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"IF I FORGET THEE, O JERUSALEM! LET MY RIGHT HAND FORGET HER CUNNING."—PSALM 137, 10.

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CORRESPONDENCE.

Apocalyptic Regeneration.

A series of Lectures on the book of Revelation, with a Dissertation on the origin and nature of symbolic language, and on the use of Hieroglyphs by the prophets. By the Rev. Robert Pollok, of Kingston Church, Glasgow. Glasgow Thomas Murray & Son.

We had read but a very few pages of this book when we found that the title, which at first perplexed us not a little, may be regarded as an elliptical or abbreviated expression for what might be more fully stated as, The Regeneration of Apocalyptic Interpretation "Apocalyptic Regeneration" is a phrase descriptive, in some degree, of the character of the work before us, but especially of the great purpose which its author gives his valuable aid to accomplish by its publication. It is founded upon the method in which the subjects are treated: it is not expressive of anything particularly or inherently characteristic of the subjects themselves. The Apocalypse has been usually approached and interpreted as a book isolated and detached, in a great measure, from the rest of Scripture. It has been dealt with as if, in its style, language, symbols, and scenery, it had nothing in common with any portion of that whole revelation of which it is the magnificent close. The consequence has been that many writers, who have set themselves to explain its contents, have adopted principles which would be justly deemed by sound expositors, altogether inadmissible in the interpretation of the other prophetic books; while others, discarding any particular plan or principle, have made it the sport of exuberant fancy and unrestrained ingenuity. Hence we have had sketches in the greatest abundance and of the amplest diversity, in which beautiful and striking things are said, regular coincidences noted, and appalling things prescribed, as much, seemingly, for the sake of the character in which they are made to appear as for any good reason, or any real end at all, assigned for their truth and reality. To plain and easily ascertained signification the symbols of anterior prophecy has been sometimes recklessly rejected, and a significance, purely arbitrary, applied. The same has been used in singular or analogous connections the word of God have been thus made to

bear a multitude of unnecessarily varying, and strangely opposite meanings. Even in the interpretation of the Apocalypse itself, the same representations and terms are made to set forth different things in different portions of the same book, when the reader can discover no occasion and when no just ground is actually advanced, for the variation. For example, the symbol, "horse," is made to mean one thing in one place, but quite a different thing in another place, and it meets with a lucky fate, if, in either instance, the meaning ascribed to it is supported either by natural analogy or scriptural induction. Thus, it must be apparent is a most unsatisfactory method of dealing with any portion of sacred truth, and it is easy to see that it cannot, in the nature of things, be long pursued without the introduction of much that is arbitrary and therefore unsatisfactory, and of a great deal that is fanciful and therefore erroneous. If it has pleased God to make use of symbols in the revelation of his will and if a revelation is given for the purpose of being understood, surely these symbols, wherever they recur, must be understood in the same way, otherwise the great purpose of a revelation is thwarted and the character of Divine wisdom impugned. And therefore, when we find in the pages of Scripture a recurrence of the same symbolic terms and hieroglyphic representations, the first duty of an expositor must be to ascertain, by a careful induction of all the instances in which any one symbol or hieroglyph is employed, what is its actual signification, and, when that has been discovered, it should not, without an express or obvious warrant, be departed from. This rule is faithfully applied in the explication of Scriptural language in general. It is upon this principle that lexicons are constructed, and just in proportion to the carefulness with which the meaning attached to words by lexicographers is known to have been elicited, by a simple induction from the use and application of these words, are their labours viewed with satisfaction and confidence. It is in this way we interpret the language which is used in prophetic representations. Why should not the same rule be adopted, where possible in assigning to these symbols and representations their specific significations? We know, for example, what is the correct, literal description of what the Apostle John saw when the first seal was opened by the Lamb, because we

are familiar with the terms which he employs—the meaning of his words is established by their current use in the language in which he wrote. How should we act, when we come to decipher the individual symbols placed before us in writing, in order that we may interpret the representation as a whole? The first thing to be done is, unquestionably, to familiarize ourselves with the instances in which these symbols occur in the other prophetic writings, and, by a strict but cautious comparison of one with another, we should seek to fix, if possible, upon a definite and uniform acceptance. This very simple but most important rule has been glaringly departed from by many who have stepped forward as expounders of the Apocalypse, and this fact furnishes Mr. Pollok with one reason, and certainly it is a good one, for undertaking the task of Apocalyptic regeneration. He lays down this position "as sacred and immutable, to which every thing must bend," namely, "That prophecy has a language of its own—definite, uniform, and fixed by the spirit of inspiration." (P. 11.) In connection with this we would quote the following sentences from the author's brief but valuable and interesting dissertation on prophetic language, which has an appropriate place at the commencement of the lectures.

"Hieroglyphs are chosen by God, and delineated by the pencil of Divine inspiration, and the reader is sometimes left to study their import, in the judicious persevering use of his own powers, but at other times the prophet is required to interpret and describe their spiritual import in vocal language, in order that the readers of God's word may understand them. Many examples may be met with in the interpretation of Daniel, and in the predictions of the other old Testament prophets, and I deem it unnecessary to quote any authority, the seven sheets of the Apocalyptic book contain only hieroglyphs, and an accompanying imperious command is laid on John by the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, to describe in a book, by vocal language, what he had seen, what he then saw, and what would be afterwards, because a panoramic representation of all the events and mysteries of the revealed future was placed before the wondering eyes of the inspired seer, and he was divinely qualified to write them with accuracy to the extent which the Spirit would have them known unto men, and every