

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

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## THREE FATAL ERRORS OF THE CULTISTS

*Prof. John E. Dahlin, Editor*

To a large extent most Christian people have only a superficial grasp of the activities of the various cults and their deviation from the Biblical truth. There is, of course, a vague awareness by them of the shortcomings of these spurious groups. But the majority of present-day Christians are unable, nevertheless, to identify specific departures from the Scriptures by these off-center cults. By this I refer to a position where they contradict those who hold views which harmonize with historic Christianity.

In my many years of leadership of Religious Analysis Service I have had the opportunity of studying and evaluating the positions held by the leading cults of our time. In this examination I have found that certain viewpoints are held in common by a number of these groups. Their error in this regard may be understood if the matter is given proper attention and scrutiny. There are certain distinctives which characterize practically all of the cults. Three of these positions, where cultists have erred, will be covered by this article.

### **An Inadequate Position Pertaining to Jesus Christ**

All the cults, so far as my knowledge extends, have departed from the clear presentation of our Lord as it is set forth in the New Testament. For example, the Jehovah's Witnesses teach that Christ is the highest of the created beings. By this unorthodox position this cult has downgraded the Son of God. And, to them He is not coequal and coeternal with God, the Father. They have deliberately misinterpreted and mistranslated the key passage in the New Testament which sets forth the divine nature of Jesus Christ. For example, the Jehovah's Witnesses have translated John 1:1 to read, "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was "a God." No other translation has rendered that passage to read "a God." By doing this, the Jehovah's Witnesses have manifested the audacity to classify Jesus Christ as a created being, which denies His eternal attributes. In other words, they have rejected the doctrine of the trinity (which is

also true of most of the cults), and hence they have become unitarian in their teaching concerning the Godhead. Even the Seventh Day Adventists (a group which has deviated less than other cults from the Scriptural truths) hold that Jesus Christ in His incarnation assumed a sinful nature, also that He could have sinned.

They regard the atonement as still being unfinished. The Adventists boldly teach that all the sins of the ages will eventually be gathered up and unloaded upon satan, who like the Old Testament scape goat will carry them away. This violates the basic New Testament passage, "But now once, in the end of the (ages) hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself" (Heb. 9:26). The redemptive work was completed at calvary, and it will never come up for a review, or be brought to a conclusion as the Adventists teach. In 1 John. chapter 4 and verses 2-4 the writer offers the test of orthodoxy. It rests on the position taken towards the person of Jesus Christ. On this point Paul adds these significant words, "For in Him dwelleth the fullness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. 2:9).

### **A False Position On Scriptural Exposition**

All cultic groups demonstrate a calloused disregard for the law of Biblical hermeneutics in the exposition of the Scriptures. Their position stands diametrically in opposition to the principle of interpretation of the Scriptures which is followed by honorable Bible teachers. These expositors give full consideration to such vital matters as textual context,

or the setting in which the passage occurs. In other words, Bible-believing teachers permit Scripture to interpret Scripture. This is the most reliable manner in which to secure the right meaning of a passage under consideration. The Jehovah's Witnesses have thrown such sound principles to the winds as it were. In fact, they have chosen to wrench passages of the Scriptures out of their proper context in order to bolster their preconceived views. To illustrate: The name, Jehovah's Witnesses is selected from various verses in both the Old and the New Testaments. Each time they use that expression they convey a meaning which was never intended by the inspired writers. The twisting of the Scripture is perhaps best illustrated when they translate John 1:1 to read that our Lord was "a God." By providing a false translation they succeed in their objective to downgrade the attributes of Jesus Christ. To them He simply is the highest created creature and not the coeternal and coequal One with the Father. Other cultists follow the same dishonest technique in twisting the Scriptures to mean what their perverted thinking wishes to achieve. In fact, the various cults have this in common, namely, wrenching a textual statement out of its context and then providing an exposition that is unwarranted regarding the Biblical passage selected.

### **A Belief in Continued Revelation**

Another area in which cultists err is their acceptance of ongoing revelation. This has become a major teaching among many of the cultists

of our time. Whether one considers the Mormon Church, Herbert W. Armstrong's teaching, Christian Science or several others, it is clear that continued revelation is a foundational part of these false systems. This is, of course, a distinct departure from the position of historic Christianity. Properly considered, the revelation of God has been confined to include only the sixty-six canonical books. The cultic groups hold an unscriptural position regarding the matter of the written revelation. The last book of the Bible strictly forbids any addition or subtraction to God's revealed truth. Listen to this statement, "If any man shall take away from the words of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the tree of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book" (Rev. 22:19). If we couple this verse with Paul's inspired words, we become convinced that ongoing revelation is totally unscriptural. The apostle writes, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect (thoroughly) furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 2:16-17). By no stretch of imagination does this include the writings of the so-called modern prophets and spokesmen of the cults.

The deliberate departure from the historic position of Christianity on revelation opens the way for every conceivable teaching which the cultic

groups wish to propagate. Herbert W. Armstrong, for example, claims to have received his revelation from God in the year 1934, and he writes that the world had lost the real divine truth since the end of the first century. The Mormon Church has incorporated ongoing revelation as an integral part of their system. The President of the Mormon Church stated it publically, just a few years ago, that he had received a revelation that Negro males may now qualify for the priesthood, a position denied to them during the entire history of Mormonism. Christian Science has also considered the teachings of Mary Baker Eddy as being divinely inspired. Jesus limited the authoritative revelation of God to the Holy Scriptures. Frequently he said, "It is written" and then He proceeded to enlighten the hearers by quoting the divinely inspired word. There is no hint whatever by the Lord that continued revelation has a validity such as the cultic spokesmen claim they possess. It simply is an example of twisting the Scriptures to conform to their warped ideas. These three positions which I have discussed clearly demonstrate the fatal errors of the present-day cultists. Since these include foundational positions relative to Scriptural authority, it becomes mandatory that we reject their concept of ongoing revelation. This, then, covers the fatal errors widely held by a number of cults in our generation.

# THE BRITISH-ISRAEL TEACHING IS FALSE

*By the late Dr. John R. Rice*

The Scriptures are sufficient to show that all the twelve tribes were represented in the southern nation called Judah, when it carried captive; that representatives of all the twelve tribes returned later under Ezra and Nehemiah to Jerusalem and Judea, and that in the time of Christ, the Jews represented all the house of Israel; the rulers of Israel were the senate of Israel and elders of Israel; the letters written to the twelve tribes were written to Jews: Christ was the King of the Jews; the twelve apostles will judge the twelve tribes of Israel on twelve thrones. There is not a leg for the foolish Anglo-Israel teaching to stand upon.

## **Science and History Prove That England and America Could Not Possibly Be Israel**

1. There is absolutely no history of any migration from the ancient country of Babylon across Europe into England, as is claimed by the British-Israel teachers. For such an entire nation to migrate across an entire continent, keeping its blood pure, would be so startling a phenomenon that it could not be. It simply did not happen. It cannot be traced by reputable historians.

2. The Anglo-Saxon people do not have any of the ethnological inheritance that would be inevitable if they were descended from the so-called "lost ten tribes" of Israel.

Consider, first, that the Anglo-Saxon people have no trace of the Hebrew language, and never have

had. The Hebrew language is written right to left. The Anglo-Saxon is written left to right. They are written with different alphabets. It is only accidental that some names are similar, as is true of all languages. There is no language kinship between the English and the Hebrew. This is a scientific fact.

Consider next that the Anglo-Saxon people had no tradition whatever about circumcision. When you remember how tenaciously Jews have held to circumcision in every clime and country, amidst every kind of persecution in these twenty centuries since Christ, it is inconceivable that another group of Israelites, staying together as a nation and having the same law, the same customs, the same teaching, should utterly forget the matter until there was not a tradition nor a trace if it. That simply would not happen.

Consider also that the Anglo-Saxon people had no Sabbath until it was introduced by Christian missionaries. The Sabbath was given to the nation Israel as a particular sign between her and God, as you see in Exodus 31:16 and 17 and Ezekiel 20:12. But the Anglo-Saxon people did not have any Sabbath, as an evidence that they were the people Israel. They were not.

Actually, the British-Israel doctrine is a matter of sinful national pride, a trying to assume an honor that does not belong to the English and American people. We are not Israel.

And finally, it seems foolish to sup-

pose that England would be Ephraim and that America would be Manasseh, when we are of the same blood, insofar as we are both Anglo-Saxon people. There would be just as much reason to suppose that England was Manasseh and that America was Ephraim, as to suppose the contrary. However, since the doctrine started in England and Ephraim was a larger tribe, more often mentioned in the Scriptures, they chose to be Ephraim and chose that America might be Manasseh!

The idea is not only unscriptural, but utterly unscientific.

### **The British-Israel Theory Utterly Contradicts Divine Prophecies**

The British-Israel theory speaks of a throne and kingdom, but it is the throne of the house of Hanover, not the throne of the house of David. It honors British kings instead of the Lord Jesus.

The land which is honored in Bible

prophecy as the place where Christ will return and reign, is clearly the land of Palestine. Again and again we are told that the children of Israel will return to "the mountains of Israel," and "to their own land." "the land of their fathers," etc. That could not be England.

Again the Bible teaching is that the millennial reign will be set up by Christ in person at His return. Christ Himself will overthrow the nations and set up His kingdom. In contradiction, the British-Israel people teach that England and America must rule the world, that we are "God's battle-axe." Thus the British-Israel teaching violates all true understanding of Bible prophecy. It is a doctrine of vain and prideful men who would take to themselves and to their nation honor that does not belong to them. The only way to believe it is by a perversion of Scripture and by ignoring facts of history and science.

*from the Sword of the Lord*

## **CYNICS ARE UNABLE TO ANSWER THE FOLLOWING MIRACLES**

Loose statements are often made by critics who deny the inerrancy of the Scriptures, but they cannot explain any of the following facts:

**1. The Unity of the Scriptures.** It is a well established fact that the Bible was written over a period of 1600 years by about 40 authors from all walks of life. But the amazing thing is that the Bible has one theme which continues throughout the 66 books of the Old and the New Testaments.

**2. Fulfilled Prophecy.** These numerous prophecies concern the nation Israel, the nations of the world, and the Lord Jesus Christ. They have been literally fulfilled, or are now being fulfilled in such a remarkable way as to defy human explanation.

**3. Transformed Lives.** A hundred thousand or more examples could be given to verify this fact. One of the best examples of God's transforming

power is seen in John Newton, the vile libertine who penned these lines:

*"Amazing grace! how sweet the sound  
That saved a wretch like me!  
I once was lost, but now I'm found,  
Was blind, but now I see."*

At one time the Pharisees sent officers to arrest the Lord Jesus. These men stood and listened to Jesus as He spoke. Then they returned to the Pharisees without arresting Christ. When the Pharisees asked why they had not arrested Him, the officers

said, "Never man spake like this man." In the same way we can say of the Bible, "Never book spake like this Book." No other book speaks with the same commanding tone. No other book reveals the matchless grace of God. No other book so fills the mind with peace and joy. No other book can feed the soul of man. A simple reading of the Bible will convince any honest heart that it is the Word of God.

*from Missionary Crusader*

## AN ANSWER FOR ASIMOV

*By Henry M. Morris, Ph.D.*

One of the most widely circulated anti-creationist articles to appear in many years was recently published in the *New York Times Magazine*. There was nothing new or significant in the article, but it has nevertheless been reprinted in whole or in part, under various titles, in newspapers from coast to coast and overseas, and has probably turned many people against creationism.

The reason for its impact is certainly not its contents, which feature the usual evolutionary distortions and pseudo-logic. However, the author is Dr. Isaac Asimov, the most prolific and widely read science writer of our generation, and this fact has assured a wide audience for his opinions. He is the author of over 230 books on all kinds of scientific subjects, including even a few books on the Bible, and many people consider him an authority on anything he chooses to write about.

Asimov does, indeed have impressive academic credentials and is

a brilliant writer. It is, however, impossible for any scientist to be a real "authority" on anything outside his own limited field of special study and research (which, in Isaac Asimov's case, consists of certain aspects of enzyme chemistry), so that he owes his reputation more to his exceptional ability in the techniques of exposition than to his accomplishments in scientific research.

Furthermore, Dr. Asimov has his own religious axe to grind. He was one of the signers of the infamous *Humanist Manifesto II*, promulgated by the American Humanist Association in 1973. Among other statements, this Manifesto includes the following anti-theistic affirmations:

"As in 1933, humanists still believe that traditional theism, especially faith in the prayer-hearing God, assumed to love and care for persons, to hear and understand their prayers, and to be able to do something about them, is an unproved and outmoded

faith.”

“As nontheists, we begin with humans not God, nature not deity.”

“No deity will save us; we must save ourselves.”

Asimov and other humanists decry the teaching of creationism as “religious” while, at the same time, their *Manifesto* proclaims their own set of beliefs to be “a living and growing faith.”

The quasi-scientific basis of their humanistic faith, of course, is evolution. *Humanist Manifesto I* (published first in 1933) made this clear. Its first four tenets were as follows:

*First:* Religious humanists regard the universe as self-existing and not created.

*Second:* Humanism believes that man is a part of nature and that he has emerged as the result of a continuous process.

*Third:* Holding an organic view of life, humanists find that the traditional dualism of mind and body must be rejected.

*Fourth:* Humanism recognizes that man’s religious culture and civilization, as clearly depicted by anthropology and history, are the product of a gradual development due to his interaction with his natural environment . . .”

It is significant that Asimov, in his anti-creationist harangue, does not attempt to offer even one slight scientific evidence for evolution. Nevertheless he proclaims: “To those who are trained in science, creationism seems like a bad dream, a sudden reliving of a nightmare, a renewed march of an army of the night risen to challenge free thought and enlightenment.” Asimov, as a prize-winning writer of science fiction, is a master at the use of emo-

tional rhetoric to intimidate and frighten, and this essay is a skillful masterpiece of alarmist propaganda. He warns about those previous “societies in which the armies of the night have ridden triumphantly over minorities in order to establish a powerful orthodoxy which dictates official thought.” He concludes with an Asimovian prophecy: “With creationism in the saddle, American science will wither . . . We will inevitably recede into the backwater of civilization . . .” The “prophet” Isaac never mentions the fact that most of the great founding fathers of modern science (e.g., Newton, Pascal, Kelvin, Faraday, Galileo, Kepler, etc.) were theistic creationists, nor that thousands of fully qualified scientists today have repudiated the evolutionary indoctrination of their school days in favor of the much stronger scientific evidences for creation.

Although Asimov gives no arguments or evidences for evolution, he does attempt to identify and refute what he thinks are the seven most important arguments for creation. These he denotes as follows:

(1) **The Argument from Analogy.**

Since no one would question that the existence of a watch implies an intelligent watchmaker, by analogy the much more intricate and complex universe implies an intelligent universe-maker. Asimov makes no attempt to answer this unanswerable argument, except to say that “to surrender to ignorance and call it God has always been premature.” Such an answer is foolishness. The principles of mathematical probability and scientific causality certainly do not constitute a “surrender to ig-



norance," but provide a compelling demonstration that complex systems do not originate out of chaotic systems by random processes.

(2) **The Argument from General Consent.** By this term, Asimov means the widespread belief among all peoples that the world must have been brought into its present form by some god or gods. Asimov maintains that the "Hebrew myths" of creation are no more credible than all these other beliefs and that "such general consent proves nothing."

Actually this so-called "argument from general consent" is rarely, if ever, used by creationists. However, it is almost always used by evolutionists to prove evolution! That is, since they can cite no *scientific* evidences for evolution, they use the argument that "all scientists believe evolution" as the main proof of evolution.

(3) **The argument from Belittlement.** Here Asimov incorrectly accuses creationists of failing to understand scientific terminology and of belittling evolution as "only a scientific theory." As a matter of fact, creationists maintain that real "vertical" evolution is not even a scientific theory, since it is not testable. There is no scientific experiment which, even in imagination, could suffice either to confirm or to falsify, either macro-evolution or creation. The proper term to use is not "scientific theory" or even "scientific hypothesis," but "scientific model" or "paradigm," or some such title. The creation model can be used far more effectively than the evolution model in predicting and correlating scientific data (the laws of thermodynamics, the character of the fossil record,

etc.).

(4) **The Argument from Imperfection.** Creationists are often accused of mistaking disagreements among evolutionists as evidence that evolution itself is false. Actually, all creationists are well aware of this distinction, but it does seem odd, if evolution is a sure fact of science, that it is so difficult to describe how it works! How does it happen that, if evolution is such a common process in nature, its mechanics remain so obscure? Yet, as Asimov says: "However much scientists argue their differing beliefs in details of evolutionary theory, or in the interpretation of the necessarily imperfect fossil record, they firmly accept the evolutionary process itself." Evolutionists walk by faith, not by sight!

(5) **The Argument from Distorted Science.** One of the main creationist arguments against evolution is its apparent conflict with the second law of thermodynamics, but Asimov says this argument is "distorted science," since it ignores the fact that the earth is an open system. Of course, it does *not* ignore the fact that the earth is an open system; evolutionists such as Asimov seem to have a strange blind spot at this point, perversely continuing to ignore the fact that this naive charge has been repeatedly answered and refuted. Asimov should know, as a chemist, that the mere influx of external heat into an open system (such as solar energy entering the earth-system) would *not* increase the order (or "complexity" or "information") in that system, but would actually increase its entropy (or "disorder" or "randomness") more rapidly than if it were a closed system! If "order" or

“complexity” is actually to increase in any open system, the latter must first be *programmed* to utilize the incoming energy in some organizing fashion and then be provided also with a complex energy *storage-and-conversion* mechanism to transform the raw heat influx into the specific useful work of increasing the organized complexity of the system. Since the imaginary evolutionary process on the earth possesses neither such a directing program nor organizing mechanism, the second law of thermodynamics does indeed conflict with it and, to all intents and purposes, renders it impossible.

Asimov also makes the arrogant charge that creationist scientists “have not made any mark as scientists.” The fact is that a cross-section of the records of the scientists on the ICR staff, for example, or of the Creation Research Society, would compare quite favorably with those of most secular colleges and universities (including Asimov’s own record).

(6) **The Argument from Irrelevance.** This criticism is merely a caricature of the concept of a completed creation, which Asimov thinks would be “deceptive.” The fact is that a genuine creation would necessarily require creation of “apparent age,” the only alternative being eternal matter and no true creation. There is no deception involved at all. As a matter of fact, the world does not even *look* old, except to the distorted vision of an evolutionist. The fossil record by its very nature speaks clearly of a recent worldwide cataclysm, and there are far more physical processes which yield a young age for the earth than the

handful of processes which, through arbitrary and unreasonable assumptions, can be forced to yield an old age.

(7) **The Argument from Authority.** Asimov insists, as do many other evolutionists, that the only real evidence for creationism is from the book of Genesis. The Bible does, indeed, teach creation and its literal authority was accepted by most of the founding fathers of our country and by our country’s first schools. That ought to count for something, especially with those who deliberately chose to come to this country from other countries (Asimov came with his parents as immigrants from Russia in 1923). As a matter of fact, however, creationists are quite content to let the scientific evidence speak for itself in the public schools, with no reference whatever to the Bible. Many of us, in fact, are quite insistent on this point, appalled at the prospect of a humanist teacher such as Asimov teaching the Bible to a class of impressionable young people.

Dr. Asimov opposed creationism in the schools with the following astounding concluding argument: “It is only in school that American youngsters in general are ever likely to hear any reasoned exposition of the evolutionary viewpoint. They might find such a viewpoint in books, magazines, newspapers or even on occasion, on television. But church and family can easily censor printed matter or television. Only the school is beyond their control.”

Unfortunately, his last statement is mostly correct. Parents have indeed largely yielded control of their tax-supported schools to the educational

establishment and its *de facto* religion of evolutionary humanism. However, the increasing incidence of such tirades as this from Dr. Asimov indicates that the creation movement

has become a serious threat to this powerful and pervasive system.

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## BOOK REVIEW

Reviewed by Rev. Ewald Eisele

*Testing Angels & Other Spirits.* By Paul H. Seely. (Christian Parchments, 1980) 56 Pages, paper, \$2.00.

The commandment is, "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God" (I John 4:1) The aim of this book is to instruct Christian how they might be obedient to that commandment. The author presents his reaction to the highly controversial book, *Angels On Assignment*, that relates the experiences claimed by Pastor Ronald Buck of Boise, Idaho.

This is not just a dissertation on what Mr. Seely alone thinks about the book but a fair examination of what several others have said about it. He shows just what a biblical testing of the spirits is and also what kind of testing of the spirits is contrary to Scripture and sometimes even contrary to common sense.

In three chapters he critiques what the Melodyland School of Theology in California says, what Stephen Swihart says in his book review, and what Walter Martin remarked about the book.

It seems to me that he is very fair in his analysis and shows what is good as well as what is not good in these reactions to the book.

In chapter five, "The Number One Test," the author looks at what has been said or written by these three commentators in the light of what he calls "The Primary Test"—Do their (angels) actions or words contradict the Bible? This is the longest chapter and probably the most important in that the subject is primarily regarding alleged contradictions of the Bible that are found in the book.

Not only in this chapter but all through the book there is solid instruction on this important subject. In the last chapter Mr. Seely presents "Six Basic Rules For Testing Angels and Other Spirits." they are common sense rules with a strong biblical backing of a goodly number of Scripture references.

This is a good book to read and study even if you have never read *Angels On Assignment*. It covers very well a rather neglected area of biblical truth. After all, this is one of the primary assignments for the Christian in a day when every kind of spirit is coming out of the pit and running wild on the earth, putting on clerical robes so that if it were possible the very elect would be deceived.

You may order this book from our office for \$2.00 plus 69¢ postage.

# WHO BECOME VICTIMS OF THE CULTS?

*Prof. John E. Dahlin*

The aberrative religions have swept through our land in recent years like a flood. The consequences have been that tens of thousands of people, mostly the untutored and naive have become victims of the cults. They have been ensnared and subverted by these clever propagandists. Many of these people are seekers after truth and desire a way of life that is meaningful. While it is true that people from every background may be victimized, it is a fact, nevertheless, that certain segments in society are more likely to be ensnared than others. Let us proceed to identify those who are endangered in a very special way.

## **The New Converts**

People who have come to Christ are eager to discover additional blessings and spiritual enrichment following their conversion. Many of these are young in years and inexperienced in separating the spurious from the genuine in the area of religion. It is a known fact that youth is a period in life when people seek new experiences and that which is different. Such people are called in Scripture, "babes in Christ." See I Cor. 3:1 and I Pet. 2:2. These converts are especially vulnerable to the false teachings of the cultists. This is much like childhood diseases which usually involve the young before reaching into the older groups. It is natural for young people to be attracted to strong leadership, and that is the earmark of the cultic leader. The victims of the cults are not

calloused atheists as these are very difficult to change by a new appeal. Generally the young, and inexperienced in society are victimized.

## **College Students**

No group seems more willing to listen to new ideas than those within our higher institutions of learning. Numerous students are willing to discard the old ways and patterns of life. Experimentation is the door which has been opened to them and many in these intellectual institutions are ready to listen to the new voices. Often such students enter into radical political organizations. And, they often are ignorant of that which the Bible teaches. We find a pathetic spiritual naivety or immaturity of many young college students who have native talents and could reach worthwhile objectives if led right in this critical period in their lives.

## **Naive Christians**

Both nominal and genuine Christians are often ignorant of the major truths of the Scriptures. Many of these people know very little of the doctrinal basis of the Christian faith. Paul writes to the Galatians these solemn words: "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel; which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ" (Gal. 1:6,7). The apostle faced false teachers wherever he carried on his missionary work. The Judaizers appeared in Galatia

and sought to lead the people who had embraced the gospel into a legalistic system which compromised the true message which Paul proclaimed. Paul wrote the entire Epistle to set the record right concerning the gospel in contrast with the false teachings being circulated. Many religious people, even Christians, are sentimental in their thinking in spiritual matters. These are particularly vulnerable and are often victimized. Present-day cultists are busy in ruining the messages of redemp-

tion in every area of our land. It behooves us to re-establish systematic teachings of Biblical doctrine. It is the only sound antidote for people who are naive and ill-equipped in living during these last days. It is a great challenge facing all of us who have reached a degree of spiritual maturity in meeting the cultists and courageously counter-acting their false program. This is the work as represented by Religion Analysis Service.

## APOSTASY

*by Dr. David Breese, President  
Christian Destiny, Inc., Wheaton, Illinois*

Remembering Paul's words of assurance and comfort, notice the events and trends in history that will accompany the rise of Antichrist. First, that day will be characterized by apostasy. "For that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first" (II Thess. 2:3). The word "apostasy" comes from two Greek words which mean "to revolt" and "to stand away from where one used to stand." When used in a religious sense, "apostasy" refers to the betrayal of God by the religious Establishment. The Scriptures say that some will turn from their loyalty to God and to Jesus Christ and submit to a set of religious delusions that are in opposition to the will of God. Scriptures often warn of the time of the rise of false teachers, false Christs and many who will deny the faith and heed seducing spirits and doctrines of demons (I Tim. 4:1). The Bible very clearly teaches that days of

apostasy will characterize the time of the rise of Antichrist.

It is possible that we are living in those days today? Many Bible scholars believe that we are.

This century, more than any other, has seen the corruption of Christian theology and of sound religion. If you had lived 100 years ago and called yourself a religious person, you probably would have been a believer, from an orthodox point of view at least. This is no longer the case. Religious liberalism was introduced to the world through the influence of Julius Wellhausen and other 19th century German rationalists. Wellhausen developed the documentary hypothesis which produced a critical view of the Bible. Higher criticism destroyed the confidence of many and produced a new generation of people who call themselves Christians but who are nothing but religious liberals. John

Gresham Machen, that great scholar from Princeton Seminary of a generation ago, pointed out this fact in his book *Christianity and Liberalism*. He showed that the religious view which denies the inspiration of the Bible, the virgin birth of Christ, the deity of our Lord and many other cardinal points of Holy Scripture was not Christianity at all but rather a religious point of view that was just as pagan as any of the heathen religions of the world.

Religious liberalism was soon followed by neo-orthodoxy, which was introduced after the close of World War II. Neo-orthodoxy is the theology of experience, or the theology of contradiction. Neo-orthodoxy actually offers a way of salvation through a psychological experience with the personality of Jesus. Neo-orthodoxy has profoundly influenced not only the religious liberal establishment but also many segments of evangelical Christianity. This theology of experience is very damaging to the current religious Establishment. It is a more subtle apostasy than the outright denial of the truth of Holy Scripture. It affirms some of the truths of the Bible but in effect denies the objective revelation of Jesus Christ and misunderstands justification by faith in the objective fact of the finished work of Christ on the cross.

The apostasies of our time surely point up the great need of the Church. That need is a movement back to the Bible, back to the sole foundation on which Christ has promised to build His Church, the Word of God. The drift away from the final authority of Scripture into new and clever religious views is a

most degenerative characteristic of today's religious scene. God has finally rested His case on the teaching of Holy Scripture. Preaching and teaching that erodes confidence in the Word of God is, in the final analysis, a sign of the rise of Antichrist. Antichrist will use the power of corrupt religion to establish his dominion. The undiscerning Christian is in critical spiritual danger in our time and must give new attention to the sacred pages of Scripture.

This strange religious view of neo-orthodoxy was supplanted a few years ago by the most astonishing religious announcement of all—"God is dead." This announcement was not made by atheists but rather by members of the religious Establishment. Theologians from some great denominations cooperated in this announcement. It was perhaps the most apostate statement imaginable. How could the religious Establishment deny the Lord more completely than to announce that the very God who wrote the Bible is dead?

As a result of recent apostasy, the religious Establishment has become, in many cases, a vile institution. Some of the most filthy pornography, some of the most evil suggestions concerning marriage, divorce, sex, abortion and other issues, have been made by corrupt and defiled religious leaders. We therefore have come to live in a day in which a church does not necessarily represent the message of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Thus the Bible carefully warns us that days of apostasy will characterize those times of the Antichrist's emergence.

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## **PERTINENT QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

*John E. Dahlin, Editor*

**QUESTION . . .** Do the various cultic groups tend towards uniformity in their deviation from the Scriptures?

**ANSWER . . .** *Yes, these groups reject or misinterpret the major doctrinal teachings of the Bible. Generally the doctrine of the Trinity is rejected. And, they also reject Christ's position of being coequal and coeternal with God, the Father. Usually they do not accept the teaching of the bodily resurrection of Christ. The atonement is not accepted as man's only hope of salvation. None of the cults teach salvation by grace. Among such groups it is always coupled with works. Eternal punishment of the wicked is also rejected. Indeed, the cults tend towards a uniformity on these positions.*

**QUESTION . . .** Do the liberals also follow a similar pattern in a departure from the Scriptures?

**ANSWER . . .** Liberals are more cautious in the phraseology of doctrinal matters. At times they use the language of Bible-believing people. They are masterful, however, in concealing their exact position on many doctrinal truths. Their explanation of Inspiration of the Scriptures is an example of their cunningness in dealing with these vital matters. Factually stated, liberals have a similarity with the cults in the departure of the Scriptures.