THE APOCALYPSE OF JOHN

III. ITS CONTENT, ARRANGEMENT, AND SOURCES OF MATERIAL¹

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In the collection of primitive Christian writings that we call the New Testament there is one dramatic work. The Apocalypse of John is full of scenery and action. It has the qualities and the intention of drama. Not that it was composed for the stage, for neither Jews nor primitive Christians made use of the theater. But the apocalypses were spectacular in their presentation of ideas, and were designed to produce grand emotional effects. The Apocalypse of John could be staged, and would be most impressive.² The panorama of heavenly scenes, the majesty of the divine beings, the rapid succession of striking events, the ecstasy and adoration of observers, the glorious acts of redemption, the shouts of praise and paeans of victory, the high lights and splendid colors of the world-consummation, produce a literary composition whose chief aim is to thrill anxious hearts with hope, courage, and joy.

Some recent attempts have been made to print the text of the Apocalypse in stage arrangement, as though for modern rendition, in order that one may read it as he reads the plays of Shakspeare or Ibsen. The success of this effort has been only partial, for our dramatic mechanism was not in the mind of the author of the book, nor was the actual staging of it intended. His idea did not go beyond the literary drama; the whole effect he expected to produce was to be reached through the imagination of the reader. Nevertheless, he

¹ The former articles of this series, "Jewish Apocalyptical Literature," and "The Thought, Style, and Method of Apocalyptic," appeared in the *Biblical World* for January and April of this year.

² Of course the features of the eschatological drama would seem to us grotesque, for it embodies conceptions of heaven and earth which do not belong to the twentieth century with its scientific world-view.

anticipated a very great effect. In the absence of histrionic art from his world, literary art stood first for the achievement of the author's purpose. And we shall understand the Apocalypse of John best when we read it as a dramatic production; when we allow it to engage our imaginations and emotions in a rhapsody of the triumph of heaven over the evils, miseries, and anxieties of earth.

In order to appreciate the book, it is not necessary for us to suppose that things will ultimately take place in just the manner described. Our interpretation of John's Apocalypse has usually been a literal one. We have assumed that it was a detailed and accurate disclosure of events that still lie in the future, events that are to finish the present age and inaugurate a new one. Perhaps that is a more artificial and extreme view than the author himself had of his visions and descriptions. In any case, we are no longer able to regard the book as predictive in this mechanical sense. Its contents are of the nature of imagery, its forecasts have the very general value of a confident trust that all will be well in God's world—that love, righteousness, peace, and bliss will come to prevail.

It is common now to speak of the Apocalypse as poetry. The term is appropriate as regards the substance of the book, but as regards its form the term does not at once convey the correct conception, since meter and rhyme are absent. The formal features of Hebrew poetry do not appear; nor was Jewish apocalyptic customarily written in poetic style. The Sibylline Oracles are an exception, due to the desire of their authors to imitate the style of the Greek Sibyllines. Dean Church called Dante's *Divina Commedia* "the first Christian poem," but it deserves this title only in the formal sense. The Apocalypse of John might better on the nature of its contents bear the designation,³ and it would be interesting to know in what respects and to what degree Dante was himself indebted to the New Testament drama of heaven and hell. Moulton⁴ designates the

³ But there was earlier Christian poetry than the Apocalypse of John. Not a little of Jesus' teaching was given in poetic form, as the Sermon on the Mount and other passages of the gospels show. Paul also contributed one of the most beautiful poems ever written—his praise of love in I Cor., chap. 13. A fragment of primitive Christian hymnology may be seen in I Tim. 3:16.

⁴ *Modern Readers' Bible*, single-volume edition, p. 1707.

Apocalypse a "rhapsody," a term which he applies as well to the vision portions of Isaiah, Joel, Amos, and Zechariah. All literary interpreters agree that the book is highly imaginative, giving vivid delineation to a glowing religious ideal. The production embodies the ardent hope of suffering Christianity, claiming vindication, relief, and reward at God's hands.

We may look for unity in the Apocalypse—unity of idea, unity of action, unity of presentation. Such a dramatic unity exists.⁵ The story is a connected whole, the story of the glorious redemption of the people of God. The scenes of this consummation succeed one another in relation, the movement is continuous, the development progresses to a logical and most impressive *dénouement*. The book is not a disjunct composite of miscellaneous pieces.⁶ It is not a Mosaic of Jewish and Christian apocalyptic fragments. The pattern is woven through from beginning to end. And this is true, even if some of the threads were drawn from earlier fabrics.

The Apocalypse of John is the work of a single author, who worked according to an elaborate plan, with remarkable literary skill, with great dramatic sense, with large imaginative resource, with consuming religious fervor, and with an exalted practical purpose. One may rightly compare this author and his work with the great Greek dramatists (Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides) and their tragedies. Lofty religious principles and ideals were their themes also, great moral purposes moved them to write.

The contents of the Apocalypse are arranged as seven visions: (1) the Messages to the Seven Churches, (2) the Breaking of the Seven Seals, (3) the Sounding of the Seven Trumpets, (4) the Manifestation of the Seven Mystic Figures, (5) the Outpouring of the Seven Bowls, (6) the Triumph of Christ and the Final Judgment,

⁵ Dramatic unity is not quite synonymous with literary unity. There are some literary elements in the book that have not been completely assimilated to their new setting; but this feature can scarcely be regarded as interfering with the grand plan of the book.

⁶ As for instance the Ethiopic Book of Enoch is. It consists of five main portions juxtaposed, with a sixth portion (the Noachic Apocalypse) broken up and distributed through some of the other portions. The six separate parts were originally the productions of different authors at different dates.

(7) the New Earth and the New Jerusalem. A prologue and an epilogue complete the structure.⁷

⁷ The analysis of Moulton, *op. cit.*, differs somewhat from the one here proposed. He too divides the Apocalypse into seven visions, as follows: (1) the Sealed Book and the Lamb; (2) the Power of Judgment; (3) the Seven Trumpets: Judgment Imperfect, and the Mystery of Prophecy; (4) Salvation: the Kingdom of the World becoming the Kingdom of Christ; (5) the Seven Golden Bowls: Judgment Consummated, and the Mystery of Babylon; (6) the Word of God and the Thrones of Judgment; (7) the Lamb's Bride and the New Jerusalem. "By a structure exactly analogous to that of Joel's rhapsody and in a less marked degree to that of Zion Redeemed in Isaiah, the fourth or central section is the foundation of all the others, the first three working toward it, the last three founded upon it." "The sevenfold prologue is partly involved in the vision of the Revelation, in the main outside it."

It seems to me preferable to understand the letters to the seven churches as the first great division of the Apocalypse; partly because the structure of the book is built on sevens, and chaps. 4-22 fall better into six than into seven additional visions; but still more because the letters are distinctly included within the apocalyptic content of the book by the long section, 1:9-20, which pictures the Heavenly Christ enthroned and giving to the seer these seven communications. Similarly Spitta and Bousset against Vischer, Völter, Pfeiderer, O. Holtzmann.

The analysis of Porter, in the *Messages of the Apocalyptic Writers* (pp. 179 f.), is as follows:

Superscription, 1:1-3.

I. The Messages of Christ to his Churches, 1:4-3:22.

1. Introduction: Salutation, 1:4-6; Theme, 1:7; Attestation, 1:8.

2. The prophet's call, 1:9-20.

3. The seven messages, chaps. 2-3.

II. Visions of the Future, chaps. 4-22.

A. Introduction:

1. Vision of God, by whom all is done, chap. 4.

2. Vision of Christ, by whom all is known and revealed, chap. 5.

B. First stages of the coming judgment, chaps. 6-9.

1. Destructive powers seen at the opening of six seals, chap. 6.

2. Salvation of the faithful, chap. 7.

a) The safety of the saints, 7:1-8.

b) Final blessedness of martyrs, 7:9-17.

3. Preliminary judgments; destroying one-third of earth and mankind at the sounding of six trumpets, chaps. 8, 9.

C. Last stages of the judgment, chaps. 10-20.

(I) Introduction:

1. The prophet's new commission, chap. 10.

2. New assurances, in old figures of the safety of saints and martyrs, 11:1-13.

a) Safety of the true worshipers, 11:1-2.

b) Work and reward of martyrs, 11:3-13.

(II) The Overthrow of Rome and Satan, 11:14-20:15.

1. Introduction: Heavenly song, anticipating God's victory, 11:14-19.

2. The powers of evil: a. Satan, chap. 12; b. Rome and the imperial cultus, chap. 13.

3. The opposing host, Christ and the undefiled, 14:1-5.

4. Last warnings to flee from the wrath to come, 14:6-20.

5. The judgments, chaps. 15-20.

a) Vision of the wrath of God, in seven bowls, chaps. 15-16.

b) Fall of Rome described in a figure, chap. 17.

c) Fall of Rome in prophecy, chap. 18.

d) Fall of Rome in heavenly song, 19:1-10.

e) Fall of Rome as the Victory of Christ in warfare with the beasts, 19:11-21.

f) The fall of Satan, 20:1-10.

g) General resurrection and judgment, 20:11-15.

D. The blessed Consummation.

1. The coming of God to dwell with men, 21:1-8.

2. The descent of the heavenly Jerusalem, 21:9-22:9.

Concluding warnings and promises, 22:10-21.

ANALYSIS OF THE APOCALYPSE

- I. CHAP. 1:1-8. PROLOGUE.
 1. 1:1-3. Superscription and authentication of the book.
 2. 1:4-8. Salutation to the seven Asian churches.
- II. CHAPS. 1:9-3:22. FIRST VISION. Preliminary. Christ's Messages to the Seven Churches of Asia, preparing them for the reception of the Revelation.
 1. 1:9-20. The circumstances of the Revelation.
 2. 2:1-7. The message to the church at Ephesus.
 3. 2:8-11. The message to the church at Smyrna.
 4. 2:12-17. The message to the church at Pergamum.
 5. 2:18-29. The message to the church at Thyatira.
 6. 3:1-6. The message to the church at Sardis.
 7. 3:7-13. The message to the church at Philadelphia.
 8. 3:14-22. The message to the church at Laodicea.
- III. CHAPS. 4:1-8:1. SECOND VISION. The Breaking of the Seven Seals which bound the Book of the Future.
 1. 4:1-5:14. The preparation in heaven for the breaking of the Seals.
 - a) 4:1-11, God upon his throne, glorious and supreme, presents the Book.
 - b) 5:1-14, Christ receives the Book, he alone being accounted worthy to open it.
 2. 6:1-17. The breaking of the first six Seals, disclosing the promise and the precursors of Christ's victorious return.
 - a) 1, 2, the first Seal broken reveals invasion from Parthia.
 - b) 3, 4, the second Seal broken reveals war from Rome.
 - c) 5, 6, the third Seal broken reveals famine.
 - d) 7, 8, the fourth Seal broken reveals death and the grave.
 - e) 9-11, the fifth Seal broken reveals persecution and martyrdom of Christians.
 - f) 12-17, the sixth Seal broken reveals physical catastrophe antecedent to the judgment.
 3. 7:1-17. The preparation for the breaking of the seventh Seal.
 - a) 1-8, the mark of God set upon the elect of Israel, a sign of protection.
 - b) 9-17, the glorious assemblage of the redeemed in heaven.
 4. 8:1. The breaking of the seventh Seal, disclosing the second symbolic cycle.
- IV. CHAPS. 8:2-11:18. THIRD VISION. The Sounding of the Seven Trumpets, which evoke the seven great Plagues designed to turn the ungodly to repentance in preparation for the Lord's return.

1. 8:2-5. Preparatory offering of the prayers of the saints as incense before God.
2. 8:6-12. The sounding of the first four Trumpets, evoking the lesser woes.
 - a) 6, 7, the first Trumpet sounded evokes hail and fire.
 - b) 8, 9, the second Trumpet sounded evokes blood in the seas.
 - c) 10, 11, the third Trumpet sounded evokes bitterness in the living waters.
 - d) 12, the fourth Trumpet sounded evokes darkness.
3. 8:13-9:21. The sounding of the fifth and sixth Trumpets, evoking the first two great woes.
 - a) 8:13, awful annunciation of the three woes to come.
 - b) 9:1-11, the fifth Trumpet sounded evokes the tormenting locusts.
 - c) 9:12-21, the sixth Trumpet sounded evokes the host of demon-riders.
4. 10:1-11:13. The preparation for the sounding of the last Trumpet.
 - a) 10:1-11, the seer is commanded not to disclose the mystery of the seventh Trumpet, which will bring the end and consummation of all things.
 - b) 11:1-13, assurance that the Christians shall come through the grand catastrophe unharmed and glorified.
5. 11:14-18. The sounding of the seventh Trumpet, whose mystery is not disclosed except that it introduces the consummation and triumph of God.

V. CHAPS. 11:19-14:20. FOURTH VISION. The Manifestation of the Seven Mystic Figures, which join in a conflict of error against truth.

1. 11:19. The temple of heaven is thrown open to disclose these mysteries.
2. 12:1-13:1a. The first three Mystic Figures, who join in deadly conflict.
 - a) 12:1, 2, the first Mystic Figure, the Sun-clothed Woman, symbolizing the ideal community of God's people.
 - b) 12:3, 4, the second Mystic Figure, the Great Red Dragon, symbolizing the hostile world-power of evil.
 - c) 12:5, 6, the third Mystic Figure, the Man Child, symbolizing the Messiah who is taken to heaven for protection.
 - d) 12:7-12, the conquest and expulsion from heaven of the Dragon (Satan) and his host.
 - e) 12:13-17, the conflict on earth between the Dragon (the host of evil) and the Woman (the host of God).
3. 13:1-18. The fourth and fifth Mystic Figures, who assist the Dragon in his conflict.

- a) 1-10, the fourth Mystic Figure, the Beast from the Sea, symbolizing the Roman power.
- b) 11-18, the fifth Mystic Figure, the Beast from the Earth, symbolizing the priesthood that secures emperor worship.
- 4. 14:1-20. The sixth and seventh Mystic Figures, who set themselves to withstand the Dragon.
 - a) 1-5, the sixth Mystic Figure, the Lamb on Mount Zion, symbolizing Christ the leader of the conquering host.
 - b) 6-13, three angels proclaim the final judgment, with its twofold issue.
 - c) 14-20, the seventh Mystic Figure, the Son of Man on the Cloud, symbolizing Christ who introduces the final judgment.
- VII. CHAPS. 15:1-19:10. FIFTH VISION. The Outpouring of the Seven Bowls, which discharge the final wrath of God on the ungodly.
 - 1. 15:1-8. The preparation for the outpouring of the Seven Bowls.
 - a) 1, announcement of the seven plagues, the final cycle of divine visitations.
 - b) 2-4, the song of triumph of those who had gained individual victories over the Beast.
 - c) 5-8, the procession from heaven of the seven angels with the Bowls of wrath.
 - 2. 16:1-21. The outpouring of the Seven Bowls.
 - a) 1, 2, the first Bowl discharges a pestilence.
 - b) 3, the second Bowl discharges blood into the sea.
 - c) 4-7, the third Bowl discharges blood into the fresh waters.
 - d) 8, 9, the fourth Bowl discharges scorching heat from the sun.
 - e) 10, 11, the fifth Bowl discharges darkness upon the ungodly world.
 - f) 12-16, the sixth Bowl discharges drouth, the Euphrates is dried up, and the demons gather for battle.
 - g) 17-21, the seventh Bowl discharges convulsions of the earth, all-destructive.
 - 3. 17:1-19:10. The paean of victory over the downfall of Rome, the heart of the evil world-power.
 - a) 17:1-18, the vanquished Babylon is exhibited and explained to the seer.
 - b) 18:1-24, the utter condemnation of Babylon, with the laments of the ungodly.
 - c) 19:1-10, the hosts of heaven celebrate the triumph of Christ over the evil world-power.
- VII. CHAPS. 19:11-20:15. SIXTH VISION. The Complete Triumph of Christ, and the Final Judgment.
 - 1. 19:11-21. Christ's conquest and overthrow of the Roman Emperor (the Beast) and his allies.

2. 20:1-3. The arch enemy Satan is bound for a season.
3. 20:4-6. The millennial reign of Christ with the risen saints.
4. 20:7-10. The final, complete victory of Christ over Satan and his host.
5. 20:11-15. The final judgment.

VIII. CHAPS. 21:1-22:5. SEVENTH VISION. The New Heaven, the New Earth, and the New Jerusalem.

1. 21:1-8. The holy city, the blessed abode of God and his people.
2. 21:9-22:5. The seer's description of the New Jerusalem.

IX. CHAP. 22:6-21. EPILOGUE.

1. 22:6-17. Assurances and warnings concerning this divine Revelation.
2. 22:18, 19. Injunction that this book of prophecy be preserved inviolate.
3. 22:20. Assurance of, and prayer for, the speedy coming of Christ.
4. 22:21. Closing benediction.

One would like well to know the way or ways in which the author secured his material for this book. The traditional conception is that the entire book, contents and form, was a supernatural revelation to him, given him on some specific occasion and written down by him as the mere penman of the Heavenly Christ.⁸ This is taken to be the *prima facie* meaning of 1:1, 2, which reads:

The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to shew unto his servants, even the things which must shortly come to pass: and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John; who bore witness of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, even of all things that he saw.

The historical view of the origin of the New Testament books, however, is not satisfied with this interpretation. The miraculous production of biblical books—ideas, facts, words, all in a finished form—is not now regarded as a satisfactory account of their origin. As a mode of evaluating books, in a time when the historical facts of their origin were unknown, such an explanation is intelligible—perhaps excusable. But we have reason to think that there is much to tell in describing the origin of a book like the Apocalypse of John.

When one compares the material of this Apocalypse with the material of which previous apocalypses were composed, and particularly with the Book of Daniel and apocalyptic portions of other Old Testament books (Ezekiel, Joel, Zechariah, Isaiah), it becomes

⁸ In considering with a class the New Testament sources for ascertaining the Teaching of Jesus, one student wished to know whether we could not use the Book of Revelation equally with the Synoptic Gospels for this purpose.

evident that apocalyptic ideas, symbols, imagery, and language constituted a common stock of material from which the whole class of apocalyptic writers freely drew. Each writer in his turn, and according to his ability, contributed something additional to this common stock, at the same time that he revamped the older material for his new book. The successive authors of apocalyptic are not to be denied originality in thought, style, and method, but neither shall we fail to recognize that they made large use of kindred material which was available. Their method was reasonable enough. No one should complain of it. To generations that were indifferent to what we call plagiarism, old material that was repeated, retouched, expanded, freshly combined, and freighted with a message more or less new, had all the interest and value of original productions. Indeed, the interest and value might be much greater, inasmuch as the old material brought with it to the new message the sentiments, convictions, and sanctities of time. Symbols and phrases that have become classic in religious usage are the more precious and powerful in their repetition.

For this reason, probably, as well as because the apocalyptic genius did not generally run to *de novo* production, the writers of this type of literature freely possessed themselves of and employed the apocalyptic material that existed in their day. The author of the New Testament Apocalypse, being one of the latest writers of his class, found abundance of earlier material to his hand. He took what he found useful, wherever he found it, and made it serve his purpose.⁹ Of the 404 verses which compose the Apocalypse, 278 have ideas, words, and phrases found in the Old Testament. Of these, 46 are from Isaiah, 31 from Daniel, 29 from Ezekiel, 27 from the Psalms, and a lesser number from Genesis, Exodus, Deuteronomy, Jeremiah, Joel, Zechariah.¹⁰ The Book of Daniel, in pro-

⁹ This may be readily seen if one will compare with the text of the Book of Revelation the Old Testament passages referred to in the margin of a Reference Bible, or the list as contained in the appendix to Westcott and Hort's *New Testament in Greek*, or best of all (because the Greek of both text and reference is given) the table given in Swete's *Apocalypse of John*, pp. cxxxv-cxlviii.

¹⁰ Swete, *op. cit.*, who furnishes these figures (p. cxlviii) also says: "He lays under contribution each of the books of the Law, the Book of Judges, the four Books of Kingdoms, the Psalms, the Proverbs, the Song, the Book of Job, all the Major and seven of the Minor Prophets."

portion to its length, furnishes much the largest contribution to the Book of Revelation—the two great apocalypses, one Jewish, the other Jewish-Christian; three hundred years apart in date of composition, but most alike in content, spirit, point of view, and purpose.

But the author of the Apocalypse of John, although he made such extensive use of the Old Testament, was not a mere compiler of passages and phrases. He is scarcely to be thought of as searching through the rolls of the prophetic and other books, pen in hand, copying out for his book here a verse and there a phrase, afterward putting his excerpts together into a patchwork design. This notion of his method would probably be too deliberate, too literary, too mechanical for our author. Is it not more likely that before he came to the writing of his own Apocalypse, he should for many years have been most familiar with the books of this class, should have filled his mind with the classic apocalyptic ideas, symbols, and phrases, should have repeated them singly and in many combinations, with many Christian adaptations and applications, expanding them as he used them, and adding to them not a little of form, color, meaning, and direction out of his own apocalyptic genius?¹¹

He made much less use of Jewish apocalyptic literature outside of the Old Testament canon. There are numerous similarities in idea and expression to the Ethiopic Enoch; Charles¹² presents 26 such correspondences, including the seven spirits, the tree of life, the white clothing, the four living creatures about the throne, the angels of the winds, the intercessory angels, the burning of the unrighteous in the presence of the righteous, the horses walking in blood breastdeep, the book of life, the fiery abyss. The Slavonic Enoch¹³ furnishes some parallels, as do also the Apocalypse of Baruch, the Apocalypse of Ezra, and the Sibylline Oracles. The author of the New Testament Apocalypse was quite surely acquainted

¹¹ Similarly Swete (p. cxlix): "There is not a single instance in which the Christian prophet of the Apocalypse has contented himself with a mere compilation or combination of Old Testament ideas. His handling of these materials is always original and independent, and he does not allow his Old Testament author to carry him a step beyond the point at which the guidance ceases to lend itself to the purpose of the book."

¹² *Book of Enoch*, pp. 43-45.

¹³ Morfill and Charles, *Book of the Secrets of Enoch*, p. xxiii. See also Swete, *op. cit.*, p. xxi.

with these earlier books in the same field with his own, and they have been sources of his ideas and phraseology.

We must also take account of the fact that there was an apocalyptic tradition which did not take written form, but was in constant use and was handed down by oral transmission. The apocalyptic books presumably gave written record to much apocalyptic that arose in this widespread and appreciated body of tradition, directed and enlarged by many minds. And when these new elements had been given literary standing, they reacted upon the tradition, assuming a new position and influence in the current apocalyptic. The Apocalypse of John is no doubt greatly indebted to this common stock of apocalyptic tradition for ideas, symbols, terms, phrases, combinations, interpretations, and the like. The author was well acquainted with and much influenced by this oral apocalyptic, which the first Christians had taken over from Judaism and had made to serve their religious purposes. So he had not only Jewish apocalyptic, but Christian apocalyptic as well, from which he could draw materials for his book.

Some large pieces that he used, particularly in chaps. 11 and 12, were not assimilated in detail to their new location. While they were adjusted to serve the main purpose of the book, a number of specific terms and allusions were allowed to stand unadapted. These original elements have caused the interpreters of the Apocalypse much trouble, as a Christian significance for them could not properly be found. The two pieces in 11:1-2, 3-13, formerly constituted a portion of some Jewish apocalypse, and may have been connected with the Antichrist legend.¹⁴ The two pieces in 12:1-12, 13-17 were also derived from Jewish apocalyptic, and it has been argued by Gunkel¹⁵ that these contain elements taken from Babylonian mythology, and in particular the myth of the birth of the sun-god Marduk and of the persecution of Marduk by the Dragon Tiamat.¹⁶ In

¹⁴ So Bousset, in *Encyc. Biblica*, Vol. I, col. 209. ¹⁵ *Schöpfung und Chaos*, 1894.

¹⁶ Porter, *op. cit.*, speaking of chap. 12, says: "The writer uses figures which he certainly did not create for the purpose, but borrowed and more or less adapted. If we could know where he found them, and to what extent he modified them, we should be able to solve the problem which the chapter presents. The Old Testament furnishes but slight analogy. There were, however, Babylonian and Egyptian and Greek sun-myths with which this material quite certainly stands in some relation. . . . The whole picture has a cosmic range and an unmistakably mythological back-

these and other passages where the author of the New Testament Apocalypse has incorporated material from other sources it is sometimes necessary to recognize unassimilated features, and to distinguish their original signification apart from their present environment.

What, then, was the process of producing the Apocalypse of John? We cannot know certainly, but we may with some probability make the following conjectures: (1) that the author had a "vision," that is, an ecstatic religious experience filled with a consciousness of the divine presence and a divine communication;¹⁷ (2) that this vision confirmed his Christian conviction of the future triumph of God and the glorification of his saints which rings through the book and is the essence of his message; (3) that under the impulse of this vision he wrote, in order to convey to others the same assurance of impending divine redemption, a needed word of comfort and strength to the Christians in their severe trials from persecution; (4) that he made abundant use of the apocalyptic portions of Old Testament books, especially Daniel, out of a memory long charged with this material, for the purpose of Christian exhortation; (5) that he also had large possession of non-canonical apocalyptic, oral and written, from which he drew, shaping portions of it to convey the Christian message; (6) that the book thus projected and drafted was deliberately and carefully worked out, perhaps at successive sittings over a shorter or longer period, until it reached the final stage in which we now have it.

The Apocalypse is a great work, in impulse and message, but also in construction and literary quality.

It remains to consider, in the closing article of this series, the time when the Apocalypse of John was written, for whom it was written, who was the author, what was his purpose in writing the book, what the chief ideas of the book are, the correct principles for its interpretation, and its present-day value.

ground. . . . Changes have been freely made in the story to adapt it to Christian use, and it is not improbable that it was shaped by a Jewish hand first. We can be quite sure that we see here traditional materials that have gone through various modifications, even though we cannot retrace the process with confidence."

¹⁷ The "vision" is a well-recognized psychological phenomenon, attending high-wrought emotional states, particularly in the field of religion. Cf. Paul's visions at his conversion and at other times, II Cor. 12:1; Acts 9:10; 16:9, 10; 18:9; 26:19. This form of religious experience diminishes as the mental and moral content and control of experience increase.