

much of the prophecy of the book as not referring to or exactly fulfilled in any definite historical events, but as containing picturesque representations of general principles, or as consisting of imaginative and poetic drapery. Its pictures, as a recent writer has put it, "represent realities but not literalities." (Cobern, on Daniel.)

Nevertheless, this interpretation is not merely ideal. It is at the same time *historical*, inasmuch as it recognizes the fact that John is not merely stating general principles, but also considering the phenomena of his own time in the light of their relation to the kingdom of God and of his expectation of certain courses of development out of the historical conditions in the midst of which he stands.

It is evident from all that has been said that no apocalyptic book can be understood apart from its *historical situation*. We must fix the historical situation, therefore, of the apocalypse of John, and then see how John applies the great Christian principles and hopes in order to establish Christian faith and courage in the midst of the distress of that situation.

Now the date, according to all the evidence of Christian antiquity, as well as of the book itself, is either soon after the persecution under Nero (say A.D. 68), or toward the close of the reign of Domitian (*i.e.*, about A.D. 95). The time is one in which Rome is drunk with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.

On the whole, I incline to the earlier, or Neronian date, and shall use it as my working hypothesis.

Under the storm and stress of cruel persecution, John receives from God visions of the conflict of the Church and the world, of the triumph of the Church