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THE
Revelation

By WALTER SCOTT.

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THE REVELATION

“REVELATION” signifies *the veil rolled aside*.

I.—Character of the Book.

IN this intensely interesting and only prophetic book of the New Testament, the veil is rolled aside and the future is disclosed in a series of panoramic visions beheld by the Apocalyptic Seer. Light and darkness, good and evil, are the moral forces in opposition. God, Christ, and Satan; men, saved and unsaved; and angels, holy and unholy are the actors in this marvellous work of plan and purpose. The scenes shift and change—now time, then eternity. Heaven, earth, and the lake of fire form the platform and theatre of display. The song of the victor and the wail of the vanquished both gladden and sadden. In result, God triumphs, and the millennial and eternal glories of Christ shine forth in undimmed and undying splendour. *Then* shall be brought to pass the saying of the Hebrew prophet, “He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied.”

All its visions, save the first (chap. i. 12-18), refer to the future. Some of the visions are of the most exalted character. The book unfolds the dark and closing hours of Christendom. The rays of the prophetic lamp are

God's search-lights, revealing heaven, earth, the abyss, and lake of fire; time and eternity; angels, men, and demons; Christendom, Israel, and the world, all come within the glare of light, and scope of divine dealing. These and other considerations invest the Apocalypse with undying interest. It is one which directly concerns every human soul, for it is the book of Eternal Destiny. All is fixed on a Righteous and Eternal basis. The new-made heaven and earth will become the respective and eternal abodes of all that is holy and good; whilst the lake of fire shall have gathered into it all that is unholy and contrary to God. Hades and the Abyss cease to exist in Eternity. Heaven, Earth, and the Lake of Fire eternally remain.

Grace is the keynote of the previous epistolary communications. The public *government* of God in dealing with evil and in the exalting of good, is the characteristic burden of this book.

How solemn, therefore, its character. Surely such a book demands the profoundest reverence of the Church of God, and its earnest, prayerful, and devout study by every Christian. No other book in the sacred canon is so guarded, divinely attested, and commended to all—readers and hearers alike (Rev. i. 3; xxii. 6-19).

II.—The Title and Writer.

The sacred writers, in no instance that we are aware of, gave titles to their books, and all such are destitute of divine authority, save one or two (Acts i. 20; Luke

iv. 17). The title given to the Apocalypse in the Authorised Version and retained in the Revision of 1881, is faulty and misleading. It is not "The Revelation of St John," but, as in the text, "The Revelation of Jesus Christ." Whether the epithet "the Divine" was added as an expression of the writer's supposed superlative sanctity, and to distinguish him from John the Apostle, are matters of unimportant controversy. We are at perfect liberty to reject the title as a whole. The church-tradition, that John the Apostle was the writer, dates from A.D. 170. The John of the fourth Gospel, and of the three Epistles to which his name is prefixed, is, we doubt not, the inspired writer of this book; *there* however, he is described, *here* he is expressly named five times.

III.—The Parts, Divisions, and Sections.

PARTS.

The book is divided in two distinct and equal parts. The *first* is from chap. i. till chap. xi. 18, in which the general condition of things and events are prophetically sketched from the close of the first christian century till the introduction of the Eternal State: compare "the time of the *dead* that they should be judged" (xi. 18) with "I saw the *dead*, small and great, stand before the throne" (xx. 12). The *last* act in time is the raising of the wicked dead. The *first* act in eternity is their judgment.

The *second* part is from chap. xi 19, till chap. xxii. 21, in which details are furnished connected with Israel,

Christendom, and the Pagan world, in the future awful crisis of their respective histories. The last sixteen verses of the book are full of exhortation and warning—never more needed than *now*.

DIVISIONS.

The three-fold division of the prophecy is noted in chap. i, 19. This verse forms the *key* to the interpretation and understanding of the book. It contains a past, a present, and a future.

First, "Write the things which thou *hast* seen"—*past*. This constitutes a vision by itself, comprised within verses 12-18 of chap. i., in which Christ in the midst of the seven golden lamp-stands, is the central object.

Second, "Write the things which are"—*present*. These things are embraced within chapters ii. and iii., in which the professing Church is traced through successive and contemporary stages of her history, from her decline (ii. 14) till her rejection (iii. 16).

Third, "Write the things which shall be hereafter" or *after these things*—*future*. This division commences with chap. iv. and runs on till chap. xxii. 5. This is pre-eminently the prophetic part of the book. We must not merge the second into the third division. THIS latter is future—future in John's day, and yet future in ours. The Seals, Trumpets, and Vials; Babylon, the Marriage, the Reign .etc., are *future*. The divisions do not overlap. They are consecutive. The Church period is now running its course, which when completed, the third or prophetic period opens. With the excep-

tion of the first three chapters and the last sixteen verses of the book, we regard the rest of the contents of the Apocalypse as yet *future*, save an occasional backward glance, as in xii. 2, 5, the Birth and Rapture of the Man Child, *i.e.*, Christ: compare with Psalm ii.

SECTIONS.

There are twelve sections into which the whole of the contents of the Apocalypse may be distributed, which if carefully noted will prove an immense help in the understanding of this wonderful book.

First, a general introduction, chap. i. 1-8.

Second, Christ seen in judicial glory in the midst of the professing Church, *i.e.*, the seven Asiatic Assemblies, chap. i. 9-20.

Third, the Church as God's witness on earth. Her growing departure from love, holiness and truth. chaps. ii. and iii.

Fourth, the heavenly saints on high enthroned and glorified, chaps. iv. and v. Creatorial glory of Jehovah chap. iv. Redemption glory of the Lamb, chap. v.

Fifth, the seven seals successively opened by the Lamb, chaps. vi.-viii. 1., chap. vii. parenthetic.

Sixth, the seven trumpets successively blown by the angels, chaps viii. 2—xi. 18.

Seventh, the sources (xii), actors (xiii.), and results (xiv.), chaps. xi. 19—xiv.

Eighth, the seven vials of God's wrath successively poured out, chaps. xv. ; xvi., closing dealings.

Ninth, Babylon the mystical in her political and ecclesiastical associations, chaps. xvii. ; xviii.

Tenth, chronological sequence from the fall of Babylon till the eternal state, chaps. xix-xxi. 8. opens with song, closes with wailing.

Eleventh, the bride of the Lamb in governmental and millennial splendour, chaps. xxi. 9—xxii. 5. The Church in Love, Life, and Beauty.

Twelfth, warnings, threatenings, and encouragements, chap. xxii. 6-21.

IV.—Prophetic Periods and Days.

The various prophetic periods, or denominations of time in chapters xi., xii. ; and xiii. ; if understood literally, greatly facilitates the study of the book. These periods refer to the *last* half of Daniel's week of seven years (Dan. ix. 25-27). The days in Daniel xii. 11, 12, while commencing in the midst of the week, yet extend beyond it. The *first* half of the week is not specially noted in any prophetic scripture. The interest is concentrated in the *second* half. The national restoration of Israel to Palestine in unbelief (Isa. xviii.), and the restoration of the ancient Empire of Rome in a ten-kingdom form, are political events of the gravest importance, and are needful to open the week (Dan. ix. 27 ; whilst the attempt to force idolatry upon the Jewish people (Dan. xii. 11 with Matt. xxiv. 15) signalises the com-

mencement of the half week of 3 years and a half. The 70 weeks mentioned by the Hebrew prophet (Dan. ix.) are weeks or sevens of *years*—in all 490. There are three weeks of *days* referred to in chap. x. 2.

V.—General Notes.

The strictly prophetic part of the book commences with chap. vi. and concludes with verse 5 of chap. xxii.

The chronological events under the Seals, Trumpets, and Vials transpire *after* the rapture (1 Thess. iv. 17) and *preceding* the appearing in glory (Rev. xix. 11-14). It will be impossible to understand the Revelation if this is not clearly seen.

No date can be fixed for the opening of the Seals. The Roman Empire *may* be forming while the Seals are being opened one by one. The Empire is not recognised as existing under the Seals. It may be that under the throes of the sixth Seal (vi. 12-17) the Empire emerges out of the general chaos. The Empire comes into view under the Trumpets.

The first four Trumpets (viii.) specially concern the Roman world. The three "woe" Trumpets announce judgment respectively upon apostate *Israel*, apostate *Christendom*, and upon the guilty *World*. The Trumpets succeed the Seals, and the Vials succeed the Trumpets. The Seal judgments are comparatively light, but wide-spread with one exception (vi. 8). The Trumpet chastisements are heavier in character; the first four are more limited in extent, while the last two cover a wider area.

The *martyred* company of Judah on the glassy sea harping and singing are noted in chaps. xiv. 2 ; xv. 2-4.

The *preserved* company of Judah on Mount Zion alone can learn the song of their brethren in heaven, chap. xiv. 1-5.

The *sealed* company of Israel (vii.) are not said to emerge out of the Tribulation, and are a distinct class from that of chapter xiv. The hundred and forty-four thousand of chap. vii. is of all *Israel*, whereas the hundred and forty-four thousand of chap. xiv. are of *Judah* only.

The *apostate* part of Israel is specially in view in chap. ix. 1-11. Thus Israel as a whole is fully accounted for.

PARENTHETIC PORTIONS.

There are six distinctly marked parentheses in the book as follows: *First*, chap. vii. between the sixth and seventh Seals. *Second*, chaps. x.-xi. 1-13, between the sixth and seventh TRUMPETS. *Third*, chaps. xi 19—xv. 1-4, between the sounding of the seventh trumpet and the pouring out of the bowls of wrath. *Fourth*, chap. xvi. 13-16, between the sixth and seventh VIALS. *Fifth*, chaps. xvii.-xix. 1-10, between the pouring out of the seventh Vial and the personal advent of the Lord in power and glory. *Sixth*, chaps. xxi. 9—xxii. 1-5, between the description of the eternal state and the concluding section of the book. The longest parenthesis is the third in which the hidden sources of good and evil are disclosed (xii.), the agents and chief instruments of evil named (xiii.), and the results in grace and judgment fully stated (xiv.).

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