

philological inquiry into the reason for the name that was given to the magician, for we have rid ourselves of Elymas ; and although there is some variation in the spelling of the name that replaces it, we ought to be able to decide whether Etoemos is a genuine Greek word, translating an Aramaic name, or whether it is a mere transliteration of some such name.

J. RENDEL HARRIS.

DIALOGUES ON THE CHRISTIAN PROPHETS.

III.

Babylon the city of Rome—The *reda*—The number of the Beast—
Irenaeus on the number—Salmon and Zahn on Irenaeus.

Mason. Since we last met, Riddell, I have looked up two or three authorities, to see what interpretations they adopted concerning Babylon.

Riddell. Are you engaged in writing a dictionary, Mason, or only an encyclopaedia ?

M. Not yet, thanks.

R. Then why such extravagant devotion on your part to necessary evils ?

M. I suppose you admit that there is room for diversity of opinion on the solution of the great riddle of the Bible ?

R. Dear me, yes, that I do ! By all means let us have every possible opinion put forward, and let the best prevail. "A life without discussion is not worth living," as Plato observes : and we may add, "Not even for the junior clergy." But I cannot quite admit that the question now before us is the great riddle of the Bible. The Synoptic Gospels, and their mutual relations, are a greater riddle, to name only one. And I cannot agree either that much good is to be gained from consulting authorities, as you call them.

M. Why not ?

R. I have consulted several, and I find that a lifetime would not suffice to read them all. They have been classified (without being read, I should think, ever in their entirety by one man) under four serious-sounding heads: 1. The Preterists who find the interpretation in the past, the seer's own time. 2. The Futurists, who find it in the time still to come. 3. The Continualists, who find it in the continuous history of the Church from 70 A.D. to the present day. A lively branch of this class may be called the Papalists. 4. The Spiritualists, who find it in spiritual allegory. But this would not be a complete arrangement of all the writers on Revelation, for you must not suppose that many interpreters are consistent and accommodating enough to scuttle down under one of your four heads and remain there. They will keep running across and taking shelter under another screen, and then running back again. Far be it from me to deny them that right!

M. You seem to say that authorities are no authorities, and that classification of interpretations is useless.

R. You put it rather bluntly, Mason. I would prefer to say that life is too short to test the value of every so-called authority, and that even classification of interpreters is very imperfect, and does not help us very far; and I wished to suggest that you should make up your own opinion for yourself rather than rest upon what others have said. Too much has been said and written, and yet not enough. Too much upon the limited lines of the past, when men knew no Hebrew, or no Greek, or no Copernican system; not enough, upon modern lines, of comparative research.

M. There is a chance for us yet, then. "Some work of noble note may yet be done."

R. Yes, indeed. But if it is to be

Not unbecoming men that strove with gods,

it must be done for and by ourselves. We must not

“quench the Spirit,” but trust it; we must “despise not prophesyings.” It is no use, believe me—or rather, believe the living Word—it is no use to pray for guidance and then creep about and in and out of the devious paths of “authorities,” agreeing with one here and with another there, and calling this *your* path. Look at things with your own eyes, and you will find your sight interesting enough, and probably powerful enough, for your own purposes. But do not spend your time in trying to find an old pair of another man’s spectacles to suit your eyes. There is no fear of your seeing everything, or even every point of view, but you shall see light.

M. Right valiantly said. I hope to leave you less bewildered than I came.

R. Now, then, to close quarters with our subject. We may start almost anywhere with the meaning of Babylon, and we shall find that it is Rome.

M. “All roads lead to Rome.”

R. Yes, but this is Rome the city, not Rome the Church, remember. I have written out a short passage for you from the famous elegy on Rome, and parallel with it some verses from Ezekiel, in order to show you how very closely the seer of the Revelation has followed the lines of the ancient prophet. You will see presently what bearing it has upon our question, though I fear that readers are so sick of the idea that Babylon means Rome the Church, and of its explosion, that they are scarcely prepared to listen to the identity of Babylon with Rome the city. Here is the parallel:

REV. XVIII.	EZEK. XXVII.
10 Woe, woe, the great city, Babylon, the strong city! for in one hour is thy judgment come.	2 Now, thou son of man, take up a lamentation for Tyre.
11 And the merchants of the earth	12-25 (Many places named) were thy merchants.

weep and mourn over her, for no man buyeth their cargo 12 any more; a cargo of gold, and silver, and precious stone, and <i>pearls</i> , and fine linen, and purple and <i>silk</i> , and scarlet; and all <i>thyine</i> wood, and every vessel of ivory, and every vessel made of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and <i>marble</i> ; 3 and <i>cinnamon</i> , and spice, and <i>incense</i> , with ointment, and <i>frankincense</i> , and wine, and oil, and <i>fine flour</i> , and wheat, and cattle, and sheep, and of horses and chariots and slaves; and lives of men.	32 In their wailing they shall lament over thee. 33 Thou didst fill the nations with Thy fulness. 12 silver and gold (LXX.). 22 precious stones. 16 fine linen. [Silk, <i>sericum</i> , was unknown to LXX.] 7 purple and scarlet from the isles. 6 benches (holy things LXX.) of ivory. 15 ebony. 12 iron and tin. 13 vessels of brass. 19 calamus (elsewhere classed with cinnamon). 17 ointment and cassia (cheap spice) and oil. 18 wine. 17 wheat. 20 cattle. 21 rams and lambs. 14 horses. 20 chariots. 13 lives of men.
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M. There is no possible doubt as to the origin of the description. I can see that the seer, when he wrote his picture of "Babylon," had been inspired with the picture of Tyre by Ezekiel.

R. There is much more in the same context of Revelation which agrees with the same context in Ezekiel, but I thought this was enough by way of a sample, and you will see what a few articles of merchandise have been added to those of Tyre by the seer in his picture of Babylon. They suggest a useful exercise in the study of civilization. *Pearls, silk, marble, flour*, mark the principal advance since Ezekiel's time. There is some confusion in the LXX. of this chapter in more than one verse, the names of places being confused with the merchandise in which they deal, and so forth; this is common in the Septuagint. But what I would draw your attention to especially is this.

When the LXX. wants to describe "*chariots*," it uses the word *ἄρματα*, a very common Greek word, used by every writer, including the seer himself in this book. But the seer has not used it here; he has used, instead of it, *ῥεδᾶν*, a peculiarly Roman word, which no other Greek writer has used anywhere, if we believe Liddell and Scott! This *reda*, or *raeda*, was a four-wheeled post-chaise. Horace—you remember—

M. "Quem tollere *reda* Vellet iter faciens." Do I not recollect my old saying-lessons now and again? Maecenas would sometimes offer Horace "a lift."

R. Good man! It was a remnant—both thing and name—of the Gallic invasions of Italy, but, marvellous to relate, the *reda* seems not to have travelled very far outside Italy; otherwise the Greek writers would have used the name. In and about Ephesus, that pampered minion of Rome, that ultra-Roman eye of Greece, that first and farthest follower of Roman fashions at Ephesus, the four-wheeled post-chaise in which

The Roman drove in furious guise,
Along the Appian Way,

had become habituated, and was known to the seer as a symbol of overweening Gentile insolence and luxury. At Ephesus the roads were good. Elsewhere out of Italy the *reda* was a useless article in the absence of engineered roads for which Rome, alone of ancient empires, was ever famous. Imagine Tyre, or Babylon, or Jerusalem, as ever having been famous for its roads! Impossible!

M. You make a good point there. Every one knows that the presence or the absence of a road is the clue to the course of all history in Roman times. I have sometimes thought that a pretty volume might be made in showing how the battlefields must follow the highways, whether there was an engineered road, a *via munita*, as at Philippi

and the Milvian Bridge, or only a track, as at Carrhae or Megiddo.

R. I am pleased to find that you agree with me. Old as the identification is of Babylon with Rome, I do not remember seeing this point made before. But, you know, when the Papalist fever takes hold of a commentator, he is quite capable of agreeing with all this, and yet proceeding to say, "Yes, yes, it is Roman upholstery, Roman carriage factory, Roman commerce, but it means *Papal* Rome all the same! These *redae* are the carriages in the Papal stables, in which the Pope used to drive out to his summer residence at Castel-Gandolfo."

M. A kind of interpretation, this, "against which the gods themselves contend in vain."

R. There is a verse rather later which the Papalists might revel in. Let us put it alongside of the original in Jeremiah.

REV. XVIII. 22 f.

And the voice of harpers and minstrels, and flute players and trumpeters shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman shall be found any more at all in thee; and the voice of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee; and the light of a lamp shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee.

JER. XXV. 10.

I will cause to perish from them the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the sound of the millstones (but LXX. has *the scent of myrrh*, μύρου, rohika'gh for μύλου reh'chev) and the light of the candle.

(Evidently the seer is here, again, following the Hebrew and not the LXX.)

It is a strange thing that the LXX. knew the words for *harp*, *flute*, *trumpet*, but have never used the words for *harper*, *flute player*, *trumpeter*, though they were very well known. These three words, then, are introduced by the seer; they specify in a graphic manner the professional

musicians of his time, as employed in Roman civilization. But the interesting point is that he gives the first mention to the favourite instrument of Nero, who had no sooner assumed the purple, as Suetonius tells us, than he sent for Terpnus, the leading harper, or rather lute player, of the time, and kept him beside him by day and by night to teach him the arts of playing and voice production.

M. Yes, that is a minor detail, not without interest of a kind. But I thought you said the Papalists would find some pleasure of their own in it.

R. They would delight in saying that here we had a reference to Raphael's pictures in the Stanze of the Vatican! You remember the beautiful *Parnassus*, with its Apollo and the Muses. Let me get out my portfolio, and you shall see the photographs of the *Segnatura*. There are their musicians, you see!

M. I seem to remember Apollo playing the violin! Is that their lute?

R. No, the lute is with the exquisite figure of Poetry just above. The flute, they would say, is in the hand of the Muse to the left of Apollo.

M. And the trumpet?

R. That was a difficulty. It had to be put in the next room: but there, you see, in the *Attila*, there are the trumpeters! The identification is complete.

M. A fair caricature of those worthy Papalists. But now, to return to a serious discussion on Rome as the object of Revelation xvii. and xviii.—what is your view, Riddell, of Dr. Salmon's remarks upon the Roman solution of Babylon? For my fellow traveller in the train was very full of Salmon, who, he said, had upset all that view long ago. He saw that you had mentioned Salmon, but did not see how you overcame his objections.

R. Dr. Salmon is to me a name renowned and venerable. I do not wonder at any one being fascinated with the lumi-

nous and masterly lectures which form his *Introduction to the New Testament*. They have all the racy freedom and freshness of an Irish touch: they are playful yet careful, sunny yet serious. But I shall be very glad to answer your question, and feel bound indeed to do so. For no one treating of Dr. Salmon's subjects can pass him by on the other side, though space may forbid him to combat any but the most recent writers. My edition of the *Introduction*, the fifth, is 1891, and since then several Germans have written, and even a few English have found time to spare from cricket matches and parochial engagements in support of voluntary schools, but you cannot expect *them* to write much. First of all, then, I think Salmon is rather anxious to refute Renan.

M. Have you read Renan?

R. No, I have not. I possess *L'Antechrist*, but have only cut the pages the other day; so that where I agree with him, the agreement is independent, and now I am naturally much more interested in discovering how far that agreement extends. My knowledge of him is due to reading those conclusions of his which have been handled by Dr. Salmon, or by Mr. Simcox in his commentary in the *Cambridge Bible for Schools*. With many of these I need not trouble you. For bear in mind that Salmon agrees that "the Beast" denotes Rome and its emperor, though he is unable to regard "Nero Caesar" as the solution of "the number of the Beast" 666.

M. Why does he not allow that Nero is 666?

R. He says that in order to get 666 you have to write it NRON KSR, whereas it ought to be written NRON KISAR, since the proper spelling requires an I.

M. I do not understand you; I am no Hebraist.

R. Each letter of the Hebrew alphabet had to serve for a numeral as well as a letter. Thus if I in Hebrew wrote NRO, I should mean 256, because N = 50 and R = 200 and O = 6. So NRON = 306.

M. But NRON is not Nero.

R. No, but it is the usual way in which a Greek would write Nero's name in Hebrew.

M. But Nero himself would not add the final N.

R. True. But the vast majority of Nero's subjects would write it in Greek. For Greek was the universal language. Even in Rome itself it was the prevalent language.

M. Yes, I remember Juvenal's protest a bare generation later: "Non possum ferre, Quirites, Graecam urbem," "Sons of Quirinus (i.e. Romulus), I cannot bear my city to be Greek."

R. It is so. At any rate we are dealing with the public as did the Apostles and all writers of the New Testament. Greek was their one language. Therefore the Greek for Nero had a final N. But the strange thing is that there is another reading in Revelation xiii. 18 of the number of the Beast, which makes it to be 616, and that this reading 616 was known to Irenaeus in 177 A.D. If therefore you prefer the writing NRO (only it must be in Hebrew characters), you can still have your Nero. Now, it is hardly possible that the two readings 616 and 666 should have been in existence a century after the Apocalypse was written unless there was some very deliberate reason for this fact. No reason has been given, nor can any reason, I think, be conceived, so clear and palpable as this, that the true solution was a name that might be spelt in two ways, one representing 616, and the other 666. To my mind, the solution is proved as absolutely as anything in the past ever was proved. The chance of any other solution ever being produced so as to compete with it on anything like equal terms is infinitesimal. Neron Caesar is 666, Nero Caesar is 616.

M. But I have looked it out in Alford, and he will not have it *Nero* or anything but *Lateinos* written in Greek characters. He is quite certain too! Why do you bring in the Hebrew characters at all? You have just said that

the New Testament is written in Greek and for the Greek public who knew no Hebrew.

R. Capital! You may well ask the question. It brings us to the question of the antecedents of the seer of the Revelation, which must certainly be discussed, but time would fail us to embark upon that question today. You will perhaps allow that he was of Palestinian descent, and was well versed in Hebrew, and that he shows his interest in Hebrew names, and also shows his readers' interest—mark this carefully—in Hebrew names, when he says (ix. 11), “ His name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in the Greek he hath the name Apollyon ”; and (xvi. 16), “ The place called in Hebrew Har-magedon.” After these references, not to say any more, it would be hard to say that he must not use a name in Hebrew. The holy language must surely be allowed to express the antipodes of what is holy.

M. That quite satisfies me. But now as to the KSR. What of Salmon's objection that KAISAR must in Hebrew be spelt KISR?

R. Salmon insists that it would have been KISR because though Hebrew had a vowel sound (though the Hebrew vowel marks were unwritten then and for many centuries after) for A, it had none for AI, and therefore the I, or “ Jod ” must be written with the other characters. I have no doubt that the more correct and careful spelling would be KISR, with the I.

M. How then do you overcome his objection?

R. I used to think it was serious, but now I think very little of it. For apart from the fact that we find many words in Latin containing cae- spelt sometimes ce-, such as *caerimonia*, *caena*, *scaena*, and we may add *saeculum*, the conclusive fact is that Buxtorf in his *Lexicon* gives from the Talmud two instances of the spelling of *Caesar* in *Caesarea* without the I. It is very interesting to find the seer providing us with a close parallel to this spelling in

ῥεδῶν (all uncial MSS. Rev. xviii. 13), where, according to the more correct Latin spelling, we should expect ῥαιδῶν with an *ι* for *raedarum*.

M Supposing the I had been inserted, what difference would that have made to the number?

R. It would have made 676. Now just imagine the difference to the seer. To you and me it would be as easy to say 676 as 666. But the seer has been using 7 throughout his book as a holy number. Do you think that after using the number 7 in the Apocalypse fifty times in a holy sense he would choose to use it as the central digit of a number to denote the most disgusting and degraded and abominable thing in creation? Of course not. When in doubt he would choose to avoid the 7 just then. But there was another reason why he should prefer 666 for its own sake. It was already a base and degraded number, for it was the number of Mammon.

M. How do you mean? Mammon is not in the Apocalypse.

R. No, but when you read in the Bible of the wealth of the idolatrous King Solomon (1 Kings x. 14), "the weight of gold that came to him in one year was 666 talents of gold," you may see that this gold of the idolater is Mammon; this number must be a bad number, unholy and therefore to be held in abomination.

M. I think there must be something in what you say; but why does it not satisfy Dr. Salmon?

R. That is a question which you should address to Dr. Salmon himself. But though I cannot answer it, I can tell you what he has done. He has resorted to the usual plan of the advocate in distress, not exactly to abuse plaintiff's attorney," but to knock the heads of his opponents together. The effect of throwing together a miscellaneous crowd of eminent men of various centuries and tendencies and costumes, and representing them as all jostling together in competition, more or less, for a post of which they never

dreamed themselves, but which certain enemies of theirs long after their death think them fit to occupy, is comical, and must be so. The papal crimson, the Geneva fustian, the archiepiscopal lawn, the Roman emperor's greaves, and Bonaparte's cocked hat, are jumbled together by Salmon in a very fine medley. Salmon affects to think that all these are equally probable solutions of the number 666. He knows they are not.

M. A capital rhetorical artifice. But has he no rule of his own?

R. Oh yes, he is very funny over that too. He offers three rules: First, if a proper name will not make the number required, add a title. Secondly, if Greek fails, try Hebrew, or even Latin. Thirdly, do not be too particular about the spelling!

M. The best way to treat his rules is to ignore the vein of irony and apply them in good earnest.

R. Quite so. Then they are not bad rules at all. We have seen why the seer should deliberately prefer 666 to 676, and that his spelling was good, if not the very best. The seer's spelling, I can assure you, is far better than his syntax or even his attempts at the simplest concords.

M. Are they so bad?

R. Simply atrocious. Scratch the Apocalypse anywhere you like; you will find the Hebrew author underneath. But I think Salmon would have you forget the remarks which he himself had made a few pages earlier about the bad Greek of the Apocalypse. But then he really seems to persuade himself that if a lock can be opened by two keys, neither key can be the right one. "We cannot," he says, "infer much from the fact that a key fits the lock if it is a lock in which almost any key will turn." Note the words "a lock in which almost any key will turn."

M. Rhetoric! Such a lock would be almost no lock at all.

R. Very like it. If two different keys *open* the lock, then for the purpose of that lock either key is right ; though there may be other reasons which we must examine for preferring one of these two to the other. So if there are more than two. Our present key is Nero Caesar. There is no need to trouble about Mahomet, Titus, Parnell with two r's, (this is one of Salmon's mock solutions), and Luther and the rest, until some one takes them up and makes them part of one consistent view for the understanding of Revelation and other books related to it. One would really think Salmon had no interest in doing so, although he writes an Introduction to the New Testament !

M. How so ?

R. Salmon actually says : " Irenaeus, I think, drew a very sensible inference from the multiplicity of solutions which he himself was able to offer. He says (Iren. v. 30) : ' It is safer, therefore, and less hazardous to await the event of the prophecy than to try to guess or divine the name, since haply the same number may be found to suit many names. For if the names which are found to contain the same number prove to be many, which of them will be borne by The Coming One (the Beast) will remain a matter of inquiry.' " Fancy Dr. Salmon with his knowledge taking shelter under Irenaeus with his ignorance of Hebrew !

M. Do you mean to say that Irenaeus knew no Hebrew ?

R. Certainly, Irenaeus knew no Hebrew. That is quite clear. The proof of it is given abundantly in Irenaeus ii. 24. The fact is of vast importance for understanding the value of Irenaeus as a commentator on Scripture. But now you may fairly ask whether Dr. Salmon will say that Irenaeus drew an equally " sensible inference " in the same chapter when he says : " There shall follow another danger too, of a very serious kind, for those who falsely presume to know the name of the Antichrist. For if he shall come with a name different to that which those persons suppose, they

will be easily seduced by him." The penalty, he says, is that of "adding to or taking from the Scripture," which is so clearly stated in Revelation xxii. 18, 19. A very serious matter indeed!

M. Irenaeus was more earnest than intelligent.

R. Probably he was intensely earnest. Let us credit him with that. He lived in continual expectation—of a kind—of the coming of Antichrist. And yet his ignorance was so great that he could not approach the true solution.

M. But I thought you said that he did essay a Greek solution?

R. Yes, so he did. A Greek one, which Alford follows.

M. The desire to begin an *Introduction to the New Testament* was too much for him!

R. At any rate he was not consistent. He might have been wrong, and might have led others wrong, and caused them to be seduced by Antichrist. But he did it! The solution of his which Alford follows is *Λατεινος* in Greek letters, *Latinus*, "the man of Latium." I think it of no value, except that, like Nero Caesar, it points to Rome. But with a perversity absolutely provoking and defiantly dangerous, in view of his previous remarks, Irenaeus proceeds to give two others. *Euanthas* is one; "but," he adds, "we affirm nothing about it"—not even a warning. "But we will not boast of *Latinus* only," which comes second, "but *Teitan* is most worthy of credit of the current names. It makes 666, it has 6 letters, it is an old name, but not too common, no existing king is so named, no idol has it; many think it is divine, they call the Sun Titan; it suggests vengeance" (*τινομαι*, *avenge*). He thinks it a very probable solution; but then he adds the words: "But we do not hazard a positive statement; for if it had been necessary for his name to be publicly proclaimed at the present time, it would have been uttered by the seer's mouth. For the Apocalypse was not seen so long ago, but

almost in the time of our generation, at the end of the reign of Domitian."

M. That would be twenty-five years later than you represent.

R. Yes. But leave the Domitianic date aside for the present, please. It is a fact that Domitian was on the throne in 70 A.D. for some months. I want you to think of Irenaeus and the enormous weight which Salmon attributes to some of his statements, and to consider whether they deserve it. Is Irenaeus right when "he looks on the Apostle as having designedly left the matter obscure, since if he had wished the name to be known at the time he would have spoken plainly"? I quote Salmon's words (p. 205).

M. I remember that you have already said that the Seer designedly gave a clue when he said in Revelation xvii. 9, "Here is the mind (or meaning) which hath wisdom," and also, Revelation xiii. 18, "Here is wisdom. He that hath understanding, let him count the number of the beast; for it is the number of a man: and his number is 666" (or 616).

R. Irenaeus says, you recollect, that if you guess the name wrong you pay the awful forfeit of "receiving the plagues which are written in this book," and losing part in "the tree of life," and being excluded "from the holy city" (Rev. xxii. 18, 19). But does *the seer* say anything like this?

M. Oh dear no! Nothing so preposterous. The seer had said: "He (the Second Beast) causeth all to receive a mark, and that no one should buy or sell without the mark, the name of the Beast or his number." How were people to know how to avoid this mark? All were to have it, if the Second Beast could make them, all—"the small and the great, the rich and the poor, the free and the bond"—all who wanted to buy or to sell. Yet it was wrong; it was abominable in the sight of the seer and his readers. They must not buy nor sell under these terms; they must

avoid the number of the Beast. But in order to avoid it, they must exercise their wisdom. They must have a clue, and a clear one withal.

R. Irenaeus then reduces the careful provision of the Seer to an absurdity.

M. Yes, I can see that he does, in making it a matter of guess work at all.

R. It is not so much his ignorance of Hebrew, which is palpable elsewhere, nor yet his inconsistency, as his hopeless want of ordinary imagination, which strikes us. When the seer falls into the hands of Irenaeus, he might well exclaim, Save me from my friends! And yet, I can assure you, you would be surprised to hear what astonishing inferences have been drawn by learned modern commentators from the remarks of Irenaeus upon St. John. They are possessed of the idea that Irenaeus was almost in the same generation with the seer, as Irenaeus himself pretends in the sense that if the seer lived to "the end of Domitian's reign" (96 A.D.), his death would have fallen perhaps about thirty years short of Irenaeus' birth. Then they go on to disregard the fact of Irenaeus' literary career beginning a generation later still, and they ignore the years between the composition of the Apocalypse and Domitian's death (I assume that this part of the statement means 95 A.D.—a point we will discuss later), and thus they forget that two generations at least had passed between the seer's writing and Irenaeus' writing. Then they make much of the historical chain, *Irenaeus—Polycarp—"St. John,"* whom they identify with the seer. Then they sometimes end by prefixing "St." to Irenaeus, which prefix diminishes his fallibility by one-half in the estimation of many readers. However, I was going to say that the German theologian, Zahn, has welcomed in a most cordial embrace the ideas, first, that Irenaeus knew something worth knowing on this question; next, that Irenaeus says that the Beast's number

must be reckoned in Greek, *and not in Hebrew*; then, that the readers of the Apocalypse would in any case require the Hebrew words to be translated, since the only Hebrew words intelligible to them were such as Amen, Hallelujah, which they knew in their liturgies; then, that it was traditional in Asia Minor in the circles of John's disciples to take the Greek characters as the base of the solution: lastly, that the attempt to make the Beast mean Caligula instead of Nero was made upon this principle of a Greek solution.

M. We have seen how much Irenaeus knew on this question. At least I take your word for it that he knew no Hebrew. Therefore I infer that Irenaeus was not qualified to say that the Beast's number could not be reckoned by the Hebrew letters, whatever he might be able to say in favour of the Greek solution.

R. I think you are right in your inference. But if it does not bore you, I should like to read you what Irenaeus says in the context of his remark upon the tradition in Asia Minor. For I am going, if you will allow me, to defend Irenaeus on one point presently. He has been saying that the Beast is a *recapitulation of wickedness*, "summing up in himself all the wickedness which took place before the Deluge, being due to the apostasy of the angels." Noah was 600 years old at the Deluge, Nebuchadnezzar's image was 60 cubits high and 6 cubits broad. Those three digits indicate the recapitulated apostasy of 6,000 years, which is the duration of the world, because it was created in six days, and one day is with the Lord as 1,000 years.

M. Really wonderful reasoning! Will you champion that?

R. No. But listen. Irenaeus now proceeds: "Such, then, being the state of the case, considering that this number is found in all the most approved and ancient copies [of the Apocalypse], and that those men who saw John face to face bear their witness [to it], and that reason tells us that

the number of the name of the Beast, according to the Greek mode of calculation—i.e. the tens equal to the hundreds and the hundreds equal to the units—by means of the letters contained in it will amount to 666, for the number which is the digit six being equally observed throughout, indicates the recapitulations of the universal apostasy which was in the beginning, is now, and shall be at the end, I do not know how it is that some have erred, through following a private fancy” . . . so as to read 616.

M. It is plain that Irenaeus is very strongly in favour of 666 as against 616. The latter figure would upset all his calculations.

R. That is the chief point which comes out clearly. But what I was going to observe, in justice to him, is that he does not venture to disparage the Hebrew reckoning *in comparison with* the Greek. There is no question of such comparison at all. He did not profess to know much Hebrew, and we must not accuse him of making the pretence. There is a Latin version of Irenaeus, I should tell you, which is about 200 years later than the Irenaeus whose original is fragmentary and in Greek. For most of the passage here quoted we have the Greek as well as the Latin, but the Greek fails us just before the words *will amount to 666*, and Eusebius, a century and a half later, in quoting the Greek, has not put the italicized words, but says instead, *becomes manifest*.

M. How does that alter the case?

R. I think it alters it somewhat. We know that it did not become manifest in any precise sense, for Irenaeus admits that he did not know the true solution. But it has seemed to commentators—who, by the way, read their Eusebius more often than they read their Latin version of Irenaeus, and do not trouble to notice the difference between the two—as if Irenaeus (177 A.D.) were already giving his deliberate verdict *here* upon the way in which we

were to find the Beast's name. That is not so ; he attempts the mode of solution two pages later. But here, I take it, he is only saying that the mode of *writing the number* is by means of Greek letters, *and not Roman*. He is here, in fact, limiting the field of vision to the Greek language. He does not say that those who saw John face to face handed on the tradition to "Use Greek notation instead of Hebrew, *and you will solve the problem,*" as Zahn maintains. He says, "Those who saw John have borne witness to the number being 666," and he adds, "reason tells us that as the book is all in Greek, this part of it is in Greek, even if we write the six hundred and sixty and six in the Greek literal form $\chi\xi\varsigma'$, at the risk of its being corrupted into 616, $\chi\iota\varsigma'$."

M. How would it be if written in Roman letters, DCLXVI.? There too you have the ominous number of 6 digits.

R. Seeing that you have no *single* letter for 6, or for 60, or for 600, in Latin, this would not suit Irenaeus' remarks on the digit six being equally observed throughout. It would rather upset his reasonings from Noah and Nebuchadnezzar. I should underline the passage in Irenaeus thus: ". . . numerus nominis bestiae secundum Graecorum computationem *per litteras* quae in eo sunt sexcentos habebit et sexaginta et sex (hoc est, etc. . . .) ignoro quomodo erraverunt quidam . . ."

M. You mean that the contrast is between writing in words at length and writing in letters of the alphabet which serve as numerals in Greek (as in Hebrew also).

R. Yes. Irenaeus is proceeding to show how the error 616 arose out of 666 by explaining (however absurdly, it matters not) that the ξ for 60 was flattened out into ι , and further on in the same chapter he is about to offer what is really a Latin name, *Λατίνος*, Latinus. However, I admit that just in this small particular I am holding a brief for

Irenaeus; and for taking *computationem*, or its original Greek $\psi\eta\phi\omicron\nu$, to mean *a mode of writing a number*, and not *a mode of solving a numerical riddle*, I think you will admit that there is much to be said. But if so, it follows that a good case is made out for Irenaeus against Zahn's hasty translation of his words. It follows naturally that the tradition in Asia Minor, of which Irenaeus speaks, is limited to the testimony that 666 is correct and 616 wrong; and that Zahn is wrong upon the Greek solution on which he lays so much stress as against the Hebrew. This is a mere matter of grammar in understanding Irenaeus. The clause which follows, with its broken Greek, is not very clear either way.

M. Neither, at this late hour, is my head very clear, Riddell. Like the Greeks of whom you were speaking, I could write a number down, but I cannot now attempt to solve a riddle. *Au revoir!*

R. It is not much of a riddle, Mason, but, like other riddles, it can wait. Good-night.

E. C. SELWYN.