

**The Apocalypse**  
**A Series of Special Lectures on the Revelation of Jesus Christ**  
by  
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Preface

There is a widespread prejudice against the study of the Apocalypse. Though it is the great prophetic Book of the New Testament, the last of all the writings of Inspiration, a special message from the ascended Savior to His Churches on earth, and pressed upon everyone's attention with uncommon urgency, there are religious guides--sworn to teach "the whole counsel of God"--who make a merit of not understanding it and of not wishing to occupy themselves with it. If such treatment of an acknowledged part of the Sacred Canon is compatible with ministerial fidelity and Christian duty, the author of these Lectures is very much mistaken in his understanding of Christ's commands, as well as in his estimate of the purposes for which a Divine Revelation has been given.

It is also manifest, if the Apocalypse is to be comprehended by Christians and made to serve them as a writing from God worthy of the Holy Ghost, that a new style of dealing with it must be inaugurated, and a different class of books made to take the place of the prevailing literature on the subject. Indeed, there is no part of Biblical exposition in which real guides are so scarce, or fresh effort so much needed.

Whether the work here offered is of the class to be desired is to be determined by the character of its contents. Candid readers will hardly deny to it the merit of honesty of purpose, straightforwardness in the treatment of Divine things, simplicity and consistency in the application of what the rapt Seer narrates, direct leaning on the Sacred Word over against the stilted theories and rationalistic systems of men, and a self-evidencing force and satisfactoriness not generally found in attempts at Apocalyptic interpretation.

The theological standpoint of the author is that of Protestant orthodoxy. He claims to be in thorough accord with the great Confessions of the early Church and of the Reformation. Contrary to these he has nothing to teach, though he is quite convinced that they have not, in every direction, altogether exhausted the contents of the Scriptures. Their Eschatology, particularly, is very summary, rendering further inquiry and clearer illustration desirable. These Confessions themselves also legitimate [sanction/authorize] and provide for such further investigation of the Divine Oracles. It is contrary both to them and the Scriptures to undertake to warn off from the study of anything which God has caused to be written for us, provided that no part of settled Christian faith be contravened. Not *against* that whereto the Church has hitherto attained, but *on the basis of it*, it is the vocation of Christians to go on exploring for the full truth which God has given for their learning and profit. And if anything is encountered in these Lectures beyond what has been commonly thought, let it not be rejected too hastily, but dispassionately weighed in the fear of God and in just regard for His infallible Word.

A "Revised Text" has been printed at the heads of the Lectures. It is not offered as a substitute for the common English Version, though the received text of the Apocalypse is in a worse condition than that of any other book of the New Testament. The object of the author's "Revised Text" is simply to present, in connected form, the best results of modern textual criticism, as

developed by Tischendorf, Tregelles, Hengstenberg, Alford, Trench, Wordsworth, and other able and laborious investigators, together with an original collation of the lately discovered and highly to be prized *Codex Sinaiticus*. The value of such a "Revised Text" in more fully representing the idiom of the inspired record, in exhibiting what certainly belongs to the most ancient copies, and in assisting the verification of the expositions given, will not be disputed by scholars nor lightly esteemed by the common reader. As Tregelles has said of his version of the Apocalypse, translated from the Ancient Greek text, so it may be said of this and now with greater certainty, that "the reader may rest satisfied that he has here a version of a Text of which every word rests on competent evidence of twelve hundred years old at least; and almost all on consenting evidence of fourteen hundred years old; indeed, including the evidence of the Versions, ALL has authority of at least this antiquity." And as to the translation, nothing has been given which has not the concurrent sanction of eminent masters of the Greek tongue in general, and of the Greek of the New Testament in particular.

The Lectures themselves have been composed and delivered at different intervals of time, as occasion rendered convenient. From the interest manifested in them at their delivery, and at the urgent solicitation of many who listened to them, their publication has been commenced before the completion of the course. Some of them have gone forth in numbers even in advance of the first volume, which is now presented to the public. It is the intention of the author, if life and health be spared, to continue the series and to go through the whole Apocalypse after the same manner of this first volume.

Those of God's people who find pleasure and edification in such studies are earnestly requested to give these labors a place in their prayers, that the author may successfully complete what, under particular constraints of conscience, he has thus begun, and that God's blessing may be upon what he now devoutly commits to the care of Divine Providence and to the serious attention of all Christians and all men.

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