

Bride or Harlot

Then I answered and said to him, “What are these two olive trees — at the right of the lampstand and at its left?” And I further answered and said to him, “What are these two olive branches that drip into the receptacles of the two gold pipes from which the golden oil drains?” Then he answered me and said, “Do you not know what these are?” And I said, “No, my lord.” So he said, “These are the two anointed ones, who stand beside the Lord of the whole earth.”

Zechariah 4:11-14

Then I was given a reed like a measuring rod. And the angel stood, saying, “Rise and measure the temple of God, the altar, and those who worship there. But leave out the court which is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it has been given to the Gentiles. And they will tread the holy city underfoot for forty-two months. And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth.”

These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands standing before the God of the earth. And if anyone wants to harm them, fire proceeds from their mouth and devours their enemies. And if anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in this manner.

These have power to shut heaven, so that no rain falls in the days of their prophecy; and they have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to strike the earth with all plagues, as often as they desire.

Revelation 11:1-6

Bride or Harlot

The Church in the Last Judgment

&

The Harlot in Revelation 17 - 19

by

Benne Holwerda

edited by Roelof A. Janssen

including his dedication to Mr. Donald J. Trump
(Carbon Copy to Mrs. William J. Clinton)



INHERITANCE PUBLICATIONS
NEERLANDIA, ALBERTA, CANADA
PELLA, IOWA, U.S.A.

Dedication to Mr. Donald J. Trump

by Roelof A. Janssen

The Church in the Last Judgment

by Benne Holwerda

translated by P.Y. De Jong

The Harlot in Revelation 17 - 19

by Benne Holwerda

translated by Mrs. R. Hoeksema
and other ladies

A Covering and Readiness to Serve

by Klaas Schilder

translated by Roelof A. Janssen

The General Epistle of the Apostle Judas

(From *The Dort Study Bible*)

translated by Theodore Haak

Edited by Roelof A. Janssen

Cover Picture by Leonard Bevaart

ISBN 978-1-77298-012-7

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by Inheritance Publications

3317 Township Rd 624

County of Barrhead, AB T0G 1R1 Canada

Tel. 780-674-3949

Web site: inhpubl.net

E-Mail: inhpubl@telusplanet.net

Published simultaneously in the U.S.A. by

Inheritance Publications

Box 366, Pella, Iowa 50219

Printed in the U.S.A.

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Benne Holwerda 1909 - 1952

Dedicated by the editor and publisher

to

Mr. Donald J. Trump

with a Carbon Copy

to

Mrs. William J. Clinton

To Mr. & Mrs. Donald Trump and Barron
 The Trump Organization
 725 5th Avenue
 New York NY 10022

Dear Mr. Trump,

God, who inspired the Bible — the only infallible Word of God — may well be calling you to one of the most important tasks in His world today. His Son, Jesus the Christ, is ruling this world. He wants you to be a good soldier in His Kingdom.

Will you be a David or a Saul?

That is, will you serve the God of David or practice the idolatry of Saul, who used the people of God for his own end.

Will you be an Artaxerxes¹ who as king allowed Nehemiah to rebuild the Temple (the Church) or an Ahab who had “married a Tyrian princess, Jezebel, who was up to her neck in synthesis, in world trade, in world politics, and in the ecumenical largest-common-denominator-religion, that message of-and-to-and-for-oneself. So Jezebel played the role of ecumenical figure in apostolic robes and cap, upon which, in the Esperanto of those days, were embroidered the initials S.o.N. (Shepherdess of Nations).”²

Will you be a William of Orange³ who, as a faithful protestant in the 16th century, resisted over-zealous Protestants who, just as many Roman Catholics of those days wanted to do to the Protestant faith, wanted to outlaw the Roman Catholic religion. William, when he was a Roman Catholic himself, showed his greatness by faithfully declaring that a king may not rule the conscience of his subjects, since conscience is God’s domain! I could send you many of our publications on both Williams, but will limit myself to the best two: *I*

¹ Or, *Arthasasta*. See *The Dort Study Bible*, vol. V, page 159. I plan to send you two volumes of The Dort Study Bible, and insert a pre-publication of the Epistle of the Apostle Jude from it in the back of this book.

² Klaas Schilder, *Your Ecumenical Task*. Klaas Schilder, though unknown to many, was likely the most important spiritual leader of the Dutch resistance during World War II. You can download the complete audio version of his speech {the most important speech of the 20th century} on inhpubl.net/ip/ngj-fab.htm. Most of the contents of THIS book can also be downloaded in MP3 format from that page. I hope to be able to upload them on YouTube as well before November.

³ William the Silent, great-grandfather of the most important king of England.

Will Maintain on William III and *William of Orange the Silent Prince* for your son.⁴

As my plan grew to send you *I Will Maintain* (which I have sent to many politicians in the past), I read one morning the book of Jude in English. Because of some questions I had, I read it right away again in Dutch, as well as the annotations the Dutch translators had added to the text. I was struck by the relevance of that book for today.

Since you attend a Reformed Church in America, a church that has its roots in the same synod that appointed the translators of that Bible and requested the Dutch Government to publish it, I thought it fitting to finish the book of Jude for *you* at this time. I believe this Dutch Bible is still the best translation of the Bible in any western language,⁵ very valuable because of its short annotations. We are republishing it today as *The Dort Study Bible*.

As I already had been working on Benne Holwerda's speech *The Church in the Last Judgment* and its defence *The Harlot in Revelation 17 - 19* in which he already in the late forties discussed the United Nations and the (new) World Order to come, I considered it very fitting to send that to you as well. Thus I began my work to finish it in the beginning of August 2016 and am finishing it the first week of September after watching and listening to your Full Immigration Speech in Phoenix, Arizona.

⁴

I also plan to include *Salt In His Blood* for your son, a beautiful book about the successor of Maarten Tromp, Michael De Ruyter, the greatest admiral in history.

⁵

It was published in Dutch in 1637, and soon also published in English, in 1657.

Next to Schilder's *Your Ecumenical Task*, I consider Holwerda's speech *The Church in the Last Judgment* the most important speech of the 20th Century. I began recording the audio version in 2015, shortly before I ran for political office in Canada for the Christian Heritage Party and after I had helped a friend win his nomination in the Conservative Party, which caused the local CHP to decide not to run against him (I ran in a neighbour riding).

In your speech when you accepted the GOP nomination you said, “. . . our laws prevent you (the evangelical community) from speaking your minds from your own pulpits. An amendment pushed by Lyndon Johnson, many years ago, threatens religious institutions with the loss of their tax-exempt status if they openly advocate their political views — their voice has been taken away! I am going to work very hard to repeal that language and to protect free speech for all Americans.”

I thank you for those words.

Yet, even if Mrs. Clinton wins and makes us, Christians, a theatre, as Hitler did to Hermanus Knoop and Kornelis Sietsma in Dachau,⁶ we will still confess that Christ is King today, also of the United States. And we will be more obedient to Him, even when it will cost us our life and goods. We will do so as also the two

⁶

I plan to send you also *A Theatre in Dachau* by Rev. Knoop and the *Self-Justification of God in the life of Job* by Dr. Sietsma (which I as publisher dedicated to the family members of those who died as a result of the terrorist attacks on New York, Washington, and Somerset, PA on Sept. 11, 2001).

witnesses of Revelation 11 did or will do. Of these the translators of the Dutch Bible wrote:

Some people are of the opinion that by these two witnesses are meant Enoch and Elijah, which for the time of forty-two months, or of one thousand two hundred and sixty days, that is, about three and a half years, before the end of the world, should prophecy against the antichrist, and after that be killed by him, and all that is here told in the text and in the following verses should literally happen to them. This opinion is advocated by some people today, to conceal the exposure of the antichrist and his kingdom, which now already for a long time has been known in the world.⁷ But besides it being absurd, that the Holy Spirit in this revelation would ignore those things that consequently had to come to pass after this, in which the Church of Christ suffered so many changes, and instantly would come to the four last years of the world, it is also impossible that the kingdom of the antichrist would be established within three and a half years and perform all the things that are foretold in the Word of God of him and his kingdom throughout the whole world. It also is in conflict with the Word of God, that the saints would descend from heaven with their heavenly bodies, to be killed here, or that they would come to preach again in this world, as Abraham testified in Luke 16:29, or also that they would prophecy among all the nations for three and a half years, or that their bodies would be seen thus by the nations, generations, and languages within

⁷ The 17th century translators are referring to the false church, especially to the Roman Catholic church. —RAJ.

the space of three and a half actual days, and that they who dwell upon the earth would rejoice at it and send presents to one another, as here is said in the text. That is why both the matter itself and the time of it must be understood here in a prophetic and figurative sense, namely of days which mean whole years, as in Ezek. 4:5 and Dan. 9:24. Some people consider these years as having begun in the year 606, when the Bishop of Rome assumed the title of Bishop of the whole Christian Church, which title belongs only to Christ, and when idolatry mostly began to break through among Christians. Others, however, consider these years to have begun somewhat earlier, namely from the destruction of the old Rome, and of its dominion by the Goths, about the year 412. Yet, leaving this opinion entirely, the raising of these two witnesses, as was said in Rev. 11:2, is fittingly understood of some eminent teachers whom God within that space of time caused to raise up in His Church during the kingdom of the antichrist, to reveal and oppose this dominion and idolatry. That is why they were said to be clothed with sackcloth, because they opposed the pride and arrogance of the antichrist's kingdom by wearing poor clothing, and with a mournful face. And they are mentioned as two because there indeed would be but a few, yet enough to testify the truth to men, as all truth exists in two or three witnesses, see Deut. 19:15, and because God commonly used two of such excellent witnesses for the restoration of the decayed doctrine, as the here following words in Rev. 11:4 first refer to Joshua and Zerubbabel, who established the worship of God after the Babylonian captivity, and to Moses and Aaron, which did the same in the wilderness. It can also be seen as

referring to Elijah and Elisha, to which Rev. 11:5, 6 apply, who did the same under Ahab and other servants of Baal, which also can be called two, because they only used the doctrine of the Old and New Testament to refute the kingdom of the antichrist as witnesses of this truth, and thereby powerfully convinced others. Such have also been Peter Waldo and Peter of Bruys in France, John Wycliffe and Pourneus in England, John Huss and Jerome of Prague in Bohemia and Germany, who also were put to death for it in the Council of Constance, and with joy of all that company, gathered out of several nations and languages, were burnt, until it pleased God after that to raise up Luther and Melanchthon in Germany, Zwingli and Oecolampadius in Switzerland, Farel and Calvin in France, with more others in their place, who with more power concluded their testimony, and caused a great part of that great Babel to fall, of whose total ruin and destruction will be prophesied in the following verses.

I am writing and quoting all this to YOU because you need to know what GOD wants you to do, just as everyone who is made in the image of God needs to know that. And many people should get to know you as well. Some people think they know you, because they have seen or heard glimpses of you in the news. Many do not realize how biased that news is. Just watch the clip on abortion! If people do not listen to you all the way (but to the commentators, and only to what they want people to see and hear of you), people get a very warped view.

I am also sending you a copy of a complete reprint of a book that deals, among many other things, extensively with the assassination of Abraham Lincoln. It is *Fifty Years in the Church of Rome* and will also warn you about the Jesuits.

I have listened to your speeches for many hours, and appreciate most things you say. Certainly, I can understand one friend of mine who did not dare call you a Christian but a friend of Christians. That same friend told me that he prayed God to change the heart of "Hillary." Now I know that God is able to do that. But I believe it is far more likely that HE will ordain you, like Queen Esther, as president of the U.S.A. And HE wants you to be faithful to Him. Only then will you be a blessing to the world of today. All the following articles will be of benefit to you. In your busy life you will find besides the Bible no better daily literature than the daily meditations of Klaas Schilder in *Gold, Frankincense, and Myrrh*.

May God bless you!

For your wife I had hoped to include another beautiful book, *They Looked for a City* by Lydia Buksbazen, but it is not quite ready yet. For that reason I am enclosing *Coronation of Glory* by Deborah Meroff. Perhaps I can send the other book later, even if it is after your election, the Lord willing.

Neerlandia, Alberta, Canada, Roelof A. Janssen

With kind regards from my wife Theresa Janssen.

**THE CHURCH
IN THE LAST JUDGMENT
by Benne Holwerda**

translated by P.Y. De Jong

The following is a translation of a speech delivered by Prof. B. Holwerda at a youth meeting in 1949. It was translated by Dr. P.Y. de Jong at that time Professor at Calvin Seminary, Grand Rapids, MI. It has been published in several formats as a booklet and in instalments in some magazines. The original Dutch is also included in the book *Populair Wetenschappelijke Bijdragen* in 1962. B. Holwerda was Professor at the Theological Seminary of the Reformed Churches in The Netherlands (liberated) from 1946 until his death in 1952. In this speech he refers to several political situations of his time. Please remember that the Second World War was history (with the bombing of the city of Rotterdam in May 1940) but that the Dutch soldiers were still fighting in the Dutch Indies (Indonesia).

Since our subject concerns itself specifically with Revelation 17, we do well by way of introduction to provide a brief orientation into the composition and train of thought found in Revelation.

It is my firm conviction that in Revelation we do not find different glimpses into history, so that time and again we arrive at the last day and thereafter again see history unfolding itself. Instead, the pattern of

Revelation, more specifically its visionary section, contains but two distinct parts, namely, chapters 4 through 11 and chapters 12 to the end. In chapters 4 through 11 God proclaims in visionary language the Church as she performs her evangelistic task and perfects her preaching, while Christ reinforces this preaching and call to repentance by means of the judgments which he unleashes in the world. In this fashion we should understand the entire vision of the seven seals which are successively broken open. In this fashion, too, the vision of the seven trumpets, wherein the seventh seal is particularized and expanded, is illumined.

All the judgments which Christ Jesus unleashes in the world in the form of war and revolution, of famine and pestilence, of postponement of wrath aroused by the blood of the Church, of world-collapse and especially of the seven final plagues have but one aim. It is that of bringing the world to repentance and causing men to believe the word of Christ as proclaimed by the Church. And only when all these attempts are stubbornly resisted even in the last hour, will God put a stop to history and lead His Church to victory.

Those who hold this view will understand at once that at the beginning of Revelation the centre of the stage is occupied by the *world*, in so far as the Church seeks to reach the world with the gospel of Christ Jesus.

As soon as we come to Revelation 12, however, the scene shifts. There the Church suddenly stands in the foreground, even though the world remains one of the chief actors in this drama. John tells us in Revelation 12 that he has seen a woman clothed with the glory of the

sun and the moon and the stars; thus a woman adorned with heavenly glory because she both brings forth the Christ in this world and is the mother of “the rest of her seed” who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. In this way he introduces the Church as queen of the light, who from the outset is contrasted with the dragon, the devil. He hates her not only because of her great Son Jesus Christ but also because of her other children who keep His commandments. John, however, does not develop in detail the drama of the persecution of the Church by the world, influenced by Satan. Actually he finishes it in one second of chapter 12. He simply says, “And the earth helped the woman.” For the earth opened her mouth, so that the river which the dragon spewed out after the woman was swallowed up by the cracks of the earth. Thus unto the woman could be shown a place for herself in the wilderness where she could be safe at least from immediate annihilation.

Thereafter in chapter 13 John mentions the great monster who appears repeatedly in history, namely, the beast which ascends out of the abyss and receives all its authority from the dragon. In this way the devil incorporates his dominion in a human power and allows that beast, which is the political world power, to be assisted by a second beast which comes up out of the earth: the beast of false prophecy. But precisely how this develops, after what fashion false prophecy attacks the Church and the world power opposes the Church, John does not relate in detail. For again, although quite differently than in the first section of the book, he takes the leap to the last days. In chapter 14 the thought-

pattern of chapter 7 reappears. It is namely so, that just before the last plagues of the seven trumpets break out — thus *after* the opening of the sixth seal with its judgments and *before* the unleashing of the final judgment (the seventh seal) — John announces that the Church of God has been made secure. He has sealed the 144,000 upon their foreheads. Only then are the ultimate catastrophes set in motion. From this you realize that in chapter 14 we are at the end of history. Before describing the last drama from the Church's viewpoint, he says again, "And I saw, and behold, the Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him a hundred and forty and four thousand, having His Father's Name written on their foreheads." And they sang a song of praise before the throne, and before the four living creatures and the elders.

When the great storm breaks, we find ourselves thus at the final moment of history. The sealing has been accomplished. Now appear the seven last plagues, which John first introduced as the seven trumpet-plagues but at this point announces as the seven vials or seven bowls filled with the last plagues (see the chapters 15 and 16).

Thus the seven last plagues are poured out upon the earth by God. It is remarkable that, while John throughout this chapter has indicated only the outstanding events and leaves large gaps, he suddenly introduces in great detail in connection with the revelation of the seven last plagues (the seven bowls) a unique figure: the great harlot whose name is Babylon. In explaining this I feel constrained to differ on some points with the exegesis of Prof. Greijdanus.

As we begin to read this chapter, we discover that the details presented at the outset are somewhat difficult to reconstruct. For John tells us that he beheld a woman, decked out as a harlot, who sat upon seven heads and at the same time upon many waters, she sat upon the mountains but also in the midst of waters. Likely we should so combine these two pictures or representations that John, receiving the vision, beholds an island sea wherein the Beast is swimming. Thus at this moment only his heads are visible and not his body, since the author writes somewhat later, “The beast that you saw was, and is not; and is about to come up out of the abyss . . .”

Another difficulty is presented by the seven heads. On the one hand these are called the seven mountains upon which the woman sat, and on the other hand the seven kingdoms (seven “kings”) of which five have already fallen, and the sixth now is, and the seventh is yet to come.

Perhaps we do best by beginning with the seven heads of the Beast. This is the easier, since in chapter 13 the same description is found of a monster with seven heads and ten horns and who has been endowed by the dragon with his power. Only in so far do the two descriptions differ, that in chapter 13 mention is made of the fact that one of the heads has been so severely smitten that the Beast received a deadly wound from which it could not be expected to recover. Yet contrary to all expectations its death-stroke was healed, with the result that when the Beast recovered from this deadly blow, everyone on earth was ready to worship it.

You will remember, of course, that when the writer of Revelation speaks about the beast, he is indicating the world power, the universal kingdom. This is the attempt to unite all peoples and nations and races into one great federation and under one powerful political structure. This he calls a "Beast," because this is the world power of a unified state which has scattered death and destruction since the beginning of the world. He could choose no other description, for too clearly has he seen in God's light that this world government is a monster which like some wild beast has seized everything within its reach and destroyed it. And in choosing this name John is not alone, for he refers to Daniel. In the seventh chapter of his prophecies, Daniel actually says the same thing. When discussing the world monarchies, he mentions four, the four which existed in his day and in the time immediately thereafter. He informs us that the first was like a lion, the second like a bear, the third like a leopard, while the fourth was an altogether terrifying monster with iron teeth. It kept on devouring and stamped in pieces all the residue. All the characteristics of these different beast are combined here. John describes but one Beast, yet it displays all the features of the four beasts of Daniel. Actually he says: it was like unto a leopard, and it had the feet of a bear and the mouth of a lion and also the seven heads and ten horns. Thus Daniel beheld four *distinct* beasts. He saw that world power in its several manifestations, each with its own pattern and character. Therefore he could say that the first appeared in history devouring as does a lion; the second brutish as a bear; the third cunning as a leopard; and the fourth as the most fearful

of them all. But John says: If you discern well, you will discover in all these kingdoms *one and the same* satanic power which incorporates itself in a unified state, a world government, and as such always speaks blasphemy and brings death and destruction upon mankind. Because John sees the *unity* of all these diverse world powers, the single style which controls them all, therefore he speaks of only *one* beast and ascribes to it all the characteristics of Daniel's four beasts. Daniel wrote about the four of his own time. John says that actually there will be seven. He is farther along in history. What Daniel did not see as yet, God revealed to John. Consequently he says: We have already seen five heads of that Beast; the one manifest now is the sixth; after a while the seventh will appear.

If you know your Bible, you will be able to glean from its pages what all this means. This totalitarian state and world power you will find for the first time shortly after the Flood — in Genesis 11. It arose in Babel where in opposition to the promise and mandate of God mankind stayed together and built a city to house everybody. They reasoned: Upon this accursed earth there is but one way to make life bearable — in unity lies our strength. For the first time, then, a world federation was organized there. And as you continue reading in the Old Testament, you will notice somewhat later the rise of the Assyrian power which shatters the people of Israel. Without interruption follow the Neo-Babylonian, the Medo-Persian, the Graeco-Macedonian and at last the Roman empire, this last one known to John by personal experience. Thus the Roman empire of that day was the sixth.

Now I think you already understand one of the details of Revelation 13 — the matter of the deadly wound which that Beast received. For when the sixth head appeared on the scene, events took a new turn. The Roman world power was not succeeded by another, which took its place. Rather, that kingdom was repeatedly broken up into a large number of great and small nations. This paved the way for the modern period of time in history, in which every people proclaims its national independence and pursues a policy of neutrality, a period of countless clashes. Throughout this period all attempts to resurrect the ancient world power of Babel are unsuccessful. This was tried by Louis XIV and Napoleon and Hitler but to no avail. All of modern history is a concatenation of wars among the various nations of the world all determined to defend their own independence. Consequently throughout this period between the sixth and the seventh world power it appears as if the old monster had indeed suffered a deadly wound, one so decisive that it cannot rise again, with the result that history will follow the same course as today with its many peoples and nations and its innumerable national boundaries and barriers. The struggle for a world-wide empire, which has always inspired the devil and wherein he seeks his strength, seems to be frustrated for good.

But John warns us: Watch out, lest you be deceived. Look carefully and believe God's Word. For indeed at the time of the dissolution of the Roman empire the satanic organization of sin seems to have received its death-blow without hope of recovery. But that which no one deems possible — in view of the perpetual clashes

and conflicting interests, the permanent tensions among all peoples — will finally take place. The compelling urge for unity and federation will triumph over all particularism and national independence and national pride. At last this spirit of unification will again embody itself in a world empire. Then contrary to all expectations that old monster, which throughout the ages has blasphemed God and wrought death and destruction, will miraculously arise. At that time the spirit of lawlessness, which caused both Daniel and John to tremble, will begin anew. At that time the Church once again, even as Israel in the days of our Lord Jesus, will be confronted with the monster of sin which terrorizes the Church and tyrannizes over the world with a sceptre of iron. At that time everyone will worship that Beast in the form of its seventh head, the world government which has recovered itself from its deadly divisiveness through the ages and now reveals its grand victory.

To be sure, I need venture no prophecies concerning the future when I say in simple language: We are beginning to see that seventh head today. Isn't it true that preparations are being made even now for the seventh world empire? And would you know what is most surprising and also most dangerous? It is that all this takes place so quietly. During the war there was the Atlantic Charter. Of course, we had to do something about the Germans, as did also the British and Americans. One simply had to join hands. Circumstances compelled it. What else could anyone do? And should one desire some future, one simply must not play the game of neutrality as in earlier days

or persist in swaggering about on one's own little legs. Everyone must conform to the demand of today's circumstances. And after the war this tidal wave engulfed the whole world with U.N.O., Security Council, United Nations, Atlantic Charter . . . Even The Netherlands is carried along . . . Of course, we all say . . . "Benelux," that is Belgium, The Netherlands, and Luxemburg, "appears on the scene, and The Netherlands enters into the alliance. Because if we do not join hands, then perhaps a more horrible war with atomic weapons will break out." Anyone who desires a future for the economy must learn to think and act and trade in terms of the family of nations. The United States of Europe is in the making. About this the newspapers make mention of some initial discussions — a little item which is scarcely noticed — but this union is coming. And when the Security Council stirs in the troubled waters, as for example in the Dutch East Indies, then we all grumble; and when we take notice of all the fumbling of the past few years, we complain especially when our children are there. Some even wonder whether Benelux will be profitable for us. But a war wouldn't be so nice either! Thus we are compelled to choose whether or not we will sacrifice our national aspirations. It is undeniable that not The Netherlands but the U.N.O. have their say in the Indies. And when all is said and done, Montgomery is also commander-in-chief of *our* soldiers. As soon as we realize this, further argumentation is fruitless. We can still wear the "orange," and display our Netherlands' flag and honour the Dutch lion, but meanwhile The Netherlands together with all the other nations will lose its identity

in the world government. The newspapers will make much noise about changing a few boundaries for the sake of a few square miles of territory and even challenge the party in power, but this noise will sound so foolish at a time when all national boundaries are being obliterated. But all this takes place so quietly. Meanwhile the several nations of the world are being swallowed up in the coming world empire.

Each day the contours of this seventh head become clearer. Naturally, we are angry that our troops are being evacuated from Djocja. We regard it as a disgrace to the Dutch flag, an insult to our nation, a mockery of our boys who have risked their lives for nothing. But shall I tell you something? Within a half year we will forget this, and after twenty years our children will assume that all this was proper. But then, at that time, we shall be painfully aware that the *beast* has been healed of his death-wound!

We tremble when the Russians act sullenly in Berlin. And when as in recent days the bombers again streak through our skies we ask anxiously: Is anything serious in the offing? When the Russians are a little friendlier, we again take a deep breath and say, "No war yet." And to be sure everyone wants the Big Four to agree. People applaud when our prime minister affixes his signature to some solemn pact, supposing that this is the road to world peace. At school too, our children must be brought up-to-date on the United Nations.

But no one speaks about the seventh head. Small wonder that the Beast laughs. Not too much enthusiasm is evident, since everyone betrays a tendency to perpetuate the traditional. But all are agreed that the

present developments are demanded by our times. Thus tomorrow already they can begin to worship the Beast: Never war again but prosperity, thanks to the United Nations. Perhaps the Russians will first have to be put in their place, only then never another war but perpetual peace!

Are there, then, not some things a thousand times more terrible than even a war with nuclear weapons? Is not this the worst of all, that the old monster is once more alive and raises himself up to spew destruction over the face of the earth?

Would that we worried less about the chances of a coming war. So long as these chances are present, the time of the end is not yet come. Would that we stopped talking about economic problems and soberly assessed the spirit of the age — that with full speed we are steering in the direction of the seventh head.

This is the seventh manifestation of “Babel,” a totally godless world wherein we shall stand all alone, since therein is no room for God and for His Christ and for His tabernacle and for those who serve Him there.

When I read all this, I can understand why John was so shocked by this vision. Yet I believe that his perplexity actually had a deeper source. He was frightened most of all by that woman seated on the scarlet beast.

You will remember that earlier in Revelation John introduced us to a woman, a woman clothed with the sun, having the moon under her feet, and adorned with a crown of seven stars on her head. This was the

Church, bedecked with the glory from above because she was enabled to bring forth Christ in this world and to become the mother of the holy seed. But here is the woman clothed with the glory which is from below — with purple, scarlet, gold and jewels and pearls.

And why was John so frightened by this? The answer is simple. This *woman* is *also* the *church*, but then the apostate church, who was the bride but became a prostitute. Upon her forehead John saw her name, precisely as all the harlots in the Roman empire carried their names inscribed upon their foreheads. And this name was: Babylon the Great! But John adds: this is a mystery. One must not think here of the city of Babel or the kingdom of Babylon. This must be understood figuratively, spiritually, precisely as John speaks in chapter 11 of Jerusalem as the city which is spiritually called Sodom and Egypt where our Lord was crucified. Thus he clearly pointed to Jerusalem. So it is also here. The official name of this woman is not Babylon, but *spiritually* she deserves to be called Babylon. In this woman who has become a harlot — in this apostate church is revealed the spirit of the ancient Babylon, who no longer saw an opportunity to incorporate itself in a world empire but recognized the opportunity to assume this form within the church. That church is Babylon because she does what the world empires have wanted to do since the beginning: seeking unity without believing in the promise and without concerning herself with God's demand. And while doing this she *calls* herself church, bedecked with the glory of heaven, even though she *is* Babylon. For she seeks her glory in this present world and sells her *soul* for the treasures which

pass away. *Calling* herself the wife of God and the bride of Christ, she is *actually* the mother of harlots and of the abominations of the earth, the chief prostitute.

This, of course, does not compel us to think only of immorality, although this is included. You will remember that when the Bible speaks of committing adultery, this describes the Church in the act of forgetting God who is her Husband and of breaking the covenant. Adultery is present when the church transgresses God's commandments. In that connection and in consequence of this, the abomination of licentiousness appears. But this adultery is the total, radical apostasy, the breach of the covenant and the murder of her children.

It is striking that when John speaks of the beast, he refers to Daniel. But when he speaks of that woman, he reminds us of *Ezekiel* 16 and 23 where we find the same message. You should read that once again. When God drove Jerusalem into captivity and punished her, He said, "Sodom was bad and Samaria was even somewhat worse, but Jerusalem was the worst prostitute which the world has ever seen." This was *also* John's consternation. The woman arrayed with the light of heaven had exchanged the glories from above for the treasures of this earth. She had abandoned the Word, even though God was her husband. And because she was a bad wife for the Lord, she became a bad mother for her children. John saw her drunk with the blood of the saints and the witnesses of Christ. Instead of nurturing her children in the Lord, she sinned against them so greatly that she became dead-drunk with the blood of her own children.

Do you suppose that John did not know what was happening in his time? He surely saw the Jews persecuting the Christians. In the Jewish congregation, the “synagogue of Satan” (Rev. 2:9), we again discover the woman who became a harlot, the church which broke the covenant with the Lord and therefore killed her true children. Read then the rest of the pages of history! What did the Roman Catholic church do? What did the Reformed (state-) church of The Netherlands do? What did the synodical-bound churches do? One may say that today there is no bloodshed. Yet there is a persecution which is more bitter than death. As often as the church abuses church discipline against her children, God says that she is drunk with the blood of the saints.

I do not maintain that outside of the liberated churches no one is saved. Let me emphasize this. For from what I have just said the conclusion is frequently and unblushingly drawn that the liberated churches announce themselves as the only churches wherein salvation is found — which is completely erroneous. I indeed believe that with the synodical-bound churches and with the Reformed (state-) church there are those who are saved. I also believe that there are Roman Catholics who are saved. But this is not the issue. The point is rather whether we are dealing with an apostate church which slays the brothers. Nor is this a passing quarrel, but rather one which rocks the world in the last days. What, after all, does it mean that also there some people are saved? Ask rather how many millions have been driven into hell by the Roman Catholic church. Italy, France, Spain, Belgium — these are lost and the true Christian life has disappeared without a trace.

Are there Reformed (state-) church members who are saved? Thanks be unto God, indeed! But how many hundreds of thousands have perished within a single century here in The Netherlands, because this church was apostate. Entire generations, which sixty years ago were orthodox but as concerned believers remained within the false church, now seem to be irrevocably lost to Christ.

So serious is the apostasy of the church! So dreadful is it, when the church makes a game of the covenant and thus becomes unfaithful to her children. Therefore it is not the question whether one can be saved there, but rather what we are doing with the generations to come.

In this connection I should also touch on a question closely related to the above. This is discussed from time to time among us: the problem of cooperation. I realize full well that people do not find a ready solution to this and therefore are afraid to withdraw from an association which God does not want to see destroyed. But what I cannot understand is that Christians who can no longer see the possibility of cooperation in specific situations are accused of seeking to destroy everything; that even within their own church they are compelled to listen to voices which mock with: a separate church, a separate political party, a separate newspaper . . .

The matter really isn't so simple. If the sole motive were an inordinate desire to be separate, then the cause certainly should come to nought. But to this I add: Woe to him among us who is not disturbed by the basic issues which are involved. It simply is a fact that nearly

all Christian organizations no longer are concerned about departing from the Lord and His Word. They champion a set of lovely theories which they call “principles”, but faithfulness to God’s covenant is nowhere taken seriously and nowhere is there concern about the murders which are committed within the church. If the covenant of the Lord and loyalty to the true children of the Church no longer grip men’s hearts, then I don’t know what will happen. But I do know that this is the spirit of adultery and that such cooperation is not a manifestation of the communion of the saints controlled from above but rather a striving after the proverb, “In unity lies our strength” in the spirit of Babel. Of this the Bible declares: judgment will come upon it. If it were only thus: they have an organization, and we too; they have a newspaper, and we too; thus a matter of competition, then we would be guilty of the same sin. But surely the goal is not the *organization* but the salvation of *men* for Jesus Christ and His coming. All organization is purely secondary! Our concern is not for the school but the children. And because the salvation of whole generations in The Netherlands is involved in this, therefore no mere man may deal lightly with these matters, especially in our day when we see the contours of the seventh head.

This adultery, let this be remembered, is international. John beholds the woman sitting upon the seven heads. He said that these are the seven hills of Rome which in those days was the capital of the world. A little later he added, that she sits among many waters, peoples, nations, and tongues. The church is an international power.

This is actually the most dreadful of all. Therefore he pauses here so long. When the beast in its sixth head received the deadly wound and loses the opportunity for centuries to establish a world unity and thus a *political* international power, the church becomes throughout this period an international power and by means of her false unity manifests the image of Babel. Never think lightly about the apostasy of the church. John declares that she rules over the kings of the earth. In her apostasy the church has pursued earthly power and obtained it. Who really are in control among the peoples of the world? The leaders of the apostate church! The church is the chief figure in world politics. All the kings of the earth have committed adultery with her and catered to her. All the inhabitants of the earth are drunk with the wine of her adultery, for all men are intoxicated with a Christian culture which is actually apostate. You know, of course, that Christianity is strong in Europe and America. We speak of Christian Europe and Christian America and proclaim that all of cultural life is Christian. But who had power in Russia in the past? The Czars. Yet over them stood the Greek Catholic church, the harlot. In Spain Philip II ruled, but the Roman Catholic church was in control. In France there was Louis XIV, but the harlot really ruled. In the eighteen hundreds William I was king of The Netherlands, but the Reformed (state-) church committed adultery with him. Never throughout the centuries has there been a pure worldly political power. The actual power rested with the apostate church, the harlot.

What went wrong in Indonesia? Was this the result of an inefficient government and the consequence of interference by the Security Council? The situation went wrong, because behind the scenes was the Roman Catholic church and the Reformed (state-) church, which even sent two pastors to America to oppose police action. Behind the scenes were American Christendom and the World Council of churches. When speaking about political matters, we use such political designations as Jews, Liberals, Roman Catholics. But none of these names can be used without using an ecclesiastical term. The “Jew” and the “Liberal” and the “Roman Catholic”, these are again and again the children of the harlot. The apostate church has not understood her heavenly calling but reached out after worldly power. All the misery in Indonesia and throughout the world was born in the church who is the harlot. Would history have taken its present course in Russia, if the Greek church had not committed adultery for centuries with the Czars? Would the recent misery have come upon Indonesia if the churches throughout the world had not committed adultery? The whole course of human history since the days of the Roman Empire has been dominated by the apostate church.

When in our day the world empire, this seventh head, is being built, this is occasioned by the church which breaks its covenant with the Lord and intoxicates herself with the blood of the faithful witnesses. All wars and revolutions and social injustices and abominations are born within and are fed by the adulterous church. This underscores the significance of the creedal article on the true and false church. This demands the reformation, the return to the Lord.

Do you know what I can never understand? While everyday and everywhere we see with our eyes the devastation with which the false church regales humanity — a devastation which produces universal sighing — hardly anyone takes the confession concerning “true and false church” seriously. If one only speaks nice words about unity and makes sympathetic gestures in the direction of ecumenicity, reaching over every ecclesiastical wall, then a person is praised as a fine fellow. But if one confesses to the truth about Christ’s Church, such a person is accused of narrow-minded churchmanship, of absolutism, of fanaticism.

Think for a moment about the relationship between us and the synodical churches. The leadership maintain with determination the doctrinal decisions which rob all promises and demands and thereby the whole covenant with God of its strength. The great majority (and this perhaps is even worse) doesn’t seem to care anymore. All they want is peace and unity. Already voices are being heard favouring reunion with the Reformed (state-) church. Many in The Netherlands are flirting with the World Council of churches. And their mission churches in Indonesia are already affiliated with such a council in which Communists also occupy influential positions.

In this situation some in our churches are already rejoicing at the possibility of a speedy or eventual reunion with them. But then I would say, “Be quiet when another war breaks out. When terrors stalk abroad as presently in Indonesia, don’t open your mouth about Schermerhorn and Beel but simply announce that here this church of ours has also committed adultery.”

As long as they do not take the covenant seriously and become faithful to the Lord and thus also to the children of the Church, so long should we refuse to think about reunion, let alone even speak about it. The Lord says: Come out, come out, that you be not partakers of her sins. (Rev. 18:4).

I must say something more about that beast. Already, I suppose, you have understood this. After the days of the Roman empire the antichristian world government could no longer rise to power, for instead of one world empire there appeared a host of nations who continually waged war with each other. In the place of the beast we see today as an international power the apostate church. Therefore John could say, "At present the beast is not." The entire civilization of the world has been coloured by Christianity. The antichrist cannot be seen clearly and baldly. Regrettably everything bears the hall-mark of being Christian. But in actuality it is the false church which permeates and penetrates all of life. Formerly in the days of Rome and earlier the beast was, but today he is not there even though he is. For the beast dwells within the church. But it will come again. The seventh head will appear, says John, and will remain only a short time. Then after a little while the beast will be completely manifested as the antichrist in his final appearance, the eighth world-ruler. During the seventh empire the church will still be able to maintain her strong position and continue with her adultery. But when the reign of antichrist comes, there will still be divergent powers but all of them blind subjects of antichrist. All their authority they have delivered unto him to be motivated by the same will as he. God Himself has put it in their hearts.

Today we already can understand this, as we see one nation after another delegating or depriving themselves of some of their authority. When this process has run its course, the world dictator will have appeared with all the others blindly following him even though they insist on exercising dominion within their own realms. At that time a two-pronged attack begins, the war against the Lamb and His faithful followers but also the war against the woman called the harlot. By that time they are more than disgusted with the secularized Christendom. Those ten horns — which are the ten vassals of the antichrist, the rulers who in association with him exercise authority — will together hate the harlot and uncover her and eat and burn her flesh. Today there is international respect for Christendom, for “righteousness, mercy, and love to fellow-men” and all such things, since men can play a fine game with the false church. But the time will come, when they shall loathe her and cast her aside in her nakedness.

Would you see some of the symptoms, some glimpses in history, wherein this is beginning to manifest itself? During the war Hitler was particularly antagonistic towards the Jews, and we trembled because of the gruesome deeds as gas chambers and the rest. Hitler hated the Jews because of what they had done to Germany in the spheres of politics and economics. But these Jews were still the apostate church, and with their adultery they had polluted Germany and not Germany alone. World Jewry is guilty of many evils. Thus at last the flames of hatred began to burn. Far be it from me to rationalize the persecutions of the Jews, but Jewry as the apostate church has

exerted tremendous power and with her abominations has led many astray. Thus the judgment comes and hate burns brightly! The Russians in their hatred against the Hungarian Roman Catholics and the Bulgarian Protestants have seen the church's power in the life of the nation, socially and politically and economically, yet the church was not the heavenly bride but a harlot who committed adultery. With her men make short shrift. And in the days to come this will take place on an international scale.

Therefore the Lord warns: My people, depart out of the midst of her that you may escape her plagues. I realize that when this is done, war is declared against the true Church and against Jesus Christ. For neither the antichrist nor his followers will make a distinction. All that bears the name of church they will seize. But God adds, "Although the antichrist will make no distinction between Church and church, I will do so." For when he opposes the false church, God declares that His purposes are being fulfilled, that His judgment is falling upon the great harlot. But when he wars against the Lamb and His faithful servants, God says that this Lamb is Lord of lords and King of kings. He will triumph with His true Church. Oppression will be experienced for a little season, but then we will escape.

Revelation 17 gives us at a glance all of world history and enables us to understand the times. Often we find ourselves unable to keep up even with the best news review of Mr. Jongeling's paper.⁸ World events are

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Mr. Pieter Jongeling, is well-known under his penname Piet Prins, the author of the Scout books, published by Inheritance Publications. —RAJ.

frequently so confusing and chaotic. But God sets John above the international situation and causes him in the spirit to see it all and then describe it for us in the Scriptures. This is the style of the New Testament time and this shall surely come to pass.

When we have understood this, then we know that the issue is not what America has plotted or the United Nations has planned but rather what is the true Church! The basic issue is the problem of the Church, that question which men have so lightly dismissed because it is so thorny. But this is undoubtedly the most significant issue of all. The issue is whether the Church keeps the covenant and cherishes her children or whether she kills them. We cannot prevent the unfolding of history. When men suggest that we make common cause against Communism and thus demonstrate that in unity lies our strength, I would reply: Rather stop all this, for we cannot prevent this development. The coming of the seventh head cannot be stopped nor that of the eighth.

But what we can do is to make our decision about the Church — whether we will cooperate in the abominations of the harlot or whether we with Christ as His called and elect and faithful people will keep covenant with Him and with each other. We can decide whether we will perish in the judgment which will come upon the great Babel or whether with Christ we will triumph over the devil and his kingdom. When then Djocja is surrendered and Soekarno returns to lay bare all the shame of The Netherlands, and when we see the international powers play their political game, don't throw your newspaper in fury on the table but listen to

God addressing you in the specific facts: What now do you believe about the one, holy, catholic Christian Church? Will she be bride or harlot?

We now come to Revelation 19:6-10. This portion of Holy Scripture relates a new vision received by John on Patmos. Immediately it is clear that everything here centres in the glorification of Christ's bride. For John hears a mighty thundering of voices, raising a song of praise, "For the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready." And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and shining: for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints." And since this is the message of the song, the angel who speaks with John commands him to write a beatitude, "Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb."

Now it should be clear to us that this vision is the counterpart of that other vision found in Revelation 17. While Revelation 19 announces to us the glory of Christ's *Bride*, the seventeenth chapter is replete with the judgments which in the last days shall come upon the *harlot* who sat upon many waters. John first told us that the harlot is condemned; but now he proclaims that the bride is about to receive her glory and her lovely bridal gown. Thus the contrast between the two prophecies is complete.

Yet it may not escape our attention that there is an intimate relation between these two chapters of Revelation. All too lightly we suppose that in this book we receive many distinct and isolated glimpses into the future, something like viewing a series of separate

slides. This is incorrect. Throughout the book runs a straight line. All of us know the differences between a film and a slide-projector. The man who makes use of the latter is constantly showing a new scene on the screen, a series of *distinct* pictures. But he who shows a film does something quite different. He presents a series of *closely connected* shots, so that we are aware of the progress from the one to the other. Whereas the slide-projector can only give a series of pictures, each separated from the next by a leap as it were, the film presents a coherent picture. Here is a story in which the action is seen and the progression is exhibited.

So it is in Revelation. John does not show a series of shots to portray the end-time but the drama of the consummation of all things. Here we see the total development from one stage to the next. He shows, as it were, a *film* of the last days.

Consider for a moment, if Revelation 19 were an isolated scene without any connection with the rest, then to be sure it would be interesting to view. It would be a consolation, when in all the struggles and stress of our day we would be given a glimpse of the coming great glory. But then we would be unable to see the progress: we would grasp nothing of the way which leads to that glory. We would be compelled, in order to taste the comfort, to take a leap in the spirit out of our present realities to the glory which will come, only immediately thereafter again to be plunged back into the misery of our grim and gray existence.

But now keep clearly in mind that John is not showing an isolated slide in his projector; he is running a film.

For who is the one speaking with him here? This is the same angel mentioned in chapter 17; one of the seven angels who empty out the vials with God's last plagues upon the world. He led John in the spirit into the wilderness, far beyond the clamour of the world. Here John no longer received a message. He was hermetically sealed off from this life. But then God had this angel show him the film of history. John first beheld that breath-taking spectacle of the Beast with seven heads and ten horns and of the adulterous woman who sat upon that Beast. By this time you know about all this. The beast is the satanic world-empire, the one realm of blasphemy and abominations which since the days of the flood has manifested itself repeatedly in a different form. Almost without interruption the world empires follow each other: the old-Babylonian, the Assyrian, the Neo-Babylonian, the Medo-Persian, the Graeco-Macedonian, the Roman. Ever in another form and in new garb. But still always the incarnation of the demonic drive towards world unity and international fraternization apart from God's promises and contrary to His commandments. A world empire in a variety of forms and yet essentially the manifestation and realization of disbelief and disobedience; a realm ever and again of blasphemy, of apostasy and thus always as a wild beast which wreaks devastation and misery. And then suddenly the deadly wound; for the sixth head is cleft and crushed and thereupon the world is broken up into nations and kingdoms; then comes the modern period of history with its many peoples and boundaries which make it impossible again to unite mankind into one nation. It seems therefore that the satanic monster,

after the dissolution of the Roman empire, will never rise again, as if it has been wounded unto death. Yet after so many centuries it succeeds. Then men learn to rise above their divisions and their wars, and the satanic world empire arises anew.

How clearly we learn to understand history here! For today we look into the jaws of that Beast; we see the contours of the seventh head becoming clearer every day.

To this is then added that other, that even greater terror: the woman who commits adultery and decks herself with the glory of this world. The apostate church which breaks the covenant of the Lord and commits adultery and slays her faithful children; the harlot who has become an international power and dictates throughout the whole world and thus determines the course of politics and commerce; who flirts with the leaders of the world and allies herself with them; who makes all men drunk with the glory of a "Christian" culture; the church which forgets her heavenly calling and despises her splendour from above and adorns herself instead with gold and purple and jewels. Until at last the Lord produces the antichrist and his ten vassals and drives the whole world to attack the apostate church.

If your experience is as mine, you can no longer escape the oppressiveness of this vision. For the seventh head of the Beast makes himself manifest. The world empire approaches so silently. It is already much nearer than we think. You must realize that already now boundaries are being effaced, and our government finds itself powerless to do anything. You must see that our

nation as well as the others is being controlled by Lake Success. And surely you must be seeing the world church with her amorous eyes and filled with adultery.

Now then, this life of ours as it takes shape in our time, this history which is unfolding itself, John saw with his own eyes on the film of the end of the world which the angel showed. This was, so to speak, the initial act.

But now comes the second act. When the apostate church has reached the zenith of her apostasy and adultery, of her unfaithfulness to Christ and the true children of the Church, in the days of the seventh head — when world-empire and world-church together push such fornicating to its extreme and so create a glittering “Christian” culture which deceives nearly everyone, then suddenly the seventh head will make way for the eighth — the kingdom of the undisguised antichrist and his ten vassals. They no longer join forces with the adultery and shocking splendour of the church which while flirting with all around builds a brilliant culture and becomes drunk with the blood of her own children. On the contrary, suddenly they loathe her; they are filled with revulsion at the sight of her and all the blinding luxuries in which she clothes herself. They must have none of her pious speeches and christianized culture. Furiously and vehemently they fall upon the apostate church. All the rulers of the world crowd after the antichrist, each one surrendering his crown and authority to the Beast to follow him blindly. More unanimous than ever before in the history of the world are they, for God has suddenly untied them after all their feuding and fighting. He has delivered all the potentates unto a

universal and wholesale hatred against the harlot, and they plan to kill her.

This, then, is the second act of the drama which John sees in chapter eighteen. He beholds the great Babel, the church solely united in unbelief and disobedience; he beholds that great Babel consumed by flames. This is a conflagration in comparison with which the flames of Rotterdam were of no account. In a moment the whole Christian culture is destroyed. All its treasures all the wealth and pomp and science and art, indeed, all that the international church has built up by her apostasy is consumed in an instant. In consternation John describes all this for us: the kings of the earth, the merchants and the multitudes in the streets. For commercial life in its totality was geared to the Christian culture of the apostate church; all waxed rich because of her; and in one hour all this glory is destroyed.

Now you may ask whether there is no one who is grieved because all these cultural treasures are devoted to the flames? But they could not do otherwise. God had made all the leaders of earth one in will and has inclined their hearts to do His will. God will no longer tolerate that culture, and He presses all the powers to do *His* will. Therefore they set fire to do it, so that its smoke arises forever. All the splendour and glory wherewith the apostate church bedecked herself and of which she caused men to “drink” with delight — all this is destroyed in one hour. Of the apostate church and her culture nothing remains.

Meanwhile the screen portrays the *last* act of this one drama. It opens in heaven with the Hallelujah

chorus. Up there the voice of praise to God, who at last has judged the harlot who with her adulteries has corrupted the whole earth and who has intoxicated herself with the blood of her children, resounds. And that song of praise has barely ended, when John hears for a second time: Hallelujah. This rejoicing continues. It ascends to the very steps of the throne of God. And finally there is even a voice from the throne which summons all the servants of God to sing Hallelujah. Then John hears a sound increasing in intensity as a mighty hurricane. The anthem which began in heaven is echoed by the Church on earth. It is the sound as of a mighty host. It resounds like the heavy thunder of a waterfall and as the dark reverberation of a thunderstorm, "Hallelujah, for the Lord the Almighty God has accepted the dominion of the kingdom." The kingdom of God has now at last become a full reality. And they encourage each other: Let us be glad and rejoice! To God be all the glory!

For who, was behind all this? Who caused the beast to recover from its deadly wound? Who caused the antichrist to appear? Who forced the movement of history unto the coming of the seventh head of the beast? Who brought this judgment upon the great harlot? *God!*

This was not the work of men. The entire course of events was the work of God. Triumphantly he sat above the great sea of the nations. He directed the days, he stirred the powers, He settled accounts with the great harlot to destroy her, he assumed His sovereign control. And this He did, in order that His people might rejoice. For now is come the marriage of the Lamb, and His

bride has decked herself for this nuptial day with her shimmering white wedding-gown.

Do you now see the course of events which we are experiencing, which John indeed saw from afar but which is being fulfilled before our eyes?

At the *outset* is the Beast and the seventh head which appears. At the outset is the harlot which corrupts life and intoxicates herself with blood. At the outset is our world of today, so stifling and oppressive. But suddenly comes the second: the fire which breaks out upon the false church and all her splendour. But God exerts his pressures and so directs the course of history that eternal joy appears. When then you shudder, as the first dark figures of this film appear on the screen of world history, hold fast the glory of the last scenes which the *Word* reveals and which shall also be revealed by-and-by as *history*. The false church perishes, but the true Church, the Bride, enters along this road into eternal communion with the Bridegroom. The *end* of history, which is being made today and causes us to tremble, the end of this history is the glorious marriage of the true Church. In a little while she will be brought in solemn procession and in glorious apparel to her King.

He who believes this is truly comforted.

As we witness the appalling chaos of our time, the godlessness and abominations and unconscionability of world politics, the intrigues within the church — then not one of us can possibly escape. To be sure, Revelation 17 enables us to see some line and direction in this confusion. God points it out to us; the seventh head of the Beast is coming. And after him the

antichrist as the eighth; meanwhile the church continues to commit adultery. As we read this, we see it being fulfilled before our eyes. Thus we learn to understand the life of today. But if we knew no more, we would despair. It really means something to live in such a time in which the old monster again rears his head. How fearfully lonesome we would become. And in such a world we bring forth our children.

Not long ago there was a story in the newspaper about a young man who chose Paris as his home and refused to have anything more to do with citizenship papers. He called himself "World Citizen number 1." People laughed at him as a foolish dreamer. We have our children properly registered in the place of birth, and when we request a passport it is neatly noted: Nationality: Dutch. But pause for a moment. National life is deteriorating. Boundaries exist only on paper. In actual fact there is already a world government. All our children, born as Netherlanders, are really world citizens. When the situation becomes serious, they will be fighting in an international army. I see the seventh head, and close behind the antichrist, the great harlot sitting upon many waters. In such a world I beget children. If I knew no more than this, I would lose my sanity and gaze about in bewilderment. We introduce our children into a world of counterfeit Christianity today, a world of undisguised blasphemy tomorrow. This I could not endure, if God had not already shown me the last scenes of the terrifying film, "Hallelujah! The Lord has accepted His dominion, and the marriage feast of the Lamb shall come! This is the conclusion.

When people then ask me: What is going to happen to the world? What is the destiny of the demon-possessed history of today? Where are you going, and where are you children going? — then I now reply: straight through the adultery and alongside of the open jaw of the monster we are on the way to the banquet of the marriage of the Lamb. If I did not know this, I could not face life.

For do you know where lies the real danger of life today? It is that we allow all this to come upon us in fatalistic fashion; that we see the intrigues of world politics and the adultery of the church as those who are unable to change anything, as people who, while either gnashing their teeth or watching with indifference, see the avalanche come upon them. But the Lord says, “You shall *believe!*” Is today’s history the pawn of fate before which we stand powerless? To be sure, I also see the abominations of mankind. Yet all this is governed by God. He permits the monster to arise. He permits the fornicating and drunken church to pursue her course until the day of her destruction. But He says, “In this way will I reign over all, and in this way will I bring My Church to the marriage feast. I am making the preparations. I am already setting the table and putting the chairs in their place.”

The drama in the Indies is slowly coming to its conclusion. In England people are being aroused but too late. Also the Americans are learning from the papers of their dead journalists that their political manoeuvring was detrimental. But meanwhile dreadful facts have come to pass. We are experiencing the destruction of The Netherlands and Dutch Indonesia.

God is saying: Do you see the head of the beast, enraged more than ever? Do you see the adultery of the church, more filthy than before? But do you also see in and above all this your God who also guides the history of these days, who is coming into His sovereign glory, and who along this way is conducting His people to the marriage feast?

Then there is no longer fate to terrify you, but there is faith to fill you with gladness. Already today, in the midst of this demon-possessed world, we are learning the Hallelujah. Indeed, the horror occasioned by so many abominations has not passed away. I still tremble because of both the beast and the harlot. But I can also say, "We are going to the marriage feast. Let us be glad and rejoice." We shall give Him glory who causes this terrifying history to issue into the wedding-room. The Netherlands has become a fourth-rate power, and the kingdom has been strangled, and the Indies are approaching a dark night; but the end of all this is the wedding of the Lamb.

And if God today is already preparing the wedding room, because He wants to fill us with eternal joy, if He says to us, "The meaning of all this is the glorifying of My true *Church*, that is what I am working at," then our life again becomes meaningful. If through all these events God seeks the glory of the Church as His Bride, what else can we do but place the emphasis where He places it? If He makes the terrifying history of beast and harlot and antichrist, because He speaks of "Church," what else in this world should be of any real significance to me than that Church which He is leading to the marriage feast? For when we contemplate eternal joy — let's be honest now —

we hardly think at all about the Church. Most people only seem concerned that their soul shall be with Christ. But if you have trifled until now with the faith-article about the Church,⁹ this opportunity is yours no longer. The final phase of world history in all its details is so directed by the Lord as we behold its realization today because Christ says, “My concern is with My Bride and with My marriage to her.” The beast raises its head, and the adulterous woman ogles in every direction and adorns herself with the fruits of culture, but God says, “All this is necessarily so. For the time of the marriage is at hand.”

Shall we pity ourselves that we must live in these times and witness these terrors? God says, “Look at the last scenes of the film; then you will understand what is at stake in your own day. The marriage is at hand; therefore you who are invited to the wedding may be considered blessed.” Are we creatures to be pitied, because we must live in these times? And our children, are they wretched, because they enter this world at this stage of history? The angel instructs John: “Write, blessed are they who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb.” To be sure, they pass through chaos and terror. But they are called to the great wedding, to the feast of everlasting fellowship between Christ and His true Church.

And because Christ in all the events of this time is making preparations for the marriage, His Bride also should prepare herself. Have you ever met a bride who just before the wedding day, when all the invitations have been mailed and all arrangements have been made with the bridegroom, still shows no interest in her bridal gown?

⁹ Holwerda means Article 28 of the Belgic Confession. —RAJ.

Thus the Scriptures say so appropriately; “His wife has made herself ready. And to her it was granted to be arrayed in shining fine linen; for this fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints” (Rev. 19:7b, 8).

There you see Christ’ true Bride in her wedding finery. You will recollect how the apostate church bedecked herself like a prostitute, with gold and pearls and gems, with purple and scarlet. By her extravagant dress she drew attention to herself. She adorned herself for everyone, because she was for sale. But the true bride clothes herself simply and attractively in shining white and clean linen, which linen is the righteous acts or the good works of the saints. This garment is *given* her, for only by the power of *grace* can the Church with her children perform good works. But with these she adorns herself. She does not dress to attract everyone but adorns herself solely for her bridegroom. She prepares herself with her children for the wedding by good works.

What, therefore is left for us to do today? What is to be our goal? The apostate church snatches at honour and power, wealth and luxury, influence and prestige, and for the sake of these denies her husband and barter herself away to anyone. But the true Church and her living members do not attract attention in this world. They receive no power and glory. Silently and soberly they go their own way. But they reach after righteousness, after the doing of the will of Christ. And when the splendour of the harlot is consumed by the flames, the bride of Christ appears without spot or blemish in the shining garment of good works.

Thus only one thing is important today. We need no longer dream of a position of power and prestige. This

can be attained only by committing adultery. Even among our people we hear some say, “We must do something! We must establish an organization for this or that purpose. We must gain some influence and win the world for Christ.” Let us not intoxicate ourselves with such illusions. We will not overcome the world; the antichrist will conquer. Influence will be gained by the apostate church which is not faithful to Christ and her own children, but the true Church is always persecuted, set at nought, driven, despoiled, slain. What alone is significant? Not that our business-men make profit, but that they do the will of Christ in their assigned place. Not that our labourers attain to a higher standard of living, but that they are zealous in good works. If only in our families and all other relationships the will of God has dominion, then the rest matters not. Significant in our day is only the question whether we are truly Church and whether all of us as living members of the Church manifest the pattern of the true Church in all good works.

The future belongs to such alone. Of them it is written, “Blessed are they which are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb.” And this means to cleave unto the Lord Christ with a true faith. Important is only this that we as Church cling to the grace of the liberation,¹⁰ and that each of us allows this grace free

¹⁰

Holwerda is referring to the Liberation of 1944, when God set His people free from the unscriptural synod decisions of 1942. For more information about this, please read, *My Path To Liberation* by Douwe Van Dijk — a book that reads like a novel — or *Schilder's Struggle for the Unity of the Church* by Rudolf van Reest, of which especially chapter 3, also dealing with the Second World War, is very captivating. Schilder was not only a Church Reformer, but in essence also the most important spiritual leader of the Dutch Resistance Movement at the beginning of World War II. See about this also *A Theatre in Dachau* by Hermanus Knoop. —RAJ.

passage in his personal life. All that is important consists in this, that we in this antichristian world, in which the world church commits adultery, keep ourselves chaste and pure for Christ.

Of course, this can be done only when the firm hope of the coming wedding feast fills our hearts. Therefore the angel also gave John the emphatic assurance, "These are the true words of God" (Rev. 19:9b). For if in John's day the Church would lose hope and fail to live in expectation of the marriage, which in spite of all is approaching, then she will be drawn away by the beast or the harlot and at any event will not remain standing. Also then there were martyrs in the Church. If we see only the head of the beast and the pomp of the harlot and no longer set our hope on the marriage which is the goal towards which all this is moving, ah, then not one will remain standing.

This is true also for us. The head of the beast is an ugly reality and comes oppressively upon us and our children. We have become aware what loyalty to Christ and choosing for His true Church demands in the way of struggle and ridicule and distress.

If then one has no hope which carries him through, he is lost.

And now we stand only at the beginning. All this will become much worse, as soon as antichrist appears. Daily the prayer offered at the time of baptism assumes more profound meaning for me, when it states, "That we, daily following Him, may joyfully bear our cross, cleaving unto Him in true faith, firm hope, and ardent love; that we, being comforted in Thee, may leave this life, which is nothing but a constant death."

Here the Church confesses that life becomes a constant death for Christ's sake. It becomes a life of cross-bearing. And that cross does not consist of headache or rheumatism or some other miseries. It is rather that the church drinks to intoxication the blood of the faithful witnesses and that the beast opens wide his mouth. Through all this we must pass, and such is possible only when we cleave unto Him with a true faith and a firm hope.

Let us realize that it really means something to look into the cruel jaws of the beast or to call the harlot by her actual name. Then the marriage feast seems too unattainable and so unreal, something with which one can't accomplish a thing.

But still I believe that it is possible to hold fast this hope. God not only gives us the assurance, "These are the true words of God," He also confirms this by the *facts*. What we see and experience in church and world today is precisely what John saw from afar. And as history is unfolded still more, we shall see more clearly that these were not the visions of a frenzied fanatic but the true words of God. But when history *demonstrates* that the *beginning* of the prophecy concerning the end is true, then it becomes easier to expect the conclusion of this drama. The harlot decks herself in finery, the seventh head of the beast is being more sharply outlined — this we see with our own eyes. But if these beginnings are real, then I know for sure that the *conclusion* is true. Then I am convinced that the marriage is approaching. The beast rises from the dead, and all men join in worshipping. This is precisely what John has told us. The harlot arrays and intoxicates herself. This is

precisely what God has announced. But then the marriage feast will also surely come to pass. The Word of God is corroborated by the facts. The apostasy of the church and the return of the monster demonstrate that God does not lie. Therefore these times teach me to hold more firmly to the Word than ever and to hope for the great supper of the marriage of the Lamb.

“. . . Cleave to Him with ardent love,” so we pray in the form for baptism.

Now concerning that ardent love our text concludes with a most remarkable announcement. John was deeply moved, when the angel said that all the agitated and chaotic history of the world was so made by God that the marriage-supper of the Lamb would come. To himself he says: How great is this angel! He is prophesying the end of the ways of God in history, because he could tell me all these things. And not only does he prophesy all this; he is also one of the actors who pours out the final vials of wrath. Thus this angel assists in realizing the end of history and the complete deliverance of the Church. He not only *announces* the end; he also *makes* the end. Then in John's soul arose such deep reverence for this mighty angel, mighty in word and deed, mighty in prophecy and fulfilment, that before he realized what he was doing he fell upon his knees to worship. To himself he thought: How dwarfish am I, and the Church consists only of dwarfs!

But the angel at once made an end to this, “Watch out, see you do not do it. Am I great? Great in word today and great in works after a while? I am, even as yourself, only a servant of God. John, God alone is great and greatly to be praised. He alone has thought out this

road which brings the Church to the wedding. He alone has revealed to me this mystery of salvation. He alone is the One who will bring world history to an end, who alone will destroy the harlot and trample upon the dragon. God alone is great; worship Him. For this plan is His, and this prophecy is His, and soon also this marriage feast is His alone. I am but His servant. John, set not the servant above nor even next to His Lord. Do not esteem me so highly.

“Nor must you think so lowly of yourself. For you fall upon your knees and say, ‘How small and insignificant am I compared with you.’ But this is not true. Am I, because of this word and because of the pouring out of the last plagues by-and-by, any greater than you? I simply stand next to you. I am only a servant of God and cling to the testimony of Jesus Christ. Am I a prophet, John? Well, so are you. For Pentecost has come. And all who cling to the testimony of Jesus Christ have received since the day of Pentecost the Spirit of prophecy. As a servant I am, indeed, God’s prophet. But so are you and all those others who together with you proclaim the testimony of Jesus Christ and hold fast to the gospel even at the cost of their lives. And do not say to yourself, ‘But what will happen later on?’ Do not say to me, ‘You and your fellow-angels will take an active part in unleashing judgment upon the harlot and in preparing for the wedding, while we as men will only watch without working.’ This is not true. For I prophesy, but you who maintain the Word of Christ and seek with that gospel to bring the world salvation, are prophesying just as well. And after a while I will receive in my hand a vial

full of wrath and pour this out. Then I will be doing something. But you and your brothers will be doing no less. For you who keep God's commandments and maintain the testimony of Jesus are struggling in word and deed for the salvation of the world and the apostate church. Ah no, you will not convert them all. But your prophetic word and evangelical deed is still a power in this world. If not unto conversion, then unto hardening. Your word and deed are active powers, powers of the Holy Spirit by means of which He ripens the world for the end.

“Say not, John, ‘When an angel speaks, then I do well to be silent.’ For your word is fully as significant and fully as much a power in the end-time. Say not, ‘Now that I have seen what after a while the angels will do, I can put my hands in my pocket.’ For by means of word and deed, godly walk and prophetic witness you are bringing in the end of history as much as I in my place.

“John, God alone is great; therefore worship Him.

“Men and angels stand next to each other, in word and deed, as God's servants. In this way they steer the world towards the last day in which the harlot is condemned and the beast destroyed.

“And therefore, John, love God. Worship Him together with the whole Church as the Lord of history. Worship Him whose connection with the harlot and the beast brings His true Church to the marriage feast.

“And love also your fellow men. Open your mouth together with all your brothers. Proclaim the gospel of Christ. Cling to it in the face of an antichristian world and an apostate church. And keep God's command-

ments. Never take part in the abominations of the harlot or the blasphemies of the beast.”

Did you understand this? Ah, none of us will be tempted today to worship an angel. But have you not experienced that other temptation of feeling ourselves to be so insignificant and powerless? Increasingly we have an oppressive sense of our own insignificance. Men laugh about us. All the abominations of our day we could not restrain. Meanwhile our government acts and the Security Council acts. But does the Church have any influence? Indeed, the apostate church, the great city of adultery does. But that little handful of us? We feel so helpless in world events. Of all of history we say, “I stand there simply as a spectator, unable to do a thing about it.” We suppose we can do something only when our men become cabinet members and when we are supported by an organization numbering hundreds of thousands. But we ought to be cured of this illusion once and for all.

Who really is significant in the world? He who understands history in the light of God’s Word and therefore takes notice of the beast and the harlot. He who loves Christ’s Church with all his heart and therefore hates all adultery within the Church and all ungodliness in disciplining the true children of the Church. He who believes that today God is preparing for the coming marriage feast and therefore dares to face the future. He whose hope is more firmly fixed on the new Jerusalem with every passing day, because he sees the Word being fulfilled. He who worships only God as Lord of history and is aware of his place next to that of the angels. He who in his own small corner keeps the

commandments of God and clings to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even when men ridicule him. He who in word and deed dares to stand alone, not concerned for a moment about how many people will back him up, because he knows. “Angels stand next to me, and God stands above me.”

Who makes history? Not the gentlemen at Lake Success but the simple soldier in the Indies with whose life the leaders are gambling but who in his own company keeps God’s commandments and is not ashamed of confessing Christ.

Who makes history? Not the labourers who press their claims through the big union but the man who quietly keeps God’s law in relation to his employer. The father who tells his children about the gospel and the mother who puts a Christian stamp on her family, even though everyone in the neighbourhood avoids them as somewhat peculiar. Not the cabinet minister who flies every week to some important conference but the patient who has been confined for some years to the same small bed in the same small room and there clings to the testimony of Christ. Not the man who is very active in the ecumenical movement but the simple Church member who in the hour of decision refused to tolerate within the Church the slaying of his brothers and infidelity to God’s covenant and therefore was not ashamed of the liberation¹¹ and not inspired by the striving for false unity, even though others called him narrow-minded and refused to continue as his

¹¹

Holwerda is again referring to the Liberation of 1944, when Prof. Dr. Klaas Schilder was suspended and deposed from office by Synod. —RAJ.

customers. Do you ask about the millions? These you will find following the beast. Are you looking for the hundred thousands? They range themselves with the harlot. But blessed is the man who remains faithful to God when the whole church denies Him, who remains faithful to the brothers when everyone tolerates their slaying, who in word and deed confesses, "I believe a holy catholic Church," even when he has to stand alone. Blessed is the man who is small and bows humbly before God but who also stands up courageously and does not depend on man but takes his place next to the angels and in covenant with them proclaims God's Word and in regal fashion keeps God's commandments, knowing, "As God's servant I together with the angels am setting all of history in motion towards the day of the great marriage feast."

For in very truth this is the man, although he may have to stand all alone and be effectively isolated in daily life, who mingles his voice with that of the innumerable multitude, roaring like the sea and rumbling like thunder, "Hallelujah, for the Lord God omnipotent reigns." And we are travelling towards the great marriage feast. For by word and deed he helps to bring that day nearer, on which God will say also to him, "Blessed are you, for you are called to the supper of the marriage of the Lamb."

These are the true words of God.

**THE HARLOT
IN REVELATION 17 - 19
by Benne Holwerda**

*translated by Mrs. R. Hoeksema
and other ladies*

This is a translation of the Dutch publication *De Hoer in Openbaring 17 - 19* written by Prof. B. Holwerda in the early 1950s. As the introduction will inform the reader, it was written in defence of Prof. Holwerda's exegesis of Revelation 17 - 19 with regards to the harlot. This exegesis was originally put forth in 1949 in two speeches at a youth rally. Together they are available in English as translated by Dr. P.Y. de Jong under the title *The Church in the Last Judgment*.

Wherever possible, a literal translation has been employed to maintain Prof. Holwerda's true intended meaning. It is the hope of those involved in the translation that this publication will assist in the edification of the Church of Christ, and thereby promote His honour and glory through studying the recurring themes in the history of Salvation.

Mrs. R. Hoeksema and other ladies

1. Introduction

This publication is more or less a continuation of, and an addition to, the first one which I wrote for this series, entitled *The Church in the Last Judgment*. However, this one is somewhat different in *format*. One who is familiar with the first one will understand why this is so, for the *first one* consisted of two speeches which I gave at a youth rally in 1949 in Wassenaar. Naturally, because of this, it was *thetical* in character. This *second* publication, however, came to be mostly due to the criticisms the first one received. Since I am of the opinion that this criticism is to be rejected, and deserves a refutation, I was compelled to write this one in a *polemical* format.

However, this does not mean that in the pages which follow I will answer all the criticism which drew my attention. For instance, I refuse to carry on the controversy regarding criticism from synodical quarters.¹²

Professor Dr. Herman Ridderbos wrote an article in *Gereformeerd Weekblad*, under the heading “Liberation and Apocalyptic,” in which he, in a very authoritative tone, asserted a great deal without proving anything. “The harlot of Revelation 17 is not the church, but the world,” according to Ridderbos. And what is more, he would “not be able to name a reputable exegete today which would support such an interpretation or even take the possibility into consideration.” Of course this

¹²

By “synodical” the author means the people who followed the Synod of the Reformed Churches in The Netherlands in 1944. —RAJ.

does not mean that these exegetes do not *exist*, but only that Ridderbos does not *know* of them.

Apparently he does not even seem to know that his own father-in-law, Mr. J.H. Kok, published (in 1926, for the *third* time even) a book about Revelation with the beautiful title, *De Hemel Geopend (The Heavens Revealed)*. It was a new publication of a national edition. The writer of the book was Dr. J.C. de Moor who acquired his degree at the same university as Ridderbos. De Moor knows a thing or two about exegesis, whose outstanding service in our churches is most certainly well known. De Moor also recognized the harlot of Revelation 17 as the false church. And, as has been stated previously, Mr. Kok has brought this exegesis to the attention of the people, three times over. More serious than this lack of information is the fact that Professor Ridderbos does not come up with any *essential* argumentation against my lectured exegesis. His whole article is nothing more than a fierce and bitter outburst in which he does not even attempt to be polite. In this situation a discussion with people such as Ridderbos has no merit.

Also, from some of our own *brothers* I received opposition regarding this matter; and by one of them (Rev. Plooy) I was openly attacked and challenged. I promised several of them (long *before* the article by Professor Ridderbos was published) that I would return to this exegetical problem as soon as time permitted. To answer questions from brothers is always possible, is it not? And it is also right to reply to criticisms of brothers, even more so since Rev. Plooy tried to deliver an essential refutation. All questions which were put to

me will gradually be dealt with in my answer to Rev. Plooy. It is impossible for me to repeat all of his articles here, but I believe that the readers will receive sufficient orientation, and that I will do justice to Rev. Plooy, by giving the following summary which he himself gave when he concluded his series of articles.

We now have to come to the conclusion of our criticism of Professor Holwerda's exegesis of Revelation 17, at the same time answering our own questions which came up in these articles. We have found that Professor Holwerda's argument is based on three pillars:

A. The astonishment of the apostle John, regarding the harlot, whom he recognizes as the woman of Revelation 12 — the *church*.

B. His understanding of "Babylon the Great", in a spiritual sense, as being *Jerusalem*.

C. His reference to Ezekiel 16 and 23, where the harlot is named *Jerusalem*.

After investigating these three pillars, our conclusion must be:

A. That Professor Holwerda's explanation of John's astonishment has the context in which the text was written against him.

B. That Professor Holwerda's explanation of "Babylon the Great" as being Jerusalem is not based on solid exegetical grounds; and that wherever mention is made in the last book of the Bible, of "the great city," it refers to the city of *Rome* in those days, exemplifying the *big secular city* of the end of time.

C. That Professor Holwerda, by his reference to Ezekiel 16 and 23, does no justice to the striking and multiple quotations in Revelation 18, taken from Isaiah 13, 21, 23, 47, and 48; Jeremiah 50 and 51, and Ezekiel 26 and 27; in which chapters no mention is made of a church-city (Jerusalem), but rather a *secular city* (Babel, Tyre, or Nineveh, as in Nahum 3).

With this we believe that we have attacked the issue in an essential manner with good argumentation against an exegesis which has become quite popular among us today. An exegesis which is propagated in all possible forms, yes, which is poured out upon our youth especially. However, proper argumentation is given nowhere.

2. The authority of “common opinions”

Permit me to begin with Rev. Plooy’s complaint, namely, that I have not given reasonable argumentation for my exegesis. According to Rev. Plooy, this is in agreement with the manner in which this exegesis was forced down the throats of our youth. This is regrettable. He continues to say that he hopes his criticism may contribute to *break the spell* of Prof. Holwerda’s exegesis, bring further reflection upon the matter, that thereby public account may be rendered.

I presume that I must understand it in this way: according to Rev. Plooy I committed a resentful *rashness* against our youth by pouring a new exegesis into them and leaving the one of Prof. Greijdanus, the “common one.” I then had to first give public account of

the grounds on which I had left the exegesis of Prof. Greijdanus *before* I had the moral right to speak to the youth in such a “popular” fashion.

To come straight to the point, I do not believe a word of this. Anyone who speaks to the congregation from the pulpit, or to the youth from a different platform, must know what he is discussing and should have truly examined the issue. Permit me to say, for example, in the course of his study a person comes upon a text with three or more different explanations. Then he *himself* has to weigh the arguments over against one another, coming to a well considered choice of his own; but he does *not* have the moral obligation to first publicly justify his not so popular choice of exegesis *before* he is allowed to present it. Otherwise no minister would be allowed on the pulpit anymore.

For after all, there are very few texts in which differences in exegetical opinions do not exist. If a minister, *before* he would be allowed to preach, first had to defend his explanation in a more or less knowledgeable way, then we might as well all pack up and leave. It would boil down to this: we would have *censorship* on exegesis. In this manner only one particular explanation would be proclaimed as the “common one,” to which everyone would be bound; while someone who had a different understanding would first have to give account for his scholarly argumentation before he would be allowed to speak to the congregation, or its youth.

Fortunately, we do not have this situation, yet. I believe that the binding of Scripture and confession is sufficient, and everyone, who in his preaching and

oration, adheres to these, has the right to present his explanation which he, on a solid basis, contends to be the correct interpretation.

Just like myself, Rev. Plooy must have heard, or read, sermons in which he came to the conclusion, "The preacher followed the exegesis of 'A' but I feel more for the opinion of 'B.'" Do we then have to express our sadness because the minister left the exegesis of 'B?' I think not.

Moreover, how often does Rev. Plooy want to put this public accountability into practice? I mean, who has to form this committee to judge? Of course not the congregation; they "receive" the popular education. Obviously these have to be a number of people who are capable to analyse the "not so popular." A number of theologians perhaps? After all, it is a matter of spiritual exegesis. Who has to appoint these? And, how will they be able to agree among themselves? Do they have the infallible exegesis?

If such a committee came into existence, is Rev. Plooy himself prepared to request preaching consent if he is holding an exegesis which deviates from the norm?

Rev. Plooy is using the easy term "common exegesis." I had my fill of this term when ecclesiastical assemblies were commissioned against people who in preaching and writing did not agree with opinions which were announced as being "common." I believe that the pitiful fencing of the term "common" was demonstrated clearly in those days.

At what time must, or may, we call an opinion common? Already at first glance pro and con opinions become readily evident, even when dealing with one point.

Who is then to decide which is the common view? Can anyone, no matter who, even trace how many supporters an opinion has? Does one have the necessary data at his disposal? And suppose that he was actually able to decide: opinion 'A' was shared by ten, 'B' by eight, 'C' by eleven, and 'D' by three, which interpretation is to be dubbed "common?" Is then the decision in the masses? Does it then become a matter of relative or absolute majority?

Remaining within the confines of Rev. 17, Rev. Plooy must himself immediately agree that there are, at minimum, three different exegesis, each with numerous variations. I have read extensively about this chapter, and I doubt if there are even two persons who think the same.

For instance: there is the opinion of the commentators who wrote the annotations to the Dort Study Bible, mostly followed by De Moor; then there is the different explanation of Prof. Greijdanus, and Ringnalda's is different also. With these examples I remain within the Reformed community of The Netherlands. If we go outside of this circle and read the explanations of Schlatter, Zahn, Charles, Bousset, Kiddle, and others, who then is yet to say whose is the "popular opinion?" Rev. Plooy is quite intelligent if he, regarding Rev. 17, can trace how many adhere to the Annotations of the Dort Study Bible, how many were influenced by the commentaries of Prof. Greijdanus, or by the book by Rev. Ringnalda.

"Common opinions" are fictitious!

3. The great difficulty of the “common explanation”

Rev. Plooy complains that I fail to give reasonable argumentation for my thesis. This complaint astonished me, regardless of what I wrote before. I, in no wise, expected such a remark, especially after Rev. Plooy’s *own* articles.

His criticism was aimed at “three *pillars*” on which my opinion seemed to be resting. Regarding “pillars,” I certainly must be allowed to assume he meant the points of complete support on which my whole argument was resting, the fundamental ideas which uphold everything, just as pillars under a bridge. When, in this context, Rev. Plooy employs the verb “seem,” then I may take it for granted that he discovered, according to his own conviction, these three points of support, on which the whole case is resting.

This is why I do not understand his complaint regarding the *lack* of argumentation, nor his request for public account. For an *argument* is, after all, proof of a thesis. *As a matter of fact, the same thing as a pillar of a thesis.*

In what way can Rev. Plooy on the one hand, point to the pillars and on the other hand, say that these are not there. This is unfortunate for Rev. Plooy, for he could have saved himself the trouble. He fought against pillars, but they were no pillars at all. What he refers to under ‘A’, ‘B’, and ‘C’ are *sections* of my speech which are not *arguments* of support. These three points belong to the *superstructure*, not to the foundation *under* it, which, at times, can be referred to as “pillars.”

Rev. Plooy should not take offence, but I have the impression that he was somewhat hasty in the writing of his articles. What I mean to say is, he did not pay enough attention to the great deal of points which are at stake here. He also does not seem aware of the questionability of the exegesis he is advocating. Perhaps he will reply; "This remark applies to Greijdanus also." But, only partly so, I believe.

Anyone who has studied the book of Revelation knows of the many problems this book puts before the reader, especially in terms of exegesis. Prof. Greijdanus amended several points of his argument in the course of the years. A simple comparison between his first and last study of Revelation will make this evident. Greijdanus did not totally comprehend this book, but this is nothing to be ashamed of, for no one will ever be finished with it. At least Greijdanus brought us a great deal closer. Although I could not accept his solution, Greijdanus still shows that he at least clearly recognized the *problems*. I believe that Rev. Plooy reads and follows Greijdanus, but he does not consider the problems sufficiently.

One point in particular struck me: Rev. Plooy says in one of his articles, "The explanation of Greijdanus . . . at first reading gives the impression of contemplating two ideas. For example, Rome as world power *and* Rome as Papal power. On closer examination this impression is replaced by an other, namely that, *also* when Greijdanus speaks of Papal power, he puts the emphasis more on the thought of power than on the idea of false church."

Rev. Plooy is of the opinion that a certain contradiction in the exegesis of Greijdanus is only a deception and that he in fact sees the harlot and the beast *everywhere* as being identical. I cannot agree with this, for Greijdanus wrote in connection with this woman:

She is sitting on the beast and, nevertheless, is distinguished from its heads . . . the Papal power and the Roman church. No more than this beast, does this woman represent more than one power at a time. This beast is sometimes the entire world power . . . then again certain embodiments of it . . . then anti-christian . . . then the Roman world dictatorship in her various forms of existence; for example: Imperial, Papal, or antichristian (*Korte Verklaring*, 252).

It is plain to see Greijdanus considered harlot and beast as being *identical*. However, not completely. He also continued to realize that he had to *distinguish* them, and because of this he ran into difficulties. For what is nearly identical is difficult to distinguish. Greijdanus found the solution in this, that both beast and harlot, at different points in time, manifest themselves. For instance, in vs. 16ff. the antichrist and his assistants are, in the opinion of Greijdanus, a particular manifestation of the world power, and the harlot another concrete form of this (the Papal church). I am not satisfied with this solution and I will come back to this later on.

There is in the exegesis of Greijdanus an unresolved tension between the identification and distinction of harlot and beast. He rightly perceived that one faces a

dilemma with this exegesis of Rev. 17, if one does not persist in *distinguishing* these two.

I believe that Rev. Plooy entangles himself in hopeless difficulties if he rigidly holds on to the *identical* quality of these. Difficulties which, in my opinion, cannot be resolved.

If one should say, “The harlot is the world” or “the world power” and the beast as well, then he finds himself immediately entangled into mysteries.

A. The harlot sits on the beast (vs. 3).

Explanation: The world power sits on the world power. But my question is, what does that mean, sitting on? How is it possible for one to sit on himself?

B. The harlot is completely undressed, eaten, and burned by the ten horns of the beast (vs. 16).

Explanation: The world power of the last hour is being destroyed by the antichristian world power. If the harlot is not the false church but the world power, as Rev. Plooy argues, then she is at the moment of verse 16 herself the antichristian world power and practically identical with the ten horns, which are busy making her desolate and are burning her. In other words, the world power is devouring itself? Or, the antichrist eats itself and destroys its own kingdom?

I am asking this because I am totally unable to understand this explanation. Greijdanus at least says that in verse 16 we must think of the false church, the Papal one.

C. This harlot commits adultery with the kings of the earth (18:9). In other words, with the rulers of this world power. But if the harlot also represents the world power, than it would mean that she commits adultery with herself. What does this mean?

Rev. Plooy thinks that he can get out of this dilemma by simply referring to several texts from the Old Testament where adultery is used when pointing to idolatry. In this case we would get, the world power is committing idolatry with itself.

I did not accurately examine all the texts which Rev. Plooy refers to. I am not convinced that these indicated passages are speaking of idolatry. Let us leave this aside for the time being.

In all cases, it is clear that one city committed adultery with *another* city. Nowhere does it say that Tyre, Nineveh, etc. are committing adultery with themselves, but they did so with *other* powers. Adultery is committed by two *distinct* powers. That is why I also do not understand the references to these texts in the explanation of Rev. 17, in order to defend his opinion on the identification of the harlot and the beast.

We can only speak of adultery providing that we speak of two parties, but two parties do not exist when we make them identical. Do not misunderstand me. I readily admit that idolatry is often qualified as adultery. This is possible because there is first a covenant between two parties, namely God and His people. The second party became unfaithful to her "husband" by involving herself with a third party.

So, two *distinguishable* parties always do exist. As far as I am aware, the Bible speaks of people who

commit adultery with idols, but not of the world committing adultery with itself. These dilemmas aroused my doubt regarding the identification theory.

If harlot and beast are actually the same power, then the world sits on herself, and I fail to understand what this is supposed to mean. Then she kills and eats herself, but this is in contradiction with the context. Then she commits adultery with herself, but as far as I know, that is not what the Bible is calling idolatry.

Nothing positive has yet been said of my exegesis “the harlot is the false church.” At this time I was only concerned to make it clear why I started to doubt what Rev. Plooy calls the “popular opinion.”

For the moment, I will not go any further than the thesis: *harlot and beast are distinguishable. They are two diverse concrete bodies.*

4. Which data must be taken into consideration?

It is not necessary to dwell on the question of what should be understood regarding “the beast.” I think that Rev. Plooy agrees with me that the beast is the description of the world empire (or for that matter, the world state) which manifests itself in different forms and rears its various heads in the course of history. But the unanimity is lost as soon as the question is asked, “Which solid power does the harlot symbolize?”

It is superfluous, in my opinion, to go into the ideas of all sorts of commentators who are critical of Holy Scripture. There are several theories which call attention to the whole exegesis of Revelation and, as

such, also touch chapter 17. I am thinking of the “Tradition Geschichtliche” (Traditional Historical), the “Zeit Geschichtliche” (Time Historical), the “End Geschichtliche” (End Historical), and the “Uber Geschichtliche” (General Historical) conceptions. The explanation of the starting point and method of each of these theories would lead me too far off topic, moreover too much scientific nonsense would enter into the picture.

I hold fast to my conviction that all readers, if they are able to judge this, will agree with me that these opinions do not do justice to Scripture and ought to be rejected by believers in Holy Scripture. In this Rev. Plooy also kept himself to the explanations which were given within Reformed circles, and I reserve the right to keep my answer within the bounds of his intention.

I am of the opinion that in our circles we can reduce the meaning of the harlot to three:

A. The harlot is the world power, and therefore, practically identical to the beast.

B. The harlot is an indication of the world, but then especially from the aspect of culture and wealth. In other words, the harlot is culture.

C. The harlot is the false church.

I admit this diagram is more or less simplistic, for there are many variations, modifications, and combinations. With Prof. Greijdanus for instance, we already see more or less a combination of (A) and (C). Naturally the possibility exists for several other combinations and modifications. I believe there is no

point in going into this. In short, permit me to indicate three views, the “Political” (A), the “Cultural” (B), and the “Ecclesiastical”(C).

In order to find an answer, we must first carefully gather the data which Scripture offers us, and it would be wise to immediately classify this data. For we find one piece of data in the description of John’s vision and another in the explanation which the angel gives him.

I classify then:

1. *Data in the Description of John’s Vision:*

A. She is portrayed as “*a woman*” (vs. 3).

B. Further on as a woman called “*the great harlot*” because of her evil practices. For that matter, a woman who is thus stipulated over against the point of marital fidelity (vs. 1, 2, compare 4b, 5b.)

C. She is introduced as “*sitting on the scarlet beast*” which has seven heads and ten horns (vs. 3).

D. She is also said to be “*sitting on many waters*” (vs. 1).

E. She commits her adultery with “the kings,” as well as with all inhabitants, “of the earth” (vs. 2).

F. Her *garment* is characterized as manufactured of purple and scarlet. Her ornaments consist of gold, jewels, and pearls, and she has a golden cup in her hand (vs. 4).

G. John sees the *name* written on her forehead, “Mystery, Babylon the Great, Mother of Harlots, and Abominations of the Earth” (vs. 5).

H. She is *drunk* with the blood of the saints and the blood of the martyrs of Jesus (vs. 6).

2. *Data in the explanation which the angel gives of this vision* (inclusive of the sections in chapters 18 and 19):

A. Her sitting on the scarlet beast with seven heads is explained as “sitting on seven *mountains*” and at the same time sitting on “seven *kings*” (vs. 9, 10). This corresponds with “1C”.

B. Her sitting on many waters is explained as her position in the midst of “*peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues*” (vs. 15; see “1D”).

C. Her destruction comes when the ten horns of the beast begin to *hate*, destroy, undress, eat, and burn her (vs. 16).

D. She is “*the great city*” (Greek, “*polis*”; vs. 18a).

E. As such she “*reigns over the kings of the earth*” (vs. 18b).

F. The people of the LORD are summoned to *come out of her* lest they take part in her sins and share in her judgment (18:4ff.).

G. The wealth of her *garment* is illustrated in 18:7, 11ff. (compare “1F”).

H. The matter of her *drunkenness* (with the blood of the saints) is raised again in 18:20, 24; 19:2 (compare “1H”).

I. Those who committed adultery with her are appalled when her judgment comes upon her (18:9ff.).

K. On the other hand, there is rejoicing in Heaven for now the marriage of the Lamb has come (19:7ff.).

As far as I know, I combined all the elements which we have to bring into consideration for the explanation. Off hand we can see right away that the angel does not go into all the sections of the vision and at the same time other elements are mentioned in the explanation which John did not bring into account.

Methodically it seems correct to start with the data of group “2”. The vision is obscure in many respects itself, is it not? This is the reason why the angel gives John further information. If we want to approach the vision then we have to start our examination by what the angel himself says pertaining to the explanation. According to me, we have to attempt to give a suitable account from the data classified under group “2”, to the elements arranged under group “1”.

5. Rejection of the cultural opinion

As far as I am concerned, one of the aforementioned opinions must be eliminated immediately, in particular: the “cultural conception”. *The world as cultural power is not the denotation of the term “harlot”.*

1. Although no one will deny, especially with respect to chapter 18, that there is a close connection between the “harlot” and culture, it cannot be said that John teaches the destruction of the “world” with her “culture” in the days of the eighth king here. We saw (did we not?) — comparing the data mentioned under “2G” — that the “world” still exists after the “harlot” and her wealth have perished. Also, the world powers, the politically mighty ones, yet exist (18:9), as well as the

people who took charge of the manufacturing, transporting, and selling of this wealth. Therefore, it is incorrect to say that “*culture*” is ruined at this very moment, not even if they add to this the limitation that the *apostate* culture is meant here. The merchants, etc. cannot see a *consumers market* anymore for their luxury articles which they formerly supplied to the “harlot” (vs. 11). Yet there is no indication at all that the (apostate) culture, as such, has disappeared, or that the world as cultural power has ceased to exist.

2. To this we add “1f”. It is certainly significant that the vision is making a distinction between the “harlot” herself on the one hand, and the “garment,” as well as her adornments, on the other.

3. If we come to the understanding that the “harlot” is the “world as cultural power,” then what it says in 19:3 has to be taken seriously, “Her smoke goes up for ever and ever”. This positively signifies that the destruction is without remainder and definite. Therefore, this blaze is never extinguished. Then, from this point of reference, we have to accept the fact that the world power, with her apostate culture, is ruined for ever. Yet this does not coincide with the suggestion of chapter 18 on which we touched under group “1”.

4. Even more important: at the time the harlot with her display goes up in flames, the eighth king, the antichrist, is ruling with his henchmen. The world power has not disappeared absolutely yet. Are they of the opinion that this eighth antichristian power will be without culture? I believe that Scripture teaches us that especially in those days the apostate culture will reach its *highest* point. They will still send each other presents

(11:10) and rejoice; cultural means and possibilities are abundant. Paul, for that matter, speaks in the same manner in 2 Thess. 2. The antichrist will come with “all power, signs, and lying wonders,” with “all unrighteous deception” (vs. 9, 10). This surely means that the world, as cultural power, reaches the most extreme development — to a culture of hellish refinement. The antichrist only finishes off the existence of the harlot and the monuments of the culture which she built. But not the “world power” or the “world empire,” not even if we take it only from the cultural perspective.

I should say a few more things about this, for there are authors who, when discussing the “harlot,” think only of one specific historical greatness of the world empire (i.e. the Roman Empire). For example: Prof. Schilder in *Christus en Cultuur* (“Christ and Culture”, p. 71; compare his book on the Revelation of John) is still virtually in agreement with Greijdanus. This way we are ending up with: the antichrist does not make an end of the world and its culture, but of one specific empire and the typical culture of its realm.

Yet, I think, that the text itself contradicts the identification: “the harlot is the Roman Empire with its cultural wealth.” I cannot go into this in detail. I have to refer to my first brochure, especially to those sections in which I give an exegesis of the beast with its seven heads. I allow myself to add one comment yet. If the “harlot” is the indication of the Roman Empire, then she is identical with the sixth head, for I do not believe that anyone will contradict by saying the sixth head refers to the Roman Empire.

But exactly in this head the beast receives a deadly wound. The beast itself rears up again after a while, but this does not mean that the sixth head appears for a second time, but, the beast lifts up its seventh head. In other words, the world empire, as portrayed by the Roman Empire, is smitten. If we identify the “harlot” with this empire, it follows that the “harlot,” at this time, receives the deathblow. But this contradicts with the rest of the chapter. At the moment when the beast lays at death’s door, the woman is in her prime. She deceives the thousands and she exhibits all her glory. Furthermore, she does not receive her finishing blow until the days of the eighth king, the antichrist. She is not ruined with the sixth king, and for this reason cannot be identical to the Roman Empire.

I link to this a few comments I made under “2D.” This harlot is mentioned in vs. 18 as “*the great city*” (Greek: polis). I maintain that this pleads against the cultural opinion and at once has great meaning for that which is discussed later. I cannot give an elaborate discussion here on the meaning of the word “polis,” but I vividly remember that I, in one of the first winters during the war, was engaged for some time in a treatise on this subject, which fascinated me tremendously. I have in mind the book by Karl Ludwig Schmidt: *Die Polis in Kirche und Welt* (The Polis in church and world, Zurich, 1940).

Schmidt first gives, as is typical of him, a great deal of linguistic material. According to Schmidt, “polis” first means “city”, but it also means the association of “citizens, the city municipality, the city state, and the state.”

I hope the reader is able to understand this citation. Consequently this is a term which indicates the association of people with citizen rights and obligations between government and subjects, between laws and offices. It should be noted, however, that Schmidt does understand the harlot to be Rome (vs. 13) and, as such, anything but a support for the exegesis I defend. Although all of this is very important.

In any case, with “polis” is meant a *specific community*, an *organized relevant society*. Therefore it seems impossible for me to understand world as a cultural power when we speak of the “harlot.” The world in the sense of the “world empire” can indeed be called “polis.” But the world from a specific *aspect*, the world as cultural power, can never be named “polis.” Aspects must remain abstract in nature, but not concrete communities. As far as I am concerned, the use of the term “polis” pleads very strongly against the cultural exegesis.

If this is true — and I truly believe that it is — than there are only two possibilities left: the *political*, which sees the “harlot” as a world power in all her existence or one certain embodiment of it (Rome); and the *ecclesiastical*, which understands this to be the “false church.”

Because of what I have previously demonstrated, we have to distinguish between the harlot and the beast and see them as being separate entities. My conception of what is meant remains uncertain as long as there are several possibilities. The picture becomes clear when the possibilities are reduced to the dilemma: *either* world empire *or* false church. The beast is the world

empire, is it not, and is distinct from the harlot. Consequently: there remains no other possibility than the ecclesiastical.

6. Further considerations of Scripture references

Naturally, it must yet be determined if the conclusion we first arrived at is supported or refuted by the above mentioned classified data. First we will pursue the ones I arranged under “2.”

A. The woman sitting on the beast with seven heads is explained as sitting on “*seven mountains.*” Previously I pointed out that whoever identifies harlot with the beast actually makes the world power sit on itself. With this the representation becomes obscure and it becomes difficult to give a reasonable explanation. Yet the angel gives an explanation: the seven heads, first and foremost, portray seven mountains. Hereby is the *geographical* position of the harlot indicated. As far as I can ascertain, it is no where imputed — also not by myself — that these seven mountains point toward Rome, the city on seven hills.

A little further on “2B” it is stated, however, that the sitting of the woman between waters indicates her position between peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues. Hereby it is not denied that this harlot resides in Rome, but definitely that she does not abide there *only*, for she has a place in the midst of all peoples, international, does she not? In other words, the harlot has her place in the world centre of this time, yet she also has expanded internationally.

Do we now ask the question: is there anything decided in so far as the choice between ecclesiastical and political opinions are concerned? I believe the answer must be negative. For, when we interpret harlot here as an indication of the world power, then we will come to a reasonable conclusion: This world power is established in Rome as centre and it has its shoots internationally. Yet we see no reason either why this would contradict the ecclesiastical opinion. The church has already expanded internationally and has obtained a place in Rome as well. The false church? Indeed, for the Jews resided in Rome and were scattered among all peoples at the time when John wrote Revelation. I do not believe that what we understand in the Belgic Confession, both *pertinently* and terminologically, as “false church” was unknown to John. I think here of 2:9, where he writes of those “who **say** they are Jews but are not, but are a **synagogue** of Satan.” John is familiar with a society who claims to be the congregation of the living God, but in reality is the synagogue of Satan. Anyone who understands that “synagogue” is one of the terms which indicates an ecclesiastical gathering, can also comprehend that John knows of those congregations which bear this name illegitimately. Compare this with the beginning of article 29 of the Belgic Confession.

In other words, what was mentioned under “A” neither proves, nor disproves anything of the ecclesiastical view.

B. The sitting on the seven heads is at the same time explained as sitting on “*seven kings*,” of which five have already fallen, the sixth is present at the time, while the

seventh does not appear until later. The *historical* place of the harlot is indicated by this. She is said to be sitting on the beast with seven heads. This is, according to the explanation: she is sitting on the world empire, which in the past already showed five forms of existence, and at this time exhibits the sixth form, and will evolve further in the future. We shall determine if this is of future benefit for us.

The sixth head is the Roman empire. According to some, the harlot is the world power also, but what does the “sitting on” then mean? The world power would then be sitting on itself. This is meaningless. Perhaps we could yet consider if this might be a feature of the vision which could be ignored, but this is at odds with the *explanation* of the angel, as he brings this section into account. He indicates this “sitting on” to be geographical as well as a historical position. If we now understand the harlot as the empire, then the whole indication of the historical position is thereby nullified. If we, nevertheless, think of the false church, then the meaning is preserved. The “sitting on” then means that this false church leans on the world power and is sustained by it. She relies on the empire, as it, in the course of the ages, has received its centre in Rome and from there puts her iron hand on all peoples of the then known earth (compare Greijdanus, *Korte Verklaring* {short commentary}, 252).

This section pleads in favour of the ecclesiastical opinion and against the political.

C. It says in verse 16 that the ten horns torture the harlot in a horrible manner. I pointed out earlier that also Greijdanus, although he forcefully persists in the

correlation between the harlot and the beast, could not find his direction clearly in this verse, and thus speaks of this verse as pointing to the Papal church.

I also stated that I completely agree with Greijdanus. Here we must think of two distinct entities when dealing with harlot and beast. I do not want to limit this to the Papal church, but I also understand this to be the “false church” in various forms, as does the Belgic Confession.

In accordance with this I refer to Ezekiel 16 and 23. This parallel has been seen by many, and is very remarkable. Rev. Plooy does not deny this either, although he tries to make the appeal to Ezekiel ineffective by asking some questions which he would rather not express. For didn't he write, “Now we will not ask if the Jerusalem of Ezekiel 16 and 23 already was ‘false church,’ and neither will we ask if the false church could still expect prophecy of salvation, like the Jerusalem of Ezekiel 16, although these questions are of importance.”

I would like to go into these questions on account of their importance.

Was Jerusalem then already “false church?” Yes, and why would she not be considered such? (I do not wish to answer this question in a negative manner.) My reasons are as follows. In the first place, what does the confession understand by “false church?” Our confession, according to the texts under Article 29 (French edition, 1619; see Bakhuizen van de Brink, p. 188), thinks of the church which commits adultery by breaking the covenant. We should also compare the various editions which Bakhuizen van de Brink

compares with each other. It is remarkable that *Revelation* 2:9 and 17:3 are considered as connected here. I have already commented on the first text. In other words, our confession speaks here also of the “adulterous” church when it speaks of the “false” church (compare textual references). Exactly the same case as in Ezekiel 16. If Rev. Plooy asks, “could Jerusalem then be called ‘false church,’ ” then I answer: what does our confession mean with this term other than the sin of Ezekiel 16? In the second place, Rev. Plooy should also know that in the Reformed symbolisms of the time, “false” and “adulterous” are interchangeable comprehensions and that “harlot” (meretrix) occurs as synonym of “false church” (ecclesia falsa). The Scottish confession (1560) discusses the marks by which the True Church is distinguished from the false church (Art. 18), and says in the context (do not be frightened off by the Latin, the translation will follow): “Notas autem et indicia, quibus intemerata Christi sponsa ab impura illa et abominanda *meretrice* (*ecclesiam impiorum* intellige) discerni possit . . . That is, “the characteristics and marks by which the pure bride of Christ can be distinguished from the unclean and abominable *harlot* (namely the “*church*” {assembly} *of the ungodly*). . . .” Also, the Hungarian confession (1562) has as superscription on chapter 5, Art. 7: “De signis, quibus vera Ecclesia dignoscitur ab *adulterina*, which means, “of the marks by which the true Church is distinguished from the *adulterous* one” (compare Müller’s edition on pages 257 and 428). The term “false church” is not understood if we do not see “adulterous church” and “harlot” as synonymous during this time period. Why

can Jerusalem, which was punished in Ezekiel 16 for its adultery, then not be called “false church” in light of Calvinistic confessions? Furthermore; did Israel not destroy itself with the services of the high places? And was not the adultery, the unfaithfulness to the LORD, the part which was *false* in this *church assembly*? And, does it not get this far eventually, so that on account of these sins someone like Hosea had to say to the people, “You are not my people?” Do the prophets not speak of a bill of divorce?

Just because Ezekiel, in his judgment on the adultery of Jerusalem, ends with a promise of salvation, Rev. Plooy wants to conclude that John, in chapter 17:16, did not have his eye on Ezekiel because John does not know anymore of mercy for the harlot. I am unable to understand this. If the LORD, during an earlier period of apostasy within His Church, was inclined to grant grace to His Church again, does this mean that He will also be merciful to it in the final phase of its history? Revelation 17 does deal with the end of the ages. The exile was the beginning and shadow of the definite downfall of the apostate church, but not yet as beginning and shadow of the end *itself*. A parallel could be drawn here with sin. Christ says that only the sin against the Holy Spirit is unpardonable. This sin was not yet known in the Old Testament because the Spirit was not yet in His full essence, as Jesus Christ had not yet been glorified. Yet, the Old Testament knows of a shadow of this unforgivable sin (see Heb. 10:28, 29, “If anyone has violated the law of Moses, he will die without mercy at the testimony of two or three witnesses. How much worse punishment do you think

will be deserved by the man who has trampled down the Son of God” . . .). The writer sees a *similarity* between the greatest sin of the Old Testament and the unpardonable sin of the New Testament; there will come an end to God’s mercy. Although he sees a similarity, he also sees a *difference*. The aforementioned sin remained pardonable in the Old Testament, but no longer in the days of the New Testament. We should especially consider the third part of this comparison. In the Old Testament dispensation there remained hope, even through extreme punishment, while the New Testament dispensation does not allow for this any longer, for the grace has grown more abundant in the meantime. This is why the Church in the Old Testament dispensation could not come to her total elimination. In the most terrible judgment that came upon the Old Testament Church because of her adultery, the possibility of mercy still existed, a promise of salvation could yet follow the prophecy of judgment. But this does not mean that mercy has to again follow the judgment upon the harlotry of the church in the final days of the New Testament, nor is it necessary that John should end with a message of grace, as Ezekiel did when he spoke of the same sins and judgment.

Rev. Plooy then continues with, “But we will ask ourselves, Is besides the church city also the *world city* called *harlot* in the prophecies of the Old Testament?” He answers this question positively when referring to Isaiah 23:17, Jeremiah 51:7, and Nahum 3:4, which speak of the adultery of Tyre, Babylon, and Nineveh, respectively. This is true; but who is denying it? I would not consider it for a moment. However, nothing has

been proven as far as Rev. 17 is concerned. The Old Testament, on occasion, speaks of the adultery of a *world* centre. But how often was this done in comparison to the many times in which the LORD reprimands His *Church* people for adultery? I would not like to number the occurrences which indicate the adultery of the *Church*. When Rev. Plooy, in his discussion, refers to *some* passages, *three in total*, where the adultery of the world is lashed against, then I am able to point out against this a *continuous* testimony from the Old Testament which turns itself against the adultery of the Church. If they were counted, then it could be very well possible that there would be *three hundred* passages. In the question of the *Old Testament basis* of Rev. 17 I would have many more passages at my disposal than does Rev. Plooy.

D. Now I come to verse 18a, where the harlot is called "*the great city*," the "polis."

I have already made a few remarks on this with my rejection of the "cultural" opinion. I have yet this to add: This data *by itself* is not decisive for the "ecclesiastical" interpretation. Rome and the world state can also be called "polis" in the Greek New Testament. But, this word does not plead *against* the thought of false church. The "ecclesiastical" meaning of the term is established by many in several places (compare Schmidt's book).

One particular place in connection with this, of great importance for the justification of my opinion, is Rev. 11:8. Rev. Plooy assumes correctly that I believe, as well as he himself, that "the great city" always holds the same meaning throughout the book of Revelation. Therefore, *also* in 11:8 I consider the text to be referring

to the “church city.” Rev. Plooy does not agree with me. He writes, “Yet may I remind you in all soberness that our Lord was *not* crucified in but *outside* of ‘Jerusalem,’ and also not *by* Jerusalem but by ‘Rome’ . . . Thus many witnesses of the Lord may often be handed over by ‘Jerusalem’ (the false church) but they are actually *killed* on the grounds of ‘Babylon.’ ” Here he refers to what happened in the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries, “the false church *accused* and provoked, but the state (city) executed.”

I will match Rev. Plooy in his solemnity. With his first comment he, I believe, has Hebrews 13:12 in mind, where it says that Jesus suffered “outside the gate” in the form of the sacrificial law for the Day of Atonement. I also believe that this is a tremendously rich message; one which I have preached about with elation. But Rev. Plooy is not allowed to solve it in the following manner: He is killed “outside the *gate*” = “outside *Jerusalem*” = *on the territory of Babylon*. Does Rev. Plooy perhaps believe that in those days the jurisdiction of Rome ended at the walls of Jerusalem, so that, *inside* Jerusalem would mean on the territory of the *church*, and *outside* Jerusalem on the territory of the *world* city? Pilate had his residence *inside* the wall of Jerusalem and *there* he gave Jesus up to death on the cross. In other words, the author of the Bible never gave it a moment of thought that “outside the *gate*” must be understood as “on the territory of the world empire.” Hebrews 13:12 does not contain a single argument against the thesis: “the harlot is the false church.”

Concerning his second comment. I am well aware that the Jews needed authorization from Rome in order to execute this judgment, but I would never endorse his

statement that Jesus is not crucified by “Jerusalem” but by “Rome.” For Christ, in the interrogation before Pilate, condemns Jerusalem more than Rome (compare John 19:11). I will now use this opportunity to write down, in all soberness, some texts as well.

Acts 2:23, “Him (Jesus), being delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, *you (Jews) nailed to a cross* by the hands of unrighteous men and *put to death.*” The “*church city*” executed the sentence of the cross, all be it through the hands of the Romans.

Acts 3:15, “But *you put to death* the Prince of life . . .” Peter said this to the people of *Jerusalem*.

Acts 4:10, “. . . by the Name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, whom *you crucified . . .*” Thus Peter spoke to the *Sanhedrin!*

Acts 5:30, “. . . Jesus whom *you murdered by hanging Him on a tree.*” Peter, again to the *Sanhedrin!*

Acts 7:52, “Which one of the prophets did *your fathers* not persecute? And *they* killed those who had previously announced the coming of the Righteous One, whose *betrayers and murderers you have now become.*”

It is strange that Rev. Plooy thinks that I lack common sense when I consider John 11:8 to point to *Jerusalem*.

This last text is very important because here it is said that murder of prophets is not a single *incident* in the “*church city*,” but her practise. Just like Christ Himself did say, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her!” (Matt. 23:37).

All these verses strengthen me in my opinion that “the great city” in Rev. 11 is *Jerusalem*, the “*church city*.” This does not mean yet that “the great city” simply always points to “Jerusalem.” But I feel very strongly about this especially on the grounds of Revelation 16:19 where “the great city” is distinguished from “the *pagan cities*.” According to me this favours again the opinion that by “the great city” in Revelation one should constantly think of the false church, also in Revelation 17:18. Now we have arrived at the next point.

E. It is said of the woman that she is “the great city” *which has the kingship over the kings of the earth*. It looks like this is a major “political” addition. Yet questions do come up in my mind. For I can imagine that in this way there is spoken of one particular world *city* in ancient times: Nineveh, Babylon, Asher, and in John’s days, Rome. Thus there would be one particular place, distinguished from other places. In the opinion which I disputed, “the great city” is not seen as one city which officiates as world *centre*, but as world state, world dominion, and world empire. Then it is understood that in this sense “the great city” has already been presented in the preceding chapter as a *well-known* greatness. But then I do not understand anything of the opposition, which captures our attention here, for then we will get this paraphrase: the woman is the world empire, which has dominion over the kings of the earth. What is the use then of this opposition? There is nothing in it which was not included in “the great city” already. It seems to me that this addition is totally senseless in that case.

But something else is still more important to me. This world empire is still presented here as the beast

with seven heads. And John says emphatically in 13:3 that it received a deadly wound in one of its heads. In other words the empire is collapsing at a given moment, and to everyone's astonishment does not lift itself up again until later. I think this refers to the downfall of the Roman empire (for more details see my speech *The Church in the Last Judgment*). At that time for instance one head did not make room for another as had happened with the end of other world powers, so the empire could *continue* to exist in another form. Yet, at that time, the beast *itself* fell torpidly to the earth. For the time being it was not possible to speak of a world power anymore. And I am also of the opinion that John is also hinting at this in our chapter when he in vs. 8 and 11 speaks of the beast "which was and *is not*." Although the beast consequently lays fatally wounded on the earth, not to scramble to its feet until later, the woman is still going strong in playing her role. *Her* destruction does not come until at the beginning of the eighth empire. There is between the sixth and the seventh head of the beast a time *without empire, but the woman exercises her dominion during this time*, as well as during the seventh empire. This makes it impossible for me to recognize the woman as a world power for she is in full power also when the empire apparently had been ruined forever. Therefore, I still believe this to be strong grounds — besides the many other motives which I mentioned earlier — by which to distinguish beast and harlot, and to see this last figure as the false church, which herself exercises imperialistic power with her influence into all independent kingdoms, also in the ages when there is no empire.

F. When the people of the Lord are told “to go out from her” (18:4ff), we can understand this from a world city, but not from a world *empire*. For it is not possible to withdraw from it. A person *could leave* the *city* of Rome, as well as the *city* of Nineveh, or Babylon, but no one can withdraw himself from the grasp of the world empire. Joseph and Mary could not escape from the power of Augustus and as such could not go out of “the world empire.”

But this summons *indeed* becomes meaningful when we think of the great city of the false church as a concrete community within the world. It is possible to break the connection with *her*. This is why it appears to me that this verse is again decisively pointing into the direction of the “ecclesiastical” interpretation.

G. This was already dealt with in the rejection of the cultural opinion and actually it was also indicated already that there is no way of thinking of the harlot as world power, simply because this power still existed *after the woman had already perished forever*. The political structure is still complete at that time. Then one has to come to the conclusion: it was the false church which was swept away forever.

H. This woman is said to be drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the witnesses of Jesus (17:6; 18:20, 24; 19:2). Now it is remarkable that in 17:6, a distinction is made between “saints” and “witnesses of Jesus.” I am aware that also New Testament believers often are called “saints.” The question yet enters my mind, whether or not we are to think of the pious ones of the *Old Testament* here. This would not be strange in a chapter which has such strong lines

of resemblance to Daniel 7, pertaining to the signs of the world empires. In this same chapter of Daniel the pious ones of the Old Testament are several times referred to in the Dort Study Bible as “the *saints* of the high places” (vs. 18). Aalders, (in his *Korte Verklaring*) writes correctly, “the saints of the Most High.”¹³ This way of speaking still exists in the New Testament (compare Matt. 27:52 where it speaks of many bodies of the saints which had passed away and at the time of the death of Christ were raised).

Then in our verse we would also have a classification of the believers; on the one hand the “saints” of the Old Testament and on the other hand, the “witnesses of Jesus” as an indication of the martyrs of the New Testament. And thus we could come to the conclusion that the “harlot” also in the days of the Old Testament appeared as “false church” and laid violent hands upon the lives of God’s faithful children. Actually, even if the suggestion in connection to the term “saints” is not correct — I certainly will not give it that much authority — then the thesis that the harlot is the false church which already operated in the days of the Old Testament *still* constantly receives a great deal of support from the texts mentioned. For, in 18:20 it signifies that God with the destruction of the harlot settled the account she had with the “holy apostles” and the “prophets.” It is “their” judgment which the Lord executes over her. For, as it says in vs. 24, “in her is found the blood of the prophets and of the saints and of everyone who was slain on the earth.” The “prophets:”

¹³ Thus also in the King James Version. — RAJ.

these are undoubtedly God's ambassadors of the Old Testament. The "saints:" (see above) perhaps the Old Testament believers. "All who are slain on the earth" would then be a summary of the New Testament martyrs.

In any case, it is certain that the woman, *already in the days of the Old Testament* played her role as murderess of God's servants and children.

Now I will come back for a minute to my remarks on "2B." I was speaking there in connection with the sitting of the woman upon the seven kings from her *historical* position. It has been said already that the woman is sitting on the beast as harlot and murderess, and that she is supported by the beast, and that she also performs her function *until* the days of the eighth king. I on purpose left the question when the manifestation of the woman *began*. It appears now that she was already doing her gruesome work in the days of the world empires, the five which had vanished already in the days of John. In other words the harlot is a concrete power which manifests itself through all ages in alliance with the beast and is nevertheless distinguished from it. The prophets were angry (were they not?) against the apostate Israel, which broke the covenant with the Lord and entered into a covenant relationship with the world powers of those days.

For *which power* layed violent hands upon the blood of the *prophets*? The *world empire* or the *apostate church*? I already showed that Rev. Plooy is incorrect in his opinion that it is always the city, the state which carried out the executions. Rome did not crucify Christ: Jerusalem did. It was not the empire but

the false church. But there is something more to add. In his argument Rev. Plooy did not take into consideration that the harlot, *also in the days of the Old Testament*, killed the prophets. This again puts us on the track to identify the “harlot” who murdered the prophets. Again, a number of verses:

1 Kings 19:10, “*The children of Israel (not the Assyrians!!!) have slain Thy prophets!*”

By whom did Jeremiah suffer? And Amos?

When Jesus chastised the Pharisees He also said (Matt. 23:35), “That upon you may come all the righteous blood, which is shed on the earth, from the blood of the righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah whom *you* murdered between the temple and the altar.” All murders, which were committed against the prophets in the days of the Old Testament, are put to the account of the apostate *Israel*, even without any cooperation of a world empire at all! I am therefore of the opinion that the question which power we have to understand behind the woman who slew the prophets can only be answered with: it was “*Jerusalem,*” *the false church*. I refer here also to the verses mentioned before: Matt. 23:37 and Acts 7:52. In the days of the Old Testament it was always the *ecclesiastical* body who “persecuted those who lived in holiness according to the Word of the Lord.”

Let us now also then render the account. In the days of the Old Testament it was the “harlot” who drank herself drunk with the blood of the prophets and saints; the apostate Israel, “*Jerusalem.*”

In *John’s own* time (Revelation 2:9) the Jews were the ones who persecuted God’s Church, because of which they were called “a synagogue of Satan.”

The false church at the *end of time* was also identified (as harlot —RAJ) by Greijdanus (Revelation 17:16).

The “*harlot*” is again and again the same power in the beginning, middle, and end of history.

Perhaps Rev. Plooy will by now understand why I cannot follow Greijdanus when he identifies the harlot to be, time and again, a *different* power: “first the great Babylon then especially the Roman world power of those days and again at an other time, some different incorporation or world power, and finally the papal Rome” (K.V. 252).

Over against that I say that, although the false church manifests itself every time in a different form (in the days of Ahab different than in the days of John, and in the time of the antichrist different again), *the woman is still a constant greatness just as the beast is a constant greatness. She is always distinguished from the beast although she is sitting on it.*

Indeed, if the “harlot” is on the one hand this and on the other that, how would it be possible to obey the admonition, “go out from her?” The latter is only possible when she, at all times, represents the same greatness.

That the harlot as constant greatness is to be distinguished from the beast, not only once in a while but permanently, now also receives support from:

I. The announcement, mentioned in Rev. 18:9, that the kings which committed adultery with her are in mourning, when they see her total destruction.

In the beginning I already pointed out that we have to see the suggested adultery as an action between two parties, so that we have to make a distinction between

the “harlot” and the “kings of the earth.” These latter ones are bearers of political power and, as such, are representatives of the world empire, and during the time of the collapse of this empire are the rulers of smaller territories; in all cases they are “political” entities. *That they are distinguished from the harlot appears also from this, that they are still functioning after the harlot has perished definitely.* Otherwise it would be impossible for them to act as mourners, as is mentioned in 18:9.

K. Also significant is what it says in 19:7ff. As soon as the “harlot” has perished, the marriage feast of the Lamb is coming, and then His wife is preparing herself. There is certainly dramatic power in this vision. The “harlot” has to perish and then comes the exalted day of the “bride.” For “harlot” and “bride” are two female characters; the first one forgot the marriage fidelity, while the second prepared herself for this. It seems to me that this contrast certainly has something to say also. I admit, I would never base the whole exegesis on this contrast. Only on the basis of the “bride” in 19:7 as portraying the true Church I could not call the “harlot” the false church. But it becomes apparent in a totally different way that we, with “harlot,” must think of the false church. Thus this exegesis receives confirmation from this verse in retrospect, and our insight in the message of this chapter is intensified.

For — and with this I switch over to the data under “1” — we should pay attention to the question, What motivated John to portray the character mentioned here as a *woman*, or rather, what did *God* intend when He portrayed this power to us as a “woman?” If the *world*

empire is meant here, then this question is difficult to answer. It is possible to say that this character of a woman is necessary in order to denounce her idolatrous practices, which are already called “adultery” in the Old Testament. I would except this answer if not *at the same time* this world empire was shown to us in the recurring form of the “beast.” If it would be only a simple matter of idolatrous practices of the world power, then I could imagine that here — as well as in Isaiah 23:17, Jeremiah 51:7, and Nahum 3:4 — a character of a woman is brought into the picture. But there is a lot more at stake in this chapter on account of her power, her murder, her drunkenness, her culture, and her cooperation with political powers. The above answer becomes unacceptable when John embodies the political power in the beast and emphatically distinguishes the woman from the beast. Also the annotations to The Dort Study Bible put their explanation of the character of *this* woman immediately in antitheses with the one of chapter 12.

Point “A” of the data under “1” is settled with this, the points “B” up to and including “F” as well as “H” came up for discussion in the previous articles already, with the discussion of the corresponding data of the second series.

Thus there remains only one point which I mentioned under “1” namely “G”: the *name* of this woman. I wrote that “John says that this name is a mystery. Thus we should not think of the city Babylon nor of the state Babylon; but this name must be understood in a spiritually transmitted way.”

Rev. Plooy has some objections:

Here we have to observe immediately, that it certainly is a very inaccurate representation of the text to say that John calls the name of Babylon, on the forehead of the woman, a mystery. It says in Rev. 17:5: "And on her forehead a name written 'Mystery,' " does it not? John does not *call* her name a mystery but he says that her name *is* "Mystery." This inaccuracy immediately avenges itself, according to me, when "Mystery" is deprived of her very definite *name*-character, and with Prof. Holwerda gets an *adverbial* character in the sense of "spiritually transmitted." Nothing is left here of the specific meaning of "Mystery," a revelation-historical defined term!

It seems like a telling blow at first glance. A very inaccurate representation of the text, for her name is "Mystery." Moreover, just like that attaching an adverbial quality to a name, apparently a proper name. And further on, not leaving anything of the specific meaning of a revelation-historical defined term!

Still, it seems more important and substantial than it is. For:

A. I believe that Rev. Plooy wrote these severe sentences with too much haste, and without having consulted his Greek New Testament. Nestle, at least in the 1932 edition (which I used), did not include "mystery" at all in the name. He does not place the capitals until he presents the Greek text of "The Great Babylon," and as such does not start the name until then. Therefore I may translate the Greek text just as well in this way, "And on her forehead was written a

name (a mystery!): The Great Babylon,” etc. Does Rev. Plooy want more examples? He should consult Schlatter, Charles, Bousset, Behm, Moffat (commentary and “New Translation”), Lohmeyer, Kubel, Goodspeed, Jansen (Canisius translation), Bornkamm (by Kittel IV) just to name a few which are immediately available to me. I also know that some include “mystery” in the name itself, but most of the ones I read certainly do not.

B. Greijdanus does include “mystery” in the name, but he still indicates, “This is *not a proper name*, but a *symbolic description* of her being” (K.V. 254). In other words, Greijdanus, in spite of his translation, chooses *essentially* against Rev. Plooy (no proper name), and thus is not that far removed from my opinion, “symbolic description.” And the others which I mentioned before in succession translate as I did: “a symbolic name.”

C. I really do not understand what the weighty “revelation-historical defined term” here means — written even with an exclamation mark. I am very interested in the history of revelation and I probably know what Rev. Plooy means when he says that the term “mystery” is defined revelation-historically, but I believe that he should not apply this word so haphazardly. For not everywhere in the New Testament does this term receive the same definition and character. May I refer him to Kittel?

I believe that I did not commit an inaccuracy as such, and can peacefully maintain that John describes that we have to understand “the Great Babylon” symbolically and metaphorically. I have already explained at length why I understand this name as symbolic of the false church.

D. The text of Rev. 17 itself also could have taught him that “mystery” does not belong to the proper name. The angel prepares himself in vs. 7 to “tell him the mystery of the woman.” Here the thought is obvious that there is something dark and mysterious about the name “Babylon” which the woman bears, for it needs explanation. This would not have been necessary if the woman had been the embodiment of the world empire. John and his readers know the Scriptures well enough to know that the empire of their day was the continuation of the former Babylon. There was no “mystery” in this for them. But what *did* need an explanation was this: that beside the empire there was a *different* concrete body which did not bear the official name Babylon, nor was it an empire. But essentially it *still* deserved the name “Babylon” because of her style and atmosphere. “Mystery,” in my opinion, also points in the “ecclesiastical” direction.

Rev. Plooy seems to take it ill of me that I did not refer to the many Scripture passages which are quoted in his Bible (published by Brandt). I myself do not have this edition. I always enjoy it when a Bible edition contains a lot of references. I do not know who took care of these references in the Brandt edition, but this reference work as such is not necessarily authoritative. Rev. Plooy may be made aware that I indeed examined these references, but a lot more than just those of this short list. I get the impression that he comes to the conclusion that because in these references there is spoken of the world empire Babylon, and because John sometimes even literally quotes these places, that he (John, —RAJ) *also* must have a view on this world empire.

Yet I think this to be too simplistic. The issue of the manner in which Revelation gives quotations from the Old Testament and takes up characters out of this book and processes them in its own visions and symbols is in *general* much more complicated. One should not simply conclude that Isaiah 21:9 is referring to the world empire of Babylon, and that consequently Rev. 18:2, which took over this word of Isaiah, does the same. Naturally I cannot widely discuss this problem of the use of the Old Testament in the last book of the Bible within the confines of this presentation. But as far as method and style is concerned, in which John goes to work here, I had a lot of help from Schatter in his *Das Alte Testament in der Johanneischen Apokalypse* (1912). Furthermore, I will mention for this aspect of the argument: A. Farrer, *A Rebirth of Images* (1949). I believe it to be essential to first orientate oneself to some extent with the general method which John follows *before* making *far-reaching* conclusions from *certain* quotations of the Old Testament.

Moreover I fail to understand why Rev. Plooy, when reading parallels from the Old Testament, limits himself to texts which speak of the *world empire*. Why did he not give with Revelation 18:22, 23 a reference to Jeremiah 25:10 which emphatically deals with *Jerusalem*? It is fine with me if someone wants to draw parallels, but not biased ones.

And in conclusion, I am of the opinion that exactly the fact that John, when he introduces this woman to us as “The Great Babylon” and precedes this with the *signal of attention* “remember this is a mystery,” that

exactly this fact has to guide us also in the consideration of the texts mentioned by Rev. Plooy. John saw the spirit of “Babylon” disclosed in the apostate church. Therefore all the threats which the prophets had spoken against “Babylon” also applied, without any reservations, to this unfaithful people of the Lord. Thus, in the destruction of the “harlot” he could see fulfilled all the prophecies against “Babylon”. That is why he could also in his description of the judgment on the harlot digest everything which before was spoken of by the prophets against “Babylon.”

It is easy to apply to the world power of the present all the sins which the Old Testament lashes on to the world powers of that time, and all the judgments which it announces upon it. But it is a lot more difficult to determine this sinful spirit in a greatness which presents itself totally different and, as such, conceals her real being. Especially because of this, a very careful exegesis is a necessity so that we withdraw ourselves from the grasp of this woman, have no participation in her sins, and thus flee the judgment which awaits her.

For I did not write or speak to snub others. The danger stood before me that also this time, just as again and again in history, the reformation would be followed with a renewed “adultery.” I do not have a smooth theory of true or false church, and none of us need it. But it is a question of life and death for us all that we stay faithful to the Lord and keep His covenant. For this reason I spoke, and wrote this brochure in addition to it, so that we might understand the Scriptures, believe them, and keep them.