

Prophecy, Prophet, and Prophetess

I. IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

A. Introduction

Yahweh had forbidden Israel all kinds of oracles in vogue among the pagans. If, for a time, he consented to reply by Urim and Thummim (apparently a species of sacred lots which the high-priest carried in the cincture of his ephod, and consulted at the request of the public authorities in matters of graver moment), yet He always abominated those who had recourse to divination and magic, practiced augury and enchantment, trusted in charms, consulted soothsayers or wizards, or interrogate the spirits of the dead (Deuteronomy 18:9 sqq.). Speaking of orthodox Yahweism, Balaam could truthfully say "There is no soothsaying in Jacob, nor divination in Israel. In their times it shall be told to Jacob and to Israel what God hath wrought" (Numbers 23:23). For the absence of other oracles, the Chosen People were indeed more than compensated by a gift unique in the annals of mankind, to wit, the gift of prophecy and the prophetic office.

B. General Idea and the Hebrew Names

(1) *General Idea* -- The Hebrew Prophet was not merely, as the word commonly implies, a man enlightened by God to foretell events; he was the interpreter and supernaturally enlightened herald sent by Yahweh to communicate His will and designs to Israel. His mission consisted in preaching as well as in foretelling. He had to maintain and develop the knowledge of the Old Law among the Chosen People, lead them back when they strayed, and gradually prepare the way for the new kingdom of God, which the messias was to establish on earth. Prophecy, in general, signifies the supernatural message of the Prophet, and more especially, from custom, the predictive element of the prophetic message.

(2) *The Hebrew Names* -- The ordinary Hebrew for prophet is *nabî'*. Its etymology is uncertain. According to many recent critics, the root *nabî*, not employed in Hebrew, signified to speak enthusiastically, "to utter cries, and make more or less wild gestures", like the pagan mantics. Judging from a comparative examination of the cognate words in Hebrew and the other Semitic tongues, it is at least equally probable that the original meaning was merely: to speak, to utter words (cf. Laur, "Die Prophetennamen des A.T.", Fribourg, 1903, 14-38). The historic meaning of *nabî'* established by biblical usage is "interpreter and mouthpiece of God". This is forcibly illustrated by the passage, where Moses, excusing himself from speaking to Pharaoh on account of his embarrassment of speech, was answered by Yahweh: "Behold I have appointed thee the God of Pharaoh: and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet. Thou shalt speak to him all that I command thee; and he shall speak to Pharaoh, that he let the children of Israel go out of his land" (Exodus 7:1-2). Moses plays towards the King of Egypt the role of God, inspiring what is to be uttered, and Aaron is the prophet, his mouthpiece, transmitting the inspired message he shall receive. The Greek *prophetes* (from *pro-phanai*, to speak for, or in the name of someone) translates the Hebrew accurately. The Greek prophet was the revealer of the future, and the interpreter of divine things, especially of the obscure oracles of the pythoness. Poets were the prophets of the muses: Inspire me, muse, thy prophet I shall be" (Pindar, Bergk, Fragm. 127).

The word *nabî'* expresses more especially a function. The two most usual synonyms *ro'éeh* and *hozéh* emphasize more clearly the special source of the prophetic knowledge, the vision, that is, the Divine revelation or inspiration. Both have almost the same meaning; *hozéh* is employed, however, much more frequently in poetical language and almost always in connexion with a supernatural vision, whereas *râ'ah*, of which *ro'éeh* is the participle, is the usual word for to see in any manner. The compiler of the first book of Kings (ix, 9) informs us that before his time *ro'éeh* was used where *nabî'* was then employed. *Hozéh* is found much more frequently from the days of Amos. There were other less specific or more unusual terms employed, the meaning of which is clear, such as, messenger of God, man of God, servant of God, man of the spirit, or inspired man, etc. It is only rarely, and at a later period, that prophecy is called *nebû'ah*, a cognate of *nabî'*; more ordinarily we find *hazôn*, vision, or word of God, oracle (*ne um*) of Yahweh, etc.

C. Brief Sketch of the History of Prophecy

(1) The first person entitled *nabi'* in the Old Testament is Abraham, father of the elect, the friend of God, favoured with his personal communications (Genesis 20:7). The next is Moses, the founder and lawgiver of the theocratic nation, the mediator of the Old Covenant holding a degree of authority unequalled till the coming of Jesus Christ. "And there arose no more a prophet in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face, in all the signs and wonders, which he sent by him, to do in the land of Egypt to Pharaoh, and to all his servants, and to his whole land, and all the mighty hand, and great miracles, which Moses did before all Israel" (Deuteronomy 34:10 sqq.). There were other Prophets with him, but only of the second rank, such as Aaron and Miriam, Eldad and Medad, to whom Yahweh manifested himself in dreams and vision, but not in the audible voice with which He favoured him, who was most faithful in all His house (Numbers 12:7).

Of the four institutions concerning which Moses enacted laws according to Deuteronomy (14:18-18), one was prophecy (18:9-22; cf. 13:1-5, and Exodus 4:1 sqq.). Israel was to listen to the true Prophets, and not to heed the false but rather to extirpate them, even had they the appearance of miracle-workers. The former would speak in the name of Yahweh, the one God; and foretell things that would be accomplished or be confirmed by miracles. The latter were to come in the name of the false gods, or teach a doctrine evidently erroneous, or vainly endeavour to foretell events. Later prophetic writers added as other signs of the false Prophets, cupidity, flattery of the people or the nobles, or the promise of Divine favour for the nation weighed down with crime. Balaam is both a Prophet and a soothsayer; a professional soothsayer it would seem, of whom Yahweh makes use to proclaim even in Moab the glorious destiny of the Chosen People, when He was about to lead them into the Promised Land (Numbers 22-24).

In the time of the Judges, in addition to an unnamed Prophet (Judges 6:8-10), we meet with Deborah (Judges 4-5), "a mother in Israel", judging the people, and communicating the Divine orders concerning the War of Independence to Barak and the tribes. The word of God was rare in those days of anarchy and semi-apostasy, when Yahweh partly abandoned Israel to render it conscious of its feebleness and its sins. In the days of Samuel, on the contrary, prophecy became a permanent institution. Samuel was a new but lesser Moses, whose Divine mission it was to restore the code of the elder, and to supervise the beginning of the royalty. Under his guidance, or at least closely united to him, we find for the first time the *nebi'im* (1 Samuel 10:19) grouped together to sing the praises of God to the accompaniment of musical instruments. They are not Prophets in the strict sense of the word, nor are they disciples of the Prophets destined to become masters in their turn (the so-called "schools of Prophets"). Did they wander about spreading the oracles of Samuel among the people? Possibly; at all events, in order to waken the faith of Israel and increase the dignity of Divine worship, they seem to have received charismata similar to those bestowed upon the early Christians in the Apostolic days. They may not ineptly be compared with the families of singers gathered around David, under the direction of their three leaders, Asaph, Heman, and Idithun (1 Chronicles 25:1-8). Doubtless the *benê-nebi'im* of the days of Elias, and Eliseus the "disciples of the Prophets", or "members of the confraternities of the Prophets", forming at least three communities, domiciled respectively at Gilgal, Bethel, and Jericho, must be regarded as their successors. St. Jerome seems to have understood their character aright, when he saw in them the germ of the monastic life (P. L., XXII, 583, 1076).

Are we to consider as their degenerate and faithless successors those false Prophets of Yahweh whom we meet at the court of Achab, numbering four hundred, and later very numerous, also fighting against Isaias and Micheas and especially against Jeremias and Ezekiel? A definite answer cannot as yet be given, but it is wrong to consider them, as certain critics do, as authentic as the true Prophets, differing from them only by a more retrograde spirit, and less brilliant intellectual gifts. After Samuel the first Prophets properly so called who are explicitly mentioned are Nathan and Gad. They assist David by their counsels, and, when necessary, confront him with energetic protests. Nathan's parable of the little sheep of the poor man is one of the most beautiful passages in prophetic history (2 Samuel 12:1 sqq.). The Books of Kings and Paralipomenon mention a number of other "men of the spirit" exercising their ministry in Israel or in Juda. We may mention at least Ahias of Silo, who announced to Jeroboam his elevation to the throne of the Ten Tribes, and the ephemeral character of his dynasty, and Micheas, the son of Jemla, who predicted to Achab, in presence of the four hundred flattering court Prophets, that he would be defeated and killed in his war against the Syrians (1 Kings 22).

But the two greatest figures of prophecy between Samuel and Isaiah are Elias and Eliseus. Yahweism was again endangered, especially by the Tyrian Jezebel, wife of Achab, who had introduced into Samaria the worship of her Phœnician gods, and Israel's faith was tottering, as it divided its worship between Baal and Yahweh. In Juda the danger was not less menacing, King Joram had married Athalia, a worthy daughter of

Jezebel. At that moment Elias appeared like a mysterious giant, and by his preaching and his miracles led Israel back to the true God and suppressed, or at least moderated, their leaning towards the gods of Chanaan. At Carmel he won a magnificent and terrible victory over the Prophets of Baal; then he proceeded to Horeb to renew within him the spirit of the Covenant and to be present at a marvellous theophany; thence he returned to Samaria to proclaim to Achab the voice of justice calling out for vengeance for the murder of Naboth. When he disappeared in the fiery chariot, he left to his disciple Eliseus, with his mantle, a double share of his spirit. Eliseus continued the master's work against the Chanaanite idolatry with great success, and became such a bulwark to the Kingdom of the North, that King Joas wept for his death and took his farewell with these words: "My father! my father! chariot of Israel and its horsemen"! Not all the Prophets left their oracles in writing. Several of them, however, have written the history of their times. Gad and Nathan, for instance, the history of David; and Nathan that of Solomon; also Semeias and Addo the annals of Roboam; Jehu, son of Hanani those of Josaphat.....Is it possible that the historical books of Josue, Judges, Samuel, and Kings were called in the Jewish canon the "earlier Prophets" because of the belief that they were written by the Prophets or at least based on their writing? To this query there can be no solution.

(2) *Prophetic Writers* -- The prophetic books were entitled in the same canon the "later Prophets". Gradually the custom of calling their authors the prophetic writers crept in. There are four Greater Prophets, that is those whose works are of considerable length. Isaias, Jeremias, Ezechiel, and Daniel, and twelve Minor Prophets, whose works are briefer- Osee, Joel, Amos, Abdias, Jonas, Micheas, Nahum, Habacuc, Sophonias, Aggeus, Zacharias, and Malachias. The Book of Baruch, which is not included in the Hebrew canon, is united in our Bibles to the Book of Jeremias. The ministry of Amos, the most ancient perhaps of the prophetic writers, is placed about the years 760-50. Osee follows him immediately. Next comes Isaias (about 740-700), and his contemporary Micheas. Sophonias, Nahum, and Habacuc prophesied towards the last quarter of the seventh century. Jeremias about 626-586; Ezechiel between 592-70. The prophecy of Aggeus and in part that of Zacharias are dated exactly in 520 and 520-18. Malachias belongs to the middle of the fifth century. As for Daniel, Abdias, Joel, Baruch, as well as portions of Isaias, Jeremias, Zacharias, their dates being disputed, it is necessary to refer the reader to the special articles treating of them.

(3) *The Prophetesses* -- The Old Testament gives the name *nebi'ah*, to three women gifted with prophetic charismata: Mary, the sister of Moses; Debbora; and Holda, a contemporary of Jeremias (2 Kings 22:14); also to the wife of Isaias meaning the spouse of a *nabi'*; finally to Noadia, a false Prophetess if the Hebrew text is accurate, for the Septuagint and Vulgate speak of a false Prophet (Nehemiah 6:14).

(4) *Cessation of Israelitic Prophecy* -- The prophetic institution had ceased to exist in the time of the Machabees. Israel clearly recognized this, and was awaiting its reappearance. Its necessity had ceased. Religious revelation and the moral code expressed in Holy Writ were full and clear. The people were being instructed by the scribes and doctors- a living magistracy, fallible, it is true, and bound overmuch by letter of the law, but withal zealous and learned. There was a feeling that the promises were about to be fulfilled and the consequent apocalypse increased and intensified this feeling. It was not unfitting, therefore, for God to allow an interval to elapse between the prophets of the Old Covenant and Jesus Christ, who was to be the crown and consummation of their prophecies.

D. Vocation and Supernatural Knowledge of the Prophets

(1) *The Prophetic Vocation* -- "For prophecy came not by the will of man at any time: but the holy men of God spoke, inspired by the Holy Ghost" (2 Peter 1:21). The Prophets were ever conscious of this Divine mission. I am not a professional or a voluntary Prophet, Amos practically said to Amasias, who wished to prevent him from prophesying at Bethel. "I am a herdsman plucking wild figs. And the Lord took me when I followed the flock, and the Lord said to me: Go, prophesy to my people Israel" (vii, 14 sq.). Again "the lion shall roar, who will not fear? The Lord God hath spoken, who shall not prophesy?" (iii, 8). Isaias saw Yahweh seated on a throne of glory, and when a seraph had purified his lips he heard the command "Go!" and he received his mission of preaching to the people the terrible judgments of God. God made known to Jeremias that he had consecrated him from his mother's womb and appointed him the Prophet of nations; He touched his lips to show that He made them His instrument for proclaiming His just and merciful judgments (i, 10), a duty so painful, that the Prophet endeavoured to be excused and to conceal the oracles entrusted to him. Impossible; his heart was consumed by a flame, which forced from him that touching complaint: "Thou hast deceived me, O Lord, and I am deceived: thou hast been stronger than I, and thou hast prevailed" (xx, 7). Ezechiel sees the glory of God borne on a fiery chariot drawn by celestial beings. He hears a voice

commanding him to go and find the children of Israel, that rebellious nation, with hardened heart and brazen face, and without prevarication deliver to them the warnings he was to receive.

The other Prophets are silent on the subject of their vocation; doubtless they also received it as clearly and irresistibly. To the preaching and predictions of the false Prophets uttering the fancies of their hearts and saying "the word of Yahweh" when Yahweh spoke to them not, they fearlessly oppose their own oracles as coming from heaven and compelling under penalty of revolt against God. And the manifest sanctity of their lives, the miracles wrought, the prophecies accomplished demonstrate to their contemporaries the truth of their claims. We also separated from them by thousands of years should be convinced by two irrefragable proofs among others: the great phenomenon of Messianism culminating in Christ and the Church, and the excellence of the religious and moral teaching of the Prophets.

(2) *Supernatural knowledge: inspiration and revelation*

(a) *The fact of revelation* -- The Prophet did not receive merely a general mission of preaching or predicting in Yahweh's name: each of his words is Divine, all his teaching is from above, that is, it comes to him by revelation or at least by inspiration. Among the truths he preaches, there are some which he knows naturally by the light of reason or experience. It is not necessary for him to learn them from God, just as if he had been entirely ignorant of them. It suffices if the Divine illumination places them in a new light, strengthens his judgment and preserves it from error concerning these facts, and if a supernatural impulse determines his will to make them the object of his message. This oral inspiration of the Prophets bears an analogy to the Scriptural inspiration, in virtue of which the Prophets and hagiographers composed our canonical books.

The entire contents of the prophetic message is not, therefore, within the compass of the natural faculties of the divine messenger. The object of all strictly so-called prediction requires a new manifestation and illumination; unaided the Prophet would remain in more or less absolute obscurity. This, then, is revelation in the full sense of the term.

(b) *Manner of the revelatory communications; Canons for the interpretation of the prophecies and their fulfilment* -- In the words of St. John of The Cross -- and the doctors of mysticism have a special right to be heard in this matter -- "God multiplies the means of transmitting these revelations; at one time he makes use of words, at another of signs, figures, images, similitudes; and again, of both words and symbols together" (The Ascent of Carmel, II, xxvii): To grasp accurately the meaning of the Prophets and judge of the fulfilment of their predictions, these words must be remembered and completed: The material element perceived in the vision may have a strictly literal meaning and simply signify itself. When Micheas, the son of Jemla, beholds "all Israel scattered upon the hills, like sheep that have no shepherd", and hears Yahweh say "These have no master; let every man of them return to his house in peace" (1 Kings 22:17), he sees exactly what will be the outcome of Achab's expedition against the Syrians at Ramoth of Galaad. Again, the meaning may be entirely symbolic. The almond branch shown to Jeremias (i, 11 sq.) is not shown for itself; it is intended solely to represent by its name *vigilant*, the Divine watchfulness, which will not allow the word of God to be unfulfilled. Between these two extremes there exists a whole series of intermediary possibilities, of significations imbued with varying degrees of reality or symbolism. The son promised to David in Nathan's prophecy (2 Samuel 7) is at once Solomon and the Messianic king. In the last verse of Aggeus Zorobabel signifies himself and also the Messias.

Neither the Prophets nor their clear-sighted, sensible hearers were ever misled. It is wronging Isaias to say he believed that at the end of time the hill of Sion would physically surpass all the mountains and hills on the earth (ii, 2). Examples might be multiplied indefinitely. Yet we are not forced to believe that the Prophets were always able to distinguish between the literal and the symbolical significations of their visions. It was sufficient for them not to give, and to be unable to give, in the name of God any erroneous interpretation. It has likewise been long known that the vision very frequently disregards distances of time and place, and that the Messias or the Messianic era almost always appears on the immediate horizon of contemporary history. If to this we add the frequently conditional character of the oracles (cf. Jeremiah 18; 24:17 sqq. etc.), and remember moreover that the Prophets convey their message in words of eloquence, expressed in Oriental poetry, so rich in striking colours and bold figures, the pretended distinction between realized and unrealized prophecies, predictions substantially accurate but erroneous in detail, will disappear.

(c) *State of the Prophet during the Vision* -- Ordinarily the vision occurred when the Prophet was awake. Dreams, of which the false Prophets made ill use, are scarcely ever mentioned in the case of true Prophets. Much has been said about the ecstatic state of the latter. Possibly the soul of the Prophet may have been at times, as happened to the mystics, so absorbed by the activity of the spiritual faculties that the activity of the senses was suspended, though no definite instance can be cited. In any case, we must remember what St. Jerome (In Isaiam, Prolog. in P. L., XXIV, 19) and St. John Chrysostom (In I Cor. homil. XXIX in P. G., LXI, 240 sqq.) remarked that the Prophets always retained their self-consciousness and were never subject to the disordered and degrading psychic conditions of the pagan soothsayers and pythias; and, instead of enigmatical and puerile sybilline oracles, their pronouncements were often sublime and always worthy of God.

E. The Teaching of the Prophets

(1) *The exterior form* -- They usually taught orally. To this they often added symbolical acts which accorded with Oriental tastes and caught the attention of their hearers. Jeremias, for instance, wandered through Jerusalem under a wooden yoke, symbolizing the approaching subjugation of the nations by the King of Babylon. The false Prophet Hananias, having taken this yoke and broken it on the ground, receives this answer, in the name of Yahweh "Thou hast broken chains of wood, and thou shalt make for them chains of iron" (xxviii, 13). Jeremias and Ezechiel make frequent use of this method of instruction. Amos was probably the first who was inspired to unite the written to the spoken word. His example was followed. The Prophets thus exercised wider and more lasting influence, and left moreover an indisputable proof that God had spoken by them (cf. Isaiah 8:16). Some prophecies seem to have been made exclusively in writing, for instance, probably the second part of Isaias and all Daniel. The greater part of the prophetic books is couched in rhythmic language perfectly adapted to the popular and, at the same time, sublime character of the oracles. Hardly any kind of Hebrew poesy is absent; epithalamia and lamentations; little satirical songs; odes of wonderful lyrism etc. The fundamental law of Hebrew poetry, the parallelism of the stichs, is usually observed. The metric seems to be based essentially on the number of accents marking a raised intonation. Most exhaustive researches upon the construction of the strophes have been made, but without many definitely accepted conclusions.

(2) *The Teaching*

(a) *Preaching: religion and morals, in general* -- Samuel and Elias sketch out the programme of the religious and moral preaching of the later Prophets. Samuel teaches that the idols are vanity and nothingness (1 Samuel 12:21); that Yahweh alone is essentially true, and immutable (xv, 29); that He prefers obedience to sacrifice (xv, 22). For Elias also Yahweh alone is God, Baal is nothing. Yahweh chastises all iniquity and punishes the injustices of the powerful for the feeble. These are the fundamental points emphasized more and more by the prophetic writers. Their doctrine is based on the existence of one God alone, possessing all the attributes of the true Divinity -- sanctity and justice, mercy and fidelity, supreme dominion over the material and moral world, the control of the cosmic phenomena and of the course of history. The worship desired by God does not consist in the profusion of sacrifices and offerings. They are nauseous to Yahweh unless accompanied by adoration in spirit and in truth. With what greater indignation and disgust will He not turn away from the cruel and unclean practice of human sacrifice and the prostitution of sacred things so common among the neighbouring nations. On being asked with what one should approach and kneel before the Most High God, He replies by the mouth of Micheas: "I will show thee, O man, what is good, and what the Lord requireth of thee; Verily to do judgment, and to love mercy, and to walk solicitous with thy God" (vi, 8). So religion joins morality, and formulates and imposes its dictates. Yahweh will call the nations to account for violating the natural law, and Israel, in addition, for not observing the Mosaic legislation (cf. Amos 1-2, etc.). And He will do this, so as to conciliate in a Divine manner the rights of justice with the realization of the promises made to Israel and mankind.

(b) *Prophetic predictions. The Day of Yahweh; the Saved; Messianism; Eschatology* -- The constant subjects of the great prophetic predictions of Israel, the punishment of the guilty nations, and the realization for all of the ancient promises. Directly or indirectly all the prophecies are concerned with the obstacles to be removed before the coming of the new kingdom or with the preparation of the New and final Covenant. From the days of Amos, and clearly it was not even then a new expectation, Israel was awaiting a great day of Yahweh, a day, which it deemed one of extraordinary triumph for it and its God. The Prophets do not deny, but rather declare with absolute certainty that the day must come. They dispel the illusions concerning its nature. For

Israel, faithless and burdened with crimes, the day of Yahweh will be "darkness and not light" (Amos 5:18 sqq.). The time is approaching when the house of Jacob will be sifted among the nations as wheat is shaken in the sieve and not a good seed drops to the ground (ix, 9)/ Alas! the good seed is rare here. The bulk will perish. A remnant alone will be saved, a holy germ from which the Messianic kingdom will arise. The pagan nations will serve as sievers for Israel. But as they have wandered still further from the right path, the day of Yahweh will come for them in turn; finally the remnant of Israel and the converts of the nations will unite to form a single people under the great king, the Son of David. The remnant of Ephraem or of Juda remaining in Palestine at the time of the Exile, the remnant returning from the Captivity to form the post-Exilic community, the Messianic kingdom in its militant state and its final consummation- all these stages of the history of salvation are mingled here and there in one prophetic view. The future life looms up but little, the oracles being addressed principally to the body of the nation, for which there is no future life. However, Ezechiel (xxxvii) alludes to the resurrection of the dead; the apocalypse of Isaias (xxvi, 19 sqq.) mentions it explicitly; Daniel speaks of a resurrection unto life everlasting and a resurrection unto eternal reproach (xii, 2 sqq.). The broad daylight of the Christian Revelation is coming.

II. IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

When this dawn is about to break, prophecy then long silent finds voices anew to tell the good tidings. Zachary and Elizabeth, Mary the Virgin-Mother, the old man Simeon and Anna the Prophetess are enlightened by the Holy Ghost and unfold the future. Soon the Precursor appears, filled with the spirit and power of Elias. He finds anew the accents of olden prophecy to preach penance and announce the coming of the kingdom. Then it is the Messias in person who, long foretold and awaited as a Prophet (Deuteronomy 18:15, 18; Isaias 49; etc.), does not disdain to accept this title and to fulfil its signification. His preaching and His predictions are much closer to the prophetic models than are the teachings of the rabbis. His great predecessors are as far below Him as the servants are below the only Son. Unlike them He does not receive from without the truth which He preaches. Its source is within Him. He promulgates it with an authority thereunto unknown. His revelation is the definite message of the Father. To understand its meaning more and more clearly the Church which He is about to establish will have throughout all ages the infallible assistance of the Holy Ghost. However, during the Apostolic times, God continues to select certain instruments like unto the Prophets of the Old Law to make known His will in an extraordinary manner and to foretell coming events: such, for instance, are the Prophets of Antioch (Acts 13:1,8), Agabus, the daughters of the Evangelist Philip, etc. And among the charismata (cf. Prat, `La theologie de Saint Paul", 1 pt., note H, p. 180-4) conferred so abundantly to hasten and fortify the incipient progress of the faith, one of the principal, next after the Apostolic, is the gift of prophecy. It is granted "unto edification, and exhortation, and comfort" (1 Corinthians 14:3). The writer of the "Didache" informs us that in his day it was fairly frequent and widespread, and he indicates the signs by which it may be recognized (xi, 7-12). Finally the Canon of the Scriptures closes with a prophetic book, the Apocalypse of St. John, which describes the struggles and the victories of the new kingdom while awaiting the return of its Chief at the consummation of all things.

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