

The Origin Of Futurism

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Perhaps I should tell you something about “Futurism” and its origin. Many of our people know little or nothing about this dangerous deception. After over 40 years in full-time city evangelism I have come to the conviction that Futurism is one of the deadliest deceptions in Christendom today. This conviction is shared by other men who have devoted their lives to working for souls.

For instance: Futurism has tainted and corrupted the whole evangelical system everywhere. Where did Futurism originate? This question demands a clear answer, so here it is:-

The Reformers, one and all, applied the prophecies of the “Man of sin” and the “Antichrist” to the Papacy. John Knox, for instance, wrote, “The Pope is the head of the Church of Antichrist. As for your Roman Church as it is now corrupted. I no more doubt but that it is the synagogue of Satan, and the head thereof called the Pope, the man of sin.”

Cranmer at his trial, gave what he knew was his dying testimony, “As for the Pope, I refuse him as Christ’s enemy, and the antichrist with all his false doctrines.” It was this conviction based on prophecy that made the Reformation. Bible prophecy added great strength to this God-led movement. Bible prophecy may not be the sole foundation but it provided a solid foundation. The Papacy was condemned by both precept and prophecy.

Martin Luther never felt free to break with the Church of Rome until he discovered Justification by faith and had nailed his thesis on the church door. He still believed the Pope was the vicar of Christ and the church of Rome was Christ’s church. He merely aimed at reforming the Catholic Church. It was the discovery from Bible prophecy that finally gave him strength to make the full and final break. He discovered that the Pope was the Antichrist, the “Man of Sin.” He then burned the Pope’s Bull. To him his former church was but a counterfeit system. Now separate from Rome was not separation from Christ, but separation from Antichrist. This discovery produced the Reformation. It gave it its foundation and strength. The Reformation, we do well to remember, was born of a dual discovery:- The discovery of the true Christ and the discovery of the Antichrist. Prophecy had foretold the Reformation and prophecy had given the foundation. Is it any wonder that the Papacy, felt that at any cost, it must turn the evidence. The stigma must be removed.

Ribera, a clever Jesuit was selected to do the removing of that damning stigma.

Futurism’s origin condemns it. It originated with Jesuits. It was invented for one purpose and that was to stifle Truth. To dull the sword of God’s Word. Although volumes have been written exposing the work of the Jesuits, much more could be written on this light-extinguishing society. Let me merely give you a few lines from the pen of inspiration.

THE JESUITS

The first triumphs of the Reformation past, Rome summoned new forces, hoping to accomplish its destruction. At this time the order of the Jesuits was created, the most cruel, unscrupulous and powerful of all the champions of popery. Cut off from earthly ties and human interests, dead to the claims of natural affection, reason and conscience wholly silenced, they knew no rule, no tie, but that of their order, and no duty but to extend its power. (See Appendix.) The gospel of Christ had enabled its adherents to meet danger and endure suffering, undismayed by cold, hunger, toil, and poverty, to uphold the banner of truth in face of the rack, the dungeon, and the stake. To combat these forces, Jesuitism inspired its followers with a fanaticism that enabled them to endure like dangers, and to oppose to the power of truth all the weapons of deception. There was no crime too great for them to commit, no deception too base for them to practice, no disguise too difficult for them to assume. Vowed to perpetual poverty and humility, it was their studied aim to secure wealth and power, to be devoted to the overthrow of Protestantism and the establishment of the papal supremacy.

When appearing as members of their order, they wore a garb of sanctity, visiting prisons and hospitals, ministering to the sick and the poor, professing to have renounced the world, and bearing the sacred name of Jesus, who went about doing good. But under this blameless exterior the most criminal and deadly purposes were often concealed. It was a fundamental principle of the order that the end justifies the means. By this code, lying, theft, perjury, assassination, were not only pardonable but commendable, when they served the interests of the church. Under various disguises the Jesuits worked their way into offices of state, climbing up to be the counselors of kings, and shaping the policy of nations. They became servants to act as spies upon their masters. They established colleges for the sons of princes and nobles, and schools for the common people; and the children of Protestant parents were drawn into an observance of popish rites. All the outward pomp and display of the Roman worship was brought to bear to confuse the mind and dazzle and captivate the imagination, and thus the liberty for which the fathers had toiled and bled was betrayed by the sons.

The Jesuits rapidly spread themselves over Europe, and wherever they went, there followed a revival of popery. To give them greater power, a bull was issued re-establishing the inquisition. (See Appendix.) Notwithstanding the general abhorrence with which it was regarded, even in Catholic countries,” Great Controversy, page 234-235.

What was the situation? The great apostasy had taken place.

2 THESSALONIANS 2:3 The “falling away” was now history. The “Man of Sin” “the Antichrist” - “the embodiment of disobedience” “the son of perdition” was plainly revealed. This sinful power lorded it over most of Christendom, for over twelve hundred years.

DANIEL 7:25 “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.” This power had worn “out the saints of the most High.” It had persecuted till the pages of history were glued together with the life blood of the faithful.

It had “cast down the truth to the ground; and it practiced and prospered,” until hundreds of millions bowed at its altars. Angels shuddered at the sight and cried out.

DANIEL 8:13 “Then I heard one saint speaking, and another saint said unto that certain saint which spoke, How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot?”

DANIEL 8:14 “And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.”

The sure word of prophecy declared that in 1844 God’s mighty message of reformation would be here.

As the pale light in the east heralds the coming dawn, so the faithful reformers proclaimed truth wonderful truth - but they had not all truth. That was reserved for 1844. Then “the Everlasting Gospel” would be proclaimed to all the world.

REVELATION 14:6-12 “To every nation kindred tongue and people”. Then Babylon’s system and maddening wine would be explained.

We live in the hour of God’s Judgment. In this mighty hour we must finish the work of God. Truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth must be upheld. But there are obstacles - there are counterfeits. The great counterfeiter is still active. Prophecy clearly states.

REVELATION 12:17 “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.”

The devil hates truth. Counterfeits and lies are his stock in trade.

JOHN 8:44 “He abode not in the truth. When he speaks a lie, he speaks of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.” This king of liars, loves to twist and distort truth. Deception, false hoods are his tools of trade. His agents are also deceivers. The child of God heeds, however, the voice of truth and certainty.

ISAIAH 8:20 “To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.”

You will never find fight where God says there is no light. So you will never find light and truth from what Bible prophecy shows is apostasy. Never look to apostates for truth. As the apostate Jews twisted prophecy, which led to the tragedy of their nation, thus this greatest tragedy of the ages, led to the rejection and crucifixion of their own Messiah. So the apostates that take the name of Jesus twisted prophecy to save themselves from the condemnation of God’s Holy Bible.

Remember, never expect to find light in apostasy. Neither will you find there the true interpretation of God’s inspired prophecies. Apostates do not lead to truth. This is clearly stated.

DANIEL 12:10 “None of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand.”

God’s wise ones are those who turn people from sin to righteousness. Notice carefully this promise to those whom Heaven regards as wise in these last days.

DANIEL 12:3 “And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.”

May the reader of this paper be found at last among those revealed here. Eternity's wise men. This promise is for the last days, the days when so many are indifferent. They foolishly sneer at those who are concerned, and brand them as fanatics or Concerned Brethren. Truly "none of the wicked shall understand."

So the indifferent and careless will remain ignorant. In this "Judgment Hour" we are faced by two great systems of prophetic interpretation. They are known as Futurism and Historic. Which is true?

Futurism as the name implies pushes practically the whole of Revelation into the future. This is also true of Daniel and many of the prophecies uttered by Christ.

Jesus our Savior, "the Way, the Truth and the Life." and our "Example in all things" has shown us the secret of prophetic interpretation.

JOHN 14:29 "And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe." He has "told us before it come to pass" - that's prophecy. It is history written backwards. It is a prediction of future events. This is the sure test of inspiration. Real prophecy is only found in the Bible, for Christ only is the Author of true prophecy. How do we know how to interpret prophecy? Christ it's Author tells us:-

"When it come to pass" we are to believe - we can know. Thus History will not only prove prophecy is of God; it will confirm prophecy. History explains prophecy. Thus what we call the historic interpretation, is Christ's method. History fulfils prophecy and proves it. This, I am glad to say was the method of God's saints throughout the ages. It was the way of the suffering saints through "the dark ages." When the Man of Sin wore out "the saints of the Most High," the saints saw prophecy fulfilling.

This was also the method used by the early Reformers. God used them to expose Rome and reveal the man of sin, commonly called "the Antichrist." To avoid this powerful stigma Rome used the Jesuit, Ribera to Invent Futurism. This he did by tossing all the prophecies into the future. He claimed the duration of the antichrist would not be over a period of twelve centuries, but only three and a half years. He would not be a false friend but an open foe. A Jew in a rebuilt temple in Jerusalem. He would persecute the Jews and not the saints. He would be Jewish not Roman. In Jerusalem and not in Rome. This was the word of apostasy.

The wicked would not understand, but Satan used the apostates to lead millions astray, in one of the greatest deceptions history has known. Not only has Bible prophecy revealed the apostasy, but we find many witnesses who confirm this dark record.

FUTURISM WAS INVENTED BY THE PAPACY.

Thus Futurism was "first invented by the Jesuit Ribera "declared Grattan Guinness In "Romanism and the Reformation" p. 184.

Why was it invented? The reason is clear, for it was a matter of life or death for Catholicism." Had not the Reformers, to the man, branded the Papacy as the "beast" of Revelation - the "Man of Sin" of Paul and the "Antichrist?" For instance the first sermon John Knox preached in Scotland was on Daniel 7 in which he proved that the church of Rome was "the little horn" of that prophecy. The Papacy was the "Man of Sin" - the Antichrist. The evidence was overwhelming. Scotland was shaken. The prophecy was so clear. The Papacy was forced to her knees. Many thousands left Catholicism. It looked as though the Papacy was finished. This conviction grew strong. In the preface of the King James Version of the Bible are found these words - "Which has given such a blow unto that man of sin, as will not be healed."

TO THE MOST HIGH AND MIGHTY PRINCE JAMES, BY THE GRACE OF GOD, KING OF GREAT BRITAIN, FRANCE, AND IRELAND, DEFENDER OF THE FAITH, Etc., THE TRANSLATORS OF THE BIBLE WISH GRACE, MERCY, AND PEACE, THROUGH JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD.

GREAT and manifold were the blessings most dread Sovereign, which Almighty God, the Father of all mercies, bestowed upon us the people of England, when first he sent Your Majesty's Royal Person to rule and reign over us. For whereas it was the expectation of many, who wished not well unto our Zion, that upon the setting of that bright Occidenial Star, Queen Elizabeth of most happy memory, some thick and palpable clouds of darkness would so have overshadowed this Land, that men should have been in doubt which way they were to walk; and that it should hardly be known who was to direct the unsettled State; the appearance of Your Majesty, as of the Sun in his strength instantly dispelled those supposed and surmised mists, and gave unto all that were well affected exceeding cause of comfort; especially when we behold the Government established In Your Highness, and Your hopeful Seed, by an undoubted Title, and this also accompanied with peace and tranquility at home and abroad.

But among all our joys, there was no one that more filled our hearts, than the blessed continuance of the preaching of God's sacred Word among us; which is that inestimable treasure, which excels all the riches of the Earth. Because the fruit extends itself, not only to the time spent in this transitory world, but directs and disposes men unto that eternal happiness which is above in heaven.

Then not to suffer this to fall to the ground but rather to take it up, and to continue It in that state, wherein the famous Predecessor of Your Highness did leave it: nay, to go forward with the confidence and resolution of a Man in maintaining the truth of Christ, and propagating it far and near, to that which has so bound and firmly knit the hearts of all Your Majesty's loyal and religious people unto You that Your very name is precious among them: their eye does behold You with comfort, and they bless You in their hearts, as that sanctified Person, who, under God, In the immediate Author of their true happiness. And this their contentment does not diminish or decay, but every day increases and takes strength, when they observe, that the zeal of Your Majesty toward the house of God doth not slack or go backward, but is more and more kindled, manifesting itself abroad in the farthest parts of Christendom, by writing in defense of the Truth, (which has given such a blow unto that Man of Sin as will not be healed) and every day at home, by religious and learned discourse, by frequenting the house of God, by hearing the Word preached, by cherishing the Teachers thereof, by caring for the Church, an a most tender and loving nursing Father.

So strong was the teaching of the antichrist that it became a matter of life or death to the Papacy. It felt that it must turn the tide of evidence, at any cost. So one of their cleverest Jesuits was selected to invent some system of interpretation that would remove the stigma of "antichrist" from the church of Rome. The cleverest Jesuit that Rome could find was Ribera, and he was selected.

"The Futurist interpretation is traced back to the Jesuit Ribera (AD 1580) whose aim was to disprove the claim of the Reformers that the Pope was Antichrist." *Prophecy and the Church*, page 297 by A. T. Allis.

Two great and mighty truths produced the Reformation. Justification by faith in Christ and not penance, Buying indulgences, pilgrimages and the other works of Catholicism. With it was the truth that the Papacy was the Antichrist - the "Man of Sin." Thus the message of the Reformation was for Christ and against Antichrist.

So great was the reaction to truth that in 1516 at the Fifth Lateran Council a decree was passed forbidding anyone writing or preaching on the subject of the Antichrist. With the reformation came the principles and from it poured hundreds of leaflets. Thus by the press and preaching, Truth continued to spread throughout England, Switzerland, Germany, France, Denmark and Sweden. Despite the decree of Rome, the word spread with power and conviction. Despite persecution the truth prevailed. The Scriptures of truth conquered. Thousands rejoiced in the light of heaven. They likewise saw that the Papacy was the "Man of Sin" - the Antichrist of Scripture.

Such havoc was wrought in Catholicism that they could see they must produce "a new interpretation." Thus from the Jesuit pen of Ribera, Futurism was born. To him Antichrist was a future person and therefore could not be the Papacy. The *Encyclopedia Britannica* says "Under the stress of the Protestant attack there arose new methods on the Papal side." Volume 23, page 213 (11th Edition).

Special mention is made of the Jesuit Ribera, the founder of the new Interpretation = Futurism.

Francisco Ribera (1537-1591) a Jesuit of Salamanca, Spain, wrote a five hundred page commentary on Babylon and Antichrist. He had one aim and that was to remove the stigma from Rome. Ribera assigned the first chapters of Revelation to the first Century. All the rest of that amazing book he restricted to a literal three and a half years at the end of time. He claimed that a Jewish temple would be built again in Jerusalem and that Antichrist would be a single person, who would deny Christ, pretend to be God and rule the world."

The Reformer, Thomas Brightman, (1562-1607) when he saw Ribera's work said in disgust "Once they would not suffer any man to scarce touch a Bible, now they produce a commentary to explain it - to point men away from the Papal Antichrist." Leroy Froom, Volume 2, page 493. This was the beginning of Futurism.

"Thus in Ribera's Commentary was laid the foundation for that great structure of Futurism, built upon and enlarged by those who followed. until it became the common Catholic position.

And then, wonder of wonders, in the nineteenth century this Jesuit scheme of Interpretation came to be adopted by a growing number of Protestants, until today Futurism, amplified and adorned with the rapture theory, has become the generally accepted belief of the Fundamentalist wing of popular Protestantism" *Prophecy and the Church*, page 297 by A. T. Allis.

Allis says: 'The futurist interpretation is traced back to the Jesuit Ribera whose aim was to disprove the claim of the Reformers that the Pope was the Antichrist. Not only Protestant writers, but Catholic writers as well, have recognized that the Futurist interpretation about Antichrist originated with Ribera. The futuristic school, says one Catholic theologian, Founded by the Jesuit Ribera in 1591, looks for Antichrist, Babylon, and a rebuilt temple In Jerusalem, at the end of the Christian Dispensation.' Hitchcock, *The Beast And The Little Horn*, page 7.

In his tract *Who is the Antichrist?* A former Catholic priest, Joseph Zucchello, says: “The Jesuits, a militant order of priests... were the first ones to introduce a new theory in order to divert men’s minds from perceiving the fulfillment of the prophecies of the antichrist in the papal church. The Jesuit Ribera brought out the futuristic system, which asserts that the antichrist is yet to appear: And to this statement he adds: “Protestants who advocate the futuristic system are pleasing the pope and are playing into the hands of Rome.” Ladd, *The Blessed Hope*, page 38.

Ribera’s false teaching of futurism was greatly aided by Robert Bellarmine (1542-1621). He was an Italian cardinal and an outstanding Jesuit, and a leading controversialist. He supported his brother Jesuit in sidetracking the truth of God regarding the Papacy. He was a nephew of Pope Marcellus. Bellarmine, was probably the most powerful controversialist that the Roman Catholic church ever produced.” Pope Clement VIII said at his nomination “We choose him, because the church of God does not possess his equal in learning.” Bellarmine, the Jesuit upheld Futurism.

The “new interpretation” of Futurism won general acceptance among Catholics. But this attempt to sidetrack the teaching that the Papacy was the Antichrist failed to hold back the onward sweep of truth. So the enemy of truth aimed at getting futurism into Protestantism. The agents he used to break down the wall of truth of professed Protestantism were professed Protestants. The three men who opened the floodgates of this “new interpretation” of futurism into Protestantism were Reverend S.R. Maitland, librarian to the Archbishop of Canterbury. Dr. James Todd, Fellow of Trinity College Dublin, Ireland. John Henry Newman of Oxford. These men all were pro-Catholicism. They all attacked the Protestant Historic interpretation of Bible prophecy.

They all upheld “the new interpretation of futurism.” Reverend Maitland maintained that the “man of sin” was an infidel, who would sit for 1260 literal days (3.50 years) in a literal temple of bricks and stone in Jerusalem, showing himself to be God. He claimed that the Albigenses and Waldenses were heretics. Their slaughter was not the “blood of saints” but of heretics. He poured out pamphlet after pamphlet attacking the fundamental pillars of truth. He pushed the prophecies of Daniel, Christ and Revelation into the future.

Dr. Todd in 1838, proclaimed that he followed Maitland. To him the prophecy of 2 Thessalonians 2 was not the Papal apostasy, but it was well in the future. He discouraged the study of history. These pro-Catholic men were strongly supported by John Henry Newman, who became Cardinal Newman.

Were these men Jesuits? Many are convinced they were, or at least were strongly influenced by Jesuits. Futurism now began to grow in professed Protestant circles until today this Jesuit Inspired teaching has swallowed up millions of those who claim to be “born again” Christians.”

Futurism has invaded Christendom!

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