

BIRD WATCHER'S GUIDE

NOTICE:

This study is NOT for the squeamish, doctrinally ignorant, easily offended or those who prefer to remain in doctrinal la-la land. It IS for the Bible believer who lives in the real world and wants to be informed historically, doctrinally and biblically of the men and movements he or she may be confronted with who argue for a hearing and claim to be somehow related to Bible Christianity and which have impacted Christian doctrine (God's Word).

This guide does not pretend to be exhaustive, but to present the major religious groups and their relationship to Biblical Christianity. You will notice that the major world religions are not represented (ISLAM, BUDDHISM, JUDAISM, CONFUCIANISM, etc. – all "birds" to be avoided), but only those who relate positively or negatively to the Christian faith. This listing deals with both past and present men and religious movements that have impacted Bible Christianity.



Matthew 13:31-32

Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field, which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof.

Colossians 2:8

BEWARE lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

INTRO.: We have often heard someone say: "Watch out for that bird" – meaning some shady character. Jesus warned His disciples "Beware the leaven of men..." "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Saducees..." "Beware of the scribes..." "Beware of false prophets..." He likened those who would corrupt His kingdom to "birds." (texts) The O.T. listed many "fowls" or birds as being an "abomination." Thus birds often have a negative connotation in the Bible and are likened to evil men and their doctrines.

Leviticus 11:13-19

And these are they which ye shall have in abomination among the fowls; they shall not be eaten, they are an abomination: the eagle, and the ossifrage, and the ospray, 14 And the vulture, and the kite after his kind; 15 Every raven after his kind; 16 And the owl, and the night hawk, and the cuckow, and the hawk after his kind, 17 And the little owl, and the cormorant, and the great owl, 18 And the swan, and the pelican, and the gier eagle, 19 And the stork, the heron after her kind, and the lapwing, and the bat.

Paul the apostle also warned: "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ." Col.2:8 Since the founding of the Church many false prophets, heretics and false doctrines have been espoused by men and organizations. We have been given fair warning in the Bible.

Probably the greatest weakness in the Church today is a lack of spiritual discernment. It seems that regardless of how many warnings are given from the pulpit, people are easily led astray or snared by some "bird" who comes along with some new "*wind of doctrine*." Of course part of the problem is in the pulpits as well, as it is not popular to warn against men and movements, especially if the preacher is specific and names names. (*The Apostle Paul named over 20 men by name in a negative way!*)

What follows is an attempt to list some "*HERESIES: OLD AND NEW*" in an effort to keep someone out of another snare of the evil one. Satan is not only a "*roaring lion*," he also shows up as a subtle serpent and even an "*angel of light*" and his servants sometimes manifest themselves as "*ministers of righteousness*"! 2 Cor. 11:14,15

Some of the heresies and heretics listed are mentioned specifically in the Bible and others are alluded to or identified by their false teaching or doctrine. Hopefully this study will help you as you study the Scriptures and/or church history to identify some obvious and some very subtle distortions of truth.

Each of the men and movements in this paper are important because they have all had, or in some cases are having, a negative impact on Bible belief, doctrine and even the way we worship. The fact that some of these groups and men are long since off the scene doesn't diminish their negative and unbiblical influence.

EBIONITES: This was a very "humble" and pious belief system that taught believers must "follow Christ's example" or "imitate the lowly Galilean." (Their favorite book today is: "In His Steps" by C. Sheldon) They love to talk about "the historical Jesus" or the "real Revolutionary." Three of Origen's fellow Bible translators were Ebionites: Symmachus, Theodotian and Aquila. (Origen was the father of modern Bible translators.) *Jesus Christ Superstar* (rock opera, circa 1970) is an Ebionite production and makes Jesus the bewildered, duped and deluded messiah, and Judas Iscariot the hero. Some Ebionites fit Paul's description as "*forbidding to marry...*" This "bird" – like the ostrich, just doesn't fly! "BEWARE...!"

ESSENES: This was a monastic sect of men who tried to work their way to heaven by "mortifying the deeds of the body" and "putting the flesh to death" by self-will. They lived lives of extreme asceticism and often mutilated their bodies (As Origen did and like past and present day Roman Catholic monks, nuns and some priests do.) They followed their "Teacher of Righteousness" whom the Liberals today claim was Christ! The Essenes lived in caves in the Dead Sea wilderness area (where the famous Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered). This "bird" is now mainly extinct except for a few ascetics in convents and monasteries. "BEWARE...!"

JUDAIZERS: These were Jews who insisted that Gentile believers in the early church return to the bondage of the O.T. Law by observing Sabbaths, holy days, abstaining from certain meats and drinks and the ceremonial and moral laws of the O.T., much like Catholicism and Seventh Day Adventism do in our day. These are kin to "legalizers." These "birds" still exist today although their wings have been clipped because of the grace of God which has overcome their legality. (Biblically speaking legalism is adding anything to the simple doctrine of salvation by grace through faith plus nothing.) "BEWARE...!"

PHILOSOPHERS: These were those who were from Greece (!), and Rome (!), and Egypt (!) who brought with them the teaching of Aristotle, Plato, Zeno, Socrates, Euripides, Demosthenes, Pythagoras, Hippocrates, Aristophanes, et. al. Their modern day counterparts are Dr. R.B. Thieme, A.T. Robertson, Trench, Alford, Elicott, etc. and the translators of the new "versions" of the Bible. They worship "scholarship." As Paul warned: "*Beware philosophy...*" Col. 2:8 These "birds," like parrots, squawk a great deal and will continue to do so as long as there are people gullible enough to desire to "*hear some new thing*" like the Athenians in Paul's day. "BEWARE...!"

GNOSTICS: These heretics taught *pleroma* (their own version of heaven) could only be reached by having access to "special revelations" or "knowing" (Greek: *gnosis*) or "pneumatic knowledge" (Charles Farah, past professor, Oral Roberts University). Present day Gnostics are the Jehovah's Witnesses, Rosicrucians, Christian Scientists, Mormons and many "Greek scholars" who claim to have unearthed the "hidden nuggets" of the "original Hebrew and Greek." The Gnostics are very active in Bible schools, colleges and universities and "spoil" (Col. 2:8) unsuspecting young students. They are also behind most of the new Bible versions, along with the "philosophers" above. We need to remember the warning in 1 Corinthians that *"not many wise men after the flesh"* have been called, but that rather has *"God chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise."* The Lord called *"ignorant and unlearned men"* to spread the gospel in the early church, not philosophers or Gnostics who are puffed up with their own intellect. The same is true in church history; the Billy Sundays, and the D.L. Moody's have accomplished more for God's glory than the Bible correctors and "scholars"! These "birds" may have pretty plumage and attract attention but God often bypasses the birds of paradise for the simple sparrows! "BEWARE...!"

MYSTICS: This group believed that certain "experiences" were necessary to true spirituality, e.g., speaking in tongues, healings, prophesying, etc., like today's charismatics, Pentecostals, Yoga practitioners, reincarnation "freaks," guru followers, Transcendental Meditation adherents, Buddhists, Hindus, RCC priests, monks, nuns, and other monastics, etc. Praise the Lord these are "rare birds" in America, but they nonetheless sing their songs wherever they are permitted or encouraged. "BEWARE...!"

PHARISEES: These were strict legalists who believed in the "letter of the Law" and missed the spiritual intent altogether. Christ identified them as *"vipers," "hypocrites," "blind leaders of the blind," "wolves in sheep's clothing," "children of hell,"* and even *"whitewashed sepulchers."* (And you thought I was negative!) Today's counterparts are believers who measure their spirituality by others lack. (2 Corinthians 10:12 *"For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise."* The Pharisees were bound by empty tradition. Jesus said *"Beware the leaven of the Pharisees..."* Lk. 12:1 Today's traditionalists include Roman Catholics, Liberals, and many "conservatives," "evangelicals," and even some "fundamentalists." They like formalism, robes, costumes, repetitive prayers, liturgy, symbols, titles ("Rabbi," "Father," "Reverend," "Archbishop," "Cardinal," "Pope," etc.) prominent positions, holy days, rules, regulations, and a show of religion. (cf. Mt. 23) These "birds" still nest in the branches of Christianity wherever ignorance of the Word of God prevails or tradition reigns over Scripture. Jesus' admonition must be remembered: *"Search the Scriptures; for in them (not in traditions) ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of Me."* Jn.5:39 "BEWARE...!"

SADUCEES: These are they who believed in only that which could be detected with the five physical senses (See Acts 23:8). They did not believe in angels, the spirit world (the Devil, devils, etc.), or a future resurrection. Their relatives today are the atheists, agnostics, scientists, educators, philosophers, liberals, Jehovah's Witnesses, materialists, and probably your next door neighbor! *"Beware the leaven (doctrine) of the...Pharisees!"* Mt. 16:12 Watch out for these "birds"! Our Savior warned the Saducees of His day *"Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God."* Mt. 22:29 "BEWARE...!"

HERODIANS: Jesus warned: *"Beware...the leaven of Herod..."* Mk. 8:15 These were the followers of Herod among the Jews of Jesus' day (cf. Mt.22:16-24; Mk.3:6). Simply the "leaven of the Herodians" is worldliness. God's people are to be separate from the world! Leaven is always synonymous with some form of sin in the Bible. We are to *"purge out...the old leaven..."* (1 Cor. 5:7). Praise the Lord these "birds" are extinct in their original form, but unfortunately their progeny survives among Christians who fail to separate from the world. "BEWARE...!"

LIBERALS: Those who deny the inspiration of Scripture, the Deity of Christ, the new birth, the "fundamentals of the faith," and set themselves up as their own authority and are the theological leftists of today in Christianity. They advocate situation ethics, progressive education, socialism,

communism, "equal rights," affirmative action, welfarism, "civil rights" (meaning infringing on your rights to give them to some minority group, e.g., homosexuals!), sex education, abortion, the abolishment of capital punishment, etc., etc. ad nauseum. Famous "liberals" are Pontius Pilate ("*What is truth?*" i.e., situation ethics), all the Popes (reject the absolute authority of Scripture – *sola Scriptura*, and substitute *prima Scriptura* along with church tradition, etc.), Norman Vincent Peale ("The Power of Positive Thinking"), Robert Schuller (who built the glass Crystal Cathedral on the San Andreas fault!), Jane Fonda, Donahue, Martin (Michael - his real name!) Luther King, Jr., the Kennedy family, Fidel Castro, et. al. Jesus issued a warning in Matthew 13:32 concerning these "birds" and their proliferation in the "church" or Christianity in our day. "*Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof.*" "BEWARE...!"

NEO-ORTHODOX: (alias "Ortho-ducks" or "quacks"!) They "believe the Bible when it creates an experience for you." – (J.F. MacArthur, *The Charismatics*, p.32) Thus the Bible "becomes" the Word of God" for each individual *if* it speaks to them. Neo-orthodox, J.K.S. Reid asserts: "God's Word is petrified in a dead record until you and I encounter it and it comes alive." Complete subjectivism. This is the theology of the man in the street who believes he is his own authority and that "everyone should worship God as he sees fit" and "go to the church of his choice." This is the ecumenical and syncretistic crowd. "Let's all get together" is their motto (Bible believers excepted, of course!). These "birds" are easy to identify. ("If it walks like a duck and quacks like a duck, it must be a duck!") "BEWARE...!"

NEO-EVANGELICALS: These are the "new breed" of fundamentalists (they despise the term), whose self-confessed evangelist is Billy Graham, whose publication is *Christianity Today*, whose favorite terms are "dialogue," "relevant," "decision," and "commitment," instead of "separation," non-conformity to the world," "saved," and "consecrated"! They speak a great deal about the "inspiration of the original manuscripts" of Scripture and their "innerancy," but never of the "preservation of Scripture," and its "authority!" Their favorite translations or versions are the ESV, ASV, the NASV, the NIV, NKJB, "Good News," the Living Bible, or the latest copy of any version translated from the infamous Westcott and Hort manuscripts (viz. the R.C. Vaticanus and Sinaiticus), just off the press from the "Bible-a-month" club! They are quick to bring the Bible in line with the latest "scientific" ("falsely so-called..." 1 Tim. 6:20 KJV, AV1611) findings, instead of bringing "science" in line with God's Word! (They believe the Bible "contains" the Word of God, not IS the Word of God.) They love the praise and acclamation (and accreditation) of the world and its leaders: political, scientific or religious, *regardless of their infidelity*. They are the compromising, middle-of-the-road, "respected," professors, authors, preachers and "Bible scholars" of our day. These "birds" are more like bats! (You cannot tell if they are mammals or fowl. But they are definitely "FOUL" in the sense of "foul-ball," "foul-play," "foul-smell," etc.) ["The bigger the belfry the more bats."] They are equally comfortable with Billy Graham, Billy Crystal or Billy Joel (but not Billy Sunday!). They hob nob with Johnny Carson, Johnny Cash, and Joni Earekson, but have problems with John the Baptist and the Apostle John! They fellowship with liberals, Charismatics, Neo-orthodox, Pentecostals, philosophers, theologians, scientists, superstars (rock, sports, show business, etc.), and anyone else except Bible-believing fundamentalists whom they refer to as "Pharisees." "Birds of a feather flock together." "BEWARE...!"

NEO-FUNDAMENTALISTS: "Neo" means "new," but there is nothing new about these birds! (They are also referred to as "pseudo (false) fundamentalists." They disdain the term "evangelical," or "neo-evangelical," and insist they are fundamentalists and treat the Bible with high regard. They are like the fundamentalist in many areas, but they seem to have neo-evangelical tendencies, in that they prefer to freely associate with "Christians" with questionable "testimonies," like Chuck Colson, or Chuck Smith [founder of the Calvary Chapel denomination, who prophesied the Rapture in 1981 causing many to leave the movement] or with groups who have questionable associations, like the Southern Baptists. These are generally good men (like Jerry Falwell) who have trouble with ecclesiastical separation. (Of course a historic definition of a fundamentalist includes that of being a separatist.) They seem to believe that it doesn't matter who you fellowship with, as long as that person is a "brother." They do not believe it is proper to publicly "name names" of the

apostates, liberals, Christ rejecters, demoninations, isms, cults, sects and religions. (cf. 3 Jn. 9,10; Jude 11; Phil. 4:2; 1 tim.1:19,20; 2 Tim. 2:17,18; Titus 1:10-13; 2 Tim. 1:5, 4:10, 4:14, etc.) They believe like fundamentalists (they say) but are willing to sacrifice principle for expediency or growth. Younger men are especially prone to this persuasion. Fundamental, Bible-believing churches are often nesting places for these "birds" who graduate from good schools and take the pulpits of old-fashioned churches where they "sing a new song" of deviant doctrine and practice, foreign to the old guard. They preach salvation messages, but implement new concepts and emphasize machinery (organization) over doctrine, buildings over revival, and meetings over soul-winning. (Think mega churches and men like "Mr. Smiley Face" – Joel Osteen and his ilk.) "BEWARE...!"

CHARISMATICS or NEO-PENTECOSTALS: The old Pentecostalism suffered an "image problem" with flamboyant, flashy super-sensationalism in side-show healing meetings (like the early Oral Roberts, A.A. Allen, Amy McPherson, Kathryn Kulhman, etc.). Today that has changed. The neo or new Pentecostal or Charismatic is slick, smooth, well dressed and even well educated (ala the 700 Club, Pat Robertson, Richard Roberts, etc.). There are still exceptions (Ernest Angely, Dr. Thea Jones, Benny Hinn, Kenneth Copeland, Ravi Zacharias, T.D. Jakes, Jeremiah Wright, etc.). They believe in miracles, healings, tongues, visions, being "slain in the Spirit," the nine sign-gifts of the early church, etc. (1 Cor. 12) but for the most part downplay these things in televised meetings or in the more modern charismatic churches (e.g. the Calvary Chapel denomination). Many major on entertainment rather than doctrine in their services. They are basically ecumenical and try to unite "Christians" on the basis of common experience (tongues, the "baptism of the Holy Ghost") rather than on Bible truth. They are usually free in the use of various Bible versions. They, as their bedfellows, the neo-evangelicals and neo-fundamentalists, speak much about "love" and exalt love above sound doctrine and even God's Word. Theologically they are to the extreme right, along with the cults. Your "experience," not your doctrine, is the test of fellowship. The Roman Catholic Church and the apostate main-line denominations have gotten on the band wagon and everyone talks about being born-again, and being "baptized" or "filled" with the Holy Spirit, regardless of other blasphemous doctrines (transubstantiation, purgatory, prayers for the dead, etc.) and practices (laughing revivals, barking like animals, healing washing machines, transmigration of the soul, out-of-body experiences, supernatural filling of teeth in services, etc.). One lady reported being given a new belly button (!) through prayer. Others testify of having empty gas tanks being filled, etc., *ad nauseum*. Their music also reflects experience more than doctrine (ala Jimmy Swaggart, the Gaithers, Doug Oldham, Little Richard, etc.). These birds are an old species which has evolved with brighter plumage, but they warble the same old song, i.e., "experience is the measure of Christianity." "BEWARE...!"

CALVINISM: The so-called "Five Points of Calvinism" (viz. Total Depravity, Unconditional Election, Limited Atonement, Irresistible Grace and the Perseverance of the Saints, often referred to by the acrostic "TULIP"), in themselves need not necessarily (depending on the definition of these terms) produce spiritual deadness or lethargy, but a Calvinistic concept of one or more of these doctrines often does. It is that deadening overemphasis which denies soul-winning (does your church have a soul-winning program?!), zeal and ambition. Dead orthodoxy is the result. Churches with this disastrous disease wither on the vine. They emphasize the sovereignty of God to the exclusion of the responsibility of man. They teach and preach that "salvation is of the Lord" and fail to see that God has given a commission to witness, woo and win souls to Christ. Many fundamentalists classify themselves as 3, 4 or 5 point Calvinists. There is a resurgence of this deadening and dangerous doctrinal bias in the church today. The reader is encouraged to read *The Other Side of Calvinism* by Vance and *What Love Is This?* by Dave Hunt which more than adequately refute this distortion of biblical theology. Calvinism is like a vulture which feeds on the dead carcass of a lifeless or dying church. Any church which used to be on fire, but has lost its fervor is easy prey for Calvinism. "*I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.*" *Rev. 3:1* "BEWARE...!" (See my brief expose of Calvinism: "FIVE POINTS AGAINST THE FIVE POINTS OF CALVINISM" – P.F.)

ARMINIANISM: The opposite of Calvinism, this theological position promotes the reverse emphasis and teaches salvation comes through man's efforts primarily or completely. Since the

emphasis is on man and his efforts or works, the Arminian believes that man can earn or merit salvation and/or must work to keep it once he finally attains it. Arminianism produces shallowness and inconsistency as well as a lack of assurance in its adherents. Since a lack of human effort or sin in a person's life results in a loss of salvation for these people, they are often biblical perspective and suggests corrections to this biblically errant theology. The Arminian position will rob a believer of his joy and his victory because of the doubts about losing his or her salvation; much like the cat bird which robs the nest of other birds when they let down their guard. "BEWARE...!"

DENOMINATIONALISM: Those who place a religious organization (denomination) above the Lord or the teaching of the denomination above "Thus saith the Lord" identifies this not-too-rare species of Christian "bird." If the denominational headquarters hands down a decree, even though contrary to Scripture, the "denominational parrot" picks up the tune and sings it till he is buried in the church graveyard. His song sounds something like: "I was born a Methodist (Catholic, Presbyterian, Baptist, etc.) and I will die one." In the cycle of church deterioration denominationalism is natural and to be expected. Principle: Unless there is new energy put into any system deterioration is the inevitable result. Entropy, decay, deterioration and death are natural: something supernatural must be injected into any Christian's life or any church or organization or they are doomed. The believer and the church needs to be in a state of constant revival. Without the supernatural the natural will occur. It can happen to you and your church. "BEWARE...!"

CATHOLICISM: Roman, Russian or Greek Orthodox (Western or Eastern), all have common roots, rituals and rudiments. Catholicism is a sacramental system of works and mysteries which is designed to meet man's inherent religious instinct, yet falls short of meeting his true spiritual need. It has a system of mystical ceremonies and aesthetic beauty borrowed from the Old and New Testaments with a mixture of pagan traditions and religious accoutrements. (It is amazing that otherwise intellectual people are enamored by the costumes ["It dresses like a mother and calls itself a father!"] and ceremonies, usually performed using a language its followers don't even speak.) Its government is hierarchical and absolute. Its basic doctrine is salvation through sacraments (religious ceremonies which purportedly impart grace to the soul and impart to the priests great power). This system is vividly described in the Bible in Revelation chapter 17. Catholicism in all its forms is a harlot church with anti-Christ in leadership positions. It will fall under the wrath of God in a special way in the Tribulation period (Rev. 17-19). Here is a "bird" with the brightest, gaudiest plumage of all (Rev. 17:12,13). This church has become the "habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird!" Rev. 18:2 "BEWARE...!"

SCIENTISM: These "birds" make science and its leaders and findings authoritative and "worship" its latest theories, hypotheses, dogmas and declarations. They admit that "spontaneous generation" (life from non life – the "Big Bang" theory and evolution in general) has never been observed nor reproducible. Science thus becomes a god to many. The concept of evolution has destroyed the faith of many potential believers. To see just how ridiculous trust in science is, one need only check out the science textbooks of five years ago. Their theories and postulations change with the wind. What was once considered "good science" is now known to be "bad news" to its adherents. Former "scientific" explanations for the world around us and God's creation are like the extinct "dodo bird." Unfortunately some never learn the lesson that yesterdays hypotheses are today's dinosaurs! "BEWARE...!"

HUMANISM: These deadly vultures teach man can do anything, thus man becomes his own god. This is the "religion" of the public (government) school system in America and is much like scientism. The *Encarta World Dictionary* defines humanism as "a system of thought that is based on the values, characteristics, and behavior that are believed to be the best in human beings, rather than any supernatural authority(!) ...based on the rediscovery of the arts and *philosophy* of the ancient Greeks and Romans." It is a man-centered religion! It embraces the philosophy that man has unlimited potential. Everyone needs to "self-authenticate," make a mark, be somebody. Thus we have a proliferation of books by those who should not have bothered, TV and talk shows

and trivia by the hour. All truth is relative – there are no absolutes – convenient situation ethics – “If it feels good, do it!” Social media breeds this philosophy. “BEWARE...!”

EVOLUTIONISM: Evolutionism is a close kin to humanism and scientism and it is hard to tell which came first, the “chicken” or its “egg.” Evolution says chance is the creator and everything ultimately came from nothing. There are several forms of evolutionism (Theistic REALLY?!, organic, uniformitarian, etc.), but all are directly contradictory to the Bible account of creation, the fall of man, sin and the need for a Savior. After all if we are just animals anyway, we are not responsible for our actions, there is no need for a Savior, heaven and hell are myths, everyone and everything is getting better and better, and we will eventually produce a “super race” (Nazism), through selective breeding and the survival of the fittest (Socialism), and produce a Utopian society (Communism), where we will all live in harmony, love and peace (United Nations, the New World Order), and we will enjoy total equality (ERA, women’s lib, children’s lib, unisex, transgenderism, etc.) without discrimination (civil rights movement), and have total freedom (homosexuality, bestiality, incest, abortion, pornography), and we will rehabilitate criminals, perverts, etc. (anti-capital punishment, half-way houses and rehabilitation centers, correction institutions - instead of jails!), clean up our environment (Environmental Protection Agency, OSHA, PETA, anti-nuclear power organizations, tree huggers, etc.) and redistribute the wealth (welfarism, urban renewal, socialism), and so on, *ad nauseum!* If the above sounds far-fetched to you, why don’t you “search the Scriptures” as Jesus commanded, and get a “bird’s eye view” from the Divine viewpoint?! “BEWARE...!”

THE CULTS AND SECTS: These “birds” can be identified rather easily in spite of their different heresies. In every case they add to the Scriptures (The Book of Mormon, Joseph Smith; Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures, Mary Baker Glover Patterson Eddie; The Great Controversy, Rosicrucian Philosophy, et. al.). Most often they build their nests on the shifting sands of an obscure verse of Scripture (e.g. 1 Cor. 15:29 – baptism for the dead; Mormons). They all teach salvation by works of some kind, thus adherents are usually hard-working and zealous. They are often hard to pin down regarding their false doctrine, therefore a Christian needs to be careful in his dealings with cultists lest he be ensnared. (2 Jn. 9-11) Some of the cults or sects include Mormons (Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints), Christian Scientists, Seventh Day Adventists, Jehovah’s Witnesses, Rosicrucians, Swedenborgianism, Moral Re-Armament (“Up with the people!”), Anglo-Israelism, Armstrongism, Baha’ism, Theosophy, Moonies, etc., etc. These are theologically to the right of the extreme right! These “birds” constantly rob the “nests” of other churches or the unchurched to gain more adherents. “BEWARE...!”

OTHER “BIRDS OF PREY” TO BEWARE:

THEISTS: These “birds” believe in a personal God without commitment; i.e., the average American.

ATHEISTS: They believe there is no God; they are primarily evolutionists and humanists.

POLYTHEISTS: Believe there are many gods. (There are! The Bible calls them “devils.”)

HENOTHEISTS: Believe in worshipping one God without denying the existence of other gods.

MONOTHEISTS: Believe in one God, but no Trinity.

PANTHEISTS: Believe God is a part of His creation; that He is in the rocks, trees, etc.

DEISTS: Believe in a personal God who does not intervene on the earth; a transcendental Being. Ben Franklin was a Deist.

DUALISTS: Believe in two original forces or beings in the world; one being the source of all good, the other the source of all evil.

OCCULTISTS: Includes witchcraft, spiritism, Satan and devil worship, astrology (horoscopes), and worship of idols. Usually begins with a desire to know the “secrets of the universe” or with an unusually strong desire to know the future (oija boards, taro cards, fortune tellers, Dungeons and Dragons, etc.).

EXPERIENTIAL THEOLOGY: Has its roots in...

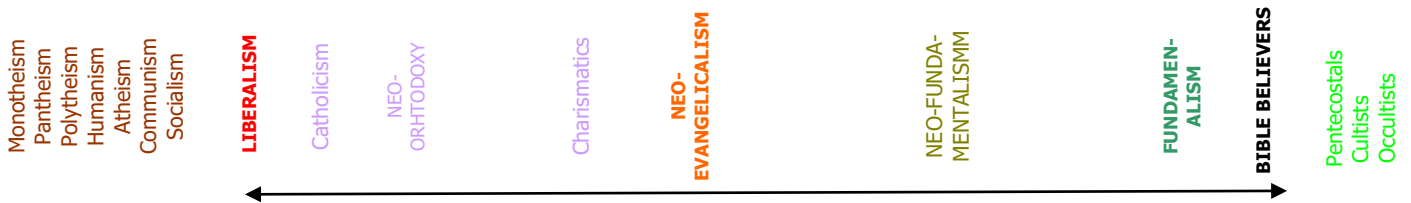
EXISTENTIALISM: A philosophical view that says life is meaningless and absurd; thus we can “do our own thing.” This cult denies that the universe has any intrinsic meaning or purpose

and requires individuals to take responsibility for their own actions and shape their own destiny. Sin is relative and thus a savior is redundant.

PAGANISM: If “experience” (joy, satisfaction, peace and happiness) is the criteria, any form of religious ritual is acceptable. The religion of feeling or experience is extremely subjective and spawns an “anything goes” theology. Clark Pinnock aptly said: “A subjective, man-centered experience is indistinguishable from gastric upset.” Technically a pagan is anyone who does not follow any of the world’s “accepted” religions. From the Bible-believer’s viewpoint it is any non-believer.



“BIRD WATCHERS” VISUAL GUIDE (THE THEOLOGICAL SPECTRUM)



Note 1: The “Charismatic bird” is difficult to place on the theological spectrum since his theology is relegated to secondary importance and “experience” is elevated to primary importance.

Note 2: There are Catholics who are closer to the Neo-orthodox theology than to the out-and-out Liberal position.

Note 3: This guide is designed to place the Bible-believer on the “right,” the Liberal on the left and the Neo-evangelical in the middle-of-the-road position, relating all others to these three major groups. Those listed beyond the left and right positions are seen as extremists.

Note 4: There seems to be a correlation between liturgy and ritual and theological persuasion. Someone has said: “The more ritual, the less Bible!” This is often true. Fundamentalists and even Bible believers had better take care and watch this deadening influence in our churches. Formalism is the stepping stone to ritualism.



