

expectation the Christian people in the midst of that actual historical situation. Throughout, indeed, general principles are revealed which may be applied to many another historical situation to comfort and encourage many other people in many other ages. But we must first ascertain the original historical circumstance and the original significance of the representations. Wherever the concrete emerges, we must interpret it primarily in relation to John's own times and readers. This is readily recognized in regard to the epistles to the seven churches. They manifestly deal with concrete circumstances and conditions. The seven hills on which the woman sits (xvii. 9) evidently are the hills of Rome, and the description of Babylon (in chapters xvii. and xviii.) makes the identification with Rome indubitable. The ideal view is justifiable to this extent that we should not seek for historical persons and events in the apocalyptic scenes and events except where clearly indicated. One great part of the duty of an interpreter of such literature is to carefully discriminate between the ideal and the historical elements.

The true interpretation may therefore be called *the Ideal-historical*. It recognizes a large ideal element, it does not profess to interpret all the details predictively, it regards many details as merely poetical drapery, and, where it is constrained by the clear evidence of the passages to see specific references to historical characters and events, it interprets them as pertaining to the historical situation as it existed in the time of John or to that immediate future in which John expects the coming of the Lord and the triumph of the kingdom.

This interpretation is *ideal*, then, inasmuch as it regards