

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

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- 2. PROBLEMS WITH CERTAIN NON-CULTIC GROUPS
- 4. FOUR FALLACIES OF THE SOCIAL GOSPEL
- 10. THE SCHEMES OF SATAN
- 14. EXISTENTIALISM
- 16. PERTINENT QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

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PROBLEMS WITH CERTAIN NON-CULTIC GROUPS

by Prof. John E. Dahlin, Editor

The problems of Bible-believing Christians are not limited in opposing only the well-known cults, but other developments in our time also demand a proper discrimination on our part. It is necessary that we oppose every form of deviation from the Scriptural standard wherever it appears.

In our time the charismatic movement is taking on a very wide expansion involving many million Protestants and Roman Catholics. Those who have moved into this orbit in our generation have selected one doctrinal area which is receiving an extraordinary emphasis. Their major interest is in Baptism of the Holy Spirit and the speaking in tongues. Usually this is associated with physical healing, which is mainly built on Isaiah 54:4, where the coming redeemer is referred to in the words, "He Himself took our infirmities and sicknesses." Their exegesis is faulty in that they teach that physical healing was directly achieved in Christ's atonement. Matt. 8:17 refers specifically to this passage in Isaiah by stating, "This He did that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet," "He

Himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses." It is stretching the law of hermeneutics in applying a fulfilled prophecy as being effective for all future generations. Modern healers have gone into extremism in a matter not sustained in Scripture. Obviously, all blessings stem from the atonement, or the finished work of Christ. But linking direct healing in the atonement is stretching the Scriptures in an unauthorized way. In writing on our extra-ordinary blessing in Christ, Paul says, "Blessed by the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all *spiritual blessings* in heavenly places in Christ" (Eph. 1:3). Not a word is stated about physical healing. Most believers hold that God heals certain individuals (when it is His will to do so) through the prayer of faith. But such good things from God are extra blessings which He may grant in addition to that which is directly involved in His work of redemption. A number of modern healers has allowed this to become a money-making scheme. Some others are sincere in believing physical healing was achieved

by Christ's atonement.

The charismatics have put all their eggs in "one basket" at the expense of much more important Scriptural matters needing attention. For more than fifty years I have observed this kind of extremism expand until its adherents have lost interest in other major areas of the Scriptures. Even the theological liberals and Roman Catholics are welcome as participants within the charismatic groups, that is, if they subscribe to this specific emphasis. It may be well to take cognizance of Paul's words, "I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God" (Acts 20:17). He refused to identify himself with those of a one-track mind. Notice, he states to Timothy, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness . . . (2 Tim. 3:16).

While the emphasis of the charismatics do not bring them into the cultic classification, their position on the Scripture creates problems, nevertheless, especially for those who lack the capability of discrimination, or in handling aright the Scriptural Truth.

THE TREND TOWARDS ECUMENICITY

In this discussion I do not refer to present-day great church federations, consolidations and mergers of denominations, and the creation of the National Council of Churches with the larger orbit known as the World Council of Churches. These developments have taken place during recent

decades, bringing about a church union of unprecedented dimensions. I have reference to a movement often unnoticed where many evangelicals also work towards ecumenicity. Fragmentation is deplored by these people, hence Holy Week Services are held in which both conservative and liberal groups unite. The large scale all-inclusive evangelistic crusades follow the same pattern. And, social action activities bring about a united effort where separation is not regarded as being important. Even the present-day popular Bible study classes spread all across the land (mostly fine), tend to follow an ecumenical arrangement in that controversial doctrinal matters are mainly left out, and people from many religious groups are participating. Indeed, this seems meritorious, yet it is difficult to provide such studies with a full emphasis on the Biblical imperatives and specific doctrines. Usually the leaders try not to offend any element present in order to maintain the unity. Our Lord, however, did not mince words in his teachings. People said, "This is a hard saying, who can hear it?" The response of many who were present is indicated: "From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with Him." Jesus then turned to the twelve saying, "Will ye also go away?" He did not retreat from His position. The prayer of Jesus for oneness is usually mentioned in the support for unity. But His prayer was limited to His own redeemed company, who by faith had committed

themselves wholly to Him.

It is not popular to take a decisive position in these sensitive areas, but separation is emphasized consistently in the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. The error of ecumenicity is, it leads to accommodation and compromise along a wide front. One may easily seek to rationalize a position which seems expedient. In other words, accepting the philosophy that the end justifies the means. This whole matter merits our prayer and careful evaluation.

In my first pastorate, more than 50 years ago, a carnival came to town for a week. The village population was approximately 800. Those in charge of the arrangements proposed to all the

churches there to unite for a service Sunday morning in the big tent. This was a concession to the churches, you see, as they would get all the offering that morning. The carnival had been a cheap type of entertainment during the week benefiting no one. My Church and I refused to take part. We were subjected to considerable criticism for our stand. Many fair-minded people admired the position we took, however. It gave our church a much stronger influence in the community. The popular ecumenical crowd is pressing you and me to climb aboard the movement and seek unity. We might prayerfully read 2 Cor. 6:14-18 in reaching our position regarding ecumenicity.

FOUR FALLACIES OF THE SOCIAL GOSPEL

by Harold S. Martin

There are **two** gospels being preached in the church today. The one is the Gospel of Jesus Christ, with the message of salvation as seen in John 3:16. The other is the social gospel, which teaches that Jesus was merely a social reformer, and that He expects us to be social reformers too.

The true Gospel of Jesus Christ is a divine offer of salvation, an offer of redemption and deliverance from the penalty of sin. **The social gospel** is a mere human program for social reform. The true Gospel of Jesus Christ is God's only message to lost men: "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures . . . (and) was buried . . . and rose again the third day . . . and in a moment, in the twinkling of an

eye . . . the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed" (I Corinthians 15:3, 4, 52). This is the Gospel. Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures. This is the good news of salvation. And any person who perverts that Gospel, and who offers people something else in place of it, is putting himself in danger, and he is putting in danger the souls of those who listen to him.

The main stress in the professing church during the past several decades has been away from the supernatural and toward the social. One preacher writes, "On Monday evening, our church members are all busy running a rummage sale—our church is in

the junk business. On Tuesday night, our members are serving dinner at the fair—our church is in the restaurant business. On Wednesday night, they are making and selling aprons—our church is in the dry-goods business. On Thursday night, our members are busy borrowing costumes for their big annual entertainment—our church is in the theatre business. On Friday night, they are gathering labels and box-tops, and selling jello—our church is in the grocery business. On Saturday, our members are picking up pies, cakes, bread, and doughnuts (that other church members baked)—our church is in the bakery business." And he concludes by saying, "No wonder this community doesn't know what the business of the church is when Sunday morning comes around."

Many churches are not too much more than a social club. They sell almost anything to make money (jello, oyster soup, dishrags, Christmas cards)—anything, you name it, we have it! But the social gospel is something more serious and more far-reaching than mere social activities. The social activity within so many churches is merely a by-product of a false, perverted gospel.

Everyone recognizes that this world is full of problems. We live in a world of conflict. Ever since Adam and Eve rebelled against God, there has been contention and trouble on earth. Through six thousand years of human history, the conditions have only grown worse. Nation has been fighting against nation; the breach between

the races has become wider and wider; children are becoming increasingly rebellious against parents. In fact this world has not known one single day (since the fall of Adam), in which there has been no strife and conflict. Now **the social gospel** is simply the teaching that God's answer to all this mess is that the church shall go out and attempt to get the whole world Christianized through social and political reforms.

Advocates of the social gospel say that the cure for the world's ills is to have everyone adequately fed and sufficiently clothed, and living in a warm, comfortable house. They believe that with the advance of democracy and science and universal education, mankind will build a new world. But listen friends—better housing conditions and more education will never make the world a better place in which to live. The cause of all the sorrow and death and hatred in this world is **sin**—and until the sin-problem is settled, there will be no release from the troubles of mankind. Society will never be improved until the **individuals** of society are regenerated through the supernatural redemption which God has provided through the blood of Jesus, and **final solution** to the world's problems will only be realized when Jesus comes back, in Person to be king over all the earth. Revelation 19:13-15 says: "His name is called the Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, and out of his mouth goes a sharp sword, that

with it he should smite the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron."

The powers of Hell are assailing the church today in a way that we have never known before. Many preachers are emphasizing racial integration, world peace and disarmament, the liberation of minorities, etc.—and are failing to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and the doctrine of the new birth. Because we believe that this social gospel is a serious departure from the faith of our fathers, and from the will of God, we want to present in this message some of the basic fallacies and errors upon which it is founded.

1. The social gospel teaches the false theory of evolution which ignores the fall of man

This is the first point where the advocates of the social gospel take issue with the Bible. One preacher says, "The fall of man is not a fact. Ever since we have known man on earth, he has been progressing mentally and morally." But Genesis 3 tells about the fall of man. Genesis 6 describes the Flood which swept men from the face of the earth because they had become corrupt. The whole Book of Exodus is devoted to the history of a sinful people. The Scriptures everywhere present man as a sinful, fallen being, tending by nature to go away from God. The Bible declares that humanity is depraved and lost in sin, and that there is none that doeth good, no not one.

Those who preach the social gospel claim that we all started as some kind of jelly on the shoreland

of some prehistoric age, and that through millions of years of evolution, we have been working our way up toward perfection. Everything is lovely they say. The world is getting better and better. Civilization is progressing. We have a World War once in a while (and a few little things like that), but there is nothing fundamentally wrong with man. He will work out his own salvation, if you will just give him a little time. These men teach that man evolved from a lower form of animal by a slow process, and that gradually he is getting better and better, and that it is our Christian duty (that it is the work of the Church) to give him a boost on his way up the ladder toward perfection.

Adam was never a caveman swinging a club. He was a godlike, intelligent being, who fell from the perfect state in which he had been created. Man in his present state, is not on his way up from the beast, he's on his way down from the best! If the first were true (that he is on his way up from the beast), then all he needs is culture. If the second is true (that he is on his way down from the best), then he needs Calvary. If the first is true, all he needs is more education; if the second is true, he needs regeneration. These false teachers say that man is on his way up (he's getting better and better) and that all he needs is a **boost**. God says that man is on his way down (he's getting worse and worse), and that what he needs is a **birth!** The supreme need of every human being born into this world, is spiritual regeneration. Jesus told

Nicodemus (a moral, religious, educated man) that he must be born again. Jesus never tried merely to improve social conditions. His work lay in creating new hearts (and of course this does indirectly improve social conditions). Only to the extent that men receive Jesus Christ into their hearts, only to that extent will the world become a better place in which to live.

The Bible teaches that man was created in perfection. The first man Adam, was not a primitive savage. He was an intelligent man. He named the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air. But he fell from this state of perfection (and all his posterity after him), and now man can be lifted up only through appropriating the plan which God has provided, the blood of Jesus. False teachers say that man started out as some prehistoric slime and that over millions and millions of years, he evolved into the human being, and that through education and reformation and legislation, he is gradually progressing toward a higher plane—and that all he needs is more education, more reformation, more legislation—and finally the golden age will come. This is contrary to the Word of God, and this is the first fallacy of the social gospel.

2. The social gospel asserts that the church will bring the kingdom of God on earth

The social gospel advocates looking at the **church** as a great ship sailing through the seas. The ocean might be stormy they say, but the

ship keeps on in triumph, surely to come into port some day with all the world on board! They expect the world to be Christianized, and every man to be brought under the dominion of the Gospel. But the Bible actually pictures the **world** as a ship—a sinking ship at that—from which the church is to salvage as many souls as possible, before it sinks under the sea of God's judgment. Not one verse in the Bible, teaches (nor even hints) that the whole world is to be converted through the work of the Church. Rather, God is **calling out** from the world a people who will honor His name. This is the meaning of the word "church"—a called out people.

And yet much denominational literature is filled with teaching that the church must Christianize the world. One paper says, "There is still much work that needs to be done in this world in order to bring all mankind to Christ." That's false teaching. It is our duty to bring Christ to all the world, and to preach the Gospel to every creature (to evangelize)—but it can never be our duty to bring all the world to Christ (to Christianize)—for Jesus in Matthew 7 that the majority of men will reject Him.

God's purpose in this age is not primarily to improve the social and moral order of the world, but to form His Church, the Body of called-out believers in Christ. Acts 15:14 says, "Simon hath declared how God . . . did visit the Gentiles to take out of them a people for his name." The primary task of the Church in this age, is to preach the

Gospel of salvation to all men; to offer them eternal life in Jesus Christ; and to gather a remnant of true believers and teach them the ways of God. Those who are taught the ways of God **will be** concerned about the suffering of humanity, and **will offer** relief and rehabilitation, but this will not be the only and primary concern.

Many teachers today promote the idea that the church is merely an agency for world-betterment. They talk about bringing-in the kingdom, and making the world a fit place in which to live, and that sort of thing. The world was filled with social ills in Paul's day, but he made no attempt to free the slaves. He didn't even try and reorganize society. He had no idea whatsoever of interfering with politics. The message of the Church is not a message of social reform, but a message of personal redemption in Jesus Christ.

3. **The social gospel declares that all men are the children of God**

One prominent preacher says, "The basic constitution of Christianity is that God is our Father, and that therefore all men are brothers. The world is a human family, with God as Father . . . please note . . . we do not offer you a brotherhood of Christians only." Now if god is the Father of all mankind, and if we are all His children, then we must all be inherently good. If all men are the children of God, then there is no kingdom of evil, there is no devil, and there is no Hell. There's no need for a place of punishment when all persons are basically

good and are the children of God. One preacher says, "I believe all of us are more godlike than we really know. It's merely a matter of bringing it out. What a man requires, is not regeneration in the old sense, or a change in nature, but simply an awakening to what he really is." This man is saying that we are all godlike—all we have to do, is to wake up, and see how godly we are!

From this same false reasoning, these men also conclude that sin is not a personal evil, but a social evil (the consequence of improper social conditions). They say, "Clear away the slums; give the drunkard a new house; see that every boy and girl gets a free public education—and everything will be all right; sin will disappear." The Bible, however, does not teach that if we give people enough soup and enough soap, they will be all right. Some of the most brutal crimes ever committed have occurred in the most educated and civilized parts of the world. It's true that our Lord might disapprove of the slums—but He wants us to spend our time facing the real problem, the slums of the human heart!

The fact is that all men are **not** the children of God. The Bible teaches that there are really two brotherhoods in this world. There are those who are "in Adam." and those who are "in Christ." The New Testament most clearly teaches that men are not the children of God by their first birth, but that they must be converted and born again, before they become children of God in the true

sense of the word. The Bible says in John 1:12, "To as many as received him (Christ), to them gave he power (the right) to become the sons of God." Galatians 3:26 says, "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." In 1 John 3:10 we read "in this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil; whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother."

Jesus, in telling the parable of the wheat and tares, says, "The good seed are the children of the Kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one." Jesus clearly says that there are two distinct classes of people in this world. The one class He calls the children of God. The other, He calls the children of the devil.

All men are creatures of God, in the sense that God made us all, but nowhere does the New Testament say that all men are the children of God. If all men are brothers (merely because God created them), then they are brothers not only to human beings, but also to prairie dogs, tadpoles, Texas rabbits, and in fact, any creature you can name. The only brotherhood of man taught in the Scriptures, is that of the household of faith—those who have been born again, purchased by the blood of Jesus at Calvary. Therefore (in view of the fact that men who have never been converted to Christ are not the children of God, but are on the road to eternal perdition), it is clear that the supreme duty of the Church is not to remove mere outward social conditions, but to win

men to repentance and to a personal faith in Jesus Christ.

4. The social gospel emphasizes the building of a united super-church

The prophetic Scriptures indicate that in the end of the age, there will be a trend toward centralization in every area of human activity. In politics, this means a world government; in religion, it means a world church. Religion is even now shaping up into a world organization. The demand for a one-world religion is growing in the minds of many Catholic and Protestant church leaders alike. The goal of the ecumenical movement from its very beginning, has been the formation of a united church body, into which Protestant, Catholic, and Orthodox groups should finally merge.

The word "ecumenical" is used much in our day. It literally means "world-wide in extent," and when used in connection with church unity, it simply speaks of the bringing of all professing Christians throughout the world into one great religious organization. The Councils of Churches are functioning as instruments for the building of this future united church.

The Bible predicts an ecumenical church and a world political leader in the last days. The cries for these two men are heard on every hand today. In the **political realm**, the fear of an atomic war is bringing on the cry for a united world. We are told the civilization is doomed, unless all nations unite under one federal

head. This is leading to the beast out of the sea, the Antichrist. Revelation 13 says that he will be a man of marvellous appearance, a kind of president over all the earth. All the civilized world will wonder after him, and do homage to him, and in his pride, he will speak great and blasphemous things against God. In the **religious realm**, men are deploring the differences that exist in the denominations within Christendom, and as a result movements are on foot to form a union of churches. Church leaders say that division is the scandal of Christianity, and that it weakens our churches, and so the cry goes out for church union and world brotherhood. You may remember that the Pharisees and Sadducees were divided in their religious

beliefs too. Acts 23 says that one group believed in the resurrection and the doctrine of angels, whereas the other did not. When Jesus met with so much opposition among the people, and saw all the religious controversy, why didn't He unite all those different groups into one federated movement, and become the president of the new society himself? Church union always involves compromise at the expense of the purity of the faith. I trust that together we can say, "Our faith is in the living God; our hope is not in the United Nations; we don't believe that education is the solution to our problems; our hope is in the second coming of Jesus; we accept what the Bible teaches about Him. Even so come quickly, Lord Jesus."

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THE SCHEMES OF SATAN

by Dr. Roy Knuteson, Pastor
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Underlying the structure of each of the cults today are basic concepts as old as Satan himself. Paul warned about the "wiles", "snares", and "doctrines" of the Devil. He flatly stated: "We are not unaware of his schemes" (2 Cor. 2:11 NIV), as the words suggest, that Satan has a basic "concept of mind, or pattern of thought" that has remained unchanged throughout the ages. The "old dragon" has not changed his tactics. The same basic methods whereby he duped Eve in the garden are in vogue today. Satan

may altar his outer garments and change his name, but the old lion's tail, claws, and growl are still recognized.

Every new generation offers a challenge to the adversary to try out his old schemes. He is still "walking about seeking whom he may devour" (1 Peter 5:8). He still desires to "sift" men (Luke 22:31) and to beguile them (Genesis 3:13).

A survey of church history reveals that the age-old heresies, all condemned in ecclesiastical councils, continue to show up in each century, proving again that

the "god of this age" is still about his diabolical work. He has not changed.

Christians need to be aware of his tactics and "resist him steadfastly in the faith" (I Peter 5:9). Many who are "captured at his will" (2Tim. 2:26) fail to recognize his methods or "wiles" (Eph. 6:11). Basic to any defense system is an understanding of the enemy's strength, weapons, and tactics. The degree of conquest and victory is directly related to our knowledge of these vital matters, whether it be in the physical or spiritual realm. An examination of the Bible will reveal at least four "schemes" regularly practiced by the Devil.

1. IN RELATION TO THE SCRIPTURES.

The first thing that ought to be observed is that Satan cannot quote the Bible correctly. He either questions its authority, wrenches it from its context, or deliberately misquotes, or adds to it.

In Eden's garden he used his "more subtle" approach as he questioned the Word of God by asking: "Yea, hath God said, you shall not eat of every tree in the garden?" Millenniums later, his followers ask: "Where is the promise of his (Christ's) coming?" (2 Peter 3:4), again casting doubt upon the veracity of the Word of God. Every attempt by ancient and modern man to discredit or question the Bible is a manifest token of Satan's changeless "schemes".

Another favorite trick of the enemy is to take a passage out of its context in order to use it for his

own pre-designed and evil purposes. To Jesus Christ, Satan said: "Cast thyself down (from the temple pinnacle) for it is written, He shall give His angels charge over thee, and in their hands shall they bear thee up" (Matt. 4:6). The setting of this quotation from Psalm 91 was completely ignored by the Devil in his foolish insistence that the Son of God recklessly leap from the temple pinnacle. No protection is promised in the Psalm for fool-hardy ventures like that. Jesus knew this and brushed Satan aside with a direct quotation from the same Old Testament scriptures.

Informed, and alert believers recognize this tactic in the glib Bible quotations by the Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons. The supposed support for the existence of the Book of Mormon from Ezekiel 37:16, 17 vanishes when the rest of the chapter is read. The violation of this basic hermeneutical principle of Bible interpretation is what gives rise to the fantastic prophetic schemes of the Seventh Day Adventists and British Israelites. The "day-year" theory of these two cults collapses when the context of their "proof-texts" is examined.

Satan loves to deliberately *misquote* and *add* to the Word of God. To Eve he said: "You shall *not* surely die! (Gen 3:4) in direct contradiction to the plain statement of Almighty God in Genesis 2:7. The Mormon's contention that Jesus was born in *Jerusalem* (cf. Alma 7:10) further illustrates this scheme of the Evil One. All of the "additional revelation," whether it be

the claims of Ellen G. White, Mary Baker Eddy, Joseph Smith, or The Pope of Rome, simply multiplies the evidence that the "lion still roars" (I Peter 5:8). The omniscient God sounded the warning: "If any shall ADD . . . or TAKE AWAY from the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life . . . (Rev. 22:18, 19).

2. IN RELATION TO THE SAVIOUR

Paul emphatically states that "the god of this world (age) hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, *who is the image of God* should shine unto them" (2 Cor. 4:4). Satan knows who Jesus Christ is. The "anointed cherub" (Ezk. 28:14-15) knew the "Word, who was God" (John 1:1). In the temptation of Christ, He affirms this knowledge by stating: "Since (not "if" as A.V.) you are the Son of God . . ." (Matt. 4:3).

While Satan knows and recognizes the deity of our Lord, he continues to blind men's minds to this truth. The religious people of Jesus' day said: "If thou be the Christ, come down from the cross" (Matt. 27:40). The nation of Israel could not accept His deity, hence the crucifixion. That blindness continues even until this day (2 Cor. 3:14). The diabolical teaching of the Mormon church that Jesus Christ was the natural offspring of Adam and Mary shows the present-day manifestation of that blindness. In these attempts to discredit the Son of Man, Satan is

still striving to exalt his throne "above the stars of God" (Isa. 14:13).

Every individual, whether he be a cultist or liberal, perpetuates "the lie" (2 Thess. 2:11) of Satan, whenever the divinity, virgin birth, or integrity of Jesus Christ is questioned. The Bible affirms the deity of our Saviour, but Satan deplores it. There is still "division among the people because of Him (Christ)" (John 7:43).

The anti-Christ spirit of Satan not only attacks the *person* of Christ by clouding men's minds to the truth, but he attempts to discredit His *works* as well. Jesus said: "Believe the works that ye may know and believe that the Father is in me and I in Him: (John 10:38). Yet the religious leaders of the first century charged Christ as being empowered by demonic power (Luke 11:15). They minimized His mighty works (John 9:24), and even attempted to destroy the evidence of His power! (cf. John 12:10-11). Nineteen hundred years later His miracles are still being ignored, denied, or explained away. Satan's "ministers of righteousness" (2 Cor. 11:15) continue their diabolical monologue.

The "old dragon" is not completely satisfied, however, for in one last master stroke of strategy he will establish his "man of sin" (2 Thess. 2:3) who shall perform "signs and lying wonders" (2 Thess. 2:9). The Devil's last attempt to discredit the Saviour and His work will be the introduction of his own "anti" (or substitute) Christ.

The doom of all such doctrine

and schemes is clearly announced in the prophecy of the Bible: "The Devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night forever" (Rev. 20:10).

3. IN RELATION TO SALVATION

Having twisted the scriptures, and denied the Saviour, the next natural scheme of Satan is to destroy God's plan of salvation. "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly that in the latter times, some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and the doctrines of demons" (I Tim. 4:1). The "doctrine" of Satan and his demonic hordes is a religion of works. In spite of the clear Bible statement: "By grace are ye saved through faith . . . *not of works*, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:8, 9), the Devil has warped the minds of men to cause them to believe that they can "work the works of God" (John 6:28), and thus merit eternal life!

Legalism or human works of righteousness are condemned by Paul in Galatians 1:6-9. Whether it be the "observance of days, months and years" (Gal. 4:10), the "abstinence from meats" (I Tim. 4:3), "much praying" (Matt. 6:7), "sabbath worship" (Col. 2:16), or even a ministry of supernatural wonders (cf. Matt. 7:21-23), it is still the work of the flesh and rests under the curse of God. "They that are in the flesh cannot please God" (Rom. 8:8). "For without faith it is impossible to please God . . ." (Heb. 11:6). Therefore, it is "to

him that WORKETH NOT, but to believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness . . . blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute iniquity" (Rom. 4: 5, 8). Bible salvation is "not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy . . ." (Titus 3:5).

Every religion, or cult that denies the grace of God for salvation and security, rests under the anathema of the Almighty (Gal. 1:8).

4. IN RELATION TO SELF

Lucifer was self-deceived. He believed that he could "be like the Most High" (Isa. 14:14). He, himself, demanded worship (Matt. 4:9). His "schemes" (2 Cor. 2:11), are that he alone is right and that God and His Word are wrong. He transformed himself "into an angel of light and it is therefore no great thing that his ministers be transformed as ministers of righteousness" (2 Cor. 11:14-15).

Satan's followers, like himself, are "vainly puffed up in their fleshly minds" (Col. 2:18). Every cult demonstrates this *exclusivistic* spirit. They all claim to be the only true religion established by God. It would appear as though Satan's kingdom is divided as his dupes war among themselves for the populace of this planet. Yet basically, they are all warring for him. His hosts are dressed in various disguises and arrayed in strange formations, but they are readily recognized by this spirit of self deception which permeates the whole pack.

"All deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ" (2 Cor. 11:13) will boast of their huge temples, number of congregations, radio outreach, literature distribution, and total constituency "supposing that gain is godliness" (2 Tim. 6:5). How deceived they are! They have swallowed the lie of the Deceiver, but "their end shall be according to their works" (2 Cor. 11:15).

Jesus rebuked this sectarian spirit. When his disciples complained of one who "followed not with us" (Lu. 9:49), He said: "Whosoever is not against us is for us" (Lu. 9:50), proving that this isolation spirit of the cults is wrong along with their erroneous doctrine.

EXISTENTIALISM

by Dr. William Be Vier, Dean of Education
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Existentialism has been defined as the modern philosophy of despair, of the absurd, of meaninglessness. William Barrett writes: "No school of philosophy in recent decades has attracted quite so much popular attention as existentialism," [William Barrett, ed., *Philosophy in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Random House, 1962), III, 141.].

The influence of existentialism has ranged from the bohemian element in Paris and elsewhere, to the literary, psychiatric, entertainment, and academic subcultures. For the Christian, existentialism needs to be recognized when encountered.

The origin of existentialism is explained as a reaction against the "organization man," the regimen-

CONCLUSION

Satan will continue to perpetuate his methods of deceit regarding the Scriptures, the Saviour, salvation, and self. An informed Christian, however, should be able to detect his tactics regardless of attire or title, and turn away, not lending ear, nor support to these diabolical systems of error.

"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: for many false prophets are gone out into the world" (1 John 4:1).

"Prove all things; hold fast to the good" (1 Thess. 5:21).

tation of church, state, or commerce, and the mechanistic technology in which the individual is lost in the mass or the group and dehumanized.

Existentialism is essentially unstructured as a philosophy; one of its chief characteristics being individualism, so much so that some existentialists do not recognize other existentialists. However, to most non-existentialists, existentialists divide into two main groups on the issue of the existence of God, forming theistic and atheistic existentialism.

Among the theistic existentialists are Soren Kierkegaard (1813-1855, the "gloomy Dane"), Fyodor Dostoevsky (1821-1881, Russian novelist some have sought to iden-

tify as an evangelical believer), Paul Tillich, Martin Buber (Jewish, "I-Thou" relationships), Karl Jaspers, and Gabriel Marcel (French, Roman Catholic). Atheistic existentialists are identified as Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-1980) and Martin Heidegger (b. 1889). Heidegger is usually recognized as a leader in the movement, but he repeatedly has denied being an existentialist.

Existentialism has had its greatest acceptance on the continent of Europe, Cf. France and Germany, and in the United States. Some see its popularity growing out of the despair which swept over Europe with the depression of the 1920s, the rise of totalitarianism, World War II, and the rejection of the Christian heritage of Western Europe. Americans tend to accept it as "something new."

Another area of popularity, though frequently not understood by its adherents, has been among college-age American young people. Existentialism became the "in thing" with the "hippie" movement. Many proudly identified themselves as "Existentialists," quoting Sartre, Camus, and other existentialists. When questioned about the tenets of their philosophy and its relationships to life or reality, many would retreat behind the words "It doesn't matter," or "Man, you don't understand." The fact that you ask questions of them was proof that you "didn't understand." From such encounters the inquirer was left with the impression existentialism was an attitude, not a way of life,

and perhaps it really "didn't matter." But this was popular, man-on-the-street existentialism, not the philosophical approach found in literature.

Some identify Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) as an existentialist, but he was not so identified until the 1960s. This is one of the amazing changes in philosophy in the last decade or so, to consider Nietzsche an early representative of existentialism.

One should note the terminology repeatedly used by existentialists. Certain words serve to identify the movement. Among the terms are: negation, leap of faith, crisis, decision, accountability, paradox, dilemma, enigma, selfhood, being and non-being, and the foundational concept "existence precedes essence." It should be remembered that the meanings for these terms are assigned by each existentialist, so vary from person to person.

To make a prediction, existentialism probably will not stand the test of time. It appears to be past its height of popularity, though still advocated by some. The two basic traditional philosophies of Idealism and Realism have stood through the centuries, and existentialism is essentially a pessimistic form of Idealism.

In conclusion, existentialism is humanistic and subjective, and has no contribution to make to Biblical Christianity or to Christian living. One is reminded of Colossians 2:8, "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy . . ."; the only academic discipline the Christian is warned against in Scripture.

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PERTINENT QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

John E. Dahlin, Editor

QUESTION . . . How does the social gospel differ from the redemptive message of the New Testament?

ANSWER . . . The social gospel magnifies the responsibility of the church in being actively humanitarian in its activities. This involves changing the present political world order and the economic and social spheres as well. It means also changing the environment and getting rid of the slums and blighted urban areas. The social gospel is committed to such panaceas, but it has nothing spiritually to offer a needy world. The redemptive message is centered in the truth that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures. It majors in seeking to win the individuals for the Lord rather than cure the ills of society. It involves getting the slums out of the sinful hearts of men rather than seeking to remove the external slums. The redemptive message holds forth the need to be born again by believing on the Lord Jesus Christ. Acts 16:31.

QUESTION . . . Does the present ecumenical movement have a true Biblical position on which to base its program?

ANSWER . . . The favorite passage of the promoters of ecumenicity is the prayer of Jesus, "that they may be one as thou art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one of us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me" (John 17:21). The Lord did not pray for ecclesiastical, external, or denominational unity as casual readers of the passage believe. Christ prayed for His own, the blood-bought and the redeemed. It was not a prayer for organizational unity at all. The Lord did not pray for an institutionalized, all-inclusive or universal unity in Christendom.