

And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw the earth, and Jerusalem, and the saints, and the apostles, and I saw the dead, and they worshipped the Lamb, which was slain, and he gave unto him a crown of life, and he said unto him, Come, and thou shalt reign with me, and thou shalt be king over the nations.

The ANTICHRIST

12 And he exerciseth all the power and signs of Satan, that he may deceive the elect, whose deadly wound he hath received, which dwell there, and he shall be slain, and his soul shall be cast into the fire.

13 And he doeth great signs, and wonders, and he cometh down from heaven, and he shall be seen of men, and he shall be the means of the destruction of the world.

14 And deceiveth the elect, and he shall be the means of the destruction of the world.

HERMAN HOEKSEMA



FIRST PRC EVANGELISM
HERITAGE COLLECTION

ABOUT THE HERITAGE COLLECTION

The Heritage Collection consists of pamphlets on various subjects that were written by Protestant Reformed ministers from approximately the 1930s to the 1970s. At first they were printed and distributed as small plain covered pamphlets by the First Protestant Reformed Church Sunday School. Eventually the printing was taken over by the church's evangelism society and their appearance was updated.

Background information on most of these pamphlets is sketchy. Some were written in response, occasionally fiery, to doctrinal struggles that took place at particular times. Often they were first delivered in lecture form and then printed to facilitate wider distribution. The earlier authors are in glory; the later ones are retired ministers.

Characteristics of the pamphlets are that they are solidly Reformed and Scripturally based—many abound in Scriptural proof texts—and, given the limited amount of space in pamphlets, provide a comprehensive overview and perspective on their topics. They are often not light reading, but taking the time to read them, study them, and savor the many insights they provide can be conducive to spiritual growth.

The writing of many of the pamphlets was sparked by debates decades ago, but the issues they address are still relevant for readers today. These issues always need to be clarified for those encountering the Christian faith for the first time and for each new generation of believers. Some of the more involved pamphlets may be of greatest benefit to believers who already have a background in the Scriptures.

It is our hope that these voices from a past era may continue to bless readers in the future as they have in many previous years.

INTRODUCTION

Christians have always been interested in the coming of the Antichrist, the counter-Christ who will claim to be Christ. As events in our world lead more and more to the end of time, interest in this subject only increases.

John's description of the Antichrist in his vision in Revelation 13 gives rise to all sorts of questions. What will the Antichrist be like? Why is he pictured as two beasts, one coming out of the sea and one coming out of the earth? How can it be that in the last times no one will be allowed to buy or sell unless they worship the beast and his image? It is interesting that when this was written in Herman Hoeksema's day of "mighty inventions, of steam and electricity, of modern conveniences, of telephone and telegraph, of television and radio," Rev. Hoeksema already then proposed how restrictions on buying and selling might be put into place. Today, with technology's instant communication across the globe, it is even easier to envision this happening.

This pamphlet gives a biblical perspective on the Antichrist, describing the universal political power that he will wield, the spiritual influence he will have, and his worship, image and sign.

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THE ANTICHRIST

Rev. Herman Hoeksema

Who is the Antichrist; when shall he arise; and what shall he do?

The Scriptures speak often of Antichrist.

An Old Testament picture of him must, undoubtedly, be seen in the "little horn" of Daniel 7:8, which came up among the ten horns on the fourth beast, that "shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws; and they shall be given into his hand until time and times and the dividing of time" (Daniel 7:25). A partial and typical fulfillment of this prophecy was seen in the terrible Antiochus Epiphanes; the full realization, however, must be expected in the end of time.

More often, however, we read of Antichrist, his coming, power, and final destruction, in the New Testament. The Lord speaks of false prophets that come in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravening wolves (Matthew 7:15). He warns that many shall come in His name saying that they are Christ and shall deceive many (Matthew 24:5). "For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect" (Matthew 24:24). We are all acquainted with the description of Antichrist in 2 Thessalonians 2:3, where the apostle Paul speaks of him as the "man of sin," whose chief characteristic is sin, and as "the son of perdition," who is born of perdition; who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped; whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders; but whom the Lord will consume with the spirit of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming.

The apostle John tells us that the existence of antichrists and the final coming of Antichrist is characteristic of the "last time," so that we may be assured that the dispensation in which we now live is the last time (1 John 2:18). There will therefore be no other period of time, millennial

or otherwise, following the dispensation in which Antichrist shall appear. This is positively¹the "last hour" on the clock of the history of the world. When it is finished, eternity will be ushered in.

This is as we would expect, for Antichrist will fill the measure of iniquity, and in him the "man of sin" will be completed. Also the powers of darkness, as they shall culminate in Antichrist, must fulfill the counsel of the Most High. In the deepest sense they must be explained from that counsel of God. Were there no counsel of election, there would be no church; were there no counsel of reprobation, there would be no Antichrist. Just as for the church as a whole and for every member individually God has ordained good works, "that we might walk in them," (Ephesians 2:10b) so God has also ordained a certain task for the whole of the power of darkness as it reaches its ultimate development in Antichrist.

Also the wicked accomplish God's work. To be sure, they do not mean it so; they purpose to do their own work; they set themselves against God and His Anointed; and thus they become worthy of damnation. But the fact remains that God is always God, and all creatures always execute His will. Willingly or unwillingly, all are servants of the Almighty. They have a work to do. When their work is finished, the end of time is reached. Because Antichrist shall fill the measure of iniquity, the dispensation in which he appears must be the "last hour."

The most complete picture of Antichrist we find in Revelation 13 in comparison with Revelation 17; and it is to this picture that I would call the attention of my readers more particularly in this pamphlet. Briefly I shall attempt to describe Antichrist, as presented in Revelation 13:

1. In his political power.
2. In his spiritual influence.
3. In his worship, image, and sign.

HIS POLITICAL POWER

Historically the appearance of Antichrist must be explained from the fact of the fall of the human race in Adam, and from this other fact: that God has anointed His King over Zion, who is ordained Heir of all things, Lord of lords and King of kings, and who will subject all things under Him in the name of God. Man was originally an office-bearer of God, an anointed one, a king-servant. Through the fall he became the devil's office-bearer. He proposes to rule in the name of Satan. When therefore God sends His Anointed into the world, fallen man reveals himself as antichrist.

The derivation of the name Antichrist is not quite certain. It may signify "one who opposes the Christ of God"; it may also mean the "Counter-Christ," one who claims to be Christ and acts accordingly. Materially it makes no difference which of these two interpretations one may choose. Antichrist is both: a Counter-Christ and Christ's opponent. Fallen man, who proposes to rule over the world in the name of the devil and press all things into the service of iniquity, must proclaim himself a Christ, a king; and as such he must necessarily oppose the Christ of God. This also explains why the antichristian power assumes the form of a kingdom and its king, with universal political power.

Even in the old dispensation this antichristian power was in the world and exerted itself to frustrate God's counsel regarding the coming of God's Christ into the world. But in its true character the power of Antichrist does not become manifest until after the incarnation of the Son of God and His crucifixion, resurrection, and exaltation at the right hand of God. In the new dispensation the Antichrist is the Counter-Christ; indeed, he opposes Christ for the purpose of replacing Him.

In Revelation 13 we find this antichristian power pictured first of all as a universal world power. This aspect of Antichrist is represented by the beast that rises up out of the sea. The beast has the general appearance of a leopard, but it has the feet of a bear and the mouth of a lion. It has seven heads and ten horns. Upon its heads are found

names of blasphemy; on its horns there are ten crowns. One of its heads reveals the scar of a deadly wound that has been healed. It receives its power and authority from the dragon, that is, the devil. All the world admires the beast.

The first question that arises is: what is the meaning of the sea out of which the beast arises? No one disputes the fact that here, as usual in the book of Revelation, we deal with symbolism. The various elements of this symbolic picture may not be interpreted arbitrarily, according to our own imagination and fancy, but must be explained in the light of Scripture. The Word of God usually interprets its own symbols.

This is also the case here. If we consult Daniel 7:2-3, 17, and Revelation 17:15, we find that the storm-swept sea is a picture of the nations of the world, moved by sin from within, swept by the revelation of the wrath of God from heaven, restless with wars and revolutions and troubles political and economic, always giving birth to new kingdoms and kings, forms of government and dictators, alliances and federations. In Daniel 7:2-3 we read: "Daniel spake and said, I saw in my vision by night, and, behold, the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea. And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another." This is explained in verse 17: "These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall rise out of the earth." It is evident that by "the earth" is here meant the nations of the earth. The storm-swept sea therefore represents the nations as they give rise to new kingdoms and their kings. We reach the same conclusion on the basis of Revelation 17:15: "And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues." The sea out of which the first beast arises represents, therefore, the restless nations of the world, swept by the storms of war and revolution and disturbances of every kind.

The second element in the vision that draws our attention is the symbol of the wild beast. The beast in Scripture is representative of the

political world power, the king or ruler and his domain. There can be no doubt of this in the light of Daniel 7:17, where the four beasts are interpreted as four kings who shall arise out of the earth, as well as on the basis of verse 23 of that chapter, in which the fourth beast is called the fourth kingdom upon the earth that shall be diverse from all kingdoms.

A king and his kingdom are inseparable. When the question is asked whether the Antichrist shall be a person or a power, we may probably answer: both. He shall be a world ruler, a mighty person or genius, in whom all the world shall trust and whom the whole world shall admire; but he is not to be separated from the kingdom over which he shall have dominion. Nor must the term be taken in too narrow a sense. In modern times, men like Mussolini and Hitler were not kings in the literal sense of the word, but they were world rulers nevertheless and, in fact, exercised far more power than many a king.

That in the book of Revelation John beholds not merely one beast but a combination of beasts (leopard, bear, and lion) most probably points to the fact that the world power of the last days will be a culmination of other historic world powers that have existed in the past. However this may be, the picture of the wild beast in the vision teaches us that the ultimate manifestation of Antichrist will assume the form of a political world power, a kingdom and its ruler or government.

The seven heads that appear on the beast represent so many different manifestations of the antichristian world power in the course of history, some of which existed in the old dispensation and one of which existed at the time of the vision, while the last one represents a world power that must still be realized. Of this there can be no doubt in light of the explanation given in Revelation 17:9-10: "The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth. And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space." It is evident that the seven heads are seven historical representations of the antichristian world power, as these empires appear and disappear in time.

Nor would it seem impossible to determine from the text which empires are meant. It is certain that the sixth of the seven heads represents the Roman empire, for "five are fallen, and one is". It was the Roman empire that existed at the time John received the vision. If from the standpoint of the vision we figure backward and ask what world powers existed before the Roman, we find that the latter was preceded by the Greek-Macedonian power, established by Alexander the Great, the he-goat of Daniel 8. The Greek-Macedonian empire superseded the power of the Persians and Medes, the bear of Daniel 7. The Persian dominion followed the mighty world power of Babylonia, with Nebuchadnezzar as its most glorious ruler. Before the Babylonian empire there was the power of Assyria with its capital in Nineveh. All these world powers are mentioned in Scripture, so that we may be sure that four of the five "that are fallen" represent the Greek-Macedonian, the Persian, the Babylonian, and the Assyrian empires.

As to the fifth head, there may be room for difference of opinion whether it refers to Egypt or to the kingdom of mighty Nimrod in the land of Shinar (Genesis 10:8-11). Various considerations would seem to indicate that the latter is meant. Egypt indeed appears in Scripture as the house of bondage, bent upon the destruction of the holy seed; but it is hardly reckoned with the great world powers. In contrast, the kingdom of Nimrod stands at the very beginning of the history of the world powers, and the Assyrian empire is represented in the Bible as developing directly from it, for "out of that land went forth Asshur, and builded Nineveh" (Genesis 10:11).

Besides, we read in Revelation 13:3 that one of the seven heads on the beast was wounded, or "as it were wounded to death." This expression can most properly be explained as referring to the confusion of tongues, which was the deathblow to the earliest attempts to establish a universal world power in the land of Shinar. The added information that his "deadly wound was healed" then refers to the fact that in the end of time, in the day of Antichrist, the division into nations will be overcome for a season and all the nations of the world will unite

into a strictly universal world power. The attempt that failed in the land of Shinar shall succeed for a short time.

All the nations of the world shall ultimately, though it be only for a brief space of time, unite around the antichristian banner. Even the heathen nations shall give their power to the beast. This is symbolized by the crowned horns that appear on the beast of Revelation 13. The horn in the Bible is symbol of royal and political strength. Thus the psalmist uses the figure in Psalm 89:17: "For thou art the glory of their strength: and in thy favour our horn shall be exalted." According to the symbolic meaning of the number ten in Scripture, the ten crowned horns represent a fullness of royal and political strength. In this instance the reference is to the whole of those powers that exist outside of the pale of nominal Christendom, the nations that live on "the four quarters of the earth" (Revelation 20:8) and that are called Gog and Magog in Revelation 20. Not from their midst but from the nominally Christian world, in Europe and America, shall the Antichrist arise. There shall be the center and throne of the antichristian kingdom, as might be expected. But the pagan rulers shall unite with it and give their power to the beast for a season.

The union, however, shall not be permanent. The difference between paganism and (anti) Christianity shall soon assert itself. After a season the heathen nations shall rise against the center of anti-christendom, and there will be a world war in the strictest sense of the word.

But for a time the ideal of Babel, which could not be attained in the land of Shinar, shall be realized, and all the nations of the world shall give their power to the beast. All this is clearly taught us in Revelation 17:12-13, 16: "And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast. These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast...And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire."

God has put in their hearts to fulfill His will and to agree and give their kingdom to the beast, until the ultimate form of the antichristian world power from its political aspect shall be the universal and final consummation and culmination of all the historic world powers in the past, realized for a time by the voluntary federation of all the kingdoms of the world, in which even the nations of heathendom, Gog and Magog, shall have a place.

HIS SPIRITUAL INFLUENCE

We read that the beast receives his power from the dragon. This must, of course, be understood not in the absolute sense of the word, for all power belongs to God only, and without Him even Antichrist has no power. It must rather be understood in the spiritual sense of the word. Antichrist is the servant of the devil and does his will. In Antichrist the devil appears to realize his own dominion, and through him Satan is prince of this world indeed. In the antichristian empire all do Satan's will—except the saints. The beast therefore is said to have a mouth to speak blasphemies against God, His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven. All admire and worship the beast, except the saints. For these it shall be a time of persecution and of great tribulation.

This spiritual aspect of the antichristian world power is pictured to us more particularly in the second beast and its activities. This second beast has its origin in the earth, it has horns like a lamb, and it speaks as a dragon. It is very closely related to the first beast, so that it must not be conceived of as a second power, next to that of the first beast, but rather as another aspect of the same antichristian world power. The first and second beast belong together. They constitute a unity.

This is evident from the text in Revelation 13:11ff. The whole purpose of the second beast is in the maintenance and acknowledgment of the power and authority of the first. He exercises all the power of the beast *before him*, that is, as his servant (v. 12). He causes men to worship the first beast; he persuades men to make an image for the first beast;

and he causes all who do not worship the image to be killed. It is he who causes all men to receive the mark of the beast in their right hand or on their foreheads, and he decrees that no man be able to buy or sell except those who are distinguished by the mark as worshipers of the beast. The first beast could not exist, its power and influence over men would be inconceivable, without the activities of the second. The first and second beasts together constitute the antichristian world power, and they must be interpreted as two aspects of it, both of which are indispensable to its existence and authority.

Nor does Scripture leave us in the dark regarding the identity of this second beast. It is not another kingdom but merely the spiritual-ethical aspect of the antichristian dominion. This is evident from the fact that it rises not out of the turbulent and restless sea, but out of the stable and quiet earth; science and philosophy do not flourish in times of war and upheavals but are furthered in the quiet study of peacetime. It is evident too from the fact that this second beast does not have the appearance of a wild monster, but rather that of a lamb. Last, let us notice that this second beast *speaks* and emphasizes his speech by doing great signs and wonders. He functions through speaking, preaching, and teaching, and thus he persuades men to worship the first beast and to make an image for him. Nor can there be any question that this second beast is the same as the false prophet mentioned in Revelation 19:20: "And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image."

All these data lead to the same conclusion, namely, that this second beast represents the power of false prophecy, the intellectual, spiritual, moral aspect of the antichristian world power. It is the power of false philosophy, agnosticism, atheism, modernism; of false religion without Christ, as preached from many a pulpit today; of false science, that is, science and all its results and inventions pressed into the service of sin, occupied with the wisdom of men, which is natural, earthly,

devilish. It works miracles by which men are deceived and induced to follow after the first beast and to worship him and his image—miracles, therefore, not in the service of God, but in the service of the devil.

In our day of mighty inventions, of steam and electricity, of modern conveniences, of telephone and telegraph, of television and radio, we begin to understand what these signs and wonders will be. Who can say what the future will still bring of these miracles, which witness of the power of man and shall be used as the credentials of the antichristian power? Who would deny the possibility of a literal fulfillment of Scripture in Revelation 13:13: "And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men"? They will be the days when even the very elect would be deceived, were it not that the days were shortened!

HIS WORSHIP, IMAGE, AND SIGN

Men will be seduced, by the influence of this second beast, to worship the first beast. His teaching is universally accepted. The power of his miracles is entrancing and charms the lovers of this world. The beast supplies them with all the modern utilities, conveniences, and luxuries of life. It is due to this second beast in no small measure that the antichristian kingdom is all that can be desired by the natural man. Men therefore, in that age of antichristian prosperity and glory, shall worship the beast voluntarily. All men wonder after the beast!

It is not at all inconceivable that this worship shall actually be offered to one person, the personal Antichrist, at the head of the antichristian kingdom. Let a man arise endowed with the power of a universal genius, who is able to create a condition of world prosperity, and men will be glad to forget that they believed in democracy and to hail this "world savior" as their lord and worship him as their god! Hitler in Germany and Mussolini in Italy were national illustrations of the truth of this statement.

However, the worship of Antichrist will also be compulsory. He brooks no opposition. The antichristian spirit is very "broad minded"—on

condition that you worship the beast and his image. They who refuse to bow the knee to this universal idol shall suffer persecution. Once more the sword of the world power shall be turned against the saints of Christ. They shall be killed.

Besides, they shall be allowed no room in that empire of Antichrist. Social and economic outcasts they shall be. Pariahs in the literal sense of the word they shall be made. They shall not be allowed to buy or sell unless they worship the beast and his image! How easily these things can be literally realized may be seen, for example, in the power of the labor unions in many places, where you will not be able to employ or to find employment unless you agree to wear the union badge and stamp your goods with the union label.

The second beast takes care that no one escapes, that all who refuse to worship the first beast are exposed! There will be no hiding from his vengeance. In his day men will be compelled openly to profess whether they are for or against Christ. The lines of demarcation will be clearly drawn. This will be accomplished by "the image of the beast." The second beast

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, which had the wound by a sword, and did live. And he had 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. And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name (Revelation 13:14-17).

Exactly how this image of the beast and this mark on the right hand or forehead of his worshipers will be realized, it is impossible to predict. It is not only very well possible, of course, but also in our day entirely conceivable that in the age of Antichrist there will be a literal image of

the beast, which men will meet everywhere and will be forced to acknowledge and before which they will be expected to bow down in worship. It is not at all below the dignity of modern heathendom to return to the worship of an image. Think of the statue of the goddess of Reason in l'Eglise de Notre Dame in Paris at the time of the French Revolution! How easily can we, in our days of badges and buttons, conceive of the literal realization of the mark in the right hand or forehead, of which the text in Revelation 13 speaks!

Yet it is of minor importance whether or not we are able to determine just what form this image and mark will assume. Of far more significance is the purpose they must serve. This purpose is, evidently, to expose publicly those who refuse to worship the beast and make them the objects of persecution. The image shall speak! By his speaking he will cause all who refuse to worship the beast to be killed.

Again, it is a minor question in what form this image will speak. It is no longer inconceivable that the realization will be a literal fulfilment of the text. But it will speak! Literally or figuratively, it matters not, the image shall surely speak. It will record to the beast your every whisper, your secret thoughts and inclinations regarding the antichristian power. It will reveal your yes or no, your for or against. There will be no possibility of escape.

The mark will speak for itself. Not to wear the antichristian badge will surely expose you as one who is not of Antichrist, but of Christ. And Antichrist is no respecter of persons! Rich and poor, bond and free (does this suggest, to say the least, that communism will not be the ultimate form of society?), small and great alike shall be required to show the mark of the beast. Failure to show it will mark one as an outcast, vainly seeking a place where he may buy his daily bread!

Then it will no longer be possible to serve God and mammon, even in outward appearance. A time of great tribulation it will be for the saints in Christ Jesus. But at the same time it will be a period in which the

lines shall be very clearly drawn. It will then be seen once more who fear the Lord and who do not fear him. It will be given of grace to the saints in the cause of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer with Him.

The saints shall have the victory!

Antichrist must fail. His ultimate and complete failure is already sealed. Christ has overcome the world and is seated at the right hand of God, clothed with all power and authority in heaven and on earth. The rule and ravings of Antichrist will be but for a season. The chapter tells us that he has power to continue forty and two months. This power is given unto him by God.

The period of forty and two months is evidently the same as that of twelve hundred and sixty days, three and a half years, time and times and half a time, mentioned elsewhere in the book of Revelation. As a symbolic indication of time it refers to the whole of the new dispensation. The period during which the "woman" (the church of the new dispensation) is nourished in the "wilderness" is, according to Revelation 12:6, a thousand two hundred and threescore days; and the same period is indicated in verse 14 of that chapter as "time, and times, and half a time." It is clear that this is the same period as what is indicated by forty and two months, for forty and two months are twelve hundred and sixty days, or three and a half years.

It is therefore the period of this entire dispensation, though it may have a more literal fulfillment in the end. All through this dispensation Antichrist is in the world, although in his full power he will become manifest only in the end of time. It is not impossible that in the fullness of his power he will continue only three and a half years or forty and two months in the literal sense of the term.

However this may be, he shall fail. His time is limited. He shall be cut off. According to Revelation 17:16, the end of the antichristian empire

shall be marked by that universal world war between the central antichristian powers and the nations that live on the four corners of the earth, for the ten horns, representing the pagan powers, shall hate the whore and make her desolate. It is on the scene of this desolation that the Lord shall come on the clouds of heaven to consume His enemies by the breath of His mouth and to judge all the nations of the earth.

That Antichrist shall fail is also indicated by his number, or the number of his name, the number six hundred threescore and six. A thousand and one interpretations have been offered of this number, which the reader may find in the commentaries on this passage. They are, many of them, proof of much learning, and they are characterized by great ingenuity. Usually they interpret the number of the beast as if it were a puzzle that was offered to be solved.

The best known of these interpretations, dating back to the time of the early church fathers and still accepted by many interpreters of Holy Writ today, finds in the number 666 the Greek letters that spell the word Lateinos. It applies the number of the beast to the Roman emperor, or according to others, to the pope. The letters of the Greek alphabet have numerical value. In order, the letters of Lateinos represent the following numbers: 30, 1, 300, 5, 10, 70, 200. The sum of these numbers is 666.

But against this interpretation there are many weighty objections. The chief of these is that it appears to be a juggling with the terms of Scripture in order to reach a preconceived explanation. The name "Lateinos," whether referring to a particular Roman emperor, to the Roman empire itself, or to the pope, was before the mind of the interpreter; and the number 666 was, quite arbitrarily, dissolved into those numbers that would correspond to the letters of that name.

If thus we begin to juggle with the terms of Holy Writ, there is no end of possible interpretations. The number 666 may readily be dissolved into other combinations of numbers so as to spell a different name.

Irenaeus already hesitated between the names Teitan and Lateinos and preferred the former. Besides, the Greek form of the name "The Latin" is not Lateinos but Latinos, so that the word-and-number puzzle does not even check! No wonder that Alford could write, "Even while I print my note in favour of the Lateinos of Irenaeus, I feel almost disposed to withdraw it. It is beyond question the best solution that has been given; but that it is not the solution, I have a persuasion amounting to certainty."

It seems to me that we must heed the introductory words of Revelation 13:18: "Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast." These words must not be read as if they were equivalent to: "Here is a puzzle. Let him that is ingenious solve it." Wisdom and understanding take into consideration the light of the Word of God in general in order to interpret a particular passage. It is certainly in harmony with the Holy Scriptures in general to read into the numbers a symbolic significance. That the number 666 has a symbolic meaning is all the more to be expected because it occurs in the book of Revelation.

If we apply this rule, we find that six is the number of the earthly creation with a view to time. Four is the number of the earth with a view to its extent. Scripture speaks of the four winds and of the four corners of the earth. But six is the number of the earth and all earthly things from the viewpoint of their development in time. It is the number of creation week. It is the number of our week of toil and labor without the Sabbath. It therefore represents clearly the idea of labor without rest, of effort that is not crowned, of exertion that ends in ultimate failure, of time without eternity! The number six therefore stands for all the efforts of man in time to find rest in the merely earthly things.

That this number is repeated three times and multiplied by the number ten and by ten times ten indicates, first, the *completeness* of this effort of man to bring the things of this world to their highest possible development, for the number ten always indicates a fullness. Second,

man strives *repeatedly*, in the course of history, to reach the rest to establish his ideal of the kingdom of man, and man repeatedly fails. He is mere man, and the number of man is always six. Without Christ he is limited to that number six. The *seven*, the final Sabbath, the true rest, he never reaches. Antichrist is from below. His efforts are always limited by the number six and are therefore doomed to fail.

But the saints in Christ Jesus, who have the patience, who do not worship the beast and his image but are faithful even unto the end, although in this world they may seem to fail, reach the number seven, the eternal Sabbath, the rest that remains for the people of God! They seek the city that has foundations, whose builder and maker is their God! They shall never fail or be ashamed, for their Joshua, the Captain of their salvation, has gone before and shall surely lead them into the eternal victory of the heavenly Canaan.

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