

The Great Papal Reaction – By H. Grattan Guinness



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THE REFORMATION of the sixteenth century was succeeded by **the great Papal Reaction** (AKA The Counter-Reformation) of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; a movement which included the founding of the order of the Jesuits, the Marian persecutions, the wars in France against the [Protestant] Huguenots; the Auto-da-fes (execution of a heretic) of the Inquisition in Spain; the decrees and anathemas of the Council of Trent; the diabolical attempt of the Duke of Alva to exterminate the Protestants in the Netherlands, of whom 18,000 were slaughtered in six years; the fearful massacre of St. Bartholomew (the massacre of Protestant Huguenots) in 1572; an invasion of the Spanish Armada in 1588 (Catholic Spain's attempted take over of Protestant England); the Jesuit attempts on the life of Queen Elizabeth; the Gunpowder Plot in 1605; the sanguinary thirty years' war beginning in 1618; the massacre of 20,000 Protestants in Magdeburg in 1631; the diabolical barbarities of Count Tilly in Saxony; the massacre of 40,000 Protestants in Ireland in 1641; and wholesale slaughter of the Waldenses in 1655; together with other wars, massacres, and persecutions too numerous to be mentioned. By these dreadful acts, the papacy was revealed as the persecuting Antichrist, in colours so glaring and terrible as to compel universal recognition.

It is noteworthy that while the Church of England (Episcopal Church) in her Thirty-nine articles drawn up at an earlier date, in 1562– articles strongly Anti-Romish in character – refrains from identifying the Pope with the predicted “Man of Sin,” **the confession of the Westminster Assembly of Divines** in 1647 (a confession ratified and established by Act of Parliament in 1649), does so identify him; as witness the following article, –

There is no other Head of the Church but the Lord Jesus Christ. **Nor can the Pope of Rome in any sense be head thereof, but is that Antichrist, that Man of Sin, and son of perdition, that exalteth himself in the Church against Christ, and all that is called God.**”

Thus also the articles of the Church of Ireland, drawn up in 1615, declare **"The Bishop of Rome is so far from being the Supreme Head of the Universal Church, that his works and his doctrines do plainly discover him to be that "Man of Sin" foretold in the Holy Scriptures, whom the Lord shall consume with the Spirit of His mouth, and abolish with the brightness of His coming."**

With these solemn affirmations of the Protestant Churches of the seventeenth century the voices of *all* the leading prophetic interpreters of the period agree. Their works are before us as we write. We have carefully examined their teachings, from those of **Lord Napier's** "Commentary on the Apocalypse," [Lord Napier was the inventor of Logarithms], published in 1593, to Vitringa's, a century later, including **Cressener's** "demonstrations" of the principles of Apocalyptic interpretation in 1690; the works of Dent (1607), Taffin (1614), Forbes (1614), Brightman (1615), Bernard (1617), Cowper (1619), Taylor (1633), Goodwin (1639), Mede (1643), Pareus (1643), Cotton (1645 and 1655), Roberts (1649), Holland (1650), Homes (1654), Tillinghast (1654), Stephens (1656), Guild (1656), Durham (1680), More (1680), Jurieu (1687), Marckius (1689), Cressener (1690), Vitringa (1695), Cradock (1697), and others.

All these seventeenth century writers are agreed as to the *historical principle of interpretation*, and as to the general outline of events fulfilling Apocalyptic prophecy. Their views on the thirteenth chapter of Revelation are especially important in *their clear recognition of the papacy as heading the second, or revived stage of the wild beast power; and its persecution of the saints during the forty-two prophetic "months" or 1,260 years*, of its domination. Cressener's works may be especially mentioned as containing a powerful demonstration of this view.

(Quoted, from pages 131 and 132 of "History Unveiling Prophecy" Fleming H. Revell Co., 1905).