

REVIEWS

THE APOCALYPSE.

A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Revelation of St John, with introduction, notes, and indices, also the Greek text and English translation. By R. H. CHARLES, D.Litt., D.D., Archdeacon of Westminster, Fellow of the British Academy. (International Critical Commentary. T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1920: in 2 vols. vol. i pp. xcii + 373, vol. ii pp. 457 + indices pp. 459-497: price 40s.)

THE mere statement just given of the number of pages contained in these volumes suffices to shew that here the Apocalypse has met with more detailed treatment than in any English work (or, so far as I know, any continental one) published in our time. And, indeed, as Dr Charles tells us, we have here the result of a study extending over twenty-five years. It is hardly necessary to remind readers of this JOURNAL of all the mass of work connected with Apocalyptic literature which Dr Charles has put out. We owe to him the most usable editions we have of most of the great Jewish Apocalypses, not to mention other *pseudepigrapha*; and now we have his presentation of the great Christian Apocalypse.

How does he arrange his work? A brief conspectus of the contents will be in place here.

In a *Short Account of the Seer and his Work*, to which we shall return, Dr Charles defines his attitude on the principal points, and then gives an analysis of the plan of the Apocalypse. We then have two sections on the *Authorship of the Johannine Writings*, in which the evidence, internal and external, is examined. The existence and character of an *Editor of the Apocalypse* are then postulated and described. The *Depravation of the Text* is set forth, and next, the *Greek and Hebrew Sources* employed by the writer, and his obligations to the *Books of the O. T., Pseudepigrapha, and N. T.* expounded. The next sections deal with the *Unity, Date, Circulation, and Reception*, followed by a description of the *Object of the Seer* and some of his *Doctrines*. A detailed *Grammar of the Apocalypse* occupies pp. cxvii-clix, an estimate of the values of the various authorities for the text fills twenty pages: lastly we have a statement of the *Methods of Interpretation*, and a *Bibliography*. The Commentary proper extends to p. 226 of the second volume: on pp. 227-385 is the Greek text with *apparatus criticus*: on pp. 386-446 an English translation, with copious footnotes calling attention to the innovations. Some Additional Notes intervene between this and the indexes.

It will be convenient to state at the outset some of the positions adopted by Dr Charles. The Apocalypse is the work of John the Seer, a Palestinian Jew, who late in life emigrated to Asia Minor. The Gospel and Epistles are the work of another, who was probably John the Elder. John the Apostle was martyred by the Jews before A.D. 70. (Thus three Johns, not two, as has been commonly the fashion, are postulated.) That the Elder and the Seer 'belonged to the same religious circle, or that the author of the Gospel was a pupil of the Seer, is not improbable'.

The *Date* of the Apocalypse is about A.D. 95. In it the Seer used not only his own visions of various dates, but also Jewish and Christian sources of Neronian and Vespasianic dates. These various *sources* are dealt with at p. lxxxix. The author had written his Epistles to the Seven Churches under Vespasian: and in iv 1-8 he re-edits a vision of his own. Traditional material is used in vii 1-8: in xi 1-13 two sources written before A.D. 70 are employed: xii is a combination of two sources (written in Greek) re-edited: with xvii-xviii the case is the same.

The text as we have it has suffered from interpolation and in other ways. The interpolations amount to upwards of 22 verses, a complete list of which is given at p. lvii. The most considerable in bulk are i 8 (I am Alpha and Omega, &c.), viii 7-12 (the first four Trumpets), xiv 3-4 (These are they that were redeemed, &c.), xiv 15-17 (the harvest of the earth). Others are brief but important, e.g. iv 5 (which are the seven spirits of God), vi 8 (and Hell followed after him), xv 3 (the song of Moses), xvi 13 (evil spirits *like frogs*), &c., &c. For the moment I exclude xx 4-xxii from consideration.

There are also dislocations in i-xx 3, of which one seems deliberate, viz. viii 2 (connected with the interpolated four Trumpets: it should follow viii 5). The verses xiv 12, 13 (Blessed are the dead) are to follow xiii 18 (number of the Beast): xvi 5, 6 (words of the angel over the waters) follow xix 4; the angel of the waters is interpolated: xvi 15 (Behold I come as a thief) follows iii 3 (in the letter to Sardis): xviii 14-23 are wholly rearranged.

Further, there are lacunae. Several clauses are gone after xvi 10 (fifth vial: between 'his kingdom was darkened' and 'they gnawed their tongues for pain'). After xix 9 a not only is there an interpolation or dittograph of the angel forbidding the Seer to worship him, but an account of the destruction of the Parthian kings is lost: for (among other considerations) in xix 13 the Word has His vesture dipped in blood. In xviii 22 the words 'shall be heard no more in thee' should follow the mention of the pipers and singers as well as that of the flute-players and trumpeters, to make the series of parallels complete. In

xxi 22 we should read 'And the Lamb (is the ark of the covenant thereof)'.

For most of these depravations an editor is responsible. 'John died when he had completed i-xx 3 of his work, and the materials for its completion, which were for the most part ready in a series of independent documents, were put together by a faithful but unintelligent disciple in the order which he thought right' (p. 1). Of this editor's shortcomings Dr Charles has much to say. Of the end of the book (xx 4-xxii) he has made a complete chaos. In the earlier portions we detect him by his deviations from the style and grammatical habits of the Seer. Thus he writes (xxi 5) ὁ καθήμενος ἐπὶ τοῦ θρόνου: whereas John would have written ἐπὶ τὸν θρόνον: for where the participle καθήμενος is in the nominative or accusative, ἐπί, following it, takes the accusative: while καθημένου would be followed by ἐπὶ τοῦ and καθημένῳ by ἐπὶ τῷ. Again, in i 8 the editor has separated ὁ θεός from ὁ παντοκράτωρ by eight words, not understanding that the phrase is a stock rendering of 'God of Hosts' and therefore indivisible. Worse: in xiv 3, 4 he makes the 144,000 into celibates, and shews himself a narrow ascetic. In xiv 14-20 he has divided the Messianic judgement into two parts (harvest and vintage of the earth) and has assigned the first to the Son of Man, and the second and greater part to an angel. This 'betrays a depth of stupidity all but incomprehensible'. The prohibition to take from or add to the Book (xxii 18, 19) is also his, and much strong language characterizes it.

From the way in which I have recorded some of these matters, the reader will suspect that I am not in agreement with Dr Charles's view. That is no more than the truth. In spite of the very great care which he has devoted to the study of the grammar of the Apocalypse, I am not convinced that he is justified in setting aside this or that clause as not written by the hand of John. I do not trust the negative results of the examination of style as I must and do trust the positive: especially in a case like this, where it is admitted that the style is unique. Unique, but quite regular in its abnormalities, Dr Charles contends. There is the rub. In xvi 13 John ought to have written πνεύματα ὡς βάραχοι: the text gives ὡς βατράχους: ergo it is not John's. Thrice John speaks of lightnings and voices and thunderings in that order: in viii 5 we have thunderings and voices and lightnings: this, therefore, is the editor's work. To me it is not possible to be so certain.¹ And when

¹ I think Dr Charles may fairly be quoted against himself. In the commentary on xii (i 303) we read 'the evidence is distinctly against the hypothesis that we have here a recast of existing Greek sources from another hand or hands', for there is an 'overwhelming agreement in point of idiom and diction of this chapter with the style of our author'. But on p. lxiii 'our author most probably found these sources already in a Greek form, and the conclusion recorded in i 303 is here withdrawn'.

we are dealing with a book of the character of the Apocalypse I feel that abruptnesses and apparent interruptions of the sequence are to be looked for, and that to transplant the sayings 'Behold I come as a thief' and 'Blessed are the dead' may be to shew a very wooden—even a Prussian—view of what the Seer ought to have written. With somewhat similar eyes I view the excision of the first four Trumpets (viii 7-12). They 'are not original, but a subsequent addition, and deal only with cosmic phenomena; whereas the sealing in vii 4-8 prepares the reader to expect not cosmic but demonic Woes. The last three Trumpets are the three Woes announced by the Eagle (viii 13)'. Is there not a possibility that the first four Trumpets are actually indicated in vii 2, in the four Angels to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea? We should then have an arrangement corresponding to that of the Seals, in which the first four, the Riders, are marked off from the rest. I think something might be made of this view, which is not noticed by Dr Charles. It is not contended that viii 7-12 differ widely from their context in style: they are said to be 'somewhat different', but a foot-note points out affinities.

It is in the concluding section of the book, xx 4-22, that, as has been said, the 'Editor' is seen at his worst. Nothing but a drastic process of rearrangement and excision can restore consistency to the successive visions. The resultant order, apart from minutiae, is this:

- xx 1-3 Satan is chained for 1,000 years.
- xx 9-xxii 2, 14-15, 17 The Heavenly Jerusalem the seat of Christ and the glorified martyrs, and the centre of evangelization of the nations for 1,000 years.
- xx 4-6 Vision of the glorified martyrs who reign with Christ.
- xx 7-10 Satan is loosed, the Holy City attacked, the foe defeated.
- xx 11-15 The final judgement.
- xxi 1-5 (rearranged), xxii 3-5 The new heaven and earth. The New Jerusalem which is to be everlasting.
- xxi 5-8 Words of God.
- xxii 6-7 (and other verses) Words of Christ to the Seer.
- xxii 8-9, 20 John's testimony.
- xxii 21 Final benediction.

Consistency is attained by this rearrangement, and one of Dr Charles's principal theses is that we must postulate consistency of thought and a regular sequence of ideas in this book. Again I must say, there is the rub. The Apocalypse of John is a unique book: I cannot judge it by the standard of 4 *Esdras* or 2 *Baruch*, writers who (I believe in spite of all dissection-theories) carry out their plans from start to finish with comparative calmness and self-restraint. I can well believe that

John, as he approached the great *dénouement* of human history, would find it impossible to bind the mighty conceptions that possessed him into a frame. Every one must recognize that there are abrupt transitions, conflicting conceptions, if you will, in these chapters. Broken up into sections with intervening asterisks instead of standing in an orderly row of verses, they might give a truer idea of their condition. Such a device would, I believe, be more faithful to the spirit of the book than are the neatness and symmetry which result from rearranging the lines and purging away elements which cannot readily be fitted into the scheme we have laid down. Probably Dr Charles has made as good a case for rearrangement as can be made; but even so he does not avoid all awkwardnesses. 'The Seer does not say what became of the (first) Heavenly Jerusalem, but its withdrawal from the earth before the final judgement is presupposed', and of the second and eternal New Jerusalem very little is said.

One of the startling changes of text in these chapters is in xx 13: instead of the sea giving up its dead we read 'the treasures (of departed souls) gave up the dead which were in them'. Another is that xxii 11 (ὁ ἀδικῶν ἀδικεῖτω ἔτι κτλ.) disappears, adjudged to be an interpolation.

As to the general plan of the Apocalypse, set out in full on pp. xxv-xxviii, two points emerge. First, while Dr Charles postulates a regular progress in the visions, and dismisses all theories of recapitulation, he finds room for three proleptic sections, (1) the vision of vii 9-17, subsequent in point of time to the visions in xiii; (2) x-xi 13 Antichrist in Jerusalem, contemporaneous with 13; (3) 14, visions of the Church triumphant on earth, and of the judgement of Rome and the nations, which summarize the matter of xviii-xx. The other point is of a different kind. The Seer in xiii and elsewhere anticipates that *all* the faithful will be martyred by Antichrist. This, to my mind a very debateable view, is naturally of great importance. Its acceptance implies the acceptance of the rearrangement of the last chapters.

Another striking and interesting feature is the attempt to restore, in the translation, 'the poetical form in which the Seer wrote so large a part of the Apocalypse'. Similar restorations, it may be remembered, mark Dr Charles's versions of other Apocalypses, notably the *Book of Jubilees*.

To two highly important and valuable sections of the work I can do no more than call attention, namely, the study of the diction and grammar of the Apocalypse, and the very large amount of material contributed to the constitution of a text. The value of the authorities is discussed and estimated on pp. clx-clxxxiii. The place of pre-eminence is vindicated for A. Twenty-two cursives have been collated for this edition. In this department Dr Charles makes generous

acknowledgement of his obligations to the Rev. F. S. Marsh, and to other scholars.

It is inevitable that a reviewer should devote most space to the points in which he disagrees with the reviewed. I should be very sorry if I did not leave the impression on the reader that he will find in this work of Dr Charles's ample evidence of the labour that has been spent on it, and a mine of information about apocalyptic literature in general and this Apocalypse in particular. But I do think that it has defects, and that one of them is that the editor is too sure that he knows what the Seer ought to have written, and is too ready to rule out anything that runs counter to his view.

Ungracious as it may seem to end with further criticism, I must find place to record one or two points that need correction. On pp. xlv-1 there is a discussion of the traditions of John the Apostle's residence at Ephesus, and of his martyrdom at the hands of the Jews before A. D. 70. The first of these Dr Charles rejects, the other he accepts. Under the former heading he speaks of the silence of ecclesiastical writers down to A. D. 180 as to the residence of John the Apostle in Asia Minor. I find neither here nor elsewhere any mention of the *Acts of John*, and this omission is surprising and disquieting, for that book is an unequivocal second-century witness to the Asia Minor tradition, and should certainly have been taken into account somewhere and at some length. Under the second heading—the story of the martyrdom—I demur to the statement that De Boor's Papias-fragment comes from 'an Oxford MS (7th or 8th cent.)'. The Baroccian MS 142 is a paper book of the fourteenth century. Dom J. Chapman's work on this and the kindred fragment of George Hamartolus is worth consulting, as is also his explanation of the supposed confusion of the two Philips, Apostle and Evangelist (Charles, p. 1; Chapman, *John the Presbyter*, 1911).

I demur also to the words 'certain ancient writers imply or recount the martyrdom'. Those who are cited certainly do not recount it, in fact no writer does; and I should excise from the list (1) the *Martyrium Andreae* as a most shaky authority,¹ (2) Chrysostom, whose words cannot be made to bear the required meaning, (3) the Muratorian Canon, the exposition of which is very forced. The Syriac Martyrology of 411 is quoted in Greek, I know not why. Of the Calendar of Carthage this is said, 'there is the entry "Commemoration of St John Baptist, and of James the Apostle, whom Herod slew"'. Since in the same calendar the Baptist is commemorated on June 24,

¹ The opening paragraphs of this particular *Martyrium* cannot safely be taken to depend upon the ancient Acts, which, as Flamion has shewn, are themselves of the third century, and not early in that century.

it is clear that John the son of Zebedee is here intended.' But is it not certain that the feast of June 24 commemorated, here as elsewhere, the *birth* of the Baptist? In short, whatever may be the truth about the martyrdom, I do not feel that Dr Charles has made belief in it more reasonable.

I cannot, however, make a final end on this note. Dr Charles's work on the Apocalypse, if not final (what work is final?), has positive merits which go far to outweigh the defects I have had to notice. Questions of interpolations, dislocations, lacunae, sources (and may I add, plan?), still remain controversial: but in no other commentary can we find so full an exposition of three centrally important topics: the relation of the writer to the other books of Scripture, and to the rest of the apocalyptic literature; the ideas and beliefs which colour his visions; his style and diction; and the constitution of the text of his book.

Saint Jean: L'Apocalypse, par le P. E-B. ALLO des frères prêcheurs, Professeur à l'Université de Fribourg (Suisse). 'Études Bibliques': Librairie V. Lecoffre, J. Gabalda, Éditeur, Paris, 1921. Large 8vo, Introd. pp. cclxviii. Text with Translation and Commentary and Indexes pp. 373.

IN this substantial volume we have an excellent presentation of a more conservative view of the Apocalypse, written from the Roman Catholic standpoint. Dr Charles's work was not in Professor Allo's hands; he wrote just before its appearance. He has, however, made considerable use of the same author's *Studies on the Apocalypse*. Of all commentators he attributes the greatest weight to Dr Swete, 'commentateur profond, érudit et pieux'. 'Son ouvrage, qui pourrait presque être signé d'un catholique, est celui auquel nous devons le plus pour notre commentaire.' It is pleasant to read this tribute, and, generally, to note Professor Allo's intimate acquaintance with the work of English scholars. But, in fact, the whole book is pleasant to read: it is, moreover, adequately *documenté*, and, above all, sympathetic. It would be unjust and untrue to say that Dr Charles was not in sympathy with the Book upon the study of which he has lavished the best part of his time; but the fact remains that the stress he lays upon interpolations, dislocations, and other blemishes which he finds in the text has a rather derogatory effect, which I doubt not is quite out of harmony with his own real attitude towards the Apocalypse.

A very few notes on Professor Allo's main positions are all that can be given here. For him there are no dislocations or important inter-

polations in the text. He is willing in theory to admit the idea of the use of sources by the writer, but 'Il n'y a guère que xiv 14-20, la scène de la "moisson" et de la "vendange", avec son coloris et sa structure tout à fait hébraïque, qui nous inspire quelques doutes sérieux'. For him the writer is John the Apostle, and the date somewhere in the two last years of Domitian's reign. The Gospel, also the work of the Apostle, is slightly later. The gulf which separates the two books is bridged by the consideration of the very different environment of the author at Patmos and at Ephesus. 'L'Apocalypse . . . porte des traces de gêne, de précipitation, par-ci par-là même de véritables distractions . . . C'est l'œuvre d'un génie contrarié, que des circonstances extérieures ont contraint à livrer à la publicité, pour ainsi dire, son brouillon.' Then came the return from exile—'Rentré dans une existence normale, et, comme a su bien l'exprimer Ramsay, mûri définitivement par l'épreuve . . . le disciple bien-aimé devait, peu d'années après, donner à l'Église et au monde une œuvre plus sublime encore, son Évangile'. The large section of the Introduction which is devoted to the exposition of this thesis puts an unpopular view with clearness and force.

The plan of the Apocalypse is set forth on pp. lxxv-xciii. Professor Allo sees in vi-xi 18 the 'exécution des décrets du Livre aux sept sceaux', and in xi 15-xxi 8 the 'exécution des décrets du Petit Livre que Jean a reçu des mains de l'Ange'. In a previous chapter (vii) the Apocalypticist's methods are examined at great length, and stress is laid upon his habit of dovetailing one section of his book into another by means of anticipatory visions, and upon the constant presence of antitheses, of septenaries, and of a 'rythme ternaire'. In the setting forth of all this, musical analogies are often and effectively employed. Professor Allo's instinct for perceiving the literary and artistic greatness of the Apocalypse is to me a welcome feature in his book.

Needless to say, he supports many positions, besides that regarding authorship and date, which are strongly contested: I will single out one to which a lengthy excursus (p. 292) is devoted: 'Il n'y a pas proprement succession chronologique, mais plutôt simultanéité, entre les réalités du Millénaire et celles des visions précédentes'. 'La prophétie du Millénium, qui fait parfaitement corps avec les autres prophéties du livre, est simplement la figure de la domination spirituelle de l'Église militante, unie à l'Église triomphante, depuis la glorification de Jésus jusqu'à la fin du monde'. Whatever difficulties Professor Allo's readers may feel in accepting such propositions as this, they will at least not find reason to complain that he has failed to acquaint himself with the work of other scholars. His equipment for the task he has undertaken is thorough, and I can sincerely commend his book.

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