

The
DISCERNER

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

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THE CHURCH IN RELATION TO THE CULTS

Prof. John E. Dahlin, Editor

In our generation confusion is prevalent among millions of people on a number of issues. This is especially true with regard to the political, economic, social and moral matters. It is obvious that the present-day confusion also should spill over into the area of the Christian religion. It is distressing to know this has happened among major religious denominations and movements of our time. One great phenomenon is the confusion caused by the expansion of cultic activity throughout the world. In the 19th century only four major cults were active in America. In addition to these cults, there were some limited activities of a few other scattered groups, but generally they made no important impact upon the people of the country. In recent decades, however, many of the leading cultic groups have spread into every area of the land. In fact these aggressive groups have initiated activities which are world-wide in scope. Several of these have passed the million mark in numbers. It is well to point out that they are well organized under capable leaders and they have enormous resources with which to carry on their activities. And, in addition, they have a drive or motivation which stands unmatched. Fortunately, we have been forewarned in the New Testament Scriptures about the delusions of the latter days. Paul writes,

"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils" (I Tim. 4:1). In the Second Letter to Timothy the apostle adds to his earlier statement, these words, "This know also in the last days perilous times shall come" (II Tim. 3:1). The great expansion of cultic activity in recent years, as well as the aggressiveness of these groups, demonstrate that the latter days are here.

The question of primary importance is, what position should the Christian Church take towards the many spurious groups? The purpose of writing this article is to help Bible-believing Christians in meeting their responsibility in this regard. Various positions are being taken by denominations and religious organizations toward the groups which have deviated from the historic faith, and we will proceed to examine what certain religious bodies have done with regard to the cults.

THE POSITION OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

With regard to the cultic groups, it is altogether clear that The National Council of Churches is willing to accept them. Only a few years ago The National Council of Churches received into membership the cult which was founded by Emanuel Swedenborg over two centuries ago. It

is an undeniable fact that Swedenborgianism has been completely at variance with the historic tenets of Christianity. By accepting this cult into membership, The National Council of Churches has openly demonstrated its apostate position with regard to Biblical Truth.

This year, The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of The Latter Day Saints was accepted into The National Council of Churches. It is well known that this group adheres strictly to the Book of Mormon, and it claims even a closer identification with the teachings of Joseph Smith than the Utah body of Mormons. The acceptance of this cult into membership in The National Council of Churches reveals clearly its lack of concern for Biblical standards, as well as its failure in giving the proper regard for the historic position of Christianity. Doubtlessly other cults will be received into the apostate system bearing the name, The National Council of Churches.

THE POSITION OF THE NON-SEPARATISTS

This writer has witnessed a careless disregard among some so-called evangelical groups with respect to their position toward cultists. On a number of occasions these broad-minded people in certain churches have invited representatives of the cults to come and speak to various church groups. The purpose, they say, is to give the people first-hand information on the teachings of the various cults. Such an arrangement simply serves to break down the wall of separation which has been maintained between the churches and the cultic groups. Christians who are knowledgeable should recognize that for several decades cultists consistently have sought to achieve respectability. Obviously when the cultic representatives are invited to speak

in the regular churches, it helps to give them the status which they want. More than that, it will open the way for the cultists to gain additional followers. It ought to be said with emphasis that church groups which follow the procedure, just mentioned, are playing with fire, and they have none to blame but themselves when they get burned. The representatives of the cults are fully trained for such situations as those described. By permitting them to speak in the churches, the way is opened to exploit the people who may be unaware of the dangers involved. No dialog with representatives of the cults should ever be allowed in the Christian church.

THE POSITION OF THE DO-NOTHING GROUP

In our day we often hear the expression from certain people, "leave the cultists alone." In other words, we are told not to enter into any controversy with them. By making such a statement, it is implied, let cultists continue to propagandize their false teachings without being rebuked or exposed. As one looks at the matter casually, it might appear at first that such a course represents fair-play and a spirit of Christian generosity. But the people who follow such a concept are about as naive as the pseudo-intellectuals of our day who see no threat from Communism. They are blind to the diabolical nature of this alien philosophy. While we do not identify the cults with the Communists, there is a parallelism with the naivety of certain people with regard to false teachings. In contrast to the lack of realism by the do-nothing people, we find all of the cultists have clear as well as bold objectives, and they are not hesitant to push their plans in order to gain new followers. Indeed, their program is made easier due to the blindness and lack

of concern on the part of many church people. Cultists should be identified for what they are, and the unvarnished fact about their deviation from the Scriptures should be pointed out openly. It is necessary to warn church people repeatedly against the peddlers of heresies, and their evil activity should be exposed without any hesitation. The do-nothing policy towards the cults is unscriptural as we are admonished again and again to take a firm stand against every kind of false teaching.

THE POSITION OF THE IGNORANT AND THE INDIFFERENT

This writer has found a considerable number of people who have not registered a position of opposition to the cults due to either ignorance or indifference. Either these people have been led to believe that the doctrines of the cults are substantially the same as the position held by the evangelicals, or they have not manifested sufficient interest to ascertain what the cults believe. It is a known fact that the cultists are past masters in sugar-coating their teachings so that they will sound plausible to people who are indifferent or ill-informed about their deviations from the Scriptures. Usually there is little or no effort on the part of the ignorant and indifferent people in checking the credentials of those who pose as bona-fide spokesmen for Scriptural truth. It would be well for the people who are not properly informed about certain cults that they write to our agency for information concerning these groups and what they teach. Our office is happy to provide the information needed on these very important matters. False teachings are expanding rapidly these days because such a large number of people do not make the effort of finding out the real facts about them.

THE POSITION OF NO COMPROMISE WITH ERROR

In these days it is very difficult for a number of people to take a firm position because of the spirit of ecumenicity which is in the air, and this often causes many Christians to be swept into a position of compromise and accommodation. Fortunately the Word of God is very clear concerning what our position should be towards those who are promoting error. To the Church at Corinth Paul writes, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? . . . Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you" (II Cor. 6:14, 17). And to the Ephesians the same apostle writes, "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them" (Eph. 5:11). In referring to the apostates, the apostle John provides for us the proper procedure in dealing with them: "For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist . . . If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God-speed, for he that biddeth him God-speed is partaker of his evil deeds" (II Jn. vs. 7, 10-11). These passages, and many others which we might add, make it unmistakably clear that God's people must not compromise with error.

LESSONS AND SUMMARY

We shall conclude the article, which has dealt with the relations of the church towards the well known cults, by providing some lessons and observations. It is clear to those people who are adequately informed

that the present-day trends are not good. Actually the situation is distressing to all who are concerned about maintaining the Biblical standards. Not only has the liberal church diluted its theological position, but it has also modified its relation towards the cults. It is always tragic when the spirit of accommodation gains an ascendancy in the church and its institutions. In recent decades institution upon institution, particularly theological seminaries, are inviting liberals, and those with alien philosophies, to speak at chapel services and other convocation of the institutions. What we may expect is that invitations will be extended to prominent cultists to address the public assemblies of the institutions. The theory being embraced more and more in secular institutions and theological seminaries is that students should be exposed to all points of view in our time. In other words, directive education is usually being frowned upon as outmoded and restrictive, and that it must be replaced with open-mindedness on all subject matter. In a wide ministry of teaching and preaching, including 20 years of college and seminary teaching, this writer does not know of a single institution which has been able to maintain its evangelical and conservative position when the directive type of education has been set aside. It is popular to substitute the directive type of Christian education with a homogenized or smorgasbord pattern. It is extremely important for Bible-believing groups to hold firmly to the great doctrines of the Scriptures. When rationalists and theological liberals are given access to the platform and to the class-rooms of Christian institutions, the gate is opened for deviation from the Biblical standards with disastrous consequences. Illustration upon illustration could be

provided to substantiate that the above warnings should not be taken lightly. Institutions with a long record of evangelicalism have taken the popular road of accommodation in recent years. Dr. G. Gresham Machen gave words of solemn warning some four decades ago what would happen to theological institutions if the historic conservative position be modified. The theological institution with which he was associated at the time was irreparably damaged when the conservative position was compromised. The warnings which were given by Dr. Machen were vindicated by subsequent events. His classic book, **Christianity and Liberalism**, should be read by everyone, particularly those who are inclined to make accommodations and compromises with the liberals. Not many are willing to take the vigorous stand which was taken by the late Dr. Machen, one of the greatest New Testament Scholars of this century.

The Biblical doctrines are given with such clarity, that any person who is able to think logically should recognize the danger of entering into a dialogue with the liberals. It is even more detrimental when the spirit of accommodation is followed with reference to the cultists. When this happens in wide areas, it will complicate the whole spiritual sphere, and it will add to the perplexity caused by a compromising attitude towards the liberals.

Those of us who are taking a firm position against every form of deviation, obviously will be accused of dogmatism and a lack of Christian charity. But the Bible is on our side, and the record of Church History reinforces those who maintain that tragic results will follow when toleration and accommodation are substituted for Scriptural separation.

MARY

We oppose the Catholic practice of praying to and worshipping the Virgin Mary for the following reasons:

a. It is of heathen origin, and did not begin until the 5th century.

b. The proclamation of the dogmas of the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption into Heaven are of recent origin, 1854 and 1950 respectively.

c. Feasts were not held in Mary's honor until the 7th century.

d. The title "Queen of Heaven" is of heathen origin and adopted from pagan religions. Heaven has no Queen; A King reigns there (Eph. 1:20-23; Phil. 2:9-11).

e. To pray to Mary is a pagan sin, and leads one to worship and serve "the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever" (Rom. 1:25).

f. The Scriptures teach us to pray to God only; and our God demands an undivided worship (Mat. 6:69; 4:10; Jn. 14:13-14; Acts 8:22; Rom. 10:12-13).

g. The Scriptures declare that Christ alone is the Saviour of men. (1) Christ is "The Door of Paradise," and not Mary (John 10:9). (2) Christ is the sinner's "Advocate," and not Mary (1 Tim. 2:5-6; 1 Jn. 2:1-2; Heb. 7:25; 9:24; Rom. 8:34). (3) Christ is the only Saviour, and not Mary (Acts 4:12). (4) Christ is "The Morning Star," and not Mary (Rev. 22:16). (5) Christ is "The Hope of Sinners," and not Mary (1 Tim. 1:1; 1 Pe. 1:21; Joel 3:16; Ps. 146:5). (6) Christ is "The One Mediator," and not Mary (1 Tim. 2:5-6).

h. God has no Mother. He is "the King, eternal, immortal, invisible" (1 Tim. 1:17).

i. Mary was the mother of our Lord's humanity only. Christ never exalted the human relationship above the divine (Lk. 2:48-49; 11:27-28; Jn.

2:4; Mt. 12:48-50).

j. There is not one verse in the Bible which states that Mary was conceived without sin.

k. Mary was not a virgin, in the strict sense of the word, the remainder of her life. She had other children, four sons and at least two daughters (Mt. 13:55-56). The Catholic talk about her being "Ever-Virgin" is effeminate, nonsensical sentimentalism.

l. There is not one verse in the Bible which tells us that Mary intercedes with Christ on our behalf.

m. There is not one verse in the Bible which declares Mary to be the dispenser of God's favors to men.

n. There is not one verse in the Bible which tells us that God the Father and God the Son are less merciful, or are inferior in love and power, in comparison to Mary.

o. There is not one verse in the Bible which gives an exalted title to Mary, which belongs only to God or His Son.

p. Mary never invited anyone to pray to her or worship her.

q. God never commanded anyone to pray to or worship Mary.

r. The Apostles never urged anyone to pray to or worship Mary.

s. God never commanded any person to put his trust in Mary.

t. There is not one verse in the Bible which tells us to look to Mary in the hour of our death.

u. Mary never has had and never will have one thing to do with the Salvation of anyone's soul.

—From the book, "Baptist Faith and Roman Catholicism,"
by Wendell Holmes Rone

NO CONTRADICTION?

By John S. Jennings

A growing movement to undermine the authority of the Scriptures is resulting today in a widespread rejection of many of the Biblical doctrines of the Christian faith. We see this trend among clergy and laymen alike.

Perhaps nowhere is this erosion more evident than in the recent action of the General Assembly when our denomination recognized the possibility of evolution. Contrary to what many people seem to think, the theory of evolution does, in fact, contradict the Biblical doctrine of creation.

'In the Beginning, God . . .

The Bible repeatedly teaches that "in the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." According to the evolutionist, however, the universe has always been in existence and thus wasn't really "created" by God.

This means that those who accept the possibility of evolution are questioning the Biblical truth which affirms the fact that at a particular time God "created" the universe.

That is not all. The Bible also declares that God created both plants and animals. We are told in Genesis 1:12 that God created plant life consisting of herbs and trees. In Genesis 1, verses 21 and 25, we read that God "created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters bring forth abundantly . . . and every winged fowl . . . and cattle . . . and every thing that creepeth upon the earth."

All these things were brought into being, the Bible tells us, as a definite act of God's own will. We are told repeatedly in the first chapter of Genesis that everything which was created was commanded by God Himself.

Evolution Disputes

According to the evolutionist, however, all living things, both plant and animal, were brought into being by some accidental (or chance) combination of circumstances which caused non-living materials to acquire that property which we call life. This theory, of course, contradicts the Biblical teaching of creation.

Note, if you will, the word "accidental." To say that everything was created accidentally is to completely contradict the Biblical teaching of creation. According to the Bible every living thing was created by a definite act of God's will, not by some accident.

Another matter needs to be noted here: when God created both the plants and animals, the Bible tells us that He created them as just that, as plants and animals, and this includes man, as well. The Bible plainly states that when God decided to make man, He "created man in His own image" (Gen. 1:27).

The theory of evolution would have us believe that all living things, man included, were not created as such. That is, they were not created as herbs or trees, or as birds, fish, cattle and so forth; all living things only evolved into what they are. The evolutionist holds that all living things, including man himself, evolved from primitive forms of life and were not created as such, even though the Bible clearly states they were.

Closely related to this is the Biblical declaration that when God created all of the various plants and animals, He created them so as to produce their own kind. When God created the plants and animals of the earth, He told them to reproduce "according

to their kind" (Gen. 1:12, 24). The Hebrew word which is translated here as "kinds," can also be translated, "species." God created the plants and animals in such a way that they could produce no "kinds" or "species" but their own — a fish could produce only a fish, and not a bird or any other "kind" or "species" of animal.

Genus and Species

This, of course, is still another place where the theory of evolution contradicts the Biblical doctrine of creation. According to the evolutionist, there are changes from one species to another. Over a period of time, one species of plant or animal can actually produce another species, he says.

While the Bible does not allow for a change of species (such as a dog changing into a cat), it does, in fact, allow for a change within species. For many changes actually do take place within the many kinds of plants and animals. This we can see very well in the many different varieties of cats, all of which are still cats. The name which is used to describe this change *within* species is micro-evolution.

In spite of the fact that the Bible does allow for certain changes to take place within species, it does not allow for changes from one species to another. Here again the theory of evolution contradicts the Biblical doctrine of creation. When God created the various species of plants and animals, the Bible tells us that He did so in such a way that they would produce only their own particular kind or species and not another.

This is true of man, as well. For when God "created" the first man and woman, "male and female," He made them in such a way that they, just like every other living thing, also produced only their own kind

or species. After having been created by God, Adam and Eve produced offspring like themselves. And their children also proceeded to do the same, as did their children's children after them. In this way the human race has been able to populate the earth, over the long centuries which have since passed.

No 'Book of Science'

It has been said at our General Assembly that the Bible is "not a book of science," and I don't know that anyone would disagree with this statement. But let me say four things that I think we need to recognize here:

The first is that according to Dr. William G. Pollard, executive director of the Oak Ridge Institute of Nuclear Studies, science is by definition "the study of nature."

Second, the Christian faith affirms that nature is a revelation of God. Nowhere do we see this stated any better than we do in Psalm 19:1. Here, the psalmist declares that "the heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth His handiwork."

Third, the Bible also reveals God. For the Bible is God's revelation of Himself to man and this includes all of Scripture. The Bible declares in II Timothy 3:16, that "all Scripture" (not just parts of it, but "all" of it) "is given by inspiration of God." Therefore, it is true in all that it teaches.

Fourth, since both science and the Bible reveal God, it is impossible that they should contradict each other. For God does not reveal one thing in nature and another thing in His holy Word. What God reveals in nature and what He reveals in His Word are in perfect agreement with one another.

Those who hold to any scientific

belief which contradicts the clear teaching of Scripture are wrong in what they say, regardless of the kind of argument that they may happen to give. This certainly applies to the theory of evolution which clearly contradicts what God reveals to us in His Word concerning creation.

Only a Theory

I think that it needs to be said here that the theory of evolution is just a theory, no more than that, for the theory of evolution has never been scientifically proved true. In fact, far from being scientifically proven, Dr. Henry M. Morris, head of the Department of Civil Engineering, at the Virginia Polytechnic Institute, says:

"There is not one single valid argument for the theory of organic evolution." He goes on to say that how "a theory which is so utterly devoid of any legitimate scientific proof could have attained such a position of universal power and prestige in the name of science, is surely a remarkable commentary on human nature."

Having done a lot of reading on evolution myself, I couldn't agree with him more. One has only to examine the evidence that is given in support of this theory to realize the difficulty which is involved in the acceptance of it. The arguments given in favor of evolution are so weak, and the arguments against it so strong, that I find it difficult to understand how anyone can intelligently affirm the theory of evolution.

Above and beyond the scientific arguments of man, I look to the Word of God as my strongest argument against the theory of evolution; upon God's Word I continue to stand. For "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine." This includes the doctrine of God's creation of the plants and animals, as well as of man. Believing this, I shall continue to stand faithfully upon the holy Scriptures, knowing, in the words of the hymn writer, that there is laid in God's Word, a "firm foundation."

(From the *Presbyterian Journal* issue April 22, 1970, by permission.)

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A number of our subscribers to *The Discerner* send gift subscriptions to their friends, relatives, or to others who appreciate receiving our magazine containing high quality reading material. *The Discerner* deals with deviations from the Scriptures by cults and other false teachers of our time. The subscription price is 4 Issues for \$1.00 and 12 for \$3.00. Be sure to include the zip code with your address. God will bless you for remembering people with a subscription to *The Discerner*.

THE MISSING "DEMONSTRATION"

By David Lawrence

"Reprinted from June 8, 1970 issue U.S. News & World Report"

Amid all the furor on our campuses and amid all the rallies and marches in our city streets, with the loud cries for "change" along with threats of "revolution," we get few words of reverence for law and order from most of the church groups in America. Indeed, many of them have become active participants in the political controversies of the day. Voices that might have been raised to help subdue the passions on the campus have often merely echoed the complaints and have frequently seemed to approve the protests.

Why haven't they tried to convince the advocates of violence that there are methods of winning the attention of a majority of people other than by tragic headlines? The latter merely emphasize our indifference to the greatest means we have to unite mankind—namely, the spiritual power which generates the moral force of a nation.

Have we read, for instance, of a single case in which the students of a college have participated in a mass prayer, instead of a mass rally?

Prayer can remind us of the presence of God inside ourselves. Prayer is an influence that can turn our minds from evil thoughts—from selfishness to unselfishness

Where can the leadership come from for such a movement in our national life? We think immediately of the churches. Yet, we find many clergymen busily taking part in the activities of organizations which have promoted discord in our midst. Should not the churchmen be striving rather to produce a mood among all the people receptive to peaceful behavior and reasoned study of public issues?

Have they made any persistent efforts to bring together those who disagree with one another so that representative groups may debate questions in an orderly fashion?

We have read of many protests against war as being illogical and unmoral. But the violence on our campuses and our streets has itself been a disregard of human rights. Not only has property been damaged but many persons have been killed or injured. Is it not time to accept the guidance that God gives to those who seek it? Is it not time to stress a dependence on spiritual influence as the best way to achieve both internal and external peace?

The United States is trying to assist smaller nations to meet the threats of the imperialistic regimes in the world. But inside America such altruism apparently is not as widely understood as it should be. The doctrine of "love thy neighbor" applies everywhere. Human beings have a duty to help each other. This doesn't necessarily require military force. Wars can be prevented by encouraging peoples to choose governments which will maintain peace.

The principle of brotherhood in the world must have its start in a sincere recognition by the peoples of the larger nations that they have an obligation to use their power and resources to come to the aid of the weaker countries in which many human beings are threatened with disaster.

These are times not for internal strife, but for serious consideration of how America can best serve mankind in a distraught world. We need God's help. It is available to us if we

will only make ourselves aware of His spiritual presence in our lives. This is but another way of saying that what we call conscience is a constant reminder of what we feel in our hearts—we really know the difference between right and wrong and that we should assist the weak and the helpless.

We need to awaken the American people to the fact that this is an occasion for prayer, not only on every campus but in every home, every day—a prayer that we may see the right course and carry out the mission which God wishes us to fulfill for human welfare.

For whom should we pray? We should pray for the unfortunate people of North Vietnam, who have been forced into a war through the intrigue with Hanoi by the Communist regimes in Peking and Moscow.

We should pray for the South Vietnamese, who have suffered the heaviest casualties in this same war.

We should pray for the brave young Americans who are in Vietnam serv-

ing a great cause as they are engaged in an unprecedented effort to prove to the smaller nations of Asia as well as Europe that the United States will not desert them.

We should pray for the Americans at home who, unmindful of the facts about the Vietnam war, brush the whole thing aside as of no concern to them or to this country—as if human suffering and enslavement by Communism need evoke no response from the United States.

Let us pray together to reach the hearts and minds of the peoples of the Soviet Union and of Red China in order that they may in turn influence their own governments to stop the war in Southeast Asia.

We have been omitting the greatest “demonstration” of all—mass prayers by young and old together, so that we may sense the spiritual power which can bring salvation to the troubled world of today.

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DISCRIMINATION IS ESSENTIAL

We are specifically admonished by John in these words, “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits, whether they are of God. Many false prophets have gone out into the world” (I John 4:1). The reason that millions of people fall victims to the activities of cults is because they lack the capacity of discrimination. Never has the need been greater than now to check people’s credentials. The cultists always put forth that which seems plausible, and invariably they sugar-coat their pills of false doctrine in order that naive people may accept them. All across America church people are being swept into one or the other of the cults simply because they lack the ability to discriminate between the spurious and the genuine. We need Paul’s admonishment, “Therefore, my beloved, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know your labor is not in vain in the Lord” (I Cor. 15:58). J.E.D.

A CREEPING MENACE

(A STUDY OF CULTS)

by Rev. LeRoy Gager

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Do you cast a sidewise glance at a Jehovah's Witness "publisher" standing on the street corner and pass on your way unmoved — disinterested? What do Mormon missionaries suggest to your mind beyond the idea of some strange religion that has polygamy attached to it in some way? The Seventh Day Adventists — aren't they simply Christians who worship on Saturday instead of Sunday? Anyway, what difference does it make just so they are sincere — and don't bother me in my smug self-complacency. "Have you listened to the 'Voice of Prophecy' radio broadcast? Interesting, isn't it. And they do quote the Bible a great deal so they must be O.K." "I enjoy that Temple-time hymn program that comes from Salt Lake City over the network. They use the old hymns of the church just like we do. I wonder if they are really very different from us after all."

So the church goes on its way undisturbed while the cults give whole years of their time in missionary service, dump tons of their heresy-laden literature into the hands of a world of people who are rapidly becoming literate, erect houses of worship in every mushrooming community, and steal sheep out from the noses of dozing shepherds

WHAT IS THE NEED FOR DEFENSE TODAY, you ask?

There is greater need today for the defense of the faith than there has ever been since the birth of the church at Pentecost. These are the latter times" of which Paul wrote to Timothy, "when some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons."

The first major sign concerning the

end of the age is the rise of many false Christs who will deceive many. Did you know that within a 50-year period, from the 1820's to the 1870's the church witnessed the rise of five of the major false cults, not to mention Darwin's biological evolution which has been called "the root of all isms." A brief listing must suffice; Mormonism in the 1820's, the Millerite movement out of which grew the Adventist bodies in 1840's, modern Spiritism with the Fox sisters in 1848, the Russelite or Jehovah Witness movement in 1872, Christian Science with the publication of Mrs. Eddy's "Key" in 1875. Add to this atheistic biological evolution, totalitarianism in politics, materialism, modernism in religion, Freudianism, Free-loveism, behaviorism, anarchism on every level, etc.

How can the people of God fail to be impressed by this mass of evidence that we are now living in the last days of this dispensation? Jesus said, "Take heed that no man lead you astray." Paul warned, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves and to all the flock . . . for this I know that after my departure shall grievous wolves enter in among you not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them." Peter prophesied, ". . . there shall be false teachers among you who privily shall bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them; and bring upon themselves swift destruction." John indicated that "it is the last time; and as ye have heard that anti-christ shall come, even now are there many anti-christs; whereby we know it is the

last time." In case we should have missed the earlier warnings of apostasy, Jude stands forth to cry for contenders for the faith, which was once delivered unto the saints . . . "because there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ."

The church cannot call itself the Church Militant until it rises up to give a united, Spirit-empowered statement of the Truth and an intelligent refutation of the false cults. Jehovah's true watchmen must climb the tower and sound forth a blast that will awaken the sleeping church to the progress of this creeping menace.

WHAT IS THE AREA TO BE DEFENDED, is the second vital question facing us. Jude expresses it in these words, "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints." (verse 3). What are those particular doctrines for which we are to be contenders? Must we contend for every minor point, provided there are such, or is there a more limited area in which contention is to be waged?

Anyone venturing an opinion in these matters is certain to run into conflict with brethren on the left hand and on the right. But because the central issues are so important we will stick out the proverbial neck and express what we believe to be the area to be defended.

Perhaps we can do this most cogently by giving our own private definition of a false cult. "A false cult is a religious system which takes the name of 'Christian' but which in its teachings denies one or more of the cardinal Bible doctrines essential to salvation, fruitful Christian living and effective spiritual service. Each

has a 'prophet' ministry which it claims to be from God for the world in the last day. An exception is Roman Catholicism whose professed 'prophet' ministry began about the 4th or 5th century A.D." These cardinal Bible doctrines are the particular area for defense.

While there are peripheral matters of faith and practise wherein evangelicals differ, there is a common ground of evangelical truth upon which we have stood together throughout the centuries and upon which we must continue to stand by God's grace. Many feel that they can allow their brethren of other denominations to differ with respect to the form of church government, the mode of baptism, the order of divine worship, the use of paraphernalia, etc. But true evangelicals can allow no deviation in the essentials such as: the doctrine of the trinity of the Godhead, involving the full deity and unity of all three Persons, the virgin birth of Jesus Christ, His sinless life, His vicarious atonement, His death and bodily resurrection, the blood atonement as the only approach to a Holy God, the necessity of the new birth, the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures, eternal bliss and punishment, etc.

Taken together, these and other related doctrines constitute a living body of truth. To allow any one of these cardinal truths to be destroyed would be to see the rest waste away into death. Every doctrine mentioned is a vital spot in the body and is a particular point of attack by Satan and the false cults.

WHY MUST WE BECOME CONTENDERS FOR THE FAITH? Why concern ourselves about such matters?

We say that we do not wish to offend our neighbors, many of whom are followers of these false cults.

They are fine people, lovely neighbors, warm friends. We would rather be at peace with them than to try to change their religion. Consequently there is a spiritual inertia that seals our lips on matters of our faith. We would rather be courteous cowards than risk the chance of involving ourselves in an argument in the hope of winning these friends to Christ and eternal life. We know that the unsaved must be disturbed out of their lost condition but we could not take a chance on disturbing our own little world of selfish complacency in attempting it. We sleep on while the enemy sows the tares of heresy and they spring up unto eternal damnation.

An apology should be made for the attempted satire in the previous paragraph. However, if the description does not fit you, you will be in sympathy with it. If it does fit you, you need to be stung into shame, remorse and above all INTO ACTION. So we will let it stand.

The "faith" was "once delivered." It was committed to the church as a trust to be administered. We are its guardians and at the judgment seat of Christ we will be called into account as to what we have done with it. It will not be enough to say that we have kept the faith, that we believe every word of it. Christ does not want it wrapped in a napkin of credal orthodoxy. He demands that it be put to work that it might multiply itself in the hearts of others. The best defense is offense. You do not need to defend a lion. Simply turn him loose and he will defend himself.

Why contend with a Jehovah's Witness? Because his eternal welfare is at stake! Because he does not know

the Triune God who alone can save. Because by his denial of the Son and His essential Deity he does not have access to the Father. Because by his denial of the person and Deity of the Holy Spirit he cannot know of the things of Christ, nor the experience of the new birth. Because they are announcing a kingdom of which they are not a part, when they should be accepting and preaching a Gospel of which they know very little, if anything.

How can we contend for the faith unless we contend against those who would destroy it? When Seventh Day Adventism teaches that "Christ inherited just what every child of Adam inherits — a sinful nature" it undermines the very foundation of salvation. How could a being with a sinful nature of his own, take the place in punishment for other sinners? The Scriptures declare that "He hath made Him to be sin for us WHO KNEW NO SIN . . ." (2 Cor. 5:21). Quoting Dr. H. A. Ironside, "The Christs of these isms are not the Christ of the Bible. Each of the false cults has a hideous caricature of our lovely Lord."

The church is a sleeping giant that is being bound by Lilliputians. They are whispering their insinuations of impotence, division, clerisy and unconcern. They even shout and go unchallenged as the church shifts to a more comfortable position. May God awaken the sleeping church to the creeping menace of heresy. May we take up the whole armor of God including the shield of faith and the Sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God and "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints."

From the NORTHWESTERN PILOT,
September, 1954

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PERTINENT QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Prof. John E. Dahlin

QUESTION . . . Does demonology provide some explanation for the persistence which characterizes the activities of the cults?

ANSWER . . . It may not be possible to be specific in the identification of demon activity, but the Scriptures make it clear that their presence is a definite reality. False teachings are referred to as "doctrines of demons" (I Tim. 4:1). Their presence and power are presented by the apostle Paul (Eph. 6:12). For an adequate treatment of demonology the book by Merrill F. Unger provides information which is very helpful on the subject.

QUESTION . . . Will the ecumenical movement include all the major wings of Christianity eventually?

ANSWER . . . In the Book of Revelation, Chapters 17-18, we have the great prophetic description of the latter-day apostasy. "Mystery Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and the Abominations of the Earth" depicts the maturity of apostasy in the final period. Most Protestant bodies are already in the World Council of Churches, as well as the big ecclesiastical systems known as the Greek Orthodox Church and the Russian Orthodox Church. Overtures with Rome continually are being made. The present intermingling of the leading religious systems of the world points to the final step of world church union during the days of antichrist.