

THE APOCALYPSE.

ANYONE who propounds a theory should be grateful for all serious and well-informed criticism of it. As I have always learned more from those who differ from me than from those who are of the same opinion, I am indebted to Dr. Beet for showing me where the difficulties are felt in my presentation of the case, and still more for giving me the occasion for re-stating the essential part of the theory, apart from what I have built upon it. As mere policy, it is a mistake to put forth a theory, and, at the same time, to offer a re-arrangement and an interpretation based upon it, because this offers the opportunity of arguing backwards to the failure of the theory from matters which might in many points be wrong, without even weakening the probability of the theory itself.

Thus one critic dismisses the whole as the work of a twentieth-century philosophical theologian, though that only applies, or, at least, is only applied by him, to the interpretation. Even in this matter, the mind of such a person might be at least as near to the mind of John as the mind of a modern literary critic. But on the essential question of the analysis of the text, it is obviously a quite irrelevant consideration. The possibility of a reasonable interpretation would no doubt help to confirm the theory—as, for example, if it should be true, as so eminent a New Testament scholar as Professor König thinks, that the interpretation impresses him by its sobriety, and must, in the main, be on right lines. But that would be enough, however many errors there might be on detail.

Again, there may be mistakes in the rearrangement without disproving in any way that the analysis of the text into equal sections is wrong. After the analysis, we

should still be only in the same position as the original editor : and, though it might be possible to succeed better by ridding ourselves of some of his wrong pre-suppositions, there would still be possibilities of mistake.

Finally, I have held that the editor has divided some sections, and it is possible that these sections have been wrongly made up. Yet if the seventeen whole sections wrought out rightly, and what remained divided exactly by nine, these mistakes would in no way disprove the theory.

For that reason, I intend to deal here mainly with the fundamental part of the theory, which is, that when glosses are omitted, the book divides into 26 exactly equal sections, with one more which is shorter because it is the last, apart from the further questions of rearrangement and interpretation.

The main question reduces itself to this : When glosses are removed, are the whole sections equal, and is the rest the proper length for what remains ?

Two other questions then arise :

(1) Are the divisions of the text natural divisions ?

(2) Are the glosses omitted really glosses ?

The second is the more important, because the divisions, in the main, are very clearly marked, and no critic has seriously challenged them.

The weakness of the theory, as originally presented, undoubtedly was that, while the divisions were fixed by an objective standard, the glosses were determined on the ground, mainly at least, of what seemed to be irrelevant. This raises two other questions : first, whether everything equally irrelevant was omitted ; and, second, whether relevancy was not determined by my own subjective standard, and to suit my idea of the length of the sections.

Even to the argument as it stands, Dr. Beet does scant

justice. First, some sections are exact as they stand and some more practically so; and, second, in some other sections, as, for example, § XII (chap. vi. 2-17), all that is removed as glosses is repetition of one phrase, with only the numerals different, which could not have been selected to suit the length.

But I am ready to take the section on the Trumpets, which Dr. Beet specially selects (chaps. viii. 1-ix. 21).

To begin with, I am very far from being alone in regarding the first four as spurious. Dr. Charles, for one, argues against their genuineness. Indeed, there are few serious commentators who defend them. Now the three left are precisely the length which has been determined on other grounds, without any omission whatsoever: and, as the standard of length was determined quite apart from this section, this would be very remarkable as pure accident.¹

Dr. Beet's first argument for the genuineness of the first four is against an argument which depends on my rearrangement, so that may pass. The second and third, about the senseless destruction of thirds and the poverty of thought and expression, are not my arguments in particular. Dr. Beet is not impressed by them, but I still think that they are sound arguments, and they have convinced other students of the subject besides myself. But the important argument is the fourth. The first point in it is that, in a symbolic work of the type of the Apocalypse, literary consistency is hardly to be looked for. This must be applicable only within very narrow limits, because, if any inconsistencies can be put together, there would be no use arguing about the book: and, if a method of rearrangement does away with inconsistencies, this would surely be an argument in

¹ This does not necessarily prove that there is no change in the text, because the transcriber would be aware of the length of his sheet and might be unconsciously influenced by it in putting in as much as he took out, but that would not be accident.

its favour. The second point of the argument is that there is, as a matter of fact, no inconsistency, "for the destruction in the earlier passage touched but a third of the whole." Dr. Beet has evidently not verified his reference here, because it says in the first trumpet that "all green grass was burned." How, then, can it say in the fifth: "It was told them not to hurt the pasture of the earth, nor aught green"? He might argue that it had grown again, but why should it be wholly destroyed in the first, and specially spared in its entirety in the fifth?

There is, however, another argument against the genuineness of the first four trumpets, which I failed to notice at the time. It is the extent to which they are mere doublets of the first four vials (xvi. 2-9). The first is on the land; the second on the sea, the sea becoming blood, and all living creatures dying in it—which is the more certainly a doublet from the attempt to make Greek of the author's Hebrew idiom in the vials; the third on the rivers and fountains of waters; the fourth on the sun, with the addition of moon and stars from xiii. 1, and the darkening from the fifth vial.

Other doublets are viii. 7, "and he cast it into the earth," from viii. 5, and the suggestion of the thirds from ix. 18.

What is left are the phrases, viii. 7, "all green grass was burned." "And there was hail and fire mingled with blood." Verse 8, "as a great mountain burning with fire." Verse 10, "and there fell from heaven a great star blazing like a torch." Verse 11, "The name of the star was Wormwood," and "The waters became wormwood."

That some at least of these clauses are from the vials is rendered probable by the fact that they exhibit the author's usual use of Old Testament references, and by the unlikelihood that the editor would have introduced what was inconsistent with what follows, without an original.

It would be a delicate task to restore these passages, yet they seem to confirm the view taken in the book, that the first five vials refer to past oppressors of the true Israel. Thus all the clauses from the first trumpet, however we put them together with the first vial, seem to be drawn from the plagues of Egypt. The blazing mountain suggests the destruction of Sodom and the mountain of the Law, "burning with fire unto the heart of heaven" (Deut. iv. 11), which was, if not in, very near the land Ezekiel calls Sodom. The great star fallen from heaven seems to depend on Isaiah xiv. 2, "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Day Star, son of the morning"—which is Babylon. Then there are several Old Testament references to the waters of Babylon.

The interpretation of the first five vials, as an account of the past, depends, however, on the much larger question: Why the conflict is always spoken of as of long duration, yet the expectation of the end is at hand. On any interpretation of the book, the purpose is to preach endurance; and John does seem to say that the trial will be harder and longer than his fellow Christians are preparing for. But, while the hardest part is to come, it is the death-agony of the powers of darkness, and the end is to come shortly. How are these seeming opposites to be combined, if all the calamities are yet to come? The explanation I have offered is that an important part of John's appeal is that every faithful Christian is entering upon an age-long conflict, and that he must not fail at the end. Dr. Beet's criticisms do not seem to assail that broad conclusion, or challenge seriously any of its applications.

But the point which is relevant to the present discussion is that, when these passages are restored, and chap. xi. 14-19 and xiv. 6-xvi. 16 have all doublets omitted from them, they divide somewhat differently from what I have done, but more naturally, and make up exactly the expected

lengths. This happens to have been the one part which left me wholly dissatisfied: and I stated in the book that it stood alone. Had Dr. Beet chosen to take § X. (chap. xv. 5-xvi. 16) as an example of subjective selection of glosses, he would have had a good case. But now the problem solves itself purely on the question of doublets: and when this was followed out, it was found to apply to the whole book.

It may well be asked, why, especially as so large a part of what I had excluded were doublets, I did not discover this test at the time. But I suppose that I am not the first person, who, when working with a mass of detail, could not see the wood for the trees. In some subconscious way I must have noticed it, because, as soon as I dismissed the subject from my conscious mind, and turned to other studies, it occurred to me. The result was to find that all the sections as they stand, with the exception of § X, part of which I have found not to belong to it, and two short clauses from the doublet xix. 9, 10, which had to be restored in the same way as the passages in the vials, and the extra line which I thought was found in § XIX, which disappears, when all doublets are omitted, all are exact—more remarkably exact indeed than before—when every doublet in the book, not guaranteed clearly by the context, is removed. In the complete sections most of what I had excluded are doublets, but in the other sections, where the task was more difficult, I have more frequently gone astray.

But the important point is that all the seventeen complete sections, as I had divided them, work out precisely, and that, in addition to the test of glosses by the length of each section, there is the further test that the glosses are all free doublets—that is, doublets not guaranteed by the context—and that these two tests rigidly coincide.

In what follows I shall deal mainly with these undivided

sections, because the composite passages present an intricate problem, which would take too long to explain ; and only, if the reader were convinced by the simpler examples, could he be expected to take the trouble to understand. In respect of the rest it must suffice to say that, when put together, the whole makes up the remaining sections exactly, and that, while it shows that I was wrong in the positions I had assigned to certain passages, it does not alter my sections, except in the cases stated above. In any case, the whole sections are a fair test, because they were fixed beforehand, and the new test has not required me to alter one of them, but works out with quite astonishing exactness.

The first four sections, I said in the book, are more exact, if all the repetitions of " He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit says to the Churches," are omitted, than on the omission i. 20*a*, which I there prefer, while retaining the first as well as the last " He that hath an ear." Now I see that the reasons for the omission of i. 20*a* and the retention of ii. 7*a* are wrong. First, in rejecting i. 20*a*, I was dominated by the ordinary idea of a gloss, as an interjected explanatory clause. But further study of the book showed that the author gives many such explanations, which are undoubtedly genuine, and I ought to have gone back and revised my judgment. The second argument also is wrong, for " mystery " is used in much the same sense in xvii. 7, where it is also in a similar explanation. The argument about repetition of sevens is not of any value by itself, and while there is no parallel, there might be a reason for this repetition at the beginning. Finally, the seven spirits of God are so uncertain, that they may be the angels of the Churches. But the chief failure was in not seeing that the clause " He that hath an ear " to be retained was the last, not the first. Only at the end is it relevant ; and what the Spirit says to the Churches is least of all

relevant after only one has been mentioned. The change of position in the message, which I thought at the time to be important, I now see to be dependent solely on the purely verbal connection of "This thou hast" in the previous verse. This dependence on mere verbal connexions I have mentioned, but I now see that it is much more constant than I had then recognized.

I give the sections in my book, lest any reader should have it and care to refer to it, but I go through the text in its present order, to show the effect of omitting all free doublets as glosses.

§§ I-IV (chaps. i.-iii.) with the omission of all doublets of iii. 22 as explained above.

In §§ XX, XXI (iv. 1-vi.1), I have no glosses, and, though there are doublets from this passage, the originals are evidently here, for none of them could be omitted.

In § XII (vi. 2-17) all that I have omitted as glosses are doublets of vi. 1, with the mere alteration of the numerals.

In § XXII (vii.) the passages omitted as glosses are, first, the last clause in verse 2, which is from 3*a*, only grammatically altered, with "to whom it was given" to which there are several parallels; and, second, verses 5-8, which is simply an arithmetical doublet of "144 thousand slain from every tribe of the sons of Israel" in verse 4.

§§ XXIII, XXIV (viii., ix), about the trumpets, have already been discussed. Nothing has been omitted in the three I have retained, and I have already explained that I now retain everything that is not doublet in the rest. The last clauses of viii. 5 and ix. 2, however, are doublets, and in place of them xvi. 7 after vii. 5 seems to be in place.

Chapter x. I have treated as part of a divided section (§ V) and without glosses.

In § VI (chap. xi. 1-13) I have omitted "and gave glory to the God of heaven" as a gloss, on the ground that what

follows shows that the men did not repent. But it is not a doublet of anything in the book. We have "They cursed the God of heaven," but all the other doublets are accurate verbal reproductions, except for the grammatical changes and changes of numbers which were made necessary by the connexion. Moreover, the phrase "God of heaven," as a name of power, may have been deliberately chosen to show that their state of mind was awe and not repentance. But there is a doublet in verse 7, "that coming up from the abyss," which is from xvii. 8, with only the necessary grammatical changes. For treating this as a gloss there is the reason that xvii. 8 shows that this was not the name of the beast, but merely an account of what he was about to do, as he was then in the abyss. Moreover, his origin is the sea, not the abyss. Also, if my order were correct, the beast is still on the earth, and not yet in the abyss. This makes the section quite exact, while it was very slightly short with my omission.

xi. 14-19 combines with xiv. 6-xv. 4 (§§ XXV and XXVI). The whole passage (ch. xiv. 6-xvi. 16) I pass over as presenting too complicated a problem to be discussed here. I can only repeat that when the very extensive doublets are deducted and the clauses which are not doublets from the first four trumpets are added, the whole works out exactly.

In §§ VII-IX (xii. 1-xiv. 5) I omitted only one short clause, "for they are virgins" (xiv. 4). This I stated that I did with some dubiety. There is nothing, however, in the least parallel to this in the book. There is one doublet and only one, xiii. 9a, "if anyone has an ear let him hear," and the omission of this makes the section quite exact. The argument that xiv. 4b has to do with freedom from idolatry, not celibacy, still holds, but this is explained by xvii. 2.

In §§ XIII-XVI (xvi. 17-xix. 9a) the passages I have

omitted which prove to be doublets are xvi. 18*a* of xi. 19*c*, xvii. 14*b* of xix. 16*b* with the order reversed, and xviii. 21, last clause, of verse 22*b*. But to xvi. 21*b* there is no exact parallel. It has a general resemblance to other passages, but it is not, as all the others are, an exact use of the same words of another passage, except for the necessary grammatical and numerical changes. The other real doublets in this passage are xvii. 11*a*, from xvii. 8, and the last clause of xix. 5, which is from xi. 18, with the necessary grammatical changes. The result again shows a more remarkable precision than before.

Of the rest of the text, I take chapters xx. 11–xxi. 8 to be the close of the book, and xxii. 8–9 to be editor's epilogue. The test of glosses shows that, in what remains, I have treated two passages wrongly. First, I have transferred the wrong passage to chapter x. But, as the right passage is of the same length when the doublet is removed, this does not affect the standard of length. The other is that xxii. 8, 9, is the original and should remain where it is, while xix. 9, 10, is the doublet. What is not doublet in xix. 9, 10, should, however, be restored to xxii. 8, 9. When this is done, and all free doublets omitted, the result is exact, and not a line too much as before.

This leaves no line to be added to §§ XX–XXI (chaps. iv. 1–vi. 1) as I had supposed. I stated that the shortness might be due to the number of long words, and, therefore, the fewer intervals, in the passage, and in some texts, like the R.V. it is the usual length. But Gebhardt has proved so uniformly accurate that it is difficult to admit an exception. There is just one line in the introduction which is not doublet (i. 5*b*–*c*), and probably it should be inserted somewhere in this passage.

This test of doublets solves a problem I had raised : Why, when the editor is so careful to observe his own rule, not to

take away from the words of the book, does he so freely add? The answer is that he did not think that repeating his author was adding.

That the removal of these doublets detracts somewhat from "the sonorous eloquence," as Dr. Beet says, may be true, for it is possible that the editor's reason for inserting them was in some cases just to add to it. But let us take the example Dr. Beet selects "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." As one closing word, it is a moving appeal to consider that what has been said is said to all; while, as a phrase repeated at intervals, it is mere "sonorous eloquence" and far less really impressive.

The care the editor takes to repeat with verbal accuracy is a valuable test of the accuracy with which he transcribed the original.

This enables me to answer one of Dr. Beet's objections to my method: what he regards as my ruthless treatment of the text along with punctiliousness about it. Throughout I have maintained that my treatment shows that the editor's text has been transmitted with great accuracy. I am not an authority on texts, and have no right to an opinion. But I have a vague idea that the tendency on the whole is in favour of what is known as the Western text. In any case, the question of text is within very narrow limits. But no question of text can concern anything beyond the work of the editor, because it can only show what he left, not what he found. The critics of the Pentateuch have the same problem. They believe that the text has been so accurately transmitted that they can argue from words like *Yahweh* and *Elohim*. If, however, their inquiries into the originals of the work are to be limited by the present text, they must necessarily retire from business. But if only doublets have been inserted this carries us much further than the critics

of the Pentateuch can go, for it proves that the editor of Revelation handled his text with the utmost care.

Only two questions, so far as I foresee, can arise. The first concerns the divisions. They are, I think, sufficiently definite in themselves : but, in any case, I made them without any thought of glosses, and, if they are quite phenomenally exact when nothing is omitted except doublets, were that mere accident, it would be a very remarkable example of the long arm of coincidence.

The second concerns the question of which is original and which is doublet. No reader, I think, will have serious doubt, at least in most cases, and in the unbroken sections I had already rejected the larger proportion of them, purely on the ground of irrelevancy.

I am loth to go farther, because I should like this one question of the division of the text to be considered, without complication from other questions on which it does not depend. But Dr. Beet has other objections, which, if I remained silent on them, I might be seeming to admit. It is to be hoped, however, that the reader will remember that the question discussed above stands alone, and that nothing I have said about it need be wrong, even were I mistaken about all the other points I now proceed to discuss.

That I should succeed, at the first shot, in solving correctly every difficulty of interpretation and the many detailed questions which arise, was highly improbable, and it may be that, in view of this probability, I have not always shown becoming modesty, but have put forward my views too much with what Dr. Beet calls "a tone of assurance." But I could not be always explaining and apologizing : and personally such apologies in a book always annoy me, because it seems to assume that, where they are not given, something more is being offered than the author's best judgment. As a matter of fact, I have found a great many

more mistakes than Dr. Beet has discovered. So far as I can see, he has, indeed, only hit upon one—the wrong place I have assigned to xix. 9, 10. To the rest I propose to reply, but I may say once for all that it is only with my best judgment upon the facts under discussion.

I begin with Balaam and Jezebel. Dr. Beet thinks that they represent movements, not the originators of them. Personally I still think that very improbable, but, as, in any case, they represent what came to be movements, it would not materially affect the general interpretation of the passage.

Next I take the 1260 days. With many others, I take that to mean the 1260 years of the World-rule. Dr. Beet says that this is not easy to harmonize with the facts of history. Had he said why, it would be easier to answer, but I never imagined that it could with any exactness. The question does not concern our chronology, but John's.

Dr. Beet finds difficulty in *βασιλεῖς* being used for kings and also for monarchies, but it is quite certain that the word is so used in the LXX of Daniel.

The only other point Dr. Beet raises about the monarchies is the interpretation of "a sea of the dead" as the "Dead Sea." This name he says "does not seem to have come into use until the second century of our era, when it appears in Pausanias, Justin, and one or two other writers." Revelation was written towards the end of the first century, apparently by a Palestinian Jew. Considering how many ancient names of places have never been mentioned in literature, we cannot assume that the use of any name is contemporaneous with its mention by writers. But, in this case, seeing that we have it mentioned by writers so far apart as Pausanias and Justin, who both probably learned it from the Jews, it is not assuming much to suppose that it was familiar to a Palestinian Jew a generation earlier.

The next question is the number of the beast. After

reading my explanation again, it seems reasonably clear for a condensed exposition. But, as it has perplexed Dr. Beet, I shall try to re-state the case, taking more care to distinguish between what is known as fact and what is merely conjecture.

1. The author expects that any sensible person will know what the number is. It is likely, therefore, to be a number already mentioned; and the only one is the 1260 days of the World-rule.

2. Read as an inscription, the first letter of the Greek numerals has the value of 1000, the second of 60, and by a slight alteration in the form of the letter, the third of 200.

3. It is now known that the "mark" was a mercantile stamp. More than one example has been found, and on all is the name "Cæsar." Possibly at this date there was nothing else.

4. The solution is obviously not in the Greek letters, as they do not combine into any meaning, so we naturally seek it in the Hebrew numerals, probably the only other system known to the author. Isaiah viii. 1 confirms the view that "the number of a man" has this meaning. Dr. Beet asks what connexion "pen" could have with "number." I did not say it had. What I said was that several authorities held that the phrase, translated "the pen of a man," means the phonetic writing as opposed to a more learned and difficult form, probably cuneiform. I did not enter into the question of the translation, but it should then be "the writing of the common man," as opposed to the learned.

5. There is no question about the letters of this writing being used for numerals. As John only uses three in Greek, he would be working with three in Hebrew, *koph*, *samech*, *resh*. Their value in order is 100, 60, 200. Even, if we could make no guess as to how 100 was raised to 1000,

this is sufficiently near to suggest that it was done somehow.

Possibly a person more familiar with the later Hebrew numeral system may know, though I doubt if any person's knowledge goes very far. My ignorance at least makes the following suggestion only conjecture. Conjecture, however, appears here for the first time, because the change in the third Greek letter is guaranteed by the value of the Hebrew.

The most likely is that John read the word in another common Hebrew form with a *yod* after the first letter, but, if so, as he reproduces them with only three numerals, he read the first two together. This he was entitled to do because *yod* is not a consonantal letter here, but a sign for the vowel, which merely modified the sound of the first letter. Therefore, there is a reason why he should multiply the first by it, while merely adding the others. Both the Greeks and the Hebrews probably learned their numeral systems from the Phoenicians, and there is a possibility that the mark like an acute accent, which the Greeks used, as we used naughts, for higher numerals than the alphabet could express, is merely the relic of a *yod*. In any case *yod*, being 10, was the natural sign to use for multiplying by 10. This, for aught we know, may have been a common usage, but, even if John invented it, it is not more forced than is usually found in such parallels, or would probably be found, if we knew more, in his use of the word "Harmagedon."

Dr. Beet further thinks that, even if this solution be correct, it does not accomplish much, for the mystery of the number remains. I think that the 1260 days stands for the years of the World-rule; Dr. Beet has his doubts. About this we need not quarrel, for, whether they be years or not, it is certainly the number associated with the World-rule. Here, John says, is the name on the stamp which prohibits Christians from doing business, the number

of which shows it to represent the wicked World-power, and the Christians should not wonder at suffering from it. This surely would clear up the perplexity considerably.

The rest concerns two points of interpretation—the Man-Child and the Living Creatures. On them I can only say that, if I ever come to alter my opinion, it will not be on Dr. Beet's arguments. Why should a parallelism need to be complete in every particular? And, if a person is carried through the air, where is the difficulty in seeing how the representative of it could help?

JOHN OMAN.

REVIEWS.

Sacrifice in the Old Testament ; its Theory and Practice. By G. B. Gray, D.Litt. Clarendon Press. Pp. xv + 434.

At the time of his death Dr. Gray stood almost alone in the front rank of European Old Testament scholars, and was certainly the greatest that the English-speaking world had produced since Lowth. He died at a comparatively early age, when we were still looking forward to many years of fruitful study from him, and not a few of us felt that, in spite of the magnificent work he had already done, he was still at the beginning of his best achievements. A list of his published works included in this volume contains over seventy magazine articles, every one of which is important, and eight separate volumes, including three in the International Critical Commentaries. Yet many of us will feel that this posthumous work on Sacrifice, printed from the manuscript of his Speaker Lectures, admittedly incomplete, and lacking the final revision of the author, is yet his greatest work.

The book falls into four sections. The first deals with the theory of Sacrifice, and Dr. Gray was concerned to shew that the "communion" theory to which Robertson Smith gave such prominence was not the only view that was held, and that men increasingly regarded sacrifice as a gift made to God, especially for propitiation and expiation. He then discusses the nature and the history of the Altar, adding a couple of chapters on the