

VICTORY !

IS NOT ONLY POSSIBLE BUT CERTAIN

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PREMILLENNIAL "SOON RAPTURISM" IS UNBIBLICAL

Are we now living near the end of history? Will all decent human life on our planet soon end? Shall only the dregs get "left behind" -- after a "soon rapture" of the Church? Or shall the Church continue here -- and after yet many centuries finally finish subduing and christianizing the Earth? Shall the Church's earthly innings end in defeat – or in victory???

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by Rev. Professor-Emeritus Dr. Francis Nigel Lee

Are we now living near the end of history? Will decent humanity on our planet soon end, and only the dregs get "left behind" -- after a "soon rapture" of the Church? Or shall the Church continue here, and finally finish subduing and christianizing the Earth -- **victoriously**?

Victory in the Older Testament

When God made man, He ordered him to "multiply" and to "replenish" or **fill** the Earth. Genesis 1:28. Clearly, this is still very far from having been accomplished!

For Russia, from the Urals to Vladivostok, still has a meagre population. So too, practically all Canada north of Edmonton. And the vast Sahara and Gobi deserts, most of Australia, and the polar regions of Greenland and Antarctica -- are yet almost uninhabited. Indeed, it seems history cannot end -- till at least all those regions too have been filled with living people. If not also the moon, and many of the other extra-terrestrial places (Psalm 8:3-6).

God also said man was to have dominion (Genesis 1:26-28). As Calvin comments: "He appointed man...lord of the World.... Hence we infer what was the end for which all things were created.... He furnished the World with all things needful, and even with an immense profusion of wealth, before He formed man....

"If God had such care for us before we existed, He will by no means leave us...now that we are placed in the World.... Adam with his wife was formed for the production of offspring, in order that men might replenish the Earth.... Man had already been created with this condition, that he should subject the Earth to himself."

Has man yet subdued our planet, under its crust? And its oceans, to their very depths? And all the air, under its skies? Hardly!

Moreover, God then "blessed the seventh day" (Genesis 2:3). Calvin comments: "His blessing...means the favour which He bestows upon His people...by a certain special favour..., so that He might engage us in the consideration of His works.... God claimed for Himself the meditations and employments of men... This is indeed the proper business of the whole life in which men should daily exercise themselves....

"He blessed this rest, so that in all ages it might be held sacred.... This is to be the common employment not of one age or people only, but of the whole human race.... The Sabbath was a figure of this rest.... It was commanded to men from the beginning, so that they might employ themselves in the worship of God.... It should continue to the end of the World."

God said He "planted a garden..., and there He put the man whom He had formed" (Genesis 2:8-24). Calvin comments: "Adam was by Divine appointment an inhabitant of the Earth -- in order that he might, in passing through his earthly life, meditate on heavenly glory.... He was commanded to cultivate the fields....

"Men were created to employ themselves in some work, and not to lie down in inactivity and idleness.... Let him who possesses a field so partake of its yearly fruits, that he may not

permit the ground to be injured by his negligence!... Let him endeavour to hand it down to posterity as he received it, or even better cultivated!...

"Man...was in every respect happy.... His earthly life truly would have been temporal. Yet he would have passed into Heaven, without death.... In the person of the woman, the human race was...like a building -- just begun!"

After man's fall, God told the serpent He would in time cause the woman's Seed to crush the skull of Satan and his seed. True, this work would also bruise the Seed of the woman -- and also His seed too (Genesis 3:15).

But, as Calvin comments: "Victory is promised to the human race, through a continual succession of ages.... The human race...would at length be victorious.... To this, the declaration of Paul refers (Romans 16:20): 'The Lord shall bruise Satan under your feet'.... The power of bruising Satan is imparted to faithful men, and thus the blessing is the common property of the whole Church.... He exhorts them to fight against Satan without fear, and promises them...victory!"

Again, God repeats these promises right after Noah's devastating flood. Genesis 9:1-18. Calvin comments: "God blessed Noah and his sons.... The new restitution of the World was revealed to them.... They shall raise up mankind from death to life.... The Lord prescribes...that a progeny shall spring from them, which shall diffuse itself through all regions of the Earth.... This also chiefly has respect to the restoration of the World....

"The same dominion shall continue!... God promises salvation to a thousand generations" alias **some twenty thousand years!** "Moses enumerates the sons of Noah...for the purpose of more fully illustrating the force of the promise 'Replenish the Earth!' (Genesis 1:28 & 9:1).... Because one family...grew -- into so many and such numerous nations!"

Indeed, God soon promised Abraham: "In you, shall all families of the Earth be blessed.... I will multiply your seed like the stars..., and like the sand on the sea-shore.... Your seed shall take possession of the city-gates of his enemies!" (Genesis 12:3 & 22:17).

Comments Calvin: "God, in my judgment, pronounces that all nations would be blessed in His servant Abraham.... God promises to His servant Abraham that blessing which shall afterwards flow down to all people.... The offspring of Abraham would be victorious over their enemies.... The victory is promised not to the sons of Abraham promiscuously, but to Christ and to His members."

In Psalm 2:2-9, God promises: "I set My King upon My holy hill of Zion!... I shall give You the Heathen for Your inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the Earth for Your possession!"

Calvin comments: "It ought not to be restricted to the Person of Christ.... This applies more appropriately to the Kingdom of Christ.... This prophecy concerning the vast extent of Kingdom..., we must apply...to Christ Who alone has subdued the whole World to Himself -- and embraced all lands and nations under His dominion....

"The Gospel is an iron rod.... The Ministers of Christ are furnished with spiritual weapons to cast down every high thing which exalts itself against Christ (Second Corinthians 10:4).... He

may truly be said to slay the ungodly...with the Breath of His mouth (Second Thessalonians 2:8)... Regard the judgments which Christ daily executes, as **presages** of the terrible ruin which remains for all the ungodly!"

In Psalm 8:3-8, David says: "I consider Your Heavens, the work of Your fingers, the **moon and the stars**.... What is **man**?... You have...crowned him with glory and honour!"

"You made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands. You have put **all things** under his feet -- all sheep and oxen. Yes, and the beasts of the field, the fowl of the air and the fish of the sea."

Calvin comments: "It is by the wonderful providence of God that...oxen yield their service to men; that sheep produce wool to clothe them -- and that all sorts of animals supply them with food for their nourishment..., even from their own flesh.... The more that this dominion is apparent, the more we ought to be affected with a sense of the goodness and grace of our God -- as often as we...eat food!..."

"God, in creating man, gave a demonstration of His infinite grace and more than fatherly love towards him.... The faithful whom God gathers to Himself under Christ their Head, enjoy...the good things which they lost in Adam."

In Psalm 22:27f, God promises: "**All the ends of the World shall...turn to the Lord... All the kindreds of the nations** shall worship before You. For the Kingdom is the Lord's. And He is the Governor among the nations."

Comments Calvin: "David stops not at his own person.... Under himself, as a type, he describes the promised Messiah...."

"David's name, I admit, was great and renowned among the neighbouring nations. But what was the territory which they occupied -- in comparison to the whole World?..."

"The Gentiles...would again come to embrace the true religion from which they had fallen away.... Christ, we know, penetrates...**from the east to the west**..., in order to bring into the Church **the Gentiles from all parts of the World**."

In Psalm 72:7-11, we read of the Messiah that "in His days, the righteous shall flourish...so long as the moon endures. **He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and...to the ends of the Earth**.... All kings shall fall down before Him. **All nations** shall serve Him!"

Calvin comments: "David represents the life of the King as prolonged to the end of the World.... Christ...by rising from the dead obtained for Himself celestial life and glory, so that He might govern His Church for ever.... The Kingdom of Christ...was to be **extended** from the rising of the sun to the going down thereof...."

"The King chosen by God...will obtain so complete a **victory over all His enemies**..., that **they shall come humbly to pay Him homage**.... In the Church and flock of Christ, there is a place for kings.... They will come with all the dignity of their station, to prostrate themselves at the feet of Christ."

In Psalm 110:1*f*, David said: "The Lord (God the Father) said to my Lord (God the Son), 'You sit at My right hand until I make Your enemies Your footstool!'" Commented Calvin: "Christ would subdue all the opposition.... The Kingdom of Christ would never enjoy tranquillity, until He had conquered His numerous and formidable enemies....

"They shall, by the greatness of His power, be laid prostrate at Christ's feet.... Christ's Kingdom shall be vastly extended.... God would cause His power to extend to the remotest regions of the Earth.... An innumerable offspring shall be born to Christ, who shall be spread over the whole Earth."

In Isaiah 2:2*f*, it is predicted of the Lord's house that "all nations shall flow into it.... Out of Zion, the Law shall go forth." Calvin comments: "He is speaking of the Kingdom of Christ.... While the fullness of days began at the coming of Christ, it flows on in uninterrupted progress until He appears the second time for our salvation....

"The most complete of all kinds of instruction, is contained in the Law.... This prediction was fulfilled, when the preaching of the Gospel began.... Christ first taught at Jerusalem, and afterwards His doctrine was spread throughout the whole World.... **The Apostles and other teachers spread the Gospel**....

"The boundaries of His Kingdom will be enlarged, so that He may rule over various nations.... Christ is not sent to the Jews only, so that He may reign over them -- but so that He may **hold His sway over the whole World**."

In Isaiah 65:17-23, God promises: 'I create new Heavens and a new Earth.... There shall be no more...an old man that has not filled his days. For the child shall die a hundred years old.... They shall build houses and...plant vineyards.... My elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands.... For they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them.'

Comments Calvin: "The greatness of such a blessing which was to be manifested at the coming of Christ, could not be described in any other way. Nor does he mean only the first coming, but the whole reign -- which must be extended as far as to the last coming.... Whether they are children or old men, they shall arrive at mature age, so as always to be vigorous.... They shall always be healthful.... Christ comes to repair our strength, and to restore and preserve our original condition.... No one shall be taken out of the World, till he has reached mature age.... Even in old age, they shall be robust....

"You shall not be removed from this life, before receiving the fruit which shall be enjoyed not only by yourselves but by your children.... The people shall peacefully enjoy both their houses and their vineyards, and shall not be molested by enemies.... This peaceful condition shall last as long as the life of a tree.... Parents, together with their offspring, shall be free from dread.... They shall be convinced that they shall always be safe and sound through the favour of God."

In Isaiah 66:18-23, God promises: "**I will gather all nations and tongues**; and they shall come and see My glory.... I will send...to the nations -- to Tarshish, Pul and Lud..., to Tubal and Javan, to the isles afar off that have not heard My fame.... The new Heavens and the new Earth...shall remain before Me.... So shall your seed and your name remain!"

Calvin comments that Isaiah "includes the whole coast of the Mediterranean Sea.... By Lud, some suppose...to be meant...Asia Minor (or Turkey).... By Tubal and Javan, he denotes Italy and Greece; and by the Islands, he denotes unknown countries.... The name 'Islands'...denotes **all that lay beyond the sea**.... He means that **the knowledge of God shall be spread throughout the whole World**....

"When he speaks of 'new Heavens' and a 'new Earth' -- he looks to the reign of Christ.... God will establish the World, so that it may never perish.... The Church shall be perpetual, so that it may be **prolonged through all ages**....

"Do these things relate absolutely to the Last Judgment?.... I do not deny that they extend **as far as to that Judgment**.... But under the reign of Christ, there shall be a constant and uninterrupted solemnity!...

"The opinion...that this passage proves the abrogation of the Law...does not appear to me to rest on sufficient grounds.... There is here only a contrast between the (Israelitic) Sabbath..., and the perpetual Sabbath...we have at the present day (Hebrews 4:9f).

In Daniel 2:33-45, that Prophet sees an image with "legs of iron.... A Stone...smote the image upon its feet..., and broke them into pieces.... **The Stone** that smote the image, became a great mountain -- and **filled the whole Earth**.... The God of Heaven shall set up a Kingdom which shall never be destroyed..... **It shall stand for ever!**"

Calvin comments that Daniel "speaks of the Roman Empire as 'iron'.... Without any external force, it fell into pieces by itself.... It was broken up by Christ....

"Grant, Almighty God..., that we may raise our eyes upwards and consider how much power You have conferred upon Your only-begotten Son!... Compel the whole World to promote our salvation..., until at length we enjoy the fruit of the **victory** which You have promised!...

"The Kingdom of Christ is said 'to break up all the empires of the World'.... 'The Stone...shall become a great Mountain, and shall fill the whole Earth'....

"Christ first appeared cast down.... But the Branch increases wonderfully and beyond all expectation and calculation, unto an immense size -- till it fills the whole Earth. We now perceive how appositely Daniel speaks of Christ's Kingdom....

"The (Islamic Muslims and their) Turks a long time afterwards..., suddenly burst forth like a deluge.... The Turks have spread far and wide, and the World is filled with impious despisers of God.... The Prophet here puts an end to the Roman Empire, when it began to be torn into pieces.... From the time when the Gospel began to be promulgated, we know the Roman monarchy to have been dissipated -- and, at length, to vanish away."

King Jesus cracked those worldly powers, and started either to destroy or to transform them. After cracking them, His Stone Kingdom gradually grows here and now on Earth into a great Mountain which ultimately fills the whole World. Matthew 28:19 and Revelation 11:15 & 15:4 & 21:4f. This disproves the dogma of Chiliasm or Premillennial Dispensationism -- that Christ sets up His Kingdom only at His still-future and second coming!

In Daniel 7:8-14, we read that "the Ancient of days did sit.... One like the Son of man came with the clouds of Heaven, and came to the Ancient of days.... There was given Him dominion and glory and a Kingdom -- so that **all people, nations and languages** should serve Him. His dominion is **an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away.**"

Calvin comments that some apply this prophecy only "to the **second** Advent of Christ -- an interpretation by no means correct!... The subject treated, is the **first** coming of Christ.... It embraces **His Ascension** and that preaching of the Gospel which ushered in His Kingdom.... **He really appeared to Daniel 'in the clouds'...when He ascended to Heaven....**

"Christ left the World and **ascended** to the Father -- first, **to subdue all powers** to Himself.... Next, to restrain the devil, and to protect and preserve the Church.... 'Power was given unto Him'... The events which the Prophet here narrates, are **not yet complete**.... When the Prophet says Christ's dominion is eternal -- he doubtless signifies the constant endurance of His Monarchy **even to the end of the World.**"

It is true that Daniel 7:19-27 then describes the subsequent rise of severe opposition against Christ's True Church. The Prophet says "the fourth beast...was...exceedingly dreadful," and that one of the ten horns on its head "made war with the saints, and prevailed against them."

But for how long? "Until...judgment was given to **the saints**..., and the time came that the saints possessed the Kingdom..... They **shall take away his dominion**, to consume and to destroy it.... **The kingdom and dominion...under the whole Heaven shall be given to the peoples of the saints of the Most High**..., and all dominions shall serve and obey Him."

Here Calvin remarks in his *Institutes* IV:7:25: "We call the Roman Pontiff Antichrist.... Paul says that Antichrist would sit in the temple of God (Second Thessalonians 2:4).... The Spirit...says that his reign would be with great swelling words of vanity (Daniel 7:25)...."

"Paul foretells...that that seat of abomination will be erected when a kind of universal defection comes upon the Church.... This calamity was neither to be introduced by one man, nor to terminate in one man.... Second Thessalonians 2:3.... The Roman Pontiff has impudently transferred to himself the most peculiar properties of God and Christ. There cannot be a doubt that he is the leader and standard-bearer of an impious and abominable kingdom!"

Calvin then comments on Daniel 7:25-27: "These calamities would come to an end, whenever God in mercy to His Church would restrain those tyrants.... He says also, 'Judgment shall then sit.' That is, God shall again restore to order all this confusion, and the World shall feel **His providence ruling over the Earth**.... The restoration is here called a sitting in judgment -- when the Roman empire is blotted out...."

"When the preaching of the Gospel commenced, no one would have thought its success could have been **so great and so prosperous**.... God's royal sceptre went forth from Jerusalem, and shone far and wide -- while the Lord was extending His Hand and His Authority **over all the regions of the World**.... 'All powers,' says he, 'shall serve and obey Him' (Daniel 7:27)!"

The Antichrist is checked and consumed and destroyed **not** by the second coming of Christ, but instead by the increasing earthly testimony **here and now** of Christ's Spirit-filled **Church**. Daniel 7:19-26 & 12:7-11 and Revelation 11:10-16 & 12:11-17 & 14:6,12 & 17:14 & 19:15-21.

In Daniel 12:1-13, we are told that after the expansion of the Roman Empire through Egypt and into Palestine (11:26-45) -- "Michael shall stand up" in "a time of trouble such as there never was" (cf. Matthew 24:5-21). That is the 'great tribulation' -- terminating in the 70 A.D. fall of Jerusalem (Matthew 24:1-3,15,21,28 and Luke 21:20-24). From then on till the time of the end, many shall run -- and knowledge shall be increased.

"How long shall it be to the end?... It shall be for a time, times, and a half.... From the time the daily sacrifice shall be taken away and the abomination that makes desolate set up -- there shall be 1290 days.... But go your way till the end be! For you shall rest, and stand up in your lot at the end of the days!" Daniel 12:6-13.

Calvin comments: "By Michael, many agree in understanding Christ as the Head of the Church.... This epithet of Christ...(is) Michael the Guardian of the Church.... I embrace the opinion of those who refer this to the Person of Christ.... The angel...calls 'Michael the mighty Prince'.... Michael would be the Guardian and Protector of the elect.... Michael would be superior to every enemy.... We are in truth obliged to fight; but Christ has **conquered** for us." *Mi-cha-'El* means 'Who is like God?' Who, except Christ Who always has been God!

However, Calvin then adds: "At the present time (1561 A.D.), in the Papacy and throughout the whole world, impiety prevails.... I do not hesitate to suppose the angel to promise the **arrival of a period when God would collect many Disciples to Himself**.... God would gather to Himself **a great multitude**.... The sons of God would soon become **increased**.... The Lord will at length cause **many** to embrace (this prophecy) to their own salvation....

"Men must wait for 'the time, times, and half a time'.... The passage ought to be understood of that pollution of the temple.... 'Time' means a long period; 'times,' a longer period.... Many years must elapse before God fulfils what His Prophet had declared.... How sad is the dispersion of the Church in these days!... But yet, **the end would be prosperous!**....

"In this passage..., he treats of the period after the destruction of the temple (in 70 A.D.).... I have no hesitation in referring this...to that profanation of the temple which happened after the manifestation of Christ.... 'From that period, there shall be 1290 days'.... The angel...puts days for years.... That time may seem immeasurably prolonged.... Yet it must be endured....

"The days should be understood as years.... The faithful ought constantly to persist in the hope of deliverance.... 'You (Daniel), shall rest'; meaning, you shall die. But then you shall stand (up again)...after God has sufficiently proved the patience of His people and...has humbled His Church and purged it -- until the end shall arrive!"

In the above way, Christians progressively overcome the Antichrist. For the 70 A.D. fall of Jerusalem is followed by the much later rise of a 1290-year-long antichristian abomination in the Church; and then by the latter's Reformation from the 1360f A.D. Wycliffe onward. This Reformation removes that abomination -- by the resultant and subsequent arrival of a "blessed" state of the Church of Michael-Christ (Luke 21:24b and Romans 11:12-15,25-32), culminating in Daniel's own resurrection at the very "end of the days." Daniel12:7-12 and Revelation 12:11 & 18:4f & 20:12 to 22:5.

However, first Christ's Kingdom must spread throughout the Earth. As Zechariah 9:9-10 predicted: "O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you!.... He shall speak

peace to the Heathen. And His dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the Earth!"

Calvin comments that God "will speak peace to the nations'.... To speak...to the nations, means that they will calmly hear.... **The Gentiles would become obedient**, and quietly submit to His authority.... Christ would so rule far and wide, that the farthest would live contentedly under His protection.... His dominion would be 'from sea to sea'.... From the Red Sea to the Syrian Sea toward Cilicia; 'and from the river'...Euphrates 'to the **extreme borders of the Earth!**'"

In Zechariah 12:10, God says "the house of David...shall look upon Me Whom they have pierced -- and they shall mourn." Calvin comments: "The Jews, through the dictation and the suggestions of the Holy Spirit, would find God merciful to them.... The Jews, previously so hardened in their evils as not to flee to God for help, would **at length** become suppliants. Because the Spirit would inwardly so touch their hearts as to lead them to deplore their state before God, and thus to express their complaints to Him.

"Zechariah declares that the Jews would **at length** look to God. It follows that the spirit of repentance and the light of faith are promised to them, so that they may know God as the Author of their salvation and feel so assured that they are already saved -- as **in future** to devote themselves entirely to Him. 'They shall' **then** 'look to Me Whom they have pierced'....

"The Jews...had crucified their God.... Zechariah...promises...the spirit of repentance to the Jews.... The Jews, after having despised Christ, would **at length** acknowledge Him to be a precious and invaluable treasure!"

In Zechariah 13:1, God promises: 'In that day, there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David...for sin and for uncleanness.' Calvin comments: "From this verse we again learn that Zechariah promised the spirit of repentance to the Jews.... They would find God still propitious to them.... After having...declared that there would be felt by the Jews the bitterest sorrow because they had as it were pierced God, he now mentions the fruit of this repentance."

Then, Zechariah 14:8-21 declares that "in that day..., living waters shall go out.... **The Lord shall be King over all the Earth** in that day!"

Calvin comments: "This prophecy no doubt refers to the Kingdom of Christ.... Whence they were to look for...the full restitution of the Church, and as it were **the renovation of the World**.... The fountain...shall **water the farthest regions of the Earth**.... The copiousness of the waters would be so large and abundant, that though they would pass through the whole Earth -- yet **their flow would never cease!**....

"All nations would acknowledge...God.... He governs the whole World.... The Kingdom of Christ...is here described from its commencement to its end.... The Lord will go on, until that shall be completed which now makes **continual progress!**"

In Malachi 1:11-14 & 3:12 & 4:2-4f, God promises: "From sunrise till sunset, **My name shall be great among the Gentiles**.... My name is terrible among the nations.... **All nations shall call You blessed**.... The Sun of righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings..., and **you shall tread down the wicked**.... You must **remember the Law!**"

Calvin comments: "**God...would...be worshipped purely, by all nations**.... The doctrine of salvation would be propagated to the utmost extremities of the Earth....

"The Gentiles would become holy to God, because He would adopt them.... The **Law...would be proclaimed among all nations**, so that true religion might spread everywhere.... So that His will might be known everywhere....

"**'The name of God,' he says, 'shall be great in every place'.... The whole World would come to the faith and true religion**.... God will be worshipped and adored **everywhere**.... The time would come, when the pure and spiritual **worship of God would prevail in all places**....

"My name shall be great; it shall reverently be **worshipped by all nations**.... God's worship would not be confined to Judea or to any other particular part of the World.... By the Gospel, the Lord would receive to Himself all nations!...

"When the Prophet then says that the 'day would come' -- he refers I think to the **first** coming of Christ.... Malachi calls Christ 'the Sun of righteousness'....

"God has always given light to His Church; but Christ brought the full light.... When therefore the Heavens became at length opened and clear by means of the Gospel -- it was through the rising of the Sun (at His resurrection and especially at His ascension)....

"This is **not to be confined to the Person of Christ**, but extended to the **Gospel**. Hence Paul says" 'Awake, you who sleep, and rise from darkness -- and Christ shall illuminate you!' (Ephesians 5:14). **Christ then daily illuminates us**, by His doctrine and His Spirit....

"Christ performs towards us the office of a Sun -- not to guide our feet and hands as to what is earthly. But He brings light to us, to show the way to Heaven.... By its means, we may come to the enjoyment of a blessed and eternal life....

"Malachi now says that there would be 'healing in the wings' of Christ.... If we consider the history of those times, it will appear that the condition of that people was most grievous. He now promises a **change** to them. For the restoration of the Church, would bring them joy....

"Malachi says that **'the ungodly would be trodden under foot by the faithful'**.... They...were also to be **superior** to their **enemies**.... They were to be raised above all the height of the **World!**....

"We shall **triumph** over the ungodly!... The Law is sufficient to guide us.... Prophetic teaching would again be **renewed**.... If we wish to derive benefit from what the Prophet teaches us, we ought especially to welcome Christ....

"Grant, Almighty God, that...we may strive to **profit!**... So that the Law, the Prophets, the voice of John the Baptizer, and especially the doctrine of Your Only-begotten Son may more fully awaken us; **so that we may...hasten** to Him and also proceed constantly on our course and **persevere** in it, until we shall **at length** obtain the **victory** and the crown of our calling as You have promised...to all who do not faint!.... Amen!

Victory in the Newer Testament

Coming now to the Newer Testament, the Lord Jesus Christ commanded His Ministers to "go into all the World, and preach the Gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). "**Keep on** going and discipling all nations! **Keep on** baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit! **Keep on** teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded!... Even to the end of the World!" (Matthew 28:19-20).

Calvin commented that "when Christ appeared to the Disciples, He...commissioned them to be Apostles -- to convey **into every part of the World** the message of eternal life.... He expressly called Himself the Lord and King of 'Heaven and Earth.' Because, by constraining men to obey Him in the preaching of the Gospel, He established His throne 'on the Earth'....

"By proclaiming the Gospel everywhere, they should bring '**all nations**' to the obedience of the faith.... The Lord commands the Ministers of the Gospel to go to a distance, in order to spread the doctrine of salvation **in every part of the World**....

"Thus is fulfilled that prediction of Isaiah (49:6).... That Christ was 'given for a Light of the Gentiles, so that He might be the salvation of God **to the end of the Earth**.'"

Matthew 28:19's command to disciple all nations is still far from exhausted! For even today, only a third of the World is yet even nominally Catholic or Protestant! Many years are still needed to complete this gigantic task -- right down to the very end of the World.

Meanwhile, believers live and die -- and then go to Heaven. As Jesus promised: "In My Father's house are many mansions (or apartments).... I am going (there), to prepare a place for you.... So that where I am, there you too may be!" John 14:2-3.

Christ, Calvin comments, "declares that He is not going away in such a manner as to remain separate from them -- since there is a place for them too in the Heavenly Kingdom.... He says that the mansions are 'many'.... They are sufficient -- for a great number.... There is room there not only for Himself, but also for all His Disciples....

"Christ signifies that the purpose of His departure, was to prepare a place for His Own.... Christ did not ascend to Heaven privately for Himself, to dwell there alone -- but rather so that it might be the common inheritance of all the godly....

"This place is said to be prepared for the day of resurrection.... In His Person, we already possess Heaven -- by hope.... The state of the fathers after death, therefore, is not distinguished from ours here. Christ has prepared a place both for them and us, into which He will receive all at the last day.... Now they enjoy a blessed rest, until the redemption is completed.... The proper day for our entrance into Heaven, has not yet come."

In Romans 8:19-22, God says that "creation waits for the manifestation of the sons of God.... Because creation itself too shall be delivered.... For we know that the whole creation groans...until now."

Calvin comments: "There is no element and no part of the World which....is not intent on the hope of the resurrection.... All creatures...are sustained by hope.... From hope comes the

swiftness of the sun, the moon, and all the stars.... God has given to each its proper task..., but has at the same time inwardly implanted the hope of renewal....

"He has given them a hope of a better condition. They sustain themselves with this.... It is neither expedient nor right for us to inquire with...curiosity into the perfection which will be evidenced by beasts, plants, and metals.... They have a hope of being freed..., until they have been delivered.... It will not be in vain.... It will finally bring forth a joyful and happy fruit."

In Romans 11:11-32, Paul explains that by the stumbling of the Israelites -- salvation comes to all the World of the Gentiles. Yet finally, the Israelites too shall be saved.

"Have they stumbled, so that they should fall? God forbid! But rather, so that through their fall, salvation comes to the Gentiles -- to provoke them (the Israelites) to jealousy..... If the fall of them (the Israelites) be the enrichment of the World..., how much more their fullness?!... If the casting away of them be the reconciling of the World -- what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?... Blindness in part has happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in -- and so, **all Israel shall be saved!**... For God has concluded them all in unbelief -- **so that He might have mercy upon all!**"

Comments Calvin: "The fall of the Jews has resulted in the salvation of the Gentiles. It had, however, this purpose -- that the Jews should be stirred up..., and thus turn their minds to repentance.... If the fall of the Jews could raise up the Gentiles, and their diminution enrich them -- how much more would their fullness?... The latter would come to pass naturally....

"If the rejection of the Jews has been able to occasion the reconciliation of the Gentiles -- will not their reception be much more powerful? And should it not raise them even from the dead?... Since therefore God has marvellously brought life out of death, and light out of darkness -- how much more...ought we to hope that the resurrection of a people virtually dead, will bring the Gentiles to life!...

"The 'fullness of the Gentiles' means a great number!... When the Gentiles have come in, the Jews will at the same time return from their defection to the obedience of faith.... Paul wanted here to point to the consummation of the Kingdom of Christ, which is by no means confined to the Jews but **includes the whole World.**" For after the Heathen and the Muslims, also the Jews shall come to Christ and be saved!

Thus "the God of peace shall bruise Satan" or crush the devil, under the feet of Christians! Romans 16:20. Comments Calvin: "The expression...'the God of peace shall bruise Satan' is a promise to strengthen them.... Fight against Satan without fear! Paul promises them...**victory.**... He not only speaks of the last day when Satan will be openly trodden under foot.... He promises that the Lord will subdue him" -- **now!**

In First Corinthians 2:9, God says: "It is written (Isaiah 64:4), 'Eye has not seen nor ear heard, neither have the things which God has prepared for them that love Him -- entered into the heart of man.'" On Isaiah 64:4, Calvin comments: "Believers...here ask...that He may continue to exercise His kindness, and that...He may not cease in future to cause His strength and power **to shine forth more and more brightly.**... In that way, might this single but remarkable instance of the divine goodness raises the mind...to so high a pitch -- as to meditate on that infinite abundance of blessings which is laid up for believers in Heaven!"

On First Corinthians 2:9 itself, Calvin comments "that the Prophet...was led on...to glory in the spiritual blessedness which is laid up in Heaven for believers.... The favours of God...are daily bestowed on believers.... They will be led from temporal gifts, to eternal life."

In First Corinthians 15:22-28, Paul insists: "As in Adam all die, even so **in Christ shall all be made alive**.... Christ, the firstfruits. Afterward, they that are Christ's, at His coming. Then comes the end, when He delivers up the Kingdom to God...; when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign, till He has **put all enemies under His feet**.... And when all things shall be subdued to Him..., then God shall be all in all!"

Calvin comments: "Just as Adam did not die for Himself alone but for us all, so it follows that Christ Who is the Antitype did not rise again merely for Himself. For He came to restore everything which had been brought to ruin in Adam.... We now have the first-fruits in Christ. But the time for our resurrection, will be when He comes...."

"When He shall have abolished all rule'... Christ will not deliver up the Kingdom before the end.... It will not...be brought to absolute completeness, until the last day.... The World will come to an end.... Paul shows that it is not yet the time for Christ to deliver up the Kingdom to the Father.... The end has not yet come, when everything will be restored to its true condition and to a peaceful state.... Christ has not yet subdued all His enemies.

"But that must take place -- because the Father has placed Him at His right hand...until they have **all been brought under His sway**. This has also been said for the comfort of believers, so that they may not grow impatient because the coming of the resurrection is so long delayed.... The day for delivering up the Kingdom has not yet arrived, because Christ has still to deal with His enemies.... Believers should therefore take heart and not lose hope, until all the things which ought to come before the resurrection are actually fulfilled...."

"**For He put all things in subjection under His feet**'.... This piece of evidence is taken from Psalm 8:7.... I am quite in agreement with that.... This is a conclusion that Paul has reached, by considering the nature of the rule of Christ...."

"Paul shows from the Psalm, that God **the Father has handed over to Christ power over everything**. Because it is said, 'You have put **all** things under His feet'.... **All** things must be brought into subjection to Christ, before He hands back His sovereignty over the World to the Father.... Let us calmly wait, until Christ is **victorious** over **all** His enemies!"

In his *Institutes* III chapters 6 to 10, Calvin argues we must "daily **advance**.... Today is **better** than yesterday.... If during...our life we seek and follow, **we shall at length attain it**...."

"We are God's!... All **prosperous** and desirable success, depends entirely on the blessing of God. Then, **victory** is followed by hope.... Our mind...will...be **expanded** with spiritual joy.... We may be trained...**to aspire** to the future life.... This life...is justly classed among divine **blessings** which are not to be despised.... The Lord has ordained that those who are ultimately to be crowned in Heaven, must maintain a previous warfare on the Earth.... Our desire of a **better** life, should **increase**...."

"In the school of Christ -- who does not look forward with joy to the day of death and final resurrection (Second Timothy 4:18 and Titus 2:3)?... They will turn their eye to that day (Isaiah

25:8 and Revelation 7:17) on which the Lord will receive His faithful servants, wipe away all tears from their eyes, (and) clothe them in a robe of glory and joy....

"The present life is a kind of pilgrimage by which they hasten to the Heavenly Kingdom.... Paul, not without cause, admonishes us to use this World without abusing it, and to buy possessions.... First Corinthians 7:30-31.... Let this be our principle, that we err not in the use of the gifts of Providence when we refer them to the end for which their Author made and destined them!...

"He created food...not only for our necessity, but also for our enjoyment and delight.... Has the Lord adorned flowers with all the beauty which spontaneously presents itself to the eye, and the sweet odour which delights the sense of smell -- and shall it be unlawful for us to enjoy that beauty and this odour?... Has He not given qualities to gold and silver, ivory and marble -- thereby rendering them precious above other metals or stones?...

"He who makes it his rule to use this world as if he did not use it..., removes every care and affection which might withdraw or hinder him from aspiring to the heavenly life.... The Lord enjoins every one of us in all the actions of life, to have respect to our own calling!"

In First Thessalonians 4:15-17, Paul says the live believers shall not be raptured long before but be "caught up **together**" with dead believers "to meet the Lord in the air." Calvin comments this would not be soon, but at a "**later**" date.... These words...disprove the aberrations...of the Chiliasts.... When believers have once been gathered together..., their life will have no end.... To allot Christ a thousand years so that afterwards He would cease to reign, is too **horrible** to speak of. Those...who limit the life of believers to a thousand years, commit this **absurdity!**"

In Second Thessalonians, Paul denies Christ shall return -- until Antichrist has arisen. Even **after** Antichrist been destroyed by **the Church's** proclamation of the Word of God.

Comments Calvin: "In chapter one, he exhorts them to patience. In chapter two, he disproves a profitless and fanciful belief about the imminent return of Christ.... He does so, by arguing that first there must come apostasy in the Church, and a great part of the World turn from God.... Antichrist must reign in the temple of God!"

In Second Thessalonians 2:1-8, Paul insists: "Regarding the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ..., be not soon shaken in mind...as if the day of Christ is at hand! Let no man deceive you by any means! For that day shall not come, except there comes a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed...who opposes and exalts himself...so that he as a god sits in the temple of God, himself claiming to be a god....

"You knows what holds back, so that he might be manifested in his time!... He who now holds back, will keep on holding back -- until he is removed. And then shall that wicked one be manifested, whom the Lord shall consume with the Spirit of His Mouth and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming."

Comments Calvin: "When Paul's epistle which contains a vivid description of the resurrection had been read (1:7-10) -- some over-curious individuals seized this inappropriate moment to begin a discussion concerning the **time** of this (final) day.... This then was Satan's cunning.... He promised that the day was close, and would soon be at hand....

"The ravings of (the 320 A.D.) Lactantius and the (premillennial) Chiliasts...destroyed the hope of the resurrection.... Satan in his artfulness misdirected the curiosity of this man and those like him.... Even at the present day, he (Satan) makes use of the same means of attack....

"The false-prophets...who are refuted by Paul, were bidding men feel assured of His (Christ's) speedy (and final) advent.... The Day of Christ., he (Paul) says, will not come -- until the World has fallen into apostasy, and the rule of Antichrist has held sway in the Church....

"The word 'apostates' can be understood only of those who have previously enlisted in the service of Christ and His Gospel. Paul, then, is predicting a general defection on the part of the Visible Church. As if he were saying, 'The Church must be reduced to a ghastly and horrifying state of ruin -- before its full restoration is achieved'....

"The minds of the ancients were so bewitched, that they believed that Nero would be Antichrist! Paul, however, is not speaking of one individual -- but of a kingdom that was to be seized by Satan for the purpose of setting up a seat of abomination in the midst of God's temple. This we see accomplished in Popery.

"The defect has indeed spread more widely. For since Mohammed was an apostate, he turned his followers...from Christ.... The (A.D. 610f) sect of Mohammed was like a raging overflow, which in its violence tore away about half of the Church. It remained for Antichrist (by A.D. 666f) to infect the part which was left, with his poison....

"Anyone who has learned from Scripture...and who...considers well what the Pope usurps for himself, will not have much difficulty in recognizing Antichrist.... Paul sets Antichrist in the very sanctuary of God. He is not an enemy from the outside, but from the household of faith -- and opposes Christ under the very name of Christ.... It is the temple of God in which the Pope holds sway....

"(Back then,) the State of the Roman Empire delayed the revelation of Antichrist.... Antichrist was about to seize for himself the vacant rule of the Roman Empire.... The power of the Roman Empire prevented the rise of Antichrist.... The name 'Antichrist' does not designate a single individual, but a single kingdom which extends throughout many generations....

"The reign of Antichrist would be temporary!... 'The Lord Jesus shall slay him.' Paul had predicted the destruction of the reign of Antichrist, and now describes the manner of his destruction. He will be annihilated by the Word of the Lord.... Paul does not think that Christ will accomplish this in a single moment....

"Paul indicates...Christ will scatter the darkness in which Antichrist would reign, by the rays which He will emit **before His coming**. Just as the sun, before becoming visible to us, chases away the darkness of the night with its bright light....

"This victory of the Word will therefore be seen in the World. For '(the Spirit or) the Breath of His Mouth' simply means His Word. As in Isaiah 11:4, the passage to which Paul appears to be alluding.... It is a notable commendation of true and sound doctrine, that it is represented as being sufficient to put an end to all ungodliness and as destined at all times to be victorious over all the devices of Satan.... The preaching of this doctrine is referred to as Christ's 'coming' to us." Let us then preach with fire; for everything depends on that!

In First John 2:18-23, that Apostle declared: "You have heard that Antichrist shall come. Even now, there are many antichrists.... Whosoever denies the Son, the same does not have the Father."

Calvin comments on the statement that "we today must...apprehend by faith the near advent of Christ.... But the many ages which have passed away since John's death, seem to prove this prophecy false....

"Under the Papacy, there is nothing more well-known and common, than the 'future' coming of Antichrist.... The Papists have imagined an Antichrist who is to harass the Church for three and a half years. (However,) all the marks by which the Spirit of God has pointed out Antichrist, appear clearly in the Pope!...

"Those who think that he (Antichrist) would be just one man, are dreaming.... For Paul, referring to a future 'falling away' -- plainly shows that it would be a body or a kingdom (Second Thessalonians 2:3). He first foretells a falling away that would spread throughout the whole Church.... Then he makes the head of this apostasy the adversary of Christ who would sit in God's temple.... Let us learn to know Antichrist, from Paul's description!...

"But how does that passage agree with John's words, when he says that there were already many antichrists?... John only meant that certain sects had already arisen.... For Cerinthus, Basilides, Marcion, Valentinus, Ebion, Arius and the rest -- were members of that kingdom which the devil afterwards raised up against Christ. Properly speaking, Antichrist was not yet in existence....

"Turks, Jews and suchlike -- have a mere idol in place of God. For whatever titles they may give the god they worship, yet because they reject Him without Whom they cannot come to God and in Whom God has concretely manifested Himself to us -- what have they, but some creature or invention of their own?"

In First John 4:4-6, God declared of Christians: "You are of God..., and have overcome them.... Greater is He Who is in you, than he who is in the world!... We are of God.... He who is not of God, does not hear us. By this we know the Spirit of truth, and the spirit of error."

Calvin comments of those Christians: "Although they have to fight..., they have **conquered** -- because they would be successful! It is as if he said that in the midst of the battle, they were already out of danger. For they would be **victorious!**... Whatever contests we may have against the world and the flesh, **certain victory** accompanies them!... As we fight by Christ's power and are armed with God's weapons in fighting and striving, **we are victorious!**... We can no more be **conquered**, than can God Himself.... **Victory** is certain!...

"Today, the Papists proudly vaunt that they are worshippers of God -- and yet, no less proudly reject God's Word.... Today the Papists boast with professorial superciliousness that all their inventions are the oracles of the Spirit.

"Mohammed too asserts that he has drawn his dreams only from Heaven.... But I reply that **we** have the Word of the Lord.... When false spirits claim the name of God -- we must enquire from the Scriptures whether it is as they say!" Now we turn to the Book of Revelation.

Victory in Revelation one to nineteen

Coming now to Revelation, it is true Calvin did not live long enough to write a Commentary on that book. Yet his incidental remarks elsewhere, clearly enable us to understand how he and his followers interpreted that last volume of the Holy Bible.

In Revelation 1:6, God says Christ "has made us kings and priests unto God and His Father -- to Whom be glory and dominion for ever and ever." Calvin remarks (*Institutes* II:15:6 & IV:18:17) that "we ourselves...in Him being priests..., offer ourselves and our all to God and freely enter the heavenly sanctuary.... Christ is our Mediator, by Whose intervention we offer ourselves and our all to the Father. He is our High Priest Who, having entered into the upper sanctuary, opens up an access for us.... He it is, I say, Who 'has made us kings and priests unto God and His Father' (Revelation 1:6)."

In Revelation 2:7,10,17,27 -- God says: "To him who overcomes, I will give to eat of the tree of life which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.... Be faithful unto death, and I will give you a crown of life!... To him who overcomes, I will give to eat of the hidden manna.... He shall rule them with a rod of iron. Like the vessels of a potter, they shall be broken to shivers." As the Calvinistic *Geneva Bible* of Mrs. Calvin's brother-in-law Rev. Dr. William Whittingham and Calvin's student John Knox remarks: "There shall be comfort and release!"

In Revelation 3:5,10,12,21 -- God says: "He that overcomes, the same shall be clothed in white raiment.... I will also keep you from the hour of testing which shall come on all the World.... Him that overcomes, I will make a pillar in the temple of my God...which comes down from Heaven.... To him that overcomes, I will grant to sit with Me on My throne." As the *Geneva Bible* here comments, it is as if God the Spirit says as regards the Father: "Let no man pluck them away, whom You have won!... For they are Your crown!"

In Revelation 5:10-13, some of the saints in glory sing to Christ: "You have made us kings and priests to our God, and we shall reign on the Earth.... And every creature in Heaven and on the Earth...say: 'Blessing and honour and glory and power be to Him Who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever!'"

The *Geneva Bible* here comments: "Our Saviour Jesus has redeemed His Church..., and gathered it from all nations!" As Calvin remarks in his *Institutes* III:5:8: "It is absolutely certain that both irrational and inanimate objects are comprehended.... Every part of the Universe, from the highest pinnacle of Heaven to the very centre of the Earth..., proclaims the glory of the Creator!"

In Revelation 6:2, one reads about "a white horse, and He Who sat upon him.... A crown was given to Him. And He went forth **conquering**, and in order to **conquer!**" The *Geneva Bible* comments: "The white horse signifies innocence, **victory**, and felicity -- which should come by the preaching of the Gospel!" And the Rider of the horse, of course, is Jesus Christ.

In Revelation 6:9-11, John tells us he "saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the Word of God.... And white robes were given unto every one of them. And it was said to them that they should rest yet for a little while, until their fellow-servants too that would be killed as they were, would be fulfilled.."

Calvin says in *Psychopannychia*: "The souls of the martyrs under the altar" are "the souls of the dead.... White robes are given to them.... White robes are not at all adapted for sleep -- and therefore, when thus clothed, they must be awake.... White robes undoubtedly designate the commencement of glory, which the divine liberality bestows on martyrs while waiting for the day of judgment." So then, no soul-sleep! For these souls in Heaven are wide awake!

Also the *Geneva Bible* notes: "They are in His safe custody, in Heaven." Yet the text adds that "their fellow-servants too...would be killed, as they were."

The Calvinistic *Dordt Dutch Bible* comments: "The Church of Christ would be oppressed by the Antichrist...who would shortly after that arise in the Church.... What succeeds that, is the rise in the East...of the Mohammadans" -- and "especially...the Romish Antichrist in the West."

In Revelation 7:4-16, one reads that some "144000 were sealed of all the tribes of Israel.... I beheld a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations...standing before...the Lamb clothed with white robes.... They serve Him day and night.... They shall hunger...and thirst no more."

Calvin in his *Institutes* III:5:2 & 9:5 remarks "that all the saints 'have washed their robes,'" and that "they will turn their eye to that day...on which the Lord will...clothe them in a robe of glory and...exalt them to share with Him in His greatness." While the *Geneva Bible* comments: "An infinite number of both Jews and Gentiles shall be saved through Christ."

In Revelation 9:1-17, the Apostle John says: "I saw a star fall.... To him was given the key of the bottomless pit.... There came out of the smoke, locusts.... To them was power given.... The shapes of the locusts were like horses prepared for battle.... They had tails like scorpions.... They were loosened from the great river Euphrates.... The number of the army of the horsemen was 200,000,000!"

Stated Calvin in his *Institutes* II:6:4: "The Turks in the present day...proclaim...with full throat that the Creator of Heaven and Earth is their God. Yet by their rejection (of the Deity) of Christ" -- they "substituted an idol in His place." The *Geneva Bible* comments: "In 'the great river Euphrates'" -- means "the enemies of the East Country who would afflict the Church of God. As did the Arabians, Saracens, Turks, and Tartars."

The *Dordt Dutch Bible* remarks: "Some understand this star, of Mohammad and his followers. They around 620 scraped together his ungodly doctrine which was brought forth from the bottomless pit -- from Judaism, Paganism and Christianity." Indeed, Mohammad's "ungodly doctrine...was propagated throughout a large part of the World -- by his Arabs and Saracens who looked like armed locusts."

This is why the Calvinistic Westminster Assembly's *Directory for the Publick Worship of God* urges congregations to "pray for the propagation of the Gospel and Kingdom of Christ to all nations." They are to pray "for the conversion of the Jews, the fullness of the Gentiles, the fall of antichrist...(and) for the deliverance of the distressed churches abroad from the tyranny of the antichristian faction -- and from the cruel oppressions and blasphemies of the Turk."

Indeed, that is also why the *Westminster Larger Catechism* (191 & 195) explains that "Thy Kingdom come!" means we are to "pray that the kingdom of sin and Satan may be destroyed, the

Gospel propagated throughout the World, the Jews called, **the fulness of the Gentiles brought in**, (and) the Church furnished with all Gospel Officers and ordinances, purged from corruption, (and) countenanced and maintained by the civil magistrate" -- while "**Satan**" is "**trodden under our feet!**"

As Princeton's Calvinistic President Dr. Jonathan Edwards explained in his *History of the Work of Redemption*: "The two great works of the devil...are...his Antichristian (Papal) and Mahometan (Islamic) kingdoms.... It is in the destruction of these that the glorious **victory** of Christ at the introduction of 'the glorious times of the Church' -- will mainly consist....

"The Saracens...where Mahomet lived..., began dreadfully to waste the Roman Empire.... These are supposed to be meant by the 'locusts' that we read of (Revelation 9:3)....

"After this, the Turks who were followers of Mahomet conquered all the Eastern Empire. They began...to invade Europe 1300, and took Constantinople and so became masters of all of Eastern Europe in the year 1453.... These are...the 'horsemen' in...Revelation (9:7-19)."

In Revelation 11:15, it says "there were great voices in Heaven, saying: 'The kingdoms of this World have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign for ever and ever!'" First, however, the Papacy and Islam must be converted. As the *Geneva Bible* comments: "Albeit Satan by the Pope, Turk and other instruments trouble the World never so much -- yet Christ shall reign!"

In Revelation 12:7-11, one reads: "There was war.... Michael and His angels fought against the dragon.... (He) was cast out.... They **overcame** him!"

The *Geneva Bible* comments: "The dragon was deprived of all his dignity.... Cast onto the Earth" and "overcome by Christ," he "had no more place.... The **victory** is gotten, to the comfort of the faithful.... Satan was not able to destroy the Head -- or the body!"

Indeed, the *Dordt Dutch Bible* here comments that by "this 'Michael' -- that is, 'Who is like God?' -- most expositors understand Christ Himself. So too, by 'His angels' -- many understand the believers who have overcome the dragon..., as is hereinafter asserted (verse 11)."

Meanwhile the dragon -- unable to reach the remnant of the Church -- frustratedly went and "stood upon the sand of the sea.... I saw a beast rise up.... All the world wondered after the beast.... His number is six hundred and sixty-six!" Revelation 13:1-18.

As the *Geneva Bible* rightly comments: "About 666 years after this revelation, the Pope or the Antichrist began to be manifest in the World.... Antichrist's time and power, is limited." And the *Westminster Confession* 25:6 adds: "There is no other Head of the Church but the Lord Jesus.... Nor can the Pope of Rome in any sense be Head thereof, but is that Antichrist -- that man of sin...that exalts himself in the Church against Christ.... Revelation 13:6."

Indeed, the Calvinistic *Savoy Declaration* declares: "The Pope of Rome...is that Antichrist.... In the latter days -- Antichrist being destroyed, the Jews called, and the adversaries of the Kingdom of His dear Son broken -- the churches of Christ being enlarged and edified through a free and plentiful communication of light and grace, shall enjoy in this World a more quiet...and glorious condition."

In Revelation 14:6, the Apostle John says he saw an "angel fly in the midst of the sky, having the everlasting Gospel to preach to them that dwell on the Earth -- and to every nation and kindred and tongue and people.... And I heard a voice from Heaven saying to me: 'Write, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord!".... 'Yes,' says the Spirit, 'so that they may rest from their labours. And their works follow them!'"

Maintains Calvin in his *Institutes* III:5:10: "Far better and more solid comfort is furnish by Scripture, when it declares: 'Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord.' And adds the reason, 'for they rest from their labours.'"

In his *Psychopannychia*, Calvin adds: "John has taught more clearly.... 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.' 'Yes,' says the Scripture, 'so that they may rest from their labours'.... This then is the bosom of Abraham." For there, "they are admitted with Abraham the father of the faithful -- where they enjoy God fully, without weariness."

The *Geneva Bible* comments: "The faithful are exhorted to patience." For those "are ingrafted in Christ, by faith." They "rest and stay only on Him, and rejoice to be with Him.... Immediately after their death, they are received into joy!"

Comments the Calvinist Dr. Albert Barnes: "The design of this vision is...to sustain the courage and the faith of the Church...by the assurance that the Gospel would ultimately be triumphant.... At the time referred, this will be done.... For the fulfilment of this therefore we are to look to a period subsequent to the rise and fall of that great Antichristian power.... When that falls -- the last enemy of the Church will be destroyed, and the final triumph of the True Religion will be speedy and complete....

"The works of mercy which they had done on the Earth, would follow them to the Future World -- securing rich and eternal blessings there.... 'Their works do follow them'.... The rewards or the consequences of their works will follow them to the Eternal World!"

In Revelation 15:1-4, John says: "I saw another sign in Heaven, great and marvellous!... I saw...them that had gotten the **victory** over the beast..., standing on the sea of glass, having the harps of God.... And they sing...: '**All nations shall come and worship** before You!'"

Comments the *Geneva Bible*: "The saints of God overcame them all." They "sing divine songs to God, by Whose power they get the **victory**!"

In Revelation 16:2-21, one reads of the seven vials of God's wrath being poured out on the Vatican, Islam, and 'the cities of the nations.' There, all of them fall!

The *Geneva Bible* comments that "all strange religions -- of the Jews, Turks and others -- then fall with that great whore of Rome." The *Dordt Dutch Bible* comments that by the words 'the cities of the nations fell' -- is to be understood all other cities outside of Christendom; such as those of the Turks, Persians and other Heathen."

The Calvinist James Durham in his *Commentary* rightly remarks: "The first four vials...carry on Antichrist's ruin.... The fifth vial overturns Rome's seat.... The sixth overturns Turks..., brings in the Jews, and sets the Gospel at its full brightness. The seventh vial...fully overturns the devil's kingdom in the World."

Comments Dr. Jonathan Edwards: "All the forces of Antichrist and Mahometanism and Heathenism will be united.... There shall be the spirit of Popery and the spirit of Mahometanism and the spirit of Heathenism -- all united...."

"Christ and His Church shall in this battle obtain a complete and entire victory over their enemies. They shall be totally routed...."

"The Mahometan kingdom...shall be utterly overthrown. The 'locusts' and the 'horsemen' in the ninth (chapter) of Revelation, have their appointed and limited time set them there.... Though Mahometanism has been so vastly propagated in the World and is upheld by such a great Empire -- this smoke which has ascended out of the bottomless pit shall be utterly scattered!"

The Calvinist Dr. Albert Barnes adds in his *Commentary*: "The symbol of the Euphrates (Revelation 9:14 & 16:12), is the seat of the Turkish power.... The kings of the East would be converted to the True Religion."

In Revelation 17:14-16, we are told that the seven kings or Ancient World Empires and the ten horns of the Roman Empire "make war with the Lamb. But the Lamb shall overcome them!"

"For He is Lord of lords and King of kings, and they that are with Him are called and chosen and faithful.... These shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate."

The *Geneva Bible* comments: "Christ Jesus...will take vengeance on this Romish Harlot." Here, the Romish "Antichrist is compared to a harlot, because she seduces the World...."

"The new Rome...is the Papistry.... This woman is the Antichrist; that is, the Pope." The ten horns are "diverse nations like the Goths, Vandals, Huns and other nations -- which were once subject to Rome, but shall rise against it and destroy it."

In Revelation 18:4, God says to Babylonish Rome: "Come out of her, My people! So that you not be partakers of her sins!"

Barnes comments: "Papal Rome...will be reduced to a state of utter desolation, resembling that of the real Babylon.... It is the Papacy, represented under the image of the city, and having its seat there. That is to be destroyed as utterly as was Babylon of old...."

"The Reformation was in entire accordance with what God would have His people do.... His people are expressly commanded to 'come out of her, so that they may not be partakers of her sin nor of her plagues!'.... Just in proportion as the principles of the Reformation are acted on -- the destiny of mankind is onward!"

In Revelation 19:6-20, the Apostle John heard "the voice of a great multitude...saying: 'The Lord God omnipotent reigns!'.... And I saw...a white horse, and He Who sat on him was called 'Faithful and True'...."

"Out of His mouth went a sharp sword, so that with it He would smite the nations. And He shall rule them with a rod of iron... And He has on His vesture...written, 'King of kings and Lord of lords'...."

"And I saw the beast and the kings of the Earth and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him Who sat on the horse.... The beast was taken, and with him the false-prophet.... These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone" or sulphur!

The *Geneva Bible* comments: "Christ our Judge shall be **victorious**, and shall triumph over His enemies.... He was (and is and always shall be) Ruler of all the World."

The many crowns on His head signify "His **victory** and the destruction of His enemies." Christ does indeed "**smite the nations**. And He shall rule them with a rod of iron."

Dr. Barnes comments: "The religion of Christ would finally prevail.... **Victory**...is to be obtained over the beast and the false-prophet."

That would be "the final triumph of the Church.... The 'beast' here, as all along, refers to the papal power.... The 'false-prophet' is united with the beast in deceiving the nations.... As if the Papacy and Mahometanism were combined."

The Calvinist Dr. Benjamin Warfield, in his article *The Millennium and the Apocalypse*, states: "The section opens with a vision of the **victory** of the Word of God, the King of kings and Lord of lords, over all His enemies.... It is a vivid picture of a complete **victory**, an entire **conquest**...."

"It is the period of advancing **victory** of the Son of God over the World.... It is the eleventh chapter of Romans..., in symbolical form...."

"John teaches that...the earthly history of the Church is...a history of...**conquest** over evil.... John teaches...this **conquest** will be decisive and complete...."

"Jesus comes forth not to war merely, but to **victory**.... The Gospel of Christ is...completely to **conquer** the World...."

"The possibility of an extended duration for the **conquered** Earth, lies open.... A progressively advancing **conquest** of the Earth by Christ's Gospel, implies a coming age deserving at least the relative name of '**golden**'!"

The World's greatest Calvinist ever, John Calvin himself, in his *Prefatory Address to the King of France* (right at the front of his *Institutes*), declared: "Our doctrine must stand sublime above all the glory of the World, and **invincible** by all its power. Because it is not ours, but that of the living God and His Christ."

"Him the Father has appointed King. So that He may rule from sea to sea and from the river even to the ends of the Earth, and so rule as to smite the whole Earth and its strength of iron and brass...."

"(He shall smite) with the mere rod of His Mouth and break them into pieces like a potter's vessel. According to the magnificent predictions of the Prophets respecting His Kingdom! Daniel 2:34; Isaiah 11:4; Psalm 2:9."

Victory in the key chapter of Revelation twenty

In Revelation 20:1-6, the Apostle John says he saw "an Angel come down from Heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in His hand. And He laid hold of the dragon...and bound him 1000 years...so that he should deceive the nations no more.

"Then I saw thrones, and they [the nations] sat upon them. And judgment [or rulership] was given to them.... They [the nations] lived and reigned with Christ -- a 1000 years. But the rest of the dead did not live until the 1000 years ended....

"Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection! On such, the second death has no power.... They shall be priests of God and Christ; and shall reign with Him 1000 years."

Now we must look closely at this. We must bear in mind that Revelation 17 to 22 are all closely connected, depicting events which have not yet happened -- or at least, not yet finished happening.

In Revelation 19, Christ had just shown His Apostle John a preview of the completion of the final mopping-up operation on His enemies, by the armies of His Church. This mopping-up and conversion of many of His former enemies, results in establishing a Christian World Order in every land throughout our great planet Earth -- as shown here in Revelation 20.

The Premillennial Dispensational or Chiliastic "two resurrections" theory -- one at an assumed 'rapture' of the Church at the commencement, and the other at the resurrection of all others at the end of an intervening millennium -- is unbiblical. It is neither Old-Testamentical, New-Testamentical, nor Early-Patristic. It is a Mid-Patristic aberration by only a minority of Christians -- derived **not from the Bible** but from Babel (*via* Zoroastrian Paganism).

The theological word "millennial" is derived from two Latin words -- *mille* (meaning "1000") and *ennium* (meaning "year"). "Millennium" then simply means "a 1000 years." It is from "*chilia etee*" in Revelation 20:2, that the origin of the word "Chiliasm" is derived. The word "millennium" and its derivatives is nowhere found in Holy Scripture. Yet the concept occurs there thrice.

First, it is stated in the prayer of Moses in respect of the shortness of human life -- that "a 1000 years in the eyes of God flies past "but as yesterday" (Psalm 90:1-4). Second, it is said regarding the time till Christ's second coming -- "that one day with the Lord is like a 1000 years; and a 1000 years like one day" (Second Peter 3:8). And third, it is stated six times in Revelation 20:1-7 that Satan is "bound a 1000 years."

Where Millennialists (be they Amillennialists or Postmillennialists or Premillennialists) speak of "the Millennium" -- they refer only to the period of "a 1000 years" mentioned in Revelation 20. That passage is encountered after the fall of "Babylon" and Christ's victory over the beast and the false-prophet at the end of Revelation 19, and before the description of the final judgment and the renewed Heaven and the renewed Earth at the end of Revelation 20 and at the beginning of Revelation 21.

The Angel in John's Revelation 20:1-2, seems to be Christ. For He is the One Who bound Satan (*cf.* Matthew 12:28-29 and Luke 11:20-22). Yet it seems the fulfilment of that period --

is largely still future. For Revelation 20:2 apparently refers to an occurrence which really only **begins** some time **after** Christ ascended into Heaven, and then sent His invisible Spirit to indwell His Church and use her to continue binding Satan for the 1000 years. As taught by the same John in his Gospel 14:2,17,26 & 15:26 & 16:7-14 -- and, indeed, **after** the end of the mopping-up operation mentioned immediately before in Revelation 19.

Now none of the Biblical books -- and in the first Christian centuries none either of the Early Church Fathers -- is Premillennial. The *Didachee*, the *Epistle of Barnabas*, Clement of Rome, the Shepherd of Hermas, Ignatius, Quadratus, Diognetus, Pseudo-Clement, Polycarp and Papias (properly interpreted) -- all seem to have been Postmillennial.

With the exception of the later Premillennialists Justin, Irenaeus and Tertullian -- none of even the subsequent Church Fathers were Premillennial. Indeed, all of the many Ante-Nicene Fathers after Tertullian -- rather seem to have been Postmillennial.

Tatian, Theophilus, Melito, Apollinarius, Hegesippus, Athanagoras, Clement of Alexandria, Caius, Hippolytus, Origen, Dionysius, Cyprian, Methodius, Victorinus, and Eusebius -- despite having lived through a number of very horrible persecutions of the Christian Church -- all seem to have been Postmillennial. Thereafter too, there were in fact just no Premillennialists at all -- until the Post-Reformational Anabaptists.

From the end of the third century A.D., the Church's positive expectations of **victory** here and now in this present World -- were partially realized. For they then experienced the nominal **christianization** of the Heathen Roman Empire. So the **victory-oriented** Church from the fourth century till after the Reformation too, was quite overwhelmingly Anti-Chiliastic.

It is important to note that Calvin, the greatest of all Reformers, did not place the millennium in Heaven (like many modern Amillennialists do) -- but precisely here on **Earth**. He placed it neither in the past nor in the present (like many Preterists and most Amillennialists do) -- but in the **future**.

He placed it to start occurring **before** the visible return of Christ. Yet quite differently to the way of all Premillennialists, who start it only after Christ's return.

In his *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (III:25:5), Calvin ignored the '**heavenly millennium**' theory. He also opposed "the Chiliasts" or Premillennial Dispensationalists "who **limited** that [future] **reign** of Christ to a **1000** years.

"This **fiction** is too **puerile** to need or to deserve refutation. Nor do they receive any countenance from the Apocalypse, from which it is known that they extracted a gloss for their error (Revelation 20:4). Since the 1000 years **there** mentioned, refer not to the eternal blessedness of the Church, but only to **the various troubles which await the Church Militant in this world!"**

Note here especially Calvin's word "await." He says that the aforesaid events of "the 1000 years" still "**await**" Christ's Church. They await not His Church Triumphant in glory, but His "**Church Militant in this world.**" Not awaited, but "await." Not did await (past tense); but do await (present and future tense).

Continues Calvin: "There will be no end...to the happiness of the elect.... Those who assign only a 1000 years to the children of God to enjoy the inheritance of future life, observe not how great an insult they offer to Christ and His Kingdom.

"If they are not to be clothed with immortality -- then Christ Himself into Whose glory they shall be transformed, has not been received into immortal glory. If their blessedness is to have an end -- the Kingdom of Christ on Whose solid structure it rests, is temporary....

"They are either most ignorant of all divine things, or they maliciously aim at subverting the whole grace of God and power of Christ which cannot have their **full** effect unless sin is obliterated; death swallowed up; and **eternal** life **fully** renewed.".... Let us have done with these **triflers**, so that we may not seem...to think their **dreams** deserving of refutation!"

Calvin remarks also in his *Psychopannychia*: "John has described a twofold resurrection, as well as a twofold death. Namely one [resurrection] of the soul, **before** judgment -- and another when **the body will be raised up** [**at** the judgment], when the soul also will be raised up to glory. 'Blessed,' says he, 'are those who have part in the first resurrection; on them the second death takes **no effect**' (Revelation 20:6).... That **first resurrection**...is the only **entrance** -- to **beatific glory!**"

The *Geneva Bible* comments that in Revelation 20:1, the 'Angel' indeed "may signify Christ, Who would tread down the serpent's head." The 'key of the bottomless pit' means "the Gospel, whereby Hell is shut up to the faithful and Satan is chained so that he cannot hurt them.... The Ministers hereby open it to the infidels." Too, Francis Junius in his edition of the *Geneva Bible* comments there that 'the first resurrection' is "to receive Jesus Christ in true faith -- and to rise from sin in newness of life."

We could here give many citations from the very zenith of German, Dutch and British Calvinism. Citations from Calvin's successors Beza, Knox, Perkins, Hakluyt, Foxe, James I, Brightman, Alsted, Sibbes, Voetius, Rutherford, John Cotton, Twisse, the *Westminster Assembly*, John Owen, Eliot, Jan van Riebeeck, Dickson, Charnock, Greenhill, Samuel Lee, Brooks, John Brown of Wamphray, Essenius, Spener, Bunyan, Cocceius, Newton, Howe, Cameron and Witsius *etc.* were all Postmillennialists. Let us just quote a citation from Witsius.

In his *Holy Dissertations on the Apostles' Creed*, the Calvinist Witsius explains Revelation 20:1-6. He maintains: "The erection of the 'thrones' -- here refers to the Church (here and now) on Earth.... Believers, at least without molestation or stumblingblocks from civil governments, and even with their encouragement and support -- shall hold their meetings. For the preaching and hearing of the Word of God; for ruling the Church by the keys of the heavenly Kingdom; and for...**victory** over pernicious heresies.

"The persons who sit [and rule] on those thrones, are therefore not men who have died long ago. But **living saints** in that period which is here described. Thanks to the fellowship of the Church Militant (on Earth) with the Church Triumphant (in Heaven), every addition to the Kingdom of Christ...on Earth...is an addition to the Kingdom of the saints in Heaven too [*cf.* Hebrews 12:22-23].

"Till now, we have had no mention of the resurrection of bodies.... 'They' -- note, not their souls but the persons themselves! -- 'they...had not worshipped the beast' *etc.* That is to say, 'they'

who faithfully adhere to Christ, resolve to have no fellowship with the kingdom of Antichrist. 'And they lived' and enjoy a blessed peace in their consciences and a **rich surfeit** of spiritual consolation.... They reign with Christ. They **triumph** over Satan and the world, and they share in the Saviour's glorious grace.

"Thus 'they live and reign with Christ a 1000 years.' Not that the lives of each stretch out to a 1000 years! For that never has happened; and that too never shall be given to any mortal. But those kind of people then reign thus, **during many successive centuries**, till the fixed time.

"If you repeatedly point out that they then 'live again' -- we would simply reply that they then 'lived and reigned with Christ a 1000 years.' Yet they do in a sense then live again -- "inasmuch as that kind of people was recently distressed under the tyranny of the beast...and reduced to a smaller number. They were engaged in such difficulties and deprivations, that they then hardly discovered...any principle of vitality at all. But **now**, the whole cycle of things has altered. Their numbers are increased....

"The rest of the dead, lived not again (until the 1000 years were finished).' This 'rest (of the dead)' is those who did not receive Jesus' testimony -- and (who) worshipped the beast. That is to say, those who continued their disbelief -- or who, instead of believing the healthy doctrine, embraced the 'Church of the Antichrist'.... They 'lived not again (until the 1000 years were finished).' They do not partake of spiritual life, and they also get no part of the happiness of that blessed condition to which the True Church of Christ is promoted at this time....

"The resurrection of the World (now)..., consists of the glorious enlargement of the Church by the successful preaching of the Gospel and the renewing energy of the Holy Spirit.... That includes the first preaching of the Gospel of the Kingdom among Jews and Non-Jews. This is accompanied by the conversion of many. It also includes the open disavowal of Heathenism in the Roman Empire under Constantine -- and the Reformation of the Church by the unmasking of that Antichristian system. The prediction of the 1000 years refers also to all favourable alterations which are **still expected**.

"Blessed and holy is he that has part in the first resurrection!" This expression stands against the false glorification of the followers of the beast -- who, as a result of the superstitious and idolatrous canonizations of the Pope, honour their supporters. The expression 'live' does not here mean the mere existence of somebody.... To live is not just to exist, but to be happy!" Thus Witsius.

The Calvinist Dr. Charles Hodge in his *Systematic Theology* (II:637f) insists about Christ: "Having been committed to Him for a special purpose, this universal dominion as Mediator will be relinquished when that purpose is accomplished. He will reign **until all** His enemies are put under His feet. And when that last enemy [death] is subdued, He will deliver up this Kingdom to the Father -- and [then] reign forever as King over the redeemed."

Charles Hodge's son Professor Dr. A.A. Hodge in his *Outlines of Theology* (pp. 568v.) asks the question: "What is the Scriptural doctrine concerning the millennium?" This he answers as follows:

"First, the Scriptures both of the Old and New Testament clearly reveal that the Gospel is to exercise an influence over all branches of the human family immeasurably more extensive and

more thoroughly transforming than any it has ever realized in time past. This is to be gradually attained, through the Spiritual presence of Christ in the ordinary dispensation of Providence and ministrations of His Church. Matthew 13:31-32 & 28:19-20 and Psalms 2:7-8 & 22:27-29 & 72:8-11 and Isaiah 2:2-3 & 11:6-9 & 60:12 & 66:23 and Daniel 2:35-44 and Zechariah 9:10 & 14:9 and Revelation 11:15.

"Second, the period of this general prevalency of the Gospel will continue a 1000 years -- and is hence designated the millennium (Revelation 20:2-7). Third, the Jews are to be converted to Christianity either at the commencement or during the continuance of this period (Zechariah 12:10 & 13:1 and Romans.11:26-29 and Second Corinthians 3:15-16). Fourth, at the end of these 1000 years..., Christ's advent (and) the general resurrection and judgment will be simultaneous -- and will be immediately succeeded by the burning of the old and the revelation of the new Earth and Heaven."

It was further asked: "What considerations favour the spiritual and oppose the literal(istic) interpretation of Revelation 20:1-10?" Is the millennium and its end positive, or negative?

Here Hodge answers: "Christ has in reserve for His Church a period of universal expansion and of pre-eminent spiritual prosperity, when the spirit and characters of the 'noble army of martyrs' shall be reproduced again in the great body of God's people in an unprecedented measure.... These martyrs shall, in the general triumph of their cause and in the overthrow of that of their enemies, receive judgment over their foes and reign on the Earth. While the party of Satan -- 'the rest of the dead' -- shall not flourish again...."

"The future general conversion of the Jews is taught in Scripture. This Paul, in Romans 11:15-29, both asserts and proves from Old Testament prophecies. E.g Isaiah 59:20 and Jeremiah 31:31 and Zechariah 12:10 and Second Corinthians 3:15-16.... The spiritual interpretation of these Old Testament prophecies...regards them as predicting the future purity and extension of the Christian Church."

On the point of the millennium being yet-future, also the Calvinist Dr. Abraham Kuyper Sr. agrees. In his volumes on *The End* (IV pp. 326 & 348), he declares: "The representation [of the Book of Revelation] from chapter 20...until chapter 21..., must be taken as **one** uninterrupted whole.... The millennium is not already **behind us** -- but is **still** to be expected (20:4-6)."

In his recent book *The Promise of the Future*, the Calvinist Cornelis Venema concurs with the interpretation of Romans 11 held by Postmillennialists Professors Charles Hodge and John Murray. He agrees it refers to a future conversion of a large number of Jews to Christ.

In an exposition of Revelation 20, Venema points out that there is a parallel between individual and cosmic redemption. The individual receives a new resurrection body that is free from sin and the effects of the curse; but the resurrection body is not immaterial.

There is continuity between it and the present body. Likewise, there is continuity between the present Heavens and Earth -- and the new Heavens and the new Earth. These new Heavens and Earth are not some kind of immaterial Gnostic realm!

Venema is optimistic. He expects widespread conversion to Christ across the World, and also that of the Jews. To him, the Kingdom of Christ shall gradually overcome that of Satan.

Now we must look at the very heart of this prediction. Revelation 20:4-5 states: "I saw thrones. They sat upon them, and judgment was given to them...for the witness of Jesus.... They lived and reigned with Christ a 1000 years.... But the rest of the dead lived not..., until the 1000 years were finished."

These verses do not teach a physical resurrection of believers at a 'rapture' occurring at an invisible second coming of Christ to remove them from this Earth at the beginning of a millennium! Nor do they teach another physical resurrection of later believers and of all unbelievers at a visible third coming of Christ only at the end of that millennium!

They teach the spiritual resurrection of believers the moment they are converted here and now. Too, they teach the physical resurrection of all believers and unbelievers simultaneously -- yet only at the very end of history unto final judgment. Revelation 20:4-14. Cf. too Daniel 12:2,13 and Matthew 25:32-46 and John 5:29.

This is especially apparent also from Isaiah 26:19 and Acts 24:15. In Isaiah 26:19, we read: "Your dead men shall live!.... Awake and sing, you who dwell in dust! For your dew is like the dew of herbs, and the Earth shall cast out the dead!"

On Isaiah 26:19, Calvin comments: "'Your dead men shall live!'... God guards believers.... They 'shall live' amidst death itself.... The Prophet includes the whole reign of Christ, from the beginning to the end. Since the hope of living...goes beyond this world....

"The reprobate, even while they live, are dead.... But believers, by fleeing to God, obtain life in the midst of afflictions..... Because they have in prospect that day of the resurrection....

"Isaiah includes the whole reign of Christ. We begin to receive the fruit of this consolation, when we are admitted into the Church. Yet we shall not enjoy it fully, till that last day of the resurrection is come when all things shall be most completely restored.... On this account, it is also called 'the day of restitution' (Acts 3:21)....

"All who are ingrafted into Christ, are justly said to live.... Out of the depths of death, they always come forth conquerors.... He (Isaiah) willingly ranks himself in the number of those which he firmly believes will be restored to life..., provided that he be accounted a member of the Church....

"Wicked men...'shall not live'.... [Not 'life' but simply] resurrection will be common not only to believers, but also to the reprobate.... Isaiah does not speak merely of the resurrection, but of the happiness which believers will enjoy. Wicked men will indeed rise again, but it will be to eternal destruction....

"'Awake and sing, you inhabitants of the dust!' He gives the name 'inhabitants of the dust' to believers.... They enjoy God's blessings in this life....

"He thus draws a clear distinction between God's elect, whom the corruption of the grave and the 'habitation in the dust' will not deprive of that heavenly vigour by which they shall rise again. And the reprobate who, separated from God the source of life and from Christ, fade away even while they live -- until they are wholly swallowed up by death.

"Your dew is the dew of herbs'.... 'Herbs,' and especially those of the meadows, are dried up in winter -- so that they appear to be wholly dead.... Yet the roots are concealed beneath.... Which, when they have imbibed the 'dew' at the return of spring, (they) put forth their vigour.... 'Herbs' which formerly were dry and withered, grow green again...(and) regain...former vigour.... We also revive, when watered by the grace of God."

In Acts 24:15 too, we read: "There shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust." Simultaneously!

Calvin comments: "After professing that he believes in Scripture, he (Paul) now adds the hope of the future resurrection.... The general resurrection is asserted here against certain (premillennial) fanatics, who restrict it to the members of Christ. But as Paul says in this verse..., all will rise again. So Christ clearly refers to all without distinction, in His words 'some to judgment, some to life' (John 5:29).

For as John 5:29 fully declares: "They that have done good, shall come forth unto the resurrection of life. And they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." And this is the true interpretation also of that same John's later words in Revelation 20:4-5. His words that those "which had not worshipped the beast...lived and reigned with Christ a 1000 years; but the rest of the dead live not until the 1000 years were finished," and even then only exist!

The Calvinist Dr. J. Marcellus Kik well paraphrases his own understanding of these words, as follows: "I beheld the [**living**] **saints** seated upon thrones -- **ruling over** the flesh and **the World**.... Yes, I beheld too the [**postmortal**] **victorious lives** of those who had **been beheaded** -- and also of those who [**had**] **suffered** because they [had] refused to worship the beast. As a matter of fact, **all** saints lived and reigned with Christ for a 1000 years!"

Also the Calvinist Dr. Anthony A. Hoekema writes in his book *The Bible and the Future* (pp. 173f): "The concept 'Amillennialism' is not very fortunate. It suggests that Amillennialists either do not believe in any millennium -- or that they simply negate the first six verses of Revelation twenty which [indeed] speak of a millennial rule." And in his *The Meaning of the Millennium*, Hoekema rightly observes: "Because of the binding of Satan during this present age, the nations cannot **conquer** the Church -- but **the Church is conquering the nations!**"

Revelation 20:4-5 says that the believers 'live and reign with Christ a 1000 years.... This is the first resurrection.... But the rest of the dead did not live, until the 1000 years were finished."

Augustine of Hippo-Regius declares in his A.D. 413-426 work *City of God* (18:47f & 20:7 & 22:1) that "the Church of Christ has everywhere **increased**. This House of God is **more** glorious than the first one which was constructed of wood and stone.... The glory of **this** House is **not** so apparent **now** as it **shall** be -- when **everyone** who is there, shall be there **always**.... 'No man can enter into a strong man's house and despoil his goods, except He first **binds** the strong man. Meaning by 'the strong man' -- the devil" (Matthew 12:29).

In Revelation 20:5 we read that the unbelievers, "the **rest** of the dead, **did not live** until the 1000 years were finished." **Previously** too, they had only existed but **never** truly "**lived**." Nor would they ever **live**, but only exist forever -- even **after** their physical resurrection at the time "the 1000 years were ended" (Revelation 20:6).

As the *Geneva Bible* comments, by 'the **rest** of the dead' John "means them which are spiritually dead." And they shall suffer 'the second death' or "the death of the **soul**, which is eternal damnation."

The American Calvinist Dr. John Cotton made some striking observations about the millennium -- one year before the *Westminster Assembly*, which he was invited to attend as a Commissioner. The pouring out of the seventh vial of Revelation chapter sixteen, held Cotton, inaugurates the 1000 years' reign of Christ here on Earth -- as soon as the power of the preached Word of God finally defeats Antichrist. That would then activate a widescale international **social regeneration** called the 'first resurrection' -- which would be spiritual, not bodily. It would commence at the fall of the Antichrist.

Cotton explained in his work *The Church's Resurrection*: "**These 1000 years...**most properly **begin** from the throwing down of **Antichrist** and destruction of **Rome**. The Lord will then send such powerful Ministers into the Church that, by the power of the **keys**, they shall take hold of Satan -- that is to say, convict him and his instruments of all Popish and Paganish Religion; and bind him by...the strong **chain** of God's ordinances."

James Durham comments on Revelation 20:1-4: "We conceive this place to hold out a **flourishing and good condition for some time** of the **Church Militant...**, going [**al**]together **opposite to** things wherein the [**present**] **low condition** of the saints consisteth.... It consisteth in the plurality and **abundance** of professors...**embracing** this Gospel, **many nations...joining them[selves] to the Lord.**"

Dr. Jonathan Edwards states in his *History of Redemption* that there will be a "great **spiritual** resurrection...of the Church of God.... This **spiritual** resurrection, is the resurrection spoken of as attended with judgment. Revelation 20:4....

"I will describe the **prosperous** state the Church shall be in.... It is...the time of the Kingdom of Heaven **upon Earth**.... Now is the principal fulfilment of all the prophecies of the Old Testament, which speak of the glorious times of the Gospel...**in the latter days**....

"Then, **all countries and nations** -- even those which are now most ignorant, shall be full of light and **knowledge**.... Then, many of the Negroes and Indians will be divines.... Excellent books will be published in Africa.... The Scriptures everywhere represent it to be of **long continuance**.... Revelation 20:4."

In his *Analysis* of chapter twenty, in Dr. Albert Barnes's *Commentary on the Book of Revelation* he explains: "This chapter...pertains to the **future**, and discloses things which are **yet to occur**.... Satan is to be arrested and bound for a 1000 years.... This is properly the **millennium** -- the **long** period when the principles of **True Religion** will have the **ascendency** on the **Earth**....

"Time is marked in the prophetic description, until the fall of [Romanism as] the great enemy of the Church. Beyond that, it does not seem to have been regarded as necessary to determine the actual duration of the events referred to.... The grand purpose was to show **that Christianity would finally triumph**.... The **end** is triumphant and glorious."

In his *Commentary* itself, Dr. Barnes insists: "The scene that is recorded here [in Revelation 20:1f], occurs **after** the destruction of the beast and the false-prophet (chapter 19:18-21)...., **after** the final destruction of the Papal and Mahometan powers.... The World shall enjoy a reign of peace and righteousness during the long period....

"**The Earth** would continue under a reign of righteousness, **through a vastly long period in the future**.... This will be **subsequent** to the downfall of the Papacy, and the termination of the Mahometan power in the World.... There will be a **general** prevalence of evangelical religion.... It will be a time when the Hebrew people -- the Jews -- will be brought to the knowledge of the truth, and will embrace the Messiah whom their fathers crucified."

In Revelation 20:1-10, John says he saw an Angel lay hold of the devil and bind him a 1000 years so that he should deceive the nations no more. "And when the 1000 years are expired, Satan shall be loosened out of his prison and shall go out to deceive the nations Gog and Magog in the four quarters of the Earth to gather them together.... Fire comes down from God out of Heaven, and devours them. And the devil that deceived them, is cast into the lake of fire and brimstone (or sulphur) -- where the beast and the false-prophet are. And they shall be tormented day and night, for ever and ever!"

How will the millennium **end**? This is **the order of the seven last events**. (1) The revivification of the dead-in-Christ, and their meeting the Lord in the air -- First Thessalonians 4:14-16. (2) The raising of the bodies of the dead-in-Satan, to stand here on Earth like zombies, while surrounding the camp of the saints -- Revelation 20:5 & 20:8f *cf.* too Matthew 24:37-41. (3) Then the immortalizing in a moment of the living saints and their meeting the Lord in the air, thus vacating their camp here on Earth -- First Corinthians 15:51-54 *cf.* First Thessalonians 4:15f and Revelation 20:5-9.

That will then immediately be followed by the remaining events. *Viz.:* (4) The changing in a moment of the physically-undead wicked then alive on the Earth, into a state where they shall never cease to exist -- First Corinthians 15:51f & Revelation 20:8f. (5) The final judgment here on Earth, involving the punishment of **all** the wicked in (2) and (4) above -- Revelation 20:9-14. (6) the thrusting of the condemned wicked from off of the Earth and into the hellish lake of fire and brimstone for ever -- Revelation 20:15. And (7) the triumphant descent of the Christians through the air, together with Heaven, down onto the then-renewed Earth for ever -- Revelation 21:1f,10f,24-26 & 22:1-5.

The Calvinist Dr. John Gill held "that all the wicked shall be brought out of Hell, for the purpose of going up on the length of the Earth to fight [the] battle referred to in Revelation (20:5 & 8)." And even Arminian Seventh-day Adventists stated in 1957 -- that at Revelation 20:8 "Gog and Magog are **revived** by means of, or **resulting** from, the second **resurrection**."

Already the A.D. 170-235 Hippolytus wrote about Revelation 20:7f in his eschatological *Fragments*, about the loosening or unbinding of Satan at the very **end** of the millennium. "This unbinding of Satan," says Hippolytus, "does **not** mean that he will then enjoy a time of renewed activity -- but that he and his followers will then be thrown into the fire!"

A more extended treatment is given by Augustine. When an Anti-Christian Manichaeon, he himself had toyed with chiliastic Premillenarianism. But after his conversion, in his 413-426 *City of God* (XX:6-13), he wrote *inter alia* the following about Revelation 20:1-9.

"There are...two resurrections.... The first and spiritual resurrection...takes place in **this** life, and preserves us from coming into the second death. The second does not occur now but at the end of the World; and...is of the body, not of the soul....

"Those who...have suspected that 'the first resurrection' is **future** and **bodily**..., surpass the measure of credulity itself. Such assertions can be believed only by the carnal. They who do believe them, are called by the spiritual 'Chiliasts' -- which we may literally reproduce by the name '[Pre-]Millenarians'....

"By the 'chain'..., the devil is...**restrained** from seducing those **nations** which **belong to Christ**.... It is **not** said that he [the devil] would not seduce anybody, but 'that he would not seduce the **nations**' -- meaning, no doubt, those among which **the Church** exists -- 'till the 1000 years would be fulfilled'....

"The words 'that he would not seduce the **nations**'...are not to be understood as indicating that afterwards he **is** to seduce!... He is shut up till the 1000 years be fulfilled..., so that he may no more deceive **the nations**."

Augustine explains that the loosening of Satan **after** the 1000 years will be "occurring while the **Final Judgment** is **imminent**.... These nations which he [John] names 'Gog' and 'Magog' -- are not to be understood of some barbarous nations in some part of the World....

"They are therefore the nations in which we found that the devil **was** shut up as in an **abyss** -- and **the devil himself** coming out from them.... The reign of the saints with Christ shall last **longer** than the bonds and imprisonment of the devil.... The 1000 years of the reign of the saints **does not terminate**, though the imprisonment of the devil does."

Dr. Jonathan Edwards too comments in his *History of Redemption* on the activity of the then-resurrected ancient nations of Gog and Magog in Revelation 20:8. He remarks: "There is **nothing** in the prophecy which seems to hold forth as though the Church actually falls into their hands -- as the Church **had** fallen [previously and quite before the earlier commencement of the **millennium**] into the hands of Antichrist.... God will **never** suffer this to be again -- **after** the fall of Antichrist! For **then** -- the day of her mourning shall be **ended**!"

Also Dr. Albert Barnes comments on the way in which the millennium will **end**. "All the enemies that have ever opposed the Church -- in all forms of Paganism, Mahometanism, Popery and delusion -- will be destroyed for ever. The World then will have peace; the Church will have rest; the great triumph will have been achieved."

Dr. Warfield too wrote about Revelation 20:7f in his *The Millennium and the Apocalypse*. He said: "The picture that is brought before us here, is...the 1000 years.... In the **preceding** vision (19:11-21), Christ's Gospel is **to conquer the Earth**.... The saints described, are removed from the sphere of Satan's assaults."

In 1929, the Calvinist Dr. Ned Stonehouse of Westminster Theological Seminary published his book *The Apocalypse in the Ancient Church*. There, he quoted approvingly the words from Hippolytus we ourselves have cited. Then Stonehouse himself stated: "In truth, this loosening of Satan signifies not that he enters upon a period of renewed activity, but that he with his followers are to be cast into the burning and judged!"

In his 1955 book *Revelation Twenty*, Dr. J. Marcellus Kik, a former Associate Editor of *Christianity Today*, stated: "Satan's loosening will be that period just before the Second Coming of the Lord.... Before the loosening of Satan, all nations will become predominantly Christian.... Notice that Satan does not break out of the prison by his own power.... He is loosened by the Lord" -- and only to be led off to the Final Judgment!

In the 1957 edition of his book *The Millennium*, the Calvinist Dr. Loraine Boettner stated: "Warfield believed there will be no resurgence of evil at all at the end, but rather that at the return of Christ, the present Kingdom -- then perfected with the **conquering** of the last enemy, death -- will be merged into the eternal Kingdom.... We agree that Revelation 20:1-10 affords no real basis for believing that there is to be a final apostasy in the sense that a large proportion of Earth's inhabitants turn against God, or that the safety of the saints is seriously threatened."

The Calvinist Rushdoony states in his 1970 *Thy Kingdom Come!* that in Revelation twenty "verses 7-10, we see the release of Satan [so] that he might be destroyed.... Some see a defeat of the saints and a victory for Satan **in the end times** -- but only by importing other Bible passages into this text, all with doubtful reference!"

Rushdoony himself then insists: "We are here told only of an attempt.... It fails, and God destroys forever the power of Satan."

In his 1994 *Systematic Theology*, Rushdoony explains: "**The Second Coming**...shall be **preceded**...by the **destruction of all His enemies** -- except death (First Corinthians 15:24-26). However, there can be a **very long** time-span between the **World-triumph** -- and **His coming again**."

In 1984, Dr. Boettner wrote to Dr. Francis Nigel Lee: "I remember with real appreciation your visit here at my home about nine years ago.... I am writing primarily to say that in the recent [revised 1984] edition of *The Millennium*, I have added a chapter -- 'The Millennium of Revelation 20.' This presents a new interpretation of chapter 19:11-21, which carries over into the 20th chapter -- and, I believe, gives a truly logical basis for the postmillennial position.

"I have never been fully satisfied with the view that just before the end of the Church Age, there is to be a fearful apostasy in which the saints would be all but annihilated just before Christ returns.... I believe that this [my **new**] interpretation solves that problem; that it firmly establishes the postmillennial system.

"I am sending you a copy of this book.... I shall be glad to have your reaction to this...interpretation. I highly respect your position as a Reformed Theologian and a Postmillennialist, and I shall await with interest your evaluation."

Dr. Lee then responded to Dr. Boettner: "Thank you for your gracious airmail letter September 7th 1984.... I too remember...my visit to your home some nine years ago, and our agreement then about 'no final apostasy' at Revelation 20:8....

"I find myself in total agreement with the recent edition of your book *The Millennium*.... I would regard...Revelation 20:5-10 [as descriptive of]...Christ's postmillennial no-final-apostasy Second Coming" -- followed by the Final Judgment (Revelation 20:11-15).

Victory in Revelation chapters twenty-one and twenty-two

In Revelation 21:1-26, the Apostle John wrote: "I saw a New Heaven and a New Earth.... Then I, John, saw the Holy City New Jerusalem coming down from God out of Heaven.... He will dwell with them, and they shall be His peoples.... The nations shall walk in the light of it, and the kings of the Earth bring their glory and honour into it.... And they shall keep on bringing the glory and honour of the nations into it!"

It is interesting to note that when God renovates the Earth, He will dwell there not with His people (singular) but with His "peoples" – with His *laoi* (plural). There shall be no elevation of just the people of Israel dispensationalistically; but rather of all peoples Calvinistically!

As Calvin insisted in his *Institutes* IV:16:17, the nations shall be there with those who were their infants. Of course, such "must be purified before they can be admitted into the Kingdom of God -- into which nothing that defiles shall enter (Revelation 21:27)."

The *Geneva Bible* comments: "**All** things shall be **renewed** and **restored** into a most excellent and perfect estate.... Therefore the day of the resurrection is called 'The day of restoration of all things.' Acts 3:21." The "holy city 'New Jerusalem'" -- though it "comes down from Heaven -- is really a renovation of the old earthly Jerusalem."

Furthermore, the phrases 'the nations...shall walk in the light' of the City of New Jerusalem and '**the kings of the Earth shall bring their glory and honour into it**' -- are most significant. For they show that "**kings and princes (contrary to that wicked opinion of the Anabaptists) are partakers of the heavenly glory**, if they rule in the fear of the Lord."

The Calvinist Dr. Campegius Vitringa commented: "Princes, kings [and] emperors shall serve Christ and His Church -- [and] shall bring their glory, majesty and power into it." For such political leaders "shall convert" their glory, majesty and power -- to the "use and advantage" of Christ and His Church.

These political leaders "shall publically celebrate the True Religion; honour its Ministers; and by their authority and power" they shall "maintain and defend" the True Religion. They shall also maintain True Ministers of the Christian Faith. This, "the Church has **already** experienced **in part**, from the time of **Constantine** -- and lately, from the period of the **Reformation**."

Yet the **complete** fulfilment of the last two chapters of the Bible, is to be realized **only in the future**. For it is "**partly** as yet **to look for**.... It appears very clearly from **this** place, that this vision [of Revelation 21:24-26] refers to the state of the Church **on Earth**."

Comments Dr. Albert Barnes: "All the saved [are] considered **as nations**.... All that they consider as constituting their glory -- treasures, crowns, sceptres, robes -- will be devoted to God in the future days of the Church in its glory.... **That** blessed World shall be made up of all that was truly valuable and pure on the [**present**] Earth."

Dr. Abraham Kuyper Sr. stated in the fourth edition of his *Common Grace* (I:464): "These achievements do not simply disappear and get destroyed during a general conflagration of the World. But the achievements have a permanent significance also for...the New Earth!"

Compare too especially the last 200 pages of the book written by his son, Dr. Abraham Kuyper Jr. We mean in his book *On Sanctification, Glorification and the Kingdom of Glory*.

Also the Calvinist Dr. Klaas Schilder has insisted in his book *John's Revelation and Social Life* (pp. 29, 210 & 238f): "It will not be without fruit, even for eternity! Do the kings of the Earth not bring the glory and the honour of the nations to the New Jerusalem?..."

"In contrast to a generation which plunders the gold of the temple and which melts it down for the crown of the Antichrist -- stands God's wisdom and grace! He will one day take all the gold of the World, and with it pave the streets of His Heavenly City (Revelation 21:18-21)... All precious stones, all the gems of the World, will become the foundation of God's Jerusalem. The **ornaments** of the **worldly** city, become the **foundation** of the **Heavenly** City....

"When God's New Jerusalem, His city of peace, comes down from God out of Heaven -- culture, then divested of its sinful stains, shall surrender its fruits to God's Kingdom. The glory and the honour not only of the kings but also of the nations -- yet not only of the masses but also of that in which the individual brilliance of the style-formers and the pace-setters is to be seen -- will all be brought into God's 'New Paradise' of the future....

"Thus it is precisely the Calvinistic life and world view that accepts a life's task which arouses the highest attention of the soul. In the knowledge that there is a vocation in respect of the entire Cosmos, which rests on that man who hears creation sigh...and who hears God's voice calling him to enter into the Sabbath of God.

"For God's Sabbath arrives when the Cosmos is renewed and the Universe is regenerated [Matthew 19:28].... Our building up the house of the Universe is in vain [Psalm 127] -- unless God Himself is put first in that construction..., **to undertake the conquest of the World!**"

In Revelation 22:1-21, the Apostle John says: "Proceeding out of the throne of God...and on either side of the river, there was the tree of life, bearing twelve kinds of fruits...every month.... The leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations....

"His servants shall keep on serving Him. Then they shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads. Then there shall be no night, and they shall need no...sunlight. For the Lord God keeps on giving them light; and they shall keep on reigning for ever and ever!..."

"He who is holy, let him be yet holier!... Blessed are they that do His Commandments, so that they may have the right to the tree of life.... If any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life and out of the Holy City.... The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all -- Amen!"

Dr. Abraham Kuyper Sr. insists in his *Concerning the Consummation of the Ages*: "Revelation 22:1f...completely agrees with the prophecy of the **Old Covenant**, which teaches that **human relationships** and the existence of the **Cosmos** are...**never destroyed**. So, even from the description of the New Jerusalem..., it appears that the **elements** continue to exist....

Mention is made of **a city**, in contradistinction to **the country** surrounding that city.... It can mean nothing less than that the all-embracing difference between **agricultural** life and centralized **urban** life, will continue **even in the hereafter!**"

The Calvinist Dr. Herman Bavinck has observed in his *Manual for Instruction in the Christian Religion* and his *Reformed Dogmatics*: "The **whole creation...is liberated....** The New Jerusalem which is now above and indicates the city where God dwells with His People, then descends to the Earth. Revelation 21:2f and 22:2f."

Also Dr. Klaas Schilder wrote in his article *Jesus Christ and Cultural Life*: "Paradise was the **beginning....** Everything was already there in principle..., in order for it to develop into a **consummated** World. But a historical **process** of many centuries is needed for it to come to its **full-grown state....**

"**Christ conquers the World** for His God. He unites the beginnings of the World with its final end; its earliest history with its ultimate history; its *alpha* with its *omega*; the 'abc' of God's legislative speech in the **beginning**, with the composition of the fugue of the faithful culture of the last days ripe in all its points and counterpoints....

"Every labourer God created should, in the history of the created World, so use all the 'talents' issued by God to His workmen in the **morning** of creation that -- by making them productive -- **everything inherent in the World would finally be extracted from it.** All the talents which the Lord of the servants gave to the servants, were finally to have achieved just as much at **dusk** -- as they were distributed at **dawn** to do [Romans 2:14f]....

"It was to make this **service** of God again possible for man -- to give God His World and His workmen back again -- that Christ came.... He again makes 'men of God'.... He again erects specimens of the **pure** human race.

"They are not yet perfect, but in principle they **do** exist. They exist from the very moment Adam bowed in faith under the first promise of the Gospel. And they are coming, and **increasing**, and becoming the **great multitude** which no man can number -- the multitude of those sanctified by God in Christ!"

Schilder observed in his book *What is Heaven?*: "In Revelation 22:2, there is in the first place mention of the consummation of the **Covenant of Works** [cf. Hosea 6:7]. After all, the Prophet [namely the Apostle John] is speaking about the **City** of New Jerusalem -- to show us that this **city** also has a **garden** in it....

"All of the images reach back to *Paradise Lost*. The 'garden' in Revelation twenty-two reminds one...of Genesis [two]. And in Genesis, the garden is not a poetic device, but a reality concerning which the **historian** gives **information.**" Similarly, also in **glory** -- "there will also be a **history** of all of the unceasing developments on the New Earth!"

In his work *John's Revelation and Social Life*, Schilder adds: "Does one not with strong desire look forward to the 'tree of life' -- which will one day restore the loss of the 'tree of life' from *Paradise Lost*?" But **then** -- it is *Paradise Regained*. Nay more, *Paradise Perfected*!

In Revelation 22:11-14, the Apostle John declared: "He that is righteous -- let him be yet more righteous! And he that is holy -- let him be yet more holy!... Blessed are they that do His Commandments, so that they may have the right to the tree of life and may enter in through the gates into the City!"

As Calvin remarked in his *Adultero-German Interim*: "The justified, having now become...the servants of righteousness..., abound in good works. And the more they abound in them, the more **increase** of righteousness is added to them.... Says the Scripture...: 'He who is just, let him become still more just! (Revelation 22)."

Also the Lutheran Hengstenberg comments at Revelation 22:1-14f: "**Only** in the **future** ..., will the germ of life fully develop itself.... When **the meek** [or the '**Law-abiding**'] shall possess the Earth -- the Kingdom of the elect shall reach its highest elevation....

"There shall be nothing more to withstand the **full** establishment of its dominion.... When **Adam broke the Command[ments]**, the way to the tree of life was barred. But they who do the **Commandments**, shall have power over the tree of life!"

Dr. Schilder wrote in his *Jesus Christ and Cultural Life*: "The '**abc**' of God's Law dominates all spheres of life. And in all this, Christ consummates everything in the World....

"He went back to the beginning of God's creation. There, from the **Tables of the Law** [Ecclesiastes 7:29 *cf.* Romans 2:14f], He read out the rules for work laid down at the start by God for the 'man-of-God' who was God's creature **in** and **with** the World. And **this** is the **pure rule for labour** -- which He read out from the **Tables of the Law**." Hosea 6:1-11 *cf.* Revelation 22:14.

Schilder remarks in his book *John's Revelation and Social Life*: "The **kingship** comes over **everything**, as a rich blessing.... It moves **upward**, so that -- while preserving that which is individual -- **everyone** achieves kingship!"

In Revelation 22:18-21, the Apostle John finally declares: "I testify to every man that hears the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add to these things -- God shall add to him the plagues written in this book! And if any man take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life and out of the Holy City!... The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all -- Amen!"

As Calvin concludes (*Institutes* IV:9:2): "I deny that those assemble in the name of Christ who, disregarding His Command by which He forbids anything to be added to the Word of God or taken from it..., devise some novelty out of their own head!... Revelation 22:18."

For cursed are they who either add to any or take away any of the words in God's Bible! But blessed are they who believe every word of it. For then, their own names are seen to stand written in that Book of Life!

"He Who testifies these things, says: 'Surely, I come quickly!' Even so, come, Lord Jesus! The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all! Amen!" Revelation 22:20-21.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR --->

Dr. Francis Nigel Lee was born in 1934 in the Westmorland County of Cumbria (Great Britain). He is the great-grandson of a fiery preacher whose family disintegrated when he backslid. Though Dr. Lee's father was an Atheist, he married a Roman Catholic who raised their son Nigel in that faith.

For the Second World War, Dr. Lee's father was appointed Chief Radar Officer (South Atlantic). So the family then moved to South Africa. There, Dr. Lee became a Calvinist; had the great joy of leading both of his parents to Christ; and became Minister of God's Word and Sacraments in the Dutch Reformed Church of Natal. Later, he also led his father's murderer to Christ, as well as the murderer's parents.

Emigrating to the U.S.A., he attended the very first General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America; transferred his previous ministerial credentials to that denomination, and pastored congregations in Mississippi and Florida. He was also: Professor of Philosophy at Shelton College in New Jersey; Research Scholar-in-Residence at the Christian Studies Centre in Memphis; and Academic Dean of Graham Bible College in Bristol Tennessee. He was then the only person in the world serving on the Executives of both the British Lord's Day Observance Society (headquartered in London) and the Lord's Day Alliance of the United States (headquartered in Atlanta).

Preacher, theologian, lawyer, educationist, historian, philosopher and author, Lee has produced more than 191 publications (including many books) and also more than 534 long unpublished manuscripts. In addition to an honorary LL.D., he has twenty earned degrees -- including one honorary doctorate and some eleven earned doctorates* awarded for dissertations in law, literature, philosophy and theology.

Dr. Lee rises early; reads God's Word in eleven languages; then walks a couple of miles before breakfast. He has been round the world some seven times; has visited around one hundred countries (several repeatedly); and has also visited every inhabited Continent. He is in demand as a promoter of doctoral students in Australia, Britain, Germany, South Africa, and the United States. In Australia, he was till his retirement in 2000 the Professor of Systematic Theology and Caldwell-Morrow Lecturer in Church History at the Queensland Presbyterian Theological College.

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- D. Phil: *Communist Eschatology*
- Ph.D.: *Miracles. What and When and Why*
- D.Min.: *Daily Family Worship*
- D.Ed.: *Catechism Before Communion!*
- S.T.D.: *Rebaptism Impossible!*
- D.R.E.: *Baby Belief Before Baptism!*
- D.Jur.: *Women Ministers & Australian Litigation*
- D.Litt.: *Holinshed on the Ancient British Isles*
- D.C.L.: *The Roots and Fruits of the Common Law*
- D.Hum.: *Tiny Human Life -- Abortion and IVF*