



# THE VOICE of ELIJAH

Restoring the hearts of the fathers to the children

## Some Things Are So Downright Obvious

I come now to the point which (is urged both by our own brethren and by the heretics). Our brethren adduce it as a pretext for entering on curious inquiries, and the heretics insist on it for importing the scrupulosity (of their unbelief). It is written, they say, "Seek, and ye shall find."

Let us remember at what time the Lord said this. I think it was at the very outset of His teaching, when there was still a doubt felt by all whether He were the Christ, and when even Peter had not yet declared Him to be the Son of God, and John (Baptist) had actually ceased to feel assurance about Him.

With good reason, therefore, was it then said, "Seek, and ye shall find," when inquiry was still to be made of Him who was not yet become known. Besides, this was said in respect of the Jews. For it is to them that the whole matter of this reproof pertains, seeing that they had (a revelation) where they might seek Christ.

"They have," says He, "Moses and Elias,"—in other words, the law and the prophets, which preach Christ; as also in another place He says plainly, "Search the Scriptures, in which ye expect (to find) salvation; for they testify of me;" which will be the meaning of "Seek, and ye shall find."

For it is clear that the next words also apply to the Jews: "Knock, and it shall be opened unto you." The Jews had formerly been in covenant with God; but being afterwards cast off on account of their sins, they began to be without God. The Gentiles, on the contrary, had never been in covenant with God; they were only as "a drop from a bucket," and "as dust from the threshing floor," and were ever outside the door.

Now, how shall he who was always outside knock at the place where he never was? What door does he know of, when he has passed through none, either by entrance or ejection? Is it not rather he who is aware that he once

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libed within and was thrust out, that (probably) found the door and knocked thereat? In like manner, "Ask, and ye shall receive," is suitably said to one who was aware from whom he ought to ask, —by whom also some promise had been given; that is to say, "the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob."

Now, the Gentiles knew nothing either of Him, or of any of His promises. Therefore it was to Israel that he spake when He said, "I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Not yet had He "cast to the dogs the children's bread;" not yet did He charge them to "go into the way of the Gentiles."

It is only at the last that He instructs them to "go and teach all nations, and baptize them," when they were so soon to receive "the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, who should guide them into all the truth." And this, too, makes towards the same conclusion.

If the apostles, who were ordained to be teachers to the Gentiles, were themselves to have the Comforter for their teacher, far more needless was it to say to us, "Seek, and ye shall find," to whom was to come, without research, our instruction by the apostles, and to the apostles themselves by the Holy Ghost.

All the Lord's sayings, indeed, are set forth for all men; through the ears of the Jews have they passed on to us. Still most of them were addressed to Jewish persons; they therefore did not constitute instruction properly designed for ourselves, but rather an example.

Certullian, "The Prescription Against Heretics," Chap. viii, in Roberts and Donaldson (Eds.), *The Ante-Nicene Fathers* (1885), Vol. 3, p. 247.

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## *A Note From the Editor*

As we begin the new year, I would like to thank the members of the newly elected Board of Directors. They certainly let no grass grow under their feet as they drafted board policies immediately following their June 2006 meeting. Their concern for detail as they established the checks and balances between the Board and President have strengthened both VOE's Board governance and President's accountability (to both the Board and VOE contributors). Through their efforts, we have made huge strides in protecting VOE's nonprofit status and in preparing for the heightened level of IRS scrutiny that is sure to come as we approach the End.

The purpose of Voice of Elijah, Inc., as adopted by the Board at its annual meeting, is that ALL True Believers be prepared for the appearance of the Antichrist. As distasteful as it may be, a necessary part of our mission involves finances. Our outreach is funded 100 percent through your contributions. Without you, our ministry would have no legs—we would be incapable of reaching anyone. Therefore, it gives me great pleasure to tell you that, in spite of a few setbacks, we forged ahead and made significant progress in introducing new (and successful) outreach programs and in fine tuning the internet outreach program we began in 2005.

Thanks to the contributions you made in 2006, every area of *The Voice of Elijah*<sup>®</sup> ministry marked an advance over the previous year—from the number of people contacted, to total subscribers, to total contributors, to total contributions—all up from 2005. So I thank those of you who responded to my invitation in the October 2006 issue of *The Voice of Elijah*<sup>®</sup>, to “step up” your level of contribution to *The Voice of Elijah*<sup>®</sup>. Both Monthly Contributor and Next Step participation increased after that invitation. Comparing January 2007 figures to January 2006, we've seen an increase of over 40 percent in Next Step participants and almost 20 percent increase in Monthly Contributor participants.

Just as 2006 proved to be a year of growth for *The Voice of Elijah*<sup>®</sup>, 2007 shows every indication that trend will continue. With increased contributions comes increased outreach, and I'm pleased to report that our outreach mailings increased from nineteen mailings in 2005 to twenty-five mailings in 2006. As many of you know, *The Voice of Elijah*<sup>®</sup> provides a free copy of *The AntiChrist* booklet to anyone who requests it through our website ([www.voiceofelijah.org](http://www.voiceofelijah.org)), by phone, or by mail. VOE mailed just under seven thousand free copies of *The AntiChrist* in 2006. We hope to at least double up every year from here on.

*The AntiChrist* booklet precisely defines the ministry of *The Voice of Elijah*<sup>®</sup>, which makes it the perfect vehicle for outreach. After reading *The AntiChrist*, one either recognizes the Truth in what the Early Church Fathers wrote and they want more information, or one rejects what they have read and rejects the ministry that provided it. Either way, that little booklet has accomplished its purpose. We have no further obligation to

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anyone who rejects what they find written in *The AntiChrist*.

In the second half of 2006, VOE began a new outreach campaign—mailing postcards offering a free copy of *The AntiChrist* booklet to everyone who responded. We sent two postcard mailings to 14,177 specific U.S. addresses, which led to the phone immediately ringing off the hook with requests for *The AntiChrist*. The response from those two mailings far exceeded any outreach campaign VOE has ever conducted up to this point. We're hopeful to see that same enthusiastic response repeated time and again throughout 2007 and the years to come.

Generous end-of-year contributions made it possible for VOE to rent a mailing list of over eight thousand names for the first mailing of 2007. The postcards have already been printed and will be mailed the last week of January. Our hope is to mail at least one postcard mailing per month throughout 2007, while continuing to post sponsored ads on internet search engines. Our plan is simple: The more outreach we have, the more True Believers we reach, making even more outreach possible.

As we have improved our targeting of True Believers who are searching for the Truth, we have seen *The Voice of Elijah*® subscription renewal rate rising as well. That would indicate our outreach efforts are now, more than ever before, getting into the hands of people who have been looking for what we have to offer. The last quarter of 2006 saw a renewal rate of more than 66 percent—an all-time high for *The Voice of Elijah*®, and coming close to the 80 percent average that most periodicals expect.

Another area of growth for VOE is the recent update to our eight-year-old website. If you haven't been to [www.voiceofelijah.org](http://www.voiceofelijah.org) lately, please take a break and take a tour. Both the content and design have been drastically revised. Descriptions of the articles in all of the back issues of *The Voice of Elijah*® are provided in "The Stacks" section of "The Library." If your personal TVOE library is missing some back issues, you'll find that all back issues (from our Premier Issue, October 1990, to the current issue) are available for acquisition online, along with

all The Elijah Project publications. Your contributions for these materials are now completely tax deductible.

In addition to the paid outreach programs, VOE also asked for volunteers among our Next Step contributors to post Free Offer bookmarks and postcards on public bulletin boards throughout the United States. We have since been contacted by many who have become aware of the ministry of VOE through this new "boots to the pavement" approach. I appreciate all of you who volunteered to distribute these materials in your local areas. We have a time-critical message to deliver. So every effort to reach True Believers as quickly as we can, wherever we can, is well worth the effort, not to mention essential to accomplishing our mission. Those of you with internet access can be a part of VOE's outreach as well. Just mention our Free Offer of *The AntiChrist* in your personal blogs and forums and add a link to [www.voiceofelijah.org](http://www.voiceofelijah.org).

I appreciate all of you across the country who have made this ministry your own. With your help, we will far exceed 2006's accomplishments this year, and will continue to reach even more True Believers with the Truth every year from here on. Thank you for the encouragement you provide as we persevere in our efforts to fulfill our mission: That ALL True Believers be prepared for the appearance of the Antichrist. I'll leave you with this bit of encouragement from the Prophet Daniel:

*"Those who have insight will enlighten like the One enlightening the expanse; and those who lead the Many to righteousness like the stars to 'olam and beyond."*  
(Daniel 12:3) —Larry's interim translation

In Him,

*Marcia Woody*

PS. For the benefit of our new subscribers, the word 'olam (mentioned in the verse above) is discussed in the following issues: "Questions & Answers," *The Voice of Elijah*®, July 2000; "Questions & Answers," *The Voice of Elijah*®, October 2000; and "He's Coming in Clouds of Glory (Whatever That Means)," *The Voice of Elijah*®, January 2001.

# Just Keep Thinkin' Those Happy Thoughts

**T**he circumstances in the Church today are fairly easy for any truly rational person to comprehend: There is no concern for whether something is actually true; it is enough for Pretenders that something merely sounds good. And if the lie they *choose to believe* makes them feel more secure in their pretense, all the better. The Church today, under the leadership and guidance of Pretenders everywhere, has finally achieved what the Apostle Paul foresaw nearly two thousand years ago:

*I solemnly testify—before the {Living} God and Christ Jesus, Who is going to judge living and dead—concerning even His appearance and His kingdom. Preach the Word. Be ready—in good times {and} bad times. Rebuke, admonish, encourage—with all patience and teaching. For a time will come when they will not put up with accurate teaching, but they will surround themselves with teachers in accordance with their own desires to have their ears scratched. And they will both turn their ears away from the Truth and turn aside to myths.*  
(2 Timothy 4:1–4) —my interim translation

Let me briefly mention a myth the Pretenders in the Church today firmly believe: They *think* it doesn't matter *what one believes*. Funny thing is, they are exactly who Paul described to his disciple Timothy—folks who believe what they want to believe without regard to whether or not it is true. If you are one of those, *what you believe* is about to come around and bite you in your most holy backside. But I have *certainly* not been called to teach you anything, so you *certainly* did not hear anything even remotely like that from me. All I said was, "Just keep thinkin' those happy thoughts."

For the benefit of those of you who are still seeking a knowledge of the Truth, I want to give you a bit of insight into the history of the Truth that you believed when you were born again. Maybe then you will understand why you have been feeling a whole lot like a fish out of water lately. You see, when Christians in the Early Church were persecuted, they were persecuted because of *what they believed*. And thousands, if not hundreds of thousands, of born-again Believers at that time willingly died rather than give up their belief in the Truth of the Gospel—which is an introduction to *The Apostolic Teaching* they knew had been *handed down* to the Church by the Apostles.

Unfortunately, Pretenders who held positions of leadership in the Church back in those days were not willing to allow God to use persecution to purge their fellow-Pretenders from the Church. (See "Puritans and Pretenders: Cyprian, Novatian, and the Lapsed," *The Voice of Elijah*®, January 1994.) So those wannabe Dudley Do-Rights not only corrupted *The Apostolic Teaching*, they also allowed their fellow-Pretenders—even those who, during persecution, publicly denied what they *claimed* to believe—to come right back into the Church after the persecution abated. How's that for demanding a genuine belief in the Truth? But you have to understand, to the Pretenders' "way" of thinking—then as now—a warm body is always better than a cold one. Got to keep those church coffers overflowing, you know.

Unbridled persecution of True Believers finally ended around A.D. 300, when the pseudo-Christian and first Pretender politician, Emperor Constantine, made Christianity a state religion. (See "How the West Became 'Christian': Constantine and the Church," *The Voice of Elijah*®, July 1994.) After that, it didn't matter

all that much *what one believed*; it only mattered that one *said* one believed “in Jesus Christ”—whatever that overt stupidity is supposed to *mean*. That sorry state of affairs continued right up to October 31, 1517.

For those of you who do not have a Lutheran background, All Hallows Eve in 1517 is the date on which a Roman Catholic monk named Martin Luther nailed his Ninety-Five Theses on the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, Germany. I won't mention all ninety-five of his theses in this short space, since they aren't all that important anyway. What is important is this: In ninety-five different ways, Luther declared to the Pope and to the world that *what one believes* does, in fact, matter. Not surprisingly, Luther was not the Pope's patsy. He was just a sincere fellow to whom the Truth still mattered a whole lot more than some stupid religious tradition—or his life.

Now, for the benefit of those of you who may never have had the opportunity to read much about the Protestant Reformation, let me be the first to explain what you need to know about that little—well, maybe not so little—controversy. It's like this: The Roman Catholic Church has long said the Truth is whatever the Pope says the Truth is. For example, if rich folks want to cheat poor folks so that they have enough money to buy their way into Heaven, and the Pope says that is okay with God, then God will just stand back and let rich folks rob and steal so they can buy their way into Heaven. Martin Luther and a few other “hotheads” in his day had a bit of a problem with that “way” of thinking, but maybe you don't see it quite the way they did. If not, I have *certainly* not been called to teach you anything, so you *certainly* did not hear anything even remotely like that from me. All I said was, “Just keep thinkin' those happy thoughts.”

After Martin Luther had his little—well, maybe not so little—tussle with the Pope, relations between the “protest-ants” and the “papists” turned downright nasty. So let me tell you a little bit—well, maybe not so little a bit—about that. After Luther had the audacity to assert that the Pope might not be the best person to consult if one wants to know what God is thinking, the Pope sent Luther a cease and desist order. The powers that be in the Roman Catholic Church called that scrap of paper a “papal bull”—probably because *they knew* it was a whole lot of “bull.” But Luther publicly burned the “papal bull” that he received—because *he knew* it was a whole lot of “bull.” That action on his part sort of

set the stage for a bit of theatrics on the part of the Pretenders who controlled the Roman Catholic Church at that time. But we needn't get into that nonsense here either.

As it turned out, Martin Luther was not the only fellow in his day who thought the Truth needed a bit more substantiation than just the Pope's say-so. That's why there are now officially more flavors of Protestants than Jelly Belly jelly beans. Although I could explain in gory detail all the petty little political grievances that contributed to the histrionic posturing of Pretenders during Luther's era, that would be a waste of time. Those things are of absolutely no consequence whatsoever. All you need to know about that little—well, maybe not so little—flap can be learned from a book written by the Protestant Reformer John Calvin. The English translation of his work is titled *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. (See the Order Form.) From reading that one book you will learn that the Protestant Reformation was based entirely on the premise that *what one believes* is extremely important; therefore, the Truth requires a bit more documentation than just the Pope's say-so.

The “protest-ants” of Martin Luther and John Calvin's era made the rather remarkable claim that the Scriptures take precedent over any pious proclamation or pedigreed pronouncement of the Pope. That is, the Pope's say-so is only valid if—and when—it agrees with the Scriptures. Needless to say, the Pretenders who have held the papacy since Luther's time haven't cared too much for that little bit—well, maybe not so little bit—of insight into the Truth. So the Pope and the powers that be in his “church” have continued on in their pathetically pietistic pretense to this very day, while the “protest-ants” have split up and wandered off in a thousand different directions—with the equally pathetically pietistic powers that be in each little—well, maybe not so little—splinter group assiduously asserting they have somehow, somewhere, someway stumbled onto a bit more of the Truth that the Church lost. (See “The Protestant Confession: the Church Lost *The Teaching*,” *The Voice of Elijah*®, January 1992.)

You see, one of the claims that the Protestant Reformers stated rather forthrightly was an insistence that they still had insight into the Truth of the original Gospel message. Maybe you have already heard about that one: “Justification by faith” is what they called the part of *The Apostolic Teaching* they understood. Some today call that bit of Truth the doctrine of “salvation by

faith." I just call it "the Truth," because I completely agree with their assertion that they understood a fundamental Truth that the "papists" in their day had completely rejected. But maybe you don't see it quite the way they did. If not, I have *certainly* not been called to teach you anything, so you *certainly* did not hear anything even remotely like that from me. All I said was, "Just keep thinkin' those happy thoughts."

Unfortunately, the two phrases "justification by faith" and "salvation by faith" no longer *mean* anything to the Pretenders piously perched in the pulpit today. They used to *mean* something—back before the idiot philosopher and wannabe theologian Søren Kierkegaard changed the *meaning* of the word *faith*. (See "Satan's Fools Are Satan's Tools," *The Voice of Elijah*®, April 1994.) Nowadays, any deluded dope who wanders in off the street becomes an instant "Christian" the minute he says so.

The mendacious morons who run roughshod over True Believers in the Church today think "justification by faith" *means*, "You are a Christian if you *say* you are a Christian—just don't forget to slip a few dollars in the collection plate every Sunday." I beg to differ with that stupidity. The Protestant Reformers *knew* better, and so do a whole lot of folks just like me today. But maybe you don't see it quite the way we do. If not, I have *certainly* not been called to teach you anything, so you *certainly* did not hear anything even remotely like that from me. All I said was, "Just keep thinkin' those happy thoughts."

Men like Martin Luther, John Calvin, and Ulrich Zwingli insisted the Pretenders in charge of the Roman Catholic Church at that time had somehow managed to lose sight of the Truth of the Gospel. They also insisted that because those poor dupes did not know the Truth, their "church" was not actually the true Church of God. Make no mistake about that one: God called me to make exactly the same allegation concerning the Protestant wing of the Church today. Protestant leaders have now totally abandoned the Gospel message that the Protestant Reformers concisely stated and valiantly defended. But maybe you don't see it quite that way. If not, I have *certainly* not been called to teach you anything, so you *certainly* did not hear anything even remotely like that from me. All I said was, "Just keep thinkin' those happy thoughts."

Those of you who have heard the Pretenders' ridiculous argument regarding "not forsaking our own assembling together" (Heb. 10:25) might want to pay

close attention to what the Protestant Reformers said about the "true Church." The issue today is basically the same one they faced: If the Protestant Church is now filled with—and governed by—Pretenders, how can "assembling" with unbelievers—who worship some goofy god of unconditional grace—be any different than "assembling" with the adherents of any other pagan religion? Since they all worship a figment of their imagination, you may as well "attend church" at the neighborhood bar of your choice. The only difference would be the "drunks" with whom you have chosen to "assemble." John Calvin put it this way:

*1. How much the ministry of the word and sacraments should weigh with us, and how far reverence for it should extend, so as to be a perpetual badge for distinguishing the Church, has been explained; for we have shown, first, that wherever it exists entire and unimpaired, no errors of conduct, no defects should prevent us from giving the name of Church; and, secondly, that trivial errors in this ministry ought not to make us regard it as illegitimate. Moreover, we have shown that the errors to which such pardon is due, are those by which the fundamental doctrine of religion is not injured, and by which those articles of religion, in which all believers should agree, are not suppressed, while, in regard to the sacraments, the defects are such as neither destroy nor impair the legitimate institution of their Author. But as soon as falsehood has forced its way into the citadel of religion, as soon as the sum of necessary doctrine is inverted, and the use of the sacraments is destroyed, the death of the Church undoubtedly ensues, just as the life of man is destroyed when his throat is pierced, or his vitals mortally wounded. This is clearly evinced by the words of Paul when he says, that the Church is "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone" (Eph. ii. 20). If the Church is founded on the doctrine of the apostles and prophets, by which believers are enjoined to place their salvation in Christ alone, then if that doctrine is destroyed, how can the Church continue to stand? The Church must necessarily fall whenever that sum of religion which alone can sustain it has given way. Again, if the true Church is "the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. iii. 15), it is certain that there is no Church where lying and falsehood have usurped the ascendancy.*

*2. Since this is the state of matters under the Papacy, we can understand how much of the Church there survives.*

There, instead of the ministry of the word, prevails a perverted government, compounded of lies, a government which partly extinguishes, partly suppresses, the pure light. In place of the Lord's Supper, the foulest sacrilege has entered, the worship of God is deformed by a varied mass of intolerable superstitions; doctrine (without which Christianity exists not) is wholly buried and exploded, the public assemblies are schools of idolatry and impiety. **Wherefore, in declining fatal participation in such wickedness, we run no risk of being dissevered from the Church of Christ. The communion of the Church was not instituted to be a chain to bind us in idolatry, impiety, ignorance of God, and other kinds of evil, but rather to retain us in the fear of God and obedience of the truth.** They, indeed, vaunt loudly of their Church, as if there was not another in the world; and then, as if the matter were ended, they make out that all are schismatics who withdraw from obedience to that Church which they thus depict, that all are heretics who presume to whisper against its doctrine (see sec. 5). **But by what arguments do they prove their possession of the true Church? They appeal to ancient records which formerly existed in Italy, France, and Spain, pretending to derive their origin from those holy men who, by sound doctrine, founded and raised up churches, confirmed the doctrine, and reared the edifice of the Church with their blood; they pretend that the Church thus consecrated by spiritual gifts and the blood of martyrs was preserved from destruction by a perpetual succession of bishops.** They dwell on the importance which Irenæus, Tertullian, Origen, Augustine, and others, attached to this succession (see sec. 3). How frivolous and plainly ludicrous these allegations are, I will enable any, who will for a little consider the matter with me, to understand without any difficulty. I would also exhort our opponents to give their serious attention, if I had any hope of being able to benefit them by instruction; but since they have laid aside all regard to truth, and make it their only aim to prosecute their own ends in whatever way they can, I will only make a few observations by which good men and lovers of truth may disentangle themselves from their quibbles. First, I ask them why they do not quote Africa, and Egypt, and all Asia, just because in all those regions there was a cessation of that sacred succession, by the aid of which they vaunt of having continued churches. They therefore fall back on the assertion, that they have the true Church, because ever since it began to exist it was never destitute of bishops, because they succeeded each other in an unbroken series.

But what if I bring Greece before them? Therefore, I again ask them, Why they say that the Church perished among the Greeks, among whom there never was any interruption in the succession of bishops—a succession, in their opinion, the only guardian and preserver of the Church? They make the Greeks schismatics. Why? because, by revolting from the Apostolic See, they lost their privilege. What? Do not those who revolt from Christ much more deserve to lose it? **It follows, therefore, that the pretence of succession is vain, if posterity do not retain the truth of Christ, which was handed down to them by their fathers, safe and uncorrupted, and continue in it.**

3. **In the present day, therefore, the pretence of the Romanists is just the same as that which appears to have been formerly used by the Jews, when the Prophets of the Lord charged them with blindness, impiety, and idolatry.** For as the Jews proudly vaunted of their temple, ceremonies, and priesthood, by which, with strong reason, as they supposed, they measured the Church, so, instead of the Church, we are presented by the Romanists with certain external masks, which often are far from being connected with the Church, and without which the Church can perfectly exist. Wherefore, we need no other argument to refute them than that with which Jeremiah opposed the foolish confidence of the Jews—namely, "Trust ye not in lying words, saying, The temple of the Lord, The temple of the Lord, The temple of the Lord are these" (Jer. vii. 4). The Lord recognises nothing as his own, save when his word is heard and religiously observed. Thus, though the glory of God sat in the sanctuary between the cherubim (Ezek. x. 4), and he had promised that he would there have his stated abode, still when the priests corrupted his worship by depraved superstitions, he transferred it elsewhere, and left the place without any sanctity. **If that temple which seemed consecrated for the perpetual habitation of God, could be abandoned by God and become profane, the Romanists have no ground to pretend that God is so bound to persons or places, and fixed to external observances, that he must remain with those who have only the name and semblance of a Church.** This is the question which Paul discusses in the Epistle to the Romans, from the ninth to the twelfth chapter. Weak consciences were greatly disturbed, when those who seemed to be the people of God not only rejected, but even persecuted the doctrine of the Gospel. Therefore, after expounding doctrine, he removes this difficulty, denying that those Jews, the enemies of the truth, were the Church, though



they wanted nothing which might otherwise have been desired to the external form of the Church. The ground of his denial is, that they did not embrace Christ. In the Epistle to the Galatians, when comparing Ishmael with Isaac, he says still more expressly, that many hold a place in the Church to whom the inheritance does not belong, because they were not the offspring of a free parent. From this he proceeds to draw a contrast between two Jerusalems, because, as the Law was given on Mount Sinai, but the Gospel proceeded from Jerusalem, so many who were born and brought up in servitude confidently boast that they are the sons of God and of the Church; nay, while they are themselves degenerate, proudly despise the genuine sons of God. Let us also, in like manner, when we hear that it was once declared from heaven, "Cast out the bondmaid and her son," trust to this inviolable decree, and boldly despise their unmeaning boasts. For if they plume themselves on external profession, Ishmael also was circumcised: if they found on antiquity, he was the first-born: and yet we see that he was rejected. **If the reason is asked, Paul assigns it (Rom. ix. 6), that those only are accounted sons who are born of the pure and legitimate seed of doctrine.** On this ground God declares that he was not astricted to impious priests, though he had made a covenant with their father Levi, to be their angel, or interpreter (Mal. ii. 4); nay, he retorts the false boast by which they were wont to rise against the Prophets—namely, that the dignity of the priesthood was to be held in singular estimation. This he himself willingly admits: and he disputes with them, on the ground that he is ready to fulfil the covenant, while they, by not fulfilling it on their part, deserve to be rejected. Here, then, is the value of succession when not conjoined with imitation and corresponding conduct: posterity, as soon as they are convicted of having revolted from their origin, are deprived of all honour; unless, indeed, we are prepared to say, that because Caiaphas succeeded many pious priests (nay, the series from Aaron to him was continuous), that accursed assembly deserved the name of Church. Even in earthly governments, no one would bear to see the tyranny of Caligula, Nero, Heliogabalus, and the like, described as the true condition of a republic, because they succeeded such men as Brutus, Scipio, and Camillus. **That in the government of the Church especially, nothing is more absurd than to disregard doctrine, and place succession in persons. Nor, indeed, was anything farther from the intention of the holy teachers, whom they falsely obtrude upon us, than to maintain distinctly that churches exist, as**

**by hereditary right, wherever bishops have been uniformly succeeded by bishops. But while it was without controversy that no change had been made in doctrine from the beginning down to their day, they assumed it to be a sufficient refutation of all their errors, that they were opposed to the doctrine maintained constantly, and with unanimous consent, even by the apostles themselves. They have, therefore, no longer any ground for proceeding to make a gloss of the name of the Church, which we regard with due reverence; but when we come to definition, not only (to use the common expression) does the water adhere to them, but they stick in their own mire, because they substitute a vile prostitute for the sacred spouse of Christ.** That the substitution may not deceive us, let us, among other admonitions, attend to the following from Augustine. Speaking of the Church, he says, "She herself is sometimes obscured, and, as it were, beclouded by a multitude of scandals; sometimes, in a time of tranquillity, she appears quiet and free; sometimes she is covered and tossed by the billows of tribulation and trial." —(August. ad Vincent. Epist. 48). As instances, he mentions that the strongest pillars of the Church often bravely endured exile for the faith, or lay hid throughout the world.

4. **In this way the Romanists assail us in the present day, and terrify the unskilful with the name of Church, while they are the deadly adversaries of Christ.** Therefore, although they exhibit a temple, a priesthood, and other similar masks, the empty glare by which they dazzle the eyes of the simple should not move us in the least to admit that there is a Church where the word of God appears not. The Lord furnished us with an unfailing test when he said, "Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice" (John xviii. 37). Again, "I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine." "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me." A little before he had said, when the shepherd "putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him; for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers" (John x. 14, 4, 5). Why then do we, of our own accord, form so infatuated an estimate of the Church, since Christ has designated it by a sign in which is nothing in the least degree equivocal, a sign which is everywhere seen, the existence of which infallibly proves the existence of the Church, while its absence proves the absence of everything that properly bears the name of Church? Paul declares that the Church is not

founded either upon the judgments of men or the priesthood, but upon the doctrine of the Apostles and Prophets (Eph. ii. 20). Nay, Jerusalem is to be distinguished from Babylon, the Church of Christ from a conspiracy of Satan, by the discriminating test which our Saviour has applied to them, "He that is of God, heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God" (John viii. 47). In short, since the Church is the kingdom of Christ, and he reigns only by his word, can there be any doubt as to the falsehood of those statements by which the kingdom of Christ is represented without his sceptre, in other words, without his sacred word?

5. As to their charge of heresy and schism, because we preach a different doctrine, and submit not to their laws, and meet apart from them for Prayer, Baptism, the administration of the Supper, and other sacred rites, it is indeed a very serious accusation, but one which needs not a long and laboured defence. **The name of heretics and schismatics is applied to those who, by dissenting from the Church, destroy its communion. This communion is held together by two chains—viz. consent in sound doctrine and brotherly charity.** Hence the distinction which Augustine makes between heretics and schismatics is, that the former corrupt the purity of the faith by false dogmas, whereas the latter sometimes, even while holding the same faith, break the bond of union (August. Lib. Quæst. in Evang. Matth.). But the thing to be observed is, that this union of charity so depends on unity of faith, as to have in it its beginning, its end, in fine, its only rule. **Let us therefore remember, that whenever ecclesiastical unity is commended to us, the thing required is, that while our minds consent in Christ, our wills also be united together by mutual good-will in Christ.** Accordingly Paul, when he exhorts us to it, takes for his fundamental principle that there is "one God, one faith, one baptism" (Eph. iv. 5). Nay, when he tells us to be "of one accord, of one mind," he immediately adds, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. ii. 2, 5); intimating, that where the word of the Lord is not, it is not a union of believers, but a faction of the ungodly.

6. Cyprian, also, following Paul, derives the fountain of ecclesiastical concord from the one bishopric of Christ, and afterwards adds, "There is one Church, which by increase from fecundity is more widely extended to a multitude, just as there are many rays of the sun, but one light, and many branches of a tree, but one trunk upheld by the tenacious root. When many streams flow from one

fountain, though there seems wide spreading numerosity from the overflowing copiousness of the supply, yet unity remains in the origin. Pluck a ray from the body of the sun, and the unity sustains no division. Break a branch from a tree, and the branch will not germinate. Cut off a stream from a fountain, that which is thus cut off dries up. So the Church, pervaded by the light of the Lord, extends over the whole globe, and yet the light which is everywhere diffused is one" (Cyprian, de Simpliciter. Prælat.). Words could not more elegantly express the inseparable connection which all the members of Christ have with each other. We see how he constantly calls us back to the head. Accordingly, he declares that when heresies and schisms arise, it is because men return not to the origin of the truth, because they seek not the head, because they keep not the doctrine of the heavenly Master. **Let them now go and clamour against us as heretics for having withdrawn from their Church, since the only cause of our estrangement is, that they cannot tolerate a pure profession of the truth.** I say nothing of their having expelled us by anathemas and curses. The fact is more than sufficient to excuse us, unless they would also make schismatics of the apostles, with whom we have a common cause. Christ, I say, forewarned his apostles, "they shall put you out of the synagogues" (John xvi. 2). The synagogues of which he speaks were then held to be lawful churches. Seeing then it is certain that we were cast out, and we are prepared to show that this was done for the name of Christ, the cause should first be ascertained before any decision is given either for or against us. This, however, if they choose, I am willing to leave to them; to me it is enough that we behaved to withdraw from them in order to draw near to Christ.

7. The place which we ought to assign to all the churches on which the tyranny of the Romish idol has seized will better appear if we compare them with the ancient Israelitish Church, as delineated by the prophets. So long as the Jews and Israelites persisted in the laws of the covenant, a true Church existed among them; in other words, they by the kindness of God obtained the benefits of a Church. True doctrine was contained in the law, and the ministry of it was committed to the prophets and priests. They were initiated in religion by the sign of circumcision, and by the other sacraments trained and confirmed in the faith. There can be no doubt that the titles with which the Lord honoured his Church were applicable to their society. After they forsook the law of the Lord, and degenerated into idolatry and superstition, they

partly lost the privilege. For who can presume to deny the title of the Church to those with whom the Lord deposited the preaching of his word and the observance of his mysteries? On the other hand, who may presume to give the name of Church, without reservation, to that assembly by which the word of God is openly and with impunity trampled under foot—where his ministry, its chief support, and the very soul of the Church, is destroyed?

8. **What then? (some one will say); was there not a particle of the Church left to the Jews from the date of their revolt to idolatry? The answer is easy. First, I say that in the defection itself there were several gradations; for we cannot hold that the lapses by which both Judah and Israel turned aside from the pure worship of God were the same.** Jeroboam, when he fabricated the calves against the express prohibition of God, and dedicated an unlawful place for worship, corrupted religion entirely. The Jews became degenerate in manners and superstitious opinions before they made any improper change in the external form of religion. For although they had adopted many perverse ceremonies under Rehoboam, yet, as the doctrine of the law and the priesthood, and the rites which God had instituted, continued at Jerusalem, the pious still had the Church in a tolerable state. In regard to the Israelites, matters which, up to the time of Ahab, had certainly not been reformed, then became worse. Those who succeeded him, until the overthrow of the kingdom, were partly like him, and partly (when they wished to be somewhat better) followed the example of Jeroboam, while all, without exception, were wicked and idolatrous. In Judea different changes now and then took place, some kings corrupting the worship of God by false and superstitious inventions, and others attempting to reform it, until, at length, the priests themselves polluted the temple of God by profane and abominable rites.

9. **Now then let the Papists, in order to extenuate their vices as much as possible, deny, if they can, that the state of religion is as much vitiated and corrupted with them as it was in the kingdom of Israel under Jeroboam. They have a grosser idolatry, and in doctrine are not one whit more pure; rather, perhaps, they are even still more impure.** God, nay, even those possessed of a moderate degree of judgment, will bear me witness, and the thing itself is too manifest to require me to enlarge upon it. When they would force us to the communion of their Church, they make two demands upon us—first, that we join in their prayers, their sacrifices,

and all their ceremonies; and, secondly, that whatever honour, power, and jurisdiction, Christ has given to his Church, the same we must attribute to theirs. In regard to the first, I admit that all the prophets who were at Jerusalem, when matters there were very corrupt, neither sacrificed apart nor held separate meetings for prayer. For they had the command of God, which enjoined them to meet in the temple of Solomon, and they knew that the Levitical priests, whom the Lord had appointed over sacred matters, and who were not yet discarded, how unworthy soever they might be of that honour, were still entitled to hold it (Exod. xxix. 9). But the principal point in the whole question is, that they were not compelled to any superstitious worship, nay, they undertook nothing but what had been instituted by God. **But in these men, I mean the Papists, where is the resemblance? Scarcely can we hold any meeting with them without polluting ourselves with open idolatry. Their principal bond of communion is undoubtedly in the Mass, which we abominate as the greatest sacrilege.** Whether this is justly or rashly done will be elsewhere seen (see chap. xviii.; see also Book II., chap. xv., sec. 6). It is now sufficient to show that our case is different from that of the prophets, who, when they were present at the sacred rites of the ungodly, were not obliged to witness or use any ceremonies but those which were instituted by God. But if we would have an example in all respects similar, let us take one from the kingdom of Israel. Under the ordinance of Jeroboam, circumcision remained, sacrifices were offered, the law was deemed holy, and the God whom they had received from their fathers was worshipped; but in consequence of invented and forbidden modes of worship, everything which was done there God disapproved and condemned. **Show me one prophet or pious man who once worshipped or offered sacrifice in Bethel. They knew that they could not do it without defiling themselves with some kind of sacrilege. We hold, therefore, that the communion of the Church ought not to be carried so far by the godly as to lay them under a necessity of following it when it has degenerated to profane and polluted rites.**

10. With regard to the second point, our objections are still stronger. For when the Church is considered in that particular point of view as the Church, whose judgment we are bound to revere, whose authority acknowledge, whose admonitions obey, whose censures dread, whose communion religiously cultivate in every respect, **we cannot concede that they have a Church,**

*without obliging ourselves to subjection and obedience.* Still we are willing to concede what the Prophets conceded to the Jews and Israelites of their day, when with them matters were in a similar, or even in a better condition. For we see how they uniformly exclaim against their meetings as profane conventicles, to which it is not more lawful for them to assent than to abjure God (Is. i. 14). And certainly if those were churches, it follows, that Elijah, Micaiah, and others in Israel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Hosea, and those of like character in Judah, whom the prophets, priests, and people of their day, hated and execrated more than the uncircumcised, were aliens from the Church of God. **If those were churches, then the Church was no longer the pillar of the truth, but the stay of falsehood, not the tabernacle of the living God, but a receptacle of idols.** They were, therefore, under the necessity of refusing consent to their meetings, since consent was nothing else than impious conspiracy against God. **For this same reason, should any one acknowledge those meetings of the present day, which are contaminated by idolatry, superstition, and impious doctrine, as churches, full communion with which a Christian must maintain so far as to agree with them even in doctrine, he will greatly err. For if they are churches, the power of the keys belongs to them, whereas the keys are inseparably connected with the word which they have put to flight.** Again, if they are churches, they can claim the promise of Christ, "Whatsoever ye bind," &c.; whereas, on the contrary, they discard from their communion all who sincerely profess themselves the servants of Christ. Therefore, either the promise of Christ is vain, or in this respect, at least, they are not churches. In fine, instead of the ministry of the word, they have schools of impiety, and sinks of all kinds of error. Therefore, in this point of view, they either are not churches, or no badge will remain by which the lawful meetings of the faithful can be distinguished from the meetings of Turks.

11. Still, as in ancient times, there remained among the Jews certain special privileges of a Church, so in the present day we deny not to the Papists those vestiges of a Church which the Lord has allowed to remain among them amid the dissipation. When the Lord had once made his covenant with the Jews, it was preserved not so much by them as by its own strength, supported by which it withstood their impiety. Such, then, is the certainty and constancy of the divine goodness, that the covenant of the Lord continued there, and his faith could not be obliterated by their perfidy; nor could circumcision be so profaned by

their impure hands as not still to be a true sign and sacrament of his covenant. Hence the children who were born to them the Lord called his own (Ezek. xvi. 20), though, unless by special blessing, they in no respect belonged to him. So having deposited his covenant in Gaul, Italy, Germany, Spain, and England, when these countries were oppressed by the tyranny of Antichrist, He, in order that his covenant might remain inviolable, first preserved baptism there as an evidence of the covenant baptism; — which, consecrated by his lips, retains its power in spite of human depravity; secondly, He provided by his providence that there should be other remains also to prevent the Church from utterly perishing. But as in pulling down buildings the foundations and ruins are often permitted to remain, so he did not suffer Antichrist either to subvert his Church from its foundation, or to level it with the ground (though, to punish the ingratitude of men who had despised his word, he allowed a fearful shaking and dismembering to take place), but was pleased that amid the devastation the edifice should remain, though half in ruins.

12. Therefore, while we are unwilling simply to concede the name of Church to the Papists, we do not deny that there are churches among them. **The question we raise only relates to the true and legitimate constitution of the Church, implying communion in sacred rites, which are the signs of profession, and especially in doctrine.** Daniel and Paul foretold that Antichrist would sit in the temple of God (Dan. ix. 27; 2 Thess. ii. 4); we regard the Roman Pontiff as the leader and standard-bearer of that wicked and abominable kingdom. By placing his seat in the temple of God, it is intimated that his kingdom would not be such as to destroy the name either of Christ or of his Church. Hence, then, it is obvious that we do not at all deny that churches remain under his tyranny; churches, however, which by sacrilegious impiety he has profaned, by cruel domination has oppressed, by evil and deadly doctrines like poisoned potions has corrupted and almost slain; churches where Christ lies halfburied, the gospel is suppressed, piety is put to flight, and the worship of God almost abolished; where, in short, all things are in such disorder as to present the appearance of Babylon rather than the holy city of God. In one word, I call them churches, inasmuch as the Lord there wondrously preserves some remains of his people, though miserably torn and scattered, and inasmuch as some symbols of the Church still remain—symbols especially whose efficacy neither the craft of the devil nor

*human depravity can destroy. But as, on the other hand, those marks to which we ought especially to have respect in this discussion are effaced, I say that the whole body, as well as every single assembly, want the form of a legitimate Church.*

*(John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, Trans. by Henry Beveridge, 1845, Book IV, Chapter II)*

It amuses me every time some dolt sends a letter or email denouncing the “un-Christian nature” of the sarcasm and ridicule I heap on the vacuum-headed leaders of the Church today. Such folks have obviously never read the scathing comments made by Calvin, Irenæus, and Hippolytus—not to mention the Prophets, Apostles, and even Jesus Christ Himself. For some “strange” reason, I feel completely inept. I keep falling short of the absolutely scathing derision they heaped on the Pretenders of their day—even though I constantly strive to measure up to the impossibly high standard they set. But enough about me.

Now you know why some in the “protest-ant” wing of the Church still make the vociferous claim that the Pope is the Antichrist. John Calvin said it, they blindly believe it, and don’t you dare disagree with their dumbness. The thing is, if they had actually taken the time to *read* Calvin instead of just *repeating* some of the more obviously inaccurate goofiness that has been passed down *orally* for the past five hundred years, they might not appear so dimwitted. I have a hunch Calvin was just hurling the most devastating charge he could think of at the Pope. If he actually believed the Pope *in his day* was the Antichrist, all that proves is, he was no more infallible than the Pope. But I assume you already knew that.

You may well feel a real affinity with John Calvin. I do; not just because he had quite obviously been born again by responding to the same Gospel message that I heard and believed in a little country church at the age of twelve, but also because he understood the basics in regard to the *parabolic imagery* of *The Apostolic Teaching*. For example, he could see the Church was somehow a continuation of *Corporate Israel*, and he even had a basic understanding of the fact that the Hebrew idiom “cut off from” applies to that continuation. Although he was clearly lacking some of the more pertinent details, he, nevertheless, had an intuitive feel for how certain major elements in *The Apostolic Teaching* relate to other elements.

Now that I have told you why I identify with John Calvin, I should probably also explain something that may not be quite as obvious. The “once-saved-always-saved” Pretenders in the Church who look to John Calvin as their “great white hope” cannot even begin to understand how he could—and did—reject their nonsense. He never once said that all you have to do to be saved is *say* you believe and you will never be lost. As a matter of fact, he said exactly the opposite; and he went to great lengths to insist that only a genuine belief in the Truth of the Gospel will guarantee salvation to the Elect of God. That is exactly the same thing I have been saying for years: Salvation by faith depends on *what you believe*, not on *that you believe*. Everyone but the morons leading the Church today should be able to see the logic in that; but something tells me they won’t, the blind being what they are.

The only addition I would make to what John Calvin taught concerning “justification by faith” is how the *parabolic imagery* of *The Apostolic Teaching* explains his belief in “predestination.” Look at it this way: “The One” has always been predestined; “The Many” are predestined “in The One.” If you think you can explain that one any better than John Calvin, you are obviously not one of “The Many.” They know better than to try. Now that I have riled the thimble-brained numskulls who seek to hide behind John Calvin, let me show you what he wrote about the *Living Word* of God with Whom you True Believers are already acquainted:

**1. BEFORE proceeding farther, it seems proper to make some observations on the authority of Scripture, in order that our minds may not only be prepared to receive it with reference, but be divested of all doubt.**

*When that which professes to be the Word of God is acknowledged to be so, no person, unless devoid of common sense and the feelings of a man, will have the desperate hardihood to refuse credit to the speaker. But since no daily responses are given from heaven, and the Scriptures are the only records in which God has been pleased to consign his truth to perpetual remembrance, the full authority which they ought to possess with the faithful is not recognised, unless they are believed to have come from heaven, as directly as if God had been heard giving utterance to them. This subject well deserves to be treated more at large, and pondered more accurately. But my readers will pardon me for having more regard to what my plan admits than to what the extent of this topic requires.*

*A most pernicious error has very generally prevailed—viz. that Scripture is of importance only in so far as conceded to it by the suffrage of the Church; as if the eternal and inviolable truth of God could depend on the will of men.* With great insult to the Holy Spirit, it is asked, Who can assure us that the Scriptures proceeded from God; who guarantee that they have come down safe and unimpaired to our times; who persuade us that this book is to be received with reverence, and that one expunged from the list, did not the Church regulate all these things with certainty? On the determination of the Church, therefore, it is said, depend both the reverence which is due to Scripture and the books which are to be admitted into the canon. **Thus profane men, seeking, under the pretext of the Church, to introduce unbridled tyranny, care not in what absurdities they entangle themselves and others, provided they extort from the simple this one acknowledgment—viz. that there is nothing which the Church cannot do.** But what is to become of miserable consciences in quest of some solid assurance of eternal life, if all the promises with regard to it have no better support than man's judgment? On being told so, will they cease to doubt and tremble? On the other hand, to what jeers of the wicked is our faith subjected—into how great suspicion is it brought with all, if believed to have only a precarious authority lent to it by the good-will of men?

2. *These ravings are admirably refuted by a single expression of an apostle. Paul testifies that the Church is "built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets" (Eph. ii. 20). If the doctrine of the apostles and prophets is the foundation of the Church, the former must have had its certainty before the latter began to exist.* Nor is there any room for the cavil, that though the Church derives her first beginning from thence, it still remains doubtful what writings are to be attributed to the apostles and prophets, until her judgment is interposed. For if the Christian Church was founded at first on the writings of the prophets, and the preaching of the apostles, that doctrine, wheresoever it may be found, was certainly ascertained and sanctioned antecedently to the Church, since, but for this, the Church herself never could have existed. **Nothing, therefore, can be more absurd than the fiction, that the power of judging Scripture is in the Church, and that on her nod its certainty depends. When the Church receives it, and gives it the stamp of her authority, she does not make that authentic which was otherwise doubtful or**

*controverted, but, acknowledging it as the truth of God, she, as in duty bound, shows her reverence by an unhesitating assent.* As to the question, How shall we be persuaded that it came from God without recurring to a decree of the Church? it is just the same as if it were asked, How shall we learn to distinguish light from darkness, white from black, sweet from bitter? Scripture bears upon the face of it as clear evidence of its truth, as white and black do of their colour, sweet and bitter of their taste.

3. *I am aware it is usual to quote a sentence of Augustine, in which he says that he would not believe the gospel, were he not moved by the authority of the Church (Aug. Cont. Epist. Fundament. c. v.).* But it is easy to discover from the context, how inaccurate and unfair it is to give it such a meaning. He was reasoning against the Manichees, who insisted on being implicitly believed, alleging that they had the truth, though they did not show they had. But as they pretended to appeal to the gospel in support of Manes, he asks what they would do if they fell in with a man who did not even believe the gospel—what kind of argument they would use to bring him over to their opinion. He afterwards adds, "But I would not believe the gospel," &c.; meaning, that were he a stranger to the faith, the only thing which could induce him to embrace the gospel would be the authority of the Church. And is it anything wonderful, that one who does not know Christ should pay respect to men?

*Augustine, therefore, does not here say that the faith of the godly is founded on the authority of the Church; nor does he mean that the certainty of the gospel depends upon it; he merely says that unbelievers would have no certainty of the gospel, so as thereby to win Christ, were they not influenced by the consent of the Church.* And he clearly shows this to be his meaning, by thus expressing himself a little before: "When I have praised my own creed, and ridiculed yours, who do you suppose is to judge between us; or what more is to be done than to quit those who, inviting us to certainty, afterwards command us to believe uncertainty, and follow those who invite us, in the first instance, to believe what we are not yet able to comprehend, that waxing stronger through faith itself, we may become able to understand what we believe—no longer men, but God himself internally strengthening and illuminating our minds?" These unquestionably are the words of Augustine (August. Cont. Epist. Fundament. cap. iv.); and the obvious inference from them is, that this holy man had no intention to suspend our faith in Scripture on the nod or decision of the

Church, but only to intimate (what we too admit to be true) that those who are not yet enlightened by the Spirit of God, become teachable by reverence for the Church, and thus submit to learn the faith of Christ from the gospel. In this way, though the authority of the Church leads us on, and prepares us to believe in the gospel, it is plain that Augustine would have the certainty of the godly to rest on a very different foundation.

At the same time, I deny not that he often presses the Manichees with the consent of the whole Church, while arguing in support of the Scriptures, which they rejected. **Hence he upbraids Faustus (Lib. xxxii.) for not submitting to evangelical truth—truth so well founded, so firmly established, so gloriously renowned, and handed down by sure succession from the days of the apostles. But he nowhere insinuates that the authority which we give to the Scriptures depends on the definitions or devices of men.** He only brings forward the universal judgment of the Church, as a point most pertinent to the cause, and one, moreover, in which he had the advantage of his opponents. Any one who desires to see this more fully proved may read his short treatise, *De Utilitate Credendi* (*The Advantages of Believing*), where it will be found that the only facility of believing which he recommends is that which affords an introduction, and forms a fit commencement to inquiry; while he declares that we ought not to be satisfied with opinion, but to strive after substantial truth.

4. **It is necessary to attend to what I lately said, that our faith in doctrine is not established until we have a perfect conviction that God is its author.** Hence, the highest proof of Scripture is uniformly taken from the character of him whose word it is. The prophets and apostles boast not their own acuteness, or any qualities which win credit to speakers, nor do they dwell on reasons; but they appeal to the sacred name of God, in order that the whole world may be compelled to submission. The next thing to be considered is, how it appears not probable merely, but certain, that the name of God is neither rashly nor cunningly pretended. **If, then, we would consult most effectually for our consciences, and save them from being driven about in a whirl of uncertainty, from wavering, and even stumbling at the smallest obstacle, our conviction of the truth of Scripture must be derived from a higher source than human conjectures, judgments, or reasons; namely, the secret testimony of the Spirit.** It is true, indeed, that if we choose to proceed in the way of argument, it is easy to

establish, by evidence of various kinds, that if there is a God in heaven, the Law, the Prophecies, and the Gospel, proceeded from him. Nay, although learned men, and men of the greatest talent, should take the opposite side, summoning and ostentatiously displaying all the powers of their genius in the discussion; if they are not possessed of shameless effrontery, they will be compelled to confess that the Scripture exhibits clear evidence of its being spoken by God, and, consequently, of its containing his heavenly doctrine. We shall see a little farther on, that the volume of sacred Scripture very far surpasses all other writings. Nay, if we look at it with clear eyes and unbiassed judgment, it will forthwith present itself with a divine majesty which will subdue our presumptuous opposition, and force us to do it homage.

**Still, however, it is preposterous to attempt, by discussion, to rear up a full faith in Scripture.** True, were I called to contend with the craftiest despisers of God, I trust, though I am not possessed of the highest ability or eloquence, I should not find it difficult to stop their obstreperous mouths; I could, without much ado, put down the boastings which they mutter in corners, were anything to be gained by refuting their cavils. **But although we may maintain the sacred Word of God against gainsayers, it does not follow that we shall forthwith implant the certainty which faith requires in their hearts.** Profane men think that religion rests only on opinion, and, therefore, that they may not believe foolishly, or on slight grounds desire and insist to have it proved by reason that Moses and the prophets were divinely inspired. **But I answer, that the testimony of the Spirit is superior to reason.** For as God alone can properly bear witness to his own words, so these words will not obtain full credit in the hearts of men, until they are sealed by the inward testimony of the Spirit. The same Spirit, therefore, who spoke by the mouth of the prophets, must penetrate our hearts, in order to convince us that they faithfully delivered the message with which they were divinely intrusted. This connection is most aptly expressed by Isaiah in these words, "My Spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever" (Is. lix. 21). Some worthy persons feel disconcerted, because, while the wicked murmur with impunity at the word of God, they have not a clear proof at hand to silence them, forgetting that the Spirit is called an earnest and

seal to confirm the faith of the godly, for this very reason, that, until he enlightens their minds, they are tossed to and fro in a sea of doubts.

5. *Let it therefore be held as fixed, that those who are inwardly taught by the Holy Spirit acquiesce implicitly in Scripture; that Scripture, carrying its own evidence along with it, deigns not to submit to proofs and arguments, but owes the full conviction with which we ought to receive it to the testimony of the Spirit. Enlightened by him, we no longer believe, either on our own judgment or that of others, that the Scriptures are from God; but, in a way superior to human judgment, feel perfectly assured—as much so as if we beheld the divine image visibly impressed on it—that it came to us, by the instrumentality of men, from the very mouth of God.* We ask not for proofs or probabilities on which to rest our judgment, but we subject our intellect and judgment to it as too transcendent for us to estimate. This, however, we do, not in the manner in which some are wont to fasten on an unknown object, which, as soon as known, displeases, but because we have a thorough conviction that, in holding it, we hold unassailable truth; not like miserable men, whose minds are enslaved by superstition, but because we feel a divine energy living and breathing in it—an energy by which we are drawn and animated to obey it, willingly indeed, and knowingly, but more vividly and effectually than could be done by human will or knowledge. Hence, God most justly exclaims by the mouth of Isaiah, “Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen, that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he” (Is. xliii. 10).

Such, then, is a conviction which asks not for reasons; such, a knowledge which accords with the highest reason, namely, knowledge in which the mind rests more firmly and securely than in any reasons; such, in fine, the conviction which revelation from heaven alone can produce. *I say nothing more than every believer experiences in himself, though my words fall far short of the reality.* I do not dwell on this subject at present, because we will return to it again: only let us now understand that the only true faith is that which the Spirit of God seals on our hearts. Nay, the modest and teachable reader will find a sufficient reason in the promise contained in Isaiah, that all the children of the renovated Church “shall be taught of the Lord” (Is. liv. 13). This singular privilege God bestows on his elect only, whom he separates from the rest of mankind. *For what is the*

*beginning of true doctrine but prompt alacrity to hear the word of God? And God, by the mouth of Moses, thus demands to be heard: “It is not in heaven, that thou shouldst say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear and do it? But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart” (Deut. xxx. 12, 14). God having been pleased to reserve the treasure of intelligence for his children, no wonder that so much ignorance and stupidity is seen in the generality of mankind. In the generality, I include even those specially chosen, until they are ingrafted into the body of the Church. Isaiah, moreover, while reminding us that the prophetic doctrine would prove incredible not only to strangers, but also to the Jews, who were desirous to be thought of the household of God, subjoins the reason, when he asks, “To whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?” (Is. liii. 1.) **If at any time, then, we are troubled at the small number of those who believe, let us, on the other hand, call to mind, that none comprehend the mysteries of God save those to whom it is given.***

(John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, Trans. by Henry Beveridge, 1845, Book I, Chapter VII)

Now I realize some rabidly religious rodent who has spent the better part of a lifetime nibbling and gnawing around the edges of Christian theology is going to insist Calvin is saying dimwits like him can believe anything they want to believe and still have the “witness of the Spirit” that he describes. Well, I have not only read what Calvin wrote, I have also had the same experience of regeneration that he describes elsewhere in his work. (See Book III, Chapters I–IV.) So it is fairly obvious that is not what he had in mind.

Calvin, like every other legitimate Evangelist since his time, plainly says those who do not begin the salvation experience with a wholesome fear of God have only the “implicit faith” of the Roman Catholic “schoolmen” that he rails against. Those of us who have actually been born again know that. So you can take your idiotic “God loves me and has a wonderful plan for my life” nonsense, write it in large letters on an extremely large piece of paper, and stuff it all the way up your snooty nose. Try it; it will fit. There is nothing else in that vacuum between your ears anyway.

If the dim lights who appeal to Calvin for their spiritual safety and security had ever bothered to read him thoroughly, they would already know that his



point is this: *Belief in the objective Truth of the Gospel comes before the "witness of the Spirit."* That is, the "witness of the Spirit" is not attained by some mystical "salvation" experience in which a completely degenerate reject comes to a sudden supernatural "knowledge" of God. To be born again, you must first believe the same content of the Gospel—the "justification by faith" doctrine—that John Calvin understood and believed.

Calvin's point is, from the new-birth *experience* you gain the "witness of the Spirit" that confirms the Truth of the Gospel you have had opportunity to hear—provided you have actually been born again and have not deluded yourself into believing one of Satan's lies. So before you make the same mistake that other mental midgets in the Church today have made, you had best make sure you fully understand the implications of the things Calvin explains in his work.

To put it bluntly, Calvin said the Pope's say-so has no validity unless it agrees completely with what *the Prophets and the Apostles* have said because the Apostle Paul plainly says the Church "is built on the foundation of *the Prophets and the Apostles*" (Eph. 2:20). Calvin's point was—and still is—that although the Pope claims to be the sole remaining *Apostle* of Jesus Christ, that does not grant him ascendancy over *the Prophets and the Apostles* who came down the pike before he and every other bishop of Rome set foot on Earth. That is true because what *the Prophets and the Apostles* have to say is still readily available in the Scriptures. So, as they say, "Touché." The Pope must still agree with what *the Prophets and the Apostles* have written. Simple argument, complex *significance*.

Have I told you I like Calvin's style? I do. I would have a hard time choosing between him and Irenæus. The *significance* of the Truth he has stated so succinctly is this: All those "little popes" running around blithering and blathering in the Protestant Church today? The ones proudly declaring they have some "special" insight into the *meaning* and *significance* of the Scriptures? Those mindlessly mendacious morons have to hew to the same standard that Calvin applied to the Pope. That is, if what they say doesn't agree *completely* with what *the Prophets and the Apostles* have said, you can toss it out with the garbage—because that is what it is. And only those who have true faith (belief) in the same Gospel message—the "justification by faith" doctrine—that Calvin and other "protest-ants" believed will be able to accept what he says about that:

1. *ALL these things will be easily understood after we have given a clearer definition of faith, so as to enable the readers to apprehend its nature and power. Here it is of importance to call to mind what was formerly taught, first, That since God by his Law prescribes what we ought to do, failure in any one respect subjects us to the dreadful judgment of eternal death, which it denounces. Secondly, Because it is not only difficult, but altogether beyond our strength and ability, to fulfil the demands of the Law, if we look only to ourselves and consider what is due to our merits, no ground of hope remains, but we lie forsaken of God under eternal death. Thirdly, That there is only one method of deliverance which can rescue us from this miserable calamity—viz. when Christ the Redeemer appears, by whose hand our heavenly Father, out of his infinite goodness and mercy, has been pleased to succour us, if we with true faith embrace this mercy, and with firm hope rest in it. It is now proper to consider the nature of this faith, by means of which, those who are adopted into the family of God obtain possession of the heavenly kingdom. For the accomplishment of so great an end, it is obvious that no mere opinion or persuasion is adequate. And the greater care and diligence is necessary in discussing the true nature of faith, from the pernicious delusions which many, in the present day, labour under with regard to it. Great numbers, on hearing the term, think that nothing more is meant than a certain common assent to the Gospel History; nay, when the subject of faith is discussed in the Schools, by simply representing God as its object, they by empty speculation, as we have elsewhere said (Book II. chap. vi. sec. 4), hurry wretched souls away from the right mark instead of directing them to it. For seeing that God dwells in light that is inaccessible, Christ must intervene. Hence he calls himself "the light of the world;" and in another passage, "the way, the truth, and the life." None cometh to the Father (who is the fountain of life), except by him; for "no man knoweth who the Father is but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him." For this reason, Paul declares, "I count all things as loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." In the twentieth chapter of the Acts, he states that he preached "faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ;" and in another passage, he introduces Christ as thus addressing him: "I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness;" — "delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee," — "that they may receive*

forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified through faith which is in me." Paul further declares, that in the person of Christ the glory of God is visibly manifested to us, or, which is the same thing, we have "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." It is true, indeed, that faith has respect to God only; but to this we should add, that it acknowledges Jesus Christ whom he hath sent. God would remain far off, concealed from us, were we not irradiated by the brightness of Christ. All that the Father had, he deposited with his only begotten Son, in order that he might manifest himself in him, and thus by the communication of blessings express the true image of his glory. Since, as has been said, we must be led by the Spirit, and thus stimulated to seek Christ, so must we also remember that the invisible Father is to be sought nowhere but in this image. For which reason Augustine, treating of the object of faith (*De Civitate Dei*, Lib. xi. c. 2), elegantly says, "The thing to be known is, whither we are to go, and by what way;" and immediately after infers, that "the surest way to avoid all errors is to know him who is both God and man. It is to God we tend, and it is by man we go, and both of these are found only in Christ." Paul, when he preaches faith towards God, surely does not intend to overthrow what he so often inculcates—viz. that faith has all its stability in Christ. Peter most appropriately connects both, saying, that by him "we believe in God" (1 Pet. i. 21).

2. This evil, therefore, must, like innumerable others, be attributed to the Schoolmen, who have in a manner drawn a veil over Christ, to whom, if our eye is not directly turned, we must always wander through many labyrinths. **But besides impairing, and almost annihilating, faith by their obscure definition, they have invented the fiction of implicit faith, with which name decking the grossest ignorance, they delude the wretched populace to their great destruction. Nay, to state the fact more truly and plainly, this fiction not only buries true faith, but entirely destroys it. Is it faith to understand nothing, and merely submit your convictions implicitly to the Church? Faith consists not in ignorance, but in knowledge—knowledge not of God merely, but of the divine will. We do not obtain salvation either because we are prepared to embrace every dictate of the Church as true, or leave to the Church the province of inquiring and determining; but when we recognise God as a propitious Father through the reconciliation made by Christ, and Christ as given to us for righteousness, sanctification, and**

**life. By this knowledge, I say, not by the submission of our understanding, we obtain an entrance into the kingdom of heaven.** For when the Apostle says, "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Rom. x. 10), he intimates, that it is not enough to believe implicitly without understanding, or even inquiring. The thing requisite is an explicit recognition of the divine goodness, in which our righteousness consists.

3. I indeed deny not (so enveloped are we in ignorance), that to us very many things now are and will continue to be completely involved until we lay aside this weight of flesh, and approach nearer to the presence of God. In such cases the fittest course is to suspend our judgment, and resolve to maintain unity with the Church. **But under this pretext, to honour ignorance, tempered with humility, with the name of faith, is most absurd. Faith consists in the knowledge of God and Christ (John xvii. 3), not in reverence for the Church. And we see what a labyrinth they have formed out of this implicit faith—everything, sometimes even the most monstrous errors, being received by the ignorant as oracles without any discrimination, provided they are prescribed to them under the name of the Church. This inconsiderate facility, though the surest precipice to destruction, is, however, excused on the ground that it believes nothing definitely, but only with the appended condition, If such is the faith of the Church. Thus they pretend to find truth in error, light in darkness, true knowledge in ignorance. Not to dwell longer in refuting these views, we simply advise the reader to compare them with ours. The clearness of truth will itself furnish a sufficient refutation.** For the question they raise is not, whether there may be an implicit faith with many remains of ignorance, but they maintain, that persons living and even indulging in a stupid ignorance duly believe, provided, in regard to things unknown, they assent to the authority and judgment of the Church: as if Scripture did not uniformly teach, that with faith understanding is conjoined.

4. We grant, indeed, that so long as we are pilgrims in the world faith is implicit, not only because as yet many things are hidden from us, but because, involved in the mists of error, we attain not to all. The highest wisdom, even of him who has attained the greatest perfection, is to go forward, and endeavour in a calm and teachable spirit to make further progress. Hence Paul exhorts believers to wait for further illumination in any matter in which they

differ from each other (Phil. iii. 15). And certainly experience teaches, that so long as we are in the flesh, our attainments are less than is to be desired. In our daily reading we fall in with many obscure passages which convict us of ignorance. With this curb God keeps us modest, assigning to each a measure of faith, that every teacher, however excellent, may still be disposed to learn. Striking examples of this implicit faith may be observed in the disciples of Christ before they were fully illuminated. We see with what difficulty they take in the first rudiments, how they hesitate in the minutest matters, how, though hanging on the lips of their Master, they make no great progress; nay, even after running to the sepulchre on the report of the women, the resurrection of their Master appears to them a dream. As Christ previously bore testimony to their faith, we cannot say that they were altogether devoid of it; nay, had they not been persuaded that Christ would rise again, all their zeal would have been extinguished. Nor was it superstition that led the women to prepare spices to embalm a dead body of whose revival they had no expectation; but, although they gave credit to the words of one whom they knew to be true, yet the ignorance which still possessed their minds involved their faith in darkness, and left them in amazement. **Hence they are said to have believed only when, by the reality, they perceive the truth of what Christ had spoken; not that they then began to believe, but the seed of a hidden faith, which lay as it were dead in their hearts, then burst forth in vigour. They had, therefore, a true but implicit faith, having reverently embraced Christ as the only teacher. Then, being taught by him, they felt assured that he was the author of salvation: in fine, believed that he had come from heaven to gather disciples, and take them thither through the grace of the Father.** There cannot be a more familiar proof of this, than that in all men faith is always mingled with incredulity.

5. We may also call their faith implicit, as being properly nothing else than a preparation for faith. The Evangelists describe many as having believed, although they were only roused to admiration by the miracles, and went no farther than to believe that Christ was the promised Messiah, without being at all imbued with Evangelical doctrine. The reverence which subdued them, and made them willingly submit to Christ, is honoured with the name of faith, though it was nothing but the commencement of it. Thus the nobleman who believed in the promised cure of his son, on returning home, is said by the Evangelist (John iv. 53) to have again believed; that is, he

had first received the words which fell from the lips of Christ as an oracular response, and thereafter submitted to his authority and received his doctrine. Although it is to be observed that he was docile and disposed to learn, yet the word "believed" in the former passage denotes a particular faith, and in the latter gives him a place among those disciples who had devoted themselves to Christ. Not unlike this is the example which John gives of the Samaritans, who believed the woman, and eagerly hastened to Christ; but, after they had heard him, thus express themselves, "Now we believe, not because of thy saying, for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world" (John iv. 42). From these passages it is obvious, that even those who are not yet imbued with the first principles, provided they are disposed to obey, are called believers, not properly indeed, but inasmuch as God is pleased in kindness so highly to honour their pious feeling. But this docility, with a desire of further progress, is widely different from the gross ignorance in which those sluggishly indulge who are contented with the implicit faith of the Papists. If Paul severely condemns those who are "ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth," how much more sharply ought those to be rebuked who avowedly affect to know nothing?

6. **The true knowledge of Christ consists in receiving him as he is offered by the Father—namely, as invested with his Gospel. For, as he is appointed as the end of our faith, so we cannot directly tend towards him except under the guidance of the Gospel.** Therein are certainly unfolded to us treasures of grace. Did these continue shut, Christ would profit us little. Hence Paul makes faith the inseparable attendant of doctrine in these words, "Ye have not so learned Christ; if so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus" (Eph. iv. 20, 21). Still I do not confine faith to the Gospel in such a sense as not to admit that enough was delivered to Moses and the Prophets to form a foundation of faith; but as the Gospel exhibits a fuller manifestation of Christ, Paul justly terms it the doctrine of faith (1 Tim. iv. 6). For which reason, also, he elsewhere says, that, by the coming of faith, the Law was abolished (Rom. x. 4), including under the expression a new and unwonted mode of teaching, by which Christ, from the period of his appearance as the great Master, gave a fuller illustration of the Father's mercy, and testified more surely of our salvation. But an easier and more appropriate method will be to descend from the general to the particular. **First, we must remember, that there is an inseparable relation between faith**

*and the word, and that these can no more be disconnected from each other than rays of light from the sun. Hence in Isaiah the Lord explains, "Hear, and your soul shall live" (Is. lv. 3). And John points to this same fountain of faith, in the following words, "These are written that ye might believe" (John xx. 31). The Psalmist also, exhorting the people to faith, says, "To-day, if ye will hear his voice" (Ps. xcvi. 7), to hear being uniformly taken for to believe. In fine, in Isaiah the Lord distinguishes the members of the Church from strangers by this mark, "All thy children shall be taught of the Lord" (Is. liv. 13); for if the benefit was indiscriminate, why should he address his words only to a few? Corresponding with this, the Evangelists uniformly employ the terms believers and disciples as synonymous. This is done especially by Luke in several passages of the Acts. He even applies the term disciple to a woman (Acts ix. 36). Wherefore, if faith declines in the least degree from the mark at which it ought to aim, it does not retain its nature, but becomes uncertain credulity and vague wandering of mind. The same word is the basis on which it rests and is sustained. Declining from it, it falls. Take away the word, therefore, and no faith will remain. We are not here discussing whether, in order to propagate the word of God by which faith is engendered, the ministry of man is necessary (this will be considered elsewhere); but we say that the word itself, whatever be the way in which it is conveyed to us, is a kind of mirror in which faith beholds God. In this, therefore, whether God uses the agency of man, or works immediately by his own power, it is always by his word that he manifests himself to those whom he designs to draw to himself. Hence Paul designates faith as the obedience which is given to the Gospel (Rom. i. 5); and writing to the Philippians, he commends them for the obedience of faith (Phil. ii. 17). For faith includes not merely the knowledge that God is, but also, nay chiefly, a perception of his will towards us. It concerns us to know not only what he is in himself, but also in what character he is pleased to manifest himself to us. We now see, therefore, that faith is the knowledge of the divine will in regard to us, as ascertained from his word. And the foundation of it is a previous persuasion of the truth of God. So long as your mind entertains any misgivings as to the certainty of the word, its authority will be weak and dubious, or rather it will have no authority at all. Nor is it sufficient to believe that God is true, and cannot lie or deceive, unless you feel firmly persuaded that every word which proceeds from him*

*is sacred, inviolable truth.*

(John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, Trans. by Henry Beveridge, 1845, Book III, Chapter II)

Did you happen to notice how many times Calvin referred to "the Truth," "true knowledge," and "knowledge of the Truth"? He is referring to the "protest-ant" doctrine of "justification by faith." So don't be an idiot. The pea-brained pulpit parrots proudly proclaiming the love of God in the Protestant Church today have stupidly entrusted their souls to the same "implicit faith" of the "papists" that Calvin repeatedly lambasts. Unfortunately for them, their asinine belief in that diabolical dumbness does not in any way, shape, or form *mean* the Truth of the Gospel has somehow become the mere statement of whimsy that you find them peddling in the Church today.

The Truth that explains the *meaning* and *significance* of the Scriptures does exist; so if you firmly believe there is no such thing as *absolute Truth*, more than a few of us are still able to see you are an *absolute moron*. The most that anyone like you can say is, "I don't know if there is absolute Truth." Do otherwise, and you have made the following *absolutely moronic* assertion: "It is *absolutely true* there is no *absolute Truth*." Bright fellow, that one. Calvin knew better; and he also knew there was only one "way" for you to get from where you began to where you need to be:

5. *Though all this is true, yet the term repentance (in so far as I can ascertain from Scripture) must be differently taken. For in comprehending faith under repentance, they are at variance with what Paul says in the Acts, as to his "testifying both to the Jews and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts xx. 21). Here he mentions faith and repentance as two different things. What then? Can true repentance exist without faith? By no means. But although they cannot be separated, they ought to be distinguished. As there is no faith without hope, and yet faith and hope are different, so repentance and faith, though constantly linked together, are only to be united, not confounded. I am not unaware that under the term repentance is comprehended the whole work of turning to God, of which not the least important part is faith; but in what sense this is done will be perfectly obvious, when its nature and power shall have been explained. The term repentance is derived in the Hebrew from*

*conversion, or turning again; and in the Greek from a change of mind and purpose; nor is the thing meant inappropriate to both derivations, for it is substantially this, that withdrawing from ourselves we turn to God, and laying aside the old, put on a new mind.* Wherefore, it seems to me, that repentance may be not inappropriately defined thus: A real conversion of our life unto God, proceeding from sincere and serious fear of God; and consisting in the mortification of our flesh and the old man, and the quickening of the Spirit. In this sense are to be understood all those addresses in which the prophets first, and the apostles afterwards, exhorted the people of their time to repentance. The great object for which they laboured was, to fill them with confusion for their sins and dread of the divine judgment, that they might fall down and humble themselves before him whom they had offended, and, with true repentance, betake themselves to the right path. Accordingly, they use indiscriminately in the same sense, the expressions, turning, or returning to the Lord; repenting, doing repentance. Whence, also, the sacred history describes it as repentance towards God, when men who disregarded him and wantoned in their lusts begin to obey his word, and are prepared to go whithersoever he may call them. And John Baptist and Paul, under the expression, bringing forth fruits meet for repentance, described a course of life exhibiting and bearing testimony, in all its actions, to such a repentance.

**6. But before proceeding farther, it will be proper to give a clearer exposition of the definition which we have adopted. There are three things, then, principally to be considered in it. First, in the conversion of the life to God, we require a transformation not only in external works, but in the soul itself, which is able only after it has put off its old habits to bring forth fruits conformable to its renovation.** The prophet, intending to express this, enjoins those whom he calls to repentance to make them "a new heart and a new spirit" (Ezek. xviii. 31). Hence Moses, on several occasions, when he would show how the Israelites were to repent and turn to the Lord, tells them that it must be done with the whole heart, and the whole soul (a mode of expression of frequent recurrence in the prophets), and by terming it the circumcision of the heart, points to the internal affections. But there is no passage better fitted to teach us the genuine nature of repentance than the following: "If thou wilt return, O Israel, saith the Lord, return unto me." "Break up your fallow ground, and sow not among thorns. Circumcise yourselves to the Lord, and take away

the foreskins of your heart" (Jer. iv. 1-4). See how he declares to them that it will be of no avail to commence the study of righteousness unless impiety shall first have been eradicated from their inmost heart. And to make the deeper impression, he reminds them that they have to do with God, and can gain nothing by deceit, because he hates a double heart. For this reason Isaiah derides the preposterous attempts of hypocrites, who zealously aimed at an external repentance by the observance of ceremonies, but in the meanwhile cared not "to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free" (Is. lviii. 6). In these words he admirably shows wherein the acts of unfeigned repentance consist.

**7. The second part of our definition is, that repentance proceeds from a sincere fear of God. Before the mind of the sinner can be inclined to repentance, he must be aroused by the thought of divine judgment; but when once the thought that God will one day ascend his tribunal to take an account of all words and actions has taken possession of his mind, it will not allow him to rest, or have one moment's peace, but will perpetually urge him to adopt a different plan of life, that he may be able to stand securely at that judgment-seat.** Hence the Scripture, when exhorting to repentance, often introduces the subject of judgment as in Jeremiah, "Lest my fury come forth like fire, and burn that none can quench it, because of the evil of your doings" (Jer. iv. 4). Paul, in his discourse to the Athenians, says, "The times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent: because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness" (Acts xvii. 30, 31). The same thing is repeated in several other passages. Sometimes God is declared to be a judge, from the punishments already inflicted, thus leading sinners to reflect that worse awaits them if they do not quickly repent. There is an example of this in the xxixth chapter of Deuteronomy. **As repentance begins with dread and hatred of sin, the Apostle sets down godly sorrow as one of its causes (2 Cor vii. 10). By godly sorrow he means when we not only tremble at the punishment, but hate and abhor the sin, because we know it is displeasing to God. It is not strange that this should be, for unless we are stung to the quick, the sluggishness of our carnal nature cannot be corrected; nay, no degree of pungency would suffice for our stupor and sloth, did not God lift the rod and strike deeper. There is, moreover, a rebellious spirit which must be broken as with hammers. The stern threatenings which God employs are extorted**

from him by our depraved dispositions. For while we are asleep it were in vain to allure us by soothing measures. Passages to this effect are everywhere to be met with, and I need not quote them. But there is another reason why the fear of God lies at the root of repentance—viz. that though the life of man were possessed of all kinds of virtue, still if they do not bear reference to God, how much soever they may be lauded in the world, they are mere abomination in heaven, inasmuch as it is the principal part of righteousness to render to God that service and honour of which he is impiously defrauded, whenever it is not our express purpose to submit to his authority.

**8. We must now explain the third part of the definition, and show what is meant when we say that repentance consists of two parts—viz. the mortification of the flesh, and the quickening of the Spirit.** The prophets, in accommodation to a carnal people, express this in simple and homely terms, but clearly, when they say, “Depart from evil, and do good” (Ps. xxxiv. 14). “Wash you, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek judgment; relieve the oppressed,” &c. (Is. i. 16, 17). In dissuading us from wickedness they demand the entire destruction of the flesh, which is full of perverseness and malice. It is a most difficult and arduous achievement to renounce ourselves, and lay aside our natural disposition. For the flesh must not be thought to be destroyed unless everything that we have of our own is abolished. But seeing that all the desires of the flesh are enmity against God (Rom. viii. 7), the first step to the obedience of his law is the renouncement of our own nature. Renovation is afterwards manifested by the fruits produced by it—viz. justice, judgment, and mercy. Since it were not sufficient duly to perform such acts, were not the mind and heart previously endued with sentiments of justice, judgment, and mercy, this is done when the Holy Spirit, instilling his holiness into our souls, so inspires them with new thoughts and affections, that they may justly be regarded as new. And, indeed, as we are naturally averse to God, unless self-denial precede, we shall never tend to that which is right. Hence we are so often enjoined to put off the old man, to renounce the world and the flesh, to forsake our lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of our mind. Moreover, the very name mortification reminds us how difficult it is to forget our former nature, because we hence infer that we cannot be trained to the fear of God, and learn the first principles of piety, unless we are violently smitten with the sword of the Spirit and annihilated, as if

God were declaring, that to be ranked among his sons there must be a destruction of our ordinary nature.

(John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Trans. by Henry Beveridge, 1845, Book III, Chapter III)

If Calvin has not described the experience you had when you were “born again,” trust me: You have not been born again. So if you *choose* to continue in your pretense, you are betting your soul that you can fill a “gut-shot” straight with a pair already on the board. For the benefit of those not familiar with the popular game of Texas Hold’em, I just said it’s not likely you will get what you are *hoping* for, and even if you do, you may already have lost. But if taking risks is your *métier*, go ahead; be my guest. Just don’t say I didn’t warn you. God already has the deck stacked against you (that’s an idiom). So if you *choose* to do something that stupid, I—and a whole lot of other folks just like John Calvin—know this one thing to be *absolutely true*: You are an *absolute* moron.

In case the “carnal” activity I described above offends your sense of “holiness,” I should tell you that was my intent. Any moron whose religion consists in *external* do’s and don’ts rather than *internal* knowledge of, and belief in, the Truth of the *Living* Word of God is engaged in nothing but the public presentation of dead works anyway. You know, dirty minds dressed up in “Sunday-go-to-meetin’ clothes” and all that. So trust me on this one: If you are counting on *externals* to get into Heaven, I am going to find a way to offend your phony-as-a-three-dollar-bill “godliness.” And that, unlike the “gut-shot” straight draw I described above, is a winner. You can bet it right out every time.

“The Many” who know the Truth here at the End have all heard exactly the same Gospel message the Protestant Reformers understood—and we responded to it. If you responded to “God loves you” or some other part of the ridiculous nonsense that is preached as “the gospel” in the Church today, you may have *thought* you heard the same Gospel message we heard, but thinking sometimes gets folks like you in trouble—more trouble than you could ever imagine. That’s because God’s thoughts are not your thoughts, and God’s “ways” are not your “ways.” Isaiah said something like that somewhere a long time ago; and if you don’t know where that “somewhere” is, you should probably take that as your first clue that you and the Pope are both trying to sit in God’s chair. ■



**T**he Voice of Elijah® publishes articles based on the findings of The Elijah Project, a private research group headed by Larry D. Harper. In this column we seek answers to general-interest questions concerning the findings, purpose, and philosophy of this project.

*Editor: Several of our contributors are interested in understanding Jesus' sayings in Matthew concerning End-Time events. In Matthew 13:30 Jesus says, "Allow both to grow together until the harvest, and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, 'First gather up the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them up; but gather the wheat into my barn.'" What is the "binding" and what are the "bundles" mentioned in this passage?*

*Elijah:* Let me begin by reminding you that I have already explained—generally—the meaning of the parabolic imagery of the Prophets that Jesus used in this parable. (See "Questions & Answers," *The Voice of Elijah*®, October 1990; "Plant 'Em Six Feet Under," *The Voice of Elijah*®, July 1993; "They Are Trying to Hide When They Should Be Seeking," *The Voice of Elijah*®, April 2005; and especially "Glory Be! What's That I See?" *The Voice of Elijah*®, October 2003.) With that in mind, let's take another look at the Parable of the Sower that Jesus told right before He told the Parable of the Tares that you mentioned:

*On that day Jesus, having come out of the house, was sitting by the sea. And a large crowd gathered to Him, so that He got into a boat to sit down; and the whole crowd was standing on the shore. And He spoke many things to them in parables, saying: "Look, the Sower went out to*

*sow; and as He sowed, some of it fell beside 'The Way,' and the birds came and ate them. But it also fell on rocky places where it did not have much soil, and it sprang up immediately because it had no deep soil. And with the rising of the sun, it was burned up; and because it had no root, it was withered. But it also fell on the thorns, and the thorns rose up and choked them. But it also fell on the good soil and gave fruit—the one a hundred, the other sixty, and the other thirty."*  
(Matthew 13:1-8)—my interim translation

A little later, Jesus explained the meaning of The Parable of the Sower to His disciples:

*"You, therefore, hear the parable of the Sower: Whenever someone hears the Word of the Kingdom and does not understand, the Evil One comes and steals what has been sown in his heart. This is what was sown beside 'The Way.' But what was sown on rocky places? This is the one who hears the Word and immediately receives it with joy; and he does not have a root in himself, but is transitory. So when tribulation or persecution occurs because of the Word, he immediately falls away. But what was sown among thorns? This is the one who hears and understands the Word, and the cares of the world and the deception of its riches crowd out the Word, and it becomes unfruitful. But what was sown on the good soil? This is the one who hears and understands the Word, who does indeed bear fruit and produces—the one a hundred, the other sixty, and the other thirty."*  
(Matthew 13:18-23)—my interim translation

As you can see, Jesus is describing the various responses that four different categories of people have when they hear "the Word"—that is, the Truth of *The Teaching*, of which the Gospel is but an introduction. But my point is, immediately after He tells the Parable of the Sower, Jesus tells the Parable of the Tares:

*He put another parable before them saying: "The Kingdom of Heaven has become like a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while the men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and left. But when the wheat grass sprouted and made grain, then the tares also became apparent. And the slaves of the master of the house said to him, 'Lord, didn't you sow good seed in your field? Therefore, from where does it have tares?' And he said to them, 'A hostile man*

has done this!' So his slaves say to him, 'Do you want us therefore to go out and collect them?' But he says: 'No, lest collecting the tares you should uproot the wheat at the same time. Let them both grow together until the harvest; and in time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, "**First collect the tares and tie them into bundles to burn them; but gather the wheat into my granary.**"'"

(Matthew 13:24–30) —my interim translation

Did you see how Jesus began the Parable of the Tares? He said this:

*"The Kingdom of Heaven has become LIKE a man who sowed good seed in his field."*

(Matthew 13:24b) —my interim translation

God only has one kingdom. That kingdom is and always will be the "people" that I call "Corporate Israel." That "people" is the *collective* family ("house") of True Believers that God, for His Own reason, calls "The Many" (Jer. 11:15; Dan. 12:3; cf. 1 Kin. 18:25). It is also a *collective* family to Whom the *Living* Word of God is continually adding those who are willing to believe the *Living* Word of God that God is and from Whom He is continually "cutting off" those who, for their own ignorant reasons, decide to no longer believe the Truth of that *Living* Word.

If you have read *Not All Israel Is Israel*, you should already know that in the Parable of the Tares, Jesus is *parabolically* referring to Himself as "The One" Who became Corporate Israel when all the other Jews were "cut off from" Corporate Israel. Therefore, He now is Corporate Israel—that is, "the Kingdom of Heaven." So, *parabolically* speaking, Corporate Israel "*has become LIKE a man who sowed good seed in his field.*" To understand what Jesus is referring to by that statement, all you have to do is remember what He said about Himself in The Parable of the Sower—which He told immediately before He told the Parable of the Tares.

As Jesus Christ had already explained in the Parable of the Sower, the "Seed" that He "sowed" while He was here on the Earth is *The Teaching*—the *Living* Word of God that to be saved, True Believers must believe and carefully "guard" in their "hearts." Now that you know that, we can look at what He said would happen to *The Teaching* after Early Church leaders failed to "keep watch" and "guard" the Truth of that *Living* Word:

Then, leaving the crowd, He went into the house. And His disciples came to Him saying, "Explain for us the parable of the tares of the field." So He, answering, said: "The One Who sows the good seed is the Son of 'the man,' and the 'field' is the world. The 'good seed'? These are the sons of the kingdom; but the 'tares' are the sons of the evil {one}. The 'enemy' who sowed them is the devil. The 'harvest' is the End of the Age, and the 'reapers' are messengers. Therefore, just as the tares are collected and burned with fire, thus it shall be in the End of the Age. **The Son of 'the man' will send His messengers, and they will collect out of His kingdom all 'stumbling blocks' and those who do 'the lawlessness,' and they will throw them into the furnace of the fire.** There will be wailing and grinding of teeth there. At that time, **THE INNOCENT WILL SHINE LIKE THE SUN** in the kingdom of their Father. Let the one who has ears hear."

(Matthew 13:36–43) —my interim translation

The *parabolic imagery* that Jesus used in the Parable of the Sower is the key to understanding the *parabolic imagery* He uses in the Parable of the Tares. That *parabolic imagery* depicts events at the End of the Age in which "tares" are "tied" in "bundles" in preparation for being burned. If one is able to "see" that a True Believer is *parabolically* LIKE a "wheat plant" that "springs up" from the "wheat Seed" of the Truth that the *Living* Word of God is, then one should also be able to "see" that a Pretender is just LIKE a "tare plant" that "springs up" from the "tare seed" of Satan's lies.

The perennial fly in the ointment is the fact that, just as Jesus stated in the Parable of the Sower, three out of every four people who "hear the word"—including some who start out as "wheat plants"—end up as "tare plants" because they go back to believing one of Satan's lies. Consequently, a lot of folks today who firmly believe they are exactly where they need to be with God are, in fact, nowhere even close to being what God desires. Jesus describes the surprise that awaits those people this way:

*"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Your Majesty! Your Majesty!' will enter into the Kingdom of Heaven—only the one who does the will of My Father in Heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Your Majesty! Your Majesty! Didn't we prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name do many miracles?' And then I will confess to them: 'I never knew you. GET AWAY*



FROM ME, YOU WHO WORK "THE LAWLESSNESS.""  
 (Matthew 7:21–23) —my interim translation

We now have it on strong authority that some "good" folks at the End of the Age are going to be rudely informed that the Liar Satan himself was the jovial "conductor" who "punched" their "ticket" and constantly assured them they were on the "fast train" bound for Heaven. So I can now tell you how the "reapers" of God "bound" those deluded dimwits into "bundles" in preparation for their being burned. They did it the same way Satan always works—by lying to them. As a matter of fact, the "tares" that Satan has "planted" in the Church are now so securely "bound" together by the goofy lies they believe that they would never believe the "wheat" is already being "gathered" into God's "granary"—even if Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses came back and told them. We are, after all, *talking about* a *parabolic* description of the same events that Malachi describes in this passage:

*Then those who feared His Majesty will speak—each to his neighbor—and His Majesty will pay attention and hear. And a scroll of remembrance will be written before Him for those who fear His Majesty and for those who think about His Name. "And they will be Mine," says His Majesty of Hosts, "on a day when I make a possession; and I will spare them just as a man spares his son who serves him." And you will again see {the difference} between one who is not guilty and one who is guilty—between one who serves God and one who does not serve Him.*

(Malachi 3:16–18) —my interim translation

**Editor:** *In Matthew 24:20 Jesus says, "But pray ye that your flight be not in winter, neither on the sabbath day." What does Jesus mean by this statement? Being concerned about the harshness of winter is understandable, but why would a Christian be concerned about traveling on a weekly Sabbath? Also, why does Jesus encourage us to pray in regards to the timing of this event? Can the time be changed through prayer?*

**Elijah:** Let me first give you a little more *literal* translation of what Jesus actually said to His disciples on that occasion. Then I can show you why you should not take *literally* anything that Jesus said when He was speaking *parabolically*:

*"But pray, so that your flight is not during 'rainy season' or on 'Sabbath.'"*

(Matthew 24:20) —my interim translation

That translation conveys a little bit different sense than the one you read, doesn't it? It even differs from the New American Standard translation:

*"But pray that your flight may not be in the winter, or on a Sabbath."*

(Matthew 24:20)

The NASB translation and the translation that you read infer that we should pray and *ask that* our "flight" does not happen at either of the two times mentioned. But my translation indicates we are to pray *so that* our "flight" does not happen then—that is, so as to prevent it from happening then. The Truth is, the grammatical construction Jesus used on that occasion is exactly the same one that occurs twice in this passage:

*And they come to a place whose name is Gethsemane; and He says to His disciples, "Sit here until I have prayed." And He takes Peter and James and John with Him, and He began to be very disturbed and to be upset. And He says to them: "My soul is very sad—until death. Remain here and keep watch." And He went a bit {further} and **He fell on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour would pass by Him.** And He was saying: "Abba! Father! All things are possible to You! Take this 'cup' from Me! But not what I want, but what You {want}." And He comes and finds them sleeping, and He says to Peter: "Simon! Are you sleeping? Were you not able to keep watch for one hour? **Both keep watch and pray, so that you don't come into temptation.** The spirit is indeed eager, but the flesh is weak."*

(Mark 14:32–38) —my interim translation

As you can see from the two sentences I have bolded, when Mark uses the same grammatical construction that Jesus used, he is indicating Jesus was praying *that* God would not force Him to endure the *parabolic pantomime* in which He died an agonizing death on the cross. But to understand what Jesus is asking, you first have to know that He did not have to die—ever. He explained that Himself on the following occasion, but nobody today understands the *significance* of what He said:

*"I am the 'Good Shepherd.' And I know My own; and My own know Me. Just as the Father knows Me, I also know the Father. And I lay down My soul for the 'sheep.' I also have other 'sheep' who are not from this 'fold.' I must also guide them, and they will listen to My voice, and they will become one flock—One Shepherd. Because of this, the Father loves Me—because I lay down My soul, so that I may receive it again. **Nobody takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to receive it again.** This is the commandment I **received** from My Father."*

*(John 10:14–18) —my interim translation*

The second time the grammatical construction we are investigating occurs in the passage above, Jesus is once again encouraging His disciples to pray. But He uses the definite expression "both ... and" to tie the verb translated "keep watch" together with the verb translated "pray." That clearly indicates He was saying His disciples should do both things "so that you don't come into temptation." That is precisely what He *meant* when He said this:

*"But **pray**, so that your flight is not during 'rainy season' or on 'Sabbath.'"*

*(Matthew 24:20) —my interim translation*

Now that we know Jesus was highly recommending prayer as a means of avoiding what would obviously be a rather unpleasant "flight" "during 'rainy season' or on 'Sabbath,'" we need to know what *parabolic imagery* He had in mind when He said that. So let's go back and look at the context in which He made that statement and see if we can determine what He *meant*. Here's what Matthew says:

*And Jesus, having come out of the temple, was leaving; and His disciples approached to point out to Him the construction of the temple. But responding, He said to them: "Do you not see all these things? Without doubt, I say to you, not one stone here will be left on {another} stone which will not be torn down." **But while He was sitting on the Mount of Olives, His disciples approached Him privately, saying: "Tell us! When will these things be? And what is the sign of Your coming and the End of the Age?"***

*(Matthew 24:1–3) —my interim translation*

Now, unless one wants to *arbitrarily assume* that Jesus was—as I sometimes have in the past—just trying to appear to answer their question, we can expect Him to address two separate issues: (1) when will the End occur, and (2) what "sign" will precede it. And unlike me, Jesus does exactly what His disciples asked Him to do. He addresses the second question first by reminding His disciples that one of the "signs" is Satan appearing as the messiah the Jews are expecting and taking military action against other nations:

*And responding, Jesus said to them: "See that no one deceives you. For many will come in My Name saying, 'I am the Messiah,' and they will deceive many. But you are going to hear of wars and reports of wars. See that you are not disturbed, for this must occur. But the End is not yet. For nation will rise up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and famines and earthquakes will be in various places. But all these things are the beginning of labor pains."*

*(Matthew 24:4–8) —my interim translation*

Jesus next explains that after the Antichrist has settled things militarily with his neighbors, he will then turn his attention to the vexing matter of exterminating those who know he is not Jesus Christ:

*"**Then** they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all of the nations because of My Name. And **then** many will be caused to stumble, and they will deliver one another up, and they will hate one another. And many false prophets will be raised up, and they will deceive many. And because 'the lawlessness' will increase, the love of 'The Many' will grow cold. But the one who holds out to the End, he will be saved. And this Gospel of the Kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a witness to all of the nations. And **then** the End will come."*

*(Matthew 24:9–14) —my interim translation*

As I have already mentioned on another occasion, Jesus uses "the lawlessness" as a euphemism for the dumbness that masquerades as Christianity while claiming the Jews are still members of *Corporate Israel*. Jesus' point in using it here is, it is going to be rather difficult for True Believers to hold on to their belief in the Truth concerning the Antichrist when the whole world has been taken in by Satan's pretense. Jesus uses

that same euphemism when He *talks about* things that will occur at the End in Matthew 7:23 and 13:41, which I have already quoted above. Paul also uses the same euphemism twice in the following passage, where he explains what he knows about the Antichrist:

*But we ask you, brothers, concerning the coming of our Majesty Jesus Christ and our "gathering" to Him, that you not be quickly shaken from the understanding or be disturbed either by a spirit or by a word or by a letter as {though} from us, as {though} the day of His Majesty has come. Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, because {that cannot be} unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of "the lawlessness" is revealed—the son of the annihilation—the one who opposes and elevates himself above everything called "god" or "object of worship," so that he seats himself in the temple of God, himself proclaiming that he is God. Don't you remember me telling you these things while I was still with you? And you now know what is holding fast so that he will be revealed in his own time. For "The Mystery" of "the lawlessness" is already "working"—{which is} only the one now holding fast until he comes out of the midst. And at that time "the lawless one" will be revealed, whom His Majesty {Jesus} will kill by the "Spirit" of His mouth and wipe out by the appearance of His coming; the one whose coming is according to the "working" of Satan—in all power, and signs, and lying wonders, and in all deceptive injustice for those who are perishing—against those who did not receive the love of the Truth for them to be saved. And because of this, God will send upon them a delusional "working" so that they believe "the lie," in order that all those who did not believe the Truth but took pleasure in "the injustice" would be judged.*

(2 Thessalonians 2:1–12) —my interim translation

We already know from what Hippolytus and Irenæus have told us that Paul is  *talking about*  the Antichrist sitting in the Temple in Jerusalem and pretending to be Jesus Christ. Those two men have also told us that ridiculous charade is "the abomination of desolation" that Daniel mentions (Dan. 11:31; 12:11). That is why, immediately after Jesus describes how True Believers will be killed because they know the Truth, He then tells His disciples the Antichrist sitting in the Temple is a "sign" they can absolutely depend on. The End of the Age is now in full view, but they need to realize the Antichrist has no intention of letting

them live. So they had best get moving if they intend to preserve their knowledge of the Truth until the End:

*"Therefore, when you see the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION—the one told of by Daniel the Prophet—standing in a holy place (let the reader understand), then those in Judea should flee into the mountains; the one who is on the roof should not go down to get things out of his house; and the one who is in the field should not turn back to get his coat. But woe to those who are pregnant and those who are nursing in those days! **But pray, so that your flight is not during 'rainy season' or on 'Sabbath,' for then there will be a great tribulation**—such as has not occurred from the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will occur."*

(Matthew 24:15–21) —my interim translation

There is the verse you asked about. It is sitting right smack dab in the middle of a *literal* description of *literal* events that will occur after the Antichrist takes his *literal* seat in the *literal* Temple in *literal* Jerusalem. So we can be absolutely certain that the "flight" He has in mind is a *literal* skedaddle out of town and not some *parabolic* sashay around the park and then back home for an early lunch. But did you notice that He used the little word *then*? Little word, BIG significance. He says this:

*"But pray, so that your flight is not during 'rainy season' or on 'Sabbath,' for THEN there will be a great tribulation—such as has not occurred from the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will occur."*

(Matthew 24:20–21) —my interim translation

If you go back and read my translation of the verses that occur right before these two verses, you will find that Jesus has been repeatedly using the word *then* to refer to the time of the Antichrist's maniacal search for True Believers. That Greek term has the sense of "at that time." But here, He is *parabolically* referring to a point in time *after* the Antichrist's methodical elimination of True Believers is already in full swing. The Truth is, He is referring to two entirely different times. One is *parabolically* LIKE a "rainy season," the other is *parabolically* LIKE a "Sabbath."

You see, after the Antichrist begins the herculean task of eliminating all of us who know the Truth, two completely separate, but equally momentous, events

are going to occur. First, the *parabolic* “rain” that the Prophets *parabolically* describe in detail is going to become an absolute torrent of “floodwaters” that will shake Satan’s “house” to its very “foundation.” Jesus *parabolically* describes that event this way:

*“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Your Majesty! Your Majesty!’ will enter into the Kingdom of Heaven—only the one who does the will of My Father in Heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Your Majesty! Your Majesty! Didn’t we prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name do many miracles?’ And then I will confess to them: ‘I never knew you. GET AWAY FROM ME, YOU WHO WORK “THE LAWLESSNESS.”’ Therefore, everyone who hears these—My words—and ‘does’ them will be like a ‘sensible Man’ who ‘built his House’ upon ‘the Rock.’ And ‘the Rain’ came down, and ‘the rivers’ rose, and ‘the winds’ blew, and they beat upon that ‘House.’ And it did not ‘fall,’ for it had been ‘founded’ on ‘the Rock.’ And everyone hearing these—My words—and not ‘doing’ them will be like a ‘foolish man’ who ‘built his house’ on ‘the sand.’ And ‘the Rain’ came down, and ‘the rivers’ rose, and ‘the winds’ blew, and they beat against that ‘house.’ And it ‘fell’; and its ‘fall’ was great.”*

*(Matthew 7:21–27) —my interim translation*

After the “rainy season” has ended in the collapse of Satan’s “house” and world leaders finally wake up to the fact that the Antichrist is a total impostor, as one of lesser piety than myself might say, “All Hell breaks loose.” I would never use such a crude expression myself ;- ) I would simply tell you—as Jesus did—that when the overwhelming forces of death, Hell, and the grave are suddenly staring political dimwits right in the face, “then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred from the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will occur.” And *at that time*, a lot of folks are *suddenly* going to try to undo what they *suddenly* realize they have already done to themselves by not praying beforehand, “so that your flight is not during ‘rainy season’ or on ‘Sabbath.’”

That addresses your mistaken *assumption* concerning “winter.” But now you probably want to know about “traveling on a weekly Sabbath.” So let me remind you that Jesus said absolutely nothing about “traveling.” He said “flight.” And as is the case on every other occasion when He spoke *parabolically*, He chose

His words very carefully and said exactly what He *meant* to say. So you can be certain He *meant* “flight.” Of course, the word that He used actually *means* “fleeing,” but why would anyone squabble over semantics? A verbal noun is still a noun.

The point is, the fortunate ones are those who have “kept watch” and “prayed” beforehand so that they “take flight”—that is, begin “fleeing”—as soon as they see the Antichrist sitting in the Temple. They know what they believe, and they demonstrate their belief in the Truth by acting in accordance with the Truth. But some poor dolts who have been born again are going to “wait and see” until the “rainy season” begins before they reconsider what they believe. And some even denser dimwits are going to wait until *the Sabbath* begins. Can you imagine spending an *eternity* “fleeing” from something you can never escape? Trust me, you don’t want to know how that feels. But in case you were wondering what Jesus had in mind when He used the word translated “flight,” Moses describes it in Leviticus 26:17 and Deuteronomy 28:25.

Now that I have answered your question, let me show you how Jesus answered the other question His disciples asked. As you undoubtedly remember, they asked this:

*But while He was sitting on the Mount of Olives, His disciples approached Him privately, saying: “Tell us! **When will these things be?** And what is the sign of Your coming and the End of the Age?”*

*(Matthew 24:3) —my interim translation*

Jesus has so far been focused on the “sign” that the Antichrist will provide True Believers when he finally takes his seat in the Temple as a pale imitation of Jesus Christ. But before the Lord turns His attention to answering their question as to *when*, He mentions the one other indisputable “sign” that His disciples should expect to “see” after the Antichrist begins tracking down and killing those who know he is an impostor. It is the one “sign” that nobody will be able to deny:

*“And if those days had not been shortened, no flesh would have been saved. But because of those who are chosen, those days will be shortened. Then, if anyone should say to you, ‘Look! Here—or there—is the Messiah!’ don’t believe {it}. For many false messiahs and false prophets will be raised up, and they will do*

great signs and wonders so as to deceive, if possible, even those who are chosen. Look! I have told you beforehand. Therefore, if they say to you, 'Look! He is in the wilderness!' don't go out. 'Look! In the inner rooms!' don't believe {it}. **For just as the ray of light comes out from sunrise and shines until sunset, thus will be the coming of the Son of 'the man.'** Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will be gathered. But immediately after the tribulation of those days, **THE SUN WILL BE DARKENED, AND THE MOON WILL NOT GIVE ITS GLOW, AND THE STARS WILL FALL from Heaven, and the powers of Heaven will be shaken, and then the sign of the Son of 'the man' will shine in Heaven, and then all the tribes of the Earth will be cut off, and they will see the SON OF 'THE MAN' COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN with power and great glory.** And He will send His messengers with A GREAT TRUMPET, and THEY WILL GATHER TOGETHER those who are His chosen ones from the four winds—from one end of Heaven to the other." (Matthew 24:22–31) —my interim translation

The point of what Jesus says in this passage is extremely easy to understand, but it is also extremely difficult for Pretenders to accept. Jesus Christ is not going to "appear" in the flesh as a man. He is going to be "revealed" in the awesome power and "glory" of "the flesh" of the resurrected Body that the Apostle Paul describes in 1 Corinthians 15. That resurrected Body has been created in the image and likeness of the Living Word of God that Christ was before He took on the "likeness" and "form" of a man (Phil. 2:6–11). That is not something that Pretenders can even begin to understand, much less accept. That's why they are going to accept the appearance of the Antichrist—a mere man—as the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

Jesus has been repeatedly warning His disciples not to be taken in by anyone who claims to be the Messiah because there will be no need for anyone to go anywhere to see Him when He is finally "revealed." When "The Light" that He is begins to shine out of great darkness, there will be absolutely no room for doubt—even in the mind of mendacious morons—that the Living Word of God has finally arrived on the scene.

With that brief description of His "revelation," Jesus concludes what He has to say about the "signs" of His Second Coming. He then turns His attention to the fact that although His disciples will not know *precisely* when He is going to be "revealed"; they will be able to

know *generally* because they will have already seen the "abomination of desolation" and they will know the "revelation" of the Living Word of God is to follow shortly. But Jesus is careful to emphasize the fact that the damned will be caught completely by surprise when "The Light" that He is suddenly comes riding on brilliant clouds in the "glory" of a nuclear inferno:

*"But from the Fig Tree learn the parable: When His branch at last has become tender and is putting forth leaves, you know that summer is near. Likewise also you, when you see all these things, you know it is near—at the door. Without doubt, I tell you that this generation will not pass away until all these things occur. Heaven and Earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away. But concerning that day and hour no one knows, neither the messengers of Heaven nor the Son, but the Father only. For just as the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of 'the man.' For as they were in those days—the ones before the Flood—eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and they did not understand until the Flood came and took them all, so will be the coming of the Son of 'the man.' Then two will be in the field, one man will be taken and one left; two grinding at the mill, one woman will be taken and one left. Therefore, keep watch, because you don't know what day your Lord is coming. But this you do know: That if the master of the house had known on what watch the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and not allowed his house to be broken into. For this reason you also be ready, because the Son of 'the man' is coming in whatever hour you do not think."*

(Matthew 24:32–44) —my interim translation

*Editor: In the last passage you read, Jesus says, "Then there will be two men in the field; one will be taken and one left. Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one will be left." That sounds very definite, so why does Luke 18:8b say, "When the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?" That sounds very indefinite. If there is just one Truth, The Teaching, that ties all of Scripture together—with no discrepancies or conflicting passages—how do these verses tie together? What is their meaning and significance?*

*Elijah: First let me correct a possible misconception about the normal translation of Matthew 24:39–41. The*

verb translated “taken” in the last two instances is not the same verb that Jesus used to describe the Flood “taking” the unsuspecting during the time of Noah. His choice of verbs was deliberate and intentional. The verb that He used to describe the Flood has only the general meaning of “take.” The second one means “take” in the sense of “accept,” “receive,” or “take to one’s self.” He is using that verb with exactly the same sense that it has when He says this:

*“Don’t let your ‘heart’ be thrown into confusion. You believe in the {Living} God, and You also believe in Me. In ‘The House’ of My Father, there are many ‘dwelling places.’ But if not, I would have told you, because I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and take you for Myself, so that where I am you also may be. And where I go, you know ‘The Way.’”*

*(John 14:1–4) —my interim translation*

Jesus is using the verb translated “take” in that passage as a double-entendre. That verb not only carries the meaning “receive” or “accept,” it is also used with the sense of “to take in marriage.” The parabolic “house” Jesus has in mind is the family of God, and the parabolic “taking” to which He refers will occur at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb (Rev. 19:9). He used that same verb in Matthew 24:40–41 because He was deliberately contrasting those who were “taken” by the Flood in Noah’s time with those who will be “taken” or “accepted” by the “Flood” that is going to come during the “rainy season” that precedes the Second Coming.

Those “taken” by the Living Word of God at that time will be “accepted” or “received” favorably into the “glory” that is yet to come. Everyone else will be caught up in that inferno, but will not escape from it. If that explanation seems like some sort of mumbo-jumbo to you, just ask yourself this question: “Why would God resurrect the physical bodies of both the Righteous and the Wicked?” The answer is, so that both may exist forever in the fire that He is.

If one does not know that Jesus is parabolically talking about Himself as “The Light” of The Teaching in Matthew 24:32–44, one has absolutely no basis for even understanding what He is talking about, much less what He has said. So let me put this parabolic image in perspective for you. The “taking” that Jesus has in mind in the passage above will occur during the parabolic “Flood”

that results from the parabolic “Rain” of the Living Word of God that parabolically “falls” during the parabolic “rainy season” that precedes the literal “revelation” of “The One” Who is that Living Word of God. That literal “Flood” is what Habakkuk is talking about here:

*“Because the Earth will be filled  
With the knowledge of the glory of His Majesty,  
Like the waters cover the sea.”  
(Habakkuk 2:14) —my interim translation*

As I indicated in the October 2006 issue of this newsletter, Habakkuk says that right in the middle of a passage where he is talking about things that pertain to the Antichrist. (See “The Forecast,” *The Voice of Elijah*®, October 2006.) But you also need to know that Habakkuk is quoting Isaiah. Isaiah says this:

*And the wolf will dwell with the lamb,  
And the leopard will lie down with the kid,  
And the calf and the young lion and the fatling together;  
And a little boy will lead them.  
Also the cow and the bear will graze;  
Their young will lie down together;  
And the lion will eat straw like the ox.  
And the nursing child will play by the hole of the cobra,  
And the weaned child will put his hand on the viper’s den.  
They will not hurt or destroy in all My holy mountain,  
For the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD  
As the waters cover the sea.  
(Isaiah 11:6–9)*

That passage is clearly describing circumstances that will exist after “The Light” of the Living Word of God has “cut off” “The Remnant” of the man Adam from the face of the Earth. But my point is, the parabolic “Flood” of the Living Word of God that precedes the literal “Flood” of the Living Word of God cannot be easily distinguished from it. In the incredible wisdom of God, both are one and the same. I cannot openly explain how that is. I can only explain the parabolic imagery. However, if one wants to say the “taking” that Christ has in mind here pertains only to the literal “revelation” of the Living Word of God that occurs at the End of the Age, I would have to assume—on the basis of the evidence—that individual has made some completely unwarranted assumptions. The parabolic imagery does not support any such assumption.

How does all this *parabolic imagery* relate to your question? Quite precisely. Jesus has already told us this:

*“And if those days had not been shortened, no flesh would have been saved. But because of those who are chosen, those days will be shortened.”*  
(Matthew 24:22) —my interim translation

It is easy to miss the *significance* of that statement if one does not understand the *parabolic imagery* in *The Teaching* to which He is referring. That *parabolic imagery* explains that Satan can only succeed in thwarting God’s salvation of the man Adam if he exterminates the Truth that resides in those who believe. Can he actually do that? Of course not! But that is the opportunity he has been offered, and he is still stupid enough to believe it is possible. That is why he has been constantly distorting the Truth of *The Teaching* over the past several thousand years. His objective has been to stamp out the Truth completely. But now that his “cat” has quietly slipped out of the “bag”—as “cats” are wont to do—his only hope is to come as the Antichrist and exterminate those who still believe the Truth. That is why Jesus told the following parable and then asked the rhetorical question that you mentioned:

*But He was telling them a parable about how it was necessary for them to always pray and not become discouraged, saying: “There was a judge in a certain city who did not fear the {Living} God and did not defer to man. And there was a widow in that city, and she was coming to him saying, ‘Render a decision against my accuser.’ And he was not willing—for a while. But after these things, he said to himself, ‘Although I do not fear the {Living} God or defer to man, because this widow continues to bother me, I will render her a decision so that she is not continually coming to pester me.’” But the Lord said: “Hear what the unjust judge says. And will the {Living} God not make the decision for His chosen ones—those who cry to Him day and night—and delay in regard to them? I tell you that He will make the decision for them quickly. However, when the Son of ‘the man’ comes, will He find ‘the belief’ on the Earth?”*  
(Luke 18:1–8) —my interim translation

I have told you before, and I will tell you again and again: The Early Church Fathers accurately understood

the *meaning* of this parable. They tell us the “unjust judge” that Jesus had in mind is the Antichrist; the inhabitants of Jerusalem—that is, the Jews—are the pestering “widow”; and the “decision” the “widow” is requesting is Satan’s appearance as the messiah the Jews are still expecting. (See *The Advent of Christ and AntiChrist*, pp. 60, 181.)

The Early Church Fathers have told you the Truth. But I tell you Satan has put off coming in the flesh as a man because he has—until now—believed he could totally stamp out the Truth without resorting to that extreme measure. Now that his hopes in that regard have been completely dashed, he has finally “decided” to do what he does not really want to do. He will give the “widow” the “messiah” she has been praying for. But just when Satan’s plans are about to be accomplished, God will pull the rug out from under him by suddenly “deciding” to give His “chosen ones” the Messiah they have been praying for. It is at that point in history that the proverbial “all Hell” will suddenly “break loose” and folks down here will realize they have no place to hide from “*The Light*.”

In asking the rhetorical question you mentioned, Jesus is merely emphasizing the fact that very few True Believers are going to remain alive until the End of the Age. Most will be “taken” by the Lord Himself during the *parabolic* “rainy season” that precedes His *literal* “revelation.” Don’t underestimate Satan’s rage. The most frustrating thing he has had to face time and time again is the fact that all he has ever done is assist God in accomplishing what God has planned. Satan “gathers” out; God “gathers” in. When the full magnitude of that unsettling Truth finally dawns on him, Satan will have—once again—unwittingly assisted God in accomplishing precisely what God has planned.

*Editor: Jesus mentioned Noah and the Flood in Matthew 24:37–39. Since the time that I first read Genesis 8:7–8, the meaning of Noah sending forth a raven that did not return and the doves which did return have been an enigma to me. What does that mean? Are birds used in the Hebrew Scriptures in parabolic imagery? When John the Baptist saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove at Jesus’ Baptism, was it the visible form of an actual dove, or an unknown visible form that descended as a dove? Also, speaking of baptizing, did the Apostles of Jesus Christ actually use the words “I baptize you in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy*

*Ghost”? (Matt. 28:19) Or did they use the words “I baptize you in the name of Jesus Christ”? (Acts 2:38)*

**Elijah:** Yes, the generic bird is used in *The Teaching* as a *parabolic image*. It normally represents either the spirit or the soul. But if someone wants to go further than that and single out the characteristics of specific birds as *parabolic imagery*, they need to have some basis for that in actual fact. That is, they need to know that Moses and the Prophets are using it as a *parabolic image*. When the Prophets do something like that, they will normally use the word *LIKE* to reveal the comparison. But sometimes not. For example, the Prophets often depict the Spirit of God generally as a “bird of prey”; and I tend to think they had an owl in mind, inasmuch as the owl has a decided preference for snakes. However, the Early Church Father Hippolytus tells us (see *The Advent of Christ and AntiChrist*, p. 180) that Jeremiah is *parabolically* describing the Antichrist as being *LIKE* a partridge in this passage:

*“As a partridge that hatches eggs which it has not laid,  
{So} is he who makes a fortune, but unjustly;  
In the midst of his days it will forsake him,  
And in the end he will be a fool.”  
(Jeremiah 17:11)*

As far as the *meaning* and *significance* of the raven and the doves that Noah sent out from the ark are concerned, there is absolutely no indication that Moses is doing anything more than providing a historical record of things that actually happened. He does not tell us God told Noah to send out those birds as some sort of *parabolic pantomime* in which the birds *parabolically* depicted something else. Quite the opposite. He tells us Noah sent out the raven first and the raven did not return. That makes sense. Ravens are omnivores, and there would have been more than enough dead meat lying around for it to feed on. But doves are herbivores; they normally feed on fruits and seeds. So Moses tells us Noah used three doves in successive weeks to determine that the water had subsided sufficiently for trees to once again begin to grow. That told Noah there would be enough vegetation for all the other animals to feed on.

As far as the Baptism of Jesus is concerned, that was most definitely a *parabolic pantomime*. Jesus orchestrated it by insisting that John baptize Him, and God

Himself went so far as to get directly involved. So you can be absolutely certain that the dove had a definite *parabolic meaning* and *significance* on that occasion. As to what that was, I can only tell you what all four of the Gospels tell us. The “Spirit” of God appeared *visibly* to be *LIKE* a dove. Luke goes even beyond that. He plainly says the Spirit “came down *in bodily form* like a dove”:

*But having been baptized, Jesus immediately went up from the water and, look! The heavens were opened, and He saw the Spirit of the {Living} God descending LIKE a dove and coming on Him. And look! A voice out of the heavens saying, “This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well-pleased.”*

*(Matthew 3:16–17) —my interim translation*

*And immediately coming up out of the water, He saw the heavens being divided and the Spirit LIKE a dove coming down to Him. And a voice came out of the heavens: “You are My beloved Son. In You I am well-pleased.”*

*(Mark 1:10–11) —my interim translation*

*But it happened when all the people had been baptized, Jesus also was baptized; and {as He was} praying, Heaven opened and **the Holy Spirit came down in bodily form LIKE a dove on Him**. And a voice came out of Heaven: “You are My beloved Son. In You I am well-pleased.”*

*(Luke 3:21–22) —my interim translation*

*John also testified saying, “I watched the Spirit coming down LIKE a dove out of Heaven, and it remained on Him.”*

*(John 1:32) —my interim translation*

Now I come to the last question you asked. First of all, the Scriptures do not say “*in The Name*.” They normally say, “*into The Name*.” But we can talk about that *parabolic imagery* some other time. Anyone who understands the *parabolic imagery* related to “*The Name*” already knows that God only has one *Name*—“*The Name*” that Jesus Christ was given when He was resurrected in the image and likeness of God. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are God. So it really does not matter whether one says “I baptize you *into The Name* of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,” or “I baptize you *into The Name* of Jesus Christ.” And anyone who claims otherwise is only revealing their ignorance of the Truth. ■