

the Jewish people ; and Dr. Moffatt, in his *New Translation*, seems entirely justified in placing these verses between the two sentences in verse 36. It is perplexing to find at how few points the Synoptic and the Johannine tradition of Passion week coincide. Different interests in the witnesses afford only partial relief to the mind. We must add that probably the fourth evangelist, whose home was in Jerusalem, went to and fro as the service of the Master required, and that his influential position, of which more must be said afterwards, gave him access where the twelve were excluded.

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A PLEA FOR THE FOUR TRUMPETS.

IN a recent work, *Studies in the Apocalypse*, Dr. Charles has given an earnest of the long-promised volume on the Book of Revelation to be published in the International Critical Commentary. The present book is only a fragment, but in it the writer sets forth some conclusions which, though novel, he contends are in the main valid, and will only be confirmed by further investigation. Perhaps in the case of no book of the New Testament is the hope of finality in interpretation less warranted than with regard to the Apocalypse. The first two chapters of Dr. Charles's work show how successive interpreters have come to the Book, confident that at last they held the key that was to open its seals, and how their interpretations have been superseded by others, not less confident and not less transitory ; and it may be wise not to hail any conclusions, even though they come from an acknowledged master of interpretation, as final. Time will try them and sift them ; and it will be something if out of a good deal of chaff some good grain survives.

After the two chapters to which we have already referred, there follows a chapter of special interest and value on the Hebraic style of the Apocalypse, in which the writer maintains a thesis which will doubtless be treated with greater fulness in the forthcoming volume, a thesis which, if proved, promises to clear up many a difficulty with regard to the vexed question of the language and style. Limits of space—the book consists of four lectures delivered in connection with London University—hinder the author from dealing with more than a selected portion of the Apocalypse itself; and he has chosen chapters vii.-ix., not only because these chapters have been most misunderstood, but also because a right interpretation of them is of vital importance to the understanding of the significance of the remaining chapters of the Book. In his study of these chapters perhaps the point that will receive most attention and evoke most dissent is his theory with regard to the passage that describes the first four trumpets, which he looks upon as no part of the original writing, but as an interpolation by a later hand.

To one who has studied with any care the edition of the Book of Enoch or of the Apocalypse of Baruch which Dr. Charles has given to the world, and seen with what masterly skill, amounting almost to infallible instinct, he analyses these books, and assigns each section to its appropriate historical setting, it may well seem as if to him must fall the honour of saying the last word on any point of apocalyptic analysis. Yet, in the case of a book that makes so varied an appeal as the Apocalypse, any conclusion that will in the long run win the adherence of scholars will be such as will have commended itself after the Book has been looked at from every point of view. It may not be without value, then, to test the conclusion to which Dr. Charles has come, and to put in a plea for the passage on the

first four trumpets being retained as part of the original treatise.

Dr. Charles finds the passage suspicious because it "not only arrests the development of the Book, but also introduces an alien element at this stage" (p.146). It does not carry forward in a direct line what he conceives to have been the meaning of the Sealing of the tribes as narrated in chapter vii. "The reign of Antichrist with all its superhuman horrors was about to begin, and so the Sealing was carried out just then (i.e. after the opening of the 6th seal), and not earlier, and not later. This Sealing did not secure against physical or social or cosmic evils, such as had already occurred, or would again occur; least of all did it secure against martyrdom; but it secured the faithful against the coming outward manifestation of demonic power, the epiphany of Satan and his kingdom" (p. 143). But as the demonic plagues do not issue forth till the fifth trumpet has been sounded, whereas the first four give the signal for "colourless cosmic visitations" to fall upon the world, these latter constitute a seam of alien matter thrust in between two sections that otherwise would fit closely together.

While this may be taken as the chief objection to the admission of the passage, supporting arguments are not lacking. Of these the principal are two, viz., the contrast between the plain objective character of the first four trumpets and the visionary nature of the fifth and sixth, and the fact that the first four trumpet-judgments are weak and colourless repetitions of the Seals and the Bowls. In the wholesale destruction brought about by the last series of judgments there is an exhibition of strength itself in comparison with the weakness displayed in the partial and hesitating judgments inaugurated by the Trumpets. Therefore Dr. Charles comes to the conclusion that the

passage has been inserted by a later editor of the Book, who failed to apprehend the meaning of the Sealing and the movement of the author's thought; and that the simplest solution is to cut out the passage bodily.

But this entails other changes; for the interpolator had to alter the context in order to dovetail the interpolation into the original writing. Therefore various emendations have to be made to restore the text to what Dr. Charles conceives to have been its original form. *Seven* must be replaced by *three* wherever it occurs. The phrase *that stand before God* in v. 2 must be omitted, for in conventional religious thought the angels that stand before God were seven in number; and the verse must read, "And I saw three angels, and unto them were given three trumpets." Further, as this verse in its present position interrupts the natural connection between the silence in heaven and the acceptance of the prayers of the saints, it must be removed to another place, probably after v. 5. And lastly, the word *other* in v. 13, as implying the existence of trumpets that have already been sounded, must be taken out, and the word *yet* that has been incorrectly introduced into both English versions must be dropped, and the Greek word translated as it should be, *which are about to sound*.

Such is the theory which Dr. Charles advocates, and such the emendations of the text with which he supports it. At first sight it must be admitted to be extremely plausible, and one that requires an emendation of the text so simple that, if it is true, the wonder is that it never suggested itself before to any commentator. But its very simplicity makes us hesitate to receive it with open arms. May there not be something to be said for the retention of the passage which this simple though drastic scheme of excision and emendation does not take account of?

And first, let us examine the fundamental contention of

Dr. Charles, that the passage introduces an alien element into the movement of the writer's thought. What is the movement of his thought? According to Dr. Charles the servants of God were sealed to secure them against demonic powers. "The powers of Satan were about to make their last struggle for the mastery of the world. In the past their efforts had been hidden, invisible, mysterious, but now, at the end of time, they are to issue forth from their mysterious background, and make open battle with God and His hosts for the possession of earth and heaven. The hidden mystery of wickedness was about to reveal itself; the Antichrist was in some sense to become incarnate, and appear armed with all but almighty power. Against such spiritual foes coming into manifestation, the faithful needed special help, and this was accorded to them, and that just on the eve of the epiphany of the Antichrist and Satan." For the proof of this the writer relies on chap. ix. 4, where the scorpion-locusts are commanded not to hurt vegetation, but only such men as have not the seal of God on their foreheads. But chap. ix. 4, marks only an early stage in the developing thought of the Book. Can we arrive at no more definite knowledge of the writer's conception of these demonic forces? In some sense they were to become incarnate. In what sense? The 144,000 that were sealed are not lost sight of, but appear again in chapter xiv. as those that are with the Lamb on the mount Zion, with the seal, "His name, and the name of His Father," still visible upon their foreheads. They have come through the danger against which they were sealed. And if we may identify the 144,000 of chapter xiv. with those that are said in chapter xv. to stand on the glassy sea, the danger from which they have obtained security is clear; for they have "come victorious from the beast and from his image and from the number of his name." The vague demonic forces

that issued from the abyss have become concrete in the Roman Empire, that, by the institution of Cæsar-worship, has sold itself to the beast, and has become the embodiment of Antichrist in the world. They presented themselves in the form of the persecuting powers that laid their hand so heavy on the Church's life. The servants of God were indeed wrestling against principalities and powers, but principalities and powers that had become incarnated in flesh and blood. They found themselves in collision with the imperial system which they could not escape and which they could do nothing to appease. They were face to face with tremendous inducements to forsake Christ. And it was against all that was involved in standing face to face with so powerful and ruthless an adversary that they were sealed. They would not be exempted from outward calamities, even from martyrdom itself. On the contrary, the central idea of the Book is that the acceptance of what the world chooses to offer is the Royal road to the side of the Lamb on the mount Zion. But throughout the conflict between Satan and God which had its outcrop in history in the conflict between the Empire and the Christian Church, they would be kept safe and would achieve victory. Nor would the writer think that any element in the life of the Empire would be exempted from being involved in that conflict. The forces of nature would be pressed into the service of God or of Satan. The diminution of the productiveness of land and sea, the failing and poisoning of the sources of life, earthquake and eclipse of sun and moon, would all be on the field of battle. Cosmic forces cease to be purely cosmic when they are employed by Satan as his instruments, or by God as the vehicles of His judgments. Now it is the sense of a concrete and definite historical situation, which is writ on every page of the Apocalypse, that we miss in the treatment of Dr. Charles. From any-

thing that is said in the *Studies*, the Book might have almost as little of historical colouring as some apocalypses with which Dr. Charles has dealt in his time, to which it is extremely difficult, and in some cases impossible, to assign a date at all. Only once in his book are we brought into warm touch with history, where, on page 100, the second beast of chapter xiii. is interpreted as "the heathen priesthood of Asia Minor, which had for its office the worship of the Roman Emperor." Apart from this single reference the historical situation is spoken of in terms so vague that the Book might have been written as well at one time as at another, or might even be a detached speculation on the movements of the unseen world as they sometimes affect earth. There are two points of view from which the Apocalypse may be looked at. It may be looked upon as a true apocalypse; in which speculation on the unseen world and on eschatology is carried on largely for its own sake, and bearing a more or less faint tincture of the time in which it was written. Or it may be looked upon as a prophetic discourse, meant to persuade or exhort to a line of conduct in the presence or imminence of a great crisis, with the apocalyptic element in it subordinate and secondary, as being the conventional religious thinking and language and imagery of the time which a teacher of religion had to adopt if he was to make himself intelligible at all. Dr. Charles would seem in his book to take the former point of view; and this, it may be, has led him to forget that every element in the complex life of the Empire would be regarded by the writer as a possible vehicle of Divine working, and so to look upon the phenomena represented by the first four trumpets as introducing an element alien to the thought of the Book.

Consideration of the supporting arguments only deepens the belief that these verses are from the hand of the original writer and are no interpolation. Not much stress need be

laid on the fact that the heptadic structure is graven deep on the Apocalypse (seven seals, seven thunders, seven bowls), though in the case of a number with a recognised symbolic meaning the argument for uniformity of structure is stronger than it would otherwise be. And we can easily imagine that had the chapter come down in the amended form that Dr. Charles gives it, some scholar might have been contending on this very ground that a passage must have been dropped from the original. Nor does the argument from the contrast between the plain objective character of the four, and the visionary character of the fifth and sixth trumpets seem of much weight, for the same contrast is in the bowl-series also. Indeed so close is the parallelism between the one series and the other that the inference is suggested that in both cases the writer is regarding precisely the same phenomena from different points of view.

But Dr. Charles seems to lay great stress upon the weakness of the trumpet-judgments in comparison with the strength of the bowl-judgments. "Colourless and weak repetitions" he calls them, contrasting the destruction of one-third with the wholesale destruction under the bowls. But it is to be noted that we do not by any means get rid of this weakness by the excision of the first four trumpets. The sixth trumpet also brings judgment only on the third part of men (ix. 15); and the same partial scope of judgment is expressed in the fifth trumpet in a somewhat different way. There the scorpion-locusts are commanded not to kill men but only to torment them, and that, too, only for a limited time, five months. Thus this element of "weakness" inheres in all the trumpet series, and thus the question is suggested whether indeed it is not essential to their message.

There seems to be no possible doubt that in the symbol

bowls the writer has expressed the characteristic feature of these last judgments. The shape of the vessel, shallow and broad-brimmed, so that the contents could be dashed out to overwhelm those upon whom they fell, as well as the action of the angels that had charge of them, vividly suggests the deluge of Divine wrath that overtakes the impenitent world. So it may be legitimately inferred that a significance is intended to be conveyed in the other symbols, seals, thunders, trumpets.

Now, there is little difficulty in arriving at the idea that lies in the symbol Trumpets. The sound of the trumpet was an arresting one, and, frequently in the prophets, a warning one. The watchman on the city wall blew his trumpet to warn the citizens of approaching danger, and to summon them to defence. So in the name *trumpets* we may see the idea of arresting and warning. This idea is supported by chapter ix. 20 f., a passage which seems to belong to the trumpet-series as a whole. "And the rest of mankind, which were not killed with these plagues, repented not of the work of their hands . . . and they repented not of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts." When the writer states so emphatically that the rest of mankind did not repent, surely he means to suggest that repentance was the purpose of these judgments, that God was sending warnings and threatenings because He had mercy upon them.

And the contracted sphere of the trumpet-judgments seems intended to set forth the same truth. That punishment follows some sinners with leaden foot while others it overtakes with swift wing, is a fact of observation. Thus, by the punishment that falls upon some sins, their inevitable results are underlined and emphasised, so that those who may be conscious of being guilty of the same sins but have received a respite, may be led to repent and turn to God.

Thus in the trumpet-series there lies an idea that is not common in the Apocalypse, the mercy of God leading to repentance. As the product of a time of persecution and suffering the Apocalypse is not "rich in mercy." All the more welcome should be such traces of it as exist. And such seems to be the meaning of the partial character of the judgments, what Dr. Charles calls their "weakness." Long-suffering may appear weak in comparison with the summary exacting of vengeance; but it is the "weakness of God" which is stronger than men, and which is sometimes able to soften the heart that punishment would make only more obdurate. The Trumpets contain an idea that must be in the Book before it can be called a Christian book—that God, while making clear by many examples the inevitable issue of continuing in sin, yet holds Himself in, that men may have opportunity to repent before the outpouring of His wrath from which there is no refuge. The ground on which Dr. Charles would reject the first four trumpets seems, then, to be a feature that is not only common to them all, but which is the very idea that they are meant to convey.

With the objections to the first four trumpets all necessity for the proposed emendations of the context disappears. But two points of minor importance may be touched upon.

1. Dr. Charles removes viii. 2 from its position in the text and places it after v. 5, on the ground that it is an intrusion between the silence in heaven and the rising of the prayers of the saints into the ear of God. But the silence and the prayers do not constitute an independent episode. They are but elements in a great scene of judgment. They are the prelude to and, in a sense, the efficient cause of the outpouring of those judgments. But that God's judgments are ready to be poured out at the appointed time and on a given signal is an idea that is surely not unworthy of symbolic expression. And the symbol of their readiness

seems naturally to precede the symbol of the removal of the restraint upon their action. So in vii, 1 f. the angels of the winds are first announced, and then the angel that forbade them to hurl their judgments on the earth till the servants of God should have been sealed.

2. Dr. Charles also notes, as other commentators have done, the inconsequence of the effect upon the cause in the fourth trumpet. "There is no conceivable connection between the destruction of one-third of the light of the sun and the shortening of the duration of the day by a third." He attributes the inconsequence to a hopeless confusion of the text, and by a series of ingenious conjectures and with the help of a Hebrew original he is able to get the reading, "And the third of them shone not by day, nor by night likewise." But it may be doubted whether it is necessary to seek a reading different from that which we have. It is characteristic of the writer to lay stress on the ideas that he wishes to be conveyed rather than upon the imagery that he employs to convey them. And the idea that he has in his mind is the diminution of light, which may occur in one of two ways, either by decrease of its intensity or of its duration. Here, then, we have probably only one of many instances in this Book in which the consistency of the imagery is sacrificed to the ideas that it bears. Who could present to the eye, e.g., the picture of a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, and taking a book out of the hand of Him that sat upon the throne? How are we to visualise the Holy City of which the length and the breadth and the height are equal? In the beginning of the 8th chapter, we have an instance of how lightly the author's imagery lies upon him. In the first verse we are told that on the opening of the seventh seal there was silence in heaven for the space of half an hour, in order that, as Dr. Charles suggestively interprets, "the

prayers of the suffering saints on earth may be heard before the throne of God." We should naturally expect, then, that the prayers should be represented as rising to God in terms of sound. As a matter of fact they are represented as rising in terms of sacrifice, so that the silence in heaven does not seem so necessary. The angel adds incense to them, and they ascend with the incense and are found acceptable. In the beautiful Old Testament phrase the Lord "smells a sweet savour in them." Incidentally, the present position of v. 2 finds support in this inconsistency.

There are many suggestive things in Dr. Charles's book with which we cannot deal. This foretaste whets the appetite for the full feast. If many of his conclusions have the revolutionary look of this one, his commentary will not prove the final word upon the interpretation of the Book of Revelation; but, coming from the hand of so great a master of apocalypse, it cannot fail to throw a flood of light upon a Book of which Dr. Charles justly says that "in its own literature it stands absolutely without a rival, while in the literature of all time it has deservedly won for itself a place in the van."

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PAPIAS AND THE GOSPELS.

THE quotations in Eusebius iii. 29 from Papias have been sifted *ad nauseam*, and by every man according to his ability or prejudice. Yet they are of sufficient importance to be sifted ever afresh. They are being used every day. Thus in the EXPOSITOR for March 1914 Dr. Bacon breaks a lance over them with the "sixteen reconstructors of Q." The theory that Matthew made a collection of Logia in Aramaic which Matthew and Luke used and translated each according to his ability harks back to poor Papias. Papias actually