

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

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RELIGIOUS TOLERATION

Prof. John E. Dahlin, Editor

Any careful observer of the ongoing religious life in America will discover the expanding phenomena of toleration. It has permeated nearly all of the major denominations as well as the institutions of the church. It should be pointed out also when toleration of unbiblical positions is followed as a policy, it will not be long before one is able to witness the later consequences of such actions. The toleration of a certain situation will lead subsequently to the adoption of such a principle. To illustrate: Most of the well-known institutions of the church were once established by Bible-believing people. And, as we look back upon the historical developments, we find that during a few generations, or sometimes within a few decades, many of the colleges and seminaries have become non-spiritual, and often they are as secular as the institutions of the state. How may this be explained? Well, the fact of the matter is that the toleration of lower standards usually, little by little, has changed the charted course of the church with its institutions. All of this is understandable in the light of the great expansion of the ecumenical movement, with its continuous merger of numerous religious bodies throughout the world. It is en-

tirely clear that no such massive consolidation of religious organizations could be achieved except through compromises on important positions, as well as the toleration of situations which are contradictory to Biblical Christianity. The toleration of many undesirable conditions has led to the acceptance of certain prevailing situations, as, e.g., membership in Secret Orders, the admittance of divorcees to church membership, and those who advocate abortion on demand. And, further, it includes those who advocate social drinking and worldly living. In addition, the popular new-fangled music in the churches is quite generally being accepted. Some go farther in the way of toleration by permitting homo-sexuals in the church. Such accommodations are altogether contrary to the Scriptures. Because these unfortunate developments have not come as a bolt from the clear sky, people fail to see the consequences of tolerating such developments. In other words, these conditions come gradually, hence many people fail to take cognizance of this type of spiritual apostasy.

Now, let me illustrate this matter with some concrete observations. The large University from which I received my under-gradu-

ate degree, as well as my advanced degree, began as a church oriented institution of learning with a definite spiritual emphasis. This was over a century ago. While its present cultural and academic excellence cannot be questioned, yet the fact remains that this well known institution of learning is similar in every respect, and equally secular and materialistic in the outlook of life, as the institutions chartered by the state. I remember only one teacher of mine, among over 40 during the 8 years spent at that institution, who had a definite spiritual interest. This is not an isolated situation, but I mention it first because of my great familiarity with that University. In the metropolitan area of the Twin-Cities, and the other outlying regions, many of the higher educational institutions, established by Christian denominations, are identical with the state University in their educational philosophy and general policy. How do we account for such a distressing development within religious denominations and its educational institutions? There is one simple answer, namely, the toleration of unbiblical standards, and the failure in maintaining the proper spiritual values. The clearest example, perhaps, may be found from the development within the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod during recent years. The administrations in recent decades, directing their largest theological institution at St. Louis, tolerated teachers who deviated from the Scriptures. During the past year, the present leadership of the Synod decided to eliminate false teachings from the seminary. This brought about a sudden cleavage, with the majority of the teachers

and students establishing a new seminary in exile under the leadership of the recently deposed President of the regular seminary. The toleration of liberalism brought about this catastrophic situation within the largest Lutheran body in America.

HOW GOD JUDGES RELIGIOUS TOLERATION

Rather than providing the readers with additional illustrations, it is preferable, I feel, that I bring an exposition on the most classical example in the Scriptures of God's disapproval of religious toleration when it involves matters of fundamental importance. In I Sam. chapter 3, verse 13, we have the major point in a story which unveils the record of a national personality who tolerated the desecration of holy matters. While very young, Samuel was placed within the jurisdiction of Eli, the high priest, for training in the services of the tabernacle. In this solemn record, we find God's judgment fell upon one of the greatest religious leaders of his time. It is shocking to hear the verdict of God with regard to this man. First of all, Eli was kind and amiable, and for several decades it had been his task to hear God's message and to be God's spokesmen to men. Perhaps there was not a person in the land that could point out anything wrong that the priest had done during his long service to the nation which extended into a period of 40 years. In addition, Eli loved the youth. This must be regarded as doubly significant as he was growing old. There was an intimacy between Eli and Samuel. It is pleasant to see springtime and winter in fel-

lowship. In other words, as we behold Eli and Samuel we see sunrise and sunset walking arm in arm. Moreover, Eli had a real spiritual understanding. He instructed the child Samuel how to respond to the voice of God. Indeed, Samuel was fortunate in having this kind of counsellor at a time of his immaturity. Perhaps the very best quality of the priest was his submissiveness to God's will and purpose. When God's verdict was given with regard to Eli, he did not say, Lord I do not deserve this harsh treatment. Rather, we find him saying, "It is the Lord, let Him do as it seemeth good to Him." Where do we find a greater submissiveness to God? All of these virtues, which I have enumerated, must be balanced with the other side of the ledger. Judgment came to this white-haired leader not because he was dishonest, untruthful or hypocritical. He stands charged with no personal wrong-doing; rather he was guilty of a serious omission, that is, he failed to take a course of action when such action was urgent. The record points out that he failed to discipline his sons when they were disgracing their high spiritual office. It is stated that Eli knew about their actions, but he restrained them not. In other words, he stood guilty before God of toleration, especially when God's honor was concerned. Yes, Eli failed to exercise the proper authority in the spiritual household where he was the leading person. His failure seems so modern, as discipline today is generally lacking in the home, the church, and in the educational institutions. It seems our age lacks the courage to uphold the old tested Biblical standards. It is costly

to the flesh to invoke discipline as it may well harm the popularity of an individual.

Dr. Jacob Preus, President of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, has been villified as few men have experienced in our time, simply because he has sought to reverse a trend of religious toleration within his own denomination's seminary. It would have been easier for him to have held his peace, or going along with the majority of the seminary, as it were, and not rock the boat, figuratively speaking. This O.T. story needs to be read and re-read these days when we see generally a spineless leadership holding high office in the various denominations. Solomon, the incomparable king, with all his wisdom, was guilty of the same weakness as Eli. He knew that his many foreign wives were worshipping idols, but he restrained them not. In fact, he tolerated a situation which was abominable before God. As head of the royal household he failed to exercise authority and the necessary discipline at the time when idolatry was practiced under his eyes.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF RELIGIOUS TOLERATION

First of all, it destroyed the influence of Eli, the priest. His personal influence was lost. The fact is no one has an ounce of personal influence to squander. According to Hebrews, we as Christians are living Epistles. We are viewed and scrutinized by all men. We are described by our Lord as the salt of the earth. We must assert ourselves as pillars of righteousness. This does not imply that we may be tactless, or that we need-

lessly offend people. It is imperative, however, to say in critical situations, "Thus saith the Lord." We need to give our fellowmen, who are misguided, the unvarnished facts regarding each situation demanding our attention and response.

Secondly, toleration destroys the effectiveness of the Christian minister. Think of it, Eli after nearly half a century of leadership saw his effectiveness collapse like a falling wall! Indeed, he could have acted in time. He could have restrained his sons who were guilty of evil activity, but he failed to do so when it was urgent for him to act decisively. It is distressing to read the account of this man, both priest and judge for so long a time, yet failing to assert his God-given responsibility in a challenging hour. Those godless sons of Eli knew their father was an easy mark. And that knowledge made their choice of the downward way an easier choice.

Thirdly, toleration allows worldly practices to enter the very life of the church. Often I have heard it said, you cannot practice discipline anymore. God has not exempted his followers from continuing a right course because the pressure is severe. The low standards generally prevailing in churches and institutions in our time have come about through policies of softness and lack of decisiveness. Eli allowed his sons to minister before the altar even though he knew they were utterly corrupt. Never in history has the need been greater than now for the church to speak out on vital issues.

Finally, toleration wrecks the home. When Jacob, the patriarch, became tolerant with respect to

spiritual deviation within the family, the institution of the home was going asunder. It became necessary for God to command Jacob to return to Bethel where he earlier has made a vow and committed himself to God. By following this command, Jacob was once more enabled to exercise leadership and power. In fact, he received a new name and gained power with God and power with men. Previously when he tolerated worldliness in his home; the family was ready to break up. One of the conditions that leads to a national catastrophe in America is the broad spirit of toleration of improper conduct by members within the family.

MODERN EXPLANATION OF TOLERATION

First of all, fundamentalists have become the objects of whipping and scorn by the liberals for lacking in compassion and a spirit of tolerance. Those who take a decisive stand on Biblical authority are called unbrotherly and bigoted. Abuse is heaped upon separatists for their inflexible positions. In my wide ministry, stretching over 45 years, I have found the liberals are much more narrow and ruthless than those designated as fundamentalists. I wish to take the opportunity to throw back this accusation into their camp, like our soldiers did at the front, who picked up the hand grenades and quickly hurled them back to the place from which they were first thrown out. Numerous writings from liberals and naive evangelicals, tend to depict the former as brotherly and compassionate. And, fundamentalists are exhorted to copy and apply

this spirit in their circles. This may be good propaganda to mislead people who are incapable of proper discrimination. The liberals of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod have demonstrated their lack of fair play in seeking to circumvent the decision of their national convention a year ago. When liberals achieve a majority status, there will be no room for those who seek to maintain the Biblical standards. Some liberals like to point to Christ as being an example of extraordinary tolerance. Yes, writers often depict Him as being effeminate and soft. Some artists attempt to portray him as having long, delicate and tapering fingers. Indeed our Lord was compassionate towards sinners and all those who were laboring under the burden of guilt. But when he dealt with the religious leaders and their pride, he became vehement. For example, when Jesus went into a synagogue one day, there were present some heartless religionists who sought to prevent a man with a withered hand from receiving a blessing. Christ displayed a holy wrath. It was an anger which stamped itself deep on the memory of His disciples. John wrote about it about 50 years later, and it seemed as fresh to the apostle as if it had taken place the day before.

On another occasion when Christ went into the temple He found it was being desecrated. Heartlessly certain religious leaders were practicing their sordid trade. They were commercializing a situation right within the temple. Christ displayed indignation concerning the fraud carried on by the money-changers. He didn't say, well boys, you must not do this, that is, overcharging

the people when they exchange their money for the currency required. Rather, our Lord seized a scourge of small cords, and you can almost hear the lash as it was applied to the anatomy of those guilty of desecration of the temple. In fact, he overturned the tables of the money changers and the coins were rolling all over the place. In driving out those who were guilty of this infamy, He said, "My house shall be called a house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves." Christ never tolerated wrong practices even though some of these had been made acceptable by tradition. The lesson for us is, that we are not to tolerate wrong, but rather seek to overcome it. We simply cannot hinder the expansion of evil activity by politely letting it alone. We are here as aggressive men and women. We read, "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Eph. 6:10-12).

Religious toleration will impoverish the church more and more. It will help to discredit the Christians before the world. Toleration is a manifestation of a serious apostasy within the sphere of Christendom. While we cannot change the present world order, or reverse the trends of our day, we can register our position and stand up for righteousness and "holding forth the Word of life" to a confused generation which believes toleration is preferable to

THE BIBLE AND ABORTION

*Pastor John E. Ashbrook,
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In July of 1970 the State of New York legalized abortions with a bill which states that an abortion may be performed on any woman who requests that her baby be taken from her up to six months of pregnancy. During 1971, the first full year of operation under this liberalized law, the State Health Department reported that 262,807 abortions were performed. Do you realize what a fantastic total that is? If those babies were living, they would make a city about the size of Dayton, Ohio, Tampa, Florida or Austin, Texas. The total death rate from the war in Southeast Asia is about 50,000. It is a paradox of liberalism that most of its followers lament the high death toll of the war in Viet Nam, but support abortion which claims over five times as many lives in a single state.

WHAT ARE THE CHURCHES SAYING ABOUT LEGALIZED ABORTION?

As a Pastor I would like to ask and answer three questions about legalized abortion. First of all, What are the churches saying about legalized abortion? The thinking person who will take time to read in this area will be appalled at the frightful progress of apostasy.

In 1970 the General Conference of the United Methodist Church

principles. We have used one of the outstanding examples of the Scripture in refuting religious toleration as it is being practiced generally in our time.

urged: ". . . that states remove the regulation of abortion from the criminal code, placing it instead under regulations relating to other procedures of standard medical practice." In other words, these clergymen recommend that abortions be considered like tonsilectomies and appendectomies.

About the same time the United Presbyterian General Assembly accepted for study a report on sex which recommended removing abortion from legal answerability and making it solely a matter of personal decision between the mother, her physician and her pastor or counsellor.

On April 16, 1970 our local paper carried a report which said: "Representatives of more than 150 Church of Christ churches in the Dayton, Cincinnati and Springfield areas voted over the weekend to support the repeal of Ohio's abortion laws . . . The delegates to the meeting approved a resolution urging Ohio lawmakers to repeal all laws regarding abortion, thus leaving the decision to a woman, her conscience and her physician."

Americans are almost past the point of shock. However, anyone with any moral fibre left ought to turn pale at reading such quotations. Remember, they come not from the convention of the Communist Party, but from the pulpits of America.

When preachers speak that way, public opinion changes. A Gallup Poll in 1967 reported that 21% of Americans approved abortion on maternal preference. Two years later, in 1969, that figure had

risen alarmingly to 40%. The figure at this moment would be worse and much of the onus must be put on the unbelieving opinion-molders in the pulpit. It is amazing to realize what the churches are saying about legalized abortion.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT LEGALIZED ABORTION?

Are modernistic ministers justified in what they say? That brings us to a second question. What does the Bible say about legalized abortion?

It may surprise you to learn that the word, "abortion," or even the idea of it, is not in the Bible. The possibility of this type of human conduct is not even considered. However, the sixth commandment, Exodus 20:13, surely bears on the subject. It states, "Thou shalt not kill (murder)."

Right here the argument rages over when life begins. There are only three possibilities. (1) Life begins at the moment of birth. (2) Life begins at the time the baby could live outside of its mother's body (about five months). (3) Life begins at the moment of conception.

The Methodist Board of Social Concerns, in defending its position, espouses possibility (1) by saying, ". . . the fetus is not a person, but rather tissue with the potentiality, in most cases, for becoming a person." Killing potentialities sounds very vague and harmless; and, the purpose of the statement is to make it sound so.

Some time ago I talked to one of our ushers who was responsible for counting the number of people in our services. He asked, "Do you want the babies counted?" I returned the question by saying,

"When do you think we ought to count them?" After a pause, he suggested, "Perhaps we should count them only when they are old enough to get something out of the service." I said, "When is that?" My friend knitted his brow and said, "That is pretty hard to determine, isn't it? I guess we had better count them all from the beginning."

When should we consider the fetus to be a human life? The Bible bears out a point similar to the previous illustration. We had better count them human life from the beginning. That is scientific as well as moral. We know that the fetus receives its total genetic potential of RNA and DNA molecules at conception. The potential of what that person is to be is determined then. In the eye of God that is certainly the beginning moment of life.

Stop to think how the Bible speaks of individuals as persons before birth—while still in the womb. God said to Jeremiah:

"Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations."

Jeremiah 1:5

Do you get the point? God considered Jeremiah a person and ordained him a prophet while he was still what we would medically call a fetus. Is the fetus a person? You just read the answer from the Bible. The courts are presently struggling with that question. After months of deliberation they will probably get the wrong answer. However, if they were only willing to let the word of the Creator govern in human affairs the

court case would be ended right now. It is a tragedy that our courts will swear on the Bible, but never read it.

Since the fetus is a person before God, the sixth commandment applies and abortion is clearly murder. That is what the Bible says about legalized abortion.

WHAT ARE THE MAIN REASONS FOR DESIRING LEGALIZED ABORTION?

A third question affects this discussion. What are the main reasons for desiring legalized abortion? The proponents of legalized abortion have made long speeches before our law-makers about the necessity for legalizing abortion. They can wring tears from General Grant's statue by talking about cases where the life of the mother is endangered, cases of rape and cases where the child would be deformed by diseases like German measles. Tender hearts swallow that line without thought of scientific facts.

Listen to what some qualified physicians say. Dr. Joseph P. Donnelly, former medical Director of the Margaret Hague Hospital in New Jersey says, "Abortion is never necessary to save the life of the mother." For a physician, a group that is notably cautious about scientific pronouncements, that is a rather positive statement.

Dr. Bernard J. Pisani, Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology at New York University School of Medicine states, "Medical reasons for provoking abortion are just about non-existent. In fact, no basis on pure medical grounds ever really stands up."

Others have argued for psychiatric necessity. Dr. John Pheland, Instructor in Psychiatry, Univer-

sity of Miami School of Medicine, says, "I share the opinion of many of my colleagues that there are no psychiatric indications for abortion. We hear that abortion is necessary to protect the health of the mother or that, unless an abortion is performed, a patient will commit suicide. This approach is malicious and does not stand up under statistical and clinical scrutiny." That is quite clear, isn't it?

We hear a lot about deformities from German measles. Did you know that only one in ten babies born to mothers who had German measles during pregnancy are born with any defects? Are you willing to take nine healthy lives in the effort to prevent one deformed baby?

To hear the abortionists sing their siren song you would believe that those 262,807 babies in New York State died for good medical reasons. The plain truth of the matter is that not 1% of the abortions performed in those cases were done for medical reasons.

If those abortions were not performed for medical reasons, what were the reasons? There are really only two main reasons for legalized abortions. First, men and women wish to escape the responsibility of children. A couple may be fancy free, enjoying being footloose and living high on the income of two good jobs. All of a sudden the wife is expecting. Being footloose will have to end. The groceries and the furniture will have to be bought with a single salary. The answer? Abortion.

Are you faced with such a problem? What should you do about it? Why not sit down and read a few verses to see how the Bible considers children? Take Genesis 33: 5. Esau asked Jacob, "Who are

those with thee?" Jacob replied, "The children which God hath graciously given thy servant." Or, turn to Psalm 127:3. "Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is his reward." The person considering having an abortion for convenience sake had better stop to ask how the giver of life views that coming child.

Suppose that we were to give that young couple with the unwanted child, or that older couple with the late bloomer, a two year waiting period to rear that little life and then were to give them the option of doing away with it? Would they take the step so lightly? Yet, before God, the only difference in that life is the age of it.

Men and women wish to escape the responsibility of children. God says that we ought to view that child as a wonderful gift from Him, even if it may inconvenience our own selfish schedule.

There is a second reason for desiring legalized abortion. Men and women wish to escape the consequences of sin. There are no figures available to prove my point but, my readers know as well as I do that the major aim of those 262,807 abortions was to hide sin. Those were the infants of unwed mothers. Those were the infants fathered by other women's husbands. They were the consequences of office romances, parked cars and lust-filled weekends. With the fear of being caught in their vices, women told their partners in sin, "I'm expecting!" The answer? We'll hide it from your parents, your husband, my wife, with an abortion.

That conduct will escape the human consequences of being caught in sin and shamed by men. How-

ever, God says, "Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge." You cannot escape the divine consequences of sin with an abortion. The rest of your life will be plagued by a conscience stained by fornication and infanticide. When that agony is past, God must still be faced.

If any Christian woman sins in this regard, there is only one right thing to do. Tell the truth—to God, husband, parents and Pastor. It will not be pleasant to face the music. The consequences of sin are never easy. However, telling the truth will make possible the Scriptural handling of your case so that the Lord's people can help you. The man who is guilty is not as easily trapped by the situation; but, be assured of this, God knows. Nothing will ever be right in his life until he also tells the truth.

There is a better course of action than the one in the previous paragraph. I would commend it to every young person. Keep yourself clean and pure. Learn to enjoy yourself with the other sex while keeping your hands off your partner. Keep yourself clean from petting and illicit sex. There is only one place where the sexual relationship between man and woman can be perfect. "Marriage is honorable and the bed undefiled . . ." (Hebrews 13:4). It is far more blessed to have your relationship considered under that part of the verse than it is to follow the flesh and come under the curse of the final clause. ". . . but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge."

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CONTRASTING CHRISTIAN CHARACTER

The unique strength, beauty and usefulness of the believer's life is found in its *contrast* to the world, never in its conformity (Romans 12:1-2). Because of our old natures, however, we must fight constantly the urge to conform — or at least be enough like the world so that it isn't immediately apparent that we are one of Jesus' people.

Now there is no value in contrast for the sake of contrast alone. The wild-eyed, screaming street corner preacher wrapped in a bed sheet with beard and sandals is a contrast to the others passing by, but it is a surface contrast only. The true believer is different by the very nature of his relationship to and standing with God. The believer is alive, the world is dead. The believer walks in the light, the world is in darkness. The believer has heavenly hope, citizenship and inheritance. The worldling has only citizenship here and all his life is rooted in an earthly existence.

When will we learn that we attract men to Christ and His

Church by being different from the world not by being like the world? Very often the man on the street doesn't pay much attention to us because he sees in us only a dull reflection of himself. In our desperate effort to be "relevant" we have lost our distinctive character and power. Someone says ecology, women's lib, the new morality, social revolution and anti-war demonstrations are the "in thing", so we appoint a committee and begin feverishly to re-think our position in these areas.

I'm for flexibility and common sense and changing methods when necessary. And I'm for charm and grace and winsomeness in witnessing, but let's dare to be the different people God has called us to be. Let us remember that every true saint of God in history has stood out in stark contrast to the sick and sinful society into which he was sent to minister. He was never there to catch the spirit of his time but rather to correct it!

Rev. Wendell K. Grout, pastor
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THE CHALLENGE IN THESE TIMES

In these days of confusion God's people cannot remain smug and indifferent to the trends prevalent which reveal a general apostasy. In contrast, historically considered, all the Christian denominations, at the time of their organization, were firmly planted on the Bible as the infallible standard in the matter of faith and practice. Truly, they were organized and established on that basis. Each body of Christians did clearly and positively affirm its allegiance to the Scriptures as the true and authoritative Word of God. If God's people are to remain true to their original principles, they must resist any attempt to undermine the divine authority and the integrity of the Word of God. When leaders of religious organizations question the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures, they strike at the very foundation of Christianity. To illustrate: if one person can reject the accounts of the Virgin Birth of Christ given in Matthew and Luke, why cannot some one else discard other portions of the New Testament, which does not fit into his subjective views? And, indeed, that is the very thing that the liberals are doing: what suits them in the Bible they accept; what does not suit them they reject. How can Christians remain neutral when their only book of authority is thus maltreated?

Firm belief in the Biblical teaching furnishes the very rea-

son for being a Christian. It is difficult to understand how any earnest evangelical person can sit by and be indifferent to the paramount issues at stake. Would he not defend himself if he were attacked? Would he not defend his loved ones? Then why should he not defend Christ and the Bible when they are belittled or assailed? Are they not precious to him?

It is difficult to understand the status of the mind that would or could not raise his voice in the affirmative. The Psalmist says, "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do" (Ps. 11:3). The challenge should be accepted without any reservation. With Jude each Christian should take the firm position stated "It was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints" (Jude v. 3). If Bible-believing Christians cannot all be engaged directly in the contest, they can at least support those who are battling in the defense of the truth. No one who is concerned for the defense of the Word of God can afford to be apathetic toward the ongoing conflict. As long as the opponents, that is, the liberals—keep up their activity of discrediting those who accept the complete authority of the Scriptures, it seems proper for the Bible-believing element to continue its militant position.

From the writings of
Dr. Leander S. Keyser

BOOK REVIEW

ARMSTRONGISM, The World-Wide Church of God, by Dr. Robert L. Sumner. An in-depth study of a false religion, June 1974, 425 pp., cloth \$5.95. Reviewed by Rev. E. Loren Pugsley of Religion Analysis Service. Order the book from our office.

Over a period of years I have been asked often if I believed that religious cults and isms were guilty of deliberately deceiving people. Some time ago I read a book written by a man who had been a member of a well-known religious group for some fifty years. After reading this book, I was fully convinced that this particular group does deliberately deceive people. It so happens that this group had a very strong influence on Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong in the early days of his religious experience.

After studying the Armstrong position, including Dr. Sumner's carefully documented book, I am likewise convinced that the so-called World Wide Church Of God is guilty of deliberate deception. Mr. Sumner's method of exposing the heretical teaching of the Church (W W C O G—called the Church from here on.) was to carefully and painstakingly read thousands of pages from their literature, then comparing them with the plain teaching of the Word of God. It is simply a case of *Thus saith the Church VS Thus saith the Lord*. It is especially noticeable that the Church errs in the areas of Bibliology, Theology and Soteriology. However, many of the other doctrines of the Word of God are twisted, denied, and made to mean what the Church wants them to mean.

In addition to their perversions of Scripture, probably one of the most tragic practices of the Church has to do with marital relationships. In the case of either a husband or a wife who is in the Church, while the spouse remains an unbeliever, the member is taught to desert the non-member. Letters to Dr. Sumner from many former church members tell heart-breaking stories where this has happened. Three tithes, plus numerous offerings, are required of the church members. Written reports of wives and children who have had to go without either food or clothing, or both, have been sent to Dr. Sumner. This, in view of the fact that the Armstrong leaders are living in comparative luxury in many cases.

The book is a large one. It is not pleasant reading. But the type is large and clear, making it easy to read. The exposé is of great value to all born-again people, whether they are involved in any way with Armstrongism, or whether they have relatives or friends who are involved, or whether they want to know the truth, either for themselves or to be of help to others. The Lord said: "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free."

This refers to the Truth of God's Word. But knowing that Truth, plus knowing the truth about Armstrongism as it is presented in Dr. Sumner's good book, has obviously brought freedom and salvation to many. I predict the Lord will use it for this purpose to help many who are still enslaved.

CHRIST WAS NOT A REFORMER

Certain writers of late have come forth advocating the idea that Christ was a revolutionary and a leading reformer. This concept does not come from liberals exclusively as certain new-evangelicals also are making the same assertion. These ideas regarding Christ may be popular, but there is no support for them in the New Testament. Our Lord lived under one of the most corrupt governments of ancient times. Despite this fact, Jesus never launched some reform movement endeavoring to change the Roman Empire. He said to those who asked Him about paying taxes to Caesar, "Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's" (Matt. 22:21). At no time during His ministry did our Lord start a movement of reform on earth, and he plainly showed that He was not concerned with reformation without regeneration. He came to die—to give His life as a ransom that men might have eternal life. It is stated that He was "wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed" Isa. 53:5). In the Lord's high priestly prayer, He referred to His own in these words: "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world" (John 17:16). He did not initiate methods to improve the conditions of natural men on earth. The most specific reference regarding the purpose of our Lord coming to the earth is contained in the statement: "For the Son of Man is come to seek

and to save that which is lost" (Luke 19:10). When the church of Jesus Christ commences to give over its major effort in seeking to change the present world order, and adopt social action as its primary goal, then it is untrue to her trust. Paul understood this very well, and we might carefully listen to his words, "Woe is me, if I preach not the Gospel" (I Cor. 9:16). As the most dedicated minister of Christ in the first century, we never find him advocating revolution, or seeking to change the political, economic, and social order of that day. He considered such a program as an ineffective way in advancing the cause of Christ. This is fully implied in the words "I therefore, so run, not as uncertainly, so fight I, not as one that beateth the air" (I Cor. 9:26). When reform is given too much time and attention, it generally becomes a substitute for the Gospel. Of course Christians are responsible to cast their ballot and stand up for principles of righteousness, but this is not the same as a direct involvement with the purpose of changing the present world order. We read, "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds . . ." (II Cor. 10:4). To say that Christ was a revolutionary and a reformer is to blunder in Bible exegesis, and read into the Scriptures certain popular concepts which lack support in the Word of God. Believers should not be led astray by these modern voices who seek to associate directly social action with the proclamation of the Gospel. It is much

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better to do as Paul declared, belong to Christ's Great Commission which provides the true blueprint for this age. J.E.D.

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PERTINENT QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

John E. Dahlin, Editor

QUESTION . . . In what areas is toleration most detrimental to Bible-believing Christians?

ANSWER . . . Most consecrated Christians will not be found tolerating well-defined evil activities. The danger, however, is that they become involved and participate in activities of non-separatists within an ecumenical arrangement not unlike that which is practiced by the National and World Council of Churches. When such an association is entered into, it becomes necessary to tolerate leaders and groups who do not stand fully on a Biblical position. Such co-operation leads to confusion and it weakens those who previously have maintained a policy of separation.

QUESTION . . . Should Social Action be linked directly with the proclamation of the Gospel of Christ?

ANSWER . . . Recently this course has been advocated by many leaders and groups who consider themselves as evangelicals. The large gathering at Lausanne in July seemed to take this position. It is clear, however, that the Gospel of Christ is the only remedy for a sinful world, and it is independent of social panaceas. The history of Christianity does demonstrate that needed social changes have come as a result of evangelism. The last Great Commission of Christ does not include Social Action as a part of the witnessing program for this age.