... in all wisdom and prudence, He makes known to us the secret of His will (in accord with His delight, which He purposed in Him) to have an administration, the complement of the eras, in which the universe is to be headed up in the Christ—that in the heavens as well as that on the earth—... (Eph. 1:9, 10).

God has a secret. This secret is concerning Christ. God proposes to have an economy which will round out the eras—a harvest season we may call it—in which the universe will be headed up in Christ again. Very few know that Christ once was at the head of all, and perhaps even fewer know that the time is coming when God is going to make Him the head of the entire universe. This is the secret or "mystery" of Christ.

Let us turn to the third chapter of Ephesians. If we wish to be clear as to the truth for the present administration of God’s grace, it will be necessary for us to distinguish between the secret of Christ, God’s secret concerning Him, and the present secret administration. Here the apostle starts out to speak of the secret concerning God’s grace for the present time. Parenthetically he refers to that brief statement which we have read in the first chapter concerning the secret of Christ, and he wishes us to know his intelligence in this "mystery of Christ."
Peter's Heavenly Note

(even as I write before, in brief, to enable those who are reading to apprehend my understanding in the secret of Christ, which is not made known to other generations of the sons of humanity as it is now revealed to His holy apostles and prophets): . . . (Eph. 3:4, 5).

Now the mystery concerning the present administration was made known to the apostle Paul alone. None of the others received any revelation concerning it. But you will notice that the secret of Christ was made known to the other apostles and prophets; only that the apostle Paul claims that he has a superior intelligence concerning it. He understands it better than they for the simple reason that the administration that he is peculiarly associated with and which was revealed to him is especially concerned with its heavenly aspect.

Now if you will turn with me to 1st Peter 3:22 we can get an apprehension of what this apostle understood concerning the mystery of Christ. He undoubtedly, along with all the apostles of the circumcision, had an accurate knowledge of this secret so far as it pertains to the earth. But of the heavenly aspect of it he knew very little. Here he says:

... Who is at God's right hand, being gone into heaven, messengers and authorities and powers being made subject to Him (1 Pet. 3:22).

Here we have the apostle Peter acknowledging that the Messiah who came to Israel—Who was to be their King, their Priest, their Prophet—He also had a place in the heavens. This is, I think, the only place where the Apostle Peter so much as acknowledges this.

The Apostle John in the Revelation gives us more concerning the heavenly headship of Christ than any other of the circumcision apostles. He does not approach the heights to which the apostle Paul rises, but he does give us a variety of detail concerning the heavenly headship of Christ. Before enlarging upon that aspect of it let me give you a brief outline of the book which we call the Revelation or the Apocalypse. It would be wise for us to call it
The Unveiling of Jesus Christ

As a boy I once went to see a monument of some great man unveiled. The statue was covered over with a cloth, but as the ceremony proceeded they came to a point when they lifted the veil. And that is what we have in the book of Revelation. It is not written simply to inform us about things to come. It does that, but it does far more—it unveils Jesus Christ.

I have been reminded that there have been other christs beside our Christ: some who have suffered, perhaps, for the sake of their fellowmen. But where is the christ who not only has lived and died but who has risen again and is ascended to God’s right hand, and who is going to be unveiled and who is going to be given the highest place in all the universe? All the other so-called christs are dead and, until our Christ calls them from their graves, they are dead indeed.

In this book we have the unveiling of Jesus Christ. When He was here upon earth before, He hid Himself. He was, you might say, in a disguise. He was like the veil in the tabernacle which was a true picture of Him, which hid the shekinah glory from us. It was not until the veil was rent upon the cross that access into the presence of God was possible. We think we know something of Christ but the time for Him to be publicly known is not yet come (although it may soon be here) and when that time arrives men will behold a Christ of Whom they have never dreamed.

The remarkable thing about this book is that it takes His title, Christ, and separates its splendors just as if we should gaze upon the sunlight through a prism and admire its varied hues. This book takes the title Christ and refracts it into its glories, and just as the sun’s glories are resolved into three primary colors, so here we are bidden to behold the threefold radiance of God’s Anointed.

The christs of the Hebrew scriptures were prophets, they were kings, they were priests. All of these received the holy anointing oil. Aaron was anointed and was a christ. David, too, was Jehovah’s anointed. Elisha’s anointing made him a christ. These are the
Prophet and King and Priest

three glories that are bound up in the title "Christ." The Christ, as a Mediator between God and man, needs first of all to be a Priest to bring man near to God. Next He needs to be a King—One who can rule the people for God. And He also needs to be a prophet in order that, when priesthood and sovereignty fail, He can be both King and Priest in one. For, indeed, when He sits upon the throne the order of His priesthood will not be Aaronic but that of Melchizedek. He must be One who can combine all the functions of the priesthood and of sovereignty in Himself.

Now, how is this done in the book of Revelation? We have endeavored to show this graphically by means of a chart. On the chart we have three lines. The first line represents Christ and His PROPHETIC ministry to the seven churches. The second full line contemplates Him as KING—the political aspect of the book. The third full line represents the PRIESTLY aspect of His unveiling.

One of the greatest difficulties in studying this book is the question of time. We are apt to read the book from beginning to end and imagine things follow each other chronologically. But this is not the method employed in other portions of the Word of God.

In the first and second chapters of Genesis we have an example of how God teaches us truth. In the first chapter we have the creation of Adam with regard to his relations to God and the rest of creation; in the second chapter another account of his creation with reference to his own constitution. These are not two different men but two accounts of the creation of one Adam. So in the book of Revelation. The same events are reviewed several times from different standpoints. The same actors come upon the stage in each scene but clothed in a different garb. Two distinct classes of redeemed Israelites are seen in each section. The "churches" do not represent the whole nation but a company called out of the nation; and the overcomers, who are saved out of the great tribulation and will shepherd the nations with an iron club, are an election out of the churches. So the one hundred forty-four
THE LITERARY FRAMEWORK OF THE UNVEILING OF JESUS CHRIST

Fourfold Reversion

INTRODUCTION (11-3) The Swift Unveiling of Jesus Christ.
Blessing on the Reader, Hearer and Keeper.

MESSAGES TO THE ECCLESIAS (14-32)
Reward according to Acts (223, etc.)

THE THRONE (41-1118) The Political Redemption of the Earth.
Preparatory Vision: The Throne, the Scroll and the Lambkin (41-514).
THE SEVEN SEALS restore Earth's Sovereignty to God.
The Four Horses (Providential):
Distant Conquest, War, Famine, Pestilence (61-8).
The Saints Slain. The Great Convulsion. (61-17)
Preparatory Vision: The 144,000 and the Vast Crowd (71-17).
THE SEVEN TRUMPETS (an expansion of the Seventh Seal).
The First Four ( Providential):
The Land, the Sea, the Waters, the Sun (81-12).
The Three Woe Trumpets, the Abyss, the Euphrates.
Preparatory Vision: The Messenger and the Open Scroll (101-3).
THE SEVEN THUNDERS (sealed up) (104).
The Little Scroll Eaten (105-11).
The Temple Measured. The Two Witnesses (111-14).
The Seventh Trumpet (1115-18).

The Ark of the Covenant in View (Faithful Israel Redeemed 1119).
The Star-Crowned Woman and her Male Son (121-2,6,14-16).
The Dragon and his Messengers (123-4,7-12,17).
The Wild Beast and his Prophet (13).
The Blessed Dead and the 144,000 (141-13).
The Harvest, blessing (1414-16)
The Vintage, judgment (1417-20)
The Tabernacle of the Testimony in View (Apostate Israel Destroyed).

THE SEVEN BOWLS (151-1621)
The Unfaithful Woman (171-6).
The Scarlet Wild Beast (177-11).
The Ten Horns (1712-18).
Great Babylon (18-19).
The Marriage of the Lambkin, blessing (196-10).
God's Great Dinner, judgment (1911-21).
Satan Bound: The Millennium (201-4).
The Former Resurrection: Judgment of Saints (205-6).
Satan Loosed: The Brief Era of War (207-10).

The Holy Jerusalem Descends from Heaven.

THE THRONE (225)
The River of Life (not lightning and thunder) Issues out of the Throne bringing Blessing (not wrath).

MESSAGES TO THE ECCLESIAS (226-17)
Pay according to work (224).

CONCLUSION (2218-21) Curse on him who Adds or Subtracts from this Scroll.
The Swift Coming of the Lord Jesus.
thousand and the great multitude of the next section are two redeemed companies with special privileges. The one hundred forty-four thousand seem to correspond to the overcomers in the churches. The vexed question of the “man child” or male son seems to find its solution in this light. Not only Christ but the overcomers are to shepherd the nations with an iron club. The one hundred forty-four thousand are all masculine and celibates (“virgins” Rev. 14:4, see Mt.19:12) hence may well be designated as male sons. Like the “man child” they are protected from the fury of the judgments and have a special place of honor in the coming Kingdom. By thus associating the events and characters in each section many of the difficulties which beset the student will disappear.

We will pass over the prophetic aspect, which is brought before us in the second and third chapters. When judgment begins at the house of God (1 Pet. 4:17) His people are in apostasy. It is only in apostasy that a prophet is needed. In the past kings and priests failed. Their failure gave occasion for the call of prophets. But in the future the Christ’s kingly and priestly ministry will not fail. After He becomes the Priest upon His throne there will be no Prophet needed. Before that time He visits His apostate people—the great Antitype of Moses and all the prophets. Throughout these two chapters of Revelation we have allusions to various affairs which occur between the beginning of Jehovah’s day and His appearing or epiphany. We read of Satan’s throne, which is mentioned under one of the seals. The various activities spoken of during this period assign the seven churches to the beginning of the day of Jehovah. The promises to the overcomers in these seven churches take us still further into the period of the thousand years and even beyond this into the day of God.

On the chart we have distinguished man’s day, Jehovah’s day, and God’s day. At present we are in man’s day. Man is having his time now and he is certainly taking advantage of it. The time is coming when Jehovah is going to take the reins of this earth, and
then it is going to be Jehovah’s day. The book of Revelation starts at this point. John, in spirit, comes to be in Jehovah’s day, the day of the Lord.

In the Greek scriptures we are not so fully informed as to the titles of our Lord as in the Hebrew. There this day is spoken of as the day of Jehovah. Jehovah is the God of Israel. So at the beginning of the book we are reminded that the God of Israel is going to take matters in hand. After Jehovah’s day, when Israel has reigned for a thousand years and the nations are no longer kept from God by means of the mediancy of Israel, then we have God’s day when all the nations can approach directly into the presence of God and Israel is no longer a priest nation. God’s day continues until the consummation when God becomes All in all.

From the fourth chapter of the book until the fifteenth verse of the eleventh chapter, we have the political aspect of Jehovah’s dealings. This section closes with the notable statement that the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign for the eons of the eons. From the end of the eleventh chapter until we get to the twentieth chapter we have the priestly aspect of the same era—from the commencement of Jehovah’s day to His epiphany—and then we have the notable statement that the saints live and reign with Christ a thousand years. You will notice that there is a discrepancy here (there are a great many in the Revelation, just as there are in all parts of the Bible!) and we may as well examine this one while we are concerned with it. When it becomes a question of rule with Christ as the King of Israel He reigns for the eons of the eons—all the way up to the consummation. So, when we come to the latter part of Revelation and enter God’s day, we will notice there that rule continues. In spite of the fact that the nations may draw nigh to God without the mediancy of Israel, Christ still continues on the throne throughout the day of God. Until He has ruled out rule by its very perfection He remains upon the throne. In contrast to this let me call your attention to the statement that the saints lived and ruled with
Christ only for a thousand years. Why this discrepancy? It is like every other discrepancy. It is a blunder in our own heads and hearts. It is perfect. God never makes a mistake and He has made none here. This statement is the climax of the priestly section of the book. In the day of God priesthood vanishes and no longer do the saints live and reign with Him in accordance with this section of Revelation. At the end of these two sections we have a seal upon the fact that one is concerned with the political and the other with the priestly aspect of Israel's redemption. In harmony with this, in the fourth chapter, what do we find? When a door is opened in heaven the first thing that is seen is a throne and all the action that follows is concerned with government. Round about that throne are twenty-four thrones—our version calls them seats. Twenty-four thrones surrounding one throne. Besides that there are the four living creatures. Let us not call them beasts. The false christ is called a beast—a wild beast—and he well deserves the name. But these "beasts" are simply animals. The first was like a lion, the second like a calf, the third had a face as of a man, and the fourth was like a flying eagle. Besides these there are multitudes of angels round about the throne. So in this political scene we have the redemption of the earth brought forward and all heaven called to a council as to how it is going to be done.

Upon the hand of the One on the throne is a scroll sealed with seven seals, and a cry goes forth "Who is able to open the scroll?"

Here are dignitaries greater than earth ever knew: twenty-four elders sitting upon thrones. These are the sovereignties and authorities in heavenly realms—rulers whose might far transcends all human power. Strong angels are there, Michael and myriads more. All creatures in heaven and on earth are challenged. But there was no one found to open the scroll—none able to break a single seal, until the Lion of the tribe of Judah comes forward, and He alone is able to open the scroll. And Who is He? Behold a strange metamorphosis! The Lion of the tribe of Judah appears
Priesthood is Limited to the Millennium

as a little Lambkin. Where do we find Him? He is in the midst of myriads of angels. He is in the midst of the elders. He is in the midst of the living creatures. He is in the midst of the throne itself! That is where we find our Christ when God begins the political redemption of the earth. He is the center of the entire universe. All its hopes are focused upon Him. He alone is able to open the scroll!

In Israel when a redemption was forfeited, and a man had to dispose of his allotment, instruments of writing were made out and all was duly signed and sealed (Jer. 32:11). In the land of Israel they could have made good use of the American Liberty Bell because every fifty years liberty was proclaimed throughout the land, and everyone who had forfeited his allotment regained possession of it again. They however used the divine method and ushered in the jubilee by the sound of trumpets. This was indeed a joyful sound to the distressed Israelite of old. And so will the seven trumpets serve the same purpose in that great jubilee which comes with His unveiling. Israel has lost both her place and portion. All they are waiting for is the day of jubilee when all that has been mortgaged to the adversary will be recovered.

This world is under a heavy bond and the question is, Who can break the seals of that bond and deliver it? Angels refuse the task, the four and twenty elders dare not attempt it, but the Lion of the Tribe of Judah because He is the Lambkin that was slain, Who is in the midst of the throne, He alone is able to break the seals and restore to Israel her rightful sovereignty over the nations of the earth. And this is what engages Him throughout this section of the book. The first six seals are broken and they prepare for the sounding of the seven jubilee trumpets. The effect is chronicled for us in the royal proclamation: "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He will reign for the eons of the eons." Then will He restore to Israel what they have forfeited through their unfaithfulness and apostasy—the sovereignty of the earth.
The Political section of the book extends from the fourth chapter to almost the close of chapter eleven. It begins with a throne and it ends with a sovereignty that lasts for the eons of the eons.

At the end of the eleventh chapter the apostle turns from the throne and he sees a temple. The temple of God in heaven is opened. If you wish to read the Book of Revelation intelligently always note very closely where the apostle is and his environment. Now that the throne gives place to the temple, what does he see in the temple? He sees the ark of God's covenant. God has made a covenant. I need not remind you of the fact that God has not made a covenant with us or with any other nation except Israel; but God has made a covenant with them, and now the time has come for its fulfillment. That covenant is to restore to them the place they have lost as a priest nation.

It is important to notice that the priestly as well as the political redemption of Israel commences at the beginning of Jehovah's day. In fact all of these periods—the prophetic, the political and the priestly—commence with the beginning of Jehovah's day, and all end at the epiphany or the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ. So do not read the whole of the Revelation as if the events are recorded in their chronological order. In a general way indeed, in each section events follow in order of time but each new section takes us back to the beginning again and we traverse the same period as before, only we travel a different road. The same events, the same characters, the same companies come before us in each section, but changed to conform to the ruling thought of the section. Some have wondered why there are two companies of one hundred forty-four thousand in the Revelation. There are not two companies. Once we have the one hundred forty-four thousand presented to us as servants before the throne. Another time we see the same company as celibates. Once we have them brought before us in connection with rule, the second time we have them brought before us in connection with religion. Once they serve before the throne and again they worship.
The Temple Presages the Priesthood

So, too, with the seven trumpets and the seven bowls. Perhaps we all have noticed that the seven bowls, or vials, seem to speak of the same judgments as the trumpets. The sphere of the first is on the earth; the second is in the sea; the third is in the waters; the fourth deals with the sun; the fifth one is concerned, in one case with Apollyon, and in the other with the beast. The sixth takes us to the river Euphrates. So throughout these judgments there seems to be a parallel and the question is, How are we to understand it?

Under the fifth seal, which occurs, it seems, at the beginning of the great tribulation, we have the souls under the altar and they pray to God for vengeance. Under the sixth seal we have God sealing His servants, protecting them from the great judgments about to come upon the earth. Then, under the seventh seal, there is an ominous hush, followed by the seven trumpets. Then the heavenly priesthood presents to God the prayers of the saints that we read of under the fifth seal. Under the seven trumpets you have God's answer to their prayers.

It will be noticed that under the trumpets, as a rule but one-third of any given thing is affected, while under the bowls all of it is included. We suggest that the reason for this lies in the fact that the trumpets deal with all the kingdoms of the earth in order to establish the kingdom of God's Anointed, but the bowls, dealing only with those under the law, are confined to apostate Israel and their land. The nations are guilty as to the covenant with Noah, Israel suffers under the decrees of Sinai. Not all of the earth is equally guilty before God. God deals with them not only according to their deserts but with a view to their blessing. While the trumpets speak to us of the alarm for war with the other nations which was sounded in Israel, the bowls take us into the tabernacle and engage our thoughts with a service in which the other nations had no part. The vessels of the sanctuary may not be used even in judging aliens.

Among a variety of vessels used in the tabernacle service were the bowls which come before us here. These
12 The Seven Trumpets Correspond

are filled with the imprecations of the souls under the altar and form the basis of the judgments upon apostate Israel, just as the same imprecations breathed into the seven trumpets of the preceding section. The bowls are confined to the land of Israel. They cover the whole land whereas the trumpets are concerned with the third part of the earth. The words “earth” and “land” are one in Greek. The context alone determines its force. Thus there is no discrepancy between the two but rather a deeper harmony than most of us are able to appreciate. I well remember speaking to a musician once, who was perplexed about a certain note. “Were I a great musician,” he said, “I could put a discord in here that would be the grandest harmony, but I don’t know how.” So with the word of God, these harmonies that seem to us to be discords are often too deep for us to apprehend. But when we once see God’s wonderful way of opening up His truth to us what seems to be discord turns out to be the most perfect harmony.

The three sections dealing with the prophetic, political and priestly ministry of Christ culminate in His epiphany or appearing and when we reach this point in the twentieth chapter all that follows is concerned with the thousand years, and with the following eon. There is no longer any return to the previous periods spoken of in the book, but all seems to go on and gives us a view of God’s harvest season upon the earth. It presents us Christ as a Lamb upon the throne. It shows us Him as the Sovereign of the Kings of the earth, One whose Name transcends every earthly name, and one who is able to subdue the greatest apostasy that this world will ever know, after the millennium of peace. We have seen great armies but we must wait until after the thousand years are finished to see the greatest army of all. With Christ upon the throne it takes but a word and fire comes down from heaven and devours them. He is Victor and continues His reign in the new earth to such purpose that He brings to perfection every earthly administration. All below is administered by means of the nation of Israel and especially the apostles whom He had chosen.
This is as far as this unveiling takes us, but the apostle Paul goes far beyond this. His transcends every other revelation. One of the greatest mistakes that Bible students are making today is to imagine that this book deals with the final things. This is a serious error, for it brings nothing to perfection. It has nothing to say about the heavens, it is all concerned with the earth. Not that heaven is excluded from view. On the contrary, we are taken there in spirit and we are told of heavenly warfare which clears the celestial realms of Satan’s host. Nevertheless every act, every move, is all with a view to the redemption of the earth. Let us charge our hearts to ponder well that there, in the heavenly administration of the earth, Christ has the central place, surrounded by the angels and the elders, and even by the living creatures. He is in the midst of the throne.

When we sit at the feet of the apostle Paul we learn far higher truth than this. Let me repeat what we had at the beginning:

... the universe is to be headed up in the Christ—that in the heavens as well as that on the earth—... (Eph. 1:10).

In the book of Revelation we have the details of the heading up of all on earth, but the apostle opens to us far greater glory than that, much higher honors than earth can afford. He shows us that He is to be Head, not only upon the earth, but on the heavens too.

Therefore, I, also, when hearing of the faith which relates to you in the Lord Jesus, and that for all the saints,... (Eph. 1:15, 16).

It is very interesting sometimes, in studying the ancient manuscripts, to notice the gradual corruption of certain texts, and this is one of them. As the truth was lost and it no longer held men, they naturally corrupted the text because they did not understand it. It seemed nonsense to them and so they changed it to make sense.
The Heavenly Headship of Christ

What is the force of the contrast between you and all the saints? In the apostle's day there were many of the circumcision still alive who looked forward to the grand events we have been considering. Theirs was an earthly allotment. Their faith is not our faith. But here the apostle speaks of a faith which refers to us in contrast to that which relates to them, and he prays:

... do not cease giving thanks for you, making mention in my prayers that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father glorious, may impart to you a wise and revealing spirit in its realization, the eyes of your heart having been enlightened, for you to perceive what is the prospect of its call, what the glorious riches of the enjoyment of its allotment among the saints, and what the transcendent greatness of its power for us who are believing, in accord with the operation of His mighty strength, which operates in the Christ when rousing Him from among the dead and seating Him at His right hand among the celestials, up above every sovereignty and authority and power and dominion and every name that is named, not only in this eon, but in that which is future, also; and subjects all under His feet, and gives Him the headship over all to the ecclesia which is His body, the complement which is completing the entire universe (Eph. 1:16-23).

Here again we have the sovereignties and the authorities and the powers which came before us under the figure of the elders and of the living creatures and of the angels. There He was in the midst of them, greater than all, more powerful than all. In the book of Revelation we have an exhibition of God's power in redeeming the allotment which He gave to His people Israel, in recovering the earth from the grasp of the adversary, in restoring to mankind upon the earth what they had lost.

But here we have something higher and richer. Here we have the mighty power which has roused Christ from the dead and seated Him at God's right hand, not simply in the midst of the heavenly dignities, but