“I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth.”—Revelation 11
The Reformation was far more than a separation from the Roman Church, although it was certainly that. But the Reformers were not all of one mind; there were the orthodox Protestants like Calvin (right), then there were the “Radical Reformers” such as the Vaudois (left), the Waldenses and later the Anabaptists who sought Bible Truth. It was among these latter groups that pockets of the Truth could be found (Revelation 12:17; 13:9,10; 16:7.

Ron Kidd considers just what the Reformation achieved — or did not achieve. He looks at the doctrines taught by the Catholic Church and compares many of them with what the prominent reformers promoted. The Anabaptist sects were the people who paved the way for open Bible study in place of tradition.

As people read the Bible the light of the word was gradually changing society

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Most people do not find it easy to step out of line by publicly declaring their political or religious differences with the established and generally accepted views of the society in which they live. It is not considered respectable to stand alone opposed to everyone else. When ideas are imposed by an authoritarian rulership, resistance to it is not only uncomfortable, it can be highly dangerous.

Men who seek power and desire to control their fellows do not look favourably upon those who are in opposition to them, and that is why subservience and unquestioning obedience to the dictates of an emperor or pope have been the characteristic of society over many centuries. It has always been easier to “follow a multitude to do evil,” (Exodus 23:2) than to protest against it, and risk being decapitated, burned at the stake, thrown into a den of starving lions or into a fiery furnace.

The same principle exists in less extreme circumstances when it becomes more comfortable to conform to popular opinion than to stand apart from the falsehood of a corrupt system in either politics or religion, and thereby risk ostracism and social exclusion. It is often more agreeable to be what is called “politically correct” than to be considered a heretic or a traitor. It was Jesus who said:

“Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from your company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man’s sake. Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets.... Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets” (Luke 6:22-23, 26).

When men challenged the teachings of the Roman Church and pointed out that its doctrine was at variance with what the Bible taught, history tells us that the consequences were horrific. Nonetheless, in order to make a difference, some chose the hard road demanded by a conscience enlightened by the Scriptures. Others were moved by a sense of justice and compassion for those who were cruelly tortured or put to the sword. From various motives such people chose to stand alone.

Reformers

The word “reformation” is defined in the Oxford Concise English Dictionary as: “The act of reforming or process of being reformed, especially a radical change for the better in political or religious or social affairs.” So a “reformer” is: “a person who advocates or brings about (especially political or social) reform” says the famous Dictionary. All reformers believe that the changes they seek are changes for the better; they see these changes or reforms as improvements—which they may or may not be.

The word reformation appears only once in the New Testament (Hebrews 9:10), and here the Greek—diorthosis—carries the idea of “to straighten thoroughly; rectification” (Strong’s).

When reference is made to the “reformation” of King Josiah’s time we recognize that it involved a complete overhaul of the practices that had developed. We read:

“For in the eighth year of his reign, while he was yet young, he began to seek after the God of David his father; and in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem from the high places, and the groves, and the carved images, and the molten images. And they brake down the altars of Baalim in his presence; and the images, that were on high above him, he cut down; and the groves, and the carved images, and the molten images, he brake in pieces, and made dust of them.” (2 Chronicles 34:3,4).

or that of Hezekiah, it usually means the return to the ways and standards that were outlined by Moses and the prophets. Compare the sense of Leviticus 26:23. Similarly in the times of Ezra and Nehemiah the people made amends through confession and practice—so “amendment” can also describe reformation. But reformation is not necessarily repentance.

Repentance (Greek: metanoeo) carries the idea—to think again, to think differently or afterwards; to reconsider, implying a change of mind. Established assemblies of believers are urged to “repent” in the apocalyptic epistles, for example Revelation 2:5:

“Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.”

Or again, Revelation 3:3,

“Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.”

In both of the above passages the word “remember” is “a clause, representing a circumstance” says Vine’s Expository Dictionary. The sense is, to reconsider your present position in the light of previous circumstances—recall the way (the “how”) in which you received and heard the gospel message. The idea conveyed is clear: get back to your original position; retrace your steps.

In Hebrews 10:32-33, the writer says:

“But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions; Partly, whilst ye were made a gazingstock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, whilst ye became companions of them that were so used.”

The context of this passage involves holding fast the profession—or (Revised Version), “the confession of our hope that it waver not;” in other words, “continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel...” (Colossians 1:23). Hebrews chapter 10 continues: “...not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together...” (verses 23-25). Instead of capitulating to evil or sinning wilfully and thus...
looking for judgment and fiery indignation, believers need to remember the former days after they were enlightened, and how they endured conflict and sufferings with boldness (Greek, outspokenness) which had great recompense of reward. Rotherham in his Emphasized Bible renders Hebrews 10:35 as follows: “Do not then, cast away your freedom of speech.—The which hath a great recompense.”

In order to be effective the Hope must be spoken boldly and unambiguously, even bluntly, and that requires not only confidence, but fearlessness. So people who make a difference must first be different themselves. They must have courage as well as conviction—an independent spirit of mind that can think and act upon the basis of conscience and knowledge. Such people make an impact by being witnesses, even in an environment that is hostile to their message.

It is inevitable that such reformers will be established orthodoxy as departing from the agreed and accepted party-line. They will be labelled as rebels. This presents a challenge and a trial (test) for all. People have to decide whether the orthodox and prevailing ideas are reliable and trustworthy, or whether there is need for change, and the deciding factor in religious matters is the question of authority. If that authority resides in the church—then which church? Does the final word rest with the pope, or with the Bible? Authority is key. This was the question put to Jesus by the established leaders in first century Judea:

“And when he was come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and said, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority?” (Matthew 21:23).

The reformers often followed the practice of king Josiah, of whom it is written: “the carved images, and the molten images, he brake in pieces.” The images of “saints” were enthusiastically demolished and a simple form of worship introduced. Jesus taught his followers not to seek the uppermost rooms and chief seats in religious assemblies. He said: “But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ: and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased: and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted” (Matthew 23:8-12).

The history of Christianity demonstrates that many have not taken heed to Christ’s words. As in any human society leaders have been forthcoming to organise meetings and preside over Christian assemblies, and often to exercise control over the flock. These administrators have not always been the most suitable or the ones best qualified, having been driven by a love of preeminence as was Diotrophes (3 John 9, 10). This has produced church hierarchies, church councils, chairmen of committees, conclaves and popes.

As the apostle Paul told the Ephesian brethren: “For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them” (Acts 20:29-30).

So leaders would arise with the objective of gaining a following—“to draw away disciples after them.”

An assembly of believers has to be organized in some way for practical purposes, and the guidelines for this are laid down in the New Testament, especially the epistles of Paul to Timothy and Titus: “That thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the ecclesia of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth” (1 Timothy 3:15). Such behaviour did not allow room for ecclesiastical politics—the motive has to be that of service—providing for others; being subject to the Truth and to others. But the history of Christianity is largely one of battles for superiority, authority, domination—and what the apostle Peter called “being lords over God’s heritage” (1 Peter 5:3).

The task of the reformer then is a difficult one. Whilst challenging human authority there is the need to remain faithful to Biblical principles. While remaining subject to his brethren, he must also be a pioneer. He must be prepared to stand alone.

Pioneers of Reform

Reformers such as Ezra, Nehemiah, John Baptist, Jesus himself and the apostles—all had to begin their work by standing alone, and sometimes ended their work alone. But the apostle Paul wrote to Timothy saying:
“At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge. Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen” (2 Timothy 4:16-18).

The true reformer then is not self-sufficient, and his confidence is not in himself. As the Proverbs says:

“He that is first in his own cause seemeth just; but his neighbour cometh and searcheth him” (Proverbs 18:17).

There have been many reformers who were “first in their own cause” with the result that their reformation was only a partial one. Reformers such as Luther, Calvin and Knox only took their reforms so far and were harsh in their criticism and treatment of those who tried to go further and nearer to Scripture. It has frequently been the case that personal animosity and rivalry has been disguised by appeals to doctrinal purity—such a case was seen when John Calvin targeted Michael Servetus featured elsewhere in this magazine. Servetus was a pioneer in medical science as well as in Bible study, but his jealous antagonists did not rest until they had committed him to the flames.

Another reformer who met a similar fate was the Bible translator William Tyndale who reacted sharply to a provocative statement made by a religious leader of his time. As John Foxe tells it in his Acts and Monuments:

“...the said great doctor burst out into these blasphemous words, and said, “We were better to be without God’s laws than the pope’s.” Master Tyndale, hearing this, full of godly zeal, and not bearing that blasphemous saying, replied again, and said, “I defy the pope, and all his laws;” and further added, that if God spared him life, ere many years he would cause a boy that driveth the plough, to know more of the Scripture than he did. After this, the grudge of the priests increasing still more and more against Tyndale, they never ceased barking and rating at him, and laid many things sorely to his charge, saying that he was a heretic in sophistry, a heretic in logic, a heretic in divinity...”

The enemy soon caught up with Tyndale and had his life extinguished—but his work was done, and it may be said that it resulted in the Reformation in England.

A pioneer may be defined as one who goes before the main body and prepares the road ahead. The prophet Malachi (chapter 3:1) tells us that a messenger “shall prepare the way” before the coming of the Lord. And in chapter 4:5 he tells who this will be, saying “I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers...” This is to be the voice of a pioneer in the wilderness who will cry “Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God” (Isaiah 40:3). Jesus confirms this saying “Elias (Elijah) truly shall first come, and restore all things” (Matthew 17:11).

This looks ahead to the future, but imminent reformation of Israel. In that day all Israel will be strengthened to stand alone against the world—and yet they will not be alone, for the Lord says that he will plead for his people and for his heritage Israel (Joel 3:2). Never will there have been a reformation comparable to this one.
The fifteenth and sixteenth century introduced unprecedented changes which fashioned our modern world; it was a time of scientific discovery, of extensive exploration, and intellectual pursuits. The Protestant Reformation figured prominently during this period creating turmoil in both the religious and political spheres of society. It has been suggested that two influences may have contributed to the Reformation, both of which pointed to the impotence of the Roman Catholic Church. The first was the Black Death which ravaged the European population during the 14th Century; the second was the Papal Schism, or Western Schism as it is also known, which occurred in the Roman Church between 1378 and 1417. Both these events had a profound effect on the faith of those under the influence of Rome, causing many to become disillusioned with the power of the Church.

The most prominent name associated with the Reformation was that of Martin Luther, an obscure monk from an unknown university in Germany. However there were others who made valuable contributions to the Reformation both directly and indirectly; names such as John Wycliffe, Desiderius Erasmus, William Tyndale, Ulrich Zwingli and of course Henry VIII. Some of these principal figures had personal agendas and others were at odds with one another regarding the principles they fought for. For example, Henry VIII, who eventually proclaimed himself head of the Church of England, separated from Rome over his proposed divorce of Catherine of Aragon, notwithstanding Henry remained faithful to Catholic doctrine and practices and in many respects the Anglican Church, formally established during the reign of Queen Elizabeth, retained many identical beliefs to that of Catholicism.

Many of the objections raised against Rome throughout the reformation related to the authority of the Church over that of the scriptures. In the thirteen hundred’s John Wycliffe challenged Rome, maintaining that the laity did not need a priest to mediate with God for them. He opposed the doctrine of transubstantiation and emphasized the principle of grace for all God’s children rather than the...
Tyndale devoted his life to achieving more of the scriptures than thou boy that driveth the plough to know when he said, “If God spare my life, ere many years pass, I will cause a ninety-five theses and supposedly nailed them to the Castle Church door in Wittenberg on October 31, 1517. This act was never intended to be a rebellion against the Catholic Church but rather a basis for future discussion; instead, within a short period of two weeks the entire region was buzzing with excitement. Like Wycliffe, Luther did not attack the doctrines of the Church; his concerns were related to the theology of indulgences and church relics which he found no support for in scripture. Three years later Luther was excommunicated by the pope and subsequently outlawed by the Emperor Charles V at Worms in 1521. When the Emperor tried to limit the movements of Luther by force in 1529, Luther was supported by some of the princes of the German states, who stood up in ‘protest’; the movement became known from this time onwards as Protestants and instead of encouraging reform from within the Mother Church, it separated thus initiating the ‘Reformation.’

It is recorded that for the next two decades or so Luther wrote many books highlighting in his native tongue his disputes with Rome; ordinary people were able to judge for themselves the right or wrong of his arguments. Luther also translated the Bible into German, again allowing the common folk the ability to determine for themselves what was true biblical teaching without clergy influence. The effect of Luther’s reformation was that Christian Europe would never be the same again, it was divided into three main areas: the Lutheran (Germany and Scandinavia); the Zwinglian and Calvinist (Switzerland, France, Holland and Scotland); and the Church of England.

During this period William Tyndale emerged as a thorn in the side for the English authorities. Not only were the common people ignorant of the message of the Bible but they were dependent upon a clergy that was equally ignorant in Biblical matters. We are reminded of Tyndale’s famous statement in conversation with one such cleric, when he said, “If God spare my life, ere many years pass, I will cause a boy that driveth the plough to know more of the scriptures than thou dost.” From this point onwards Tyndale devoted his life to achieving this.

Tyndale’s work in translating the scriptures into English was different from those who had gone before him; he proceeded to translate the Bible from the Greek and Hebrew scriptures. For many years Tyndale lived in extreme conditions, hiding from the authorities in Europe; he captured the attention of Henry VIII along with Cardinal Wolsey and later Sir Thomas More, the king’s Romanist Chancellors who were unable to stamp out the importation of Tyndale’s translation of the Bible into England. In 1535 William Tyndale was arrested and the following year strangled and burnt at the stake.

There was also another group, a small minority of believers who stood aside, not only from the Roman Church but also from other reformers. With the increase of Bibles being circulated in the common tongue of the people men and women no longer needed to rely on the clergy for instruction; those that could read, communicated their findings to those who couldn’t; and the message contained in the word of God began to spread. Small groups met in houses accepting as their only authority, the scriptures of truth. As the believers grew in understanding of the scriptures so did their conviction. One important conclusion that emerged from their studies of the Bible was that infant sprinkling had no Biblical support whatsoever and that adult baptism was a requirement of submission to the gospel. This caused a division between those who were unprepared to accept Bible teaching over that of Church tradition. Ulrich Zwingli, a leader of the Reformation in Switzerland vigorously defended the latter.

The year 1525 was particularly significant for this small group of believers; the authorities issued laws forbidding them to meet and worship, with the result that one evening they dedicated themselves to God as Brethren in Christ, sealing their decision by breaking bread together. The authorities derogatively named them Anabaptists—the rebaptizers. Strong opposition developed against these small groups of believers which manifested itself in some of the most inhumane acts being directed against men and women because of their faith in God.

The Winds of Change

At this point we need to go back much further in history, to an earlier era, to appreciate just how far the Roman Catholic Church had strayed from first century Bible teaching. Early Christians recognized and accepted the Bible as the only authority for Christian living. The principle expressed by the prophet Isaiah—“to the law and the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them” (Isaiah 8:20)—was fully acknowledged and the gospel committed to the Apostles by Jesus was described as “the Apostles doctrine” (Acts 2:42; John 17:20). We can appreciate then why Paul could write so emphatically when he said, “Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed” (Galatians 1:8). It wasn’t long before this important principle was challenged.

Prior to his crucifixion Jesus predicted that “many false prophets shall arise, and deceive many” (Matthew 24:11); some thirty years later the apostle Paul warned members of the Ephesian ecclesia, saying, “I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them” (Acts 20:29-30). Later Paul further
Church leaders debate doctrinal changes as Protestants develop their ideas

warned that “the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and be turned unto fables” (2 Timothy 4:3-4). By the time the apostle John wrote his epistles (around AD 96) apostasy was already evident—“many false prophets are gone out into the world” (1 John 4:1).

It is important to appreciate what these verses are saying. The problems of the early church would originate from inside the community; sound doctrine would be replaced by fables; and the majority within the church would prefer to hear what appealed to their own lusts. The winds of change were already at work, moving in a direction which would completely change the face of Christianity. There is one more Bible reference that can be added to the above which provides further insight into the events that were to develop over the next four centuries.

The ecclesia at Thessalonica experienced considerable persecution at the hand of the unbelieving Jews, which gave them great cause to rejoice in the promise that Jesus Christ would return to be glorified in his saints (2 Thessalonians 1:7-10). But Paul was careful to advise the ecclesia that the return of Jesus would not take place until apostasy had manifested itself:

“Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away (Greek ‘apostasia’) first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition. Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God” (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4).

Clearly the apostasy would not be confined to small pockets of change, but rather a system of religion developed described as “the mystery of iniquity” (verse 7), headed by a man of sin; it would be a system that indulged in “signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness” (verses 9-10), but would come to an abrupt end at the appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ (verse 8).

By the fourth and fifth centuries the full development of this system was manifested in a considerably modified Christian Church; the Apostles Creed, formulated sometime in the second century, underwent an evolution of thinking, first with the Nicene Creed early in the fourth century, finally concluding with the Athanasian Creed in the fifth century. At this point the doctrines of the early church bear no resemblance to the dogmas of the Church. There is an interesting comment in the Encyclopedia Britannica under the heading of Doctrinal Change, we read,

“Like all concepts the meaning of religious terms is changed with a changing experience and a changing world view. Transplanted into the world where Greek ideas were prevalent, inevitably the Christian teaching was modified—indeed transformed. As the empire became Christian in the 4th century... certain beliefs...all but disappeared remaining only as the faith of obscure groups. As thus the background is changed from Jewish to Greek, so are the fundamental religious conceptions. In theology the fundamental problems of..."
Concerning God

- Unity of God
- Trine God

The Nature of Man

- Mortal and Dying
- Immortal Soul

The Kingdom of God

- On Earth
- Church or the heart

The Rite of Baptism

- Adult immersion
- Infant Sprinkling

Zechariah 14:16-17; Isaiah 2:1-4; 1 Corinthians 15:23-26; Revelation 5:10; 2 Samuel 7:12-16; Matthew 19:28; Luke 1:30-33. One can imagine the dilemma facing the Church; having decided that man has an immortal soul which flies away to some heavenly place, what further need was there for a kingdom on earth? And so the view that "the Catholic Church in its empirical form, was the kingdom of Christ, that the millennial kingdom had commenced with the appearing of Christ, and was therefore an accomplished fact" (Encyclopedia Britannica), replaced the teaching of the Bible.

Concerning the Rite of Baptism

The teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ is "...by the time of the Reformation the full authority of the Church had superseded that of the Word of God. An apostate system of religion was now in control. With this information we can now examine whether the changes instituted by the Reformation constituted a return to first century Christianity.

Limited Reform

It is natural to think that the truth of God’s word was a common denominator for all involved and that the teachings of the first century church were closely adhered to; sadly this was not the case. As noted earlier those who contributed to the Reformation were not necessarily united; whilst all shared a need for reform, each of the players were driven by different circumstances and ideals. Both Luther and Zwingli held firmly to the key doctrines of Rome, as did John Calvin, and Henry VIII simply changed the name of the church. By contrast the small community known as the Brethren in Christ was strongly influenced by the simple teaching of the Bible; the more they examined for themselves what the scriptures taught the more they realized that Rome and many Protestant reformers were astray.

A number of Protestant Churches emerged out of the Reformation, some of which broke away from the Anglican Church, such as the Presbyterian and Methodists congregations. The question must be asked, how far did the Reformation go; did the movement for change involve a return to the pure teaching of the Word of God?

The following chart highlights the beliefs of those involved in the Reformation and those that came out of this period.

- It should be noted that whilst the Baptist Church continues to recognize the scriptural teaching of baptism, full immersion is viewed as secondary to being regenerated by the Holy Spirit. This is quite contrary to Bible teaching.
- It is apparent from examining the chart that the Reformation was in fact no reform at all; very little changed with regards to the key doctrines of the Church. Moreover over the past fifty years considerable effort has been engaged in by the Catholic Church through the ecumenical process to restore its influence amongst other Church and Ecclesiastical communities.
- We have already noted that the scriptures speak of a system of religion that would develop in the first century clothed in mystery and deceit; that it would continue until the return of the Lord Jesus Christ and be destroyed with the brightness of his coming (2 Thessalonians 2:8). This religious system is reintroduced in the book of Revelation where it is described as a woman bearing the name “Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth” (Revelation 17:5). It is not without significance that this woman has daughters which bear the same characteristics as their mother and that together they will experience the judgment of everlasting destruction.
- What remains is for the reader to determine where he or she stands in relationship to this system and ask the simple question has your own personal life undergone a reformation.
A class of persons separated in the providence of God to execute any work for Him are His sanctified ones, irrespective of their moral relations to the gospel. They are designated in scripture by various names. They are styled witnesses, prophets, olive trees, candlesticks, as well as saints; because they are exercised in these several capacities. They may have to bear witness for civil and religious liberty; to preach against the lion-mouth and his clergy; to stand forth as a lamp before God to enlighten the nations of the earth, &c.; they may discharge all these functions, and yet be neither believers of the gospel of the kingdom, nor even "pious" as the term is. This class of people may be found figuring largely in the history of all European nations. They are the hostile party to the beast in all "religious wars," and wars for liberty against the despotism of popes, emperors, kings, and priests. In these sanguinary wars their uniform has been sackcloth; yet they have devoured their enemies with fire and sword, and smitten the earth with all the plagues of war as often as they pleased. With various fortune they have combated with the tyrants of the world. Cromwell "tormented them (the Royalists) who dwelt in" England, and who drew the sword for the "right divine of kings to govern wrong;" he struck terror into those in Ireland who worshipped the beast, and devoured them with fire and brimstone from the cannon’s mouth. In France, the Huguenots did good service against the beast. They shut up the political heaven, and suffered not the rain of peace to descend upon Piedmont, and the south, where the blood of Albigenses, and Waldenses, was crying out from the ground, like Abel’s for vengeance upon those who dwelt upon the earth. But, however successful for a season, they were destined to succumb for a while; as it is written, in Daniel, "The little horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them: Until the Ancient of Days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the Most High: and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom."

Now, it must not be forgotten that, by reason of the Little Horn’s empire comprehending the three subjugated horns, it is a part of the ten-horned apocalyptic beast as well as the independent horns; therefore what is affirmed of it, is also affirmed to the beast as a whole including its mouth and horns. Hence, John writes the same thing of the ten-horned beast, and of the two-horned beast, and the image of the former beast’s imperial head, that Daniel does of the Little Horn, saying, “The beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit,” or sea, “shall make war upon them, and shall overcome them, and kill them;” (Revelation 11:7) and in another place, the ten-horned “shall make war with the saints, and overcome them;” (Revelation 13:7) and again, the two-horned beast “causeth them that dwell in the earth to do homage to the (imperial head of the) first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. And he causeth those that dwell upon the earth to err through the deeds it was given him to do against the beast; saying to them that dwelt on the earth that they should make an Image of the Beast, which had the wound by a sword and did live. And it was given to him to give breath (xxxxxx) to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast, that they be killed. And he caused all, the small and the great, the rich and the poor, the free and the bond, that a sign (xxxxxx, mark, or sign) should be made upon them on their right hand, or upon their forehead: that no man might be qualified (xxxxxx, be able, in a moral sense) to buy or sell, except he have the sign, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.”

Now it is the saints who refuse to adore the imperial Roman image, or Eyes and Mouth of the Little Horn; and who have not the sign X upon their foreheads, or in their right hands. These are the parties whom the image has caused war to be made upon, and who have been prevailed against, and killed with all the attendant enormities of promiscuous massacre. The slaughter of the Albigenses in Languedoc; of the Vaudois in the valleys of the Piedmontese mountains, in the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries; and of the Huguenots on St. Bartholomew’s, and at the
revocation of the edict of Nantes; the dragoonades, drownings, &c., are instances of the cruelties inflicted upon the saints by the roaring lion of the “eternal city.” In the face of these teeming testimonies of history, the special pleaders of the Papacy have the hardihood and effrontery to declare that the Head of their church has put none to death; that their church is the pure, sinless spouse of Christ! But the spirit denounces it as “drunk with the blood of the saints,” because, in stirring up the secular powers to murder and massacre the opponents of Romanism and the advocates of human rights, it has “caused the saints to be killed;” and become so dyed in wickedness and steeped in crime, that its iniquity hath at last reached unto heaven, and the burning flame of war is consuming and destroying it unto the end.

But, says the apostle, “the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but spiritual.” In his letter to the Ephesians (Eph. 6:14), he enumerates them as the girdle of truth, the breast-plate of righteousness, the preparation of the gospel of peace for sandals, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the spirit which is the word of God. This is the “whole armour of God” which “the people of the holies” are permitted to use. The two-edged sword of the spirit is the only offensive weapon they are allowed to wield in combat with the Beast. The impulses of the flesh would lead them to crush the tyrants who have drenched the earth with their blood, and to bruise their heads like serpents, but their Captain has said, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay.” It is the impulse of the flesh, hostile to the truth of God, which urges the Beast to war against those who adhere to that truth. The people of the holies are forbidden to act under such an impulse; but to imitate Jesus, who resisted not, but committed his cause to God. Unresisting suffering is the law of their warfare. If persecuted they must fly; if smitten, they must not smite again; if reviled, they must bless; but withal “fight the good fight of faith” with the word of God, without favour, affection, or compromise, with any thing that exalts itself agains the knowledge of God.

But this may be thought to be a contradiction of what has been said of the witnesses inflicting the plagues of war as often as they pleased. How can they do this unless they contend in battle against the Beast? The answer is, that the anti-Papal instrumentality of God in the earth consists of three classes of persons; two of these classes are political, but the third is that class spoken of by the apostle as his brethren. The prophecy of the two witnesses is concerning two great parties in the ten-horned beast’s dominion, which antagonize it in its civil and ecclesiastical policy. One party is purely secular, and styled “the earth,” or democracy; the other party is “religious,” and termed “the woman.” The mission of these is to make war upon tyranny, and to take vengeance upon it, and finally to be the means, or occasion, of breaking it up in its ten-horned and Papal constitution. “The earth,” or secular witness, is the helper of “the woman,” or religious witness. They have co-operated since the reign of Constantine more or less intimately until the present time; their co-operation consisting in a determined hostility to State-Churchism, and to its monarchical allies. They are both more or less Republican in their principles. “The earth” especially is animated by a hatred of oppressors. Its spirit in all ages has shown itself in a terrible form. It is ferocious as the tiger, but it is a ferocity which is required by the nature of the work assigned it. The civil and ecclesiastical tyranny it has to combat, which is itself horribly terrific and blasphemous against God and His truth, must be encountered by a spirit as fierce. In history, we see it exhibited in the Circumnellions of the first century of its operations, in the men of Munster of the sixteenth, the Camisards of the seventeenth, the Terrorists of the eighteenth, and the Red Republicans, Socialists, &c., of the nineteenth. Like God’s “sanctified ones, the Medes,” the heart of “the earth” is steel, and its eye un pitying. It is ready to dash out the brains of sucklings, to spoil the property of the rich, and to reduce the social fabric of the Beast to its elemental chaos. Its political representative in Europe is “THE MOUNTAIN” in the French legislature—a body of men who are the abomination and terror of the Jesuit-priest-party throughout the world.

“The woman” is constituted of heterogeneous sects. “Dissent” and “Non-conformity” are terms which define the religious witness in this country. In France she is styled “Calvinist.” Her tendencies are Republican, as illustrated in the Cromwellian commonwealth, and in the constitution of the United States of America, which was the conjoint work of “the earth” and “the woman.” This great religious witness is made up of an infinite variety of factions, whose contempt of popes, emperors, kings, priests, and aristocrats is profound; yet, with all their hatred, they conscientiously repudiate the excesses of “the earth,” or secular witness. These two witnessing parties, however, are of one theory, which is death to tyranny, if not to tyrants; and, in some sense or other, rally around the standard of “liberty, equality, and fraternity”—three principles which are utterly destructive of the dominion of the Little Horn, and its less audacious fellows of the Roman Beast.

But there is a third party which, although it has the deep-rooted enmity of truth against every form of Satanism in Church and State, Papal and Protestant; and wishes success to the Two Witnesses in their war with civil and ecclesiastical tyranny, yet it is distinct from them both. It is composed of the saints of God in the highest sense of the word. It is the one Body of Christ, having the one faith, the one hope, one Lord, one spirit, one baptism, and one God and Father (Ephesians 4:4-6). It is styled “the holy city” in the apocalypse (Rev. 11:2); and is trodden under foot of the Gentiles for forty-two months of years, till the Ancient of Days appears. It is by this class that “the faith once for all delivered to the saints” is preserved from being entirely lost. In the twelfth of Revelation they are termed “the remnant of the Woman’s seed, who keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.” They are a people who believe the gospel of the kingdom of God and the things of Christ’s name as set forth in “the law and the testimony;” for “the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of the prophecy.” They are also an immersed people; for they keep the commandments of God as well as believe His word. It is their mission to “contend earnestly for the faith.” Hence, they come into collision with all parties; being antagonistic to “every high thought that exalts itself against the knowledge of God,” whether entertained by the enemy, or by the witnesses, who torment him with their insurrections, or with their prophesies in behalf of civil and religious liberty.
And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered... And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne. And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days” (Revelation 12:1-2; 5-6).

In a 1988 encyclical entitled Mulieris Dignitatem the late John Paul II declared that “Mary is the ‘figure’ of the church.” In a reference to Revelation chapter 12 he wrote:

“She is ‘a woman clothed with the sun,’ with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of stars.”

This concept has been expressed in several works of visual art which can be seen throughout the world, and especially in Catholic Europe and other countries. Two statues which have been placed at the Milvian Bridge in Rome are of particular interest because of the connection with Revelation chapter 12. One statue depicts the woman in an attitude of prayer with the moon and the dragon (or serpent) under her feet. The other statue looks adoringly at a cross, while a man-child clings to the skirts. The meaning is clear—the woman (i.e. the Church) has trodden under foot the pagan constitution of Rome (the moon and dragon), and embracing Christianity (the cross) has brought forth her manchild (or champion). And it was here at the Milvian Bridge that Constantine defeated the forces of paganism — an event which led to the State religion of Rome becoming “Christ’s kingdom” — Christendom (Revelation 12:7-10).

This tells us how the Roman Church sees itself in Revelation chapter 12. But the details of the prophecy tell us that there is more to it than that. How is it that the “virgin church” is with child in the first place? The suggestion here is that there was unfaithfulness as we read in 1 John 2:26; hence the emerging of “antichrist” (verse 18-19). In 2 Corinthians 11 the apostle Paul wrote:

“For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him” (verses 2-4).

“Another Jesus?” “Antichrist?” The “man-child” of Revelation 12:5 engages in war (verse 7) which the true followers of Christ would not do, for it is written:

“He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.”

As one historian put it:

“The conversion of Constantine is generally hailed as the final victory of the new faith. It may equally be regarded as the triumph of totalitarianism. The church no doubt won not only tolerance and relief from persecution, but also wealth and the right to persecute. The price was clerical endorsement of the existing order on earth.”

A Fugitive Woman

In AD 325 Constantine invited bishops of the Church to the Council of Nice hoping to bring religious peace and harmony to his newly won empire. The theological debates that took place could not bridge the gap between those who
believed in the Trinity (one God, consisting of three persons; the Father, Son and Holy Spirit) and those who rejected such an absurdity. Neither party held the true understanding of Scripture. The Trinitarians being as corrupt as those who opposed them, known as Arians.

Emperor Constantine decided in favour of the Trinitarians whose concept is enshrined in the Nicean Creed. Those who could not accept it were labelled heretics and apostates. In the words of Edward Gibbon: “Constantine absolutely prohibits the assemblies of the heretics, and confiscates their public property to the use either of the revenue or of the catholic church.” So Revelation 12:6 tells us:

“And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days.”

Having given birth to her “man child” the woman sought protection from the ten-horned Roman dragon until her apostate offspring could become her champion, for he “was to rule all nations with a rod of iron” (verse 5). This was that “man of sin” who would be “revealed” (Greek: apokalupto) from the “falling away” spoken of in 2 Thessalonians 2:3. He is also called “the son of perdition” or man child (same word in 2 Thessalonians 2:3 and Revelation 12:5). But what of the woman?

John Thomas in his Exposition of the Apocalypse (Eureka) wrote as follows:

“But when Constantine came to recognize the catholic sect as his Mother Church, what became of the rest of the Anti-pagan Body—‘the whole body of the Christians’ besides, namely, of the Novatians, Donatists, Valentinians, Marcionites, Paulists, Cataphrygians, and others? They were still “the woman,” only minus the catholic sect. Whatever other differences obtained among them, they were generally opposed to the union of church and state; for, as all of them could not be the world’s church, they were displeased at any one sect enjoying that pre-eminence over the rest. “What,” said they, “has the emperor to do with the church? What have Christians to do with kings, or what have bishops to do at court?” Hence, without ceasing to be anti-pagan, they now became an Anti-Catholic Body. This was the “woman” of the sixth verse of this twelfth chapter—the Anti-Catholic Woman. Between this woman and the Sun-clothed Harlot in the heaven, there has been, and can be, no fellowship.”

John Thomas continues:

“...there were sects in her communion whose principles and practices were both worldly and unscriptural; but there were to be found in her anti-catholic pale xx xxxxxx xxx xxxxxxxx xxxxx, remnants of her seed, who were characterized by “keeping the commandments of the Deity, and holding the testimony of the anointed Jesus”—verse 17. These were anti-catholic of the intensest character; but they were also opposed to all other sects of the anti-catholic woman, which did not keep the commandments of the Deity, and did not hold the testimony of the anointed Jesus.”

These sects which comprised the anti-catholic woman were subjected to persecution and banishment. For example, Gibbon says that “Constantine was satisfied with inflicting the punishment of exile on the principle leaders of the Donatist faction.” He also draws attention to the fierce controversies that raged among such fractious communities. At this distance in time we may not be able to obtain an accurate picture, but enough material has come down to us in order for us to know that many of these “heretics” seem to have had contact with true doctrine.

We know that persecution dispersed the early disciples and that “the disciples were called Christians first at Antioch” (Acts 11:19 and 26). That would be in about AD 42. According to Mosheim’s history, there followed a period of considerable controversy. He says:

“The most famous controversies that divided the Christians during this (3rd, PB) century, were those concerning the millennium, or reign of a thousand years the baptism of heretics, and the doctrine of Origen.

“Long before this period, an opinion had prevailed, that Christ was to come and reign a thousand years among men, before the entire and final dissolution of this world. This opinion, which had hitherto met with no opposition, was differently interpreted by different persons: nor did all promise themselves the same kind of enjoyments in that future and glorious kingdom. But, in this century, (the 3rd century, PB) its credit began to decline, principally through the influence and authority of Origen, who opposed it with the greatest warmth, because it was incompatible with some of his favourite sentiments.”

Towards the end of that century, and on the eve of Constantine’s ascension to the throne of Caesar (Revolution 12:5). Mosheim calls attention to Paul of Samosata, bishop of Antioch, and says:

“He introduced much confusion and trouble into the eastern churches, by his new explication of the gospel concerning the nature of God and Christ, and left behind him a sect, that assumed the title of Paulians, or Paulianists. As far as we can judge of his doctrine, by the accounts of it that have been transmitted to us, it seems to have amounted to this: ‘That the Son and the Holy Ghost exist in God, in the same manner as the faculties of reason and activity do in man; that Christ was born a mere man; but that the reason or wisdom of the Father descended into him, and by him wrought miracles upon earth, and instructed the nations; and finally, that, on account of this union of the divine word with the man Jesus, Christ might, though improperly, be called God.’”

We leave that garbled version of the doctrine of God Manifestation (as it seems to be) as Mosheim gives it. This Paul (bishop of Antioch) was “degraded from the episcopal order in AD 269. Another sect has been brought to our notice by Mosheim when he says:
“For there sprung up now, in Arabia, a certain sort of minute philosophers, the disciples of a master whose obscurity has concealed him from the knowledge of after-ages, who denied the immortality of the soul, believed that it perished with the body; but maintained, at the same time, that it was to be again recalled to life with the body, by the power of God. The philosophers, who held this opinion, were called Arabians, from their country.”

Such were the various sects that formed the anti-catholic woman of Revelation 12:6.

**The Remnants of her Seed**

“And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent. And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood. And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth. And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ” (Revelation 12:14-17).

The eagle is a well known symbol for the Roman empire (e.g. Deuteronomy 28:49; Matthew 24:28), and it was in the “wings” of this empire that the fugitive woman found refuge. She was in a wilderness state and in an exiled condition. In the early days after her flight she could be found with her “seed” in parts of Roman Africa and among the Paulicians of Armenia and the banks of the Euphrates. Becoming the victims of tyranny and persecution, Gibbon says that “their exile has scattered over the West the seeds of reformation.” This was possible because—as John Thomas has explained in *Eureka*: “To the fugitive woman was providentially committed the custody of the Divine Oracles; for it is the remnants of her seed which are testified to have held the testimony of the anointed Jesus, which is to be found only in the Holy Scriptures.”

John Thomas tells the account of how the Scriptures came into the hands of the Paulicians. The account is based upon the research of Mosheim and Edward Gibbon. The account given is as follows:
Paul.

Scriptural guidelines given by the apostle established the assemblies thus formed as became known, made many converts and blood and ashes of the first victims a

The eighth century, Constantine, surnamed repeatedly arose and About the middle of succession of teachers and congregations had made an expedition into Armenia, and

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Edward Gibbon

migration of early Christians as told by Edward Gibbon

“There resided in the city of Mananalis, in Armenia, a person of the class to whom the gospel is preached, the obscure, whose name was Constantine. One day a stranger called upon him, who had been a prisoner among the Saracens in Syria, and having obtained his release, was returning home through this city. He was kindly received by Constantine, and for some days entertained at his house. The stranger had been a deacon of a church. In return for the hospitality he had received, he presented Constantine with two manuscripts; one of the “four gospels;” the other of Paul’s epistles. Constantine studied them as they deserved to be; and when he came to understand them, he would touch no other books; and commenced to teach the doctrines of Christ and his apostle to the Gentiles.”

This Constantine Sylvanus (as he became known) made many converts and established the assemblies thus formed as much as possible according to the Scriptural guidelines given by the apostle Paul.

“The Catholic Dragon was greatly alarmed at the defections caused by his labors,” says John Thomas, “and at the formidable proportions into which “the remnant” was being developed. After the ancient method of dealing with heretics, he proceeded to “cast out water like a flood” to sweep them away. He began to persecute the Paulicians with the most sanguinary severity; and the bloody scenes of the Great Fiery-Red Dragon ministered by Galerius and Maximin were repeated under catholic names and forms.”

Migrations into Europe

Edward Gibbon comments: “From the blood and ashes of the first victims a succession of teachers and congregations repeatedly arose” and “About the middle of the eighth century, Constantine, surnamed Copronymus by the worshippers of images, had made an expedition into Armenia, and found, in the cities of Melitene and Thedesiospolis, a great number of Paulicians, his kindred heretics. As a favour, or punishment, he transplanted them from the banks of the Euphrates to Constantinople and Thrace; and by this emigration their doctrine was introduced and diffused in Europe.”

Gibbon continues to relate the penetration of the Paulicians, saying:

“Three different roads might introduce the Paulicians into the heart of Europe. After the conversion of Hungary the pilgrims who visited Jerusalem might safely follow the course of the Danube: in their journey and return they passed through Philippopolis; and the sectaries, disguising their name and heresy, might accompany the French or German caravans to their respective countries. The trade and dominion of Venice pervaded the coast of the Adriatic, and the hospitable republic opened her bosom to foreigners of every climate and religion. Under the Byzantine standard the Paulicians were often transported to the Greek provinces of Italy and Sicily: in peace and war they freely conversed with strangers and natives, and their opinions were silently propagated in Rome, Milan, and the kingdoms beyond the Alps.”

“The visible assemblies of the Paulicians, or Albigeois, were extirpated by fire and sword; and the bleeding remnant escaped by flight, concealment, or Catholic conformity. But the invincible spirit which they had kindled still lived and breathed in the Western world. In the state, in the church, and even in the cloister, a latent succession was preserved of the disciples of St. Paul, who protested against the tyranny of Rome, embraced the Bible as the rule of faith, and purified their creed from all the visions of the Gnostic theology.”

The Dragon’s War upon the Remnants

The symbol of the ten-horned red dragon of Revelation 12:3 is clearly recognized as the pagan Roman authority. This can be seen by comparing chapter 12:4 and 9 with 1 Peter 5:8. But this dragon, representing the pagan constitution of Rome was defeated in battle and “cast out” of the political heaven. This resulted in the great political earthquake of Revelation 6:12 which tells us of the same event using different symbols. The constitution of the empire was thus changed from pagan to catholic Christendom.

It will be observed from Revelation 12:5-6 that the woman-community fled into the wilderness from the enthroned man child (or man of sin) so that when the dragon persecutes the woman in verse 13 he is in his post-war phase. In other words, he is now still Roman but catholic-christian rather than pagan. It is this Catholic dragon that then persecutes the woman and then continues to make war with the “remnants of her seed” which keep the commandments of God, and hold the testimony of Jesus Christ” (verses 13-17).

History tells us that this is what happened. We also find that, as verse 16 says, the fugitive woman community was given help. Although some Paulicians refused to take arms, there were many who were willing to stand and fight their enemies. Others, horrified by the cruel persecution and slaughter of the woman’s seed came to their defence. They did not always share the beliefs of the persecuted groups, but fought for toleration, thus the symbolic language of Revelation 12:16, “And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood...”
Christianity Becomes State Church of Rome

It has been revealed that the Holy Catholic Church is now recognized officially within the Roman Empire. The Church has the full authority of the State with Caesar’s house at the head. The Catholic Church will replace the former ecclesiastical Organization of the empire.

For many ears there has been within the Christian Church a growing political influence. Under Diocletian this was severely dealt with, and much pain was inflicted upon the community so that she cried out for justice. Under Maxentius the government was determined to devour any organized military leadership that might emerge as a champion of the Christian cause. However, the swift manner in which Emperor Constantine was caught up to the throne of Caesar, and his identification with the Christian cause by publishing the Edict of Milan, forestalled any immediate action.

Some Christians, not in agreement with the newly formed State Church alliance, chose to disassociate themselves from the deal—an action which effectively puts them in the political wilderness.

The fierce war that was fought for the mastery of the Empire has resulted in the defeat of Licinius and the disestablishment of the old ecclesiastical system, which is now recognized as an adversary—a system that has deceived the whole world. In Church circles it is now being openly stated that the Kingdom of God, and the power of his Christ—as this is seen in the Emperor—has arrived. As one source described it: “Our Christian brethren which were accused before Caesar day and night, have been vindicated at last.”

Three main reasons have been given for the success of the Christian cause: the example of Christ to his followers, the sustained Christian witness throughout the Empire, and the fact that they loved not their lives unto death. After such a long struggle, there is now much rejoicing in Rome following the official recognition of the Holy Catholic Church.

War on Remnants of Anti-Catholic Christians

On the level of local government, which still remains in the hands of civil servants faithful to the old establishment, there is reported to be great anger over changes that are seen as inevitable within a short time (i.e. within the next 20 years it is believed that Catholic officials will replace present ones at all levels of government). There have been reports of persecution at this level, but it appears to be aimed mainly at those Christians who disassociated themselves from the deal with the State, they are therefore unable to appeal to the Emperor for protection. Some of these communities (sources name as examples, the Novations, the Donatists and Paulians) are reported to be emigrating to the wings of the Empire in order to escape the rising tide of persecution.

In some parts there is an apparent groundswell of public opinion which seems ready to offer protection to the fleeing fugitives.

New Medal: The above medal showing the Labarum of Emperor Constantine victorious over Lysinius’ Dragon, struck yesterday

The Supreme Civil authority (its seat is shortly to be moved to Constantinople) appears to be disinterested in offering any protection to those remnants of the Christian community who have refused to recognize the new position of the Holy Catholic Church. There are even fears in some quarters that rigorous persecution against the heretics could soon be instigated by the new Christian authority itself.
U.S. & Britain to defend Middle East

As this issue of The Bible Magazine is just hours away from going to print, news indicates that a crisis is threatening in the well-known Gulf region, and it seems that concerns are much wider than that. The United States is reported to be sending “thousands” of troops to Israel, while Britain is sending its most sophisticated warship to join the rest of its fleet in the area.

At the same time Russia is reported to be sending warships to Syrian ports to protect its interests. It may be too soon to tell where all this is going in the immediate future, but it does seem to indicate a growing crisis which has a pattern that will be familiar to those who have an eye on prophecy fulfilling.

At present these military moves are being presented by the Western media as “a major missile defense exercise” designed to improve cooperation between the U.S. and Israeli forces. The British Defence Secretary however has publicly warned Iran that its threatened blockade of the Strait of Hormuz would be the “Red Line” that would bring confrontation.

In explaining Russian moves one paper said that: “Amid global pressure on Assad, analysts say Russia’s stance is rooted in resentment over Libya, reluctance to lose one of its few footholds in the Middle East and a desire to project a firm image in relations with the West in an election season.”

While the prophecy of Ezekiel 38 will come to many minds, that of Daniel chapter 11:40 should not be lost sight of as we watch these events taking place. We have to see the development of a “King of the South” and a “King of the North” — a north-south division of competing powers in the Middle East, with Israel being one of the bones of contention.

The “King of the South” equates with Ezekiel’s “Sheba, and Dedan, and the merchants of Tarshish, with all the young lions thereof” (verse 13). The “King of the North” will include Iran (Persia - 38:5) as well as many other nations. The line-up is exactly what Scripture leads us to expect, but we must remember that Christ will come before Ezekiel 38 is fulfilled. Believers do not have to wait for that event. It may well be that as the North-South situation is developing Christ will come and call the responsible to judgement. That is the event that will decide our own future and destiny.
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<td>Zwingli preaches in the Grossmunster since 1526</td>
<td>Jud. Bibliander and Zwingli work on German Swiss Translation of the Bible.</td>
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<td>The first Lord’s Supper in the Grossmunster after the abolition of the mass, Easter 1525.</td>
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<td>The three martyrs about whom many legends were written. (3rd century) and the city patrons Felix, Regula and Exuperantius</td>
<td>Ceaser Karl the Great the probable founder of the Grossmunster.</td>
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<td>The fourteen year old Zwingli playing music</td>
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The “woman” of Revelation 12:1 is seen to be arrayed with the splendour of the sun and crowned with twelve stars, thus indicating her privileged position in the Roman political heaven. This position was attained as a consequence of Constantine’s victory at the battle of Milvian Bridge, when the sign of the dragon was replaced by the sign of the cross (in which sign it is said that Constantine was to conquer). Her destiny was very different to that of the fugitive woman who fled into the wilderness—and where she remained for 1,260 symbolic days (years). During this time the unfaithful woman who had become joined in an unholy union with the State, selling herself to the desires of the emperor who used her for his own political ambitions. In this way she became an adulteress through friendship with the world, which friendship rendered her “the enemy of God” (James 4:4).

**State Churches**

This horrible and immoral woman persecuted those who would not bow to her authority. As one writer put it:

“... from time to time, reformers started up amidst the catholics themselves; and, as pioneers, prepared the ground for more advanced believers to cultivate and sow with the incorruptible seed.”

The Church tortured and executed many who chose to try and follow Bible teaching rather than the false doctrines (the symbolic “wine”) in her golden cup. Dripping with the wealth that she had gained through extortion and by devouring widows’ houses she flaunted it to bedazzle multitudes of superstitious worshippers.

But for some it was all too much. Those who had access to the Bible soon saw that Rome’s State Church was none other than the great false church predicted therein. When they then saw the cruelty and bloodshed that accompanied this false religion they sought escape from it. For example, when the reign of “bloody Mary” (1555-58) sent some 300 people to their deaths, those who could fled the country. Others, from different parts of Europe likewise sought to flee to safety—many going to Geneva in Switzerland.

So it was that these refugees, finding that many of their beliefs were shared by other outcasts and asylum seekers, formed themselves into groups, and the groups became churches, and churches produced leaders, and leaders insisted on preeminence... and power. all to often power could be gained by forming a relationship with the State—so again these Protestant churches committed “fornication” with the kings of the earth, became the friend of the world and the enemy of God.

Among the reformers of this class were John Calvin (1509-1564), Zwingli (1484-1531), Martin Luther (1483-1546), William Farel (1489-1565), Theodore Beza (1519-1605), and John Knox (1513-1572). Whilst widely recognized as the leaders of Protestantism, they rigidly maintained many of the doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church. They engaged in power struggles against the Roman Church, and against other Protestants who are after referred to as “Radical Reformers,” but leadership quarrels were often more of an issue than were actual doctrines. The doctrinal issues more often that not disguised the personal feuds and were made the excuse for bitter enmity. The proverb of Ezekiel 16:44 says “As is the mother, so is her daughter” and certainly the character of the Roman Church has been reflected in her daughter Protestant churches. They too have allied themselves with the rulers of this world. Whereas the early disciples of Jesus set their hopes upon the restoration fo the kingdom
Yet another image of the woman with her 12 stars and child. The horns of the moon under her feet are just visible under her

again to Israel (Acts 1:6), and confessed their relationship to “the Hope of Israel” (Acts 28:20; 26:6), the so-called reformers were in love with the world (compare 1 John 2:15). Consequently Zwingli established his church by agreement with the ruling power of Zurich. Calvin committed fornication with the rulers of Switzerland and Geneva; Luther with the princes of Germany. John Knox was the recognized pioneer in the Church of Scotland, and of course Switzerland and Geneva; Luther with the princes of Germany. John Knox was the recognized pioneer in the Church of Scotland. It is compared to a drunken murderess and prostitute intoxicated with the blood of the holy and the faithful; whom she has destroyed by thousands and tens of thousands, for what she blasphemously styles “Heresy.” Her doctrine is represented by “a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornications,” which “all nations have drunk of;” and have consequently all been “made drunk.” Such is the apocalyptic view of “Christendom,” so called—its spiritual guides, its rulers, its politicians, and its peoples, all made drunk by blasphemous and filthy doctrine and superstition.

“The Ecclesiastical Polity of Europe represented by this strumpet is imperial...”

He continues:

“But, she being the Mother, who are her Daughters? These are as easily discerned as the mother herself. The Protestant State Churches are “the Harlots;” and the Dissenting, or Nonconformist, “Names and Denominations,” are “the Abominations of the Earth.” The genealogy of all of them is traceable to Rome; with whose dogmas they have more accord than with the principles of the doctrine of Christ. The Harlots and the Abominations are “the Names of Blasphemy,” of which the Beast is said to be “full.” They are all injurious to, and subversive of, “the truth as it is in Jesus.”

Babylon the Great

This multi-headed, multi-sect ecclesiastical system in the aggregate, is known generally as “Christendom,” but in the language of the Spirit “Babylon the Great” (Revelation 17:5; 18:2). We are told that:

“...all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies” (18:3).

She is likened to a “great city,” for under the cloak of religion there is a vast organisation that is involved in virtually every aspect of society; finance (banking) and business, hospitals and social programmes, the media, politics (all parties), engineering and manufacturing—in every aspect of public life Rome will have an influence. If we are aware of these things and read Revelation chapter 18 with that in mind, we will exclaim with verse 18, “What city is like unto this great city!”

And so it is that the words of Revelation 18:4 cry out to all who have ears to hear:

“Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.”

**John Foxe published details of Catholic cruelty in his “Acts & Monuments”**

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**“Mater Ecclesiae” (Mother Church) declared on the wall at St, Peters, Rome**

THE BIBLE MAGAZINE Vol. 25 ISSUE No.1
“And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth” (Revelation 11:3-4).

A witness (Greek: Martus) is one that bears witness, gives evidence or testimony (marturia). The meaning has been defined thus: “A witness is one who gives testimony to the truth at the hazard of liberty, estate, and life.”

In the eleventh chapter of the Revelation two witnesses are said to prophesy (or speak forth) for a period of time “standing before the God of the earth.” The word “standing” here is the same as that used in Ephesians 6:11,13-14; for example “Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.” The sense is that of making a stand—“Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth...” in the Revelation the two witnesses are seen making their stand before “the God of the earth” (not the God of heaven, as in verse 13). They are not standing “by” the Lord of the whole earth— as is the case in Zechariah 4:14.

Now in 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4 “that man of sin” is said to “exalt himself above all that is called God... so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.” So when we come to Revelation 12:5, the man child (or son of perdition) is “caught up unto God, and to his throne” and is given the name “Michael” (verse 7) meaning ‘Who is like God’ (Young). It is quite reasonable therefore that “my two witnesses” as the Spirit calls them, should prophesy, and thereby make a stand before the Roman god as he became embodied in the man child of sin. This witness—which is the testimony of Jesus Christ and the spirit of the prophecy (see chapter 19:10) was to continue for 1,260 symbolic days (literally years). This is the period of the fugitive woman’s sojourn in the wilderness (Revelation chapter 12:6) and can be dated from the man child’s ascension to the emperor’s throne — AD 312. This period of 1260 years terminated in 1572 the date of the famous massacre of the Huguenots in France. The whole structure of this prophecy therefore fits exactly! Revelation 11:7 reads: “And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them.”

This 1,260 years long testimony of the witnesses takes us from the Constantinian era to that of the Huguenots in France. During this period there existed several different kinds of “protestants” against the Roman Church. Some were secular, some religious and a few were those who held the real testimony of Jesus Christ.

“A gathering of Bible believing Vaudois”

Paulicians:
“So early as the year 660, an inhabitant of Mananalis, near Samosata, named Constantine, having obtained a copy of the New Testament, devoted himself to the study of it, as the rule of his faith. The society which he formed took the name of Paulicians...
“Their form of worship was very simple, and the unceremonious manner with which they freed themselves from relics, images, and saint worship, bears a great resemblance to the Reformation preached by Knox.”

According to Browning, early Paulicians had their head-quarters in the city of Tephrice in Armenia, and according to Mosheim in his Ecclesiastical History:

“They had not, like the Manichaeans, an ecclesiastical government administered by bishops, priests, and deacons: they had no sacred order of men distinguished by their manner of life, their habit, or any other circumstance from the rest of the assembly; nor had councils, synods, or such like institutions any place in their religious polity... Among these, there reigned a perfect equality, and they had no peculiar rights, privileges, nor any external mark of dignity to distinguish them from the people.”

He goes on to say:
“Their society, without a leader, remained scattered among the mountains till 970, when John Zimises conducted a number of them to Thrace, whither some Paulicians had emigrated during the persecution in the seventh century. They were joined by numbers of the Bulgarians; established themselves in Macedonia, Epirus, Croatia, and Dalmatia; and in course of time spread into Italy and France.”

Browning's History says of these Protestants:
“Theyir numbers increased very considerably, and they formed that society known by the several names of the Vaudois, Waldenses, and Albigenses... Popery, uniform in its hatred of every attempt to restore Christianity to its original simplicity, was not backward in hurling its thunders at these unoffending people.”

He continues to comment:
“It is difficult to describe the horrors of this continued massacre; the fanaticism of an ignorant soldiery was worked upon, to make them think they were acting in a meritorious manner; but what language can be strong enough to characterise the horrible councils of Rome—of that church which arrogates to itself the attribute of infallibility, and which not only excited this persecution, but canoned two monsters, who were the most active in the work of murder and devastation? They were Dominic Gusman, and Francis d’Assise, who each of them founded an order of monks called after their respective names. The Dominicans have zealously imitated their founder, and we find that the offices of the Inquisition have almost always been filled by them.”

In his exposition of the Apocalypse, Eureka,
John Thomas in referring to the work of Peter Waldo says:

“Numbers of his disciples fled for an asylum into the Valleys of Piedmont, taking with them the new translation of the scriptures. In this country they mingled with the Paulicians and other witnesses against Romish superstition previously existing there, and were afterwards known by the name of “Waldenses,” or Vaudois: they also diffused themselves over the South of France, where they became known as “Albigenses;” for it is the same class of witnesses styled by these different names, according to the different countries, or districts of the same country in which they appeared. In Alsace and along the Rhine, the doctrines of Waldo spread extensively. Persecution followed in their wake. Thirty-five citizens of Mentz were consumed to ashes by the papists in one fire in the city of Bingen, and eighteen in Mentz itself. The bishops of Mentz and Strasburgh breathed nothing but vengeance and slaughter against them; and at Strasbourg, where Waldo himself is said to have narrowly escaped, eight persons were committed to the flames. Multitudes died praising God, and in the confident hope of resurrection to eternal life. The blood of the witnesses became the seed of a new generation of faithful ones; and in Bulgaria, Croatia, Dalmatia, and Hungary, societies were established which flourished throughout the thirteenth century.”

Their history unfolded over several centuries as they continued their prophecy “clothed in sackcloth.” But they were a very mixed community and formed many different subgroups as a result of doctrinal controversies which continuously raged among them. It would be difficult to find a clear statement of their beliefs as their assemblies were independent of one another and often permitted a large degree of tolerance in some areas of Biblical interpretation. Yet enough scraps can be gathered as evidence that pockets of the Truth existed among them. Some of their radical beliefs (as they would be considered) were preserved among a few of them and re-emerge among those known as the “radical reformers,” such as the Anabaptists, Mennonites and so forth. In his *History of the Church* (1841) Milner draws attention to the Anabaptist movement in Zurich which was led by Felix Manz in about 1525. It was opposed by Zwingli who taught “he that baptizes with water let him be drowned in the water;” consequently Manz was drowned in the river; January 1527.

Also according to Milner, Zwingli opposed the Anabaptists on another issue, and in a footnote mentions “the opinion entertained by the Anabaptists of those days (about 1529), viz. that departed souls sleep till the resurrection” (c/p Matthew 9:24).

Milner mentions the *Polish Recovian Catechism* of 1574 linking it with the name of Faustus Socinus and the sect known as Socinians. This bring us to the period of the

“death” of the witnesses.

“The leading principle of the sect (Socinians) appears to be, that, “whatever surpasses the limits of human comprehension is to be excluded from the Christian profession.” The mystery of the Trinity—the incarnation of the Son of God—and the Deity of the Spirit—are therefore, consequently, utterly renounced in their creed. Respecting the article of baptism, they admitted only adults; and re-baptised those who joined them from other communions. They were considerably divided among themselves...

“It is observable that some of the most zealous disciples of Socinianism were physicians, as Servetus, (see panel on page ??), whose fate is well known; and whose turbulent spirit brought him to his untimely end, inexcusable as the instruments were who embued their hands in his blood.”

In 1536 Menno became attached to the society and although rejecting some beliefs, Milner says:

“He retained still some of the particular doctrines of the sect, respecting baptism—the millenium—the unlawfulness of war—and of oaths—and the exclusion of all magistracy (authority P.B.) from their communion... He recommended the greatest peaceableness of conduct, even to non-resistance, and the strictest purity of morals, without which none were to be admitted, or abide in their communion. Under so prudent a leader, the society established order, and obtained respectability. Divisions among themselves indeed greatly weakened their cause; which all Menno’s prudence could not appease. A rigid sect arose affecting peculiar strictness of discipline, and hurling excomunications against their brethren on the slightest occasions. This produced a separation into the rigid and moderate Anabaptists, and endless debates of too little consequence to dwell upon.”

These Socinians, says Milner, were banished from the kingdom of Poland, and in 1658 (when the witnesses were politically dead), “dispersed and exiles, they fled into different countries, and after various efforts to obtain an establishment, were viewed by too suspicious an eye to gain any settled resting place. The denial of Christ’s divinity was then regarded as a crime so blasphemous, as no Christian state should tolerate: milder maxims have since prevailed: intolerance becomes not the advocates for truth and meekness.

“But few communities of Socinians are known out of England, the colluvies of all sects and heresies. Here Biddle had a congregation under Cromwell, and Charles II. Nor hath there been wanting a succession of those who have maintained the leading features of the Socinian heresy, though not exactly agreed respecting the person of the Son of God. But all concur in rejecting the doctrine of the Trinity, denying the godhead of Christ, and renouncing all vicarious satisfaction from the sufferings of a Redeemer.”

We cannot escape the fact that these people fit the description of those witnesses who made their testimony before the Roman system and made a stand against it even though it brought harsh consequences. They were to be found in parts of France, northern Italy and in what is today Switzerland. In the 16th century these areas naturally became a centre for the Reformation where John Calvin, Zwingli, Knox and others established their congregations.

What we have found in these various radical sects, is not total truth, but pockets of it. Many
Felix Manz is said to have pioneered the Anabaptist sect in Zurich and he worked with Conrad Grebel who shared his beliefs. In December 1524 he submitted a so-called “Protestation” outlining his arguments against the validity of infant baptism (or Christening). He refuted the accusation made against him that he was a rebel, arguing that his position was Biblical and ought to be shared with others — including council members. He cited instances from Scripture which taught that faith and repentance were required before baptism and used Romans 6:4 in his presentation: “Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.” He was opposed by arguments from Zwingli.

A contemporary artist records the drowning

Here in the Limmat, from a fishing platform, Felix Manz and five other Anabaptists were drowned during the time of the Reformation between 1527 and 1532. The last Anabaptist to be executed in Zurich in 1614 was Hans Landis.

The above plaque identifies the location on the river Limmat where Felix Manz was drowned for preaching adult baptism.

See also the illustration on page 27. This was how victims were bound for drowning.

Anabaptist Felix Manz

Felix Manz with Conrad Grebel and George Blauroc were baptized in 1525 following a debate with Zwingli and continued to preach their beliefs to others in Basel and surrounding territory. Manz was arrested in December 1526 and on January 5th 1527 his hands and feet were bound and he was placed in a boat and pushed into the Limmat river here in Zurich.
Michael Servetus (1511-1553) clashed with reformers over the traditional doctrine of the Trinity, the immortality of the soul, infant baptism and Church authority. His death sentence is seen on the right.

Servetus was a physician and discovered the pulmonary circulatory system. Edward Gibbon wrote: “I am more deeply scandalised at the single execution of Servetus than at the hecatombs which have blazed in the Auto da Fes of Spain and Portugal. The zeal of Calvin seems to have been envenomed by common enemies...”

His book *Christianismi Restitutio* was a shock to both Catholics and Protestants. Calvin wrote to Farel and warned him that if Servetus came to Geneva he would not leave alive. After being tried by the government of Geneva, Calvin and others were called upon as “experts” to testify against him. He was sentenced to be burnt at the stake in October 1553.

Servetus was labelled as a heretic by John Calvin - a charge that was endorsed throughout Europe. His death was slow and agonising as his executioners used green wood in order to prolong suffering.

This monument was erected in Geneva on the spot where Michael Servetus was burnt at the stake in 1553.

had elements of the Truth and we doubt not that there were those who embraced the true Gospel, but they are not known to us. It is the Scripture itself that informs us of their existence as “the holy city” Revelation 11:2, and of the remnants of the woman’s seed “which keep the commandments of God, and hold the testimony of Jesus Christ” (Revelation 12:17).

**Finishing their Testimony**—Revelation 11:7

Throughout Europe the witnesses continued their testimony in sackcloth, making their stand before the Roman god of the earth, and as the “days” of their prophesying began to draw to a close the printing presses were making the Scriptures more widely available so that their testimony became more Biblical and therefore more effective. The issues that had concerned earlier reformers, such as indulgences and transubstantiation (the bread and wine becoming the literal flesh and blood of Jesus), the authority of the Roman Church in religion and secular affairs, the worshipping of images and relics—although still relevant, were being expanded by some groups so as to include other matters and doctrines. Zwingli, Calvin, Farrel and other prominent reformers maintained the orthodox Protestant position and opposed those who sought to take the Reformation further, especially the various sects of Anabaptists. With the main-line Protestants forming state-sponsored (and approved) Churches, the question of ecclesiastical authority was challenged yet again. Calvin and others who had denied the authority of Rome and its pope, now found themselves having to defend their own position of authority. As Martin Luther established his position in Germany (his Ninety-five Theses was written in 1517), Ulrich Zwingli established his in Zurich by attacking indulgences. It was some eight years after gaining his leadership that Zwingli had to confront the Anabaptists in his own town. His main Anabaptist opponents were Felix Manz, Konrad Grebel and George Blaurock (see panel on page ??).

As the Anabaptist movement spread other cities became involved in the controversy — cities such as Bern (which today is the capital city of Switzerland). It was on January 22nd 1528 that Ulrich Zwingli debated with eight Anabaptists in the Bern city Hall (or Rathaus). One of the eight denied his faith but the other seven held fast (George Blaurock was one of them) and were expelled from the city. Three of these Anabaptists returned to Bern without permission and were sentenced to death — they were drowned in the river Aare. Other Anabaptists were sentenced to death at the City Hall, either by drowning, beheading, burning or hanging. For example in 1529 three Anabaptists were expected to deny their beliefs, but when they refused to do so they were drowned. There were many Anabaptist martyrs in Bern. Others were expelled from the country or drowned in the river Aare. Spectators would gather on the platform in front of the Cathedral to watch executions and deportations.

Also in 1529 the Reformation gained strength in Basel where again there was an
Anabaptists Executed in Bern Switzerland

The Rathaus (City Hall), built between 1406 and 1416. Bern joined with other cities in 1527 in issuing a harsh edict against the Anabaptist movement. Trials took place in the Rathaus, after which the Anabaptists were taken to the street shown here and informed of the sentence: drowning, beheading, burning, hanging or deportation.

Below: Executions were carried out by drowning in the River Aare. Victims were tied up with a stick inserted as shown in the engraving.

A grim reminder of times past. This model of the executioner is located in Bern at the spot where executions of the anabaptists by beheading took place in the 16th century.

The Rathaus (left) was also the venue at which a debate took place between Ulrich Zwingli and the Anabaptists, the result of which was banishment of the Anabaptists from Bern.

Ulrich Zwingli

The River Aare, Bern
increase in the persecution of Anabaptists who were considered enemies of the State. The university of Basel is the oldest in Switzerland, and it was here that Erasmus worked in the 1530’s and 40’s.

An important centre for the Reformation was also Geneva due largely to the work of John Calvin who clashed with Michael Servetus, and then the Libertines. Servetus was burnt at the stake in Geneva (see panel on left).

It was in Geneva that John Knox of Scotland helped in production of the well-known Geneva Bible, the version that most English-speaking Protestants and Puritans used until the King James Version replaced it. It was from this city where Calvin worked that the influence of the Reformation spread world-wide, but especially in the English-speaking world via the Geneva Bible. A major reason for Geneva becoming so influential was that as persecutions of Protestants raged elsewhere (in England it was the reign of “Bloody Mary” who sent some 300 Protestants to death) many fled to the town of Geneva and became impressed with the teachings of Calvin. At one point a thousand such refugees arrived in the city every year. Many of these came from France where some 50,000 Protestants were put to death during the 1540’s.

There is neither time nor space in this article to fully relate the history of these times, but it was the closing years of the witnesses prophecy before they would be not only made war against, but overcome and killed.

This brings us to the closing years of the prophesying period of the witnesses and to that time when the beast would ascend and make war against them—a war that lasted from 1572 until the death of the witnesses in 1685.

The Massacre of 1572

The signal for beginning the massacre of the French Protestants was the ringing of the great bell of the palace. As Browning’s History relates it:

“The ringing of the bell of St. Germain L’Auxerrois was answered by the bells of all the churches, and by a discharge of fire-arms in different parts. Paris resounded with cries and howlings, which brought the defenceless people out of their dwellings, not only unarmed, but half naked. Some tried to gain Coligny’s house, in the hope of obtaining protection but the companies of guards quickly despatched them: the Louvre seemed to hold out a refuge; but they were driven away by men armed with spears and musketry. Escape was almost impossible; the numerous lights placed in the windows deprived them of the shelter which the darkness would have afforded them; and patroles traversed the streets in all directions, killing every one they met. From the streets they proceeded to the houses; they broke open the doors, and spared neither age, sex, nor condition. A white cross had been put in their hats to distinguish the Catholics; and some priests, holding a crucifix in one hand and a sword in the other preceded the murderers, and encouraged them, in God’s name, to spare neither relatives nor friends.

When the daylight appeared, Paris exhibited a most appalling spectacle of slaughter: the headless bodies were falling from the windows; the gateways were blocked up with dead and dying; and the streets were filled with carcases which were drawn on the pavement to the river.

Even the Louvre became the scene of great carnage: the guards were drawn up in a double line, and the unfortunate Huguenots who were in that place were called one after another, and killed...”

This massacre lasted for a whole week, says the historian. It spread to the provinces where the dreadful carnage continued. The history continues:

“The news of the massacre created a great sensation throughout Europe. The indignation which it excited was accompanied by terror; for it seemed the signal of a crusade against the Protestants...

“At Rome great rejoicing took place: the Cardinal of Lorrain liberally rewarded the messenger, and questioned him, like a person informed beforehand. The Cardinal Alexandrin had made no secret of expecting the news of a great victory gained over the heretics, and exclaimed when it arrived, “The king of France has kept his word!” The pope went in a grand procession, performed high mass with all the splendour of his court, and ordered a Te Deum to be sung in order to celebrate the event; the firing of cannon at the same time announced the glad tidings to the neighbouring villages. A medal was struck, bearing on one side the head of Gregory XIII and on the other the exterminating angel striking the Protestants, with this inscription: “Huguenotorum Strages, 1572.”

The “War” and “death” of the Witnesses

This “crusade” against the Huguenots in France lasted for years, from 1572 until 1598 when an Edict of Toleration (The Edict of Nantes) was signed by king Henry IV. This

Top left: Medal struck showing victory over Calvinists (i.e. Huguenots).
Left: The Revocation of the Edict of Nantes with the royal seal.
Below: A painting of the massacre of St. Bartholomew in 1573
“war” (Revelation 11:7) was followed by the political “death” of the witnesses when the Edict was revoked 87 years later in 1685. The Edict of the revocation was signed at Fontainbleau on the 18th of October of that year. According to a contemporary comment made by the duke of Saint-Simon:

“The revocation of the edict of Nantes, without the least pretext or necessity, and the various proscriptions, rather than proclamations, which followed it, were the fruits of this dreadful plot, which depopulated one-fourth of the kingdom, ruined trade in all its branches, placed it so long under the public avowed pillage of the dragons, and authorized tortments and executions, in which thousands of innocent persons of both sexes perished.”

Commenting upon the effects of the revocation, Browning’s History says of king Louis XIV.

“Numbers of his subjects were legally and civilly dead, with the anomalous tyranny of the Clergy which the Father hath put in his own power. His subjects were either begun, or will begin shortly.”

The resurrection of the witnesses Juriéru connects with the great earthquake of Revelation 11:13, which he describes as a revolt against papal power.

“But who must begin this last revolt? ’Tis most probable, that France shall. Not Spain, which as yet is plunged in superstition, and is as much under the tyranny of the Clergy as ever.”

This was the Revolution on 1789, which brought “Liberty, Equality, Fraternity”—it brought freedom of religion and marked the beginning of the modern age.

The Hope of Israel

Juriéru believed that the resurrection of the witnesses in France would lead to the restoration of the ancient kingdom of Israel under the reign of Christ. Writing of this he says:

“This is the Kingdom that was promised to Jesus Christ by the Angel, who fore-told his birth to the B. Virgin. God will give him the Throne of David his Father. I would reign know how that Oracle hath been accomplished...

“But what doth the Answer of our Lord Jesus Christ to his Apostles signify? They demanded of him, Will thou at this time restore the kingdom again to Israel? Jesus replied, by remitting them to another time; ’Tis not for you, saith he, to know the Times and Seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. If the Kingdom should never be restored to Israel, why doth not our Lord tell them so? and why doth he hold them in suspense? if the Kingdom of Israel be nothing else than the Calling of the Gentiles and our Christian Church, why doth he refer them to a longer time; saying, that God hath reserved to himself the knowledge of that Time? that was a thing should be effected within a few years in their own time, before their eyes, and by themselves. Lastly, why hath he commanded us to pray daily, Thy Kingdom come, since that Kingdom is already come?...”

Juriéru proceeds to reference Isaiah 63:4 and connects it with Revelation 19:11-21. He wrote:

“Now I would fain know, for whom this victory described by Isaiah, must be gain’d? Without doubt, ’tis on the behalf of the people of the Jews, ’tis to the Jews that he speaks, the year of my Redeemed is come; and presently after followeth that which we have cited, I will mention the loving-kindnesses of the Lord, &c. which belongs to the people of the Jews, and can’t belong to any other. ’Tis therefore for the Jews, and on their behalf, that the great battle in the 19th of the Revelation, shall be fought; ’twill be to get a crown for them, and to raise them upon a Throne. Therefore this Nation is not in so great an error, as men have hitherto imagined upon the subject of the nature of the reign of their Messiah.”

Latter-day Witnesses

Juriéru, writing in 1686, saw that the witnesses would be slain, and that they would be raised up from that political death-state after a symbolic time of three days and an half. Another writer, John Carter, wrote about the revival of the witnesses in 1949:

“... The revival took place in the French Revolution when forces were liberated which have done much to restrain the Roman Church, and which have entered largely into the shaping of the events of the last 150 years. But coincident with the uprise of the political witnesses a revival also of the true witnesses might be expected. Such a view indeed receives specific endorsement from a warning of Jesus which is connected with his reappearance on the earth. “Behold, I come as a thief: Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.” Such a prophecy requires that there shall be living at the second advent some who are waiting and looking for Christ, who know God’s way of salvation and have been “clothed” with God’s righteousness.”

It has been the duty of these latter-day witnesses to announce to the world the approaching kingdom of God on earth. This is the coming kingdom of Israel under Messiah, of which the present state of Israel has been a sign to the world that the time has come when God will “restore again the kingdom to Israel” as promised in the Scriptures of truth. Over the last 2,000 years many have witnessed to this Gospel of the kingdom—some as the true and faithful servants of Jesus Christ, and some as witnesses of the outer court which has been given to the Gentiles.
The Reformation’s early Spread

Luther’s original 95 theses were written in Latin in 1517, and their translation into German and printing the following year is traditionally taken to mark the start of the Reformation. The teachings of Luther spread rapidly throughout the German region and beyond. His attacks on Papal authority soon led to his excommunication in 1521 by the decree of Pope Leo X.

One of Luther’s “crimes” was to correctly identify the Man of Sin of 2 Thessalonians ch. 2 as the Papacy, and the little horn of the 4th beast of Daniel ch. 7 as the Power of the Roman Church. He also linked Rome to the Babylon the Great of Revelation ch’s 14, 16, 17 and 18. One of his treatises was entitled the Babylonish Captivity of the Church. Another, written following the receipt of the Papal Bull of excommunication, was entitled Martin Luther against the Excrable Bull of Antichrist.

“The die was now cast. Luther had declared war against the Roman pontiff” (Grattan Guinness; Romanism and the Reformers).

At the same time, in Switzerland, Ulrich Zwingli (1484–1531), was speaking out against indulgences, making his break with Rome in 1523 by declaring independence from Rome for the Zurich Council.

“In the ten years 1522 to 1532 the wave of the Protestant Reformation rolled over Europe. It reached to every part of Christendom, affecting not only those countries which became officially “Protestant”, but stirring deep eddies and currents in lands whose governments were most loyally Roman Catholic, such as Spain, Italy and Austria. In some countries it was a clean break. It should be remembered that the first official Protestant state was the canton of Zurich in Switzerland, whose council adopted a state church “according to the word of God” in 1523. By 1532 some Swiss cantons, some German states, Sweden and England had seceded from Rome. Elsewhere longings for change proved to be widely diffused and intractable, escaping here and there like suppressed steam from a boiling pot” (Alan Eyre; The Protesters).

Rome’s troubles had begun earlier than this with the advent of men like Wycliffe who translated the Bible into the common tongue, so it no longer was solely the preserve of the churchpriests. Laboriously copied by hand, numbers were small, but with the coming of the printing press in the mid 1400’s the ability to make many copies became possible, bringing the power of the Word of God to a much wider audience. Gutenberg printed the Latin Vulgate in 1455-6 and with the printing of books about the scriptures in English and other languages, the understanding of God’s Word increased mightily and gave birth to the Reformation. To the Protesters it became plain that Rome fulfilled the terms of the Man of Sin, popularly known as Antichrist, whose coming was foretold by the prophets.

Rome fights Back

Rome could not ignore the increasing questioning of the claims of the Roman Catholic Church brought about by this new availability of God’s Word, due to the power of the printing press. Rome’s first act to stem this rebellion against her authority was to call a special council. The Fifth Lateran Council (1512-17) was set up under Julius II who died of a fever in 1513 and it was continued by his successor, Leo X. It resorted to strictly forbidding anyone to publish a book without prior consent, and also prohibited anyone from preaching on the subject of Antichrist:

Session 10, 4 May 1515, On censorship of books:

... “some printers have the boldness to print and sell to the public, in different parts of the world, books—some translated into Latin from Greek, Hebrew, Arabic and Chaldean as well as some issued directly in Latin or a vernacular language—containing errors opposed to the faith as well as pernicious views contrary to the christian religion and to the reputation of prominent persons of rank. The readers are not edified. Indeed, they lapse into very great errors not only in the realm of
faith but also in that of life and morals. This has often given rise to various scandals, as experience has taught, and there is daily the fear that even greater scandals are developing.”

“We therefore establish and ordain that henceforth, for all future time, no one may dare to print or have printed any book or other writing of whatever kind in Rome or in any other cities and dioceses, without the book or writings having first been closely examined, at Rome by our vicar and the master of the sacred palace, in other cities and dioceses by the bishop or some other person who knows about the printing of books and writings of this kind and who has been delegated to this office by the bishop in question, and also by the inquisitor of heresy for the city or diocese where the said printing is to take place, and unless the books or writings have been approved by a warrant signed in their own hand, which must be given, under pain of excommunication, freely and without delay.”

“In addition to the printed books being seized and publicly burnt, payment of a hundred ducats to the fabric of the basilica of the prince of the apostles in Rome, without hope of relief, and suspension for a whole year from the possibility of engaging in printing, there is to be imposed upon anyone presuming to act otherwise the sentence of excommunication” (Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils, ed. Norman P. Tanner).

The next session reinforced the authority of the Rome alone to proclaim the true interpretation of the Bible.

Session 11, 19 December 1516, On how to preach:

... “We command all who undertake this task of preaching, or will later undertake it, to preach and expound the gospel truth and holy scripture in accordance with the exposition, interpretation and commentaries that the church or long use has approved and has accepted for teaching until now, and will accept in the future, without any addition contrary to its true meaning or in conflict with it. They are always to insist on the meanings which are in harmony with the words of sacred scripture and with the interpretations, properly and wisely understood, of the doctors mentioned above. They are in no way to presume to preach or declare a fixed time for future evils, the coming of antichrist or the precise day of judgment; for Truth says, it is not for us to know times or seasons which the Father has fixed by his own authority. Let it be known that those who have hitherto dared to declare such things are liars, and that because of them not a little authority has been taken away from those who preach the truth” (ibid).

Rome’s two Options

A) Death and book burning

These decrees did little however to stem the power and spread of the Reformation. Rome had two options: to use force against the Protestants, or to undermine the Protestant teachings. She used both options! According to the Bloody History of Papal Rome, a Timeline by Darryl Eberhart, during the 30 year period 1540-1570 at least 900,000 Waldenses were killed and during 1550-1560 at least 250,000 Dutch Protestants were slaughtered. At the same time Queen Mary ("bloody Mary") had around 300 men and women burned alive at the stake in Britain.

There were also public burning of books and Bibles to remove them from circulation.

B) The subtler Approach—The Jesuits

The subtler option of undermining the Protestants was one that developed over time through a new champion of the church. The knight in shining armour who rode to the defence of the papacy was found in the person of Don Inigo Lopez de Recalde, better known as Ignatius of Loyola—a small town in the Spanish Basque region. Ignatius (1491-1566) was the founder of “The Society of Jesus” or the Jesuits, whose powerful influence can still be seen at work to this day. Initially founded in 1534, it received Rome’s seal of approval under the then Pope Paul III in 1540, when Ignatius and his small band of followers put themselves at the Pope’s disposal, to work as “pontifical theologians”. By the time of Ignatius’ death in 1566 they had more than 1,000 members.

“The members had to vow not only chastity, poverty, and implicit obedience to authority…but, especially, compliance with the commands of the Pope in going to any country and under any conditions to convert heretics and infidels, especially Moors and Jews.

“Their special obedience to the Pope naturally caused the Jesuits to fight against the greatest danger to the Catholic Church, Protestantism. Through this fight, the Jesuits developed political influence which soon made the members of the order the most versatile representatives of the Catholic Church in worldly affairs. In order to achieve this goal, a complicated organization of the utmost neatness and rigor was developed. The Jesuits received the rights both of mendicant orders and of secular priests. They recognized only the superiority of the Jesuit Superior General and the Pope. This gave them great worldly power. Furthermore, from their inception they devoted much interest to education, and early in their history were appointed to many highly important chairs of theology at the leading universities of Europe” (World Scope Encyclopedia. History of the Jesuits).

As a 19th century writer put it: “I cannot too much impress upon the minds of my readers that the Jesuits by their very calling, by the very essence of their institution, are bound to seek, by every means, right or wrong, the destruction of Protestantism. This is the condition of their existence, the duty they must fulfil, or cease to be Jesuits. "Accordingly, we find them in this evil dilemma. Either the Jesuits fulfil the duties of their calling, or not. In the first instance, they must be considered as the biggest enemies of the Protestant faith; in the second, as bad and unworthy priests; and in both cases, therefore, to be equally regarded with aversion and distrust" (G.B. Nicolini, History of the Jesuits: Their Origin, Progress, Doctrine, and Design 1854).

The Council of Trent

In 1555, the Roman Church convened another council in their efforts to stem the tide of defections from Rome. The Council of Trent ran for several years from 1545 to 1563 with over 25 sessions. It did correct some of the blatant church excesses that the Protestants had decried, but it reinforced the authority of the Church and pronounced some 100 anathemas upon the heads of heretics! It was under this council’s guidance that the work for the Jesuits to pursue was made clear—Protestantism was to be attacked and subdued.

Diverting Attention!

The Jesuits concentrated on attacking the main thrust of the Protestants—the pointing to Rome as the fulfilment of those prophecies which revealed a coming apostasy. One master stroke was to settle all questions that the Book of Revelation had anything to do with warnings of the true nature of the Roman Church, by proclaiming that this enigmatic book had its setting in a future, 1260 day (3½ year) period, associated with the time of the end. This brilliant strategy gradually took off in Reformation circles!
Until then, people’s understanding was based on what we today term a continuous historical interpretation and taking a year for a day when unravelling time periods. So the forty two months (1260 days) of Revelation 11:2 and the 1260 days of Revelation 12:6 (and the time, times and half a time of 12:14) equated to 1260 years—a long period of time. Yet in the 1500’s, the “man of sin” had been flourishing for about this length of time, since the days when Constantine had legalised Christianity in his Edict of Milan in AD 313. This was powerful evidence that was used against Rome. It is interesting that only the continuous-historical interpretation of the book Revelation shows clearly who the true enemy of the Truth is. There is no other persecuting power that fits, other than Rome.

Indeed this powerful evidence had its origins in the much earlier prophecies contained in the book of Daniel. Here was evidence from Daniel that a form of Rome would continue until the time of the end. Daniel’s vision of the 4 beasts in chapter 7 is quite detailed in its description of the 4th, Roman Beast. Bible students could see in the times and half a time of 12:14) equated to 1260 years—a long period of time. Yet in the 1500’s, the “man of sin” had been flourishing for about this length of time, since the days when Constantine had legalised Christianity in his Edict of Milan in AD 313. This was powerful evidence that was used against Rome. It is interesting that only the continuous-historical interpretation of the book Revelation shows clearly who the true enemy of the Truth is. There is no other persecuting power that fits, other than Rome.

“I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things. And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time” (Dan 7:8, 25).

This was the original reference to a 1260 day period pointing to a 1260 years of persecution, which would be enlarged upon in the book of Revelation.

The Protestants also had the powerful words of the apostle Paul when he wrote his second letter to the Thessalonian believers and showed them the development of the Man of Sin in his 2nd chapter. They could link this with the woman giving birth in Revelation ch. 12 and point again to the evidence that a 9 month (280 days) pregnancy, on the basis of a day for a year, pointed to Rome. 280 years from the start of corruption in the early ecclesias brings us to the time of Constantine and his Edict of Milan changing the ecclesia into a State Church based in Rome.

So the Jesuit strategy was simple. Show that these Protestant understandings were wrong by deflecting any ideas that the 1260 days was a symbolic time period, which, on the basis of a day for a year, pointed to a 1260 year period, by insisting that this was a literal 1260 day period, that is 3½ years and that it lay away into the future! Wrapped up in this was the use of the emotive title Antichrist to describe the deeds of this trouble maker who would come at this end-time 3½ year period.

Ribera’s new Ideas

The Jesuit Francisco Ribera (1537-1591) set out to write up this new Futuristic understanding of the book of Revelation in 1585. Ribera had been born in Spain and became a Jesuit in 1540, eventually rising to be a doctor of theology at the Spanish University of Salamanca. His book In Sacrum Beati Ioannis Apostoli, & Evangelistae Apocalypsin Commentarij ran to 500 pages and was published in 1590, a year before his death.

“In order to remove the Catholic Church from consideration as the antichrist power, Ribera proposed that the first few chapters of the Apocalypse applied to ancient pagan Rome, and the rest he limited to a yet future period of 3½ literal years, immediately prior to the second coming. … Then, he proposed, the antichrist, a single individual, would:

- Persecute and blaspheme the saints of God.
- Rebuild the temple in Jerusalem.
- Abolish the Christian religion.
- Deny Jesus Christ.
- Be received by the Jews.
- Pretend to be God.
- Kill the two witnesses of God.
- Conquer the world” (Wikipedia).

This new interpretation effectively deflected any attention from Rome—the signs and symbols had to do with a literal time period which lay in the future.

There was another important item that Ribera proposed which forms the basis of much of the modern-day Futurist ideas. It was to separate the 70th week (Daniel 9:27) in Daniel’s 70 Weeks prophecy from the previous weeks and allocate them to a future fulfilment. In spite of taking the days of Revelation literally, this could not be applied here because more than 69 weeks—483 days—was required to fulfill the events of the first 69 weeks—the rebuilding of the wall to the cutting off of Messiah. A day for a year does fit here, so on that basis the 70th week indicated a 7 year period. By detaching this week and applying it to a future 7 year time of trouble, with Antichrist being the one who would appear in the middle of the week followed by a time of great trouble for the remainder of the week, Ribera was laying the foundation for the modern ideas. With this 7 year period of trouble divided into two 3½ year periods, it was easy to make the link with the several references to 1260 days/42 months/a time, times and half a time in the book of Revelation.

Bellarmino takes up the Challenge

Ribera’s death the following year caused Rome to look for a skilled teacher who could spread these new ideas. They found in the person of Roberto Bellarmino, an Italian cardinal described as of “immense intellect and great personal charisma.”

“He was highly educated as an apologist and became one of the shrewdest Jesuit defenders of Roman Catholicism against Protestantism. Bellarmino was a powerful speaker and lectured to large audiences of both Catholics and Protestants who travelled great distances to hear him.

“Bellarmino’s theological masterpiece was his Polemic Lectures Concerning the Disputed Points of the Christian Belief Against the Heretics of This Time. Regarding the influence of this work, the Catholic Encyclopedia states: ‘This monumental work was the earliest attempt to systematize the various controversies of the time, and made an immense impression throughout Europe, the blow it dealt to Protestantism being so acutely felt in Germany and England that special chairs (professorships) were founded in order to
provided replies to it."

"Bellarmino continued Ribera’s counterattack against the reformers and made it his life mission to defend the Catholic faith and the literalistic hermeneutic of futurism. "He insisted that the prophecies concerning Antichrist in Daniel. Paul and John had no application to the papal power. This formed the third part of his Polemic Lectures Concerning the Disputed Points of the Christian Belief Against the Heretics of This Time published between 1581 and 1593. This is the most detailed apology of the Catholic faith ever produced, and became the arsenal for all future defenders and expositors. It called forth a host of counter writings from the Protestant leaders, who considered him their greatest adversary" (Stephen P Bohr. Futurism's Incredible Journey).

**Alcazar weaves his Deceptions**

Just in case this wasn’t sufficient ammunition against the Protestants, a few years later another Jesuit put forward the Preterist interpretations, that is, that the whole of the book of Revelation was fulfilled by AD 70 or by the time of Constantine or soon after. Luis De Alcazar (1554-1613) was also Spanish. His book entitled Vestigatio arcani sensus in Apocalypsi (Investigation of the Hidden Sense of the Apocalypse) was a massive 900 pages long and was published posthumously in 1614.

Again it deflected the Bible reader’s eyes away from the evils of the Roman Catholic system. The Bible, according to Alcazar, had no message for the readers of his day.

"In his volume, Alcazar affirmed that the Antichrist prophecies of Daniel and Revelation had been fulfilled in the distant past, a system of political interpretation that came to be known as preterism. Alcazar believed that the little horn of Daniel 7 represented Antiochus Epiphanes. He also believed that the entire book of Revelation was fulfilled in the first six centuries of the Christian era and that Nero was the predicted Antichrist of scripture."

"The consequences of Alcazar’s hermeneutical method were devastating. By relegating the fulfilment of the Antichrist prophecies of Daniel and Revelation to the distant past, Alcazar argued that they could not apply to the papacy in the 16th century. If Alcazar’s interpretation was correct, then the Protestant view was gravely wrong. In this way Alcazar’s alternative method of prophetic interpretation removed the incriminating finger from the papacy and pointed it instead at Antiochus and Nero!" (Stephen P Bohr. Futurism's Incredible Journey).

**Lacunza uses Jewish Pseudonym**

One other Jesuit needs mentioning, Manuel Diaz Lacunza, born in Chile in 1731 and died in Italy in 1801. He was a Jesuit priest in Chile until King Charles of Spain expelled the Jesuits from Spain and its colonies. Lacunza fled eventually to Italy. Here he wrote a 22 page tract entitled The Anonymous Millennium, which espoused Futurism, but also had the Catholic Church falling into apostasy at the time of the end; thus ensuring his book entered the list of books to be banned?

In about 1791 he wrote a manuscript in Spanish entitled La Venida del Mesías en Gloria y Magestad (The Coming of the Messiah in Glory and Majesty). At this time the Jesuits were under a ban, so he wrote it under the pseudonym of Juan Josafat Ben-Ezra—a Jewish name. Also an advocate of Futurism, Lacunza's manuscript was posthumously published in London, Spain, Mexico and Paris between 1811 and 1826.

Lacunza believed that, apart from the first 3 chapters, the book's fulfillment lay in the future. Again, the climax at the time of the end is to be a literal 3½ years of trouble, but that the 144,000 would be literal Jews and that Israel would be gathered and converted during this time of trouble. Also during the Millennial Kingdom that followed this time of trouble, Israel would be dwelling in their land and that a temple would be built and sacrifices offered. In his ideas Antichrist would not be an individual but “an apostate system that would arise at the end of the age”. His ideas on The Rapture—the removal of believers to heaven from the scene of trouble, have been at the core of modern Futurist ideas.

**The Protestants absorb the Jesuitical leaven**

It took some time before the Jesuitical leaven began to appear within Protestant writings. There were many Protestants who attacked these new ideas, but gradually the hard work of the Jesuits began to pay off and we find that in the early 1800's these Jesuitical ideas began to be adopted by the Protestant movement. It seems to have started in England before spreading to America. Samuel Maitland (1792-1866), was a lawyer and Bible scholar, who took up the post of librarian to the Archbishop of Canterbury. It is thought that here he found a copy of Ribera’s works, for in 1826 he published a booklet entitled An Enquiry into the Grounds on which the Prophetic Period of Daniel and St. John has been supposed to consist of 1260 Years. In its pages he set forth Ribera’s ideas, that the book of Revelation belongs to an end time period of literally 1260 days, rather than the traditional Protestant view.

Another Protestant who became influential was Edward Irving (1792-1834). He discovered that Ben Ezra was none other than a Jesuit writer, and intrigued, learnt Spanish in order to translate Lacunza’s work into English. He added a 203 page introduction and enthusiastically spread his new found ideas. Among his listeners was a John Nelson Darby (1800-1866) who was the founder of the Plymouth Brethren, who took these Futurist ideas to America. Both Irving and Darby spoke of “The Rapture” — when Christ would withdraw his followers from the earth at the commencement of a double 1260 day period — a 7-year period of tribulation under Antichrist, who would be defeated by Christ’s public return.

Thus the Jesuit teaching was now bearing fruit; Rome was in the clear as far as being the centre of the foretold apostasy.

**Newman — Follow me**

Another Church of England priest who espoused these ideas was none other than John Henry Newman, the founder of the Oxford Movement. Such was the reinstatement of the Roman Catholic Church into Protestant thinking, that Newman himself “crossed the Tiber” and was received into the Roman Church in 1845 and became a Roman Catholic priest the following year. In September 2010, Pope Benedict XVI visited Britain to mark the
“beatification” of this man. The Pope’s call was for the Church of England to follow Newman back to Rome!

Quoting from *Milestones 2010*:

“May the profound ideas of this great Englishman continue to inspire all Christ’s followers in this land to conform their every thought, word and action to Christ, and to work strenuously to defend those unchanging moral truths which, taken up, illuminated and confirmed by the Gospel, stand at the foundation of a truly humane, just and free society” (*Benedict*).

Now this call to follow Newman’s ideas can only have one logical outcome. It is a call to members of the state church, of whom the Queen is the head, to follow the footsteps of Newman and come back to the “mother” church!

As this *Catholic Culture* (17-Sep-10) article openly put it:

“But when he spoke to a group of Anglican (and Catholic) bishops, and offered Cardinal Newman as a model for ecumenical actions, the Pope was making his point clearly enough. Any Anglican prelate who takes that suggestion seriously, and models his actions after those of Cardinal Newman, will very soon run up against an immovable fact. Cardinal Newman became a Catholic. If you want to follow him, you’ll have to follow him to Rome.”

The Pope stressed that Cardinal Newman made his move gently, politely, without breaking friendships, without recriminations, without renouncing his heritage—the same way other Anglicans might take the step today, under the provisions of Anglicanorum Coetibus.

“Perhaps Benedict is thinking that Newman is the vehicle that he can use to push the beatification cause.

The Pope stressed that Cardinal Newman made his move gently, politely, without breaking friendships, without recriminations, without renouncing his heritage—the same way other Anglicans might take the step today, under the provisions of Anglicanorum Coetibus.

The Scofield Reference Bible

Another person who was greatly influenced by Derby was Cyrus Ingerson Scofield (1843-1921), well known for the Scofield Reference Bible and who incorporated these ideas into his footnotes, boosting the spread of Futurism and smoothing the way to an acceptance of Rome.

“Through the Scofield Bible, the Jesuit child reached young adulthood. The doctrine of an Antichrist still to come was becoming firmly established inside 20th-century American Protestantism” (*Steve Wohlberg. History of the very recent origin of the Pretribulation rapture and Dispensationalism*).

The Rapture and Antichrist

In more recent times the ideas of The Rapture and the coming Antichrist have been promoted by writers such as Hal Lindsey

“Then in the 1970s, Pastor Hal Lindsey, a graduate of Dallas Theological Seminary, released his blockbuster book *The Late Great Planet Earth*. This 177-page, easy-to-read volume brought Futurism to the masses of American Christianity, and beyond. The New York Times labelled it “The number one best-seller of the decade.’ Over 30 million copies have been sold, and it has been translated into over 30 languages. Through *The Late Great Planet Earth*, Jesuit Futurism took a strong hold over the Protestant Christian world. *Left Behind* is now teaching much of the same Jesuit Futurism as Francisco Ribera, which is hiding the real truth about the Antichrist” (ibid).

“In the 90’s it was the turn of Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins to popularise these ideas.

“Now we have *Left Behind*. In the 1990s, Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins took the future one-man Antichrist idea of Hal Lindsey, Scofield, Darby, Irving, Newman, Todd, Maitland, Bellarmino, and Ribera, and turned it into “The most successful Christian-fiction series ever” (*Publishers Weekly*). Hal Lindsey’s book, *The Late Great Planet Earth*, was largely theological, which limited its appeal, while *Left Behind* is a sequence of highly imaginative novels, “overflowing with suspense, action, and adventure,” a “Christian thriller,” with a “label its creators could never have predicted: blockbuster success” — *Entertainment Weekly* (*Steve Wohlberg Left Behind by the Jesuits*).

Lutherans Today

Luther was of course a long way from understanding the Truth, but he would be amazed at just how his followers had turned back to Rome. The Lutheran Church in Germany works with the Roman Catholic Church to supress other sects. In 1996 *The House of Commons Ad Hoc Committee* went to Germany to investigate reports of discrimination against religious and ethnic minorities in Germany. According to their report (3rd edition March 1998):

“We have to say from the outset that we were completely unprepared for the sheer scale of prejudice, discrimination and even persecution, which our witnesses recounted. What has astonished us is that in a rich, democratic country certain rather unpleasant things seem to have been happening to members of what are officially categorised as sects or *Sekten*—religious and Weltanschauung (world view) groups which are not part of the rather narrowly defined religious establishment.

“Christian and non-Christian, new religions or *Weitanschauung* groups which are not part of the rather narrowly defined religious establishment.

“They also added:

“Our inescapable conclusion is that significant elements within the state and church apparatus have been brought to bear on these minority religions and philosophies in an attempt to destroy them. It dawned on us that we can only make sense of this intense effort if it is the prelude to something else, something far bigger and more important. We were unable to work out in the short time available what this bigger project may be.”
Church of England today

Many in the Church of England have already followed Newman to Rome. Under provisions made it is now possible for whole communities to move allegiance to Rome. Married ex Church of England priests are allowed to continue to minister to their flocks under the Ordinariate canonical structure set up by Rome.

Following the Pope’s visit to Britain in 2010, “The Personal Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham under the patronage of Blessed John Henry Newman” was established at Walsingham in Norfolk, UK. Walsingham has both a Roman Catholic shrine and an Anglican shrine to Mary and is a centre for Marian parades and pilgrimages. So the place and the patronage were significant. Its website describes the work of an Ordinariate as follows:

“On 15 January 2011, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith published a Decree which formally established a ‘Personal Ordinariate’ in England and Wales for groups of Anglican faithful and their clergy who wish to enter into full communion with the Catholic Church.

Walsingham emblem

“The establishment of this Ordinariate was the first fruit of the Apostolic Constitution Anglicanorum coetibus, issued by Pope Benedict XVI on 4 November 2009. The Constitution and the Complementary Norms published by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith provide the essential norms which will enable members of the Ordinariate to preserve within the Catholic Church those elements of Anglican ecclesial prayer, liturgy and pastoral practice (patrimony) that are concordant with Catholic teaching and which have nurtured and nourished their Christian faith and life.

In time, it is expected that further Ordinariates will be established in other parts of the world to meet the desire of those Anglican communities who in a similar way seek to be united in communion with the Successor of St Peter (ordinariate.org.uk).

It is led by “Mgr” Keith Newton, who was a Church of England Bishop, who, with his wife, were received into the Roman Catholic Church on Jan 1st 2011 and 2 weeks later he “was ordained a Catholic priest”. So far 4 other Church of England Bishops (2 of them were retired bishops) and some 55 deacons and priests have joined the Roman Catholic Church, together with a considerable number of their congregations. The flow is expected only to grow. Truly the daughters are returning home!

The Jesuits today

They are still an active force today; in fact according to Wikipedia, the Jesuits today form the largest single religious order of priests and brothers in the Catholic Church, numbering 19,216 (Jan. 2007). They operate in 112 countries, with the greatest numbers in the USA and India.

In 1956, the year before the signing of the Treaty of Rome—the start of the present EU—the Jesuit European Office (OCIPE) was set up. According to its website:

“OCIPE seeks to accompany the construction of Europe: in serving its personnel in their professional and spiritual discernment, in sustaining critical reflection from the perspective of Christian faith on European values and responsibilities, and in promoting Europe’s solidarity internally and with the wider world” (www.ocipe.info).

Knowing the influence that the Roman Church has on the decrees of Europe—incorporated into the Lisbon Treaty was the requirement that the churches be regularly consulted over EU matters—we can be sure that the Jesuits are busy promoting the growing influence of Rome upon the affairs of Europe.

We reflect on the words of Pope Benedict XVI to the German parliament on his State visit in September 2011.

“... the invitation to give this address was extended to me as Pope, as the Bishop of Rome, who bears the highest responsibility for Catholic Christianity. In issuing this invitation you are acknowledging the role that the Holy See plays as a partner within the community of peoples and states. Setting out from this international responsibility that I hold, I should like to propose to you some thoughts on the foundations of a free state of law” (Vatican Radio 22-Sep-11).

He went on to speak that laws in the past were based mainly on religious principles; German legislators needed to remember that there is a Creator God and this should influence their law-making.

Benedict is preparing his troops for a big drive to put Christianity at the heart of Europe. Just as the former German Defence Minister Karl-Theodor Guttenberg, slimmed down the German army to make it a leaner, meaner,
fighting force, so Benedict has been honing his army of workers for the task ahead! It will be aimed at undoing the work of the Reformation, and bringing the people of Europe back to Rome.

The Battle for Britain

Reclaiming Britain to Rome has been an important goal. The Church of England have undermined their own foundations, surely with Jesuitical assistance, so the way is now set for her traditional members, deeply hurt by the introduction of women priests and modern liturgy, to follow Newman back to Rome.

This work has been greatly assisted by the work of the Roman Catholic laity, who were urged many years ago to use their influence in their workplace. One area that was seen as vital, was in the world of media. Hence we see many newspapers, radio and TV broadcasting as well as politics and business. Their first loyalty is to Rome. Ann Widdecombe, a Tory politician, once described herself as “a Catholic, British, Conservative, woman from Kent... in that order” (Dennis Sewell. Catholics—Britain’s Largest Minority).

Their work has been very successful. The Roman Catholic Tablet magazine published (11-Sep-10) a list of those they regarded as the top traditional members, deeply hurt by the undermining of their own foundations, surely with the most common factor of our list is that the majority are the products of formidable Catholic schools, in both private and state sectors. Many are also the children of migrants, often with links to Ireland. In 10 or 20 years’ time, such a list may include the children of Latin American and Eastern European migrants who make the Church so vibrant today.

The Vatican at the Time of the End

Scripture makes it clear that at the time of the end, in spite of all the reverses Rome has faced in the past, she will be a dominant power. The picture of Revelation chapter 17 is of the Harlot Woman riding the Beast. This we see is an apt description of the Roman Church, whose is “drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus” (Rev. 17:6). She rides the European Beast, she was in Germany, before whom the Kings have subsumed their power.

“These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful” (Revelation 17:14).

This is a picture of Europe after the Battle of Armageddon. She opposes the new ruler in Jerusalem who demands to be recognised as the ruler of the world! At his hands, this evil system will be destroyed and men and women liberated from her deception.

“O LORD, my strength, and my fortress, and my refuge in the day of affliction, the Gentiles shall come unto thee from the ends of the earth, and shall say, Surely our fathers have inherited lies, vanity, and things wherein there is no profit” (Jeremiah 16:19).

Oh what a transformation for this troubled earth. The blood of God’s saints will have been avenged and under the righteous rule of Christ, the nations will walk in truth and righteousness, reflecting praise to Israel’s God who has brought blessing. We look and long for this day to dawn.

Footnotes

1. The re-building of “St Peters” had commenced under Julius II and much money was needed. The outcry over the sale of indulgences to raise some of the money was one of the triggers of the Reformation.

2. It was to be some time after that before the supremacy of the Bishop of Rome to be head of Christendom was established by the decrees of the emperors Justinian AD 533 and Phocas around AD 610. 1260 years takes us to the start of the break-up of the Vatican in the French Revolution 1793 and loss of temporal power of the papacy in 1868-1870.

3. A time = 360 days (Rev. 11:2, 3), times = 720, half time = 180. Total 1260 days— or 1260 years on a day for a year principle (Num. 14:34; Ezek 4:4-6).

4. Antichrist only occurs in the Letters of John (4 times). Antichristos = an opponent of the Messiah. The sad thing is that the one Christendom will label Antichrist, will in fact be Christ himself! Christendom will reject Christ at his 2nd coming just as the Jews did at his 1st coming!

5. It makes no sense to put a gap into this prophecy. Its fulfilment came 490 years from its commencement. (70 x 7 = 490 days = 490 years on a day for year basis). Jesus after a 3½ yr. ministry was “cut off” in the midst of the week. The 70th week ending 3½ years later at the time of Cornelius and the call to the Gentiles (Acts ch. 10). John Thomas, however, argues that the word for midst signifies one-half without specifying which. With John the Baptist’s 3½ yr. ministry before the baptism of Jesus, this would put Jesus crucifixion as the final event of the 70th week.

6. This used to be the Supreme Sacred Congregation of the Roman and Universal Inquisition! Same work, different name!

Ignatius trampling “heresy”. (In St Peters)

SUMMARY OF ALCAZAR’S BOOK

• Revelation chapters 1-11 describes the rejection of the Jews and the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans.

• Revelation chapters 12 - 19 were the overthrow of Roman paganism (the great harlot) and the conversion of the empire to the church.

• Revelation 20 describes the final persecutions by Antichrist, who is identified as Cesar Nero (54-68 A.D.), and judgment.

• Revelation 21 -22 describe the triumph of the New Jerusalem, the Roman Catholic Church.

WINGS OF THE EAGLE

The (British) woman “is a daughter of “Mystery, Babylon the great, the Mother of Harlots, and all the Abominations of the earth;” and is constitutionally styled, “the Church of England and Ireland, as by law established.” In the palmy days of the Tudors and the Stuarts, there was another woman, who fled from the face of the British Serpent. This was the woman of nonconformity and dissent. And to this fugitive were given the wings, or extremeties, of the Great Unicorn; that she might fly into the wilderness, into the day of affliction, into the midst of the week. The 70th week ending 3½ years later at the time of Cornelius and the call to the Gentiles (Acts ch. 10), John Thomas, however, argues that the word for midst signifies one-half without specifying which. With John the Baptist’s 3½ yr. ministry before the baptism of Jesus, this would put Jesus crucifixion as the final event of the 70th week.

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The financial crisis is consolidating Europe while separating Britain from that political block

By Don Pearce  RUGBY, U.K.

A recent headline in The Daily Telegraph editorial read: “Will 2012 bring the Leaders the World Needs?”

These elections will only bring the leaders that their people choose. None of them will be able to solve the deep underlying problems that the world faces.

What we are hoping is that 2012 will bring the leader whom the world really needs. We refer of course to the Lord Jesus Christ, the one born to be King, as millions recently celebrated, yet fail to recognise the validity of that claim in today’s world.

A frightened world desperately seeks solutions to the mess it is in. Grim parallels are drawn with the dark days of 1932, 1931 had been a dreadful year, with banking crises in Europe and America but few can have realised how much worse matters would get as they commenced that New Year. There would unfold many tragic scenes of great poverty as the economic world of that day collapsed, leading to mass unemployment, homelessness and starvation, and growing out of that, anarchy.

What will 2012 bring? The omens are not good. By a financial sleight of hand a temporary stay in the euro-crisis has been put in place at the end of the year, with the EU Bank lending €500bn at very low rates to the banks. It seems that this has been swallowed up by them and little is going into the economy to stimulate it.

The Bible paints a picture of a time of trouble such as never was (Dan. 12:1). Now whether that commences before the return of the Master or after, we don’t know, but things are looking bleak, especially for the euro-zone countries.

Now more than ever before, the world needs the leader that God has appointed to rule in righteousness to the ends of the earth. We pray indeed that 2012 might be the year of his return. The time of the gathering of the living leaders and the resurrection of the leaders from earlier generations, that God has chosen to look after the rulership of the New World. All will be centred in Jerusalem when there is One King, One Government, One Law, One Religion.

We concluded the last update with these words:

“Space has run out to look at the way the financial crisis is pushing Germany to a dominant position as the undoubted leader of Europe, whilst increasing the pressure on Britain to quit the EU to avoid being embroiled in the spiralling problems of the euro. The collapsing euro is driving nations to hand over power to the EU, bringing about increasing political union within the euro-zone countries. God Willing we can explore these items next time.”

What a lot has happened since writing those words at the start of October. We have reached a defining moment in Britain’s relationship with the EU. Before we look at that decisive euro crisis meeting in December, let’s have a layman’s guide to the euro crisis.

The Euro Crisis—A Short Background

The euro had been causing great problems for many of the southern European countries. The problem was that since the launch of the euro they had access to money at low rates of interest. The fact that Germany, France and other major economies were in the euro, meant that the financial markets saw the euro as a stable currency. The European Central Bank was dominated by Germany who was used to low interest rates, in contrast with the Mediterranean countries who had often double digit rates of interest. So there was a boom in borrowing during the early balmy days of the euro. In Greece and Spain especially, huge building projects were undertaken. Property prices rose, wages rose and everyone felt happy, whilst property prices rose faster than interest rates.

Then came the credit crunch of 2009, triggered by the sub-prime mortgage fiasco in America. Suddenly, property prices were tumbling and house values were now less than mortgage debt. Sales generally shrank, jobs were lost and
builders abandoned their building projects. Governments were left with substantial debts and falling revenues from income and sales taxes. Governments normally borrow on loans lasting a few years, which are repaid by taking out further loans. Now with interest rates rising sharply, the new loans were much more expensive. So austerity measures were needed to try to reduce deficits. The problem is that this leads to growing unemployment and personal suffering as benefits are cut or withdrawn. Greece especially was hit by waves of violent protests against the government’s cuts. Under normal circumstances a country would devalue its currency, but locked into the euro, this option is not available.

There was one country that was scarcely affected—Germany. It seems clear that the German leaders understood only too well what the effect would be of linking together so many countries with very different economies. It could only end up in disaster for those countries which had no experience of handling access to cheap money.

This chart illustrates the difference in policy between Germany and the southern euro members.

Germany cut labour costs by 8% in the years 2000 to 2010. On the other hand Italy’s rose 18% and Greece’s 17% in that same period, meaning that German labour costs were some 25% less. Germany achieved this through productivity gains, low wage rises and increasing automation.

This ensured that Germany was in a very strong position. She could continue to increase the exports of her goods not only abroad but into the EU.

Germany Rewiring the EU

An earlier Strafor article (16-Mar-10) puts its finger on Germany’s power.

“In essence, European states are borrowing money (mostly from Germany) in order to purchase imported goods (mostly from Germany) because their own workers cannot compete on price (mostly because of Germany).”

Many commentators have pointed to the concept that the euro crisis was something that Germany had planned from the beginning, and that it would give them the opportunity to regain the power that they had lost when they gave up their currency, the Deutsmark. The Strafor article asked the question, which has profound implications.

“What if, instead of the euro being designed to further contain the Germans, the Germans crafted the euro to rewire the European Union for their own purposes?”

The article pointed out that they believe that this indeed was the case. As it explained:

“What made us look at this in a new light was an interview with German Finance Minister Wolfgang Schauble on March 13 in which he essentially said that if Greece, or any other eurozone member, could not right their finances, they should be ejected from the eurozone. This really got our attention... Germany now appears prepared not just to contemplate, but to publicly contemplate, the re-engineering of Europe for its own interests. It may not do it, or it may not do it now, but it has now been said, and that will change Germany’s relationship to Europe. The implications of this are difficult to overstate. If the euro is essentially gutting the European — and again to a greater extent the Club Med — economic base, then Germany is achieving by stealth what it failed to achieve in the past thousand years of intra-European struggles. “The paradigm that created the European Union—that Germany would be harnessed and contained—is shifting. Germany now has not only found its voice, it is beginning to express, and hold to, its own national interest. A political consensus has emerged in Germany against bailing out Greece. Moreover, a political consensus has emerged in Germany that the rules of the eurozone are Germany’s to refashion” (Stratfor 16-Mar-10).

In the 21 months since that article appeared, it is so clear that indeed this is what is happening. Germany has taken control and is dictating the terms. Germany wanted a political union, with herself in charge! This has always been the German dream.

Helmut Kohl was the German Chancellor from 1982 to 1997 and in 1995 when monetary union was being planned (it was in 1995 that the same euro was chosen) he said:

“We want the political unification of Europe. Without monetary union there can be no political union and vice versa” (Kohl 1995). He also made this private, “off the cuff” remark, when he thought the microphones had been turned off, but they hadn’t:

“The future will belong to the Germans... when we build the House of Europe. In the next two years, we will make the process of European integration irreversible. This is a really big battle but it is worth the fight” (Hilton The Principality and Power of Europe Pg. 39).

What is emerging is the very thing they dreamt of, as this headline illustrated:

**Total German Triumph as EU minnows Subjugated**

“The Iron Chancellor of Germany could not have been clearer. ‘Whoever wants credit must fulfil our conditions.’ “These conditions are capitulation by three vulnerable states on core policies, and partial loss of sovereignty for the rest of the eurozone. Raw power is shifting, but to whom exactly? It is as if Merkel has somehow been crowned Magna Mater Europae by the Consilium (Council), behind closed doors. “Just as eurosceptics always feared, monetary union has led to a state of affairs where—in order to “save the euro” as Mrs Merkel puts it—Europe’s ancient states find themselves having to accept a quantum leap towards political union and a degree of subjugation that would not have been tolerated otherwise.”

As the euro woes grew deeper and deeper, Germany made it increasingly clear that only political union of the euro states would be able to save the currency. At another crisis meeting in July—there have been 8 such meetings during 2011—it was agreed that for the 17 eurozone members they had to have fiscal union. A government’s fiscal policy is defined by Wikipedia as “the use of government expenditure and revenue collection (taxation) to influence its economy.” So fiscal union, in terms of the EU, is the handing over to a central establishment the powers of the individual members to control their taxes and how they are spent. This would be another big step on the road to political union.”

The Daily Telegraph 22-Jul-11 headline following this decisive meeting was:

**The Euro Crisis will give Germany the Empire it’s always Dreamed of**

“It is almost impossible to overestimate the importance of the decision which European leaders seemed last night to be reaching. By authorising a huge expansion in the bail-out fund that is propping up the EU’s peripheral members (largely in order to stop the contagion spreading to Italy and Spain), the eurozone has taken the decisive step to becoming a fiscal union. So long as the settlement is accepted by national parliaments, yesterday will come to be seen as the witching
hour after which Europe will cease to be, except vestigially, a collection of nation states. It will have one economic government, one currency, one foreign policy. This integration will be so complete that taxpayers in the more prosperous countries will be expected to pay for the welfare systems and pension plans of failing EU states.

“This is the final realisation of the dream that animated the founders of the Common Market more than half a century ago—which is one reason why so many prominent Europeans have privately welcomed the eurozone catastrophe, labelling it a ‘beneficial crisis.’

“Germany is busy turning into one of the most dynamic and productive economies in the world. Despite the grumbling, for the Germans, the bail-outs are worth every penny, because they guarantee a cheap outlet for their manufactured goods. Yesterday’s witching hour of the European Union means that Germany has come very close to realising Bismarck’s dream of an economic empire stretching from central Europe to the Eastern Mediterranean.”

Greece and Italy given their Orders

In spite of all the planned bailouts, matters grew worse and worse, especially for Greece and Italy. Greece was faced with imposing absolutely swinging cuts, in order to qualify for more bailout money. Meanwhile the government’s cost of borrowing to finance its debt nudged 7%.

The subheading ran:

**The emergence of the Frankfurt Group has turned back the Democratic Clock**

**Electorates are being bypassed as increasing austerity pushes Europe’s weaker countries into an economic death spiral.**

“Here’s how things work. The real decisions in Europe are now taken by the Frankfurt Group, an unelected cabal made of up eight people: (Christine) Lagarde (managing director of the International Monetary Fund); (Angela) Merkel; (Nicolas) Sarkozy; (Mario Draghi, the new president of the ECB); José Manuel Barroso, the president of the European Commission; Jean-Claude Juncker, chairman of the Eurogroup; Herman van Rompuy, the president of the European Council; and Olli Rehn, Europe’s economic and monetary affairs commissioner.

“This group, which is accountable to no one, calls the shots in Europe. The cabal decides whether Greece should be allowed to hold a referendum and if and when Athens should get the next tranche of its bailout cash. What matters to this group is what the financial markets think not what voters might want. To the extent that governments had any power, it has been removed and placed in the hands of the European Commission, the European Central Bank and the IMF. It is as if the democratic clock has been turned back to the days when France was ruled by the Bourbons.”

Ahead of the vital December Summit meeting of EU leaders, France and Germany met several times to thrash out a future strategy for the euro and the EU. They have assumed their right to be the ones who steer the EU along its rocky path. A new word has been coined to cover this phenomenon, *Merkozy*, an amalgamation of the names of the two leaders, Angela Merkel and Nicolas Sarkozy.

They plans were far reaching along the road to political union. Wrapped in this package was a toxic item, the so called Tobin Tax on financial transactions as a way of raising much needed revenue. Every time a currency was changed into another currency the

The popular British Press urge the U.K. to leave the E.U.
tax would be levied. To a layman it would appear that countries within the euro don’t do anywhere near the changes in currency transactions as does the UK, a country not in the euro but part of the EU. Indeed this tax is clearly seen as an attack on Britain.

“The French and Germans, long jealous of London’s special financial status, have for years sought to cut it down to size.

“London—the center of financial services in Europe—is under constant attack through Brussels directives,’ British Prime Minister David Cameron said last month. ‘It is a key national interest that we need to defend.’

“I think it’s probably one of the biggest threats we’ve seen to the city in my career of 40-odd years,’ argues Stuart Fraser of the City of London Corp” (UPI 07-Nov-11).

UK left out as euro countries to make own treaty

At the December meeting Merkel and Sarkozy put their ideas to the assembled heads of the 27 member countries. After a dinner, the talks got down to serious business. The hours ticked by and at 3 a.m. Cameron was allowed to put his view. His deal was, if the tax is dropped he would not stand in the way of the eurozone moving into closer alignment. It seemed to a man, this was a request too far. Cameron had been very straightforward and without anger or a repeat of Mrs Thatcher’s famous handbag banging on the table, he stood his ground, “hands off London or I will have to tell you I will have to veto your proposals.”

The meeting had gone on all night. It was clear that Plan B had to be brought into operation. If all 27 could not agree to the new measures, then those who did agree would proceed, leaving an outer core, initially of one, to be left out of future discussions on the matter. Thus the 2-speed Europe has come into being. France was overjoyed, this is what they had wanted all along, to sideline the nation that they saw as their biggest threat.

It wasn’t just France that had turned against Britain as Daniel Hannan, the Daily Telegraph correspondent reported under this headline:

Eurowcrats no longer trouble to Disguise their Loathing for Britain

“I wish I could adequately convey the intensity of the anti-British feeling in the European Parliament. In today’s debate on last week’s Brussels summit, speaker after speaker rose to denounce our entire nation as selfish, narrow-minded and arrogant. Some spoke of retribution, of making us feel the consequences of our isolation.

“You needed to be present, to hear the yawling and shrieking and desk-banging that accompanied every Anglophobic utterance. “What do I conclude from the new mood? First, and most obviously, that Britain cannot back down without a national humiliation unprecedented since Suez—possibly since the fall of Singapore.

“Second, as I argued yesterday, the EU will now wilfully and deliberately set out to maim the City.

Third, the British Government will need to take unilateral action to defend its interests.

“Fourth, since Eurocrats no longer bother to disguise their contempt for Britain, let’s ask the question that has been hovering at the edge of our consciousness all along. Why do we submit to government from people who plainly detest us? (Daily Telegraph 10-Dec-11).

So now the talk is of how much longer will Britain remain in the EU? Here are some headlines.

EU treaty: Britain now faces a Europe that is becoming hostile (Daily Telegraph 11-Dec-11)

Cameron’s Veto May Herald End of Britain’s EU Membership (Spiegel 12-Dec-11)

Sarkozy hails birth of smaller European bloc without UK (Financial Times 13-Dec-11)

How Britain could leave Europe (Economist 17-Dec-11)

What are the benefits of staying in the European Union? (Daily Telegraph 19-Dec-11)

Britain has been a member of the EU for 39 years. I wonder if by this time next year, after a 40 year sojourn, Britain will be setting a new course. In hindsight we can see that this time was not wasted; without Britain’s membership, Europe would have been much further on the road to political union. It has been Britain that has been the awkward member, spoiling their party. As Spiegel (12-Dec-11) put it:

“Have we finally reached the end of this fractious alliance? Is Britain well on its way to coming of age? It has been Britain on its way to Maastricht. It has been Britain that has always been both in geographical terms and in spirit: an island, politically and culturally far removed from Europe, which many people here simply call “the continent” with muted disadn.

“Britain is entering a new era. Indeed, Cameron’s veto marks the beginning of the end of Britain’s days as a member of the EU.

… Like Switzerland, Britain will then be proud and free—but, unlike Switzerland, it will also have nuclear weapons and a permanent seat on the UN Security Council. Losing Britain means losing a voice that carries weight outside EU borders, as well.”

Yes! Yes! Britain has a role to play, long foretold by the prophets of old, that of helping bring back the sons and daughters of Israel’s coming King and ruler of the whole earth.

Focus on the Commonwealth

Britain has interests far removed from the narrow politics of Europe. The Queen is the Head of the 54 Commonwealth nations; all bar two were part of the British Empire. A few weeks before the December turning-point summit, David Cameron joined the Queen in Perth, Australia, for the bi-annual Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM). He was delayed going there due to the biggest back-bench rebellion in his party in protest at not being able to hold a referendum about whether Britain should remain in the EU and then he had to rush off to yet another euro crisis meeting. I’m quite confident that in Perth there were many who strengthened his hand to contemplate the trade that could be done with so many friendly countries if Britain came out of the EU, when the high tariffs that stifle Commonwealth trade would no longer apply.

Did this give him his resolve to stand up, like none of his predecessors had, against the collective might of the EU leaders?

The Queen’s speech Reflected the Commonwealth ties

How interesting that the Queen chose the Commonwealth to be at the heart of her Christmas Day speech. Fortunately the speech is pre-recorded, for it was the first Christmas that the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh were parted from their celebrations at Sandringham, following the 90 year old Duke’s heart problems which saw him in hospital over Christmas. He is back and active again after this scare.

We turn briefly to some other matters—Iran, Israel and the “Arab Spring.”
Iran’s Currency is Collapsing

As Iran seems very close to the last stages of being able to produce nuclear weapons, America has turned the economic heat to high with sanctions against the Iranian Central Bank being approved at the year end. The Iranian rial has been tumbling against the dollar and the pound, following earlier sanctions, making imports much more expensive. Its value has fallen some 35% since September; also house prices have rocketed 20% in the past few weeks. (Washington Post 02-Jan-12) Under the new sanctions, things are expected to get far worse for Iran’s economy.

Whether these pressures will bring Iran to heel is very doubtful, military intervention seems inevitable. Meanwhile, in a show of defiance, Iran carried out a massive naval exercise in the Straits of Hormuz, designed to demonstrate that she had the power to shut this vital waterway if she chose, though this would harm her own exports. She allegedly tested new advanced missiles, capable of hitting Israel, though it was not possible to tell if those she fired were any different from her existing stock, but it made good publicity.

Israel has been equipped by America with the latest bunker-busting bombs which are capable of exceptionally deep ground penetration. America has also been supplying these bombs to the United Arab Emirates (UAE), whose western equipped military forces continue to purchase a formidable arsenal of weapons. Military sales to Saudi Arabia are also running at exceptionally high levels as America seeks to strengthen her allies for action against Iran. They are being paid for from the exceptional revenues that high oil prices have brought to these oil rich countries.

Israel, yet more Energy finds

It is getting increasingly difficult to map all the gas sites off the coast of Israel. For many years we had the Mari B field, then in 2009 we had Tamar and Dalit, in 2010 Myra and Sarah and Leviathan. This year we have to add Noa and Or, Gabriella and Yitzhak; and now in December one has to squeeze on the map Dolphin 1 and Yam Hadera!

With the gas pipe line from Egypt having been sabotaged 10 times in 2011, Israel has told drillers to move ahead as quickly as possible to bring supplies ashore from these new fields. The Mari B field is expected to run dry in 2013. Israel’s gas usage would increase greatly if it had access to abundant supplies. At the moment she consumes some 1.2bn M³ a year of gas. Even if this shot up 20 fold, she would have years of available gas from these fields, and able to export gas. There are still many areas yet to have exploratory drilling done.

‘Oil shale: A sound way to achieve Energy Independence’

Israel Energy Initiatives (IEI) is the Israeli company set up to exploit the enormous reserves of shale oil to be found in Israel. They have just submitted results of their preliminary investigations to the Environmental Protection Ministry and are seeking permission to proceed to the next stage, that of setting up a pilot well.

“To produce oil, the company must drill a production pipeline surrounded by a ring of heating wells, which gradually heat the rock over the course of nine months to 300°C and thereby transform it into lightweight oil in situ.

“During the pilot phase, which will consist of one drilling site and production facility in the northern part of the Shfela, IEI plans to extract 500 barrels of oil—2 barrels per day—from this year through 2015.

“Once further drilling has been approved by the National Planning and Building Committee, a demonstration phase will produce about 2,000 barrels a day from 2016 through 2019, and by 2020, the commercial phase will yield 50,000 barrels a day for about 25 years, according to Shafrir, the IEI CEO.

“Israel imports about $10 billion worth of oil per year. Oil shale production would bring the country $5bn per year through taxes and royalties, he said” (Jerusalem Post 03-Jan-12).

They talk of an incredible 3,000 year supply of oil in Israel from the shale oil alone!

The Front row Wiped out

Well nearly: this picture was taken at the Arab-Africa Summit in Oct 2010, hosted by Col Gaddafi in Sirte in Libya. 15 months later the whole front row would be dead or deposed! These are the countries the “Arab Spring” has affected the most. At the moment the eyes of the world are focused on the struggle in Syria, second only to Libya for the number of deaths. Expelled from the Arab League, President Assad is battling to stay in power and few expect him to survive many more months. Russia has been helping Assad as they desperately want to be able to retain the valuable naval port facilities that Russia is developing in Syria.

With so much happening in Europe and the Middle East we must surely be on our toes, ready for the call from the Master that he is back on the earth again. With the world so full of doom, what a glorious hope the Bible extends to all who would put their trust in Israel’s God and look forward to being the helpers of the Lord Jesus in bringing the world back to God and sanity. “Will 2012 bring the leaders the world needs?” We pray that it will.
In early 1453, the city of Constantinople was all that remained of the Eastern Roman Empire. Surrounded by the Turkish Ottoman Empire, it was a Christian island in a Muslim sea. She had suffered through many sieges, from both Christians and Muslims, but had continued to extend her life against all odds.

Constantinople, as well as being the capital of the eastern empire, was the home of eastern orthodoxy. When the city was desperately in need of help, and appealing for manpower and funds, they received a cold shoulder from most of Europe in spite of their promise to help. In the early part of the 15th century, the eastern emperor, John VIII Palaeologos, went looking for allies against the Ottomans. He arranged with Pope Eugene IV to reopen reunion discussions, and the Council of Ferrara-Florence was convened with delegates from east and west. At the council, John convinced the eastern delegates present to accept the western doctrines of Filioque (concerning the use of leavened or unleavened bread in the Eucharist), of purgatory, and of the supremacy of the papacy. On June 6, 1439 the agreement was signed. The Great Schism of 1054 appeared to have ended. The one eastern bishop who did not attend—Mark of Ephesus—disagreed. Upon their return to Constantinople, the bishops found that the general population and the civil authorities also rejected the agreement. For the next 14 years, only the emperors sought to ratify the agreement, hoping help would come from the west.

The Catholic Church, based in Rome, had grown into a powerful institution at the centre of European society. But the leaders of the church were usually members of the nobility, and the clergy were generally out of touch with the spiritual needs of the people. The teachings of the church were seen to be in need of reform.

By Ken Loveridge

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Constantinople had long promoted scholarship, and when it fell to the Turks, many of the books and manuscripts, as well as the intellectuals, were transferred to Europe in general, and Italy in particular. But these were events which took place not only when the city fell, but over a number of years before and after the siege and sack of the city. Before 1453, Greek scholars sought opportunities abroad, and after 1453, other scholars came to Europe from Venetian commercial colonies in the Adriatic and the Aegean seas. The growth of the Turkish Empire and the parallel decline of the Byzantine Empire did not take place overnight. Constantinople controlled lands and kingdoms on both sides of the Bosporus, in both Asia and Europe. As various emperors came and went, their power and land-holdings waxed and waned, and the supply of wealth and manpower for the armies needed to defend the empire did the same.

Situated where Asia and Europe came together, Constantinople controlled much of the trade with China and the east. Although the sea route brought goods up through the Red Sea and Egypt, the land route through Samarkand brought goods to the shore of the Black Sea, and from there to Constantinople, enroute to the population of Europe. Even before the time of the Crusades, traders from around the shores of the Mediterranean came to the city looking for the right to trade, and they were willing to pay for the privilege. Catalans from Spain, France, Italy and the islands of Corsica and Sardinia; the Genoese; the Venetians and the Cretans all played a part in the lucrative trade. They were also involved with the defence of the city, and were able to take some of the people and their possessions back to their home countries.

During the years before the fall of the city, as the eastern empire declined, many scholars took advantage of teaching opportunities in Europe. The Renaissance movement was underway, not only in Italy, but in the rest of the Mediterranean world. As the nations and languages of Europe grew more distinct, universities were established which required teachers. Several centuries before Constantinople came into the picture, universities in Europe required a charter from the Pope or the Holy Roman Emperor. The curriculum consisted of the Arts, Theology, Law and Medicine, but usually not all in the same institution. Latin was the language of education, as well as the language of the church, and often the students received income from clerical benefits while attending the university, without having to be residents of the church lands. The better schools had more than one of the higher faculties, drew their students from a wider area, and employed teachers with established reputations called masters.

The “invention” of the movable-type
printing press was a momentous change for the people of Europe. Beginning about 1440, Johannes Gutenberg mastered the art of printing in this way, and worked with it for several years before producing his first Bible in 1455. Latin grammars and church indulgences were among his early projects. Before this time, books were copied by hand, and the prices were out of reach for most of the population. The printing press changed this in a comparatively short time. People were learning to read, and wanted useful books in the common languages, not Latin. Many of the libraries of Constantinople were burned and destroyed by the Turkish army, but some books and manuscripts survived the fires, while others were taken abroad by the emigrating scholars. Many of these eastern texts were in Greek, and had never before been translated, much less printed for the common people. Whereas the earliest translations of scripture were made from the Latin Vulgate of Jerome, it was not long before people like Erasmus were able to consult the scriptures in the original languages, which had been preserved in the east, and to provide a sound, consistent Greek translation for others such as William Tyndale to use in their work.

As a result of the translation of the scriptures into the vernacular, and the production of Bibles which individuals could afford to own, people learned to read for themselves, and ultimately to question the scriptural teachings of the Catholic Church. While the church insisted that free access to the scriptures was unnecessary and dangerous, and that only the clergy should interpret scripture, Martin Luther inspired many others to write and question these things, and a spirit of reformation swept through late medieval Europe.

But the scriptures alone were not the cause of changes in Europe. Economic conditions were very harsh, and the people felt exploited by both the landowners and the church. Just as today, there are revolutions occurring where people see the inequalities between rich and poor, many people saw the need for change. The ancient feudal system began to give way to the carving out of new nations with new monarchies. The year of Constantinople’s fall, 1453, was also the year that marked the end of the 100 Years War between the Valois and the Plantagenets for the throne of France. A century and more after the Black Death had done so much to depopulate Europe, the population was increasing, and the cities of Europe were growing as the common people were forced off the land. Trade increased and new industries were developed to produce textiles, armaments, and many other necessary products. Military powers became more aggressive, and governments sought to centralize their powers.

Exploratory journeys took men from Spain, Portugal, England and other countries in Europe, around the globe, and they returned with cargoes which enriched them, their backers, their sovereigns, and the people. On May 20, 1498, the Portuguese explorer, Vasco da Gama, reached Calcutta in India and established trading relations. Just a few years earlier, in 1492, the Italian Christopher Columbus, reached the Caribbean islands on his first attempt to reach the Indies by a shorter route on behalf of Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain. In 1494, Pope Alexander VI divided up this New World between Spain and Portugal. All of the Americas, except Brazil, went to Spain, while Portugal received the Far East, except the Philippines and Japan. Because these activities were going on, as the population of Europe grew and prospered, men looked for opportunities outside the church, especially in the areas of commerce and trade.

Traditionally, May 29th, 1453 marked the beginning of the Reformation, and the end of the Middle Ages. But the fall of the city of Constantinople, and the eastern empire, perhaps meant more to the Turks than it did to Europe.

Having this foreign Christian city in the midst of their empire meant that the Turks had no feeling of security, or permanence. As the new capital of their empire, Constantinople helped them to maintain their foothold in Europe, which they still enjoy today.

The western church sought to support the city, but did not have enough of her own resources to do so effectively. The forces of reformation being unleashed were soon to keep the papacy, and the leadership of the church, fully engaged. The Eastern Orthodox Church, enclosed as it was within the Ottoman empire, was totally isolated from the reformation as it worked its way through Europe. They did not take part in the discussions and decisions that emerged. The Russian Orthodox Church grew in strength as it was not controlled by the Muslims, and Russia called itself the Third Rome, as it saw itself as the cultural heir of Constantinople. Eastern Orthodox Christians believed that the Fall of Constantinople was God’s punishment for the acceptance by their leaders, of the doctrines of the western church, and the supremacy of the Pope. The Reformation in Europe was now to bring punishment upon that western church.
"An examination of prophecy shows that there are reasons for believing a revival of witnessing of gospel truth would take place prior to the end of the age... The revival (of the witnesses) took place in the French Revolution when forces were liberated to restrain the Roman Church... But coincident with the uprise of the political witnesses a revival also of the true witnesses might be expected."

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"Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?"

The Resurrection of Saving Truth