

St Victorinus of Poetovio: Commentary on the Apocalypse

Saint Victorinus was bishop of the Pannonian city of Poetovio (or Pettavium; now the modern Ptui, Slovenia) in the second half of the third century. He is described by St Jerome as the first Latin exegete of the Bible. Of the many works which Victorinus produced, however, we have mere fragments of a very few, and only his Commentary on the Apocalypse (*In Apocalypsin*) is complete. This commentary on the Book of Revelation is also the earliest surviving complete one, which was written by Victorinus during the reign of the Emperor Gallienus (258-260). During the Great Persecution of Diocletian in 304, the Holy Martyr Victorinus joined the chorus of Saints.

Jerome is responsible for an extensive revision of Victorinus' commentary, dated to 398, which he particularly undertook at the request of a friend to adjust Victorinus' commentary in those verses and passages displaying interpretations which were taken to be chiliastic/millennialistic, a theological opinion which had since been rejected by the Church at large (notice the statement in the Nicean-Constantinopolitan Creed of 381: "of Whose Kingdom there shall be no end"—a creedal rejection of chiliasm). Consequently, essentially two versions of Victorinus' commentary have come down to us: his original and the Hieronymian edition. I have undertaken to translate Victorinus' original and only Jerome's letter to Anatolius (which serves as a prologue to Jerome's version) and Jerome's ending of the work (which replaces Victorinus' commentary on chapters 20 and 21 of the Apocalypse). A relatively poor translation of Jerome's version is included in the Nicene-Post Nicene Fathers collection, as [here](#).

The text I have used is that of Martine Dulaey, *Victorin de Poetovio. Sur l'Apocalypse et autres écrits* (Source Chrésiennes 423. Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1997). For further information on Dulaey's textual decisions, see there, or her larger two-volume work *Victorin de Poetovio: Premier Exégète Latin* (Collection des études augustinienes. Série antiquité 139-140. Paris: Institut d'études augustinienes, 1993).

A few words are necessary on the presentation here. All italicized words in the text represent citations or allusions to Biblical texts. These are often quite loose. Even when they are literal, they belong to that complex of the Old Latin versions of the Apocalypse that are not completely well-understood, particularly for any regional variants in Victorinus' province. The chapter numbers in Victorinus correspond to the chapter numbers in the Apocalypse, thus the citations in each chapter, unless otherwise noted, belong to that chapter of the Apocalypse. I do not provide here the precise citations for these references to the Apocalypse itself, but only for those references to other books. If someone is familiar enough with the Apocalypse to track down this translation of this commentary to it, they should certainly be familiar enough with the text not to need citation notes. The citations are provided at the bottom of each chapter block.

If the reader finds any errors, or has any suggestions or questions, please [contact me](#).

Victorinus Poetovionensis: Commentarius In Apocalypsin

1 The beginning of the book promises blessing to *who reads, who hears, and who obeys* so that in studying the reading, he therefore learns works and keeps those which are

commanded. *Grace to you and peace, from God Who is and Who was and Who is coming. Is, Who endures; was, Who with the Father made all, and Who did not begin from the Virgin; is coming, indeed, to judge. Of the sevenfold Spirit:* in Isaiah we read: *A spirit of wisdom and intellect, of counsel and strength, of knowledge and piety, the spirit of fear of the Lord.*^a These seven spirits are of one; namely, they are given by the Holy Spirit. *And from Jesus Christ, Who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead.* In becoming human, He gave witness to the world, suffering in which, He *freed us from sins by His blood*, and having defeated Hell, first rose up from the dead, and *death no longer has dominion over Him*,^b but by His reign, the kingdom of the world is destroyed. *And made us a kingdom and priests*, that is, the Church of all believers, as the Apostle Peter said: *a holy people, a royal priesthood.*^c *Behold, He is coming with the clouds, and all peoples see Him.* He who first, in becoming human, came in secret, will in a little while come openly, in majesty and glory, to judge.

² For it says that *in the midst of the golden lampstands was walking one like a son of man.* *Like a son of man* it says. After victory over death, when He ascended into the heavens, His body having been united with the Spirit of glory which He received from the Father, He is now able to be called like a Son of God, not (only) like a son of man. *Walking in the midst of the golden lampstands*, that is, in the midst of the churches, as was said by Solomon: *In the ways of the just ones I walk.*^d

His antiquity and immortality, the source of majesty, are shown by *with a white head*. For the Head of Christ is God. *And with white hair* are the multitude of wearers of white (the newly baptized), like *wool*, because of the sheep, like *snow*, because of the innumerable crowd of candidates (catechumens) given by Heaven. *Eyes like a flame of fire.* These are the commandments of God, giving light to those who believe, (but) burning the unbelievers.

³ *And a face with the brightness of the sun.* His face is His coming in which He spoke to man face to face. For the sun is of less glory than the glory of the Lord. But because of rising, and setting, and again rising?for He was born, and suffered, and rose up?for this reason Scripture gives the comparison of His face to the glory of the sun.

⁴ *In a priestly garment*, which is the flesh not corrupted by death, and by suffering He has been given an eternal priesthood, most obviously. *Breasts* are the two Testaments, and a *golden sash*, the chorus of saints, like gold tried by the fire; alternately, the gold sash *binding the chest*: the enkindled conscience and pure spiritual sense given to the churches.

By a sharp double-edged sword coming out of His mouth, He is shown to be Who brought knowledge to the whole world both now, of the good things of the Gospel, and, previously, of the Law of Moses. But from which same Word, Old or New Testament, is the whole race of humans indeed judged, thus it is called a sharp double-edged sword. For the sword arms the soldier; the sword slays the enemy; the sword punishes the deserter. And in order to show the Apostles He announced judgment, He said: *I did not come to bring peace, but the sword.*^e *And after He had finished the parables,*^f *He said to*

them: Have you understood everything? They said: Even so. He added: Therefore, every scribe trained in the Kingdom of Heaven is like the father of a family, bringing out from his treasury new and old;^g "new:" the word of the Gospel; "old:" the Law and the Prophets. These come out of His mouth, He said to Peter: *Go to the sea and cast a hook, and the first fish that comes up, opening its mouth you will find a stater (coin), which is two denarii, give for Me and for you.*^h And David similarly said by the Spirit: *Once, is God speaking; twice, have we heard Him,*ⁱ for God has determined "once" what will happen, from the beginning to the end. These are the "two" Testaments, which at a particular time are called either two denarii, or New and Old, or a sharp double-edged sword. Finally, with His being appointed Judge by the Father, wanting to show that men will be judged by the word of preaching, He says: *Do you think that I will judge you in the last day? The word which I speak to you, it will judge (you) in the last day.*^j And Paul says to the Thessalonians against the Antichrist: *whom the Lord will slay with the breath (spiritus) of His mouth.*^k Therefore, this is the sharp double-edged sword coming out of His mouth.

⁵ *His voice was like the voice of many waters. Many waters* are to be understood as peoples, or also the gift of baptism, which He gave as a commandment, spread out by the Apostles for the salvation of men. *His feet like gold-copper, as though burning in a furnace.* It says the Apostles, who were burned in suffering, preached His word; through them, in fact, the preaching went out (lit. 'walked'); they were well-named "feet." See where the prophet anticipated this, saying: *,We will worship where His feet have stood'* for where they first stood the Church was also established, that is Judea; there will all the saints be gathered and worship their God.

⁶ *Seven stars in his right hand.* We have said that the seven virtues of the Holy Spirit were given into His power by the Father, as Peter exclaimed to the Jews: *Therefore, exalted at the right hand of God, He has poured forth the Spirit . He received from the Father, which you have seen and heard.*^m But also John the Baptist anticipated it, saying to his disciples: *For He has not given the Spirit by measure. The Father loves the Son and has given all into His hands.*ⁿ These are the seven stars.

⁷ *The seven churches,* each of which He calls by name, to whom the letters were composed, which are not the only or the principal churches. But what He says to one, He says to all. It makes no difference; whether a military troop of a small number of soldiers, or by it the whole army is indicated. Finally, as in Asia, so in the whole world: seven churches as all. Paul taught that the seven named are the one Catholic Church. Indeed, at first, so he might keep this (rule), he did not exceed the number of seven churches, but wrote to the Romans, to the Corinthians, to the Ephesians, to the Thessalonians, to the Galatians, to the Philippians, and to the Colossians. Afterwards he wrote to individual people, but did not exceed the number of seven churches, as he summarized in brief in his preaching to Timothy: *so that you will know how you must behave in the House of God, which is the Church of the Living God.*^o

This type (or 'symbol') was preached by the Holy Spirit through Isaiah, as we read of *the seven women who took hold of one man.* For the one man is Christ, not born from seed.

The seven women are the churches, receiving *their bread, and in their tunics* covered, who ask *to remove their reproach, and that his name will be spoken over them*.^p For *bread* is the Holy Spirit, which nourishes eternal life; *theirs*, promised to them by faith. And *their tunics*, that is, the promises to them with which they want to be covered. Finally, as Paul said, *Thus must weakness put on strength, and mortality immortality*.^q *Remove their reproach*: the reproach is previous sin, which is removed by baptism. And the beginning of a person being called Christian, which is *your name will be spoken over us*. Therefore, for these reasons, for example, seven churches are made one Church.

⁸ He also wrote, for quality of faith and election ?either to those who are also striving in the world, and are working at their striving for simplicity, and are patient and, when seeing certain destructive and pestilential people in the church, that it (the church) might not be dispersed, suffer them. He warns all of them of love in which faith is lacking, that they might make penance. ?or to those who are living in cruel places among persecutors, persevering to be faithful. ?or to those who under the pretext of mercy introduce illicit sins into the church, teaching others to do them; ?or to those who are at ease in the Church; ?or to those who are negligent, Christians only in name; ?or to those who, humbly instructed, persevere strongly in faith; ?or he rebukes those who study the Scriptures and strive to know the hidden prophecies, and are unwilling to do the works of God, which are mercy and love. For all he pronounces penance, for all he announces judgment.

^a Isa 11.2, 3 ^b Rom 6.9 ^c Ex 19.6; 1Pt 2.9 ^d Prov 8.20 ^e Mt 10.34 ^f Mt 13.33 ^g Mt 13.51-52 ^h Mt 17.26-27 ⁱ Ps 61.12
^j Jn 12.48 ^k 2Th 2.8 ^l Ps 131.7 ^m Acts 2.33 ⁿ Jn 3.34, 35 ^o 1Tim 3.15 ^p Isa 4.1 ^q 1Cor 15.53

2 Indeed, in his first letter he says, *I know your suffering and works and your patience*, I know you are suffering and see your works and patience: do not think I remain far (or 'for long') away from you. *And that you cannot bear evil people, and that those who say they are apostles, you discovered them liars, and you have patience according to My name*. All these belong to praise, and not mediocre praise. But also such men and of such a kind, and the selection of such men, indicates that every one of them must be admonished so that they are not deprived of good things. He says he has a few things against them, saying: *You have abandoned your earlier love: remember from where you have fallen*. He who falls, falls from a height, and therefore he says *from where*, for at all times until the end works of love are to be practiced, with is the greatest commandment. Finally, unless this is done, was threatened *to move the lampstand from its place*, that is, to scatter the people. *For you hate the works of the Nicolaitans which I also hate; you have this*, this belongs to praise. For *the works of the Nicolaitans*: before this time, false and disease-bearing men, ministers in the name of Nicolaus, made for themselves a heresy, (saying) that something devoted (to an idol) may be exorcized and eaten, and that whoever had fornicated could receive the peace on the eighth day. Therefore he praises those to whom he has written, to whom, such and so great men, he has promised *that tree of life which is in the garden of God*.

² The following epistle reveals the behavior and custom of the following other kind. And at the end of it he says: *I know you, that you are both poor and suffering, but you are*

rich: for he knows that for such, riches are hidden with him; and he rejects the slander of the Jews which are not Jews, but the synagogue of Satan, who are brought together by Antichrist; to whom he says that if they persevere to the death, and he who has persevered will not be hurt by the second death, that is, he will not be thrown into Hell.

³ The third kind of saints indicates men who are strong in faith, and not fearing persecution. But there are others among them who are prone to unlawful concessions. He says: *I will fight them with the sword of my mouth*, that is, the commandment which I will speak, and which I will tell you to do. For, *the teaching of Balaam taught to set a stumbling-block before the eyes of the Sons of Israel, to eat what is sacrificed (to idols) and to fornicate*: as noted long ago. For he gave this advice to the king of the Moabites, and thus the people stumbled. He says, *Thus, you also have among you holding this kind of teaching*, and under the pretext of mercy you make others suffer. He says, *To him who conquers, I will give to him of the hidden manna. The hidden manna is immortality; the white gem is adoption in the Son of God; a new name is "Christian."*

⁴ The fourth kind indicates the nobility of the faithful, working daily, and doing great works. But even here are indicated some men to be at ease, given over to unlawful pleasures, and paying attention to new prophecies, which he shows and prophesies to others, to whom this is not pleasing, who know the wickedness of the Adversary, by which evils and sorrows he seeks to bring dangers on the head of the faithful. And thus he says: *I will not place upon you another weight*, that is, I have not given you laws, observances and burdens, which is *another weight, that what you have, you hold onto, until I come. And to him who conquers, I will give to him power over the nations*, that is, I will make him a judge among the other saints. *And the star of the morning will I give to him*: namely, the first resurrection he promised; for *the morning star* chases away the night and announces light, which is the beginning of day.

3 The fifth kind, selection, or conduct of the saints, shows negligent men, doing other than they should in the world, foolish works, Christian in name only. And therefore he exhorts them, if they can turn back from dangerous negligence, to be saved. He says: *Be strong for those who are dying; for I have not found your works full before my God*. For it is not enough for a tree to live, and flourish, but not have fruit, as it is not enough to be called a Christian, and to confess Him, but not have Christian works.

² The sixth kind, the best conduct of the selection, the behavior of saints is described, namely those who are humble in the world and simple in the Scriptures, and bearing an unshakable faith, not being frightened by anything and drawing back from the Faith. Therefore he says to them: *I have placed before you an open door* and he says *for you have kept the word of my patience*, with such little strength, *and I will keep you from the hour of temptation*: so that they will know of what kind is His glory, indeed He does not allow them to be handed over to temptation. He says, *He who conquers will be made a column in the temple of God*: for a column is beautiful for a building, that is, he who perseveres will be considered more noble in the Church.

³ And this selection, the seventh kind, describes wealthy men, believers who are in dignified positions, but believers that are rich men: they indeed discuss the Scriptures at home in their rooms, but outside no one would know they are believers. Namely, they are boasters who also say that they know everything, possessed of confidence in letters, but their works are empty. And therefore he says to them *neither cold nor hot* are they, that is, neither unbelievers nor believers, for they are all things to all people. And what is neither cold nor hot must be *lukewarm*, so that it causes nausea: he says, *And I will vomit you out of my mouth*. Nausea, though it is hateful, harms no one: so with this kind of men, who will be ejected. But that this is a time of penitence, he says: *I counsel you, buy refined gold from me*, that is, if you are able, to suffer anything for the name of the Lord. He says *And anoint your eyes with salve*, that is, that what you gladly know from the Scriptures, you might also try to do the deed. And because, if this kind of men turns back from great destruction to penitence, not only will they be useful to themselves, but are able to benefit many, not a mediocre reward is promised to them, that is: *to sit upon a throne* as judges.

4 He says *an open door in heaven*: the preaching of the New Testament was seen by John, and it was said to him: *Come up here*. When it is depicted opened, it is obvious that it had previously been closed to men. But it was sufficiently and fully opened, when Christ ascended bodily to the Father. And the voice which he heard, when it said that he was talking with him: without contradiction it reproves the stubborn. He who is coming is He who spoke through the Prophets. For John was of the circumcision, and all that People which heard the preaching of the Old Testament was edified by that Voice. He says, *For that voice which I heard, it said to me: Come up here*: that is Jesus Christ whom he shows seen as a little before as a son of man among the golden lampstands. And now henceforth he recalls those things which were predicted in similitudes through the Law, and by these scriptures he connects all the earlier Prophets, and opens up the Scriptures. And because afterward our Lord invited to heaven all believing in His name, He immediately poured out the Holy Spirit, who brings men to heaven, he says: *Immediately I was in the Spirit*. And when the mind of the faithful is opened by the Holy Spirit, he makes obvious to them what also was predicted to those before.

² Plainly *a throne placed* is the seat of a judge and a king; *upon* which throne he says he saw *the resemblance of jasper and sardis*, which jasper is the color of water, and sardis of fire: this shows the two Testaments are placed, until the end of the world, upon the judgment-throne of God; of which two judgments one is already accomplished in the destruction by water, but the other will be accomplished by fire. And *a rainbow around the throne* has a burning color; for the rainbow is called a bow, of which indeed God spoke to Noah and his sons, no longer to fear inundation by water. He says *I will set my bow in the clouds*,^a may you no longer fear the water, but the fire. And *Before the throne was something like a sea of glass like crystal*: is the gift of baptism, which He pours out by His Son in a time of repentance before He brings the Judgment. Therefore, *before the throne*, that is, before the judgment. And when it says *a sea of glass like crystal*, it depicts calm water, not moved by the wind, not flowing down, but given to be as immovable as the gift of God.

³ *The four animals* are the four Gospels. He says *The first is like a lion, the second is like a bull, the third is like a man, the fourth is like a flying eagle; having six wings around them, eyes both inside and outside, and, he says, never ceasing to say ἅγιος, ἅγιος, ἅγιος, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty.*

Twenty-four elders sitting, having twenty-four judgment-seats: are the books of the Prophets and the Law, relating the witness of the Judge. For the twenty-four fathers are the twelve Apostles and the twelve Patriarchs. Therefore, the animals which are different faces, have them for this reason.

⁴ *The animal like a lion* is the Gospel according to John, which, while all the other Evangelists announced that Christ was made man, it was for him to announce that He was God before He descended and took on flesh, *The Word was God*,^b and because he proclaims like a roaring lion, his preaching bears the face of a lion. *Like a man.* Matthew made an effort to announce to us the family of Mary, through which Christ received flesh. Therefore, when he recounts from Abraham up to David, and from David up to Joseph, as though spoken of a man, thus his preaching receives the image of a man. Luke also, when he recounts from the priest Zacharias offering a sacrifice for the people and the angel appears to him, because of the priesthood and the sacrifice, this writing bore the image of the bull. Mark, the interpreter of Peter, wrote a record of those things which he generally taught, but not in order, and begins with the word of prophecy announced by Isaiah.

Therefore, they begin thus, saying: John: *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God*;^b this is the face of a lion. And Matthew: *The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, son of God, son of David, son of Abraham*;^c this is the face of a man. And Luke thus: *There was a priest of the name Zacharias, of the course of Abia, and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron*;^d this is the image of a bull. Mark begins thus: *The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, as it is written in Isaiah*;^e it begins with the Spirit flying, therefore, it also has the image of a flying eagle.

And not only the prophetic Spirit, but also the Word of God the Father Almighty, Who is His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, bears the same images in the time of His appearance to us. For when, it was predicted *like a lion, and like the cub of a lion*^f because for the salvation of men, He was made man, conquering death and freeing all; because He offered Himself as a sacrifice to God the Father for us, He is called a bull; and because He conquered death, ascended to heaven, extending His wings and protecting His people, He is called a flying eagle. Therefore these announcements, which are four, are actually one announcement, which came out of one mouth, like the river in paradise, from one source dividing into four parts.

⁵ And *these animals have eyes inside and outside*, that is the preaching of the New Testament; it shows Spiritual providence, which both looks into the secrets of the heart, and also sees things yet to come, which are *inside and outside*. *The wings* are the witnesses of the books of the Old Testament, and therefore they are twenty-four, which is also the same number of elders on the judgment-seats. As an animal is not able to fly

without having wings, so neither does the preaching of the New Testament have faith without having the previously announced witnesses of the Old Testament, by which it takes off from earth and flies. For always, when what was said before is found to have happened later, this makes an undoubting faith. For again, if *wings* are not attached to animals, they have no way to prolong (?) life. For without those things previously announced by the prophets being accomplished in Christ, *their preaching will have been made worthless*.^g The Catholic Church holds both the previously announced and also the later accomplished, and it truly flies and takes off from the earth, a living animal. And with the heretics who don't use the prophetic witness, living creatures are present for them, but which are only earthly. And for the Jews, who do not accept the preaching of the New Testament, wings are present for them, but they are not living; that is, they bring a worthless prophecy to men, not hearing (obeying), not uniting what is said to what happens.

For the books of the Old Testament are twenty-four, as we see in the Epitome of Theodore. But also, as we have said, the twenty-four are the Fathers and Apostles: it is necessary to judge His people. For when the Apostles asked and said: *We have left everything of ours to follow you; what will there be for us?*^h Our Lord responded: *When the Son of Man sits upon the throne of His glory, you will also sit upon twelve judgment-seats, judging the twelve tribes of Israel*.ⁱ And also of the Fathers who are to be judging, the Patriarch Jacob says: *And he himself shall judge his people among his brothers as one of the tribes of Israel*.^j

⁶ *And lightning and voices and thunder came out of the throne of God, and seven torches* : it signifies the announcements and promises of God, and the warnings. For *lightning* signifies the coming of the Lord, and *voices* the announcements of the New Testament; and *thunder*, that the words are heavenly; *torches burning with fire*, truly the gift of the Holy Spirit, because when by wood the first man was lost, by the wood of the Passion is he returned.

⁷ And while this was happening, *all the elder born fell down and worshipped the Lord, while the animals gave glory and honor*: that is, while the Gospel, namely the actions and teachings of the Lord, accomplished the word previously announced by them, they worthily and rightly exult, knowing they themselves have properly served the Word of God. Finally, because He came Who would conquer death, the only One worthy to take up the crown of immortality, all of them had, for the glory of His great accomplishment, *crowns, throwing them under His feet*, that is, because of the eminent victory of Christ, (throwing) all their victories *under His feet*. This is what the Holy Spirit fulfilled in the Gospel by showing, for when He was finally about to suffer, the Lord came to Jerusalem, and the people went out to meet Him, some covered the road with cut branches of palm trees, others threw down their tunics, namely showing two peoples, one, of the Fathers and the Prophets, of great men, who have palm branches for any of their victories against sins, casting them to Christ, *under His feet*. For the palm branches signify the same, which are not given to anyone but a conqueror.

^a Gen 9.13 ^b Jn 1.1 ^c Mt 1.1 ^d Lk 1.5 ^e Mk 1.1-2 ^f Gen 49.9 ^g 1Cor 15.14 ^h Mt 19.27 ⁱ Mt 19.28 ^j Gen 49.16

5 *And in the hand of the one sitting upon the judgment-seat was a book, written on the inside, sealed with seven seals: they signify the Old Testament, which is placed in the hand of our Lord, who has received judgment from the Father. He says, A herald cried out, whether anyone was worthy to open the book and remove its seals, and no one was found worthy, neither in heaven, nor in the earth, nor under the earth. For to open the Testament is to suffer, and to conquer death for men. To be worthy of this no one was found, neither among the angels in heaven, nor among men in the earth, nor among the souls of the saints in rest, none but Christ the Son of God alone, Whom he says he saw: a lamb as though slaughtered, having seven horns in number. About Him was predicted whatever the Law reflected about Him through the offerings and sacrifices, which was necessary for Him to accomplish. And because He was the testator and conquered death, it was just that He was made the heir of God, that he might also possess the substance of the one dying, that is, the members of humanity.*

² He says this, *The lion of the tribe of Judah, of the root of David, has conquered. We read of the lion of the tribe of Judah in Genesis, where the Patriarch Jacob says: Judah, your brothers praise you: you have both lain down and risen up like a lion, and like the cub of a lion.*^a For He is called a lion for conquering death; for suffering for men, *like a lamb led to the slaughter.*^b But because He conquered death and came before (?) the work of the torturer, He is called *as though slain*. This, therefore, He opens and unseals: that Testament which He had sealed. Moses the Lawmaker also knows this, which needed to be sealed and hidden until the coming of His Passion. He veiled his face and spoke thus to the people, showing that the words of the prediction were veiled until the coming of the time of Christ. Also, when he read the Law to all the people, he took red wool, and the blood of a bull, and sprinkled water on all the people, saying: *This is the blood of the Testament, which the Lord has commanded for you.*^c Therefore it is necessary for you, the diligent man, to observe that the whole of the prediction coheres as one. For it does not suffice to call these the Law, which are also called a Testament. No law is called a testament, nor is a testament called anything else, except what is made by those who are dying; and whatever things are inside the testament are sealed until the day of death of the testator. Therefore, now it may only properly be unsealed by the *slain lamb* which like a lion tore apart death, and who accomplished what was foretold, and freed men, that is flesh from death, and took possession of the substance of the dying, that is, of the members of humanity. As through one body all men came under a debt of death, so through one body all believers rise up in life eternal. Therefore, now the face of Moses is open, now also revealed, and therefore the Apocalypse is called the Revelation, now His book is unsealed, now the sacrifices of offerings are understood, now the priesthood and commandments of Christ and the building of the temple and the testimonies are openly understood.

³ The twenty-four elders and the four animals, having harps and bowls, sing a new song: *singing a new song* shows the combination of the prediction of the Old Testament with the new Christian people, that is, those who carry out their confession publicly. It is new for the Son of God to be made man, and indeed new for Him to be handed over to death by men, new to rise up on the third day, new to ascend bodily into heaven, new to grant

removal of sins to men, new for the Holy Spirit to seal men, new to take up a priesthood of prayers and to expect a Kingdom of immeasurable promise. For *harps*, with strings extended on wood, signifies the body of Christ, that is the flesh of Christ, connected (to the cross) in His Passion; and *bowls*: confession, and the propogation of a new priesthood. *Many angels*: on the contrary all, all of the chosen bringing thanks to our Lord for freeing man from the plague of death.

^a Gen 48.8-9 ^b Isa 53.7 ^c Heb 9.19-20; Ex 24.8

6 The unsealing of the seals is, as we have said, the opening of the Old Testament predictions and the announcement of what will happen in the end times; of which, although prophetic Scripture speaks by a single seal, yet, as all the seals are opened, the prediction has its order. Now, as he says, is opened *the first seal; he saw a white horse, and the crowned rider has a bow*: for this happened at first; for after our Lord ascended to heaven and opened everything, he sent the Holy Spirit, whose words, through preachers, are like arrows piercing the hearts of men, and *conquering* disbelief. The crown on the head of the preachers is promised by the Holy Spirit. Of the other three horses, the Lord, showing in the Gospel war, famine, and disease, plainly indicated the prediction. And therefore he says *one of the animals*, because all four are one. And *come and see*: *come* is said to one invited to the faith, and *see* is said to him who did not see. Therefore the *white horse* is the word of preaching sent into the world with the Holy Spirit; for the Lord says: *This Gospel will be preached in all the world of the earth as a witness to all nations, and then will the end come*.

² And the *black horse* signifies famine; for the Lord says: *and there will be famine in various places*.^a And His word is properly extended to Antichrist, which is a time when a great famine will occur, and when men will also be harmed. *Scales in his hand*: the books of examination, in which the merits of individuals are displayed. And he says *a voice: Do not harm the wine and oil*, that is, do not strike the spiritual man with plagues. This is the black horse.

A red horse, and he who sits upon it has a sword: these are wars, which are indicated will happen, as we read in the Gospel: *And people will rise up against people, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be a great earthquake*.^b This is the red horse.

³ And *a pale horse and he who sits upon it has the name Death*. These are the same which, among other plagues, the Lord predicted: illnesses and deadly things to come. For when he says: *And Hades followed him*, that is, it awaits the devouring of the many souls of the impious. This is the pale horse.

⁴ *And the souls of the slaughtered were seen under the altar*, that is, under the earth. And both heaven and earth are called an *altar*; so the Law made two altars, seeming images of the truth, one golden inside and one bronze outside. For we understand the altar is called heaven, by our Lord bringing witness to us, for He says: *When you offer your gift at the altar, certainly our gifts are the prayers which we should make, and you remember there that you have something against your brother, leave your gift there*.^c Certainly, prayers

ascend to heaven. So, therefore, heaven is understood as the golden altar which was inside, for the priest who had the mandate of Christ also entered into the temple once a year, to the golden altar. The Holy Spirit signified this is to be done, that is, what is suffered (by Christ) was done once. So also by the bronze is understood the earth, under which is Hades, a region far from punishments and fires, the resting place of the saints, in which indeed the righteous are seen and heard by the impious, but they are not able to pass over to them. Therefore, these are such, that is, *the souls of the slaughtered*, who *wait for the vindication of their blood*, that is, their bodies, *from those dwelling upon the earth*, as He who sees all would have us know. But because in the last times, both the perpetual repayment of the saints and the damnation of the impious are coming, it is said to them *to wait*. And as a consolation for their bodies, *they receive*, he says, *white robes*, that is, the gift of the Holy Spirit.

⁵ The sixth seal: *There was a great earthquake*: that is, the final persecution. *The sun became like sackcloth*: the splendor of doctrine will be darkened by unbelievers. *The moon bloody*: the Church of the saints is shown to shed its blood for Christ. *The stars to fall*: the faithful to be troubled. *A shaken fig tree drops its figs*: people being separated from the Church by persecution. *Both mountain and islands shaken from their places*: in the final persecution all were to withdraw from their places; that is, the good will be moved, escaping the persecution.

⁶ *The four angels at the four corners of the earth, or the four winds across the Euphrates River* are four nations, because to every nation an angel is assigned by God, as the Law said: *He established them according to the number of the angels of God*.^d While the number of saints is being completed, the ends (of the earth) are not left by them, because in the last (times) they will come with Antichrist.

⁷ And what he said: *a great crowd from every tribe*, shows the number of the chosen of all the believers, who *through the blood of the lamb*, those cleansed by baptism, *their robes were made white*, keeping the grace which they received.

^a Mt 24.7 ^b Lk 21.10-11 ^c Mt 5.23-24 ^d Deut 32.8

7 *And an angel descending from the rising of the sun*: he speaks of the Prophet Elijah who is coming before the time of Antichrist, for the restoring and strengthening of the churches against the overwhelming persecution. We read of this in the opening of the books of the Old Testament and the new prophecy, for the Lord says through Malachi: *Behold, I am sending to you Elijah the Tishbite, to turn back the heart of the father to the son, and the heart of a man to his neighbor*,^a that is, to Christ through repentance; *to turn back the heart of the father to the son*: the time of a second calling, to recall the Jews to the faith of the following People. And therefore he also shows the number of the Jews, and the great multitude of the gentiles, who will believe.

^a Mal 4.5-6

8 For we also read in the Gospel that the prayers of the Church are sent from heaven by an angel, and they are taken up by a holy angel against the outpouring of wrath and the darkness of the kingdom of Antichrist. For he says: *Pray that you might not fall into temptation.*^a *For there will be great suffering, such as has not been from the beginning of the world; and except the Lord shortens those days, there would not be any flesh saved upon the earth.*^b Therefore, He will send these seven great Archangels for the piercing of the kingdom of Antichrist. For as He also says in the Gospel: *Then the Son of Man will send His messengers, and they will gather His chosen ones from the four winds, from the end of heaven to its (other) end.*^c And he says before: *then there will be peace in the earth, when seven shepherds will arise in it, and eight attacks (lit. 'bites') of men, and they will encircle Assur, that is, Antichrist, in the ditch of Nebroth*^d; in the damnation of the devil. And Ecclesiastes similarly says: *When the guardians of the house will be moved.*^e For the Lord Himself says thus: *When the workers come to him and say to him: 'Lord, have we not sowed good seed in your field? So, from where are the weeds there?' He answered them: 'An enemy has done this.' To whom they say: 'Do you want us to go and remove that?' He says to them: 'No, leave them together so they are growing until the harvest. And at that time,' He says, I will say to the harvesters to collect the weeds and throw them in the fire, and to lay up the wheat in the granaries.*^f This Apocalypse shows these harvesters and shepherds and workers to be the Archangels.

² And the *trumpet* is the word of power. And it may be repeating by the *bowls*, not as though it was said twice, but because what will happen only once, it is decreed by God that it will be, therefore it is said twice. Accordingly, whatever was said in the trumpets less, it was said in the bowls more. Neither (should you be) regarding the order of sayings, because the sevenfold Holy Spirit, where He hurries through to the final times and the end, returns back to the same time and adds to what little He said. Nor (should you be) seeking order in the Apocalypse, for that is also false prophecy; rather be seeking the meaning. They are, therefore, those things which are written in the *trumpets* and the *bowls*, either destructions by plagues sent out into the world, or the insanity of Antichrist himself, or the decline of peoples, or different kinds of plagues, or the hope in the Kingdom of the saints, or the ruin of cities, or the ruin of Babylon, that is, the city of the Romans.

³ *An eagle flying in the midst of heaven*: the Holy Spirit is indicated, testifying by the two prophets to threaten plagues of great wrath, if in any way, even in the final time, anyone may still be saved.

^a Mt 26.41 ^b Mt 24.21-22 ^c Mt 24.31; cf Mk 13.27 ^d Mic 5.5-6 ^e Eccl 12.3 ^f Mt 13.27-30

[Chapter 9 is not covered by Victorinus.]

10 Then what he says, *a mighty angel descended from heaven, clothed with a cloud, and a rainbow upon his head, and his face like the sun, and his feet like columns of fire, and having in his hand an open book, and he placed his feet upon the sea and the earth*, signifies our Lord, as we have told above of *His face like the sun*, that is, of the

resurrection; *a rainbow upon his head* is judgment, which was and will be. And the *open book* is the Apocalypse which John received. His *feet*, we also spoke of above, are to be equated with the apostles. For, both *the sea and the earth* to be trampled by Him signifies everything is put under His feet. He says he is an *angel*, that is, a messenger of the Father Almighty; *for He is called a messenger of great counsel*.^a *To call out in a great voice*: the great voice is of heaven; to announce to men the words of the Almighty God, because after the closing of repentance, there will be no hope afterward.

² *Seven thunders spoked in their voices*: the Spirit of sevenfold power (Who) has testified through the prophets all that will be, has by His voice given witness in the world. But because it says he *was to be writing* what was said by the *thunders*, that is, whatever was obscurely predicted in the Old Testament, he is prohibited to write, but (is told) to leave and *to seal* (them). Because he was an apostle, it was not proper to confer the grace of the following degree on a man of the first, because *now is the proper time*. For the apostles, by powers, by signs, by warnings, by great works, have conquered unbelief. After them, now the churches are strengthened by faith, having been given the comfort of interpreting the writings of the prophets; which interpreters he called prophets. For the Apostle says: *And He also placed in the Church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers*^b and the rest. And in another place he says: *Two or three prophets speak, and let others evaluate*,^c and he says: *Every woman praying or prophesying without a veiled head defiles her head*.^d For when he says: *Two or three prophets speak, and let others evaluate*, he does not speak of general prophecy, unheard and unknown but now predicted; but let them *evaluate* whether the interpretation agrees with the witness of the prophetic saying. Therefore, this was certain not to have been necessary for John, armed with superior strength; with the Church being the Body of Christ, adorned with His members, it must answer in His place.

³ *For to take the little scroll and to eat it*: having been shown to him, it is committed to memory. *To be sweet in the mouth* is the fruit of the preaching of the speaker, and to the hearers is very sweet, but (also) very bitter to the preacher and to those persevering in the commandments through sufferings. He says, *It is necessary to preach again*, that is, to prophesy, *among peoples, tongues, and nations*: this is because, when John saw this, he was in the island of Pathmos, condemned to a mine by Caesar Domitian. Therefore, John is seen to have written the Apocalypse there. And when now old, he thought it possible to return after the suffering. Domitian having been killed, all his judgments were undone and John was released from the mine, and thus afterward he handed over this same Apocalypse which he received from the Lord. This is: *It is necessary to preach again*.

^a Isa 9.5 (LXX) ^b 1Cor 12.28 ^c 1Cor 14.29 ^d 1Cor 11.5

11 *And to show him a reed like a rod, so that he might measure the temple of God and the altar and those worshipping in it*: he speaks of authority, which, having been released, he afterward displayed to the churches. For he also afterward wrote the Gospel. For when Valentinus and Cerinthus and Ebion and others of the school of Satan were spread throughout the world, the bishops of the nearby cities came together and compelled him, so that he might write his own testimony about the Lord. For the *measure*

of faith is commanded by our Lord, to confess the Father Almighty, as we have learned, and His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ: before the origin of the world spiritually born of the Father; made man and conquered death; received bodily into heaven by the Father; poured forth the Holy Spirit, gift and pledge of immortality. This One was predicted by the Prophets, this One was written of in the Law, this One is the Hand of God, and the Word of the Father Almighty, and Creator of the circle of the whole world. This is the *reed* and *measure* of faith, that no one may *worship* at the holy *altar*, except who has confessed this: *He is Lord and Christ*.^a

² *And leave out the inner court.* A court is called an atrium, an empty place between walls. Those such who are not necessary, he ordered to be thrown out. *Which is given to be trampled by the gentiles*, that is, for this kind of men to be trampled either by the gentiles or with the gentiles. Then he repeats about the ruin and slaughter of the end time, and says: *And they will trample the holy city forty-two months. And I will give to my two witnesses, and they will preach, clothed in sackcloth, for one thousand, 260 days*, that is, three years and six months; one thousand, 260 days make 42 months. Therefore, their preaching is for three years and six months, and the reign of Antichrist, is another of such (length). *And from the mouths of these prophets goes out fire against their adversaries*: he speaks of the power of the Word. All the plagues which are to happen will be sent by the voice of their angels.

³ Many think Elijah to be with Elishah or Moses, but they are both dead. But Jeremiah has not found death. By all our ancients they passed down that it was to be Jeremiah; for even the very word which was made to him testifies, saying: *Before I formed you in your mother's belly, I knew you, and before you left the womb I sanctified you, and I made you a prophet to the gentiles*.^b But he was not a prophet to the gentiles, and thus both (sayings being) by the Divine, that which He promised has also inevitably to show: that he will be a prophet to the gentiles. He spoke of these *two lampstands and two olive trees*: thus He has reminded that, if reading in another place you have not understood, here you will understand. For it is written in Zechariah, one of the Twelve Prophets.

⁴ *These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands which stand in the sight of the Lord of the earth*, that is, in Paradise. These, therefore, must be slain by Antichrist, after many plagues have been thrust into the world, of whom he says *the beast came up from the abyss*. And that he *will ascend from the abyss*, many witnesses for us are collected in this chapter. For Isaiah says: *Behold Asshur, a cypress in Mount Lebanon. Asshur, oppressing, an exceedingly well-branched cyprus*, that is, a numerous people; *in Mount Lebanon*: in the kingdom of kingdoms; *beautiful in seeds*,^c that is, mighty in armies. *Water*, he says, *nourished him*, that is, many thousands of men, which will be subject to him. *The abyss enlarged him*,^d that is, it vomited him. For it was said by Ezekiel in nearly the same words. For he was to be in a kingdom of kingdoms, and was to be among the Caesars, Paul also proved by witness. For he says to the Thessalonians: *Thus now he holds back who is seen (to do so), until he is removed from the middle; and then he will appear, whose coming is according to the ability (or 'power') of Satan, with signs and lies*.^e And so that they knew him to be coming, who was then the Princeps, he adds: *The secret of malice now works*,^f that is, the malice which he will be doing is done secretly,

but he is not elevated by his own power or his father's, but by the command of God. For which reason, therefore, Paul said: *Therefore, because they do not take hold of the love of God, He sends to them a spirit of error, so that all might be persuaded by a lie who are not persuaded by the truth.*^g Isaiah says: *In waiting for the light, darkness rose for them.*^h

⁵ Therefore, the Apocalypse shows these prophets to be slain by the same, and to rise up the fourth day, so that they are not found equal to God. And Jerusalem is to be called *Sodom and Egypt*, (because of) the deed accomplished by the people of the persecutor. Therefore, diligently and with all care, it is necessary to follow the prophetic prediction and to understand, because the Holy Spirit predicts scatteredly, and returns and runs through to the end time, repeats back previous times, and because what will happen once is shown as done several times? which unless you understand several sayings, not several happenings, you fall into a great fog? therefore, the interpretation of the sequence of sayings in it will agree, that it might be understood not in order of reading, but of reason.

⁶ *Opened was the temple of God which is in heaven:* is the appearance of our Lord. *The Temple of God* is His Son, as He says: *Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it;* and the sayings of the Jews: *Forty-six years has it been built.* The Evangelist says: *He said this of the temple of His body.*ⁱ *The ark of the testament:* he says the preaching of the Gospel, and the forgiveness of transgressions, and all those things which came with Him, appeared.

^a Acts 4.26 ^b Jer 1.5 ^c Ezk 31.3 ^d Ezk 31.4 ^e 2Th 2.7-9 ^f 2Th 2.7 ^g 2Th 2.10-11 ^h Isa 59.9 ⁱ Jn 2.19-21

12 *And a woman clothed with the sun and the moon under her feet, having a crown of twelve stars, giving birth in her pains* is the ancient Church of the fathers and prophets and holy apostles, because she bore the sorrow and torment of her desires, until which He was made from her people according to her flesh, as long promised to her: to see Christ take up from the same nation a body. And *clothed with the sun* signifies the hope of resurrection and the promise of glory. *The moon*, indeed, is the falling of the bodies of the saints from the debt to death, which never lacks strength. For whenever the life of men is lessened, it will also be increased. Nor is the hope of the sleeping totally extinguished, as some think, but they have a light in the darkness, like the moon. *A twelve-starred crown* signifies the chorus of fathers according to the birth of the flesh, from whom Christ was to take up flesh.

² *And a red dragon standing waiting, so that when the woman will have borne her son, he might devour him* is the devil, namely the fugitive angel, who supposed that the annihilation of all men equally through death was possible. But He who was not born of seed owed nothing to death; because of which nor was he able *to devour him*, that is, to hold onto Him in death. For indeed He rose up on the third day. Finally also, before He had suffered, he came to tempt Him like a man, but when he found Him not to be who he thought, *he went away from Him*, it says, *until the time.*^a

³ It says this one *was taken up to the throne of God.* We read of it in the Acts of the Apostles, how speaking with the disciples He was taken up into heaven. For it is he who

will be leading all nations with a rod of iron: the rod of iron is a sword; and all nations are those which battle under the stratagems (?) of Antichrist against the saints still remaining: which also, he says, will fall by the sword.

And the color of which he says to be *red*, that is, scarlet: the fruit of his works gave to him such a color. For *from the beginning he has been a murderer^b* and has oppressed all the human race not only by the debt of death, but moreso through various plagues everywhere.

Seven heads, seven kings of Rome from whom also is Antichrist, as we will speak of soon. *Ten horns*, ten kings in the end time; these are the same we will treat fully there.

⁴ *And the woman flew into the desert with the help of the wings of a great eagle?* namely the two prophets? all the Catholic Church, in which will be one hundred forty four thousand believers in the end time, under the Prophet Elijah. Another second people will be found at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, of which the Lord Christ Himself speaks in the Gospel: *Then those who are in Judea will be fleeing into the mountains,^c* that is, however many will have been gathered in Judea, let them go to that *place* which *they have prepared so that they will be nourished there for three years and six months, away from the face of the devil.* The *wings of a great eagle* are the two prophets, Elijah and he who will be the prophet with him.

⁵ *And the water which the serpent sent out of his mouth* signifies his command of the army following him. *And the earth opened its mouth and devoured the water* shows the conquering of the persecutors. Therefore, this might signify the one giving birth, and shows after the birth the fleeing to the heights: these things did not belong to one time. For we know the time to have occurred that Christ was born; however, that she will flee from *the face of the serpent*, this has not yet happened.

⁶ Then he says: *There was war in heaven: Michael and his messengers fought with the dragon; and the dragon fought, and his messengers; and there was not found for him a place in heaven. And the great dragon was thrown out, the ancient serpent fell to earth.* This is the beginning of the coming of Antichrist. Yet before, Elijah must preach and there must be a time of peace, and thus after the end of *three years and six months* of the preaching of Elijah, he is to be *thrown out* of heaven, where he had the power of ascending to until this time, and all the fugitive angels. Thus Antichrist is to be raised up from hell; the Apostle Paul also says this: *Except first will come the man of sin, the son of perdition, the adversary, who will raise himself above all that is called God or is worshipped.^d*

⁷ And it says that *The tail of the dragon drew a third part of the stars.* This may be taken in two ways. For many think this: he is able to seduce *a third part* of men to believe him; but, it ought to be better understood that (they are) the angels subject to him when he was still a prince, when he descended from his nature (?). Thus, what we have said above, the Apocalypse says: *He stood upon the sand of the sea.*

^a Lk 4.13 ^b Jn 8.44 ^c Mt 24.16 ^d 2Th 2.3-4

13 *And I saw rising from the sea a beast like a leopard* signifies the kingdom of that time, the kingdom of Antichrist, and the variety of nations and peoples mixed together. *His feet like the feet of a bear*, of a strong and very impure beast; and *his feet* speaks of his leaders. *and his mouth like the mouth of a lion*, that is, armed with teeth for blood. For, the *mouth* is his command, and his tongue, that which will come out for nothing else except for the shedding of blood.

² *The seven heads are seven mountains, upon which the woman sits*, that is, the city of Rome. *And there were seven kings: five have fallen, one is, and another has not yet come; and when he comes, his time will be short. And the beast which you saw is of the seven, and is the eighth.* Accordingly, it is useful to understand the time in which the Apocalypse was written, because Domitian was Caesar then. And before him was Titus his brother and Vespasian their father, Otho, Vitellius, and Galba. These were *five who have fallen; one is*, he says, under whom he says the Apocalypse was written, namely Domitian. *Another has not yet come*: speaks of Nerva, who *when he comes, his time will be short*: for he did not complete two years. *And the beast which you saw*, he says, *is of the seven*: because before these kings Nero reigned. *And is the eighth*, he says only that when this one comes, count the eighth place. And because in his (reign) will be the end, he adds: *He goes to destruction.* For *ten kings received royal power*: when he moves from the East, they will be sent from the city of Rome with their armies. He speaks of these *ten horns and ten diadems*. And Daniel shows: *Three of the former were uprooted*,^a that is, three of the former leaders of Antichrist are destroyed. The other seven give him *glory and honor and a throne and power*, of whom he says, *they will hate the whore*, namely, it speaks of the city, *and they will burn her flesh with fire.*

³ *And one of the heads was slain to death, and his death-stroke was healed*: speaks of Nero. For it is certain that when he was followed by the cavalry sent by the Senate, he cut through his own throat. This one raised, therefore, God is to send as a worthy king to those worthy, to the Jews and to the persecutors of Christ, a Christ of such a kind the persecutors and Jews have deserved. And because he will be bearing another name, and also beginning another life, so thus the same will be taken for Christ. For Daniel says: *He will not be acquainted with the desire of women*, in this he will be very impure, *and with no god of their fathers will he be familiar*.^a For he will not be able to seduce the people of the circumcision unless he becomes a defender of the Law. Finally he will compel the saints to no other thing except to receiving circumcision, if he will be able to seduce them. Thus, he will make the faith of the people to him, so that by them he will be called Christ. For he has risen up from hell, as we also spoke of above in the words of Isaiah: *Water*, he says, *nourishes him, and the abyss enlarges him*.^b He who must change his name and not change his name when he comes, the Holy Spirit says: *His number is 666 (DCLXVI)*; this number is to be completed by Greek letters.

⁴ *Another great beast from the earth*: the false prophet, *who made signs and portents* and lies before him *in the sight of men*; of whom he says *having horns like a lamb*, that is, a kind like that of the Just Man (?), *speaking like a dragon*: the devil full of malice. For this *will happen in the sight of men*, so that the dead will be seen to rise, but *in the sight of*

men. And fire will descend from heaven, but in the sight of men, for in the sight of men, the magicians also do this through the fugitive angels, and this one will also make it so that a golden image of Antichrist might be placed in the temple of Jerusalem, and a fugitive angel might enter there; and then he will give forth voices and oracles. And he will make it that slave and free receive a mark on their foreheads or on the right hand, the number of his name, who may not buy or sell, except he who will have the mark. And of this overturning of men, the contemptible thing to God, and desecration, Daniel has spoken: And he will erect, he says, his temple among the mountains of the sea, and the two seas,^c that is, Jerusalem; and then he will erect the golden image like king Nebuchadnezzar made. The Lord recalls this for all the churches of the end times; he says: When you see the contemptible thing of overturning, which was spoken of by the Prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place where it is not allowed, let him who reads understand.^d Contemptible thing is said, when God is provoked that idols are worshipped; for overturning, that unsteady men have been overturned by false signs and portents, and seduced away from salvation.

^a Dan 7.8 ^b Ezk 31.4 ^c Dan 11.45 ^d Mt 24.15

14 *And an angel flying in the midst of heaven which he says he saw, we have also treated above: the same is to be Elijah, who acts before the reign of Antichrist. And another angel following signifies the same prophet, the associate of his preaching. But because, as we have said, his leaders, by making a treaty, will attack this city, great Babylon, its ruin is borne witness to.*

² *And he says: Come. I will show you the damnation of the whore who sits upon many waters. And I saw, he says, a woman drunk on the blood of the saints, and on the blood of the witnesses of Jesus Christ.* For all the sufferings of the saints are accomplished by decree of its Senate, and she herself, recently having granted (?) a remission, gives decree among all nations against all preaching of the faith.

And the woman to sit upon the red beast, the doer of murders, has the image of the devil. Also these heads are there, of which we have reminded and treated. This is also Babylon, it says in the Apocalypse and Isaiah, because of the scattering of the peoples; it was also named Tyre by Ezekiel. Finally also, if you compare what is said of Tyre, and what Isaiah and the Apocalypse said of Babylon, you will find them all to be one.

³ *What he also says: Put out your sharpened pruning-hook, for the harvest of the grapes of the vine, speaks of the nations to perish at the coming of the Lord; and he also shows this in many ways, as in the dry harvest; but it will happen once at the coming of the Lord, the end of the kingdom of Antichrist, and the appearance of the kingdom of the saints.*

⁴ *What he also says: thrown into the winepress of the wrath of God and trampled outside the city, the trampling of the winepress is the reward of the sinner. And the blood went out up to the bridles of the horses: vengeance will go out to the chiefs of the peoples, that is the leaders, either the devil or his angels. In the final battle, the vengeance of the*

shedding of *blood* will go out, as it was predicted before: *In blood have you sinned, and blood will follow you.*^a *For one thousand six hundred stadia*, that is, through all four parts of the world. For a foursome is quadrupled, as in the four faces of the fourformed (animals) and the wheels. For four four-hundreds are one thousand six hundred.

^a Ezk 35.6

15 The same Apocalypse repeats the persecution; it says: *Seven angels having plagues, because with these the wrath of God is finished.* For *the wrath of God* always struck a stubborn people with *seven plagues*, that is perfectly, as it says in Leviticus; (plagues) which will happen in the future, when the Church will have gone out from their midst.

[Chapters 16 through 18 are not covered by Victorinus.]

19 *And a white horse, and one sitting upon him* shows our Lord coming with the heavenly army to reign, at Whose coming all the nations will be gathered, and will fall by the sword. And others who were nobles will serve in the service of the saints; and of these (nobles) also he shows they will be killed in the end time, at the finish of the reign of the saints, before the judgment, after the release of the devil. On these all the prophets likewise agree.

20 *And the scarlet devil is imprisoned* and all his fugitive angels *in the Tartarus of Gehenna* at the coming of the Lord; no one is ignorant of this. And after the thousand years he is released, because of the nations which will have served Antichrist: so that they alone might perish, as they deserved. Then is the general judgment. Therefore he says: *And they lived*, he says, *the dead* who were written in the book of life, *and they reigned with Christ a thousand years. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he who has a part in the first resurrection: toward this one the second death has no power.* Of this resurrection, he says: *And I saw the Lamb standing, and with him 144 thousands*, that is, standing with Christ, namely those of the Jews in the last time who become believers through the preaching of Elijah, those who, the Spirit bears witness, are virgins not only in body, but also in language. Therefore, as he reminds above, the 24 elder-aged said: *Grace we bring to You, O Lord God who has reigned; and the nations are angry.*

² At this same *first resurrection* will also appear the City and the splendid things expressed through this Scripture. Of this *first resurrection* Paul also spoke to the Macedonian church, thus: *For as we have thus said to you*, he says, *by the Word of God, that at the trumpet of God, the Lord Himself will descend from heaven for raising up; and the dead in Christ will stand first, then we who are living, as we will be taken up with Him in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and thus we will always be with the Lord.*^a We have heard the trumpet spoken of; it is observed that in another place the Apostle names another trumpet. Therefore he says to the Corinthians: *At the last trumpet, the dead will rise, will become immortal, and we will be changed.*^b He says the dead will be be raised immortal for bearing punishments, but it is shown that we are to be changed and

to be covered in glory. Therefore where we hear "the last trumpet," we must understand also a first, for these are two *resurrections*. Therefore, however many were not previously to rise in the *first resurrection* and to reign with Christ over the world, over all nations, will rise at the last trumpet, after the thousand years, that is, in the last *resurrection*, among the impious and sinners and perpetrators of various kinds. He rightly adds, saying: *Blessed and holy is he who has a part in the first anastasis: toward this one the second death has no power*. For the second death is being thrown into hell.

^a 1Th 4.15-17 ^b 1Cor 15.52

21 Therefore in the kingdom and in the first resurrection appears *the holy city*, of which he speaks, *descending from heaven, foursquare*, walled around with *stones* of different and precious and coloured and various kinds, *like fine gold*, that is, bright. *In crystal*, he says, *is its street paved; the river of life flowing through the middle, and springs of waters of life; the tree of life around it, making different fruits for every month; no light of the sun is there, because of a greater glory. The Lamb*, he says, *is its light*.

² *Its gates*, truly, *are each a single pearl, three from each part, not closed*, but to be open. Scripture shows many reasons for the gifts of the kings of regions and nations, (kings) who will be servants, being brought there: he speaks of the subjection of the last ones, which we have treated. But the city is not thus understood, as one (?) we have known; for we are not able to testify any further, without a guide, to that which we have heard and seen. Otherwise, the city is spoken of as all those provinces of the Eastern region promised to the Patriarch Abraham. *Look*, he says, *to the heavens, from the place in which you are now standing*,^a that is, *from the great river Euphrates to the river of Egypt*,^b *all the land which you see, I will give it to you and to your seed*.^c Finally, the Holy Spirit says: *It will be ruled from sea to sea*, that is, from the Red Sea, which is in Arabia, to the North Sea, which is the Sea of Phoenicia, *and to the ends of the earth*^d: which are the major parts of Syria. Therefore, all these provinces are to be levelled and cleansed at the coming of the Lord and (His) brightness descending from heaven like a cloud, outshining the brightness of the sun, and are shown contained in the circuit (of its walls).

³ For as the Holy Spirit has also testified through Isaiah: *Like a smoke of light burning with fire; with all the glory it will be covered*,^e and in another place he says, *Shine, Jerusalem! For your light has come, and the glory of the Lord is risen for you. For the sun will not illuminate for you by day, nor the moon for you by night; the Lord your God will be for you an eternal light*.^f And David says: *And there will be on the earth a firmament above the peaks of the mountains, and his fruit will be exalted over that of Lebanon, and they of the city will flourish like the grass of the earth*.^g And Daniel spoke of the stone cut out without hands to strike the statue having four in it, that is, gold and silver, bronze and iron, and clay in the last; and this stone, after it will have reduced the statue to dust, will become a great mountain, filling the whole earth. And he interpreted the dream for the king, and says: *You are*, he says, *the gold head, and your nation. Another kingdom*, he says, *will rise, lesser than you, and there will be a third kingdom which will rule the whole earth. And the fourth kingdom: very hard and very strong, like*

iron which subdues everything and cuts down every tree.^h And in the end time, he says, like clay mixed with iron will men be mixed, and there will not be treaties nor agreement.ⁱ And in those times the Lord God will raise up another kingdom, which kingdom, he says, the saints of the Most High God will take up.^j And this kingdom will not be captured by another nation; for God will strike and capture all the kingdoms of the earth, and His will remain forever.^k

⁴ Paul also, speaking to the Corinthians, recalled mention of His kingdom: *He must reign until He puts His enemies under His feet.*^l The saints are spoken of in this kingdom: *I have rejoiced^m just as we have heard.*ⁿ In the same kingdom he will find those serving a perfect faith, of whom he says: *they stood upon the sea of glass, having kitharas and bowls*, that is, firmly established upon their baptism, and having their confession in their mouth, they are rejoicing there.

⁵ In this kingdom, He has promised to His servants, saying: *Whoever will leave father or mother or brother or sister for the sake of My name will receive the reward of one hundred parts multiplied, both now, and also will in the future possess eternal life.*^o In this kingdom, those who have been defrauded of their goods because of the name of the Lord, and those many killed for all crimes and in prisons?and indeed before the coming of the Lord the Holy Prophets were stoned, killed, sawn?they will receive their consolation,^p that is, heavenly crowns and riches. In this kingdom the Lord Himself has promised *He will restore for the years in which the locust and the wingless locust and the corruption ate.*^q In this, all of creation will be saved and, by the command of God, will give forth the good things hidden in it. Then the saints will receive *for bronze, gold, and for iron, silver^r* and precious stones. In this place, He will send to them *the riches of the sea and the excellent things of the nations.*^s In this kingdom, *the priests of the Lord will be called the servants of God,*^t just as they have been called sacrilegious. In this kingdom, *they will drink wine and be anointed with ointments^u* and they will be given to rejoicing.

⁶ Of this kingdom, the Lord reminded the Apostles before He suffered, saying: *I will not drink of this fruit of the vine any more, until when I will drink with you again in the coming kingdom,*^v which is the hundred parts multiplied, ten times, a thousand times, to greater things and better things.

And what he says of the different stones, that they will be shown by kind and by color, this speaks of men; as also it signifies the most precious variety of the faith of each man. For the *gates of pearls* he shows to be the Apostles. *They will not be closed*, he says: grace is given through them, and the same is never closed. In this place *they will see face to face,*^w and *one will not request of another.*^x And *the names* of the Fathers and the Apostles are to be *both on the foundations and over the gates*: we have already treated of the 24 elders, and of those who are to rule in this kingdom, *they will judge the world.*^y

^a Gen 13.14 ^b Gen 15.18 ^c Gen 13.15 ^d Ps 71.8 ^e Isa 4.5 ^f Isa 60.1, 19, 20 ^g Ps 71.16 ^h Dan 2.37-40

ⁱ Dan 2.43 ^j Dan 7.18 ^k Dan 2.44 ^l 1Cor 15.25 ^m Ps 59.8 ⁿ Ps 47.9 ^o Mt 19.29; Mk 10.30 ^p Mt 5.5

^q Joel 2.25 ^r Isa 60.17 ^s Isa 60.5 ^t Isa 61.6 ^u Isa 25.6, 7 ^v Mt 26.29 ^w 1Cor 13.12

^x Isa 34.15b-16 (LXX) ^y 1Cor 6.2

[Victorinus does not cover chapter 22. This is the end of the original work.]

Jerome's letter to Anatolius, which is the prologue to his edition of Victorinus' commentary:

Those crossing over the perilous seas find different dangers. If a storm of winds has become violent, it is a terror; if the moderate air has calmed the back of the elements, lying calm, they fear traps. Thus is seen in this book which you have sent to me, which is seen to contain the explanation of the Apocalypse by Victorinus. Also, it is dangerous, and opens to the barkings of detractors, to judge the short works of eminent men. For even earlier Papias, the bishop of Hierapolis, and Nepos, the bishop of parts of Egypt, perceived of the kingdom of the thousand years just as Victorinus. And because you are in your letters entreating me, I do not want to delay, but nor do I want to scorn praying. I immediately unwound the books of the greats, and what I found in their commentaries about the kingdom of the thousand years, I added to the little work of Victorinus, erasing from there those things which he perceived according to the letter.

From the beginning of the book to the sign of the cross, we have corrected things which are the corruptions of inexperience of scribes. Know that from there to the end of the book is added. Now it is yours to judge, and to confirm what pleases. If our life will be made longer and the Lord will give health, for you, our most capable genius will sweat over this book, dearest Anatolius.

Jerome's ending to his version of Victorinus' commentary, which replaces Victorinus' material on chapters 20 and 21 of the Apocalypse:

¹ For I have not considered the kingdom of the thousand years to be earthly: for, if it is being perceived thus, at the completion of the thousand years they cease to reign. But I will offer as my capacity for understanding has perceived. The number ten signifies the Decalogue, and one hundred shows the crown of virginity. For he who has preserved entire his resolution for virginity, and faithfully fulfilled the precepts of the Decalogue, and has overcome impure actions and impure thoughts among the chambers of the heart so that they do not rule him, this is truly *a priest of Christ* and entirely completes the millenary number, believed *to rule with Christ*, and rightly with Him *the devil is bound*. He who has been ensnared in the errors and dogmas of the heretics, in him *the devil is released*. But because he says he *will be released at the completion of the thousand years*, at the completion of the number of the perfect saints, in the bodies and hearts of whom virginity reigns, with the arrival of the coming of the hating one, many will be overthrown by him, seduced by earthly loves, and will likewise enter the lake with him. And *after a little while*, the ground returns the bodies of the saints which shortly before were resting: he shows that those receiving, with the eternal King, the immortal kingdom, which is not by virginity of the body alone, but also of language and thought, will rejoice with the Lamb.

² Truly, *the square city* of which he speaks, *of gold*, and *precious*, shining stones, and a paved road and a river through the middle and the tree of life of either side, bearing twelve fruits throughout the twelve months and the light of the sun will not be there, because the Lamb is its light; and gates each of a single pearl, with three gates from the

four sides, and *they may not be closed*: *the square city* shows the gathering of the multitude of the saints, among whom now nothing can make faith waver, as was commanded to Noah, that he would make the ark out of squared wood, so that it would be able to bear the force of the flood. *Precious stones* shows men strong during persecution, who are neither moved by the storm of the persecutors, nor are the forces of their floods able to loosen from the true faith. For this reason they are associated with *pure gold*, with whom the Great King decorates the city. Indeed, by *the road* are shown their hearts, cleansed of all stains, where the Lord walks. Truly, the *river of life* shows grace to flow in spiritual birth. *The tree of life of either bank* shows the coming of Christ according to the flesh, Who the Law predicted was to come and to suffer, and was shown clearly by the Gospel. Truly, by *twelve fruits through each of the months* are shown the diverse graces of the Twelve Apostles, which they receive from the single tree of the cross, satiating peoples consumed by hunger with the preaching of the Word of God.

And because he says *in the city the sun will not be necessary*, it plainly shows the immaculate Creator of lights to shine in its midst, Whose splendour no mind is able to contemplate, nor language to describe. He says *from the four sides will be three gates, each formed of a single pearl*: I think these are the four virtues: wisdom, strength, justice, temperance, which relate each one to another, and when mixed together they complete the number twelve.

Indeed, *the twelve gates* we believe to be the number of the Apostles, which by the four virtues as precious shining pearls are showing the way to the saints, by the light of their doctrines, for making entrance to the city of the saints, so that the chorus of angels might praise their way of life. By *the gates may not be closed* is plainly shown the doctrine of the Apostles will not be overcome by any storms of criticism, and even if the waves of the nations and the insane superstition of the heretics rage against the true faith; their overcome foam will be dissolved, because Christ is a rock, by Whom and through Whom the Church was founded, Who will not be overcome by any waves of insane men. Therefore, they are not to be listened to who affirm the kingdom of the thousand years is to be earthly, which they believe with the heretic Cerinthus.