A PARAPHRASE
AND
ANNOTATIONS
UPON ALL THE BOOKS OF
THE NEW TESTAMENT,
BRIEFLY EXPLAINING
ALL THE DIFFICULT PLACES THEREOF.

BY H. HAMMOND, D.D.

Δόξα ἐν ὑψίστῳ Θεῷ, καὶ ἐπὶ γῆς εἰρήνῃ ἐν ἀνθρώποις εὐδοκίᾳ.

Χριστὸς γεννᾶται, δοξάσατε,
Χριστὸς ἐπὶ γῆς, ὑψώθητε,
Χριστὸς ἀπ' οὐρανοῦ, ἀπαντήσατε,
Άσατε τῷ Κυρίῳ πᾶσα ἡ γῆ.
Greg. Nazianz.

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A PREMONITION CONCERNING THE INTERPRETATION OF THE APOCALYPSE.

HAVING gone through all the other parts of the New Testament, I came to this last of the Apocalypse, as to a rock that many had miscarried and split upon, with a full resolution not to venture on the expounding of one word in it, but only to perform one office to it, common to the rest, the review of the translation: but it pleased God otherwise to dispose of it; for before I had read (with that design of translating only) to the end of the first verse of the book, these words, ἄν δεὶ γενέσθαι ἐν ταχεῖ, which must come to pass presently, had such an impression on my mind, offering themselves as a key to the whole prophecy, (in like manner as, this generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled, Matt. xxiv. 34, have demonstrated infallibly to what coming of Christ that whole chapter did belong,) that I could not resist the force of them, but attempted presently a general survey of the whole book, to see whether those words might not probably be extended to all the prophecies of it, and have a literal truth in them, viz. that the things foretold and represented in the ensuing visions were presently, speedily, to come to pass, one after another, after the writing of them. But before I could prudently pass this judgment, which was to be founded in understanding the subject-matter of all the visions, some other evidences I met with, concurring with this, and giving me abundant grounds of confidence of this one thing, that although I should not be able to understand one period of all these visions, yet I
must be obliged to think that they belonged to those times that were then immediately ensuing, and that they had accordingly their completion; and consequently that they that pretended to find in those visions the predictions of events in these later ages, and those so nicely defined as to belong to particular acts and persons in this and some other kingdoms, (a far narrower circuit also than that which reasonably was to be assigned to that one Christian prophecy for the universal church of Christ,) had much mistaken the drift of it.

The arguments that induced this conclusion were these: First, that this was again immediately inculcated, ver. 3, ὀ γὰρ καυρὸς ἔγγος, for the time is nigh; and that rendered as a proof that these seven churches, to whom the prophecy was written, were concerned to observe and consider the contents of it, Blessed is he that reads, and he that hears, &c. (ἰσιρατζὶ ἀνῷ, saith Arethas, "that so hears as to practise," ) for the time, or season, the point of time, is near at hand. Secondly, that as here in the front, so chap. xxii. 6, at the close or shutting up of all these visions, and of St. John's epistle to the seven churches, which contained them, it is there again added, that God hath sent his angel to shew to his servants, ἵτι γένεσα ἐν τῇ, the things that must be speedily, or suddenly; and immediately upon the back of that are set the words of Christ, the author of this prophecy, Ἰδοὺ ἱχνομαῖ ταῦτα, Behold, I come quickly, not in the notion of his final coming to judgment, (which hath been the cause of a great deal of mistake, see note [6] on Matt. xxiv.) but of his coming to destroy his enemies, the Jews, &c.; and then, Blessed is he that observeth, or keeps, the prophecies of this book, parallel to what had been said at the beginning, chap. i. 3. Thirdly, that ver. 10, the command is given to John, not to seal the prophecies of the book, which that it signifies that they were of present use to those times, and therefore to be kept open, and not to be laid up as things that posterity was only or principally concerned in, appears by that reason rendered of it, ἵτι ὁ καυρὸς ἔγγος ἐτοῖ, because the time is nigh, the same which had here at the beginning been given, as the reason that he that considered the prophecies was blessed in so doing.

This being thus far deduced out of such plain words, so many times repeated, the next thing that offered itself to me was, to examine and search what was the design of Christ's sending these visions in a letter to the seven churches. For by that somewhat might generally be collected of the matter of them. What that design was, appeared soon very visibly also from plain words, which had no figure in them, viz. that they and all Christians of those times, being by the terrors of the then pressing persecutions from the Jews, and by the subtle insinuations of the Gnostics, (who taught it lawful to disclaim and forswear Christ in time of persecution,) in danger to lose their constancy, might be fortified by what they here find of the speediness of God's revenge on his enemies, and deliverance of believers that continued constant to him. This is the full importance of chap. i. 3, and the same again, chap. xxii. 7, Blessed are they that keep, &c., for the time is nigh. So in the proem, or salutation, by John, prefixed to this epistle of Christ, (which from ver. 4 to ver. 9, was the result of his observations upon the

1 Thomas Cromwell and Cranmer, c. xiv. 18; queen Elizabeth, Chemnitus, lord treasurer Codi, the three first angels, c. xvi. 1, 3, 4; Brightman, Apoc. Apoc.
visions, and was not any part of the visions themselves, and so gives us his notion and interpretation of this matter,) we have these words, ver. 7, Behold he cometh with clouds, &c. Where the coming of Christ being a known and solemn phrase to signify remarkable judgment or vengeance on sinners, (and in the first place on the Jews that crucified him,) and deliverance for persevering believers, (see note [6] on Matt. xxiv;) and the addition of the mention of clouds, referring to God's presence by angels, the ministers of his power, whether in punishing or protecting, this ἐρχόμενος, or coming, in the present, agrees perfectly and literally with what was before observed of the speediness of its approach at that time, and is an express signification what was the design of sending the visions to the churches, viz. to fortify them by that consideration.

Proceeding therefore by these degrees, it presently appeared by demonstrable evidences, that the first part of that which was thus suddenly to come to pass, was the illustrious destruction of the Jews, (which was also, of all things imaginable, the surest and opportunest comfort and fortification to the Christians at that time, who were virulently persecuted by them, and indeed, as Tertullian saith, owed the beginning of all their persecutions to the Jews.) This appeared, first, by the latter part of the seventh verse of the first chapter, where the ἀπέκτασιςἐκείνης, as many as pierced Christ, and πᾶσα ἡ θύσιν, all the tribes of the land, most clearly denote the Jews, (as ἡ γῆ, the earth, or the land, hath been often shewed to signify, and πᾶσα, the land, among the Jewish writers, see note [6] on Matt. xxiv,) whose waiting (there mentioned in the very words that are used, Matt. xxiv. 31) was to be for the miseries that came upon them, James v. 1. For although some few words in this seventh verse (as the looking on him whom they had pierced) would seem to make that seventh verse parallel to that of Zach. xii. 10, and so, that it should belong to the contrition or repentance of the Jews for the crucifying of Christ, as that seems to do, (and if it do, may have had its completion at several times in many thousands of that nation, (see Acts xxii. 20,) about three thousand being converted in one day, Acts ii. 39 and 41,) yet the whole frame of the words of this seventh verse together, Behold, he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him, and all that had pierced him; and all the tribes of the land shall mourn over, or upon, him, doth much more fully agree with the like words, Matt. xxiv. 30, where in the destruction (or the coming of the Son of man to this destruction) of the Jews we have these words: And then shall all the tribes of the land mourn, and shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory, which clearly belongs to the destruction of the Jews. To which I shall only add, that because that royal coming of Christ consisted of two parts, to destroy the impenitent Jews remarkably, and as remarkably to rescue or save the penitent believers, (and therefore in that place of Matthew it follows, ver. 31, and his angels shall gather the elect, &c., which belongs to that delivering of the penitent Christian Jews,) therefore that also of the Jews repenting for the crucifixion of Christ, (that is, of those Jews that at any time did repent,) may here be taken in, in the richness of this divine writing; and so the ordinary sense of the word in Zachary also will not be left out by this interpretation, which applies this verse to the destruction of the Jews. So chap. vi.
9, 10, 11, the souls beneath the altar, that cry for vengeance of all the blood that was shed in the land, is just parallel to that of Matt. xxiii. 35, that on the Jews of that generation should come all the αἷμα ἐν γῆς, the blood that had been shed on the land, &c. And accordingly all the rest of that sixth chapter, of the great earthquake, the sun become black, and moon as blood, and the stars falling from heaven, &c., are the very particulars mentioned in the immediate subsequent discourse of Christ, Matt. xxiv. So most especially, chap. xi. 8, that the scene of these tragedies is the city where our Lord was crucified, that is, certainly and literally Jerusalem, called Sodom there, but that only πνευματικῶς, mystically or spiritually (or in the vision) as the text specifies. So saith St. Jerome, Hierusalem ex eo tempore non appellatur civitas sancta, sed sanctitatem et pristinum nomen amittens, spiritualiter vocatur Sodoma et Αἰγύπτιος, “Jerusalem is called Sodom and Egypt,” referring to that place of Apoc. chap. xi, which must therefore in his opinion be understood of Jerusalem. And so that Comment, which bishop Tunstall set out for St. Ambrose’s, interprets the sixth chapter to be meant of the Jews. And in Arethas, on chap. vi. 12, concerning the earthquake, we find these words: Τῶν τἀντας εἰς τὴν ὑπὸ τοῦ Ὄσιανος πολιορκήσαντος ἡμᾶς, τὰ εἰρήματα τροπολογήσαντες, “Some expound this tropologically of Vespasian’s siege,” where the thing of which he makes doubt in that interpretation is the τροπολογία, the figurativeness of the speech; (whereas perhaps it may be understood of real earthquakes, see note [f] on chap. vi.;) but he objects not against the interpretation or application of it to those times of Vespasian and the Jews. So Rupertus Tuitiensis interprets that chapter of the Jews: and I shall not need make use of the suffrages and consent of many more, who have been forced to acknowledge that truth. But I must suppose that it will be objected and pretended, that this destruction of Jerusalem was past at the time of John’s receiving and writing this vision, because it is affirmed by Eusebius, out of Ireneus, that it was received or seen, (h οὐρανῷ, it was seen,) πρὸς τῷ τίτων Δομιτιανοῦ ἁρχῆς, “at the end of Domitian’s reign.” To this I might reply, from the opinion of i St. Augustine, and some others, that these visions were not all predictions of what was future, but the description of what had passed “from the first coming of Christ;” and from venerable k Bede, that John “ recapitulates from the suffering of Christ;” and l Rupertus Tuitiensis, that “the Apocalypse comprehends what had been, what is, and what should be the state of the church;” and this to very good purpose, by what was past to confirm Christians in what was future, and now further to be declared. And it would be no great objection against this, that it is all set down as a prophecy, for it is no new thing for prophecies sometimes to speak in the future tense of things that are past; as Dan. vii. 17, These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth, where yet the Chaldean monarchy was long before risen, and now near expiration. But to pass this over, I answer

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8 Ep. 100. qu. 8.  
1 Eccl. Hist. i. 3. cap. of.  
1 Apocalypse completeitur totum tempus a primo adventu Christi. De Civ. Dei, l. 20. c. 8.  
1 Johannem a passione Christi recapitulare.  
1 Apocalypse completeitur quals fuisse, quals est, et quals futurus est ecclesiae status.
more distinctly to the testimony of Irenæus: first, that what he affirms concerning John's vision at the end of Domitian, is not of all, but particularly of that vision of the number of the beast, ch. xiii. 18. Thus will Eusebius's words be understood. εἴ δὲ θεί αὐτοῦ ἐπ' ἀνάφαντον ἐν τῷ νῦν καιρῷ κρίτετο καὶ τοῦ θοῦ τινὲς ἐφέσου ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ καὶ τῷ ἀπωκάλυψιν ἐκφράσατο. Οὐδὲ γὰρ πρὸ πολλοῦ χρόνου ἐκφράσθη, ὥστε. "If the name of antichrist ought to be proclaimed openly now, it would have been declared by him that saw the revelation, for it was not seen any long time ago." Where it is clear that ἐκφράσθη, was seen, may belong to ἐπιφάνεια, the name of the beast, as before ἐφέσου, declared, did. And that it not only may, but must be so understood, appears by the Latin of Irenæus, (which only is extant,) which reads it thus: Antichristi nomen per ipsum utique editum fuisset, qui et apocalypsis viderat; neque enim ante multum temporis visum est, sed pene sub nostro seculo ad finem Domitianis imperii, "The name of antichrist would have been published by him who saw the apocalypse; for it was not seen any long time since, but almost under our age, at the end of Domitian's empire." Where the word visum in the neuter, seen, not visa in the feminine, belongs apparently to the name, not to the apocalypse. Secondly, I answer, that although it should still be acknowledged to be the opinion of Irenæus, that John received the Revelation and all his visions at the end of Domitian; yet on the other side it is the affirmation of Epiphanius, that "John prophesied in the time of Claudius Cæsar, when," saith he, "he was in the isle Patmos." And that which may give authority to Epiphanius's testimony is this; first, that Epiphanius in that place is a writing against the Montanists, about the authority of the Apocalypse, and that the later it were seen or written the more it would have been for his turn toward confuting or answering them, whose objection it was, that the church of Thyatira, mentioned in the Apocalypse, was not yet a church when that was said to be revealed. And therefore if it had been but uncertain whether it were written so early or no, he would without all question have made use of this as some advantage against his adversaries, whom he was then in confuting. Secondly, that Epiphanius is so far from doing this, that he doth twice in the same place expressly affirm, first, that his being in the isle of Patmos, secondly, that his seeing these visions there, yea and his return from the island, were in the time of Claudius. Having said this for the confirming this assertion of Epiphanius to have as much authority as his testimony can give it, four arguments I shall add for the truth of it. The first negative, to the disparagement of that relation that affirms him banished by Domitian, and returned after his death in Nerva's reign. For of the persecution by Domitian there be but two authors mentioned by Eusebius, Tertullian and Hegesippus; but of Tertullian he hath these words: Πεπεραίας ποτε καὶ Δομιτίανος ταῦτα ποιεῖν εἶχεν, μέρος δὲ τῆς τοῦ Νέρωνος ἀριστηράς, ἀλλὰ τάχιστα ἑταίρισαν, ἀνακαλεσάμενος ὅς ἐξῆλθεν, "Domitian went about to do as Nero had done, being a part of his cruelty;" or, as Tertullian's words.

\[\text{\textsuperscript{m}}\] Αὐτὸν δὲ προφητεύειν ἐν χρόνοις Κλαύδιου Καίσαρος διὰ τί ἔστιν τὴν Πάτμον νῦσον ὑποβρύξας, εἰς τὴν Ἀλλογ. 51. καὶ μετὰ τὴν αὐτοῦ ἐκ τοῦ Πάτμου ἐκάλων τῷ τούτῳ Κλαύδιος γενομένῃ Καίσαρος, ib.

\[\text{\textsuperscript{n}}\] 1. 3. 1. 10. \quad \text{\textsuperscript{o}}\] Apol. c. 5.
are, porio Neronis de crudelitate, “a portion of Nero for cruelty;” sed facile captum repressit, resitutus eiam quos relegaverat, “but he ceased from it presently, and recalled those whom he had banished:” which no way agrees with his banishing John, and not recalling him all his life, as is supposed in the other relation, and affirmed by P. Eusebius. And therefore Baronius, that is for his banishment under Domitian, in the tenth year of his reign, is forced fairly to reject Tertullian’s authority in this matter, giving for it his proof out of Dio, viz., that “Nerva released those who were condemned of impiety, and restored those who were banished.” Which affirmation of Dio’s being granted, as far as belongs to those who were in exile, or stood condemned at Nerva’s coming to the empire, doth no way prejudice the truth of Tertullian’s words, of Domitian’s having “repressed his severity” against the Christians, “and revoked the banished,” (wherein he is much a more competent witness than Baronius.) No more doth his killing of his uncle Clemens, and banishing his cousin Flavia Domitilla; for that was five years after this time of John’s supposed banishment, in the fifteenth or last year of Domitian’s reign. In the relation of Hegesippus, (a most ancient writer, that lived in those times,) there is no more but this, that Domitian had made a decree for the putting to death all that were of the lineage of David; that some delators had accused some of the children of Jude, the kinman of our Saviour, ος εκ γενεσεως Δαβίδ, “as such who were of David’s seed;” that Jocatus brought these to Domitian, but upon examination being found to be plain men, and such as believed not Christ’s kingdom to be σωματικος, or ου καιρως, of this world, or earthly, but heavenly and angelical, to begin at the end of the world, ἠλευθερων μιν αυτως ανωτερα, καταπαυσας δε δια προσταγματος των κατω της ιερας ισωμων, των δε απολειπτων ιγνασασθαι των ιερας, “he set them free, and by edict took off the persecution against the church; and they being released became bishops in the church, and continued peaceably,” and lived till Trajanus’s days. And this certainly agrees very little with the other relation; nor can any account probably be rendered why, when the persecution of Christians was taken off by the edict, and ελεγκτης γενομην, peace restored, to the church of Christ, and when the profession of Christianity, in the sons of Jude, being by them avowed to the emperor, was not yet thought fit to be punished in the least, yet John should be banished, and continue in his exile till Nerva’s reign, for no other crime but that of being a Christian. Where by the way Baronius’s authority much faults him: “Tertullian,” saith he, “fell into his error by following Hegesippus’s authority;” but Hegesippus,“ saith he, “spake apparently de ca persecutione qua mota est in Judaeos, of that persecution that was raised against the Jews,” not against the Christians. How true that is will now appear, when the express words are, that “by that emperor’s edict the persecution against the church” (sure that was not of Jews, but Christians) ceased. Secondly, that about the ninth year of Claudius the Christians were pursued and banished by the Roman powers. That at that time Claudius banished the Jews out of Rome, is evident by Josephus, and acknowledged by all; and that by the Jews the Christians are meant, appears

p Lib. 3. c. 9.
q Sed plane errore lapsus cognoscitur, dum vult eum quasi facti positioneem exulas revocasse. An. 93. n. 5.
by Suetonius, in the life of Claudius, c. 25, Judeos impulsore Chresto assidue tumultuantes Roma expulit, "He banished the Jews out of Rome for the tumults which they daily raised by the impulsion of Chrestus." By Chrestus it is certain that the Roman writers meant Christ, calling him Chrest, and his followers Chrestians, as Tertullian observes, Apol. c. 3. And so they that were acted by the impulsion of Chrest, in that narration, must, though called Jews, necessarily be resolved to be Christians: and what was done at Rome, is to be supposed to have been done also in other parts of the emperor's dominions; and so that edict, mentioned Acts xviii. 2, was in reason to reach to Ephesus, and may justly be thought to have involved St. John there. And accordingly chronologers have placed this banishment of his to Patmos in that year. Thirdly, that about Claudius's time it was that the unbelieving Jews began and continued to oppose and persecute the Christian Jews; and thereupon the Gnostics' compliances (and making as if they were Jews, to avoid persecutions) are so oft taken notice of by St. Paul, Gal. vi. 12, and elsewhere. And by all the Epistles, both of him and the rest of the apostles, written from about that time of Claudius, the Gnostics are everywhere touched on, as the pests that were creeping into the churches, against which they endeavoured to fortify the believers, and assure them that those persecutions of the Jews should be shortly ended by their destruction, (that night of sadness far spent, and the day of deliverance and refreshment at hand, Rom. xiii. 12, and xvi. 20,) and that then the complying Gnostics, which were so solicitous to save their lives, should lose them, that is, should perish with them. Accordingly, to the very same purpose is most of the vision here that concerned the seven churches, chap. ii. 2, 4, 9, 14, 20, and chap. iii. 9, 10, &c., and much of the following prophecy, to assure them that God would take revenge on these impudent and impure professors, and rescue the constant Christians. And that makes it very reasonable to believe that this vision was received about the same time also. A fourth argument will be taken from the account of the eight kings or emperors, chap. xvii. 10, which cannot, I believe, otherwise be made intelligible, but by beginning the account from Claudius, so that he, and Nero, Galba, Otho, Vitellius, shall be the true that were fallen; and then Vespasian (in whose time I suppose these visions were committed to writing by St. John) being the sixth, shall be the one is, and Titus the seventh, that is not yet come, and when he comes shall stay but a little while, reigning but two years and two months, and then the beast that was and is not, and is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goes to destruction, will fall out to be Domitian, to whom (and to whom only of all the emperors, nay of all men in any story) all those distinctive characters will appertain, as that he exercised the office of the emperor, and was called emperor at Rome, when Vespasian was gone into Judea, and after his return became a private man again, delivered up the empire to him, and so was, and is not; and then was the eighth, (reckoning from Claudius as the first,) and the son of one of the seven, viz. of Vespasian, and should be a bloody persecutor, and accordingly punished, and so go to destruction. This seems to me to be a demonstrative character of the time wherein the first of these visions was delivered, and will further yield some answer to the authority of
Irenæus, by interpreting his words ἐπὶ τῆς τελείας Δομετιανοῦ ἄρχης, of the conclusion of that reign of his at Rome, when his father Vespasian was in Judæa, in respect of which it is said of him, that he was and is not, that is, that reign of his was come to its τέλος or end, was now concluded; making this not improbably that author's meaning, that John did first (in this time of Claudius) receive some visions concerning this destruction of the Jews, and the other attendants of it, and afterward, in Vespasian's time, while he was in Judæa, and Domitian reigned at Rome, receive more visions, that particularly of the number of the beast. For I suppose the several visions of this book were (as those of Isaiah, chap. i. 1, Jeremiah i. 2, 3, Hosea i. 1, Amos i. 1, Micah i. 1, in the reigns of several kings) received at several times, not all at once, or in one day. And if against that presumption it be objected, that they were here sent all together to the churches of Asia, and therefore were all received and written at the same time, to this the answer is most obvious, from what we see done in the forementioned prophecies of Isaiah, &c., in the Old Testament, which, though clearly received in several kings' reigns, and each sent to that king or the people under him to whom they belonged, as it is evident that of Hezekiah was, (and not concealed and reserved till after their death who were concerned in them,) were yet long after the time of receiving the first of them, put into a book, and a title, comprehending them all, prefixed to them. And accordingly there is no difficulty to conceive that John, having first received the vision of the seven churches, and, according to direction, chap. i. 11, speedily sent it to them, did after that (as μετὰ ταύτα, ch. iv. 1, literally imports) receive more visions at several times, and after all put them together into a book or volume, and dedicate them anew to the seven churches, ch. i. 3, and this about the forementioned end of Domitian's reigning in his father's stead, that is, in Vespasian's time, when he was returning from Judæa to resume his power again. I can foresee but one further objection against this date of these visions, viz., that in the epistle to the church of Pergamos, chap. ii. 13, there is the mention and very name of Antipas the martyr, ὁ ἀντιπάτριος, who was killed, which may be thought to imply that this vision was received after that part of Domitian's reign wherein Antipas is affirmed to have been slain. To this I answer, that this naming of Antipas by way of prophecy may be as easily and probably believed of the Spirit of God, before the time of his suffering, as the naming of Cyrus before he was born, which we know was done in the Old Testament; nay, as Christ's telling St. Peter that he should be put to death, and particularly crucified; or as Agabus telling St. Paul what should befall him at Jerusalem, Acts xxvi. 10; or, as I conceive, Simeon's telling the mother of Christ that a sword should pass through her soul, Luke ii. 35. St. Hilary, in his Prologue to the Psalms, offers instances of this; as, saith he, when in some of the Psalms, of which Moses was the author, there is yet mention of things after Moses, viz., of Samuel, psalm xix. 6, before he was born, nulli mirum aut difficile videri oportere, "this ought not to seem strange or hard to any," when in the books of the Kings Josias is by name prophesied of before he was born, 1 Kings xii. 2. And if Zacharias the son of Barachias, Matt. xxiii., be that Zachary the son of Baruch that was killed close before the siege of Jerusalem, (of
which there is little reason to doubt,) there is then a direct example of what is here thus said of Antipas, the έφωνεότατος, ye have killed, being there said of him, as ἀπεκτάφη, he was killed, here; (see note [y] on Matt. xxiii.) That Antipas was a contemporary of the apostles, and when he died, was extreme old, will hereafter appear out of the Menology; and therefore at what time soever this vision was written, it is certain there was such a man as Antipas, and no doubt a Christian, if not bishop of Pergamos then; and so it is less strange that he should be here mentioned by name than that Cyrus should, before he was born; and no more strange than for any other living person to have his martyrdom particularly foretold. As for the sense of ἀπεκτάφη, was killed, which may be thought to conclude him already killed, sure that is of little weight, it being very ordinary for prophecies to be delivered in words which signify the time past. All this may serve for a competent satisfaction to the grand difficulty. And howsoever in a matter of some uncertainty we may possibly mistake in the particularity of time wherein the visions were received, yet that they belong (much of them) to the business of the destruction of the Jews, there will be little question, when the particulars come to be viewed.

This being thus far evident, it follows to be observed, that the destruction of Jerusalem under Titus was but one part of this coming of Christ, I mean of the judgments upon the Jews. Many other bloody acts there were of this tragedy still behind when that was over. Not to mention Domitian's edict of killing all David's kin, (Eusebius, lib. 3. c. 19.) the first I shall insist upon is that under Trajan, till whose reign St. John himself lived, (saith Eusebius, l. 3. c. 23, out of Ireneus, l. 2. c. 39, and l. 3. c. 3, and out of Clemens Alexandrinus,) though not to this part of it. In this emperor's time it went very heavily with the Jews, Τὰ δὲ τῶν Ἰουδαίων συμφορᾶς κακοῖς ἐπαλθὲν ἣκμαβι, saith he, "Their calamities came tumbling in upon them, one on the back of another;" for both in Alexandria, and the other parts of Egypt, and even in Cyrene, many Jews behaving themselves seditiously, and at last breaking out into open wars and horrid cruelties, described by Dion and Spartianus, as well as Eusebius, and once having worsted the Grecians, they of Egypt and they of Cyrene joining together under the conduct of Lucuas, and overpowering all Egypt, the issue of it was, that Trajan sent Marcus Turbo with an army by sea and land, horse and foot, who in a long continued war killed great multitudes of them; and lest they in Mesopotamia should, or suspecting that they had already joined with them, the emperor sent to Quintus Lucius Aemilius, that he should destroy them all utterly out of that province; and for his care in obeying that command, he was, saith Eusebius, constituted ἰουδαίων ἱγματως, ruler of Judea, under the emperor. These passages we find in Eusebius, l. 4. c. 2; and, saith he, all the Greek writers of the heathens, who set down the stories of those times, have the same verbatim; and so indeed they have. See Dio, as also Spartianus. And the number of the slain Jews in that calamity is reckoned to be no less than two hundred thousand in that reign of Trajan's: and this, if there had been none before, and if there were no more behind, might well be styled a coming of Christ in the clouds against
his crucifiers, a lamentable judgment on all the tribes of that land, and so might own the expressions in that seventh verse, and some part of the after visions.

But beside this, yet further, within few years more, in the time of Adrian, Trajan’s immediate successor, (who began his reign A.D. 118,) there befell more sad destructions upon the Jews, and particularly upon Jerusalem itself, occasioned by the rising of Barchocheba, who, being but a villain, ἰδρυότης καὶ ἡσυχαστικὸς ἤτοι ἄνθρωπος, one that lived by robbing and killing, took upon him to come as a Messiah, as a light from heaven to the Jews, and therefore styled himself son of a star. And with those that he thus raised, a great war there was waged by the Romans in the eighteenth year of Adrian, at the town Bethek, not far from Jerusalem; and the issue was, that the Jews were under a most miserable siege, and Rufus governor of Judæa, on occasion of this rising, without any mercy destroyed all he could come to, men, women, and children, παρακατε τῆς ἔβρας, saith Eusebius, l. 4. c. 6, whole myriads together; and, to conclude, there came out an edict of Adrian’s, after the death of the ringleader, interdicting all Jews, and forbidding them to return to their city Jerusalem again, or so much as to look toward it: to which end the foundations of the temple were ploughed up by Rufus, (and so Christ’s prophecy not till now exactly fulfilled, of not one stone upon another,) the city inhabited by the Romans, new built, and named Αἰλία, from Αἰλίου Adrianus, and (they say) the statue of a swine set over the gate of it, to reproach the Jews, and banish their very eyes from it. And this was another passage which might well be referred to in that place, as matter of mournful spectacle to all the tribes of Judæa, and as mournfully represented in some of the visions. To which must be further added, that the unbelieving Jews are not the only men to whom the destruction here revealed in these visions did belong, but as notably also, and well nigh as soon, the erroneous vile Christians of those times, (which were many of them Jews also, and (those that were not) Judaizers, or compliers with the Jews,) viz. the Gnostics, so oft spoken of in St. Paul’s Epistles, and by St. Peter, and St. James, St. Jude, and St. John also, with intimation of their approaching destruction, which here is visible in the vision of, and the causes of the several destructions that lighted on the seven churches of Asia, (if not wholly, yet) at least on the Gnostics and other heretics among them; of whom saith Eusebius, after the enumerating of their heresies, Ἀργον θαντόν εἰς τὸ παντὶ ἐπισβήκας, "They vanished to nothing in a moment;" and this saith he, in Trajan’s time, lib. 3. c. 27. And then in the second place, the other enemies of Christ, partakers in the crucifying of him, and afterward eminent persecutors of Christians, those of heathen Rome, as will appear in the exposition of the visions. And then, thirdly, as in a parenthesis, Gog and Magog, chap. xx. 8, which, after the peaceable flourishing of Christianity for a thousand years, should waste the church again, the Turks in the East, &c. And then all the enemies of God, at the fatal last day of doom, chap. xx. 11.

That this was the summary matter of these ensuing visions, the most serious pondering of every part soon made unquestionable to me. And of it the reader may here beforehand receive this short scheme, viz. that, after the preface, in the first chapter, to ver. 10, and the visions about the seven churches of Asia, each of them set down distinctly,
chap. ii. and iii, this book contains, first, the proceedings of God with the Jews, from the fourth to the twelfth chapter. Secondly, the infancy and growth of the church of Christ in order to the heathen world, till it came through great oppositions to get possession of the Roman empire, partly by destroying, partly by converting the heathen and villanous impure idol-worshippers, from the twelfth to the twentieth chapter. Thirdly, the peaceable, flourishing state of the church for a thousand years, (and after that the breaking out of the Turk, and harassing the eastern churches, briefly touched, together with their destruction, and the end of the world,) most rhetorically described from chap. xx. to the 6th verse of chap. xxi; and from thence to the end of the book a formal conclusion of the whole matter. All which is somewhat proportionable to that which old Tobit prophetically spoke of the times that were to follow him, chap. xiv. 5, which he divided into three distinct spaces: first, the rebuilding of the temple, which was now long past, and this book hath nothing to do with that: secondly, the consummations of the seasons of the age, that is, the destruction of the Jewish state, which is the first main period here. This is not so clearly set down in our ordinary English version as in the Greek it is: for that reads not as the English doth, until the time of that age be fulfilled, confining the continuance of the second temple to the time of that age; but, ἕως πληρωθῆσαι καιρὸς τοῦ αἰῶνος, till the seasons of the age be fulfilled, a phrase near of kin to those many which are used in the New Testament for the destruction of this people, the latter days, or seasons, συντελεῖ αἰῶνος, the consummation, or conclusion, of the age, Matt. xxiv. 3. But in the Hebrew copy, set out and rendered by Panlus Fagius, (which appears to be translated skilfully by some Jew out of the original Chaldee,) there is a very considerable addition to this purpose, יִנְעֹר אֵאִישׁ בְּנֵבְלוּת בְּבֹרֵי לֵויִי. And again they shall go into a long and great captivity, noting the greatness and duration of this beyond all the former. That these words in that Hebrew copy are the true reading, appears by the subsequent mention of a return, which cannot be sense without this precedent mention of a captivity. And that it belongs to that destruction of them by the Romans, appears by another passage, added also in that Hebrew copy, and directly parallel to Matt. xxiv. 31. For as there, after the destruction of Jerusalem, ver. 29, is mention of the angels sent to gather the elect Jews from the four winds, (parallel to the vision of the sealing, Rev. vii,) so it follows in Tobit, but God, holy and blessed, shall remember them, and gather them from the four corners of the world. After which follows, thirdly, the state of Christianity, the glorious building of Jerusalem, and the house of God, foretold by the prophets, (and that building set down, chap. xiii. 16, 17, with sapphires, emrods, precious stones, pure gold, beryl, carbuncle, stones of Ophir, in the same manner as it is described in these visions, chap. xxi. 18, 19,) and that to continue for ever, or, as the Hebrew reads, for ever and ever; and as a prime branch of that period, the converting of the nations, and burying their idols, (which is here the second main period,) ver. 6, 7. This parallel prediction in Tobit may be of some force to authorize the interpretation of these visions; in all which, as there may be several particular passages either so obscure (from the nature of prophetic style) as not to be easily explicated, or
so copious (and capable of more than one explication) as to render it uncertain which should be preferred, (in which respect I hope and expect that much more light may be added to it by more strict surveys, and comparing the expressions in this book with the like phrases or passages in the prophets of the Old Testament,) so for the general matter of these visions, I suppose, upon pondering the whole, there will be little doubt but these are the true lineaments of it.

And it hath been matter of much satisfaction to me, that what hath upon sincere desire of finding out the truth, and making my addresses to God for his particular directions in this work of difficulty, (without any other light to go before me,) appeared to me to be the meaning of this prophecy, hath, for the main of it, in the same manner represented itself to several persons of great piety and learning, (as since I have discerned,) none taking it from the other, but all from the same light shining in the prophecy itself. Among which number I now also find the most learned Hugo Grotius, in those posthumous notes of his on the Apocalypse, lately published.

And this is all that seemed useful to be here premised concerning the interpretation of this book.

THE REVELATION OF JOHN THE DIVINE.