

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

*The*  
**DISCERNER**

AN  
INTERDENOMINATIONAL  
HERESY-EXPOSING  
QUARTERLY

Vol. X      No. 12

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October-December 1982

# The DISCERNER

Published Quarterly  
Price \$2.00 for 4 issues.  
50 cents a copy, for foreign  
subscriptions add 20 cents a copy.  
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2708 E. Lake St., Suite 231  
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55406  
Printed in the United States

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John E. Dahlin, *Chairman*  
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## THE RIGHT TECHNIQUE IN COMBATTING THE CULTS

*By Prof. John E. Dahlin, Editor*

Many Christian leaders of today are casting about for some effective method in checking the expansion of the cultic activity in our generation. In past decades it was thought the most successful technique was by overpowering these false groups in superior arguments. This involved open confrontation and by means of debates with those who had erred. It appeared that this method would strip these off-center groups of their tools in deceiving people. Somehow, the condemnatory procedure in dealing with the cults has not been very productive. During my many years in leadership of Religion Analysis Service, I have found no simple answer in winning the battle against the present-day cults. It is possible, however, to learn from our opponents certain techniques which have been successful in reaching people. We find that all of the major cults have concentrated on the matter of distribution of literature. No group perhaps has done this on the scale of the Jehovah's Witnesses, who published (per issue) 20 million copies of "The Watchtower" and "Awake," their two major magazines. Other cults have followed this technique, even if they have done it in a

lesser way. The cults have depended on the printed page in making a significant impact on people. I am personally convinced that the utilization of the printed page is equally effective when used by evangelical groups. Our office has succeeded in selecting some of the best literature available on the cults and thus providing pertinent information on the groups who are propagating error. It is proper to raise the point, why is literature so all-important in combatting the cults?

### **Literature Expands Our Outreach**

By the distribution of quality literature we are enabled to reach a much larger number of people than if we choose to deal personally with individuals. For example, Wm. J. Schnell, the author of "Thirty Years a Watchtower Slave" has influenced tens of thousands of people to break with the cult with which he was identified for such a long time. Had he limited himself to the personal approach he would have reached only a fraction of the number which now have gotten the true facts by means of the printed page. I might add here the most effective publications are those provided by former cultists

who have been delivered from the unscriptural teachings which they once accepted. Such pamphlets as "No Longer a Mormon" and "We Found Our Way Out" (out of print) have been equally effective in the enlightenment of many people, who subsequently have separated themselves from the false groups. Literature provided at a proper time has been very effective in helping those who have strayed from the truth. In other words, the printed page keeps the door open, as it were, while oral arguments often close the door. We have seen many people who have abandoned the false teachings when the truth has been brought to them. It is a thrilling experience to see them move back to the path of the truth. Our adversaries, particularly the leaders, are fully committed to propagating error. It is necessary that we surpass them in our dedication of presenting the Word of God. Without question, the printed page is our best method in reaching people who have been ensnared by cultic teachings.

### **Literature Stimulates People to Think**

There definitely is a curious streak in nearly every individual. It is important that we become good Christian psychologists. It is a known fact that when people get their eyes focused on some attention-compelling caption of a book or pamphlet, many cannot resist reading that kind of material because of curiosity. Literature prepared neatly and attractively will serve as an eye-opener, and this in turn often leads the reader to evaluate that material. A young man came up to me after a

service at which I preached, and he made the following statement rather enthusiastically. "I heard a very inspiring message over the radio as I came to the church in my car." I asked the young man who the speaker was to which he listened. He said, "I believe it was Herbert W. Armstrong." I said to him, "I see you need some literature." I handed him two pamphlets dealing with the delusions of Armstrong. This young man returned for the evening service and after reading the pamphlets, said, "I never knew that Armstrong was a false teacher." This fine person was straightened out by reading the right kind of literature. Had I lambasted the man for listening to Armstrong, I might have lost the opportunity in providing the enlightenment which he needed. The literature opened the eyes of this man to errors that had been proclaimed by a false voice over the radio. The long time managing editor of the Good News Broadcaster wrote to us about what our literature did to him and his wife many years earlier when they were confused in spiritual matters. He pointed out to us how the literature put them back on the right track. (His testimony appeared in *The Discerner* a few years ago.)

### **Literature Helps to Reduce Prejudice**

It is true that despite our best intentions, the personal approach may be resented. On the other hand, our making literature available to people in need of such is the least offensive method in reaching them with God's truth. It is a fact that very few people have been brought into God's kingdom through arguments. Even

logical and factual arguments are not productive in winning people to Christ. The fact is, when people read a tract or pamphlet, the prejudice is reduced to the minimum. In the oral discussion usually it is not possible to expand that conversation with the necessary Scriptural references for a proper evaluation of the matter under consideration. It is an undeniable fact that people will be less inclined to argue with the printed page than a person with whom they may be involved in a personal confrontation. I realize that there is no hard and fast rule in dealing with people who are befuddled and misdirected through satanic powers. I am, on the other hand, convinced that the right kind of literature given to deluded people is extremely effective. Every church, with its varied organizations, should have on hand an adequate assortment of literature which may be used. Each week I receive requests for material on certain cults. We need to be practical and steer away from the one-track mind approach in carrying out our responsibilities as servants of Christ. The apostle Paul has made this clear in his statement; "I am made all things to all men that I might by all means save some" (I Cor. 9:22). Harsh verbal exchange of words and condemnatory statements over misguided persons serve no useful purpose. Prejudice is a fearful barrier in reaching many of our fellow men with the Gospel. I have earnestly tried to avoid a heated or open clash with the cultists.

## **A Total Dedication to This Ministry is Required**

Since we are dealing with people who are misled and usually brain-washed, we need to be knowledgeable and yet at the same time compassionate towards those who are ensnared in false teachings. Fortunately many people are leaving several of the major cults, having become disillusioned through the cultic teachings.

As Bible-believing Christians we have many opportunities in the light of this situation which have developed among many who have turned away from the cults. By means of this article I have given you my best suggestions in meeting the present-day challenge. My 26 years as Director of Religion Analysis Service have given me rich experiences regarding techniques or methodology in dealing with people who need the kind of ministry that I have discussed in this article. Lastly, we must follow up the advantages scored through the utilization of literature by counselling and guiding those who are willing to let us serve them.

No less than total dedication to Jesus Christ will be sufficient in equipping a Christian in reaching those who have been ensnared by the false teachings of the cults. According to James 5:18-20, it is a vital ministry in winning those who have erred from God's truth.

# THE BIBLE, GOD'S WORD

Dr. John F. Walvoord, President,  
Dallas Theological Seminary, Dallas, Texas

Orthodox Christians have always believed that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God" and is therefore the Word of God.

The importance of inspiration is evident in that all Christian doctrine depends upon the Bible. If the accuracy and authority of Scripture be recognized, it at once establishes a standard on which all belief can be founded. It is for this reason that recognition of the inspiration and infallibility of the Bible becomes the cornerstone upon which any Christian faith must rest.

One of the most amazing testimonies to the inspiration of the Bible is the fact that its books, though many centuries old, have an abiding pertinence and relevance to the issues of our day. Its insight into history, its analysis of human psychology and spiritual behavior, its provision for the immediate moral and spiritual needs of man, and its perspective of the present and future provided in the prophetic Word have no equal.

Many collateral proofs confirm this testimony from the Bible itself concerning its own inspiration. No other book in all of the world has demonstrated its power to transform hopeless sinners into holy men of God. It has dramatically changed civilization wherever consistently applied. It has brought morality and decency to those once degraded and debased. It has exalted womanhood and given dignity to humanity. It has dramatically affected the social and political structure of the world when

even a substantial fraction of the people involved were committed to Scriptural faith. The Scriptures have stood the test of time and will endure after the physical world has passed away.

Inasmuch as the Bible is the principal means of divine revelation in the world and the only instrument that explicitly sets forth divine truth in human terms, the proper use of the Bible becomes most important in achieving God's will for our lives. It is this Word which we are to preach (II Tim. 4:2), and it is this Word which we must obey. The Word of God was intended to be the daily companion of God's children. Because it is the very Word of God we are to love it and mediate upon it. As the Psalmist declared, "O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day" (Ps. 119:97).

The wise follower of the Lord Jesus Christ, therefore, includes in his daily program a reading of the Word of God and directs his energies to Biblical study which will enrich his life and give him new understanding of the will of God. In any work of God as well as in the life of individual believers the Word of God must be central, and it is by this Word we will be judged in eternity.

We believe the Bible because from Genesis to Revelation it is Holy Scripture, because it is inspired of God, because it is without error, because it reveals divine truth from eternity past to eternity future, from the highest heaven to the lowest hell.

Taken from *Christian Economics*, Used by permission.

## EQUIPPING FOR THE BATTLE

*By Rev. Ewald Eisele*

Basic to winning any war or battle is the training of the troops. In order to accomplish this the armed services of any nation will print literally thousands of training manuals. Usually there is one for each kind of tool, weapon or machine that may be used. With this kind of system it could be necessary for a single trooper to master a half a dozen books besides spending many, many hours of group classroom study.

Winning the spiritual battles with the counterfeit religions and cults, all empowered by Satan, is just a mite different. There is only one study Manual, The Word of God. It is to the individual Christian soldier's advantage, naturally, to study the Manual in a group situation with others of like faith as well as spending many, many hours in individual study. The important thing is to master the Manual and to let the Manual master the student.

The Manual has some very pointed things to say about this. Let's look at a few of them. "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (II Tim. 2:15). "... Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you . . ." (I Peter 3:15). "Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God . . . and the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God" (Eph. 6:13a and 17b). "And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32).

So many times the office of

Religion Analysis Service is asked what to do about one cult or another. Really, the answer is the same no matter which or which kind of a cult it might be. There are two basic things to do when a problem with a cult or heresy presents itself. The first is to pray. The second is to present the Word of God which "is sharper than any two-edged sword."

There are these who present some kind of a "tried system" for one cult or another. They will say that certain steps should be taken and that if these are followed there will be certain positive results. There is only one problem with that approach. We do not all think alike. Our minds and personalities do not always lend themselves to the "system that works" for someone else. Another thing is that to fail with another's way of doing things can contribute to our becoming timid in the area of presenting a positive witness of our faith. How much better it is to forget the so-called "systems" and fall back on the Biblical way. Jesus, in His ministry, depended on prayer and the Word. In His temptation and in His "going about doing good" this was the only "system" that He had.

It is not possible to emphasize too much the necessity and effectiveness of Holy Spirit led prayer. Our Lord does not want anyone to be ensnared by Satan or any of his ambassadors, and the promise given to His own is that if we will ask the Father for anything in His Name, in the power of the Holy Spirit and according to His will, He will grant

the request. One does not have to make long prayers nor retreat to the closet. Peter, when he was in danger of drowning, cried only three words, "Lord, save me," and was heard. When Paul writes in I Thess. 5:17, "Pray without ceasing," he has the idea of being on "praying ground" at every moment. That means that the Christian soldier will have no unconfessed sin to stand in the way of having his little three word prayers heard and answered. As one old professor in college said, "Keep short accounts with God. When you sin, confess it right away with the assurance that it is forgiven and that the Lord will give the power to keep you from committing it again, if that is your real deep-seated desire." So this is the first thing, whether the problem is a friend or relative being tempted or already ensnared with some form or error or confronting some "missionary" or proselyter at the front door.

But what about the Manual? What part of the Bible should be studied? What is the best book or portion? Which verses should be memorized? Which is the 'best' version or translation? Protestants have made a problem for themselves in regard to the last question in that they have been carried away with a 'new version/translation' fever. Producing a new translation or version has become a very lucrative business, so much so, that even *Readers Digest* is getting into the act with a condensed version with 40 per cent of the text deleted. One would expect true Christians to by-pass such a perversion of the Word of God, especially since it is a condensation of the liberally oriented Revised Standard Version. One is always safe using the

King James Version; in fact it is essential when dealing with Mormons because that is the version that their 'missionaries' carry. If another version is used one must have a sound reason for it. To say merely, "It makes more sense to me," or, "It is in today's English," isn't going to win points with a cultist who can usually give very good reasons to him as to why *his* translation or version is better.

Now using the Manual requires some advance preparation. Either you must do some extensive memorizing or else make sure that the reason for your faith is jotted down on the back page or in the margin of your Bible. There are several areas that a cultist will major in and these will be briefly considered.

Some will point out that the Trinity is not mentioned in the Bible. The Trinity *is* in the Bible; the *word* Trinity might not be, but the truth is in many places. "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen" (II Cor. 13:14). "In the Name of God" in Genesis 1:1 it is plural, and in Luke 4:18-21 Jesus read Isaiah 61:1 and applied it to Himself: "The Spirit of the Lord hath anointed me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings . . ." It is also found in these Scriptures: Matt. 3:16; 28:19; John 15:26; Rom. 8:11. The Bible reveals 1) the deity of each member of the Godhead: John 1:1; Acts 5:3-4, 2) their mutual knowledge and love: Matt. 3:17; 11:27; John 3:35; 4:34; 5:30; Rom. 8:27; I Cor. 2:10, 3) and their distinct yet related offices; I Cor. 12:46; Eph. 2:18-22. Should anyone want a thorough ex-

position of the Scriptural teaching of this important subject and doctrine, the classic "The Trinity," by Edward Henry Bidkersteth, or the shorter "The Holy Trinity," by H.A. Ironside, is available from our office.

Then there is the question of God. One needs to know *that* He is, and *who* He is. Hebrews 11:6 says, "He that cometh to God must believe that He is . . ." Mormons, especially, are misinformed and demonically brainwashed at this point. They believe that Adam was God and that God is Adam. They also are poly-theists—believing in many gods. All of this is, of course, unscriptural but is taught, as are many errors of our day, as fact. The Scriptures do not attempt to prove God's existence, but everywhere either assumes or affirms it: Gen. 1:1; John 1:1; Rom. 1:19-20. There is *one* God, the Bible teaches us, and yet three equal Subjects in the Godhead who are distinct Persons. There is perfect unity in the Godhead, so much so that God can say in Isaiah 45:5, 6, 18, 21, 22 and in many other places, "I am *the* Lord, and there is none else, there is no God beside me."

When it comes to salvation, without exception the cults rely on works. Whether it is the Seventh-Day Adventists with their Sabbath-keeping, or the Hindus with their repetitious mantras, the emphasis is on do rather than on the Biblical admonition, "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt *believe* in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the Scripture said, Whosoever believeth on

Him shall not be ashamed" (Rom. 10:9-11). The Seventh-Day Adventists err further in that they do not believe in the Jesus of the Bible. *Their* Jesus, they say, did not finish the atonement for sin on the cross but has been at it again since 1844 when he supposedly went into the inner sanctuary in heaven to examine the books and to complete the atonement in removing sin from the sanctuary (The Great Controversy, by Ellen G. White, 1939 edition, page 480). Based on this investigation or examination of the books, he will "make an atonement for all who are shown to be entitled to its benefits" (ibid. page 546). Now the Bible expressly states that salvation is *not* of works but of faith and grace. Just a few of the verses that set this truth before us to use to refute error: John 3:15-16; 5:24; 20:31; Rom. 3:24; 5:15; 6:23; 10:9; 11:6; Eph. 2:8-9; I John 5:13. There are also verses that very *plainly* say, "Works are unnecessary and insufficient," Matt. 7:22-23; Rom. 3:20; Gal. 2:16; Eph. 2:8-9.

Many of the cults and non-Christian religions major on the outcome of this life. What is out there, after a person dies? In Christian doctrine it is called Eschatology—The Doctrine of Last Things. That man must die is admitted by all—with the possible exception of the members of Mary Baker Patterson Eddy's Church of Christ Scientists, known as The Christian Scientists. They deny sin, sickness, death and all reality! But for the most part all religions believe in the reality of death. Some believe in some kind of heaven—a happy hunting ground, nirvana, absorption into "The All" or, as is true with some cults and religions, a Biblical-type of

glorious future after death. Others may or may not admit to the reality of hell. They talk of annihilation, reincarnation, nothingness or some other philosophical or religious idea. All of these ideas and theories add up to attempts to escape or hide from what the Bible declares to be a very real place of eternal punishment. Many will even twist the Scriptures or use it out of context or misinterpret it in order to convince themselves and others that there is no hell. Should anyone want a classic example of this he would only have to read Herbert W. Armstrong's article in the August 1982 issue of "The Plain Truth" magazine. But then, Mr. Armstrong has every reason for fearing a real hell for the lost after this life. In his article he very conveniently misapplies some of Jesus' teaching on the subject and totally ignores many passages which very plainly (his is *not* the Plain Truth) teach eternal punishment as found in, for instance, Rev. 14:11. Yes, he *should* fear a real hell!

But man doesn't have to fear hell, neither does he have to try to invent an alternative. Hell was not made for man; hell was made, ". . . for the devil and his angels" (Matt. 25:41). There is a Way to keep out of hell, and His Name is Jesus. The Bible teaches that there is a real hell and describes it in a number of ways. In Ps. 11:6 it is a literal rain of burning coals and brimstone. In Matt. 8:12 it is a place of weeping. In Matt. 25:26 it is a place of everlasting punishment, and in Rev. 14:11, as noted above, it is a place where the smoke of the tormented ones ascends forever and ever. It is rather in-

teresting that those who say that they admire Jesus, and sometimes profess to be His, fail to realize that He said more about hell than anyone else in the Word of God.

When it comes to reincarnation or annihilation, the verse to remember is, "It is appointed unto man *once* to die but *after* this the judgment," (Heb. 9:27). If reincarnation is true, then II Cor. 6:2 cannot be true, "Behold *now* is the accepted time, *now* is the day of salvation." The *now* of that Scripture is our present lifetime and those who speak of reincarnation make God's Word out to be a lie. As for annihilation, Luke 16:19-31 is very clear, as is Rev. 14:11, already mentioned twice above.

Now there are many other areas of conflict between the cults, the other religions, and the Word of God. How do you win the battle? The Christian has but one Manual, but two weapons, prayer and the Word of God. Fulfilling Rom. 12:1-2 is really the first requirement, because this will guarantee that our prayers will be effectual. Then, search the Scriptures. Be Bereans (Acts 17:10-11). Master the Word and let the Word master you. It is good to know the enemy and his strategy, but it is far more important for the Christian to "be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you . . ." (I Peter 3:15). There is a battle to be fought. But never forget, "The battle is the Lord's" (I Sam. 17:47). The Christian's part is to be obedient to the Word and enter into the victory the Lord will win through His own.

## HOW BAHÁ'Í INTERPRETS THE BIBLE AND THE LAST TIMES

*By Dr. Seth Erlandson (translation from Swedish) by pastor Edward J. Johnson of the Trinity Lutheran Church, Dalton, Nebraska. The article appeared in the *Biblicum*, a Lutheran quarterly of a separatistic research foundation.*

Baha'i teaches that Jesus already has returned to earth, not invisibly in 1914 but visibly as early as 1844. These dates remind us of, among other things, the Millerite speculations with their point of departure, the 2,300 days mentioned in Daniel 8:13-14.

Some time ago at the Bilbicum Foundation which I direct in Uppsala, Sweden, I gave lectures on the subject "The Return of Christ and the Thousand Year Reign." A representative of Baha'i stood up in the question and answer period, demanding that a "more correct" interpretation be given concerning these matters. He gave me a publication which he said the world sorely needs today. It was issued by Baha'i's National Spiritual Council for Sweden in 1964 under the title "Prophecy Completed," by Elisabeth H. Cheney. Against this background, then, I took up a study of Baha'i's dismal doctrine and Biblical interpretation.

Cheney proceeds from the assumption that "everyone" agrees that a thousand year reign of peace shall be instituted on this earth. "All of the world's revealed religions," she writes, "have assured us that righteousness and the true humanity will finally triumph and be established in peace and justice here on earth." The "kingdom of God" shall be "established on earth in justice and peace for all mankind."

Well, of course it is true that many have put forth such vision both within and outside of the established religions. But the Bible does not promise us this kind of kingdom, but one which is "not of this world" (John 18:36) and which promises us peace and a righteousness which we possess already in faith exclusively upon the basis of Christ's vicarious atonement. But this kingdom of grace has no outward appearance to be seen in this world. It is obscure, and it is now only in formation.

Baha'i teaches that what is meant by the return of Christ is a coming of God's revelation, or of the Word—not merely that the Christ who was pierced through hands and feet "shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11). This "returning Word"—Jesus the Christ—already has reappeared in Baha'i in two forms: in Baha'u'llah and his forerunner, the Bab. Already on May 23, 1844 "the Bab's revelation in his capacity as the forerunner of the Baha'u'llah" occurred, Cheney's pamphlet states (Profetian ar fullbordad, p.8).

Actually "Bab" was Merza Ali Muhammed, a Sufi (Sufism is part of Islam—a mystical, anascetic development among some of the first generation of the followers of Mohammed) who declared himself the Bab or gate through whom peo-

ple would find out about the advent of another messenger from God. Bab was martyred in 1850 by "orthodox" Mohammedians. (The above is the Editor's statement.)

Baha'i asserts that Christ shall return "when the end comes." Yet according to Baha'i the end already came in 1844. What then? Well, according to Baha'i the American Bible Society had instituted the spread of Christ's Gospel to all people on earth as early as 1841. And since this strange declaration fits right into the Baha'i system, it must be divine truth. But what actually constitutes "the end" for Baha'i? Plainly, nothing less than the end of the world, of this world.

The year 1844 was arrived at in this fashion: The "two thousand years and three hundred days" of Daniel 8:14 correspond to 2,300 years. If one begins reckoning from the edict of Artaxerxes for the rebuilding of Jerusalem, which is dated at 457 B.C., one will come out at May 23, 1844. But is precisely this reckoning the correct one? Well, of course—this is self-evident. Jesus' statement that no one knows the day or the hour for His return becomes meaningless in such a context.

### **How Baha'i Interprets the Bible**

Baha'i diligently quotes the Scriptures. But how shall they be interpreted? We cite several examples:

1. In Matthew 24:5 Jesus says: "For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many." According to Baha'i this means that no one less than Christ Himself shall step forth as the Christ or the Messiah at His return. How can one arrive at such a farfetched conclusion? Simple: the point of

departure for such an interpretation is not what actually is written in the words of the Bible, but the notion that the Christian shall consider Baha'u'llah as his Christ and the Mohammedan shall see him as his Mahdi, and so on. Cheney writes: "To glorify Baha'u'llah—the Glory of God—in his role at the return of Christ is thus the same as to glorify Christ . . . The Baha'i religion is the consummation and the fulfillment of all of the ancient dogmas of faith. The Jews await a Messiah; the Christians are awaiting Jesus' return; the Mohammedans expect a Mahdi; the Buddhists await the fifth Buddha; the adherents of Zarathustra await the Shah Bahram; the Hindus, the reincarnation of Krishna" (p. 17). Cheney maintains that Baha'u'llah is the new prophet, rightly named the Glory of God, whom all are awaiting. And all of this is supposed to be stated in Matthew 24:5!

2. In Matthew 24:9 we read: "Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake." This, according to Baha'i, means not the disciples of Jesus but the adherents to the Bab and the Baha'u'llah, who "were brutally tortured and murdered by the Mohammedans in Iran (Persia) during the last century" (p. 5). (And are being persecuted anew there today—Tr.)

3. In Ezekiel 43:2 it states: "And, behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east." Since, as indicated earlier, the name Baha'u'llah means "the Glory of God," this is interpreted in Baha'i as referring to Baha'u'llah. He, too, comes from the east, i.e., from Iran, and he was "banished to the Holy

Land where he spent the last 24 years of his life" (p. 12). He went to Akko in Palestine. Obviously, Baha'i does not appropriate the full meaning of what Ezekiel 43:2 really says.

4. Isaiah 65:10 says: "And Sharon shall be a fold of flocks, and the valley of Achor a place for the herds to lie down in, for my people that have sought me." Since Sharon and the valley of Achor lie very close to the city of Akko, Baha'i interprets this verse as a prophecy of Baha'u'llah's flight to Akko and his instruction there. Cheney accordingly maintains that "Jesus Himself never made any claim to be the Prince of Peace" (p. 13). The real Prince of Peace is said to be the Baha'u'llah; but he obviously is not lifted up as such through any atonement for the sins of the world or through the Gospel of redemption. Baha'i established peace on earth on the basis of law, of social and spiritual laws. He worked out a detailed plan for the governing of the world during the era of world peace. He is "the one who unites and gathers together into one family under God all religions, races and nations" (p. 14).

5. In Matthew 16:27 it is stated: "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father . . ." Because Baha'u'llah's name means "Glory of God," Baha'i considers that Jesus here is speaking of the Baha'u'llah.

6. John 16:12-13 tells us: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all the truth . . ." This passage, too, speaks of the Baha'u'llah in Baha'i's interpretation. "Baha'i believes that Baha'u'llah is the Spirit of truth whom Jesus

forebode" in John 16:12-13 (p. 15). In such blasphemous fashion can Baha'i interpret the Bible and motivate its notion of a continuing revelation after the completion of the Bible.

7. Isaiah 2:3 tells us: "And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." Naturally, this is a prophecy of the Baha'u'llah! When he issued the laws for the thousand year kingdom in the vicinity of Mount Carmel, the prophecy of God's law coming from His mountain of Zion was fulfilled. Baha'i tells us so.

Suppose it happened that all people now would go over to the false interpretations and claims of Baha'i and would accept and practice its laws. Then the thousand year reign of peace would become a fact. But Baha'i's dreams are doomed never to see fruition. Baha'i does not take seriously enough the facts of sin and of mankind's sinful inheritance. He who does not, is bound to be indifferent toward the one means of rescue he has from sin and eternal torment, namely, Jesus Christ and His crucifixion. And it is precisely this crucified Christ who is coming back, visibly and revealed to all, to judge the living and the dead. Then all heretics and seducers will meet their doom.

This must be kept in mind as Christians within the fellowship of the church confront Baha'i, its apocalyptic speculations, and the way it arbitrarily distorts the Bible.

# CHURCH OF CHRIST

*By Rev. Alan Streett,  
Finksbery, Maryland*

The Church of Christ, not to be confused with the United Church of Christ, claims to be the only "true" Church on earth. Teaching a salvation obtainable only through water baptism, the cult has 12,000 congregations worldwide with a membership exceeding 2,000,000. It has congregations in all 50 states and 65 foreign countries.

## HISTORY OF THE MOVEMENT

The origin of the Church of Christ movement can be traced to the early 1800s. At this time, four ministers, each living in different geographical locations and totally independent of each other, were striving to bring about unity of the brethren in his respective locale. Each met with opposition from denominational leaders. The foursome included Barton Stone, who started a church, which he simply called the "Christian" church; Walter Scott, who claimed to be leading a restoration movement based on John 17; and a father-son combination, Thomas and Alexander Campbell, who teamed up to start a church whose members were called the "Disciples." After learning of each others efforts, the groups merged in 1832 and took the title "The Disciples of Christ" or "The Christian Church." The new entity claimed to be the only church totally following the New Testament pattern of church order and theology.

By the mid 1800s, a controversy arose among the leaders of the new order. The issues revolved around two questions:

1. Were missionary societies biblical in nature?

2. Should organ or piano music be used in worship services?

Alexander Campbell stood opposed to both points. By 1906, differences between the factions became irreconcilable; thus, the Church of Christ was born. In essence, Campbell wanted to restore the restorationists. One-fourth of the Disciples of Christ chose to follow Campbell.

## DOCTRINAL DISTINCTIVES

1. The Church of Christ claims to be the sole "New Testament" church in existence. All others are apostate. This, of course, is the same claim made by such notable groups as the Mormon Church, The Way International and Armstrong's Worldwide Church of God.

2. There is no salvation apart from baptism by immersion; thus, Christ does not save, the water saves. Furthermore, since it takes a pastor to baptize the seeker, the pastor becomes the mediator between God and man. If salvation is based on water baptism, then a dying soldier on a battlefield is hopelessly lost forever.

The Apostle Paul said, "For Christ sent me NOT to baptize but to preach the Gospel" (I Cor. 1:7). Notice, the terms baptize and gospel are exclusive of each other. They are unrelated. In Romans 1:16, Paul says, "The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation," not baptism.

If baptism by immersion is a prerequisite for salvation, then many of

the great Christians of the past are lost and damned to Hell forever, John Wesley, Martin Luther, Charles Finney, etc.

3. While baptism is essential for salvation, the believer must also join the Church of Christ, attend its Sunday worship services and adhere to all its strange doctrines before he can have "assurance" of eternal life. This presents two major problems. First, multitudes of people are excluded from heaven because of their position or lot in life. Shut-ins, for example, must be excluded since they cannot attend services. What about police officers, doctors, firemen, nurses and so on who must work on Sundays? Or how about the soldiers, sailors on ships and forest rangers? Is there no hope for them? Second, if salvation is based on baptism and Church of Christ membership, what about all those believers who lived prior to 1906? Are they doomed for Hell?

4. The Church of Christ is the Body of Christ on earth. Hence, to be baptized into the Church of Christ is to be baptized and incorporated into Christ's Body.

5. The Old Testament is rejected as being irrelevant for this dispensation. Most "Campbellites" are totally illiterate when it comes to knowing the Old Testament Scriptures.

6. Only non-instrumental singing is allowed during the worship services. No pianos, organs or harps are permitted to grace the doorway of a

Church of Christ. Only the singing of "spiritual songs and psalms" (Eph. 5:19) is allowed. The use of instrumental music is a sin. Interestingly, every major Greek New Testament commentary renders the word "psalms" (Eph. 5:19) to mean a "song accompanied by a musical instrument."

## CONCLUSION

Since no "Campbellite" trusts Christ alone for salvation, none possesses assurance of going to Heaven. One evangelist observed, "I found fewer people of the Campbellite persuasion who were truly saved than almost any other denomination or sect that I have ever had contact with."

Those who follow the Church of Christ theology are not soul-winners. They study the New Testament only for the purpose of winning arguments with non-Church of Christ people. Their ministers are trained to be debaters; how to twist facts, forcibly present their beliefs and persuade others to their point of view. They are skilled at winning proselytes but not sinners to Christ.

The cult is growing. It presently owns 21 colleges, 70 secondary and elementary schools, 40 homes for orphans and the aged and it publishes scores of periodicals, newspapers and journals. Properties owned are valued at 2½ billion dollars.

## NEW BOOKS IN STOCK FOR YOU

**THE MORMON PAPERS**—Harry L. Ropp, 118 pp, \$3.95. Beginning with a chapter which bears the title, "Is Mormonism Christian?" the author gives us a book that will not only strengthen to resist Mormon proselytizing but also be a source of help in turning Mormons to the truth.

**THE JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES' NEW TESTAMENT**—Robert H. Countess, 136 pp, \$5.95. This is a critical analysis of the *New World Translation* of the Watchtower Society. It is a well-organized and clear treatment of the text of this document and will give to laymen and scholars alike information for evaluating the claims that have been made for it.

**GOD'S VOICE IN THE STARS**—Kenneth C. Fleming, 143 pp, \$3.95. A book designed to draw out your heart in worship to the Lord of the Universe and Redeemer of mankind. It can also provide helpful insights for people who have been caught in the web of astrology.

**IN HIGH PLACES**—R. Alan Street, 114 pp, \$2.95. A study of occultism in world government. The author traces this from 1914 through Watergate, including in his assessment the names of many Presidents of the United States who sought occult advice.

### **BOOKS ON COMMUNISM:**

**YOU CAN TRUST THE COMMUNISTS (To be Communists)**—Dr. Fred Schwartz, 186 pp, \$2.50. Tells how Communism affects you . . . and tells you what you can do about it.

**THE SOVIET UNION'S VAST NETWORK OF SLAVE LABOR CAMPS**—Church League of America, 142 pp, \$1.50. An eyewitness account given in sworn testimony to the U.S. government.

**BETRAYING AMERICA: THE JANE FONDA**—TOM HAYDEN AXIS—Church League of America, 80 pp, \$5.00. A documented report from the

research department of this organization which is concerned with the preservation of our constitutional liberties.

**PROTECTING TRAITORS, SPIES AND TERRORISTS: HOW AMERICA'S INTERNAL SECURITY IS BEING DESTROYED**—Church League of America, 78 pp, \$2.00. Tells what was behind the crippling and demoralizing of the FBI and CIA in the wake of Watergate and what the Communists have to do about it.

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**THE RECORD OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES, VOL. I**—Church League of America, 175 pp, \$3.00.

**THE RECORD OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES, VOL. II**—Church League of America, 48 pp, \$3.00. Vol. I is revised to September, 1972. Vol. II is from September 1972 to November, 1978. Together they record from the NCC's own publications and speeches their liberal lobbying before the Congress, influencing the White House, the press, national magazines, radio and television, to support their left liberal political propaganda.

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## Pertinent Questions and Answers

*John E. Dahlin, Editor*

**QUESTION . . .** Are we winning the battle against the cults in this generation?

**ANSWER . . .** Certain conservative Bible-believing groups have succeeded well in publishing effective literature exposing the errors of the cults. In addition, they are familiarizing themselves with the techniques of these groups, and are taking the offensive against the off-center organizations. All this is helpful. On the other hand, however, the entire liberal church in America is doing nothing in opposing the cults. In fact, the National Council of Churches has received several of these into membership of its organization. On the whole, we are not gaining any ground against the great cultic expansion of our time. The Mormon Church gained more members in a recent year than the largest denomination in America.

**QUESTION . . .** What is hindering the anti-cult organizations in their struggle against the many false systems of religion?

**ANSWER . . .** The extraordinary increase in the *cost of printing* essential materials has slowed down the publishing of effective literature. This is important in a ministry such as Religion Analysis Service. Then, too, the unprecedented rise in the postal rates of late has caused a curtailment of the ministry in literature. Unless God's people increase, or double their contributions, our work in opposing the cults is hindered very much. You can help us and similar agencies by increasing your gifts to this greatly needed service in combatting the cults.