

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

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THE CULTS DELIBERATELY EMBRACE FALSE POSITIONS

Prof. John E. Dahlin, Editor

The greatest tragedy regarding the deception of the cults is that they have willfully chosen to promote false doctrines which are unsupported by the Scriptures. I listened recently to Herbert W. Armstrong, during his radio program, at which time he sought to convey to the radio audience that "The Worldwide Church of God" has come through the last five decades being entirely free from any doctrinal error. Obviously, he used no Scriptural arguments to support his position; rather, he chose to rationalize the entire presentation. Armstrong concluded his overview by stating that his movement is the only one today which is committed to presenting God's message in its purity to our generation. We might point out that other cults are also guilty of making these false assertions. The Jehovah's Witnesses, the Mormons, The Seventh Day Adventists, and those adhering to Christian Science, speak of their infallibility. The fact of the matter is, all these groups, and other cults too, disregard sound Biblical doctrine as it is set forth in the Scriptures. The sad fact is that the Truth of God is set aside in favor of the new-fangled interpretations

made by the present-day cultists. Instead of giving heed to certain honorable scholars from their own organizations, who have suggested some revisions in the teachings, the organizations have cast out the honest dissenters. This is called "disfellowshipped" by their group. They have been eliminated without a proper hearing. No dialog or discussion of doctrine is tolerated by the cults. The hierarchy is completely dominant in the decision-making policy.

A similar situation confronted Martin Luther in his time, that is, when he suggested high level discussion of doctrines in the Roman Catholic Church. These were called the 95 theses which were nailed to the door of the old castle church at Wittenberg. The hierarchy allowed no such discussion. Luther was excommunicated from the Church as a heretic. This procedure is used today by the cults in disallowing any dissent in the cultic systems. It is willful apostasy, and is inexcusable in an age of enlightenment. This position of the cults must be repudiated as being totally arbitrary and unfair. We are dealing with a deliberate action by

the cults.

The Misleading Use of Propaganda

No area of cultic activity is more deceptive than their skillful utilization of propaganda. This is mainly achieved through the printed page. By propaganda is meant a technique used in order to gain an advantage in the art of convincing people in yielding to persuasive arguments. It is important that we familiarize ourselves with this false approach of the cultists, and their great skill in using propaganda as a major means of achieving results. The cults of today depend on a massive outpouring of printed material in gaining a favorable response from millions of naive people.

The Jehovah's Witnesses and the Mormons are perhaps the most aggressive groups among the cults in using the technique of distributing an enormous amount of printed material. They also are past masters in sugar-coating their false teaching through literary manipulations. Christian Science has made reading rooms available in most cities in promoting their pantheistic teaching, and, at their centennial about 15 years ago, special editions of their publications were printed to display the wonders of Christian Science. Their most brilliant editor, Mr. Erwin D. Canhan, made a trip around the world during which time he appeared in 52 leading cities. He spoke, usually, in huge auditoriums and provided a great stimulus to Christian Science. Usually the Jehovah's Witnesses print twenty million copies of the "Watchtower" and the "Awake" magazines, when these magazines are printed. No other cult has equaled this enormous printing of material.

Herbert W. Armstrong is not far behind, however, in spreading of his propaganda through the magazine known as "*Plain Truth*"—(a better title would be plain humbug). No charge is made for the subscription to the magazine. But Armstrong fails to mention that his organization demands 30% of the gross income from his brain-washed followers. And, by letters received at our office, some wives of these generous husbands tell how family needs are neglected by giving these large amounts of money to Armstrong.

It is a fact that the cults practice deliberate deception to gain their objectives, which is ensnaring people in their false systems of religion. They never seek to evaluate Biblical Truth with an open mind. Instead, these groups use arbitrary methods and totally biased interpretations of the Scriptures. This method borders on heartless cruelty, and it is widely used. Paul speaks of Satan's work: "Lest Satan should gain an advantage of us, for we are not ignorant of his devices" (I Cor. 2:11).

How May We Best Cope With The Present Situation?

First of all, we need to be convinced that the present-day cults are guilty of deliberate unfairness in circulating their false doctrine. When this matter is called to attention of the leaders in the cultic systems, they became adamant and refuse to discuss the possibility of any doctrinal changes in their teachings. In other words, they manifest an inflexible attitude towards any modification of their teaching. Since they take this hard line, we should resist any accommodation with the cults. The National Council of Churches com-

promised their position in accepting for membership in the N.C.C. several of the cultic groups in recent years. This gives these false groups a recognition which they do not deserve.

Secondly, we need to combat the false teachings of the cults by publishing superior literature. It is well to point out to these misguided zealots specifically where they have strayed away from the Scriptures. In other words, we should provide the unvarnished facts where the cultic groups have erred in their teaching. Such literature must be clear and Scripturally convincing. We have much of this kind of literature in our office.

Thirdly, it is essential that we have a good understanding of the cult involved in the discussion. These people need to be instructed in those teachings where the cults are at variance with the Biblical Truth. We need to avoid long arguments or using the technique of ridicule in dealing with these misguided people. Condemnatory statements on their

teachings serve no good purpose. Our purpose should be to gain these people for Jesus Christ. When I was first involved with Religion Analysis Services, I was much concerned to win in an encounter with the cultists. Today I am much more concerned that our primary purpose in all the anti-cultic literature being printed be that they may be saved. In other words, the confrontation of the cults and refuting their teachings constitute only one area of our responsibility. It is an important objective, but it ought not to be our only interest in combating the cults.

These few observations should be helpful to people interested in those who are misled by cultic teachings. Our organization is designed to reach these people who too often are written off as being beyond reach with the Gospel. The final words of the writer James in the New Testament is an appeal to believers to seek to rescue those who have erred from the truth. All the articles in this issue have been selected with this objective in mind.

CRISIS OF CONSCIENCE

By Ramond Franz

(Book reviewed by Dr. Jerry Bergman, Bowling Green, Ohio)

A small independent "Bible study" group, began in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in 1874, has now evolved into the two-and-a-half million Jehovah's Witnesses in some 200 lands. When the Watch Tower publishes a new book, the normal initial printing is over a million copies, with millions more soon following. Few people have not had some con-

tact with the Witnesses as a result of their intense door-to-door activity.

Yet, for most persons, this religion remains a new mystery. More remarkably, even very few Witnesses have much knowledge of the doctrine-forming and policy-making processes of their own organization. The discussions of the small group of men who form its world "Governing Body" are

totally private. Yet that Body's decisions are applicable—and enforceable—for every Witness on the face of the earth. The author, as a third-generation member, lived the first sixty years of his life as an active Jehovah's Witness, serving in various countries at every level of the organizational structure. The final nine years of his life as a Witness were spent as a central leader on the central highest executive council, the Governing Body. Those years led to his crisis of conscience, the theme of his book, which forced him to leave the Witnesses and accept historical Christianity.

The account is the first ever which allows the reader an inside view of the decision-making sessions of their inner council and of the powerful, dramatic, and sometimes tragic impact their decisions have on people's lives. Presented with sensitivity and compassion, the information at the same time "raise very fundamental questions that are both disturbing and conscience-stirring."

As is so often the response when questions by Witnesses develop over their ever changing doctrine, the Society tends to simply ignore the members' concern (and they seem to ignore most other problems as well) and stop the questions by expulsion. Once the Society makes an adverse judgment relative to someone, which is common if one espouses a non-Society idea, however minor, or questions any of the Society's doctrines (a common problem for devout Bible readers), the person is expelled. There are few rules to guide their brand of "justice." One is simply, summary dismissed (disfellowshipped they call it), which means one can no longer

have any fellowship whatsoever with any friends or family that are still Witnesses. And once this occurs there is generally no recourse. The Elders are all powerful.

The main issue the book deals with, although it applies to a specific religious denomination, the Jehovah's Witnesses, has been of concern time and time again throughout history. And that is, "when an individual conscience conflicts with an organization's position (be it state, church or business) dictates, whom shall he or she obey?" Many people conclude that they are constrained to obey the organization. Others feel that they must do what they sincerely believe to be correct and, in view of the fact that the Witnesses require an incredibly rigid adherence to virtually every teaching that they espouse (even though their teachings are constantly changing, and some are incredibly poorly researched and thought out) much room for conflict exists. Although Franz shows that many of the Society's doctrines are without Scriptural foundation, the main focus is on the inner corruption of this man-made organization and its many prophetic failures, many of which are extensively documented by Franz.

Franz shows quite ably that Jehovah's Witnesses are among the most intolerant of all religious organizations, insisting upon an incredible rigidity, probably equaled only by the popular misunderstanding of the Roman Catholic Church during the middle ages.

The author's main motivation for writing the book was simply concern for the tragedy that he saw caused by the Society. In his own words, "what

do you do when you see mounting evidence that people are being hurt, hurt deeply, with no real justification? What obligation does any of us have before God and fellow humans, when he sees that information is withheld from people to whom it could be of the most serious consequences?"

It is ably stressed that the Society's "research" seems to be an effort to find authorities that already agree with them instead of finding out what is true. As this story builds, Franz shows how his own research while on the Governing Body continually, and almost unanimously, usurped some of the major teachings of the Society. He tried in vain to support the 1914 date, a major Witness doctrine, and the best he could do was to unsuccessfully try to tear down the opposing chronology while offering no support for the 1914 date. Franz admits that his efforts for the Society was "purely to uphold a date for which there was no historical support" (p. 26).

What really clinched his leaving, though, was his nine years on the governing body, which "had a great impact on me and particularly on my conscience." (p. 29). Although group-thinking strongly operates in the governing body, Franz brings out that as time went on the issues arose which made this forced conformity more and more difficult for him, as well as others, to accept. This work clearly confirms this writer's strongly-held opinion that the Society's "research" is incredibly superficial. They make important decisions without really thinking them through or exploring them in sufficient detail. One member of the

governing body often fell asleep at the meetings—obviously his input was not too valuable. Probably what was most disturbing, as clearly brought out by Franz and buttressed with a number of quotations from Watchtower authorities, publications and others, is that the leadership of the Society is either senile or, at worst, dishonest.

Throughout the book, though, it is clear that the tragedy wrought by the Witness hierarchy has been immeasurable. Lack of humanity, concern, and normal feelings for others, seem to be altogether lacking. Their God is the Watchtower Society, to be worshipped with absolute devotion, even if the Society demands the most unreasonable behavior from its adherents. Thus, one motivation for writing this book is summarized in the proverb "evil prevails when good men remain silent."

The discussion on their many chronological failures and predictions is very complete and excellent (one of the best available). Towards the center of the book, the reader has more and more understanding of the author's concern and indeed the exact "price of conscience," that he has paid. The account reviews the path that not only Franz, but many others as well, have walked in leaving the Society. The crisis of conscience occurs over and over, forcing, as Franz notes, almost a million persons to leave the Witnesses in the past decade alone.

One might wonder what is "the other side" of the story that Franz presents. Likely, Franz questioned some major doctrines of the Society which had tenuous scriptural support but were "traditionally held among

Jehovah's Witnesses." The writer has worked with many cases, like Franz's, and his own disagreement with the Society confirms this: the most serious offense against the Society is to question its authority. They insist absolutely that the Watchtower alone is God's organization, and what emanates from it, no matter how foolish, is not to be questioned. Even serious questioning is

not in the least tolerated. The result is expulsion, and a cutting off from, often, one whole family. This is what happened in Franz's case. This is an important book for Christians to read, for it gives a picture of the Society found nowhere else. It is limited in scope and discusses few doctrinal points, but fills in a large gap in our understanding of the Witnesses. It is highly recommended.

DIRECTIONS FOR DAYS OF APOSTASY

By Harold S. Martin

(Reprinted from *Bible Helps*, P.O. Box 391, Hanover, Pa. 17331)

The word "apostasy" means "a falling away or a defection from the faith." The Greek translation of the Old Testament uses the word "apostasia" in Joshua 22:22 to describe the rebellion of the people from God. The same word is used in II Thess. 2:3 to describe the falling away which will precede our Lord's Second Coming.

Apostasy should be distinguished from ignorance (a lack of knowledge). Apostasy is characterized by a deliberate rejection of Christ's deity, His atoning death, and other cardinal doctrines of the Christian faith. The Book of Jude foretells the age of apostasy and warns against its inroads in the church.

The writer of the Epistle of Jude, was Jude the brother of James, and therefore the brother of Christ Jesus (Matthew 13:55; Galatians 1:9). Just at the time when Jude was preparing to write on the subject of salvation, he heard of godless men who were threatening the church with er-

roneous teachings. Thus he was moved to write about the perils of false teachers. The Epistle of Jude is the Holy Spirit's warning to the church, against apostasy.

1. The Rise of Apostate Teachers (Jude vs. 3-4)

Jude was planning to write his fellow believers a letter on the subject of the salvation which they all shared (verse 3). He saw the need, however, to abandon this plan and prepare an epistle in which he could urge his readers to a faithful defense of the great truths which had been received from Christ and His apostles. He saw that these truths were in grave peril. The nature of the peril was the presence and influence of certain men in the church who denied the Lord they professed, by their teaching and by their conduct. Their coming had long ago been predicted, but their entrance into the church had been unobserved ("crept in unawares," verse 4).

Jude speaks here about "the faith." This speaks of the body of truth regarding God's great plan of redemption. It speaks of the great fundamentals of Christian truth. The first is the incarnation, God was in Christ and Christ was God incarnate in human flesh in the person of Jesus Christ (II Corinthians 5:19). The second is the vicarious death of the Son of God for sinners (Romans 5:10). The third is the truth that Jesus Christ arose from the tomb in a body (I Corinthians 15:14). The fourth is the authority of the Scriptures (II Timothy 3:16). The fifth is belief in heaven and hell. Other fundamental doctrines include the evangelization of the nations of the world, the doctrine of the Church the body of Christ, the imminent and personal return of our Lord Jesus Christ, salvation by grace with works following (including the observance of the New Testament ordinances). Jude indicates that the body of revealed truth is complete and final. Verse 4 literally says the faith was "once for all" delivered. There is no other true Gospel, and there will be no other. God's revelation is complete. The last chapter of the Bible warns against adding to or deleting from God's Word. We do grow in grace and in the knowledge of these truths, but there is no change in the truths themselves.

The faith was delivered to "the saints." God's people have been entrusted with the faith. It is your heritage and mine; it was not invented by man, but directed from God. We are to "earnestly contend" for the faith. The Greek for these two words means, "Fight for what you are standing on and hold on to what you have." We must exercise the

spirit of meekness, but we must not fail to defend the truth and expose error. No one ever used more severe language than our Lord when speaking on false doctrines. The Apostles followed Christ in their attitude, and the Epistles were written for the express purpose of defending the faith and exposing error.

Who are the opposers of the faith? Those who "crept in" unnoticed, Jude says. Thousands of people heard Ingersoll and Huxley belittle the faith outside the church, but many of these false teachers about whom Jude speaks actually occupy prominent pulpits within our churches today. They make a display of scholarship. They deny the faith and substitute pagan ethics and a rosewater gospel. They talk about the love of God but reject His judgment against sin. They carry a shallow view of sin, and "turn the grace of God into lasciviousness." That is, they claim that liberty in Christ gives them license to do as they please concerning the gratification of the flesh. This is a result of emphasizing God's love to the exclusion of His wrath against sin. Paul said, "Of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them" (Acts 20:30). Let us earnestly contend for the faith. Paul says, "Let your conversation [conduct] be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel." And again he says, "I am set for the defense of the gospel" (Philippians 1:17, 27).

2. The Warning to Apostate Teachers (Jude vs. 5-7)

Jude in these verses, cites God's judgments in the past as warnings to men living in these last days. Most of the incidents are judgment-scenes from the Old Testament revealing God's hatred for sin. Today also, we are living in an age when shallow views of sin are met on every hand. When the church succumbs to the spirit of the world, it always accepts light views of sin.

The first incident is about the unbelief of Israel in the wilderness (verse 5). These people, though they had special privileges and were miraculously delivered out of Egypt, yielded to unbelief, and as a result did not enter the Promised Land. Those who were responsible for this unbelief never set their feet inside the land of Canaan. We too are warned about unbelief in the Epistle to the Hebrews: "Take heed brethren, lest haply there shall be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in falling away from the living God."

Notice also verse 6. Compare the phrase "And the angels which kept not their first estate," with II Peter 2:4. The lesson of these passages is that if the apostate angels in heaven did not escape the judgments of God, surely apostates on earth will not.

Verse 7 says that "Sodom and Gomorrha are set forth" as an example. That is, the judgment on these cities is a warning to those who live afterward. The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrha is one of God's great signposts on the highway of life, against fornication and unbridled sensuality.

Each of the above examples reminds us that God brings judgment upon sin, and if God punished

those who took shallow views of sin in the past, He will do it again!

3. A Description of Apostate Teachers (Jude vs. 8-19)

The false teachers are often lawless. They reject God's way of salvation, follow the error or greed for money, and rebel against authority. Verses 12-19 further describe false teachers by showing their corrupt influence, their hypocrisy, their disgrace, and their doom.

To "despise dominion" (verse 8) means to make light of authority. There is often rebellion in the home. The Scriptural mandate, "Children obey your parents in the Lord for this is right," has many times become, "Parents obey your children for this is more up to date." There is also revolt against authority in the schools, against the government, and against the authority of the Word of God. Even the archangel did not bring a railing accusation against Satan, but said "The Lord rebuke thee." He submitted to the supreme authority of God. Lawlessness began in Eden, and it can only be controlled when the Spirit of God controls the heart.

In verse 11, three incidents are brought out of the dim past to warn men who live in the last days, that God has not changed His attitude toward sin and lawlessness. The first incident here is "the way of Cain." Cain was the first man to despise and reject God's way of salvation and to set up a religion which pleased his own evil heart. He wanted to erect an altar that would never be stained with blood, but rather embellished with flowers and fruits as an offering to the Lord. This is a picture of men

and women who despise salvation by blood, and would rather have beautiful buildings and appealing music and ritualism for their "worship." The way of Cain is man's way of life and righteousness, as opposed to God's way. The second incident is "the error of Balaam." Balaam tried to change God's wrath for material gain. The sin of Balaam is with us today. Those ministers who for the love of money are dishonoring their high calling by trying to please the people rather than trying to honor God, are following the error of Balaam. There are ministers, for example, who perform the marriage of divorced persons. They dishonor God, but at the same time, increase material gain. The final incident mentioned in this verse, is "the gainsaying of Korah." Korah was the leader of a group that rebelled against the authority God had given to Moses and Aaron, and claimed to be equal with Moses. What a terrible judgment fell upon Korah and his companions! The earth opened and they went alive into the pit. This same sin is evident today. The religious leaders who deny the deity of Christ are actually saying that He is no better than they, and that He is only a man like we are. If Korah and his followers met with such an awful judgment, what will be the punishment for those who deny the One who is the Mediator of a greater covenant? The rebellion of Korah was a refusal to submit to the authority of God's appointed servant.

The verses thus far have named seven characteristics of apostates. But the picture is made even more repulsive by the figures of speech which follow. These verses describe false teachers by showing their cor-

rupt influence, their hypocrisy, their disgrace, and their doom.

In verses 12 and 13, Jude described false teachers as "spots in your feasts of charity." Beware of those who make merchandise of their religion, posing as followers of Christ, participating in the lovefeast, but whose speech and practices betray them to be apostates. By their fruits you shall know them. He describes them further as "clouds without water." Just as a farmer is disappointed when he sees rain clouds gather during a dry season (and then bring no rain), so a thirsty soul is disappointed when all he hears is an unsatisfying social gospel. Also, they are like "trees whose fruit withereth." What a contrast is found here in comparison with the man who meditates on God's Word. He shall be "like a tree planted by rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither, and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." False teachers are also like "raging waves of the sea." They are often carried about by every wind of doctrine. They accept the latest thinking of prominent theologians instead of the simple truth of the Word of God. Thank God we can be settled upon the Rock of Ages! They are "wandering stars." That is, they are like meteors that flash in the sky for a short time and then suddenly disappear. The Bible says, "For if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to naught; but if it be of God ye cannot overthrow it" (Acts 5:38-39).

Those who have no real faith in God are many times "murmurers" and "complainers" and speakers of "great swelling words" (verse 16). We are living in a day when these words

need little explanation. Most people are born crying, live complaining, and die disappointed. They are often dissatisfied with life and sometimes blame God for the trouble they bring upon themselves. Let us accept God's will for our lives, knowing that "all things work together for good to them that love God."

In verses 17 and 18, we are told to remember the teachings and warning of the apostles (II Timothy 3:1-5; 4:3-4). Jude exhorts us to meet apostasy not with surprise, for these things have been predicted, but with a careful discernment. The sensual men who were prophesied to come, had already begun to appear on the scene before the end of the first century after Christ.

The punishment for apostate teachers had been predicted over and over again. Verses 14 and 15 state, in words which tradition assigns to Enoch the man who walked with God, that scoffers and mockers will come in the last days—but that the hour will also strike when the Judge shall appear from heaven with all His saints, and then He will convict those who had gone through life without recognizing and submitting to the true God (verse 15a). The punishment of hell ["blackness of darkness"] will be "for ever" (verse 13).

4. Counsel in View of Apostate Teachers (Jude vs. 20-23)

Jude's picture of the apostasy in the closing days of this age, as we have just seen it, is a dark one. The growth of evil will continue right up to the end. But we come now to the brighter side of the Epistle. Jude mentions some factors that should characterize the true Christian in the

age of apostasy.

The life of the true believer cannot be stagnant. There must be growth and progress and advancement in the Christian life. We are to continue to build upon our "most holy faith" (verse 20). Moses was told to build the tabernacle according to the pattern shown him, and just so we are to add to our faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and so forth (II Peter 1:5-7). The Christian life is a continuing building process.

"Praying in the Holy Ghost" should also characterize the Christian (verse 20). Praying in the Spirit means praying in the energy of the Spirit and according to God's will (Romans 8:26-27). It also means making our requests within the bounds of believing prayer, and in accordance with the mind of the Spirit as revealed in the Word of God (which the Spirit inspired when written). One simple, earnest, Spirit-energized prayer counts more in God's sight than a thousand eloquent, carefully worded prayers springing from an unregenerated heart and mind.

Further, we are to keep ourselves in the love of God (verse 21). That is, we are to "walk in love as Christ also hath loved us." We must maintain an attitude of love in a world that is filled with controversy and hatred. We must not allow the distracting, discouraging events that take place all around us, to draw us from fellowship with our ascended Lord, and from showing charity toward our fellowmen.

We are also told to look for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, which we shall find at His coming for His own, when He calls us out of the world to

meet Him in the air (I Thessalonians 4:16-17). In His loving mercy, He will deliver us from the terrible Day of Wrath that will come upon the earth (Revelation 3:10). Let us keep on building, praying, keeping, and looking, as we are admonished to do in the inspired Epistle of Jude.

It is our duty also to save souls from the paths of sin. There are different degrees of sin into which apostates have fallen, but those who love the sinner and hate sin, are to consistently try and save others caught in Satan's trap—show them the danger of living without Christ—warn them to flee the wrath to come—snatch them as brands from the burning.

The Book of Jude is filled with the flashing of lightnings, and judgments upon fallen angels and fallen men. Here we see the fall of angels; here we see the burning flames of Sodom and Gomorrhah; here we see Cain going guiltily out from the presence of the Lord. But just as a stormy day sometimes comes to a close with a beautiful sunset, so this brief and stormy Book comes to a conclusion with one of the grandest and most precious of all the promises and sayings of God's Word. This interesting little Epistle ends with a wonderful doxology of divine glory. Verse 24 says, "Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God, our Savior, be glory and majesty and dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen!"

The reader's thought has been led through dark scenes of perplexity and suffering, and of apostasy and doom. But now the clouds break

away, and the eyes gaze in rapture on the face of a God who is love, and on the glory of a coming Christ. We see in the closing verses of Jude that the danger of falling is implied. And no marvel, for when we consider the number and the power of our foes, it is not surprising that a Christian should fall. He must often walk in slippery places; he is subject to great weaknesses; there are many hindrances in his path. The flesh, the world, and the devil are continually trying to cause him to fall. But thanks be unto God, He is able to keep us from falling! God is powerful, and we have the promise that we are kept by "the power of God" until our salvation is completed. We are made fit sons of His through the imputed righteousness of Christ. It becomes our obligation to keep our hearts free from sin and yielded to the indwelling Holy Spirit. We must make use of the means of grace. Bible study, prayer, church attendance, observance of the ordinances—these are necessary for fostering good spiritual health in the life of the believer.

So unto God be all the glory, majesty, dominion, and authority. In spite of all that the devil can do, and in spite of all the apostasy and the failure of men, God's program of redemption will be carried out to its final and victorious end. Hallelujah, what a Saviour!

CRISIS OF CONSCIENCE

By Ramond Franz

This book, reviewed by Dr. Jerry Bergman on page 4-7, is available from our office for \$9.95 plus postage.

FACING CHARISMATIC TEACHING

Some Fortright Points of Approach

by Rev. Samuel Fisk

A close friend, a very sincere and well meaning brother, has been swept up in the charismatic movement. He claims to have found in it that which meets some deeper need of his. He urges its benefits upon those of us around him.

In a visit in his home, I came to the conclusion that we might as well face up to the issue and have the whole thing laid out in the open. I asked if we could withdraw to a quiet room where we could discuss things for a bit.

I began by reminding this friend of my modernish upbringing and how I came to the truth largely through reading the Bible. Many religious avenues were then open before me, and so in order to know which way to go I determined to test everything strictly by the Bible. Ever since, I told him, I have insisted on having clear, positive, direct Scriptural grounds for anything I am going to accept.

I said, "Joe" (we will call him that), "I must have unmistakable Scripture to go on for anything I am going to hold to. It *must be solidly biblical*."

"Neither can I follow a thing where Scripture runs directly against it," I said. "For example, look at I Corinthians 12:13." We opened the Bible. I read, "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free, and have been all made

to drink into one Spirit."

"Notice carefully," I said, "the first phrase: 'By one Spirit we are all baptized into one body.' What is that body? Why of course it is the body of Christ, the church composed of all born-again ones. If we're Christians at all we're in that body. And, see, it is by the Spirit that we are baptized into that body. No waiting or seeking after we are saved for any baptism of the Spirit. Notice the two uses of 'all' in the text. Believers are 'all' baptized into one body and then, 'have been all made to drink into one Spirit.' Nothing could be more clear, more sure."

"But," said Joe, "here it is baptism 'by' the Spirit that is spoken of. That may be at salvation, but the baptism 'with' the Spirit is different; baptism 'with' the Spirit is a subsequent experience. That is what we seek in our meetings. It is a wonderful, soul-enriching thing to experience."

"I don't find that difference in the Bible," I replied. "Where did you get the idea that baptism 'by' the Spirit and 'with' the Spirit are two very different things?"

This last question he could not answer. Leaving that occasion, when I got home I looked up the point. I wanted to be absolutely sure of my ground, so I checked carefully into the matter. Finally I wrote him as follows:

"Joe, I have looked up the phrase

'by one Spirit' we are baptized, I Corinthians 12:13, and baptized 'with' or 'into' the Spirit, Matthew 3:11b, Mark 1:8, John 1:33. I checked the original, and in the Greek they all come from one and the same word, 'en.' I cannot find any authority or source of exegesis that makes any distinction based on any difference here. In the Appendix to Young's Concordance it is seen that 'En' is translated into English as 'by' 142 times, 'with' 139 times, 'into' 11 times, and 'in' over one thousand times. All this indicates that there is but one baptism of the Holy Spirit, that is into the body of Christ, and that occurs when we are born again into the family of God."

Again I wrote, "There is no valid difference between being baptized 'in,' 'by,' or 'with' the Holy Spirit. Recently I noticed that the first time such a baptism is mentioned in the New Testament, in the New American Standard Version at Matthew 3:11, there is a reference to the margin where it says, 'The Greek here can be translated *in*, *with*, or *by*.' In that verse the same numeral referring to the marginal note occurs twice, once where it is 'baptize you in water,' and then where it is 'baptize you with the Holy Spirit.' The *in* and the *with* are both from the same source. It is the same throughout the New Testament. An identical marginal reference in this New American Standard Version is seen in Mark 1:8, John 1:33, etc. No one can make a case on these terms; there are no two separate performances of the Holy Spirit. By, in, or with the one Spirit we are all baptized into the one body. First Corinthians 12:13 still stands. I have never found any charismatic or second blessing

adherent who could explain that text."

In a follow-up letter my good friend found a way out. He had been to a meeting where a noted charismatic leader, Dr. DuPlessis spoke. He presented a glowing report of the meeting. Apparently the idea was set forth that the Holy Spirit comes to be "in" one at conversion, but that the Spirit comes "upon" one as a separate thing for service. The attempt was made to bring this out in several ways. In response I wrote as follows:

"As I have done with so many other aspects of the subject, I went to the Word and carefully examined it. I always want only to be on solid Scriptural ground. But I find that this recent line of thought just does not hold up. In this case another Greek term is chiefly involved, the preposition 'Epi.' Consulting Young's Concordance again, it may be seen that it comes out in our versions, among other uses, as 'upon' 158 times, 'on' 195 times, but also as 'in' 117 times, and as "into" 15 times. So these renderings may be used interchangeably. No doctrinal distinctions can be built up around them.

"Let me give a couple of examples. This word is used of the Holy Spirit where, in Luke 1:35, it is said that the Holy Spirit came 'upon' Mary. But the same word is used in reference to the same thing in Matthew 1:20 where it is said, 'that which is conceived *in* her is of the Holy Ghost.' So, the Holy Spirit's coming 'upon' her or 'in' her prove to be one and the same thing.

"Then look at Acts 11. This is Peter's account of the experience of the first Gentile converts in the house

of Cornelius. In verse 15 we read, 'the Holy Ghost fell on them.' The very next verse, continuing and explaining what had just happened, speaks of the promise of being 'baptized with' the Holy Spirit. The different English words are used in reference to the same thing. And, most crucial of all, verses 14 and 18 show that this was a salvation experience, not anything subsequent thereto! Therefore, dear Joe, don't be led off by easy explanations that don't really stand up under the scrutiny of the Word of God."

Lest it thought that those of us who question the charismatic teaching are very self-satisfied and see no need for a deeper work of God in our life, I recognized the need of bringing this up and I frankly faced it with Joe. I said that as to the desire to find something better for the hungry soul, that is commendable. There is, I pointed out, a fullness of the Holy Spirit which many Christians have failed to enter into, but which is available to the sincere child of God. It brings victory and blessing when it is realized. I offered to pass along to Joe Bible studies on the deeper Christian life.

In further communication I said we certainly believe that there may be a further filling or deepening of the Spirit and repeated workings of the Spirit in a life after conversion, and this should be our continual aim and desire. No doubt many earnest souls are seeking something to fill the emptiness the world leaves us with. It is

good, I said, that nominal Christians want to get all the fullness of blessing which God is ready to give. But, I added, we must get it from the right source and in the right way. That is the way of Scripture.

It would seem that the leaders of these modern ideas have to go on experience because there is a lack of solid Scripture to use as a foundation. But experience is no safe guide. Scripture is the only sure standard. Human nature is so diverse and variable it would bring utter confusion if followed—would leave a person open to most anything.

Of course being converted to Christ is a wonderful experience, and walking with Him day-by-day is a blessed experience. But these are based upon a biblical foundation; they have Scripture which presents both their nature and their means. And in taking them up we should always concentrate first on the biblical groundwork, then the experience which grows out of it. Don't reverse the process. And much less don't follow after something which has only the experience standing by itself.

It seems that rather than such things as tongues being for these last days, this craze for something new and for the sensational is a sign of the last days. Let us be satisfied with the truth of the gospel which the church has proclaimed for nineteen-hundred years and bear witness to that. When entered into in its fullness it will meet all needs and satisfy the hungry soul.

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

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PERTINENT QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

John E. Dahlin, Editor

QUESTION . . . Are the capable leaders of the various cults unaware of the errors which they are promoting?

ANSWER . . . Their long association with the cults, which they represent, has somehow obscured the false doctrines to which they are committed in their systems. Since they have held firmly to their traditional teachings for years, it appears that they have been overtaken with real intellectual blindness. The same condition prevails in the Roman Catholic Church involving the hierarchy. These well trained leaders are totally committed to the historical doctrines of their church, and unfortunately they seem to find no alternative but to adhere to their religious system.

QUESTION . . . Is willful deception too severe a charge to lay at the door of the various cultists?

ANSWER . . . No. The ruthlessness with which they carry on their activities, and their unconscionableness in dealing with people, identify them very well with this terminology. In addition, their dominant and highhanded ways in dealing with their own followers are also traits which are very distinct. Finally, the lack of love and compassion among these leaders are characteristics easily recognized. Willfulness is the right word of identification of this group.