

**THE OPENING OF THE SEALED
BOOK IN THE APOCALYPSE
SHEWN TO BE A SYMBOL OF A
FUTURE REPLICATION OF THE
OLD TESTAMENT**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649663392

The Opening of the Sealed Book in the Apocalypse Shewn to Be a Symbol of a Future
Republication of the Old Testament by Richard Newton Adams

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RICHARD NEWTON ADAMS

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THE SEALED BOOK
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SHEWN TO BE A SYMBOL OF A FUTURE REPUBLICATION
OF THE
OLD TESTAMENT.

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Liber...signatus...VETUS TESTAMENTUM significat
VICTORINUS. *Comment. in Apocalypsin.*

CAMBRIDGE:
PRINTED AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS.
LONDON:
JOHN W. PARKER, WEST STRAND.

M.DCCC.XXXVIII

999.

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INTRODUCTION.

THE Interpretation of the Sealed Book in the Apocalypse, which is proposed in the following pages, occurred to the Writer several years ago, while studying the twenty-ninth chapter of the prophecy of Isaiah. But, though since that time the subject has frequently occupied his thoughts, it is not till a comparatively recent period, that he has found leisure and opportunity to pursue the different points of inquiry to which this suggestion gave rise, to such an extent, as would warrant his appearing before the public as the propounder of a new principle of interpretation, to be applied to the most abstruse portion of God's revealed Word. He endeavoured, however, from time to time, to collect the opinions of the most approved writers on the Apocalypse respecting the meaning of the Sealed Book; and began to turn his attention towards the views entertained on this subject by the early Fathers of the Christian Church. And greatly was he surprised and gratified by the discovery, that their interpretations of this fundamental symbol were essentially different from those of more modern commentators, and approached much more nearly to the meaning which he himself attached to it. At this period an observation of Michaelis, which he casually

met with, led him to institute a more systematic inquiry into the several changes which the Interpretation of the Apocalypse, and especially that of the Sealed Book, had undergone from the earliest ages of Christianity. 'It would really be worth while,' observes this author, 'to write a particular history of the expositions of the Apocalypse, and to shew in what manner the most ancient interpretation of it was gradually forsaken, in what manner the modern interpretation of it took its rise among Protestants, and how this interpretation has spread into so many different branches.' The Author immediately determined to proceed according to this suggestion:—not indeed to enter upon so extensive a field as was here opened to him, and become the historian of the interpretations of the whole Apocalypse; but to examine minutely the expositions of its primary symbol, the Sealed Book, in regular chronological order. In carrying this idea into effect, the first object of the Author was to obtain as full and correct a catalogue as possible of those writers, both in the Greek and Latin Churches, who have either left commentaries on the Apocalypse, or incidentally alluded to the Sealed Book in other parts of their writings; and then to trace the original interpretation of this symbol, and all the secondary interpretations which grew out of it, until they were entirely supplanted by the expositions of more recent commentators. This research has put the Author in possession of some interesting information respecting

¹ Marsh's *Michaelis*. Chap. xxxiii. Sect. viii. Vol. vi. p. 515.

the Apocalypse, not familiarly known to the generality of readers, and led to the publication of the following Essay.

Before the Author states more in detail the object of the following work, and the manner in which he has attempted to execute it, he will briefly advert to certain points, the discussion of which forms no part of his plan, and for the omission of which an apology, or at least an explanation, may be required by some readers.

In the first place, the Author has thought it unnecessary to present his readers with any dissertation on the genuineness of the Apocalypse, as a real prophecy delivered by the inspired Apostle St John. This topic has been so thoroughly handled by several writers, especially by Lardner and Woodhouse, that the Author can add nothing to the general stock of information on this subject.

Again, with regard to the time at which these visions were granted to the beloved disciple, and by him published to the Church, no discussion is introduced in the ensuing work: but it is assumed that the general opinion is correct, which assigns the banishment of St John to the close of the reign of the Emperor Domitian, and considers the year 96 as the most probable period when this revelation was made. So carefully has this question also been investigated by the learned writers just mentioned, that the Author would not have thought it necessary to add any thing further on this subject, had he not