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To sum up then the criticism in a word. It seems to me that, to make Dr. Sanday's account of the development of the ministry a complete representation of history, there would be wanted a fuller recognition on his part of the principle of succession, and of the substantial identity of the later Church ministry with the apostolic; or, in other words, there would be wanted more regard for the continuous claim of the ministry from the first in interpreting its *origines*.

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THE NEW THEORY OF THE APOCALYPSE.

AMONG the various theories that have been held, in ancient and in modern times, among orthodox Christians and others, on the subject of the origin and character of the Apocalypse, there is one thing which, until the other day, was not seriously called in question. The book might be the work of the Apostle John, of another St. John, also a faithful disciple of the Lord, or of Cerinthus or some other Judaising heretic; it might date from the reign of Galba, of Vespasian, or of Domitian; it might be a true prophecy of events immediately impending, of the events that will come at the very end of the world, or of all history from one to the other, or, again, it might be a wild fancy destined never to be fulfilled: but that it was the work of one age and of one man was admitted by

out that the claim to represent a prophetic succession (*Euseb.* v. 17), or to restore a former state of things, was (so far as it was made) an afterthought, due to the later desire to get a recognition from the Church. The earlier chapters of the *De Monogamia* will shed a strange light on the desperate character of the claim to be a *restitutio*. There were some heretics who really did make the claim to be the true conservatives. They were the Humanitarians, or Adoptionists, of the third century (*Euseb.* v. 28). The *Little Labyrinth* makes the suggestive rejoinder, "What they said might have been perhaps convincing, if, first of all, the Holy Scriptures had not contradicted them."

all. True it is, that Grotius, and in later times Vogel, Schleiermacher, and Bleek, raised doubts whether the whole was written at one time and on one plan, but they were willing to concede the unity of authorship; and Bleek, who alone among them was likely to have any considerable following, minimised if he did not retract his theory in his latest work on the subject. And yet the form and substance of the book might suggest, that there may well be interpolations in it. It belongs to a class of literature in which interpolation is very frequent, and in which interpolation implies no moral inferiority to the original writer. It is indeed the sole specimen (unless we count the *Shepherd* of Hermas)[1] that has come to us of the group, once probably considerable,[2] of Christian apocalypses. But this group is only one section of the larger class of Jewish apocalypses, of which we have several: indeed, the Christian and non-Christian classes pass into one another. The Second Book of Esdras was in all likelihood originally a purely Jewish work, of a period after Christianity had definitely separated itself from Judaism; but it has been expanded and recast by Christian hands. The *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, on the other hand, has been regarded as the work of a Nazarene or orthodox Jewish Christian; but as soon as the view is suggested, that this also is a Jewish work interpolated by orthodox Christian hands, it becomes almost certain that this is the true explanation of its phenomena. The Apocalypse of Baruch is no doubt a Jewish work, of date later than the fall of Jerusalem; but it seems to show a know-

[1] It has been suggested that the *Shepherd* itself consists of portions of different dates. This view might explain the fact that in it, as in the Apocalypse, internal evidence points to an earlier date than external.

[2] See the Muratorian fragment, where the Apocalypses of John and (more doubtfully) of Peter are singled out as the only ones to be received as genuine or authoritative.

ledge of our Apocalypse.[1] And the much older Book of Enoch, some part at least of which was received as authoritative by Christians in the apostolic age, contains elements differing very widely in style and in value, and, so far as we can judge, in date and in doctrine.

And the position which the Joannine Apocalypse held in the early Christian Church was not very different from that which these apocalypses held both among Jews and among Christians. It was always regarded with reverence; but it was not, till a comparatively late day, received as one of the books of canonical Scripture, which, being the heritage of the universal Church, were incapable of addition or of any but the most inconsiderable local variations.

In the eastern Churches, in fact, the book hardly made its way into the canon till the invention of printing; at least, its literary and textual history stands quite apart from that of the other books. It is rarely included in one volume with them, rarely transcribed for its own sake, as a sacred text, without a commentary. The comparative rarity of copies is, no doubt, to be explained by their not being wanted, as the gospels and epistles were, for liturgical use; but this non-use of the book in liturgies is itself an evidence that it was regarded, even after its genuineness and inspiration were generally admitted, as being on a different footing from the rest of canonical Scripture. Moreover, the obscurity of the textual history of the book (see Westcott and Hort's *New Testament*, "Introduction," §§ 340, 344, seq.) points to the conclusion that its position in and before the fourth century was much the same as in late times; and we may think it likely, that while the Church continued to produce prophetical and other original religious works, there would be less scruple in making alterations in this book than in those whose authority was more unquestioned.

But an objection must be anticipated here. The book as

[1] Compare Baruch vi. 6–vii. 1 with St. John vii. 1.

it stands ends with an emphatic malediction on any one who interpolates or mutilates it: if it be, in any sense or measure, a work of the Spirit of God, that Spirit cannot have sanctioned such interpolation. The Jewish apocalypses with which it is sought to establish a parallel were not, in their original form, the work of the prophets whose names they bore; their later editors or interpolators, when they introduced into them what they judged true and edifying, were only doing what the authors did, with equally pious and no more fraudulent intent. The Revelation of St. John, on the other hand, does profess (truly or falsely) to be a revelation made to its actual author. Unless we take the view that some one fraudulently sought to pass off his work as that of St. John the apostle, we have no reason to doubt that "John," who is described as seeing the visions, did really write the book. Either then he had really seen the visions, or else he was a false prophet who "followed his own spirit, having seen nothing." And if we ask which of these views is likelier, quite apart from the theological question, whether we have here a revelation from the Spirit of God or no, the style and tone of the narrative seem to prove, on merely literary and psychological grounds, that we have here a record of a vision seen, and perhaps in part recorded, in a state of ecstasy. Thus, it will be said, the whole analogy breaks down between the Jewish apocalypses, where the name of the seer and the story of his vision are mere matters of literary form, and the Christian Apocalypse, where the name is either genuine or fraudulent, and the vision is a fact—in a Christian's eyes, a supernatural fact, giving the work a Divine authority.

And it is quite true that the analogy between the Jewish and the Joannine apocalypses does fail here, and that it is impossible to treat the work bearing St. John's name as though it were a member of the same class with those that bear the names Enoch, Esdras, etc. But it will not follow

that Christian reverence or orthodoxy demands that we shall assume the entire unity of the book. Suppose that St. John saw the vision as he describes it, and received in vision (as he says) a Divine command to write what he saw; yet he can hardly have written the whole, as it stands, while the vision was still before him. In fact, i. 9 almost inevitably suggests that the book, as we have it, was written after the seer had left Patmos. Now suppose the Revelation to be written in the same manner that, according to the Muratorian fragment, the gospel was. St. John, having seen the vision at Patmos, sits among his disciples at Ephesus, and records what he had seen, by the same Spirit by which he saw it; he either writes or dictates the inspired words describing the inspired sights. But now, whatever was the case at the moment of the vision, "the spirit of the prophet is subject to the prophet," and "if anything be revealed to another that sitteth by, the first holds his peace." It may therefore happen that there are episodes, visions or comments on the vision, which are not part of what was seen or heard by the original seer, and do not exactly fall into their place with it: though they are similar in tone and form, as having been suggested by it, and identical in doctrine with it, as coming from the same Spirit.

Nor is it quite inconceivable that inspired interpolations, such as we have supposed to be made by a contemporary prophet while St. John was composing the work, might be made also by a later prophet, after St. John had left it complete. Little as we know of the age immediately following St. John's death, we do know that the gift of prophecy was not reckoned to have failed with him; that the Church which rejected the claims of the Montanist prophets and prophetesses did not regard such claims as a mere anachronism, but contrasted their prophecy, on the merits of its method and substance, with the prophecy of

true catholic prophets of the same period or one only just past.[1] It is likely indeed that the inspiration of Ammia, Quadratus, and their contemporaries was of a lower order than that of St. John; but if he was inspired to write a book for the Church's instruction, we have no right to hold it impossible that they may have been inspired to edit and amplify it. And it might be the last prophet, not the first, who stereotypes the book in its final form upon penalty of the Divine curse.

We approach then without theological prejudice the question, Does the Apocalypse, as we have it, show traces of interpolation? are there any passages in it that we see grounds to assign to a date or authorship different from that of the main work? And first of all, we are struck by the fact that the book contains two formally distinct elements: there is the introduction, comprising the first three chapters, and the conclusion, of which the limits are not so clearly marked, but which may be taken to reach from xxii. 6 or 8 to the end; and between these there is the main series of visions. The distinction in form between these however proves nothing; they are as like in style and substance of thought as the difference in form admits of. The two are related to each other as the frame to a picture. Now, if we find a frame and a picture plainly made for one another, we do not say that a painter is not a goldsmith or a wood carver, and that therefore the two cannot be from the same hand; we leave that question open; and it is quite possible that the style of art may be so similar as to prove the picture and frame to have come from one mind, or even from one hand. Nor can we give much weight to the fact that it is only in the introduction and conclusion that we meet with the name John (for its insertion in xxi. 2 there is no authority worth mentioning). It is quite natural that, when recording the supernatural

[1] Eusebius: *H. E.* v. 17.

vision, he should forget himself; in chap. x. only, where his commission and authority is to be mentioned, could his name have been in place. Still we note the fact that it does not appear here or elsewhere, as it does several times in the first and last chapters.

But is the vision, or rather series of visions, extending from iv. 1 to xxii. 5 to be regarded as one continuous and harmonious whole? is this, at least, all certainly the work of one author? Our answer to this will vary, perhaps, according to our judgment on the *bona fides* of the Seer. If he was a mere imaginative writer, freely composing, and not possessed by any higher power than his own genius, we should certainly expect work of so high genius to have more unity of plan than we actually find. But if the vision were really seen in ecstasy, the sort of inconsequence and incompleteness which we find in it becomes intelligible. One may illustrate the action on the Seer's human faculties, even if the power acting on them was superhuman, by what happens to ourselves in dreams, trances, or delirium; we can parallel the differences between the symmetrical descriptions of chaps. i. or iv., v., and the broken utterances of chap. xi., by the difference of style and treatment between the first few lines of Coleridge's *Kubla Khan*, which are as coherent as *Christabel*, and those that follow towards the end of the fragment. The Seer has, no doubt, more self-control and self-possession than an ordinary dreamer; he never makes so near an approach as Coleridge to mere nonsense verse; as a rule, in the midst of his strangest visions, he knows what to look for and what to look at: but it will not surprise us if, now and then,

> "A change comes o'er the spirit of his dream,"

if he loses the thread of the story that he has been telling; if *e.g.* in chap. xi. he seems uncertain whether he *hears* or *sees* the fate of the two witnesses; or if in chap. xii. his

point of view, or the scene of action, seems to fluctuate between earth and heaven.

It is the total disregard of these considerations shown by Dr. Völter that prevents our attaching much weight to his theory—set forth in a little book, *Die Entstehung der Apokalypse*, published in 1882, new edition 1885. He has little difficulty in showing that there are many passages in the Revelation where we might have expected something different from what we find, where it is perhaps likely that a self-possessed writer would have put something different; he shows that there are some where a phrase is used in a different sense from what it bears elsewhere in the book, or that a doctrine is stated in one passage which is not put forward in another, more or less closely parallel. By arguments like these he succeeds, to his own satisfaction, in distinguishing five elements in the book. The first is "the original Apocalypse of the Apostle John, of the year 65 or 66," consisting of i. 4–6, iv. 1–v. 10 (the introductory words being of course modified, part of them being "told off" to i. 9, 10, and the "seven horns and seven eyes" of v. 6 being interpolated); vi. 1–vii. 8 (the last six words of vi. 16 being however an interpolation); viii. 1–ix. 21; xi. 14–19 (*vv.* 15 and 18 having a few words interpolated); xiv. 1–3 (*v.* 1 however running as in the Received Text, not the critical); xiv. 6, 7; xviii. 1–xix. 4; xiv. 14–20; xix. 5–10, the last clause being interpolated. Then comes "the supplement by the original Apocalyptic, of the year 68 or 69," containing only x. 1–xi. 13, xiv. 8, and chap. xvii. (without the reference to chaps. xv., xvi. at the beginning). Then followed three recastings, ascribed to the times of Trajan, Hadrian, and Antoninus Pius respectively.

The arguments by which these dates are supported are, it is not too much to say, of much the same value as those by which the "continuous historical" school of interpreters were able to find any event in history symbolized by any

vision in the Apocalypse. A sober judgment will surely pronounce that, even if a critical method of such "vigour and rigour" as Völter's is anywhere admissible, it is totally out of place in a work like this. Even with books like Enoch and Esdras, that undoubtedly have undergone such successive rehandlings, it is a difficult and precarious task to determine the limits of each, and quite impossible to assign with such precision the dates of all; but the discrepancies of style there are far greater, and original inconsequences much less likely to occur, than in this book. Further, we have to account for the fact that the finished work is so widely circulated within twenty years of the last recension—being known to St. Justin,[1] as well as to the Churches of Gaul, Asia, and Africa in the last quarter of the second century; while all traces of the earlier forms of the work vanish entirely.

Yet, unconvincing as is Völter's method, and inadequate as are most of his arguments, one may feel a certain doubt whether their inadequacy does not unfairly prejudice the value of his conclusions. After all, the Apocalypse has an unquestionable unity of its own; it is (whatever else it is) a sublime work of art, though not of self-conscious art. There is in it a thread of continuity, of steady progress to an end. Episodes that could be detached may nevertheless be original; but there is a presumption that interruptions and contradictions are not. We give here a tabular analysis of the book, drawn up quite irrespective of Völter's or other theories, wherein the essential and the separable parts of the book are set over against one another. (It is, of course, sufficient to confine this analysis to the central portion, from iv. 1 to xxii. 5.)

[1] He refers to the passage on the millennium, which Völter assigns to Trajan's time. Völter tries to show that the passages which he supposes earliest written are the earliest used by other writers; but he does not deny that St. Justin probably, and the Church of Lyons in A.D. 177 certainly, had the whole work before them: only he guesses that St. Justin found Jerusalem designated, more expressly than at present, as the seat of the millennial reign.

Main Narrative.	Episodes, and Possible Interpolations.
iv. 1–v. 14. The Throne of God and of the Lamb is seen in the midst of the host of Heaven.	
vi. 1–17, viii. 1. The Lamb opens the seven seals of the Book (of Life?—cf. xx. 12, xiii. 8, xxi. 27).	vii. 1–3. Between the sixth and seventh seals is a pause, for the sealing of the Servants of God. Though episodical, this can hardly be interpolated; it is relevant after the end of chap. vi., and is presupposed in ix. 4. 9–17. Vision of the Saints in triumph. Seems out of place here, but is analogous to xiv. 1–5, xv. 2–4.
viii. 2–ix. 21, xi. 14–19. Seven trumpets are sounded by Angels.	x. 1–xi. 13. Between the sixth and seventh trumpets is a pause; first, seven thunders utter their (unrecorded) voices, and the Seer receives a new commission; and he then hears foretold the prophecy, martyrdom, and resurrection of God's two Witnesses (Moses and Elias?) at Jerusalem. This seems very long for an episode. In position it is analogous to chap. vii.; but it is felt more decidedly as an interruption. The first part however belongs to this place.
xii. 1–10, 12–17. Was begun in Heaven, and transferred to earth, between the Dragon and the Woman and her Seed.	xii. 11. Somewhat interrupts the context.
xiii. 1–8, 11–18, xiv. 6–11, xviii. 1–xix. 21. War (foretold in chap. xi.?) between the Beast, as the Dragon's vicegerent, and the Saints of God.	xiii. 9, 10. Though occurring at a natural pause of the narrative, belongs to a class of passages that do not seem to belong to their context. xiv. 1–5. Is episodical, but not irrelevant. 12. Is one of the comments out of relation to the context.

Main Narrative (*cont.*).	Episodes, and Possible Interpolations (*cont.*).
	13. Though different in style, seems equally out of relation to the context.
	14–20. Seems inappropriate at this place.
	xv., xvi. Are episodical, but relevant. xvi. 13, and the references in xvii. 1, xxi. 9, seem to show that this belongs to the original plan.
	xvi. 15, on the other hand, is a plain interruption of a continuous narrative.
	xvii. Can be omitted altogether, with some gain to clearness and consistency.
xx. 1–6. Partial and temporary establishment of the Kingdom of the Saints.	
7–10. Rebellion of the Dragon.	
11–15. Divine Judgment by God in person.	(Contrast the Judgment by the Son of Man in xiv. 14–17.)
xxi. 1–xxii. 5. Final and universal establishment of the Kingdom of God and Christ.	

We observe some coincidences here between this scheme and Völter's; that is, some of the passages here set aside as unessential to the main work are what he has marked as late interpolations, or as altered or misplaced by later editors. But before discussing the degree of probability that this coincidence may give to suspicions, it may be well to state and examine a theory, still more recent than Völter's, still more startling in its novelty, but whether sound or not, a great deal simpler and more plausible.

In June, 1885, Professor Harnack gave as a subject for a vacation exercise "the theological position of the author of the Apocalypse." Herr Eberhard Vischer, a student to whom this task was assigned, told him that "he had found

no solution but to explain the book as a Jewish apocalypse, with Christian interpolations, and set in a Christian frame." Dr. Harnack felt, as any one else would, an impulse to suppress the audacious undergraduate; but on reflection, he says, he found that "there fell as it were scales from his eyes": and he encouraged Herr Vischer to publish his views, giving the work the sanction of his own name, and a postscript by his own hand.

The "Christian setting" or "frame," on this view, is what we have already designated by the same image—the first three chapters and the last sixteen verses. And the "Christian interpolations" that it is necessary to assume are really remarkably few, and, with one great exception, such as can easily be dispensed with. Chap. vii. 9–17 is a passage that every one feels to come too soon in the narrative; "they who came out of the great tribulation" are shown in triumph, before the tribulation itself had been seen. The same may apply, in a less degree, to xiv. 1–5. Also xix. 9, 10 and xxii. 8, 9 might be thought not both to be original. Then xii. 11, xiii. 9, 10, xiv. 12, 13, xvi. 15—the last most of all—are manifest interruptions to their context, and cannot belong to the main plan of the work. The only question is, whether they are not *too* irrelevant ever to have been interpolated in cold blood—whether we ought not rather to suppose, that while the original prophet was writing or dictating, either he or another prophet present hears these Divine words, and they are written down when they are heard; having more or less of a spiritual, though no logical, connexion with what comes before and after them.

Nor will any one quarrel with Vischer for marking as interpolated the gloss giving the Greek name in ix. 11, and the word *Ἑβραιστί* in xvi. 16. His theory is, that the original Jewish work was written in Hebrew, and that the Christian redactor of the enlarged work was the translator of the older part. Thus he attempts, whether successfully

or no, to account for the unity of style; unlike Völter, who leaves altogether unanswered this obvious objection to his theory. And the suggestion has a bearing on one important point on which Vischer is silent; *viz.* the relation between the language of the Apocalypse and that of the fourth gospel. The difference between the two is hardly greater than that between the prologue of the Son of Sirach and the main body of his book.

A more serious question arises on vi. 16, xi. 15, xx. 6, xxii. 3, with which may be connected xxi. 22, 23, xxii. 1, and perhaps xiv. 10, xv. 3. In the seven first cited passages, we have the names of God and Christ (under that title as an equivalent) coupled together as co-ordinate: in the first four of them, the mention of the two names is followed by a singular verb or pronoun. Either then the Seer not only regarded Christ as the co-equal Son of God, but held in its fullest sense the doctrine that "He and His Father are one," or else we have dogmatic grounds in all these passages, and grammatical grounds in the first group, for regarding the name of "Christ" or "the Lamb" as an interpolation. Of course we cannot discuss so wide a question here, only we must allow to those who take the latter view that the same argument will apply, if at all, against the original authenticity of v. 9–14, though the purely literary difficulty of supposing the climax of that glorious passage to be an interpolation is surely very great.

There remain a few other distinctively Christian passages, which Vischer is constrained to treat as interpolations: the name in xii. 17; one clause in xvii. 6; xvii. 14; three words in xviii. 20; a clause or two in xix. 11, 13; something more in xx. 4, 5; the last words in xxi. 9; and the last clause in xxi. 14. If the theory were accepted on other grounds, no one would find the rejection of these so difficult as to form a fatal objection to it.

But it is surely otherwise, when Vischer is constrained

to eliminate the name of the Lamb from the whole Apocalypse. Here he confesses that it is impossible, by the simple excision of a word or a phrase, to reduce the fifth chapter to what a Jew could have written; but he suggests that the part borne in the Christian Apocalypse by the Lamb may have been taken in the Jewish by "the Lion of the tribe of Judah." Harnack, still more strangely, suggests that in v. 6 the Opener of the seals was described simply as "one standing," presumably of a human figure.

Surely it is a strong objection to either of these views, that either the Man or the Lion "having seven horns and seven eyes" would be a grotesque figure, shocking to our natural reverence. But further, even if we suppose that the Opener of the seals was not originally "the Lamb standing as it had been slain"—*i.e.* the sacrificed but living Redeemer of Christian faith—still have we eliminated all that is distinctively Christian from His figure? If not the Christ of the gospel, who is He? Is He the Jewish Messiah? But He is (as we shall see) not born till chap. xii. He must therefore be the *pre-existent* Messiah, who surely is indistinguishable from the Christ of Christian, even of Joannine or catholic, belief.

This is really the weak point in Vischer's theory; its strong point is what we have just had occasion to allude to—that it explains chap. xii. of the birth of the Messiah, regarded, from a Jewish point of view, as yet future. No one doubts that, in chap. xi. and in chap. xiii. the Seer is describing, in a symbolic form, events which he means to foretell as impending, though very likely he saw the beginnings of them in the present. It is certainly hard to suppose that, between these visions of the future, an event is symbolically represented which was already some seventy years in the past, and of which the Seer and his readers were accustomed to think and speak, under no veil, but with "great plainness of speech." This is a real difficulty

to any Christian interpretation of the book, on the hypothesis of its unity. But once admit that the book, or at least this chapter, is Jewish, and all is clear. The writer foretells that the Daughter of Zion will give birth to the Messiah, that He will be caught away to God's presence, and that He will reappear (chap. xix.) at the head of the hosts of heaven, to overthrow the enemies of Israel.

It is more doubtful whether chap. xi. is, as Vischer thinks, equally easy to explain as a Jewish work, and equally hard to Christianize. The view is not peculiar to him, that the early verses of this chapter mean that, in the Roman siege of Jerusalem, the city would be taken, and even the outer court of the Temple profaned; but that nevertheless the inmost sanctuary, the altar before it, and the worshippers in the inner court, would remain inviolate. But though this has become a commonplace with the dominant modern school of interpreters, it surely is really so absurd, that we ought to hesitate to fasten the responsibility of it upon a man so highly endowed as our Seer was, even if not divinely inspired.

It is indeed credible enough, from the Jewish or perhaps the Judæo-Christian point of view, that when the LORD had chastened the sins of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem by allowing the heathen to cut them short, even to their last refuge, yet He would be "a wall of fire round about" to His Temple and to the remnant of His faithful ones. It is even said that, in the last crisis of the capture of the Temple, the fanaticism of its defenders was animated by an expectation of this sort. But was it credible, to a fanatic or to any one, that the Divine Captain of the host of Israel would confine Himself to a purely passive defence —that instead of breaking forth upon the ungodly, He would let them trample down the holy city for forty-two months, while the saints were cooped up in the inmost courts of the Temple? How, on this view, are the true worshippers to

be fed? and whence are they to find sacrifices for their worship? Surely it is more reasonable to suppose that the Temple which remains inviolable is the heavenly Temple, not the earthly, even though we are obliged to confess some uncertainty as to what is meant by the different fate of the outer court. We may even ask, if it is absolutely certain that what is said means that the outer court is to be profaned and the sanctuary protected. Zechariah ii. 4 (8, *Heb.*) rather suggests that the non-measurement may imply a boundlessness of blessing; and in 2 Samuel viii. 2, 2 Kings xxi. 13, Isaiah xxxiv. 11, Lamentations ii. 8, measurement is for destruction, not for preservation. While the Temple stood in its glory, the outer court was, in one sense, "given to the Gentiles"; it served to make the house of the Lord "a house of prayer for all nations." A Christian of the fourth, fifth, or twelfth century would have said that the destruction of the Jewish Temple made room for such a world-wide worship on its site; a very tolerant theist might add, that it has been the seat of a worship of God open to all nations in every age, from Constantine's days, if not from Hadrian's, to our own.

Thus after all, it seems that Vischer's hypothesis fails to make the book as a whole intelligible, since it can give no clear account of its Protagonist, who (in its present shape) bears the person of the Lamb. It is a poor set off to this, that it does make more intelligible the position of the one vision in chap. xii. Christians have not, after all, felt any insuperable difficulty in understanding this vision of the birth of *their* Christ; nor is there wanting a reason why His figure should be introduced just here. Here is to begin the *description* of "the great tribulation," which has been *foretold* in chaps. vii. and xi.; here then is the place where it is necessary to trace to its source the enmity between the dragon, the source of the persecuting spirit, and the people of God. It is the outcome of the ancient enmity

between the old serpent and the seed of the woman; the dragon has to be fought and overcome, first by the second Adam, who called Himself the Son of man, and then by those whom He is not ashamed to call brethren. His nativity is mentioned, to bring out the fact of His brotherhood with them—not without reference to the fact that He was actually persecuted from the very hour of His birth.

And there is another more general objection to Vischer's view. He rightly starts by pointing out that the Jewish and Christianized Jewish apocalypses have undergone successive recensions—some of them, it is likely enough, in the hands of translators; and he says that he supposes this Christianized Jewish Apocalypse to have gone through the same process. But those Jewish apocalypses have kept their original Jewish names. If this Jewish Apocalypse bore originally the name of an Old Testament worthy, and "John," in describing the vision with Christianizing additions, substituted his own name for the original one as that of the Seer, then we have a phenomenon absolutely unique. It perhaps is as well not to press the argument that it is a phenomenon hardly consistent with good faith; but we may say that, while St. John may have supposed this Jewish Apocalypse to be of Divine authority, as St. Jude seems to have thought the Book of Enoch,[1] it is for that very reason incredible that he should have erased the name that commended its authority to him.

Still, if we reject Völter's theory as altogether arbitrary, and Vischer's as raising more difficulties than it removes, we may still thank them for having suggested the question, whether the history and perhaps the interpretation of the book may not become clearer when we cease to assume its unity. In particular, there is a remarkable conflict between

[1] Perhaps, in fact, the Book of Enoch is used by the Seer himself. For this see Völter, *op. cit.*, pp. 113, 114.

external and internal evidence as to the date. A plausible if not absolutely convincing interpretation of chap. xvii.[1] points to the date A.D. 68–70. St. Irenæus is or ought to be a very trustworthy witness, when he tells us that the vision "was seen almost in our own days, at the end of the reign of Domitian." What if chap. xvii. was a vision really seen (by St. John or some one else) in Nero's time, and incorporated by him or by a contemporary or later editor[2] in the Revelation, the main part of which was seen or recorded under Domitian? The scarlet beast of chap. xvii., used as a beast of burden, though a similar, is not an identical image with the leopard-like beast of chap. xiii. and the main narrative that follows, who tyrannises over the whole world, and has its kings and their armies at his command. Again, the destruction of Babylon by the ten kings, in chap. xvii., seems a different conception from her destruction by an immediate Divine judgment, which seems implied in chap. xviii.[3] It seems an hypothesis worth examining, whether vii. 9–17, xi. 1–13, xiv. 14–20, xvii., are not originally independent visions,—visions however of the same Seer as the rest, or of the same prophetic school, and some or all of which (see chap. xvii. 1) may actually have been seen as part of the principal vision, memory passing into sight; just as some of his visions were undoubtedly

[1] Völter shows that the Hebrew letters of *Trajanus Adrianus* add up to 666 (with a variant 616), at least as accurately as those of *Nero Cæsar*.

[2] Rev. i. 1–3 look like an editor's gloss (but an authoritative editor's), closely analogous to xix. 35, xxi. 24, 25, in St. John's Gospel.

[3] It does not follow that, if the two prophecies are scarcely consistent in their imagery, the event will not be a fulfilment of both. Two of the happiest suggestions in apocalyptic interpretation are that of St. Hippolytus, that the monarchies into which the Roman empire is divided will turn into democracies; and St. Benedict's, that Rome will be destroyed, not by the nations, but by natural convulsions. When these interpretations of prophecy were proposed, there were no visible signs of the fulfilment of either: but the last ninety years have seen something more than a beginning of the fulfilment of the former; and for the latter, we know, as St. Benedict did not, that Rome stands as Pompeii did, on volcanic soil, within a few miles of volcanoes now extinct—for the present.

suggested by those of other seers recorded in the O.T. If so, we may believe that it is not without cause that these passages, and such parentheses as xvi. 15, etc., come in where they do; but in interpreting the book as a whole we may set them aside. They bear each their own meaning, which is usually plain enough; but they do not advance the story, or elucidate the meaning of the rest.

W. H. SIMCOX.

THE EPISTLE TO PHILEMON.

III.

"Wherefore, though I have all boldness in Christ to enjoin thee that which is befitting, yet for love's sake I rather beseech, being such a one as Paul the aged, and now a prisoner also of Christ Jesus: I beseech thee for my child, whom I have begotten in my bonds, Onesimus, who was aforetime unprofitable to thee, but now is profitable to thee and to me."—PHILEM. 8–11 (Rev. Ver.).

AFTER honest and affectionate praise of Philemon, the Apostle now approaches the main purpose of his letter. But even now he does not blurt it out at once. He probably anticipated that his friend was justly angry with his runaway slave, and therefore, in these verses, he touches a kind of prelude to his request with what we should call the finest tact, if it were not so manifestly the unconscious product of simple good feeling. Even by the end of them he has not ventured to say what he wishes done, though he has ventured to introduce the obnoxious name. So much persuading and sanctified ingenuity does it sometimes take to induce good men to do plain duties which may be unwelcome.

These verses not only present a model for efforts to lead men in right paths, but they unveil the very spirit of Christianity in their pleadings. Paul's persuasives to Philemon are echoes of Christ's persuasives to Paul. He had learned his method from his Master, and had himself experienced