The hero of *God's Bairn* is a foundling called Moses Marlowe. When a tiny baby he was left on the altar steps of the church of Marlowe-in-the-Fens, and was found by the sexton and adopted by him. He was a manly little boy, and showed his pluck during the Civil War. The clear-cut illustrations in black and white have been beautifully executed by Mr. Paul Hardy.

FLEMING H. REVELL.

Tom Keenan, Locomotive Engineer; a story of fifty years on the rail as told by himself. Compiled by Neason Jones (3s. 6d. net). It is Saul of Tarsus over again, whole-hearted and undaunted whether against Christ or for Him. But there is this difference, that before his conversion Saul of Tarsus was zealous for the Law of God, while Tom Keenan was zealous for the devil and all his works. Many cursed Keenan for his bad example before he knew Christ; more blessed him afterwards. The story is told with wonderful skill.

FISHER UNWIN.

We have had *Tales from Plutarch* (5s.) before, but we never had them told more naturally. All the ruggedness of the old translators is removed, but in its place there is no straining after the extreme simplicity of diction which characterizes Professor Church's work. The new editor keeps his own hand out of sight. The attention of the reader is immediately caught, and it is entirely given to the story till the end comes. There are four tales—the Story of Theseus, the Story of Romulus, the Story of Fabius Maximus, and the Story of Alcibiades. The illustrations are arrestive. Eight of them are done by Cecil Wilson; each occupies a page. The initials and tailpieces are the work of Amy B. Schultz. The writer of the book is F. Jameson Rowbotham.

The Date of the Apocalypse.

BY PROFESSOR W. M. RAMSAY, D.C.L., LITT.D., LL.D., ABERDEEN.

IT is now generally recognized that the Apocalypse is associated with the Flavian dynasty: those who date it in 70 A.D. and those who date it in 90–96 are agreed at least that a Flavian emperor was reigning at the time. The ancient authorities, as is well known, assign it to the reign of the third and last Flavian emperor, Domitian. In Rev $17^{9ff.}$ the sixth, seventh, and eighth Basileis (a term which ought to be translated 'emperors,' rather than 'kings') are closely connected with each other, so that the sixth is, the seventh is not yet, come, while the eighth *is of the seven* and *goeth into perdition*. Only in the Flavian dynasty was there such a close connexion of three emperors, for we must understand that the family was conceived to be all present in the person of one. The first seven emperors are the heads of the monster; but the eighth is the monster himself; he stands out from the rest as the present incarnation of the whole monstrous power, and the sixth and seventh as his father and his brother are represented in him. There must be some special meaning in this peculiar view, or, as St. John puts it, 'Herein is wisdom.' We have to attempt to trace the thought, 'the wisdom,' which is wrapped up in it.

In regard to this envisagement of the three Flavian emperors in the last of them, it must be remembered that the emperors have a place in this book only through their relation to the Church. In studying the Apocalypse, Vespasian is not to be thought of as the sane, cool, and able administrator, possessed of a considerable share of quiet humour and full of strong, rough common sense, which is the character that he bears in history. How did he appear to the Christians of Asia? That is the only question that the interpreter of the Apocalypse has to ask. Now it has been argued in the *Church in the Roman Empire before* 170, chap. xii., that Vespasian was the emperor who first proscribed the Christian name and confession: he did it for reasons of state, not of religion. He satisfied himself that the Christian principles were a danger to the empire, as every clear-minded and vigorous emperor must and did perceive. They saw, as he saw and as the fact undoubtedly was, that the imperial authority, on its existing basis, was absolutely and diametrically opposed to the Christian view of life; and they all recognized that this enemy must be proscribed in the interest of the existing government. An 'opposition' party was not permitted: mankind had not yet learned that an 'opposition' may be loyal. It was not the worst emperors who were the greatest persecutors, except during the first century. The reigns of Commodus and Caracalla and Elagabalus and others of the most infamous emperors were times

of peace for the Church. Trajan and Marcus Aurelius, the very greatest and noblest among the emperors, are remembered by the Church as persecutors. Decius and Diocletian, under whom the two most determined and thoroughgoing attempts to exterminate Christianity were made, rank among the great emperors. It is now a commonplace, admitted by practically everyone, that 'if Rome was true to itself, it must compel obedience—and to do so meant death to all firm Christians'; but this was not a commonplace and not generally admitted, when it was stated in the *Church in the Roman Empire*, p. 356. The emperor who was truly Roman must admit and confirm the proscription of the Christians.

Moreover, even if those scholars were right who maintain that the principle of proscribing Christians originated from Nero, and was thereafter the settled practice of government, they are bound to maintain that Vespasian confirmed the principle. As Nero was condemned (*damnatus memoriae*) and his acts were rendered invalid, no principle of policy laid down by him was valid until it had been reaffirmed by his legal successor. Even if Galba, Otho, or Vitellius had had time during their short reigns to go into this question and re-established the Neronian principle, which is wholly improbable, it is certain that the acts of Otho and Vitellius would not have been regarded as valid in later procedure until reaffirmed by Vespasian. It is therefore certain that Vespasian must have declared himself definitely against the Christain claim for toleration, and this principle was understood by Pliny to be in force in his time, and was accepted by Trajan as the law of the empire in his famous rescript to Pliny. It is quite certain that Domitian was not the first to declare the principle of proscription. His acts were invalid, and the policy that existed before his time would naturally come into force again at his death. But, as we have just seen, Trajan accepted proscription as the settled, established practice of the empire; and this principle, therefore, must have rested on the authority of some emperor whose acts were valid. That emperor can only have been Vespasian or Titus; and all probability speaks for Vespasian as against his shortlived elder son.

The Flavian policy, then, was the central and dominant fact in the view of the Christians about 80–100 A.D.; after-ages remembered the persecution of Domitian, because he had carried out the policy for a much longer time and with a more ruthless and cold thoroughness corresponding to his narrow and intense character; but at the time the prominent fact was that the three Flavian emperors had all agreed in proscribing the Name and in punishing the bearer of it, quite apart from any charge of crime. This was the fact which gave a certain unity to the three in their relation to the Church; they all agreed in this, and they were the first who had made this a principle of the State policy. The totally different character of the Neronian persecution is described in clear emphatic terms by Tacitus, and those scholars who still maintain that Nero proscribed the Name are thereby maintaining that Tacitus, who was a trained lawyer and not a soldier, was incapable of describing accurately a legal process which he describes at considerable length and with special attention to its legal character. If the authorities are to be treated like this, whenever they disagree with our prepossessions, the study of ancient history as a whole degenerates into the subjective farce which the 'higher critics' of the old school have made it in all that regards the New Testament.

To the Christians of that period, then, the three Flavian emperors are one, and they are all present in the person of one, the reigning emperor of the moment. Now this view, as stated by St. John, is explicable only on the theory that all three were agreed as to the policy of the State towards the Church. The policy of Domitian was not peculiar to himself: it was 'the Flavian policy,' and its character stands out clearly before us in the Apocalypse when read aright. But, on the current view that Nero and Domitian were the persecutors, and that Vespasian and Titus were kind and non-persecuting, it would follow that there were two Basileis closely connected, both present in the reigning emperor of the moment. Until the interpreter has realized that there is a sense of justice in the Apocalypse, and puts that as the foundation of his theory, he is bound to go all wrong in his interpretation. In the lack of this fundamental principle, the book has been the most misunderstood book in the New Testament. And yet there was a vague sense of this principle in the mind of former interpreters of the Apocalypse, though they did not express it clearly or reason strictly according to it. They had the idea that Nero must come in, and so they concocted the theory of Nero *redivivus* playing a considerable part in the book.

For long I confess that I was guided by this idea, and consequently could not arrive at a clear view of the book. Only when I perceived that the supposed references to the returning Nero all rest on misinterpretation, did the book become intelligible. This is not the place to draw out all the consequences of the simplified view: to do that would mean the writing of a little book about the Apocalypse. It is sufficient here to show that the current false views about the Neronian and the Flavian persecutions are responsible for the misunderstanding of the Apocalypse, and that no progress is possible until the facts are recognized to be as they are stated by the ancient authorities.

But one inference must be drawn, because an objection to what has just been stated will occur to many minds. Clement of Rome is understood to speak of the Neronian presecution and that which was proceeding at the moment when he wrote, as if they were the outstanding two persecutions by two emperors; and as one of the emperors is clearly Nero, it is understood that Clement thinks of Domitian as the other. But this does not lie in his words; it is put in them through a prepossession. Clement speaks of the later persecution as 'a succession of sharp, sudden assaults.' I take the phrase from Lightfoot (Clement, i. p. 81), who, however, proceeds to introduce into Clement's words the addition that all these 'assaults' were made by Domitian; but the true meaning is that the Flavian policy made itself felt in this way. With regard to that policy we must always remember that it was introduced by an emperor who was familiar with the Eastern provinces, and was enacted with a special view to the centre and home of Christianity at the time, viz. to the regions on the great central highway of the empire—the road through Antioch, Ephesus, and Corinth. The Roman Church was not then so important as it became in the second century; and the province Asia was the chief seat of Christianity and the scene of the great Flavian persecution.

There is some temptation at first sight to understand Rev $17^{9ff.}$ as implying that at the time Vespasian, the sixth Basileus, 'is' (*i.e.* is actually reigning), and Titus, the seventh, 'is not yet come' (to the throne). Mr. Anderson Scott has taken this view in his excellent little edition in the Century Bible. Two conclusive reasons seem to tell against this interpretation. In the first place, the emphasis laid on the eighth, as the monster himself, classed along with the seven in a sense, but yet apart from and beyond them all, can hardly be explained except on the supposition that he is the present embodiment of the monstrous power. In the second place, it can be proved with the highest probability that John was exiled by Domitian and not by any earlier emperor. The proof results from the fact that, though his punishment was a life sentence, yet he was released, and returned to Ephesus; and no other explanation of his release seems allowable except that the sentence had been an act of Domitian, and therefore was invalidated by the death and condemnation of that emperor. Had John been exiled by Vespasian, his sentence would not have been affected by the death of Domitian.

It is true that it was not uncommon to set free the prisoners on the islands as an act of grace at the accession of a new emperor; and if such an amnesty had been granted at the accession of Nerva, it would apply even to convicts condemned under Vespasian. But in case of such an *indulgentia generalis*, criminals of the worst class were usually excepted as a danger to society, and Christians were criminals of the worst and most dangerous class, being enemies to society and order. Moreover, when the nature of St. John's punishment is considered, it cannot be supposed to have lasted from 78 (or earlier) to 96; it was too terrible, and killed men off too quickly. Even ten years was regarded as sufficiently crushing, and Caracalla ordered that criminals who survived that term might be set free if they had relatives that applied and undertook responsibility for them. On this subject I may be permitted to refer to chap. viii. of my *Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia*.

The case stands thus: if Domitian be understood as the reigning emperor at the time, the whole story of St. John is natural and in accordance with the facts of the time. If Vespasian be understood, the story can be placed in the history of the time only by a series of improbable, though not impossible, suppositions.

At any rate it lies on the surface as the one most undeniable fact about the Apocalypse, that it was written in a time of severe and long-continued persecution, resulting from an established policy, and not a mere, almost accidental, outbreak, lasting for two or three years, such as Tacitus describes

Nero's persecution to have been. The definite and diametrical opposition between the empire and the Church is the fundamental thought in the book. In the time of Nero's persecution it was possible and natural to regard the policy that ruled previous to the outbreak of autumn 64 A.D. as the regular imperial policy, and his persecution as a temporary and exceptional measure; but the Apocalypse regards persecution as the necessary and inevitable policy of the empire. Accordingly, anyone who would date the book under Vespasian must abandon completely the traditional Eusebian view about that emperor as having been kind to the Christians (against which I have been arguing), and must go even beyond me in maintaining that persecution was extremely active and severe under his rule. The idea that the Apocalypse was composed in a time of peace and quiet for the Church, is one that has only to be stated to make its absurdity patent. Two persecutions stood out in the memory of history during the first century; but it was a mistaken inference of Eusebius and others in the fourth century that the period between Nero and Domitian was one of kindly treatment.

Rev 17^{10} therefore was written under Domitian; but in that case what is the meaning of the statement that the seventh Basileus 'is not yet come'? Here I can only suggest that either the short reign and untimely death of Titus, the seventh Basileus, is hinted at in these words, as if his reign was yet to come, or that something unknown to us in the history of that obscure period is referred to. Something equally obscure lies hid in Rev 13^{18}, where the idea that the sum of the numbers expressed by the letters of the name and title of Nero in Hebrew is hinted at, must be pronounced ridiculous. The book was written for Asian readers who knew no Hebrew. Something is meant here that Asian readers would understand.

Conversion in Man.[1]

By the Rev. W. T. A. Barber, D.D., Headmaster of the Leys School, Cambridge.

1. The New Testament is based upon the idea of the kingdom of God. This is the state of things in which God has come into His rights as Monarch, in which man is in his lawful place as subject. We have already seen that the Atonement is a necessary precedent of the commencement of the kingdom of God in the New Testament sense. In the Atonement God's love and wisdom have been acting in and for the race. All His power has thus been brought to bear upon it; all the obedience of the God-man, the organic Head of the race, has acted. This willing obedience unto death bore witness to the supreme deadliness of sin, and annulled sin. And all these facts and forces continued to act, so that the race was placed in a new restored position towards God; the kingdom of God came.

2. The race was thus in a new attitude of relation and possibility. In order that the individual should share in this possibility, a new attitude of soul was necessary in that individual. The individual sinner had been a rebel, the original and lawful relation between subject and lord had been outraged and destroyed. Without a changed attitude in the individual, God could not righteously bring upon him the new blessings now possible for the race. If he is to be privileged to enter the kingdom, he must be willing to enter the kingdom; if he is to enter the kingdom, he must be, if not fit, at any rate of a soul-attitude possible for it.

3 The attainment of this new attitude is the New Birth. 'Except a man be born anew,' the Saviour said, 'he cannot see the kingdom of God' (Jn 3^{16}). The metaphor used is of a new atmosphere, a new life. We saw how the penalty of sin is death, the sundering of the soul from its true air and food. The reversal of this is the bringing of the soul into a new relationship to the elements that make life. The old attitude was sin, selfishness, alienation from God; the new must be an expression in every way of the restored communion made possible by the Atonement of Christ.

Two essential elements of this new affection of the soul are faith and love towards the King.

4. Before we go on to discuss these manifestations of the new life, we must further state its source and origin. By the new birth man is to attain to his true, ideal, spiritual nature, union with

[1] The second in a series of twenty-minute addresses to the Cambridge Intercollegiate Christian Union.