

All the world knows what followed. The city that thought itself safe from attack from without was suddenly overwhelmed by the warriors who crawled out of the wooden horse, overwhelmed the guards at the gates, opened them to new swarms of invaders, and soon left the city a blackened ruin.

Could such a catastrophe hit the Christian church? Would God permit it? It does not take much knowledge of history to demonstrate that God has many times allowed a substantial portion of His church to disappear, when it has allowed itself to be overwhelmed by outer or inner forces of infidelity and unbelief.

At one time Syria and Egypt were great centers of Christianity, with thousands of churches. Then Mohammedanism conquered these regions so completely that only a handful of Christians remained. In the latter part of the sixteenth century one third of Poland was Protestant, including many of the nobility. Jesuit debates and political intrigues, followed eventually by rioting and persecution, cut down the Protestant population to less than five per cent.

At the same period, more than half of France was held by the Huguenots --those earnest French Protestants. All the efforts of military attack failed to dislodge them. One of their number was next in line to be king of the whole country. The time came when all of France was at his feet, except Paris, which the Jesuits had roused to fanatical resistance. Unable to take Paris, Henry said: "What is France without Paris? If I reign over the entire country I can protect my Protestant brothers. Paris is worth a mass." So saying, he joined the Roman Catholic church, and became king of all France. For several decades French Protestantism flourished. Then Henry's grandson revoked the edict of Nantes, drove the Protestant pastors from the country, made Protestantism a serious crime, vigorously persecuted all who resisted, and Henry's compromise resulted in the end