

# The End of Intolerance

By Jeff Wehr

THE central doctrine of the Reformation was the doctrine of justification by faith. Yet, there were differences of opinion among the Reformers on the part that good works should play in the role of salvation. In Luther's eagerness to establish the doctrine of justification by faith, instead of by works, he downgraded *good* works to something that became like an appendix to a book. Good works only came into the picture after salvation became an established fact. In other words, Luther was primarily interested in the forgiveness of sins--rather than freedom from sinning. His theology addressed the problem of guilt--rather than the problem of pollution. This unfortunate belief creates an apparent imbalance between that which God does *for man* and that which He does *in man* which, tragically, has led to a faith *without* works. See James 2:20. The plan of salvation is not faith without works, or even faith in our own merited works, but a faith which works. Faith in what Christ has done *for us* and faith in what Christ does *in us* are inseparable. See Philippians 2:13; 2 Corinthians 3:5; Galatians 5:6; Ephesians 3:20; Colossians 1:29. All emphasis supplied unless otherwise noted.

Another unfortunate view held by many of the Reformers concerned the relationship between church and state. Luther saw the church as an extension of society, rather than simply as an element within society. Luther faced a dilemma, namely, the dilemma of wanting both a confessional church based on personal faith and conviction, and a regional church to be attended in a given locality. In other words, was the church a community of experiential believers, or a fellowship territorially? Was the church *Corpus Christi*, the body of Christ, consisting only of believing folks, or *Corpus Christianum*, the body of a "christened" society?

When the Reformers began to favor Christendom over Christ--that is, a church embracing society over a church of professed believers--then a group of sincere Christians led in a movement of reform within the Reformation. They believed in sanctification as part of the gospel, and believed in the separation of church and state. They were in turn persecuted by the Reformers for holding such convictions.

What many fail to understand is that the Christian faith is not here to create cultures--but to influence them. Christians are "in the world but not of the world." They are to be the "salt of the earth"--not religio-political oppressors. The early Christians knew that although Jesus is the Saviour of "all men," He, as Saviour, bestows eternal life to them that *believe*. The Christian faith is not a saving faith to those who are merely born--but to those who are reborn.

The failure of the Church of Rome to grasp the New Testament teaching concerning the nature of God's church led to the original "fall" of Christendom. As Paul said, "Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a *falling* away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition." 2 Thessalonians 2:3.

The "fall" of the Church of Rome in making "war with the saints, and to overcome them" (Revelation 13:7) by her adulterous marriage with the state, was just as fraught with evil consequences as was the "fall" in Eden. And just as a rebirth experience was necessary after the

fall of Adam and Eve, so too did the fall of the Church of Rome necessitate a new creation within Christendom, namely, the Reformation. But, tragically, even the Reformers fell into unholy matrimony by uniting the church with the state. Consequently, the church had twice fallen as a result of misunderstanding what the relationship between church and state should be. A "fall" is a very serious thing for a church, but once again we stand on the threshold of Protestants in America repeating the same mistake--for a third time in the history of Christendom.

When Peter drew his sword and cut off the ear of the high priest's servant, Jesus clearly said, "Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?" Matthew 26:52-53. The "fallen" churches conveniently forget that Jesus was displeased by Peter's rash act--drawing the sword of steel. In fact, Jesus stooped down to repair the damage which had been inflicted by Peter.

The "fallen" Church of Rome claims that two swords belonged to Peter. One was at his command, and the other was in his hand. The first was spiritual; the second was material. The former belongs to the priest; the latter to the soldier, while both do the bidding of the church. But such an arrangement declares Jesus to be wrong--and Peter to be right. Oh, how indeed, has the church "fallen!"

The sword of steel, at the command of the priest, was an instrument of coercion. The Church of the Middle Ages was not a gathering of believers joined in voluntary association. It was a church of the masses brought together and held together by the sword of steel--the symbol of coercion. The official doctrine of the Church of Rome as declared by Pope Pelagius in a.d. 553 was: "Unto the coercing of heretics and schismatics the Church possesses the secular arm, to coerce in case men cannot be brought to sanity by reasonable argument." Leonard Verduin, *The Reformers and Their Stepchildren*, 71.

When popes, priests, or pastors instigate the use of the secular arm in order to murder dissenters, they are no more innocent than were the Jewish leaders who refrained from going into the house of Pilate lest they be defiled, while they delivered Jesus up to be crucified. So it will be in these last days--the blood of the martyrs of Jesus will be brought into the judgment to witness against those who use the arm of the state to persecute the innocent.

History attests that the union of church and state is a choiceless Christianity--an optionless society--which is as totalitarian as the communistic government of Stalin's Russia. From the time that Cain slew his brother Abel, religious intolerance, or "holy" hatred, has left its evil imprint on the pages of human history. However, the good news is that this religious intolerance will come to an end. The devil, demons, false prophets, and the false shepherds will not have the last word. Truth will triumph! Then, once again, the universe will harmoniously pulsate with love, joy, peace, truth, and adoration toward God alone.

While Revelation chapter seventeen describes the finishing touches of the New World Order of Church and State, it also describes its eventual demise. Let us now take a look at these final movements:

In this vision, John sees a harlot sitting on many waters. See Revelation 17:1. In Bible prophecy a "woman" represents a church. See Revelation 12:17. If it is a pure woman, it is God's true church, but a "harlot" represents an apostate church. This harlot church is a mother, implying that she has daughters that have joined in her apostasy.

This harlot is also said to represent that "great city" which reigns over the kings of the earth. See Revelation 17:18. If we can identify the city, we can identify the harlot church.

The harlot is that "great city" that sits on "seven mountains" (verse 9), upon a scarlet beast (verse 3), and upon many waters (verse 1). The city famous for sitting on seven mountains is Rome. Papal Rome is that great city, sitting on seven mountains, that reigned over the kings of Europe during the Dark Ages. However, Inspiration predicts that that "great city" will again reign over the kings of the earth.

To reign over the kings of the earth, this apostate church must possess, or control, political power. In Bible prophecy, a beast represents a political power. See Daniel 7:17. The harlot riding upon a scarlet beast represents the Papacy's rise to political power.

She also sits on many waters. In Bible prophecy, "waters" represent "peoples, multitudes, and nations, and tongues." Revelation 17:15. In Revelation thirteen, this situation was described as the whole world wondering after the first beast, the Papacy. See Revelation 13:3, 8.

In summary: the harlot sits on seven mountains, representing her location in Rome; she sits on a beast, representing her rise as a political force; and she sits on many waters, representing the support of the multitudes of the earth.

The beast that the harlot is riding upon is described as having seven heads. The seven heads are said to represent seven mountains and seven kings. See Revelation 17:9-10. The seven mountains represent the location of that "great city," Rome. However, the seven heads also represent seven kings or kingdoms. See Revelation 17:10-11.

In Revelation thirteen these kingdoms refer to the seven world powers, beginning with Babylon. The first six are: Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome, the Papacy, and the United States. As we continue this study, I believe that evidence points to the United Nations as the seventh head or world power.

1. Babylon (605-539 b.c.)
2. Medo-Persia (539-331 b.c.)
3. Greece (331-168 b.c.)
4. Rome (168 b.c.-a.d. 476)
5. Papacy (a.d. 538-1798)

6. United States (a.d. 1776-Present)

7. United Nations (a.d. 1945-Present)

In addition to these seven heads, we also saw the Eighth Head--the Papacy after regaining her lost supremacy.

When John saw this vision, five of these kingdoms had already fallen. Of course, they fell in the order that they consecutively reigned. John was carried forward in this vision to a time when Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome, and the Papacy would have already fallen. Therefore, John was taken forward to the time when the Papacy fell in a.d. 1798.

In Revelation chapter thirteen, John saw a second beast arise from the earth while the first beast was taken "into captivity" and received its deadly wound. See Revelation 13:3, 11. While Napoleon's general captured the pope and placed him in captivity in a.d. 1798, John saw America rise to prominence. Therefore, he says, "five are fallen" (Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome, and the Papacy), "one is" (the United States), "and the other has not yet come" (the United Nations). Revelation 17:10.

The vision declares that there will be an eighth king or kingdom. The Bible says, the "eighth" king is that beast power "that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition." Verse 11. The eighth king is the Papacy "that was" a beast-political power (ruling both civilly and religiously from a.d. 538 to a.d. 1798), "and is not" a beast-political power (receiving a deadly wound as America was rising to prominence), and "even he is the eighth" (when the deadly wound would be healed and the Papacy would once again become a political power).

In Revelation chapter thirteen, the Papacy was described as a beast political power that ruled for forty-two prophetic months (or 1260 years) and then received a deadly wound. In a.d. 1798, while she continued to function as a church, the Papacy ceased to be a political power. However, we were told that the deadly wound of the beast (the political arm of the Papacy) would be healed, representing the Papacy's second rise to power in the political arena.

The beast--the Papacy--is one of the seven and is considered the eighth. Many students of the Bible have often noted that the number eight represents something that has gone from old to new, or something that has been resurrected. For example, there were eight people on Noah's ark that brought them from the old world into a new world. Jesus was resurrected on the first day of the week or the eighth day following the seventh. This old fallen world will be recreated into a New Earth when the eighth millennium begins. See Revelation chapters 20 and 21. Therefore, the eighth head would be a resurrected kingdom--a power that once was, then was not, but has been revived to control again. Today, the Papacy is the only one of the seven kingdoms that fits that description. The Papacy "was" a political power. She experienced her "is not" state after a.d. 1798. She will rule in the imminent New World Order, which will last only for a short time.

What do the ten horns represent? "And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast. These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast." Revelation 17:12-13.

These ten kings "who have received no kingdom as *yet*," represent the seventh head which "has not *yet* come." Notice that they are kings or powers that presently do not have *a* kingdom. They are not ten kings that have ten kingdoms. They are ten kings that have "no kingdom as yet." But when they have power with the beast, the political arm of the Papacy, they will have a kingdom--the New World Order of Church and State. Rome will be that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth. The pope will reign supreme when the Sunday laws are made universal.

These ten horns which have received no kingdom as of 1798 are described in the beginning of the chapter as ten horns without any crowns. Again, this supports the interpretation that they are not ten kings with ten kingdoms, but ten kingdoms that give their power unto the beast. However, in Revelation chapter thirteen, there are ten horns with ten crowns, signifying that they are ten distinct kingdoms, representing the ten divisions of Rome from which the first beast, the Papacy, arose.

These ten kings that have *a* kingdom give their allegiance to the Papacy. They will be supportive of Sunday laws throughout the entire world. Some have suggested that the ten kings are symbolic of all the nations wondering after the beast power. Others have suggested that the world will be divided up into ten political and economic regions through the United Nations. There is a United Nations Charter [chapter 8, Articles 52 (2-3) and 53 (1) of the Charter, under "Regional Arrangements"] that intends to divide the world up into political and economic regions. The United States will still be the United States, and Mexico will still be Mexico. However, there will exist an international body that will supersede the sovereignty of nations. Already the United Nations touches every aspect of human life. In judiciary matters there is the World Court, which already has laws that supersede the American Constitution. In matters of health there is the World Health Organization. In matters of finance there is the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. In matters of policing there is the U.N. peace-keeping force. The only thing that is lacking in this scenario is the whole world (the United Nations or the uniting of the nations) wondering after the Papacy. The United Nations is not only in the backyard of the United States, but the United States is the strongest political force in the United Nations. Will it be in the United Nations that the world will follow the lead of the United States? Will it be through the confederacy of nations in the United Nations that the United States will "cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed"? Revelation 13:15.

This union of the nations with the Papacy will bring persecution--not peace. "And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus." Revelation 17:6. As the blood of the saints was shed of old, persecution will again be kindled. There will be a final Inquisition. The persecution in these last days concerns worship, for it is the "blood of the saints" that is shed. The church that is right with God is not the one in union with the governments of the world. God's true church is the one that is being persecuted. Jesus said, "They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service." John 16:2.

However, the persecutor will in the end be persecuted. "And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire." Revelation 17:16. When the world realizes that it has been deceived and that it is too late to repent, they will turn upon the false religious leaders and destroy them. Imagine the sheer terror and hatred in the hearts of those who realize that they are lost for eternity.

If men could only remember that when religion is good, God will take care of it: but when God does not see fit to take care of it, so that that religion must appeal to the state for support, then it is evident that that religion is not of Christ and that its cause must be a bad one.

Dear friends, intolerance will come to an end. Eternity is just around the corner. Troublous times are coming, but do not give up the faith. We are nearing home!