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THE GREAT HARLOT
OF REVELATION CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

A Thesis Presented to

The Faculty of Concordia Seminary

Department of New Testament Theology

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Sacred Theology

---

by

Lorman Milton Petersen

July 1945

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Approved by: L. Fuerbringer

P. E. Kretzmann.

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THE GREAT HARLOT

OF REVELATION CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

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The secret things belong
unto the Lord our God:
but those things which are
revealed belong unto us
and to our children for
ever, that we may do all
the words of this Law.

- Deuteronomy 29:29

Now we see through a
glass darkly; but then
face to face: now I
know in part; but then
shall I know even as
also I am known.

- I Corinthians 13:12

I have yet many things
to say unto you, but ye
cannot bear them now.
Howbeit when He, the
Spirit of Truth, is come,
He will guide you into
all truth: for He shall
not speak of Himself;
but whatsoever He shall
hear, that shall He speak:
and He will shew you
things to come.

- Saint John 16:12,13

PREFACE

"Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand." (Revelation 1:3)

With these sacred words of God's assurance ringing in my ears, I began the study of the Book of Revelation, confident of the Holy Spirit's guidance for the arduous task. I first began a study of Revelation for a Pastoral Conference and Study Group in Central Illinois. This effort was in the form of a continuous word-by-word exegesis, and I am still working at it a few minutes each day.

My interest in the mysteries and lofty language of the Book increased as I proceeded. Therefore, I grasped at the suggestion of Dr. William Arndt, head of the Department of New Testament Theology of Concordia Lutheran Seminary, St. Louis, to write a thorough exegesis of the very controversial seventeenth chapter of Revelation as the thesis for my Master's Degree in New Testament Theology.

It is true the Book of Revelation has proved a happy hunting ground for faddist theologians and quacks. False theological systems and radical principles of interpretation have caused the confusion which reigns concerning the book. But I know now that the Book of Revelation, interpreted in the light of the corpus doctrinae, offers much for our Christian learning and comfort today, when "the time is at hand."

I offer the results of my study in humility, but with the firm conviction that the Holy Spirit has led me in the Way of Truth. I pray God that the results of my work are equal to the many laborious hours spent, and that the thesis will be an encouragement to others to spend more profitable time on the Book of Revelation.

I want to express my gratitude to Dr. Paul E. Kretzmann and to Dr. Ludwig Fuerbringer of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, two great theologians of our beloved Lutheran Church, for reading the manuscript. I wish also to acknowledge the valuable suggestions received from Dr. William Arndt and to thank Dr. Theodore Graebner for the use of his splendid library. Miss Martha Schrieber and Miss Marie Schrieber, two faithful workers in Trinity Lutheran Church of Pekin, Illinois, deserve my special thanks for their unlimited patience in typing the manuscript.

The Babylonian Harlot, the Antichrist, symbolizing the Roman Catholic Church, is a dangerous woman. She is like the devil, if not the devil's harlot - clever, treacherous, deceiving, immoral, and yet powerful, swift, intelligent, patient. Let us all remember that the only means of combating the Antichrist today is the same as it was in Luther's day, that is, the preaching of the true, sure, all-powerful Gospel of Jesus Christ. (Romans 1:16)

May God's Word
And Luther's Doctrine pure
In all eternity endure!

Pekin, Illinois — LORMAN M. PETERSEN

July, 1945

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Dedicated to

MY MOTHER

Mrs. Florence Petersen Weddell

Avon, South Dakota

PART THE FIRST

HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION

I

Introduction

These words are being written during World War II. A week ago, May 8, 1945, Nazi Germany fell into the destruction of her own conceit. Victory over Japan, a most treacherous enemy, we pray Almighty God, lies in the not too distant future. Verily, the whole world is, or has been, at war once more.

This fact, besides an ardent desire to know more about the Book of Revelation and its mysteries, was prominent in inducing the writer of this thesis to undertake the study of Biblical prophecy, especially of the Seventeenth Chapter of the Apocalypse, in its relation to the war and the events of our day.

In wartime the hearts and souls of men are sorely tried. Then, more than any other time, man looks to the future. He sees the walls of civilization crack and crumble about him. He sees vast empires rise and fall. He realizes that things which he thought must remain forever are changing and passing into oblivion before his very eyes.

Automatically he asks himself the questions: What about the future? What will it bring? When will this all end? What is to happen to the world? What is to become of me?

Where shall he seek the answers to the questions of the future? In his futile search man goes to many fountains of "knowledge" - to the astrologist, the wizard, the witch, the fortune-teller, the spiritualist, the newspaper, the false religionist, the necromancer. Any straw of plausible information which seems to fit the occasion in answering the problems of the future, is grasped as though the seeker were a drowning man.

For many good reasons God has closed the exact details of the future to all of us, but vain man thinks he should know precisely what and when shall come next in world events. And he will even go so far as to manipulate the records to make his dreams come true.

Sorry to say, the Holy Bible especially has been crudely man-handled by man in his quest of information about the future. It is history written beforehand, the idle prognosticator thinks. He does not let the text, nor the grammar and the dictionary speak. If the answer to every phenomenon of history is not there in plain words, he finds it between the lines. He makes figurative what is literal, and literal what is figurative. He plays with words and pictures, changes and crosses out, adds and subtracts, tries to outguess the men who were inspired to write the Bible, so that when the answer does come out of this false religious mill, it is ground so fine and mixed with so much dirt that the omniscient God himself would not recognize it as His own.

As in the last war and in all wars, so in this war there are thousands of these false servants of the devil, liars by God's holy

name, fakes, quacks, and wild-eyed fanatics who are performing their devilish surgery upon the Holy Book.

Two of the many grave errors these fake Bible interpreters perpetrate against God's Word are evident: The one error is that they approach the Bible text with perceived ideas and thus abuse passages out of their context. The other error is that they see much in the Sacred Text where nothing is to be seen at all - that is, when they have good solid juicy meat on the table, they are blind to it and pick around on the bones; they seldom eat the solid heavenly meat from the Gospels or the Epistles or other clear doctrinal books of the Bible, but always seek answers to their problems where God has given <u>little certain information</u>, namely --- in SYMBOLIC PROPHECY.

One of the lean symbolic portions of the Bible which the false teacher thinks is a juicy morsel is the Revelation of Saint John, the last book of the New Testament. This cryptic book, together with some of the Prophets of the Old Testament, is most abused by the millennialist interpreters and sectarian preachers.

Some of the sectarian preachers use the Book of Revelation and the Book of Daniel as their Bible during wartime. They dive down into the mysteries of these books and come up with the most spectacular answers and speculative statements that man has ever heard. These yelling and shrieking errorists give "definite" but ever-changing historical indentification (always in the terms of modern history) of the beasts, the Harlot, the thousand years, the kings, horns, heads, and the many other images mentioned in Revelation. They give definite dates when the war will end, tell us who will win, and what each country and its leader will do next.

Besides the many books, magazines, and papers which have flooded the market, they use the radio to good advantage to propagate their views. On Sundays - morning, noon, and night - their rantings can be heard. A radio station in Chicago sponsors a fifteen-minute daily program called "The Bible and the News". The day after V-E Day, May 8, 1945, a Mr. Meredith, commentator on this program, said:

"The news we are hearing these days is so thrilling and refreshing that we cannot help looking up, for our redemption draweth nigh. Mussolini and Hitler were not the Antichrists, as we thought. We know now that they were simply forerunners --- they brought prophecy and its fulfillment closer to the end, to Armagedon and Christ's final return for His magnificent reign on earth during the Millennium. Russia looms before us now as the beast of Revelation XIII and XVII, for she might turn into the great dictator, as is also prophecied in Daniel, Ezekiel, and Isaiah. And is not the San Francisco Conference foretold in Revelation III? If we do not like this news, it shows us that we are not the Christians we should be."[1]

It is about time more of our Lutheran pastors and teachers make a thorough study of these problems to see where we stand. In these chaotic times even our own good Lutheran people may be led astray easily.

Recently one of the confirmands of the writer's parish in Pekin, Illinois, came to him with a question about the number of the Beast of Revelation 13:18.[2] On a piece of paper he had given each letter of

---

1. Heard over Radio Station WAIT, Chicago.
2. Rev. 13:18, "Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man: and his number is Six hundred threescore and six."

the alphabet an equivalent in numbers, that is, A equals 100, B equals 101, C equals 102, and so on until Z which equals 125. This code he then applied to the name Hitler, thus:

H	-	107
I	-	108
T	-	119
L	-	111
E	-	104
R	-	117
Total	-	666, the number of the Beast

He had gotten this information from a classmate at school. Was it right? Was Hitler the beast of Revelation 13? The Pastor must be prepared not only to say that such interpretations as this are false and arbitrary, but also explain why and give intelligent reasons, which his people have a right to expect.

Again, one of the members of our parish asked us some time ago if tire rationing was not prophesied in Isaiah 3:18: "In that day the Lord will take away the bravery of their tinkling ornaments about their feet, and their cauls, and their round tires like the moon."

A few weeks later another parishioner brought to us the following newspaper clipping with the question: "Pastor, is this right?" (We should thank God for Christians who come to their Pastor to verify their religious sentiments instead of believing everything and everybody they hear!) -

APOCALYPTIC HORSEMAN

The increasing use of yet another symbol in this war which has seen the crooked cross, the rising sun and the V-for-victory is reported by a Zurich, Switzerland newspaper.

It is a black horse, the picture of which is

> appearing with suspicious regularity near bodies of slain Nazi officials. Sometimes it is painted on walls, in other places scrawled across pavements, often more than life-size. A writer suggests it may be the chosen sign of an avenging society of anti-Nazis, perhaps composed in part of foreign slave laborers, which has selected the job of eliminating prominent Nazis as its part of the battle for liberation.
>
> If this is so, it may well have been suggested by the words of chapter six, verse five, of the book of Revelation: "And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand."
>
> A symbol, in short, of justice. And a fitting one to oppose that latest nightmare of the Hitlerites, the "were-wolf." [3]

The writer was grateful that he had been studying Revelation and could give at least a plausible answer why this was an abuse of a figure in Revelation to suit a writer's purpose. The black horse and the pair of scales do not depict justice on the Nazis, but is a general picture of the opposite --- economic oppression, famine, and hardships the people of God must suffer throughout the Church's existence.

In wartime our people naturally look to their religious leaders for guidance. They hear these twisted interpretations, are troubled about them, and come to us with their questions. We must know the correct answers ourselves, that we, who have the Truth, may be able to teach the Truth and only the Truth to others, at the same time being able with sound doctrine to refute the gainsayers.

It is our humble opinion that every Bible Student, every minister, every layman, should take a definite evangelical position regarding the

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3. Editorial, Peoria Journal-Transcript, Peoria, Illinois, April 22, 1945.

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interpretation of the visions of the Book of Revelation and then stay with his interpretation until forced to move by Scripture itself. This does not mean that he has to be dogmatic, or that no one else may have an acceptable interpretation of some of the images, but he should support that view which best satisfies the text, the context, our Lutheran confessional writings, and does not militate against Scripture as a whole.

Once a pastor, for example, does this he will not tremble every time someone asks him a question about Revelation, and at the proper time will give his consent when his Adult Bible Class or Walther Leaguers clamor for a cursory study of Revelation. Certainly this would be far superior to saying: "I really don't know; no one does. We had better leave Revelation go for it is too difficult for us." We must remember that Revelation is in the canon and was written for our learning.

In Revelation XVII, the chapter under discussion in this paper, there is the problem of the gaudily-attired, jewel-bedecked Great Harlot, Babylon the Great. Whom or what does she represent? All agree that she represents the Antichrist. But who is the Antichrist? What light does the Book of Revelation throw upon St. Paul's description of the Antichrist in II Thessalonians 2:1-12?

The attempted union movement in the Lutheran Church of America in recent years has brought this question into the fore-ground, especially since the Doctrine of Inspiration and the soundness of the Lutheran Confessions are being discussed in this regard. In these days when many of the confessional statements of the Fathers are being "re-examined",

when some of the statements of our excellent Lutheran confessions are being questioned, it is good season to see for ourselves what we must believe. The discussion of the Antichrist which naturally plays a great role in the exegesis of Revelation XVII is very profitable, therefore, just at this time.

Other interesting and stimulating questions forge to the front from a mere casual reading of Revelation Chapter XVII. Who or what is the scarlet-colored Beast full of names of blasphemy? This Beast has seven heads and ten horns, which represent seven mountains and ten kings respectively. Who, what, are they? Who are the five fallen kings? Which king is it that is (v.10), and which one is to come? And who is the eighth king? Who are "the kings of the earth" (v. 2)?

What does this phrase mean: "The Beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit"? Or as it is at the end of verse 8, "The Beast that was, is not, and yet is"? Who are they "Whose names were not written in the book of life"? What is the "war with the Lamb" which is spoken of in verse 14? Finally, another big question: Does the fulfillment of all these prophetic images lie in the past, are they being fulfilled in our day, or are they yet to come?

These are some of the cruces of just one chapter of Revelation. One's interpretation of these images will determine to some extent his views of other symbols of the book. For instance, what relation does Revelation XVII stand to Revelation XIII[4] and to the rest of the Book of Revelation?

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4. In Rev. 13: 1.11, two beasts are mentioned, the first rises out of the sea having seven heads and ten horns; the other, coming up out of the earth, has horns like a lamb and the speech of a dragon.

Is there any connection between this chapter and certain passages in Daniel and the other prophets of the Old Testament? Then, of course, comes the back-breaking question: Is the Book of Revelation apostolic at all? Are the disreputable things which have been said about Revelation in the past true? These and many other questions cause one to become profoundly interested in the interpretation of this mysterious Book.

However, the great problem before us in this thesis is: What is the value of the multifarious interpretations which have been offered concerning the images of Revelation XVII? Our thesis has the specific title, "The Great Harlot of Revelation XVII, An Evaluation of the Various Interpretations Offered Concerning", which topic centers around the most important image (The Harlot) of the chapter. But our treatise will also contain the views and interpretations regarding the other lesser symbols of the chapter --- the Beast, the kings, the seven mountains, and all those problems mentioned before.

Now concerning the views of other men about this chapter. Are they correct? Are they tenable? Are they entirely sound, or only in some details, or are they wholly wrong? Or are there a number of views which one may hold and still not militate against the body of Scripture? What if one identifies the Great Whore with the Pope and the Papacy --- is this interpretation tenable? Or must it be the Roman Empire and the Caesars, or even some other historical or spiritual personage or institution? And let us say there are a number of interpretations of Revelation Chapter XVII which are tenable --- which one (or ones) is the best and most plausible view?

It is evident from these few considerations that the Book of Revel-

ation is a problem in interpretation. This thesis lies in the field of New Testament Exegesis. It has been most profitable effort for the writer, because it involves a study of the text of the Bible itself, always more valuable than a study in an applied branch of theology. We chose Revelation XVII for special study because we consider it representative and one of the most difficult chapters in the Book. The manner in which one explains this section will determine in a general way one's views of the rest of the symbolism of the Apocalypse.

And we want to emphasize the point that the study of this chapter cannot be done efficiently and satisfactorily without at least a brief study of the entire Book of Revelation. The Revelation of St. John is a complete, connected unit. Also, the canonicity of the book must be determined, as well as the method to be employed in exegesis.

And a good historical introduction to the book is necessary before any textual study can be done at all, for when we enter upon the study of any part of Revelation certain questions meet us at the threshold of the book --- problems which must be answered before we can advance. This is the reason for the lengthy introduction to our study which the reader will find on the pages following.

The arrangement of the thesis was made with these thoughts in mind. First, the reader will find an Introduction to the Apocalypse. This is followed by a brief outline of the entire Book of Revelation with brief summaries of the contents of each chapter, so that the reader at once will become acquainted with the contextual setting of Chapter XVII. It would be well for each reader to read the entire Book of Revelation

according to this outline, in the original if possible.[5] Our purpose is to make the essay as readable as possible, in spite of the many difficulties involved.

After this follows a brief story or overview of what is contained in Chapter XVII of Revelation without any interpretation, to give the reader an indication of what the subject matter is about. Then we list the various interpretations offered by exegetes of all the schools of theology we could find. This comprised not the least of our task.

We have tried to evaluate these interpretations as we went along. At first it had been our plan to classify all these interpretations under certain heads, such as spiritual, mystical, allegorical, historical, and crass interpretations, or some other classification, and thus save much time and space. But immediately we ran into much difficulty on this point. It is simply impossible to classify any of the interpretations offered, since they all differ in their details. The reader will discover this to be true when he reads some of the exegetical efforts we have listed.[6]

Therefore, we have attempted to choose representative interpretations of individual exegetes, great and small, to give the reader a

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5. For this purpose the reader may also use to good advantage the excellent brief surveys of the whole Book of Revelation according to Dr. P. E. Kretzmann's Popular Commentary or the Annotated Pocket New Testament by Dr. Theodore Graebner.

6. We agree with Dr. Lenski when he writes concerning all the hundreds of different interpretations of Revelation: "The interpretations of the large number of commentators of all the past centuries to the present day present a bewildering and an unsettling tangle. It would require libraries and years of labor to compile a firsthand inventory. Most of the popular expositions are reverent enough but are rather light." (Interpretation of St. John's Revelation, Introduction, p. 14).

bird's eye view of what has been offered in this field. To give the theories of all the interpreters regarding Revelation XVII would run into volumes, and would detract too much from the value of our treatise, since we wish it to be more positive than negative.

We have, however, included pertinent and pointed quotations from the interpretations of representative exegetes for the benefit of the reader who might wish to read the primary sources. The reader who does not care to do this will find a summary of each man's interpretation at the head of the section in which his views are criticized. These summaries can be scanned for a hurried reading, until the reader arrives at the chapter and discussion in question. Then we give our own exegesis of the chapter with fear and trembling, for we realize that only a prophet sent from God could give an absolute interpretation of Revelation.[7]

The long bibliography will indicate the many books perused for information on this subject. We sought material from every source we could think of, from libraries both secular and theological, private and public. This search revealed that there has been very little work done on Revelation in our own Lutheran circles.[8] Why this is so we will not venture to answer.

---

7. After working with Revelation for a number of years quite regularly, we indeed feel the truth of Moffat's words to Kiddle when the latter contemplated a commentary on Revelation: "Anyone who puts his hand to write a commentary of the Apocalypse is a bold man ... No one knows how difficult the task is until he has tried it for himself."

8. In our correspondence with Dr. William Arndt of Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, we one day received the following words from him: "Not very much work has been done in our circles with regard to the latter Biblical book (Revelation). In Chapter XVII you have one of the cruces of the book, and a penetrating study of the text itself and of the various interpretations would be very much worth-while." (Feb. 3, 1945).

The only worth-while published works on the entire Book of Revelation in the Lutheran Church of America are by Kretzmann (Popular Commentary), Graebner (Pocket New Testament), Lenski, Goeszwein, and Peters, the last two being in German. Dr. Luther himself wrote very little on Revelation. Neither did we find much on Revelation in Catholic writings. Most of the work done on Revelation has been accomplished by Reformed and Millennialistic interpreters, only a few of which are worthy of our study.

It is not the purpose of this thesis to add anything new to the literature concerning the Apocalypse, but we use this as a method to study the book and to find out more about it for ourselves. As a young pastor this book has always mystified us, and we determined long ago to make a thorough study of it at the first opportunity.

Our purpose, then, in writing this thesis has been that expressed by the Great Apostle Paul to young Timothy: "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth."[9] This is a motto which should be hanging in every pastor's study.

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9. II Timothy 2:15.

II

The Unique Character of Revelation

THE UNIQUE CHARACTER OF REVELATION

The Book of Revelation is not an illogical rhapsody, nor a book of divination, nor a series of elusive parables --- it is a book of divine prophecy, written to be understood. Those who study it carefully will see that the plainest statements are those which have the deepest thoughts. In it the future is predicted by means of special imagery.

The Apocalypse is the most profoundly mystical of all Biblical books, the only one of its kind in the New Testament. "The writer has cast his message in a great super-opera, with arias, antiphonies, and choruses, having as its tremendous orchestration not only harps and trumpets but the great noises of nature --- thunders, earthquakes, and mighty waters."[10] The early church Father, Jerome, says of it: "As many words, so many secrets."

In the day it was written, no doubt, Revelation was not the unique book it is for us today, for it belongs to a class of apocalyptic writings which flourished in the first two centuries. It is a demonstration, panoramic, which was given to John, the beloved disciple of Jesus, of the program of events which mark the general history of the New Testament church and the return of Jesus Christ to Judgment, all depicted in special imagery. Most dramatically, John has given to us a prophetic word-picture of all ages, and --- make no mistake about it --- we are all in

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10. Edgar J. Goodspeed, The Short Bible, p. 484.

the picture, nobody is left out.[11]

We find prophetic utterances in other New Testament books, for instance, concerning the Antichrist, II Thessalonians 2:1-10; of the Judgment, Matthew 25:31-46; concerning ungodliness in the latter days, I Timothy 4:1-3. But there is a vast difference between these prophecies and those of Revelation. The words of these prophecies are plain statements of facts, not in the form of symbols or visions. But the Book of Revelation was signified. The very first verse of the book says: "God sent and signified it by His angel unto His servant John."

This means that everything God was pleased to reveal to us about Jesus Christ, His beloved Son, and the conflicts in the history of the Christian Church through the centuries, was given to a man called John in the form of visions, symbols, images, pictures, signs, figures, all of which mean something for us today, whether we grasp their meanings or not.

Thus Revelation is a succession of pictures and symbols, the actual meanings of which often are hidden from view, given in expressive words. We find then, that the book is more figurative than literal.

The Apocalypse closely resembles the visionary sections of Daniel, Ezekiel, Isaiah, Hosea, Zechariah, and other prophets, and most of its

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11. "What beauty in Revelation! God's redeeming love and Christ's finished work in the Apocalypse stand out in a form so naked, so rich, so thrilling, so heavenly and ethereal, as to endear the language of the book to thousands. The Apocalypse lifts us to even a higher region than the Gospels. What beauty of language! Giving forth the same truths in music and poetry so beautiful as to dim the brightness of everything else. We are ushered behind the veil, into the midst of things invisible, with eyes to see and ears to hear. Where everything else is simply announced, it is here enacted. What elsewhere is said is here sung in strains celestial. The same truths are expressed, lifted up to third heaven." (David Brown, D.D., The Apocalypse, p. 44).

patterns are found in the Old Testament.[12] It is a book of mysteries, a system of occult divinity, of cryptic sayings and prophecies. The frequent use of the number seven (7), which means completeness, is striking --- seven candlesticks, seven churches, seven seals, seven trumpets, seven vials, seven mountains; also the number 144,000, the 1260 days, and the 1000 years. Its interpretation, therefore, often is uncertain and difficult.

For this reason the Revelation of Saint John is called The Apocalypse, that is, a special form of foretelling future events by opening up to the prophet or writer in the form of visions and images, a panoramic history of the Christian Church. The word apocalypse is derived from the Greek word "apocalupsis", meaning "to uncover" or "reveal". Thus the derived English word is Revelation.[13]

The Revelation of Saint John the Divine, then, is symbolical history of the Christian Church, past, present, and future. We are living in that period of history, that of the New Testament Era, which the inspired John depicts for us, and this prophecy is being fulfilled in this very hour. Of course, at John's time, when the Apocalypse was written, most

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12. "The books of Daniel and of Revelation are counterparts of each other. They naturally stand side by side, and should be studied together." Uriah Smith, Daniel and The Revelation, p. 3 in Preface.

13. The English word does not cover the entire meaning of the Greek apocalupsis (καλύπτω plus ἀπο, to "uncover", "reveal") since it is too general, not stating the definite manner in which the prophecy or divine wisdom comes to man. The picture the Greek word presents is that of a veil which covers the future; God draws it aside, and in the form of moving, dramatic pictures, reveals to us the general history of Christendom. "The things which are and the things which shall be hereafter" are shown in vivid pictures. Cf. Chap. 1:1.19; 4:1; 22:6.

of the book was yet in the future.[14]

Unique, indeed, is Revelation in character! John casts his message in the old Jewish apocalyptic type, thus veiling his meaning from matter-of-fact Roman minds by picturing empires and monarchs under the form of beasts and monsters. By one mighty sweep of his brush, he paints into one grand picture the nearer and farther future, placing side by side events which took place hundreds, perhaps thousands of years apart. Notice, for example, verse seven of the first chapter, "Behold, He cometh with clouds", which plainly deals with the Judgment.[15]

This manner of presentation, we might say, is not unusual in prophecy. Biblical prophecy often lacks a definite perspective. This is why pseudo-interpreters of the Bible, way-laying fundamental rules of hermeneutics, abuse Biblical prophecy. They forget that in the eyes of God there is no

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14. "We have here a symbolic history of the fortunes of the Church from the first century to the end of time. In a series of vivid pictures, John was shown how the Church would develop, pass through dreadful conflicts with the wicked powers of earth and hell, and ultimately gain the victory". (Drews, Introduction to the Books of the Bible, p. 214).

15. "Dr. Luther has a very fine description of Revelation in his Preface of 1545. He speaks of the different kinds of prophecy, and places Revelation in a class all by itself:

"Etliche weissagt von kuenftigen Dingen, die nich zuvor in der Schrift stehen; und diese ist dreierlei: die erste thut's mit ausgedrueckten Worten, ohne Bild und Figuren, wie Moses, David, und dergleichen Propheten mehr, von Christo weissagen, und wie Christus und die Apostel von dem Endeschrift und falschen Lehrern.

"Die andere thut's mit Bildern, aber dooh setzt daneben auch die Auslegung mit ausgedrueckten Worten, wie Joseph die Traeume auslegt, und Daniel beide Traeume und Bilder auslegt.

"Die dritte, die es ohne Worte oder Auslegung, mit blossen Bildern und Figuren thut, wie dies Buch der Offenbarung, und vieler heiligen Leute Traeume, Gesicht und Bilder, welche sie vom Heiligen Geist haben." (Sammtliche Schriften, St. Louis Edition, Vol. 14, p. 130).

time element as we know it, and are unable to separate the two.[16] Jesus uses the same method of prophecy, we remember, when he amalgamates into one prophecy the statements concerning the coming doom of Jerusalem and that of the end of the world --- all in one magnificent picture with the same words![17] That is Revelation --- dramatic, panoramic, full of suspense; unique, indeed![18]

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16. Cf. II Peter 3:1-10 (especially verses 4 and 8), where this whole problem is discussed.

17. Matthew 24:1-35.

18. "Most people find this book difficult to understand, largely because it belongs to a class of literature that is not common in these days. Like most books that have at some time been produced to meet a special need, and have for that reason been written in a particular style, it demands specialized study if it is to be critically interpreted. But that does not necessarily mean that it must remain a closed book to those who are not acquainted with apocalyptic literature. A man does not need to be an art critic to get inspiration from a picture; and there is such a way of looking at this book as gives the ordinary reader an inspiring impression of its message." (John Stirling, Bible for Today, p. 1234).

III

The Author of the Book of Revelation

THE AUTHOR OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION

An important question the interpreter of Revelation must answer is whether the book is apostolic or not. If the book was not written by an apostle, it is not canonical, and the student wastes his time studying it. It should then be considered one of the New Testament Apocrypha.

But is Revelation spurious? We readily admit that Revelation is an antilegomenon, that is, a book "spoken against", a book which caused objections on the part of the early Christians when it was to be placed into the canon. Even Dr. Martin Luther, as reluctantly as we dislike to admit it, spoke against Revelation especially in his earlier years.[19]

But these facts should not deter us from believing that Revelation is genuine. Though we honor our Father Luther as the Great Reformer, yet we neither deify him nor consider him a standard of canonicity. Later on toward the end of his life, he changed his mind about this mysterious book. The fact that someone spoke against the book simply because of its cryptic character does not make of the book an illegitimate child, as many have claimed it to be.

And when all the arguments against the apostolic nature of the Apocalypse are considered in proper light, we can freely and confidently

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19. Saemmtliche Schriften, St. Louis Edition, Vol. XIV, p. 141-42, Luther retained Revelation and the other antilegomena in the canon, but did not number the pages of these books to show his displeasure. Zwingli said outright, "Not a Biblical book!" Calvin always maintained that Revelation was canonical. What Luther said about Revelation and how he later changed his mind is treated elsewhere in this section.

believe that the book is genuine, authoritative, authentic, and apostolic. We have listed some of the negative criticisms used to discredit Revelation, and also the counter-arguments which we think greatly outweigh the unfavorable evidence offered.

The main reason Revelation has caused doubt and misgivings about its origin from earliest times is that the writer of the book does not specifically call himself an apostle of Jesus Christ. The writer simply calls himself John.[20] If he told us point-blank that he is the Apostle John, whom Jesus loved, there would be no more argument. But he does not, and since many critics get into a critical mood at the least provocation, the battle is on.

Who is this "John"? they ask.[21] Most modern critics say that this "John" is not the Apostle John, but a man called "Presbyter John". This statement they uphold by saying that though there is a great similarity between the Gospel and Epistles of John, the Revelation "has not a syllable in common with them". The style and character of the Gospel of John and Revelation are so different, they say, that it is impossible to believe they were written by the same author. This argument they resurrect from Dionysius of Alexandria, who lived in the third century.

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20. This he does four times in the Apocalypse. Chap. 1:1: "The revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and He sent and signified it by His angel unto His servant John." Chap. 1:9: "I, John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation ..." Cp. Chap. 21:2; 22:8 also.

21. We need not bother with the silly theories that Cerinthus or John Mark wrote Revelation. And we discount altogether the theory that John died as a martyr, either with his brother James (Acts 12:2) or together with James (the Just) in 62 or 66 A.D. From this it is then concluded that John the Apostle never was in Ephesus, nor exiled to Patmos, and, of course, is not the author of Revelation. We know, however, that there is nothing said about John's martyrdom in the Book of Acts.

To this the negative critics add further reasons against the genuineness of the Apocalypse, namely, that the style is too picturesque and lofty for John; that this is another imitation of Jewish apocalypses; that John the Apostle had been put to death long before Revelation was written.[22]

All these objections have been advanced because John does not say he is the author. Are they tenable? Is there evidence or not that John the Apostle was the author? We do not wish to dip our pen in gall when we speak against these higher critics, but we will see that both the internal and external evidence for John's authorship is very favorable and impressive.

First of all, the high position and divinity ascribed to our Lord Jesus in Revelation is such that one cannot say the Gospel of John attributes to Him any higher honor. Throughout the book Jesus is "King of Kings and Lord of Lords."[23]

Furthermore, the Apocalypse must have been written by a personal hearer of our Lord, for the words of Jesus in the Gospel records are to be found more frequently in Revelation than in any other New Testament book, outside the synoptic Gospels.

We note also in Revelation the identity of the Christology of John's Gospel with that in Revelation; the fact that Revelation refuses to acknowledge the unbelieving Jews as true Jews, which is in harmony with the Gospel;[24] that, the logos teaching, the title of Jesus in Revelation,

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22. This latter argument is taken from a fragment of Papias preserved by George Harmartolos.

23. Cf. Rev. 19:16: "And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS." Also Rev. 5:12-13.

24. John 8:39 ff.: "They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. But now ye seek to kill me." Cp. with Rev. 3:9.

the "Word of God"[25], immediately connects it with the "Word" in John's Gospel and Epistles; that the Revelation calls Christ "lamb" some twenty-nine times --- nowhere else is this tit e used for our Savior except in the Gospel of John.[26]

We may also add that the author of Revelation uses the term "Son of Man" some eighty times, a term also used in John's Gospel. The term "witness" is used by John more frequently than by any other author, and he is the only one to use such telling phrases as "keep My Word and My sayings". The "bridegroom" idea emphasized in both the Gospel and Revelation is not merely an accident. These facts show that the same author, namely John the Apostle, wrote these books of the Bible.

Again, there is no disharmony in doctrine between Revelation and the rest of the Biblical books. For instance, the almost perfect harmony between the description of the Antichrist in Revelation XVII and that given by Paul in II Thessalonians is much more than merely accidental --- a very emphatic proof that Revelation is canonical and apostolic.

And the Atonement --- yes, much Soteriology and Christology is taught in the Apocalypse, the same as in the Gospel and Epistles. At the same time Revelation is eschatalogical and telic --- a prophecy of continuous triumph, triumph absolute till the end!

We have more telling evidence for John's authorship of Revelation in his letter to the Church at Ephesus, chapter 2:2. He says: "Thou has tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found

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25. Rev. 19:13: "And His name is called, The Word of God". Cf. John 1:1.14; I John 1:1; 5:7.

26. Cf. John 1:29. That John uses the two different words ἀρνίον and ἀμνός for "lamb" in Revelation does not alter this impressive argument. No two books by the same author will be exactly alike, especially if they are written some time apart.

them liars." Would a man who was not an apostle write such words of authority? Between the lines we must read: "This is the Apostle John speaking to you now; cast all false prophets aside!"

The argument against the authorship of John the Apostle drawn from the solecisms of language and grammar is strong, but not overwhelming. This argument is also borrowed from Dionysius. All scholars admit that the language and syntax of Revelation are atrocious. The Gospel and Epistles of John are written in the smooth, usual terse and easy style, free from barbarisms in Greek grammar and syntax; but the Greek found in Revelation is startling from the first --- false appositions[27], anacolutha[28], and many other irregularities.

But surely, these discrepancies do not militate against the genuineness of the Apocalypse, nor against its inspiration. For the Holy Spirit used the talents of John as they were and he was allowed this freedom of construction. And can we expect that John, in such abrupt utterances, passing quickly from vision to vision, would regard strict grammatical regularity at all times?

If one reads the Gospel of John and then Revelation, he sees many similarities --- the same easy and free style, the simple Greek (Revelation of St. John is just as easy to translate as his Gospel), and the same expressions and even words. Were it not for the irregular syntax and grammar, this argument could not be offered.

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27. Rev. 1:4: ἀπὸ ὁ ὢν καὶ ὁ ἦν, ... - Here we have the nominative used with the preposition ἀπο. Also, the personal pronoun should be οὗς and not ὁ. Notice false appositions in v. 5.

28. For an example of anacoluthon see chapter 6, verse 2, in the Greek: καὶ ἐξῆλθεν νικῶν καὶ ἵνα νικήσῃ.

The nature of the material John had to write in his book is such that one would expect a difference in style. The subject matter is picturesque, unique, and not easily understood, and he could have violated the rules of syntax on purpose.

Also, John knew the colloquial Greek, and uses some very common vernacular phrases and constructions for the benefit of the people to whom he was writing. And the anacolutha do not prove that he did not know the regular Greek constructions, because rules not followed in one place are obeyed in others. The apocalyptic nature of the book required such mysterious imagery and lofty high-sounding phrases.[29]

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29. The question remains, how is it that the Greek of the Gospel is so much better if both were written by the same man? Here are some more explanations. Perhaps the Apocalypse was written at an earlier date than the rest of the Johannine writings, before John met real Greek influence as he did in Ephesus later and while he was still struggling with the Greek. Some learned men in our Lutheran Church espouse this idea.

Another explanation is that John may have had assistance, namely, that someone might have "proof read" and polished the Gospel and the Epistles, but not Revelation. There is also the opinion, and perhaps a good one, that John used for the Gospel and Epistles an amanuensis, (a secretary), just as Paul did, but that he wrote Revelation himself, as the first chapter seems to indicate.

One noted scholar voices his opinion: St. John spoke the Aramaic tongue, which has no case endings. He may have had difficulties in the early days in learning all the constructions and cases in Greek. Thus he used the nominative as much as possible. John probably knew Greek enough to be able to use it in ordinary conversation, but was pressed somewhat for correct terms when he wished to put his thoughts down in writing. The Apocalypse is just what one would expect of a man whose native tongue was Aramaic.

These views possibly may be true, and they throw some light on the language question of Revelation, but we are careful to state we doubt these theories. Our opinion is that John wrote at a late date, perhaps a few years before death, when he knew as much Greek as he ever would know.

Here is what Dr. Lenski offers regarding the peculiar and irregular language of Revelation:

> "To say that John did not know his Greek as he should is not true, for Revelation has much excellent Greek. The anomalies are not those of a bungler, they are altogether intentional and significant ... An easy explanation is that the same author did not write Revelation and the other Johannine writings; or to say that John wrote Revelation early, before he knew Greek properly; or that John had somebody polish the language of his Gospel and his Epistles before they were sent out ... The Lord intended the language of Revelation to be different from that of John's other writings. The Lord intended the difference to be so great that even the dullest reader should at once be struck by this fact ... Revelation is not at all a composition of John. The symbolical terms, expressions, images, are not products of John's mind; they are as far beyond his mind as they still are beyond ours. John is as much the recipient as we are today ... This book is "the Revelation of Jesus Christ", this book is in the highest sense Jesus Christ's book, and the very language proclaims the fact.[30]

To us the extensive use of the Old Testament in Revelation (not so many direct quotations, but many, many allusions) is proof of its canonicity. Hengstenberg was right when he said: "The seer of the Apocalypse lives entirely in the Holy Scriptures." It is amazing how the seer takes numerous phrases and thoughts from the Old Testament prophets and incorporates them into his book. Anyone who examines Revelation from this point of view, will have a list pages long of Old Testament passages used by John.[31]

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30. Op. Cit., p. 15, 16, 18

31. As an example, compare Rev. 1:7 and Zech. 12:10. John is alone in using the expression "pierced Jesus" in the New Testament. It is also found in Psalm 22.

We maintain that the Apostle John did not have to mention the fact that he was an apostle of our Lord. He was so well known that this was unnecessary.[32] The fact that he did not say he was an apostle was an indication that his readers should and would take it for granted. Perhaps, also, he was a very modest man.

If a man forged his name to this book, certainly he would have made his impersonated apostleship very plain to the reader; and if another John were writing it with an honest purpose, he would have carefully distinguished himself from the Apostle John. This author makes no effort to distinguish himself, and being a mistaken identity never enters his mind. He uses the language of apostolic authority. It would be impossible for a deliberate forger to make up the sublime visions here written. The very character of the book speaks for its divine authorship.

The Apocalypse is built upon the plan of the prophetic books of the Old Testament, wherein it is customary to mention only the name of the prophet. Many of the historical books of the Bible are anonymous.

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32. We cannot see why the fact that the author does not say he is an apostle, or give his title in an official way, should have great weight in determining who is the author. Where is the man who will say that John mentions his official title of apostle in his Gospel? The simple truth is that he doesn't mention the name "John" at all! And is it a phenomenon when a man signs his name to a letter or document and does not write down whether he is a lawyer, dentist, doctor, or preacher? President Roosevelt always signed his name "Franklin D. Roosevelt"; he did not have to tell everyone he was president; we all knew that. But perhaps two thousand years from now there may be some doubt as to which Roosevelt it was, as in John's case.

The congregations of Asia Minor to whom John writes are those among whom John the Apostle lived and worked. The readers would know who he was. He writes with unusual authority. Was he not Apostolic Supervisor of the Churches in Asia Minor?

The argument from Papias that John the Apostle was put to death by the Jews at an early date does not carry a great deal of weight. For the most part it is based on a misunderstanding of Papias. Papias does not say Revelation was not written by the time of John's death. Neither does he say that the Jews put John to death. In fact, many divines gather from Papias that he took the apostolic origin of Revelation for granted.

Justin Martye (ca. 150 A.D.) in his Dialogue of Tryphaeus the Jew says that John the Apostle wrote the Apocalypse. Irenaeus (ca 180 A.D.),[33] Clement of Alexandria (ca. 200 A.D.), Tertullian (ca. 220 A.D.), the Muratorian Canon (200 A.D.), Origen of Alexandria (ca. 223 A.D.), and Hippalytus (ca. 240 A.D.) --- all are unanimous in ascribing Revelation to John.

The Early Church as a whole, especially after 300 A.D., considered it to be written by the Apostle John. The Book of Revelation was officially placed into the Canon already at the Council of Laodicea (ca. 350 A.D.) and by the Council of Carthage in 397 A.D. For us these considerations overrule the gainsaying of the apostate Marcion, of Dionysius, Caius of Rome, Eusebius, and one or two others who were led

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33. Let us bear in mind the weight of Irenaeus' testimony. He was a student of Polycarp, who in turn was a pupil of John himself.

into doubt, not by lack of evidence of John's authorship, but by the character of the book.

The Book of Revelation for this reason is not so often studied in our Lutheran Church of America. In fact, it has always been an unwritten rule that no one would be considered a heretic if he did not accept Revelation as apostolic.[34]

Conversations with older pastors and scholars of our Church revealed that this is still true. We doubt if anyone in our Lutheran Church does not accept Revelation as the divinely inspired Word of God; but it has always been our wish that our fathers had not taken such a position in regard to Revelation. It seems to be going too far. To us it seems definitely arbitrary that they should condemn the Apocalypse simply because they could not explain some of its passages or because it was "different" from the other books of the Bible.

Dr. Francis Pieper has some notes on this point, words which must have been as difficult for him to write as for us to read:

> "Den Unterschied zwischen Homologumena und Antilegomena, den die erste Kirche gemacht hat, kann die spaetere Kirche nicht durch Beschluss aufheben. Auch Luther laesst den Unterschied gelten der innerhalb der ersten Kirch unter den Schriften des Neuen Testaments gemacht worden ist, wenn er in bezug auf den Hebraeerbrief die Briefe St. Jakobi, und Judae und die Offenbarung St. Johannis sagt: 'Diese haben vorzeiten ein ander Ansehen gehabt' mit Berufung auf Eusebius, Kirchengesch. III, 25." (Christliche Dogmatik, Band I, Z. 399).

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34. "In our Synod there has been a discussion of this matter and our fathers declared it not heretical if one does not look upon this work as canonical." (Dr. William Arndt, "Notes on Revelation," p. 59) We are indebted to these notes for some of the material presented on these pages.

Irrespective who these doubters of Revelation were, we are offended that they cast disrepute upon some of the canonical books, as in the case of Luther with James, Jude, Hebrews, and Revelation, simply because they could not solve some of the hard knots in them which can be explained and have been satisfactorily explained. None of the antilegomena have the character of the Apocrypha to which they have been compared and classed with. And how could the fathers of our Missouri Synod follow in their foot steps, as Dr. F. Pieper does in his great work Christliche Dogmatik?[35]

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35. Note that Dr. Pieper quotes Dr. Walther as his authority in this instance: "Auch die Vaeter des Missouri-synode hielten an der Unterscheidung zwischen Homologumena und Antilegomena fest, freilich auch mit der naeheren Erklaerung, dasz sie die Beurteilung der einzelnen Antilegomena jedermann freilassen. Waren sie doch untereinander, z.B. in bezug auf die Apokalypse, verschiedener Ansicht. Schon im zweiten Jahrgang von "Lehre und Wehre" (1856) ist die Frage von den Homologumena und Antilegomena des Neuen Testaments ausfuehrlich behandelt unter dem Titel: 'Ist derjenige fuer einen Ketzer oder gefaehrlichen Irrlehrer zu erklaeren, welcher nicht alle in dem Konvolut des Neuen Testaments befindlichen Buecher fuer kanonisch haelt oder erklaert?'

"Wir sollten wohl Anfang und Schlusz dieses Artikels als charakterisch hierhersetzen. Walther schreibt: 'Zu dieser Frage werden wir dadurch gefuehrt, dasz Herr P. Roebbelen bei Gelegenheit der Gloesen, die er ueber die Offenbarung St. Johannis im Lutheraner veroeffentlicht hat, zugleich das Gestaendnis getan hat, dasz er mit Luther die Offenbarung nicht fuer kanonisch halte. Dies hat, wie wir hoeren, hie und da groszen Anstosz erregt. Auch wir koennen nun zwar in diesem Punkte unserm teuren Bruder Roebbelen nicht beistimmen, indem wir die ueberzeugung haben, dasz koestlich Christen- und Kirchentrostbuch der Offenbarung zu dem Kanon gehoere. Nichtsdestoweniger glauben wir jedoch dasz es unbillig ist und wohl auch auf Unkenntnis der Sache beruht, wenn man einen sonst unverdaechtigen Theologen darum fuer einen gefaehrlichen Irrlehrer ansehen will, der Gottes Wort selbst verdaechtig mache, weil er zwar alle Homologumenen (allgemein anerkannte Buecher) von Herzen fuer kanonisch haelt, aber an der Kanonizitaet des einen oder andern Antilegomenon (widersprochenen Buches) zweifelt.

"Es waere dies auch durchaus unlutherisch, indem unsere teuren Glaubensvaeter fast ausnahmslos bis nach Berabfassung der Kondordien-

If the Bible is a complete unit and "wholly and entirely the inspired Word of God" as we tell people from our pulpits, then we had better tell them "all except Revelation," if we wish to have such a loose rule in the Church. It has caused no disturbance in the Church yet, but it can. Modern critics have found arguments to undermine parts of almost every book of the Bible. Here would be a good place for some doubter from within to light a match that might burst into a flame and a fire. We are sorry Luther[36] and our Fathers ever doubted Revelation.

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formel entweder alle oder doch einige aus den Antilegomenen fuer nicht in den Kanon gehoerende Schriften gehalten und erklaert haben, und zwar nicht aus Uebereilung und Leichtfertigkeit in Absicht auf das Wort Gottes, sondern im Gegenteil aus grosser Gewissenhaftigkeit in Absicht auf dasselbe. Luthers Urteile ueber die Antilegomenen sind so wenig ein Schandfleck unserer Kirche, dasz sie vielmehr Zeugnis geben (?), wie genau es einst in unserer Kirche mit dem nahm, was Regel und Richtschnur unsers Glaubens und Lebens sein soll." (Bank I, p. 399-401, under Die Heilige Schrift, 11. "Die Geschichtliche Bezeugung der Schrift.")

36. That Dr. Luther had many serious doubts about the canonicity of Revelation can be seen from reading his Vorrede zur Offenbarrung St. Johannis von Jahre 1522:

"In diesem Buch der Offenbarrung Johannis lasz ich auch jedermann seines Sinnes walten ... Mir mangelt an diesem Buch nicht einerlei, dasz ich's weder apostoli ach noch prophetisch halte ... ich's fast gleich bei mir achte dem vierten Buch Esra's und allerdinge nicht spueren kann, dasz es von dem Heiligen Geist gestellet sei ... Mein Geist kann sich in das Buch nicht schicken, und ist mir die Urfach genug, dasz ich sein nicht hoch achte, dasz Christus darinnen weder gelehrt noch erkannt wird." (Saemmtliche Schriften, St. Louis Edition, Vol. 14, p. 141.).

But we can see how Luther changed his mind by 1545 when he wrote a longer Preface to Revelation. From this we can see that he spoke in haste in 1522, and perhaps without first studying the Book, since he said then that Christ was not taught in Revelation, which we know is not true --- there is much Christology in Revelation. It is a part of God's revelation to mankind. Here is what Luther wrote in 1545:

"Um solcher ungewissen Auslegang und verborgenen Verstandes willen haben wir's bisher auch lassen liegen, sonderlich weil is auch

We personally are convinced, from our little study of the Apocolypse, that it is John's and that it is God's.[37]

Yes, indeed, Saint John the Divine --- seer, mystic, dreamer, yet practical theologian; at once a Son of Thunder and the Apostle of Love; strong but tender; one of the inner circle of the Twelve, the Disciple whom Jesus loved most; eyewitness of the raising of the daughter of Jairus; one of those few present at the Transfiguration and in the Holy of Holies of Christ's suffering in Gethsemane; who leaned on our Lord's bosom at the Last Supper; who stood by the cross till the end and took his Lord's mother into his home; who witnessed the Ascension and the Day of Pentecost and spoke in many tongues; source of the phrase, "Little children, love one another"; the only Apostle who did not die a violent death --- he it was who wrote Revelation! In all sincerity we believe it is the Revelation of St. John the Divine!

not so, but Revelation is "The Revelation of Jesus Christ the Divine!" not John as he was Human only.

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bei etlichen alten Vaetern geachtet, dasz es nicht St. Johannis des Apostels sei, wie in libro 3. Hist. Eccl. cap. 25 steht, in welchen Zweifel wir's fuer uns auch noch lassen bleiben, damit doch niemand gewehrt sein sook dasz er's halte fuer St. Johannis des Apostels, oder wie er will. Weil wir aber dennoch gerne die Deutung oder Auslegung gewisz haetten, wollen wir den andern und hoehern Geistern Urfachen nachzudenken geben, und unsere Gedanken auch an Tag geben ... Nach dieser Auslegung (Luther has given his ideas about the book) koennen wir dies Buch uns nuetze machen und wohl brauchen. Erstlich zur Troestung ... Zum andern zur Warnung wider das grosze, faerliche, mannigfaeltige Aergernisz, so sich begibt an der Christenheit." (Ibid. Vol. 14. pp. 130-138, passim).

37. Dr. L. Fuerbringer writes: "The Book of Revelation contains the divine will written by St. John. Without it the New Testament would be incomplete. The book was written at the express purpose and command of God. Rev. 1:11". (The Revelation of St. John, p. 1).

IV

The Place Where Revelation Was Written

THE PLACE WHERE REVELATION WAS WRITTEN

Though the canonicity of Revelation has been doubted, there is no doubt as to the place where the Apocalypse was written. John informs us plainly where he was when he received the visions: "I, John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the Word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ."[38]

Patmos. An island. Many Bible readers recognize the familiar "Patmos" when they read Revelation, but then pass on quickly without giving much thought about what the island was like.

First, where is the Isle of Patmos? The little islet lies in the Aegean Sea, between Asia Minor and Greece, but closer to Asia Minor (modern Turkey), about fifteen miles west of Ephesus. It is one of the long chain of islands forming the Sporades which stretch north and south along the shoreline of Asia Minor. At the north end of the Sporades is Samos, the largest isle of the group, and Rhodes lies at the southern end of the group. Patmos is about thirty miles south of Samos and about one hundred fifty-five miles north of Rhodes. Today the isle is called "Patino."

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38. Rev. 1:9.

Patmos is a tiny island of volcanic origin --- not so much of an island as an islet. It is so small that it is only a dot on the largest map, if it is listed at all. A large atlas in our possession mentions many islands of the Aegean Sea, such as the Sporades in the north and the Cyclades in the south; Crete, Samos, Scio, Lemnos, Thasos; but little Patmos is of such small size and importance that it is hardly mentioned as far as world geography is concerned.[39] Twenty-five miles will take one completely around the island, and about sixty square miles will measure sufficiently its area.

Because of its size and rocky volcanic formation, Patmos is of little commercial or maritime value. There is little agriculture and no minerals. Most of the people live on fish. It is rocky, barren, and lonely; almost uninhabitable. When we think of Patmos, we are reminded of Ascension Island in the Atlantic. There is said to be only two wells on the entire island.

When a traveler approaches the islet, rocky cliffs, bare and cold, rise up before him on the horizon. Only a clump of trees here and there breaks the monotony. Someone has suggested that when John was on Patmos, the island may have been covered with forests, but there is no evidence of such a vast change of the tiny island.

In the beginning of the Middle Ages few people stayed on the island because it was used as a mooring place for the many pirates who roamed the Mediterranean. In the days of Rome it was used as a

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39. New Pictorial Atlas of the World, Chicago, The Geographical Publishing Company, 1939.

prison for banished criminals --- a Devil's Island of ancient times. It is said the prisoners had to work hard fashioning rocks for Roman buildings.

Today the isle has little more significance than in ancient times. It is known mainly because it is mentioned in Revelation. In 1088 the Monastery of St. John was built there, which still stands today, forming a central part of the only sizeable town on the island --- also called Patmos. It is a town of about 4,000 people, located on the "peak" of the island.

The only useable harbor is La Scala, a deep narrow inlet at the south end of the isle, from which a crooked paved road leads upward toward the town of Patmos. All in all, it is an entirely desolate place, filled with foreigners of every type, thieves and cut-throats, and no one cares to live on Patmos today. The religion of the island today is Catholic, though the Turks have also invaded the isle with Allah.

To this lonely island St. John was banished by the Roman government during the last half of the first century. We think he was banished by the Emperor Domitian, who ruled about 81-96 A.D. He was exiled to this barren place because he was loyal to his Savior and refused to worship the Emperor as god - because he testified for Christ and preached his Word.[40]

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40. See Rev. 1:9 for the words John uses to describe the cause of his exile: "For the Word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ." Cf. the use of the word "testimony" in chap. 6:9; 12:11; and 20:4. The reader is referred to the section entitled "The Purpose of Revelation" for some notes on the Emperor worship and the persecution of the christians in John's day.

The Roman emperors of the first centuries looked upon Christians, especially their leaders, as rebels and criminals, so John, no doubt, was exiled to this prison island called Patmos as a criminal. Here on this rocky isle, as a slave in exile among many criminals, St. John received from God and His Christ, the beautiful and lofty Revelation with all its symbolic visions, prophecies, and symbols.

We are of the opinion that John wrote down the visions of Revelation while he was yet on the island, immediately after he received the visions. We believe this to be true in spite of the fact that many say he wrote down Revelation after getting back to Ephesus. John speaks only of one day, the "Lord's Day".

St. John, no doubt, was exiled while at Ephesus. He first served in the Jerusalem Church, but later became Apostolic Supervisor of the Church at Ephesus. After Domitian's reign he was permitted to return to Ephesus, where he died at an extremely old age sometime after 98 A.D. It was during those days that he was carried into the church, at which time he would bless the congregation and say, "My little children, love one another!"

Today on the road that leads upward from the harbor of La Scala to the Village of Patmos, there is located a small cave, called the Grotto of the Apocalypse, which travelers are shown and told that it is the place where John received his visions.

V

The Date of Revelation

THE DATE OF REVELATION

The date when the Book of Revelation was written has caused much controversy and confusion. Moreover, the date of Revelation is important since the date determines one's interpretation of the book, especially the exposition of Chapter XVII. The chief reason for the confusion is that the Fathers do not agree on the point, and that there is even more disagreement among modern scholars.

Some scholars place the banishment of John as early as the reign of the Roman Emperor Claudius, 41-54 A.D. Another group claims that John's exile came during the rule of Nero, 54-69 A.D., when the Christians were persecuted extensively. A third group of scholars has decided that the banishment to Patmos took place during Emperor Domitian's reign, that is, between 81-96 A.D.

The real controversial point, however, is whether the book was written before 70 A.D. and the destruction of Jerusalem or afterwards. The question is then, Has the book an early or a late date?

The advocates of the early date base their claims, first of all, on style. They claim that the style of Revelation is so different from that of the Fourth Gospel that the book must have been written at a very early date, at least before 70 A.D., when John's knowledge of Greek was meager. This argument is also used to prove that John did not write the book.

But solecisms in Revelation do not necessarily call for an early date when John was supposedly new at writing Greek.[41] In some places his syntax is very accurate, and there is much evidence that he knew Greek well, only he did not always use it. A difference of date will not explain the peculiar language and grammar of Revelation, but the prophetic character of the book. We are of the opinion that the irregular style of Revelation has no bearing whatsoever on the date of the book.[42]

Some want to support the early date from the use of the term "Lord's Day" in Revelation, Chapter one, saying this term was most common then. But the observation that the term "the First Day of the Week" and not the "Lord's Day" was the only name known in the Pauline Epistles quite defeats this argument and argues more for the late date. It must have been after 68 A.D., since Paul was beheaded sometime between 64 and 68 A.D. (in the fourteenth year of Nero's reign according to Jerome, which would be about 68 A.D.), that the term "Lord's Day" became current established usage among the early Christians. This disposes of the early date.

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41. See our notes on this point in a previous section under "Author of Revelation".

42. We must bear in mind also that the subject matter required a totally different style of writing --- symbolic prophecy. John was writing in an ecstatic trance. Perhaps the rapid flow of words was difficult to take down by an aged man who could not write and read correctly at times. Many old people have this trouble.

Others wish to prove from Revelation 11:1, 2, 8, 13, that the Temple was still standing, which would mean John wrote before 70 A.D. when Jerusalem was sacked.[43] We dismiss this argument as unfounded since it is doubtful exegesis to apply these words to the Temple in Jerusalem. The "Temple of God" is a figurative term for the Holy Christian Church, all the believers in Christ, not the actual temple which stood in Jerusalem.

When the list of emperors, or at least supposedly so, in Revelation XVII is used to prove the early date, we know that these scholars are catching at every straw to hold their point.[44] The sixth emperor mentioned in Chapter 17:10, they say, is Nero, which indicates that Revelation was written while Nero reigned, 54-68 A.D. In our reading we have encountered many different line-ups of the Caesars, most scholars starting to count at a different Caesar. And not one of the early church Fathers connect Nero with John's exile to Patmos. The interpretation is arbitrary to say the least, and the confusion existing on the point definitely destroys the argument. Many critics use

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43. Here is how the argument sounds: "When the seer is given a reed and told to measure the Temple, (Rev. 11:1), it is reasonable to see an indication that the Temple is still standing, hence that Revelation antedates 70 A.D." (Morton Enslin, Christian Beginnings, p. 80).

44. Here is the line of reasoning most used for the early date: "There are two different opinions as to the date of the book. An ancient tradition, resting almost solely on an ambiguous statement of Irenaeus, assigns the composition to the latter part of Domitian's reign. But the manner in which the Temple, altar, and court are mentioned in xi. 1-3, and the designation in xi. 8, of the great city as the place where the Lord was crucified, clearly imply that at the time of the writing the city and temple of Jerusalem were yet standing. Another proof of this early date appears in the reference to the seven kings in xvii. 10, the sixth of whom, according to the most popular way of reckoning the Caesars (Julius, Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, Nero), would be Nero. The reign of Nero extended from 54 to 68 A.D., and somewhere between these dates we may best place the composition of the Apocalypse." p. 334 (Milton S. Terry, Bible as Literature, 1896).

this same argument to good effect to prove the later date.[45]

We are of the opinion that The Book of Revelation was written at a later date, just before the turn of the first century, perhaps in the year 96 A.D. Many things in and about the book point to this. Most of the arguments for the early date are weak, and often stretch the point of issue. The arguments for the early date were never heard of before the sixth century; before this time most christians considered Revelation a book written at the late date.

Our strongest argument for the late date is that the early Church Father Irenaeus, a great Greek historian of 177 A.D., says in his work "Against Heresies", that Revelation was written "almost in our own generation, about the end of Domitian's reign."[46]

Now to assume arbitrarily that Irenaeus misunderstood the situation and really means Nero who was surnamed "Domitus", and that this name might easily have been confused with "Domitian", especially when Irenaeus lived in those days, is about the worst in unfairness and dishonesty. There is no external evidence for the early date of Revelation at all.

Then another important point in favor of the late date is the emperor worship in the days of Emperor Domitian which furnished the occasion for the writing of Revelation. Domitian was the first emperor

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45. There are some negative critics who say that Revelation is a composite work, a conglomeration of writings, and not a uniform book, parts of which were written before the Fall of Jerusalem and parts of which were written after. Some say that chapter 11 was written before the Fall of Jerusalem and later incorporated into the book. We cannot countenance such a view because it does violence to both the inspiration and genuineness of Revelation. It proceeds from the opinion that the book is not inspired of God.

46. Quoted from D. Brown, The Apocolypse, p. 7. He also says that Eusebius quotes this statement twice verbatim, and that advocates of the early date "consider this the most important argument against them."

to really enforce the idea that "EMPERATOR Deus est."

We think that the whole tenor of Revelation, depicting the ageless combat between the forces of darkness and light, when the Christians must suffer on account of their love for the Lord Jesus, tells us that Domitian's reign is the proper place to put its composition. This seems to be the predominant idea of the scholars of our beloved Lutheran Church. They agree that John was banished during Domitian's reign and that John wrote Revelation between 81 and 96 A.D.

Since history tells us that the persecutions of Domitian did not systematically strike the provinces of the vast empire until late in his reign, and since Domitian died September 18, 96 A.D., the greater majority of our divines say that John wrote Revelation in the nineties, perhaps 95 or 96 A.D.[47] John was released after Domitian's death,

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47. "Ancient tradition informs us that John was condemned to Patmos during a persecution under the Roman Emperor Domitian, who reigned from A.D. 81 to 96. Accordingly, many surmise that the Apocalypse was written about A.D. 90." (C.F. Drewes, Introduction to the Books of the Bible, p. 216).

"John's long stay in Ephesus was roughly interrupted. He was banished to the Island of Patmos during the reign of Domitian (A.D. 81-96). From Patmos he wrote Revelation, the last book of the Bible. He was permitted to return to Ephesus, where he died in extremely old age after 98 A.D." (Lars P. Qualben, History of the Christian Church, p. 54).

"John was at the time an exile on the Island of Patmos in the Southeastern Aegean Sea, off the coast of Asia Minor, having been banished to this mountainous, barren, and lonely spot 'for the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus' ... The banishment of John probably took place during the reign of the Emperor Domitian, and the book was written in the nineties of the first century." (P.E. Kretzmann, Popular Commentary, vol. 4, p. 589).

"The view taken here is that Irenaeus is correct in that the date of the work is about 94." (W.E. Arndt, Introduction to the New Testament, p. 58).

and died early in Trajan's reign (98 - 117 A.D.).

Two other minor considerations of internal evidence point to the late date of Revelation. The seven golden candle-sticks[48] show that the church of Asia Minor was broken up into at least seven parts (and no doubt more), and this conception could not have been true in the earliest Apostolic Age.

Also, the epistle to the seven churches of Asia Minor indicate that some of these had sunk to a low spiritual level. It must have taken more than a few years for this to take place.[49] We can also be quite certain that the heresies mentioned in Revelation, chapter two, had not developed by the early date, as John describes them.

No doubt the term "Lamb" for Jesus, which is a very beautiful and "catchy" name, would have been found in the synoptic Gospels and other writings of the fifties or sixties of the first century had Revelation been written at an early date. As it is, only John in his Gospel, and mostly in Revelation, makes use of the term.

Is it natural to suppose that a book presenting the most exalted conceptions of the glory and majesty of the Savior should come from a real early period? In fact, we think that the Gospel, the Epistles, and the Apocalypse were all written by the last of the Apostles in his

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48. Revelation 1:20: "The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches; and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches."

49. The Church at Ephesus had "left her first love", Rev. 2:1; Pergamos: "Thou has them that hold the doctrine of Balaam," Rev. 2:14; Sardis: "I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead", Rev. 3:1; Laodicea: "I know thy works, that thou are neither cold nor hot", Rev. 3:15.

old age.[50]

Again, we know John was well acquainted with the churches in Asia, but certainly he did not come to Ephesus during Paul's day. We are confident that the late date is the only one which sufficiently satisfies the historical background.

St. John informs us that he received the Vision on Patmos, but he does not tell us specifically that he wrote it down immediately. He could have waited until he returned to Ephesus, as some think. But he received the direct command from God, Rev. 1:19: "Write the things which thou hast seen." So we have good reason to infer that John wrote Revelation on Patmos immediately after he received the visions. This is also indicated by the word "send" in chapter 1:11.[51]

However, it is worthy of note that John informs us of the day on which he wrote Revelation. He says in chapter 1:10: "I was in the spirit on the Lord's Day", which is the first day of the week, Sunday. From this verse we may conclude that John experienced the entire vision in all its complexity and volume and also wrote it down on a single Sunday. Of course, the exact Sunday, the exact date, month, even the exact year, is not known.

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50. Dr. Westcott's theory, arguing for the early date, that the Revelation is "the necessary germ out of which the Gospel proceeded" militates against history, the Doctrine of Inspiration, and pure common sense. Introduction to the Gospel of St. John, p. 84.

51. Rev. 1:11: "What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia."

VI

The Addressees of the Book of Revelation

THE ADDRESSEES OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION

It is very clear to whom Revelation was addressed. Chapter one, verse four, reads: "John to the seven churches which are in Asia."[52]

The Asia mentioned in this passage is not the Continent of Asia, but a province within the promontory of western Asia called Asia Minor. These seven church are listed in the eleventh verse of chapter one: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea. Most of these churches were in the vicinity of Ephesus where John lived in his later years, and worked until his death.

A glance at a map of Asia Minor reveals that these seven churches are arranged in somewhat of a circle with Ephesus as the center. The Apostle Paul had founded the majority of these congregations. The entire Book of Revelation was intended for reading in these churches.[53]

Though Revelation was specifically intended for the seven churches, yet we know there were more than seven churches in Asia Minor and we may well conclude the book was intended for all churches. These seven seem to be the representative of all churches. And we must remember also, that Revelation, as well as the entire Bible, was written for our times. The Apocalypse is intended for all Christians of all times. This is why

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52. Cf. Rev. 1:11: "What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia".

53. Cf. Rev. 2:7: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches".

we spend time studying the book.[54]

Since some men insist that the letters to the seven churches were addressed specifically to the angels[55] of the churches and not necessarily to the congregations themselves, we make haste to point out that these angels are representatives of the churches in the Lord's sight, and anything addressed to them is addressed to the churches. Moreover, chapter one plainly tells us that John is writing to the churches themselves.[56]

"The Book of Revelation was written to the seven congregations of Asia Minor ... It was to meet an immediate need on the part of those to whom it was addressed, but, like the other books of the New Testament, it serves for consolation to the children of God in the manifold trials and tribulations which are the lot of the believers in Christ until the end of time."[57]

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54. Rev. 1:3: "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein; for the time is at hand".

55. The term "angel" as used in this section, means the minister or pastor of the church.

56. Rev. 1:11: "What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea".

57. P.E. Kretzmann, Popular Commentary, Vol. IV, p. 590.

VII

The Purpose of the Book of Revelation

THE PURPOSE OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Our study of the Book of Revelation reveals four main purposes of this marvelous book. In listing these purposes, we would have the reader keep in mind that these purposes were first of all intended for the situation in Asia Minor in John's day, and that they are for us Christians today only by application:

1. The Book of Revelation is intended to inform us of the future, not of the world as a secular history book, but especially of the Christian Church in its fight against Satan and all evil --- not to satisfy our idle curiosity, but for our spiritual well being.

2. To prepare Christians of all times for tribulations and distresses, and to comfort Christians in times of persecution and trouble.

3. To give Christians strength and courage to withstand persecution, the evil one, all apostasy, and all false teachers, and to cling to the Rock of Ages until the end.

4. To assure Christians everywhere of final victory over sin, death, and hell through Christ Jesus our Lord. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." Rev. 2:10.

We shall take up each one of these purposes, all of which are quite closely connected, and discuss them in turn to show the reader why the Apocolypse was given to St. John by the Holy Spirit.

The Revelation of St. John is symbolic history of the fortunes of the Church from its beginning until now, and from the present time until the end of time. We must bear in mind that all this begins in the Apostolic Age. In a most unique way, by means of pictures, symbols, and figurative expressions, the Apostle gives a picture of the history of the Christian Church through all its conflicts with the Dragon, the evil one. Here it is foretold with absolute certainty that the Church will be glorious, that she will triumph over all her enemies --- yea, though Satan and hell itself be against her, she shall be victorious in the end!

Therefore, the first purpose of Revelation, though not necessarily the most important, is to give the Christian world a vivid picture of the New Testament Church of all times. Moses and the Prophets gave us the history of the Old Testament Church; now John is directed by the Lord to outline in the New Testament the battle of the Church with the world throughout the ages.[58]

But this does not mean that God has given us Revelation as a hunting ground for curious seekers of faddist doctrines. The book is not to be abused. Date setters and interpreters with millennial

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58. Dr. Arndt says: "The book must not be regarded as a work written to satisfy our curiosity as to what lies in the future and as to the date of important events like the coming of the Judgment. The book is indeed intended to tell about the future, but for our spiritual well being. It is to prepare us for the coming of tribulations and distresses. It is to be a comfort to us in times of persecution and to assure us of the final victory of the cause of Christ." (Introduction to the Books of the Bible, p. 58.)

tendencies have not treated the book properly in the past. We are not to be too literal concerning the number 144,000 (Rev. 7:4), the 1,000 years (Rev. 20:2), and 1,260 days (Rev. 11:3; Dan. 7:25), and the like. Those who try to find the exact date of the Judgment and the end of wars, ad infinitum, by a twisted use of words and mathematics do not understand the true purpose of Revelation. The Apocalypse is for our spiritual nurture. It contains the lesson of the power of God over evil.

In the second place, our Lord has intended that the Book of Revelation be a book of consolation for the children of God of all ages. Dr. L. Fuerbringer writes: "The whole book is a book of consolation and comfort."[59] As such it is also designed to prepare Christians for the Scriptural truth: "We must through much tributation enter into the Kingdom of God."[60]

It is a God-given rule that we Christians must suffer much before we reach our home above. There are the doubts and misgivings of conscience; the stunning blows of the Dragon; the ever-continuous fight between us and our flesh; the torments of sin from every side. There are the trials of disease and sickness; the hardships of living in the world; the duplicity of once close friends; the blood and sweat and tears of war; the fear of death.

In the Church itself there are the divisions, the scisms, the intolerance of liberals, the unfaithfulness of the leaders of the Church to the Bible, the secularization of the Church, the socialization of the Church, the strife among Christians themselves, the attempts at union and unity in the Church on a social and good-fellow basis, the enmity

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59. Notes on Revelation, p. 1.
60. Acts 14:22.

and lack of cooperation among many of the clergy. These are just some of the trials and tribulations which John foresees for the Church. And as we contemplate them, and feel them, and see their fulfillment in these dark hours of greed and cruelty and war and bloodshed, they seem hard to bear indeed.[61]

To console us Christians in the face of all these things, both from within and without, the Book of Revelation was signified by the angel to John.[62] Anyone who reads and understands Revelation in this light, will see also how well the book fulfills this purpose.

The third purpose of the Revelation of St. John lies in the historical and political situation in which the book was written. It was to give the Christians of John's time (and, of course, in our own time) strength and courage to withstand all persecution and apostasy, urging them not to sell their birthright of heaven for a mess of pottage, nor to listen to false teachers and their fleshly doctrines.

Like Daniel, Revelation was written at a time of distress. The early Christians lived on a volcano. In John's day they practiced a religion not recognized by the Roman State (religio illicita). During the first decades after Christ it was semi-protected because the Romans regarded it as a branch of the Jewish religion.

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61. "The prophecy of the ultimate triumph of the Kingdom of God over all the hostile forces of earth and hell, the promise of the coming of Christ, the pictures of heaven with its glory and its joys, have been a source of cheer and comfort and courage to millions of Christians." (Drewes, Introduction to the Books of the Bible, p. 216).

62. "Revelation was designed to meet an immediate need on the part of those to whom it was addressed, but, like the other books of the New Testament, it serves for consolation to the children of God in the manifold trials and tribulations which are the lot of the believers in Christ until the end of time." (P.E. Kretzmann, Popular Commentary, V. II, p. 590).

Most of the Roman Caesars of the first century, however, especially Nero, persecuted the Christians. And when Domitian came to the throne (September 13, 81 - September 18, 96 A.D.) and demanded that the Christians regard the Emperor as god, we have the first systematic persecution of the Church. Then the Church and the Empire came into sharp collision; they were at war, so to speak. It became a dangerous thing to be a Christian, and many men became martyrs.[63] Those who would not bow down were banished, as John was, or put to death, especially in Asia Minor where there were many Christians.

It was difficult to be a Christian. Christ demanded that they worship Him alone. No man can serve two masters, He said. So there was a strong temptation to compromise. Just a bow to an image outwardly, and to burn a little pinch of incense --- what harm was there in that, especially if one did not mean it?

The Church of our day faces the same compromises. Our Lutheran Church is under continual pressure to "get in line" and forget our "narrowness". Our Government and the leaders of our country in general divide the religions of the nation into three parts: Catholic, Jewish, Protestant. During this war we have experienced this "forget your differences" spirit. How comforting, how strength-giving, then is the Revelation of St. John for us today who are bombarded from all sides by false teachers, and even from within, to let go the ropes that tie us to the anchors of the Faith of our Fathers - true Confessional Lutheranism!

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63. The slogan of this emperor worship was "Eperator est Deus", or "Eperator Dominus est Deus". In the Roman provinces the pagan people looked upon the emperor as a great god and benefactor, and urged emperor worship extensively, and the Christians were expected "to fall in line". In three provinces, for instance, inscriptions of "the Emperor is Divine" were found: Ankara, Turkey; Antioch in Psidia; and in Iconium.

John calls upon the Christians of Asia Minor and all of us today not to compromise with the situation, but to triumph over it --- to suffer, if necessary, as an exile from society, as he was as an exile on Patmos. God gave John Revelation to help the early Christians in the weakness of their faith and because of the fear of death to overcome apostasy. "Do not bow down to the pagan gods or to the emperor", John means to say, "Listen not to the false Nicolaitanes[64]; rather suffer death from Christ first, for great is your reward in heaven!" Thus Revelation is a great document of christian faith.

The fourth reason Revelation was written was to assure all Christians of the final victory over sin, death, and hell, through Christ. Such comforting assurance is given us in the Seven Letters to the seven churches of Asia. And what joy must have surged through those Christians' hearts as they contemplated the final chapters of the Book wherein God speaks of the ultimate victory and glory of the saints. Now they knew, in spite of all the sufferings the Church of God must endure, that they would win out in the end! The Church of Christ can never be defeated!

As the Living Lamb triumphed over his enemies in death, so He and His own shall ever triumph amid the raging of the Dragon and all his cohorts until the final Judgement ends the mighty conflict forever. No matter what disaster - earthquakes, famines, invasions, wars, persecutions - Christians may see about them, the Kingdom of God must move irresistibly forward and must finally prevail. This is one of the main purposes and the theme of Revelation.

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64. These Nicolaetines (Rev. 2:15) are supposed to have been the followers of Nicolaus (Acts 6:5), a proselyte of Antioch, who called himself a true Christian but was in reality a libertine, serving the flesh and the trend of the times. He stood for freedom of morals. Of course, there were other false teachers in those days. The Judaizers were not dead yet.

In Revelation it is prophesied that no matter what happens here on earth, heaven shall be the Christian's for certain, without a single doubt! What worldling has such comfort? We find the same thoughts expressed by Paul once to Timothy, the other to the Romans: "The foundation of God standeth sure ... the Lord knoweth them that are His!" "I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord".[65]

And we who live in the Church Militant today know that in the days to come when the life-blood shall cease to course through our veins, and our hearts cease to beat, that we shall realize our Lord's great promise of all the joys of the Church Triumphant in heaven. When we are finally transplanted from the Kingdom of Grace into the Kingdom of Glory, what wonders of love and heavenly bliss will be ours in the Savior!

Thus, to comfort us Christians in the face of all adversity here on earth is the great purpose of Revelation. After reading this wonderful Gospel, giving ourselves thereby a foretaste of heaven, every true Christian will put away earthly things and rejoice in his sorrows thus: "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us!"[66]

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65. 2 Tim. 2:19; Rom. 8:38.39.
66. Rom. 8:18.

VIII

The Method of Interpreting Revelation

THE METHOD OF INTERPRETING REVELATION

If there has been much discussion regarding the authorship and date of Revelation, there has been as much, if not more, controversy concerning the method of interpretation, that is, what shall be our view regarding the time when the things herein prophesied took place.

In our reading and study of the works of others concerning Revelation, we found six main methods of interpretation, or views, of the Apocalypse:

The first method used is what we call Spiritual Interpretation, or Spiritual Parallelism. It is difficult to describe just what this method is like, but we would say it is nearer allegory than anything else. Every image or figure or event of the book is not interpreted in the light of history, but is given some ethereal spiritual meaning.

Jerome, Origen, Ticonius, and especially Swedenborg, are exponents of this school of interpretation. In future pages of this thesis we will copy out excerpts of Swedenborg's treatment of the Holy Book. Origen was an amateur compared with Swedenborg. Swedenborg interprets the whole book in an allegorical way. To him every word and sentence of Revelation has a spiritual meaning, generally something to do with

the Word of God directly.[67]

The second method of interpretation used on Revelation is what we call the Preterist or Contemporaneous Theory. This view, we have discovered, is held by more scholars than any other, especially by those who hold that the Roman Empire's rise and fall is depicted in Revelation.[68]

Thus the supporters of this method view Revelation as having taken place in the past, namely, in the first century. All the events depicted in Revelation, especially those of the last nineteen chapters, took place in the first century, they say. Some even go so far as to say that the whole book's prophecies were fulfilled with the Fall of Jerusalem. This theory, placing all of Revelation in days of John's life, makes the Book meaningless for us christians today.

The third school of interpretation is the opposite of the one just mentioned. It is the Futurist View.[69] Those scholars who adopt this

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67. Swedenborg says in the Preface of his Interpretation of Revelation: "There are many who have toiled in the explanation of the Apocalypse; but as the spiritual sense of the Word had been hitherto unknown, they were unable to see the arcana which lie stored up in it, for these the spiritual sense alone discloses."(p.1).

On another page he writes boastfully: "Everyone can see that the Apocalypse can by no means be explained but by the Lord alone; for each word therein contains arcana, which would in no wise be known without a particular enlightenment, and thus Revelation; on which account it has pleased the Lord to open the sight of my spirit, and to teach me." (p.5).

68. A "preterist" is one whose chief interest or pleasure lies in the past.

69. "It becomes our duty to inquire whether the book can be interpreted of the times when it was written before we accept the wild theory that St. John was inspired to relate to Christians of the first century, in what to them must have been perfectly unintelligible language, the events that were to occur in succeeding centuries, apparently for no other reason than that the people who were to live in those later times might amuse themselves with an endless puzzle, to which every fresh inquirer was to furnish a fresh solution". (Walter Adeney, How To Read the Bible, p. 134).

theory hold that everything except the first three chapters still lies in the future, yes, in the far distant future, and will be fulfilled literally at the end of the world. This view is held by all the millennialistic interpreters, for it fits in well with their schemes and dreams about this book.

The Kingdom of God View is the fourth method of interpretation which scholars use. These scholars make the interpretation of Revelation easy for themselves by saying that only in a general way it is a picture of the eternal battle of the Church against evil. They do not become specific in their interpretation, and do not identify any of the images in the book. It is simply a picture of the good in the world against the evil and the final triumph of the good.

Now we know that it is not always necessary to identify and interpret all the images of Revelation, unless Scripture itself identifies the figures --- but since all Scripture was given for our learning and is meant to be understood, we have the perfect right and perhaps even a duty to identify the images with persons or institutions of history, as long as they do not do violence to the Corpus Doctrinae. It is certainly more commendable and christian to interpret Revelation as well as possible, than to never look at the book. "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy," says John.[70]

A fifth view of Revelation is that of the School of Higher Criticism. Higher critics maintain that the Book of Revelation is of composite origin, that it is made up of stories and legends and exaggerated imagery from many different sources. They say that many different religions and

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70. Rev. 1:3.

philosophies and mythologies are represented in the Apocalypse. To them it is simply another collection of pseudo-epigraphic Jewish legends and Apocalypses.

This method of interpretation has done untold harm to the high place of Revelation in the Canon. Some of the higher critics we found who use this atrocious method are Dr. Charles, in The International Critical Commentary, Gunkel, Bousset, and others of their school. These critics treat many of the other books of the Bible in the same negative way with less reason, and so we relegate their wicked theory to the already large heap of human imaginations called Oblivion. The theory does injustice to Inspiration and all common sense.[71]

The method of Interpreting Revelation we have followed in our work in Revelation is the sixth --- the Church Historical Method.[72] That is, the prophecies of Revelation refer to all the events that have happened in and to the Christian Church from Pentecost until the end of time. The Church Historical, or Continuous-Historical View is the only correct way to interpret Revelation as far as we are concerned. Revelation is an

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71. "Here we have to deal with that book of the Bible which more than any other has been the victim of a perfect riot of fanciful interpretation. Its very obscurity has sheltered the indulgence of innumerable vagaries. The extravagent assertions of so many writers on the Apocalypse, and the absolute contradictions that prevail among the several schools of interpreters, warn us that some sober method of exegesis is absolutely necessary if ever we are to hope for correct view of the book." (Walter Adeney, How To Read the Bible, p. 132)

72. "The Church History View, holding that God has revealed here the struggle of the Church through the various centuries and that he has depicted especially the antagonism of the Papacy and the victory of the Lutheran Reformation of Luther, is the view that is held in our Lutheran Church predominantly." (Dr. William Arndt, Introduction to the New Testament, p. 58).

outline in a general way of the history of the Christian Church from the beginning to the end under the forms of visions and symbols.

From our point of view in the twentieth century, this book has a past, a present, and a future. For this reason a combination of the Preterist, Futurist, and Historical Views is the best method of interpreting Revelation. It is impossible to approach Revelation with the idea that it refers only to the past, or only to the future, or only to the present --- it refers to all three eras of time.[73]

The reader must bear in mind, however, that Revelation is not a detailed outline of Church History following in chronological sequence, but a representation of the great epochs and powers developing the Kingdom of God in its relation to the world. It is good to picture the book as giving us history in seven (if we divide the book into seven visions) great panoramas, some of which overlap and run parallel and synchronous at times. In this book, one scholar avers, all the other books of the Bible meet; it is the consummation of all previous prophecy.

The major fault of the exegetes of the modern heterodox church bodies is this --- they try to make the unique visions of Revelation fit into their own mold of the present, especially the fast-moving events of Europe and Asia during the War. This is why they come forth with such ludicrous interpretations, and why they have much trouble and difficulty defending their theories.

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73. Dr. D. Brown in his Introduction to the Book of Revelation writes: "Under three heads John's materials were to be arranged. 'Write the things which thou sawest, that is, the vision (1:1-20); 'and the things which are' --- the existing state of affairs (chap. 2 and 3); 'and the things which shall be hereafter' --- the strictly prophetic part of the book (chaps. 4 - 22)." (p. 68)

Many of these interpreters explain Revelation in the light of such highly prophetic books as Daniel, Jeremiah, Ezekiel --- prophecy in the light of prophecy. We think it should be interpreted in the light of the clear books of the Scripture, like the Gospels and Epistles of the New Testament, where figurative language is at a minimum.

One's faith in the Doctrine of Inspiration is strengthened when one has to look at all the books of the Bible almost to unlock the symbols of Revelation. Standing alone, it is a bewildering book indeed - but in the light of Analogia, it is positive, enlightening, comforting.[74]

Study one of the simple outlines of the Book of Revelation which follow in the next section. From this alone it is plain that the Church History View of Revelation is the correct method of interpretation. The first part of the Apocalypse is dedicated to the seven churches of Asia Minor which were in existence at the time John received his vision on Patmos. This section, then, refers to the past from our point of view in the twentieth century.[75]

Chapters four to twenty, the second major part, refer to the events

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74. "Revelation does not mean something hidden, or concealed or even difficult to understand. The title itself is a rebuke to them that speak of the book as an insoluble enigma. If God has made a revelation, who shall charge Him with putting it before us in an obscure and unintelligible way. Surely the Bible was not written to gratify the idle curiosity. Either it means something or it doesn't. It is revealed, therefore, in language which only His servants understand, 1,1. If the book be put aside because of its obscurity and depth, it certainly is not God's will. For anyone to say it is written in language beyond the possibility of interpretation, is to bear witness against himself, as not being true to the character of those to whom the revelation is made. Having the spirit of Christ implies having the key to the meaning of all Scripture." (Ford C. Ottman, The Unfolding of the Ages, p. 18).

75. Lenski on the structure of Revelation: "As far as the writer is able to see, the visions, from first to last, present lines or vistas. These start at various points, but like radii or rays all focus upon the final judgment and the eternal triumph ... All history is covered, but not as we read history, but only as God sees it." (Op.cit. p. 25).

of the Church from the time of Pentecost until today. Some of these predictions contained in these sections are fulfilled again and again while we live. These sections deal with the present.

The last part of the Book, chapter twenty-one to the end, without a doubt, is a revelation of the future glory of the Church Militant when it is transformed into the Church Triumphant. The defeat of Antichrist, the description of the Heavenly Jerusalem, from which Bunyan borrowed so much imagery for his Pilgrim's Progress, definitely point to the future. Certainly it has not been fulfilled as yet. Thus we have here the third element of the book, the future.

Two passages from the Scriptures indicate that this is the correct view of the Apocalypse.[76] Note what the Apostle Peter says at the First Pentecost Festival, Acts 2:16-21, quoting the Prophet Joel:

> "But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; and it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; and on my

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76. Dr. L. Fuerbringer says in his Notes on Revelation: "This book has been interpreted in three ways: 1) The visions in this book refer to the distant future, and all will be fulfilled at the end of the world. 2) Contemporaneous Theory: The visions in this book are fulfilled during the first century of the Christian Church. 3) The Church-Historical Conception: This book refers to the things that will have happened to the Christian Church, from its beginning to the end of time. This latter view is the correct one." p. 1.

"To prove that this book refers to the historical existence of the Church: The first part of the book speaks to the churches in Asia which were in existence at this time. The last part refers to the end of all things. Therefore, the sections in between must refer to the things that happen to the Church from its beginning until the time of the end of the world." (Ibid.).

> servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy: and I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke: the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come: and it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved."[77]

And Paul speaks thus in I Cor. 10:11: "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come."[78]

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77. Dr. Luther in his Preface to Revelation of 1545 gives his idea about how Revelation should be interpreted and how it should be viewed by the interpreter:

"Weil es soll eine Offenbarung sein kuenftiger Geschichte, und sonderlich kuenftiger Truebsale und Unfall der Christenheit, achten wir, das sollte der naechste undgewisseste Griff sein, die Auslegung zu finden, so man die ergangene Geschichte und Unfaelle, in der Christenheit bisher ergangen, aus den Historien naehme, und dieselbigen gegen diese Bilder hielte, und also auf die Worte vergliche. Wo sich's alsdann wuerde sein mit einander reimen und eintreffen, so koennte man drauf fuszen, als auf eine gewisse oder zum wenigsten als auf eine unverwerfliche Auslegung." (P.133, St. Louis Edition, Vol. 14).

78. The reader who wishes a very good introduction to the Book of Revelation will find the Reformed theologian Dr. W. Hendriksen in his book "More Than Conquerors," first three chapters, pp. 1-45, to be worthwhile reading.

IX

Principles of Hermeneutics to be Used in the Interpretation of Revelation

PRINCIPLES OF HERMENEUTICS TO BE USED IN THE INTERPRETATION OF REVELATION

1. For the interpretation of Revelation, constant references and comparisons should be made with the analogous Apocalyptics of the Old Testament prophets. Here we refer to the Visions of Joel, Ezekiel, Daniel, Zechariah, and others.
2. One must constantly keep in mind the Great Theme of the Book: "Behold, He cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him; and all kindreds of earth shall wail because of Him."[79]
3. The interpreter must keep in mind that the imagery of Revelation is carefully chosen, and that there is hardly a figure or symbol which is not taken from the visions of the Old Testament.
4. The exegete should remember that in Revelation the number seven (7) is the most frequent symbolical number, and that it should not always be taken literally.
5. The interpreter is to remember that the same future event is often repeated by the prophet or visionary under different forms

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79. Rev. 1:7.

and symbols. The visions often run parallel or overlap.

6. The interpreter should beware of extreme literalism.

Example: Some men have written that Gen. 3:15, is fulfilled every time a serpent or snake bites a man!

7. The exegete must determine from the context what is a symbol and what is not.

8. The exegete must note the differences as well as the similarities of symbols, types, and antitypes.

9. The Apocalypse should be considered also in the light of the personal character of him who received the visions.

10. The exegete has the task of distinguishing between that which is essential in a certain vision and that which is merely symbolical --- between the forms of speech and the great underlying thought.

11. In the Apocalypse and in the apocalyptics of the Old Testament, there appears constantly the double vision of Judgment and Salvation, and the natural divisions of the principle parts frequently fall into fours and sevens.

12. The exegete must also note that it is the habit of Apocalyptics to represent punitive punishment in a four-fold or seven-fold manner.

13. In interpreting the Apocalypse, all dogmatism must be set aside, and the interpreter should endeavor to place himself in the very position of the prophet. All pre-conceived views should be cast aside, and the most plausible view selected.

14. The prophet should be permitted, as far as possible, to explain

himself. Let the text, the context, the grammar, and the dictionary speak!

15. Where a wide difference of opinion prevails concerning a certain symbol or vision, the interpreter should not for a moment allow any a priori ideas or assumptions prejudice his mind as to what ought to be found in the vision. In other words, beware of old man Dogmatism!

16. The interpreter should not be too willing to draw ideas or parallels from secular history, unless the prophet tells him to.

17. Important question to be answered when approaching any vision of Revelation: Which view best satisfies all the conditions of the prophet, the language, and symbols?

18. Naturally, an interpretation of the Apocalypse dare not contradict the concrete passages of the Holy Scriptures, but must be in the light of the entire Bible. The Analogy of the Scriptures and the Analogy of Faith must remain intact, whatever mystery in Revelation confronts us. The principle of interpreting prophecy in the light of prophecy, as many modern exegetes follow, is not correct nor evangelical.[80]

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80. "This last book of the New Testament contains visions, largely prophetic ... it does not give a regularly progressive disclosure of the future, but is divided into a number of groups, each formally complete in itself, and each beginning, not where the preceding left off, but at some starting point (it may be in the distant past) best suited to the special topic of that vision or group."

"It is a prophetic book, speaking in the figurative and symbolical language of prophecy. Much is to be taken, not in its literal, but in its symbolic meaning; and for this very reason we must be careful not to explain any part of it in contradiction to such statements of Scripture as speak plain, not symbolic, language. Also, the numbers are not to be understood in their numerical value, but in their symbolical meaning." (Theo. Graebner, Annotated Pocket New Testament, p. 3).

X

The Plan of the Book of Revelation

THE PLAN OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION

To be truthful, the book has no plan, not in the ordinary sense. It cannot be divided logically as a preacher divides a sermon or as a student makes an outline for an essay or as the historian writes history. The reason for this, as we have noted before, is that the book does not follow history chronologically but gives us events in the form of great panoramas or parallel visions which generally overlap in scope. Some of the visions span the entire New Testament Era.

Dr. Lenski writes thus about this problem: "In seven different places Revelation reaches the end of the world: 6:12-17; 7:9-17; 11:18; 14:4-20; 16:17-21; 19:11-21; 20:7-15. The note of the end is struck already in two of the letters (to the churches), 'Till I come' (2:25); 'Behold I come quickly!' (3:11). Again, Revelation presents a number of scenes in heaven with great doxologies. To these scenes we may add the first revelation of Christ in 1:9-20.

"Yet we are unable to use these features for making divisions in a convincing way, although it has been attempted: a heavenly scene introducing each part and then earthly scenes following it. We frankly give up the attempt to divide this book in an ordinary way. At most one could detach 1:9 - 3:22, and again chapters 21 and 22, but what about all that lies between?"[81]

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81. Interpretation of John's Revelation, pp.24-25.

Because of this situation, we find interpreters dividing Revelation in many different ways and in many different parts. Some divide the book into two parts; some into three or four parts; some into five parts; six parts; seven parts; ten parts; and so forth ad infinitum.

The division of the book often depends much upon one's view of it and upon the amount of history it is thought to include. The division into seven parts, that is, into seven visions, is very attractive because the number seven is very prominent in the book.

We believe the reader and student of Revelation will be assisted greatly in his understanding of the Apocalypse if he becomes familiar with at least a general outline of the book. Accordingly, we are attaching a few of the plans which students of the book have offered. They are written down in the reverse order of importance.[82]

I.	Introduction	- Chapters 1 - 3[83]
II.	Vision of the Book of Destiny	- Chapters 4 - 11
III.	Vision of the War against the Dragon	- Chapters 12 - 18
IV.	Vision of the Heavenly Jerusalem	- Chapters 19 - 22
V.	Epilogue	- Chapter 22: 6-21.

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82. It really makes little difference what outline of the book one has as long as his view of the book as a whole is correct.

83. This outline is taken from An Introduction to the New Testament, Benjamin Bacon,(p. 162).

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Part I. Chapters 1 - 3 - Introduction and the Seven Epistles[84]

Part II. Chapters 4 - 11 - Overthrow of the Jewish Nation and Mosaic Law

Part III. Chapters 12 - 20:10 - Overthrow of the Roman Persecuting Power

Part IV. Chapters 20:11 - end - Final Triumph of the Gospel

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(1) -- Christ in the Midst of the Seven Golden Lampstands - Chapters 1 - 3[85]

(2) -- The Book of the Seven Seals - Chapters 4 - 7

(3) -- The Seven Trumpets of Judgment - Chapters 8 - 11

(4) -- The Woman and the Man-Child persecuted by the Dragon and his Helpers (the Beasts and the Whore) - Chapters 12 - 14

(5) -- The Seven Bowls of Wrath - Chapters 15 - 16

(6) -- The Fall of the Great Whore and of the Beasts - Chapters 17 - 19

(7) -- The Judgment upon the Dragon (Satan) followed by the New Heaven and Earth, New Jerusalem - Chapters 20 - 22[86]

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84. Thomas Whittemore, A Commentary on the Revelation of St. John, p. 24.

85. Rev. W. Hendriksen, More Than Conquerors, p. 28.

86. Dr. Paul E. Kretzmann in his Popular Commentary and Dr. Lenski in his Interpretation of Revelation simply follow the outline according to the chapters, making chapter headings as their outline, which perhaps is as easy and as correct a way as can be found.

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I. Chapter 1:1-8 - The Introduction[87]

II. Chapters 1:9 - 22:5 - The Seven Visions

III. Chapter 22:6-21 - The Conclusion

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I. Chapters 1:9 - 3 - The Seven Letters[88]

II. Chapters 4 - 8:1 - The Transfer of St. John into Heaven and the Book of the Seven Seals

III. Chapters 8:2 - 11 - The Seven Trumpets

IV. Chapters 12 - 15:4 - The Battle with the Dragon. Antichrist and His Judgment

V. Chapters 15:5 - 16 - The Seven Last Plagues

VI. Chapter 17 - The Solution of the Riddle of Babylon

VII. Chapter 18 - God's Judgment over Babylon

VIII. Chapter 19 - Victory of Christ over Antichrist

IX. Chapters 20 - 21:8 - The Thousand Years

X. Chapters 21:9 - 22:7 - The Heavenly Jerusalem

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87. The division into three parts is the simplest outline possible. This, of course, includes the sub-dividing of Part II into the Seven Visions and all their parts.

88. Theodore Zahn, Die Offenbarung d. Johannis, p.28. The outline as given does not include the Prologue and the Epilogue, but these may be easily added.

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REVELATION: THE TRIALS AND TRIUMPHS OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH[89]

	Chapters
I. The First Vision: John's Call to Write	
1. Christ's Appearance	1
2. Christ's Command	2 - 3
II. The Second Vision: The Throne of God	
1. The Glory of the Father	4
2. The Majesty of the Son	5 - 6
3. The Power of the Spirit	7
III. The Third Vision: The Seven Angels and the Seven Trumpets	
1. The First Six Trumpets	8 - 9
2. The Seventh Trumpet	10 - 11
IV. The Fourth Vision: Michael and the Dragon	
1. The Fight of Michael with the Dragon	12
2. The Two Beasts	13 - 14

89. This simple and workable plan of Revelation is taken from The Annotated Pocket New Testament, by Dr. Theodore Graebner, Part Twelve, pp. 3-4.

		Chapters
V.	The Fifth Vision: The Seven Vials of Wrath	
	1. The Song of the Saints	15
	2. The Vials of Divine Wrath Poured Out	16
VI.	The Sixth Vision: The Antichrist	
	1. His Description	17
	2. His Fall	18 - 19
	3. The Defeat of all Antichristian Forces	20
VII.	The Seventh Vision: The Heavenly Jerusalem	
	1. The Description	21
	2. The Application	22

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I. The Prologue

Chapter 1:1-3

II. The Messages or Prophecies for the Seven Churches in Asia (The First Vision)

Chapter 1:4 - Chapter 3

1.	Preliminary Vision of the Son of Man	Chapter 1: 4-20
2.	To the Church of Ephesus	Chapter 2: 1- 7
3.	To the Church in Smyrna	Chapter 2: 8-11
4.	To the Church in Pergamos	Chapter 2:12-17
5.	To the Church in Thyatira	Chapter 2:18-29
6.	To the Church in Sardis	Chapter 3: 1- 6
7.	To the Church in Philadelphia	Chapter 3: 7-13
8.	To the Church in Laodicea	Chapter 3:14-22

III. The Prophecies according to the Book of the Seven Seals (The Second and Third Visions)

Chapters 4 - 9

1.	Preliminary Vision of Heaven and the Heavenly Worship	Chapters 4 - 5
2.	The Seven Seals	Chapters 6 - 7
3.	The Seven Trumpets	Chapters 8 - 9

IV. The Prophecy of the Little Book Which is Eaten by St. John (The Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Visions)

Chapters 10 - 20

1.	The Book of Prophecy	Chapter 10
2.	The Vision of the Temple	Chapter 11
3.	The Battle with the Dragon	Chapter 12
4.	The Vision of the Two Beasts	Chapter 13
5.	The Vision of Babylon	Chapter 14
6.	The Seven Vials of Wrath	Chapters 15 - 16
7.	The Great Harlot and the Riddle of Babylon	Chapters 17 - 19
8.	The Thousand Years	Chapter 20

V. The Final Victory and Glory of the Church (The Seventh Vision)

Chapters 21 - 22:5

1.	The Vision of the New Heaven and the New Earth	Chapter 21:1
2.	The Vision of the Heavenly Jerusalem	Chapter 21:2-22

VI. The Epilogue

Chapter 22:6-21

The last two outlines given are the most suitable. For our purpose the division of Revelation into the seven main visions is very practical, for the Sixth Vision contains the subject matter of our thesis, that of the Great Harlot, the Antichrist. We use a combination of the two (the last one listed) for the brief survey we give of the chapters in the next section, however. This latter plan shows where the Seven Visions of Revelation are found in the book, exhibiting at the same time a rather detailed outline of all the chapters. We let it up to the reader to choose the outline he likes best.[90]

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90. Dr. P. E. Kretzmann believes with Mauro (Introduction, p. 5) that a very proper way to study Revelation is topically, since each of these divisions generally are complete in themselves and may take the student over the same period of time already covered by the preceding vision or group of visions.

That this method is very practical was demonstrated in the Graduate School at Concordia Seminary when Dr. Kretzmann, the instructor, conducted a course in the Book of Revelation under these topics: 1. The Seven-fold Spirit. 2. The Background of the Seven Cities. 3. The Seven Beatitudes of the Apocalypse. 4. References to the Old Testament in the Apocalypse. 5. Incipient Sectarianism. 6. Names of Christ in the Apocalypse. 7. The Great Harlot (Antichrist). 8. The Atonement in the Apocalypse. 9. The Millennium. 10. The Doxologies of the Apocalypse. 11. The Description of the Heavenly Glory.

PART THE SECOND

SYNOPSES OF THE FIRST SEVENTEEN CHAPTERS

OF REVELATION

Section I.

THE PROLOGUE, Chapter 1:1-3

The Book of Revelation gets its name "Revelation" from the first verse of the Book, though "Apocalypse" (ἀποκάλυψις, Greek) is perhaps the better name.

This book is a disclosure of the divine things of God before unknown. "Of Jesus Christ" (Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ) is a Subjective Genitive --- Jesus will do the revealing; John is His agent. The phrase "which must shortly come to pass" (ἃ δεῖ γενέσθαι ἐν τάχει.) must be taken in a relative sense. With God there is no time and a thousand years are but a day in His sight.

A blessing is pronounced in verse three upon all who read and keep the sayings of the book.

Section II.

THE MESSAGES OR PROPHECIES OF THE SEVEN CHURCHES IN ASIA, (THE FIRST VISION)

Chapter 1:4 - Chapter 3

Chapter 1

The remaining verses of chapter one, (4-20), form a second introduction to the subject matter to come. John is the author, and he says he is writing to the Seven Churches in Asia Minor.

A vivid description of the Holy Trinity is found in verses four to six. The "seven spirits" of verse four (ἑπτὰ πνεύματα) refer to the Holy Ghost.

Verse seven is a summary of the whole Book. John says he was in the spirit (ἐν πνεύματι), that is, in an ecstatic trance, carried away by the Spirit of God to the realms of heavenly glory. He receives the instruction to write in a book all he sees. The day this took place was a Sunday. He was on Patmos, exiled because of his testimony for Jesus. The "Great Voice" (φωνὴ μεγάλη) of verse ten is that of Jesus.

From verse twelve to the end of the chapter we have the vision of the Seven Candlesticks. Herein is found that unique, holy, and glorious vision of the Son of Man. In Jesus' right hand are seven stars, which

symbolize the pastors of the seven churches in Asia Minor.

The two-edged sword proceeding out of Christ's mouth is the Word of God, the two edges representing the Law and the Gospel which is preached by the ministers. The seven golden candlesticks represent the seven churches. The phrase "The Keys of Hell and of Death" (Κλεῖς τοῦ θανάτου καὶ τοῦ ᾅδου), means that Jesus has power to deliver us from the power of sin and hell.

In verse nineteen we have the contents of the book listed, covering the past, present, and future.

Chapter 2

The letters to the seven churches are given in chapters two and three. Note that each one of these letters has two parts: First, they commend the virtues of these churches, and secondly, they correct the abuses and evils.

Verses one to seven are written to the congregation in Ephesus, the rich and evil city of Diana. Paul had founded the congregation in Ephesus, and St. John had lived and served there since Paul's death. This congregation had left its "first Love (τὴν ἀγάπην τὴν πρώτην), namely, its ardent faith in Christ and its zeal for the Kingdom.

False apostles and the Nicolaitanes are condemned. The Nicolaitanes represented the liberal Gnostic sect of libertines who condoned loose morals in those days. They claimed that what the flesh and the body did was immaterial and did not affect the spirit, and that giving reign to the flesh was the way in which to master the flesh --- the spirit would always triumph. We can see they were much like the Adamites of the fifteenth

century and the nudists of our day.

The congregation is urged to repent and a promise of forgiveness is attached. "The Tree of Life" represents heaven.

Verses eight to eleven contain the letter to the church in Smyrna. Smyrna is a city of great beauty, still existing today. This church was suffering much persecution from the Jews, but beautifully John tells them they are rich inwardly in Christ. "The First and the Last" (ὁ πρῶτος καὶ ὁ ἔσχατος) is Jesus. "Synagog of Satan" (συναγωγὴ τοῦ σατανᾶ) refers to the false teachers and the enemies of Christ, applied especially to the Jews.

"Tribulation for ten days" in verse ten, (θλῖψις ἡμερῶν δέκα) no doubt refers to a complete testing of faith for the Christians of Smyrna; yet, because a definite time is mentioned, we can suggest that it will not be forever nor above what they can endure. The "second death" (θάνατος ὁ δεύτερος) refers to the Last Judgment, when Jesus will come to judge the quick and the dead, a horrible event for the wicked, but a blessing for the saints in Christ.

The letter to Pergamos is found in verses twelve to seventeen. This city was a literary center. Parchment is said to have been invented there. But it was now a very wicked city because of its gross idolatry, (ὅπου ὁ θρόνος τοῦ σατανᾶ) "where Satan's seat is".

The Christians in Pergamos are to be praised because they hold up under persecution, even when their faithful pastor Antipas was murdered. But they had sins, too, some followed Balaam's teaching which advocated that man should indulge in all sorts of sexual and immoral practices.

"Hidden manna" (τὸ μάννα τὸ κεκρυμμένον) is

eternal life, and "white stone" (ψῆφος λευκή) no doubt (perhaps a diamond) refers to the joys of heaven.

The church in Thyatira is often called the "adulterous church". John's letter to this church is found in verses eighteen to twenty-nine. Commending them for their good works and faith, John also condemns their sins of the flesh. This is the longest of the seven pastoral letters. Thyatira was the home of pious Lydia. "Jezebel" is generally considered a symbolical name for the false teachers of Thyatira who taught the Christians they could overcome evil by succumbing to it. What Jezebel was for the Northern Kingdom of Israel (she introduced the worship of Baal, which was combined with the worship of Ashtaroth all consisting in much lewdness and fornication. Cf. I Kings 21:25), these false teachers were for the church at Thyatira. We admit, according to verse twenty, that there may have been a woman preacher in Thyatira who played the part of an evil Jezebel.

"I will cast her into a bed" (βάλλω αὐτὴν εἰς κλίνην) refers to the judgment over this evil, that is, a bed of sickness and pain as a punishment for sin.

At the end of the letter, however, Jesus promises eternal life to those who remain faithful.

The wealth of the material in these letters applicable to our Christians and our Churches in this wicked world of today, shows us that Revelation can be studied with much profit. "The morning star" (ὁ ἀστὴρ ὁ πρωϊνός) of verse twenty-eight, refers to Jesus and His salvation, that is, the believer in Christ will shine in heaven with Jesus, the true Morning Star. What beautiful promises to the faithful believer!

Chapter 3

The church at Sardis has been named the "dead church". The first six verses of chapter three are written to this congregation. "Coming now to Sardis, we find not the rise and progress of a system of satanic wickedness, but a state of decline and decay, a dying out of spirituality and love of the truth."[91] Sardis was Christian in name only.

"He that hath the seven spirits and the seven stars", verse one, of course, is Christ. There were many members in the church, and perhaps some social activity, but no Gospel or burning love for Christ. How like many modernistic churches today!

"Defile garments" (μολύνειν τὰ ἱμάτια) means to accept error or indulge in sins. "To walk with Christ in white raiment" (περιπατεῖν μετ' ἐμοῦ ἐν λευκοῖς) means to be in heaven with Him, dressed in His imputed righteousness which is by faith. Such will not have their names rubbed out of the Book of Life in Heaven, which were written there when they in true faith accepted Jesus as their Savior.

The church at Philadelphia was the faithful church, verses seven to thirteen. This was the most loyal of the seven churches, and John says it has opened the door for its members to enter heaven. He also gives them an open door for mission work.

"The Key of David" (ἡ κλεὶς Δαυίδ), means supreme authority of Jesus in the Church. "Thy crown" (ὁ στέφανος) of

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91. Theodore Graebner, op. cit., p. 10.

verse eleven, is the gift of heaven, and the "hour of temptation" (ἡ ὥρα τοῦ πειρασμοῦ) refers to the fiery trials and hardships Christians must go through in this life.

"New name" (τὸ ὄνομα τὸ καινόν) means the believers as Christ's, the same ones who are made pillars in the temple of God (in heaven).

This letter is important because of the admonition and great promise of verse eleven, which is often used at Confirmation Rites in our Lutheran Church.[92]

The church at Laodicea, the "lukewarm church", verses fourteen to twenty-two. This letter contains some harsh terms of condemnation, but it is also full of beautiful promises. Laodicea was a very wealthy city with a good educational system. "Amen" is another name for Christ.

"Neither cold nor hot", (οὔτε ψυχρὸς εἶ οὔτε ζεστός), means the Laodicean church had a middle-ground religion, a mere externalism. Lukewarm Christians are generally hypocrites.

In spite of its wealth, this church was poor spiritually. Maybe this was because there was not much persecution. "Spue out" (μέλλω σε ἐμέσαι ἐκ τοῦ στόματός μου), reject because of unbelief.

In verse eighteen John applies the picture; he tells them to buy "gold tried in the fire" (χρυσίον πεπυρωμένον ἐκ πυρός), that is, a true and proved faith. The "white raiment" (ἱμάτια λευκά), again refers to the holiness through the blood of Christ, imputed to us by faith.

"Nakedness" (ἡ γυμνότης), is human sin. "Eyesalve",

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92. Rev. 3:11: "Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."

(τό κολλύριον), no doubt refers to the re-awakening of the Holy Spirit through the Word.

The beautiful verse twenty, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock", is the picture of Christ standing before the heart of a man calling him to repentance. "To sup" (δειπνήσω μετ' αὐτοῦ), refers to the eating of the Banquet of Eternal Life, that is, hearing the Gospel and eating heavenly food. 93

Section III

THE PROPHECIES ACCORDING TO THE BOOK OF THE SEVEN SEALS, Chapters 4 - 9

1. The Preliminary Vision of Heaven, the Throne of God, and the Heavenly Worship, chapters four and five, (The Second Vision)

Chapter 4

This is the second vision shown to John. He is transported in the spirit to heaven. There he sees the throne of God and the worship of God in heaven in all its glory and majesty. God the Father sits upon the throne. The precious stones represent God's glory; the rainbow (ἡ ἶρις), His covenant with His people.

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93. Cf. St. John, chapter six.

The "twenty-four elders" (οἱ εἴκοσι τέσσαρες πρεσβύτεροι) represent believers in glory --- the Twelve Tribes in the Old Testament, the Twelve Apostles in the New Testament; the "seven lamps of fire (ἑπτὰ λαμπάδες πυρός), the Holy Spirit; the "glassy sea" (θάλασσα ὑαλίνη), eternal life.

The hymn, "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty", is based on this section.[94]

The four "living creatures" or "beasts" (τέσσερα ζῶα) are angels and symbolize the following: The lion - strength; the calf - patience and perseverence; man - intelligence; flying eagle - eagerness in pursuit, speed, keen vision.[95] The church has always also considered these four living beasts symbols of the four Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Christians receive much comfort from this view of heavenly glory.

The thunderings and lightnings typifying the justice and holiness of God, are not to terrify us. On the contrary, the four and twenty elders show us that there is room for all in heaven who believe in God and His Christ. Here we have one of the few previews of what life will be like in heaven. What consolation these words must have conveyed to the poor persecuted Christians of Asia Minor in John's day!

Chapter 5

John continues his vision of the heavenly glory. The book (βιβλίον)

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94. Hymn number 246 in our Lutheran Hymnal.
95. Cf. Ezekiel 1 and Isaiah 6.

God held in his right hand (really a parchment or scroll) contained the "future history of the Church from the days of the Apostles to Judgment Day."[96]

Until Jesus, the Lamb, called the Lion of Juda and the Root of David's line, came to open the seven seals, John despaired of ever seeing such heavenly blessings.

This chapter is filled with the love of God for sinners in the Atonement of Christ.[97] The Holy Spirit with His seven-fold power, (τὰ ἑπτὰ πνεύματα τοῦ θεοῦ), is signified in verse six. Because of their free salvation in Jesus, the heavenly hosts and the innumerable saints --- ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands (μυριάδες μυριάδων καὶ χιλιάδες χιλιάδων) sing praises with harps and incense to God on His throne.

What beautiful imagery! What glorious Gospel! The thought that all Christians will receive this glory through Christ, fills us all with ecstatic delight.

2. The Vision of the Seven Seals, chapters six and seven

Chapter 6

The scroll (τὸ βιβλίον) was rolled up and sealed with seven seals (ἑπτὰ σφραγῖδες). The opening of these seven seals represents the gradual unfolding of the divine plan for the ages, that is,

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96. Theodore Graebner, op. cit. p. 13.
97. Cf. Verse 9.

the spiritual and bodily affliction of the Church throughout history.

Here we have the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse under the first four seals.

The victorious Being on the white horse is Christ. Under the second seal the prophet sees the red horse, which is a prophecy of war and bloodshed on the earth. Much has the Church, even in this war, suffered from this scourge. Next comes the black horse and its rider means famine and pestilence, and food will be rationed, which is represented by the pair of balances (ὁ ζυγός). The fourth horseman on the pale horse represents Death and Hell. "Fourth part of the earth" (τὸ τέταρτον τῆς γῆς), must not be literally interpreted as one-fourth of the people of the earth, but simply means a general territory, limited, however, by God.[98]

"Lest Christians should think that being children of God they will escape the general tribulations that afflict mankind, this vision of the Four Horsemen was given John."[99]

The fifth seal, verses nine to eleven, described the sufferings of the Christians in the world, the death of martyrs who died because of their faith. Notice the cry for God's vengeance (not the Christian's) on the persecutors of God's people - "How long, O Lord?"

"Little season" (χρόνος μικρός) means until their fellow martyrs would be killed and taken to heaven.

The sixth seal gives us a vivid description of the events of the Last Day, verses twelve to seventeen.[100] It does not refer to the

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98. "The four horsemen in chapter six signify invasion, war, famine, death." (William Arndt, op. cit. p. 59).
99. Theodore Graebner, op. cit. p. 15).
100. Cf. Luke 21; Joel 2; Matt. 24.

Destruction of Jerusalem, as many suppose.

Chapter 7

Chapter seven is an interlude preparing the seer for the opening of the seventh seal. John is still in heaven. This chapter, too, is for the comfort of the believers in spiritual and bodily afflictions; they may be certain of their salvation.

The "four angels", (τέσσαρες ἄγγελοι), verse one, are judgment angels, evil servants of Satan, coming from all the earth with winds of affliction and trouble. "From the east" (ἀπὸ ἀνατολῆς ἡλίου), "from the rising sun", another angel, perhaps Jesus interceding for His own, comes and will not allow judgment to come on the earth for the sake of the elect (servants of God). This is great comfort for Christians of all times.

"Sealed on their foreheads" means to be marked and saved as God's own. The number 144,000 is a symbolic number and is not to be taken literally, as though that is the total number of the saved, but it simply indicates a very large number, an innumerable number, the full number of the elect. The Twelve Tribes symbolize Spiritual Israel, the New Testament Church. Verse nine describes the elect; the palms in their hands signify victory through the Lamb.

"The great tribulation" (ἡ θλῖψις ἡ μεγάλη), has nothing to do with a Millennium, or with a definite period of time, but means the suffering of the Church on earth before being taken to heaven, which is described in the last verses of the chapter.

"Here ends the preparation for the prophecies to be told in the next chapters. At the same time we have the close of the Second Vision, begun in chapter four."[101]

3. The Vision of the Seven Trumpets, chapters eight and nine, (The Third Vision)

Chapter 8

The third great vision begins. This vision depicts "the inner history of Christianity, especially the spiritual afflictions through anti-Christian doctrine."[102] "Silence half an hour" (σιγὴ ὡς ἡμίωρον), indicates a change of subject, a breathless suspense when great news was expected.

Seven angels stand before God with their seven trumpets (ἑπτὰ σάλπιγγες); an eighth angel comes to the golden altar in heaven (all figurative with incense, which symbolizes the prayers of the saints.

The first four angels blow their trumpets, verses six to thirteen. These trumpets symbolize different kinds of false teachers in the Church and their doctrines.

The star called "Wormwood" (ὁ Ἄψινθος), perhaps refers to some especially malicious false teacher, like Arius, who denied Jesus' deity; or like Pelagius who also wrought havoc in the church. The "third part" (τὸ τρίτον), repeated in verse twelve means that about

101. Graebner, op. cit., p. 18.
102. Ibid., p. 18.

a third of the people will follow the false teachers, though God will see to it that not all the believers depart from Christ. But it is nevertheless an ideal or "round" number, and we must not become too literal.

"Other voices" (αἱ λοιπαὶ φωναί), of verse thirteen probably refer to the voices of heretics of the early Church.

Chapter 9

This chapter depicts the sounding of the fifth trumpet, and the first of the Three Woes. This is a very difficult chapter and much has been said about it. Since God does not explain or give us any indication what this chapter means, the interpretation is very uncertain.

The "fallen star" (ἀστὴρ πεπτωκώς), Luther referred to as the fall of the false teacher Arius, ca. 300 A.D. Others say it is Satan or Mohammed. "Smoke from the bottomless pit" is said to mean the heresies of hell. All of the imagery refers to spiritual darkness. "Locusts upon the earth" are the swarms of the Saracens, according to the best exegetes.

"Five months" (μῆνες πέντε), is about the time it took the Saracens to extend their empire. They were like scorpions in their cruelty. The angel of verse eleven we think is Satan. It is doubtful that Abaddon and Apollyon ("Destroyers") represent the Roman Pope, as many say. Some refer all this imagery to the barbarian hordes.

In verse thirteen we have the sixth trumpet sounded. This is the voice of God. "Euphrates" is the source of Mohammedanism. Verse fifteen says that a definite time was given to the conquest of the Turks. The

Turks fought on horses, and there were hundreds of them. In their day there was spiritual darkness and hardship for the Church, indeed!

Section IV

THE PROPHECY OF THE LITTLE BOOK WHICH IS EATEN BY ST. JOHN, (THE FOURTH, FIFTH AND SIXTH VISIONS)

Chapters 10 - 19

1. The Book of Prophecy

Chapter 10

"Just as there had been, after the opening of the sixth seal, a passage full of comfort for the true believers, so we have, in the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth chapters, incidents that prepare for the last great woe."[103]

This is not the seventh angel, but still another angel, namely Christ, for the description fits Jesus. He has the "little book" (βιβλαρίδιον) open in His hand, and one foot is placed on the sea and the other on the earth, which shows His great majesty and universal power.

We do not know what the seven thunders represent, and John was told not to write down what they said. It is a strange mystery. The

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103. P.E. Kretzmann, op.cit., p. 620.

implication is that it is not necessary for us to know all the secrets of the future. This would be fulfilled when the seventh angel sounded his trumpet.[104] For the tenth and eleventh chapters may be considered as an interlude until the seventh trumpet is sounded, describing the persecutions of the Church during that time. The first verses of the chapter may describe Christ.

The voice of God tells John to go and take the little book from the Son of God and eat it up, telling him how it would taste. Naturally, this is all figurative eating, perhaps a symbol of attentive reading and thorough understanding.

It was pleasant to eat the book, but the contents telling of the sufferings of Christ's people weighed heavily and bitterly on John's stomach.[105] Dr. Kretzmann says this angel represents a false Christ who wishes to mislead people with his malicious doctrine, pleasing to the taste, but bitter to digest --- all meaning the Roman Pope.[106]

2. The Vision of the Temple

Chapter 11

This chapter speaks of the measuring of the Temple, the Two Witnesses, and the Third Woe. The temple (ὁ ναὸς τοῦ θεοῦ) here described is a type of the one in Jerusalem, not the actual temple itself. It is figurative for the Holy Christian Church. Therefore,

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104. Rev. chaps., 11 and 15.
105. Cf. Ezekiel 3:1-3.
106. P.E. Kretzmann, op.cit., p. 622.

those who maintain that the Temple was still standing when John wrote this chapter and thus give Revelation a date before 70 A.D., miss the mark.

Forty-two months, (μῆνες τεσσεράκοντα καὶ δύο), three and one half years, or 1260 days, is the symbolical number (indefinite period of time) designating the length of time the Antichrist will rule.[107] "Two witnesses" (μάρτυρες δύο), refers not to just two individuals, but to all the faithful ministers of Christ who will raise their voice against Antichrist and testify of the Savior and the true Gospel. God says he will protect these ministers, verse five, and that He will give them great powers, even to open and shut heaven. (Office of the Keys).[108]

The beast of verse seven is the Antichrist, or perhaps the Roman Empire --- see Chapter XVII, where the same words are used. This Beast will make martyrs of the faithful witnesses. This took place in the Middle Ages.

"Sodom and Egypt" --- "The great city to which these names are applied is none other than the Church of Antichrist, a Sodom, on account of the sins that are committee under the mantle of holiness, and an Egypt on account of the suppression of the pure Gospel."[109] These words are in the form of an allegory ("spiritually" (πνευματικῶς) verse eight).

The enemies of the true believers rejoice at their death, but too soon. For God "after three days and a half" (τρεῖς ἡμέρας

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107. Dr. Graebner says it represents the Middle Ages. (op. cit., p. 23).
108. "The two witnesses, chapter 11. The reference seems to be to Moses and Elijah who, however, represent Christian ministers." (Dr. William Arndt, op. cit., p. 57).
109. P. E. Kretzmann, (op. cit., p. 623).

καὶ ἦλθον) resurrected these martyrs, that is, when the time of Antichrist's power, the Middle Ages, was over. This was fulfilled in the Reformation of Luther, and since then many have believed.

"Tenth part of the city" (τὸ δέκατον τῆς πόλεως) --- on this difficult point we turn to Dr. Kretzmann who writes in his Popular Commentary, p. 623:

> "The Reformation finally shook the Church like a great earthquake, and many that held to the old, antichristian order of things were swept down to eternal destruction in the ruin which threatened the very foundations of Antichrist's kingdom. And as for the rest, great numbers were gained for the truth, while others were at least terrified to the extent that they insisted upon, and finally effected, at least a partial external removal of the many abuses that had openly been tolerated in the Church."

"Seven thousand slain" (ἀνθρώπους χιλιάδες ἑπτά) is a symbolical number for "many men slain".

"The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly", verse fourteen. Thus is ushered in the awe-striking seventh angel, which really comprises the Fourth Vision beginning in Chapter XII. This woe will continue throughout all ages.

What comfort it contains! If the people ever thought Antichrist was going to overwhelm them, now they know that Jesus their Lord is Conqueror! Christ is the Victor and His own partake in His Victory over all evil, especially Mohammed and Antichrist.

Haendel took the words of verse fifteen for his famous oratorio,

The Messiah.[110] We are certain he caught something of the great hymn the hosts and saints sing to our glorious Christ in heaven.

3. The Battle with the Red Dragon, chapter 12, (The Fourth Vision)

Chapter 12

Here is introduced a new vision, namely, the Fourth. The main characters are the Woman, her Child, and the Dragon. This is a picture of the battle of Christ and His Church against the Dragon, Satan, here in the form of the evil Roman Empire, verse nine.

The Woman (ἡ γυνή) is the Church of Christ. She is the true Church, the opposite of the Great Harlot of Chapter XVII. She is dressed in the majesty of Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, (sun, moon, stars).

"Twelve stars" (ἀστέρες δώδεκα), symbolize the people of God, represented by the Twelve Apostles. The Red Dragon, (δράκων μέγας πυρρός) no doubt is the Roman Empire. Many think the Red Dragon all evil agencies who seek to destroy the church. Others say the Dragon represents the Devil. We have a like picture in chapter XVII, which see for the interpretation of the seven heads and ten horns.

"The Man Child" (ὁ υἱὸς ἄρσεν)[111] is Christ, born of the Jewish Nation, the seed of Christ's Church. Or it may refer to the

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110. Rev. 11:15: "And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever."

111. "In chapter 12 the child evidently signifies Christ; the mother is the church, especially the Church in Palestine." (Dr. W. Arndt, op. cit., p. 59).

spiritual children of Christ, brought forth by the church in conversion, Galatians 4:26.27. Many think the Doctrine of Incarnation is taught here.

The 1260 days refer to the time the Church was preserved from the Antichrist. We think the old Roman Empire with all its persecution is personified by the Dragon here as an agent of the Devil. The War in Heaven, then, is the fight between Christianity and Paganism. The Red Dragon was cast out, that is, he no longer had his former position of power; Christ had defeated him, verse eleven. Michael is the leader of the angels.

We do not have the space to give the meanings of all the images in this brief survey. Sometime later we want to study this chapter more thoroughly. Here we simply have the conflict between Christ and Satan, in which all our souls are always at stake. This battle began in the beginning, Genesis 3:15. Christ has dethroned Satan. Through the power of His Resurrection we can also defeat Satan, even by our faith. Does it not contain a beautiful message of comfort and cheer?

Dr. Kretzmann gives a terse summary of this chapter: "The seer pictures the Church as a woman whose children and offspring the dragon, Satan, tries to devour; but, owing to the resistance of Michael and the heavenly host, through the power of Christ, all the attempts of the devil are foiled, and the Church is kept safely in the hands of God."[112]

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112. Popular Commentary, Vol. IV, p. 627.

4. The Vision of the Two Beasts, chapter 13, (The Fourth Vision)

Chapter 13

The chapter falls naturally into two parts treating of the two beasts. Who are they? The first beast (verses 1-10) represents the Roman Empire. This is the same beast mentioned in Chapter XVII.[113]

"The Dragon gave him his power", that is, Satan rules through the tyranny of the Roman State which also persecuted the Church. One of the heads, that is, the Empire itself, was, as verse ten of Chapter XVII ("The Beast that was, is not, and yet is") tells us, wounded in 476 A.D. when Rome was sacked by the Teutonic Tribes from the North.

But Rome maintained her power inspite of this, for the Pope healed the wound somewhat by restoring the power of the Roman State, which is plain from verse six. She used the secular power of the State to persecute the true people of God, verses seven to ten.

The second Beast, verses eleven through eighteen, is the Papacy, built upon the ruins or healed wounds of the first Beast. This second Beast is not mentioned specifically in Revelation XVII, though we consider this Beast the same as the Harlot. "Out of the earth", (ἐκ τῆς γῆς), shows that the Papacy arose out of the Roman Empire. In verse twelve we are told that the second Beast rules over the first Beast, which is what the Pope does, thus healing the Empire's wound.[114]

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113. See our exegesis of chapter XVII for the meaning of the seven heads and the ten horns.

114. "The first beast refers to the secular power of the papacy; the second beast is the religious power of the Papacy." (Dr. William Arndt, op. cit., p. 59).

One would have to have the gifts of a prophet sent from God to interpret the number 666; we do not know what it is. Why 666? Why not some other number? For want of something better we give Iraenaeus' explanation: The Greek numerals spell "Lateinos" or "Latinus", which he refers to the Papacy, located in Rome, Latin in language.[115]

5. The Vision of Babylon

Chapter 14

This chapter pictures the coming of Martin Luther and the Reformation and the partial fall of Babylon, the Papacy, from her high pedestal. We must admit that through the Counter-Reformation she somewhat recovered from the jolt.

The Lamb is Jesus and the number 144,000 is a symbolical number representing the total number of those who will be saved.

The "other angel" (ἄλλος ἄγγελος), of verse six has always signified Dr. Luther and the Reformation for Lutheran interpreters. This perhaps may be somewhat arbitrary, for it seems out of

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115. We will not use space to demonstrate how Iraenaeus (and others) comes to this conclusion of the problem. Anyone who is interested will find the formula worked out in any one of the better volumes on Revelation. We are quite certain, however, that the number 666 does not refer to Hitler or Mussolini, or any other character who passes from the pages of history as quickly as these men did. We rather think the number refers to a personage or system which continues in history, like the Papacy. We believe the number designates the Papacy, since we have also identified the second Beast with the Roman church; but that Iraenaeus' method is the correct way to arrive at this conclusion, we are not in a position to say at present.

scope.[116] We remember, however, that God used the concept "angel" to signify the ministers of the Asian churches.[117]

Babylon is the Papacy, the same as Babylon the Great of Chapter XVII.

What comfort the persecuted Christians of Asia must have received from verse thirteen! "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth." It is one of the few passages from Revelation used in our Catechism.

The difficulty which confronts us is the other angels mentioned in verses eight, nine, fifteen, seventeen, and eighteen. If the first angel signifies Luther, then we should have definite great men of the Reformation be represented by the other angels in the chapter if we want to be consistent. Perhaps Melanchthon, Bugenhagen, Gerhardt, Jonas, and others worthy of note.

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116. Dr. Theodore Graebner offers the following in his Annotated Pocket New Testament on verses 6 - 8: "Glad news! The Gospel was again to be preached on earth! In the midst of Antichrist's kingdom true witnesses of Christ again were to arise. Especially one messenger is referred to who would call upon all men to worship the true God, and give glory not to themselves, but to Him alone. The voice of this messenger would penetrate to all languages and people. Babylon would fall --- the power of Rome would decay, her influence would be broken. This is understood to be a reference to Martin Luther and the work of the Reformation." p. 30.

117. And when we look at the passage, we certainly must admit that it fits the Reformation better than any event or person we know of today. Notice the terms "everlasting Gospel", (εὐαγγέλιον αἰώνιον); "to preach", (εὐαγγελίσαι); "to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people" (ἐπὶ πᾶν ἔθνος καὶ φυλὴν καὶ γλῶσσαν καὶ λαόν); "in a loud voice", (ἐν φωνῇ μεγάλῃ). Luther did every bit of this - and in a loud voice too; in fact, it is still being heard round the world (Our Missionaries, the Lutheran Hour, etc.)!

6. The Seven Vials of Wrath, chapters fifteen and sixteen, (The Fifth Vision)

Chapter 15

This is the shortest chapter in Revelation. Together with chapter sixteen it forms the Fifth Vision. So far we have had Seven Seals and Seven Trumpets; now we see the Seven Vials (πληγαὶ ἑπτά, (or plagues) of God's Wrath for the enemies of the Church. The Church and the saints shall overcome all trials and tribulations; that is the theme of the chapter as well as of the book. In this chapter we hear their song of victory in heaven.

The "Sea of Glass" (ἡ θάλασσα ὑαλίνη) is a picture of God's glorious majesty.[118] The fire signifies His judgments on the earth. Now the tables are turned; the true believers, victors over the Antichrist, sing songs of praise to God. The Song is taken from the Old Testament.[119]

"These two chapters (fifteen and sixteen) treat of the judgment which God was to bring upon Antichrist through the faithful witnesses and preachers of the Gospel."[120]

Commenting on verses five to eight, Dr. Theodore Graebner says: "This is a summary of what is to follow --- a prophecy of the victories which Luther and all faithful witnesses to the truth were to gain over the powers of darkness. The success of Christian missions, the expansion

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118. Cf. Rev. 4:6.
119. The song is generally thought to come from Exodus 15, where is recorded the song of Moses and Israel praising God after their safe passage of the Red Sea.
120. Theodore Graebner, op.cit., p. 31.

of Protestantism from the Reformation to the present day, faithfully maintaining the doctrines of Scripture against all opposition."[121]

This picture, then, begins in the early ages of the Church, continues today, and will continue until the end of time.[122]

Chapter 16

Chapter sixteen describes the pouring out of the Seven Plagues. The tribulations of the Church and the judgment of the wicked are here brought to final completion. These plagues are very similar to the Ten Plagues of Egypt at the time of Moses. Revelation, however, retains the holy number seven throughout.

"In the picture of the seven plagues (vials), culminating in the final Judgment, the effect of the Gospel proclamation since the Reformation upon the Kingdom of Antichrist and upon his adherents and worshippers is depicted."[123]

Note that the plagues were poured out upon the earth, the sea, the rivers, the sun, the seat of the Beast, the great River Euphrates, and the seventh into the air.

We will not attempt to describe the significance or the effects of the seven vials here. Suffice it to say that these vials were poured out during history (and it will continue in the future till the end of time) upon those who worship the Antichrist, the Pope and his system, which includes peoples of all the world. Thus we have a preview of the

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121. Ibid., p. 32.
122. This fact is illustrated by verse eight, which says that "no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled."
123. P.E. Kretzmann, op. cit., p. 638.

great events coming in Chapter XVII.

The "great voice" (μεγάλη φωνή) of verse one is the voice of God. Those having "the mark of the Beast" (τὸ χάραγμα τοῦ θηρίου), are the followers of the Antichrist, those who bend the knee to him and worship him.

In verse six the words, "they have shed the blood of saints and prophets", refer to the bloody persecutions propagated by the Church at Rome --- the Inquisition and all the individual martyrs Rome burned at the stake. They are "worthy", (ἄξιος), that is, fit for punishment for they deserve it.

The "seat of the Beast" in verse ten (ὁ θρόνος τοῦ θηρίου) is the city of Rome, where Papacy has the Vatican, the universal center of Antichrist where the vast spider-web begins to grow.

"Babylon", situated on the River Euphrates, does not refer to literal Babylon of old; but the kingdom of Antichrist with headquarters in Rome is here compared to the old wicked Babylonian Empire on the Euphrates. It is a symbol of the Papacy.

"Kings of the East", (οἱ βασιλεῖς οἱ ἀπὸ ἀνατολῆς ἡλίου) may refer to Cyrus and other Persian kings who entered Babylon and captured it by the simple strategy of changing the course of the River Euphrates; thus it was "dried up". So Rome was dried up from the lack of the preaching of the Gospel.

"The three unclean spirits like frogs", (πνεύματα τρία ἀκάθαρτα ὡς βάτραχοι). --- "These three are here combined in a union of iniquity: the dragon (Satan), the beast (the Antichrist), and the false prophet (what ever pope may be occupying the throne in Rome

at the time). The spirits of demons speak out of their mouths, clammy and ugly as frogs."[124] We think this may depict the mighty efforts of Papacy to regain her strength after the Reformation (the Jesuits and the Counter-Reformation).

Verses sixteen to twenty-one describe the pouring out of the Seventh Vial, together with the Battle of Armageddon. This will not be an earthly battle ushering in the Millennium as many modern interpreters say; but it is a picture of Christ's last battle with his enemies in which He will utterly defeat them forever on Judgment Day. This is found in the Hebrew name itself --- Ἁρμαγεδών means "Destruction of Their Army". The Christian's triumph over all his evil enemies is assured through Christ.

The "Great City, Babylon", (Βαβυλὼν ἡ μεγάλη), of verse nineteen is the Roman Papacy, which is represented by the Great Harlot, "Babylon the Great", in Chapter XVII. At the end of time, spiritual Babylon, the Roman Church, will have to drink of the Vial of God's Wrath to the very dregs.[125] This is depicted by the city being shattered into three parts, and falling into ruins.

The last verse of the chapter depicts the horrible events of Judgment Day, as Jesus often does in the Gospels. The imagery of the text indicates that extreme horror will reign on earth in the last days. Even today we can see these plagues in history.

In Chapter XVII, which we will now take up for thorough study, we

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124. P.E. Kretzmann, op.cit., p. 537.

125. Isaiah 51:22: "Thus saith thy Lord the Lord, and thy God that pleadeth the cause of his people, Behold, I have taken out of thine hand the cup of trembling, even the dregs of the cup of my fury; thou shalt no more drink it again:"

have repetition in a more vivid form of what we have seen here in chapter sixteen --- a description of the Antichrist, Babylon the Great, which is the Papacy, and her fall and final judgment.[126]

7. The Great Harlot, Babylon the Great, chapters seventeen through nineteen, (The Sixth Vision)

THE STORY OF THE GREAT HARLOT AS TOLD TO ST. JOHN IN REVELATION XVII

While St. John was in his ecstatic trance, with his mind separated from the body, seeing visions of heavenly glory, an angel came and spoke to him. It was one of the seven angels which had just finished pouring out the Seven Plagues of God upon the earth and upon the peoples of the earth who were following the Antichrist.

"Come with me", the angel said to John, "I will show you the judgment of the Great Harlot who sits upon many waters." The angel then revealed to John that this great whore had been committing the terrible sin of fornication with the kings of the earth. Yes, what is more, the very peoples of the earth were now drunk with the wine of her adulteries!

Then John speaks. He says he was carried away to a wilderness where

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126. "The Recapitulation Theory must not be overlooked. We must not think that from Chapter Four on necessarily successive events are recorded, that is, that in the seals, trumpets, and vials always different events are pointed to. Some of these happenings may be synchronous, and it may also be that the same events are prophesied twice ... More important than to get all the details of the book is its general tenor, its prophecy of tribulation and final victory." (Dr. William Arndt, op.cit., p. 59).

he should see the vision. All the while he was in the spirit. And what does he see first? "I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns." What a terrible looking apparition! --- an animal with seven heads and ten horns!

The woman, John says, was dressed very richly and gaudily. Her garments were of royal purple and scarlet. And she wore many jewels of all kinds --- precious stones, pearls and gold.

Most unusual in the picture which John saw was the object in the right hand of the Harlot. It was a golden cup. But it was not full of good wine or anything refreshing to drink. On the contrary, it was full of evil and sin - full of abominations and filth, a result of her evil life of fornication.

Being a harlot, she had her mark, her name on her forehead that men may see who she was. It was a mysterious, cryptic name, "Babylon the Great", it was, in large letters. And there was also a subtitle which John saw underneath: "The Mother of Harlots and the Abominations of the Earth".

The harlot's name told John immediately that this was no ordinary woman and that she must have been very wicked. This he knew for sure when he saw that she was drunk with blood --- with the blood of the witnesses of our Lord Jesus.

The vision was so startling that John could not help being amazed. "When I saw her, I wondered with great admiration", he tells us. But the angel said, "Why do you marvel at this vision? Let me tell you what it means, and then perhaps you will be less surprised."

So the angel began to explain to John the mystery of the woman and the beast that was carrying her on his back, which had seven heads and ten horns.

"The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit." Then he goes into perdition. "When the people of the earth who do not have their names written in God's Book of Life in heaven see this take place, they shall wonder just as you have. They shall be utterly amazed when they behold a beast that was, and is not, and yet is."

"And let me explain to you what the seven heads and the ten horns mean", the angel said to John. "The seven heads of the beast represent seven mountains. The harlot sits upon these mountains. But these seven hills also stand for seven kings. Now of these seven kings, five have already fallen; one is, and the other is yet to come. When this last king comes, he will continue only a short time."

"Now another word about the beast, who is joined with these kings," the angel went on. "The beast that was and is not, he is going to be the eighth. Notice that he is really from the seven. But he shall go into perdition."

"And of course you are anxious to know what the ten horns of the beast are. Let me tell you --- these ten horns represent ten kings. They have received no kingdoms to rule over as yet. But they will receive power as kings for one hour with the beast."

"And let me point out," said the angel, "that these ten kings are of one mind in serving the beast. In fact they shall give all their power and strength to the beast when they receive their kingdoms."

"Then there shall be war. These kings shall band together with the beast and make war with the Lamb. But, mark you, the Lamb shall win the war. Why? Because He is Lord of Lords, and King of Kings. And remember, too, that those who fight with Him are loyal warriors - they are called, and chosen and faithful."

John then interrupts the angel's story, indicating that perhaps the angel had paused for a time. But John says the angel suddenly went on to explain to him what the many waters were upon which the harlot was sitting. "They are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues", he said.

"However", the angel told John, "there will be a revolt against the beast and the Harlot. For these ten horns, which are ten kings, shall one day hate the whore, and shall make her desolate, and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire." - "What a fateful, horrible end for the creature!" John thought.

"The reason the ten kings shall do this", the angel continued, "is that God will put in their hearts to fulfill His will, and to agree. And He will make them give their kingdoms to the beast until the words of God shall be fulfilled."

"But one more word," said the angel to John, as the vision was drawing to a close. "Do you wish to know who the woman, the Harlot called Babylon the Great, is? Let me tell you. She is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth!"

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That is the story. Many people who read the Bible only infrequently perhaps are amazed there is such a striking story in the Scriptures. But there is. What does it mean?

PART THE THIRD

AN EVALUATION OF THE VARIOUS INTERPRETATIONS OFFERED CONCERNING THE GREAT HARLOT OF REVELATION XVII

In Part III of this thesis we present thirty or more interpretations of Revelation XVII offered by the exegetes of various schools of theology. Our evaluation and criticisms, mostly negative, accompany each exposition.

This portion of our essay would have been much shorter if it had been possible to classify the various interpretations. But this was impossible, as we have pointed out before. Most of the interpreters have different views in some or many respects. Also, we have not listed these interpretations in order of importance, but give them more or less at random.

There are many other good interpretations of Revelation which we did not study. But we doubt whether there would be anything new brought forth by anyone, except it be a crass modern view, since we found that after reading about twenty-five books, that interpreters often had the same views expressed by another man, or had copied from him. We have tried, however, to give the reader an over-all and representative view of what has been said to date in the history of interpretation on Revelation XVII.

Often, because of lack of knowledge of individual men, we did not know what denomination a certain expositor represented. We hope this has not detracted from the value of our thesis.

We would also like to point out to the reader who does not care to read all of the quotations of this section, that the summaries at the head of each interpretation listed were placed there for his bene-

fit. It took not a little time to digest the views of each interpreter, often voluminous, into a kernel.

When we began our study of Revelation XVII with its symbolism of the Beast and the Harlot, we thought that surely we would find many interpretations wherein men and institutions of modern history, for instance, Germany, Italy, Russia, Hitler, Mussolini, Hirohito, and others, would find their places. We were eager to pounce upon the folly of such expositions, which as in the past, have fallen into oblivion, because men were sorry they had written them.

But we found no such interpretations anywhere we looked. Our surmise is that these modern interpretations have not found their way into permanent book form as yet, because we have heard them over the radio again and again. Perhaps they were afraid to place their ideas into print. Too, it must be remembered, we suppose, that most of the modern crass exegetes select Revelation XIII for their study, as there we have two Beasts with which to work. They speak much of the Antichrist, but they do not bring in the imagery of Revelation XVII. Thus we have no documentary evidence against them.

All men who have dealt with a subject of this nature know how difficult it is to be objective and to treat everyone fairly. The criticisms and conclusions we offer in the following pages, we beseech the reader to believe, have come from a heart that attempted with much determination to be honest and christian in its judgment, and from a result of much reading on the subject. We did not make up our mind on any conclusion until we were convinced that "this man has something and that man has not".

THE INTERPRETATION OF DR. MOSES STUART

Summary: The Harlot is the City of Rome; The Beast - "The Imperial Power of Rome"; The Beast that was, and is not - Nero Redivivus; "Five are Fallen" - Julius Caesar, Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, Nero and Galba; Ten Horns - "Ten subordinate kings of the Roman Empire".

Dr. Moses Stuart, one of the great American expositors of the last century, wrote a two-volume commentary on the Book of Revelation.[127] The first volume deals only with the historical introduction; the second folio is the interpretation. In his commentary on Revelation XVII he becomes an exponent of the Neronic Interpretation of the Beast and says that Rome is the Great Harlot:

> So in respect to the woman, that is, Rome, in the present case ... The Beast (not the woman) is first characterized, as being, after all, the most important particular of the symbols. Plainly here the reigning emperor is characterized, so that beast, although in itself a generic appellation marking the imperial power of Rome ...[128]

In his explanation of the phrase, "The beast which thou sawest, was, and is not, and will come up from the abyss", Dr. Stuart says the

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127. Stuart's work, called "A Commentary on the Apocalypse", was written in 1845, and so is 100 years old this year. He was professor of sacred literature in the theological seminary at Andover, Mass. Our quotations from his work are taken from pages 322-326, vol. II.

128. All of the lengthy quotations from other expositors' works in this section of our thesis will be single-spaced and indented, and no quotation marks will be used.

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following, adopting the view that Nero is the man who fulfills the prophecy:

> The well known hariolation respecting Nero, that he would be assassinated, and disappear for a while, and then make his appearance again to the confusion of all his enemies, solves the apparent enigma before us.
>
> What the angel says, seems to be equivalent to this: The beast means the Roman emperors, specifically Nero, of whom the report spread throughout the empire is, that he will revive, after being apparently slain, and will come as it were from the abyss or Hades; but he will still perish and that speedily.

And what does Moses Stuart say about the "seven heads" and the "seven kings", or "mountains"?

> Septicollis Roma was famous the world over, and no room is left here for mistake about the place. The woman, that is the city (v.18), sits on these, that is, Rome is built on seven hills. The beast with seven heads bears the woman; and the seven heads being taken (as they are here) as emblems of hills, and the woman is the symbol of the great city, all is plain.
>
> The seven heads are seven kings, Basileus, as an appellation for a Roman emperor, was usual among the Greeks. Five are fallen, that is, Julius Caesar, Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius. Nero is the sixth; Galba succeeded, who reigned only seven months. Or if we begin with Augustus, then Galba is the sixth; and Otho, who succeeded him, reigned but three months.
>
> We can see at once, how the beast (Nero) could be one of the seven and yet an eighth. But why an eighth, rather than a ninth or tenth? Simply because if Nero were expected to reappear at all, it would be naturally supposed to happen during, or immediately after, the reign of his successor. Such a tyrant as Nero would not patiently endure exile or seclusion for a long time.

Stuart's exposition quoted above is quite a common one. But it is neither right nor possible. It is too uncertain, especially his alternative choice in regard to the five fallen emperors. Too much depends upon where one starts counting.

The Nero-as-the-Beast Theory has been popular for many years, but there is no historical fact behind the resurrection of this bloody tyrant. And that the Holy Spirit through John would perpetuate the Nero Redivivus myth in the Holy Bible, is quite out of the question.[129]

The "ten horns" or "kings" of verse twelve, are, according to Dr. Stuart, ten contemporaneous kings, or rather ten subordinate and tributary kings of the Roman Empire. But he does not identify them in any way, and the reader of his work is left to figure this out for himself.

From these considerations the reader may draw the correct conclusion that Stuart's interpretation, and all others which place mythology into the Revelation of St. John, are not very valuable for the evangelical Bible student.

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129. Dr. R. C. Lenski in his Interpretation of St. John's Revelation, "Introduction", page 11, says this about the Nero Revivication Theory: "It is assumed that Revelation operates with the myth regarding Nero. Instead of having died, he was supposed to have fled to the Parthians so as at some future time to return to Rome with a mighty host. When time went on without his return, the myth was expanded: Nero would arise from the dead for this grand return to Rome. If Revelation operates with this fiction, we must lay it aside as a cheap, uninspired book that is worthy of no serious study." The reader will hear more of this theory in following interpretations.

THE INTERPRETATION OF STEWART CREBS, M. D.[130]

Summary: Babylon - "a composite city of Rome and Constantinople; Seven Kings - Dan, Ephraim, Babylonia, Medo-Persia, Macedonia, Rome, and Satan; The Eighth King - Satan; The Ten Horns - Ten Lost Tribes of Israel; The Antichrist is made up of Satan, Catholicism, and Mohammedanism.

Dr. Crebs strikes a new note when he says that Babylon represents Rome and Constantinople together. His is almost a radical interpretation. We feel also that he is a Millennialist.

> Babylon is a composite city of both Rome and Constantinople; both of these cities have been said to sit on seven hills; they are both typified by Rome, who holds in captivity to sin people who should be people of the God of Israel ... The "woman" is the false "Mother Church", the religion of Rome, which typifies the religions of both Rome and Constantinople, and that of other worshippers of the Antichrist.

This double symbolism - the Harlot symbolizes Rome and Rome represents Constantinople - is hardly necessary. Why make something already complicated more intricate by such a rendition of the material?

Mr. Crebs also has some new ideas about the identity of the Seven Kings. According to him, they are:

> Dan, Ephraim, Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Macedonia, Rome, and Satan. The seventh is Satan when he comes

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130. Berry Stewart Crebs, The Seventh Angel, pp. 146-152.

> as a king when he is loosed for a season at the end of the thousand years during which he is bound.
>
> "Five are fallen" - Dan, Ephraim, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Macedonia, and the Empire of Satan. Satan when he comes at the end of the thousand years will then be king (Rev. 20:3). Satan will be the seventh when he comes as a king in union with the other six as the Antichrist; he is also the eighth, for he not only has his own existence, but also exists in all the others.

We ask, How can Rome be one of the seven kings and yet be Babylon, and Constantinople? This is a rather good object lesson in crass interpretation. Why Dan and Ephraim? Why not some of the other tribes of Israel? How do they fit with Babylonia and Persia? And is it not rather inconsistent to bring in a spiritual empire of darkness like that of Satan's in a list of world empires? To us the supposition that Satan is the eighth king is the "straw that broke the camel's back."

But there is more of this kind of material offered by Crebs, for example, his explanation of the Ten Horns:

> The Ten Horns symbolize the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel; and likewise the ten kingdoms comprising the Roman Empire and thus of the world, for the territory of that empire was called the world; and these both typify the Kingdom of Antichrist. ... These ten kings have been deprived of their own kingdoms by being carried to Babylon, where they still remain and thus have received no kingdom as yet.

Let the reader read the last paragraph quoted again to see if he can follow the thought. Is it not complicated? First the interpreter starts out in Palestine with the Ten Tribes, and then suddenly we find him in the Roman Empire. More surprising, both of these typify the

Antichrist and His Kingdom! Then, almost as quickly, we are back in Babylon, and he says these kings are still there! This interpretation does not even make sense. It must have been written late at night.

But to make the issue still more confusing, in a later paragraph Mr. Crebs says the Harlot may be Mahammedanism:

> The Great city (or the Woman) which reigneth is Papal Rome; for Papal Rome reigns over the kings of the earth, while Civil Rome does not, nor can any other city be said to do so. And Papal Rome typifies the Antichrist in which is Satan, Catholicism, and Mohammedanism.

Evidently Mr. Crebs thinks Babylon, the Harlot, and the Great City are different institutions and personages. First Babylon was a composite city of both Rome and Constantinople, and now suddenly he changes his mind and says the Woman is Satan, Catholicism, and Mohammedanism - a combination of three, and three different entities at that!

The interpretation, because of its rank confusion, defeats itself.

THE INTERPRETATION OF FRANKLIN WEYMOUTH, D.D.[131]

Summary: The Harlot is Ancient Jerusalem; Kings of the Earth - "Rulers of Palestine"; Seven Mountains - "Very mountainous situation"; Seven Kings - "Seven Roman procurators of Judea or seven Herods"; The Ten Horns - "The allies of Rome in the Jewish Wars".

Weymouth's explanation of the various symbols of Revelation XVII comes from history, but he gathers his data from surprising sources, as a few excerpts from his book will indicate:

> Rome was not capable of violating the covenant of her God, or of being false to her divine Husband, for she never was the married wife of Jehovah. But all through their testimony, this is the sin and this the name which the Old Testament Prophets hurl against Jerusalem. Isaiah 1:21; 32:8. Jeremiah 2:20; 4:30; 9:15. Ezekiel 16:22.23.
>
> "Sitteth upon many waters" --- if interpreted Jerusalem this may refer to the dispersion of the Jews at that time over many nations of the earth, and their world-wide influence.
>
> "Kings of the earth" --- these words mean the Rulers of Palestine ... "Sitting upon a beast" --- if the woman symbolizes ancient Jerusalem, these words symbolize her subjection to and dependence on the imperial power of Rome ... "Seven mountains" --- possibly implying that the interpretation which most readily suggests itself is not the true one. Seven hills may merely denote a very mountainous situation, or worldly prominence. Or it may be interpreted literally of Constantinople, Jerusalem, or Rome.

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131. Franklin Weymouth, Interpretation of Revelation, pp. 661 ff.

The reader can readily see that Weymouth thinks there is a direct connection between the literal Babylon and Jerusalem against whom the prophets cried out because of their idolatry and apostasy; so he goes to Palestine for his interpretation. The following interpretation he offers on the Seven Kings bears this out:

> The phrase "Seven Kings" has been explained of empires rather than of men. If the words be taken literally, they may denote either, 1) Seven Roman emperors. 2) Seven Roman procurators of Judea. 3) The seven Herods. One is still reigning. If he could be identified as Nero, or as any other definite person, this of course would fix the date of the Apocalypse.
>
> The Ten Horns mean possibly the allies of Rome in the Jewish Wars.

We cannot accept Weymouth's interpretation because it limits the imagery of Revelation XVII to one small epoch of history. The tenor and scope of Revelation XVII, however, indicates that the interpreter must find an interpretation which covers all the time from the Apostolic Age until the end of time. The War against the Lamb of verse fourteen certainly indicates the Judgment at the end of the world.

Neither does the interpretation explain the intimate relation between the Harlot and the Beast. And besides, the author uses the words "if", "perhaps", and "possibly" too much.

THE INTERPRETATION OF EMANUEL SWEDENBORG

Summary: Babylon is the Roman Church; Kings of the Earth - "Truths and falsities of the Church"; The Beast - "The Word of God"; Seven Heads - "Intelligence from the Word"; The Ten Kings - "The Word as the power from Divine Truths with those in the Kingdom of France".

Swedenborg is a typical spiritual interpreter, an allegorist in the extreme degree. Like many interpreters, he has a little truth mixed in with a multitude of errors. His interpretation is for the most part far-fetched, highly imaginative, and goes beyond the scope of the text. In fact his commentary on the whole Bible is of this character.

Many call his "Church of the New Jerusalem" non-christian. His theology is a mixture, so it seems, of pantheism, spiritism, theosophy, and rationalism. His case is stated very well in II Thessalonians 2:11. He certainly is no credit to the Swedes.

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But somehow he finds the Papacy in the seventeenth chapter of

Revelation, as the first sentence of his interpretation indicates.[132]

> Since Babylon, which is the Roman Catholic Religion, is treated in the Apocalypse, chapters 17, 18, and 19, its doctrinal tenets must first be presented.

Swedenborg also finds a place for the Reformed Church in the Apocalypse, which is out of order, of course.

> Revelation from the Lord, from the inmost heaven, concerning the Roman Catholic Religion. Hitherto the state of the Church of the Reformed at its end has been treated of; now the state of the Roman Catholic Religion at its end is treated of. ... By the "seven angels" is signified the Lord speaking out of the inmost heaven. ... By the "Great Harlot" is signified the profanation of the holy things of the Word and the Church, and the adulteration of good and truth.

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132. We gathered our material from Swedenborg's book, The Apocalypse Revealed (a free book, as all of his works are distributed free to libraries without even requesting them). Emanuel Swedenborg was quite a character. "He had gained an enviable reputation as scientist, when, at the age of fifty-five, he suddenly resigned his position, claiming to 'have seen wonderful things which are in the heavens and below the heavens and to have been commanded to relate what had been seen'. In order that he might gain a clear vision of the new doctrine, he claims to have been permitted to hold open intercourse with the spirits of every class and to become familiar with their character and surroundings. For this same purpose he held many conversations with angels, devils, with Luther, Melanchthon, and Calvin." (Theodore Engelder, Popular Symbolics, p. 388)

Such an interpretation of the Great Harlot means nothing for the Church or anyone. And how it fits in with Swedenborg's explanation of the Kings of the Earth we would like to know:

> It may further be seen that nothing else is meant by the "Kings of the Earth" but the truths or falsities of the Church, and by their whoredoms the truths of the Church, which are from the Word, falsified, adulterated, and profaned, some passages shall be adduced from the Apocalypse.
>
> By "being drunk with wine" is signified to become insane in spiritual things ... By "wilderness" is signified a church in which there is no longer any truth ... By the "woman" the Roman Catholic, or Babylonish Religion is signified ... By the "scarlet Beast" the Word is signified.

What license to say that the Beast signifies the Word of God! He uses some of the most senseless words and English we have read in many moons. One wants to give up in disgust as he reads his hallucinations. He contrives to make everything signify the Word or Truth in some way. Here is another example --- and notice the impossible sentence structure:

> The "Beast that was" signifies the Word acknowledged as holy among them, and yet really not acknowledged. It is acknowledged as holy indeed because it treats of the Lord, but still it is not acknowledged; for it is not read by the people because they are kept from reading it, and dissuaded by various figments of the monks ... they listen only to the dictates of the Pope.

About the Horns and Heads of Revelation XVII, Swedenborg has the following concoction:

> "Seven Heads" signify intelligence from the Word; intelligence comes from the brain ... seven does not mean "seven" at all, but "all", and is applied to holy things. ... The "Ten Horns" signify much power.

But then he switches to another interpretation of the Seven Heads and Ten Horns when they appear later on in the chapter:

> The "Seven Heads" signify the Divine Goods and Divine Truths of the Word, upon which the Roman Catholic Religion is founded, destroyed in time, and at length profaned. The reason is that the whole Word is profaned and adulterated by that religion.
>
> "Five are fallen" signifies that all the Divine Truths of the Word have been destroyed, except this one, that all power in heaven and earth was given to the Lord; and except another, which has not yet come into question, and when it does, it will not remain, which is, that the Lord's Humanity is Divine.
>
> "Ten Horns are Ten Kings" signifies the Word as the power from Divine Truths with those who are in the Kingdom of France, and are not fully under the yoke of the papal dominion, among whom, however, there has not yet been formed a Church fully separated from the Roman Catholic Religion.

These are not yet the worst examples of Swedenborg's spiritual method of interpretation. As one reads on, he meets the same repetition:

> "Drunk with blood" signifies that religion is insane from the adulterated and profaned divine truths and goods of the Lord, of the Word, and thence of the Church --- by "blood" the falsification, adulteration, and profanation of the Word are signified.

If God gave him His Holy Spirit alone, as Swedenborg claims, we cannot see how he came forth with such imaginations as this. We cannot condone at all Swedenborg's spiritual, allegorical, paradoxical, far-fetched, foolish method of explaining Revelation. Anything that does not make sense cannot be right.

THE EXPOSITION OF EDWARD CLARENCE FARNSWORTH[133]

Summary: The Great Whore is the Kingdom of Anti-Christ; The Scarlet Beast - The Red Dragon; Five Fallen Kings - "five great dynasties which flourished during the passage of the sun through the major portion of a zodiacal sign"; Ten Kings - "represent ten factions or evils; Ten Horns - The Ten Plagues of Egypt. He uses the Zodiac in his interpretation.

Every interpretation we read is different. Mr. Farnsworth's exposition reveals some novel features, especially his references to the signs of the Zodiac, when identifying the Seven Kings.[134]

> The Great Whore sitting upon many waters is the kingdom of Antichrist. The words of John were yet to be filled against the Roman Empire; but the prophecy ended not then, for Rome itself was but a type of the Babylon with which the seventeenth and eighteenth chapters of Revelation deal in an extended way.
>
> The scarlet colored beast typifies the dragon mentioned in chapter twelve ... The verse (about Babylon the Great) describes the Roman Empire and especially the city of Rome under the pagon emperors, particularly Domitian and Nero.

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133. Edward Farnsworth, The Revelation of John, pp. 138-142.

134. Mr. Farnsworth speaks of this method as follows: "All men fail who attempt the book through western methods of interpretation. The would-be interpreter is unable to perceive at the outset the peculiar astrological and zodiacal symbolism of Revelation and the mystery of language. The founders of the ancient mysteries had come to know that the past, present, and future of the earth are indicated by the Zodiac ... Revelation deals with periods comprising thousands of years. To be explicit, it deals with the zodiacal time between the entrance of Pisces-Virgo and that of Capricornus-Cancer in the great equinoctial procession."

But when Farnsworth comes to the "Beast that was, and is not", he has an altogether new rendition, unheard by this writer before:

> The key is in chapter 13:2, and in the words: "and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority". The real seat of the dragon is in hell. That seat he did not relinquish, nor any power peculiar to his own proper place. Verse 8 refers to the Dragon's dominion and seat in the abode of men. It is as if a king should choose a temporary regent. Then it could be said that as a sovereign he was, but now is not, and yet is, for he upholds the regent and can at any time thrust him aside and resume his rightful place. John's play on words is to emphasize the fact that never before was the dragon so nearly personified as he would be at the time indicated.

As we said, this is a new interpretation. But who with a sane mind and who wishes to stay with the text and scope of Scripture and Revelation specifically, can accept it? It is true that Chapters XVII and XIII are related and that some of the images are the same and mean the same.

We cannot accept the "regency theory" at all. It is neither historical nor textual. Chapter XVII is not to be explained in the light of Chapter XIII in such a manner. This is an interpretation thought up in the imagination, tailor-made to fit the situation, but explains nothing.

Every exegete's interpretation of this chapter has to be treated by itself because of the various views within the interpretation. They cannot be classified because they do not follow definite patterns.

But to go on. Farnsworth says the "seven mountains" are "seven kingdoms, each of which is guilty of some or even all of the seven deadly sins, to wit: luxury, wrath, idleness, envy, avarice, gluttony,

and worldly pride."

The "five fallen kings" he says, indicate five great dynasties whose representative kings had departed before the days of John... Each of these dynasties, he says, "flourished during the passage of the sun through the major portion of a zodiacal sign in the equinoctial procession."

What this can mean only Farnsworth himself must know. Farnsworth utilizes the Zodiac and its mysterious signs to assist him in determining the meaning of these kings. But to use astrology to interpret a book of the Bible is atrocious. The Scripture interprets itself. Therefore we cannot accept the interpretation offered here by Farnsworth:

> The sixth king of the kingdom, under Pisces, was the Roman Empire, which, as a nation, came into prominence about 600 B.C., and ended with the fall of Constantinople in 1453 A.D. The fifth kingdom, under Aries, was Israel, which attained to some importance about 1800 B.C., and ceased with the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. The fourth kingdom, under Taurus, was Babylonia, originating at least 4000 B.C., and virtually ending with the death of Alexander.
>
> The third kingdom, under Gemini, was Egypt whose history is traceable beyond the year 5000 B.C. The second kingdom under Cancer, 8900 B.C., was one of those pre-historic civilizations concerning which the Secret Science of the Initiates has revealed much. (We have their interpretation included in this essay.) The first kingdom flourished under Leo at least 11,000 B.C., and was ruled by the last of the Atlantean kings, the remnant of whose land sunk many thousand years before Plato in that cataclysm which the account in Genesis makes the Noahic Deluge. The seventh king, or kingdom, the one to come, is now here and must endure for a short space, but just how long the seventh seal, and trumpet, and vial, will reveal.

Very interesting reading, but the whole plan is incorrect. The dates are wrong. Israel was not a great kingdom in 1800 B.C. Abraham did not receive the promise until 1500 B.C. We do not go back as far as 11,000 B.C., or to a prehistoric age in Biblical chronology. This is explaining the Bible by contradicting the Bible. It is a rather silly explanation when one thinks it over.

> Then the ten kings - who are no more kingly than is the beast - are to represent ten factions; evidently those ten evils which are the fulness of hellish conditions. This for one zodiacal hour, or about ninety days.
>
> In a way the ten horns resemble the ten plagues brought upon Egypt; only now there is no Moses to call off the ten plagues brought upon itself by the kingdom of Antichrist.

Definitely this interpretation offered by Farnsworth does not satisfy the Christian mind. False assumptions and incorrect observations of history make the interpretation itself valueless. The method of interpretation used here is beyond us. It is a concoction of a brain which does not treat the whole of Scripture as a unit and which is ignorant of history. The theory of a king voluntarily choosing a regent and then dethroning him when he wanted to come into power again in the interpretation of verse 8 is ridiculous. God grant that no true Christians get hold of this book and read it and believe it!

Farnsworth is not a bit logical either, nor consistent. The first images he identifies with world empires and kingdoms, but the Beast and others he says are Satan or the Dragon.

THE INTERPRETATION OF DR. MILTON S. TERRY

Summary: The Harlot is Old Jerusalem; "Beast which was, and is not" - A special manifestation of the Red Dragon, or Satan himself; Seven mountains - "seven mountains of Jerusalem"; Ten Horns - "indicate seats of power".

Dr. Terry is a representative interpreter of this passage among the Methodists. His exposition is not specific enough to suit the writer. He dodges the issues, and forms no conclusions. He identifies the central character of Revelation XVII, the Great Harlot, with Ancient Jerusalem.[135]

> The vision of Babylon the Great (chapters xvii, xviii) is a highly wrought apocalyptic picture of the apostate Church of the Old Covenant. The then existing Jerusalem, in bondage with her children (Gal. iv,25), is portrayed as a harlot, and the language and imagery are appropriated largely from Ezekiel's allegory of the same city (Ezek. xvi). It is that murderess of prophets against whom Jesus uttered the terrible words of Matt. xxiii, 34-36. From the beginning of the Roman Empire Jerusalem sought and maintained a heathenism complicity with the Caesars, and the empire became politically the dependence and support.

The interpretation sounds very plausible, at first. But there are many difficulties, some too difficult to clear up. John's vision of Chapter XVII is prophecy, that is, it is to take place after John's day, in the future, not in the past. Notice, as an example, the words

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135. Milton S. Terry, Biblical Hermeneutics, pp. 368-372.

about the kings in verse ten, "and the other is not yet come."

And how does such an interpretation explain the "Beast that was, and is not, and yet is"? It would take some far-fetched exegesis to bridge such a gap. This certainly could not have been said of Rome before the Fall of Jerusalem.

However, the most glaring oversight in such an interpretation is making ancient Jerusalem the mistress over Rome. Jerusalem was always very much a subject of Rome. She never rode astride the Beast; no more than we see a horse ride the rider, instead of the rider riding the horse today.

This difficulty Dr. Terry encounters almost immediately, when he tries to explain verse eighteen ("the woman is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth"). Already arbitrary exegesis, without the dictionary, sets in, for he changes the meaning of "the earth" (γῆ), to mean "the land," that is, Judea:

> Jerusalem was the chief city of that province (Judea), and is, therefore, properly said to "reigh over the kings (not of the earth, and not over emperors and monarchs of the world but) of the land" (chap. xvii,18). It is the same land (γῆ), the tribes of which mourned over the coming of Son of man (chap. 1,7). We, accordingly, take the mystic Babylon to be identical with the great city which, in chap. xi,8, is called Sodom and Egypt, where the Lord was crucified.

Naturally, the exposition of the other images of the chapter must follow this line of thought:

> The Beast with seven heads and ten horns is usually identified with the wild beast from the sea (chap. xiii, 1), and may be understood of Rome and her allied and

> tributary princes who took part in the war against Judea and Jerusalem. The great harlot city, whose holy temple had been made a place of merchandise and a den of thieves (Matt. xxi,13: John ii, 15), was carried for a hundred years by Rome, and at last hated and destroyed by the very kings with whom she had maintained her heathenish traffic.

Upon what grounds may a man limit the carrying of the harlot by the beast to a hundred years? And why to into the past for the fulfillment of this prophecy? This inconsistency also causes Dr. Terry to consider the "Beast which was, and is not" a different beast from the one mentioned in verse three:

> The beast "which was, and is not, and shall come" (παρεσται, shall be present, ver. 8), may symbolize a deeper mystery. He is not a combination of the lion, the leopard, and the bear, nor does he "come up out of the sea" like the beast of chap. xiii, 1, but he is a "scarlet-coloured beast", and "comes up out of the abyss". May he not, therefore, be more properly regarded as a special manifestation of the "great red dragon" of chap. xii, 3?

But farther on in his remarks about the Mystery of Babylon the Great he says the Beast here spoken of is Satan:

> We venture to suggest that the beast "which was, and is not, and shall come," may be understood primarily of Satan himself, under his different and successive manifestations, in the persons of bitter persecutors of the Church.

Which shall it be?

The following interpretation, or no interpretation, is offered

concerning the seven mountains and ten horns:

> The seven heads and ten horns of the dragon indicate seats of power and regal and princely agents through whom the kingly "angel of the abyss" (chap. ix,11) accomplishes his satanic purposes. We need not, therefore, look to the seven hills of Rome, or to ten particular kings, for the solution of the mystery of the scarlet-colored beast.
>
> The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman is sitting (ver. 9). This may indeed refer literally to seven mountains, either of Jerusalem or Rome, for both these cities covered seven heights. There were Zion, Moriah, Acra, and Bezetha, and the three fortified heights, Millo, Ophel, and the rock, seventy-five feet high, on which the Castle of Antonia was built.
>
> But it is as likely to refer, enigmatically, to manifold political supports or alliances, considered as so many seats of power or consolidated kingdoms, and called seven because of covenanted arrangements.

Such is Dr. Terry's exposition of Revelation XVII. We admire Dr. Terry highly as an exegete of sound principles, but we cannot accept his exposition in this case, for the reasons cited above.

THE INTERPRETATION OF DR. J. A. SEISS

Summary: The Harlot - "Not Papal Rome alone, but the representative of all idolatry, false worship, and perversion of the Word"; The Beast is the Roman Empire; Seven Mountains - "Greece, Persia, Babylonia, Assyria, Egypt, Rome, and the seventh is yet to come"; He says nothing of the Ten Kings.

We would be very foolish not to admit that the evaluation of the various interpretations of Revelation XVII is a very difficult task. The reasons for this are, as we have stated many times, that the Lord Himself has not given us the explicit key to the imagery of Revelation; that all is so uncertain; and also that the interpretations of other men often seem very plausible, too.

Before us we have a group of lectures by Dr. Seiss, a man who certainly had a good mind and knew how to use it. Though we are able to find flaws in his interpretation and disagree on good grounds here and there, we readily confess that his is a plausible explanation.

Anyone who wants to read a treatise on why the Papal System is not represented by the Great Harlot, Babylon the Great, should read Dr. Seiss' dissertation.

Because he is a well known interpreter, and because his views regarding the Apocalypse are widely held, we are quoting him at length:[136]

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136. All quotations are taken from Seiss' extensive book, Lectures on the Apocalypse, pp. 109-131.

> That Rome and the Romish system are involved, may readily be admitted; but that this is all, and that the sudden fall of Great Babylon is simply the fall of Romanism, must be emphatically denied, if the inspired portraiture is to stand as it is written.
>
> What then can this rival Woman(opposed to the Woman of Revelation XII) be but the organized Antichurch, the pseudo-church, the Bride made out of Satan, the universal body and congregation of false-believers and false-worshippers? ... And as this Woman is a harlot, she must needs be the great embodiment, source, and representative of all idolatry, false worship, and perversion of the word and institutes of God.
>
> She can by no means be Rome alone, whether Pagan or Papal, any more than the sun-clad Woman is the early Church alone, or the Protestants alone.
>
> How could she be "the mother of the harlots and of the abominations of the earth" if her existence does not date back to, and above all include, the great harlotries and abominations which preceded both the Popes and the Roman emperors?
>
> Besides, we have here the motherhood of various harlots, or systems and economies of harlotry and abominations of the earth. If Pagan Rome ... if Papal Rome is to be understood, that again is but one individual system ... The imagery, therefore, goes back to the beginnings, out of which all false systems, and false worships, and abominations of the earth have come.

The rest of Seiss' interpretation naturally follows from this: If one identifies the Harlot as a certain institution, system, or systems, then the rest of the imagery, if it is to be consistent, must conform with this principle. Thus, following this line of thought, Dr. Seiss writes these words on verse six: "Drunken with the blood of the saints":

> This is positive proof that the Great Harlot is not Papal Rome only, for all the prophets were dead

> hundreds of years before the rise of Papacy; and myriads on myriads of God's true people died as martyrs of the faith ere ever there was a Pope or Papal hierarchy.

The good Doctor is too positive about his statements. Does the text say that the Harlot drank the blood of all the saints who were ever martyred in history? This "positive proof", upon proper investigation, is not positive after all.

The author then comments on verse fifteen, which says that the Harlot sits upon many waters which in turn are "peoples and multitudes, and nations, and tongues" -

> It is only when we understand this mystic Harlot as the whole body of organized alienation from God, as in heathenism, false religions, and spiritual prostitution, that we find an object co-extensive in time and territory with the "peoples and multitudes, and nations, and tongues", which make up the seat, dependence, and support of this great Harlot.

Next he speaks about the Beast, and the seven kings:

> This Beast is the same described in chapter 13 ... The seven hills of the city of Rome, to begin with, are not mountains; and if they were, they are not more characteristic of the situation of Rome than the seven hills are characteristic of Jerusalem.
>
> The succession of the forms of administration, enumerated as Kings, Consuls, Dictators, Decemviers, Military Tribunes, and Emperors, were not seven kings or regal mountains.

But Seiss does turn his brief for Catholicism into an effort of interpretation when he gives what many call a plausible explanation

of the seven kings and the seven mountains, though we do not believe it is altogether the best interpretation which can be found:

> The seven imperial mountains on which she rides must therefore fill up the whole interval; or there was a time, and the most of her history, when she did not ride at all, which is not the fact. The reference is to kings, to mountains of temporal dominion, to empires ...
>
> Preceding Rome the world had five great names or nationalities answering to imperial Rome, and those scarce a schoolboy ought to miss. They are Greece, Persia, Babylon, Assyria, and Egypt; no more, and no less. And these all were imperial powers like Rome. Here, then, are six of these regal mountains; the seventh is yet to come ...
>
> Thus, then, by the clearest, most direct, and most natural signification of the words of the record, we are brought to the identification of these seven mountain kings as the seven great world-powers, which stretch from the beginning of our present world to the end of it.

However, the interpreter goes back to his former system of thought by saying:

> It is not upon one alone, nor upon any particular number of them but upon all of them, the whole seven-headed Beast that the Harlot sits ... To say that the Romish Papacy was thus carried, nurtured, and sustained by the ancient empires of Greece, Persia, Babylon, Assyria, and Egypt, would be a great lie on history ...
>
> By no means then can this Harlot be the Papacy alone, as maintained by all "respectable interpreters." Furthermore, it is a matter of fact, that as surely as Rome in John's day, and Greece, Persia, Babylon, Assyria, and Egypt, before Rome, existed and bore sway on earth as regal mountains, so surely and conspicuously were they each and all ridden by this great Harlot.

It is enough of Seiss. The Roman Catholic Church must have been quite elated when his book appeared. Many carry a torch for the Jews in prophetic literature; he happens to bear the light of polemics for the Church of Rome.

What about his interpretation? What is its value? Notice that it is very general, so much so, that in order to understand him, you must interpret his interpretation! All agree that the Harlot represents evil - therefore, in reality, he has not interpreted the image for us at all; he simply says she pictures "systems and economies of harlotry and abominations of the earth."

This, we must state firmly, does not agree with the text in verse 18 (which he, by the way, leaves out of his "Revised Text"): "And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth."[137]

This is what makes his interpretation contradictory and of less value than one would at first think. He does not give the meaning of the ten horns at all.

For us, his interpretation, though one of the most scholarly and interesting efforts, we have discovered, up to this time, is not adequate. We shall continue to look for something better which will take care of the imagery of the entire chapter in a more unified and complete form.

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137. Those who would refer to his book will find that he uses the whole following chapter (Lecture XXIX, pp. 133-158) to explain the difficulty of verse 18.

THE INTERPRETATION OF DR. C. I. SCOFIELD

Summary: Two Babylons in Revelation; The Harlot - "Ecclesiastical Babylon, which is Apostate Christendom, headed up under the Papacy."

As in most cases in his annotated Bible, Dr. Scofield is not clear in his stand on Revelation XVII. He beclouds the issue and does not make himself understood. His interpretation would mean practically nothing to the average reader:

> Two "Babylons" are to be distinguished in the Revelation: ecclesiastical Babylon, which is apostate Christendom, headed up under the Papacy; and political Babylon, which is the Beast's confederated empire, the last form of Gentile world-dominion.
>
> Ecclesiastical Babylon is "the great whore" and is destroyed by political Babylon (Rev. xvii, 15-18), that the Beast may be the lone object of worship. The power of political Babylon is destroyed by the return of the Lord in glory (See "Armageddon", Rev. xvi, 14) ... The language of Rev. xviii seems beyond question to identify "Babylon", the "city" of luxury and traffic, with "Babylon" the ecclesiastical center, viz. Rome ..."

Notice that Scofield says nothing about the heads and horns. Neither does he show how the Papacy comes to the front in world power. And there is no room in this chapter for two "Babylons". Neither does he answer the question, Who is the scarlet-colored beast? It seems that his notes would fit Rev. XIII much better than this chapter, when

we think of the civil and religious powers. His placing of an ecclesiastical power in the general picture is good, but we taste the bit of Millennialism in the last paragraph.

We must also dismiss this interpretation as inadequate; it does not make the chapter clear at all. Nothing new is added.

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC INTERPRETATION[138]

Summary: The Whore is not identified; The Seven Heads - "They are seven emperors of Rome, Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, and Nero; "One is" - Vespasian; "The seventh" - Titus; "The Eighth" - Domitian; "One that was, and is not" - Nero Redivivus; Ten Horns - "vassal rulers under the supremacy of Rome."

Naturally, the Catholic Church resents very much the fact so many interpreters have found the Holy See and its corruption and cruelty in the Apocalypse.

For the Roman Church's interpretation, which we certainly consider a representative one since it represents so many constituents, we sought the most reliable source there is - their own Catholic Encyclopedia, which has the official "Imprimatur" seal of the Catholic Church and of which it is said in the Preface: "The Catholic Encyclopedia proposes to give to its readers, full and authoritative information on the entire cycle of Catholic interests, action and doctrine".

Following are some excerpts from the section dealing with the Apocalypse. The rancor and disturbed ire of the Catholics is at once evident:

> Racial hatred and religious rancor have at all times found in the Apocalypse's visions much

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138. All quotations are from The Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol. I, pp. 594-599.

> suitable and gratifying matter. Such persons as Mahomet, the Pope, Napoleon, etc., have in turn been identified with the beast and the harlot.
>
> To the "reformers" particularly the Apocalypse was an inexhaustible quarry where to dig for invectives that they might hurl them against the Roman hierarchy. The seven hills of Rome, the scarlet robes of the cardinals, and the unfortunate abuses of the papal court[139] made the application easy and tempting.

The Catholic view of Revelation and their method of interpretation seems to be that of the Preterist, as we see from these words:

> Owing to the patient and strenuous research of scholars (no doubt Catholic!), the interpretation of the Apocalypse has been transferred to a field free from the odium theologicum. By them the meaning of the Seer is determined by the rules of common exegesis. Apart from the resurrection, the millennium, and the plagues preceding the final consummation, they see in John's visions references to the leading events of his time. Their method of interpretation may be called, historic as compared with the theological and political application of former ages.

The Roman Catholics say they have used the correct method of interpretation in their work on Revelation, one which does not contain the "abuses" of the Protestant exegetes. The last sentence in the above quoted paragraph just is not representing the facts. What is historical is also political and also theological if considered Bible interpretation at all.

They here pour fire upon the heads of the Protestant divines,

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139. The italics are ours. At least this Catholic author is honest enough to admit it!

while they, if their method is examined closely, use the same manner of interpretation as we do, that is, a method based upon the Laws of Identity. We shall see shortly that they also identify the images of this chapter as definitely as we do and in the same manner and for the same reasons. If our method is wrong, so is theirs.

> The seven heads of the beast are seven emperors. Five of them the Seer says are fallen. They are Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, and Nero. The year of Nero's death is A.D. 68. The Seer goes on to say, "One is," namely, Vespasian, A.D. 70-79. He is the sixth emperor. The seventh, we are told by the Seer, "is not yet come. But when he comes his reign will be short." Titus is meant. who reigned but two years (79-81). The eighth emperor is Domitian (81-96). Of him the Seer has something very peculiar to say. He is identified with the beast. He is described as the one that "was, and is not, and shall come up out of the bottomless pit."
>
> All this sounds like oracular language. But the clue to its solution is furnished by a popular belief largely spread at the time. The death of Nero had been witnessed by few. Chiefly in the East a notion had taken hold of the mind of the people that Nero was still alive ... They expected him to return. The Seer either shared their belief or utilized it for his own purpose.
>
> Under Nero the first persecution took place. The second occured under Domitian ... In this way the Seer was led to regard Domitian as a second Nero, "Nero Redivivus". Hence he described him as "the one that was, that is not, and that is to return." Hence also he counts him as the eighth and at the same time makes him one of the preceding seven; viz. the eighth, Nero.

All this seems very logical, and in some respects it is. We have copied out much of it because it represents the best explanation of the Nero Redivivus Theory we have thus far met. Yet it is not

all correct, neither is it truly historical.

There are two major mistakes in this set-up. The one is that in the list of emperors as given there are some emperors left out so that the arithmetic would come out right; Galva, Otho, and Vitellius. We do not believe this omission can be explained by the shortness of the reigns. Whenever one tries to make the list of emperors theory work, one runs into much difficulty. The problem is: Where shall one start counting?

And, of course, we may expect that the Romanists would lean over backwards to get the Roman Empire into this picture as much as possible, and that is no doubt why they espouse the theory, even though it has difficulties. But we never thought the Romanists, many of whom are noted for their scholarship, would adopt the Nero Redivivus Theory.

The second mistake in this interpretation is a defeating one. If we accept the list of emperors as the Romanists give them here, then John wrote Revelation during Vespasian's reign! Note the words quoted in another paragraph: "The Seer goes on to say, 'One is', namely, Vespasian, A.D. 70-79."

This becomes a major contradiction when we read on another page that they set the date of the Apocalypse during Emperor Domitian's reign, 81-96. And how could Domitian be a second Nero when he wasn't reigning yet? Yes, when one tries to interpret verses nine and ten by a list of emperors, he runs into many difficulties, and we find that almost every interpreter has a little different angle.

But notice the superficial method the Catholic interpreter uses to cover up this glaring error, which he himself happily admits exists:

> To this objection (the one we have mentioned above), however, it may be answered that it was the custom of apocalyptic writers, e. g., of Daniel, Enoch, and the Sibylline books, to case their visions into the form of prophecies and give them the appearance of being the work of an earlier date. No literary fraud was thereby intended. (?) ... Though actually banished to Patmos in the reign of Domitian, after the destruction of Jerusalem, he wrote as if he had been there and had seen his visions in the reign of Vespasian when the temple perhaps yet existed. Cf. II, 1.2.

We cannot subscribe to such a long-range theory with all these loop-holes in it. First of all, because it is not historical; secondly, it also does injustice to the Divine Origin of Revelation by using the Nero Redivivus theory, as they say, "the Seer utilized it for his own purpose", accusing an inspired writer of fraud.

We never even imagined that the usually sharp Catholic scholars would fall back upon the Nero myth to support their interpretation. It is definitely a myth, and to accuse the holy writer of using it deceitfully or because he did not know better is equal to blasphemy. It is a somewhat different use of the myth by making it represent Domitian, the "second Nero". We cannot believe there is mythology in the Apocalypse; if there is, it is not divine or apostolic. And without it the whole interpretation of the Romanists falls into a worthless heap.

They do not offer a great deal on the ten horns:

> The ten horns are commonly explained as the vassal rulers under the supremacy of Rome. They are described as kings (basileus), here to be taken in a wider sense, that they are not real kings, but received power to rule with the beast. Their power,

> moreover, is but for "one hour", signifying its short duration and instability. (xvii, 17).

The whole Catholic interpretation is a little shaky and somewhat shady. They do not even identify the Harlot! There are too many contradictions and far-fetched conclusions, and a wrong use of history.

In the light of these observations, their words quoted before accusing the Protestants of inaccuracies sound rather out of place: "Their (Catholic scholars) method of interpretation may be called historic as compared with the theological and political application of former ages." We will continue to look for a better explanation of the Great Harlot and her vassals of heads and horns.

CATHOLIC INTERPRETATION NO. II

Summary: The Harlot is the City of Rome; The Beast is the heathen Roman Empire; "The other is not yet come" - the Roman Caesar Julian; "Five are fallen" - Diocletian, Maximian, Galerius, Maximinus, and Maxentius; "The seventh" - Constantine (third son of Constantine the Great); The Ten Kings - vassal kings to the Romans after Julian.

In an old Catholic Bible in German we found an altogether different idea on interpretation of Revelation XVII, showing that not even the Catholic interpreters are in agreement on these images:[140]

> Die auf vielen Wassern sitzende Hure ist die Stadt Rom, die Beherrscherin vieler Voelker (v.15.), wie deutlich aus V.3 und 9 hervorgeht. Es kann nur die Frage sein, ob darunter Rom vor oder nach dem Falle des heidnischen Reiches zu verstehen sie. Offenbar das letztere.

Then we find a new interpretation which we had not encountered before, namely that in this chapter we have a picture of the great Emperor Constantine:

> Wir haben uns also in dem Folgenden die Schicksale Roms nach Konstantins des Groszen Uebertritt zur

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140. Dr. Joseph Franz, Die Heilige Schrift, unter Kapitel XVII des Offenbarungs.

Christus-Religion zu deuten. Rom befand sich zu dieser Zeit in einer Wueste; denn das heidnische Reich war gefallen, und Konstantin hatte sogar den Sitz der Regierung von Rom nach Konstantinopel (Byzenz) verlegt.

The Beast is the heathen Roman Empire, and with this the writer ties up the emperors of the fourth century:

Das Thier (das Heidnische Reich), welches du gesehen hast, ist gewesen ... Unter dem Wiederdommen des Thieres ist zunaechst die Regierung des abtruemigen Kaisers Julian zu verstehen ... Er regierte aber keine vollen zwanzig Monate, und mit seinem Ableben verschwand das Heidenthumfuer immer aus dem Roemischen Staatsleben.

Sinn der Verse 9 - 11. Das ist die sinnvolle Bedeutung des Weibes auf dem Thiere. Die sieben Koepfe des Thieres bezeichnen ihre sieben Berge, und zugleich sieben ihre Koenige ... Durch die sieben ist deutlich die Siebenhuegelstadt Rom bezeichnet ... Die fuenf vorhergehenden Kaiser sind demnach Diocletian, Maximian, Galerius, Maximinus, mit dem Zunamen Taja, und Maxentius, welche all umkamen in den Jahren 311-313, kurz vor dem Verfallen der heidnischen Reiches.

Es fragt sich nun, welches dersiebente sei? ... Nun waren zu zeit, da Licinius mit Konstantin herrschte, die drei Sohne des Konstantin - Konstantin, Konstans, und Konstantinus schon am Leben, und eben darum auch shon kuenstige Caesarin, nichtaber Julian, der 309 nach Ehr. von den Soldaten zu Parisnoch zu Lebzeiten des Konstantinus zum Kaiser ausgerufen wird. Dieser ist also der siebente. Er stellt das Heidenthum wieder her, regierte aber nich einmal zwei Jahre nahm ein elendes Ende. Ein achter Kaiser wird nich mehr angegeben, sonder nur das Thier selbst wird so benannt.

Ganz der Natur des Sach gemaesz! Denn ein heidnischer Kaiser regierte nich mehr nach Julian, dem Abruennigen, wohl aber dauerte das Heidenthum ... Aber dieses Heidenthum

> wird in's Verderben gehen, nich nur werden es von Zeit zu Zeit dieselben Strafen treffen, die ueber das Roemische Heidenthum ergangen sind, vergl. 18, 4), zuletze am Ender des Zeit wird es voellig vernichtet werden, und das Christenthum einen vollkommenen Sieg darueber feiern.

This old Catholic German Bible also has something on the ten horns or ten kings:

> Darunter sind die heidnischen Koenige zu verstehen, welche sich bald nach Julian der verschiedenen Provinzen des Roemischen Reiches bemaechtigten. Sie sind Horner an dem Thiere, nicht weil sie dem Roemischen Reiche unterworten, sondern weil sie Heiden waren.

This in an entirely different approach to the imagery of Chapter XVII. It is historical in the main too; in fact, the interpreter has worked out the system well. But we believe this explanation lies beside the text and not in it.

Notice that the Scripture says: "Fuenf sind gefallen, einer ist, und ein anderer ist noch nicht gekommen." (V.10) "Einer ist," certainly does not allow us to identify the kings of the passage with emperors who lived over 200 years after John lived. This king lived in John's day. This is just one reason the interpretation does not satisfy.

THE INTERPRETATION OF CHARLES T. RUSSEL[141]

Summary: The Woman is the Roman Church; The Beast - "Pagan Rome"; "The Beast that thou sawest" - Antichrist; Seven Kings - "Seven forms of Roman Government"; The Kings - "Desendants of the ten powers originally composing the Roman Empire."

Herewith is presented the Interpretation of the imagery of Revelation XVII by the Rev. Charles T. Russel, representing the Watch Tower Society. He entitles his chapter on Revelation 17 "The Papacy's Last Stand". Here are some notes on the chapter:

> "And I saw a Woman" - The Roman Catholic Church ...
> "Sit upon a scarlet colored Beast - Pagan Rome, and its successors.

From the next words of explanation the reader will clearly understand our difficulty when we tried to classify all interpretations under various heads; it was impossible because they all differ in some detail. Here, too; Dr. Russel gives a usual interpretation and then suddenly swerves to the left with these words:

> The Beast that thou sawest - The Antichrist.
> Was - Exercised actual dominion until 1799 A.D.

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141. Charles Russel, "The Finished Mystery", in "Studies of the Scriptures, pp. 259-269. Russel is a representative of the Watch Tower Society (Jehovah's Witnesses).

> And is not - Has not had even a vestige of temporal power since 1870. Since then it has been in oblivion, the "bottomless pit".

That doesn't make a great deal of sense. It is date setting.

However, in the next paragraph Russel has a clearer note, and at least a plausible though somewhat incorrect interpretation. We might inform the reader in passing that the Decemvirate, the Triumvirate, and the Dictatorship of Caesar really were all parts of the Republic:

> And there are seven kings - seven forms of government of the Holy Roman Empire, the devil's own particular pattern of government. Five are fallen - 1. The Regal period, 753-510 B.C. 2. The Republic, 509-451 B.C. 3. The Decemvirate. 4. The Triumvirate. 5. The Dictatorship of Caesar.
>
> And they are ten kings - The rulers, whether kings, kaisers, presidents or others who have dragged into the slaughter house the descendants of the ten powers originally composing the Roman Empire.

THE INTERPRETATION OF PHILIP MAURO

> Summary: The Woman - "has its most conspicuous exemplification in Catholicism"; The Beast - the Roman Empire; Seven Heads - "Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome, the seventh to come"; "The Beast that Was" - "The League of Nations".

Mr. Mauro does well as a theologian, even though he is a layman.[142] However, he is not of the conservative school and at times becomes rather radical in some of his views. Dr. L. Fuerbringer says: "He is of a different education than ours".

He identifies the Great Harlot as Catholicism, and has rather sane views on the other images of Revelation Seventeen, but he goes off on a tangent when explaining the figure of the Beast.

About the Great Whore he remarks as follows:

> The woman of Chapter XVII, on the other hand, is identified with the earthly city, Babylon (vv.5,18), and instead of being the immaculate bride of the Lamb, is one with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication (v.2). This then is the false "Church", which has had a recognizable existence in the world since the fourth century, and which has had its most conspicuous exemplification in Catholicism. All the symbols and descriptive items confirm this view, some of them in a very

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142. The fly-leaf of the book has this note: "Mr. Mauro is an eminent and able lawyer. A member of the Bar of the United States Supreme Court. A man accustomed to weighing evidence, and a profound student of the Bible".

striking way.[143]

Speaking of the Great Harlot with special reference to the sentence, "sitting upon many waters", Mr. Mauro writes:

> The application is plain. Papal Rome has enormously enriched herself at the expense of the peoples, multitudes and nations (the "many waters") upon which she has practiced her seductive arts and enchantments. Her treasures are fabulous, her revenues enormous, and the aggregate value of her holdings of lands and buildings runs into astronomical figures.[144]

That Mr. Mauro believes, with some restrictions and reservations that the Papacy is the Great Harlot may be seen from his words about the words in verse four, "And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet color":

> Another identifying mark is given in the description of the woman's attire, which is of purple and scarlet color, with adornments of gold and precious stones. The colors, purple and scarlet, are conspicuous in the vestments of the Roman Clergy, scarlet being identified with the cardinals, the "princes of the Church". 145
>
> A further and final mark of identification is found in verse 6, which points definitely to Rome's bloody record of persecution and slaughter of the saints of God and of the martyrs of Jesus. The word "drunken"

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143. Philip Mauro, Of Things Which Soon Must Come To Pass, pp. 482-483.
144. Ibidem, p. 485.
145. Ibidem, p. 486.

> expresses forcibly the state of being glutted or surfeited with blood; though in truth it has seemed as if her thirst for the blood of God's saints were insatiable.[146]

The Beast Mr. Mauro identifies with the Roman Empire. This is only to be expected since he voices the opinion that the Pope is the Great Harlot. Here is what he says:

> It is well, however, to recall particularly that in John's day the ungodly world-power was in its sixth stage, that of the Roman Empire, corresponding to the sixth head of the beast, and that there was to be yet another stage ... For the Israel of God in its total life history had been in subjection to these six powers successively, Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome; leaving but one more, the seventh, to make that history of oppression and subjection full and complete.[147]

We are not particularly fond of the explanation of the seven heads of the beast as the great world powers of history, because not all of these were parts of the Roman Empire (heads of the Beast). This interpretation gives the exegete much difficulty in explaining verses ten and eleven of Revelation XVII in a logical congruous manner. If we identify the Beast as the Roman Empire, as Mauro does, then the heads of the Beast must be part of the Beast.

The author hits a new high of far-fetched interpretation when he writes about the beast "that was, and is not, and yet is", however:

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146. Ibidem, p. 488.
147. Ibidem, pp. 400 and 488.

> As to the one that was (and is) yet to come, there are various and cogent reasons for believing, though we may not affirm it with certainty, that it is even now in the process of formation, and at a rapid rate, in the political doings, compacts, (1933), discussions and alliances between the principal states of Europe. What is apparently close at hand is a superstate (the League of Nations) which will be the seventh and last stage of the beast government, and ten associated kingdoms which will "receive power as kings one hour with the beast".
>
> But it is given to us to know that God's hand will be the active agent in it; that He will put in their hearts to fulfill His will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast (the League of Nations, or something similar).

Mauro follows one good rule in his interpretation of Scripture. He interprets Revelation in the light of the rest of the Bible, especially the Old Testament prophets.

But finally he becomes too confusing to follow, though many of his individual interpretations are good. As an over-all pattern his interpretation is not homogeneous enough to suit the more conservative divine. It seems that every expositor of this Chapter has some variation off the interpretations of others. As yet we have found no two alike in every detail.[148]

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148. The critical reader is immediately let in on the secret or underlying views on Revelation of Mr. Mauro from some words of his in the Preface of the book: "The major part of the contents of this volume was published in 1925 under the title The Patmos Visions. Subsequent studies of the Scriptures and observance of recent developments in the spheres of world politics and economics, while strongly confirming the main principles and nearly all the details of the interpretation presented in that volume, have indicated the need of certain revisions and additions." He follows, in other words, the church historical view too closely and makes unwarranted comparisons and identifications. As a whole, however, any Lutheran student will not waste money by having Mauro on his bookshelf.

INTERPRETATION OF THE AMERICAN COMMENTARY

Summary: The Woman - "An impure and hateful power"; The Harlot - "A pretender to the character and prerogatives of the Church".

This commentary on Revelation was written by a Dr. Justin A. Smith, and is published by The American Baptist Publication Society of Philadelphia, and thus we are inclined to call it a "Baptist Interpretation of Revelation."

The commentary is well written, but Dr. Smith fails to take a position in regard to the imagery of Chapter XVII. For instance, he writes as follows concerning the Great Harlot:

> Many commentators ... understand by the woman the Church in its condition of spiritual apostasy ... It may be well doubted if there can be such a thing as a faithless church. There may be what shall call itself a church, yet there can be surely no such thing as a false church ... for the very fact of its falseness proves that it is no Church of Christ at all.
>
> We decline, therefore, to see in this woman on the scarlet beast the Mother of the Man-child ... For the present, we simple suggest the impossibility of viewing the woman of this chapter as in any sense either the church of Christ, or a church of Christ, but as an impure and hateful power, assuming the name and seeking to impose herself upon the world as alone entitled to recognition as that church which is to God "as the apples of His eye".

Later on in his essay Dr. Smith says the Harlot is a "pretender

to the character and prerogatives of the church" and identifies the Harlot in a weak manner with the Papacy.

INTERPRETATION OF JAMES M. PRYSE[149]

Summary: Babylon - "As the Mighty City is the human body"; The Seven Heads - "The seven cardinal desires of evil"; Ten Horns - "Five pranas"; "The Apocalypse gives the esoteric interpretation of the Christos-myth".

We have seen how one man who called himself a master interpreter used the signs of the Zodiac to interpret Chapter XVII of Revelation. We bring to the reader's attention now an interpretation which is even more guilty of breaking the laws of hermeneutics and plain common sense. While browsing in a city library in the theological department in quest of someone's ideas on this chapter, we discovered an interpretation, the value of which is not that it is new or different, but that it is simply brutal and diabolical. It is what we call a crass interpretation.

Superlative claims about the author's ability and his "inspiration and insight" immediately stamp it as false. It is perhaps what one would call a mystical allegorical interpretation with special reference to pagan mythology and legend. The author insists that he has pierced through the "literal and historic veils of the Sacred Scriptures to their deeper spiritual meanings".

This exposition illustrates the old truth that nothing is so foolish, so heretical, but that someone will teach and believe it in

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149. The Apocalypse Unsealed, pp. 1, 5, 79, 187-189 passim.

all gravity and confidence, leading many sheep astray. For centuries the Roman Pope has taught that no one but the Roman Church can properly understand and authoritatively explain the Bible. Here we have a similar proud claim.

Such heresies as this should move us to read what St. Paul once wrote to the Thessalonians, 2 Thess. 2:10-11.[150] It is about as crass as the Office of War Information's announcement often heard over the radio these days: "Be careful when you walk across the street. Live to see Victory!" Let us call it a new heresy.

The complete title of the book reads: "The Apocalypse Unsealed, Being An Esoteric Interpretation Of The Initiation Of Ioannes Commonly Called The Revelation Of St. John". Here is what it means:

> They (conventional interpreters who use historical method) translate its title Revelation, but it reveals nothing to them ... That Ioannes could not possibly have intended the title of his occult treatise to convey the meaning of 'revelation' is evident from the nature of the work, which is profoundly esoteric and couched in the mystery-language of the zodiac.
>
> The word apokalypsis is clearly a substitute for epopteia, 'initiation into seership'.
>
> Now in plain words, what does this very occult book, the Apocalypse, contain? It gives the esoteric interpretation of the Christos-myth; it tells what "iesous the Christos" really is; it explains the nature of the old serpent, who is the Devil and Satan; it repudiates the profane conception of an anthropomorphic God.

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150. 2 Thess. 2:10-11: "And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusions, that they should believe a lie."

In order to interpret Revelation, says Pryse, the interpreter must have the Key, the Gnosis, which is given only to the few:

> In the primitive Christian Church, organized as a secret society, this Gnosis, or secret science, was guarded with jealous care, being imparted only to a comparative few who were deemed worthy of initiation.

When one looks at the results of this metaphysical and esoteric interpretation, he knows there is ample proof that the devil is still at work. We turn to Chapter XVII and the esoteric, rather, "cholic" commentary:

> The two "women" of the Apocalypse are both goddesses in the pagan sense ... Babylon, as the Mighty City is the human body; and as the fallen Woman she is a Goddess, the Magna Mater of the temple prostitutes in the Mystery-cult of Rhea, or Astarte.
>
> As a Goddess, the infernal Aphrodite, the depraved Virgo symbolizes the anima bruta, or lower world-soul, which is saturated with sexuality. In this role she holds a cup, which is the adjacent constellation Crater, the Mixing-bowl failed to have belonged to Iacchos, the God of orgiastic revelry.
>
> The red Dragon, the epithumetic, passional nature, is the principle which, if close alliance with the Beast, or phrenic mind, impels the soul to continue incarnate, and he thus sustains the Woman, who typifies physical existence ... The formula, "was, is not, and shall be present", merely expresses in an enigmatical way the Platonic doctrine that in the spheres of generation "nothing really is, but all things are becoming".

The man, and his name is James M. Pryse, who wasted good human time to think up and write this indigestible mass of sixteen-cylinder

words which is not only tasteless but poisonous, should be considered a public menace. Why waste time copying more or studying more, the reader asks? The simple answer is, if nothing else, to show how apostate the human being may become.

> The seven heads of the Dragon are, like those of the Beast, the seven cardinal desires (not virtues!) but in one they are mental, in the other instinctual; and the seven mountains are the seven chakras ... The ten horns are the five pranas, each of which is dual, positive and negative, where they are merely the life-winds, or vital forces ... The waters are the great sea of generated life ... The rulers of the earth are the underlying forces of the material world.

The abuse of God's Holy Word and of our good English language is apparent enough. The exposition (?) speaks for itself. The hope of this writer is that the Peoria Public Library, Peoria, Illinois, received this book as a gift and did not use the tax-payers' money to purchase such trash. We will have nothing to do with the interpretation of this wild-eyed fanatic.

THE INTERPRETATION OF FORD C. OTTMAN

Summary: The Harlot - "An apostate ecclesiastical system ... in a general way characterizes Romanism throughout the entire time of her history"; The Beast that is to come - "Rome shall revive in its pagan character, while Rome Papal shall retain throughout the human form".

The Rev. Ford C. Ottman, no doubt a Methodist or Presbyterian,[151] presents a view of Revelation XVII which in many respects is much more sensible than many we have studied. With certain reservations, he says that the imagery of this Chapter fits the Roman Catholic Church throughout its history better than any other interpretation. However, we are not supporting him in his statement that the interpretation of this chapter is an open question:

> The woman of this chapter is, beyond all possibility of successful contradiction, an apostate ecclesiastical system. Whether she represents the papal church - as many contend - or the entire mass of professing Christendom after the true Church has been taken from the earth, is an open question.
>
> The indications are of such a character as to mark out more particularly the ecclesiastical system now known as the papal church. Romanism shall be in existence at any time, but more fearfully apostate than she has ever been. The definite marks here given are such as have in a general way characterized Romanism throughout the entire time of her history.

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151. Ford C. Ottman, The Unfolding of the Ages in the Revelation of St. John, pp. 378 - 383.

> If she represents the papal church - and this seems most consistent throughout - then the long dream of the papacy is found here to be fully realized. She has not only ecclesiastical, but also temporal authority. The purple and scarlet in which she is arrayed are the symbols of royalty and earthly glory.

But we cannot agree with everything Ottman advances as explaining this chapter. For instance, when he says, in speaking of the "Beast that was, and is not", that this means "Rome shall revive in its pagan character, while Rome papal shall retain throughout the human form", we wonder about what he is speaking.

Nor do we agree with this statement: "The ecclesiastical government, with temporal authority subject to it, shall for the time being deprive the beast of power, and this justifies the expression, 'The beast that was and is not'."

And this observation is not entirely within the scope of the text: "Rome declined and fell under the sixth form of empire. It will revive under a seventh form. The imperial head shall, of course, be the seventh head. Receiving a death-stroke, which is afterwards healed, he shall return to power as the eighth head. Thus it is easily seen how 'the beast that was and is not', even he is the eighth and is of the seven". We don't see how it can be "easily seen" from such an interpretation.

Neither can we agree with the author when he says that "the nations of the earth are yet to be generally, if not indeed universally, papalized."

In general, however, his interpretation is not so disgusting

as many we have studied. He leaves out, indeed, many of the important details. He does not identify the heads and horns specifically; for instance, he does not discus the beast enough to satify this reader. But credit is due him for finding in the Great Harlot the Antichrist with religious power.

INTERPRETATION OF JOHN QUINCY ADAMS[152]

Summary: Babylon - "not the Catholic Church alone, but the mother of all the impurity in the Catholic Church, all the impurity intermingled with Protestantism, and then mother of every abomination outside of these realms"; The Beast - "The Political Sovereignty of this world in its final consummation"; Ten Horns - "Ten countries of Europe and Asia"; Five are fallen - "Assyria, Babylonia, Medo-Persia, Egypt, Greece, and Rome is the sixth"; The Seventh - "The federation of the divided kingdoms of the old Roman Empire in a tight alliance".

Adams, whose book was printed by The Prophetical Society of Dallas, Texas, calls attention to the "two women" of the Apocalypse in the opening paragraph of his work. He refers to the pure woman and the fallen woman; the former in chapter twelve, the latter in chapter seventeen. He says both are mothers, but "the one is sustained by celestial wings; the other is carried along by the Beast with the seven heads and ten horns."

The most outstanding feature of the fallen woman he says, is her harlotry, both spiritual and literal. Jesus Christ, the Savior, is to be the master and God of every soul; but when a soul is aligned with another, it is harlotry, in whoredom. When a people worship for God what is not God, the Scriptures call it whoredom, adultery, fornica-

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152. J.Q. Adams (no relation to an early President!) is an extreme and wild-eyed Millennialist. Moreover, he is a date-setter. He wrote the book studied in 1924, wherein he predicted that the Second Advent of Christ to Earth would probably take place on October 20, 1930. He also prophesies many other events and dates, saying it is all deducted from the Scripture.

tion. (Jeremiah 3:6,8,9; Ezekiel 16:32; Hosea 1 and 2; Revelation 2:22).

This interpreter, however, says that since the woman riding the beast is the "mother of harlots and abominations of the earth", she (or Babylon) is not the Catholic Church entirely.[153]

> Then Babylon is not the Catholic Church alone. There are abominations outside of both Protestantism and Catholicism. This Babylon is mother of all the impurity in the Catholic Church, all the impurity intermingled with Protestantism, and then mother of every abomination outside of these realms. It goes back to the beginning of our world, all of which is sprung from the one man, Noah.[154]

Mr. Adams also claims that after Noah all the evil and rebellion against God came from Shinar and the Tower of Babel (which he also calls Babylon). He says all spiritual harlotry stems from there. Thus he identifies the harlot with the evil and ungodliness and apostasy of the world. He gives an insight to his view of the whole of Revelation, the Seventeenth Chapter, when he says:

> How fitting it is that as all the apostasy in the world today was sent out from Babylon, that Babylon is to be remade the world's center for final judgment where apostasy entered, and that he, Nimrod, the person Satan used to initiate the apostasy of today, should be returned personally and literally as the final Antichrist to be crushed by the returning Lord![155]

The author of this fantastic book does not identify the Beast

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153. Quotations taken from His Apocalypse, by the author mentioned above.
154. Ibid., p. 307.
155. Ibid., p. 307.

in his notes on this chapter.[156] But he does speak of the seven mountains whereon the woman sits and also of the seven heads and ten horns. He says these words have caused many commentators to label Babylon as Rome, because of Rome's being built on seven hills.

"But, in in the first place," he goes on as he disagrees, "the hills of Rome are not 'mountains'. Next, 'mountains' are frequently Biblical symbols of kingdoms."[157] Then he quotes David in Psalm 30:7, "Lord, by Thy Favor thou has made my mountain strong."

Adams states in this chapter that kings and their kingdoms are meant. Then he asks the question, "What five great kingdoms had fallen before John's day?" In answer he says, Assyria, Babylonia, Medo-Persia, Egypt, and Greece. Rome was the kingdom that made and yet makes the sixth kingdom.

The seventh, according to Adams, that follows is the federation of these divided kingdoms of the old Roman Empire in tight alliance: Britain, France, Spain, Italy, Austria, Greece, Balkan Confederation, Turkey, Syria, and Egypt. This federation will last only a little while, for the beast becomes head only of it, but in his reign takes in all the nations as the eighth kingdom.[158]

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156. In the author's notes on the Thirteenth Chapter of Revelation, however, he says the Beast is "the Political Sovereignty of this world and its final consummation", and he identifies the ten horns as England, France, Spain, Italy, Austria, Greece, Balkan States, Turkey, Syria, Egypt. He reports, too, that the Antichrist is a Supernatural, and not an ordinary person, though an individual person. (pp.240-249 and passim).

157. Ibid., page 308.

158. Ibid., page 309.

The exegete must stretch the meaning of the word ὁ βασιλεύς (king) in verses ten and twelve to make it say "kingdom". We also do not agree with all the choices Adams has made for the ten horns. For these reasons we are reluctant to accept these interpretations.

The rest of Adams' book is such a jumbled mass of human prophecy and arbitrary date-setting outside the scope of the whole of Scripture that one soon gives up in his attempt to wend his way through its labyrinthian mazes.

He often brings in the Papacy and the Pope and his Cardinals, but he is not specific. Naturally, his view of Revelation is from the Futurist standpoint; most of the events all lie in the future.

INTERPRETATION OF REV. W. HENDRIKSEN

Summary: Babylon = "The world as center of anti-christian seduction at any moment in history"; The Beast = "Clearly Rome"; The Beast that Was and Is Not = "Represents the various ancient empires"; The Seven Heads = "Seven antichristian world-empires"; Ten Horns = "They represent the power of evil in every realm and phase of society".

The Rev. W. Hendriksen wrote an interpretation of the entire book of Revelation entitled More Than Conquerors.[159] In as few words as possible we will try to tabulate his views of the various images in Revelation, Chapter Seventeen.

The explanations he offers are, like those of all other men, different in many phases. In fact, it seems that much of what he says is contradictory. For instance, it can be noted that he says that the Great Harlot is the City of Rome and then again that it is not.

> Now, in order to arrive at the correct view with respect to the symbolical meaning of this figure, we must bear in mind, first of all, that Babylon is called the great whore. In other words, the symbol indicates that which allures, tempts, seduces, draws people away from God.
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> Secondly, we must remember that this whore is a worldly city ... a reference to a great industrial and commercial metropolis ... Now, the beast is the entire antichristian persecution movement

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159. The Rev. Hendriksen is Pastor of the Christian Reformed Church in Oakdale Park at Grand Rapids, Michigan. More than Conquerors was his thesis for his Doctor's Degree granted by Pike's Peak Bible Seminary of Manitou Springs, Colorado, in 1939.

> throughout history, embodied in successive world-empires.
>
> Thirdly, Babylon is viewed as past, present, and future; its form changes; its essence remains. Hence, we conclude that also the whore represents the world as center of antichristian seduction at any moment in history. The beast, very clearly, is past, present, and future. Here the reference to the whore at John's time, is clearly Rome. The imperial city attracted to her pleasures the kings of the nations. Even the saints were torn to pieces in its circuses for the amusement and entertainment of the public.
>
> Babylon, then, is the world as center of seduction at any moment in history; particularly, during this entire present dispensation ... Observe the close association between beast - the empire of the world - and woman - seduction.[160]

This is confusing for any reader. It is a mix-up, as are many attempts to explain this chapter by means of temporal powers altogether. By partially identifying the harlot and the beast with the same explanation, the author misses the mark.

It is difficult not to be critical of such an interpretation as this, especially when in a footnote Dr. Hendriksen adds these words:

> We reject the following views (of the Harlot, Babylon): A. Babylon is the literal city which will be rebuilt on the bank of the River Euphrates. B. Babylon is the apostate church - the Babylon of Rev. 17-19 is the whore, not the adulteress (Tell us, what is the difference?). We consider the "false church" conception entirely impossible. C. Babylon is Rome. This is true but too restricted. - We need not discuss the view that Babylon symbolizes the Roman Catholic Church.[161]

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160. Rev. W. Hendriksen, Th. D., More Than Conquerors, pp. 199-203.
161. Ibidem, p. 274. The italics and parentheses in the quotation are not the authors, but our own.

Thus his view of the Great Harlot, or Babylon the Great, is a world center of evil and ungodliness, it seems, at any period of history. The interpretation is not specific enough. It can mean anything and therefore means nothing.

Speaking of the Beast, Dr. Hendriksen assumes that the "beast that was and is not, and is about to come again out of the abyss", represents the various ancient empires: "All of these kingdoms in which the beast had been embodied perished. The beast, in the form of Old Babylonia, Assyria, New Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greco-Macedonia, is no more! Yet this beast seems to have the ability to raise its head anew after every defeat! ... Thus, again and again, the essence remains throughout this entire dispensation; yea, throughout the history of the world, until the judgment day."[162]

From a former quotation from this work the reader may learn that the author said the same things about the Great Harlot, the mysterious Babylon the Great. Making these two images, the Harlot and the Beast, mean the same ungodly power, or whatever it is, is certainly not in keeping with the text. We must remember that one image (the Harlot) sits upon the other. They are two separate entities, two separate powers. One cannot mean the other.

Our own interpretation which we will present later will show how (through verse eleven wherein we are told that the "beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven") the Great Babylon or the Harlot turns into the final Beast.

Commenting on the Beast's seven heads and ten horns, Dr. Hendrik-

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162. Ibidem, pp. 203-204.

sen says:

> First of all, these seven heads symbolize seven mountains, the seven hills of Rome, viewed as city and as capital of the Roman Empire ... Secondly, these seven heads also symbolize seven kings, that is, kingdoms ... These seven heads do not symbolize seven individual kings or emperors but seven anti-christian world-empires.
>
> Five fell, namely, Ancient Babylonia, Assyria, New Babylonia, Medo-Persia, Greco-Macedonia. One is, namely, Rome. The seventh is not yet come, but when he comes he will have to remain some little while. The emphasis is on the word "remain". Is this seventh head the collective title for all antichristian governments between the fall of Rome and the final empire of antichrist that is going to oppress the church in the days just preceding Christ's second coming? ... Does the clause "and is of the seven" indicate that, in some sense, one of the former antichristian empires will be re-established? If so, which one?[163]

To the comments above the author adds another note in a footnote: "Some make this seventh head the papacy; others, the nominally Christian Roman Empire beginning with Constantine the Great; still others, the Germanic nations that overwhelmed Rome."

From all this one can be well aware of the various interpretations this passage has suffered. Dr. Hendricksen also is aware that he is treading over dangerous ground. He does not even make a conclusion regarding the seventh head, but lets it hang loosely up in the air by means of a question that carries doubt behind it: "Is this seventh head the collective title of all antichristian governments between the fall of Rome and the final empire of antichrist?"

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163. Ibidem, pp. 204-205.

It must be admitted by all that verses ten and eleven form the great crux of the whole chapter of Revelation XVII. Their interpretation perhaps will always be in doubt. Dr. Hendriksen is to be credited with some reasonable conclusions at least.

Next the author gives his views concerning the ten kings of verse twelve: "And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings". He says they represent power of evil in every realm and phase of society. Here are his words:

> And now the ten kings. All the mighty ones of this earth in every realm: art, education, commerce, industry, government, inasfar as they serve the central authority, are indicated. Self-aggrandizement in opposition to Christ is their goal. In order to reach this goal they are willing to give their power and authority to the beast. They reign "in company with" the beast for just "one hour". Every worldly ruler has his satellites. They generally last only "one hour". All these "horn-kings" have one design, namely, to help the beast in its conflict with Christ and His Church.[164]

This view of the ten kings is new to us. It is not often stated by other commentators. This is the first time it has been noted at all. It does not seem to fit well with the tenor of the whole chapter. From the description of the Harlot and the Beast, in this chapter and in others, one looks for more spiritual powers, false powers which use temporal powers as their means, who war against the Christ. After all, that is what antichrist means, a spiritual power against a spiritual power, the evil against good.

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164. Ibidem, p. 205.

THE INTERPRETATION OF WILLIAM F. ROADHOUSE

Summary: Roadhouse argues strongly that Babylon is not the Roman Church. The Woman - "Represents Israel, the Jewish People personified" (Zionism); Sitteth on many waters - "Dominance of the Jews in a monetary way over the Gentile nations".

"What a mass of divergent opinion there has been concerning the question of Babylon as here presented. Various schools of teaching and polemical writings have set forth their conception of this matter. Many thousands of pages have been read by controversialists, and preached - to long-suffering hearts! Will the reader of this permit the writer to present a treatment that will be somewhat different from every other?"

Thus William Frederick Roadhouse introduces his remarks on Revelation Chapter XVII. We will gladly permit him to have space to present his "new interpretation";[165]

> Broadly speaking, there have been three views of the purport and meaning of this Woman and City.

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165. Mr. Roadhouse is presumably a revivalist. He presented his book on Revelation to The Pritzlaff Memorial Library in St. Louis, with the words, no doubt referring to the Lutheran Hour: "Dedicated to the Library of the Concordia Lutheran Seminary ... whose Radio messages never fail to edify us ... and with the Christian Greetings of the Author." Toronto 9, Canada, 187 Keele St., January 1933.

Mr. Roadhouse belongs to a sect of some group called the "Overcomers." He says: "This leads us to indicate that the understanding of Revelation (as before suggested) is limited to Overcoming Saints, for such is the purport of the third verse of the Prologue." (p. 15).

> A few scholars have believed that Jerusalem was meant by "Babylon". One is inclined to think there is as much to be said in its favor as for the second view - namely, that it is Rome in Italy. Neither, is in our judgment, the Biblical view. The first we shall discuss further on. Let us state here, briefly, our reasons for not believing this Woman to be the church and city of Rome (and we hold no "brief" for Romanism).[166]

Let us see what Mr. Roadhouse offers as reasons why the Great Harlot cannot be the Church at Rome:

(2) Because Rome does not fulfill the physical conditions of Babylon.

(3) Because Rome does not hold, nor has held, secular and despotic sway over the ecclesiastical world, as required by Chapter 13.

(5) Because the full-length source of the Harlot description in Ezekiel 16 (also Hosea 2:3), makes the Woman - Jewish, and not Roman.

(6) Because "the seven heads," or "mountains" (17:3, 9,10), are definitely placed by John, not anywhen during 1900 years of time, but as we saw throughout our study, within the first half of Daniel's week, and thus future.

(7) Because the Woman, and later the City, are suddenly "destroyed", according to 17:16-18 and 18:8. And hence: if the Harlot is reigning now as Rome, then that reign must be coextensive with the Roman world. Which it is not. If she had perished, then Antichrist must now be reigning over the Roman world. Which it is not. If Antichrist is now destroyed, then we are today in the Millennium. Which we are not!

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166. The title of his book is Seeing The Revelation. Our quotations are taken from pages 143 ff.

Mr. Roadhouse is quite sure of himself. But notice that his interpretation is also quite arbitrary and literal. More devastating, it is based upon that old common rule of hermeneutics often used by Millennialist interpreters, that of interpreting prophecy by prophecy. In each one of his conclusions there is a false premise, sometimes the minor, sometimes the major, sometimes both.

It is for this reason that he comes out with the fantastic interpretation that ancient Babylon on the Euphrates (from a literal treatment of the Prophets of the Old Testament) will be rebuilt by the Jews and they as the Woman will rule over the earth in a financial manner.

> Here (in Zechariah 5, the Ephah Vision) we require parallel Scripture to clarify the message. Consistently used, symbolically, in such a context, the "Woman" represents Israel ... The "Woman" we feel can only mean - the Jewish people personified.
>
> This system of the Ephah becomes the "Woman of Babylon" in Revelation 17. It is Babylon on the Euphrates, a literal, staggering, future world metropolis. Distasteful as it may be to our Gentile pride, its ruling power will be the transplanted Jew ... We have called the "Woman of Babylon" a <u>system</u>, a <u>moral</u> system.
>
> So this Woman rides her wild ride ... She "sitteth upon many waters" ... This is clearly dominance over the Gentile nations, and world-wide at that! Is it not a sway that is monetary? ... The geographical <u>place</u> of Chapter 17 is undoubtedly Babylon in modern Iraq.
>
> Think of the genius of the Jew for finance - the Rothschilds, men like some American Hebrews. Note the industry, the organizing ability. Watch him when his opportunity comes. And God's Word says this shall be. "To build in an house in the land of Shinar; and it shall be established (or settled) there upon her own base." The son of old Jacob will make it his base!

We will not countenance a personal and arbitrary interpretation

of Revelation XVII which finds in its imagery the modern movements of Zionism. Why are these literal interpreters always holding a brief for the Jews? The interpretation is neither historical nor textual. We must find in Revelation XVII an interpretation which will cover all the ground from John's day until the end of time. This verse eighteen clearly indicates: "And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth."

Much of the rest of what Mr. Roadhouse says, (for instance, his explanation of the seven mountains and the ten horns) is simply fantastic. He certainly did not write his book to be understood.

The interpretation takes too much for granted. First he must say that Babylon will be rebuilt, and secondly that it will be destroyed, and this he does without definitely showing that it is Babylon the Woman at all! He says, p. 144, the "only and safe rule of Biblical interpretation, the law of parallel Scriptures (since when is this the only one?) gives us no ground whatsoever to prove that this Woman is the Romish Church. If so, where is it?"

May we ask him the same questions about his explanation?

We also claim that the interpreter does not become too literal about the term "Babylon the Great". This is not Babylon of old on the Euphrates, or any future Babylon - Babylon is gone forever, and we are glad of it! It is a figurative term, a symbol of another city, institution, or system like Babylon of old in all its wickedness and cruelty.

THE INTERPRETATION OF THOMAS WHITTEMORE[167]

Summary: Babylon the Great - "The seven-hilled city"; The Beast - "Represents the secular power of the Empire"; The Beast that was - Nero Redivivus; The Seven Kings -"Seven Roman emperors commencing with Julius"; Ten Horns - Ten "lesser kings" under the Roman Empire.

Thomas Whittemore's interpretation is one of the traditional ones which we have criticized previously in this essay. We include it because of its clarity.

> Rome was the seven-hilled city; and for this she was famous all the world over. There cannot remain a doubt that Rome, therefore, was intended by the woman who sat on the scarlet-colored beast.
>
> Mystery, Babylon, therefore, means not Babylon proper, but Babylon in a mysterious, or metaphysical sense. And why was the figure Babylon used? The term seems to have been one which the woman was willing to apply to herself. Babylon was truly a great city, and one of the wonders of the world. Rome claimed to be in glory and magnificence what Babylon was, when at the height of her pride.
>
> This was the beast mentioned in Chapter 13:1. He had seven heads and ten horns ... There is no doubt, then, that the beast on which the woman sat, represented the secular power of the empire; and the city of Rome did sit on that beast. Being the imperial city, the center of power, both secular and ecclesiastical, the empire sustained the city, and contributed immensely to its support and grandeur. The

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167. All the quotations from his work, A Commentary on Revelation, are from pp. 280 ff.

> woman, therefore, is represented as resting or sitting on the beast.

In regard to the "Beast that was, and is not, and yet is", Whittemore has the following:

> Here are three kings of time mentioned - the past, the present, the future. What can that mean? Best belief is that in Nero, the great persecutor of the church, that he should be assassinated, should disappear for a time, and then should revive again and reign.
>
> Is not a double reign here referred to? To whom then can this refer but Nero? Not that he actually reigned twice, but there was popular impression that he would do so. He then would be the eighth, having been the sixth. Because, when cut off, his successor would have been appointed, and he at his return, would have taken rank next after his successor. How true it is, then, if we consider the prevalent expectation in regard to Nero, that the beast that was and is not, even he is the eighth, and yet he was of the seven. He was the beast that was, and is not, and yet is. The return of this emperor to the throne is spoken of agreeably to the public expectation; and this shows that the Apocalypse must have been written while that expectation existed, and before subsequent facts showed.

Here is his view concerning the seven kings:

> All these circumstances put together seem to us to point very directly to the Roman emperors, the word Basileus, being used among the Greeks for a Roman emperor. We commence with Julius, first of the Caesars, who, although not by name an emperor ... Julius, Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, and Claudius. These are the five who had fallen. One is, namely NERO, who was the successor of Claudius; and the other, who had not "yet come", was Galba, who had a very short reign, agreeing with the declaration, "he must continue a

> short space". ... The Beast represented the Roman secular power ... The Apocalypse seems to have been written in the time of the sixth emperor, which was Nero.

We claim that Julius Caesar, according to historical records, never was considered a Roman Emperor. One has a very shaky interpretation when he identifies the "heads" with emperors. There were more than five emperors before Domitian, also. However, we must admit it fits the word "kings" (οἱ βασιλεῖς) very well, much better than "kingdoms".

> The ten horns - they represented ten kings, that is, ten lesser rulers, who had not been exalted to imperial power, but who received power for a short time with the aid and cooperation of the beast, the highest secular authority. As to what particular ten kings are intended by the revelator in the passage before us, we shall not undertake to say; but there seems to be no room to doubt, that they are contemporaneous rulers, who had submitted to the imperial power of Rome. The empire consisted of many nations. The rulers of these different nations, called kings in Greek, having submitted to Rome, were permitted to reign, under subjection to the empire.

We have this good comment to make about Whittemore's exposition - it is consistent, at least. It is an interpretation the Roman Church would willingly espouse. But we cannot accept it, as we have stated before, because it contains the myth about a resurrected Nero.

THE INTERPRETATION OF F. W. FARRAR

In his short and to-the-point exegesis of Chapter Seventeen of Revelation, Dr. Farrar relates the following:

> The beast 'who was, and is not, and will come up from the abyss' is Nero, who committed suicide in June A.D. 68, but whom many believed to be alive. There was a general rumor that he had only fled to Parthia, and would return to conquer Rome.[168]

He says of the "seven hills" mentioned in verse nine: "This proves decisively that 'Babylon' is intended for Rome".

Again he interprets verse ten by saying: "The seven kings are the Emperors Augustus, Tiberius, Gaius (Caligula), Claudius, Nero, Galba, Otho."

He significantly adds: "But all the applications of the prophecy are wrapped in obscurity."[169]

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168. Farrar, F. W., Text Explained, 1899, p. 371.
169. Ibidem. This is the same Farrar who has given us the excellent History of Interpretation. He is a famous English scholar.

INTERPRETATION OF MATTHEW HENRY

Summary: The Harlot is the Papacy; The Beast: "The city on seven hills, Rome;" The Beast that was, and is not - "Seat of Idolatry and persecution"; Seven Mountains - "Seven sorts of (Roman) government"; Eighth Beast - The Papacy; Ten Horns - "Ten kingdoms out of the ruins of Rome".

Matthew Henry, as always, is brief and to the point when he attacks this difficult chapter. He has an interesting remark at the beginning of his comments when he says:

"A whore (in this passage) is one that is married, and has been false to her husband's bed, has forsaken the guide of her youth, and broken covenant with God."[170]

Again he says that the principal seat and residence of the Great Harlot is on the Beast, "that is to say, Rome, the city on seven hills, infamous for idolatry, tyranny, and blasphemy."

He makes the observation that we should not take the name Babylon literally since it is a mystery, which means some other city resembling Babylon.

But Matthew Henry has a most unusual interpretation of the Beast that was and is not, and yet is. For this reason in this treatise we have not been able to group all those interpreters following a certain view, for instance, that the Harlot is the Roman Empire,

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170. Commentary on the Whole Bible, Vol. I, pp.1172 ff.

because almost all of the interpreters differ in detail in their explanation of some of the images.

Here is Henry's unusual explanation of the Beast:

> This beast was, and is not, and yet is; that is, it was a seat of idolatry and persecution; and is not, that is, not in the ancient form, which was pagan; and yet it is, it is truly the seat of idolatry and tyranny, though of another sort and form. It ascends out of the bottomless pit (idolatry and cruelty are the issue and product of hell), and it shall return thither and go into perdition.

We have encountered this unusual spiritual interpretation in other works, but it certainly means little for the reader. What comfort is there in it? Again, is it historically true? History reveals that Rome, whether one speaks of the papal or secular powers, has always been cruel and wicked.

In regard to the seven mountains or seven kings, Matthew Henry has the following:

> Seven mountains - the seven hills on which Rome stands, which have a double signification. Seven kings - seven sorts of government. Rome was governed by kings, consuls, tribunes, decemviri, dictators, emperors who were pagan, and emperors who were Christian.
>
> Five of these were extinct when this prophecy was written; one was then in being, that is, the pagan emperor; and the other, that is, the Christian emperor, was yet to come.
>
> The beast, the papacy, makes an eighth governor, and sets up idolatry again.

Matthew Henry has found a very plausible interpretation for the seven mountains and the ten horns. In all our study of the chapter we have found no better explanation than this.

Matthew Henry is one of the few interpreters of the Reformed brand we have read, who adopted the view that the Papacy is the Great Harlot. He also mentions this in connection with the Ten Horns, or Ten Kings:

> Some (of these ten kings) shall not rise up until the Roman empire be broken into pieces; or, as others, shall not rise up till near the end of antichrist's reign, and so shall reign but as it were one hour with her ... but shall during that time have devoted interest (to the Pope), out of an unaccountable fondness for the papacy.

In speaking about the Fall of Babylon which follows, Mr. Henry also says that these kings will be instrumental in attacking and overthrowing Papacy. But he does not say a great deal about it.

This is one of the few interpretations, except that section about the "beast that was", which makes real sense and fits in with the context of Revelation. We must of necessity, because we believe it is the best explanation, follow Matthew Henry's exposition (perhaps with differences in detail) of the seven kings and the ten horns in our interpretation of this chapter to follow in the next major part of this thesis.

INTERPRETATION OF DR. CHARLES

IN THE

INTERNATIONAL CRITICAL COMMENTARY[171]

Summary: The Harlot is the City of Rome; The Beast is Nero or the Roman Empire; The Seven Kings - Seven Roman Emperors; Ten Kings - The Parthian Hosts; Antichrist - The Kaiser of 1918.

The International Critical Commentary on Revelation was written By Dr. Thomas Charles. He offers the old interpretation most of the Reformed type of scholars render, namely, the Roman Empire and the Nero Redivivus theory:

> The Beast, which symbolizes the demonic Nero, or Nero returning from the abyss to lead the Parthian powers against Rome ... Now the Harlot is none other than the City of Rome, whose doom is described in the vision that follows ...

But a few pages later, which makes it so very confusing when reading these commentators, Dr. Charles contradicts this statement. He does this because he says Revelation comes from two sources:

> The Beast is undoubtedly the Roman Empire. On its power the Harlot reposes ... Purple and

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171. Commentary on Revelation, Passim, pp. 64 - 87.

> Scarlet symbolize the luxury and splendour of imperial Rome ... Babylon is the mystical name for Rome ... Verse 6 refers to the Neronic persecution ... The Beast is not the Neronic Antichrist coming up from the abyss ...

About the seven kings, five of which are fallen, he says:

> The first five emperors are Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, Nero. The emperor who "is" is Vespasian, 69-79 A.D., and the one who "is not yet come", is Titus, 79-81.
>
> The ten kings are not unknown powers belonging to the future, nor Roman governors of the senatorial provinces who held office a year, but the Parthian hosts, at whose head Nero would return and destroy Rome ... there were 14, but the number ten is not to be stressed.

In concluding his notes on Revelation XVII, Charles makes some comments which put one in doubt as to how he interprets the chapter at all:

> This prophecy will be fulfilled at sundry times and in diverse manners and in varying degrees of completeness. The present attitude (War I, 1918) of the Central Powers of Europe on this question of might against right, of Caesarism against religion, of the state against God, is the greatest fulfillment that the Johannine prophecy in XIII and XVII have as yet received.
>
> So in regard to the present war, it is difficult to determine whether the Kaiser or his people can advance best claims to the title of the modern Antichrist. If he is a present-day representative of the Antichrist, so just as surely is the empire behind him for it is one in spirit and purpose with its leader - whether regarded from its military side, its intellectual, or its industrial.

The last two paragraphs quoted from Charles plainly show the radical element in his interpretation. It is the modern idea of identifying the Harlot and the Best and the Kings with every personage that fits in history, and then changing the interpretation as the one Antichrist falls and another rises. Hitler and Mussolini have also been found in Revelation XVII.

But for this writer, any interpretation which sponsors the Nero Myth is automatically invalid. That the ten kings should be the Parthian Hosts, especially when there were admittedly fourteen, is ridiculous.

THE INTERPRETATION OF CHARLES R. ERDMAN

Summary: The Harlot - "Neither pagan nor papal Rome, but imperial Rome"; Seven Mountains - "Seven empires or seven emperors"; The Beast - "Political or civil power absolutely and universally supreme"; "In a certain sense every era has its Babylon and every age its beast."

Charles R. Erdman is Professor of Practical Theology at Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, New Jersey. He has written a commentary on the whole New Testament which has been published by the Westminster Press of Philadelphia.

Though he treats all the subjects from the Reformed view-point, his commentary is well written. In the interpretation of Revelation, however, one immediately knows that he is not of the Lutheran School.

He is not very clear on the various images in the chapter under consideration. Here is what he says about the Great Harlot, the Beast, the Seven Heads, the Ten Kings:

> The "woman" evidently is Rome, yet specifically neither pagan nor papal Rome but imperial Rome, as the type of every city or system which is godless, cruel, idolatrous, and opposed to Christ. The very symbol, "Babylon", is significant. That ancient city on the Euphrates was the historic and heartless enemy of Israel. It was an embodiment of luxury and license, of abominable idolatry and unbridled impurity. No name could comprehend more fully all the corrupting and seducing influences, all the false religion and bloody tyranny,

which John associated with the city of the Caesars.[172]

The opinions he has on the "seven heads" is vague and hesitant. In fact, it seems he is at a loss as to what to say about these detailed images. He places all he says, therefore, under the question mark:

> Whence does John borrow his symbolism? What do the symbols mean? For the source of these symbols one needs to look quite as carefully into The Book of Daniel as into the history of Rome. Even then it seems impossible to determine whether the "seven kings" refer to "seven empires" or "seven emperors".
>
> The statement that he "was, and is not; and is about to come up out of the abyss" would probably indicate that he will reembody the cruelty and power of a previous one of "the seven". As seven indicates a completeness, as ten is the world number, this mysterious passage apparently means that the beast as a political or civil power is to be absolutely and universally supreme. Thus it appears that, for a time, the political world power is in league with the pagan, apostate, idolatrous city. Babylon even controls the beast.[173]

Dr. Erdman does not take a stand. From reading the above paragraph the reader will have little difficulty in ascertaining that he does not identify anybody or anything with the unfortunate epithets of the Great Harlot and the Beast and the Kings. Moreover, he wishes to make these symbols be a pattern throughout the history of all like instances.

Like all the Reformed theologians, he avoids the real issue:

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172. Charles R. Erdman, The Interpretation of Revelation, p. 128.
173. Ibidem, p. 129.

"Who is the Harlot, and who is the Beast?" Once one has these identified the other images follow quite readily, with some thought.

The same vagueness and uncertainty is evident in his next words:

> By Babylon and the beast evidently John intended to picture the final forms of false religion and of political tyranny. He saw these prefigured and foreshadowed by the city and the empire of Rome.
>
> The complete fulfillment of his prophecy is still future. Yet a partial realization of his vision is seen wherever a false religion assumes political power and dominates the state, or where a corrupt religious system is overthrown by a godless government. In a certain sense every era has its Babylon and every age its beast.

The last sentence of the last quotation is evidence of what Dr. Erdman has in mind. His view is this: "Let us not be so foolish as to identify these images. Rather let them represent anything any interpreter or any reader has in mind, that is, let them represent ungodliness and tyranny and corruption in general. Then no one will be able ever to convict you of a wrong interpretation."

For this reason he can say nothing about the seven heads or mountains or about the ten kings, for he has no place in history to choose from. These he must leave unexplained. Under such an arrangement, one can say that Hitler and Mussolini (who died while we were writing this thesis) are the Beast and the Harlot, too, for that matter, and no one can say that person no. This is what Erdman calls the spiritual or allegorical method of Revelation. That it is inadequate as a satisfactory interpretation of the Bible, even the most illiterate would know.

Erdman's view just doesn't satisfy; why, in the introduction to his work he condemns both the Historical and Futurist views of Revelation, also the Preterist and the Spiritual, and offers instead an unfortunate combination of all of them which only confuses the reader and lets the interpreter avoid all the issues. This, of course, is true of all interpreters who follow in his footsteps.

What he says in the introduction of his book makes clear what we mean. Notice the apparent contradictions on two separate pages:

> It is difficult, if not actually impossible, to discover in the pages of the Apocalypse the description of any specific incidents of ancient history. The vision of the writer is turned to the future. The events he pictures cannot be confined to the first century. He sees a struggle which is age-long.[174]

In that paragraph he writes against the Preterist View. But yet he identified the Harlot and the Beast as Rome! How inconsistent! How confusing!

Now listen to what he says when he speaks of the Spiritual Theory:

> At least this spiritual theory warns us against a too crass view of prophecy as being, in too literal a sense, "history written in advance". It cautions us against looking in the Apocalypse for a detailed outline of the future.
>
> The writer is not picturing the rise of the Papacy, nor the career of Mohammed, nor details of a future Antichrist as to his origin, his name, his time, or the exact character of his doom. He is presenting, in symbolic form, typical events which do not minutely predict but which illustrate the conflict be-

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174. Ibid., p. 22.

> tween Satan and the Savior, between the world power and the Church. This conflict reaches its climax in the appearance of a man of sin, in his overthrow by the Victorious Christ.[175]

It is easy to condemn all and make a general meaningless book of the comforting Scripture called Revelation, but what does this author offer in exchange? And just where does he stand? In truth, nowhere; or anywhere, depending whence pressure or questions come. We are sorry, but such an interpretation just doesn't satisfy us. He condemns a method and then uses it himself. What is the above but the Futurist View, or even the Spiritual View, which he so avidly condemns and tosses out?

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175. Ibid., p. 24.

THE INTERPRETATION OF DR. GLENTWORTH BUTLER

Summary: The Harlot - "The Roman Empire"; The Beast - "Her seat was the city of seven hills"; Rome is the sixth major kingdom of the earth.

Dr. Glentworth Butler in his Bible-Work does not come down to earth at all in his interpretation of this chapter. In a large work of two volumes he has just a small paragraph. He says:

> It is there told, almost without figure, what is the seat, and what the name, and what the place in history, and what the singular, the unprecedented end of that power which in John's time was the rider upon the beast. Her seat was the city of seven hills. Her name, that of the great empire then reigning over the kings of the earth. Her place in history, the sixth and last but one of those mighty empires which have successively towered above the thrones of the earth. She comes after Egypt, after Assyria, after Babylon, after Persia, after Greece.

The author does not identify the Harlot and the Beast. We may understand from his veiled words, however, that he means the Roman Empire by the symbol of the Harlot, and that the city or Beast the Harlot sits on is the City of Rome.

From the last sentence it would seem that Dr. Glentworth Butler seeks to explain the symbol of the Harlot not by a spiritual power but by a temporal power alone, since he says she succeeds powers as Egypt, Babylon, Greece, and others.

THE INTERPRETATION OF MARTIN KIDDLE[176]

Summary: The Woman - "Roman civilization"; The Beast - "Nero Redivivus; "The five fallen kings are Roman emperors"; Ten Kings - "The Parthian satraps".

Kiddle says that chapters sixteen to nineteen expand the story of the Fall of Rome and the defeat of Antichrist. John is taken into the desert and from this desert he is able to see the whole elaborate structure of Roman civilization in an essential simplicity, as the Great Harlot; the subject of the chapters then is the doom of the world Empire.

The woman is the Empire, the Roman civilization. Each successive Emperor of the empire (the Beast's seven heads), constitutes a temporary manifestation of a constant force or evil. The Beast which John is describing, Kiddle states, is Nero Redivivus.

The five fallen kings are Roman Emperors, counting from Augustus makes Nero the sixth. The ten kings are one of three things: 1. All rulers of the world; 2. Provincial governors of the Roman Empire; 3. Parthian satraps.

Naturally Kiddle must choose the Parthian satraps to make his theory of the Nero Redivivus complete and plausible. "It seems almost

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176. Martin Kiddle, The Revelation of St. John, pp. 337-347.

certain that these kings are to be associated with the Parthian Satraps ... On the whole, the most reasonable course seems to be to think of them as Parthian leaders, whose powers the Neronic Antichrist employs in his destruction of the Empire."

Kiddle gives his own summary on page 347:

> The Antichrist, the Satanic Power to whom the Empire is bound, is universal in reach, and is manifested in the whole line of Roman emperors. Most of these Emperors have passed; the time quickly approaches when the Satanic Power will emerge in its entirety.

There is Kiddle's exposition. He refutes his own theory when he makes the observation which follows: "We are struck at once by an apparent inconsistency. How is it that the Empire can be seen in visionary form reclining on a Beast, which, according to verses eight and nine, has existed on earth, at present does not exist on earth, but is destined to do so once again in the future? Obviously there is some sort of contradiction here. Yet it is only a verbal contradiction."[177]

Therein lies the fault, not only of this interpretation, but of those like it - it is filled with "apparent (real) inconsistencies." "Obviously there is some sort of contradiction here," describes them very well. And to call them simple verbal contradictions does not erase their presence.

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177. Ibid., p. 346.

If the Bible and Revelation were written to be understood without working out an interpretation like a cross-word puzzle, then this interpretation is not correct.

After reading this interpretation, and sweating over it, one asks, "How come the Roman Empire rides on Nero's back?" If the Woman is the Empire, and the Beast is Nero Redivivus, and the kings Roman and Parthian Satraps and Emperors - who is left to be the Antichrist? Kiddle says it is the "Satanic Power," or in other words, the Devil, and that leaves the interpretation hanging in the air.

It is not interpretation at all. Everyone knows that Satan is antichristian. The exposition is not specific enough, and is not what John wrote through inspiration.

The great fault of these interpretations all tangled up with the Roman Empire is that they are too complicated. Veiled as the language of Revelation is, we are certain the Holy Spirit did not expect it to be so paradoxical and full of riddles. It is a simple, logical, explanation that is needed.[178]

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178. Kiddle is an Anglican of England, Vicar of Christ Church, Harrogate Lecturer of Leeds Parish Church. His book was written during the war, 1940.

THE EXPOSITION OF DR. JAMES MOFFAT[179]

Summary: The Harlot - "The Roman Empire"; The Beast - "Nero Redivivus"; "Domitian is a sort of a spirit or reincarnation of the Nero Redivivus".

Dr. Moffat says that Revelation XVII is "enigmatic" and we find his interpretation very much of that character. He begins quite well (we mean, he can be understood), but before long he is so tangled up with the various theories and so exasperated in trying to find something definite to cling to, that one grows tired, yawns, and wants to close the book.

The Expositor's Greek Testament, in which Moffat's exposition is found, is always much help linguistically, but as far as interpretation is concerned, it helps very little. We are much surprised that a great theologian as Dr. Moffat could swallow and espouse the Nero Redivivus Legend. To most historians it is one of the most impossible events of history, perhaps of Talmudic origin.

He also says that the Emperor Domitian had become for John a symbol of Nero, and thus Moffat very enigmatically and disgracefully makes two figures of speech where before there was only one - the Beast equals Nero and Nero equals Domitian.

We ask the reader to scan through the excerpts to see how compli-

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179. James Moffat, D.D., "Revelation of St. John," The Expositor's Greek Testament, pp. 452 ff.

cated the interpreter makes an already complicated matter.

> Rome, personified as a feminine figure, rides on a beast ... Seven hills; here at any rate the author is sketching the Roman Empire in its general magnificence and authority under the Caesars. The great harlot is Rome, domina Roma, the pride and queen of the world! ... Vv.7-18. An explanation of the vision, cautiously but clearly outlining the Nero-saga.

Under the verse eight, concerning the Beast that was and is not, Dr. Moffat claims that the beast described cannot be non-existent, and therefore must denote not the empire but the emperors, or one of its heads. "The emperor here, Nero Redivivus, embodied the empire ... and the Nero-antichrist introduces the fresh horror of a monster breaking loose even from death ... Therefore, the Beast of the source here is evidently the Antichrist transformed into Nero Redivivus."[180]

Dr. Moffat goes a way that other interpreters of this chapter have not gone when he comes to verse eleven. This is an entirely new idea of the Beast from any we have so far encountered. It embodies the idea that Domitian (Moffat adopts the correct view that Revelation was written after 95 A.D.) is a sort of a spirit or reincarnation of the Nero Redivivus who was once reincarnated already.

It is views likethis which make one despair of all modern interpreters and want to return home.

It is hardly worth the space, but here it is! On page 305 of Moffat's Introduction to Revelation he calmly says that Nero Redivivus theory is a myth with these words: "The most central of these co-

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180. Ibid.,pp. 452-453.

efficients, drawn from a mixture of supernatural and political legends, is the belief in the return of a Nero-antichrist from the underworld."[181]

> The verse (verse 11) is really a parenthesis added by John to bring the source up to date, Domitian, the eighth emperor, under whom he writes, is identified with the Neronic genius of the empire; he is a revival and an embodiment of the persecuting beast to the Christian prophet, as he proved a second Nero to some of his Roman subjects ... But the prophet does not care to dwell minutely on the emperor's personality as an Incarnate Nero.[182]

Concerning the verses twelve to eighteen, which speak about the Ten Kings and the overthrow of Antichrist, Dr. Moffat has the following: "The campaign of Nero and his vassal-kings against Rome, which is slain by an arrow feathered from her own wings ... This political application of the ten horns probably means the Parthian satraps of xvi, 12, reckoned in round numbers, who occupied a royal position in the estimation of the beast."[183]

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181. There follows a rather detailed account of the myth on pages 305-306. Anyone who has love for the Scriptures and their inerrancy certainly cannot countenance the accusation that John followed a myth in his Revelation or that the Holy Ghost inspired it.

182. Ibid., p. 453.

183. According to the Neronic legend, Nero is supposed to have gone to Parthia and from there to have returned with an army to overthrow his successor, all of which is a part of the Nero Redivivus Myth.

THE INTERPRETATION OF JOHN E. FINNEY[184]

Summary: The Great Whore - "A vast religious system"; (The Papacy); The Seven Kings - "Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Media-Persia, Greece, Rome, and Resuscitated Rome"; The Ten Kings - "Resuscitated Rome".

In this section a theologian's book is reviewed regarding the Great Harlot and the Beast of Revelation who says that he interprets these images in general terms. It sounds as though he refers the symbols of the Harlot and the Beast to the Roman Catholic Church. But really he says nothing about anything.

Neither does he identify specifically the harlot or the seven mountains or the ten kings in any sense. He simply says the Harlot is a great religious blasphemous organized system which will appear in the last days.

According to Mr. Finney, Revelation XVII could mean anything. Here are a few of his words:

> The Revelation unveils a great organized religious system that will be in the height of her power in the last days ... The 'great whore' of the Revelation is the symbol of a great religious system that will mingle with the seed of men by establishing herself in all countries of the world ... She will send out missionaries to all nations and languages and to the extent of her power will try to enforce those of other religious beliefs to recant on penalty of torture unto death. For her murders and

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184. John E. Finney, Events of the Last Days, pp. 77-78

> fornications, she will eventually be brought into judgment.

Everyone will readily agree that these words sound as if the author has the Roman Catholic Church in mind. His description does not fit any other religious organization in existence today or in the past. But if he believes the Harlot is the Papacy, he has not the courage to say so. It would almost seem as if he wants his readers to understand the Roman Church by his following words:

> The "Great Whore" is so closely identified with the "beast" having "seven heads and ten horns" that she is seen riding into power on the back of this beast. Since she is of Rome, she will get her power from Political Rome.[185]

About the seven heads and seven mountains, the Rev. Finney says the following:

> As herein before stated, the word "mountain" in prophecy is a symbol of government or kingdom. Therefore, the "seven heads" of the "beast" are symbols of seven kingdoms - all included in the seventh - and the "great whore" is here seen as she sits a queen of the seventh kingdom. Those seven kingdoms have been named - Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Media-Persia, Greece, Rome, and Resuscitated Rome. The descendents of all the peoples of these kingdoms are to be found under the dominating influence of the "great whore".[186]

Again we condemn the statement that the word βασιλεύς is a symbol of a kingdom. It means "king" or the kind of government he

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185. Ibid., p.79. Italics my own.
186. Ibid., p.81.

represents. We have also stated before our objections to the five great world empires as heads of the Beast - they were not heads or part of the Beast if the Beast is the Roman Empire.

The author says that the ten kings are the ten kings of the ten-kingdom empire - Resuscitated Rome:

> When the "great whore" will have won to herself Mohammedans, Buddhists, Hinduists, and followers of other religions, she will be looked upon with green-eyed jealousy by the ten kings of the ten-kingdom empire - Resuscitated Rome. Their jealousy will finally develop into such hatred that they will seek permission of the antichrist to destroy her. The antichrist will be secretly jealous of the "great whore's" popularity.[187]

Some of the ideas in Mr. Finney's interpretation are plausible if he would only identify specifically what he means. All surely points to the Roman Catholic Church as he has the characteristics of the Great Harlot outlined, but his interpretation loses value because he does not say that expressis verbis.

"Since she is of Rome, she will get her power from Political Rome", certainly bespeaks the Catholic Church which has its capital in Rome.

But what does the author mean by "Resuscitated Rome"? From this it can easily be seen that the author does not identify the Harlot with Antichrist at all, because he says that Resuscitated Rome, made up of the ten-kingdom empire, will hate and seek to destroy the Antichrist.

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187. Ibid., p. 82.

It is all very confusing. Such anomalies in many interpretations of this chapter make one believe that the author himself is confused, and above all, that the interpretations offered in such instances are not the correct ones. They do not fit in with the whole theme and tone of the chapter and its context.

THE INTERPRETATION OF STIRLING[188]

Summary: Not necessary to "identify every figure and incident" - "Whether the Beast is Rome or Nero or both we do not inquire" - The Beast is a "manifestation of evil" - The other images he does not identify.

It is not good to judge a man's view of Revelation from such a short message from him as this, and therefore, we will not comment upon the interpretation except to say that it is too shallow and too easy. It seems to be an exposition of the lazy man who wishes to by-pass the issue. We include it in the list of interpretations because of its "generalizing" character.

> Whatever turns a man from God, defrauds him of his experience of worship, or endangers the life of his soul, must be and will be destroyed. That is the simple message of these chapters, and it is not necessary to identify every figure and incident here described to discover it.
>
> Whether, therefore, the Beast at this time was Rome or Nero or both we need not inquire. The point to be noted is that the Beast is a manifestation of evil, of the Dragon, of Satan, and that unless the Dragon itself is destroyed, other beasts, no less monsters, may arise afterthe destruction of this one. It would seem as though they did, and that it is part of life's task to attack each new manifestation of evil as it arises, until in the end the monstrous spirit of Evil itself is slain.

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188. John Stirling, The Bible for Today, p. 1249.

THE INTERPRETATION OF MORTON SCOTT ENSLIN, D.D.[189]

Summary: The Scarlet Woman - is Rome; The Seven Mountains - A series of Roman Emperors; The Beast - The Roman Empire.

Mr. Enslin's exposition, though brief, is an example of many we have read, that is, the Harlot is considered the Roman Empire and the Seven Mountains are reckoned as a series of Roman Emperors.

We can see how it might be possible to interpret the kings as emperors, but we are in doubt about the virtues of such an exposition because there are too many emperors to choose from. One must make an arbitrary selection of six emperors - and who is to be selected and who left out? For that reason we find all sorts of combinations, punctuated with many "ifs" and "probablies".

Also, when one selects emperors (persons) as the seven kings instead of kingdoms, he has difficulty with the Beast who is the eighth, this especially when the Beast is first of all considered the Roman Empire, which he generally is in this type of exposition.

All things considered, we think it dangerous to consider Mr. Enslin's or any other similar exegesis the correct exposition of the passage. This is plainly brought out in the following excerpts from Enslin:

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189. Christian Beginnings, pp. 363-367.

> Thus it should be perfectly clear that the book of Revelation is in no sense a source of authentic history - past, present, future. Its value lies simply in the intensity of faith ... To nerve his followers to stand firm, he writes in this peculiar style ...
>
> The scarlet woman, wherever the author gets the figure, is Rome, who is even now drunk with the blood of the saints. Similarly, the two beasts, chapter 13 - one is the Roman Empire, the other the priesthood of Emperor worship.
>
> Again, the passage 17: 9-11, to which I have already referred, suggests that though in its present form it is from the time of Domitian, the latter verses are simply additions to an earlier passage in which the seven here had been mentioned. The presumption is that it was written during the reign of the sixth, Vespasian - "the five are fallen, the one is, and the other is not yet come".
>
> Augustus 31 B.C. - 14 A.D.
> Tiberius 14 - 37 A.D.
> Gaius (Caligula) 37 - 41 A.D.
> Claudius 41 - 54 A.D.
> Nero 54 - 68 A.D.
> Vespasian 69 - 79 A.D.
> Titus 79 - 81 A.D.
> Domitian 81 - 96 A.D.
>
> Julius was not usually included in the list of the emperors. It is scarcely probable that the rivals Galba, Otho, or Vitellius, who contended for the throne through the terrible year 68-69, would be reckoned in the line.

Here we have an example of the confusion and great uncertainty which results from trying to identify the seven heads of the Beast with a series of Roman emperors. And why shouldn't Galba, Otho, and Vitellius be reckoned in the line? They were on the throne as well as Tiberius was.

THE INTERPRETATION OF E. PERKINS[190]

Summary: The Harlot is Ancient Babel in Shinar; Ten Horns - one of these is the Italian King; the other images he does not identify definitely.

Perkins has presented some very interesting reading material, but his exposition of Revelation XVII is out of tune with the scope of the Book of Revelation. His gravest error is that he reaches back into the history before Christ for his answer to the Riddle of Babylon.

> To be the mother of harlots and abominations would date the Harlot's origin very early, much too early in fact, to allow this Harlot to be interpreted, as many do interpret her, to mean Rome (Papacy). Without a doubt there is included in this mother harlot's posterity all that is false in Rome, and there is enough, and all that is false in all Christendom, and there is plenty.
>
> But according to Scripture records, the original city which Nimrod founded - ancient Babylon - was the beginning of organized resistance against God. The deliberate choosing, as a people, of other objects of religious worship than the living God, began very early in human history, in this city founded and named Babel, or Babylon, by Nimrod. God checked their wicked purposes (Genesis 11 ... In Babylon began and in Babylon shall end the colossal wicked world-system which ignores God and goes its foolish, willful way to destruction, for the most part, worshipping and serving Mammon and earthly fame and glory.

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190. A Keen Look At The Last Book Of The Bible, pp. 83 - 88.

Thus we find that Perkins is a literalist. Just because there is a Babylon in the Old Testament it does not follow that the same Babylon is meant in our chapter, especially not in such a symbolical book as Revelation. And how does the author have the right to assume that the end of the Harlot will come in a rebuilt city of Babylon? Here is another sample of his work:

> These ten horns are ten men who are kings without kingdoms. Doubtless the Italian King will be one of these, for even the present king is not the ruler. The final world-dictator will make friends of ten of the kings whose kingdoms he rules. These, then, (verse 14), are the leaders, with the Beast Antichrist, in the attacking army at the Battle of Armageddon ... All religious property will be confiscated or destroyed by these ten kings.

If Babylon is the Harlot, how can one suddenly come to France for one of the ten kings? And is it not false, according to Revelation XVII, that these Ten Kings fight on the side of the Beast, Antichrist? Verse sixteen tells us that they shall fight against the Whore, Antichrist: "And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate, and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire."

We cannot accept this as even a plausible interpretation of our problem. There is too much conjecture; too flagrant a violation of the context.

THE INTERPRETATION OF DR. RICHARD C. LENSKI

Summary: The Whore - "The antichristian empire"; Kings of the Earth - "The various parts of the antichristian empire"; Earth-dwellers - "The antichristian multitudes"; "In a sense Babylon, the whore, the kings, the earth-dwellers, are one and the same"; "The Mother of Whores means the Supreme Antichristian Seductress"; The Seven Kings - "The high, proud, imposing thoughts, plans, designs of the antichristian power"; The Ten Horns - "All the powers of the beast, the sum total of the antichristian power".

The exposition of Dr. Lenski of the Ohio Synod, one of the noted Lutheran commentators, we leave till last. We had hoped to gain a line of direction and much knowledge about the Great Whore and the other images of Revelation XVII from the pen of Dr. Lenski. But even though he is a well-known Lutheran commentator and writer, his interpretation of this chapter is as shadowy and confusing as any we have yet encountered.

Generally, Dr. Lenski is a very dogmatic in his writings. He gives his view and that is that, no matter how right or wrong it is or who gainsays it. However, in this chapter he seems to take the easy way out, using the spiritual method of interpretation, and does not definitely identify any of the images in the chapter, but saves his words to condemn those who do.

In other words, this commentary on Revelation does not seem like Lenski's. It is too vague to be his, neither does it satisfy the inquisitive mind.

Following are some excerpts from his work which reveal his opinions:[191]

Babylon the Great

> Babylon the Great is the antichristian empire, either summarily the whole empire, as in 14:8, or the capital with many vassal kings and domains, as in 16:12-16.
>
> The Great Whore is again Babylon the Great; but now she is presented as being clothed with all the antichristian seductiveness, as luring the earth dwellers to commit whoredom and to be made drunk with the wine of her whoring.

"The Kings of the Earth"

> The kings of the earth are not individual kings such as the various Roman emperors, or individual emperors and kings of later centuries, or individual rulers in dynasties. Nor are these kings political and national kingdoms such as England, Belgium, Italy or the United States and France with its presidents, or others with their dictators ... These "kings of the earth" who keep whoring with the great whore ... are the various parts of the antichristian empire. ... Itemize these as you please: government, politics, commerce, education, art, manufacture, labor, amusement, etc.

By "antichristian empire" Dr. Lenski no doubt means all the ungodliness in the world. Behind this we put a question mark. He eliminates all possibilities of identification, but like so many commentators, offers nothing in its place. What about this "antichristian empire"? He speaks much about it throughout the chapter,

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191. R.C.A. Lenski, The Interpretation of St. John's Revelation, pp. 488 - 513.

for this is the key to his interpretation. When did it begin? Where is its seat? Is it Satan? Is it just another way of saying, "Satan, the world, and our flesh"? What is it?

He adds, significantly enough, "The earth dwellers of verse two are the antichristian multitudes ... in a sense Babylon, the whore, the kings, the earth dwellers, are one and the same."

The "Mother of Harlots"

> The woman is the whole antichristian seduction, is thus connected with the whole antichristian power. The connection, too, seems significant; she sits upon the beast; by her seduction to whoring she exercises the power of the beast. She is dependent on the beast; the beast carries her ... We regard "scarlet" as the color of sin.
>
> The Mother of Whores and of the Abominations of the Earth means the Supreme Antichristian Seductress, all of whose daughters are whores, the mother of all the antichristian abominations of the earth. ... The whores of which she is the mother are in substance "the kings of the earth".

These words of interpretation would fit very well with the idea that the Great Harlot is the Papacy. But he does not bring the Papacy into his interpretation at all - not even the Roman Empire.

The Great Harlot is not the Papacy

> Those who identify the degenerate church or the papacy with this whore and the woman and then cannot understand why John wondered how the church could degenerate so, have an unclear conception of these visions. The whole antichristianity and its seduction is more than the papacy which is but a part of it.

The Seven Kings

> The two numbers "seven" and "ten" cannot be understood literally; they must be symbolical, cf., 13:1. We cannot list seven actual kings, seven dynasties, of kings with their kingdoms, or seven forms or types of secular government and then add ten kings who are represented by the horns, who, with their kingdoms, followed the first seven, thus making a list of seventeen secular kings.
>
> These seven mountain heads of the beast appear to be the high, proud, imposing thoughts, plans, designs of the antichristian power ... As "mountains" they appear vast, dominating, never to be overthrown as the earth dwellers also imagine.

Dr. Lenski has a rather unusual interpretation of verse which reads in part, "five are fallen, one is, and the one is yet to come". He does not identify any of the images. As a whole his interpretation is rather disappointing. After one has read it, he does not know what he has read, or what it means. Of course, we do not mean to force anyone to identify the images of Revelation XVII, but we think an interpretation has much more ethical value if the images are explained. What does the chapter mean, if this is not done?

He begins the whole attempt from the wrong angle. Listen to what he says:

> We do not think that "seven mountains" are seven empires, and that "seven kings" are seven rulers or ruling dynasties or types of government, one each for each empire ... The beast seems to have one design, one general dominating scheme at a time with which to enthrall the earth dwellers. There are at all times head kings, but not always do we find the same one.

> So end the seven heads and head kings of the beast, the dominating thoughts, plans, designs with which, through the course of history, he sought to supplant the holy, saving plans of God and of the Lamb.
>
> The Ten Horns
>
> The number "ten" is symbolical. Horns equal power to strike. So we take the ten horn kings to be all the powers of the beast, the sum total of the antichristian power. Since they are presented separately as "ten horns" and are distinct from the "seven heads", we are to see in the ten horn kings the antichristian brute forces with a show of royalty, with dominance and rule.

From this effort to interpret Revelation XVII one can readily understand that unless one starts right and unless the interpreter specifically identifies and explains the various images like the Harlot and the Beast and the Kings, he runs amuck.

Dr. Lenski is one of the most voluminous of Lutheran writers of this century. Yet here he has such a muddle of "might be's" and "possibly's" that the result is nothing save a labyrinth of words. It certainly is not an exciting interpretation, neither an interesting one. It is dead, lifeless.

If Revelation is to be a book of comfort and encouragement, the Christian does not receive much of it from such an explanation of the Great Harlot and her cohorts. Lenski's interpretation, to the Lutheran divine, is discouraging, to say the least. It misses the mark. It does not fit into Lutheran theology. We are not impressed. We are left out on a limb in a vacuum.

Somewhat of a summary of his views on Revelation XVII, Dr. Lenski

presents in his own words as follows:

> We have already, in v. 1 and throughout, stated fully what we understand by "the woman", and in what sense she is Babylon. According to one view Babylon is the great antichristian empire as an empire (summary), or the central city with many vassal domains (more detailed). According to anotherview Babylon is the whole antichristian seduction, "the mother of the whores" (specific character). Follow what John wrote and this becomes clear.
>
> Anticipating, let us add: in successive visions we are shown the dragon, the two beasts, the whore, and how they arise and dominate. These are Satan, the whole antichristian world power and the world propaganda, the whole antichristian world seduction.

Such a view leaves "the Mother Church" of Rome sleep on quietly, smuggly nestled in her vile bed of whoredoms. A Lutheran has had opportunity to prick and prod her and at least let her know that we know who and what she is - and he speaks about vague "antichristian powers" and "seductions"!

PART THE FOURTH

THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN INTERPRETATION OF REVELATION XVII

In Revelation XVII we have one of the most vigorous and illuminating descriptions of the Antichrist in all Biblical literature. In this chapter the concept of the Antichrist is even more detailed than in Revelation XIII and in II Thessalonians, the great seat of the teaching concerning the Antichrist.

Many believe that because Revelation is an antilegomenon and such an uncertain book, its value concerning the Antichrist is much diminished. But we do not believe this is altogether true; it has been much overdone in the past. The Apocalypse sheds much needful illumination on the revelation of the Antichrist by Paul in Thessalonians, and also on other sections of Holy Writ treating this topic. This, in our opinion, is the great value of Revelation to the student of the Antichrist and the phenomena which have accompanied her rise to satanic power, both temporal and spiritual.

The leading character in the story of Revelation XVII is the Great Harlot, Babylon the Great. We did not find Hitler, Mussolini, Russia, or the Millennium in this chapter, as many modern interpreters do. Though it is not stated expressis verbis, we believe she is the Antichrist, the same Antichrist spoken of by Paul in II Thessalonians 2:3-10. This in turn brings to the foreground the next inevitable question: Who is the Antichrist? On whom shall we pin this unfortunate epithet? Once the interpreter has settled this problem, the rest of the imagery of the chapter must follow along.

We have shown why we cannot accept the theories, or at least the greater part or parts of individual expositions, and so we offer what we think is the best interpretation as far as we are concerned. We do so with our eyes wide open. We are mindful that we are somewhat in the field of speculation. We realize we are treading over ground where angels fear to walk.

No one person can prove his interpretation is perfectly correct in all details. God has not explained the images of Revelation to us as Jesus explained the Parable of the Sower.[192] We must say with St. Paul: "For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known."[193]

But after examining all the interpretations offered concerning Revelation XVII, we feel that none of them offers as good an interpretation as our Lutheran Fathers. We have in mind here specifically the identification of the Great Harlot with the Antichrist, the Pope and the Roman Church, and also the explanation of some of the lesser details of the prophecy. So far we have been wandering around in a large world of interpretation of this chapter, like a prodigal son, and now we are willing to come home to the Lutheran Fathers.

Where can one find a better interpretation of Revelation than that of the Fathers? So we give our own interpretation saying that the Great Harlot arrayed in scarlet and gold is the Roman Catholic Church; the Beast is the Roman Empire and the city of Rome, the present location of the Vatican; the seven heads and the ten horns are subsidiary kings of the Papacy which arose

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192. Saint Luke 8:4-15.
193. I. Corinthians 13:12.

out of the ruins of the old Roman Empire.

Those who are disposed to doubt this interpretation will be burdened with the task of finding a better and more plausible and historical interpretation of this chapter. We have arrived at our conclusions by explaining the obscure passages of Revelation with the clearer ones (II Thessalonians), and by studying God's revelation to us in history, especially of the Roman Empire.

That the reader may know where we intend to lead him, we offer a skeleton outline of our interpretation of the chapter:

Outline of the Chapter: Verses 1-6: John is Shown the Great Harlot
Verses 7-13: The Vision is Given in Detail
Verses 14-18: The Lamb Conquers the Beast

Interpretation of some of the Imagery:

Verse one: "The Great Whore" - Papacy, the Antichrist; called Babylon the Great in verse five; "woman" in verse three.
"Many waters" - the peoples of the earth, cf. v.15.

Verse two: "Kings of the Earth" - Nations surrounding the Papacy in Europe and Asia, both ancient and modern.

Verse three: "Scarlet colored Beast" - Rome, both City and Empire.

Verse five: "Mystery" - Not a part of the title; means "Babylon" is symbolic.

Verse eight: "The Beast that was, etc." - Roman Empire, which fell in 476 and was revived in the Papacy.

Verse nine: "Seven Heads" - They have a double significance, "mountains" and "kings".
"Seven Mountains" - The City of Rome (Septicollis Roma).

Verse ten: "Seven Kings" - The kinds of rulers of the Roman Empire: Kings, Consuls, Decemvirs, Tribunes, Triumvirs, Emperors, Christian kings with divided empire.
"One is" - The emperors(Octavius to Augustulus).
"Other not yet come" - The seventh head is the Christian rulers.

Verse eleven: "The Beast, he is the eighth" - The Papacy, controlled by the Harlot; after the Empire the Beast and the Harlot become one: "The Papacy is Rome".
"Of the seven" - The Papacy contains all that the seven heads were before, all incorporated into the Harlot.
"Goeth into perdition" - Judgment and destruction on the Last Day.

Verse twelve: "Ten Horns" - These are ten kings and their kingdoms which arose out of the ruins of the Roman Empire; they also represent all those nations of today who lie with the Harlot (cf. v. 16).

Note: This vision is a panorama which covers all of history from John's day (and before) until the end of time. Parallel passages are found in II Thessalonians 2:3-10, and in I John, chapter two. We do not believe there is exact parallelism between Revelation XVII and the visions of Daniel, chapters two and seven. We use the Church-Historical Method for interpreting Revelation.

I

Saint John is Shown the Great Harlot

Verses One to Six

I

Saint John is Shown the Great Harlot

Verses one to six

Verse One:

> And there came one of the seven angels of those having the ten vials, and spoke with me, saying, Come here, I will show you the judgment of the great Harlot who sits upon the many waters.

Revelation XVII is not an independent, but a connecting unit between the other chapters of the Book. We noticed that Babylon, which forms the outstanding subject matter of this chapter, was mentioned at the end of Chapter XVI, verse nineteen. This is the Sixth Vision, but it is very closely connected with the preceding chapter where we read of the seven angels pouring out their vials of God's wrath upon the earth, because one of the seven angels shows this vision to John.

Therefore, it is not necessary to insist that a new series of visions begins in Revelation XVII, but rather a more particular description of the Great Whore Babylon the Great, the faithless Roman Church, and of those events of the period preceding Christ's Second Coming.

The Judgment of Antichrist has been discussed in previous chapters, and the final judgment takes place in chapters eighteen and nineteen. This

chapter gives a more complete description of Antichrist, Babylon the Great, a summary, and of God's judgment upon her. [194]

We may add that the grammar and Greek constructions of this chapter and the words are not difficult at all. The words themselves are easily understood, but what the words stand for is the problem. The textual critic will also notice that there are few variant readings in the text (this no doubt because the copyist made no intentional errors of explanation), and that none of these harm the original language in any degree. εἷς ἐκ τῶν ἑπτὰ ἀγγέλων τῶν ἐχόντων τὰς ἑπτὰ φιάλας: One of the seven angels having the seven vials.

The first note which strikes the ear in this chapter is that of the number seven; there were seven angels and seven vials or bowls. We need not press the significance of the number seven, which occurs again and again in Revelation, but must be content to say that it is a holy number and that it is generally thought to indicate completeness.

These seven angels, who pour out the wrath of God, in Chapters XV and XVI, however, must have been special angels of the Most High, perhaps of the higher ranks of the seraphim or the cherubim, for they have a special message from heaven for the world.

One of these seven special angels of God, who take a large part in the Revelation of John, is now designated by God to show St. John the whole judgment of the Great Whore, as it is written down in the annals above. Which one of the seven this angel was we are not told; neither does it matter or have any bearing on the interpretation. We might surmise, though, that it

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194. "Thus closes the last of the Septenary series - that of the Seven vials; and with it all that Divine Wisdom has seen fit to announce beforehand of the fate of that gigantic Antichristian edifice of church and State, the features of which, so fully described in preceding chapters, we have pointed out in detail." (David Brown, The Apocalypse, p. 135).

probably was the seventh angel since it was during the outpouring of the seventh bowl that reference is made to the fact that God remembered Babylon the Great in the fierceness of His wrath, and then invited John to behold her destruction.

τὴν φιάλην, Dr. Thayer says this refers to "a broad shallow bowl", or a "deep saucer". Dr. Goodspeed is correct, therefore, when he translates, "Then one of the seven angels with the seven bowls came and spoke to me". The word "vial" used in the Authorized Version generally refers to a glass bottle, small in size with a long neck and a stopper, used for medicines, perfumes, chemicals, etc.

Just what these phialas were like is, of course, inconsequential, since the picture is entirely symbolic of a great punitive action of God placed in the language of human understanding. Therefore Moffat's modern translations which reads, "Then came one of the seven angels with the seven plagues and spoke to me", is more of an interpretation than a translation. He is somewhat justified in his translation because the results of the pouring out of the bowls of wrath were very similar to the Ten Plagues of Egypt.

καὶ ἐλάλησεν μετ' ἐμοῦ λέγων: He spoke to me saying. This is the common phrase used in the Book of Revelation to describe the giving of a vision to John. It is also used in Chapter one, verse twelve. It is a peculiar phrase. μετά means "with" someone, construed with the Genitive. Used with the word λαλέω (ἐλάλησεν is the I Aorist indicative active) it means "to talk or converse with someone." In other words, a conversation in which both parties do the talking, and not just a one-sided conversation in which one person does all the speaking.

No doubt it is a colloquial phrase, and John means that the angel did

the speaking while he listened with rapt attention. John himself says not a word during this whole vision, though he sometimes tells us what went on in his mind. The nearest he comes to speaking is in verse six: "And when I saw her I wondered with great admiration." Both Moffat and Goodspeed in their modern English translations say "spoke to me."

Δεῦρο is a Greek adverb, here used in the sense of place: "hither," "to this place." In urging or calling someone to him one would say Δεῦρο, that is, "Come here!" The Authorized Translation is excellent: "Come hither!"

How are we to picture this situation? Did John arise from where he was and walk to another part of the Isle of Patmos, perhaps to a high cliff overlooking the ocean to see this vision? We should not conceive of it in that way. Remember St. John is "in the spirit,"[195] that is, in a trance or ecstatic vision. What does this mean? It means that John was not in a normal state of mind when he received this vision. He was in the possession of the Holy Spirit of God. He was "under the Spirit's miraculous and prophetical influence."[196] The prophets of old often went into such a trance when under the influence of the Spirit.[197] "John found himself in the spirit, in that peculiar ecstasy which detached the mind from the body, as it commonly attended special prophetic revelation, Ezek. 37:1; Dan. 10; 2 Cor. 12:17."[198] Thus we must not conceive of a local physical movement on the part of John, but all this took place in his mind, in this trance through the will of God. It is like a dream in our sleep when sometimes

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195. Cf. verse three and chapter one, verse nine: ἐν πνεύματι.
196. John T. Mueller, Concordia New Testament with Notes, p. 730.
197. Cf. Isaiah 6.
198. P.E. Kretzmann, op. cit., p. 592.

we see ourselves traveling, working, and doing other things, though we lie quietly in bed. "This is a word merely calling the attention, as we should say now 'here'. It does not imply that John was to leave the place where he was."[199]

Δεῦρο: This is the future tense of the verb δείκνυμι, meaning simply "to show," "to exhibit", or "open to the eyes." See also its use in John 14:8. Here it refers to things seen in a vision. We notice that this "showing" was accomplished by the angel of the Lord in two ways: The angel gave John definite pictures and images; also, John was told in express words.

What was the Apostle John to see? The special purpose of the whole vision of Chapter XVII is included in the answer: To show John the judgment of the Great Harlot. The word used is τὸ κρίμα, which means in the first place "a decree." Here it means judgment, or sentence, that is, a condemnation of wrong, the decision which a judge passes upon the faults of others.

It is used here as in Luke 24:20 and Romans 5:16, where the justice of God in punishing sin is shown - thus it denotes condemnatory sentence, penal judgment, justice, sentence. The word is used here with the Genitive of the person upon whom the sentence is passed. Both Moffat and Goodspeed translate the word, "doom."

The queer thing about the chapter is that it does not speak a great deal about the Judgment of the Babylon, but we find this mostly in the chapter XVIII. Only a few verses at the end of the chapter are allotted to the description of the judgment of the Whore. By the sentence announcement "I

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199. Albert Barnes, Notes on Revelation, p. 419.

will show you the judgment," the angel no doubt referred to what takes place in Chapter XVIII also. We will see at the end of this chapter, however, just in what this judgment consisted.

Who shall be judged? ἡ πόρνη ἡ μεγάλη, is the answer. It is interesting to know that this word comes from the verb πορνεύω, "to sell". In the Classical Greek literature and in the New Testament it designates "a woman who sells her body for sexual uses," "any woman indulging in unlawful sexual intercourse whether for gain or for lust"; thus a prostitute, a harlot, a whore.

Thayer has this note: "Hebraistically, metaphorically, an idolatress; so of 'Babylon' i.e. Rome, the chief seat of idolatry: Rev. xvii. 1,5,sq."[200] Dr. Goodspeed translates the word with idolatress; Dr. Moffat translates the word with a harlot.

"One of the special messengers of the Lord that had poured out the vials of His wrath upon the kingdom of Antichrist and upon all his servants, took John to show him the doom, the execution of the sentence upon the anti-christian harlot. With emphasis she is called the great harlot, for her impudence and shamelessness have become a proverb and a byword among the nations."[201]

Revelation Chapter XVII has as its theme the role played by this Great Harlot, and her nature and her identity will unfold as we study verse after verse. According to verse eighteen of this chapter she is a city, that much the Holy Writer explains for us: "And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth."

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200. Lexicon of the New Testament, p. 402.
201. P.E. Kretzmann, op. cit., p. 638, vol. II.

But the identity of the city is not given. However, it does give us an important lead in the interpretation of this evil symbol. She is the great persecuting power whose destruction is here foretold. She is the Antichrist, and this chapter is a picture of God's judgment upon her.

When we see the term "harlot" used symbolically in the Scriptures it immediately suggests an apostate church. Later on she is simply called a "woman" (γυνή) but that detracts nothing from her character.[202]

It is the way the Prophets pictured idolatry and corruption of a city, under the guise of a woman - a pious city under the picture of a chaste woman, a virgin; an evil city under the image of an abandoned or lewd woman. That is the manner in which the Prophet Isaiah mourned over the faithless, apostate Jerusalem of his day: "How is the faithful city become an harlot!"[203]

We believe, after thorough study of all other interpretations offered, that the Great Harlot represents the Roman Catholic Church with all her corruption and misused power and apostasy of ancient and modern times. It is difficult for us to call anyone a whore, but this is as we see it. Notice also that the Papacy always is called "she", which agrees with her feminine character.

Anyone who studies to any degree the dogmas of the Church at Rome,

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202. Matthew Henry, p. 1172: "A whore (in this passage) is one that is married, and has been false to her husband's bed, has forsaken the guide of her youth, and broken the covenant of God. She has been a prostitute to the kings of the earth, whom she had intoxicated with the wine of her fornication." Let the reader look at the history of the Roman Church, which gradually in the early centuries forsook her husband's bed (left Christ's true doctrines of grace and truth) and became the harlot flirting with the kingdoms of the world, playing more politics than preaching grace, using more tyranny than love, condemning to hell, rather than saving through Christ's blood and righteousness.

203. Isaiah 1:21.

especially the Councils of Trent of 1545, and considers this chapter in the light of her long and rotten history, can hardly fail to see the similarity between this image and the debauched church. She is a lewd female, a fit representative of an apostate, corrupt, unfaithful church.

"The departure of the Church from fidelity to her Lord, like the unfaithfulness of a woman to her husband, is often spoken of in Scripture as spiritual adultery or fornication."[204]

The Early Church was a virgin, sweet and pure, the Bride of our Lord Jesus. But soon, through the connivance of Satan and the lust of men, she gradually broke her vow under which she was married to Christ as a pure virgin, and gave her love to another, namely the Dragon and all he stands for, and played the part of the harlot, as she still does today. The false church of Christ will always be a whore in God's sight, unless she changes her ways. For she has forsaken the pure doctrines of Christ, especially the Doctrine of Salvation through faith in Christ, and is now married to another, Satan.[205]

Satan succeeded in defiling the Early Church and turning her into a Great Harlot just as he seduced Eve in the Garden of Eden. Rome took the Church into her power not by force, but by allurements. So Satan changed Jerusalem into a Sodom. Thus the Roman Church was enticed from her "First Love" (chapter 2:4), from Christ the Heavenly Bridegroom, and now consorts with idols. And today Satan uses the fallen woman who he seduced to defile others - oh, the wiles of Satan!

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204. Theodore Graebner, op. cit., p. 35.

205. "The world-power gives up its hostility, and accepts Christianity externally: the beast gives up its God-opposed character, the woman gives up her divine one. They meet half-way by mutual concessions: Christianity becomes worldly, the world Christianized. The gainer is the world, the loser the church." (James Faussett, Commentary on Revelation, p. 36).

In the seventh century B.C. the Prophet Jeremiah thus condemned the Jews: "For of old time I (the Lord God) have broken thy yoke, and burst thy bands; and thou saidst, I will not transgress; when upon every high hill and under every green tree thou wanderest, playing the harlot."[206]

Gradually, during the next verses of this chapter, the nature and identity of the Harlot unfolds. She is called next "the whore, the great one, who is sitting upon many waters," ἡ καθημένη ἐπὶ ὑδάτων πολλῶν. καθημένη is the participial form of the present from the verb κάθημαι meaning "to sit or be seated."

There is much meaning in this word and its use in this passage which throws light on the purpose and role of the Harlot. Note that the word is used with the preposition ἐπί, construed with the so-called Genitive of the Seat, that is, this Harlot sits upon a throne and rules; she is in control; she is an evil queen upon a throne. The woman is seen sitting on the beast, both because she exercises control and power over it, and also because the woman relies upon the beast for support.

In ancient Greek the verb κάθημαι pictured just that scene - an emperor, ruler, or judge sitting on his throne and ruling over his subjects and passing sentence upon them. This certainly describes the history of the Catholic Church. For we believe that this image does not only depict something which happened in the past, as when the Roman Empire was in power, but something taking place before our very eyes and which will continue till the end of time. We know of no other institution on earth now or in the past which fits the picture better than the Roman Church.

And this will become even more evident as we offer concrete examples

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206. Jeremiah 2:2.

later on in our thesis. Rome was the great center of authority of the Empire; it is also the seat of power of the Pope. Even this war has not greatly affected his power over the earth.

The phrase ἐπὶ ὑδάτων πολλῶν, "upon many waters", explains more fully the situation. We are told in verse fifteen that τὰ ὕδατα refers to "peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues." Waters often symbolize nations in the Bible.

And again in verse fifteen the same word κάθηται is used to depict the fact that this Harlot, who is later on called Babylon the Great, rules over subjects.

The picture fits well here on a grander scale, for we know what power an evil woman can have over a man. We have to think only of Napoleon and his Josephine, Hitler and his Eva, Mussolini and his Clara, for concrete examples.

The description reminds us of Jeremiah's words about old Babylon on the Euphrates,[207] about which Jeremiah spoke when he issued God's judgment against her: "O thou that dwellest upon many waters, abundant in treasures, thine end is come, and the measure of thy covetousness."[208]

As ancient Babylon exploited the nations of the world which were the sources of her riches and earthly grandeur, so the Roman Church has done throughout the ages - think of its dealings with England and Germany and other nations of Europe in the Middle Ages, before and after the time of

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207. "An image drawn either from Babylon, situated on the Euphrates, and encompassed by the many artificial rivers which had been made to irrigate the country; or Rome, situated on the Tiber." (Albert Barnes, Notes on the Book of Revelation, p. 419).

208. Jeremiah 51:13.

the Reformation!"[209]

The history of the Roman Church certainly bears this fact out, that the Papacy has the nations in her power. The iniquity of the harlot has always been not only apostasy from Christ, but also a godless, luxurious commercialism, making merchant princes of those dealing with her.

As a system, Rome has never enriched the nations of the earth, but rather the contrary. Witness the late rebellions against Rome's appropriating to herself, free from taxes, vast parts of the territories of such lands as Mexico and Spain.

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209. Goeszwein sagt: "Babel wird Rom gewoehnlich dann genannt, wenn seiner Herrschaft und aeuszern Herrlichkeit gedacht wird. Die Wasser, ueber welchen es sitzt, sind auch die Woelker, die ihm dienen und Quellen seines Reichthums und seiner irdischen Macht sind." (Erklaerung der Offenbarung St. Johannis, p. 234).

Verse Two:

With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and those that dwell on the earth have been made drunk from the wine of her fornication.

The description of the Great Harlot continues. Not only does she have influence over the peoples of the earth; she also has the kings of the earth in her power. Tyre's perverse commercial dealings (Isaiah 23:17), and the political intrigues of Assyria with which she seduced and deceived other nations and states (Nahum 3:4,5), are described in almost the same language.[210]

μετ' ἧς ἐπόρνευσαν οἱ βασιλεῖς τῆς γῆς: "with whom the kings of the earth have committed adultery." We term this as spiritual adultery. ἐπόρνευσαν is the I Aorist indicative of πορνεύω, "to prostitute one's body to the lust of another", "to give one's self to unlawful sexual intercourse"; μετά τινος, "to permit one's self to be drawn away by another into idolatry."

The wily whore, holding out her lustful arms to embrace the kings of

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210. Nahum 3:4,5: "Because of the multitude of the whoredoms of the well-favoured harlot, the mistress of witchcrafts, that selleth nations through her whoredoms, and families through her witchcrafts. Behold, I am against thee, saith the Lord of hosts; and I will discover thy skirts upon thy face, and I will shew the nations thy nakedness, and the kingdoms thy shame."

Isaiah 23:17: "And it shall come to pass after the end of seventy years, that the Lord will visit Tyre, and she shall turn to her hire, and shall commit fornication with all the kingdoms of the world upon the face of the earth."

the nations of the earth, has finally got them into her power. She has seduced them. They are now living in adultery with her, in the same kind of unfaithfulness, idolatry and corruption she embraced when she made illicit love to the father of lies, the Dragon. The kings and lords of the earth have made love to her and have given their majesty and their power and glory to her and thus have made her great.

The "kings of the earth" (οἱ βασιλεῖς) are all those rulers of the empires surrounding Rome in the old world who supported the Harlot, gave her money, lent her power and prestige, and finally were caught in the siren's meshes. Now through her trickery, they were willing to carry out her desires in exchange for her love. The whole picture is one of sin and shame. No wonder the Lord God pronounces a judgment upon this Great Whore to take place in the future!

Thus the Papacy got her political power. Think of the sway the Roman Church held over the masses in the Middle Ages! She cursed and excommunicated, jailed and killed, persecuted and burned - all in the name of the Church of Jesus Christ! What deep hypocrisy! Think of the golden age of the Papacy under Hildrebrand, Gregory VII, in the eleventh century. In the year 1076 Emperor Henry IV of Germany and his whole people were excommunicated for disregarding a papal decree, and later the emperor himself was made to stand in the cold for three days in Italy, waiting on the proud Pope's arrogance before he was "forgiven". And what is the Pope doing with the Papal Secretary of State today?

If there is a better revelation of the Harlot's identity than the Papacy, it will have to come in the future. The reader will always understand, of course, that we are not attempting to prove the Doctrine of the

Antichrist from Revelation. This, we are sorry to say, we cannot do, for it is an antilegomenon.

But the reader will see that Revelation XVII is an excellent commentary or supplement to II Thessalonians, chapter two. Remember that the name "Antichrist" is not mentioned in either place. The Pope is not mentioned, either - not specifically. But we believe the Pope and all he stands for is the Antichrist, Babylon the Great; the revelation we have in the Word and in history is too plain not to see this light.

For many reasons the fact that they had been seduced was the emperors' and kings' of the earth own fault; they consorted with the Harlot. They committed spiritual whoredom with the prostitute in Rome. She pronounced them "Christian" for pay in kind - money and "reverence."

Today we have the same situation in the world set-up. To us "kings of the earth" does not refer alone to the emperors and rulers and kings of ancient Rome and the European nations, but to the rulers and kings of modern times. Many of the leaders of the great nations today are lying with the Whore of Rome. Considering the two-sided role the Catholic Church played in the politics of World War II in Europe, one would think some of the larger powers would punish such action as a criminal offense, but they are still consorting with her. Is Russia altogether wrong in saying that the Vatican helped Hitler and Mussolini to power?

Our own nation still has an ambassador to the Vatican. In this way the "kings of the earth" of our day support the Great Harlot in her evil occupation of sitting upon the nations of the world and keeping them in spiritual darkenss and servitude, and away from Jesus Christ and the true Gospel. Look how long Spain endured the weight of the Harlot upon the

country, until revolting against her in the Revolution. Think of what is happening in South America today! All over the world, to the little islands in the South Pacific, the Harlot holds her evil spell over the nations.

The second half of verse two informs us that the people of the nations, the "earth dwellers", also have supported the Great Harlot. The picture in this case is that they have "become drunk with the wine of her fornication". We note that there is not a single variant reading in the first two verses of the Chapter, thus omitting any textual criticism.

These οἱ κατοικοῦντες τὴν γῆν, the "inhabitants of the earth," refer to all the people of the world who have joined and will join and support the Roman Church in spreading her heresies and leading men to hell instead of to heaven.

Before the Reformation in the sixteenth century this was especially true, for in the days before Martin Luther the people blindly followed the Church of Rome. She was fully entrenched in the feudal system of Europe, owning more property and wielding more power than the Emperor himself.

Sacerdotalism and Sacramentalism held sway over the masses, generally by their permission. The people lost sight of the Bright Morning Star and became followers of the Mother Church. Intoxicated by Rome's power and glory, by her pomp and circumstance, by her holy water and dark chancels and superstitions, they offered all for the Roman Church - money and goods, body and soul, life and salvation. ἐμεθύσθησαν is the I Aorist indicative passive of μεθύω, meaning "to be drunken".

This magic drink of superstition and error, ὁ οἶνος τῆς πορνείας αὐτῆς, "the wine of her fornication," made fanatics of the masses. The potion was not of men, but of Satan the Dragon, who mixed with the wine all kinds of false doctrines like Rome's teaching

concerning purgatory and the Mass and Justification - powerful errors, made as enticing as possible.

The word ἡ πορνεία used in this passage is worthy of study. It means "fornication," or "prostitution", any kind of carnal intercourse and only that. It speaks of illicit sexual cohabitation in general (Acts 15:20,29; 21:25), and for this reason is to be distinguished from ἡ μοιχεία, which is a broader word (both are often translated "adultery") referring not only to carnal intercourse, but also to impurity of any kind. Thayer says that πορνεία is "used metaphorically of the worship of idols, Rev. 14:9; 17:2; 18:3." It has the metaphorical or spiritual meaning here, of course.[211]

It was plain seduction, which made the people forget the love of God in Christ Jesus, taught and preached by the Apostles. John on Patmos was granted this long look into the future, and has given this sixth vision for us and our learning today - Beware of the Harlot!

"Here it is said that the harlot had made them "drunk with the wine of her fornication, that is, they had been, as it were, intoxicated by the

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211. A word study of πορνεία and μοιχεία is in place here. μοιχεία (μοιχεύω, μοιχάω) means, 1) Illicit carnal intercourse between a man and a woman, either or both of whom are married. 2) In the Sixth Commandment the term is used to forbid any impurity by thought, word, or deed. In other words, it has a broad meaning and is generally translated "adultery", though often in the Authorized Version the two words "adultery" and "fornication" are used interchangeably. ἡ πορνεία, on the other hand, has as its only meaning "carnal intercourse", "fornication". It means, though, any kind of carnal intercourse, whether between married persons or not. The Lord Jesus used this word purposely in Matthew 19:9, for had he used μοιχεία, which may mean any kind of sexual impurity, and not necessarily carnal intercourse, people could obtain a divorce for almost anything - kissing, impure thoughts or language, etc. πορνεία, then, has a narrow meaning, meaning only carnal intercourse. Actually, then, adultery is always fornication, if the word μοιχεία is understood in its narrow sense; and fornication is always adultery.

alluring cup held out to them. What could better describe the influence of Rome on the people of the world, in making them, under these delusions, incapable of sober judgment, and in completely fascinating and controlling all their powers?"[212]

Wine, beer, and liquor are used by the evil-doers of our present day who frequent the night-clubs and taverns to get the woman or man drunk as an aid in seducing them more easily. The will-power of a drugged or drunken person is very easily subjected to the will of others.[213] We cannot help thinking that the imagery before us in this verse fits the Roman Church much better than the Roman Empire. The Empire was not very subtle at seductions; with the Caesars force was all in all.

But the Roman Church uses finesse; she coaxes and teases (remember Cajetan's and Miltitz' dealings with Luther!) and uses endearments, trickery, strategy, and cunning before she uses the stern heel. She always keeps in the half-darkness to make herself the more alluring. She, as a Harlot, does not stand out in the street and shoot poisoned arrows at everyone, but she entices them into her boudoir with her incense and darkened chancel, with her gaudy dress and ritual and pageantry, all of which casts a hypnotic spell stronger than Circe's, upon a person, if he stays in the atmosphere too long. Yes, the Antichrist is the Harlot, and the Harlot is the Pope and his Church!

We like Moffat's translation of this verse better than Dr. Goodspeed's. Dr. Moffat's version is: "With whom the kings of the earth have committed vice, and the dwellers on earth have been drunk with the wine of her vice."

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212. Albert Barnes, Notes on Revelation, pp. 419-420.
213. cf. "Sailor, Soldier, Civilian, Beware!" by Helen Worden, Reader's Digest, June, 1945, pp. 109-111.

Dr. Goodspeed translates: "In whose idolatry the kings of the earth have joined, and with the wine of whose idolatry the inhabitants of the earth have been intoxicated."

Verse Three:

> And he carried me away in the spirit into a wilderness, and I saw a Woman sitting upon a scarlet-colored Beast, filled with names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.

The seer is now taken by force, so to speak, and shown a descriptive revelation of the Great Whore. Again John tells us of the peculiar manner in which he received the vision, as in Revelation chapter one, verse nine, ἐν πνεύματι. See our notes on verse one of this chapter for an explanation of this concept.

ἀπήνεγκεν is the first Aorist indicative active of ἀποφέρω: "He carried me away." We emphasize the fact again that this phrase must not be considered ina physical sense, as though John's body was picked up by the angel and transported to the Arabian Desert or some other desolate place where this image was seen on the crest of the sand dunes. It is true, ἡ ἔρημος means "desert" in every sense of the term, but John tells us he was carried away ἐν πνεύματι, that is, "the prophet's soul and mind were dissociated from his body for a short while, in order that he might see this picture."[214]

To him in his trance, it seemed as if he were carried away to a desert, as our mind wanders in our dreams, while the actual situation was that while in the ecstatic state in Patmos the scene we are about to witness was made

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214. P.E. Kretzmann, op. cit., p. 638.

to pass before his mind's eye in so realistic a manner that as far as he was concerned he was actually present.

John was carried in his trance "into a desert", εἰς ἔρημον. A desert is a wilderness, a deserted desolate place, where there are few or no inhabitants, a place, therefore, where one might dwell concealed and unknown to the peoples of the earth, just as the Roman Church for centuries has concealed herself in a desert of evil from the masses, covering up what she really was and is. In Luke 1:80 the word is used for the "wilderness of Judea". In Acts 7:30-36, it is used to indicate the wilderness in which the Israelites wandered. A desert is the traditional place for important visions in apocalyptic literature. In Isaiah 21:1-9, the prophet had a vision of the fall of Babylon, where he also saw it located in a desert: "The burden of the desert of the sea. As whirlwinds in the south pass through; so it cometh from the desert, for a terrible land." John's allusion to Babylon in the desert may have been adapted from Isaiah, but we must bear in mind that in Isaiah we have the actual Babylon on the Euphrates pictured, while here we have another "Babylon", the Roman Catholic Church - the two passages are not parallels.

We are of the opinion, as we said, that an interpreter should not press too much the significance of John's being transported to a wilderness for this vision. It is just the peculiar manner of presentation of the Apocalypse, and we should not try to infer too much meaning from the fact that the Seer was carried to a desert, or, let us say for example, to the sea or on top of a high mountain for the presentation of the vision.

But many exegetes do this, including Stuart, Barnes, and others. They like to refer the desert to the condition of the Beast, that is, of the city and empire of Rome at the time when the Papacy took over civil

power through Gregory the Great, A.D. 590. Rome had been sacked by the Barbarians, they say, in the Fifth Century, and this term "desert" describes the horrible state of the empire, in which Rome was speedily reduced to the state of a dreary wilderness, in which the land was barren, the waters impure and the air infectious.[215]

We are not willing to accept such a literal view as this of the meaning of the word ἔρημος, but we think this idea is good: "Into the wilderness; probably to be understood symbolically of the fact that her presence makes a spiritual wilderness."[216]

John is now in this vast outdoor theater (in the spirit) and the picture is about to be flashed upon the screen of his mind. What does he see? A most ghastly object, or objects, a monstrosity of the worst and most fearful sort: "And I saw a woman, sitting upon a red beast ..." Goodspeed translates: "So he carried me away in a trance to a desert, and I saw a woman on a scarlet animal ...", while the version of Dr. Moffat is: "So he bore me away rapt in the Spirit to the desert, and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet Beast ..."

The verb εἶδον is the second aorist indicative of ὁράω

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215. To what foolish conclusions such an exegesis leads the interpreter, witness the following: "On the supposition now that the inspired author of the Apocalypse had Rome in that state when the civil power declined and the Papacy arose in his eye, what more expressive imagery could he have used to denote it than that he has employed? On the supposition - if such a supposition could be made - that Mr. Gibbon meant to furnish a commentary on this passage, what more appropriate language could he have used? Does not the language look as if the author of the Apocalypse and the author of the 'Decline and Fall' meant to play into each other's hands?" (Barnes, op. cit., p. 420).

216. John T. Mueller, Concordia New Testament with Notes, p. 766.

and here it means to "see in a vision". There is no doubt about it that the term ἡ γυνή means "woman", as this is the general term of the Greek used to designate a woman.

We may infer from the simple "a woman" that it was an evil woman, especially since the word is in apposition to ἡ πόρνη, "the Harlot", in the first verse. Note that the term is used by Paul to designate a man's wife in Eph. 5:28, which certainly gives us grounds to contend that this woman was a married woman, yes, once the faithful bride of Christ, but now has turned into a gross Harlot, an adulteress, in the form of the unfaithful Roman Church with many of its blasphemous teachings like the Celibacy of the Clergy, the Sacrifice of the Mass, and Infallibility of the Pope, the Prayers for the Dead, the Doctrine of Purgatory, and the gratia infusa.

In the Concordia New Testament With Notes, Dr. J. T. Mueller writes of the woman:

> Representing this idolatrous persecuting power (the Roman Church), who, with all deceivableness or unrighteousness, by pretended miracles, shows, splendid decorations, indulgences, jubilees, and blandishments of various sorts, had been deceiving and enslaving the nations, promising all good to those who should follow, and all evil to those who should oppose her. 2 Thess. 2:9-12; 1 Tim. 4: 1-3.[217]

The woman who is the Great Harlot, is seen sitting ἐπὶ θηρίον κόκκινον, "upon a Beast, a red one." Καθημένη is the same verb form we have in verse one; see that place for significance of the term, namely, that the word means that not only does the woman sit upon the Beast, but that she also rules and guides it with a hand that at

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217. Page 666.

one time entices and at another stabs in the back.

Regarding τὸ θηρίον Dr. Thayer in his thesaurus has an interesting etymological discussion: First he says it is a diminuative of θήρ, and thus means "a little beast", a "little animal", ... "but in usage it had almost always the force of its primitive use ... and in Revelation under this figure is depicted the Antichrist, both the person and his kingdom and power; metaphorically, a brutal, bestial man, savage, ferocious, Titus 1:12."

We choose the term "wild beast" as the correct one, since this certainly depicts the character of the Roman Empire which we believe the image represents and which following verses will show.[218]

This designation of the Beast is heightened further by his gaudy and bloody color: κόκκινος, "crimson," "scarlet-colored," "red like crimson," the "color of blood." This word is often used as an adjective, but in verse four where we are told the woman was dressed in purple and scarlet, it has the force of a neuter substantive and means "red-colored clothing". κόκκινος is used only about five times in the New Testament, and each time it is translated "scarlet", "bright red color", "color of blood". 219

This scarlet color may have been the natural color of the Beast, or he may have been covered with scarlet clothing or trappings. At any rate, we think this color depicts for us the nature of the Beast, namely, that he

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218. "The beast that carries the woman is the old Roman Empire." (Theo. Graebner, op. cit., p. 35).

219. The word is derived from κόκκος, a kernel, the grain or berry of the ilex coccifera, which are the clusters of eggs of a female insect, and when pulverized produced a red dye. These eggs are laid in a certain oak of Western Asia.

was blood-thirsty.

Anyone who reads the history of Rome in its treatment of the world's masses, especially of the Christians, will immediately see the validity of this conclusion. Think of the murdering done by Rome under Nero, Diocletian, and in John's time under Domitian! Yes, Rome's fingers were dripping with the blood of the martyrs slain for their loyalty to Christ, just as Rome was also guilty in killing the Prince of Life.

And when the Papacy took over Old Rome the blood of the martyrs still continued to flow, and will flow at her hands throughout history, more so if she had more chance - but who knows how much blood the Church at Rome caused to flow, for instance, during the Spanish Revolution of this century, and even in this World War II, not counting the Inquisition and days like St. Bartholomew's of the Middle Ages?

In either case, red, scarlet, stands for blood and cruelty and tyranny, whether wielded by Ancient Rome or the Pope. The color was used in the robes and garments of the military and at court - the official color of Rome and the Papacy.

> "John is carried by one of the seven angels into the wilderness, and there sees a harlot riding upon a scarlet-colored beast, which is manifestly the same as the beast that rose out of the sea. Chap. 13:1.
>
> A harlot is the appropriate symbol of an apostate church, and her riding upon the beast represents the fact that the beast supports her,[220] and she uses it for the accomplishment of her base purposes. She is therefore the same for substance as the two-horned beast that "exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him." Chap. 13:11,12.

The description of the Beast is continued. We are told the Beast was "full of names of blasphemy." In chapter XIII the Beast had names of

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220. J. T. Mueller, op. cit., p. 766.

blasphemy only on his head - here we see that they have spread to fill his whole body. γεμοντα is the present participle of the defective verb γέμω, ("to be full"), which in the New Testament is used only in the present indicative and in the participial form. Generally it is used with the Genitive, but here it is used hebraistically with the accusative of the material.

There has been some argument, due to some variant readings in the old manuscripts, whether the form should read γεμοντα, as Nestle has it, or γεμον, as Tregelles and Weiss have it. The textual evidence seems to be for Nestle's reading; besides, it seems to fit better gramatically.

We are at a loss to understand how both Moffat and Goodspeed can translate the word "covered with, or all covered with blasphemous titles," though we must admit it makes good sense, for writings are generally placed on the outside of objects.

What these names or titles of blasphemy were, (ὀνόματα βλασφημίας), we do not know. Many commentators attribute all the characteristic titles and names of the Papacy to the Beast in this passage. In a certain sense the Beast and the Harlot are synonymous, since they co-operate in the business of drinking the blood of human souls.[221] One serves the other, or we might say, they serve each other in this blasphemous business.

In this way we can assign all the characteristics of Antichrist in II Thessalonians to the Beast. Under the sway of the Great Whore the

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221. See our notes under verse eleven.

world-power puts forth more blasphemous pretentions than in pagan days - kissing the Pope's feet, adoration of him as a god, the office of the Cardinals, and the color of the Mass.

However, according to the text before us, these are names or titles of blasphemy. From Old Testament times it has been blasphemy for one save God Himself to assert and call himself God. Jesus was condemned by the Jews on this score. And so we believe that this is what this name of blasphemy refers to - the Pope's raising himself to the level of God. Does not the Papal Decree of 1870 or the Pope's Infallibility ex cathedra give sufficient evidence of this?

In this way again Revelation XVII is a commentary on II Thessalonians 2, especially verses three and four:

> Let no man deceive you by any means; for that day shall not come except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped, so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

In our opinion this is the greatest and most atrocious blasphemous title the Beast has, though our Father in Heaven knows that he and the Papacy (in that unique partnership or union of the devil) have many more. For comment on these thoughts we refer you to the words of one of our own Lutheran theologians:

> The man of lawlessness sets himself in opposition to God, to Christ, thereby revealing his nature as

> as Antichrist. He wants his own doctrines and laws regarded just like those of Christ; in fact, he insists upon replacing Christ's precepts with his own. At the same time he vaunts himself, exalts himself against all that is called God or an object of true worship. He acts as though he were not under, but over God's will and Law; he treads all true religion under his feet, making the service of God a play and a farce.
>
> But the climax is reached by his final arrogance, by which he sets himself in the temple of God, showing himself forth that he is God. In the Church, in the midst of Christendom, in the midst of the baptized Christians, Antichrist had the audacity to place his throne. For he presumes to be the representative of God on earth and to be endued with divine power and authority.
>
> There can be no doubt that this prophecy finds its fulfillment in the Roman papacy, as a special article below will show. The insistence of the Roman See upon the tradition of the Church, its prohibition of Bible reading, its doctrines of the immaculate conception of Mary, of transubstantiation, of the sacrifice of the mass, of indulgences, of the veneration of the saints, of purgatory, of the infallibility of the Pope, etc., the entire system of doctrine, in fact, with all its ramifications, mark the Pope of Rome, as the Antichrist in the narrow or specific sense of the word.[222]

Since we cannot express the thoughts as well as others have done, we necessarily ask you to read them which is far better. So we quote some notes from the Concordia New Testament With Notes, on the blasphemous titles of the Papacy:

> As God: assuming the right to control the conscience, receiving the titles, and claiming the honors which belong only to God - called by his deluded followers, "Our Lord God and Pope", "Another God upon Earth", "King of kings and Lord of Lords" ... Who invades the

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222. P.E. Kretzmann, op.cit., p. 362. See also his brief summarizing article entitled Antichrist, based largely upon Luther and our Confessional writings, p. 364.

> prerogatives of God, pretending to be the head of the church, to forgive sins, and to do what God himself cannot do - grant indulgences to commit sins ...
>
> Who practically annuls the laws of God, and substitutes for them the commandments of men; as when the Council of Trent decreed, "Whosoever shall say that it is not more blessed to remain in virginity or celibacy than to be joined in marriage, let him be accursed;" and when the Pope says, "Be careful to preserve the people not only from the reading of papers, but from the reading of the Bible" ... "shun with horror the reading of such deadly poison;" thus exalting himself above the Word of God.[223]

Writings of the papists themselves show that words such as these are not slander but the truth. If this is not one of the blasphemous titles which the Beast carrying the Harlot wore, we want to see a clearer one or one in larger letters.

The Beast is made still more gruesome and strange by the statement that it has seven heads and ten horns: ἔχοντα κεφαλὰς ἑπτὰ καὶ κέρατα δέκα. There is no difficulty in the grammatical construction or in the meaning of the words themselves - ἡ κεφαλή is the head of a man or beast; by metaphorical use it may mean anyone or anything which is supreme, chief, master, or lord of something or someone. These seven heads symbolize seven mountains and seven kings which must be identified.

The word translated "horn" is τὸ κέρας, which means just what it says. Animals like bulls defend themselves with their horns, so among the Hebrews the term "keras" signified strength and courage. Notice the use of the phrase κέρας σωτηρίας, "Horn of Salvation", in St. Luke 1:69, which sheds some light upon this

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223. p. 590.

interpretation.

But in this case we must take the term "ten horns" in the same light as we took "seven heads" before, namely, that these ten horns symbolize people or institutions. The angel tells St. John in verses nine and ten that the seven heads have a double significance - they stand for seven kings and seven mountains. Here are the words the angel uses:

> And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth. And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space.

In verse twelve of this chapter, the angel tells John that the ten horns represent ten kings, thus: "And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast."

We have little difficulty in identifying the seven mountains with the seven hills of the city of Rome (Roma Septicollis), but who are the seven kings and also the ten kings? An explanation of these kings, together with the Beast "that was, and is not, and yet is", causes the interpreter not the least of his difficulties in his interpretation of Revelation XVII, as the reader will soon discover when he reads our notes under the verses quoted above.

Verse Four:

> And the woman was clothed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stone and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand, full of abominations and uncleanness of her fornication.

Verses four to six constitute a rather lengthy description of the Great Harlot, Babylon the Great. Again he calls her ἡ γυνή, simply "a woman", or now rather, she is "the woman."

The minute description tells us who this Harlot is. With such information as given here, we may by the Law of Identity, attach this most unfortunate epithet to the Papacy, past, present, and future. We dislike to call anyone or anything, even beasts, harlots; but the identification marks are so plain that we fail to find any person or institution in the world of the past or present which fits the picture better than the Papacy.[224]

Let the reader see for himself. This section, as well as Chapter XIII of Revelation, is a commentary on the description of the Antichrist

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224. The Law of Identity means that an object or individual identified must agree with the person, time, place, and thing of the description. This is a common procedure in courts of law when a person is identified as a thief or murderer. If identification cannot be confirmed under these three points, it is not a true identification. Concerning the Roman Church as the Harlot (described in II Thessalonians and here) we have no doubt about the identification being correct.

as described in II Thessalonians. In fact, we think the same Antichrist, the Papacy, is meant in both sections.

John says that the woman he saw was περιβεβλημένη πορφυροῦν καὶ κόκκινον, that is, "clothed in purple and scarlet (clothing or robes)." περιβεβλημένη is the participle of the perfect passive of the word περιβάλλω, "to cast around"; in the Middle Voice, "to clothe or dress one's self"; in the Passive, "to be clothed", - "arrayed" in the Authorized Version. Goodspeed says the "woman was dressed in purple and scarlet," and Moffat says, "clad in purple and scarlet", that is, purple and scarlet garments and robes.

Πορφυροῦν and κόκκινον, "purple and scarlet", form a synecdoche, that is, part for the whole, meaning "purple and scarlet garments or robes". They are neuters with the force of substantives. The πορφύρεος, the purple color, was the product of a certain shell-fish found in the Mediterranean Sea - it was a reddish-purplish dye which the Ancient people of state and wealth especially coveted for their costly garments.

Often the two colors were much alike in color - the purple color containing more blue, however, than the scarlet - and so we find that the two words were interchanged, as in the case of the mock robe placed on the Lord's lacerated shoulders; in Matt. 27: 28, it is called χλαμύς κόκκινη, scarlet robe, while in Mark 15:17,20, it is ἡ πορφύρα, purple.

This description, according to the Law of Identity, fits the Roman

Church precisely. We admit also the possibility that it could refer to the royal colors and robes of the Roman Emperors and their courts, but we think it especially fits the Church at Rome and all the gaudy dress of the Pope, Cardinals, Bishops, better than any other institution, more so because of the description which follows.

The Roman Catholic Church is the Harlot - once a loyal Bride of Christ, but changed into a gaudily, loudly attired adulteress whose unfaithfulness and sins shout to heaven for vengeance - dressed as harlots are, in the alluring bright red to entice the men and kings of the world.[225]

Purple and scarlet are the favorite colors of the Papacy, as the appearance of the Pope, the Cardinals, Archbishops and Priests in their bright robes on some festival occasion will show. This description of the Great Harlot to our mind was intended by the Holy Spirit for the false Papacy. This is an exact picture of the outward pomp and splendor of the Church of Antichrist, which even the poorest of the poor and the blindest of the blind, can see very well.[226]

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225. "Scarlet is the color reserved for popes and cardinals. Paul II made it penal for any but cardinals to wear scarlet hats: cf. 'Ceremoniale Rom.,' iii, sec. 5,c.5. This book was compiled more than 340 years ago by Marcellus, a Romish archbishop and dedicated to Leo X (Pope at Luther's time). In it are enumerated five articles of dress, all scarlet; a vest studded with pearls; the pope's mitre is of gold and precious stones. The very characteristics outwardly which Revelation thrice assigns to the harlot or Babylon." (Fausset, "Revelation", Crit. and Exper. Commentary, p. 710).

226. Dr. Albert Barnes has this interesting dissertation on this point of the colors of Rome and the Papacy in his Notes on Revelation, pp. 421-422: "Those who are familiar with the descriptions given of Papal Rome by travellers, and those who have passed much time in Rome, will see at once the propriety of this description, on the supposition that it was intended to refer to the Papacy. I caused this inquiry to be made of an intelligent gentleman who had passed much time in Rome - without his knowing my design - what would strike a stranger on visiting

> The chief color of the Great Harlot's attire is scarlet, and scarlet is the predominating color of Rome. In Pagan Rome it was the color of authority. The emperors' robes were purple, and the Roman senators and knights wore purple on their breasts. The cloak of the Pope is lined with scarlet, and five of the articles of his apparel on state occasions are scarlet. His carriage is scarlet, and the carpet on which he treads is scarlet. His cardinals are arrayed in scarlet, their hats, cloaks and stockings being always of this color. Their carriages and the trappings of their horses are scarlet. The body guard of the Pope is dressed mainly in scarlet. 227

How clearly this describes Papal Rome! Her service, called worship, her rituals, her splendid edifices - all is fair to behold and

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Rome, or what would be likely particularly to arrest his attention as remarkable there, and he unhesitatingly replied, 'the scarlet color'. This is the color of the dress of the cardinals, their hats, and cloaks, and stockings being always of this color. It is the color of the carriages of the cardinals, the entire body of the carriage being scarlet, and the trappings of the horses the same.

On occasion of public festivals and processions, scarlet is suspended from the windows of the houses along which processions pass.

The inner color of the cloak of the Pope is scarlet; his carriage is scarlet; the carpet on which he treads is scarlet. A large part of the dress of the body-guard of the Pope is scarlet; and no one can take up a picture of Rome without seeingthat this color is predominant.

I looked through a volume of engravings representing the principal officers and public persons of Rome. There were few in which the scarlet color was not found as constituting some part of their ap arel; in not a few the scarlet color prevailed almost entirely. And in illustration of the same thought, I introduce here an extract from a foreign newspaper of February 22, 1851, as an illustration of the fact that the scarlet color is characteristic of Rome, and of the readiness with which it is referred to in that respect: "Curious Costumes - The three new Cardinals, the Archbishops of Toulouse, Rheims, and Bensacon, were presented to the President of the French Republic by the Pope's Nuncio. They were red caps, red stockings, black Roman coats lined and bound with red, and small cloaks." I conclude, therefore, that if it be admitted that it was intended to represent Papal Rome in the vision, the precise description would have been adopted which is found here."

227. C. A. Blomgren, Thy Kingdom Come, p. 135.

and pleasing to the eye of natural man - like a golden cup. She encourages sins by her indulgences. With the celibacy there is also filth connected. And then the vileness and abomination of the confessional - why go on?

All this tawdry pomp and earthly splendor has been given to the Great Whore, for the most part by her lovers. But the crimson and the purple also represent blood; yea, her garments have been saturated through the centuries with the red and innocent blood of the martyrs!

Not only is scarlet a symbol of kingship, but red also implies blood-guiltiness and deep-dyed sin. How did she get so bloody? She was stained by the blood of the martyrs for Jesus, and her fingers are dripping with the blood-sin of unrighteousness and murder.

We note next that the Harlot is not only rich in color, but also in jewels and precious stones, which she wears - κεκρυσωμένη χρυσίῳ καὶ λίθῳ τιμίῳ καὶ μαργαρίταις - "decked out with gold and precious stone and pearls."

This is certainly a picture of a harlot; for they are really lonely women, and pearls and diamonds and such help keep them company. So she bedecks herself in them to excess that everyone may know who she is.

Thus the Great Harlot is gilded with gold and gems, so that she lacks nothing of earthly splendor, even if everything that glitters is not gold. This outward splendor is to impress those who come and lie with her, that they may think her rich, not only in earthly things but also in morality and righteousness (the sin of which the bright garments hide), a woman to be desired.

But why go on? He who has eyes which see, let him see. Was there ever a more apt description of the Catholic Church, the Antichrist? So

she has been through the centuries, a Great Harlot bedecked with jewels, enticing mortal souls into her house of lust (so Luther found it in Rome in 1512!) that she may defile them with her purgatory, prayers for the dead, and sacrifices.

During the Middle Ages the Roman Church owned as much land in Germany and other countries of Europe as the feudal lords themselves. Look at the richness, the property of the Roman Church in American today, after only two hundred years of history! How can anyone who claims to serve Jesus Christ and follow his doctrines get rich doing it, unless they play the harlot?

A study of the Greek words used to name these jewels throws some light on what they were. κεχρυσωμένη is the perfect passive participle of χρυσόω, "to adorn with gold", "to gild". Thayer says it is a picture of a woman ornamented with gold so profusely that she seems to be gilded, Rev. 18:16.

Dr. Thayer also says τὸ χρυσίον is a diminutive form of ὁ χρυσός, and that in Rev. 17:4 it refers to "golden ornaments, precious things made of gold", though the first meaning of the word is simply "gold". The use of the word with the verb χρυσόω strengthens the idea that this Harlot is covered with gold of all kinds.

The Great Whore also has λίθος τίμιος. The adjective τίμιος means "held as of great price, i.e., precious" "costly". The Authorized Version translates this phrase as "precious stones", that is, in the plural, while the word is really in the singular - "precious stone". We take it as a collective term, an idiomatic phrase meaning "precious and costly stones of all sorts".

We often do the same in English today; for example, when we speak of a load of coal, we generally mean many pieces of coal. So here. The word or phrase is not used in the singular to make the phrase enumeration consistent, for μαργαρίτης, "pearls" is in the plural.

In Matthew 7:6 Jesus uses this word as meaning the most sacred and precious teachings of the Gospel, when he says: "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet."

Pearls are also a much-valued female ornament. Here pearls belong to the general costly make-up of the Harlot. This is just another part of the Harlot, the Roman Church. What a gaudily-colored, jeweled female! Any woman who wears lots of gold, precious stones and diamonds, rings, bracelets, brooches, lockets, strings of pearls and other things, all at the same time, besides bright colored robes and garments, really is decorated! When such women walk down the street today, and there are some wearing all these trappings, plus a good coat of paint, lipstick and powder, one cannot help thinking of the Great Harlot of Revelation XVII.

The next part of the description of the Great Harlot is most unusual - John says she has a Golden Cup in her hand,[228] "ἔχουσα ποτήριον χρυσοῦν ἐν τῇ χειρὶ αὐτῆς".

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228. Many men have said that John's Greek is irregular, but in this chapter so far we have very good Greek, at least the syntax is. Again, the queer thing is that there are no variant readings in this codex! Many would think that τὰ ἀκάθαρτα should be in the Genitive, that is, that it should be a Partitive Genitive like βδελυγμάτων following a verb signifying fullness. But even though an Accusative and a Genitive following γεμω is not consistent, it is not incorrect, since hebraistically an Accusative of the Material may rightly follow γεμω, as is the case in verse three.

Τὸ ποτήριον is a neuter, meaning "drinking cup or vessel." If this was a golden cup, we can also infer that it was costly and studded with the most precious of jewels, for this Harlot owns nothing but the best in ornaments and utensils. Χρυσοῦν is the adjective χρύσεος, "golden, made of gold, overlaid or covered with gold."

The golden vessel is modified further by what it contains, which reveals fully just why this Harlot carries this cup and offers all the world to drink. Here is the descriptive phrase Saint John uses to depict the Great Harlot astride the Red Beast out in the imaginary desert, γέμον βδελυγμάτων καὶ τὰ ἀκάθαρτα τῆς πορνείας αὐτῆς, that is, "(the cup) was filled with foul filth and the impurities of her whoredoms."[229]

The word τὸ βδέλυγμα is a strong one. It is a Biblical and ecclesiastical word meaning "a foul thing", and Thayer adds in parentheses, "loathesome on account of its stench". In the Old Testament it is used of the sexual impurities which attended idol worship, to be held in abomination by the Israelites. It has the same meaning here - though the cup be golden of the finest gold, yet it is filled with impurities and idolatries and abominations of whoredom.

This is what the term τὰ ἀκάθαρτα means. It is the adjective ἀκάθαρτος made into a plural substantive, and is used in a moral sense, "unclean in thought and life", as it is used

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229. Codex Sinaiticus and a few other less important MSS add the phrase καὶ τῆς γῆς, "and of the earth" here. Nestle, whose Greek text we are using, leaves the phrase out of the text; but even if it were placed in, it would change the meaning none, only strengthening it - it is in the earth where the Harlot commits her gross sins of adultery.

in Ephesians 5:5. This word "unclean" was a favorite among the true Israelites who clung to the ceremonial law, and this phrase, therefore, was well understood by John's readers.[230]

Dr. Kretzmann writes about this filthy cup as follows: "The woman ... had a cup of gold in her hand, the most dangerous feature in the picture, for it was filled with all the abominations and the filth of her fornication, of her adulterous life, with the doctrines of Satan, who tries to deceive the whole world."[231]

The image here again is that of Papal Rome. No one with eyes and some knowledge of history can escape it. Let us not forget that verse nine with the words: "The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth," shows quite plainly that the Beast is Rome and that the Whore is the Pope. And does not the pronoun "she", which Rome always uses in speaking of the Holy See, agree very well with the Harlot?

Barnes in his Commentary on Revelation has a picture of a coin issued under Pope Leo XII on which is pictured on the reverse side a robed woman wearing a tiara with a cross-like staff in her left hand and with a cup in her right hand which is extended as though offering the world a drink! Printed on the coin are the words: "Sedet Super Universum," that is, "She Sits Upon The Universe."[232]

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230. Ephesians 5:5: "For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God."

231. Op.cit., p. 638.

232. "Do you see a woman sitting there with an inviting look, and in her hand a cup? She is called Deceit; by her power she beguiles all who enter life and makes them drink. And what is the draught? Deceit and ignorance." (Cebes' Tabula, quoted from the Expositor's New Testament, p. 451).

Dr. Barnes comments on the phenomenon as follows:

> The image here is that of Papal Rome, represented as an abandoned woman in gorgeous attire, alluring by her arts the nations of the earth, and seducing them into all kinds of pollution and abomination. It is a most remarkable fact that the Papacy, as if designing to furnish a fulfillment of this prophecy, has chosen to represent itself almost precisely in this manner - as a female extending an alluring cup to passers-by ... Far as the design of striking this medal may have been from confirming this portion of the Book of Revelation, yet no one can fail to see that if this had been the design, no more happy illustration could have been adopted. Apostate churches, and guilty nations, often furnish the very proofs necessary to confirm the truth of the Scriptures.[233]

The role the Harlot of Rome plays in world politics and in deceiving the peoples and nations and tongues of the world is well exemplified by the story of Tamar who deceived and played the part of a prostitute to Judah. This is a blight on the history of the Jews. Tamar was Judah's daughter-in-law, the reader will remember. She wanted children by any means at all since her husband Er and also Onan, Er's brother, had been slain by the Lord for their wickedness.

So she sat by the wayside dressed as a Harlot. Judah thought her to be a harlot because she covered her face. Notice the similarity between this harlot Tamar and the Harlot of Revelation! She dressed as a harlot so as to deceive Judah. And note that she insisted upon being paid! "What wilt thou give me, that thou mayest come in unto me?" Is not this the Roman Church in its dealings with the peoples of the world? Is not this a picture of the Harlot of Rome sitting along the roadside

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233. Notes on Revelation, pp. 422-423.

of the world enticing the children of men with her cup of intoxicating filth? She entices and she wants to be paid! The nations of the world have been filling the coffers of Rome since the days of Gregory and before. And once they lie with her, she catches them in her web and holds them tight - consider how Tamar saw to it that she caught Judah with definite and shameful proof!

Here is the story of the harlot Tamar, as recorded in Genesis 38:12-19. Let the reader judge for himself:

> And in process of time the daughter of Shuah Judah's wife died; and Judah was comforted, and went up unto his sheepshearers to Timnath, he and his friend Hirah the Adulamite. And it was told Tamar, saying, Behold thy father in law goeth up to Timnath to shear his sheep. And she put her widow's garments off from her, and covered her with a vail, and wrapped herself, and sat in an open place, which is by the way to Timnath; for she saw that Shelah was grown, and she was not given unto him to wife.
>
> When Judah saw her, he thought her to be an harlot; because she had covered her face. And he turned unto her by the way, and said, Go to, I pray thee, let me come in unto thee: (for he knew not that she was his daughter in law.) And she said, What wilt thou give me, that thou mayest come in unto me? And he said, I will send thee a kid from the flock. And she said, Wilt thou give me a pledge, till thou send it?
>
> And he said, What pledge shall I give thee? And she said, Thy signet, and thy bracelets, and thy staff that is in thine hand. And he gave it her, and came in unto her, and she conceived by him. And she arose, and went away, and laid by her vail from her, and put on the garments of her widowhood.

As intoxicating liquor has fascinated and made the world drunk these

days of much drinking, so this cup of fornication extended from Rome, has made the world spiritually drunk on false doctrine and deceit. Thus also wrote the Prophet Jeremiah against another Babylon, from which picture John could have borrowed his words: "Babylon hath been a golden cup in the Lord's hand, that made all the earth drunken: the nations have drunken of her wine; therefore the nations are mad."[234]

Into this potion of sin the Devil, who misleads the world into despair and other shame and vice, has mixed together the teachings of hell (I Tim. 4:1) and the teachings of the Roman Church. The entire idolatrous and blasphemous teachings of Rome, together with all the hellish magic powers which are attached to her, like the superstitions and relics and holy water and prayers, ad infinitum, are in this cup.

This cup of impurity is handed to Catholic children already at seven years in the Roman Cathechism, and throughout a Catholic layman's life in church and school this magic potion is offered to him. He must drink or be cast out.

Woe be unto thee, thou Harlot of Rome! For the day comes when our Savior will take thee into judgment and righteousness shall again prevail![235]

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234. Jeremiah 51:7.

235. "Es ist ein goldener Becher; denn es ist alles gefasst in christlichen Schein und Namen. Die wenigen Stuecke elden Metalls, die Rom noch hat, wie die christliche Taufe, das apostolische Glaubenbekenntniss, das Vaterunser, muessen dazu dienen, um den christlichen Schein zu bekraeftigen und die Christen zu taeuschen, waehrend doch die ganze Lehre darauf hinauslaeuft, Christum auszurotten und die Taufgnade zu stehlen. Roms Pfaffen sind eben keine offenen Luegner, sondern Luegenredner in Gleissnerei (1 Tim. 4,2.), welche die Wolfsklauen under dem Schafspelze haben." (G. Goesswein, Offenbarung St. Johannis. z. 236).

Verse Five:

And upon her forehead a name was written, mystery,
BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF
THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.

The Beast with the seven heads and ten horns was covered with blasphemous names. But the Harlot had only one name and this was on her head. John saw on the forehead of the Harlot a single but horrible name written. The Greek reads: καὶ ἐπὶ τὸ μέτωπον αὐτῆς ὄνομα γεγραμμένον.

Evidently she did not give this name to herself, because this name revealed just what she was - a Harlot. Evil and wicked people always try to cover up their wickedness if they have any pride or shame at all. No doubt the finger of God, the same who wrote the letters of the Ten Commandments, in stone, wrote this name on the Harlot's head.

The verb γεγραμμένον is the perfect passive participle of γράφω. We note an anomoly of Greek once more in the phrase ἐπὶ τὸ μέτωπον, where John uses ἐπὶ with the nominative, when ἐπὶ with the Genitive or even the Dative would be the more regular syntax.[236] This word μέτωπον is used only in Revelation, here and in Rev. 7:3, and 9:4. No doubt it

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236. Cf. Rev. 7:3 - ἐπὶ τῶν μετώπων.

should be used either with Genitive or Dative, but not the Accusative, though this is even possible at times in the Koine.

This title or name on the Whore's forehead tells all men that this is Babylon the Great, the personification of the Antichrist. It is prominent and public and unmistakable, written in blazing capitals, in neon lights, if you please. It is a title which indicates her character. It is a name of blasphemy. Ancient history reveals that in the days of Rome harlots wandered the streets of Rome and Ephesus and Alexandria and other large cities with a circlet on their heads soliciting their evil trade, on which was written the words: Πόρνη ἐσμί, "I am a Harlot."

> In ch. xiv. 1 and vii. 3, the faithful members of God's Church have His Name on their foreheads; here the faithless ones, represented by the harlot, exhibit a spurious imitation. As God's name marked the former as His, so the name Babylon, etc., marks the latter as belonging to the world.[237]

We may also liken the figure, though not in an evil sense, to the marks which the people of India wear on their foreheads to indicate their caste. They use colored chalk, each color and shape of mark or brand indicating a different caste. We also like to think of Babylon's title as a brand, just like the cattle wear in the Western states, one which never can be effaced, since history cannot be unwritten by a decree.

What was her name or title? Many say that it was Mystery, which is further explained by the name Babylon the Great. Of this term "Mystery" G. Goeszwein has this to say:[238]

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237. Pulpit Commentary, p. 415.
238. Op. cit., p. 236.

> Das Geheimnisz heiszt sie, naemlich das Geheimnisz der Bosheit (2 Thess. 2,7), welches nur der durchschaut, dem der Heilige Geist das Geheimnisz des Reiches Gottes (Marc. 4,11) aufgeschlossen hat und der das Geheimnisz des Glaubens in reinem Gewissen bewahrt (1 Tim. 3,9).

Our opinion is that the term "Mystery" (μυστήριον), whether it be considered a part of the title or not, seems to denote here that there is something hidden, obscure, secret, or enigmatical about the name "Babylon the Great."[239]

There is no evidence from the original manuscript or ancient copies, so far as we know, to force one to place in capital letters any of the title "Babylon the Great". The same may be said of the superscription placed over the Cross of Jesus, Matt. 27:37. Translators and textual critics have placed the words "MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH" into "caps" because they wanted to show emphatically that these words comprise a title.

We notice, however, that Dr. Nestle in his Greek codex does not place the word "Mystery" into capital letters, and he says in a footnote that this is also Dr. B. Weiss' position. We believe there is merit in this action, even though many translators have pointed the word "Mystery" as it it were a part of the inscription.

It would be better, as we have said before, to consider the word "mystery" as an adjective modifying the title, that is, the title is mysterious; it is a name written mysteriously; it is symbolical and

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239. This is a parallel passage to II Thess. 2:7, which also speaks of the Antichrist: "For the mystery of iniquity doth already work; only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way."

enigmatical; there is a hidden meaning concealed beneath the name.[240]

Therefore, it is not to be literally understood. And, as we shall see, this is the case. The actual ancient city of Babylon on the Euphrates is not meant; but this name is a symbol for a like system elsewhere.[241]

Finally, what is this mysterious name? It is "BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF WHORES AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH."

This is the way Goodspeed and Moffat translate the title. Goodspeed: "On her forehead there was written a name that was symbolic: 'Mighty Babylon, mother of idolatresses and of earth's abomination'". Moffat: "And on her forehead a name was written by way of symbol, 'Babylon the great, the mother of harlots and of all abominations on earth'".

Notice that Dr. Goodspeed and Dr. Moffat, both of them great New Testament scholars, take the term μυστήριον in the sense that it indicates the title here given to be symbolic. We do not know

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240. Expositor's Greek New Testament: μυστήριον (which hardly belongs to the title itself) indicates that the name is to be taken πνευματικῶς (xi.8), not literally; 'a name written which is a symbol', or a mysteriously significant title. p. 452.

241. There are those who believe that the literal Babylon is in view here in these two chapters (XVII - XVIII). It is claimed that literal Babylon on the banks of the Euphrates is to become once more a large city and the seat of government during the end of this day. But literal Babylon never was a part of the Roman empire, and this Babylon here was closely associated with Rome. It must be Rome, the seat of Papacy, or Papacy itself - what's the difference? St. Peter uses the term for Rome in the conclusion of his First Epistle (5:13), where he writes: Ἀσπάζεται ὑμᾶς ἡ ἐν Βαβυλῶνι. There was no church of the Apostles in actual Babylon on the Euphrates when Peter wrote this Epistle. The point is that the usual name for Rome was "Babylon", because of the similarity between the two, especially the wickedness of the two cities. It is interesting to note also that in I Peter 5:13 there is a variant reading Ῥώμη, - "Rome" in place of "Babylon".

where Moffat gets the word all in "all abominations" for it is not in the Greek text; however, the definite article, "the abominations" might be considered all-inclusive.

There is little difficulty in the words or the language here. All is plain. The difficulty is, what does the title mean? The variant reading πορνείων instead of πόρνων, which Nestle has in the text, should bother us little, since it does not take away or change any of the meaning. We like to follow Nestle and say that Babylon is the mother of harlots, rather than of whoredoms - there is little difference in the two. The Authorized Version takes it this way; so does Berry in his "A New Testament".[242]

The words βδελυγμά, (abominations) and πόρνη (harlots), have been explained in a preceding verse. Much of what we could say about the words of the title would be mere repetition of what has been said before, so we will omit any further discussion here.

The difficult question before us is, Who is Babylon the Great? One interpreter says that "Babylon the Great" refers to the Roman Church as the head of the Christian world, as Babylon of old was the head of the heathen world. But this is not what is meant by "Babylon". Even though Rome can boast of children among all nations (verse one), yet Rome is not the head of the Christian world. Such an interpretation seems to sit beside the text.

We think that God calls the Roman Church the Great Babylon because she raises herself to heaven in babylonic pride and rules her subjects which are supposed to be God's people in a most tyrannical way. She has

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242. Page 656.

them in spiritual prisons, and they are kept in ignorance and darkness as much as possible; some of them have never seen the light of day. The Babylonian Captivity of the Jews was nothing compared to this captivity of the world by this Whore.[243]

Who then, is this woman, branded a Harlot, which one of the seven angels with the vials showed to John? She represents the Papal system in its power and control of the world. Rome crucified Christ, destroyed Jerusalem and scattered the Jews; persecuted the early Christians in pagan times and Protestant Christians in Papal times. She is "Babylon the Great". Babylon means "confusion"; it is the great confusion of all the evils and perversions of the Truth of God brought into one powerful organization.

This is what is meant when it is said she is the mother of the harlots and abominations of the earth. Every world religious system which aims at worldly power and grandeur and which shares more or less her assumption and false doctrines is one of her offsprings.

We cannot give assent to such a general interpretation of the Harlot's title as this:[244]

> We read her name, "BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF THE HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH." Now, the whole idea of the sinful opposition to God is gathered together in a unit. It is a city; it is a woman. We must forsake all guides, and declare our conviction that Babylon means neither Christian nor heathen Rome, nor any other city, kingdom, or state in particular; but the one kingdom of evil

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243. In this connection let the reader compare Daniel 4:27, Revelation 14:8, 16, 19.
244. Pulpit Commentary, p. 425.

> manifesting itself in many kingdoms and systems, both political and ecclesiastical, and equally independent of either. The essential idea is the Babylon of evil as it stands in antithesis to the holy Jerusalem - the pure, the bride, the Lamb's wife.

But she is really the mother of harlots and of whoredoms because she promotes spiritual apostasy from the True Gospel of Christ, which in the language of the prophets would be adultery. She educates her congregations to spiritual houses of whoredom, wherein the hearts of men are stolen from their only Saviour Christ Jesus and given to a false god, such as Mother Mary and her Scapular Promise. From this springs all the horrors of false doctrines and idolatrous service on earth.[245]

> This faithless portion of Christ's Church is the mother, that is, the cause of the existence of unfaithfulness to God. So true is it that the professing Christian who is worldly-minded does more to cause in others disobedience and unfaithfulness to God, than he who openly declares himself in opposition to God, and even persecutes the faithful.[246]

We can hardly fail to see why this adulterous Woman is called the Mother of Harlots and of the Abominations of the Earth if we reconsider some of the descriptive features given her in Revelation XVII and in other chapters.[247]

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245. Cf. Isaiah 1:13.

246. Pulpit Commentary, p. 415.

247. "Rome is not accidentally, but in its very principle, a harlot, metropolis of whoredome, 'the mother of harlots', whereas the Evangelical Protestant Church is, in her principle, a chaste woman: the Reformation was the woman's protest against the harlot. The spirit of heathen Rome had, before the Reformation, changed the Church in the West into a Church-State." (Faussett, op. cit., p. 711).

She is clad in gorgeous array; holds out an enticing cup; drunk with the blood of the saints; poisons the inhabitants of the earth (18:3); bears names of blasphemy; rules over the kings and nations of the earth; a means by which the merchants of the earth get rich (18:3); presumptuous in her self-security (18:7); hated by the very powers whom she has ruled over. We are bidden by the various terms of this symbolism to seek some form of wickedness which manifests a glaring, atrocious alienation and apostasy from God - while at the same time putting on a form like that of a faithful church.[248]

Pope Pius the Ninth designated Rome as "The Mother and Mistress of all Churches". And all denominations who accept any of Rome's false doctrines and ape after her pagan rites and reach for worldly power as she does, are her daughters. And Catholicism, we fear, has many daughters in the world today, for no one seems to fear her and swallows all her lies and idolatries and adulterations of God's Word as Truth, and flirt and make love to her, the Harlot.

Could the following clipping from a newspaper be an indication of how Rome is the Mother of Harlots? Notice how her principle of playing politics wherever possible is imitated here by the Methodists:[249]

> METHODISTS TAKE STAND ON CURRENT POLITICAL ISSUES
>
> Chicago, June 23 - Delegates to the Rock River conference of the Methodist church unanimously agreed Thursday to write President Truman asking

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248. "And as she herself had left the Lord of her youth, so she had now become the mother of all other adulterous and idolatrous people in the world and the mother of all the greatest abominations on the earth." (P.E. Kretzmann, op.cit., p. 638).

249. Pekin Daily Times, Pekin, Illinois, 1945.

for an announcement of the conditions to be imposed on Japan after defeat.

This action was requested by the World Peace Commission of the conference. Dr. Ernest Fremont Tittle, Evanston, heads the commission.

Entrance of the United States into the International Organization planned by the San Francisco Conference was also endorsed.

Admitting weaknesses in the San Francisco charter, the delegates declared that the charter must be approved, both as a frame work within which improvements can be made, and as the only alternative to "international anarchy and chaos."

The session also voted to disapprove the majority decision of the United States supreme court in its verdict upholding the Illinois supreme court's ruling that a conscientious objector be denied admittance to the state bar.

And, of course, the Roman Church is also the mother of the abominations of the earth, that is, of the lewd and spiritually false adulteries which prevail in the world. Think of the worship of the saints, the superstitions regarding the relics, and the Confessional! And the stories, both ancient and modern, about the immorality and drunkenness of some of the priests because of their celibacy, are not all fiction.

Some of the early Popes were frightfully immoral, and their courts were easily comparable to the loose and easy-going morals of Louis XIV of France or of Henry VIII of England. Let the reader peruse any good history of the Popes and some detailed church history of the first fifteen centuries, and he will find plenty of evidence for the angel's revelation that the Papacy is the Mother of Harlots and of the Abominations of the

Earth 250

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250. See our remarks under verse four concerning the cup filled with abominations.

Verse Six:

And I saw the woman drunk from the blood of the saints, and from the blood of the witnesses of Jesus. And I wondered, having seen her, with great wonder.

The sixth verse of this chapter concludes the description of the harlot. The picture which here meets our eyes is most disgusting. We see a reeling, intoxicated harlot - not drunk from wine, but from human blood! John wondered, too, when he saw it. And don't we?

This verse again convinces us that the Pope and the system of religion he represents is the Antichrist.

The author reverts to the use of the word "woman": καὶ εἶδον τὴν γυναῖκα. But we notice that he designates her as the woman, which automatically excludes those interpretations of this chapter which say that in a general way the Harlot represents any person or institution which might emerge from history. The words of necessity force us to attach the epithet of Antichrist and the Harlot to one certain individual - the Pope at Rome.[251]

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251. "I see reproduced the story of Herodias and Herod Antipas in their treatment of John the Baptist ... She herself could not touch a hair of his head, but she had the king now in her fix ... Even so our "harlot" though she could not herself "shed the blood of the saints and of the martyrs of Jesus", she could cause the execution of her cruel sentences by "the kings" - by an auto da fe (an "Act of Faith"). No wonder, then that she was seen "drunk with their blood!" (David Brown, op.cit. P.138-139).

The verb μεθύουσαν is the present participle of μεθύω, meaning "to be drunken". Used with the prepositional phrase ἐκ τοῦ αἵματος, it means, according to Thayer, "one who has shed blood perfusely."

> The phraseology is derived from the barbarous custom (still extant among many pagan nations) of drinking the blood of enemies slain in the way of revenge. The effect of drinking blood is said to exasperate, and to intoxicate with passion and a desire of revenge.[252]

Whose blood is it that the vicious Harlot drinks? It is the blood of the οἱ ἅγιοι ("holy ones", "saints"), and of the οἱ μάρτυρες Ἰησοῦ ("martyrs of Jesus"). In other words, this Harlot and her Beast are guilty of killing Christians, those redeemed and saved by the blood of Christ. And what is still more cannibalistic and heathenish, she drinks their blood!

She is like an angel of light, a quiet smooth siren, seemingly harmless and only full of love when she holds out her cup of poisonous doctrines; but once she has the victim in her power, she turns into a vicious cannibal and her diet becomes human flesh and blood.[253]

She is a servant, not of God, but of Satan, who was a murderer from the beginning. Red is her color, and red is the color of blood. She is the Church of Cain, as one commentator states, and cannot perpetrate enough of murder and persecution. Her drunkenness is incur-

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252. Stuart, On the Apocalypse, Vol. II, p. 322.
253. Cf. Dan. 7:21,25. Rev. 12:13,14. Rev. 13:15.

able, for she is in Satan's snare and will never be sober again.[254]

As an example of the flowing blood of the saints at the instigation of the Roman Church, we think of the persecution of the Huguenots in France under Louis XIV and the Jesuits. We take the liberty to quote from a patient historian writing on this period:

> But when Louis XIV (1643-1715) began to assert his kingship he began to restrict the rights of the Edict of Nantes and gradually pushed the Huguenots to the wall ... The Jesuits became his guiding spirits who advised him to atone for his immoral life, luxury, and extravagance by persecuting the Huguenots and cleaning the country of heresy.
>
> For twenty-four years a systematic persecution was carried on which culminated in the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in the year 1685. Public worship was prohibited. All Huguenot ministers had to leave the country or embrace Catholicism. Thousands of Huguenots were sent to the galleys, thousands perished in prisons, and equal numbers were cruelly executed. The dragonnades came upon them and were increased from time to time. The barbarity and bestiality of this system is beyond description.[255]

Examples fromancient and medieval history of the atrocities and brutalities of the Roman Church, which actually made her drunk with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus, are too numerous to describe here. To our mind at first hand there comes the reign of Bloody Mary of England (1553-58), the Thirty Years' War of 1618-48, the evident purposes of the

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254. "What further characterizes the woman is so plain that the Romanists are forced to accept the application of it(the name 'Harlot') themselves v.6. This has always characterized Rome, when not under restraint of temporal authority as she now is, but let Rome be given full field to work out in practice what her doctrines teach, and there would be enacted once more the same violent and fanatical persecutions as of old. Rome is of necessity intolerant. She claims to be the bride of Christ, and, therefore, the mistress of the world. As if unconscious af her infidelity to Christ, she has grown into an enormous system of ever increasing power and world-wide influence." (Ford C. Ottmann, op.cit., p. 380 f.).

255. G.E. Hageman, Sketches from the History of the Church, pp. 190-191.

Society of Jesuits, the Council of Trent (1545-63), and above all the Inquisition.[256]

> The "Holy Office," usually called the Inquisition, was a church tribunal whose objective it was to discover and to eradicate heresy. Those suspected of heresy or spiritual offences against the Roman Church were brought before this court. Confession frequently was wrung from the victims under torture as cruel as imagination could devise. Penalties usually consisted of confiscation of property, imprisonment, banishment, or death. The sentences were executed by the secular Government.
>
> How could such cruel coercion and infliction of pain enter into the Catholic propaganda? The Catholics justified the use of this terrible machinery on the ground that the Catholic Church, as they said, was the only true Church, outside of which there was no salvation. When the people were led astray by Protestant "heresy", it was the duty of the Church to bring those people back again.[257]

Most Americans, reading these words in these days of war in a

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256. Whole volumes have been written on the Inquisition alone. We believe that many of our people who are today so complacent about what the Roman Church is doing in the world, should read more of these books, and also a modern evaluation of Catholic Action by a man who knows what he is talking about, Can Catholicism Win America?, by Harold E. Fey, which we will mention later on in this thesis.

257. Lars P. Qualben, op. cit., p. 342. The italics above are ours. "The sentences were executed by the secular government" is the fulfillment of the prophecy of verse three of this chapter, "I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet colored Beast," and of verse thirteen: "these (ten kings) have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast."

"When Jerusalem had filled her measure of blood-guiltiness, then Rome began to shed the blood of the saints. Pagan Rome instituted ten great bloody persecutions against the Christians. Papal Rome had been equally blood-thirsty. One need only refer to Jesuitism and the Inquisition to verify this statement. Rome would rejoice in another St. Bartholomew massacre. She would order one gladly, if she had the power to do so. Her persecutions are at present in obeyance, but they will revive again and continue until Rome is destroyed." (C. A. Blomgren, Thy Kingdom Come, p. 136 f.).

country of freedom, where Catholic propaganda has succeeded so well that many a good Lutheran thinks "the Catholic Church is nearer the Lutherans than any other", would think, we suppose, that we are attempting to stir up hatred against the Romanists.

But if anyone of us had lived during the Middle ages and the Inquisition of Spain and the Counter-Reformation, or the Spanish Revolution of our own century, and also reads the citations we shall have later on in this manuscript, we would think differently about the Harlot who rides the Beast.[258]

We think no one need illustrate how applicable this is to the Papacy. It is clear enough. Some may cling to the idea that it also refers to the Roman Empire at the time of St. John and before, but the Empire never was a woman, nor a "she"; neither did the Empire use a golden cup to beguile its subjects - the emperors used force and lots of it, and Rome could not be the mother of harlots.

We say let the blood shed at the instigation of Papacy in the valleys of Piedmont; the blood shed in the Low Countries by the Duke of Alva in his torture chambers; the blood shed on Batholomew's Day; and the blood of the martyrs shed in the Inquisition, testify. As John looked forward in the vision on Patmos he could see all these cruel,

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258. "That this apostate woman is a symbol of the Roman Catholic Church, all Protestant commentators are agreed. Between this church and the kings of the earth there have been illicit connections, and with the wine of her fornications, or her false doctrines, the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk. This prophecy is more definite than others applicable to the Roman power, in that it distinguishes between church and state. We have the woman, the church, seated upon a scarlet-colored beast, the civil power, by which it is upheld, and which it controls and guides, as a rider does a horse, to her own ends." (Uriah Smith, op. cit. p. 267).

wicked, Satanic deeds to be performed by the Papacy and her Beast.[259]

καὶ ἐθαύμασα ἰδὼν αὐτὴν θαῦμα μέγα.

It is a wonder, that when John had seen this vision of this Harlot, dressed in scarlet and drinking the blood of the witnesses of Jesus, that he wondered exceedingly, could hardly believe what his eyes saw? All the words of this sentence are plain. Ἐθαύμασα is the first aorist of θαυμάζω. Τὸ θαῦμα is "a wonderful thing", "a wonder". Used with the adjective μέγας and with the verb θαυμάζω as here, it means "to wonder exceedingly", or "wonder a great wonder".

The phrase ἐθαύμασα θαῦμα μέγα is one of those peculiar tautological expressions used in the Revelation of St. John. But it is used elsewhere in the New Testament also. It is what Robertson calls "The Accusative of the Inner Object or Cognate Accusative", that is, the action of the verb expresses itself in a word of the same root. We have a like expression in Mark 4:41, ἐφοβήθησαν φόβον μέγαν, "They feared a great fear". Thus, "John wondered a great wonder."

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259. "The Inquisition, the torture-chambers, the countless victims who were burned to death and cruelly tortured, the unspeakable horrors of centuries of violence and murder come to our minds as we read this description. It could never be true of the literal Babylon. Nor does it mean, as Romish expositors of this book claim, pagan Rome, for if it meant the persecutions under the Roman Emperors, John would not have wondered with a great wonder. And the last page of her cruel, horrible, persecutions is not yet written. Papal Rome, the blood-thirsty, corrupt system is what we see here." (A.C. Gaebelein, Revelation, pp. 101-102).

Goodspeed's translation of this verse is good: "I saw that the woman was drunk with the blood of God's people, and the blood of the witnesses of Jesus. When I saw her I was perfectly amazed." So is Dr. Moffat's: "Then I saw the woman was drunk with the blood of the saints and the blood of the witnesses of Jesus; and as I looked at her I marvelled greatly.[260]

St. John was greatly surprised at what he saw, just as Isaiah was, who at the sight of the faithless Jewish Church cried out: "How is the faithful city become an harlot! it was full of judgment; righteousness lodged in it; but now murderers."[261]

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260. "Why should John wonder with great astonishment when he saw the woman drunken with the blood of saints? Was persecution of the people of God any strange thing in his day? Had he not seen Rome launch its most fiery persecutions against the church, being himself in banishment at the time he wrote, under its cruel power? Why then should he be astonished? ... All the persecution he had witnessed had been from pagan Rome, the open enemy of Christ. It was not strange that pagans should persecute Christ's followers. But when he looked forward and saw a church professedly Christian, persecuting the followers of the Lamb, and drunken with their blood, well might he wonder with great amazement." (Uriah Smith, op. cit., p. 268.).

261. Isaiah 1:21.

II

The Vision of the Harlot and the Beast Explained

Verses Seven to Thirteen

II

THE VISION OF THE HARLOT AND THE BEAST EXPLAINED

Verses Seven to Thirteen

Verse Seven:

And the angel said to me, why did you wonder? I will tell you the mystery of the woman and of the Beast that carries her, which has the seven heads and the ten horns.

In this and the following verses the angel explains the vision of the Harlot who is astride the Beast. And what the angel says is what induced us to make the remarks we have on the preceding verses. The angel intends to give to John the key to the mystery which unites the Woman and her Beast, which are the Papal Church and the revived Roman Empire under her control.

The angel was doubtless taken aback with the appearance of John as he stood fixed in amazement, and hastened to explain what John could not even have guessed. The question: διὰ τί ἐθαύμασας,[262] no doubt was to inform John that his surprise and the vision before him

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262. John did not admire the beast. Not the beast, but the woman, sunk into a harlot,(the Church become a world-loving apostate), moves him with an astonishment tinged with disgust. That the world should be beastial is quite natural, but that the faithful Bride of Christ should become a whore was monstrous.

would be removed or at least be somewhat lessened.[263] The verb ἐρῶ, the future of εἶπον, "I will tell", has the sense here of "I will explain, interpret." We might translate τὸ μυστήριον with the English word "symbolism"- "I will explain to you the symbolism of this vision."

The word βαστάζων, the present participle of βαστάζω, means simply "to carry", "to bear". By metaphor it may mean "to bear a burden", "to endure affliction". There may be some intrinsic value in the use of the word here, meaning that the Beast certainly has to bear a cross and affliction when he carries the Harlot who exploits and rules him.[264]

We are giving Goodspeed's and Moffat's translation of each verse, for they generally bring out the correct meaning of the passage in English. Note Goodspeed's: "But the angel said to me, 'Why are you amazed?' I will explain to you what the woman and the animal with seven heads and ten horns that carries her symbolize"; and Moffat's, "But the angel said to me, 'Why marvel?' I will explain to you the mystery of the woman, and of the Beast with the seven heads and the ten horns who carries her."

We will take up what we consider the greatest crux of the chapter, the Beast with the seven heads and ten horns, when we discuss the individual verses of this section.

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263. Oh, we say, if John could only be here to give the interpretation of Revelation to us! For no doubt he alone was revealed what all the imagery meant, as this verse implies.

264. Cf. Matt. 20:12. Acts 15:10. Gal. 6:2.

Verse Eight:

The Beast which you saw was, and is not, and shall come up from the abyss, and he goes into perdition. And the people who dwell upon the earth whose names are not written in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world, shall wonder when they see the Beast that was and is not and shall be.[265]

Verse eight is a most difficult verse of interpretation. The language is not difficult, but the occult meaning troubles the exegete. It is one of the most peculiar, intriguing verses of the Bible.

First we will look at individual words of the verse. The phrase μέλλει ἀναβαίνειν, present indicative infinitive of ἀναβαίνω, means "about to go up from", or simply, "will go up from." Μέλλει is the present indicative of μέλλω, and means, with an infinitive, "to be about to do anything"; or we suggest the meaning here is "destined to do something",

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265. Goodspeed: The animal that you saw was, and is no more; it is going to come up out of the abyss, but it is to go to destruction. The inhabitants of the earth, whose names from the foundation of the world have not been written in the book of life, will be amazed when they see that the animal was, and is no more, and yet is to come.

Moffat: The Beast you have seen was, is not, but is to rise from the abyss - yet to perdition he shall go - and the dwellers on earth will wonder (all whose names have not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life), when they see that the Beast was, is not, but is coming.

in this case, "to come up out of the abyss". From John's point of view this is to take place in the future.

This brings us to that interesting word used in this verse, namely, ἄβυσσος. Now in Classical Greek this is an adjective, meaning "bottomless". In the New Testament and in the Septuagint the word is used often as a substantive with the word ἡ χώρα ("The pit"), either supplied or understood, thus: ἡ ἄβυσσος χώρα.

For its meaning in the passage before us we look elsewhere in the New Testament. In Romans 10:7 it is used to designate the common receptacle of the dead.[266]

In Luke 8:31 the word ἄβυσσος is used in the same sense when the legion of devils in the country of the Gadarenes "besought Jesus that He would not command them to go out into the deep."[267] We have the identical word used in Revelation 20:1,3, where it is also translated "bottomless pit" in the Authorized Version. Verse seven of Revelation twenty throws light on the meaning of the word, when we are told that "Satan shall be loosed out of his prison".

All of these passages indicate that the word abyss as used in the verse under study means hell, the abode of the devils and of the damned.

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266. Romans 10:7: "Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead)." In verse six of Romans ten we have the correlative: "Who shall ascend into heaven, (that is, to bring Christ down from above)." The natural conclusion then is that abyssos means the abode of the damned, namely, hell.

267. Not into the lake into which the swine later plunged, but into hell. The devils were afraid Jesus would cast them back into their proper abode.

Then, of course, we must consider the meaning of the word ἡ ἀπώλεια. We do not believe the translation "destruction" is strong enough; "perdition" is better. Still better is the paraphrase, "The destruction which consists in the loss of eternal life in heaven, that is, eternal doom in hell." It simply does not mean destruction of an earthly or material empire, though this is included, as our armies "destroyed" Germany in World War II. So Jesus called Judas - a "son of perdition", ὁ υἱὸς τῆς ἀπωλείας.[268]

This is what the Antichrist of II Thessalonians, chapter two, is called, "that man of sin, the son of perdition".[269] Again we see great reason to believe that Revelation is canonical, a part of the great unit of God's Word, the Bible - look at the exact parallel here! In our opinion, therefore, the words ἄβυσσος and ἀπώλεια are synonymous, both meaning destruction in hell.

A study of the words of the passage with a dictionary and grammar reveals to us the incidents recorded in the passage quite well, once the figure is identified. This Beast is the revived Roman Empire, in our opinion. Look how extraordinary and mysterious this Beast is! This is the first step in the solution of the mystery which shows how closely connected is the Harlot, the Papacy, with the Old Roman Empire.

The Beast already had lived before the time of John the Divine, and also before the human creation of the Papacy. The Roman Empire

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268. John 17:12. II Pet. 3:16. Phil. 3:19.
269. II Thess. 2:3: "Let no man deceive you by any means; for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and, that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition."

had its beginning in reality with Julius Caesar about 50 B.C. and existed and ruled the world for centuries. In every sense, with all her cruelty and evil ways, Rome was a beast. But in the year 476 A.D. the end came, when the barbarian hosts from the north came and sacked proud Rome, so that it might be said in a certain sense that she "went into the abyss, into perdition".

This explains what the phrase, "was and is not" means. ἦν καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν is tautology, one of John's queer expressions. It means, it "was", that is, it "isn't anymore". We would paraphrase it thus: "the Beast you saw is no longer in existence" (that is, when this prophecy shall be fulfilled.)[270]

But then, the prophecy proceeds, "it is about to ascend out of the abyss", (μέλλει ἀναβαίνειν ἐκ τῆς ἀβύσσου). Yes, in a few hundred years from the day St. John received Revelation on Patmos, this Beast would come forth in a new revived form. The Beast went down into the deep alone, but when he came out in this revived form the Harlot was astride him.

"For it is the Roman Empire upon which the Church of Antichrist is sitting, in itself a continuation of the ancient Roman world empire. For the latter was before the kingdom of Antichrist; then it came to an end in 476, when the Germanic hordes conquered Rome."[271]

The phrase ἐκ τῆς ἀβύσσου causes some difficulty when the question is asked, "If the abyss is hell, how could the Roman Empire be resurrected from hell?" This is explained by the observation

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270. "The Roman Empire 'was', that is, when this vision is fulfilled it has ceased to exist." (Theo. Graebner, op. cit., p. 35).

271. P.E. Kretzmann, op. cit., p. 639.

that the revived Roman system under the Papacy, as we have described it before, would be of such a nature that no one could mistake its origin being in hell.

We make like observations when we say "This is a doctrine of hell!" But no one can deny, on the other hand, that men like Nero and Domitian and many others before them went to hell at death. Their spirits of evil, however, are revived under the Papacy who now sits on the Empire.

> The meaning here is, that this power would seem to come up from the nether world. It would appear at one time to be extinct, but would revive again as if coming from the world over which Satan presides, and would in its revived character be such as might be expected from such an origin.[272]

The words at the end of verse eight, τὸ θηρίον ὃ ἦν καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν καὶ παρέσται, "the Beast that was and is not, and shall be" seem to indicate, too, that the spirit of the empire never was entirely destroyed, though it was thwarted for a short time. It concealed itself, we might say, in the realms of hell, and waited anxiously until the devil through the false prophet the Pope would bring it forth again in a new form.[273]

We might well inject at this point the discussion of the word παρέσται which appears at the end of this verse. This is the only problem in textual criticism we have encountered in this chapter.

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272. Barnes, op. cit., p. 424.

273. Thus Dr. J. T. Mueller in the Concordia New Testament with Notes: "8. Was, and is not - shall ascend - go into perdition; the beast is the Roman power considered through the whole of its duration. It was, as the old Roman empire, and in this form it was destroyed and ceased to be; then it ascended out of the bottomless pit as papal Rome, and in this form it shall finally go into perdition." (p. 767).

The question is: Is the correct reading the present παρεστιν, "is", "present"; or is it the future indicative, παρέσται, that is, "shall be", "shall come"?

Dr. Nestle places the future form of παρ-ειμι (not παρ-εἶμι) into his codex, that is, παρέσται. The textual evidence for the reading πάρεστιν is almost negligible, and in our opinion Nestle is correct in placing παρέσται into the text, making it read, "shall be", "shall be present". Note that this is the form παρέσται, not πάρεσται, (accent on second syllable). Therefore it is the future of the verb εἰμί, "to be", not being derived from the verb εἶμι, which means "to go".[274]

But whether this form is the present or the future makes little difference for the meaning of this passage. This is prophecy. Looking at the word from John's time it would be in the future; looking at it in the future from John's point of view, that is, when this prophecy would be fulfilled, the present would be in order. The present form (like the German, "Ich komme Morgen") often has the force of the future. So whether

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274. Thayer has this note: "παρ-ειμι; fut. 3 pers. sing., παρέσται (Rev. xvii 8 L T) not(as G. Tr. WH Alf., al.) παρεσται." Since we spent some time studying this form, we shall include our conclusions. The interpreter who at first may be misled by the term παρέσται, thinking it comes from the root παρ-εἶμι, that is, "shall come", "shall go", will be set at ease when he learns that παρ-εἶμι is not used in a future form like παρεσται, but the term used is παρ-ελεύσομαι, future of παρ-έρχομαι. The reason for this is that εἶμι "to go", has only the present system. This discussion is mainly for the sake of clarity - after all, does it make a great deal of difference if we say "he shall be", or "he shall come"? παρ-ειμι or παρ-εἶμι, or παρεσται or παρ-ελευσεται - the meaning remains the same. (Cf. Herbert Smyth, A Greek Grammar for Colleges, pp. 210-213).

we say "and shall be" or "is", the meaning is the same. The context, however, seems to speak for the future form as Nestle's text reads, since we have the past tense in ἦν καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν. We naturally expect the future form.[275]

All who have only a smattering knowledge of early Church History know that the kingdoms of the world under Rome were bitter enemies of Christ and the Apostolic Church. They even crucified the Lord. The Roman Empire, in which was incorporated all the power on earth, persecuted the Christians for over three hundred years, fearing that the Gospel would conquer the heathen idols of wood and stone. At John's time, as we have pointed out in the Introduction, this was especially prevalent under the Emperor worship of Domitian.

Things changed somewhat early in the fourth century when Emperor Constantine was converted to Christianity and protected Christianity. The prince of this world, the devil, then found much less support from the world powers to use force against the Church of Jesus. Christian rulers then wanted to help and prepare the way for the King of Glory.

But a terrible catastrophy gradually took place. After a short time the temporal and spiritual powers of the earth became mixed. The Church played the Harlot with the Empire. Soon, we suppose because the so-called Christian emperors were misled by false doctrines of Satan,[276] the Harlot climbed astride the Beast and took him into her power!

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275. It is interesting to note that this expression describing the Beast ("who was, is not, and shall be") has its counterpart in the description of God, in chapter one, verse four: ὁ ὢν καὶ ὁ ἦν καὶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος.

276. II Thess. 2:11,12: "And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

That this is history, true and blue, all will have to admit. And does it not fit perfectly with everything Revelation XVII says about the Harlot and the Beast?[277]

Time moves on and we are in the early Middle Ages. Papacy is rising, sitting ever tighter in the saddle on the Beast. Pope Gregory the Great, who is said to be Rome's greatest pope, started the Papacy out on her upward climb.[278] Then came the era of Absolute Papacy, from Gregory VII to Boniface VIII (1050-1294), especially the supreme reigns of Gregory VII and Innocent III (1198-1216).[279]

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277. A Roman Catholic writer, Augustine Steuchus, quite frankly admits that the Roman See took over the old Roman Empire: "The empire having been overthrown, unless God had raised up the Pontificate, Rome, resuscitated and restored by none, would have become uninhabitable, and been a most foul habitation thenceforward of cattle. But in the Pontificate it revived as with a second birth; its empire in magnitude not indeed equal to the old empire, but its form not very dissimilar: because all nations, from East and from West, venerate the Pope, not otherwise than they obeyed the Emperors." (Quoted from Barnes, op. cit., p. 421).

278. "Papal dominion over Europe was advanced during this era, 590-1050, by prominent popes, by missionary endeavor, by the Iconoclastic Controversy, by the donations to papacy by Pepin II and Charlemagne, by the Donations of Constantine and the Pseudo-Isidorian Decretals, by the decline of imperial power. After the division of the Frankish empire, papacy remained for a century and a half the only real international power in Europe, until the coronation of Otto the Great in 962." (Lars P. Qualben, A History of the Christian Church, p. 153).

279. "Papal power which for centuries had been in process of growth was brought to its pinnacle during the pontificate of Innocent III (1198-1216). Slowly and gradually papacy had risen to its dizzy height of absolute world supremacy. Innocent III added the finishing touches, after which the finished structure stood there throughout the rest of the century.

Pope Innocent III was the great pope of the thirteenth century. He was capable of gathering under favorable conditions all the favorable trends of medieval development into one great, unifying organism which gave papacy its universal power. He insisted that the pope was not merely God's deputy or representative on earth; he was Vicarius Christi; and while the pope was inferior to God, he was superior to all men. As the vicar of Christ he could wield two swords, the spiritual and the temporal. Kings and princes received their power from the pope as the moon receives

At this time the Harlot, Babylon the Great, took over the power of both swords, temporal and spiritual, in Europe; entered the feudal system; crowned the emperors; collected taxes from the kings; made them stand in the snow when she felt like it; excommunicated them when they did not obey.

How the world prayed for their hours of sexual pleasure with her! How drunk they became from her poisonous golden cup! With power came corruption. Ruthlessly the Harlot killed and swept away the bodies of those who spoke against her - Savonarola, Wyclif, Hus, and thousands of others. And so she is drunk with the blood from the witnesses of Jesus. Only in the Reformation was she revealed in all her hideousness. But even today, according to this prophecy and from what the eye can see, she is still cooking her evil brew. How perfectly the Apostle here depicts the reign of the Harlot on the Beast!

The A postle tells us that all the people on earth who have the mark of the Harlot on their heads, who followed her, will wonder when they see how the Beast was able to rise up again in the form of Papacy. The meaning is that all the inhabitants of the earth, who do not remain faithful to Christ, shall wonder after the beast and shall worship him. The beast will eventually go into perdition, but not before all, except the elect in Christ, have succumbed to the fascination of his second advent from the abyss in the form of the Papacy. We wonder too. It is all contrary to the regular course of events; so remarkable, so surprising, so difficult of explanation.

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her light from the sun; hence the pope could make or depose kings at will. Peace and justice (think of it!) should reign on the earth, a slogan which appealed to the people. Pope Innocent also developed the interdict so that it became a dreaded moral, economic, and political weapon." (Qualben, op. cit., p. 181).

θαυμασθήσονται is the future passive of θαυμάζω used in a middle sense. Those who will wonder in this verse are narrowed down to those "whose names were not written in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world." καταβολή means "a throwing or laying down", "a foundation"; here it refers to God's creation of the world in the beginning of time.

The concept τὸ βιβλίον τῆς ζωῆς, "the Book of Life", refers to the book or register in a spiritual sense, which our Savior and Judge keeps in heaven, in which are recorded all the names, works, and deeds of those who shall obtain everlasting life, that is, of those who have trusted in Jesus their Savior by faith.[280]

The Doctrine of Election to grace is here alluded to, when we are told that the believers' names are written in the Book of Life in heaven since the foundations of the world.

Of course, those whose names are <u>not</u> written in the Book of Life are <u>the unbelievers</u>, the people who have always rejected their Savior, and they are the ones of whom John says "wondered" upon seeing "the Beast that was, and is not, and yet is."[281]

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280. Rev. 13:8: "And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." Cf. Phil. 4:3: "And I intreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellowlabourers, whose names are in the book of life."

281. There is a minor variant reading here, τοῦ βιβλίου, instead of τὸ βιβλίον, as Nestle has it. It makes little difference, since ἐπί can be used with Genitive or Accusative in this case.

The comforting and most important part of the verse we leave until last: καὶ εἰς ἀπώλειαν ὑπάγει, that is, this Beast shall go into perdition.

The Harlot may reign over the Beast (in this case they are almost synonymous) for centuries, but her fate is damnation in hell at the end. Both Harlot and Beast will be destroyed. This is definitely protrayed in the last verses of this chapter, when the Lamb shall triumph over the Dragon. Also in the Chapter XVIII; it is in reality the theme of the whole book.

Those who worship the Harlot will be destroyed also. Is it not true that anyone who follows and believes whole-heartedly in the Catholic way of salvation, by prayers for the dead, masses, indulgences, rosaries, superstitutions, in the Mother Mary for help and salvation, and leaves Jesus only a secondary figure in the picture - shall go into perdition?

Thus it is also prophesied in II Thess. 2:8: "And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming." On Judgment Day the Harlot and all those who lay with her shall be judged and receive their just reward according to their works.

Verse Nine:

Here is the mind which has wisdom: The seven heads are seven mountains, where the woman sits upon them.

In verses nine and ten we meet the second great crux of interpretation in Revelation XVII. For us this section was the most difficult of all, especially because of the vast number of plausible theories. Other interpreters have the most voluminous notes under these verses.

The first crux of the chapter (though all of this chapter is difficult to interpret) is verse eight: "The beast that was, and is not, and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit." The third great crux we will encounter in verse twelve: "The ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings." However, the third difficulty is easier than the first two cruces after one has found a suitable interpretation for the first two.

All must agree, after reading verses nine and ten, with the statement of the angel: ὧδε ὁ νοῦς ὁ ἔχων σοφίαν. We would paraphrase this paradoxical statement thus: "For the interpretation of this passage there is need of a mind with keen understanding."[282]

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282. Dr. Goodspeed's rendition is as follows: "Here is a problem for a profound mind! The seven heads are seven hills, on which the woman is seated."

Dr. Moffat translates: "Now for the interpretation of the discerning mind! The seven heads are seven hills, on which the woman is seated."

This meaning of the introductory statement of the angel we gather from the use of the little Greek idiomatic adverb ὧδε. The first meaning of ὧδε is "so, in this manner", as it is used often in Homer. The second meaning is "here", "here in this place", an adverb indicating place. In the instance before us, the adverb is used metaphorically, that is, it is a vulgar idiom for "Here in this thing ..."

Thayer says that in Revelation 13:10, 14:12, and 17:9 ὧδε "seems to be the equivalent to 'here there is opportunity', 'need of', etc." It is a very common idiom even today, and throughout this essay the reader will hear us say: "Here (in this verse or passage) we have the following ..."

The term ἡ σοφία, in this instance refers to the mind including all the mental faculties of perceiving, understanding, and judging. ἡ σοφία is also translated well here as "wisdom". Thayer says: "The intelligence evinced in discovering the meaning of some mysterious number or vision, Revelation 13:18, 17:9".

This simple yet meaningful statement of the angel as he is about to explain the seven heads of the beast (and even the angel has not explained them!) makes us wonder if we have any cause at all to try to interpret this problem with our small mind. Perhaps it is words like these which have induced wiser men to leave Revelation alone. We confess that when we chose Revelation XVII as the subject of our thesis, we did not realize this statement was in the chapter, or we might not have attempted to explain it, for our mind and judgment certainly are

not of the caliber the angel calls for here.

Yet we have one consolation. We have prayed to God for His Holy Spirit, which He never fails to grant to His own. The riddle could not even have a plausible solution if God had not given us the answer in world history, especially of the Church and of the Roman Empire. History is also a part of God's revelation to man, though not in the sense the Scriptures are. God, therefore, expects us to make certain historical judgments.

Some divines claim that this passage implies that Revelation XVII cannot be understood by the human mind. We think, however, that the angel means it might be understood if the exegete is truly Christian in his approach and applies what knowledge God has given him. At any rate, it calls for much study on the part of the exegete to fathom this riddle. This may also be a major reason why most pastors and theologians steer clear of Revelation ---- not only because of its problematical character, but also because of the effort it requires to interpret the book.

The angel tells John: αἱ ἑπτὰ κεφαλαὶ ἑπτὰ ὄρη εἰσίν, that is, "The seven heads are seven mountains (or hills)". The Greek is most simple, and there is no doubt about the meaning of τὸ ὄρος (Plural: ὄρη), "mountain", "hill".

There has been much objection on the part of many exegetes who wish to keep Rome out of Revelation XVII to the translation of ὄρος as "hill"; but who in honesty will deny that a mountain may also be a hill, depending on one's point of view, or that ὄρος is often used

for "hill" and not always for "mountain" in other places in the New Testament and in secular Greek?[283]

If the angel had stopped speaking after the last sentence, we would be totally in the dark as to what is to be understood by the seven heads which mean seven mountains or hills. But he adds, and this immediately gives us the line of direction for our interpretation, the words: ὅπου ἡ γυνὴ κάθηται ἐπ' αὐτῶν, that is, "Where the woman sits upon them". The prepositional phrase ἐπ' αὐτῶν is definitely a Hebraism, indicating that John is a Jew speaking Greek. It is tautology. Good English is, "upon which the woman is sitting".

For the exposition and meaning of κάθηται, see our remarks under verse two. Notice that the form is present indicative - the Harlot is still sitting there to this day.

Can anyone find a better application of this figure than to the Papacy, the Church of Antichrist, located in the seven-hilled city of Rome? Does not every image in this chapter point to the Roman Church as the Antichrist? Is it not upon that city where the Great Harlot sits? Even today it is so, and who will show that the situation is changing?

That the seven mountains are a reference to the city of Rome, and thus to the Harlot who is in control of Rome, is clear. Rome has always been the seat of the Pope. For the Catholic to go to Rome is

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283. Notice the words of Horace: "Dis quibus septem placuere colles." Quoted from Barnes' Notes, p. 339).

the greatest boon. Luther wanted to go to Rome so earnestly that he walked the distance from Germany over the Alps to set foot in the "Holy City". All the adherents of Antichrist today recognize Rome as the Capitol of their spiritual empire.[284]

> The situation of the city would naturally suggest the idea of the seven-headed monster. The explanation which is here given of the meaning of the seven heads is in fact one that is given in the book of Revelation itself, and there can be no danger of error in this part of the interpretation.[285]

In verse eighteen of this chapter we are told that the woman "is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth". The Harlot is Rome, which is the same as the Papacy in control of Rome. The Beast is the Roman Empire, we must remember, "that was, and is not, and shall be (in the form of the Papacy)".

The mention of seven hills makes it easy for us to place the seat of the Harlot, Babylon the Great, in Rome; and from the other images and prophetic information given in the text, we must identify

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284. The World Book Encyclopedia has illustrative drawings of ancient Rome, in which are shown the seven hills of the city as follows: 1) Quirinal, 2) Capitoline, 3) Viminal, 4) Esquiline, 5) Palatine, 6) Aventine, 7) Coelian. (Vol. 14, p. 6171).

285. Albert Barnes, op. cit., p. 339.

her as the Papacy sitting astride the city (Septicollis Roma) in the form of the revived empire.[286]

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286. "Rome was built, as is well known, on seven hills, and was called the seven-hilled city (Septicollis), from having been originally built on seven hills, though subsequently three hills were added, making the whole number ten. Thus Ovid: 'Sed quae de septem totum circumspicit orbem Montibus, imperii Romae Deumque locus.' Tertullian: 'I appeal to the citizens of Rome, the populace that dwell on the seven hills.' Apol. 35. And again, Jerome to Marcella, when urging her to quit Rome for Bethlehem: 'Read what is said in the Apocalypse of the seven hills.'" (Ibidem).

Verse Ten:

And they (the heads or mountains) are seven kings: The five are fallen, the one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he comes, he must remain only a short time.

This passage, taken together with verse eleven ("And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven"), is one of the most difficult "knots" in the whole of Revelation XVII, if not in the entire Book of Revelation.

It is here that we ran into page after page of arguments and counter-arguments for or against a certain interpretation. It is here that we met our greatest disappointment in other interpreters; for what most of them offered was very vague, sometimes worthless. It is here also that we spent most of our time reading, studying, debating ---- Which view shall it be?

The general picture is this: The seven heads of the Beast have a double significance. They represent seven mountains upon which the Harlot sits. At the same time they symbolize seven kings. Five of the heads have passed into history. One is in existence at the time of John, that is, around 95 A.D. Another is to come at an unstated time, and he will remain only a short while. This picture is then tied up

with the statement in verse eleven that the Beast is the eighth head or king, and is from out of the seven, that is, he is built upon the remains of the seven predecessors.[287]

The Rev. G. Goeszwein has expressed the situation ably in few words: "Die sieben Huegel, auf welchen die Stadt Rom erbaut ist, geben das Bild fuer die sieben Berge oder Reiche, welche als sieben Haeupter an dem Thiere erscheinen, von denen eines nach dem andern mit dem Reiche Gottes in Fehde lag und sich den Todesstreich holte."[288]

The greatest controversy among all exegetes, even among our own Lutheran interpreters, surrounds the term βασιλεύς. Shall it be translated "king", or "kind of ruler", or "kingship", or "form of government", or "kingdom", --- or even "empire"? Notice that in the above quotation from Goeszwein he uses the word "Reich" - "Die sieben Huegel geben das Bild fuer die sieben Berge oder Reiche" --- Is this the correct meaning of βασιλεύς?

Upon the exegete's view of this word βασιλεύς depends his entire interpretation. If one is in doubt as to what a certain expositor's view of this passage is, let him look at his notes under this verse, and the expositor will reveal immediately where he intends

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287. Following is how Dr. Goodspeed translates this verse: "They are also seven kings; five have fallen, one is reigning, the other has not yet come, and when he does his stay must be brief".

Dr. Moffat translates thus: "Also, they are seven kings, of whom five have fallen, one is living, and the other has not arrived yet - and when he does arrive, he can only stay a little while".

288. Op. cit., p. 142.

to lead one. Here is where they all have the most voluminous notes, which is true also in our case.

St. John, or rather the angel, uses the word βασιλεύς four times in this chapter - in verse two, in verse ten before us, in verse twelve, and again in verse fourteen, where it refers to Jesus. In each case the word is βασιλεῖς (plural of βασιλεύς), and there are no variant readings in any of the manuscripts in any of the four cases.

In verse two the expression is οἱ βασιλεῖς τῆς γῆς, ("the kings of the earth"); in verse twelve, δέκα βασιλεῖς εἰσιν, ("are ten kings"); and in verse fourteen the word is used in both singular and plural, βασιλεὺς βασιλέων, ("King of Kings").

The reader's attention is called to the fact, first of all, that John distinguishes between the two words "king" and "kingdom" in Revelation XVII. In verse ten he uses the word βασιλεύς which means "king", "a ruler", "a leader of a people", or "government", or "kind of government". In verse twelve we have the word ἡ βασιλεία, which always means "kingdom", "empire", "country", or "any territory over which a king rules".

The use of the dictionary is very important for the correct interpretation of this difficult portion of Scripture. John makes the same distinction in Revelation 1:5,6. This fact tells us that there was no confusion in John's mind in the use of the two words. He carefully distinguishes between "king" and "kingdom".

In a letter written not later than B. C. 334 the term of βασιλεύς was adopted by Alexander the Great (Priene I), and it was a favourite designation of his successors in the Syrian and Egyptian monarchies. It became a familiar term with the Jews of the Dispersion, and was taken into the Septuagint as the translation of vernacular word מלך. And then it was transferred to the Roman rulers of all kinds, as we find it used of the Emperors in the New Testament. The Septuagint translation of Daniel, Chapter seven, where we have language similar to that used in Revelation XVII, the same distinction is made between βασιλεύς and βασιλεία.[289]

Our conclusions from a study of the use of the word βασιλεύς therefore, are that the term may refer to any kind of a ruler or the kind of a kingdom he rules and the way he rules it, that is, the form of government he has. This we see from that fact that it is used to designate the Roman emperors, the tetrarchs like the Herods, Jesus as a spiritual King, the monarchs of Persia, Syria, and Egypt. And incidentally, nowhere did we find it used as designated a kingdom, that is, the thing ruled.

We think, therefore, that John could have had in mind by the phrase "seven kings" the various kinds or rulers or governments of the Roman Empire throughout its history, that is, the forms of government of the Beast. And let us say that we wanted to use a Greek word to designate the kings, consuls, or decemvirs, or emperors who ruled the Roman Empire

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289. Daniel 7:22-24.

during the history - what term would we use, βασιλεύς or βασιλεία? Would it not be βασιλεύς? There is no other word which fits, to our knowledge, the concept in Greek.[290]

We must, therefore, in giving an exposition of this passage, of necessity, discuss the meaning of the term βασιλεύς. The Greek word βασιλεύς, "king", we have discovered, is not used in either the New Testament or the Classical Greek writings as expressing the idea "kingdom", or "empire". It always means "king" or the kind of government he has, or the kind of ruler he is.

But upon looking into the use of the word βασιλεύς in the Septuagint, in the New Testament, and in the Greek Classics, we find that it is not always used to express the concept of "king" but also what kind of a king he was, and how he ruled, or what type of government he has. Surely we cannot say that it refers to the Roman Emperors alone, but also to other kinds of rulers.

It is a designation of every one in possession of a dominion of the Roman emperor, 1 Peter 2:13, 1 Timothy 2:2; and of the tetrarchs (differ-

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290. "The word kings here - βασιλεύς may be understood, so far as the meaning of the word is concerned, (a) literally as denoting a king, or one who exercises royal authority; (b) in a more general sense as denoting one of distinguished honor - a viceroy, prince, leader, chief, Matt. ii. 1,3,9, Luke i.5, Acts xii. 1; (c) in a still larger sense as denoting a dynasty, a form of government, a mode of administration - as that which in fact rules ... It would be contrary to the whole spirit of this passage, and to what is demanded by the proper meaning of the word, to insist that the word should denote literally kings, and that it could not be applied to emperors, or dictators, or to dynasties." (Barnes, op. cit., p. 425).

ent kind of a ruler and a different form of government) in Luke 3:1, Matthew 2:1, Acts 25:13; also of Aretas of Arabia, 2 Corinthians 11:32. The word is also used to designate God as king over all things, Matthew 5:35, 1 Timothy 1:17; and to point out Jesus as the King of the Jews, Matthew 2:2. In Matthew 5:35 we have the unusual expression, πόλις τοῦ μεγάλου βασιλέως, that is, "the city of the great King", meaning God with Jerusalem as the seat of His worship and government in Old Testament times.

The term βασιλεύς among the Classical Greek writers meant "king", or "ruler". But it is also used in speaking of Zeus as King of the gods," Hes. Th. 886. And sometimes in Homer it is used to express the thought of "captain" or "judge". It is also used to speak of a "descendent of a royal house", especially in Ionia, Arist. Ath. 41.3. At Athens the term designated the second of the nine Archons, Lys. 6,4. After the Persian War, when a new government went into control of the country, the word designated the king of Persia, Herodotus, 7, 174. Besides, the term was used to designate any great man, Ps.-Phoc. 113; the winner at a game, Poll. 9.106; the "first or most distinguished of any class", Philostr. VS 2.10.1.

We are of the opinion, therefore, that it is a breach of good usage of language and of a major rule of interpretation (that an interpretation must be both grammatical and historical) to say that the five fallen kings, for instance, refer to five ancient empires of Europe and Asia - the Assyrian, the Egyptian, the Babylonian, the Persian, and the Greek-Macedonian - and then to make the Roman Empire the sixth head. If the Beast is the Roman Empire, as many believe, how can one of his heads also be the empire?

We have listed many interpretations of this sort in Part III of this essay, and we believe that the exegete dare not stretch the word βασιλεύς to mean βασιλεία, especially when St. John uses the two words in their usual senses in the same chapter very close together.[291]

Many interpreters rely upon the Book of Daniel for support in this view of the seven kings, namely, that they represent ancient empires. They point to the vision of Daniel in Daniel 7:15-28, wherein he saw the Four Beasts, the lion, the bear, the leopard, and the "terrible one", which are correctly interpreted as the Babylonian Empire, the Medo-Persian Empire, the Grecian Empire, and the Roman Empire respectively.

We admit there is a similarity of words between Daniel's and John's visions, for instance, the fourth Beast (the Roman Empire) of Daniel has ten horns, the same as John's Beast in Revelation XVII, which identifies the two. But let the reader notice that in both Daniel and Revelation the images are both Beasts, not heads of the Beast, that is, kings or kingdoms! Note also that in Daniel's explanation of the Beasts he says

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291. Here is the line of argument the interpreter would have to use for such an explanation, and the reader can immediately sense that it is not quite fair to the language, though it sounds very plausible:

"It is often understood that by synechdoche a king stands for his kingdom, and vice-versa. For instance, in past years we have spoken of the "Big Three" in world politics - the United States, England, and Russia. In every-day parlance these three empires or nations have been synonymous with their leaders, Roosevelt, Churchill, Stalin. Instead of saying, 'I wonder what Russia will do to help us defeat Japan?' we often say, 'I wonder what Stalin will do to help us defeat Japan?' No one would certainly call this an abuse of language. The newspapers and the radio speak this way, and so do the best war writers of our nation." But we point out again that St. John does identify any king or ruler with his kingdom in this chapter.

in verse twenty-three of Daniel, chapter two: "The fourth Beast shall be the fourth kingdom (βασιλεία) upon earth." The word "king" (Hebrew: מלך) is not used in the sense of kingdom by Daniel. To us this fact also speaks heavily against the "kingdom" interpretation of the seven heads.

Another objection we have to the use of Daniel too extensively to interpret Revelation XVII is that in the Book of Daniel there are only four kingdoms or empires mentioned, while in the case before us there are seven kings.[292] We truly believe that the Fourth Kingdom of Daniel, Chapter Seven, is the Roman Empire and that this is the same Beast we have in Revelation XVII, but we do not believe that for that reason there is an exact parallel between Daniel and Revelation. In Revelation XVII there are three more kings to trouble the interpreter than in Daniel - seven instead of four. And they are called "kings", we repeat, and not "Beasts" or "kingdoms".

Again, in Revelation XVII the seven kings are considered parts, heads, of the Beast or the Empire. The Babylonian and Assyrian empires and the others mentioned, never were parts of the Roman Empire when they were at the height of their power. They themselves ruled at that time what later became Rome! We believe that the panorama of history we have in Revelation XVII goes back farther in time than the Roman emperors, but we think we must stick to the Roman Empire when explaining this chapter. The whole set-up and description of the imagery indicates that

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292. In Daniel chapter 2, verses 31-45, when Daniel explains the symbolism of the Great Image to Nebuchadnezzar he uses the word "kingdom" (speaking of the four kingdoms identified the same as those in chapter seven) and not the word "king."

the Roman Empire plays a role only second to the Great Harlot in this Sixth Vision.

Another consideration which we urge against this interpretation is that there were more than five great empires of Europe and Asia before the Roman Empire, which is considered the king "that now is." By selecting the five mentioned we must omit other empires or countries of antiquity which could well be called "kingdoms".

Moreover, if one were to use the interpretation that the seven kings are ancient empires, he would have the most difficulty in explaining the seventh head. According to verse ten, he must be in existence only a short time, ὀλίγον αὐτὸν δεῖ μεῖναι. We would have to make the Papacy be the seventh head, following the Roman Empire (for there was no other empire after that in John's day), and how could the Papacy be the seventh head and rule only a short time, when it is still in power today? It is not enough to say that we must look for the seventh head outside the Roman Empire, as many do, for we know that the seventh head is on the Beast, part of the Empire itself!

Then the "Beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven," in verse eleven would also cause us much trouble. How can the Beast legitimately be "of the seven" if we identify the kings as the Egyptian, the Assyrian, the Babylonian, the Persian, the Macedonian, and Roman Empires? And how could he be the "eighth" in such an interpretation? There would have to be much stretching of words and logic to put the exposition across.

Also, with what or whom would one identify the seventh head, if it is to be an empire in a class with the great empires of antiquity and

still not be the Roman Empire and not the Papacy and yet rule only for a short time? In our opinion, these are insurmountable difficulties with which the interpreter who thus identifies the seven kings would have to contend.[293]

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293. Here is another example of the "empire interpretation" which we found in the Pulpit Commentary, p. 418:

Where is this harlot seen? There is a triple combination of expressions here. 1. She is seen seated on the beast with seven heads and ten horns; 2. seated on seven hills; 3. seated on many waters, which are peoples, nations, tongues. Her being seated on the beast, or resting on the civil world-power, is one form of expressing her alliance with state authority. The seven heads of the beast are so many forms of worldly dominion - five of which had passed away, viz., Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, and Greece. The sixth existed at the time of the Apostle. This was Rome. The seventh was another which, when Rome was no more Rome, would rise up, and would be manifest in ten forms.

Dr. J. A. Seiss also offers some convincing interpretation concerning the seven mountains: "The seven imperial mountains on which the Harlot rides must therefore fill up the whole interval ... Preceding Rome the world had five great names or nationalities answering to imperial Rome, and those scarce a schoolboy ought to miss. They are Greece, Persia, Babylon, Assyria, and Egypt; no more, and no less. And these all were imperial powers like Rome. Here, then, are six of these regal mountains; the seventh is yet to come. (Lectures on the Apocalypse, pp.127-129 passim).

The arguments we have presented against the Empire Interpretation have been given to show why we personally do not adopt this exposition. The reader should know that there are many great theologians and scholars who have adopted the Empire Theory as their interpretation, and for many good reasons. It is only fair to acknowledge this. Their point is not that the heads of the Beast be taken in a literal sense, but that the ancient empires like Babylonia and Assyria and Egypt were types of the Roman Beast in a vast panorama. In the case of each empire, they say, we are dealing with a particular attitude of the Beast toward the people of God, that is, to the people of the Old Testament, the believers in the Messiah to come. Each one of these empires persecuted the believers and Babylonia and Egypt were good examples since the people of God were in slavery in Egypt and in captivity in Babylon. They also point out that Antiochus Epiphanes certainly was a type of Antichrist, and one of the antichrists mentioned in First John.

Dr. P.E. Kretzmann espouses the Empire Interpretation in his

Another favorite interpretation of Catholic and Protestant exegetes alike is to identify these seven kings with the Roman Emperors who ruled and died in succession. Many adopt this view only for the sake of proving their over-drawn point that Revelation was written during the period of Nero or Vespasian or some other emperor before John's time and before Domitian, thus arriving at an early date for the writing of the Book of Revelation.

This interpretation, we must admit, fits well the idea that the seven heads are kings, and interpreted as Roman Emperors they certainly could be considered as parts or heads of the Beast; but there are other difficulties, which we will point out shortly, that make this interpretation quite improbable.

Dr. Moses Stuart in his two-volume Commentary on the Apocalypse, as the reader can see from his interpretation listed in Part III, adopts this interpretation of the seven kings. He begins his line of seven emperors with Julius Caesar, and counts them in this order: the "five that are fallen" are Julius Caesar, Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, and Claudius. Nero he supposes to be the sixth, and states that this is the man who was reigning when John wrote Revelation, thus supporting the early date for Revelation. Galba is the seventh in the line-up. The "Beast that was and is not", is then considered Nero, who according to the popular myth of the day, would appear or rise from the dead after

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Popular Commentary: "The Roman Empire is here conceived of as the continuation of the ancient world empires, of which five had fallen, the Egyptian, the Assyrian, the Babylonian, the Persian, and the Greek-Macedonian. At the time when John wrote, the Roman empire was in power. And as for the seventh ruler and empire, that is undoubtedly to be found in the Christianized Roman Empire, in the kingdom of Antichrist." (p. 639, Vol. II).

this assassination and carry on his persecutions again.

In Part III of this thesis the reader will recall that we pointed out again and again why we could not accept the view that these seven kings represent seven Roman emperors or persons. One of our main objections is that it is too arbitrary and uncertain. The method depends entirely upon where one starts counting the emperors.

In every interpretation we studied, some of the important emperors of Rome before John's time were omitted from the line-up. Almost every interpreter has a little different line of Roman rulers with which to explain the seven kings. Some even include Constantine and Julian.[294]

In our reading of the history of the Roman Empire and of the Caesars, which must be done for a proper understanding of this chapter Revelation XVII, we made a list of the emperors which lived before John's day. Here they are as given by good authorities, which the reader will find listed in our bibliography:

Augustus (Octavius)	27 B.C.	Vitellius	69 A.D.
Tiberius	14 A.D.	Vespasian	69 A.D.
Gaius (Caligula)	37 A.D.	Titus	79 A.D.
Claudius	41 A.D.	Domitian	81 A.D.
Nero	54 A.D.	Nerva	96 A.D.
Galba	68 A.D.	Trajan	98 A.D.
Otho	69 A.D.		

294. This is also Barnes' observation. He says, page 426 of his Commentary: "The principle opinions which have been held may be reduced to the following: (1) That the seven kings here refer to the succession of Roman emperors, yet with some variation as to the manner of reckoning." He then rejects the interpretation.

And there were sixty-three more emperors of lesser or greater renown, including those of the Divided Empire, who reigned in Rome from the time of Trajan's death, 117 A.D., to 476 A.D., when Romulus Augustulus was reigning and the fall of the Western Empire formally and officially took place with the invasion of the Teutons from the North.

Notice that in the list above Julius Caesar is not included. Historians do not include him in the list of Emperors. They say that the line of Roman Emperors began with Octavius ("Caesar Augustus" of Luke 2) in 27 B.C. And this is right. Julius Caesar never was an emperor in the sense that the other emperors were. He was a monarch, a dictator. He stemmed from "fortunate" circumstances out of the Triumvirate, when Crassus conveniently died and Pompey made too many political mistakes. To us, therefore, it is bad history to include Julius Caesar in the number of Roman emperors.[295]

Let the reader look at the list of Roman Emperors again. Take for granted that John wrote Revelation during Domitian's reign, as we think he did. Counting backwards from Domitian to Augustus we have not five, not seven, but ten emperors! And those who are so bold as to strike history in the face and include Julius Caesar in the list,

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295. We have good evidence from the Roman historian Tacitus that Caesar was not considered one of, or rather, the first of the emperors: "Non Cinnae, non Syllae longa dominatio: et Pompeii Crassique potentia cito in Caesarem, Lepidi atque Antonii arma in Augustum cessere; qui cuncta, discordiis civilibus fessa, nomine Principis imperium accepit." Here he plainly states that Augustus was the first Roman emperor. (Tacitus, The ANNALS, Book I, Chap. 1, quoted from The Loeb Classical Library).

have eleven!

Also, does the honest interpreter think we should not count Galba and Otho and Vitellius, since they all reigned during one turbulent year of Rome's history, as three emperors but only as one, as many exegetes do? They were emperors on the throne, in our opinion, as well as were Augustus and Nero and Domitian.

Then there are those who find Nero to be the sixth head, that is, the king, designated by the phrase "one is" by John. Again is it correct to claim that Nero was the sixth emperor when he was really only the fifth, since Julius Caesar was not an emperor in the true sense of the term?

It is true that this opens the way for the interpreter to say that Galba or Otho or Vitellius, or all three, are represented by the seventh head, which "must remain for a short while", for they all had very short reigns, some only a few months. But is it an upright and respectable interpretation? Both the arithmetic and the history of such an exegesis, to be truthful about it, miss the mark and are incorrect!

A final main objection we have to the interpretation of the seven kings as seven Roman Emperors is that even the best of interpreters insert into this maze of complicated Roman history the abominable Nero Redivivius Myth.[296]

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296. The reader has seen many crass examples of this impossible and pagan Nero Myth in the interpretations we cited in Part III. But Dr. Albert Barnes has such an excellent summary in his Notes on Revelation that we shall present it here:

"Nero, who, as he (Barnes is speaking of Dr. Moses Stuart's interpretation) supposes, was the reigning prince at the time when the book was written, he regards as the sixth; Galba, who succeeded him, as the seventh. Others, who adopt this literal method of explaining it,

In a previous section (Part III) the reader was told again and again why we cannot condone mythology in the inspired Word of God. We will not use the time or space to refer to them here in repetition. But if the Book of Revelation contains these legends (and in our opinion the popularity and wide-spread acceptance of this myth has been much overemphasized by Bible interpreters) then it is not a book of God and must be relegated to the Apocrypha and is not worth the time for serious study. We emphasize again that most interpreters of this chapter foolishly adopt this view merely because they carry a torch, for some reason, for the early date of Revelation. This, of course, is approaching the subject with a prejudiced mind.

We could use up many more pages speaking about all the different

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suppose that the time begins with Augustus, and then Galba would be the sixth, and Otho, who reigned but three months, would be the seventh. The expression 'the beast that was and is not, who is the eighth', Prof. Stuart regards as referring to a general impression among the heathen and among Christians (?), in the time of the persecution under Nero, that he would again appear after it was reported that he was dead, or that he would rise again from the dead, and carry on his persecutions again. See Prof. Stuart, Com. vol. ii. Excur. iii.

The Beast, according to this view, denotes the Roman emperors, specifically Nero, and the reference in ver. 8 is to 'the well-known hariolation respecting Nero, that he would be assassinated, and would disappear for a while, and then make his appearance again to the confusion of all his enemies'. 'What the angel', says he, 'says, seems to be the equivalent to this: The Beast means the Roman emperors, specifically Nero, of whom the report spread throughout the empire that he will revive, after being apparently slain, and will come, as it were, from the abyss or Hades, but he will perish, and that speedily'. Vol. ii, p. 323."

ideas and interpretations of the seven heads of the beast, but these we have enumerated and evaluated to the best of our ability in a previous section. The two interpretations, with multifarious variations, we have just discussed and rejected are the only ones really worthy of mention besides the one we have adopted ourselves. It is hardly worth while to use the time to fight one's way through the great maze of verbal labyrinths offered by the hundreds of interpreters of this enigma.

We would rather lead the reader into what we think is the correct interpretation. It is not a new one. We do not claim to have originated it. It was produced by a "mind that hath wisdom" before us.[297] The purpose of our thesis is not, as we have said before, to think up new ideas to fit the imagery of this chapter. Our purpose is to evaluate what has been offered and select what we think is the best interpretation. But, first of all, we wanted to clear the air regarding this chapter, as far as our own mind was concerned, for we did not know which way to turn when we first started working on this riddle of Babylon.

After much prayer to God our Father in Heaven to guide us with His Holy Spirit while working on this thesis, we present the interpretation which we think is the correct one, yes, the one we are now personally quite convinced the Holy Spirit through the holy writer St. John the Divine originally intended.

We believe that the seven kings or heads of the Beast represent the various kinds of rulers or forms of Roman government which ruled

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297. Cf. verse nine: "And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth."

Rome from earliest times until the Papacy or the Harlot built her domain out of the ruins of the fallen Empire. The seven kinds of rulers or forms of government which had ruling power worthy of note over Rome during her long history are: (1) Kings, (2) Consuls, (3) Decemvirs, (4) Tribunes, (5) Triumvirs, (6) Emperors, (7) Christian rulers with the Empire divided into Western and Eastern domains.

Thus the "five fallen kings" are the Kings, Consuls, Decemvirs, Tribunes, and the rulers of the Triumvirate. The "one that is", represents the Emperors or Imperial Forms of government which was in power in John's day. The "other is not yet come, and when he cometh, he must continue a short space", is the Divided Empire with Christian rulers which reigned only a short while. "The Beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven", is the Papacy, the Harlot which sits upon the great city, that is, upon the revived Roman Empire under the Pope's control. The "ten horns" represent ten tributary rulers and their domains or provinces which arose out of the ruins of the fallen Roman Empire.

All of this we consider a vast panoramic view covering all history from the founding of Rome through John's day until our own, and going into the future, since the Papacy sits upon the Great City of Seven Hills to this day. We must bear in mind that this is prophecy, and that it is perspective and panoramic. We dare not narrow the panorama here given to one small epoch in history, but it contains the whole New Testament Era and more.[298]

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298. Jesus is supposed to have been born 750 Anno Urbis Conditae, that is, 750 years after the founding of Rome, according to the accepted

This is our interpretation. We believe it fits the text and context and whole scope of Revelation XVII better than any other interpretation we know of, though there are other interpretations, as we have observed, which are quite plausible. We think this view of the kings, the riddle which forms the most difficult problem of Revelation XVII, makes the most sense and is the easiest arrived at.

However, we would not be so bigoted as to call anyone a heretic who did not agree with us, or if he believed with good reasons that the seven kings stand for Roman Emperors or for the great empires of antiquity, as we also have some respect for these views. But all things considered, the view we espouse seems the best to us.[299]

Let us show the reader, if we may, why we have arrived at these conclusions. Having identified the "seven kings" and the "Beast that is the eighth" with the forms of Roman Government or various kinds of

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chronolgy. But the early history of Rome is legendary - we do not really know when the country's history began. Therefore, the period covered by this panorama would include all the history of this country from the earliest settlements there. Roman writers generally considered the founding of Rome also the beginning of the world.

299. The great Roman historian, Livy, gives us much support on this very subject: "Quae ab condita urbe Roma ad captam eandem urbem Romani sub regibus primum, consulibus, deinde ac dictatoribus, decemviris ac tribunis consularibus gessere foris bella, domi seditiones, quinque libris esposui." (Lib. vi. c. i.).

Also Tacitus, Latin historian, writes: "Urbem Romam a principio Reges habuere. Libertatem et Consulatum L. Brutus in stituit. Dictaturae ad tempus sumebantur. Neque Decemviralis potestas ultra biennium, neque tribunorum militum consulare jus diu vasuit. Non Cinnae, non Syllae longa dominatio: et Pompeii Crassique potentia cito in Caesarem, Lepidi atque Antonii arma in Augustum cessere; qui cuncta, discordiis civilibus fessa, nomine Principis sub imperium accepit." (Annal. lib. i. cap. 1).

kings or rulers, we proceed to see what the angel tells St. John shall happen to these seven kings. A thorough study of the text in the light of history and Scripture, we pray, will demonstrate to the reader the validity of our interpretation, just as we have attempted to show in the past pages of this thesis.

The angel who is telling and explaining the vision to St. John says: οἱ πέντε ἔπεσαν, that is, "five have fallen". The verb ἔπεσαν is the I Aorist of πίπτω and has the meaning here of a government "falling from power or influence."

We must place ourselves back into the history of John's day to explain this dilemma. The angel means to say that up to the time of John's life five of these kings or forms of government of Rome had fallen, for they are heads of the Beast, the Roman Empire. They disappeared from the pages of history because their government had been dethroned or died. It is very evident that these seven heads did not all exist at the same time, but appeared upon the scene of history successively. They had reigned one after the other, and now had ceased to exist. All interpreters, no matter what interpretation they support, agree to this point.[300]

The historical background of the Roman history involved in this prophecy we will give only in outline, just enough to demonstrate our exegesis. The student of ancient history who is further interested

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300. "The heads are not introduced into the picture in order to convey the idea that the beast had seven heads at one and the same time. As a matter of fact, he never had the seven heads all at once. Though spoken of as having seven heads, he is nevertheless, a single-headed beast. The seven heads are not synchronous but consecutive. They are kings, and one follows another." (David Brown, op. cit., p. 142).

in this section of our paper may read the details himself. [301]

Any outline of Roman history will reveal immediately that the History of Rome for the most part, except for the military campaigns, consists of the continuous struggle for power between the Plebeians and the Patricians, between the common people, the plebs, and the aristocrats. History still follows this pattern, and always will. This fact precipitated many civil wars and revolutions inside the Roman Empire itself.

The very early history of Rome is swathed in legend. But all historians agree that Rome was first ruled by Kings. Monarchial form of government was in power from the founding of Rome to 509 B.C. It was at this time that the plebs began to seek more representation in their country's government. A threat of revolt in 509 B.C. caused the aristocrats to give in to the plebeian demand that Rome should be ruled by two Consuls. Thus the so-called Roman Republic was born. This continued from 510 B.C. to about 451 B.C. During this period the plebeians were always struggling for power, specifically to get representation in the government. To us these were the days of Rome's glory, not the period after Julius Caesar.

In 494 B.C. the common people forced the government to elect ten "Tribunes of the People", but these were never official rulers and never constituted a new government; they acted much as our Senate

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301. The student who is interested in Roman history will find plenty of reading in Gibbon's Decline and Fall of the Empire, in The Cambridge Ancient History, in Mommsen's History of Rome, or in a good outline in any of the larger encyclopedia like the Britannica or Americana.

does in protecting the people's rights. Historians are quite well agreed that the Tribunes of the People were not a ruling group. They were very temporary.

It was a different matter with the Decemvirs who began to reign in 451 B.C. These ten men were also elected as a result of the lobbying of the plebs. Their purpose was to rewrite certain fundamental laws in favor of the Plebeians, one of which would allow a plebeian to hold the office of Consul. Before long, however, these Decemvirs were ruling the country and became very despotic for a time. They were actually rulers over Rome.

But the Decemvirs were soon deposed by the same common people who had placed them in power. Then beginning in 445 B.C., six Military Tribunes were elected jointly by the aristocrats and the plebeians; some of these were also from among the Plebeians. These Tribunes continued to rule until the civil wars brought on the Triumvirate form of government in 60 B.C. Through the years some of these Tribunes went under the name of Quaestors, Dictators, Censors, and Praetors, but always it was the same form of government and no radical change was ever made.

The fifth type of Roman administration was the Triumvirate made up of Pompey, Crassus, and Julius Caesar. Crassus expediently died in 53 B.C., and beginning in 49 B.C., Caesar and Pompey fought it out for supremacy. As even the grade school student knows, Caesar won out, Pompey fleeing to and dying in disgrace in Egypt, and Julius Caesar took over the empire in 46 B.C. Many say the empire began at this point; but history says it did not. It began with Octavius Caesar

officially in 31 B.C.[302]

Historians uniformily tell us that these were the successive rulers of Rome. These forms of government of Rome were so marked, that in connection with the mention of the seven mountains designating the "great city", there could be little doubt as to what was in the angel's mind. The Christian mind of John's day would easily think of the horrible form (the emperors) of the Beast then in power, and the people would quickly think back over the five forms of heads of the Beast which had preceded.

No doubt this is what John meant, therefore, by the five kings that had fallen before John's day, when the imperial form of government, the emperors, were holding sway over Rome. They form a brief history of Rome in outline:

The First King:	Kings	? - 509 B.C.
The Second King:	Consuls	509 - 451 B.C.
The Third King:	Decemvirs	451 - 445 B.C.
The Fourth King:	Military Tribunes	445 - 60 B.C.
The Fifth King:	Triumvirs	60 - 31 B.C.

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302. "Caius Julius Caesar Octavianus Augustus (63 B.C. - A.D. 14), the first of the Roman emperors, originally called Caius Octavius. He was the son of Caius Octavius and Atia, a daughter of Julia, the sister of Julius Caesar". (The American Educator Encyclopedia, sub "Augustus", Vol. 2, p. 285).

We add, for the sake of completeness, that there was a Second Triumvirate composed of Octavius, Antony, and Lepidus which was in power for a short time after the First Triumvirate. All know that Lepidus was deprived of his power after a short time, and how after that Antony and his amours with Cleopatra finally brought on the Battle of Actium in 31 B.C., after which Octavius (Caesar Augustus, during whose reign our Savior was born) became master of the world. Let the reader note, however, that these two triumvirates were the same form of government.

We like this interpretation much better than identifying the five fallen heads of the Beast with ancient empires which were like Rome in scope and fierceness, or with Roman emperors themselves. And it can be held that very many interpreters among Protestant church bodies seem to adopt this view in favor of all others.[303]

The reader can see also that in this interpretation we have not forsaken the meaning of the word βασιλεύς, "king", for we have different persons or "kings" ruling in each mode of government. The government is named after the men in control. Even the Latin term contains the term "man" (vir) in naming one form of administration. We can see no discrepancy of language or meaning of a word in this respect. This interpretation in our opinion is the sanest and the most plausible of all.

We proceed to the next words of the angel to John in verse eleven. The angel says to John: ὁ εἷς ἔστιν, literally, "the one is". This, of course, would be the sixth kind of king or form of government. This is the imperial form which began with Octavius Caesar (the "Caesar Augustus" of Luke 2) in 31 B.C.

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303. Barnes says: "In confirmation of the same thing I may refer to the authority of Bellarmine, a distinguished Roman Catholic writer. In his work De Pontiff. cap. 2, he thus enumerates the changes which the Roman government had experienced, or the forms of administration that had existed there: - 1. Kings; 2. Consuls; 3. Decemvirs; 4. Dictators; 5. Military Tribunes with consular power; 6. Emperors." (Notes, p. 429 f.).

This is the kind of government which was in existence in John's day. He felt it, as did all Christians, very keenly. Domitian was on the throne. He was demanding that he be called "deus", "god". We have seen how John was given the visions of Revelation to strengthen the Christians of Asia Minor under the persecutions of the Roman Empire during this period.

We would like to point out that this "one that is" is not to be identified with the Roman Empire itself. In other words, it is not synonymous with "the Beast that was and is not and goeth into perdition". The Beast actually is to be considered the Roman Empire, not just at the time of the Caesars, but the domain or country throughout its existence. Remember, the imperial form of government is just one head of the Beast. Naturally, the head as well as the empire was to go into perdition, the former being a part of the latter.[304]

This brings us to the discussion and identification of the seventh head of the Beast, on which there has been a great diversity of opinion,

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304. Before the time of the great recent works in New Testament Textual criticism, there was a reading which no doubt comes from Erasmus (cf. verse 8), namely, in the Textus Receptus, which reads thus καίπερ ἔστιν, "still is", or "although he is". Barnes, page 421, uses this reading: "It was once a mighty power (the Beast); it then declined, so that it could be said that 'it is not'; and yet there was so much remaining vitality in it, or so much revived power, that it could be said that it 'still is' - καίπερ ἔστιν". We understand that it was Griesbach who showed this reading not to be genuine. But as far as the interpretation is concerned, it does not change the meaning of the verse at all. It has practically the same meaning as παρέσται "shall be present". Dr. Charles in the International Critical Commentary on the Book of Revelation says: "παρέσται is here equal to ἐλεύσεται, a form the author does not use, though he uses other tenses of ἔρχομαι and ἐξελεύσομαι". (p. 429). This additional information regarding παρέσται should have been included in our discussion of verse eight. We add it here for the sake of completeness.

and which is not a small difficulty.[305]

John is told about the seventh king. The angel says: "ὁ ἄλλος οὔπω ἦλθεν", literally, "the one has not yet come". The Greek words are clear. ἦλθεν is the II Aorist of ἔρχομαι, a simple statement of historical fact. This seventh king is coming for certain, though he is not upon the scene in John's day. This is expressed by the ὅταν with the subjunctive.

This is a general clause, and a good way to translate it is "whenever he comes".[306] In the Apodosis we have the construction of an infinitive (μεῖναι, II Aorist) with an accusative subject (αὐτόν) after δεῖ. We must supply χρόνον with ὀλίγον, "a short time".

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305. We present two of the many pertinent views of the seventh head: "That of Bishop Newton, who regards the sixth or imperial 'head' as continuing uninterruptedly through the line of Christian as well as Pagan emperors, until Augustulus and the Heruli, and the seventh to be the Dukedom of Rome established soon after under the Exarchate of Ravenna. Prophecies, pp. 575, 576." (Quoted from Barnes, p. 427).

"That of Mr. Elliot, who supposes the seventh head or power to refer to a new form of administration introduced by Diocletian, changing the administration from the original imperial character to that of an absolute Asiatic sovereignty." (Barnes).

306. Dr. Kaegi in his Short Grammar says this in a Conditional Clause of the Fourth Type "expressing a single future occurrence". In future and present conditions ἐάν with the Subjunctive is used in the Protasis and the principle tense in the indicative in the Apodosis. "The conclusion is set forth as positively certain. This form of hypothetical proposition is especially employed to express thoughts or truths of universal application and is, therefore, of constant occurrence in legal phraseology." (pp. 143-145, passim).

Thus the sentence reads: "Whenever he (the seventh) comes, he must remain a short time", or we would say the last clause includes the meaning, "he cannot remain but a short time."

One exegete makes the observation that this characteristic of being in existence only a short while is applied only to this one of the seven, and that the time would seem short compared with the reigns of those who preceded and with the one which followed, the eighth, into which it was to be merged.

Who is this seventh head? Dr. Albert Barnes thinks that this seventh head of the Beast which should remain in power only a little while is the Exarchate of Ravenna, which came into existence when Rome was reduced to a Dukedom after the fall of the imperial form of government. Since his view is representative, we will quote him:

> Now there can be no difficulty, I think, in referring this to that form of administration over Rome - that 'Dukedom' under the Exarchate of Ravenna, which succeeded the decline of the Imperial power - between the year 566 or 568, when Rome was reduced to a Dukedom, under the under the Exarchate of Ravenna, and the time when the city revolted from this authority and became subject to that of the Pope, about the year 727. (Notes, p. 430).

Then Barnes quotes the Roman historian Mr. Gibbon as evidence, saying:

> This period continued, according to Mr. Gibbon, about two hundred years. He says, "During a period of two hundred years, Italy was unequally divided between the kingdom of the Lombards and the Exarchate of Ravenna" ... It is

> worthy of remark, also, that this account of Mr. Gibbon's history immediately precedes the account of the rise of Papacy.
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> Mr. Gibbon (iii.202,) has marked it as extending through "a period of two hundred years"; and if this is compared with the form of administration which preceded it, extending to more than five hundred years, and more especially with that which followed the Papal form - which has extended now some twelve hundred years, it will be seen with what propriety this is spoken of as continuing for "a short space". (Ibid., pp. 430-431).

The choice of the Exarchate of Ravenna as fulfillment of the seventh head or form of Roman government does not exactly appeal to us. We have been trying to remain consistent in this that each head is a head of the Beast and thus a government which should include the Roman empire in its entirety. The Dukedom of Ravenna was located in Italy, it is true, but it was simply a city state. It never was a real head of the Empire.

We admit that this Dukedom was a new form of administration, but it does not appeal to us as being a head which succeeded the imperial form. The Beast to us always means the Empire. This Empire fell in 476 A.D. It was finished. The Beast went into perdition. And this Dukedom did not come into existence until a hundred years later, according to Barnes, when he says "between the year 566 and 568, when Rome was reduced to a Dukedom under the Exarchate of Ravenna."

No, in this case we would rather identify the seventh head of the Beast (and we are completely satisfied with this explanation after examining all the others) with the Division of the Empire into Eastern and Western Domains at the time of Diocletian (284-305 A.D.). This

division did not become official until about 330 A.D. (during Constantine the Great's reign, 323-337 A.D.), when the Capitol of the Empire was moved to Byzantium.[307]

Diocletian divided the Empire through the appointment of Maximian to the post of joint emperor. This action started the division of government administration which finally resulted in the separation of the Empire into Eastern and Western sections. But after Diocletian came Constantine the Great who was sole emperor. It was then that Christianity became the State Religion.

We also have sole rulers. The first one was from Byzantium - Constantius (Constantine's son) in 350 A.D. Julian the Apostate (361-363 A.D.) also was sole emperor. He tried to restore paganism, and thus received the name "Apostate". But after these men came the joint emperors Valentinian and Valens. Again, after Theodosius the Great (379-395) the empire was divided between his sons Arcadius and Honorius, the latter receiving the West, and the former becoming ruler of the Byzantine Empire.

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307. This is also the interpretation of W. Peters, a German scholar: "Fuenf sind gefallen", das sind fuenf verschiedene Regierungsformen, die Rom bis dahin, als Johannes die Offenbarung empfing, behabt hatte ... Merkwuerdig ist es allderdings, dasz man gerade fuenf verschiedene Regierungsformen, die bereits gefallen waren, zaehlen kann, naemlich: die koenigliche, die konsularische, die decemvirische, die diktatorische upd die des Triumvirats"... "Und einer ist": Das die Offenbarung empfing, in Rom bestand."

"Sobald Rom unter christliche Kaiser gekommen war, fing auch die grosz Hure on, das Tier zu besteigen. Der Kaiser Konstantin der Grosze raeumte der Papstkirche Rom ein, indem er seine Residenz, nach Byzanz verlegte ..." (Die Richter ist vor der Thuer! p. 292).

The last of the Roman emperors, strangely enough, bore the name of Romulus (same as legendary founder), but was surnamed Augustulus. In 476 Odoacer dethroned this child emperor and took the title of king of Italy; he thus brought the Roman Empire in the West to an end.

Rome now became a province of the Byzantine empire, and was ruled in theory, sometimes in fact, from Constantinople, until in 800, the crown of the Western Empire was placed on the head of Charlemagne. Thus the Holy Roman Empire was born, and remember, for future reference, it was the Pope who crowned Charlemagne!

We place the seventh head of the Beast, therefore, between 330 and 476 A.D., when the Beast itself fell, verse eight: "The Beast that thou sawest was, and is not." During this period we have a divided Empire, East and West, with joint (and jealous and fighting) rulers. This certainly was a different form of government of the Beast.

But this form of the Beast was different also in another way, yes, different than all the other heads of the Beast. It was Christian (at least in name). Under Diocletian was the last great pagan persecution of the Christians until the eighth head (the Papacy), verse twelve, should renew the persecutions in the days of the Renaissance, the Reformation, and the Inquisition. Constantine the Great had made Christianity the State Religion. And it was to continue so until the end of the Beast in 476, yes, even after that in the form of the Holy Roman Empire nominally, all of which would then be gradually incorporated into the eighth head, the Papacy.

These two characteristics considered, the Divided Kingdom and the change from paganism to Christianity as a philosophy of the state government, certainly would cause the Angel to tell John this was the head

which had not yet come. And was not the whole vision to comfort John and the Christians? They would know what was meant!

The division of the Empire Beast into Western and Eastern Domains would remain only a short time. Compared with the time of the eighth head, the Papacy, has been in power, and the long time the Emperors ruled, this interpretation also fulfills the requisite, "he must continue a short space", (ὀλίγον αὐτὸν δεῖ μεῖναι).

Some interpreters correctly count from the final division of the Empire under the sons of Theodosius, Arcadius and Honorius (ca. 400 A.D.) making the duration of such a final divided kingdom only 70 years.

We have noted theologians in our own Lutheran Church who view this seventh head of the Beast in this manner:

> 'Einer ist', das ist das heidnische roemische Weltreich, welches zu Johannis Zeit die Voelker unter sich hatte. Das war des sechste Kopf der Weltmacht, der sich am Reiche Gottes den Schaedel einrennen sollte ... Nimmt man das zu Johannis Zeit herrschende heidnische Rom fuer das sechste Haupt, so waere das siebente Haupt in dem christianisirten roemischen Weltreiche zu suchen.[308]

Dr. Theodore Graebner has the following in his Annotated Pocket New Testament:

> 10. 'There are seven kings' of which, 'five are fallen', the various forms of government of the Roman Empire: 'one is', at the time of John, the rule under the Roman emperors; one 'is not yet come', referring to the division of the empire and invasion of the Germanic tribes, which continued 'a short space', 11. followed by the eighth king, the Papacy.[309]

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308. G. Goeszwein, Offenbarung St. Johannis, p. 239.
309. Pages 35 - 36.

From Dr. L. Fuerbringer, one of the great scholars and theologians of our Lutheran Church, we quote the following regarding the interpretation of verse eleven:

> The seven forms of government leading finally to the Antichrist: Kings, consuls, dictators, decemvire, tribunes, Roman empire divided into Eastern and Western Empires, the eighth would be the papacy. It is better to explain this according to Daniel: 1. Assyria; 2. Babylon; 3. Persia and Cyrus; 4. Grecian empire with Alexander; 5. Antiochus Epiphanes; 6. Roman Empire; 7. This is the division of the Empire; 8. The Antichrist.[310]

Dr. Martin Luther does not have a great deal of interpretation regarding Revelation, but we cite here what he says regarding the problem before us. Commenting on Revelation chapter thirteen in his Preface to Revelation, he writes thus:

> Hier sind nun die zwei Thiere: eines ist das Kaiserthum, das andere, met den zweien Hoernen, das Pabsthum, welches nun auch ein weltreich worden ist, doch mit dem Schein des Namens Christi. Denn der Pabst hat das gefallene roemische Reich wieder aufgerichtet, und von den Griechen zu den Deutschen bracht; und ist doch mehr ein Bild vom roemischen Reich denn des Reichs Koerper selbst, wie es gewesen ist; dennoch gibt er solchem Bilde Geist und Leben, dass es dennoch

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310. Op. cit., p. 36. We call the reader's attention to the fact that also the interpretation of the passage with empires, as Dr. P.E. Kretzmann and others have it, will also work out well. See Dr. Fuerbringer's second interpretation above and notice the addition of Antiochus, who certainly was a type of the Antichrist.

In all these interpretations it is well to remember that the Harlot, the Antichrist, is the most important figure in the picture. Interpretations may differ in detail, but all must find the Antichrist, the Pope and his abominable system in the imagery of Revelation XVII. The Antichrist is the motif, the theme, of the whole prophecy.

> seine Staende, Rechte, Glieder und Aemter hat, and geht etlichermaszen im Schwange. Das ist das Bild, das wund gewesen und wieder heil worden ist. 311

His words about Revelation XVII are few and to the point:[312]

> Im siebenzehnten wird das kaiserliche Pabsthum und das paebstische Kaiserthum ganz von Anfang bis ans Ende in Ein Bild gefasset, und gleich in einer Summa vorgestellt, wie es nichts sei (denn das alte roemische Reich ist laengst dahin), und sei doch (denn es sind ja etliche Laender, und dazu die Stadt Rom auch noch da) ... wie dies Thier soll nun bald auch verdammt, und wie St. Paulus 2 Thess. 2,8, sagt, durch die Erscheinung der Zukunft unsers Herrn zerstoert werden.[313]

Many interpreters of other church bodies support the view of the seven kings as seven forms of administration of the Roman government. Some of them also adopt our view of the seventh head. The quotations will reveal, however, that these men often differ in some of the details.

Here is what the well-known interpreter Matthew Henry says about the subject:

> This Beast has seven heads, which have a double

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311. Prefaces to the Books of the Bible, St. Louis Edition, Vol. XIV, p. 134.

312. Ibidem, p. 137.

313. In the St. Louis Edition of Luther's Works, Volume XIV, pp. 186 - 250, there is a series of tableaux which beautifully depicts the vast difference of spirit between our Savior Christ Jesus, and the Antichrist, the Pope. The title of the series is Passional Christi und Antichristi. Just to look at these pictures without Luther's comments is very enlightening to anyone studying the Biblical revelation of the Antichrist.

> signification. (1) Seven Mountains --- the seven hills on which Rome stands; and, (2) Seven Kings --- seven sorts of government. Rome was governed by kings, consuls, tribunes, decemviri, dictators, emperors who were pagan and emperors who were Christian. Five of these were extinct when this prophecy was written; one was then in being, that is the pagan emperor; and the other, that is, the Christian emperor, was yet to come, v. 10. This beast, the papacy, makes an eighth governor, and sets up idolatry again.[314]

Uriah Smith, who, we believe, is a Seventh-Day Adventist, writes the following:

> The seven heads are explained to be, first, seven mountains, and then seven kings or forms of government; for the expression in verse 10, "and there are seven kings", should read, "and these are seven kings". ... The seven forms of government that have existed in the Roman Empire are usually enumerated as follows: 1. Kingly; 2. Consular; 3. Decemvirate; 4. Dictatorial; 5. Triumvirate; 6. Imperial; and 7. Papal ... John was living under the imperial form. Two more were to arise after his time ... The head which was to succeed the imperial and continue a short space could not be the papal; for that has continued longer than all the rest put together. We understand therefore that the papal head is the eighth, and that a head of short continuance intervened between the imperial and papal. In fulfillment of this we read that after the imperial form had been abolished, there was a ruler who for about the space of sixty years governed Rome under the title of the "Exarchate of Ravenna".[315]

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314. Revelation, Vol. VI, p. 1173.
315. Thoughts on Revelation, pp. 269-270.

We have very little interest in the following interpretation, even though it comes from The Lutheran Commentary, so-called. It is one that is unusual, most unusual --- and wrong. Yet we must admit that it brings out the major points:[316]

> Williams also gives us a summary of the explanation given by the Greek interpreters: "The seven heads and seven hills on which the Kingdom of the world is established: Nineveh, of the Assyrians; Ecbatana, of the Medes; Babylon, of the Chaldeans; Susa, of the Persians; the Kingdom of Macedonia; the ancient Rome, and the new Rome. And with these they connect the seven kings, as Ninus, Arbaces, Nebuchodonoser, Cyrus, Alexander, Romulus, and Constantine".

Dr. David Brown says the seven heads and mountains represent the city of Seven Hills (Urbs Septicollis). The seven kings are forms of government:[317]

> If five of the different forms of government had already fallen, and the one that then existed was that of the Emperors, the other, not yet come, must be that which succeeded the fall of the Empire. This is "the beast that was" in its Imperial form as a persecuting power, but "is not" when the Empire fell; "he is himself an eighth and is of the seven" (an eighth, inasmuch as, being an ecclesiastical power, it was perfectly different from all the others; but "of the seven", since the same supremacy which characterized all the seven forms was prolonged in this one); "and he goeth into perdition", being that blasphemous, persecuting Power, "drunken with the blood of the saints".

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316. Page 233.
317. Op. cit., pp. 142-143.

Dr. Albert Barnes in his Notes on Revelation gives the summarized views of other English scholars regarding the seventh head;[318]

> (a) That of Mr. Mede. He makes the seventh head what he calls the "Demi-Caesar", or the "Western Emperor who reigned after the division of the Empire into East and West, and which continued, after the last division under Honorius and Arcadius, about sixty years - a short space. Works, B. iii. ch. 8. v.ch.12.
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> (b) That of Dr. More and Mr. Cunningham, who suppose the Christian emperors, from Constantine to Augustulus, to constitute the seventh head, and that this had its termination by the sword of the Heruli.

The World Book Encyclopedia, obviously written without any theological basis, gives us this bit in illuminating information regarding the seventh head of the Beast, especially about the Harlot's assumption of the Roman temporal power;[319]

> The decline of the Empire began with Commodus (180-192 A.D.). Diocletian (284-305) under whom occurred the last frightful persecution of the Christians, perceived that one man could not administer so great an empire, and divided it into East and West Empires, making Maximian joint emperor; and from that time on, there are two parallel streams of Roman history. The dissolution had begun; but under the great Constantine, who was sold ruler from 323-337, the state was again united. He made Christianity the State religion, and moved the center of government from Rome to a newly founded city on the Bosporus, which he called Constantinople.
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> After Constantine's death came another period of wild disorder, during which the only living, growing

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318. See pages 428 ff.
319. Vol. 14, p. 6176.

thing in the Empire seemed to be the Church. Julian (361-363) called the "Apostate", tried to restore paganism, but the Church had become too strong to be overthrown.

For the reasons given, we reiterate that we like the interpretation we have outlined on the last page very much. It fits the text and context and scope of John's prophecy. It agrees with God's revelation in history. One does not have to abuse the text nor mutilate the usual statements of history to arrive at these conclusions.

But what about the various other interpretations, especially where they differ in detail and yet seem plausible? We readily admit that there may be other interpretations, and good ones, which fit parts of the picture. Throughout the thesis we have maintained this view, except in those instances where the interpreter became so crass and unreasonable and unhistorical that we had to condemn his procedure altogether, that there may be other suitable interpretations, too. Our claim is that there is no interpretation, however, so clear and consistent as the one we have outlined.

There may be differences of opinion regarding some of the images of Revelation XVII, many minor matters may have different plausible explanations (and this is true of the whole Book of Revelation) - but the identification of the main figure of the prophecy is clear, that of the Harlot, the Antichrist. No matter what view the various respectable exegetes accept regarding minor features of the symbolism of Revelation XVII, they generally see that the Papacy is the exact fulfillment of the prophecy as a whole. No one with an open mind can escape that conclusion. All the minor details of the prophecy are but

a means, as in a great symphony of music, to set forth the leitmotif in the clearest of light.

We like to use as an illustration of this point a certain great painting with which most Lutherans are well acquainted, for it is often included in Lutheran textbooks about Luther and the Reformation. The title of the painting is "The Age of the Reformation", and it was painted by William Von Kaulbach. In this marvelous piece of work the artist has depicted the whole Reformation with one stroke of the brush, so to speak. In other words, time is forgotten, but in one great perspective panorama all the great figures and events of the Reform Movement the artist could think of are grouped together. One picture covers many years of history. Sometimes the various small details of the painting are difficult to identify clearly, but the theme of the picture, God's Word and Dr. Martin Luther and the Reformation, stands out in bold relief.

Again, let the reader go to an art museum and view closely some examples of modern art. Some people are inclined to think that many recent pieces of painting acclaimed as great works of art are not paintings at all, but jumbled masses of nothing. However, upon studying one of these often grotesque paintings, one generally finds that the theme and point the artist wishes to emphasize is clear, even though we may never know what some of the minor details in the painting represent or even why they are there.

So it is with the vast panorama the angel revealed to John in Revelation XVII - the Antichrist in the figure of the bloody Harlot, the Papacy, stands out in such bold and scarlet relief that there can

be no mistaking her identity, even though some of the lesser images of the picture are not always clear to us. We think this is a good and safe way to view the Book of Revelation in general.

But we must proceed to the next verse.

Verse Eleven:

And the Beast which was, and is not, he is also an eighth, and is of the seven, and he goes into perdition.[320]

Verse eleven is a commentary on, or an addition to, verse eight, which reads: "The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition". It is also closely connected with verse ten which precedes, since the Beast is the eighth successive head after the seven mentioned in verse ten. Thus the passage must be treated in the light of both of the passages just mentioned.

Καὶ τὸ θηρίον ὃ ἦν καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν, "and the Beast which was and is not" - about this Beast we gave a rather long dissertation under verse eight, to which the reader is referred. There we said, the reader will remember, that this Beast is the Roman Empire, and when this prophecy here is fulfilled (from John's point of view), it had ceased to exist, that is, "he was and is not". The year of the collapse was 476 A.D., as we have just observed. This is the same

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320. Dr. Moffat translates this verse as follows: "As for the Beast which was and is not, he is an eighth head; he belongs to the seven, and to perdition he shall go."

Here is Dr. Goodspeed's version: "So must it be with the animal that was, and is no more. It is also an eighth king, although it is one of the seven, and it is to go to destruction."

Beast mentioned in the first part of Revelation XIII, the one that came out of the sea.

Then we saw under verse eight that after the fall of the Beast, the Harlot, Babylon the Great, climbed astride the Beast and ruled over him, as it is written: "And he shall ascend out of the bottomless pit." We have the same picture here.

Note carefully, however, that here the Beast is called the eighth head of the Beast (καὶ αὐτός ὄγδοός ἐστιν), "he is also the eighth".[321] The αὐτός makes it definite and emphatic: "He is also the eighth." There is no doubt about the meaning of ὄγδοος; it means eighth; Thayer says, "the eighth". This is so even without the οὗτος which many think should be in the text instead of the αὐτός, as the evidence is quite strong for the reading.

Whether we translate the καὶ with "and" or "also", the meaning remains the same. It would seem, then, that there is a contradiction in this instance - if the Beast is the eighth head of the Beast, then he is his own head, whereas all the other heads are part of the Beast!

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321. Nestle's codex omits the definite article ὁ, making the phrase read thus: "He is also an eighth." But there is a variant reading in many manuscripts in which the ὁ is included. Nestle is certainly justified in leaving out the definite article since only Codex Aleph and a few others have it. It makes very little difference, as far as the interpretation is concerned. First we have seven heads mentioned, and now an eighth - he can, therefore, also be called the eighth. We mention this fact because some exegetes insist that the absence of the definite article here is evidence that this "eighth" is not the eighth one in a successive series. We do not get the point of the argument or its grounds.

But this is cleared up if we consider the phrase, "he is of the Seven." The Beast is thus synonymous with the Harlot after the Fall of the sixth head, the imperial form of government, for the Harlot becomes the Beast. This we pointed out already in verse eight.

The Beast, according to verse eleven, is one that came out of the other seven heads. His essential identity was preserved through the succession of kings, consuls, tribunes, and other forms of Roman government. He is the eighth in succession, but he includes the other seven heads and everything they stood for. This form of sovereignty is a continuation or prolongationof the one power and all the former fallen heads of the Beast.

Thus writes Barnes: "There was a sense in which it was proper to speak of it as an eighth power, and yet, viewed in its relation to the whole, it so essentially combined and concentrated all that there was in the seven, that, in a general view, it scarcely merited a separate mention."

The Greek phrase, καὶ ἐκ τῶν ἑπτά ἐστιν, "and he is of the seven", may be well paraphrased thus, "he springs from the seven", or "he is derived from the seven".

The enigma, therefore, lies in the statement that he is numbered with the seven, although he is the eighth one. When the seventh government falls, his corpse, so to speak, is revived, not by his own soul, but by the Antichrist. Hence the Antichrist is numbered with the seven as one of them, though he is in reality the eighth head.

This means that this eighth head of the Beast, or the Beast himself, is a derived power. It got its influence and beginnings from

the seven fallen kings or forms of Roman government. It was thus also another, or new form of government by a new "king" which built itself upon the ruins of the seven.[322]

We believe that this eighth head, which is also the Beast, is the Papacy of Rome, with its succession of heads, the Popes. Now we have no more kings, consuls, decimvirs, tribunes, and emperors, but the Popes, ruling Rome by another form of government, the Papacy, which is both spiritual and secular and which contains all the evils and powers of former Rome. It is the same as the Harlot, who is astride the Beast, so closely connected with the Beast that the two have become one, as this verse indicates. In practical speech today, also, when we speak of the Catholic Church we often say simply, "Rome" - all is Rome, Semper Roma!

This point must be made clear to the reader - this eighth head is the Beast himself, ridden by the Harlot who controls it so thoroughly and who is so much like the other seven heads and the Beast that in the light of history the two are identical! The Papacy has practiced the same idolatry, the same cruelty, the same persecutions, the same superstitions, et alii, as the Roman secular governments which preceded her, so much so that there is no mistaking her as the eighth head out of the seven.

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322. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and decked in precious stones and pearls - the sumptuous gifts of the kings to her, in return for what she did to them. Thus beautifully did Church and State play into each other's hands - the kings, including "them that dwell on earth" (the rich laity), vying with each other who would to more honour to the church; providing for it on a scale corresponding with the grades of rank and wealth in the State; while she, on the other side, compacts them - though each independent of the other - into one solid Christendom, a gigantic engine of church and State, which for more than a thousand years, as the church condemned to death as "heretic" all who dared to refuse its claims, while as the State its sentences were dutifully executed. (David Brown, op, cit., pp. 137-138).

The Harlot has become the Beast, and the Beast has become the Harlot;[323]

This is evident from God's revelation in history. What took place after the Fall of Rome, after the division of the empire? The glory of old Rome and its seven forms of dominion had departed; they were fallen. But immediately after this had taken place, yea, much before this, the Church of Rome was beginning to feel its influence. We find that in the year 453 A.D., when Attila the Hun marched into Italy with his hordes and threatened Rome, he was induced by the pleas, by the influence, of the Christian bishop, Pope Leo the Great, to spare the city! Rome Catholic was beginning to take over the temporal power

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323. The Rev. G. Bloedel of Hamlet, Indiana, a brother pastor, in an essay entitled "The Two Beasts of Revelation 13" says that the Whore and the Beast must always be kept distinct in any interpretation: "In Chapter 17 John shows the beast and the whore as being distinct; and I believe the whore riding represents the Roman papacy. The beast is not the whore and the whore is not the beast. Then chapter 17, 16, says that the ten horns upon the beast (which are the strength of the beast or the beast itself) shall hate the whore and shall make her desolate. Now if the beast should be the papacy, then the papacy would hate itself and make itself desolate, which is absurd." (p. 1).

To us this explanation seems to miss the mark in the light of verse eleven before us. True, the Harlot and the Beast must be kept separate, and they are separate, until the time of the eighth head. Then it says in verse eleven that the Beast, even he is the eighth. All good interpretations of this verse identify the eighth head with the Papacy, which in reality becomes the beast. This is correct, because the Beast is of the seven in the form of the eighth head, and since we identify the Papacy with the eighth head it follows that the Papacy and the Beast have merged into one, not physically, of course, but for all practical reasons. So we maintain that after the fall of the pagan emperors the Beast and the Harlot become one, as we say, "The Papacy is Rome".

of Rome;[324]

After a few hundred years, the Popes reached dazzling heights of power, ruling both the spiritual and temporal empires of the world. All the power of the former Roman Empire ("of the Seven") plus the added tyranny of the spiritual might in the form of the Interdict, was incorporated into the Papacy.[325]

With all this power concentrated into one form of Roman Government, we see one of the mightiest empires of the earth springing up.[326] It comprised essentially the power of all the former heads, of the kings, consuls, decemvirs, tribunes, emperors. And today it has the same central seat on the Tiber. Does not the Apostle say: "I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet colored beast, having seven heads and ten horns ... the seven heads are seven mountains (Septicollis Roma), on which the woman sitteth"?

It was not long before the kingdom of the Harlot Babylon the Great also included all the nations of the old Empire of Rome and all its

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324. But even before the Popes the spirit of Antichrist was prevalent. Shortly after John false teachers began to creep into the Church, yea, he even writes against some of them in Revelation. Jesus was set aside more and more by early antichrists. The development of Christian art in these centuries is evidence of this, for as time went on Mother Mary received more and more attention from the artists and the Infant Jesus is relegated to the background. Think of the Arian Heresy undermining the Doctrine of the Deity and Divine Sonship of Jesus - what untold harm this did to the Church, and what a victory for Antichrist! So we would have the reader get this impression from our words, that the assumption of temporal and spiritual power by the Harlot was a gradual process taking place through many centuries.

325. Please see our notes on the Rise of Papacy under verse eight.

326. "The Roman Kingdom was built up; then it was destroyed; then it rose again in the Papacy." (Dr. L. Fuerbringer, op. cit., p. 56).

heads. Today she has the whole earth in her power, crushing them spiritually and temporally like a mighty female octopus in her tentacles of Sacramentalism and Sacerdotalism. It is in fact the Roman scepter still swayed over the world. The Papacy, as an ecclesiastical system, has sustained the civil power of Rome through the means of her spiritual tyranny, throughout her adulterous history.[327]

The Pope claims that he is the Eighth. He wants to occupy a place by himself in the world, a top place. Pope Pius X and Leo XIII proclaimed and proclaimed again, as many popes have since then, that the Roman Church is the Church of the New Testament. Everything the Harlot does today is done in the same dictatorial manner the Roman Emperors used. Everything is right as long as it is for the Church. Might makes right for her.

She is ruthless in her persecution of those who oppose her. Any priest or nun who tries to escape the vows and the unholy system of the orders is tracked down until they cry, "Pater, peccavi!" The Word of Christ is pushed aside. It is always, "This is what the Holy Father says!" "The Holy Father has decided it", says the priest to his people, "and therefore you do it!" No effort is made to prove any claim from Scripture. Who will deny the statement: "Papa verus

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327. Listen to what one of the worshippers of this Beast or Harlot by the name of Augustine Steuches, a Roman Catholic, has to say on this verse: "The empire having been overthrown, unless God had raised up the Pontificate, Rome, resuscitated and restored by none, would have become uninhabitable, and been thenceforth a most foul habitation of earth. But in the Pontificate it revived as with a second birth; in empire or magnitude not indeed equal to the old empire, but its form not very dissimilar: because all nations, from East and from West, venerate the Pope, not otherwise than they before obeyed the emperor." (Quoted from Barnes' Notes, p. 431).

antichristus est?"[328]

Cannot the reader see the exact parallel in Paul's account of this Antichrist, Babylon the Great, become the Beast, in 2 Thessalonians? St. Paul says this man of sin should be revealed and here in Revelation and in history we have him revealed fully - we need not doubt today who is the Antichrist!

> Let no man deceive you by any means; for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition.
>
> Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.
>
> Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?
>
> And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time.
>
> For the mystery of iniquity doth already work; only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way.
>
> And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming.[329]

Let the Christian also notice how St. John, the same Apostle who wrote Revelation, warns us about the Antichrist in his First Epistle.

> Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits

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328. "Although there is a distinction between the woman, or World-city, and the Beast, or Antichrist (The World-kingdom) they are nevertheless so closely united that there is but one mystery, that of the woman and the beast". (Henry Jacobs, The Lutheran Commentary, p. 230).

329. II Thess. 2:3-8.

whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God:

And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.

Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.[330]

But the peoples of the world may be comforted and rejoice greatly! For the Prophet John is told by the angel that this Beast, or Harlot, Babylon the Great will go into perdition at the end of time! Καὶ εἰς ἀπώλειαν ὑπάγει, cries the angel. "He goes into hell!" God will see to it that she gets her just reward! She shall be destroyed in hell! The verses following and the whole chapter XVIII depict this for us beautifully, especially in verses nine to sixteen:

And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning.

Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come.

And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more:

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330. I. John 4:1-4.

> The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble,
>
> And cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men.
>
> And the fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from thee, and all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all.
>
> The merchants of these things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing.
>
> And saying, Alas, alas, that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls!

In other words, this mighty dominion, which has for so many centuries ruled tyrannically over the hearts of men, leading them from the Light of Christ to the darkness of hell, shall continue to rule thus until Judgment Day - Then will come the end. This will be the last in the series of heads. There will be no more. There will be no ninth or tenth or eleventh or twelfth head of the Beast to take over after the eighth - when this one falls, it will be her just judgment at the end of time. "He goeth into perdition!"

No more will she torture the bodies and consciences of men. No more will she be able to deprive people of their spiritual liberty. No more will she be able to lead people into the idolatry of worshipping the Holy Father and the Virgin Mary. No more will she bind people's consciences with her hideous superstitutions and traditions. No more

will she be able to lead precious souls from the arms of Jesus into the arms of Satan Dragon. She will be judged - and forever. [331]

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331. The reader will appreciate the clarity and boldness of Pastor Goeszwein's words about the eighth head: "Das Thier, aber, das gewesen ist und nist ist, die gottfeindlicke Weltmacht, die im heidnischen Rom wuethete und ihr Ende fand, geht nie voellig unter bis zum juensten Tage. Sie ist im siebenten Haupte wieder aufgestanden and zum Reitpferde der antichristlichen Kirche herangezogen worden ... Der Roemische Papst hat nicht bloss das siebente Haupt ueberdauert, sondern wollte auch unter den daraus ensprungenen Reichen der Mittelpunkt der weltlichen Herrshaft sein, auf den die Koenige zu hoeren haben. Die roemische Kirche, dieses Bild des Thieres, ist eine Fortsetzung des roemischen Reichs in anderer Gestalt. Dieses in Versteckspielen so bewanderte Haupt faehrt in die Verdammnisz, wenn der Herr der grossen Babel den Zornbecher reichen wird. (Cap. 16,19)". (Op.cit., p. 239).

Verse Twelve:

And the ten horns which you saw are ten kings, which have not yet received a kingdom, but receive authority as kings one hour with the Beast.[332]

Before us we have the final dilemma of Revelation XVII - the ten horns on the Beast. There were more horns than heads - did the heads have the horns? - what a monstrosity!

The angel is still speaking. He tells John that these ten horns represent ten other kings. Again we have the same term used: βασιλεῖς, "kings"; and not βασιλεία, "kingdom". It is clear that these ten kings have not the importance attached to them that the seven kings of the Beast had, for these are apart from and subsidiary to the Harlot.

They were not in existence at the time of John, as the angel says: οὔτινες βασιλείαν οὔπω ἔλαβον, "they have received no kingdom as yet". This implies that they would each receive a kingdom in the future. The word βασιλεία is translated correctly; it means "kingdom", "the domain over which a king or ruler reigns." They would receive their kingdom during the reign of the

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332: Moffat: "As for the ten horns you have seen, they are ten kings who have no royal power as yet, but receive royal authority for an hour along with the Beast;"

Goodspeed: "The ten horns that you saw are also ten kings, who have not yet begun to reign, but for a single hour they receive authority as kings along with the animal."

Harlot after the fall of the Emperors, then they would arise, and it seems (since the word λαμβάνω is used) they would get their grants of power or their kingdoms from the Harlot.[333] They would actually be kings, for the angel says that they would "receive power (authority) as kings", (ἐξουσία). The verb form λαμβάνουσιν is what we call a Prophetic Present with a future meaning, that is, "they shall receive power".

What kind of power? The power or rule of government. That is what the word ἐξουσία means. The word βασιλεία is used in the Doxology of the Lord's Prayer. Many exegetes think that βασιλεία and ἐξουσία are substantially the same concept. It is really a derived, or delegated authority - a higher power gives a lower authority power to rule. This is the meaning here with the use of the word λαμβάνω, which means "to take what is offered one with the hand", "to receive". These ten kings become subject to the temporal power of the popes.

One phrase in this verse is especially difficult of explanation. It is the little word phrase μιὰν ὥραν μετὰ τοῦ θηρίου, "one hour with the Beast". We do not think they should be taken literally. No doubt they mean a short time, similar to "little while" above. The idea is that they receive authority only one hour (μιὰν ὥραν), and even then they cannot receive this power except μετὰ τοῦ θηρίου, that is, with the aid, concurrence, and cooperation of the

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333. The form ἔλαβον is the second Aorist indicative of λαμβάνω.

Beast.

The idea is that these kingdoms should have short duration; they are brief and temporary, perhaps through one period of history. We cannot, of course, say how many years this will be, or what period of history this "one hour" refers to. It could be a hundred years, five hundred years, a thousand years - we do not know, and have no way of knowing precisely.

However, in this verse we think we have a very good right to explain the kings as kingdoms, not because the word βασιλεύς has suddenly changed from the meaning "king" to "kingdom"; but because we are told here that these kings would receive a βασιλεία, that is, a kingdom.

These ten horns which should rise out of the Roman Empire had already been shown to Daniel. Many at least think that these ten horns are the same as the ten toes of the great image. It seems that to Daniel they were not so much kings as kingdoms. He calls them separate kingdoms who existed side by side.[334]

Who are these kings? No doubt they were ten major kings and their countries or provinces of the Roman Empire, which after the Empire had fallen, should rise and become independent kingdoms. The prophecy means that the Roman Empire could not always go on as a mighty unit, but that

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334. "In Daniel 7: 24, the ten horns of the beast, there described, symbolize ten successive kings; here plainly they designate ten contemporaneous ones. That subordinate and tributary kings are here meant, is plain from the nature of the declaration". (Dr. Moses Stuart, op.cit.).

it should give place with the Harlot's consent to several kingdoms or empires in Europe and Asia. Symbolically these ten kings may represent all the nations of today who lie with the Harlot.

Thus writes Dr. Theodore Graebner: "'The ten horns are ten kings', the Roman provinces, which then were not independent kingdoms, but soon became such and ranged themselves on the side of the beast."[335]

And this is also the view of Dr. J. T. Mueller:

> Ten kings: ten governments, which should rise out of the ruins of the old Roman Empire. One hour: through one period of time. With the Beast: their rise is coincident with that of the beast. At first they give their power to the beast; but afterwards they turn against it.[336]

Since these ten kings are to rise into power with and under the Beast for only a short time, we think they were the kingdoms or lesser governments which came out of the confusion shortly after Rome fell, but which later on were displaced by the more permanent powers of Europe and Asia.

In other words, we think they might have been "mushroom governments" which held their own during the early years of the Papacy for a time because she had no power then to squelch them; that is, they grew up with the Beast and the Harlot, but later on, as verse thirteen informs us, they gave "their power and strength unto the beast." Therefore, they have to exercise their authority in connection with and

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335. Op. cit., p. 36.
336. Op. cit., p. 768.

under the influence of the Great Harlot.[337]

Having this thought in mind, perhaps the interpretation of Sir Isaac Newton, or at least the idea of it, is not impossible: He lines them up as follows: 1) The kingdom of the Vandals and Alans in Spain and Africa; 2) the kingdom of the Suevians in Spain; 3) the kingdom of the Visigoths; 4) the kingdom of the Alans in Gallia; 5) the kingdom of the Burgundians; 6) the kingdom of the Franks; 7) the kingdom of the Britons; 8) the kingdom of the Huns; 9) the kingdom of the Lombards; 10) the kingdom of Italy. These were very temporary, and soon were remodelled into the powers of Europe, many of which stand to this day.[338]

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337. W. Peters has about the same view of the ten horns: "Die Zahl ist symbolisch. Es wird uns also unter den zehn Hoernern die letzte Weltentwicklung im Staatsleben gezeigt, nachdem die alten roemischen Regierungsformen sick ausgelebt haben." (p. 296).

338. We quote some worth-while words (because of their clarity) from The Rev. G. Bloedel, Pastor of St. Matthew's Lutheran Church, Hamlet, Indiana, on the Ten Kings. We beg to differ with him, however, that the eighth beast "must be one of the ten horns of the seven headed beast." This does not correspond with the imagery St. John gives us in Revelation XVII very well.

"From the explanation of the angel, Rev. 17, it is plain that the ten horns or kings are the countries which made up the realm of the beast. When the beast was slain, these countries became independent and chose their own rulers, as for instance, Spain, France, Italy, Great Britain, Greece, etc. All these countries taken together formed originally the beast under one head. Now the beast of the last days cannot be the seven-headed beast because the pagan Roman Empire, the sixth head, and the Christian Roman Empire, the seventh head, are gone; hence the eighth beast, Rev. 17, 11, which is of the seven must be one of the ten horns of the seven-headed beast. But according to Saint John they will give their power to the beast and hate the whore, Rev. 17,13.16.

Now which are the ten horns or kings that give their power to the beast? You can name them as you please. Since there are ten and they are independent, it follows that they will fight one another, some even attack the beast. But the beast will ever be watchful that none of the

Dr. Paul E. Kretzmann has this explanation of the ten horns, though he does not name them:

> Here (ten horns) there is a reference to the ten great provinces into which the Roman Empire was divided. At the time of John's vision, these provinces were not yet independent, but they later became autonomous and had their own rulers.
>
> Their heirs and successors may be found in practically the entire world to-day. And of the great majority of rulers and states it is true that they have directly or indirectly furthered the cause of the beast, of Antichrist. No matter how dissimilar they may be otherwise, in their admiration for the Papacy they are all alike, and they place themselves, more or less directly, into the power of Antichrist, to be used as the tool of the Pope.[339]

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horns grows too strong. It will ever meddle in the affairs of the ten horns and thus assist one or the other in the fight and keep them from pooling their strength against it (the beast). And again, the beast will ever succeed in receiving their help when necessary. It is not necessary that these countries or horns must always be the same, because in the continual struggle for existence some lose their identity, others again arise; but there will always be ten more or less. Let us mention a few others. There we have Jugoslavia which was formerly Serbia and at the time of the Roman Empire it had a still different name. Belgium and Holland were also a part of the old Roman Empire. Then there were Egypt and Syria in the clutches of Rome. And let us not forget some of the countries which were not dominated by Rome, but were nursed by the Roman whore to this very day, as Poland, Czechoslovakia, and others. We must not be too critical about the number, but the fact, that the ten horns give their power to the beast.

And I will suggest as my own personal opinion, that the beast of the last days can be recognized by the fact that it (the beast) receives the power of the ten horns and that Saint John in telling us this gives us a clue by which to recognize the beast of the last days." (Op. cit., p. 7).

339. Op. cit., p. 640.

Therefore, we may easily infer, following the Continuous-Historical Method of interpreting Revelation, that these ten horns or kings are symbols of the nations today which have grown out of the original ten. This would include many nations of Europe, Asia, and the Western Hemisphere which are in the lime-light even today. England, France, Spain, Italy, Germany, Scandinavia, Russia, United States, Brazil, Argentina, Australia, Africa --- these are just some examples.[340]

Of course, in this case we take the number "ten" as an ideal number, and do not attempt to fit any ten states to the pattern. Such a procedure would present insurmountable difficulties. The scene is always changing.

But the thing we know is true is that all these nations, as Dr. Kretzmann says above, bend the knee to the Pope and serve the Beast. Even our own country has an ambassador at the Vatican --- a definite fulfillment of this prophecy.

We may well consider the words of Goeszwein in this connection. He believes the number of kingdoms will never remain the same; there will not always be just ten, but they will be always a symbol of the world powers in the last days:

> Es werden nicht immer zehn sein und bleiben,
> wie Daniel schon andeutet. Es gibt im Laufe
> der Zeit viele Veraenderungen. Etliche fallen,
> andere kommen auf; eines verschlingt das andere

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340. John Quincy Adams identifies the ten horns as England, France, Spain, Italy, Australia, Greece, Balkan States, Turkey, Syria, and Egypt. (Op. cit., p. 142).

> oder haelt es unter sich, wie es unter den wilden Thieren auf dem Gebiete der Politik immer hergeht, zumal in der letzen Zeit, der viele unruhen vorausgesagt sind.
>
> Doch wird die Zahl der zehn Koenige und ihrer Nationen eine stehende zur Bezeichnung der Weltmaechte in der letz. Man mag darum diese Nationen zaehlen, wie man will; es liegt wenig daran, weil die Grenze eine fliesszende ist und die Weltkarten oft ihre Farben wechseln. Sie haben eine Zeitlang Macht und Heerschaft mit dem Thiere.[341]

In our day we have seen these things happen and this prophecy fulfilled. As the hymnist says "Kingdoms rise and wane". Nations come and go. Napoleon, the Kaiser, Hitler, Mussolini, and others are modern examples. But the Great Harlot lives on till the end of time, outlasting them all.

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341. Op. cit., p. 143.

Verse Thirteen:

These (ten kings) have one mind (purpose), and
their power and authority they give to the Beast.

St. John tells us that the ten kings, or heads of the Beast, μίαν γνώμην ἔχουσιν, "have one mind". ἡ γνώμη is "the faculty of knowing", "mind", "reason"; also a "view, judgment, opinion". In verse seventeen of this chapter the word is used in the sense of "decree", or "will of God".

The word really refers to the purpose in one's mind, or to the course the individual should follow, and thus it means "resolve", "purpose", "intention". (Thayer) This, we think, is the meaning in this passage, especially with the word ἔχω, which makes the phrase an idiom.[342]

These ten kings or kingdoms are united in one purpose, to support the Harlot and her Beast. They may fight with each other and have disagreements in other matters, but in this one thing they all have the one opinion - they must always be on the side of the Harlot. The truth is, however, that these ten kingdoms and all the kings and princes represented by them in history, have allowed themselves voluntarily to become subject to the Papacy. In spite of all the quarrels

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342. Goodspeed: "They have one purpose, they give their power and authority to the animal."
Moffat: "They are of one mind, and they confer their power and authority upon the Beast."

between them, they are united in this one thing, namely, in the philosophy of the Harlot.[343]

Our interpretation of the ten kings, the reader will recall, is that they represented the ten rulers and their realms which arose from the ruins of the Roman Empire and that they may symbolize also the nations of the past and of the present who have supported the Harlot. Speaking of the kingdoms of Europe and Asia which were born with the death of Rome, it is a fact of history that these countries, even though frequently at war with each other, became Roman Catholic and had this one thing in common that they coddled and made love to the Papacy.

Truly they are well represented by the Holy Writer as ten horns of the Beast. As a bull or other animal uses his horns to have his way and rule over others, so the Pope used these countries against each other in the greatest political game which history has witnessed; in fact, it is still going on.

Everyone who has read only a little history knows that the kings of Europe of the early Middle Ages thought it an honor to be crowned by the Pope. Many of the kings and princes received their power and their realms through the Pope's machinations. The Pope's dealings

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343. "Here there is reference to the ten great provinces into which the Roman Empire was divided. At the time of John's vision these provinces were not yet independent, but they later became autonomous and had their own rulers. Their heirs and successors may be found in practically the entire world to-day. And of the great majority of rulers and states it is true that they have directly or indirectly furthered the cause of the beast, of Antichrist. No matter how dissimilar they may be otherwise, in their admiration of the papacy they are all alike, and they place themselves more or less directly, into the power of Antichrist, to be used as the tool of the Pope." (P.E. Kretzmann, op.cit., p. 640).

with the Italian states was a long line of political intrigue. We cannot forget, for instance, Alexander VI and the Borgias. Then we think of the way the Pope tried to use this method of political pressure to get Luther to Rome during the Reformation Era, so as to put him to death as a heretic, but was foiled because God put into the mind of Frederick the Wise of Saxony to oppose the Pontiff and even outwit him.

Therefore it can be truthfully said: καὶ τὴν δύναμιν καὶ ἐξουσίαν αὐτῶν τῷ θηρίῳ δίδοασιν, "and they shall give their power and authority to the Beast."

The verb δίδοασιν is the present indicative of δίδωμι. The Authorized Version's rendition, "shall give", is a suitable translation, for the verb is an Ingressive Present, indicating a future action (perhaps also durative) for this process is still going on today. Some interpreters state that this form is a Prophetic Present, where we have the Attic form δίδοασιν instead of the Koine δίδουσι. Automatically the reader's mind thinks of this happening in the future, even though the present is used, for when else would the kings give their power to the Beast but in the future? The present here, then, has a future connotation.

The words δύναμις and ἐξουσία may be considered synonymous in this passage, since they are often used interchangeably in Greek. However, one may make this distinction as we have done in our translation, namely, that δύναμις is the inherent power which a person or animal or country possesses, while ἡ ἐξουσία

denotes the power and right of rule or government, or authority.

This means that the ten kings gave everything they had to the Pope for him to use as he saw fit. They became completely subject to the temporal power of Papacy. For this reason the Pope often calls himself "King of Kings". The Romanists will argue that this indicates the Christian nature of the ancient kingdoms. But on the contrary, we have here a description of the universal antichristian character of these and many future kingdoms who lie with the Harlot. Certainly since the Papacy is the Antichrist, those who support her are also guilty of opposition to God and His Christ, for they are allies of the Beast and the Harlot and act in concert with them.[344]

Dr. Barnes in his commentary gives us a fine summary of the verse when he says:

> The meaning is that they would all become Papal kingdoms, and supporters of the Papal Power. It is unnecessary to pause to show how true this has been in history. At first, most of the people out of whom these kingdoms sprang were Pagans; then many of them embraced Christianity under the prevailing form of Arianism, and this fact was for a time a bar to their perfect adhesion to the Roman See; but they were all ultimately brought wholly under its influence, and became its supporters.
>
> In A.D. 496, Clovis, the king of the Franks, on occasion of his victory over the Allemanni, embraced the Catholic faith, and so received the title transmitted downward through nearly thirteen hundred years to the French Kings as his successors, of 'the eldest son of the church'; in the course of the sixth century, the kings of Burgandy, Bavaria, Spain, Portugal, England, embraced the same religion, and became defenders of the Papacy.

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344. Matthew Henry: "They shall be very unanimous and very zealous in that interest (of Papacy's), and entirely devoted to it, divesting themselves of their prerogatives and revenues (things so dear to princes), out of an unaccountable fondness for the papacy." (Op.cit., p. 1173).

It is well known that each one of the powers above enumerated as constituting these ten kingdoms, became subject to the Papacy, and continued so during their separate existence, or when merged into some other power, until the Reformation in the sixteenth century. All "their power and strength was given unto ~~the~~ beast"; all was made subservient to the purposes of Papal Rome.[345]

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345. Notes, page 432.

III

The Lamb Conquers the Harlot and the Beast

Verses Fourteen to Eighteen

III

THE LAMB CONQUERS THE HARLOT AND THE BEAST

Verses Fourteen to Eighteen

Verse Fourteen:

> These (ten kings) shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall conquer them, because He is Lord of Lords, and King of Kings, and those with Him are called and chosen and faithful.[346]

This verse brings us the most comforting message of the entire chapter: The Lamb, Jesus Christ, shall conquer! Now we have an offensive move. Here is described the downfall of the Harlot and her empire, which is more fully depicted in the next chapter.

And let the Christian note, the elect are with Him and share in His great Victory over all evil and falsity. From this instance till the end of the Book of Revelation, this grandiose thought is repeated again and again by the Evangelist.

Yes, thanks be to God, the Great Whore and the Beast she rides will receive their punishment and damnation at the hands of God Himself! The road of punishment for the Harlot and all her paramours follows this course: The ten kings shall conquer her, and Christ our

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346. Goodspeed translates thus: "They will make war upon the Lamb, and the Lamb with his elect, chosen, and faithful followers with him will conquer them, for he is Lord of lords and King of kings."

Moffat: "They will wage war on the Lamb, but the Lamb will conquer them because he is Lord of Lords and King of kings - the Lamb and the elect, the chosen, the faithful who are with him."

Savior shall conquer the ten kings and all powers they ever shall represent. Consider in this connection also verse sixteen of this chapter: "And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire." We see a parallel between this passage and the words of Paul in Philippians 2:9-11, where we are told that Christ must reign until all enemies are under his feet:

> Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name; That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

The verb form πολεμήσουσιν is the future indicative of the word πολεμέω, meaning "to war", "to carry on war", "to fight", generally construed μετά τινος. The next verb used in this verse means more than to wage war, but means to wage war and carry off the victory. We speak of νικήσει which is the future indicative of νικάω, "to conquer", "to carry off the victory", "to come off victorious". This is especially spoken of Christ as the Victor over all His enemies, both spiritual and physical. There are no difficulties or irregularities of Greek syntax in this verse, except, perhaps, where one shall place the verb (which must be supplied) in the last clause. The term ἀρνίον used to designate our Lord Jesus here at once stamps Revelation as a Johannine Book, for he is the one who uses this term most consistently,

as we have shown before, both in his Gospel and Revelation. In the Scriptures Jesus is both Lamb and Shepherd, and the pictures of both are beautiful - as the Lamb He laid down His life and conquered all evil; as the Shepherd He watches over the flock which His victory engendered. The same designation is used in Revelation 5:6: "And I beheld, and lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth."

Goeszwein has some words worthy of quotation concerning why the Apostle John uses the term Lamb to designate our Lord Jesus in this verse:

> Es ist alles gegen Christum gerichtet, der hier auch nicht umsonst als das Lamm bezeichnet wird. Er schweight und leidet in seiner Kirche wie ein Lamm, so dasz die Gottlose der Endzeit um so sicherer werden, weil er von seinem Zorne nichts sehen laeszt.
>
> Er laeszt den Pabst seine Unfehlbarkeit proclamieren, ohne Feuer vom Himmel zu schleudern. Er laeszt die Weltreiche ihren babylonischen Thurm bauen, und die Wissen schaft triumphiren, sie sei schon bis an den Himmel gerathen, ohne einen Gott zu entdecken; und er faehrt nicht hernieder in seinem Zorn. Er laeszt die Hunde und Saeue den Abgrund aufwuehlen und allen Schmutz der Hoelle ueber die Erde fuehren, ohne mit seiner schrecklichen Hand dreinzufahren. Wenn er sich so stille haelt, hat er aber immer etwas Groszes vor. Er ruestet sich auf die Erscheinung seiner Zukunft. Das Lamm wird die Groszen der Erde ueberwindern; denn es ist der Loewe vom Stamme Juda, der rechte Michael, der fuer sein Volk streitet. Christus siegt als der Koenig ueber alle Koenige und Herr ueber alle Herren. (Cap. 19,16. 1 Tim. 6,14.f.)[347]

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347. Op.Cit., p. 241.

The thought of the verse is that the ten kings will combine with the Papacy in fighting the Gospel of Christ. Some commentators say it is not mean that they would oppose Christ openly and actually proclaim war against the Lamb, but that they would do it indirectly by sustaining and supporting the Papacy, a persecuting power. Naturally, this is true. But some countries openly waged war against the Lamb. The Roman Empire itself did. And what about Spain under Ferdinand and Isabella at the time of the horrible Inquisition? And what of Bloody Mary of England and Scotland? And Fascism and Bolschevism in our own country?

Some commentators imagine that this verse pictures the great Battle of Armageddon mentioned in the previous chapter.[348] Perhaps this is permissible, since the Book of Revelation gives us any number of Pictures of the same event or person - but we would have the reader bear in mind that Christ's real victory was a spiritual one, won on Calvary's Cross. So we would rather refer the battle here fought to Calvary and Christ's final Triumph on Judgment Day.

But the Harlot and her allies are no match for the Lamb. No human organization, no matter how wily or powerful or cruel, not all the powers of earth and hell, can match power with the Lord and His Christ. Why not? St. John gives us the answer: ὅτι κύριος κυρίων ἐστὶν καὶ βασιλεὺς βασιλέων. that is, "because He is Lord of Lords and King of Kings".

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348. Revelation 16:16, "And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon."

The Evangelist uses the same nomenclature in chapter nineteen, verse sixteen: "And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS." And St. Paul uses it when he writes to Timothy: "... until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ: Which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords".[349]

Jesus has supreme power over all the earth, and all kings and princes are under His control. "For the Lord your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty, and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward."[350] This is Jesus' Kingly Office depicted here, and we may say that all three of His kingdoms, the Heavenly, the Earthly, and the Spiritual (Church) are involved, especially His Kingdom of Power and His Kingdom of Grace.

Luther's Small Catechism says, "Christ was anointed to be my Prophet, Priest, and King. As my King, Christ with His almighty power rules over all creatures, governs and protects His Church, and finally leads it to glory."[351]

No enemy of Christ shall be able to destroy the Gospel and its fruits. The Bible plainly teaches us this great comforting doctrine. History and experience bear it out. In spite of all the persecution in the world, much of it at the instigation of the Harlot and her allies, the true Gospel message that Jesus is the only Savior and that man is justified by faith alone lives on. Yea, the blood of the

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349. I Timothy 6:14.15.
350. Deuteronomy 10:17.
351. Question 132, pp.107-108.

martyrs have only nourished the Seed more and strengthened the plant of the Church, through the centuries.

Christians and Christian pastors and missionaries, like those of our Lutheran Church in South America today who are feeling the persecuting power of the Harlot, can always be comforted by this thought in those dark hours; Christ shall always be the Victor over all evil, yea, He has conquered all already with His supreme sacrifice on Calvary's Altar!

This victory of Christ over all evil is still in progress today. Every convert in the mission field is a victory for Christ. Sometimes it may not seem that Christ is the Victor over the devil, and many men say that in view of all the war and wickedness which prevails upon the earth today the devil is really in power over man, not God - but here we have the prophetic promise which will be made totally manifest to all at Judgment, that is, CHRIST REIGNS FOREVER AND EVER!

Yes, at the end of time, total destruction shall be the Harlot's fate, as we have it described in chapter eighteen of Revelation. And partaking in Christ's victory by faith in Him, are all the members of the Body of Christ - the called, the chosen, and the faithful, that is, the redeemed, both the quick and the dead, who believe in Jesus and are manifested when He appears at Judgment. It is not our interpretation of this passage that the Lamb conquers <u>because</u> He has the assistance of the chosen and the faithful Christians. We have a <u>καί</u> introducing the last clause or phrase, and not a <u>ὅτι</u>, "because". We, therefore, would not take the liberty to translate the last phrase, "<u>and because those fighting</u> with Him are called and

chosen and true", as a reason why Jesus overcomes in the struggle.[352]

St. John says the Lamb does all the fighting against the Harlot and her allies. He alone conquers. He fights for His own as a Champion, as David fought Goliath for the Israelites vicariously while they stood on the hillside and watching him shared in his victory. It was their victory, too, but David did the fighting. We have a like picture here. On the Mount of Temptation, in the Garden of Sorrows, and on the Hill of the Skull Jesus battled alone. But we share in the victory because we are members of His Body. Our office, namely, the office of the called and the chosen and the faithful in the struggle, is mainly to praise and glorify Him who has thus redeemed us and rescued us from our enemies forevermore, because He is Lord of Lords and King of Kings.

In a sense, of course, the followers of the Lamb wage the war against sin and Satan with the Lamb. The war fought for them by the Lamb against the Harlot and all she represents is their fight, too. Every true Christian takes up his cross and holds the banner of Christ high. We are all soldiers in the Army of the Cross. But we do not fight an effective battle without the Lamb. Without Him we can do nothing, for He is the Vine and we are only the branches. He alone

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352. This is the view of Moses Stuart in his Apocalypse: "Two reasons why the Lamb must prove victorious; first, he is King of kings, and Lord of lords, and secondly, he is accompanied by forces of his own choice, selected from the mass and not enlisted by chance or taken by lot, and true and faithful to their great leader. Although each of the adjectives employed here is often expressive of Christian character and condition, yet in the present case the reference is of the military cast, in relation to the war just mentioned. Who these troops are, may be seen in Revelation 19:14". (Vol. II, p. 327f.)

has made our struggle against sin possible. He had to win the battle first before we could even be called as soldiers of the Cross. He has also given us the Weapon to wage this spiritual war - His all-powerful Word. We must always bear in mind that this is not a crusade against the Harlot with an earthly army, for that is the Harlot's method of waging the war - no, our only means of combat is the Word of Christ.[353]

Therefore Luther translates this verse very correctly: "Diese werden streiten mit dem Lamm, und der Koenig aller Koenige, und mit ihm die Berufenen, und Auserwaehlten, und Glaeubigen."

We must always bear in mind when interpreting Revelation that John's purpose in writing Revelation was to comfort and strengthen the Christians of Asia Minor and of all times in the face of persecution. That is the purpose, no doubt, of this seemingly somewhat unnecessary phrase or clause which he has appended to this verse and which has opened the synergistic doors of many commentators: "And those with Him are called and chosen and faithful." οἱ μετ' αὐτοῦ, "those with Him", are the saints of all times, Christians of all ages, members of both the church Militant and the church Triumphant.

They are they who stayed with the Lord as faithful followers in all persecutions and temptations. By faith they share in the Lord's victory over sin, death, evil, and hell - all synonymous with the Harlot and the Beast - "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy

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353. See Ephesians 6. Also Christ's Temptation by the Devil, St. Matthew 4. The Parable of the Seed Growing Secretly, St. Mark 4:26-29.

victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."[354]

The thought is most beautifully expressed by Jesus in the Good Shepherd Parable: "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one."[355]

Much could be written about the words "called" (κλητός from καλέω) and "chosen" (ἐκλεκτός from ἐκλέγω). There is little difficulty to be encountered by the use of these two words together, if the interpreter considers them in a common sense manner. Some want to make distinction between the chosen and the called by saying that the former Christians are those who are true partakers of the salvation, while the latter are merely the called, who have been invited to the Great Supper, but have not accepted the invitation.

But there is no reason for such a distinction or contrast. It is not Biblical. Neither does it agree with the thought in the verse. One cannot make three classes of Christians out of the three words "called," "chosen," and "faithful". Rather the three terms are synonymous, simply describing the Christian's coming to faith and the life after conversion. The Christian is both called and chosen, or perhaps

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354. I Corinthians 15:55-57.
355. St. John 10:27-30.

chosen and called. He is also faithful and trustworthy; the Lord may rely upon him to stand fast in the doctrine and faith into which he has been baptized and has learned.

St. Paul expresses the thoughts of this verse in his Epistle to the Romans: "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate, to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth."[356]

This verse, we might add in conclusion, does not have the Millennial connotation which many modern interpreters give it, as Faussett writes: "These have been with Christ in heaven, but now appear with Him".[357] The christians spoken of here are both the quick and the dead, not just the saints in heaven, or as Faussett intimates, those caught up in the Rapture. All christians who have been called and chosen and were faithful until the end shall be with Jesus in His victory and through faith in Him receive eternal glory.

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356. Romans 8:28-33. The term "elect" is also used in Col. 3:12; Titus 1:1; Luke 18:7; I Pet. 1;2; Rom. 1:1; I Cor. 1:1; and Gal. 1:15.

357. Op. cit., Vol. VI, p. 713.

We close our remarks on this verse with a quotation taken from Dr. Kretzmann's Popular Commentary:[358]

> Again and again not only Roman princes and rulers, but also such as professed the Protestant faith have become the instruments of Rome in attempting to suppress the true Gospel-preaching with all the means at their disposal. But what will their puny attempts avail in the end? In waging war with the Lamb, the King of kings and Lord of lords, their inevitable end is destruction. And in overthrowing these enemies, the Lamb incidentally protects them that are His, those whom He has called, those whom He has chosen, those that are faithful to Him to the end.

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358. Op. cit., p. 640.

Verse Fifteen:

And he says to me, the waters which you saw, where the Harlot sits, are peoples and multitudes, and nations and tongues.

Verse fifteen has been explained in connection with our comments on verse one of Revelation XVII.[359] This is a picture of the Whore ruling over the peoples of all the earth. The verse really forms a digression from the main narration of the story, which seems to continue with verse sixteen. But the information contained in this passage throws much light on the meaning of the story, comparable to the role played by verse eighteen which identifies the Harlot, and it seems the Lord specifically places them into the text to give us the key to the chapter.

Notice the present tense of λέγω; it is a historical present, otherwise it would be εἶπεν. A few manuscripts do have εἶπεν, but the difference in meaning it not worth the time for controversy or comment. εἶδες is the second aorist of ὁράω, and therefore must be translated "saw" and not "see". As we have remarked in other sections, it means to "see in, or by means of a vision".

The verb κάθημαι has the same meaning in this passage as it does in verse one, that is, it does not express the simple thought of sitting alone, but sitting upon a throne and ruling as a king or em-

359. Cf. pp. 225 ff.

press. Κάθηται here is the present indicative. The verb is derived from κατά and ἧμαι, "to sit". Οὗ is an adverb meaning where; it could also be ὅπου as we have in verse nine: "where the woman sits upon them".

The King James Version has translated the group of synonyms found in this verse quite accurately. We have consulted Thayer for the meanings of these terms, and find that they are all synonymous. λαός is "a people", "tribe", "nation", "all those who are of the same stock and language". ὄχλος is designated as "a crowd", "a casual collection of people", "a multitude of men who have flocked together in some place","a throng". Often the term is used to distinguish the common people from the rulers and leaders of people.

The word ἔθνος also means "multitude of people", but it also means "race", or "nation", as of the Jewish people. ἡ γλῶσσα, of course, is "the tongue","a person's organ of speech". The next meaning is an applied one, meaning "the language of a people". If the word is used in the plural, as it is here, it designates the "people of various languages and nationalities".[360]

The reader of the original text will observe that the verb ἐστίν separates these four nouns into two groups of two. This is what we call a double Hendiadys. It changes the meaning none,

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360. Goodspeed's translation: "The waters that you saw", he said to me, "on which the idolatrous woman was seated, are peoples, multitudes, nations, and languages".

Moffat: "He also told me, "The waters you saw, on which the woman is seated, are peoples and h osts, nations and tongues.""

however.

The obvious meaning of the symbolic language "many waters" is here explained, namely, many different kinds and multitudes of peoples. It is a common symbol of the Scriptures to designate many peoples and nations, or all the people of the world. The sum total of the inhabitants of the earth is meant, for Babylon the Great shall rule over the kings of the earth (verses 1 and 2).

The Prophet Jeremiah (47,2) in speaking of the destruction of the Philistines and their country by the Babylonian hordes under Nebuchadnezzar writes thus:[361] "The word of the Lord that came to Jeremiah the prophet against the Philistines, before that Pharaoh smote Gaza. Thus saith the Lord: Behold, waters rise up out of the north, and shall be an overflowing flood, and shall overflow the land, and all that is therein: the city, and them that dwell therein: then themen shall cry, and all the inhabitants of the land shall howl."

The sense here in Revelation XVII is that vast numbers of people of all nations shall be subject unto the Harlot. They would be of many nations and of many different tongues. It is hardly necessary to show how this applies to the Papacy. Throughout the Harlot's history nations of every color and language have been subject to her around the world. Europe has many different languages and dialects and even dialects within dialects, sometimes only a stone's throw apart, as in Germany. These all were under the dominion of the Roman Church, and are yet today to a great extent.

Luther spoke German at home, but when he spoke to Rome it was

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361. Jeremiah 47:1-2. Cp. also Isaiah 8:7-8.

generally in Latin. On the little islands of the Pacific there are Catholic chapels, in the Philippines, in Asia, in Africa - there simply is no earthly limit to the coverage of the Roman Church. Perhaps under not one other government, not even under the ancient empires of Babylonia, Macedonia, or Rome, has there been so many different peoples speaking different languages and of different origins as under the Harlot's regime.[362]

The Pope claims a double (spiritual and earthly) supremacy over all the peoples of the earth according to the two swords, supposedly typified by the two swords of Luke 22:38: "And they said, Lord, behold, here are two swords. And he said unto them, It is enough.".

Boniface VIII's Bull Unam Sanctum makes this diabolical and blasphemous claim, saying that the two swords of the Pope are represented by two keys: the spiritual, as the universal bishop or vicar of Christ on earth, for which he is crowned with a mitre; and the temporal, for which the Pope is crowned with the tiara, indicating imperial supremacy over the nations. Then let us contrast the many diadems of the Pope with the many diadems of Him who alone shall exercise the twofold dominion, as we read in Revelation 19:12: "His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself."

Such ungodly claims as this on the part of the Harlot at once

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362. "The angel fittingly describes the Church of the Pope as the great Harlot sitting on many waters, that is, as one occupying a proud throne over many peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues, ruling them by her power and seducing them into the fornication of her idolatry." (Dr. P.E. Kretzmann, Op.Cit., p. 640).

stamp the Roman Church as the Antichrist, and those who cannot see it are blind or do not want to see it. Notice how this ties up with the prophecy of Antichrist in II Thessalonians 2:4: "Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God."

The Harlot sits on the hearts and consciences of the peoples of the earth. It is not always the political bonds, or the patriotism of any land, or any temporal benefit, but the religion of Rome is what chains the peoples of the earth to the Vatican, in spite of all the differences of speech, education, origin, and private interests.

The Antichrist at Rome has welded the peoples' consciences to his throne with chains of darkness. This fact alone leads the discerning person to believe that the Pope is the very Antichrist of whom St. Paul speaks in II Thessalonians and who is more minutely described under the symbol of the Harlot in Revelation XVII.

Verse Sixteen:

And the ten horns which you saw and the Beast, these shall hate the Harlot, and they shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and shall burn her up with fire.[363]

For a time, according to this prophecy, the Harlot and her allies shall have power over all people, and together they shall conquer the world and rule it. But then something will happen - dissension will spread through their smooth-working ranks, and the former allies will turn on their mistress and rend her.

The Evangelist gives the process by which this split between the Harlot and her allies shall come. First comes hate, for what reason we know not, and then comes war in which the Harlot is made desolate and naked, yea, burned with fire till she has a changed beyond recognition. Perhaps we should also add, that, according to verse seventeen, this will be accomplished according to the plan and will of the all-ruling God in heaven. It is God in His righteous judgment Who decrees the Harlot's destruction in this way.

Thus we have here by anticipation the cause and description of the fall of Babylon the Great. The kings of the earth together with the Beast shall destroy her. By the hand of those whom she formerly

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363. Goodspeed's Translation: "The ten horns that you saw and the animal will hate the idolatrous woman and make her desolate and naked, and eat her flash and burn her up with fire."
Moffat's Rendition: "As for the ten horns you have seen, they and the Beast will hate the harlot, lay her waste, and strip her naked; they will devour her flesh and burn her with fire."

seduced with her cup of fornication and pomp and ceremony, she shall lose both her temperal and spiritual power over them. This was fulfilled, we know, gradually as history unfolded. How it happened we will relate later.

The Authorized Version translates the first part of the verse thus: "And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast". But the Greek original text reads, "And the ten horns which you saw and the Beast". This is no great discrepancy, the Revised Version translates the sentence this way also, and the meaning remains the same, though it would seem more consistent to say "the horns of or upon the beast." But why should not one say "ten horns and the Beast" for thinking about it in its symbolic meaning shows that they are separate entities, since the ten kings or heads represent countries or provinces of the Roman Empire? This shows how exact John's inspired prophecy is - later history would reveal that the temporal powers derived from the Beast would be separated from the Harlot, as well as the ten horns, and turn on their former mistress.

It is rather peculiar that the evangelists follows the neuter nouns κέρατα and ἀρνίον with the masculine pronoun οὗτοι. Many say this means that the ten horns and the Beast are persons, not institutions or systems of government. We do not believe this should be stressed too much, for St. John often writes such Greek in Revelation; he is more interested in putting down the thoughts of the vision in writing than in composing perfect Greek. And are not governments generally headed by people?

μισήσουσιν is the future tense of the verb μισέω. πρωτευούσης is the feminine perfect

passive participle of ἐρημόω, meaning "to make desolate", "lay waste". The word is used in the New Testament only in the passive. It has the force of an adjective here, and the whole construction is idiomatic. It is generally used with the verb πορθέω to describe the sacking of a city or plundering the riches of a person or institution, as we have it described in the next chapter in verses seventeen and nineteen. The verb is used in Matthew 12:25 and in Luke 11:17 in describing the destruction of a kingdom by an enemy.

In the idiomatic clause before us the ἠρημωμένην is used as an adjective together with the adjective γυμνός, which means "naked", "not covered", "without clothing". The entire clause must be taken together, and means "to despoil the Harlot, to strip her of her treasures". The phrase is, of course, figurative, as is the following ones which depict the destruction of the Great Harlot.

In the clause καὶ τὰς σάρκας αὐτῆς φάγονται, "and shall eat her flesh", the verb φάγονται is the future indicative of the verb ἐσθίω, "to eat", "devour", construed with the Accusative of the Thing. Here it is used metaphorically, describing the destroying of a great city, as verse eighteen plainly shows us. Wicked Jezebel was eaten by the dogs; the Harlot also shall have her flesh eaten.

We have one more phrase, synonymous with the two preceding ones, describing the desolation of Babylon the Great, which is: καὶ αὐτὴν κατακαύσουσιν ἐν πυρί, "and they shall burn her up with fire." The verb κατακαύσουσιν is the future indicative of κατακαίω, "to burn up", strengthened by the

prefix κατά. It means "to consume by means of fire" when used with the Dative of Agent (πυρί).

There has been some doubt as to whether the preposition ἐν (en puri) belongs in the text. Nestle places the preposition in brackets indicating thereby that Hort and Tischendorf doubt the authenticity of the reading. Examining the evidence, however, it is our opinion that Nestle is correct and that the ἐν belongs in the text. It changes the meaning none, nor is the syntax incorrect, for ἐν with the Dative has the instrumental connotation, "to burn with fire". Normally the Dative with ἐν is not used in the instrumental sense, but with the verb κατακαίω we have a Greek idiom influenced much by the Hebrew.

Such shall be the fate of the Great Harlot, or of the Great City (Verse 18). The Papacy shall be stripped of all her attractiveness. All that was so gorgeous and alluring, her wealth and pomp, especially her infinite power, shall be taken away, compared to what it was in the peak of her glory. Then she will be seen as she is, without anything to dazzle the eye or fool the simple mind. The Harlot will become destitute, her treasures and her clothing stolen. The old wiles and feasts of illicit love will no longer fascinate. She will be destroyed much as God condemned idolatrous Jerusalem of old:[364]

> Wherefore, O harlot, hear the word of the Lord:
> Thus saith the Lord God; Because thy filthiness
> was poured out, and thy nakedness discovered

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364. Ezekiel 16:35-41.

> through thy whoredoms with thy lovers, and with all the idols of thy abominations, and by the blood of thy children, which thou didst give unto them; behold, therefore I will gather all thy lovers, with whom thou hast taken pleasure, and all them that thou hast loved, with all them that thou hast hated; I will even gather them round about against thee, and will discover thy nakedness unto them, that they may see all thy nakedness. And I will judge thee, as women that break wedlock and shed blood are judged; and I will give thee blood in fury and jealousy. And I will also give thee into their hand, and they shall throw down thine eminent place, and shall break down thy high places: they shall strip thee also of thy clothes, and shall take thy fair jewels, and leave thee naked and bare. They shall also bring up a company against thee, and they shall stone thee with stones, and thrust thee through with their swords. And they shall burn thine houses with fire, and execute judgments upon thee in the sight of many women: and I will cause thee to cease from playing the harlot, and thou also shalt give no hire any more.

Yes, she shall be utterly destroyed - even her flesh shall be eaten, that is, she shall be laid low as if her flesh had been eaten.[365] The kings finally seeing the greatness of their folly, and how they had been bewitched and enslaved by the Papacy, out of righteous wroth shall not only forsake the Roman Harlot, but also be the instrument of God's Providence in her destruction.

And then what was left, we take it, will be cast into the fire

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365. Barnes: "Perhaps the image is taken from the practices of cannibals eating the flesh of their enemies slain in battle. If so, nothing could give a more impressive idea of the utter destruction of this formidable power, or of the feelings of those by whom its end would be brought about." (Op. cit., p. 434).

and burned.[366]

Let us turn to Chapter Eighteen of the Book of Revelation and read the verses where this is more fully described. The picture of the Harlot's destruction is given as that of a rich merchant-city reduced to desolation. That the reader may have these verses before him, we have transcribed the first eight verses of Revelation chapter eighteen:

> And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committee fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies. And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double. How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow. Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her.

One of the most pertinent questions one can ask at this moment

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366. "As Jerusalem used the world-power to crucify her Savior, and then was destroyed by that very power, Rome; so the church, having apostatized to the world, shall have judgment executed on her by the world-power, the Beast and his allies. These afterwards shall have judgment executed on them by Christ Himself." James Faussett, Revelation, p. 713.

is, When did, or when will, all this happen? When did the ten kings, the Harlot's former allies, begin to hate her, and make her naked and desolate and plunder her?

We believe Dr. Barnes has struck the right note, when he writes this on this question:

> What is here said must refer to some subsequest period, indicating some great change in their feelings and policy. We have seen the evidence of the fulfillment of the former statements. This statement will be accomplished if these same powers, represented by the ten horns, that were formerly in alliance with the Papacy, shall become its enemy, and contribute to its overthrow. That is, it will be accomplished if the nations of Europe, embraced within the limits of those ten kingdoms, shall become hostile to the Papacy, and shall combine for its overthrow.[367]

History shows that this judgment of Rome has already begun. Man has already set upon her flesh- her riches, bequests, institutions, and power, especially in Europe. The Reformation was the greatest bomb which shook Papacy from her former power. Even before the Reform Movement gained impetus some of the European powers sought to squirm out from under the Harlot's heel and throw off the Roman yoke. Thereafter the popes had their serious troubles and conflicts with the earthly powers. Every book of Church History always speaks of the Rise and Fall of Papacy, and this downfall and loss of prestige on the part of Papacy took place with the rise of Humanism, and the Renaissance, culminating in the Reformation.

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367. Notes, p. 433.

Speaking on chapter eighteen, Dr. Theodore Graebner writes:

> This entire section is made up of imagery describing the conflict between the Reformation (Protestantism) with the Church of Rome. This spiritual conflict, waged as Martin Luther and other reformers brought back the teachings of the Apostolic Church so that through the greater part of Europe there occurred a great separation (out of which arose the Protestant countries of modern times, including the United States and Canada and the British Empire), is pictured here as a terrific war bringing destruction a rich city.[368]

As a specific instance of this, and there are many more, we like to refer to the action of Elector Frederick the Wise of Saxony who time and again defied the Pope's threatenings when he demanded Luther be sent to Rome. He would not let Tetzel come into Saxony with the indulgence racket - in fact, Frederick and his brother John, who followed him on the throne, gave orders to the Pope and the Pope, plainly speaking, had to like it.

Then we remember Napoleon's Edict at Rome in 1809, which confiscated much of the Papal lands and property and divided up the Italian states and took them away from the Pope's sway.

How striking a retribution that having obtained her first temporal dominions, the Exarchate of Ravenna, the kingdom of the Lombards, and the state of Rome, by recognizing the usurper Pepin as lawful king of France, she should be stripped of her dominions by another usurper of France, the Napoleonic Dynasty!

Today all the Pope has left is the little tract of land in Rome and his Vatican Palace, and he had to pamper Mussolini to keep that.

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368. Op.cit., p. 37.

> It is a strange fact, but one borne out sufficiently well by many pages of history, that the very rulers and princes who received power and authority with the beasts, at certain times turned against the rule of Antichrist, especially as to his meddling in temporal affairs. Even before the Reformation, for more than a century, complaints were lodged against the usurpation of the Roman hierarchy, and a number of councils attempted to adjust matters. And since the Reformation many of the rulers of the world, in spite of their outward adherence to the Church of Rome, have plundered her institutions, stripped her of her worldly power and goods, and left her comparatively destitute and helpless. Even the Pope's own temporal kingdom, a strip of land in Italy, has been taken from him, and he now sits in his immense palace, the Vatican, calling himself a prisoner. That was one phase of God's judgment upon the antichristian beast; these rulers carried out the intention and purpose which He put into their hearts.369

England detached herself from the Papacy altogether under Henry VIII and set up her own church. France during the Revolution struck a big blow at the Pope. During 1848 and in 1870 only a miracle saved the Pope, and during World War I the Pope fared none too well. Then consider what the Spanish Revolution did to the Papacy in our own century, and how the Pope during and after World War II is relegated to the role of beseeching and admonishing instead of giving orders or laying on the interdict of former centuries.[370]

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369. Paul E. Kretzmann, Popular Commentary, page 640.

370. We do not intend to convey the impression by our words that the Pope is now powerless. He is not. We are simply comparing his present state with the glorious period of Papacy in the height of her power in the Middle Ages. Let the reader study the articles of Mr. Harold E. Fey, in the Christian Century ("Can Catholocism Win America?") to learn first hand information concerning the Pope's attempt to make America Catholic and the powerful means he is using to accomplish his purpose. Yes, the Pope is still the Harlot and the Beast!

The Book of Revelation is prophecy, and this prophecy has been fulfilled by those nations and people, who formerly allies and supporters of her falsities, have become her most determined foes. And thank God, final destruction, total destruction will come from the Lord himself at the end of time, for He is King of Kings and Lord of Lords and will not suffer His true Church to be removed, but will see to it that she shall conquer and reign with Him forever and ever! Amen.

Verse Seventeen:

For God gave unto their hearts to do his will, and to have one mind and to give their kingdom to the Beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled.[371]

When in Athens, the Apostle Paul, speaking before the image dedicated to the Unknown God, said: "God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed anything, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; That they should seek the Lord." 372

These words are true in regard to the Harlot's destruction also. They will always be true - God rules the nations and determines their destiny. If anyone thinks the desolation of the Great Whore happened by chance, he is sadly mistaken. Here we learn that God changed the hearts of the kings of the earth to turn against the Harlot they had formerly supported and made love to. God actually placed into the minds of the leaders of these world powers to do His will and not

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371. Moffat: "For God has put it into their hearts to execute his purpose, by having one mind and by conferring their royal power upon the Beast, until the words of God are fulfilled."
Goodspeed: "For God has put it into their hearts to carry out his purpose by having a common purpose and giving up their authority to the animal until God's decrees are carried out."
372. Acts 17:24-27.

their own - ὁ γὰρ θεὸς ἔδωκεν εἰς τὰς καρδίας αὐτῶν ποιῆσαι τὴν γνώμην αὐτοῦ.

The verb ἔδωκεν is the first aorist form of δίδωμι "to give". The world powers became tools of the wrath of God, who must carry out His judgment against the Harlot, as we saw in the last verse. In every great war Christians may be confident that rulers, kings, and princes are employed by God to carry out His designs. Kings and princes are under the control of God, and, whatever may be their own designs, they are in fact employed to accomplish our Heavenly Father's purposes, and are instruments in His hands. Ps. 76:10.

St. John's stern philosophy, if we may call it that, is that one partner in this unholy alliance of antichristian wickedness shall be employed to ruin the other. The remarkable unanimity and obedience of the usurping vassals, which welds them into an avenging instrument against the Harlot, can be explained only on supernatural grounds. Even the enemies of God must serve His will. The irony of the situation is that the tools of God's providence are destroyed after they have unconsciously served His purpose. It is so even in the world today. What peace-giving comfort for Christians living in a wicked world!

Regarding the syntax of this verse and its translation, the word γνώμην is best translated "will", that is, "to do God's will". The word also may mean "purpose", "mind", "intention", but "will" seems to be the best rendition in this case. ποιῆσαι is the first aorist infinitive active of ποιέω, here translated "to do" rather than "to make".

The next clause is a Greek idiom (ποιῆσαι μιαν γνώμην) which must be paraphrased in English thus: "To be united in one purpose", or, "to be of one mind". The Authorized Version's translation "to agree" is very suitable.

There is something striking, even seemingly contradictory, in the phrase, καὶ δοῦναι τὴν βασιλείαν αὐτῶν τῷ θηρίῳ, "and to give the kingdom to the Beast." This is the same thought as expressed in verse thirteen, "These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the Beast." Here, however, the word βασιλεία, "kingdom", is used; it does not change the meaning, but shows how completely these world powers gave themselves to the Beast and the Harlot astride him. Their whole kingdoms were at her disposal. Δοῦναι is the second aorist infinitive of δίδωμι.

The striking fact is that God caused them to do this! Why? We do not know, save that it was part of His mysterious and divine purpose. Even the most sorrowful things in life - wars, catastrophes, sickness, as Job also learned - serve the purpose of our God. At times it may look as though God is allowing the devil to take charge of the world, but this only seems so, God is continuously fulfilling His purpose and His words, in a manner we humans do not always understand, and we must simply trust in Him to bring all things to pass for our good.[373]

This arrangement of the kingdoms giving their complete support to

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373. Cp. Psalm 33:15. Prov. 21:1. Acts 2:23.

the Harlot and the Beast shall not endure forever; it is not a permanent arrangement. This plan shall last only as long as God wants it to; then He will place the word into the hearts and minds of the world princes to turn against the Harlot and rend her.

Thus it is said: ἄχρις τελεσθήσονται οἱ λόγοι τοῦ θεοῦ, "until the words of God shall be fulfilled." When His purposes are accomplished, these kingdoms would withdraw their support, and Papacy would fall to rise no more. Τελεσθήσονται is the future indicative passive of τελέω, "to end", "to fulfill", "to accomplish".

What are the words of God which shall be fulfilled? The words which God had spoken in regard to the destruction of the Harlot and her empire, then the change of policy on the part of the kings and world powers came and the Harlot was destroyed, as we have it described in the next chapter. This was fulfilled quite generally at the time of the Reformation as described in the preceding verse. Until that time the Harlot and the earthly kingdoms were still strongly united in war against the Lamb, but after that came the real desolation and stripping of the Harlot. And at the end of time, total destruction in hell shall be the Roman Harlot's fate.

The promises and words of God fulfilled in the final analysis, then, are found in these familiar Bible passages:

> "Upon this rock I will build my Church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."[374]

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374. St. Matt. 16:18.

"Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."[375]

"Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen."[376]

The great hymn writer Johann M. Alterburg has expressed the thought well in the familiar hymn:

O little flock, fear not the foe,
Who madly seeks your overthrow;
Dread not his rage and pow'r.
What tho' your courage sometimes faints
His seeming triumph o'er God's saints
Lasts but a little hour.

As true as God's own Word is true,
Not earth nor hell with all their crew
Against us shall prevail.
A jest and by-word are they grown;
God is with us, we are His own;
Our vict'ry cannot fail.[377]

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375. St. Matt. 24:34.35.
376. St. Matt. 28:20.
377. Lutheran Hymnal, hymn No. 263, stanzas 1 and 3.

Verse Eighteen:

And the woman which you saw is the great city which has rule over the kings of the earth.[378]

This passage, the final one of Revelation XVII, almost seems to be an anticlimax compared to the wonderful, high-sounding, and mysterious words and thoughts which have preceded it; but it is an important passage for the interpretation of the chapter. That there should be no mistake regarding the identity of the Harlot is, no doubt, the reason why the divinely inspired writer places it as a final note of the chapter.

We are told that the woman represents, or rather, is "the great city" (ἡ πόλις ἡ μεγάλη, "the city the great one"). It is further identified by the words ἡ ἔχουσα βασιλείαν ἐπὶ τῶν βασιλέων τῆς γῆς, "which has rule over the kings of the earth". The passage has been explained in connection with the first verses of the chapter.

One interpreter said to us orally, "The identification of the Harlot and the City almost shouts at you". Even if the name Rome would be specifically mentioned, it could be no clearer. Rome would, of course, be understood by this language in the time of John, and all

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378. Goodspeed translates: "And the woman that you saw is the great city that has dominion over the kings of the earth."
Moffat translates: "As for the woman you have seen, she is the great City which reigns over the kings of the earth."

the circumstances and description of the woman and the name Babylon the Great, combine to show that Rome is intended. Even those commentators who do not identify the Harlot with the Papacy, with one consent agree that Rome is here referred to.

We read many interpreters who speak as Prof. Weidner of Chicago Lutheran Seminary does about this passage:

> If we interpret this verse grammatically there seems to be no difficulty in deciding what is meant by the great city of the woman. The statement is - this woman which John saw sitting upon many waters (17:1,15), is the great city, and this city is the one having a kingdom over the kings of the earth. The present participle the one having points to the time when the words were uttered (we think it is also prophetic), and to the dominion then exercised by the city. It is evident that when John wrote, Rome was just such a city as this verse describes. It is highly probable, almost certain, that the City of Rome is here referred to.[379]

The Expositor's Greek Testament says this is a dramatic climax of the oracle: the great harlot is - Rome, dominal Roman, the pride and queen of the world! Rome was the whole world, and all the world was Rome![380]

It is difficult to express the significance of verse eighteen better than G. Goeszwein has explained it:

> Damit kein Zweifel bleibe, von wem die Rede ist,

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379. Lutheran Commentary, "Revelation", p. 243.
380. Vol. 5, p. 592.

> so wird noch ganz klar gesagt, dasz Rom die alte Hure sei; denn wie jeder weisz, der etwas von der Weltgeschichte gehoert hat, so gab es zur Apostelzeit und darnach keine andere Stadt, die das Reich hatte ueber die Koenige der Erde.
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> Es wird auch fast allgemein zugestanden, selbst von den Papisten und Jesuisten wie Bellarmin, Pererius, Suarez, Viegas, Ribera, Alcasar, Cornelius a Lapide, dasz Rome hier gemeint sei. Sie suchen sich aber damit zu helfen, dasz die Einen im Bunde mit neuern protestantischen Auslegen behaupten, es sie die altheidnische Stadt Rom gemeint, und die Andern, welche sehen, dasz diese Erklaerung dem Zusammenhang widerspricht, auf den Traum verfallen, Rome werde noch den "heiligen Vater" ausstoszen und ins Heidenthum sinken; dann werde dieses Gericht hereinbrechen. Die Pabstkirche musz natuerlich immer das unschuldige Lamm sein und von des Antichrists Creaturen mit allen Luegenkuensten vertheidigt werden, bis sie im feurigen Pfuhl gebraten wird. 381

But one fact we Christians of today must bear in mind continually. The Harlot, though old and haggard, is still in the world ruling and deceiving many.

The fact that the kings of the earth have turned upon the Harlot which they formerly loved and supported during the first 1500 years of her history, does not mean that the Harlot is stripped of all her power. She still wields a tremendous power in the world, especially in the political world. We must ever be on our guard, against her, and out of love for our Lord Jesus Christ and through the power of the Spirit and the Word of God, combat her with all our might even today, until the time comes when Jesus Himself will destroy her and her wicked works altogether.

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381. Offenbarung St. Johannis, p. 243.

Thus Dr. P. E. Kretzmann writes also:

> But the power of Antichrist is by no means exhausted: And the woman which thou sawest is the great city which has regal authority over the kingdoms of the earth. So the final judgement has not yet come upon the Church of Rome, upon the kingdom of Antichrist. Rome is still a very powerful empire, which must be reckoned with; she still has kingly authority over many rulers of the world; she is still able to bedeck herself with the ornaments of her idolatrous and adulterous traffic, and many thousands there are that are impressed by this pomp and yield to her entreaties. May God mercifully hold His sheltering hand over all true Christians![382]

But thanks be to God, the Harlot will receive her just punishment and her damnation! Let the true, trusting Christian today remember that Christ the great Champion of His own will neither slumber nor sleep. Christ our Savior, the great Victor over all evil, shall conquer and destroy the Harlot and all her evil at the end of time; He has done so already with His supreme Sacrifice on Calvary's Altar!

As it is written: "These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them; for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings".[383]

And as it is written, "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils ... therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be

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382. Op.Cit., p. 640. The reader will find some most interesting and informative reading in Ghodes and Fey. Protestants today, blessed with a heritage of freedom of many decades in America, above all religious liberty, should know what the Roman Church is doing in our country, and should be on their guard lest they become lethargic about their liberty and heritage like those who say, "the Catholic Church is just like the Lutheran."

383. Revelation 17:14.

utterly burned with fire; for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her."[384]

"These things I (Jesus) have spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."[385]

"Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."[386]

Crowns and thrones may perish,
  Kingdoms rise and wane,
But the Church of Jesus
  Constant will remain.
Gates of hell can never
  'Gainst that Church prevail;
We have Christ's own promise,
  And that cannot fail.

Onward, then, ye faithful,
  Join our happy throng,
Blend with ours your voices
  In the triumph song:
Glory, laud, and honor
  Unto Christ, the King;
This thro' countless ages
  Men and angels sing.[387]

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384. Revelation 18:1.8.
385. St. John 17:35.
386. I. Corinthians 15:57.
387. The Lutheran Hymnal, No. 658.

APPENDIX

ERGO CENSEO: PAPAM ESSE IPSUM VERUM ANTICHRISTUM!

I

The Marks of the Antichrist

ERGO CENSEO: PAPAM ESSE IPSUM VERUM ANTICHRISTUM![388]

I. The Marks of the Antichrist

There are antichrists (antichristianism) and there is the Antichrist (antichristianity), according to the Scriptures. The Epistles of John, which were written after St. Paul, prophesy of antichrists. "Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that Antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time."[389]

"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world."[390] "For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist."[391]

These passages characterize antichrists in general. The outstanding characteristic of these antichrists is that they deny the divinity of Christ and spurn His Salvation. The Holy Ghost specifically

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388. "Therefore I judge that the Pope himself is the very Antichrist." - Luther, Smalcald Articles, Part II, Article IV.
389. I John 2:18.
390. I John 4:1.
391. IIJohn 7.

brands them as antichrists who place themselves in opposition to Christ. They are false teachers of all kinds within the Christian Church. In other words, these antichrists are not secular powers which persecute the Church from without, as many have said that the Russian Czar, Hitler, Napoleon, and others have done; but false prophets who fall away from the Truth of Christ while externally connected with the Church.

Moreover, these false teachers are not peculiar to any certain period of history, but are to be found in all periods of the Church's history, even today. All the churches (really sects) today who are anti-Trinitarian and anti-Christian and are teaching the social Gospel of Modernism instead of the true saving Gospel of Christ, may be classed in the group of antichrists.

But the Scriptures speak also of a phenomenon of history called the Antichrist. It is of this Antichrist, the Harlot of Babylon, that our thesis treated. Compared with him, all other antichristian systems and men are minor antichrists. He is the one great Antichrist in a special and specific sense. St. John, the same Apostle who wrote the Book of Revelation, mentions this great Antichrist in the passage quoted before: "Antichrist shall come".[392]

More passages may be found in which John prophecies of the Antichrist: "He is Antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son."[393] "And every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not of God; and this is that of the Antichrist, who, as you have heard (from St. Paul) is coming and is already in the world."[394] "This is the deceiver and

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392. I John 2:18.
393. I John 2:22.
394. I John 4:3.

the Antichrist."[395]

A summary of the Antichrist Dogma according to John is that the Antichrist represents a power in existence at John's time but was still in the process of coming, and will continue till Judgment Day since John says: "whereby we know that it is the last time." He denies Christ.

Does this not agree with John's prophecy of the Antichrist in Revelation XVII and elsewhere? And let the reader remember that when we cite the Apostle John in his Epistles we are not quoting from antilegomena such as Revelation is supposed to be. From John's Epistles we can speak of the Antichrist with authority.

St. John in his writings, however, must refer to St. Paul's words about the Antichrist in II Thessalonians, chapter two, where we have the locus classicus of the Antichrist Doctrine. St. Paul gives us a much more detailed description of the Antichrist than John. The Bible is therefore one perfect unit, including Revelation. The same Holy Spirit inspired both John and Paul what to write.

And now we would list some of the main identifying descriptive marks of Paul's Antichrist, and show deductively from these passages, comparing them with history, that the Pope and the Roman Catholic System he represents comprise the one great Antichrist.[396]

Dr. Paul E. Kretzmann, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, in a

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395. II John 7. Cp. Daniel 7; 11:31-35.

396. We add this appendix to our thesis for three reasons: 1) For the sake of completeness; 2) Because St. John's Revelation is an antilegomenon and some may think we base our Antichrist interpretation alone on the Book of Revelation; 3) To show from history that the Pope is the Antichrist since he fulfills exactly the prophecies in the Bible. We do not claim that this is all that can be said about the Antichrist. Our space is limited. We refer the reader to the many writings about Antichrist of our Lutheran Church, some of which are listed in our bibliography.

thorough essay entitled The Antichrist - the Pope, has the following points under a brief exegesis of the words of the Apostle in II Thessalonians, Chapter Two:[397]

> "If we take the points given in the passages from John's Epistles and those contained in 2 Thess. 2, we have the following list:
>
> 1. The Antichrist is not any particular individual, but a representative person, or a power represented by a person or in a person.
> 2. He was in process of coming, or development, as early as the middle of the first century, when the mystery of lawlessness was already at work.
> 3. He is not an outside person or power, but arose in the midst of the Church, in the temple of God.
> 4. The revelation of his lawlessness was hindered by a power headed by a restraining person (the Roman Empire).
> 5. After the removal of the hindering influence, the Antichrist came out openly with his claims and was also revealed in his true nature (Emperor Constantine).
> 6. He was exposed before the world(by the Lutheran Reformation) but continued his activity as the son of perdition.
> 7. He claims divine prerogatives for himself, vaunting himself and raising himself above constituted authorities.
> 8. His doctrine is, in its last analysis, a denial of the Father and of the Son as revealed in both their persons and their Word in the Holy Scriptures.
> 9. He presumes to direct every object and every form of worship.
> 10. He operates with lying wonders, that is, such as are based upon lies and intended to spread lies.
> 11. He is constantly deceiving people who give credence to his false claims.
> 12. He will not be destroyed until the Lord's great parousia (Second Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ).
>
> It is surely a heavy and scathing arraignment that we have before us. We ask at once: To which historical phenomenon must we apply the descriptions? We answer without hesitation, on the bases of the evidence which can easily be adduced, that the passages briefly explained above apply to the Pope of Rome, with his whole system, with his entire pernicious activity. Every statement applies with unmistakable force."

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397. Published by the Concordia Seminary Mimeograph Company, St. Louis, Missouri, pp. 7-8, 1945. The italics are ours.

One of the great books of our Lutheran Church which has been of great benefit to many,[398] lists the following identifying marks of the Antichrist:

> The special distinguishing characteristics of Antichrist are given (that is, in the Antichrist prophecies of both the Old and New Testaments) as follows:
>
> 1. His habitation, or tabernacle, between two seas ... and on seven hills.
>
> 2. The time of his appearance, soon after the period of the Apostles.
>
> 3. The person of Antichrist, not indeed Satan himself ... It is not an individual person who is here referred to, but a collective person, one who represents or personifies a power.
>
> 4. The essence of Antichrist's person and position, described with the words "falling away" ... The reference is to the falling away from the true Christian religion.
>
> 5. The place of Antichrist is found in the very temple of God, in the Christian Church in its external or visible form.
>
> 6. The manner in which he conducts himself, namely, in this, that he opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God ... He exalts himself above all those to whom God has given government.

It is not our intention to discuss in our short essay all the characteristics of Antichrist listed from these two sources. We shall limit our words to the consideration of what we personally believe to be the three chief distinguishing features of the Papacy which brand

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398. The Concordia Cyclopedia, "Antichrist", page 26. Passages from the Scriptures are listed from which these propositions are derived.

the Church of Rome as the Antichrist prophesied in the Scriptures:

1. The Marks of the Antichrist.
2. The Pope's Attitude Toward the Bible.
3. The Antichristian Doctrines the Roman Church Promulgates.
4. The Vast Unchristian Claims and Usurpation of Authority of the Roman Church (The Papacy Always in Politics).

For further emphasis, however, we shall add two other sections:

5. The Progressive Revelation of the Antichrist.
6. The Lutheran Confessions on the Antichrist.

II

The Pope's Attitude Toward the Bible

II. The Pope's Attitude Toward The Bible

A revealing Catholic manual of small size and for Protestant consumption, called Instructions for Non-Catholics Before Marriage, came to our mail box recently. This little handbook offers non-Catholics a brief instruction in Catholic fundamentals. And it makes arrogant demands. In our opinion, it is another attempt to blind gullible Protestants to the truth of what Rome really is.

The great heritage of the Protestants, especially of Lutherans, is the Holy Bible, still the best seller year after year the world over. So this manual on marriage quotes the Bible again and again and says those things which the Protestant likes to hear if he or she contemplates to enter the Catholic portals of darkness because of a love affair.

Imagine this, we say to those who know from the Roman Church's own doctrinal books what Rome stands for - in this book, in spite of all of Rome's celibacy, the Bible is quoted in favor of marriage; it is quoted for proof concerning Holy Communion and the Catholic Mass; it is quoted to illustrate the Protestant Principle of Separation of Church and State (try to imagine that, someone, the Roman Church wanting Separation of Church and State!)

But we know that this is not the real Rome. Anyone who knows anything about what the Catholic Church actually teaches in her official writings knows that the Roman Church cares little for Biblical authority in matters of life and doctrine. It is Church authority, tradition authority, which counts with the Papacy. No matter how much the Romanists disown the statement, it is still true that the Catholics

advise against reading the Bible; and that if anyone wishes to read the Bible, he should not read a Bible unless it has the Catholic stamp of approval.

But you find nothing of this age-old Catholic attitude toward the Bible in the book Instructions for Non-Catholics before Marriage! Again and again one would think it was a Protestant who wrote the book. We cannot keep the picture out of our mind of the Harlot, dressed in red, holding forth with enticing words and lies and subterfuge her cup of poison to the world, as she is pictured to us in Revelation XVII.[399]

The history of Roman Doctrine reveals that one does not slander the Roman Church when he makes the statement that the Pope has always been averse to let the people read the Bible.

> "All Bibles written in the people's tongue (vulgari idiomate) - German, French, Spanish, Italian, English or Flemish, etc., shall in no wise be printed or read or kept without permission from the office of the Holy Roman Inquisition."[400]

Lest the reader think we are quoting ancient history and "that it isn't the same today, for Rome has changed", permit us to quote Pius IX who thunders from his encyclical Qui Pluribus, November 9, 1846, just a hundred years ago:

> These crafty Bible societies, which renew the ancient guile of heretics, cease not to thrust

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399. Revelation 17:4 - "And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet clour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations a filthiness of her fornication."

400. Pope Pius IV, 1559, speaking ex cathedra, thus putting the Bible on the list of prohibited books. Quoted from "Does The Papacy Require A New Evaluation?" C. B. Gohdes, p. 162.

> their Bibles upon all men, even the unlearned - their Bibles which have been translated against the laws of the church, and often contain false explanations of the text. Thus the divine traditions, the teachings of the fathers, and the authority of the Catholic Church are rejected, and everyone in his own way interprets the words of the Lord, and distorts their meaning, thereby falling into miserable errors.[401]

Rome has not changed. The Harlot has repudiated none of her ancient doctrines and traditions. Thus when one reads a book like Instruction for Non-Catholics Before Marriage, which was written for Protestant consumption, he knows it is simply "bait" and enticement to get new members under false pretenses. It is the Harlot holding forth her poisonous cup for the people to drink and become intoxicated from her filthy fornications.

Here are some more thoughts for the record, all of which makes one identify the Papacy as the Antichrist of the Bible:

> Translating the Bible was a challenge to the hierarchy to inflict the terrible sanctions of rack and stake which implemented its decrees. The dead Wycliff, who had dared to translate the Bible from the Latin Vulgate into the English of his period, was dug up by order of the Council of Rome (1412) and burned, whereupon his ashes were scattered upon the water, lest some thoughtful Englishman might show regard for the man by giving burial to what was left after Rome's wrath had done its work.
>
> William Tyndale, whose translation of the New Testament has been preserved in our English Bible like a golden cup reappearing in a better form after being melted, was burned in the Netherlands in 1536 for the same crime. "Unlawful possession", a charge Americans living in the prohibition era vividly remember, was at one time the charge of harboring a contraband with less baneful connotation - the Holy Scriptures; and when the Counter-Reformation was launched by Loyola and directed by his

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401. Quoted from Does The Papacy Require A New Evaluation, C. B. Gohdes, p. 164.

> Jesuits, the possession of a Bible was deemed a deadly heresy, as attested by thousands of flaming pyres in Spain, Italy, France, Germany, and wherever the Gospel was proclaimed.[402]

"Pope Leo XII said: 'If the sacred Scriptures be everywhere indiscriminately published, more evil than advantage will arise.'" Encyclical, May 3, 1824.

"The writer visited a sick scholar and on leaving marked certain passages in the Bible and said to the devoted Catholic aunt, 'You may read this to your niece'. 'I will not. You know we are not allowed to read the Bible. This is what I pray.' - a book full of Mary and nothing but Mary, Marianity, not Christianity."[403]

The following quotation taken from a Catholic journal shows how antichristian Rome feels about the Bible:

> The Bible is the book that, more than any other, has raised against us the tumults and tempests by which we have almost perished. In fact, if anyone examines closely and compares the teaching of the Bible with what takes place in our churches, he will soon find discord, and will realize that our teaching is often different from the Bible, and oftener still contrary to it. And if the people wake up to this, they will never stop challenging us till everything is laid bare, and then we shall become the object of universal scorn and hatred. Therefore it is necessary to withdraw the Bible from the sight of the people. -Converted Catholic Magazine, of March, 1944.[404]

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402. Ibid., page 165.
403. William Dallmann, "Why Lutheran - Not Catholic", American Lutheran, June, 1945, pp. 146ff.
404. Taken from a pamphlet "Liberty Versus Totalitarianism", The Liberty Press, 128 S. Franklin Street, East Peoria, Illinois.

The October issue (1925) of the Walther League Messenger carried the following revealing article:

ROME AND THE BIBLE

It is well for all lovers of God's Word to remember what is the attitude toward it of the papal church.

In the National Library, Paris, there is preserved a document containing advice given to Pope Julius III by the Cardinals on his election to the pontifical throne in 1550. It contains the following passages:

"Of all the counsels that we can offer your holiness we have kept the most necessary to the last. We must open our eyes well and exercise all possible force in the matter, namely: TO PERMIT THE READING OF THE GOSPEL AS LITTLE AS POSSIBLE, ESPECIALLY IN THE COMMON TONGUE, IN ALL THOSE COUNTRIES UNDER YOUR JURISDICTION.

"Let the very little suffice that is usually read in the Mass and let no one be permitted to read more.

"So long as the people will be content with that little, your interests will prosper, but as soon as the people want to read more, your interests will begin to fall.

"This is the book which more than any other has raised against us the disturbances and tempests by which we are almost lost.

"In fact, if any one examined diligently and compares the teaching of the Bible with what takes place in our churches, he will soon find discord, and will see that our teaching is very often different from it and still more frequently contrary to it.

"And if the people understand this, they will never cease challenging us till all be divulged, and then we shall become the object of universal scorn and hatred.

"Therefore it is necessary to withdraw the Bible from the sight of the people, but with great caution in order not to raise tumults."

Finally, we should like to add a quotation on Catholic animosity towards the Scriptures from the Canons and Decrees of the Council of

Trent, the standard of doctrine the Catholics swear to till this day:

> On The Sacred Books Of The Church - If any one receive not, as sacred and canonical, the said books entire with all their parts, as they have been used to be reading in the Catholic Church, or as they are contained in the Old Latin Vulgate version, and knowingly and deliberately condemn the traditions aforesaid: let him be anathema.
>
> Moreover, the same sacred and holy Synod, - considering that no small utility may accrue to the Church of God, if it be made known which out of all the Latin editions, now in circulation, of the sacred books, is to be held as authentic - ordains and declares that the said old and Vulgate edition, which, by the lengthened usage of so many years, has been approved of in the Church, be, in public lectures, disputations, sermons, and expositions, held as authentic; and that no one is to dare, or presume to reject it under any pretext whatsoever.

The Pope has considered the Bible his worst enemy throughout the centuries, for it undermines his man-made authority. Anyone who believes in the Bible and the authority of Christ, cannot but renounce the Pope and his arrogant usurpation of divine authority.

If the Roman Church is not an enemy of the Scriptures, why didn't she stop the following outrage in Spain? This is the question the Lutheran Witness (March 4, 1941, p. 69) asks in an editorial under the following heading: "Spain Grinds Bibles into Pulp". The editorial reads:

> Under the date-line London, September 23, the New York Times of Sunday, October 6, printed a special correspondence under the heading "Bibles are Seized in Spain for Pulp". The opening paragraph read: "Reports reaching here say the Spanish Government has just confiscated 110,000 copies of the Bible, the Evangelists andexcerpts from the Scripture which the British and Foreign Bible Society had sent to Spain for distribution. According to information here, the books are to be ground to make cellulose, one of the materials most lacking in Spain."

The mystery of the report is that it got through Catholic censorship at all, for it appeared only in the early edition of the Times, and was stricken out of the second and following editions. It was the influence of the Harlot again, and it seems as if our people insist on playing the Harlot with her!

The Roman Harlot is the Antichrist because she is the enemy of God's Word. This is shown by some publicity ads for the Catholic Church which have been "run" in St. Louis newspapers during 1945, which more or less proved to be "publicity in reverse" as far as the Protestants were concerned. In one of the ads this legend was written: "The World's Best Seller, the Book of Disunity - in the fifteenth century self-appointed men offered the Bible as the sole guide in all matters of religious belief; the Bible does not contain all of Christ's teachings."

Writing about the Catholic opposition to the English Authorized Version when it first appeared in 1611, and how the Textus Receptus won its place in the world, Dr. At. T. Robertson, great American Biblical scholar of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky, says:

> But the Authorized Version did not have it all its own way at first. The effort to give the Bible to the people of England is itself a story of martyrdom and of final triumph. The Roman Catholic Church resisted every attempt to give the Bible to the people. This powerful hierarchy destroyed Wycliffe and the Lollards and his translation from the Latin Vulgate ... The Bishop of London, Dr. Tunstall, had as many copies as he could get his hands on publicly burned in St. Paul's churchyard ... Dr. Warham, the Archbishop of Canterbury, bought up all the copies of Tindales first edition that he could in order to keep them

> from circulation ... The very zeal of the reformer for the circulation of the Bible among the people stiffened Roman opposition, which feared the power of the Bible and the spirit of freedom.[405]

Thus great obstacles are placed in the way of Catholics who would read the Bible, a Book, it seems, it is difficult to induce people to read as it is. Where are the Bible passages in the Catholic Catechism? Even today when one quotes the Bible to the average Catholic, he cannot answer one because he speaks only in terms of the Holy Father. The Pope is the Catholic's authority.

Catholics, for example, when Biblical arguments such as that of both kinds in the Lord's Supper where Jesus plainly says, "Drink ye all of it", have two choices - either to say the Bible is wrong or that they are wrong and that the people and not the priest alone should drink the wine. But what do they generally do? They cling to the authority of the Pope, and repudiate the Holy Scriptures.

Can any institution which makes sin-laden people commit the crime of all crimes, - that of denying the authority of the Bible, - be anything but the Antichrist? The Pope's attitude toward God's Word, the center and power of the Christian Church, marks him as the very Antichrist.

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405. A. T. Robertson, Studies In The Text Of The New Testament, pp. 45-47.

III

The False Antichristian Doctrines the Roman Church Promulgates

III. The False Antichristian Doctrines
The Roman Church Promulgates

We believe also that the Church at Rome is the Antichrist because of her apostasy from the Truth. This is a large field, for Rome has many false teachings which today form her Tradition gathered through the centuries. There is hardly a doctrine of the Bible which the Romanists have not vitiated in some way. This topic is also closely connected with the preceding section, since the Pope has had to deliberately and systematically repudiate the Bible in order to teach his false doctrine and his traditions.

This present section will not be an attempt to exhaust the possibilities of this subject, but merely to give outstanding examples of Rome's antichristian characteristics and beliefs. When one reads just a few of these examples of false teachings he is convinced that the person and system which so destroys the Gospel is the Anti-Christ - one would certainly not call him "Pro-Christ".

First, let us look at the core and center of Christian Doctrine, the Article of Justification by Faith. God's word teaches that man is saved, or justified, in the sight of God by faith without deed, and curses salvation by works.[406]

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406. Romans 3:28: "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law."
Galatians 2:16: "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified."
Galatians 3:6-24: "Even as Abraham believed God, and it was

Dr. Martin Luther made this principle the leitmotif of the Reformation.[407] But Giovanni del Monte, who later became Pope Julius III, said at the Council of Trent:

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accounted to him for righteousness. Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham. For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith. And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ: that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto. Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect. For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise. Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator. Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one. Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith."

Ephesians 2:8-10: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."

Romans 1, 16-17: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith."

407. Luther was particularly anxious that the Reformation be kept

> "All the errors of Martin were resolved into that point - Justification - from whence he hath denied efficacy in the Sacraments, authority of priests, purgatory, sacrifice of the Mass, and all other remedies for remission of sins. Therefore by a contrary way, he that will establish the body of the Catholic doctrine, must overthrow the heresy of Justification by Faith only."[408]

The Council of Trent, the resolutions of which have never been changed or repudiated by the Roman Church, condemned in five canons of Session VI the Biblical doctrine of justification by faith alone. For the sake of brevity, we will quote only from canons nine and twelve.

Canon 9:

> "If any one saith that by faith alone the impious is justified, in such wise as to mean that nothing else is required to cooperate in order to the obtaining the grace of justification, and that it is not in any way necessary that he be prepared and disposed by the movement of his own will, let him be anathema."

Canon 12:

> "If any one saith that justifying faith is nothing else by confidence in the divine mercy which remits sins for Christ's sake or that this confidence alone is that whereby we are justified, let him be anathema."

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sane and within proper control. It was his contention that the Church established by Christ was the true and only Church, that the Roman church had originally been that Church, but had fallen away through idolatry and ignorance. This had been caused by a blind following of the edicts of successive popes and councils that failed to take into account the original purpose and setup of the Christian Church. Instead of "thus saith the Lord" the Roman Church said "thus saith the Church". Ingeborg Stolee, Luther's Life, A revision Based On "Luther's Life" by O. Nilsen, p. 82.

408. Paolo Sarpi, His Council Trent, p. 190, quoted from the American Lutheran, Dr. William Dallman, op. cit.

If an interpreter of the Bible explains the Doctrine of Justification in this way, his interpretation of the remaining points of Biblical Doctrine will also be tainted with this error. He who teaches falsely here, will proclaim errors in almost all other doctrines of the Bible. This is a proved fact, and the history of dogma bears it out.

Here is the Roman way of salvation, or the forgiveness of sins:

> "If any one denieth that for the entire and perfect remission of sins there are required three acts in the penitent, which are, as it were, the matter of the sacrament of penance, to wit, contrition, confession, and satisfaction ... whereby one believes that his sins are forgiven him through Christ, let him be anathema."[409]

One of the most heinous sins of the Great Harlot is her leading astray thousands of souls from Christ to Mary - Mariolatry. The Bible plainly says, "Thou shalt worship the Lord, thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve."[410] But the Pope teaches people to worship and pray to the Virgin Mary, her husband Joseph, and all the other saints. Every country has its patron saint, every profession and craft and calling has its patron saint. We also think of all those false relics like those of the Robe of Christ, the milk of the Virgin, the teeth of Peter, which are supposed to have magic power. Pilgrimages are made to these numberless relics in special shrines, especially throughout Europe.

What is such superstitution but paganism? It certainly is not the teaching of our Lord Jesus. Only recently we read in the well-known Life magazine concerning the confusion and anxiety surrounding the

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409. Council of Trent, Sess. XIV, Canon 4.
410. Matthew 4:10.

return of St. Stephen's hand from Austria to Hungary after the war. A full-page picture showed a number of priests and bishops (who should know better than to believe in such childish things) holding the sacred vessel containing the hand which is said never to have decayed - "the incorruptible hand". What falsities!

Much could be written about the false teachings of Rome concerning the Mass, the Eucharist, the Adoration of the Host, the Infallibility of the Pope, Purgatory, Confession, Celibacy, Monkery, Forbidding of Meats, Union of Church and State, and dozens of others. If any reader is not familiar with errors which Rome teaches concerning these matters, we shall quote a few examples from the official canons of the Catholic Church, The Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent. Just a few citations on major doctrines will show the reader that we have much evidence for the statement, The Pope of Rome is the Antichrist.[411]

Here is what the Catholic Church teaches concerning the Adoration of the Host, a doctrine which is a by-product of the pernicious Doctrine of Transubstantiation:

> If any one says that in the holy Sacrament of the Eucharist Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, is not to be adored with the worship, even external, of latria, and is, consequently, neither to be

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411. "Der Engel nennt die Roemische Papstkirche 'die grosze Hure.' Und das ist der bezeichnendste Ausdruck, der fuer sie gefunden werden kann. Die Papstkirche ist recht eigentlich eine Hure, eine geistliche Hure. Sie ist Christo, dem einig wahren Braeutigam, untrue geworden. Sie hat sich dem Roemischen Antichrist hingegeben, dem groszen Erzhurer und falschen Propheten. Sie lebt mit diesem in falscher Lehre, Abgoetterei und allerlei Aberglauben. Dadurch aber hat sie sich dem Satan hingegeben. Denn die Zukunft des Antichrist 'geschieht nach der Wirkung des Satans.' (2 Thess. 2,9). Und der Satan richtet durch den Roemischen Antichrist sein allerhoellischestes Werk aus wider Christum und Seine Kirche. Mit diesem vom Satan gesandten Antichrist hurt die Papstkirche! Sie ist eine ganz greuliche Hure! Sie ist eine grosze Hure! Sie ist 'die grosze Hure'! Sie ist einzig in ihrer Art. Es gibt keine groeszere Hure auf Erden als sie. Vor aller Welt gibt sie sich den Schein, dasz sie die allertreueste

> venerated with a special festive solemnity nor to be solemnly borne about in processions ... or is not to be proposed publicly to the people to be adored and that the adorers thereof are idolaters, let him be anathema. 412

The Adoration of the Host is closely related to the Catholic Corpus Christi Festival. What is this act of "worship" but idolatry? And what is the Catholic practice of reservation wherein the host (wafer) is continually reserved in a receptacle on the altar, and the Catholic bends his knee as he leaves and enters his pew as an act of adoration to the consecrated wafer, but a form of idolatry.

For the Catholic, Christ's all-atoning sacrifice on the Cross once was not enough; he must sacrifice Christ anew every time Mass is celebrated in the Roman Church:

> Forasmuch as in this divine sacrifice which is celebrated in the Mass that same Christ is contained and immolated in an unbloody manner who once offered Himself in a bloody manner on the altar of the cross, the holy synod teaches that this sacrifice is truly propitiatory ... For the victim is one and the same, the same now offering by the ministry of the priests who then offered himself on the cross, the manner alone of offering being different.[413]

Concerning the Eucharist the Catholic Church teaches as follows, as described in the Canons and Decrees of The Council of Trent:

Christi sei; und dennoch hurt sie auf die allergreulichste Weise mit dem Antichrist und durch diesen mit dem Satan ... Fuerwahr, die Papstkirche ist eine grosze Hure! Fuerwahr, sie ist des Gerichtes und der Verdammnis schuldig!" (Carl Zorn, The Antichrist, pp. 255-256).

412. Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent, Sess. XIII, Can. 6.

413. Ibid., Sess. XVII, Chapter II.

> Because that Christ, our Redeemer, declared that which He offered under the species of bread to be truly His own body, therefore it has ever been a firm belief in the Church of God, and this holy synod doth now declare it anew, that by the consecration of the bread and of the wine a conversion is made of the whole substance of the bread into the substance of the body of Christ, our Lord, and of the whole substance of the wine into the substance of His blood; which conversion is by the Holy Catholic Church suitably and properly called transubstantiation.[414]

But the Roman Church goes farther in its teaching concerning the Lord's Supper, saying that the Holy Sacrament is very beneficial even to the person who has not faith and forgives sins by its power ex opere operato (by the simple performance of the act):

> If any one saith that by the said sacraments of the New Law grace is not conferred through the act performed (ex opere operato), but that faith alone in the divine promise suffices for the obtaining of grace, let him be anathema (damned).[415]

Everyone is aware of the stilted and hypocritical worship this doctrine has created in the Catholic church services. People just go to the Church ("attend Mass") and whether their hearts are in their worship or not makes little difference - the main idea is to be present for this ex opere operato grace and salvation. Simply defined, it is gross paganism in the name of Christianity.

Perhaps the dexterity of the Catholics in creating expedient doctrines of their own outside the Bible is no where exemplified so well as in the case of purgatory, upon which is also based the sacrifice of the Mass, the pecuniary practice of indulgences, and prayers for the dead:

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414. Council of Trent, Session XIII, Chapter IV.
415. Ibidem, Session VII, Canon 8.

> If any one saith that, after the grace of justification has been received, to every penitent sinner the guilt is remitted and the debt of eternal punishment is blotted out in such wise that there remains not any debt of temporal punishment, to be discharged either in this world or in the next, in purgatory, before the entrance to the kingdom of heaven can be opened (to him), let him be anathema.[416]

The anti-Christian teaching of Celibacy of the Clergy is firmly established in the Council of Trent:

> If any one saith that clerics, constituted in sacred orders, or regulars, who have solemnly professed chastity, are able to contract marriage, and that, being contracted, it is valid notwithstanding the ecclesiastical law or vow ... let him be anathema.[417]

This confession of doctrine, of course, was aimed by the Council directly at Luther and the Lutherans. We have often asked ourselves the question, Why did the Romanists wait until 1545-1563 to declare their doctrines formally? Why was not this done before? The reason is that the doctrines the Catholic Church taught before were simply man-made traditions which bishops had created through the centuries, and which were never taught in the Scriptures. After the Reformation the Pope had to make his own Bible officially, or be lost.

Thus we are convinced that the real beginning of the Roman Church should be dated at the Council of Trent, when the Harlot left the fold of Christianity and went her own haughty way down the road of error in the form of Antichrist.

Is it necessary to quote the words of St. Paul prophesying of the Papacy, the Antichrist, thus? -

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416. Ibid., Sess. VI, Can. 30.
417. Ibid., Sess. XXIV, Can. 9.

> "Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition. ... Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."[418]

Or, after presenting this array of errors of the Roman Church which are <u>not</u> in accordance with God's Word, is it needful that we quote from Revelation XVII again to show the precise fulfillment of the prophecy?

> "So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness; and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand, full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON, THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH."[419]

Indeed, because of her apostasy from the Truth, the Church at Rome is the very Antichrist!

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418. II Thessalonians 2:3.9-12.
419. Revelation 17:3-5.

IV

The Vast Unchristian Claims and Usurpation of Authority of the Roman Church

IV. The Vast Unchristian Claims and Usurpation of Authority of the Roman Church

The all-inclusive claims of authority both temperal and spiritual, by the Pope, and of infallibility, brand him and his system as the Antichrist. The Roman Doctrine of the Primacy of the Pope makes him the Vicar of Christ on earth, with full power over the Church. But not only is he the head of the Church, according to the Papists; he is also the supreme governor over all temporal and state affairs!

These vast unchristian claims led directly to the doctrine of the Pope's infallibility. But how can the Romanists believe in the light of history, that the Pope is infallible? Is not God alone infallible? The conclusion is that he who is infallible must be God! Is the Pope God? What other conclusion can there be?

We are not exaggerating the argument in the least. Let the reader peruse this Catholic Proclamation, decreed at the insistence of Pius XI by the Vatican Council, 1870:

> We, the sacred council, approve, teach, and so define as a dogma divinely revealed (?), that the Roman Pontiff, when he speaks ex cathedra - that is to say, when in the discharge of the office of pastor and teacher of all Christians, by virtue of his supreme apostolic authority, he defines a doctrine regarding faith and morals to be held by the universal Church, - is, through the divine assistance promised to the blessed Peter himself, possessed of the infallibility with which the divine Redeemer willed that His Church should be endowed for defining doctrines concerning faith and morals; and that such definitions of the Roman Pontiff are of themselves, and not from the consent of the Church, unalterable. But if any

one shall venture to contradict our definition, let him be accursed.[420]

Errare est humana. "To err is human". When we read the papistic declaration of papal infallibility we cannot help thinking of the words describing the Antichrist, that "Man of Sin", "The Son of Perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God."[421]

And what fits the description better than the Pope which we find in Revelation 17: "Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication"?[422]

But the highest degree of papal arroganoy is reached when the Roman Pope claims to be supreme over all civil law and government. We can understand how the Pope can claim spiritual authority over all Christians, many have done that; but to claim that civil authorities of all the world must bow to his will, well, that is a doctrine of the devil and not of God.

In his encyclical of 1864, Pius IX pronounces condemnation upon all those who will not acknowledge the Pope's authority to lay his commands upon states in such a way that not only family life, the school, and education pass entirely under the control of the Roman Church, but

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420. Theodore Engelder, Arndt, Graebner, Mayer, Popular Symbolics, p. 164.
421. II Thessalonians 2:3.4.
422. Revelation 17:1.2.

also that the Pope may even interfere in all legislation and require its alteration:

> "The ecclesiastical power must exercise its authority without the permission or assent of the civil power ... it has the right to employ force ... the Church ought not to be separated from the State, nor the State from the Church."[423]

> "The Church of Rome is one monarchy over all the kingdoms of the world, as the mind and soul of the body of a man, or as God in the world. Therefore the Church of Rome must not only have the spiritual power, but the supreme temporal power."[424]

> "The Pope is crowned with a triple crown, as king of heaven, of earth and of hell. Nay, the Pope's excellence and power are not only about heavenly, terrestial and infernal things, but he is also above angels, and is their superior; so that if it were possible that angels could err from the faith, or entertain sentiments contrary thereto, they could be judged and excommunicated by the Pope. The Pope is, as it were, God on earth, the only prince of the faithful of Christ, the greatest king of all kings, to whom the government of the earthly and heavenly kingdom is entrusted." [425] [426]

In the American language and thinking of 1945 this would be branded as totalitarianism and dictatorship. A little pamplet which recently came to our desk, citing the officials of Rome word for word, points this fact out with acuteness:

> "The Vatican Council of 1870 decreed: The Holy

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423. Popular Symbolics, p. 165.
424. Leo XIII, Encyclical of 1879.
425. Ferraris' Ecclesiastical Dictionary, p. 260.
426. "It is singular that in our own day and so far as appears for the first time the Roman Church has actually taken this very symbol as her own chosen emblem - medal struck in 1825 bearing the image of Pope Leo XII on one side and on the other the Church of Rome symbolized as a 'woman' with a cross in her left hand and a cup in her right with the legend around her, 'Sedet super universum' - 'The whole world is her seat'". John Adams, His Apocolypse, p. 312.

> Apostolic See and the Roman Pontiff possesses the primacy over the whole world ..."
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> "The will of the Pope is the supreme law of all lands." - Archbishop John Ireland, St. Paul, Minnesota.
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> "The Pope alone ought to wear the token of imperial dignity; all princes ought to kiss his feet; he has power to depose emperors and kings, and is to be judged by none." - Decree of the Council of Bishops, under Pope Gregory VII.
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> "The Pope is not only the representative of Jesus Christ, but he is Jesus Christ himself, hidden under the veil of the flesh. Does the Pope speak? - It is Jesus Christ who speaks ... So that when the Pope speaks we have no business to examine. We have only to obey." - Archbishop of Venice, who later became Pope Pius X.
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> "The Pope alone has the right to define the limits of his own authority and the limits of the authority of the state. It is the Pope's duty to pronounce, not only on the rights of individuals, but of peoples, nations and their rulers." - Cardinal Manning.

The pamphlet comments as follows: "This is Roman Catholic totalitarianism and dictatorship over the world with a vengence! Only ignorant dupes and cowering slaves and helpless victims will submit to this deadly menace to human rights."[427]

> Pope Leo XIII wrote, "We hold upon earth the place of God Almighty". - Great Encyclical Letters, page 304. The Apostle Peter said to Cornelius, when Cornelius knelt before him, "Stand up; I myself also am a man." - Acts 10:26. There is not a single passage in the Bible in which God delegates his position and authority to any human being whatsoever. BUT, the Pagan Roman Emperors claimed to be God and the supreme rulers over mankind. The Papacy is a continuation of Pagan Rome.

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427. Liberty vs. Totalitarianism, The Liberty Press, 128 South Franklin Street, East Peoria, Illinois.

The Roman Church is definitely an enemy of the American Principle of Separation of Church and State, a principle upon which the American Democracy stands and falls, for when freedom of religion is gone, then only the beast tyranny is left behind.[428]

Here are some samples of Roman Catholic Americanism:[429]

> The fatal theory of the need of separation between Church and State. The absurdity of such a position is manifest.
>
> It is an unrighteous position that the Catholic religion is allowed a stand in civil society equal only to societies alien from it.
>
> It is a sin in the State not to favor the only one true religion, the Catholic religion.

The Pope is always in politics, local, national, and international. To control civil government, to further its own aims politically is a definite goal and doctrine of Rome as the following quotations reveal:[430]

PATRIOTISM

> "Tell us, in the conflict between the Church and the civil government we take the side of the Church, of course we do. Why, if the government of the United States were at war with the Church, we would say tomorrow, TO HELL WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES! And, if the Church and all of the governments of the world were at war, we would say, To hell with all the governments of the world! ... We are Catholics first and Ameridans decidedly afterwards." - Priest D. S. Phelan, editor of the Western Watchman, St. Louis, Mo., in a sermon June 30, 1912.

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428. "This man is king of kings; for he wears a triple crown - the diadems of other sovereigns not being distinctive enough for him. If this does not come up to all that is here predicted of "the man of Sin", we may safely say that the prediction will never be realized. David Brown, The Apocalypse, p. 153.

429. Letters, Pope Leo XIII, quoted by William Dallman in the American Lutheran, June, 1945, page 6ff.

430. Liberty vs. Totalitarianism, The Liberty Press, 128 South Franklin Street, East Peoria, Illinois.

"All Catholics should exert their power to cause the constitutions of states to be modeled after the principles of the Catholic Church." - Pope Leo XIII, Encyclical.

"The Roman Catholic citizen of the United States owes no allegiance to any principles of the government which are condemned by the Pope." - The Tablet.

"I claim to be the supreme Judge and Dictator of the consciences of men - of the peasant that tills the field and the prince that sits on the throne; of the household that lives in the shades of privacy, and the legislature that makes the laws ... I am the sole Supreme Judge of what is right or wrong." - Cardinal Manning, speaking in the name of the Pope, at Kensington, England, 1869.

Let the Church delve into politics, says the Pope:[431]

The Pope says: "Catholics should give attention to national politics". p. 131. Yes, but how? The Pope orders: "Follow the guidance of the Apostolic See as their rule of life and obey the Bishops whom the Holy Ghost has placed to rule the Church of God".

"The political prudence of private individuals would seem to consist wholly in carrying out faithfully the orders issued by lawful authority." The Pope says: "The faithful Catholics should imitate the practical political wisdom of the ecclesiastical authority". Vote as the priest tells them to vote. Vote for whom? "Support men - who pledge themselves to serve well in the Catholic cause." [432]

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431. William Dallman, American Lutheran, quoting from The Letters of Pope Leo XIII.

432. "Nun sind alle unsere vorgehabten Bedenken verschwunden . Wahrhaftig, ein Reich, welches sich darstellt als das Reich oder die Kirche Jesus Christi, aber falsche, ja teuflische Lehren fuehrt; ein Reich, welches alle Eigenschaft und Macht des Roemischen Weltreichs hat und dieselbe wider die wahre Kirche Jesus Christi bebraucht; ein Reich, welches, nur in anderer Gestalt, die Wiederbelebung und Fortsetzung des Roemischen Weltreiches und so der Sitz des letzen Wehes, naemlich des Antichristentums ist, - ein solches Reich sehen wir in der Geschichte des Welt und der Kirche gar wohl. Es is das Roemische Papstreich. Es kann kein anderes sien als das Roemische Papstreich. Das Roemische Papstreich stellt sich dar als das Reich oder die Kirche Jesu Christi auf Erden, als die Eine heilige all gemeine oder katholische Kirche, auszer welcher kein Heil und keine Seligkeit

After reading these official sayings by the Popes, statements which have never been repudiated, one asks, "What is this?", after reading the following in the new Catholic book, Instructions for Non-Catholics Before Marriage:

> The Catholic Church, as a Church, is friendly to American principles ... How can Catholics in America give their country an undivided allegiance, when they are subjects of a foreign power? This question has disturbed many non-Catholics, but the difficulty soon disappears when they learn that Catholics pledge allegiance to the Holy Father in Rome in spiritual matters only.[433]

Definitely these words were written for gullible Protestants. We think of the Harlot holding out hercup of enticement to the world.

Then consider this gem of a statement concerning the Principle of Separation of Church and State coming from a Catholic writer with the Nihil Obstat approval of the Church:

> The Church is interested solely in the spiritual welfare of her children. The State has divine authority as well as the Church, and within their particular spheres each is supreme: the church cannot interfere in purely civil matters, and the State must refrain from interference in spiritual matters. The Catholic is bound to obey the State's laws, unless they are unjust, destructive of liberty,

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ist; es fuehrt aber falsche, teuflische, seelenverderbliche Lehren und will mit denselben die Menschen um ihre Seligkeit bringen, die Schaft und Macht des Roemischen Weltreichs und gebrauchtedieselbe fleiszig und schrecklich wider die wahre Kirche JEsu Christi. Und es beansprucht diese Macht heute noch und moechte sie so gerne haben und wider Christi wahre Kirche gebrauchen! Das Roemische Papstreich ruehmt und bruestet sich laut und oeffentlich damit, dasz es von Christi wegen stete und alle Gewalt habe auf Erden, mehr noch, weit mehr noch, als das untergegangene Roemische Weltreich." Carl Zorn, The Antichrist, pp. 195-196.

433. By Rev. Anthony L. Ostheimer, p. 184.

> or contrary to the moral law. Our Lord has given His Church, and us, the line of distinction when He said: "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."[434]

> Bishop England of Charleston, S.C., had this to say of American Catholics and their "foreign allegiance": "Let the Pope and Cardinals and all the powers of the Catholic world united make the least encroachment on that Constitution (of the United States), we will protect it with our lives. Summon a General Council. Let that Council interfere in the mode of our electing but an assistant to a turnkey in a prison - we deny the right; we reject its usurpation."[435]

Now anyone who knows anything about the Catholic Church's doctrine and its history knows that no bishop can say such things about the Holy Father and go unpunished and unfrocked. It just doesn't fit the record. The Roman Church does not believe in Separation of Church and State. The official documents and encylicals tell a different story. Words like these are a veneer of half-truths to cover up the real Rome.

This is what we mean when we say the Pope is the Antichrist. Does not St. Paul say, "Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness and unprighteousness?"[436]

> On November 10, 1889, Archbishop Ireland preached in Baltimore from the text Ecclesiasticus 4:33, "Even unto death fight for justice, and God will overthrow thy enemies for thee." Linking the present with far-offdays of Urban II, he said: "Our work is to make America Catholic! If we love America, if we love the Church, to mention the work suffices. Our cry shall be, 'God wills it!' and our hearts shall leap with Crusader enthusiasm."[437]

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434. Ibidem, pp. 184-185.
435. Ibidem, p. 187.
436. 2 Thessalonians 2:9.10.
437. Jacob Stone, Will America Become Catholic?, p. 1.

> Donning the cloak of a prophet, Bertrand Russel, addressing the Rationalist Press Association in London in the summer of 1928, said:
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> "It seems that in another fifty or one hundred years the Roman Catholic Church will dominate America. It will do so by sheer force of numbers. This is a grave matter, and will have its effects on the whole civilized world, because more and more Americans tend to rule the world." (There are about 330,000,000 Catholics in the world today; about 210,000,000 Protestants; 20,000,000 Catholics in America.)[438]

A recent and successful endeavor to expose Catholic policies in America was attained by Mr. Harold E. Fey through his articles which appeared in The Christian Century magazine during 1944 and 1945, under the general title "Can Catholocism Win America?" He wrote the articles when the Roman Church launched the campaign to shut Protestant missions out of Latin America, a campaign which was launched in Washington, not in Rome. Following are several paragraphs from the concluding section of his series of eye-opening articles:

> What will happen to other religious faiths when Catholicism comes into power? The question is not dodged. Since the Roman Catholic is the only true church, all others must be false. Protestants and other religious groups "may" be permitted to practice their own form of worship, providing it is "carried on within the family circle or in such an inconspicuous manner as to be an occasion neither of scandal nor of perversion to the faithful."
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> One method of dealing with dissenting churches when Catholicism comes into power, says Monsignor Ryan's book, will be to remove their "exemption from taxation", while the Roman Catholic Church will of course retain such exemption. If the state refuses to do the will of the church, the Pope can, says Dr. Ryan, free citizens from their oaths of allegiance to it.

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438. Ibidem, p. 111.

> Consider the location of the center of Catholic power in the United States ... It is rooted in Washington. There can be only one reason why the hierarchy chose the nation's political capital as its center of organization. It is because political influence is over-whelmingly important for the winning of America to Catholicism. It outweighs all other considerations which might orient the Catholic system elsewhere.[439]

Mr. Fey concludes his last article with these words:

> Today America includes Catholicism with other faiths and makes them equally at home. It includes them all, however, on Protestant terms. Protestants claim religious liberty for themselves, and grant it to others, including Catholics. Roman Catholic doctrine and the Roman Catholic organization of power are committed to the radical modification of this basic freedom. The Roman Catholic hierarchy has launched a program which will, if it succeeds, include other faiths in American culture only on Catholic terms - Can Catholicism Win America? - Yes.

In an article in the Walther League Messenger, October, 1944, entitled "Fight Catholic Propaganda", Dr. Walter A. Maier, the editor, writes of Catholic promotional activity thus:

> The Roman Church has a definite and well-organized propaganda machine at work in our country to make America Catholic. They advertise extensively in the newspapers, see to it that pressure is placed on library boards to get Catholic books in the libraries, influence school boards to buy Catholic approved text books, and systematically fight all Protestant statements. The Knights of Columbus in every large city have instituted vast programs of newspaper advertising disseminating Catholic Doctrine.

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439. A painter did the heads of Peter and Paul. A cardinal said he had painted the faces too red. Tartly he replied - "He painted them so as to show how they were blushing at the gaudiness and stateliness of their successors." From Trapp's Commentary.

England, before the days of Henry VIII, was called the Pope's ass for bearing the Pope's burdens. God forbid that America should play the role of the Pope's ass in days to come. But if we do not keep eternal vigilance, this will be the case. The Pope has recently announced that more American bishops will be created, and that the next Pope may be an American!

Too many Americans think that Rome is changing into a more tolerant, more American church. Reading some of the impressive claims the Catholics make exalting the tolerance and liberty-loving hierarchy of the Catholic church, many are led to believe this to be true. But the thinking man who examines the record more closely, especially the annals of history, knows different.

Writing under the caption "Is Rome Changing?", Dr. Walter A. Maier says:

> Cleveland papers recently gave unusual prominence to the utterances of Archbishop Joseph Schrembs before the Round Table National Conference of Christians and Jews in that city. In a speech ... the Ohio churchman went so far as to say that "we who believe in God" (including specifically Jews, Unitarians, Modernists) "must unite to preserve the worship of God on earth."[440]

Always the Harlot is holding out her enticing poisonous cup which to many an American looks like a sweet and soothing potion, but which is to drug the unsuspecting individual. Her purpose here was to drug American Protestants and politicians with false tolerance. This is brought out well by Dr. Maier in the paragraphs following:

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440. This and following quotations taken from the Walther League Messenger, March 1940, Vol. 48, No. 8.

> If the Catholic Church is the great tolerant church that loves democracy; and if, as Monsignor Sheen recently told the world in a radio address: "The pope is the only hope of the world for peace", why does the Catholic Church not work for tolerance and the pope agitate for liberty and freedom of conscience today in those countries where its power is uncontested? There are three countries, Ethiopia, Albania, and Spain, in which the authority of the Roman Church is uncontested and where it can put into practice the tolerance which the archbishop ascribes to his church. But what has happened in these three countries?
>
> In Ethiopia Protestant missionaries are consistently banned. The work of many years of concentrated labor for Christ's sake was destroyed overnight. James O.A. Luckman, former missionary to Ethiopia, writes: "In 1936 some dozen Protestant mission boards had representatives among the ten or fifteen million people of Ethiopia. Today, after three years of Italian occupation of Ethiopia, only one station, under the direction of the United Presbyterian Board remains ... The dozen mission boards represented in Haile Selassie's kingdom in 1936 had 167 men in the field. At the time of the occupation, however, 3,000 Catholic priests were in Rome ready to sail, and a few months after the Italian invasion of Addis Ababa, the country was covered by these emissaries of the papacy."

Then Dr. Maier writes a few lines about the situation in Albania:

> After the regiments of Mussolini had crushed Albania, what happened to the one and only Protestant mission of that country? Missionary Jacques writes in the Moody Monthly: "The mission work here has been closed, and the missionaries ordered home ... It was a complete surprise to the Albanian Christians ... It might be that the local Jesuit missionary could shed some light on the reason for our exposition."

Thus the Harlot works. She will sell her birthright for power. She vowed support of Mussolini's vile rape of Ethiopia if she were allowed absolute religious superiority. This is the color of Rome's flesh under the veneer of "tolerance" with which she beguiles gullible Americans. If she would ever get America to lie with her in her bed of whoredoms, the same thing, we fear, would happen in our own country.

She always looks out for Rome. And Rome never changes. She thinks in centuries.[441]

Spain was no exception. Everyone knows the role Rome played in the Spanish Revolution of our century. Dr. Maier writes again:

> In Spain Roman Catholic autocracy reached new heights in consequence of Franco's victory. On April 17 of last year (1939) all Protestant schools in Madrid were closed. During the bitterness of the war, Protestant worship was not interrupted once, but with the dominance of Catholic forces the Protestant work was stopped.
>
> In his recent book called What is the New Spirit, called the Spanish replica of Hitler's Mein Kampf, Jose Premartin, national figure in Spain, declares, as quoted in the Sunday School Times: "We in Spain have the right to be more papistthan the Pope. We must be absolutely intolerant of opinions contrary to the Catholic religion. The Catholic religion must be declared the official religion of the state. No public worship of any other religion will be permitted ... The program of total Catholication cannot be achieved without decided action against the anti-Catholic sects. There must be a total and definite prohibition of everything contrary to Catholic orthodoxy."

The editor of the Messenger makes his conclusion as follows:

> These conditions, it seems, show that when the Roman Catholic church secures undisputed control it has not proved itself tolerant of religious liberty and personal freedom.

Many Americans remember that Governor Alfred E. Smith was defeated as a candidate for the United States Presidency because he was a Roman Catholic. Many go farther and say he was defeated because Pope Pius would not reject past pronouncements of Roman policy and guarantee

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441. The extent to which Rome has hoodwinked our American people was forcefully brought home to us the other day when it was reported in a daily newspaper (Peoria Journal-Transcript, Oct. 17, 1945) that a shrine to the Blessed Virgin in Brimfield, Illinois, was "constructed with funds contributed by persons of all faiths."

that he would leave America alone. We predict that some day we shall have a Catholic President, elected by a Catholic political help and intrigue, and then let America beware. Then America will be sorry he slept with the Harlot from Rome!

Dr. Theodore Graebner in a well-written article, "Is the Roman Peril Real?" writes concerning the Smith Candidacy in which he also cites an example of Roman policy the time when President Theodore Roosevelt visited Rome:[442]

> I have said that the lessons of history have been forgotten even by some Protestants. To this I would now add: Even recent American history. It was only in 1910 that Theodore Roosevelt came home from his African hunt over Europe and made a stop-over in Rome. A visit to the Pope was suggested to him, and he consented. Through a messenger the Catholic authorities now advised him that the Pope was willing to receive him in audience - if he would promise to accept no invitations from the American Methodists in Rome. Asserting his manhood and his Americanism, Roosevelt refused to see the Pope.
>
> The statement given out by the pastor of the American Methodist Church in Rome, after being received by Mr. Roosevelt, is worthy of preservation: "Mr. Roosevelt", he said, "has struck a blow for twentieth-century Christianity. The Vatican is incompatible with republican principles. This is a bitter dose for patriotic Catholics in America to swallow. I wonder how many doses they will take before they revolt. Is Catholicism in America to be American or Romish? If Romish, then every patriotic American should rise to crush it, for Roman Catholicism is the uncompromising foe of freedom."

Illustrating Dr. Graebner's article are two pictures of note, the one showing the directors of the Young Men's Catholic Board who were

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442. Walther League Messenger, June 1927, p. 623, Vol. 35, No. 11.

arrested and charged with issuing circulars urging an economic boycott, refusing to obey the laws and inciting the people to disobey them; the other is a picture of Archbishop Jose Mora Y Del Rio, head of the Catholic Church in Mexico, and other bishops who were charged by the Mexican government with inciting the Mexican people to rebellion. Acting Consul-General of Mexico, M. G. Pietro, recently stated: "The people of the United States should know that as a matter of history the cry of the Church when it fought to retain its special privileges was 'Down with Tolerance!'"

Roman Catholic intolerance is exposed again by Dr. Maier in an article entitled, "If Rome Ruled!"[443] Speaking of the Governor Alfred Smith situation for President, he writes:

> Yet, while there can be no consitutional objection to the candidacy of a Roman Catholic for the highest office of our country, serious-minded people view with alarm the possibility of a Catholic administration and of Catholic control of the legislative and judicial branches of our government. That this apprehension is justified is demonstrated beyond all question of intelligent doubt by the action and utterances of Catholic politicians and officials in the present day and hour, - actions and utterances which clearly show that real Catholicism is Roman and not American and that Catholic control of our country would mean violence, favoritism, intolerance, and national stagnation.

Dr. Maier then cites examples of his statements. He says:

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443. Walther League Messenger, October 1924, p. 74ff. Subheadings of the article read, "The spirit that burned John Huss still lives". "It is an error to assert that the church ought to be separated from the state and the state from the church." (Pope Pius IX). "It is an error to assert that it is no longer expedient that the Catholic religion shall be held as the only religion of the state, to the exclusion of all other modes of worship." (Pope Pius XI).

> A few months ago the State of Rhode Island was subjected to a reign of political terrorism unparalleled in the history of our country. Below the surface there was something deeper than political unrest; there was a feeling of religious fanaticism, enflamed through the protracted turmoil, which led the Democrats, representing the Catholic vote of the state, to unbelievable extremes ... When the situation became more desperate, Catholic leaders spoke of bloodshed and the Lieutenant Governor, a French Canadian, in referring to his opponents, practically all Protestants, declared in the presence of a large group of people: "By God, the next time we get them here, we'll kill them!"

Next comes an example of favoritism and intolerance from New York City:

> Roman rule would also bring fatal favoritism. We turn to New York City and to its widely-heralded mayor, John Hylan (1924). When the Knights of Columbus gathered in his city during the summer, he delivered himself of a very illuminating statement. He told his hearers:
>
> "If any of you get in any mix-up with the 'cops' while you are here, just give them the high sign; if that does not work, call me up at City Hall ... One of your faith has been permitted to direct this city."
>
> Just the opposite of what Americanism stands for is here advocated by the mayor of the country's largest city when he thus, besides speaking out his contempt of the law, fosters religious prejudices and partisan feelings.

Then the editor of the Messenger cites an example out of Chicago:

> A similar spirit was shown in Chicago when a small fortune of public money was expended by Catholic politicians to welcome the newly-created cardinal through a series of ceremonies that culminated in the ring-kissing scene in which Mayor Dever, as the highest official of the City of Chicago, bent his knees before Cardinal Muendelein.

Now read Revelation, Chapter XVII, again, especially in view of the "ring-kissing scene", and do you not see a fulfillment? "The Great Whore that sitteth upon many waters, with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication." Is this the spirit of Christ or of Antichrist? The spirit of the New Testament or of bigotry and intolerance?

Yes, what a sad condition we have in our beloved America today when everyone seems to trust the Catholic Church and to look upon her as a harmless dove. Outwardly she appears to man as a benignant institution which has only the public's good at heart - yes, like the harlot dressed up in most beautiful clothing with the enticing cup in her outstretched hand! But underneath that veneer of soft compassion there lies the heart of the serpent, of a bloodthirsty woman who will stop at nothing to gain her ends.

It is to the best advantage, naturally, for Rome to appear to the public in the role of a peace-loving dove in America. But tear off her mask of falsity. Then she will appear as she is, the harlot dressed in many colors, drunk with the blood of the nations, a prostitute astride the beast and whoring with the nations, a wolf in sheep's clothing!

Indeed, if she dared, she would be as intolerant (in action as well as in principle) and tyrannical in our democratic America as during the days of the Spanish Inquisition. She dare not show her true face to Americans with their Protestant heritage, but if she ever gets the opportunity, she will turn out to be a vicious she-wolf.

To those who know Rome as she really is, quotations like the following are no surprise.[444]

> "Protestants were persecuted by France and Spain with the full approval of the Church. The Church has persecuted. Only a tyro in Church history will deny that. When she thinks it good to use physical force, she will use it. The Catholic Church gives no bonds for her good behavior." - Western Watchman, December 24, 1908.
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> "If Catholics ever gain sufficient majority in this country, religious freedom is at an end, so our enemies say; so we believe." - The Shepherd of the Valley, St. Louis, Missouri, November 23, 1851.
>
> "No man has a right to choose his religion. Catholicism is the most intolerant of creeds. It is intolerance itself." - New York Freeman, Official Journal of Bishop Hughes, January 26, 1852.
>
> "Protestantism is not a religion - never was a religion. The most that could ever be said of it was that it is a form of rape and robbery masquerading as a religion, and ahypocrisy wearing the livery of Christianity to serve the seven deadly sins in. We must not forget that three-fourths of the people of the United States are unbaptized heathens." - The Western Watchman, November 12, 1914, page 10.
>
> "Protestantism is simply ruffianism, organized into a religion. The first reformer, Martin Luther, was the vilest blackguard of all time ... All his associates in the sacrilege of scanctuaries and sacking of religious houses were almost to a man of the lowest and beastliest morals." - Western Watchman, September 28, 1911.
>
> "Those are not to be accounted, murderers or homocides who, when burning with love and zeal for their Catholic mother against excommunicated Protestants, shall happen to kill a few of them." Pope Urban II, Decree 1088.

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444. Pamphlet, Liberty vs. Totalitarianism, The Liberty Press.

> But the blood of Protestants is not called the blood of saints, no more than the blood of thieves, manKillers, and other malefactors, for the shedding of which, by order of justice, no commonwealth shall answer.

Men in high places in our United States Government are fraternizing too much with the organization which espouses such "American" ideals. Our opinion is that the Pope is using them as a tool for his own ends. At present he may support them for the return of political favors and they may support him for the same reason. But some day when the Pope has the power he seeks, he will tell them and all of us what to do. God forbid!

As an example of this heart-rending procedure of selling our American liberty down the river for political favors, in the Chicago Tribune of September 22, 1945, there appeared a large picture under the caption: "Congressmen Visit Pope Pius in Vatican City." Eight officials of our government are gathered around Pope Pius seated at his desk. Below the picture we read: "Members of the United States House Foreign Affairs Committee with Pope Pius XII, as they visited him in his private study in Vatican City, September 13. Left to right: Lt. Col. E. P. Cushman, Morris M. Hughes (state department), Rep. Pfeifer, Rep. Gerlach, Franklin C. Gowen (assistant to Myron Taylor, President's representative to the Vatican) Rep. Jarman, Rep. Jonkman, and Rep. Luther Johnson."

When Monsignor Michael J. Ready, former general secretary of N.C.W.C., was consecrated on December 13, 1944, as bishop of Columbus, Ohio, the cabinet officials and other national figures present included Claude Wickard, secretary of agriculture, Francis Biddle, attorney

general, Frances Perkins, secretary of labor, Adolf A. Berle, assistant secretary of state, Senator Burton, several congressmen, representatives of the army and navy, and ambassadors or other representatives of nine foreign countries.

What were they all doing there?[445]

All of this contriving to gain political power in the world and thus to spread the Gospel by force reveals that the Pope is the Anti-Christ. This all-out political activity on the part of Rome fulfills a great portion of the Bible's prophecies concerning the Antichrist.

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445. One exciting volume we read concerning the Pope's lust for temporal power is Dr. Theodore Graebner's "The Pope and Temporal Power." (Northwestern Publishing House, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 1929). We have not quoted from it before since it is useless to try to select "best" quotations because the book is completely filled with choice morsels under such delectable chapters as "The Pope and the World War," "Some Forgotten Chapters of our History", "The Pope and the Presidency," and "Temporal Power at Last!" Let the reader look into this volume thoroughly for a full discussion of the subject of the pope and his earthly authority.

V

The Progressive Revelation of Antichrist

V. The Progressive Revelation of Antichrist

The spirit of Antichrist began to show itself early in the history of the Christian Church. A brief study of the history of dogma will show the student how the Antichrist grew with true diabolical ingenuity from apostolic days till his present position of vast power and authority, both in spiritual and temporal domains.

The Apostles Paul and John both prophesied concerning the Antichrist, saying that he was at work already in the first century, in the sixth and tenth decades.[446]

In those days the Pope was not in power (though the Romanists claim there was a pope from the time of Peter on), but the spirit which prevailed in John's day soon climaxed in the Papacy. And those who heeded the warning of Paul and John and followed the explanation and description the Apostles clearly gave in Scriptures, could not help recognizing the Pope as the Antichrist when he finally came. For the Roman Pontiff as the head and exponent of the Roman system fulfills in every detail the description of the Antichrist in Holy Scripture.

The development of an ecclesiastical hierarchy from apostolic times onward, is one clear revelation of the Antichrist. This powerful doctrine was promulgated as early as Cyprian of Carthage and Ignatius of Antioch. It paved the way for the totalitarian government of the Roman Church - Sacerdotalism, which was one of the great factors in

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446. 2 Thess. 2:3-12; I John 2:18; 4:3.

making the Pope the Antichrist as it grew in power during the centuries. Every Catholic is therefore bound to obey the one supreme "divinely instituted" head, the Pope of Rome.

Another step in the development of the popish Antichrist was the gradual putting aside of Christ as the one and only, the all-sufficient Savior of sinners in favor of His mother, Mary. True, some writings of the Roman Church speak of Christ as the Divine Son, but systematically they speak of Him as the "Son of Mary" rather than the "Son of God".

Everything Rome does is more and more centered around Mother Mary. She is the compassionate one, the intercessor for sinners to God, the real mediator between God and men. Jesus is relegated to a subordinate position and the people are taught to trust in Mary rather than in the Son of God for salvation.

"Notwithstanding, therefore, the orthodoxy of creeds and formularies, the maintenance professedly of the doctrine of the Trinity (though truly it is denied in practice) and all that, the Christ of Romanism is 'another Jesus'." [447]

Let the reader examine some official Catholic writings on their teachings. He will discover that whole books are filled with Rome's main doctrines of purgatory, prayers for the dead, the Mass, marriage laws, the seven Sacraments, the confession, and other laws of the church, - but little is the testimony for Christ and His salvation, if any at all!

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447. Philip Mauro, Things Which Soon Must Come To Pass, p. 107f.

Thus people are taught to go to heaven by works, by following the rules and customs of the Church, instead of by the works of Jesus the Savior. Thus the central Doctrine of Justification by grace through faith was gradually discarded through the years in favor of the blatant doctrine of works which over-turns the whole foundation of the Gospel. If this isn't the work of the Antichrist, what is it?

"One of the most discouraging chapters in the entire history of dogma is this loss of the great doctrine of Christ and His Apostles, namely that a man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the Law. This development was the inevitable consequence of the situation in the church."448

Another step (the reader will note that these steps are not necessarily chronological) to assume the full role of the Antichrist on the part of Rome was the false teaching concerning the Lord's Supper. This move was on the part of Rome also vitiates the Doctrine of Justification by Faith alone:

> Here again it was a truly diabolical cleverness that succeeded in bringing in the idea of a further necessary sacrifice. It is but natural, almost inevitable, that this first step in the false direction would lead to others, to the blasphemy of transsubstantiation, to the adoration of the host, to the withdrawal of the chalice, and in particular to the Mass of the Romish Church, that abomination of wickedness which has not only vitiated the Lord's Supper, but has made the entire system of church relationships and church duties one of mere outward performances. Truly, this is

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448. Paul E. Kretzmann, The Antichrist, p. 16.

> one of the great marks of the Antichrist, the subversion and denial of one of the most beautiful and comforting truths of the Gospel.[449]

But the end of the 12th century brought the further development of the Church into the Antichrist Church. The Bible as the only source and norm of salvation and life was undermined in favor of a translation, the Vulgate, which bristles with errors and church traditions.

Next it was maintained that the traditions of the Fathers and the decrees of the Councils are on a level with the words of Scripture, and must be obeyed as well as the words of Christ Himself. And the history of the Catholic Church has revealed that where the word of Christ conflicted with the traditions of the Church, the Word of Christ was the first to be discarded, not tradition!

The proclamation of the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of Mary and the teaching on the free will of man, even after the Fall, perverted the force of the doctrine of Original Sin and Total Depravity.

This led to "infused grace" (gratia infusa) and the false doctrine of faith and love as a way to salvation in heaven.

The next step was the introduction of more sacraments into the church, seven in all, more than Jesus instituted. These greatly strengthened the power of the hierarchy over the masses.

The veneration of the saints and masses for the dead followed. In fact, around the Mass all Catholicism is built.

If people are to pray for the dead, especially for those who

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449. Ibidem, p. 16.

apparently went to hell at death, they must have something to pray them out of. The papists invented purgatory, a fine money-making scheme for the ambitious among the Catholic bishops. Purgatory gave rise to the evil practice of granting, and finally selling, of indulgences, the powder-keg which set off the Reformation.

No wonder the souls who were still Christ's at the end of the 12th century (not only a year or so before 1517 did the people think Rome needed a thorough house-cleaning) sighed because of the deplorable conditions of their church and asked God to help!

In view of all these things - who is to be blamed for the Reformation? Luther or the Romanists themselves? Let the man with common-sense judgment answer this question. The Romanists always blame Luther for "harming" their lucrative church system; but many years before Luther was born, people tried to reform the church - the only difference is that they did not succeed.[450]

But one fact is clear, and a look at the Book of Revelation shows it was also prophesied. Luther by the grace and power of God led the stream of the Word of God into the evil stream of lies and falsities of Antichrist, and restored the Church of Christ to its pristine and apostolic purity.

Thus was the Man of Sin revealed; Antichrist was exposed. Though

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450. "The Roman Catholic Church, more properly called the Romish Sect, the Church of Antichrist, had its inception with the Council of Trent, and should be so dated in all sound books of church history. For the decrees of this sect clearly indicate that the tenets which were accepted and promulgated under the jurisdiction of the Papacy within the Catholic Church before the Reformation have now been received as the official doctrines of this new denomination." - Dr. P.E. Kretzmann, The Antichrist, p. 17.

he lives and is powerful yet today, his power was struck a mighty blow, and God promises that at the end of time he shall be destroyed forever and receive the same reward of hell as Satan himself.

Anyone who reads the Decrees of the Council of Trent, 1546-1563, must admit that the Pope is the Antichrist. This one could almost do without the aid of the prophecies of Scripture!

So today, the choice before all people is: Christ or - Antichrist?

And Rome is still progressing to the ultimate in her role as the Antichrist. More clearly century by century it is revealed that this is indeed the one great Antichrist foretold in Scripture. We think one of the big steps was the proclamation by decree that the pope is infallible when he speaks ex cathedra (from his throne in official capacity), a doctrine by creatures, not by God, as late as 1870, only 75 years ago!

The end is not yet. Trends in Catholic writings and doctrine reveal that a total dethronement of Christ in favor of Mariolatry , that is, the setting up of a creature to worship and pray to by decree (now only in practice) instead of Christ, is coming.

This last extreme in the progressive revelation of Antichrist is what is called "The Assumption of Mary". This teaching of Rome has been in the church since the sixth century, but has never been declared a dogma of the church. By many leaders of Antichriat it is unofficially considered a doctrine, and it seems only a matter of time before it will be proclaimed a dogma officially from Rome.

> This belief (the Assumption of Mary) is by no means a defined dogma of faith, but it is so firmly rooted

> in Christian (!) piety that it would be temerarious to deny it.[451]

A Catholic journal takes up the task of preparing the way for the official proclamation of this doctrine to Catholic lay people by printing information like this:

> It is not yet a defined article of faith; yet it has been held dearly through many centuries and seems clearly included among the prerogatives which God conferred on His blessed Mother. It is very probable that our own century will see this doctrine raised to the dignity of an article of faith. If so, we shall then complete the tale of the end of Mary's days with as beautiful a doctrine as that which touches her beginnings in immaculate conception.[452]

Any church body which has the effrontery to "raise a teaching to the dignity of an article of faith" certainly cannot be called Christian. What is this but the action of the Antichrist?

A recent (1942) book from the Catholic presses entitled Mary In Her Scapular Promise, by John M. Haffert, is based on the supposed doctrine of the Assumption of Mary, and raises her to the level with God. The quotations we offer demonstrate how far the Antichrist has gone in creating and publishing false doctrine:

Msgr. Fulton J. Sheen in the Preface to the book writes:

> Mr. Haffert's case is so strikingly presented that to challenge this devotion is to challenge to some extent, the tradition and authority of the Church.[453]

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451. Cabrol, The Year's Liturgy, Vol. II, p. 40.
452. America, August 9, 1941.
453. Haffert, Mary in Her Scapular Promise, page VIII.

> The tradition of the Church is full of various titles under which the intercessory power of the Blessed Mother may be invoked. At one time, it is as the Defender of Christianity, when the Turks invaded Europe; at another as the Queen of Peace; at another as the Lady of Lourdes. This book is concerned with one of these titles and one of the most glorious of them all: "Mary, Mother of the Scapular of Mount Carmel."[454]

> The scapular, which is a miniature of clothing, a reversal of the penalties and effects of original sin ... Mary's gift of clothing is just a simple garment, sufficient to cover the traces of original sin in us, but its very simplicity is also a witness to the fact that her own beautiful mantle covers our souls. The scapular bears therefore a double witness: to Mary's protection against the ravages of the flesh occasioned by the Fall, and to Mary's influence as Mediatrix of graces, who covers our souls with the richness of her Son's Redemption.[455]

> With particular reference to Mary's intercession for our eternal salvation, Mr. Haffert has been inspired to write this book of devotion.[456]

> So, since the Scapular devotion was your secret, impart it now to the world that the Reign of Jesus through Mary be hastened.

Anyone who reads this book will see the legends and non-scriptural grounds for Catholic Doctrine. How queer that the promise of the Scapular should come from that foot-like cloud rising out of the sea upon Mt. Carmel after the defeat of the prophets of Baal!

> And the story of the mighty vision of Simon Stock in 1251 when he retired to the Cambridge Monastery, when the Mother Mary came to him while he prayed in his tiny cell; holding forth the brown Scapular of the friars and saying: "Receive, my Beloved Son, this habit of the Order: this shall be to thee and to all

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454. Ibid., page VII
455. Ibid., page IX
456. Ibid., page X

> Carmelites a privilege, that whosoever dies clothed in this shall never suffer eternal fire.[457]
>
> Presenting the Scapular to Saint Simon for the world, Our Lady makes but one condition to Her promise of Salvation: "Whatsoever dies clothed in this Habit shall not suffer the fires of hell". She promises that anyone who enters Her family of Carmel, and dies there, shall not be lost.[458]
>
> To die in the membership of Mary's family is the one condition. Now, in order to so die, one must die clothed in the sign of membership! This sign of membership may be the large scapular of the religious habit, the small scapular, or the scapular Medal ... The Scapular must be the large one. It must be of woven wool, of a color somewhere between brown and black, and of rectangular shape. It must be so made that it can hang over the shoulders and thus rest at once against the front and back of the body.[459]

How silly and foolish the whole matter is can be seen from the following excerpt:

> In 1910, Pope Pius X made an astounding legislation. He declared that the cloth Scapular, after the enrollment, could be replaced by a medal which bore on one side an image of the Sacred Heart and on the other an image of Our Lady. The missionaries in torrid zones had besought him to authoritatively make such a mutation of the Sign of membership because cloth Scapulars were so inconvenient for the natives. With no outer clothing to protect those two little pieces of cloth joined by strings, the Scapulars soon became ragged and knotted; due to the heat and frequent uncleanliness of the natives, they also became nesting places for vermin; smelly, curled and unsightly. Surely what Our Lady had made a Sign of membership in Europe was not appropriate in the tropics. So the Vicar of Christ changed it, as Mary undoubtedly wished. And if ever an act was providential, it was this very legislation. Four years later the World War broke out and literally millions would have had to face death without Mary's assurance

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457. Ibid., page X
458. Ibid., page XII
459. Ibid., page XVI

> of Salvation had it not been for the Scapular Medal. Not only did it become difficult to obtain the cloth Scapulars in that terrible war, but something more drastic happened. In the filth of the trenches the Scapulars, which the soldiers would never take off, became nests for vermin and soldiers were officially deprived of them! But the medal was then to be had. 460

What an attempt to make Mary a God and giver of heaven! The Vicar of Christ changed it!

Pope Benedict XV declared on July 8, 1916: "And the Pontiff proceeded to grant an indulgence of five hundred days for each time the Scapular is kissed."461

The way they prove the historicity of the Scapular is simply outrageous. There is no basis at all except the decree of the Pope. Everytime some one attacks it, they add more indulgences to it and put his book on the index of prohibited books.

The Scapular is a most potent means of salvation according to Haffert's next words:

> Thus the Scapular is not only an assurance of Salvation after death, it is even now a powerful means of Grace. In instituting such a simple but complete devotion, Mary continually hinders Herself, as it were, to intercede for us. Truly, then, is the Scapular, Her Sacrament; it is a visible pledge of her intercession, the very channel of Grace. She has complete dominion over Grace, says Saint Bernard, so that "she dispenses to whom she will, when she wills, and in so much as she wills." "The Scapular is one of the greatest means of salvation," says Father Houdry, "because Mary has attached a promise of Salvation to the Scapular and hence a special protection, which means that she gives us very powerful means for working out our salvation. It only remains for us to make them infallible."462

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460. Ibid., pages 16 and 17.
461. Ibid., page 19
462. Ibid., pages 56 and 57.

Here is the sum total of blasphemy in the attempt of the Roman Church to exalt Mary to the godhead - here is real Antichristianity!

> So let the professed members of the said Order be freed from punishment and from guilt on what day they go from this world; so that with hastened step they shall pass over Purgatory. I, THE MOTHER OF GRACE, SHALL DESCEND INTO PURGATORY ON THE SATURDAY AFTER THEIR DEATH AND WHOMSOEVER I SHALL FIND IN PURGATORY I SHALL FREE, so that I may lead them unto the holy mountain of life everlasting. - From the Papal Bull of Pope John XXII, March 3, 1322.[463]

So the next step in the progressive revelation of the Antichrist is the Assumption of Mary. When this takes place, and it will, Antichrist will have removed the Savior entirely from His place in God's plan of Salvation and will have placed a creature in His stead. Diabolical! Truly the work of the Harlot!

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463. Ibid., pages 75 and 76.

VI

The Lutheran Confessions on the Antichrist

VI. The Lutheran Confessions on the Antichrist

Many theologians, even Lutheran divines, seem to be of the opinion that the Lutheran Confessions do not teach the Doctrine of the Antichrist, that is, they say that the Confessional Books do not identify the Pope and his system with Antichrist. Some say that Luther never called the Pope the Antichrist alone, but also included the Turk at times, or some other powerful personage like Mohammed, who sought to destroy Christianity in his day.

Therefore, they say, there was some doubt in Luther's mind as to whom the Antichrist really is. "If Luther doubted, so can we", is their argument. "After all", they say, "the Bible does not specifically state: The Pope is the Very Antichrist; the Confessions alone do that, and the Confessions are of human origin."

Then comes the argument whether or not the teaching that the Pope is the Antichrist is a doctrine divisive of church and prayer fellowship in the Lutheran Church. Is it, in other words, a fundamental doctrine, a non-fundamental doctrine, or simply a historical judgment based on Scripture?

It is not our intention to give detailed answers to these questions. This task has been done more ably elsewhere. But we would like to state our opinion concerning the matter after a thorough study of the Antichrist and accompanying problems.

Generally speaking, every statement, every teaching of the Bible

is a doctrine which Christians who accept the Bible must believe. But what is a dogma or doctrine, according to church usage? A dogma or doctrine is a teaching of the Bible formulated in the confessional writings of a church body and officially proclaimed as the church's own.

Of course, the doctrines of any church must be based upon the clear and actual teaching of God's Word. By no means may a church body accept as a true doctrine any teaching which is not based on the clear Words of Scripture.

We reason thus, therefore, as any loyal Lutheran should: We believe that the Confessional Books of the Lutheran Church express the true teachings of God's Word. Every Lutheran pastor gives his oath of allegiance to these books voluntarily when he enters his sacred office; every congregation's constitution in our Missouri Synod calls upon each member of the church to accept the teachings of the Confessions as teaching the Word of God in its truth and purity.

There can be no mistake about the fact that the Lutheran Confessions teach that the Pope is the Antichrist, as we shall show shortly by quoting the Confessions themselves. Therefore, we give a quia confession to the teachings of our Confessional writings. Why do otherwise? We whole-heartedly accept our Confessional Books not because they are on the level with the Bible; not because they are our Bible; but because (quia) they teach the Bible correctly, because they contain the doctrines of the Bible.

We do not accept them in so far as (quatenus) they contain the truths of the Bible. By such a weak confession anyone can accept them by simply discarding what he does not care to believe.

By such a position we do not for one moment think that genuine Lutheranism consists in placing the Confessions' interpretations above the plain words of Scripture itself. We would then cease calling ourselves a Lutheran Pastor, for such action would be tantamount to Romanism which we despise.

Again, permit us to state also, to ward off false conclusions, that we know the Scriptures do not state in so many words (expressis, nudis verbis): "The Pope of Rome is the Antichrist". This claim has never been made by orthodox teachers, and we do not advocate it here. The same is true of any number of doctrines of the Lutheran corpus doctrinae.

But our beloved Lutheran Church, in it's official Confessions (to which we are pledged as a Pastor in the Lutheran Church), basing its statements upon clear Scripture, has declared its doctrinal position: Papam verum Antichristum esse. It is our honest conviction that this declaration is based on the Words of Scripture, yes, drawn from words which cannot be misunderstood if they are accepted as they read and if there is no ulterior motive in the interpreter's mind for not accepting them. The Doctrine of the Antichrist, although not a fundamental, but a non-fundamental doctrine, is definitely not an open question (as many want to make it), both according to Scripture and according to the Lutheran Confessions.

He who will not accept what our Lutheran Confessions say about the Antichrist has the burden of proof to show that they are wrong. To say the least, he must place himself above the theological acumen of Luther, Walther, Pieper, and other acknowledged masters of Scriptural interpretation. We must submit to the Lutheran Confessions and the clear words of Scripture upon which they are based, not with a weak quatenus

but with a definite quia subscription.

Though the Bible does not expressly state who the antichrist is, it describes him, so that Christians may recognize him and be warned. As we endeavor to determine who this antichrist may be, we must not take just one or two traits, but the entire composite picture as portrayed in the Scriptures, and find who fits into the picture. As we study the history of the Church, we find but one institution which bears all the marks ascribed to antichrist, and that is the Roman Papacy.

There is nothing in the history of man that so fully answers the description of the antichrist given in the Bible as the Roman Papacy. Saying that the Pope is the antichrist, we are not thinking of one individual person, but of a succession of persons, each carrying on where his predecessor left off. It applies to the system of the Papacy as it developed in the course of time, and of which each individual Pope is the head.

We do not believe such a firm stand on our Lutheran Confessions can be labeled a mere blind loyalty. We believe that he who subscribes to the Confessions is at the same time following the Bible.

What other position is a loyal Lutheran, be he a pastor or a layman, to take? Why all the digression and argument concerning fundamental doctrines, primary fundamental doctrines, secondary fundamental doctrines, non-fundamental doctrines, open questions, theological problems, historical judgments, and other divisions of dogmatics, when we discuss the Antichrist? Surely we believe that such divisions of doctrine in dogmatics help one to determine the relative importance of

of doctrines as far as salvation is concerned, but such divisions should not determine what we are to believe and not to believe. The Holy Scriptures determine what we believe.[464]

Therefore, let a Lutheran who calls himself a Lutheran and believes he is a Lutheran, accept the teaching of the Papal Antichrist as a Doctrine of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. Let him be a Confessional Lutheran. Let him declare his quia acceptance of the Lutheran Confessions, or let him admit he is a Lutheran only in part.

The Lutheran Church has proclaimed that the Pope is the Antichrist since its very inception; why are we suddenly wrong? Let us answer these questions: Who has found a better interpretation of the Antichrist passages? Who has proved sufficiently that the Pope is not the Antichrist? What person or institution fits the Antichrist prophecies better than the Papal System? Shall we say the Turk? Hitler's Nazism? Russia's Bolshevism? Why change now after four hundred years of Lutheran History?

We are of the opinion that the objections to the Confessional Standard on the Antichrist are very weak indeed. The "Antichrists" offered in exchange for the Papal Antichrist of our Confessional statements are of a very temporary nature and do not cover all the marks of Antichrist.

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464. "The teaching concerning the Antichrist is in itself not a fundamental doctrine, either of the primary or of the secondary variety, nor is it a non-fundamental doctrine according to the definition given above, namely according to the nomenclature suggested by Lutheran dogmaticians. But the teaching concerning the Antichrist, as promulgated by the true Lutheran Church, is definitely a teaching of the Bible whose truth may not be denied without jeopardizing the basic fact accepted by every true believer, namely, that of the inspiration of all the truths contained in the Sacred Record." - P. E. Kretzmann, The Antichrist, p. 4.

The objection most frequently registered is that the Antichrist must be regarded as an individual person who must be sought in some of the present-day anti-religious movements, such as Modernism or Bolshevism. We have before us such a contention of one of our Lutheran brethren, reading as follows:

> So it is high time that we restudy those prophecies and look about us in the world for present-day Anti-christian persons or powers. The writer, in common with other Bible students and observers of world events, believes that today there is a greater power threatening Christendom than Rome ever was ... It is militantly atheistic. Like A ntiochus, it has broken into the temple from without; it has already, in two large branches of Christendom, put its own teachers of anti-religious atheism in the place once occupied by Christian priests and pastors and teachers.
>
> Its Antichristian creed is not confined to one country or continent, but is rapidly spreading throughout the world, and has gained a better foothold in our own country than we like to admit to ourselves. Rome's influence and power, on the other hand, is waning (?). This does not mean that Rome is an impotent foe of the Gospel of justification by faith alone. For that matter, neither is Modern Liberalism within the ranks of Protestantism - a movement that has been paving the way for this new Antichristian foe. But Rome has never opposed God and His Word in the measure that this new foe is opposing all religion as "the opium of the people."
>
> Here is food for thought - sober thought - untainted by Chiliastic fanaticism. It is high time that we admit that Luther's Endchrist has served its purpose, and with a mind stripped of tradition and prejudice we do exactly what Luther did four hundred years ago - for our warning and encouragement apply the Antichrist prophecies to present-day foes of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.[465]

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465. Rev. J. H. Gockel, Wilmette, Illinois, Luther's Antichrist, pp.5-6, ca. 1944. No doubt he is speaking of Russian Atheistic Communism.

Although Modernism arose within the Church and is certainly Antichristian, yet it lacks the marks of Antichrist. We believe that Bolshevism and Mohammedanism cannot be the Antichrist since their existence is temporary, both arising after 600 A.D. Also, they arose outside the Church.

We are little disturbed by the notation of Veit Dieterich in the Alterburger Bibelwerk which he wrote under II Thessalonians 2, in 1544: "When the Roman Empire fell, then both the Pope and Mohammed, who without doubt are the true Antichrist, arose." Nor do we take seriously his remark on Daniel 12: "This Antichrist kingdom is not only the godless papacy but also the kingdom of the Turk and Mohammed." We do not consider the Altenburger Biblewerk a confessional writing of our Lutheran Church anymore than we would a book written by one of our theologians today and published with the notes and opinions of one individual.

Following are some examples of indentifying the Antichrist with present-day persons and powers. Notice in this first example how arbitrary the interpreter is in attributing marks of the Antichrist (50 years of age!) which are not found in the Antichrist prophecies:

> Is Mussolini the Antichrist? His answer is: He may be. I know of no reason why he would not fit the description of this terrible Man of Sin. He is an Italian. He is evidently an atheist. He once debated for atheism. He has the ruthless disposition, the ruling genius. He has an obsession to restore the Roman Empire. Furthermore, he is already in power in Rome ... Mussolini is somewhat past fifty, neither too young nor too old for the brief meteoric rule of the horrible Man of Sin. The Man of Sin must be a ruler at Rome, and Mussolini

might be the man.[466]

The following crass example makes Hitler the Antichrist:

> Antichrist will allow no man to buy or sell without his mark (Rev. 13:16,17). Hitler has his mark, the swastika, and while as yet he may not have branded it on any one's hand or forehead, yet 650,000 German Jews can testify that no one in Germany can buy or sell without his permission.[467]

Will one favor these interpretations in place of the Papacy, especially since both Hitler(?) and Mussolini are now dead?

And of course we Lutherans must have the tables turned on us by the Romanists. Brother Johannes, a Catholic monk who lived about 1600 wrote some prophecy in the Paris Figaro first printed in 1914:

> The real Antichrist will be one of the monarchs of his time, a Lutheran Protestant. He will invoke God and give himself out as his messenger (or apostle). This prince of lies will swear by the Bible. He will represent himself as the arm of the Most High, sent to chastise corrupt peoples. He will have only one arm, but his innumerable armies, who will take for their device the words 'God with us' will resemble the infernal legions.

So far we have not seen a one-armed Lutheran who answers to this description. This is really "something old and something new", a Lutheran Antichrist!

Many of these interpreters are like the cross old giant

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466. John R. Rice, World-wide War and the Bible, 1940, quoted from War In The Light Of Prophecy, Theodore Graebner, page 1.

467. King's Business, a Millennialist Magazine, quoted from War In The Light Of Prophecy, page 2.

called Procrustes of Greek fable lore. This mad giant stopped all travelers that came his way and forced them to lie in his bed. His most evil habit was that he always made his customers fit the bed. If a traveler was too long for the bed, he would cut off the feet or head and make a perfect fit. If a man was too short, he would stretch him until he fit the uniform size. So these men handle the words of the Bible, especially the marks of the Antichrist. They pick an "anti-christ" and then saw and chisel and stretch until he "fits".

To those who feel that the Bible must say in express words, "The Pope of Rome is the Antichrist", and that using the Law of Identity is not legitimate, we would reply that Scripture itself constantly operates along this line. How did the preachers of the early Apostolic Period, before the writing of the canonical books of what is now the New Testament, proceed to prove their identification of the promised Messiah with Jesus of Nazareth? During the Old Testament period the Messianic Prophecies built up the picture of the Messiah until his identity could not be mistaken, except by those who wished to remain blind, when He was born in Bethlehem and after He had fulfilled the works His Father had sent Him to do. For a number of years, perhaps two decades or more, the people who testified of Christ before the New Testament books were written, used this very method of comparing prophecy with fulfillment in order to show their hearers that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah. Can we do wrong today if we use a method of interpretation the Bible itself uses?[468]

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468. Compare Acts 3:18.22-26; 5:29-33; 13:24-39. St. John 1:41.45. John 10:22-38. St. Paul uses thisform of argumentation in presenting the Christian Doctrine throughout his letters, as in Romans 3:28; Galatians 3:13-29; Galatians 4:24-31. We should also like to call attention

The objection that the fulfillment of the Antichrist prophecies still lies in the future is ruled out by the prophecies in the Book of Revelation, one of which this thesis undertook to unravel, and by several passages in the Book of Daniel. Those who do not care to risk identifying the Antichrist take this easy way out, saying, "He hasn't appeared on the scene yet." In this way they free themselves of any obligation of studying the Antichrist prophecies, and perhaps will die without ever knowing who the Antichrist is. It is our opinion that more of our Lutheran divines think along these lines than we realize.

We have based our statements upon what we have read and studied, in the Scriptures and in our Confessions, which we believe to be the correct interpretation of the Scriptures. What do the Lutheran Confessions actually teach concerning the Antichrist? We shall quote at length from our Lutheran Confessional Writings to show that they plainly teach that the Pope is the very Antichrist. And after reading these quotations the Lutheran theologian will have to admit that doubt or hesitation in hardly excusable, since our Confessions make very clear statements regarding the Antichrist.

One of the outstanding statements on the Antichrist is in The Smalcald Articles. Hear Dr. Martin Luther as he hides no words in his conviction that the Pope is the very Antichrist:

> This teaching (the Pope's claim of power over all things) shows forcefully that the Pope is

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in particular to the argumentation of Peter, in Acts 2:22-36, and of Paul in Acts 13:26-30, since these arguments are almost an exact analogy to the necessary deductions from clear Scriptural statments which we hold in support of the Biblical and Lutheran Doctrine of the Antichrist.

> the very Antichrist - "papam esse ipsum verum antichristum" - who has exalted himself above, and opposed himself against Christ, because he will not permit Christians to be saved without his power, which, nevertheless, is nothing, and is neither ordained nor commanded by God. That is, properly speaking, to exalt himself above all that is called God, as Paul says, 2 Thessalonians 2:4.[469]
>
> Therefore, just as little as we can worship the devil himself as Lord and God, we can endure his apostle, the Pope, or Antichrist, in his rule as head or lord. For to lie and to kill, and to destroy body and soul eternally, that is wherein his papal government really consists, as I have very clearly shown in many books.[470]

Those two excerpts from our Lutheran Confessions are very clear concerning the position of the Lutheran Fathers on the Antichrist. Forty-three theologians and princes subscribed their names to the document.

We have just heard Luther himself speak. Now let us hear Melanchthon:

> Now it is manifest that the Roman pontiffs, with their adherents defend and practise godless doctrines and godless services. And the marks (all the vices) of Antichrist plainly agree with the kingdom of the Pope and his adherents. For Paul, 2 Thess. 2:3, in describing to the Thessalonians Antichrist, calls him an adversary of Christ ... He speaks therefore of one ruling in the Church, not of heathen kings, and he calls this one the adversary of Christ, because he will devise doctrine conflicting with the

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469. Part II, Article IV, Triglotta, p. 475. This statement was approved forty years later when it was repeated in The Formula of Concord, Thor. Decl. X, "Of The Church", Triglotta, p. 1059.

470. Ibidem

Gospel, and will assume to himself divine authority.[471]

The treatise, Of The Power and Primacy Of The Pope, speaks of the Pope as the Antichrist:

> This being the case, all Christians ought to beware of becoming partakers of the godless doctrine, blasphemies, and unjust cruelty of the Pope. On this account they ought to desert and execrate the Pope with his adherents as the kingdom of Antichrist; just as Christ has commanded, Matt. 7:15: Beware of false prophets.[472]

The Smalcald Articles, "Of the Power And Jurisdiction of Bishops", says:

> Therefore, even though the bishop of Rome had the primacy by divine right, yet since he defends godless services and doctrine conflicting with the Gospel, obedience is not due him; yea, it is necessary to resist him as Antichrist.

There is nothing uncertain or ambiguous about any of these statements. The Lutheran Confessions clearly teach that the Pope is the Antichrist. And more statements can be found. For instance, consider these words from The Apology of the Augsburg Confession, which we will quote in the German version:

> Derhalben der Papst ein irdischer Gott, eine oberste Majestaet und allein der grossmaechtigste Herr in aller Welt ist, ueber alle Koenigreiche,

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471. The Smalcald Articles, "Of the Power and Primacy of the Pope," Triglotta p. 515. The Smalcald Articles form the theological masterpiece of the Reformation, summarizing the Lutheran doctrine against the Papacy. Melanchthon is the author. The Articles were accepted February 23, 1537, at Smalcald.

472. Ibidem, page 517.

> ueber alle Lande und Leute, ueber alle Gueter, geistliche und weltliche, und also in seiner Hand hat alles, beide weltliches und geistliches Schwert. Diese Definition, welche sich auf die rechte Kirche gar nicht, aber auf des roemischen Papste Wesen wohl reimt, findet man nicht allein in der Kanonisten Buechern, sondern Daniel der Prophet walt den Antichristen auf diese Weise.[473]

The Apology speaks again under Article XV (VIII), "Of Human Traditions In The Church", where Melanchthon writes as follows:

> And what need is there of words on a subject so manifest? If the adversaries defend these human services as meriting justification, grace, and the remission of sins, they simply establish the kingdom of Antichrist. For the kingdom of Antichrist is a new service of God, devised by human authority rejecting Christ ... Daniel 11,38, indicates that new human services will be the very form and constitution of the kingdom of Antichrist.[474]

We find these words on page 371 of the Apology:

> We find fault with the laws which, since the ancient synods, the Popes of Rome have framed contrary to the authority of the Synods ... Therefore this law concerning perpetual celibacy is peculiar to this new pontifical despotism. Nor is it without a reason. For Daniel 11, 37, ascribes to the kingdom of Antichrist this mark, namely, the contempt of women.[475]

In the Apology Melanchthon again writes under Article XXIV (XII), "Of The Mass For The Dead," that the Pope is the very Antichrist:

> And it seems that this Baalic worship (the Mass)

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473. Art. VII (VIII), page 235.
474. Page 319.
475. "Of The Marriage Of Priests", Art. XXIII (XI).

> will endure as long as the reign of the Pope, until Christ will come to judge, and by the glory of His advent destroy the reign of Antichrist.[476]

We have no doubt that the Lutheran Confessions teach the doctrine that the Pope of Rome and all that he represents is the Antichrist.

The congregation of which we are the Pastor, Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church of Pekin, Illinois, in its Constitution has this standard of doctrine under Article III, "Basis of Doctrine", Section 2: "This congregation acknowledges and accepts all the Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, contained in the Book of Concord of 1580, as the true and sound exposition of the Bible, according to which all doctrines are to be examined and taught, and all doctrinal controversies, which may arise, adjudged." Among the nine symbolical books mentioned in this congregation's Constitution and By-Laws are The Apology of the Augsburg Confession, The Smalcald Articles, and The Formula of Concord. And does not Synod itself and all the congregations of our Missouri Synod subscribe to these same Confessional Books?

Only men who are in accord with the confessional standard of our cohgregation can be pastors or teachers in the congregation. When we became the Pastor, we gave an oath of allegiance to these Confessions. We believe in them. We shall always believe in them.

Even the most recent "confession" of the Lutheran Church, "The Doctrinal Affirmation", which many divines claim does not "hew the line close enough" in many respects, declares that the Pope is the

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476. Triglotta, page 419.

Antichrist and states concerning certain problems related to our proposition as follows:

Of Open Questions

> 48. Those questions in the domain of Christian doctrine may be termed open questions which Scripture answers either not at all or not clearly ... Not to be included in the number of open questions are the following: the doctrine of the Church and the Ministry, of Sunday, of Chiliasm, and of Antichrist, these doctrines being clearly defined in Scripture.

Of The Symbols of the Lutheran Church

> 50. Since the Christian Church cannot make doctrines, but can and should simply profess the doctrine revealed in Holy Scripture, the doctrinal decisions of the symbols are binding upon the conscience not because our Church has made them nor because they are the outcome of doctrinal controversies, but only because they are the doctrinal decisions of Holy Scripture itself.
>
> 51. Those desiring to be admitted into the public ministry of the Lutheran Church pledge themselves to teach according to the symbols not "in so far as", but "because" the symbols agree with Scripture. He who is unable to accept as Scripture the doctrines set forth in the Lutheran symbols and their rejection of the corresponding errors must not be admitted into the ministry of the Lutheran Church.[477]

Concerning the Antichrist, the Doctrinal Affirmation confesses as follows (and here we sense some weak and vague phrases):

> 45. The Antichrist. - As to the Antichrist, we

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477. Doctrinal Affirmation of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States, and of the American Lutheran Church, St. Louis, Missouri, Concordia Publishing House, September, 1944, pp. 19-20.

> believe that the prophecies of the Holy Scriptures in 2 Thess. 2:3-12 and 1 John 2:18 have found a fulfillment in the Pope of Rome and his dominion. (footnote: We definitely do not like the phrase "a fulfillment"; we would rather have "the fulfillment".) All the features of the Antichrist as drawn in these prophecies, including the most abominable and horrible ones ... these very features are the outstanding characteristics of the Papacy. (Cp. Smalcald Articles, Triglot, p. 515, paragraphs 39-41, p. 401, paragraph 45; M., pp.336, 358.).
>
> Hence we subscribe to the statement of our Confessions that the Pope is "the very Antichrist" (Smalcald Articles, Triglot, p. 475, paragraph 10; M., P. 308), which statement is a historical judgment based upon a clear prophecy of Scripture (why not "doctrine" instead of "statement"?)
>
> Whether in the future, prior to Christ's return to Judgment, there will be a special unfolding of the antichristian power already present now and thus a still more comprehensive fulfillment of 2 Thessalonians 2 may occur, we leave to the Lord and Ruler of the Church and of world history. (Why was this added at all?)[478]

When one of our Lutheran Pastors asked the faculty of our Concordia Theological Seminary, St. Louis, for an opinion concerning the Antichrist, he received the following statement:

> Your question, "Is the statement of the Smalcald Articles, that 'the Pope is the Antichrist' a doctrine (an article of faith, Glaubenssatz) or a historical judgment?" our Faculty answered, saying, that the teaching that "the Pope is the very Antichrist" is not a mere historical judgment, but a historical judgment based on Scripture.
>
> Since it seems that our answer was not understood, we herewith declare that the Scriptures teach the doctrine of the Antichrist; that "the Pope is the very Antichrist" is a teaching, or doctrine, of

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478. Pages 18 and 19. The parenthetical remarks are ours.

> our Confessions, taught on the basis of 2 Thess. 2, interpreted in the light of history. The doctrine that the Pope is the Antichrist is more than a mere historical judgment, since it rests both on definite words of Holy Scripture and on history.[479]

The Concordia Cyclopedia, an official doctrinal publication of our Lutheran Church, says under the section "Antichrist":

> Who is this Antichrist? (After a long discussion on the marks of Antichrist) If we take all these individual attributes and characteristics together, the picture in its entirety affords a full and adequate description of Romanism, with the Pope of Rome as its head and representative, the apotheosis of wickedness in high places.
>
> The Lutheran Confessions, therefore, do not hesitate to declare frequently, and consistently, that the Pope is the true Antichrist. This is shown on the basis of his prohibition of marriage, of the invocation of saints taught in the Roman Church, of the abuse of the mass, and other false and pernicious doctrines and practices.[480]

Many men who are apparently not well acquainted with the existing literature on the Antichrist, seem to think that the identification of the Papacy as the Antichrist is a doctrine peculiar to the Lutheran Confessions and in particular to the Synodical Conference. In this thesis we have made every effort to point out (and with quotations) that there are many theologians who are definitely not "Missourian" in their confessional standard who positively state that the Pope is the Antichrist.

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479. This opinion was published on May 11, 1942.

480. Pages 26 and 27. Let the reader study carefully Dr. Walther's clear and Lutheran conviction concerning the Antichrist in his great work Law and Gospel, p. 67f.

Others think that before the Reformation there was no thought of identifying the Pope with the Antichrist, implying that this doctrine originated from Luther's hate of the Roman Church which excommunicated him for his stand on the Scriptures as God gave them to us.

But in our reading in regard to the Antichrist Doctrine, we found a little treatise called "The Lantern Light" written about 1400. In this ancient treatise on the Antichrist the author cites the same passages we use today from the Prophets, St. Paul, and Revelation. In one paragraph he plainly states:

> The well, the beginning, and the cause of all the ruin and mischief, is THE COURT OF ROME. Now, by the one authority of God, and one accordance of his holy saints, follows an open conclusion firmly grounded in true belief, that in the court of Rome is the head of Antichrist, and in prelates is the body of Antichrist, and in those clouted sects, as monks, canons, and friars, is the venomous tail of Antichrist.

On the occasion of the Quadricentennial of the Reformation of the Lutheran Church, 1917, the Rev. A. Rasmussen, a Lutheran minister from Franklin Furnace, Ohio, wrote an article entitled "Can We Prove Our Doctrine of Antichrist?" [481] This article makes good reading for anyone who wishes to be enlightened on this question. He writes in the introduction:

> When the searchlight of God's Word was thrown upon the abominations of popery, the Pope stood revealed as a false prophet, yea, more than a false prophet ... the great Antichrist. We believe firmly that our confessors acted according to the good and perfect will of God when they embodied their doctrine of Antichrist in the Lutheran confessions. We believe it was His holy

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481. Theologische Zeitblaetter, Vol. VIII, No. 32, April, 1918, pp. 153-176.

> will that the Evangelical Lutheran Church from the days of the Reformation till the end of the world should bear this testimony against the apostate church of Rome.

Can we prove that the Lutherans are correct in calling the Pope the Antichrist? Rev. Rasmussen says, "Yes!"

> If this doctrine is doubted or denied, the testimony of the Reformation against Rome is weakened considerably. It behooves us, therefore, to be sure of our position. Hence the question: Can we prove our doctrine of Antichrist? To this question we answer emphatically, YES. When we teach and confess that the pope of Rome is the prophesied Antichrist, we are not guessing at things, we are not merely supposing, we are not dealing in possibilities or probabilities, we know we are speaking the truth; we can prove our doctrine.

The Rev. Rasmussen asks and answers this question in another paragraph of his well-written essay:

> How will he be revealed? Will God send us an angel from heaven or an inspired prophet to point him out? No Lutheran would make such an assertion because it would conflict with the Word of God and the formal principle of the Reformation. The distinguishing marks of Antichrist are revealed in Scripture, and the moment we find a man who has all these marks, we can point to him and say with infallible certainty: There is the great Antichrist.

Dr. Theodore Graebner, Concordia Theological Seminary, St. Louis, dedicates the fourth chapter of his book, "War In The Light Of Prophecy", to the subject "The Antichrist". He states that "Chiliasts of the Dispensation School, one and all, connect the rise of Antichrist with the Second Advent. One and all they reject the Protestant identification of the Man of Sin of Second Thessalonians with the Papacy."[482]

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482. Page 51.

Then Dr. Graebner proceeds to examine the exegesis and the hermeneutical principles of the Chiliastic interpreters and then states the following atthe conclusion of the chapter, words in which we are especially interested.[483]

> What shall the judgment be which sound interpretation of Scripture pronounces upon this interpretation of Antichrist? ... Consider the simple fact that not a single text quoted from the Old Testament and from the Book of Revelation as describing the career of Antichrist is connected with any reference to Antichrist either preceding these passages or in any way connected with them. We are bold enough to say that this picture of Antichrist as a physical ruler who leads the hosts of the world against the Jews in Palestine is, like the national return of the Jews, pure fiction, without a single supporting text of Scripture.
>
> We shall continue to confess with the Lutheran Church of the Reformation age that the Antichristian principle is a spiritual one, that of soul-destroying error, and that particularly in his formal curse pronounced on the doctrine of justification by faith alone, without the deeds of the Law, the Pope has been revealed as Antichrist, as the Man of Sin, 2 Thess.2. We believe likewise that in the persecution of the saints during the Middle Ages and during the Reformation age all those prophecies have been fulfilled which connect Antichrist with warfare upon the confessors of the truth.

Dr. Paul E. Kretzmann, in a noble essay, places the entire proposition in a nut-shell, to which we sincerely subscribe:

> Scripture, in unmistakable and unambiguous terms, teaches the fact of the culmination

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483. Pages 51-57.

> of all antichristian teaching and propaganda in the person of one great Antichrist, who, in a passage which is obviously parallel to those containing the names, is called the man of sin, and the son of perdition. The fact of the Antichrist's existence and power is clear teaching of the Scriptures.
>
> The teaching of Scriptures, in these plain passages concerning the Antichrist, compels us to identify the Antichrist as the pope of Rome (in his function as head of the papal system). This complusion is forced upon everyone who follows the words of the two apostles primarily concerned in this case.
>
> There is no other phenomenon in the history of the world and the Church to which this entire description can be applied in every detail but that of the Papacy.[484]

There may be those people who say that the Scriptures know nothing of popery. But we are convinced that popery is mentioned in the Scriptures, and whenever it is, it is spelled with the letters A-N-T-I-C-H-R-I-S-T.

Ceterum censeo: Papam esse verum Antichristum!

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484. The Antichrist, pages 3 and 4.

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