

# Theology on the Web.org.uk

*Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible*

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



**PATREON**

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

**PayPal**

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

---

A table of contents for *The Expositor* can be found here:

[https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles\\_expositor-series-1.php](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_expositor-series-1.php)

THE NERONIC DATE OF THE APOCALYPSE  
UNTENABLE.

AMONG competent judges the difference on this subject lies between two periods: *the reign of Nero*, and shortly before the destruction of Jerusalem, about A.D. 68; or *the reign of Domitian*, and shortly before his death, about A.D. 95 or 96.

Of *external evidence* for the former date there is absolutely none. In fact, this date was never heard of till the sixth century, and even then only in the superscription to a Syriac version of the book supposed to be of that date. After that we hear nothing of it till, in the twelfth century, we find Theophylact assigning it to the reign of Nero.

But what says ecclesiastical history to the later date? The great witness, as he is the primary one, is IRENÆUS, bishop of Lyons A.D. 177 to *circa* 202. To Gaul he came from Asia Minor, where he tells us he was a hearer of Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna and disciple of the Apostle John. In his great work *Against Heresies*, we find him discussing the two readings of "the number of the beast" (Rev. xiii. 18) whether in the original text it was 666 or 616. He says that in all the approved and ancient copies (*ἐν πᾶσι ταῖς σπουδαίαις καὶ ἀρχαίαις ἀντιγράφαις*) the reading was 666, and that this reading was attested by those who had seen John face to face (*καὶ μαρτυροῦντων αὐτῶν ἐκείνων τῶν κατ' ὄψιν τὸν Ἰωάννην ἑωρακάτων*). The importance attached to this reading lay in the belief that this number enigmatically pointed to the expected antichrist, whose name (he says) he will not speak of confidently, "because had it been necessary to name him at the present time, it would have been declared by him who saw the Revelation; nor was it long since it had been seen, but almost in our own generation (*οὐδὲ γὰρ πολλοῦ χρόνου ἑώραθη ἀλλὰ σχεδὸν ἐπὶ τῆς ἡμέτερας γενεᾶς*), about the end of Domitian's reign."

This very important statement is twice quoted *verbatim* by Eusebius (*H. E.* iii. 18 and v. 8), and the value of it is so felt by the advocates of the early date, that they make every effort to break it down; while all subsequent testimony is regarded as but an echo of this one, and therefore of no value. We must weigh it then, and all the more because the *date* of the book has an important bearing on the interpretation of it.

Observe, then, that Irenæus "saw and heard" Polycarp in his youth, or early manhood (*ἐν τῇ πρώτῃ ἡμῶν ἡλικίᾳ*, iii. 4); and he so describes him as to shew what a deep impression that venerable Father had made upon him—an impression of his person as well as his teaching—as may be gathered from a remarkable passage in his "Letter to Florinus." He is there reasoning against certain heresies, and he appeals to the testimony of Polycarp, whose disciples Florinus and he had been. "For I saw thee while I was yet a youth (*παῖς ὢν ἐτί*) in Asia Minor with Polycarp. For impressions made in youth are better remembered than those made quite recently. For what we have been in our youth grows with our spirit, and gets incorporated with it, insomuch that I could even tell the place where the blessed Polycarp sat when discoursing, his exits and entrances, his manner of life and the appearance of his person, his addresses to the people, and his familiarity with John and others who had seen the Lord, which he related to us, and their sayings which he reported."<sup>1</sup>

May I not appeal to those who will candidly weigh these statements, whether they do not shew that Irenæus was speaking *from knowledge* of the fact, when he says that the Revelation was seen not long since, but almost in his own generation, near the close of Domitian's reign?

Coming next to the *internal* evidence for the Neronic

<sup>1</sup> *Irenæi Opp.*, ed. Stieren, 1883 (pp. 822, 823).

date—for it has nothing else to rest on—let us see what the book itself has to say to the question.

1. In the first, the introductory chapter, the seer tells us how, when in the rocky isle of Patmos, in the Ægean Sea, banished there “for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ,” he was “in the Spirit on *the Lord’s day*.” Observe the testimony to the late date of this book which crops out, quite incidentally, at the very outset. Up to the date of the last of the Pauline Epistles, the only name for this day current among the Christians was “the first day of the week.” Now, since (according to Jerome) the Apostle Paul was beheaded in the 14th year of Nero’s reign (A.D. 68), it must have been after that, and probably some years after, ere this most appropriate abbreviation came into such *established* use as is implied here. And if this is true, it disposes at once of the Neronic date.

2. The glaring difference between the Greek of the Apocalypse and that of the Fourth Gospel has led one class of critics to believe that both works cannot have come from the same author; while others (believing critics), holding that both came from the pen of the Apostle John, explain the peculiar style of Greek in which the Apocalypse is written by its early (Neronic) date, when the apostle was less familiar with the use of the language than when he wrote his Gospel. This is Dr. Westcott’s view. But is this the only way of accounting for the *solecisms* of the Apocalypse? Startling they certainly are, both in their number and in their harshness; but that they are no proof of the writer’s inability to write good Greek is freely admitted, and indeed is evident from his accuracy in other places. The only question then is, Must we explain it by his immaturity in the use of the Greek language? If so, you will have to explain how this immaturity does not shew itself from beginning to end. And what is harder still, you will have to shew how so raw a hand, as you

suppose the writer to be, was able to *coin* such compound words as *ποταμοφόρητος* (xii. 15), "river-borne" ("carried away by the stream," R.V.); and *μεσουρανήμα* (xiv. 6), "mid-heaven," found only in one medical writer of about the third century; and *χαλκολίβανον* (i. 15, ii. 18) "burnished brass" (R.V.). This kind of coinage seems to me to put an end to the theory of unfamiliarity with the use of the language, and, so far as that is concerned, to the necessity of an early date to the Apocalypse.

How else the solecisms are to be accounted for, I pretend not to explain. But I may be pardoned for throwing out this conjecture. Suppose the seer, being "in the Spirit," and writing under this inspiration, should find that in the rapid flow of his words these abnormal forms had dropped unsought from his pen, half dithyrambically, but on observing this, had thought it right to leave them uncorrected, is there anything incredible or improbable in this? Be this however as it may, if it is not to be traced to ignorance of the language, it has no bearing on the date of the book.

But, it may be said, it is not on the solecisms of the book only that we rest; the whole *style* of Greek used here differs from that of the Fourth Gospel. True enough, but why? Not because of any difference of *date*, but because the *subject-matter* required a totally different style of writing. Every one knows the difference between prose and poetry. Poets studiously avoid ordinary, familiar forms of expression, and in the choice of words and phrases they go out of their way to find whatever is rare, startling, figurative. Now the prophetic style, while it has all these characteristics of real poetry, has a boldness and intensity peculiar to itself. Dealing, as it does with the unseen, the celestial and infernal, the transporting and the terrifying, with what stirs the soul as earthly things cannot, it rises to heights and sinks to depths of its own. And if this is

to be seen in all Hebrew prophecy, in the Apocalypse it stands out unrivalled.

As to the avoidance of familiar words and phrases, let any one, with his Greek Testament in hand, observe the number of uncommon words and phrases, *evidently selected as such*, in the Apocalypse, and he will be convinced, I think, that not any difference of date will explain this, but that it is due rather to the prophetic *character of the subject-matter*. One illustration of this, which strikes me while I write, I may here give. The unusual word *ρομφαία* for a "sword" is used in the Apocalypse sixteen times, but nowhere else in the New Testament, save once, and that in a *prophetic utterance*, Luke ii. 35.

As specimens of the prophetic style in the Old Testament prophets, let any one compare Isaiah xiii., xiv. with the *prose* of the same Isaiah; or the *δεινότης* of Ezekiel xxvii., xxviii. with the *prose* of the same Ezekiel in such places as xxiii. 21, 22; or our Lord's own style in His terrific denunciations of the "scribes and pharisees, hypocrites," in Matthew xxiii. 13 to end, and the style of His prophecy of Jerusalem in Matthew xxiv. or Luke xxi., when compared with the inimitable prose of His parting address to the Eleven at the supper table, and the high-priestly prayer with which it closes—

"O, it came o'er my ear like the sweet south  
That breathes upon a bank of violets,  
Stealing, and giving odour;"—

and he will not doubt, I think, that it was the *subject-matter* that gave birth to the *style* of the Apocalypse. In fact, every good writer's style varies with what he writes about. And if proof were wanting that the apocalyptic seer was no stranger to this ability, we need only refer to the pure *prose* of the Epistles to the seven Churches (chap. ii., iii.), in the very midst of which two of the solecisms occur.

3. If the following features of the Apocalypse have any truth in them, the advocates of the *late* date of that book entirely misunderstand it. And as the quarter from which the statement of them comes is entitled to great deference, I must examine it in detail. It is thus expressed by Dr. Westcott, in the Introduction to his great work on the *Gospel of St. John* :

“The Apocalypse is doctrinally the uniting link between the Synoptists and the Fourth Gospel. It offers the characteristic thoughts of the Fourth Gospel in that form of development which belongs to the earliest apostolic age. It belongs to different historical circumstances, to a different phase of intellectual progress, to a different theological stage, from that of St. John’s Gospel; and yet it is not only harmonious with it in teaching, but in the order of thought it is the necessary germ out of which the Gospel proceeded by a process of life.”<sup>1</sup>

With submission, I venture to say, that there is no such relation between the Apocalypse and the Fourth Gospel as is here described. Harmonious indeed they are in their teaching, but the one is in no sense the germ of the other. The truths common to both are presented historically in the one book, in the other scenically. In the Gospel they appear in their abstract, settled, enduring form, unaffected alike by time and by circumstances; in the Apocalypse they appear in the concrete form, taking their shape from definite circumstances and specific occasions. In the one case, the interest they possess lies wholly in what is of eternal moment; in the other case, it lies in the changing forms which the great struggle between the organized kingdoms of light and of darkness assumes in successive ages. With what propriety, then, can it be said that the one is the necessary germ out of which the other proceeds, that the one represents an earlier stage in the development of the same characteristics as the other? In this respect I venture to think that they admit of no comparison.

<sup>1</sup> *Gospel of St. John*, “Introd.,” p. lxxxiv. (Murray, 1882.)

There is however a true, a most important sense in which the truths common to both books appear in a less developed form in the one book than in the other. But it is not in the Apocalypse, but in the Fourth Gospel that that less developed form appears. In that latest Gospel the developed results of God's redeeming love and of Christ's finished work could not possibly appear. But in the Apocalypse they stand out in a form so naked, so rich, so thrilling, as to endear that book to thousands who never attempt to sound the depths of its prophetic mysteries. "*I have many things to say unto you,*" were among the last words which the Master addressed to the Eleven before He suffered, "*but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He shall guide you into all the truth: for He shall not speak from Himself; but what things soever He shall hear, these shall He speak: and He shall declare unto you the things that are to come. He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of Mine, and shall declare it unto you. All things whatsoever the Father hath are Mine: therefore said I, that He taketh of Mine, and shall declare it unto you.*" The best commentary on these words is, first of all, the Acts of the Apostles, from beginning to end; and yet, even there, we find ourselves only in the vestibule of the temple of "the Spirit of truth." Only after the disciples had been formed into Churches, needing further instruction by the precious Epistles written to them, do we see how the Spirit had "guided them into all the truth," making them "able to comprehend what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, and be filled with all the fulness of God." So long as the Master was with them, the very language in which such things are expressed in the Epistles would have been unintelligible. But once ascended on high, and the Holy Ghost resting on the Church, the apostles could say to the Churches they had

gathered, and the Churches could understand them when they said, "In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace"; and so, in every varied form, in all the Epistles. But the Apocalypse lifts us to even a higher region, giving forth the same truths in strains so exalted as almost to dim the brightness of them everywhere else. There the veil seems to be lifted, and we are ushered into the midst of things invisible and inaudible, with eyes to see and ears to hear. What is elsewhere simply *announced* is here *enacted*; what elsewhere is *said* is here *sung*, sweeping upon the ear in strains celestial. "We love Him (says the beloved disciple), because He first loved us,"—words which will never die upon the lips of any that has ever felt it. But here he rises even above himself, bursting out into song. "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father, to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." In the Epistle to the Hebrews we read, "To them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation." Delightful prose, indeed; but as if that were too tame, here we seem to see Himself darting through these heavens, to the view of every eye: "Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him."

But do I see evidence in this of a later *date* for the Apocalypse? So far from that, I believe that his Gospel, his Epistles, and the Apocalypse were all written by the last of the apostles in his old age. But instead of its being "doctrinally the uniting link between the Synoptists and the Fourth Gospel," "the necessary germ out of which by a process of life the Fourth Gospel proceeded" (a view of the subject very wide of the mark, as I humbly think), it is in my view simply the same truths, which in their ripest

stage and fullest development appear in the Epistles, lifted up (in the entrancing effect which they produce upon the heart) to the third heaven.

How true this is, grows upon one the farther he advances in the study of the book. When we come to the strictly prophetic part of it, we have at the outset a grand introductory vision in two parts: in the first part (chap. iv.) of God as *Creator*; in the second (chap. v.) of Christ as *Redeemer*; in both cases however it is in a language of its own, the significance of which is such that it seems, by its symbols and scenic actions, to compress within a nutshell all that is grandest and richest in every other part of Scripture. In the first part we have "Him that sitteth upon the throne," in whose ears day and night is heard the cry, from one class, of "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and which is, and which is to come," and from another, "Worthy art Thou, our Lord and our God, to receive the glory and the honour and the power: for Thou didst create all things, and because of Thy good will they were, and were created." This is the Hymn of *creation*. Now for *redemption*. In the right hand of Him that sat on the throne is seen a book (the book of the Church's fortunes). A challenge is addressed in a loud voice to all creation, for one worthy to open it and reveal its contents, if such could be found. But none answering, the seer weeps much, as if the case were desperate. But he is soon relieved with an assurance which can only be expressed in the angelic language, "Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath conquered" (*ἐνίκησεν*) the right "to open and loose" the seals of this mysterious book. Whereupon, "in the midst of the throne, and in the midst of the living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, I saw a LAMB standing, *as though it had been slain* (in the eternal freshness, the all-atoning virtue, of His precious blood), having seven horns and seven eyes,

which are the seven Spirits of God, sent forth into all the earth" (the omnipotence and omniscience of the Spirit in the hands of the enthroned Lamb over the whole earth, to conquer for Himself His inheritance, the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession). This done, the whole ransomed Church (in its twofold character of priests and kings, "the living creatures and the elders"), with their harps and the sweet incense of their deepest emotions, sang that "new song" which will never grow old, "Thou art worthy to take the book and loose its seals: for Thou wast slain, and didst purchase us with Thy blood out of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation; and madest them to be unto our God kings and priests: and they do reign (or shall reign) upon the earth," that earth which the fall sold into the hands of the usurper, now cast out. The angels then join in the chorus, but one note is now left out. "Worthy is the Lamb that hath been slain" (not now "for us"); and this is at length taken up by the whole creation, in a fourfold ascription of "blessing, and honour, and glory, and power to Him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb, for ever and ever"—thus clasping both parts of this incomparable vision in one, while the Church says the "Amen" to "Him that liveth for ever and ever."

But what bearing, it may be asked, has this upon the question of *date*? To me it suggests this question: Is it natural to suppose that a book presenting the most exalted conceptions of the glory and majesty of the Eternal, with the ripest and richest expressions of the Person and work of Christ, and both these breaking upon our ear in strains of celestial music, was written so much earlier than the Fourth Gospel that "it belongs to the earliest apostolic age"? For myself, I cannot believe it.

But this becomes more difficult to believe as we advance in the visions of the book. We have seen how the two

central Objects, "GOD and THE LAMB," stand out together in the great introductory vision. In chap. vii. the seer beholds "standing before the throne, and before the Lamb, a great multitude which no man could number, out of every nation, and of all tribes, and peoples, and tongues, arrayed in white robes, and palms in their hands, and crying with a loud voice, Salvation unto our God, which sitteth on the throne (the *Source* of it), and unto the Lamb (the mediatorial *Channel* of it)"; while round about them stood all the angels, who fall on their faces, and worship Him that liveth for ever and ever. But what is the secret of those "white robes" and their right to "stand" before the throne, since from the very face of Him that sitteth upon it "the earth and the heaven fled away" at the last judgment, "and there was found no place for them"? They had come out of the great tribulation, and had "*washed their robes, and made them white, in the blood of the Lamb.* Therefore are they before the throne of God," etc. Does such language read as if it "belonged to the earliest apostolic age"? That is not my reading of the New Testament.

A word on the surpassing strains of the two last chapters. When one reads in the *Pilgrim's Progress*, how, when winding up his immortal allegory, the author's language sounds like the music of heaven, he is ready to say, Was ever such a finish given to any story? But whence did he draw his inspiration? From this book; but for whose closing chapters—fit close to the inspired volume itself—we are safe to say such language could never have been penned. Yet this, we are to believe, "belongs to the earliest apostolic age"!

These however are but great generalities. To me there are certain specific characteristics of this book which speak for anything but an *early* date.

1. The Church of God under the old dispensation was

one undivided whole, existing only in "the Lord's land," and its central seat was on Mount Zion, in the Tabernacle and Temple. Accordingly the golden candlestick, or lamp-stand, was *one*, and the seven branches of it, when all lighted up, gave light to the whole interior. But in the Apocalypse, at the very outset, the seer beheld, not one, but "*seven golden candlesticks*" or lamp-stands; and as these represented the seven distinct Churches, there is here announced a complete ecclesiastical revolution—the Church of God, in its external framework, no longer one, but broken up into sections corresponding with the geographical divisions of its members. Our Lord gives a very distinct intimation that such a division of "His sheep" was at hand. Speaking of His true disciples, who at that time were all Jews, He says: "I lay down My life for the sheep. And *other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice; and they shall become one flock and one Shepherd*" (John x. 16). The A.V. by translating "*one fold*," expresses the precise theory of the Church of Rome, that the whole Church of Christ should be within one pale. But since the seven Churches of Asia were in all outward respects as distinct from one another in their corporate existence and internal condition as were the localities in which they were placed, so we must hold the teaching of the Apocalypse to be, that the Church of Christ is intended to consist of as many distinct and independent branches as the different localities (or perhaps impossible combinations) in which they find themselves.

That such a conception could not have found a place in a book written "in the earliest apostolic age," and in so distracted a time as on the eve of the destruction of Jerusalem, I do not say. But in my judgment it clearly belongs more naturally to a later stage and a more settled state of things in the development of the Church of Christ. But this brings me to the Epistles to the seven Churches.

2. I am not disposed to make too much of the degenerate character of some of these seven Churches, especially of the last one, Laodicæa, as an evidence of the *late* date at which they must have been written. But taken along with other arguments in the same direction, this degeneracy is certainly noteworthy. Take the first of these Epistles, to *Ephesus*. Three years or more after this Church sprang up, in a city steeped in a gorgeous and witching idolatry, its spiritual father addressed them through its assembled elders at Miletus (Acts xx.); but though he had to warn them against an influx of self-seeking teachers, and false brethren among themselves, the Epistle which he wrote to them about four years after that, so far from shewing that they had sensibly declined, teems with evidence implying rather a steady condition. But when the Master addresses this Church in the Apocalypse—within four or five years' only after that, if the Neronic date is adopted—it had so sunk that, should it not repent, the removal of its candlestick, or its extinction as a Church, would follow. The Church of *Sardis* “had a name to live”—a reputation among the churches for being full of spiritual life—“but was dead”: the life they had having died down, and they were living upon their reputation. The white raiment given them at their conversion (cf. Zech. iii. 4) had been so ill kept that but “a few names” could be found who “had not defiled” them. As for the *Laodicæans'* condition, it was so loathsome in the pure eye of its exalted Lord, that He likens it to food which one is fain to vomit up. Does this look like Churches only a few years in existence?

3. THE LAMB, as a proper name, is never applied to Christ by any New Testament writer save John, and even by him nowhere in his Gospel nor in his Epistles. For though it occurs twice in his Gospel, he is there reporting an exclamation of the Baptist (John i. 29, 36). But when we come to the Apocalypse, we find it no fewer than *twenty-*

eight times. In fact, the constant recurrence of this remarkable epithet is a special characteristic of the book; and if the reader will refer back to the remarks on this phrase as it occurs in chap. v. (p. 280) he will come, I think, to this conclusion: that while it presents the great central truth of the atonement in no more fully developed form than in the Pauline and Petrine Epistles, it is a form which, if it had struck upon the ear of the Church in the time of these apostles, it would have become the *current coin* of its phraseology—one of those household words which could not fail to crop out here and there, if only for variety, in their writings. But since we find it nowhere but in this book, it is to me no slight evidence that it was not in existence in their day.

4. "*The books of life*" is a phrase used only once elsewhere in the New Testament (Phil. iv.) as a record of *names*, the names of the righteous, which God is supposed to keep; we find it as early as the days of Moses (Exod. xxxii. 32). The psalmist catches it up (Ps. lxix. 28; cxxxix. 16). In Malachi (iii. 16) it is said, of a time of deep religious declension, that "a book of remembrance was written before Him, for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon His name." But in Daniel, *the apocalyptic book of the Old Testament*, besides occurring in the definite form, "the book" (xii. 1), we have the phrase in a quite distinct form—that of "*books*" in the plural number. The scene in which it occurs is a scene of "the last judgment"; but it is not of individual *men*, but of *nations* in their corporate capacity, and therefore *here on earth*. It is the judgment of the four kingdoms previously specified, the oppressors of the Church, together with one terrible form of the fourth one. "Thrones" of judgment being "placed, One that was the "Ancient of days did sit" for judgment in terrible majesty, surrounded by myriads of angels; the judgment was set, "and THE BOOKS were opened." This

was no record of *names*, but of the *deeds* of those kingdoms for which they were to be condemned, and their kingdoms were to give place to that of the "Son of man," whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom. Now observe how this double conception of "the *book*" (of names) and "the *books*" (of deeds) is taken up in our New Testament Apocalypse. Four times it comes before us; but I begin with the place where they both appear in a very definite and most wary form (chap. xx. 11, 12, 15). "And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat upon it, from whose face the earth and heaven fled away, and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne; and *books* were opened, and *another book* was opened, which is *the book of life*: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in *the books*, according to their works. . . . And if any one was not written in the book, he was cast into the lake of fire." The sublime idea conveyed by this artistic distinction between "the book" and "the books" is that the judgment proceeded exclusively upon "their works," as recorded in "the books"; but that this done, "that other book was opened," from which it appeared that this decision, both upon the righteous and the wicked, had been recorded in that book "from the foundation of the world"—the names of those adjudged by "the books" to eternal life" being exclusively found there, while the absence of the names of all others ("if any one was not found written" there) expressed negatively what would be found to be their due. Thus two characteristics of this book come out; its being the book of those "ordained to eternal life" (Acts xiii. 48), and its having been written "before the foundation of the world." Another characteristic of vital moment is, that it is "the book of life of the Lamb that was slain," that is, specifically in His sacrificial character; teaching this great truth, that the names found in this book

were written there solely in virtue of their connexion with His atoning death, eventually to take place. And so it is called "the Lamb's book of life."<sup>1</sup>

What conclusion now, as to the *date* of the Apocalypse, do I draw from these facts? Decidedly this: that the whole conception of "the book of life," and "the books" out of which the dead will be judged, has advanced progressively in the outcome of Divine revelation, and that, appearing only in its fullest, most artistic, and most speaking form, it proclaims its place in the order of time, to be in this book, as the fitting close of all revealed truth. But—

5. What shall I say of the almost countless number of phrases peculiar to this book, but full of pregnancy? Take the seven Epistles—"the first love," of one Church, "left," and "the last works," of another Church, "more than the first"; the burning eyes of their exalted Head having "a few things" against two of the Churches otherwise praised; one Church commended for having "a little strength," and not "denying His name," "the second death," and so on. Then, in the prophetic part, the central position given to the symbols of the living creatures and the elders (because representing the redeemed, as is evident from chap. v. 9) while *outside* of them and surrounding them are the angels, who also ascribe worthiness to the Lamb that was slain, but do not say "for us" as in ver. 9). And above all, the constant conjunction of "Him that sitteth upon the throne and the Lamb," the one as

<sup>1</sup> It is a thousand pities, I think, that both the Authorized and Revised Versions punctuate chap. xiii. 8 thus: "The book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." No such idea as this, that Christ was crucified before the foundation of the world, is anywhere else to be found in the New Testament; and if any one will compare the same idea of chap. xiii. 8 as it is repeated in xvii. 8, where only the writing of their names from the foundation of the world (not His being slain from that time) is mentioned, he will see, I think, that the following is the proper punctuation of the verse: "All whose names are not written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb that hath been slain" (as in the margin of the R.V.).

the Fountain whence flows all salvation, the other as the Channel through which it all flows to men. In chap. v., the relative position of each respectively, and their absolute oneness in the work of redemption (as in John xiv. 7, 9-11, 23; xvi. 15; xvii. 21), stand boldly out; but in chap. vi. 16 we have them awfully associated in "the wrath of Him that sitteth upon the throne, and *the wrath of the Lamb.*" In a word, that peculiar name given to the enemy of souls, suggested by his occupation, "the accuser of the brethren," who "accuses them before our God day and night." In fact, the whole book teems with unique epithets and phrases, and symbolic arrangements, suggestive of the "unsearchable riches" of that scheme of salvation which, while expressed it is true in fully developed forms in the apostolic Epistles, appears in this book as if the seer had been instructed to take us, not into the sanctuary only, but into the holy of holies.

In view of all this, can it be said that this book reads like "the connecting link between the Synoptists and the Fourth Gospel," and "that form of development which belongs to the earliest apostolic age"? Let the reader judge.

DAVID BROWN.

---

## THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

### XIV. CHRIST AND AARON (CHAP. VIII.).

THE discourse on Melchisedec is ended, and now Aaron comes to the front. Having used the priest of Salem to set forth the dignity and value of Christ's priesthood, the writer proceeds now to use the high priest of Israel to convey an idea of His priestly functions. The aim of this new section, extending from the commencement of the eighth to the end of the ninth chapter, is to show that the