

THE HOMILETIC REVIEW.

VOL. IX.—APRIL, 1885.—No. 4.

REVIEW SECTION.

I.—THE POETICAL IMAGERY IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION.—No. II.

BY JAMES M. LUDLOW, D.D.

IN our first article we gave abundant evidence that the greater part of the poetical imagery in the Book of Revelation was drawn, from neither the fancy nor the inspired imagination of the writer, but from the Old Testament Scriptures. This gives to the book its most prominent characteristic—viz., that of a rhetorical resumé, as well as a prophetic conclusion, of Sacred writ; and, at the same time, it points to John, the last survivor of the Apostolic College, as its author.

II.

Of the remaining imagery of the book, perhaps the greater part can be associated with, if not traced to, the RABBINICAL LITERATURE.

John, as a devout Jew, and one who, in comparative youth, maintained an acquaintance with the more scholarly and priestly class among his people (John xviii: 15), was undoubtedly familiar with the maxims of the Rabbins, with their comments upon the Old Testament Scriptures, and with the peculiar customs which had grown out from the ritual of worship. For our knowledge of these things we must go to the Talmud and Targums, which, though swollen with many legalistic and fantastic conceits of the later Rabbins, preserve for us the records of the opinions and customs of the pre-Christian age.

In these Jewish books we find many expressions and allusions, so similar to those in the Apocalypse, that we are forced to regard them as more than coincidences. We are not warranted in saying that John was indebted, in every such instance, to the Rabbinical thought. These books were written, in their present form, after John's time, chiefly by the hands of such Rabbins as Judah, Jochanan, Ashè and