

THE
REVELATION
OF
ST. JOHN

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NOTE: -

These notes were taken in the lectures of Prof. L. Fuerbringer by one of his students and are mimeographed with his permission, but they have not been corrected or revised by him. --

Introductory:

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) 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. Cp. Acts 2:17 and 1 Cor. 10:11.

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 command of God. Rev. 1:11. -- Jerome says of it: "As many words, as many secrets."

The plan of the book is very simple. It may be divided into four parts:

- 1) Ch. 1-3: The prophecies for the seven churches in Asia.
- 2) Ch. 4-9: The prophecies according to the Book of Seven Seals.
- 3) Ch. 10-19: The prophecy of the Little Book that is eaten by St. John.
- 4) Ch. 20-22: The prophecy of the end of all things.

It may also be divided into three parts:

- 1) Ch. 1:1-8: Introduction
- 2) Ch. 1:9-22:5 Seven visions
- 3) Ch. 22:6-21: Conclusion

To prove that this book refers to the historical existence of the Church: Section 1) speaks of the churches in Asia which were in existence at this time. Section 4) refers to the end of all things. Therefore sections 2) and 3) must refer to the things that happen to the Church from its beginning until the time of the end of the world.

Zahn in his new commentary gives ten visions:

- 1) 1:9 - 3:22. The Seven Letters
- 2) 4,1 - 8:2 The transfer of St. John into heaven, and the Book of Seven Seals
- 3) 8:2 - 11:19 The seven trumpets
- 4) 12:1 - 15:4 The battle with the dragon. Anti-Christ and his Judgment
- 5) 15:5 - 16:21 The seven last plagues
- 6) 17:1 - 18 The solution of the riddle Babylon
- 7) 18 God's judgment over Babylon
- 8) 19 Victory of Christ over Anti-Christ
- 9) 20:1 - 21:8 The thousand years
- 10) 21:9 - 22:7 The heavenly Jerusalem

The whole book is a book of consolation and comfort, especially the seven letters which are contained in the first three chapters. The interpretation of these chapters is definite, because these events have already been fulfilled. It is comforting, because these seven churches represent the whole Christian Church.

CHAPTER 1

Verse 1 The preaching shall be by signs. Christ is the One that has shown these visions. "Edooken" and "deixai" refer to the contents of this book. "Doulo Iocannee," John the servant. Here the name of the author is given. It is a certification of this book. Like the Old Testament prophets, John places his name at the beginning of his book.

Verse 2 This book stresses especially what John has seen, and not what he has heard. The book does not speak of John, but of the Word of God which is given thru the testimony of Jesus Christ. This verse contains the testimony of the book concerning itself. - "Emartyreesen" - The acrist of letter-writing. The writer places himself in the place of the receiver of the book. He means to propound something forceful and emphatic. Christ Himself is the true witness. Some of the things John heard, but mostly he saw things in visions and symbols. Prophets were called visioners because they saw what they were to proclaim.

Luther at first rejected this book, and his reason was that he considered that revelation had no place in the New Testament, for in the New Testament everything was fulfilled. Luther had a great deal of trouble with the New Prophets, who based all their claims on this book. Luther said that the acceptance of this book has been greatly abused and misused. It is interesting to note that altho this book is not in the inner circle of canonical books, it has been rejected by comparatively few, and those that do reject it, do so on the grounds that it does not agree with their religious teaching.

Verse 3 The recommendation of the book. "Makarios" in the participation of the kingdom of glory. This blessedness is tied up with the hearing and keeping of the Word of God. It is a favorite expression of John. "Anagnnooskoon," the public reader in the church, often called the lector. This word shows that in the early Church already, the Bible was read. The lector read the Word of God publicly in the services. "Kairos," the opportune time, a certain time, an appointed period. The whole time of the New Testament is the last time. Nothing is to be expected but the return of Christ in glory. "Akouontes," the member of the Christian Church listening to the lector. "Propheteias" - the whole book consists of words of prophecy.

Verse 4 Verses 4 to 8 give the dedication of the book. John was a well-known man, and it must have been the apostle John. Asia Minor was the diocese of John after the time of Peter and Paul. "Asia" - Asia Minor, the Roman province of Asia, called Asia proconsularis. "Ekkleesiaais" represent the Church. Purposefully it is said seven. This number agrees with the contents of the book; seven seals, seven trumpets, etc. "Charis" is the foundation of the book. "Eireenee" is the fruit of grace. Grace remits sins, and peace gives quiet to the soul. The central thought of the book is the coming of Christ. He directs the happenings in the Church until the last day. This is the consolation of the Church in all trials and tribulations. "Apo ho oon" - proposition with the nominative. This is characteristic of John. It shows the eternal God, the Hebrew "I am that I am." The absolute, unchanging, eternal being, the God of the covenant. The fact that "oon" is not inflected shows the unchangeableness of God. "Pnoumatoon" - these are the seven different ways in which the Holy Ghost reveals Himself. It does not refer to the inner Trinitarian relationship, but to the offices of the Holy Ghost. It indicates the manifold activities and gifts of the Spirit. Cp. Isaiah 11:2.

Verse 5 Christ is here placed third. This does not imply an inferiority of Jesus. "Ho martys" - Christ is the witness of this prophecy. "Proototokos" - Jesus is the first-born from the dead, the One that has conquered death thru His own power. This refers to the death of Christ on the Cross. "Ho archeon" - the

kingly office of Christ. He is a kingly and reliable witness. He reigns and will return in glory. All kings of the earth are subject to Him. This is another consolation for the suppressed Church. "Agapoonti" belongs to "autoo", and "estin" is understood. The glory is to Him loving us. "En too haimati"; the Hebrew "b" of price. "En" is the dative of price. He has saved us not with gold or silver, but with His own precious blood.

Verse 6 "Basileian" is the kingship of the Christians. The abstract idea of kingship is stronger than the concrete idea of king. Jesus has elevated us to the kingship. We are kings. "Basileian" is used in the active sense, not in the passive, denoting that we are in the kingdom. We are kings over sin, death, and the devil, heirs of the coming and heavenly kingdom. Cp. Ex. 19:6 and 1 Pet. 2:9. "Hierois" shows our direct and close connection and communion with God. "Too theoo" shows the dative of attachment and connection. "Autoo" refers back to the "agapoonti" in verse 5. "Hee doxa" is the majestic state of Christ "To kratos" shows the power and dominion of Jesus. He can do everything. This power is to all eternity. "Ameon" emphasizes what John has said. It is a power and means against all suffering and tribulation.

Verse 7 This is the summary of the book in a powerful sentence. It is made firm and established by the name of God. "Erchetai" - the subject of this verb is Christ. The present tense is used here, altho the future should really be used. This is the prophetic present. The return of Christ is the theme of the whole book. He comes for judgment. All other judgments are but harbingers of the judgment that is to come. "Nepheloon" - Jesus comes in the clouds. This shows the majesty and supremacy of Christ. Cp. Dan. 7:13. The man in the clouds was a designation of the Messiah among the Jews. Revelation 19-21 shows how the believers will receive Christ with joy. "Exekenteesan" - Also His enemies (Zach. 12:10) who have pierced Him. Now this means not only those that actually have pierced Him, but also those who have pierced Him again with their sins. Sins are the worst indication of unbelief. "Kopsontai" is not a wailing of repentance, but a wailing of despair, the wailing of Judas. They wail because of what they expect. "Ep'auton" is the direction toward the coming Judge. "Pasai hai phylai" - the unbelievers, the minority or believers not being included in this expression. "Nai, ameen" - a double affirmative, the Greek "nai" and the Hebrew "ameen."

Verse 8 "Legai ho kyrios ho Theos" - the confirmation of verse 7. It is like the Old Testament phrase, "Thus saith the Lord." The eternal God and the almighty God. He will fulfill and make true His Word. Cp. Isaiah 44:6; 48:12; 41:4. He has unlimited and absolute power, another great consolation for the Christian Church. Rev. 21:6; 22:13. "To alpha kai to oo" - He is the first and the last, the beginning and the end. "Pantokrater" - the Old Testament name for God.

Verse 9 John writes like the Old Testament prophets. He places his name at the beginning of the book. He shows the divine authority by which he speaks. "Egoo Ionneos" is a very solemn expression. In verses 1:4 and 9, John gives his name. The apocalypse of John and Daniel agrees in a remarkable way. "Adelphos" - John does not call himself the father of the believers, but a brother. He emphasizes the equality between himself and his readers. "Synkoinoones" - the companion and partner. "Tee thlipsei" - times of trouble and persecution. "Basileia" is here used in the passive sense, the kingdom of grace which is, and the kingdom of glory which will come. "Hypomonee" means to remain under, to endure. "Ieesou" - the reason for the foundation. "Egenomeen" - he was no longer there, therefore the past tense is used. "Patmos" - a small island to which the Emperor Domitian had banished John. "Ton logon" - not on account of receiving the revelation, but because he had been banished there for preaching the Word of God. The atmosphere of martyrdom is

found thruout the entire book. "Martyrdom" on account of the testimony for Jesus Christ.

Verse 10 This begins the first main revelation, the seven letters. The first vision goes to ch. 3:21. Ch. 1:9-20 is a special introduction. It explains how he receives the apocalypse and the command to write. "Pneumatī" is the Holy Spirit, in a special sense. He was in an ecstatic state. Not the objective Spirit of God, but in a subjective condition, brought about and effected by the Spirit of God. In that state he was able to see visions. "Kyriakee heemera" - either Sunday or Easter Sunday. Sunday is the most logical conclusion. All this happened in one day, Rev. 8:1. This was the Day of the Lord. This is the first time that this expression is used in literature. Not the yearly, but the weekly, Day of the Lord. "Blepeis", the seeing and hearing was real, tho he was in an ecstatic state. "Opisoo", something unexpected and unusual. The voice was that of Christ. "Salpiggos" it sounded like a trumpet. This figure of speech is frequently used in the Apocalypse. It was a loud and powerful voice. The genitive of attraction.

Verse 11 "To kai to O" is a gloss, because John did not as yet know who was speaking. "Blepeis" is the present tense; it is often used without reference to time. "Grapson", he is commanded to write. This expression is used twelve times in this book. God's word should be kept and treasured. "Bibliou" is called the apocalypse. One book he is to write, altho it is addressed to seven congregations. It is given to the seven churches, i.e. to the entire Church. It is an ocumenical book for the whole Church. He writes this book while he is still at Patmos, and he sends this book to the seven churches. He did not write it while in an ecstatic state, but soon after. "Hepta", a symbolic and holy number, but here there is a concrete reason for its use. The churches were divided into two groups, three and four, according to how they were situated in Asia Minor. The direction is given as from Patmos. The first direction denotes Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos. Ephesus is mentioned first because it is the residence of John, and it was the center of the seven churches. The other four congregations are Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea. Rome is not even mentioned, so at this time it was evidently of little importance.

Verse 12 John wants to know more exactly who it is that is speaking to him. "Lychnias chrysas," v. 20, explains what the seven candlesticks are. They are the seven churches in Asia Minor. In the tabernacle there was a candlestick with seven arms. This was a symbol of Israel: one candlestick - one Israel. In the temple of Solomon the candlestick had ten arms. In the temples of Zorubbabel and Herod the candlestick had only one arm. The lighted candlestick means that the congregation should be a light unto the world, Mtt. 5:14. "Chrysas," precious and valuable. Cp. Ps. 45.

Verse 13 Christ was "en mosoo" of the candlestick; either standing or walking. The sight that John beheld was a majestic vision. The name of the person is not as yet given altho a minute description of Him is. "Hyien anthropou", Dan. 7:13 speaks of the Son of Man. This is the name which the Lord uses for Himself. The phrase emphasizes that He is the Son of God appearing on earth in the flesh of man. He is not that Son of Man alone, but also the Son of God. This is the exalted Christ that is called the Son of Man, Acts 7:56; Rev. 14:14. He is clothed with the precious garment of the high priest and the king. It is necessary to supply the word "chitoo", which is a long robe or garment. "Podeeree", this garment went down to His feet. "Periezoosmenon" joined together, perhaps a robe with many folds and tucks. It refers to the priestly dignity of Christ, Dan. 10:5-6. In this description the quiet and majesty of this figure is shown.

Verse 14 This verse gives the description of His head. "Triches" - the color of his hair indicates dignity. The highest degree of white - white as wool, the color of snow. "Chioon" adds the idea of lustre and brilliance. It does not express the innocence of Christ, nor does it express His holiness, but the dignity and eternity of Christ. Dan. 7:9. He is the "A kai to O" of all things, Dan. 10:16. "Phlox pyros" - a flame of fire. This does not mean the holiness of God which destroys everything that is under Him, nor does it show the iustitia vindicata of God, but the omniscience of God. It is the piercing and all-knowing glance of the Judge.

Verse 15 "Chalkolibanoo" - white brass. Probably the electron of the Greeks, which consists of four parts of gold, and one part of silver. It was known for its brilliance and glitter. These glittering feet agree with the flaming eyes of the figure. It expresses the power of God that destroys everything, and shows the power of God over His enemies, Dan. 10:6. John himself seems to have coined this word. "Ex kaminoo" - fire is a symbol of God's appearance, e.g. the burning bush. "Hydatoon" shows the power and strength of the voice of God. It is like the rushing, swirling, and dashing waves which beat against the rock-bound coast.

Verse 16 Discursus: Warning - Do not ask, when reading visions in the Bible, how it can be possible. These visions cannot be measured by human calculations and figures.

In a few words John vividly describes this figure. "Asteras" - Stars are a symbol of a ruler. Numbers 24:17. These stars are the elders and rulers of the seven churches. Hebrews 13:7 - "Those that rule over you." These rulers are in His hand. He is their Lord, and they are His property. No one can pluck them out of His hand. "Oxein" agrees with the rest of this description. It shows the divine power of this figure. It shows the power of His Word. With His Word alone He destroys His enemies. Cp. 2 Thess. 2:8; Heb. 4:12. The Word of God is sharper than a two-edged sword. "He opsis" is not His general appearance, but His face. This figure is used by John alone. "Heolios" - the sun appears in his power when no clouds or fog cover his face. Especially at noontime is the sun in the height of his power. Like the sun in the height of his power is the face of Christ, Matt. 17. The transfiguration of Christ.

Verse 17 The appearance of the Lord creates deadly terror. John fell down "hoos nekros." It is the fear of the sinner before the holy God. God's consuming fire causes death. Isaiah 6:5. If such a great terror seizes the friends of God, how much greater will be the terror of the enemies of God! This figure is friendly towards John and helps him. This figure "etheeken dexian" upon John, "etheeken teen dexian." John was like one that was dead. Christ is the absolute living one. He has overcome death. He has redeemed His people from death. He has the keys of death. V. 19. He puts His right hand upon John, just like in healing and in raising from the dead. And He speaks to John, "legoon." The help is really brought about by the Word. The action and the word together work to bring comfort to John. These words are used by heavenly beings and presuppose or show that men have a fear of holiness. This figure uses of Himself glorious terms: "Egoo eimi he prootos kai ho eschatos." It expresses the full divinity of God. He is personally the almighty God. He is the first; He has created the world. He is the last; everything will finally lie at His feet. 1 Cor. 15:24-28.

Verse 18 "Ho zoon" - the living one who has risen from the dead. Christ is the absolute living one. He is the first and the last. He is Jehovah. This is a special description of God, "ho zoon". "Ho prootos kai ho eschatos" - this can be said of the true God. Because He is the living one, He is able to give

life. His life is the guarantee that His believers will not remain in death. He was dead and now He is alive forevermore. By His death He has taken away the power of death. By His rising He has brought life to all believers. "Aioon" in the strict sense of the word, eternity. Jesus does not live in the passive sense, for Himself, but in the active sense, for us. He has "kleis tou thanatou kai tou hadou." This is a picture and symbol of the power of God. He has the power over death and hell, and He can save and keep. He closes the gates of hell for His own. He opens them for the devil and his servants. Death and hell are personified as places. Hades here does not mean the condition of death, or death, but everlasting punishment. Like the Hebrew word Shool, it may mean death, but it also means hell. This power of Christ is a consolation for John. It makes him able and fit for his office. He is to know the majesty of Christ, then proclaim it.

Verse 19 John had seen Christ in His majesty. That is the reason why he is commanded to write. Jesus tells him what he is to write. It is the unfolding of the majesty of Christ. John is in the proper condition. He is strengthened for his office. He fulfills the command of Christ. He wrote what he had seen. John wrote after the events recorded in chapter 22. "Ha eides" refers to the vision in verses 12-18. "Ha oisin" - the present conditions. "Ha mellei genesthai meta tauta" - this refers to the things that shall be hereafter. This refers to the future happenings.

Verse 20 John had seen the stars upon the hand of this figure. He is to write the mystery of the seven stars. "Mysterion" is anything which man cannot understand of himself, but concerning which he must receive his knowledge from God. "Mysterion" and "apokalypsis" are co-relative terms. From the word "mysterion" hang the words "hepta asteroon" and "tas hepta lychnias." "Tas hepta lychnias" should be in the genitive case. He is to write and describe the seven candlesticks. They are explained in authentic manner. He has written this mystery in the Apocalypse. The whole book treats of the Church, its essence, its calling and purpose, its lot; its development and its completion. The seven congregations represent the whole Church. The hope of the believers rests on the fact that the Church is in His hand, and that He "peripatei" among the candlesticks. He defends and protects His Church. The Church receives its light from God. It should show its light; it should appear in their conversation and in their life. Matth. 5:14 ff. The Churches are "chrysas", precious in His sight. "Aggeloi" - they have relationship with the Church. What the angels are told is to be applied to the Church. "Aggelos" means: 1) messenger, and 2) a heavenly messenger. Not guardian angels are meant, not the messengers that the churches had sent to John at Patmos, but messengers of God to the churches. It is an official name, the name of an office. It is that of the elders of the Church, bishops or teachers. Dan. 12:3. They are messengers because they proclaim that for which God has sent them. They are called stars which announce the heavenly doctrine, which is light.

"Hepta ekklesiai" - What significance attaches to these seven churches? Are they used in a purely historical or in a typical sense? That they are used in a typical sense is undoubtedly the correct answer. Reasons: 1) The symbolical number used, seven. There were more churches in this neighborhood, but only seven of them are mentioned. 2) The meaning and contents of this vision. These churches must be considered as typical because Jesus is the master of all churches, and not of these seven only. 3) Contents of these letters. The letters are historical, but their contents are very general, and are sent to all Christians. These letters bring out the chief thought of the whole book. The Lord will return. Rev. 1:7; 2:5,16; 3:3,11; 20. Every letter closes with the words: "what the Spirit tells the "okkloesiais." Every letter is, therefore, meant for all congregations. The description of the conditions is taken from the individual congregations. However, the

single traits are selected in such a way that every church condition is pictured. These traits picture the whole Church at all ages, at all times.

CHAPTER 2

We have to take into consideration the plan and arrangement of the seven letters.

- 1) The arrangement is the same. Every letter begins with the command to write to the angel of the congregation.
- 2) We always find a precious title of Christ, always indicating Christ's divine majesty, and always having reference to the contents of the letter. These titles are always attributes which we find in Rev. 1. These letters always begin with the words "tade legei." It is an old prophetic form of introduction. Cp. Amos 1:3,9,10,13. The different attributes fit the individual congregations. For the metropolis Ephesus, the one that holds the stars and walks in the midst of the candlesticks. For Smyrna, the martyr church, He who was dead and is living. For Pergamos, the seat of Satan, the sharp sword of two edges. For Thyatira, where false doctrine was rampant, the flaming eyes and the feet of burnished brass. For Sardis, that is called dead, He that has the seven spirits and the seven stars. For Philadelphia, the faithful church, He who hath the key of David and who sets an open door before the church. For Laodicea, the lukewarm church, the true and faithful witness, who is called Amen.
- 3) The third part of each letter is the real content of every writing, always introduced with "oida," "I know." This shows the perfect divine knowledge. There are three sub-points to the contents of each letter:
 - a) An exhortation to steadfastness, if the condition of the church is good
 - b) An exhortation to repentance, if the condition is bad
 - c) An announcement what will happen especially at the return of the Lord.
- 4) Every letter has a call, "he that hath an ear, let him hear." In the first three letters the call precedes the promise. In the last four letters, the call stands at the end. We see that the number seven is divided into three and four. Two of the churches that are in good condition are Smyrna and Philadelphia. They are not exhorted to repentance, but to steadfastness. The two corrupt churches of Sardis and Laodicea are called to repentance. The two churches that are in a mixed condition, Ephesus and Pergamos, are also called to repentance. Likewise the adherents of Jezebel at Thyatira are called to repentance. Jezebel herself will not repent.

All in all, we find twelve promises in the seven letters. In the third, fourth, and sixth letters we find a double promise. In the fifth letter we find a triple promise. In the review of the seven churches, we find that blame and praise are partially combined. If the praise overbalances, the praise precedes. If the blame outweighs, the blame precedes. Philadelphia receives praise only, Laodicea receives blame only. There are four letters in the second chapter, and three letters in the third chapter.

Verses 1-7 The first letter is sent to the church at Ephesus. John is to write to the angel of the church, that is, the bishop, preacher, or minister. He is the representative of the church. Whatever is told him is told to the entire church. The One speaking these words is Christ, the Exalted One, the Lord and Pastor of the Church. He has the seven stars in His hand and walks in the middle of the candlesticks. He is present on earth. He sees, knows,

and observes everything. Ephesus and every church should bear this in mind. He knows the works of this church, that she suffers much and does many good works. She has suffered for Christ's sake. She has borne with the evil things (persecutions), but she has not borne them with the evil persons. There were teachers at Ephesus that called themselves apostles. They claimed to be right teachers, but they were not. The church examined them and put out the evil ones. The church had practiced church discipline in doctrinal matters. She had reprimanded and not tolerated the Nicolaitanes. They were adherents of a Gnostic sect which also harbored carnal lusts. They claimed to subdue the desires of the flesh by complying with them. They were libertines. 2 Pet., Jude, 2 Tim. The Lord acknowledges that Ephesus does not bear with these people. However, one thing he has against the church - They have left their first love. He refers to the sincere love that the Church has for Christ, her Bridegroom. This love has grown cold. The symbol of the bridal love between Christ and the Church. Rev. 19:19; 22:17. In this passage faith and love appear as one thing. John 14:23. These people did no longer have their strong inner faith. The inner life had decreased. The spiritual life had become less. Not everything proceeded from the heart. It had become a habit, something external. Love should grow in an older church. It should become stronger, riper, more firm, and more fervent. That is one of the great dangers in Church life; this outward formality which is poor Christianity. It is only mechanical and machine-like. This bad condition the church at Ephesus should know and recognize. The congregation should consider from whence she had fallen. Christ does not say that she had lapsed entirely, but she had given up something precious. She must repent and do again her first works, works that really proceed from the heart. If she does not repent, the Lord will remove His candlestick. The church will then absolutely lose faith and love. She will be eliminated from the company of the churches of Christ.

The letter closes with the words, "he that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." God is speaking to all churches. And especially is He referring to churches like the church at Ephesus. The characteristics of the church at Ephesus are activity and works, strict discipline, orthodoxy, but lack of love. They should repent and overcome the temptation. Then they shall eat of the Paradise tree. They will attain to life eternal. Life eternal is a pure and lasting joy. This enjoyment will be the lot of him that overcomes. At the close of every letter we read of this victory. The members are exhorted to this overcoming and victory. It is the victory of faith over all temptations and dangers.

Word Study: v. 1 - "Kraton" - who holds fast. This is a strong term for holding fast. v. 2 - "Kakos" - evil, godless in themselves. v. 3 - "Kekmeekas" - not to become weary. v. 5 - "metanesees" - God will remove their candlestick if they do not change their minds and repent. v. 7 - "Akouo" - listen and pay close attention. "Autoo" - a Hebraism. This word is not necessary in the Greek language.

Discursus: At this time Ephesus was a large city. Now it is a heap of ruins. All that remains is a filthy village.

Verses 8-11 This letter is written to Smyrna. If one looks at the map and traces a course from Patmos to Ephesus, one sees that the next and most logical stop would be Smyrna. And at Smyrna we are now. This letter speaks of inward examination and purification. It treats of temptation and purification coming from the outside. In this letter Christ is described as "who was dead and has become alive" ("ezeesen"). As the living One, He stands in the midst of His Church. He knows very well her condition, and He acknowledges her as His own. She receives praise, though reproof. She has been sorely pressed and persecuted. The Christ-hating Jews (Synagogue of Satan) reviled the Church. They stirred up the heathen against this church. She suffered the pillaging of her property. She had become poor externally, but inwardly she was rich in the grace of God and faith which overcomes the world. She was

rich in love toward the Lord and the brethren. Her members should not avoid the common tribulations. She will become a martyr church. Some of them will be cast into prison. This will happen in order to try and prove them. God finally has a beneficial purpose; everything must tend to strengthen and improve their faith, a groping for spiritual benefit. We know from history that this was fulfilled to the very letter. At Smyrna (ca. 155 AD) Polycarp suffered martyrdom. But this bloody persecution has its fixed time, namely ten days. It is a brief time, definitely fixed by God. God will finally give the victory to the ecclesia oppressa (the oppressed Church). Whoever will remain faithful unto the end, will receive the crown of life. The end here means as much as the end by martyrdom. Not a kingly crown is intended, but a crown by martyrdom. According to the letter to the Ephesians, eternal life is a blessed enjoyment. According to the letter to Smyrna, it is honor, victory, and domination. All those that overcome will participate therein. All these words the Spirit says to all the churches.

The characteristics of this church are external poverty, manifold tribulation, and, at the same time, inward riches. That happens even today. Some churches are poor externally, but have inner riches of great faith, spiritual blessings, and moral virtues. Those that are separated from the world will have so much joy in one another. The eternal reward of the Christians: They shall suffer no harm in the second death, that is, the eternal death.

Word Study: Smyrna was a large city situated on the gulf of the Aegean Sea. Ignatius wrote a letter to this church. About 250,000 people lived there. "Ioudaios" - not Jewish Christians, but Jews hating the Christians. "Synagoogoe" - usually this stands for the church, but here it stands for the congregation of the devil. "Diablos" - Through persecutions emanating from the devil the rulers do these things. "Ginou pistos" - not "be faithful", but "become faithful." "Thanatos" - not a natural death, but a death by martyrdom, is meant here. "Achri" - this expresses duration, but also degree; until death. "ou mee" - emphatic negation.

Verses 12-17 This letter is sent to the church at Pergamos. In it Christ describes Himself as the One with the sharp, two-edged sword in His mouth. From this figure we must expect sharp, cutting words to the congregation. At the beginning He acknowledges the church because of faithfulness. She has a hard position at Pergamos, because Satan ruled there and waged war against the Christians. She suffered severe times, even martyrdom. Antipas was slain as a martyr and still the church remained faithful. She deserves also censure and reproof. What the Master reproves is something very great and very evil. He calls it "oliga," a few things, because many good things are found there. Some of the members held to the doctrine of Balaam. Balaam had been called to curse Israel, but he had to bless her. However, he finally gave the devilish advice to seduce Israel into idolatry. This idolatry was connected with great moral uncleanness. Numbers 22-25; 31:8,16. His teaching is seduction to libertinism. Such seducers were also found at the church in Pergamos. They covered their heathenish practices with a Christian cloak. The Nicolaitanes were also found there. They taught similar doctrines and similar things. Cp. 2 Peter, Jude. The Lord is incensed at the libertines above all things. He will fight against them and destroy them in hell. They will pay for their evil desires in everlasting torments. Because the church tolerated such people in her midst, she must repent sincerely.

Characteristics: Confessional faithfulness, but lack of discipline. Such churches are to be found also in our day. Our days are days of moral corruption, libertinism, adultery, fornication, unspeakable sins, abortion of unwanted children, birth control, race suicide, obscene literature, vile pictures, dances, movies, theaters, immodest dresses, etc. ad nauseam. It is a horrible thing if such people and such conditions are tolerated in the Christian church. Congregations that tolerate such people sink into the

depths of the mire. It is necessary to testify against such people in order to obtain the victory. The Lord concludes with the inviting promise. Eternal life is a hidden manna. Noone has tasted it as yet. It is of incomparable sweetness and shows the sweetness of heaven. Those that have rejected the lusts of the flesh shall be served in the other world with this eternal manna. Such victors will receive from God (Christ) a white stone. This word is used in the judicial sense. The reference is to the casting of a vote by the judges. The prisoner was declared innocent by the casting of a white stone, while the casting of a black stone showed guilt and condemnation. Christ declared the believers to be innocent, and calls them His own. On that stone which shows their innocence, the Christians shall receive a new name. This new name expresses what they are in the eyes of Christ. It expresses that they are the children of God. In the world to come, they will have a new name, and there will be a new earth and a new heaven.

Word Study: At Pergamos there was a supreme court. That is why the Lord used the expression of a white stone. The people at Pergamos understood very well what He meant. This city traded in parchment, which is a derivative of the Greek word "pergamos." This city was an evil city. Here there was a cult of Caesar, in which the people worshipped Caesar as God. It was so evil that it was called "thronos tou Satanaa." "Oliga" - a few things. The plural does not indicate several things. "Martys" - to seal his testimony with his blood. "Autoo" - a Hebraism, superfluous in the Greek. "Tou Manna" - partitive genitive. The heavenly manna.

Verses 18-29 This letter is written to the church at Thyatira. In this letter Christ calls Himself the Son of God. He is the omniscient one, the Judge that tries hearts and reins, the almighty one that has feet of burnished brass. He goes forth and destroys His enemies. He will crush every unholy thing. He first acknowledges what is praiseworthy in this church, especially her efforts and good works. She is still a church of God. However, she has done very grievous things. She has such in her midst that call themselves prophets. Especially one prophetess, Jezebel. Most likely this is a symbolic name, like some names of prophets in the Old Testament. This is an allusion to the wicked Jezebel, the wife of the evil king Ahab. This woman was a leader. She seduced the Christians at Thyatira to participate in meals offered to the idols, and at the same time seduced them to fornication which went hand in hand with these fetes to the gods. She declared this to be a special depth of love. By indulging in carnal lusts, the carnal desires were to be mortified. By indulging in heathen practices, paganism was to be overcome. This was the same error to which the Nicolaitanes held. However, at Thyatira these heresies had obtained more force and significance. A modern example is the House of David. The idea was: do those things, and you will be able to overcome them. The church had eliminated such practices. This false prophetess did not take advantage of the time of repentance. God will punish her in a special way. He will cast her on a sick bed. The bed of lust shall become a bed of pain. This will also happen to such as commit sins with her, also to her children, also referring to the adherents of her sect. So far the church has tolerated this evil thing, but it shall be destroyed and exterminated. God adds a word for the other members of the congregation. They have not fathomed the depth of Satan. The devil changes and transforms himself until he is like an angel of light. The devil is a master of deceit and hypocrisy. Still these Christians held themselves aloof from the deceit of Satan. They remained steadfast in the faith. No special command or burden shall be put upon them, except that which is contained in the decree of the apostles. Acts 15:29. They should not mingle and associate with evil persons. They should remain steadfast until the coming of the Lord. Whosoever overcomes, the Lord shall give him power over the heathen. This expression is taken from Ps. 2, and is used of Christ. Yet, here Christ uses it of all the

Christians. They will also be able to do what Christ does. They will battle and obtain the victory. They will have power over the heathen, just as Christ has power over the heathen given to Him from the Father. Christ will give them the morning star, that is, the new day, the bright and beautiful day of eternity, the glorious light of eternity.

Characteristics: An abundance of Christian works, also a weakening and yielding to the evil persons. As usual, this letter and the contents of this letter are intended for the whole Christian Church. Even today we find many churches doing beneficence, and also they are weak over against the evil ones. Christ will take to task such a church, and will punish her if she will not repent. Those that overcome will stand with Christ and will be saved.

Word Study: Thyatira was 75 miles from Pergamos. It belonged to the province of Lybia. Acts 16:14. Lydia came from this city. It was a Macedonian colony. "Ho Hysios tou Theou" indicates the glory of His judgment. v. 19 The four expressions form two pairs. "Agapee" - brotherly love. It shows itself over against those that need help. "Pistis" -- "hypomonoe" show their faith and patience. At last, rather than at first, the church has made progress. "Ploiona" - not in the intension, but in the extension way. "sou" refers to all four points. "Aphois" (apheoo) - tolerate. "Teon legousan" - she saying, a Hebraism. v. 20. Her teaching was a false teaching. "Eidoolonta" was the starting point in the other churches which also sinned. "Porousai" is first here. They committed carnal adultery. Here it does not mean spiritual adultery. "Egoo" - the Lord Himself will take care of these things and of this case. It includes the whole wicked thing of Jezebel and her adherents. "Ek toon ergoon" - away from her works. v. 23. "En thanatoo" - a pest or a plague. A Hebraism used for emphasis. This is found frequently in the Old Testament, and is reduplicated in the New Testament by John. The person is changed from the third to the second person. This is a more concrete way of speaking. Thyatira was later destroyed. v.24. "De legoo" - to you I say." These words are addressed to the faithful ones. There is a remnant in that church. It is still a congregation. "Didachee" - sins of life, not of doctrine. "Hoitines" - causal: because those. "Ta bathea" - they called their doctrine the depths of godliness, but God calls it the depth of Satan. "Pleon" only. The state of grace, the salvation of Christ, v. 26. I will give to Him power. "doosoo autoo." "Telos" - in the eschatological sense; the end of the world. "Exousian" - not a power over the nations that they will repent, but a power of judgment over the heathen nations. "Poimanei" - to herd, in the terrible sense. They will rule and crush with sceptre of iron, just like the vessels of clay are broken into shivers. In most New Testament allusions, the LXX is taken, that is, as long as the sense is the same.

CHAPTER 3

Verses 1-6 This letter is written to the church at Sardis. God is described as the One having Seven Spirits. It refers to the Holy Spirit with His manifold gifts and powers. Through this Spirit He is active in the Church. Is. 11:2. In this church He doesn't find anything praiseworthy. That is the difference between Sardis and the churches that were mentioned. Sardis, however, is spiritually dead. Sardis did not lack one thing or another in doctrine or in life, but in both. To the other churches He had to speak words of censure and of reproof, but He found something praiseworthy in them. The condition of Sardis was not only spiritual lassitude, but there was almost spiritual death. Those that still have spiritual life should arouse themselves and strengthen themselves. Even the best Christians are not able to show perfect spiritual works, but in Sardis there were only dead works to proffer. It was only an eternal opus operatum. Faith was lacking in their works. The church should

repent and remember what she has received in the past, the Gospel which she has accepted in faith. She should remember how enthusiastically she once accepted the Gospel. If she does not awaken, the Lord will come to her as a thief in the night. He will come suddenly, unexpectedly, bringing with Him ruin and destruction. He will judge this congregation and will assign to her a lot with the unbelievers. There are only a few in Sardis that have remained faithful, those that have not defiled their garments with sin. The great majority lead a sinful life. Real Christians will keep their garments clean and undefiled. It is true that they daily sin much, yet daily they wash their garments in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore, in blessed eternity they shall walk in white garments. This is the great promise given to those that overcome. They will be perfectly clean and holy. This is also a part of eternal life; perfect holiness. The Lord will not blot out their name from the Book of Life. He will confess their name before His God and Father. He will acknowledge them as His own. For those the kingdom of God has been ready from the foundation of the world. What is said here, all churches should take to heart.

Characteristics: Complete spiritual death. A person spiritually alive can die spiritually. There is a fall from grace. Whole churches may die spiritually. Our own interpreters refer these words especially to the church at Rome. This description really fits the Roman Church with its external works and opera operata. But there are also Lutheran churches that have sunk to such a depth. Watching, awakening, and strengthening are necessary. Above all things, the pastor of the church must lift up his voice, lest his church become a house of woes. It is the duty of the pastor to keep his church in the way of life and truth.

Discursus: Sardis was the old capital city of Lybia. It was situated on a rich plain. On account of its riches and its luxury, it was once well known, but it is now a poor village and ruins. Melito was bishop of Sardis.

Word Study: "Zees" - in the pregnant sense; you are still a spiritually living congregation, but dead, a worldly congregation. They are in a spiritual sleep, and that sleep is spiritual death. Eph. 5:14. "Ta loipa" - the other ones, the ones that are spiritually dead. "Apothanein" - imperfect tense referring back to an investigation. "Enoopian tou theou" - God being the witness and the judge. "En loikois" - in white "himatiois", the glorious state in eternal life. "Poos" - with what zeal thou hast received these things. Verses 1-3 refer to the church as a whole. v.4. "Alla" - a few names, "onomata" refers to certain persons. "Hoti axioi eisin" - they are worthy according to God's just retribution. This excludes all merit on their part. "En himatiois loikois" - a Hebraism. This shows the sureness of their salvation. "Mee exalipsoc" - Is. 4:3. The assurance that those who belong to Christ will reach the goal. "Aggeloon" - the angels are interested in the salvation of man. Cp. Matt. 10:32; Luke 12:18.

Verses 7-13 This letter is addressed to the church at Philadelphia. It and the letter to Smyrna are the most beautiful of the seven. This church receives praise only, and no censure; promise only, and no threats. Christ calls Himself the Holy One, the true and faithful One. He is the true and only and eternal God. He has the key of David. He is the promised seed of David. He is the Lord of the house of David. The house of David is the House of God, the Church. He holds all power in the church. He is able to open and shut the door. He knows the works of the church at Philadelphia. These works are pleasing to God and receive the praise of God. The church has an open door, the door to the house of David. The purpose of this door is that the many that are outside may come in. Those that are outside are principally the Gentiles, some Jews are included. It is through the work of Christ that they may come and enter the church. It shall have great growth. The congregation has indeed little strength; externally she is weak and small. One

thing she possesses; the Word of God. The Word of God is the power of God. And this Word she has kept even in tribulations and persecutions. Through this Word she shall gain many even from the unbelieving Jews. This is always the doings of the Lord. He will give them to the Church. He will make them come and worship. They will perceive that the Christian congregation is the true Church. She is beloved of God. If the Church keeps faithfully the Word and does not turn lax or unionistic, she will gain adherents.

The second promise is to the Church. The Church has faithfully kept Christ's Word, which is the Word of patience. This Word meets with much opposition in the world. Patience, much patience is needed in order to keep the Word faithfully. Because she has faithfully kept this Word, Christ will also keep her. Her perseverance in faith is also the work of Christ. He will also keep her in severe future temptations. This most likely refers to the temptation of the Anti-Christ. That temptation began secretly in the days of John. The Anti-Christ is anyone opposed to Christ. In the Apocalypse the pope is not mentioned as the Anti-Christ, yet from the description the pope is the Anti-Christ. In the first, second, and third centuries is heard the wailing of the Anti-Christ in the cradle.

It is necessary to remain faithful until the end. In verses 10 and 11 we read: I will keep thee ("teereesoo") and, hold fast which thou hast ("kratei"). The Christians should keep what they have, but the power is from God. By exhorting them to faithfulness He makes them to be faithful. Already Philadelphia possesses the crown by faith. By faithfulness she will keep this crown and will possess this crown eternally. The Lord closes the letter with the glorious promise. The victors shall be the pillars in God's temple. Pillars serve as an ornament. In the kingdom of God they will attain honor and glory. Pillars also serve as a support to the building. The faithful will stand undisturbed and fast: in eternity this is a part of the joy of life, eternal safety. They shall no more go out. Whosoever has eternal life shall never lose it. Christ will write a three-fold name upon the forehead of the victors: 1) The name of God. As blessed victors they will be like God. 1 John 3:2. 2) The name of the new Jerusalem. They will be citizens of the heavenly city of God, the perfect city, the heavenly Jerusalem. They will be members of the glorious congregation of the elect, and members of the kingdom of glory. 3) His own name, the new name. Christ has received a new name with His exaltation. Phil. 2:9. He is the King of all kings and the Lord of all lords. The victors will participate in such glory. They will be similar to, yea, like the glorified Christ. Phil. 3:21; John 17:22,24.

Characteristics: A little strength, great faithfulness, and great promises. What is said here is meant for every faithful congregation. Those that keep the Word of God faithfully will have the benefit of promise. God gives them an open door: they will lead others into the Church. Yielding and concession is a bad way to build the church. Half-heartedness accomplishes nothing. Faithfulness to the end is given a glorious promise. Therefore especially the faithful should be encouraged again. "Kratei ho echois" - This whole text is a description of the true Lutheran church. It is and shall be the motto for our Church. This is her signature, Christ's words, the Gospel Voice. This whole letter reminds us of Christ's words in the Gospel: Praise only!

Word Study: Philadelphia is in Lybia, 50 miles south of Sardis. Attalus Philadelphus or Pergamas was the founder of this city. In one of these churches the Turks horribly murdered the Christians. "Hagios" - the separate one. The word according to its etymology means to be set apart, aside. Christ is set apart from everything else. He is unique. "Aleothisos" - used by John only of God. A favorite word, genuine, true. "Klein" - the highest power in the kingdom of God is here expressed. He has the right of the property in the

Church. All belong to Him. "Idou" - to call attention to. "Thyran" - not the Church shall enter, but she shall lead others in. Mission activity of the Church. "Dedooka enoopion" - a Hebraism. v. 9. "Didoo" - I give. "Poiesoo" - I make. "Toon legontoon" - supply "times"; some saying. "Autous" - attraction "Hina", construed with the indicative of the future tense, like "hoti", shows purpose. "Proskyneesousin" - to fall down and worship before the congregation. The Church is the mediator of salvation. Outside of the invisible Church there is no salvation. "Egoo eegapeesa" - "egoo" is here placed for the sake of emphasis. Some refer to the sacrificial death of Christ. Better: "You, the church at Philadelphia, are the object of my love." "Logon tees hypomenoes" - genitive of quality. Tribulation and persecution. The Word of my patience is the Gospel. "Ek tees horas" - the salvation out of that hour of tribulation and temptation, out of that hour of trial. It is only a brief hour over against eternity. "Oikoumeneon" - supply "goen." This trial is the Anti-Christ. "Idou" in verse 11 is a gloss. "Tachu" - the unexpected, the sudden coming. "Stephanos" - the Church possesses in faith the crown of victory. "Kratei" - strengthens and encourages the Church to remain steadfast. "Hao" - ecclesia triumphant. "Theou" occurs four times, for emphasis. Verse 12. - "Exoo ou mee oxoltheo" shows why heaven is bliss. It is eternal. "Ep' autoon" - the Old Testament priests had "Holy to the Lord" written on their turbans, and the Christians are the New Testament priests.

Verses 14-22 - The seventh and last letter is addressed to Laodicea. God calls Himself the Amen. Whatever He says to the churches is true and certain. The threatening words to this congregation will come true if she does not repent. The beginning of the creation of God is Jesus. He is the Creator and Conserver of all creatures; the Almighty One. Everything He says He will be able also to fulfill, promises as well as threats. He knows everything, and He also knows this church. He knows that she is neither hot nor cold. Hot: the true believers. Cold: the unbelievers. Lukewarm: Those that stand on middle ground, the half-hearted people, halting on both sides. In fact, there is no middle ground and condition between faith and unbelief. The lukewarm belong to the unbelievers. There is no such thing as half faith. They try to hide and heat the inward coals with outward works. They are hypocrites. Such a condition causes musca, like lukewarm and stale water. If one wants to drink and refresh oneself, one will spit out such water. So does the Lord deal with this church. It would be better if she were cold. It would be better, much better if she were hot. A downright and manifest unbeliever is better than a hypocrite. A radical unbeliever may attain faith much more easily than an unbeliever. A hypocrite does not, according to his own opinion, lack anything. The Lord, however, is longsuffering, and He reproves and censures this congregation in order to save her. She thinks that she is rich and does not need anything, but she is poor, blind, and naked before God. She doesn't even perceive her nakedness and her poverty and correct it. The Lord loathes and hates her poverty and nakedness; then He counsels her well. She should buy from the Lord. She should buy gold tried in the fire. That is the true and proved faith, holding fast to the Word. Such faith confers true riches. She should buy white garments. This denotes innocence and righteousness given thru the blood of Christ. This righteousness covers sinful nakedness. She should anoint her eyes with eye salve. She should ask the Lord for the Holy Spirit and He will open their eyes. Then she will know the truth, will know her sin, will know God's grace. Such buying is without money and without price. Is. 53. The Lord still loves her. He does not relinquish her yet, but censures and reproves her, and calls her to repentance. He calls her with the manifold and magnificent promise given to them that repent truly. "Behold, I stand at the door." This is usually

taken as meaning the door of the heart, and therefore is understood as a call to repentance. The words may be applied in this way. The whole Apocalypse applies to the future, so these words are to be taken in this sense. Christ is already standing. He will come quickly. Then He will open the door of His glory. He knocks even now. Thru various signs He announces His coming. Whoever heeds these signs, to Him shall the Lord enter. He will sup with them the supper of eternity. And such a one will sup with Christ. Eternal life is the eternal, heavenly dominion and glorious enjoyment. They will be with Him eternally. They will sit with Christ upon His throne.

Characteristics: A luke-warm, half-hearted condition, combined with arrogance and self-sufficiency. That is an excellent description of the Syncretists and Unionists. It is a picture of those churches mixing truth with error. Some exegetes apply this to the attempt to unite the Lutheran Church with the Reformed. It fits quite well, but it does not follow the text, and hence cannot be used. Laodicea is a description of all the churches that are lukewarm. It is a description of many churches in our day. They always try to stand on middle ground. They do not take a definite stand against the world, false churches, worldly amusements, lodges, and secret societies. This letter is written also for our warning. All churches should take to heart the words of the Lord. God will spue out the poor, blind, and naked churches. Only those that are sincere, earnest, and determined in their confessions will sup with Christ. They alone will conquer and reign eternally.

Everything in these seven letters is addressed to the pastors of the seven churches. They above all others should take everything to heart. They should use the Bible for doctrine, reproof, correction, instruction, comfort, and consolation. To them especially are the words directed, "Awake, awake, for the night is flying."

Discursus: Laodicea is in Phrygia, near Colossi. It was called Laodicea after Laodicea, the wife of Antiochus the Second. It was a city of factories and commerce. It was christianized perhaps by Epaphras. Paul was very solicitous about this church. Col. 2:1. Paul wanted his letter to the Colossians to be circulated also among the Laodiceans. Col. 4:16. Now this city is in ruins, and there are no Christians to be found there. "Ho Ameen" - the true and faithful witness. "Hae archae teos ktiseoos tou theou" - Two interpretations: 1) the possessive genitive. He is the first creature of God. All ancient and modern Arians try to prove from this passages that Christ is a creature, as do also the modern Rusellites. This exegesis is impossible because of the testimony of the entire book of the Apocalypse, and also because of the entire testimony of the Bible. Christ is the true and eternal God. 2) The genitive of relationship. He is the author and originator of all creation. Principium activum. He is the creator of all creatures. He is the beginning with regard to the creation of God. John 1:1-3; Prov. 8:22ff. He is the "alpha and omega" of creation. He has created everything, and He will end and finish everything. Col. 1:15,18. - V. 15. "Ophelon" - a particle expressing desire. V. 16. "Houtoos hoti" - so because. But thus I must complain that you are. "Molloo" - indication of judgment, not absolute, but with a possibility of turning. V. 17 is a protasis, of which v. 18 is the apodosis. v. 17, the second "hoti" introduces direct speech. "Peplouteeka" - I have added riches. I have gotten riches. "Talaipooros" - the subjective term is an objective sense. "Eleeinos" - subjective sense. You should obtain commiseration. You do not know, but I know, your true condition. V. 18. gives a threefold counsel to this church. The expression "agorasai" is a part of the picture. No merit is implied. Is. 55:1. V. 19. "Egoo" is again emphasized. "Philoo" expresses love as an effect of the soul. "Agapoo" expresses love as a matter of the mind. "Paideuoo" (the wider term), to educate. "Eloghoo" (narrower term), to rebuke with words. It is a part of "paideuoo" (Christian chastisement).

CHAPTER 4

This begins the second part of the Revelation. The holy seer begins to behold a new vision. It is announced with the words, "with the things that must be hereafter." The first vision has reference to the present times of the writer. Now future secrets will be told. John beholds a door in heaven. The future secrets will now be opened and made known. John is again in the state of ecstasy. He is in the spirit (v.2). He now beholds God the Father Himself. He sits upon a throne surrounded by heavenly light and glory. 1 Tim. 6:16. John does not behold God in His essence. He does not describe God, but he says "Homoios". God looked like a jasper stone and a sardine stone. Both are very precious stones. God is also described as being like an emerald. The jasper stone is not transparent, but opaque. God is unsearchable. The sardine stone is fiery red. God is like a burning fire in His wrath. He is burning in His love. Round about the throne is a rainbow. It is a picture of peace. It is the grand old sign of God's covenant of grace. Gen. 9:2ff. It looked like an emerald, which is of a light green color. This is a picture of God's love and kindness. Around the throne of God there were 24 thrones or chairs. Twenty-four elders were sitting upon them. Their white garments denote victory. Similarly the crowns also denote victory. These elders are the representatives of the Church, of the whole congregation of believers. They are symbols of the ecclesia triumphans, which has entered the state of glory. Then all sin will be abolished, and nothing but bliss, joy, and glory prevails. The number of the elders is twenty-four. This is one of the many contacts with the Old Testament. There were twenty-four orders of priests among the Levites, 1 Chron. 24. In the New Testament, all believers are priests. 1 Pet. 2:9. Lightnings, thunders and voices proceed from the throne of God. This points to the majesty. It points to His glory, His holy, fiery wrath towards all wickedness. The seven lamps of fire burning before the throne point to and represent the Holy Ghost (Spiritus Septiformis) Rev. 1:4; 3,1 and Is. 11:2. The spirit is also a spirit of zeal and wrath towards those who do not accept Him. The glassy sea is a picture of eternal life. Rev. 15:2; 22:1. The sea is like a crystal, bright, clear, and transparent. In life eternal, rest, peace and enjoyment prevail.

In the midst and round about the throne John saw four living creatures. "Zoon" can mean beast, but the original meaning is living creature. All of these creatures are full of eyes and have six wings. They have four different forms: 1) Like a lion. This indicates strength and courage; 2) Like a steer. This indicates strength and patience in work and labor. 3) Like a man. This indicates wisdom and intelligence. 4) Like an eagle. This indicates velocity and accuracy. The cherubim are described in the same way. Ez. 1. Consequently these creatures are angels. They represent the angel dominion, just as the elders represent the dominion of the Church. There are only four creatures. In Scripture, this is the number of universality and ecumenicity. Each creature has six wings. In an instant they perform what God commands them, because their six wings enable them to fly swiftly. They are full of eyes. They see everything, always watchful for the commands of God. They exalt the majesty of God. They surround God according to Scripture. 1 Sam. 4:4; 2 Kings 19:15; Ps. 80:1; Is. 37:16. They rest not, day and night, but always praise God, singing the trishagion and the tersanctus. That is their office. They perform their office in the manner indicated in the four symbols. On earth they serve God by serving man, especially in the extension of the Church. In heaven, they praise God. When the cherubim sing such praises, the elders fall down before God. "Pesountai" - durative futuro. They cast down their crowns before God and thereby acknowledge and worship Him. They praise and honor Him as Creator. He has succeeded in the work of creation. He has fully accomplished and perfected His plan of creation. The purpose of creation is mankind, saved forever. This vision points to what is now taking place. It points to the ministrations of the angels on earth. It points to what will take place in heaven. General thought of the chapter: The adoration of God by the blessed angels

and blessed mankind, after the word has been consummated by many tribulations.

CHAPTER 5

This chapter is a continuation of chapter 4. Again the seer has a look into heaven. The vision is a supplement to the preceding vision. He beholds a book, a roll of parchment. The roll is written on both sides. It is rolled together and sealed with seven seals. Thus the contents of the roll are concealed. In the preceding vision John was told that he would be shown the things which must come hereafter. Ch. 4:1. Therefore the contents of this roll are the destinies of the Church. John weeps because no one is able to open the roll. God holds the destinies of the Church in His hand, like He holds the roll. A strong angel asks, Who can open this roll? No one is found worthy, therefore God Himself must make known the contents of the roll. He must reveal the destinies of the Church. John laments over the fact that the future of the Church is dark and concealed. He must not weep, because the lion of Judah has overcome. He has gained the victory also for this purpose of opening the roll. The lion is Christ, the strong, powerful, victorious hero. The words are based on the Messianic prophecy of Jacob. Gen. 49:8-12. He is the root of David. This refers to Is. 11:1 and other Old Testament passages. Christ is the branch of David's tree. Because He is the victor, He holds the destinies of the Church in His hand. Therefore, He is also able to reveal them to mankind. He is able to open the sealed roll. This interpretation is confirmed by the following statements. John beholds a lamb. This lamb was probably concealed from the view of John at first. This is characteristic of the vision. John sees and hears only what God wants him to see and hear. He does not see everything at once. He sees things successively, as God determines.

This lamb is clearly Christ. That is proved by the words, "as tho he had been slain". v. 6. Christ even in His state of exaltation bears the marks of the wounds in His body. John 20:27. He will be recognized by these marks at His second coming. He will be recognized by these marks and wounds out of the midst of all His angels. Rev. 1:7. "they also which pierced Him." In this case the lamb does not point to the meekness of Christ; but it means the Lamb of sacrifice, the paschal lamb. The lamb is sacrificed for us and for our sins. 1 Cor. 5:7; John 1:29. He has obtained an eternal redemption. This "little lamb" has seven horns. As usual, horns are a symbol of strength. Christ is no longer in a state of humiliation, but He lives in majesty. He therefore has the power and the right to open the roll of the destinies of the Church. He together with His Father, ordains and directs those destinies of the Church. He tells us as much as He chooses to tell. The lamb has seven eyes. This is explained by the holy seer. It is the Spiritus Septiformis. Christ sent the Holy Ghost over the earth in the interest of the Church. Zech 2:9; 4:10. Whatever the exalted Christ is now doing upon the earth, He is doing thru the medium of the Holy Spirit. Is. 11:2; Rev. 1:4; 4:5. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit was the last great deed of God before the end of the world. Joel 2:28ff; Acts 2:17ff. What is being done now on earth in the Church is the work of the Holy Ghost.

The lamb now appears in the vision and takes the book. God the Creator has everything in His hand in heaven and upon earth. Likewise also the Lamb, Christ, the Redeemer. To Him we owe our salvation. Everything now happening on earth must serve our salvation. Therefore the four living creatures and the four elders fall down before the Lamb. To these are added (v. 11) the thousand times ten thousand angels. They sing and play to the Lamb. The whole triumphant Church accords praise and honor to the Lamb, even as they accorded it to God the Father.

They offer Him praise and glory for what He has done and is still doing for His Church on earth. Everything is venerable and praiseworthy. In this song of praise harps are used. Harps are the instruments upon which the sainted ones play. Also golden bowls are mentioned. They signify the prayers of the saints here upon earth. The prayers ascend to heaven as the smoke of incense. These prayers mingle in and join with the praise of those that are in heaven, so that it is a great offering of incense. It is precious in the sight of the Lord. They sing a new, great, and wonderful hymn. They sing that hymn of praise to the Lamb that has been slain, but now has obtained power and glory. Christ the Lamb is worthy to open the book. He is able to decide the destinies of the Church. He has purchased upon earth a people with His holy blood, therefore He is worthy to open the book. He is, and will be, the proper man for governing the Church. He governs the Church but He also governs the world for the sake of the Church. He continues, as it were, His work of Redemption. He leads the redeemed people to the final and blessed home.

And now the seer sees and hears new things. He is not aware of everything at once. One thing follows upon another. He sees and hears a large and countless multitude of angels, ten thousands of ten thousands, and thousands of thousands. The angel dominion is unmeasurable for man. The Lamb is indeed the Savior of mankind. The angels take an active interest in the lot and life of man, and God has appointed them for this task. Therefore, the angels also praise and extol the Lamb. They praise Him for everything He has done and still does for man. They acknowledge that the Lamb is worthy to assume power. The Lamb is able to and finally will throw down upon the ground all His enemies. They also praise Christ's wisdom in ruling the universe and the Church. And finally all creatures join in praise and glory. All creatures accord all honor and glory to God and the Lamb forever and ever.

The holy seer casts a glance into the final ending of the destinies of the Church. What is said at the end of this chapter will take place at the end of all things. It will take place in the new heaven and the new earth. Vv. 13,14. All ungodliness and wickedness will be abolished and eliminated. The elders and the four living creatures confirm this hymn of praise of men and angels. They confirm it by saying "Amen," truly, most assuredly. The elders and the creatures are extending honor and praise to God even now. They will do so particularly in the realm of perfection. This chapter pertains to the present era and also the end of things and the end of all the ways of God, the consummation of all things.

Summary: The adoration of the Lamb by all creatures and by the sainted, yea, all creatures!

CHAPTER 6

This chapter continues the second vision beheld by John. Chapter 6 is closely joined in its contents to 5 and 4. In this chapter six of the seven seals are opened. These seals sealed up the book of the destinies of the Church. One seal after another is opened; and always the seer is given the explanation of what is behind each seal. We must, however, never forget that the blessed end has been shown to John beforehand. This is the adoration of the Lamb by all believers and angels. This blessed goal remains firmly established no matter what may happen to the Church. The opening of the seals announces the temporal and bodily tribulations of the Church in this world. Acts 14:22.

The first seal is opened. Christ Himself opens the first seal. And John hears one of the four living creatures speak with the voice of a thunder. Like heavy thunderstorms the destinies come down upon the Church. A rider on a white horse rides through the earth. He conquers. This is indicated by the white color

of the horse. The victors in battle were wont to ride upon white horses in their triumphant marches. God has given Him a victor's crown. Two interpretations of the vision:

1) Many refer this picture to the civil authority. It is frequently tyrannical and suppresses many things. The Christians were persecuted by the civil authorities, e.g., the Caesars at Rome, the Turks. For the horses of different colors compare Zech. 6:1ff; 1:8ff. This interpretation of the white horse agrees with what the other horses signify.

2) Another interpretation of the white horse seems better and more correct. The whole book of the Apocalypse is a book of comfort. The rider on the white horse is Christ. Rev. 19:11ff. pictures Christ in a like manner. This vision is given right at the beginning for our comfort. Christ encounters a severe conflict in the world, but He conquers. He has also the victor's crown, and this agrees very well with this interpretation. The Church should rest securely, and should rest assured that the Lord is victorious. To Him is victory and nothing but victory. Verse 2. "Exealthe nikoon, kai hina nikeeseo."

The second seal is opened. A red horse comes forth. The red horse points to war and bloodshed. The history of the world tells continually of wars. Matt. 24:6. Also the Church suffers from such wars. We must not expect anything else than war and bloodshed until the end of days.

The third seal is opened. It is a black horse which announces a new and severe fatality. Famine and high cost of living. Matt. 24:7. This visitation is the natural result of the preceding visitation of war. Black is the color of disaster, of mourning, the color of ruin. A measure of wheat is offered for a denarius. A measure of grain is the scanty daily food supply of one man. It is a little more than a quart. And its price is high, 16 and 2/3 cents, which at that time was a day's salary. Compare the story of the laborers in the vineyard who worked a whole day for a denarius. The laborer has to spend his whole day's salary to give himself enough to eat. The laborer has just enough for himself. The grain is weighed, not measured, because of its scarcity. Poor people are barely able to live on their income. They must be satisfied with the poorer grades of food. They buy barley grain, which is three times as cheap as wheat. And in that manner they manage to exist. The rider is ordered not to hurt the wine and the oil. These are things that are not a part of daily food. They belong to luxury. The meaning is that the great mass have hardly enough to keep alive, while the rich revel in luxury. However, let the rich have what they have. Let them keep their riches and luxury.

The opening of the fourth seal. This seal announces a new visitation. The pale horse indicates death. The pallid color is the color of death. Hence this scourge consists in a great mortality through ravaging pestilence, also by wild animals and poisonous reptiles. And right after, Hades follows. Hades devours those whom death kills. Thus God shows His wrath over against the world. Here Hades means the condition of death.

The fifth seal is opened. This picture shows the martyrs, the faithful witnesses of the Church. The book of the Apocalypse was written in the days of the persecutions, either under Nero or under Domitian. The martyrs are shed at the foot of the altar. They are shed at the foot of the altar like the blood of beasts sacrificed at the altar of burnt offerings. Lev. 4:7. They cry to God for vengeance. Their death is considered precious in the eyes of God. Their souls lived; and that is more important than the bodies. They do not understand why God has not avenged them. It is their blood crying to God for vengeance. Gen. 4:10. They were being clothed with white robes. That is the festive garment of heavenly

perfection and of eternal glory. When the rest of their brethren are assembled with them after a little while, then the day of vengeance shall come. This vengeance the world deserves because they have persecuted the Christians. The Church cannot expect anything better in this world. The Church is and will remain the Church Militant. God does not reckon time as we do. 2 Pet. 3:8; Ps. 94; Is. 26: 20.

The sixth seal is opened. The seer beholds a tremendous shaking of the universe. That is the unparalleled commotion of the Last Day. It is described in the Scriptures in the same manner in other places. Matt. 24; Joel 3; Luke 21. The inhabitants of the earth endeavor to hide themselves over against such judgment. They would rather be crushed by the mountains than face their Judge. This Judge is the Savior of the world. He has redeemed these people, but they have spurned and rejected Him. It is not a small matter if one rejects the grace of Christ.

The reader would naturally expect the end of all things after the opening of the seventh seal. The seventh seal which shows a number of visions is not opened yet. This seal ushers in the seven trumpets. Rev. 8ff. Here in the sixth chapter a summary is given of what happens to the Church in this world unto the end. Hereupon once more a start is made from the beginning. The destinies of the Church and the world are presented from different points of view, from different angles. The book of the Apocalypse does not proceed in a straight line, but proceeds in concentric circles. Therefore the contents of Rev. 6 may be stated thus: THE FIRST SIX SEALS AND WHAT THEY SIGNIFY. Rev. 7 is, as it were, an interlude. A comforting section is inserted. It shows how the Lord and the Founder of the Church will save and keep her. The great day of wrath will not affect the members of the Church.

CHAPTER 7

The holy seer beholds four angels. They hold the four winds of the earth in their hands. It is clear that these are the judgment angels of God. They are appointed to hurt the earth and the sea. But they still hold back the devastating winds. The universal judgment of the great day of wrath shall not be ushered in as yet. This they are commanded by another angel. The elect of God are first to be sealed. Just for this purpose the other angel holds the seal of the living God in his hand. The seal means: to mark for the purpose of guarding and saving. God still has a people upon earth that is to be saved. These people are guarded in great tribulations. He will guard them in the terrible storms and judgments that are to come down upon the earth. God saves them through the means of his Word and Spirit. The number of the saved are 144,000. This is a symbolic number that cannot be computed according to human figuring and standards. The number is taken from the twelve tribes of Israel. These people are the true spiritual Israel, the Church of God of the New Testament, the complete number of the elect. Compare v. 9. Then the number is given in itemized form. It states how many were sealed from each tribe of Israel. This indicates that God knows the exact number of His beloved children. He knows every one. In the enumeration of the tribes, we find the name Joseph for Ephraim, the father is mentioned instead of the son. The other son Manassah is mentioned. The Church shall not be torn asunder as Israel was by the defection of Ephraim at the time of Jeroboam the First. The Church is to be one Body. The priest tribe, Levi, is not passed by and omitted as it is in other passages. It is expressly mentioned. All members of the New Testament Church are to be priests. Dan the smallest tribe is omitted. Also Dan

was the tribe that first introduced false worship and it had no heritage. Judges 18. There will be no backsliders and apostates among the 144,000.

A new vision is introduced. This vision has a close connection with the preceding vision. John saw a great number which no man could number. This is the number of the elect. They are gathered together from all people. They are arrayed in white robes which signify innocence and purity. They carry palms as symbols of victory. The wicked will then be confounded. The tribulations of the last days have been overcome. The great number of the sealed, God's people, triumph. The day of complete and final salvation has come. Therefore, the elect in heaven honor and praise God and the Lamb. The angels before the throne of God do the same thing. All the wonderful purposes and plans of God will be revealed and made clear in life eternal, at the end of days. What God has done for man in this era will be the praise and object of praise of God in yonder life. The blessed are designated as coming out of great tribulation. But now they rest in eternal joy and glory. A definite tribulation is mentioned (ektees thlipseos). That is the tribulation of the Anti-Christian's times which is more fully described in following visions. Also their sin has caused much trouble in those days. But their sin is forgiven completely. It has been completely eliminated and abolished. This has been brought about by the blood of the Lamb, the blood and righteousness of Christ. They are now beholding God. They see Him day and night, and God dwells in the midst. This is the supreme bliss in eternal life that God is with them, and that they are with God. Therefore they shall no more hunger and thirst. All desires of the soul have been satisfied. No harm may touch them. Nothing but delight and blessed enjoyment fills their hearts and souls. There is no reason to weep and grieve. Even the memory of their sorrow on earth will be changed to pure joy. This is the end, the final goal of the way of God. He transforms the Church Militant to the Church Triumphant.

SUMMARY: The SEALING OF THE ELECT AND THE TRIUMPHANT CHURCH AT THE END OF DAYS. The inscription of this chapter is correct. The consolation of the Church in its afflicted condition.

CHAPTER 8

Six seals of the sealed roll have been opened. Rev. 6. The seventh chapter was a comforting picture, an episode inserted in between. Now comes the opening of the seventh seal. First there is a pause in heaven of about an half an hour. The holy seer is to compose himself and to hold himself ready for the new visions which are to be revealed to him. Now something very dreadful is shown, picturing the spiritual tribulations of the Church. Rev. 6 showed the temporal, Rev. 8 shows the spiritual tribulations of the Church. John beholds seven angels holding seven trumpets standing before the throne of God. This vision undoubtedly reveals the meaning of the seventh seal. And whenever one of the angels sounds his trumpet, a vision of a tribulation is shown. All of these visions refer to the history of the era and of this world. Altho the end of all things has already been shown in Chapter 7, the blessed and glorious state of the elect, the destinies of the Church are shown to the seer from another angle. This is the manner of presentation in the Apocalypse. At the end of a section it retraces its steps and presents the matter anew. Also in this passage the angels appear for the purpose of fulfilling and performing the Divine Will of God. They are especially the executors of God's commands. They take their stand before God and the trumpets are given to them. (edotheesan). This indicates that all tribulations are determined. This is a great consolation in these tribulations. For they are measured in God's council and they shall not exceed the limit. For the first something is said which precedes the blowing of the seven trumpets. An angel with a golden censor approaches the altar of burnt offering. The golden altar in the Old Testament temple was

placed before the Holy of Holies. The fire for the sacrifice was burning on the altar. Also we read of burning fire in this vision. The angel takes coals from this fire in the censer. This incense burns and a sweet smelling savour arises. This is a symbol of the prayers of the saints. The saints that are here upon earth are meant. Reference is had to their prayers that the Lord would come soon and redeem them from this world. Like sweet incense, such prayer is pleasing to God. It is heard and acceptable to Him. It is stated expressly that much incense was given to the angel that he should add it to the prayers of the saints. V. 3. This implies that the angels support the saints on earth with their prayers; ~~altho~~ they are in heaven, they take an interest in the saints on earth. This does not imply that we are permitted or commanded to ask the angels for their intercession. Hereupon the angel fills the censer for the second time. He casts the fiery coals upon the earth. Loud voices and sounds on earth result. Thunders, lightnings, and earthquakes. This is a picture of great and severe judgments. And all this judgment is to be consummated in the final judgment. But the Christians shall know before that all tribulations are lessened by sincere prayer, that their prayer will be heard, that God will finally save them who are His own. Thus, even this picture of terrors is a picture of consolation.

Now the trumpets are sounded. The first trumpet is sounded. It announces a scourge similar to the one that happened in Egypt. It is a scourge of hail, fire, and blood. Ex. 9:23ff. It covers the land. Not as yet is the final judgment, only one third of the trees and grass are burnt.

The second trumpet is sounded. The sea is damaged by a great mass of fire, also the creatures and the ships which are in the sea. Nor is this the final destruction, for only a third part of the sea, creatures, and ships are damaged.

The third trumpet is sounded. The rivers and fountains are polluted by a great star. One third of the waters of the rivers and fountains are turned into wormwood, like bitter wormwood water. And many men die.

The fourth trumpet is sounded. One third of the heavenly bodies are smitten. A darkening of the sun, moon, and the stars takes place.

The four trumpets and their judgments are supplementary to each other. All are disastrous happenings which will destroy human beings. The question is: what happenings are meant? Modern interpreters refer it to bodily and temporal happenings as described in the six seals. Rev. 6. If this were the case the seven trumpets would not differ from the six seals. This vision is one of the most difficult and obscure visions in our book. But most probably the interpretation of the ancient Church is the correct one. The tribulations and trials of the four trumpets refer to the four false doctrines. Four heresies that arose in the Church that caused the destruction of many souls. Every interpreter must needs be very careful in interpreting these things. Let us bear in mind that the various plagues come down from heaven. More than once in Scriptures, heaven is considered the realm of spirits. Eph. 6:12. Therefore, it is most probable that reference is made to disastrous happenings in the Church which are spiritual. This agrees very well with the coming of false doctrines and heresies. Church History shows that the Church did not only suffer from bloody persecutions, but the Church was sorely pressed from within by false doctrines and heresies. And we notice in fact just four destructive tendencies which arose in the Church and continue to this day: 1) Gnosticism (reconciling revealed religion with philosophy); 2) Montanism (Enthusiasm); 3) Arianism (denying the true divinity of Christ); 4) Pelagianism (denying the corruption of man's nature thru sin). The great star, v. 10, Rev. 1:16,20, is used as a symbol of a teacher. Cf. Rev. 9 where the fifth and sixth trumpets are added very fittingly. They refer to the two Anti-Christ.

This may be considered as the most probable meaning of the four trumpets. We must note that only a third part is destroyed in each of these pictures. That is indeed a great part. Still not all of the visible Church is destroyed. There are many that are left and are saved, that is the true believers, the sealed, the elect. That again is a great consolation to the Church.

CONTENTS OF REV. 8: THE FOUR TRUMPETS ANNOUNCING DANGEROUS DESTRUCTIVE HERESIES. The last verse announces a threefold woe before the three remaining trumpets are sounded. The limit of tribulations has not as yet been reached. This is the transition to Rev. 9. The Apocalypse in its construction is a work of art. It is well planned and worked out. The structure is wonderful and unique.

CHAPTER 9

This is a continuation of Rev. 8. It presents the vision of the fifth and sixth trumpet. We must always bear in mind that the sounding of the trumpet represents what will happen to the Church.

The fifth trumpet is sounded. A star falls from heaven upon the earth. This star represents Satan. Luke 10:18. Hereupon Satan is given the key to the abyss. Thereupon hell is unfettered and smoke arises. Such smoke is the creature of Hell and Satan. The sun and the air are darkened by this smoke. We must bear in mind that Satanic power and influence are employed. Therefore everything must be taken in a spiritual sense. Spiritual enlightenment will be darkened. The spiritual atmosphere will be poisoned. The smoke indicates lies, heresies, and other abominations. These abominations will reign supreme because all the power of hell is loosened. Then locusts come out of hell. These locusts are given power like scorpions. It is clear that not real locusts are meant. They do not hurt man very much. Obviously evil spirits are meant. Also it is stated that they shall not hurt any green thing. It is the natural habit of locusts to hurt green things. They are permitted to hurt only men, except, however, the elect of God. They are not permitted to kill any men but only to torment them. And not longer than five months. Five months is the time in the summer when the locusts appear and devastate the land. Five months is indeed quite a long time, yet it is not eternity. The torment inflicted upon men by the locusts is like the sting of the scorpion. Such a sting does not kill a man, but it causes him great pain. They would like to die, but they cannot die. In the following verses the description of these locusts is continued. Their appearance is marvelous but at the same time terrible. The entire description rests on Joel 2. They are indeed ghastly and horrid beasts. They have hair like women. They have the ability to lead others astray. They will therefore deceive men. Their faces are like men's faces. They are intelligent. They have breastplates as of iron. They are veritable juggernauts in their irresistible power. They have crowns of gold like lords and kings. Their teeth are like lion's teeth, devouring and crushing everything. They have tails like scorpion tails and stings. They are lead by a terrible leader and king whose name is Apollion. That is the devil himself, the destroyer. Some crack-brain exegetes draw this deduction: Abaddon, Apollyon, therefore is Napoleon. Once more power on earth will be given to the devil and his adherents. The devil is the prince of this world. The fifth trumpet ushers in the first woe. Then follow two other woes. Some exegetes hold that this prophecy has been fulfilled a long time ago. Abaddon is a great false teacher. The army of locusts is the Arian hordes which swooped down upon Europe in the Migration of Nations. A much better explanation is Roman popery. A thick smoke of lies and abominations arose, and still does from the papacy. The smoke of popery has obscured the light of true religion. It has darkened all Christianity. It has poisoned the whole spiritual atmosphere by its many abominations. The papacy is a great formidable enemy and army. It possesses temporal power and fierce

force of arms. For centuries the papacy has been the greatest power in the world. The papacy is very intelligent and it has human understanding and seductive powers. The cultus of the papacy is pompous, ostentatious, and seductive. Twice the torment caused by the Romanists is mentioned. V. 5 and 10. Thus the papacy has tormented the conscience of men. It has driven them to despair and finally to hell. The papacy is also irresistible, it will remain until the coming of Christ. 2 Thess. 2:8.

The sixth trumpet is sounded. Rev. 9:13-21, pictures a counterpart of the pope. The Oriental Anti-Christ. The coming of the second woe is sounded and announced. The holy seer hears a voice. This voice proceeds from the four horns of the altar of burnt offerings. The voice is the voice of God. Four angels are mentioned. They are bound at the River Euphrates. On the River Euphrates was situated Babylon, the oldest seat of wicked world powers. The angels are still bound. The hostile power is still checked, but they await and expect to be loosed. And when they are loosed a dreadful power will come and an immeasurable host is mentioned. These horsemen wear breastplates as of fire and brimstone. This indicates that they are invincible. They appear very dreadful and look like hell itself. They are a frightful power. They are able to afflict destruction and death. They not only torment and afflict their victims but they also kill them. Such power of destruction issues from their mouths and from their tails which have separate heads. They destroy one third of mankind, yet many are left that continue in their sins without repentance. They continue in their sins against the two tables of the Law. Thus we behold a judgment over a wicked heathen world. It is also a judgment over apostate Christianity immersed in heathen abominations. This second woe is preceded by a great apostacy. The judgment will come and is executed after the apostate generation in vain is called to repentance. If we study history, we are quite able to understand this vision. The preceding vision referred to the papacy. It was preceded by a great falling away. 2 Thess. 2:3. This present vision refers to the Oriental Anti-Christ. Everything that we have read agrees with the Turks, the adherents of Mohammed. It is a world power originating in the East, in Asia, in the countries of the River Euphrates, among which Arabia may be reckoned in the wider sense. The sword, that is, brute force has always been the weapon of the Turks. They convert people "by fire and the sword." They have killed all those that were in their way. This unnumbered horde for centuries overran the regions of the church. They conquered and subjugated the apostate eastern Church. They also subjugated entire heathen nations. And aside from their regular weapon the sword they used another weapon, the power of their tails. The Turks invented other devices besides death itself in order to torment the Christians; and make them apostates to their faith. The Mohammedan doctrine is indeed a hellish doctrine. This doctrine proceeds out of their mouth like fire and brimstone, like hell. The Mohammedans remain on the earth until this present day. It still causes enormous harm. Its adherents are numbered among the millions. Its missionary endeavors show more external success than the Christian. Probably the Oriental anti-Christ will also remain until the end. SUMMARY: THE FIFTH AND THE SIXTH TRUMPETS, THE WESTERN AND EASTERN ANTI-CHRISTS.

CHAPTER 10

Interregnum. In Rev. 9, the fifth and sixth trumpets are sounded. We expect in Rev. 10, the sounding of the seventh trumpet. However, this is not the case; the seventh trumpet announces the third of the great woes. The third woe is the greatest woe and the most dreadful one. It is to be traced thru the whole history of Christ's Church on earth. It is the Anti-Christ. The third woe also ushers in the final consummation. No other woe will follow. Prophecy will then be at an end. Then the last day will be at hand. Here also we must bear in mind that the prophecy is not given in straight chronological order. Rev. 10-12 are a preparation for the understanding of the third and last woe.

Chapter 10 proper - This chapter is an interlude between the sixth and seventh trumpet. John saw another angel coming down from heaven. This angel has been interpreted variously. Many exegetes consider it to be Christ Himself because of the description which perfectly fits Jesus. He is described very much like Christ is described in Rev. 1. He is described as very strong. He is clothed with a cloud, Rev. 1:7. Heaven is His realm. He is surrounded by a rainbow; it is upon His head. The rainbow is a symbol of grace and peace. Rev. 4:3; Gen. 9:12ff. His face is kind and gentle yet majestic like the sunlight. Rev. 1:16. His feet are as pillars of fire. Rev. 1:15. Christ is still with His people but His feet will trample upon His enemies. Ps. 110:1; Heb. 10:13. He will wreak vengeance upon His enemies and He will crush them. He has an open little book in His hand. This book is described more fully later. He places His right foot upon the sea and His left foot upon the earth. This indicates that He is Lord of heaven and earth. He raises His lion-like voice - Gen. 49:9; Rev. 5:5; - as Lord and Judge of the world. And the things created respond, as it were, the seven thunders. The things created confirm that the time for judgment has arrived. John intends to write down what he has heard. But he is commanded not to do this, but to seal up what he has heard. Men need not know as yet these things. The thunders point to the future revelation of God's majesty as Judge. Such majesty we do not know as yet. We have as yet no exact conception of it. However we shall know it hereafter. From this fact we may infer what the open booklet contains. It refers to the end of the councils and plans of God. The holy seer saw the angel lifting up his right hand and swearing. Dan. 12:7. He swears that there shall be time no longer. Time shall come to an end. No further time shall be allotted to the world. The seventh trumpet shall soon be sounded. This will announce the final destiny. Whatever God has decreed concerning the Church will then be carried out. The blessed mystery will then be consummated. v. 7. The enemies of the Church cannot and will not change one iota of it. This the Lord swears in order to comfort His Church. All trials and all griefs are at an end, a blessed end is hers at last. Now the seer is commanded to do something very remarkable. He is to eat the book in which the end of all things is written. Ez. 2:8ff; 3:1f. John complies with the command and the result is twofold: 1) in his mouth it is as sweet as honey. 2) in his belly it causes a bitter pain. That is to say, the contents of the book are of a double nature. For God's people the end ushers in the final redemption. The final consummation is the sweetest Gospel to them. But to the unbelieving the end will be bitter woe and pain. Luke 21:25-28. And now John is charged to announce the end of the world to the world, whether they believe or not.

SUMMARY: JOHN DEVOURS THE BOOK CONTAINING THE FINAL CONSUMMATION OF THE WORLD.

CHAPTER 11

The strong angel had already announced the seventh trumpet, Rev. 10. The seventh trumpet is sounded Rev. 11:15. That is the final end. Hence, what we read verses 1-14 takes place before the end. The contents of this section are stated correctly in the superscription. The two witnesses, their offices, and their lot, Rev. 10:8. John had heard a voice speaking to him. Most likely this voice was the voice of Christ. The same voice tells him that he should measure the temple of God, the altar of burnt offerings, and those that he should worship in the temple. The temple is God's people on earth. God's people is measured because it will be preserved. He should not measure the outer court. This court will be lost. This court was the place for the people, and among the people were many hypocrites and pretenders. People who really were not God's own. This court will be surrendered to the unbelievers. And the heathen will tread them under foot 42 months. This is three and a half years. And the number three and a half is the number of calamity or disaster, the time of the Anti-Christ. Dan. 7:25; 9:27; 12:7. The Church of the Anti-Christ is nothing but a worldly church, a new

heathendom.

But in these days the Lord will provide two witnesses. They will prophesy 1260 days, 42 months, $3\frac{1}{2}$ years. Therefore, this again refers to the time of the Anti-Christ. But there will still be witnesses even in these evil days, faithful witnesses to the truth. They are clothed in sackcloth, they preach repentance. They are designated as the two olive trees, the two candlesticks. It reminds us of Joshua and Jerubabel, Zech. 4. They were radiating light. Thus there will be witnesses of the truth in the New Testament, endowed with the Holy Ghost - Olive Trees. - Their testimony will shed a bright light and lustre over the earth - candlesticks. Woe to him that despises and bears enmity to these witnesses to the truth. Woe to him that will harm and injure them, and despise their work. They have the power to close heaven and to send all kinds of plagues upon the earth. Such power they have received from God Himself. They will announce destruction to the wicked enemies in the name of their God. And God will fulfil their Prophecies and will bring on eternal destruction.

Hereupon the holy seer announces the coming of the beast out of the abyss. The beast is the Anti-Christ. It will overcome and kill the faithful witnesses. It will even deny an honorable burial to their bodies. It will not permit them to rest in graves. But this will take place only after they have finished their testimony. After their word has effected what it should effect. Their bodies lie about in the great city where their Lord was crucified. This is Jerusalem that is now filled with abominations. It has become worldly and heathenish. The Roman Catholic realm represents itself to be the true Church. It claims to be Jerusalem, but it is Sodom because of its sin and shame. It is Egypt because of its heathenism. In this horrid Jerusalem the Savior is again crucified. The unbloody sacrifice of Christ. His merit is trampled upon. The bodies of the faithful witnesses will lie in the streets for three and a half days. This is again the unlucky number of the Anti-Christ. The adherents of the Anti-Christ will be delighted with these things. They will be glad and rejoice that they are rid of these tormentors. After three and a half days the breath of life from God will again enter into them. They ascend into heaven. A great earthquake takes place. One tenth part of the city is demolished. The Anti-Christian Church decreases. The rest are affrightened and give glory to God. It is the second woe and it is now past. The third woe comes quickly. We naturally ask who are those two witnesses? It is safer not to apply these words to individuals. The meaning is: God will always provide faithful preachers and witnesses to the truth. Even in the worst times of the Anti-Christ the Word of God will not be silenced completely. There are only two witnesses. A small number over against the hosts of the Anti-Christ. The Anti-Christ will kill these true witnesses. The Anti-Christian Church is defiled with the blood of martyrs. Whenever such faithful witnesses are removed the pope and world rejoice. But the dead will return to life. Thus it is presented in this picture. The meaning is: the faithful preachers will never die out but new witnesses will always come forth. Also in the picture no definite individuals are meant. All faithful witnesses and ministers will finally thru death come to God. It is simply part of the vision that the enemies see this. They will see them, in truth, at the end of all things. Terrified they will realize that they have spurned their word. And what we read of the earthquake and the partial destruction of the city has been fulfilled. God's judgments have been executed upon the Anti-Christ. We think of Luther and the Reformation. We bear in mind the conflicts of these days and later on. A mortal wound has been inflicted on the beast, the papacy. Many have been converted and many will be converted. At evening it will still be light. Zech. 14:7. But it is true that the Anti-Christ will remain until the time of the final coming of Christ in glory.

11:15-19:

The seventh trumpet is sounded. He announces the third, worst, and last woe. But in order to comfort him, the holy seer is shown at once the end of all things. The sixth seal has already described the end. Here it is pictured from a different point of view in the sounding of the seventh trumpet. This vision shows the triumph of the blessed and the kingdom of glory. Christ shall, will reign forever. V. 15. All kingdoms of the world will be subject to him. Therefore all believers may be of good cheer and expect calmly the terrible things that are to come. Even now they see the end. Then Christ will have exercised His power over the enemies. He has been victorious. And He has exalted His people and given them dominion. All the blessed represented by the 24 Elders will give Him honor and praise. They will praise and glorify God. And they will receive their reward. The enemies had indeed been very angry, and above all the one true Anti-Christ. But now the wrath of God has come and the final resurrection of the dead, and the final judgment. God's people will live forever and ever. They will adore God forever. And finally the holy seer is in another vision beholding the temple of God in heaven. He sees the ark of the Covenant, the Anti-type of the Old Testament ark. This points to the covenant of Eternal peace which God has made with His people. He will save His people. He will save His people in all trouble and anxiety. But He will meet His enemies with His Judgment, with His wrath. He will visit His enemies coming like a terrible earthquake and a great hail.

SUMMARY: THE TWO WITNESSES TO THE TRUTH: AND THE SEVENTH AND FINAL TRUMPET, THE FINAL CONSUMMATION.

CHAPTER 12

In Rev. 11, the history of the world and the Churches was continued until the end of all things. Now the prophesy turns back. It represents the history of the Church from a different angle. Heaven is the locality of this vision. The seer beholds a woman with a crown of twelve stars, that is Israel, the Church of God. She is arrayed with the symbol of sin and death. She rules over sin and death and places them under her feet. The woman is at the point of giving birth to a child and is in great pain. Before she is delivered the holy seer beholds another wonder, a dragon. This dragon is Satan. v. 9. He has seven heads and ten horns. The numbers 7 and 10 are the numbers of perfection. The horns are a symbol of his power. The crowns are a symbol of his splendor, all power upon earth is given to him. He arrogates for himself divine power. He imitates divine works. He is the god and prince of this world. All powers of the earth are at his service. He draws one-third of the stars after him and draws them down upon the earth. This indicates the fall of the evil angels. The dragon places himself before the woman in order to devour the child. The whole description is very drastic as always in the apocalypse. The woman bears a Son. He is to rule the world with a rod of iron. Ps. 2:10; Rev. 2:27. Thus we see that the Messiah is indicated. Christ sprang from Israel. But before that time great trouble prevailed. Micah 5:3. Satan tried in every possible way to destroy the child. He attempted His life thru Herod, and he did not succeed. The Son sits upon the throne of God. And the woman fled into the wilderness. There she was to remain 1260 days, the time of the Anti-Christ. This therefore refers to the New Testament Church. This need not trouble us in our interpretation of this scene. There is, in fact, only one Church, the Church of the Old and New Testament. Christ is the center between the Old and New Testament Church. Whatever here is indicated has truly taken place. God's Church has been persecuted by Satan and by the false Anti-Christian Church. The Church had to flee as it were, into the wilderness. She had to pass her days in misery and distress. But the Church has also been guarded and saved by God throughout the ages. Now the scene changes. A great conflict in heaven is described. This does not imply that

there was really a conflict in heaven. The holy seer saw a picture of a conflict. Just as he had previously seen the picture of the woman and the dragon. The war is between Michael and the dragon just mentioned. Michael means "who is like God?" and means, no one is like God. Michael is the Prince of Israel the protector of God's Church. Dan 12:1. That is the angel of the Lord, like God in essence (essentia), Christ Himself. He combats the dragon and His adherents He overcomes them. Therefore, no place is found in heaven for the dragon. And he is cast down upon the earth. The devil may no longer accuse the children of God on account of their sins. He has lost his weapon. Therefore this conflict points to Christ's work of redemption. Sin is atoned for and forgiven. The whole passage refers to Gen. 3:15. Therefore, the seer hears a hymn of praise. This hymn is sung by the victors. Since the accuser has been cast out, since his accusation is no longer valid, the angels sing this triumphant song. And their brethren on earth will do the same. This hymn of praise is sung to the Lamb. The Lamb is the Son of the Woman. This Lamb won the victory over the devil with its blood. Therefore, all shall rejoice. God's people have obtained eternal victory thru the defeat of Satan.

12:13-17: Satan is the prince and lord of this world. He still vents his wrath against the children of men upon the earth. He knows that there is little time left for him. And this section shows in what manner he pours out his wrath. The dragon now vents his wrath upon the woman, upon the Church of God in the world. He cannot harm the souls of the believers. Therefore, he tries to harm at least their bodies. The woman flees into the wilderness. There she stays three and half times (Hebrew dual). The earth helps the woman when she is persecuted by the dragon. The earth ministers to the Church, and offers protection to it. The earth offers a place where she may stay. This arouses the wrath of the devil and he makes war with her children. He wars against those that keep the word of God. Satan is not able to exterminate the Church from the earth, but he continually wars against her. Although many die as martyrs, still the Church remains. Even the gates of hell shall not prevail against her. Thus this vision pictures the whole history of the Church. The greatest tribulation is the time of the Anti-Christ. But just those days will usher in the final salvation of the Church.

SUMMARY: THE COMBAT AND VICTORY OF CHRIST AND THE CHURCH OF CHRIST OVER AGAINST SATAN.

CHAPTER 13

This chapter is divided into two sections. 1) vv. 1-10 treat of the seven-headed beast of blasphemy. 2) vv. 11-18 treat of the two-horned beast of seduction.

1-10: Again the scene is changed. The seer stood upon the shore of the sea. He beholds a beast rising out of the sea. Dan. 7. Daniel also had seen beasts coming out of the sea. He saw four beasts, representing four great monarchies. Here the seer beholds one beast coming out of the sea. This is the final and last form of the world power, the Anti-Christ. Almost all interpreters agree that this beast is the Anti-Christ. But who is the Anti-Christ? Luther refers this picture to the temporal power of the pope. The sea out of which the beast arises is the nations. The beast is a horrible, frightful beast. It has seven heads and ten horns and upon its horns ten crowns. And upon the heads names of blasphemy. Hence the beast is a princely power, and its chief characteristic is blasphemy. This points to the Roman Anti-Christ, the pope. This whole description is based upon Dan. 7. Daniel saw four beasts: 1) the lion, the Assyrian-Babylonian world power; 2) bear, the Medo-Persian world power; 3) Leopard, the Greek-Macedonian world power; 4) the unmentionable beast, the Roman world power. The beast described in Revelation has the characteristics of these four beasts. The dragon gave his power and throne to the beast.

The Anti-Christ is the tool of Satan upon earth. 2 Thess. 2:8. His appearance is fully described. Rev. 17. The seven heads point to the seven hills upon which Rome is situated. They also point to the seven different kinds of rule in the empire. Rev. 17:9,10. The ten horns and their crowns indicate the different provinces of the Roman empire, which later became kingdoms. The name of blasphemy signifies the blasphemous idol and its enmity towards Christ. John now beholds one of the heads of the beast which had been mortally wounded. But the wound was healed. The realm of the Anti-Christian Church may sometimes suffer defeat. The world history shows that the princes attacked the pope quite formidably, but the beast always recovers from its mortal wounds. The Anti-Christ will remain until the second coming of Christ. Therefore, the whole earth admires the beast because of its great power. The Roman Church is a world power found anywhere, everywhere upon the earth. By admiring the beast, people worship the dragon. The dragon really is the power behind the throne. They say admiring things about the beast. He is the greatest power upon earth. Therefore it is very proud and speaks blasphemies. Such blasphemy is the characteristic of the Anti-Christ. He blasphemes Christ's redemption and salvation. This raging of the Anti-Christ continues for three and a half years. This ever recurring time and number of the Anti-Christ. It is also evident that his time has been determined, God's judgments will come at last and make an end of him. But in his days, he acts like the god of this world. These are the days of the last great woe. He arrogates to himself dominion and power. He issues laws and decretals. He blasphemes the name of God. He also blasphemes all those that live in heaven, by his abominable saint worship. Blasphemy is his true characteristic. And just as Satan is persecuting the True Church, so likewise the Anti-Christ. He will wreak his wrath, upon those that do not side with him. Thus he has brought about the terrible persecutions of the Christians. He has vanquished the saints, externally and publicly. Never-the-less he obtains great power, homage and adoration upon earth. But only among the unbelievers and hypocrites. The book of life is called the book of the Lamb. To the Lamb that was slain we owe the fact that our names are written in the book of life. The holy seer closes this section by exhorting us to hear. These dreadful words are to be listened to and be taken to heart. Prophecy and fulfilment are to be compared. And finally we read threatening words. Whosoever leads the servants of God into captivity, shall go into captivity, who kills them will be killed. Truly God's judgment will come down upon the beast. It will receive what it has inflicted upon the saints of God according to the "iustalonis." Patience and faith of the saints is necessary. Whosoever bears the cross of Christ in faith will be victorious in the final conflict.

13:11-18: The holy seer saw another animal coming out of the earth. Earth is something fixed, something enduring. Therefore, this expression points to something stable and lasting. This other beast had two horns like unto the Lamb and spoke like the dragon. Hence, this beast looks very innocent. Those two horns point to the twofold power of the beast. The power of the words and the power of miracles. This second beast spoke like the dragon, a serpent. Rev. 12:9. He speaks in a crafty and seductive manner. This second beast is described as the servant of the first beast, the Anti-Christ. He promotes the worship of the first beast. v. 12. Just for such a purpose it also does great wonders. These signs are diabolical and Satanic miracles. 2 Thess. 2:9,10. By these signs it seduces mankind. It induces them to make an image of the first beast. This points to the cultus, the worship that is offered to the Anti-Christ. The second beast gives breath to the image of the first beast, so that the image speaks. The cultus of the Anti-Christ is external image worship. But at the same time it is filled with life and breath. In this way the beast enlivens the whole external worship of the Anti-Christ. The second beast ministers in every way to the first beast. He also causes those to be put to death who do not worship the beast. V.15. But these that worship the beast bear upon their hands and foreheads the mark of the beast. Whoever does not show this mark will not be able to buy and sell.

They will be hardly able to exist, hardly able to make a living.

THE NUMBER OF THE BEAST

The number of the beast is the number of a man. And his number is 666. It is a number that can be reckoned (Pseephisa'too). What is the meaning of this? Usually the second beast is called the false prophet, who procures honor and adoration of the first beast. And that is indeed the correct understanding. The Anti-Christ employs brute force. He utters horrible blasphemies. He has intelligence. The second beast is the false prophet of the Anti-Christ. He is a moral power (Not brute force, but the opposite of brute force). We may well apply this to Jesuitism in the Catholic Church; its scholasticism and ethics. Jesuitism is really the power of papal intelligence. It uses lofty, pious, and innocent phrases, its very name sounds very holy. The Society of Jesus. The same holds true of their well-known symbol; Iesu Hominem Salvator: I.H.S. Nevertheless, the one speaking thru Jesuitism is Satan, the deceitful serpent. Jesuitism has especially promoted the power of the papacy. This is precisely its purpose according to its own statements. It has transformed the brute force of the pope into a well organized power. And Jesuitism is a very seductive power. Many have been led astray by the scholastic tricks and practices of Jesuitism. Jesuitism has also promoted the Roman cultus. This form of worship shows considerable intelligence. Jesuitism is Satanic. Jesuitism guards and defends even the most senseless parts of this cultus. And also the words of our text regarding buying and selling have come true. This was the state of affairs in Papal Countries for many years, that one could not make a living unless they were good sons of the Church. Quite frequently the others were persecuted and killed. Just the Jesuits incited the pope to do such things. The pope himself is not safe unless he yields to the Jesuits. Here again we see that prophecy and history agree to the very letter. And also what is stated about the miracles of Rome, but there are also some things that cannot be explained in this manner. There we notice diabolic, satanic wonders. Such miracles are again and again claimed and performed by the Church of Rome.

THE NUMBER 666

Which beast is meant, the first or the second? We may say that the first and second beast are practically the same. The Anti-Christian papacy is Jesuitism, and Jesuitism is the Anti-Christian papacy. My own opinion is that the beast is the first beast. A close study of the context will show this. The mark of the beast is the mark of the first beast. Therefore it is the first beast with ten horns and seven heads. What does this number signify? Many different opinions have been given. All imaginable persons have been traced in this number. "Pseephisa'too" according to the clear words of the text the number may be counted in some way and thereby be explained. With Jews, Greeks, and Romans every number of the alphabet also represented a number. One interpretation is Caesar Nero in Hebrew letters:

Resch	Samck	Kop	Nun	Waw	Resch	Nun	
200	60	100	50	6	200	50	= 666 Irenaeus hold this.
Lambda	Alpha	Tau	Epsilon	Iota	Ny	Omikron	Sigma
30	1	300	5	10	50	70	200 - 666

The Greek stands for Rome. This may be considered as the most probable and acceptable meaning. The safest tradition of John is Irenaeus because he was a disciple of Polycarp, a disciple of John. John writes to Asia Minor and these people could only figure in Greek. 1) The beast is a man. 2) His number is 666. 3) His number can be reckoned (Pseephisa'too). 4) This book has been written to Greek speaking people. Therefore the number should be reckoned according to the Greek language.

There is a variant reading. 616. Caesar Gaius. All kinds of interpretations have been given; Napoleon, Kaiser, Chain stores, etc.
SUMMARY: THE ANTI-CHRIST AND HIS FALSE PROPHET

CHAPTER 14

After the picture, the terrible picture, in Rev. 13, John now sees a beautiful and lovely picture. He saw a lamb standing on Mt. Zion. This is the Lamb of God which has been so frequently mentioned in the Apocalypse -- Jesus Christ. He also sees 144,000 people standing with the Lamb. That is the great family of the sealed, the great number of the elect. Rev. 4:7,8. They do not bear the seal of the Anti-Christ, the mark of the beast. Rev. 13:16,17. Thereupon John hears beautiful singing coming down from heaven. It is as loud as the voice of many waters and the sound of many thunders. Yet it is as lovely as the song of harping of harpers. It is the triumphant song of eternal life. It is a new song understood only by the 144,000. It is the hymn of eternal redemption. Rev. 5:9,10. The elect persons do not defile themselves with the idolatry and false doctrines of the Anti-Christ. But they follow the Lamb wherever He goes. They are led in faith by Christ and His Word. They are God's and the Lamb's own people bought with a price. Like the first fruits of the O. T., that had to be offered to God. This chosen generation is that part of mankind that is consecrated to God, those that serve God with a true heart, v. 4a, this is spoken spiritually. The latter part of the verse explains the first part. Thus for the second time, the Holy Seer beholds the holy nation after the terrible vision of the Anti-Christ. Anti-Christ will not be able to lead astray a single one of the elect. John beholds them as already attained to the final goal. And there will also come a time in the history of the Church when this hymn will be sung on the earth. This is shown in the following vision.

14:6-13: The holy seer beholds another vision. He sees an angel flying in mid-heaven, bearing the eternal Gospel. The time is again the time of the Anti-Christ. V. 8,9. The Anti-Christ cannot completely destroy the saving Gospel. It will again be proclaimed upon earth, freely, clearly, forcefully, and universally. It is the same Gospel that has been proclaimed at the beginning of the Church. Those that dwell upon earth shall be exhorted to accept that Gospel in true faith. They are not to accord honor to the Anti-Christ, but to God alone. To that God who has created everything, and thus will be able to deliver his elect speedily. This is a clear prophecy of the Reformation. We do not say directly that Luther is the angel mentioned. This mode of expression is part of the picturesque language of the Apocalypse. It would also be rather difficult to explain the second and third angel. This vision very clearly points to Luther, and Luther's preaching of the Gospel. The angel states emphatically that the hour of his judgment is come. The Reformation is the final dawn and shining light of the Gospel upon the earth. After Luther's doctrine pure the Gospel has been proclaimed throughout the world, the end will come. The first angel is followed by the second angel calling "Babylon is fallen."

The second angel. This angel appears again speaking of the beast, and his abominations. Babylon was the capital city of heathen world power in the time of the O.T. Babylon is the picture of the enemy world power. This world power is concentrated in the Anti-Christ. The angel said it is fallen. This is called out immediately after the Gospel has been proclaimed. The fall of Babylon is the result of the preaching of the Gospel. The Anti-Christ has been revealed and judged by Luther's Word. Principally in a spiritual sense, his downfall has been accomplished. Externally he has not as yet been exterminated. That will take place at the Parousia, 2 Thess. 2:8. The reason for the downfall of the Anti-Christ is because he has given men wine to drink. Such wine tastes pleasant and sweet

but makes one drunk. It is an intoxicating cup. That is the great seductive power of the Anti-Christ. He professes to be the one and only saving Church. It is in fact a heathenish soul-destroying realm. This wine is also a wine of wrath. Whosoever drinks of this after the pernicious Anti-Christ has been revealed will encounter the wrath of God.

This is especially stated by the third angel. Whosoever permits himself to be seduced by Babylon shall suffer the wrath of God. And whosoever worships the beast shall suffer such wrath. We see that Babylon and the beast are the same thing, the Anti-Christ. And this wrath of God burns down into the deepest depths of hell, and the torments of hell are everlasting. Thus the worshipers of the Anti-Christ will suffer eternal damnation. The threatenings and murders of the Anti-Christ offer no valid excuse, neither is the fear of death a valid excuse. Patience of the saints is necessary. Holding fast the faith and keeping the commandments of God. But immediately the blessed lot of the saints is contrasted to the terrible lot of the damned. Even tho they have suffered death on account of their faith, yet they are blessed eternally. Those that live and die in the Lord are the opposite of the adherents of the Anti-Christ. In heaven they rest from their labors. On earth they suffer much tribulation, but when they die they enter into eternal bliss. And their works follow with them. The good works of the believers will then be crowned, they will be rewarded.

14:14-20: Now everything has taken place before the end. Therefore the end is now approaching, since everything that had to take place before the end had come to pass. And the following vision describes the final judgment. An angel appears upon a white cloud. He is like the Son of Man. He is a picture of Christ. He has a golden crown upon his head. He is the King of Kings. He has a sharp sickle in his hand, because He comes for the purpose of harvesting, for the purpose of holding judgment, Joel 3:13. But the harvest here is to be distinguished from the gathering of the grapes. The harvest therefore refers to the believers, the righteous. Matt. 13:24-43; 3:12. In verses 17-20, the other side is described. Another angel appears having a sharp sickle. He also is a picture of the Son of Man. He is ordered to use his sickle and cut off the grapes. The order is given by the third angel. He proceeds from the altar. There the martyrs cry for vengeance. Rev. 6:9,10. The wine and the grapes are the picture of the wanton wicked people. They are ripe for judgment. The grapes are the things thrown into the winopress of the wrath of God. Joel 3:13; Is. 63:3,4. The final wrath of God is now kindled. The winepress is being trodden outside of the city. And the blood reaches even to the bridles of the horses. The blood mentioned is the blood of the wicked. They are being punished and tormented. The bridle of the horses points to an army. That is clearly the host of the Anti-Christ. Streams of blood are flowing and this enemy host will perish in them. The distance mentioned extends 1600 stadions. That is equal to 40 geographical or 200 English miles. The Holy Land, Palestine, only covered 32 geographical or 160 English miles. The Holy Land is a familiar picture of the Church. The Anti-Christ host advances against the Church of God. It is not able to advance further. It cannot destroy the Church. It will perish in its own blood. The judgment will strike chiefly the Anti-Christ.

SUMMARY: THE ETERNAL GOSPEL AND THE FINAL JUDGMENT

CHAPTER 15

The holy seer has once more described the history of the Church from the beginning to the final consummation. There is nothing beyond that in the present world. Therefore he again turns back in the following chapters.

- Rev. 15,16: The seven last great plagues; the seven vials of wrath
- Rev. 17: Prophecies of Babylon, Rome, Anti-Christ's city
- Rev. 18: Describes the downfall of the Anti-Christ's realm
- Rev. 19: Prophecies the glorious return of the Christ for final judgment

In Chapter 15, the seven last plagues. There were two previous sets of plagues, this is the third and last set. V. 3. Ex. 15. Redemption of Israel out of Egypt is a picture of the final redemption, v. 7. The wrath of God burning like fire and smoke.

CHAPTER 16

The seven vials are poured out and the plagues come. Some interpreters consider these to be spiritual plagues. A better interpretation would be physical; like the seven Egyptian plagues. V. 2-4. These are temporal punishments for their sins, a law of recompense. V. 8-10. Men are scorched with great heat and blaspheme God. This is the suffering of the Anti-Christ. V. 12. The sixth angel. This account reminds one of the capture of Babylon by Cyrus by diverting the river around the city and marching in under the gates on the river bed. V. 12, the seventh angel. It is done. Rev. 21. The Anti-Christian state was destroyed at the Last Judgment.

CHAPTER 17

Description of Anti-Christ. (eespornee's) the great whore. Falling away from God is spiritual whoredom. V. 3. The number 10 and 7 rests upon the account in Daniel. In Rev. 12 the woman is the Church. In Rev. 17 it is the Anti-Type of the Church, that is the Anti-Christ. V. 4. The vestments and ornaments of the priests. Scarlet and jewelry. Priests are arrayed in fine clothes. Cardinals wear scarlet coat and caps. A literal fulfilment of this verse. And the dumb Catholics don't notice this. V. 5. 2 Thess. 2 (mystery). Anti-Christ is called 1) mystery; 2) Babylon the great; 3) Mother of harlots. V. 8. The Roman kingdom was built up; then it was destroyed; then it rose again in the papacy. V. 9. The seven hills of Rome. V. 10. There is a tradition that after Nero died, he would come again; therefore some interpreters explain this verse in this manner. V. 11. The seven forms of government leading finally to the Anti-Christ: Kings, consuls, dictators, decem viri, tribunes, Roman empire divided into Eastern and Western Empires, the eight 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 Anti-Christ. V. 15. Waters are many people. V. 16. The formerly obedient servants of the pope fought the pope, that is, in modern times Spain has finally thrown off papal shackles.

CHAPTER 18

The fall of Babylon. All those that have entered into her sins will be punished.

CHAPTER 19

God is praised in heaven for His righteous judgments. V. 1. This is the only place in the New Testament where the word "Alleluia" occurs. V. 7. The marriage of the Lamb. v. 9. The marriage feast for the saints of God. V. 10. Angels are not to be worshipped or prayed to. They are our fellow servants. V. 13. John 1. The Word is Christ, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. V. 17,18. Vultures are called to eat of the carcasses of those that have fallen under the wrath of God. V. 19-21. The beast and those with him are defeated by Christ and for punishment they are thrown alive in the lake burning with brimstone. Those that were slain were eaten by the vultures of the air.

CHAPTER 20

First we shall consider the contents of this chapter. V. 1-3. An angel is

coming down from heaven. He binds the devil for 1,000 years. He binds him for this purpose that he should no longer seduce the Gentiles. V. 4-6. We read of a dominion on the part of the saints. The holy seer beholds thrones. And they reign with Christ for 1,000 years. This is called the first resurrection. Over those that participate in this resurrection death has no power or authority. (That is the second death). V. 7-10. After these 1,000 years Satan will again be loosed. And he will seduce the Gentiles to war against the Holy City. But fire will come down from heaven and devour the Gentiles. The devil will be cast into the fiery abyss. This is the second death, the everlasting death. V. 11-15. Describes the resurrection and the final judgment. For some a judgment to eternal life; for others, to eternal damnation.

We must observe that the Apocalypse does not follow the chronological sequence in the pictures and visions which it presents. It always goes back; always the destinies of the Church from the beginning to end. But always different dangers, other tribulations, and other enemies. But the Apocalypse also shows continually God's protection and love. And it shows the final victory and blessed goal. Now we shall try to understand this chapter correctly and to reject the incorrect interpretations. Heretics of the Church of ancient times based their doctrines on this chapter. Papius, the father of the Chiliasts, also Montanus were Chiliasts. Most modern theologians that still accept the Bible are Chiliasts. Just in our days, the acceptance of Chiliasm is considered orthodoxy. Generally speaking, Chiliasts give the following interpretations:

They maintain that Rev. 20 follows Rev. 19 chronologically. Christ appears before all the world riding upon a white horse. ^{Rev.} 19:11-16. And the first one to be judged is the Anti-Christ. Rev. 19:17-21. Thereupon Satan is bound for 1,000 years, at least externally. The devil has lost his power. Mankind upon earth will be obedient to God for 1,000 years. And the saints have obtained dominion. The faithful confessors and martyrs live and reign with Christ for 1,000 years. But they only represent the congregation of believers. They have come back to life and that is the first resurrection. But also those believers that are found upon earth will reign with Christ. But the reigning takes place upon earth. For Christ will have his throne upon earth. All men worship him. And those that believe in him participate in ruling. Thus the Church triumphs upon earth. All the world is cast at the feet of Christ. But the final conflict issues after this blessed time upon earth. The devil will once more be loosed. The wicked heathen will once more exercise all their heathenism. Ez. 38:39. Especially God and Magog, these horrible barbaric nations. It will be a decisive conflict. The place where Christ reigns will be besieged. Even the exalted Christ will have to undergo once more on earth a siege. He must suffer enmity and resistance. This will not last long. Soon the final wrath will be poured out. The second return of the Lord in glory will take place. But the Lord will not come down from heaven, because He is upon earth. And then the resurrection of the wicked to shame and torment will take place. After judgment, eternity. Those whose names are not written in the book of life shall be cast into the fire. That is the second and everlasting death. This is generally speaking the Chiliastic interpretation of our chapter. Usually they also add some Old Testament prophecies. They say that in the millennium Israel will obtain special glory. All ^Israel will be converted. They will return to Canaan, Jerusalem will again arise in temporal splendor and glory. Ez. 40:48. The ^{Mt.} Zion will grow in height and width. Is. 2. The Land Canaan will be glorified. The converted Jews will also revel in temporal blessings. Finally the wretched heathen will encroach upon this section of glorified earth. But Christ will not permit them to do so.

This Chiliastic interpretation does not agree with the clear statement of Scriptures concerning this matter. This chapter must be taken in the spiritual sense. The beginning of its fulfilment was when thousands of Israelites were

converted. When the Word of God began to bear fruit in Palestine. Then also the believing Gentiles were added.

To assume a double resurrection is against Scriptures: 1) Of the martyrs. 2) Then the rest of humanity. John 5:28,29. At one and the same time all will arise. John 6:39,40. There a statement is made by the Lord that He will on the last day raise up all believers.

Likewise it is contrary to Scriptures to assume a double return of Christ in glory. 1 Pet. 4:5-7; Heb. 9:27,28. There is a twofold coming of Christ. 1) As a child in Bethlehem. 2) As the Lord of Glory on the last day. Only once Christ will come for final judgment.

It is also against Scriptures to assume a blessed condition of the Church before the last day. Matt. 24:25. Luke 21. Christians will suffer troubles and tribulations up to the end. And after such tribulations Christ will come in power and glory. Then He will come in order to lead the believers to life eternal. The unbelievers He will reject forever.

The Chiliastic interpretation is imposed upon our chapter although it is not contained therein. It is not stated that the believers shall sit upon thrones upon earth. Rev. 19 refers to the return of Christ to judgment. It pertains to the great and terrible day of wrath coming over all men at the last day. Rev. 20: 1, does not follow Rev. 19 chronologically. The holy seer retraces his steps, so to speak, as he has done a number of times. Something new happening to the Church is brought up. And another enemy of the Church besides the Anti-Christ is mentioned, namely, Gog and Magog, not one word is said about the believers' reign upon earth. The place that Christ reigns together with those that are with Him is not mentioned. But we know that Christ is in heaven and not upon earth. The place that Christ reigns is not upon earth in a visible manner. And therefore we refer the life of the believers in heaven is described in this passage, their reigning in heaven. The reigning of the believers in heaven is described in very similar terms (basileuoo). V. 5. The first resurrection is to be taken in a spiritual manner. It is a spiritual resurrection, beginning as soon as the believers die. The martyrs are expressly singled out - those that had been killed for the testimony of Jesus Christ. The Apocalypse was written during the days of the great persecutions. Rev. 6:9-11.

The devil is bound for 1,000 years. He is bound so as not to deceive the heathen; so as not to incite them to wage war against Christ. The devil will not be able to hinder the conversion of many heathen. The power to do so will be taken from him. The period of 1,000 years is a fixed round number. The number of completeness 10x10x10. It clearly indicates a long period. During this period the believers already triumph, they rejoice in the glory of Christ. Many interpreters have tried to figure the thousand years arithmetically. 800-1800 the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation; or: 300-1300 A.D. the victory of Christianity over heathendom in the days of Constantine the Great. All such calculations do not agree satisfactorily with the annals of history. It seems best to consider the thousand years as a prophetic ideal number which cannot and must not be figured according to human standards. Particularly also in Daniel, the Old Testament basis of the Apocalypse. Something similar are the ideal measurements in Ez. 40-48. It is a definitely fixed period. All interpreters agree that by the number 1,000 a considerable time is accorded to the extension of the Church. We may say that the thousand years begin with Pentecost and that we are now living in this period of one thousand years. And that during this period God is long-suffering and patient. He waits for men to repent.

But at the end of this period the devil will be loosed once more. Christ has predicted long ago that He would not find faith upon earth when He returns.

Luke 18:8. And the tool of Satan in his ragins will be Gog and Magog. Ez. 38:39. Who are Gog and Magog? Many Lutheran theologians including Luther have pointed to the Oriental Anti-Christ, the Turk. Much can be said for this interpretation. The murderous Pope and Turk will remain until the end. But another interpretation is preferable. Gog and Magog signify the whole Christ hating attack upon the Church in the last days. Thus the Gentiles will wage war upon the saints upon earth, and not those in heaven. They are safe in the hands of Christ. This interpretation of ours seems to agree with all the statements in our section and with Scriptures in general. Consequently Rev. 20 does not follow Rev. 19 chronologically. A new destiny of the Church is added here. And another vicious and terrible enemy of the Church besides the Anti-Christ, Gog and Magog.

SUMMARY: V.1-10: THE THOUSAND YEARS OF THE CHURCH

20:11-15: The long period of the extension and oppression of the Church is followed by the final Judgment. God sits upon His throne as the Judge of the world. Heaven and earth flee before Him. This points to the end of all things. This points to the final consummation. Hereupon the general resurrection of all the dead is shown. Wherever the dead are to be found, on earth, in the sea, in hell, they must appear before the throne of God. The great and the small without any exception will arise on that day. The different books will then be opened. These are the books of God's omniscience. All the works done during life will again be brought to light. And everyone will receive his sentence according to his works. And then another book will be opened, which is the book of life. The names of the elect are recorded in that book. Only those whose names will be found in that book will receive a favorable sentence. Whose names are not recorded therein will be cast into hell. But the names of the believers are written in the book of life from eternity. And in the days of their life God has given them saving faith and has preserved them in faith. Their faith has proved itself in its works as true faith. It is true that they also have sinned but their sin is blotted out thru the Blood of the Lamb. They, the sheep are standing at the right hand. Matt. 25:31ff., while the goats stand at the left hand. As in Matt., the final lot of all will be decided according to their good works. Thus the judgment of the Supreme Judge which actually is pronounced by faith and unbelief is judged by works. John 3:18,36; 5:24. Finally, the eternal doom of the unbelieving is described. They will be cast into the lake burning with fire and brimstone. All those that will be thrown into hell have risen from the dead, but now both body and soul will burn in everlasting fire. Nothing is stated here about the blessed lot of the elect. Of this the last two chapters treat exhaustively.

SUMMARY: (V. 11-15) THE FINAL JUDGMENT

CHAPTER 21

1-8: The holy seer has described the destinies of the Church from every side and angle. In the two last chapters he describes the glorious state of the New World (status gloriae). This prophecy extends beyond the last day and leads into eternity. This prophecy shows the Church of Christ in its everlasting state of perfection. It is delivered from all evil and rests in heavenly glory. The holy seer beholds a new heaven and a new earth. Isaiah had prophesied of this. Is. 65:17; 66:22. And St. Peter had reiterated this word. 2 Pet. 3:13. This new heaven and new earth is the dwelling place of the blessed people. This place must be indescribably beautiful. The former place shall not be remembered or come into mind. Wherein dwelleth righteousness, nothing evil or wicked will dwell there. Some modern interpreters identify the new heaven and the new earth with God. This phrase implies something corresponding to the old heaven and the old earth. That is all that can be said. The first heaven and the first earth came out of water. The new heaven and the new earth will come forth out of the fire of judgment. John beholds the entrance of the blessed into their everlasting abode. He beholds the New Jerusalem as a bride adorned. This is the congregation of the elect. The bride is adorned for her husband, Christ the Lord. And hereupon the wedding feast

of blessed eternity begins. All sin will then be eliminated. God dwells with men. This is the indwelling of God perfected. That was prefigured by the tabernacle and temple in the Old Testament, and by the Church in the New Testament. God will also wipe away all tears. All sufferings of the present world have been passed. All things have been made new. These words are faithful and true. God has proved Himself to be the God of the end; just as He was the God of the beginning. He is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. And He Himself calls out, "They have all come to pass." And He that overcomes the victor will inherit all these things. Also the Sonship will then be consummated. God will be the Father, the victors will be the sons of God. But those that have remained in their sins will suffer the second death.

21:9 - 22:5: One of the seven angels having the seven vials with the seven plagues conveys further information to the holy seer about the city of God. Every evil has been abolished. All plagues have taken place. All judgments have been executed. Only the bride of the Lamb remains, only the Church in the state of perfection, the New Jerusalem. This New Jerusalem now has the glory of God in it. It is encompassed and penetrated by the glory of God. That is the status gloriosus. Jerusalem is compared to a Jasper stone. This precious stone has a dark color, opaque. Rev. 4:3. But in yonder world there is a Jasper stone as clear as crystal. Everything is clear and bright and glorious. This new city of God has great and high walls. She is firmly and securely established. Eternal life comprises eternal absolute security. The New Jerusalem has twelve gates and twelve angels at the gates. Angels will be near to the congregation of the blessed even in the state of glory. The names of the twelve tribes are written on the gates. Again and again we observe the number twelve, the number of perfection. New Jerusalem is the Church in its state of perfection. Not a single one of the number of the elect has been overlooked or forgotten. The twelve gates of the city are open for the elect. They are wide open in every direction. V. 13. On the foundation of the city are written the names of the twelve apostles. The City of God is founded and built on their word. Eph. 2:20.

Then the city is measured. Her length and breadth and height are equal. The city is four square. It is a perfect cube. This indicates the perfection of the city. And it is an enormous city. The size is 12,000 stadia; either in circumference or in length and width. More probably 12,000 stadia in every direction. That would be 300 geographical miles or 1,500 English miles. The city comprises an enormous population. A host that none is able to number. Rev. 7:9. And the size of the walls agree with the dimensions of the city. 144 cubits, 12x12, again the number of perfection. The thickness of the walls point to the solidity and durability. This is measured according to the measurements of man. God has prepared this glorious perfect city for man. The New World will also be an abode for angels. Above all, for man. And now the glory and bliss of eternal life is pictured. It is, in truth, and certainty, an indescribably glorious state which God has prepared for His people. This is expressed in pictures and parables. Because human language is not able to express it, because human understanding is not capable of comprehending it.

The most precious stones are the materials for building the Holy City. The number twelve recurs constantly, the number of perfection. Here the twelve foundations of the city are mentioned. Here the twelve gates of pearl are mentioned. The pearls point to the divine glory. Sin is eliminated and excluded. Death is no more. A temple is no longer necessary. The symbolism of the temple is perfectly realized. The Almighty God Himself is the temple. There is also no need of the sun or of the moon, or of any light. The glory of God and of Christ penetrates and shines thru everything. There will be no more night. All the inhabitants of the city of God will bring their glory into the city of God. In the home above they will enjoy the gracious reward of their works here below. But nothing unclean, nothing sinful will enter therein. It is pure and perfect enjoyment. There will

be no change from light or darkness.

CHAPTER 22

This is closely connected with Rev. 21. The holy seer is shown by the angel a clear stream of water as clear as crystal. He is also shown the tree of life with twelve kinds of fruit. This description reminds of the description of Paradise. Gen. 2:8-10. Paradise will then be restored with eternal heavenly abundance and effection. Eternal life is nothing but blessed enjoyment for blessed eternity. Once more it is emphasized that only in the service of God that we will behold and obtain such glory. The crown of such blessedness will be in beholding God. V. 3,4. The image of God will then have been perfectly restored. It will continually be the same, always efficacious in the same manner. Eternal life will also be everlasting dominion. This ends the description of Paradise. More cannot be said in human language, but also this description falls short of the reality. And yet we must say that everything stated here serves to arouse Christian hope.

SUMMARY: (REV. 21:10-22:5) THE NEW WORLD AND THE NEW JERUSALEM IN THE STATE OF PERFECTION

22:6-21: Now follows the conclusion of the whole book in three sections. V. 6-9.

It is a seal which God Himself has prefixed to this prophecy. God is the God of the holy prophets, because He has been active in them and thru them. All honor is due to God, also for the prophesies in this Book. His revelation also in this Book shows the way into glory. The way of the cross is the way to life (via crucia, via licis).

V. 10-17: It is the final word of Jesus who is the chief Speaker and the chief content of this Book. John is ordered not to seal the prophecies of this Book. The time of fulfilment is at hand. The Lord will come to Judgment. Blessed are they that observe His commandments. Those that will not permit themselves to be hindered by the evil wicked world, they will receive power and authority to come to the tree of life. And in the way of a refrain we read again that those that live in sin will not participate in eternal life. V. 15. Rev. 21:8, Jesus has sent His angel and messenger John to testify these things before the churches. Jesus is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the offspring of David. Is. 11:1. But He is also the bright and shining morningstar. Num. 24:17. The day on which he will finally therefore appear will be the bright and shining sun for His believers. Mal. 4:2. And therefore the ardent yearning call is sounded to those that believe on Him. The Holy Spirit is calling on them, in them, and thus they call thru Him. And this call is to be transmitted from heart to heart and from mouth to mouth. They long to leave this world. They long for final salvation.

V. 18-21: The third and last section. The holy seer affirms that his words are true and sure. Woe to him that adds something to those words or takes away from them! Both ways are evil ways and will challenge God's punishment. And finally the Lord Himself adds a blessing, proclaiming, "yea, I come quickly." This word, the Church should take to heart and bear in mind. This is the Last Word of God to us. V. 21. The general blessing is the last word of the apostolic writing.

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Compare:

L. Fuerbringer: Einleitung in das Neue Testament (C.P.H. 1927)

