

The
Antichrist

by E. Frank

This booklet is provided free of charge

Author and Publisher:

Ewald Frank
P.O. Box 100707
47707 Krefeld
Germany

You can also obtain the following booklets, written by the same author:

CHRISTIANITY YESTERDAY AND TODAY
GOD AND HIS PLAN WITH HUMANITY
BAPTISM, LORD'S SUPPER, FOOT WASHING
IT IS WRITTEN ...
THE RETURN OF CHRIST

All rights reserved. Cuts of this booklet may not be used without written permission. Before translating into other languages, the author should be informed.

Foreword

I am fully aware of the response of this exposition; I also know about the consequences which might follow. But because of the urgency of the matter, there is no other choice. I have to write whatever needs to be said. This, of course, can only be done briefly. Whoever then really wants can start searching the Holy Scriptures, concerning the subject in question. As always, some will accept and others will reject; there will be those who are going to rejoice, because somebody had the courage to put the axe to the roots of the tree of evil, and others will be angry.

Purposely, I have avoided to use expressions which the German reformer, Dr. Martin Luther, used in his writings in which he dealt with the antichrist. What he said about this theme then, is much in agreement with what we are saying here now. It still can be found in his writings, for instance, in the preface to the prophet Daniel in the ancient "Luther Bible". It shows how deeply this man of God was connected to the Word he was translating. In this regard, there will be hardly a comparable work found in the church history. Because of his personal experience and the assurance of his salvation being justified through faith in Jesus Christ, he had the inner connection to God and also to His Word.

Certainly God had broken into the dominion of darkness through the outbreak of reformation. He most surely opened the doors of the biggest prison on earth. He now takes His people out again from the smaller religious prisons and leads the true Church to its completion. She came newly forth through the reformation and has experienced awakenings, revivals and deeper guidances into the Scriptures in the different church ages. Whoever has studied the church history will know that in various epochs certain truths were brought to light and put onto the candlestick to be clearly seen. Now at the very end of the dispensation of grace we have to preach the whole council of God. This also includes the mysterious prophetic aspect. That which was made known in part must now wind up and merge into the perfect.

As a missionary, I had the privilege to visit over hundred countries since 1964 and to speak at conventions in almost every denomination. I have a deep regard for all faiths and religions. In those meetings, people took part from all races and churches. In South Africa, on one Sunday morning, I spoke being a Protestant in a Roman Catholic church to at least a thousand people. Only because I feel so deeply with humanity, I have to uncover this greatest deception that has happened in the religious realm on earth. Everyone has the right to be informed about the Truth. The attack is on the system, not on a person. Although this cannot be avoided totally, it is not meant personally.

We are not living in a time when only the mayor, the priest and the teacher could read, and we don't live in the approximately one thousand years of the Dark Ages,

wherein the Bible was withheld from the people. But we are rather living in a time where everyone is informing himself about everything. Why shouldn't we start with the most necessary search about this theme?

Much credit is due to the respected Reverend William Branham (1909-1965) of Jeffersonville, Indiana, U.S.A. To my knowledge, he was the only man sent from God in our generation, who by divine revelation had the most profound understanding on this subject.

May this brochure be a blessing to all readers and cause them to forsake the broad way which leads to destruction and be brought unto the narrow way through the right gate which leads to eternal life. The Truth will be known and recognised by all sons and daughters of God. It should penetrate into their hearts, and at the same time bring deliverance from all errors. Salvation should not depend on any man or supposedly holy institution, but on God only. We should totally trust, believe and obey the Saviour Jesus Christ to be sure that we are not deceived by the anti-christ.

May God's richest blessings rest upon all the readers.

Krefeld, April 1987

The Editor

Introduction

In this exposition we shall mainly refer to the book of Daniel and also to the book of Revelation. Until recently, even renown international Bible teachers were not able to comprehend the contents of those prophetic books. They encountered always new problems while trying to understand, because they were not able to decipher the symbolic language used there. Everything that was shown and written by direct inspiration can only be understood and revealed from above. Here, the spirit of man cannot go into research in a philosophic way, but in the contrary, the Spirit of God must illuminate and reveal that which is hidden (1 Cor. 2:10–13). Because the time for this last prophetic part of the Scriptures had not yet come, even the greatest men only were able to present their knowledge to the best of their ability.

Bible prophecy cannot be interpreted; it must be watched and recognised as it is being fulfilled. The eschatological, that means the end time happenings, were foretold by divine foreknowledge and predestination. God knew both, the history of mankind and also the plan of Salvation, and therefore, He had things written ahead of time by His chosen men. What apologists, that means Bible expositors, have tried to say about prophetic subjects, has little to do with the direct answers from God's Word, as we shall see. If somebody thinks to know something, he must understand that every knowledge has to be in agreement with and embedded into the whole Scripture and coincide with it. Whatever is being said about a theme, is only then right when the last questions which pertain to it are satisfactorily answered.

Not because we have read the Bible more profoundly or thoroughly, but because the time has now arrived for the mysteries of the Word to be totally revealed, the Lord has opened the understanding for the prophetic part of the Scriptures. Without any doubt we are now living in the last part of the time of grace. With this we don't mean to create a panic situation or speak about a doomsday, but we do wish to cause an awakening to see the state we live in and take the matter seriously. Now the emphasis must be put onto the prophetic Word which was left far behind the evangelistic and the teaching part during the past.

The prophet Daniel was told, *“But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased”* (chapter 12:4).

The sealing of the contents of the book was not to be for ever, but only until the time of the end. About the “end time” or the “last days” it is written in the Old and the New Testament repeatedly. Daniel 8:17–19 says, *“Understand, O son of man; for at the time of the end shall be the vision ... Behold, I will make thee know what shall be in the last end of the indignation; for at the time appointed the end shall be.”*

What was hid and sealed up to the recent time, is now plainly revealed through the opening of the seven seals and can be understood. Certainly all who read this exposition prayerfully, will thereafter understand the book of Daniel and the Revelation better.

The prophet Daniel saw visions in which certain developments were shown and announced in symbols. But he was not to explain them; in the contrary, the angel Gabriel was sent to him to make known the precise meaning of the pictures that he was shown. Daniel testifies of him, *“And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding. At the beginning of thy supplications, the commandment came forth, and I am come to show thee; for thou art greatly beloved. Therefore, understand the matter, and consider the vision”* (9:22–23).

As at that time, so we need the clarification today and the right understanding of things. But we must also pray so that God can answer and give us the clarity. The key for these things is in the admonition, *“Therefore, understand the matter, and consider the vision.”* Whosoever leaves the Word aside will go into error, even if he thinks to have received a revelation. God is for ever bound to His Word. He does all things according to His Word. In chapter 11:2 we read, *“And now will I show thee the truth.”* We don’t need more, but we wish to know eagerly what this book of Truth contains.

John also experienced the visitation of an angel when he was on the isle of Patmos. This we can read in the first verse of the first chapter of the Book of Revelation. He testifies, *“The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant, John.”* After he saw all the visions and those things which happened, he says in chapter 22:8–9, *“And I, John, saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who showed me these things. Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not; for I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren, the prophets, and of them who keep the words of this book. Worship God.”*

We can thank and worship God alone, even if He sends an angel or a messenger. He has heavenly and earthly messengers at His command. He can speak and work through them as He likes (Heb. 1:7).

For a special commission connected to the plan of Salvation, one needs a direct prophetic and apostolic calling. If somebody only has an imaginary idea of being called, then he will bind people and his followers to his own teachings. But if somebody is sent by God, he will speak God’s Word and bring people into connection with God. Such men of God were preparing the way of the Lord and also preparing

the way for God's people to walk on. They had to remove every spiritual hindrance first (Isa. 62: 10). Only in such a way people really can come to follow the Lord Jesus Christ.

This thought reminds us of the prophecy found in Mal. 3:1, "*Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me.*" It was fulfilled in the ministry of John the Baptist, who was sent to prepare the way of the Lord (Mt. 11:10).

In Rev. 22:6 we read, "*These words are faithful and true; and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to show unto his servants the things which must shortly be done.*" Finally the Lord Himself speaks, "*I, Jesus, have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches*" (v. 16).

Every time when special events connected to the plan of Salvation were to happen, God had sent an angel or a prophet. He said, "*Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants, the prophets*" (Amos 3:7). For instance, the birth of John the Baptist was announced by an angel (Lk. 1:13). On the fields near Bethlehem, the shepherds heard the heavenly hosts singing and the announcement, which was made by an angel about the birth of the Redeemer, "*Fear not; for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord*" (Lk. 2). In our time also the opening of the seven seals was announced and has happened in a supernatural way.

Christ verses the antichrist

It is so important to have the right understanding and a clear picture about the antichrist, and therefore, without being prejudiced, we shall look into the Word of God and trace this mysterious person by seeing the Scripture illuminating this subject. Man's views exist, as already mentioned, in various writings since a long time. But we have a right to get the infallible, indisputable answer, and it can only come by the unfailing Word of God.

All testimonies found in the Holy Scriptures, in themselves and in connection to one another, are the proofs of the truthfulness of God. The creation testifies of the Creator. If anyone denies the existence of the Creator, he might as well deny the majestic creation of the universe. The redeemed are a living testimony and a proof of the Redeemer. Divine things do not need our confirmation or proof – they are proven reality. That applies to every theme and every subject in the Holy Scriptures.

The complex character of the antichrist is one of the most difficult topics to deal with. First comes the deity of Jesus Christ, and secondly the mysterious person of the antichrist. Both are much disputed and to most people they are a riddle. In both cases, the understanding differs very much. There is no chair on earth held by a professor who could speak and enlighten us on these two subjects. The traditional theology in this regard is totally in the dark. We only find declarations and assumptions of various churches, but that's all.

As already stated from the prophet Daniel, this mysterious book was only to be sealed and closed until the time of the end. In Rev. 5:1, we come to know about a sealed book in the New Testament. John, who saw these things, was told, *“Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the scroll, and to loose its seven seals”* (v. 5).

In this exposition, we cannot deal with the opening of the seals and what they actually mean. It will have to be done in a separate brochure. Here we are concerned with the theme set before us. We must come to the meaning and the symbols that go with it, which we meet frequently. The prophecy is similar to the speeches of our Lord, who spoke in parables using various pictures in which the actual meaning was wrapped up. In the two prophetic books, we read about beasts, about heads, about horns, about the image of the beast, about the mark of the beast, about the number of the beast and even about a whore riding on the beast, and so on. The meaning of these symbols has to be traced by the help of the Holy Scriptures very carefully.

The antichrist system is found in various ways and runs parallel to the almost two thousand years history of the church. The Holy Scripture shows us in different connections what it really is. Paul describes the acting person with a number of titles. With a prophetic view he was able to give a precise description of him. The apostle

writes and admonishes the believers, *“Let no man deceive you by any means; for that day shall not come, except there come the falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped, so that he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. Remember ye not that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what restraineth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work; only he who now hindereth will continue to hinder until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that wicked one be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming, even him whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceiveableness of unrighteousness ...”* (2 Th. 2:3–10).

The following comparisons give us some of the marks of the antichrist:

Christ came in the Name of the Father (Jn. 5:43);

His imitator comes in his own name (Jn. 5:43).

Christ humbled Himself completely (Phil. 2:8);

the son of perdition exalts himself above everything (2 Th. 2:4).

Christ was despised and rejected (Isa. 53:3);

the antichrist is being worshipped and celebrated (Rev. 13:8).

Christ is the true Prophet (Dt. 18:15–18; Acts 3:22–23);

the antichrist is the false prophet (Rev. 16:13; 20:10).

Christ testified of the Truth (Jn. 18:37);

the antichrist casts the Truth to the ground (Dan. 8:12).

Christ came to do the will of God (Heb. 10:7–10);

the antichrist does whatever he wants (Dan. 11:36).

Christ came to save the lost (Lk. 19:10);

the antichrist comes to destroy the saints (Dan. 8:24).

Christ submitted Himself to God’s law (Mt. 5:17);

the adversary is called the “lawless” (Dan. 7:25a; 2 Th. 2:8).

Christ was called the Son of God (Lk. 1:35);

the antichrist is the son of perdition (2 Th. 2:3).

Christ is the mystery of godliness (1 Tim. 3:16);

the antichrist is the mystery of iniquity (2 Th. 2:7).

The comparisons are necessary to trace this person. Others could be added. In our exposition, the difference between Christ and the antichrist will come clearly to light. Many have not known until now what they will come to understand through

this brochure. In Daniel, the epistles of the apostles, and in the Revelation we find various descriptions of the same person and the same system in manifold ways.

Obviously, the antichrist is a mysterious person. Just as Christ can only be recognised by divine revelation, so the antichrist can only be seen if the subject is illuminated from above. Christ is the revelation of God in human form. The antichrist at his direct manifestation will be the personified satanic superman on earth. Satan is not an atheist; he believes in God and trembles (Jas. 2:19). His representative on earth walks in his footsteps. Outwardly, we deal with a very special religious man who uses scriptures wherever fit as Satan did, even when he tempted Jesus.

Christ as well as the antichrist have a long history. Both have their origin in heaven. If one traces them back, it is easily seen that Christ goes right back to God, and the antichrist to Satan. Christ represents the Kingdom of God with light and life. The antichrist represents Satan's kingdom with darkness and death. Both are present on earth; both are revealed and hid at the same time.

As already remarked, we find a description of both in the Holy Scripture. Since the beginning of time there were shadows and symbols speaking about Christ and the antichrist. Both represent a kingdom. Both claim a throne, with the difference that one is God, and the other is being worshipped as God. Light and darkness, day and night, life and death testify from the beginning of two entirely different beings and dimensions. We see the two lineages from Cain and Abel until Jesus and Judas, and finally winding up with Christ and the antichrist.

Christ is being described in various connections with His ministry and the plan of Salvation as Son of God, Son of Man, Son of David, Lamb of God, Mediator, Advocate, King, Priest, Prophet, etc., etc.

Also the antichrist, as mentioned, is being described in various connections with different titles: as the false prophet, as the lawless, as the man of sin, etc. Whoever is versed in the Holy Scriptures will not find it hard to trace the attributes of Christ to be one hundred percent the attributes of God, and also those of the antichrist to be the ones of Satan.

Anti = against

The key for the right understanding of this mysterious person which we have to trace lies in the word anti. As everyone knows, it means "against". The antichrist is the adversary, he is the direct opponent to Jesus Christ. The deceptive part lies in the fact that this person refers to Christ, but with all his teachings and his complete practice he is contrary to Christ and His Word. He speaks about Christ but binds his followers, whom he calls "believers", to his views and dogmas. They believe his word, not the Word of Christ.

The special mark of the antichrist is known in the fact that he is called “the liar” and is identified with his doctrines which exist of all the religious lies, contrary to Christ whose teachings consist of truths only. The antichrist substitutes every doctrine of Christ with his own. A lie is truth perverted. As in the garden of Eden Satan did, so does also the antichrist use the Word of God with deception to fool and deceive especially those who are religious. But if one looks at things very carefully, then none of all his doctrines agrees with the original Word of God. Whosoever acts against the Word has to be against Christ, which means “anti-Christ”, because Christ is the Word – the Logos.

About the antichrist we already hear in the days of the apostles. John repeatedly mentions this subject in his epistles. He writes in view of the time we are living in, *“Little children, it is the last time; and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come ...”* It is noteworthy that John on one hand speaks about the coming of the antichrist in the singular and refers to the last days which has to be the end time we are now living in. At the same time he mentions that there were already antichrists in existence, *“... even now are there many antichrists”* (1 Jn. 2:18). We must understand that those people did not reject Christ, but they presented Him contrary to the Word and gave their own interpretations about Him.

The false brethren of whom Paul is writing, the false “Christs” of whom Jesus spoke, the false anointed have already been from the very beginning. They deviated from the Word of the true prophets and apostles and brought forth their own teachings. Especially one man is mentioned in the Scriptures; his followers are called the “Nicolaitans”. He took those who easily believed what he said around him, but preached that salvation depends on the works one does, instead of the apostolic doctrine that justification through faith only saves one.

The Lord spoke to His own in the message to the first church age and commends them with the following words, *“But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate”* (Rev. 2:6). In the message to the third church age, this unscriptural branch which had usurped authority over the laity and was already manifested in a small way as a clergy, the following admonition is given, *“So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate”* (Rev. 2:15). The wheat and the weeds are growing on the same field. The true and the false are on the same Christian grounds.

Firstly it started with the influence of an antichrist spirit which separated the self-made doctrines from the true teachings of the Scriptures. Later those antichrist doctrines were made dogmas, and finally they are crowned in the antichrist himself. Paul who had a prophetic foresight wrote like this, *“If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the*

doctrine which is according to godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing” (1 Tim. 6:3–4a).

The apostle knew that his proclamation of the Gospel was from God. He had received it by a direct revelation of Jesus Christ (Gal. 1:12). He did not defend himself or his own doctrines but the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the pure Salvation message of God. In 2 Tim. 1:13–14 he writes to his co-worker about the sound doctrine, *“Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Spirit, who dwelleth in us.”*

In the course of the church history, there were many false teachers and prophets who rose, just as the apostle Peter had predicted, *“But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who secretly shall bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction”* (2 Pet. 2:1). Here we read about false prophets and false teachers.

Inspired by the antichrist spirit, a church developed alongside the true Church of Jesus Christ. Self-appointed teachers, false prophets, lying apostles were not preaching the doctrine of Christ, but their own knowledge. They made followers out of those who were not yet grounded enough in the Word of God. At the end all of these marks and attributes of the antichrist are brought together in one system and under one head. Therefore we read in the book of Revelation about the false prophet. Just as the true prophets had the infallible Word of God which came to them and therefore could say thus saith the Lord, so does the false prophet claim to be the infallible voice on earth. In reality his teachings have nothing in common with the true Word of God. He is the prophet of the false doctrines, and therefore, he is spoken of as the false prophet.

Whosoever proclaims something which is contrary to what the true prophets said, is a false prophet. A false teacher is who teaches differently to what those teachers at the beginning of the New Testament Church taught. By comparison, we can easily notice that today a different Jesus, another gospel is being represented, inspired by another spirit (2 Cor. 11:4). That which is right is being put as though it was false, and that which is wrong is being established in the so-called “Christianity”, as though it was right. In the course of the church history, innumerable teachings, which can be termed as heresies, were introduced which had nothing in common with the true teaching and practise of the first century Christendom, and the people are not aware of it.

But who really searches the Scripture today? Who proves and tests whether the teachings are right? Paul said, *“For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous*

wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them" (Acts 20:29–30). They do speak with well trained voices, surrounded by ceremonial activities. Those who know not better, which are the masses, just accept it, believing that Christ has ordained and introduced those things. They look at the outside which is religious and don't detect the forgery which is done inside, because they know not the Word. Jesus said, *"My sheep hear my voice"* (Jn. 10:27). His voice is and for ever will be His Word.

As already mentioned, a false prophet is being recognised because he doesn't preach the Word of the true prophets. A false apostle is known because he does not preach the true apostolic doctrine (Rev. 2:2). The antichrist is recognised because his teachings about Christ are false. They don't coincide and agree with what Christ taught Himself. Verbally he confesses Christ, but is deeply taken up with idolatry, right down to the calling upon those who died, which is nothing less than spiritism. How serious should we take the words, *"But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed"* (Gal. 1:8)!

Whosoever thinks that the antichrist would be a world dictator, some tyrannic person, will be surprised. Paul writes about him and what Satan will do through him in his last phase, *"Even him whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness..."* (2 Th. 2:9–10a). This man doesn't have scriptural signs and wonders as they happened and are recorded in the ministry of Jesus Christ and the apostles through the power of God. Instead he is a master of deceptive miracles. All are taken up with his success. What no one else could achieve, he will do through religious politics. These are lying signs, contrary to the Truth. He knows how to deceive, and that in a most religious way; to fool those who believe him with his lying gospel. He knows how to speak with heads of state, with the highest church leaders and with the dignity. He has the best advisory staff in the world; he is the best informed man on earth; to him they come from all the various different religious and political camps. He will be a kind of mediator between the political opposing states, as he is the one under whose religious leadership all the deceived will be united. He is the highest spiritual authority existing on earth and, as he claims, he has also the highest jurisdictional power over all nations.

The antichrist will never have an answer to prayer. Never will there happen a miracle as was done by Christ, that the lame would walk, the blind would see and the deaf would hear. But the whole world will just look up to him and worship him, for they *"that perish, because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe*

the lie, that they all might be judged who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness” (2 Th. 2:10b–12). Remember, the antichrist is only a Christian by name. But in reality he is a christianised heathen and against Christ. He speaks about the Kingdom of God, but builds his own kingdom wherein he rules as he pleases.

His origin

To know the tactics and the character of the antichrist better, we have to deal firstly with Satan. This might sound peculiar, but we shall show the parallel between him and the antichrist. In Ezek. 28:12–15 we read as follows, *“Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. Thou hast been in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold; the workmanship of thy timbrels and of thy flutes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created. Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth, and I have set thee so; thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee.”*

Here, without any shadow of doubt Lucifer is spoken of, the one whom God created as an angelic being. As a creation of God he was perfect, but as we are endowed with a free will, so was he. Regrettably he used it to exalt himself and turn against God. The same is spoken about his representative who exalts himself above everything. Because Satan was not omniscient, he couldn't foresee what his action would actually draw behind. So it is with the antichrist who has to play his role right to the end. But his doom is hid from him. He knows much, but not everything.

As we were told, Satan was in the garden of Eden. There, after his fall, he incarnated himself in the serpent, and in that form he deceived the first human beings to disobey and transgress the Word of God. He questioned it and said, *“Should God have truly said?”* So he sowed doubts towards the Word of God to them. The same does his representative on earth. The whole humanity from the beginning, therefore, came under the influence of the wicked one, who always tries to put a question mark behind God's Word. It first started with the sin of unbelief towards it, then disobedience followed, and finally the transgression was perfect. That's how the fall happened, into which we all were drawn. Everyone of us have acted contrary to the will of God and become guilty – we have done and reacted precisely as Adam and Eve.

Satan did not only fall after he exalted himself, he also brought destruction and all the troubles upon the whole human race. But directly after the fall, the Lord gave the announcement about the coming Redeemer, as He spoke of the seed which

would come through the woman to bruise the head of the serpent (Gen. 3:15). This was the reason why Jesus never called Mary “mother” but only “woman”. He was that seed of God in whom the promised Word was made a reality as it became flesh. The Word of God is the seed (Lk. 8:11), and the good seed is also spoken of as the sons and daughters of the Kingdom of God (Mt. 13:38). They originate from this divine seed, and together they make up the godly generation (1 Pet. 2:9; Acts 17:29).

In the prophet Isaiah we find the fall of Satan described as follows, *“How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground, who didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north, I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High”* (Isa. 14:12–14).

Since the garden of Eden, he tried to rule over human beings. Up to this day, he did not change his notion. He wishes to accomplish his plan. At that time of which we read, he possessed the king of Tyre, in whom we see an example of the man with the satanic might here on earth. To him, God said through His prophet, *“Because thine heart is lifted up, and thou hast said, I am a god, I sit in the seat of God, in the midst of the seas, yet thou art a man, and not God, though thou set thine heart as the heart of God ...”* (Ezek. 28:2).

It is highly interesting to know that a human being would think himself as God. But that is not the man, that is Satan in the man who is called the god and the ruler of this world (2 Cor. 4:4). Satan even asked our Lord that he should fall before him and worship him. He offered Him all the riches of the world (Mt. 4:8–10). This one here, who represents Satan on earth, therefore, has to have the same marks. Riches and worship must be there. Christ didn’t have a place where to put His head. This one thinks to be someone instead of God; he thinks to take the place of Christ. But he possesses the attributes of Satan who wished to be equal with God. He receives all the wealth Christ rejected.

Further we read, *“With thy wisdom and with thine understanding thou hast gotten thee riches, and hast gotten gold and silver into thy treasuries; by thy great wisdom and by thy merchandise hast thou increased thy riches, and thine heart is lifted up because of thy riches”* (Ezek. 28:4–5). Also this visible, earthly indication is very important. It applies to both, Satan and his representative whom he uses. Until this day nothing has changed. Who doesn’t know where all the riches and the treasuries are! Who has not heard about the inestimable riches, about all the gold, silver, precious stones, etc., etc.?

The prophet continues to write under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, *“By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou*

hast sinned; therefore, I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God..." (v. 16). Since when is Satan engaged in commerce? In this description, Satan is once being spoken of and then again the earthly ruler in whom Satan dwelled. The devil is a spirit being, and he needs a physical body which he can possess, so he can exercise his might.

We have to consider the total description about Satan, and the various marks of him we have to keep in mind, because we are going to find them over and over again, as we deal with his representative on earth. Of special importance is that he appears as an angel of light in whom Satan incarnates himself. Paul was writing already in those days, *"For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore, it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness, whose end shall be according to their works"* (2 Cor. 11:13–15).

Unveiling of the mysteries

As already mentioned before, the prophet Daniel saw various events in symbols and pictures which pertain to the end time. He testified before the king with these words, *"But there is a God in heaven who revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king, Nebuchadnezzar, what shall be in the latter days"* (Dan. 2:28). God's people are now as always very much informed about what He does and what happens. What the Lord said in Mt. 23:34 still proves true today, *"Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes..."* Politicians and other great men are just presuming, but those who recognise the time and the signs according to the Word of God know what is going on. They also comprehend that we are now living in a prophetic period, this means to say, that Bible prophecy is being fulfilled now. There are some on earth who have an insight and understanding of what the prophets and apostles saw in visions and wrote under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. They also know how to rightly place it. The Word of God always came to the prophets, never to the theologians, because they are the ones who give their own interpretations.

Every true prophet and apostle or any servant of God will do like Daniel and confess, *"But as for me, this secret is not revealed to me for any wisdom that I have more than any living..."* (Dan. 2:30). In his prayer, Daniel praised the Lord and said, *"He giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to those who know understanding; he revealeth the deep and secret things; he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him"* (vv. 21–22).

Firstly, the prophet Daniel saw the statue as it was shown in front of the king Nebuchadnezzar in a dream. He gives the following description, *"This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee, and the form of it was terrible. This*

image's head was of fine gold, its breast and its arms of silver, its belly and its thighs of bronze, its legs of iron, its feet part of iron and part of clay" (vv. 31–33). Obviously this statue represented a person, as we find reference to the head, the breast, the arms, the body right down to the legs and the toes. At the same time it represented the four world empires who would succeed one another.

In verses 37–45, he gives the explanation and the meaning of the four world empires which are historically known: The Babylonian Empire, as shown in this image as the head of gold, extended from 606–538 B.C. and was controlling the world at that time. The kingdom of the Medes and Persians, as shown forth in the breast of silver and the arms, is known to have been from 538–330 B.C. The Greek Empire under Alexander the Great is shown by the hips and also the lower body, described with the copper and extended from 330–30 B.C. From that time on right to the end the Roman Empire is ruling. This is of greatest importance to know.

The same prophet saw in chapter 7 how the four winds of heaven stirred the great sea of people, out of which came four mighty beasts. The first one looked like a lion, the second like a bear, the third like a panther and the fourth one is not named, but is described as follows, *"After this I saw in the night visions, and, behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly, and it had great iron teeth; it devoured and broke in pieces, and stamped the residue with its feet; and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns"* (Dan. 7:7).

These four beasts, who came out of the masses of people of this world, symbolise the four empires, but also the rulers and the heads of the same. We don't need to take time and speak of the first three, as they don't have any significance for us. We wish to know about the fourth beast which is now in existence (v. 19). Daniel received the following information, *"The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces"* (v. 23). The fourth beast, which is the Roman Empire, swallows according to Bible prophecy, the whole world and treads it under foot. That is thus saith the Lord in His Word.

John also saw the same beast with the ten horns coming out of the sea. It had even seven heads and on the seven heads blasphemous names. On the horns were ten crowns (Rev. 13:1). This agrees totally and coincides with Dan. 7, *"And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise"* (v. 24). The first three beasts, known as the three empires as Daniel saw them, are also found again in Rev. 13:2 and are integrated into the fourth beast, *"And the beast which I saw was like a leopard, and his feet were like the feet of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion..."*

It's very important to notice that Satan gives his throne and his might to a man at the end of this last world empire, *"... and the dragon gave him his power, and his*

throne, and great authority. And I saw one of his heads as though it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed, and all the world wondered after the beast" (Rev. 13:2–3). Who the dragon is, which gives this last world power, his might and his throne, we are told about in Rev. 12:9, "*And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil and Satan ...*" The last world empire will be under the direct influence of Satan. Out of this comes, as we shall soon see, the antichrist.

Presumption

The prophet Daniel saw the climax of the exercising power of the antichrist ahead of time. In chapter 7, the beast which had the ten horns, out of which he comes forth, was shown unto him. It is recorded, "*I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn ... and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things*" (v. 8). From this last world empire, a man will come forth whose words will be accepted by all religious and political leaders.

Into this connection belongs Rev. 13:5, where it says, "*And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months.*" These are, of course, the three and a half years of the great tribulation and persecution at the end of this age.

Daniel writes in chapter 9:27 about this ruler who he will make a covenant "*with many*" for one week. The diplomatic recognition of Israel with full established relations is not this covenant. The covenant will be especially about Jerusalem and involve Israel and surrounding nations. Just as one week has seven days, so the week spoken of here prophetically simply means seven years. In the midst of these seven years he will "*cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.*" This will happen right towards the end, before the commencement of the one thousand years peaceful reign of Christ on earth.

From Daniel 8:10, we can see how much this horn exalts himself and who hides very clearly behind this power, "*And it grew great, even to the host of heaven; and it cast down some of the host and of the stars to the ground, and stamped upon them.*" Something similar we also find described in Rev. 12, where the dragon, which is Satan, was thrown out and pulled a third of the stars of heaven down with him. We recognise that he is the adversary of God who wanted to be equal to Him but then fell.

The antichrist, the "superman" of Satan, according to 2 Th. 2:4 exalts himself above everything, "*that is called God, or that is worshipped, so that he, as God, sitteth*

in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.” The believing Christians in the Bible are called the temple of God. But just as the temple then had become a den of robbers, so the fallen away Christianity is looked upon by God. In this apostate Christendom, the antichrist sets himself. He is being worshipped as God, he claims infallibility and also is being addressed with the highest title, which only belongs to God, our heavenly Father, as ‘Holy Father’ (Mt. 23:9).

He speaks in a most pleasant way now, but this will change at the appointed time, after he will have deceived the whole world.

As in Dan. 7:25 announced, *“he shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change the times and the laws; and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.”* This Scripture makes very plain that it applies to the three and a half years of the great tribulation upon Israel. In this connection, we, therefore, read about the changing of the times and the laws. To this the New Testament Church was never assigned. Here the Jews are meant, as Daniel’s people. The angel said to him, *“Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days”* (chapter 10:14).

In Dan. 11:32, we are told how the antichrist will achieve and draw the people unto his side, *“Such as do wickedly against the covenant shall he corrupt by flatteries.”* As already mentioned, the antichrist is not a political dictator who will have the whole world opposing him, no, he will be recognised by every major political and religious system as the highest authority. Therefore, the Scripture says, *“And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power (please remember, as we read before, the dragon, who is Satan, will give him his might and his throne); and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and continue, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people. And through his policy also he shall cause deceit to prosper in his hand; and he shall magnify himself in his heart, and by peace shall destroy many”* (Dan. 8:24–25). The President of the U.S.A. and the President of Russia have only a limited influence and power, but this man will have global power. He appears as a religious person; at the same time he does make world politics and directs them.

The antichrist is mentioned as having the heart of a beast during his time of direct exhibition of his power and might. Then he will speak against God, as the Scripture says, *“And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven”* (Rev. 13:6). At that time, the redeemed will be in their mansions in heaven, but he will even dare to blaspheme the ones who dwell on high.

In Jn. 14:2–4, the Lord promised to His own, *“In my Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if*

I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also.” All who truly belong to Christ and wait for Him and love His appearing, will be taken away before the tribulation time (1 Th. 5:1–9). Paul has described this great event in 1 Th. 4:13–17.

During the period of time, when these great judgements will be upon the earth, the redeemed enjoy themselves in Glory. John saw those who overcame everything at the shore of the crystal sea. He testifies, *“And I saw, as it were, a sea of glass mingled with fire, and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, having the harps of God”* (Rev. 15:2). This multitude who overcame is made up of those who had the victory over the image of the beast, over the number of the beast and so forth. So it is very important for us to know this, because everything is at stake.

Special marks

The prophet Daniel gives us signs and marks of this man, which cannot be overlooked. He is also referred as being king. His palace in comparison to other kings’ palaces is even more esteemed. In chapter 11, from verse 36, we read the following thoughts, which are being expressed, *“... he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper...”* The same wording and thoughts we have come across a number of times. This man simply exalts himself above everything and says what he likes, and he will be successful. Further on we read, *“Neither shall he regard the gods of his fathers, nor the desire of women, nor regard any god...”* (v. 37). God has let us know the marks of this man so precisely that even the most simple person should not miss it. The Lord has invented marriage, but this man rejects it, and therefore, rejects the God-given order. It says about him, that he shall not be concerned about the love of women. This Daniel wrote under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

Paul with his prophetic insight took up the theme in his letter to his co-worker Timothy. He writes about the teachings, the doctrines, which derive from demons and are caused by spirits which lead astray, and then he quickly comes to the centre of the matter with these words, *“... forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods...”* (1 Tim. 4:3). Once again it should be emphasised that the Lord has installed marriage, which this man is against for him and for the ones who serve him. The Lord said, *“It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help fit for him”* (Gen. 2:18). The teaching about the celibacy might appear very religious, but in the unfailing Word of God it is being described as a heresy, coming from demons. Please remember: Whosoever is against the Word, which means “anti-Word”, the same one is “anti-Christ”, because Christ is the Word.

To the church in Corinth Paul wrote, *“Have we no right to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas?”* (1 Cor. 9:5). Here it is mentioned that even the brothers of Jesus, that means those who came out of the holy wedlock of Mary and Joseph, had wives. In this context, Mt. 1:25 needs to be considered where it states that Joseph, *“knew her not till she had brought forth her first-born son; and he called his name Jesus.”* So after the birth of Jesus, Joseph knew Mary according to this holy Word of God. She was a virgin when she gave birth to Jesus Christ, the Son of God, but she certainly is not a virgin today. In the gospels, the names of the brethren are repeatedly mentioned. In Mt. 13:55, we have them all listed like this: *“James, and Joseph, and Simon, and Judas.”* This contradicts very plainly the old legend that Mary had no other children, and this legend is being kept up because of the cult practised with Mary. Amongst the 120 who were in the upper room was also Mary, the mother of Jesus, and His brethren (Acts 1:14).

From the head of this system we read further, *“But in his estate shall he honour the god of fortresses; and a god whom his fathers knew not shall he honour with gold, and silver, and with precious stones, and pleasant things”* (Dan. 11:38). The formulation that he will honour the god of fortresses, speaks about wars and destruction that this religious power stands behind. The history testifies about the crusades, about religious wars, about destructions which were done in the name of God under the sign of the cross. To make the connection very plain, the mentioning of gold, silver and precious stones is not left out. The god, as he has made him, is certainly not the God whom his forefathers worshipped. The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob is a totally different God.

The whore on the beast

Now we are coming to a new symbol, which also belongs to the constellation of the antichrist system which consists of earthly, political and spiritually religious power. There is a reason why God used such pictures. It could not have been made any plainer, and the actual meaning appears more clearly as it is done through these symbols.

In Rev. 17, the last world empire is shown in its final phase. The main role is played by the whore, which is riding this beast. This means, she has the authority over the last world power and uses it for her own aims. John heard the voice saying, *“Come here; I will show unto thee the judgement of the great harlot that sitteth upon many waters; with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication”* (vv. 1–2). Please remember, this is God’s judging from His viewpoint. To mankind, the matter may appear totally different. The mighty ones on earth try their utmost to

have favour with this whore. The inhabitants of the earth have lost the clear judgement about the whole matter. John writes, *“So he carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet-coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns”* (v. 3).

In order to understand the significance of this picture totally, we must turn quickly to the terminology “woman” and find out what this means from the prophetic aspect of the Scriptures. In the Old Testament, God described repeatedly Israel as His wife, His Church, which was to receive the seed of His Word. Later, He reprimanded her because of her unfaithfulness and spoke of her spiritual fornication in connection with idolatry. She turned away from His Word and thereby left Him. By receiving strange seed she performed spiritual fornication. *“Contend with your mother, contend; for she is not my wife, neither am I her husband. Let her, therefore, put away her harlotry out of her sight, and her adulteries from between her breasts ... And I will not have mercy upon her children; for they are the children of harlotry. For their mother hath played the harlot. She that conceived them hath done shamefully”* (Hos. 2:2, 4–5).

To the prophet Jeremiah the Lord said, *“Hast thou seen that which backsliding Israel hath done? She is gone up upon every high mountain and under every green tree, and there hath played the harlot”* (chapter 3: 6). The falling away from God and His Word leads from the right service of God into the service of idolatry. If that happens, bastard children are born who are called “the children of the whore”. Of those people is being said, *“They will not frame their doings to turn unto their God; for the spirit of harlotry is in the midst of them, and they have not known the Lord ... They have dealt treacherously against the Lord; for they have begotten strange children”* (Hos. 5:4, 7).

The prophet Hosea did not only see the negative side, but he also saw the positive side. He saw the redeemed New Testament Church, as the announcement was given, *“And I will betroth thee unto me forever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in justice, and in loving-kindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness; and thou shalt know the Lord”* (chapter 2:19–20). Because God became man, He established a condition of love towards His Church. He as Lord became the Redeemer, and because of His death on the cross, He brought reconciliation and forgiveness to all who would accept it. In love and mercy, He gave back the righteousness of God to those who believe. He has called out a collective body which is called the Church or His beloved, and she is placed into the position of a bride. All the redeemed make up the Bride Church, and He, the Redeemer, is the Bridegroom.

When John the Baptist was sent from God, he spoke about the Bride and the Bridegroom, *“He that hath the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom’s voice; this my joy, therefore, is fulfilled”* (Jn. 3:29). The law and the prophets were unto John; from that time the Kingdom of God was being preached (Lk. 16:16). John was the first one who used the terminology of Bride and Bridegroom in connection with the New Testament Church. He was the one who prepared the way, who bridged the Old to the New Testament. In this position, the Bride, the true Church, the called-out ones, the “ecclesia” is to be during the whole time of the New Testament covenant. In Mt. 25, Jesus speaks of Himself as being the Bridegroom and the wise, the pure, the spirit-filled virgins, make up the Bride which will go to be with the Bridegroom at the wedding supper at the time of the return of Christ. The multitude who will be in Glory is shown in Rev. 19:7. They are shouting, *“Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.”*

Just as Mary who was used by God to receive the true seed as a virgin, believed the promised Word for that day when Christ was born, so there has to be a Bride in these last days to receive the Word promised for this day. But there is also a church which has fallen away from the true Bible doctrines and has embraced strange and wrong seed. In Rev. 17, this great fallen institution is precisely described. She is called “the great whore”. To understand the subject better, we must go to Rev. 12 and see the other side of the coin, where the Scripture also speaks about a woman, but this time about the true Church. There is such a vast difference between the description of Rev. 12 and 17, and because of these prophetic pictures we shall come to know the significance much better.

The woman in Rev. 12 is clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet. The sun, of course, speaks about Jesus Christ, our Righteousness; it speaks of the grace in which we stand and also of the new covenant which is in force for us. The moon on which this woman stands represents the Old Testament with all the promises contained therein. The Old Testament is the foundation for the New. Just like the moon receives its light from the sun in a natural way, so are the Old Testament promises and prophecies illuminated through the New Testament in which they are all fulfilled in a literal way.

The New Testament Church is built and stands on the foundation of the Old. Jesus and the apostles exclusively referred to the Old Testament; the New was not written at that time. Everything pertaining to the plan of Salvation can be traced back right into the Old Testament. The Old and the New Testament make up one Bible. One is not complete without the other. In the Old Testament, God predicted, announced and promised Salvation; in the New, He has given us what He promised.

The crown with twelve stars, which this woman wore, speaks of the fact that the true Church is being crowned with the doctrine of the twelve apostles. In this picture of Rev. 12, the woman was with a child and she was in labour pains. This means that out of the New Testament Church, which receives the divine seed of the promised Word right now at the end, will come forth the victorious sons and daughters, and they will be the completed Bride. Many are called, but few are chosen. The chosen ones come out from amongst those who are called in every church age.

“And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to be delivered, to devour her child as soon as it was born” (Rev. 12:4). Strangely enough, the dragon and the beast on which the whore rides according to Rev. 17 have both seven heads and ten horns, which means that Satan’s kingdom on earth is the kingdom of the antichrist. It’s totally identical. Satan was able to establish his kingdom here on earth, and his man is ruling in it and does what he inspires him to do.

Although the chosen ones will not go through the terrible apocalyptic judgments, they will have to go through a very short time of testing when the pressure will come upon them. This is expressed in the fact that the dragon stood before the woman to devour her child that she would give birth to. Through this power which is on earth the Church is going to suffer. As soon as the political and the religious forces are joined together, the religious power will exercise its influence on the political power and will put pressure on it. All who then will not bow to the political or the existing religious system will have to suffer.

Now we shall turn back to the great whore which is riding the beast with the seven heads and the ten horns. That woman is the fallen-away church; it is the religious world power which is very clearly expressed in this picture. She will make use of the ignorance of the religious and the political leaders and will become itself the main ruling power, even if it should be behind the scene. The Scriptures describe her as being dressed in purple and scarlet, decked with gold, precious stones and pearls (v. 4). This doesn’t need any further explanation. There is only one institution on earth, upon which this picture fits one hundred percent. She was *“having a golden cup in her hand, full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication”*. In spite of her beauty the cup in her hand was full of abominations.

Surprisingly it is true, that also the woman of Rev. 17 is mother. This we can read in verse 5, *“And upon her forehead was a name written, mystery, Babylon the great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth.”* In her last phase she is not only called “Babel” but “Babylon the Great”. She has many daughters; those who came forth from her. As the mother has fallen away from God and became untrue to him, so the daughters, which are all the other denominations, turned away from the original Word of God to their own interpretations and are caught up in their own

doctrines and self-formulated creeds. They have taken unscriptural traditions from their mother and were adding things to the Scriptures. In the eyes of God, they were also committing spiritual fornication, and therefore, they are called “harlots” by the Lord God Himself.

What John had to record in verse 6 is shocking, *“And I saw the woman drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus; and when I saw her, I wondered with great wonder.”* The church history does give different figures on the martyrs. The highest estimation known to the writer is 68 millions. The actual number of those who were martyred because of their faith in Jesus Christ is known to God only. No wonder that John was so astonished when he saw this beautiful woman drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. For those who are not acquainted with the church history this is incomprehensible. But many of the true believers in Christ were slaughtered and persecuted by the antichrist system throughout the ages. In Rev. 18, it states right at the end, *“... for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived. And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth”* (vv. 23–24).

The church history is deeply immersed into the blood of the martyrs. Only at the Second Vatican Council which lasted from 1962 to 1965 it was agreed that the curse which was placed upon the Jews would no longer be valid. They were classified as “Christ-murderers”. Because of this curse repeated by the successive Popes upon the Jews they were persecuted, their possessions were taken, they were driven from place to place and killed by the multitudes. The same has happened with all who believed differently. But who knows something about the background of the massacre in Ireland today? Who knows what was behind the Spanish Inquisition or St. Bartholomew’s Eve in France? Who knows what the Huguenots went through and the Mennonites here in Europe? Who knows something about the Waldensians in Austria, who were expropriated and driven out from their properties and dwelling places? What is with all the curses which were expressed, especially at the Council of Trient, and placed upon those who believed something else? They were never taken back. The goal is the same and so is the nature of this old institution. Only the strategy has changed. Are not all who believe differently, especially Bible believing Christians, still considered to be heretics, sectarians and so forth?

In Rev. 17, from v. 7, we see the mysterious constellation at the end, which is once more clearly pictured. The angel was asking John, *“Why didst thou wonder? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns.”* He received the following explanation, *“The beast that thou sawest was, and is not, and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition.”* This power does not come from above, but rather from below. The initiator and those who follow him will be cast into perdition, as Judas was. Through the de-

cline of the Roman Empire Rome lost its power for some time, but at the end through the uniting of the religious and the political and economic powers this empire will rise to a power that it never had before.

Should there be one who still doesn't realise the significance of this and doesn't fully understand the description, let the last doubt be cleared through verse 9, *"And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth."* The connection shows finally to the city that is meant, namely that which is built on seven hills. Whosoever has read carefully, should be able to understand the description and also place it accordingly. This city is called "the eternal one", but it will be destroyed soon. It is, as God said in His Word, the divine wisdom together with the right understanding that are necessary to know and to recognise those things.

The seven heads, as we have seen, do not only have a single meaning. They also represent the seven special leaders in the various empires. At the time when John saw the vision on the isle of Patmos, five had already been, the sixth was there, and the seventh will be right during the end time. Thirdly, they also symbolise the seven heads amidst the newly re-established Roman Empire. Therefore, we read in Rev. 17:11, *"And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition."* This is highly interesting. Here we are reading about the eighth, and this one is also described as being the beast.

Whosoever has made a tour through the Vatican, will know what the tourists are told, before they go and look at the sights. The first thing they hear is that the Vatican is a state of its own with everything that an earthly government has. Thus we understand that the eighth, geographically speaking, belongs to the seventh but is self-existing, as the Vatican state is. It's very simple, a state in the midst of a state, a country of its own in the midst of a country. It cannot be said clearer. Ambassadors of this state are everywhere, just like any other nation and country has. Benito Mussolini through the Lateran Pacts in the year 1929 assured the Pope sovereignty over the Vatican state, so that the Bible prophecy should finally be fulfilled. On 20th of July, 1933, followed what is known as the "Reichskonkordat" between Hitler and Pius XI. In that way the two catholic dictators had the mighty power of the church behind them.

The following explanation is given to us, *"The waters which thou sawest, where the harlot sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues"* (Rev. 17:15). Without a shadow of doubt, with this is Europe meant where at that time already were masses of nations and languages. Also verse 18 does not need any further explanation. Here we read, *"And the woman whom thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth."*

Who can deny that all great persons, especially politicians who wish to move up, make a trip to Rome? If there would not be the Vatican, no one would pay attention to that city. But because of this fact, the audiences of personalities out of every system make headlines in the papers and are also brought as the main events in the mass media.

Through the political channels unlimited influence is made possible to all the important countries on earth. There is only one power in the world which openly and also secretly demonstrates rulership over kings, heads of states, over democracies and dictatorships. There is only one all-embracing superpower on earth.

Eastern and Western Europe

Of great significance is the constellation in the end phase. The world-wide developments politically and also economically make it necessary that the weak and the strong nations co-operate. In this, the seven West nations will take the leading position, as they are also symbolised by the seven heads. We see that a prophetic Scripture can have more than one application.

Finally the leadership will come from the European Community. The foundation for it was laid in the year 1957 through what is called the "Roman Treaty". That this treaty has come into existence is already the beginning of the fulfilment of Bible prophecy. Three politicians were mainly responsible for this: Robert Schuman, France, Alcide De Gasperi, Italy, Konrad Adenauer, West Germany. "All of these statesmen were Christian Democrats, Catholic moderates, and their prominence in the movement toward European integration showed the revived influence of Roman Catholic internationalism" (The New Encyclopædia Britannica, MACROPÆDIA, Vol. 9, pg. 771). In reality, the Roman Empire is being revived and has come back to life again.

The renowned president of France, Charles de Gaulle, who made history, had the vision of a Europe that would reach to the Ural mountains. Very strange but true, Mr. Mikhail Gorbatchev spoke about the same thought at the party congress in East-Berlin in April 1986. We have to watch the quickly advancing developments and look upon them from the view of Bible prophecy and place them accordingly. Everything shall come as it was foretold.

If the German chancellor Konrad Adenauer would have accepted the offer of the Stalin-note from 10th March, 1952, then there would have been no East-West border going through one country and finally through the middle of Europe. But this decision had to be taken that way; otherwise the European Community would not have the "engine". Stalin offered that Germany, which was divided after the war, could be united. The only condition was to become neutral. Adenauer, of course, would have known how the next election with the Protestant population of the German Demo-

cratic Republic would have been. So he rejected. Austria availed itself of the offer, became neutral and has not regretted it.

While the seven heads are a solid part of that system which exercises power at the end, the ten horns only receive their power for the last part of the prophetic events to come to pass. *“And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, who have received no kingdom as yet, but receive power as kings one hour with the beast. These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast ... For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled”* (Rev. 17:12–13, 17).

In this Scripture, we are told about a certain hour in which they receive the power. That will be the moment when the last things take place, right towards the end. From the total description it is not hard to see that the ten horns represent East Europe, in comparison to the seven heads which are found in West Europe.

In the last phase, the East also under the leadership of Russia will bow to an united Europe and co-operate. Already today, we can see how step by step they come closer to each other in every field. The economic international obligations, be it in East or West, make this necessary that also the East Block will have to be part of the last system. Another factor is added to it, which is known under the special headline “peace and safety”. They have to come and sit around the negotiating table.

The feet of that image spoken of in Dan. 2, were partly of iron and partly of clay. These are two totally different materials. They stick to one another, but they don't mix with one another (v. 43). These two elements, iron and clay, can never unite or integrate into one totally. So East and West will remain what they are, but co-operate and work together in the hour appointed for it.

The East European countries are well aware of the doings and ambitions of the Roman Catholic church. They will only tolerate this until a certain point. Because it's ordained of God, they have to put their power and submit until Bible prophecy is fulfilled. Then they will smash that whore and burn that city with fire. It is thus saith the Lord in His Word. *“And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the harlot, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire”* (Rev. 17:16).

It will be a sudden blow, because it says, *“Alas, alas, that great city, Babylon, that mighty city! For in one hour is thy judgement come”* (Rev. 18:10). So that everybody knows straightaways what and who is meant, the description is being repeated only a few verses after this, *“Alas, alas, that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and bedecked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls!”* (v. 16). Before the eyes of John the angel demonstrated literally how this great city which ruled the world will find its end, *“And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great mill-*

stone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city, Babylon, be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all” (v. 21).

Already in the Old Testament, we find a description of this great city. Everyone of us, I am sure, has heard about the building of the tower of Babel. Bab-el means “gate of God”. From the original Babel became a Babylon, which means “confusion”, and that confusion reaches up to heaven. The prophet Jeremiah saw the destruction then as though it had already happened, but first gives a description of what the great city has done, *“Babylon hath been a golden cup in the Lord’s hand, that made all the earth drunk; the nations have drunk of her wine; therefore, the nations are mad”* (Jer. 51:7). The wrong teachings have had the spiritual effect, as it is noticed with those who partake of a strong drink. One doesn’t know, where he is going, what he is doing, what he believes, what he says – the orientation is lost. That is the religious condition of the Christianity of today. All have drunk from that cup of Babylon and mixed their own doctrines with it.

Jeremiah continues, *“Babylon is suddenly fallen and destroyed; wail for her; take balm for her pain, if so be she may be healed”* (v. 8). As we will see right away from the next verse, there is no healing for Babylon, only for those who come out of it and don’t partake in its sins, *“We would have healed Babylon, but she is not healed; forsake her, and let us go every one into his own country; for her judgement reacheth unto heaven, and is lifted up even to the skies”* (v. 9).

Also in Rev. 16:19 the judgement over the city is described, *“And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell; and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath.”* If we take that great harlot into consideration, the woman that had the golden cup with all the abominable doctrines in her hand, we realise how serious the admonition is. According to Rev. 18:3, all nations have partaken of it, *“For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.”* In verse 20, those who are in heaven are to rejoice, because the judgement has come upon the city, *“Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her.”*

This really religious institution which exercises her power in connection with economic, political and religious might, rules over the kings of the earth, but will be destroyed before God’s Kingdom is established on earth. In Rev. 18:2, we read as follows, *“Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of demons, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.”*

It’s overwhelming to see the way the Holy Spirit has inspired the prophets and the apostles thousands of years before these things would ever develop and be manifest, to write about it. In verse 5, we are told that her sins have heaped up to

heaven. *“How much she hath glorified herself, and lived luxuriously, so much torment and sorrow give her; for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow. Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine, and she shall be utterly burned with fire; for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her”* (vv. 7–8).

The almighty God has pronounced judgement upon her, and the tools to be used for that purpose are also shaping up. A bomb will be dropped on that great city, and suddenly it will be no more. We can be sure, as all the other things have happened, that this prediction will also become a reality. God means what He says, and says what He means. All who wish to escape damnation should flee, become obedient and follow the voice that comes from heaven, saying, *“Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues”* (Rev. 18: 4).

We have to see Russia too as God’s tool of judgement in His hand. The symbols of hammer and sickle are well chosen. Three main hits will follow upon each other at that time. The first one is necessary that the two others, which are found in the Scriptures, will happen. Because of the fear that the U.S.A. should make an intervention, the first hit will be against the U.S.A. itself, with the thought that they could not interfere at least for that moment. The two remaining hits will be upon the Vatican and, as the last one, against Israel. From the military and strategic view it will become necessary to hit the U.S.A. first, because the U.S.A. are taking sides with Israel, and this would make it impossible for the Word of God to be fulfilled, as they would straightaways interfere, as soon as the enemy forces enter Israel.

According to Bible prophecy the countries north of Israel will make a terrible attack against Israel. Bible readers know this big event as the great battle of Armageddon, *“Persia, Cush, and Put with them; all of them with shield and helmet; Gomer, and all its hordes; the house of Togarmah of the north quarters, and all its hordes; and many peoples with thee. Be thou prepared, and prepare for thyself, thou, and all thy company that are assembled unto thee, and be thou a guard unto them. After many days thou shalt be visited; in the latter years thou shalt come into the land that is brought back from the sword, and is gathered out of many peoples, against the mountains of Israel, which have been always waste; but it is brought forth out of the nations, and they shall dwell safely, all of them. Thou shalt ascend and come like a storm; thou shalt be like a cloud to cover the land, thou, and all thy hordes, and many peoples with thee”* (Ezek. 38:5–9).

But at that moment God will interfere and make a sudden end to the enemies. He has already, long ago, said in what way the judgement would come upon those who at that time will make war with Israel, *“And I will enter into judgement against him with pestilence and with blood; and I will rain upon him, and upon his hordes, and*

upon the many peoples that are with him, an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone. Thus will I magnify myself, and sanctify myself; and I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am the Lord” (vv. 22–23).

In Zech. 14:12, we are told how the judgement will come upon the nations which will go to war against Israel, *“And this shall be the plague with which the Lord will smite all the peoples that have fought against Jerusalem: their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth.”* This decisive battle falls into the span of time at the end of the apocalyptic judgements. It will take place, when the sixth angel will pour out his vial according to Rev. 16:12–16. At that time, after this is over, the following words spoken by the prophet will be fulfilled, *“And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed”* (Dan. 2:44). Paul must have had in mind the eschatological events when he wrote the following words, *“For he will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness; because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth”* (Rom. 9:28).

The beast with the two horns

In Rev. 13, we find a second beast described as follows, *“And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spoke like a dragon”* (v. 11). This beast does not come out of the sea of people; it comes from the earth. That means, it doesn’t come from the countries belonging to the Roman Empire but, as we will see, it has to be the North American continent on which at that time there were no masses and languages of people.

This second beast was like a lamb. But then it also spoke like the dragon. This second power is the United States of America, also described in its end phase besides the united Europe. This second beast had two horns, which speaks of worldly-political power, and also of spiritual-religious power. The one is merging into the United Nations, which is the political; and the religious is merging into the World Council of Churches.

The U.S.A. was built on Protestant principles, freedom of speech, freedom of religion, etc. They became a mighty power. At first those who were persecuted by the Roman Catholic Church in Europe fled to this new continent. The general immigration set in later. Those who escaped here started on to the new continent anew. The founding fathers of the United States were believing and God-fearing men. As their governing principle they chose the wording “One Nation under God” and “In God we trust”.

At the end of verse 11, we are reading about the beast with the two horns which then spoke as a dragon, that means it spoke the language of Rome. The next verse very clearly states, that this mighty power will also submit to the last world power, which is the Roman Empire, *“And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them who dwell on it to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed”* (Rev. 13:12).

About this second beast we read that it will deceive the whole earth and cause the inhabitants thereof to worship the first beast; that means, to recognise the earthly and also the religious pre-eminence of the first beast. With the establishing of full diplomatic relations between the U.S.A. and the Vatican on the 10th of January, 1984, this influence is secured. The religious and political channels can be used in every way. The present developments point out very clearly, that in the near future all the Protestant leaders will accept the Pope as the world’s spiritual authority.

Verse 13 is also very enlightening, where it says, *“And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men.”* The incomparable technical advancement which has taken place after World War II is nothing short of a miracle. What has happened in the last part of World War II, as the fire rained upon Germany and then later in the Far East upon Japan, was only in comparison very small to that which will happen in the near future.

The image of the beast

Now we are encountering a new terminology, that of the *“image of the beast”*. Of the second beast we are told, *“...and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast, saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, that had the wound by a sword, and did live”* (Rev. 13:14).

That is a very good description and throws more light on what we have already dealt with. Within the two military blocks, the U.S.A. still have a special place. Their word and influence carry much weight. In regards to the religious section it will not be that all the Protestant churches would lose their identity and totally integrate into one. It simply means that they will join together and acknowledge the Roman Church, which means to accept the Pope as the religious leader and thereby secure their own existence and freedom of religion.

As already mentioned, the beast with the two horns symbolises spiritual and earthly power. Now with the image of the beast we see that the one horn which symbolises the religious power comes forth as the World Council of Churches and the uniting of all Protestant denominations. In Bible prophecy this image of the beast is the counterpart of the first beast with the seven heads and the ten horns. It

is very plain and can be seen by anyone, because it's already a fulfilled prophecy. Just like all nations from the East and the West have joined in the forum of the United Nations, so all the Protestant churches from the East and the West have joined in the World Council of Churches. These are the two horns, which signify the two powers. But the two powers are on the same beast. Both take political and religious influence. If there would not have been a uniting of church and state in the church history, a state-church or churches recognised by the state would not now be in different countries. The nominal church has become what she is now through worldly power. Also the World Council of Churches will be a political instrument of power. Its world president can be a Hungarian who at the same time is a member of the atheistic regime in Budapest.

When the time comes, this image will also speak, which means the voice will be recognised. It will not be many churches speaking various things, but after the total uniting their president will say what he thinks should be announced or done. This is clearly shown forth in verse 15, *“And he hath power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.”*

The time will come when those, who truly believe God's Word and therefore, can neither bow to the World Council of Churches nor can they be a member of a denomination belonging to it, will have to suffer persecution. Those Bible believing Christians will loose their rights to conduct religious services and also to practise religious ordinances. This image of the beast will really speak up and be fanatical about it, and so try to make everyone to worship the first beast, which, as we have seen, is the first combination of the religious and worldly power of the Roman Empire. As soon as this image of the beast, the World Council of Churches, will speak up, there will be religious and political pressure put upon those who don't go along with them.

This reminds us of the days of Nebuchadnezzar who had a golden statue made and ordered everyone to worship it. But just as in those days, so will now be those who will only worship God, and not bow before a religious system, which is nothing but a man-made invention. They will not bow before it. The rulership of the kings at that time started with the persecution of those who feared God. Again the handwriting is on the wall. Then it was written in an unknown language which could not be deciphered of the wise, living during that time. Only the God-appointed prophet Daniel was able to read it. Today the “Menetekel” also can be made known only through a prophetic message. It will show who are the ones that are steadfastly believing in spite of the pressure they have to go through.

As we can see from Rev. 13:5–8, the first beast is also spoken of as being a person. Therefore, it says in verse 8, *“And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.”* There will be a complete uniting of church and state, as it was in the middle ages. Everyone knows about that period in the history of mankind. But now at the end there will be the two religious systems, one coming from Rome, the other as the World Council of Churches, and they will exercise the power religiously, politically and economically. Everyone, be it country or church or individual, who does not co-operate with them will be boycotted. Only those who recognise them will be in term recognised also.

Through the institution of the World Council of Churches the Protestants will try to exercise the same power as the Roman church wherever they have the majority. Some Protestants would even like for the reformation to have never taken place. They would seek to be united and try to make us believe that the reformers did not want the church to split. The final uniting act will wind up in recognising the Roman church, because as the scriptures says, the second beast will exercise all the powers of the first one. Those who will not go along with this unity will be looked down upon as outsiders, and pressure will be put upon them. But everybody should know in the Name of the Lord, that this unity is not the unity for which Jesus Christ prayed that those who believe in Him should be one, as He and the Father are one! This is a man-made unity consisting of the various powers. It also will be that those who speak against the Roman church will have to face the consequences. There will only be one voice on earth which will be recognised. All the others will have to keep quiet. Even those who belong to a denomination, which is part of the World Council of Churches, they will not say anything but just go along with the system. Only those who don't belong to an organised or recognised church will be hunted at that time.

The mark of the beast

In Rev. 13:16 we read, *“And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and enslaved, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads.”* Again we have to do with the symbolic language used in the Holy Scriptures. A mark is some sign by which you recognise or know something. Paul, for instance, writes, *“Henceforth let no man trouble me; for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus”* (Gal. 6:17). He was suffering for the sake of Christ and the true proclamation of the Gospel. But he certainly had not the bleeding signs, the wounds of the crucified Jesus in his hands or in his feet. That of course would be the most terrible devilish mockery a person could imagine to imitate the redemption work of God in Christ,

our Lord. Paul was marked by those signs connected to his ministry as a servant of Christ, and he was bearing His reproach.

The mark on the forehead speaks of the decision one makes, and the mark on the hand speaks about the action of the person. The head signifies that one goes along with what is taking place, in this case to go along with the antichrist system. So both, the decision and the action is being shown by the head and the hand.

In the Bible believing circles, many occupy themselves with speaking about the mark of the beast, and they don't recognise that every Christian denomination which is organised is already carrying that mark. God has never founded an institution with some headquarters somewhere. He has a living organism through which He continues His ministry. Bible believing Christians and churches are free. They exist as local bodies of believers, independent and sovereign in each place. In the beginning there were those men filled with the Spirit, having God-given authority because of a divine call. According to their commission, they were serving within the church just as God has placed the various offices into the assembly (1 Cor. 12:28; Eph. 4:11).

In the beginning, there was no headquarter, and not one person ruling over all or being the final authority for the teachings. There were no bible schools, no seminaries for priests, etc. To really say the truth, those things which are seen now were not in existence then, and those things which were in existence then are not in existence now. Everything was replaced and changed from its original pattern.

Today, whether in churches or free churches, everywhere we have the same spirit of organisation, and we see the difference between that which was taught and practised in the early church and that of today. We only have the remembrance and a dead form of godliness but not the same spiritual life. Today even the smallest group of Christians has laid down what they believe and so forth. Only if someone belongs to the same organisation, he can preach there. The Protestants have rightly acknowledged that salvation cannot come through the Roman Catholic Church. But at the same time, if one looks into the matter very deeply, every denomination has the same claim. Whether its being said or not, more or less all believe that, if one doesn't accept their doctrines, their revelation and whatever they teach and practise, one cannot be saved.

In this way, every organisation identifies itself with the same mark of the first organised religion, even if they differ from one another. This in itself is the mark of the beast, because it's the same antichrist spirit, which has ruled the first organisation and is going to rule everyone right to the last one. People are not brought to Christ and don't take His doctrine – they are bound to a person or to a so-called revelation or interpretation. It should be understood that all who are members of the

churches and free churches, who have gone into this organisation automatically receive the mark of the beast. This everyone should know.

The mysterious number

As already said, those who do not accept the mark of the beast will go through a time of persecution. Religiously there will be a forcing to recognise this antichrist system. Economically they will be boycotted who don't agree with the world trade system at that time. Whosoever does not co-operate with these two powers, the religious and the economical, will be boycotted from the world commerce. Thus we read in Rev. 13:17, *"...and that no man might buy or sell, except he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name."*

Please notice, it does speak about two things, buying and selling. This is very important. It does not only concern the housewife who goes to shop groceries, but also the businessmen who buy and sell and who are also involved in the international trade. It is very clear and obvious to anyone who wishes to see this: the whole business world will have to submit to the "Roman Treaty". Those who truly believe and stand on God's Word, will have a very tough time, whether the buying or the selling is concerned.

As we have seen, there are three main things which we need to understand and watch, of which the Scriptures speaks concerning the last days: the mark, the name, and the number of the beast. As we already stated, the mark of the beast is nothing that can be seen outwardly. So also, the name of the beast and the number of his name cannot be seen at the outside. These things are mentioned and they wind up in the same system. In Rev. 13:18 we are informed about this matter, *"Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast; for it is the number of a man; and his number is six hundred threescore and six."*

Now we are coming a little closer to the matter. The number of the beast should be counted, that means it should be figured out. Before we can start doing this, we must know where this religious person is, which is being represented in the beast. It is noteworthy that this man is being identified as a beast. It is the same mysterious man of whom Paul was writing.

Nobody needs to be in darkness about this or guess any longer. The total description and also the counting of the number only applies to one person. Only one has the Latin description which comes to exactly 666. This does not mean that anyone who has the Arabic number 666, has automatically the sign of the antichrist system. Some say, it's the computer which has this number, some refer to technical inventions, but such presumptions have no biblical foundation. It states very clearly that it is the number of one man which should be counted, that means figured out.

Therefore it cannot simply be the number 666. It has to be the counting of the letters making up this number. The Holy Scripture has put it so clearly that one cannot miss it.

Every explanation and interpretation which does not coincide with the Word of God has no foundation. People are being led astray because of various interpretations. Sometimes they almost get panic, because they are afraid that the antichrist system would be the world monetary system which would have the code number 666. Such things have nothing to do with what we are dealing about here in the Book of Revelation.

Also absurd it is to say that if the number 666 is on credit cards, code numbers or some articles that you can buy or telephone numbers or letter heads or even licence plates it would be the antichrist. Such things have nothing to do with the antichrist and the number which is counted from his title. Some say there is a computer in New York, others say there is one in Brussels, which has the number 666. What a deception, what a misleading and diversion from the real object! A computer is a computer, and a credit card is a credit card. The world monetary system, the world bank and so forth are necessary for the trade to be done internationally.

Also the theory that the mark of the beast will be some kind of an identification which is going to be placed upon the forehead with laser and many others just spring up from the fantasy of man. All who teach and believe such theories have no light from God about the subject. Whosoever writes them, believes them and spreads them around to others does not realise that this is the most cunning trick of Satan to draw away from the real thing which matters. It only can be, because people did not comprehend that the Scripture does not only speak about three "sixes", but about the sum and the result of the official title of the person concerned.

We have to take seriously what the Scripture says, "*Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast; for it is the number of a man...*" We cannot only childishly repeat 666, we must count and know by the title what the actual number is. The counting then is as follows:

V I C A R I V S F I L I I D E I
 5 + 1 +100+ . . 1 + 5 . + . 1+50+1+1 + 500 . + 1 = 666

Most of the Bible teachers do go wrong and make a big mistake in their thinking. They speak about antichrist governments and movements when they think about non-Christian countries or systems, politically or religiously speaking, for instance, socialism, communism, atheism, Buddhism, Islam and others. Certainly there are religions and also governments who do not embrace Christianity, but that has nothing to do with the antichrist that the Bible speaks about.

We have to acknowledge and comprehend once for all that the antichrist spirit was already working right at the beginning of the New Testament Church, where nobody knew about the Islam or atheism, communism, etc. We also must be aware of the fact that in the days of the apostles heathen religions and idolatry were being practised. But no man of God has ever pointed out those things as though the antichrist would come from there; in the contrary, John writes with all clarity that the antichrist movement comes from within Christianity, *“They went out from us...”* (1 Jn. 2:19).

We have to find that system which is within Christianity, but with its practise and doctrines it is contrary to Christ. We must understand, it is the man who claims to be someone instead of Christ here on earth, who does act in His stead. At the same time, He does not lead people to Christ. He doesn't preach Jesus Christ as the only Saviour and the grace which was bestowed upon us, as Peter, Paul and all of God's men did. In the contrary, he has many other things of his own by which he tries to impart salvation to his followers. He draws the attention of all towards him and to the institution he represents. Those who believe him are bound to his personality and his doctrine, but not to Christ and the scriptural doctrines and practises.

At the end, there will be only two groups: one will have the seal of God, the others will have the mark of the beast. The true believers are being sealed from above by the Holy Spirit, as it is written, *“... in whom ye also trusted, after ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also after ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise”* (Eph. 1:13). If someone rejects the Word of Truth, the full Gospel of Jesus Christ, he can never be sealed by the Holy Spirit. In that case he resists the Spirit of God. Such people can only believe the lies and the wrong teachings, and finally they receive the mark of the beast, which is the same sign of the antichrist system.

Paul elaborates on the importance of being sealed by the Holy Spirit in Eph. 4:30, *“And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, by whom ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.”* When writing to the believers in the church of Corinth, the apostle makes the following statement, *“Now he who establisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God, who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts”* (2 Cor. 1:21–22). The seal of God one truly receives through the Holy Spirit is a direct supernatural experience as it is recorded many times in the New Testament Church at the beginning (Acts 2:1–4; 8:15–17; 10:44–48; 19:5–6). By this divine experience, God testifies of having received that individual as His own son or daughter. This is not a religious ceremony, nor something that any man can do, but it's a divine experience and confirmation that God has received us through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Nobody can seriously believe that people will carry some inscription visibly on their foreheads. No, they simply will bow to the system and go along with it, and thereby automatically receive the mark of the antichrist system, just as those who truly follow Christ receive His Spirit and also His seal, which is not visible at all.

If somebody truly follows the Lord, he or she will not remain in darkness concerning this point. The Holy Spirit gives light, and the time is here to understand these things. Many who are honest are still in darkness, because they are misled and have the wrong teaching about the antichrist system, not realising, that when they are a part of a church belonging to the World Council of Churches, they are automatically a part of that system. Such people even listen to the self-styled teachers who try to explain something about the antichrist. They try to find him in Syria, in Libya and many other countries, including Israel. It shows that their mind is working and not the Holy Spirit revealing the matter.

If we don't have illumination from above, we might think to be wise in ourselves but go wrong and lead others astray. We might think that we have given a big impression upon those who listen to us. But what about the Truth? Those who make claims without knowing the Truth, should stop fooling at least God's people. May through this exposition the Spirit of God lead all into the Holy Scripture and show forth that all things must be in harmony with it, and finally we see who the beast is. We understand about the mark of the beast, the number of the beast, the name and so forth.

A close comparison

Finally, we are going to look at the attributes of the antichrist again. Paul spoke about him as being the lawless, that means, somebody who does not care about the Old Testament, which actually is the basis for the New. There was a part in the law of Moses, the Psalms and prophets which spoke about that what God would do in the New Testament. The law was broken by everyone; that is without question. All have trespassed the commandments. In Heb. 3:5, the thought concerned is being brought forth like this, *“And Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after.”* As already said, we are not to comply or burden ourselves with all the things written in the law, but we have to look for the shadows and types which concern the plan of Salvation. In the Sermon on the Mount, the Lord said, *“Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no way pass from the law, till all be ful-*

filled” (Mt. 5:17–18). The expression “fulfilled” shows very clearly, beyond any shadow of doubt, that the prophetic part of the Old Testament is meant.

After His resurrection, we read of the Lord, *“And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them, in all the scriptures, the things concerning himself”* (Lk. 24:27). *“And he said unto them, These are the words which I spoke unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures”* (vv. 44–45).

We have to watch, as we are reading the New Testament that every time we find the terminology *“as the Scripture says”* or *“as it is written”* it refers to the Old Testament. Jesus Christ, our Lord, preached at a time, when not a single line of the New Testament was written. And so did the apostles. Every true servant of God will use the Old and the New Testament together in his preaching. Of Paul, the great apostle, we read, *“... there came many to him into his lodging, to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening”* (Acts 28:23).

Only if somebody proclaims the Kingdom of God in this original apostolic way, it will be possible to trace the doctrines of Christ and of the apostles right back to their beginning. In Acts 26:22, the apostle testifies like this, *“... saying no other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come.”*

After Peter had spoken at the gathering in Acts 15, James stood up and said, *“Men and brethren, hearken unto me: Simeon hath declared how God first did visit the nations, to take out of them a people for his name. And to this agree the words of the prophets, as it is written...”* (vv. 13–15).

While reading the New Testament, we can see, the Lord and the apostles were constantly using the Old Testament. The lawless has a theology totally separated from the Old Testament, and the New Testament he explains and interprets as he likes.

This man also is being described as the son of perdition. Only one man before him was given the same title, and that was Judas. In Jn. 17: 12, Jesus said of him, *“... and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition, that the scripture might be fulfilled.”* Just as Judas, the son of perdition, betrayed the cause of Christ, so does this man. Judas was the treasurer, and this man has the treasures.

In Jn. 13:2, we read, *“...the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon’s son, to betray him.”* Both, Judas as well as the antichrist, are being brought into direct connection with Satan. In Jn. 6: 70, the Lord Jesus said, *“Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?”* About the antichrist in his last stage, Paul writes the following words, *“... even him whose coming is after the working of Satan*

with all power and signs and lying wonders” (2 Th. 2:9). Paul explains here about the work of Satan which is happening through lying signs and wonders. This reminds us of Rev. 16:13–14, “And I saw three unclean spirits, like frogs, come out of the mouth of the dragon (Satan), and out of the mouth of the beast (political ruler), and out of the mouth of the false prophet (antichrist). For they are the spirits of demons, working miracles, that go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.” This last battle will happen just before the commencement of God’s Kingdom on earth.

The antichrist will play his role at the appointed time, when he that is holding up is being taken away (2 Th. 2:6 + 7). Very clearly, this is not any human being or force but the Holy Spirit in the Church of the living God, which is the only power to withstand the satanic forces. At the very moment the Bride Church will be taken up into Glory, the antichrist will come out to the open. Then, when Christ, the Lord, returns after the marriage supper as King of kings (Rev. 19:11-21) with the redeemed for the one thousand years reign, the nations which gather against Israel will be slain and the antichrist will be consumed by the spirit of His mouth (2 Th. 2:8). The prophet Isaiah has spoken of the same event in chapter 11:4, “... *he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.*”

Now we are coming to the most important marks of the antichrist, and all who wish to be in Glory should take these things seriously.

The disciple who was very close to the Lord Jesus asks in 1 Jn. 2:22 the question, “*Who is the liar?*” He also gives the reply right away and says, “... *but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ. He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son.*”

Whosoever denies that the one God revealed Himself as Father and Son is deceived by the antichrist lying spirit. God is the eternal Spirit (Jn. 4:24), and those who worship Him must do so in Spirit and in Truth. The Truth is His Word, and the Spirit always agrees with His Word. God is eternal, timeless, you cannot put Him into space, you cannot limit Him. He is infinite, as One He is all in all. He is the origin of all things which exist. At first He came out of this infinite “Spirit-fullness” into a theophany, which is a spiritual body. In this theophany form or shape He walked in the garden of Eden and manifested Himself throughout the whole period of the Old Testament.

His eternal purpose was to bring humanity back into the original state, wherein we were before the fall. In the Spirit-Body He could not die; therefore, He had to come out of that supernatural realm into the body of flesh to redeem us, because we had fallen in this body. Thus the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us in hu-

man form. He simply came out of that spiritual into the body of flesh to redeem us and finally transform us into His glorious body (1 Jn. 3:2).

Jesus is the Lord, He can be no other than God Himself. *“In Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily”*; not a third or two parts, but the fullness (Col. 2:9). What He said then is still valid today, *“He that hath seen me hath seen the Father”* (Jn. 14:9). He is Immanuel – “God with us” (Mt. 1:23).

The antichrist spirit denies this manifestation as Father and Son and makes out of the one God different persons who should have co-existed alongside one another from eternity. In the last consequence the scriptural monotheism is changed into polytheism. That is the root and the direct influence of the antichrist spirit, which is against Christ, the Lord. There are not three personalities making one God – there is one God manifested as Father and Son, dwelling in us by the Holy Spirit.

Paul, a Jew and a Christian and apostle, writes of Jesus Christ, *“... who is over all, God blessed forever”* (Rom. 9:5). The Lord said in the Old as well as in the New Testament the same: *“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord”* (Mk. 12:29–32; Dt. 6:4). Because humanity was lost, a redeemer became necessary. In Isa. 43:10–12, the Lord says, *“...before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I, am the Lord, and beside me there is no saviour ... therefore, ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, that I am God.”* We were to be placed back as sons and daughters of God, and thus we see the greatest mystery of all as it has taken place. He had to become a Son, in order to make us His sons and daughters. So He came and was born into this world as the Son. But in His origin He was God, is God and for ever will be God. Of this Son, who was to be born according to prophecy, we read, *“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace”* (Isa. 9:6).

In spite of the revelation of God as Father and Son the Scripture only speaks about one God, never about two or three. Therefore, we don't find a single time in the Bible the terminology of “trinity”, or “triune God”, or “eternal Son” and so forth. The doctrine of the trinity does not originate with the prophets and the apostles. It's a product of the antichrist spirit who has turned the Godhead upside down. What Paul writes, should open the eyes of everyone, *“And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the nations, believed on in the world, received up into glory”* (1 Tim. 3:16).

The three revelations of God were not put as three separate persons, one beside the other, by any apostle. That is Hellenistic, philosophical and rational thinking of the human mind. There are not three who agree, there is One who is manifested in

three different ways to accomplish His eternal purpose with humanity. In heaven He is our Father. That is why we pray, *“Our Father, who art in heaven ...”* On earth He was manifested as the Son, as Redeemer, and therefore, it is absolutely necessary in order to be saved to believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, because that is the way He revealed Himself as our Saviour. Whoever has the Son has also the Father, who was manifested in the Son, and thereby has received eternal life. In the Church the same God is working through the Holy Spirit. God was above us, then He was with us, and finally He found a way through redemption to dwell in us. The apostle puts it into these words, *“And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true; and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life”* (1 Jn. 5:20).

From the Old Testament period, which lasted approximately 4,000 years, not one single conversation between Father and Son is recorded. Not one time did He say, “My beloved Son, I will send you” – in the contrary: He always spoke of coming Himself to be our Redeemer, for instance in Isa. 35:4–6 and Isa. 40:3, etc. Whenever the promise was given for the Messiah, that was for Him to be born into humanity, like in Psalms 2:7 we read, *“Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.”* It never states a single time that there was a Son of God in heaven who then became a Son of God on earth. The New Testament speaks very clearly about the immaculate conception of Christ. God became tangible in human form. He Himself became man. That is the incomprehensible, unexplainable mystery of His divine love. As Son, He suffered and died. God is a Spirit, and therefore, as such He cannot die. The redemption became necessary in the body of flesh to redeem us from this body of death (Heb. 2:14–15). By His resurrection we have the guarantee for the resurrection body which we will receive (1 Cor. 15:50–57).

Jesus Christ is the Word that became flesh – the logos, the Yahweh, who came out of that fullness of Spirit and was revealed in the theophany which was a spiritual body. Then He came out of that realm and took upon Himself a body of flesh. That is the full and plain truth. *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God ... And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us”* (Jn. 1:1, 14). Jesus is not a minor God, He is the expressed image of God (Col. 1:15-20). Just as God (Hebrew: Elohim) was manifested as Lord (Hebrew: Yahweh), in the same way the Father was manifested in the Son; the same being, the same person all the time – only different forms of appearance.

The apostle does not leave us in the dark, where this antichrist movement comes from. But he states very clearly, *“They went out from us, but they were not of us”* (1 Jn. 2:19). This development does not originate with the Jews, it is simply a misunderstanding of those who joined the believing Christians without having had the same experience with Christ. Already in the first few hundred years after Christ this

branch was taking form, but only after the council of Nicea, an universal organisation was made. Every Jew knows the first commandment, *“I am the Lord thy God ... Thou shalt have no other gods before me”* (Ex. 20:1–3), and would never make three Gods.

Certainly, we have three distinct manifestations of God. This is why we, for example, read, *“Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God who worketh all in all”* (1 Cor. 12:4–6). We say “Amen” to that. But no apostle would have had the idea of benediction, *“May the blessing of God the Father and of God the Son and God the Holy Ghost be with you.”* The terminologies “God the Son” and “God the Holy Ghost” do not appear a single time in the whole Bible. They always go back to the origin, and thereby are identified with God. We read of the Son of God, about the Spirit of God, but a triune God would surely be a strange God. The doctrine of Christ and the doctrine of the antichrist have for the shallow observer who doesn’t penetrate into the subject a great similarity, and it seems as though it was only a struggle with words. But they are never the same, in fact totally different from one another. The Christ that is being preached by the antichrist is absolutely not the Christ of the Bible. Of course, it will only be seen by those whose eyes God will open and to whom He will reveal this mystery. *“All things are delivered to me of my Father, and no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him”* (Lk. 10:22).

The power of the antichrist was already at work in its infancy right from the beginning. John called those who belong to this branch false prophets and speaks about them in 1 Jn. 4:1–3 and gives the following warning, *“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but test the spirits whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world. By this know ye the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God; and this is that spirit of antichrist, of which ye have heard that it should come, and even now already is it in the world.”*

It is not the antichrist only who doctrinally acts as a false prophet. There are many false prophets and false “Christs”, for they propagate the same teaching. Therefore, the Lord gave the warning about them in Mt. 24. All preachers, evangelists, pastors who have taken the false doctrines about Godhead, water baptism, etc. from that false prophet are contrary to the Word of God, and therefore, they are also false prophets and spiritually belong to the antichrist camp.

The word “Christ” means “the anointed”. So there are many false anointed ones which are the false Christs, about whom our Lord was speaking. There are great men, miracle workers, with a mighty anointing, but are still false and bound in tradi-

tional teachings, defending the antichrist without knowing it. Therefore, we have to watch, because the false and the right will be so close together, that if it were possible even the elect would be deceived. But thanks be to God, that they who are chosen will not be deceived. The Word of God was revealed to them by the Spirit of God whereby they were sealed.

Our Lord referred to those who were mightily used in spiritual gifts, but were still wrong. He said, *“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father, who is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? And in thy name have cast out demons? And in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity”* (Mt. 7:21–23). There is no need to vainly repeat the creeds which have become a tradition. Everything has to be examined and proved by the Word. Denominational traditions have replaced the apostolic doctrine. The Lord will judge everything according to His Word.

The Spirit of God will say the same thing every time. That also applies to all the servants whom the Lord placed. Here we are not dealing with just a confession with our lips but rather, as Paul explains, that *“no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Spirit”* (1 Cor. 12:3). As Lord He is God, and that is what we are concerned with. It is only he that can say out of the deepest conviction, “Jesus Christ is the Lord” who has received the revelation that the Yahweh of the Old and the Jesus of the New is the same self Lord. There is only one faith, one Lord, one baptism. Whosoever cannot believe this, is still under the delusion of the antichrist spirit, regardless to what religious denomination he might belong.

The following verse is given as a challenge and also as a self-examination. Whoever has the Spirit of Christ, which is the Holy Spirit, will believe what He said after His resurrection, *“I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty”* (Rev. 1:8). This is the testimony of our Lord and Saviour, who spoke of Himself as being the Almighty. Does anyone believe that there is more than one Almighty? Whether we read about God or any of His manifestations, it’s always in the singular. There is only one Creator, one Sustainer, one Saviour, one King, only one Father, one Son, one Holy Ghost; only one Salvation, one Church, one eternal life and so forth. Whatever proceeds out from God is always in the singular, but Him being expressed in a multifold plurality justifies the word Elohim.

Here we certainly don’t speak about the “Jesus Only” doctrine which is also unscriptural. Jesus did not bring Himself into existence, He did not pray to Himself. When He prayed it was not one weak God praying to another strong God; He did

pray in His humanity as the Son of man. However, the Truth will be known to those who are born of that same seed of God's Word and have the same Holy Spirit. The main thought which is basically used for this expositions is to bring forth the pure, unadulterated biblical doctrine, which has to be restored back again, right now at the end time. Only after the everlasting Gospel is preached to all nations as a witness, then the end shall be (Mt. 24:14). Not a man-tempered gospel, but the same Gospel preached at the beginning!

Whether a Bible teacher or a Bible reader, all should profoundly and fundamentally make a comparison with all honesty. We should detect the difference between Christ, as He was originally taught, and in the way denominations speak about Him today. A comparison will show that there are two different Christs being presented. The same thing applies to all the other doctrines which have become part of the believers so much and anchored in them, and still they think if anyone speaks about Christ, the same has to be of God.

Because of this general attitude, many will find it hard to detect the antichrist straightaways. The one, the Scripture very clearly describes as such, presents himself to the masses of all nationalities and before all religions and speaks about Christ. Therefore, people don't even dare to think that such a man could be the adversary of Christ.

Just take for example the historical visit of the Pope in India, where he spoke to a very large multitude of Hindus and said, "Christ is found in every religion." Here we have to ask, what kind of a Christ? The one Mary still holds in her arms as a baby? The one that is made of some sort of a material and attached at a cross? The one that can be used for every purpose? The self-made? The one that becomes Christ from a baked piece of wafer after the repetition of "Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus"? The Christ who listens to Mary? The one who has many mediators put around him? The Christ whose ascension to heaven fades away, because the ascension of Mary in soul and body is so much more emphasised? The Christ that has to give way to the queen of heaven? and so forth.

The Christ which is being presented by the Pope's church is not the Christ of God; that is a Christ who is being formed and placed as needed. Such a Christ, of course, is everywhere, wherever we put him or lift him up or carry him. He is always there as we need him. But that is not the Christ described to us in the Bible whom we know by experience as Lord, as Saviour, as King and as Judge. Finally we will come to know Him as God. Just as Yahweh became Jesus, so Jesus will be Yahweh. To confess Christ with our lips has nothing to say whatsoever. The spirit has to be tested and proven. The doctrines have to be compared. The Christ whom we find in

the Holy Scriptures is not the way we form him. He is above every concept, above every understanding and the same, yesterday, today and for ever (Heb. 13:8).

As we can see from the Scripture itself, Christ always referred to the Word of God. Therefore, we must emphasise once again that a verbal expression or referring or confessing about Christ means nothing. It has to be the Christ we mean, we teach, we love and speak of, found and described in the Holy Scriptures. The decision, whom one likes to believe and trust, must be made by everyone himself. Here only the advice can be given to critically search these spiritual matters and come to the revelation of God and His Word and His plan of Salvation and believe it with all your heart.

We are now living very near to the consummation. The time of grace will soon end. Without compromise we must put all the Bible truths back onto the candlestick again. There are many revival preachers and there were also great men in the past who, in various ages, have brought forth again truths which were hidden before and the established churches withstood them. Many have given their lives for the Word of God. All true believers are called upon to contend for the faith once for all delivered to the saints (Jude 3). We are now in the last battle. The victory will be with those who stand with Him that overcame death and hell and Satan and rose on the third day as the great Conqueror. As we take our stand with God, He will be with us, until we come to see what we believe. The gates of hell will not prevail against the true Church. The final victory will be God's, and those who believe Him will participate in it.

May all readers be blessed in a special way, is my prayer. *"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen."* (Phil. 4:23)