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## \*THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD.

### THE EXERCISE OF THE VOCATION.

By G. CAMPBELL MORGAN, D. D.

The day when a man stands girded at the threshold of his actual work in the ministry of the Word, is a day full of mystic wonder. He is conscious of strange lights and shadows, of joy and of fear, of hope and almost of despair. The opportunities of service are seen to be at once so vast, and so full of solemnity, that he is seized with a sense of inability and of unworthiness. He feels in his own soul what the Apostle undoubtedly felt as he inquired: "Who is sufficient for these things?" Nevertheless he is conscious anew of the fact that his call was from God, and that Divine resources are ever at the disposal of those called to Divine service; and so a sense of dependence is also a sense of confidence. These apparently conflicting emotions fill the soul with a great and reverent awe.

Perhaps the most common disaster in ministerial life is the loss of this very sense of awe. The glory passes; the light becomes dim; the wonder ceases; and work become routine, and preaching a drudgery. How is this to be obviated, and the first glory maintained undimmed? This is really a great question, demanding serious consideration. I propose to deal with it so far as I am able strictly from the positive side. There are four matters which seem to me to be of paramount importance in the exercise of the vocation of the ministry of the Word. They are: first, the prayerful culture of the spiritual life; secondly, the persistent study

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## THE OPENED DOOR

"After these things I saw, and behold, a door opened in heaven."—Rev. 4:1.

### OUTLINE STUDY ON REVELATION.\*

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#### *I. Author, Date and Destination.*

Written by the apostle John when exiled on Patmos, in the closing years of the Roman emperor Domitian, 95-96 A. D. The destination of the book was primarily to the seven churches of the Roman province of Asia (1:4, 11); but, as the number seven denotes completeness, ultimately to the Christian Church of all ages and countries.

#### *II. Occasion and Purpose of the Book.*

Occasion was the condition of Christians in Asia in 95-96 A. D. They were distressed by the delay in Christ's second coming; by the bitter hostility of the Jews; by their own low spiritual vitality; by Pagan persecution here and there even unto death (17:6; 18:20; 6:9, 10); and by the dark prospect of greater persecution ahead. The immediate purpose was to strengthen these Christians of 95-96 A. D. in their trials. The more remote purpose was to strengthen Christians of all ages by showing that after the conflict comes the victory.

#### *III. Theme.*

General Theme: This may be variously stated, as follows: The Opened Door; A Spiritual View of History; The Coming of the Lord. But the central and sovereign idea of the book is best summed up in the one word "Victory." The All-Conquering Christ. "The Son of God goes forth to war, a kingly crown to gain." The Unconquerableness of Christianity. Ultimate Triumph of our Saviour's Kingdom. Gates of Hell will never pre-

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vail against Christ's Church. Theme verses: 11:15; 17:14; 1:7; 12:11. From standpoint of the Christian the theme may be expressed: "Overcoming by Undergoing." See 12:11. "We climb the steep ascent of Heaven through peril, toil and pain."

'by God's will  
Doubt not, the last word is still "Victory!"  
(Dante Gabriel Rosetti.)

Particular Theme: By reason of the presence and power of her Lord, the Church, after passing through discipline and conflict, will triumph over all foes and be established on the earth as our Saviour's universal Kingdom of righteousness, peace and love.

#### *IV. General Analysis.*

- A. The Discipline of the Church, or Christ as Prophet, Chs. 1-3.
- B. The Conflict of the Church, or Christ as Priest, Chs. 4-20.
- C. The Victory of the Church, or Christ as King, Chs. 21-22.

The Church Hesitant, Chs. 1-3; the Church Militant, Chs. 4-20; and the Church Triumphant, Chs. 21-22. (C. Alphonso Smith, *Keynote Studies in Keynote Books of the Bible*, p. 185).

In chapters 4-20, the conflict of the Church, in all ages is set forth in seven series of visions, each series of which reaches from the beginning of the conflict to the victorious end. These visions are not successive but synchronous, yet not in mere repetition of each other, but ever giving a more spiritual conception of history and ever drawing nearer and more visibly to the end. We may compare the movement of the book to the succeeding waves of the sea climbing higher on the shore, or to a spiral road winding up a mountain side or to the sections of a telescope which slide within or over one another.

These seven series of visions, or moving picture reels, each different, yet each inculcating the same lesson, are as follows:

1st Series: The Redemptive Purpose, ending in a redeemed universe. Chs. 4-5.

- 2nd Series: The Seven Seals, ending in Peace, 6:1-8:1.
- 3rd Series: The Seven Trumpets, ending in Victory, 8:2-11:19.
- 4th Series: The Seven Symbolic Figures, ending in the final vintage and harvest of the world, Chs. 12-14.
- 5th Series: The Seven Bowls, ending in the utter defeat of the enemies of Christ's Kingdom, Chs. 15-16.
- 6th Series: The Seven-fold Judgment, ending in the destruction of every power that arrays itself against Christ and His Kingdom, Chs. 17-19.
- 7th Series: The Seven-fold Victory (the thousand year period) ending in complete and final victory over Satan, Ch. 20.

Each reel carries us to the final end and consummation as the following passages show: 5:13; 6:12-17; 11:15; 14:14-20; 16:17-21; 19:11-21; 20:11-15. But that consummation is variously represented. John gives us seven pictures of the end; in one picture a certain feature, in another picture a different feature, is foremost. The consummation is, however, one and the same all along; though different elements predominate from time to time, as the apostle's purpose varies. So with all the Biblical writers. Paul's portrayal of the Consummation in Rom., Chap. 8, is quite different from that in 1 Cor. Chap. 15, because his purpose is different. Yet it is the same Consummation looked at from different view-points. Isaiah paints for us several wonderful pictures of the ultimate triumph of Messiah's Kingdom. Yet they differ. In one picture Jehovah is the central figure; in another, the Messiah; in still another the redeemed people of God. Likewise John, in the Apocalypse, varies his presentation of the final end of all things. Here, he makes prominent the idea of a Redeemed Universe; there, the coming of the Lord fills the whole picture; yonder, it is the destruction of Satan's kingdom upon which John concentrates his attention. By combining these seven pictures, we get a complete, composite picture of the Final Consummation.

V. *Schools of Interpretation.*

Four Schools: 1, Preterist—the whole book refers to the past; 2, Futurist—refers to future; 3, Historical—portrays church history; 4, Symbolic or Typical—visions of the book are pictures of principles recurring in the onward march of Christ's Kingdom.

VI. *Principles of Interpretation.*

- A. Book belongs to "apocalyptic" literature, which endeavors to express truth in symbolic visions rather than in simple narrative. It is a "vision" or "dream" book.
- B. Purpose of book is ethical and not chronological.
- C. Not meant to be a Chinese puzzle, but a plain book that would be understood by the Christians of A. D. 95-96. "A tract for bad times."
- D. The Visions are synchronous, and not successive. Each of the seven great visions of the book reaches from the beginning to the end of the Church's conflict.

## D E T A I L E D A N A L Y S I S

## P R E F A C E 1:1-3

- 1. Source of the revelation. 1:1.  
God, Jesus Christ, and John.
- 2. Content of the revelation. 1:2.  
God, Jesus Christ and John.
- 3. Importance of the revelation. 1:3.  
"Read," "hear," and "keep."

## O P E N I N G S A L U T A T I O N 1:4-8

- 1. Writer 1:4
- 2. Readers 1:4.
- 3. Greeting 1:4-8

I. *The Discipline of the Church, 1:9-3:22.*

- A. The disciplinarian 1:9-20.

Vision of the Church's Lord, risen and glorified, and present with His Church on earth. See Rev. 1:13; Mark 16:20; Math. 28:20.

The central teaching of the vision:

Christ's presence in the Church, His power and His faithful discipline guarantee the Church's ultimate victory. Materials of the vision drawn partly from Dan. 7:9-14; 10:5-9.

**B. The discipline. Chs. 2-3.**

Central thought in the Letters to the Seven Churches: The working of her Lord in her to fit the Church for the conflict ahead and thus insure victory.

We are to look at each of these seven Churches in a double aspect: (a) as an individual, historical church; and (b) as a representative Church. Ephesus (2:1-7), the unenthusiastic Church; Smyrna (2:8-11), spiritually minded Church; Perganum (2:12-17), the Church that will not enforce discipline; Thyatira (2:18-28), the wordly Church; Sardis (3:1-6), the dead Church; Philadelphia (3:7-13), the weak but faithful, the one talent Church that used its talent; Laodicea (3:14-22), the lukewarm Church. Smyrna and Philadelphia are the only ones still standing.

*II. The Conflict of the Church. Chs. 4-20.*

Set forth in seven series of visions, or moving picture reels, each reel reaching from the beginning of the conflict to the end.

**A. First Reel: The Redemptive Purpose, Chs. 4-5.**

Observe: The movement starts with the Cross (5:5-6), and closes with "every created thing" brought beneath the sway of Christ. (5:13).

The two-fold pledge of the ultimate success of the Divine purpose of Redemption:

**1. Power of God the Creator. Ch. 4.**

All history is in the hand of "the Lord God, the Almighty." (4:9).

The four living creature represent Creation and the Divine immanence in Nature. The twenty-four elders represent the Church in her totality, a state yet future. Creation looks to Redemption as its goal.

## 2. Love of God the Redeemer. Ch. 5.

All history is in the hand that was pierced on Calvary. The sealed book and the Lamb.

The book here = the future destiny of the world. Only the Lamb can open the seals of the book, i. e., carry history onward to the final victory of the Church.

Central truth of Chs. 4-5: "God's redemptive purpose is the fulfillment of all hopes, the perfection of all philosophy, the interpreter of all revelations, the key of all seeming contradiction in the physical and moral worlds; it is life, glory and immortality." (John Von Muller).

## B. Second Reel: The Seven Seals, 6-1-8:1.

A vision of history evolving under the control of the Lamb, Opening of the sealed book of the world's destiny: first seal (6:1-2), Christ going forth to conquer; second seal (6:3-4), civil war; third seal (6:5-6), famine; fourth seal (6:7-8), pestilence; fifth seal (6:9-11), persecution; sixth seal (6:12-17), social revolution and upheaval at Second Coming; seventh seal (8:1), PEACE.

The movement begins with the Cross and Resurrection (Rev. 6:1-2; cf. Math. 28:19-20; Luke 24:45-49), and ends with the Final Judgment (Rev. 6:12-17; 8-1).

Central teaching of the seven seals:

"Truth forever on the scaffold, Wrong forever on the throne,—  
Yet that scaffold sways the future, and behind the dim unknown.

Standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above His own."—*Lowell*.

cf. Paul in 1 Cor. 3:21-22.

Chapter 7 is parenthetical, giving anticipatory visions assuring the Church of her safety in the upheavals that will accompany the Second Coming. (Observe the location of Chapter 7 between the sixth and seventh seal).

1. Vision of the Church's safety in the midst of the upheaval. 7:1-8.
2. Vision of Church's glory after the upheaval. 7:9-17.

## C. Third Reel: The Seven Trumpets, 8:2-11:19.

1. Preparation for the trumpets. 8:1-6.
2. Trumpets sounded. 8:7-11:19.

First trumpet (8:7), blight upon the land; second trumpet (8:8-9), blight on the sea; third trumpet (8:10-11), blight on the rivers and fountains; fourth trumpet (8:12), blight on the light; fifth trumpet (9:1-12), entrance of Satanic and demoniac forces; sixth trumpet (9:13-19), Parthian invasion which symbolizes the upheaval at Second Coming; seventh trumpet (11:15-19), the triumph of Christ's Kingdom.

Main teaching of the Trumpets: A merciful God calls a sinful world to repentance. (See Rev. 9:20-21). The seventh trumpet clearly brings us to the end. (11:15-19).

The section, 10:1-11:14, is parenthetical. It is placed between the sixth and seventh trumpets, just as chapter 7 is placed between the sixth and seventh seals. Its purpose is the same as that of chapter 7. It gives anticipatory visions assuring the Church of her safety in the upheavals that will accompany the Second Coming.

The little open book of chapter 10 = the history of the Church; the large closed book of chapter 5 = the history of the world, including the Church.

Analysis of 10:1-11:14. Three visions of comfort:

- a. The little open book; the history of the Church will be both sweet and bitter. Chapter 10.
- b. The measuring rod: The safety of all real Christians. 11:1-2.
- c. The two witnesses: The indestructibility of truth. 11:3-14.

The natural history of all true witness-bearing.

"Truth crushed to earth shall rise again,

The eternal years of God are hers;

But error, wounded, writhes in pain,

And dies among his worshippers."

(cf. 1 Pet. 5:10).

*Special Note:* In 11:2, 3; 12:6, 14; 13:5 the 3½ days = 3½ years = 42 months = 1260 days, which represent the period when paganism will be dominant over the church. It is borrowed from Daniel 7:25; 12:7, where it is spoken of as "a time and times, and half a time," i. e., 3½ years.

Originally it covered the duration of the sufferings of the Jews under Antiochus Epiphanes, June 168-Dec. 165 B. C., and thus became the symbol of the period of the last terrible sway of Satan and his agents in the world before the Second Coming of the Lord.

- D. Fourth Reel: The Seven Symbolic Figures—the woman with child (Church of God), the red dragon (Satan) the man-child (Jesus Christ), the beast from the sea (the Roman Empire), the beast from the land (native Council of Asia), the Lamb on Mt. Zion (Jesus Christ), and the Son of Man on a white cloud (Jesus Christ). Chapters 12-14.

Analysis of Chapters 12-14:

1. Satan tries to destroy the Church by killing the infant Jesus at His birth. 12:1-6.
2. Satan now tries to blot out the Church by dethroning the risen and exalted Christ. 12:7-12.
3. Satan tries to wipe out the Eastern wing of the Church in Palestine 12:13-17.
4. Satan now tries to destroy the Western wing of the Church 13:1-18.

Satan's two instruments:

- a. Beast from the Sea 13:1-10.

This beast is undoubtedly, in a primary sense, the Roman Empire of Nero and Domitian (60-95 A. D.); but, in a wider sense, it represents all godless rulers, empires and forces arrayed against Christ in any age.

- b. Beast from the Land 13:11-18.

This beast = the native council of Asia.

5. Whole company of the redeemed safe and happy in the presence of the Lamb upon the heavenly Mt. Zion, 14:1-5. Like Chap. 7 and the section 10:1-11:14, this paragraph (14:1-5) is parenthetical. It gives an anticipatory vision to comfort God's people as the end draweth near.
6. Final judgment and coming of the Son of Man to receive and reward His people and punish the wicked 14:6-20.

Main teaching of the Seven Symbolic Fixtures: the gates of hell shall not prevail against Christ's Church. The movement extends from the birth of Christ (12:1-6) to the Second Coming (14:6-20).

E. Fifth Reel, the Seven Bowls. Chaps. 15-16.

The bowls signify the outpouring of the Divine wrath upon a world already doomed to destruction.

1. Preparation for the Bowls. Ch. 15.
2. Bowls poured out. Ch. 16.

Note that the seventh bowl is poured out upon the air (17:17-21). "There remains nothing to complete the triumph of Christ but the destruction of that part of the earth which is the special sphere of Satan, the prince of the power of the air." (Thus the seventh bowl carries us to the End).

The comparison given below shows that the Trumpets and Bowls practically agree, and also that the Seals resemble the Trumpets and Bowls:

SEALS (6:1-8:1)	TRUMPETS (8:2-11:19)	BOWLS (15:1-16:21)
1. Conquering Christ.	Land.	Land.
2. Civil War.	Sea.	Sea.
3. Famine.	Rivers and fountains.	Rivers and fountains.
4. Pestilence.	Sun, moon and stars.	Sun.
5. Persecution.	Satanic forces.	Throne of Beast (Rome)
6. Social upheaval.	Invasion from Euphrates.	Euphrates.
7. Peace.	Destruction of Satan's Kingdom.	Air (Satan).

**F. Sixth Reel: The Seven-fold Judgment, Chaps. 17-19.**  
 Judgment on and destruction of symbolic Babylon, ending in the victory of Christ over Rome. Chs. 17-19. Babylon = Rome = all forces and systems opposed to the triumph of Christ.

1. Judgment upon Babylon. Ch. 17.

Rome is the harlot that has seduced the nations to commit spiritual fornication by worshipping the image of the Roman emperor. The eight emperors: Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, Nero (Galba, Otho, Vitellius), Vespasian, Titus, Domitian.

2. Destruction of Babylon. Ch. 18.

Not Rome as a material city, but as a spiritual symbol. Everything that opposes Christ is to go down.

3. Victory over Babylon, ushered in by the Second Coming of Christ. Ch. 19.

Central Truth: Certain destruction of everything that opposes the Kingdom of Christ. Note that here also we are carried to the end. (19:11-21).

**G. Seventh Reel: The Seven-fold Victory, Chap. 20.**

Two stages:

1. Partial and temporary victory over Satan, 2:1-6.

2. Complete and final victory over Satan, 20:7-10.

Main Truth: The last word is "Victory!" This reel, like the others, reaches to the end (20:11-15). The appearance of the white throne (20:11) is perhaps a symbol of the Second Coming, which is followed by the Final Judgment (20:12-15). Hence we infer that in perfect agreement with the whole structure of his book (see above analysis) John in Chap. 20 depicts the whole conflict of the Church from the beginning to the end. 1000 year period = from First to Second Advent.

*III. The Victory of the Church, and the Glories that Follow,  
Chaps. 21-22. The New Heaven and the New  
Earth. The Eternal City of God.*

- A. Site of the city, 21:1-8.
- B. Description of the city, 21:9-27.
- C. Occupation of the citizens—unending service of God, 22:1-5.

*CONCLUSION OF THE BOOK 22:6-20*

Truth of the Book of Rev. attested:

1. By the angel who showed these things to John, 22:6-7.
2. By John, who heard and saw them all, 22:8-9.
3. By Jesus Christ Himself, 22:10-20.