

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

*The*  
***DISCERNER***

AN  
INTERDENOMINATIONAL  
HERESY-EXPOSING  
QUARTERLY

Vol. IX

No. 11

- 2. THE CULTS AND THE BIBLE
- 5. THE ULTIMATE LIE
- 11. IN MEMORIAM
- 12. "A NEW LOOK AT SEVENTH DAY ADVENTISM"
- 16. PERTINENT QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

July-September 1979

# The DISCERNER

Published Quarterly

Price \$2.00 for 4 issues; \$5.00 for 12 issues;

50 cents a copy, for foreign

subscriptions add .20 cents a copy.

Copyright 1979 by Religion Analysis Service, Inc.

2708 E. Lake St., Suite 231

Minneapolis, Minnesota 55406

Printed in the United States

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

John E. Dahlin, *Chairman*

Mr. Harold Dainsberg

Rev. David L. Larsen

---

## THE CULTS AND THE BIBLE

*by Prof. John E. Dahlin, Editor*

The most important study of the cults is observing their attitude toward the Holy Scriptures. At no point do they part company with Bible-believing people as distinctly as in this matter. Many Christians are unaware of this, hence they need instruction regarding the position of the cults towards the Bible. When their emissaries come to your doors, they obviously will try to convince you that they are committed to the right emphasis of the Biblical truth. This is extremely misleading for none of the cults sets forth properly what the Bible teaches. What they do is to first establish their particular positions, which is, of course one of deviation from the Scriptural base.

### **CULTS FOLLOW THE WRONG METHOD TOWARDS THE SCRIPTURES**

Instead of pursuing directly the teachings of God's Word, the cults set forth their own preconceived notion, and then they come to the Bible to find proof-texts to substantiate what they want to believe. In other words, they select certain Scriptural passages without any regard for the context, and place

them into their own biased concepts. They do much like a dentist I once heard of who tried to fit the mouths of people to the dentures, rather than see so the plates would fit the mouths of his clients. This illustrates what the cultic leaders do with reference to the Bible. Instead of studying the Scriptures to ascertain what they teach, they first establish their own positions and search the Bible to find proof-texts to verify their doctrines. Since I do not have the space in this issue of *The Discerner* to substantiate how the various cults follow this procedure, I will select mainly the Jehovah's Witnesses to illustrate this discussion. Even their name, The Jehovah's Witnesses, since 1931, is selected from isolated verses in the Bible, which in their proper context, have no connection with the activities of this spurious cult. By wrenching verses out of their context any cult is able to develop whatever system of teaching that is desired. No group has misapplied Scriptural truth on a wider front than the Jehovah's Witnesses.

First of all, the JW's reject the personality of the Holy Spirit. They do not come to the Scriptures with

an honest heart and with open-mindedness depending on the Holy Spirit to take the things of God and show them to us (John 16:16). They cannot do this when they refuse to accept the personality of the Holy Spirit. To them the Holy Spirit represents some kind of energy or influence. Obviously a power cannot teach; only a person can instruct. It becomes impossible for the JW's to understand the Bible when they reject the author of the Scriptures. We might also point out that Christian Science stands guilty of the same error. To Mary Baker Eddy, the Holy Spirit is Christian Science. Herbert W. Armstrong is also Unitarian in this respect and rejects the personality of the Holy Spirit. It is impossible for anyone to understand what the Bible teaches when God's Word is approached on a kangaroo fashion (hopping around) without any regard for the context, or the setting of the Scriptural passage. Let me illustrate: When tourists go to Russia they are given guided tours. The Communists have things that they do not want the tourists to see. In fact, the Russian guides steer people away from the actual conditions under Communism. No one will understand Russian life under such an arrangement of selectivity as the guides follow. The Bible must never be treated in that manner. Bible students who desire to know the truth of God will study the Bible book by book, then chapter by chapter, and then verse by verse. Peter deals with those who fail to use the right procedure in this regard. He writes, "They that are unlearned and unstable wrest,

as they do also the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction" (2 Pet. 3:16). I believe it was Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer who pointed out that an unlearned person who is taught by the Spirit of God will have a clearer understanding of the Bible than a university professor who is not taught by the Spirit of God.

### **A SPECIAL TRANSLATION OF THE SCRIPTURES**

In order to establish their teachings, according to their own desires, the Jehovah's Witnesses have come out with THE NEW WORLD TRANSLATION OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES. The publishers do not hesitate to change the text whenever it is convenient for them to do so, that is, in order to establish their teaching. Who did the translation? The JW's refuse to furnish the names of the scholars who did the work of translation. In all other translations the names of the scholars, who have done the work, are freely given. And, it is well to point out here that no present-day evangelical scholar is willing to accept the translation of the Scriptures by the Jehovah's Witnesses. In limited areas their translation may be fairly satisfactory. But, on the whole it is slanted to favor their biased teachings. In John 1:1 Jesus Christ is down-graded. Let me quote their translation of this verse: "In the beginning the Word was, and the Word was with God and the Word was a *god*." They teach that Christ was the highest of God's creatures, but they do not believe that he was

the God-Man, and co-equal with the Father. In contrast to this erroneous translation by the JW's of this verse, we find that nineteen of the known translations render that expression "The Word was God." The translation "a god" is unjustifiable. The entire debate on Christ's deity can be settled by determining the correct translation of this verse. When it can be proved that they are wrong on this key verse, their entire structure comes tumbling down. A large number of seminary teachers were asked to comment on this particular verse, and we find that none believed that the JW's were right in the translation of that key expression "a god." If the Jehovah's Witnesses are not dependable on such a crucial point how can one rely on them elsewhere?

### **THE RIGHT APPROACH TO THE SCRIPTURES**

I made reference in a earlier paragraph to the rejection of the personality of the Holy Spirit by the JW's. It is understandable that they do not accept his personal presence in the study of God's Word. In the upper room discourse Jesus said, "But the Comforter, who is the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatever I have said unto you" (John 14:26). Notice here, and in numerous places, the Holy Spirit is called "He" and is never referred to as "an active force only." Our Lord said, "He (the Holy Spirit)

shall teach you all things." And further, when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatever he shall hear, that he shall speak: and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you." (John 16:13-14) Cultic groups cannot come to a right understanding of Scriptural truth when they reject the personality of the Holy Spirit.

Moreover, the JW's do not want to hear the truth of God about Hell, and Judgment, and about the Wrath of God. Where do you find Scriptural teachings in their writings on these subjects? They explain these truths away. Paul refers to the deceivers in the last days: "Evil men and seducers shall become worse and worse deceiving and being deceived" (2 Tim. 3:13).

In this brief article I have endeavored to bring to your attention both the wrong as well as the right methods in approaching the Scriptures. All the cults have failed to deal fairly with the Word of God. They are guilty in a manner much like that of the Sadducees about whom Jesus said, "Ye do err not knowing the Scriptures and the power of God." They were the modernists of the first century who were guilty of rationalizing the Scriptures. In my many years of study of the various cults, I have reached these conclusions and they are set forth in this editorial presentation.

## THE ULTIMATE LIE

*Substance of a sermon delivered at First Covenant Church in Minneapolis  
by Pastor David L. Larsen.*

*“For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness.” II Thess. 2:11-12*

The apostle Paul in this great passage is talking about events in the last times. The Thessalonian believers are suffering fierce persecution. They are being so pressed and persecuted that the opinion apparently has gained currency that they are in the midst of the tribulation. Other believers have felt the same in various periods of church history.

But Paul tells them that before “the day of the Lord” comes (that is an expression from the Old Testament which describes the great period of final judgment and the outpouring of the wrath of God at the end of the tribulation period), before the tribulation comes, there must first be a falling away, an apostasy, and the man of sin, the Antichrist, must be revealed. Before the man of sin or the Antichrist is revealed, he who holds back must be taken away. We have understood this to refer to the Holy Spirit in His dispensational fullness as He fills “the church which is Christ’s body.” The church will not see the Antichrist, but when the Holy Spirit in the translation of the church is removed from the world in that ministry which He has carried on in this age, then it is that

the man of sin, the Antichrist, will be revealed. This whole age will be an age of gross deception.

From the very beginning of human history and the fall there has been falsehood, there has been heresy, there has been wrong teaching, there have been lies. This will all climax at the end of human history in what Paul calls in verse 11 *the lie*. He says those who will not love the truth are going to believe the lie, and God himself will allow strong delusion to be so pervasive, to so penetrate human society, that men will believe the lie. The Lord will permit strong delusion of such intensity that men and women will believe the lie. The definite article is used. It is not just a *lie* to which reference is made here. It is *the lie*, the lie of lies, the final lie, the great lie. What is it? Paul does not tell us precisely or exactly what it is. It must be that he concludes we shall quickly understand what he means by the lie. With all of the mistruth and the falsehood, with all of the prevarication and the twisting of the truth that there has been in human history, there is *the lie* and it is concerning that ultimate lie that I want to speak to you out of this text. What is the lie?

I.

First of all, I want to discuss *the concoction of the lie*. The lie has its origin in the seeds of Satan’s original sedition, Satan’s primal

rebellion. It really goes back to Satan's revolt against God as described in Isaiah 14, where five times Lucifer, the son of the morning, says "I will." "I will ascend up." "I will exalt my throne." "I will be like the most high." My friends, that is the beginning of the lie—"I will." The lie is the delusion that we are the highest, that we are the center. That is the essence of sin. I believe that is why Paul thought it unnecessary through the Holy Spirit to define what the lie is. It is crystal clear. It should be obvious. What is sin? Sin is the assertion of self to the exclusion of God. That is sin. The assertion of self—I will—to the exclusion of God. And what is hell other than the final and absolute assertion of self to the final and absolute exclusion of God. Sin is saying, "Mine is the kingdom and the power and the glory," instead of saying, "Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory." My friends, there is all the difference and distance between heaven and hell in those two statements. And which is our statement: Mine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, or Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory? The lie has its origin in the original revolt of Satan. And what did the tempter say to our first parents when he came to them in the garden, alluringly, tantalizing, seductively? "You shall be as gods"—assert yourself, be what you want to be, be all.

What motivated the building of the tower of Babel (Gen. 11:4)? "Let us make us a name lest we be scattered abroad across the face of the earth." Glory to man in the

highest—that is the cry of the sinner, the echo and the expression of human pride, and it has persisted down through all the centuries, whereas, in the church of Jesus Christ it is God's purpose that in all things Christ should have the preeminence. We read in III John about Diotrephes who loves to have the preeminence. The name we give to this attitude of self assertion, concocted originally by Satan himself, and spread as a malignant infection throughout the human race, is humanism. This is humanism, and the Humanist Manifesto (number two) states: "We do not need deity. We can handle our problems ourselves." That is humanism—the assertion of self to the exclusion of God. My friends, I submit to you that is *the lie*, and the concoction of the lie began in Satan's rebellion.

## II.

Secondly, I want to speak with you about *the course of the lie*. Here I am going to indulge in a little philosophic analysis because, in western civilization, our Judaeo-Christian civilization with its assertion of the reality and power of the living God, how could the lie come to such prominence and such pervasiveness in our time, considering the legacy which we have culturally and philosophically? How did this happen?

I think Francis Schaeffer's analysis is correct and no one has helped us as adeptly and as ably as Francis Schaeffer in unmasking humanism and its course in western society. Actually, we have

to go back to St. Thomas Aquinas, a great theologian of the Middle Ages. But Thomas had a deficient doctrine of sin. Every heresy begins with a deficient doctrine of sin. Thomas said that the fall of man did not touch the essence of human nature. In the fall, in his sin, man lost the "golden bridle," as he called it, which gave a certain cohesiveness and unity to life, but the fall of man was essentially a deprivation, a loss of something. Man lost something but sin was not the perversion or the twisting or the change of man's essential nature. Now, my friends, that is a disastrous departure from what the Scripture teaches. The Scripture teaches that sin has invaded the very inner precincts of our being and it has tainted and tintured every aspect of our being. There is no part of our being that has not been touched and damaged by sin. Man's will, emotion and intellect have all been influenced by sin. But St. Thomas said man essentially has been untouched by sin. He lost something—that is too bad—but man essentially remains intact.

Then, added to this was the contribution of the brilliant German philosopher George Hegel. Hegel was the philosopher of the inevitability of progress. Hegel (he was a pantheist) was the philosopher who outlined the basic structure, thesis countered by antithesis, resolved in synthesis. This basic pattern—thesis, antithesis, synthesis—has become foundational and fundamental in the development of modern thought. Karl Marx picked this up in

political theory. He is a dialectical philosopher, and the synthesis which emerges for Karl Marx ultimately is the classless society. That is his goal. History is moving, says Karl Marx, in the struggle of the proletariat toward a classless society. Karl Marx picked up Hegel. Others like Graf and Wellhausen picked this up in terms of the development of religion, a view of the Bible, higher criticism. This basic idea of inevitable progression from the crude, the simple, toward the complex and the sophisticated became the backbone of the whole liberal approach to Holy Scripture.

Biologically and in terms of human life, Darwin picked up Hegel's dialectic, the whole notion of the inevitability of progress. Charles Darwin posited development of life without reference to a supernatural Creator. If once it be conceded that there has been development of life without a human creator, the next and inextorable step is the origin of life without reference to a supernatural Creator. That was Darwin's theory of evolution. The whole origin and development of Homo Sapiens can be explained without reference to a supernatural God. Do you see not only in politics, not only in religion, but there in biology and in the whole approach to man and what he is, is a theory of origins and development which makes no reference to God? This led, of course, inevitably to the brutalization of human life, the animalization of man, the survival of the fittest, violence, the glorification of struggle. I believe

that Will Durant is not wrong at all when he traces to Charles Darwin and his theory of evolution, Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, that man who became insane through paresis at the age of 46, the man who wrote the book *The Will to Power*. If that doesn't epitomize the lie, the will to power, the struggle of the herd, and the emergence of the superman. Nietzsche, one of the fathers of modern existentialism. Darwin, says Will Durant, influenced Nietzsche, and Nietzsche is philosophically and ideologically responsible for Adolf Hitler. Where did Hitler get this insane idea of a master race? The Arians as the supermen who were destined to rule and control? My friends, that brutalization, that animalization of life, that glorification of struggle, the survival of the fittest, violence, making lamp shades out of Jews' skin, and Dachau, and Buchenwald and Austerlitz and Belsen and all the rest of it is the fruitage of these ideas, of the lie, in their raw, bald form. Humanism, the assertion of self to the exclusion of God. It is thus, I submit to you, that the lie concocted initially in the primal fall and revolt of Satan, developed in a course philosophically and ideologically down through these centuries, which has brought us to modern times.

I hold in my hands something that deeply distresses me. This is a periodical entitled *Today's Student*. It claims to be the largest national student newspaper on 120 campuses. It is published at Ames, Iowa. Here I read that a professor at the Iowa State University at

Ames has proposed (I am quoting) "that students entering biology classes be screened on the basis of their views toward creation and be excluded from the classes if they don't accept evolution." My friends, that is about as bold and as brazen an expression as I have ever read. What are we coming to? Now that man's thoughts were not accepted, but they were expressed in his advocacy of this position. So deeply entrenched is the theory of evolution, is the lie that man be explained in his origin and his development without reference to supernatural agency. My friends, this is what is being fed to American young people year after year after year in school. Is it any wonder that we have violence and crime and lack of respect for life and the dignity of the person and property of others? This is the course upon which we find ourselves.

### III.

Thirdly, I want to come to the *consumation of the lie*. The lie, this assertion of self, is not only something reflected crudely and crassly by some professor down at Iowa State University. This lie has infiltrated, has infused itself into our basic thought processes so profoundly I don't think we Christians realize how far it has gone, the extent to which we have been captured by the spirit of this age.

Paul said, "Be not conformed to this age," and, my friends, here is the most insidious distortion of truth, and I don't think we are aware of it. Man, the center. The



cult of the self. Autonomous man. what is the goal which people have? To be autonomous. That means myself as the law. The physicians of our culture speak of modern man's obsession with self. The me-god. No matter how piously people sing hymns and go to church, the fact is we are caught up in the vortex of this vicious and vile falsehood, the cult of personal fulfillment. This is a sophisticated variant of the lie—the cult of personal self fulfillment. It is everywhere around us. Why do we do it? I feel fulfilled when I do it. Why do you go to that place? I feel like going to that place. But, should you go to that place? Well, I feel like it. No standards. No point of reference. The only rule is there are no rules. Well, so I have been married for 20 years. So I have a wife and four kids. You know, I don't feel like staying married. You mean you are going to leave your family? Yes. Why? I feel like it. Do what you feel. Do your own thing. Have your thrills. Take your kicks. The cult of personal self fulfillment. Yes, but you have a duty; you have a responsibility. Yes, but I don't feel like it. And there is nothing higher for thousands and millions of Americans than how they feel, what they want, what the latest caprice may be. Dear people, we who believe the Word of God cannot believe that the primary object of human life is the gratification of our own desire. If we are Christians who know the Lord Jesus Christ, we must drastically break with this pattern in our society and in our culture. That the gratification of

our own desire is the highest and paramount good is a lie. That is *the lie*.

There is a ground swell. You see it everywhere. Want to boost production. Our paper asks the question, abolish the week-end? I can't believe the proposal. Here are professors at New York University who have figured it all out, a revolutionary theory, the continuing week. The way we shall do away with this waste, throwing away 28½ per cent of our original investment, is to separate employees into three working groups. The first group works Tuesday through Saturday, the second Wednesday through Sunday, the third Sunday through Thursday. You will only need a much reduced plant—you can have so much more efficiency. And what does this do to the Lord's Day? There is no Lord's Day. Who cares? Efficiency. This is the way our culture is going. Don't challenge the self. Don't thwart or frustrate the self.

Here is Sweden. Dear people, have we come to the point where Sweden leads the world in stupidity? The Swedish parliament by an overwhelming vote—there were only seven who opposed it—has passed a law prohibiting parents from spanking their children. This bill goes into effect July 1. You cannot sock, whack or spank children. You cannot send children to bed without supper, etc., ad nauseum. Don't say no to some little "brat." Don't punish some obstreperous little child. We have legislation now being advocated by some of the most powerful politicians in this country

which would totally take the educational process away from the parents beginning at age two. Let the government take over. Let all day care centers be put right in government hands. We could not be far from the point where a minister who publicly said to young people, obey your parents, could be guilty of a crime. That is the direction our society is moving. The cult of personal fulfillment, the cult of the self, is the lie. This is not something way out there far away. This has become part of the thought process of millions and millions of people, and it is increasingly having its influence on us.

Things are shaping up. I read in my news magazine that a one-world money system is being developed. I read that on the 7th of June a European parliament will be elected to represent the millions of voters in the nine common market nations. Things are moving fast. What is going to happen? Well, maybe the Lord will come. Maybe our Lord Jesus is at hand. Wouldn't that be a marvelous thing? "Even so, come Lord Jesus." That blesses my heart to think that Jesus may come soon. Maybe it is going to be awhile. What can we do? We can pray for a moving of the Spirit of God. We can pray for God to interpose. There is nothing which hinders God from a final mighty sweep before His Son returns. I do not say this will take place. I say there is no reason in the sovereignty of God why it may not take place.

In England in the 18th century, there were those who in 1657 posted out orthodoxy. The nation

was on her knees. She couldn't get to her feet. England was prostrate. In the Westminster Confession in 1657 orthodoxy was articulated. The Westminster divines defined the truth of the Word of God in classic terms. The Congregationalists accepted it in the Savoy Confession and the Baptists accepted it in the London Confession, but within 50 years, notwithstanding all of that articulation of orthodoxy, the nation was still on her knees. England was in a quagmire of vulgarity, of obscenity, of drunkenness, of calloused cruelty. In such religious illiteracy and skepticism as I have not words to describe, it looked hopeless, and then came the evangelical awakening. John Wesley and George Whitefield began to preach under the unction of the Holy Spirit and thousands of people were swept into the kingdom of God. England was saved from what would parallel the French Revolution, and as historians tell us, even the quality of the cloth being produced in linen textile factories improved perceptibly and markedly. There was a revival.

I don't know what is ahead, how soon the Lord will come, whether His coming will be preceded by persecution in America or whether there will be revival before the Lord comes. But this I know, the lie, the cult of the self, the cult of personal fulfillment, is sweeping on apace and it is moving toward the worship of the beast as set forth in Revelation 13 so that the whole world worships the beast, the Antichrist. And what is his number, without which you cannot

buy or sell? 666. What does that number stand for? Six is the number of man. Man was created on the sixth day. It is the worship of man. It is humanism with a vengeance. This is how the age will climax. This is the consummation of the lie and we are moving pell mell in that direction. Do you see it? Do you recognize the trend? Or do you think I stand here tonight like a ranting fool?

You will have to determine in your own perspective and in your own heart how you will receive this message. I see the lie, and I see it tantalizing and alluring the hearts

of God's elect. I see it moving in and seeping into our own thoughts, into our own goal setting, into our own priorities, and I say, "Dear Lord, let old self go to the cross." There is only one place for old self. It is not on the throne—that throne belongs to Jesus Christ who loved us and gave Himself for us. That is the place for self—on the cross and Jesus on the throne. That is the decision you and I must face in the living of these days. Self in the saddle, or Christ? Self in control, in the spirit of our age, or Christ? That is the solemn issue we all face.

## IN MEMORIAM

Our highly esteemed friend, Mr. Edward J. Steen, went to be with the Lord on April 4, 1979 at the age of 96 years. A tribute to him was given by the Editor at the Memorial Service held on Saturday, April 7, 1979. To the readers of *The Discerner*, I wish to mention that no person, over so many years, has manifested a greater interest in the work of Religion Analysis Service than brother Steen. For many years he gave us much appreciated service voluntarily at the office, even up to his 90th year. He was well equipped to do this as he had spent half a century with a major business organization. Our departed friend knew the impor-

tant contribution that Religion Analysis Service was making in exposing false teachings. Best of all, Mr. Steen was a man of great integrity and spiritual discernment. His genuine humility and dedication will long be remembered in our office and by the Board of our organization. During his near century of life he brought honor to his family, to the First Baptist Church of Minneapolis and to Religion Analysis Service.

We also appreciate the generous gift presented to our work by Mr. and Mrs. Paul Norton of West Concord, Minnesota in his memory. Mrs. Norton is the daughter of Edward J. Steen.

## "A NEW LOOK AT SEVENTH DAY ADVENTISM"

by Roy E. Knuteson, Ph.D.

Pastor of The Peoples Church

2550 S. Taft Hill Rd., Fort Collins, CO 80526

Seventh Day Adventism has gone through a metamorphosis over the past three decades that has compounded the confusion surrounding this religious body. Since its inception in 1844 in the aftermath of the Millerite "Great Disappointment," Seventh Day Adventists have been considered alternately, a cult of Christendom and a branch of Christianity. Like any other sect, it has experienced an evolutionary process of doctrinal development and deviation.

Most of the older books on cults include a large chapter on Seventh Day Adventism. In 1956 Donald Grey Barnhouse and noted cult specialist Walter Martin squashed the idea that the movement was a cult and placed it squarely in the mainstream of evangelical Christianity through their published writings. Since then most of the newer books on cults have omitted the Adventists.

Most Christians, therefore, have accepted the Adventists as a part of the Body of Christ without serious question. Many do not understand the reasons for their more visible deviations from orthodoxy, namely, Saturday worship and vegetarianism. In all fairness to both their founder, Ellen G. White, and the present constituency, we must acknowledge their fundamental stand on such basic doctrines as the inspiration of Scripture, the Deity of Christ (although they believe he had a sin-

ful nature), the bodily resurrection of our Lord and His soon return in power and great glory.

However, since the average Christian cannot possibly keep up with all the doctrinal gyrations within the group, his understanding of Adventism is usually based upon casual conversations or the literature of a particular era. Few realize the tremendous internal struggle that has taken place within Adventism the last thirty years over the doctrine of justification by faith. The theological position of Adventism in the decades of the 50's, for instance, was radically different than its previous half century of history. The 1960's saw another turn in the road and now in the end of this decade, Adventism has changed its stance again in reaction to the "Brinsmead Controversy" of the 60's. For a complete understanding of this upheaval, see *THE SHAKING OF ADVENTISM* (Baker) by Geoffrey Paxton.

The only valid view of this sect must therefore be its current position. This does not mean, however, that all Seventh Day Adventists, whether clergy or laymen, hold identical views, even in this very monolithic structure. Some are theologically still in the 60's. Since, however, all doctrinal positions emanate from headquarters in Washington, D.C., what we cite is majority position and practice now.

## CONCEALED IDENTITY

Seventh Day Adventism still hides its face. For years the "Voice of Prophecy" radio program from Glendale, California, never admitted publicly they were the official voice of the group. Even now, they do not always include a word of identification that H.M.S. Richards, Jr. is a Seventh Day Adventist minister.

Unless one is very perceptive and recognizes THE HERALD AND REVIEW PRESS name, he may not realize that all the full color and attractive Bible Story books that grace the tables in doctors' and dentists' offices are Seventh Day Adventist publications. Many Christian homes have the full set of these books, not realizing what they have purchased. Few recognize the distinguishing doctrines of this group subtly woven into every publication.

In addition, the Adventists still promote city-wide "prophecy conferences" across America each year and spend thousands of dollars in very elaborate and extensive advertising for these meetings. Never will they identify the prophecy teacher as a Seventh Day Adventist, nor name the sponsoring group in their promotional materials. Unless you know that Andrews University, from which the speaker graduated, is their school, you haven't a hint as to the identification of sponsorship of the meeting. Currently, they are also using films of recognized evangelicals to supplement their presentations and further trap their unwary audiences. Even in the

meetings they refuse to plainly identify themselves, and hesitate to do so when asked: "Who are you, anyway?"

What do Adventists have to hide? Why are they constantly covering up their tracks? Why don't they want people to know their denominational affiliation? The obvious answer is: Like other cults, they want to get you in their arms before they take off their appealing mask. It's a trapping device.

## CULTIC MENTALITY

Seventh Day Adventism almost stepped into the mainstream of Evangelicalism in the 60's, but have since backed away from any concept of the universal church, and have isolated themselves again, as the only voice of true orthodoxy, and therefore, the only true church. There "chosen remnant" idea concocted by Mrs. White from Revelation 12:17, is the cohesive that holds them together and apart from all others. The Adventists tend to believe that the Holy Spirit dove flew straight from the Apostles to their own shoulders, with perhaps a brief stopover during the Reformation. This is why they call themselves a "Movement of Destiny." They view all the rest of us as a part of the "Protestant Babylon." Of course, all the cults have this same mindset: "We're the only ones that are right." Which makes them wrong!

Every cult seeks to find specific Scriptural documentation for their existence. Many, like Herbert W. Armstrong, cite a specific verse of

Scripture as a prophecy pertaining directly or exclusively to them. Seventh Day Adventists do the same. Ellen G. White claimed the "third Angel's message" of Revelation 14 among other Scriptures, was a clear reference to her movement and their "restoration Gospel." This powerful psychological trick has tremendous appeal and to the Satanically-deceived it justifies their claims and existence. It becomes a dynamic force to keep them going, too! After all, the fact that God has "raised them up for these last days" is *proved* by the Bible! It produces an arrogant self-infatuation as revealed by the current president, Robert H. Pierson, who said: "Let us remember that those of us here on the General Conference Staff are daily, hourly, momentarily, a part of a group of leaders that *constitute the highest authority of God on earth.*" (emphasis mine). (Robert H. Pierson, THE MINISTRY, June, 1976.)

Every cult has its almost-deified founder and "prophet." Adventists have denied that Mrs. White's writings are on a par with the Scriptures, but in actual practice they are. In the present controversy within the movement over the "Gospel," both sides appeal to Ellen G. White, more than they do the Bible for their proof texts! This cultic mentality of rallying around a leader (even through dead for 64 years) robs the movement of a Biblical base.

### **CONFUSION DOCTRINALLY**

Granted that Adventism holds

some orthodox views, it nevertheless has never repudiated the following errors which, in my judgment, places the movement clearly outside the boundaries of Biblical Christianity.

Presently, the Adventists have reverted back to the old and erroneous view that justification by faith had only to do with *past* sins and that present righteousness and acceptance by God at the Second Coming is dependent upon good works (produced by the Holy Spirit). This is a frightening doctrine to many of the members. Few believe they can attain the sanctification necessary to be accepted. This "final-generation perfectionism" is "another gospel" according to Galatians 1:8, and is foreign to Scripture and, therefore, under the condemnation of God. This one great error concerning the Gospel plainly puts Adventism in the heretical realm of the cults, whatever else good may be said about it. It is the "Galatian heresy" all over again. If a person is wrong here, it makes no difference how orthodox they are on other matters, because the end result is hell for all who misunderstand or misrepresent the Gospel.

Adventists have never repudiated their zeal for the law" and the resultant emphasis upon "Sabbath-keeping" and dietary laws. Those of us who observe Sunday as "the Lord's Day" are considered to have taken the "Mark of the Beast." Sabbatarianism and vegetarianism are, of course, key issues with the Adventists and become test points of fellowship and orthodoxy. The New Testa-

ment books of Hebrews and Colossians stand opposed to this kind of teaching. Legalism of this sort is also another earmark of a cult.

Eschatologically, the Adventist movement is pre-millennial in one sense, but certainly unscriptural in many aspects of their prophetic scheme. They view most of the events in the book of Revelation as already passed. They have to take this position in order to support their theory that their movement is specifically described in chapter 14! This gross "spiritualizing" of Scripture has led them into many other related errors including "soul sleep" and annihilation of the wicked. They deny the "rapture" as a catching away before the coming Great Tribulation and think the "Gospel" is preparing people for the "Loud Cry" (Revelation 14:18)

and the Second Coming of Christ. The Thessalonian Epistles refute such theololical nonsense. Interestingly, all the cults hold similar perverted views of coming events. It's one of the "schemes of Satan" that blinds men's minds to the truth.

Are Adventists Christians?—My answer is "No"—since most of them embrace the present heresies of the group. Some within the movement may be sincere believers in Christ and genuinely born again in spite of the profound error regarding the Gospel. However, the enlightened Christian attitude should now be one of understanding and love toward them, coupled with an aggressive evangelistic outreach to reach these people with the true and liberating Gospel of Jesus Christ.

## SUBSCRIBE TO THE DISCERNER

The *Discerner* keeps abreast of developments within the cultic areas. Articles appear in each issue which deals with groups and individuals which have deviated from the truth. More requests have come for the recent issues than during any year in the past. The present issue has equally challenging articles. Check the expiration date of your own subscription and be sure to renew it in time. Your friends will appreciate gift subscriptions. 4 issues for \$2.00, 12 issues for \$5.00.

Kindly report any change of address immediately. Every *Discerner* magazine returned to our office because of incorrect address, and sent out again separately, has a much higher postal rate.

RELIGION ANALYSIS SERVICE, INC.  
2708 E. Lake Street  
Suite 231  
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55406

Address Correction Requested

---

## PERTINENT QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

*John E. Dahlin, Editor*

**QUESTION . . .** What dominant trait is uniformly found among all the cults of our time?

**ANSWER . . .** All cults handle God's Word deceitfully. They use the Bible mainly to find proof-texts for their own doctrines. The Bible is not used to gain information and enlightenment of their minds. Paul warns us concerning those who are "walking in craftiness and handling the Word of God deceitfully" (2 Cor. 4:2).

**QUESTION . . .** What is the best method in keeping people from being ensnared by the cults?

**ANSWER . . .** The best method is to consistently and continuously teach the Biblical doctrines in our churches, Sunday Schools and other church organizations. This will build up needed spiritual strength and discernment among God's people as to that which the Bible teaches. Unless the fundamental truths of God's Word are taught some people will be victimized by the modern charlatans and quacks. In addition, literature revealing the errors among the various cults will be helpful for the people.