

“ . . . Hereby know we the spirit of truth and the spirit of error’

The
DISCERNER

AN
INTERDENOMINATIONAL
HERESY-EXPOSING
QUARTERLY

Vol. IX

No. 7

2. HOW TO CONFRONT THE CULTISTS
6. LEARNING FROM HISTORY
7. HOW TO IDENTIFY A FALSE CULT
9. DEMONISM—FACT OR FABLE
14. THE SCRIPTURAL PRINCIPLE OF SEPARATION
16. PERTINENT QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

July-September 1978

CONTENTS

The DISCERNER

Published Quarterly

Price \$2.00 for 4 issues; \$5.00 for 12 issues;

50 cents a copy; for foreign

subscription add 14 cents per issue.

Copyright 1978 by Religion Analysis Service, Inc.

2708 E. Lake St., Suite 231

Minneapolis, Minnesota 55406

Printed in the United States

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

John E. Dahlin, *Chairman*

Mr. Harold Dainsberg

HOW TO CONFRONT THE CULTISTS

Prof. John E. Dahlin, Editor

For some time I have felt the need of bringing to the reader's attention the right and the wrong ways in dealing with those who have deviated from the truth. First of all, we need to recognize that these people are misguided and brainwashed through the clever work of their leaders. In my twenty-two years as the director of Religion Analysis Service, I have confronted many cultists. Some of these people I have dealt with personally; others by correspondence, or the telephone, and more often perhaps by means of literature which I have provided for them. It might be well to point out that these people represent a wide spectrum of those ensnared by erroneous concepts. In other words, they are identified with a variety of cults. My observation has been through these many years that those who are deceived by the cultists usually have closed minds, except for that which is being taught them by their leaders. The question which crowds to the front for attention is, how might we confront these people effectively who are ensnared through false teachings?

THE WRONG APPROACH

Employing Superior Skill

During the early years of my leadership of our agency (established to combat cults), I felt it was imperative that one should, first of all, batter down the cultic positions being held. In other

words, using superior arguments, hence stripping these people of their defences. It is possible, of course, to achieve a mastery of Biblical truth to the point where one can defeat an opponent in the arguments. Invariably when these people are defeated in such an encounter, they will walk away sullen, and even chagrined for coming out second best in such a confrontation. It is my conviction, however, that storming your opponents position with superior skill is not the right approach. I believe that I am able to win such arguments on the issues discussed, due to my long experience and through the knowledge of the positions held by the cultists. Yes, one may win the argument and lose the person for Jesus Christ. This method, or approach is not usually rewarding in dealing with those involved in erroneous teachings.

OFFERING SWEEPING CONDEMNATION OF THEIR TEACHING

One is tempted to follow this method when you are convinced that the cultists contradict the Biblical truth at nearly every essential point. When those people come to your door, the first impulse may be to be condemnatory, even to the point of verbally abusing them for peddling false teachings. This method usually is not productive; it will harden the position of those whom you attempt to set free

from un-Scriptural teachings. Seldom will the lambasting of your opponent, and the position held, change the person's viewpoint. The use of ridicule, as it were, generally will be unsuccessful. I do not believe it is wise to use the massive assault technique, as it will simply increase the resistance of the person involved in such an encounter with you.

INVITING THE CULTIC REPRESENTATIVES TO PRESENT THEIR CASE

This method has been used by certain churches and organizations in order to get information from the cultists, first hand, what they believe. Obviously the purpose is to bring a rebuttal to such spokesmen later. This technique has been used by Dr. Paul B. Smith, pastor of the largest Protestant Church in Canada, known as the People's Church of Toronto. He invited a number of cultic representatives to appear separately during an extended series of evening services. These meetings were held one hour prior to the regular service. Such spokesmen were given the platform and no questions were directed to them. Following their appearance, Dr. Smith did his best in skillfully refuting what each speaker had presented. Since Dr. Smith is knowledgeable, this technique might have been reasonably successful. But in giving the cultists the liberty of presenting their teachings, they achieved a status, or a kind of respectability which they did not deserve. Obviously such representatives conceal those teachings which are objectionable to an alert audience. I disapprove of this method in meeting with cultic representatives publically.

It is my candid judgment that we have enough information to convey to an audience, about the teachings of each cult, to fairly state where they are wrong and unscriptural. But allowing

them the podium is giving them an equal treatment with those who accept the Scriptures. Through the years I have warned churches and organizations never to invite the cultists to appear and explaining what they hold as to their teachings. This technique is inviting trouble, and it may bring confusion to people who lack the capability of discrimination and discernment. In his Second Letter, the Apostle John instructs us how to proceed in dealing with those who have erred: "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him Godspeed; for he that biddeth him Godspeed is partaker of his evil deeds" (vs. 10-11).

These, then, are some improper methods in dealing with the cultists. I fear, however, in day when discrimination is weak, many will follow a wrong approach, especially some of those I have discussed, particularly the last one.

THE RIGHT METHOD

As we leave behind, what I consider to be erroneous methods in dealing with the cultists, it is exceedingly important, I think, that we select the right approach in dealing with those who have deviated from the truth. Let me mention some of the methods which work very well.

Sticking to the Scriptures

By laying aside logical and personal arguments and turning to the Scriptures in order to illuminate the discussion, I find that it invariably brings about a wholesome atmosphere. Opponents will be at a disadvantage in not being able or willing to openly attempt to refute the Word of God. All they are able to do is to slant the interpretation of the Scriptures to conform to their teachings. This gives your opponent a weaker position than yours. When you set forth plainly what the Bible teaches on major doctrines it gives you an ad-

vantage over your adversary. Obviously each Bible believing Christian needs to know with conviction what the Bible teaches on all vital subjects, especially Bible doctrine. It is well to remember when Jesus confronted the Sadducees, he made the statement "Ye do err, not knowing the Scripture, nor the power of God" (Matt. 22:29). The right use of the Scriptures also constituted Luther's method when he masterfully faced the ecclesiastical leaders of his day. They had only the traditional or medieval interpretations, while Luther had the inerrant Word of God. I have given the priority of using the Scriptures in my confrontation with the cultists, and have found that method effective.

The Need for Compassion

It is regretfully true that many of us from time to time may have been unkind, and perhaps somewhat ruthless in going rough-shod over those who have strayed away from the truth. A few decades ago much of the literature printed on the cults was condemnatory and excessively harsh. In other words, it seemed the main thrust was to knock down the adversaries, figuratively speaking, with the strongest language possible. If anything is needed in order to be helpful to those who have deviated from the truth it is that of manifesting compassion on them. It is well to remember our Lord manifested compassion on people whom he ministered to. He was approachable and kind even to the confused and besmirched woman of Samaria. Our Lord was firm, yet, on the other hand, he was merciful and kind to those who were in need of help. He was rewarded in that the woman at the well listened to him and received the living waters. We who minister to misguided people need to recognize the lostness of those who are enslaved by the delusions propagated in our time. By following this procedure I was able to lead a

brilliant mother and her family away from an unBiblical cult and to confess Jesus Christ. She later made it clear it was my right approach which brought about the results which were desirable. Many others also have been helped through this approach.

Giving Our Personal Testimony

Instead of debating vigorously the points on which we differ with the cultist, it is much better to give the person in your presence your personal testimony how you came to know Jesus Christ as your Savior, and how completely and wonderfully you have found the assurance that you belong to Him and have eternal life. Paul, the apostle, used that technique on many occasions. He presented the story of his conversion to rulers and potentates. We find that Felix, Festus, and King Agrippa were all moved by the testimony of the apostle. I have never known a Jehovah's Witness who has come to my door with literature, who has had the knowledge of being saved. Their hope is in peddling literature and in total loyalty to their superiors and their teachings. Peter puts it well in these words, "Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you the reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear" (1 Pet. 3:15).

Providing People with Effective Literature

The major contribution of Religion Analysis Service for more than three decades has been in providing quality literature. It is important for every Christian to have literature on hand dealing with the cults. At every conference held, and at each speaking engagement, I have made available a table of literature. In addition, I also have a considerable amount at my home, and in my automobile, and wherever I travel I carry literature with me. The advantage in providing people

with pamphlets and books is that the cultists will not be in a position to match their skill with you in coming up with arguments. And, since most people are curious, it is a known fact that much anti-cultic writings are being read. While the literature may not be effective immediately, it will often open the way for a further consideration of those teachings which have confused many people. By the distribution of literature, you will avoid a clash with the cultist. This often takes place when there is a personal confrontation.

Our most highly recommended publications are those which come from people who have been delivered from false systems of religion. For example, our pamphlet, "No Longer a Momon" gives a concise story of a young man who was set free from the clutches of this evil system. He points out while he was in the navy, a man with great love and compassion was used of God, to open the way for him to take further steps, which in time brought him to Christ for salvation. These people once enslaved, but delivered, seem to have a special gift in helping others who are ensnared in false religious systems.

It is inexcusable for Christians not to have on hand various kinds of literature as such are frequently needed. Generally each week I deal with people who need help and information. Personally, I have great confidence that the truth will set people free from cultic errors. We read, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32).

Intercessory Prayer Needed

Above and beyond all other methods which we may select in dealing with people who are involved in error is that of prayer. The apostle Paul saw that need early in his ministry, and he writes, "Helping together by prayer." I fear we often fail to intercede in behalf of people who are ensnared by false teachings. Most of us have the motto in some room, *Prayer Changes Things*. I fully believe prayer must be considered as being objective. It will produce results if we persist in intercession. The New Testament is filled with accounts of wonderful answers to prayer. Nearly every one has some relative or neighbor who has strayed away from the truth. We need to put these people on our prayer list immediately. Prayer is not conquering God's reluctance, rather it is taking hold of God's willingness. To illustrate: without sincere prayer our ministry in literature could not have continued. Every year we have seen how God has laid it upon the hearts of our friends to remit the necessary funds with which we have been able to maintain our service to many people. Prayer for individuals who are misguided and confused also should merit our interest and concern.

These are some right methods in dealing with the cults. This writer hopes that the suggestions given in the article will be helpful to the readers. We all are facing an incredible expansion of cultic activity, hence we need wisdom in dealing with those who have been influenced in following blindly the modern charlatans and quacks.

OUR NEW CATALOG

We plan to publish the new catalog in the near future. It will be sent to all on our active mailing list. The categories are carefully arranged, and it will be easy to locate the material needed when you are ready to send in your order. The catalog is free, but if you wish to send in a contribution to help us at this time we will appreciate this very much. The cost of printing and mailing is approximately \$1,500.00.

LEARNING FROM HISTORY

by Rev. Richard M. Winchell, General Director,
of The Evangelical Alliance Mission

Winston Churchill is reported to have said, "We never learn anything from history except that we never learn anything from history." A pessimistic notion, but one that could prove true for evangelicals if we aren't careful.

The revivals of the nineteenth century ushered in a surge of involvement in foreign missions rooted in pietism and the reformation doctrine of the authority of Scripture. But by 1900 liberalism had begun to set in, and scriptural authority was gradually undercut by an increasing rapprochement with humanistic optimism.

At the World Missionary Conference at Edinburgh in 1910, world evangelization was still the prime concern of the representatives, and their theology was largely evangelical. But there was a touch of humanistic optimism in the minds of some mission thinkers convinced it was possible to win the world and bring in the Kingdom within their lifetimes. This optimism, based on confidence in man's abilities—though checked by two world wars—has been reaffirmed at most of the conferences held by the ecumenists.

By the time of the Jerusalem conference of 1928, liberals had rejected inspiration. Higher criticism ruled their view of Scripture. Although Jerusalem delegates repudiated syncretism, they leaned heavily on the concept of God's revelation through nature in the religious, social, and political realms to the detriment of evangelism.

At Madras in 1938, there was a partial return to Biblical authority, but it was Barthian (Scripture is said to contain the Word of God). The "larger evangelism" was introduced, founded on this changed concept of revelation.

Their message of salvation continued to include reconstruction of society.

Conferences since the end of World War II have tried, among other things, to redefine salvation as the liberation of the oppressed, have continued to discount Roman Catholic and Orthodox countries as mission fields, and have introduced dialogue with non-Christian religions.

In much of ecumenical thinking the non-Christian world is no longer looked upon as a mission field. Socio-political concerns have replaced the Biblical basis for world "evangelization." The lostness of man has long since been lost.

In recent years, concerned lest the ecumenical voice be the only one heard on world mission issues, attempts have been made to gather evangelicals to speak to the issues. Congresses in Berlin in 1966 and in Lausanne in 1974 had an admirable emphasis on the evangelization of the lost. However, some of the trends that have followed give cause for concern lest the errors of history be repeated. Looking at the gradual decline in the ecumenists' concern for the lost, let me list four lessons we should learn:

1. We must maintain the authority of Scripture. Advances in the biological and behavioral sciences have made evident the need for more adequate theological and anthropological training. But this training must be obtained in light of II Timothy 3:14, "Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned." Our concern must be for truth and not just a desire to be recognized as intellectuals.

2. We must put social emphasis into Biblical perspective. What was in-

roduced as "the larger evangelism" has today reappeared as "holistic evangelism." Without being blind to man's needs, we nonetheless must maintain the emphasis where Jesus placed it. Looking at the crippled man he healed of palsy, he spoke first to the forgiveness of that man's sins. Jesus made clear that we must first be concerned with deeper needs, rather than with the more apparent physical, material, and social needs.

3. We must *do God's will* and not get sidetracked talking about it. The pursuit of organizational unity has led some to neglect action in favor of theory. Although we evangelicals pride ourselves on our non-involvement with the ecumenical movement, our current preoccupation with calling conferences and congresses could lead to the same end.

4. We must maintain a dependence on the Holy Spirit's direction and on believing prayer. Pragmatism cannot take the place of doing God's will. Optimism predicated on the ability to design successful programs and methodology is reminiscent of the humanistic optimism of those who felt they could usher in the Kingdom. Ours must be an optimism based on God's power, not on man's programs.

What we learn from history is that it pays to maintain a Biblical view of the authority and inerrancy of Scripture and a firm commitment to its concept of evangelism. It pays off not only in spiritual returns but for the social betterment of man as well.

Reprinted from *Horizons Magazine Publication*.

Historical material from *World Evangelism and the Word of God*, Arthur P. Johnston, 1974, Bethany Fellowship

HOW TO IDENTIFY A FALSE CULT

by Alan Streett

Many times people ask me, "How can I determine if a religious group is cultish in nature?" This is one of the most important questions a Christian can ask in light of the number of new cults and sects which are springing up. The average Christian does not have adequate knowledge of the Scriptures upon which to judge the claims of a cult. Neither does he seem to be sensitive to the prodding of the Holy Spirit to discern the true nature of these new religious groups. Therefore, I have listed a nine-point outline to help the Body of Christ to recognize instantly whether a group is cultish or not.

1. A REJECTION OF ONE OR MORE OF THE CARDINAL CHRISTIAN DOCTRINES—Any group that rejects the virgin birth of Christ, His atonement for sins, the bodily resurrection of Christ, His second coming, the existence of heaven and hell, the inspiration and authority of Scripture as the sole rule

of faith, and the Trinity is cultish. These cardinal doctrines are a must!

2. EXTRA-BIBLICAL REVELATION—Any group that believes they possess a book which supercedes the authority of the Bible is cultish. For example, the Mormons hold that the *Book of Mormon* is equal to or supercedes the authority of the Scripture. The Unification Movement (Sun Myung Moon) accepts the *Divine Principle* as its rule of faith.

Under this same category must be listed a belief that special revelations, visions, prophecies, etc. are given by God today which can supercede or contradict His Word. Many charismatic groups and spiritualistic groups fall into this category.

3. THE "SOLE INTERPRETER" SYNDROME—This is a belief that the cult or head cultist has been given an "inside track" into Biblical interpretation. Such groups as the Worldwide Church

of God (Garner Ted Armstrong), The Way (Victor Paul Wierwille) and the Christian Science movement (Mary Baker Eddy) all claim to possess the ONLY CORRECT interpretation of Holy Writ.

4. A LATTER-DAY PROPHET WHO SUPERCEDES JESUS CHRIST—A belief that Christ was simply one of a succession of God's prophets, but not His final revelation to man. For instance, the Baha'i faith believes that Baha'ullah was God's prophet for this age.

5. SUBMISSION TO THE CULT—Any group that calls for its followers to totally submit unto its leaders is cultish in nature. God has given everyone of His children a free will. Submission leads to bondage, mind control, and domination of one human being over another. Such groups as the Children of God and the Jehovah's Witnesses practice varying degrees of submission. One characteristic of these submission cults is "extra-local authority," where one man or group of men controls the affairs of their followers in various locations from one central headquarters.

6. AN OVER EMPHASIS OF ONE PARTICULAR TRUTH OR DOCTRINE—Certain groups take one truth and stretch it out of proportion until error results. The Seventh Day Adventists are a prime example. They stress the necessity of obeying the Old Testament laws, especially observing Saturday as the sabbath.

7. CLOSED MEMBERSHIP—This is a rule whereby outsiders are forbidden to attend certain meetings. Before one becomes eligible to attend, he must first submit himself to special indoctrination classes. The Mormons, for example, will not allow any outsider to attend Temple rite services. The Jehovah's Witnesses' Tuesday evening Watchtower meeting is also closed to the public.

8. A DEFECTIVE CHRISTOLOGY—All cults reject either the humanity or the divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ. Some religious sects believe that Jesus was an angel or some other type created being, but not a man. The Church of Christ Scientists falls into this category. Atheistic groups go as far as to deny the very earthly existence of the man Jesus altogether. Other groups such as the Spiritual Frontiers Fellowship, Theosophy, etc. go to the other extreme and reject Christ's incarnation, pre-existence and divinity. They claim that He was only a man.

9. SUBJECTIVISM—This is the common denominator in all false religious systems. This concept states that man must do something or have something done to him or experience some kind of spiritual phenomenon within before he can be saved. He must have a subjective experience. Every false cult teaches this. Examples of subjectivism would be keeping a set of rules to attain salvation, getting baptized, speaking in tongues, being reincarnated, chanting, working off one's karma, meditating, etc. as the basis of salvation.

True Christianity, on the other hand, teaches that man does nothing to be saved. He cannot work out his own salvation. God did it all—completely outside of man's experience—two thousand years ago on the Cross of Calvary. Christianity teaches that salvation is "objective" in nature; man has no part in it. Faith is placed in what God did through Christ on the Cross, not in anything that happens to, or in, or by man.

* * * *

Examine all religious groups by these nine points. Any group that exhibits one or more of these traits is cultish in nature.

Used with permission.
Copyright, 1977
R. Alan Street

DEMONISM—FACT OR FABLE

by C. Reuben Lindquist
Berean Mission, Inc., St. Louis, Missouri

In spite of the fact that the Word of God clearly reveals the existence and reality of Satan and his evil emissaries, the demons, many reject these truths pertaining to the sphere of these supernatural beings as mere superstition, folklore or old wives' fables.

Someone has facetiously asked, "If Satan and his cohorts are not realities and do not exist, then who is carrying on this nefarious work?" If there are not any satanic or demonic forces in this wicked world, then, perforce, we must find another reason for man's depravity and evil behavior.

The sudden appearance and phenomenal manifestation of supernatural forces at work in our day have confirmed what the Scriptures say about the existence and activity of Satan as he operates through his henchmen, the demons. Ever since the encounter of Satan, the subtle serpent, with the woman in the Garden of Eden, which brought about the fall of mankind, as described in Genesis 3:1-6, the human race has been the object of Satan's attack, deception and seduction.

Both the Old and New Testaments testify of his cunning work as he reigns over, and operates through, the demonic forces at his command in his kingdom of darkness. The Lord Jesus Christ, in talking with the Jews on one occasion, graphically described the nature and work of Satan in these words;

"Why do ye not understand My speech? even because ye cannot hear My word. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no

truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it" (John 8:43-44).

Today, however, we are witnessing a sudden outburst of the occult and every kind of demon activity and manifestation. The apostle Paul warned us that in the latter days there would be

"... false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if **his ministers** also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works" (II Corinthians 11:13-15).

Likewise, concerning the onslaught and activity of demons, the apostle said,

"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**; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron" (I Timothy 4:1-2).

It is obvious from these passages and many others found throughout God's Word that Satan is not only the archdeceiver of the whole world of unregenerate men, but through his emissaries, the demons, he is also relentlessly seeking to seduce and beguile the very elect, the children of God. By means of supernatural "signs and wonders," many of God's saints are "falling away" from the truth "giving heed to seducing spirits."

As we study God's Word, we find that demon activity can be classified under three general categories. The

first of these is:

DEMON DECEPTION

Even though the demons are depraved creatures, they have superhuman intellects and supernatural power. Therefore, under the control and direction of Satan, the archfiend and the enemy of God, their prime motive and objective is to defeat God's plan and purpose for the human race by deception. "In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not . . ." (II Corinthians 4:4). Consequently, they are continually and consistently engaged in deceiving human beings concerning the revealed truth of God. By nature they are unclean (Mark 1:27), hypocrites (I Timothy 4:1-3), and seducing spirits, appealing to depraved man's lust and immorality and bringing about the degradation of the natural man's condition, as described by the apostle Paul in Romans 1:21-32.

However, satanic deception is not confined to the unregenerate who have deliberately turned away from God and His Word. In his intense hatred of God, Satan and his cohorts, the demons, are particularly directing their attacks on the **minds** and **lives** of believers. From the moment that God declared, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed," Satan, with his unseen host of evil spirit beings, has declared a relentless war on the saints of God down through the ages of man's history here upon the earth in an attempt to destroy "the Seed of the woman," the virgin-born Redeemer. Under the guise of seeking to lead them nearer to God by substituting "doctrines of demons" for the truth of God's Word, he causes them to go astray resulting and bringing them into delusion and bondage to himself (Matthew 24:24; II Corinthians 4:4).

Satan employs three tools or methods to deceive and beguile the

unregenerate and particularly the untaught and carnal Christians. These are clearly outlined in I John 2:16, as follows:

(1) the lust of the flesh (2) the lust of the eyes (3) and the pride of life, and are demonstrated in the serpent's seduction of Eve in the Garden of Eden, as recorded in Genesis 3:

- (1) "And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food"—**the lust of the flesh**
- (2) "And that it was pleasant to the eyes"—**the lust of the eyes**
- (3) "And a tree to be desired to make one wise"—**the pride of life**—"she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat."

The same three methods of approach were evident when Christ, the Seed of the woman, was led into the wilderness by the Spirit to be tempted or tested of the Devil, as recorded in Matthew 4:1-11:

- (1) "Command that these stones be made bread"—**the lust of the flesh**
- (2) "If Thou be the Son of God, cast Thyself down . . . his angels . . . shall bear Thee up"—**the lust of the eyes**
- (3) "All these things will I give Thee, if Thou wilt fall down and worship me."—**the pride of life**

Whereas Eve was deceived (I Timothy 2:14) and succumbed to the lies of Satan, the Saviour defeated him by the power of the Word, "**It is written . . .**" (Matthew 4:1-11).

The apostasy, the preponderance of evil cults, and the moral decadence, so prevalent in our day, indicate that we are in the "last days" of this dispensation as described by the apostle Paul in II Timothy 3:1-13. We call attention to two verses in this portion in particular:

Verse 8—"Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of **corrupt minds**,

reprobate concerning the faith.”

Verse 13—“But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.”

Let us, therefore, heed the admonition of Paul to Timothy in the verses that follow:

“But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of . . . the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus . . . profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (II Timothy 3:14-17).

The second phase of demon activity deals with

DEMON OBSESSION

Some years ago, the much publicized seance in which the late Bishop James A. Pike, a notable minister in the Disciples of Christ Church, was supposed to have communicated with his son, who had committed suicide, caused a resurgence of the occult phenomenon. Since that time, there has been a staggering increase involving black magic, fortune telling, astrology, metaphysics, satanism and false cults of every kind. This, coupled with modern-day scientific research, has produced some real questions on the part of former skeptics and those ignorant of God’s Word, concerning the reality of spirit existence, influence, and involvement with mankind.

It is significant to note that most heathen cultures, destitute of biblical knowledge, recognize and readily admit and attest to the existence of these powers of darkness. Their religious rites, ceremonies and worship usually involve either appeasing the wrath of or imploring the assistance of unseen powers in the spirit world, as part of

their daily existence. The tragedy in our modern-world Christendom is the appalling ignorance on the part of so many professing Christians concerning what the Bible teaches with reference to the current satanic manifestations and activities. God’s Word alone can fortify the born again believer against the onslaughts of Satan and his evil conspirators. Without it, any well-meaning soul will fall prey to Satan’s delusions.

Demon obsession deals with the **power demons can exert over the mind** or the **thought pattern** of every human being. Since the unregenerate and the heathen are without the knowledge of the Gospel, they are particularly susceptible to satanic mental delusions or obsessions. As a result, he holds them captive at his will since he fully **controls and manipulates the thoughts of their minds**. In view of this fact, Satan and his cohorts are primarily focusing their attention and their deceptive efforts in influencing and captivating the minds and thought patterns of Christians, thus leading them astray.

Through their superphysical strength, demons are able to take advantage of mental depression and physical weaknesses, which can produce depression, anxiety, emotional upsets or various phobias and fears, sometimes even ultimately resulting in a deranged mind (Ephesians 2:2). Being cognizant of the effects of the mind and its behavior upon the physical body, they can harass the mind and afflict the body with psychosomatic diseases, physical disabilities, or organic and chronic disorders, which even defy medical and psychiatric treatment. Frequently these attacks will result in nervous breakdowns or mental instability, which in turn may drive their enslaved victims to self-destruction or other violent reactions.

Needless to say, the current use and

addiction to drugs is but another of Satan's diabolical methods, used not only to destroy the minds of our confused youth today, but also to wreck their physical bodies. This, coupled with the flood of pornographic literature, homosexuality, permissiveness, and violence associated with the various X-rated movies and TV programs, truly emphasizes the fact that we are living in a day when Satan and his seductive imps are waging an all-out war to capture the minds of mankind. The Bible declares, **"For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he"** (Proverbs 23:7a).

The final phase or goal of demon activity involves

DEMON POSSESSION

Since the Bible clearly indicates that demons are disembodied spirits, they are seeking bodies or habitations which they can indwell and control. One notable instance is found in Matthew 8:28-34, where the Lord Jesus, together with His disciples, came into the country of the Gergesenes. There they met "two possessed with devils, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce." Recognizing Christ and that they were doomed to perdition, they besought him, saying (verse 31), "If thou cast us out, suffer us to go away into the herd of swine." When He gave them permission, they came out of the men that they had possessed, went into the herd of swine, taking control of them, and ran violently down a steep place, perishing in the water.

Many instances of demon-possessed victims are mentioned in the New Testament. In every instance it is to be noted that demon possession involves a condition where one or more evil spirits, or demons, actually inhabit a human body, thereby taking complete control of their victim. So complete is this transformation that the original personality of the human being is en-

tirely set aside and the demon imposes or substitutes his own personality on the possessed victim, employing the physical body as a means for expressing his demonic characteristics, personality and thought, even using the mouth of the one possessed to speak in an altogether distinct and different voice. Frequently, the demons leave their victim's body, coming and returning at will. When absent, the one possessed reverts to and manifests his original personality, until such time as the demon or demons elect to return.

The question is often asked, "Can a Christian become **demon possessed**?" While it is possible for a born again believer to experience **demon deception and obsession** if he yields to the wiles of Satan, or allows himself to be drawn into evil temptations, it is our definite conviction that a believer who has truly been regenerated and simultaneously indwelt by the Holy Spirit **cannot be demon possessed**. We base this conviction on several passages, such as I John 4:1-6 where we are definitely assured in verse 4, "Ye are of God, little children, and have **overcome them** (spirits): **because greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world.**"

Therefore, we are exhorted to **"try the spirits** whether they are of God" (verse 1).

"We are of God . . . Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error" (verse 6).

Another passage which confirms this fact is found in I John 3:9,

"Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for His seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God."

"It is God who has delivered us out of the dominion of darkness and has transferred us into the kingdom of His dearly loved Son, by whom **we possess** the ransom from captivity" (Colossians 1:13—Williams Transla-

tion).

Demon possession represents the ultimate in Satan's ability to completely victimize and subjugate a human being, body, soul and spirit, putting him under his dominion and control.

Needless to say, there is much that we do not know about the phenomenon of demon activity but, as we trace these three phases of Satan's operations in the world today, it is evident that the Word of God teaches, beginning with **demon deception** which affects all mankind, that there is a downward trend or a more accelerated form of activity in **demon obsession**, culminating in **demon deception** Satan seeks to "**blind the minds**" of men to the truth. In the case of the ungenerate, "... the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them" (II Corinthians 4:4).

With reference to the saved, Satan seeks to "pervert and distort" the truth of the Word, substituting "doctrines of demons."

The trends of our day, including neo-orthodoxy, liberalism and the charismatic mania, which is sweeping the world, with its emphasis on experience, bodily healing, tongues, and miracles, associated with the baptism of the Holy Spirit as a second work of grace, are evidences of turning from the truth. The apostle Paul gave warning that this would occur at the end of this age, when he wrote to Timothy, "Preach the Word . . . For the time will come when **they** (believers) **will not endure sound doctrine**: but after **their own lusts** (desires and designs) 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**" (II Timothy 4:2-4).

How then can we as God's children

engage in this spiritual warfare without being defeated? In his letter to the Ephesian believers (6:10-18). Paul gives us the strategy and the list of the armor required to defeat our enemies. Let us take note:

- (1) **The source of our supplies** (verse 10)
"Be strong in the Lord, and in the **power of His might.**"
- (2) **Adequate protection** (verse 11)
"Put on the **whole armor** of God, that ye may be able to **stand against** the wiles of the devil."
- (3) **Know your enemy** (verse 12)
"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against **principalities**, and against **powers**, against the **rulers** of the darkness of this world, against **spiritual wickedness (wicked spirits)** in high places" (areas of conflict).
- (4) **Check each piece of armor** (verse 13)
"That ye may be able to **withstand** in the evil day, and having done all, to **stand.**"
- (5) **Take the initiative** (verses 14-17)
"Stand therefore . . ."
 - a. **Loins** girt about with **truth**.
 - b. **Chest**—breastplate of righteousness
 - c. **Feet** shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace.
 - d. **Shield** of faith (defensive weapon), wherewith ye shall be able to quench **all** the fiery darts of the wicked.
 - e. **Head**—helmet of salvation.
 - f. **Sword** of the Spirit (offensive weapon), two-edged, the Word of God.
- (6) **Keep in constant touch with Headquarters** (verse 18a)
Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit" (information and guidance in coping with the enemy).
- (7) **Alert at all times** (verse 18b)
"Watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication

for all saints" (striving for the unity of the Spirit).

Let us resist the Devil and he will flee from us!

Reprint from MISSIONGRAMS

THE SCRIPTURAL PRINCIPAL OF SEPARATION

*by Robert P. Lightner, Th.D., Assistant Professor of Systematic Theology
Dallas Theological Seminary, Dallas, Texas*

Truth and error are always separated in Scripture. They are opposites which will not admit of synthesis with God. Scripture speaks of them as mutually exclusive. God is the epitome of truth as Satan is of error. From the very beginning God separated light from darkness. Throughout Scripture darkness speaks of error, and light speaks of truth, and the two are diametrically opposed to each other. "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5). The children of God are to bear family resemblance. They are constantly to avoid error by walking in the light. It goes without saying that the children of God are to refrain from sin. Scripture makes that abundantly clear. Since departure from and denial of the faith are certainly sin it follows that believers are to refrain from aligning themselves with that departure. Severe judgment of God is pronounced upon those who profane the name of God or the cause of God. Rejection of the inerrant authority of Scripture and the deity of Christ certainly profanes the name and cause of God. That the liberal ecumenical establishment has repudiated these and many other basic Christian doctrines has already been established. It remains for the believer to understand that alignment with the ecumenical movement or even inclusion in the numbers which church unionists use to accomplish their ends makes him party

in one way or another to that which he rejects and which God will one day judge.

God's people have throughout Scripture been marked as a distinct, peculiar and separated people. Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, was rebuked by God for lending assistance to the wicked despisers of God and His people (II Chron. 19:2). The law of God to His own made it explicit that they should "not plow with an ox and ass together" (Deut. 22:10). Surely this was designed to teach them the law of separation. That which was to characterize their physical lives was also to be true of the spiritual life. This principle was stated by God to His own in the form of a question, "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" (Amos 3:3). It is simply impossible to have true Biblical fellowship with those who deny the very essentials upon which that fellowship is made possible. This does not mean believers are to hate and avoid all who are not born-again. Such an attitude would militate against the very reason for the believer's existence—to propagate the Gospel and glorify God. Personal friendship is one thing. Fellowship involving union and the joining of hands for a so-called Christian effort with those who reject the orthodox Christian faith is another.

From Church Union by Dr. Robert P. Lightner

SUBSCRIBE TO THE DISCERNER

Our magazine, *The Discerner*, keeps abreast of the developments within the cultic areas, and articles appear in each issue which deal with various groups that have deviated from the truth. The new subscription price is 4 issues for \$2.00 and 12 issues for \$5.00.

With postage and printing costs going up continually, this moderate increase is necessary. We appreciate when you send in subscriptions for your friends. Check the expiration date on your own subscription, and be sure to send in your renewal on time.

RECENT BOOKS BY THE EDITOR ARE AVAILABLE

About a year ago the book, *Glimpses and Reflections of a Ministry*, by Prof. John E. Dahlin, was published. It reviews his 50 years of ministry in wide areas. The material is both biographical as well as providing an overview of his experiences and observation during a long ministry. The introduction is written by Dr. John Walvoord, President of Dallas Theological Seminary. It is cloth-bound. The price is \$4.25 with

50¢ postage.

The book, *Living and Serving*, became available February 1st. It is a selection of 28 important radio messages given over Northwestern College Network of Christian radio stations during these many years. It is a devotional book and is well received. The price is \$3.45 with 36¢ postage. Order from Religion Analysis Service, 2708 E. Lake St., Minneapolis, Minn. 55406.

REPEAL OF GAY RIGHTS ORDINANCES

Recent months have brought encouragement to the moral forces in our land in that they have won elections in several cities which repealed the 'Gay Rights' laws. These were: Eugene, Oregon which recently voted by almost a 2 to 1 margin repealing a local ordinance prohibiting discrimination

against homosexuals, in housing, jobs or public accommodations. Similar victories were won earlier in Dade County (Miami) FL, St. Paul, MN, and Wichita, KS. People have awakened to this evil which is seeking recognition in our land.

RELIGION ANALYSIS SERVICE, INC.
2708 E. Lake Street
Suite 231
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55406

Address Correction Requested

PERTINENT QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

John E. Dahlin, Editor

QUESTION . . . What basic doctrinal error seems to include all the present-day cults?

ANSWER . . . All the cultic groups have erred in that they have minimized the attributes of the Lord Jesus Christ. To them He is less than being co-equal with God, the Father. There are some variations among them, however. They fail to give Christ the position set forth in the Scriptures. To the Jehovah's Witnesses, Christ is only the highest created one, but His co-existence with the Father from eternity they do not accept. Even the Seventh Day Adventists do not hold fully the Scriptural doctrine regarding the Son of God. The apostle John provides the test with reference to the truth versus error concerning the doctrine of Christ. See I John 2:22; 4:3).

QUESTION . . . On what other important position do the cultists differ from Bible-believing Christians?

ANSWER . . . Evangelicals hold that the sixty-six books of the Bible contain God's complete revelation to man, and that the Scriptures are inerrant and authoritative in all matters. The leading cults believe in continued revelation, that is, revelation is ongoing. The founders of these cults claim they have received special revelation on certain teachings. By taking such a position they detach themselves from the moorings of the Scriptures, and assume a position unauthorized by fallible men. The Mormon Church has gone the farthest of any group in this direction. The President of the Mormon Church recently claims that he has received a new revelation regarding the right to priesthood of negro men. This had been previously denied.