

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

*The*  
***DISCERNER***

AN  
INTERDENOMINATIONAL  
HERESY-EXPOSING  
QUARTERLY

**Vol. IX**

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**January-March, 1977**

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Published Quarterly  
Price \$1.25 for 4 issues; \$3.50 for 12 issues;  
35 cents a copy; for foreign  
subscription add 6 cents per issue.  
Copyright 1977 by Religion Analysis Service, Inc.  
2708 E. Lake St., Suite 231  
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55406  
Printed in the United States

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## WHERE CULTS DIFFER WITH TRUE BELIEVERS

*Prof. John E. Dahlin, Editor*

During my twenty years as director of Religion Analysis Service, I have had an adequate opportunity of evaluating cultic teachings in the light of Biblical truth. It is a disappointment, however, whenever one hears certain people say that the cults may have the same goals as those of genuine believers, and that they differ mainly on certain details regarding the Scriptures. Any person who expresses himself in that manner is either ignorant or naive with regard to the groups which have embraced false teachings. It is my purpose in this article to make it altogether clear that the cults have parted company with Bible-believing Christians on matters of primary importance. Over the years it has become necessary for me to spell out that difference, not only in writings, but also in personal conversation with people who are confused in this matter. There is no desire on my part at nit-picking, no not at all; rather it is an attempt to enlighten people who lack the proper information regarding cultic teachings. We shall list a few of these distinctive areas:

### THE RATIONALIZATION OF THE WORD OF GOD

Various cultic groups obviously do not concede that they are guilty

of rationalization of the Scriptures, but that they are doing so is a true statement nevertheless. It has been clearly established that cultists do not allow the Scriptures to stand as completely authoritative in all matters pertaining to faith and doctrine. As an illustration it might be well to point out that practically all cultic groups rationalize or explain away the Scriptural teaching of eternal punishment for the ungodly. This area of the Bible is not being accepted. On the other hand, the cultists maneuver around those passages in a manner that is nothing less than arrogant. This major Biblical doctrine is rejected through the procedure of rationalization of the Scriptures. Likewise, the solid doctrine of Christ's atonement on the cross is explained in a way that is completely contradictory to the Word of God. In addition, the doctrine of personal salvation through faith in Jesus Christ is not being faced honestly by the cultists. Works and other prescribed conditions are being substituted or given the priority. We might continue our study of the rationalization of Scriptural truth along the whole front by the spurious groups, but the above illustrations will indicate clearly that there is a major difference between Bible-believing Christians and the

cultists. These false groups do not honestly and unequivocally accept the Scriptures as being fully authoritative in all matters pertaining to doctrine and faith.

#### THE ACCEPTANCE OF ONGOING REVELATION

One of the most clearly recognized positions of the various cultists is their belief in ongoing revelation. On the other hand, Christianity in its long history has uniformly regarded the sixty-six books of the Bible as constituting the complete written revelation of God. Occasionally there have been a few variations among certain scholars whether or not a few isolated passages should be incorporated in the Biblical text since they do not appear in all the ancient manuscripts. But these *few verses* change no doctrine, and represent only an infinitesimal portion of the Bible. On the whole, the early manuscripts stand in a marvelous agreement regarding the Scriptures. We have therefore the same Bible (in our language) as the believers had in the first centuries in the Hebrew and Greek languages.

I believe that the statement in the Book of Revelation about adding or deleting words from the Book, applies not only to the last book of the Bible, but it also covers all of the Scriptures. We read, "If any man shall *add* unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book. And, if any man shall *take away* from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book" (Rev. 22:18-19). When we couple this statement with Paul's pronouncement regarding the Scriptures, then we hold a

totally reliable position with regard to the sixty-six canonical books which constitute the written revelation of God. Notice Paul says, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (II Tim. 3:16-17). Here, then, is stated our only infallible authority, that is, the Holy Scriptures.

It is extremely arrogant for leaders of the various cults to come forth with claims of special revelation. This is precisely what the Mormon Church does. The founder, Joseph Smith, is called the prophet. This, the man in charge of the Mormon Shrine at Carthage, Illinois, tells all visitors who come to the place where Joseph Smith was assassinated by the mob which stormed the jailhouse at that place. The followers of Joseph Smith are taught that the Book of Mormon was miraculously given to their founder. The old story about the discovery of the Gold Plates is quite shop worn to most of us who know clearly its lack of authenticity, but Mormons are led to believe it is the truth. As an example of their belief in ongoing revelation, the present head of the Mormon Church states with reference to the lack of qualification of Negroes for the priesthood, that the Church must wait for a special revelation on that matter, that is, if there is to be a changed status of the Negroes in this regard. (They have been denied the position of priesthood up to the present). All of us ought to be aware of the fact that the Book of Mormon is substituted by the cult for the Bible as their reliable authority. Mormon writers say that the Bible has been

so widely corrupted by erroneous translations that scarcely a single verse has escaped such a situation. This is the biggest misstatement of facts during the century.

In the attempt to promote what might be called Armstrongism, the founder of that cult claims that he received special revelation during the decade of the thirties, hence the world, ever since the first century, was without a complete message until Herbert W. Armstrong appeared with the special revelation. It might be pointed out here that Armstrong's hodge-podge of teachings have been borrowed from a number of the old line cults, and obviously dressed up to fit his own system. No one can deny Armstrong's claim of special revelation, however.

Even the Seventh Day Adventists, while not claiming infallibility for Ellen White, their revered founder, they do believe, nevertheless, that she was guided by special inspiration, hence her writings are authoritative. It is a fact that the Seventh Day Adventists hold tenaciously to her teachings which were set forth over a century ago.

It must be stated with emphasis that by holding the claim of ongoing revelation the cultists embrace a doctrine that is foreign to the Scriptures and contradictory to the history of the Church. By accepting this false position, people cannot know with any degree of certainty what constitutes the whole revealed truth of God. In other words, the situation becomes fluid, and dependent on the leadership of those men and women who claim to be recipients of special revelation. This untenable position of the cultists must be rejected outright as being both erroneous and unwar-

ranted. By following such a path of interpretation they actually have a Bible of their own, one which they believe is more complete and authoritative than the sixty-six canonical books of the Bible. Ongoing revelation, which cultists claim, make them more up-to-date on revelation (they assert) than those who limit their position on revelation to the original Scriptures. It is fallacious to insist on continued revelation, and this leads cults to proclaim dangerous teachings. Their position on revelation must be completely rejected by all Bible-believing Christians.

#### · DICTATORIAL LEADERSHIP OF CULTISTS

Anyone who has studied the various cults of this country will discover that practically all of them pursue a policy of authoritarianism over their followers. To illustrate: Joseph Smith and Brigham Young and their successors have continually exercised dominance over their religious system. It is equally true that pastor Russell and Judge Rutherford followed the same method as leaders of the Jehovah's Witnesses. Nathan Knorr, the present head of that organization, may use a more skillful procedure, yet the method is dictatorial. Herbert Armstrong has maintained a tightly organized program with a complete dominance of his followers. This caused a break-away of some of the leaders under him as they could no longer tolerate that dominance. They established independent organizations a few years ago. Some of the more recent extremists among the cultic groups operate an even more ruthless policy of brain-washing their followers, hence whipping them into line as it were. Generally considered, the well known cults have

established a kind of hierarchy, with a small group exercising complete control over their respective groups. The Mormon Church is the best example of a hierarchy which has been in operation for over a century. The President of that complex organization comes out with pronouncements from time to time which are binding on the Mormon Church. Obviously a dictatorial policy simplifies all activities among the cultic groups. Somehow it resembles the authoritarianism practiced by Mussolini and Hitler on the political front. Those who have deviated from the truth tend to move into an orbit where dictatorship becomes a standard policy.

Evangelical groups, on the other hand, have followed mainly the Scriptural way which stands in contrast with the methods of the cults. Paul writes, "The servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose them . . ." (II Tim. 2:24-25). Peter states it in a similar manner, "Feed the flock of God which is among you . . . neither as being Lord's over God's heritage, but examples to the flock" (I Pet. 5:2-3). In contrast to the Scriptural injunction, the usurpation of dictatorial power is the general mark of identification among the cultic leaders. The ruthlessness of many of the leaders of the cults is one of the worst elements among these groups. We have scores of letters in our office with information how certain cultists demand of their adherents blind obedience to their instructions. The Armstrong leadership demands a 30 per cent tithe of the gross income of their followers. Some letters which we receive indicate when the heads of house-

holds have followed this monetary demand, their families at times have been unable to buy the very essentials of life. While these excessive demands are made on the people, often the leaders live in mansions, having their private planes, and enjoying a luxurious way of life. The heartlessness of some of the cultic leaders should awaken some of the captive followers to these inconsistencies, but too often they acquiesce to what is being done through a lack of discernment.

My position throughout this article is to point out to the readers that there are definite differences between Bible-believing Christians and those identified as the cults. Their doctrinal deviations are obviously the most serious distinctions, and they should never be minimized or swept under the rug. Too many Christians are unwilling to think through these matters and thus reach proper conclusions. There are certainly some weaknesses among Christian organizations and the leadership of these, but they are minor in comparison to the gross inconsistencies and errors of the modern cultists. No one describes these false groups more graphically than Jude does in his short Letter. It behooves us to be informed in a day when leaders with a satanic cunningness are deceiving thousands of people with their false teachings and unscriptural tactics. Truth and error will exist side by side until the end of the age, and it is our responsibility to practice discernment at a time of confusion. We need Paul's exhortation these days, "Therefore my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord" (I Cor. 15:58).

## IX. ABERRATIONS EVANGELICALS FACE: CRACKS AND CREVICES IN EVANGELICAL CONFIDENCE IN SCRIPTURE

*By David L. Larsen, Pastor, First Covenant Church of Minneapolis*

Not all of our spiritual dangers come from without. Some of our most hazardous perils come from within. At a time of significant evangelical resurgence, an ominous development from within the ranks of evangelicals must occasion grave concern. There does appear to be significant erosion of confidence in the total reliability and trustworthiness of Holy Scripture on the part of some who have generally stood for Biblical faith.

Sometimes the high view of the inspiration and authority of the Bible is called verbal or plenary inspiration, or the infallibility of Scripture, or the inerrancy of Scripture. Some incline to one term or another, but all of these terms delineate a position of uncompromising confidence in the integrity of the Word of God. The Lausanne Covenant affirms this stance: "We affirm the divine inspiration, truthfulness and authority of both Old and New Testament Scriptures in their entirety as the only written Word of God, without error in all that it affirms, and the only infallible rule of faith and practice."

Dr. Francis Schaeffer has expounded this historic conviction in addresses and in the booklet, *NO FINAL CONFLICT*, in which he states: "We must not compromise our view of Scripture. There is no use of evangelicalism becoming larger and larger, if at the same time appreciable parts of evangelicalism are getting soft at that which is the central core, namely the Scriptures." Schaeffer argues that

inerrancy is the watershed of the evangelical world. He insists that existential methodology has infiltrated that which is called evangelicalism with a resultant weakening and decline of a high view of Scriptural inspiration.

In support of Schaeffer's apprehensions has come a controversial volume from the pen of the editor of *Christianity Today*, Dr. Harold Lindell, entitled: *THE BATTLE FOR THE BIBLE*. Lindell's thesis is essentially that of Schaeffer. He defines inerrancy as the total trustworthiness and reliability of the Bible in all that it affirms, including history, matters of science it may address, etc., etc. Inerrancy means that the Bible can *always* be trusted. It means that the Bible is free from mistakes. It only makes factual representation. Lindell moves on in an irenic but factual manner to document his contention that there is a mood of concession among some evangelicals and some evangelical institutions and denominations.

Lindell's book has aroused the ire of many who want to avoid controversy and anything which mars unity. Yet the question of the authority of Scripture is not peripheral or minor. "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" (Psalm 11:3). The question of Biblical authority is absolutely basic in all theological inquiry. It is the necessary starting point—is reason infallible? Is the Church infallible? Or is the Bible infallible? What will control and shape our beliefs? Can we really trust our Bible?

Lindsell argues that history shows a surrender of a high view of Biblical authority ultimately has disastrous consequences. To adopt a limited inerrancy is fraught with the gravest peril. Dr. Clark Pinnock well argues that "It is wiser and truer to recognize that the Bible is a seamless garment. We are not to pluck out a thread and discard the cloth. 'ALL Scripture is God-breathed.' Like Paul we believe everything laid down by the law or written in the prophets (Acts 24:14). Its truth is all intertwined in a most complex unity. He discredits its authority who limits its reliability. This proposal of limited inerrancy is a misdevelopment in theology which could have serious and tragic consequences. Limited inerrancy is a half-way house on the way to unlimited errancy. It is in position, a slope and not a platform. Like the term marriage, inerrancy is absolute and cannot easily be limited without ceasing to be a useful term. We expect those who at present seek to limit inerrancy in the near future to disavow the term altogether, which is precisely what less conservative Christians have done" (GOD'S INERRANT WORD, p. 150).

#### EXCESSIVE AVERSION TO CONTROVERSY

Lindsell's book has engendered controversy—but he has raised a vital and crucial question. He has done evangelicalism a service in his call to face this issue. He has not spoken in vague and glittering generalities. He has specifically addressed by way of illustration and documentation examples which substantiate his thesis. He speaks of the denial of inerrancy as an infection which is spreading. I do not think Lindsell's thesis can be light-

ly dismissed. Favorable reviews have come from Dr. Harold J. Ockenga, Dr. John F. Walvoord, Dr. W. A. Criswell, Dr. Charles Ryrie (*Bibliotheca Sacra*, October-December, 1976, pp. 356-7), Dr. Hudson T. Armerding (*United Evangelical Action*, Summer, 1976), Dr. Francis R. Steele (*Christianity Today*, April 9, 1976, p. 35), *Alliance Witness*, August 11, 1976, etc., etc. All of these men are centrists and share in the deep concern expressed by Lindsell.

Who can deny the catastrophic consequences of a weakened or mediating view of Biblical inerrancy during the last several centuries? We have only to reflect on the ravages of higher criticism in the main line denominations and seminaries. Did not apostasy begin in almost every case with a doubting and questioning of the Word? In many smaller, traditionally evangelical groups there is substantial evidence of a weakening of posture here. Lindsell contends that as a church's schools go, so goes the church. It has happened in the past and it is happening today. "Nowhere," he says, "is there any example of a group that has limited the Bible's inerrancy where further defection has not occurred." There are not many instances where these trends have been reversed once they set in.

We must not allow aversion to controversy and hard facing of the issues to turn us from doing our homework. We believe in the total trustworthiness of Scripture for the very same reason that we believe in the Virgin Birth of Christ, His sinless life, His substitutionary death, His bodily resurrection and His imminent second coming. These are all doctrines taught in Holy Scripture. We have not solved all the problems in relation to an under-

standing of these doctrines but we believe these great foundational truths because they are taught by Christ and the Apostles. We believe that "Every Word of God is pure" because this is what Christ and the Apostles believed and taught. Are they or are they not reliable teachers of doctrine? For 1800 years this high view of Scripture was virtually unchallenged in Christendom. Gausen well stated, "With the single exception of Theodore of Mopsuestia, that philosophical divine whose numerous writings, so strongly tainted with Pelagianism, were condemned for their Nestorianism in the fifth ecumenical council . . . it has been found impossible to produce, in the long course of the eight first centuries of Christianity a single theologian who has disowned the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures, unless it be in the bosom of the most violent heresies" (THEOPNUESTIA, pp. 139-140). Inerrancy is no innovation as some seek to argue today. Innumerable quotations from the early church fathers uniformly maintain inerrancy. Augustine spoke typically in his famous letter to Jerome (XXVIII,3): "It seems to me that most disastrous consequences must follow upon our believing that anything false is found in the sacred books; that is to say, that the men by whom the Scriptures have been given to us, and committed to writing, did put down in these books anything false." The same can be said for the Reformers. Warfield has not overstated the facts when he says, "The Church has always believed her Scriptures to be the Book of God, of which He was in such a sense the author that everyone of its affirmations of whatever kind is to be esteemed as the utterance of God, of infallible truth and author-

ity" (THE INSPIRATION AND AUTHORITY OF THE BIBLE, p. 112).

#### BUT WHAT ABOUT THE PROBLEMS?

Advocates of limited inerrancy frequently cite alleged discrepancies in Holy Scripture as necessitating a revision and a rethinking of the high view of inspiration. These problems are not new. It should be stated clearly that there are fewer problems today than formerly—so much more recent manuscript discovery and archaeological data have tended to substantiate and confirm the Biblical material. I cite for example the Ebla Tablets and their reference to Sodom and Gomorrah as "cities of sin." I refer to "The Search for Noah's Ark" and the fantastic things being presented to the American public which encourage and foster confidence in the historical accuracy of the Bible. There really is, as Warfield used to say, an avalanche of evidence which God has raised up in the scepticism and agnosticism of modern times to encourage faith and confidence in the Bible. What is this predisposition to construe a difficulty or a mystery or an unanswered problem as an error or a mistake? Why do we not side with our Savior and affirm, "The Scripture cannot be broken."

"Yes," we are told, "but there is a cultural overlay which must be taken into account." To be sure the statement of certain abiding spiritual principles is seen in a cultural setting, as for instance the eating of meats offered to idols. The subordination of the woman to the man as taught in I Corinthians 11 and 14 is seen in the cultural setting of the first century with respect to the covering of the head, but the principle is an abiding principle as Paul so clearly teaches in Ephesians 5 and I



Timothy 2. The subordination of the woman to the man (as Christ is subordinate to the Father) no more implies inferiority of the woman to the man than does the subordination of the Son to the Father teach inequality.

But now, as Lindsell shows, some deny the normativeness of the Apostolic teaching at this point, maintaining that Paul was in error in his teaching, that he was adversely influenced by his upbringing (Jewish rabbinic tradition) and by his historical time (first century Palestine). In this line of teaching Genesis 2, I Corinthians 11 and 14, Ephesians 5 and II Timothy 2 are to be discarded as shipping paper. This is to undercut Paul's clear teaching that "all Scripture" is normative in its authority. We are in serious difficulty if we think that Paul was wrong.

If indeed we lay aside Paul's teaching on master and servant and husband and wife, how can we insist on it when he speaks of parents and children? Where shall we

draw the line? We must be awake to the implications of limited inerrancy. We must discern that the weakening of our view of Biblical inspiration opens the sluice gates for all kinds of subjectivism. We have ultimately then lost Biblical authority. Notwithstanding the weaknesses of my analysis of trends or Lindsell's, will we not do better if we stand where the Church has stood and where Spurgeon stood when he wrote:

"O Bible! it cannot be said of any other book, that it is perfect and pure; but of thee we can declare all wisdom is gathered up in thee, without a particle of folly. This is the judge that ends the strife where wit and reason fail. This is the book untainted by any error, but is pure, unalloyed, perfect truth. Why? Because God wrote it! Ah! Charge God with error if you please; tell Him that His book is not what it ought to be . . . Blessed Bible, thou art all truth!" (quoted by Lindsell, p. 67).

#### NEW BOOK AVAILABLE

The recently published book by Prof. John E. Dahlin, *Glimpses and Reflections of a Ministry*, portrays 50 years of observations and evaluation of the American scene during the years (1926-1976). The wide experience of the Editor of *The Discerner* will be exceedingly helpful to pastors and Christian workers who read the book. The introduction is by Dr. John F. Walvoord of Dallas, Texas. Many other Christian leaders have given their endorsement of the book. It may be ordered through Religion Analysis Service, Inc., 2708 E. Lake St., Minneapolis, Minn. 55406. An autographed copy may be secured from the author,

Prof. John E. Dahlin, 5517 Chicago Ave., Minneapolis, Minn. 55417. Cloth bound, price \$4.25 and .35¢ postage.

Prof. John E. Dahlin received recognition for 50 years in the ministry and for publication of his new book by a special Sunday afternoon service Nov. 7 at the First Evangelical Free Church of Minneapolis, where the Dahlins are members. A number of Christian leaders in the twincity area extended greetings. Autographed copies of the new book were available for the first time, and several scores of books were procured.

## HUMAN EXPERIENCE VERSUS CHRISTIAN REALITY

*By Stan Carter, Youth Pastor, Billings Bible Church, Billings, Montana*

Many of today's newspapers and Christian periodicals are dealing with the phenomenal growth of the Charismatic Movement. Books have sprung up overnight, attempting to rationalize this "revival" that is sweeping our country. I place the word "revival" in quotation marks, because this movement needs some close inspection in its relationship to what revival really is. I want it understood that I am just as happy when a person places his faith in Jesus Christ as when someone who has been lost is found. Although I am not a Pentecostal, I have many friends in that denomination, and I share their joy and happiness in seeing people won to Christ.

If a person does not receive effective follow-up as a newborn babe in Christ, he is in trouble. Satan has a way of discouraging and destroying new believers, and it seems that most converts who are not grounded in the Word fall into a pattern that will eventually lead to an ineffective life, this pattern being the establishing of emotional experience as a means of spiritual growth, rather than the study of the Word of God. In other words, impressions on the mind or experiences of the human emotions begin to take the place of Bible study and personal Christian growth.

In the 1600's, a philosopher named Pascal came forth with his famous "wager". In simple terms, he challenged men to gamble their lives in order to see if the possibility of Christianity might be true. The

modern version of this is seen by many well-meaning Christians who tell the lost to "just believe in Jesus and you'll know He is real." Without ever showing the prospective convert the objective truth of Christ, they encourage the sinner to take the "leap of faith," which often results in subjective human experience. After Pascal's time, a school of thought called Empericism came into being. The famous promoter of this train of thought was John Locke. He believed that knowledge came through the senses, such as sight, taste, touch, etc. Now, you are probably wondering how these old philosophies and contemporary Christian living are related. They are now closely intertwined, but in the original thought patterns they should be carefully dissected. If knowledge is gained by what we feel, then what makes your knowledge superior to mine? What is the criterion for truth? There could be no Absolute Truth, because each person's experiences would be the norm for truth. Instead of Christ being the Truth and His Word being the absolute standard for faith and practice, emotional experience becomes the center of truth. Many Christians have fallen into this error. They seem to think that Scripture, prayer, witnessing, and all of the things that combine to make the Christian life a meaningful and life-changing experience are only true if experienced in the realm of natural sensitivity. It seems that instead of the "just living by faith," they interpret that to

say that the just shall live by feelings. Instead of realizing that Scripture is the means of sustaining the Christian life and the very core of spiritual knowledge, they have inadvertently given entrance to the core idea of neo-orthodoxy, in that it is only Scripture if I feel some exhilarating or ooey, gooey emotion, often equaled with "joy in Christ."

The whole idea of faith is at the core of the Christian experience. Romans 1:16 and Hebrews 11:6 make this very clear, because these texts infer that the life that is not lived by faith is a life that is not pleasing to God. However, many Christians have given faith a mystical, fantasy-like definition. Hebrews 11:1 teaches that faith is substance and evidence. If faith is substance and evidence, then we could say that faith must be belief in reality, because of the facts that we have about the reality. Reality is substance and the evidence of the substance is in the facts. If either has been lost or not used, then faith is not complete. For example, Napoleon is a highly-regarded hero in France, his body lying in state in a French city. The proof of the reality of Napoleon's life is the conquests he made on European soil. Some of his results were the rise of Nationalism in France and the unification of the German city-states. Now, in the spiritual sense, let us look at the facts of Christ. I placed my trust in Christ because I believed in the reality of Christ. How did I know that the reality of Christ was true? Because of the facts that we have about Him. He said, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life," and, "I give unto them eternal life and they shall never perish." Those are pretty important facts! But how do we really know if Christ actually said those

words? They were spoken nearly 2,000 years ago, so why should we put any validity in them? Westcott and Hort believe that our present-day translations are 98.33% pure, and A. T. Robertson says 99.9% is free from substantial, consequential errors. That even beats Ivory soap! Now, if the presented facts are true and accurate and the validity of the facts hinges upon the person of Christ who spoke to them, who am I to doubt the factuality of Christ? Now that I have faith in a trustworthy person, my faith is confirmed by the reality of the substance of the person of Christ. Whereas Napoleon brought ideas of unification and freedom in the physical sense, Christ has brought unification with God (Romans 8:16) and freedom from sin.

If I live the Christian life by faith, and I must in order to please God, do I put that faith in my feelings or in the character of God? It must be the character of God! We must not be deceived into placing our faith in subjective experience, but in the objective truth which is exemplified by the One who said, "I AM . . . THE TRUTH!" This faith can only grow as we allow it to grow, and as we "grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." I believe that faith and belief are two separate, yet connected, concepts of the Christian life. If a person truly believes in the Lord, he will place his faith in the Lord. Belief expresses itself in the form of action, and the result of an act of the will is faith, which we have already discussed earlier. As the result of faith is seen, our confidence grows in the Lord and, therefore, our personal belief that Christ is the All-Sufficient One is enhanced and enriched. Also, we can

be assured that we are pleasing God, because faith has become the means of operation.

How does all of this relate to my opening remarks about the "revival" that is sweeping our country? As one studies revivals or renewals that took place with the children of Israel, one important fact stands out: there was a renewed concern for the Word of God. For instance, after the wall was rebuilt under the leadership of Nehemiah, the people gathered to hear the Word of the Lord. I believe this is lacking today. Instead of hearing what God has to say, many are simply sharing their experiences. I am certainly not against Christian sharing, but when personal experiences shape the Christian life instead of the Word of God, there is a great danger.

How does all this relate to Empiricism? It shows that Christianity and Empiricism are contrasting philosophies. Empiricism is based upon individual experience, and that experience is the criterion for truth, while Christianity is based upon the factual truth of the reality of Christ. Therefore, in conclusion, I would like to state the following principle: Those leading these youth to Christ

during this sweeping Jesus Movement must present the objectivity of the Gospel to their prospective converts: that is, (1) that it is based upon the person of Jesus Christ, (2) that Jesus Christ was an historical figure and not an inner force or feeling, (3) that faith in Christ is not a subjective experience but rather a logical step of faith as a result of belief in the work that Christ did at Calvary, and, (4) that growth in the Christian life is dependent upon living the fruits of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23) and not the conjuring up of the human soul.

The Christian exists by faith, as stated in Romans 1:16 and as Colin Brown in his book, "Philosophy and the Christian Faith," states, ". . . if experience, history or science were to show that the Christian account of existence was wrong . . . the whole Christian conception of God would have to go." I don't think our conception of God will have to go, because Christ said He is the same yesterday, today, and forever, and His Father said, "I am the Lord, I change not."

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## BOOK REVIEW

### JESUS CHRIST IS NOT GOD

By Victor Paul Wierwille, 177 pages.

\$6.95. Reviewed by Homer Duncan,  
Editor of Missionary Crusader.

I have been asked to review the book with the above title by Dr. Victor Paul Wierwille who is the president of a research, teaching and training ministry called "The Way," whose headquarters is in New Knoxville, Ohio. Dr. Wierwille studied at the University of Chicago and is a graduate of Princeton Theological Seminary. He has studied with such men as Karl Barth, E. Stanley Jones and Glen Clark, all of which reminds me of a saying of my dear old Dad, "You cannot rub up against a smutty stove without getting some of it on you." It would seem that some of the smut has rubbed off on Dr. Wierwille.

It has been said that we should never judge a book by its cover or by its title, but, in this case, the title of this \$6.95 book very well lets us know what it is all about. Dr. Wierwille does not believe that Jesus Christ is God, and he has written this 177 page book to prove that Christ is not God. He states, "Jesus Christ is not God. Biblically he is the Son of God." Wierwille rightly recognizes that Christ must be a man in order to redeem men, but he refuses to recognize the Biblical teaching that Jesus Christ is the God-man.

Much of his book sounds like an old Watchtower record, and I cannot help but wonder if Dr. Wierwille has studied with the Jehovah's Witnesses or if he has not read some of their books. However, there are a number of marked differences be-

tween Dr. Wierwille and the JW's. He uses a different method of explaining away John 1:1, and he denies the pre-existence of Christ, which the JW's do not do. Dr. Wierwille states, "We did not exist before the world began. Neither did Jesus Christ."

Chapter one of this book is entitled "The Origin of the Three-in-One God." Among other things, Dr. Wierwille attempts to prove that Constantine controlled the proceedings of the Nicean Council, and that he brought pressure on the bishops compelling them to adopt his theological position. The Nicean Council dealt with the Arian heresy which was a denial of the full deity of Christ. This book is simply a new manifestation of the old Arian heresy.

In chapter two Dr. Wierwille correctly tells us that the Lord Jesus is called the "Son of God" over 50 times in the New Testament, and that He is called "God" only four times. He thus implies that there are only four references on the deity of Christ in the N.T. With the usual dexterity of false prophets, he explains away the four verses that he says seem to teach the deity of Christ. The four verses that He explains away are: 1 Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 1:8; John 20:28 and Isaiah 9:6. He does not mention John 1:1 in this chapter but deals with it in a separate chapter. In this chapter he does not mention Isaiah 7:14; Ezekiel 44:1,2; John 5:17-19; 5:23; 8:

58; Romans 9:5; Colossians 2:9; Titus 2:13 or 1 John 5:20, but he does attempt to explain away some of these verses in Appendix B of his book.

One of the most popular booklets published by the Watchtower Society is THE WORD: WHO IS HE? Chapter four of Dr. Wierwille's book is "WHO IS THE WORD?" Neither Dr. Wierwille nor the Watchtower Society can allow the truth of John 1:1 to stand since this is one of the clearest references to the deity of Christ in the entire Bible. However, Dr. Wierwille uses a different method of destroying the deity of Christ than does the WTS. He attempts to prove that "The Word" refers to God the Father rather than to God the Son, but he states that the incarnate Word is His Son Jesus Christ. You will have to figure that one out for yourself! Dr. Wierwille states, "The Word began to be made flesh when God created the sperm in Mary." He states, "when Jesus Christ was born he came into existence." Wierwille denies that Christ is the great creator. With the usual skill of false prophets, he explains away John 1:3; Ephesians 3:9; Colossians 1:16 and Hebrews 1:2. He states, "The people who say that all things were created by Jesus Christ contradict the first verse of the Bible: 'In the beginning God created . . .'"

Dr. Wierwille fails to mention that the Lord Jesus has all of the attributes of God the Father. He fails to call to the readers' attention

that the name "Lord" proves the absolute deity of Christ. He does not recognize that the Jesus of the New Testament is the Jehovah of the Old Testament.

Dr. Wierwille states that his is the only true and right doctrine, and, of course, this is the claim of every false cult under the sun. The faith of unstable souls who are not rooted and grounded in the Word of God will be shaken by the subtle arguments presented by Dr. Wierwille, but those who know the Book and who are taught by the Holy Spirit (who Wierwille denies) will not be led astray. Wierwille makes a distinction between God who is the Holy Spirit, and the holy spirit (no caps) which is the gift of God.

To be honest with you, I do not like to get my hands dirty with such a mess, but Jude by the Holy Spirit exhorts us to "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints" (Jude 3). Either Jesus Christ is God or He is not God. We believe in His deity and we accept the doctrine of the trinity, not because we can understand these doctrines but because both of these doctrines are clearly taught in the Word of God. Additional copies of this expose can be obtained for ten cents a copy. Our booklet JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES AND THE DEITY OF CHRIST, which deals fully with every aspect of this subject can be purchased for 55 cents. Both can be obtained from us.

## A BOOK REVIEW

The Battle For The Bible — Harold Lindsell, Ph.D., D.D. Zondervan, 1976, pp. \$6.95.

Review by Pastor E. Loren Pugsley, Office Manager, Religion Analysis Service, Inc.

In the early 50's, when the Revised Standard Version of the Bible appeared on the scene, it stimulated an avalanche of comment, pro and con. Quite a few critics, who apparently had not read the text in its entirety, published adverse comments. An article by the late Dr. Donald Grey Barnhouse appeared in a leading Christian magazine, entitled: I Have Read The R S V. (These comments do not constitute an endorsement of either Dr. Barnhouse or the R S V.)

I read Dr. Lindsell's book with much interest. It is a tremendous apologetic for the inspiration, infallibility and inerrancy of the Holy Scriptures. In fact, Mr. Lindsell states that in his opinion the question of infallibility "is a watershed question."

As a part of the development of his treatise, he refers to a number of evangelicals and evangelical institutions which have departed, at least in part, from the view of absolute infallibility and inerrancy of the Scriptures. I must say that, while

he is candid in his exposes, factual, and uses well documented statements, he is neither unkind nor unethical.

Dr. Lindsell laments the fact that so many evangelicals have departed from a strong view of infallibility and inerrancy.

Being an evangelical himself, adds to his sorrow over this situation. I recommend this book to the Christian public. It will be helpful to many.

Perhaps because I am a professed fundamentalist, in addition to being an evangelical, I find at least one distinct weakness in the book. As Dr. John R. Rice, of The Sword Of The Lord Foundation, says, in essence, it diagnoses the condition, but does not prescribe the cure. The Biblical cure is found in such Scriptures as II Cor. 6:14-7:1. We are to leave, and come out from among them and be separated from such fellowships, instead of continuing in their ranks. In his generation, the late Dr. Charles Hadon Spurgeon verifies this as his practice.

This cloth-bound 218 page book, may be purchased from Religion Analysis Service, Inc., Suite 231, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55406. The price is \$6.95, plus a \$1.40 mailing charge. All Minnesota residents please include 4% sales tax.

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## PERTINENT QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

*John E. Dahlin, Editor*

*QUESTION . . .* How may we identify the people who most easily become the victims of the Cultists?

*ANSWER . . .* Without a doubt the people who are most susceptible to the propaganda of the cults are those who are deficient in the doctrinal truths of the Bible. Often this condition is found in many homes, and at other times the church has failed in teaching Biblical doctrine. Those who are thoroughly acquainted with the Scriptures are not easily ensnared by false teachings. Cults may be successfully combatted through the systematic instruction of the people in the Word of God. A leading denomination in our land boasts that it is not doctrinal in its position. It is little wonder that liberalism has gained the control of that entire religious organization.

*QUESTION . . .* Which cults have made rapid inroads in the United States during recent years?

*ANSWER . . .* It is clearly evident that cults with an eastern philosophy have moved in with great determination. This non-Christian philosophy is being interwoven with elements which are based in Christianity. People who have no capability of discrimination are led to believe that these new teachings will bring real satisfaction to the restless minds of today. These false teachers are giving the people stones instead of bread, an expression Jesus used in those days. Our Lord also said, "Beware of false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing" (Matt. 7:15).