

"... Hereby know we the spirit of truth and the spirit of error"

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# The DISCERNER

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## HOW IMPORTANT AID IS GIVEN TO CULTIC GROUPS

*Prof. John E. Dahlin, Editor*

The lack of convictions by many people in theological matters, and the rapid deterioration of spiritual standards in our time, have opened the doors widely for renewed cultic activity. The present-day situation is predicted in the New Testament Scriptures. In His Olivet discourse our Lord said, "And many false prophets shall rise and shall deceive many. For there shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; inasmuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the elect. Behold I have told you before." (Mt. 24:11; 24-25). It is clear to students of prophecy that the present days manifest a renewed satanic onslaught against the forces of righteousness in order to destroy the Christian faith. The Psalmist asks, "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" Often we hear the illogical expression, one may trust Christ without taking sides in current theological controversies. But a little honest reflection reveals the absurdity of such indifference. Obviously, if the great doctrines of the Scriptures are regarded as unimportant and relegated to the background, the Christian faith will be detached from the spiritual mooring mast. It is really pre-

posterous to place "doctrine" in contrast to simple faith. It needs to be said with emphasis that the doctrinal matters which are being debated in the Church today are not questions which lie on the periphery of Christian belief, but rather such concern the centrality of authority of the Scriptures.

It is becoming increasingly popular to discount creeds, especially those which have had a historic significance. A few years ago the old Westminster Confession was exchanged for a stream-lined arrangement in harmony with present-day liberal theological concepts. Perhaps you have heard some so-called scholars say, "I have no use for creeds." Such a statement is comparable to the man on the way to the penitentiary who says, "I do not believe in law and order." The one who rejects doctrine and sneers at a creed manifests mental bankruptcy and moral cowardice.

### **The New Testament Church Exhibited Faith In Doctrine**

The earliest record of the New Testament company of believers, with regard to basic beliefs, is stated in these words, "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles doctrine"

(Acts 2:42). For lack of such an adherence to Bible doctrine today, we see the growth of all kinds of isms. The modern church must bear much of the blame for the growth of so much humbug in the religious sphere. When the historic faith goes out of the window then all kinds of spurious teachings spring up out of the soil of liberalism. In other words, hosts of substitutes for faith are bound to emerge when doctrinal positions are compromised or abandoned. It is altogether clear that the New Testament Church exhibited faith in her doctrines which was full of force and fascination. In fact, out of this faith lives appeared which bore the indelible marks of holiness. Such moral purity, which was manifested in those days, stood in complete contrast with the warped standards which were prevalent in that sin-darkened age. In addition, the New Testament Church possessed beliefs for which she gladly and bravely suffered. It is a bad sign when Christians no longer are willing to suffer for Christ. The Church is fulfilling her functions only when she is consciously fighting for her life. There is very little evidence today that religious denominations are willing to "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints" (Jude v.3). Our generation has become entirely too soft and pliable on issues which pertain to the preservation of the vital element of faith. It appears that less and less people are willing to "go forth therefore unto Him, outside the camp, bearing His reproach" (Heb. 13:13). On the other hand, we find that Christianity is being popularized, and the applause from the world is being welcomed. These prevailing conditions clearly contradict the position of the early

Church, and hence pave the way for continuous cultic expansion.

#### **ECUMENISM AIDS CULTIC GROUPS**

In a study of historical trends, we discover that in the early part of this century the cults were properly identified as false and unscriptural. In other words, the line of demarcation between Bible-believing groups and cultists was clear and well defined. In recent years, however, the spirit of ecumenism and togetherness serves to break down this vital line of separation between truth and error. A prominent writer in one of the largest denominations wrote a book on cults which is widely read with the title, "These Also Believe." The title selected makes it unmistakably clear that the author does not advocate any hard line of opposition to the cults. While much valuable information is provided in this book, it is clear that the writer is ready to extend the hand of fellowship to the cultists despite their many peculiarities and unorthodoxy.

The spirit of ecumenism has been manifested further in that several of the well known cults have been admitted into The National Council of Churches. In other words, through the present-day ecumenical spirit more and more of the cults are achieving respectability and acceptance. In the past one of the greatest handicaps among the cults was the unwillingness of the regular denominations in granting status to them. The general lifting of this stigma, as applied to the cults, has accelerated cultic activity in every area.

Moreover, the continuous emphasis of the "Universal Fatherhood of God," and the "Brotherhood of Man," is bound to benefit all the spurious

groups known as the cults. Broadly considered, we find today that only the separatistic groups, which are relatively small, are maintaining a vigorous opposition to the cults. It is this writer's opinion that the spirit of ecumenism has done more than any other step taken in giving stimulus and impetus to the false groups in enlarging their activities. Unfortunately numerous denominational leaders, as well as many lay-people, are too spiritually blind to see the disastrous consequences of the position taken by those who direct the present day ecumenical movement. The sharp cutting edge of discernment is lost through the spirit of togetherness which is so strongly emphasized in most of the religious denominations of our time. If there were no other reason in opposing the ecumenical program, one should resist it simply because it erases the line of demarcation between truth and error. Such a condition is solemnly illustrated in the Old Testament history when the descendents of Seth and Cain merged into a common stream. It brought on the judgment of God on the inhabitants of the earth, that is, the deluge of water swept away the whole generation except Noah and his family. The Biblical prophecy reveals that this judgment of God will be repeated during the end of the age due to the worldwide apostasy which will be prevalent at that time. Unfortunately history does not seem to teach people these solemn lessons.

In summary, it is well for all of us to remember that a compromising position against false doctrine will cause cultic activity to intensify and expand. The unparalleled success of the cults of our day is a sad commentary on the failure of the regular de-

nominations in taking a Scriptural stand against peddlers of evil doctrine. The apostle John lays down a principle which is still valid in dealing with those who are promoting error. "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine (the Scriptural truth), receive him not into your house, neither bid him God-speed. For he that biddeth him God-speed is partaker of his evil deeds" (II John vs. 10-11).

Doctrine is not something which can be either right or wrong, true or untrue, believable or unbelievable. Doctrine that is divine—and the true Church has none other—is of such a quality that it cannot be anything but true. It is lack of such doctrine, and of a passion for such doctrine, that places the Church in such an unsteady and insecure place in the world of today. A church without Biblical doctrine is not an institution of God according to the New Testament teachings. When doctrine is diluted the church is impotent in the performance of God's work in this world. It is understandable why the Apostle John exhorts the children of God never to give aid and comfort to those who have deviated from the Biblical doctrines. It is imperative that Christian people repudiate all unscriptural activities and do as Paul says, "have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them" (Eph. 5:11).

The great need of this day is for our pulpits to preach with no uncertain sound the doctrine of God which once stirred the world of long ago, and for God's people to believe these doctrines and live them out in their complexity of life as we know it. The beliefs which conquered then will triumph once more.

## CONFUSION IN CONTEMPORARY PROTESTANTISM

by  
*Rev. George Darby, pastor*  
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Dr. Vance Havner, beloved evangelist and Bible Conference speaker, in an address delivered at Moody Founder's Week Conference, February, 1970, referred to the religious conditions of our day in the following words as quoted in MOODY MONTHLY of June, 1970:

"We are living in a fog in the strangest and weirdest and the most uncanny period in the history of the church. Black and white have become gray. Church leaders are lost in the mist, and unless God raises up some prophets and seers who can see through this smog, then evangelical Christianity faces deterioration and disintegration."

The religious confusion described by Dr. Havner is too obvious to be denied and too serious to be lightly dismissed. Its effect is apparent both within the church and in the world outside. The church itself is fragmented, frustrated and full of problems for which there seem to be no solutions. The world meanwhile looks on with amused tolerance and sometimes with scorn. Men talk freely of our age as the "post-Christian era" which carries the not too subtle implication that the church has no further significance for our time, perhaps not even a valid claim to exist.

We hear much today about the search for identity. Nowhere is there a greater need for self-identification than in the case of the Protestant Church. The question, "What is the Church?" evokes so many varied and contradictory answers from those who might be expected to know as to result in virtually no answer. The plain fact of the matter is that the church

has laboured so long and so strenuously to identify with the world in one or another of its forms that the church's own real identity has been effectively obscured, if not obliterated. Ecumenicism has promoted the World Church concept so successfully as to erase the boundary lines between the church and the world. "When you look for the church you find it in the world. When you look for the world, you find it in the church."

The concept of the church as a called-out elect company, set apart from the world to bear witness to the truth as it is in Christ, has all but vanished from the minds of modern church leaders. In its place has been erected the image of a socio-political organization, more bent on building a Utopian Society than on beseeching sinners to be reconciled to God. The world, we are asked to believe, is on the way to a man-made millennium of which the World Council of Churches is the Architect and Builder. The only thing needful for its production is to persuade men that they are entitled to it without the necessity of spiritual change!

With the loss of the church's peculiar character has gone inevitably, the distinctiveness of its doctrines. In embracing the world we have espoused its philosophies. Just as the "mixed multitude" which went up out of Egypt with Israel rejected the manna, so the world-minded church today rejects the pure manna of biblical truth. The cardinal doctrines of "the faith once delivered to the

saints" are either repudiated or watered down to become palatable to the natural man.

Jeffrey K. Haddon in *THE GATHERING STORM OF THE CHURCHES* reports some findings from the Glock and Stark survey relative to current unbelief in the major Protestant denominations. In response to the survey,

"87 per cent of the Methodists, 95 per cent of the Episcopalians, 88 per cent of the Presbyterians, 67 per cent of the American Baptists, and 77 per cent of the American Lutherans did not believe that the "Scriptures are the inspired and inerrant Word of God not only in matters of faith but also in historical, geographical, and other secular matters" (p. 4). In answering the question whether "Adam and Eve were individual historical persons," 82 per cent of the Methodists, 97 per cent of the Episcopalians, 84 per cent of the Presbyterians, 55 per cent of the American Baptists, and 51 per cent of the American Lutherans said no (p. 40). Sixty per cent of the Methodists, 44 per cent of the Episcopalians, 49 per cent of the Presbyterians, 34 per cent of the American Baptists, and 19 per cent of the American Lutherans did not believe that the virgin birth of Jesus was a biological miracle." Fifty-eight per cent of the Methodists, 60 per cent of the Episcopalians, 54 per cent of the Presbyterians, 35 per cent of the American Baptists, and 22 per cent of the American Lutherans agreed that "Hell does not refer to a special location after death, but to the experience of self-estrangement, guilt and meaninglessness in this life" (p. 46).

—Quoted in *CHRISTIANITY TODAY*  
Probably no other single influence has so seriously adulterated the teachings of the Protestant Church as has the Darwinian evolutionary hypothesis. The acceptance of this unproven theory as the explanation of man's origin has wrought untold

havoc in the creeds of orthodox Christendom.

Even among evangelicals, we have witnessed the sad spectacle of teachers trying to fit evolution into the framework of belief in the Bible. In a vain effort to reconcile the Genesis account of creation with the theory of organic evolution some have effected a compromise in the form of "theistic evolution" only to find that the resulting monstrosity is neither biblical nor scientific.

The evolutionary hypothesis, once accepted, makes ridiculous the basic tenets of the Christian faith. The fall of man, the reality of sin, the need of atonement, the uniqueness and Deity of Jesus Christ must all be discarded by those who look upon man as the steadily improving product of forces resident originally in lower forms of life rather than as the special creative handiwork of God. Small wonder that where Darwin's authority has been acknowledged, belief in the Bible has been steadily eroded and the minds of professing Christians, especially among the young, reduced to religious chaos.

As the sure consequence of doctrinal decline has come decay in the church's moral integrity. Protestantism, once the bulwark of social righteousness has been so honeycombed with permissive philosophies and ethical compromises as to render it useless in defending society against the tides of iniquity which sweep across today's world. Robinson's *HONEST TO GOD* and Fletcher's *SITUATION ETHICS* reflect the moral confusion which results when men abandon the objective standards of Divine revelation and substitute their own faulty and sinful judgments concerning right and wrong.

Peter writes in his second epistle

of "the pollution of the world." (II Peter 2:20). The word is literally "Miasmas." Like pestilential vapours the vicious doctrines which take their rise in the depraved minds of unregenerate religionists are spreading their poison through the whole of what was once known as our "Christian civilization." There has settled down upon our enlightened twentieth century a moral smog so dense as to smother all sensitivity of conscience and to effectually hide from men the way of righteousness. Theological professors laugh at virtue and openly advocate free love. Clergymen march at the head of revolutionary organizations and participate in the riots which they foster, encouraging the violation of law and order under the euphemism of "civil disobedience." Churches smile approval upon homosexuals and refuse the biblical classification of homosexuality as sin. In a Minneapolis Church the bread and wine of Holy Communion is administered to a nude couple. And so the corruption spreads.

On the international scene the church's moral obfuscation is even more apparent. The National Council of Churches pleads for Red China's admission to the U.N. in patent disregard of that nation's contempt for every canon of decency and respect in international relationships. The World Council of Churches votes to provide financial support for South African revolutionaries in their efforts to overthrow the rightful government of the land and simultaneously agitates for increased aid to the Soviet masters of communist enslaved nations. Expressing deep concern over the alleged ill-treatment of those who promote domestic violence they at the same time urge vehemently the withdrawal of all U.S. forc-

es from Vietnam and the abandonment of the South Vietnamese to the tender mercies of the communist aggressor.

Confusion in some of the above areas is not confined to the liberal wing of Protestantism. Unfortunately there are evangelical leaders and particularly some editors, who use more ink to castigate and lampoon the "far-rightists" and the "extreme fundamentalists" than they do to rebuke the leftist tendencies which are so dangerous to church and state alike. Admittedly, there are those who wrongly equate Americanism with Christianity; nevertheless their activities on the whole are surely more conducive to the welfare of society than those who promote rebellion and anarchy, sometimes on the pretext that Jesus Christ was a revolutionary.

It becomes increasingly difficult to discern between the evil and the good. The fact of the matter is, many have given up trying. The order of the day is religious syncretism, that is the blending together of the variant religions in one homogeneous mixture, having removed all of the awkward differences of belief. The prophet Isaiah long ago pronounced woe on those "who call evil good, and good, evil; who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter" (Isaiah 5:20). We seem to feel that we have escaped the Divine judgment by eliminating all such distinctions as those noted by the prophet. Our aim is to find the good in all religions and put it together in one delightful ambrosial cup. Many there are today who drink of its contents and pronounce it good. No wonder John warned us, "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits, whether they are of God: because

many false prophets are gone out into the world." (I John 4:1)

Remarkably enough one of the areas in which worse confusion exists today is that of the ministry of the Holy Spirit. The widespread development of the "glossolalia" movement and its claim to be a work of the Holy Spirit has occasioned much perplexity among true believers. Penetrating into all the major denominations of Protestantism and even crossing over into Roman Catholicism the movement recognizes only one criterion of a Christian — the experience which they term the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Without entering into a detailed discussion of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit it should be obvious that there is something in the emphasis of this movement that does not square with New Testament teaching. For one thing, since the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth it is impossible that He should identify Himself by some special sign of His favour with those who are committed to systems of error and untruth. The primary function of the Holy Spirit is to glorify Christ, not to gratify my desire for some ecstatic experience. Furthermore, the idea that the Holy Spirit will bestow spiritual gifts upon unregenerate men is found nowhere in Scripture. To count Christian, men who have never been born again, simply on the ground of some emotional or ecstatic experience which they associate with the work of the Holy Spirit is at best confusing and at worst, highly dangerous. Such tampering with the truth of the gospel serves to compound the confusion which exists in the minds of multitudes concerning the nature of Christianity.

The quality of spiritual discernment was never more needed than at

the present time. While we must be aware of lovelessness in our relations with other believers we must nevertheless walk circumspectly and with discrimination lest we be found loving that which the Lord hates and lending our support to the program of Antichrist under the delusion that we are doing the work of God. Paul prayed for the Philippian believers that their "love (might) abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment" to the end that they would be able "to approve things that are excellent." (Phil. 1:9-10) That last clause is rendered in the margin of the American Standard Version, "That ye may distinguish between things that differ." Such a prayer we might well echo on behalf of ourselves and all believers in this confused and confusing age. Very good people can become involved in very serious error, and "evil is wrought by want of thought as well as by want of heart." The love of Christ is not to be divorced from the mind of Christ, and the Christian needs to employ both if he would walk worthily of the Lord in this difficult day.

This is not an appeal for specialists in witch-hunting although Paul's question to the Galatian Christians might suggest that spiritual witchery is more than an imaginary activity. "Who," he asked, "hath bewitched you?" Heresy-hunters may become obsessed with their pursuit to the point where more positive ministries are neglected, but this does not justify Christians in refusing to test the religious teachings of our time by the standard of God's Word. Just as some of our political leaders deliberately close their eyes to the presence of subversive forces within our government, thereby rendering us the more vulnerable to their destructive de-



signs, so Christians, and especially Christian leaders who blindly and blandly approve whatever assumes the guise of "evangelicalism" are responsible for exposing the testimony of Jesus Christ to harmful heresies.

If Protestantism, as we remarked earlier, is confused as to its identity, it is equally in the dark as to its destiny. The medieval concept of the church as the kingdom of God on earth has infatuated the minds of modern ecclesiastics. They conceive of the church in terms of a power-structure which, like the stone in Daniel 2, is to grow until it becomes a great mountain filling the whole earth. This unbiblical image of the church has impelled Protestantism toward a goal quite different from its own dream of destiny. The end of liberal Protestantism is depicted not in the second chapter of Daniel but in the third and seventeenth chapters of Revelation. Pictured in the Laodicean Church of Revelation 3:14-22, is a religious organization where the authority of man has displaced that of Christ. The Lord to whom it pays nominal allegiance is shut out from the church's practical considerations. In consequence the church sees itself not as it really is but in a mirror of self-deception. Convinced of its prosperity, it moves toward ultimate debacle, when the Lord will publicly disown it, spewing it out of His mouth. What a rude awakening is in store for proud intellectual Protestantism which dares to sit in judgment upon the Word of God and refuses to acknowledge any authority but its own reason.

The seventeenth chapter of Revelation adds a further touch of tragedy to the account of Protestantism's demise. There the final stage of an

apostate church is depicted under the figure of a harlot who is in turn the mother of harlots. This scarlet clad woman is the sum total of false religion representing all that is contrary to the revealed truth of God. Her daughters are surely suggestive of the multiplied expressions of unbelief and heresy that make up the Protestant world of our day. The woman aspires to and for a time occupies a position of world authority sitting astride the beast who is the final figure of political power. Her triumph, however, is short-lived. The very means by which she is carried to her proud position become the instrument of her overthrow. The beast, weary of her hypocrisies and deceptions, and resentful of any rival to his supremacy, turns upon the woman and devours her. Thus the church which was rejected of the Lord in Revelation 3, is now repudiated by the world whose favour and friendship she so wickedly courted.

It should be said of course, that none of the foregoing applies to the church which is the body of Christ. Within the great house of confused Christendom there is to be found "the house of God which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." (I Timothy 3:16) Because of the abounding confusion of our day, it is difficult at times to distinguish this company from the jumble of religious profession by which it is surrounded. "Nevertheless, the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are His, and, Let every one that nameth the Name of Christ, depart from iniquity." (II Timothy 2:19) For this, the true church, which Christ loved and for which He gave Himself, the church upon which His eye rests

(Continued on page 14)

## IS THERE A GOD?

by Dr. J. Allen Blair

Dr. Len G. Broughton in describing his days as a medical student, told of his doubts regarding the supernatural generation of Christ. Extremely confused, he went to a Doctor of Divinity who reasoned with him and left him in greater perplexity than ever. His medical education finished, the young Doctor went to a small town to begin his practice. One Sunday morning a back-woods preacher in a little country church knocked out more skepticism in one half hour than Broughton had gotten in three years. This is the way he did it. He said, "If there is anybody here troubled about the mystery of God becoming man, I want to take you back to the first chapter of Genesis and the first verse.—'In the beginning, God . . .'" The preacher looked at his audience very searchingly. Broughton said later, "I felt like he was looking directly at me." The speaker continued, "Let me ask you this. Do you believe God was in the beginning; that is to say, that before the beginning began God was?" Broughton said to himself, "Yes, I believe that." "Now," said the preacher, "if you believe that God was ahead of the beginning, you believe the only mysterious thing of this universe." "If I believe that," thought Broughton, "God knows I could believe anything else in the world." Broughton had gone to college and traveled through the mysteries of the theories of reproduction and cell formation and had come out to realize that he was just a common fool—that if God was in the beginning, that was the one supreme mystery of all mysteries in this universe of God.

You may be sure that God was in the beginning. The Bible declares on

the first page, the first verse, Genesis 1:1, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." "But," somebody replies, "I don't believe that." How can you deny it? If you say there is no God, then all the wonders around you are accidental. The thousand billion stars in the sky just happened to make themselves. Likewise, they generate their own power to keep them on their steady courses. The earth magnetized itself to keep the oceans from falling off toward the sun. Infants teach themselves to cry if they are hungry or hurt. A small flower invented itself so that we could extract digitalis for sick hearts. The top few inches of our land just happened to have top-soil without which we would have no vegetables to eat, no grass for the animals whose meat is our food. No one put oil just deep enough in the earth to keep until we need it. The wind which carries the delicate seedling to a fertile place was devised by us. The inexhaustible envelope of air, only 50 miles deep, and of exactly the right density to support human life, is just another law of physics. It is?

Let us be reasonable! There has to be mind behind all of this, and thousands and thousands of other forms of creation that exist. Do you think that the bank deposits of coal, zinc, iron, and uranium could be merely accidental? Water expands when it freezes while other substances contract. This makes ice lighter than water and keeps it floating on the surface. Otherwise, lakes would be solid down to the bottom all the year and no fish could survive. Who made this arrangement?

Why does the earth spin at a given speed without ever slowing up so

that we have day and night? Who tilts it so that we get seasons? No one really knows the why and how of the magnetic pulls but there they are. Who put them there? How about the sugar thermostat below the human pancreas? It maintains a level of sugar in the human blood sufficient for energy but without it, all of us would fall into a coma and die. How do you explain this?

The sun stokes a fire just warm enough to sustain us on earth but not hot enough to fry us or cold enough to kill us. Who keeps the fire constant? And what about special healing rays emitted by the sun? Furthermore, what makes a light bulb light? Electricity? Or is it? Who showed it how to travel at lightning speed, makes right angle turns and twists on a piece of wire without flying off? Who invented eyes to see the light?

While thinking of the eyes, what about the rest of the body? Your body is a most interesting machine, so complicated that the chief wonder is that it doesn't give more frequent trouble. It contains about 2,500,000 pores, about 3000 to the square inch. The human skeleton has more than 200 bones. All the blood in your body is pumped through your heart once every minute and your heart beats about 70 times a minute, or 100,800 times a day. The average person can hold about 230 cubic inches of air in the lungs and at each breath from 25 to 30 cubic inches are inhaled and exhaled. Most men breathe about 18 times a minute; women slightly faster. Your body has more than 500 muscles and about an equal number of nerves and blood vessels and your normal temperature is 98.6 degrees Fahrenheit. The average person takes in about 5½ pounds of food and drink a day which is almost a ton in a year.

And then there is the heart, an unbelievable rugged organ, a four chamber, four valve pump which handles 5,000 gallons of blood a day, almost enough to fill a railroad tank car. It supplies a circulatory system whose vessels total 12,000 miles, and in the course of a lifetime, beats two and one half billion times.

The kidneys are among the most miraculous organs in the body. They contain a total of approximately 280 miles of tiny tubules whose function is to filter impurities from the blood. In the course of a day, they filter something like 185 quarts of water from the blood, purify it, and return it to the circulation.

Normally, the adult body contains approximately 24 trillion red cells which carry oxygen to nourish tissues. Laid edge to edge they would stretch 116,000 miles; half way to the moon.

Think about these things. Do not be too quick to shout, "There is no God." Face reality! Study the Bible—you will find it to be accurate in every statement. It begins with this glorious truth that "In the beginning God." This God exists in the trinity—Father, Son and Holy Ghost. All are involved in creation.

But more important than creation is re-creation that comes through God's Son, Jesus Christ. When one believes on Him, he is born again and becomes a new creature in Christ. This experience is absolutely necessary for one to possess eternal life and to go to heaven. Considering what God has done in the universe, realize that the greatest act of all was the sending of His only begotten Son to die on the cross for your sins and mine. Receive Him into your heart and daily let Him live through you! ■

From *Pioneer*, February-March Issue 1971, Good News Publishers, Westchester, Illinois.

# JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES

## APOSTLES OF DENIAL

by *Edmond Charles Gruss*

Presbyterian and Reformed. 324 pages, \$4.50, paper; \$6.50, cloth.

Read this book and you need never again get tied in knots by the Jehovah's Witnesses when they present their claims and teachings. **Apostles of Denial** is precisely what its subtitle indicates, "an examination and exposé of the history, doctrines, and claims of the Jehovah's Witnesses." The author sketches the history of the movement, skillfully portraying the character of its leaders and the changes which they have conveniently made in their doctrine through the years. Mr. Gruss then summarizes and scripturally refutes the distinctive beliefs of Jehovah's Witnesses with other chapters on their hermeneutics, Bible translations, and tools and methods. As an exposé, the book must be regarded as a success and its title justified.

But to fully appreciate this book, one must know something of the author's qualifications and method.

Gruss' knowledge of the cult is firsthand, having been a Jehovah's Witness himself as a teen-ager. His interest in the cult continued after his conversion, and this book is the result of research that stretches from his college and seminary days into his present associate professorship at the Los Angeles Baptist College. Gruss writes on the broad bases of personal experience and investigation, firsthand acquaintance with the writings of Jehovah's Witnesses and thorough acquaintance with the secondary literature.

But a word of warning—this book is not for leisure reading in your hammock. It is a book to study. But the returns will warrant this kind of investment. —Reviewed by Stanley N. Gundry, Theological Department. ....

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## HOW CULTS CONSTITUTE A THREAT TO THE CHURCH

We frequently hear people say, why not let the cults be about their own business while we go about ours? This is an unrealistic position to take because it fails to recognize that cultic activities affect the work of the church. One of the disturbing features of these spurious groups is their capacity in continually gaining new followers. It is a significant fact, and it is important for Christian people to know this, namely, that seldom do the cultists seek to reach the unchurched and unevangelized. This should be the primary objective of the missionary program of every group. Not only do the cultic propagandists seek to gain followers among those who are classified as church people, but they also specialize in gaining the discontented. It is a fact, however, when church people go on unsatisfied they often become the victims of these quacks. The cultists promise these people satisfaction through the freshness of their teachings. Many of the most successful workers among the cults were once identified with well-known Christian denominations. Moreover, the enormous amount of literature produced and distributed by these false groups has a considerable impact upon people who lack the ability of discrimination. These activities of the cults constitute a real threat to the church. —J.E.D.

## THE POSITION OF THE FUNDAMENTALISTS

Historically considered, all the great evangelical churches were firmly planted on the Bible as the infallible standard in matters of faith and practice. In fact, they were organized and established on that basis. Therefore, if they are to remain true to their original purposes and principles they must resist any attempt to undermine the divine authority and destroy the integrity of the Bible. Fundamentalists surely cannot remain placid and indifferent in this crucial period of history. It is a common practice for liberals to discard any portion of the Bible which does not fit into their subjective views. And, indeed this is the very thing they are doing: what suits them in the Bible they accept; what does not suit them they reject. Can evangelical churches remain quiescent when their only book of authority is thus maltreated? Fundamentalists have stood for both offensive and defensive warfare in behalf of what they earnestly believe is the truth.

Fundamentalists have stood firmly and unalterable for the doctrines of the Scriptures. With them the Bible is the infallible rule of faith and practice, and this is asserted in all their confessional declarations. The following statement, or one similar to it, is found expressed by every fundamentalist group: "We believe in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament as verbally inspired of God, and inerrant in the original writings, and that they are of supreme authority in faith and life."

Having taken a firm and stalwart position on the Bible, fundamentalists logically accept without compromise the great doctrines of the Bible. They could not consistently do otherwise. Hence they believe in the Virgin Birth, the Deity of Christ, His Vicarious Atonement, His Bodily Resurrection and the Lord's Return. It must be said, however, that the fundamentalists do not mean to imply that the specific doctrines now mentioned are the only vital doctrines. There are other doctrines of the Scriptures just as clearly taught and emphasized. But since the major doctrines mentioned have been the special targets for attack by the liberals, they must be given special attention. To illustrate, if the doctrine of the Trinity had been made a special object of attack, it also would come to the fore in this controversy. All the Christian denominations, founded upon "the impregnable rock of the Holy Scriptures," will go to pieces on the shoals if they permit their beliefs to be destroyed.

The fundamentalists also hold it to be a Christian duty to defend the faith, and not sit idly by and let the enemies beset and capture the citadel of truth. They are not friendly to the lackadaisical saying, "You need not defend the truth; the truth will take care of itself!" The Scriptures support the fundamentalists in taking this strong position of defense of the truth of God. Peter writes, "But sanctify the Lord in your hearts; and be ready to give an answer to every man

that asketh of you a reason for the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (I Pet. 3:15). Jude is equally concerned for the defense of the truth. "Beloved, when I gave diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you and exhort you that ye should contend earnestly for the faith once for all delivered unto the saints" (Jude v. 3). This position is altogether proper to take as Christ defended Himself against the misrepresentations of His enemies on numerous occasion. The apostle Paul also made a classical defense of himself and his doctrine before Agrippa, Felix and Festus; he also proved himself a master apologist on Mars Hill in Athens before the philosophers of that cultured city. Fundamentalists recognize there is a large apologetic element in the Bible, and they believe that Christians ought not to be as ease in Zion when Biblical truths are attacked and imperiled. The modernistic view and treatment of the Bibel is a sapping process. Fundamentalists recognize that this is foundationally undermining; that, if carried to its logical conclusion, it would cut the heart out of Christianity. When men begin to hack away some portions of the foundation of a building, they immediately mar its symmetry, and afford encouragement for any one who desires to remove other parts, and thus the structure will soon be undermined, and will topple to the ground. The whole building of doctrinal truth must be preserved intact.

Sometimes fundamentalists are being misrepresented as full of in-

tolerance and bigotry. This is an overstatement and it is completely false and ought to be rejected outright. As a rule fundamentalists use less invective and vituperation than the liberals. It must be conceded that on both sides epithets are freely used. On the whole, it is clear that the strong language used by the Bible believing groups is due to their intense earnestness and not to a spirit of malice. No earnest Christian, who is concerned for the integrity of the historic faith, can afford to be apathetic toward what is going on in the churches today. It is only natural that fundamentalists are ready to don their fighting armour and pick up their weapons when the enemies attack the great truths of the Scriptures.

From the writings of the late Dr. Leander S. Keyser with certain adaptations.

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#### CONFUSION—from page 9

in recognition and acknowledgement, He has prepared a glorious destiny. "I will come again," He says, "and receive you unto Myself, that where I am there ye may be also." (John 14:3)

Liberal Protestantism knows nothing of the true hope of the church. Occupied as it is with schemes of worldly grandeur, it charges with folly those who wait for God's Son from heaven. As the coming of the Lord draws near, surely one of the distinguishing marks of those who are truly His will be the love of His appearing (cf. II Timothy 4:8) expressed in the prayer, "Even so come, Lord Jesus." (Rev. 22:20)

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**PERTINENT QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

Prof. John E. Dahlin

**QUESTION . . .** What is one of the major spiritual dangers confronting Christian people during our time?

**ANSWER . . .** Without a doubt the increasing pressure towards compromise and accommodation is Satan's master-stroke for the end-time. Everywhere Christian people are being tempted to copy worldly trends and patterns in order to maintain popularity. Many follow this road with the erroneous concept that by making such adjustments they will be able to win their fellowmen to Christ. Nothing could be more fallacious than to compromise Christian positions in order to gain spiritual influence with men. Rom. 12:1 and II Cor. 6:14, 17 set forth the Scriptural standards in all such matters, and these exhortations need to be followed in an age when separation is so little understood and practised.

**QUESTION . . .** Are the present popular slogans for social action and involvement effective means in strengthening the Church for its assigned task in the world?

**ANSWER . . .** No. The more the Church gets involved in seeking to change the world order, the less time it will have for witnessing and direct Gospel work. For example, The Fourth Assembly of the World Council of Churches spent most of the time during the sessions at Uppsala, Sweden in seeking a solution to the social and economic ills of mankind. Various panaceas were recommended, and the achievement of these were major goals of that ecumenical gathering. Never in Church History has a great conclave manifested so little effectiveness in its Gospel responsibility. Social and economic needs, must never the given priority. They are secondary to witnessing and the evangelization of the lost.