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The Apocalypse of Ezra

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AMONG the numerous examples of Apocalyptic,¹ that have come down to us, the Fourth Book of Ezra is one of the most interesting documents of its kind. In its present form, it consists of a nucleus of Jewish origin, (chapters iii-xiv) with Christian additions (chapters i-ii, and xv-xvi). The Jewish portion, or "Apocalypse of Ezra," as it may be called, is notable for the fact that its teaching is much more nearly akin to Christian than to Jewish thought,—especially in its view of man, his state of sin, and need of redemption.² As such, it must have come from the pen of a liberal Hebrew, who lived at a time of great distress, and who found himself passing through the experiences which, in the case of Paul, led to the latter's conversion to Christianity. As devoted as any of his race had ever been to the traditional ideal of the pre-eminence of Israel,³ and unable to reconcile this ideal with the new and growing ideal of the pre-eminence of the moral man, he had been led,

¹ Apocalyptic was in its aim and purpose, homiletic and practical, rather than scientific,—to find evidence, in the logic of events, of a world, created but to reveal God's moral government, with Israel the human partner of the Divine. In its incidence, it was synchronous with the apocalyptic moments of Hebrew history,—occasions when the Hebrew racial temperament was in strong reaction against depressing exterior influences,—in particular, acts of profanation of the Temple by Gentiles. Its view of history was distorted,—serious, not always unintentional falsifications of facts frequently occur.

² 3 21-2, 25-6, 4 30, 7 116-26, 139, 8 3, 26,—in particular 7 118,—“O thou Adam, what hast thou done? For though it was thou that sinned the evil is fallen not on thee alone, but upon all of us that come of thee!” Cf. Rom. 5 12.

³ 5 27: “Among all the multitudes of peoples, thou hast gotten thee one people.”

in spite of himself, to seek relief for his perplexity in certain aspects of the new faith.⁴ On the basis of its teaching, a late date should be assigned for the composition of the apocalypse, a conclusion which is warranted by additional internal evidence, consisting of allusions to events in Roman history, contained in the account of the famous Eagle-Vision.

According to this Vision, which takes up chapters 10 58 to 12 39, an Eagle, having twelve wings, eight winglets and three heads, is made to symbolise⁵ the last of the four Gentile empires which are to hold Israel in captivity.⁶ The apocalyptic moment is at some point in the period of domination of the empire by the powerful dynasty figured in the description of the three heads.⁷ Scholars are agreed that under the similitude of the Eagle, covert allusion is made to Rome.⁸ Hitherto, only Gutschmid,⁹ and Le Hir,¹⁰ both of whom place its composition in

⁴ 9 13: "Inquire how the righteous shall be saved, they whose the world is, and for whom the world was created."

⁵ 11 1: "There came up from the sea an eagle, which had twelve feathered wings and three heads . . . 3,—out of her wings there grew other wings over against them . . . 11,—and I numbered her little wings, . . . and behold, there were eight of them.

⁶ 11 39: "Art not thou it that remainest of the four beasts whom I made to reign in my world that the end of my times might come through them?" (Cf. Dan. 2, 7-12.)

⁷ 12 25-5. "In the last days thereof, shall the Most High raise up three kings, and renew many things therein, and they shall bear rule over the earth, and over those that dwell therein with much oppression, above all those that were before them,—therefore are they called the heads of the eagle."

⁸ The Apocalypse of Ezra declares openly in favor of the "futurist" interpretation of the visions of Daniel. "The eagle, (i. e., Rome,—cf. 12 14-15,) "whom thou sawest come up from the sea is the fourth kingdom which appeared in vision to thy brother Daniel" (12 11-12). This interpretation is found in the Apocalypse of Baruch, cc. 36, 37, and in the so-called Synoptic Apocalypse (Mark, 13 14-27), both of which reflect Jewish thought during the years following the fall of Jerusalem, A. D. 70. Josephus knew both the preterist and the futurist interpretations of the book of Daniel (to use modern terminology). See his *Ant.* x, 11 7.

⁹ A. von Gutschmid, "Die Apokalypse des Esra und ihre späteren Bearbeitungen," *ZWT*, 1860, pp. 1-80.

¹⁰ A. M. Le Hir, "Du IV^e Livre d'Esdras," *Études bibliques*, i, pp. 184-92.

the year 218 A. D., have seen in the historical allusions made in the course of the Eagle vision evidence of a late date for the book. The common and accepted view, however, is in favor of an early date, and finds in the symbolism of the three heads of the eagle, witness to the fortunes of the house of Vespasian.¹¹ Thus Charles declares "the work was written toward the close of the first century."¹² Box, the latest authority on the subject,¹³ following Kabisch,¹⁴ assigns it to the year 120. Sanday, in his able review of Box's edition, takes exception to this date on the ground that "the Eagle-vision points to the reign of Domitian."¹⁵ When we turn back to the sweeping statement of Schürer to the effect that "there can be no mistaking the fact that all that is said with regard to the three heads will apply admirably to the three Flavian emperors, Vespasian, Titus and Domitian,"¹⁶ we must admit that it is time to call for the testimony of the Roman historians.¹⁷

Now, according to the Apocalypse, it is stated concerning the great rulers symbolised by the heads, that the first to reign shall be a mighty conqueror, who shall put to death two rival aspirants for the throne, and after a reign of great severity, die on his bed in agony, to be succeeded by two lesser rulers, as joint heirs to the empire, one of whom shall slay the other with the sword, and reign alone, until his own death by violence.¹⁸

¹¹ The fact that Clement of Alexandria (Strom. iii, 16) cites a text of an Ezra-apocryph, ("Εσδρας ὁ προφήτης λέγει) which corresponds to Apoc. Ezra, 5 35, already predetermines the choice of most scholars in favor of an early date.

¹² R. H. Charles, *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, xi ed., p. 108, s. v. "Ezra, Fourth Book of."

¹³ G. H. Box, *The Ezra Apocalypse*, p. XXXIII.

¹⁴ R. Kabisch, *Das Vierte Buch Esra*, p. 175.

¹⁵ *International Journal of the Apocrypha*, xxx, 44.

¹⁶ E. Schürer, *The Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ*, Div. ii, vol. iii, p. 106.

¹⁷ Their several statements are to be given precedence in the order of the credibility of the several authors as witnesses.

¹⁸ 11 31-2: "The head . . . did eat up the two under wings that thought to have reigned. But this head held the whole earth in possession." 12 26-8: "And whereas thou sawest that the great head appeared no more, it signifieth that one of them shall die upon his bed, and yet with pain

This is no true picture of the Flavian times. Vespasian came to the throne on the murder of Vitellius, whom mob-violence subjected to cruel indignities.¹⁹ He was a wise and able ruler,—even a hostile Semitic imagination could not make him a prototype of the great tyrant of the Apocalypse. He did not put to death two rivals,—his death was not lingering and painful, but sudden, due to excessive drinking of ice-water.²⁰ Titus and Domitian never shared the throne. Probably no one in Rome except Domitian himself ever thought that Vespasian would leave his two sons joint heirs to the empire.²¹ As for Titus, he died not by the sword, nor indeed, except in town gossip, absurdly reflecting the unpopularity of Domitian, by any cause for which his brother was responsible. A malignant fever, with severe delirium at its inception, terminating in collapse, perhaps due to intestinal perforation, ended his life.²²

. . . the sword of the one shall devour him that was with him, but he also shall fall by the sword in the last days."

¹⁹ Suet., Vitell., 17.

²⁰ Suet., Vesp. 24: Hic cum super urgentem valetudinem creberrimo frigidæ aquæ usu etiam intestina vitiasset, nec eo minus muneribus imperatoris ex consuetudine fungeretur, ut etiam legationes audiret cubans, alvo repente usque ad defectionem soluta, "imperatorem", ait. "stantem mori oportere", dumque consurgit ac nititur, inter manus sublevantium extinctus est.

²¹ Domitian pretended that his father left him joint heir with Titus, but that Vespasian's will had been altered to defraud him of his inheritance,—*"fraudem testamento adhibitam"* (Suet., Dom. 2).

²² Suet., Titus, 10: Sabinos petit aliquanto tristior . . . Deinde ad primam statim mansionem, febrim nactus, cum inde lectica transferretur, suspexisse dicitur dimotis pallulis caelum, multumque conquestus, "eripi sibi vitam immerenti." This is a clear statement to the effect that the early stages of Titus' illness exhibited severe delirium. Elsewhere, Suetonius records a bit of town gossip to the effect that Domitian induced the nurses to desert Titus at the crisis of his illness: "corruptum gravi valetudine, prius quam plane efflaret animam, pro mortuo deseri iussit" (Dom. 2).

Further romancing about Domitian was possible. Thus Dio Cassius brings against Domitian the charge that he plunged the moribund Titus into a coffin filled with snow,—*ἐμπνουν γὰρ τοι αἰὶς ὄντα καὶ τὰχα περιγεῖσθαι συνάμενος, ἐς λάρνακα χιόνος πολλῆς γέμουσαν ὁ Δομιτιανὸς ἐπέβαλεν, ἵνα θάσσει ἀποθάνῃ* (Dio Cass., lxxvi, 26). Aurelius Victor decides in favor of poison as the means by which Domitian became his brother's murderer (De

The main objection to the Flavian theory is in the fact that it does not agree with history. Neither does it fit the statement of the Apocalypse. It is clear that, by the twelve wings of the Eagle are symbolised twelve emperors of Rome,—the first two being respectively Julius Caesar and Augustus.²³ Ten wings and eight winglets remain to be accounted for. If seven of the wings bring us down to the accession of Vespasian,²⁴ three wings and eight winglets remain unidentified.²⁵

If a theory is to be worth anything at all, it must be one that follows the facts, instead of preceding them. The Flavian theory breaks down because it is made to precede the facts.

So far is the testimony of the historical allusions in the Eagle-vision from being in favor of an early date, so clear are the references in the symbolism of the three heads to the fortunes of the house of Septimius Severus, that, notwithstanding the stumbling-block of the famous Clementine citation,²⁶ it must be admitted that the Apocalypse of Ezra could not have reached its present form prior to the reign of Caracalla. Septimius Severus, symbolised as the great head of the Eagle,²⁷ was a man of blood and steel, a military despot who never lost a battle, and governed Rome with the iron hand of a Genghis

Caes., x: veneno interiit). The substratum of truth beneath these stories is that Titus's illness took an unfavorable turn at the crisis,—instead of recovery, sudden collapse, accompanied by a violent chill and speedy death, supervened.

²³ 12 14: "In the same shall twelve kings reign, one after another, whereof the second shall begin to reign, and shall have a longer time than any of the twelve." Augustus did "begin to reign," and was emperor for 41 years.

²⁴ Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, Nero, Galba, Otho, Vitellius. As a matter of fact, however, Galba, Otho, and Vitellius are not reckoned as emperors in the Johannine Apocalypse, nor are they by Clement, Eusebius, or Ptolemy.

²⁵ Schürer *l. c.*, p. 107, fills up the list by adding the names of Vindex, Nymphidius and Piso! A writer who knew enough to include Galba, Otho and Vitellius, would have known better than to include these pretenders,—even were he the most mendacious of apocalyptists in falsifying history, for the sake of his art. One would as soon think of reckoning Perkin Warbeck or Lambert Simnel among the kings of England.

²⁶ See note 11.

²⁷ 11 4: "The head in the midst was greater than the other heads."

Khan.²⁸ He literally waded in blood to the throne,—as the great head “did eat up the two under wings that thought to have reigned,”²⁹ he put to death, with barbarous indignities, his two rivals, Pescennius Niger, and Clodius Albinus.³⁰ With a despot’s conceit, he boasted openly of his exploits,—not without reason, perhaps seeing in himself the savior of the empire.³¹ History records a sad end to his life. Long a sufferer from gout and neuritis, and perhaps conscious that an undutiful son wished for his death, Severus became despondent, and meditated suicide. Unable to obtain poison, he gorged himself with a hearty meal of heavy, rich food,—dying speedily, “upon his bed, and yet with pain,” a victim of acute indigestion.³² To his sons,

²⁸ Herein historian and apocalypticist agree: Ps.-Aur., Epit., xx, Septimius Severus: *Fuit bellicosissimus omnium qui ante eum fuerunt*; Aur. Vict., De Caes. xx, 14: *Felix ac prudens armis praecipue, adeo ut nullo congressu nisi victor discesserit, auxeritque imperium, subacto Persarum rege nomine Abgaro*; and Apoc. Ez., 11 32: “But this head held the whole earth in possession, and bare rule over those that dwell therein with much oppression, and it had the governance of the world more than all the wings that had been.”

²⁹ 11 28-31.

³⁰ History and Apocalypse herein agree: Aur. Vict., xx, 9: *Pescennium Nigrum apud Cyzicenos, Clodium Albinum Lugduni victos coegit mori*; Spartianus, Niger, v, 8: *Victus est, atque apud Cyzicum circa paludem fugiens sauciatus, et sic ad Severum adductus, atque statim mortuus*; Julius Capitolinus, Albinus, ix, 3: *Albinus fugit, et, ut multi dicunt, se ipse percussit, ut alii, servo suo percussus, semivivus ad Severum deductus est*; and Apoc. Ez., 11 28-31: “And I beheld, and lo, the two that remained, thought also in themselves to reign, and while they so thought, behold there awaked one of the heads that were at rest, namely, it that was in the midst . . . And . . . the head . . . did eat up the two under wings.” The cruelty of Severus is attested by his mutilation of the corpses of his vanquished rivals,—Spart., Severus, ix, 1: *confluxit cum Nigro. eumque apud Cyzicum interemit, caputque eius pilo circumtulit*; xi, 6,—*deinde Albini corpore adlato, paene seminecis caput abscidi iussit, Romamque deferri . . . reliquum autem cadaver eius ante domum propriam exponi ac diu videri iussit. Equum praeterea ipse residens supra cadaver Albini egit. expavescentemque admonuit et effrenatum, ut audacter protereret.*

³¹ Spart., Severus, xxiii. 3: *Turbatam rem publicam ubique accepi, pacatam etiam Brittannis relinquo, senex ac pedibus aeger firmum imperium Antoninis meis relinquens, ac boni erunt, imbecillum, si mali (his last words).*

³² History and Apocalypse herein agree: Spart., Severus. xix: *Perit Eboraci in Brittania, . . . morbo gravissimo, . . . iam senex*; Ps.-Aur.

the Antonines, as he called them, Geta and Bassianus, nicknamed Caracalla, he left the empire, intending they should rule as co-regents. Thus he made the mistake Vespasian knew better than to make and disaster followed. Anyone who knew Caracalla could have foretold his act,—he slew his brother with the sword, and handed his own name down to history, as that of the most contemptible scoundrel that ever disgraced a throne, loathed in his day by the world that had respected, however much it had feared, his father.³³

It appears, on comparison of the statements of the Apocalypse with the testimony of the Roman historians, that everything which is said with regard to the rulers symbolised by the three heads, will apply with the minutest accuracy to known events in the fortunes of the house of Severus. Furthermore, it is stated that two winglets shall precede the great head,—these are symbolic of the emperors, Pertinax and Didius Julianus,—of whom the former reigned eighty-six days, and the latter, “sooner away than the first,” was murdered after sixty-six days of imperial power.³⁴ Thus we are able to identify completely

Epit., xx: *Is dum membrorum omnium, maxime pedum, dolorem pati nequiret, veneni vice, quod ei negabatur, cibum gravis ac plurimae carnis avidius invasit, quem cum conficere non posset, cruditate pressus, expiravit; and Apoc. Ez., 12 28: “And whereas thou sawest that the great head appeared no more, it signifieth that one of them shall die upon his bed and yet with pain.”*

³³ Historian and Apocalyptist agree,—Spart., Caracalla, ii, 4: *Conquestus est circumveniri se fratris insidiis, atque ita fratrem in Palatio fecit occidi; and id., Geta, ii, 8: Bassianus, cum eum occidisset, ac vereretur tyrannicam ex parricidio notam, audiretque posse mitigari facinus, si divum fratrem appellaret, dixisse fertur,—sit *divus*, dum non sit *vivus*. Apoc. Ez. 11 35: “And I beheld, and lo, the head upon the right side devoured it that was upon the left side;” 12 28: “For the sword of the one shall devour him that was with him.” Caracalla was half-brother to Geta, whom he murdered, and whose mother he forced to marry him. The brutally cynical terms in which he proclaimed the deification of Geta were quite in keeping with his despicable character. “*Hic tamen omnium durissimus et, ut uno complectamur verbo,—parricida et incestus, patris, matris, fratris inimicus*” (Spart., Caracalla, xi, 5).*

³⁴ Historian and Apocalyptist agree: Julius Capit., Pertinax, xv, 6: *Imperavit mensibus ii, diebus xxv. Spart., Didius, ix, 3: Imperavit mensibus duobus, diebus quinque* (cf. also Ps.-Aur., Epit. xviii: Dio Cass.,

six wings, four winglets, and three heads.³⁵ The identity of the remaining figures will depend on what disposition it is possible to make of the problem relating to the literary structure of the Apocalypse.

That the work is composite is generally agreed,—the final redaction, according to the usual view, being set in the period 96—120 A. D. Gutschmid and Le Hir, who draw their conclusions from the Eagle vision, dissent in favor of the year 218. The former, in the opinion of critics, absurdly, proclaims that the vision is an interpolation;³⁶ the latter ascribes the work to a Christian, who drew in part from older sources.³⁷ From both these views, the writer of the present essay, who deals only with facts, and has no theories, ventures to dissent. Mere interpolation is out of the question. Nor is the Apocalypse of Ezra the work of a Christian,—the writer is a Jew, solicitous for the fate of Israel, but forced to find place in his thought, quite against his own will, for the rising doctrine of election on a purely ethical basis.

A clew to the literary structure and date is obtainable, however, from the fact of the apparent absence of an apocalyptic moment in the apocalypse as we have it.³⁸ In fact, the last

lxxiii, 10. 17); and Apoc. Ez. 11 25-7: "These under wings thought to set up themselves, and to have the rule. And I beheld, and lo, there was one set up, but within a while it appeared no more. A second also, and it was sooner away than the first."

³⁵ Six wings = six emperors of the Julian line.

Four winglets = Pertinax, Didius, Pescennius, Albinus.

Three heads = Septimius Severus, Geta, Caracalla.

³⁶ Gutschmid, *op. cit.*, p. 52: "Hiermit ist mathematisch bewiesen, . . . daß das Adlergesicht eine spätere Interpolation ist."

³⁷ Le Hir, *op. cit.*, p. 207: "Pour me resumer, le iv^e livre d'Ezdras tel que nous l'avons, est de l'an 218. Il a été composé par un chrétien, à l'aide d'un document plus ancien, d'origine juive, et qui remontait au dernier quart du premier siècle."

³⁸ The feature of apocalyptic is its immediacy,—Daniel, Apoc. Baruch, the book of Revelation,—not to speak of the apocalyptic portions of Enoch, and the Solomonic Psalter, were tracts for the times, written in historical crises. The age of Severus was marked by no Gentile persecution of Jews,—though the emperor did enjoin them from making proselytes, and put down an uprising in Syria,—for which Bassianus, as crown prince, was awarded a triumph. "Filio sane concessit, ut triumpharet, cui sena-

apocalyptic moment in Hebrew history, having racial significance, was on the occasion of the ethnicising of Jerusalem by Hadrian, following the suppression of the Bar-Cochba rebellion. The emperor razed city and temple, sparing no pains to render insult as well as injury to the subject race.³⁹ The land was held for virgin soil,⁴⁰ a new temple built and dedicated to Jupiter. The pious sentiments of Israel were outraged by the sight of a statue of the emperor in the holy place,⁴¹ and the sculptured image of a pig, surmounting the Bethlehem gate.⁴² Though the period must have been one of activity in apocalyptic writing, no document relating to the Hadrianic persecution is known to have come down to us. This fact is passing strange,—that the Jews had not forgotten how to hate is shown by the evidence of a curse, “crush his bones,” which in the Talmud and the Midrash follows the name of Hadrian.⁴³

tus Iudaicum triumphum decreverat, idcirco quod et in Syria res bene gestae fuerant a Severo” (Spart. Severus, xvi).

³⁹ Schürer, *Div. i.*, vol. 2, p. 293: “So long as Jerusalem lay in ruins, the Jews could cherish the hope of its restoration. The founding of a heathen city, the erection of a heathen temple on the holy place, put an end to these hopes in terrible manner.” Compare also the testimony of the ancient historians: Appian, *Syriaca*, 50: *τὴν μεγίστην πόλιν Ἱεροσόλυμα καὶ ἀγρωτάτην αὐτοῖς [Πομπήσιος] ἔσκαψεν, ἦν δὴ καὶ Πτολεμαῖος ὁ πρῶτος Αἰγύπτου βασιλεὺς καθήρηκε, καὶ Οὐέσπασιανὸς αὐτὸς οἰκισθεῖσιν κατέσκαψε, καὶ Ἀδριανὸς αὐτὸς ἐπ’ ἑμοῦ.* Jerome, ad *Joel* 1 4: *Aelii quoque Hadriani contra Iudeos expeditionem legimus, qui ita Ierusalem murosque subvertit ut de urbis reliquiis ac favillis sui nominis Aeliam conderet civitatem.* Id. ad *Isa.* 1 5: *Post Titum et Vespasianum et ultimam eversionem Jerusalem, sub Aelio Hadriano usque ad praesens tempus, nullum remedium est.* Hadrian, in fact, pursued his policy of extermination in methodical and cold-blooded fashion,—successful where Antiochus Epiphanes had failed.

⁴⁰ Jerome, ad *Zech.* 8 18: *Aratum templum in ignominiam gentis oppressae. Plowing up the ruins of a city symbolised the seizure of the site as virgin soil.* “Ad . . . diruendas civitates, aratrum adhibitur, ut eodem ritu quo condita, subvertantur” (Servius, ad *Aen.*, iv, 212).

⁴¹ Jerome, ad *Isa.* 2 9: *Ubi quondam erat templum et religio Dei, ibi Hadriani statua et Iovis idolum collocatum est.*

⁴² Eusebius, *Chron.* (Migne, *Pat. Lat.*, viii, col. 469): *Aelia ab Aelio Hadriano condita, et in fronte eius portae, qua Bethleem egredimur, sus sculptus in marmore prominens, significans Romanis subiacere Iudaeos.* Hadrian thus came to rival Antiochus as an object of execration.

⁴³ *Jewish Encyclopaedia*, art. “Hadrian,” ad *fin.*

Imbedded in the text of the Apocalypse of Ezra, however, are yet to be found traces of a lost Hadrianic apocalypse, composed after the suppression of the Bar-Cochba rebellion.

Of these passages, the first is as follows: 10 21ff: "For thou seest that our sanctuary is laid waste, our altar broken down, our temple destroyed, our psaltery is brought low, our song is put to silence, our rejoicing is at an end, the light of our candlestick is put out, the ark of our covenant is spoiled, our holy things are defiled, and the name that is called upon us is profaned, our freemen are despitefully treated, our priests are burnt, our Levites are gone into captivity, our virgins are defiled and our wives ravished, our righteous men carried away, our little ones betrayed, our young men are brought into bondage, and our strong men are become weak, and what is more than all, the seal of Sion, for she had now lost the seal of her honor, and is delivered into the hands of them that hate us."

At first sight, this description might seem to apply equally well to the times of Vespasian and Hadrian. There is, however, a suggestion that the persecution has been unprecedentedly violent, practically a war of extermination, a policy for which Hadrian is known to have been responsible.⁴⁴

In the second passage it is written: 12 14: "In the same shall twelve kings reign, one after another, whereof the second shall begin to reign, and shall have a longer time than any of the twelve." Compare also 11 17, — "There shall none after thee, (i. e., the second king) attain unto thy time, neither unto the half thereof."

The fact that the writer takes pains to distinguish the reign of Augustus in this manner, is due not to any desire to impress on his readers a fact of history,⁴⁵ but rather because the fact itself has some apocalyptic significance. Historically, in the period covered by the Eagle-vision, two emperors, Hadrian and Antoninus Pius, did indeed reign for a longer time than half the

⁴⁴ The founding of a heathen city on the site of Jerusalem may be implied in the reference to the "loss of the seal of Sion."

⁴⁵ A scientific historian deals with facts and writes history; the apocalyptist sees in history only a record, optionally falsifiable, with which to prove his theories.

years of Augustus. The writer must have known this, and, if he had been author instead of editor, he would have had no motive to ignore it. *If, however, the passage comes from a lost apocalypse inspired by the sad issue of the Bar-Cochba insurrection, and composed shortly before the death of Hadrian, ere the latter had been emperor half as many years as Augustus, it would have been much to the point for the author of the earlier document thus to predict the speedy end of the hated ruler, and the coming of the Messianic deliverance of Israel, by the statement that no emperor,—not even the one at that time in power,—was to have a reign half as long as “the second of the twelve.”*⁴⁶

With the identification of the nucleus of the Apocalypse of Ezra as a lost Hadrian-apocalypse, the way is open to the solution of other difficulties connected with our subject. The problem of the Clementine citation disappears,⁴⁷ since it is perfectly fair to suppose that he cited the lost Hadrian-apocalypse. As to the Eagle-vision, the lost apocalypse contained a much simpler version of it, in which the Roman empire was symbolised by an Eagle with twelve wings, representing the twelve emperors,⁴⁸ last of whom was Hadrian, the latter-day antitype of Antiochus Epiphanes, who was destined to be cast down to perdition by the hand of the Lord ere he had filled out a reign half as long as that of Augustus.⁴⁹

In the reign of Caracalla, an apocalyptic moment of local significance occurred at Alexandria. On this occasion the tyrant added to his unlovely reputation by causing a massacre of all the able-bodied youth of the city.⁵⁰ In the number of

⁴⁶ An editor, forcing himself to keep the number at twelve, would here boldly ignore facts.

⁴⁷ See note 11. Briefly, the problem is as follows: 1. Clement cites 5 26,—hence the Apocalypse must have been written before 218. 2. But Clement could not have cited our Apocalypse of Ezra,—since it contains allusions to events subsequent to his own death.

⁴⁸ See note 24.

⁴⁹ 11 17.

⁵⁰ Spart., Caracalla, vi: Alexandriam petit, in gymnasium populum convocavit, eumque obiurgavit, legi etiam validos ad militiam præcepit. Eos autem, quos legerat, occidit exemplo Ptolemaei Euergetis, qui octavus

the slain there must have been many of Jewish descent, and this fact inspired a certain pious and liberal-minded Hebrew, the final editor of our Apocalypse of Ezra. To his pen we must ascribe the enlargement and adaptation of the Hadrian-apocalypse, in particular, as far as the Eagle-vision is concerned, the addition of the symbolism of the winglets,⁵¹ the clumsy reckoning of the twelve wings,⁵² and, what is most important, the accurate summary of Roman history under the Severan dynasty, as contained in the symbolism of the three heads.⁵³ The last part of the vision, containing allusions to the "small kingdom and full of trouble,"⁵⁴ is best taken as a forecast of events to succeed the predicted assassination of Caracalla, whose fate was easy to prophesy, since he lived at a time when never more uneasy lay the head that wore the crown.

hoc nomine appellatus est. Dato praeterea signo militibus, ut hospites suos occiderent, magnam caedem Alexandriae fecit.

⁵¹ 11 11, 12 20.

⁵² Historically, (leaving out Galba, Otho, Vitellius), thirteen emperors reigned from the death of Augustus to the accession of Pertinax. In some way satisfactory to himself, the writer strait-jacketed facts in true apocalyptic manner,—his method is not worth guessing after.

⁵³ It is always to be observed that apocalyptists are the most accurate of historians for the times in which they live.

⁵⁴ 12 20-20.