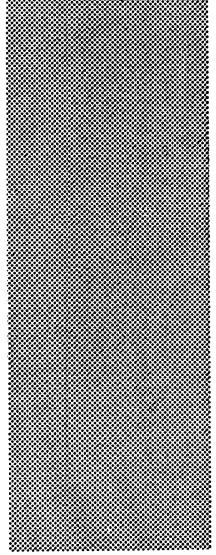


"...Hereby know we the Spirit of truth and the Spirit of error"

The
DISCERNER



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Who Are The British Israelites And What Do They Teach?

By Oswald J. Smith, Litt.D., L.L.D., D.D.

Pastor of The Peoples Church, Toronto, Canada.

briefed by Rev. Herbert V. Caneday.

British-Israelism claims that the Anglo-Saxon races, *viz.*, Great Britain and the United States constitute the lost ten tribes of Israel.

ORIGIN AND HISTORY

The first advocate of British-Israelism was Dr. Abadie — 1723. He said that the ten tribes would be found in the British Isles. The second advocate was Richard Brothers, a half-crazed British naval officer, who was born in the year 1789. He claimed to be the “nephew of God,” and a descendent of King David. He predicted that the Jews would return to Palestine in his lifetime, and that he would become “the prince of the Hebrews” and world ruler. The authorities placed him in a lunatic asylum.

The third advocate was Edward Hine. In 1871 he wrote his book, “Identification of the British Nation with Lost Israel.” Edward Hine, who held many strange fallacies, claimed to be “the Deliverer out of Zion.”

It remained, however, for John Wilson to put British-Israelism on the present basis. His book is entitled “Our Israelitish Origin.” But John Wilson, contrary to Hine, included the Germans as Israelites. And it may be of interest to note here, that one of the

leaders of British-Israelism on his visit to India, made this amazing statement: “This appeal is also to you, O brethren, who are yourselves Indians, but are verily also the sons of Jacob.”

Stranger still, there has been a movement in Japan claiming that the Japanese as a nation are Israelites, and thereby disrupting missionary work on a large scale. A missionary from Japan tells me that the identifications are just as strong and just as convincing in favor of the Japanese being the lost tribes as they are that the Anglo-Saxon races are Israelites.

The British-Israelites themselves admit that British-Israelism is only a theory, and while they are prepared to base their teachings on a mere theory, I am not. Bishop Titcombe, one of their advocates has this to say, “Until a better theory can be propounded, it is worthy of our fullest belief.”

THEIR TWO BIBLES

British-Israelites claim that they stand for the Bible, the whole Bible, and that they believe it from cover to cover, and on that ground they cannot understand my attitude. But I would remind them of the fact that Christian Scientists and Jehovah’s Witnesses make exactly the same claim. They insist

that they accept the Bible, the whole Bible, and abide by its teachings. Hence, that argument is valueless. Mrs. Eddy and Judge Rutherford place their own interpretation on the Word of God. And while they claim to believe the Bible, they really do not. The same is true of British-Israelism.

The British-Israelites profess to have two Bibles. God's Word alone does not satisfy them. They would add to the revelation already given. Their Bible is the Great Pyramid of Egypt, upon which they have built the most fantastic theories imaginable. It was my privilege when I was in Egypt, to visit the Great Pyramid. I was taken all through the passageways and the various chambers, and I am very frank to say that it has nothing whatever to do with prophecy, or God's program for the future.

The conclusions at which the British-Israelites have arrived in regard to the Pyramid have had to be altered again and again. I know of nothing so utterly absurd and childish as the things they are saying in regard to what they dare to call their "other Bible." No, my friends, there is but one Bible, the Word of God. It is absolutely authoritative and we need no other. Our doctrines must be based on God's revelation in the Scriptures, and not on the idle speculations of men.

THEY HAVE NO ANSWER

Some years ago a British-Israelite said that Edward would be Britain's last ruler. Now Great Britain has a queen. How does he explain it? British-Israelites know but little of the truth. They are very one-sided. They think and write only in terms of their own fantastic theory. All Bible students and teachers, no matter how great, are discounted just because they

cannot see the so-called truth of Anglo-Israelism. But a teacher who has little or no standing from a scholastic and theological position is recognized by them as a great Bible student if only he advocates their theory.

WHAT THE ENCYCLOPEDIAS SAY

But now let us turn to the greatest of authorities namely, the encyclopedias. Again and again they insist that only highly educated people with academic training are capable of dealing with British-Israel truth. In other words, it is not for the common people. They are considered incapable of understanding. How different to the ministry of our Lord. The common people heard Him gladly.

But now, if the British-Israelites really want the opinion of scholars, the greatest scholars and theologians, they are available. If they really are sincere in their statement that only the highly trained intelligensia are capable of discussing the subject, then they will listen to what the encyclopedias have to say.

First of all, the **New International**. And this is what it says: "The theory is destitute of scientific proof." Second, **American**. It is even stronger: "A peculiar belief untenable on scientific grounds." Third, **Chambers**: "A theory that sets at defiance all ethnological and linguistic evidence." Last of all, and most important, the **Britannica**. And the Britannica speaks in no uncertain language: "The theory of Anglo-Israelism rests on premises which are deemed by scholars, both theological and anthropological, to be utterly unsound."

That should settle the question. To think of an ordinary individual stressing his opinion and insisting

that he knows more than the great scholars, theological and anthropological, who have weighed the question and then had the verdict published in the Britannica encyclopedia, is nothing short of preposterous. These editors are first of all scholars, and scholars of the highest rank. To deal with Anglo-Israelism the most outstanding of the theological scholars have been called and consulted. Naturally, they base their verdict on the Word of God, the Scriptures having been their special study. And yet adherents of British-Israelism have the audacity to ignore their verdict. I insist, my friends, that the statements of the encyclopedias are unanswerable.

BRITISH ISRAELISM UNTRUE

There are four reasons why I believe British-Israelism to be untrue. First of all, it is untrue from a historical standpoint, and I quote from a theologian and Bible teacher of outstanding ability, Rev. Joseph W. Kemp. Let us weigh carefully every word. "We are asked to believe, forsooth, that nearly three million Israelites poured into Great Britain, and that they dropped their language, physiognomy, customs, records, their names, and their memory; and, what is equally astonishing, that for two thousand years nobody seems to have suspected the astonishing fact. The thing, of course, never occurred, and I doubt if in the whole world there could be found a historian of any note who would risk his reputation by averring it did. Synagogues and customs (circumcision for instance) mark today every city to which the Jew has wandered. Further, that an entire race, which once wrote from right to left should, without leaving a single trace of the process behind, revo-

lutionize its penmanship by now writing from left to right, is impossible to conceive."

In the second place, I consider Anglo-Israelism untrue from a **national** standpoint. "What a travesty of the Kingdom of God British-Israelism presents to the world! British-Israelites claim that Britain is the place of God's appointment, where the ten tribes are to be blessed. If Britain be the place, and the British people be Israel, how does it come they shall move no more (II Sam. 7:10) when Israel is yet to inhabit the vast territory of Palestine — Mesopotamia? Again, has Britain nothing to fear from the children of wickedness — her enemies? Can anyone possessed of reasoning faculties argue that the promise of David, as quoted, is fulfilled today? For the surrounding nation to be told that the British Empire is the Divine Kingdom on earth, and that the British throne, is the Throne of David, to which all nations must ultimately bow, is tragic, and, to the nations concerned, it is ludicrous and politically dangerous. Is it not clear that a war on Britain by any nation would be war on God?"

In the third place, I consider British-Israelism untrue from an **ecclesiastical** standpoint. "British-Israel Truth" says: 'Israel has been re-covenanted by being baptized into the one Catholic and Apostolic Church,' and now 'the Gospel of salvation must be preached by his constituted agents, the house of Israel.' How can the nation be baptized into the Church and still remain a nation, and simultaneously evangelize all other nations? The Word of God emphatically declares that in the Church 'there is neither Jew nor Greek, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian,

Scythian, bond nor free' (Col. 3:11). Nationalism within the Church is a complete subversion of Scripture truth regarding the Church. It makes national prosperity and greatness the hall-marks of Divine favor, thus ignoring individual regeneration and sanctity.

BIBLICAL REFUTATION OF THE THEORY

Finally, British-Israelism, I believe to be untrue from a Biblical standpoint. There are five statements in the Word of God that prove conclusively the impossibility of the Anglo-Saxon races being the lost ten tribes.

The first is found in Amos 9:8,9, where God says: "I will sift the house of Israel among all nations." Therefore no nation on national territory of its own, can be Israel. The Jews have been sifted and scattered among the nations of the world. But British people never have. They are today on their own territory. Hence Britain and the United States cannot be Israel.

From Deut. 28:62, we understand that the Israelites are to be few in number, and that they are to flee before their enemies (Lev. 26:17,36). That has never been true of Great Britain or the United States. The British people are by no means few in number, nor do they flee before their enemies. Hence they cannot be Israel.

Hosea 3:4 tells us that they are to remain without a king, a prince and a sacrifice for many days. That has been true of the Jews, for they have had neither king, prince, nor sacrifice for nearly two thousand years. But, never has it been true of Great Britain. Hence, Britain is not Israel; but the Jews are Israel.

In Numbers 23:9 we are told that the people of Israel are to dwell alone, and that they are to

be unknown among the nations. That prophecy has been fulfilled, so far as the Jews are concerned. For over 2,000 years they were not recognized as a nation. But Great Britain is most certainly reckoned among the nations of the world in a very real sense, and so is the United States.

Last of all, according to Gen. 17:14, the Israelites were to be barred from blessing unless circumcised. That law has never been changed. All Israelites have to be circumcised. The Anglo-Saxons are not a circumcised people, and, therefore are barred from the blessings promised to Israel.

FIVE UNANSWERABLE QUESTIONS

First, to whom were the promises of blessing given? According to Ezek. 37:11,16,17-23 they were given to the "whole house of Israel." Not to Judah alone, but to all twelve tribes. Nowhere does it say Israel is to enjoy them apart from Judah (Isa. 11:12,13; Jer. 3:18).

Second, in which land were they to be fulfilled? There is no blessing for Israel when outside their own land of Palestine (Jer. 3:17-18; Ezek. 36:28; 37:22).

Third, when are the promises to be fulfilled? Not until the return of Christ for His Millennium reign upon the throne of David will the promises be fulfilled. (Jer. 23:5-8; Ezek. 37:24-25).

Fourth, what is to be Israel's condition until then? According to Paul in Romans 11:5,7,11,25: darkness, blindness, and unbelief, except for the election of grace; as is true of the Jews today, not Britain nor America.

Fifth, how long is this to last? "Until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in" (Rom. 11:25). And this one passage from verses 13-25,

which declares that Israel, and not Judah alone, is to be broken off, and that "blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in," proves conclusively that British-Israelism cannot be true.

BRITISH ISRAELISM IS DANGEROUS

British-Israelism is dangerous because it places the emphasis on national instead of individual salvation. As Dr. Mountain says, "The British people have accepted the Christian faith and, come under the New Covenant." That is like saying a man is a Roman Catholic or a Protestant, a Presbyterian, or

a Methodist; therefore he is a Christian. This is national salvation rather than the personal acceptance of Christ as Savior.

The Apostle Paul knew no such message. He declared all men, both Jews and Gentiles are sinners, and insisted on personal regeneration. In fact, he turned his back on nationalism and the Jews' religion of his fathers which he renounced. Hence, we would warn the people of God against this, another error, a latter-day heresy, and urge those who are dabbling in it to renounce its absurdities and go on to the deeper things of God.

WHAT DOES HERBERT ARMSTRONG PREACH?

by H. V. Caneday

Many have appealed to this organization for information about the teachings and belief of Herbert W. Armstrong of Pasadena, California. This radio personality is supposedly the head of a school he calls Ambassador College, editor of two periodicals, publisher of a Bible correspondence course, and main speaker on his own radio broadcast known as "The World Tomorrow." Discerning Christians quickly sense that his message is something less than orthodox and therefore unsound from the Scriptural standpoint. His doctrinal bias is peculiarly his own and that of a few associates he has gathered around himself. It seems to have no designative name as yet, unless one should call it "Armstrongism." Furthermore it is one of those hybrid things that is part of one thing and part of another; but it stands distinctly separate as being neither of the two.

We understand that this man was once in Seventh-Day Adventism and broke with that organized

system. However, his teachings reveal that he did not forsake all the errors of that church, when he turned to embrace British-Israelism. Thus in himself and in his followers he has brought about a remarkably logical union of two illogical and unscriptural systems of teaching. But this merging of parts of two false cults cannot be expected to produce a new system that will be less erroneous than its spurious parentage.

As editor of **The Good News**, Mr. Armstrong endorsed an article entitled "Truth About Unclean Meats" by one of his associates, Raymond F. McNair in the March 1953 issue. In the concluding paragraph he leaves one with the unmistakable impression that there is no salvation for those who eat pork or other unclean meats as he says:

"Where will you cast your lot? With those who partake of the forbidden foods and ruin your health, and receive God's final judgment — to be destroyed?"

Or will you obey God's perfect laws and live more healthily, happily, and abundantly now and forever? 'Choose you this day whom ye will serve'."

As editor of the above mentioned paper, Mr. Armstrong is equally guilty with the author of that false statement for its implications that eternal life may be obtained by abstaining from eating certain foods. God's Word makes no such errors in its teaching.

Another error held over from S. D. A. ism is Armstrong's teaching that the ten commandments are binding upon Christians today. This man is also editor of **The Plain Truth** and therefore responsible for the teaching in that paper. In the September 1956 issue he printed an article by Roderick C. Meredith entitled "Is Obedience to God Required For Salvation?" That author insists the ten commandments are not "done away" as is said in II Corinthians chapter three, and therefore they are still in force. The seriousness of this Galatianism is revealed in a statement at the conclusion of the above mentioned article on page 24: "You will have to repent of breaking God's law. You will need to be baptized as an outward symbol of your willingness to bury your old, disobedient self. Then God will give you the Holy Spirit, through which you will receive the love to keep His law." This is preaching salvation by the deeds of the law, concerning which Paul declared, "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin." That which the Scriptures declared to be the "ministration of death," these make to be the way of salvation.

Mr. Armstrong, himself wrote in

The Good News page 14 of July 1952 saying, "The law provides for both worship of God, religiously, and obedience to God, and blessings from God — every need of man for his own good in a living, active, continuous relationship with the all-wise, all-powerful, all-loving God." If "every need of man" is thus supplied in the law, why did Jesus Christ die for man's sin, and why should these wish to call themselves Christians? This is pure Judaismism.

Most of our readers will have anticipated Mr. Armstrong's next error as being that of Sabbath keeping. Here again he manifests the S.D.A. influence coupled with his belief that he is a part of the nation of Israel after the flesh. Under the title, "What is the Sign of a Christian?" Mr. Rod Meredith wrote in **The Good News** of July 1952 saying "Your Bible proclaims a definite SIGN by which God knows you are one of His children." That sign of course, is Sabbath keeping. He attacks preachers who do not keep the fourth commandment and says, "God is going to punish these false preachers for misleading His people Israel — Britain and America" (P. 3). He continues, "The Bible says that if you are a Christian, you are spiritually an Israelite (Gal. 3:29) . . . The Gentiles who were not given this SIGN were without hope and without God. As long as you follow the practices and laws of the Gentiles you can't be saved" (P. 4). All of this is in opposition to God's simple plan of salvation that is to be found, not in observing a day, but in receiving the Person of His only begotten Son.

Still worse and more of the leaven of false teaching of Seventh-Day Adventism comes to light

(Continued on page 10)

Bible Truths Restored, Inc.

(THEODORE FITCH'S WRITINGS)

by Rev. Laurel W. Hanely

The above name is probably not widely known, but the writings of Theodore Fitch who heads this Council Bluffs, Iowa, corporation have been mailed into thousands of homes. Fitch states that he has written 35 books and that he has 400,000 copies out now, many on a loan basis. Without having analyzed all of his work, a review of several easily shows that, while he makes abundant reference to Scripture, his teaching differs from the truth of God on several major points. Some of these are as follows:

The BIBLE

In his many quotations from the Word he frequently inserts explanatory words or phrases which often completely change the meaning of the passage. For example, in quoting Genesis 5:23; 24, this is the way it appears in his booklet, **All of the Dead Will Be Made Alive**, pg. 26: "Enoch . . . was not (kept alive) for God took him (suddenly in death)."

His failure to note the context of a passage is glaringly apparent on the same page where in also speaking about Enoch, he says, "Paul said that he died (Heb. 11: 13)." A checking of the immediate context in Hebrews, chapter eleven, with special attention to verse five, will show that the writer specifically excluded Enoch from the general statement that "ALL these died."

Quotations from the Apocrypha and other non-canonical writings are given as if they were just as authoritative as the inspired books.

GOD

The teaching in these writings as regards the Trinity is very shallow. He refers to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and does not deny their deity, but holds that only the Son is a Person. In his booklet, **"Jesus Greater Than You Think"**, page 1, in speaking about the Father, he says, "As Spirit, God is everywhere. Therefore He is not a person, or a spirit being, for He is without body, parts or form." This same idea is seen in **Brief Highlights of My Trip Around the World**, page 34, where he says, "God the Father is God in every place. Jesus is God in one place. Therefore, Jesus is God the Father made visible to us as a man." To him anyone is a pagan who denies that our Lord is the one and only Person of God.

He teaches that before Jesus came to earth He was not the Son of God, and in **1000 Facts About Jesus**, page 10, he states, "The Christ-Word-Logos may not be dwelling in that fleshly body in which He ascended to heaven."

MAN

Much stress is placed by him to show that man does not *have* a soul, but that he *is* a soul. To be alive this soul must be energized by the Spirit of God which is loaned to each baby at birth. This is the only Spirit man has and when death occurs, this Spirit returns to God and the soul dies. Death to him is the cessation of all consciousness in any form and this sleep continues for saved or lost until the resurrection when all will

be made alive. There is no such thing as going to heaven. Even after the resurrection we will inherit the earth, not heaven.

In *Our Paradise Inside the Earth*, page 36, the following definitions are given:

LAKE OF FIRE is a huge white cloud of shekinah (glory or Spirit). It will cover the earth.

SECOND DEATH is a figure of speech. It means "dying out to sin," "dead to sin," or "dead with Him" (2 Tim. 2:11).

The everlasting punishment of the wicked is denied as is seen by this statement from the next page of the same booklet, "They say that the wicked dead are burning in hell. Instead they will be raised, judged and corrected in the next age."

He teaches that all white people have descended from the twelve tribes of Israel and that true Jews come from the one tribe of Judah. He states emphatically that the Eskimos did not come from the Adamic race.

PRAYER

Concerning prayer which is so important to a believer, Fitch, in his booklet, *Brief Highlights of My Trip Around the World*, page 33 makes the charge, "With Jesus completely out of their minds they pray, as it were, to another God; that is, to someone else besides Jesus. What a dreadful error! Think of it! With no thought of Jesus most Christians pray, 'My dear heavenly Father etc. When finished, they say, 'In Jesus' name.' That is NOT the correct way to pray." In spite of John 16:23, he teaches that the only way to pray is to Jesus. It appears that he cannot conceive of praying to other than a person, and since in his system the Father is not a person, prayer must, therefore, be made

to Jesus who, he says, is the 'Father's Person. It would be interesting to see what he says about prayers uttered by Jesus such as that in John 17.

PARADISE

One of the weirdest teachings of this man is that of the location of paradise. Our earth is said to be a hollow sphere with a crust 800 miles thick. There are two entrances to this, each 1400 miles in diameter, one at the north and the other at the south. In his book, *Our Paradise Inside the Earth*, page 32, he says, "In the interior are vast continents, high mountains, deep valleys, wide rivers and lakes. There may be three times as much land surface ABOVE SEA LEVEL as there is on the exterior. Vegetable, plant and animal life excel anything ON earth. It is indeed a vast paradise of great beauty and grandeur. It is peopled by BOTH holy and evil angels." This is stated to be the realm of Satan and his angels from which he rules the world. It is also the source of the flying saucers and little brown men of recent note in the news. Several statements from these men are given in this book. One of them is quoted as saying, "When we build anything, we build it to last forever." Civilization is described on the inside of the earth as being in the most advanced state, surpassing anything ever built on this earth. When the Lord returns for his 1000 year reign as King, He will take over this realm which will then be the abode of all the resurrected saints. The wicked dead will be raised and inhabit the outside of the planet until they finally are taught, converted, corrected and perfected. Then they will go to live with the rest of the saints in this paradise. All will eventually be saved.

CONCLUSION

Under the guise of being scriptural, the above and many other false teachings are being propagated by this man. Doubtless, many have drunk deeply at this fount and more will follow them and be contaminated. It is hoped that this will help some to recognize errors that may not readily appear on the surface. It is recognized that this article for brevity sake has not sought to disprove the teachings of this man or his kind,

but only to call attention to the errors with the hope that a previous or new study of the Word on the part of those who read this article will cause a greater appreciation of and blessing from the truth.

It should be noted that unordered mail received in the manner that most of this is sent out need not be returned or paid for. Because of the many fables and fallacies it includes, the wisest course to follow would be to destroy it.

HERBERT ARMSTRONG

(Continued from page 7)

in the July 1952 issue of **The Good News** through the pen of another of Mr. Armstrong's associates, Dr. C. F. Meredith. Under the title, "Is This the Only Day of Salvation?" This man writes about a time when the "vast majority" of men will be saved. Quoting Revelation 20:11-12 he says, ". . . And the dead were judged out of the things which were written in the books.' They are to be judged by what they HAVE DONE in this life and by what they WILL DO after they are resurrected to mortal life! This is the Great White Throne judgment when the vast number of unsaved dead will be resurrected and given their first chance for salvation . . ." (p. 7).

This man and Herbert Armstrong have both embraced a modified form of the conditional immortality and second chance theories of S.D.A.ism and others who are not willing to stand with God on His word when He declared that the heathen and all men "are without excuse" (Rom. 1:20). With

heaven and earth banished and dissolved to nothingness (Rev. 20:11), this man would have us believe that the unsaved are "resurrected to mortal life" in a kind of reincarnation that is meaningless when there is no heaven nor earth left for their habitation. However, this "resurrection unto damnation" of which Jesus spoke is not a chance for salvation; neither is it a resurrection to "mortal life," nor life in the flesh, but to a life in bodies fitted for eternal torment in a literal hell. These will be brought before the judgment bar of God, standing on nothing, naked of all righteousness, with no place to hide, and there await the pronouncement of their eternal doom. All the false promises of Mr. Armstrong and his associates will not reverse God's Word that, "it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27).

Truth-loving Christians will neither give ear nor money to this hybrid system of two-fold Judaism with its denials of the fundamentals of the faith once delivered to the saints.

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BAHAISM

by Prof. John E. Dahlin

Bahaism is a cult which has not emerged out of our own American habitat. It was imported from Persia less than 50 years ago. A man by the name Abdul-Baha conducted a coast to coast speaking tour over here about 45 years ago and gained not so few adherents to Bahaism. Baha 'U'llah was the mainspring in the movement which began in the last century, although some preliminary activity had been manifested somewhat earlier by Mirza 'Ali Muhammed, a young Persian merchant, who had sought to promote similar teachings. These were expanded by Baha 'U'llah, the major exponent of Bahaism.

Bahaism expresses itself with a belief in nine great revelations of deity — Moses, Buddha, Confucius, Zoroaster, Mohammed, etc., culminating in Baha 'U'llah, who was the supreme manifestation of God. In their teaching Jesus Christ became merely another prophet. The great doctrines of the Trinity, the Atonement, Our Lord's Resurrection and Ascension are denied. God exists not as a person, but rather as a "World Soul" an expression which is extremely nebulous and also contrary to the Word of God. The above expression reminds us of the "Oversoul" concept of Ralph Waldo Emerson under his nineteenth-century transcendentalism.

Bahaism expresses itself also in the idea of a universal brotherhood of all men. Their great temple at Wilmette, Ill., has enshrined that thought in its unique architecture. Bahaism recognizes the merit in all religions, and it seeks to unify men in this strange hodge-podge of oriental pantheism.

Here, then, is a religion which has been embraced by many refined and cultured groups who want to believe that sin does not exist, and that man is moving onward to eternal perfection. The aim is to teach and spread the idea of universal love and brotherhood, not based on a devotion and committal to Jesus Christ, but rather in a belief which is resting on man's inherent capacity to achieve perfection by and by.

From reliable information received recently from their headquarters, their secretary states that the Baha'i membership in this country is scattered about in more than 1,600 communities, and the number varies from a few in each to as many as 300 in the larger cities. They never quote numbers, nor do they provide anyone with membership figures; instead they refer to the localities where the Baha'is reside rather than reporting exact numbers. They also claim to operate in 250 countries or geographical subdivisions throughout the world. It is obvious that in Persia, in the land of the origin of the faith, there are several million Baha'is. In recent years, however, they have fanned out into all parts of the earth. The writer saw a magnificent Baha'i temple at Haifa in Israel during a visit to the Middle East a few years ago. Baha'i lecturers appear from time to time in all of our major cities expounding their teachings before select groups. While this cult is not as potent as that of the Jehovah's Witnesses, it is reaching into the intellectual

(Continued on page 15)

WHO ARE THE COONEYITES?

by Roy Divers

INTRODUCTION: It is difficult to acquire information from which to make a report on this group, if we can correctly call them a group. They are not formally organized as other religious groups are organized. They publish and distribute no literature. They have no headquarters. They use the King James version of the Bible, and a song book or two (Hymns Old and New, published in Glasgow). The song books contain quite a number of gospel hymns familiar to most protestants. A member of this group lent us a copy of a hymnal they use, a small booklet of printed songs without music, a mimeographed copy of a foreign missionary's letter, and a mimeographed copy of a (model) sermon delivered at gospel meetings held in San Diego 16 years ago. This party also sent answers to 18 pertinent questions that we had asked him. This man is a veteran member of the group (since he left Methodism, 36 years ago). A few reports are available on this faith. The information has been gained thru personal contacts, and reports from others who have listened to their preachers.

HISTORY: This group of worshippers is unique in that they have no name by which they call themselves, or agree to be called by others. They are referred to by various names, such as, — Two by Twos, Go Preachers (They minister from house to house by twos), Tramp Preachers, Roving Evangelists, The Jesus Way, and Cooneyites. The latter name came from Edward Cooney who was an early promoter of this faith. The movement is said to have been started

by a William Wier Irvine, in southern Ireland. He left the Faith Mission work and started an independent mission back in the 90's, of the last century.

Our veteran Cooneyite promoter tells us that he believes they are scattered in every state in the union, and that their missionaries are working in every country in the world except Russia. We suspect this may be a strongly biased impression. He tells us that their ministers have been working in the Minneapolis area for about 50 years. The writer has been in active public service in this area for over 35 years and has not knowingly met one, personally. Perhaps this is due to the fact that they have no designated name, and work mainly in rural areas. They propagate a somewhat independent religious faith whether they have a designated name or not. So this is another religious sliver from the world's population.

DISTINCTIVE TEACHINGS: They claim to believe in the deity of Christ, the Trinity, Christ's atonement for our sins, in the resurrection of Christ, and in eternal punishment. They believe baptism by immersion necessary for salvation. They take communion every Sunday, and have prayer meetings twice a week.

This sounds quite orthodox. The same is the claim (for themselves) of many of the prevalent cults. But let us look at some of these teachings: as to the deity of Christ, we find some of them saying, "Jesus overcame His own flesh", implying that He had a fleshly, sinful nature, which can not be consistent with His deity; Luke 1:35,

"That holy thing which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God", and in Him is no sin; I John 3:5, "I and the father are one". Could one who speaks of Christ's having to overcome the flesh in Him, believe Him to be Deity? Then if they can not believe in the deity of Christ, they do not believe in the Trinity. One of this faith claims there is no salvation apart from the Atonement. Another, when pressed as to the necessity of the precious blood Atonement of Christ as the ground for salvation, remarked, "How can the blood of a dead man save any one?"

They say, salvation is solely through **their** ministry. Our veteran of this faith says, "Lots of people are sure of the different **WAYS** they have taken; some day they will find they are all wrong." This is a common position taken by many cults, e.g., Christian Science, Jehovah's Wit., S.D.A., Mormonism and also Roman Catholicism. No church or denomination ever did or ever will save any one. They may assist individuals to find the Truth. Eph. 2:8,9 says, "By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it (salvation) is the gift of God: (it is) not of works lest any man should boast;" Rom. 10:9,10, "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 --"; John 3:14,15, The Son of Man was lifted up, "--that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life."

They reject the taking of collections and the method of the **TITHE**. Our veteran promoter of this faith says, "Teaching to **TITHE** is a financial racket. Any New Testament preacher teaching

it is ignorant, or he is a thief and a robber." Tithing is a hardship, he says. He also says that giving should be according to ability. He does not realize that the principle of the Tithe is just that (according to ability). We find much said in the Old and New Testaments with regard to giving: Prov. 11:24, "There is that scattereth and yet increaseth, there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty;" Luke 6:38, "--freely give." Paul admonished the churches at Corinth to give **regularly**, every week, I Cor. 16:2; and to give **cheerfully**, II Cor. 9:7; **according to ability**, Deut. 16:17; Acts 11:29; II Cor. 8:12; give with **liberality**, II Cor. 8:2-5, 7.

Their **WAY** is *The Jesus Way*. They say preach the gospel without money and without price as Jesus told the 12 and the 70 (Matt. 10:5-10; Luke 10: 1-12). One writer quotes them as saying, that any divergence of thought from this teaching (of theirs) is denounced as, "sensual, earthly, and devilish." But let us see what Jesus said on the night of His betrayal, after supper, and after His earthly ministry (in His incarnate state) was finished. In Luke 22:35-36, we find that Jesus indicates a change in the requirements for their work. While He was with them in the flesh, they lacked nothing, (v. 35). Then He said unto them (v. 36), "But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip; and he that hath no sword let him sell his garment and buy one." Verse 37 indicates that He is now completing His incarnate work, "--for the things concerning me have an end." We find in both of these passages (Matt. 10 and Luke 10) much the same and definite instructions to His 12 apostles

and to the 70. The instructions were not only as to the manner in which they were to go (by twos, without purse, staff, food, or extra clothing); they were told to whom to go (the lost sheep of Israel, the Jews); and they were told what to do (Preach the kingdom of Heaven is at hand, heal, raise the dead, cast out devils). The seventy were to go "whither He himself would come". We know that Christ's ministry was to the Jew only, —Matt. 15:24, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

Do the **Jesus Way** ministers truly follow Jesus' way? Do they preach to the Jews only? Do they heal the sick, raise the dead, cast out devils?

As to **Organization** they claim, "We are organized under the plan of the New Testament." This statement is so indefinite as to be insignificant. We are not told definite details of the organization of Christ's followers, and of the early Christian churches. We know there was a type of organization. The apostles at Jerusalem called a meeting of the disciples to set up a relief plan for taking care of the needy women and children in the Christian homes (Acts 6:1-6). After Paul returned to Antioch from his missionary journey into Asia Minor, he and Barnabas and some others were sent as a committee to consult with the Council at Jerusalem regarding the question of requiring the Gentile converts to be circumcised. They secured a formal statement from the Council which they took back to the churches at Antioch and in Asia Minor (Acts 15:22-29). Paul, as adviser, gave definite instructions as to what the church should do with respect to misconduct on the part of members (I Cor. 5: 1-13). So we

know there must have been a rather definite and complete set-up of **Organization**, although details are not given.

The Cooneyites seem to be afraid of organization; perhaps because they have seen corruption in other religious groups. Since Adam, man has had a sinful nature. It matters not whether he is in or out of an organization. When large numbers make-up a group, it is not surprising that some of this evil nature is manifest. Shall we refuse to have civil organization (city, state, and national), because corruption will appear? Paul told the churches what to do about the corruption. They were to deal with it, or remove the guilty ones. The function of the church is to help people live more righteously day by day, and perform other services, impossible by the individual.

RELIABILITY OF THEIR TEACHINGS: (a) Their teachings involve **mis-application** of scripture, e.g., — In the model sermon sent us, reference is made to the oft quoted yule-tide passage of Isa. 9:6, "—and the government shall be upon His shoulders." The writer says in his sermon, "That verse shows how men can have forgiveness of sin, instruction in the way of righteousness, and guidance in the Path of Life. It is when they are willing to place the government of their lives upon Him as King of Kings and Lord of Lords." It is plainly evident that the verse is wrongly applied. There is no basis for such statements. From what is stated here and what follows in the sermon, it is clear that this preacher is implying that the government, here referred to, is Christ's rule over the lives of surrendered individuals here and now, rather than Christ's reign upon the earth during the millennium,

as is generally accepted by orthodox theologians.

(b) In this sermon we have a **misquote** of Matt. 11:28, "Come all ye that are weary and heavy laden, sit at My feet and learn of Me." (emphasis ours).

EFFECTIVENESS OF MINISTRY: They claim that they have never had to turn out any that have professed in their meetings; but when a person got hold of the "Truth" he would stick to it. One critic of this faith writes that this is not true, however. He states that one of their former preachers is now preaching with another company of Christians after having been cast off by them; and a number of others have left them. The *Jesus Way* (Cooneyites) folk say of all such apostates there is absolutely no hope.

SOME FACTS: In answer to a question as to whether they had schools for training their ministers, our veteran promoter replied, "We have no schools for training our preachers. They learn in the Lord's school of hard knocks." Furthermore he says they do not maintain orphanages, hospitals, homes for the aged, or for retired ministers. Of course, these undertakings would be impossible for

them without some definite form of organization.

Their preachers must be single. Some have deserted their families to preach the gospel. "If any provide not for — those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel," (I Tim. 5:8). We have evidence from the model sermon referred to, and from the fact that their ministers have no special training, that their ministers are not qualified to serve as professional ministers. There is wide disagreement among them on vital teachings, pertaining to the Atonement, Baptism and requirements for salvation. This is due to the fact that there is no one among them who is a recognized authority on interpretation of scripture, and also due to the fact that they have no periodicals by means of which they can distribute their teachings. They discourage the reading of literature put out by other religious faiths.

CONCLUSION: From these facts we predict this group to be destined to remain (until it vanishes) in that class of religious groups whose distinctive teachings are based, to a large extent, upon erroneous interpretations and applications of scripture, or upon no scripture at all.

BAHAISM

(Continued from page 11)

circles more rapidly than many of the other cults. The rapid expansion of Bahaism demonstrates that our generation is extremely gullible and that a great many people

have an affinity for unscriptural teachings. The Baha'is cloak themselves in Christian terminologies, hence many uninformed people accept a religion which has a false Messiah (Baha 'U'llah) who denied the authority and identity of Jesus Christ our Lord.

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Pertinent Questions and Answers

By "Pastor Mac" of *Spiritual Clinic*,
and Pastor of *Powderhorn Park Baptist Church*, Minneapolis

Question—I have heard ministers speak of the apostasy that shall come upon the earth in the last days. Just what is apostasy?

Answer—It would be well for you to make a careful study of the book of Jude. This is the only book in the Bible that is entirely devoted to the great apostasy which is to come upon Christendom before the Lord Jesus Christ returns. One great Bible teacher said that the theme of Jude should be called "The Acts of the Apostates."

Apostasy is not to be confused with mere indifference to the Word of God, nor to error or heresy. An apostate has received light, but not life. He may have received, in some degree, the written Word; but he has not received the Living Word. Jude gives three clear marks of an apostate: ungodly (he is simply without God) — a perverter (he perverts the grace of God into lasciviousness or uses the grace of God as an excuse for sin) — a denier (he denies the ONLY Lord God or he does not believe that Christ is the ONLY way to God as Jesus said in John 14:6).

Although apostasy is found primarily within the pale of professing Christianity (that means that you would look for it within the professing Church — the pulpit — Christian schools, etc.) yet, according to these three marks given by Jude no true Christian could be an apostate. In fact, Jude closes his little book with a word of comfort and assurance to the believer that the child of God will be kept from falling into apostasy! (Note verses 24 and 25).

Pastor "Mac"

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