

75TH
• ANNIVERSARY •
COMMEMORATIVE
EDITION

MORE THAN CONQUERORS

AN INTERPRETATION
OF THE BOOK
OF REVELATION

WILLIAM
HENDRIKSEN



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William Hendriksen, *More Than Conquerors*
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Biographical Tribute

William Hendriksen
1900–1982

A commemorative word about William Hendriksen to acknowledge his prodigious writing and profound Christian commitment is a natural response of a grateful publisher. That these comments appear in an edition of *More Than Conquerors*, however, is especially appropriate.

Publisher Herman Baker presented the first trade copies of *More Than Conquerors* to the author in July 1939. The book has remained in print and is now in its twenty-fifth impression. Its long life parallels William Hendriksen's prolific writing career.

Forty-two years later, William Hendriksen at the age of eighty-one was still writing as intensely and productively as ever—up to within a few months before his death in January, 1982. He was progressing well with his next work, a commentary on First Corinthians, having finished the introduction and first chapter.

The vibrancy of the words “More Than Conquerors” was mirrored in William Hendriksen's firm possession of a triumphant biblical faith. The fuller rendering of the apostle's victory cry in Romans 8—“We are more than conquerors through him who loved us”—reverberated in William Hendriksen's tenacious labors to interpret God's Word with clear, rich, and irenic exposition. At his death, it was fitting to

see a copy of *More Than Conquerors* as the focal point of the floral tribute placed on his casket.

The wide distribution of *More Than Conquerors* is evidence of consistent and broadening respect accorded William Hendriksen as a trusted and eminent New Testament scholar. Dr. Hendriksen gained most of his prominence through his commentaries. He began the New Testament Commentary series in 1952 with the first volume of the Gospel of John, and he most recently completed the Book of Romans (1981). As each volume was released, scholars enthusiastically endorsed it. Typical of the statements by reviewers are:

The volumes in the NTC (New Testament Commentaries) are appealing in style, language, and exposition.

[Hendriksen's] style is concise, his language clear, and his exposition conservative.

. . . demonstrates his indefatigable energy, his scholarly acumen, and his ardent desire for the proper understanding of the biblical revelation of God's sovereign grace in Jesus Christ as understood in the Reformed tradition.

Another noticeable feature of Hendriksen's commentaries is the care he takes to study thoroughly different points of view before drawing his conclusion.

. . . careful exegesis.

. . . reflects facility with the grammar and syntax.

. . . awareness of the scholarly literature.

. . . mature exegetical commentary.

Dr. Hendriksen's mastery of languages was a major factor in his incisive exposition. He was fluent in Hebrew as well as Greek (rare among New Testament scholars) and could read in twenty languages. He learned Spanish after he retired from the pastorate. His own Greek translation appears in each of his commentaries, and his familiarity

with the theological literature of Germany and Holland added breadth to his expositions.

His linguistic competence prompted involvement as a consultant and translator in the preparation of the New International Version of the Bible. During the NIV editorial sessions, Dr. Hendriksen became a close friend of Dr. Edwin H. Palmer, whose high admiration for Hendriksen was published in a 1976 issue of *The Banner*, a magazine of the Christian Reformed Church, the denomination Dr. Hendriksen served. Dr. Palmer seemed to be making certain that William Hendriksen would be a prophet honored “in his own country.” The tribute titled “New Testament Giant” began:

While Dr. William Hendriksen is still hale and hearty, I want to draw the attention of the *Banner* readers to this New Testament Giant. . . . The first thing that comes to my mind when I think of Dr. Hendriksen is his New Testament commentaries. I know of no finer commentaries in the English language. They are so superb that every church ought to buy a complete set for its pastor, if he does not already have one.

Dr. Palmer continued, summarizing the features of the commentaries and asserting that they:

assume that the Bible is the completely authoritative, inerrant
Word of God
presuppose the Reformed faith
have meat without being pedantic
are well organized
exhibit a wholesome emotional piety

Writing verse-by-verse commentaries, some of which have more than a thousand pages, at such a steady pace reveals Dr. Hendriksen’s driving willpower and unwavering self-discipline. These traits emerged in part out of the fabric of his early family life. William’s perfectionistic bent had its parental model in his father, who by trade was a carpenter (and an excellent one), but one who also expressed a highly creative nature as a talented wood-carver. William Hendriksen remembers his father producing beautiful carvings, “working on them

for weeks, often for months. When they were finished he would give them away.” As far as William knew, his father never accepted money for any of them.

William’s penchant for hard work came to him environmentally as well. Of hardy immigrant stock, he came at age ten with his family from the Netherlands to settle in Kalamazoo, Michigan. Family dreams of prosperity by starting fresh in America remained elusive—the family was large (William was the youngest of eight children) and the country was gripped by an economic depression. Older children were expected to work for the family’s financial survival. The livelihood of William’s father was so precariously small that at times the master wood-carver had no recourse other than to apply his skills doing minor repair work on items such as clocks and sewing machines.

William did his share to help support the family. After passing the eighth grade, he briefly attended a new high school, which folded several months after classes started in the fall. William went to work, finding jobs wherever he could. He began as a produce peddler and later worked in a gold-leaf printing company, in a radiator repair shop, in a grocery store as a clerk, and in a stationery factory.

A desire to become a minister of the gospel came early to William—even before his family emigrated from the Netherlands. Throughout his life, Dr. Hendriksen believed that when he was five or six years old God planted in his heart a resolve to become a minister.

The story of God’s love toward sinners, and of the cross of Christ, as told by excellent Sunday school teachers and, of course, also by my parents, had impressed me deeply. I wanted everybody to know about it. I loved our minister. So I was entirely sincere in wishing to become a preacher.

The intensity of this feeling for the ministry never faded from William’s heart. His father, however, did not encourage this dream of his youngest child. This is surprising since both his mother (who died when William was sixteen) and father taught their eight children to love the gospel. Furthermore, the lives of his parents exemplified loving service as well as believing correct Christian doctrine. The home was hospitable, and in personal ways his parents frequently helped

those with special needs. When he was a teenager, William held this conversation with his father:

“I’m still planning to study for the ministry.” My father’s response was brief and decisive: “*Daar komp toch niks van*” (Nothing will ever come of that).

Nonetheless William pursued his goal of preparing for the ministry. On the job by day, he studied at night by enrolling in a Carnegie college correspondence course, which covered the first two years of high school. William completed this course in just nine months. At age eighteen he accepted a one-semester appointment to teach fourth graders at a Christian school in Roseland, Chicago. In January he started in his second teaching position—a one-room, eight-grade school near Hospers, Iowa. He continued with education by correspondence (with state-approved courses) to qualify for permanent certification for teaching. Of this phase of young Hendriksen’s education, Dr. Edwin Palmer relates that William studied for these courses in the winter

. . . wearing an overcoat in an unheated, rented room. Such self-discipline continued even into his state of retirement, where he maintained a regular schedule for work, starting the day at five in the morning.

At the age of twenty, William Hendriksen was accepted at Calvin College where he enjoyed science subjects—especially chemistry—along with his BA courses in languages and history. One college science professor attempted to lure William into lecturing on organic chemistry as an assistant professor, advising William against a career in the ministry because of his weak voice. Teaching on the college level was tempting, but William declined the offer and entered Calvin Seminary. With seminary training completed in 1927, William Hendriksen served large pastorates in Michigan for the next sixteen years. He also used this time for advanced studies, earning his Master of Theology degree at Calvin Seminary and a doctorate at Princeton Seminary. In 1943 he became Professor of New Testament at Calvin Theological Seminary and served in this capacity for nine years. Dr. Hendriksen then reentered the pastoral ministry, continuing until his retirement at age sixty-five.

William Hendriksen was married thirty-five years to Rena Baker, who died in 1960. They were the parents of three children. In 1961 he married again. For the rest of his life, he and his second wife Reta worked together on the commentary ministry.

Reta was a loyal and loving wife, and her proficiency in typing and editorial assistance was also highly valued by Dr. Hendriksen:

One can well imagine what this qualification of hers meant to me in my work as an author. Never could I have accomplished half as much had it not been for the constant help of Reta. . . . Capability, sympathy, warmth, and wisdom—all these are found in her in a very high degree.

William Hendriksen pursued his course actively up to the final months of his life when his last surgery drained most of his strength. A. A. Koning concluded his tribute with these words:

Even as his last illness began to lay hold on him, he received a request from England to come and speak. But he had to turn it down—he wanted to finish writing. Now he is no longer gazing darkly into a mirror but seeing face to face.

Throughout the various stages of his career—whether pastoring, teaching, or writing—William Hendriksen remained in a profound sense a supreme educator. Part of the genius of his work was his unique ability to encase his commanding scholarship in simplicity and warmth that enlightened and inspired both advanced and beginning students of God's Word.

Purpose, Theme, and Authorship of Revelation

In form, symbolism, purpose, and meaning the book of Revelation is beautiful beyond description. Where in all literature do we find anything that excels the majestic description of the Son of Man walking in the midst of the seven golden lampstands (Rev. 1:12–20), or the vivid portrayal of the Christ, Faithful and True, going forth unto victory, seated upon a white horse, arrayed with a garment sprinkled with blood, followed by the armies of heaven (19:11–16)? Where again do we find a sharper contrast than that between the doom of Babylon on the one hand, and the joy of Jerusalem the Golden on the other (18:19; 21:22)? And where are the throne set in heaven and the blessedness of heavenly life depicted in a manner more serenely simple, yet beautiful in its very simplicity (4:2–5:14; 7:13–17)? What a wealth of comfort; what an insight into the future; above all, what an unveiling of the love of God are contained in the words of the prophecy of this book!

1. The Purpose of the Book

In the main, the purpose of the book of Revelation is to comfort the militant Church in its struggle against the forces of evil. It is full of help and comfort for persecuted and suffering Christians. To them is

given the assurance that God sees their tears (7:17; 21:4); their prayers are influential in world affairs (8:3–4) and their death is precious in His sight. Their final victory is assured (15:2); their blood will be avenged (19:2); their Christ lives and reigns forever and forever. He governs the world in the interest of His Church (5:7–8). He is coming again to take His people to Himself in “the marriage supper of the Lamb” and to live with them forever in a rejuvenated universe (21:22).

As we think of the glorious hope of the second coming, our hearts are filled with joy; our souls are consumed with a breathless impatience; our eyes attempt to pierce the dark clouds which veil the future, hoping that the glorious descent of the Son of Man may burst upon the view. It is a longing that gushes into words: “And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And he that hears, let him say, Come” (22:17).

But as we consider these truths we realize that already He is with us— with us *in the Spirit*, walking in the midst of the seven golden lampstands (1:12–20). “And he laid his right hand upon me, saying, Fear not; I am the first and the last, and the living one; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades.” We are, indeed, more than conquerors through Him that loved us!

2. The Theme of the Book

The theme is the victory of Christ and of His Church over the dragon (Satan) and his helpers. The Apocalypse is meant to show us that things are not what they *seem*. The beast that comes up out of the abyss *seems* to be victorious. He “makes war with them, overcomes them, and kills them. And their dead bodies lie in the street of the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified. And from among the peoples and tribes and tongues and nations do men look upon their dead bodies three days and a half, and suffer not their dead bodies to be laid in a tomb. And they that dwell on the earth rejoice over them, and make merry; and they send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwell on the earth” (11:7–10). But this rejoicing is premature. In reality it is the believer who triumphs. “And after the three days and a half the breath of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them that beheld them . . . the dominion over the world became the dominion of our Lord and of his Christ; and he shall reign forever and ever” (11:11, 15).

Throughout the prophecies of this wonderful book Christ is pictured as the Victor, the Conqueror (1:18; 2:8; 5:9ff.; 6:2; 11:15; 12:9ff.; 14:1, 14; 15:2ff.; 19:16; 20:4; 22:3). He conquers death, Hades, the dragon, the beast, the false prophet, and the men who worship the beast. *He* is victorious; as a result, so are *we*, even when we seem to be hopelessly defeated.

Let us look, for instance, at the great company of believers who are portrayed in chapter 7. Their garments were filthy, but they are washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb. They were in “great tribulation,” but have come out of it (7:14). They were killed, but they stand upon their feet (11:11). They are persecuted by the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet, but in the end we see them standing victorious on Mount Zion. Rather, we see the Lamb, and with Him a hundred and forty-four thousand having His name, and the name of His Father written on their foreheads (14:1). They triumph over the beast (15:2).

Does it *seem* as if their prayers are not heard (6:10)? The judgments sent upon the earth are God’s answer to their pleading (8:3–5). These very prayers constitute the key that will unlock the mysteries of any sound philosophy of history.

Do they *seem* to be defeated? In reality, they reign! Yes, they reign upon the earth (5:10), in heaven with Christ a thousand years (20:4), in the new heaven and earth forever and ever (22:5).

And what happens to those who *seem* to be conquerors: the dragon (12:3), the beast (13:1), the false prophet (13:11), and Babylon (14:8)? They are defeated—and in exactly the reverse order. Babylon falls in 18:2, the beast and the false prophet are horribly punished in 19:20, and the dragon is confined to unending torment in 20:10.

In short, the theme of this book is stated most gloriously and completely in these words: “These shall war against the Lamb, and the Lamb shall conquer them, for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings; and they also shall conquer that are with him called and chosen and faithful” (17:14).

3. The People to Whom the Book Is Addressed

On my desk lies a recently published commentary on the Apocalypse. It is a very “interesting” book. It views the Apocalypse as a kind of history written beforehand. It discovers in this last book of the Bible

copious and detailed references to Napoleon, wars in the Balkans, the great European War of 1914–1918, the German ex-emperor Wilhelm, Hitler and Mussolini, and so on. But these kinds of explanations, and others like them, must at once be dismissed.¹ For what possible good would the suffering and severely persecuted Christians of John's day have derived from specific and detailed predictions concerning European conditions that would prevail some *two thousand years later*?

A sound interpretation of the Apocalypse must take as its starting point the position that the book was intended for believers living in John's day and age. The book owes its origin, at least in part, to contemporary conditions. It is God's answer to the prayers and tears of severely persecuted Christians scattered about in the cities of Asia Minor.²

Nevertheless, although it is true that we must take as our starting point the age in which John lived, and must even emphasize the fact that the conditions that actually prevailed during the last decade of the first century AD furnished the immediate occasion for this prophecy, we should give equal prominence to the fact that this book was intended *not only* for those who first read it, but for all believers throughout this entire dispensation.

We submit the following arguments for this position.

First, the affliction to which the Church was subjected in the days of the apostle John is typical of the persecution that true believers must endure throughout this entire dispensation (2 Tim. 3:12), and especially just before Christ's second coming (Matt. 24:29–30).

Second, many of the predictions in which the book abounds (e.g., the "seals," "trumpets," and "bowls") concern principles and happenings which are so broad in their scope that they cannot be confined to one definite year or period of years, but span the centuries, reaching out to the great consummation.

Thirdly, the letters in chapters 2 and 3 are addressed to the seven churches. Seven is the number which symbolizes completeness. Its use here indicates that the Church as a whole is in mind and that the admonitions and consolations of this book were meant for Christian believers throughout the centuries.

1. For a descriptive note on the various theories of interpretation see M. C. Tenney, *New Testament Survey* (IVF), pp. 387ff.; and L. Morris, art. "Book of Revelation" in *The New Bible Dictionary* (IVF).

2. See chapter 6 for a fuller discussion of this point.

Finally, all those who read and study this book in any age are called blessed (1:3). As at the beginning, so also at the close of the book, the author addresses himself not merely to one group of men living in one decade, but to “every man that hears the words of the prophecy of this book” (22:18).

4. The Author of the Book

The author tells us that his name is *John* (1:1, 4, 9; 22:8). But the question is, which John? For some deny that John, the beloved disciple, wrote the Apocalypse. This is partly due to the fact that whereas the author of the Fourth Gospel and the three love Epistles never mentions his own name, the author of the Apocalypse tells us that his name is John.

Again, it is pointed out that there is a striking difference between the style and general tone of the Gospel and Epistles on the one hand, and Revelation on the other. But read the Gospel of John and then read the Apocalypse. Do you notice the difference? In the former the ideas flow smoothly; in the latter they are introduced abruptly—you never know what the author is going to talk about next. The former emphasizes God’s love; the latter—so it is said—stresses His stern justice. The former describes the inner condition of the heart; the latter dwells on the external course of events. The former is written in beautiful, idiomatic Greek; the latter is written in what has been called “rugged, Hebraistic, barbarous” Greek.³

It is also claimed that there is a marked difference between the *doctrine* of the Gospel and the Apocalypse. The former is broad-minded, universalistic; it preaches the “whosoever” gospel and the doctrine of salvation by grace. The latter, it is said, is narrow-minded, particularistic; it is Jewish in its doctrine of salvation and it stresses the necessity of good works.⁴

Finally, it is pointed out that, as early as the third century AD, Dionysius of Alexandria ascribed the book of Revelation to “another John,” a view that was adopted by the ecclesiastical historian Eusebius.

3. Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, vii. 25.

4. W. Beyschlag, *New Testament Theology*, II, p. 362.

Now some are convinced by these arguments that some John other than the beloved disciple wrote the Apocalypse.⁵ They still believe that John, the apostle, was responsible for the Fourth Gospel. Others accept the Johannine authorship of the Apocalypse but claim that some other person—maybe another John, maybe not even a John—wrote the Gospel.⁶ And, of course, there are the radicals who deny that the apostle John wrote either the Gospel or the Apocalypse.⁷

But let us examine the arguments for a moment. The first impresses one by its weakness. Surely the very fact that the author of the Apocalypse merely calls himself *John* indicates that he was very well known, not only in one particular locality but throughout the churches of Asia. When he simply called himself *John*, without any additional designation, everybody knew just who was meant. Does not the conclusion seem warranted that this person who was so well known must have been the apostle John? Suppose the author of the book that you are now reading simply called himself William; do you think for a minute that everybody would immediately guess who wrote it? We are thoroughly convinced that there was only one John who did not need to add “the apostle,” for the very reason that he was known as the apostle! Besides, the author does not call himself *apostle* for the simple reason that he wrote this book in the capacity of *seer*, to whom visions were revealed (cf. John 15:27; Acts 1:22–23; 1 Cor. 9:1).

The difference in grammar, in style, and in general tone must be admitted. But does this mean that John, the apostle, cannot have written the Apocalypse? In our opinion it does not. How, then, shall we account for this difference? Some there are who hold that when John wrote the Gospel he had assistants, perhaps the elders in Ephesus; and that the absence of these assistants when John was in Patmos would account for the peculiar grammar and style of the Apocalypse.⁸

Other elements may enter into the explanation. First, we should not exaggerate these differences in style and language. Between the Gospel and the Apocalypse there is also a strong body of *resemblances*—a fact that, of late, many are beginning to emphasize. These similarities

5. See for example the writings of F. Bleek and J. Neander.

6. This view is held by the Tübingen school.

7. Bousset, Harnack, Holtzmann, and Moffatt are among these.

8. An interesting explanation is given in A. Pieters, *The Lamb, the Woman, and the Dragon*, pp. 18ff. See also A. T. Robertson, *Word Pictures*, VI, p. 274.

are striking. They are to be found even in peculiar grammatical constructions and in characteristic expressions (cf. John 3:36 with Rev. 22:17; John 10:18 with Rev. 2:27; John 20:12 with Rev. 3:4; John 1:1 with Rev. 19:13; and John 1:29 with Rev. 5:6).⁹

Again with reference to the style, should we expect to find the same style in a history of events (the Gospel), a personal letter (the Epistles), and the Apocalypse or unveiling (Revelation)? In this connection, let us not forget that when John wrote the last book of the Bible, his soul was in such a condition of deep, inner emotion, surprise, and ecstasy (for he was “in the Spirit”), that his earlier, Jewish training may have exerted itself more forcibly and may even have influenced his style and language.

We feel certain that the transcendent nature of the subject matter, the deeply emotional state of the author when he received and wrote these visions, and his abundant use of the Old Testament—Hebrew and Greek¹⁰—are responsible to a large extent for the differences in style that remain after the striking similarities have been taken into account.

We need not dwell at length on the so-called difference in doctrinal emphasis. The simple fact is that the Fourth Gospel and the Apocalypse do not clash on even a single point. In fact, the agreement in doctrine is remarkable.¹¹ The Gospel calls Jesus “the Lamb of God” (*amnos*) in John 1:29; so does the Apocalypse (*arnion*), twenty-nine times. The Epistles and the Gospel use the title “the Logos” with reference to our Lord (John 1:1ff.; 1 John 1:1); so does the Apocalypse (19:13). The Gospel represents Christ as the pre-temporal, eternal Being (1:1ff.); so does the Apocalypse (22:13; cf. 5:12–13). The Gospel of John ascribes man’s salvation to the sovereign grace of God and to the blood of Jesus Christ (1:29; 3:3; 5:24; 10:10–11); so does the Apocalypse (7:14; 12:11; 21:6; 22:17)—most emphatically. And the “whosoever” doctrine is found in both books (John 3:36; Rev. 7:9; 22:17).

There are no doctrinal differences!

9. For further similarities between the Gospel and the Apocalypse, see J. P. Lange, *The Revelation of John (Commentary of the Holy Scriptures, The New Testament, X)*, pp. 56ff.

10. See A. T. Robertson, *The Minister and His Greek New Testament*, p. 113.

11. For a survey of this whole subject, see H. Gebhardt, *The Doctrine of the Apocalypse*, especially pp. 304ff.; ad G. B. Stevens, *The Theology of the New Testament*, pp. 536ff., 547.

Finally, with reference to the opinion of Dionysius, already quoted, it should be clear that this view rests upon a misreading of a very careful statement of Papias,¹² and was probably influenced by opposition to Chiliasm¹³ which sought to justify itself by an appeal to the book of Revelation.¹⁴

The early Church is almost unanimous in ascribing Revelation to the apostle John. That was the opinion of Justin Martyr (ca. AD 140); of Irenaeus (ca. AD 180), who was a disciple of a disciple of the apostle John; of the Muratorian Canon (ca. AD 200); of Clement of Alexandria (ca. AD 200); of Tertullian of Carthage (ca. AD 220); of Origen of Alexandria (ca. AD 223); and of Hippolytus (ca. AD 240).¹⁵

When we add to all this that according to a very strong tradition the apostle John was banished to the isle of Patmos (cf. 1:9), and that he spent the closing years of his life at Ephesus, to which the first of the seven letters of the Apocalypse was addressed (2:1), the conclusion that the last book of the Bible was written by “the disciple whom Jesus loved” is inescapable.

5. The Date of the Book

The question now arises, when did John write the Apocalypse? In the year 69 (or even earlier), or must we reverse the figure and make it 96 (or perhaps 95)? One cannot find a single really cogent argument in support of the earlier date. The arguments produced are based on late and unreliable testimonies, on the wholly imaginary idea that John did not yet know his Greek when he wrote the Apocalypse, and on a very questionable literal interpretation of certain passages that most certainly have a symbolic meaning. Thus, for example, we are told that the temple at Jerusalem was still standing when the Apocalypse was written, for 11:1 reads: “Rise and measure the temple of God.”

The late date has very strong support. Says Irenaeus: “For that (the apocalyptic vision) was seen not a very long time since, but almost

12. See the discussion in R. C. H. Lenski, *Interpretation of St. John's Revelation*, pp. 8ff.

13. From Gk. *chilioi*, “1000”; a term used to describe eschatological views which are strongly millennial in character.

14. N. B. Stonehouse, *The Apocalypse in the Ancient Church*, p. 151.

15. *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, I-III. See also N. B. Stonehouse, *op. cit.*, pp. 153ff.

in our own day, toward the end of Domitian's reign." Again he says: ". . . the church in Ephesus, founded by Paul, and lived in by John until the time of Trajan (AD 98–117), is a true witness of the tradition of the apostles."¹⁶

When, in connection with these strong and definite evidences, we remember that the Apocalypse reflects an age in which Ephesus has already lost its first love; Sardis is already "dead"; Laodicea—which was destroyed by an earthquake during Nero's reign—has been rebuilt and is boasting of its spiritual wealth (3:17); John has been "banished," a very common form of persecution during Domitian's reign; the Church has already endured persecutions in the past (20:4); and the Roman Empire, as such, has become the great antagonist of the Church (17:9); when we remember all these facts we are forced to the conclusion that the late date (AD 95 or 96) is correct.¹⁷ The Apocalypse was written toward the end of Domitian's reign by the apostle John.

Yet the real author is not John but the Almighty God Himself. "The revelation of Jesus Christ, *which God gave him* . . . and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John . . ." (1:1, emphasis added). To be sure, John, the apostle, wrote Revelation. But God, through Christ, was the real Author. Therefore what this book predicts is not the product of human fancy, prone to error, but the revelation of the mind and purpose of God concerning the history of the Church.

At Copenhagen, among the many noble sculptures of Thorwaldsen, there is one of the apostle John. His countenance is suffused with the serenity of heaven. He is actually looking up to heaven. His writing tablet is before him. In his hand is his pen. But the apostle's pen does not touch the tablet. He will not venture on a single word until it is given to him from above.¹⁸

16. *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, I, pp. 416, 559.

17. For the earlier date, however, see H. Cowles, *The Revelation of St. John*, pp. 17ff. Amongst those who support the late date are Alford, Godet, Moffatt, Ramsay, Swete, Warfield, and L. Berkhof in his *New Testament Introduction*, pp. 347f.

18. See A. Plummer, *The Book of Revelation (Pulpit Commentary)*, p. 150.