

# THE TRINITY REVIEW

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare [are] not fleshly but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. And they will be ready to punish all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled.

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## The Grand Inquisitor

Fyodor Dostoyevsky

*Editor's note: The Brothers Karamazov has been acclaimed as Dostoyevsky's best novel, and certainly "The Grand Inquisitor" is his most perceptive piece of theology. He grasps the enormity of the perversion of Christianity embraced by the large, allegedly Christian churches, and he condenses that perversion to these words: miracle, mystery, and authority, the three temptations of Christ in the wilderness. Christ rejected those temptations, but those who claim to be his representatives on Earth have not: "We have corrected Thy work and have founded it upon miracle, mystery and authority. And men rejoiced that they were again led like sheep." The speaker in Ivan Karamazov*

"My story is laid in Spain, in Seville, in the most terrible time of the Inquisition, when fires were lighted every day to the glory of God, and in the splendid act of faith the wicked heretics were burnt. Oh, of course, this was not the coming in which He will appear according to His promise at the end of time in all His heavenly glory, and which will be sudden 'as lightning flashing from east to west.' No, He visited His children only for a moment, and there where the flames were crackling round the heretics. In His infinite mercy He came among men in that human shape in which He walked among men for three years fifteen centuries ago. He came down to the 'hot pavement' of the southern town in which on the day before almost a hundred heretics had, 'for the greater glory of God,' been burned by the cardinal, the Grand Inquisitor, in a magnificent

'act of faith.' They had been burned in the presence of the king, the court, the knights, the cardinals, the most charming ladies of the court, and the whole population of Seville.

"He came softly, unobserved, and yet, strange to say, everyone recognized Him.... This might be one of the best passages in the poem. I mean, why they recognized Him....The people are irresistibly drawn to Him, they surround Him, they flock about Him, follow Him. He moves silently in their midst with a gentle smile of infinite compassion. The sun of love burns in His heart, light and power shine from His eyes, and their radiance, shed on the people, stirs their hearts with responsive love. He holds out His hands to them, blesses them, and a healing virtue comes from contact with Him, even with His garments. An old man in the crowd, blind from childhood, cries out: 'O Lord, heal me and I shall see Thee!' And, as it were, scales fall from his eyes and the blind man sees Him. The crowd weeps and kisses the Earth under His feet. Children throw flowers before Him, sing, and cry Hosannah. 'It is He. It is He!' all repeat. 'It must be He, it can be no one but Him!' He stops at the steps of the Seville cathedral at the moment when the weeping mourners are bringing in a little open white coffin. In it lies a child of seven, the only daughter of a prominent citizen. The dead child lies hidden in flowers. 'He will raise your child,' the crowd shouts to the weeping mother. The priest, coming to meet the coffin, looks perplexed, and frowns, but the mother of the dead child throws herself at His feet

with a wail. 'If it is Thou, raise my child!' she cries, holding out her hands to Him. The procession halts, the coffin is laid on the steps at His feet. He looks with compassion, and His lips once more softly pronounce 'Maiden, arise!' And the maiden arises. The little girl sits up in the coffin and looks around smiling, with wide-open wondering eyes, holding a bunch of white roses they had put in her hand.

"There are cries, sobs, confusion among the people, and at that moment the cardinal himself, the Grand Inquisitor, passes by the cathedral. He is an old man, almost ninety, tall and erect, with a withered face and sunken eyes, in which there is still a gleam of light. He is not dressed in his brilliant cardinal's robes, as he was the day before, when he was burning the enemies of the Roman Church—at this moment he is wearing his coarse, old, monk's cassock. At a distance behind him come his gloomy assistants and slaves and the 'holy guard.' He stops at the right of the crowd and watches it from a distance. He sees everything; he sees them set the coffin down at His feet, sees the child rise up. His face darkens. He knits his thick gray brows and his eyes gleam with a sinister fire. He holds out his finger and bids his guards arrest Him. And such is his power, so completely are the people cowed into submission and trembling obedience to him, that the crowd immediately makes way for the guards. And in the midst of deathlike silence the guards lay hands on Him and lead Him away. The crowd instantly bows down to the Earth, like one man, before the old inquisitor. He blesses the people in silence and passes on.

"The guards lead their Prisoner to the close, gloomy vaulted prison in the ancient palace of the Holy Inquisition and lock Him in it. The day passes and is followed by the dark, burning 'breathless' night of Seville. The air is 'fragrant with laurel and lemon.' In the pitch darkness the iron door of the prison is suddenly opened and the Grand Inquisitor himself comes in with a light in his hand. He is alone. The door is closed at once behind him. He stands in silence and for a minute or two gazes into His face. At last he goes up slowly, sets the light on the table and speaks.

"Is it Thou? Thou?' But receiving no answer, he adds at once, 'Don't answer, be silent. What canst Thou say, indeed? I know too well what Thou wouldst say. And Thou hast no right to add anything to that Thou hadst said of old. Why, then, art Thou come to hinder us? For Thou has come to hinder us, and Thou knowest that. But dost Thou know what will be tomorrow? I know not who Thou art and care not to know whether it is Thou or only a semblance of Him. But tomorrow I shall condemn Thee and burn Thee at the stake as the worst of heretics. And the very people who have today kissed Thy feet, tomorrow at the faintest sigh from me will rush to heap up the embers of Thy fire. Knowest Thou that? Yes, maybe Thou knowest it,' he added with thoughtful penetration, never for a moment taking his eyes off the Prisoner."

"I don't quite understand, Ivan. What does it mean?" Alyosha, who had been listening in silence, asked with a smile. "Is it simply a fantasy, or a mistake on the part of the old man—some impossible mistaken identity?"

"Take it as the last," said Ivan, laughing, "if you are so corrupted by modern realism that you can't stand fantasy. If you like it to be a case of mistaken identity, let it be so. It is true," he went on, laughing, "the old man was ninety, and he might well have been crazy over his set idea. He might have been struck by the appearance of the Prisoner. It might, in fact, be simply his ravings, the delusion of an old man of ninety, overexcited by the 'act of faith' of a hundred heretics the day before. But does it matter to us after all whether it was a mistake of identity or a wild fantasy? All that matters is that the old man should speak out, should speak openly of what he has thought in silence for ninety years."

"And the Prisoner too is silent? Does He look at him and not say a word?"

"That's inevitable," Ivan laughed again. "The old man has told Him He hasn't the right to add anything to what He has said of old. One may say it is the most fundamental feature of Roman Catholicism, in my opinion at least. 'All has been given by Thee to the Pope,' they say. 'And all, therefore, is still in the Pope's hands, and there is no

need for Thee to come now at all. Thou must not meddle for the time, at least.' That's how they speak and write too—the Jesuits, at any rate. I have read it myself in the works of their theologians. 'Hast Thou the right to reveal to us one of the mysteries of that world from which Thou hast come?' my old man asks Him, and answers the question for Him. 'No, Thou hast not; that Thou mayest not add to what has been said of old, and mayest not take from men the freedom which Thou didst exalt when Thou was on Earth. Whatsoever Thou revealest anew will encroach on men's freedom of faith; for it will be manifest as a miracle, and the freedom of their faith was dearer to Thee than anything else in those days fifteen hundred years ago. Didst Thou not often say then: "I will make you free"? But now Thou has seen these "free" men,' the old man adds suddenly, with a pensive smile. 'Yes, we've paid dearly for it,' he goes on, looking sternly at Him, 'but at last we have completed that work in Thy name. For fifteen centuries we have been wrestling with Thy freedom, but now it is ended and over for good. Dost Thou not believe that it's over for good? Thou lookest meekly at me and deignest not even to be angry with me. But let me tell Thee that now, today, people are more persuaded than ever that they have perfect freedom, yet they have brought their freedom to us and laid it humbly at our feet. But that has been our doing. Was this what Thou didst? Was this Thy freedom?'"

"I don't understand," Alyosha broke in again. "Is he ironical, is he joking?"

"No. Not at all! He claims it is a merit for himself and his Church that at last they have vanquished freedom and have done so to make men happy. 'For now' (he is speaking of the Inquisition, of course) 'for the first time it has become possible to think of the happiness of men. Man was created a rebel; and how can rebels be happy? Thou wast warned, 'he says to Him. 'Thou hast had no lack of warnings, but Thou didst not listen to those warnings. Thou didst reject the only way by which men might be made happy. But, fortunately, departing Thou didst hand on the work to us. Thou hast promised, Thou hast established by Thy word, Thou hast given to us the right to bind and to unbind, and now, of course,

Thou canst not think of taking it away. Why, then, hast Thou come to hinder us?'"

"And what's the meaning of 'no lack of warnings?'" asked Alyosha.

"Why, that's the chief part of what the old man must say."

"'The wise and dread spirit, the spirit of self-destruction and non-existence,' the old man goes on, 'the great spirit talked with Thee in the wilderness, and we are told in the books that he "tempted" Thee. Is that so? And could anything truer be said than what he revealed to Thee in three questions which Thou didst reject, and which in the books is called "the temptation"? And yet if there has ever been on Earth a real miracle, it took place on that day, on the day of the three temptations. The statement of those three questions was itself the miracle.... Imagine simply for the sake of argument that those three questions of the dread spirit had perished utterly from the books, and that we had to restore them and to invent them anew. To do so we had gathered together all the wise men of the Earth—rulers, chief priests, learned men, philosophers, poets—and had set them to the task of inventing three questions, such as would not only fit the occasion but express in three words, three human phrases, the whole future history of the world and of humanity. Dost Thou believe that all the wisdom of the Earth united could have invented anything in depth and force equal to the three questions which were actually put to Thee then by the wise and mighty spirit in the wilderness? From those questions alone, from the miracle of their statement, we can see that we have here to do not with the fleeting human intelligence, but with the absolute and eternal. For in those three questions the whole subsequent history of mankind is, as it were, brought together into one whole, and foretold. In them are united all the unsolved historical contradictions of human nature. At the time it could not be so clear, since the future was unknown. But now that fifteen hundred years have passed, we see that everything in those three questions was so justly divined and foretold, and has been so truly fulfilled, that nothing can be added to them or taken from them.

"Judge Thyself who was right—Thou or he who questioned Thee then? Remember the first question. Its meaning was this: "Thou wouldst go into the world, and art going with empty hands, with some promise of freedom which men in their simplicity and their natural unruliness cannot even understand, which they fear and dread—for nothing has ever been more insupportable for a man and a human society than freedom. But seest Thou these stones in this parched and barren wilderness? Turn them into bread, and mankind will run after Thee like a flock of sheep, grateful and obedient, though forever trembling, lest Thou withdraw Thy hand and deny them Thy bread." But Thou wouldst not deprive man of freedom and didst reject the offer, thinking, what is that freedom worth, if obedience is bought with bread? Thou didst reply that man lives not by bread alone. But dost Thou know that for the sake of that Earthly bread the spirit of the Earth will rise up against Thee and will strive with Thee and overcome Thee? And all will follow him, crying: "Who can compare with this beast? He has given us fire from heaven!" Dost Thou know that the ages will pass, and humanity will proclaim by the lips of theirs ages that there is no crime, and therefore no sin; there is only hunger? "Feed men, and then ask of them virtue!" that's what they'll write on the banner, which they will raise against Thee, and with which they will destroy Thy temple. Where Thy temple stood will rise a new building; the terrible tower of Babel will be built again. And though, like the one of old, it will not be finished, yet Thou mightest have prevented that new tower and have cut short the sufferings of men for a thousand years; for they will come back to us after a thousand years of agony with their tower. They will seek us again, hidden underground in the catacombs, for we shall be again persecuted and tortured. They will find us and cry to us: "Feed us, for those who have promised us fire from heaven haven't give it!" And then we shall finish building their tower, for he finishes the building who feeds them. And we alone shall feed them in Thy name, declaring falsely that it is in Thy name. Oh, never, never can they feed themselves without us! No science will give them bread so long as they remain free. In the end they will lay their freedom at our feet, and to say to us: "Make us your slaves, but feed us." They will

understand at last, that freedom and bread enough for all are inconceivable together. Never, never will they be able to have both together! They will be convinced, too, that they can never be free, for they are weak, vicious, worthless and rebellious.

"Thou didst promise them the bread of Heaven, but, I repeat again, can it compare with Earthly bread in the eyes of the weak, ever sinful and ignoble race of man? And if for the sake of the bread of Heaven thousands and tens of thousands shall follow Thee, what is to become of the millions and tens of thousands of millions of creatures who will not have the strength to forgo the Earthly bread for the sake of the heavenly? Or dost Thou care only for the tens of thousands of the great and strong, while the millions, numerous as the sands of the sea, who are weak but love Thee, must exist only for the sake of the great and strong? No, we care for the weak too. They are sinful and rebellious, but in the end they too will become obedient. They will marvel at us and look on us as gods, because we are ready to endure the freedom which they have found so dreadful and to rule over them—so awful it will seem to them to be free. But we shall tell them that we are Thy servants and rule them in Thy name. We shall deceive them again, for we will not let Thee come to us again. That deception will be our suffering, for we shall be forced to lie.

"This is the significance of the first question in the wilderness, and this is what Thou hast rejected for the sake of that freedom which Thou has exalted above everything. Yet in this question lies hidden the great secret of this world. Choosing "bread," Thou wouldst have satisfied the universal and everlasting craving of humanity—to find someone to worship. So long as man remains free he strives for nothing so incessantly and so painfully as to find someone to worship. But man seeks to worship what is established beyond dispute, so that all men would agree at once to worship it. For these pitiful creatures are concerned not only to find what one or the other can worship, but to find something that all would believe in and worship; what is essential is that all may be *together* in it. This craving for *community* of worship is the chief misery of every man individually and of all humanity from the

beginning of time. For the sake of common worship they've slain each other with the sword. They have set up gods and challenged one another: "Put away your gods and come and worship ours, or we will kill you and your gods!" And so it will be to the end of the world, even when gods disappear from the Earth; they will fall down before idols just the same. Thou didst know, Thou couldst not but have known, this fundamental secret of human nature. But Thou didst reject the one infallible banner which was offered Thee to make all men bow down to Thee alone—the banner of Earthly bread. And Thou hast rejected it for the sake of freedom and the bread of Heaven.

"Behold what Thou didst further. And again in the name of freedom! I tell Thee that man is tormented by no greater fear than to find someone quickly to whom he can hand over that gift of freedom with which he is born. But only one who can appease his conscience can take over his freedom. In bread there was offered Thee an invincible banner; give bread, and man will worship Thee, for nothing is more certain than bread. But if someone else gains possession of his conscience—oh! then he will cast away Thy bread and follow after him who has ensnared his conscience. In that Thou wast right. For the secret of man's being is not only to live but to have something to live for. Without a stable conception of the object of life, man would not consent to go on living, and would rather destroy himself than remain on Earth, though he had bread in abundance. That is true. But what happened? Instead of taking men's freedom from them, Thou didst make it greater than ever! Didst Thou forget that man prefers peace, and even death, to freedom of choice in the knowledge of good and evil? Nothing is more seductive for man than his freedom of conscience, but nothing is a greater cause of suffering. And behold, instead of giving a firm foundation for setting the conscience of man at rest forever, Thou didst choose all that is exceptional, vague and puzzling. Thou didst choose what was utterly beyond the strength of men, acting as though Thou didst not love them at all—Thou who didst come to give Thy life for them! Instead of taking possession of men's freedom, Thou didst increase it, and burdened the spiritual kingdom of mankind with its sufferings forever. Thou didst desire man's

free love, that he should follow Thee freely, enticed and taken captive by Thee. In place of the rigid ancient law, man must hereafter with free heart decide for himself what is good and what is evil, having only Thy image before him as a guide. But didst Thou not know he would at last reject even Thy image and Thy truth, if he is weighed down with the fearful burden of free choice? They will cry aloud at last that the truth is not in Thee, for they could not have been left in greater confusion and suffering than Thou has caused, laying upon them so many cares and unanswerable problems

"So that, in truth, Thou didst Thyself lay the foundation for the destruction of Thy kingdom, and no one is more to blame for it. Yet what was offered Thee?

"There are three powers, three powers alone, able to conquer and to hold captive forever the conscience of these impotent rebels for their happiness—those forces are miracle, mystery and authority. Thou hast rejected all three and hast set the example for doing so. When the wise and dread spirit set Thee on the pinnacle of the temple and said to Thee, "If Thou wouldst know whether Thou art the Son of God then cast Thyself down, for it is written: The angels shall hold him up lest he fall and bruise himself, and Thou shalt know then whether Thou art the Son of God and shalt prove then how great is Thy faith in Thy Father." But Thou didst refuse and wouldst not cast Thyself down. Oh! Of course, Thou didst proudly and well like God. But the weak, unruly race of men, are they gods? Oh Thou didst know then that in taking one step, in making one movement to cast Thyself down, Thou wouldst be tempting God and have lost all Thy faith in Him, and wouldst have been dashed to pieces against that Earth which Thou didst come to save. And the wise spirit that tempted Thee would have rejoiced. But I ask again, are there many like Thee? And couldst Thou believe for one moment that men, too, could face such a temptation? Is the nature of men such, that they can reject miracles and at the great moments of their life, the moments of their deepest, most agonizing spiritual difficulties, cling only to the free verdict of the heart? Oh, Thou didst know that Thy deed would be recorded in books, would be handed down

to remote times and the utmost ends of the Earth, and Thou didst hope that man, following Thee, would cling to God and not ask for a miracle. But Thou didst not know that when man rejects miracles he rejects God too; for man seeks not so much God as the miraculous. And as man cannot bear to be without the miraculous, he will create new miracles of his own for himself, and will worship deeds of sorcery and witchcraft though he might be a hundred times over a rebel, heretic and infidel. Thou didst not come down from the Cross when they shouted to Thee, mocking and reviling Thee: "Come down from the cross and we will believe that Thou art He." Thou didst not come down, for again Thou wouldst not enslave man by a miracle, and didst crave faith given freely, not based on miracles.

"Thou didst crave for free love and not the base raptures of the slave before the might that has overawed him forever. But Thou didst think too highly of men therein, for they are slaves, of course, though rebellious by nature. Look round and judge; fifteen centuries have passed, look upon them. Whom hast Thou raised up to Thyself? I swear, man is weaker and baser by nature than Thou hast believed him! Canst he, canst he do what Thou didst? By showing him so much respect, Thou didst, as it were, cease to feel for him, for Thou didst ask far too much from him—Thou who has loved him more than Thyself! Respecting him less, Thou wouldst have asked less of him. That would have been more like love, for his burden would have been lighter. He is weak and vile. He is weak and vile though he is everywhere now rebelling against our power, and proud of rebellion! It is the pride of a child and a schoolboy. They are little children rioting and barring out the teacher at school. But their childish delight will end; it will cost them dearly. They will cast down temples and drench the Earth with blood. But they will see at last the foolish children, that, though they are rebels, they are impotent rebels, unable to keep their own rebellion. Bathed in their foolish tears they will recognize at last that He who created them rebels must have meant to mock at them. They will say this in despair, and their utterance will be a blasphemy which will make them more unhappy still, for man's nature cannot bear blasphemy, and

in the end always avenges it on itself. And so unrest, confusion and unhappiness—that is the present lot of man after Thou didst bear so much for his freedom!

"Thy great prophet tells in vision and in image, that he saw all those who took part in the first resurrection and that there were of each tribe twelve thousand. But if there were so many of them, they must have been not men but gods. They had borne Thy cross, they had endured scores of years in the barren, hungry wilderness, living upon locusts and roots—and Thou mayest indeed point with pride at those children of freedom, of free love, of free and splendid sacrifice for Thy name. But remember that they were only some thousands; and what of the rest? And how are the other weak ones to blame, because they could not endure what the strong have endured? How is the weak soul to blame that it is unable to receive such terrible gifts? Canst Thou have simply come to the elect and for the elect? If so, it is mystery and we cannot understand it. And if it is a mystery, we too have a right to preach a mystery, and to teach men that it's not the free judgment of their hearts, not love that matters, but a mystery which they must follow blindly, even against their conscience. So we have done. We have corrected Thy work and have founded it upon *miracle, mystery* and *authority*. And men rejoiced that they were again led like sheep, and that the terrible gift that had brought them such suffering, was, at last, lifted from their hearts. Were we right teaching them this? Speak! Did we not love mankind, so meekly acknowledging their feebleness, lovingly lightening their burden, and permitting their weak nature even sin with our sanction? Why hast Thou come now to hinder us? And why dost thou look silently and searchingly at me with Thy mild eyes? Be angry. I don't want Thy love, for I love Thee not. And what use is it for me to hide anything from Thee? Don't I know to Whom I am speaking? All that I can say is known to Thee already. And is it for me to conceal from Thee our mystery? Perhaps it is Thy will to hear it from my lips. Listen, then. We are not working with Thee, but with *him*—that is our mystery. It's long—eight centuries—since we have been on *his* side and not on Thine.

"Just eight centuries ago, we took from *him*, the wise and mighty spirit in the wilderness, what Thou didst reject with scorn, that last gift *he* offered Thee, showing Thee all the kingdoms of the Earth. We took from *him* Rome and the sword of Caesar, and proclaimed ourselves sole rulers of the Earth, though we have not yet been able to complete our work. But whose fault is that? Oh, the work is only beginning, but it has begun. It has long to await completion and the Earth has yet much to suffer, but we shall triumph and shall be Caesars, and then we shall plan the universal happiness of man. But Thou mightest have taken even then the sword of Caesar. Why didst Thou reject that last gift? Thou wouldst have accomplished all that man seeks on Earth—that is, someone to worship, someone to keep his conscience, and some means of uniting all in one unanimous and harmonious ant heap, because the craving for universal unity is the third and last anguish of men. Mankind as a whole has always striven to organize a universal state. There have been many great nations with great histories, but the more highly they were developed the more unhappy they were, for they felt more acutely than other people the craving for worldwide union. The great conquerors, Tim ours and Genghis Khans, whirled like hurricanes over the face of the Earth striving to subdue its people, and they too were but the unconscious expression of the same craving for universal unity. Hadst Thou taken the world and Caesar's purple, Thou wouldst have founded the universal state and have given universal peace. For who can rule men if not he who holds their conscience and their bread in his hands.

"We have taken the sword of Caesar, and in taking it, of course, have rejected Thee and followed *him*. Oh, ages are yet to come of the confusion of free thought, of their science and cannibalism. For having begun to build their tower of Babel without us, they will end, of course, with cannibalism. But then the beast will crawl to us and lick our feet and spatter them with tears of blood. And we shall sit upon the beast and raise the cup, and on it will be written: "Mystery." But then, and only then, the reign of peace and happiness will come for men. Thou art proud of Thine elect, but Thou hast only the elect, while we give rest to all. And besides, how many of those elect, those mighty ones who

could become elect, have grown weary waiting for Thee, and have transferred and will transfer the powers of their spirit and the warmth of their heart to the other camp, and end by raising their *free* banner against Thee? Thou didst Thyself lift up that banner. But with us all will be happy and will no more rebel nor destroy one another as under Thy freedom. Oh, we shall persuade them that they will only become free when they renounce their freedom to us and submit to us. And shall we be right or shall we be lying? They will be convinced that we are right, for they will remember the horrors of slavery and confusion to which Thy freedom brought them. Freedom, free thought and science, will lead them into such straits and will bring them face to face with such marvels and insoluble mysteries, that some of them, the fierce and rebellious, will destroy themselves. Others, rebellious but weak, will destroy one another. The rest, weak and unhappy, will crawl fawning to our feet and whine to us: "Yes, you were right, you alone possess His mystery, and we come back to you. Save us from ourselves!"

"Receiving bread from us, they will see clearly that we take the bread made by their hands from them, to give it to them, without any miracle. They will see that we do not change the stones to bread, but in truth they will be more thankful for taking it from our hands than for the bread itself! For they will remember only too well that in old days, without our help, even the bread they made turned to stones in their hands, while since they have come back to us, the very stones have turned to bread in their hands. Too, too well they know the value of complete submission! And until men know that, they will be unhappy. Who is most to blame for their not knowing it? Speak! Who scattered the flock and sent it astray on unknown paths?

"But the flock will come together again and will submit once more, and then it will be once and for all. Then we shall give them the quiet humble happiness of weak creatures such as they are by nature. Oh, we shall persuade the mat last not to be proud, for Thou didst lift them up and thereby taught them to be proud. We shall show them that they are weak, that they are only pitiful children, but that childlike happiness is the sweetest of all.

They will become timid and will look to us and huddle close to us in fear, as chicks to the hen. They will marvel at us and will be awestricken before us, and will be proud at our being so powerful and clever, that we have been able to subdue such a turbulent flock of thousands of millions. They will tremble impotently before our wrath, their minds will grow fearful, they will be quick to shed tears like women and children, but they will be just as ready at a sign from us to pass to laughter and rejoicing, to happy mirth and childish song. Yes, we shall set them to work, but in their leisure hours we shall make their life like a child's game, with children's songs and innocent dance. Oh, we shall allow them evens in, they are weak and helpless, and they will love us like children because we allow them to sin. We shall tell them that every sin will be atoned, if it is done with our permission. We shall tell them that we allow them to sin because we love them, and the punishment for these sins we take upon ourselves. And we shall take it upon ourselves, and they will adore us as their saviour because we have taken on their sins before God. And they will have no secrets from us. We shall allow or forbid them to live with their wives and mistresses, to have or not to have children—according to whether they have been obedient or disobedient—and they will submit to us gladly and cheerfully. The most painful secrets of their conscience, all, all they will bring to us, and we shall have an answer for all. And they will be glad to believe our answer, for it will save them from the great fear and terrible agony they endure at present in making a free decision for themselves. And all will be happy, all the millions of creatures except the hundred thousand who rule over them. For only we, we who guard the mystery, shall be unhappy. There will be thousands of millions of happy ones and a hundred thousand sufferers who have taken upon themselves the curse of the knowledge of good and evil. Peacefully they will die, peacefully in Thy name, and beyond the grave they will find nothing but death. But we shall keep the secret, and for their happiness we shall allure them with the reward of heaven and eternity. Though if there were anything in the other world, it certainly would not be for such as they.

"It is prophesied that Thou wilt come again in victory, Thou wilt come with Thy chosen, the proud and strong. But we will say that they have only saved themselves, but we have saved all. We are told that the harlot who sits upon the beast, and holds in her hands the *mystery*, shall be put to shame, that the weak will rise up again, and will rend her royal purple and will strip naked her loathsome body. But then I will stand up and point out to Thee the thousand millions of happy creatures who have known no sin. And we who have taken their sins upon us for their happiness will stand up before Thee and say: "Judge us if Thou can stand darest." Know that I fear Thee not. Know that I too have been in the wilderness, I too have lived on roots and locusts, I too prized the freedom with which Thou hast blessed men, and I too was striving to stand among Thy elect, along the strong and powerful, thirsting "to make up the number." But I awakened and would not serve madness. I turned back and joined the ranks of those *who have corrected Thy work*. I left the proud and went back to the humble, for the happiness of the humble.

"What I say to Thee will come to pass, and our dominion will be built up. I repeat, tomorrow Thou shalt see that obedient flock who at a sign from me will hasten to heap up the hot cinders about the pile on which I shall burn Thee for coming to hinder us. For if anyone has ever deserved our fires, it is Thou. Tomorrow I shall burn Thee.... I have spoken."

Ivan stopped. He had been carried away as he talked and spoke with excitement. Now he suddenly smiled.

Alyosha had listened in silence. Toward the end he was greatly moved and seemed several times on the point of interrupting, but he restrained himself. Now his words came with a rush.

"But...that's absurd!" he cried. "Your poem is in praise of Jesus, not in blame of Him—as you meant it to be. And who will believe you about freedom? Is that the way to understand it? That's not the idea of it in the Orthodox Church.... That's Rome and not even the whole of Rome, it's false—those are the worst Catholics, the Inquisitors, and Jesuits! ...



And there could not be such a fantastic creature as your Inquisitor. What are these sins of mankind they take on themselves? Who are these keepers of the mystery who have taken some curse upon themselves for the happiness of mankind? When have they been seen? We know the Jesuits. They are spoken ill of, but surely they are not what you describe? They are not that at all, not at all.... They are simply the Romish army for the Earthly sovereignty of the world in the future, with the Pontiff of Rome for Emperor ... That's their ideal, but there's no sort of mystery about it.... It's simple lust for power, for filthy Earthly gain, for domination—something like a universal serfdom with them as masters—that's all they stand for. They don't even believe in God perhaps. Your suffering Grand Inquisitor is a mere fantasy."

"Wait, wait," laughed Ivan. "How upset you are! A fantasy you say, let it be so! Of course it's a fantasy. But let me say: do you really think that the Roman Catholic movement of the last centuries is actually nothing but the lust for power, for filthy Earthly gain? Is that Father Paissy's teaching?"

"No, no, on the contrary, Father Paissy did once say something rather the same as you.... But of course it's not the same, not at all the same," Alyosha quickly corrected himself.

"A precious admission, in spite of your 'not at all the same.' I ask you why your Jesuits and Inquisitors have united simply for vile material gain? Why can there not be among them one martyr oppressed by great sorrow and loving humanity? You see, only suppose that there was one such man among all those who desire nothing but filthy material gain—if there's only one like my old Inquisitor, who had himself eaten roots in the desert and made frenzied efforts to subdue his flesh to make himself free and perfect. But yet all his life he loved humanity, and suddenly his eyes were opened, and he saw that it is no great moral blessedness to attain perfection and freedom, if at the same time one gains the conviction that millions of God's creatures have been created as a mockery, that they will never be capable of using their freedom, that these poor rebels can never turn into giants to complete the tower, that it was not for such

geese that the great idealist dreamt his dream of harmony. Seeing all that he turned back and joined—the clever people. Surely that could have happened?"

"Joined whom, what clever people?" cried Alyosha, completely carried away. "They have no such great cleverness and no mysteries and secrets.... Perhaps nothing but atheism, that's all their secret. Your Inquisitor does not believe in God, that's his secret!"

"What if he doesn't believe in God! At last you have guessed it. It's perfectly true that that's the whole secret. But isn't that suffering, at least for a man like that, who has wasted his whole life in the desert and yet could not shake off his incurable love of humanity? In his old age he reached the clear conviction that nothing but the advice of the great dread spirit could build up a tolerable sort of life for the feeble, unruly 'incomplete, empirical creatures created in jest.' And so, convinced of this, he sees that he must follow the counsel of the wise spirit, the dread spirit of death and destruction, and accepting lying and deception, and lead men consciously to death and destruction. He sees that he must deceive them all the way so that they may not notice where they are being led, that the poor blind creatures may at least on the way think themselves happy. And note, the deception is in the name of Him in whose ideal the old man had so fervently believed all his life. Is not that tragic? And if only one such stood at the head of the whole army 'filled with the lust for power only for the sake of filthy gain'—would not one such be enough to make a tragedy? More than that, one such standing at the head is enough to create the actual leading idea of the Roman Church with all its armies and Jesuits, its highest idea. I tell you frankly that I firmly believe that there has always been such a man among those who stood at the head of the movement. Who knows, there may have been some such even among the Roman Popes. Who knows, perhaps the spirit of that accursed old man who loves mankind so obstinately in his own way, is to be found even now in a whole multitude of such old men, existing not by chance but by agreement. Perhaps these old men formed a secret league long ago for the guarding of the mystery, to guard it from the weak and the unhappy,

so as to make them happy. No doubt it is so and so it must be indeed. I believe that even among the Masons there's something of the same mystery and that that's why the Catholics detest the Masons. They feel that the Masons are breaking up the unity of the idea, while it is so essential that there should be one flock and one shepherd.... But from the way I defend my idea you might think that I am angry at your criticism. Enough of it."

"Maybe you are a Mason yourself!" said Alyosha suddenly. "You don't believe in God," he added, speaking this time very sorrowfully. He felt that his brother was looking at him ironically. "How does your poem end?" he asked, suddenly looking down. "Or was that the end?"

"I meant to end it like this. When the Inquisitor stopped speaking he waited some time for his Prisoner to answer him. His silence weighed down upon him. He saw that the Prisoner had listened carefully all the time, looking gently in his face. But evidently He did not want to reply. The old man longed for Him to say something, however bitter and terrible. But He suddenly approached the old man in silence and softly kissed him on the forehead. That was his answer. The old man shuddered. His lips moved. He went to the door, opened it and said to Him: 'Go, and come no more....Come not at all, never, never!' And he let Him out into the dark alleys of the town. The Prisoner went away."

"And the old man?"

"This kiss glows in his heart, but the old man holds to his idea."

## Christ Versus the Clergy

*Editor's note: Dostoyevsky used the literary device of a kiss, but Christ did not kiss the clergymen of his day. Instead, he called them names. Behold the wrath of the Lamb*

## Fools

Then Jesus spoke to the crowd and to His disciples, saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sat down on Moses' seat. Then all things, whatever they tell you to keep, keep and do. But do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do. For they bind heavy and hard to bear burdens, and lay *them* on the shoulders of men; but they do not desire to move them with their finger. And they do all their works to be seen by men. And they make their phylacteries broad, and enlarge the borders of their robes. And they love the first couch in the suppers, and the first seats in the synagogues, and the greetings in the markets, and to be called by men, Rabbi, Rabbi. But do not you be called Rabbi; for One is your leader, the Christ, and you are all brothers. And call no one father on Earth, for one is your Father, the *One* in Heaven. Nor be called leaders, for One is your Leader, the Christ. But the greater of you shall be your servant. And whoever will exalt himself shall be humbled. And whoever will humble himself shall be exalted.

But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut up the kingdom of Heaven before men; for you do not enter, nor do you allow those entering to go in.

Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you devour the houses of widows, and pray at length as a pretext. Because of this you will receive more abundant judgment.

Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you go about the sea and the dry *land* to make one proselyte; and when he has become *so*, you make him twofold more a son of Hell than yourselves.

Woe to you, blind guides, who say, Whoever swears by the temple, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gold of the temple is a debtor. Fools and blind! For which is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifies the gold? And *you* say, Whoever swears by the altar, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gift on it, *he* is a debtor. Fools and blind! For which is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifies the gift? Then the *one* swearing by the altar swears by it, and by all things on it. And

the *one* swearing by the temple swears by it, and by the *One* dwelling in it. And the *one* swearing by Heaven swears by the throne of God, and by the *One* sitting on it.

Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithes of mint and dill and cumin, and you have left aside the weightier *matters* of the Law: judgment, and mercy, and faith. It was right to do these, and not to have left those aside. Blind guides, straining out the gnat, but swallowing the camel!

Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and of the dish, but within they are full of robbery and excess. Blind Pharisee! First cleanse the inside of the cup and of the dish, that the outside of them may become clean also.

Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitened graves which outwardly indeed appear beautiful, but within are full of bones of *the* dead, and of all uncleanness. So you also indeed outwardly appear righteous to men, but within are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you build the tombs of the prophets, and adorn the tombs of the righteous. And you say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. So you witness to yourselves, that you are the sons of those who murdered the prophets. And you fill up the measure of your fathers.

Serpents, offspring of vipers! How shall you escape the judgment of Hell? Because of this, behold, I send to you prophets and wise ones and scribes. And *some* of them you will kill and crucify; and *some* of them you will flog in your synagogues, and will persecute from city to city; so that should come on you all *the* righteous blood poured out on the Earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah the son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. Truly I say to you, All these things will come on this generation. —*Matthew* 23:1-36.

# THE TRINITY REVIEW

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare [are] not fleshly but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. And they will be ready to punish all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled.

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## Antichrist

Edited by John W. Robbins

The early church scanned the future in anticipation of the coming Antichrist who was depicted so strikingly by Daniel, Paul, and John. Many thought that he would appear on the scene after the fall of the Roman Empire. It is not surprising that the early church had indistinct ideas about the great Antichrist.

It is significant that the church did not come to any distinct or united conviction about the identity of Antichrist until the clear Gospel of justification by faith alone began to chase away the shadows of the dark ages of the papacy. Not only did the church come to a united understanding of justification by faith alone, but at the same time it came to a united understanding about the identity of Antichrist. It is important that we realize this relationship between justification by faith alone and the identity of Antichrist.

We do not contend that the Reformers were without fault in their theology. There were points on which they could not agree among themselves. But we had better give serious consideration to the points on which the Christian Church reached total and united agreement. With one united voice the Church said that the Antichrist was the papacy.

Nowadays many want to dismiss the Reformers' view of Antichrist as mere polemics of a bygone era. But it was not a matter of ill will in the midst of theological controversy. "This understanding of the

position and function of the papacy became an important part of Luther's theology. It was not merely part of his polemic but apart from all personal animosity a sincere theological conviction" (George W. Forell, *Faith Active in Love* [Augsburg, 1954], 171). The reason so many today cannot appreciate the united view of the Reformers as to the identity of Antichrist is that they do not see the importance of justification by faith alone. They do not regard this doctrine as the great central article of faith, the very air which Christians breathe. They do not recoil with horror to see this doctrine adulterated or relegated to a position of only relative importance.

To the Reformation Church the papacy was the very Antichrist because it committed the ultimate impiety by making war on justification by faith alone. Francis Pieper expressed the view of the Reformation when he wrote 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 (Concordia, 1950, Vol. 2, 553-554).

An English theologian of the nineteenth century, Dr. H. Grattan Guinness, wrote:

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 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 . . . (*Romanism and the Reformation* [S. R. Briggs], 250-260).

### *The United Testimony of the Reformers on the Identity of Antichrist*

The Reformers' system of prophetic interpretation, known as "the Protestant system," was unchallenged in the Protestant movement for three hundred years. It has been all but forgotten today.

Martin Luther:

"We are convinced that the papacy is the seat of the true and real Antichrist" (*What Luther Says*, ed. Ewald M. Plass, Vol. 1, 34). "You should know that the pope is the real, true, final Antichrist, of whom the entire Scripture speaks, whom the Lord is

beginning to consume with the spirit of his mouth and will very soon destroy and slay with the brightness of his coming, for which we are waiting" (Plass, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, 36, 37).

John Calvin:

"Daniel and Paul had predicted that Antichrist would sit in the temple of God. The head of that cursed and abominable kingdom, in the Western church, we affirm to be the Pope. When his seat is placed in the temple of God, it suggests that his kingdom will be such that he will not abolish the name of Christ or the Church. Hence it appears that we by no means deny that churches may exist, even under his tyranny; but he has profaned them by sacrilegious impiety, afflicted them by cruel despotism, corrupted and almost terminated their existence by false and pernicious doctrines; like poisonous potions, in such churches, Christ lies half buried, the Gospel is suppressed, piety exterminated, and the worship of God almost abolished; in a word, they are altogether in such a state of confusion that they exhibit a picture of Babylon, rather than of the holy city of God" (*Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Bk. 4, chap. 2, sec. 12).

Heinrich Bullinger:

"By the little horn many understand the kingdom of Mohammed, of the Saracens and of the Turks. . . . But when the apostolic prophecy in *Second Thessalonians* 2 is more carefully examined, it seems that this prophecy of Daniel and that prophecy of the apostle belong more rightly to the kingdom of the Roman pope, which kingdom has arisen from small beginnings and has increased to an immense size" (trans. from Heinrich Bullinger, *Daniel Sapientissimus Dei Propheta (Daniel the Most Wise Prophet of God)*, chap. 7, fol. 78v).

Nicholas Ridley:

"The head, under Satan, of all mischief is Antichrist and his brood and the same is he which is the Babylonical beast. The beast is he whereupon the whore sitteth. The whore is that city, saith John in plain words, which hath empire over the kings of the earth. This whore hath a golden cup of abominations in her hand, whereof she maketh to drink the kings of the earth, and of the wine of this harlot all nations hath drunk; yea, and kings of the earth have lain by this whore; and merchants of the earth, by virtue of her pleasant merchandise, have been made rich.

"Now what city is there in the whole world, that when John wrote, ruled over the kings of the earth; or what city can be read of in any time, that of the city itself challenged the empire over the kings of the earth, but only the city of Rome, and that since the usurpation of that See hath grown to her full strength?" (*A Piteous Lamentation of the Miserable Estate of the Church in England, in the Time of the Late Revolt from the Gospel*, in *Works*, 53).

Philip Melanchthon:

"18. Since it is certain that the pontiffs and the monks have forbidden marriage, it is most manifest, and true without any doubt, that the Roman pontiff, with his whole order and kingdom, is very Antichrist.

"19. Likewise in *2 Thessalonians*, 2, Paul clearly says that the man of sin will rule in the church exalting himself above the worship of God, etc.

"20. But it is certain that the popes do rule in the church, and under the title of the church in defending idols.

"21. Wherefore I affirm that no heresy hath arisen, nor indeed shall be, with which these descriptions of Paul can more

truly and certainly accord and agree than with this pontifical kingdom . . . .

"25. The prophet Daniel also attributes these two things to Antichrist; namely, that he shall place an idol in the temple, and worship [it] with gold and silver; and that he shall not honor women.

"26. That both of them belong to the Roman pontiff, who does not clearly see? The idols are clearly the impious masses, the worship of saints, and the statues which are exhibited in gold and silver that they may be worshiped" (trans. from Philip Melanchthon, "De Matrimonio," *Disputationes*, No. 56, in *Opera (Corpus Reformatorum)*, Vol. 12, cols. 535, 536).

John Hooper:

"God hath given this light unto my countrymen . . . that [neither] the bishop of Rome nor none other is Christ's vicar upon the Earth. . . . It is so plain that it needeth no probation; the very properties of Antichrist, I mean of Christ's great and principal enemy, are so openly known to all men that are not blinded with the smoke of Rome that they know him to be the beast that John describeth in the Apocalypse" (*Declaration of Christ and His Office*, chap. 3, in *Works*, Vol. 1, 22, 23).

## *The Origin of Futurism and Preterism*

Not only did the Reformers proclaim the mighty truth of justification by faith alone for the liberation of men's souls, but they nerved thousands to break from the tyranny of the dark ages of the papacy by clearly identifying the Antichrist of Bible prophecy. The symbols of Daniel, Paul, and John were applied to the papacy with tremendous effect. The realization that the incriminating finger of prophecy rested squarely on Rome aroused the consciousness of Europe. In alarm Rome saw that she must successfully counteract this identification of

Antichrist with the papacy or lose the battle. She must present plausible arguments which would cause men to look outside the medieval period for the development of Antichrist.

The Jesuits rallied to the Roman cause by providing two alternatives to the historical interpretation of the Protestants. These alternatives, preterism and futurism, were designed to deflect attention from the papacy as Antichrist by making Antichrist exclusively a figure of the past (preterism) or of the future (futurism). In this way the Jesuits attempted to refute the Reformers' identification of the papacy as Antichrist.

The first alternative developed by the Jesuits was preterism—which is now the view held by many post-millennialists. Luis de Alcazar (1554-1613) of Seville, Spain, devised what became known as the "preterist" system of prophetic interpretation. This theory proposed that 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 become popular among Protestant liberals, modernists, and postmillennialists.

The second view developed by the Jesuits was futurism, which is the view held by most dispensationalists and fundamentalists. This tack was taken by Francisco Ribera (1537-1591) of Salamanca, Spain. He was the founder of the "futurist" system of prophetic interpretation. Instead of placing Antichrist in the past as did Alcazar, Ribera argued that Antichrist would appear far in the future. About 1590 Ribera published a five hundred page commentary on Revelation denying the Protestant application of Antichrist to the Church of Rome. The gist of his futurist system was as follows:

(1) 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.

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

(3) Antichrist's blasphemous work would continue for a literal three and a half years.

(4) 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 dominant 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 Praeterist School, founded by the Jesuit Alcazar, explains the Revelation by the Fall of Jerusalem [in A.D. 70] or by the fall of Pagan Rome in 410 A.D. (G.S. Hitchcock, *The Beasts and the Little Horn*, 7).

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

Accordingly, toward 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 A.D. 1580, may be regarded as the Founder of the Futurist system in modern times (*Daniel and the Revelation* [Hodder & Stoughton, 1898], 16, 17).

Ribera's futurism was polished and popularized by the great Roman Catholic controversialist, Cardinal Bellarmine (1542-1621) of Italy. This shrewd prince of the Roman State-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 Roman faith ever produced, *Disputationes de 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. Bellarmine wrote:

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 (*Disputationes*, Bk. 3, chap. 2, 185).

Bellarmino further said:

Nor can anyone 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 (Chapter 8, 190). The pope is not Antichrist since

indeed his throne is not in Jerusalem, nor in the Temple of Solomon (Chapter 13, 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 united on the historical principle of prophetic interpretation, and neither futurism nor preterism penetrated the Protestant movement. Today there are two prophetic camps fighting each other within "Protestantism," and the Protestant doctrine has been abandoned or rejected. The two camps are the futurists—the dispensationalists, fundamentalists, and amillennialist—and the preterists—the postmillennialists and the liberals. Both are wrong. Neither is Protestant. Both reject the Reformers' identification of the Papacy as Antichrist. Both are unwitting disciples of the Jesuits.

### *Futurism*

Futurism first entered Protestantism in nineteenth-century England by two apparently widely separated developments. The first was the appearance of a Romanizing tendency in the Church of England. Briefly, the development was as follows:

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 Roman Catholic interpretation. His views were first published in 1826 and received widespread study and interest. 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.



John Henry Newman (1801-1890), famous high church Anglican who converted to Rome and became a cardinal, was one of the leading spirits in the Oxford, or Tractarian, movement. Five years before he joined the Roman State-Church, 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 unknown person to come in the future.

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 postmillennialism (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: 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 advents of Antichrist and Christ. The origin of this theory has embarrassed some of its advocates, and the defenders of this novel theory have tried to deny its historical beginning. But the discovery in a rare book by Dr. 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 actually preserved Miss MacDonald's pretribulation vision and "prophetic" utterance in his book. He wrote:

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 (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, admitted that the Brethren obtained the idea of the rapture from the Irvingite movement. He wrote:

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 (*The Hope of Christ's Coming*, 35; cited by George L. Murray, *Millennial Studies—A Search for Truth* [Baker Book House, 1960], 138).

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. Oswald T. Allis wrote 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 two in number. The one related to the Church. It was the result of the profound dissatisfaction felt at that time by many earnest Christians with the worldliness and temporal security of the Church of England and of many of the dissenting communions in the British Isles. The other had to do with prophecy; it represented a very marked emphasis on the coming of the Lord as a present hope and immediate expectation. These two doctrines were closely connected.

#### *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.

#### *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 Premillennialists, 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 *Daniel 9.*, the second part of which they identified more or less exactly with the events recorded in *Revelation 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.

#### *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 (*Revelation 7*) 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 teaching 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 by Oxford University in 1909. 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 (Presbyterian & Reformed Pub. Co., 1972, 9-14).

## *Two Outstanding Defenders of Protestant Hermeneutics*

When developments in England were seriously eroding the historical, or Protestant, system of prophetic interpretation, two great opponents of futurism arose:

1. Edward Bishop Elliott (1793-1875), graduate of Cambridge in 1816, produced a most elaborate work of 2,500 pages on Revelation. He exposed the fallacious interpretations which involved abandonment of the Protestant position on Antichrist and attacked the Romanizing tendencies in the Tractarian movement. It was Elliott who presented a thorough, documented history of the rise of futurism and preterism from Jesuit sources.
2. Dr. Henry Grattan Guinness (1835-1910) of London published nine major works on prophecy between 1878 and 1905. Alarmed by the inroads of the futurist school of interpretation stemming from the Jesuits, Guinness mounted a tremendous defense of the historical school, the Protestant view, which holds to the progressive fulfillment of prophecy from John's time to the second advent.

## *A Summary and 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 and postmillennial wings 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 the Spanish Jesuit Alcazar. The right wing of Protestantism, the dispensationalists and fundamentalists, have taken over the Spanish Jesuit Ribera's futurism, and have made it a part of orthodoxy. This represents a remarkable triumph of the theories of Rome's Counter Reformation.

The Presbyterian Church, at the turn of the twentieth century, revised the *Westminster Confession of Faith* and deleted the sentences identifying the papacy as Antichrist. The Reformational understanding of prophecy has been either deliberately rejected or forgotten. The two contending factions, the futurists and the preterists, can be traced directly to the Jesuits. Both agree on one thing: The Protestant view is wrong.

### *The Reason for the Change in Eschatology*

We need to understand the reason Protestantism has abandoned her historic prophetic convictions. It is because the great truth of justification by faith alone is no longer at the center of the church's attention. That truth has been eclipsed by an earthly, man-centered vision. Dr. Francis Pieper wrote:

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 Dollinger pointed out in his lectures on the reunion of the Christian Church [in the nineteenth century].

The historic Protestant identification of Antichrist is not a matter of cheap polemics against the papacy. Rome is the religious personification of human nature. "We cannot reproach Rome with anything which does not recoil upon man himself" (J. H. Merle D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, Vol. 1, 32). It is for good reason that the apostle calls the Antichrist the "man of sin" (2 *Thessalonians* 2:3). Paul's words echo the book of *Daniel*. The prophet describes this power which grew up out of the Roman Empire and among the ten nations of Western Europe as having "eyes like the eyes of man" (*Daniel* 7:8). And the leopardlike beast of *Revelation* 13, which is obviously the same power as the horn of *Daniel* 7, is said to have "the number of man" (*Revelation* 13:18). The papal system was developed by man. Its beginnings are found in 3 *John*. Great men like Augustine, who combated the heresy of Pelagianism, tragically helped build the Roman State-Church into the papacy. Augustine combated Pelagius by showing that there was much evil in the best saints—and his own impact on subsequent church history proved his own words. More and more the Roman State-Church bore the image and superscription of man until it sat in the temple of God acting as if it were God. It was the expression of the one sin of all ages—man taking the place of God.

### *Casting the Truth to the Earth*

The focus of the Christian's affections is above. It is "where Christ sits on the right hand of God" (*Colossians* 3:1). The Old Testament scripture most frequently alluded to in the New Testament is *Psalms* 110: "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit at my right hand. . . ." It needs to be made startlingly clear

that Christ at the right hand of God, and not Christ in the human heart, is the great focal point of the apostolic proclamation. Christ has achieved, perfected, justified, and secured the salvation of his people, and he has brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel. But all these blessings are in Christ, *reserved in Heaven* for all who are kept by the power of God through faith (*1 Peter* 1:3-5). The Christian does not possess these blessings within himself, for they are found outside of him in the person of Christ. Christ himself at the right hand of God, absent from his saints on Earth, is the redemption, righteousness, security, perfection, and life of his people. The Holy Spirit dwells in the saints to direct their affections, their faith, and their attention outside of themselves to Christ at the right hand of God.

In contrast, let us look at the spirit of Antichrist. Daniel, the great prophet who described the Antichrist, said, "It cast down the truth to the ground; and it practiced and prospered" (*Daniel* 8:12).

Consider how the truth of justification by faith alone was thrown down to the Earth. The Christian's righteousness with God is at the right hand of God. But through the influence of sinful human nature—the man of sin—

It needs to be made startlingly clear that

Christ at the right hand of God, and not Christ in the human heart, is the great focal point of the apostolic proclamation.

The Church lost this great truth of justification. More and more it focused on the inward work of grace in the human heart. Finally, the Church taught that the Christian's righteousness with God is found in the Holy Spirit's work in his heart—the experience of renewal and sanctification. The *personal* righteousness of the believer on Earth was put in place of the *vicarious* righteousness of Christ in Heaven. Faith was no longer directed to the doing and dying of Christ alone for justification with God. It was directed to the inner experience of the believer. In short, a present righteousness on Earth (the good works of men) took the place of a heavenly and all-sufficient righteousness (the good

works of Christ) mediated for poor sinners at the right hand of God. Thus did the sin of man throw down the truth to the ground.

The whole development of the Roman system is a de-monstration of what happens when the human heart and inward religious experience become the focus of the Church's attention. What makes it more terrible is that it is done under such a pious pretext. It is done under the guise of honoring the Holy Spirit, who indwells Christians. James Buchanan pinpointed the doctrine of Antichrist when he wrote:

There is, perhaps, no more subtle or plausible error, on the subject of Justification, than that which makes it rest on the indwelling presence, and the gracious work, of the Holy Spirit in the heart . . . nothing can be more unscriptural in itself, or more pernicious to the souls of men, than the substitution of the gracious work of the Spirit *in us*, for the vicarious work of Christ *for us*, as the ground of our pardon and acceptance with God (*The Doctrine of Justification* [London: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1961], 401, 402).

When man's *personal* righteousness took the place of Christ's substitutionary righteousness, the whole process of putting man in the place of God began.

The whole development of the Roman system is a demonstration of what happens when the human heart and inward religious experience become the focus of the Church's attention.

The Church usurped the authority of Christ. Its voice was put forth as the voice of God, its priests became mediators in the place of Christ, and its mass was set forth as the present and experiential sacrifice in the place of the historical cross. All the horrors of the papal system are corollaries of its one great error of putting an inside righteousness of the heart in the place of the outside righteousness of Christ.

#### The Deadly Wound

Luther did not center his attack on the abuses of the papacy but against its doctrine of justification. Complaining against the radical enthusiasts, who

aimed their attack on papal customs and abuses, Luther said:

We moreover did teach and urge nothing but this article of justification, which alone at that time did threaten the authority of the Pope and lay waste his kingdom. . . . Images and other abuses in the church would have fallen down of themselves if they had but diligently taught the article of justification (*A Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians* [London: James Clarke & Co. Ltd., 1953], 218, 219).

The Reformation restored the truth of righteousness by faith—a righteousness not on Earth but in Heaven, not in man but in Christ, not personal but vicarious, not infused but imputed, not earned but given by grace, not experiential but judicial, not psychological but legal.

The Reformation restored the truth of righteousness by faith—a righteousness not on Earth but in Heaven, not in man but in Christ, not personal but vicarious, not infused but imputed, not earned but given by grace, not experiential but judicial, not psychological but legal. This was the sword of truth which inflicted such a blow on the papacy that prophecy described it as a "deadly wound" (Revelation 13:3).

#### The Healing of the Deadly Wound

The same sinful tendencies which corrupted the truth of justification by faith alone in the early Church have been at work in the Protestant movement for centuries. Contemporary religionists are preoccupied with things other than the great article of justification. They are obsessed with the human heart and what goes on in it. This religion of internalism, which never gets higher than a man's own spiritual navel, takes many forms:

(1) It is often taught that faith itself justifies as an ethical act. People are urged to "surrender" as if a certain quality in the heart called "faith" or "trust" will make them pleasing in the sight of God.

(2) Every sinner who comes to faith by the hearing of the Gospel and work of the Spirit will make a decision for Christ, but this is far different from

urging people to become Christians by their own acts of decision. There is a popular type of "decisionism" which tends to ground salvation on some religious act—it may be called "faith," "decision," "surrender," etc. But justification by grace alone teaches us not to trust in our own acts of repentance, contrition, and consecration, and hide ourselves in the faithfulness of Christ alone.

(3) So-called "evangelicalism" has far more to say about the psychological and moral change in the believer (regeneration or renewal) than about God's salvation in Jesus Christ. Along with this, baptism is often set forth as the outward sign of this inward experience. Baptism becomes a sign and memorial of the believer's "death"—a memorial of his decision and consecration—instead of a witness to the one efficacious death of Jesus Christ. The Gospel is subtly changed into a message of self and self crucified instead of Christ and Christ crucified (1 Corinthians 2:2). The believer's mystical act of "dying" becomes the focus of attention. This crisis experience of "yielding," "surrendering," and "dying" is said to be the means of getting the Spirit or getting the victory over sin (according to a misuse of Romans 6:1-7).

Just as Rome put man's personal righteousness in the place of Christ's vicarious righteousness, so this teaching puts the personal "dying" of the believer in the place of the vicarious death of Christ.

Just as Rome put man's personal righteousness in the place of Christ's vicarious righteousness, so this teaching puts the personal "dying" of the believer in the place of the vicarious death of Christ. It is so easy to forget that it is Christ's unique, unrepeatable death which frees us from sin and the law and brings us the Spirit (Romans 6:2-7; 7:4; 2 Corinthians 5:14; Galatians 3:13, 14).

(4) The apostles proclaimed the resurrection of Jesus with great power, but modern "evangelicalism" prefers to focus on the resurrected life of the believer. The new birth, of course, is vitally important, but it is a soul destroying error when we substitute the "gospel" of the changed life for the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The new birth, of course, is vitally important, but it is a soul-destroying error when we substitute the "gospel" of the changed life for the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Instead of preaching the good news about Christ, the pulpit on the changed life itself as the supreme event. Go to a typical "testimony meeting," and you will have full proof of that. But the devotees of Indian gurus, Mary Baker Eddy, and dozens more religious charlatans also have glowing testimonies about how their masters have given them victory over drugs, changed their personalities, and filled them with radiant peace. The apostles did not run around preaching a new lifestyle obtainable by believing in Jesus—as if Jesus were a mere means to this end. Modern "evangelicalism" preaches the conversion event of the believer far more than the death of Christ: It preaches salvation by new birth rather than salvation by the finished work of Christ.

(5) There is no question but that the doctrine of the Spirit's indwelling and the Spirit-filled life has become a focus of "evangelical" interest. The charismatic movement has merely carried this evangelical preoccupation with the Spirit's work in the heart a little further than most of its "evangelical" friends.

(6) Contemporary fascination with counseling and psychology in the churches is a logical result of the man-centered message of the churches. The churches have long been preaching an experiential message; they have long been preoccupied with inner experience. In the past twenty years they have discovered that unbelievers have had a lot to say about inner experience, and they are now preaching psychology rather than the Christ of history.

When the human heart and subjective inner experience become the center of the church's teaching, the truth is cast down to Earth. Man on Earth has taken the spotlight from Christ at the right hand of God; it is the spirit of Antichrist. Glorification of religious experience under the sanctimonious pretext of honoring the Holy Spirit is the glorification of man and leads to the worship of the creature rather than worship of the Creator. This

is what the great issue described in Revelation 13 and 14 is all about.

The Church cannot ignore the mighty truth of justification by faith alone without casting the truth to the ground. When the pursuit of man's religious experience on Earth takes the place of faith in Christ's intercession of righteousness in Heaven, people "mind earthly things"—even their own "belly," or internals (Philippians 3:19).

How Views of the Gospel Influence Views on Prophecy

An earthly, man-centered, experience-centered religion will have a corresponding effect on views about eschatology.

Instead of looking to the Jerusalem which is above (Galatians 4:26), which descends "out of Heaven from God" (Revelation 21:10), there is a looking to an *earthly* Jerusalem. Instead of looking to Mount Zion which is in "heavenly Jerusalem," where Jesus stands as Mediator of the new covenant (Hebrews 12:22-24), there is a looking to an *earthly* Mount Zion. Instead of looking to the true temple of Heaven, where Christ is high priest after the order of Melchisedek (Revelation 11:19; Hebrews 8:1, 2), there is a looking for an *earthly* temple to be built in Palestine. And the end of all *earthly*, man-centered religion is an *earthly* and man-centered millennium. An "exciting experience of the Spirit-filled life" is to be exceeded by an even more exciting future in the coming earthly utopia.

Futurism and preterism are extensions of Roman Catholic spirituality to the things of prophecy. The only reason that they could take root on Protestant soil is because, as Catholic scholar Louis Bouyer wrote, there has been "a rediscovery of Catholicism" within the Protestant movement (*The Spirit and Forms of Protestantism* [Cleveland: World Pub. Co., 1964], 189). The so-called "Protestant" churches are saturated with Catholic mentality and Catholic spirituality. A Judaizing corruption of the Gospel has led to a Judaizing concept of prophecy and eschatology.

The Implications of Revelation 13



However unpleasant and alarming it might be, we ought to take off our futurist and preterist glasses and look at the way Protestantism read Revelation 13 for three hundred years. Just as the Hebrews got a new Pharaoh who knew not Joseph, so the church has new teachers who know not justification by faith alone nor the Protestant system of prophetic interpretation. This generation of Christians needs to be told how our spiritual fathers understood the symbol of the leopardlike beast in Revelation 13.

Until the last one hundred years Protestants generally understood that the great leopardlike beast of Revelation 13 was a symbol of the papacy. John wrote:

And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority (Revelation 13:1, 2).

This echoes Daniel 7, where the prophet describes the four great empires (Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome) under the symbols of the lion, the bear, the leopard and the ten-horned beast. Apparently, the spirit of Babylon, Greece, etc., lives on in the power brought to view in Revelation 13. The evil work of this beast corresponds exactly with the evil work of the "little horn" of Daniel 7.

The "little horn" of Daniel 7 grew out of the beast which symbolized the Roman Empire. It is therefore a Roman power. It grew up among the ten nations of Western Europe and dominated them. It is described as continuing its existence until the judgment takes away its dominion. The "little horn" clearly describes Papal Rome, and the beast of Revelation 13 is obviously the same power brought to view. So Protestant theologians of a bygone era said that Revelation 13:1-10 describe the papacy. They also understood that the Protestant Reformation inflicted the "deadly wound" on the papacy through proclaiming the truth of justification by faith alone. Thereafter the power of Rome

suffered a great decline in Europe, until the opening of the nineteenth century witnessed a papacy so weakened that most observers saw it ready to die as a world power, never to rise again.

But the prophecy of Revelation 13 does not end there. Even as Christ received his death wound and lived again, so the Antichrist would receive his death wound and live again. The prophet shifts his attention to a lamblike beast rising from the Earth (Revelation 13:11). The lamb is elsewhere used as a symbol of Christ. Here a new power arises which is completely different from the wild, ravaging "beasts" that came before. In appearance and profession this power is Christian. But a strange thing happens. This second beast, which supplanted the first beast, begins to act like the first beast. Instead of preaching the Gospel, it preaches another gospel. It becomes a "false prophet" (Revelation 16:13) which works miracles and brings fire down from Heaven in the sight of men (Revelation 13:13). It thereby deceives people into once again worshiping the first beast (Revelation 13:11-13). A likeness of the first beast is formed, and together the beast and its image unite to compel all men to follow in their train.

Now if the first beast of Revelation 13 is, as Protestantism once believed, a symbol of Romanism, what is signified by this second beast, which finally becomes a likeness of the first beast? Could it be a symbol of a Pro-testantism which, having lost the truth of justification by faith alone, proclaims a "gospel" in the power and spirit of Antichrist?

If Revelation 13 is truly a description of where the current religious scene is heading, it demands the most urgent and prayerful attention on the part of God's people. The great mistake of the Jewish nation was that, failing to recognize Christ, they fulfilled prophecy by condemning him (Acts 13:24). The great danger facing the Christian Church is that, failing to recognize Antichrist, we will fulfill prophecy by promoting him. One thing from Revelation 13 stands out clearly. Just as Christ, the image of God, is also God, so the lamblike beast, on becoming an image of Antichrist, is also Antichrist.

## The Reformation of All Things

Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to him, we ask you not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come. Let no one deceive you by any means, for that day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. . . . For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way. And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of his mouth and destroy with the brightness of his coming. Amen.

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