INTRODUCTION. } REVELATION. (cn. xxi.   
   
   
 whole substance of the testimony of the writer of a book which we   
 accept as canonical, nor to deny that visions, which he purports to have   
 received from God to shew to the church things which must shortly   
 come to pass, were so received by him, and for such a purpose.   
 10. Maintaining this ground, and taking into account the tone of the   
 book itself, and the periods embraced in its prophecies, we cannot con-   
 sent to believe the vision of the Writer to have been bounded by the   
 horizon of his own experience and personal hopes. We receive the book   
 as being what it professes to be, a revelation from God, designed to shew   
 to his servants things which must shortly come to pass\*. And so far   
 from this word offending us, we find in it, as compared with the con-   
 tents of the book, a measure by which, not our judgment of those con-   
 tents, but our estimate of worldly events and their duration, should be   
 corrected. The space denoted by shortly confessedly contains, among   
 other periods, a period of a thousand years. On what principle are we   
 to affirm that it does not embrace a period vastly greater than this in   
 its whole contents ?   
 11. We hold therefore that the book, judged by its own testimony,   
 and with regard to the place which it holds among the canonical books   
 of Scripture, is written with the object of conveying to the Church   
 revelations from God respecting certain portions of her course even up   
 to the time of the end. Whether such revelations disclose to her a con-   
 tinuous prophetic history, or are to be taken as presenting varying views   
 and relations of her conflict with evil, and God’s judgment on her   
 enemies, will be hereafter discussed. But the general object is inde-   
 pendent of these differences in interpretation.   
 12. The contents of the book have been variously arranged. It seems   
 better to follow the plain indication of the book itself, than to distribute   
 it so as to suit any theory of interpretation. We find in so doing, that   
 we have,   
 I. A general introduction to the whole book, ch. i. 1—3:   
 II. The portion containing the Epistles to the seven churches,   
 i, 4—iii, 22, itself consisting of   
 a, The address and preface, i. 4—8.   
 6. The introductory vision, i. 9—20.   
 ec. The seven Epistles, ii, 1—iii, 22.   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
 © Diisterdieck has stigmatized this view as that of magical inspiration, as distin-   
 guished from his own, which he designates as that of ethical inspiration. It is   
 difficult assign any meaning to these epithets at all corresponding to the nature of   
 the ease, Why that inspiration should be called magical, which makes the prophet   
 the organ of communicating the divine counsels in symbolical language to the Church,   
 it is difficult say: and surely not less difficult to explain, how that inspiration can   
 be called ethical, which makes him pretend to have received visions from God, which   
 he has only imagined in his own mind.   
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