

## Our Christian Heritage

There are two great truths that stand out in the preaching that brought about the Protestant Reformation—the “*just shall live by faith*” (Romans 1:17; Galatians 3:11; Hebrews 10:38)—not by the works of Romanism or any other religion—and “the Papacy is the Antichrist revealed in Scripture.” It was a message for Christ and against Antichrist. The entire Reformation rested on this twofold testimony. In losing the second, unquestionably we have done injury to the first; ecumenical Christianity and “new evangelicalism” provide abundant testimony to this.

Iain Murray in his book *The Puritan Hope* described the Reformers as “unanimous in their belief” that the Papal system is both the “*man of sin*” (2 Thessalonians 2:3) and the Babylonian whore of which Scripture forewarns. Rome was the great Antichrist, and so firmly did this belief become established that it was not until the nineteenth century that evangelicals seriously questioned it (Iain Murray: *The Puritan Hope*, Banner of Truth).

Victorian Bible scholar Dr. Grattan Guinness ringingly declared, “Thousands of martyrdoms have sealed the testimony against the Papal antichrist, and on this testimony rests the Reformation. To reject it is to reject the foundation of the noblest and divinest work which has been wrought in this world since the day of Pentecost.” (H.Grattan Guinness: *Romanism and the Reformation*)

The Protestant or Historical interpretation of prophecy views the prophecies of Daniel, Paul, and John as fully and faithfully laying out the entire course of Christian history; and sees the Book of Revelation as a pre-figuration in detail of the chief events affecting the church and Christendom. “*A great cloud of witnesses*” (Hebrews 12:1) has given testimony to the correctness of this view. Wycliffe, Huss, Savonarola, Luther, Calvin, Melancthon, Zwingli, Tyndale, John Rogers, Latimer, Ridley, Hooper, Cranmer, John Foxe, Bunyan, the translators of the King James Bible, the men who published the Westminster and Baptist Confessions of Faith, Sir Isaac Newton, Wesley, Whitefield, Jonathan Edwards, Matthew Henry, and (more recently) Spurgeon, Bishop J.C. Ryle, Hudson-Taylor, and Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones—these men, among countless others, steeped and soaked in Scripture, recognised the office of the Papacy, the Vicar of Christ, as “*the man of sin*”, the new face of the old paganism that is “*MYSTERY, BABYLON*” (Revelation 17:5) in the Bible. They saw it all in the Scriptures; it was quickened to them. They saw the counterfeit bride, the Harlot that would be judged at the end of history. All of them were immensely burdened for the souls of those in bondage to such an evil and corrupt system and imprisoned in what Luther called “the Babylonian Captivity of the Church.” They knew that it was their duty to view the Church of Rome as God views her and stand

clearly against all her heresies. If they were right about this then, they are still right today. God's Word does not change, **and** Rome has since added to her many heresies.

### **What Is Historicism?**

The *Historicism Research Foundation* has a helpful summary on historicism on its web site:-

“In brief, Historicism teaches that biblical predictions are being fulfilled throughout history and continue to be fulfilled today. The Book of Revelation is a pre-written history of the Church from the time of its writing to the future Second Advent of Christ, which shall usher in the new heaven and new earth.”

In short, Historicists agree on the following unique concepts:

- The “Year-Day” principle of prophetic language defines a day of symbolic time as representing a year of actual historic time.
- The “Time, Times, and Half a Time”, “3½ years”, “1260 days”, and “42 months” time period, which occurs seven times in Daniel and Revelation, is understood by Historicists to be fulfilled in history.
- All Historicists believe that the Papacy is that Antichrist, the Man of Sin of 2 Thessalonians 2, and the Beast of Revelation 13.
- Historicists generally agree that Revelation 9 speaks of the Muslim scourge which afflicted Christendom.
- All Historicists agree that the book of Revelation prophesies the history of the Church from the Apostolic era to the future Second Advent of Jesus Christ.
- The Historicist interpretation was the standard interpretation from Wycliffe to Spurgeon (spanning 500 years) and is known as the Protestant interpretation, in distinct contrast to Preterism and Futurism which were Jesuit interpretations contrived during the Counter-Reformation.

Additionally, the Reformation confessions, including the Irish Articles (1615), the original Westminster Confession of Faith (1646), the Savoy Declaration (1658), and the London Baptist Confession (1688), have adopted the Historicist interpretation. (<http://www.historicism.net/>). In the desire to avoid offending anyone, under the guise of attaining unity in the church, many of us have allowed these truths to take second-place, with “unity” taking first priority. Have we forgotten that genuine unity is a fruit of the Holy Spirit, born of God's truth, and is never a man-made unity, contrived at the expense of the truth?

*Michael De Semlyen*