσιοι καὶ οἱ ἰσχυροὶ καὶ πᾶς δούλος καὶ ἐλεύθερος ἔκρυψαν ἑαυτοὺς εἰς τὰ σπήλαια καὶ εἰς τὰς πέτρας τῶν ὀρέων.

15. And the kings of the earth and the princes and the tribunes, and the rich and the strong, and every bondman and every freeman, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of mountains.

After the heavens were withdrawn as a scroll, persecutions still raged, and Christians are shown hiding themselves in the dens (σπήλαια—"grottos," caves, or pits) and in the rocks of the mountains. We know as a matter of history that many Christians of all classes fled from the persecution; those at Rome fled into the catacombs, and those abroad into the

mountains and deserts. Seven classes of Christians are mentioned, which means all classes. Eusebius tells us that when the tenth persecution broke upon the Church, Christians were entrusted with the government of Provinces, that the Church enjoyed perfect freedom, and that the Church buildings were spacious and filled with an illustrious concourse (H. E. viii. 1). Persecution broke out in the year 302. It began with the army. Military "tribunes" suffered. Tribunes were officers of the Roman legions. Their inclusion in the list above points to a Roman stage, and therefore to Roman persecution. The Diocletian persecution seems to be in view. It covered the whole extent of the Empire. Galerius in the East and Maximian in the West united with Diocletian in trying to extirpate Christianity. Eusebius says, "Again the worshippers of God began to flee; again the open fields, the deserts, forests, and mountains received the servants of Christ" (Euseb. B.M. x. 8).

16. Καὶ λέγουσιν τοῖς ὄρεσιν καὶ ταῖς πέτραις, Πέσετε ἐφ' ἡμᾶς καὶ κρύψατε ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ προσώπου τοῦ καθημένου ἐπὶ τοῦ θρόνου καὶ ἀπὸ τῆς ὀργῆς τοῦ ἀρνίου.

16. And they say to the mountains and to the rocks, Fall upon us and hide us from the face of him that sitteth upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb.

(S. = πέσατε.)

The fugitives called upon the mountains and rocks to fall upon them and hide them from "the wrath of the Lamb." This is a clear indication that they knew that they were suffering for their sins. Eusebius admits that persecution was a just punishment from God for the sins of the Church. It had not done penance as prescribed at R. ii. 5, hence its candlestick was removed out of its place. Who but Christians feared "the wrath of the Lamb"? They said: "Hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne and the wrath of the Lamb." Here we have the overshadowing presence of the vision of the throne of God, and S. John again strikes the note of equality between the Godhead on the throne and the Lamb (see R. xxii. 1).

The Christian fear of God is the peculiar note of this vision. It is in splendid contrast with the behaviour of the pagans when the vials of God's wrath were poured out upon them. They blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and wounds (R. xvi. 9-11). The fear of God is strongly inculcated in this Book, even directly from the Throne. "A voice came out of the throne saying, Praise ye our God, all his servants and you that fear him, little and great" (R. xix. 5).

17. Ὅτι ἦλθεν ἡ ἡμέρα ἡ μεγάλη τῆς ὀργῆς αὐτῶν, καὶ τίς δύναται σταθῆναι.

17. For the great day of their wrath has come, and who shall be able to stand?

The great day of their wrath—*τῆς ὀργῆς αὐτῶν*—refers to the Christians whose *θλίψις* is in view. It may refer to the tenth persecution, the worst of all in duration and intensity. All the earth, says Lactantius, was deluged in blood. Rocks and fires, boiling oil and molten lead, sharp stakes and cruel stripes, wild beasts and every conceivable torture were brought into use. "And who shall be able to stand?" There is a note of humility in these concluding words. "If thou, O Lord, will mark iniquities, Lord, who shall stand it?" (Ps. cxxix. 3).

The Hebraic symbolism used in the above vision is also found in Isaias. "And they shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, from the face of the fear of the Lord" (ii. 19). See also Osee x. 8, and Luke xxiii. 30. Our Lord warns the daughters of Jerusalem. "Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall upon us, and to the hills, Cover us."

Having foretold the persecutions, S. John now begins to reveal the punishment in store for the persecutors, and first the Jews.

CHAPTER VII

1. Μετὰ ταῦτα εἶδον τέσσαρας ἀγγέλους ἐστῶτας ἐπὶ τὰς τέσσαρας γωνίας τῆς γῆς, κρατοῦντας τοὺς τέσσαρας ἀνέμους τῆς γῆς, ἵνα μὴ πνέῃ ἄνεμος ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς μήτε ἐπὶ τῆς θαλάσσης μήτε ἐπὶ πᾶν δένδρον.

1. After these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that they should not blow upon the earth, nor upon the sea, nor on any tree.

Μετὰ ταῦτα—"after these things"—is used here to denote a new departure. No seal is broken. It is an interlude. "The four corners of the earth" corresponds to the ancient view that the earth was a flat surface, stretching north, south, east, and west. Four angels restrain, as in a leash, the four winds of the earth. These four winds indicate the four scourges placed in the hands of Death, which had power "over the four parts of the earth, to kill with the sword, with famine, with pestilence,

and with the beasts of the earth" (R. vi. 8). The Prophet Zacharias had a vision of chariots, the first with red, the second with black, the third with white, and the fourth with grised horses. And he asked what they were? An Angel answered, "These are the four winds of the heavens which go forth to stand before the Lord of all the earth" (vi. 5). They represent the traditional punishment of the Jews. "He that shall abide in this city shall die by the sword and by the famine and by the pestilence" (Jer. xxi. 9; Ezech. vi. 11; see R. vi. 8, notes). These punishments are about to fall upon the Jews. But before they fall, it is necessary to assure Hebrew Christians that they will be saved. S. John sent this Book to the Nazarenes in the year 67, and he lets them know that the seal of baptism will protect them from the terrible punishments of the Jews, which he is about to describe. For the symbolism of the earth, the sea, and the trees, see R. vii. 3.

2. Καὶ εἶδον ἄλλον ἄγγελον ἀναβαίνοντα ἀπὸ ἀνατολῆς ἡλίου, ἔχοντα σφραγίδα Θεοῦ ζῶντος· καὶ ἔκραξεν φωνῇ μεγάλη τοῖς τέσσαρσιν, ἀγγέλοις οἷς ἐδόθη αὐτοῖς ἀδικῆσαι τὴν γῆν καὶ τὴν θάλασσαν.

2. And I saw another angel ascending from the rising sun, 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.

As the sun rises with great splendour from the Eastern horizon of the Ægean Sea, so the Seer saw an Angel arise in the East. The "Book of Enoch" places paradise in the East (xxiv. 2, 8). The Angel had the seal of the living God. This seal, or *σφραγίς*, was the symbol of baptism amongst the early Christians. "And he cried with a loud voice to the four angels" at the four corners of the earth, "to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea." The mission of the four angels comes plainly into view. It was given to them to hurt the earth and the sea and the trees. See next verse.

3. Λεγων, Μὴ ἀδικήσητε τὴν γῆν μήτε τὴν θάλασσαν μήτε τὰ δένδρα, ἄχρι σφραγίσωμεν τοὺς δούλους τοῦ Θεοῦ ἡμῶν ἐπὶ τῶν μετώπων αὐτῶν.

3. Saying, Hurt not the earth, nor the sea, nor the trees, till we seal the servants of our God in their foreheads.

The earth and the sea and the trees have a symbolical significance of their own.

Τῆν γῆν—"the earth"—is put for the enemies of the Church (see R. vi. 10). "The sea" is put for the inhabitants of the earth generally (see R. xii. 18, notes). "When the multitude of the sea shall be converted to thee, the strength of the Gentiles shall come to thee" (Isa. lx. 5). "The wicked are like the raging sea, which cannot rest, and the waves thereof cast up dirt and mire" (Isa. lvii. 20). "The sea is come up over Babylon" (Jer. li. 42). The Beast of the Apocalypse, meaning the Cæsars, rises from the sea of life. "The trees" stand for persons of distinction, princes, nobles, and the proud Jews. "The Lord has brought down the high tree and exalted the low tree" (Ezech. xvii. 24). "Thou hast cut down every tree" (Ezech. xxi. 10). The prophet Daniel tells Baltassar that he is the tree of the vision, grown great and mighty (iv. 17, 19). "Because the day of the Lord of hosts shall be on every one that is proud and high-minded," . . . "and upon all the tall and lofty cedars of Libanus, and upon all the oaks of Basan" (Isa. ii. 12-13). Isaias uses the symbolism of trees in a political sense in a prediction of the rout of the Assyrians. "I will cut down its tall cedars and its choice fir trees" (xxxvii. 24).

The Angels are told not to hurt the enemies of God, in this case his Jewish enemies, "till we seal the servants of our God on their foreheads." Servants, usually put for the Hebrew leaders of the Church, has a wider significance here, and covers all Hebrew Christians (see next verse). As in Exodus, the door-posts of the children of Israel were marked with the blood of a lamb to save the Israelites from the plagues of the firstborn (xii. 7), and in Ezechiel, an angel is ordered to mark with Thau the foreheads of the just in Jerusalem, to save them from the destroying angel (ix. 4-6), so the Hebrew servants of God are sealed to protect them from the vengeance of God upon their nation.

The question is asked, How were they sealed? It is an historic question. Christians are in view, and they were sealed and differentiated from the rest of men by baptism. "Going therefore teach ye all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost" (Matt. xxviii. 19; Jhn. iii. 5). The rite of baptism fulfils the symbolism of sealing.

S. Paul refers to "the seal of God" (2 Cor. i. 22; Eph. iv. 30). Eusebius says that when Basilides, the soldier, wished to join the Church, the brethren gave him the seal, meaning baptism (H. E. vi. 5). Clement of Alexandria used the expression "the seal of the Lord" with reference to baptism. "The Presbyter taking the youth home . . . at length baptized him. After this he relaxed exercising his former care and vigilance as

if he had now committed him to a perfect safeguard in the seal of the Lord" ("Who is the Rich Man"). Abercius, who visited Rome about the year 216, left an inscribed steele, in which he mentions his intercourse with people at Rome having the lustrous seal ("λαμπρὰν ΣΦΡΑΓΕΪΔΑΝ ἔχοντα"). According to Gregory Nazianzum (c. A.D. 380) the reason why Christians called baptism, σφραγίς, "a seal," is because it is a preservation mark, or mark of dominion (Orat. 40). As a matter of history, the Jews of Judea and Jerusalem who had been baptized fled to Pella and escaped the woes of the Jews.

4. Καὶ ἤκουσα τὸν ἀριθμὸν τῶν ἐσφραγισμένων, ἑκατὸν τεσσεράκοντα τέσσαρες χιλιάδες ἐσφραγισμένοι ἐκ πάσης φυλῆς υἱῶν Ἰσραὴλ.

4. And I heard the number of them that were sealed, an hundred and forty-four thousand sealed, of every tribe of the children of Israel.

"And I heard the number of them," is a formula indicating that the number is authoritative. We have it repeated again at R. ix. 16, where another round number is used. The number sealed corresponds with the twelve tribes multiplied by twelve thousand—twelve thousand of each tribe (see next verse). The question has been asked why is this sealing confined to the tribes of the children of Israel? It is to protect the Christian converts from Judaism from the catastrophes which are about to fall on the Jews. Gentile Christians needed no protection from sufferings, which were not to come upon them.

5. Ἐκ φυλῆς Ἰούδα δώδεκα χιλιάδες ἐσφραγισμένοι; ἐκ φυλῆς Ῥουβὴν δώδεκα χιλιάδες, ἐκ φυλῆς Γὰδ δώδεκα χιλιάδες.

5. Of the tribe of Juda, twelve thousand sealed. Of the tribe of Reuben, twelve thousand sealed. Of the tribe of Gad, twelve thousand sealed.

6. Ἐκ φυλῆς Ἀσσήρ δώδεκα χιλιάδες, ἐκ φυλῆς Νεφθαλεὶμ δώδεκα χιλιάδες, ἐκ φυλῆς Μανασσὴ δώδεκα χιλιάδες.

6. Of the tribe of Asser, twelve thousand sealed. Of the tribe of Nephthali, twelve thousand sealed. Of the tribe of Manasses, twelve thousand sealed.

7. Ἐκ φυλῆς Συμεὼν δώδεκα χιλιάδες, ἐκ φυλῆς Λευεὶ δώδεκα χιλιάδες, ἐκ φυλῆς Ἰσσαχάρ δώδεκα χιλιάδες.

7. Of the tribe of Simeon, twelve thousand sealed. Of the tribe of Levi, twelve thousand sealed. Of the tribe of Issachar, twelve thousand sealed.

8. Ἐκ φυλῆς Ζαβουλῶν δώδεκα χιλιάδες, ἐκ φυλῆς Ἰωσήφ δώδεκα χιλιάδες, ἐκ φυλῆς Βενιαμείν δώδεκα χιλιάδες, ἐσφραγισμένοι.

8. Of the tribe of Zabulon, twelve thousand sealed. Of the tribe of Joseph, twelve thousand sealed. Of the tribe of Benjamin, twelve thousand sealed.

The tribe of Dan is omitted and that of Joseph duplicated by his own name and that of his son Manasses. The Seer placed his own tribe Zabulon, with Joseph and Benjamin, at the last. It may be that before Jerusalem fell, in the year 70, about 12,000 of each tribe had become converted to Christianity, and sealed by the seal of baptism. The Apostles laboured for twelve years in Jerusalem with great success (see Acts ii. 41, iv. 4, and vi. 7). And when they went forth into the cities of the Gentiles, they found the Brethren everywhere, and made their first appeal to them. When these Hebrew Christians were sealed from harm, the way was cleared for vengeance upon the impenitent tribes of Israel.

But first the martyrs appear before the throne of God, and join with the angels and saints in giving glory to God.

9. Μετὰ ταῦτα εἶδον, καὶ ἰδοὺ ὄχλος πολὺς, ὃν ἀριθμῆσαι αὐτὸν οὐδεὶς ἐδύνατο, ἐκ παντὸς ἔθνους καὶ φυλῶν καὶ λαῶν καὶ γλωσσῶν, ἐστῶτες ἐνώπιον τοῦ θρόνου καὶ ἐνώπιον τοῦ ἀρνίου, περιβεβλημένους στολὰς λευκάς, καὶ φοίνικες ἐν ταῖς χερσὶν αὐτῶν.

9. After that I saw a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and in sight of the Lamb, clothed with white robes and palms in their hands.

Μετὰ ταῦτα, "after these things," as at verse 1, separates this vision from the sealing of the tribes, and takes us back again to the ten persecutions, to those who feared "the wrath of the Lamb." The martyrs cried out, "How long, O Lord?" They were told to wait till the martyrs' roll was complete. The symbolism of persecution in the sixth seal followed (R. vi. 10, 12-16). This vision now shows the effect of persecution, the completion of the martyrs' roll. A great multitude which no man could number of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues appear before the throne, clothed in white robes, with palm-branches in their hands. These are the martyrs. It is important that we should make no mistake about them. Accordingly, one of the Ancients explains that they are martyrs (R. vii. 14). The Seer does not

give the number on the martyrs' roll, because they are a countless multitude. Every tribe—*φῦλον*—of Israel and of all nations and peoples and tongues, in the Roman Empire, showing the wide extent and severity of the ten persecutions. They wear "*στολὰς λευκάς*"—"white robes"—such as were conferred upon the martyrs at R. vi. 10, as their distinctive garb. "White robes" occurs only at R. vi. 10, vii. 9, 14, and xxii. 14. They also have palms in their hands, the emblem of victory. The victors in the athletic contests of Greece and Rome carried palms as a sign of victory. Representations of palms are found scratched on the walls of the Catacombs. The martyrs' roll forms a great addition to the vision of the throne of God. It is a new feature. The martyrs were not seen when the vision of the throne first appeared. What has happened in the interval to cause this change? Only the loosing of the sixth seal, containing the ten persecutions.

10. Καὶ κράζουσιν φωνῇ μεγάλῃ, λέγοντες, Ἡ σωτηρία τῷ Θεῷ ἡμῶν τῷ καθημένῳ ἐπὶ τῷ θρόνῳ καὶ τῷ ἀρνίῳ.

10. And they cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God, who sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb.

And the martyrs loudly glorify God and the Lamb, with the expression, Ἡ σωτηρία, translated "Salvation." The same word occurs again at R. xii. 10, in an acclamation of praise to God and His Christ, "because the accuser of our brethren is cast forth." And again at R. xix. 1, because "he hath judged the great harlot" . . . "and revenged the blood of his servants." In the N. T. the expression *Σωτήρ*, "Saviour," is given to both God and to Christ, as in 1 Tim. i. and Tit. i. 4. It connotes in this Book safety and deliverance, through God and the Lamb. The persecuted Christians of R. vi. 16 exclaimed, "Hide us from the face of Him that sitteth upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb." Now that they have gained the palm of victory, they attribute their salvation "to our God Who sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb." This helps to identify them as the martyrs of R. vi. 16.

11. Καὶ πάντες οἱ ἄγγελοι ἱστήκεισαν κύκλῳ τοῦ θρόνου καὶ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων καὶ τῶν τεσσάρων ζώων, καὶ ἔπεσαν ἐνώπιον τοῦ θρόνου ἐπὶ τὰ πρόσωπα αὐτῶν καὶ προσεκύνησαν τῷ Θεῷ.

11. And all the angels stood round about the throne, and the ancients and the four living creatures, and they fell down before the throne upon their faces, and adored God.

12. Λέγοντες, Ἀμήν, ἡ εὐλογία καὶ ἡ δόξα καὶ ἡ σοφία καὶ ἡ εὐχαριστία καὶ ἡ τιμὴ καὶ ἡ δύναμις καὶ ἡ ἰσχὺς τῷ Θεῷ ἡμῶν εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων, ἀμήν.

12. Saying, Amen, Benediction, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and strength to our God, for ever and ever, amen.

In the vision of the throne of God (Chapter V.) the Lamb was found "worthy to take the book and open the seals thereof, because thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to God in thy blood, out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation" (R. v. 9). The angels, the living creatures and the ancients, praised the Lamb with sevenfold praises (R. v. 12). Now, when the martyrs of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues appear before the throne and salute God and the Lamb, they fall down and adore God and salute Him with a similar doxology of sevenfold praise. It is not exactly the same, *πλοῦτος*, "riches," is ascribed to the Lamb, and *εὐχαριστία*, "thanksgiving," to God (see R. v. 12, 13, notes).

13. Καὶ ἀπεκρίθη εἰς ἐκ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων λέγων μοι, Οὗτοι οἱ περιβεβλημένοι τὰς στολὰς τὰς λευκὰς τίνες εἰσὶν καὶ πόθεν ἦλθον.

13. And one of the ancients answered and said to me, Who are these that are clothed in white robes, and whence are they come?

14. Καὶ εἶρηκα αὐτῷ, Κύριέ μου, σὺ οἶδας, καὶ εἶπέν μοι, Οὗτοί εἰσιν οἱ ἐρχόμενοι ἐκ τῆς θλίψεως τῆς μεγάλης, καὶ ἔπλυναν τὰς στολὰς αὐτῶν καὶ ἐλεύκαναν αὐτὰς ἐν τῷ αἵματι τοῦ ἀρνίου.

14. And I said to him, My lord, thou knowest, And he said to me, These are they who have come out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and have made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

It is evidently important that we should make no mistake as to the identity of the innumerable host who appeared before the throne, clothed in "white robes." One of the Ancients explains. And he answered and said, "These are they who are come out of 'great tribulations,'" *θλίψεως μεγάλης*. The same expression, *θλίψις*, is used at R. ii. 10, where the Church of Smyrna, representing the martyrs' age of the Church, is promised ten persecutions, "and you shall have tribulation ten days." The accuracy of wording in the Apocalypse is very striking, "And have washed their robes." Again, "τὰς στολὰς,"

to correspond with the robes of the martyrs at R. vi. 11, and R. vii. 9. The metaphor of making robes white in the blood of the Lamb is significant of the ancient ritual in which cleansing by blood was practised. The efficacy of martyrdom in cleansing is attributed to the death of our Saviour on the cross (see R. i. 5, and v. 9). "Blessed are they who wash their robes in the blood of the Lamb" (R. xxii. 14). "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony, and they loved not their lives unto death" (R. xii. 11).

15. *Διὰ τοῦτό εἰσιν ἐνώπιον τοῦ θρόνου τοῦ Θεοῦ, καὶ λατρεύουσιν αὐτῷ ἡμέρας καὶ νυκτὸς ἐν τῷ ναῷ αὐτοῦ, καὶ ὁ καθήμενος ἐπὶ τοῦ θρόνου σκηνώσει ἐπ' αὐτούς.*

15. Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple, and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell over them.

These are the rewards of heaven. They are put figuratively, as we are incapable of understanding heaven. The martyrs shall be before the throne of God and serve him day and night; meaning ceaselessly. "And night shall be no more" (R. xxii. 5). "And they shall see his face" (R. xxii. 4). "In his temple." "And I saw no temple in it. For the Lord God Almighty is the temple thereof and the Lamb" (R. xxi. 22). "Behold the tabernacle of God with men and he will dwell with them" (R. xxi. 3). These quotations are from the picture of heaven at the end of Revelation. They qualify the symbolism employed above as purely figurative. *Τῷ ναῷ* was the sanctuary, or inner temple, to which only priests were admitted (see R. iii. 12, xi. 1, 2, 19, xiv. 15, 17).

16. *Οὐ πεινάσουσιν ἔτι οὐδὲ διψήσουσιν ἔτι, οὐδὲ μὴ πέση ἐπ' αὐτούς ὁ ἥλιος οὐδὲ πᾶν καῦμα.*

16. They shall not hunger or thirst any more, neither shall the sun fall on them, nor any heat.

Isaias says, "They shall not hunger nor thirst, neither shall the heat nor the sun strike them" (xlix. 10). This with reference to the salvation of the Gentiles. Hunger and thirst and scorching heat are inflictions. For the latter see R. xvi. 9. But in heaven "there shall be no sorrow, for the former things are passed away" (R. xxi. 4). And the tree of life is there, "bearing twelve fruits, yielding its fruits every month" (R. xxii. 2), and "the water of life" (R. xxii. 1). See also Jhn. iv. 14 and vi. 35. The fulfilment of prophecies is in view.

17. Ὅτι το ἀρνίον τὸ ἀνά μέσον τοῦ θρόνου ποιμανεῖ αὐτούς, καὶ ὀδηγήσει αὐτούς ἐπὶ ζωῆς πηγὰς ὑδάτων, καὶ ἐξαλείψει ὁ Θεὸς πᾶν δάκρυον ἐκ τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν αὐτῶν.

17. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall rule them, and shall lead them to the fountains of the waters of life, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

Isaias says in the same verse, quoted above, (He) "shall be their shepherd and at the fountains of waters he shall give them to drink" (xlix. 10). In the description of the New Jerusalem we are told, "To him that thirsteth I will give of the fountains of water of life gratis" (R. xxi. 6), also, "and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes" (R. xxi. 4). Isaias says, "and the Lord God shall wipe away tears from every face" (xxv. 8). There is a full symbolism of the joys of heaven in the final chapters of Revelation, see R. xxi. and xxii., with which these passages are connected, in some cases word for word, e.g., viii. 17 with xxi. 4, clearly proving the homogeneity of the Book.

CHAPTER VIII

1. Καὶ ὅταν ἤνοιξεν τὴν σφραγίδα τὴν ἑβδόμην, ἐγένετο σιγή ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ ὡς ἡμίωρον.

1. And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven as it were for half an hour.

The interlude is over. The martyrs have carried their plaint from "under the altar" up to the throne, reinforced by their completed roll. Hebrew Christians are protected by the mark of baptism. All is ready for punishing the persecutors of the Church. The seventh and last seal has just been opened. The whole court of heaven expects that it will reveal the fulfilment of prophecies, the rupture of the covenant between God and His chosen people. No one knew what was coming. Only the Lamb was worthy to open the seal (R. v. 3). But the prophets and the Apostles, and the saints of heaven, who were, in the year 67, overwhelmingly children of Israel, expected the revelation of the day of the wrath of God on Jerusalem. The Seer employs an intensely dramatic figure to show the interest aroused in the courts of heaven. "There was silence in heaven as it were for half an hour." So Virgil, *Conticuere omnes intentique ora tenebant* (*Æneid*, B. ii.), where Æneas relates the Siege of Troy. The silence fell "when he had opened the seal." The

momentous events to be revealed are ushered in by ceremonial preparations which indicate the gravity of the cause, and produce this solemn hush.

2. Καὶ εἶδον τοὺς ἑπτὰ ἀγγέλους οἱ ἐνώπιον τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐστήκασιν, καὶ ἐδόθησαν αὐτοῖς ἑπτὰ σάλπιγγες.

2. And I saw seven angels standing in the presence of God, and to them were given seven trumpets.

The vision discloses seven angels. The number seven is the perfect number. Employed here it means that, in the series of actions which are coming into view, all the angels needed to perform those actions stand ready before the throne. The vision of the throne of God is still in view.

“To them were given seven trumpets.” The voice of the trumpet sounded long and loud, and was heard by the people of Israel, when God gave them the ten commandments (Exod. xix. 19). Trumpets are appropriately introduced here to herald the punishment of the Jews for failing to observe those commandments (see Joel ii. 1; Osee viii. 1). Jericho, in the mystical sense, signified iniquity. The fall of Jericho is put symbolically for the fall of Jerusalem. Josue relates that seven priests with seven trumpets went round about the city, and on the seventh day the walls of the city fell, and all that were in it, men and women, young and old, were slain with the edge of the sword (Jos. vi. 13-21). Trumpets were used in warfare by the Jews, and by the Romans. Every manoeuvre of the Roman army, when S. John wrote the Apocalypse, was performed at the sound of a trumpet. Trumpets indicate the action of the red horse of war (R. vi. 4).

3. Καὶ ἄλλος ἄγγελος ἦλθεν καὶ ἐστάθη ἐπὶ τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου ἔχων λιβανωτὸν χρυσοῦν, καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτῷ θυμιάματα πολλά, ἵνα δώσει ταῖς προσευχαῖς τῶν ἁγίων πάντων ἐπὶ τὸ θυσιαστήριον τὸ χρυσοῦν τὸ ἐνώπιον τοῦ θρόνου.

3. And another angel came and stood before the altar, having a golden censer, and there was given to him much incense, that he should offer of the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar, which is before the throne of God.

Another angel, not one of the angels of vengeance but an intercessory angel, who should offer up the prayers of the saints, stood before the golden altar. Not the altar of burnt offering

on which the victims were slain (R. vi. 9), but the altar of incense. He had a golden censer. And there was given to him much incense that he should offer up the prayers of the saints on the golden altar. In the vision of the throne of God we saw the four living creatures and the four-and-twenty ancients, having vials full of odours which are the prayers of the saints (R. v. 8). Incense is the symbol of acceptable prayer. "Let my prayer be directed as incense in thy sight" (Ps. cxl. 2). Incense was offered up by the high priests of the Temple in censers (Lev. xvi. 12).

4. Καὶ ἀνέβη ὁ καπνὸς τῶν θυμιαμάτων ταῖς προσευχαῖς τῶν ἁγίων ἐκ χειρὸς τοῦ ἀγγέλου ἐνώπιον τοῦ Θεοῦ.

4. And the smoke of the incense of the prayers of the saints ascended up before God, from the hand of the angel.

This means that God was pleased and heard this prayer. It was acceptable prayer. We are not told the nature of the prayer offered up, but there has been only one prayer so far mentioned, and that is the martyrs' prayer, "How long O Lord." That prayer was not accepted at the time, as the martyrs' roll was incomplete. Reinforced now by the prayers of all the saints, "τῶν ἁγίων πάντων," seen at R. vii. 9 it is accepted. The result shows this prayer to have been the martyrs' cry for vengeance. "Will not God," said our Saviour, "revenge his Elect, who cry to him day and night, and will he have patience in their regard. I say to you that he will quickly revenge them" (Luke xviii. 7-8).

5. Καὶ εἴληφεν ὁ ἄγγελος τὸν λιβανωτόν, καὶ ἐγένετο αὐτὸν ἐκ τοῦ πυρὸς τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου καὶ ἔβαλεν εἰς τὴν γῆν, καὶ ἐγένοντο βρονταὶ καὶ φωναὶ καὶ ἀστραπαὶ καὶ σεισμός.

5. And the angel took the censer and filled it with the fire of the altar, and cast it on the earth, and there were thunders and voices and lightnings and a great earthquake.

The angel filled his censer with fire, instead of incense, and casts it down on the earth, τὴν γῆν. This action recalls that of the angel in Ezechiel who took fire from under the throne, and cast it upon Jerusalem as a symbol of its ruin (Ezech. x. 2). Fire is a symbol of suffering. "I am come to cast fire on the earth" (Luke xii. 49). Thundering and voices and lightnings

indicate the power and the wrath of God in action. The earthquake signifies the fall of Jerusalem (R. xi. 13). Before we go on, let us note that we have had the Temple of Jerusalem, its sanctuary, its altars, and its ritual, placed before us, in living symbols of things Divine. That is very strong proof that this Book was written during the existence of the Temple. It indicates common knowledge of the ritual of the Temple on the part of the readers of the Book, and places its date before the year 70.

6. Καὶ οἱ ἑπτὰ ἄγγελοι οἱ ἔχοντες τὰς ἑπτὰ σάλπιγγας ἠτοίμασαν αὐτοὺς ἵνα σαλπίσωσιν.

6. And the seven angels, who had the seven trumpets, prepared themselves to sound the trumpet.

7. Καὶ ὁ πρῶτος ἐσάλπισεν, καὶ ἐγένετο χάλαζα καὶ πῦρ μεμιγμένα ἐν αἵματι, καὶ ἐβλήθη εἰς τὴν γῆν, καὶ τὸ τρίτον τῆς γῆς κατεκάη, καὶ τὸ τρίτον τῶν δένδρων κατεκάη, καὶ πᾶς χόρτος χλωρὸς κατεκάη.

7. And the first angel sounded the trumpet, and there was made hail and fire, mingled with blood, and it was cast on the earth, and the third part of the earth was burnt up, and the third part of the trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up.

Vengeance begins. At the sound of the first trumpet the red horse of war is loosed upon the Jews. "Τῆς γῆς" stands for the inhabitants of the earth, who are of the earth, earthy, viz., the enemies of God's Church. The third part of the earth, and of the trees (extended later to the sea, the ships, the rivers, the sun, the moon, and the stars) follows the prophecy of Ezechiel (v. 2-12). Ezechiel predicted as the punishment of the Jews, that a third part should burn with fire in the midst of the city, a third part be cut in pieces with the knife, all round about, a third part die with pestilence, and be consumed with famine, and a third part scattered. "A third part" is symbolical. Here it means a great part. Its general historical accuracy will be admitted.

In this vision hail, fire and blood are mingled together, joining cause and effect. The mention of blood indicates warfare. Josephus has left us a thrilling account of the Jewish war. He was present at most of its operations, first as a Jewish general, afterwards as a prisoner of war in the Roman camp. He relates that from the beginning of the war, the Romans, day and night, continued burning cities in the plain. "So that Galilee was all

over filled with fire and blood" ("Wars," B. III. iv. 1). Next Vespasian came to Gadara and "slew all the youth, having no mercy on any age whatsoever. . . . He also set fire not only to the city itself but to all the villas and small cities that were round about it." Then he went to Jotapata "and set the engines for throwing stones and darts round about the city. . . . And stones of the weight of a talent were thrown by the engines . . . together with fire and a vast multitude of arrows" ("Wars" III. vii. 1-9). The weight of a Jewish talent was about 124 lbs. The symbols of the Seer and the descriptions of an eye-witness closely agree. So the third part of the Jewish earth was burnt, literally (see Historic Notes). And the third part of the trees, *i.e.*, the mighty men of Judæa, and all green grass, the ignorant, poor, and lowly, the growing youth of the nation, were burnt and destroyed by the *hail* of rocks and fiery darts which overwhelmed the Jews. The prophet Isaias uses the symbolism of grass in like manner. "Indeed the people is grass" (xl. 7). See 1 Peter i. 24.

8. Καὶ ὁ δεῦτερος ἄγγελος ἐσάλπισεν, καὶ ὡς ὄρος μέγα πυρὶ καίομενον ἐβλήθη εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν, καὶ ἐγένετο τὸ τρίτον τῆς θαλάσσης αἷμα.

8. And the second angel sounded the trumpet, and as it were a great mountain, burning with fire, was cast into the sea, and the third part of the sea became blood.

"As it were a great mountain"—ὡς ὄρος μέγα—means that it was not really a great mountain, but that the expression is used symbolically for a great power. Daniel foretold the greatness of Nebuchadnezzar by saying that his kingdom would become a great mountain (ii. 35; see Jer. li. 25). Mountains are put for Churches at R. vi. 14, (where see notes) and for Roman powers at R. xvi. 20, and for the Cæsars at R. xvii. 9, (where see notes). Ezechiel addresses the Princes of Israel as "Ye mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord God" (vi. 3). With history to guide us we may take the great mountain as the army of Vespasian, which, burning with the zeal of destruction, fell upon the Jewish people and slaughtered a third part of them.

The sea is a common figure of the mass of humanity and is used as such in this Book (see R. vii. 3, xii. 18, xiii. 1, xvi. 3, notes). In this verse the sea represents the mass of the Jews. And a third part became blood, indicates death by violence—bloodshed.

9. Καὶ ἀπέθανεν τὸ τρίτον τῶν κτισμάτων τῶν ἐν τῇ θαλάσσῃ, τὰ ἔχοντα ψυχάς, καὶ τὸ τρίτον τῶν πλοίων διεφθάρησαν.

9. And the third part of the creatures died, which had life in the sea, and the third part of the ships was destroyed.

The introduction of ships in connection with sea shows that the real sea is now meant, and that the maritime Jews would share the same fate as their inland brethren. One or two illustrations of this may be taken from Josephus. During the war the Jews of a seafaring type repaired to the city of Joppa and made it the headquarters of their ships. Vespasian sent a part of his army to take Joppa, seeing which the inhabitants fled to their ships.

“Now as these people of Joppa were floating about in the sea, in the morning there fell a violent wind upon them; it is called by those that sail there ‘the black north wind,’ and then dashed their ships one against another, and dashed some against the rocks, and carried many of them by force, while they strove against the opposite waves, into the main sea; for the shore was so rocky, and had so many of the enemy upon it, that they were afraid to come to land; nay, the waves rose so very high that they drowned them; nor was there any place whither they could fly, nor any way to save themselves; while they were thrust out of the sea, by the violence of the wind, if they stayed where they were, and out of the city by the violence of the Romans; and much lamentation there was when the ships were dashed one against another, and a terrible noise when they were broken to pieces; and some of the multitude that were in them were covered with the waves, and so perished, and a great many were embarrassed with shipwrecks; but some of them thought that to die by their own swords was lighter than by the sea, and so they killed themselves before they were drowned! although the greatest part of them were carried by the waves and dashed to pieces against the abrupt parts of the rocks, insomuch that the sea was bloody a long way, and the maritime parts were full of dead bodies; for the Romans came upon those that were carried to the shore, and destroyed them; and the number of the bodies that were thus thrown out of the sea was 4,200” (“Wars,” III. ix.).

So much for the Mediterranean Sea. The fisher folk and sailors of the inland seas fared no better. Josephus relates how Vespasian launched ships on the Lake of Genesareth, in pursuit of the Jewish fleet.

“As for those that endeavoured to come to an actual fight, the Romans ran many of them through with their long poles. Sometimes the Romans leaped into their ships, with swords in their hands,

and slew them; but when some of them met the vessels, the Romans caught them by the middle, and destroyed at once their ships and themselves who were taken in them. And for such as were drowning in the sea, if they lifted their heads up above the water they were either killed by the darts or caught by the vessels; but if, in the desperate case they were in, they attempted to swim to their enemies, the Romans cut off either their heads or their hands: and indeed they were destroyed after various manners everywhere, till the rest, being put to flight, were forced to get upon the land, while the vessels encompassed them about (on the sea); but as many of these were repulsed when they were getting ashore as were killed by the darts upon the lake; and the Romans leaped out of their vessels, and destroyed a great many more upon the land; one might then see the lake all bloody, and full of dead bodies, for not one of them escaped. . . . The number of the slain, including those that were killed in the city [Taricheæ] before, was 6,500" ("Wars," III., x.).

10. Καὶ ὁ τρίτος ἄγγελος ἐσάλπισεν, καὶ ἔπεσεν ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἀστὴρ μέγας καιόμενος ὡς λαμπάς, καὶ ἔπεσεν ἐπὶ τὸ τρίτον τῶν ποταμῶν καὶ ἐπὶ τὰς πηγὰς τῶν ὑδάτων.

10. And the third angel sounded the trumpet, and a great star fell from heaven, burning as it were a torch, and it fell on the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters.

We have had stars at R. i. 16, 20, where they are explained to be the Angels of the Churches. In the symbolism of the ten persecutions stars are put for great Churchmen (R. vi. 13). In the O.T. stars are symbols of potentates (Dan. viii. 10, xii. 3).

At the sound of the third trumpet a great star, or Prince, fell from heaven, or was heaven sent. Burning, "as it were a torch." "As it were" indicates a symbolic torch. And it fell upon the third part of the rivers and the fountain of waters. This is figurative language. As the sea represents the mass of humanity, so the rivers and springs which supply the sea are put for women and children who supply the sea of life. Waters in this Book are put for the living people (see R. i. 15, xvi. 5). And, "The waters which thou sawest, where the harlot sitteth, are peoples and nations and tongues" (R. xvii. 15). We must bear in mind the original metaphor, "And the angel took the censer and filled it with the fire of the altar and cast it on the earth" (R. viii. 5). To keep to the metaphor the Seer describes the burning of the earth, the trees, the green grass, and the sea. Now we have the rivers and springs to complete the tale of destruction of the Jewish people. Josephus in his book on "The Wars of the Jews" shows that in this last war women and children were slain in great numbers and without mercy.

Fire is looked upon in this Book as a symbol of God's punishment, not necessarily meaning fire (see R. xi. 5, xiv. 18, xx. 9, notes). In nature fire avoids water, but if fire represents punishments, and water the inhabitants of the earth, τῆς γῆς, the attack of fire on water is explained.

In the light of history we may take Titus, who completed the destruction of Jerusalem and its people, as the great star, heaven sent. Historians tell us that Titus was one of the best of the Roman Emperors. He was singularly imbued with the idea of his Divine mission in overthrowing the Jewish power (see Josephus "Wars," VI. i. 5, and ix. 1).

We shall see, in the next verse, that the great star, "burning as it were a torch," that is, with the ardour of victory, made the waters bitter.

11. Καὶ τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ ἀστέρος λέγεται ὁ Ἄψινθος, καὶ ἐγένετο τὸ τρίτον τῶν ὑδάτων εἰς ἄψινθον, καὶ πολλοὶ τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἀπέθανον ἐκ τῶν ὑδάτων, ὅτι ἐπικράνθησαν.

11. 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.

"And the name of the star is called Wormwood." In these words the Seer throws light upon the whole series of events. He refers to the O.T. as a key to this symbolism. The prophet Jeremias foretold "wormwood." "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, Behold I will feed this people with wormwood and give them water of gall to drink. And I will scatter them among the nations, which they and their fathers have not known, and I will send the sword after them till they be consumed" (Jer. ix. 15 f.). The Seer dare not mention by name the Roman legions and their generals. He indicates them, using the expression, "as it were a great mountain," and "a great star, as it were a torch." In common Greek usage ἄψινθος, "wormwood," is feminine, but here it is rendered ὁ ἄψινθος, masculine, to correspond with the "great star" Titus.

"And the third part of the waters became wormwood, and many men died of the waters." The prophet Jeremias says again, "They are all become unto me as Sodom, and the inhabitants thereof as Gomorrha. Therefore, thus saith the Lord of hosts to the prophets, Behold I will feed them with wormwood and will give them gall to drink, for from the prophets of Jerusalem corruption is gone forth into all the land" (Jer. xxiii. 14, 15). See Lam. iii. 15-19. The fulfilment of prophecies is in view.

12. Καὶ ὁ τέταρτος ἄγγελος ἐσάλπισεν, καὶ ἐπλήγη τὸ τρίτον τοῦ ἡλίου καὶ τὸ τρίτον τῆς σελήνης καὶ τὸ τρίτον τῶν ἀστέρων, ἵνα σκοτισθῇ τὸ τρίτον αὐτῶν καὶ ἡ ἡμέρα μὴ φάνη τὸ τρίτον αὐτῆς, καὶ ἡ νύξ ὁμοίως.

12. And the fourth angel sounded the trumpet, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars, so that the third part of them was darkened, and a third part of the day shined not, and the night in like manner.

The metaphor of the Jewish earth suffering is continued. Its light, derived from the sun, moon, and stars, is cut off, as to one-third of its intensity, both day and night. The prophet Amos foretold the sufferings of Israel in similar words: "And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord God, that the sun shall go down at mid-day, and I will make the earth dark in day of light" (viii. 9). The prophet Isaias, foretelling the destruction of Babylon, predicts that her sun, moon, and stars shall be darkened, using these symbols in a political sense (xiii. 10).

We have had the symbolism of the eclipse of the sun, and of the moon becoming as blood, at R. vi. 12, where it is explained as referring to the eclipse of the light of the Church, and of Christian bloodshed during persecution. When we come to the vials of God's wrath, poured out upon Rome, we will find similar symbolism of the sea, the rivers and fountains of water, and of darkness, used in the same sense. They are subsidiary to the horses of R. vi. 4, 5, 8.

Taken literally, these things never happened. But they symbolise events that did happen at the time of the Jewish catastrophe. According to Josephus, one John of Gischala, with his followers, made himself master of the Temple of Jerusalem during the war, and from thence carried fire and sword into the city. He turned the Temple into a sink of iniquity, deposed the high priests and appointed tools of his own in their place. He abolished prayer and sacrifice. He put to death all those who were conspicuous for wisdom and piety, even the prophets of the Lord ("Wars," IV. 3). But the Temple was the central light of the Jewish people; the high priests of the Temple were its stars; and the pious God-fearing Jews, reflecting the light of the Temple, formed the moon of the Jewish Church. All the lights were darkened during the war. At the close of the siege its lights were extinguished.

13. Καὶ εἶδον, καὶ ἤκουσα ἑνὸς ἀετοῦ πετομένου ἐν μεσουρανήματι λέγοντος φωνῇ μεγάλῃ, Οὐαὶ οὐαὶ οὐαὶ τοὺς κατοικοῦντας ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἐκ τῶν λοιπῶν φωνῶν τῆς σάλπιγγος τῶν τριῶν ἀγγέλων τῶν μελλόντων σαλπίζειν.

13. And I beheld and heard the voice of one eagle flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth, by reason of the rest of the voices of the three angels, who are yet to sound the trumpet.

The eagle symbolises a prophet who gives warning of the three coming woe trumpets. The eagle is the symbol of S. John. It would seem that the eagle voice is that of S. John himself, who proclaimed the coming woes in this Apocalypse. At R. iv. 7 the fourth living creature, the emblem of S. John, is distinguished as an "eagle flying." The symbols of the evangelists were known to S. John, whose Revelation displays complete knowledge of future events.

The eagle flies through the meridian—*μεσουρανήματι*—or highest point of the heaven, and from thence proclaims in a loud voice—*φωνῇ μεγάλῃ*—the woes of Jerusalem. *Τοὺς κατοικοῦντας ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς*—the inhabitants of the earth—is an expression applied to both Jewish and Roman enemies of the Church. We shall find both involved in the next chapter.

CHAPTER IX

1. Καὶ ὁ πέμπτος ἀγγελος ἐσάλπισεν, καὶ εἶδον ἀστέρα ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ πεπτωκότα εἰς τὴν γῆν, καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτῷ ἡ κλεῖς τοῦ φρέατος τῆς ἀβύσσου.

1. And the fifth angel sounded the trumpet, and I saw a star fall from heaven upon the earth, and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit.

The Seer saw a star—*πεπτωκότα*—"fallen" upon the earth. We have had stars as princes of the Church (R. i. 20), as princes of the world (R. viii. 10), and we shall see them as angels of heaven (R. xii. 4). A fallen star is one which has transgressed and lost its high position (see R. vi. 13). The prophet Isaias throws light on this passage. "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer . . . how art thou fallen to the earth . . . and thou saidst in thy heart . . . I will exalt my throne above the stars of God . . . but yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, into the depth of the pit" (xiv. 12-15).

Τῆς ἀβύσσου—"the bottomless pit"—is the Hades of the Ancients, a prison, or place of detention. The Beast of the Apocalypse comes from it at R. xi. 7, and xvii. 8. Satan is shut up in it and loosed out of it, at R. xx. 3.

We may take Lucifer to be the fallen star. He leads forth an army of "locusts" from the bottomless pit, and we are told at R. ix. 11 they had over them a king, the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name is, in Greek, Apollyon, "the destroyer."

"To him was given the key of the bottomless pit." The key is in the possession of God. "Behold I am living for ever and ever and have the keys of death and hell" (Hades) (R. i. 18). It "was given" to him in the sense that he was permitted by God to use the key, to carry out the designs of Providence.

2. Καὶ ἤνοιξεν τὸ φρέαρ τῆς ἀβύσσου, καὶ ἀνέβη καπνὸς ἐκ τοῦ φρέατος ὡς καπνὸς καμίνου μεγάλης, καὶ ἐσκοτισθῆ ὁ ἥλιος καὶ ὁ ἀήρ ἐκ τοῦ καπνοῦ τοῦ φρέατος.

2. And he opened the bottomless pit, and the smoke of the pit ascended as the smoke of a great furnace, and the sun and the air were darkened with the smoke of the pit.

(S. = ἐσκοτώθη.)

Lucifer opened the bottomless pit with the key, and the smoke of the pit ascended and darkened the sun and air. According to Josephus, with whose O.T. views S. John was in sympathy, the bottomless pit was a subterranean region, of perpetual darkness, in a part of which was a lake of unquenchable fire, the hell of the damned ("Concerning Hades"). When the bottomless pit was opened "the smoke of the pit ascended as the smoke of a great furnace," is realistic. "And the smoke of their torments shall ascend up for ever and ever" (R. xiv. 11).

There is a very general opinion amongst the old commentators that we have here a reference to heresy, especially the Arian heresy which denied that Christ was equal to the Father, and thereby obscured the light of Christianity. But there is no question of Christianity here. The woe trumpets are to bring woes, not on the Church, but on its enemies. The context shows that to be the position. Besides there is no evidence that this Book deals anywhere with heresy. The messages to the Seven Churches are devoted to their interior spiritual condition. The rest of the Book is taken up with the struggles of the Church and the world. Apparently heresiarchs have little part in the Revelation of S. John. They are summarily dismissed as "liars." See R. ii. 2, notes.

3. Καὶ ἐκ τοῦ καπνοῦ ἐξῆλθον ἀκρίδες εἰς τὴν γῆν, καὶ ἐδόθη αὐταῖς ἐξουσία ὡς ἔχουσιν ἐξουσίαν οἱ σκορπίοι τῆς γῆς.

3. And from the smoke of the pit there came out locusts upon the earth, and power was given to them as the scorpions of the earth have power.

We are told, in effect, that for the punishment of the Jews, the key of hell was given to Lucifer, and he was allowed, metaphorically, to loose hell upon Jerusalem. Locusts are an image of numbers in the O.T. "The Lord of hosts hath sworn by himself, saying, I will fill thee with men as with locusts, and they shall lift up a joyous shout against thee" (Jer. li. 14). Locusts are harmless to men. So "power was given to them as the scorpions of the earth have power." They became stinging locusts. "Bring the horse as the stinging locust, prepare the nations against her" (Jer. li. 27). In Ezechiel's commission to preach to the children of Israel, we read, "for thou art among unbelievers and destroyers, and thou dwellest with scorpions" (ii. 6). The torment of a scorpion's sting is excessive and prolonged local pain, a painful, but rarely fatal, form of blood-poisoning. Scorpions were generally believed to prey upon each other, as the female scorpion bites to pieces and eats the male after the honeymoon. The scorpions who were let loose upon Jerusalem were gangs of murderous and licentious robbers, one of which was headed by Simon. Josephus says that "he was of a barbarous disposition and bore great anger to this nation . . . as we may see all the woods behind despoiled of their leaves by locusts, . . . so there was nothing left behind Simon's army but a desert ("Wars," IV. ix. 7).

4. Καὶ ἐρρέθη αὐταῖς ἵνα μὴ ἀδικήσωσι τὸν χόρτον τῆς γῆς οὐδὲ πᾶν χλωρὸν οὐδὲ πᾶν δένδρον, εἰ μὴ τοὺς ἀνθρώπους οἵτινες οὐκ ἔχουσιν τὴν σφραγίδα τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐπὶ τῶν μετώπων αὐτῶν.

4. And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, nor any green thing, nor any tree; but only the men who have not the sign of God on their foreheads.

(S. has ἀδικήσουσιν, and omits the final αὐτῶν.)

In the midst of the woes of Jerusalem the Seer's concern for his "children" of the Nazarene Church induces him to comfort them again with this assurance. Terrible woes are impending. But no Christian, only those who have not the sign of God on their foreheads must be hurt. (See R. vii. 3, notes.)

5. Καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτοῖς ἵνα μὴ ἀποκτείνωσιν αὐτούς, ἀλλ' ἵνα βασανισθῆσονται μῆνας πέντε, καὶ βασανισμὸς αὐτῶν ὡς βασανισμὸς σκορπίου, ὅταν παίσῃ ἄνθρωπον.

5. And it was given to them that they should not kill them, but that they should torment them five months, and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion when he striketh a man.

The hellish locusts, who came out of the pit, were bands of robbers under John Gischala and Simon. It was not given to them to kill, in the sense of sacking Jerusalem and putting its inhabitants to the sword. That was reserved for the Romans. But from the vantage ground of the Temple, it was given to them, scorpion-like, to torture and destroy their brethren for several months. *Βασανίζειν*, Dr. Swete points out, is used for "torture," from Thucydides, downwards; and for acute pain in the O.T. and N.T.

Josephus relates in Books IV. and V. of his "Wars of the Jews," the awful sufferings of the Jews in those days. They were far more severely "tortured" by their own "brethren" than by the Romans. These things must be read in Josephus to be understood. The "zealots" treated the ordinary inhabitants of Jerusalem "without mercy and omitted no method of torment or barbarity." "They were inwardly tormented without daring to open their lips in groans" ("Wars," V. 1).

6. Καὶ ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις ἐκείναις ζητήσουσιν οἱ ἄνθρωποι τὸν θάνατον καὶ οὐ μὴ εὕρῃσουσιν αὐτόν, καὶ ἐπιθυμήσουσιν ἀποθανεῖν καὶ φεύξεται ὁ θάνατος ἀπ' αὐτῶν.

6. And in those days men shall seek death, and shall not find it, and they shall desire to die, and death shall fly from them.

(S. has *φεύγει*.)

These words represent a climax of suffering such as has seldom existed on earth. The prophet Jeremias predicted this thing for the Jewish day of reckoning. "And death shall be chosen rather than life" (viii. 3).

Giving an account of the sufferings of the Jews under the zealots, Josephus says:

"Nay, the terror was so very great, that he who survived called them that were first dead happy, as being at rest already; as did those that were under torture in the prisons.

“ But for the noblemen and the youth, they first caught them, and bound them, and shut them up in prison, and put off their slaughters, in hopes that some of them would turn over to their party; but none of them would comply with their desires, but all of them preferred death before being enrolled among such wicked wretches as acted against their own country. But this refusal of theirs brought upon them terrible torments, for they were so scourged and tormented that their bodies were not able to sustain their torments, till at length, and with difficulty, they had the favour to be slain . . . and there were 12,000 of the better sort who perished in this manner ” (“ Wars,” bk. IV. c. v.).

Instances of this kind, including wholesale suicides, might be multiplied from the pages of Josephus.

7. Καὶ τὰ ὁμοιώματα τῶν ἀκρίδων ὅμοια ἵπποις ἡτομασμένοις εἰς πόλεμον, καὶ ἐπὶ τὰς κεφαλὰς αὐτῶν ὡς στέφανοι ὅμοιοι χρυσῷ, καὶ τὰ πρόσωπα αὐτῶν ὡς πρόσωπα ἀνθρώπων.

7. And the shape of the locusts were like unto horses prepared for battle, and on their heads were as it were crowns like gold, and their faces as the faces of men.

The locust army let loose upon Jerusalem was not composed exclusively of zealots. It consisted also of Roman soldiers, who now come into view. The Seer was obliged to keep the dominant power, Rome, out of the Apocalypse. He could not therefore introduce Roman legions otherwise than by symbolism. The symbolism is from the O.T. The prophet Joel, foretelling “the day of the Lord,” wrote of the invaders, “The appearance of them is as the appearance of horses. . . . They shall leap like the noise of chariots. . . . At their presence the people shall be in grievous pain. . . . They shall enter into the city. . . . They shall climb up the houses. . . . The sun and moon are darkened, the stars have withdrawn their shining” (ii. 4-10). The Idumean zealots were driven out of their own country into Jerusalem by the Roman army, hence S. John holds Rome accountable for all the woes of the Jews. See “Historic Notes,” pp. 54, 55.

Locusts “like unto horses,” “with faces as the faces of men,” and “on their heads, as it were, crowns like gold” (*στέφανοι*, or crowns of victory), indicate an army of horse and foot, wearing brazen helmets, burnished like gold.

8. Καὶ εἶχαν τρίχας ὡς τρίχας γυναικῶν, καὶ οἱ ὀδόντες αὐτῶν ὡς λεόντων ἦσαν.

8. And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions.

Long hair refers to the Roman auxiliaries, whose warriors took great pride in their long hair. The majority of our own Sepoys in the Indian army, of many different tribes, have long hair, like women, neatly coiled up. So have the Chinese and other Eastern people. Josephus says that there was a considerable number of auxiliaries, of the Kings of Syria, with the Roman army of invasion ("Wars," III. 1, 3).

Teeth as lion's teeth is a symbol of the ferocity and strength of the locust army. This simile is taken from Joel. "For a nation is come up upon my land, strong and without number; his teeth are like the teeth of a lion" (i. 6). The fulfilment of prophecies is constantly borne in mind.

9. Καὶ εἶχον θώρακας ὡς θώρακας σιδηροῦς, καὶ ἡ φωνὴ τῶν πτερύγων αὐτῶν ὡς φωνὴ ἄρμάτων ἵππων πολλῶν τρεχόντων εἰς πόλεμον.

9. 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.

Breastplates "as it were of iron" means that they were not iron, but as hard as iron. The Roman legions, horse and foot, had breastplates of leather as hard as iron. Syrian war chariots, drawn by horses, accompanied the army, and were stationed with the cavalry on the wings. "They shall leap like the noise of chariots" (Joel ii. 5). The Seer has represented the invading force as a locust army, with faces as the faces of men, wearing brazen helmets, with breastplates like iron, with teeth as the teeth of lions, with long hair as the hair of women, active as horses and accompanied by chariots. Indications enough to enable "the brethren" to identify the locust army with the army of Vespasian. S. John's fellow-servants, both at Jerusalem and at Rome, were familiar with the appearance of Roman soldiers. For many years a Roman cohort of occupation was stationed in the fort of Antonia, overlooking the Temple. Josephus, who was with the army of invasion, says that both horse and foot-soldiers wore helmets and breastplates ("Wars," III. 5). The Seer refers his readers to the O.T., especially to Joel, for the application of this vision, and we find there prophecies of the fall of Jerusalem.

10. Καὶ ἔχουσιν οὐράς ὁμοίας σκορπίοις καὶ κέντρα ἐν ταῖς οὐραῖς αὐτῶν, ἣ ἐξουσία αὐτῶν ἀδικῆσαι τοὺς ἀνθρώπους μῆνας πέντε.

10. And they had tails like to scorpions, and stings were in their tails, and their power was to hurt men five months.

If we accept the locusts as representing the army of invasion, we must look for the stings in the rear of the army. The horrors of war are seen in the track of a conquering army—dead and wounded men abandoned to robbers, hyenas, jackals, and vultures; burning houses and plundered farms; ruined crops and vineyards; famine and pestilence; anarchy and disorder. These things lay behind, or in the tail of the army. Dr. Swete points out that “κέντρον” translated “sting” is the goad used for oxen” (*op. cit.*, p. 119). See Acts xxvi. 14.

Another prominent feature of the “tail” of a Roman army was the siege-train, engines for throwing darts, javelins, and rocks. Gibbon says of the Roman legions, “The slingers and archers skirmished in front; the auxiliaries formed the first line and were seconded or sustained by the strength of the legions; the cavalry covered the flanks, and the military engines were placed in the rear” (D. and F. c. i.). Josephus relates how these engines “goaded” the besieged Jews during the siege of Titus (“Wars,” V. 6, 2).

11. Ἐχουσιν ἐπ’ αὐτῶν βασιλέα τὸν ἄγγελον τῆς ἀβύσσου, ὄνομα αὐτῷ Ἑβραϊστί, Ἀβαδδών, καὶ ἐν τῇ Ἑλληνικῇ ὄνομα ἔχει Ἀπολλύων.

11. And they had over them a King, the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in Greek Apollyon.

S. John characteristically gives the Hebrew and Greek names of Satan. Abaddon is a Hebrew word, signifying “destruction” (Job xxvi. 6; Prov. xv. 11). Apollyon is a Greek word having the same meaning. In the opening verse of this chapter the key of the bottomless pit was given to a fallen angel; he loosed destroying forces upon Judæa; he had power over them, and his name, “the Destroyer,” connotes Lucifer.

In the Vulgate there is at the end of the above verse, “in Latin, *exterminans*.” This addition of the Latin name for “destroyer” was probably originally a marginal note by a Latin copyist.

12. Ἡ οὐαὶ ἡ μία ἀπῆλθεν, ἰδοὺ ἔρχονται ἔτι δύο οὐαὶ μετὰ ταῦτα.

12. One woe is past ; and behold there come two more woes hereafter.

(S. has ἔρχεται.)

We gather from the context and from the key reference to the prophet Joel that the woe, which is now declared to be past, referred to the civil war in Jerusalem and to the horrors of the Roman invasion. "There come two more woes hereafter" indicates further suffering of the same kind. These three woes are an echo of Joel's "Ah, ah, ah (woe, woe, woe), because the day of the Lord is at hand" (i. 15). They have an exegetical value upon each other. We assume as a matter of exegesis that the first woe refers to Jerusalem. The Seer confirms the precision of that view by indicating unmistakably that the "two more woes" occur in Jerusalem. He refers to the Temple of Jerusalem at R. xi. 1, and says of the city in which the scene of the woe is laid, "Where also their Lord was crucified" (R. xi. 8). The two more woes came hereafter as a matter of history. There was a long interval between the events just symbolised and the final siege and fall of Jerusalem. Dynastic civil wars intervened on the death of Nero and delayed the conclusion of the Jewish war.

13. Καὶ ὁ ἕκτος ἄγγελος ἐσάλπισεν, καὶ ἤκουσα φωνὴν μίαν ἐκ τῶν κεράτων τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου τοῦ χρυσοῦ τοῦ ἐνώπιον τοῦ Θεοῦ.

13. And the sixth angel sounded the trumpet, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before the eyes of God.

When the sixth seal was opened, the ten persecutions were disclosed as an interlude and after that followed an interval for the sealing of converts from Judaism. So, when the sixth trumpet is sounded, the chastisement of Rome comes into view as an interlude, and there is an interval for preparing for the Roman and final revelations. There is similarity of design here. It will be noticed that no fresh calamity happens to the Jews at the sound of the sixth trumpet. The relation of the final Jewish woes is postponed to Chapter XI., "Behold there come two more woes, 'hereafter,'" μετὰ ταῦτα (verse 12) marks a complete break in the narrative (see R. iv. 1, vii. 1 and 9, where see notes). In translation μετὰ ταῦτα is rendered, "after these things," "after this," and "hereafter." The breach in the narrative is complete, and calls for a fresh chapter.

The sixth angel gets a new mission; as we shall see in the next verse, he is sent to the Euphrates. The command comes from the four horns of the golden altar of holocausts, from under which the prayer of the martyrs was offered to God, "How long, O Lord." The altar of holocausts of the Temple had horns projecting from the four corners to keep the sacrificial victims from falling off. The time has come to show forth the punishment of Rome. The Jewish theme is an epopee, beginning with the vision of the throne of God and ending with the general judgment (R. xi. 18). It requires a vision of vengeance on Rome to complete it.

The altar is represented at R. viii. 3 as being "before the throne of God," not "before the eyes of God." This latter expression, used above, is not in the Greek. The Vulgate has "*ante oculos Dei.*"

14. Λέγοντα τῷ ἕκτῳ ἀγγέλῳ, ὁ ἔχων τὴν σάλπιγγα, Λύσον τοὺς τέσσαρας ἀγγέλους τοὺς δεδεμένους ἐπὶ τῷ ποταμῷ τῷ μεγάλῳ Εὐφράτῃ.

14. Saying to the sixth angel, who had the trumpet, Loose the four angels who are bound in the great river Euphrates.

The sixth angel, who had the trumpet, was sent off to the Euphrates, far away from Judæa, and told to loose the four angels who are bound in that river. The Euphrates was the boundary, separating the Roman from the Parthian Empires. It denoted the quarter from whence chastisement was to fall on Rome. Parthia was the solitary example, existing at that time, of a power capable of injuring Rome.

15. Καὶ ἐλύθησαν οἱ τέσσαρες ἄγγελοι οἱ ἠτοιμασμένοι εἰς τὴν ὥραν καὶ ἡμέραν καὶ μῆνα καὶ ἔνιαυτόν, ἵνα ἀποκτείνωσιν τὸ τρίτον τῶν ἀνθρώπων.

15. And the four angels were loosed, who were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to kill the third part of men.

The action of these angels is summed up in one word, to kill. They are "to kill the third part of men," the pagan or Roman third, as we shall find. The Apocalypse divides men into three classes, Christians, Jews, and pagans. The four death-dealing angels of R. vii. 1 (where see notes), are now concentrated in the river Euphrates, because the punishment of Rome is in view. The Seer draws attention to this by using, practically, the same words at R. xvi. 12, when the correspond-

ing vial—the sixth vial—looses the Kings of Parthia and Persia upon Rome, from τὸν ποταμὸν τὸν μέγαν Εὐφράτην—“that great river Euphrates.”

The Greek words εἰς τὴν ὥραν show that the angels were prepared for *the* hour, and *the* day and *the* month and *the* year, preordained for their work, which time is indefinite—ἵνα ἀποκτείνωσιν—“in order that they may kill.”

16. Καὶ ὁ ἀριθμὸς τῶν στρατευμάτων τοῦ ἵππικοῦ δυο-
μυριάδες μυριάδων ; ἤκουσα τὸν ἀριθμὸν αὐτῶν.

16. And the number of the army of horsemen was twenty thousand times ten thousand. And I heard the number of them.

(S. has δισμυριάδες.)

To keep to the local symbolism of the Euphrates, the invading army is composed of horsemen, as the Parthian and Persian armies consisted mainly of cavalry. “And I heard the number of them” shows that the Seer anticipated that the figure 200,000,000 would astonish his readers. We have foreshadowed here all Roman wars from the year 67 till the death of Totila, a period of about five hundred years. During that long time the Roman Empire was the theatre of almost constant warfare. It was invaded on all sides by barbarian hordes, who threw it down by force of numbers. Two hundred millions is a round number, a symbolic number, meant to convey to the minds of readers in the first century an army capable of overwhelming Rome, mistress of the world.

17. Καὶ οὕτως εἶδον τοὺς ἵππους ἐν τῇ ὁράσει καὶ τοὺς
καθημένους ἐπ’ αὐτῶν, ἔχοντας θώρακας πυρίνους καὶ ὑακιν-
θίνους καὶ θειώδεις ; καὶ αἱ κεφαλαὶ τῶν ἵππων ὡς κεφαλαὶ
λεόντων, καὶ ἐκ τῶν στομάτων αὐτῶν ἐκπορεύεται πῦρ καὶ
καπνὸς καὶ θεῖον.

17. And thus I saw the horses in the vision ; and they who sat on them had breastplates of fire, and hyacinth, and brimstone, and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions, and from their mouths proceeded fire and smoke and brimstone.

“And thus I saw the horses in the vision” is in the manner of one describing a vision of the past. Moreover it indicates purely visionary horses, to be taken symbolically. Θώρακας πυρίνους means breastplates of fiery hue ; ὑακινθίνους, dark red ; and θειώδεις, yellow or sulphur hued. It is a question

of colour. The Persian horsemen were protected by breast-plates and chain armour. Some few gleamed with silver and gold, but the majority wore steel or brass in different degrees of polish; most of them rusty and fiery red in colour.

But the horses had the heads of lions. The lion is the symbol of Persia, and horses with lions' heads, coming from the Euphrates, denote Persian horses. "From their mouths proceeded fire and smoke and brimstone," is a symbolic way of saying they breathed forth fire and slaughter. The great Temples of Ephesus had tinted sculptures, bas-reliefs, and frescoes, of the symbols of warfare. Horses were sometimes represented with wide expanded nostrils from which issued the hot breath or smoke of battle. The painted tombs of Marissa, in Palestine, discovered in the year 1902, contained, amongst other frescoes, a well-preserved specimen of the man-headed lion of Persia painted in yellow, red and black, showing that even in Palestine these symbols were known. Gibbon tells us that Julian the Apostate was hated by the Persians who represented him in paintings as a furious lion vomiting from his mouth, consuming fire (D. and F. c. xxiv.).

The extraordinary literary finesse with which the Seer explains the real meaning of this vision by weaving into it key words, such as the "great river Euphrates, horsemen, plagues, idolaters, and sorcerers," all denoting Rome, is very remarkable.

18. Ἀπὸ τῶν τριῶν πληγῶν τούτων ἀπεκτάνθησαν τὸ τρίτον τῶν ἀνθρώπων, ἐκ τοῦ πυρὸς καὶ τοῦ καπνοῦ καὶ τοῦ θείου, τοῦ ἐκπορευομένου ἐκ τῶν στόματων αὐτῶν.

18. And by these three plagues was slain the third part of men, by the fire and by the smoke and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths.

The expression *πληγῶν*—"plagues"—identifies these sufferings with those poured out of the vials of God's wrath upon Rome, called the seven plagues at R. xv. 1, 6, 8. Here they are summarised under the symbolism of fire, the generic symbolism of suffering. Smoke comes from fire, and *θείου*—"brimstone," or sulphur—increases fire. These three figures are put as symbols of all the plagues which affected the Roman Empire, subsequently displayed in the Roman theme.

19. Ἡ γὰρ ἐξουσία τῶν ἵππων ἐν τῷ στόματι αὐτῶν ἔστιν καὶ ἐν ταῖς οὐραῖς αὐτῶν, αἱ γὰρ οὐραὶ αὐτῶν ὅμοιαι ὄφεσιν, ἔχουσαι κεφαλάς, καὶ ἐν αὐταῖς ἀδικοῦσιν.

19. For the power of the horses is in their mouths and in their tails ; for their tails are like to serpents, having heads, and with them they hurt.

The barbarian hordes, who overran the Roman Empire, destroyed all before them. They laid waste the fairest provinces with fire and sword. This is the power of their mouths. But "their tails were like serpents, having heads, and with them they hurt." We have seen at R. ix. 10 that the locust army of Roman invaders of Judæa "had tails like unto scorpions, and stings were in their tails, and their power was to hurt man." The barbarian armies who chastised Rome had tails like serpents' heads, therefore more venomous than scorpion stings, and the misery and devastation left behind them was proportionately greater. Attila boasted that grass never grew again where his horses trod !

20. Καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ τῶν ἀνθρώπων, οἳ οὐκ ἀπεκτάνθησαν ἐν ταῖς πληγαῖς ταύταις, οὐδὲ μετενόησαν ἐκ τῶν ἔργων τῶν χειρῶν αὐτῶν, ἵνα μὴ προσκυνήσουσιν τὰ δαιμόνια καὶ τὰ εἰδῶλα τὰ χρυσα καὶ τὰ ἀργυρᾶ καὶ τὰ χαλκᾶ καὶ τὰ λίθινα καὶ τὰ ξύλινα, ἃ οὔτε βλέπειν δύνανται οὔτε ἀκούειν οὔτε περιπατεῖν.

20. And the rest of the men who were not slain by these plagues did not do penance for the work of their hands, that they should not adore devils, and idols of gold and silver and brass and stone and wood, which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk.

The repetition of the word "plagues" in the sense of punishments indicates the chastisement of Rome.

The Seer identifies these men who are killed by the cavalry of the Euphrates as pagans. They are not Christians. They are not Jews. They belong to the third or pagan division of men. They are idolaters, and worship "idols of gold and silver and brass and stone and wood, which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk." And they adored "devils." S. Paul says, "But the things which the heathen sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God" (1 Cor. x. 20). "And they shall no more sacrifice their victims to devils" (Lev. xvii. 7). "They sacrificed to devils, and not to God, to gods whom they knew

not" (Deut. xxxii. 17). This passage connotes with one in the Roman theme. "And they adored the dragon" (R. xiii. 4). The same verb, *προσκύνέω* to prostrate oneself, or worship, is used in both places. For the wording of verse 20 above, see Dan. v. 23.

"The rest of the men who were not slain." Here, *οἱ λοιποὶ*, "the rest," has a very wide signification.

21. Καὶ οὐ μετενόησαν ἐκ τῶν φόνων αὐτῶν οὔτε ἐκ τῶν φαρμακιῶν αὐτῶν οὔτε ἐκ τῆς πορνείας αὐτῶν οὔτε ἐκ τῶν κλεμμάτων αὐτῶν.

21. Neither have they done penance for their murders, nor for their sorceries, nor for their fornication, nor for their thefts.

All these things were pre-eminently characteristic of pagan Rome. But one especially, *φαρμακιῶν*—"sorceries"—has an explanatory value. It is made one of the counts of the indictment against Rome in this Book. "All the nations have been deceived by thy sorceries" (R. xviii. 23). We have it again as one of the chief sins, deserving hell, "sorcerers and idolaters" (R. xxi. 8). And the chief sinners excluded from heaven are "sorcerers, the unchaste, murderers, and those that serve idols" (R. xxii. 15). One of the principal objects of the Book was to keep Christians from falling into Cæsar worship, with which these sins are identified.

Even Rome might have been saved by repentance; for that is the meaning of "*μετενόησαν*" in v. 20, 21, above: multitudes were saved by conversion and repentance, but pagan Rome was blotted out.

The end of the Jewish theme is in sight. The seven sealed book is all but finished; the seventh and last trumpet alone remains. The Seer looks forward to the Roman theme, which follows. It requires a medium of presentation. This sixth-trumpet-interval, with its Roman visions, is used to introduce the coming Roman theme by means of a new book. The new book contains the history of the Church and the World to the end of time.

CHAPTER X

1. Καὶ εἶδον ἄλλον ἄγγελον ἰσχυρὸν καταβαίνοντα ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, περιβεβλημένον νεφέλην, καὶ ἡ ἴρις ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς αὐτοῦ, καὶ τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ ὡς ὁ ἥλιος, καὶ οἱ πόδες αὐτοῦ ὡς στύλοι πυρός.

1. And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud, and a rainbow upon his head, and his face was as the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire.

(S. = τὴν κεφαλῆν.)

Another angel—*ἄλλον ἄγγελον*—means different from the trumpet angel. He is *ἰσχυρὸν*—"mighty." He is "clothed with a cloud" (see R. i. 7); "and a rainbow on his head" (see R. iv. 3); and his face as the sun (see R. i. 16); and his feet as pillars of fire (see R. i. 15). He reflects, as it were, some of the attributes of the Divinity. But the resemblance stops there. The *ἄγγελον ἰσχυρὸν* appeared at R. v. 2, and called out, "Who is worthy to open the book." He appears again at R. xviii. 1 "*καταβαίνοντα ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ*," as above, and proclaims the fall of Babylon. And again, R. xviii. 21, when he casts a stone, the size of a millstone, into the sea, as a sign of the disappearance of ancient Rome.

2. Καὶ ἔχων ἐν τῇ χειρὶ αὐτοῦ βίβλαρίδιον ἠνεωγμένον, καὶ ἔθηκεν τὸν πόδα αὐτοῦ τὸν δεξιὸν ἐπὶ τῆς θαλάσσης, τὸν δὲ εὐώνυμον ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς.

2. And he had in his hand a little book open, and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot upon the land.

The angel had in his hand a small open papyrus manuscript, in strong contrast with the seven sealed book, which was in the hands of God (R. v. 1). This little book contained the revelation of the overthrow of the Empire, hence the mighty angel sets his feet upon sea and land to proclaim God's power over the whole Empire. The book is called *βίβλαρίδιον*—"a little book"—because the affairs of the pagan empire do not rank in importance with those of the chosen people, and because the little book is contained in the larger one. It comes out of the seventh seal, with the sixth trumpet. It is an "open book" because the revelation as to Rome was opened to the reader in the vision of horsemen from the Euphrates in the last chapter.

3. Καὶ ἔκραξεν φωνῇ μεγάλῃ ὡσπερ λέων μυκᾶται, καὶ ὅτε ἔκραξεν, ἐλάλησαν αἱ ἑπτὰ βρονταὶ τὰς ἑαυτῶν φωνάς.

3. And he cried out with a loud voice as when a lion roareth, and when he had cried out seven thunders uttered their voices.

The voice of the mighty angel is like that of a lion in strength. But *μυκᾶται* denotes the lowing of an ox. His voice is like the lion's roar, deprived of its harshness and mellowed. In answer to his voice, seven thunders uttered their voices. *Ἐλάλησαν*, from *λαλέω*, signifies intelligible speech.

Thunder was put as a symbol of the destruction of Sodom by Josephus (see notes to vi. 6). It is put in this Revelation as a symbol of the fall of Jerusalem at R. xi. 19, and of the fall of Rome at R. xvi. 18. It is the symbol of a great catastrophe affecting a world power at war with the Church, or the punishments of God upon a wicked city, people, or country. The seven thunders are not to be taken literally as meaning only seven. Seven is used as a noun of multitude in the Apocalypse and signifies completeness. The reference is to the future judgments of God upon the whole world down to the end of time; upon the World at war with the Church. Some thunders like the French Revolution and the Napoleonic wars have come and gone. The reader can supply others from his knowledge of history. Others are still in the womb of the future. All, little and great, were revealed to the Seer.

4. Καὶ ὅτε ἐλάλησαν αἱ ἑπτὰ βρονταὶ ἤμελλον γράφειν· καὶ ἤκουσα φωνὴν ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ λέγουσαν Σφράγισον ἃ ἐλάλησαν αἱ ἑπτὰ βρονταὶ καὶ μὴ αὐτὰ γράψῃς.

4. And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write, and I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, Seal up the things which the seven thunders have spoken, and write them not.

The seven thunders spoke an intelligible language to S. John. He understood, and was about to write an account of these things, when he heard a voice from heaven ordering him not to divulge them. At the end of Revelation S. John is commanded, "Seal not the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand" (R. xxii. 10). That prophecy included a full account of the fall of Rome, and a glance at the thousand years of the middle ages. But the period from the end of the thousand years (R. xx. 7) to the day of judgment (R. xx. 9-11) is dismissed in twelve lines, and it is probably to that period

that the seven thunders belong. That period began about the year fifteen hundred and has already lasted four hundred years.

This passage shows that S. John had very complete knowledge of the future, and that he wrote down his account after, and not during, the visions. The long revelation of future events, contained in the seven thunders, was finished before he took up his pen to write.

The command not to write these things came from God. Heaven is the throne of God.

5. Καὶ ὁ ἄγγελος, ὃν εἶδον ἐστῶτα ἐπὶ τῆς θαλάσσης καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, ἤρην τὴν χεῖρα αὐτοῦ τὴν δεξιὰν εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν.

5. And the angel whom I saw standing upon the sea and upon the land, lifted up his right hand to heaven.

6. Καὶ ὤμοσεν ἐν τῷ ζῶντι εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων, ὃς ἔκτισεν τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὰ ἐν αὐτῷ καὶ τὴν γῆν καὶ τὰ ἐν αὐτῇ καὶ τὴν θάλασσαν καὶ τὰ ἐν αὐτῇ, ὅτι χρόνος οὐκέτι ἔσται.

6. And he swore by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven and the things which are therein, and the earth and the things which are therein, and the sea and the things which are therein, that time shall be no more.

The key to this passage is found in Daniel's prophecy of the fall of Jerusalem. "And I heard the man that was clothed in linen, that stood upon the waters of the river, when he had lifted up his right hand and his left hand to heaven, and had sworn by him that liveth for ever, that it should be unto a time and times, and half a time. And when the scattering of the band of the holy people shall be accomplished, all these things shall be finished" (xii. 7). A "time," one year, and "times," two years, and "half a time," half a year, make three and a half years, the duration of the Jewish war. The dispersal of the Jews is treated as the final woe. The Jewish theme is again in view. The angel swears by the creator of all things that *χρόνος οὐκέτι ἔσται*, "there shall no more be any interval of time," i.e., "no further delay."

7. Ἄλλ' ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις τῆς φωνῆς τοῦ ἑβδόμου ἀγγέλου, ὅταν μέλλῃ σαλπίζειν, καὶ ἐτελέσθῃ τὸ μυστήριον τοῦ Θεοῦ, ὡς εὐηγγέλισεν τοὺς ἑαυτοῦ δούλους τοὺς προφῆτας.

7. But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound the trumpet, the mystery of God shall be finished as he hath declared by his servants the prophets.

The seventh angel sounds his trumpet in the next chapter; and when he does so the chorus in heaven explains, "The kingdom of this world is become our Lord's and his Christ's, and he shall reign for ever and ever" (R. xi. 15). This is the mystery of God as He has declared by His servants, the prophets. They foretold the abolition of the religious supremacy of the Jews in favour of a new kingdom, the kingdom of Christ. The prophet Daniel says, concerning the fourth beast, the Roman power, "But the saints of the most high God shall take the kingdom, and they shall possess the kingdom for ever and ever" (vii. 18, 27). Our Lord preached the Gospel of the kingdom (Matt. iv. 23). He said, "There are some standing here that shall not taste death till they see the kingdom of God" (Luke ix. 27). This referred apparently to the fall of the Temple and to S. John. See Jhn. xxi. 22. S. John refers to the kingdom in this Revelation, at i. 6, 9, xii. 10. The mystery of God shall be finished—*ἐτελέσθῃ τὸ μυστήριον*—there shall be no more delay. The seventh trumpet synchronises with the destruction of the Temple of Jerusalem, "For these are the days of vengeance that all things may be fulfilled that are written" (Luke xxi. 20-22).

8. Καὶ ἡ φωνὴ ἣν ἤκουσα ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, πάλιν λαλοῦσαν μετ' ἐμοῦ καὶ λέγουσαν Ὑπαγε λάβε τὸ βιβλίον τὸ ἠνεωγμένον ἐν τῇ χειρὶ τοῦ ἀγγέλου τοῦ ἐστῶτος ἐπὶ τῆς θαλάσσης καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς.

8. And I heard a voice from heaven again speaking to me and saying, Go and take the book that is open from the hand of the angel standing upon the sea and upon the land.

The Seer heard the voice of God again. He commanded him to take the open book "from the hand of the angel," not even qualifying the latter now as a mighty angel.

9. Καὶ ἀπῆλθον πρὸς τὸν ἄγγελον, λέγων αὐτῷ, δούναί μοι τό βιβλαρίδιον. Καὶ λέγει μοι, Λάβε καὶ κατάφαγε αὐτό, καὶ πικρανεῖ σου τὴν κοιλίαν, ἀλλ' ἐν τῷ στόματί σου ἔσται γλυκὺ ὡς μέλι.

9. And I went to the angel, saying unto him that he should give me the book. And he said to me, Take the book and devour it, and it shall make thy belly bitter, but in thy mouth it shall be sweet as honey.

(S. = ἀπῆλθα.)

The Seer obeyed the command; and the angel said, "Take the book." There was no question of worthiness. The little open book is treated very differently from the seven-sealed book. The angel tells him to devour it, not literally, but metaphorically. To devour a book and digest its contents are common expressions. The prophet Jeremiah says of the words of the Lord, "Thy words were found and I did eat them" (xv. 16). The key to this symbolism is found in Ezechiel, "And I looked and behold a hand was sent to me wherein was a book rolled up, and he spread it before me, and it was written within and without; and there were written in it lamentations and canticles and woe. . . . And he said to me, Son of man, eat all that thou shalt find, eat this book, and go speak to the children of Israel. And I opened my mouth and he caused me to eat that book. . . . And he said to me, Son of man, thy belly shall eat, and thy bowels shall be filled with this book, which I give thee. And I did eat it, and it was sweet as honey in my mouth" (ii. 9, iii. 1-3). The Seer adopts this symbolic method of conveying his Revelation of the fall of the Temple to the servants of God.

As regards the Roman theme, later on the Seer is going to give us, in the shape of visions, the results of his fully digested knowledge of the future, now acquired. That fact, and his knowledge of the seven thunders, which he was prepared to write down, confirm the view that the composition of the greater part of the Book is his own, though inspired by God.

10. Καὶ ἔλαβον τὸ βιβλίον ἐκ τῆς χειρὸς τοῦ ἀγγέλου καὶ κατέφαγον αὐτό, καὶ ἦν ἐν τῷ στόματί μου ὡς μέλι γλυκὺ· καὶ ὅτε ἔφαγον αὐτό, ἐπικράνθη ἡ κοιλία μου.

10. And I took the book from the hands of the angel, and devoured it; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey, and when I had devoured it, my belly was bitter.

(S. = βιβλαρίδιον = "little book"—Vg. = librum.)

The little open book has a double significance in this connection. On the one hand it affords the matter for a future

revelation concerning the Church and the Gentile world. On the other, by its connection with Ezechiel, it draws attention to the coming end of the Jewish dispensation, and paves the way for its narration in the next chapter. Accordingly in the next verse we are apprised of a coming cosmopolitan revelation; whereas the present verse points to the downfall of Judæa.

The prophecy contained in the book "devoured" by Ezechiel related to the woes of Jerusalem. All are ordered to be slain who are not marked on their foreheads with the letter tau (T). The reference to Ezechiel is opportune since it directs attention especially to the siege of Jerusalem. "And thou shalt turn thy face to the siege of Jerusalem, and thy arm shall be stretched out, and thou shalt prophesy against it" (Ezech. iv. 7).

II. Καὶ λέγει μοι Δεῖ σε πάλιν προφητεῦσαι ἐπὶ λαοῖς καὶ ἔθνεσιν καὶ γλώσσαις καὶ βασιλεῦσιν πολλοῖς.

II. And he said to me, Thou must prophesy again to many nations and peoples and tongues and kings.

(S. = λέγουσίν.)

A new commission to prophesy is given to the Seer.

Professor M. Stuart points out that ἐπὶ λαοῖς κ.τ.λ. means *with respect to* many nations and peoples and tongues and kings. We find, accordingly, reference to many nations, kings, and peoples in the Roman theme, which opens at R. xii. 1.

CHAPTER XI

I. Καὶ ἐδόθη μοι κάλαμος ὅμοιος ῥάβδῳ, λέγων. Ἔγειρε καὶ μέτρησον τὸν ναὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ τὸ θυσιαστήριον καὶ τοὺς προσκυνούοντας ἐν αὐτῷ.

I. And there was given to me a reed like unto a rod, and it was said to me, Arise and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that adore it.

Although this sentence begins with the word Καὶ, "and," it is in no way connected with the previous sentence. Καὶ is often used by the Seer to introduce a fresh train of ideas, as at R. xii. 1, xiii. 1, xiv. 1, xv. 1, xvi. 1, xvii. 1, xviii. 1, xx. 1, xxi. 1, xxii. 1. On the other hand καὶ connects with the sixth trumpet, from which this verse is separated by an interlude. The Seer takes us back to the siege of Jerusalem and resumes the Revelation of the Jewish catastrophe at the point at which

he broke off at R. ix. 12, "and behold there come two more woes hereafter." These two woes come in this chapter, which is devoted to a revelation of the last days of Jerusalem.

The order to measure the Temple comes from God. Prof. M. Stuart points out that the Hebrew word used for rod, in Ps. lxxiv. 2, Jer. x. 16, and li. 19, means a measuring rod; and that the Septuagint translates it *ῥάβδος*, in more than twenty-five places (*op. cit.*, vii. 216). The Seer was told to rise—"Ἐγειρε"—as in the Psalms, "rousing to action," and measure the Temple of God. *Τὸν ναὸν* refers to the Sanctuary of the Temple. Priests only could enter the *ναός*. The altar—"τὸ θυσιαστήριον"—we may take to be the altar of burnt offerings which stood in the inner court of the Temple.

"Measure . . . them that adore it." Worshipers are counted, not measured. The expression is used in token of symbolism. Hebrew Christians were safe-guarded from the punishments of the Jews by the sign of baptism on their foreheads. So now, before the destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple, the Nazarene Church, the true *ναός* or sanctuary of the Lord, is measured off to a place of safety.

The measuring rod occurs in Ezechiel xii. 3, where it refers to the Temple of Jerusalem.

2. Καὶ τὴν αὐλὴν τὴν ἔξωθεν τοῦ ναοῦ ἔκβαλε ἔξω καὶ μὴ αὐτὴν μετρήσης, ὅτι ἐδόθη τοῖς ἔθνεσιν, καὶ τὴν πόλιν τὴν ἁγίαν πατήσουσιν μῆνας τεσσεράκοντα δύο.

2. But the court which is without the temple cast out and measure it not, because it is given to the Gentiles; and the holy city they shall tread under foot forty-two months.

(S. = ἔξωθεν.)

The outer court of the Temple is put for the false Jews, who slew their Messiah. "Measure it not." Leave it open to the Gentiles. *Τοῖς ἔθνεσιν* are neither Jews nor Christians. They are pagan Romans, the besiegers of Jerusalem. The "holy city" was one of the synonyms of Jerusalem, (Is. xlvi. 2; Matt. xxvii. 53). "Then the devil took him up into the holy city, and set him upon the pinnacle of the temple" (Matt. iv. 5). "Tread under foot," *πατήσουσιν*, connects with the Gospel of S. Luke. "And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captives into all nations; and Jerusalem shall be trodden down by the Gentiles (*πατουμένη ὑπὸ ἔθνων*), till the times of the nations be fulfilled" (Luke xxi. 24).

The Seer has the fall of Jerusalem in view, and limits the

period to forty-two months, or three and a half years, the duration of the Jewish war. Jerusalem is put for the whole of Judæa, as commonly in the O.T. Compare with the prophecy of Daniel (R. xii. 6). The Nazarene Church, idealised as a woman, is shown in the next chapter as preserved by God from the dragon for 1,260 days=three and a half years (R. xii. 6).

3. Καὶ δώσω τοῖς δυσὶν μάρτυσίν μου, καὶ προφητεύσουσιν ἡμέρας χιλίας διακοσίας ἐξήκοντα περιβεβλημένοι σάκκουσ.

3. And I will give unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth.

Here enter two witnesses, who have been a puzzle to exegetes from the beginning. This new feature is introduced by the word, Καὶ, "and." "My two witnesses"—*μάρτυσίν μου*—remind us of Antipas—"ὁ μάρτυς μου"—(R. ii. 13). *Μάρτυς* is put in the N.T. for a Christian martyr. The word is found inscribed over certain loculi in the Catacombs, denoting a martyr's resting-place. "My two witnesses" are presently martyred in Jerusalem (R. xi. 7). The speaker is evidently God. "I will give" relates to their prophetic mission of 1,260 days. *Προφητεύσουσιν*, is not limited to predicting. A prophet preached the word of God, was the mouthpiece of God. The period of 1,260 days is the same as the forty-two months in which "the Gentiles shall tread the holy city under foot." It is the time of the Jewish war. The two witnesses are wrapped round—*περιβεβλημένοι*—in sackcloth, a touch of local colouring distinctive of the mourning of the Jews in the first century.

We gather that two very important witnesses of God were present in Jerusalem at the time of the war and made a last, and, as we shall see, an extraordinary effort to convert the Jews. Some commentators say that these events will take place in the last days, when Moses and Elias will appear in Jerusalem, and actively oppose an anthropomorphic Antichrist, enthroned in that city. The objections to that view are at least threefold. First, there is no sign of an anthropomorphic Antichrist, either in this Book or in any other Scripture. Second, Jerusalem will never recover its fall. Third, the context does not warrant the transfer of these events from the year 70 to the end of the world. According to the Epistles of S. John, who is the only sacred writer who mentions Antichrist, Antichrist is a movement, and not a man. The modern anthropomorphic Antichrist

tradition is medieval in its origin, and is made up of texts from the prophecy of Daniel, from S. Paul's Epistles to the Thessalonians, and from the Apocalypse.

The Prophet Daniel referred to "the abomination of desolation" standing in the holy place in his predictions regarding the fall of Jerusalem (ix. 27). Eusebius, the ecclesiastical historian, voicing the tradition of the early Church, says of the siege of Jerusalem, "The abomination of desolation, according to the prophet's declaration, stood in the very temple of God" (H. E. iii. 5). Our Lord said of the fall of the Temple, "When therefore you shall see the abomination of desolation, which was spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place, he that readeth let him understand. Then they that are in Judæa let them flee to the mountains" (Matt. xxiv. 15, 16).

In S. Paul's voluminous writings there is no mention of Antichrist. Some cryptic references of his to "the man of sin," . . . "the son of perdition who opposeth and is lifted up above all that is called God, or that is worshipped so that he sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself as if he were God" (2 Thess. ii. 3, 4), have been taken to refer to Antichrist, chiefly because they are cryptic; as if S. Paul was afraid to mention Antichrist! He would have written about Antichrist as fearlessly as S. John, if he had Antichrist in view. There was absolutely nothing to hinder him from doing so. But if he had the Divine Claudius in view, and referred to Nero as the man of sin who should come first, he must symbolise them. His references were cryptic because, like S. John's in the Apocalypse, they were political and referred to the reigning power. S. John Chrysostom remarked that S. Paul had the Roman Empire in view when he penned his lines to the Thessalonians. S. Paul expected the Parousia, or second coming of Christ, to synchronise with the fall of Jerusalem, and he saw the signs of the gathering storm. As he wrote to the Corinthians, "We know in part and we prophesy in part" (1 Cor. xiii. 9). He predicted that Nero, the man of sin, raised to the altar, would come first. Mgr. Le Camus, Bishop of La Rochelle, whose book "L'Œuvre des Apôtres" has the approval of Pope Pius X., says, "All attempts to explain away Paul's illusion concerning the nearness of the Parousia are both superfluous and desperate" (*op. cit.*, vii. 235).

Again, Jerusalem will never regain its former greatness. "And Jerusalem shall be trodden down by the Gentiles till the times of the nations be fulfilled" (Luke xxi. 24). That is till the end of the world. "And the desolation shall continue even to the consummation and the end" (Dan. ix. 27). John Henry Newman wrote, "But again the Jewish Temple was confess-

edly the *centre* of Jewish worship and polity; to rebuild the Temple was to establish the Jews, *as Jews*, in their own land, an event which, if prophecy is sure, never is to be" ("Essays on Miracles," p. 342).

There is no mention of Antichrist in the Revelation of S. John, nor is there any vision which can be construed into his likeness. The eschatological teaching of Revelation is opposed to the anthropomorphic Antichrist idea. We have in the Church of Laodicea a picture of the last age of the Church of Christ, and in Chapter xx. a picture of its final struggles with the world. In neither place is there the least hint of a coming Antichrist. War, famine, pestilence, death, and persecution, kept the world and the chosen people in order until the coming of the Son of man; so, we may reasonably suppose, they will suffice to keep the world and the Church in order till the second coming. Revelation points to that conclusion. The agencies to be employed by Christ in dealing with mankind are marshalled forth in Chapter vi. of the Book. The four living creatures call our particular attention to them. They are the red horse of war, the black horse of famine, the pale horse of pestilence; Death and Hades following after.

The context does not warrant the transfer of these events to the last days. The last days in this Revelation are well marked as the judgment days.

4. Οὗτοί εἰσιν αἱ δύο ἐλαῖαι καὶ αἱ δύο λυχρίαὶ αἱ ἐνώπιον τοῦ κυρίου τῆς γῆς ἑστῶτες.

4. These are the two olive trees and the two candlesticks, that stand before the Lord of the earth.

Here the two witnesses are likened to symbols known to the servants of God. We find them in the prophecy of Zacharias. "What are these two olive trees upon the right side of the candlestick and upon the left side thereof?" And he said, "These are the two sons of oil who stand before the Lord of the whole earth" (Zach. iv. 11, 14). These two were Jesus, the High Priest, and Zorobabel, two Jews, acceptable to the Lord, symbolised as sources of light, feeding the lamp of the tabernacle with oil. Their mission was to build up the Temple. Here the mission of the two witnesses is to save the Jews, as it were a living Temple.

5. Καὶ εἴ τις αὐτοὺς θέλει ἀδικῆσαι, πῦρ ἐκπορεύεται ἐκ τοῦ στόματος αὐτῶν καὶ κατεσθίει τοὺς ἐχθροὺς αὐτῶν. καὶ εἴ τις θελήσῃ αὐτοὺς ἀδικῆσαι, οὕτως, δεῖ αὐτὸν ἀποκτανθῆναι.

5. And if any man would hurt them, fire shall come out of their mouths and shall devour their enemies; and if any man would hurt them, in this manner must he be slain.

Fire is the symbol of punishment. "Thus saith the Lord, the God of hosts: Because you have spoken this word, behold I will make my words in thy mouth as fire, and this people as wood, and it shall devour them" (Jer. v. 14). The two witnesses shall have God-given power to destroy their assailants. Many perished by fire in the last days of Jerusalem, as we learn from Josephus. But their power was not limited to material fire. It is amplified in the next sentence. They had power to control the forces of nature, like the prophets of the Old Law.

6. Οὗτοι ἔχουσιν ἐξουσίαν κλείσαι τὸν οὐρανόν, ἵνα μὴ ὑετὸς βρέχῃ τὰς ἡμέρας τῆς προφητείας αὐτῶν, καὶ ἐξουσίαν ἔχουσιν ἐπὶ τῶν ὑδάτων στρέφειν αὐτὰ εἰς αἷμα καὶ πατάξαι τὴν γῆν ἐν πάσῃ πληγῇ ὅσάκις ἐὰν θελήσωσιν.

6. These have power to shut heaven that it rain not in the days of their prophecy; and they have power over waters to turn them into blood, and to strike the earth with all plagues, as often as they will.

(S. = τὴν ἐξουσίαν.)

These passages recall to mind Moses and Elias. Moses said, "Behold I will strike with the rod that is in my hand the water of the river and it shall be turned into blood" (Exod. vii. 17). And Elias the Thesbite said, "There shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to the words of my mouth" (3 Kings xvii. 1). The two witnesses are thus compared, by the Seer, with the two great witnesses of God in the O.T., Moses and Elias. This is a measure of their dignity and importance. Their power is "in the days of their prophecy," viz. the 1,260 days of the Jewish war. We have seen that waters symbolise people. To turn waters into blood is to cause the bloodshed of strife. To strike the earth with all plagues, refers here to the Jewish earth, and is reminiscent of the plagues of Egypt. We shall find Jerusalem presently called Egypt.

7. Καὶ ὅταν τελέσωσιν τὴν μαρτυρίαν αὐτῶν, τὸ θηρίον τὸ αναβαίνειν ἐκ τῆς ἀβύσσου ποιήσει μετ' αὐτῶν πόλεμον καὶ νικήσει αὐτοὺς καὶ ἀποκτενεῖ αὐτούς.

7. And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the abyss, shall make war against them, and shall overcome them and kill them.

“The beast that ascendeth out of the abyss” has the article τὸ prefixed = τὸ θηρίον, which shows that it was known to the servants of God. Daniel’s fourth beast was known to refer to the Roman Empire. In the Roman theme of the Apocalypse the beast is used by S. John as a symbol of Nero. “He that hath understanding let him compute the number of the beast (τοῦ θηρίου), for it is the number of a man, and his number is six hundred sixty six” (R. xiii. 18). The superstition of Nero’s death and reincarnation from the abyss is in view. “And power was given to it (the Beast) to act forty-two months” (R. xiii. 5). This period corresponds with the thousand two hundred and sixty days, during which the two witnesses shall prophesy (R. xi. 3). A passage in the Roman theme refers Nero to the abyss. “The beast which thou sawest, was, and is not, and shall come up out of the abyss (τῆς ἀβύσσου) and go into destruction” (R. xvii. 8). The wording τὸ θηρίον . . . αναβαίνειν ἐκ τῆς ἀβύσσου, is so like the above that it may have an exegetical value. That is a part of S. John’s system of conveying his esoteric meaning to his readers. Note that “prophecy” in R. xi. 3, 6 is turned into μαρτυρίαν = “testimony,” in the above verse, which relates to the death of the witnesses. They are ranked with the martyrs. When they shall have finished their testimony—τὴν μαρτυρίαν—they are slain by the beast, Nero. Not directly, but indirectly, as one of the results of his war. Nero is held accountable for the Jewish war and its consequences.

Τῆς ἀβύσσου, translated “the abyss,” above, is translated “the bottomless pit” in the parallel passage at R. xvii. 8. We have to go back to the Greek in some cases to find the correspondence of one verse with another.

8. Καὶ τὸ πτώμα αὐτῶν ἐπὶ τῆς πλατείας τῆς πόλεως τῆς μεγάλης, ἣτις καλεῖται πνευματικῶς Σόδομα καὶ Αἴγυπτος, ὅπου καὶ ὁ κύριος αὐτῶν ἐσταυρώθη.

8. And their bodies shall lie in the streets of the great city which is called, spiritually, Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified.

Their dead bodies lie exposed in the streets of Jerusalem. S. John takes care that we shall make no mistake about the

place. He calls it a great city. It had many titles to greatness. There were three million inhabitants in it at the time of the siege. He does not call it the holy city, as at R. xi. 2, for he identifies it otherwise. Spiritually, it is called "Sodom and Egypt." The prophet Isaias, with an eye to the days of its punishment, apostrophises Jerusalem as Sodom: "Hear the word of the Lord ye rulers of Sodom" (i. 10). The prophet Jeremias does the same (xxiii. 14). So does Ezechiel xvi. 46. In Ezechiel xxiii. 21, 27, Jerusalem is compared to Egypt. But to make it quite clear, we are told, "Where also their Lord was crucified." Jesus Christ was their Lord, and He was crucified in Jerusalem. The importance of this statement from an exegetical point of view is very great. We have been hitherto interpreting symbols only, and they have led us to the fall of Jerusalem. We have assumed that the two witnesses testified in Jerusalem. Now we know that to be the case. Moreover, as Jesus Christ was their Lord, the two witnesses were Christians; *μάρτυσίν μου* (R. xi. 3). The bodies of the two witnesses left exposed were treated with the utmost disrespect; for we know the Jewish people were very solicitous about the burial of their dead. See Gen. xxiii. 4; Ecc. vi. 3; Isaias xxii. 16.

9. Καὶ βλέπουσιν ἐκ τῶν λαῶν καὶ φυλῶν καὶ γλωσσῶν καὶ ἐθνῶν τὸ πτώμα αὐτῶν ἡμέρας τρεῖς καὶ ἡμισυ, καὶ τὰ πτώματα αὐτῶν οὐκ ἀφίουσιν τεθῆναι εἰς μνήμα.

9. And they of the tribes and people and tongues and nations, shall see their bodies for three days and a half, and shall not suffer their bodies to be laid in sepulchre.

Many tribes and nations were at that time in Jerusalem King Agrippa I. wrote to the Emperor Caius:

"Jerusalem is the metropolis not only of Judæa, but of very many lands, on account of the colonies which, on various occasions, it has sent out into the adjoining countries of Egypt, Phœnicia, Syria, Cœlesyria, and into the more remote Pamphylia, Cilicia, the greater part of Asia Minor as far as Bithynia, and the remotest parts of Pontus; likewise into Europe, Thessaly, Bœotia, Macedonia, Ætolia, Attica, Argos, Corinth, most parts (and these the fairest) of the Peloponnesus. Nor are Jewish settlements confined to the mainland only; they are found also in the more important islands—Eubœa, Cyprus, Crete. I did not insist on the countries beyond the Euphrates, for with few exceptions all of them, Babylon, and the fertile regions around it, have Jewish inhabitants" (Philo, "Legat. ad Gaium," sec. 36).

There were gathered together in Jerusalem in the day of its fall Jews from all parts of the earth, or Roman Empire, who

had come up for the great feast of the Passover. At all ordinary times it was a Babel of many nations and tongues—at this time especially so. After the Holy Ghost had descended on the Apostles, we read in the Acts (ii. 5-10): “Now there were dwelling at Jerusalem, Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. And when this was noised abroad the multitude came together, and were confounded in mind, because that every man heard them speak in his own tongue. Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and inhabitants of Mesopotamia, Judæa, and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia. Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Lybia about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews also and Proselytes, Cretes and Arabians; we have heard them speak in our own tongue.”

The picture drawn at verse 9 represents the time before the siege, when the zealots were masters of Jerusalem. *Οὐκ ἀφίουσιν*, “will not permit,” refers to them. They were joined by bad Jews of all nations assembled in Jerusalem. There was drinking and rejoicing of a dissolute kind amongst them. Once the Romans surrounded the walls, there was no more rejoicing. Famine arose, and dead bodies lay unburied in the lanes and houses of the city, or were cast over the walls to putrefy (Josph., “Wars,” V. xii. 3).

10. Καὶ οἱ κατοικοῦντες ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς χαίρουσιν ἐπ’ αὐτοῖς καὶ εὐφραίνονται, καὶ δῶρα πέμψουσιν ἀλλήλοις, ὅτι οὗτοι οἱ δύο προφήται εβασάνισαν τοὺς κατοικοῦντας ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς.

10. And the inhabitants of 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.

Here, *κατοικοῦντες ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς*, “the inhabitants of the earth,” refers to the Jew dwellers in “Sodom and Egypt”—that is, Jerusalem in its last stage.

With characteristic obstinacy the Jews assailed the two great witnesses sent to convert them. Their preaching and their plagues were alike a torment to them. When they were slain there were mutual congratulations on the part of the zealots of all tribes, and they made it as an occasion for rejoicing by gifts. “*Εὐφραίνονται*” refers to the conviviality of banquets, in which oil and wine and gifts of meats probably played a part. See Luke xii. 19, xv. 23, and xvi. 19. The spite and vengeful feeling of the zealots against the two Christian witnesses was so great that they would not allow their corpses to be buried, contrary to the custom of the Jews and the dictates of health.

11. Καὶ μετὰ τὰς τρεῖς ἡμέρας καὶ ἡμισυ πνεῦμα ζωῆς ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ εἰσῆλθεν ἐν αὐτοῖς, καὶ ἕστησαν ἐπὶ τοὺς πόδας αὐτῶν, καὶ φόβος μέγας ἐπέπεσεν ἐπὶ τοὺς θεωροῦντας αὐτούς.

11. 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 that saw them.

Bodies exposed for three days and a half in Jerusalem must have been far advanced in decomposition. When our Saviour went to the tomb of Lazarus to raise him again to life, Martha said, "Lord, by this time he stinketh, for he is now four days" (Jhn. xi. 39). This convincing proof of the death of the witnesses was given; and then they were raised again to life. Consequently a great fear fell upon those that saw them. The fear of God's retribution smote them.

12. Καὶ ἤκουσαν φωνὴν μεγάλην ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, λέγουσαν αὐτοῖς Ἀνάβατε ὧδε, καὶ ἀνέβησαν εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν ἐν τῇ νεφέλῃ, καὶ ἐθεώρησαν αὐτοὺς οἱ ἐχθροὶ αὐτῶν.

12. And they heard a great voice from heaven saying to them, Come up hither, And they went up to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies saw them.

(S. = φωνῆς μεγάλης . . . λεγούσης.)

There is a certain distant parallelism between the death and ascension of the two witnesses and that of our Lord, which gives them an added importance. They went up in a cloud (See Acts i. 9). The great voice from heaven was the voice of God, as at R. x. 4.

We are in a position now to examine the question of the identity of the two witnesses from the historic standpoint. When the Seer measured off the inner Temple, symbolising the flight of the Nazarene Church to Pella, the witnesses appeared in the streets of Jerusalem. Two witnesses were required by Jewish law to attest the truth. "And in your law it is written that the testimony of two men is true" (Jhn. viii. 17). They were Christian witnesses, as we gather from the use of the word *μάρτυς*, and from the reference to Jesus Christ as their Lord, "where also their Lord was crucified" (R. xi. 8). They remained in Jerusalem and devoted their lives to the conversion of their brethren when their fellow Nazarenes fled to Pella. They were men of high position in the Church, specially chosen for this work by God. Their mission was to prophesy and to witness for Christ. This would bring them into collision with the Jews. Hence they were given special powers of defence.

The time of the mission was the beginning of the war. The 1,260 days indicate the time of the war. It was a time of great signs and wonders. Our Lord foretold them.

Josephus relates that Jesus, the son of Ananus, a plebeian, during the war and for four years before it, went about the city proclaiming the woes of Jerusalem. He was whipped till his bones were laid bare, but his answer to every stroke of the whip was "Woe, woe, to Jerusalem." There were visions of armies in the clouds, voices in the Temple, and "a star resembling a sword that stood over the city" (Joseph., "Wars," VI. v. 3); which "star resembling a sword" is found by calculation to have been Halley's Comet.

There is nothing strange in the presence of two Christian witnesses in Jerusalem, at that time, exercising supernatural powers. On the contrary it would be strange if the Nazarenes all fled away and abandoned their Jewish brethren to their fate. There is no record of these remarkable events anywhere outside the Revelation of S. John. But much the same thing may be said of the miracles of our Lord, performed publicly in times of peace. They are nowhere chronicled outside the pages of the New Testament. There was a conspiracy of silence on the part of heathen and Jewish writers as regards Christian miracles. They noticed Christianity only to revile it.

But there is in Josephus something which looks like a garbled account of the two witnesses. Josephus was a prejudiced witness. Dr. F. W. Farrar, on "Jesus Christ" in the *Encyc. Brit.*, says of Josephus, "The passage in which he speaks of the preaching and execution of John the Baptist is not disputed, and is very important as showing that Josephus must have been perfectly well acquainted with the facts of Christ's life, and that he passed them over in his usual unscrupulous way, with a reticence due only to dislike or perplexity."

Josephus makes particular mention of two men, who withstood the wicked zealots and preached to them. The first he calls Ananus, the oldest of the high priests. "He was a very prudent man, and had perhaps saved the city if he could have escaped the hands of those that plotted against him." Again, he says, "The best esteemed also of the high priests, Jesus the son of Gamala, and Ananus the son of Ananus, when they were at their assemblies, bitterly reproached the people for their sloth and excited them against the zealots." "Ananus stood in the midst of them, and casting his eyes frequently at the Temple . . . he said, Certainly it had been good for me to die before I had seen the house of God full of so many abominations," etc. ("Wars," iv. III). And Jesus spoke thus of the zealots, "They are robbers who by their prodigious wickedness have profaned

this most sacred floor, and who are to be seen now drinking themselves drunk in the sanctuary" ("Wars," iv. 4).

When the Idumæans were let into Jerusalem by the zealots . . . they sought for these two high priests, and the generality went with the greatest zeal against them; but as soon as they caught them they slew them, and then standing upon their dead bodies, in way of jest upbraided Ananus with his kindness to the people and Jesus with his speech.

"Nay, they proceeded to that degree of impiety, as to cast away their bodies without burial, although the Jews used to take so much care of the burial of men, that they took down those that were condemned and crucified, and buried them before the going down of the sun. I should not mistake if I said that the death of Ananus was the beginning of the destruction of the city. He was on other accounts a venerable and very just man, and besides the grandeur of that nobility, and dignity, and honour of which he was possessed, he had been a lover of a kind of parity, even with regard to the meanest of the people. . . . Jesus was also joined with him, and although he was inferior to him upon the comparison, he was superior to the rest. And I cannot but think that it was because God had doomed this city to destruction as a polluted city, and was resolved to purge His sanctuary by fire, that He cut off these, its great defenders and well-wishers; while those who had a little before worn the sacred garments . . . were cast out naked and seen to be the food of dogs and wild beasts" ("Wars," iv. 5).

The coincidence with Revelation is remarkable; but that is all we get from Josephus. He records no witness to Christianity, no miracles, and no ascension of the two witnesses. We are entitled to believe from his suppression of all Christian miracles that he would not record such things if he knew them to have happened!

But Josephus did not see or hear the two witnesses. Whilst these events were going on in Jerusalem, he was a prisoner in chains in the camp of Vespasian, in another part of Judæa. He had no chance of speech with the inhabitants of Jerusalem till Titus brought him to the city walls, long afterwards, still a prisoner of war, but unchained. Titus used him as an interpreter. "And what information the deserters brought out of the city, I was the only man that understood them" (Joseph. Apion. I.). He put into the mouths of Ananus and Jesus long orations (see "Wars," iv. 3 and 4), which no one could have reported *verbatim*. They are obviously Josephian speeches of his own invention. If we add invention to suppression, what residuum of fact remains supports the conclusion that the two witnesses are historic characters, great Hebrew Christian prophets slain, like "their Lord," by the Jews.

13. Καὶ ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ὥρᾳ ἐγένετο σεισμὸς μέγας, καὶ τὸ δέκατον τῆς πόλεως ἔπεσεν, καὶ ἀπεκτάνθησαν ἐν τῷ σεισμῷ ὀνόματα ἀνθρώπων χιλιάδες ἑπτὰ· καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ ἔμφοβοι ἐγένοντο καὶ ἔδωκαν δόξαν τῷ θεῷ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ.

13. And at that hour there was a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell ; and there were slain in the earthquake names of men seven thousand ; and the rest were cast into a fear, and gave glory to the God of heaven.

“ Hour ” is not to be taken literally. “ But the hour cometh and now is when the true adorers shall adore the Father in spirit and in truth ” (Jhn. iv. 23). We have had an earthquake before at R. vi. 12 (where see notes). An earthquake is put for a great political upheaval in this book as in Ezechiel xxxviii. 19, and the fall of Rome (R. xvi. 18). The tenth part of the city fell. The Temple of Jerusalem was utterly destroyed, but only a part of the city was thrown down. Jerusalem was not long afterwards reinhabited by the Jews. “ Names of men ” is put for men. See R. iii. 4, notes. “ Seven thousand ” slain is put for many thousand. The significance of seven is amplitude. Josephus says that Cestius had a census of the population of Jerusalem taken on the feast of the Passover, at the beginning of the war, which showed 2,750,000 inhabitants, exclusive of foreigners, lepers, and others. As the result of the war 1,100,000, were slain by war, famine and pestilence (“ Wars,” vi. 9, 3). “ The rest ” doubtless includes the Nazarenes and thousands of others who escaped from the city. These with the captives taken to Rome, or sold into slavery, were struck with the fear of God, and gave glory to him. Οἱ λοιποὶ, “ the rest,” must be put in this case at a million or more. See R. ii. 24, notes.

14. Ἡ οὐαὶ ἡ δευτέρα ἀπῆλθεν· ἰδοὺ ἡ οὐαὶ ἡ τρίτη ἔρχεται ταχύ.

14. The second woe is past ; and behold the third woe will come quickly.

At R. ix. 12, after the scorpion visitation on Jerusalem, we were told, “ One woe is past, and behold there come two more woes hereafter.” Now, after the siege and fall of the Temple, we are told, “ The second woe is past, and behold the third woe will come quickly.” It comes in the next sentence.

15. Καὶ ὁ ἕβδομος ἄγγελος ἐσάλπισεν· καὶ ἐγένοντο φωναὶ μεγάλαι ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ, λέγοντες, Ἐγένετο ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ κόσμου τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν καὶ τοῦ χριστοῦ αὐτοῦ, καὶ βασιλεύσει εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων.

15. And the seventh angel sounded the trumpet, and there were great voices in heaven, saying. The Kingdom of this world is become our Lord's and his Christ's, and he shall reign for ever and ever ; Amen.

Note " Amen " is not in Greek, above.

The first woe was the invasion of Judæa, and civil war in Jerusalem. The second the fall of the Temple and sack of the city. The third woe we take to be the dispersal of the Jews, as God declared to the Prophet Daniel. "And when the scattering of the band of the holy people shall be accomplished all these things shall be finished" (Dan. xii. 7). "In the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound the trumpet, the mystery of God shall be finished, as he has declared by his servants the prophets" (R. x. 7). From Amos to Jeremias the prophets had one main purpose, and that was to warn the Hebrew nation that it had incurred the wrath of God and must suffer unless it repented. They were prophets of woe who foretold the end of the Jewish dispensation, and the coming of the kingdom of Christ. The last woe trumpet sounded the death knell of the Jewish Kingdom and heralded the coming of age of the Kingdom of Christ. And great voices in the court of heaven were heard saying, "The kingdom of this world is become our Lord's and his Christ's, and he shall reign for ever and ever." The fall of the Temple marked the complete detachment of the Kingdom of Christ from the things of the Old Law. At the death of Christ the veil of the Temple was rent in two, from the top even to the bottom, showing that the covenant was torn up (Matt. xxvii. 51).

16. Καὶ οἱ εἴκοσι τέσσαρες πρεσβύτεροι, οἱ ἐνώπιον τοῦ Θεοῦ καθήμενοι ἐπὶ τοὺς θρόνους αὐτῶν, ἔπεσαν ἐπὶ τὰ πρόσωπα αὐτῶν καὶ προσεκύνησαν τῷ Θεῷ.

16. And the four and twenty ancients, who sit on their seats in the sight of God, fell on their faces and adored God.

The whole court of heaven, watching over the progress of events, acclaimed the establishment of the Kingdom of Christ on the ruins of the Temple, and the four and twenty ancients who were all Hebrews, fell upon their faces and adored God.

17. Λέγοντες, Εὐχαριστοῦμέν σοι Κύριε ὁ Θεὸς ὁ παντοκράτωρ, ὁ ὢν καὶ ὁ ἦν, ὅτι εἴληφας τὴν δύναμίν σου τὴν μεγάλην καὶ ἐβασίλευσας.

17. Saying, We give thee thanks O Lord God, Almighty, who art and who wast, and who art to come, because thou hast taken thy great power, and thou hast reigned.

Note, "and who art to come" is not in the Greek, above. Vg. *et qui venturus es.*

The ancients give thanks to God because He has assumed His great power and has become King. 'Εβασίλευσας, "hast reigned as a King"—*βασιλεύς*—refers to the Kingdom. The prophets of the Old Law and the Apostles of the New thank God for establishing the spiritual Kingdom of Christ upon earth. They concur in the justice of God's judgment on the Jews.

18. Καὶ τὰ ἔθνη ὠργίσθησαν, καὶ ἦλθεν ἡ ὀργή σου καὶ ὁ καιρὸς τῶν νεκρῶν κριθῆναι καὶ δοῦναι τὸν μισθὸν τοῖς δούλοις σου τοῖς προφήταις καὶ τοῖς ἁγίοις καὶ τοῖς φοβουμένοις τὸ ὄνομά σου, τοῖς μικροῖς καὶ τοῖς μεγάλοις, καὶ διαφθεῖραι τοὺς διαφθείροντας τὴν γῆν.

18. And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead to be judged and to render a reward to thy servants, the prophets, and to the saints, and to them that fear thy name, little and great, and to destroy them who have corrupted the earth.

(S. = τοὺς μικροὺς καὶ τοὺς μεγάλους.)

The four and twenty ancients apparently continue to speak. This verse is not separated from the preceding context by *μετὰ ταῦτα* or any other sign of a breach of continuity, hence it belongs to the Jewish theme and has a purely Jewish significance.

"And the nations were angry," with the remnant of the Jews, understood, as they are and have been for centuries, because God's "wrath is come."

"And the time of the dead to be judged"; that is the dead slain in the Jewish drama. The Seer follows the custom of Greek tragedy in pointing out the end of his *dramatis personæ*. Especial regard is given to the reward of the Messianic Jews, for ὁ καιρὸς—the due season—has come to give them "τὸν μισθὸν"—"the reward" promised to the just at the end of the Book. "My reward (ὁ μισθός μου) is with me to render to

every man according to his works" (R. xxii. 12). "Thy servants, the prophets," are men of Apostolic rank, not seen after the first century.

"Ἅγιοι, "the saints," denoted Christians in S. John's day, and he uses the expression in this Book to denote members of the Church of Christ even in the last days. At the end, Satan seduces the nations and they "surround the camp of the saints (τῶν ἁγίων) and the beloved city" (R. xx. 8).

"And to them that fear thy name, little and great," proclaims another class to be rewarded. At Chapter xix. we are told "A voice came out from the throne, saying, Praise ye our God all his servants and you that fear him, little and great" (R. xix. 5). The "Invisible Church" might be indicated there. But in the Jewish theme we have had only those who feared "the wrath of the Lamb" (R. vi. 16).

"And to destroy them who have corrupted the earth," refers to pagan Rome, represented in this Book as a triumvirate, composed of Satan, the Cæsars, and the pagan hierarchy. This announcement looks back to the martyrs' prayer at R. vi. 10 and to the command at R. x. 11, and forward to the Roman drama which begins in the next chapter.

19. Καὶ ἠνοίγη ὁ ναὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ ὁ ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ, καὶ ὤφθη ἡ κιβωτὸς τῆς διαθήκης αὐτοῦ ἐν τῷ ναῷ αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἐγένοντο ἀστραπαὶ καὶ φωναὶ καὶ βρονταὶ καὶ σεισμὸς καὶ χάλαζα μεγάλη.

19. And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and the ark of his testament was seen in his temple, and there were lightnings and voices and an earthquake and great hail.

We have had references to the ναὸς or sanctuary of the Temple at R. iii. 12 and vii. 15. It occurs again at R. xv. 5, 6, where the seven angels having the seven plagues come out of it. "The ark of the Testament" (Exod. xxv. 16, 22; xxx. 26), called also "the ark of the Covenant" (Jos. iii. 6, 11, 14, Numb. x. 33, Deut. x. 8), was the visible sign of God's dwelling with the Israelites. It contained the tables of the Law (Exod. xl. 18, Deut. x. 5). It was preserved in the tabernacle of the Temple, and a veil was drawn before it (Exod. xl. 18, 19). It was a chest of satin wood, plated with gold, within and without, and it was carried off by the Babylonians at the fall of Jerusalem, 587 B.C. (4 Kings xxv. 13 f.). The prophet Jeremias predicted its disappearance (Jer. iii. 16). But there were Jewish traditions concerning its reappearance at the time of the Messias.

“It was a common belief among the rabbis of old that it would be found at the coming of the Messiah” (C. L. Souvay, D.D., etc., “The Cath. Encyc.”). S. John concludes the Jewish theme with this characteristically Jewish vision. The lost Ark of God’s testament is seen in the *vaòs* or tabernacle of heaven, which is opened for that purpose.

Lightnings, voices, and thunders are manifestations of the majesty of God, suitable to the occasion. See R. iv. 5. Thunders (*βρονταὶ* in the Greek) are omitted in the English version, which follows the Vulgate. An earthquake and great hail are symbols of destruction (R. vi. 12, viii. 5, xi. 13, xvi. 18, 21). They form a fitting *finale* to the Jewish theme.

PART IV
THE ROMAN THEME

CHAPTER XII

HERE begins the preface to the Roman theme. When S. John had devoured the little open book, his belly was bitter, showing that he had digested its bitter contents and was full of the knowledge of the future. He was then ordered to prophesy *again*, denoting a fresh prophecy, "to nations and peoples and tongues and to many kings" (R. x. 11). We have seen that *ἐπὶ λαοῖς* means "concerning nations," etc. We shall find that commission fulfilled in the Roman theme. The Seer makes use of the stage and scenery, as it were, of the Jewish theme, and displays his visions of the future, dramatically, before the Court of Heaven, which intervenes at times, to help us to understand the matter. There is no fresh ecstasy, not even a *μετὰ ταῦτα* to delimit this theme from the last, for it is a continuation of the revelation in answer to the martyrs' prayer—especially to "*οὐ κρίνεις*," "dost thou not judge." The Seer begins the new revelation with the birth of Christ and of His Church. This necessitates some overlapping with the Jewish theme, so that we shall find the escape of the Nazarene Church to Pella again in view.

1. Καὶ σημεῖον μέγα ὤφθη ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ· γυνὴ περιβεβλημένη τὸν ἥλιον, καὶ ἡ σελήνη υποκάτω τῶν ποδῶν αὐτῆς, καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς αὐτῆς στέφανος ἀστέρων δώδεκα.

1. And a great sign appeared in heaven, a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars.

Σημεῖον, "sign," is used in a like sense in Matt. xxiv. 30, "and then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven." A woman clothed with the sun. We take this "woman" to be the Church of Christ. The Seer places the Church, idealised

as a mother, in the forefront of his vision, as she is the subject of his theme. He places her in heaven as "a great sign" of her ultimate triumph. He clothes her with the light of her Founder, as she is to illuminate the world. "And art clothed with light as with a garment" (Ps. ciii. 2), "And his face shone as the sun shineth in its full strength" (R. i. 16). "On her head a crown of twelve stars." The stars signify the twelve Apostles. (See R. i. 20, notes.) At R. xxi. 14, the twelve Apostles are shown as the foundations of the Church. But the Church is the Bride, "the wife of the Lamb"—*την γυναῖκα τοῦ ἀρνίου* (R. xxi. 9). Accordingly, we find *γυνή*, "the woman" or "wife," appearing gloriously in heaven, her Apostolic founders forming an aureola of stars about her head. She has under her feet the moon, which reflects the light of the sun. It is put for the body of the Church, waxing and waning as persecution or prosperity affects it.

S. John characteristically goes back to the beginning, even to Genesis, as we shall see.

2. Καὶ ἐν γαστρὶ ἔχουσα κράζει ὠδίνουσα καὶ βασανιζομένη τεκεῖν.

2. And being with child, she cried, travailing in birth, and was in pain to be delivered.

The wife of the Lamb is represented as being in painful labour. Some commentators see a figure of the Virgin-Mother of God in this woman. They have in mind the prophecy of Isaias: "Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign. Behold a Virgin shall conceive and bear a son" (Isa. vii. 14). But the Blessed Virgin being free from original sin (The Immaculate Conception) was free from the pains of child-birth (Gen. iii. 16). Hence, "*βασανιζομένη*," an expression used for the torments of the Jews in the Jewish theme (R. ix. 5), and for the torments of hell at R. xiv. 10, would not apply to her. The woman in labour symbolises the early Church which generated her children with many tribulations. S. John would not symbolise the Blessed Virgin as an ordinary woman—*γυνή*—in the tortures of labour! The expression *παρθένος*, "a virgin," was due to our Lady. He avoids the word "virgin" to show his meaning. Presently he represents the woman in flight to Pella, and Satan persecuting the woman and her seed.

3. Καὶ ὤφθη ἄλλο σημεῖον ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ, καὶ ἶδον δράκων μέγας πυρρός, ἔχων κεφαλὰς ἑπτὰ καὶ κέρατα δέκα καὶ ἐπὶ τὰς κεφαλὰς αὐτοῦ ἑπτὰ διαδήματα.

3. And there appeared another sign in heaven, and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads seven diadems.

Another—σημεῖον—"sign" is seen in heaven, the dragon, the enemy of the Woman. We are told in verse 9 that the dragon is Satan. Thus, the two great protagonists in the theme of the Book, the Church and Satan, are brought before us in its opening scene.

The great saurians of the Tigris and Euphrates were the embodiment of evil to primitive man. Hence they were put for the evil spirit, and endowed with wings. Satan, the dragon, has seven heads. The number seven indicates an innumerable host—"principalities and powers . . . the rulers of the world of this darkness . . . the spirits of wickedness in the high places" (Eph. vi. 12). He has ten horns, or "powers," with which he pushes his way in the world. These are world-powers, who do his will (Dan. vii. 20, 21, 24, viii. 3, 5, 20, 21). He is a red dragon, for his mission in this Book is to stir up bloody persecutions against the Woman, and he is stained with the blood of her children. Our Lord, addressing the Jews, said: "You are of your father, the devil, and the desires of your father you will do. He was a murderer from the beginning" (Jhn. viii. 44). "And on his heads seven diadems." Diadems are distinctive of royalty. S. John, in his Gospel, calls Satan "the Prince of this world" (xii. 31, xiv. 30, xvi. 11). Later in the Book, when our Lord appears as a conqueror, "he has on his head many diadems," as He is "King of Kings" (R. xix. 12, 16).

4. Καὶ ἡ οὐρὰ αὐτοῦ σύρει τὸ τρίτον τῶν ἀστέρων τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, καὶ ἔβαλεν αὐτοὺς εἰς τὴν γῆν· καὶ ὁ δράκων ἔστηκεν ἐνώπιον τῆς γυναικὸς τῆς μελλούσης τεκεῖν, ἵνα ὅταν τέκη τὸ τέκνον αὐτῆς καταφάγη.

4. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven and cast them to the earth; and the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to be delivered, that when she should be delivered he might devour her son.

We have had a reference to Lucifer as the fallen star at R. ix. 1 (where see notes). Here the stars of heaven, the rebel angels, are dragged down to earth by the fall of Lucifer. This

is fully explained presently at verses 7 and 8. The third part is an expression used in the Jewish theme to denote a considerable part. The dragon is represented as watching over the birth of Christianity with the intention of devouring it at its birth. At the birth of Christ, Satan inspired Herod who "killed all the men-children that were in Bethlehem and in all the confines thereof, from two years old and under" (Matt. ii. 16). He inspired the Jews to crucify Christ, and murder and persecute His followers. In every age, wherever the dragon prevails by means of revolutions or otherwise, his children stand before the Woman—*i.e.*, the Church—bent on destroying her.

5. Καὶ ἔτεκεν υἱόν ἄρρενα ὃς μέλλει ποιμαίνειν πάντα τὰ ἔθνη ἐν ράβδῳ σιδηρᾷ· καὶ ἠρπάσθη τὸ τέκνον αὐτῆς πρὸς τὸν Θεὸν καὶ πρὸς τὸν θρόνον αὐτοῦ.

5. And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with an iron rod ; and her son was taken up to God and to his throne.

(S. = ἄρσεν. See verse 13, τὸν ἄρσενα.)

Ὡς μέλλει ποιμαίνειν, "who was (about) to rule all nations with an iron rod." The man child is Jesus Christ. The reference is to Psalm ii. "The Lord hath said to me, Thou art my Son ; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I will give thee the Gentiles for thy inheritance. . . . Thou shalt rule them with a rod of iron" (Ps. ii. 7, 8, 9). He is the Conqueror who shall rule the Gentiles with a rod of iron, see R. xix. 15.

"Her son was taken up to God" indicates the Ascension. (See Jhn. xx. 17.) "And to his throne" refers back to R. iii. 21: "As I also have overcome and have sat with my Father in his throne." Jesus Christ is represented, symbolically, as the first begotten of His Church.

6. Καὶ ἡ γυνὴ ἔφυγεν εἰς τὴν ἔρημον, ὅπου ἔχει ἐκεῖ τόπον ἡτοιμασμένον ἀπὸ τοῦ Θεοῦ, ἵνα ἐκεῖ τρέφωσιν αὐτὴν ἡμέρας χιλίας διακοσίας ἑξήκοντα.

6. And the woman fled into the wilderness where she had a place prepared by God, that there they should feed her a thousand two hundred and sixty days.

The Woman is shown to be Mother Church in this passage. The Nazarene Church, which was the Mother Church of

Christendom, escaped the dragon at the siege of Jerusalem by fleeing to the highlands of Pella. This place in the rocky mountains of Moab was a "desert" compared to Jerusalem. That she had a place prepared by God where they should feed her 1,260 days, carries out the symbolism of the Church as a woman. The 1,260 days, we have seen, denote the period of the Jewish war. It was the period when the Nazarene Church fled from Jerusalem. See R. xi. 2, 3.

Τὴν ἔρημον—"the desert"—from which the word hermit is derived, is translated above "the wilderness." But in the connecting passage at R. xii. 14, referring to the same episode, it is translated "the desert." In like manner τρέφωσιν, which is translated "to feed" here, is translated "to nourish" in the corresponding verse, xii. 14; thus missing the verbal concordance put for our guidance by S. John.

7. Καὶ ἐγένετο πόλεμος ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ, ὁ Μιχαὴλ καὶ οἱ ἄγγελοι αὐτοῦ τοῦ πολεμῆσαι μετὰ τοῦ δράκοντος, καὶ ὁ δράκων ἐπολέμησεν καὶ οἱ ἄγγελοι αὐτοῦ.

7. And there was a great battle in heaven, Michael and his angels fought with the dragon, and the dragon fought and his angels.

It looks as if Satan seeing "the man child," whom he wished to devour, "taken up to God and to his throne," followed Him, ignorant of His Divinity. He tempted our Lord in the desert, not knowing Him to be the Son of God (Matt. iv. 3 f.). S. Michael and his angels fought with the dragon and his angels, and overcame them (next verse). Michael, according to the prophet Daniel, is one of the chief princes of heaven (x. 13, 21). S. Jude calls him "Michael the Archangel" (9). This symbolism of the dragon and the woman goes back to Genesis to the serpent and the woman, "I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed" (Gen. iii. 15). The seed of the woman is the Church. That S. John has Genesis in view will appear directly.

8. Καὶ οὐκ ἴσχυσεν, οὐδὲ τόπος εὐρέθη αὐτῶν ἔτι ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ.

8. And they prevailed not, neither was their place found any more in heaven.

9. Καὶ ἐβλήθη ὁ δράκων ὁ μέγας, ὁ ὄφιν ὁ ἀρχαῖος, ὁ καλούμενος Διάβολος καὶ ὁ σατανᾶς, ὁ πλανῶν τὴν οἰκουμένην ὅλην, ἐβλήθη εἰς τὴν γῆν, καὶ οἱ ἄγγελοι αὐτοῦ μετ' αὐτοῦ ἐβλήθησαν.

9. And the great dragon was cast out, the old serpent who is called the Devil and Satan, who seduceth the whole world ; and he was cast unto the earth and his angels were thrown down with him.

The identity of the great dragon is now made manifest. He is the old serpent of Genesis, who is called the Devil and Satan ; Διάβολος in Greek and Σατανᾶς in Hebrew. The Seer, as usual, gives the Greek and Hebrew names. S. Michael and his angels cast down Lucifer and the rebel angels, εἰς τὴν γῆν, to the earth. I saw Satan like lightning falling from heaven (Luke x. 18). His power is now limited to the wicked children of the earth, who are his horns. Satan's place in heaven was taken from him. See also next verse.

10. Καὶ ἤκουσα φωνὴν μεγάλην ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ λέγουσαν Ἄρτι ἐγένετο ἡ σωτηρία καὶ ἡ δύναμις καὶ ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ Θεοῦ ἡμῶν καὶ ἡ ἐξουσία τοῦ χριστοῦ αὐτοῦ, ὅτι ἐβλήθη ὁ κατήγωρ τῶν ἀδελφῶν ἡμῶν, ὁ κατηγορῶν αὐτῶν ἐνώπιον τοῦ Θεοῦ ἡμῶν ἡμέρας καὶ νυκτός.

10. And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying. Now is come salvation and strength, and the Kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ ; because the accuser of our brethren is cast forth, who accused them before our God, day and night.

(S. = κατηγορῶν αὐτους.)

The loud voice is put for the combined voices of heaven, as at R. v. 11, where thousands of thousands say "with a loud voice"—"φωνῇ μεγάλῃ." They proclaim the establishment of the Kingdom of our God. So, when the Lamb had opened the book, the four living creatures and the four and twenty ancients fell down before the Lamb, and said : "And hast made us to our God a kingdom and priests" (R. v. 10). In the doxology of the Lamb, "strength" and "power" occur (R. v. 12), and "salvation to God" and "to the Lamb," at R. vii. 10. Similar rejoicings take place in heaven now, "because the accuser of our brethren is cast forth." "Brethren" in the O.T. and generally in the N.T. denote the children of Israel. The saints of heaven were, at the time of the Ascension, of Hebrew origin. Satan appears as the accuser in the Book of Job. He appears moreover with the "sons of God," standing before the Lord. The sons of God represent Hebrews (see Gen. vi. 2 ; Job i. 6 f. ; Osee i. 10 ; 1 Jhn. iii. 1). "Day and night" means ceaselessly—ceaseless accusations.

11. Καὶ αὐτοὶ ἐνίκησαν αὐτὸν διὰ τὸ αἷμα τοῦ ἀρνίου καὶ διὰ τὸν λόγον τῆς μαρτυρίας αὐτῶν, καὶ οὐκ ἠγάπησαν τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτῶν ἄχρι θανάτου.

11. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony, and they loved not their lives unto death.

'Ενίκησαν occurs at R. v. 5, when the root of David "hath conquered" to open the book. The verb νικάω, "to conquer," generally connotes martyrdom in this Book (see R. ii. 7, iii. 21). Τῆς μαρτυρίας αὐτῶν, "of their testimony," also connotes martyrdom (see vi. 9 notes). "And they loved not their lives unto death," conveys the same meaning. "He that shall lose his life for me shall find it" (Matt. x. 39). And "He that loveth his life shall lose it" (Jhn. xii. 25).

In this preface to the Roman theme, which goes back to the Nazarene Church, the martyrs are Hebrews, SS. Peter, Paul, Stephen, James, and many others. They "overcame" by the merits of the blood of the Lamb, without which they would have shed their blood in vain. They "washed their robes and have made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (R. vii. 14). They exemplify the sufferings of the Woman—the early Church.

12. Διὰ τοῦτο εὐφραίνεσθε, οὐρανοὶ καὶ οἱ ἐν αὐτοῖς σκηνοῦντες· οὐαὶ τῇ γῇ καὶ τῇ θαλάσῃ ὅτι κατέβη ὁ διάβολος πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἔχων θυμὸν μέγαν, εἰδὼς ὅτι ὀλίγον καιρὸν ἔχει.

12. Therefore rejoice O heavens and you that dwell therein. Woe to the earth and to the sea, because the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, knowing that he hath but a short time.

(S. = τὴν γῆν καὶ τὴν θάλασσαν.)

Dr. Swete notices σκηνοῦντες applied to heaven dwellers as opposed to κατοικοῦντες, the earth dwellers (see R. xi. 10). The former word is used of God's dwelling with the martyrs—σκηνώσει ἐπ' αὐτούς at R. vii. 15 (see R. xiii. 6, τοὺς ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ σκηνοῦντας). This is Jewish symbolism from σκηνή, "a tent," or tabernacle. The saints of heaven rejoice, and warn the earth—"τῇ γῇ"—that is the Roman Empire, and the sea, mankind generally (R. viii. 8-10), that the devil is coming upon them in great wrath. Because he has been cast down from heaven to earth, and knows that he has but a short time. He knows that the earth will perish, and that at the day of judgment he and his angels will be cast into everlasting fire (Matt. xxv. 41; see also R. xx. 9).

13. Καὶ ὅτε εἶδεν ὁ δράκων ὅτι ἐβλήθη εἰς τὴν γῆν, ἐδίωξεν τὴν γυναῖκα ἣτις ἔτεκεν τὸν ἄρσενά.

13. And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman who brought forth the male child.

Here the meaning of the Woman is further explained. It is the Church Militant. The mind of the Seer is still on the Mother Church of Jerusalem, which contained all the living relatives of our Lord and His Apostles. We go back again to the history of the Nazarene Church, begun at R. xii. 6, when the Woman fled into the desert and was fed 1,260 days. Τὸν ἄρσενά, "the male child," does not agree with ἄρρενα, the "man child," at R. xii. 5. Considering the Seer's care in the choice of concordant words to explain his meaning, Dr. Swete is probably right in putting ἄρσεν at xii. 5 (Codices A.C.). The same "child" is clearly in view in both verses.

14. Καὶ ἐδόθησαν τῇ γυναικὶ δύο πτέρυγες τοῦ αἰετοῦ τοῦ μεγάλου, ἵνα πέτηται εἰς τὴν ἔρημον εἰς τὸν τόπον αὐτῆς, ὅπου τρέφεται ἐκεῖ καιρὸν καὶ καιροὺς καὶ ἡμισυ καιροῦ ἀπὸ προσώπου τοῦ ὄφεως.

14. And there was given to the woman two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the desert to her place, where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the face of the serpent.

The Seer is careful to show that he refers to the Woman of verse 6—Mother Church. He practically repeats the wording of verse 6. But instead of saying that she was fed for 1,260 days, in the desert, he says that she was fed for a time—a year, and times—two years, and half a time—half a year. In all three and a half years, or forty-two months, or 1,260 days. The Jews counted thirty days to a month. The prophet Daniel referring to the fall of Jerusalem, symbolises the same period, in the same words, "It should be unto a time and times and half a time" (xii. 7).

The verbal system of the Seer is not followed in the translation, for a desert is a place devoid of vegetation, whereas a wilderness may mean overgrowth or rank vegetation (see R. xii. 6, notes). The Woman is given two wings of a great eagle to fly from the serpent—τοῦ ὄφεως. Dragons had wings, but serpents had none; hence the change of symbolism. Wings enabled the Woman to escape the wingless serpent. So in Exodus, after the flight of Israel from Egypt, God says, "I have carried you upon the wings of eagles" (xix. 4). The woman fled to the highlands of Pella, across the Jordan, where

she was protected by King Agrippa, an ally of the Romans (Euseb., H. E. iii. 5).

15. Καὶ ἔβαλεν ὁ ὄφεις ἐκ τοῦ στόματος αὐτοῦ ὀπίσω τῆς γυναικὸς ὕδωρ ὡς ποταμόν, ἵνα αὐτὴν ποταμοφόρητον ποιήσῃ.

15. And the serpent cast out of his mouth, after the woman, water as it were a river, that he might cause her to be carried away by the river.

The serpent—Satan, aimed at cutting off the flight of the early Church. His agents, the Roman legions, streamed into Palestine from various quarters and flooded the country with soldiers. This symbolism is taken from Isaias, "Therefore behold the Lord will bring upon them the waters of the river strong and many, the King of the Assyrians and all his glory, and he shall come up over all his channels and shall overflow all his banks" (Isa. viii. 7). And Jeremias, "Behold there come up waters out of the north, and they shall be as an overflowing torrent, and they shall cover the land and all that is therein, the city and the inhabitants thereof, then the men shall cry, and all the inhabitants of the land shall howl, at the noise of the marching of arms, and of his soldiers, and the rushing of his chariots" (xlvii. 2, 3).

16. Καὶ ἐβοήθησεν ἡ γῆ τῇ γυναικί, καὶ ἤνοιξεν ἡ γῆ τὸ στόμα αὐτῆς καὶ κατέπιεν τὸν ποταμὸν ὃν ἔβαλεν ὁ δράκων ἐκ τοῦ στόματος αὐτοῦ.

16. And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth and swallowed up the river, which the dragon cast out of his mouth.

The earth stands for the enemies of the Church. In this context it stands for both Jews and Romans.

The Jews drove back the army of Cestius, the Roman general who invaded the city of Jerusalem at the beginning of Nero's war. It was then, as Josephus tells us, that "many of the most eminent of the Jews swam away from the city, as from a ship when it was going to sink" ("Wars," II. xx.). The Nazarenes had been warned by our Lord of this time of desolation (Luke xxi. 20). Thus was the opportunity given to that Church to depart out. But for the scattered Christians of Judæa a further opportunity was given by the arrest of the army of Vespasian before the walls of Jotapata. Vespasian would quickly have overrun the country of Judæa, dealing

death to Jew and Christian alike, but that he was stopped by the strategy of Josephus. Josephus, the historian, and leader of the Jewish forces, concentrated his army in the strong fortress of Jotapata, so that Vespasian was obliged to halt his troops, and besiege Jotapata. This siege occupied the time and attention of the Roman army for forty-seven days. In the meanwhile the Christians of all parts of Judæa, now doubly warned, were enabled to make their way to Pella. In this way the earth helped the woman to escape, by swallowing up the river.

But the political condition of Rome caused a still longer cessation of hostilities in Judæa. When Nero died in July, A.D. 68, Galba, Otho and Vitellus in turn assumed the purple. Then Vespasian was proclaimed Emperor about the end of the year 69. There was a cessation of the war for many months from the death of Nero till the proclamation of Vespasian, during which time Christians found their way to Pella, before the siege of Jerusalem began.

17. Καὶ ὠργίσθη ὁ δράκων ἐπὶ τῇ γυναικί, καὶ ἀπῆλθεν ποιῆσαι πόλεμον μετὰ τῶν λοιπῶν τοῦ σπέρματος αὐτῆς, τῶν τηρούντων τὰς ἐντολὰς τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ ἔχόντων τὴν μαρτυρίαν Ἰησοῦ.

17. And the dragon was angry against the woman, and went to make war with the rest of her seed, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

“Christ” is not in the Greek above. It is in the Vulgate. Satan, enraged at the escape of the Mother Church of Jerusalem, went off to make war with the rest of her seed. Here the identity of the Woman is clearly established. She is the Church. Her seed are those “who keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus,” evidently Christians. The Seer still has Genesis in mind, “the seed of the woman” (see R. xii. 7, notes). Here τὴν μαρτυρίαν Ἰησοῦ corresponds with the same words at R. xix. 10, where “The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.” An expression which connotes the *Ecclesia docens*.

18. Καὶ ἐστάθη ἐπὶ τὴν ἄμμον τῆς θαλάσσης.

18. And he stood upon the sand of the sea.

Satan, baffled and enraged, paused on the shore and surveyed the sea of life (see R. viii. 8, notes). He takes no interest in

any other sea. The Seer, as we shall find presently, has the sea of Daniel in view. "And four great beasts, different one from another, came up out of the sea" (Dan. vii. 3). "These four great beasts are four kingdoms, which shall arise out of the earth" (Dan. vii. 17); earthly kingdoms came up out of the sea. Satan surveys the "sea," thirsting for revenge. His aim is to destroy the kingdom of Christ. Rome was the centre of the sea of life. His outlook shows him Rome persecuting the seed of the woman, accordingly he goes to Rome to form an alliance with paganism (next chapter). It is a very fine dramatic picture.

CHAPTER XIII

THE Preface to the Roman theme is finished. The scene of Revelation now passes to Rome, where SS. Peter and Paul had preached and died for the faith. Soon after the Nazarene Church fled to Pella, the mantle of primacy fell upon Rome. In point of numbers it was a great Church having adherents even in the palace of Nero. For three years and a half persecution took its toll of blood, yet failed to extirpate the Church of Rome. It was a primatical Church by reason of its location in the capital of the Empire, and by reason of its founder S. Peter, whose body with S. Paul's lay buried at Rome. It was a conspicuously faithful Church. In the year A.D. 57 or 58 S. Paul wrote an epistle to the Romans in which he says, "I give thanks to my God, through Jesus Christ, for you all, because your faith is spoken of in the whole world" (Rom. i. 8). Satan saw in Cæsar worship and persecution the looked-for instruments of his vengeance upon the seed of the Woman.

"It was no mere servile adulation which led to the deification of the emperors. The emperor was God, and divine honours were paid to him because he was the visible symbol of imperial Rome, making manifest its power and permanence. And it was a real feeling of worship that raised in every house the altar to the *divus imperator*, and spread over the whole Roman Empire, jostling aside its myriad creeds, the one faith in Rome, in its power, in its eternity, and its mysterious strength. It was in this way that paganism and Rome became almost synonymous, and that Christianity and Rome were foes from the first" (Dr. T. M. Lindsay, "Ency. Brit.," Christianity).

1. Καὶ εἶδον ἐκ τῆς θαλάσσης θηρίον ἀναβαῖνον, ἔχον κέρατα δέκα καὶ κεφαλὰς ἑπτὰ, καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν κεράτων αὐτοῦ δέκα διαδήματα, καὶ ἐπὶ τὰς κεφαλὰς αὐτοῦ ὀνόματα βλασφημίας.

1. And I saw a beast coming up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten diadems, and upon his heads names of blasphemy.

This beast was seen before at R. xi. 7, where he appears as "τὸ θηρίον," the well-known fourth beast of Daniel (Dan. vii. 7). It was explained to Daniel that "The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be greater than all the kingdoms" (vii. 23). This fourth beast was generally recognised as the Roman Empire. Hebrews of the first century would identify this beast with Rome. It came out of the Gentile Sea, as did the beast of Daniel (see Isa. lvii. 20). And it had ten horns like Daniel's beast. Daniel was told "the ten horns of the same kingdom shall be ten kings" (vii. 24). An angel explains to the Seer, "And the ten horns, which thou sawest are ten kings" (R. xvii. 12). In token of their being kings, they are crowned with regal diadems. Horns are scriptural symbols of power (see R. xii. 3). They are here explained to be kings. The ten kings play an important part in the Roman theme in turn as allies and enemies of Rome.

The seven heads are an essential part of the beast. They are the line of the Cæsars. The number seven covers the whole dynasty. An angel informs us that the seven heads are seven mountains upon which the woman sitteth, and they are seven kings (R. xvii. 9).

This Woman was Babylon (R. xvii. 5), the mystic name of Rome amongst the Hebrew Christians, and Rome was seated on seven mountains. We are thus led to conclude that the Beast represents the Cæsars. That explains the "names of blasphemy" on the heads of the Beast. Divine honours were paid to the Roman Emperors. Amongst the Divine titles assumed by the Cæsars, found in inscriptions at Ephesus, are *ἀντοκράτωρ*, "almighty," and *Καῖσαρ Θεοῦ*, "Lord God," *Θεοῦ Νερούα υἱώνος*, and *Σεβαστός* (Hick's "Ephesus," pp. 150, 154, 162).

Those who blasphemed God meant, in the Jewish sense, those who usurped his prerogative, not blasphemous swearers in the modern sense. When the man sick with the palsy was let down through the roof, Jesus said to him: "Son, thy sins are forgiven thee. And some of the scribes were sitting there, and thinking in their hearts: why does this man speak thus? He blasphemeth. Who can forgive sins, but God

only?" (Mark ii. 5, 7). So when Jesus, in the Temple, said to the Jews: "I and the Father are one," they took up stones to stone Him. And He asked them for which of His good works they stoned Him. "The Jews answered him, For a good work we stone thee not, but for blasphemy, and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God" (Jhn x. 30, 33). So also, when Jesus was brought before Caiaphas, the high priest, and said: "Hereafter you shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of the power of God, and coming in the clouds of heaven. Then the high priest rent his garments, saying, He hath blasphemed" (Matt. xxvi. 64, 65). The Jews said that when a man made himself out to be God, it was blasphemy; that was their idea of blasphemy.

2. Καὶ τὸ θηρίον ὃ εἶδον ἦν ὅμοιον παρδάλει, καὶ οἱ πόδες αὐτοῦ ὡς ἄρκου, καὶ τὸ στόμα αὐτοῦ ὡς στόμα λέοντος. Καὶ ἔδωκεν αὐτῷ ὁ δράκων τὴν δύναμιν αὐτοῦ καὶ τὸν θρόνον αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐξουσίαν μεγάλην.

2. And the beast which I saw was like to 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 own strength and great power.

Daniel's fourth beast is represented as coming up out of the sea after three other great beasts, the first, a lioness, representing the Babylonian Empire; the second, a bear, representing the Persian Empire; and the third a leopard, put for the Empire of the Greeks. The fourth beast, the Roman Empire, took possession of all these kingdoms; "and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down and break it in pieces" (Dan. vii. 23). In continuation, therefore, of his symbolism of the Roman Empire, the Seer represents it as made up of the empires it had devoured. It is described as combining in its own person the qualities of swiftness, strength, and ferocity, found in the leopard, the bear, and the lion. Thus he rivets Daniel's symbols on the beast to show that it is the Roman Empire. We have had "the teeth of lions" ascribed to the Roman legions at R. ix. 8.

And they had over them Apollyon, "the angel of the bottomless pit" (R. ix. 11). So, here, the dragon is shown as covering the Beast with "his own strength and great power." In the Greek, above, the dragon "gave him his own throne" as well as his own strength and great power. "His own throne" is not in the Vulgate. It carries out the idea of the dragon's power on earth, and the extent of his help to the Cæsars. See ὁ Θρόνος τοῦ σατανᾶ, referring to Rome, at R. ii. 13.

3. Καὶ μίαν ἐκ τῶν κεφαλῶν αὐτοῦ ὡς ἐσφαγμένην εἰς θανάτον, καὶ ἡ πληγὴ τοῦ θανάτου αὐτοῦ ἔθεραπεύθη· Καὶ ἐθαύμασεν ὅλη ἡ γῆ ὀπίσω τοῦ θηρίου.

3. And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death ; and his deadly wound was healed. And all the earth was in admiration after the beast.

(S. = ἐθανμάσθη.)

The Beast which rose from the sea had seven heads, which we are told at R. xvii. 9 are seven kings. So far they represent the dynasty of the Cæsars and are indefinite. But the Seer fixes our attention on one particular head or king. And he saw it wounded to death and its deadly wound was healed, and all the earth “ἐθαύμασεν”—“wondered.” This brings up the superstition of the year 67, that Nero would be slain by the sword and come to life again. We have already described this superstition, its nature and extent, in the Introduction (p. 90). The only objection to it here is that, as a matter of fact, Nero’s wound was not healed. Could S. John in his Revelation make use of an erroneous superstition? S. Jerome, whose authority on the Scriptures is acknowledged, says: “It is the custom of Scriptural historians to declare many things according to the popular belief of the time” (In Matt. xiv. 8). Again: “Many things are set forth in Scripture according to contemporary opinion, and not according to intrinsic truth” (In Jer. xxviii. 10). The Seer wished his Christian brethren to identify this head of the beast, and made use of a popular belief for that purpose. It is the first of many efforts to bring home to the reader the name of Nero.

The wound is described later, at verse 14, “as the wound by the sword”—μαχαίρης, the short sword used by the Romans in Nero’s time, to bring it into line with the current superstition. Μάχαιρα may be either a knife carried in a sheath at the girdle (Jhn. xviii. 10), or a sword (Hastings, D.B., iv. 634). At verse 10 it is predicted of Nero that “he must be killed by the sword.” The Greek word used for wounded, above, ἐσφαγμένην, comes from σφάζω, to slay with a knife, or short sword.

Ἐθαύμασεν, translated “admiration,” above, comes from θαυμάζω, “to wonder,” “to be astonished.” The same word is translated “wonder” at R. xvii. 6 and 7. Superstitious wonder was the attitude of the world towards this prediction of the soothsayers regarding Nero. But “admiration” in old English was sometimes put for “wonder.”

4. Καὶ προσεκύνησαν τῷ δράκοντι, ὅτι ἔδωκεν τὴν ἐξουσίαν τῷ θηρίῳ, καὶ προσεκύνησαν τῷ θηρίῳ, λέγοντες, Τίς ὅμοιος τῷ θηρίῳ, καὶ τίς δύναται πολεμῆσαι μετ' αὐτοῦ.

4. And they adored the dragon which gave power to the beast; and they adored the beast, saying, Who is like to the beast? and who shall be able to fight with him?

And they, ἡ γῆ, "the earth," in the last verse, that is non-Christians, adored the dragon, who gave the Beast "his own strength and great power" (R. xiii. 2). They adored the dragon by idol worship as well as by Cæsar worship; they adored "devils, and idols of gold and silver and brass and stone and wood, which neither can see nor hear nor walk" (R. ix. 20, where see notes).

"It was the unanimous sentiment of the Church that demons were the authors, the patrons, and the objects of idolatry. They lurked in the temples, pronounced oracles, and were even allowed to perform miracles. The Christians considered any respect shown to idol worship as a homage to the demon and a rebellion against God" (Gibbon).

Cæsar worship had spread over the Empire in the time of Nero. It was especially prevalent in the wealthy and sycophant cities of S. John's district of Asia Minor. There were temples to the Augusti at Ephesus, Smyrna, and Pergamos.

"They adored the beast, saying, Who is like to the beast? and who shall be able to fight with him?" These references to the military resources and fighting strength of the Beast help to identify it with the Roman Empire. There was no power which could fight against it, except Parthia.

The exclamation, "Who is like to thee?" belongs to God (Exod. xv. 11). Its use in connection with the worship of the Beast is an illustration of the blasphemy of Cæsar worship.

5. Καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτῷ στόμα λαλοῦν μεγάλα καὶ βλασφημίας, καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτῷ ἐξουσία ποιῆσαι μῆνας τεσσεράκοντα δύο.

5. And there was given to him a mouth, speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given to him to act forty-two months.

Compare this with Daniel vii. 20: "And a mouth speaking great things," also vii. 25: "And he shall speak words against the High One. . . . And they shall be delivered into his hand until a time, and times, and half a time"—forty-two months.

The prophecy of Daniel related to the destruction of the Temple.

The prophecy of the Apocalypse, in this Roman piece which is now being put before us, refers to Nero's persecution of the Christians at Rome. It is quite true that Nero was equally responsible for the Jewish war and the destruction of the Temple; but we have had those events related to us in the first theme, and in the preface of this second one; besides, they are spoken of quite differently. At R. xii. 6, we are told that "the woman" fled into the wilderness, where she had a place prepared 1,260 days. The devil failed in this attack, and was angry with "the woman," and went to make war with the rest of her seed. The scene of the Apocalypse is transferred to Rome, to Nero's persecution. We are told that power was given to the Beast "to act forty-two months," and later, verse 7, "And it was given to him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them." The period of time is the same—about three years and a half in both cases—but the events related in this chapter and in Chapter xii. are different: "the woman" escaped the dragon; "the saints," on the contrary, are delivered into his power.

It is a strange and mystic coincidence that these two great events, the first persecution and the fall of Jerusalem, should last the same time, overlap each other, in the same century, and have Nero for their common author.

6. Καὶ ἤνοιξεν τὸ στόμα αὐτοῦ εἰς βλασφημίας πρὸς τὸν Θεόν, βλασφημηῆσαι τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ καὶ τὴν σκηνὴν αὐτοῦ καὶ τοὺς ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ σκηνοῦντας.

6. And he opened his mouth in blasphemies against God, to blaspheme his name and his tabernacle and them that dwell in heaven.

Βλασφημίας, "blasphemies," is derived from two Greek words, βλάπτειν, "to injure," and φήμη, "reputation." We have seen at verse 1, above, what Hebrew Christians thought of blasphemy. Nero, in particular, on his return from the Olympian games, was received with many expressions due to God alone. Παντοκράτωρ, "the Almighty," the name with which the saints and angels of heaven salute the enthroned God at R. xix. 6, was inscribed on his effigy. Nero allowed himself to be adored as God, thus blaspheming the name of God; and the emperors permitted temples to be erected to themselves as gods, thus blaspheming the Tabernacle of God and the saints and angels of God.

The Hebrew brethren of S. John understood these things,

and could, moreover, appreciate the clues introduced into the vision by the Seer, with the design of leading up to the identity of the wounded head of the Beast.

7. Καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτῷ ποιῆσαι πόλεμον μετὰ τῶν ἁγίων καὶ νικῆσαι αὐτούς, καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτῷ ἐξουσία ἐπὶ πᾶσαν φυλὴν καὶ λαὸν καὶ γλῶσσαν καὶ ἔθνος.

7. And it was given to him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them ; and power was given him over every tribe, and people, and tongue, and nation.

“It was given to him” means that God permitted him to war upon the saints and overcome them. Great historic figures, good and bad, fulfil the designs of Providence. God said to Pharo, “And therefore have I raised thee that I may show my power in thee, and my name may be spoken of throughout all the earth” (Exod. ix. 16 ; see also Rom. ix. 17). “Τῶν ἁγίων,” “the saints,” is a word denoting Christians in this Book, as commonly in the N.T. “Ποιῆσαι πόλεμον” refers back to “ποιῆσαι μῆνας τεσσεράκοντα δυο” at verse 5, and explains its meaning. Ποιέω means to do something during the forty-two months specified at verse 5. Here it is shown that the action referred to is to make war on the Christians. Forty-two months was the duration of Nero’s persecution.

“And power was given him over every tribe,” etc., indicates that the world-wide power of the Roman Empire is in view.

8. Καὶ προσκυνήσουσιν αὐτὸν πάντες οἱ κατοικοῦντες ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, ὧν οὐ γέγραπται τὸ ὄνομα ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τῆς ζωῆς τοῦ ἀρνίου τοῦ ἐσφαγμένου ἀπὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου.

8. And all that dwell upon the earth adored him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb, which was slain from the beginning of the world.

(S. has Τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ.)

“And all that dwell upon the earth adored” the Beast—Κατοικοῦντες ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς—a phrase which recurs frequently.—denotes the non-Christian inhabitants of the Roman Empire, those “whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb.” The Roman legions carried to the furthest boundaries of the Empire, which stands for the whole earth in this Book, sacred standards on which the image of the reigning emperor

was painted as the symbol of their tutelary god (Modestius De. ree. milit. Vocab.). Artabanus, King of Parthia, when reconciled to Caligula, adored (*adoravit*) the Roman standard (Suet. Calig. 14). Josephus tells us that the Jews begged Pontius Pilate to kill them rather than hoist the ensigns of Tiberius in Jerusalem, knowing that they would be expected to adore them ("Wars," II. ix. 2, 3). Tacitus calls the ensigns and the eagles *propria legionum numina* (Anls. I. 39).

The Book of Life is mentioned at R. iii. 5, in connection with those who "overcome" in the Church of Sardis. It is mentioned again at R. xvii. 8, in connection with the Beast, "whose names are not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world;" where *καταβολῆς κόσμου* is translated "foundation of the world," as against "beginning of the world," here. The Book of Life is opened on the day of judgment, and all who are not found written in it are cast into the pool of fire (R. xx. 12, 15). The continuity of the whole Book is evident.

9. Εἴ τις ἔχει οὖς, ἀκουσάτω.

9. If any man has an ear, let him hear.

This sentence belongs to the next verse, which is one of the three cryptic, but distinctive, references to Nero in the Book. It refers to the manner of his death. It is precluded by the warning addressed to the reader at the end of each of the Seven Letters. The next similar test question refers to the number of the Beast. It is precluded by the words, "Here is wisdom" (R. xiii. 18). And the third refers to Nero's position in the list of Emperors. It is introduced by the words, "Here is the understanding that hath wisdom" (R. xvii. 9, 10). In these three places particular attention is requested, suggesting a problem that requires careful study. They are the three key references to Nero. "If any man has an ear to hear" takes us to the Gospel of S. Luke. The question at issue is the understanding of a cypher, on all fours with a parable. As if it were said, if one may be allowed the paraphrase, To you it is given to know the mystery of the Beast by means of Scriptural symbolism, but to the rest in cypher—that seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand (see Luke viii. 10).

10. Εἴ τις εἰς αἰχμαλωσίαν, εἰς αἰχμαλωσίαν ὑπάγει· εἴ τις ἐν μαχαίρῃ ἀποκτενεῖ, δεῖ αὐτὸν ἐν μαχαίρῃ ἀποκτανθῆναι. Ὅδὲ ἐστὶν ἡ ὑπομονὴ καὶ ἡ πίστις τῶν ἁγίων.

10. He that shall lead into captivity shall go into captivity; he that shall kill by the sword must be killed by the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.

When these lines were written, the Jewish war was in progress. Hebrew Christians would naturally expect that Nero would lead the Jewish race into captivity. The fulfilment of prophecies was in his hands. Our Lord foretold the captivity. "And they shall fall by the edge of the sword and shall be led away captives into all nations" (Luke xxi. 24). The Seer drew attention to one head of the Beast as wounded and healed, a mark of Nero; to the same head blasphemously adored as God, another mark of Nero. Now he endows him (*αὐτὸν*) with a further mark of Nero, seen prophetically. "He that shall kill by the sword must be killed by the sword." This shortly came to pass. Nero was killed by the sword on the 9th June in the next year—68—as here predicted.

"Here is the patience and the faith of the saints," *τῶν ἁγίων*, *i.e.*, Christians. Their patience is founded on their faith in the promised protection of Christ, often renewed in the N.T., and confirmed by the promised death of Nero by the sword, and the rumour that he would go into captivity, into the abyss. For "patience" see R. i. 9; ii. 2, 3; and R. xiv. 12, notes.

11. Καὶ εἶδον ἄλλο θηρίον ἀναβαῖνον ἐκ τῆς γῆς, καὶ εἶχεν κέρατα δύο ὅμοια ἀρνίῳ, καὶ ἐλάλει ὡς δράκων.

11. And I saw another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns, like a lamb, and he spoke as a dragon.

Kingdoms arise from the sea in the O.T. Hence this beast which came out of the earth is not a Kingdom. "He had two horns like a lamb." But he was not a lamb, because he spoke as a dragon, that is, as Satan, the dragon, spoke. The symbolism of horns requires special notice here. In ancient days, amongst shepherd people, rams were symbols of power. Eight-horned rams and sheep with two or three pairs of horns existed. A ten-horned ram, like the Beast, would represent symbolically a great power. It was the peculiarity of lambs of multihorned sheep that they had only two horns. The ram is lord of the flock, the lamb is his offspring. The relationship between the first

Beast and the second is thus indicated. The first Beast, it is allowed, represents, not an individual, but the Imperial power. We may safely infer that the second beast is put, not for an individual, but for a kindred and inferior power. We are not left long in doubt as to the meaning of the beast from the earth, τῆς γῆς, *i. e.*, the pagan Roman Empire. We are told that he derived his power from the first Beast, and used it to seduce men to make an image of the Beast and adore it. He exercised the functions of the pagan priesthood. Several indications of this are given. Moreover we are shown the two beasts working together throughout the whole period of Cæsar worship. They are allied with Satan in resisting the advance of the Kingdom of Christ. At R. xvi. 13, these three, the dragon, the Beast, and the false prophet gather the foes of Christianity to battle against God. That the beast from the earth and the false prophet are identical is plainly stated by the Seer at R. xix. 20, when the Beast and the false prophet are cast into hell together. They fell together conquered by the Kingdom of Christ.

“Prophet” is an expression which indicates priesthood. “The historical meaning of *nābi* (the Hebrew word for prophet) established by biblical usage is ‘interpreter and mouthpiece of God.’ The Greek *προφήτης* (from *προ-φάναι*, to speak for or in the name of someone) translates the Hebrew word accurately” (Jean Calés, S.J., the Cath. Encyc.).

The researches of Dean Stanley on the Jewish Church, and Professor Fairbairn on Prophecy, have shown that the word “prophet,” in its Scriptural meaning, does not necessarily imply the gift of prediction. The word simply meant one who spoke by supernatural impulse, the mouthpiece, as it were, of God.

Classical writers used the expression in the same sense. Apollo was called the prophet of Jupiter, because Jupiter spoke through him. Pythia, the priestess of Apollo, was called, in like manner, the prophetess of Apollo, and her attendants, the prophets of Pythia.

This was also the Hebrew use of the word “prophet.” It is retained in the Greek of the Septuagint, and by the writers of the New Testament. The Rev. T. L. Scott sums up our knowledge of the nature of prophecy in his book, “The Visions of the Apocalypse” (1893). He says:

“The New Testament use of the word ‘prophet’ and ‘prophecy’ is entirely consistent with what we have found in the Old Testament, for here also we find the word ‘prophet’ applied to two classes of persons, first to those who hold an office which constitutes them God’s spokesmen, and secondly to those who, whether they have or have not a regular and permanent official appointment, yet

are on special occasions moved by Divine impulse to declare God's will" (p. 18).

The chief priests of idolatry held an office which made them the spokesmen of the gods. By mechanical devices, or by ventriloquism, they voiced the oracles. The earliest oracle was derived from "γῆ," "the earth." The Delphic oracle was originally of that character. Appropriately, the false prophet came out of the earth, ἐκ τῆς γῆς, and spoke as a dragon. He spoke as a dragon because he was the mouthpiece or prophet of the dragon. The early Christians looked upon the oracles of the temples as diabolical manifestations and all heathen temple-jugglery as pure Satanism. The sacrifices of the heathen priesthood were looked upon as offerings to the devil (see R. ix. 20, notes). "They sacrificed to devils and not to God" (Deut. xxxii. 17). The gravamen of the charge against Rome in this theme is Cæsar worship. The Seer sets forth judicially the accusation, and then describes the punishment. The pagan priesthood must be included in a description of Cæsar worship.

12. Καὶ τὴν ἐξουσίαν τοῦ πρώτου θηρίου πᾶσαν ποιεῖ ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ, καὶ ποιεῖ τὴν γῆν καὶ τοὺς ἐν αὐτῇ κατοικοῦντας ἵνα προσκυνήσουσιν τὸ θηρίον τὸ πρῶτον, οὗ ἔθεραπεύθη ἡ πληγὴ τοῦ θανάτου αὐτοῦ.

12. And he executed all the powers of the former beast in his sight, and he caused the earth and them that dwell therein to adore the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.

"The former Beast," was the Roman Emperor. *Pontifex Maximus* at Rome, and deified abroad.

Gibbon says :

"The office of supreme pontiff, which from the time of Numa to that of Augustus had always been exercised by one of the most eminent of the senators, was at length united to the imperial dignity" ("Decline and Fall," c. xx.).

"The ministers of polytheism, both in Rome and in the provinces, were, for the most part, men of noble birth and of affluent fortune, who received as an honourable distinction the care of a celebrated temple, or of a public sacrifice; exhibited very frequently at their own expense the sacred games . . . and whilst they acknowledged the supreme jurisdiction of the Senate, of the College of Pontiffs, and of the Emperor, these civil magistrates contented themselves with the easy task of maintaining in peace and dignity the general worship of mankind" ("Decline and Fall," c. xv.).

To these men the Emperor delegated both temporal and spiritual power. The Asiarchs, or chief priests of Asia, had magisterial powers over life and death in all matters relating to religion. They "executed all the powers of the former Beast in his sight"; *ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ*, which may be rendered "under his supervision." They held enquiries in the presence of the Imperial representative; and the "living" bust of Cæsar looked down upon the proceedings.

The imperial edicts of persecution were laws concerning religion which came into the hands of the sacerdotal magistrates for execution. The priesthood coerced the earth, and those "*ἐν αὐτῇ κατοικοῦντας*," a Greek formula used in this book for the enemies of the Kingdom of Christ, to adore the first beast. Those Christians, and only those, who fell away under persecution, belonged to that class.

"The first beast whose deadly wound was healed," refers, as we have seen, to the reigning King, Nero, who was adored as a God.

13. Καὶ ποιεῖ σημεῖα μεγάλα, ἵνα καὶ πῦρ ποιῆ ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καταβαίνειν εἰς τὴν γῆν ἐνώπιον τῶν ἀνθρώπων.

13. And he did great signs, so that he made even fire to come down from heaven upon the earth in the sight of men.

The pagan false prophets pretended to supernatural powers, and "did great signs," like the Egyptian magicians (Exod. vii. 12 and viii. 7). The priests of the chief Temples had mysterious powers, which faded away as Christianity spread. Eusebius noticed this (Dum. Evang. L. V). Julian the Apostate admitted it (Cyril, Contra Julian, L. vi.). Juvenal refers to it in Satire VI. So also Lucan, Lib. IV. Towards the end of the first century Plutarch wrote a book about the silence of the oracles.

Fire coming down from heaven was one of the miracles of Elias (3 Kings xviii. 38, 4 Kings i. 10). We have seen in the Apocalypse that fire coming down from heaven may mean various inflictions (R. viii. 5, 7, 8, xi. 5, xiv. 18, xx. 9). Conjuring with fire was one of the stock miracles of Eastern magicians. We are expressly told that the dragon gave the Beast his own strength and great power (R. xiii. 2). The dragon's strength lay partly in supernatural manifestations. Eusebius, quoting Justin, refers to the magic arts of Simon Magus (H. E. ii. 13), and of Menander (H. E. iii. 26).

14. Καὶ πλανᾷ τοὺς κατοικοῦντας ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς διὰ τὰ σημεῖα ἃ ἐδόθη αὐτῷ ποιῆσαι ἐνώπιον τοῦ θηρίου, λέγων τοῖς κατοικοῦσιν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ποιῆσαι εἰκόνα τῷ θηρίῳ, ὃ ἔχει τὴν πληγὴν τῆς μαχαίρης καὶ ἔζησεν.

14. And he seduced them that dwell on the earth by the signs which were given him to do in the sight of the beast, saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image of the beast which had the wound by the sword, and lived.

(S. = ὃς ἔχει.)

At S. John's headquarters, Ephesus, magic arts were in vogue. The "Ἐφεσια γράμματα" were well known. When S. Paul preached at Ephesus, c. A.D. 55, "Many of them who had followed curious arts, brought together their books and burnt them before all" (Acts xix. 19). By means of "signs which were given him to do" (*i.e.*, which God permitted), the heathen priesthood seduced, τοὺς κατοικοῦντας ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, pagan idolaters, who were easily seduced, telling them to make an image (εἰκόνα) of the Beast, "which had the wound by the sword and lived." The wound is called "the wound by the sword," to connect it with Nero. Signs done in the sight of the Beast does not limit their performance to Rome. The Asiarchs strove to popularise Cæsar worship in the provinces, by means of signs, in the presence of the Imperial representatives and image of the Emperor (see xiii. 12, notes).

"He seduced them that dwell on the earth" goes back to "Satan, who seduceth the whole world" (R. xii. 9). The lamb-like beast is a minister of Satan.

15. Καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτῷ δοῦναι πνεῦμα τῇ εἰκόνι τοῦ θηρίου, ἵνα καὶ λαλήσῃ ἢ εἰκὼν τοῦ θηρίου, καὶ ποιήσῃ ἵνα ὅσοι ἐὰν μὴ προσκυνήσωσιν τῇ εἰκόνι τοῦ θηρίου ἀποκτανθῶσιν.

15. And it was given to him to give life to the image of the beast, and that the image of the beast should speak; and should cause that whosoever will not adore the image of the beast, should be slain.

"To give life to the image of the Beast, and that the image of the Beast should speak," need not be taken quite literally, apparent life and animation will satisfy the reading. By adjustments of light and shade and distance, with the aid of ventriloquism or speaking tubes and movable lips, it was easy to make the image speak. We may suppose that the local authorities connived at trickery of this kind, for the sentence went forth from

the Beast, and from his image, "that whosoever will not adore the image of the Beast should be slain." That official sentence included all men, high and low.

"And it was given to him to slay" means that God permitted persecution for the ultimate good of the Church.

16. Καὶ ποιεῖ πάντας, τοὺς μικροὺς καὶ τοὺς μεγάλους, καὶ τοὺς πλουσίους καὶ τοὺς πτωχοὺς, καὶ τοὺς ἐλευθέρους καὶ τοὺς δούλους, ἵνα δώσιν αὐτοῖς χάραγμα ἐπὶ τῆς χειρὸς αὐτῶν τῆς δεξιᾶς ἢ ἐπὶ τὸ μέτωπον αὐτῶν.

16. And he shall make all, both little and great, rich and poor, freemen and bondmen, to have a mark in their right hand or on their foreheads.

"Πάντας," "all," indicates that the Cæsar worship was binding on all ranks throughout the Empire; that every man, from Consul to slave, should have a mark in his right hand or forehead. This is symbolism. Roman history, which checks every line of this exegesis, knows of no such mark. The Seer is writing of the Deified Emperor, and has to make use of symbols. The word *χάραγμα*, translated "mark," was the stamp used on the official documents of the Empire in Nero's time in Egypt. Deissmann gives an example: "*Λιβ' Αὐτοκράτορος Καίσαρος Νερούα Τραϊανοῦ Σεβαστοῦ Γερμανικοῦ Δακικοῦ*" ("Biblical Studies," p. 242). This title illustrates the blasphemy of Nero. At the same time the use of the technical name of the stamp, used on Neronian documents, forges another link in the chain of evidence, connecting the Beast with Nero.

Eusebius, who lived through the tenth persecution, throws light on the meaning of "a mark in the right hand." He says that

"Edicts were also issued, in which it was ordered that all the prelates in every place should first be committed to prison, and then by every artifice constrained to offer sacrifice to the gods." . . . "Here one, whilst some forced him to the impure and detestable sacrifices, was again dismissed, as if he had sacrificed, although this was not the case. There another, though he had not in the least approached the altar, not even touched the unholy thing, yet, when others said that he had sacrificed, went away, bearing the calumny in silence" (H. E., VIII. 2-3).

"One was seized by the hands and led to the altar by others, who were thrusting the polluted and unhallowed victim into his right hand, and then suffered to go again as if he had sacrificed. Another, though he had not even touched, when others said that he had sacrificed, went away in silence" ("B.M.," c. i.).

From which it appears that the act of taking the sacrificial meat in the right hand was the test employed. The meat stained the right hand, and that mark was the proof of sacrifice, the mark of the beast. These things, related by Eusebius, took place in the tenth persecution, in the nineteenth year of the reign of Diocletian, A.D. 303.

The mark on the forehead, where all is symbolism, may be taken symbolically. It is so taken previously in the Apocalypse, which may be for our guidance. At R. vii. 3, when punishment is about to fall upon the Jews, an angel cries out: "Hurt not the earth, nor the sea, nor the trees, till we seal the servants of our God in their foreheads." Then twelve thousand of each of the twelve tribes were sealed. This sealing we take to be the sign of the cleansing waters of baptism on the forehead. It is the sign of Christianity. It is alluded to again at R. ix. 4, where we find the locusts, who came out of the pit, commanded that "they should not hurt the grass of the earth nor any green thing nor any tree, but only the men *who have not the sign of God in their foreheads.*" The absence of the sign from the forehead is put forward in the Jewish theme of the Apocalypse as the mark of the non-Christian. In the Roman theme it is put forward, in almost the same words, as the mark of the pagan destined to destruction.

17. Καὶ ἵνα μή τις δύνηται ἀγοράσαι ἢ πωλῆσαι εἰ μὴ ὁ ἔχων τὸ χάραγμα, τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ θηρίου ἢ τὸν ἀριθμὸν τοῦ ὀνόματος αὐτοῦ.

17. And that no man might buy or sell but he that hath the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

The official "*χάραγμα*," or stamp of the Beast, was sacrifice to Cæsar. But the Asiarchs were sometimes content with the invocation of the genius of Cæsar, together with the burning of incense, or pouring out of libations in honour of Cæsar's effigy. Pliny's test for doubtful Christians was to make them call upon the gods and supplicate the image of Cæsar with frankincense and wine.

Eusebius relates that when S. Polycarp was led to martyrdom, in the second century, "He was met by Herod, who was the Irenarch, and his father Nicetes, who, taking him in their vehicle, persuaded him to take a seat with them, and said: 'For what harm is there in saying, Lord Cæsar, and to sacrifice, and thus save your life'" (H. E. IV. c. xv.) But Polycarp, refusing, was taken to the stadium, where the pro-consul urged

him. "Have a regard for your age," he said. "Swear by the genius of Cæsar" (*Ib.*).

"And that no man might buy or sell, but he that hath the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name" (R. xiii. 16-17). The priests took care that the ordinary transactions of daily life, such as buying and selling, should be accompanied by some overt act of worship of the emperors, so that no one, little or great, rich or poor, could escape their meshes.

Tertullian, writing, about the year 200, notices this state of affairs. He says: "The innumerable deities and rites of polytheism were closely interwoven with every circumstance of business or pleasure, of public or private life, and it seemed impossible to escape the observance of them without at the same time renouncing the commerce of mankind and all the offices and amusements of society" ("De Corona Militis," c. x.).

The consideration of "the number of his name" is personal to Nero, as will appear in the next verse.

18. Ὡδε ἡ σοφία ἐστίν. ὁ ἔχων νοῦν ψηφισάτω τὸν ἀριθμὸν τοῦ θηρίου, ἀριθμὸς γὰρ ἀνθρώπου ἐστίν· καὶ ὁ ἀριθμὸς αὐτοῦ ἑξακόσιοι ἑξήκοντα ἕξ.

18. Here is wisdom. He that hath understanding let him compute the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man, and his number is six hundred and sixty-six.

We have had the Beast put before us in two aspects, as the Roman Empire, personified in its seven heads, the Cæsars; and specifically, as the head wounded by the sword. It is hinted repeatedly that the wounded head is Nero. Now we are told to compute the number of the Beast, for it is the number of a man, a living man, whose dreaded name must be shrouded in the mystery of gematria. Hence the necessity for wisdom, "σοφία," "That the Father of Glory may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and of revelation (σοφίας καὶ ἀποκαλύψεως) in the knowledge of him" (Eph. i. 17). "He that hath understanding, let him compute the number."

The ancient doctrine of numbers, which the Jews probably derived from the Chaldeans, entered into the Hagadic exposition of the Old Testament, which gradually assumed written form and completion, from about two centuries before to two centuries after Christ ("Ency. Brit."). The use of the numerical power of letters as a key to mysteries, which the Jews of Palestine had early favoured, was familiar to the converts

from Judaism living in S. John's time. The number 666, as we have seen (p. 92), corresponds in Hebrew to the name of Nero. The explanation of this text is complete.

Simple as the solution appears now, it was not until the systematic study of Hebrew was applied to scriptural exegesis by German scholars in the 19th century that it was discovered.

CHAPTER XIV

1. Καὶ εἶδον, καὶ ἰδοὺ τὸ ἀρνίον ἑστὸς ἐπὶ τὸ ὄρος Σιών, καὶ μετ' αὐτοῦ ἑκατὸν τεσσαράκοντα τέσσαρες χιλιάδες ἔχουσαι τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ καὶ τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ γεγραμμένον ἐπὶ τῶν μετώπων αὐτῶν.

1. And I saw and behold a Lamb stood upon Mount Zion, and with him a hundred and forty-four thousand, having his name and the name of his Father written on their foreheads.

When the vengeance of God was about to fall upon Jerusalem, another angel arose, "Saying, hurt not the earth, nor the sea, nor the trees, till we seal the servants of God in their foreheads" (R. vii. 4). And "an hundred and forty-four thousand (were) sealed of all the tribes of the children of Israel" (R. vii. 4). They were living Hebrew Christians sealed as a protection against the destruction awaiting their Jewish brethren.

This same body of Christians appears before us again. The Seer carries the revelation regarding these favoured Hebrew Christians a step further and shows them safe, with the Lamb, in heaven. They shall not be hurt by the plagues of Rome. This reassuring revelation was given to the living representatives of that great Hebrew body, then at Jerusalem (see Nazarines, p. 216).

Mount Zion, the highest part of Jerusalem, was commonly put in the O.T. as a symbol of heaven. "And now they that are redeemed by the Lord shall return, and shall come into Sion, singing praises" (Isa. li. 11). "Sing ye to the Lord a new canticle . . . let the children of Sion be joyful in their king" (Ps. cxlix. 1-2). In the N.T. S. Paul says, "But you are come to Mount Zion, and to the City of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to the company of many thousands of angels" (Heb. xii. 22). It is the fulfilment of prophecies. In the vision of the New Jerusalem, at the end of the Book, we read, "The Lamb shall be in it, and his servants shall serve him. And they shall see his face and his name shall be on their foreheads" (R. xxii. 3, 4).

2. Καὶ ἤκουσα φωνὴν ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ὡς φωνὴν ὑδάτων πολλῶν καὶ ὡς φωνὴν βροντῆς μεγάλης, καὶ ἡ φωνὴ ἣν ἤκουσα ὡς κιθαρῶδῶν κιθαριζόντων ἐν ταῖς κιθάραις αὐτῶν.

2. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters and as the voice of great thunder, and the voice which I heard was as of harpers, harping on their harps.

At R. i. 15 the voice of God is compared to "the sound of many waters," *i.e.*, a multitude of people. In this vision the voice proceeds from the 144,000 Hebrews, and the volume of sound is likened to great thunder. But there was music in it, for it was accompanied by the harp. For harps and canticles see R. v. 8, 9. Note the similarity of construction of the Roman and Jewish themes.

3. Καὶ ᾄδουσιν ὡς ᾠδὴν καινὴν ἐνώπιον τοῦ θρόνου καὶ ἐνώπιον τῶν τεσσάρων ζώων καὶ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων, καὶ οὐδεὶς ἐδύνατο μαθεῖν τὴν ᾠδὴν εἰ μὴ αἱ ἑκατὸν τεσσαεράκοντα τεσσαρες χιλιάδες, οἱ ἠγορασμένοι ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς.

3. And they sang as it were a new canticle, before the throne and before the four living creatures and the ancients, and no man could say the canticle but those hundred and forty-four thousand, who were purchased from the earth.

At R. v. 9 the four living creatures and the four-and-twenty ancients "sang a new canticle," which is there given. Here the 144,000 sang "as it were" a new canticle before the throne, the living creatures and the ancients. They are in heaven, a new feature in that ever-present vision of the throne. They sang a canticle which none could sing but themselves, something distinctive of their peculiar position in the sight of God. No one else could sing it.

The Seer places the Hebrews of the early Church in a class apart. He has in view their twofold position, under the Old Law and the New. They, alone, welcomed their Messiah and followed Him. They inherited the promise of the O.T. They were the elect and chosen; many of them the companions, friends, and relations of Christ, and His Apostles. But besides that, they were the first fruits of Christianity. No others of those "redeemed" to God in the blood of the Lamb (see R. v. 9) had the double claim to the rewards of heaven, therefore none of the O.T. canticles could express their debt to the Lamb.

4. Οὗτοί εἰσιν οἱ μετὰ γυναικῶν οὐκ ἐμολύνθησαν, παρθένοι γάρ εἰσιν. οὗτοι οἱ ἀκολουθοῦντες τῷ ἀρνίῳ ὅπου ἂν ὑπάγει, οὗτοι ἠγοράσθησαν ἀπὸ τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἀπαρχὴ τῷ Θεῷ καὶ τῷ ἀρνίῳ.

4. These are they who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were purchased from among men, the first fruits to God and to the Lamb.

The Apocalypse repeatedly symbolises idolatry as fornication and prostitution, *e.g.*, "With whom the Kings of the earth have committed fornication, and they who inhabit the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her prostitution" (R. xvii. 2). See R. xvii. 4, 5, 16, xviii. 3, 9, xix. 2. The 144,000 Hebrews of the early Church were not virgins in the literal sense of the word; but they were in the metaphorical sense. Idolatry was abhorrent to the Hebrew Christians. The 144,000 had never sacrificed to Cæsar, or to other false gods. In that respect they were virgins. But their claim to heaven as followers of the Lamb rests on other grounds. They were purchased (*ἠγοράσθησαν*) from among men, "the first fruits to God." At R. v. 9, "*ἠγόρασας*" is translated "redeemed," and that is the sense in which the word is used here, and at verse 3, above. In the Old Law the first fruits of the field were given to God (Exod. xxiii. 19; Lev. ii. 12). The Apostles laboured for some years, exclusively, in Jerusalem, and their first appeal elsewhere also was to the Jews. The 144,000 Hebrews were consequently the earliest converts to Christianity, "the first fruits to God and the Lamb." Their position is well defined. S. Paul uses "first fruits" in the same sense (Rom. xvi. 5, and I Cor. xvi. 15).

5. Καὶ ἐν τῷ στόματι αὐτῶν οὐχ εὐρέθη ψεῦδος· ἄμωμοί γάρ εἰσιν.

5. And in their mouth was found no lie, for they are without spot before the throne of God.

(S. omits *γάρ*.)

Lying connotes false doctrine in this Book, whether it be heresy or paganism. "Who is a liar, but he who denieth that Jesus is the Christ" (I Jhn. ii. 22). False Apostles and false prophets afflicted the early Church. They were liars. The Pharisees were liars. The Jews were liars. Our Lord told them so, "You are of your father the devil. . . . When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own, for he is a liar and the father thereof." S. John put this in his Gospel (viii. 44). The

144,000 were free from this taint. Dr. Hort notices that ἄμωμοι comes from a Levitical term, referring to Jewish sacrifice, meaning sacrificially perfect, "without spot."

"Before the throne of God above" follows the Vulgate = "*ante thronum Dei.*"

6. Καὶ εἶδον ἄλλον ἄγγελον πετόμενον ἐν μεσουρανήματι, ἔχοντα εὐαγγέλιον αἰώνιον εὐαγγελίσαι ἐπὶ τοὺς καθημένους ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς καὶ ἐπὶ πᾶν ἔθνος καὶ φυλὴν καὶ γλῶσσαν καὶ λαόν.

6. And I saw another angel flying through the midst of heaven, having the eternal gospel to preach to them that sit upon the earth, and over every nation and tribe and tongue and people.

Before the final woes of Jerusalem were depicted an Eagle appeared, *πετομένου ἐν μεσουρανήματι* (the same words), and made a proclamation of woe (R. viii. 13). That eagle we have assumed to be S. John himself, and the proclamation his Revelation. So here we may assume that he is making a prediction of coming events. *Εὐαγγέλιον* = glad tidings, was used for the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the early Church (Mark i. 1). But in this case the substance of the proclamation is given in the next verse. The "glad tidings" refers to the punishment of Rome, "Fear the Lord and give him honour because the hour of his judgment has come," next verse. This good news is given to those, *καθημένους*—sitting as Christians upon the earth. *Κατοικέω* is the verb used for non-Christians. This connects with R. xvii. 15, "The waters . . . where the harlot sitteth are people and nations and tongues," Christian people and nations and tongues as above. The sufferings of pagans at the hands of Rome do not come into the purview of the Book. Another angel follows and proclaims the fate of Babylon = Rome. The "eternal gospel" has a wide significance, and S. John may refer in this vision of the future to his own gospel.

7. Λέγων ἐν φωνῇ μεγάλῃ, Φοβήθητε τὸν Θεὸν καὶ δότε αὐτῷ δόξαν, ὅτι ἦλθεν ἡ ὥρα τῆς κρίσεως αὐτοῦ, καὶ προσκυνήσατε τῷ ποιήσαντι τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν καὶ τὴν θάλασσαν καὶ πηγὰς ὑδάτων.

7. Saying with a loud voice, Fear the Lord and give him honour, because the hour of his judgment is come; and adore ye him who made heaven and earth, the sea and the fountains of water.

(S. omits the article *τὴν* before *θάλασσαν*.)

Φωνῇ μεγάλῃ—"with a loud voice"—is another connecting link with the eagle angel of R. viii. 13. Bound up with the

evangel of the fall of Rome is an exhortation to Christians, the world over, to refrain from idolatry, to fear God and adore Him alone.

The fear of the Lord is taught in many places in the Apocalypse, both directly as here, and indirectly, as when the saints in heaven are referred to as having feared the Lord. Men fell into Cæsar worship through fear. It was necessary to oppose that fear by a greater one, the fear of God, whose power extends over both this world and the next.

Three angels make three announcements in this chapter, connected one with the other. They are prophetic warnings.

"Because the hour of his judgment is come" refers to the matter in hand, the execution of God's judgment on the Roman power. At R. xiv. 15 we are told "the hour is come to reap." At R. iii. 10 we have "the hour of temptation." Hour is put for time, indefinite in length. "The hour of his judgment is come" is the answer to the martyr's prayer at R. vi. 10—"Dost thou not judge and revenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth"—"κατοικούντων ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς." We know the meaning of that Greek phrase now. It means pagan Rome, the persecutor. Accordingly pageants of vengeance on Rome presently appear.

8. Καὶ ἄλλος δεύτερος ἄγγελος ἠκολούθησεν λέγων, Ἐπεσεν ἔπεσεν βαβυλῶν ἡ μεγάλη, ἣ ἐκ τοῦ οἴνου τοῦ θυμοῦ τῆς πορνείας αὐτῆς πεπότικεν πάντα τὰ ἔθνη.

8. And another angel followed, saying, She is fallen, she is fallen, that great Babylon which made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.

And another *δεύτερος*—"second"—angel followed. ("Second" is not in the Vulgate.) He encouraged the Christian people to be fearless of Rome, for she is fallen, doubly fallen. Not only has the Empire come to grief, prophetically, by anticipation, but "Great Babylon" also. Babylon was the mystic name for Rome amongst Hebrew Christians of the early Church. "That is admitted by scholars" (Hort, "Judaism and Christ," p. 155). In 1 Peter v. 13 we read: "The Church which is in Babylon . . . salutes you." S. Peter wrote from Rome, and evidently employed a well-known metaphor when he called it Babylon in his Epistle. In the Sibylline Oracles, a Jewish composition written before the year 67, Rome is more than once referred to under the name of Babylon.

Gibbon says: "As long as the emperors who reigned before

Constantine persisted in the profession of idolatry, the epithet of Babylon was applied to the City and to the Empire of Rome" ("Decline and Fall," cap. xv.).

S. John, as we know, had good reason to avoid inflaming the passions of the Romans, hence he could not mention Rome by name. But in using the expression Babylon he makes his meaning perfectly clear to the Christians of his time.

Ancient Babylon was the metropolis of a great and idolatrous Empire, which persecuted the chosen people. It was, therefore, a symbol of pagan Rome easily understood. It is written in *Isaias* xxi. 9: "Babylon is fallen, she is fallen, and all the graven gods thereof are broken unto the ground." The predictions regarding the destruction of ancient Babylon were fulfilled gradually, during the lapse of centuries. So it was with the Roman Babylon.

Here, again, Babylon is represented as a woman, as was the Hebrew custom; and the allusion to wine and fornication is put for her idolatrous arts and saturnalia. "Babylon hath been a golden cup in the hand of the Lord, that made all the earth drunk; the nations have drunk of her wine" (*Jer.* li. 7).

Prof. M. Stuart notices that *τοῦ θυμοῦ* is derived from *θύω*, "to sacrifice," *i.e.*, to burn on an altar (*op. cit.*, ii. p. 296). It is in contrast with the wine of God's wrath at verse 10 below. The same charge is made against Rome at R. xvii. 2, when the Kings of the earth and the inhabitants of the earth are said to have been "made drunk with the wine of her prostitution," "*τῆς πορνείας αὐτῆς*"—the same word in Greek with two English translations. Fornication is used frequently as a symbol of idolatry in the Apocalypse, as in the O.T.

9. Καὶ ἄλλος ἄγγελος τρίτος ἠκολούθησεν αὐτοῖς λέγων ἐν φωνῇ μεγάλῃ. Εἴ τις προσκυνεῖ τὸ θηρίον καὶ τὴν εἰκόνα αὐτοῦ, καὶ λαμβάνει χάραγμα ἐπὶ τοῦ μετώπου αὐτοῦ ἢ ἐπὶ τὴν χεῖρα αὐτοῦ.

9. And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man shall adore the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand.

The third angel continues the prophetic warning, calling attention particularly to the worship of the Beast and his image, and to the marks of the Beast, set forth at R. xiii. 15, 16, showing that the denunciations which follow are aimed at Cæsar worship.

10. Καὶ αὐτὸς πίεται ἐκ τοῦ οἴνου τοῦ θυμοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ τοῦ κεκερασμένου ἀκράτου ἐν τῷ ποτηρίῳ τῆς ὀργῆς αὐτοῦ, καὶ βασανισθήσεται ἐν πυρὶ καὶ θείῳ ἐνώπιον ἀγγέλων ἀγίων καὶ ἐνώπιον τοῦ ἀρνίου.

10. He also shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is mingled with pure wine in the cup of his wrath, and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the sight of the holy angels and in the sight of the Lamb.

“Καὶ αὐτὸς”—“He, the same,” who shall adore the Beast, “shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God.” Adoring the Beast is the same thing as drinking “the wine of the wrath of her fornication” (see R. xiv. 8). The wine of the wrath of God is an O.T. symbol of Divine chastisement. “He shall drink of the wrath of the Almighty” (Job xxi. 20). “For in the hand of the Lord there is a cup of strong wine full of mixture . . . all the sinners of the earth shall drink” (Ps. lxxiv. 9), see also Isa. li. 17, Jer. xxv. 15. The meaning of the wine of the wrath of God in this case is exemplified by what follows, “He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone.” Brimstone, *i.e.*, sulphur, added to fire, not only makes it burn more fiercely, but also causes it to evolve suffocating fumes. The Lord rained fire and brimstone on Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. xix. 24). See the fire of Topheth (Isa. xxx. 33).

The apostates, who sacrifice to Cæsar, are warned that there is prepared for them the torment of fire and brimstone, in the sight of the Lamb and his holy Angels.

11. Καὶ ὁ καπνὸς τοῦ βασανισμοῦ αὐτῶν εἰς αἰῶνας αἰώνων ἀναβαίνει, καὶ οὐκ ἔχουσιν ἀνάπαυσιν ἡμέρας καὶ νυκτός, οἱ προσκυνοῦντες τὸ θηρίον καὶ τὴν εἰκόνα αὐτοῦ, καὶ εἴ τις λαμβάνει τὸ χάραγμα τοῦ ὄνοματος αὐτοῦ.

11. And the smoke of their torments shall ascend up for ever and ever ; neither have they rest day or night, who have adored the beast and his image, and whosoever did receive the mark of his name.

The eternity of the torments, of those who adored the Beast, is explicitly declared. “Day and night” is a Hebraism, meaning continually, without end.

The herald angels announce, first, that the hour of God’s “judgment is come.” That is the answer to “How long O Lord . . . dost thou not judge” at R. vi. 10. Second, that judgment is fallen (by anticipation) on Rome because she has corrupted all nations with her idolatries. Third, that all who participate in Cæsar worship will be condemned to hell.

12. Ὡδε ἡ ὑπομονὴ τῶν ἁγίων ἐστίν, οἱ τηροῦντες τὰς ἐντολὰς τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ τὴν πίστιν Ἰησοῦ.

12. Here is the patience of the saints, who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.

At R. xiii. 10, where the death of Nero by the sword is foretold, we have a similar intimation, "Here is the patience and faith of the saints." The Seer knew the strength of the temptation to sacrifice to Cæsar, how men would cling to life, and fall into apostacy like green figs shaken from a fig-tree in a high wind (R. vi. 13). The natural instinct of self-preservation had to be met by the strongest arguments in favour of self-sacrifice. These he puts forward in the punishments of hell.

The patience of the saints is to ponder the reward of the good and the punishment of the bad, as set forth above, and to bear patiently the trials of this short life to avoid the worse sufferings of the wicked in the eternal life to come. We gather from S. Paul that "tribulation worketh patience" (Rom. v. 3).

13. Καὶ ἤκουσα φωνῆς ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ λεγούσης, Γράψον. Μακάριοι οἱ νεκροὶ οἱ ἐν Κυρίῳ ἀποθνήσκοντες. ἀπ' ἄρτι ναὶ, λέγει τὸ πνεῦμα, ἵνα ἀναπαήσονται ἐκ τῶν κόπων αὐτῶν, τὰ γὰρ ἔργα αὐτῶν ἀκολουθεῖ μετ' αὐτῶν.

13. And I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, Write, Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord. From henceforth now saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, for their works follow them.

(S. puts the stop after ἀπ' ἄρτι.)

Angels having threatened with punishments those who lapse into idolatry; a voice from heaven proclaims the reward of the "constant." Blessed are they who die in the Lord, now, and from henceforth. The voice is the voice of the Spirit, the Holy Ghost. It takes us back to the letters to the Seven Churches, which begin with Γράψον, "write," and end with, He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit—"τὸ πνεῦμα"—says to the Churches.

That they may rest—"ἵνα ἀναπαήσονται." So, the martyrs who cried out "How long, O Lord" were told to rest—"ἵνα ἀναπαύσονται" (R. vi. 11, where see notes).

Their labours are ended, but their good works follow them. God warns the Church of Laodicea, "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot." At R. xx. 12, 13, we are told the dead "were judged, every one according to his works." Again at R. xxii. 12, "My reward is with me, to render to

every man according to his works." Revelation is very clear as to the value of works. S. John in his Gospel throws light on the meaning of works (Jhn. v. 36, vi. 29, viii. 39, 41).

The command to write means that this is an important decree specially worthy of remembrance.

14. Καὶ εἶδον, καὶ ἶδου νεφέλη λευκή, καὶ ἐπὶ τὴν νεφέλην καθήμενον ὁμοιον υἱῷ ἀνθρώπου, ἔχων ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς αὐτοῦ στέφανον χρυσοῦν καὶ ἐν τῇ χειρὶ αὐτοῦ δρέπανον ὀξύ.

14. And I saw and behold a white cloud ; and upon the cloud one sitting like to the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle.

(S = υἱὸν ἀνθρώπου.)

This is a fresh vision. It introduces the Roman catastrophe with a tableau symbolising the fall of Rome. *Νεφέλη λευκή*, "a white cloud," and sitting on the cloud, as on a throne "one like the Son of man." See *ὁ καθήμενος*, R. iv. 2. "One like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven" (Dan. vii. 13). "And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man" (R. i. 13). "Behold He cometh with the clouds" (R. i. 7). See Matt. xxiv. 30, xxvi. 64; Acts i. 9, 11.

"The Son of man," an expression used frequently by the prophet Ezechiel for the Messiah, adopted by our Lord and used by the Seer at R i. 13, evidently means our Saviour. He holds a sharp sickle or reaping hook in His hand, as a symbol of reaping. He appears in an executive capacity in this comprehensive symbolism to match His appearance at the head of the forces which overthrow Rome in Chapter xix. 11.

15. Καὶ ἄλλος ἄγγελος ἐξῆλθεν ἐκ τοῦ ναοῦ, κράζων ἐν φωνῇ μεγάλῃ τῷ καθημένῳ ἐπὶ τῆς νεφέλης, Πέμψον τὸ δρέπανόν σου καὶ θέρισον, ὅτι ἦλθεν ἡ ὥρα θερίσαι, ὅτι ἐξηράνθη ὁ θερισμὸς τῆς γῆς.

15. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat upon the cloud, Put to thy sickle and reap, because the hour is come to reap, for the harvest of the earth is ripe.

"Another angel," different from the herald angels, "came out of the Temple"; that is, Hebraically, from the presence of God. At R. xi. 19 the Temple of God was opened in heaven, in connection with the judgment, "and there were lightnings and voices." This angel came from the judgment seat of God as a messenger. "Put to thy sickle and reap," is the

command of God. This is in accordance with the teaching of the Gospel of S. John. "This commandment have I received from my Father" (Jhn. x. 18, xii. 49, xiv. 31).

For the harvest of the earth, "*τῆς γῆς*," is ripe. We have seen that *τῆς γῆς* is put throughout the Apocalypse for the non-Christian inhabitants of the Roman Empire. As we have done with the Jews, "*τῆς γῆς*" refers here to pagans. Dr. Swete says, "In the Prophets the harvest, whether wheat harvest or vintage, represents the overthrow of the enemies of Israel, who are ripe for their fall" (*op. cit.*, p. 190). S. John uses the same metaphor with reference to Rome.

The angel announces that the hour has come to reap (see verse 7, *ante*). The hour is mentioned again in connection with the destruction of Rome at R. xviii. 10, 17, 19. The harvest of paganism took some centuries to reap, but Christians of the first century could not know that.

16. Καὶ ἔβαλεν ὁ καθήμενος ἐπὶ τὴν νεφέλην τὸ δρέπανον αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν, καὶ ἐθερίσθη ἡ γῆ.

16. And he that sat on the cloud, put his sickle to the earth, and the earth was reaped.

(S. = *τῆς νεφέλης*.)

"And he that sat on the cloud put" his reaping hook upon the Empire. "Ἐβαλεν, as we have seen at R. ii. 22, does not mean violence. He laid the sickle—*ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν*—upon the Roman world and it was reaped. He gave the signal for reaping, and forthwith the reaping was finished. Thus the Seer shows the irresistible power and greatness of Him that sat on the cloud. A display of Divine omnipotence was needed to symbolise the destruction of the Roman-world-power.

17. Καὶ ἄλλος ἄγγελος ἐξῆλθεν ἐκ τοῦ ναοῦ τοῦ ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ, ἔχων καὶ αὐτὸς δρέπανον ὀξύ.

17. And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle.

There were two harvests, the cereal, and the wine harvest. The idea of gathering these in, as the harvests of iniquity, comes from Joel. "Put ye in the sickles for the harvest is ripe, come and go down for the press is full, the fats run over, for their wickedness is multiplied" (Joel iii. 13). Another angel came out of the Temple of Judgment, with a sharp sickle. *Δρέπανον* means a pruning sickle used for vines as well as for corn.

18. Καὶ ἄλλος ἄγγελος ἐξῆλθεν ἐκ τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου, ἔχων ἐξουσίαν ἐπὶ τοῦ πυρός, καὶ ἐφώνησεν φωνῇ μεγάλῃ τῷ ἔχοντι τὸ δρέπανον τὸ ὄξυ, λέγων, Πέμψου σου τὸ δρέπανον τὸ ὄξυ καὶ τρύγησον τοὺς βότρυας τῆς ἀμπέλου τῆς γῆς, ὅτι ἤκμασαν αἱ σταφυλαὶ αὐτῆς.

18. And another angel came out from the altar, who had power over fire, and he cried with a loud voice to him that had the sharp sickle saying, Put to thy sharp sickle and gather the clusters of the vineyard of the earth because the grapes thereof are ripe.

The angel from the altar who had power over fire reminds us of the angel of punishment at R. viii. 5, who "took the censor and filled it with the fire of the altar and cast it on the earth." To have power over fire is to be concerned in the administration of punishments. He ordered the other angel—*ἄλλος ἄγγελος*—of verse 17, who had the sharp sickle, to gather the clusters of the vineyard of the earth—*τῆς γῆς*—meaning the Roman Empire. For the grapes are—*ἤκμασαν*—"full ripe," from the point of view of iniquity.

19. Καὶ ἔβαλεν ὁ ἄγγελος τὸ δρέπανον αὐτοῦ εἰς τὴν γῆν, καὶ ἐτρύγησεν τὴν ἀμπελον τῆς γῆς καὶ ἔβαλεν εἰς τὴν ληνὸν τοῦ θυμοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ τὸν μέγαν.

19. And the angel put his sharp sickle to the earth, and gathered the vineyard of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God.

Εἰς τὴν γῆν, as Prof. Stuart says, "generically expresses the object on or toward which the action of the *δρέπανον* was directed." The angel gathered the vineyard of the earth, *τῆς γῆς*, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. The over-ripe vineyard of the earth is symbolical of the moral pagan rottenness of the Empire.

The idea of the great winepress of the wrath of God follows the threat at R. xiv. 9, 10, "If any man shall adore the Beast and his image. . . . He also shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God." And these tropes are strongly contrasted with the sin of mystic Babylon, "which made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication" (R. xiv. 8). This symbolism is taken from the O.T. Job says of the wicked man, "He shall drink of the wrath of the Almighty" (xxi. 20). "Pour out thy wrath on the nations that have not known thee" (Psalm lxxviii. 6). "For thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel. Take the cup of wine of this fury at my hand,

and thou shalt make all the nations to drink thereof" (Jer. xxv. 15).

Note that the "Son of Man" gave the signal for reaping, but the executive work is done by angels.

20. Καὶ ἐπατήθη ἡ ληνὸς ἔξωθεν τῆς πόλεως, καὶ ἐξῆλθεν αἷμα ἐκ τῆς ληνοῦ ἄχρι τῶν χαλινῶν τῶν ἵππων, ἀπὸ σταδίων χιλίων ἑξακοσίων.

20. And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress up to the horses' bridles for a thousand and six hundred furlongs.

The prophet Isaias refers to the winepress and the blood of the Gentiles. "I have trodden the winepress alone, and of the Gentiles there is not a man with me." "I have trampled upon them in my indignation, and have trodden them down in my wrath" (lxiii. 3). The Seer follows Isaias in making blood come up out of the trodden winepress. We know that he has this Isaian figure of the Gentiles, that is of pagan Roman punishment in view. (See R. xix. 13, notes.)

Blood standing up to "horses' bridles" is a Jewish figure, taken from Enoch. "A horse will wade breast high in the blood of sinners" (c. I. 3). But the Seer goes further, and says ἀπὸ σταδίων χιλίων ἑξακοσίων, wherein σταδίων has been translated furlongs—"for a thousand six hundred furlongs." But length and height, without breadth, makes an unnatural figure. It is a faulty metaphor. It is meant to express quantity, but fails to do so, for the third dimension is wanting. When the Seer wrote this, Christians were being slaughtered in the "stadium"—or amphitheatre—of Rome. His prophetic eye saw the stadia of the Empire running with Christian blood. He had in view the martyrs' cry, "How long, O Lord, dost thou not revenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth (R. vi. 10). It was a question of blood for blood, and the measure of it. As Christian blood was shed in the stadium; stadia are appropriately taken as the measure of retaliation. We are told that blood from the winepress of the wrath of God stood up to the level of horses' bridles in sixteen hundred stadia. Sixteen, the square of four multiplied by one hundred, is a symbol of amplitude. We have here a perfectly natural figure and a measure of quantity, which the servants of God of the first century would readily understand. In their day a stadium was a place for athletic, gladiatorial, and wild beast shows. In the Acta Martyrum such public arenas were called in-

differently stadia and amphitheatres. Owing to the amount of space they occupied, stadia were built outside the city. This accounts for the winepress being trodden "without the city," an expression which, otherwise, cannot be explained.

The use of the word "stadium" for "furlong" came into use centuries after this Book was written. The far-seeing eye of prophecy is evident in this reference to stadia.

CHAPTER XV

BEFORE the seven angels with the seven trumpets called down the fire of God's wrath on Jerusalem, there was silence in heaven; a heaven of Jewish saints witnessed in silence the ceremonial preparations for the destruction of Jerusalem. Heaven, reinforced by countless multitudes of all nations, tribes, peoples and tongues (R. vii. 9), now rejoices at the fall of Rome. But the ritual of preparation for vengeance is duly observed, as before.

1. Καὶ εἶδον ἄλλο σημεῖον ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ μέγα καὶ θαυμαστόν, ἀγγέλους ἑπτὰ ἔχοντας πληγὰς ἑπτὰ, τὰς ἔσχάτας, ὅτι ἐν αὐταῖς ἐτελέσθη ὁ θυμὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ.

1. And I saw another sign in heaven great and wonderful, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God.

If we carry our minds back to the first century, when the Roman power held the world in a grip of iron, any sign from heaven of the speedy overthrow of Rome would be great and "θαυμαστόν,"—"astonishing," as well as wonderful. In the synopsis of the Roman theme, at R. ix. 18, we have a reference to the plagues of Rome, veiled under the symbolism of fire and smoke and brimstone, things which denote punishment.

Now that we have reached the punishment of Rome, seven angels having the seven last plagues appear in heaven, just as seven trumpet angels appeared to execute judgment in the Jewish theme (R. viii. 2). The number seven means the prescribed number known only to God. It had this Hebraic appeal to the "servants" of God.

The seven "last plagues" are so called for a reason given, "for in them is filled up the wrath of God," where, *ἐτελέσθη*, aorist, for future, means proximate and certain accomplishment. We have had *ἐτελέσθη* used in the same way in the parallel case of the destruction of Jerusalem, *καὶ ἐτελέσθη τὸ μυστήριον*

τοῦ Θεοῦ (R. x. 7). It is introduced here again with reference to the fall of Rome, almost in the same words, *ἔτελέσθη ὁ θυμὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ*. Bearing in mind the Seer's careful selection of words, it has the same sense. These remarks are called for because this part of the Apocalypse has been interpreted as referring to the end of the world. The "last plagues" are taken out of their Roman context, and made criteria of the last days. But we have the fall of Rome, the millennium, and the troubles of Gog and Magog, before we come to the last days, and when they appear in this Book there is no mistaking them (see R. xx. 11-15).

2. *Καὶ εἶδον ὡς θάλασσαν ὑαλίνην μεμιγμένην πυρί, καὶ τοὺς νικῶντας ἐκ τοῦ θηρίου καὶ ἐκ τῆς εἰκόνης αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐκ τοῦ ἀριθμοῦ τοῦ ὀνόματος αὐτοῦ ἐστῶτας ἐπὶ τὴν θάλασσαν τὴν ὑαλίνην, ἔχοντας κιθάρας τοῦ Θεοῦ.*

2. And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire, and them that had overcome the beast and his image and the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, having the harps of God.

In the vision of the throne of God there was before the throne "as it were a sea of glass" (R. iv. 6). The Seer sees this crystal pavement of heaven, now, mingled with fire, which is a symbol of suffering. And standing upon it, "them that had overcome the beast"—*τοὺς νικῶντας ἐκ τοῦ θηρίου*—which may be translated "those who had come off victorious over the beast." Here the verb—*νικάω*—"to conquer" indicates martyrdom; as frequently before the reference is to victory over death by martyrdom. We saw the martyrs of Cæsar worship at R. vii. 9, "before the throne of God" (R. vii. 15). Now, seeing the seven angels in heaven, having the seven last plagues or punishments for Rome, the martyrs hold the harps of God and are prepared to sing a canticle of triumph.

3. *Καὶ ᾄδουσιν τὴν ᾠδὴν Μωυσέως τοῦ δούλου τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ τὴν ᾠδὴν τοῦ ἀρνίου, λέγοντες· Μεγάλα καὶ θαυμαστά τὰ ἔργα σου, Κύριε ὁ Θεὸς ὁ παντοκράτωρ· δίκαιαι καὶ ἀληθιναὶ αἱ ὁδοί σου, ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν αἰώνων.*

3. And singing the canticle of Moses, the servant of God, and the canticle of the Lamb, saying, Great and wonderful are thy works, O Lord, God, Almighty; just and true are thy ways, O King of ages.

(S. = *τῶν ἐθνῶν*.)

The canticle of Moses is the song of triumph of the Hebrews on their deliverance from the Egyptians by the passage of the

Red Sea, "Let us sing to the Lord for he is gloriously magnified" (Exod. xv. 1). The martyrs, standing before the throne, exult in their victory. The canticle of the Lamb we have had at R. v. 9, "Because thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to God in thy blood, out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation." The martyrs acknowledge that they have conquered by the merits of the Redeemer's blood.

Moses—*τοῖ δούλου τοῦ Θεοῦ*—"the servant of God," helps us to understand the class of men to whom the Apocalypse was sent—*τοῖς δούλοις αὐτοῦ* (R. i. 1). The Seer uses his expressions with such precision, that we may be sure the "servants" of God stood for the Hebrew Leaders of the Church.

"Great and wonderful are thy works" corresponds with the "great and wonderful" sign, at verse 1, above.

"Just and true are thy ways" refers especially to the judgments of God upon Rome. See R. xvi. 7 and xix. 2, where these expressions are repeated.

The Divine titles *Κύριε, ὁ Θεός, ὁ παντοκράτωρ*, "Lord," "God," "Almighty," were expressions blasphemously given to Nero and other Cæsars.

4. *Τίς οὐ μὴ φοβηθῆ, Κύριε, καὶ δοξάσῃ τὸ ὄνομά σου ; ὅτι μόνος ὁσῖος, ὅτι πάντα τὰ ἔθνη ἤξουσιν καὶ προσκυνήσουσιν ἐνώπιόν σου, ὅτι τὰ δικαιώματά σου ἐφανερώθησαν.*

4. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and magnify thy name? For thou only art holy, for all nations shall come and shall adore in thy sight, because thy judgments are manifest.

(S. = *δοξάσει.*)

In the last chapter an angel flying, cried with a loud voice, "Fear the Lord and give him honour and adore ye him, who made heaven and earth because the hour of his judgment is come" (R. xiv. 6, 7). The martyrs comply with this command, and echo its expressions, "Who shall not fear thee, O Lord?" "The hour of his judgment" they change into "thy judgments are manifest." The seven last plagues are in sight.

"All nations shall come and adore in thy sight." They themselves were "a great multitude, which no man could number of all nations" (R. vii. 9), the victims of Roman persecution. The Seer reintroduces the vision of the martyrs, seen in the Jewish theme, showing that persecution is finished and retribution takes its place. Eusebius having this text in view, wrote, at the end of the tenth persecution, "Sing to the Lord a new song because he has done wonderful works. . . . Thus then as the Scriptures enjoin upon us to sing a new song" (H. E. x. 1).

5. Καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα εἶδον, καὶ ἤνοιγῆ ὁ ναὸς τῆς σκηνῆς τοῦ μαρτυρίου ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ.

5. And after these things I saw, and behold the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened.

After the rejoicings which were called forth by the appearance of the seven angels in heaven, the ceremonial ritual of vengeance upon Rome begins. It differs from the ceremonial preparations for the punishment of the Jews at R. viii. 2-6. The Temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened. This takes us back to the Temple of Judgment at R. xi. 19. The description is essentially the same. "The temple of God was opened in heaven and the ark of his testament was seen in the temple." Here the tabernacle is thrown open for the exit of angels of vengeance. This symbolism would appeal to Hebrew Christians of the first century who were familiar with the ritual of the Temple. At R. xiv. 15 the tableau of vengeance on Rome (the reaping of the harvest of wickedness) is begun by an angel coming out of the sanctuary (τοῦ ναοῦ), and saying, "Put to thy sickle and reap" (see also R. xiv. 17). Accordingly now that we have reached the harvest of vengeance, the temple is opened for the exit of the angels of punishment. These revelations are knit together by a continuous chain of linked prophecies.

6. Καὶ ἐξῆλθον οἱ ἑπτὰ ἄγγελοι οἱ ἔχοντες τὰς ἑπτὰ πληγὰς ἐκ τοῦ ναοῦ, ἐνδεδυμένοι λίνον καθαρὸν λαμπρὸν καὶ περιεζωσμένοι περὶ τὰ στήθη ζώνας χρυσᾶς.

6. And the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, clothed in clean and white linen, and girt about the breasts with golden girdles.

The seven angels of the seven plagues call to mind the seven angels of the seven trumpets (R. viii. 2). The Roman theme follows the model of the Jewish theme. The plagues are seven in number for the same reason that the trumpets are seven in number, because the number seven covers all the plagues of all kinds which destroyed the Roman power. Or as the Seer puts it, "for in them is filled up the wrath of God" (R. xv. 1), on Rome, understood. But they are not called the seven *last* plagues here, as at R. xv. 1. A repetition of the word "last" might lead to misconception (see R. xv. 1, notes).

The punishment of Rome is not inflicted in anger. Like the punishment of the Jews, it is the result of the deliberate judgment of God, to be carried out with solemn ritual. The

seven angels come forth from the Temple vested in ceremonial garments. Their vestments are those worn by the priests of the Temple, when engaged in liturgical services (Lev. xvi. 4; Exod. xxviii. 39, 40). The Great High Priest, the Son of Man, is depicted in these garments at R. i. 13.

7. Καὶ ἐν ἑκ τῶν τεσσάρων ζῶων ἔδωκεν τοῖς ἑπτὰ ἀγγέλοις ἑπτὰ φιάλας χρυσᾶς γεμούσας τοῦ θυμοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ τοῦ ζῶντος εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων.

7. And one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden vials, full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever.

At R. v. 8 the four living creatures have "golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of the saints." At R. viii. 3, 4, before punishment begins, "the prayers of the saints" are accepted. Now one of the four living creatures gives to the seven angels seven vials full of the wrath of God. We have had the wine of the wrath of God—"τοῦ οἴνου τοῦ θυμοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ"—at R. xiv. 10. It is adjudged to all who partake in Cæsar worship (R. xiv. 9), hence it is meted out to the idolatrous Empire.

"Who liveth for ever and ever," recalls the warning at R. xiv. 11, "The smoke of their torments shall ascend up for ever and ever." The threats contained in the last chapter are now about to be fulfilled.

Observe the continuity of the Roman theme with the early chapters of the Book. The four living creatures were seen at R. iv. 6. One of them takes part in the Roman theme without further introduction. It is manifestly intended that the vision of the throne of God should continue in evidence in the Roman theme. The vials are the φιάλας of R. v. 8, shallow saucer-like bowls adapted to the use of incense. The "plagues" are now shown to consist of "the wrath of God."

8. Καὶ ἐγεμίσθη ὁ ναὸς καπνοῦ ἐκ τῆς δόξης τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ ἐκ τῆς δυνάμεως αὐτοῦ, καὶ οὐδεὶς ἐδύνατο εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὸν ναὸν ἄχρι τελεσθῶσιν αἱ ἑπτὰ πληγαὶ τῶν ἑπτὰ ἀγγέλων.

8. And the temple was filled with smoke from the majesty 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.

"Smoke from the majesty of God" follows O.T. symbolism. "And all Mount Sinai was on a smoke because the Lord was come down upon it in fire" (Exod. xix. 18). When the

prophet Isaias saw the vision of God, he tells us, "and the house was filled with smoke" (Isa. vi. 4). "And no man was able to enter into the temple," because of this smoke of the majesty of God. "Neither could the priests enter into the temple of the Lord, because the majesty of the Lord had filled the Temple of the Lord" (also Isa. lxxv. 5, 2 Paralip. vii. 2; see 3 Kings viii. 11). When the Ark, containing the Tables of the Law, was brought into the Temple, the priest could not stand and minister, "For the glory of the Lord had filled the house of God" (2 Paralip. v. 14).

The Seer makes this significant addition, that "no man was able to enter into the temple till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled." The majesty of God would not allow, even, of intercession. No mercy would be shown to idolatrous Rome. With this prediction, the ritual of preparation and the dramatic prologue to the Roman theme comes to an end.

CHAPTER XVI

THIS chapter gives a detailed account of God's vengeance upon the Roman Empire. It is modelled partly on the plagues of Egypt in the O.T. and partly on the vengeance trumpets of the Jewish theme.

1. Καὶ ἤκουσα φωνῆς μεγάλης ἐκ τοῦ ναοῦ λεγούσης τοῖς ἑπτὰ ἀγγέλοις· Ὑπάγετε καὶ ἐκχέετε τὰς ἑπτὰ φιάλας τοῦ θυμοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ εἰς τὴν γῆν.

1. And I heard a great voice out of the temple, saying to the seven angels, Go and pour the seven vials of the wrath of God upon the earth.

(S. = μεγάλης φωνῆς, ἐκχέετε.)

We have had φωνῆς μεγάλης hitherto translated "a loud voice." The "great voice" out of the Temple is the voice of God, for the Temple is filled with the smoke of His majesty, and no one can enter it. He commands the seven angels to pour the seven vials of the wrath of God "upon the earth"—εἰς τὴν γῆν—as in R. viii. 5. Here the whole Empire is in view. These vials contain the plagues, but there is no further allusion to them as being the "last plagues." The command was given to all the angels simultaneously. They were sent together to destroy the Empire of Rome. "Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death and mourning and famine" (R. xviii. 8). For convenience of description they are taken in turn, as the first, the second, etc.

2. Καὶ ἀπῆλθεν ὁ πρῶτος καὶ ἐξέχεεν τὴν φιάλην αὐτοῦ εἰς τὴν γῆν, καὶ ἐγένετο ἔλκος κακὸν καὶ πονηρὸν ἐπὶ τοὺς ἀνθρώπους τοὺς ἔχοντας τὸ χάραγμα τοῦ θηρίου καὶ τοὺς προσκυνοῦντας τῇ εἰκόνι αὐτοῦ.

2. And the first went out and poured out his vial upon the earth, and there fell a sore and grievous wound upon the men who had the mark of the beast, and upon them who adored his image.

The first angel poured his vial εἰς τὴν γῆν, and there fell a sore upon the men who had the mark of the Beast, *χάραγμα τοῦ θηρίου*. There is no mistaking the class of persons upon whom the vials are poured. They are Cæsar worshippers, those who adored the image of the Beast.

“A bad and malignant sore,” would seem to be the meaning of *ἔλκος κακὸν καὶ πονηρὸν*, above. This was one of the plagues of Egypt (Deut. xxviii. 27 and 35). It is described as “boils and swelling blains both in men and beasts in the whole land of Egypt” (Exod. ix. 9).

In the reign of Marcus Aurelius, the Parthian war, though successful, brought upon the Empire the great plague or pestilence of A.D. 166, which caused great loss of life, especially in Italy (Gibbon, *op. cit.* xii.). In the reign of Valerian another great bubonic plague devastated the Empire, A. D. 250, 260. It is said by Eusebius that it was not so severe upon the Christians as upon the Jews and Romans (H. E. vii. 22). Under Gallienus, son and successor of Valerian, the plague increased in virulence. Gibbon describes it:

“Famine is almost always followed by epidemic diseases. Other causes must, however, have contributed to the furious plague which, from the year 250 to the year 265, raged without interruption in every province, every city, and almost every family of the Roman Empire. During some time 5,000 persons died daily in Rome, and many towns that had escaped the hands of the barbarians were entirely depopulated. . . . Half the people of Alexandria perished; and could we extend the analogy to the other provinces we might suspect that war, pestilence, and famine had consumed in a few years the moiety of the human species” (“D. and F.,” cap. x.).

Eusebius describes the famine and plague in the time of Maximin, A.D. 308: “A species of ulcer called by an epithet the carbuncle on account of its inflammatory appearance” (H. E. ix. 8).

In the reign of Justinian, A.D. 542, an epidemic of bubonic plague attacked the Roman Empire. There were ten thousand deaths a day in Constantinople. In several districts of Italy the harvest and the vintage withered in the ground for want of reapers (“D. and F.,” xliii.).

This vial recalls the pale horse; "and he that sat upon him his name was death." *ὁ θάνατος*, "pestilence." See R. vi. 8, notes.

3. Καὶ ὁ δεῦτερος ἄγγελος ἐξέχεεν τὴν φιάλην αὐτοῦ εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν· καὶ ἐγένετο αἷμα ὡς νεκροῦ, καὶ πᾶσα ψυχὴ ζωῆς ἀπέθανεν τὰ ἐν τῇ θαλάσῃ.

3. And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea, and it came blood as it were of a dead man, and every living soul died in the sea.

(S. omits *ἄγγελος*.)

When the second angel in the Jewish theme sounded the trumpet, "as it were a great mountain, burning with fire, was cast into the sea, and the third part of the sea became blood" (R. viii. 8, where see notes). We have seen that the sea is used as a figure of mankind. Here the whole, not a third part of the Empire, is deluged with the blood of its inhabitants—*ὡς νεκροῦ*, as it were the blood of the dead. This imagery is derived from the O.T., the first plague of Egypt, where all waters were turned into blood (Exod. vii. 19-21). The four living creatures called special attention to the red horse of battle, the black horse of famine, the pale horse of pestilence, and Death, "Come thou and see," R. vi. 3, 8. These are the real forces in action in the outpouring of the vials of God's wrath.

Needless to say, no student of Roman history could take this passage literally. It is symbolism. S. John uses up the symbolism of earth, air, and water, to show us that no part of the Empire would escape the visitation of God's plagues on Rome.

4. Καὶ ὁ τρίτος ἐξέχεεν τὴν φιάλην αὐτοῦ εἰς τοὺς ποταμοὺς καὶ εἰς τὰς πηγὰς τῶν ὑδάτων· καὶ ἐγένετο αἷμα.

4. And the third poured out his vial upon the rivers and the fountains of waters, and there was made blood.

(S. omits the second *εἰς*.)

In the Jewish theme a great star fell from heaven upon the rivers and fountains of water, the sources of the sea of life, and the third part of the waters became "wormwood." We have seen that the reference is to the slaughter of women and children by the Romans in the Jewish war. The Seer uses the expression "wormwood" there to mark the fulfilment of prophecies (see R. viii. 10, notes). Here the "rivers and fountains," "women and children," are turned into blood. In the same way the two witnesses had power over waters to turn them into blood (R. xi. 6). The barbarian hordes who invaded Rome had no mercy,

slaying all regardless of age or sex. Many Christians were doubtless involved in this indiscriminate slaughter. They were not protected by any special mark from the fury of the invading hordes who devastated Italy and repeatedly sacked Rome. S. Leo the Great succeeded in saving Rome from the Huns under Attila in the year 452. He persuaded Genseric to restrain the Vandals from destroying the city and putting the inhabitants to the sword in 455. Christians who sought sanctuary in their churches were often spared, and the Church flourished in the period under review, but still there must have been a very large number of Christians who participated in the sufferings which overwhelmed the Empire.

5. Καὶ ἤκουσα τοῦ ἀγγέλου τῶν ὑδάτων λέγοντος. Δίκαιος εἶ, ὁ ὢν καὶ ὁ ἦν ὁ ὅσιος, ὅτι ταῦτα ἔκρινας.

5. And I heard the angel of the waters saying, Thou art just, O Lord, who art and who wast, the holy one, because thou hast judged these things.

“The angel of the waters,” is a new expression. It cannot apply to any of the angels who poured out the vials of wrath. They are introduced as the “seven angels having the seven last plagues” (R. xv. 1-6). When later any one of them speaks the Seer defines him as of the seven angels who had the seven vials (R. xvii. 1, xxi. 9). Moreover the angels of the vials are in heaven, pouring down the wrath of God, whereas the “angel of the waters” is on earth, and his remarks on the justice of God’s judgments are answered by another angel from the altar in heaven. The angel of the waters is not a spiritual Angel. The Seer explains the waters as peoples and nations and tongues (R. xvii. 15). The angel of the waters is the angel of the Church in the third or Pergamus age, which corresponds with the age of the decline and fall of Rome. To him it was said, “These things saith he that hath the sharp two-edged sword, I know where thou dwellest, where the seat of Satan is” (R. ii. 12 f.). The Bishop of Rome was the angel referred to. We may imagine him to be Pope S. Leo. He saw his flock involved in the punishment of idolatrous Rome, and he put up this prayer to heaven, “Thou art just, O Lord . . . because thou hast judged these things.”

6. Ὅτι αἷμα ἁγίων καὶ προφητῶν ἐξέχεαν, καὶ αἷμα αὐτοῖς ἔδωκας πίνειν, ἄξιοί εἰσιν.

6. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink, for they deserved it.

(S. = δέδωκας.)

For they, that is the Romans, "have shed the blood of saints and prophets;" where *ἁγίων* are Christians generally, and *προφητῶν*, those who have the word of God—preachers, the ecclesiastical hierarchy. Their souls cried out from "under the altar," "dost thou not judge and revenge our blood" (R. vi. 10). We have heard the angel at R. xiv. 7, saying, "The hour of his judgment is come." We have seen the winepress at R. xiv. 20, "and blood came out of the winepress even up to horses' bridles." The angel of the waters, notwithstanding the sufferings of his flock, proclaims the justice of God's judgments on "the Romans," for they "deserved it." In saying "thou hast given them blood to drink" he expresses metaphorically the effect of the vials: blood is revenged by blood. This application of the *lex talionis* is repeatedly justified as we go on.

7. Καὶ ἤκουσα τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου λέγοντος, Ναί, Κύριε ὁ Θεὸς ὁ παντοκράτωρ, ἀληθινὰ καὶ δίκαιαι αἱ κρίσεις σου.

7. And I heard another from the altar saying, Yea, O Lord God Almighty, true and just are thy judgments.

Τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου, "of the altar," the angel who had power over fire, or punishment (R. xiv. 18). He confirms the praise of the angel of the waters, almost in the words of the canticle of Moses and of the Lamb, "True and just are thy ways, O King of ages" (R. xv. 3). Thus heaven and earth bear testimony to the justice of the punishments, past and to come, upon the doomed Empire. Later on, the whole host of heaven cry out, "For true and just are his judgments who hath judged the great harlot" (R. xix. 2).

8. Καὶ ὁ τέταρτος ἐξέχεεν τὴν φιάλην αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τὸν ἥλιον· καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτῷ καυματίσαι τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ἐν πυρὶ.

8. And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun, and it was given to him to afflict men with heat and fire.

In R. viii. 12 the fourth angel sounds his trumpet, and the third part of the sun, moon, and stars are smitten. This has

been interpreted to mean the spiritual destitution that fell upon the Israelites. But the foregoing verse appears to apply to the sun literally, for the vial being poured upon the sun, its heat increases: it burns like fire. It is interpreted by the next verse, which shows the effect of the sun's blazing heat.

9. Καὶ ἐκαυματίσθησαν οἱ ἄνθρωποι καῦμα μέγα, καὶ ἐβλασφήμησαν τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ Θεοῦ τοῦ ἔχοντος ἐξουσίαν ἐπὶ τὰς πληγὰς ταύτας, καὶ οὐ μετενόησαν δοῦναι αὐτῷ δόξαν.

9. And men were scorched with great heat, and they blasphemed the name of God who hath power over these plagues, neither did they penance to give him glory.

Here we have the vial interpreted as a plague of heat, which scorched men. Dionysius of Alexandria gives an account of the excessive heat which afflicted a great part of the Roman Empire. He represents the Nile as having dried up. Drought usually accompanies periods of excessive heat, and famine follows drought. "Neither did they penance to give him glory," as applied to idolaters, means that they continued in their worship of strange gods, and despised the Christian God, whose gospel of penance they rejected. It is an echo of "Neither have they done penance" at R. ix. 21, and is probably meant to connect these visions together as pagan punishments, for that is the Seer's plan.

Pagan Rome supplicated her false gods the more, the more she was afflicted. So with reference to the Assyrians, "saith the Lord and my name is continually blasphemed all the day long" (Isa. lii. 5). The Roman idolaters blasphemed the name of God actually as well as by Cæsar worship. They called upon Christians to curse Christ. Pliny the younger stated in his letter to Trajan, "*Omnes et imaginem tuam, deorumque simulacra venerati sunt et Christo maledixerunt.*" Dionysius tells us that in the Decian persecution at Alexandria, "It was impossible for any Christian to go into the streets, even at night, for the mob was shouting that all who would not blaspheme should be burnt." (Jn. Chapman, the Cath. Encyc.) But heat and fire connote all manner of plagues.

10. Καὶ ὁ πέμπτος ἐξέχεεν τὴν φιάλην αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τὸν θρόνον τοῦ θηρίου, καὶ ἐγένετο ἡ βασιλεία αὐτοῦ ἔσκοτωμένη, καὶ ἔμασῶντο τὰς γλώσσας αὐτῶν ἐκ τοῦ πόνου.

10. And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast, and his kingdom became dark, and they gnawed their tongues for pain.

The fifth angel poured out his vial upon the throne of the Beast, τὸν θρόνον τοῦ θηρίου, showing that the Beast is a King. His Throne is erected at the seat of Empire. If the Beast be Cæsar, then the seat of the Beast is Rome. We are told in the next chapter, "the seven heads" of the Beast "are seven mountains upon which the woman sitteth. "The woman . . . is the great city . . . which has dominion over the kings of the earth." "And on her forehead a name written . . . Babylon the Great" (R. xvii. 9, 18, 5), a combination of indications which spell Rome. Babylon was the mystic name of Rome. Spiritually, Rome could not be made darker. But politically, the brilliancy of Rome, *la ville lumière* of her day, could be extinguished, and the city plunged in the darkness of despair. Alaric in A.D. 410, Attila, A.D. 451, Genseric, A.D. 455, Odoacer, A.D. 476, and Totila in A.D. 546, captured and pillaged Rome. Procopius tells us that Totila burnt the city down and destroyed the inhabitants. "Genseric repeatedly invaded Italy and plundered the capital" (Gibbon, D. and F. xxxi.). But the whole kingdom, "ἡ βασιλεία," became dark. Defeat and death and captivity abroad, added to pillage and slaughter in the capital, disorganised the State, and filled the minds of the Senate and people with an abiding gloom. They gnawed their tongues on account of their accumulated sufferings—the bubonic plague, the scorching heat, the drought, the famine, the invasions of barbarous hordes, defeats and bloodshed.

11. Καὶ ἐβλασφήμησαν τὸν Θεὸν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἐκ τῶν πόνων αὐτῶν καὶ ἐκ τῶν ἑλκῶν αὐτῶν, καὶ οὐ μετενόησαν ἐκ τῶν ἔργων αὐτῶν.

11. And they blasphemed the God of heaven, because of their pains and wounds, and did not penance from their works.

This is a repetition of verse 9. Like the Egyptians, the Romans hardened their hearts, as plague followed plague. "They did not penance for the work of their hands that they should not adore devils, and idols of gold and silver" connects R. ix. 20 with the above. Ἐκ τῶν ἔργων is translated "for the works" at R. ix. 20, here "from their works."

The conduct of the Christian martyrs at R. vi. 15, 17, who feared God and the wrath of the Lamb, in the midst of furious persecution, is in striking contrast with that of the pagans, who blasphemed the more, the more they were punished.

12. Καὶ ὁ ἕκτος ἐξέχεεν τὴν φιάλην αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τὸν ποταμὸν τὸν μέγαν τὸν Εὐφράτην· καὶ ἐξηράνθη τὸ ὕδωρ αὐτοῦ, ἵνα ἐτοιμασθῇ ἡ ὁδὸς τῶν βασιλέων τῶν ἀπὸ ἀνατολῆς ἡλίου.

12. And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates, and dried up the water thereof, that a way might be prepared for the Kings from the rising sun.

We have here an allusion to the same Parthian and Persian wars which were in the Jewish theme, veiled in the figure of the four angels loosed in the great river Euphrates. With characteristic attention to significant details, the Seer makes the sixth trumpet angel correspond with the sixth vial angel in loosing the forces of the Euphrates, ἐπὶ τῷ ποταμῷ τῷ μεγάλῳ Εὐφράτη (R. ix. 14, notes). "The Kings from the rising sun," that is the Kings of the East, who dwelt beyond the Euphrates, were the Parthians and Persians. They were a menace to Rome when the Apocalypse was written. The Seer has to convey to the servants of God in the first century tidings of hostile invasions which would break up the Roman power. The Euphrates was the only possible illustration. Besides, the Prophet Jeremias had predicted this of the enemies of God, "the sword shall devour, and shall be filled, and shall be drunk with their blood, for there is a sacrifice of the Lord God of hosts in the north country by the river Euphrates" (xlvi. 10). We, who are enlightened by history, know that the Euphrates is a symbol of invading hordes from "the north country," from the Danube, as well from the East. But the prophecy, even as regards the Euphrates, was literally and amply fulfilled.

"During the reign of Valerian, Sapor, King of Persia, spread devastation and terror on the borders of the Euphrates. Valerian marched against him, and was defeated, and taken prisoner. The Romans lost a great part of their army in battle by famine and pestilence. Sapor used the Roman Emperor Valerian as his footstool when he mounted his horse. When Valerian died of shame and grief, his skin, stuffed with straw, and formed into the likeness of a human body, was long preserved in one of the great temples of Persia.

"In the reign of Diocletian the Roman army was utterly routed and destroyed by the Persians in the plains of Mesopotamia.

“During the long period of Constantius’s reign the provinces of the East were afflicted by the calamities of the Persian war. The Roman and Persian armies encountered each other in nine bloody fields, which were commonly adverse to the Romans, in some cases with great slaughter” (Gibbon, cap. xviii.).

Probus and Julian were slain during the Persian war. “Jovian, who succeeded Julian, concluded an ignominious peace with the Persians under Sapor, which has justly been considered a memorable era in the decline and fall of the Roman Empire” (Gibbon, cap. xxiv.).

The drying up of the Euphrates for the passage of the Kings of the East is an image founded on the passage of the Red Sea by the Israelites. The plagues of Egypt are still in view. We must bear in mind, too, the harolation which predicted that Nero should flee to Parthia, and reconquer his kingdom with the aid of Parthians. The Seer twice refers to the Euphrates as a *great* river. Near Busra, where he is said to have preached the Gospel, it was half a mile wide and from 3 to 5 fathoms deep, and from thence its course ran inland for 1,600 miles.

13. Καὶ εἶδον ἐκ τοῦ στόματος τοῦ δράκοντος καὶ ἐκ τοῦ στόματος τοῦ θηρίου καὶ ἐκ τοῦ στόματος τοῦ ψευδοπροφήτου πνεύματα τρία ἀκάθαρτα, ὡς βάτραχοι.

13. And I saw from the mouth of the dragon, and from the mouth of the beast, and from the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits, like frogs.

Καὶ, “and,” again introduces quite a new idea. The Dragon, the Beast, and the false prophet, form a triumvirate, banded together for the defence of Cæsar worship and the oppression of Christianity. The false prophet is not introduced as a new-comer. On the contrary the Seer assumes that his readers know him well. He is the lamb-like beast “who seduced them that dwell on the earth by the signs, which were given him to perform in the sight of the beast, that they should make an image of the beast” (R. xiii. 14). Later on the Seer identifies him with this two-horned lamb, where he says, “And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet, who wrought signs before him, wherewith he seduced them who received the mark of the beast” (R. xix. 20). The false prophet represents the high priests of idolatry, whose action is shown at R. xiii. 11-14.

In the N.T., unclean spirits mean demons (Matt. x. 1; Mark i. 7; Luke iv. 36; Acts v. 16, viii. 7). They are devilish counsels or designs, as explained in the next verse. Frog-like,

unclean, cold-blooded, crafty designs. "I will go forth and be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets" (3 Kings xxii. 22). In 1 Jhn. iv. 1, we find *πνεύματα* and *ψευδοπροφήται* occurring in a connection which shows that the Seer had false prophecies in view. In translating these weird symbols into deeds we must keep the facts of Roman history before us.

14. *Εἰσὶν γὰρ πνεύματα δαιμονίων ποιῶντα σημεῖα, ἃ ἐκπορεύεται ἐπὶ τοὺς βασιλεῖς τῆς οἰκουμένης ὅλης, συναγαγεῖν αὐτοὺς εἰς τὸν πόλεμον τῆς ἡμέρας τῆς μεγάλης τοῦ Θεοῦ τοῦ παντοκράτορος.*

14. For they are the spirits of devils working signs, and they go forth unto the Kings of the whole earth to gather them to battle against the great day of the Almighty God.

The unclean spirits are the spirits of demons working signs, which signs go forth to the whole world (*οἰκουμένης ὅλης*—as at R. iii. 10 and xii. 9). They go to the confines of the Empire of Rome, gathering outside Kings to her aid against the great day of battle with Almighty God. The day of God, in the O.T., is the day of His wrath, when He will punish His enemies (Isa. xiii. 6, Ezech. xiii. 5).

The triumvirate, seeing the Empire invaded north and east, resolved to gather all their forces to battle. Many new and semi-independent kingdoms were established within and beyond the Empire. In those days kings were set against kings, by dissimulation, bribery, and lies. The Empire sought and found allies amongst its own invaders. Haruspices were consulted before war was declared or battle given. Augurs consulted the omens, and predicted according to the designs of Cæsar, who as Pontifex Maximus "managed the arts of divination as a convenient instrument of policy" (Gibbon, D. and F. xxviii. These omens were in reality "the spirits of devils working signs"; "spirits of error and doctrines of devils" (1 Tim. iv. 1). The false prophet with the aid of the dragon procured the signs. And he seduced them that dwell on the earth by the signs which were given him to perform" (R. xiii. 14). The triumvirate proclaimed that the signs were favourable. Victory was promised. Ambassadors carried the signs and omens of victory to the semi-barbarous kings, and promised them rewards. So they were gathered to battle.

15. Ἴδου ἔρχομαι ὡς κλέπτης· μακάριος ὁ γρεγορῶν καὶ τηρῶν τὰ ἱμάτια αὐτοῦ, ἵνα μὴ γυμνὸς περιπατῆ καὶ βλέπωσιν τὴν ἀσχημοσύνην αὐτοῦ·

15. Behold I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame.

“The great day of Almighty God” suggests the day of particular Judgment. The moral is drawn from the context that it will surely and unexpectedly come to all men. This warning was given to the angel of the persecuted Church of Sardis (R. iii. 3). This remark is in the nature of an “aside.” The disassociation of normally connected parts in the Roman theme is sometimes puzzling, and intentionally so, as the Book was written during Nero’s persecution and was not intended to be easy reading. “Behold I come as a thief” has also an eschatological significance. This warning is borne out by S. Paul, “The day of the Lord shall come as a thief in the night” (1 Thess. v. 2). See also 2 Peter iii. 10. The shame of nakedness brings to mind the faults of the Church of Laodicea (R. iii. 18).

The preparations for the great battle are resumed in the next verse.

16. Καὶ συνήγαγεν αὐτοὺς εἰς τὸν τόπον τὸν καλούμενον Ἐβραϊστὶ Ἀρμαγεδών.

16. And he shall gather them together into a place which is called in Hebrew Armagedon.

(S. = Ἀρ Μαγεδών.)

“And he shall gather them together” into a place which is called “Armagedon,” refers to R. xvi. 14 = “*συναγαγεῖν αὐτοὺς εἰς τὸν πόλεμον.*” The Roman forces, the Beast, the false prophet, and the Kings of the earth, are gathered together to battle against God Almighty. Their doom is sealed in advance.

Armagedon is identified with the great plain of Esdraelon, some fifteen miles S.W. of Nazareth, the terrain of Jewish and Assyrian battles. See Judges iv. 13, 16, v. 19. Ochosias, King of Juda, was slain at Mageddo (4 Kings ix. 27). King Josias was slain there (4 Kings xxiii. 29, 30). The name of Mageddo had become a symbol of lamentations amongst the Jews (Zach. xii. 11). For this reason it is adopted as an omen of the fate of the pagan armies metaphorically gathered there. Dr. Swete makes the name “Ἀρ Μαγεδών,” “the waters of Magedon,” *i.e.*, the river Kishon, which flows through the plain of Esdraelon

(*op. cit.*, p. 209). In any case the reference is to the old battle-field.

The battle of "Armagedon" is only adumbrated here, as it is reserved as a dramatic conclusion to the Roman theme (Chapter xix.). It is a summing up of the centuries of warfare of paganism against Christianity, shown as a pageant of the triumph of Christ.

17. Καὶ ὁ ἕβδομος ἔξέχεεν τὴν φιάλην αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τὸν ἀέρα· καὶ ἐξῆλθεν φωνὴ μεγάλη ἐκ τοῦ ναοῦ ἀπὸ τοῦ θρόνου λέγουσα, Γέγονεν.

17. And the seventh angel poured out his vial upon the air, and a great voice came out of the temple, from the throne, saying, It is done.

We have had the earth, the sea, the rivers and fountains of waters, the sun, and the throne of the Beast, afflicted with the vials of God's wrath. The last vial is poured upon the air, the vital air, the air we breathe (τὸν κοινὸν ἀέρα, *Wisd. vii. 3*), to symbolise the complete extinction of pagan Rome. And a great voice came out of the Temple (of Judgment), saying, "It is done," *i.e.*, the Roman Empire is annihilated. The great voice "from the throne" is the voice of God. The plagues or vials are done; judgment is accomplished.

18. Καὶ ἐγένοντο ἀστραπαὶ καὶ φωναὶ καὶ βρονταί, καὶ σεισμός ἐγένετο μέγας, οἷος οὐκ ἐγένετο ἀφ' οὗ ἄνθρωποι ἐγένοντο ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, τηλικούτος σεισμός οὕτω μέγας.

18. And there were lightnings and voices and thunders, and there was a great earthquake, such as never hath been since men were upon the earth, such an earthquake, so great.

(S. = ἄνθρωπος ἐγένετο.)

"And from the throne proceeded lightnings and voices and thunderings" (R. iv. 5). See also R. viii. 5, which introduces an earthquake, emblematic of the downfall of Judaism. The earthquake is repeated at R. xi. 13, when the tenth part of the city of Jerusalem fell. The seven vials have overthrown the Roman Empire. So great a political earthquake was never seen since men were upon the earth, for the Roman Empire was the greatest which the world had ever seen. To get the significance of this great earthquake one must try to realise the position of Rome in the first century of the Christian Era.

19. Καὶ ἐγένετο ἡ πόλις ἡ μεγάλη εἰς τρία μέρη, καὶ αἱ πόλεις τῶν ἐθνῶν ἔπεσαν. καὶ Βαβυλῶν ἡ μεγάλη ἐμνήσθη ἐνώπιον τοῦ Θεοῦ, δοῦναι αὐτῇ τὸ ποτήριον τοῦ οἴνου τοῦ θυμοῦ τῆς ὀργῆς αὐτοῦ.

19. And the great city was made into three parts, and the cities of the Gentiles fell, and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give her the cup of the wine of the indignation of his wrath.

The seven vials have been poured out—*εἰς τὴν γῆν*—upon the Roman Empire (R. xvi. 1). And as the result of this action the great city was made into three parts. The great city is put for Imperial Rome, which was divided in the course of time, into three parts, archæological Rome, Papal Rome, and Anti-papal Rome. The cities of the Gentiles (*τῶν ἐθνῶν*), the cities of Italy, were destroyed by the Huns, the Goths, and other invaders.

The chastisement of the capital city, Rome, is reserved for special mention in the next chapter. So "Great Babylon" comes "in remembrance before God to give her the cup" of His wrath. "Babylon" has already suffered much. It has participated in all the plagues that have worn down the Empire. "The fifth angel poured his vial on the seat of the Beast and his kingdom became dark" (R. xvi. 10). But that is not enough. "Babylon" is the chief sinner, and many figures will be devoted to symbolising its complete destruction.

20. Καὶ πᾶσα νῆσος ἔφυγεν, καὶ ὄρη οὐχ εὐρέθησαν.

20. And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.

In the prediction of the ten persecutions we are told "every mountain and the islands were moved out of their places" (R. vi. 14). That figure was put as a symbol of the dispersion of the great Christian Churches by persecution. The same figure is employed here to denote the complete overthrow of the political power of Rome in all its provinces, great and small. These figures are strongly contrasted. The Christian Churches were moved out of their places. The Provincial Governments and Consulships of Rome were found no more. They ceased to exist.

21. Καὶ χάλαζα μεγάλη ὡς ταλαντιαία καταβαίνει ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἐπὶ τοὺς ἀνθρώπους· καὶ ἐβλασφήμησαν οἱ ἄνθρωποι τὸν Θεὸν ἐκ τῆς πληγῆς τῆς χαλάζης ὅτι μεγάλη ἐστὶν ἡ πληγὴ αὐτῆς σφόδρα.

21. And great hail like a talent came down from heaven upon men, and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, for it was exceeding great.

We have had hail at R. viii. 7 (where see notes). It was a symbol of punishment falling on the Jews. We had it again at R. xi. 19, where the temple of judgment was opened, "lightnings and voices and an earthquake and great hail," symbols of God's wrath. Hail was a symbol of God's wrath in the O.T. It was the seventh plague of Egypt (Exod. ix. 22-25). See Josu. x. 11; Isa., xxviii. 2; and Ezech. xxxviii. 22. The great engines of warfare in early days were catapults, which hurled rocks weighing a "talent" of 124 lbs. In S. John's time there was nothing more graphic of destruction than this great hail of rocks. It is a fitting climax to the action of the seventh and last vial.

CHAPTER XVII

THIS chapter is devoted to explaining the chief symbols of the Roman theme. S. John throws as much further light on the subject as he can, in view of the lynx-eyed Roman authorities. The explanations given look forward to the destruction of Rome and the battle of Armagedon, as well as backward to the Beast. They confirm the reading that the Beast is Cæsar, and that everything connected with the Beast, such as the "seven last plagues," relates to the Roman Empire. "Great Babylon" is remembered and brought into prominence.

1. Καὶ ἦλθεν εἰς ἐκ τῶν ἑπτὰ ἀγγέλων τῶν ἐχόντων τὰς ἑπτὰ φιάλας, καὶ ἐλάλησεν μετ' ἐμοῦ λέγων Δεῦρο, δείξω σοι τὸ κρίμα τῆς πόρνῆς τῆς μεγάλης τῆς καθημένης ἐπὶ ὑδάτων πολλῶν.

1. And there came one of the seven angels who had the seven vials and spoke with me, saying, Come, I will show thee the condemnation of the great harlot who sitteth upon many waters.

One of the seven angels who had the seven vials spoke to S. John, saying, I will show thee the condemnation (τὸ κρίμα)

of the great harlot. We take this angel to be the angel referred to in R. i. 1, "and signified sending by his angel to his servant John." He reveals his identity further, later on. It is his task to signify or explain through Jesus Christ the important symbols of the obscure Roman theme. We have a similar usage of the verb *σημαίνω*—"to point out"—in the Acts, where Agabus "signified by the Spirit that there should be a great famine" (xi. 28).

Κρίμα, translated "condemnation" here, but "judgment" at R. xviii. 20 and R. xx. 4, connects with *οὐ κρίνεις* at R. vi. 10—"dost thou not judge" (the martyrs' cry). The time has come to judge and revenge their blood on Rome. The angel said: "I will show thee the *judgment* of the great harlot who sitteth upon many waters." "Harlotry" is scriptural symbolism for idolatry. Rome that "made all nations drink of the wine . . . of her fornication" (R. xiv. 8) was the "great harlot."

"Who sitteth upon many waters" is expegetical. The angel explains, later on, that "the waters . . . where the harlot sitteth are peoples and nations and tongues"=the polyglot inhabitants of the Empire. This connects with other indications of Rome. We have seen that "the angel of the waters" approved her punishments (R. xvi. 5).

2. Μεθ' ἧς ἐπόρνευσαν οἱ βασιλεῖς τῆς γῆς, καὶ ἐμεθύσθησαν οἱ κατοικοῦντες τὴν γῆν ἐκ τοῦ οἴνου τῆς πορνείας αὐτῆς.

2. With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and they who inhabit the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her prostitution.

With the great harlot, the kings of the earth, *τῆς γῆς*, have committed fornication. The phrase "*ἐκ τοῦ οἴνου . . . τῆς πορνείας αὐτῆς*," taken from R. xiv. 8, shows that the angel has "great Babylon" in view. Altering the translation from "fornication" to "prostitution" obscures the reference.

Rome worshipped and erected temples to all the gods of all her subject nations. There were 420 temples in Rome, so that visitors from all parts could find their own particular gods, and practise their national rites of idolatry. But Cæsar worship was the form of idolatry chiefly practised when the Apocalypse was written. That was the wine of Rome's prostitution.

Idolatrous Tyre is described as a harlot in Isaias xxiii. 15, 16, 17. So also Ninive: "Because of the multitude of the fornications of the harlot" (Nahum iii. 4). "Babylon hath been a

golden cup in the hand of the Lord, that made all the earth drunk. The nations have drunk of her wine" (Jer. li. 7).

Verse xvii. 2 above is practically repeated at R. xviii. 3, in which chapter (xviii.) the destruction of Rome, under the symbol of Babylon, is described.

3. Καὶ ἀπήνεγκέν με εἰς ἔρημον ἐν πνεύματι, καὶ εἶδον γυναῖκα καθημένην ἐπὶ θηρίον κόκκινον, γέμον ὀνόματα βλασφημίας, ἔχον κεφαλὰς ἑπτὰ καὶ κέρατα δέκα.

3. And he took me away in spirit into the desert. And I saw a woman sitting upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.

(S. = γέμοντα.)

The desert here is the spiritual desert of paganism. In this desert the Seer saw a woman, on whose forehead was written "Babylon the Great" (R. xvii. 5). She is sitting upon a scarlet coloured beast, identified by its seven heads and ten horns as the Beast from the sea (R. xiii. 1). "Full of the names of blasphemy" refers to her 420 temples, another connecting link with the Beast. The woman, pagan Rome, is upheld by the line of Cæsars. The Beast is "scarlet" with the blood of martyrs.

The Seer is taken away in the spirit for the third time.

4. Καὶ ἡ γυνὴ ἦν περιβεβλημένη πορφυροῦν καὶ κόκκινον, καὶ κεχρυσωμένη χρυσίῳ καὶ λίθῳ τιμίῳ καὶ μαργαρίταις, ἔχουσα ποτήριον χρυσοῦν ἐν τῇ χειρὶ αὐτῆς γέμον βδελυγμάτων καὶ τὰ ἀκάθαρτα τῆς πορνείας αὐτῆς.

4. And the woman is clothed round in purple, and scarlet and gilt with gold, and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand, full of the abominations and filthiness of her fornication.

The woman, the Imperial City, is clothed round in the Imperial purple. When the soldiers crowned our Lord with the crown of thorns, they put on Him a purple garment—*ἰμάτιον πορφυροῦν περιέβαλον* (Jhn. xix. 2), in token of His Kingship. But Rome, as the great harlot, is adorned with scarlet, and gilt with gold, and precious stones and pearls. The Seer decks the woman with purple and scarlet and gold and precious stones and pearls to identify her with the City of Rome, which he, in turn, identifies by her traffic in these same articles. See R. xviii. 12.

Having a golden cup full of the abominations of her fornication. "She . . . made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication" (R. xiv. 8). Dr. Swete points out that *βδέλυγμα*, "abomination," is frequent in every part of the Septuagint, where it usually represents ceremonial or moral impurity, or an object of idolatrous worship or an idolatrous rite (*op. cit.*, p. 216). We may read for "fornication," "idolatry," and for the filthiness thereof, its abominable character and the impurities which accompanied it.

5. Καὶ ἐπὶ τὸ μέτωπον αὐτῆς ὄνομα γεγραμμένον, Μυστήριον, Βαβυλῶν ἡ μεγάλη, ἡ μήτηρ τῶν πορνῶν καὶ τῶν βδελυγμάτων τῆς γῆς.

5. And on her forehead a name was written. A mystery, Babylon the Great, the mother of the fornications and abominations of the earth.

On her forehead *Μυστήριον*, "a mystery," as at R. i. 20, "The mystery (*τὸ μυστήριον*) of the seven stars . . . and seven golden candlesticks." It draws attention to the fact that it is a mystic or symbolic name. *Βαβυλῶν ἡ μεγάλη* we have had before in connection with Rome (R. xiv. 8, xvi. 19). Babylon was the secret name for Rome amongst Christians of the first century (1 Peter v. 13). "The mother of the fornications and abominations of the earth" (*τῆς γῆς*), refers to her position as mistress of the world and chief upholder of idolatry and impurity.

6. Καὶ εἶδον τὴν γυναῖκα μεθύουσαν ἐκ τοῦ αἵματος τῶν ἁγίων καὶ ἐκ τοῦ αἵματος τῶν μαρτύρων Ἰησοῦ καὶ ἐθαύμασα ἰδὼν αὐτὴν θαῦμα μέγα.

6. And I saw the woman drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And when I had seen her I wondered with great admiration.

(S. = καὶ εἶδα.)

Θαῦμα μέγα means "with great wonder" (see next verse). There is nothing to admire in the vision of the woman drunk with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus, though much to excite astonishment. Admiration, in Elizabethan English, was put sometimes for surprise, but *ἐθαύμασα* and *θαῦμα* should be rendered by the same word.

Drunk with blood is a metaphor expressive of the state of men who are obsessed with killing their fellow creatures, as were the French in the Reign of Terror. This metaphor is found in Roman literature as Dr. Swete points out, *e.g.*, "*gustaras civilem sanguinem vel potius exsorbueras*" (Cic. Phil. ii. 29). "*(Antonius) ebrius sanguine civium*" (Plin. H. N. xiv. 22, 28). See also Suet. Tib. 59 (*op. cit.* p. 217). It looks back to R. xvi. 6, and forward to R. xviii. 24. This passage was written in the time of Nero, when Rome was drunk with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. S. John wondered, and all Christianity wondered at this awful and unsettling spectacle.

The martyrs are classified, first, as τῶν ἁγίων—the saints, *i.e.*, Christians generally; and second, τῶν μαρτύρων Ἰησοῦ—witnesses of Jesus, put for the hierarchy. "For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (R. xix. 10); for they have shed the blood of saints and prophets (R. xvi. 6), prophets, in the sense of preachers.

7. Καὶ εἶπέν μοι ὁ ἄγγελος, Διατί ἐθαύμασας; ἐγὼ ἐρῶ σοι τὸ μυστήριον τῆς γυναικὸς καὶ τοῦ θηρίου τοῦ βαστάζοντος αὐτήν, τοῦ ἔχοντος τὰς ἑπτὰ κεφαλὰς καὶ τὰ δέκα κέρατα.

7. And the angel said to me, Why dost thou wonder? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman and of the beast which carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns.

(S. = Διὰ τί.)

Διατί ἐθαύμασας—"why do you wonder"—from θαυμάζω—"to wonder," "to be astonished." The angel now proceeds to explain the conjoint mystery of the woman and the Beast of R. xvii. 3.

Compare this with Rev. vii. 13, 14, where one of the ancients proffers an explanation of the vision of the countless multitude who stood before the throne clothed with white robes. It was important there that no mistake should be made about the martyrs. It is important here that no mistake should be made as to the Beast and the scarlet woman, the authors of their martyrdom.

8. Τὸ θηρίον ὃ εἶδες ἦν καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν, καὶ μέλλει ἀναβαίνειν ἐκ τῆς ἀβύσσου καὶ εἰς ἀπώλειαν ὑπάγειν. καὶ θαυμάσονται οἱ κατοικοῦντες ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, ὧν οὐ γέγραπται τὸ ὄνομα ἐπὶ τὸ βιβλίον τῆς ζωῆς ἀπὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου, βλέπόντων τὸ θηρίον ὅτι ἦν καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν καὶ παρέσται.

8. The beast which thou sawest was and is not, and shall come up out of the bottomless pit and go into destruction; and the inhabitants of the earth (whose names are not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world) shall wonder, seeing the beast that was and is not, and will reappear.

(S. = "θαυμασθήσονται.") The brackets are in the Vulgate.

To begin with the Beast, the chief actor in this drama. He is the Beast seen at R. xiii. 1, and again at R. xvii. 3. He is the Beast whose living head, Nero, was wounded to death and his deadly wound was healed (R. xiii. 3, where see notes). The Seer recurs to the current superstition regarding Nero, that he would be killed by the sword and go into the bottomless pit, and reappear again as a conqueror, and finally go into destruction—*εἰς ἀπώλειαν*—the abode of Apolyon, the destroyer (R. ix. 11). The angel goes on "*οἱ κατοικοῦντες ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς*"—the enemies of the Church, whose names are not written in the Book of Life, "*θαυμάσονται*"—shall wonder—seeing the beast that was and is not, and will reappear." The superstition that Nero, slain, would recover and return to reconquer his kingdom, was one that specially interested the Roman world. The soothsayers predicted it. This hariolation is brought in here as a clue to the enigma which follows in the next verse.

We have had the Book of Life before, in the same use at R. xiii. 8. The terminal words, *καὶ παρέσται*—"and will reappear"—are not in the Vulgate, and consequently not in the Douay Bible. *Τῆς ἀβύσσου*, translated "the abyss" at R. xi. 7, is here called "the bottomless pit."

9. Ὡδε ὁ νοῦς ὁ ἔχων σοφίαν, αἱ ἑπτὰ κεφαλαὶ ἑπτὰ ὄρη εἰσίν, ὅπου ἡ γυνὴ κάθηται ἐπ' αὐτῶν, καὶ βασιλεῖς ἑπτὰ εἰσιν.

9. And here is the understanding that hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, upon which the woman sitteth, and they are seven kings.

S. transfers *καὶ βασιλεῖς ἑπτὰ εἰσιν* to the beginning of the next verse, to which it properly belongs. Brandscheid follows the Vulgate.

“The understanding that has wisdom” is an expression suggesting the necessity for examining this matter carefully. It tallies with the “wisdom” and “understanding” called for at R. xiii. 18, to compute the number of the Beast. “The seven heads are seven mountains upon which the woman sitteth.” The seven mountains are a clear indication of Rome, which was built on seven mountains, and was commonly known as the seven-hilled city. *Sed quæ de septem totum circumspicit orbem Montibus, imperii Roma deumque locus.* Ovid, *trist.*, i. 5, 69. See also Virgil, *Aen.* vi. 782; Horace, *carm.*, *saec.* 7; Propertius iii. 10; Martial iv. 64; and Cicero, *ad Attic.* vi. 5.

“Great Babylon,” built upon seven mountains, is aptly described as seated upon seven mountains. The seven heads which support her, the Cæsars, are also entitled to be called mountains in a scriptural sense (see R. viii. 8, notes). “The seven heads are seven kings”—“*Βασιλεῖς εἰσιν.*” Nero the last of the Julian line was a true *Βασιλεύς*. He inherited the throne. Those who came after him were simply generals commanding armies thrust upon the throne by their legions.

10. Οἱ πέντε ἔπεσαν, ὁ εἷς ἔστιν, ὁ ἄλλος οὐπω ἦλθεν, καὶ ὅταν ἔλθῃ ὀλίγον αὐτὸν δεῖ μέναι.

10. Five are fallen, one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he shall come he must remain a short time.

To make this verse clear we have to repeat the last clause of verse 9, “And they are seven Kings.” “Five are fallen.” It is admitted by all that the seven Kings are Kings of Rome. The five fallen Kings were Julius Cæsar, Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, and Claudius. “One is.” That is, one, the sixth, still lives. Nero was the sixth. “And the other” (the seventh King) “is not yet come.” “And when he shall come he must remain a short time” is a prediction, which came true, for Galba, the seventh King, reigned only seven months.

That Julius Cæsar was the first of this line of Kings is generally admitted. He claimed the title of Imperator (Suet. *Jul.* 76); and he was the first of the Cæsars, worshipped as a god. See p. 93.

11. Καὶ τὸ θηρίον ὃ ἦν καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν, καὶ αὐτὸς ὄγδοός ἐστιν, καὶ ἐκ τῶν ἑπτὰ ἔστιν, καὶ εἰς ἀπώλειαν ὑπάγει.

11. And the beast which was, and is not, the same is also the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into destruction.

This verse takes us back to verse 8, “The beast which thou sawest, was and is not, and shall . . . go into destruc-

tion." It revives the superstition concerning Nero's death, and re-incarnation. Given five dead Kings, and one living (Nero), a seventh and an eighth are required to complete this legend—to bring back the sixth King—on the death of the seventh. We are told that the eighth King is one of the seven, and that he is the Beast which was and is not = Nero. The Beast, Nero, sixth of the line of Kings, dies. A seventh King, Galba, reigns for a short time, and dies. Then Nero revives and reappears as the eighth King. This is the story of *Nero redivivus* put into a small compass.

"And goeth into destruction" is another indication of Nero. This is distinctly foretold of the Beast at R. xix. 20 that he should be "cast alive into the pool of fire burning with brimstone." That is the destruction meant by εἰς ἀπόλειαν, above. In his solicitude for the readers' enlightenment, the Seer has given every possible indication of Nero, short of naming him outright. This is the third specific indication that Nero is the wounded head of the Beast.

12. Καὶ τὰ δέκα κέρατα ἃ εἶδες δέκα βασιλεῖς εἰσιν, οἵτινες βασιλείαν οὐπω ἔλαβον, ἀλλὰ ἐξουσίαν ὡς βασιλεῖς μίαν ὥραν λαμβάνουσιν μετὰ τοῦ θηρίου.

12. And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, who have not yet received a kingdom, but shall receive power as kings, one hour after the beast.

The ten horns were seen at R. xiii. 1, and at R. xvii. 3. At R. xiii. 1 (where see notes) the ten horns are crowned with regal diadems, in token of their kingship. The symbolism is taken from Daniel, whose fourth beast, the Roman Empire, had ten horns, "And the ten horns of the same kingdom shall be ten kings" (Dan. vii. 24). The number ten is not intended to be taken literally. When the Apocalypse was written the ten Kings had not yet received a kingdom. They were Kings of the future, seen with the eye of prophecy. This prediction concerning the ten kings was fulfilled, and is a part of Roman history. "They shall receive power as kings," foretells their appearance. *Λαμβάνουσιν μετὰ τοῦ θηρίου*, indicates that they received power with the concurrence of the Beast. *Μίαν ὥραν*—"one hour"—indicates a short time. Compared with the Roman Empire, the kingdoms referred to should be short-lived, and so it happened. The barbarians who invaded the Empire in the course of time gained permission to reside within its boundaries as allies; but as Rome decayed they asserted their independence, and established kingdoms of their own. The

Goths and Visigoths settled on the Danube, in Gaul and Italy, the Visigoths, the Suevi, and the Alani, in Spain and Gaul, the Franks on the Rhine, the Huns in Thrace, the Vandals in Carthage, the Heruli on the Danube, the Burgundians in Burgundy, the Thuringians in Germany, the Saxons in Britain, and the Armoricans in Brittany. Of this number were some of the ten kings whose "hour" has long since passed away. See in this connection "Rome," Encyc. Brit. vol. xx. p. 780.

13. Οὗτοι μίαν γνώμην ἔχουσιν, καὶ τὴν δύναμιν καὶ ἔξουσίαν αὐτῶν τῷ θηρίῳ διδόασιν.

13. These have one design, and their strength and power they shall deliver to the beast.

These kingdoms have one design—*μίαν γνώμην*—which we find later is to do the will of God; *ποιῆσαι μίαν γνώμην*—"to carry out one design," to "give their kingdoms to the beast until the words of God be fulfilled" (R. xvii. 17). Pending that time, they give the Beast, *δύναμιν καὶ ἔξουσίαν*, as the dragon gave the Beast, "strength" and "power" (R. xiii. 2). They join forces with the Beast at the battle of Armagedon.

14. Οὗτοι μετὰ τοῦ ἀρνίου πολεμήσουσιν καὶ τὸ ἀρνίον νικήσει αὐτούς, ὅτι κύριος κυρίων ἐστὶν καὶ βασιλεὺς βασιλέων, καὶ οἱ μετ' αὐτοῦ κλητοὶ καὶ ἐκλεκτοὶ καὶ πιστοί.

14. These shall fight with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them, because he is Lord of Lords, and King of Kings; and they that are with him are called, and elect, and faithful.

The ten kings are in alliance with the Beast, and assist him in fighting with the Lamb. They are the kings—"της οἰκουμένης ὅλης"—"of the whole earth" at R. xvi. 14 (where see notes). They were gathered together to battle—"εἰς τὸν πόλεμον"—against the great day of Almighty God. The same battle is in view here. "Πολεμήσουσιν μετὰ τοῦ ἀρνίου," "They shall fight with the Lamb." The battle of Armagedon is described in Chapter XIX., where the Lamb appears as leader of the heavenly host, with this title written on his garments and on his thigh, "King of Kings and Lord of Lords." Because of this, the Lamb shall conquer them—"νικήσει αὐτούς."

And they that are with him—*μετ' αὐτοῦ*—"are called, and elect, and faithful." "The Lamb stood on Mount Zion, and with him—*μετ' αὐτοῦ*—one hundred and forty-four thousand," "who were purchased from the earth, who were not defiled with women, who follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth"

(R. xiv. 1 f.). This is the advance description of "they that are with him." The primitive Hebrew Christians, especially the Apostles, were "called and elect and faithful." The different references to the battle of Armagedon correspond very closely.

15. Καὶ λέγει μοι, Τὰ ὕδατα ἃ εἶδες, οὗ ἡ πόρνη κάθηται, λαοὶ καὶ ὄχλοι εἰσὶν καὶ ἔθνη καὶ γλῶσσαι.

15. And he said to me, The waters which thou sawest, where the harlot sitteth, are peoples and nations and tongues.

The angel began his explanation of the mystery of the "harlot" and the Beast with information as to the Beast. He now turns to the "harlot." The waters which thou sawest (at R. xvii. 1) "are peoples and nations and tongues." After the ten persecutions, the Seer saw a great multitude of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues standing before the throne in the sight of the Lamb, clothed with white robes (R. vii. 9). Rome oppressed or "sat upon" the waters, *i.e.*, the Christians of her subject nations.

"Ὀχλοι"—"multitudes"—is not in the Vulgate, and is consequently left out of the Douay Version. It emphasises the connection with R. vii. 9.

16. Καὶ τὰ δέκα κέρατα ἃ εἶδες καὶ τὸ θηρίον, οὗτοι μισήσουσιν τὴν πόρνην, καὶ ἡρημωμένην ποιήσουσιν, αὐτὴν καὶ γυμνήν, καὶ τὰς σάρκας αὐτῆς φάγονται, καὶ αὐτὴν κατακαύσουσιν ἐν πυρί.

16. And the ten horns which thou sawest on the beast, these shall hate the harlot, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and shall burn her with fire.

This is a prediction concerning the fate of Rome, which has come into "remembrance." "The ten horns," "which are ten kings" (verse 2) shall desolate her, and strip her of her belongings, and eat her up, and set fire to her. As a matter of history we know that all this happened. Many "barbarian" kings helped Rome at first, but when they grew strong they partitioned her. Alaric, King of the Visigoths, besieged Rome in 409, and plundered it A.D. 410. Attila, King of the Huns, wasted northern Italy up to the walls of Rome in A.D. 452. Genseric, King of the Vandals, stormed and captured Rome in 455, and allowed his soldiers to pillage the city for fourteen days. Gibbon gives a long account of this incident:

"The pillage lasted fourteen days and nights, and all that yet remained of public or private wealth, of sacred or profane treasure, was

diligently transported to the vessels of Genseric. . . . It was difficult either to escape or to satisfy the avarice of a conqueror who possessed leisure to collect and ships to transport the wealth of the capital. The imperial ornaments of the palace, the magnificent furniture and wardrobes, the sideboards of massive plate were accumulated with disorderly rapine; the gold and silver amounted to several thousand talents; yet even the brass and copper were laboriously removed " ("D. and F.," xxxi.).

In this manner was Rome stripped naked by Genseric. The sacred furniture of the Temple of Jerusalem, brought to Rome by Titus with the golden seven-branched candlestick, were removed to Carthage. Ricimer, a Suevian, besieged and sacked Rome in 472. Totila, King of the Ostrogoths, besieged Rome for several months in the year 546, and gave it up to fire and slaughter. It is said that it remained an uninhabited waste for forty days (Marcellin, in Chron., p. 54).

17. Ὁ γὰρ Θεὸς ἔδωκεν εἰς τὰς καρδίας αὐτῶν ποιῆσαι τὴν γνώμην αὐτοῦ, καὶ ποιῆσαι μίαν γνώμην καὶ δοῦναι τὴν βασιλείαν αὐτῶν τῷ θηρίῳ, ἄχρι τελεσθήσονται οἱ λόγοι τοῦ Θεοῦ.

17. For God hath given into their hearts to do that which pleaseth him, that they give their kingdom to the beast until the words of God be fulfilled.

We have explained this verse by anticipation at R. xvii. 13. *Μίαν γνώμην*, "one design," is here repeated and defined as "that which pleaseth him" (God), viz., "that they give their kingdom to the Beast until the words of God be fulfilled." The "design" of the ten kings was to do the will of God, pre-ordained, viz., to help the Roman Empire at first, and gain admission to it as allies, then to form independent kingdoms with this alliance, and, finally, when strong enough, to rend the Empire in pieces. The words of God that were thus "fulfilled" are contained in the last verse.

We know from history that the "ten kings" overthrew the Roman Empire and destroyed the capital city, Rome. It is very remarkable that the most important of these kings were conscious of their divine mission. Alaric told his people that a voice ever cried to him on the Danube, "Go and destroy Rome." Attila claimed as his official title "The Scourge of God." Genseric, when asked by his pilot where he should steer, said, "Go to that land on which God's anger rests." Odoacer, King of the Heruli, was encouraged to invade Italy by Severinus, a holy hermit of Noricum.

The battle of Armagedon in which the ten kings assist the Beast with "their strength and power" is described in Chapter XIX. It was fought by Rome and her allies against Attila, King of the Huns. It seems to have been a turning-point in the history of Rome and her dependent kings, who learnt then the weakness of Rome and that "the hour" had come to destroy her. In the next hundred years, from A.D. 452 to 552, they "make" Rome "desolate and naked," and "eat her flesh," and "burn her with fire."

"Καὶ ποιῆσαι μίαν γνώμην" is not translated in the Vulgate.

18. Καὶ ἡ γυνὴ ἣν εἶδες ἔστιν ἡ πόλις ἡ μεγάλη ἡ ἔχουσα βασιλείαν ἐπὶ τῶν βασιλέων τῆς γῆς.

18. And the woman which thou sawest is the great city, a kingdom which hath dominion over the kings of the earth.

Continuing his explanation of the harlot woman, the angel says that "the woman is the great city," which great city "hath dominion over the kings of the earth." Rome was the great city of the first century, and Rome alone had dominion over the kings of the earth. She sat upon and oppressed all nations. Nothing could be clearer or more convincing. The woman is pagan Rome, consequently the Beast is the line of Imperial demi-gods, who upheld her idolatrous practices.

CHAPTER XVIII

.1 Καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα εἶδον ἄλλον ἄγγελον καταβαίνοντα ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, ἔχοντα ἐξουσίαν μεγάλην, καὶ ἡ γῆ ἐφωτίσθη ἐκ τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ.

1. And after these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was enlightened with his glory.

(S. omits the first *Καὶ*. Bd. follows the Vulgate.)

Towards the close of Chapter XVI. we were told "and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give her the cup of the wine of the indignation of his wrath" (R. xvi. 19). Then an angel explains in Chapter XVII. the mystery of Babylon (R. xvii. 1-7, 18). Now Babylon comes into "remembrance" and is made to drink the cup.

"After these things," that is after the explanations given by the angel in Chapter XVII., another angel, having great power, and a glory which illuminated the earth, came down from

heaven. "Glory" is a secondary sense of *δόξη* (Luke ii. 9). A great and glorious angel is needed here to symbolise a power mighty enough to overthrow great Babylon. Our Lord appeared in person when it was a question of reaping the Roman Empire at R. xiv. 14. This angel came down to earth, *ἡ γῆ*, the Roman earth. He is like the angel who appeared before with the little open book at R. x. 1., where see notes.

2. Καὶ ἔκραξεν ἐν ἰσχυρᾷ φωνῇ λέγων, Ἐπεσεν ἔπεσεν Βαβυλὼν ἡ μεγάλη, καὶ ἐγένετο κατοικητήριον δαιμονίων καὶ φυλακὴ παντὸς πνεύματος ἀκαθάρτου καὶ φυλακὴ παντὸς ὀρνέου ἀκαθάρτου καὶ μεμισημένου.

2. And he cried out with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every unclean spirit, and the hold of every unclean and hateful bird.

Hitherto the Seer has invariably used the expression *φωνῇ μεγάλῃ*, "loud voice." This dazzling angel is endowed with *ἰσχυρᾷ φωνῇ*, "a strong voice," symbolic of his strength. He repeats the prediction of the angel of R. xiv. 8, viz., "She is fallen, she is fallen, that great Babylon"; for now is come the time of her fall. "The prediction is couched in the present tense, as a thing seen by the Seer. She is fallen into ruin. The picture is drawn on the lines of fallen Babylon in Isaias, "But wild beasts shall rest there, and their houses shall be filled with serpents, and ostriches shall dwell there, and the hairy ones shall dance there" (xiii. 21). In like manner Isaias prophecies of Edom (xxxiv. 14). The prophet Jeremias predicted similarly of the ruins of Babylon, "Therefore shall dragons dwell there with the fig-fauns and ostriches shall dwell therein" (l. 39)

The reader will notice a certain amount of repetition in this part of the Book, as commonly in the Hebrew Prophets.

3. Ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ οἴνου τοῦ θυμοῦ τῆς πορνείας αὐτῆς πέπωκαν πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, καὶ οἱ βασιλεῖς τῆς γῆς μετ' αὐτῆς ἐπόρνευσαν, καὶ οἱ ἔμποροι τῆς γῆς ἐκ τῆς δυνάμεως τοῦ στρήνου αὐτῆς ἐπλούτησαν.

3. Because 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 have been made rich by the abundance of her delicacies.

Before the picture of Rome's desolation is drawn, her crime of idolatry, especially of Cæsar worship, is once again charged against her (see R. xvii. 2, notes). A kind of judicial trial of

Rome takes place; first the crime in this verse; then the judicial sentence; lastly, the picture of its execution.

The merchants of the earth are brought in here, because they have pandered to the luxury and vice of Rome, and they will be involved in her ruin, and will witness it (R. xviii. 11).

4. Καὶ ἤκουσα ἄλλην φωνὴν ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ λέγουσαν. Ἐξέλθατε, ἐξ αὐτῆς, ὁ λαός μου, ἵνα μὴ συγκοινωνήσητε ταῖς ἀμαρτίαις αὐτῆς, καὶ ἐκ τῶν πληγῶν αὐτῆς ἵνα μὴ λάβητε.

4. And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Go out from her, my people, that you be not partakers of her sins, and that you receive not of her plagues.

As the Nazarene Church was warned to leave Jerusalem at the time of its destruction, so now the Church at Rome is warned. "Another voice from heaven" is apparently that of our Saviour, for it says, "my people"—"ὁ λαός μου." We are reminded of the warnings of the O.T. regarding the destruction of Babylon.

Compare Isaias xlvi. 20: "Come forth out of Babylon." Jer. l. 8: "Remove out of the midst of Babylon." See also Jer. li. 45: "Go out of the midst of her, my people; that every man may save his life from the fierce wrath of the Lord."

There are some indications that the warning was heeded at Rome. At the time of Alaric's sacking of Rome in 414, many Christians fled away to S. Jerome, who was then at Bethlehem, in Judæa; others took refuge in other parts. S. Jerome says (Ep. vi.) that S. Paula, and several illustrious Christian families, had left Rome, as if by particular inspiration, and retired into Judæa. "The holy Pope Innocent was drawn by a particular providence out of the city, as Lot out of Sodom, that he might not see the ruin of a guilty people" (Orosius, Lib. vii. c. xxxix.). We read likewise that Melania, a friend of S. Jerome, as if she foresaw the approaching catastrophe, prevailed upon many Christians to retire with her from a city doomed to destruction (Histor. Laus. c. cxviii.).

Melania left Rome in the year 408, with Rufinus. For the sacking of Rome by Alaric, see Gibbon ("D. and F.," c. xxxi.).

5. Ὅτι ἐκολλήθησαν αὐτῆς αἱ ἁμαρτίαι ἄχρι τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, καὶ ἐμνημόνευσεν ὁ Θεὸς τὰ ἀδικήματα αὐτῆς.

5. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and the Lord hath remembered her iniquities.

The accusation is resumed. Her sins have reached to heaven. This refers to R. xvii. 6, "I saw the woman drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus." Which again refers to R. vi. 10, "How long, O Lord, dost thou not judge and revenge our blood." Their blood has reached heaven, like the cry of Abel's blood (Gen. iv. 10), and the Lord "remembered" the iniquities of Rome. So the judgment of Babylon "reached even to the heavens" (Jer. li. 9).

6. Ἀπόδοτε αὐτῇ ὡς καὶ αὐτὴ ἀπέδωκεν, καὶ διπλώσατε διπλᾶ κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτῆς, ἐν τῷ ποτηρίῳ ᾧ ἐκέρασεν κεράσατε αὐτῇ διπλοῦν.

6. Render to her as she also hath rendered to you, and double unto her double, according to her works; in the cup wherein she hath mingled, mingle unto her, double.

(S. = (τὰ)διπλᾶ.)

This is the judicial sentence, pronounced by the last voice heard at R. xviii. 4, addressed to "ὁ λαός μου." It is a command to the angels of vengeance, "Double unto her double, according to her works." See R. xvi. 6, and xvii. 6, for "her works." The cup in her hand is seen at R. xvii. 4. The punishment of the cup is symbolised at R. xiv. 20. And at R. xvi. 19, "Great Babylon came in remembrance before God to give her the cup of the wine of the indignation of his wrath." Of Babylon of old the sentence ran, "Pay her according to her work; according to all that she hath done, do ye to her" (Jer. l. 29). But to Rome the Jewish law of restitution is applied, as laid down in Exodus xxii. 4 and 7. We may recall the tableau of vengeance on the Empire at R. xiv. 20, where blood filled 1,600 stadia, up to the level of horses' bridles. The meaning of mingling unto her double, in the cup, is developed as we go on.

7. Ὅσα ἐδόξασεν αὐτὴν καὶ ἐστρηνίασεν, τοσοῦτον δότε αὐτῇ βασανισμὸν καὶ πένθος. ὅτι ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ αὐτῆς λέγει ὅτι Κάθημαι βασίλισσα, καὶ χήρα οὐκ εἰμὶ καὶ πένθος οὐ μὴ ἴδω.

7. As much as she hath glorified herself and lived in delicacies, so much torment and sorrow give unto her; because she saith in her heart, I sit a queen and am no widow, and sorrow I shall not see.

The general principle is laid down in Luke xiv. 11, "Because everyone that exalteth himself shall be humbled." It is found in the O.T. (Isa. iii. 16). The prophet Isaias warns Babylon of her punishment, "Thou hast said I shall be a lady for ever, . . . I shall not sit as a widow" (xlvi. 7, 8). This is a continuation of the judgment, still on the lines of the Jewish laws in Exodus.

8. Διὰ τοῦτο ἐν μιᾷ ἡμέρᾳ ἤξουσιν αἱ πληγαὶ αὐτῆς, θάνατος καὶ πένθος καὶ λιμός, καὶ ἐν πυρὶ κατακαυθήσεται ὅτι ἰσχυρὸς ὁ Θεὸς ὁ κρίνας αὐτήν.

8. Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death and mourning and famine, and she shall be burnt with fire, because God is strong, who shall judge her.

Because of these things, enumerated at verses 3, 5, and 7 above, her plagues shall come in one day. The afflictions of Babylon are called "plagues" to preserve the symbolism connecting her with the Empire. "One day" does not mean a day of twenty-four hours. It means, as in Genesis, an indefinite period.

Rome is delivered up to the white horse, death; and the black horse, famine; and the red horse of war and conflagration. Ὁ Θεὸς ὁ κρίνας αὐτήν connects with κρίνεις at R. vi. 10. The martyrs' cry is heard. Judgment is pronounced.

9. Καὶ κλαύσουσιν καὶ κόψονται ἐπ' αὐτήν οἱ βασιλεῖς τῆς γῆς οἱ μετ' αὐτῆς πορνεύσαντες καὶ στρηνιάσαντες, ὅταν βλέπωσιν τὸν καπνὸν τῆς πυρώσεως αὐτῆς.

9. And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication, and lived in delicacies with her, shall weep and bewail themselves over her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning.

The result of the judgment is seen in the widespread lamentations of all those who are dependent on Rome. First the kings of the earth, τῆς γῆς, who have worshipped her Cæsars,

and lived dissolute lives. They are not the barbarian kings—*τοὺς βασιλεῖς τῆς οἰκουμένης ὅλης*—of R. xvi. 14, who are allied to the Beast for a time, and then turn and rend her—Alaric, and the rest—Arian kings who were the instruments of God in desolating Rome, and stripping her naked, and burning her with fire (R. xvii. 16). These are friendly kings who have joined in Cæsar worship, and who have much to lose by the ruin of the city. They bewail themselves when they see the smoke of her burning. Their lament is very similar to that of the son of man over the fall of Tyre, in Ezechiel, chapter xxvii.

10. Ἀπὸ μακρόθεν ἐστηκότες διὰ τὸν φόβον τοῦ βασι-
σμοῦ αὐτῆς, λέγοντες, Οὐαὶ οὐαὶ, ἡ πόλις ἡ μεγάλη
Βαβυλῶν, ἡ πόλις ἡ ἰσχυρά, ὅτι μῆ ὥρα ἦλθεν ἡ κρίσις σου.

10. Standing afar off for fear of her torments, saying, Woe, woe, that great city Babylon, that mighty city, for in one hour is thy judgment come.

When the kings of the earth lament over the fate of "that great city Babylon, that mighty city," any lingering doubt there may be in the mind of the reader that Babylon means Rome is dispelled. The lament is repeated at R. xviii. 16 and 19. Prof. Stuart holds that *Οὐαὶ οὐαὶ* should be translated Alas, alas! since the kings are sorrowfully witnessing, not predicting, or imprecating woe (*op. cit.* II., p. 333).

"One hour," "*μῆ ὥρα*," means the hour of judgment.

11. Καὶ οἱ ἔμποροι τῆς γῆς κλαίουσιν καὶ πενθοῦσιν ἐπ'
αὐτήν, ὅτι τὸν γόμον αὐτῶν οὐδεὶς ἀγοράζει οὐκέτι.

11. And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her, for no man shall buy their merchandise any more.

The merchants' lament carries still further the idea of the desolation of Rome. No one is left to buy their merchandise. This picture also is like that of the fall of Tyre in Ezechiel, chapters xxvii. and xxviii. The merchants lament the downfall of Rome, only in so far as it affects themselves. For this cause they weep and mourn.

Τὸν γόμον is put for a ship's cargo in the Acts (xxi. 3). Rome had oversea commerce with the West, as well as with Africa and the East.

12. Γόμον χρυσοῦ καὶ ἀργύρου καὶ λίθον τιμίου καὶ μαργαρίτου καὶ βυσσίνου καὶ πορφύρας καὶ σιρικοῦ καὶ κοκκίνου, καὶ πᾶν ξύλον θύϊνον καὶ πᾶν σκεῦος ἑλεφαντινον καὶ πᾶν σκεῦος ἐκ ξύλου τιμιωτάτου καὶ χαλκοῦ καὶ σιδήρου καὶ μαρμάρου.

12. Merchandise of gold and silver and precious stones and pearls, and of fine linen and purple and silk and scarlet, and all thyine-wood, and all manner of vessels of ivory, and all manner of vessels of precious stone, and of brass, and of iron and of marble.

(S. = μαργαριτῶν.)

When this enumeration of articles of luxury was made the teaching of Christ regarding poverty was still observed. Ephesus, the first age of the Church, was warned. "But this I have against thee that thou hast left thy first charity" (R. ii. 4). Hence the scandal of this luxury was great at that time. S. John's followers at Ephesus were well acquainted with the traffic of the East with Rome, including slaves and the "souls of men." Much of it was shipped from the port of Ephesus. Thyine-wood, probably the *Thuia Articulata* of botany, was used for making polished inlaid tables, according to Dr. Swete (*op. cit.*, p. 233).

Σκεῦος, translated "vessels," means also an implement of any kind.

13. Καὶ κιννάμωμον καὶ θυμιάματα καὶ μύρον καὶ λίβανον καὶ οἶνον καὶ ἔλαιον καὶ σεμίδαλιν καὶ σίτον καὶ κτήνη καὶ πρόβατα, καὶ ἵππων καὶ ρεδῶν καὶ σωμαίων, καὶ ψυχὰς ἀνθρώπων.

13. And cinnamon and odours and ointment 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.

(S. has καὶ ἄμωμον after κιννάμωμον, "a perfume familiar to Roman writers." Bd. omits it. It is not in the Vulgate.)

Cinnamon oil was used in the perfumed unction with which the tabernacle and the ark and the candlesticks and the priests of the Temple were anointed (Exod. xxx. 23-30). The Romans anointed their persons with it, when preparing for banquets. *Θυμίαμα* is the word used to express incense at R. v. 8 and R. viii. 3, though translated "odours" at R. v. 8. It was used in Cæsar worship. "Σωμαίων," "slaves," were bought and sold in the slave market of Rome—the emporium of immorality.

Gibbon refers to a special class of slave merchandise very common in the markets of decadent Rome. He says: "The eastern imports of the Empire included eunuchs, whose value

was increased as the Empire declined" (*op. cit.*, chap. vi.). They had lost their manhood, but had still *the souls of men—* ψυχὰς ἀνθρώπων.

14. Καὶ ἡ ὀπώρα τῆς ἐπιθυμίας τῆς ψυχῆς σου ἀπῆλθεν ἀπὸ σοῦ, καὶ πάντα τὰ λιπαρὰ καὶ τὰ λαμπρὰ ἀπόλετο ἀπὸ σοῦ, καὶ οὐκέτι οὐ μὴ αὐτὰ εὐρήσουσιν.

14. And the fruits of the desire of thy soul are departed from thee, and all fat and goodly things are perished from thee, and they shall no more find them.

(S. puts σου after ὀπώρα, and omits it after ψυχῆς.)

Having enumerated the articles of merchandise which gratified the desires of Rome, the city is apostrophised. All these things—the ripe fruits of her civilisation, the desire of her soul—shall depart from her. Prof. Stuart says, "λιπαρὰ" and "λαμπρὰ" characterise all kinds of furniture and clothing, which were gilt or plated or embroidered, and therefore were bright and splendid (*op. cit.*, ii. 335). They shall perish from her, "And they shall no more find them"; or "they shall no more be found," which is in better keeping with the Greek text.

15. Οἱ ἔμποροι τούτων, οἱ πλουτήσαντες ἀπ' αὐτῆς, ἀπὸ μακρόθεν στήσονται διὰ τὸν φόβον τοῦ βασιανισμοῦ αὐτῆς, κλαίοντες καὶ πενθοῦντες.

15. The merchants of these things, who were made rich, shall stand afar off from her, for fear of her torments, weeping and mourning.

Τούτων, "these things," that is the merchandise mentioned at verses 12 and 13. The merchants of R. xviii. 11, who were made rich by this merchandise of gold and silver, etc., "shall stand afar off from her, for fear of her torments," as the kings did at R. xviii. 10. But their grief is greater, for their loss is greater. Commerce is at a standstill. Hence they weep and mourn, "bewail themselves over her" (R. xviii. 9).

16. Λέγοντες, Οὐαὶ οὐαὶ, ἡ πόλις ἡ μεγάλη, ἡ περιβεβλημένη βύσσινον καὶ πορφυροῦν καὶ κόκκινον, καὶ κεχρυσωμένη ἐν χρυσίῳ καὶ λίθῳ τιμίῳ καὶ μαργαρίταις.

16. Saying, Woe, woe, that great city which was clothed with fine linen and purple and scarlet, and was gilt with gold and precious stones and pearls.

(S. = μαργαριτή.)

The merchants, crying out Alas, alas! "that great city," mention some of the principal articles of their merchandise,

and conclude, like the kings at verse 10, by saying, "For in one hour are so great riches come to nought." That is the cause of their crying out, Alas, alas! Dr. Swete prints this verse with the ending ὅτι μιᾷ ὥρᾳ κ.τ.λ as at verse 10. But Brandscheid, as usual, follows the Vulgate, and makes the merchants lament the beginning of the shipmasters' testimony (verse 17). The shipmasters' lament concludes with ὅτι μιᾷ ὥρᾳ, and therefore should not begin with it. All three laments are planned alike.

The scarlet woman at R. xvii. 4 is identified as "that great city," Rome, by being clothed in purple and scarlet and "gilt with gold and precious stones and pearls," as above.

17. Ὅτι μιᾷ ὥρᾳ ἠρημώθη ὁ τοσοῦτος πλοῦτος, καὶ πᾶς κυβερνήτης καὶ πᾶς ὁ ἐπὶ τόπον πλέων καὶ ναῦται καὶ ὅσοι τὴν θάλασσαν ἐργάζονται, ἀπὸ μακρόθεν ἔστησαν.

17. For in one hour are so great riches come to nought, and every shipmaster, and all that sail into the lake, and mariners, and they that work at sea stood afar off.

Καὶ, and, really begins this sentence, as often elsewhere. Here we have a new set of witnesses. Another class of persons deeply interested in the prosperity of Rome testify to her greatness, to her ruin, and to their great loss. Thus the picture of Rome's magnificence and fall is filled up. Every "shipmaster"—"κυβερνήτης"—is literally the helmsman who pilots the ship. Ὁ ἐπὶ τόπον πλέων, means, "He who sails to a place," *i.e.*, from one place to another along the coast, the captain of a coasting ship, for example. And "ναῦται," sailors, and all who work at sea, oarsmen, carpenters, sail-makers, cooks, and the like, "stood afar off," like the kings and merchants, because they saw the smoke of her burning. The word "lake" is not in the Greek above. It is the Vulgate rendering of "ἐπὶ τόπον πλέων," and suggests that the Latin redactor of the eighth century had the Mediterranean Sea in view, and knew that Babylon stood for Rome. Vg.=*qui in lacum navigat*.

The harbour of Ostia, at the mouth of the Tiber, reconstructed by the Emperor Claudius in the first century, was crowded with shipping engaged in the commerce of Rome, when the Apocalypse of St. John was written.

18. Καὶ ἔκραξαν βλέποντες τὸν καπνὸν τῆς πυρώσεως αὐτῆς λέγοντες Τίς ὁμοία τῇ πόλει τῇ μεγάλῃ.

18. And cried out, seeing the place of her burning, saying, What city is like to this great city?

They cried out seeing "τὸν καπνὸν," *i.e.*, "the smoke" of her burning. Standing afar off, they could see the smoke, for it was the smoke of a great city. The conflagration of Rome would be visible from the sea. The dome of S. Peter's is visible from the sea. The walls of Rome were thrown down, the public monuments demolished, and the city destroyed by fire by Totila (Procop. L. iii. 12). Evidence of the fire still remains. Recent excavations in the Forum show the coins of the money changers melted and burnt into the solid rock.

"The *place* of her burning" in the English version above is taken from the Vulgate, *locum incendii ejus*, which follows "τοπον,"—"place" in the Codex Alexandrinus. In this Greek text we have "the smoke" of her burning.

19. Καὶ ἔβαλον χοῦν ἐπὶ τὰς κεφαλὰς αὐτῶν καὶ ἔκραξαν κλαίοντες καὶ πενθοῦντες, λέγοντες Οὐαὶ, οὐαὶ, ἡ πόλις ἡ μεγάλη, ἐν ᾗ ἐπλούτησαν πάντες οἱ ἔχοντες τὰ πλοῖα ἐν τῇ θαλάσσῃ ἐκ τῆς τιμιότητος αὐτῆς, ὅτι μιᾷ ὥρᾳ ἠρημώθη.

19. And they cast dust upon their heads and cried out, weeping and mourning, Woe! woe! that great city wherein all were made rich who had ships at sea, by reason of her prices, for in one hour she is made desolate.

"They cast dust upon their heads," an ancient Jewish way of demonstrating grief (Jos. vii. 6; Job ii. 12; Josephus, Ants. xx. 6, 1).

This picture of the downfall of Rome is very similar to that of the fall of Tyre in Ezechiel, as will be seen from the following: "The mariners and all the pilots of the sea, shall stand upon the land. And they shall mourn over thee with a loud voice, and shall cry bitterly: and they shall cast up dust upon their heads, and shall be sprinkled with ashes. And they shall take up a mournful song for thee, and shall lament thee. What city is like Tyre, which is become silent in the midst of the sea, which by thy merchandise, that went from thee by sea, didst fill many people; which by the multitude of thy riches, and of thy people, didst enrich the kings of the earth?" (Ezech. xxvii. 29, 30, 32, 33).

"By reason of her prices" sounds peculiar. Ἐκ τῆς τιμιότητος αὐτῆς, could be rendered "by reason of her wealth," where *τιμιότης* is "worth," "value," "preciousness." The

shipmasters conclude, "for in one hour she is made desolate"—*ὅτι μὴ ὄρα ἡρημώθη*, that is the conclusion, not the beginning, of a lament.

20. *Εὐφραίνου ἐπ' αὐτῆ, οὐρανέ, καὶ οἱ ἅγιοι καὶ οἱ ἀπόστολοι καὶ οἱ προφῆται, ὅτι ἔκρινεν ὁ Θεὸς τὸ κρίμα ὑμῶν ἐξ αὐτῆς.*

20. Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets, for God hath judged your judgment on her.

A new chord is struck and a command given. Enough, for the present, of weeping and mourning over the downfall of wicked Babylon. Her victims, the souls of the martyrs, who cried to heaven for vengeance against her, at R. vi. 10, have a right to rejoice now their prayer, "judge and revenge our blood," is heard. The countless multitude of martyrs who stood before the throne at R. vii. 9, amongst them the Holy Apostles SS. Peter and Paul, and the prophets, or Bishops of the Church, slain for their faith by Rome, are told to rejoice, "for God hath judged your judgment on her." This again looks back to R. xvii. 1, I will show you the condemnation—*τὸ κρίμα*—of the great harlot. *Κρίμα* is translated "condemnation" at R. xvii. 1, and "judgment" here.

In the Greek, above, *ἅγιοι*, "saints," are commanded to rejoice, as well as "apostles and prophets," accordingly the response comes from "many multitudes in heaven" at R. xix. 1, followed by "the four-and-twenty ancients" at R. xix. 4.

21. *Καὶ ἦρεν εἰς ἄγγελος ἰσχυρὸς λίθον ὡς μύλινον μέγαν, καὶ ἔβαλεν εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν λέγων, Οὕτως ὀρμήματι βληθήσεται Βαβυλὼν ἡ μεγάλη πόλις, καὶ οὐ μὴ εὐρεθῆ ἔτι.*

21. And a mighty angel took up a stone, as it were a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, With this violence shall Babylon, that great city, be thrown down, and shall now be found no more.

We have seen this "*ἄγγελος ἰσχυρὸς*" before at R. v. 2 and x. 1., and perhaps at xviii. 1. He cast a stone, as heavy as a millstone, into the sea, saying, With this *ὀρμήματι*, "impetus," will great Babylon "be thrown down," and "be found no more." Millstones were round flat stones weighing about 25 lbs. or more, superimposed, one upon the other, for grinding corn. It is a striking prediction of the complete disappearance of the city of pagan Rome. The prophet Jeremias predicted

the fall of Babylon in like manner, "And when thou shalt have made an end of reading this book, thou shalt tie a stone to it, and shall throw it into the midst of the Euphrates. And thou shalt say, Thus shall Babylon sink" (li. 63, 64).

It is predicted here that the fall of pagan Rome should be accomplished with great violence—as, in fact, happened—and that it should disappear as completely as a stone thrown into the sea. Within the last few years excavations in the ruins of the Forum have brought to light some of the temples of ancient Rome. Ruins within ruins, witness to the downfall of the pagan city, the Babylon of the Apocalypse. Even as a stone buried in the sea, has the life of that city gone. It lies dead and buried in the midst of the living city of Christian Rome.

Finally, as the natural consequence of the ruin of her temples, basilicas, baths, forums, amphitheatres, palaces and work-shops, no sound of life is left in her.

22. Καὶ φωνὴ κιθαρῳδῶν καὶ μουσικῶν καὶ αὐλητῶν καὶ σαλπιστῶν οὐ μὴ ἀκουσθῆ ἔν σοι ἔτι, καὶ πᾶς τεχνίτης, πάσης τέχνης, οὐ μὴ εὐρεθῆ ἔν σοι ἔτι, καὶ φωνὴ μύλου οὐ μὴ ἀκουσθῆ ἔν σοι ἔτι.

22. And the voice of harpers and of musicians and of them that play on the pipe and on the trumpet, shall no more be heard in thee, and no craftsman of any art whatsoever shall be found any more in thee, and the sound of a mill shall no more be heard in thee.

The routine of daily life is summed up in music of all kinds, which stand for revelry, in craftsmen, who stand for the arts and manufactures, and in the sound of the millstone, which stands for domestic life (see Matt. xxiv. 41). All are gone. The round of daily life exists no more.

23. Καὶ φῶς λύχνου οὐ μὴ φάνη ἔν σοι ἔτι, καὶ φωνὴ νυμφίου καὶ νύμφης οὐ μὴ ἀκουσθῆ ἔν σοι ἔτι, ὅτι οἱ ἔμποροι σου ἦσαν οἱ μεγιστᾶνες τῆς γῆς, ὅτι ἐν τῇ φαρμακίᾳ σου ἐπλανήθησαν πάντα τὰ ἔθνη.

23. And the light of the lamp shall shine no more in thee, and the voice of the bridegroom and bride shall be heard no more in thee; for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for all nations have been deceived by thy sorceries.

Lamp-light and "the bridegroom and bride" stand for nocturnal life. Day and night, Rome is silenced for ever.

These pathetic touches complete the picture of Rome's utter

desolation. There is something of the same kind in Jeremias with regard to the fall of Babylon: "And I will take away from them the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the sound of the mill and the light of the lamp" (Jer. xxv. 10; see also Jer. vii. 34, xvi. 9).

"Sorceries" connects with R. ix. 21, "Neither have they done penance for their murders, nor for their sorceries," showing that the Roman Empire is in view. Babylon is reprobated "for the multitude of her sorceries" (Isa. xlvi. 12).

24. Καὶ ἐν αὐτῇ αἷμα προφητῶν καὶ ἁγίων εὐρέθη καὶ πάντων τῶν ἐσφαγμένων ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς.

24. And in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints, and of all who were slain upon the earth.

In the first century the complete annihilation of Rome may have needed a final word of justification. All men were dazzled by her magnificence, even Christians shared in her glory. So the reader is reminded of her merchandise, her sorceries, and the blood of prophets and of saints, shed not only in her amphitheatres, but throughout the Empire. All this blood is laid at her door before final judgment is executed upon her in the next chapter. "Προφητῶν καὶ ἁγίων" stands for "clergy and laity."

'Εσφαγμένων means "sacrificially slain," and is so used for the Lamb slain, at R. v. 6, and for the martyrs slain, at R. vi. 9, where see notes. Dr. Swete says that this word is used in no other book to describe the death of Christ. It is an example of the Seer's choice of words having a special significance.

The reader is now in a position to appreciate the political character of this revelation, and the necessity of hiding it from Rome. The outspoken condemnation of Cæsar worship, the plagues predicted for the Empire, the political action of the ten kings, the destruction of the capital, thinly veiled under the name of "that great city Babylon, that mighty city" (R. xviii. 10), form a picture which would astound and enrage the Roman world in the days of the Augusti. The battle of Armagedon, the downfall of the Cæsars, and their consignment to hell, further treasonable matters, come in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XIX

1. Μετὰ ταῦτα ἤκουσα ὡς φωνὴν μεγάλην ὄχλου πολλοῦ ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ λεγόντων, Ἀλληλουϊά ἡ σωτηρία καὶ ἡ δόξα καὶ ἡ δύναμις τοῦ Θεοῦ ἡμῶν.

1. After these things I heard the voice of many multitudes in heaven saying, Alleluia. Salvation and glory and power is to our God.

“After these things” = Μετὰ ταῦτα—indicates a new departure. The Seer heard the voice of many multitudes, ὄχλου πολλοῦ, in heaven. After the ten persecutions he saw ὄχλος πολύς, translated “a great multitude,” standing before the throne, saying, “Salvation to our God who sitteth upon the throne and to the Lamb.” The martyrs of Rome found salvation in martyrdom and rejoiced. They rejoice now at the salvation of the Church, brought about by the fall of Rome. They rejoice in obedience to the command at R. xviii. 20, “Rejoice over her thou heaven.”

2. Ὅτι ἀληθινὰ καὶ δίκαια αἱ κρίσεις αὐτοῦ· ὅτι ἔκρινεν τὴν πόρνην τὴν μεγάλην ἣτις ἐφθείρεν τὴν γῆν ἐν τῇ πορνείᾳ αὐτῆς, καὶ ἐξεδίκησεν τὸ αἷμα τῶν δούλων αὐτοῦ ἐκ χειρὸς αὐτῆς.

2. For true and just are his judgments, who hath judged the great harlot, which corrupteth the earth with her fornication, and hath revenged the blood of his servants at her hands.

The countless multitude of martyrs continue, “true and just are his judgments.” So they cried out when the seven last plagues appeared, δίκαια καὶ ἀληθινὰ, “just and true” are thy ways (R. xv. 3. See also R. xvi. 7). Ὅτι, “because,” He hath judged the great harlot. “Because God is strong who shall judge her” (R. xviii. 8). “The great harlot which corrupteth the earth with her fornication” is an indication of Rome taken from R. xvii. 2, 5, and xviii. 3. “And hath revenged the blood of his servants,” takes us back to the martyr’s prayer, “Judge and revenge our blood” (R. vi. 10). The same words, “true,” “judge,” “revenge,” and “blood,” are found in both places. The verbal connection is very strong. The continuity of the whole Book is clearly shown by these recurring echoes of the martyr’s prayer.

“Servants” here—δούλων—refer to SS. Peter and Paul and other great Bishops slain in Roman persecutions.

3. Καὶ δεύτερον εἶρηκαν Ἀλληλουϊά. Καὶ ὁ καπνὸς αὐτῆς ἀναβαίνει εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων.

3. And again they said Alleluia. And her smoke ascendeth for ever and ever.

“Alleluia” is an expression of praise taken from the Psalms, where it frequently occurs; the word is not found in the N.T., except here. Alleluia may be literally rendered “All hail to Him Who is!” Taking “All Hail” as equivalent to “Glory in the Highest” (Rev. Dr. O’Mahony, the “Cath. Ency.”). And her smoke, that is the smoke of those who have adored the Beast, “ascendeth for ever and ever.” “And the smoke of their torments shall ascend up for ever and ever” (R. xiv. 11). Rome is put here for her wicked idolatrous inhabitants.

4. Καὶ ἔπεσαν οἱ πρεσβύτεροι οἱ εἴκοσι τέσσαρες καὶ τὰ τέσσαρα ζῶα, καὶ προσεκύνησαν τῷ Θεῷ τῷ καθημένῳ ἐπὶ τῷ θρόνῳ, λέγοντες, Ἀμήν, Ἀλληλουϊά.

4. And the four and twenty ancients, and the four living creatures, fell down and adored God that sitteth upon the throne, saying, Amen, Alleluia.

“Rejoice over her thou heaven and ye holy Apostles and prophets” (R. xviii. 20). The turn of the Apostles and prophets to rejoice has come. Accordingly the four-and-twenty ancients “fell down and adored God” on the throne, saying Alleluia. This confirms the opinion generally held that the four-and-twenty ancients are the twelve prophets of the old Law, and the twelve Apostles (see R. iv. 4, notes). And the four living creatures did likewise. These have been witnesses from the beginning. Their introduction here shows continuity (see v. 8, 14, vii. 11, xi. 16, xiv. 3).

5. Καὶ φωνὴ ἐκ τοῦ θρόνου ἐξῆλθεν, λέγουσα, Αἰνεῖτε τῷ Θεῷ ἡμῶν πάντες οἱ δοῦλοι αὐτοῦ καὶ οἱ φοβούμενοι αὐτόν, οἱ μικροὶ καὶ οἱ μεγάλοι.

5. And a voice came out of the throne saying, Give praise to our God, all ye his servants, and you that fear him, little and great.

(S. = ἀπὸ τοῦ θρόνου.)

A voice from “the throne, saying Give praise to our God,” would seem to be the voice of the Lamb, for the Lamb sits with the Father on His throne (R. iii. 21), and the Lamb “is in the midst of the throne” (R. vii. 17), “and her son was taken up to God, and to His throne” (R. xii. 5). It is objected that the Lamb would say “my God,” not “our God.” But Prof.

Stuart holds that the words of our Saviour, "I ascend to my Father and to your Father, to my God and your God" (Jhn. xx. 17), convey the same meaning as "our God." On the other hand at R. iii. 12, where the Lamb is the speaker, He speaks of "the temple of my God, . . . the name of my God, . . . the name of the city of my God, . . . out of heaven, from my God."

"All ye his servants and all you that fear him little and great" takes in the whole living Church. Owing to the fall of Rome, the Church is free to praise God openly, and is commanded to do so, "And you that fear Him" (see xi. 18, notes).

6. Καὶ ἤκουσα ὡς φωνὴν ὄχλου πολλοῦ καὶ ὡς φωνὴν ὑδάτων πολλῶν, καὶ ὡς φωνὴν βροντῶν ἰσχυρῶν, λεγόντων, Ἐλληλουϊά, ὅτι ἐβασίλευσεν Κύριος ὁ Θεὸς ἡμῶν, ὁ παντοκράτωρ.

6. And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of great thunders, saying Alleluia, for the Lord our God, the almighty, hath reigned.

The appeal is answered by the voice of "a great multitude," not before the throne, nor in heaven, but "as the voice of many waters," which refers to living people (R. xvii. 1-15). A prolonged Alleluia rises from the whole Church, for the reign of God is established upon earth. The "reign" of God connotes a visible kingdom. The same sentiment appears at R. xii. 10, "Now is come salvation and strength and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ, because the accuser of our brethren is cast forth." The Church rejoices openly because she is acknowledged as supreme in her own sphere for the first time in her history. This anticipates the millennium (R. xx. 1-2). See also xi. 15-17, notes.

7. Χαίρωμεν καὶ ἀγαλλιῶμεν, καὶ δῶμεν τὴν δόξαν αὐτῷ, ὅτι ἦλθεν ὁ γάμος τοῦ ἀρνίου, καὶ ἡ γυνὴ αὐτοῦ ἠτοίμασεν ἑαυτήν.

7. Let us be glad and rejoice and give glory to him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come; and his wife hath prepared herself.

The Church rejoices because the marriage of the Lamb has come. She, "His wife hath prepared herself." The Church is the spouse of Christ, and she rejoices because an era of spiritual peace has dawned upon her through the destruction of paganism. She has prepared herself, by centuries of suffering and constancy, for this triumph. The imagery is from the

O.T., where Judah is the spouse of the Lord (Cants. iv. 8 f.; Jer. iii. 14; Osee ii. 19, 20). The same idea is frequently exhibited with reference to Christianity in the N.T., as in Matt. xxii. 2, 10, xxv. 1 f.; Mark ii. 19; Jhn. iii. 29; 2 Cor. xi. 2. *Γάμος* is "the marriage feast" of Matt. xxii. 8, to which men were gathered from the highways and the byways, where there was question of "a wedding garment." But the "spouse" is prepared.

8. Καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτῇ ἵνα περιβάληται βύσσινον λαμπρὸν καθαρὸν· τὸ γὰρ βύσσινον τὰ δικαιώματα τῶν ἁγίων ἐστίν.

8. And to her it hath been granted that she should clothe herself with fine linen, glittering and white, For the fine linen is the justification of the saints.

The "spouse" has been given the gift to clothe herself in, *βύσσινον λαμπρὸν*—"fine linen," the *byssus* of Egypt, brilliant and "*καθαρόν*"—"white," "spotless," which was, in fact, the customary wedding garment. But then we are told not to take it literally. "The fine linen is the justification of the saints." It is a symbol of the grace of God, freely given. This leads on to the contemplation of the Church triumphant.

The verb *διδόναι*, "to give," is used in this book to denote the gifts of God to His Church, as in the letters to the Seven Churches.

9. Καὶ λέγει μοι Γράψον, Μακάριοι οἱ εἰς τὸ δεῖπνον τοῦ γάμου τοῦ ἁρνίου κεκλημένοι, καὶ λέγει μοι, Οὗτοι οἱ λόγοι ἀληθινοὶ τοῦ Θεοῦ εἰσίν.

9. And he saith to me, Write, Blessed are they who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith to me, These words of God are true.

"The marriage supper of the Lamb" is in heaven. "The kingdom of heaven is likened to a king who made a marriage for his son, and he sent his servants to call them that were invited to the marriage" (Matt. xxii. 2, 3). "The spouse" reappears in heaven at R. xxi. 9, where one of the seven angels, who had the vials, says, "Come and I will show thee the bride, the wife of the Lamb," and he shows the Seer the holy city, the new Jerusalem, the Church triumphant.

We gather from the next verse that it is the angel of R. xvii. 1, and of R. xxi. 9, who says "Write." He is present to explain matters to the Seer, or rather to us. "A great voice from the

throne," referring to the "bride" and the rewards of heaven, says, later, "Write for these words are most faithful and true" (R. xxi. 5). And the "Hebrew prophet" angel repeats the words, in the same connection, at R. xxii. 6. Thus, thrice repeated, in the most solemn way the promises and prophecies of Revelation are guaranteed. The command to write would seem to indicate that S. John was fully occupied in listening to the angel.

10. Καὶ ἔπεσα ἔμπροσθεν τῶν ποδῶν αὐτοῦ προσκυνῆσαι αὐτῷ. καὶ λέγει μοι, Ὅρα μὴ, σύνδουλος σου εἶμι καὶ τῶν ἀδελφῶν σου τῶν ἐχόντων τὴν μαρτυρίαν Ἰησοῦ. τῷ Θεῷ προσκύνησον. ἡ γὰρ μαρτυρία Ἰησοῦ ἐστὶν τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς προφητείας.

10. And I fell before his feet to adore him, And he saith to me, See thou do it not, I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Adore God. For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

The Seer fell at the feet of the angel—*προσκυνῆσαι αὐτῷ*—"to do obeisance to him," "to prostrate himself before him." The word connotes deferential worship; not *λατρεία*, from *λατρεύω*, "to serve God," which means "adoration." See *λατρεύουσιν*, R. vii. 15. The custom still prevails, in India, of doing homage to princes and potentates by prostration at their feet. In Eastern countries this customary reverence does not mean worship, in a religious sense, at all. However, it was otherwise at Rome, and the opportunity is taken of inculcating a lesson against anything like Cæsar worship. "See thou do it not," that is to say, do not worship a creature, however exalted. "Adore God."

That the Seer knew the character of the angel and did not give him divine worship is shown by contrasting this episode with that of the vision of Christ at R. i. 17. "And when I saw him I fell at his feet as dead"—*ὡς νεκρός*. This angel discloses his identity here, and still further at R. xxii. 9. He was a "fellow servant" of S. John's, in the days when the Apostles called themselves officially the servants of God. He belonged to the Apostolic order. He was "of thy brethren," that is to say he was a Hebrew Christian, who had the testimony of Jesus. "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy," he tells us; and at R. xxii. 9 he says, "I am . . . of thy brethren the prophets." He was therefore a Hebrew Christian prophet, who had predeceased S. John. He is seemingly the angel of whom it is written, "I Jesus have sent

my angel to testify to you these things in the churches" (R. xxii. 16). This again corresponds with the opening lines of the Book, "And signified sending by his angel to his servant John" (R. i. 1). And it corresponds with "Behold I send my angel before thy face who shall prepare the way before thee" (Mark 1. 2; Malac. iii. 1). "My angel" is found nowhere else in the Holy Scriptures. This was said of John the Baptist, who was a Hebrew Christian prophet, and a fellow servant of S. John the Evangelist, who preached "the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. iii. 2), who "gave testimony" of Jesus (Jhn i. 32, 34).

11. Καὶ εἶδον τὸν οὐρανὸν ἠνεωγμένον, καὶ ἰδοὺ ἵππος λευκός, καὶ ὁ καθήμενος ἐπ' αὐτὸν καλούμενος πιστὸς καὶ ἀληθινός, καὶ ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ κρίνει καὶ πολεμεῖ.

11. And I saw heaven opened and beheld a white horse, and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and with justice he judgeth and fighteth.

(The use of capital letters here, as in other places, is taken from the Vulgate.)

Καὶ, "and," introduces a new vision which takes us back to "a door open in heaven" at R. iv. 1, and the "white horse" at R. vi. 2, which leads on to the battle of Armagedon, reintroduced here as a fitting conclusion to the Roman theme. Three unclean spirits went forth from the mouths of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet, and gathered the kings of the earth "to battle against the great day of the Almighty God" (R. xvi. 13, 14). The great day has come. Heaven is opened for the passage of an army. And behold "a white horse and he that sat upon him." We have seen "a white horse and he that sat upon him"—"καὶ ἰδοὺ ἵππος λευκός, καὶ ὁ καθήμενος ἐπ' αὐτὸν"—at R. vi. 2. Identical words are used in both places to mark the identity of this rider with Him who "went forth conquering that he might conquer." He is the conqueror of Armagedon. "He was called Faithful and True." "Faithful" identifies him with "Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness" (R. i. 5). "True," identifies him with the Holy One and the True One at R. iii. 7, and the combination "Faithful and True" identifies him with "the Amen, the faithful and true Witness who is the beginning of the creation of God" (R. iii. 14).

As this is the prelude to a prediction of great slaughter, the end of the shattered Empire, we are again reminded "with justice he judgeth and fighteth," as at xix. 2. "The angel of the

waters," a Roman himself, and Bishop of Rome, expressed this sentiment at R. xvi. 5, where see notes.

12. Οἱ δὲ ὀφθαλμοὶ αὐτοῦ ὡς φλόξ πυρός, καὶ ἐπὶ τὴν κεφαλὴν αὐτοῦ διαδήματα πολλά, ἔχων ὄνομα γεγραμμένον ὃ οὐδεὶς οἶδεν εἰ μὴ αὐτός.

12. And his eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head many diadems, having a name written which no man knoweth but himself.

Further marks of identification are given that we may know who it is that rides forth on the white horse. "His eyes were as a flame of fire," is taken from R. i. 14, which again is amplified at R. ii. 18. "The Son of God who hath eyes as a flame of fire." "And on His head many diadems," contrasts with the dragon at R. xii. 3, and the Beast at R. xiii. 1. For He is ὁ ἄρχων, Prince (or King) of the kings of the earth (R. i. 5). He is "King of Kings" (R. xix. 16). All the diadems of the earth are His.

"Having a name written which no man knoweth but himself." This refers to R. ii. 17, where see notes. We are incapable of understanding the mystery of the name of the Son of God. "No one knoweth the Son but the Father" (Matt. xi. 27). But the Seer supplies a name, in the next sentence, by which we may know the rider of the white horse. He is "the Word of God."

13. Καὶ περιβεβλημένος ἱμάτιον ῥεραντισμένον αἵματι, καὶ κέκληται τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ, Ὁ λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ.

13. And he was clothed with a garment sprinkled with blood; and his name is called, The Word of God.

(S. = ῥεραμμένον.)

In Isaias lxiii. 1 to 4 we are told of the beautiful one that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments; red, "like theirs that tread in the winepress; . . . I have trodden the winepress alone, and of the Gentiles there is not a man with me. I have trampled on them in my indignation, and have trodden them down in my wrath, and their blood is sprinkled on my garments, and I have stained all my garments. . . . For the day of vengeance is in my heart." All this is very significant of the matter in hand—final vengeance on Rome. Compare with Rev. xiv. 20: "And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress."

The treading of the winepress has been in progress for some

centuries. It approaches its end. The victor's garment is dyed with blood.

"His name is called the Word of God." That is to say by that name we may know Him. It is an expression frequently used in the N.T. for the Gospel of Christ. It appears to have been a Jewish appellation of the Messias. Josephus, in the beginning of his discourse to the Greeks concerning Hades, says, "At the resurrection and general judgment God the Word shall come as a Judge, whom we call Christ." S. John used "the Word" as a designation of our Lord in his first Epistle, writing, "Our hands have handled of the word of life" (1 Jhn. i. 1). And again, "There are three who give testimony in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost. And these three are one" (1 Jhn. v. 7). When S. John wrote his Gospel, some years afterwards, he opened with, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (Jhn. i. 1). "His name is called the Word of God," is one of many proofs that S. John the Evangelist wrote the Apocalypse, for he alone in the Holy Scriptures has used this expression.

14. Καὶ τὰ στρατεύματα τὰ ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ ἠκολούθει αὐτῷ ἐφ' ἵπποις λευκοῖς, ἐνδεδυμένοι βύσσινον λευκὸν καθαρόν.

14. And the armies that are in heaven followed him on white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.

"The armies that are in heaven" has a wide significance. It includes the angelic host, S. Michael and his angels (R. xii. 7), as well as the redeemed. "Is there any numbering of his soldiers?" (Job xxv. 3). "The armies of the living God" (1 Kings xxvii. 26).

White horses are emblems of victory (see R. vi. 2, notes). Fine linen, white and spotless, is put for the uniform of heaven. At verse 8, above, we have "βύσσινον λαμπρὸν καθαρόν," clothing the Church triumphant. See also R. iii. 4, 5, 18, iv. 4 (R. iii. 4, 5; see R. xix. 8, notes). All this is symbolism. If we refer back to R. vi. 2, 8, we find the actual fighting forces which followed our Lord and conquered Rome are war, famine, pestilence and death. The red horse of battle is engaged here.

15. Καὶ ἐκ τοῦ στόματος αὐτοῦ ἐκπορεύεται ῥομφαία ὀξεῖα, ἵνα ἐν αὐτῇ πατάξῃ τὰ ἔθνη· καὶ αὐτὸς ποιμανεῖ αὐτοὺς ἐν ῥάβδῳ σιδηρᾷ· καὶ αὐτὸς πατεῖ τὴν ληνὸν τοῦ οἴνου τοῦ θυμοῦ τῆς ὀργῆς τοῦ Θεοῦ τοῦ παντοκράτορος.

15. And out of his mouth proceedeth a sharp two-edged sword, that with it he may strike the Gentiles. And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; and he treadeth the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God, the Almighty.

Haydock's Bible translates τὰ ἔθνη, "the Gentiles," other Bibles, "the nations." As the whole of these passages relate to the chastisement of pagan Rome, Gentiles would seem to express the mind of the Seer. Pagan nations were commonly called "Gentiles" in the N.T. (Matt. xii. 21; Mark x. 33; Luke xviii. 32; Acts x. 45). That was the Jewish meaning of τὰ ἔθνη when the Apocalypse was written. All nations were then either Jewish or pagan.

In the vision of our Lord in Chapter i. 16, "From his mouth came out a sharp two-edged sword" (see also ii. 12); this serves to identify the rider of the white horse, and to explain his mission, which is one of execution of judgment. To the red horse which followed Him was granted "to take away peace from the earth . . . and to him was given a great sword" (R. vi. 4).

The rod of iron refers to Psalm ii. 8, "I will give thee the Gentiles for thy inheritance. . . . Thou shalt rule them with a rod of iron, and shalt break them in pieces like a potter's vessel." The dominion of paganism is broken up and handed over to the Church of the millennium. To the Church of Thyatira was given power over the nations (τῶν ἐθνῶν, the Gentiles), to rule them with a rod of iron (R. ii. 27, where see notes). We are on the eve of the millennium, *i.e.*, the Church of Thyatira. Again at R. xii. 5, The woman "brought forth a man child who was to rule all nations (πάντα τὰ ἔθνη) with a rod of iron."

"And he treadeth the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God." For the wine of the wrath of God, see R. xiv. 10, xvi. 19, and for the winepress see xiv. 20, notes.

16. Καὶ ἔχει ἐπὶ τὸ ἱμάτιον καὶ ἐπὶ τὸν μηρὸν αὐτοῦ ὄνομα γεγραμμένον, βασιλεὺς βασιλέων καὶ κύριος κυρίων.

16. And he has on his garment and on his thigh written, King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

In this final scene of the contest with the dragon, the beast, the false prophet, and the kings of the earth, our Lord appears

at the head of His followers with His high titles blazoned on His garments: *King of Kings*—a very fine picture, and a striking introduction to His conquest over “the kings of the whole earth.”

We have had the title King of Kings before at R. xvii. 14 in connection with this same battle. In the O.T. this title is seen with reference to the King of Babylon (Ezech. xxvi. 7). It was the recognised title of the Parthian kings from the time of Orodes 38 B.C., and was in use when S. John was preaching the Gospel on the Euphrates. Goterzés, a Parthian satrap, who ruled about A.D. 40, took the title of Satrap of Satraps, or Lord of Lords, before he was proclaimed “King of Kings.” He reigned A.D. 41 to 51. It agrees perfectly with “The white horse and he that sat on him had a bow, and a crown was given to him” at R. vi. 2 (where see notes). The same title is given to our Lord, Jesus Christ, by S. Paul (1 Tim. vi. 15). This distinguishing title, carried into battle, blazoned on his vesture, by the leader of an army, is of the essence of heraldry. It may have been a Parthian custom.

17. Καὶ εἶδον ἓνα ἄγγελον ἐστῶτα ἐν τῷ ἡλίῳ καὶ ἔκραξεν φωνῇ μεγάλῃ λέγων πᾶσιν τοῖς ὀρνέοις τοῖς πετομένοις ἐν μεσουρανήματι Δεῦτε συνάχθητε εἰς τὸ δεῖπνον τὸ μέγα τοῦ Θεοῦ.

17. And I saw an angel standing in the sun, and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that did fly through the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together to the great supper of God.

In anticipation of the great slaughter of the enemies of God, an angel calls the vultures from the midst of heaven to sup upon their flesh. Similar imagery is found in Jeremiah (vii. 33) and Ezechiel (xxxix. 4, 17). Vultures have remarkable powers of vision. They circle in the air at such altitudes as to be invisible to man, ἐν μεσουρανήματι. When a dead body lies exposed they appear like specks in the sky, and in a very short time perch round the body. They are recognised scavengers. S. John was familiar with the Egyptian vulture, very common in Palestine. An angel standing in the sun is well placed to call vultures “together to the great supper of God.”

18. Ἴνα φάγητε σάρκας βασιλέων καὶ σάρκας χιλιάρχων καὶ σάρκας ἰσχυρῶν καὶ σάρκας ἵππων καὶ τῶν καθημένων ἐπ' αὐτῶν, καὶ σάρκας πάντων ἐλευθέρων τε καὶ δούλων καὶ μικρῶν καὶ μεγάλων.

18. That you may eat the flesh of Kings and the flesh of tribunes and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all freemen and bondsmen, little and great.

(S. = ἐπ' αὐτούς.)

The object of calling the vultures together is to eat the flesh of kings, and tribunes, men and horses, freemen and bondsmen, the leaders and captains and the rank and file of the army, gathered together, by the dragon, the Beast, and the false prophet, "against the great day of the Almighty God" (R. xvi. 14). And they were gathered into a place called Armagedon. Observe the correspondence between these men, the food for vultures, and the Christians who suffered persecution at the hands of Rome (R. vi. 15). We have kings, tribunes, mighty men, freemen and bondsmen, in both places, denoting the Roman Empire. The *lex talionis* is in view, a king for a king, a tribune for a tribune, and so on. But whereas the Christians were driven into hiding by persecution, their persecutors the Romans are made the food of vultures. To leave the dead a prey to loathsome vultures was to inflict upon them the worst possible indignity in the eyes of the Jews. Hence this lot is foretold for the pagan persecutors of the Church. It also carries out the judgment pronounced against Rome, "Render to her as she hath rendered to you, and double ye the double, according to her works" (R. xviii. 6).

19. Καὶ εἶδον τὸ θηρίον καὶ τοὺς βασιλεῖς τῆς γῆς καὶ τὰ στρατεύματα αὐτῶν συνηγμένα ποιῆσαι τὸν πόλεμον μετὰ τοῦ καθημένου ἐπὶ τοῦ ἵππου, καὶ μετὰ τοῦ στρατεύματος αὐτοῦ.

19. And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies, gathered together to make war with him that sat upon the horse and with his army.

The Seer sees the battlefield of Armagedon. The Beast is there, and the ten kings. "These shall fight with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them, because he is Lord of Lords and King of Kings" (R. xvii. 14). The armies gathered together at Armagedon meet, but the battle is not described. It is a foregone conclusion. The vultures are waiting to feed on Roman corpses. We have a special interest in the date of

this battle as it is one of the events leading up to the millennium.

There was a battle between Attila, the scourge of God, and the Romans in the year 451, which was the prelude to the fall of the Empire of the West. On that occasion the ten kings lent their strength and power to the Beast (R. xvii. 13). Gibbon in describing the battle says:

“The Visigoths, the most powerful of the so-called barbarians, consented to join with Rome. The examples of the Goths determined several tribes or nations that seemed to fluctuate between the Huns and Romans. The indefatigable diligence of the patrician gradually collected the troops of Gaul and Germany, who had formerly acknowledged themselves the subjects or soldiers of the Republic, but who now claimed the rewards of voluntary service and the rank of independent allies—the Læti, the Armoricans, the Breones, the Saxons, the Burgundians, the Sarmatians or Alani, the Reprnarians, and the Franks. . . . Such are the various armies which . . . advanced . . . to give battle to the numerous host of Attila.”

Besides the above-mentioned nations, Gibbon says the Rugiens, the Heruli, and the Thuringians joined the Roman forces. Attila, like Titus, had an idea of his divine mission. “The doctrine of predestination, so favourable to martial virtue, was carefully inculcated by the King of the Huns, who assured his subjects that the warriors protected by Heaven were safe and invulnerable amidst the darts of the enemy” (“D. and F.,” cap. xxxv.).

In the battle of Chalons which is foreshadowed, there were engaged on the side of the Huns an army of from 500,000 to 700,000 men, and on the side of the Romans an equal number. The slain were computed to have numbered from 180,000 to 300,000. The total casualties by modern reckoning would have been over 500,000. “One of the most gigantic as well as most important contests recorded in history” (“Ency. Brit.”).

Although this battle could not be claimed as a decisive victory for either side, it shattered the Western Empire. Attila returned in the year 452, conquered the north of Italy, and threatened Rome. He died in Italy in 453. A few years afterwards, Romulus Augustulus, a Parmonian, the last Roman Emperor, resigned, and the Roman Empire ceased to exist A.D. 476.

20. Καὶ ἐπιάσθη τὸ θηρίον καὶ μετ' αὐτοῦ ὁ ψευδοπροφήτης ὁ ποιήσας τὰ σημεῖα ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ, ἐν οἷς ἐπλάνησεν τοὺς λαβόντας τὸ χάραγμα τοῦ θηρίου καὶ τοὺς προσκυνοῦντας τῇ εἰκόνι αὐτοῦ. ζῶντες ἐβλήθησαν οἱ δύο εἰς τὴν λίμνην τοῦ πυρὸς τῆς καιομένης ἐν θείῳ.

20. And the beast was taken and with him the false prophet who wrought signs before him, wherewith he deceived them who received the mark of the beast and who adored his image. These two were cast alive into the pool of fire burning with brimstone.

We have not seen the Beast, except for the purpose of identification, since the Seer foretold this coming battle at R. xvi. 14.

As the result of the battle the Beast = the line of the Cæsars, and the false prophet = the pagan priesthood, are cast into the pool of fire. The false prophet is described in a way to identify him clearly with the beast from "the earth" in Chapter xiii., 11 ff., where see notes. The beast from the earth was called the false prophet when the gathering of the army of the dragon and the Beast, preparatory to Armagedon, took place (R. xvi., 13 f.). His appearance both there and here is meant, *inter alia*, to show that the same event is in view in both places—the battle of "the great day of Almighty God." When the battle took place paganism and the Cæsars perished together. As a matter of history they never revived. As a matter of exegesis they never will, for the pool of fire burning with brimstone is hell, out of which there is no escape. See R. xx. 9, 10, and xxi. 8. "Cast alive into the pool of fire" follows the punishment of Dathan and Abiron in the O.T., "And they go down alive into hell, you shall know that they have blasphemed the Lord" (Numb. xvi. 30). Blasphemy in a similar sense is the principal charge against the Beast (R. xiii. 5, 6). The Psalmist referring to the persecuting Jews says, "Let them go down alive into hell" (Ps. liv. 16).

"Ἐπλάνησεν" should be translated "seduced" to keep in touch with "πλανᾶ" at R. xiii. 14.

21. Καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ ἀπεκτάνθησαν ἐν τῇ ῥομφαίᾳ τοῦ καθημένου ἐπὶ τοῦ ἵππου τῇ ἐξελλούσῃ ἐκ τοῦ στόματος αὐτοῦ, καὶ πάντα τὰ ὄρνεα ἐχορτάσθησαν ἐκ τῶν σαρκῶν αὐτῶν.

21. And the rest were slain by the sword of him that sitteth upon the horse, which proceedeth out of his mouth; and all the birds were filled with their flesh.

And "the rest," οἱ λοιποὶ, slain by the sword of justice, amount to such a considerable number that all the vultures

“that did fly through the midst of heaven” (R. xix. 17) were ἐχορτάσθησαν, “satiated”; which leads one to suppose that “the rest who are at Thyatira” (R. ii. 24), may mean a great number.

This is the end of the Roman theme, a pageant of conquest, in which “the King of Kings” appears on the stage triumphantly with his victorious army, a fine dramatic conclusion.

PART V
THE MILLENNIUM

CHAPTER XX

THE "millennium" is that period of a thousand years in which, according to this Book, "the dragon," "Satan," is "bound" up and "cast into the bottomless pit . . . that he shall no more seduce the nations till the thousand years be finished" (R. xx. 2, 3). It is the Cerinthian "era of pleasure" which gave rise to the great millenarian and Montanist controversies of the second and third centuries. It is that "era of peace" which our "daily papers" constantly refer to as in "the dim and distant future"!

The Seer gives us definite indications as to the time of the beginning of the millennium. The battle of Armagedon took place before the destruction of Rome, as it is referred to in Chapter xvi., with reference to the fall of the Empire. After that in Chapter xviii. we have a long description of the fall of Rome. The battle is then put at the end of the Roman theme for effect. Even supposing it has no reference whatever to the battle of Chalons, simply summing up in symbolism the result of the war between Christ and the pagan enemies of His Church; in any case the destruction of Rome stands out prominently as concluding the Roman theme, and the millennium must be dated from that time. We have seen that Gibbon puts the end of the Roman Empire in the 6th century (Historic Notes, p. 80). We must accept that as approximately the date of the beginning of the millennium. Dr. Swete refers to this date as follows: "If, however, the visions are to be regarded as following each other in something like chronological order (but see v. I notes), S. John has in view the moment of the overthrow of the Beast and the False Prophet, *i.e.*, the final break up of the Roman world-power and its ally the pagan system of priestcraft and superstition" (*op. cit.*, p. 266).

1. Καὶ εἶδον ἄγγελον καταβαίνοντα ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, ἔχοντα τὴν κλεῖν τῆς ἀβύσσου καὶ ἄλυσιν μεγάλην ἐπὶ τὴν χεῖρα αὐτοῦ.

1. And I saw an angel coming down from heaven having the key of the bottomless pit, and a great chain in his hand.

Καὶ, "and," introduces a new train of visions. "An angel" . . . "καταβαίνοντα ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ," as at R. viii. 1, having the key of the bottomless pit." "Ἀβύσσος, means "without bottom." It was a place of heat and darkness in which the fallen angels were chained up till the judgment day (Jude, verse 6; 2 Pet. ii. 4). At R. ix. 1, the key of the abyss was lent to a fallen angel for a special purpose. Here an angel comes down from heaven with the key. He is sent from God, who keeps the key (R. i. 18). He has a great chain, so great, that he carries it, ἐπὶ τὴν χεῖρα, "on his hand," not in his hand. The "chain," "ἄλυσιν," is a prison fetter. S. Peter was chained with "two chains," ἀλύσει διὰ; "and the chains fell off his hands" (Acts xii. 6, 7).

2. Καὶ ἐκράτησεν τὸν δράκοντα ὁ ὄφεις ὁ ἀρχαῖος, ὃς ἐστὶν διάβολος καὶ ὁ σατανᾶς, καὶ ἔδησεν αὐτὸν χίλια ἔτη.

2. And he laid hold on the dragon, the old serpent, which is the devil and satan, and bound him for a thousand years.

The great red dragon who appeared at R. xii. 3, as "a wonder in heaven," "having seven heads" "and ten horns," is now chained up. It is the same dragon, we know, because S. John disclosed his true character at R. xii. 9—Ὁ δράκων . . . ὁ ὄφεις ὁ ἀρχαῖος . . . διάβολος καὶ ὁ σατανᾶς, and he identifies him, in the above passage, in the same words. The idea set forth is that this particular Satan was chained up. We have had it impressed upon us that this dragon was allied with world-powers and false prophets in persecuting the Church; that he, like the scarlet woman, Babylon, was red with the blood of the martyrs. In that character he is restrained for 1,000 years. The angel bound Satan with a great chain—ἄλυσιν μεγάλην—showing that great restraint would be put on him for a thousand years.

According to the symbolism of ten and multiples of ten, a thousand years should be at least ten centuries.

3. Καὶ ἔβαλεν αὐτὸν εἰς τὴν ἄβυσσον, καὶ ἔκλεισεν καὶ ἐσφράγισεν ἐπάνω αὐτοῦ ἵνα μὴ πλανήσῃ ἔτι τὰ ἔθνη ἄχρι τελεσθῆ τὰ χίλια ἔτη· καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα δεῖ αὐτὸν λυθῆναι μικρὸν χρόνον.

3. And he cast him into the bottomless pit and shut him up and set a seal upon him, that he should no more seduce the nations till the thousand years be finished; and after that he must be loosed a little time.

(S. omits *καὶ* after ἔτη.)

The bottomless pit was a place of confinement for devils, "And they besought him that he would not command them to go into the abyss" (Luke viii. 31). Into this abyss Satan was cast, and locked in, ἔκλεισεν; "and the lock was sealed, that he should no longer seduce the nations"—"τὰ ἔθνη"—the Gentiles (those who are not God's people), till the thousand years be finished. We have seen that "He seduced them that dwell on the earth by the signs," etc. (R. xiii. 14); that is through the false prophet (see R. xix. 20). Satan's action, as disclosed in the Apocalypse (R. xii. 4, 13, 17, xiii. 2, 4, xvi. 13), has been to war upon the Church, the seed of the woman—actual warfare and bloody persecution stirred up by the Gentiles against her. He is described as a *red* dragon, because his mission is to shed Christian blood. This chaining up of Satan does not mean that there would be no devils left in the world to tempt men to sin. It only means that the old Satan of Genesis, who was cast down from heaven by S. Michael (R. xii. 9), was stopped for a thousand years from inflicting bloody persecution upon the Church, through Cæsarism and false prophets.

The chaining up stands on precisely the same ground as all the other events related in the Apocalypse. It is history pre-figured by symbols. The Jewish theme and the Roman theme stand the test of history marvellously well. So does this post-Roman theme.

The question before us is, was Satan bound up as a bloody persecutor of the Church for a thousand years after the fall of Rome—that is from the sixth until the sixteenth century? The historic page answers that question with a distinct affirmative. There was no bloody persecution of the Church from the sixth till the sixteenth century. More than that, the cessation of persecution gave the Church wide expansion. It was granted to her "that she should clothe herself with fine linen glittering and white," for the marriage of the Lamb was come, and she was prepared (R. xix. 7, 8).

The millennium consisted in the peaceful development of the Catholic Church throughout the world from the sixth to the

sixteenth century. The various nations were converted one after another to the faith. The Popes of Rome, as successors of the Apostles and Primates of the Church, grew in moral power. Freedom of speech was guaranteed to them by the possession of an independent principality. Money flowed through their hands for the conversion of the heathen. The religious orders were founded. In the designing and building of stately fanes to the greater honour of God, architecture reached its highest development. Music, sculpture, and painting lent their aids to worship, and reached, many of them, their highest achievements. The Bible was copied, illuminated, and adorned with loving skill in thousands of monasteries. The ritual of the Church was developed in accordance with its high office. The universities were founded. The poor were treated with kindness and care, and their wants supplied. The whole of Europe acknowledged one faith, one altar, and one Church until the sixteenth century.

Another aspect of this Church, however, is disclosed in the letter to Thyatira, viz., its human frailty (R. ii. 18-29). Δεῖ, signifying "must be," as Dr. Swete points out, indicates a necessity founded on the Divine Will, as at Matt. xxiv. 6, Jhn. xii. 34, xx. 19. This necessity may be connected with the reformation of Thyatira.

"A little time" is contrasted with a thousand years.

4. Καὶ εἶδον θρόνους καὶ ἐκάθισαν ἐπ' αὐτοὺς, καὶ κρίμα ἐδόθη αὐτοῖς, καὶ τὰς ψυχὰς τῶν πεπελεκισμένων διὰ τὴν μαρτυρίαν Ἰησοῦ καὶ διὰ τὸν λόγον τοῦ Θεοῦ, καὶ οἷτινες οὐ προσεκύνησαν τὸ θηρίον οὐδὲ τὴν εἰκόνα αὐτοῦ καὶ οὐκ ἔλαβον τὸ χάραγμα ἐπὶ τὸ μέτωπον καὶ ἐπὶ τὴν χεῖρα αὐτῶν, καὶ ἔζησαν καὶ ἐβασίλευσαν μετὰ τοῦ Χριστοῦ χίλια ἔτη.

4. And I saw seats and they that sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them; and the souls of them that were beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, and who had not adored the beast, nor his image, nor received his mark on their foreheads or in their hands, and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

"And I saw seats" reintroduces the vision of the throne (R. iv. 4). "Judgment was given to them"—"For God hath judged your judgment on her" (R. xviii. 20). "And the souls of them that were beheaded for the testimony of Jesus"—the souls of the martyrs standing before the throne, with palms in their hands (R. vii. 9). If we go back to the opening of the fifth seal, we read: "The souls of them that were slain for the

word of God, and for the testimony which they held . . . cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord?" (R. vi. 9, 10). "The souls of them that were beheaded for the testimony of Jesus" in R. xx. 4, and those who were "slain for the testimony" in R. vi. 9, are the same. These are the souls whose bitter cry, "How long, O Lord (holy and true) dost thou not judge and revenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" pervades the Apocalypse.

"And they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years." This is the celebrated millennial passage, which Cerinthus, the Montanists, and others, transferred from heaven to earth, making it a reign of earthly pleasure for a thousand years.

The dramatic form of the Book requires a final glimpse of the souls under the altar, the moving spirits, as it were, of the whole drama; they again appear in evidence, not complaining or rejoicing, as heretofore, but tranquilly reigning, seated in the judgment seats of heaven. We are told: "To him that shall overcome I will grant to sit with me in my throne" (R. iii. 21). *Εκάθισαν* is the Greek expression used with reference to Pilot, who "sat down on the judgment seat" (Jhn. xix. 13); and with regard to Festus, who "sat in the judgment seat" (Acts xxv. 6). It is the word used at R. iii. 21 and at R. iv. 4, and in the corresponding prediction in S. Matthew, "you also shall sit on twelve seats judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (xix. 28). We are shown the fulfilment of prophecies.

There is question of the communion of saints here. It is a received doctrine of the Church that the saints in heaven both see us, hear our prayers, intercede for us, and rejoice at our conversion to God. Bossuet draws this lesson from the pages of the Apocalypse.

Our Lord says: "I say to you that even so there shall be joy in heaven upon one sinner that doth penance, more than upon ninety-nine just, who need not penance" (Luke xv. 7). If the saints can experience sorrow as well as joy—sorrow at bloody persecution resulting in the apostasy and sin of those dear to them on earth; if the cry of the martyrs, *How long, O Lord?* connotes grief—then the millennium is explained, for when the devil was chained up for 1,000 years martyrdom for the faith of Jesus ceased for that period.

The Book of Revelation in many places indicates that the souls in heaven take a lively interest in the sorrows and joys of the Church Militant. We have the martyr's prayer at R. vi. 10, the silence in heaven at R. viii. 1, the thanksgiving of the four-and-twenty ancients at R. xi. 17, and the command to the heavens to rejoice at R. xii. 12, and xviii. 20. One of the seven angels who had the seven vials, an executive angel engaged in

the punishment of Rome, told S. John, "I am thy fellow-servant and of thy brethren" (R. xix. 10). See also the Alleluias of heaven on the judgment of Rome (R. xix. 1 ff.).

The millennium of the saints who were "beheaded for the testimony of Jesus" need not be a theological question at all for us. We, as exegetes, pure and simple, must look upon this as a dramatic matter, and give it a dramatic construction. S. John having in the first part of the Apocalypse disclosed the saints in heaven as crying out in distress "How long, O Lord?" now shows them as reigning with Christ for 1,000 years in unalloyed bliss. He gives the reason—the devil, who through the bloodshed of the martyrs was the cause of that agonizing cry "How long, O Lord?" which pervades the whole Book, is now chained up for 1,000 years. The Church is triumphant, Christianity spreads over the earth, and the saints in heaven look down on the scene with joy. For a thousand years they have no occasion to cry out again, How long, O Lord?

Οἵτινες, "whosoever"—"had not adored the Beast, nor his image, nor received his mark on their foreheads or in their hands," refers to the martyrs. See R. xiv. 9, 11.

5. Οἱ λοιποὶ τῶν νεκρῶν οὐκ ἔζησαν ἄχρι τελεσθῆ τὰ χίλια ἔτη. αὕτη ἡ ἀνάστασις ἡ πρώτη.

5. The rest of the dead lived not till the thousand years were finished; this is the first resurrection.

The Seer, having described the martyrs as living and reigning with Christ for a thousand years, says that "the rest of the dead lived not till the thousand years were finished." Where *ἔζησαν* corresponds with *ἔζησαν*—"lived," in verse 4. We must consider the effect of this Revelation on the minds of men in the first century. We have seen the martyrs previously in a vision of heaven, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, crying with a loud voice, "Salvation to our God," and serving Him day and night in His Temple (R. vii. 9 ff.). There is an anthropomorphic look about this passage taken with verse 4 above. Many early Christians took verse 4 literally, and thought that Christ would reign upon the earth for a thousand years. But the Seer explains that this is the first resurrection, *i.e.*, it is not corporeal, and that "the rest of the dead lived not" in visible presence with Christ "till the thousand years were finished." In the Book of Revelation there is no appreciable interval of time between the end of the thousand years and the day of judgment. On the contrary one single sentence describes the onslaught of the world upon the

Church and the destruction of the world, followed by the day of judgment (R. xx. 7 ff.). Hence early Christians thought that the millennium would be followed by a cataclysm involving the Church and the world in ruin. They expected, "At the end of the (millennial) kingdom, the universal resurrection with the final judgment" (J. Kirsch, S.T.D., Encyc. Cath. Millennium). S. John apparently meant to convey to them that the rest of the dead in Christ will not be seen, like the martyrs moving in heaven, until after the general judgment which is seen to follow the end of the thousand years. That seems to be a reasonable exegesis, bearing in mind that things in this Book are accommodated to the ideas prevailing in the minds of Hebrew Christians in S. John's day.

Οἱ λοιποὶ, "the rest," here stands for unknown millions.

6. Μακάριος καὶ ἅγιος ὁ ἔχων μέρος ἐν τῇ ἀναστάσει τῇ πρώτῃ. ἐπὶ τούτων ὁ δεύτερος θάνατος οὐκ ἔχει ἐξουσίαν, ἀλλ' ἔσονται ἱερεῖς τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ τοῦ Χριστοῦ, καὶ βασιλεύσουσιν μετ' αὐτοῦ χίλια ἔτη.

6. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection; in these the second death hath no power; but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

The Seer has the martyrs still in view, "who lived and reigned with Christ" (R. xx. 4). He goes on, "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection," and later, "Blessed are they who wash their robes in the blood of the Lamb" (R. xxi. 14). "In these the second death hath no power." That is the promise made to the second age of the Church—the age of martyrs. "He that shall overcome shall not be hurt by the second death" (R. ii. 11). "But they shall be priests of God and of Christ." "Because thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to God in thy blood . . . and hast made us to our God a kingdom and priests, and we shall reign over the earth" (R. v. 9, 10).

If we give due weight to the fact that the Apocalypse was written during a period of intense religious persecution, and that one of its special objects was to encourage Christians to suffer death rather than yield to Cæsar worship, we can understand that the above lines have this object in view. The martyrs shall reign with God in unalloyed bliss, whilst Satan is chained up; viz., for a period of a thousand years. The meaning of the second death is explained at R. xx. 14, and xxi. 8. It is eternal punishment.

7. Καὶ ὅταν τελεσθῇ τὰ χίλια ἔτη, λυθήσεται ὁ σατανᾶς ἐκ τῆς φυλακῆς αὐτοῦ.

7. And when the thousand years shall be finished, satan shall be loosed out of his prison.

The Vulgate combines this verse with the next, verse 8, and makes one sentence of it all. It is better than stopping at "prison." The abyss, into which Satan was cast and chained and sealed, is now called a "prison."

8. Καὶ ἐξελεύσεται πλανῆσαι τὰ ἔθνη τὰ ἐν ταῖς τέσσαρσιν γωνίαις τῆς γῆς, τὸν Γὼγ καὶ τὸν Μαγὼγ, συναγαγεῖν αὐτοὺς εἰς τὸν πόλεμον ὧν ὁ ἀριθμὸς αὐτῶν ὡς ἡ ἄμμος τῆς θαλάσσης.

8. And shall go forth and seduce the nations which are over the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, and shall gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea.

At the end of the thousand years, that is in the sixteenth century, Satan shall be loosed out of prison. He was loose all the time, in every sense except in that of a bloody persecutor of the Church. In that sense he was chained up. In that sense also he was loosed—"And he shall go forth and seduce the nations"—πλανῆσαι τὰ ἔθνη—"seduce the Gentiles." The Gentiles are put, as usual in this book, for those opposed to the Church. We are reminded of the beast from the earth, who "seduced *them that dwell on the earth*" (R. xiii. 14); another formula for the enemies of the Church. "Which are in the four quarters of the earth," gives the seduction of Satan a very widespread character. In these passages the Seer adopts the future tense. Once more, as at R. xii. 18, Satan stood unbound "on the sand of the sea" and gathered against "the woman" her enemies, "whose numbers is as the sand of the sea." This is a prediction.

The question arises, Was Satan loosed in the sixteenth century and was there a revival of Cæsar worship and persecution? The great and widespread revolt against the Church in the sixteenth century, known as the Reformation, answers that question. In its essence it was Cæsar worship and its propaganda was by bloody persecution.

To confine ourselves to Great Britain. In the reign of Henry VIII., in the year 1534, it was enacted that the King and his heirs should be the supreme heads of the Church of England in spirituals as well as in temporals. It was enacted that refusal to accept the King as spiritual head of the

Church was high treason, punishable with death. For this Blessed John Fisher, Bishop of Rochester, and Blessed Sir Thomas More, sometime Lord Chancellor of England, died. A series of appalling executions followed (see Gardner, "Letters and Papers" v., viii. pref.). Persecution continued more or less for about two centuries in England, Ireland and Scotland. Penal laws were enacted against the Church, which went beyond the severities of paganism. Priests of the Church were hunted down and executed for the offence alone of being priests.

On shelf, P. 4, of the Bodleian Library is the record of the trial at the Old Bailey Sessions, before all the judges of England, including the Lord Chief Justice, of six English priests, for the sole crime of being in England. The sentence runs, "That you be then severally hanged by the neck, that you be cut down *alive, that your privy member be cut off, that your bowels be taken out and burnt in your view, that your heads be severed from your bodies, that your bodies be divided into quarters, to be at the King's disposal*" (italics ours).

Satan's persecuting day in England, *μικρὸν χρόνον*, is over; and we would gladly forget the past. But the exegesis of Revelation requires the mention of these things. The ruined abbey churches of Great Britain are the historic monuments of this persecution.

Gog and Magog are symbols of world powers, gathered together to battle by Satan. This is the conclusion of the post Roman theme, and it is on the same lines as the conclusion of the Roman theme. *Συναγαγεῖν αὐτοὺς εἰς τὸν πόλεμον* is the phraseology of R. xvi. 14. We have the climax of a great battle in which the enemies of the Church are defeated, and the devil is cast into the pool of fire to join the Beast and the false prophet (R. xx. 9, 10).

The prophet Ezechiel foretells the coming of Gog upon the land of Israel, as it were, in the last days, "And I will rain fire and brimstone on him and on his army and upon the many nations that are with him. And I will be magnified and I will be sanctified. And I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am the Lord" (Ezech. xxxviii. 22, 23). This picture is followed in Ezechiel by a lengthy description of the heavenly Jerusalem, in which God dwells with His people for ever. In like manner the Seer follows these passages with a picture of the heavenly Jerusalem.

Gog, Prince of Magog, with his allies, Mesach and Tubal, lived in the land between the Euxine and Caspian Seas, and to the north, in the Caucasian mountains. They were a terror to middle Asia, and have often been called *the Scythians of the*

East. S. Augustine holds that they typify the wicked nations, who shall assail the Church in the last days. Gog and Magog were scriptural characters, known to the "servants of God" as concerned in the last great fight with the hosts of the Lord, in which they are destroyed, and peace reigns for ever. See Ezech. xxxviii.

"Whose number is as the sand of the sea," shows that the attack on the Church in the last days will be made by anti-Christian forces, not confined to one sect, religion, nation, or people. The four quarters of the earth will combine against the Church. But not necessarily all at one time. That is not indicated.

9. Καὶ ἀνέβησαν ἐπὶ τὸ πλάτος τῆς γῆς, καὶ ἐκύκλωσαν τὴν παρεμβολὴν τῶν ἀγίων καὶ τὴν πόλιν τὴν ἠγαπημένην, καὶ κατέβη πῦρ ἀπὸ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ κατέφαγεν αὐτούς.

9. And they ascend upon the breadth of the earth and surround the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.

(S. = ἐκύκλευσαν. He omits ἀπὸ τοῦ Θεοῦ.)

The Vulgate splits this verse into two, and begins the 9th verse with "And fire came down." The Douay Bible follows the Vulgate. Owing to the joining together of verses 7 and 8 in the Vulgate, the above verse is numbered 8.

In Scriptural language one ascends or goes up to Jerusalem from any part of the world, as one goes up to London from any part of England. It is a common figure of speech denoting the approach to an important capital city. "The beloved city" is the Church, the "*Civitas Dei*" of S. Augustine. The Church is the bride. In the Canticle of Canticles, the expression "beloved" as applied to the Church occurs frequently (i. 12, ii. 8, 9, 10, 16, 17, v. 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 16, 17, vi. 1, 2, vii. 10, 11, viii. 14). And the city of the beloved is indicated at Canticles iii. 2, 3, 4.

The Gentiles surround "the camp of the saints," the headquarters of the Church Militant. This we take to be Rome of the Popes. "The primacy of S. Peter and the perpetuity of that primacy in the Roman See are dogmatically defined in the canons attached to the first two chapters of the Constitution 'Pastor Æternus.' . . . The Pope becomes the chief pastor because he is Bishop of Rome; he does not become Bishop of Rome because he has been chosen to be head of the universal Church" (G. H. Joyce, S.J.M.A., *The Cath. Encyc.* "Pope").

It looks as if the fulfilment of this prophecy took place at the time of the Italian occupation of Rome in the year 1870.

The history of the Church and the world, from the end of the thousand years until the day of judgment, is compressed into this one symbol of the Gentiles coming up against the Church from every quarter of the world. It is the old secular contest of the Church and the world with the renewal of persecution added. It means that nearly all nations will harass the Church from time to time, but not all together. The centuries that have already elapsed since the sixteenth have seen the Reformation attack, the Russian persecution, the French Revolution, the French Republic attack, the Italian "occupation," and the Portuguese Republic persecution. Other attacks will follow, for so it is written. In every case of revolution the dragon "stood before the woman," the Church, that "he might devour her son" (R. xii. 4).

"And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them." We have had many opportunities of studying the symbolism of fire in this Book. The manifold woes of Jerusalem in its last days are covered by the symbolism of fire, "And the angel took the censer and filled it with the fire of the altar and cast it on the earth" (R. viii. 5, 7, 8, 10, ix. 17, 18, xi. 5). So also in the Roman theme, "And another angel came out from the altar who had power over fire" (R. xiv. 18), and he ordered the gathering of the vineyard of the earth, and the treading of the winepress with its enormous outflow of blood—of Roman blood, shed in various wars. See also R. xvi. 8, xvii. 16, xviii. 8. The fire indicated here is the fire of God's wrath, which is a symbol of many forms of punishment. We gather that the nations which go up against the Church will suffer for it in the end, as the Jews and pagan Rome suffered. God will protect His Church.

10. Καὶ ὁ διάβολος ὁ πλανῶν αὐτοὺς ἐβλήθη εἰς τὴν λίμνην τοῦ πυρὸς καὶ θείου, ὅπου καὶ τὸ θηρίον καὶ ὁ ψευδοπροφήτης, καὶ βασανισθήσονται ἡμέρας καὶ νυκτὸς εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων.

10. And the devil who seduced them was cast into the pool of fire and brimstone, where both the beast and the false prophet shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

The Vulgate ends its 9th verse with "where both the beast," and makes a short 10th verse of the remainder of the sentence, and so gets level with the Greek. Having elected to follow

the Greek text of Brandscheid, we have no choice in the matter.

As a sign that we have reached the end of the contest, the devil is cast into hell. The Beast and the false prophet were cast into the pool of fire at R. xix. 20; and we are presently told that this is "the second death" (R. xx. 14). The Beast and the false prophet, *i.e.*, paganism, cannot again dominate the world. They remain in the hell of the damned, where the dragon will join them at the last day.

PART VI

THE GENERAL JUDGMENT

11. Καὶ εἶδον θρόνον μέγαν λευκὸν καὶ τὸν καθήμενον ἐπ' αὐτοῦ, οὗ ἀπὸ τοῦ προσώπου ἔφυγεν ἡ γῆ καὶ ὁ οὐρανός, καὶ τόπος οὐχ εὔρέθη αὐτοῖς.

11. And I saw a great white throne and him that sat upon it, from whose presence the earth and heaven fled away, and there was no place found for them.

Καὶ, "and," again introduces a new theme. The Seer follows the Hebrew Scriptures, where still greater transitions are made by \daleth = καὶ, viz., the passing from one book to another. Even independent books sometimes commence with \daleth , e.g., Lev. i. 1 and Num. i. 1.

The vision of the "throne in heaven and one sitting upon the throne" (R. iv. 2) is again in evidence. The occasion is the final judgment. "Heaven and earth shall pass away" (Matt. xxiv. 35). "But the day of the Lord shall come as a thief, in which the heavens shall pass away . . . and the earth . . . shall be burnt up" (2 Pet. iii. 10). To show that this symbolism refers to the end of the world, the dead are immediately marshalled to judgment (see R. vi. 14, notes). There can be no mistake about it, that this vision refers to the day of judgment. It is the only convincing picture of the last days in the Book.

12. Καὶ εἶδον τοὺς νεκροὺς τοὺς μεγάλους καὶ τοὺς μικροὺς, ἑστῶτας ἐνώπιον τοῦ θρόνου, καὶ βιβλία ἠνοιχθησαν, καὶ ἄλλο βιβλίον ἠνοιχθη, ὃ ἐστὶν τῆς ζωῆς, καὶ ἐκρίθησαν οἱ νεκροὶ ἐκ τῶν γεγραμμένων ἐν τοῖς βιβλίοις κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτῶν.

12. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged by those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

The dead of every degree, high and low, rich and poor, stand before the throne to be judged according to their works. And

the books were opened, as in Daniel, vii. 10. The dead are judged by their own actions, as recorded in the books, a final and conclusive proof of the value of "works" in the scheme of salvation. And the Book of Life was opened. It was promised "to him that shall overcome" in the Church of Sardis, "I will not blot his name out of the book of life" (R. iii. 5). It is called the book of life of the Lamb at R. xiii. 8, and again at R. xxi. 27. The martyrs were given to understand that their names are in the Book of Life of the Lamb, and the names of all the elect, who are destined to heaven, are in the Book of Life. See R. xx. 15. Nevertheless, all are judged according to their works. See 2 Cor. v. 10. See also next verse.

13. Καὶ ἔδωκεν ἡ θάλασσα τοὺς νεκροὺς τοὺς ἐν αὐτῇ, καὶ ὁ θάνατος καὶ ὁ ᾄδης ἔδωκαν τοὺς νεκροὺς τοὺς ἐν αὐτοῖς, καὶ ἐκρίθησαν ἕκαστος κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτῶν.

13. And the sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and hell gave up their dead that were in them, and they were judged every one according to their works.

Not only are they judged who die in the final cataclysm, when heaven and earth pass away, but the past gives up its dead also. Death itself, even Hades, gives up its dead. Death and "hell" followed the red horse, where death stands for pestilence and Hades for limbo (R. vi. 8). The Seer makes a clear distinction between Hades and the pool of fire. Josephus in his discourse to the Greeks "Concerning Hades" says, "Hades wherein the souls of men are confined until a proper season, which God hath determined, when He will make a resurrection of all men from the dead" (v.). The souls of the dead from Hades, united with their bodies, given up by death, are judged according to their works. It is hinted that the Abyss and Hades are distinct places. At R. ix. 1 a fallen angel is given the key of the bottomless pit, τῆς ἀβύσσου. Our Lord held the key of "Hades" (R. i. 18). Smoke came out of the Abyss as from a furnace (R. ix. 2). Apollyon is the angel of the Abyss (R. ix. 11). The two witnesses are slain by "the Beast from the abyss" (R. xi. 7). The Beast (Nero) came up out of the Abyss, and went to destruction (R. xvii. 8). An angel came down from heaven with the key of the Abyss (R. xx. 1). Satan is cast into the Abyss (R. xx. 3). Satan is "loosed out of his prison"—τῆς φυλακῆς (R. xx. 7). The Abyss is therefore a *prison*, like Hades. The Seer mentions Hades in connection with men, and the Abyss in connection with demons. He

seems to have three places in view, the prison of men = Hades, the prison of demons, the Abyss, and the final place of the demons and the damned "the pool of fire burning with brimstone" (R. xix. 20).

"Ἐκαστος, each one, individually, is judged according to his works. So Matt. xvi. 27; Rom. ii. 6; 1 Pet. i. 17.

14. Καὶ ὁ θάνατος καὶ ὁ ᾗδης ἐβλήθησαν εἰς τὴν λίμνην τοῦ πυρός, οὗτος ὁ θάνατος ὁ δεύτερός ἐστιν, ἡ λίμνη τοῦ πυρός.

14. And hell and death were cast into the pool of fire : this is the second death.

That ᾗδης is but a temporary habitation is shown here by its being cast into the pool of fire, with death, at the day of judgment. Death and Hades—personified—were looked upon as the enemies of man. "And the enemy death shall be destroyed last" (1 Cor. xv. 26). "And when this mortal hath put on immortality . . . Death is swallowed up in victory" (1 Cor. xv. 54). See Osee xiii. 14.

The pool of fire, into which the Beast, the false prophet, Satan, and the damned were cast (R. xix. 20, xx. 9-15), is the second death, the eternal one; εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων (R. xx. 10).

"The pool of fire" is mentioned twice in the Greek, above.

15. Καὶ εἴ τις οὐχ εὐρέθη ἐν τῇ βίβλῳ τῆς ζωῆς γεγραμμένος, ἐβλήθη εἰς τὴν λίμνην τοῦ πυρός.

15. And whoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the pool of fire.

This vision accords with the words of our Lord: "Depart from Me, you cursed, into everlasting fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matt. xxv. 41).

So ends the Revelation of the history of the Church and the world. The period from the end of the millennium to the end of the world—about four hundred years of which has already elapsed—is dismissed in a few lines, as a period in which the Church will be attacked on all sides. To this period doubtless belong the seven thunders, which the Seer was ordered to seal up and "write them not" (R. x. 4). But we have in the predictions regarding the last three ages of the Church, Sardis,

Philadelphia, and Laodicea, a good deal of information as to the state of the Church and the world in our own day, and in the last days.

All the *dramatis personæ* of the Book are now disposed of, except the "woman clothed with the sun" at R. xii. 1, who is again referred to at R. xix. 7, 8 as the wife of the Lamb, clothed with "fine linen glittering white." She reappears in the New Jerusalem, and is identified by the Seer's Angelic guide, at R. xxi. 9, where She is called "the bride, the wife of the Lamb."

PART VII

THE NEW JERUSALEM

WE now come to the rewards of the just, symbolised in a description of heaven called the New Jerusalem. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love him" (1 Cor. ii. 9; Isa. lxiv. 4). It is impossible to symbolise the unknown and the unknowable. The Seer therefore draws a picture of the Church in bliss, into which he weaves the fulfilment of promises made to the martyrs in earlier parts of the Book, many of which are in the O.T. His picture of heaven is not material. It is the happy union of the Church with God—"the Kingdom of Heaven." The material note in it is pure symbolism and unavoidable.

CHAPTER XXI

1. Καὶ εἶδον οὐρανὸν καινὸν καὶ γῆν καινὴν, ὃ γὰρ πρῶτος οὐρανὸς καὶ ἡ πρώτη γῆ ἀπῆλθον, καὶ ἡ θάλασσα οὐκ ἔστιν ἔτι.

1. And I saw a new heaven and a new earth. For the first heaven and the first earth was gone, and the sea is now no more.

(S. = ἀπῆλθον.)

Heaven and earth mean the visible universe. The special reference to "the sea" here is taken, therefore, to refer to the inhabitants of the earth—the sea of life. The physical world and animal life are no more.

There is a reference to this "new heaven and a new earth" in Isa. lxv. 17 and lxvi. 22, and 2 Pet. iii. 13. The first heaven and the first earth "fled away, and there was no place found for them" (R. xx. 11).

"A new heaven and a new earth" are required to provide a stage for what follows.

2. Καὶ τὴν πόλιν τὴν ἁγίαν Ἱερουσαλήμ καινὴν εἶδον καταβαίνουσαν ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἀπὸ τοῦ Θεοῦ, ἡτοιμασμένην ὡς νύμφην κεκοσμημένην τῷ ἀνδρὶ αὐτῆς.

2. And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven, from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

The Vulgate and Douay Bibles have "And I, John."

This takes us back to Chapter XIX., where, after the fall of Rome, we are told "the marriage of the Lamb is come," and his wife hath prepared herself (R. xix. 7). The holy city, the New Jerusalem, "prepared as a bride" for her husband, is the Church "Triumphant." She comes down out of heaven, where we have had glimpses of her in the visions of the throne of God.

This new vision carries out the promises to the Seven Churches. "And I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven" (R. iii. 12). The saints of God form the New Jerusalem. It is a living body. The picture drawn by the Seer of the existence of the martyrs in heaven at R. vii. ff. is kept well in view here, and repeatedly referred to.

3. Καὶ ἤκουσα φωνῆς μεγάλης ἐκ τοῦ θρόνου λεγούσης, Ἴδου ἡ σκηνὴ τοῦ Θεοῦ μετὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων, καὶ σκενώσει μετ' αὐτῶν, καὶ αὐτοὶ λαοὶ αὐτοῦ ἔσονται, καὶ αὐτὸς ὁ Θεὸς μετ' αὐτῶν ἔσται, αὐτῶν Θεός.

3. And I heard a great voice from the throne saying, Behold the tabernacle of God with men; and he will dwell with them; and they shall be his people; and God himself with them shall be their God.

The great voice from the throne we have taken to be the voice of God. Ἡ σκηνή, the tent, translated "the tabernacle," takes us back to the early history of the Jews, when the ark reposed in a tent. At R. xv. 5, ὁ ναὸς τῆς σκηνῆς, the tabernacle of the temple was opened. And at R. vii. 15 we have the reference to the tabernacle with which the above connects. There an angel explains that the martyrs are before the throne of God and serve Him day and night, ἐν τῷ ναῷ αὐτοῦ, in His tabernacle. But there is no real σκηνή there, "for the Lord God Almighty is the temple thereof and the Lamb" (R. xxi. 22), showing that we have to deal with a living New Jerusalem, "the bride."

Prophecies of the O.T. are in view also. "I will walk among you, and will be your God, and you shall be my people" (Lev. xxvi. 12). See also Jer. xxiv. 7. "And my

tabernacle shall be with them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people" (Ezech. xxxvii. 27).

4. Καὶ ἐξαλείψει ὁ Θεὸς πᾶν δάκρυον ἀπὸ τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν αὐτῶν, καὶ ὁ θάνατος οὐκ ἔσται ἔτι οὔτε πένθος οὔτε κραυγὴ οὔτε πόνος, οὐκ ἔσται ἔτι, ὅτι τὰ πρῶτα ἀπῆλθεν.

4. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and death shall be no more, nor mourning, nor crying, or sorrow shall be any more, for the former things are passed away.

(S. = ἐξαλείψει πᾶν δάκρυον ἐκ τῶν ; also ἀπῆλθαν.)

The Seer follows the O.T. prophets who dwelt on the negative side in their descriptions of heaven. He treats the New Jerusalem as the company of the saints. No more tears, or death, or mourning, or crying, or πόνος, "pain," in the Church triumphant, because these πρῶτα—"first things," have passed away with "the first heaven and the first earth," ἡ πρώτη γῆ ἀπῆλθον (R. xxi. 1). They have passed away with the material world.

"The Lord God shall wipe away tears from every face" (Isa. xxv. 8). "Sorrow and mourning shall flee away" (Isa. li. 11). The particular reference is to R. vii. 17, "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

Πόνος is translated "pain" at R. xvi. 10, 11; here "sorrow." It means the pain of toil. Vg. *Neque dolor*.

5. Καὶ εἶπεν ὁ καθήμενος ἐπὶ τῷ θρόνῳ, Ἴδού καινὰ ποιῶ πάντα, καὶ λέγει μοι, Γράψον, ὅτι οὗτοι οἱ λόγοι πιστοὶ καὶ ἀληθινοὶ εἰσιν.

5. And he who sat on the throne said, Behold I make all things new. And he said to me, Write, for these words are most faithful and true.

(S. omits μοι.)

For "He who sat on the throne," see the visions of the throne, R. iv. 2, 9, v. 1, 7, 13, vi. 16, vii. 10, 15, xix. 4, xx. 11, 12. It is the voice of God. The proclamation is the corollary of—"The first things are passed away"—"All things are new." The wording recalls Isa. xliii. 19 and 2 Cor. v. 17.

"He said to me, Write, for these words are most faithful and true." That is the reason for writing these things down and giving them to the world. The command to "Write" would seem to show that the Seer was not writing at the time. It is an injunction to him to put "these words" in his Book.

"Faithful and true" are the attributes of the Lamb, "The Amen, the faithful and true Witness" (R. iii. 14). The promise

of the Faithful and True to Laodicea, was, "To him that shall overcome I will grant to sit with me in my throne" (R. iii. 21). See also R. xix. 11.

6. Καὶ εἶπέν μοι, Γέγοναν, ἐγὼ εἰμι τὸ ἄλφα καὶ τὸ ὦ, ἡ ἀρχὴ καὶ τὸ τέλος, ἐγὼ τῷ διψῶντι δώσω ἐκ τῆς πηγῆς τοῦ ὕδατος τῆς ζωῆς δωρεάν.

6. And he said to me, It is done, I am alpha and omega, the beginning and the end. To him that thirsteth I will give of the fountains of the water of life freely.

(S. omits εἰμι.)

What is done? Every prophecy contained in this Revelation is shown as accomplished. "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, saith the Lord God . . . the Almighty" (R. i. 8). The Lord God Almighty is the speaker. He promised the downfall of Rome. "And when the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air, a great voice came out of the temple, from the throne, saying: It is done" (R. xvi. 17). The martyrs were promised that they should thirst no more, and that the Lamb should "lead them to the fountains of the waters of life" (R. vii. 16, 17). That also is done. Punishments threatened and rewards promised are shown as fulfilled. S. John mentions the "fountain of water" in his Gospel, where our Lord says to the Samaritan woman who gave Him a drink: "But the water that I shall give him, shall become in him a fountain of water, springing up into everlasting life" (iv. 14). The water of life "gratis" is mentioned again in the next chapter (R. xxii. 17).

7. Ὁ νικῶν κληρονομήσει ταῦτα, καὶ ἔσομαι αὐτῷ Θεὸς καὶ αὐτὸς ἔσται μοι υἱός.

7. He that shall overcome shall possess these things, and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.

Here the situation is changed from heaven back again to the earth of the first century. Promises and threats are again renewed. "He that shall overcome" connects with the promises made to "ὁ νικῶν" at the end of the letters to the Seven Churches of Asia (see R. ii. 7, notes). The martyrs are promised that they shall have the rewards of heaven, as portrayed at R. vii. 15, 16, 17, "And I will be his God," seems to look back more particularly to the promises to Philadelphia (R. iii. 12). "And he shall be my son" may refer to Thyatira. "I will give him the morning star" (R. ii. 28.) But see 1 Jhn. iii. 1, 2.

8. Τοῖς δὲ δειλοῖς καὶ ἀπίστοις καὶ ἐβδελυγμένοις καὶ φονεῦσιν καὶ πόρνοις καὶ φαρμακοῖς καὶ εἰδωλολάτραις καὶ πᾶσιν τοῖς ψευδέσιν τὸ μέρος αὐτῶν ἐν τῇ λίμνῃ τῇ καιομένῃ πυρὶ καὶ θείῳ, ὃ ἐστὶν ὁ θάνατος ὁ δεύτερος.

8. But to the fearful and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and fornicators, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, their portion shall be in the pool burning with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.

(S. = φονεῦσι and πᾶσι.)

Again it is explained, as at R. xx. 14, that the pool of fire and brimstone is the second death. At the head of those who will go into the pool are the fearful, the cowards, who are ashamed of their religion, and who abandon it through fear, of whom it has been written, that "He that shall deny me before men, I also will deny him before my Father who is in heaven" (Matt. x. 33). This was calculated to brace the nerves of the Christians exposed to the fury of Nero's persecution, to help them to suffer and to die.

The "unbelieving" has reference to those who do not believe in the promises and threats of the "most faithful and true" (R. xxi. 5). They sacrifice to Cæsar, and fall into the category of those mentioned at R. ix. 20, 21, "idolaters," "murderers," "sorcerers," and "fornicators." As for "murderers" the blood of the martyrs cried to heaven for vengeance against them. "Liars" are false spiritual guides of all sorts, pagan and others. This warning is repeated at R. xxii. 15. All men are included in this sentence, but its special application to Cæsar worshippers is shown by the limitation of the sins named to those connected with Cæsar worship. For βδέλυγμα, see R. xvii. 4, notes.

9. Καὶ ἦλθεν εἰς ἐκ τῶν ἑπτὰ ἀγγέλων τῶν ἐχόντων τὰς ἑπτὰ φιάλας τὰς γεμούσας τῶν ἑπτὰ πληγῶν τῶν ἐσχάτων, καὶ ἐλάλησεν μετ' ἐμοῦ λέγων, Δεῦρο, δείξω σοι τὴν νύμφην τὴν γυναῖκα τοῦ ἀρνίου.

9. And there came one of the seven angels who had the vials full of the seven last plagues, and spoke with me, saying, Come, I will show thee the bride, the wife of the Lamb.

(S. = τῶν γεμόντων.)

This angel is introduced with the same formula of words as the angel of R. xvii. 1. He is therefore the same angel as the Seer distinguishes between one angel and another. At R. xix. 10 this angel said, "I am thy fellow servant and of thy

brethren who have the testimony of Jesus." He repeats at R. xxii. 9, "I am thy fellow servant and of thy brethren the prophets." The Seer takes him as a heavenly guide, following the manner of the prophet Ezechiel (xl. 1, 2), whose prophecy he has in view. The bride is now "τὴν γυναῖκά," "the wife" of the Lamb.

10. Καὶ ἀπήνεγκέν με ἐν πνεύματι ἐπὶ ὄρος μέγα καὶ ὑψηλόν καὶ ἔδειξέν μοι τὴν πόλιν τὴν ἁγίαν, Ἱερουσαλήμ, καταβαίνουσαν ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἀπὸ τοῦ Θεοῦ.

10. And he took me up in spirit to a great and high mountain, and he showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God.

S. John experiences another exaltation of the spirit. So Ezechiel was taken in spirit to "a very high mountain" to witness the vision of a new temple (xl. 1, 2). Many concrete items are taken from Ezechiel to illustrate the meaning of "the holy city," but all the time S. John lets us see that it is a living city, and not a material one. Much has been written on the significance of its stones, viewed as symbols, but we cannot expect to understand heaven on this side of the grave.

11. Ἔχουσαν τὴν δόξαν τοῦ Θεοῦ, ὁ φωστῆρ αὐτῆς ὁμοίος λίθῳ τιμιωτάτῳ, ὡς λίθῳ ἰάσπιδι κρυσταλλίζοντι.

11. Having the glory of God, and the light thereof was like to a precious stone, as to the jasper stone, even as crystal.

The holy city, the Church Triumphant, shines with the glory of God, like the tabernacle, "And the glory of the Lord filled it" (Exod. xl. 32). It is compared to a jasper crystal glowing with absorbed light. "God is Light" (Jhn. i. 4, 8, 9, viii. 12, xii. 46). Dr. Swete calls attention to the difference between φῶς, "light," and φωστῆρ. "A φωστῆρ is something in which light is absorbed and thence radiated" (Benson, *op. cit.*, p. 284). The saints are properly φωστῆρες, see Dan. xii. 3, LXX.

12. Ἔχουσα τεῖχος μέγα καὶ ὑψηλόν, ἔχουσα πυλῶνας δώδεκα, καὶ ἐπὶ τοῖς πυλῶσι ἀγγέλους δώδεκα, καὶ ὀνόματα ἐπιγεγραμμένα ἃ ἔστιν τῶν δώδεκα φυλῶν υἱῶν Ἰσραὴλ.

12. And it had a wall great and high, having twelve gates, and in the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel.

In deference perhaps to the traditional Hebrew concepts of the New Jerusalem, there is a touch of materialism blended with

the description of the mystic body, the Bride. "It had a wall great and high." The height of the wall is stated at verse 17. But we must take the wall in connection with the words of Zacharias, whose writings are in the mind of the Seer, "And I will be to it, saith the Lord, a wall of fire round about, and I will be in glory in the midst thereof" (Zach. ii. 5). A wall of some kind is the necessary complement of gates. The Seer has to introduce the gates of the city of Ezechiel, whose heavenly city had twelve gates, three on each side, according to the names of the tribes of Israel (xlviii. 31-34). "And in the gates twelve angels," perhaps "to keep the way of the tree of life," as in Gen. iii. 24. The tree of life is also in this paradise of S. John (R. xxii. 2).

13. Ἀπὸ ἀνατολῆς πυλῶνες τρεῖς, καὶ ἀπὸ βορρᾶ πυλῶνες τρεῖς, καὶ ἀπὸ νότου πυλῶνες τρεῖς, καὶ ἀπὸ δυσμῶν πυλῶνες τρεῖς.

13. On the east, three gates ; and on the north, three gates ; and on the south, three gates ; and on the west, three gates.

Ezechiel apports the tribes of Israel to the gates as follows: on the North, Ruben, Juda and Levi; on the East, Joseph, Benjamin and Dan; on the South, Simeon, Issachar, and Zabulon; on the West, Gad, Aser, and Nephthali (xlviii. 31). When S. John wrote, in the year 67, the heavenly city was preponderatingly Hebrew. Although the Seer foresaw the Gentiles walking in it (R. xxi. 24), the Hebrews were in possession. He has in mind the twelve tribes who were sealed at R. vii. 4-8, 144,000 of each, where Dan is replaced by Manasses.

14. Καὶ τὸ τεῖχος τῆς πόλεως ἔχων θεμελίους δώδεκα, καὶ ἐπ' αὐτῶν δώδεκα ὀνόματα τῶν δώδεκα ἀποστόλων τοῦ ἀρνίου.

14. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

Carrying out the same idea of a heaven of saints, the foundations of the walls of the heavenly city are represented as the twelve Apostles. The Church was founded by the twelve Apostles. The idea was familiar to the Apostles themselves. St. Paul says, "Built upon the foundation of the Apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone" (Eph. ii. 20). In the vision of the throne of God (R. iv. 4), "round about the throne were four-and-twenty seats, and upon the seats four-and-twenty ancients sitting." In this vision the Apostles are symbolised as the stones of the holy city.

There is no anachronism in S. John describing himself as one of the foundation stones of "the holy city." It is a prophecy. When the New Jerusalem descends from God, he will be there. So "the woman"—the Church, at R. xii. 1, has a crown of twelve stars.

15. Καὶ ὁ λαλῶν μετ' αὐμοῦ εἶχεν μέτρον κάλαμον χρυσοῦν, ἵνα μετρήσῃ τὴν πόλιν καὶ τοὺς πυλῶνας αὐτῆς καὶ τὸ τεῖχος αὐτῆς.

15. And he that spoke with me had a measure, a golden reed, to measure the city and the gates thereof, and the wall.

The angel of the vials who spoke with S. John had a measuring rod, "a golden reed, to measure the city" and its walls. The same figure was seen by Zacharias (ii. 1, 2) and by Ezechiel (xl. 3). It is the natural prelude to a series of measurements which the Seer wishes to introduce.

16. Καὶ ἡ πόλις τετράγωνος κεῖται, καὶ τὸ μῆκος αὐτῆς ὅσον καὶ τὸ πλάτος, καὶ ἐμέτρησεν τὴν πόλιν τῷ καλάμῳ ἐπὶ σταδίων δώδεκα χιλιάδων τὸ μῆκος καὶ τὸ πλάτος καὶ τὸ ὕψος αὐτῆς ἴσα ἐστίν.

16. And the city lieth in a four square; and the length thereof is as great as the breadth; and he measured the city with the golden reed for twelve thousand furlongs, and the length and the height and the breadth thereof are equal.

The city lay four square to the points of the compass: each side measuring 1,500 miles. The height of it was also 1,500 miles. Hence it formed a cube. The tetragon had a sacred symbolic significance to the Jews. The altar of incense should be "four square" (Exod. xxx. 2), the altar of burnt offerings should be "four square" (Exod. xxvii. 1), the threshold of Ezechiel's temple should be "four square," and the Ariel "four square" (Ezech. xli. 21, xliii. 16). The cube was held by the ancients to be a symbol of solidity and strength. The Seer gives the New Jerusalem a superficial area of 2,250,000 square miles.

All Europe, exclusive of Russia, covers an area of not much more than 2,000,000 square miles. It may be supposed that the twelve tribes, 144,000 each, of R. vii. 4-8, are in view. They would number 1,72,8000; and the great multitude which no man could number, of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues, which stand "before the throne in sight of the Lamb" (R. vii. 9 f.)

17. Καὶ ἐμέτρησεν τὸ τεῖχος αὐτῆς ἑκατὸν τεσσαράκοντα τεσσάρων πηχῶν, μέτρον ἀνθρώπου, ὃ ἐστὶν ἀγγέλου.

17. And he measured the wall thereof a hundred and forty-four cubits, the measure of a man, which is of an angel.

The repetition of the number 144 here shows that the twelve tribes are kept in mind. One hundred and forty-four cubits, equal to 204 feet, is a grand conception, but not beyond the region of facts, since historians say that the walls of ancient Babylon were still higher. Herodotus says that its walls were fifty cubits broad and two hundred high (i. 178). It is possible that S. John may have seen the ruins of Babylon when travelling in the country of the Euphrates. It is interesting to note that both Nineveh and Babylon were rectangular tetragons.

A cubit, the ordinary Hebrew unit of measurement, was the distance between the elbow and the tip of the middle finger, about seventeen or eighteen inches (Hastings, Dict. Bib. iv. 906). "The measure of a man, which is of an angel," would seem to refer to the fact that the angel declares himself to be S. John's fellow-servant and of the brethren the prophets (R. xxii. 9). He is an angel in the appearance of a man.

18. Καὶ ἡ ἐνδόμησις τοῦ τείχους αὐτῆς ἰασπιδος, καὶ ἡ πόλις χρυσίον καθαρὸν ὅμοιον ὑάλῳ καθαρῷ.

18. And the building of the wall thereof was of jasper stone ; but the city itself, pure gold, like to clear glass.

We have had jasper at R. iv. 3 and R. xxi. 11, where see notes. It was apparently a crystal.

Prof. Stuart points out that ἐνδόμησις is used by Josephus to signify "built within," as the mole in the harbour of Cæsarea (Ant. xv. 9, 6). Dr. Swete says that this is the only other instance of the literary use of ἐνδόμησις noted. Another example of literary affinity between Josephus and S. John.

"But the city itself pure gold, like to clear glass," is a reminiscence of the Temple of Jerusalem, which was covered with burnished gold, that shone, seen from a distance, like glass reflecting the sun's rays. Josephus says: "The outward face of the temple was covered all over with plates of gold of great weight, and at the first rising of the sun reflected back a very fiery splendour, and made those who forced themselves to look upon it to turn their eyes away, just as they would have done at the sun's own rays" ("Wars," v. 5, 6).

19. Καὶ οἱ θεμέλιοι τοῦ τείχους τῆς πόλεως παντὶ λίθῳ τιμίῳ κεκοσμημένοι, ὁ θεμέλιος ὁ πρῶτος ἰασπις, ὁ δεύτερος σάπφειρος, ὁ τρίτος χαλκηδῶν, ὁ τέταρτος σμάραγδος.

19. And the foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald.

(S. omits *καὶ*.)

Josephus says that some of the stones of the Temple were forty-five cubits in length, five in height, and six in breadth ("Wars," v. 5, 6). He refers to the foundation stones, some of the upper courses of which now visible in what is called Solomon's stables, under the Temple area, are of enormous size. The twelve foundation-stones had in them the twelve names of the twelve Apostles of the Lamb (R. xxi. 14). We find them *κεκοσμημένοι*, "adorned," or jewelled with precious stones. See *κεκοσμημένην*, R. xxi. 2. These twelve precious stones are symbolical of the twelve tribes of Israel. The ephod of the High Priest was adorned "with twelve stones, three in a row one way, and four in the other; a sardine, a topaz, and an emerald; a carbuncle, a jasper, and a sapphire; an agate, an amethyst and a ligure; an onyx, a beryl, and a chrysolite; upon every one of which was engraved one of the forementioned names of the tribes"—the twelve tribes (Josephus, "Wars," v. 5, 7. See Exod. xxviii. 17). The Seer omits the carbuncle, agate, ligure, and onyx, and replaces them by the chalcedony, chrysoprasus, jacinth, and sardonix. Josephus, in the same chapter, gives an account of the symbolism of the colours used in the Temple. Whether the stones introduced by the Seer correspond with a symbolic scheme of colouring is unknown. The stones mentioned are not clearly identified at the present time.

20. Ὁ πέμπτος σαρδόνυξ, ὁ ἕκτος σάρδιον, ὁ ἑβδομος χρυσόλιθος, ὁ ὄγδοος βήρυλλος, ὁ ἕνατος τοπάζιον, ὁ δέκατος χρυσόπρασος, ὁ ἐνδέκατος ὑάκινθος, ὁ δωδέκατος ἀμέθυστος.

20. The fifth, sardonix; 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.

The idea of the foundations and bulwarks of the Church being laid in precious stones is found in Isaias, where it has not a material but a symbolic significance. "Behold I will lay thy stones in order, and will lay thy foundations with sapphires. And I will make thy bulwarks with jasper, and thy gates of

graven stones, and all thy borders of desirable stones" (liv. II, 12).

21. Καὶ οἱ δώδεκα πυλῶνες δώδεκα μαργαρίται, ἀνὰ εἷς ἕκαστος τῶν πυλώνων ἦν ἐξ ἑνὸς μαργαρίτου, καὶ ἡ πλατεῖα τῆς πόλεως χρυσίον καθαρὸν ὡς ὕαλος διαυγής.

21. And the twelve gates are twelve pearls, one to each; and every several gate was of one several pearl; and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass.

Josephus relates that the gates of the Temple were lavishly covered with silver and gold, and that the pillars of the cloisters "were of one entire stone, each of them, and that stone was white marble" ("Wars," v., 5, 2). The Seer designs gates of enormous radiant pearls, and streets of dazzling burnished gold, "as it were transparent glass." This purely symbolic materialism was necessary to the carrying out of the further description of heaven as *a place*. Men, in general, can only think of it localised as a place. It is worthy of remark that the Persian Gulf was celebrated for its pearl fisheries. S. John's connection with that locality may have suggested the idea of a great pearl. It is a precious stone he often mentions, although it is not an O.T. jewel.

22. Καὶ ναὸν οὐκ εἶδον ἐν αὐτῇ, ὁ γὰρ κύριος ὁ Θεὸς ὁ παντοκράτωρ ναὸς αὐτῆς ἐστίν, καὶ τὸ ἀρνίον.

22. And I saw no temple in it. For the Lord God Almighty is the temple thereof, and the Lamb.

This gets rid of the note of materialism and brings us back to the consideration of heaven as the Bride, the wife of the Lamb. Notwithstanding the imagery of the Temple, there is "no temple in it." "God Almighty is the temple thereof and the Lamb." The union of God and the Lamb is ever present to S. John.

23. Καὶ ἡ πόλις οὐ χρεῖαν ἔχει τοῦ ἡλίου οὐδὲ τῆς σελήνης, ἵνα φαίνωσιν αὐτῇ ἡ γὰρ δόξα τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐφώτισεν αὐτήν, καὶ ὁ λύχνος αὐτῆς τὸ ἀρνίον.

23. And the city needeth not sun nor moon to shine in it, for the glory of God hath enlightened it, and the Lamb is the lamp thereof.

It is not a material city requiring sun or moon, or artificial light of any kind. It is illuminated by the glory of God and

the Lamb. (See R. xxi. 11.) Such is the picture drawn by Isaias, "Thou shalt no more have the sun for thy light by day, neither shall the brightness of the moon enlighten thee. But the Lord shall be unto thee for an everlasting light, and thy God for thy glory" (lx. 19). "There shall be no night there" (verse 25).

"The Lamb is the lamp"—ὁ λύχνος—revives the symbolism of the *λυχνίαι* at R. i. 13: "and in the midst of (them) one like unto the Son of Man."

24. Καὶ περιπατήσουσιν τὰ ἔθνη διὰ τοῦ φωτὸς αὐτῆς, καὶ οἱ βασιλεῖς τῆς γῆς φέρουσιν τὴν δόξαν καὶ τὴν τιμὴν αὐτῶν εἰς αὐτήν.

24. And the nations shall walk in the light of it; and the kings of the earth shall bring their glory and honour into it.

(S. omits *καὶ τὴν τιμὴν*.)

Having justly apportioned the places of honour in the New Jerusalem to the prophets, the Apostles, and the twelve tribes of Israel, the Seer turns to τὰ ἔθνη, the Gentiles, and the Kings of the earth, τῆς γῆς, and foreseeing their share of heaven, encourages them also. They shall walk in heaven and bring their honour and glory into it. The Prophet Isaias says, "And the Gentiles shall walk in thy light, and kings in the brightness of thy rising" (lx. 3).

25. Καὶ οἱ πυλῶνες αὐτῆς οὐ μὴ κλεισθῶσιν ἡμέρας, νύξ γὰρ οὐκ ἔσται ἐκεῖ.

25. And the gates thereof shall not be shut by day, for there shall be no night there.

The gates of the Temple were shut at the close of day, to keep out intruders and night robbers. It took twenty men to shut the eastern gate of the inner court of the Temple, which was of brass (Jos., "Wars," vi. 5, 3). But the gates of heaven are always open, there is "no night there." The Prophet Isaias says: "And thy gates shall be open continually; they shall not be shut day or night, that the strength of the Gentiles may be brought to thee, and their kings may be brought" (lx. 11). It has been noticed before that S. John was zealous to show forth the fulfilment of the prophecies of the O.T.

26. Καὶ οἴσουσιν τὴν δόξαν καὶ τὴν τιμὴν τῶν ἔθνων εἰς αὐτήν.

26. And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it.

Here, as at verse 24 above, the Seer encourages the Gentiles. When he wrote this the household of God on earth was passing into the hands of the Gentiles. The successor of S. Peter was a Gentile.

27. Καὶ οὐ μὴ εἰσέλθῃ εἰς αὐτήν πᾶν κοινὸν καὶ ποιῶν βδέλυγμα καὶ ψεῦδος, εἰ μὴ οἱ γεγραμμένοι ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τῆς ζωῆς τοῦ ἀρνίου.

27. There shall not enter it anything defiled, or anyone that worketh abomination or a lie, but they who are written in the book of life of the Lamb.

But though the Gentiles as a class shall inherit the kingdom, no one defiled shall enter: where *κοινὸν* may mean the eating of Bazaar meat which had been offered to idols. See *κοινὸν*, Acts x. 14. Abomination, *βδέλυγμα*, was one of the characteristics of idolatrous Rome (see R. xvii. 4, notes). See also R. xxi. 8 for the list of those, including "all liars," whose portion is hell. This caution was needed in the first century particularly. For the Book of Life see R. iii. 5, xx. 12, 15, notes.

CHAPTER XXII

1. Καὶ ἔδειξέν μοι ποταμὸν ὕδατος ζωῆς λαμπρὸν ὡς κρύσταλλον ἐκπορευόμενον ἐκ τοῦ θρόνου τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἀρνίου.

1. And he showed me a river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb.

"He showed me" refers to "the angel" of R. xxi. 9, who is still in attendance upon the Seer. The "water of life" we have had before. It is one of the heavenly rewards promised to the martyrs at R. vii. 17, and again at R. xxi. 6. It is referred to in S. John's Gospel, "He that believeth in me, as the Scripture saith, *Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living waters*. Now this he said of the spirit which they should receive who believed in him, for as yet the spirit was not given, because Jesus was not yet glorified" (Jhn. vii. 38, 39). The O.T. reference is from Cants. iv. 15, Jer. ii. 13, and xvii. 13. In

S. John's Gospel our Lord says, "But when the Paraclete cometh, whom I will send you from the Father, the spirit of truth, who proceedeth from the Father, he shall give testimony of me" (Jhn. xv. 26). The Seer now sees the river of the water of life proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. The union of God and the Lamb in heaven is marked. See also Jhn. iv. 14.

2. Ἐν μέσῳ τῆς πλατείας αὐτῆς καὶ τοῦ ποταμοῦ ἐντεῦθεν καὶ ἐκεῖθεν ξύλον ζωῆς ποιῶν καρποὺς δώδεκα, κατὰ μῆνα ἕκαστον ἀποδιδούν τὸν καρπὸν αὐτοῦ, καὶ τὰ φύλλα τοῦ ξύλου εἰς θεραπείαν τῶν ἐθνῶν.

2. In the midst of the streets thereof, and on both sides of the river, was the tree of life, bearing twelve fruits, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

The promises made to the martyrs and to the Churches are kept in view in this part of the Book. "He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith to the Churches. To him that overcometh I will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of my God" (R. ii. 7). The tree of life is in the midst of paradise, in Genesis—"and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever" (Gen. iii. 22).

The Seer has the prophecy of Ezechiel in mind. In Ezechiel xlvi. 12, we read: "And by the torrent on the banks thereof, on both sides shall grow all trees that bear fruit: their leaf shall not fall off, and their fruit shall not fail: every month shall they bring forth firstfruits, because the waters thereof shall issue out of the sanctuary, and the fruits thereof shall be for food, and the leaves thereof for medicine." Here we have the same figures, somewhat modified. All we know is that the Lamb is the Tree of Life, and the Bread of Life. Bearing twelve fruits probably refers to the twelve tribes of Israel. And the mention of the nations again, as at xxi. 24, shows how important it was to bring home to those early Christians, who were Gentiles by birth, that they had a full share in the New Jerusalem.

3. Καὶ πᾶν κατάθεμα οὐκ ἔσται ἔτι, καὶ ὁ θρόνος τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἀρνίου ἐν αὐτῇ ἔσται, καὶ οἱ δούλοι αὐτοῦ λατρεύσουσιν αὐτῷ.

3. And no curse shall be any more; but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him.

"And no curse shall be any more" refers to the last verse. The idea set forth seems to be that the inhabitants of paradise

may eat of the fruit of the tree of life without fear of God's curse. God cursed the earth and mankind because Adam hearkened to Eve "and did eat of the tree of life" (Gen. iii. 17). "And the throne of God and of the Lamb." There is no "but" in the Greek. We have seen the throne in heaven at R. iv. 2. The Lamb is now joined with God in the throne (R. iii. 21). "And his servants shall serve him" belongs to the next sentence, and refers back to the promises made to the martyrs at R. vii. 15, "Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple." "Λατρεύουσιν αὐτῷ" occurs in both passages. It connotes Divine worship.

4. Καὶ ὄψονται τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ, καὶ τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τῶν μετώπων αὐτῶν.

4. And they shall see his face ; and his name shall be on their foreheads.

"And they shall see His face," as they stand before the throne and serve God (see R. vii. 9, 15). "His name shall be on their foreheads" is the fulfilment of the promise made to the Church of Philadelphia at R. iii. 12. We are reminded that the Beatific vision of God is the supernatural end of man.

5. Καὶ νύξ οὐκ ἔσται ἔτι, καὶ οὐκ ἔχουσιν χρείαν φωτὸς λύχνου καὶ φωτὸς ἡλίου, ὅτι κύριος ὁ Θεὸς φωτιεῖ ἐπ' αὐτούς, καὶ βασιλεύσουσιν εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰῶνων.

5. And night shall be no more ; and they shall not need the light of a lamp, nor the light of the sun ; for the Lord God shall enlighten them, and they shall reign for ever and ever.

(S=φως ἡλίου, φωτίσει ἐπ').

In this passage the Seer repeats and emphasises the spiritual characteristics of heaven, displayed at R. xxi. 23-25, to show that there is no material heaven. "And they shall reign," βασιλεύσουσιν, "for ever and ever" is contrasted with the martyrs' reign with Christ for a thousand years at R. xx. 4. Satan was cast into the pit at R. xx. 9; thereafter the reign of happiness in heaven is without limit, eternal happiness. The description of heaven ends here, and the peroration, as it were, begins in the next verse. This description of heaven refers to "the bride, the wife of the Lamb" (R. xxi. 9), the woman of R. xii. 1, who "appeared a great wonder in heaven," the wife of the Lamb prepared by suffering (R. xix. 7). She, the last of the *dramatis personæ* of the Book, unaccounted for, appears in this final scene, as the "holy city Jerusalem" (R. xxi. 10).

EPILOGUE

6. Καὶ εἶπεν μοι Οὗτοι οἱ λόγοι πιστοὶ καὶ ἀληθινοί, καὶ ὁ κύριος ὁ Θεὸς τῶν πνευμάτων τῶν προφητῶν ἀπέστειλεν τὸν ἄγγελον αὐτοῦ δείξαι τοῖς δούλοις αὐτοῦ ἃ δεῖ γενέσθαι ἐν τάχει.

6. And he said to me, These words are most faithful and true. And the Lord God of the spirits of the prophets sent his angel to show his servants the things which must be done shortly.

Here begins a recapitulation of what may be deemed the most important points in the Book.

"These words are most faithful and true" refers to the whole book, but especially to the rewards of heaven promised at R. xxi. 5. "The Lord God of the spirit of the prophets sent his angel to show his servants" corresponds with, and signified, "sending by his angel to his servant John" (R. i. 1). This angel is the same who has been and still is in attendance on the Seer. At R. xvii. 1 this angel said, "Come, I will show thee the condemnation of the great harlot," and at R. xxi. 9 he said, "Come and I will show thee the bride, the wife of the Lamb." And when the Seer prostrated himself before him, he said, "Worship God, for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." We are being led up to a second pronouncement of the angel, viz. "I am thy fellow-servant and of thy brethren the prophets and of them who keep the words of the prophecy of this book." Hence, "the Lord God of the spirit of the prophets." The Book is a prophecy in the sense of a prediction; the Seer is amongst the prophets.

"To show his servants," taken from R. i. 1, is to show a definite class.

"Ἄ δεῖ γενέσθαι ἐν τάχει is translated at R. i. 1 "the things which must shortly come to pass," and here "the things which must be done quickly." We know now what the things referred to are, viz., the fall of Jerusalem, the ten persecutions, and the fall of Rome. "Which must shortly come to pass" corresponds best with the Greek and with the facts.

7. Καὶ ἰδοὺ ἔρχομαι ταχύ, μακάριος ὁ τηρῶν τοὺς λόγους τῆς προφητείας τοῦ βιβλίου τούτου.

7. And behold I come quickly. Blessed is he that keepeth the words of the prophecy of this book.

This admonition refers back to R. i. 3, "the time is at hand." It is repeated in verses 12 and 20 following. It refers

apparently to the coming of the Kingdom of Christ, which was at hand when this Book was written. In the messages to two of the Churches of the future, Philadelphia and Laodicea, similar warnings occur, but they have a distinct eschatological value, for they are addressed to the last ages of the Church. It is true that the whole Book including this last chapter is sent to the angels of the Churches, even to the present age. But the appeal of the Book seems to be chiefly to the first century, with its parousial views. The "Kingdom" was "Christianity," and the Kingdom quickly came. On the other hand, ἔρχομαι takes us back to R. i. 7, "Behold he cometh with the clouds," and reminds us that we are in or about the last age of the Church.

"Blessed is he that keepeth the words of the prophecy of this Book" is a special blessing to those who bear in mind its teaching. This blessing would seem to reach beyond the first century, to the students of Revelation of our own times.

8. Καὶ γὰρ Ἰωάννης ὁ ἀκούων καὶ βλέπων ταῦτα, καὶ ὅτε ἤκουσα καὶ ἔβλεψα, ἔπεσα προσκυνῆσαι ἔμπροσθεν τῶν ποδῶν τοῦ ἀγγέλου τοῦ δεικνύοντος μοι ταῦτα.

8. And I John who had heard and seen these things. And after I had heard and seen, I fell down to adore before the feet of the angel, who showed me these things.

"And I, John," takes us back to the beginning of the Book, and is a confirmation of what is there stated as to the writer of the Book. "His servant John" (R. i. 1), "John to the Seven Churches" (R. i. 4), "I, John, your brother" (R. i. 9). No one but the Apostle John could write with such assurance.

He fell down at the feet of the angel to do homage to him. "Προσκυνῆσαι," has that significance. It does not mean to adore. Adore is not in the Greek. S. John marks the difference between *latría*, "adoration," and *προσκύνειν* "to prostrate oneself before a person in token of homage." He used *latría* at R. vii. 15, where there is question of the martyrs serving God—καὶ λατρεύουσιν αὐτῷ—and again at R. xxii. 3, "and his servants shall serve him"—λατρεύσουσιν αὐτῷ. He knew the angel to be "his fellow servant, and of thy brethren who have the testimony of Jesus" (R. xix. 10). But Eastern customs had such a hold on him that he could not refrain from saluting his former leader in the usual reverential way. "King Nebuchadnesor fell on his face and worshipped Daniel" (Dan. ii. 46). Abdias "fell on his face and said, Art thou my lord Elias?" (3 Kings xviii. 7). Cornelius the Centurion,

when he met S. Peter, fell at his feet and worshipped him (*προσεκύνησεν*). "But Peter lifted him up saying, Arise, I myself also am a man" (Acts x. 25-26). It is evident from S. Peter's remark that the Messianic Jews of the first century objected to the very prevalent custom of saluting great men by worshipful prostration.

9. Καὶ λέγει μοι "Ορα μή· σύνδουλός σου εἰμὶ καὶ τῶν ἀδελφῶν σου τῶν προφητῶν καὶ τῶν τηρούντων τοὺς λόγους τοῦ βιβλίου τούτου, τῷ Θεῷ προσκύνησον.

9. And he said to me, See thou do it not; for I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them who keep the words of the prophecy of this book, Adore God.

This is practically a repetition of the scene enacted at R. xix. 10, only the angel further discloses his identity. "Of thy brethren the prophets, and of them who keep the words of the prophecy of this book." This throws a light on, "Blessed is he that keepeth the words of the prophecy of this Book." See R. i. 3 and xxii. 18. But the pith of the instruction in this incident is in its last words, "Adore God." Worship no creature however exalted. Hence it finds a place in the concluding words of this Book, as a final caution against Cæsar worship.

10. Καὶ λέγει μοι Μὴ σφραγίσῃς τοὺς λόγους τῆς προφητείας τοῦ βιβλίου τούτου, ὁ καιρὸς γὰρ ἐγγύς ἐστιν.

10. And he saith to me, Seal not the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand.

The Prophet Isaias is told to "bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples" (Isa. viii. 16). So also Dan. viii. 26: "Seal up the vision, because it shall come to pass after many days." It is to be sealed up as referring to a future generation. And again, Dan. xii. 4: "But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time appointed." The time appointed was in the distant future. But here S. John is told not to seal the book, *for the time is at hand*.

Daniel's prophecy which related to the destruction of the Temple, the fall of Jerusalem, the dispersal of the Jews and the final rupture of the Jewish Covenant was in the minds of the "servants of God," to whom this Book was sent. That prophecy transcended in importance every other in the Hebrew outlook at the time of writing. Hence the warning "the time is at

hand," *i.e.*, the Kingdom is at hand. We cannot suppose that in the last chapter of his Revelation the prophet S. John, himself, had any illusion as to the time of "the second coming." The two sentences concerning the fall of the Temple and the end of the world, bracketed together in the synoptic Gospels, are not found in the Gospel of S. John.

But this admonition seems to have an eschatological signification for us, taking it in connection with verse 12, which follows.

11. Ὁ ἀδικῶν ἀδικησάτω ἔτι, καὶ ὁ ῥυπαρὸς ῥυπανθήτω ἔτι, καὶ ὁ δίκαιος δικαιοσύνην ποιησάτω ἔτι, καὶ ὁ ἅγιος ἁγιασθήτω ἔτι.

11. He that hurteth, let him hurt still; and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is just, let him be justified still; and he that is holy, let him be sanctified still.

This sentence renews the teaching of the Book as regards the "patience" of the saints, at R. xiii. 10, where see notes. For though the Book had buried Rome prophetically, Rome was still alive. Therefore, "He that hurteth" (Nero), "let him hurt still," and "let him be filthy still." But let the just and the holy persevere, for "Behold I come quickly, and my reward is with me," see next verse. Deliverance is at hand. The Churches of Lyons and Vienne, in Gaul, wrote to the Churches of Asia, A.D. 177, that a persecution was then raging, that the above Scripture might be fulfilled.

12. Ἴδου ἔρχομαι ταχύ, καὶ ὁ μισθός μου μετ' ἐμοῦ, ἀποδοῦναι ἐκάστῳ ὡς τὸ ἔργον ἐστὶν αὐτοῦ.

12. Behold I come quickly, and my reward is with me to render to every man according to his works.

"Behold I come quickly" may be taken here in a restricted sense with reference to, "He that hurteth"—Nero. This was written in the year 67, and in July 68 Nero perished. The speaker is Jesus Christ (see R. xxii. 16). To render to every one according to his works is in accordance with repeated statements (R. ii. 23, xx. 12, 13).

But ὁ μισθός μου, "my reward," connects with R. xi. 18, where the day of judgment is in view, "To render a reward (τὸν μισθόν) to thy servants, the prophets, and to the saints, and to them that fear thy name, little and great." This may have a special application to our own time.

13. Ἐγὼ τὸ ἄλφα καὶ τὸ ὦ, ὁ πρῶτος καὶ ὁ ἔσχατος, ἡ ἀρχὴ καὶ τὸ τέλος.

13. I am alpha and omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.

“I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, saith the Lord God” (R. i. 8). At R. i. 17 Christ says, “I am the first and the last.” See also R. ii. 8 and xxi. 6. Here the marks of the Father and of the Son are blended together.

14. Μακάριοι οἱ πλύνοντες τὰς στολὰς αὐτῶν, ἵνα ἔσται ἡ ἐξουσία αὐτῶν ἐπὶ τὸ ξύλον τῆς ζωῆς, καὶ τοῖς πυλῶσιν εἰσέλθωσιν εἰς τὴν πόλιν.

14. Blessed are they that wash their robes, that they may have a right to the tree of life, and may enter in by the gates unto the city.

The Vulgate has “in sanguine Agni.” Douay, “in the blood of the Lamb.”

The Revelation was written partly to encourage the martyrs to wash their robes in their own blood. It is clearly understood that they are made white in the blood of the Lamb (R. vii. 14). “To him that overcometh (τῷ νικῶντι), I will give to eat of the tree of life which is in the paradise of my God” (R. ii. 7). Τῷ νικῶντι generally connotes martyrdom. The martyrs have therefore a right to the tree of life, which is in the New Jerusalem (R. xxii. 2). Consequently, they may “enter in by the gates,” even though each gate be guarded by an angel of the twelve tribes of Israel (R. xxi. 12); a final word of encouragement to Gentile Christians. All men may overcome and enter the gates of heaven otherwise than by martyrdom. But one great object of this Book was to encourage the martyrs. Τὰς στολὰς in this Book always indicates the robes of the martyrs. See R. vi. 11, and vii. 9, notes.

15. Ἐξω οἱ κύνες καὶ οἱ φαρμακοὶ καὶ οἱ πόρνοι καὶ οἱ φονεῖς καὶ οἱ εἰδωλολάτραι καὶ πᾶς φιλῶν καὶ ποιῶν ψεῦδος.

15. Without are dogs, and sorcerers, and the unchaste, and murderers, and servers of idols, and everyone that loveth and maketh a lie.

“Without are dogs.” The common village pariah dog in the East is a scavenger, and an unclean animal. The Jews despised dogs; a sentiment frequently reflected in the O.T. (Deut. xxiii. 18; 4 Kings viii. 13; Psalms xxi. 17; Prov. xxvi. 11).

The idolatrous sinners enumerated above are classed with dogs! They are the same class of sinners who were previously condemned to the pool of fire (R. xxi. 8). Sorcerers, fornicators, idolaters and liars, connote Cæsar worshippers. They are in view down to the last lines of the Book. *Οἱ πόρνοι*—translated “fornicators” at R. xxi. 8—is here rendered “the unchaste.” *Πόρνοι, πορνεία* and *πορνεύειν* are used frequently in this Book for the lewd feasts of idolatry. “Maketh a lie” applies to those who trump up old lies and invent new ones against the Church. In S. John’s writings “liars” are the inventors and propagators of heresies.

16. Ἐγὼ Ἰησοῦς ἔπεμψα τὸν ἄγγελόν μου μαρτυρῆσαι ὑμῖν ταῦτα ἐπὶ ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις. ἐγὼ εἶμι ἡ ρίζα καὶ τὸ γένος Δαυεὶδ, ὁ ἀστὴρ ὁ λαμπρὸς ὁ πρωϊνός.

16. I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the root and stock of David, the bright and morning star.

The Speaker reveals Himself as Jesus Christ. He repeats R. i. 1 and R. xxii. 6. “Sent my angel to testify,” but no longer to the “servants,” but *ἐπὶ ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις*, “for the sake of,” “on account of,” “the Churches.” This recalls the opening words of the Book, “John to the Seven Churches which are in Asia” (R. i. 4). It invests those Churches with an importance which the local Churches never had. It looks forward to the end of time. “These things” include post-millennial events, even twentieth century events! This shows that “the Seven Churches” represent the secular existence of the Church till the end of time. Therefore the Seven Churches must be progressive phases of the one true Church.

“My angel” = S. John the Baptist (Marc i. 2).

“I am the root and stock of David” recalls R. v. 5 and Isa. xi. 1, “And there shall come forth a rod out of the root of Jesse, and a flower shall rise up out of his root.” Dr. Swete holds that *γένος* here means “offspring,” as in Acts xvii. 28, showing that the Speaker is the true Messianic progeny of David, as foretold in the O.T. The Book was sent to the Hebrew servants of God, who would welcome this Messianic stamp. The “morning star” is promised to him “that shall overcome and keep my works unto the end” in the Church of Thyatira (R. ii. 28). The “morning star” is taken to be a symbol of the dawn. Christ’s kingdom, like the star of Bethlehem, ushered in a new day.

17. Καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα καὶ ἡ νύμφη λέγουσιν Ἐρχου, καὶ ὁ ἀκούων εἰπάτω, Ἐρχου, καὶ ὁ διψῶν ἐρχέσθω, ὁ θέλων λαβέτω ὕδωρ ζωῆς δωρεάν.

17. And the spirit and the bride say, Come. And he that heareth, let him say, Come. And he that thirsteth, let him come; and he that will, let him take the water of life freely.

These final words seem to have a wide application. It is the call of the Church, the Holy Spirit calls: the "Bride"—the Church—calls. "He that heareth," that is, "he that hath an ear to hear," who has studied and learned the call of this Book, "let him say, Come," which seems to be a command to exegetes to publish their results. The last two Popes, Leo XIII. and Pius X., have voiced this appeal, see pp. viii. and 83.

He that thirsteth, *i.e.*, thirsteth for knowledge, he who is anxious for the truth, let him come. Let everyone that wishes take the water of life freely. The river of the "water of life clear as crystal proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb" (R. xxii. 1). It flows through the living Church to living men, and the Church offers it freely to all. In heaven "they shall not hunger or thirst any more" (R. vii. 16). Therefore these invitations are meant for us.

18. Μαρτυρῶ ἐγὼ παντὶ τῷ ἀκούοντι τοὺς λόγους τῆς προφητείας τοῦ βιβλίου τούτου· εἰάν τις ἐπιθῆ ἔπ' αὐτά, ἐπιθήσει ὁ Θεὸς ἐπ' αὐτὸν τὰς πληγὰς τὰς γεγραμμένας ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τούτῳ.

18. For I testify to every one that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book: If any man shall add to these things, God shall add unto him the plagues written in this book.

"For I testify" corresponds with "I Jesus" at R. xxii. 16, and "He that giveth testimony" at R. xxii. 20. Hence this warning comes from Jesus Christ. We have a final declaration of the nature of the Book. It is a prophecy, in the sense of a prediction. It is "the Revelation of Jesus Christ." It is on that account a most sacred Book. In the Gospel accounts of His life on earth our Lord never wrote except on one occasion, when the woman was taken in adultery, then "bowing himself down, (He) wrote with his finger on the ground" (Jhn. viii. 6, 8). But He dictated a great part of this Book, *i.e.*, the Letters to the Seven Churches, and He speaks to us frequently directly from its pages. He foresaw the vast literature that would spring up in connection with the Book; how it would be twisted and turned to suit the ends and aims

of polemical controversy. This very remarkable and solemn warning is given to all time. Those exegetes who add to the text will be punished, as set forth in the seven plagues. He "that heareth" is put for an exegete or commentator.

19. Καὶ εἰάν τις ἀφέλη ἀπὸ τῶν λόγων τοῦ βιβλίου τῆς προφητείας ταύτης, ἀφελεῖ ὁ Θεὸς τὸ μέρος αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ τοῦ ξύλου τῆς ζωῆς καὶ ἐκ τῆς πόλεως τῆς ἁγίας, τῶν γεγραμμένων ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τούτῳ.

19. 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 these things which are written in this book.

Those who take away from the text will be deprived of the heavenly rewards described in the Book. The honest exegete, who reverently strives to bring out the meaning of the Book, may go astray, and yet incur no penalty. He may take confidence from other passages: "Blessed is he that readeth and heareth the words of this prophecy (R. i. 3); where ἀναγινώσκων points to exegesis. (See also R. xxii. 7, notes.) "And he that heareth, let him say, Come." (R. xxii. 17, where see notes.)

20. Λέγει ὁ μαρτυρῶν ταῦτα, Ναὶ, ἔρχομαι ταχύ. Ἀμήν, ἔρχου, κύριε Ἰησοῦ.

20. He that giveth testimony of these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Come Lord Jesus.

There is running through this Book a note of expectation, of something coming. "For the time is at hand" (R. i. 3). It may be supposed that this is a reflection of the parousial ideas prevalent in the time of St. John. There could be no such thought in the minds of those who had read and understood this Book. They would know that "the second coming" lay at least a thousand years beyond the fall of Rome.

If we bear in mind the genesis of the Book in the mysterious hour, long foretold, when the Roman eagles were gathered to the destruction of Jerusalem, if we bear in mind the peculiar position of the Hebrew Nazarene Church, the Church of the Elect, in relation to the Old Law and the New Kingdom, if we bear in mind the prophecy of Daniel and the emotion which passing events had excited in the minds of the Nazarenes, we can understand the meaning of this expectancy. In the description of the fall of Jerusalem (Chap. X.) an angel swears "by

him that liveth for ever and ever . . . that time shall be no more" (*i.e.*, that there shall be no further delay), that when "the seventh angel . . . shall begin to sound the trumpet, . . . the mystery of God shall be finished, as He has declared by His servants the prophets" (R. x. 6, 7). And when the seventh angel sounded the trumpet, there were great voices in heaven saying, "The kingdom of this world is become our Lord's and his Christ's, and he shall reign for ever and ever. Amen." (R. xi. 15.) The transference of the kingdom of this world from the Israelites and the Old Law to Jesus Christ and the Gentiles is apparently in view in these last words, "I come quickly."

But side by side with these reflections there runs another train of thought, not conflicting with them, which leads to an eschatological conclusion. If we consider that this Book has been a mystery to the Church and the world from the end of the first till the end of the nineteenth century: if we consider that when the mystery was unveiled in our own time, it was found that the predictions of the Book had been fulfilled down to its last lines: it is reasonable to conclude that its last lines may have a special appeal to the twentieth century. "Behold I come quickly" is the warning addressed to the close of the Philadelphian age of the Church, in which we live (R. iii. 11). It occurs three times in the epilogue of this Book; it may be a trumpet-call to the twentieth century.

21. Ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, μετὰ πάντων τῶν ἁγίων, Ἀμήν.

21. The grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ, be with you all. Amen.

(S. omits *χριστοῦ, πάντων*, and Amen.)

The final blessing of S. John is somewhat in the epistolatory style of the Apostles. See Rom. xvi. 24; 1 Cor. xv. 23. But he calls down the blessing of Jesus Christ on "all the saints," where τῶν ἁγίων refers to "the camp of the saints," as last seen, at R. xx. 8, surrounded by the forces of Satan.

INDEX

- ABADDON, 238
 Abercius, 218
 Abomination, the, 114, 253; "abominations," 325, 389
 Abraham, rock of, 208
 Ἀβυσσος, 232 f., 238, 256, 362, 363, 374
 Accusation, 335, 337
 Accuser, the, 272
 "Add to," 398
 Adiabene, Queen, 63
 Ἀδικεῖν, 205, 216
 Adoration (see λατρεύειν) Προσκυνεῖν : the ancients, 193, 201; angels, 220; the Synagogue, 173; devils, idols, 243; Temple, 250, 263; dragon and Beast, 281, 289, 298; God, 296, 394; all nations, 307, 348; fellow-servant, 351, 393; not, 364; angel, 393
 Adultery, 159
 Ælia, 57
 Afflict, 314
 Ἄγιοι, 49, 91, 198, 224, 225, 264, 283, 285, 314, 326, 344, 346, 350, 370, 400
 Agrippina, 61
 Air, 233, 321
 Alaric, 78, 316, 332, 333
 Alani, 78, 80, 331, 358
 Albigenses, 44
 Alcazar, 45
 Alexander, 47
 Alexandria, 7, 88
 Alityrus, 49
 Alive, 136, 165, 359
 Allard, 71
 Allegorisers, 29, 40, 43
 Alleluia, 347, 348, 349
 Almighty, 130, 192, 306, 314; God, 319, 349, 387
 Alogi, 27, 107, 156
 Alpha, 130, 380
 Altar of sacrifice, 208; golden, 224, 239; horns of, 239; Temple, 250; angel of, 314
 Ambrose, S., 42
 "Amen," 39, 128, 129, 178, 201, 221, 263, 348, 399, 400
 America, 174
 Amethyst, 386
 Ἀναγινωσκω, 126, 399
 Ananus, 260
 Ancients, 105, 189, 193, 198, 199, 201; dramatic use, 201, 220; explain, 221, 263, 294, 348
 Andreas, 43, 89, 96, 120
 "Angels" of Church, 100; of Apocalypse, 123, 124, 323, 385, 392, 393, 397; meaning, 138; ἰσχυρός, 195, 245, 335, 344, 381; numbers, 199; trumpet, 224; dramatic use, 201; four, 215, 240; another, 216, 224; adore, 220; seven, 224; of pit, 238; rebel, 269; dragons, 271; thrown down, 272; flying, 296; of fire, 225, 303; plagues, 308; of waters, 315; having key, 362; twelve, 382; measure, 385; standing in sun, 356
 Anger, nations, 264; dragon, 276
 Ἄνοιξαι, 195, 196, 198, 202
 Antichrist: by S. John, 18 f.; Polycarp, 24; S. Irenæus, 26, 84; Hippolytus, 28; medieval, 45, 46, 252
 Antimontanists, 25, 27, 30, 40
 Antioch, 23, 81
 Antipas, 150 f.
 Antoninus Pius, 72, 84
 Apameia, 185
 Apocalypse: Name of book, 85; meaning, 123; papyrus MS., 13, 119; length, 119; written in Greek, 13, 120; object, 12, 87; chapters, 43, 113, 120; copies, 120; text, 121; original copies, 14, 15; written at Patmos, 13, 130; destination, 14, 103; addressed to servants and angels, 12, 13, 123, 392; Christian dogmas, 83; difficulties and dangers, 14, 81, 109, 124; concealed, 15, 22; seen, 58; understood at Rome and Jerusalem, 15; publication, 23; mistaken, 23, 26, 31, 95; rejection in the East, 40; reinstated, 41; Antichrist, 254; a prophecy, 392, 394
 Apollo, 286
 Apollonius, 7, 25

- Apollyon, 238, 279
 Apostasy, 73, 76, 212
 Apostles: preachers, 2; writings, 120; meaning of word, 100, 138; servants, 123; false, 140; names, 152; labours, 219; martyrs, 273; holy, 344, 348; Twelve, 383
 Aramaic, 120
 Arethas, 43, 89
 Arians, 81, 106, 150, 339
 Arise, 250
 Ark, the, 265, 310
 Armagedon, 79, 112, 320, 331, 334, 352; date, 357, 361
 Armenia, 9, 41, 94
 Armies of heaven, 354; opposed to God, 357
 Armoricans, 80, 331, 358
 "Art and Wast," 313
 Artabanus, 94, 284
 Arts, 345
 Ascend, 370
 Ascension, the, 259, 270
 Asia: Proconsular, 127; map, 102; the Gospel, 109; Apocalypse, 133
 Asiarchs, 29, 287, 289
 "As it were" (ὡς), 132, 187, 197, 205, 212, 223, 227, 229, 236, 237, 241, 275, 306, 312, 318, 320, 344, 353
 Athanasius, 30, 41
 Atheists, 62, 63
 Attila, 79, 243, 313, 316, 332, 333, 358
 Augurs, 319
 Augustine, S., "ad Parthos," 8; on the Apocalypse, 42; *Civitas Dei*, 82; on seven, 116; Gog, 370
 Augustus, 48
 Aurelian, 75, 148
 Aurelius, M., 70, 72, 311
 Authorship, 26, 27, 30 ff., 88, 117, 118, 123, 125, 127, 130, 133, 155, 192, 249, 267, 269, 393
 Aya Solouk, 145

 Babylon, 91, 211, 278; great, 297, 298, 322; symbolism, 326; "the great," fallen, 335; hold of devils, etc., 335; mighty, 339; thrown down, 344; a tetragon, 385
 Balaam, 143, 152
 Balac, 152
 Banishment, S. John's, 11; Roman, 13; Dionysius', 73
 Baptism, 104, 217, 291
 Barcochebas, 56
 Barley, 205
 Barry, Dr., 83
 Βασιλειῶν, 235, 258, 268, 299, 338, 339, 341, 371
 Basil, 30, 41
 Basora, 8, 318

 Battle, 236, 237; in heaven, 271; kings of earth, 319, 331; Satan's last, 368
 Bear, 279
 Bear, to, 140, 141
 Beast, the: Number, 15, 291; name, 15; Irenæus, 26; in Greek, 39; discovered, 45; explained by gematria, 90, 92 f.; of abyss, 256, 328; kills witnesses, 256; from the sea, 278 ff.; adored, 283; image of, 289, 299, 364; kingdom, 316; mouth, 318; supports scarlet woman, 325, 327; harlotation, 328; will reappear, 328; goes to destruction, 329; helped by ten kings, 333; at Armagedon, 357; cast into hell, 359; tormented, 271
 Beast from earth. See the False Prophet
 Beasts, 340
 Beatus, 43
 Bed of sickness, 159
 Bede, Venerable, 8, 43
 Beginning, 130; creation, 178; and end, 380, 396
 Beheaded, 364
 "Behind," 98, 132, 133
 Behold, 128, 147, 173, 177, 183, 378, 379, 395
 Benary, 92
 Benediction, 193, 200, 221
 Berengaud, 43
 Beryl, 386
 Bewail, 129, 338
 Bibles: Greek, 40; S. Jerome, 42; Haydock's, 121; Coyne's, 121; opinions, 280; copied, 364; Douay, 121, 332, 370, 396
 Βιβλιον, 133
 Bind, 362
 Birds, unclean, 335, 356, 359
 Bishops, 104, 110, 146, 152, 155
 Bisutun, 94
 Bithynia, 68
 "Bitter," 230, 249
 Black Death, 44, 161
 Blasphemy, 91, 146, 281, 282, 290, 307, 315, 316, 323; names of, 278, 325
 Blessed, 126; are the dead, etc., 300; is he, 320, 367; called to the marriage, 350; keeps the word, 392; wash their robes, 396
 "Blind," 180
 Blood, cleansing, 128, 222; conquering, 272; of the Lamb, 273; wine-press, 304; sea of, 227, 312; dead, 312
 Blood of martyrs, 208, 210, 396
 Bloodshed, 226, 227, 255, 314; rivers, 312; to drink, 314; of prophets and saints, 346; of servants, 347; on garment, 353

- Boanerges, 2
 Bodies, 256
 Bodleian, 369
 Bondsman, 213, 290, 357
 Book, open, 116, 245; devoured, 249; sealed, 114, 194 f.; title, 245; books opened, 373; a prophecy, 392, 394, 398, 399
 Book of life, 169; of the Lamb, 283, 328, 373, 375, 389, 399
 Bossuet on prophecies, 3, 45
 Bottomless-pit. See "Αβυσσος"
 "Bound," 240
 Bow, 94, 202
 Brandscheid, Dr. F., 121, 372
 Brass, 135, 155, 340
 Breastplates, 237, 241
 Breons, 358
 Brethren, 209, 351, 394
 Bride, pagan, 345; groom, 345; prepared, 378, 381; says "Come," 398
 Brimstone, 241, 242, 299, 371
 Brother, 130
 "Burning," 135, 229, 230, 332, 338; of Rome, 50, 343
 Burgundians, 78, 80, 331, 358
 Burial, 71; Jewish, 49, 257, 261, 357
 Butler, Alban, 8, 71
 Butler, Dom., 75
 Buy, to, 181, 339
 Cæsar worship, 10, 12, 47 f., 68, 277, 281, 283, 286, 289, 291, 368, 381
 Cæsars: title, 29; line, 93, 329; Cæsarism, 363
 Caius, 23, 27
 Calés, Rev. J., S.J., 286
 Calf, 191
 Caligula, 48
 "Called," 331
 Camp of saints, 82, 370
 Candlesticks, 58, 97 f., 133, 134; symbolism, 138 f.; removed, 142; restored, 146; "Two," 254; taken to Carthage, 333
 Canisius, B. P., 166
 Canticles, 198; new, 294; of Moses, 306; the Lamb, 306
 Carthage, Councils of, 42
 Cassiodorus, 43, 121, 220
 "Cast" into sickness, 159; into hell, 375
 Catacombs, 49, 71, 142, 146
 Celibacy, 176
 Cemeteries, 49, 74
 Censers, 224
 Ceolfrid, 121
 Cerinthus, 18; exegete, 23; author, 27, 30; heretic, 141; millennium, 361, 365
 Cestius, 12
 Chain, 362
 Chalcedony, 386
 Chalons, battle, 358
 Chapman, Dom., 67, 315
 Chapters, 44, 111, 120, 239
 Chariots, 216, 237, 340
 "Charity (first)," 141, 157
 Chase, Bishop, 86
 Chastisement, 182
 Cherubims, 191
 Children, 160; child-birth, 268; of Israel, 152
 Chiliasm, 23, 30
 Chœnix, 205
 Chorus, the, 116, 198, 202, 221, 263, 306, 347, 348
 Christ, 123, 125, 128, 130; His kingdom, 263; power, 272; reign, 364; priests, 367; our Lord, 400. See Jesus
 Christianity, Gentile, 23; spread, 47
 Christians: Name, 23; Hebrew, 4; a sect, 49; Judæan, 8; in pagan eyes, 51, 63, 65, 68; under persecution, 86, 87; position, 63 f.; suffer with Rome, 154; early views, 366
 Chronology, 17
 Chrysolite, 134, 386
 Chrysoprasus, 386
 Chrysostom, S., 41
 Church, the: Seven ages, 96 f., 100; revelation of, 103, 127, 133; all, 160; letters, 108, 138, 397; in Asia, 101; 109, 127; pride and luxury, 72, 75, 153, 158, 166; Western, 25, 160; sufferings, 147, 213; a woman, 267 ff.; triumphant, 382, 387; founders, 383
 Church buildings, 21, 75, 105
 Cicero, 327
 Cinnamon, 340
 Cities, Gentile, 323
 City, Beloved, 82, 370; Holy, 251, 378, 382, 383, 385, 399; great, 256, 322, 339, 341, 343; dominion over kings, 334; fell, 262; made into parts, 322; mighty, 339; wall, 386; gates, 387, 396; outside, 305
 Civil War, 58
 Clairmontane Codex, 42
 Claudius Cæsar, 41, 48, 49, 89, 124
 Clemens Romanus, 22; Epistle, 66 f., 71
 Clement of Alexandria: "Who is the rich man?" 15, 88; period, 27; reputation, 88; on Nicolaus, 143; baptism, 217
 Cletus, Pope, 23
 Clothed, 189, 219; with a cloud, 245; sackcloth, 252; the sun, 267; clean linen, 308; in purple, 325, 341; fine linen, 350, 353
 Cloud, 129, 245, 259, 301, 302

- Codices, 120, 121
 Cold, 179, 180
 Columbus, 164
 Colour symbolism, 386
 "Come," 202, 203, 204, 206 (see "Ἐρχεσθαι"); up, 259; Spirit says, 398
 Come, to, 130, 260, 381, 399
 Coming of Christ, 127, 129, 130, 163, 176, 183, 399
 Commandments of God, 276, 300
 Commentaries, 120
 Communion of Saints, 198, 224, 225, 365
 Composition, 117, 137, 215, 223, 249, 267, 400
 Concordances, 113, 126, 152, 154 f., 221, 241, 242, 244, 256, 271, 280, 284, 285, 291, 293, 295, 296, 301, 306, 307, 308, 312, 317, 319, 322, 326, 329 f., 338, 342, 347, 348, 352 f., 355, 357, 359, 362, 366, 379 f., 390, 392 ff.
 Confess, to, 169
 Conqueror, the, 196, 202, 207, 352, 356
 Constantine: Antimontanist, 40; reign, 76; monotheist, 77; Constantinople, 81
 Constantinople Council, 43; new Rome, 76, 81, 152; plague, 311
 Continuity, 309, 348
 Corinth, 22, 66, 67
 Corrupters, 264, 347
 Councils: Jerusalem, 6, 143; Laodicea, 40, 109; Carthage, 42; Constantinople, 43; Nicæa, 81; Chalcedon, 81; Œcumenic, 81; Trent, 157, 167
 Court, 251
 Covenant, 148
 Coyne, R., 121
 Cowards, 148, 381
 Craftsmen, 345
 Crassus, 9
 Creator, 247
 Crown of life, 147; victory, 176, 189, 193; gift of, 202; locusts, 236; of stars, 267; golden, 301
 Crown of Tiridates, 9
 Crozier, 162
 Crucifixion, 129, 198, 200
 Crying, 379
 Cry out, 343
 Cryptograph, 13, 23, 31, 39, 113, 120, 126, 137, 151, 236; like a parable, 284
 Crystal, 191, 382; clear, 389
 Cube, 384
 Cubits, 385
 Cup, 322; golden, 325; the harlot's, 337
 Curse: Christ, 68; no, 390
 Cyprian, S., 28; banishment, 73
 Cyril, 40
 Daniel: Influence on Revelation, 113; sealed book, 114; vision, 134; "the abomination," 253; prophecy, 394
 Darkness, 210, 231, 233, 316
 Date of Book, 14, 17, 27 ff., 36, 43, 59; higher critics, 83; theory, 86 f.; tradition, 89 f., 115, 226
 David, children of, 64; key of, 170; root of, 172, 196, 397
 Day, 97; "ten," 147, 150, 222; last days, 185, 306; for the, 240; "days 1,260," 252, 270; three and a half, 257, 258; and night, 299, 371, 388; great, 215, 319, 352; one, 338
 De Rossi, 71
 Deaconesses, 69
 Dead, 165; "was dead and liveth," 136, 145; rest of, 366; before the throne, 373
 "Death," 136, 147, 148, 160, 206; unto death, 147; preferred to life, 235; a plague, 338; second, 148, 367, 375, 381; gave up dead, 374; cast into hell, 375; no more, 379
 Deceived. See Πλανᾶ
 Decius, 72, 73, 148, 212
 Defiled, 168, 389
 Deissmann, 290
 Delicacies, 335; lived in, 338
 Demetrius, 141
 Demons, 318
 Denarius, 205
 Dens, 213
 Deny, to, 150
 "Depths of Satan," 162
 Desert, 274, 325
 Deserve, 314
 "Design" (one), 331
 Desolate, 343
 Destroy, to, 264
 Devil, the, 147; worship, 243, 269, 272, 273; spirits, 319, 335, 362; cast into hell, 371
 Devour: Book, 249; enemies, 255; by fire, 370
 Diadems, 278; many, 353
 Διακονίαν, 157
 Διαχῆν, 162
 Die, ready to, 167; in the Lord, 300
 Diocletian, 75, 214, 291, 317
 Dion Cassius, 48; on Domitian, 60, 61 f., 64; on the Cæsars, 72, 93; Nero and Tiridates, 53
 Dionysius of Alexandria, 30 ff.; banishment, 73; polemic, 88; heat plague, 315; blasphemy, 315
 "Divinity," 200

- Divorce, 176
 Do it not, 351, 394
 Doctrine, 152, 162
 Dogmatic teaching, 83
 Dogs, 396
 Dominion, 334
 Domitian: Alarm of persecution, 22; title, 29; biography, 59 ff.; build-ings, 62; martyrs, 71, 86; Asia, 148
 Domitilla, 61; cemetery, 71
 "Done, It is," 321, 380
 Door, open, 74, 172; shut, 172; in heaven, 187; knocking at and opening, 183
 "Double ye," 337, 357
 Doxology of God, 192, 193; of the Lamb, 200; conjoint, 200, 220; of God, 221
 Dragon, the, 269; fought, 271; cast to earth, 274, 275; angry, 276; throne power, 279; adored, 281; spoke as, 285; strength, 289; mouth, 318, 362
 Drama, vii, viii, 116, 201, 264, 267, 365, 366, 376; stage, 377, 391
 Drunk, 297, 299, 324; with blood, 326; wine of wrath, 335
 Dust, 343
 Dwelling with God, 378
 "Eagle flying," 191, 232; wings, 274
 Ear to hear, 144, 148, 154, 165, 170, 178, 184
 Earth, Prince of the kings of, 128, 129; temptation, 175; "no man," 195; reign over, 199; every creature, 200; four parts of, 206, 215, 368; kings of, 213; hurt not, 216; to strike, 255; burnt up, 225, 226; woe to, 273; helped the woman, 275; admiration, 280; non-Christians, 281; symbolism, 285 ff.; "dwellers," see *Κατοικοῦντας κ.τ.λ.*; harvest, 301; reaped, 302; vineyard, 303; vials poured, 310; illuminated, 334; merchants, 335; corrupted, 347; breadth, 370; fled, 373; new, 377; gone, 377
 Earthquake, 210, 225, 262, 265, 321
 Eat, to, idol offerings, 143, 158, 152; tree of life, 144; flesh, 332, 357
Ecclesia docens, 157, 211, 276
 Ecstasy, 132; exhausting, 136; separate, 137; incapacitating, 188, 382
 "Egypt," 256, 311, 312
Εἰωλόθυρα, 153, 158
 "Elect, the," 7, 294, 331, 399
 Eleutherius, Pope, 86
 Elias, 28, 143, 252, 255, 393
 Emerald, 188, 386
 Empires: Chaldean, Persian, Greek, Roman, 90, 245
 End, the, 130, 176, 380, 396
Ἐνδύω, 133
Ἐνδύμησις, 385
 Enemies, 259
 England, 171
 Enter heaven, 396
 Epaphroditas, 53, 61, 63
 "Ephesians," S. Paul to, 108, 144
 Ephesus: Bishops, 9; palatial city, 10; ruined and rebuilt, 21; Cæsar worship, 48; evangelized, 104 f.; Letter, 139 f.; merchandise, 340
 Ephod, 386
 Ephrem, Syr., 21, 41
 Epilogue, 392
 Epiphanius: On the Alogi, 27; on Thyatira, 41; on Pella, 57; on Claudius, 41, 89, 124; on Nicolaus, 142
Ἐρχεσθαι, 127, 130
 Eschatology, 82, 179, 183, 185, 254, 370, 372, 376, 393, 400
Ἐσημασεν, 124, 131
 Esoteric system, 90, 108, 113, 120, 126, 144, 155, 192, 201, 220, 221, 230, 237, 240, 242, 244, 249, 256, 271, 274, 280, 298, 306, 307, 308, 312, 315, 316, 327, 347, 362
 Eternity, for ever and ever, 128, 136, 193, 200, 263, 299, 309, 348; torments, 371; heaven, 391
Ἔθνος, 163, 198, 219, 251, 257, 283, 296, 307, 322, 332, 335, 345, 355, 363, 368, 388, 389, 390
Ἐὐχαριστία, 193, 201, 221
 Eumenia, 185
 Euphrates, 8, 78, 240 f., 317
 Eusebius: Election of Simeon, 9; Apocalypse, 32 f., 89; history, 40; Bible, 40; S. Peter, 49; on Irenæus, 85; tenth persecution, 75, 213, 214; conversion of Constantine, 75; on Polycarp, 146, 291; on apostasy, 212; state of the Church, 214; "the abomination," 253; on Laodicea, 184; the mark of the Beast, 290; his canticle, 307; plagues, 311
 Eutyches, 82, 106
 Evangelists, 192
 Evil men, 140
 Ewald, 92
 Exegesis, 1, 23, 27 f., 43 f., 85, 366, 369, 399
 Eyes, every, 129, 134, 155; anoint, 181, 192, 197; as flame, 353; wiped, 379
 Face, 191; locusts, 236; angel, 245; serpent, 274; of God, 391
 Fail, to, 141
 Fairbairn, Professor, 286

- Faith, 150, 157, 285; of Jesus, 300
 Faithful, 128, 178, 331, 352, 379, 392
 Fall upon us, 214; fallen, 142, 297
 False Apostles, 140
 False Prophet, the, 285; his occupation, 287; Cæsar worship, 289; mouth, 318; cast down, 359; tormented, 371
 False prophets, 17, 19, 140
 Father, the, God, 128, 164, 169, 293
 Famine: Jews, 56; symbols, 206; Rome, 78, 80, 338
 Farrar, Dr. F., 260
 Fat, 341
 Fearful, 381
 Fear of God, 179, 214; great, 259, 262; them that, 264; the Lord, 296, 307; of torments, 339, 348
 Fear not, 136, 147
 Feed, 270
 Feet, 135; like brass, 155; fell at His, 136; angel, 245; stood upon, 259; bear's, 279
 Felix, 10, 12
 Festus, 10, 12, 105
 Find no more, 341
 Fiddes, Professor, 48
 Fight, to, 153, 352
 Fig-tree, 212
 Filthy, 395
 Fire, 181, 225, 226, 227; flame of, 134, 155; a symbol, 230, 371; of mouth, 241, 242, 255; from heaven, 288, 370; torment, 299, 303, 381; in sea of glass, 306; heat, 314, 332, 338
 First and Last, the, 136, 145, 396
 First charity, 7, 140; begotten of the dead, 128; fruits, 295; resurrection, 366, 367; works, 141
 Fisher, Ven. J., 369
 Fitzpatrick, T., 13
 Five fallen, 329
 Flavian line, 59
 Flavius Clemens, 61, 67, 71
 Flesh of Kings, etc., 357, 359
 Florus, Gessius, 12
 Flour, 340
 Forehead: Sign, 216, 234, 250, 290, 291, 293; a name, 326, 391; mark, 364
 Forgiveness of sins. See *Metanoia*, "to repent."
 Former things, 379
 Fornication, 152, 158, 244, 295; wine of, 297, 298, 324, 325; symbolism, 326, 335, 338
 Found no more, 344, 373; "not" in book, 375
 Foundations, 383, 386
 Fountains of waters, 229, 312; of life, 223, 380
 Four: Symbolism, 116, 201; living creatures, 191 f.; Evangelists, 192; parts of earth, 206; Angels, 215; winds, 215; corners of earth, 215; square, 384
 Four and twenty, 189, 263
 France, 371
 Frankincense, 340
 Franks, 78, 331, 358
 Freely, 380, 398
 Freeman, 213, 290, 357
 Friars Minor, 44
 Frog-like, 318
 Fruits, first, 295; of desire, 341; twelve, 390
 Full, 167
 Furlongs, 304, 305, 384
 Galba, 53, 58, 329
 Galerius, 75
 Galilee, 1, 2
 Gallienus, 74, 311
 Gardner, Professor, 369
 Garments, 134, 168, 169, 181, 189, 308, 320, 353
 Gasquet, Abbot, 161
 Gates, 382, 383, 384, 387, 388, 396
 Gather armies, 319, 320, 368
 Gelasius, Pope, 43
 Γη, 204, 208, 216
 Gematria, 15, 45, 92 f., 292
 Genseric, 79, 313, 316, 332, 333
 Gentiles: Bishops, 23; meaning, 164, 355, 363, 368; at Jerusalem, 251; cities, 322; strike the, 355; heaven, 388, 389 (see *Ethnos*)
 Gibbon: On the cause of Nero's persecution, 50; dispersal of Temple treasures, 58; Rome's alliances with barbarian kings, 80; on Pliny's letter to Trajan, 69; battle plan of Roman army, 238; famine, 78; end of Empire, 80; Roman pestilences, 311; Persian wars, 317; pillage of Rome, 332; eunuchs, 340; battle of Chalons, 358
 Gifts, 144, 147, 154, 163, 183, 258, 364
 Girdle, 134
 Gischala, John, 54 f., 205, 231, 235
 Given power by God, 123, 204, 206, 234, 252, 289; honour to God, 296; to do God's will, 333; kingdoms, 333; waters of life, 380
 Glabrio Acilius, 60, 67, 71
 Glad, 349
 Glass, 191; sea, 306; clear, 385, 387
 Glorified herself, 338
 Glory to God, 128, 193, 200, 221, 262, 315, 347, 349, 382, 387; angel, 334; of kings, 388; nations, 389

- God : Revealer, 123; the Father, 164, 169; symbolised, 188; praises, 192; Almighty, 130; adoration, 193, 263; doxology, 193, 200, 221; will, 193; Creator of all things, 193, 247, 296; living, 193, 216; Avenger, 208; salvation, 220; world, control, 254; eternal, 136, 193, 247; angels, 224; throne, 222, 389; serve, 222; Temple, 222, 250, 265, 387; Spirit of life, 259; "of heaven," 262; reign, 264, 367, 391; smoke of majesty, 309; of heaven, 316; mover of hearts, 333; strong, 338; judges, 344; fearers, 348; "our," 348; words, 350; priests, 367; from, 378, 382; people, 378; of "he that overcomes," 380; glory, 382, 387; Light, 391; Spirit of prophets, 392
 Godless, 62
 Gods, heathen, 47 f., 243
 Gog, 133, 368, 369
 Gold, 134; gilt, 325, 340, 341; reed, 384; pure, 385, 387
 Gospel, eternal, 296
 Goterzes, 94, 356
 Goths, 73, 75, 78, 79, 80, 358
 Grace to you, 127, 400
 Grapes, ripe, 303
 Grass, 226, 227, 234
 Greek language, 5; writing, 35, 37, 120; version, 120; drama, 116; esoteric use, 119 f.
 Greek Church, 81, 106, 148
 "Green thing," 234
 ἡρηγορεῖν, 168
 Gregory II., Pope, 121
 Gregory of Naz., 41; baptism, 218
 Grotius, 48, 96
 Gwynn, Dr., 27, 40, 121

 Hades, 136, 195, 207, 233; gave up dead, 374; cast into pool of fire, 375
 Hadrian, 56, 57
 Hail, 226, 265; great, 323; symbolism, 323
 Hair, 134; sackcloth of, 210; as of women, 237
 Hammond, Dr., 45
 Hand of God, 134, 136, 139, 197
 Handmade idols, 243; hand, mark in, 290, 298, 364
 Harlot, the, 323, 332; harlotry, 324; made naked, etc., 332; the great, 347
 Harnack, Dr., 46, 67, 84
 Harps, 198; of God, 306
 Harts, 160
 Haruspices, 319
 Harvest, 301

 Hastings' Dictionary of Bible, 92, 280, 385
 Hate, to, 143
 Have, to, 163
 Haydock, Rev. G. L., 121
 Head, 90, 134; wounded, 91; of ancients, 189; seven-horned, 269, 278, 325, 327, 328; blasphemy, 278; dust on, 343; crowned, 353
 Healing, 390
 Healy, Rev. P., 72
 Hear, to, 126, 132, 167; heard no more, 345; S. John, 393; he that, 398, 399
 "Heart," 160, 333; speech, 338
 Heat, 222, 314; scorching, 315
 Heaven: Symbolism, 177, 183, 187, 195, 222; from, 229, 232, 245; silence in, 223; dwellers, 273; "tabernacle," 265, 301, 302; sins reached, 337; rejoice, 344; new, 377
 Heavens rolled up, 212; midst, 296; opened, 352; fled, 373; gone, 377; out of, 382
 Hebraicisms, 35, 39, 128, 130, 154, 238, 272, 273, 294, 299, 301, 302, 373
 Hebrews, 119, 142, 217, 219; saints, 272; study, 293; Christians, 294; Armagedon, 320; servants, 397
 Hecker, Professor, 161
 Hegesippus, 64
 Helena, S., 57
 Hellenism, 120
 Hell. See Hades
 Helmets, 236
 Helvidius, 60, 68
 Henry VIII., 368
 Heraldry, 356
 Hereafter, 136, 239. See μετὰ ταῦτα
 Heresies, 81, 82, 106, 150, 153, 233
 Hermeneutics, 113
 Herod, 10, 49, 151, 270, 274
 Herodotus, 385
 Heruli, 79, 331, 358
 He that sat, 188, 194, 197, 200, 202, 204, 214, 222. See "Sit"
 Hid, 213
 Hierapolis, 101
 High Priests, 134, 205, 231
 Hilary, 42
 Hin, 206
 Hindoos, 9
 Hippolytus, 1, 28
 History, 82, 117 f., 155, 239, 330, 333, 359, 363, 368
 Hold, to, 116, 150, 163, 362
 Holy and True, 170, 192; holy, 307, 313, 395
 Holy Ghost. See Spirit, Holy
 Holzhauser, 45; exegesis, 96, 100; names of churches, 100; on Pergamos, 153; Thyatira, 158; Sardis,

- 166; his ordination, 167; Philadelphia, 171; Laodicea, 181; prediction, 171
- Homogeneous, 223
- Honey, 249
- Honour, 193, 200, 221, 296, 388, 389
- Horace, 47, 329
- Horns, 149, 197, 269; crowned, 278; horned sheep, 285; ten, 269, 278, 325, 327; ten kings, 330; hate the harlot, 332; desolate her, 332
- Horses, white, 94, 202, 352, 354, 359; red, 204; black, 204, 312; pale, 206; four, 216; cavalry, 236; running, 237; numbers, 241; a vision, 241, heads, 241, 243; tails, 243; bridles, 304; trade, 340; flesh, 357
- Hort, Dr., 46, 92, 121
- Hot, 179, 180
- Hour of temptation, 167, 175; half, 223; for the, 240; that, 262; of judgment, 296; to reap, 301 f.; one, 330, 339, 342, 343
- "How long, O Lord?" 12, 86, 90, 208, 225, 365, 366
- Hundred and forty-four, 385
- Hunger, 222
- Huns, 79, 80, 153, 331, 358
- Hurt, 148, 234, 238, 243, 255; hurteth, 395
- Husband of bride, 378
- Hyacinth, 241
- Idolatry, 47, 143, 243, 281, 287, 288, 289, 324, 335, 381
- Idols, 47; gold, silver, etc., 243; sacrifices, 158; serve, 396
- Ignatius of Antioch, 24, 97
- Ignatius of Loyola, 164
- Image, make, 289; speak, 289; adored, 289, 311; not, 364
- Immaculate Conception, 171
- Impeccability, 159
- Imprimatur, viii
- Incense, 224, 225
- Indifferentism, 177, 180
- Infallibility, papal, 171
- Informers, 60, 62, 68
- Innocent, Pope, 42, 336
- Interludes, 111, 215, 239
- Iron, 340
- Irenæus: On Cerinthus, 18; millenarian, 24; death of S. John, 20; Antichrist, 26; exegesis, 26; opinions, 84, 86; on the Beast, 85; Domitian, 95; Nicolaites, 143
- Ireland persecuted, 170
- Islands, 130, 212; fled, 322
- Israel, 152; children of, 382
- Itala, 121
- Italy, 371
- *Iχθὺς, 14
- Ivory, 340
- Jacinth, 386
- Jacobites, 41, 106
- James, S., 1, 2
- James the Just, 7, 9
- Jasper, 188, 382, 385, 386
- Jericho, 224
- Jerome, S., 17; Bible, 42, 280; S. John's death, 20; and exile, 89; Clement of Alexandria, 88; Bethlehem, 336
- Jerusalem: Civil war, population, 55, 257, 262; famine, 56; fall, 56; re-occupation, 56; interdiction, 57; Christians remained, 57; end, 253; torments, 235
- Jerusalem, New, 177, 378, 382
- Jesus Christ: Holy and True, 91; His Revelation, 123; testimony, 125, 130, 276, 351, 364; witness, 128, 178; death, 128; Resurrection, 136, 198; living for ever, 136; the Keys, 136; the Son, 164, 167, 169, 177; beginning of creation, 178; overcame, 183; enthroned with the Father, 183, 270; the Lamb, 197 (see the Lamb); Redeemer, 128, 198; doxology, 200; Kingdom, 263, 272; nativity, 270; martyrs of, 326; I, 397; wrote, 398; come, 399; our Lord, 400. See Christ
- Jesus, son of Gamala, 260
- Jews: Hatred of Christianity, 3, 146; rites, 4; Roman, 48, 50; privileges, 49; expulsion, 49; revolts, 46, 72; customs, 62, 357; tribute, 48, 62, 116; oppressed, 59, 63; unconverted, 129, 173; false, 4, 146, 174; religion, 47, 61; dispersal, 56, 57; punishments, 226 ff.; woes, 247
- Jezabel, 158
- Joachim of Flora, 44
- John the Baptist, 1, 124, 144, 324, 351, 397
- John the Evangelist: Name, 1, 31 ff., 34, 35, 123, 127, 130, 393; tribe, 2; age, 2, 17, 87; rank, 2, 3, 4, 7, 12, 123; priest, 128; imprisonment, 5, 6; scourging, 6, 130; Jewish feeling, 4, 5, 12; mission to Jews, 7; to Parthia, 8, 356, 385, 387; travels, 9, 203; election of Simeon, 9; Ephesus, 9 f.; exile to Patmos, 12 f., 86, 130; cause of exile, 11, 12, 86, 130, 141; Greek, 3, 5, 37, 88; Greek title, 21; prophet, 2, 12, 103, 115, 131, 185, 248, 250, 392; Hebraicisms, 39, 92; ecstasies, 98, 131, 136, 382; knowledge, 118, 136, 247; composition, 116, 135, 187, 192, 249,

- 350, 385; return to Ephesus, 14; labours at Ephesus, 16; flees Cerinthus, 18; Epistles, 18, 36; Gospel, 17, 19, 20, 87, 88, 354, 395; Presbyter, 19, 31, 34; old age, 20; death, 20; burial, 20; tomb, 21, 33; miracles, 5, 21; symbol, 191, 232
- John of Parma, 44
- Joppa, 228
- Josephus: Beginning of Jewish war, 12; decrees in favour of Jews, 48; at Rome, 49, 59; famine, 56; spread of Judaism, 63; death of Nero, 53; honours, 64; accused, 64, 93; Roman invasion, 226; soldiers, 237; sea-fights, 228; zealots, 55, 231, 235; locusts, 234; oil and wine, 207; thunder, 207; Hades, 233, 374; two witnesses, 260; prejudice, 260; prisoner, 54, 261; exodus from Jerusalem, 275; standards, 284; God the Word, 354; Temple, 385, 386
- Jotapata, 54, 57, 276
- Joyce, G. H., S.J., 370
- Judaism, 4, 5, 62
- Judge, to, 208; judgments, 210, 307, 313, 314, 338, 344, 347, 352
- Judgment, of Jewish theme, 264, 296; κρίμα, 323, 336, 337, 339, 344, 347, 364; final, 373; by works, 374
- Julian, the Apostate, 77, 288, 318
- Julian line, 29, 48
- Julius Cæsar, 48, 329
- Julius Vindex, 53
- "Just," 306, 313, 314, 347, 352; justified, 395
- Justification, 350
- Justin Martyr, 25, 63, 140
- Juvenal, 59, 60, 66, 288
- Kal in Hebrew Scriptures, 128, 207, 250, 342, 352, 362, 373
- Κατοικοῦντας ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, 209, 232, 258, 273, 283, 289, 324
- Keep, to, 126, 320, 394
- Kenyon, Dr., 119
- Kephro, 24
- Keys of death and hell, 136; of the pit, 232, 362
- Kidney, 160
- Kingdom, the expected, 4; preached, 5, 15; given to the Gentiles, 23, 57; foretold, 115; shared, 130, 248, 263; in view, 128; "hast made us a," 199; established, 263; now come, 272, 349; overcomes paganism, 286; is Christianity, 393, 395, 399
- Kingdoms, ten, 330; given to Beast, 333
- King of ages, 306; King of kings, 94, 128, 331, 355
- Kings, Roman, 29, 91, 93; seven, 328, 329; eighth, 329
- Kings of the earth, 128, 213, 250, 319, 324, 334; five, 91, 329; ten kings, 79, 80, 278, 330, 358; of the pit, 238; "of rising sun," 317; design, 331; help the Beast, 331; fight the Lamb, 331; fornicate with harlot, 335, 338; glory and honour, 388
- Knock, 183
- Know, to, 146, 154, 157, 159
- Κόρον, 140
- Κράτος, 129, 201
- Kurds, 8
- "Labarum," 76
- Labours, Ephesian, 140, 300
- Lactantius, 40, 215
- Lake, 342
- Lamb, the: Johannine expression, 36 f.; living eternally, 136; vision of, 197; canticle, 198; redeemed by His blood, 198, 222, 273; worthy, 198, 200, 202; doxology 200; wrath, 214; salvation, 220; rule, 223, 270; throne, 183, 197, 223, 270, 389; slain from the beginning, 283; Mount Sion, 293; followers, 295; Lord of Lords, 331; conquers ten kings, 331; marriage, 349; wife, 349; marriage supper, 350; Apostles of, 383; Temple, 387; lamp, 387
- Lamb, two-horned, 285
- Λαμπάς, 190, 229
- Lamps, 97, 132; light, 345
- Land, 245, 247
- Langton, Stephen, 43, 113
- Laodicea: Synod, 40; symbolism, 101, 106, 107, 178; condition, 107; Jewries, 147; letter, 178; situation, 178; suffering, 182; Church history, 184; period, 185, 300, 320, 376, 380, 393
- Lapide, A. C., 45
- Latin, 121; copies, 93
- Λατρεύειν, 222, 351, 390
- Layard, Sir H., 8, 194
- Le Camus, Mgr., 83, 253
- Leaves, 390
- Leclercq, M., 175
- Λέγει, 38
- Leo the Great, Pope, 77, 79, 313.
- Leo IX., 106, 159, 174
- Leo XIII., viii, 121, 398
- Leopard, 279
- Letters, the: Exegesis, 45, 96; history, 97; symbolism, 98 f.; destination, 101; predictions, 103; plan, 110; prophetic, 185
- Lex talionis, 95, 314, 337, 357
- Liars, 18, 140, 173, 233, 295, 381, 389; loveth a lie, 396

- Licinius, 76, 77
 Life, tree of, 144, 383, 390, 396; crown of, 147; book of, 169; water of, 380, 389, 398; everlasting, 177, 183
 Light, 97, 132, 141; angel of, 334; lamp, 345, 391; of heaven, 382, 388; sun, 391
 Lightfoot, Bishop, 67
 Lightning, 190, 225, 265, 321
 Limbo, 127
 Lindsay, Dr. T. M., 277
 Linen, 308; fine, 340, 341, 354; justification, of saints, 350
 Linus, Pope, 23
 Lion, 191; of Juda, 196; teeth, 237; heads, 241; Persian, 242; roar, 246; mouth, 279
 Living creatures, 191, 198, 199, 201, 202, 203, 204, 206, 220, 294, 309; with Christ, 364; lived not, 366
 Living God, 136, 145, 193
 Locusts, 234; shape, 236, 238
 Loeti, 358
 Λοιπὸν of, 162, 243, 262, 359, 366, 367
 Loose, to, 195, 240
 "Lord of Lords," 94, 128, 355; "of the earth," 254; crucified, 256; our, 263; remembers, 337
 Lord's Day, 13, 132
 Love, 128, 173, 182; loved not their lives, 273
 Lucifer, 232, 238, 269
 Lukewarm, 189
 Luther, 44
 Λυχνία, 132, 387
 Lyons, Church of, 27, 395
- Macedonians, 81
 Mackinlay, Colonel, 17
 Magic, 289
 Magistrates, 288
 Magog, 368, 369
 Μάχαιρα, 280
 Make merry, 258; a lie, 396
 Man, 191; man-child, 270, 274; no, 339, 353; measure of, 385; every, 395; any, 183, 398
 Mann, Rev. H. K., 159
 Manna, hidden, 154
 Manning, Cardinal, 172
 Map of Asia Minor, 102
 Marble, 340
 Marcellin, 333
 Marcus, Bishop of Jerusalem, 57
 Mariners, 342
 Mark of Beast, 299, 311; forehead, 290; hands, 290
 Mark, S., Gospel, 34
 Marriage, 349; supper, 350
 Martial, 59, 60, 329
 Mourning, 338, 339, 341, 379
- Μάρτυς, 125, 128, 130, 150, 209, 252, 273
 Martyrs: Domitian, 71; period, 147; relation to θλίψις, 147; to white garments, 181; cry for vengeance, 208; robes, 209, 220; sufferings, 51, 72, 75, 211 f., 215; numbers in heaven, 219 f., 306; an ancient proclaims them, 221; rewards, 222 f.; identified, 220; blood, 326, 366.
 See Στολή
 Maxentius, 76
 Maximian, 75
 Maximin, 72
 Measure, to, 250 f., 384
 Melania, 336
 Melito, Bishop, 25; letter to Aurelius, 70; the Lord's day, 132
 Μέλλω, 180, 248
 Men: Three classes, 240; mighty, 357; with God, 378
 Menander, 288
 Merchandise, 339, 345
 Merchants, 335, 339, 341
 Messias, 56, 114, 147, 205, 397
 Μετά ταῦτα, 187, 215, 219, 239, 347
 Μετανοεῖν, "to repent," 142, 153, 159, 167, 182, 243, 244, 315, 316
 Methodius, 49
 Michael, Archangel, 271
 Middle Ages: Thyatira, 107, 155 f.; luxury, 158 f.; saints, 162
 Milan Edict, 76, 81
 Millenarians, 24 ff.
 Millennium, 155, 156, 210; date, 361; explained, 363, 365; first-century views, 366 f.
 Mills, 345; mill-stone, 344
 Mindful, 142
 Mingle double, 337
 "Ministry," 157
 Miserable, 180
 Modernism, 1
 Mohammedans, 106
 Μολύνειν, 168
 Mommsen, 60
 Monotheism, 47, 63, 77
 Montanism, 24 ff., 30 f., 361
 Montanus, 24, 96
 Months, five, 235, 238; for the, 240; forty-two, 251, 281; Jewish, 274; every, 390
 Moon, 210; symbolism, 211, 231, 267; no, 387
 Moor, Sir T., Ven., 369
 Morning star, 164, 397
 Moses, 252, 255, 306
 Μόσχος, 190, 246
 Mount Zion, 293
 Mountains: As potentates, 91; hiding-places, 213, 214; Vespasian's army, 227; not found, 322; kings, 328; great, 382

- Mouth (see Sword) of horses, 241, 242; of serpent, 275; the earth, 275; of lion, 279; blaspheming, 281 f.; of dragon, etc., 318
- Moved, 212
- MSS., 119 f.
- Multitude, 219, 332
- Muratorius, 28
- Murderers, 244, 381, 396
- Murphy, A., on "Tacitus," 53
- Μυστήριον, 138, 145, 248
- Myrrh, 146
- Mystery, 100, 108, 109, 138, 145; of God, 248; Babylon, 326; of scarlet woman, 327; of Beast, 327
- Mystics, 29, 40, 42 ff., 108
- Naked, 180, 181; walk, 320; make, 332
- Name: of God, "my," 141, 150, 177, 178, 188; magnify, 307, 315; of City of God, 177; new, 154, 177; secret, 154, 293, 353; Babylon, 326; of Tribes, 382; of Apostles, 383; of men, 168, 169, 262; in the book of life, 283
- Names of blasphemy, 278, 325
- Ναός, 177, 222, 251, 266, 308, 387
- Nations, 163, 197; all, 219, 250, 257, 283, 296, 307, 332, 335, 345, 363, 368, 388, 389, 390 (see Gentiles)
- Nazarenes: Customs, 4; the elect, 7, 13; numbers, 7, 57; Jewish estimation, 5, 10; flee to Pella, 57, 205, 218; primacy, 139; warned, 196, 216, 274; consoled, 234; witnesses, 260; special class, 294, 399
- Nebuchadnesor, 393
- Neokorate, 10
- Nepos Bishop, 29, 30
- Nereus, 71
- Nero: Edicts, 11; institutes, 14, 22, 69; worship, 48, 53, 278, 282, 289 f.; name in gematria, 15, 92, 292; Claudius, 41; incendiary, 50; persecution, 54, 86, 286; crowns Tiridates, 53; Olympian games, 11, 53; fall, 53; death, 53, 55, 280, 285, 289; power, 283; Three Key references, 284, 292, 329; captivity, 285; official stamp, 290 (see Superstition); filthy, 395
- Nerva, 67, 71
- Nestorians, 82
- New Jerusalem, 177 f.; name, 154; canticle, 198; all things, 379; heavens, 377
- Newman, Cardinal, on the Kingdom, 115; conversion, 172; Jerusalem, 253
- Nicophorus, 41
- Nicolaites, 8, 143, 152
- Nicomedes, 71
- Night, 222, 388; no more, 391
- Νικαω, 144, 148, 154, 163, 169, 177, 183, 196, 202, 273, 306, 331, 380
- Norbanus, 60, 66
- Nourished, 274
- Novelties, 63
- Number: of Beast, 15, 26, 39, 45, 92 f., 291; of angels, 199; of Hebrew Christians, 218; of martyrs, 219; horsemen, 241; Satan's followers, 368
- Observe, 167
- Octavia, 61
- Odoacer, 79, 316, 333
- "Odours," 198, 340
- Οεcumenius, 43
- Oil, 97, 205, 254, 340
- Ointment, 340
- Olive-trees, 254
- O'Mahony, Rev. Dr., 348
- Omega, 130, 380, 396
- Omens, 319
- Onyx, 386
- Open, 10, 170, 195, 196, 198, 202
- Oracles, 286
- Origen, 28, 89
- Original sin, 128
- Orodes, 356
- Orosius, 336
- Ostia, 342
- Ostrogoths, 78, 80
- O.T. estimation, Early Christians', 23, 31
- Otho, 58
- Overcome. See Νικαω, "to conquer"
- Ovid, 329
- Oxford movement, 171
- Paganism, 47, 243 f.
- Παιδεύειν, 182
- Pain, 268, 316, 379
- Palms, 219
- Pandataria, 61, 71
- Papias, on John, 19, 32, 34 f.; Bishop, etc., 24; his book, 32, 85
- Papyrus, 13; manufacture, 119; writing, 137
- Paraclete, 127, 138, 390
- Paradise, 144
- Parousia, 4, 253
- Partakers of sin, 336
- Parthia, 8; wars, 9, 71; kings, 93; coins, 94; symbolism, 94, 202, 240, 317; politics, 95; royal titles, 356
- Pastor, Professor L., 159
- Passed away, 379
- "Patience," 130, 140 f., 157, 175; of saints, 285, 300 (see Τρομονή)

- Patmos, 11; quarries, 13; harbour, 130
- Patriarchs, 189
- Paul, S.: A Nazarene, 4; mission to Gentiles, 7; to Ephesus, 9, 104; at Rome, 10, 109; Spain, 9; captivity, 10; dates, 105; Asia, 108; Demetrius, 141; Laodicea, 184; "Ephesians," 142; ecstasy, 131; death, 92; the man of sin, 253; baptism, 217
- Pearls, 325, 340, 341, 387
- Πελασγός, 175
- Pelagians, 81
- Pella, 5, 8, 57, 124, 218, 274, 276
- Penal Laws, 169
- "Penance," 142, 153, 159, 167, 182, 243, 244, 315, 316
- Peoples, 198, 219, 250, 257, 283, 296, 332; my, 336
- Pepuza, 24, 26
- Pergamos, 10, 48; symbolism, 81, 101, 106; period, 149, 154, 313
- Persecution: Jewish, 6, 8; Roman, 10, 11, 22, 51 f., 71 f.; sporadic, 72, 75; East, 154; moral effect, 86 f.; Domitian, 59 f., 86; salutary, 146; ten, 147, 210 f.; tenth, 75, 215; millennium none, 363; English, 369
- Persia, 72, 74 f., 78; chain armour, 242; symbol, 242 317 (see Parthia)
- Peshitta, 40
- Pestilence, 73, 75, 160, 207, 311
- Πέταλον, 4, 20, 128
- Peter, S., 2, 3, 4, 5, 6; death, 11, 52; Rome, 49; Antipas, 151; man worship, 393
- Philadelphia: Symbol, 101; position, 170; period, 171; converts, 172 f.; mystery, 178; eschatology, 376; promises, 380, 391, 393
- Pierce, to, 129
- "Pillars," 7, 177; of fire, 245
- Pipe player, 345
- "Pit," the bottomless. See Ἀβυσσος
- Pius IX., Pope, 171
- Pius X., Pope, 83, 186, 398
- Plagues, 58, 73, 242, 243, 255; last, 305; of Egypt, 311; Roman, 75, 79, 311, 315, 336, 338, 398
- Πλανή, 158, 289, 345, 359, 363, 368
- Plan of Book, 111 f., 239
- Pliny the Younger, 53, 59, 67; letter to Trajan, 68, 70, 315; Tiridates, 53
- Πλοῦτος, 180, 200
- Political, 346
- Polycarp, 24; death, 84, 146, 291
- Polycrates, 20; the tomb of S. John, 33
- Poncelet, A., S.J., 84
- Pontifex Maximus, 63, 77, 287, 319
- Pool of fire, 233, 359, 371, 375, 381
- "Poor," 146, 180, 364
- Popes, 157, 364, 376
- Poppæa, 49, 52
- Portion, 381
- Portugal, 371
- Possess, 380
- Pour, 310
- Poverty, 146
- Power (κρᾶτος), 200; (δυναμῆς), 193, 221, 255, 309; (ἐξουσίαν), 315; to God, 347
- Præterists, 42, 44
- "Praise to our God," 348
- Prayers of saints, 198, 224, 225
- Preachers, 2, 286, 296
- Precious stones, 325, 340, 341, 382, 386
- Predictions, 98, 103, 123, 368
- "Preface," S. John's, 111, 201, 267
- Prepared as spouse, 349
- Presbyter, meaning, 19, 32, 33 f., 104
- Prices, 343
- Priests "to God," 128, 199, 367; slain, 369
- Priests, high, 205
- Primacy, 23, 75, 81, 139-142, 146, 149, 152, 277, 370
- Primasius, 43
- Princes, 213
- Prison, 147, 368
- Procopius, 57, 316, 343
- Promises, 87, 99
- Propertius, 47, 329
- Prophecies: Symbolized, 98; at hand, 126; wording, 101; Messianic, 114; fulfilled, 114, 129, 222, 226, 230, 237, 263; declared, 248, 331, 392, 394, 398
- Prophecy, to, 123, 251, 252, 255
- Prophetess, 158, 286
- Prophets, 98; O. T., 114, 378; S. John, 131; false, 140; declaration, 248; two, 258; meaning, 286; blood of, 314, 346; holy, 334; spirit of, 392
- Prostitution, 295, 298, 324
- Punctuation, 120
- Purchased, 294
- Purple, 325, 340, 341
- Pythia, 286
- Queen, 338
- Quickly, 153, 176, 392, 395, 399
- Quintilian, 59, 60
- Rain, 255
- Rainbow, 188, 245
- Ramsay, Sir W.: Parthian coins, 94; Laodicean Jews, 148; Thyatira, 156; Sardis, 165; Laodicea, 185
- "Readeth, he that," 126
- Reap, 301

- Rebuke, 182
 Red horse, 204; dragon, 269
 Redemption, the, 128, 196, 198, 222, 273, 295
 Reed, 250, 384
 Reformation, the: Effect on exegesis, 44; origins, 161, 166, 364, 368
 Reformation, "Counter," 168
 Reign of God, 349; of saints, 183, 364, 391
 "Reins," 160
 Rejoice, 258, 273, 344, 349
 Relegatio, 13
 Religions, 47
 Remembrance, God's, 322, 337
 Render to her, 337
 Repentance. See *Μετανοέω*
 "Rest, the." See *Αοιποι*
 "Rest, to," 209, 300
 Resurrection of the body, 74, 189, 209, 219 f.; first, 366, 367
 Reticence, 14, 109
 Revelation, the, 123, 398. See Apocalypse
 Revenge, 208, 225, 347
 Revolution, 371
 Rewards, 190, 201, 264, 395
 "Rich," 146, 181, 213; merchants, 335, 341, 343; come to nought, 342
 Ricimer, 333
 Ripe, 301, 303
 Ritual, Jewish, 224 f., 226, 305, 309
 Rivers, 54, 229; as it were, 275, 312; of life, 389, 390
 Robes. See *Στογη*
 Rocks, 213; of Abraham, 208
 Rod of iron, 164, 270, 355; measuring, 250 f.
 Roll up, 119, 212
 Roman Empire ended, 80, 358, 361; soldiers, 237; temples, 324; standards, 283
 Rome: Burning, 50; symbol, 91; new, 81, 149; seven-hilled, 91, 329; primacy, 152, 277, 370; Christian, 277; indicated, 316, 334; destroyed, 344
 Romulus Augustulus, 79, 358
 Root of David, 196, 397
 Ruffinus, 42
 Rugiens, 358
 Rule, the nation's, 164, 270; in heaven, 223
 Russia, 371
 Sackcloth of hair, 210; clothes, 252
 Sacrifice, propitiatory, 197, 198
 Sacrifices, pagan, 158, 243
 Sailors, 342
 "Saints." See *Αγιοι*
 "Salvation," 220; now come, 272; to God, 347
 Sanctified, 395
 Sanctuary. See *Ναός*
 Sand of sea, 276, 368
 Sapor, 74; persecution, 154, 317
 Sapphire, 386
 Sardis, 10; Cæsar worship, 48; symbolism, 101; history, 165; period, 166; laxity, 166; persecution, 168 f.; saints, 165; constancy, 173
 Sardiis, or sardine stone, 188; sardoniyx, 386
 Sarmatians, 358
 Satan, 47; seat of, 81, 150; dwelleth, 150, 238; fall, 272; depths of, 162; bound, 362; loosed, 368
 Saxons, 80, 331, 358
 Say, to, 248, 250, 356
 Scales, weighing, 204
 Scarlet, 325, 340, 341
 Scorpions, 234; torment, 235; stings, 238
 Scotland persecuted, 169
 Scott, Rev. T., 286
 Scripture, O.T., 23; destroyed, 213
 Sea: Symbolism, 217; of glass, 191, 306; creatures in, 200, 228; became blood, 227, 312; and land, 245, 247, 273; of life, 276; of Daniel, 278; men, 342; stone sinks, 344; gave up the dead, 374; no more, 377
 Seal up, 246, 363; not, 394
 Seals of books, 194; of God, 216; baptismal, 217
 Seals, seven, 202, 203, 204, 206, 208, 210, 223
 "Searches," 160
 Seat of Satan, 81, 150 f., 154; of Beast, 316
 Seats, 189. See *Θρόνος*
 "Secret, the," discipline of, 14; secrecy, 109, 120
 Seduce. See *Πλανᾶ*
 See, to, 125, 129, 133, 181
 Seed of woman, 276
 Seen by S. John, 393
 Send, 123; my angel, 397
 Serpent, 243, 272; face of, 274; mouth, 275; bound, 362
 "Servants": Apostles, 12, 123 f.; knowledge of O.T., 13; of Greek, 108; of Asia, 108 f.; limitations, 14; brethren of John, 130; knowledge of the kingdom, 131; martyrs, 209; date, 23, 95; seduced, 158; sealed, 216; the prophets, 248, 264, 394; little and great, 264; Moses, 306; blood, 347, 348; fellow, 351; serve God, 390; book sent to, 392
 Serve God, 222; servers of idols, 396
 Seven: Symbolism, 97, 116, 246, 305, 308; heads, 91; mountains, 91;

- Churches, 24, 127; seals, 194; horns, 197; eyes, 197; stars, 135, 138; lamps, 190; candlesticks, 138; spirits, 127; trumpets, 224; plagues, 305; classes, 214; angels, 224; thunders, 137; thousand, 262; heads, 269, 278; diadems, 269; vials, 309
- Seven Spirits, 127, 165, 190, 197
- Severus, Septimus, 72, 133
- Shame, 181, 320
- Sharer, 130
- Sheehan, Rev. F. J., viii
- Sheep, 340
- Shepherd of Hermes, 28
- Ship-masters, 342
- Ships, 228, 342, 343
- "Shortly," 204
- Show, to, 323
- Shut, to, 170, 363, 388
- Sibylline Oracles, 90, 93
- Sickle, 301, 302
- Sight, in, 287, 289, 299
- Signs in Jerusalem, 12, 260; in heaven, 267; another, 268, 305; false prophet, 288, 289, 319
- Silence, 223
- Silk, 340
- Silver, 340
- Simeon, Bishop, 3, 92, 139
- Simeon, Professor V., 149
- Simon the zealot, 54, 234, 235; Magus, 288
- Simony, 159
- Sing, to, 198, 306
- Sins, 128, 336, 337
- Sion, Mount, 293
- Sit: *καθήμενος*, 296; one sitting, 188, 301, 302; on waters, 323, 332; white horse, 352, 357, 359; in judgment, 365, 373; throne, 379
- Six hundred and sixty-six, 292
- Sixteen hundred, 304
- Σκηροῦν*, 222, 273, 378
- Slain, 150, 197, 208, 209; not slain, 243, 255; will not adore, 289; saints, 346; paganism, 359
- Slaves, 340
- Smoke of the pit, 233; symbolic, 241; of torments, 299, 348; of majesty of God, 309; of Rome, 338, 343
- Smyrna, 10; Cæsar worship, 48; symbolism, 101; period, 145; tribulation, 147; present state, 148
- Snow, 134
- Sodom, 230, 256
- Solomon's stables, 386
- Son of God, 155; of Man, 134, 269 f., 301; he that overcomes, 380
- Sorcery, 244, 345, 381, 396
- Sore, 311
- Sorrow, 338, 379
- Souls of martyrs, 208, 364; living in sea, 312; "of men," 340
- Speak, to, 133, 323, 381
- Spear-wound, 4, 37, 129
- Spencer, poet, 170
- Spirit, Holy, 127, 138, 144, 148, 154, 165, 185, 190, 197, 300, 389, 398
- "Spirit, in the," 132, 188, 325
- "Spirit of prophecy," 351; of life, 259
- "Spirits, unclean," 318, 319, 335, 382
- "Spiritually," 256
- Spouse, 349
- Square, 384
- Stadium, 84; stadia, 304, 337
- Stage, 191, 201
- Stand, who shall be able to? 215; far off, 339, 341, 342
- Standards, Roman, 283
- Stanley, Dean, 286
- Stanton, Dr., 41
- "Stars": Symbolism, 99 f., 212; seven, 135; mystery, 138; fall, 212, 231, 269; great star, 229; name, 230; Lucifer, 232, 269; third part, 231, 269; twelve, 267; morning; 194, 397
- Στέφανος*, 148, 188, 192, 212; *ὡς στεφανοί*, 236
- Stichometry, 120
- "Stings" in tails, 238
- Στολή*, 169, 182, 190, 209, 219, 221, 396
- Stone, white, 154; mill, 344
- Streets, 390
- "Strength," 200. See *Ἰσχυρός*, 272; little, 172
- Stuart, Professor Moses, on the Greek. 37; Luther, 44; exegete, 45; on seven, 116; repeated revelations, 132; *θανάτος*, 160; *εἰληθας*, 167; *μοσχω*, 192; root of David, 196; *ἐπί λαοῖς*, 250; *Εἰς*, 303; *Ὀυαί*, 339; *λυπαρὰ*, 341; our God, 348; *ἐνδωμῆσις*, 385
- Suetonius on Claudius, 48; Tiridates, 53; period, 59; on Domitian, 60, 61 f.; circumcision, 62; on Christians, 65; the twelve Cæsars, 93
- Suevi, 78, 80, 331
- "Suffer," 147
- Suicide, 236
- Sun: Shine, 135; darkened, 210; heat, 222, 231, 233; "the rising sun," 216; angel, 245; clothed with, 267; burning, 314; no, 387
- Sun-worship, 77
- Superstitions regarding Nero, vii, 54, 90, 256, 280, 328, 329
- "Supper of the Lamb," 183; of God, 356
- Surely, 399

- Surround, 370
 Swallow, to, 275
 Sweet, 249
 Swete, Dr. H. B.: Concordance of words in the Apocalypse and Gospel of S. John, 38, 39; exegesis, 46; the Yod, 92; *Táde léγει*, 101; comparison with Torah, 103; O.T. references, 113; text, 121; *μάρτυς*, 125; *ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις*, 151; *θανάτος*, 160; doctrine, 162; *Ἐρήρησάς*, 173; eschatology, 183; *βασανίζεῖν*, 235; *κέντρον*, 238; *σκηνοῦντες*, 273; *ἀρσεν*, 274; "harvest," 302; Armagedon, 320; drunk with blood, 327; "thyine-wood," 340; R. xviii. 16, 342; slain, 346; millennium date, 361; *Δελ*, 364; *φωστῆρ*, 382; *ἐνδωμῆσις*, 385; *γένος*, 397
 Sword, of Nero's death, 58, 280, 285; 289; "two edged," of mouth, 135, 149, 153, 355, 359; great, 204; "to kill with," 206
 Swore, angel, 247
 Symbolism: Fish, 14; cryptic, 14; Rome, 91; churches, candlesticks, 98 f., 215; Nero, 92 f.; O.T., 113 f., 120, 230; Roman army, 236; of light and darkness, 231; mountains, 213, 227; rivers, 275, 312; bear, leopard, lion, 279; heaven, 377
 Synagogue of Satan, 146, 148, 173 f.
 Synod of Hippo, 42
 Synoptic, 113
 Syriac version, 40, 121
 Tabernacle, 222, 265, 282; (see *ναός*) of God, 378
 Tacitus: Nero's cruelty, 11; Cæsar worship, 48; first persecution, 51; murder of Poppæa, 52; on Tirdates, 53; Nero's death, 53; writings, 59; the Domitian "terror," 60, 61; opinion of Christians, 65
Táde léγει, 102, 139, 145, 149, 155, 165, 170, 178
 Tails like scorpions, 238; serpents' 243; dragons', 269
 Take away, 399
 Talent (weight), 227; hail, 323
 Tau, 130, 250
 Teach, to, 152, 158
 Tears, 223; wiped away, 379
 Teeth, 237
 Temple: Prophecy, 3, 88; worship by Christians, 5; fall, an epoch, 15, 56 f., 90; desecration, 55, 231; fall, 56; restoration attempt, 77; never-to-be-restored, 253; ritual, 226; measure, 90, 250 f.; worshippers, 250; altar, 250 f.; court, 251; came out of, 301; open, 308; filled with smoke of majesty, 309; guilt, 386; gates, 388 (see Voice)
 Temptation, 175
 Ten: Symbolism, 117; tribulation ten days, 147, 210 f.; tenth part, 262; horns, 269, 278
 Tent, 308
 Tertullian: Birth of Christ, 17; the Apocalypse, 27; Jerusalem, 57; Domitian, 65; spread of Christianity, 72; Nicolaites, 143; on commerce, 292
Τῆς γῆς, meaning, 129, 175, 204, 206, 217
 Testimony, 125, 130, 208, 256; Ark of, 265; of Jesus, 276, 364, 398, 399; tabernacle of, 308; opened, 308; to the Churches, 397
 Tetragon, 384
 Text, 119
Θανάτος, 136, 160, 206, 312
 "Thanksgiving," 221, 268
 Thefts, 244
 Theodore of Mopsoestia, 41
 Theodoret, 17, 41
 Theodoric, 80
 Theodosius, 78
 Theophilus, 25
 Thief, as, 167, 320
 Thigh, 355
 Things: Past, 135; present, 135; future, 135; shortly come to pass, 123, 392
 Third part, 226, 227, 229, 230, 231, 240; of men, 240, 242, 243
 Thirst, 222, 380, 398
 Time at hand, 394
Θλίψις, 130, 146, 147 f., 159, 215, 221
 Thousand: Symbolism, 117; years, 153, 362, 363, 364, 367; finished, 366, 368; of thousands, 199
 Three and a half: Symbolisms, 117; day, 257
 Three parts, 76, 322; three unclean, 318; gates, 383
 Thrones, 113, 183, 188, 191, 197, 200, 220, 222, 223; of God and Lamb, 389, 390
Θρόνος, 150, 152, 188, 279, 294, 316, 321, 364; white, 373, 389
 Thunder: Seven, 137, 246, 375; awe-inspiring, 190, 225; symbolism, 246, 265, 321
 Thundering legion, 72
 Thuringians, 80, 331, 358
 Thyatira: Existence denied, 27, 41, 107; symbolic, 101; period, 155; history, 156; saints, 162; present state, 163; missions, 164; the millennium, 355; "the rest," 360; re-

- formed by persecution, 364; promises, 380
 Thyine-wood, 340
 Tiberius, 49
 "Time at hand," 126; little, 209, 363, 364; "no more," 247; short, 273; and times, 274
 Tiridates, 9, 12; at Rome, 52; crowned, 94; symbolism, 94, 203, 356
 Tischendorf, 121
 Title-page, 125
 Titus, 54, 58, 230
 Tomb of S. John, 21, 32 f.
 "Tongues," 198, 219, 250, 257, 283, 296; gnawed, 316, 332
 Topaz, 386
 Torches. See *λαμπάς*
 Torments. See *βασανίζειν*
 Totila, 80, 316, 333, 343
 Tradition, 83, 87, 89
 Trajan, 20, 56, 68; letter to Pliny, 70, 71, 147
 Trample, 135, 155, 251, 304
 Transfiguration, the, 2, 134, 135, 136
 Treason, 13
 Tree of life, 144 f., 383, 390, 396
 Trees, 216 f., 234
 Tribes, 199; Israel, 218; all, 129, 219, 257, 283; every, 296; names, 382
 Tribulation, 130, 146, 159, 221. See *Θλίψις*
 Tribunes, 67, 214, 357
 Tribute, Jewish, 48, 62
 Trinity, Holy, 127 f.
 Trodden. See Trample
 "True," 178, 314, 347, 350, 352, 379, 392
 Trumpets: Voice, 132, 224; first, 226; second, 227; third, 229; fourth, 231; fifth, 232; sixth, 239; seventh, 248, 263; player, 345
 "Truth," 130
 Tübingen School, 46
 Turks, 21, 106
 Turn, to, 98, 133
 Turner, C. H., 17
 Twelve: Symbolism, 117; tribes, 218, 293, 294; gates, 382; foundations, 383; names, 383; Apostles, 383; thousand, 384; fruits, 390
 Tyconius, 42
 Tyrant, 15, 53, 88
 Universities, 364
Τρομονή, 131, 140, 157, 175
 Valens, 78
 Valerian, 73, 74, 148, 311, 317
 Van den Biesen, Professor, 131
 Vandals, 79, 80, 153, 331
 Vellum, 119
 Vengeance, 4, 89, 95, 226, 353
 "Versions," 121
 Vespasian, 54, 58
 Vessels, 340
 Vials, 198, 242, 309; pour, 310; first, 311; second, 312; third, 312; fourth, 314; fifth, 316; sixth, 317; seventh, 321
 Victoria, Queen, 171
 Victorinus, 12, 29, 96
 Vineyard, 303
 Violence, 344
 Virgil, 223, 329
 Virgin, 268, 295
 Visigoths, 41, 80, 153, 331
 Visions, 117; repeated, 137; explanation, 241, 244
 Vitellus, 58
 Vitringa, 96
 "Voice": Trumpet, 132; seen, 133, 187; as the sound of many waters, 135, 294, 349; many angels, 199, 232; of thunder, 202, 246, 294, 349; from the throne, 190, 225, 348, 378, 379; the altar, 239; as a lion, 246; seventh angel, 248; from heaven, 246, 248, 259; in heaven, 263, 265, 272; of harpers, 294; loud, 301, 356; great, 310, 321; voices, 321; strong, 335; of musicians, 345; bride, 345; multitudes, 347, 349
 Vomit, 180
 Vulgate, 120 f., 130, 133, 134, 150, 157, 158, 162, 164, 167, 173, 187, 189, 201, 202, 203, 212, 238, 240, 263, 264, 266, 279, 296, 328, 332, 334, 340, 342, 343, 352, 370, 371, 378, 379, 396
 Vultures, 356
 Waddington, 84
 Waldenses, 44
 Walketh, who, 139; in heaven, 388
 Walls, 382, 383, 385
 Wars: Jewish, 12, 54; duration, 247, 252; Roman Civil, 58, 204; make, 256, 276; with the saints, 283
 Warnings to Nazarene Church, 3; Jews, 260; Roman Church, 336
 "Washing" from sin, 128, 221, 396
 Watch, to, 167, 320
 Waters, 135, 229, 230, 255, 275; angel of, 313; sit upon, 324, 332; of life, 380, 389, 398

Τμῖν, 162

- Wealth. See Πλοῦτος
 "Weep," 196, 338, 339, 341, 343
 "Weight," 162
 Westcott, Dr., 114, 121
 Wheat, 205, 340
 White, as snow, 134, 221, 168; cloud, 301; glittering, 350; clean, 354
 "Who is, who was, who is to come," 127, 130; who is like, 281
 Widow, 338
 Wife, 349; of the Lamb, 381
 Wilkinson, Sir J., 194
 Wilderness, 270
 Winds, 215
 Wine (Temple), 205
 Wine, of wrath, 297, 322; of God, 299; press, 303, 353, 355; of prostitution, 324, 335; trade, 340
 Wings, 192; of an army, 237; an eagle, 274
 Wisdom, 92, 200, 221, 292, 328
 "Without spot," 295; the city, 304; heaven, 396
 Witness, faithful, 128, 150 (see *Máprvs*); two, 252 ff., 259 f.
 Woes, 232; first, 239; second, 262; third, 263; to earth, 273; woe, 339, 341, 343
 Woman, the, 267, 269 f., 273, 274, 275; seed of, 276
 Woman; Hair, 237; scarlet, 91, 325, 326, 328, 342; a great city, 334
 Wonder, 280, 305, 326, 327, 328
 Wood, 340
 Wool, 134
 Word, the, 12, 36, 94, 125, 130, 208; my, 172; of testimony, 273; prophecy, 126; fulfilled, 333; true, 350; of God, 353, 364, 392; keep, 394
 Works, 140, 142, 157, 160, 161, 163, 165, 167, 172, 300, 316; Rome's, 337; judged by, 373, 374; lies, 389; render according, 395
 World, kingdom of, 263; whole, 175
 Wormwood, 230
 Worship. See Adoration
 Worthy, 168, 193, 195, 196, 198, 200
 Wound: Head, 280; healed, 280, 287, 289; grievous, 311; their, 316
 Wrath: Their, 215; of the Lamb, 214, 264; of Satan, 273; of God, 305, 309; wine of, 322, 355
 Wretched, 180
 "Write," 133; of past, present and future, 136; to Churches, 139, 145, 149, 155; name of God, 177; not, 246; Blessed, 300, 350; true, 379
 Writing, 118, 119, 137
 Written, 126; within, 195; without, 195; name, 353, 355, 382, 389; this book, 389, 399; not, 375
- Xapts*, 127 f., 400
- Year, for the, 240, 362, 363, 364
 Yod, 92
- Zabulon, 2, 128, 219
 Zealots, 55 f., 231, 235, 260
 Zealous, 182
 Zorobabel, 254

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