

# Theology on the Web.org.uk

*Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible*

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

---

A table of contents for *The Churchman* can be found here:

[https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles\\_churchman\\_os.php](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_churchman_os.php)

I will specify three main questions in which I think Mr. Elliott wholly wrong. The first is the structure of the Apocalypse. The second is his interpretation of the seven Thunders; and the third is his exposition of the first four Trumpets.—Chapter I., p. 5.

The view of Mr. Elliott is thus demonstrably untrue and baseless. I am so far from sharing it, that I have not the least doubt it has rendered his first volume a step backward and not forward in the onward march of Apocalyptic interpretation.—*Ibid.*, p. 7.

This view of the structure, then, is one which I had maintained for twenty years as of primary importance, both in two writings of my own, and in eight successive editions of Mr. Bickersteth's work; an interval now enlarged to nearly forty years without a single word of public retraction.—*Ibid.*, p. 44.

Mr. Elliott's view of a fulfilment [that is, of the Seals] in successive stages of the degeneracy of the Roman State, from the peaceful state of the Antonines to the persecution of Diocletian, needs to be completed by the view which he so strongly rejects, of their application to the decline of the visible Church from its first purity to one of intense corruption and opposition to the truth, before the coming of Christ.—*Ibid.*, pp. 46, 47.

---

## Review.

---

*Tenants of an Old Farm; Leaves from the Note-book of a Naturalist.* By HENRY C. MCCOOK, D.D.; with an Introduction by Sir JOHN LUBBOCK, M.P. Illustrated from Nature. London: Hodder and Stoughton. 1888.

**H**ARDLY any study is more healthful to the mind, more full of pure pleasure, and in its tendency, at least, more directly religious than the study of natural history. Even in its simplest branches, it throws an ever-growing interest over many of the most obvious facts of the world in which we are placed, while it brings us into the closest contact with the wondrously varied workings of Almighty God. As Howe long ago argued, it is hard to know how we could ever be convinced by works of might and wisdom of the real existence of an Almighty and All-wise Creator if the glorious works with which the world is filled, and of which we form a most significant part ourselves, are not enough to bring a full and awe-inspiring conviction of the truth. No reasoning can really shake the substance of the so-called argument from design, as men have ever felt its force from Socrates to Paley—however wise may be a re-adjustment of its verbal statement to the growth of modern knowledge. All such books, therefore, as that which Dr. McCook has given us under the title of the "Tenants of an Old Farm," deserve a hearty welcome. Conceived and written in a religious spirit, they can only do good to all into whose hands they chance to fall. In the present case, moreover, the mere pleasure of perusal is fully equal to the wealth of solid knowledge which the book contains. Though the colloquial and slightly story-like way in which the chapters are written may prove at first distasteful (as the author fears) to purely scientific readers, yet to the young and those who lack a scientific training this method will be doubtless found to give a charm, and so to win a hearing which otherwise might not so soon have been obtained. The style is so clear that a well-taught child will follow easily the writer's meaning, and only here and there in phrase and spelling does anything occur which betrays a trans-Atlantic origin. But though the author is an American, and in America of great repute, the truth and exactness of his facts are

guaranteed to any doubting English readers by the high authority of Sir John Lubbock, who, like Dr. McCook, has made the ways of insects, and particularly ants, the subject of his special study. The print and paper, finally, are alike beautiful, and the illustrations, with which the work is richly decked, are so well-chosen and well-wrought that it needs a strong effort to tear the eye away and read the text which makes their mysteries plain. From the spiders and the moths to the crickets and the ants, Dr. McCook has given us a delightful book—so delightful that for the rest of this notice our readers will be glad that he should speak for himself.

Take, for instance, this passage on the music of the crickets (chap. xv., p. 292):

"Now we are ready to consider how and why the crickets make their music. The old insects, for the most part, die on the approach of cold weather; but a few survive the winter by sheltering themselves under stones, or in holes secure from the access of water. Of these are the solitary stragglers who make their way into our houses, and warmed up by the genial fire to some dim suggestion of summer, are awakened into a sense of their forlorn estate, and creek out their loneliness to some imagined mate. The same sounds are heard over all our fields, and almost without cessation from twilight to dawn during our autumn months. There is no music in summer, for pairing does not begin until Fall, and the cricket's music is a love-call. It is the male's signal to his mate, and if ever there was a persistent, vociferous and self-satisfied serenader it is he.

"Do you tell us that the female doesn't sing?" asked Abby, with some surprise.

"Neither males nor females *sing*, for the insects have no vocal organs. But the gift of music, such as it is, is bestowed upon the male alone. Whether Madam Cricket is a loser thereby may be doubted, but the human species is the gainer; for, if Nature had endowed both sexes with the power of shrilling, the night discords would have been scarcely bearable."

Take next a passage on the industry of the harvesting-ant (chap. xvii., pp. 341, 342):

"Presently I saw an ant come up out of the gate" (of its nest), "carrying in its jaws something which it dragged across the yard" (or clear space around the gate of the nest), "and dumped upon a heap of similar objects lying in the grass at one side. I took up some of these, and found them to be the husks of a sort of grass known as ant-rice, or needle-grass. That was proof number one.

"Next I noticed that the ant-workers were continually running along the roads, across the yard, and disappearing through the gate with some kind of seed, which they bore in their stout mandibles or jaws. I tapped several of these porters on the back in order to make them drop their burdens, which I then examined, and found to be whole seeds of the ant-rice. That was proof number two—the ants were actually carrying the grain into their nests.

"Once more, I saw that workers were continually leaving the gate and travelling along the roads outward toward the grass. I stooped down upon hands and knees to follow one of these. Off it went at a lively pace further and further, until the roadway began to narrow into a thin line, when it darted off to one side into the thick grass. It kept me on close watch to keep the busy insect in sight. It twisted back and forth, around and around among the grass stalks, now and then stopping to put its jaws upon objects lying upon the ground which I soon discovered to be fallen seeds. At last the fastidious creature found one that suited her. She turned this way and that until it appeared to be balanced to her mind, then wheeled about, and started toward home.

"What a time she had with that seed! All sorts of little obstacles lay in her path—little to us, that is, but great to her. There were blades of grass bent down to the ground; there were sticks, stocks and stones

“lying in the path ; there were close-growing tufts of grass like small thickets in the way. These were to be flanked, or climbed over, or pushed through, and right nobly the little carrier did her task. Now she went straight up and forward ; now she backed to this side, dragging her burden along ; now she sidled around the obstacle ; now she plunged into a hole, and after a moment's rallying bravely mounted the wall and went on her way. So she journeyed, winding her laborious path through the grass-forest of her harvest field until she reached the road. Then, conscious that her way was clear, she broke into a smart trot, and made straight headway for her nest, and soon disappeared within the gate. The burden which she bore was a seed of ant-rice, and that was proof number three that this ant, at least, as Solomon said, provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest.”

Lastly, take a passage which touches on that strange discord in the human race which did not escape the eye of the philosophic Pliny, himself a natural historian, and on which in our time the Duke of Argyll has written nobly, though it is Scripture only that gives the full solution which is needed (chap. xx., pp. 418-420):

“Pardon me,” I said ; “your lesson is not less profitable because it awakes mirthfulness. But really, Aunt Hannah, you have done the worm injustice by your metaphor. The creature never eats itself out of house and home after the fashion of our species ; it cuts windows and doors through its leaf partitions, passing thereby from one to another, but the instinct which urged it to its first act of protection prevents it from destroying its outer defences.”

“In other words,” said Abby, speaking up sharply, “a worm will do better for itself under the sway of Instinct than some men under the rule of Reason. Why is that ?”

“Excuse me, Miss Abby, if I decline to follow up your question fully. It would lead us into very deep waters, indeed, and we should perhaps need Dr. Goodman to bring us back to harborage. But let me say there is some strange element which somewhere in man's history has overpassed the bounds and bars of the common laws of Nature and found place within him. It is peculiar to him—alien from his fellow-creatures of the lower orders. It has jarred his nature at many points, and made it discordant with the catholic Unity and Law. It has set him upon paths that lead to depths below the brutes. Sovereign of the creatures as he is, it has yet betrayed him into inferior traits, and shown him the baser and weaker vessel. At some point in history man's inner constitution has undergone a strange—a terrible revolution. When was it ? What is it ? I cannot say—at least I will not say now. I do not know——”

“Friend Mayfield, I know, if thee does not !” Aunt Hannah dropped her work into her lap, and broke into my unfinished sentence with very firm but tremulous voice. “It is an old, old truth. Why should thee spare to speak it ? ‘God hath made man upright, but they have sought out many inventions,’ That is the strange element, the fact, the revolution which you are thinking about ; *Sin hath entered in !*”

Here we take leave of Dr. McCook, though we might have quoted several passages of equal interest and beauty with those which we have chosen, in the hope that all our readers will quickly buy his book, and make themselves acquainted with its charming story of the wonderful ways of God in some of the less known parts of the universe which He has made.

ARTHUR C. GARBETT.

