

THE APOCALYPSE

HERE is, I venture to say, a very common indifference to this book, if not a prejudice against it, among our more thoughtful people—due partly to the fanatical literalism of many interpreters of it, but also partly to its peculiar form, so unfamiliar, unattractive, and, in parts, grotesque to us and our taste. A person of far more than average ability and culture said to me with reference to the Book of Revelation in an awe-struck whisper, "Isn't it a case of softening of the brain?" We can hardly wonder at this feeling in one trained in the school of the best literature of Greece and Rome, of France and England, literature characterized by felicity of phrase, concinnity of thought, and polish of style.

However, in the Apocalypse every one must grant, at least here and there, sublime and inspiring passages. But oh! comes the objection, oh! the dreary tracts of the barren wilderness of seals and trumpets and bowls, of dragon and beasts and frogs, of horsemen and locusts and earthquakes through which one must wearily trudge to reach the oases of interest and inspiration!

But what if there be some method in this madness, after all? What if there be well beaten paths which we may tread? What if *other such books* exist, the knowledge of which may help us in the study of this? What if we find that in this book, as in all similar literature, the real value