

Recognising the enemy

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"And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration . . . And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth" (Rev. 17:6; 18:24).

THE LORD JESUS depicts the destruction of the harlot woman who sits upon the beast in the closing chapters of Revelation. The harlot is evidently very influential at the time of the return of the Lord Jesus, but meets her end at his hands. Her actions influence "the kings of the earth" and "the inhabitants of the earth" (17:2). Surely the Bridegroom expects the true bride to understand who this harlot system is? Jesus's use of the description 'harlot' implies a religious system that is not faithful to him. What influential power claims to be his bride, but is in fact a harlot? What has such extensive power in these last days? There can be no doubt that Jesus was alerting us to the real truth about the Roman Catholic Church and her many daughters—the many branches of Christendom.

The growing power of Rome

There has been a quiet revolution in the UK:

"Of our three main party leaders, two-and-a-half are Roman Catholics. And what is even more astonishing is that no one seems either to notice or to care. Whether Tony Blair worships in an Anglican or Catholic church (it is usually a Catholic one) is a matter of indifference to most voters. That both Iain Duncan Smith and Charles Kennedy are Catholic is barely even known . . . It helps, I suppose, that the editor of the Conservative house journal, *The Daily Telegraph*, is himself a Catholic convert . . . The acceptance of Catholics in the most exalted positions in the British Establishment has been as speedy as it has been silent. People have barely noticed the change" (*The Times*, 21 Dec. 2001).

The speaker of the House of Commons is also a Roman Catholic. There are over 120 Catholic MPs, members of the House of Lords and members of the Privy Council.

Many leading writers, broadcasters and filmmakers are also Roman Catholic. Their first allegiance is to Rome; Pope John Paul II has urged them to use their influence to promote "the com-

mon good". It has proved a very powerful weapon in the undermining of Britain's traditional Protestant stance. The Roman Church is now considered very respectable. In a recently published book, *Catholics—Britain's Largest Minority*, Dennis Sewell charts their progress. This is an extract from the book's cover:

"In the course of the twentieth century Britain's Catholics have made a long journey from the margins of society through gradual acceptance and respectability to positions of great influence and power in public life. Dennis Sewell charts that journey through the lives of the Catholic men and women whose voices, whether in politics, journalism, literature or the arts, have made a distinctively Catholic contribution to our national conversation".

Our reaction

Are we aware of this? Does it concern us? Only by understanding the warnings from the Lord will we appreciate that in witnessing the growing power of the harlot system we have one of the signs of our times. Jesus warned us that she has been responsible for the deaths of many of our earlier brethren and sisters. Should we not fear that in her growing position of power she will seek to subdue any witness against her, any exposure of her false teaching? There are few within our community—let alone outside it—who are prepared to speak the truth about this church. Under proposed legislation against religious discrimination it may soon not be possible to advertise talks that are critical of other faiths.

Do we weakly shrug our shoulders and go along with the world's ecumenical drift back to Rome? We will shortly be called upon to assist Christ in defeating this evil system that distorts God's Word, substitutes man's ideas for Bible truth and seeks to neutralise those who oppose her teachings. A correct understanding of the Lord's last message will help us to perceive the subtle attacks being made upon our faith and our need to witness against this evil system.