

CHAPTER 25 : A PANORAMIC VIEW OF PROTESTANTISM IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

Protestantism was destined to present itself at the gates of all the kingdoms of Europe during the era of Protestant Reformation. Let us take a panoramic view of the various countries, as respects the state of their peoples and their preparedness for the great, spiritual movement which was about to enter their territories, particularly during the sixteenth century.

In some countries Protestantism made steady and irresistible advance, and at last established itself. In others, alas! it was repelled. Though thousands of martyrs died to open its way, it was obliged to retire before an overwhelming array of stakes and scaffolds, leaving the barriers of these unhappy countries, as France and Spain, for instance, to be forced open by ruder instrumentalities at a later day. To the gates at which the Reformation had knocked in vain in the sixteenth century, often came Revolution in the eighteenth in a tempest of war and bloody insurrections.

As we have noted previously, in the middle of the fourteenth century, Wyckliffe appeared in England; and nearly half a century later, Huss and Jerome arose in Bohemia. These blessed lights, represented the dawn of Protestant Reformation. Next the German sky begins to brighten, and the German plains to glow with a new radiance. Is it day that looks forth, or is it but a deceitful gleam, fated to be succeeded by another century of gloom? No! the times of the darkness are fulfilled, and the command has gone forth for the gates to open and day to shine in all its effulgence.

Both the place and the hour were opportune for the appearance of the Reformer. Germany was a tolerably central spot. The great lines of communication lay through it. Emperors visited it at times; imperial Diets were often held in it, which brought thither, in crowds princes, philosophers, and scribes., and attracted the gaze of many more who did not come in person. It had numerous free towns in which mechanical arts and burghal rights flourished together.

Other countries were at that moment less favorably situated. France was devoted to arms, Spain was wrapped up in its dignity, and yet more in its bigotry, which had just been intensified by the presence on its soil of a rival superstition — Islam namely — which had seized the fairest of its provinces, and displayed its symbols from the walls of the proudest of its cities. Italy, guarded by the Alps, lay drowned in pleasure. England was parted from the rest of Europe by the sea. Germany was the country which most largely fulfilled the conditions required in the spot where the next cradle of the movement should be placed. In its sympathies, sentiments, and manners Germany was more ecumenical than any other country; it belonged more to Christendom, and was, moreover, the connecting link between Asia and Europe, for the commerce of the two hemispheres was carried across it, though not wholly so now, for the invention of the mariner's compass had opened new channels for trade, and new routes for the navigator.

If we consider the qualities of the people, there was no nation on the Continent so likely to welcome this movement and to yield themselves to it. The Germans had escaped, in some degree, the aestheticism which had emasculated the intellect, and the vice which had embruted the manners of the southern nations. They retained to a large extent the simplicity of life which had so favorably distinguished their ancestors; they were frugal, industrious, and sober-minded. A variety of causes had scattered among them the seeds of a coming liberty, and its first sproutings were seen in the interrogatories they were beginning to put to themselves, why it should be necessary to import all their opinions from beyond the Alps, where the people were neither better, braver, nor wiser than themselves. They could not understand why nothing orthodox should grow save in Italian soil.

Here, then, marked by many signs, was the spot where a movement whose forces were stirring below the surface in many countries, was most likely to show itself. The dissensions and civil broils, the din of which had distracted the German people for a century previous, were now silenced, as if to permit the voice that was about to address them to be the more distinctly heard, and the more reverentially listened to.

From the German plains we turn to the mountains of Switzerland. The Swiss knew how to bear toil, to brave peril, and to die for liberty. These qualities they owed in a great degree to the nature of their soil, the grandeur of their mountains, and the powerful and ambitious States in their neighborhood, which made it necessary for them to study less peaceful occupations than that of tending their herds, and gave them frequent opportunities of displaying their courage in sterner contests than those they waged with the avalanches and tempests of their hills. Now it was France and now it was Austria, which attempted to become master of their country, and its valorous sons had to vindicate their right to independence on many a bloody field. A higher liberty than that for which William Tell had contended, or the patriots of St. Jacob and Morat had poured out their blood, now offered itself to the Swiss. Will they accept it? It only needed that the yoke of Rome should be broken, as that of Austria had already been, to perfect their freedom. And it seemed as if this happy lot was in store for this land. Before Luther's name was known in Switzerland, the Protestant movement had already broken out; and, under Zwingli, whose views on many points were even clearer than those of Luther, Protestantism for awhile rapidly progressed. But the stage in this case was less conspicuous, and the champion less powerful, and the movement in Switzerland failed to acquire the breadth of the German one. The Swiss mind, like the Swiss land, is partitioned and divided, and does not always grasp a whole subject, or combine in one unbroken current the entire sentiment and action of the people. Factions sprang up; the warlike Forest Cantons took the side of Rome; arms met arms, and the first phase of the movement ended with the life of its leader on the fatal field of Cappel. A mightier champion was to resume the battle which had been lost under Zwingli: but that champion had not yet arrived. The disaster which had overtaken the movement in Switzerland had arrested it, but had not extinguished it. The light of the new day continued to brighten on the shores of its lakes, and in the cities of its plains; but the darkness lingered in those deep and secluded valleys over which the mighty forms of the Oberland Alps hang in

their glaciers and snows. The five Forest Cantons had led gloriously in the campaign against Austria; but they were not to have the honor of leading in this greater battle.

To France came Protestantism in the sixteenth century, with its demand, "Open that I may enter." But France was too magnificent a country to become a convert to Protestantism. Had that great kingdom embraced the Reformation, the same century which witnessed the birth would have witnessed also the triumph of Protestantism; but at what a cost would that triumph have been won! The victory would have been ascribed to the power, the learning, and the genius of France; and the moral majesty of the movement would have been obscured if not wholly eclipsed. The Author of Protestantism did not intend that it should borrow the carnal weapons of princes, or owe thanks to the wisdom of the schools, or be a debtor to men. A career more truly sublime was before it. It was to foil armies, to stain the glory of philosophy, to trample on the pride of power; but itself was to bleed and suffer, and to go onwards, its streaming wounds its badges of rank, and its "sprinkled raiment" its robe of honor. Accordingly in France, though the movement early displayed itself, and once and again enlisted in its support the greater part of the intelligence and genius and virtue of the French people, France as a whole never Protestantized. The state remained Roman Catholic all along (for the short period of equivocal policy on the part of Henry IV is no exception); but the penalty exacted, and to this day not fully discharged, was a tremendous one. The bloody wars of a century, the destruction of order, of industry, and of patriotism, the sudden and terrible fall of the monarchy amid the tempests of revolution, formed the price which France had to pay for the fatal choice she made at that grand crisis of her fate.

Let us turn eastward to Bohemia and Hungary. They were once powerful Protestant centers, their position in this respect being due to the heroism of Huss and Jerome of Prague. Sanctuaries of the Reformed faith, in which pastors holy in life and learned in doctrine ministered to flourishing congregations, rose in all the cities and rural districts. But these countries lay too near the Austrian Empire to be left unmolested. As when the simoom passes over the plain, brushing from its surface with its hot breath the flowers and verdure that cover it, and leaving only an expanse of withered herbs, so passed the tempest of Austrian bigotry over Bohemia and Hungary. The Protestantism of these lands was eventually exterminated. Their sons died on the battle-field or perished on the scaffold. Silent cities, fields untilled, the ruins of churches and houses, so lately the abodes of a thriving, industrious, and orderly population, testified to the thorough and unsparing character of that zeal which, rather than that these regions should be the seat of Protestantism, converted them into a blackened and silent waste. The records of these persecutions were long locked up in the imperial archives; but the sepulcher has been opened; the wrongs which were inflicted by the court of Austria on its Protestant subjects, and the perfidies with which it was attempted to cover these wrongs, may now be read by all; and the details of these events form a sad and harrowing story.

The next theater of Protestantism must detain us a little. The territory to which we now turn is a small one, and was as obscure as small till the Reformation came and shed a halo around it, as if to show that there is no country so diminutive which a great principle cannot glorify. At the mouth of the Rhine is the little Batavia. France and Spain thought

and spoke of this country, when they thought and spoke of it at all, with contempt. A marshy flat, torn from the ocean by the patient labor of the Dutch, and defended by mud dykes, could in no respect compare with their own magnificent realms. Its quaking soil and moist climate were in meet accordance with the unpoetic race of which it was the dwelling-place. No historic ray lighted up its past, and no generous art or chivalrous feat illustrated its present. Yet this despised country suddenly got the start of both France and Spain. As when some obscure peak touched by the sun flashes into the light, and is seen over kingdoms, so Holland in this great morning, illumined by the torch of Protestantism, kindled into a glory which attracted the gaze of all Europe. It seemed as if a more than Roman energy had been suddenly grafted upon the phlegmatic Batavian nature.

On that new soil feats of arms were performed in the cause of religion and liberty, which nothing in the annals of ancient Italy surpasses, and few things equal. Christendom owed much at that crisis of its history to the devotion and heroism of this little country. Wanting Holland, the great battle of the sixteenth century might not have reached the issue to which it was brought; nor might the advancing tide of Romish and Spanish tyranny have been stemmed and turned back.

Holland had its reward. Disciplined by its terrible struggle, it became a land of warriors, of statesmen, and of scholars. It founded universities, which were the lights of Christendom during the age that succeeded; it created a commerce which extended to both hemispheres; and its political influence was acknowledged in all the Cabinets of Europe. As the greatness of Holland had grown with its Protestantism, so it declined when its Protestantism relapsed. Decay speedily followed its day of power; but long afterwards its Protestantism to some extent began to return for a time, and with it began to return the wealth, the prosperity, and the influence of its better age.

We cross the frontier and pass into Belgium. The Belgians began well. They saw the legions of Spain, which conquered sometimes by their reputed invincibility even before they had struck a blow, advancing to offer them the alternative of surrendering their consciences or surrendering their lives. They girded on the sword to fight for their ancient privileges and their newly-adopted faith; for the fields which their skillful labor had made fruitful as a garden, and the cities which their taste had adorned and their industry enriched with so many marvels. But the Netherlanders fainted in the day of battle. The struggle, it is true, was a sore one; yet not more so to the Belgians than to the Hollanders: but while the latter held out, waxing ever the more resolute as the tempest grew ever the more fierce, till through an ocean of blood they had waded to liberty, the former became dismayed, their strength failed them in the way, and they ingloriously sank down under the double yoke of Philip and of Rome.

Protestantism crossed the Alps and essayed to gather round its standard the historic nations of Italy and Spain. To the difficulties that met it everywhere, other and peculiar ones were added in this new field. Unstrung by indolence, and enervated by sensuality, the Italians had no ear but for soft cadences, no eye but for aesthetic ceremonies, and no heart but for a sensual and sentimental devotion.

The new faith which demanded the homage of the Italians was but little in harmony with their now strongly formed Renaissance tastes and dearly cherished predilections. Severe in its morals, abstract in its doctrines, and simple and spiritual in its worship, it appeared cold as the land from which it had come - a root out of a dry ground, without form or comeliness. Her pride took offense. Was Italy to be a disciple of the Goth? Was she to renounce the faith which had been handed down to her from early times, stamped with the approval of so many Apostolic names and sealed with the sanction of so many Councils, and in the room of this venerated worship to embrace a religion born but yesterday in the forests of Germany? She must forget all her past before she could become Protestant. That a new day should dawn in the North appeared to her just as unnatural as that the sun, reversing his course, should rise in that quarter of the sky in which it is wont to set.

Nowhere had Christianity a harder battle to fight in primitive times than at Jerusalem and among the Jews, the descendants of the patriarchs. They had the chair of Moses, and they refused to listen to One greater than Moses; they had the throne of David, to which, though fallen, they continued to cling, and they rejected the scepter of Him who was David's Son and Lord. In like manner the Italians had two possessions, in which their eyes were of more value than a hundred Reformations. They had the capital of the world, and the chair of St. Peter. These were the precious legacy which the past had bequeathed to them, attesting the apostolicity of their descent, and forming, as they accounted them, the indubitable proofs that Providence had placed amongst them the fountain of the Faith, and the seat of universal spiritual dominion. To become Protestant was to renounce their birth-right. So clinging to these empty signs they missed the great substance. Italy ultimately preferred her Pope to the gospel.

When we cross the Pyrenees and enter Spain, we find a people who are more likely, so one would judge, to give Protestantism a sympathetic welcome. Grave, earnest, self-respectful, and naturally devotional, the Spaniard possesses many of the best elements of character. The characteristic of the Italy of that day was pleasure, of Spain we should say it was passion and adventure. Love and song filled the one, feats of knight-errantry were the cherished delights of the other. But, unhappily, political events of recent occurrence had indisposed the Spanish mind to listen to the teachings of Protestantism, and had made the maintenance of their old orthodoxy a point of honor with that people. The infidel Saracen had invaded their country, had reft from them Andalusia, the garden of Spain, and in some of their fairest cities the mosque had replaced the cathedral, and the adoration of Mohammed had been substituted for the worship of Christ. These national humiliations had only tended to inflame the religious enthusiasm of the Spaniards. The detestation in which they held the crescent was extended to all alien creeds. All forms of worship, their own excepted, they had come to associate with the occupancy of a foreign race, and the dominancy of a foreign yoke. They had now driven the Saracen out of their country, and torn the standard of the Prophet from the walls of Granada; but they felt that they would be traitors to the sign in which they had conquered, should they renounce the faith for the vindication of which they had expelled the hosts of the infidel, and cleansed their land from the pollution of Islam.

Another circumstance unfavorable to Spain's reception of Protestantism was its geographical situation. The Spaniards were more remote from the Papal seat than the Italians, and their veneration for the Roman See was in proportion to their distance from it. They viewed the acts of the Pope through a halo which lent enchantment to them. The irregularities of the Papal lives and the scandals of the Roman court were not by any means so well known to them as to the Romans, and even though they had been so, they did not touch them so immediately as they did the natives of Italy.

Besides, the Spaniards of that age were much engrossed in other matters. If Italy doted on her past, Spain was no less carried away with the splendid future that seemed to be opening to her. The discovery of America by Columbus, the scarce less magnificent territories which the enterprise of other navigators and discoverers had subjected to her scepter in the East, the varied riches which flowed in upon her from all these dependencies, the terror of her arms, the luster of her name, all contributed to blind Spain, and to place her in antagonism to the new movement. Why not give her whole strength to the development of those many sources of political power and material prosperity which had just been opened to her? Why distract herself by engaging in theological controversies and barren speculations! Why abandon a faith under which she had become great, and was likely to become greater still. Protestantism might be true, but Spain had no time, and less inclination, to investigate its truth. Appearances were against it; for was it likely that German monks should know better than her own learned priests, or that brilliant thoughts should emanate from the seclusion of Northern cells and the gloom of Northern forests?

Still the Spanish mind, in the sixteenth century, discovered no small aptitude for the teachings of Protestantism. Despite the adverse circumstances to which we have referred, the Reformation was not without disciples in Spain. If a small, nowhere was there a more brilliant band of converts to Protestantism. The names of men illustrious for their rank, for their scholarship, and for their talents, illustrate the list of Spanish Protestants. Many wealthy burgesses also became converts; and had not the throne and the priesthood — both powerful — combined to keep Spain Roman Catholic, Protestantism would have triumphed. A single decade had almost enabled it to do so. But the Reformation had crossed the Pyrenees to win no triumph of this kind. Spain, like France, was too powerful and wealthy a country to become Protestant with safety to Protestantism. Its conversion at that stage would have led to the corruption of the principle: the triumph of the movement would have been its undoing, for there is no maxim more certain than this, that if a spiritual cause triumphs through material and political means, it triumphs at the cost of its own life. Protestantism had entered Spain to glorify itself by martyrdom.

It was destined to display its power not at the courts of the Alhambra and Escorial, but on the burning grounds of Madrid and Seville. Thus in Spain, as in many other countries, the great business of Protestantism in the sixteenth century was the origination of moral forces, which, being deathless, would spread and grow from age to age till at length, with silent but irresistible might, the Protestant cause would be borne to sovereignty.

England had it very much in her option, on almost all occasions, to mingle in the movements and strifes that agitated the nations around her, or to separate herself from them and stand aloof. The reception she might give to Protestantism would, it might have been foreseen, be determined to a large extent by considerations and influences of a home kind, more so than in the case of the nations which we have already passed in review.

Providence had reserved a great place for Britain in the drama of Protestantism. Long before the sixteenth century it had given significant pledges of the part it would play in the coming movement. In truth the first of all the nations to enter on the path of Reform was England.

When the time drew nigh for the Master, who was gone fourteen hundred years before into a far country, to return, and call His servants to account previously to receiving the kingdom, He sent a messenger before Him to prepare men for the coming of that "great and terrible day." That messenger was John Wyckliffe. In many points Wyckliffe bore a striking resemblance to the Elijah of the Old Dispensation, and John the Baptist of the New; and notably in this, that he was the prophet of a new age, which was to be ushered in with terrible shakings and revolutions. In minor points even we trace a resemblance between Wyckliffe and the men who filled in early ages a not dissimilar office to that which he was called to discharge when the modern times were about to begin. All three are alike in the startling suddenness of their appearance. Descending from the mountains of Gilead, Elijah presents himself all at once in the midst of Israel, now apostate from Jehovah, and addresses to them the call to "Return." From the deserts of Judah, where he had made his abode till the day of his "showing unto Israel," John came to the Jews, now sunk in traditionalism and Pharasaic observances, and said, "Repent." From the darkness of the Middle Ages, without note of warning, Wycliffe burst upon the men of the fourteenth century, occupied in scholastic subtleties and sunk in ceremonialism, and addressed to them the call to "Reform."

Even in his personal appearance Wyckliffe recalls the picture which the Bible has left us of his great predecessors. The Tishbite and the Baptist seem again to stand before us. The erect and meager form, with piercing eye and severe brow, clad in a long black mantle, with a girdle round the middle, how like the men whose raiment was of camel's hair, and who had a leathern girdle upon their loins, and whose meat was locusts and wild honey!

In the great lineaments of their character how like are all the three! Wyckliffe has a marked individuality. No one of the Fathers of the early Church exactly resembles him. We must travel back to the days of the Baptist and of the Tishbite to find his like — austere, incorruptible, inflexible, fearless. His age is inconceivably corrupt, but he is without stain. He appears among men, but he is not seen to mingle with them. Solitary, without companion or yoke-fellow, he does his work alone. In his hand is the axe: sentence has gone forth against every corrupt tree, and he has come to cut it down.

Beyond all doubt Wyckliffe's appearance marked the close of an age of darkness, and the commencement of one of Reformation. It is not more true that John stood on the dividing line between the Old and New Dispensations, than that the appearance of Wyckliffe

marked a similar boundary. Behind him were the times of ignorance mid superstition, before him the day of knowledge and truth. Previous to Wyckliffe, century succeeded century in unbroken and unvaried stagnancy. The yearn revolved, but the world stood still. The systems that had climbed to power prolonged their reign, and the nations slept in their chains. But Wyckliffe led the world into an epoch where primitive Christianity and its goals were restored. His ministry was the fountain-head of a series of grand events, which have followed in rapid succession, and each of which has achieved a great and lasting advance for society. No sooner had Wyckliffe uttered the first sentence of living truth than it seemed as if a seed of life, a spark of fire had been thrown into the world, for instantly motion sets in, in every department and the movement of regeneration, to which a the first touch, incessantly works its lofty platform of the sixteenth century. War and letters, the ambition of princes and the blood of martyrs, pioneer its way to its grand development under Luther and Calvin.

When Wyckliffe was born the Papacy had just passed its noon. Its meridian glory had lasted all through the two centuries which divided the accession of Gregory VII (1073) from the death of Boniface VIII (1303). This period, which includes the halcyon days of Innocent III, marks the epoch of supremest dominancy, the age of unclipped splendor, which was meted out to the Popes. Their power ascended to its height.

But no sooner had Wyckliffe begun to preach than a wane set in of the Papal glory. And no sooner did the English Reformer stand out in bold relief before the world as the opponent of Rome, than disaster after disaster came hurrying towards the Papacy during the epoch of Protestant Reformation.

Let us bestow a moment on the consideration of this series of calamities to Rome. First came the schism of the Popes. What tremendous loss of both political influence and moral prestige the schism inflicted on the Papacy we need not say. Next came the deposition of several Popes by the Council of Pisa and Constance, on the ground of their being notorious malefactors, leaving the world to wonder at the rashness of men who could thus cast down their own idol, and publicly vilify a sanctity which they professed to regard as not less immaculate than that of God. Then followed an outbreak of the wars which have raged so often and so furiously between Councils and the Popes for the exclusive possession of the infallibility. The immediate result of this contest, which was to strip the Popes of this superhuman prerogative and lodge it for a time in a Council, was less important than the inquiries it originated, doubtless, in the minds of reflecting men, how far it was wise to entrust themselves to the guidance of an infallibility which was unable to discover its own seat, or tell through Whose mouth it spoke. After this there came the disastrous campaigns in bohemia. These fruitless wars gave the German nobility their first taste of how bitter was the service of Rome. That experience much cooled their ardor in her cause, and helped to pave the way for the bloodless entrance of the Lutheran Reformation upon the stage a century afterwards.

The Bohemian campaigns came to an end, but the series of events pregnant with disaster to Rome still ran on. Now broke out the wars between England and France. These brought new calamities to the Papacy. The flower of the French nobility perished on the

battle-field, the throne rose to power, and as a consequence, the hold the priesthood had on France through the barons was loosened. Yet more, out of the guilty attempt of England to subjugate France, to which Henry V was instigated, as we have shown, by the Popish primate of the day, came the Wars of the Roses.

These dealt another heavy blow to the Papal power in Britain. On the many bloody battle-fields to which they gave rise, the English nobility was all but extinguished, and the throne, now occupied by the House of Tudor, became the power in the country. Again, as in France, the Popish priesthood was largely stripped of the power it had wielded through the weakness of the throne and the factions of the nobility.

Thus with rapid and ceaseless march did events proceed from the days of Wycliffe. There was not an event that did not help on the end in view, which was to make room in the world for the work of the Reformer. We see the mountains of human dominion leveled that the chariot of Protestantism may go forward. Whereas at the beginning of the era there was but one power paramount in Christendom, the Pope namely, by the end of it three great thrones had arisen, whose combined authority kept the tiara in check, while their own mutual jealousies and ambitions made them a cover to that movement, with which were bound up the religion and liberties of the nations.

Rome had long exercised her jurisdiction in Britain, but at no time had that jurisdiction been wholly unchallenged. One mean king, it is true, had placed his kingdom in the hands of the Pope, but the transaction did not tend to strengthen the influence of the Papacy in England. It left a ranking sense of shame behind it, which intensified the nation's resistance to the Papal claims on after occasions. From the days of King John, the opposition to the jurisdiction of Rome steadily increased; the haughty claims of her legates were withstood, and her imposts could only at times be levied. These were hopeful symptoms that at a future day, when greater light should break in, the English people would assert their freedom.

But when that day came these hopes appeared fated to be dashed by the character of the man who filled the throne. Henry VIII possessed qualities which made him an able coadjutor, but a most formidable antagonist. Obstinate, tyrannical, impatient of contradiction, and not infrequently meeting respectful remonstrance with transports of anger, he was as unscrupulous as he was energetic in the support of the cause he had espoused. He plumed himself not less on his theological knowledge than on his state-craft, and thought that when a king, and especially one who was a great doctor as well as a great ruler, had spoken, there ought to be an end of the controversy. Unhappily Henry VIII had spoken in the great controversy now beginning to agitate Christendom. He had taken the side of the Pope against Luther. The decision of the king appeared to be the death-blow of the Protestant cause in England.

Yet the causes which threatened its destruction were, in the hand of God, the means of opening its way. Henry quarreled with the Pope, and in his rage against Clement he forgot Luther. A monarch of passions less strong and temper less fiery would have striven to avoid, at that moment, such a breach: but Henry's pride and headstrongness

made him incapable of temporizing. The quarrel came just in time to prevent the union of the throne and the priesthood against the Reformation for the purpose of crushing it. The political arm misgave the Church of Rome, as her hand was about to descend with deadly force on the Protestant converts. While the king and the Pope were quarrelling, the Bible entered, the gospel that brings "peace on earth" began to be preached, and thus England passed over to the side of the Reformation.

We must bestow a glance on the northern portion of the island. Scotland in that age was less happily situated, socially and politically, than England. Nowhere was the power of the Roman hierarchy greater. Both the temporal and spiritual jurisdictions were in the hands of the clergy. The powerful barons, like so many kings, had divided the country into satrapies; they made war at their pleasure, they compelled obedience, and they exacted dues, without much regard to the authority of the throne which they despised, or the rights of the people whom they oppressed.

Only in the towns of the Lowlands did a feeble independence maintain a precarious footing. The feudal system flourished in Scotland long after its foundations had been shaken, or its fabric wholly demolished, in other countries of Europe. The poverty of the nation was great, for the soil was infertile, and the husbandry wretched. The commerce of a former era had been banished by the distractions of the kingdom; and the letters and arts which had shed a transient gleam over the country some centuries earlier, were extinguished amid the growing rudeness and ignorance of the times. These powerful obstacles threatened effectually to bar the entrance of Protestantism. But even with these impediments, the Lollards of England spread the gospel among the folk to their north.

The newly translated scriptures, secretly introduced, sowed the seeds of a future harvest. Next, the power of the feudal nobility was weakened by the fatal field of Flodden, and the disastrous rout at the Solway. Then the hierarchy was discredited with the people by the martyrdoms of Mill and Wishart. The minority of Mary Stuart left the kingdom without a head, and when Knox entered there was not a baron or priest in all Scotland that dared imprison or burn him. His voice rang through the land like a trumpet. The Lowland towns and shires responded to his summons; the temporal jurisdiction of the Papacy was abolished by the Scottish Parliament; its spiritual power fell before the preaching of the "Evangel," and thus Scotland placed itself in the foremost rank of Protestant countries.

The power and influence of these European nations we have surveyed spread worldwide. Especially the Spanish, French, Dutch, and English traversed the globe, conquering and dominating the regions where they explored. Thus, the religion of the mother countries became the religion of their colonies in Asia, the Americas, Australia, and Africa. The nations which remained Romish dominated the first phase of European colonization, but it was the nations which were Protestant that dominated the second phase of colonization. The Protestant Reformation accordingly became not merely a European phenomenon, but a movement with global impact.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

CHAPTER 25 : A PANORAMIC VIEW OF PROTESTANTISM IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

This second volume in a two-part series on church history is primarily an edited version of the following works on church history and Biblical interpretation:

James A. Wylie, *The History of Protestantism* (Cassell & Company, Limited: London, Paris & New York. 1878). (see electronic version at <http://www.whatsaiththescripture.com/Fellowship/James.A.Wylie.html>)

Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church* (Logos Research Systems, Inc.: Oak Harbor, WA, 1997). (see electronic version at <http://www.ccel.org/s/schaff/history/About.htm>)

J. Parnell McCarter, *Sabbath Bible Survey Tests and Assignments* (PHSC: Grand Rapids, MI, 2003). (see electronic version at <http://www.puritans.net/curriculum/>)

J. Parnell McCarter, *Let My People Go* (PHSC: Grand Rapids, MI, 2003). (see electronic version at <http://www.puritans.net/curriculum/>)

The on-line resources of Historicism Research Foundation at <http://www.historicism.net/> also proved invaluable for my understanding of Biblical prophecy. Biblical prophecy concerning Christian church history, especially as revealed in the book of Revelation, serves as the foundation upon which all church histories should be based.