

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

The
DISCERNER

AN
INTERDENOMINATIONAL
HERESY-EXPOSING
QUARTERLY

Vol. XI No. 3

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July-September, 1983

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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THE FALSE PATHS OF THE CULTIC GROUPS

Prof. John E. Dahlin, Editor

It is extremely difficult for many people, even some established Christians, to identify the false positions of the present-day cults. The literature published by these spurious organizations have cleverly concealed from the reader the unvarnished facts of their deviation from the Word of God. In fact, this writer has heard certain Christian people defend some of these well known cults. Obviously, this situation stems from a lack of knowledge of the positions held by those which have deviated from the Scriptural teachings. It is of paramount importance that God's people know with conviction where these modern charlatans stand, and where they have parted company with the Bible-believing groups. No one will take the offensive in opposing the cults until such a person is completely convinced of the errors of these off-center groups. In a careful study of these organizations, it becomes clear that the departure from the Scriptures involves the central doctrines in God's Word. In other words, the false paths of the cults definitely reveal that the cults have rejected the major doctrines of historic Christianity. Let us examine the position of the cults on some of the fundamental doctrines.

The Teaching Concerning Jesus Christ

During several decades of studies of the cultic groups, I have not found one of them which holds a sound view regarding the person of Jesus Christ. Whether in such a study you select the Jehovah's Witnesses, the Mormons, the adherents of Christian Science, or any other cult, you will discover that each one of these groups has failed to honor the Son of God as being co-equal and co-eternal with God, the Father. The apostle John places this matter as a reliable test of those who profess to be followers of Jesus Christ. In I John 4:3, the apostle makes the proper evaluation of these people. Paul Wierville, the founder of the cult known as *The Way International*, comes out openly in declaring that Jesus Christ is not the Son of God. The Jehovah's Witnesses simply refer to our Lord as the highest of the created beings. To them Christ is not the God-man or the eternal Son of God. Paul writes convincingly on this matter in these words, "In Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. 2:9). The cults fall short when measured by the Scriptural yardstick on the subject of Christology.

An Inadequate Position On The Scriptures

A careful study of the cults will reveal a calloused disregard by these false systems of the authority as well as the inerrancy of the Word of God. The Jehovah's Witnesses have produced their own translation in order to get around certain basic Biblical teachings which contradict their position. The Mormons practically bypass the Scriptures in favor of the *Book of Mormon*, the *Doctrine and Covenants*, and the *Pearl of Great Price*. Their writers refer to the Bible as being unreliable due to faulty translation. Everything in the Bible that contradicts the teachings of Joseph Smith is called a mis-translation. Mormon writers claim that nearly every verse of the Bible has been corrupted by faulty translation. It is common among most of the cults to substitute the teachings of the Bible with the writings of their leaders. The apostle rejects all these clumsy innovations by stating, "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, throughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3:16). The cults have this in common, namely, tampering with the Word of God, that is, reading into clear passages of Scripture the interpretations which are unsupportable by fair-minded scholars.

The Denial Of The Trinity

The trend among the cultic systems of today is to deny the doctrine of the Triune God. Historically this great truth has been accepted by all main branches within Christen-

dom. In contrast to this imposing record of the Christian Church through the ages, we find such groups as the Jehovah's Witnesses, Herbert W. Armstrong and Christian Science taking the lead in rejecting the doctrine of the Trinity. Many other cults move in the same path. It is done brazenly despite the clear Biblical teaching on the subject. The baptismal formula as given in the New Testament states specifically it is to be in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. And, moreover, the apostolic benediction mentions clearly the three Persons of the God-head. Even the first chapter of the book of Genesis supports the doctrine of the Trinity. It is correct to state that the cultic trend of today moves towards unitarianism. This position is one where the cults take an inexcusable position on the Scriptures regarding the Trinity.

The Cultic Teaching On Annihilation Of The Wicked

One of the unscriptural positions held by many cultic groups is that of the denial of eternal punishment for the unbelievers. Annihilation means the extinction or cessation of being. Cultic groups have this in common, that is, explaining away the solemn truth of endless punishment for the unjust. The teaching of the endless separation from God of all Christ rejecters is one of the clearest presentations which is set forth by the Lord. Again and again He refers to the eternal state of both the righteous and the unbelievers. He points to eternal punishment in hell as "the fire that never shall be quenched, where the worm dieth not" (Mk. 9:43-44). In Matthew 3:34, the Lord refers to everlasting life for believers, and in the same verse reference is made to the wrath of God which abideth on

unbelievers. Nowhere does the New Testament mention a cessation of eternal punishment of the wicked. If everlasting life constitutes an endless bliss for the redeemed, then logically we ought to accept the endlessness of judgment for the unjust because the same terminology is used in describing the eternal position of both groups. Even the Seventh Day Adventists, who hold some doctrines somewhat similar to the evangelicals, do accept annihilation of the unjust as one of their major doctrines. Annihilation contradicts the historical position of Christianity through the centuries. The rejection of the Biblical teaching on this subject is a dangerous departure from the Word of God.

The Way Of Salvation Is Not Understood

The most serious weakness of all the cults is their failure to comprehend the doctrine of salvation and the grace of God as taught in the Scriptures. In a careful examination of the well-known cultic groups, I am convinced that none of these is committed to the Biblical position on this subject. The way of salvation is plainly revealed. Paul writes, "For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:8-9). Salvation

is further amplified in these words: "Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus . . ." (Rom. 3:24). The cults insist on adding some form of works as a necessary step in being accepted by God.

Personally, I have not found a single cultist who is clear on the matter of salvation as presented in the Word of God. This is a fatal error, and it keeps multitudes of people in spiritual bondage. Works have no place in God's plan of salvation. We read, "Man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law" (Rom. 3:28). Martin Luther was in darkness and underwent soul-suffering until the light broke through regarding justification by faith. He continued to use the expression, "justification by faith alone." It became a key position in the Protestant Reformation.

If you have followed my presentation on the false paths of the cultists, you will see clearly that Bible-believing Christians have nothing in common with the present-day cultists on the fundamental doctrines of the Holy Scriptures. Their position is totally unacceptable. Actually a chasm exists between true Christians and the cults on the major teachings in the Word of God. Let us keep a complete separation from those who follow false paths with regard to the Biblical doctrines.

THE OLD TESTAMENT PROPHETS AND TWENTIETH CENTURY CULTS

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How would the Old Testament prophets have regarded the cults of the 20th century? What would Isaiah and Jeremiah have thought of today's competitors to the Christian

faith? Would they have thought it the better part of wisdom to ignore them or would they have openly pointed up the errors? Would they have focused on the sincerity of a man's belief or

the object of his worship?

False Religion In The Old Testament

Religion abounded in the ancient world. The Scriptures dismiss the atheist as a fool (Psalm 14:1). Everyone believed in a god or gods—men and women were worshipping creatures, and they were sincere in their belief. But for the prophets it was of the utmost importance that men worship the true and the living God. The God who created us demands our worship. He is a jealous God, who will not share His glory with another (Exodus 20:5).

The living God is powerful and capable of responding to men, but the idols men create are incapable of responding to their prayers. Jeremiah says, "Then shall the cities of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem go and cry unto the gods unto whom they offer incense: but they shall not save them at all in their time of trouble" (Jeremiah 11:12). And Isaiah warns, "They have no knowledge that set upon the wood of their graven image, and pray to a god that cannot save" (Isaiah 45:20).

The object of one's worship is important. The prophets would have rejected the modern area that emphasizes one's sincerity and which takes a basically agnostic view of the truth. They are closer to the view of the exact sciences which assume that under specified conditions there is only one true answer and millions of false ones. For the prophets there is one true God, He has revealed Himself and calls for our worship. When the kingdom of God comes among men, Isaiah says, "At that day shall a man look to his Maker, and his eyes shall have respect to the Holy One of Israel" (Isaiah 17:7).

Men are invited to see for themselves, to put God to the test. God created the world, He chose Israel and by His mighty acts brought them out of Egypt and into the promised land. Elijah challenged the people to decide, "How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him" (I Kings 18:21). Then he performed one of the great miracles of the Bible as he called fire down from heaven to confound the prophets of Baal. The evidence of God's work is so obvious to Isaiah that he chides his listeners because "they hear, but understand not, they see but perceive not" (Isaiah 6:9).

Not only does the worship of idols and false gods offend the one true and living God; such worship does harm to the worshiper. The idolater has rebelled against the living God and created a god which is an extension of himself. The idol is a way of meeting God on a man's own terms. The idols of the middle east represented man's lust for wealth and sensual pleasure. As he worshiped these objects, his estrangement and rebellion became worse. The Psalmist says, "Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men's hands. They have mouths, but they speak not: eyes have they, but they see not: They have ears, but they hear not; noses have they, but they smell not: They have hands, but they handle not: feet have they, but they walk not: neither speak they through their throat. *They that make them are like unto them; so is every one that trusteth in them*" (Psalm 115:4-8).

We become like what we worship. When we turn to a false god or a man-made religion, our lives become distorted, and we are less than

human. God made us in His own image, and our true humanity is realized in fellowship and worshiping Him. As the ancient prayer puts it, "We were made for Thee, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in Thee."

Modern-day cults and false religions of the ancient world lead men into areas that God never intended them to enter. When a religious system offers the possibility of communication with spirits or the dead, when it promises predictions of personal events in our lives, when it purports to give a spiritual explanation for every event in our lives, it has exceeded the limitations God has set for man. God has revealed to man what is necessary for him to know about life and spiritual things. To go beyond this is to disobey God. In Genesis 3:6, the tempter offered Adam and Eve a knowledge that would make them gods. Original sin was attempting that kind of understanding. The Old Testament warns us to accept our creatureliness, to accept that we cannot know as God knows. We are to rejoice in what God has revealed to us and stop where that revelation ends. If God in His Word has not revealed answers that respond to all of the speculative questions we may raise, then let us leave the questions and reflect upon the revelation He has provided for us.

To sum up, for the prophets of the Old Testament the object of one's worship was important. God has spoken, and He demands our response. To follow other gods was to offend Him and to do harm to our own souls. Would the prophets not call for the same attention to the object of one's worship in the 20th century? Would they not warn men that

to follow a false religion leads to disastrous spiritual consequences? Would they not insist that men test every religious utterance by its fidelity to the Word of God?

Tender Condemnation

Let us think of how the prophets approached men about the errors of their beliefs. We see them simultaneously speaking words of condemnation and hope. God is displeased with their worship of false gods but His hand is ready to save. The words of condemnation are there. Isaiah says, "They shall be turned back, they shall be greatly ashamed, that trust in graven images, that say to the molten images, Ye are our gods" (Isaiah 42:17). And at the command of the Lord, Jeremiah broke a potter's vessel in the sight of men and made the comment, "Thus saith the Lord of hosts; Even so will I break this people and this city, as one breaketh a potter's vessel, that cannot be made whole again: I will bring upon this city and upon all her towns all the evil I have pronounced against it, because they have hardened their necks, that they might not hear my words" (Jeremiah 19:11, 15).

The prophets demonstrate that negative thinking is as important as positive thinking. People must know the consequences of sin as well as the way of salvation. Repentance for sin goes hand in hand with faith. The prophets drew the vivid contrast between the light of God's revelation and the darkness of false religion.

The prophets were superb communicators. Some of the most beautiful language in the Scriptures is found in the prophecies of Isaiah and Jeremiah. The prophets devised dramatic ways of catching the atten-

tion of their hearers. But with all of their communication skills, they were first of all true to the God who had revealed Himself to them. They are more concerned to hear His words of "Well done" than the applause of their hearers.

Yet with the message of condemnation there was a word of hope. God judges, but He is also a God of mercy. Jeremiah says, "Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the Lord; and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you: for I am merciful, saith the Lord, and I will not keep anger forever" (Jeremiah 3:12). Isaiah brings this word of hope, "Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy that it cannot hear" (Isaiah 59:1).

The prophets proclaim the truth that is made even more explicit in the New Testament that while God hates their sin, He loves sinners. As we think of false teachings today, this is surely the attitude that God would have us demonstrate. We must demonstrate a respect and love for those who have turned from the truths of the Bible to false teaching without becoming tolerant of their false beliefs. Is loving the sinner but hating the sin a feat possible only for apostles and prophets? One man reflecting on this question suddenly saw that this was the kind of attitude that he had toward himself. He hated his bad habits, he hated himself for his broken promises, and his failure to meet his goals, yet he still maintained his self esteem.

Another presentation of this idea of loving the sinner, but hating the sin, may come in the words of our Lord in Luke 14:26, "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother,

and wife, and children, and brethren and sisters, yea and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." This seems difficult to understand when we are told in other passages to love our families. Some commentators suggest that the verse means that we are to love our families less than we love Jesus. Perhaps a better way to understand the verse is to see Jesus telling us that while we esteem and love our families, we are to hate anything in their lives or value systems that conflicts with our calling in Christ. While we must love and honor our parents, for example, we must reject any habits, or prejudices they may have which conflict with the teachings of Christ. As we reflect upon the lives of those who have turned away from the Lord to false teaching, we must love them as Christ loved them, but we must reject any belief that conflicts with Scripture.

Prophetic Optimism

Whatever the apparent success or failure of their work at the moment, the prophets carried with them the conviction that God was the Lord of history. From the foundation of the world He had been working out His great plan of redemption. He had called Israel to be His servant people and had guided them to the promised land, and He would complete His great plan of salvation. Amos declares that God has been involved in a recent judgment on His people, "Also I have given you cleanness of teeth in all your cities, and want of bread in all your places: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord" (Amos 4:6). And Isaiah sees God's hand in another punishment, "Therefore my people are gone into

captivity because they have no knowledge" (Isaiah 5:13). The prophets look forward to the completion of God's plan of salvation in Jesus Christ, a fulfillment of prophecy which they describe with remarkable accuracy in passages such as Isaiah 53 and Micah 2. They see the ultimate victory of God's plan in the Messianic kingdom, when all men shall know God in their hearts. "I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people" (Jeremiah 31:33).

As He moves in history, God does not treat men as puppets. Rather He directs in such an intricate way that even when men act in accordance with the dictates of their natures, even when they are unaware of His presence, He is working out His eternal purposes. Isaiah spoke of Cyrus, the Persian, as "my shepherd performing my good pleasure" (Isaiah 44:28). And in Isaiah 10:5 the Lord says, "O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, and the staff in their hand is mine indignation."

Whether the response to their message was great or small, whether it was welcomed or refused, the prophets had the assurance that God was directing history and that His purposes will be fulfilled. This same assurance should enable us to face with patience the temporary successes of those who deny the Biblical faith. God is on the throne—His triumph is sure.

Finally, we may note that the prophets' calling involved the total commitment of their lives, their wealth and their families. Hosea obeyed the Lord's command to marry a woman who would demonstrate the

infidelity of Israel, and his children were given names that spoke God's message to Israel at that point in time. Jeremiah accepted imprisonment because of the unpopularity of his message, and one of the most beautiful examples of his commitment to his message is recorded in the 32nd chapter where he agrees to buy his cousin's land. While Jeremiah was in prison, the Word of the Lord came to him saying that his cousin would come to offer him the possibility of purchasing a field at Anathoth. Jeremiah accepted the offer and carried out every legal detail including the payment of money, the signing of a deed viewed by witnesses, and the placement of two copies of the transaction in an earthenware vessel to preserve them. As he did, this he proclaimed his commitment to the promise that God's people would return to the land. "For thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; Houses and fields and vineyards shall be possessed again in this land" (Jeremiah 32:15).

The prophets remind us that our actions may dramatize the truth much more effectively than our words. A family that sacrifices to provide a son or daughter with a Christian education, a man willing to invest his savings in a new church building, a person who makes a Christian will designating a part of his estate to Christian work are bearing eloquent testimony to the truth that God's Word shall never pass away.

If the prophets were alive today, they would love the truth and stake their lives on it.

A FRESH LOOK AT CHRISTIAN SCIENCE

By Rev. Ewald Eisele

"There is no life, truth, intelligence, nor substance in matter. All is infinite Mind and its infinite manifestation, for God is All in all. Spirit is immortal Truth; matter is mortal error. Spirit is the real and eternal; matter is the unreal and temporal. Spirit is God, and man is His image and likeness. Therefore man is not material; he is spiritual." So writes Mrs. Mary Baker Glover Patterson Eddy, the founder of Church of Christ, Scientist, in the "bible" of this cult, *Science and Health With Key To The Scriptures* (p. 468). This book contains the doctrines of the Christian Scientists. In the beginning, 1875, there were eight chapters, but it was enlarged to eighteen chapters by 1906 because Mrs. Eddy claimed to have received further "revelations" from God. The above is the prescribed answer to the question which is given: What is the scientific statement of being?

William Edward Biederwolf in his booklet entitled *Christian Science, The Unvarnished Facts About It*, defines Christian Science like this: "Christian Science is a system of healing based upon the old philosophical concept of the NON-EXISTENCE of matter. The best way to refute it is to stub your toe against a stone. Its leading principle is that there is nothing material in the universe; matter does not exist."

The underlying philosophy of Christian Science is that of idealism—there is no reality but thought. This philosophy first appeared in India, where it survives in Buddhism and in some of the bran-

ches of Hinduism which teach what Mrs. Eddy taught, that all that we see about us is illusion. This philosophy was developed in the Neoplatonism of the early Christian centuries as the Docetism of some early sects which taught that Christ merely *seemed* to have a human body. It was further developed and propagated by George Berkeley, Bishop of Cloyne, Ireland, in the early 1700's. Mrs. Eddy picked this up from the founder of New Thought, Phineas P. Quimby, who died in 1866, and adopted it as her basic philosophy in the 1875 writing of *Science and Health With Key To The Scriptures* as well as in her other writings.

Pandita Ramabai, a high caste Brahmin widow, and the most distinguished native Christian of India at the time of her death, said in 1922 during a visit to the United States, "I recognize Christian Science, as it is the same pagan philosophy taught among my people for 4000 years. As I was born and educated in this philosophy, having my degree of Pandita in it, I am acquainted with both its literature and its influence, and I want to witness to its degradation."

Mr. Biederwolf, in his booklet already cited, says, "This thing they call Christian Science, so far as its theory of healing is concerned, is hoary with age; it had long, gray whiskers way back in the time of Socrates, and was so old that it had to hobble on crutches when Athens of Greece was only a little cluster of huts. And as for this woman, who

declares herself inspired of God, to claim that this came as a revelation to her from God Himself is not only the acme of absurdity but it is a pretention so monstrous, and so irreverent as to compel every right thinking individual to look upon her either as the willful perpetrator of a fraud, or as a pitiable example of mental unbalance."

If you deny the reality of matter, and convince yourself of this, you do away with all that pertains to matter. Yet Christian Scientists still work for money, which is matter, buy food with that money to feed a body which, they say, is non-existent, and take great pleasure in the many things that money can buy, in spite of the fact that all of these things are just illusions—they simply do not exist.

You also do away with heaven and hell, which things are merely a state of mind. You even do away with death. What really dies, we are told, is your belief that there was a body, because, after all, the body only exists as a state of mind or belief in the first place. You cannot get sick, because a body that is not real cannot get sick. Sickness is only a state of mind. And yet on the title page of *Science and Health With Key To The Scriptures* (hereafter in this article to be referred to as simply *Science and Health*) there is the registered trademark of the trustees of the Mother Church on which it states, "Heal The Sick, Raise The Dead, Cast Out Demons, Cleanse The Lepers."

This is only one example of the hundreds of contradictions found in this religion. In fact, Mrs. Eddy has not only tampered with the Scriptures

almost at every turn but has, in her theological teaching, contradicted every fundamental doctrine of the Bible and of the Christian faith. However, when one reads *Science and Health*, one can find much that is true or that borders on truth. This is one of the reasons why so many people are deceived and are practicing Christian Scientists.

One example of Mrs. Eddy's tampering with Scripture is found in her rendition of the Lord's Prayer, of Matthew 6:9-13, which is read, including her interlinear interpretation, each Sunday in every Christian Science church.

"Our Father which art in heaven,
Our Father-Mother God, All-harmonious,
Hallowed be thy Name,
Adorable One,
Thy kingdom come,
Thy kingdom is come, thou art ever present,
Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven,
Enable us to know, — as in heaven, so on earth — God is omnipotent, supreme,
Give us this day our daily bread,
Give us grace for today; feed the famished affections,
And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors,
And love is reflected in love,
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil,
And God leadeth us not into temptation, but delivereth us from sin, disease, and death,
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever.
For God is infinite, all power, all Life, Truth, Love, over all and All."
Concerning the doctrine of the

Word, it must be said that *Science and Health* repudiates the plain teaching of Scripture in literally hundreds of places. We will look at just a few of those places.

On pages 521 - 524, "The science and truth of the divine creation have been presented in the first chapter of Genesis; and now the opposing error, a material view of creation, is to be set forth. The second chapter of Genesis contains a statement of this material view of God and the universe, a statement which is the exact opposite of scientific truth as before recorded. The science of the first record proves the falsity of the second. If one is true the other is false, for they are antagonistic . . . this latter part of the second chapter of Genesis which portrays Spirit as supposedly cooperating with matter in constructing the universe, is based on some hypothesis of error, for the Scripture just preceding declares God's work to be finished. Does Life, Truth and Love produce death, error and hatred? Is it the truth or is it a lie concerning man and God? It must be a lie, for God presently curses the ground. Could Spirit evolve its opposite, matter, and give matter ability to sin and suffer?"

On page 544, "The first statement about evil is in the FABLE of the serpent. The FACTS of creation include nothing of the kind."

Unchristian Doctrinal Teaching

Regarding God—to whom, incidentally the Lord's Prayer is directed—*Science and Health* says that God is not a Person but rather a Principle. In answer to the question, in chapter 14, "What (!!!) is God?" this answer is given, "God is incor-

poreal, divine, supreme, infinite, Mind, Spirit, Soul, Principle, Life, Truth, Love." Mrs. Eddy emphatically avoids any personal categories for God.

Regarding Jesus Christ, these should really be considered one by one, i.e. Jesus, and Christ, because Mrs. Eddy teaches that there is a clear distinction between 'Christ', who dwelt forever an IDEAL in the bosom of God, and 'Jesus' who "demonstrated Christ." "Jesus was born of Mary. He proved that Christ is the divine idea of God." But there is no explanation as to how a "Principle" can have an idea or ideal!! Regarding the suffering and death of Christ: page 38, "The eternal Christ, his spiritual selfhood, never suffered." Page 44, "His disciples believed Jesus to be dead while He was hidden in the sepulchre, whereas He was alive. The lonely precincts of the tomb gave Jesus a refuge from his foes, a place in which to solve the great problems of Being." Page 46, "They saw Him after his crucifixion and learned that he had not died. He did not require the skill of a surgeon to heal the torn palms and bind up the wounded side and lacerated feet." But we may well ask, how can a body which is non-existent, become lacerated and torn?

As for the Holy Spirit, page 55, "In the words of St. John, 'He shall give you another Comforter that he may abide with you forever.' This Comforter I understand to be Divine Science." In the Glossary, chapter 17 of *Science and Health*, the definition of Holy Ghost is, "Divine Science; the development of eternal Life, Truth and Love."

As for man, page 475, "Man is not

matter, he is not made up of brain, blood, bones, and other material elements. Man is spiritual and perfect." "Man is incapable of sin, sickness and death. The real man cannot depart from holiness, nor can God, by whom man is evolved, engender the capacity or freedom to sin."

But of course this body, which is not, does get sick, or else there would be no need for Christian Science Practitioners; and the motto on the Seal of the Trustees, 'Heal the sick', would be nonsensical. But what is sickness then? It is, according to page 229, "the transgression of a belief of mortal mind (which is non-existent!), not of a law of matter (also non-existent), nor of divine Mind, which causes the belief of sickness. The remedy is Truth, not matter,—the Truth that disease is unreal." And on page 120, "Health is not a condition of matter but of mind." For anyone to say that disease does not exist and then to be continually talking about physical ailments is at best ridiculous and at worst insane. Yet this is one of the main topics in *Science and Health*.

Now it is evident that the bodies of even Christian Scientists are buried! But what saith the great Mrs. Eddy? Page 426, "The body cannot die, because matter has no life to surrender. The human CONCEPTS

named matter, death, disease, sickness and sin are all that can be destroyed." Page 428, "There is no death." Page 266, "Man is deathless."

Concerning sin, page 472, "Evil is but an illusion. It is a false belief. Error is unreal because untrue. It is that which seemeth to be and is not."

Scriptures, of course, reject the metaphysical philosophy of Mrs. Eddy. They teach us that there is a *personal* God who manifests Himself to us in the real Person of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, and witnesses to our spirits by His Spirit in the Person of the Holy Spirit. He proclaims in His inerrant Word, The Holy Bible, that He says what He means and means what He says. He declares that His revelation is complete and that no one had better try to add to it nor take away from it. He says that He would have all men, even Christian Scientists, come to the knowledge of His Truth by receiving a new nature through a new birth because of a personal faith in the finished work of His Son which was accomplished by His real death, burial and resurrection from the dead.

In our catalog we have a listing of available books which refute this ungodly, unbiblical and unchristian false religion.

THE SATANIC HERESY OF THE MORMON CHURCH

Startling facts about this growing system

by Mr. and Mrs. Douglas M. Wilson

What would you think of an organized group of "believers" who spoke freely about the "gospel," extolled the virtues of baptism by immersion and proclaimed the need to

be "born again"; yet embraced the unthinkable theories that "Christ is the brother of the devil," "God is but an exalted, resurrected man of flesh and bones," "the goal of human

endeavor is to become a 'god,' "salvation by faith alone damns mankind"?

Certainly our indignation burns against those who have "changed the truth of God into a lie" and blasphemed the most high God, Who gave His only Son for our salvation! But such are the heresies of Mormonism—a spiritual disease that produces spiritual death in most who are infected.

There are four main considerations for the child of God as he views this cult. First, *the error is satanic*. The god of the Mormons is not the God of Israel or Christianity. The Mormon god is in the image of corruptible man (Rom. 1:23, 25, 28); a finite, fleshly image brought down to the level of human understanding.

Mormon beliefs constitute an unrelenting attack on the Godhead. God the Father is believed to be an "ordinary" man who conscientiously learned and obeyed the laws of truth until He attained the status of godhood. God the Son—our Lord Jesus Christ—is said to be the brother of Satan; in fact, He is said to have been the product of an incestuous relationship between the flesh-and-blood "Father" and his spirit daughter, Mary. While He is accorded a certain amount of respect for His teachings and His death on the cross (said to bring about universal resurrection for men), His shed blood is not considered to suffice as an atonement for all sin. The Holy Ghost is said to be a man with a spiritual body; the Holy Spirit is an influence from God the Father, not personal. To the Mormon, the Father, Son and Holy Ghost are three separate "gods"; there is no belief in the one triune God.

The basis for Mormon teaching is a combination of the *Book of Mormon*, *Holy Bible*, *Doctrine and Covenants*, *Pearl of Great Price* and the statements of their twelve living prophets. These statements often grossly contradict the older, historical Mormon teachings. Mormonism is an eclectic faith, using bits and pieces from the Bible, thus creating a hideously deceptive but palatable belief to those who are without the truth.

Satan has been actively involved in the formulation of Mormon belief, as evidenced by the visions of Joseph Smith, "prophet" and founder of the false church. In his writings, Smith claims to have been visited by "an angel of light" (see 2 Cor. 11:14). In one particularly startling narrative, he writes: "I am the only man that has ever been able to keep a whole church together since the days of Adam. A large majority of the whole have stood by me. Neither Paul, John, Peter, nor Jesus ever did it. I boast that no other man ever did such a work as I..." (*History of the Church*, pp. 408, 409).

There are other symbols of satanic power and purpose in the Mormon world, such as the fig-leaf apron used in the temple service and the altar of Cain, found in the Visitors' Center in Salt Lake City; both of these show graphically the rejection of Jesus' blood sacrifice for sin.

The second dilemma that we as Christians must face is that *the epidemic is spreading*. The Mormon Church hopes to field 50,000 missionaries soon, and by 1985 intends to be producing converts at the rate of 500,000 per year! Indeed, the Mormon Church is the fastest-growing

religious body in the country, growing more than twice as fast as its closest competitor. For each Mormon who is led out of Mormonism, sixty more victims are taken in. Widespread research has determined that about 60 percent of the new converts to Mormonism are Baptist by background. We must do something to protect our ranks from the onslaughts of the Devil!

Our third consideration is that *the economics are staggering!* As with many cults today, the Mormon Church preys on unsuspecting, gullible individuals who are deceptively led into the mainstream of false thinking in order to build up the finances of the church and its leaders (2 Pet. 2:1-3). The president of the Mormon Church has perpetrated these false beliefs zealously in order to protect his over-three-million-dollar-per-day income. The holdings of this church include a 300,000-acre tract known as "Deseret Farms of Florida," endowed with 50,000 head of beef cattle, 2400 acres of citrus groves and 150,000 acres of timber. Lest we begin to think of acquiring this select parcel for our own uses, the selling price is \$100 million! The Mormon Church has clearly made merchandise of its members.

The fourth consideration is that *the enticement is surprising.* Certainly there are many pleasures "for a season" that have attracted these millions to a false church. An evening each week is set aside in each practicing Mormon home as the "Family Home Evening," during which the family gathers to enjoy recreation, teaching and the warmth of being together. Not a bad idea, in itself! Another enticement of Mormonism is

the belief in "Eternal Progression." This is made to sound like the best promotion opportunity in the world—or out of it! According to this plan, a couple married in the temple is married for time and all eternity; in the so-called "Kingdom of God" they will be privileged to populate their own world with numberless offspring. In addition, man is said to have the opportunity to work to achieve the status of godhood (see Ps. 50:21). Still another product of the darkened mind is plural marriage—both now (disguised by lies and questionable practices) and in the ages to come.

Our overview, so far, has painted a dramatic picture of human darkness and depravity and a bleak picture of lost souls being lured into a false hope. What, then, is the cure for the disease of Mormonism?

We must begin with the *awareness of the truth.* What are the marks of a false church—a cult? In part, a cult will claim to be the sole source of contact with God; the only true church, having an infallible leader, possessing the sole authority to baptize or to speak and act for God, and knowing the only proper interpretation of the Word of God. In addition, these groups will claim to have new revelation or other books that are superior to the Bible. What is the truth? The Word of God, as it plainly states in John 17:17. We must be active in proclaiming this living, healing truth to a hungry world.

Next, we must go about *altering the thinking* of those who are or would be drawn into a cult. Some minds are particularly susceptible to the hopes, claims and enticements of a false church. The Bible itself tells us what to beware of in Deuteronomy

13:1-4. When the Mormon missionary comes to us, well-dressed and courteous, claiming to have the power of the Holy Ghost, we must use the Word of God to evaluate his well-planned though erroneous presentation. Our all-powerful God, Who has given us His Word as our sole authority, is well able to change hearts and minds as we use this Word of truth.

Finally, we must be challenged to go about *arresting the threat* of this loathsome disease. We must understand the true nature of the Mormon Church in order to combat it. The Mormons are a well-educated people, well-versed in their teachings at an early age. We must be skilled in using the Word of God; He has promised to honor His Word when so used (Isa. 55:11). It is not enough to use our typically baptistic terminology; many of our terms such as "redemption," "born again" and "gospel" are used by the Mormons, but with entirely different meanings. Mormons are lost for the same reason other people are lost! They need to see the truth of salvation directly from God's Word in order that they may be saved. We must exercise kindness and patience in our dealings with them. Arguing is not only unfruitful,

but it is contrary to the very nature of our Lord to Whom we are trying to win them.

The average span of time between the initial contact and the salvation experience for Mormons who are won to Christ is seven years. There are questions that may be raised when appropriate concerning Mormon doctrine, thereby planting a seed of doubt within the wondering mind. May we heed the warning about this heresy from hell and its threats, and be faithful to our one God and His one Word. "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables" (2 Tim. 4:3, 4).

Pastor and Mrs. Wilson minister at the La Junta Baptist Tabernacle in La Junta, Colorado. This article is based on a work by Hal Mason entitled "Mormonism: A Major Cult." Mr. Mason is a missionary to the Mormons under the auspices of Baptist Mid-Missions.

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ROCK — Bob Larson. Here is a book for everyone, parent or not, to read and then apply to the situation in which they find themselves in relation to the "Rock Culture" of today. Every parent should read it even if their children are only babies. There are principles here which will be useful for any child-parent relationship and certainly the ounce of prevention that could be applied regarding music could apply to other areas as well. This is not a nice book. It tells the bone-bare facts as to the source and results of being consumed with rock. 160 pp \$2.95

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PERTINENT QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

John E. Dahlin, Editor

QUESTION . . . Is Hell a distinct place or a state of the soul?

ANSWER . . . Hell is the final abode of Satan and the impenitent. (Mt. 25:41). It was prepared for the Devil and his angels, but all who know not Christ will be consigned to this dreadful place. It is stated, "When the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven, all those that know not God and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ shall be punished by everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power" (2 Thess. 1:7-9). The Scriptures teach eternal hell for all Christ rejecters.

QUESTION . . . Are all parts of the Bible equally inspired?

ANSWER . . . All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, that is, God-breathed. Not all parts of the Bible are equally important, however. For example, the genealogies in 1 Chronicles 1 to 9 are important, but not as important as John 3:16 and Romans where the doctrine of salvation is presented. The inspiration is equally provided, however, thus making all Scripture authoritative in every area.