

Part 2 . . . What Does the Everlasting Gospel Deny? The Present Truth Magazine Confession of Faith



"that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive, but speaking the truth in love, may we grow up in all things into Him who is the head, even Christ." Ephesians 3:13-15

Editorial Introduction: The one article of the Christian faith at which the kingdom of Antichrist trembles and gnashes its teeth is the justification of repentant sinners by God's unmerited "grace alone" through faith in the sinless life and atoning death of the Lord Jesus "Christ alone" as revealed in the "Bible alone". Upon this truth the Protestant evangelical Christian church stands or falls. If this article is lost, all is lost. The whole focus of Satan's thunderous attack throughout history has been against this "gate" into the City of God . To breach this truth is to cast the truth to the ground and destroy the evangelical Christian church.

Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; 2 Timothy 4:2-3

The Protestant evangelical Christian church's fierce conflict with the Papal "Man of Sin" is coming to its triumphant close. All the abominable rubbish of the "False Prophet" is being cast out of the temple of God so that the Good News of the fully restored Gospel may be proclaimed to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people!! "Who can make war with the beast?" (Rev 13:4) Only the word of the Gospel can give the Beast a wound from which he will never be healed. That word proclaims, "He who is justified by faith will live." (Rom 1:17) Babylon's tower of lies has come crashing down. "Babylon is fallen, is fallen. Come out of her my people!!"



False doctrine is filling the land like the frogs that plagued Egypt

Against Meritorious Good Works and Purgatory

1. Any teaching which declares that Christians must reach such a state of holiness and sanctification in this life wherein they no longer need to be justified by faith and no longer rely solely upon the forgiveness of sin and the imputed righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ for acceptance before God and eternal life is a serious departure from the word of God.

[All have sinned](#) and all continually fall short of the glory of God. There is only one Person who has ever perfectly fulfilled the righteousness of the holy Law of God. That Person is our Lord Jesus Christ. He alone is good and He alone has atoned for our sins and met all of the Law's demands for holiness and righteousness. He alone is the One with whom the Father is well pleased. Believers, no matter how sanctified they become, always need be *justified* before the glory of God by the perfect *imputed* righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ alone. He is the eternal sinless mediator between God and Man.



The Flames of "[Purgatory](#)"?

2. Teaching that those Christian believers who have not reached perfect *sinless* sanctification in this life will burn and suffer after death in a place called "[Purgatory](#)" is a serious departure from the word of God. The sanctification, of even the best saint, is never perfect enough in this life to merit eternal life.
3. Teaching that certain believers called "[Saints](#)" have attained to such a state of holiness that they are completely *without sin* either in thought, word, motive, or deed and that only sinless, perfectly sanctified "Holy Saints" will go directly to heaven is a serious departure from the word of God.

Against Meritorious Sacramentalism

4. Teaching that God's mercy and absolution from sin's guilt or punishment are dispensed through the personal word and mediatorial office of a celibate person called a "priest" and that sinners obtain the mercy of God and absolution from sin's guilt or punishment by "Going to Confession" and contritely confessing all of their sins to this person who is called a "priest" and who is addressed in the "Confessional" with the words, "Father, forgive me for I have sinned...." followed by a complete listing of their known sins is a serious departure from the word of God. Sinners are able to pray directly to and call upon the Lord for forgiveness and absolution of their sins. Christ is the only priest and mediator between God and man.

5. Teaching that the partaking of any of the "Seven Sacraments" is meritorious or in any way essential for the forgiveness and justification of a repentant believer in Christ is a serious departure from the word of God. The rituals of baptism and the Lord's Supper are symbolic only and a public witness to faith in Christ's atoning blood alone for salvation.



6. Teaching that the elements of the [Lord's Supper](#) are literally and actually [transformed](#) into the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ is a serious departure from the word of God. Additionally, to also take literally the Lord's injunction to "[wash one another's feet](#)" before or after observance of the Lord's Supper is to misinterpret and literalize the figurative meaning of His words.

7. Teaching that a so-called "priest" is actually re-sacrificing the Lord Jesus Christ as a propitiatory sin offering and that only ordained ministers or priests can administer the Lord's Supper is a serious departure from the word of God. The word of God affirms the priesthood of all believers and thus any believer can administer the Lord's Supper and baptize new believers into the body of Christ, the church.

8. Teaching that the baptism of new believers is actually an act of meritorious cleansing from sin rather than a public confession of trusting in Christ as one's Savior and Lord is a serious departure from the word of God.



9. Teaching that Christian parents should have their little children sprinkled with water or "christened" in baptism is a serious error and a departure from the word of God.

The word of God clearly teaches baptism by immersion for believing, repentant sinners who are old enough to believe in Jesus Christ as their personal Savior and Lord. While circumcision of infants was the covenantal sign of the children of Abraham in the Old Testament, the New Testament covenantal sign is water baptism by immersion for believers in Christ who are old enough to have faith in Him. Little children who are not of sufficient age to have personal faith in Christ are sanctified by the believing parent. Children are covered by the blood of Christ because of the faith of their believing parents.

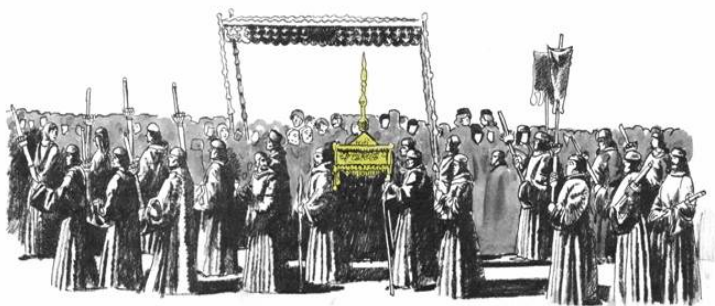
10. Teaching that celibacy is in any way a higher state of holiness than that of non-celibate believers is a serious departure from the word of God.

11. Teaching that lighting candles or saying prayers for the dead are effectual for relieving the "suffering of souls in purgatory" is disgusting and a serious departure from the word of God.

12. Teaching that the repetitious chanting of prayers (no matter how pious the content) is at all pleasing to our Lord is a serious departure from the word of God.

13. Teaching that the doing of penance (Hail Mary's, Our Fathers, pilgrimages, self-denial, or any other form) for the remission of sin or its punishment is a serious departure from the word of God. Christ's sufferings alone were sufficient to completely atone for the sins of the world.

14. Teaching that believers ought to join monasteries or nunneries where they can practice celibacy and devote their lives to poverty, penance, prayers for the dead, self-flagellation, lighting of candles, and other useless forms of sacramentalism and penance is a serious departure from the word of God.



15. Teaching that believers are to venerate, respect, adore, pray to, or show devotion to an image, icon, relic, statue, or artistic representation is a serious departure from the word of God. The [second commandment](#) forbids this.

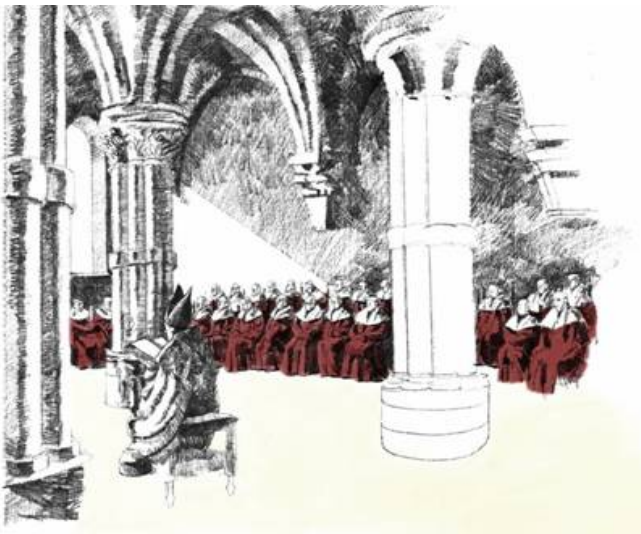
16. Teaching that the virgin Mary was immaculately conceived, was without sin, and that she can intercede for sinners and answer prayers directed to her is a serious departure from the word of God. Christ alone is the one mediator between God and man.

17. Teaching that the virgin Mary has been bodily raised from the dead is a serious departure from the word of God.

- 18.** Teaching that believers ought to petition the "Saints" for either spiritual blessings or temporal assistance is a serious departure from the word of God. Christ alone is the one mediator between God and man.



The "Saints" interceding for sinners?



- 19.** Teaching that any so-called leader of the church (whether a pastor, priest, bishop, or pope) has the power to either include or exclude any one from the kingdom of God is a serious departure from the word of God.

- 20.** Teaching that the "apostolic succession" of the "Popes" of Rome is the way to identify the true Christian church is a serious departure from the word of God.

The true Christian church is that fellowship of believers which adheres to and faithfully follows the same evangelical gospel which Christ and the apostles taught. Any man who teaches contrary to the doctrine which Christ and the apostles taught is an Antichrist regardless of his claim to "succession" or appointment to church leadership.

- 21.** Teaching that the apostle Peter was the first "Pope" and rock upon which our Lord Jesus Christ built His Church and that religious leaders in the church are entitled to be addressed such as by the title of Reverend, Most Reverend, My Lord, Father, or Holy Father is a serious departure from the word of God.

The true Christian church is built upon the Rock, Christ Jesus the Son of the living God. The "keys" to the kingdom of God which were entrusted to the apostle Peter were the words of his confession of faith in Christ as the Savior of the world, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Thus, it is the Gospel, not the personal word of Peter or one of his "successors" which contains the key to open the gates of paradise to any repentant sinner who puts his faith in the merits of the Son of God.





22. Teaching that church leaders ought to wear clerical attire, vestments, or robes which are distinct from the attire of the common ordinary believer is a serious departure from the word of God.

23. Teaching that certain portions of the church service ought to be spoken in a language such as Latin which the common believer does not understand is a serious departure from the word of God.

24. Teaching that—1.) the opinions of venerated post-apostolic churchmen called "Saints" and—2.) church tradition are of equal authority with the Bible in deciding matters of doctrine and morals is a serious departure from the word of God.

25. Teaching that a church leader has the authority to issue a decree, pronouncement, or ruling in matters of policy, doctrine, or morals which must be considered inerrant and infallible

when this leader is speaking "*ex cathedra*" is a serious departure from the word of God.

26. Teaching that divorce is an unforgivable sin and that remarried people are living in a continual state of sin is a serious departure from the word of God.



27. Teaching that the church ought to employ the civil powers of the state to enforce, propagate, or coerce the practice of religion is a serious departure from the word of God.

Against Antinomianism

28. Teaching that any individual person or religious organization has the power to alter, delete, or in any way change the holy Law of God, the Ten Commandments, is a serious departure from the word of God.

29. Teaching that the Second Commandment, which forbids bowing down to and praying to a statue or image, can be eliminated is a serious departure from the word of God.

30. Teaching that the Fourth Commandment can be tampered with to indicate that the Sabbath day is not the seventh day of the week but rather the first day of the week is a serious departure from the word of God.



31. Teaching that the Tenth Commandment can be divided into two commandments is a serious departure from the word of God.



32. Teaching that believers who are trusting in the blood of Christ need not seek by the power of the Holy Spirit to conform and transform their lives to begin to reflect the spirit and letter of God's holy Law, the Ten Commandments, is a serious departure from the word of God. Sanctification and is a life-long daily struggle against known sin and also against sins of ignorance. Repentance towards God and faith in the Lord Jesus is a daily growth in grace throughout one's lifetime.

Against the Teaching of the Natural Immortality of the Soul

33. Teaching that man is by nature immortal and that those who are not saved will burn alive for all eternity in hell fire is a serious departure from the word of God.

The saved believers will put on immortality on the Last Day at the "first resurrection". Then after one thousand years, the lost will be raised back to life in the "second resurrection". Satan and the fallen angels and the lost will suffer the full measure of Divine justice and punishment according to the record of their sins and then be completely destroyed—burned up by the unquenchable fire of God's final punishment—eternal death.



Against Hyper-Calvinism and Monergism

34. Teaching that—**1.)** God has predetermined and pre-elected who will be saved and who will be lost and—**2.)** that the grace of God is irresistible for those thus predetermined and pre-elected of God for salvation and **3.)** that believers in Christ cannot turn back to unbelief and be lost is a serious departure from the word of God.

Election for the believer is "in Christ". God has not foreordained who will be saved and who will be lost. God's omniscience must not be misconstrued as fatalistic pre-determinism. Our Lord died for the sins of the *whole* world. The Holy Spirit through the preaching of the gospel *calls all* to believe and repent. It is God's will that all should be saved through faith in Christ.

However, the grace of God is not irresistible. Men and women can and do harden their hearts and refuse to repent and believe in Christ to their own eternal loss. It is true that the natural man is in bondage to the prince of this world, Satan. But the Holy Spirit attends the proclamation of the Gospel of Christ and thus enables the hearer of the Word to believe. But those who repeatedly resist the call of the Holy Spirit in the preaching of the gospel are in very real danger of committing the unpardonable sin against the Holy Spirit and being eternally hardened in heart when the promptings of the Holy Spirit to repent and believe in Christ as savior can no longer be heard by the unrepentant sinner. The repentant Christian believer is secure in the grace of God and the blood of Jesus "keeps on cleansing from sin" so long as he *continues* to trust only in the blood of Jesus for his salvation and confess that he falls short of the glory of God and needs daily forgiveness.

Against Quietism

35. Teaching that sanctification and growth in maturity is by faith alone without any effort on the part of the believer is a serious departure from the word of God.

The true Gospel teaches us that the *justification* and forgiveness of repentant sinners is by faith in the sinless life and atoning death of our Lord alone. However, true *sanctification* on the other hand is by faith *and* works. It is a cooperative work in which the believer has an active part to play.



The Lord Jesus Christ *justifies* repentant sinners by faith in His doing and dying on the cross of Calvary alone and then motivates us to good works with the aid of the indwelling Holy Spirit of God. The daily battle of making a living, raising our children, helping our neighbor, loving our enemies, and wrestling with inbred tendencies to evil is fought by submitting to the will of God as revealed in His Word (not some inner voice) and then rising up to do that revealed will. This is where human talent and abilities are bidden to be used by the believer to glorify our Redeemer

and Savior. While no amount of human effort can win the blood-bought gift of the forgiveness of sin, adoption into the family of God, and eternal life (justification), the Lord calls us to use every talent and bring to bear every ounce of our strength empowered and motivated by the Holy Spirit in the great call to live lives worthy of our high calling (sanctification). The Christian knows that even after an entire lifetime of wrestling with evil tendencies from within, wrestling with temptation from without, and at the same time seeking to be a blessing to others, our sanctification falls short of the righteousness of God's holy standard. The Christian knows that only the *imputed* righteousness of Christ can answer the Law's demands on the Judgment Day. Imparted righteousness always bears the taint of imperfection in this life.



The theological term for this false teaching of "sanctification by faith alone" is called "quietism". The usual illustration given by the proponents of this view is that the Christian's life is like driving a car across the country on an old bumpy road. Jesus wants us to let Him sit in the driver seat and do the steering while we sit in the passenger seat and go along for the ride. We are supposedly to allow Him to have complete control of the life by total "yielding" or "submission". This "yielding" usually takes the form of "watching for signs" to show us which decision to make as for instance, daily choices of which house to buy, which car to choose, where we should shop, and even whom we should marry. The believer thinks that Jesus is going to "tell" him exactly what to do every minute of the day if he will only "yield" his will and "listen" to the "voice" or "watch" for the signs.

This is not the "rest" which the Lord has promised us. We rest in Jesus knowing we have eternal life and acceptance only through faith in the unmerited grace of God alone. However, the decisions of life and the living of life are a battle and a march. Christ gives us the Comforter, but does not do the living for us. The true Gospel *inspires* and *empowers* the church to good works, but the hope of the New Testament is not on the daily life of the believer.

From whence comes the light that allows the believer to have assurance of acceptance with God each day and on the Final Day? The light flows from the cross of Calvary. It is this light which bids us go on when we sin and stumble. When we groan because of our shortcomings and unworthiness to bear the name of Christian, the light of Calvary bids us to keep our eyes on the prize before us and not lose heart. Jesus calls out to us from His words in the bible, "Be of good cheer! Thy sins be forgiven thee!"



A better use of the illustration of the car would be to say that in sanctification Jesus is teaching us to drive the car. We must always have Him at our side as our Instructor and His Word as our road map.

It must be emphasized that true religion does not destroy the human will. Those who teach that the will of an unbeliever is the seat of evil are correct in teaching that a non-Christian's will is bound and held captive both legally and morally to Satan. But through the wooing and drawing power of the the Holy Spirit in prevenient grace the sinner is enabled to *respond* to the Gospel call to forgiveness and justification through faith in the merits of the sin pardoning Savior. Then a new principle is placed within the heart of the believing repentant sinner which wars against the old sinful nature and cooperates with Christ's will to bring forth the fruit of the Spirit in the life.

In conclusion, another point must be noted about those who teach a passive sanctification by faith alone. The proponents of this teaching can be seen as the most humble of men. Their voices seem to be almost hushed as they speak. Often there may even be a slight slump to their shoulders and they seem to be very gentle to the point of almost being effeminate. This is because they are trying so hard to submit their will to the point of extinction. They spend hours in prayer seeking to "crucify" the flesh. Actually they are in the process of spiritual suicide. If only they would take a look at Calvary and with the good old reformer Luther, laugh and rejoice that by God's unmerited grace alone He justifies repentant sinners by faith in Christ alone. This is the theme that will fill the earth with the glory of God.

Against the "Moral Influence" View of the Atonement

36. Teaching that Christ's death on the cross was not an atoning vicarious sacrifice for sin but merely a "[moral influence](#)" is a serious departure from the word of God.

This subtle deception misrepresents the Gospel to make it a system of salvation merely by copying the life of Christ and creating a moral change of a person's character by falsely teaching :

a.) That a blood sacrifice to atone for sin has its roots in pagan ideas of appeasement of "blood thirsty" angry gods.

b.) That the Old Testament practice of animal sacrifice was "borrowed" from terrible unenlightened views of a harsh god who must kill all who oppose His will unless an animal substitute is brought to satisfy or assuage his anger.

c.) That God is omnipotent and loving and therefore can forgive sin simply because He is a "gracious God".

d.) That Jesus Christ supposedly did not die on the cross to satisfy divine Justice, but merely to influence us to love God and to motivate us to moral living. Once a person is thus influenced by this view of the life and death of Christ, the person's heart will then be changed to love God and he is supposedly now "safe to save" because of this change of heart.

e.) That all of the Bible texts which speak of God's wrath against sin and His punishment of sinners for their sins are merely "dark speech" so that God can get the sinner's attention and tell the sinner about God's "unconditional forgiveness" and love. God supposedly never punishes sinners according to this view. All the bad consequences of sin are merely the natural result of the sinner's bad choices.



The true view of the Gospel is that Justice cannot be set aside even by an omnipotent and all loving God. Only Divine love and wisdom could have formulated the true plan of salvation which satisfies all the demands of justice, allows repentant sinners to be forgiven by God, and allows a holy God to give fallen sinners access to the gift of His indwelling Spirit to begin the work of restoration of the moral image of God in fallen man. God does not delight in the punishment of those who oppose Him, but His justice requires death to all who fall short of perfect righteousness. The demands of justice must be met. Man is not a mere amoral animal. He is created in the moral image of God and thus God holds Man morally responsible for his actions.

In order for God to be just and yet to justify a sinner, God Himself stepped down from His throne and humbled Himself to take on the form of a servant and suffer in the place of the guilty human race. The forgiveness and mercy of God are unmerited but not "unconditional."

Christ came into the world to fulfill all of the conditions of salvation for us. When Christ died upon the cross, Divine Justice could truly bow at the foot of the cross and say, "It is enough." Jesus' last words were, "It is finished". He had completed what He came to do: to pay the price to satisfy the penalty.

Thus we must never think that God's forgiveness and mercy are "unconditional". Christ met all the conditions of God's holy covenant for us: perfect obedience to the Law of God and death for the transgressor. On the cross our Lord was treated as we deserve so that we may be treated as He deserved. God's grace is "unmerited". We don't deserve God's grace, but He showers His mercy and grace upon the world because of Christ's righteous life and atoning death for the sins of the world.

Satan misrepresents God as delighting in the death of sinners. Jesus proved that God delights only in forgiving trespasses.

The greatest joy in heaven is that of covering the smelly prodigal with Christ's robe of righteousness, forgiveness, and reconciliation. The true gospel proves that God is not a blood thirsty God—proves that the Old Testament sacrifices pointed to the true cost of forgiveness—Christ's death on the cross of Calvary. The true gospel shows that even the omnipotent gracious God cannot wink at sin and overlook evil. The true gospel shows that limiting the work of Christ to a mere influence to motivate us to be "safe to save" is another attempt to make the true meaning of the cross of Christ of none effect.

In conclusion, the evil of this "moral influence" view is that Man is robbed of his confidence before the awesome righteousness of God. Man knows, even in this world's criminal justice system, offenders must be punished. An earthly judge who winks at crime without any punishment would be intolerable. So it is in the heavenly courts. Sinful man knows that punishment must take its toll. Selfishness if left to run riot would destroy the very fabric of society. God therefore provides the true way to be just and the justifier of the transgressor. The forgiven repentant sinner is forgiven justly and can live confidently knowing that his sin is forgiven in Christ, washed away by the blood of the Lamb.

The teaching that God could forgive mankind without having given His Son as a sin offering robs Christ of the glory due to Him for having endured the terrible punishment due to all sinners—separation from God. God the Father hid His face from Christ on the cross. Christ cried out, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" God does punish sin, so God Himself took our punishment so that we may go free. This is the true Gospel. The moral influence view is an abomination.

37. Teaching that God does not act to punish, either in this life or on the final day, those who oppose His will, but that the ruin of the unbelieving sinner is merely the natural outworking of sin's natural consequences is a serious departure from the word of God.

The word of God affirms the ruinous natural consequences of sin, but further affirms that God will justly punish and destroy all who ally themselves with Satan



38. Teaching that there is another means to a knowledge of the true God other than that of the true Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ is a serious departure from the word of God.

Against Universal Forensic Justification

39. Teaching that God has justified the entire human race at the cross, because all mankind was mystically crucified in Christ's flesh when He died on the cross is a serious distortion of the truth of the gospel. The true gospel teaches us that justification and forgiveness are *offered* to all the world. The Holy Spirit attends the gospel proclamation and enables "whosoever will" to call upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ in repentance towards God and faith in the blood of Christ.

Against Arianism and Semi-Arianism

40. Teaching that our Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit are not fully part of the Godhead—eternal, without beginning or end, all knowing, all powerful, immortal, self existing, possessing life unborrowed and underived is a serious departure from the word of God.



Against False Forms of Speaking in Tongues

41. Teaching that miracles and "speaking in tongues" are a proof of divine favor is a serious departure from the word of God.

The miraculous ability to preach and teach and pray in an actual foreign language such as was manifested in the early church is a true gift of the Holy Spirit. However, the nonsensical babbling that is heard today in "Pentecostal" or "Charismatic" circles is an erroneous counterfeit of the true gift.

Against Dispensationalism, Amillennialism, and Pre-tribulationalism

42. Teaching that the church will be secretly raptured before the final tribulation is a serious departure from the word of God. ([See footnote # 1 below](#))

43. Teaching that the events of the modern state of Israel are in any way the fulfillment of kingdom prophecy is a serious departure from the word of God. ([See footnote # 2 below](#)) All repentant sinners who call upon the name of Christ constitute the true "Israel" of God.

44. Teaching that the Christian era is the symbolic "Millennium" and that there will not be a literal 1000 years between the second coming of Christ and the final destruction of the lost is a serious error. The word of God affirms that there will be a literal 1000 years between the resurrection of the redeemed believers at the second coming of Christ and the resurrection of the lost who along with Satan will face the full wrath of God and final destruction after the 1000 years.

Against Ceremonial Holy Days of the Torah

45. Teaching that the various feast days, fast days, and ceremonial yearly sabbaths of the Old Testament such as Passover, Pentecost, Day of Atonement, and Tabernacles, (which were shadows and types pointing forward to Christ) are still to be observed by Christians today is a serious departure from the word of God. However, the weekly seventh day Sabbath which was sanctified and given to mankind before the fall of Adam at creation and proclaimed as the fourth commandment of the Ten Commandments is still to be observed for the Christian believer.

46. Teaching that the laws of circumcision, tithing, kosher diet, and the various civil and [ceremonial laws](#) and rituals of the Old Testament are still to be enforced today by the church as binding upon the Christian conscience is a serious departure from the word of God.

Those who wish to tithe, or observe the dietary regulations, or even be vegetarian may do so as a personal choice, but not as a binding rule in the church.



47. Teaching that all believers ought to observe "Christmas" or "Easter" as if these holidays were a part of the true apostolic Christian faith is a serious error. Those who do observe these holidays as secular holidays should do so without prejudice towards those Christians who do not observe them. Halloween, however, is a satanic abomination.



Against Darwinism and Theistic Evolution

48. Teaching that the theory of origins commonly called "Evolution" is in any way true and [compatible](#) with the Christian faith is a serious departure from the word of God.

49. Teaching that the seven days of the [creation week](#) in Genesis are merely a metaphor for [long eons of time](#) rather than actual twenty-four hour consecutive days; or that the Genesis account of the origin of Man, the Fall, and the entrance of sin and death is mythical, allegorical, or at all unfactual is a serious departure from the word of God.

50. Teaching that God used [evolution](#) as His creative process over millions of years to gradually produce a highly evolved human-like life form into which God breathed an "immortal soul" and thus created the first human beings called Adam and Eve is a serious departure from the word of God.

51. Teaching that the Biblical account of [Noah's flood](#) approximately 4,000 years ago is not a literal factual record of a world-wide flood which destroyed all human life on earth save those eight persons in the [ark of Noah](#) is a serious departure from the word of God.

Against New Age Spiritualism

52. Teaching that God is merely an impersonal force is a serious departure from the word of God.

53. Teaching that reincarnation is a process of "soul migration" to an eventual state of "oneness with the Godhead" is a serious departure from the word of God.

The true Gospel teaches that each one of us lives on this earth for only one lifetime. The uniqueness and value of each individual as precious in the sight of our loving God is a glorious truth. God loves us as individual persons and He will preserve us as individuals even in our resurrected bodies.





54. The common practice of.

Ancient Sorcery: such as astrology, praying to the dead, fortune telling, crystal ball use, ritual animal sacrifices, black and white magic, hypnosis, yoga, and

Modern Sorcery: such as extra-sensory perception, psychic power, mind over matter, positive mental attitude, prosperity psychology, metaphysics, will-power building, self-esteem building, mind science, believing-is-seeing, self-realization, human potential movement, imagination techniques, remote sensing, self-love techniques, and channeling are serious departures from the word of God.

Against Mormonism

55. Teaching that believers will become gods in the future and that human beings pre-existed as spirits without bodies prior to life on earth is a serious departure from the word of God.

56. Teaching that it is necessary to search out the genealogy of one's ancestry and be baptized for one's deceased relatives so that they might be saved is a serious departure from the word of God.



Those who believe Satan's lies will go into the captivity of Babylonian darkness.

Against Miscellaneous Errors and False Teaching

57. Teaching that angels were once able to have sexual relations with women and produce a race of [super-humans](#) is a serious error.

58. Teaching that Christians may be unequally yoked with unbelievers and join secret gnostic societies such as the Free Masons is a serious departure from the word of God.

59. Pornography, homosexuality, lesbianism, and the feminist movement are serious sins.

60. Abortion of unborn babies except in cases of rape or when the mother's life is in imminent danger is a serious sin.

61. Teaching that the word of God supposedly predicts certain specific post-apostolic era events in history such as the French Revolution; the rise of the United States of America; the fall of the Ottoman Empire; the taking of the pope prisoner by France in 1798; the Lisbon Earthquake in 1755; meteor showers in New England in the 1840's; a literal 1260 years of papal rule from AD 538 to 1798; or a literal 2300 year period from 457 BC to AD 1844 when our Lord supposedly "entered into the 'most holy place' of the heavenly sanctuary" to begin the "hour of God's judgment" are serious errors and a failure to rightly discern between the figurative and literal portions of the word of God.

62. Teaching that the seven churches, the seven seals, and the seven trumpets of the book of Revelation are specific dated eras in church history; and also teaching that the "1260 days", or the "3 and 1/2 years", or the "42 months", or the "2300 evening and morning sacrifices" of the apocalyptic portions of scripture refer to specific literal dates in history is a serious error and a failure to rightly discern between the figurative and literal portions of the word of God.

63. Teaching that believers can have visions and dreams and prophecies which are to be regarded as of equal authority to the Bible and of "continuing authority" in matters of faith and doctrine is a serious departure from the word of God. Only the Bible is to be considered as authoritative in matters of faith and doctrine. We must not despise prophesying in the church, but any prophecy in the Christian church today must be judged by and found to be in harmony with the word of God. Immature apocalyptic interpretation and unfaithful doctrine must be repented of and abandoned.
64. Teaching that by studying the Bible one can ascertain the time of Christ's Second Coming is a serious departure from the word of God. Immature apocalyptic interpretation and unfaithful doctrine must be repented of and abandoned.
65. Teaching that our Lord was telling His church to literally wash one another's feet before observing the Lord's Supper is a serious error and a failure to rightly discern between the figurative and literal portions of the word of God.
66. Teaching that the book of [Daniel](#) was written during the inter-testamental period of the second century BC and that the visions of Daniel are merely dealing with the desecration of the Temple by Antiochus Epiphanes and the subsequent Maccabee revolt against his rule is a serious failure to correctly interpret the word of God.

The book of Daniel was truly written in the sixth century B.C. during the Babylonian captivity of Israel, not in the 2d century B.C., and is a true prophecy of the coming of the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, as the Savior and Redeemer of the world.

67. Teaching that the word of God demands that Christians must practice total pacifism at all times and that it is wrong to use deadly force in 1.) self-defense, 2.) defense of innocent victims of criminal aggression in society, and 3.) defense of one's home, family, and nation when threatened by hostile domestic or foreign invasion. Our Lord's injunction in Matthew 5 of the New Testament against retaliation because of societal injustice was in the context of the tyrannical dominance of the Jewish nation of Israel and the early Christian church by the iron-fisted monarchy of the Roman Empire. Total pacifism at all times as practiced by various groups is scripturally unwarranted.

Footnotes:

Footnote #1. What are Dispensationalism, Futurism, the Secrete Rapture, and Preterism? [Return to Denial #41 above](#)

To the Reformation church the papacy was the very antichrist, the prophesied "man of sin," because it committed the ultimate impiety by making war on justification by faith. Dr. F. Pieper expresses the view of the Reformation when he writes in *Christian Dogmatics* :

There can be no greater enemy of the Church of God than the Papacy. In and by the doctrine of justification the Church lives . . . Can anything worse befall the Church than being robbed of the doctrine of justification, by which alone she lives and exists? When the enemy takes my earthly life, he can do me no greater harm in earthly matters. And when the Pope has taken away the spiritual life of the Church by robbing her of the doctrine of justification, the climax of harm has been reached. (St. Louis:Concordia Pub. House, 1950), Vol.2, pp. 553-554.

Said the renowned English expositor of the nineteenth century, Dr. H. Grattan Guinness:

From the first, and throughout, that movement [the Reformation] was energized and guided by the prophetic Word. Luther never felt strong and free to war against the papal apostasy till he recognized the pope as antichrist. It was then he burned the papal Bull. Knox's first sermon, the sermon which launched him on his mission as a Reformer, was on the prophecies concerning the Papacy. The Reformers embodied their interpretation of prophecy in their confessions of faith, and Calvin in his "Institutes". All the Reformers were unanimous in the matter . . . And their interpretation of these prophecies determined their reforming action . . . It nerved them to resist the claims of that apostate church to the uttermost. It made them martyrs, it sustained them at the stake. And the views of the Reformers were shared by thousands, by hundreds of thousands. They were adopted by princes and peoples... H. Grattan Guinness, *Romanism and the Reformation* (Toronto: S. R. Briggs, [n.d.]), pp.250-260.

The Counter Reformation and the Origin of Preterism and Futurism

Jesuit scholarship in the Counter-Reformation rallied to the Roman cause by providing two plausible alternatives to the historical interpretation of the Protestants.

1. Preterism... Luis de Alcazar (1554-1613) of Seville, Spain devised what became known as the "preterist" system of prophetic interpretation. This theory proposed that the Revelation deals with events in the Pagan Roman Empire, that antichrist refers to Nero and that the prophecies were therefore fulfilled long before the time of the medieval church. Alcazar's

preterist system has never made any impact on the conservative, or evangelical, wing of the Protestant movement, although in the last one hundred years it has become popular among Protestant rationalists and liberals.

2. Futurism... Francisco Ribera (1537-1591) of Salamanca, Spain took a far more successful tack. He was the founder of the "futurist" system of prophetic interpretation. Instead of placing antichrist way in the past as did Alcazar, Ribera argued that antichrist would appear way in the future. About 1590 Ribera published a five hundred page commentary on the Apocalypse, denying the Protestant application of antichrist to the Church of Rome. The gist of his futurist system was as follows:

a. While the first few chapters in the Revelation were assigned to ancient Rome in the time of John, the greater part of the prophecies of the Revelation were assigned to the distant future, to events immediately preceding the second coming of Jesus Christ.

b. Antichrist would be a single individual who would abolish the Christian religion, rebuild the temple at Jerusalem and be received by the Jews.

c. Antichrist's blasphemous work would continue for a literal three and a half years.

d. The locale of the conflict with antichrist would be the Middle East, i.e., Palestine.

Ribera's futurism was expanded and polished by later Catholic scholars and became the genuinely "Catholic" system of prophetic interpretation. Roman Catholic author G. S. Hitchcock summarizes the genesis of futurism and preterism as follows:

The Futuristic School founded by the Jesuit Ribera in 1591, looks for Antichrist, Babylon, and a rebuilt temple in Jerusalem, at the end of the Christian dispensation. The Preterist School, founded by the Jesuit Alcazar in 1614, explains the Revelation by the fall of Jerusalem, or by the fall of Pagan Rome in 410 AD—G. S. Hitchcock, *The Beasts and the Little Horn*, p.7.

In 1898 English Protestant author Joseph Tanner made these observations on the beginnings of futurism and preterism:

Accordingly, towards the close of the century of the Reformation, two of her [Rome's] most learned doctors set themselves to the task, each endeavoring by different means to accomplish the same end, namely, that of diverting men's minds from perceiving the fulfillment of the prophecies of the Antichrist in the Papal system. The Jesuit Alcazar devoted himself to bring into prominence the Preterist method of interpretation, which we have already briefly noticed, and thus endeavored to show that the prophecies of Antichrist were fulfilled before the Popes ever ruled at Rome, and therefore could not apply to the Papacy. On the other hand the Jesuit Ribera tried to set aside the application of these prophecies to the Papal Power by bringing out the Futurist system, which asserts that these prophecies refer properly not to the career of the Papacy, but to that of some future supernatural individual, who is yet to appear, and to continue in power for three and a half years. Thus, as Alford says, the Jesuit Ribera, about AD 1580, may be regarded as the Founder of the Futurist system in modern times.—Joseph Tanner, *Daniel and the Revelation* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1898), pp.16-17.

Ribera's futurism was polished and popularized by the great Catholic controversialist, Cardinal Bellarmine (1542-1621) of Italy. This astute prince of the church took up the battle against Protestantism and became the foremost apologist for Rome in the Counter Reformation. Bellarmine insisted that the prophecies concerning antichrist in Daniel, Paul and John had no application to the papal power. Between 1581 and 1593 he published the most detailed defense of the Catholic faith ever produced, called *Disputationes de Controversiis Christianae Fidei Adversus Huius Temporis Haereticos*. The third part of his *Disputationes* was devoted to showing that antichrist is not the papacy but a single man who will appear at the end of time. Said Bellarmine:

For all Catholics think thus that Antichrist will be one certain man; but all heretics teach . . . that Antichrist is expressly declared to be not a single person, but an individual throne or absolute kingdom, and apostate seat of those who rule over the church.—Bellarmine, "De Summo Pontifici," *Disputationes*, Bk. 3, chap. 2, p.185.

Bellarmino further said:

Nor can any one be pointed out who has been accepted for Antichrist, who has ruled exactly three and one-half years; therefore the Pope is not Antichrist. Then Antichrist has not yet come.—*Ibid.*, chap. 8, p.190.

The Pope is not Antichrist since indeed his throne is not in Jerusalem, nor in the Temple of Solomon.—*Ibid.*, chap. 13, p.195.

For nearly three hundred years the Protestant movement had no lack of expositors who very ably defended the "Protestant," or historical, school of prophetic interpretation. Until the nineteenth century, Protestantism stood unitedly on the historical principle of prophetic interpretation, and futurism therefore made no penetration within the Protestant movement.

Futurism Enters English Protestantism

Futurism first entered Protestantism in nineteenth century England by two seemingly widely separated developments.

Number 1. The first was the appearance of a Romanizing tendency in the Church of England. Briefly, the development was as follows:

- a. Dr. Samuel R. Maitland (1792-1866), curate of Christ Church at Gloucester and later librarian to the archbishop of Canterbury, was the first notable Protestant scholar to accept the Riberan interpretation of antichrist. Maitland held the Reformation in open contempt and freely admitted that his view of prophecy coincided with Catholic interpretation. His views were first published in 1826 and received widespread study and interest.
- b. James H. Todd (1805-1869), professor of Hebrew at the University of Dublin, studied and accepted Maitland's futuristic views. He strongly attacked the Reformers' historical system of prophetic interpretation. Todd's views were published and widely circulated among the theologians of his time.
- c. John Henry Newman (1801-1890), famous High Church Anglican who was converted to Rome and became a cardinal, was one of the leading spirits in the renowned Oxford, or Tractarian, movement. Five years before he joined the Church of Rome, Newman advocated Todd's futurism in a tract called *The Protestant Idea of Antichrist*. Newman wrote:

"We have pleasure in believing that in matters of Doctrine we entirely agree with Dr. Todd . . . The prophecies concerning Antichrist are as yet unfulfilled, and that the predicted enemy of the Church is yet to come."

Through the publication and dissemination of thousands of tracts, the Oxford movement leavened English Protestantism with the idea that the Reformers' understanding of antichrist was untrustworthy. It effectively diverted attention from Rome to some person to come in the future.

Number 2. About the same time as the development of the Oxford movement, there was another development in England which played a decisive role in bringing futurism within the Protestant movement. There was a growing disenchantment with the deadness of the established churches, a reaction against the spiritualizing tendency of post-millennialism (with its tendency toward modernism and preterism) and a revival of hope in the soon coming of Christ and the last things. Two religious leaders played an important role in these developments:

- a. Edward Irving (1792-1834), born in Scotland and a brilliant Presbyterian preacher, became a noted expositor in the British Advent Awakening. At first a historicist in his approach to the prophecies, Irving came to adopt futuristic views. He despaired of the church being able to complete her gospel commission by the ordinary means of evangelism and began to believe and preach about the miraculous return of the gifts and power of the early church.

In 1831 the "gift of tongues" and other "prophetic utterances" made their appearance among his followers, first in Scotland among some women and then in London. Irving never detected the imposture and gave credence to these new revelations. Under the influence of these revelations of "the Holy Ghost" "by other tongues," a new aspect was added to the expectation of a future antichrist - the rapture of the church before the advent of Christ. The novel origin of this novel theory has embarrassed some of its advocates, and in the face of certain lack of evidence heretofore, the defenders of this novel theory have tried to deny its historical beginning. But the recent discovery in a rare book of Rev. Robert Norton entitled *The Restoration of Apostles and Prophets; In the Catholic Apostolic Church*, published in 1861, establishes the origin of this innovative doctrine beyond all question. Norton was a participant in the Irvingite movement. The idea of a two-stage coming of Christ first came to a Scottish lass, Miss Margaret Macdonald of Port Glasgow, Scotland, while she was in a "prophetic" trance. Norton has actually preserved Miss Macdonald's pre-tribulation vision and "prophetic" utterance in his book. He says:

Marvelous light was shed upon Scripture, and especially on the doctrine of the Second Advent, by the revived spirit of prophecy. In the following account by Miss M. M. -, of an evening during which the power of the Holy Ghost rested upon her for several successive hours, in mingled prophecy and vision, we have an instance; for here we first see the distinction between that final stage of the Lord's coming, when every eye shall see Him, and His prior appearing in glory to them that look for Him. - Robert N. Norton, M.D., *The Restoration of Apostles and Prophets; In the Catholic Apostolic Church* (1861), p.15

A little later the idea of the secret pre-tribulation rapture was adopted and polished by the Plymouth Brethren in their founding Powercourt Conferences of the 1830's. S. P. Tregelles, who participated in the Powercourt Conferences, admits that the Brethren obtained the idea of the rapture from the Irvingite movement. He writes:

I am not aware that there was any definite teaching that there should be a Secret Rapture of the Church at a secret coming until this was given forth as an "utterance" in Mr. Irving's church from what was then received as being the voice of the Spirit. But whether anyone ever asserted such a thing or not it was from that supposed revelation that the modern doctrine and the modern phraseology respecting it arose.—S. P. Tregelles, *The Hope*

of *Christ's Coming*, p.35, cited by George L. Murray, *Millennial Studies—A Search for Truth* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1960), p.138.

b. John Nelson Darby (1800-1882), one of the prominent founders of the movement often known as Plymouth Brethren, was not only an ardent futurist, but he added another new dimension to the futuristic scheme Dispensationalism.

Says Oswald T. Allis in his book, *Prophecy and the Church*:

The Dispensational teaching of today, as represented, for example, by the Scofield Reference Bible, can be traced back directly to the Brethren Movement which arose in England and Ireland about the year 1830. Its adherents are often known as Plymouth Brethren, because Plymouth was the strongest of the early centers of Brethrenism. It is also called Darbyism, after John Nelson Darby (1800-82), its most conspicuous representative. The primary features of this movement were...

1. The Parenthesis Church

The beginning of the Brethren doctrine regarding the Church is found in the claim that an ordained ministry and eldership was not necessary to the proper observance of the great central rite of the Christian Church, the Lord's Supper. It was claimed that Christian believers might meet together to break bread, without any ecclesiastical order or government whatsoever. And since the New Testament speaks quite definitely of the ordaining of elders, it was claimed that this "professing church" which is characterized by a ministry or eldership having "successive" or "derivative" authority was Jewish and Petrine, and to be sharply distinguished from the Church described by Paul as a "mystery," which is entirely unique, utterly distinct from Israel, a heavenly body having no connection with the earth. So understood, the Church age is to be regarded as a "parenthesis" between the Old Testament kingdom of the past and the Old Testament kingdom of the future, or in other words as constituting an "interruption" in the fulfillment of the kingdom promises to Israel. This distinction between the true (Pauline) Church and the professing (Petrine) church is of fundamental importance.

2. The Any Moment Coming

Closely connected with the doctrine of the Church was the doctrine of the Coming. Brethrenism had its beginnings at a time when there was great interest in the doctrine of the Second Advent. Edward Irving had stirred London by his flaming eloquence, declaring in sermon after sermon that the Lord might come at any moment. The Brethren, who were ardent Chiliasts, took the position that the Church as a heavenly body had no connection with earthly events, that such events concerned Israel and the nations, that the Church must live in constant expectancy of the coming of the Lord, that no events of any kind must be regarded as necessarily intervening between the Church and this any moment expectancy, and particularly that the rapture of the Church would certainly take place before the great tribulation.

This any moment doctrine of the coming had a natural and inevitable consequence, which is of prime importance in Dispensational teaching. It led to the discovery of a second hidden interval or parenthesis in the course of redemptive history as set forth in the Bible. If the Church has nothing to do with earthly events and may be raptured at any moment, and if the Bible clearly refers to events which are to precede the coming of Christ to the earth, the logical inference is that there must be two aspects or "stages" of the coming: one which concerns the Church only and is timeless and signless, and the other which concerns the earth and will be separated from the former by an interval during which the predicted events will take place. Consequently, instead of adhering to the view that the rapture, the catching up of the saints to meet the Lord in the air, would be immediately or speedily followed by their return with Him to reign over the earth, which was the view generally held at that time by Pre-millennialists, the Brethren reached the conclusion that a sharp distinction must be drawn between the coming of the Lord for the saints (the rapture) and His coming with the saints (the appearing or revelation). In between these two events, they claimed that they could recognize an important interval of time; namely the 70th week of Dan. 9, the second part of which they identified more or less exactly with the events recorded in Rev. 4:19. Consequently, this second parenthesis, as we may call it, between the rapture and the appearing, is both a very necessary and also a distinctive feature of Brethren teaching, almost if not quite as important as the Church parenthesis referred to above.

3. The Jewish Remnant

Closely related to this teaching regarding the Church and the Coming and indeed indispensable to it was the doctrine of the Jewish Remnant. If the Church consists only of those who have been redeemed in the interval between Pentecost and the rapture, and if the entire Church is to be raptured, then there will be no Christians on earth during the period between the rapture and the appearing. Yet during that period 144,000 in Israel and an innumerable multitude from the Gentiles (Rev. vii.) are to be saved. How is this to be brought about, if the Church has been raptured and the Holy Spirit removed from the earth? The answer to this question is found in the doctrine of the Jewish remnant. After the rapture of the Church a Jewish remnant is to proclaim the gospel

of the kingdom and through the preaching of this gospel multitudes are to be saved. . .

This Brethren Controversy, as we may call it, has now become largely a thing of the past. The Plymouth Brethren are today one of the smallest of Christian groups, and their distinctive conception of Church order and government is very largely ignored. On the other hand, the fact that many of the views of the Brethren (their conception of the Church as a heavenly mystery and their prophetic program as a whole) are fully accepted in Dispensational circles, are indeed characteristic of Dispensationalism as such, has made Dispensationalism an issue of greater or lesser importance in practically all evangelical denominations at the present time . . .

Dispensationalism in America

The distinctive features of Brethrenism were fully developed and formulated before the middle of the last century. Darby made his first visit to Canada in 1859 and subsequently paid repeated visits to Canada and the United States . In 1862 James Inglis of New York began the publication of a monthly, *Waymarks in the Wilderness*, which helped to spread the teachings of the Brethren on this side of the Atlantic . One of the most influential advocates of this teaching was James H. Brookes of St. Louis , whose *Maranatha* appeared about 1870 and passed through many editions. But while Brookes' Dispensational views so closely resemble those of the Brethren that it seems clear that they were largely derived from them, Brookes gave no credit for them to Darby or any other of the Brethren. This may be due to the fact that there were associations with the name of Darby which Brookes wished to avoid. But his attitude was characteristic of the movement as a whole. Dispensationalists have accepted the prophetic teaching of the Brethren, but until recently have shown themselves decidedly unwilling to disclose the source from which they derived them. Brookes was active in the summer conferences known as "Believers' Meetings for Bible Study" which were commenced in the seventies, and also in the Prophetic Conferences, the first of which was held in New York in 1878.

Without attempting to trace the history of Dispensationalism in detail, it will suffice to point out that it has owed its rapid growth in no small degree to two books, *Jesus is Coming* by "W.E.B.", and the *Scofield Reference Bible*. Blackstone's *Jesus is Coming* was published in 1878... *The Scofield Reference Bible* was published in 1909 and revised in 1917. More than two million copies have been printed. It is the Bible of Dispensationalists, and has probably done as much to popularize the prophetic teachings of Darby and the Brethren as all other agencies put together. That Scofield was indebted to the Brethren for his Dispensational views cannot be questioned. He derived them first indirectly, from Brookes, and then directly from the Brethren and their writings. He held Darby's *Synopsis*, which is the standard commentary among the Brethren, in high esteem; and in the "Introduction to the Reference Bible" he acknowledged his indebtedness to the Brethren Movement without expressly mentioning it, and made special mention of the "eminent Bible teacher," Walter Scott, who was a prominent figure among the Brethren. There are today scores of Bible Schools and Institutes in this country and elsewhere, especially in Canada , where Dispensational interpretation of the Bible is stressed and the *Scofield Reference Bible* practically a textbook. And the number of books and periodicals in circulation today which represent this viewpoint is legion—(Philadelphia: The Presbyterian & Reformed Pub. Co., 1972), pp.9-14.

A Summarized Appraisal

In the last one hundred years the Protestant movement has largely abandoned the prophetic convictions of historic Protestantism and has opted for theories which have their origin with the Jesuits. The liberal wing of the Protestant movement, often denying the inspiration of the Bible or spiritualizing away its most pointed truths, have adopted the preterist view of prophecy, first espoused by Jesuit Alcazar. But the right wing of Protestantism, espousing an extreme literalism in reaction against the liberals, have taken over Ribera's futurism, and in some circles they have made it a part of "evangelical orthodoxy." This represents a remarkable triumph of the theories of Rome 's Counter Reformation.

Above all, we need to see the reason why Protestantism has swerved away from her historic prophetic convictions. It is because the great truth of justification by faith is no longer at the center of the church's attention. As we will see in the next article, that truth has been buried by an earthly, man-centered vision. Says Dr. Francis Pieper:

What, then, may be the reason that men are today disinclined to recognize the Pope as the Antichrist? Whence this strange and deplorable phenomenon, that nearly all recent "believing" theologians search about for the Antichrist while he is performing his work in the Church right before their eyes, his soul-destroying activity as plain as day? The trouble is that they have no living knowledge of the doctrine of justification and of the importance of this doctrine for the Church. From my own experience I must confess that I was vitally convinced that the Pope is the Antichrist only after I realized, on the one hand, what the doctrine of justification is and how much it means to the Church, and, on the other hand, that the real essence of the Papacy consists in denying and cursing the doctrine of justification . . .

Most modern Protestant theologians have adopted the Roman view of the doctrine of justification, as Doellinger

pointed out in his lectures on the reunion of the Christian Church.—Pieper, *op. cit.*, Vol.2, pp.554. [Return to Denial #41 above](#)

Footnote #2. What is the New Testament view of the "Israel of God"? [Return to Denial # 42 above](#)

What determines whether a man is a real son of Abraham?

For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God. Gal. 6:15-16.

To the Jew it was most important that he could prove he was a son of Abraham, for "to Abraham and his seed were the promises made." Gal. 3:16. The Pharisees were certain of being part of the Israel of God because they could trace their physical descent back to Abraham. John the Baptist declared that they were resting on a false confidence. ". . . think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father," he warned them, "for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham." Matt. 3:9. Mere physical descent would give them no claim on God and no right to be included in the Israel of God.

Again, the Pharisees said to Jesus, "Abraham is our father." John 8:39. But Jesus denied their confident claim, saying, "It ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham." John 8:39. Jesus categorically denied that they were children of Abraham.

When Zaccheus showed by his works that he had the faith of Abraham, Jesus declared, "Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham." Luke 19:9 RSV Jesus was not saying that Zaccheus was saved because he was a physical descendant of Abraham-for there were many Jews in Palestine who were not saved. Jesus was saying that Zaccheus' faith constituted him a real son of Abraham. The Lord could have said to him, as he said to the repentant woman, "Thy faith hath saved thee . . ." Luke 7:50.

Again, Jesus greeted Nathaniel with the salutation, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!" John 1:47. The word "indeed" signifies a true, or real, Israelite. Jesus therefore declared that a real Israelite is a man "in whom is no guile." According to Psalm 32, the guileless man is not a sinless man but the man who honestly continues to confess his sinfulness and who finds forgiveness at the hand of a merciful God. St. Paul cites Psalm 32 and shows that this guileless man (the Israelite "indeed") is the man who is justified by faith (see Rom. 4:1-8).

The clear teaching of Jesus about the real Israel of God is found also in the epistles of His great apostle. Could words be clearer than the following?:

For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly: and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God. Rom. 2:28-29.

Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed. Rom. 9:7- 8.

. . . even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. Gal. 3:6-7.

And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. Gal. 3:29.

For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God. Gal. 6:15-16.

Christ the Seed of Abraham

God made promises to the seed of Abraham. The Jews are still waiting for God to carry out His promises to them, and more amazing, many Christians are now waiting for God to carry out His promises to the Jewish nation as the seed of Abraham. This is what happens when people read the Old Testament without the light and interpretation of the New Testament.

Now let us get two simple facts straight once and for all:

1. God made promises to Abraham's seed (Gal. 3:19).

2. Christ is the Seed of Abraham. ("Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of One, And to thy Seed, which is Christ.") This is why Christ is called the Mediator of the covenant. It is only by Him, in Him and through Him that God carries out any of His promises to Abraham.

The Seed of Abraham is Jesus Christ. It includes all who are in Christ and excludes all outside of Christ. So the apostle affirms:

"... if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." Gal. 3:29.

When the apostle declares, "And so all Israel shall be saved..." (Rom. 11:26), he is certainly not teaching us that every member of the Jewish race will be saved. But the seed of Israel shall be saved - that is to say, all those who are in Jesus Christ - and not one shall be lost.

Neither Jesus nor Paul is speaking in mere allegories when they tell us who are the children of Abraham. They are telling us who are real children of Abraham. Abraham was justified by faith and therefore became the father of Israel. All who are justified by faith are real children of Abraham (Gal. 3:8). The Seed of Israel is Jesus Christ. He is also the "King of the Jews." If a man is related to Jesus Christ, who can deny that he is a real Jew according to the Scriptures? For those who believe in Jesus Christ are born again (1 John 5:1), and they actually partake of the nature of Jesus Christ (2 Peter 1:4).

The Gentile Church Not a Separate Identity

The Judaizers at Galatia were contending that the Gentiles had to become children of Abraham by means of certain changes in their flesh. The apostle Paul did not dispute the necessity of Gentiles becoming part of the Israel of God. Indeed, "all Israel shall be saved," and only Israel - for as Jesus said, "salvation is of the Jews." John 4:22. The apostle refuted the wrong method of trying to incorporate the Gentiles into the Israel of God. His message was clear: Abraham was justified by faith, and every Gentile who is justified by faith becomes a son of Abraham (Gal. 3:8). The promises were made to the seed of Abraham, and Christ is that Seed. Therefore, all who are truly baptized into Christ are in Christ and are part of Abraham's seed (Gal. 3:28, 29). Those who have become new creatures by faith in Jesus and walk according to the rule of faith are "the Israel of God." Gal. 6:15,16.

Gentiles who believe the gospel become "fellow heirs" with the faithful Jews. They do not make up a separate body, but they become "fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel..." Eph. 3:6. The Gentiles, "being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them [the Jews], and with them partake of the root and fatness of the olive tree..." Rom. 11:17. Once "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise," the Gentiles are "made nigh by the blood of Christ." Eph. 2:12-13. Being now children of Abraham, part of the commonwealth of Israel and partakers of God's promises to Israel, believing Gentiles make up "the house of Israel" to whom the new covenant promise is given:

For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put My laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to Me a people... Heb. 8:10.

The Israel of God are all those who are in Jesus Christ, the Seed of Abraham, the King of the Jews, the One to whom the promises were made. And in Jesus Christ all national distinctions are broken down. "... there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek..." Rom. 10:12. "... ye are all one in Christ Jesus." Gal. 3:28. "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism..." Eph 4:4-5. Therefore, in the things of the gospel any national distinctions deny the reality of the atonement of Jesus Christ (Eph. 2:14 -17) and are a Judaising perversion of the New Testament message.

There are some who take pride in their literal interpretation of the things of prophecy, especially Old Testament prophecy. No sound Bible scholar will deny that the Bible should be read in its historical-grammatical sense or that "literal wherever possible" is a good rule. But many prophecies of the Old Testament cannot be taken with strict literalness. The stone of stumbling to both houses of Israel was not a literal stone but Jesus Christ. Malachi's Elijah was not literally Elijah but John the Baptist. Many more examples could be given, but our point is this: How would we know the true interpretation without the New Testament? Does not the gospel determine our use of the Old Testament? Besides, a crass literalness is in keeping with the method of interpretation employed by the Pharisees. When Jesus gave a non-literal application to the Messianic prophecy about delivering the captives, they were angry. They refused to have anything to do with His spiritual kingdom, which could be seen and entered only by those who were born again. When Jesus spoke of destroying the temple and raising it up again, they insisted on giving His words a literal meaning. Jesus even had to rebuke his disciples for taking literally his warning, "... beware of the leaven of the Pharisees..." Matt. 16:11. Because they thought Jesus spoke about literal bread, He asked, "Do ye not yet understand..." Matt. 16:9.

The New Israel

Just as the Bible presents an old covenant and a new covenant, so it presents an old Israel and a new Israel . The old Israel was constituted under the twelve tribes named after the twelve sons of Jacob. When Jesus chose twelve apostles, He was taking steps to constitute the Christian church. Yet why did he deliberately choose twelve apostles? And why did the apostle James address the church as "the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad"? James 1:11. It was because the New Testament church, comprised of Jews and Gentiles, constituted the new Israel of God. When Christ died on the cross, national distinctions were ended. The old national religious economy was as extinct as the old covenant. Henceforth the Christian church, founded on the teachings of the twelve apostles, would be the new Israel , the inheritor of all the promises and responsibilities of Israel of the Old Testament.

Conclusion: Abraham was justified by faith (Gen. 15:6; Rom. 4:3). Just as Abraham had two sons—Ishmael and Isaac—so there were always two classes of Jews. Not all were true sons of Abraham. The prophets frequently referred to the faithful remnant, who were the real children of Abraham.

Finally, at the time of the apostles there was a saved "remnant according to the election of grace" (Rom. 9:27 ; 11:5). This remnant were those who welcomed their Messiah and were justified by faith in Jesus. God's word had not failed (Rom. 9:6). These alone were the lineage of Isaac, and the rest were counted as Ishmaelites - illegitimate children. All Israel - that is, all who were justified by faith - would be saved according to God's promise, which could never fail (Rom. 11:26). And all from among the Gentiles who would believe on Christ and be justified by faith would become children of Abraham. There is one way of salvation, one body, one faith, one baptism. Christ is the Seed of Abraham. The promises of God are by Him, to Him, through Him and in Him. He is the Elect One (Isa. 42:1), and the chosen people are those who are chosen in Him (Eph. 1:4).

For all the promises of God in Him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us. 2 Cor. 1:20.

The following chart illustrates how the New Testament church has become the new Israel:

Old Israel	New Israel
Holy nation Ex. 19:5, 6	Holy nation 1 Peter 2:9; Matt. 21:43
Kingdom of priests Ex. 19:5, 6	Kingdom of priests 1 Peter 2:5, 9; Rev. 1:6; Rev. 4:4; 5:10
A peculiar treasure Ex. 19:5, 6	A peculiar treasure 1 Peter 2:9
God's people Hosea 1:9, 10; Rom. 9:6-8	God's people 1 Peter 2:9
A holy people Deut. 7:6	A holy people 1 Peter 1:15, 16
A people of inheritance Deut. 4:20	A people of inheritance Eph. 1:18
God's tabernacle among Israel Lev. 26:11	God's tabernacle among Israel John 1:14
God walked among them Lev. 26:12	God walks among His people 2 Cor. 6:16-18
Twelve sons of Jacob	Twelve apostles
Twelve tribes	Twelve tribes scattered abroad James 1:1
Christ married to His people Isa. 54:5; Jer. 3:14; Hosea 2:19; Jer. 6:2; 31:32	Christ married to the church James 4:4; Eph. 5:23-33; 2 Cor. 11:2

See: [Dave MacPherson's The Unbelievable Pre-Trib Origin](#) [Return to Denial # 42 above](#)

