

There follow brief messages for the seven churches in and near Ephesus. In the first He promises "to him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God" (Rev. 1:7). This verse is noteworthy as it is one of the two places where the word "paradise" is used outside of Luke 23:43 discussed above. Obviously a paradise thus described is a place of heavenly bliss. In the other use of "paradise" in 2 Cor. 12:2-4 it is obviously heaven and the Confraternity edition footnote says, "the third heaven: i.e. paradise, the abode of the blessed." Rev. 1:7 promises to him that overcometh a place in heaven just as in the six following messages there is promised to the overcomer 1) that he shall not be hurt of the second death, 2) that he shall eat of the hidden manna and receive a new name, 3) to rule the nations with a rod of iron, 4) to be clothed in white raiment and his name not be blotted out of the book of life, 5) to have written upon him the name of my God, and 6) to sit with Christ in His throne. Clearly to be in paradise in such heavenly company is the prerogative of every man who is saved, whose name is written in God's book of life.

In the next section, chapter 4-7 John is shown through a window in heaven the throne of God and those who surround it. These include angels, the twenty-four elders, and a vast number of the redeemed. Finally all the creatures in heaven, on earth, under the earth, and in the sea join in praise to Christ. It is true that in 6:9 some souls are seen longing for God to finish His work of judgment. But these are souls in heaven not purgatory. Again an innumerable multitude of the redeemed is seen as surrounding the throne of God in 7:9. They too are in heaven. No purgatory is in the picture.

In the next section, chapters 8-11, we are given a picture of demonic hordes issuing from the abyss (9:1) and attacking men on earth. Their king is the angel of the bottomless pit (9:11). The two witnesses who testify against these evil forces are taken up to heaven (11:12). Again in the whole revelation there is no inkling of purgatory, a third place of the departed.

The next few chapters do not have many references which concern us. In 14:1 the followers of the Lamb in heaven are contrasted with those who in 13:16 are said to bear the "mark of the beast" on earth. In 14:13 the dead who die in the Lord hence-