

## ARTICLE III.

## THE AUTHOR OF THE APOCALYPSE.

BY PROF. R. D. C. ROBBINS, MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE.

*Reasons for the following Discussion.*

To some persons it may seem useless to occupy the pages of the Bibliotheca with an argument in favor of the genuineness of the Apocalypse, and of its composition by John the beloved apostle. It is enough for them that it is prefaced with the words: "The Revelation of Jesus Christ . . . . to his servant *John*," or "*John* to the seven churches which are in Asia," and "*I John* who am also your brother and companion in tribulation . . . . was in the isle called Patmos," etc.; and that near the close it is said, "*I John* saw the holy city," etc. Others, however, from the peculiarities of the book, may be inclined to excuse themselves from its study with the lingering feeling that while it has indeed "some things hard to be understood," it yet does not come under the injunction: "search *the scriptures*, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me."

Such certainly has been the feeling of some in modern days; and some, as Oeder, Semler, and Corrodi, in Germany, have opposed it with bitterness and acrimony, and denied it aesthetical merit as well as inspiration.

The majority of the leading writers in Germany are unequivocal in their denial of its apostolic origin. De Wette says: "In New Test. criticism nothing stands so firm as that the apostle John, if he be the writer of the Gospel and the First Epistle did not write the Apocalypse; or if the latter be his work, that he is not the author of the former."<sup>1</sup> Ewald is equally positive in his opinion. "That the Apocalypse was not written by the same author who composed the

<sup>1</sup> Einl. N. Test., § 189.

Gospel and Epistles is," says he, "clear as the light of the sun."<sup>1</sup> Credner, too, expresses himself to the same effect: "Between the author of the Apocalypse and the apostle John there exists a diversity so deeply pervading, that even to the mere supposition, that the Gospel and First Epistle were the productions of the same mind, when it had attained to higher spiritual progress, which at an earlier period would have composed the Apocalypse, no place can be given; since it would be altogether unnatural and inadmissible."<sup>2</sup> Others, as F. Lücke, Bleek, and Schott, might be quoted to the same purpose.

At the beginning of the Reformation, as well as more recently in Germany, the Apocalypse was discarded. Luther says: "There are many reasons why I regard this book as neither apostolical nor prophetic. First, and principally, the apostles do not make use of visions, but prophecy in clear and plain language, as do Peter, Paul, and Christ also in the Gospel; for it is suitable to the apostolic office to speak clearly and without figure or vision respecting Christ and his acts. There is also no prophet in the Old Testament, not to mention the New, who treats of visions throughout, so that the fourth book of Esdras is almost equal to it in my estimation; and certainly I cannot perceive that it proceedeth from the Holy Spirit. Besides, it seems to me too much for him to enjoin it rigorously on his readers to regard his own work as of more importance than any other sacred book, and to threaten that if any one should take aught away from it, God will take away from him his part in the book of life. Again, even if they are to be blessed who hold to what is contained in it, no man knows what that is, much less what *holding to it* means. The curse is all the same as though we had it not; and many more valuable books exist for us to hold to. Many of the Fathers, too, rejected it long ago; and though St. Jerome employs big words, and says that it is above all praise, and contains as

<sup>1</sup> Comm. p. 76.

<sup>2</sup> Einl. § 267. The above are quoted by Stuart, Comm., Introd. § 17.

many mysteries as words, yet he cannot prove that; and in several places his praise is moderate. Finally, let every man think of it as his spirit prompts him. My spirit cannot adapt itself to the book; and it is reason enough for me why I should not esteem it very highly that Christ is neither taught in it nor acknowledged, which above all things an apostle is bound to do; for he says (Acts i.) *ye shall be my witnesses*. I abide, therefore, by the books that give Christ to me clearly and purely."<sup>1</sup> Luther subsequently became more mild and reasonable in his opposition to it, although he does not seem ever to have cordially accepted it as divine: "We have," he says, "hitherto, on account of these doubtful interpretations and hidden meanings, left it to itself, especially since one of the ancient Fathers believed that it was not written by the apostle, as is related in Lib. iii. Hist. Eccles."<sup>2</sup> In this uncertainty we, for our part, let it remain; but do not prevent others from taking it to be the work of St. John the apostle, if they choose."<sup>3</sup> Others of the Reformers, as Zuingli, Carlstadt, and Erasmus, agree with Luther in denying that the Apocalypse is a "divine book."

Even Professor Stuart says: "there are so many apparent difficulties in the way of giving credit to the alleged apostolic origin of the Apocalypse, that it may easily be believed by even a fair-minded critic, who should proceed only a moderate length in the examination of the question of authorship, that grounds are not wanting to persuade one to doubt or disbelieve such an origin. Indeed we know that such is the state of the case. My own mind, if I may be permitted to speak of myself, has in the different stages of examination, gone through a process of this sort to a certain extent. I have never positively disbelieved the *apostolical* origin of the book; but I have, in certain states of knowledge and certain stages of inquiry, been compelled to hold myself in

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Davidson, Introd., Vol. III. 550, 551.

<sup>2</sup> This passage of Eusebius is quoted and commented upon below, in examining the testimony of that historian.

<sup>3</sup> Davidson, Vol. III. 551.

suspense, and wait for more light." If, then, anything can be accomplished in rescuing any from a state of suspense into which they may have fallen, by a brief outline of the arguments for the apostolic origin of the Apocalypse, our labor will not have been in vain. The discussion naturally falls into two general divisions, the *external* argument, i. e. the reception which the book received in the church of the early ages; and the *internal*, i. e. the declarations in the book itself, and the characteristics of form, style, and sentiment, when compared with the other works of the reputed author.

### I. EXTERNAL ARGUMENT.

*Proof that John the Apostle was the Author, from the Belief and Testimony of the early Fathers and the Church itself.*

Direct testimony to the Johannean authorship of the Revelation, in the generation immediately following the death of the apostle, i. e. from the end of the first to the middle of the second century, is not found, and could hardly be expected on the supposition that the apostle John is the author. Had his claim been questioned, there would doubtless have been allusion to it; but now there is merely incidental reference to it in verbal coincidences, as in other acknowledged apostolical productions.

In the "Shepherd of Hermas," the references, which may be found in Lardner and Kirchofer, are such as to indicate that the author of it had perhaps read and imitated the Apocalypse.<sup>1</sup>

Ignatius, a contemporary of John, makes no direct reference to the Revelation or the circumstances attending the life of John, in his works now extant; but there are some coincidences of language which have been referred to as showing familiarity with that writing.<sup>2</sup> Still, as Barnes

<sup>1</sup> Lardner, Vol. II. 69, 87.

<sup>2</sup> E.g. Ep. ad Romanos: "In the patience of Jesus Christ," Rev. i. 9; Ep. ad Eph., sect. 9: "Stones of the temple of the Father, prepared for the building of God," Rev. xxi. 2-19; and, as added by Mr. Knight in his "New Argument

says :<sup>1</sup> " It must be admitted that this coincidence of language does not furnish any certain proof that Ignatius had seen the Apocalypse, though the language is such as he *might* have used if he had seen it. There was no known necessity, however, for his referring to this book if he was acquainted with it, and nothing can be inferred from his silence."

Of Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, who was in part contemporary with John, we have only one relic — his epistle to the Philippians. There is, however, an epistle of the church in Smyrna to the churches in Pontus, in reference to the martyrdom of Polycarp, in which Elliot and others claim that there is allusion to the Apocalypse, but without much evidence. Polycarp is here, however, referred to as furnishing *indirect* testimony to the apostolic origin of the Apocalypse. " As Polycarp was the personal friend and attendant of John, so was Irenaeus of Polycarp. Now Irenaeus everywhere, and on all occasions, testifies his full belief in the apostolic origin of the Apocalypse. Could he have done so if Polycarp had not believed the same? And must not Polycarp have certainly known what was the fact in regard to the authorship of the Apocalypse?"<sup>2</sup> A remark of Irenaeus upon the reading in xiii. 18.  $\chi\xi\xi$ , as substantiated by those who had seen John face to face (*ἐκείνων τῶν κατ' ὄψιν τὸν Ἰωάννην ἑωρακότων*, Lib. V. 30. 1.) gives additional force to this testimony, since Polycarp is doubtless prominent in the mind of Irenaeus in this remark, and he could not have failed to refer to it if he had differed with him in his general opinion of the whole book.

Papias, who is declared by Irenaeus to be a *hearer of John* and a friend (*ἑταῖρος*) of Polycarp, is evidently supposed by that author<sup>3</sup> to have derived his millenarian views from the

for the Genuineness and Authenticity of the Revelation of John," Ep. ad. Philad., sect. 6: " If they do not speak of Jesus Christ, they are but *sepulchral pillars*, and upon them are written only the names of men," Rev. iii. 12. Quoted by Davidson and Barnes.

<sup>1</sup> Introduction to Comm., p. 12.

<sup>2</sup> Stuart's Comm., Introd. § 17 (2).

<sup>3</sup> V. 33.

Apocalypse. The same thing is implied in a remark of Eusebius, with the additional idea that the work from which his views were derived were of *apostolic*, i. e. Johannean origin, for no other apostle than John was ever thought of by the ancients as its author.<sup>1</sup> But we have direct testimony in the latter part of the fifth century and the beginning of the sixth, from Andreas, bishop of Caesarea, and his successor Arathos, that Papias received the Apocalypse as inspired: "In regard now to the inspiration of the book, we think it superfluous to speak further, since the blessed Gregory the *Θεολόγον*, and Cyril, and moreover those of an earlier age, Papias, Irenaeus, Methodius, and Hippolitus, bear witness to the credibility of this work."<sup>2</sup> Andreas not only thus refers to Papias, but in commenting on Rev. xii. 7 cites two passages from him. This *inspiration* is equivalent to Johannean authorship, as none but apostles and those who wrote at their dictation were counted worthy of the appellation *inspired*.

Melito, bishop of Sardis, "wrote a work exclusively upon this book," calling it the Apocalypse of John (*τῆς ἀποκαλύψεως Ἰωάννου*).<sup>3</sup> Barnes sums up the value of his testimony thus: "(a) Melito was bishop of one of the churches to which the Apocalypse was directed; (b) he lived near the time of John; (c) he was a diligent student on this very subject; (d) he had every opportunity of ascertaining the truth on the subject; (e) he regarded it as the work of the apostle John; (f) and he wrote a treatise, or commentary, on it as an inspired book. It is not easy to conceive of stronger testimony in favor of the book."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ἄ καὶ ἡγοῦμαι, τὰς ἀποστολικὰς παραδεξάμενον διηγήσεις, ὑπολαβεῖν, τὰ ἐν ὑποδείγμασι πρὸς αὐτῶν μυστικῶς εἰρημένα μὴ συνεωρακότα, κ. τ. λ. Hist., III. 39. See a full discussion of the testimony of Papias in Hengstenberg's Commentary, Vol. II. 395 seq.

<sup>2</sup> Περὶ μέντοι τοῦ Θεοκνεύστου τῆς βίβλου περιττὸν μακρύνει τὸν λόγον ἡγοῦμεθα, τῶν μακαρίων, Γρηγορίου φημι τοῦ Θεολόγου, καὶ Κυρίλλου, προσέτι δὲ καὶ τῶν ἀρχαιότερων, Παππίου, Ἰρηναίου, Μεθοδίου, καὶ Ἰππολίτου ταύτῃ προσμαρτυρούντων τὸ ἀξιόπιστον. Comm. on Apocal. Quoted by Stuart in his Introd. and by Hug in Introd., Vol. I. 652.

<sup>3</sup> Eusebius, Eccl. Hist., p. 26, quoted by Davidson.

<sup>4</sup> Comm., Introd. xvi.

Melito seems to have made this book not only the object of his special study, but to have taken it into his heart, and allowed it to have a moulding influence upon his character. Hence, probably, he gained the reputation of having a spirit of prophecy. Polycrates of Ephesus, says of him (Euseb., ch. V. 24), shortly after his death: "And Melito the eunuch who accomplished everything in the Holy Spirit (τὸν ἐν ἁγίῳ πνεύματι πάντα πολιτευσάμενον), who rests at Sardis, waiting for the visitation from heaven, in which he shall rise from the dead." Jerome also says of him, that he was accounted "by the most of our people" as a prophet.<sup>1</sup>

Justin Martyr flourished about the middle of the second century. He was a Greek by birth, and a heathen philosopher until he was converted to Christianity, about 132. After that time, he travelled in Egypt, Italy, and Asia Minor, and, according to Eusebius, held his "dialogue with Tripho the Jew," at Ephesus. He expressly attributes the Revelation to John the Apostle. "And since," he says, "among us a man named John, one of Christ's apostles, in the revelation made to him, prophesied that the believers in our Messiah should live a thousand years in Jerusalem,"<sup>2</sup> etc. This passage (the genuineness of which Rettig in vain attempted to impugn, as it is found in all the manuscripts of the work, and was unquestionably received when Eusebius wrote his Ecclesiastical History; for he says, he [Justin] mentions the Apocalypse of John, and says expressly [σαφῶς] that it belongs to the apostle) not only shows what Justin's belief was, but that it was a belief that would not be questioned, as it is adduced in proof of a controverted dogma,<sup>3</sup> and at Ephesus, "where," according to Hengsten-

<sup>1</sup> Hengstenberg's Comm., Vol. II. 412.

<sup>2</sup> Καὶ ἐπειδὴ καὶ παρ' ἡμῶν ἀνὴρ τις, ᾧ ὄνομα Ἰωάννης, εἰς τῶν ἀποστόλων τοῦ Χριστοῦ, ἐν Ἀποκαλύψει γενομένη αὐτῷ, χίλια ἔτη ποιήσειεν, ἐν Ἱερουσαλήμ, τοὺς τῷ ἡμετέρῳ Χριστῷ πιστεύσαντας προεφῆτηεν, κ. τ. λ. Dial. cum Tryph., c. 80 and 81.

<sup>3</sup> See Stuart's Introd., § 17 (4); Hengstenberg's Comm., Vol. II. 407, and likewise Schott, Lücke, Credner, and others upon this point.

berg, "the best information was to be obtained regarding the origin of the Apocalypse."

Besides, this direct mention of the Apocalypse does not stand alone, as has been sometimes alleged, but is "the centre of a wide circle of unquestionable references."<sup>1</sup> So many and distinct are they, that Hengstenberg thinks he has found in them an explanation of the passage in the Catalogue of Jerome, in which he attributes commentaries on the Apocalypse to Justin and Irenaeus." "It was long," he says, "before a proper commentary on the Apocalypse appeared, but at a comparatively early period the materials for such a work were prepared. A purpose in regard to this is found even in Papias, who expressly intimates, that he meant to give an exposition of this book, as well as of the discourses of the apostles. But Justin Martyr and Irenaeus, with whom also may be coupled Melito, were the first who endeavored seriously to make good such a purpose. Often do we perceive in them the effort to arrange the contents of the Apocalypse in connection with the whole scheme of biblical truth, to form a bridge between it and the Christian views and sentiments of the time, and to break through the shell of its figurative language into the kernel of its ideas. We could give from Irenaeus especially a series of passages which would be similar to a commentary, if not on the whole, yet certainly on particular parts of the Apocalypse. If the peculiar character of the book and its relation to the Greek spirit is duly considered, it will be manifest that the matter could proceed in no other way, and that proper exegetical works could only begin to appear at a later period. But so much is clear from this expression of Jerome, that he had read Justin more attentively than our modern critics, who have been so sadly perplexed with his statement."<sup>2</sup>

A passage in Polycrates, bishop of Ephesus in the latter half of the second century, is worthy of notice here. In a

<sup>1</sup> See the references in Hengstenberg's Commentary, Vol. III. 408 seq.

<sup>2</sup> Comm., II. 410, 411.

letter to Victor and the church of Rome (Euseb. B. III. 31 and V. 24) in enumerating the illustrious dead who had adorned the church in Asia, he says: "We have also to add John, who rested on the Lord's bosom, who was a *priest that bore the holy plate on the forehead* (τὸ πέταλον) and a *witness* and teacher; he reposes at Ephesus." Hengstenberg here naturally finds a plain allusion in the characteristics of John to his different writings. The words: "who rested on the Lord's bosom," taken from, also characterizes, his Gospel; "a priest that bore the holy plate on his forehead, and a witness," refer to the Apocalypse; and "a teacher," to the Epistles, where the address, "my children," is so frequent.<sup>1</sup>

Theophilus, bishop of Antioch, a man of some note, also in the latter half of the second century, in a book against the heresy of Hermogenes, drew arguments from the *Apocalypse of John*.<sup>2</sup> That by John was meant John the Apostle, and that the Apocalypse was quoted as scripture, there cannot be much doubt.

A very similar remark is made by Eusebius in respect to the book of Apollonius, a writer of Asia Minor, against the Montanists: "He employs testimony from the Apocalypse of John."<sup>3</sup> What John is meant is shown by the next clause: "And he relates that a dead person was raised by this same John, through divine power."

Irenaeus, bishop of Lyons, is a witness whose testimony if it stood alone, would be difficult to combat. His life extended back to "the first succession of the apostles" (Euseb. V. 20), and he was intimately acquainted with those who had been associated with John, as Polycarp, Papias, and others; he even appeals to the testimony of those who had seen John in respect to the number 666 in Rev. xiii. 18. His faithfulness in recording and handing down the tradi-

<sup>1</sup> Comm., II. 412, 413.

<sup>2</sup> Euseb. Eccl. Hist. IV. 24: ἐν ᾧ ἐκ τῆς Ἀποκαλύψεως Ἰωάννου κέχρηται μαρτυρίας.

<sup>3</sup> Κέχρηται δὲ καὶ μαρτυρίας ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰωάννου ἀποκαλύψεως.

tions of the church un mutilated is abundantly established. Neander, in his Church History, says of him: "From the school of John in Asia Minor there went forth an impulse, opposing itself to the arbitrary speculations of the Gnostics, which sought to preserve and uphold in their integrity the fundamental doctrines of Christianity, and to separate from them all false ingredients. And it was this impulse which was carried into the West by Irenaeus, who had been trained in Asia Minor in the school of those worthy presbyters, *the disciples of the Apostle John.*"<sup>1</sup>

Now what is the proof that he furnishes of the authenticity of the Apocalypse? It is unnecessary to quote only some of the more prominent passages. Contr. Haer. IV. 20, 11 he cites at length Rev. i. 12-16 with the words: "But John also, the disciple of our Lord, seeing in the Apocalypse the priestly and glorious advent,"<sup>2</sup> etc. In V. 26 he quotes xvii. 12 seq., using the preface: "John, the disciple of our Lord, makes known,"<sup>3</sup> etc. The same or similar language is used in IV. 30. 4; 21. 3; V. 35. 2; 36. 3. In other passages, as V. 30, the argument is based upon the idea that John is the author of the Apocalypse. And if any proof were necessary what John is designated so often by the words *Johannes Domini discipulus*, he says in III. 1, "that he also wrote the Gospel."<sup>4</sup> In these references of Irenaeus, many more of which might be quoted,<sup>5</sup> we have not only proof what Irenaeus's opinion was, but what was the common opinion of those who were contemporaneous with John, and of those of the next generation after them,

<sup>1</sup> See additional proofs on this point in Hengstenberg, Vol. II. 421.

<sup>2</sup> Sed et Johannes Domini discipulus in Apocalypsi sacerdotalem et gloriosum regni ejus videns adventum, etc.

<sup>3</sup> Significabit Johannes Domini discipulus in Apocalypsi, etc.

<sup>4</sup> *Stuart* gives the following list of passages, many of which are quite long:

Rev. i. 12 seq.; ii. 1, p. 256 in Mussuet's edition; i. 15, p. 244; i. 17, 18, p. 256; iii. 7, p. 253; iv. 7, p. 190; v. 6, p. 256; vi. 2, p. 258; xi. 19, p. 252; xii. 2 seq. (nearly the whole chapter), p. 326; xvii. 8, p. 330; xvii. 12 seq. p. 323; xix. 11 seq., p. 256; xix. 20, p. 326; xx. 6, p. 334; xx. 11 seq., p. 336; xxi. 1 seq., p. 336; xxi. 3, p. 252; xxi. 5, 6, p. 336.

since he refers back with so much trust and confidence to their authority. He says: "I can still point out the place where the blessed Polycarp sat and spake, his going in and out, his manner of life and the shape of his person; and the discourses which he addressed to the people; and how he told of his converse with John and the rest who had seen the Lord; and how he remembered their sayings, and what he had heard of them concerning the Lord, and concerning his miracles and his doctrine."

The estimation in which the Apocalypse was held by the church is perhaps better exhibited in the *Epistle* written in the name of the churches of *Vienne and Lyons* to the churches of Asia Minor, about 177, concerning the steadfastness of the martyrs in persecution under Marcus Aurelius. "At the very beginning of this production," says Hengstenberg, "the servants of Christ, write of 'the great anger of the heathen against the saints' with reference to Rev. xi. 18; 'and the heathen were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time . . . . to give reward to thy servants, the prophets and the saints.'" <sup>1</sup> Vettius Epagathus is described as one who "was and is a genuine disciple of Christ, following the Lamb wherever he goes," <sup>2</sup> applying to him the words of Rev. xiv. 4: "which follow the Lamb wherever he goeth." <sup>3</sup> Sanctus is said to have been "refreshed and strengthened by the celestial fountain of the water of life, which flows from the body of Christ." So in Rev. vii. 17: "The Lamb in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters," and xxi. 6: "And to him that is athirst I will give to drink of the fountain of the water of life freely." There are numerous similar allusions, but I will refer here only to one more, which is striking, as referring to the fulfilment of the declaration in Rev. xxii. 11: "That the scripture might

<sup>1</sup> Comm., II. 416.

<sup>2</sup> Ἦν γὰρ καὶ ἔστι γνήσιος Χριστοῦ μαθητῆς, ἀκολουθῶν τῷ ἀρνίῳ, ὅπου ἐν ὅπῃ γρ.

<sup>3</sup> Οἱ ἀκολουῦντες τῷ ἀρνίῳ ὅπου ἐν ὅπῃ γρ.

be fulfilled, Let the wicked be wicked still, and the righteous be righteous still.”<sup>1</sup> Hengstenberg says well of this letter: “It affords us a deep insight into the position which the Apocalypse then held in the church. We are not met there with an inactive theoretical conviction of its genuineness; we see how it formed during the persecution the centre of the church’s views and feelings; how from it especially sprung the invincible courage of the martyrs; how its threatenings and its promises wrought with such power upon the minds of believers that all the fury of the heathen was baffled and put to shame! We perceive the high importance which belongs to this particular portion of scripture, which the church often fails in *quiet* times to understand, and then suffers itself to be drawn into a denial of its apostolic origin!”

Hippolytus, a disciple of Irenaeus, seems to have written an apology for the Revelation, probably in opposition to the Montanists, as Ebedjesu<sup>2</sup> says of him: “St. Hippolytus, martyr and bishop, composed a work concerning the dispensation . . . . and an apology for the Apocalypse and Gospel of John the apostle and evangelist.”<sup>3</sup> He also often quotes from the Apocalypse. In his work *De Antichristo*, § 36, he says: “He [John], when he was in the isle of Patmos, sees the revelation of awful mysteries, declaring which he abundantly instructs others. Tell me, blessed John, apostle and disciple of the Lord, what thou didst see and hear respecting Babylon”; and then quotes the whole of Rev. xvii. and xviii. In § 50 he cites Rev. xiii. 18, with the words: “For John the prophet and apostle says.”<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ἰνα ἡ γραφή πληρωθῆ, ὁ ἄνομος ἀνομησάτω ἔτι, καὶ ὁ δίκαιος δικαιοδότης ἔτι. Euseb. Hist. Eccl., V. 1. See further references in Hengstenberg’s Comm., Vol. II. 416 seq.

<sup>2</sup> Asseman, in *Bibliothèque Oriental*, Vol. III. Part 1, p. 15, quoted by Davidson, *Introd.*, Vol. III. 542.

<sup>3</sup> Sanctus Hippolytus martyr et episcopus composuit librum de dispensatione . . . . et apologium pro Apocalypsi et evangelio Joannis apostoli et evangelistae.

<sup>4</sup> λέγει γὰρ ὁ προφήτης καὶ ἀπόστολος. In addition to these, Stuart cites §§ 47, 48, 50, 60, 65, and several passages where the Apocalypse is quoted by him.

At the beginning of the third century Clement of Alexandria, without question, also attributes the Apocalypse to John the apostle. He says; "He [the righteous man] will sit on the twenty-four thrones judging the people, as John says in the Apocalypse."<sup>1</sup> And again: "The Apocalypse says, I saw under the *altar* the souls of those who had been martyred, and to each one a white robe was given,"<sup>2</sup> words taken from Apocalypse vi. 9 and 11. Davidson also quotes another passage in which reference is made to Rev. xxi. 19 seq.: "And the twelve gates of the heavenly city, like the twelve precious stones, we regard as intimating the excellence of the grace of apostolic (or apostle's) voice."<sup>3</sup> Lücke justly says: "Clement of Alexandria used the Apocalypse without hesitation, and as if he had never heard of the opposition of the Alogi, as the work of the Apostle John."<sup>4</sup> "The well-known character of Clement," says Barnes, "makes his testimony of great value."

The declarations of the learned Tertullian, bishop of Carthage, are direct and explicit. It is unnecessary to quote but a small part of them. In reference to Rev. i. 16. he says: "For the *Apostle* John in the Apocalypse describes a sword proceeding out of the mouth of God, two-edged, sharp,"<sup>5</sup> etc. In the same writing, § 24, speaking of the New Jerusalem, he says: "Both Ezekiel knew of this, and the Apostle John saw it";<sup>6</sup> Rev. xxi. 2. In *De Pudicitia*, cap. 19, he speaks of the sentiments of Paul and John, and in so doing quotes largely from the Apocalypse, as contain-

<sup>1</sup> Ἐν τοῖς εἴκοσι, καὶ τέσσαρασι καθεδρεῖται θρόνοις, τὸν λαὸν κρίνων, ὡς φησὶν ἐν τῇ Ἀποκαλύψει Ἰωάννης. Strom., Lib. VI. 667, and Heb. IV. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Καὶ ἡ Ἀποκάλυψις φησὶ· Εἶδον τὰς ψυχὰς τῶν μαρτυρηκότων ὑποκάτω τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου, καὶ ἔδωκεν ἑκάστῳ στολὴ λευκή.

<sup>3</sup> Καὶ τὰς δώδεκα τῆς οὐρανοπόλεως πύλας, τιμίους ἀπειασμένους λίθοις, τὸ περιῶπον τῆς Ἀποστολικῆς φωνῆς αἰνιττεσθαι χάριτος ἐκδεχόμενα. Strom., Lib. II. 207.

<sup>4</sup> Komm., p. 314.

<sup>5</sup> Nam et apostolus Joannes in Apocalypsi ensem describit ex ore Dei prodeuntem, bis acutum, praeacutum, etc. Advers. Marcionem, III. 14.

<sup>6</sup> Hanc et Ezekiel novit et apostolus Joannes vidit.

ing the expression of John's views. In *De Resurrectione*, cap. 25, he appeals to Rev. vi. 9 respecting the souls of the martyrs as asking for retribution on the persecutors of the church, and also to various other passages in the Apocalypse, and cites them as scripture." We will quote but one more passage, although there are multitudes of the same general tenor of the preceding, penned both before and after he adopted the sentiments of the Montanists. This we quote because he refers to the opposition of Marcion to the Apocalypse, as of no significance in comparison with the united testimony of the successors of the bishops of the church back to the time of its composition: "We have churches the foster-children of John. For though Marcion rejects his Revelation, the succession of bishops traced to its origin is sufficient to establish the authorship of John."<sup>1</sup>

Origin, than whom no one is better qualified by judgment and learning to give testimony, does not question the authorship of the Apocalypse. In reference to the Hebrews he indicates that there are objections in respect to its Pauline origin; but not a question seems to have occurred to him in regard to the Revelation. In speaking of the canon of the New Testament according to Eusebius (*Hist. Eccl.*, VI. 25) he says: "*But what shall I say of him who leaned on the bosom of Jesus, viz. John? He has left us one Gospel, confessing that he could compose so many that the world could not contain them; and he moreover wrote also the Apocalypse, being commanded to keep silence and not write what the seven thunders uttered.*"<sup>2</sup> In *Commentary on John* he says: "John, the son of Zebadee, says in the Apocalypse."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Habemus et Joannis alumnas ecclesias. Nam etsi Apocalypsin ejus Marcion respuit, ordo tamen episcoporum ad originem recensens in Joannem stabit Auctorem. Contr. Marc. IV. 5.*

<sup>2</sup> *Τί δεῖ περὶ τοῦ ἀναπεσόντος λέγειν ἐπὶ τὸ στήθος τοῦ Ἰησοῦ, Ἰωάννου, . . . . Ἐγραψε δὲ καὶ τὴν Ἀποκάλυψιν, κελευσθεὶς σιωπῆσαι καὶ μὴ γράψαι τὰς τῶν ἑπτὰ βροντῶν φωνάς.*

<sup>3</sup> *Φησὶν οὖν ἐν τῇ Ἀποκαλύψει ὁ τοῦ Ζεβεδαίου Ἰωάννης.* Stuart also cites pp. 300, 303, ed. *Wirceb., Opp. I. pp. 34, 58, 755; II. pp. 169, 347, 473, 525, 632;*

Passing over the testimony of several persons of less note, as Nepos and Coracion, we come to Cyprian, bishop of Carthage, who often appeals to the Apocalypse as a part of the scripture, and as the composition of John. "In the Apocalypse the angel refused the adoration which John wished to render him," quoting Rev. xxii. 8.<sup>1</sup> Again: "The divine word in the Apocalypse declares that *the waters* designate the people, saying: "Aquae," etc. (Rev. xxii. 8).<sup>2</sup> A letter written to Cyprian, from several presbyters and deacons at Rome, in which the Apocalypse is cited, "quasi quadam tuba Evangelii," shows the estimation in which it was held there.<sup>3</sup>

Victorinus of Pettau, who suffered martyrdom under Diocletian A.D. 303, wrote a commentary on the Apocalypse, in which he frequently speaks of it as the work of John.<sup>4</sup> Methodius, bishop of Olympus, and Lactantius of Firmium, might both be quoted as recognizing the divine inspiration and Johannean origin of the Apocalypse;<sup>5</sup> but we pass on to Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria, about A.D. 326, who classes the Apocalypse among the books which he calls *canonical* and "the source of salvation; in which only is the true doctrine of religion declared; to which no man can add, and from which none can take away."

We need scarcely enumerate the several witnesses for the Apocalypse in the last half of the fourth century, such as Ephrem Syrus, Hilary of Poitiers, Epiphanius bishop of Salamis, Basil the Great, Gregory of Nyssa, Ambrose, Chrysostom, Tichonius, Julius Firmicus Maternus, Philastrius, Ruffinus, and others, showing how generally this book

III. pp. 60, 63, 75, 105, 405, 406, 408, 555, 719, 720, 867, 869, 909, 947, 961. "Nor are these," he says, "all," Comm., § 17 (14).

<sup>1</sup> In Apocalypsi, angelus Johanni volenti adorare se resistit, et dicit; Vide ne feceris, etc. Opp. p. 368.

<sup>2</sup> *Aquas* namque *populos* significare, in Apocalypsi *scriptura divina* declarat, dicens, Opp. p. 176. Cf. also pp. 59, 354, 400, 402, 403, 408, 410, 424, 425, 427, 430, etc.

<sup>3</sup> Opp. p. 58 seq., quoted by Stuart, § 17.

<sup>4</sup> See Stuart's Commentary, Vol. I. § 17.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

was acknowledged as belonging to the canon. Ruffinus not only gives his own opinion but, in speaking of the canonical books, in which he includes the Apocalypse, says: "These are the writers of the Old and New Testaments, which are esteemed such from the tradition of the Fathers, which were inspired by the Holy Spirit and intrusted to the church, as we learn from the writings of the Fathers." At the conclusion of this catalogue he adds: "These are the books which were incorporated into the canon by the Fathers, and have been designated by them as the proper sources of our faith."<sup>1</sup>

Augustine, bishop of Hyppo, constantly appeals to it as canonical, and quotes "John the apostle in the Apocalypse."<sup>2</sup> "John the evangelist in the book called the Apocalypse";<sup>3</sup> "the Apocalypse of that John who is the author of the Gospel,"<sup>4</sup> etc.

The learned and critical Jerome is not less explicit than Augustine. He shows that he was aware that objections had been raised against it, but that they were not of such a nature as to shake his faith, or that of the churches<sup>5</sup> about him, in it.<sup>6</sup> He speaks of John, in reference to his different writings, as *apostle*, *evangelist* and *prophet*.<sup>7</sup> In his epistle to Dardanus he says: "If the Latins do not receive the

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Hug's Introduction, p. 662.

<sup>2</sup> Johannes apostolus in Apocalypsi, Ep. 118.

<sup>3</sup> Joannes Evangelista in eo libro qui dicitur Apocalypsis. De Civitat. Dei XX. 7.

<sup>4</sup> Apocalypsi ipsius Joannis, cujus est hoc Evangelium. De Pecc. Mer. I. 27.

<sup>5</sup> Legimus in Apocalypsi Joannis, quas in *Ecclesiis* legitur et recipitur, neque enim inter Apocryphas scripturas habetur, sed inter ecclesiasticas, etc. Comm. on Ps. cxlix; quoted by Stuart, § 17.

<sup>6</sup> In his enumeration of the books of the canon of the Old and New Test. he includes the Apocalypse, of which he says: Apocalypsis Joannis tot habet sacramenta, quot verba. Parum dixi pro merito voluminis. Laus omnis inferior est. In verbis singulis multiplices latent intelligentiae. Opp. IV. 571 seq.

<sup>7</sup> Johannes et Apostolus et evangelista, et propheta. *Apostolus*, quia scripsit ad ecclesias ut magister; *evangelista* quia librum Evangelii condidit. . . . . *Propheta* vidit enim in Patmos insula, in quam fuerat a Domitiano principe ob Domini martyrium relegatus, *Apocalypsin* infinita futurorum mysteria continens. Opp., Vol. IV. 168, 169.

Epistle to the Hebrews among the canonical scriptures, so with equal freedom, the Greek churches do not receive John's Apocalypse. I, however, acknowledge both; for I do not follow the customs of the times, but the authority of older writers, who drew arguments from both, *as being canonical* and ecclesiastical writings, and not merely as Apocryphal books are sometimes used."<sup>1</sup>

The authority of two or three councils should here, perhaps, be attended to. That assembled at Hyppo in 393 is full and explicit in respect to the canonical character of the Apocalypse.<sup>2</sup> That held at Carthage in 397 is equally explicit.<sup>3</sup> In both these cases, as a matter of courtesy, they defer to the church at Rome;<sup>4</sup> but what the decision at Rome would be does not seem to be doubtful, since Innocent, bishop of Rome, in a letter to Exuperius, bishop of Toulouse, gives a catalogue of canonical books, in which the Apocalypse is included. There cannot be much doubt that from this time, the beginning of the fifth century, the Apocalypse was generally received by the churches. We will merely enumerate Sulpitius Severus, Innocent I., Primasius, Cassiodorus, the Synod of Toledo in 633, Isidorus of Seville, about 630, Nilus, Isidore of Pelusium, Dionysius the Areopagite, Cyrill of Alexandria, Andreas of Caesarea, Arethas, the fourth Council of Carthage, Jacob of Edessa, John of Damascus, Theophylact, Novatus and his followers, the Donatists, and Arians—persons of different countries and various phases of culture and modes of thought, who all received the Apocalypse as canonical and the work of John the apostle and evangelist.

*The alleged Testimony against the Authorship of the Apostle.*

In the last half of the second century the first intimation of any question in reference to the authenticity of the Apoc-

<sup>1</sup> Non ut interdum de apocryphis facere soleat, sed quasi canonicis et ecclesiasticis.

<sup>2</sup> See Mansi Nov. Collect. Concil., III. 924, Canon XXXVI.

<sup>3</sup> Canon, XLVII.

<sup>4</sup> De confirmando isto canone transmarina [Romana] ecclesia consulatur.

apocalypse is found; and indeed until the middle of the third century there is nothing which deserves the name of authority, or is really of any weight in an argument of this kind. The Montanists, as is well known, made their appearance as a sect toward the end of the second century. Montanus, the founder of the sect, supported his claim to be the Paraclete by John's Gospel, and drew proofs for the personal reign of Christ on the earth of a thousand years from the Apocalypse. The opponents of this sect, instead of wresting these books from them by properly explaining them, and refuting their claims, took the short method of rejecting them both from the canon. From their rejection of these books they subsequently received the appellation Alogi (*Ἀλογοί*). It is plain that the only ground of their opposition to these books was the perversion of them by those whom they opposed, and their inability so to interpret them that their heresies should not receive support from them. They ascribed the writings of John to Cerinthus. "It is obvious," as Davidson says, "that they had no critical grounds for their decision. They appealed to no historical testimony. They relied upon doctrinal reasons alone; and these were of the weakest nature.<sup>1</sup> But it is unnecessary to delay upon this part of our argument, as even the present opponents of the Apocalypse, as Lücke and Credner, acknowledged that the opposition of the Alogi is "a mere makeshift," and that "it is as clear as the light, that they rejected it, not on any historical ground, . . . . but only and simply because of their exegetical ignorance of it, and from lack of being well informed in matters pertaining to polemical theology."<sup>2</sup>

The rejection of it by Marcion, who also mutilated Luke's Gospel, is merely accidentally mentioned by Tertullian, and passed over with the remark that John, the author

<sup>1</sup> *Introd.*, Vol. III. 545.

<sup>2</sup> See Stuart's *Introd. to Apoc.*, § 17. Lücke's *Comm.*, p. 306. Hengstenberg's *Commentary*, Vol. II. 424.

of it, was the first bishop of the seven Asiatic churches ;”<sup>1</sup> thus showing that he considered the doubt as utterly unfounded, and unworthy of further notice. It need only be added that the doubt of Marcion belongs to about the same time and cause as those of the Alogi previously spoken of.

Caius, a presbyter of Rome, who wrote at the beginning of the third century, in a Dialogue against the Montanist Proclus, according to Eusebius,<sup>2</sup> says : Moreover, Cerinthus, by revelations, as if written by a great apostle, deceptively imposes upon us narrations of wonderful things as shown to him by angels, saying, that after the resurrection Christ will reign on the earth, and that under this dispensation men will give themselves up to the enjoyment of the sensuous desires and pleasures at Jerusalem ; and as an enemy to the holy scriptures, and wishing to lead astray, he asserts that a space of a thousand years will be spent in marriage feasts,”<sup>3</sup> etc. The question has been much discussed whether the Apocalypse of John is here referred to and attributed to Cerinthus, or whether a forged Apocalypse of Cerinthus was then in existence, but has since been lost, or, what is much the same thing, whether Cerinthus was guilty of corrupting the Apocalypse of John, so as to make it assume his peculiar notions. A very brief view of the arguments used in respect to this matter is all that our limits allow.

The whole manner and import of the passage would seem to indicate that it does not refer to the Apocalypse, but to a work of Cerinthus. Cerinthus, by *revelations* (not

<sup>1</sup> Si Apocalypsin ejus Marcion respuit, ordo tamen episcoporum ad originem recensens, in Johannem stabit auctorem.

<sup>2</sup> Eccl. Hist., III. 28.

<sup>3</sup> Ἀλλὰ καὶ Κήρυκος, δ, δι' ἀποκαλύψεων ὡς ὑπὸ ἀποστόλου μεγάλου γεγραμμένων, τετραλογίας ἡμῖν ὡς δι' ἀγγέλων αὐτῷ δεδεγμένας ψευδόμενας ἐπεισάγει, λέγων· Μετὰ τὴν ἀνάστασιν ἐπέγειον εἶναι τὸ βασίλειον τοῦ Χριστοῦ, καὶ πάλιν ἐπιδυμίαις καὶ ἡδοναῖς ἐν Ἱερουσαλὴμ τὴν σάρκα πολιτευομένην δουλεῖν. Καὶ ἐχθρὸς ὑπάρχων ταῖς γραφαῖς τοῦ θεοῦ ἀριθμὸν χιλιεταετίας ἐν γάμψ ἑορτῆς θέλων πλατῆν λέγει γίνεσθαι.

a revelation, as Eusebius, in whom this passage is found, always designates the Apocalypse of John), *as if written by a great apostle, deceptively imposes upon us*, etc. And then the sentiments are so different from those obtained by any just interpretation of the work of John — *the reign of Christ on the earth after the resurrection, and devotion of men to sensuous desires and pleasures at Jerusalem, and a thousand years spent in nuptial feasts*. On the other hand, if Cerinthus had written such revelations, we should expect other notices of them in writers of the time. Only one author, as far as is known, makes any allusion to such a work of Cerinthus. Theodoret says: “Cerinthus forged certain revelations, as if he himself had seen them, and added descriptions of certain monstrous things, and declares that the kingdom of the Lord will be established on earth,”<sup>1</sup> etc. There does not, then, seem to be data for a positive opinion either, for or against the reference of this passage to the Apocalypse. Paulus, Hartwig, Hug, Barnes, and others maintain that it does not refer to the Apocalypse of John. Hug says: “Cerinthus, then, invented revelations in the name of a great apostle. The language is so general that it may have reference to Peter’s Apocalypse, or Paul’s, or even one bearing John’s name, and still not the one now in our possession. But, it will be said, the sequel points more definitely to John. . . . It rather evinces the contrary. The reign of a thousand years in the midst of sensual delights, which he [Cerinthus] cunningly devised out of enmity to the holy scriptures, seems to intimate a composition which was intended as a kind of counterpart to our Apocalypse. For if he maliciously invented a sensual reign of a thousand years out of opposition to the sacred scriptures, this opposition must have reference to John’s Apocalypse, which alone assigns to departed spirits a thousand years reign with

<sup>1</sup> Κήρυκτος καὶ ἀποκαλύψεις τινὰς ὡς αὐτὸς δεασάμενος ἐπλάσαστο, καὶ ἀπειλῶν τινῶν διδασκαλίας συνέθηκε, καὶ τοῦ κυρίου τὴν βασιλείαν ἐφησεν ἐπίγειον ἔσεσθαι. Fab. Haeret., II. 3.

Christ (xx. 4, 5).<sup>1</sup> Lücke, De Wette, Davidson, and others adopt the contrary opinion. But the question is hardly worth the time we have given to it, for the opinion of Caius is of very little importance, as it is plain that, if he referred to the Apocalypse of John, his opinion was the result of his opposition to Chiliasm, and of no more weight than that of the Alogi above referred to.<sup>2</sup>

The testimony of Dionysius of Alexandria is really the first of any weight, and when all the circumstances are considered, even this is shorn of most, if not all, of its critical value. He was a pupil of Origen, and bishop of Alexandria from 248 to 265. His work against Nepos, an Egyptian bishop, and a strenuous advocate of a literal millennium and earthly reign of Christ, led him to speak of the Apocalypse, upon which Nepos and his followers based their theories, and whose credit he therefore seemed to think it necessary to invalidate. He first refers to the opinions that had been previously promulgated, and says: "Some of those before us have rejected the book," etc. "The very inscription, they aver, is false, for John is not the author."<sup>3</sup> . . . . On the other hand, Cerinthus, he from whom the heresy was derived which is called after his name, gave to this his own work a name that was venerable, in order to obtain credit for it. For this is the purport of his doctrine, that Christ will reign on the earth, and that his kingdom will consist of those things which he, with his animal and carnal appetites, gloated over, — the gratification of the appetite, and sensual pleasures, i.e. in meats and drinks and marriage, and (as means by which such desires may be more decently gratified) in feasts and sacrifices and the slaughter of victims.<sup>4</sup>

The whole account of the opinion of those designated

<sup>1</sup> See Hug's *Introd.*, p. 660, and G. Paulus, *Comm. Theol. Hist. Cerinthi. illustr.*, Pars prior, § 30.

<sup>2</sup> See Stuart's *Commentary*, *Introd.*, § 17 (2).

<sup>3</sup> He does not here say the *ancients* (*ἀρχαῖοι ἄνθρωποι*, or some such phrase), but merely *τῶν τῶν πρὸ ἡμῶν*, some of our predecessors, those of the preceding generation. See Hug's *Introd.*, p. 653.

“his predecessors” shows that he refers merely to the opponents of the Millenarians, such as the Alogi and Marcion. The argument, as will not escape notice, is not that the contemporaries of the apostle gave the information that John did not compose the Apocalypse, or that well-informed men ascribed it to others than John, but that some persons had endeavored to “make it suspicious on the score of its contents,” and were not able to bring the slightest historical evidence against it.<sup>1</sup> It is plain, as Stuart says, that Dionysius had no knowledge of more weighty objections to the Apocalypse among his predecessors. For if he had, most surely “would he have produced them. Could he but have appealed to ancient tradition, i.e. to historical testimony, in favor of his position, it was impossible that he should have failed to perceive its superior importance and cogency; and of course he would have placed it in the front of all his arguments.”

Dionysius himself, it is plain, did not place much confidence in those whose opinions he quoted, but still, from the character of the book, conjectures that John the apostle was not the author. He goes through with the contents of the book, showing that it cannot be interpreted *literally*. It has, he supposes, some hidden and mysterious meaning that he cannot understand. “Not measuring or judging these things by our own reason, but assigning more to faith, I attribute to it things higher than can be comprehended by me. I do not reject those things which I cannot comprehend; but they are more the objects of my wonder because I can not fathom them.”<sup>2</sup> “That the author was called *John*, and that this composition is *John's*, I do not deny. I agree that it belongs to some holy and inspired man. I could not indeed concede that he was the apostle, the son of Zeb- edee, the brother of James, to whom belongs the Gospel according to John and the catholic epistle.” “My belief is, that another John, among those who lived in Asia, was the

<sup>1</sup> See Hug's *Introd.*, p. 656.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted by Stuart, *Commentary*, Introduction, § 17.

author; inasmuch as the report is, that there are two sepulchral monuments in Ephesus, each of which bears the name of John." This belief in another John as author is, as is plain, the merest conjecture. He pretends to no tradition to that effect, and offers no *proof* that there was any other John whose character, station, or attainments rendered it probable that he was the author. The writer claimed the name *John*, and the style and language and some of the thoughts (though he does not dwell much upon these) are different from those of the Gospel and Epistle of John; therefore some other John, of whom there were probably several, was the author. The evangelist nowhere in the Gospel and Epistle gives his name, or speaks of himself in the first person, but the author of the Apocalypse at the outset (i. 1) says: "The Revelation of Jesus Christ . . . . to his servant John;" and in verse 4: "John to the seven churches," etc. and again, verse 9: "I John, who also am your brother;" and then at the close, xxii. 8: "I John, who saw and heard these things." But the evangelist designates himself as, "The disciple whom Jesus loved" (John xxi. 7, 20), the brother of James, an eye and ear witness of Jesus. The Gospel and Epistle harmonize well together, and they commence in the same manner. The one: "In the beginning was the word;" the other: "that which was from the beginning." The Gospel: "The word became flesh," etc.; the Epistle exhibits the same thing with slight variations: "What we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes," etc. Dionysius gives some varieties in thought in the Apocalypse and the Gospel and Epistle, and likewise avers that the language is different: They (the Gospel and Epistle) are written not only without offence against the Greek idiom, but are most eloquent in diction, modes of reasoning, and arrangement of expression." "But I perceive that his (the author of the Apocalypse) diction and idiom is not accurate Greek, and that he uses barbarous expressions and solecisms."

These methods of proof will be canvassed when we speak

of the internal proofs of the authorship of John; they are only referred to here, to show what arguments Dionysius used against the Johannean authorship of the Apocalypse. It will be perceived that they are such, and such only, as are used in modern times; and in the historical argument his opinion is worth no more than that of any one candid scholar of the present day. Indeed it is worth far less, for he had not the facilities for interpreting the book that we now have, and was pressed upon and annoyed by those who wished to give it a literal interpretation, and substantiate sentiments in opposition to the whole tenor of the rest of the scriptures, and subversive of piety and good morals. Besides, as Hengstenberg says: "He comes direct from the classical literature of Greece, and is still destitute of any taste properly cultivated and formed of a sacred kind. The Greek spirit is not to be found in the book, which, more than any other, has deeply impressed on it the Old Testament, Israelitish character. For him it has something of a foreign, strange aspect."<sup>1</sup>

One further circumstance must not be passed over here. In a letter to Hermammon<sup>2</sup> upon Valerian and the persecution under him, written some years later than the work previously quoted, he says: "And to John was this likewise revealed. And there was given to him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemy (Apoc. xiii. 5). Both (viz. his speaking great things and blasphemy and the duration of the persecution) can be seen to have wonderfully taken place in Valerian." Hengstenberg thinks "There can be no doubt that the genuineness of the Apocalypse is here acknowledged. The John mentioned can be no other than the apostle. He utters the language not of concession but of conviction." It does not however, seem to us *certain* that John the apostle is here meant. Still it is not *improbable*; and "perhaps Dionysius during that persecution

<sup>1</sup> Comm., Vol. II. 427.

<sup>2</sup> Eusebius, VII. c. 10.

(under Valerian), in which he had many things to suffer,<sup>1</sup> obtained an insight into the glory of the book, and had his eyes also opened for apprehending the testimony of the church. We can also suppose that in his work on the promises, Dionysius, carried away by his polemical zeal, had given expression to his views only on one side, and that he here brings out the other side, his previous doubts having at bottom appeared to himself no more than doubts."<sup>2</sup>

Eusebius, in the first part of the fourth century, half a century later than Dionysius, sometimes speaks hesitatingly of the Apocalypse. "Among the writings of John, besides the Gospel, his first Epistle is acknowledged, without dispute, both by those of the present day, and also by the ancients; the other two Epistles, however, are disputed. But on the Revelation contrary views are still maintained. But we will at some convenient time give our judgment upon it, as it respects the testimony of the ancients." In the following chapter (xxv.), after speaking of the scriptures generally acknowledged as divine (*ὁμολογουμένων Δείων γραφῶν*), he says: "to these may be added, if it seem good (*εἰ φανεῖν*), the Revelation of John." He afterwards goes on to enumerate the disputed (*νόθα* or *ἀντιλεγόμενα*) books, and adds: "Moreover, as I said, the Apocalypse of John [may be added], if it seem good (*εἰ φανεῖν*), which, as before said, some reject, but others acknowledge as genuine."<sup>3</sup> Eusebius never seems to have redeemed his pledge made in the first of the above quotations. But when he again speaks at length of the Apocalypse in vii. 25, he quotes the passage of Dionysius above commented upon, and seems inclined to adopt substantially his view, attributing it to the presbyter John, plainly from the same reasons, his anti-millenarian belief, and his inability fully to reconcile the Apocalypse

<sup>1</sup> Eusebius, VIII. 11.

<sup>2</sup> Hengstenberg's Commentary, Vol. II. 430.

<sup>3</sup> III. 24. Τῆς δ' ἀποκαλύψεως ἐφ' ἑκάτερον ἐτι νῦν παρὰ τοῖς πολλοῖς περιέλεται ἡ βιβλία. ὁμοίως γὰρ μὴν ἐκ τῆς τῶν ἀρχαίων μαρτυρίας ἐν οἰκείῳ καιρῷ τὴν ἐπικρισιν δέξεται καὶ αὐτή.

with views obtained from other parts of the scriptures. Hengstenberg says of the manner in which Eusebius speaks of the Apocalypse: "Clearly and distinctly he recognizes the fact, that the book had the unanimous approval of antiquity, and the external grounds were entirely on its side. He makes no attempt whatever to invalidate the importance of this testimony, but acknowledges its full value."<sup>1</sup> In accordance with his knowledge of the historical testimony, in its favor, he at times, when nothing called to mind the difficulties arising from internal characteristics, quotes it, without question, as the work of John the evangelist.<sup>2</sup>

It has been urged as an objection to the canonical authority of the Apocalypse that it is not found in the Peschito version. Neither are the second and third Epistles of John, the second of Peter, and that of Jude; but we should not on that account reject them. When this version was made is not known, probably not before the end of the second or the beginning of the third century, if indeed as early as that. The first traces of its use are in the Commentaries of Ephrem Syrus, who flourished in the latter part of the fourth century. He speaks of it as "our translation," and it was plainly in use by the churches of his time. This same commentator often refers to the Apocalypse as to other parts of the scriptures, in such a way as to show that he not only unhesitatingly received it as genuine, but that it was so received by the churches for whom he wrote.<sup>3</sup> Besides, he quotes in such a manner as to show that he must have had a Syriac translation before him. What this was it is impossible to say. But it is certainly most natural to suppose in the circumstances, that the Peschito at this time contained the Apocalypse, and that in some way

<sup>1</sup> Comm., Vol. II. 432 seq.

<sup>2</sup> See the references in Stuart's Commentary, Introduction, § 17 (4).

<sup>3</sup> See Opp. Syr. II. 332. "John, in his Revelation, saw a great, wonderful, divinely written book, sealed with seven seals," etc., Rev. v. 1. Cf. also III. 636. In Opp. Graec. (transl.), I. 39; II. 53, 194, 252: *Καθὼς καὶ Ἰωάννης ὁ θεόλογος ἐκήρυξε*. In Opp. Graec. III. 191, he makes a sort of synopsis of the Apocalypse. Stuart's Commentary, Introduction, § 17 (21).

or other it was afterwards excluded. It seems hardly possible that Ephrem Syrus, quoting the Apocalypse often, as he does, and having so high a regard for the Peschito, should not have somewhere alluded to the fact that it was wanting in it. How it lost its place, on condition it was ever there, unless as Eichhorn and Hug and some others suppose, that in consequence of the doubts of the Greek churches, and because it was not read in the regular service, it was omitted, we can not say.

On the supposition that the Peschito never contained the Apocalypse, it may be supposed that, as that version was made for reading in the churches, the Apocalypse with the Epistles mentioned above, were omitted from some supposed want of adaptation to that purpose, or because they did not readily come into the plan of the translator. The person who made the translation may have been interrupted by death or some other cause before he had completed his work, or the copy which he used may have been defective. Besides, the translator himself may, as Dionysius did, from internal grounds, have doubted its genuineness, and so omitted it. We cannot, therefore, feel that its omission in the Peschito is a matter of much importance in the historical argument. Even "Lücke himself acknowledges that nothing of any consequence *against* the book can be made out from the circumstance of its omission there."<sup>1</sup>

No other trace of opposition to the Apocalypse is found until the latter part of the fourth century, and none then of a decisive character. Some catalogues of the books of scripture are

<sup>1</sup> See Stuart, § 17 (5). Hengstenberg, Comm. II. 432, says: "If the doubts [in respect to the genuineness of the Apocalypse], wherever they are presented to us, appear destitute of an historical basis, if they always proceed from exegetical incapacity and controversial heat, if they lean exclusively on internal grounds, we must suppose the same to have been the case here, where we have simply to deal with the fact of doubt. This also is the result to which we are led by a comparison of the analogy of the other omitted books. They are all such as furnished in their matter an occasion for doubt, while no positive grounds of an external kind existed against their genuineness, although certainly the inferior external credibility in their case left criticism more at liberty to deal with internal considerations."

found in poetry, in which it is omitted, while the authors of these catalogues expressly say elsewhere that it belongs to the sacred canon, and is the work of John. So Gregory of Nazianzen, in a poetical catalogue, omits the Apocalypse, and says: "You have all. If there be any besides these, they belong not to the genuine."<sup>1</sup> And yet Gregory refers to and quotes the Apocalypse as a part of the divine scriptures, and as the work of John.<sup>2</sup> Besides Andreas, a contemporary of Gregory and an inhabitant of the same province, and his successor Arethas, attest to Gregory's belief in the apostolic origin and inspiration of the Apocalypse.<sup>3</sup> Philastrius of Brixia (at the end of the fourth century) gives a catalogue of books to be read in the churches, omitting the Epistle to the Hebrews and the Apocalypse,<sup>4</sup> and in the same work says expressly, that "those who do not receive the Gospel of John and the Apocalypse are heretics."<sup>5</sup> Such instances as these show plainly that the ground of the disregard of the Apocalypse, and its omission in catalogues of books of scriptures, was the danger of its perversion to the support of Millenarianism; and that while the historic evidence did not allow the rejection of the Apocalypse and the denial of its inspiration, yet on account of its recondite and mystical character, it was thought unsafe to have it generally read. So Philastrius speaks of the mystical writings (*scripturae absconditae*), which ought to be read by advanced Christians, but not by all.<sup>6</sup> Gregory of Nyssa, too, says: "I have heard John the evangelist enigmatically saying to such persons, in his mystical or concealed works: "I would thou wert either

<sup>1</sup> Πάσας ἔχεις. Ἐἴ τι δὲ τούτων ἐκτός, οὐκ ἐν γρηγορίοις.

<sup>2</sup> See, e.g. Opp. I. 573, where Rev. i. 8 is cited verbatim; Opp. I. 516, where Rev. i. 20 is referred to, with the words: ὡς Ἰωάννης διδάσκει μὲ διὰ τῆς Ἀποκαλύψεως.

<sup>3</sup> In the preface to his Commentary on the Apocalypse Andreas says: Περὶ μέντοι τοῦ θεοπνεύστου τῆς βίβλου περιττὸν μηκέτι τὸν λόγον ἠγοῦμεθα, τῶν μακαρίων, Γρηγορίου φημι τοῦ θεολόγου καὶ Κυρίλλου, etc., and Arethas uses nearly the same words.

<sup>4</sup> De Haeresibus, c. 88.

<sup>5</sup> C. 60.

<sup>6</sup> Quae etsi legi debent morum causa a perfectis, non ab omnibus legi debent.

cold or hot," etc. (Rev. iii. 15),<sup>1</sup> while in another place he calls the Apocalypse the "last book of grace,"<sup>2</sup> i.e. the last of the New Testament books, plainly indicating its place in the canon. Dionysius the Areopagite designates the Apocalypse as "the hidden and mystical vision of the beloved and inspired one of the disciples."<sup>3</sup>

After the fourth century there seems to have been little if any question of the genuineness of the Apocalypse in the ancient church. Some there doubtless were, as there have been in all modern times, who were inclined to give up the attempt to understand and explain it, but yet recognized it as genuine, and as the work of John.

The result of a careful examination of ancient authors seems to be overwhelmingly in favor of the apostolical origin of the Apocalypse. Nothing really worthy of account can be adduced from the Fathers adverse to it. Wheresoever it was questioned, the doubts were so manifestly from the internal character of the book, and so plainly the result of the perversion of it to substantiate views considered erroneous, that they are scarcely worthy of consideration when placed in contrast with the almost unbroken chain of testimony from the age in which it originated onward. Thus Hengstenberg, at the close of his examination of ancient authorities, well says: "It has been shown that the testimonies for the genuineness of the Apocalypse reach up to the age of its origin; that they are derived from all parts of the Christian world; that down even to the middle of the third century it was unanimously acknowledged, and had struck its roots very deeply into the Christian church; and also that the doubts and objections which were afterward entertained respecting it, only served to render more clearly manifest the recognition of its genuineness by the church."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ἦκουσα τοῦ Εὐαγγελιστοῦ Ἰωάννης, ἐν ἀποκρύφοις πρὸς τοὺς τοιοῦτους δι' αἰνέματός λέγοντος, κ. τ. λ. Opp. II. 44. Quoted by Stuart, Comm., Vol. I. 330.

<sup>2</sup> Ἡ τελευταία τῆς χάριτος βίβλος.

<sup>3</sup> Τὴν κρυφίαν καὶ μυστικὴν ἀποψίαν τοῦ τῶν μαθητῶν ἀγαπητοῦ καὶ δεσποῦ. Opp. I. 246, 247.

<sup>4</sup> Comm., Vol. II. 436.