

The Nazarene Conundrum

by: Douglas Lockhart

The Church imaginatively extends the Gospel message, invents the idea of an Apostolic succession and threatens, by stealth of its theology, the intellectual development of the Western world

The Historical Whitewash

In his quite excellent book *Binding the Devil*, Roger Baker makes an observation pertinent to this short study: "It has been recognised that in its need to establish itself the early Church wiped out most of what was valuable in paganism: critical thought, medical progress, the arts - those things that had reached a high stage of development in ancient Greece." He adds for good measure: "The intellectual development of Europe was arrested for a thousand years."¹ Here then is the opposite view from that held by, say, the Jesuit Malachi Martin, who believed that without Christianity no great European civilisation would have arisen. Baker, working in reverse, suggests that because of Christianity's early dealings with her pagan neighbours whole echelons of intellectual development already underway were either retarded or obliterated.

By 395 all pre-Christian religious forms had been banned and classified as criminal; by 600 the Church was seriously debating whether women should be considered human or not. Were not labour pains an obvious punishment from God for having indulged in sex? Shouldn't baptism be considered an exorcism of the Devil from the newly born child? Didn't unbaptised babies go straight to hell and suffer for all eternity? Weren't pagans just devil-worshippers in disguise? This was quickly the state of affairs after the death of Constantine, and it was all due to a church which believed itself divinely appointed and guided by the Holy Spirit. How convenient. God, not man, was dictating policy, and he would dramatically escalate his restrictions on human behaviour and thought until the whole of Western society and culture obeyed the divine will. Dark indeed this God, dark and resentful and heavy-handed and to become even more heavy-handed as the centuries rolled in. Pagans and

heretics alike would suffer the Church's growing intolerance and confidence in herself and, as God's appointed judge on Earth, she would further tighten her systems of control through highly imaginative extensions to the Gospel message.

As far back as 1968, Dr Hugh Schonfield admirably summed up the situation in *Those Incredible Christians*: "Christianity as we know it" he said, having spent most of a long life studying Christianity, "must not be imagined to be identical with what Jesus taught about himself and what his immediate Apostles proclaimed. Catholic Christianity is based on a radical deviation, which progressively by dubious ways and means was converted into an orthodoxy."² So said the only Jewish scholar allowed to work on the Dead Sea Scrolls when they were first discovered; and today there is a growing number of scholars who are equally aware of the historical whitewash the Church has engaged in to ensure its survival.

To believe that the God of whom Jesus was capable of inflicting such misery, such stupidity, such mindless nonsense on the whole of European civilisation is to be in the clutches of a neurosis. To unquestioningly accept that this God worked in such a manner, and not to suspect that it was human beings and not God who was actually fabricating such policies, is to be in need of psychological help. To argue that God had to work through the frailties and limitations of human beings is to overlook the fact that this God had supposedly been capable, during New Testament times, of giving precise instructions in all matters through a discarnate Jesus. Visions of the risen Lord had been frequent, and information of an often exact nature had crossed from Heaven to Earth without hindrance. Which is to say that a species of television channel complete with sound had been available to the Apostles (particularly Paul), a channel one would have expected to remain open to those of the so-called Roman Apostolic succession. Unless of course things had not been quite so clear-cut during the days and years and centuries that followed the death of the original Nazarene-affiliated Apostles, but merely a dull repeat of earlier uncertainties. And so we turn to the question of God's existence, of his interest in, and his love for, this little world of ours. If so far off that the Church was quite beyond

his control and guidance, what then the purpose of the whole affair? Or was there simply no God out there at all to regulate the Church's growing pomposity and paranoia.

Robbing Paul to pay Peter

In order to get events in a contemporary perspective, we should remember that the Emperor Constantine Crispus, his son by his first wife, drowned his second in the bath, killed his nephew, and after an oath of safe-conduct killed his brother-in-law. Playing the political game to the hilt, the embryo Roman Church ignored such lapses, willingly accepted his politically motivated sponsorship, and swiftly reversed his policy of religious tolerance - the very policy which had allowed the Church to emerge from the catacombs in the first place. Once in control, she immediately denied religious freedom to others, a policy continued over the centuries, and by 1648 was blithely condemning the Peace of Westphalia for allowing citizens the right to hold religious views at variance with their sovereign. By 1870 Vatican City was no more than a police state, complete with spies and inquisitors. Now many Churchmen will invoke the "human frailty clause" and argue that these good Christians only acted in such a manner because of the times in which they lived; but this argument is not acceptable. Why would the Lord of Hosts set up a fiasco of such proportions? Why reveal yourself and talk clearly in one century, then for next twenty mumble darkly and incomprehensibly?

Of more immediate and rewarding interest are the unusual facts surrounding the appearance of sectarian Nazarene Jews at the court of Sylvester in 318. These are facts seldom talked about by Christian historians for reasons which are already self-evident. There was a moment of uncertainty for Sylvester as those Jewish Nazarenes knocked the dust off their sandals and headed for home. As he lay dying a moment of regret, perhaps, for his curt dismissal of these family members of Jesus and their so, so foolish proposals.

But had he done the right thing in sending them away in such a manner? And what would have happened if they had managed to settle their differences, if through frank discussion

and the practice of Christian humility they had properly explored their differences? What then? Would the combined strength of the two groups have been enough to temper the hypnotic notion of using the Roman Empire and its immense strength and glamour to win the world for Christ? One can imagine a shrug from the dying man, and a wistful smile; useless to dream such a dream. These Nazarene's probably did carry the stamp of Jesus' own countenance, but everything had moved too fast and gone too far by then for reconciliation to be possible: the Nazarene Jesus was no longer the Jesus known and worshipped by the Christian community at Rome, *that* Jesus was now a stranger.

Hugh Schonfield lays out the puzzle of the so-called Nazarene 'Christians' with some dexterity. He tells us that after the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the nation's infrastructure by the Romans in 70 CE, the churches which managed to regroup had been only too pleased to receive "the propaganda of Roman Christianity."³ Helpful council in the form of communications from Apostles like Peter would not have been recognised as forgeries, the fact that such communications were emanating from Rome itself would have secured their acceptance. Did this not prove beyond doubt that God was still working on behalf of His people? How else could the new seat of Christian authority have ended up in Rome, in the lion's den itself? And was not the Blessed Peter's name to the fore, showing continuity with those who had known Jesus in person? And in light of Peter's acceptance of Paul as a brother in the Lord, as a visionary acceptable to the whole Church, should not his extended theology be accepted as authentic?

The catholic historian Peter de Rosa points out that Roman pontiffs "claim to be successors not of Peter *and* Paul but of Peter alone. Why Peter? Why an apostolic succession from Peter when it was obviously on Paul's teachings that the Roman church was founded? And again, why Peter when by way of apostolic succession among the Nazarenes Jesus' brother James, and not Peter, was the heir from which any such succession arose? Was there perhaps a double game being played here, the game of continuity through Peter, an actual Apostle of Jesus', and by such means a tapping by proxy into the Nazarene church's status

without actually having to recognise the real succession? Succession both was and is extremely important to Rome, and it is my contention that she built her own succession on an intentional blurring of the boundaries between those two factors. For it cannot be denied that the church at Rome was founded not on the teachings of Peter, who was an Apostle to the Jews as the New Testament clearly states, but on the teachings of Paul through whom a completely independent authority was set up. And an authority whose independence was striking because of its claim to be guided by Jesus from heaven through the auspices of the Holy Spirit. Who could argue with that? As Schonfield says: "In due course any doctrine which the Church found it desirable to proclaim as Catholic Truth could be attributed to this guidance, even when there was no warrant for it in the New Testament itself."⁵ This, one can only surmise, was the source of such notions as that of women not being human beings.

As one would expect, and given the above circumstances, letters emanating from Rome reflected not only anti-Jewish sentiments, but by circuitous arguments implied that the original apostolic body had been superseded. Schonfield says that most of the Christian communities in receipt of such epistles saw no reason to throw out instructions received from the Apostles prior to the war with Rome; but he adds: "a time of grave uncertainty . . . called for an agonising reappraisal; but it was not evident that the situation required a wholesale abandonment of former positions."⁶ Members of Jesus' own family were still around, together with many others still alive who had heard the original teachings. Yet there were letters with Peter's name on them. What were they to think? To whom should they turn? And so, as Schonfield skillfully shows, compromise between the Eastern and Western sources of information took place, a collating of often diametrically opposed religious ideas into a series of strange stories and equally strange doctrinal amalgamations.⁷

Strange Amalgamations

One such strange amalgamation of ideas was that Jesus was the politically explosive Jewish Messiah descended from David and

sent to rescue Israel from the Romans, while at the same time the Divine Son of God come to save all humanity, a mission above politics. Another collation was Paul's apparent dismissal of Jesus' genealogy as unimportant with the Nazarene insistence that his genealogy, like theirs, was the most important aspect of his life. What to make of the idea that their mutual Lord had been born of a virgin by miraculous means, yet was the predestined king of the Jews through Joseph, his legal father? In spite of revision, the *Book of Revelation* described Jesus as the Lion of the tribe of Judah, and the Root of David, claims that were anti-Roman by any definition. Furthermore, a serious slip in the verses following the "Lion of Judah" claim revealed one of the most important doctrinal errors of all time. The passage read: "The dominion of the world has become the dominion of our Lord and his Messiah, and he shall reign for ever and ever."⁸ Our Lord *and* his Messiah? Quite obviously "Lord" stands not for Jesus, but for God, and Jesus is quite unequivocally separated from God as his Messiah. And in the Epistles everything was topsy-turvy with James and Jude attacking Paulinist doctrine and Peter, of all people, upholding it. And so the two Christianities battled it out and slowly melted into what eventually appeared to be epistemological harmony.

The problem was that the Nazarene Mother Church, regarded as dangerous by Judaism, and continually persecuted by the Romans, could do little to halt such a process. Attempts had been made by Hegesippus in the second century to collect earlier traditions of the Christian east and the Christian west, but the surviving records were fragmentary. The real problem was not just general Roman persecution and resentment against the Nazarenes from the Jews for having helped incite, along with other sectaries, a Roman attack, but a policy of persecution by the Romans specifically directed against Jesus' family members; for it was they, the Romans realised, who would undoubtedly fan the flame of insurrection back into life. This view seemed to be contradicted by the fact that the Nazarenes refused to join Bar Kochba's revolt against the Romans during the reign of the Emperor Domitian, but this refusal was only because of their complete faithfulness to Jesus as Messiah - to them Bar Kochba was a fake Messiah. It was this kind of faith in Jesus as the

returning Jewish Messiah (a worrying notion to the Romans) that earned the Nazarenes recognition as a potentially dangerous family dynasty.

The facts suggest that by the end of the first century and during the first quarter of the second, the Nazarenes had little knowledge of doctrinally developments among the Roman Christians. When the dust settled, it may well have come as a complete shock to them to discover that a whole new view of Jesus had evolved as a result of this group's interpretation of Paul's teachings - teachings which even early on had caused the Apostles to question his credentials and motives. When it became evident that a challenge to such ideas should be mounted, they themselves had modified their beliefs and acquired what Schonfield refers to as "eccentricities as a result of new teaching and relationships with remnants of Baptist, Essene, Samaritan and other sects of 'Saints' of the pre-war period."⁹ Here then is the historical mix, and from the many clues embedded in it we realise that the Nazarenes considered Paul's teachings, or more accurately what the Roman Church had done with Paul's teachings, to be an idolatrous offshoot of Nazarene beliefs: Jesus as the Jewish God *in the flesh* was, as far as they were concerned, an exercise in pure blasphemy.

This conflict between the Nazarenes and the Roman Church lasted for centuries, and the fact that it did so shows the depth of feeling involved on both sides. But it is a conflict demoted in most historical writings as no more than a difference of opinion between the Roman Church and the "Jewish" (at one time Jerusalem-based) Church. Jewish. Not *Nazarene*. The edge is taken off the situation by simply ignoring the Nazarene-cum-Ebionites and using of the blanket term 'Jewish' to describe a much more complex situation. The problem with this is that the Jews also were against the Nazarenes, for it was the Nazarenes in conjunction with what Schonfield calls the "Essean-Essene" (the Holy Ones of Israel) who had brought calamity on the nation with their apocalyptic hopes. The reason for this was probably due to the reaction of the Jews to what Paul was teaching, for as he himself admits, his teaching was "heresy", and regarded as such by orthodoxy. Again there is a curious blurring of boundaries, but the result is the same as before: the Nazarenes are made to

evaporate. It is almost as if they had never existed, as if Jesus had never been known as "Jesus the Nazarene".

Or is there a deeper reason still, perhaps?

Schonfield notes (as does Professor Ranke-Heinemann) that Irenaeus attacks the Nazarenes as heretics, but calls them "Ebionites", meaning "the poor". This was the term used by both the Essenes and the early Christian Church to describe their position before God: "poor" simply meant "humble". That the Ebionites were a closely allied off-shoot of the Nazarenes, but with even stricter habits, is recognised by most scholar. It is known, for instance, that they were fanatical vegetarians and opposed to all animal sacrifice. Schonfield is aware of such differences, and says that "it would be going too far on the available evidence to regard the Ebionites as a denomination wholly distinct from the Nazoreans."¹⁰ Irenaeus seems to agree, for when describing the Ebionites he describes exactly the Nazarene rejection of Jesus as being anything other than a normal man born by normal means. And if this is not enough, he also observes that the Ebionites used only the Gospel of Matthew, and that they rejected the Apostle Paul as an apostate from the Law, the latter being the principal factor in the Nazarene case against Roman Christianity.

The point is this: The Nazarenes rejected Paul's highly imaginative theology concerning Jesus as the 'Christ' and spent centuries combating those idea. The later Nazarenes had documented proof to work from: And they had documented proof to work from: the original *Gospel of Matthew* in Hebrew; the Hebrew or Aramaic *Gospel according to the Hebrews* (also reputed to be by Matthew); the Ebionite anti-Pauline *Acts of the Apostles*; and last but not least other forms of the Aramaic Gospel such as the *Gospel of the Twelve* or *According to the Apostles*. Schonfield speculates that the *Gospel according to the Hebrews* was probably a propaganda exercise specifically designed to "counter the New Testament Gospels and undermine their effect on Jewish Christians by furnishing a document that was consistent with Nazarene teaching and tradition."¹¹ Such a statement brings us ever closer to the historical reality, the reality within which another set of Gospels were in circulation. And not Nazarene translations of the canonical Gospels, but original Nazarene

Gospels (Matthew, John and the Acts of the Apostles) which would later be rewritten by the Christians and parodied by the Jews.¹²

Dr Schonfield is explicit concerning Peter's role in the early Jewish Nazarene Church. He tells us that Peter was not the chief spokesman for that Church, and that he was never converted to Paulinism. James (Jesus' full brother) was "chief representative of Jesus" in the early Christian (Nazarene) community, and belief to the contrary is the result of centuries of propaganda initiated by the Roman Christian community. Denigration of the original Nazarene authority "invested in the Apostles of Jesus and members of his family" had been their aim, and they had successfully wrested that authority from Jesus' family by adopting Peter and making him a convert to Paul's new, heretical Gospel. We then learn that the Nazarene refutation of all of this is to be found in the *Clementine Homilies* and *Recognitions* and, although late in origin (probably fourth century translations from Greek into Latin reflecting third century problems) they carry information quite obviously written to counter Western propaganda concerning Peter. Which is to say that although these sections of the *Clementines* said to have been written by Peter were known forgeries, the statements made by this pseudo-Peter nevertheless accurately reflected Nazarene concerns at the time. On behalf of Nazarene outrage at the Apostle Peter being borrowed by Rome and made into an advocate for Paul's ideas about Jesus, pseudo-Peter denounced the Western Church's attempt to reverse what he himself had said and done, and although names were not actually used, his reference to the "lawless and trifling preaching of the man who is my enemy", and to men "telling their catechumens that this is my meaning, which indeed I never thought of", were too obvious to be interpreted in any other way.

In the *Recognitions*, pseudo-Peter condemned those who dared misrepresent him, and railed against those offering an authority other than that of the Nazarene Council. This was direct and unmistakable. Teachers lacking Nazarene credentials were not to be believed; only teachers from the "Jerusalem Church" carrying the testimony of "James" the Lord's brother; or,

interestingly, “whosoever may come after him” were to be believed. All teachers had to be approved by the Jerusalem Council; there were no other Apostles apart from the original twelve. There then followed an argument between Peter and Simon Magus (believed by some scholars to be an alias for Paul); once again the subject was an extended revelation through “visions”, and Peter’s rebuke of this position was to say that those who trust in apparitions or visions or dreams were “insecure”.

To my way of thinking this reflects enormous commonsense, the kind of commonsense one would expect from someone with a real handle on reality. To pseudo-Peter, talk of the Holy Spirit guiding the Church is not to be accepted; for it could easily be a deceiving spirit that was talking, and such a spirit could “say of himself what he will”. ‘Pseudo-Peter’ the writer may be called, but to my ear he sounds more like Sir Walter Scott lecturing a namesake of mine on the dangers of taking apparitions seriously.¹³

The Legend of Peter

It is now a point of faith to believe that the popes are all direct successors of Peter as bishop of Rome. But if Peter never had that title, and was never in Rome, then those claiming succession from him are claiming a meaningless authority. Some historians do allow Peter a period of three or four years in Rome on the basis of tradition alone, but there is no actual evidence to suggest that he was ever in charge of that particular Christian community. Paul’s journey to Rome is recorded in great detail, but there is no New Testament evidence, nor any historical evidence that Peter ever went there. There is no allusion in Peter’s Epistle to Rome; and when the word Rome is mentioned in the New Testament, Peter’s name is never associated with it. All is legend. And if he was Paul’s superior, then why does he receive so little attention after Paul’s arrival?

And how do explain Paul’s letter to the Roman Christians at the height of Peter’s alleged episcopate in or around 58? Paul addresses his letter not to Peter, which protocol would have demanded had he been leading the church since 42, but to the

congregation in general. And what of the letter's ethical content? Paul writes that he longs to see them, for he wants to impart to them some spiritual gift so that they might be established. Established? In what? Paul's version of the Gospel? Now if Peter was in Rome at this time, then this letter is a calculated insult to this chief Apostle's ministry; either that or he simply wasn't there at all and Paul was free to write whatever he wished. And as in this letter he also states that he does not "build on another's foundation", it is hard to imagine that this can mean anything other than the fact that Peter was neither in charge of the Roman church, or even physically in Rome.

In his detailed study of Roman Catholicism, Dr Loraine Boettner points out that "Paul was writing this letter because no apostle had been in Rome to clarify the Gospel to them and to establish them in the faith."¹⁴ This means that not only was Peter not there, and until that point had never been there, but that these Roman Christians were at that time of a different theological stamp from those established by Paul elsewhere. Now it is not too difficult to see what this means. It means without doubt that in 58 the church at Rome was still Jewish-Nazarene. Not until the great fire of Rome in 64, and the persecution of the Roman Church by Nero as a result of that fire would the predominantly Jewish-Nazarene adherents of that church be put to flight.

Peter was married, and his wife accompanied him on some of his missionary journeyings. Catholic parlance has it that Peter's wife was actually his sister, but like their problem with James being Jesus' full brother, it should be noted that in Greek the word for sister is *adelphē*, whereas the Greek word used in the New Testament is *gunē*, meaning "wife". Paul says: "Have we no right to lead about a wife that is a believer, even as the rest of the apostles, and the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas" (I Cor. 9:5) Even as the rest of the apostles? And Jesus' family heirs? And Peter? What now of his railing against marriage and the flesh and goodness knows what else? Could it be that the New Testament texts contain not two points of view, but three? That of the Jewish Nazarene, that of Paul, and that of the Roman Church as it eventually came to be? For in the above statement Paul is certainly at variance with that church when it comes to "marriage"; and he

is blatantly at odds with this church in as far as “spiritual gifts” were eventually outlawed by the Roman church as anarchic and undermining of the authority of the bishops. And he is also at loggerheads with the Jewish-Nazarene church at Jerusalem. In fact he hardly anybody about anything! He is out of step most of the time, and his seeming conformity with later Roman opinion is only because he has been thoroughly edited and made to fit into that theological scheme - a scheme developed, ironically, almost wholly out of his theological notions. But a scheme at base not of his actual making. Eventually sandwiched between two heavily opposed theologies, what Paul actually believed would be crushed out of existence to allow a hybrid form of Christianity to grow and develop, indeed mushroom into the future backed by Rome’s secular arm.

Most historians would not even allow Peter three or four years in Rome, for, surprising as it may seem, his name does not appear on the earliest lists of bishops of Rome. According to Irenaeus, the first bishop of Rome was Linus, and he was appointed by Paul, whereas the bishop after Linus, Clement, is said to have been chosen by Peter. De Rosa’s comment is simply to say that the mystery deepens. Also Eusebius, Constantine’s friend and apologist, does not say that Peter ever was ever bishop of Rome; and that in spite of Jerome saying later that he did. In the seventeenth century King Charles II’s chaplain, William Cave, corrected Jerome by saying that he had probably reported on a notion of his time quite without substance, “no such thing being found in the Greek copy of Eusebius”. And in line with modern scholarship, De Rosa notes that in those early days of the Church the Apostles did not belong to any one church, but to the Church as a whole, the fact of Apostleship precluding them from being bishop of one place. “Peter, too,” he says, “whatever momentous decisions he made in Jerusalem, Antioch and elsewhere, remained an apostle of the entire community.”¹⁵ Hence the reason why Paul, who really was in Rome, did not become its first bishop, but helped appoint someone else.

Basic to this question of whether Peter was ever actually in Rome, never mind being the first pope of Rome, are the designated “missions” taken on by Peter and Paul. In his Galatian

Epistle (2:7-8) Paul speaks of being entrusted with the gospel of the uncircumcision, and of Peter's mission being that of the gospel of the circumcision. Which is to say quite clearly that Peter's mission was to the Jews, and that Paul's was to non-Jews, to Gentiles. Boettner supplies the details here, and we learn that Peter's area of mission was to the Jewish exiles in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia - in other words Asia Minor. More importantly his journeyings also took him as far east as Babylon, and it is from Babylon that his first, and probably his second, epistle comes. Boettner points out that although there is no Scriptural evidence for Peter ever having been in Rome, there is certainly "a plain statement of Scripture that he did go east to Babylon."¹⁶

But Catholic exegetes play the same game with the word "Babylon" as they play with James's relationship to Jesus, and with words like wife" and "sister" in relation to Peter. In an introductory note to I Peter, the Catholic Confraternity edition tells us that "Babylon" is a "cryptic designation of the city of Rome." The reason for this curious rejection of what is actually written in I Peter is because in the Book of Revelation 'Rome' is referred to as "Babylon". But as Boettner is quick to point out, the Book of Revelation is apocalyptic; it is written in figurative and symbolic language. Peter's first epistle, on the other hand, is a straightforward letter in a matter-of-fact style. So why pretend that Babylon means Rome?

I think that the reasons are obvious.

The historical facts are that Jews had been living in Babylon since the time of the exile; Josephus confirms that great numbers of them had settled there by the time of Jesus. It was therefore just the kind of place Peter would have headed for. And it should be noted that in terms of New Testament chronology, Peter was part of the Jerusalem Council described in Acts 15, and that that council had specifically to do with the presentation of the Gospel to the Jewish and Gentile communities. It is at this council, held in 54, that Peter and Paul are assigned their separate missions. Chronologically this fact alone shows that Peter was not in Rome at the time he was supposed to be, and as it is not long after this council that he is confronted by Paul over his conformity to

Judaistic rituals (Gal. 2:11-21), it is highly unlikely that he went against his assigned mission and ended up at the very heart of the Gentile world.

Boettner asks the appropriate question: "Would he [Peter] defy the decision reached by all the apostles and brethren from the various churches who met in the famous first Council in Jerusalem?"¹⁷ I believe Boettner to be correct in his assumption that Peter would not have denied that council; and I think him equally correct when he says that Peter's missionary work would have taken him in the opposite direction. Three factors clearly emerge from this: (1) the Nazarene church at Jerusalem controlled by Jesus' brother James was still running the show; (2) Paul was already straining at the theological leash and threatening to break away from the Jerusalem church altogether; and (3) the Church at Rome was still Nazarene governed. Boettner later makes much the same point in relation to the Nazarenes. "It is well known that during the time of the apostles and for generations later the Eastern cities and the Eastern church had the greatest influence, and that the Roman church was comparatively insignificant."¹⁸ The Nazarene church of Rome was in the lion's den and not able to grow like the other churches. Long before the reformation of the Catholic Church Rome's claim to be the only true church had been firmly rejected by the Eastern churches. The first councils had been held in Eastern cities and were composed mostly of Eastern bishops, and the principle patriarchates had been eastern - namely, Jerusalem, Antioch and Alexandria. Only centuries later after the breakup of the Roman Empire would Rome gain the ascendancy.

The Cosmic War on Earth

Malachi Martin would have us believe that a cosmic war between God and Satan has been in process since the beginning of historical time. Not only are the Scriptures (and history) wrong and Catholic Tradition right about Peter being in Rome and not in

Babylon, but above and around and in this whole situation Satan-cum-the-Devil-cum-Lucifer is at work. Martin states this plainly:

“Through the sacrifice, death and resurrection of Christ, and by the founding of the Roman Catholic Church, God had made it possible for each man and woman to make godly choices in life, and by those choices to attain Heaven after death. In that cosmic and constant war, Christ was the leader of God’s campaign; and Christ’s personal, visible representative among men was the Roman pope. Lucifer’s aim in the war - the aim of Satan as adversary - was to ensure that as many human beings as possible missed that eternal after-life goal.”

(19)

What an extraordinary statement. In a round about manner this is to say that the questioning of Peter’s episcopacy in Rome is part and parcel of Satan’s *raison d’etre* to pin one’s soul to his lapel - reject the pope - *any* pope - and you’re in deep spiritual trouble. We are no longer dealing with tradition alongside history or Scripture, we are now dealing with a capital “T” truth which cannot be contradicted - the myth has gone manic. And if we do contradict it? Well, hell and damnation will be the result; at least that’s how it was prior to certain theological refinements. Christ is in heaven with God, and the pope in Rome has a divine mandate to do whatever comes into his head to safeguard the Roman Church which God has personally founded. We are the “cherished objective” of God and the Devil, and it is in this light alone that we must comprehend the whole edifice of Church history as taught by the Catholic Church.

What we have to watch out for is the Devil’s propaganda campaign. For just as God can communicate by immaterial, supernatural, and totally spiritual means through images and sense data, through external events, words and actions, Lucifer/Satan can also communicate his desires at the sense data level. Which is to say that all he can offer us is, metaphorically speaking, the apple of temptation, the hard round of sense data

alone. For Lucifer is preternatural, not supernatural; he moves outside of the supernatural because that is God's exclusive domain. So ultimately it is our ability to make "choices" or suitable "acts of will" which determines our spiritual fate; and to be able to make such choices we should attempt to find out from which source the data is streaming.

Malachi Martin refers to the above view of reality as "authentic Christian teaching", and points back to Ignatius Loyola as the man who resuscitated this now ignored perception of reality. We are to realise that we have lost our way, that the cosmic war is still going on, that the humanistic cry of the Renaissance heralded not light, but darkness.

References and Notes:

- 1 Baker, Roger, *Binding the Devil*, Shelden Press, London 1974, p. 57.
- 2 Schonfield, Hugh, *Those Incredible Christians*, Element Books, Shaftsbury, Dorset, London 1985, p. 160.
- 3 Ibid, p. 144.
- 4 Rosa, Peter de, *Vicars of Christ*, Corgi Books, 1989, p. 31.
- 5 Schonfield, Hugh, *Those Incredible Christians*, Element Books, Shaftsbury, Dorset 1985, p. 145.
- 6 Ibid.
- 7 Ibid.
- 8 Revelation 11: 15.
- 9 Schonfield, Hugh, *Those Incredible Christians* (as above) p. 150.
- 10 Ibid., p. 152.
- 11 Ibid., p. 163
- 12 Ibid., p. 155.
- 13 Scott, Sir Walter, *Demonology and Witchcraft*, George Routledge & Sons, New York 1884.
- 14 Boettner, Loraine, *Roman Catholicism*, The Presbyterian & Reformed Publishing Company, Philadelphia, 1964, p. 121.
- 15 Rosa, Peter de, *Vicars of Christ* (as above) p. 19
- 16 Ibid., p. 120.
- 17 Ibid., p. 123.
- 18 Ibid., p. 119.
- 19 Martin, Malachi, *The Jesuits*, Arrow Books, London 1988. p. 175.