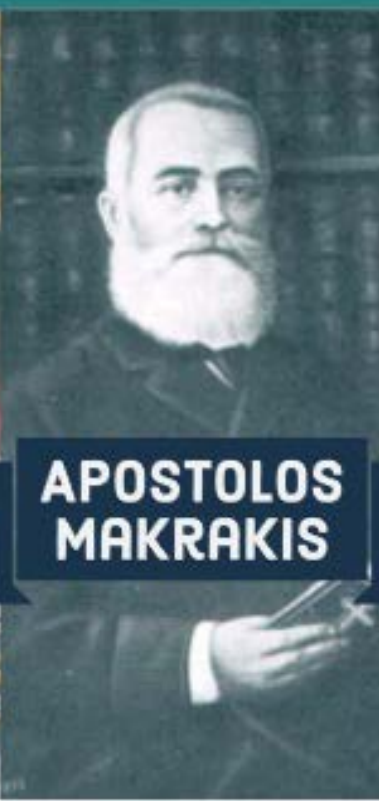




# INTERPRETATION OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION

[ Annotated & Illustrated ]



**APOSTOLOS  
MAKRAKIS**



**“(...) in a time of times and a half of a time, when the dispersion hath been consummated, all these things shall become known.” – Daniel 12:7**

Many Dispensationalist and Preterist scholars have sought to interpret the Apocalypse, but they have obscured rather than unveiled the mysterious secret of the book. This is primarily because they have misunderstood the “times” for when the divine truths were to be revealed, in accordance with the conditions set forth in Daniel 12:7: *“...when the dispersion hath been consummated, all these things will become known.”* This time having been fulfilled, starting with the end of the Jewish Diaspora and the *First Aliyah* in the year 1882, the meaning and true interpretation of Revelation was simultaneously brought to light by Makrakis that very same year. Makrakis is considered to be the *“Father of the Neo-Historicist method”* of prophetic interpretation of the scriptures, as he was the first to reinterpret the Apocalypse through a newer Eastern Orthodox perspective on the history of Christianity. Makrakis breathes new life into the long forgotten *Classical Historicist* method for interpreting biblical prophecies, which viewed prophecies as a continuous fulfillment of events throughout history until the second coming. All of the important questions and answers have been brought forward for the first time by this largest ever Eastern Orthodox commentary on the Apocalypse. According to the interpretation advanced by Makrakis, many prophecies have been fulfilled with precision and accuracy, with a never-before-seen Christological emphasis on many key events described through the history of the Church including the rise of every major heresy in the last 2000 years.

Interpretation of the Book of Revelation  
Apostolos Makrakis  
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# **INTERPRETATION OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION**

**of ST. JOHN the DIVINE**

**(with annotations and illustrations)**

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INCLUDES UPDATED ANALYSIS BASED ON  
TWENTIETH CENTURY EVENTS

**By Apostolos Makrakis**

Eastern Light Publishing  
Sheriden, WY

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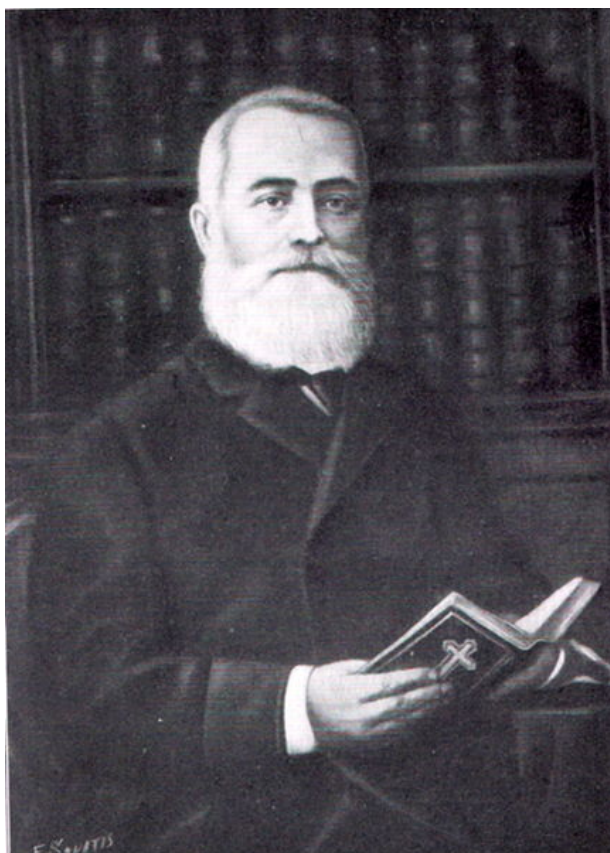
*Dedicated to Father Photius and Arthur Tate.  
May your Memory be Eternal.*





*"(...) in a time of times and a half of a time, when the dispersion hath  
been consummated, all these things shall become known."*

—Daniel Chapter 12, Verse 7



Apostolos Makrakis



EDITOR'S PREFACE (2018 AD)

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# Overview and Analysis of Apostolos Makrakis's Historicist Interpretation of the Revelation

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## Editor's Introduction – By Jonathan Photius

Apostolos Makrakis's *Interpretation of the Revelation of St. John the Divine* is the first complete and extensive modern Eastern Orthodox Commentary of the book of Revelation based on a Historicist method of biblical prophetic interpretation, as compared to the Preterist or Futurist views which are more common today. His book was first published in Athens, Greece in December of the year 1881 and translated into English in the year 1948 by the *Orthodox Christian Education Society*. Due to the timing and release of his work, Makrakis is considered to be the “*Father of Neo-Historicism*.” That is, his work was the first Historicist commentary on the book of Revelation which used a “[N]ew [E]astern [O]rthodox” Historicist perspective in interpreting the Apocalypse. This view is in contrast to the original *Historicist* writings on Daniel and Revelation by the *Classical Historicists* authors in the west from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century. These earlier historicist writings were produced after the Protestant Reformation and include notable extensive commentaries from Thomas

Brightman, Joseph Mede, George Stanley Faber, Edward Bishop Elliot and Henry Grattan Guinness. Historicism was the most dominant method of interpreting the Apocalypse after the twelfth century up until the nineteenth century, until Preterism and John Nelson Darby's Futurism (Dispensationalism) began to emerge as the two dominant methods of interpreting bible prophecy. So then, the older Protestant Western method of interpretation will be referred to here in this book as *Classical Historicism*, whereas the term *Neo-Historicism* used in this book will be referring to the interpreting the prophecies from a "newer" Eastern Orthodox perspective.

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## Evolution of Classical Historicism Methods

The very heart of the Classical Historicist method of interpreting biblical prophecy is the use of the *day-year principle* method for calculating the "times" prophecies in the bible. That is, the word "day" in the prophecies is considered to symbolically represent a "year" in time. Take for example, the duration of "1260 days" or "42 months" referenced in the Book of Revelation would then be measured as a literal period of 1260 years. The scriptural basis for interpreting a "day" as a "year" can be found by referencing the old testament scriptures such as: Numbers 14:34, Ezekiel 4:5-6 and Daniel 9:24-27. However, the Preterists and Futurist primarily reject the full use of the *day-year principle* and seem to only apply its "day-for-a-year" application just to Daniel 9:24-27 in calculating the arrival of Jesus with the 490-year "seventy-weeks" period of history. But the OT scriptures are very clear. This rule should always be followed when interpreting the "times" prophecies:

"After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, even forty days, **each day for a year**, shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years, and ye shall know my breach of promise." - **Number 14:34**

***“For I have laid upon thee the years of their iniquity, according to the number of the days, three hundred and ninety days: so shalt thou bear the iniquity of the house of Israel. And when thou hast accomplished them, lie again on thy right side, and thou shalt bear the iniquity of the house of Judah forty days: I have appointed thee each day for a year. – Ezekiel. 4:5-6***

The beginning of historicism and the use of the *day-year principle* is often attributed to Joachim of Fiore (in the 12<sup>th</sup> century). Joachim of Fiore claimed he had a vision that told him the 1260 days of the Apocalypse prophesied the events of church history from the time of the apostles until the present. He was one of the first to attribute the Papacy of the time as the Antichrist and believed the second coming would happen 1260 years after Christ in the year 1260 AD. Thus, Joachim was the first person on record that tried to apply the 1260 “days” as years. Nicolas of Lyra (14<sup>th</sup> century) was the first to apply parts of the Apocalypse as predicting the rise of the Arian heresy and the spread of Islam. The historicist was supported by many western reformers such as: Albert Barnes, Martin Luther, John Calvin, John Knox, Thomas Cranmer, John Thomas, Joseph Mede, Thomas Brightman, Isaac Newton, and John Wycliffe. Many of these reformers viewed the Papacy as the Antichrist or “Man of Sin” and man of their ideas were the main contributor to the rise of postmillennialism where they envisioned a fall of the Papacy and a 1000-year period of peace upon the earth before the Second Coming. Thus, the dominant view held by the Protestants since the start of the Reformation is that all the prophecies of the beast of Revelation 13 and 17 describes the rise and fall of the Papacy. This idea of the Papacy as the Antichrist would extend all the way through to the 19<sup>th</sup> century Historicists such as Edward Bishop Elliott, Henry Grattan Guinness, George Stanley Faber, William Cuninghame, Albert Barnes and James Aitken Wylie.

## Reasons for Failure of Classical Historicism

Historicism eventually fell out of favor in the nineteenth century. One of the key problems of historicism is that different interpreters gave priority or attention to different historical events and geographical locations, leading to inconsistent interpretations. It is a long-forgotten method today partly because it was unable to account for actual events in history related to our time, as two World Wars put an end to any thought of a postmillennial period of peace on earth. At least that is the prevailing thought. Makrakis's work will show that is not entirely true, and there are some parts of the Apocalypse that were fulfilled in the twentieth century. But to even accept such a possibility would require the biblical scholar to go outside their comfort zone and look to the fulfillment of the prophecies through history and "*time as the interpreter*." This is certainly a difficult task to accomplish if one is not well versed in history. And another major problem is most Western Historicist commentators believed the images in the book of Revelation referred only to the western churches. That is, many Classical Historicist commentators mostly ignored the existence of the Eastern Roman (Byzantine) Empire that was to exist for 1000 years after the fall of Rome.

Thus, the primary weaknesses and failures of Classical Historicism can be attributed to the following reasons:

- Identification and correlating events only to Western Church history. Almost nothing is mentioned about events that would affect the Eastern Christians. Many commentators like Edward Bishop Elliott incorrectly interpret the Fifth and Sixth trumpet to the rise of Islam and the Turks and applying the two beasts of Revelation 13 only to the history of Rome.
- The overemphasis that the Papacy is the one and only Antichrist, "Man of Sin" or "Little Horn" without consideration for other possible fulfillments through other great empires of the Middle Ages that provide a better historical fit to the texts

- Incorrect identification of the Abomination of Desolation in a spiritual sense, instead of a literal sense of a physical occupation of some structure on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem
- Overemphasis of each event pointing to only political or geographical events instead of events within the church. For example, Edward Bishop Elliott, in his famous book *Horae Apocalyptical*, believed that the trumpets covered the period of 395 A.D. to 1453 AD, beginning with the fall of the Western Roman Empire to the Goths and ending with the fall of the Eastern Byzantine Empire to the Turks, skipping over any significant events related to the early struggles of the church. This political-only context explains the failure highlighted in the next bullet point.
- Lack of a Christological view of the Trumpets and Vials due to inadequate understanding of the symbols used in the Revelation. We know that St. John spoke of the Divinity of Christ in his Gospel. He also continues that concept in the Book of Revelation and thus he places a strong emphasis on the understanding of the God-Man. Thus, many of the prophecies would most certainly speak about rising heresies that would challenge the understanding of the God-Man and Holy Trinity, and the struggles to address these issues by the Seven Ecumenical Councils and the schisms in the Church. It would have been impossible for John to not talk about those critical events in the formation, understanding and defense of the Divine and Human natures of Christ.
- Attempting to fully interpret historical events of the 1260 years before its full termination by the years 1948 and 1967, when the “Times of the Gentiles” came to a completion in Jerusalem.
- Using the Historicist method to attempt to predict the date of the end of the world. For example, the failure of William Miller to predict the Second Coming led to the *Great Disappointment* in 1844 A.D. William Miller proposed that the end of the

world would occur on October 22, 1844, based on the historicist model applied to Daniel 8:14 and the 2300 “days” prophecy.

- The promotion of the failed 1844 interpretations by the Millerites eventually reorganized as a newer corrupted form of Historicism through the forming of the Seventh Day Adventist movement and the Jehovah’s Witnesses. These groups continue to harm the case for Historicism today as they are viewed as heretical sects by many Christians today.

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### **Benefits of Apostolos Makrakis’s Neo-Historicism Model**

Makrakis’s *Neo-Historicism* view of the Apocalypse of St. John, as defined previously, provides a more complete *Christological* emphasis in that it focuses on events in history that defined the idea of Jesus as the God-Man. For example, Neo-Historicism identifies key verses which shows the Church’s struggle with heresies like Gnosticism and Marcionism in its early days, it’s struggles with Arianism through the age of the Ecumenical Councils and the formation of the Nicene Creed, all the way through the many schisms and reforms within the Church. Neo-Historicism also highlights the central theme in the Apocalypse of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, the “woman” or “bride of Christ”, who always defend the truth of the God-Man, regardless of the persecutions and wars waged against her, and the “gates of hell would not prevail” against her.

Neo-Historicism uses the art and science of biblical interpretation, referred to as Hermeneutics, to arrive at a successful interpretation. That is, the Neo-Historicist method is successfully achieved by analyzing and noting key historical events, with a with a strong correlation to end-times biblical prophecies, also backed by exact mathematical analysis of the historical dates as solid evidence using the *day-year principle*. In addition to the mathematics involved, Neo-Historicism places an emphasis on



laying the proper foundation of the symbols used in the Apocalypse. Without a thorough understanding of these symbols often borrowed from the rest of the scriptures, the reader will fail to see what the author St. John was trying to convey in the true context of the prophecy. Parts of Revelation contain many symbols reused from the Old Testament, such as the books of Ezekiel, Daniel and Zechariah. So then, the reader must either have knowledge of these symbolic references to understand the true context of the passage. Makrakis's Neo-Historicism method, therefore, attempts to fully analyze all the symbolism of various entities or objects described in Revelation before showing their use in a larger context of a sentence. Again, this leads us back to the Christological emphasis behind the definitions. How do these symbols relate to Jesus, in what way, using other key scriptures in the Old or New Testaments? For example, do the use of "*Sun*", "*Moon*" and "*Stars*" refer to astronomical phenomena, or are they really expressions used to describe Jesus, his Church and the leadership of the Church.

Therefore, the primary objective and motivation for introducing Makrakis's work again to the Eastern Orthodox community, is to provide evidence to show that the validity of the Historicist view in light of its accurate alignment of prophecy with fulfilled history. And thus, it should be reconsidered once again by Orthodox Christians with a new appreciation for its use in interpreting the apocalyptic scriptures. Especially during our times after the recent failures by many Evangelicals who have attempted (and failed) to predict the exact date of the "rapture" and arrival of the "Jewish Antichrist from the Tribe of Dan". Makrakis's Neo-Historicism offers a fresh perspective and understanding into the events of the middle east crisis which arose in the 20th century with the return of the Jews to Palestine and the conflict with the surrounding Muslim nations.

Ultimately, Makrakis's Neo-Historicist model will offer the reader a logical solution to interpreting biblical prophecy. No oth-

er prophetic method of interpretation (specifically Preterism and Futurism) offers the same level of authenticity with the calculations and confirmation of dates in history with the prophetic scriptures as Neo-Historicism. And no other method of interpretation offers a more *Christological-centric* view of St. John's Apocalypse. Centered around the nature of Christ as the God-Man, Markakis's Neo-Historicism demonstrates the biblical foretelling of the rise many of the major heresies that challenged the *One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church* for the last 2000 years.

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### The Life and Controversy of Apostolos Makrakis

Apostolos Makrakis was born in 1831 on Siphnos Island in Greece and died in 1905). He studied in Constantinople and in Paris, becoming an expert in modern European philosophy, and eventually settled in Athens in 1876 opening the *School of the Logos*. He was a very charismatic and controversial Greek Orthodox lay theologian, preacher, ethicist and philosopher in post-revolutionary Greece, and arguably one of the most important religious figures in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. A prolific writer, who's works were translated widely outside Greece. However, his controversial statements made against the prelates of the church eventually turned the Holy Synod against him, resulting in his imprisonment on charges of heresy. Constantine Andronis states in his biography – “*Apostolos Makrakis: An Evaluation of a Half a Century*”:

"...so long as Makrakis combated only Freemasonry and neither said nor wrote anything against the high priests, he was recommended by the latter as the Saviour of Orthodoxy, but when he proved certain high priests to be guilty of the crime of Simony and demanded their dismissal in accordance with the sacred regulations of the Church, war began to be waged upon him as a heretic teaching that man consists of body, soul, and spirit. Ma-

karios, Bishop of Karystia, published excommunications and anathemas in opposition to this belief.”

Specifically, the jealous and angry Holy Synod came after him because of his teaching of the *tri-compositeness of man* (a belief that man had a soul, spirit and body), stating this was an innovation and a heresy not taught by the Church fathers. On March 17<sup>th</sup>, 1881, Makrakis was found guilty on a charge of heresy brought against him and was sentenced to two years in prison, and his School of the Logos was ordered to be shut down and all documents sealed. The case was tried on June 13<sup>th</sup>, 1881 and the highest court overturned his conviction. While in prison, he wrote the very same “*Interpretation of the Book of Revelation*” which is included in this book. This work was soon published after his release from prison in December of 1881. After his overturned conviction, none of his accusers ever appeared against him after this for the last 25 years of his life. Regardless of his controversial earlier writings, his work on interpreting the Apocalypse would become one of his greatest last works put into print.

Still, during his last years his critics took issue with this interpretation and mocked him for failing to predict the return of Constantinople to the Greeks in 1897. But the reality is, had Apostolos Makrakis lived long enough to see events materialize with World War I, World War II, and the return of the Jews to Israel, he would have further understood and refined his calculations and some of his interpretations. For while Makrakis was off slightly with some of the assumptions in his calculations and dating on the fall of the Ottoman Empire, much to the delight of his critics, it turned out he was only 15 to 20 years off of its fulfillment after the end of World War I and its final disintegration. Had he considered a “solar” calendar instead of the “geometric” calendar in his measurements, he would have arrived at a more accurate date. And regardless of his miscalculation, his interpretation is still just as valid and applicable as it was over 135 years ago with respect to

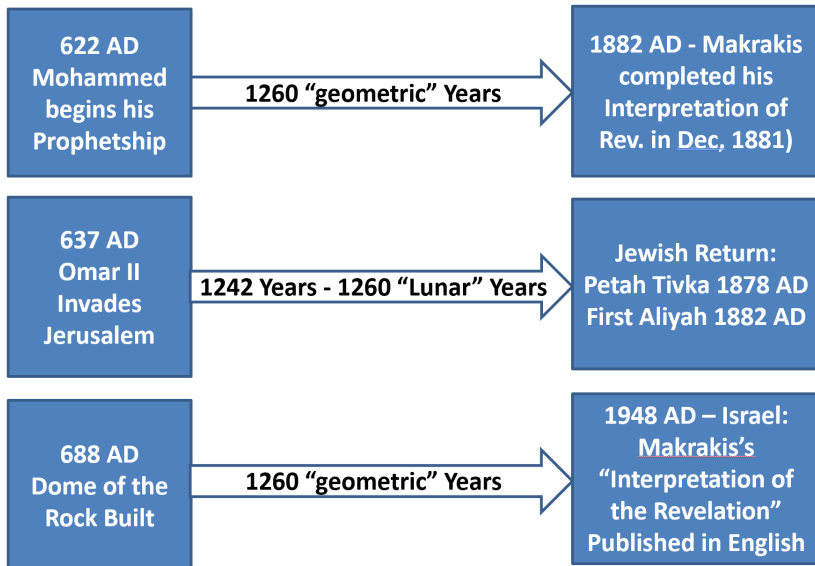
the understanding the Middle East Crisis and Church corruptions and scandals we face today. And this is the primary motivation for the reintroduction of this great work to the Orthodox world. The time was right for the Apocalypse to finally be interpreted. We are given this clue in the Daniel Chapter 12, verse 7:

*“In a time of times and a half of a time, **when the dispersion hath been consummated**, all of these things shall become known”* – Daniel 12:7, Theodotion-to-English Translation

The Theodotian and Old Greek LXX manuscripts of the Book of Daniel reveal to us that the understanding of the words of the prophecies would remain hidden until after the “*time of the consummation*.” That is, when the “*time to restore the kingdom to Israel*” is fulfilled, when the Jews return from the great Diaspora back into the Holy Land, we would then be able to understand the hidden mysteries and the “times” calculations foretold in in Daniel and Revelation. Once again, this *Dispersion Consummation* is not very revealing or visible in the other English bible translations of Daniel verse 12:7 which merely refer to this period as the “time of the end” or the “end of time.” Perhaps, when all is said and done, the answer to this mystery is really a simple matter. The key to a successful interpretation of Daniel and Revelation can only be well be understood through a historical examination only after the dispersed Jewish Nation returned to Israel in the twentieth century. And, applying the day-for-a-year principle, the understanding and interpretation of the prophecies would finally come to pass only after a period of 1260 years, measured from the arrival of the Abomination of Desolation in Jerusalem until the completion of the scattering of the Jews and their restoration to Israel.

What is most ominous in all of this analysis of the times calculations, is that Apostolos Makrakis published his interpretation exactly 1260 years after Mohammed appeared. Interesting indeed, since his main thesis is the identification of Mohammed as the “lit-

the horn” of Daniel and the “*Man of Perdition*” spoken of by St. Paul. This release of his book also exactly coincided with 1260 “lunar” years (1241 years) after the invasion of Jerusalem by Omar II in 637 AD, which is also the same time the Jews returned to Palestine, first starting with the Petah Tivka settlement in 1878 AD, then once again with a wave of immigration in the midst of the Russian Pogroms of 1881. Another interesting statistic, the timing of his translated work into English was made widely available in the United States coincided with the formation of the State of Israel in 1948. Is this just a strange coincidence? Perhaps. But very ominous, given his repeated reference to Daniel 12:7 in his interpretation and his claim that the “times are fulfilled” to the point that the mysterious book of the Apocalypse could finally be understood. Even more so since he also wrote about the Jewish restoration with his interpretation of Revelation 20, Ezekiel 37 and Romans 11 (a subject covered later in this book)



**Figure a.1** “1260 days” from Mohammed until Jewish Return and Makrakis’s Revelation

The reader will see that the *day-year principle* is central to Makrakis's interpretation, as it is for so many other Historicist commentators. And the fact that he often quotes Daniel 12:7 throughout the work should be noted by biblical scholars, given the exact timing of publication of his work coincident with the completion of the Diaspora return of the Jews. An important fact which Makrakis failed to realize himself. Regardless, it seemed the time was ready for someone to provide a clear interpretation for the apocalypse, relative to the completion of the Jewish scattering and return spoken of in Daniel 12:7. Although Makrakis often focused on the year 1897 AD in his book for the fall of the Ottoman Empire and the spread of Apostolic Christianity among the nations, it turns out that the year 1897 was a very critical year in the history of the Jewish Nation with the formation of Zionism for the permanent establishment of a homeland in Israel. And Ezekiel chapter 37 seems to describe the restoration in a series of progressions or stages until their final spiritual restoration, or acceptance of the Messiah "David."

The updated charts shown in Appendix A at the end of this book further validate Makrakis's interpretation with events centered around the 1917 Balfour Declaration, the 1948 formation of Israel, and the return of Jerusalem in the 1967 six-day war. The "*times*," however, are still not finished. We should expect a full completion of the times set to occur by the middle of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Interestingly, the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation might even reveal the exact year of restoration and fulfillment of Romans 11 if the *day-year principle* is applied properly.

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## Organization of the Book

This book offers some additions to the 1948 English-translated interpretation. It organizes it into a more readable format and allows the reader to quickly find the highlighted verses in each chapter of the Book of Revelation with highlighted gray boxes. In

addition, there are many commentary footnotes provides, mostly from the author of this edition (which are marked with a “*EDITOR’S NOTE*.” However, some footnotes from the original translated work also are included and are marked as “*COMMENT FROM 1948 EDITION*”.

Finally, the editor of this work feels that Makrakis was incorrect with his understanding on a handful of verses, primarily because he did not live long enough to see some events come to pass in the twentieth century. As such, the footnote commentary will help to explain some of his incorrect historical assumptions and provide an alternative explanation. The reader can determine on their own which view is a more accurate description of the passage. In some cases, the editor will also reference some critical Byzantine-era or Orthodox apocalyptic prophecies which can often help the reader possibly understand the meaning of a particular verse from a different Orthodox (apocalyptic) point of view.

The editors and translators of this hidden treasure and work of Orthodoxy believe this interpretation is found on the ROCK OF TRUTH and “*the work contains truth unequivocal and wisdom of divine origin.*”

- Johnathan Photius  
December 3<sup>st</sup>, 2018





**INTERPRETATION**  
**OF THE**  
**REVELATION**  
**OF**  
**ST. JOHN THE DIVINE**  
**by**  
**APOSTOLOS MAKRAKIS**

*But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, until the time of the consummation, until many shall have been taught and knowledge shall have been multiplied*

*Then I Daniel looked, and behold, there stood two others one on this side of the bank of the river, and the other on that side of the bank of the river.*

*And one asked the man clothed in line who was upon the waters of the river. How long will it be to the end of the wonders—thou hast spoken of?*

*And I heard the man clothed in linen who was upon the waters of the river as he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, swear by him that liveth for ever that in a time of times and a half of a time, when the dispersion hath been consummated, all these things shall become known.*

(DAN. XII:4-8)

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**Translated from the Original Greek Text**

**by**

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*Published by*

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**CHICAGO, ILLINOIS**

**1948**



TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE (1948 EDITION)

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# Interpretation of the Revelation of St. John The Divine

## Translator's Preface

The arduous task invariably attendant upon rendering a faithful if not an idiomatic translation of a work of such magnitude as *Interpretation of Revelation* by A. Makrakis, has not in the least been lessened either by the dominant symbolic atmosphere of Revelation or by the peculiar and sometimes almost abstruse Greek idiom and turn of phrase, not to mention the author's pronounced tendency toward heroic repetition in behalf of clarity and emphasis. In the face of all these disturbing elements, the chief aim of the translator has been to convey the author's thought and concepts as accurately and forcibly as it lay within his power, and to phrase these as adequately and as skillfully as the linguistic incompatibility between the two tongues made possible, in some cases even to the point of deciding in favor of a non-idiomatic rhetorical form,

but one which imparted fully and forcefully some outstanding fundamental philosophical principle or premise. In brief, the translation is admittedly a compromise from which, as all the initiated will sadly realize, there is no escape in the realm of the translator.

It may be expedient to explain, further, for the benefit of those not possessing a knowledge of both languages, that in regard to many instances of quotation from the Septuagint text of the Old Testament, the translator adhered to the meaning of the Greek text instead of following slavishly the King James version which teems with serious blunders resulting from mistaken meanings in the original Hebrew text. But generally, he chose to adopt the King James version rather than translate the Greek Septuagint text except in cases of pronounced discrepancies in meaning between the Septuagint and the King James versions or extreme obsolete structure in the King James. And now a word as to author and content. To those who may be inclined to resent the writer's exco-riation of all three Christian churches, the Protestant, the Roman Catholic, and the Greek Catholic - the writer's very own - the translator would recommend an absolutely fair and unbiased perusal of the work and a keen and deliberate analysis of the writer's psychic and logical processes. For unless the *Interpretation of Revelation* be founded on the ROCK of TRUTH, it cannot stand.

Upon this very rock both the editors and the translator believe this work to rest; hence they offer it to the English reader not under any pretense of its absolute perfection or faultlessness but in the firm conviction that despite the acknowledged human lacks and shortcomings of its author, the work contains truth unequivocal and wisdom of divine origin.

Apostolos Makrakis, philosopher, moralist, theologian, literatus, lecturer, was born in 1831 in Siphnos, a small island of the Cyclades, and died in Athens, December 24, 1905. After finishing his grammar-school curriculum on his native island, he entered the Greek National Training School at Constantinople, where he

completed his studies and received his teacher's diploma. He subsequently was elected head of the Greek Lyceum at Constantinople, and at once he launched upon a career of writing and teaching a new and original system of philosophical ideas and principles which have so far remained unexplored and unknown to the world in general, obviously as a result of envy and disapproval on the part of his Greek contemporaries. Very significant and illuminating, in connection, is the fact that although Makrakis' "Philosophy" was published in Athens in 1876, no mention whatever is made of it in Dr. Frederick Ueberweg's "History of Philosophy," a contemporary work. To be exact, not until the twelfth and last German edition of "History of Philosophy" (Berlin, 1928) is any mention made of Makrakis' "Philosophy and the Philosophical Sciences." However, even there the depreciating comment is volunteered to the effect that Apostolos Makrakis was a mystic - a statement without foundation or reason, very conveniently contributed by Dr. Theophilos Boreas, Professor of Philosophy, University of Athens, and writer of the article for Dr. Ueberweg's "History of Philosophy," Volume five, under "*Die Philosophie des Auslandes*" And the cause for this was clearly neither fraternal love in the heart of Dr. Boreas, nor a fervent desire to augment the fame of Apostolos Makrakis, nor was it ignorance or misconception on the part of so erudite a Doctor of Philosophy; for the most casual reader of the work in question can distinguish between mysticism and machination.

But the vicissitudes of Apostolos Makrakis were more severe than the denial of the fame and recognition justly due him. On December 18, 1878, his *School of the Logos* at Athens was closed and its founder was cast into prison.

The above-mentioned institution was attended by three hundred resident (boarding) and outside or day-students under the direction and guidance of A. Makrakis and the teaching of nine instructors. The philosophical School of the Logos where he held free evening classes open to the general public, in which he taught

the Holy Scriptures philosophically and theologically, and in which he wrote and lived together with his co-workers, was a large three-story structure and remained open until 1901. At the sale of the building by the owner, the Philosophical School of the Logos was transferred to another and smaller hall where it continued to operate until the end of his life. In the place of a dissolved organization, he founded the religious society *John the Divine*; the political society, *The Great Constantine*, acting then as senator from Attica; and finally, the political society *Plato*.

For three years he was cruelly persecuted by the governmental authorities and the Archbishop with view to his utter effacement through various charges followed by prison sentences and releases. Finally, he was condemned by the magistrate's court on a heresy charge which he did not defend, to two years' imprisonment on May 17, 1879. Upon appeal, he was tried again in 1881, and after an extended trial from February 10 to March 17, he was again given a similar sentence and thrown into prison with criminals for the discharge of his penalty. But the higher court reversed and set aside the decision of the lower court on June 13, 1881, restoring him to freedom on the same day, after which he was never again molested. But God recompensed him fully for his persecution in behalf of the absolute truth of Christ; for the fruits of his imprisonment are the interpretation of Revelation and of the entire New Testament, the completion and publication of his entire philosophical system and numerous other original writings as well as ten evangelical tours during the summer months from 1885 to 1894 throughout the provinces and districts of the country, in the course of which he preached the Gospel out in the open to great numbers of hearers. At his death, he was given a magnificent burial in the cathedral of metropolitan Athens. His casket was borne to the cemetery on the shoulders of his disciples in relays, followed by a vast crowd of people. Behind all came the empty hearse and one hundred and fifty empty carriages. Thus, we see that the inscrutable and humanly inconceivable ways of God brought forth

rich fruit in the guise of philosophical and religious works at once breathing divine inspiration and emanating a heavenly light which disperses the shadows of ignorance, delusion, religious bigotry, and unbelief, and reveals God in His effulgent glory.

ALBERT GEORGE ALEXANDER

OPENING REMARKS BY MAKRAKIS

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## [Author's] Preface

*"(...) in a time of times and a half of a time, when the dispersion hath been consummated, all these things shall become known." (DAN. XII :7)*

The opinion prevails in regard to Revelation, the last book of the New Testament, a work prophetic as well as mysterious, that it is incapable of either comprehension or interpretation by man. Indeed, up to the present the book has remained shrouded in mystery and has defied interpretation; and those who have undertaken to expound it have rendered less penetrable, rather than drawn aside, its veil of mystery. In view of such preconception or prejudice regarding this uncomprehended and uninterpreted book, the reader of the present exegesis may wonder, before completing his perusal of it, whether it is an unfolding of the mysterious and the hidden and an explanation of the hitherto unexplained, or merely an empty title lacking all practical value, since a host of preeminent intellects and divinely inspired fathers of the Church have failed to interpret this profound and mysterious work, while others have pronounced it both incomprehensible as well as uninterpretable. The reader may indeed rightly wonder how any man today can presume to claim and publish an interpretation of this



book. The solution of this perplexity lies in the introductory quotation from the prophet Daniel unto whom God pointed out the time for the revelation of the divine prophecies, saying: "***in a time of times and a half of a time, when the dispersion hath been consummated, all these things shall become known.***" In these words is to be seen the reason for the successful interpretation of the book, if it has been correctly interpreted, as may also be seen the reason for a failure in the following words, uttered somewhat earlier: "***But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, until the time of the consummation, until many shall have been taught, and knowledge shall have been multiplied.***" Since God decreed that an understanding of the prophecies be withheld until the appointed time, of course no one could interpret and reveal what God had concealed, until after the time fixed by God. Behold, then, the reason why keen minds as well as the holy fathers of the Church have been unable to expound the prophetic content of the book of Revelation. But since again, God decreed that all hidden things should be revealed "*in a time of times and a half of a time,*" when the wicked shepherds have dispersed God's fold, God's resolve could by no means fail to be fulfilled at the appointed time. Therefore, if the present interpretation of the mysterious Apocalypse turns out to be a sound one and not a mere title, this will be an indication not of ability or virtue on the part of the interpreter but of the fact that the time has arrived at which God had ordered that the mysterious book be revealed to the masses, an aim which has therefore been achieved through the cooperation and grace of God. However, if the present exegesis leaves this profound book unexpounded as have other preceding interpretations, then we may be assured that the attempt has been made before the appointed time and without God's inspiration and guidance, and that a full interpretation is reserved for some other person in the future. So much by way of preamble is vouchsafed the thoughtful reader of the present exegesis in order that he may peruse it freed of the prejudice that the Apocalypse is incapable of interpretation and that he may

know the reason for the failure of previous interpreters as well as the reason for its successful exegesis, in case he finds that the bidden things are being disclosed, and praise God who can do all things according to His will. To Him, therefore, be the glory, honor, adoration and worship for ever and ever. Amen.

INTRODUCTION

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# Introduction

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## CONCERNING THE TITLE AND THE NATURE OF THE BOOK

The book we are considering is entitled "Revelation of John the Divine." The title signifies that the author of this mysterious work is St. John the Divine, the beloved disciple of our Lord Jesus Christ, the author of the fourth gospel, the stentorian witness to the eternal existence of the Logos, or Word, and the one who established the Church of Christ firmly upon faith in the truth. At first sight the book seems to us to be of a prophetic nature, since it prophesies what is to happen from the time it was written to the consummation of the ages. But united with its prophetic character it has also an historical side, for it describes to us the Christian Church of that period while relating its past and foretelling its future. To the prophetic and the historic aspects is conjoined its ethical character, which grows out of its main purpose, the two other ones serving as means for the achievement of its moral purpose. The function of the first two elements is brought out by the fact that from beginning to end the book prescribes and teaches the duties of Christians, in the fulfillment of which an historical and prophetic knowledge of matters is highly advantageous; for the ultimate aim of the book, toward which prophecy and knowledge of matters serve as means, is a steadfast abiding in faith and holiness on the part of Christians, for whom the revelation of future

events was written. For this reason, the book of Revelation is the most ethical and the most practical of Christian books; and the more they study it, the more devout and the holier, the wiser and the more moral, the braver and the more capable of achievement they become.

To these three natures or aspects, viz., the prophetic, the historical, and the ethical, are united three excellent outstanding and most worthy features - the theological, the ontological, and the dramatic, which exalt the book to the apex of perfection and rank it as the most perfect book God has granted unto man. The book is of a theological nature because it reveals to us the eternal God as thinking and acting with regard to men in a manner befitting His nature and majesty, Furthermore, in its revelation of the future it also reveals God Himself, in accordance with whose will all things are brought to pass. No other sacred book contains so much theological knowledge as the book of Revelation - a product of the first divine of the Church; and for this reason, we consider it not only the most prophetic and the most ethical of books, but also the most theological. To the theological character or element, we find united the ontological, since all species of beings are enumerated and named in this book which reveals, beside God, all creatures depending upon and ruled by Him. Thus, we obtain from this work not only theological, but also ontological knowledge, for we are informed by it concerning the nature and the various types of beings which exist and coexist with us, and act and react for or against us according to divine restrictions and laws. The last characteristic aspect of the book is the dramatic, according to which the future of human life and activity is the result of action and reaction on the part of free-thinking moral beings, some acting in behalf of good, others reacting in behalf of evil. Couched in dramatic form, the prophecy of this book, representing the earthly career of all nations until the end of time, constitutes a great drama divided into many acts or related events, each of which is enacted at the proper place and time by the various stage characters

in the process of action or reaction. From a dramatic viewpoint, the Apocalypse is of all books the most effective and impressive, depicting through dignified and appropriate scenes the great drama of human life in which under God's domination all types of dramatic characters act, both visible as well as invisible, such as angels and demons, good men and wicked, the Church of Christ and the world of Satan, the unseen enemy of man, Satan, and the Saviour of mankind, our Lord Jesus Christ. The Apocalypse is the truest and greatest theater of Christian activity to the one who has observed carefully and faithfully the great drama of human life to its final solution. Through the Apocalypse we are ushered into the great theater of creation, in which we behold heaven and earth as well as regions under the earth, the action and reaction of those who struggle in behalf of good and of those who contend in behalf of evil, and the results of the struggle, both in particular and in general, to the very end of universal judgment and punishment. Neither the theatrical nor the dramatic element in the Apocalypse can be imitated or reproduced by human art. Christians have at their disposal the most impressive as well as the most enrapturing of theaters of dramas, although they have unfortunately so far failed to derive from these either rapture or benefit. The Christian theater mentioned above instills in the Christian both sanctity and perfect virtue, whereas the theaters of human mimicry instill in the spectator vice and moral laxity.

Such is the character of the preeminent book of Revelation, **prophetic** on first view, but also **historical, ethical, theological, ontological**, and finally **dramatic**, depicting graphically the greatest and most beautiful of spectacles. Surely such an outstanding masterpiece could be the work of no other than St. John the Divine.

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## THE NATURE OF AN ADEQUATE INTERPRETATION OF THE APOCALYPSE

An interpretation of the Apocalypse should be analogous to the nature of the book as explained above. Furthermore, the interpretation must expound this work not only from a prophetic point of view, but also from that of any and every other related phase or aspect, such as the historical, the ethical, the theological, the ontological and the dramatic, as already defined. Besides, the interpretation must aim not only toward knowledge pertaining to the events prophesied and succeeding one another in time and place, but also toward moral perfection, which Christians must acquire by grasping and conducting themselves in accordance with the fundamental principles propounded by the spectator of the greatest and best of all revelations. Again, the exegesis must contain in full not only the historical, the prophetic, and the ethical knowledge of the book, but also the ontological, and the dramatic; for through a perfect book it can perfectly edify the soul of the reader, initiating him into the mysterious and the hidden which God has concealed by means of an incomprehensible discourse and style in order that such knowledge may be revealed "*in a time of times and a half of a time,*" when the fold of Christ shall have been scattered by the vile and vicious shepherds of the present. Such an exegesis befits the Apocalypse, expounding and developing the divine book in all its preeminent character, and at the same time retaining its measure of analogy not merely toward literary economy, but also toward an adequate initiation of the reader into the mysterious and the inscrutable. It is hoped that the perfection of the book may be forcefully brought out in its exegesis and through driven home into the souls of all devout Christians; for the Apocalypse was written in their behalf, and so was the present exegesis, which offers the springs of living water to souls thirsting for the water of eternal life. Let us then hasten thither to draw water joyfully from the springs of salvation. To the reader, the Apocalypse is the spring of salvation, while the exegesis, which by the

will of God we are about to undertake, is the means of quenching his spiritual thirst.





## CHAPTER 1

# Revelation Chapter 1

*"Revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave unto him to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass;" - **Revelation 1:1***

Through the book as a whole entitled "*Revelation of St. John the Divine*", the unfolding of the future is referred to as the "*Revelation of Jesus Christ*." The two expressions, "Revelation of St. John the Divine" and "Revelation of Jesus Christ" each bear a different meaning. The first signifies that the author of the book was St. John the Divine, and the second that the revelation was made by Jesus Christ. Thus, it is evident that the latter signification gave birth to the former and the revelation by Jesus Christ was the reason why the entire work of St. John the Divine was entitled "Revelation." The first word of the book, viz., "Revelation", also designates the first aspect of the book - the prophetic, to grasp which more profoundly we must look carefully into the nature of revelation.

*To conceal* is to place a covering or veil upon an object which we wish to hide from the sight of others; while to draw aside the covering so that everybody may behold the hitherto hidden and invisible, is *to reveal*. Revelation discloses the hidden and makes known the unknown by drawing aside the veil and thus placing the revealed object within the eye's perception. The question for

our consideration is What veil does the "Revelation of Jesus Christ" draw aside and what objects does it reveal and make known to us? The future events among races and nations as well as among the civilized communities of men are hidden from and unknown to the eye of every man. The future is uncertain to all men, their ignorance being the veil which conceals the future; and it is this veil which is drawn aside by the "*Revelation of Jesus Christ*" by making known to us what is to be before it has come to pass. Hence, knowledge of the future of mankind is promised by the "*Revelation of Jesus Christ*" - knowledge conveyed by word of mouth which dispels ignorance and makes unknown things known to the heedful. This knowledge of the future, Jesus Christ received from God His Father to convey not to all men but only to his servants. Hence the text: "*Revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave unto him to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass.*" God knows all, and nothing is hidden from him: according to the holy scripture, "There is no creature unseen in his sight: and all are naked and untrammelled in his eyes." But to man, most things are hidden, unrevealed, and inscrutable, any consciousness and knowledge of them being received from God, the omniscient, through our Lord Jesus Christ assuming various roles such as that of master, teacher, intercessor, high-priest, and saviour. Our communion with God is made possible by our Lord Jesus Christ through whom we receive the knowledge "(...) *which God gave unto him to shew unto his servants.*" Such knowledge proceeding from God through our Lord Jesus Christ is food and life to our souls, for it is true and all-pervading. This knowledge we consider to be of great value, spurning as we do the knowledge of those who have strayed away from God, whose reasoning is uncertain and doubtful and whose opinions are dangerous. Behold, then, the reason why we call ourselves disciples of God, which is, that we are vouchsafed knowledge by God concerning the past, the present, and the future through Jesus Christ and his servants unto whom He first revealed this knowledge. Having thus received God's be-

neficence through Jesus Christ, we are grateful unto Him through Jesus Christ; likewise, since we receive through Jesus Christ knowledge and soul enlightenment, through Him in return we offer unto God, our Father, thanks, gratitude, and glory. On the other hand, those who neither know nor are willing to know our Lord Jesus Christ have no communion or relation whatsoever with God, and live a godless life without the least hope of future life and salvation. "(...) *which God gave unto him (...)*" The amount of knowledge received by Christ from God is not analogous to the amount which we receive from Christ, for we obtain knowledge we entirely lacked before, and we learn while in ignorance. But our Lord, being God's all-wise Logos, eternally possesses all knowledge through the Father, and neither does he learn while in ignorance, nor, lacking knowledge, receive it according to our fashion. What is the meaning, then, of the phrase, "*which God gave unto him*"? It signifies that Christ in the role of high-priest and intercessor between us and God, makes petition unto God in behalf of the fulfillment of our needs, and that God gives heed and resolves to grant the petitions made in our behalf. The resulting acceptance of Christ's petitions in our behalf and the provision made for our needs is termed ***giving***. Thus, it is evident that Christ receives knowledge from God not as one lacking it, or as one in ignorance, but as high-priest and ***intercessor*** between us and God, petitioning in our behalf for knowledge toward the fulfillment of our needs. This is made quite clear by the immediately following phrase, "*to shew unto his servants*," from which it is inferred that Christ receives knowledge not for Himself but for his servants who do His will by proclaiming Him Lord God and who live in the world for His sake. Also, servants of Christ are the servants and employees of the Church who are struggling in behalf of the application and ultimate supremacy of the Gospel. But these servants are in need of knowledge concerning God's plans and the future for the faithful execution of their duty; therefore, it was in their behalf that the Apocalypse was written and not for the pur-

pose of satisfying the curiosity of worldly people with respect to the mysteries of the kingdom of God. The Apocalypse is particular in scope and not general, for it does not reveal the future to all, but only to the servants of Jesus Christ and those who serve God's will in the world. The first servants of Christ were the twelve apostles, and after them the faithful clergy and people of the apostolic church. For all these as well as for those who from time to time serve the will of God, has the Apocalypse been granted, revealing future and preordained events until the end of the world. Therefore, it was so written as to be incomprehensible to the curious and to those estranged from God, but comprehensible to the faithful servants of God unto whom it was given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God. Newton, the renowned mathematician and sage in the eyes of the world, attempted to interpret the book of Revelation, but failed in his undertaking because it had not been given him to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God. As a result, he made as great a laughingstock of himself as he had proved himself a genius in the field of physics and mathematics. The book of Revelation is in reality a closed book for the learned men and sages of this world, or, in biblical phraseology, a sealed book; but it is an open book to those servants of Christ unto whom it was granted to see "things which must shortly come to pass." In what manner the revelation of the future was given to Christ and through Christ unto his first servant John, we have seen in what precedes; and now it is essential that we determine the significance of the phrases "**must**" *come to pass*, and *shortly*. What must come to pass is the outcome of God's plan, for without God's will nothing can come to pass. It follows, then, that whatever God wills, comes to pass. God's plans are irrevocable, and whatever things God has ordained to take place until the end of the world, must take place; hence, what is to pass is none other than the outcome of a declared decision of God's. On the other hand, the term *shortly* signifies the immediate consummation of all plans of the past; for every event is limited by time and place, and

subject to cause and effect. Again, the term shortly signifies that every detail is executed within the shortest possible period and without the least tardiness or waste of time, and is immediately followed by the execution of the next detail in systematic order. No loss of time is permitted, for God, who is frugal of time, has allotted to each event a proportionate amount of time without any extravagance or waste whatsoever. Such is the significance of the terms which *must come to pass shortly*. Now let us examine what follows.

*"And he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John, who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw." - Revelation 1:2*

The first servant unto whom Christ first revealed things "which must shortly come to pass" is called John. Though called the first servant of Christ, he is none other than the one whom Jesus loved and whom he pointed out from the cross to his own mother, saying, *"Woman, behold thy son."* It was this beloved John who was the author of the Book of Revelation, and not some other, older John, as certain ancient as well as modern commentators have foolishly and indiscriminately supposed. And the fact that John of the Apocalypse is the same person as John the evangelist, surnamed the Divine, is proved by the restrictive clause, *"who bare record of the word of God and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw."* Which John bore record of the Word of God? He who wrote *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."* Which John bore record of *"the testimony of Jesus Christ"*? The one who wrote *"And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us full of grace and truth."* Which John bore record of *"all things that he saw"*? He who wrote the fourth gospel through which he testifies to all that he saw, filling in the gaps of the other three evangelists. The above presents full proof and irrefutable assurance that John of the Apocalypse is none other than the evangelist *"who bare record of the Word of God"*

*and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and all things that he saw*" as wonderful things from the beginning until the Lord's resurrection and ascension. Such testimony no other John bore than he whom Jesus loved and who at the mystic supper leaned on Jesus' bosom and sadly asked, "*Master, who is thy betrayer?*" That this John was the first to receive from Christ a revelation of the future is further assured by the following.

In proclaiming the revelation of the future to his disciples during the mystic supper, the Lord declared: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth is come, He will guide you into all truth; for He shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak." Such were the words by which our Lord proclaimed to his first servants the unfolding of the future, which could be brought about only by His transmission of the Spirit of truth to them. According to ethical law a promise is first fulfilled for those to whom it is first made. Hence it follows that a knowledge of the future was granted to one of the first disciples of the Lord, and not to persons without the circle of the twelve, of which John was a member, son of Zebedee, author of the fourth Gospel and the three catholic epistles, and the recipient of the Apocalypse for the servants of Christ and the Church. And serving as intermediary between John and Christ, an angel unfolds the meaning of the visions; for the Lord points out the future to John by means of types and symbols while he beholds, being himself in spirit, and the angel interprets and reveals the significance of these symbols. For we read: "*And he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant; John*", that is, having dispatched an angel he revealed to John the meaning of the visible symbols, as we shall see. John here calls himself a servant of Christ. But what, we ask, is the service he renders? Bearing record of the truth. "*Who bare record of the word of God and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.*" Bearing record of the truth is the noblest service to God and entitles the

witnesses to be called servants of God and Christ. And John bore record of three testimonies:

- 1) the testimony of the word of God, through whom everything was made,
- 2) the testimony of Jesus Christ, who died and rose from the dead for our salvation, and
- 3) the testimony of the works and the miracles of Jesus Christ to which he had been an eye witness.

And all those today who hold and bear record of these testimonies before men, offer God the same noble service and are stamped servants of God. It was indeed for these servants of God that the Apocalypse was granted so that they might see "*things which must shortly come to pass.*" And just as knowledge from God was bequeathed to John through the Spirit of Christ which illumed his eyes, and through the interpreting angel, so to us too who serve God it shall be given. Amen.

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

The canonical books of the Old as well as the New Testament must be read continually in the churches, so that those who hear the word of God and those who do it may become blessed according to the proclamation of Christ. "Blessed are they who hear the word of God and who keep it." The Apocalypse is the last canonical book of the New Testament as well as the most perfect and useful, as we have already proved at the outset; and it has been written so that its reading in churches and in Christian homes may be continual, that they may know the times in which they live, and that they may rule their own life through the commandments and mandates of Christ and the Holy Spirit which speaks through this book to all the churches. For this reason, is the reader and interpreter of the words of the prophecy first blessed and then those who hear and keep Christ's commands. The words of the

prophecy being closely connected with practical ethics have, because of this fact, been granted for the moral edification of the Christian. The book is not merely prophetic in nature but also ethical, because it foretells "the things which must shortly come to pass" as well as teaches the Christian his life duties. But the curious hunter for knowledge concerning the future, neglecting fulfillment of the divine commands, fails to gain not only blessing but also knowledge of the future, which is granted only to the servants of God as custodians and followers of the divine law. Let us then all derive benefit from this divine treasure house, one by reading and interpreting the words of the prophecy, and the others by hearing and obeying what is written therein, *"for the time is at hand."* What time? The time for judgment and recompense, which is the goal of the Christian's career. At the time when the Lord ascended to heaven and his disciples gazed at him, the angels standing by said unto them *"Why stand ye gazing toward heaven? This same Jesus taken up into heaven, will return in the same manner as ye now see him ascending toward heaven."* Again St. Paul declared from the midst of Mars Hill at Athens that *"God... now commanded all men everywhere to repent because he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men in that he hath raised him from the dead."* All this points to the fact that by *"time"* is meant the time for universal judgment and recompense, at which each shall receive the compensation due to him for his work. And so, looking forward to the time at hand, we must do God's works, as well as works of faith, righteousness, and mercy in order to inherit eternal life instead of eternal damnation, which is the heritage of wrongdoers. Such a time will come after those things which Christ revealed unto John shall have "shortly come to pass;" and since events go by in rapid succession, the time for universal judgment is daily drawing nearer, But if the appointed time were "at hand" during the days of John, it is much nearer to us today after a lapse of eighteen hundred years. In fact, the words of the



prophecy were tendered so that the Christians of every period might be adequately prepared for that day. Hence the words: *"Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy and keep those things which are written therein."* For the latter are adequately prepared for that day, which is constantly drawing nearer.

Here ends the first paragraph, serving as a preamble to the book. It is through this that the prophetic character of the text is first revealed with a view to its moral character in the observance of what is written therein; John, too, the author of the book, is revealed. Besides, through this, the spring of prophetic knowledge is also disclosed - God, who is Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who in turn is the giver of knowledge, and the interpreting angel wherever interpretation is needed. Finally, this paragraph indicates the great advantage both to the one who constantly reads the book in the Church of the faithful, as well as to those who heed and obey what is written therein. And now we have come to the second paragraph.

*"John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace from him who is, and who was, and who is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne; and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the first begotten of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth." - Revelation 1:5*

The second paragraph, above, is a second epistolary preamble similar in form to that generally used by the apostles of Christ, through which the book is addressed and dispatched to the seven churches in Asia. The address is made at the command of the Lord, as explained below. Hence the Apocalypse of John, the first servant of the Lord, is transmitted to the seven churches existing at that time in Asia, concerning whom there will be discussion later. This short epistolary introduction contains a threefold knowledge: ***theological***, ***ontological*** and ***religious***, which we must explain for the purpose of illuminating the masses.

In accordance with the usual apostolic letter form, John invokes upon the seven churches in Ash grace and peace "*from him who is, and who was and who is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne.*" In the above quotation John refers to God in a novel manner by means of two [Greek] participles and one [Greek] verb in the past tense. Within this novel name we find a most true and accurate idea and knowledge of God; hence the preceding statement above to the effect that the introduction of the epistle contains theological knowledge taught by the first Church-of-Christ divine. God has many names which are used to denote his perfect essence and nature. He is called Lord, Holy, True, Just, Eternal, and so on. But among all these names there is one which above all others brings out God's true essence and nature. This name God revealed first unto Moses on Mount Sinai; and the Jewish synagogue held this name mysterious and inscrutable, considering the use of such an adorable name highly impious. When God first revealed himself to Moses on Mount Sinai through a flame of fire in the bush, for the purpose of sending him into Egypt to deliver the sons of Israel from the tyranny of Pharaoh, Moses in a philosophic and knowledge-seeking mood asked God: "*Behold when I come unto the children of Israel and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, what is his name? what shall I say unto them? And God said unto Moses, I am that I am.*" This is God's name exalted above every other name, for it alone can express above all other names a true and accurate idea of God. He "*who is*" ever complete and perfect, self-sufficient, indestructible, un-changeable, causeless and self-existent, not having without himself a cause for being, but being himself the cause or source of all beings. This name is restrictive and individual. No one can say "*I am that I am*" except God himself. All other names of God may be applied to us men. Man also may be called God. "*I have said ye are gods and all sons of the Highest.*" On the other hand, God is named Lord, yet men also are given the same title. To illustrate further, we find that God is called divine,

but man too carries this title; God is just, and so are men; God is kind, and men are also called kind. In brief, it may be said that all the elegant titles of God are also attributed to man with the exception of one, the "*I am*", which belongs exclusively to God, and can be predicated of no creature; for all creatures are facts which have passed from a state of nonbeing to one of being through the will and power of eternal God. Every fact has a cause of existence without itself, but the "*I am*" is self-existent and causeless. For this reason, neither the "*I am*" can be predicated of the fact nor the fact can be predicated of the "*I am*." And just as God's name "*I am*" is by nature individualistic and cannot be predicated of the fact, likewise the fact cannot be predicated of God, the "*I am*." Therefore, anyone that asks, Who made God? is asking an illogical and blasphemous question, for he is foolishly reducing God, the "*I am*", to the level of facts the cause of whose origin and existence can be investigated by natural means. Every fact has a cause of its existence, but the "*I am*" is both self-existent and causeless; accordingly, to ask who made God is sheer folly. God revealed his name to Moses in a single word by replying "*I am that I am*." But in revealing this to Moses he confounded the Jews; for the use of this exalted name of God was not permitted to them, since to them the real nature of God was hidden and unknown. However, our Divine [Saint John] revealed to the seven churches the great name of God in three words by invoking grace and peace "*from him who is, and who was, and who is to come*," the revelation made to Moses being only the beginning, and that of [St. John] the Divine the end united with the beginning. To the Jews God revealed himself rather obscurely and symbolically, but to Christians he revealed himself through our Lord Jesus Christ, in a true and substantial fashion, as one God in three coeternal Persons given the novel title "*who is and who was and who is to come*." "*Who is*" refers to the Father, "*who was*" refers to the Son and Word of the Father, since in the beginning was the Word and "*who is to come*" as the Paraclete, or the Spirit of Truth, proceeding from the Father and coming to us

through the Son. The fact that these three groups of words denote one and the only true God who revealed himself of old first to the Jews, through Moses, rather indefinitely and figuratively, and now to us Christians through Christ openly and in a substantial manner, is made immediately clear by the following statement: "*and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne.*" The last phrase is singular in number, not before their throne but His throne, which fact plainly indicates that "*who is*" and "*who was*" and "*who is to come*" is one God sitting on one throne and judging the entire universe in righteousness. Such is the theology of us Orthodox Christians originally enunciated by John the Divine "who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of that he saw." As against this true and certain knowledge, the uncertain and obscure conception of the Jews gives way, while on the other hand the theology of the Koran is denounced as false and Mohammed, its promoter, as a false prophet. Again, the theology of the deist philosopher is an empty delusion and a most pernicious wandering from the saving knowledge of truth. Holding on to the true idea of God, we must denounce all falsehoods and all those who are deluded, in order to save them from dire danger, which only the light and the knowledge of truth can make possible. And now let us interpret the grace and the peace which the Divine invokes from the true God upon the seven churches of Asia.

God's grace and peace are two spiritual advantages which the apostles in addressing the Christians invoked in their behalf so that through these the soul might gain blessing and joy in holding communion with God. Practically all the epistles of the Apostle Paul begin with: "*grace unto you and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*" Grace, on the one hand, frees the soul of every obligation owed to God's justice and provides it with attributes and privileges of which it is not worthy, while peace puts the soul in harmony with God and renders it fearless of all evil and danger. And both grace and peace descend upon the soul from God through Jesus Christ according to the following law.

Every transgression and disobedience draws a just recompense. The transgressor of the moral law is punished through God's justice and by means of the penalty set and provided by law for every violation. All of Adam's descendants, like Adam, have become transgressors of the moral law and deserve punishment by death and eternal damnation in accordance with the definition and provision of divine justice. But God waives this justly deserved punishment in behalf of every man believing in Christ, who died for our sins, so that those who believe in him may justly escape sentence of death and receive the privilege of life eternal. Deliverance from sentence of death and the provision of the privilege of eternal life in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ (intercessor and surety between God and man) - both these constitute God's grace, which is accessible only to Christians. But those who have not accepted Christ (that is, Jews, Turks, idolaters, atheists, or theists - all those who have neither known Christ nor are willing to know Him) remain under the wrath and curse of the law of divine justice. Dreadful the day on which the hands of God fall upon them as a result of their failure to take advantage of the opportunity for repentance and justification through grace. And grace once granted, peace descends upon the soul with its assurance of safety and calm and fearlessness of all evil and danger, since it is opposed to strife and war. For just as war involves a conflict of forces in which the weaker combatant is destroyed by the stronger, likewise, peace is a harmony or concord of moral forces in which the stronger defends the weaker. But when we transgress the moral law of God and oppose the plans and the will of God, we declare war against God and thus subject ourselves to the greatest of all risks - a conflict with the power of God. The misery and unhappiness of man, indeed, is caused mainly by war with God and the conflict waged against God's almighty power, the consequences of such foolish conflict being a terrible loss of life and unbearable torture in a place of eternal punishment. But when through Christ we obtain the grace and privilege of eternal life, we make peace

with God and place ourselves under the protection of divine omnipotence. The soul in the meantime abiding in harmony and peace with God enjoys security, ineffable calm, and fearlessness of death as well as of all other evils and dangers man is subject to. Through this interpretation everyone can see that the grace and peace of God are two spiritual advantages with which the soul is blessed and made supremely happy. For grace from God keeps the soul forever in bliss, while peace with God renders it safe and fearless. These spiritual advantages John invokes upon the seven churches in Asia, and the possession of them we too must consider to be very precious today, deeming nothing more valuable or more beneficial. Obviously, in making peace with God we wage war against the Evil One; and as a result of this war against the Devil and against low passions and desires, the divine benefit of peace is both gained and retained. But concerning this truth we shall speak again later.

John invokes grace and peace not only from "*him who is, and from him who was, and from him who is to come*" but also from "the seven Spirits which are before his throne." It is remarkable that John is the only apostle who in his letters to Christians invokes grace and peace from the seven spirits before the throne of God. Paul in his numerous epistles to the Christians invokes grace and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, but John inserts between God and Jesus Christ the seven spirits and makes them structurally precedent to Jesus Christ by writing: "And from the seven Spirits which are before his throne; and from Jesus Christ who is the faithful witness, etc." A superficial critic would probably think that John considers these seven spirits superior to Christ, since he invokes grace and peace first from them and then from Jesus Christ; therefore, we should inquire what these seven spirits are, why John alone invokes grace and peace from them, and the reason for giving him structural precedence over Jesus Christ.

Knowledge regarding the first question is termed ontological, because through it we acquire ideas concerning beings which do not come under our physical sense. And John both saw and knew these, by being in spirit and by ascending to heaven. In chapter IV of the Apocalypse he relates that "being in the spirit" he ascended to heaven and saw God sitting upon a throne, and before the throne seven candlesticks of burning flame representing the seven Spirits of God from which he invokes grace and peace upon the churches. David, the prophet, says in the 103rd psalm *"who makest thy angels spirits, and thy ministers a burning fire."* From all this we infer that the seven spirits which John saw before the throne of God as seven candlesticks of burning flame are seven angels and ministers of God coming next to God in honor and importance, just as in a kingdom the prime ministers and aides of kings are highly honored by the subjects, next to the king. This conclusion is supported and validated by sundry biblical testimony. For instance, the angel Gabriel appearing to Zachariah in the temple said to him, *"I am Gabriel that stands in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee and to shew thee these glad tidings."* (Luke I :19.) According to this testimony Gabriel is one of the seven angels stand-ing before God and ministering unto his will. Again, the angel Raphael in revealing himself to the just Tobit said: *"I am Raphael, one of the seven holy angels which carry the prayers of the saints, and enter the glory of the Holy One."* Hence the seven spirits of John are seven angels, chief ministers of God, among which are the two angels, Gabriel and Raphael, the name *"angel"* being indicative of the service of stewardship, and the name *"spirit"* signifying fundamental essence and nature. Therefore, God, a spirit, is ministered unto by spirits which in turn are the creatures of the Holy Spirit, according to the testimony of the prophet: *"who makes thy angels spirits, and thy ministers a burning fire."* And the number of these seven ministering angels who stand before the throne of God corresponds to the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, which the prophet Isaiah mentions as resting upon Christ. *"And the Spirit of*

*the Lord shall rest upon him; the spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the spirit of counsel and of fortitude, the spirit of knowledge and of godliness. And he shall be filled with the spirit of the fear of the Lord.*" Now each of the seven angels partakes of all these spirits or gifts of the Holy Spirit in a perfect measure; hence they are all able to stand before the throne of God to minister unto him. And in order that Christ might also minister unto the will and the wisdom of God, he was anointed by the seven gifts, or spirits of the Holy Spirit, or, according to the Evangelist, became filled with the Holy Spirit. Likewise, we also must be anointed by the Holy Spirit and become spirits and flaming torches of fire in order to minister unto God. Such is the ontological knowledge concerning the seven angels, which we are able to glean from parallel sections and testimonies in the Holy Bible. And now we approach the second question: why John alone invoked upon the churches grace and peace "*from the seven Spirits which are before his throne*"? Because John ascended unto heaven and saw God sitting upon a throne, and before Him the chief ministering spirits. Hence, he writes to the churches after this vision invoking upon them grace and peace, and relating all that he saw and learned about God's ministers, so that the churches might receive knowledge regarding their supreme service and importance. The other apostles, that is, Paul and Peter, in writing epistles to the various Christians addressed themselves not as having descended from heaven and having observed heavenly things, but merely as ministers of God and of Christ upon earth, not having, like John, previously beheld heavenly objects. Thus, we see that only John invoked grace and peace from the seven chief ministers of God, because he had previously beheld them in heaven before the throne of God, learned of their exalted ministrations and importance and subsequently made these known to the churches. But one of those who disregard the reverence due to holy things and who in raving stupor scorn the saints, may ask: "Having once received the grace and peace from God, of what value can grace and peace from the most exalted ministers of God be



to us?" In the same fashion in which God's ministers are serviceable to God, their grace and peace is serviceable to us; for they are ministers of God's righteousness and reflecting God's wisdom and attitude in condemning whatever God's justice condemns, in waging war against God's enemies, in rejoicing in whatever God rejoices, and in making peace with those who are at peace with God. Thus, in securing God's grace and peace, we also secure the grace and peace of his most exalted ministers, who rejoice in whatever God rejoices in and make peace with those at peace with God. Besides, these ministers of God are also our ministers, carrying our prayers to God as indicated to Tobit by the angel Raphael saying: *"I am Raphael, one of the seven holy angels who carry the prayers of the saints and enter unto the glory of the Holy One."* Hence there must be ample reason for their grace and peace which John invokes upon the churches, and we value it highly, honoring and glorifying those whom God honors and glorifies with the highest functions and offices. And now we come to the solution of the problem of Christ's rank, inquiring as to the reason why the seven ministering spirits were given precedence over Christ?

Christ is called the God of the earth, representing upon earth the God of heaven, in the capacity of man created according to the image and likeness of God to rule all God-created beings and govern the world in equality and justice. The prophet Zachariah, beholding a golden candlestick and two olive trees, one on the right side and the other on the left side, asked the angel who showed him the vision: *"What are these two olive trees upon the right side of the candlestick and upon the left side thereof?"* - Then said he, *"These are the two anointed ones that stand by the Lord of the whole earth."* Again, in Chapter XI of the Apocalypse we find *"And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and three score days clothed in sackcloth. These are the two olive trees and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth."* But who is the God of the earth before whom stand the two anointed ones according to Zachariah, and the two witnesses ac-

cording to the Apocalypse? Our Lord Jesus Christ, "*the faithful witness, the first begotten of the dead and the prince of the kings of the earth.*" Thus, we see that in the matter of rank, the God of heaven leads the way. Before him stand the seven ministering spirits and then the God of the earth, before whom stand two olive trees and two candlesticks. Thus, it may be seen clearly that John did not rank the seven spirits first, but the God of heaven with the seven spirits standing before Him. Then it may be seen that the rank of Christ is not after that of the seven ministering spirits, but after that of the God of heaven before Whom stand the seven ministering spirits. "*The one who is, and who was, and who is to come*" - He is the God of heaven, while Jesus Christ "*the faithful witness the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth*", is the God of the earth. And as the seven spirits stand before the God of heaven, so the two witnesses and the two anointed ones stand before the God of the earth. Thus, we observe an analogy or correspondence between those standing in the presence of the former and those in the presence of the latter. It is also to be noted that only the God of heaven was given precedence over the God of the earth, and not the spirits referred to as standing before the God of heaven, but NOT as ranking above Christ. The thoughtful reader understands that in descending from a supernal or heavenly state to an earthly one, John naturally gives precedence to the God of heaven. Again, those standing before the God of heaven correspond to those in the presence of the God of the earth and not to the God of the earth himself, our Lord Jesus Christ. It is evident then that the Divine did not give the seven spirits precedence over Christ, as may appear to the superficial reader, but that he ranked the heavenly state above the earthly, and the God of heaven above Christ, Who is called the God of the earth. Such is the solution of the third question. Next let us inquire into the nature of the throne of God, before which stand the seven spirits.

A throne is a symbol of power and authority as well as a symbol of the exalted position of the one occupying it. Kings have thrones

in their palaces, and high-priests have thrones in temples - thrones constructed of priceless material and most elaborately adorned. In comparison with these, the throne of God has nothing in common except the name. For the throne of God is analogous to His power and His exalted position; it is a God-made throne of mental spirits, not hand-made and of inanimate matter. God is a spirit and all things about God are spiritual. *"In my father's house"* Christ said *"there are many mansions,"* and many are the contents and the adornments of the house of God and of its mansions. Yet the house of God is spiritual, mansions together with their contents, such as thrones, chariots, wheels, and so forth all being of a spiritual nature. And when our soul is transformed spiritually, and is in spirit, like John's, then it beholds the spiritual world, God, and all his Glory, then it discerns the throne upon which sits the one *"who is and who was and who is to be"*, the Almighty. There is also an order of angels, called the thrones, serving as the resting place of the Lord God. We must now learn the names of heavenly objects in preparing to acquire knowledge concerning spiritual matters and visions.

*"And from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the first begotten of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of earth."* Grace and peace from "Him who is and who was, and who is to come"; also grace and peace *"from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the first begotten of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth."* A narrow-minded grammarian would accuse John of violating the rule of grammatical agreement, for, instead of using the genitive case of *"faithful witness"*, to agree with the genitive case of *"Jesus Christ"*, the writer changes the genitive to the nominative. A similar grammatical anomaly is observed in *"from him who is, and who was, and who is to come"*, but in this instance the anomaly is unavoidable, grammatical agreement being absolutely impossible. In the sentence hereinabove, however, the writer could have used the genitive case of *"the faithful witness"*; but he preferred the direct nominative case to the oblique, for the sake of the rhetorical force and the elegance

thus secured by the change. Such expressions are called figures of speech and not grammatical violations, which provoke the indignation of the strict custodians of grammatical rules. The change of form from oblique to direct, and vice versa, has an elegance and a force which are lost upon scholastic grammarians. Had the case agreement in this instance been strictly observed, which would have required a series of ten masculine singular genitive forms in this one phrase, the result would have been very disagreeable, because of the great number of reoccurring genitive forms, and the meaning would have been obscured; disregard of grammatical agreement, however, not only eliminates the disagreeable effect due to the great number of genitive forms but also renders the meaning more forcible, the reason for this being the fact that the nominative form immediately following the genitive, constitutes a new and direct statement explaining the identity of Jesus Christ. The expression reads as though it were "*he IS* the faithful witness, the first begotten of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth." This direct statement is far more effective than the indirect in both elegance and force. It is more elegant because of the smooth transition which relieves the monotony of ten recurring genitive forms, and more forcible through the direct conclusion, "he is the faithful witness," which strikes the ear much more forcibly than the indirect restrictive statement "of the faithful witness" [genitive form]. These stylistic liberties are condemned only by the scholastics who sneer at sacred authors for grammatical violations which they attribute to linguistic ignorance, although they themselves are lacking in both the ability to conceive as well as to express thought. And now let us take up our beloved object, Jesus Christ, and His amiable characteristics.

The knowledge revealed to us by God is termed theological, while that revealed by Jesus Christ is termed anthropological or Christological, since Jesus Christ is the perfect man created according to the image and likeness of God. The anthropological knowledge of Christ is connected with the theological, just as an

image is connected with the subject it represents, and just as through our knowledge of images we attain to knowledge of the subjects, so, through our anthropological knowledge of Christ we ascend to a theological knowledge of God, from which we again descend and repose upon our knowledge of Christ, alighting like birds from the heavens upon our tree of life. And just as we love, honor, and glorify both God and Christ jointly, so do we love and honor the knowledge granted by them to us, who know the nature of each and who try to derive from each whatever is practical and advantageous to us. The Apocalypse more than any other book of the Holy Bible reveals to us God and Christ and everything created that depends upon them. But for us Christ's knowledge is the door to all knowledge; it is the chief nourishment of our soul, the chief remedy for our ailments, and the only knowledge through which we attain health, salvation, progress, and perfection. By knowing Christ, we can know everything through Him, especially such things as pertain to ourselves; but without knowledge of Him we can have no sound knowledge, not even of ourselves. Into such knowledge of Christ, we are ushered at the very outset by the Apocalypse which invokes upon us grace and peace "*from Jesus Christ*" and points out three of His amiable characteristics, viz., "*the faithful witness, the first begotten of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth.*" These three aspects which John has indicated to us at the outset, we must now explain, beginning in order with the first.

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### The Faithful Witness

"*The faithful witness.*" Jesus Christ is characterized primarily not as *a* faithful witness, but as *the* faithful witness, that is, as the preeminent and most exalted witness, worthy of all confidence and faith on the part both of God as judge and of men. The definite article modifying "*witness*" and the restrictive adjective "*faithful*" denote, respectively, the highest and most perfect degree of virtue on the part of the witness, and the fullest and most complete faith he is worthy of. For a deeper understanding of this first

trait of Christ's we should inquire what Christ is understood to be a witness of in His capacity as witness of the most exalted and perfect type. The answer is that Christ is the witness of legal truth, without which a judge is unable to determine whether the one on trial is guilty or innocent. The axiom of God's legal justice is "*Let every charge be established upon the mouth of two or three witnesses.*" According to this legal axiom of divine justice, the decision of the judge is based on the depositions of two or three witnesses testifying the truth and not falsehoods, for the one testifying falsely against his neighbor is not a faithful witness of the truth but a criminal deserving contempt and severe punishment. Therefore, a witness is one who in a court of justice testifies the truth according to which the judge is bound to convict or acquit the accused - the testimony of the truth naturally preceding and the decision of the judge following, as determined by the truth testified. A witness in a legal and judicial sense is one who knows the truth and testifies it simply, clearly, and guilelessly before a judge presiding in accordance with the law of divine justice. But in the absence of witnesses, justice lags, the judge being unable to render either an adverse or a favorable decision. Thus, God has linked the truth to legal justice and has obligated judges to believe in the truth and to be guided by it in rendering their decisions, for God himself, a righteous and true judge, passes judgment on each and all. It is in this legal sense that Christ is called "*the faithful witness*" who possesses a first-hand and thorough knowledge of all truth and avows it before the God of righteousness. God in turn bases his decision on the testimony of Christ; and just as Christ testifies concerning each, so the justice of God is revealed in behalf of each one since "*the faithful witness*" in the presence of the most exalted and universal justice of God is Christ. And those against whom Christ testifies are to be convicted and sentenced, while those in behalf of whom he offers testimony are subject to acquittal. Now since Christ is the faithful witness, that is, since he faithfully testifies to the truth, either for or against the one on trial, if we desire to have

Christ testify in our behalf, we must hate and combat falsehood, not seeking appearances but reality, not desiring to appear just to men, but to God, to whom alone appearances and reality are one, for God sees everything in its true colors, no distortion or misrepresentation being possible, but only reality and truth. Christ is "*the faithful witness*" of God's judgment and righteousness; and the judgment of God follows the testimony of Christ, since it is the truth, and truth is the measure of righteousness. And not only from a legal point of view but from every viewpoint our Lord is "*the faithful witness*"; for every word of Christ is the truth worthy of all faith and fit to be accepted and followed by us. "*The faithful witness*" is entitled to be believed in everything that He says or reveals to us, while we are in duty bound to believe, to decide in favor of, and to follow the words and the testimony of Christ. Whoever fails to believe in the words and the testimony of Christ, disregards the basis of divine judgment and justice and incriminates himself as a distorter of God's justice, while he who entirely denies "*the faithful witness*", also entirely denies God's justice. And it is against such men that God's justice prescribed the final punishment of eternal damnation. But we, recognizing that Christ is "*the faithful witness*", are reconciled with God and His justice, for we decide and act by the same measure that God uses, and thus we attain harmony and peace with God and His justice. However, if, on the contrary, we deny this primary characteristic of Christ or if we fail to act always and everywhere in accordance with his commands, we come into conflict and are at war with God, as a result of which we are finally crushed and destroyed. If we desire to have grace and peace from Him "*who is, and who was, and who is to come*" and from "*Jesus Christ*", we must always and everywhere bear with us the testimony of Jesus Christ as the measure of our faith, our decisions and our actions, and never permit ourselves to replace this lawful measure with the pseudo-Christes and the anti-Christes (that is, those popes, patriarchs, metropolitans, archbishops, and bishops who pose as Christ's representatives but are unwilling to

be measured and judged by the words and testimony of Christ). There is only one "*faithful witness*", the measure and canon of the faith, the judgment, and the action of Christians. Whosoever dares to substitute through himself this lawful, right, and true measure as the popes of Rome are wont to do, or whosoever disregards this measure in practice either through lack of use or through abuse, as do the simoniacal patriarchs and metropolitans of the East - all these and others of their type are guilty of apostasy from God and of subverting divine justice. All such the Christians must shun as henchmen of Satan and instruments of sin. "*The faithful witness*" testifies that many pseudo-Christ and pseudo-prophets have for a long time in the past outraged his flock, and that the day for judgment and damnation of those who have corrupted and forfeited Christ's heritage is at hand. The Apocalypse unfolds the eyes of the Christian so that he may see the wolves in sheep's clothing, as well as the tools and cohorts of Satan posing as ministers and servants of Christ. Those who have accepted Christ's testimony as their standard of faith and judgment are able to discover through it that those who today profess to be custodians of religion and ministers of Christ are in reality subverters of religion and ministers of Satan. In regard to this first characteristic of Christ there is much more to say.; however, to avoid disproportion in our interpretative discussion we must be content with what has so far been presented and proceed to the interpretation of the second characteristic or aspect.

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### **"The first begotten of the dead"**

"*The first begotten of the dead.*" This second characteristic sprang from the first and was, so to speak, its natural consequence. Because of the fact that Christ is "*the faithful witness*" and had proclaimed the truth "*I am Christ the Son of the Living God*", he was condemned to death on the cross by judges who were friends of falsehood and enemies of truth; but having been put to death unjustly, he rose again in justice and became the first begotten of the



dead - a holy preamble to our own resurrection. Birth ushers man into the world, but after death resurrection returns him to life. Hence resurrection may rightly be considered the second birth of man. Christ was called "*the first begotten of the dead*" because he was the first mortal born who after death returned to life to live eternally. Before the resurrection of Christ many other dead had come back to life, as Lazarus, the daughter of Jairus, the widow's son whom Christ raised from the dead before the town of Nain, and many others among the ancients brought back to life by the prophet Elija and by Elisha. However, none of these is called "*the first begotten of the dead*" for after being raised from the dead they again succumbed to death. But Christ is called the first begotten of the dead because he is the first who has risen from the dead to die no more, but to live on eternally. Christ was the first who passed from death to eternal life; hence he is rightly characterized as "*the first begotten of the dead*." Likewise, the Holy Mother of Christ upon dying returned to life, and may be considered "*the first begotten of the dead*" among women. On the other hand, our rebirth through resurrection is to follow at the time appointed by God, our basis of assurance for this and for the eternal life thereafter being that both Jesus Christ and his Holy Mother were the "*first begotten of the dead*." Furthermore, Christ's having been "*the first begotten of the dead*" is the basis for the later "begetting" or birth of many others, for the sons of resurrection will be far more numerous than the sons of death. Thus, having once attained life through the first birth, we must look forward to the second birth of resurrection through which we pass from death to life everlasting. "*The first begotten of the dead*" testifies and instructs us as to the manner of transition through death to life eternal; hence a Christlike death is much desired and sought after as means of gaining a Christlike life over which death is powerless. Let us then die with Christ in order to live with Him. Amen. The bitter cup of death Christ transformed into a sweet potion of eternal life, but only for believers.