

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

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## DIRECTIONS FOR DAYS OF APOSTASY

*By Harold S. Martin*

The word "apostasy" means a falling away or a defection from the faith. The Greek translation of the Old Testament uses the word "apostasia" in Joshua 22:22 to describe the rebellion of the people from God. The same word is used in 2 Thess. 2:3 to describe the falling away which will precede our Lord's Second Coming.

Apostasy should be distinguished from ignorance (a lack of knowledge). Apostasy is characterized by a deliberate rejection of Christ's deity, His atoning death, and other cardinal doctrines of the Christian faith. The Book of Jude foretells the age of apostasy and warns against its inroads in the church.

The writer of the Epistle of Jude, was Jude the brother of James, and therefore the brother of Christ Jesus (Matthew 13:55; Galatians 1:9). Just at the time when Jude was preparing to write on the subject of salvation, he heard of godless men who were threatening the church with erroneous teachings. Thus he was moved to write about the perils of false teachers. The Epistle of Jude is the Holy Spirit's warning to the church, against apostasy.

### 1. THE RISE OF APOSTATE TEACHERS (Jude 3-4)

Jude was planning to write his fellow believers a letter on the subject

of the salvation which they all shared (verse 3). He saw the need, however, to abandon this plan and prepare an epistle in which he could urge his readers to a faithful defense of the great truths which had been received from Christ and His apostles. He saw that these truths were in grave peril. The nature of the peril was the presence and influence of certain men in the church who denied the Lord they professed, by their teaching and by their conduct. Their coming had long ago been predicted, but their entrance into the church had been unobserved ("crept in unawares," verse 4).

Jude speaks here about "the faith." This speaks of the body of truth regarding God's great plan of redemption. It speaks of the great fundamentals of Christian truth. The first is the incarnation, God was in Christ and Christ was God incarnate in human flesh in the person of Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 5:19). The second is the vicarious death of the Son of God for sinners (Romans 5:10). The third is the truth that Jesus Christ arose from the tomb in a body (1 Corinthians 15:14). The fourth is the authority of the Scriptures (2 Timothy 3:16). The fifth is belief in Heaven and Hell. Other fundamental doctrines include the

evangelization of the nations of the world, the doctrine of the Church, the body of Christ, the imminent and personal return of our Lord Jesus Christ, salvation by grace with works following (including the observance of the New Testament ordinances). Jude indicates that the body of revealed truth is complete and final. Verse 4 literally says the faith was "once for all" delivered. There is no other true Gospel, and there will be no other. God's revelation is complete. The last chapter of the Bible warns against adding to or deleting from God's Word. We do grow in grace and in the knowledge of these truths, but there is no change in the truths themselves.

The faith was delivered to "the saints." God's people have been entrusted with the faith. It is your heritage and mine; it was not invented by man, but directed from God. We are to "earnestly contend" for the faith. The Greek for these two words means, "Fight for what you are standing on and hold on to what you have." We must exercise the spirit of meekness, but we must not fail to defend the truth and expose error. No one ever used more severe language than our Lord when speaking on false doctrines. The Apostles followed Christ in their attitude, and the Epistles were written for the express purpose of defending the faith and exposing error.

Who are the opposers of the faith? Those who "crept in" unnoticed, Jude says. Thousands of people heard Ingersoll and Huxley belittle the faith outside the church, but many of these false teachers about whom Jude speaks actually occupy prominent pulpits within our churches today. They make a display of scholarship. They deny the faith and substitute pagan ethics

and a rosewater gospel. They talk about the love of God but reject His judgment against sin. They carry a shallow view of sin, and "turn the grace of God into lasciviousness." That is, they claim that liberty in Christ gives them license to do as they please concerning the gratification of the flesh. This is a result of emphasizing God's love to the exclusion of His wrath against sin. Paul said, "Of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them" (Acts 20:30). Let us earnestly contend for the faith. Paul says, "Let your conservation (conduct) be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel." And again he says, "I am set for the defense of the gospel" (Philippians 1:27, 17).

## 2. THE WARNING TO APOSTATE TEACHERS (Jude vs. 5-7)

Jude, in these verses, cites God's judgments in the past as warnings to men living in these last days. Most of the incidents are judgment-scenes from the Old Testament revealing God's hatred for sin. Today also, we are living in an age when shallow views of sin are met on every hand. When the church succumbs to the spirit of the world, it always accepts light views of sin.

The first incident is about the unbelief of Israel in the wilderness (verse 5). These people, though they had special privileges and were miraculously delivered out of Egypt, yielded to unbelief, and as a result did not enter the Promised Land. Those who were responsible for this unbelief never set their feet inside the land of Canaan. We too are

warned about unbelief in the Epistle to the Hebrews: "Take heed brethren, lest haply there shall be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in falling away from the living God."

Notice also verse 6. Compare the phrase "And the angels which kept not their first estate," with 2 Peter 2:4. The lesson of these passages is that if the apostate angels in Heaven did not escape the judgments of God, surely apostates on earth will not.

Verse 7 says that "Sodom and Gomorrha are set forth" as an example. That is, the judgment on these cities is a warning to those who live afterward. The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrha is one of God's great signposts on the highway of life, against fornication and unbridled sensuality.

Each of the above examples reminds us that God brings judgment upon sin, and if God punished those who took shallow views of sin in the past, He will do it again!

### 3. A DESCRIPTION OF APOSTATE TEACHERS (Jude vs. 8-19)

The false teachers are often lawless. They reject God's way of salvation, follow the error of greed for money, and rebel against authority. Verses 12-19 further describe false teachers by showing their corrupt influence, their hypocrisy, their disgrace, and their doom.

To "despise dominion" (verse 8) means to make light of authority. There is often rebellion in the home. The Scriptural mandate, "Children obey your parents in the Lord for this is right," has many times become, "Parents obey your children for this is more up to date." There is also revolt against authority in the schools, against the government, and against the authority of the Word of God. Even the archangel did not

bring a railing accusation against Satan, but said "The Lord rebuke thee." He submitted to the supreme authority of God. Lawlessness began in Eden, and it can only be controlled when the Spirit of God controls the heart.

In verse 11, three incidents are brought out of the dim past to warn men who live in the last days, that God has not changed His attitude toward sin and lawlessness. The first incident here is "the way of Cain." Cain was the first man to despise and reject God's way of salvation and to set up a religion which pleased his own evil heart. He wanted to erect an altar that would never be stained with blood, but rather embellished with flowers and fruits as an offering to the Lord. This is a picture of men and women who despise salvation by blood, and would rather have beautiful buildings and appealing music and ritualism for their "worship." *The way of Cain* is man's way of life and righteousness, as opposed to God's way. The second incident is "the error of Balaam." Balaam tried to change God's wrath for material gain. The sin of Balaam is with us today. Those ministers who for the love of money are dishonoring their high calling by trying to please the people rather than trying to honor God, are following *the error of Balaam*. There are ministers, for example, who perform the marriage of divorced persons. They dishonor God, but at the same time, increase material gain. The final incident mentioned in this verse, is "the gain-saying of Korah." Korah was the leader of a group that rebelled against the authority God had given to Moses and Aaron, and claimed to be equal with Moses. What a terrible judgment fell upon Korah and

his companions! The earth opened and they went alive into the pit. This same sin is evident today. The religious leaders who deny the deity of Christ are actually saying that He is no better than they, and that He is only a man like we are. If Korah and his followers met with such an awful judgment, what will be the punishment for those who deny the One who is the Mediator of a greater covenant? *The rebellion of Korah* was a refusal to submit to the authority of God's appointed servant.

The verses thus far have named seven characteristics of apostates. But the picture is made even more repulsive by the figures of speech which follow. These verses describe false teachers by showing their corrupt influence, their hypocrisy, their disgrace, and their doom.

In verses 12 and 13, Jude described false teachers as "spots in your feasts of charity." Beware of those who make merchandise of their religion, posing as followers of Christ, participating in the lovefeast, but whose speech and practices betray them to be apostates. By their fruits you shall know them. He describes them further as "clouds without water." Just as a farmer is disappointed when he sees rain clouds gather during a dry season (and then bring no rain), so a thirsty soul is disappointed when all he hears is an unsatisfying social gospel. Also, they are like "trees whose fruit withereth." What a contrast is found here in comparison with the man who meditates on God's Word. He shall be "like a tree planted by rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither, and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." False teachers are also like "raging waves of the sea." They are often carried about by

every wind of doctrine. They accept the latest thinking of prominent theologians instead of the simple truth of the Word of God. Thank God we can be settled upon the Rock of Ages! They are "wandering stars." That is, they are like meteors that flash in the sky for a short time and then suddenly disappear. The Bible says, "For if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to naught; but if it be of God ye cannot overthrow it" (Acts 5:38-39).

Those who have no real faith in God are many times "murmurers" and "complainers" and speakers of "great swelling words" (verse 16). We are living in a day when these words need little explanation. Most people are *born* crying, *live* complaining, and *die* disappointed. They are often dissatisfied with life and sometimes blame God for the trouble they bring upon themselves. Let us accept God's will for our lives, knowing that "all things work together for good to them that love God."

In verses 17 and 18, we are told to remember the teachings and warning of the apostles (2 Timothy 3:1-5; 4:3-4). Jude exhorts us to meet apostasy, not with surprise, for these things have been predicted, but with a careful discernment. The sensual men who were prophesied to come, had already begun to appear on the scene before the end of the first century after Christ.

The punishment for apostate teachers had been predicted over and over again. Verses 14 and 15 state, in words which tradition assigns to Enoch the man who walked with God, that scoffers and mockers will come in the last days—but that the hour will also strike when the Judge shall appear from Heaven with all His saints, and then He will

convict those who had gone through life without recognizing and submitting to the true God (verse 15a). The punishment of Hell ("blackness of darkness") will be "for ever" (verse 13).

#### 4. COUNSEL IN VIEW OF APOSTATE TEACHERS (Jude vs. 20-23)

Jude's picture of the apostasy in the closing days of this age, as we have just seen it is a dark one. The growth of evil will continue right up to the end. But we come now to the brighter side of the Epistle. Jude mentions some factors that should characterize the true Christian in the age of apostasy.

The life of the true believer cannot be static. There must be growth and progress and advancement in the Christian life. We are to continue to build upon our "most holy faith" (verse 20). Moses was told to build the tabernacle according to the pattern shown him, and just so we are to *add* to our faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and so forth (2 Peter 1:5-7). The Christian life is a continuing building process.

"Praying in the Holy Ghost" should also characterize the Christian (verse 20). Praying in the Spirit means praying in the energy of the Spirit and according to God's will (Romans 8:26-27). It also means *making our requests* within the bounds of believing prayer, and in accordance with the mind of the Spirit as revealed in the Word of God (which the Spirit inspired when written). One simple, earnest, Spirit-energized prayer counts more in God's sight than a thousand eloquent, carefully worded prayers springing from an unregenerated heart and mind.

Further, we are to keep ourselves in the love of God (verse 21). That is,

we are to "walk in love as Christ also hath loved us." We must maintain an attitude of love in a world that is filled with controversy and hatred. We must not allow the distracting, discouraging events that take place all around us, to draw us from fellowship with our ascended Lord, and from showing charity toward our fellowmen.

We are also told to look for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, which we shall find at His coming for His own, when He calls us out of the world to meet Him in the air (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17). In his loving mercy, He will deliver us from the terrible Day of Wrath that will come upon the earth (Revelation 3:10). Let us keep on building, praying, keeping, and looking, as we are admonished to do in the inspired Epistle of Jude.

It is our duty also to save souls from the paths of sin. There are different degrees of sin into which apostates have fallen, but those who love the sinner and hate sin, are to consistently try and save others caught in Satan's trap. Show them the danger of living without Christ. Warn them to flee the wrath to come. Snatch them as brands from the burning.

The Book of Jude is filled with the flashing of lightnings, and judgments upon fallen angels and fallen men. Here we see the fall of angels; here we see the burning flames of Sodom and Gomorrah; here we see Cain going guiltily out from the presence of the Lord. But just as a stormy day sometimes comes to a close with a beautiful sunset, so this brief and stormy Book comes to a conclusion with one of the grandest and most precious of all the promises and sayings of God's Word. This interesting little Epistle ends with a wonderful

doxology of divine glory. Verse 24 says, "Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God, our Savior, be glory and majesty and dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen!"

The reader's thought has been led through dark scenes of perplexity and suffering, and of apostasy and doom. But now the clouds break away, and the eyes gaze in rapture on the face of a God who is love, and on the glory of a coming Christ. We see in the closing verses of Jude that the danger of falling is implied. And no marvel, for when we consider the number and the power of our foes, it is not surprising that a Christian should fall. He must often walk in slippery places; he is subject to great weaknesses; there are many hindrances in his path. The flesh, the world, and the devil are continually trying to

cause him to fall. But thanks be unto God, He is able to keep us from falling! God is powerful, and we have the promise that we are kept by "the power of God" until our salvation is completed. We are made fit sons of His through the imputed righteousness of Christ. It becomes our obligation to keep our hearts free from sin and yielded to the indwelling Holy Spirit. We must make use of the means of grace. Bible study, prayer, church attendance, observance of the ordinances — these are necessary for fostering good spiritual health in the life of the believer.

So unto God be all the glory, majesty, dominion, and authority. In spite of all that the devil can do, and in spite of all the apostasy and the failure of men, God's program of redemption will be carried out to its final and victorious end. Hallelujah, what a Saviour!

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## HILDUR DAHLIN CALLED HOME

Readers of THE DISCERNER will be saddened to learn of the passing of Mrs. John E. Dahlin on April 21,



1977. Born in China in 1903 of missionary parents, she early trusted Christ as her Lord and Savior. Her devoted submission to the Lordship of Christ in her life led to its fullest expression in Christian service as the bride of John E. Dahlin.

Her labors of love for the Lord were both direct and personally her

own on the one hand, and on the other were indirect and less personal as she poured out her life through spiritual and marital support of her husband in his half century of ministry. After having shared in their labors there will come a sharing in the rewards because these two blended their lives into one of union endeavor for the glory of God. Our readers will sense that with Mrs. Dahlin's homegoing, an immeasurable loss is experienced by her husband. We covet much prayer from friends of this ministry on behalf of our brother in this difficult time.

Herbert V. Caneday  
(Member of the Board)

# THE CHRISTIAN AND SOCIAL DRINKING

By Loma G. Davies

*Some sobering facts to consider!*

"I only drink beer. I'd never touch the hard stuff!"

Have you ever heard anyone make a comment like this?

The trouble with this thinking is that the only difference between beer and the "hard stuff" is the amount of liquid contained in each drink. One eight-ounce can of beer has the same amount of alcohol as a one ounce shot of hundred proof whiskey—one-half ounce!

What should our attitude as born-again Christians be toward alcohol? It has become so socially acceptable that if you tell some people you do not drink they act as though you are either crazy or a liar. Is it all right for us to take a social drink and thereby avoid the ridicule we may experience if we don't drink? Or should we practice total abstinence?

One of the rationales often heard for drinking is that its use is mentioned in the Bible. While this is true, in many of those times its use created grave problems. Some of those drinking episodes affected several generations.

When Noah became drunk with wine and Ham saw him naked and told his brothers, his son Canaan received a prophetic curse (Gen. 9: 20-27). After escaping from Sodom, Lot's daughters caused him to become drunk with wine and seduced him in order to carry on his line. The child born to the elder was named Moab, and the one born to the younger was Ben-ammi. There were problems between Israel and the descendants of Moab and Ben-ammi for many years (Gen. 19:30-38).

Another problem is the fact that there are several different words in the Bible which are all translated "wine" in the English translations. There is the Hebrew *yayin*, which is fermented grape juice. The Hebrew *tirosh* is rendered "new wine." The Hebrew *shakar* (an intoxicant) is an inebriating drink. The Hebrew *ahsis* refers to the method by which the juice was expressed from the fruit. The Hebrew *sobe* means "drunk." The Hebrew *mesek* is "strong drink."

In the New Testament the Greek word *oinos* includes every sort of wine. *Gleukos* means sweet or "new wine." *Genema tes ampelou* refers to the fruit of the vine; *oinos akratos* to pure wine; *oxos* to sour wine or vinegar and *sikera* to strong drink.

Many places in the Bible contain admonitions against strong drink. "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging; and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise" (Prov. 20:1; see also Prov. 23:29-32; Rom. 14:21; Eph. 5:18).

Some people cite the miracle in John 2 when Christ turned water into wine at the marriage in Cana to rationalize their drinking by saying that Christ approved of drinking. The Greek word used here is *oinos*, which refers to grape juice; in other words, a non-alcoholic beverage. It is incomprehensible that Christ would produce a substance for use which is condemned elsewhere in the Scriptures.

I am sure it is not necessary to convince anyone of the problems associated with overindulgence in alcohol. The fact that there are nine to ten million Americans who are



alcoholics, and many more with serious drinking problems, speaks for itself.

However, many problems encountered by the social drinker are much more subtle and therefore often go unnoticed.

Many things happen to the drinker between .01 percent and .10 percent blood alcohol levels. Point ten percent is the legal limit of intoxication in many states and the drinker is far from drunk. Some use alcohol unconsciously to obtain these effects. Between these points is a removal of inhibitions, a loss of self-control, a weakening of willpower, a feeling of well-being, false confidence, impaired judgment, loquaciousness (given to excessive talking) and a dulling of attention. Looking over this list, it is easy to think of many problems that can be caused by each one. Yet these users are not drunk and are not even to the slurred speech and staggering stage, which occurs at approximately .15 percent.

Everyone is aware of the fact that alcoholics cut many years off their lives. The moderate or social drinker is doing the same thing but in a less noticeable way. Social drinkers who drink one and one-half ounces of alcohol per day have a mortality rate of 248 percent higher than normal. If, in addition, they become intoxicated six times per year, they increase their rate to 277 percent.

Social drinkers have more heart problems than non-drinkers. According to Lewis H. Kuller of the Department of Epidemiology and Microbiology of the University of Pittsburgh, there are "clinically measurable changes in myocardial function," which in lay language means something prevents the heart muscle from working properly.

Dr. George E. Burch says in an

article in Listen, "The Doctor Looks at Alcohol," that alcohol "denatures protein, destroys enzyme systems and other substances necessary for healthy performance of organized cells."

The rate at which the heart pumps blood changes significantly in non-alcoholics fifteen minutes after a drink of whiskey.

Alcohol in the blood is oxidized in the liver, releasing hydrogen there. The release of that excess hydrogen causes the accumulation of increased fat in the liver. The liver has to oxidize all the alcohol put into the system, so each time a person drinks he puts an extra unnecessary burden on his liver. While cirrhosis is commonly thought of as an alcoholic's disease, social drinkers also get it.

Another problem faced by social drinkers and alcoholics alike is the problem of blood sludging. When blood sludging occurs, a substance coats the red cells and makes them stick together in clumps. As these bits of "sludge" reach the capillaries, they pile up into a wad that may entirely plug the capillary. When sludging is extensive and many capillaries become plugged, cells in entire areas of an organ will starve for oxygen. Sludging can be detected after as little as one glass of beer. When this sludging affects the brain, irreplaceable brain cells are lost. Obviously, the more drinking occurs, the more damage; but each time a drink is taken there is some damage.

As Christians, should we be concerned with the fact that alcohol damages the body? The answer is a definite yes. It should concern us because our body is the temple of God (1 Cor. 6:19), and we are told not to do anything that will defile that temple.

We are to present our bodies as living sacrifices unto God (Rom. 12: 1). When a sacrifice is given it is to be as perfect as possible, which means we should keep our bodies in as good shape as possible. Drinking certainly does not help keep our bodies in good shape.

Every social drinker faces the potential danger of becoming an alcoholic. One out of every ten social drinkers does. Since there are no alcoholic types of personality, no one can say for sure once he starts drinking that he will not become one.

Some alcoholics are caused by psychological problems. They come to depend upon alcohol because they need its effects. Others become alcoholics because of a biochemical problem in their systems. For some reason certain people display alcoholic characteristics from the very first drink. Something in their physical makeup causes them to become instantly addicted. There is no way of knowing who these people are until they take their first drink.

As Christians we have a responsibility not to do things which will harm others. I am sure everyone deplores the terrible slaughter on our highways caused by drinking drivers. Many feel this is mainly caused by drunk drivers and alcoholics. "A few drinks couldn't possibly interfere with driving." Unfortunately, 80 percent of the fatal accidents are caused by social drinkers who are not even aware that they are a hazard!

Many things occur well below the legal limit of intoxication (.10 percent in most states) which cause a driver to become a hazard to himself and others. At .05 percent alcohol (approximately two drinks for the average 150-pound man), the peripheral (side) vision drops 18 degrees and depth perception drops

74 percent. The driver's vision is affected as though he were wearing sunglasses after dark. (Try this sometime when riding in — not driving — a car!) It takes the drinker's eyes longer to readjust after being dazzled by bright lights of an oncoming car. It is estimated that he may drive blind up to one-fifth mile before recovering. At .05 percent a person is twice as likely to have an accident as when he is sober; at .10 percent (4 drinks), 7 times as likely; and at .15 percent, 25 times as likely.

As Christians we have a responsibility to our fellow believers who may be weaker or younger in the Lord than we are. If you decide that "one drink once in a while won't hurt me," and it probably won't *that much*, you must also take into consideration the effect your "one drink" may have on others. If someone is looking to you as an example of how to live the Christian life and he sees you take a drink, he will realize you condone drinking and decide it is all right for him, too. If this brother, for some physical or psychological reason, is unable to handle alcohol and runs into serious difficulty because of his drinking, who is to blame? If we have children, they are constantly watching what we do as a pattern for their lives. I have heard more than one teenager use adult drinking as an excuse for his marijuana smoking. They see no difference in the two.

We also have a responsibility to the unsaved world. For many our lives are the only Bibles they will ever read. How can we tell them what Christ did for us and how He can help them and change their lives if they can see no difference between our lives and theirs? Again, some of the unsaved may use a Christian's social drinking as a green light to excesses of their own.

Believers should not need the artificial high given by alcohol; or any other drug, for that matter. When a person is living close to God that is all the high that is needed.

Before engaging in any type of activity a Christian should ask himself the following questions:

1. Is it Christ-honoring (1 Cor. 10:31)? "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (cf. Col. 3:17; Rom. 14:18).

2. Can you give thanks to the Lord before doing it? If not, it is wrong.

3. Is it doubtful (Rom. 14:21)? If in doubt, don't.

4. Is it considerate (Rom. 14:13, 19; 15:1)?

5. Will it cause another to stumble (1 Cor. 8:13)? "Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world

standeth, lest I make my brother to offend."

For the Christian the decision whether to drink or not to drink has many sides. He must consider the fact that if he chooses to drink he will be defiling the temple of the Holy Spirit because alcohol is harmful to the body. He is also going against the teachings of Scripture that forbid the use of strong wine. He also must consider how his actions will affect the lives of others. This is a decision each person must come to for himself. But if he is honest, he will have to admit that the use of alcohol can only harm his testimony and himself.

Mrs. Davies, a member of Bethel Baptist Church, Merrillville, Indiana, is a high school teacher in Hobart, where she has taught alcohol education for the past six years. She holds a Master's degree from Purdue University.

Used with permission from the Baptist Bulletin, March 1977 issue.

## JESUS CHRIST IS NOT GOD

*By Homer Duncan, Editor of the 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 between Dr. Wierwille and the JW's. He uses a different method in explaining away John 1:1, and he denies the pre-existence of Christ, which the JW's do not do. Dr. Wier-

wille 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 I 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 JW's. 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.

The above message was written by Homer Duncan, Editor of the MISSIONARY CRUSADER.

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## THE STATUS OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCH-MISSOURI SYNOD

*By John E. Dahlin*

The second largest body of Lutherans in America is facing a crisis at its Synod's Convention at Dallas, Texas July 15-22. A serious cleavage took place at their national convention in 1973, when Dr. Jacob Preus, the President of the Synod, was authorized to eliminate false teachings at Concordia Seminary at St. Louis, Missouri. The President of that institution, Dr. John Tietjen, was subsequently removed. A majority of the members of the faculty, supported by most of the students, established a seminary in exile (as it was called) and often known as the sem-inex. This development led to a continuous controversy within the LCMS. District leaders and pastors, as well as congregations in these areas, took sides in the matter, and this made the situation even more complicated. Somehow, the conservatives led by Dr. Jacob Preus, have commanded a majority within the LCMS ever since the conflict came to a collision at New Orleans four years ago.

The election of a President is scheduled for this convention at Dallas. Five candidates have been nominated and will be voted on. Two of these are well known conservatives, namely, Dr. Jacob Preus and Dr. Walter A. Maier Jr. The lat-

ter is the son of the famous late Dr. Walter A. Maier, who had an effective program over the International Lutheran Hour for many years. There are also three so-called moderate candidates for the presidency of the LCMS. It appears these men are seeking to establish unity, if possible, within the big Synod. Since Dr. Preus has been in the center of the controversy, it is unlikely that Dr. Maier will be able to secure sufficient votes to gain the Presidency. He is even more uncompromising than Dr. Preus. Most observers of the LCMS believe that Dr. Preus will be re-elected. The hard-liners feel that he has vacillated in certain areas in order to prevent a major split in the Synod. Of late, however, he has come forth with a platform which the conservatives find acceptable.

This major religious body stands at the cross-roads, and the coming Dallas convention will determine the direction it will take for years to come. This writer believes the chasm is too great for a compromise by the two wings, and likely a split will result. False teachings were not taken seriously when they could have been removed and the consequences would have been less far-reaching at that time than the situation is today.

# THE BASIC ERROR OF ROMAN CATHOLICISM

*By Rev. Bill Jackson*

*The Conversion Center, San Jose, California*

There are many doctrinal errors that are commonly believed by our Roman Catholic friends. Here at our Center we have books that list dozens of false teachings.

However, it is a sad fact that much of what is called "Roman Catholic evangelism" is merely an attempt to prove individual beliefs and practices of the Roman Catholic people to be incorrect. This is not to say that these beliefs and practices are not incorrect—Romanism is plagued with a host of unscriptural relics of bygone days, to which she has added more modern Marian heresies.

In the process of dealing with most Roman Catholics, it is necessary to show scriptural proofs which demonstrate her teachings to be "cunningly devised fables." But to begin with these, and to neglect Rome's basic error, is to relegate our evangelism to mere argument, the result of which becomes unimportant. Often, when an argument is won, the soul is lost. Jesus did not tell us to go into all the world and win arguments with every creature.

A brief look at scriptures dealing with salvation tells us the plain truth—Jesus Christ died for us, became our Substitute. The Bible knows no other saving message.

If we asked a Roman Catholic about salvation, especially in these "enlightened" days, he might come up with the answer, "Jesus died for the sins of the world." But closer inspection would show us that he does not mean the same as we do; as a Roman Catholic, he would have

one of two concepts concerning salvation.

The most common among ordinary Catholics is to say, "By His death, Jesus Christ opened the gates of Heaven to make it possible for us to go through. We can achieve this through Mass, Penance, Prayers, Purgatory, etc., etc."

If you were lying, injured, on the floor of your home with broken legs, back and hips—completely unable to move, and the house caught on fire, you would call for help! If your friend offered to rescue you, and all he did was to open the door, he wouldn't have done much to help you. You are helpless; you do not need a door-opener, but a rescuer. The Bible tells us that the result of the work of Jesus Christ on Calvary was "that He might bring us to God" (1 Peter 3:18). That is salvation!

The other concept, not unlike the first, but more apt to be presented by a more theologically minded Roman Catholic, or a priest, is, "Because of the merits of Jesus Christ on Calvary, we can receive infused Grace, but we must co-operate with this Grace in order to have our salvation effected." (Co-operation means good works, sacraments, penances, etc.)

We can illustrate this by the action of a man who boards a Jumbo Jet. As the huge plane lumbers down the runway while taking off, the foolish man, not thinking the plane can get off the ground, breaks a window and starts flapping his arms. The passenger's responsibility is not to help the plane to fly, but just to

get a ticket and get on board. With salvation, our ticket is free, and our boarding the "aircraft" is supernatural; once on board, we can do nothing to help with the flight!

Let us travel back over 1900 years to the plains of Caesarea Philippi, where we see a soft-spoken carpenter-turned-preacher who addresses His followers, "Whom say ye that I am?"

"Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

The Lord Jesus Christ verified this statement made by Peter, and added that this was, indeed, a Divine revelation.

To appreciate the full significance of Peter's answer, we must understand the term "Christ." To Peter, to every Jewish person, and to every believer today, this title speaks of Jesus' being the Messiah, the One who would fulfill all the glorious Messianic prophecies of hundreds of years before. There were a multitude of these, but none more important than those uttered by the princely Isaiah over 700 years before.

In Isaiah 9:6, the essential Deity of the Messiah is foretold; in Isaiah 53, His substitutionary Sacrifice. To have not fulfilled these and all other Messianic prophecies would negate any claims to Messiahship; a "Christ" who does not fulfill these is not the Christ of God.

It is not difficult, then, by simple mathematics, to discover the basic error of Roman Catholicism. Their "Christ" did not accomplish a substitutionary Atonement. The Christ of God is the sinner's Substitute. The "Christ" of the Roman Catholic Church is not the Christ of God.

When one is building any structure, the foundation is vital. Matthew

7:26, 27 outlines what happens when we rely on an insecure foundation. The Christ of God is the foundation stone of the building of God. His Church. The "Christ" of the Roman Catholic Church is the chief foundation stone of their religious system. Having a "Christ" who is not the Christ of the Bible is the basic error of Rome. All that is built on that foundation is sure to fall.

We mentioned the many false doctrines of Rome, and you can study these for yourself. You will find that each error has, as its basis, the fact that they have the wrong "Christ."

They have the Mass as a perpetuated sacrifice to take away sins—they need it because their "Christ" did not perfect the work of salvation.

They have an involved structure concerning Confession and Penance, now more harmlessly called "The Sacrament of Reconciliation." But this is needed only because their "Christ" did not do a complete work is absolving their people from sin.

They have a dreaded, yet hoped for, ordeal in the future after death. They call it "Purgatory" (a place of cleansing). They must have such a place because their "Christ" did not fully purge from sin.

When we have an opportunity to speak to Roman Catholic friends, we could ask them to tell us about their Christ. Then we can tell them about our Christ—the One who performed one full and complete Sacrifice for sins; the One in whom we have assurance, because His work for us was perfect!

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## **PERTINENT QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

*John E. Dahlin, Editor*

**QUESTION . . .** Is there any record of apostate denominations returning to a Biblical base?

**ANSWER . . .** It may be difficult to check fully on all historical religious denominations, but we have no knowledge of any apostate religious organization which has returned to a Biblical base once the control has come into the hands of the liberals. Frequently conservative segments have broken away from such denominations and established their own organizations which are conservative and Biblical. Christians who expect some reform or change among the apostates are naive and mistaken in their optimism with regard to such groups.

**QUESTION . . .** Is there a decline in the position of separation among evangelical organizations of our time?

**ANSWER . . .** As we evaluate this situation, it is clear that there has been an erosion of the spirit of separation among a number of evangelical organizations. Being separatistic is often associated with unbrotherliness and extremism. The ecumenical inroad among evangelicals often comes in a way which is not easily detected. Our organization is aware of considerable opposition toward those who take a strong position on separation. Separation is a Biblical teaching which needs a continuous emphasis, however. (See II Cor. 6:14-18)