

READINGS ON THE BOOK OF REVELATION.*

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PART VI.—FOURTH PARALLEL.

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The fourth parallel of the Apocalyptic Gospel is Rev. xvii-xix. This corresponds to the Gospel according to St. John in the narrative of the Advent. And it also answers to the Prophet Daniel and his fellows in the grouping of the Old Testament Prophets.

Now St. John, in his narrative of our Lord's first coming, dwells chiefly on the things that He did at Jerusalem, more especially at the close of His Ministry. The portion of the Apocalypse now before us dwells on the fall of Babylon. Moreover the relation between Babylon and the Beast or Anti-Christ of all ages is explained here.

We see, in chapter xvii, the vision of the woman and of the Beast "that carrieth her." The beast represents the last world-power that rules the world for Satan before Christ Himself is made King. And this last world-power is presented to us as uniting in itself the powers and marks of all that were before it. It recalls the four beasts of Daniel's vision in chapter vii. of his prophecy. Of those, the first was like a lion; the second like a bear; the third like a leopard; and the fourth like nothing in the world except itself. Here the Beast of the last days has (ch. xiii., 1, 2) the mouth of the lion, the foot of the bear, and the general appearance of the leopard; and the seven heads and ten horns, and names of blasphemy of the fourth of Daniel's beasts. Moreover, its seven heads are explained here (ch. xvii., 9, 10), as seven successive kings or powers, and also seven mountains, or sites of the Babylon of each kingdom. The eighth power is the beast of the Apocalypse, and is "*one of the seven*" for this is what verse 11 really says:—a slain and risen power, to imitate the resurrection of Christ, in the reign of Anti-Christ.

I understand the meaning to be this. There are, upon the whole, seven world-powers before the second Advent; and after Christ comes, one of the seven is raised up again by Satan when he is cast into the earth, to imitate the resurrection, as was said before. These seven powers I take to be Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Macedonia, Rome Pagan, Rome Papal, and the Anti-Christ who combines