

The Discerner

the voice of... **Religion Analysis Service**

A QUARTERLY EXPOSING
UNBIBLICAL TEACHING & MOVEMENTS

Volume 36, Number 2

April • May • June 2016

Eckankar
Confucianism

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Jehovah's Witnesses

Humanism

Jainism

Judaism

Neopaganism

MOONIES

Universalism

Wicca

Islam

Exposed!

MORMONS

BAHA'I FAITH

Buddhism

Scientology

Satanism

In This Edition:

With This Issue 2

Saying Good-bye to Larry Sutherland! 3

Reasons Why I Cannot Accept "Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures" as Scripture
by *Bary Claud Gaudrealt* 7

Jehovah's Witnesses, War, and Neutrality,
Part 2..... 19
by *Steve Lagoon*

Book Review of Zealot, the Life and Times of
Jesus of Nazareth 27
by *Reverend Dennis Ingolfsland*

QUIZ: 29



*"Hereby know we the spirit of truth
and the spirit of error" 1 John 4:6*

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WITH THIS ISSUE

It is with sadness, that we recently learned that our long-time Discerner editor and Vice-president Larry Sutherland went home to be with the Lord. We begin this issue with a memorial to Larry Sutherland. It is not over-stating matters to say that for the last generation, Larry Sutherland has been the heart and soul of Religion Analysis Service, and his leadership has been instrumental to our success during that time. He will be greatly missed. Please pray for his family during this difficult time.

Also, we have an expose on the Christian Science cult by our Canadian friend Bary Claud Gaudrealt. He does a great job comparing the false teachings of Christian Science with truths of Scripture. We also have the second installment of my article on the Jehovah's Witnesses and their stance on neutrality, armed service and war.

We have an excellent book review by Pastor Dennis Ingolfsland who is also a Bible professor and head librarian at Crown College in Saint Bonifacius Minnesota. He reviews a book on the life of Christ by Reza Aslan, a Muslim scholar.

As always, you will enjoy taking our quiz which is on the subject of the Protestant Reformation. If you find *The Discerner* to be a blessing, please share a copy with a friend!

SAYING GOOD-BYE TO LARRY SUTHERLAND!

Dear Religion Analysis Service readers,

It is with both sorrow and joy that we announce that our long-time Discerner editor Laurence “Larry” Sutherland has passed away and gone home to be with our Lord. Sorrow for the grieving to come for all those that loved Larry; yet joy at knowing that Larry is now in the presence of the Lord he has served so faithfully these many years.

In our last issue, we published the article “The Testimony of Larry Sutherland: From Atheism to the Mission Field!, Part 1” which contained Larry’s testimony of his conversion to the Lord and his preparations for a life of ministry. Larry had planned to write the second half of his wonderful life story for this issue.

Obviously, the Lord had other plans. However, as part of his memorial service, his family put together a synopsis of his years in ministry which we will provide here along with his obituary, and some words written by Larry about the importance of the legacy we all leave behind us.

Laurence James Sutherland, 86

Laurence ‘Larry’ James Sutherland, of Coon Rapids, Minnesota, passed away peacefully and in the presence of his family at Mercy Hospital on June 6, 2016. He is survived by his wife of 63 years, Shirley (Cooper); his children Philip, Thomas, Charlotte (Sam), Kurt and Netti (Tom); nine grandchildren; and six great-grandchildren.

The funeral service [was] held at 11:00 am, Saturday, June 11, at Grace Evangelical Free Church, 755 73rd Ave NE, Fridley, Minnesota, with visitation beginning at 9:30 am. Lunch and a time of fellowship [followed] the service. Private burial [took] place at Morningside Memorial Gardens. Memorials may be made to Oak Hills Christian College, Bemidji, Minnesota.

Life of Ministry—Laurence James Sutherland

Laurence was born in Grand Rapids, Minnesota, on March 7, 1930. At the age of 17, he converted to Christianity and began to study at Oak Hills Christian Training School in Bemidji, Minnesota. That’s where he met Shirley Cooper, whom he married on January 2, 1953.

After completing his studies at Oak Hills in 1951, he became pastor of the Bethel Bible Church in Mentor, Minnesota. In 1953, he continued his studies at Seattle Pacific College, where he earned his BA and MA degrees. In 1958, he became pastor of Mildred Chapel in Backus, Minnesota under the Northern Gospel Mission.

In 1959, he was ordained and accepted for service in Germany by Greater Europe Mission. In April of 1960, he, his wife, and son Philip boarded the SS United States to travel to Seeheim, Germany, where Laurence began his ministry as a missionary. The first order of business was to learn German. Both Laurence and Shirley took language courses. And Laurence's first ministries at the German Bible Institute in Seeheim included leading young people's camps and teaching bible classes. He was later appointed Christian Service Director, and from 1969 to 1971, he developed a Christian correspondence school that officially went into operation in 1971 and is still going strong today. From the beginning, the response was encouraging. Soon hundreds of students enrolled. The 1972 Olympics in Munich boosted the program's popularity. By 1975, the Correspondence School received approval for financial and didactic quality from the German government. Correspondence courses were accepted for credit in the regular school program of the German Bible Institute, and face-to-face interaction with correspondence school students was made possible by summer camps.

In that time, Laurence began a doctoral study program at Tübingen University that continued for eight semesters.

In 1986 and after much prayer and counsel, Laurence and Shirley decided to return to the United States to provide support and stability to the family. Within only a few years, Phil graduated from college, Thomas graduated from high school, Charlotte, Kurt, and Nanette completed their studies at Black Forest Academy in southern Germany. Greater Europe Mission gives Laurence the position of Regional Representative in the North Central States. As such, he visits Christian colleges and churches. From 1987 to 1996, he holds missions events in Omaha, Des Moines, Sioux Falls, Milbank, Fargo, Brainerd, Grand Rapids, Eveleth, Rochester, Cambridge, St. Cloud, Alexandria, Bemidji, Isanti, Bloomington, Brooklyn Park, St. Paul, Minneapolis, Eau Claire and La Crosse. These events were largely designed to raise funds for projects throughout Europe. During these ten years, Laurence is drawn to teaching in Latvia, Ukraine, and Romania. In 1992, he leads a team traveling to Romania to teach English for seven weeks. Laurence retires from Greater Europe Mission in 1996.

In 1996, Laurence began his itinerant ministry in Eastern Europe under the auspices of Emmanuel Ministries International. From three to four times a year, he taught in Latvia, Ukraine, or Romania. Altogether Laurence made 44 trips to these countries to teach and to help plant churches and returned home with reams of stories to tell about travel difficulties, translation miscues, health issues, cultural peculiarities, church building, classroom interaction, men and women in desperate need, meetings in churches, homes and even bars, and even the butchering of a pig.

Laurence also served at Grace Evangelical Free Church as a deacon and as Missions Committee Chairman. He was also a charter member of the Minnesota Coalition for Eastern Europe and regularly participated in the Twin Cities Association of Missions Professionals. He was a board member of the Religion Analysis Service since the year 2000 and editor of *The Discerner*, a regular publication, since 2004. Laurence always stayed in touch with supporters and friends throughout the country and was able to raise a significant amount of funds for projects in Eastern Europe.

Laurence was also a charter member of The Good Samaritan Society of America, which carries out a broad range of charitable activities in Nigeria.

After 50 years of service, Laurence wrote this to family, friends, and supporters: “Thank you for your generous and loving support over the years. Some of you have given to our ministries and prayed for us, yes, for 50 years. This astounds us (sic) every time. Oh, the greatness and goodness of God! How wonderful is His abiding grace and love. We’ll praise His Name together forever!”

Larry’s Reflections

The following is an excerpt written by Larry Sutherland and included in the January through March of 2015 issue of the *Discerner*. It was written upon Larry’s 85th birthday as he reflected upon his 50 plus years in Christian ministry. It contains a challenge for all of us!

Our Legacy

All of us will eventually leave a legacy of one kind or another to survivors and posterity. This legacy will possibly take the form of character influence, pronounced virtues, acts of kindness and thoughtfulness, prayers, witnessing to neighbors and loved ones, writing books, dedicated giving and service in the church, wise counseling to young and older people alike, and faithfulness in leadership.

Recently I reached my 85th year in life. I reflected again on my legacy. What have I done for Jesus Christ and His kingdom? What will I do in my remaining years to strengthen His church and to extend His message to the ends of the earth?

At 22 years of age I served in a mission work in Bagley and Mentor, Minnesota. One evening in Bagley I was privileged to sing in a quartet the following words:

I want my life to count for Jesus,

I want my life to count for Jesus;

That everywhere I go men may His goodness know,

I want my life to count for Jesus.

I meant those words from my heart. The Lord has given me great joy in following Him in missions, pasturing, writing, family-father and now grandfather and great-grandfather. To God be the glory for His grace and help.

I think often of the testimony of Caleb's faithfulness in following the Lord. Four times we read that Caleb 'Wholly followed the Lord.' Moses, Joshua, God and Caleb himself all declared these powerful words. May the Lord find us faithful in leaving a good legacy."

Conclusion

Larry left a great legacy and example for younger believers to follow. He will leave big shoes to fill here at Religion Analysis Service and will be deeply missed.

We pray God's continued blessings for all the ministries Larry was involved with, and especially for all his family and loved ones.

The RAS Team

28 REASONS WHY I CANNOT ACCEPT “SCIENCE AND HEALTH WITH KEY TO THE SCRIPTURES” AS SCRIPTURE

By Bary Claud Gaudrealt

This paper is an examination, in light of the Bible, of the teachings of Mary Baker Eddy and the Christian Science cult she founded. The focus will be particularly on her text, *Science and Health With Key To The Scriptures* (S&H).¹

1. Inspiration: The Bible Versus Science And Health

Mary Baker Eddy claims that there was a source greater than her for the contents of Science and Health. She also claims that her writing of Science and Health cannot be over thrown. The Bible on the other hand, is the inspired work of the Holy Spirit. It will be seen, that the Bible will also expose Mrs. Eddy’s writings which teach, a “different Jesus,” “Spirit” and “gospel.”

Christian Science (hereafter CS).- “No human pen nor tongue taught me the science contained in this book, *Science And Health*; and neither tongue nor pen can over-throw it”(S&H, p. 110).

[There is, in fact, abundant evidence of Mrs. Eddy’s plagiarism, most clearly concerning the writings of Phineas Parkhurst Quimby.²]

Bible: “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (2 Tim 3:16). “Knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit” (2 Pet 1:21). “For if he who comes preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or if you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted, you may well put up with it?” (2 Cor. 11:4).

2. Christianity, The Only True Religion

Christian Science teaches that it is not a false religion and that if any other religion teaches contrary to its beliefs they are the ones that are false. The Bible on the other hand calls all Christians to test

1 Mary Baker Eddy, *Science and Health with the Key to the Scriptures*, Boston MA (The First Church of Christ, Scientist, 1875).

2 Walter Martin, *The Kingdom of the Cults*, Minneapolis MN (Bethany House Publishers, 1985) 127-133; Martin Gardner, *The Healing Revelations of Mary Baker Eddy: The Rise and Fall of Christian Science*, Buffalo NY (Prometheus Books, 1993) 145-158.

all things in the light of scripture to see if they match up with God's truth.

CS: "Christianity [Christian Science] is not false, but religion which contradict its Principle are false"(S&H, p. 232).

Bible: "Test all things: hold fast what is good" (1 Thess. 5:21).
"Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are from God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world" (1 Jn. 4:1).

3. The Interpretation of the Bible

Christian Science claims to be the only true interpreter of Scripture. In contrast, the Bible is its own commentary, comparing Scripture with Scripture, thereby coming to the whole Biblical truth regarding sound doctrine.

CS: "Science is an emanation of divine Mind, and is alone able to interpret God aright" (S&H, p. 127).

Bible: "Whom will He teach knowledge? And whom will He make to understand the message? "Those just weaned from milk? Those just drawn from the breast? For precept must be upon precept, line upon line, here a little, there a little" (Isa 28:9-10). "I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth" (John 16:13).

4. The Accuracy of the Bible

Christian Science teaches that the Bible has been corrupted, as indicated by thousands of variant readings among ancient manuscripts. We maintain, however, that the Bible has always been, the only, eternal, pure, Word from God.

CS: "The decisions by vote of Church Councils as to what should and should not be considered Holy Writ; the manifest mistakes in the ancient versions; the thirty thousand different readings in the Old Testament, and the three hundred thousand in the New, - these facts show how a mortal and material sense stole into the divine record, with its own hue darkening to some extent the inspired pages"(S&H p. 139).

Bible: "You shall not add to the Word which I commanded you, not take anything from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you" (Deut 4:2). "The grass withers, the flower fades but the word of God stands forever" (Isa

40:8). “Your word is very pure; therefore Your servant loves it” (Ps.119:140). “Every word of God is pure; He is a shield to those who put their trust in Him” (Prov. 30:5).

Rather than being a concern, the large amount of ancient biblical manuscripts available to textual critics provides strong testimony as to the faithful transmission of God’s word through the centuries.

5. The Theme of the Bible

What is the Bible’s main theme? Christian Science teaches that the theme of the Bible is the “superiority of the spiritual over physical power.” The Bible teaches that its theme is centered upon the person and work of Jesus Christ and his atoning death on the cross.

CS: “The central fact of the Bible is the superiority of the spiritual over physical power.” S&H, p. 131

Bible: “Therefore, when He came into this world, He said: ‘Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, But a body you have prepared for Me. In burnt offerings and sacrifice for sin You had no pleasure. Then I said, Behold I have come – In the volume of this book it is written of Me – To do your will” (Heb 10:5-7). “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” (Jn. 3:16). “For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to our Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures” (1 Cor .15:3-4). “The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is long suffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance”(2 Pet 3:9).

6. The Trinity

Mary Baker Eddy says that the trinity is “Polytheistic “(the belief in many gods), and replaces it with its own pseudo-trinity that consists of three attributes, those being, life, truth and love (Christian Science). In contrast the Bible teaches that the Trinity is, One God in essence, subsisting as three divine persons, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit (The Bible).

CS: “The theory of thee persons in One God (that is, a personal Trinity or Tri-unity) suggests poly theism”(S&H, p.256). “Life, Truth, and Love constitute the triune Person called God, --That is, the triply divine Principle, Love. They represent a trinity in unity, three in one, – the same in essence, thought multi-form in office: God the Father-

Mother; Christ the spiritual idea of son ship; divine Science or the Holy Comforter”(S&H p. 331)

Bible: “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the Lord is one” (Deut 6:4). “Then Jesus, when He had been baptized, came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him”(Matt 3:16-17). “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matt 28:19). “May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all” (2 Corinthians 13:14). “Chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 1:2).

7. The Definition Of Christ

Christian Science defines Christ as no more than just the “highest human corporeal concept of divine idea (Christian Science).” The Bible states that Jesus Christ is a literal person who is the Son of the living God, the promised Messiah who took on humanity being both a 100% God and a 100% man.

CS: “JESUS. The highest human corporeal concept of divine idea, rebuking and destroying error, and bringing to light man’s immortality”(S&H p.589).

Bible: “He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” And Simon Peter answered and said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God” (Matt 16:15-16). “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a servant, and coming in the likeness of men And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even death on the cross. Therefore God has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and those on earth, and those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father”(Philip. 2:5-11).

8. The Deity of Christ

According to Christian Science Jesus denied His deity. The Bible clearly states that Jesus acknowledged His deity (The Bible).

CS: “The Christian who believes in the First Commandment is a monotheist. Thus he virtually unites with the Jew’s belief in one God, and recognizes that Jesus Christ is not God, as Jesus Himself declared”(S&H p. 361).

Bible: “Therefore I say to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins” (Jn. 8:24). “Jesus said to them, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM’” (Jn. 8:58). “I and My Father are one” (Jn. 10:30). “Jesus said to him, ‘Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, ‘show us the Father?’” (Jn. 14:9). “Thomas said to him, ‘My Lord and my God’” (John 20:28).

9. The Death of Jesus

Christian Science teaches that Jesus did not die. The Bible says that Jesus died on the cross for the sins of the world.

CS: Jesus’ students, not sufficiently advanced fully to understand their Master’s triumph, did not perform many wonderful works, until they saw Him after his crucifixion and learned that He had not died”(S&H, pp. 45-46).

Bible: “For the death He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life He that He lives, He lives to God” (Rom 6:10). “For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received; that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures” (1 Cor. 15:3). “Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Heb 12:23).

10. The Resurrection

Christian Science states that resurrection means “spiritualization of thought.” The Bible states that it is a literal, physical event in the life of Christ and eventually to all those who believe in Him.

CS: “RESURRECTION. Spiritualization of thought; a newer and higher idea of immortality, or spiritual existence; material belief yielding to spiritual understanding”(S&H, p. 593).

Bible: “Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.’ Then the Jews said, ‘It has taken forty six years to build this temple and will You raise it up in three days?’ But He was speaking of the temple of His body” (Jn. 2:19-21). “and that He was buried and that He rose again the third day according to

the Scriptures” (1 Cor. 15:4). “But now Christ is risen from the dead, and have become the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep” (1 Cor. 15:20). “But each one in his own order. Christ the first fruits, afterwards those who are Christ’s at His second coming” (1 Cor. 15:23).

11. The Holy Spirit Defined

Christian Science teaches that the Holy Spirit is “Divine Science.” According to the Bible, the Holy Spirit is the third person in the Triune Godhead

CS: “In the words of St John: ‘He shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever.’ This Comforter I understand to be Divine Science”(S&H, p. 55).

Bible: “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you”(Jn. 14:26). “But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me” (Jn. 15:26). “Go therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matt 28:19).

12. Does God (The Holy Spirit) Indwel The Believer?

Christian Science denies the indwelling of God in the believer. The Bible, however, clearly teaches that the believer is indwelt by God.

CS: “The Science of being shows it to be impossible for infinite Spirit or Soul [God] to be in a finite body”(S&H, p. 309).

Bible: “Don’t you know that you yourselves are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit lives in you?”(1 Cor. 3:16). “Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own” (1 Cor. 6:19). “And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said I dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be my people” (2 Cor. 6:16).

13. An Incarnate Savior

Christian Science denies Jesus our Savior has come in the flesh. The Bible, on the other hand, states categorically that our Savior has come in the flesh.

CS: “God is indivisible. A portion of God could not enter man; neither could God’s fulness be reflected by a single man, else God would be manifestly finite, lose the deific character, and become less than God”(S&H, p. 306).

Bible: “Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself shared likewise in the same, that through death He might destroy Him who had the power of death, that is the devil”(Heb 2:14). He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested that He might destroy the works of the devil” (1 Jn. 3:8). “This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God; Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God” (1 John 4:3).

14. The Blood Of Christ

Christian Science says, the Blood of Jesus, did not cleanse the repentant sinner of his sins. The Bible notes that the blood of Jesus does cleanse the repentant sinner from his sins

CS. “The spiritual essence of blood is sacrifice. The efficacy of Jesus’ spiritual offering is infinitely greater than can be expressed by our sense of human blood. The material blood of Jesus was no more efficacious to cleanse from sin when it was shed upon ‘the accursed tree,’ than when it was flowing in His veins as he went daily about his Father’s business”(S&H, p 25).

Bible: “How much more shall the blood of Christ who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God. ... And according to the law almost all things are purged with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no remission” (Heb 9:14, 22).

15. Man Defined

Christian Science states man is not made up of matter. Bible declares that man is composed of both a spiritual and physical nature.

CS: “Man is not matter; he is not made up of brain, blood, bones, and other material elements. The Scriptures inform us that man is made in the image and likeness of God. Matter is not that likeness”(S&H, Recapitulation, p. 475).

Bible: “For the word of God is living and powerful, shaper than a two-edged sword piercing, even to the division of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and the intents of the heart”(Heb 4:12). “Now may the God of peace Himself

sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thess 5:23).

16. Man And The Cycle Of Life

Is man subject to birth, growth, maturity and decay, which Christian Science denies, or are these things clearly taught in the Bible?

CS: “Because man is the reflection of his Maker, he is not subject to birth, growth, maturity, decay. These mortal dreams are of human origin, not divine”(S&H, p. 305).

Bible: “To everything there is as season, A time for every purpose under the sun; A time to be born, And a time to die” (Ecc. 3:1-2). “And the child grew and became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him” (Lk. 2:40). “And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men” (Lk. 2:52). “In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you are, And to dust you shall return”(Gen 3:19).

17. Does God Alone Read The Thought Of Men?

Christian Science states that: Men can read the thoughts of other men. The Bible declares that God alone knows the mind of men.

CS: “You will reach the perfect Science of healing when you are able to read the human mind after this manner and discern the error you would destroy”(S&H, p. 85).

Bible: I, the LORD search the heart, I test the mind, Even to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings (Jer. 17:10). “I will kill her children with death, and the churches shall know I am He who searches the mind and the hearts And I will give to each one of you according to your works” (Rev 2:23).

18. Matter

Christian Science states that matter is just an illusion. The Bible teaches that matter is a very real, tangible substance created by God.

CS: “MATTER. Mythology; mortality; another name for mortal mind; illusion; intelligence, substance, and life in non-intelligence and mortality, life resulting in death, and death in life; sensation; in the sensationless; mind originating in matter; the opposite of Truth; the opposite of Spirit; the opposite of God”(S&H, Glossary, p. 591).

Bible. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen 1:1). "For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, invisible and visible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him" (Col 1:16).

19. Adam's Identity

According to Christian Science, Adam, was a mere principle of "error" or a "falsity." The Bible on the other hand states that Adam was a literal man (created by God) who lived upon this world, who fell into sin by transgressing against God's Word bringing sin to all men.

CS: "ADAM. Error; a falsity; the belief in 'original sin,' sickness, and death; evil; the opposite of good, -- God and His creation; a curse; a belief in intelligent matter"(S&H, p. 579).

Bible: "And the LORD God formed man out the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life" (Gen 2:7). "Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned"(Rom 5:20). "Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come"(Rom 5:14). "From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth" (Acts 17:26).

20. Sin

Christian Science declares that sin is an "unconscious error" or an "embryonic thought without motive." The Bible clearly reveals that sin is a literal and actual transgression against God's law and will.

CS: "The belief of sin, which has grown terrible in strength and influence, is an unconscious error in the beginning, an embryonic thought without motive; but afterwards it governs the so-called man" (p. 188).

Bible: "Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness"(1 Jn. 3:4). "Therefore to him who know to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin"(Jas 4:17). "For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God"(Romans 3:23).

21. Evil

Christian Science teaches that evil, is a mere “illusion.” According to the Bible evil is a literal reality with effects every area of reality including the Spiritual and physical.

CS: “Hence, evil is but an illusion, and it has no real basis. Evil is a false belief... The supposititious parent of evil is a lie”(S&H, p. 480).

Bible: Then the LORD God said, ‘Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever’(Gen 3:22). “Seek good and not evil, that you may live; So the LORD God of hosts will be with you, as you have spoken”(Amos 5:14). “When the LORD saw that man’s wickedness was widespread on the earth and that every scheme his mind thought of was nothing but evil all the time”(Genesis 6:5).

22. Death

Christian Science denies the reality of death, calling it an “illusion.” The Bible affirms that death is the universal result of rebellion against God.

CS: “DEATH. An illusion, the lie of life in matter; the unreal and untrue; the opposite of Life”(S&H, Glossary, p.584).

Bible: “In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you returned to the ground, for out of it you were taken, and to dust you shall return”(Gen 3:19). “And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment”(Heb 9:27). “Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all have sinned”(Romans 5:12).

23. Salvation

According to Christian Science, salvation is merely the principles, of life, truth and love. The Bible states that salvation is in and through the person and work of Christ on the cross, being a free gift of God.

CS: “SALVATION. Life, Truth, and Love understood and demonstrated as supreme over all; sin, sickness, and death destroyed”(S&H, p.593).

Bible: “Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men [Jesus Christ] by which we must be saved”(Act 4:12). How much more shall the blood of Christ purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God”(Heb

9:14). “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God not of works, lest anyone should boast”(Eph 2:8-9). [It is not surprising that Christian Science gives such a convoluted definition of salvation since it denies the reality of sin, death, the Devil, and hell; all the things that Jesus Christ saves us from. *Editor*].

24. The Church

Christian Science teaches that the structure of and foundation of the church is just truth and love. The Bible says that the church is made up of all born-again spirit indwelt believers in Christ who is the head of the church.

CS: “CHURCH. The structure of Truth and Love; whatever rests upon and proceeds from divine Principle”(S&H, p. 583).

Bible.- “Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built up on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you are also being built together for a habitation of God in the Spirit”(Eph 2:19-22). “And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all”(Eph 1:22-23). “For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly await for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ”(Philp. 3:20).

25. Heaven

Christian Science teaches that heaven is figurative, being a “divine Principle.” The Bible says, that heaven is a literal physical abode of the saints.

CS.- “Heaven is not a locality, but a divine state of Mind in which all the manifestations of Mind are harmonious and immortal”(S&H, p. 291).

Bible.- “For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we all eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ”(Philp. 3:20). “But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and of the church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect”(Heb 12:22-23). “In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. And if I go and prepare a place

for you, I will come again and receive to Myself; that where I am you may be also” (Jn. 14:2-3). See also, Rev 21:12-21.

26. Angels

Christian Sciences teaches that angels are but “God’s thoughts passing to man.” The Bible states that angels are God’s literal created spirit beings who serve God by carrying out His will as ministers.

CS: “ANGELS. God’s thoughts passing to man; spiritual intuitions, pure and perfect; the inspiration of goodness, purity, and immortality, counteracting all evil, sensuality and mortality”(S&H, p. 581).

Bible: “And of the angels He says: ‘Who makes His angels spirits and His ministers a flame of fire.’”(Heb 1:7). “Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation”(Heb 1:14).

27. The Devil

According to Christian Science the devil is a mere “lie” or “error.” The Bible teaches that the devil is a powerful created spirit being created by God who rebelled against God and became Satan.

CS: ”DEVIL. Evil; a lie; error; neither corporeality nor mind; the opposite of Truth; a belief in sin, sickness, and death”(S&H p.584).

Bible: “You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, till iniquity was found in you. By the abundance of your trading, you became filled with violence within, And you sinned; therefore I caste you as a profane thing out of the mountain of God; And I destroyed you O covering Cherub, From the midst of the fiery stones”(Ez. 28:15-16). “And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought but they did not prevail, nor was there a place found for them in heaven any longer. So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world, and his angels were cast out with him”(Rev 12:7-9). “How are you fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, you weakened nations! For you have said in your heart: I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High”(Isa 14:12-14).

28. Disease

Christian Science states that disease simply “does not exist.” The Bible clearly shows that Jesus healed multiple sufferers of actual disease, not merely of the mistaken belief in disease as Christian Science claims.

CS: “What is termed disease does not exist. It is neither mind nor matter”(S&H p. 188).

Bible: “Then His fame went throughout all Syria; and they brought to Him all sick people who were afflicted with various diseases and torments ... epileptics, and paralytics; and He healed them”(Matt 4:24). “Then a leper came to Him, imploring Him and saying to Him, “If You are willing, You can make me clean.” Then Jesus, moved with compassion, put out His hand and touched him, and said to him, ‘I am willing, be cleansed.’ As soon as He had spoken, immediately the leprosy left him, and he was cleansed”(Mk 1:40-41).

Conclusion

Did Mary Baker Eddy’s writing stand or fall under the spiritual lense of the Bible? The answer is they fall flat and therefore, they are not to be accepted as “Scripture.” Her writings are no more than “a different gospel” (2 Cor. 12:4),” contrary to “sound doctrine.”

Bary Claud Gaudrealt of Claresholm Alberta Canada has a BRE and a BTH, both from the Prairie Bible Institute in Three Hills, AB.

JEHOVAH’S WITNESSES, WAR, AND NEUTRALITY, PART 2

by Steve Lagoon

The Compromises of World War I

Matthew Alfs summed up the Watchtower’s actions to placate the United States government in the face of impending actions against the organization and particularly its leaders, at the outset of World War I:

The Watch Tower Society, upon learning of the Government’s suspicions with respect to a possible propagation of anti-war sentiment on the organization’s part, proceeded in a course designed to appease the government, not oppose it. Thus, it agreed to excise the objectionable pages from *The Finished*

Mystery; it bestowed flattery upon the government calling it ‘the best government on earth’ and ‘the land divinely ‘shadowed with wings’; and it even requested the Bible Students to comply with Presidential requests concerning prayer for the speedy end and ‘glorious outcome of the war, the breaking of the shackles of autocracy . . . and the making of the world safe for the common people.’¹

As part of this Watchtower effort to appease the United States government, and in complete violation of its supposed neutrality stand, Christy Harvey Darlington explains the Watchtowers cooperation in the matter of U.S. War Bonds:

The Society was encouraging its members to buy war bonds (which at the time were known as ‘Liberty Loans’) to aid the government in funding World War 1. Note the following statements found in . . . [*the Watchtower*]: ‘The people of our Association are not against the Government, nor against the Liberty Loan . . . Members of our Association who have some personal means have bought Liberty Bonds, including Tabernacle workers who are paying 25% of their monthly allowance to purchase a bond.’—*The Watchtower*, May 15, 1918, p. 152.²

Indeed, despite the Watchtowers clear rejection of patriotic actions today, nevertheless, in the pressure leading up to American involvement in World War I, the Watchtower took pains to appear quite patriotic:

The American flag was adopted as an emblem of liberty . . . The displaying of the American flag can do injury to no one . . . Recognizing that the Government of the United States has been the special refuge of Christian people from intolerable persecution; that it was founded as an asylum of religious liberty and freedom of speech, everyone in America should take pleasure in displaying the American flag—especially when requested to do so . . . Since the Bethel Home was established, in one end of the Drawing Room there has been kept a small bust of Abraham Lincoln with two American flags displayed about the bust. This is deemed entirely proper, having in mind what Mr. Lincoln did for the Government and for the people of the United States, and in this we see nothing inconsistent with a Christian’s duty.³

1 Alfs, *The Evocative Religion of the Jehovah’s Witnesses*, 19-20. Alfs quotes from the *Watchtower* of May 15, 1918

2 Christy Harvey Darlington, *An Analysis of the Watchtower’s Historical Position on War: Has the Watchtower Organization Always Been as Neutral as They Claim?* Colorado Springs CO (Witnesses for Jesus, Not Dated/ Circa 1995) 1.

3 *The Watch Tower*, May 15, 1917, 150-151, reprints 6086

Now we certainly agree with the sentiment of the quote, but the problem is that it goes directly contrary to the Jehovah's Witnesses claim of neutrality, and was done in hopes of staving off government action against the Watchtower for evading the draft.

It can be imagined that these compromises during the World War I period would later be embarrassing to the Watchtower and cause questions to many sincere Jehovah's Witnesses. And so the Watchtower needed to provide an answer to the questions. In reviewing these events for their 1959 history book *Jehovah's Witnesses in the Divine Purpose*, the Watchtower took the clever approach of essentially admitting the compromises, but twisting it into a positive since they had confessed their sins and escaped from the Babylonian captivity they had been caught in:

The Society . . . soon realized they had been held in spiritual bondage . . . There were many false doctrines and practices that had not yet been cleansed out of the organization . . . The brothers had been in Babylonish captivity at the time . . . The Witnesses had been held in fear of man, particularly the civil rulers . . . The change-over in thinking had been so striking in many ways, *from the 1870's down to 1918 that these tainted bonds of false conceptions and practices, inherited from the pagan traditions adopted by Christendom had slipped by unnoticed by the brothers.* Now from the year 1919 a glorious new outlook presented itself. *These dedicated servants began to recognize their mistakes and make a public confession of their wrongdoing in their effort to seek Jehovah's forgiveness and be restored to his favor, which they realized they had temporarily lost . . .* Another compromise was made as revealed in The Watch Tower of June 1, 1918 . . . The expression that followed in this announcement [a call for prayer for an allied victory in World War 1] did not display the proper neutrality of the Christian.⁴

A 1972 *Watchtower* statement was very direct:

During World War I the dedicated, baptized International Bible Students . . . had yielded in a measure to fear of man . . . They had tried to keep free from bloodguilt by undertaking, for the most part, noncombatant service, but had not kept strict, total neutrality toward the conflicts of this world.⁵

⁴ *Jehovah's Witnesses in the Divine Purpose*, Brooklyn New York (Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, 1959) 91-92 (Italics not in original).

⁵ *Paradise Restored To Mankind—By Theocracy!* Brooklyn New York (Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, 1972) 99. See also *The Watchtower*, February 15, 1996, p. 14. "For a relatively brief span during World War 1 period, the remnant . . . compromised by not taking a clear stand for Jehovah when put under the pressure to support the warring nations."

There are several things that are amazing about this Watchtower attempt to excuse its own history. First, one can hardly blame those early Jehovah's Witnesses who accepted alternative or non-combatant service since that had been the long-standing policy and teaching of the *Watchtower* right up until the sudden change at the beginning of World War I.

Secondly, the Watchtower's explanation of this early period of its own history is as bizarre as it is incomprehensible. On the one hand, according to the Watchtower, God appointed the organization to be His Faithful and Discreet Slave as a reward for their faithfulness to Jehovah as determined by the Lord's investigation of their teachings and practices conducted from 1914 to 1917:

When did Jesus appoint the faithful slave over his domestics? To answer that, we need to go back to 1914—the beginning of the harvest season. As we learned earlier, at that time many groups claimed to be Christian. From which group would Jesus select and appoint the faithful slave? That question was answered after he and his Father came and inspected the temple, or spiritual arrangement for worship, from 1914 to the early part of 1919. (Mal. 3:1) They were pleased with a small band of loyal Bible Students who showed that their heart was with Jehovah and his Word. Of course, they needed some cleansing, but they humbly responded during a brief period of testing and refining. (Mal. 3:2-4) Those faithful Bible Students were true Christian wheat. In 1919, a time of spiritual revival, Jesus selected capable anointed brothers from among them to be the faithful and discreet slave and appointed them over his domestics.⁶

On the other hand, as we have documented above, this same organization during the same time period, was judged to be in a Babylonian captivity for its many doctrinal errors and false practices. Again, according to the Watchtower's statements, their organization during the period of 1914 to 1917 was so tainted with Christendom's pagan teachings and guilty of compromise on the issue of neutrality that they were in a Babylonian captivity for which they needed to repent and be restored to Jehovah. Yet, after an investigation during the same precise period, God was so pleased with the organization that he appointed it as his faithful and discreet slave!

Let us also note that the July 2013 *Watchtower* article just quoted concludes with the statement that in 1919 "Jesus selected capable

⁶ *Who Really Is the Faithful and Discreet Slave?*, *Watchtower* July 2013, on line at: <https://www.jw.org/en/publications/magazines/w20130715/who-is-faithful-discreet-slave/>

anointed brothers . . . to be the faithful and discreet slave.” It seems to imply that there has been in some sense a cleaning of the house in the leadership of the organization. In reality, there was no change at all; Judge Rutherford and his team continued in control.

Raymond Franz, a former member of the Watchtower’s Governing Body notes the same issue:

If these things make them ‘unclean’—so drastically that the newly enthroned King [in 1914] was obliged to abandon them to captivity, what must one assume? Surely that they would have to be cleansed of these things before they could come out from under his disfavor and be able to return to freedom . . . Yet, inexplicably, in 1919, when they are said to have ‘returned from Babylon,’ they were still believing and practicing the identical things that are supposed to have made them unclean and which led to their captivity!⁷

Herein there is a clear double-standard on the behalf of the Watchtower leadership regarding the breaking of the organization’s neutrality policies. Individual Jehovah’s Witnesses were castigated and ex-communicated from the organization for their so-called compromise of accepting alternative or non-combatant roles during the war. On the other hand, Judge Rutherford and his leadership team continued in their positions despite having orchestrated the much more serious compromise on neutrality.

The Compromise with Hitler’s Germany

Let us move to the period between the two World Wars during which Hitler and his Nazi party were rising to power in Germany.

Before we do, however, let us remember that the Watchtower’s patriotic actions in support of America during the World War I period may well have contributed to suspicions of the Watchtower organization in Germany since it was, in fact, Germany that America was fighting in World War I.

James Penton also points out that from its founding under Russell until 1932, the Watchtower organization had been very strongly Zionist and in support of Jewish causes. Indeed, Penton, and other show that those in Hitler’s regime remembered this fact. What is so reprehensible is how in the face of growing anti-Semitism in the wake of the great depression, and in the face of the rise of Hitler in Germany, Rutherford made a complete reversal of Watchtower

7 Raymond Franz, *In Search of Christian Freedom*, Atlanta GA (Commentary Press, 1991) 147.

teaching, abandoning Zionism in favor of a new spiritual Israel doctrine with the Watchtower replacing Israel.⁸

One of the Watchtower's most frequent attacks against so-called Christendom regards how the Roman Catholics and Protestants cowered before Hitler, and compromised their beliefs to accommodate the Nazis. Nor is there doubt that many did so, either out of fear, or because they bought into the Nazi propaganda.

A regular feature of Watchtower criticism of this period is the contrast between the heroic resistance of Jehovah's Witnesses which is contrasted with descriptions of compromise by Catholics, most especially by a concordance between Hitler and Pope Pius 12.

The Concordat Between Pope Pius XII and Hitler

Though somewhat lengthy, here is an example of the Watchtower's criticism of the Catholic Church during Hitler's reign:

Consider, for example, the facts behind Hitler's rise to power in Germany—ugly facts that some would like to expunge from the history books. In May 1924 the Nazi Party held 32 seats in the German Reichstag. By May 1928 these had dwindled to 12 seats. However, the Great Depression engulfed the world in 1930; riding in its wake, the Nazis made a remarkable recovery, gaining 230 out of 608 seats in the German elections of July 1932. Soon after, former chancellor Franz von Papen, a Papal Knight, came to the Nazis' aid. According to historians, von Papen envisioned a new Holy Roman Empire. His own short tenure as chancellor had been a failure, so now he hoped to gain power through the Nazis. By January 1933, he had mustered support for Hitler from the industrial barons, and through wily intrigues he ensured that Hitler became Germany's chancellor on January 30, 1933. He himself was made vice-chancellor and was used by Hitler to win the support of Catholic sections of Germany. Within two months of gaining power, Hitler dissolved parliament, dispatched thousands of opposition leaders to concentration camps, and began an open campaign of oppressing the Jews.

On July 20, 1933, the Vatican's interest in the rising power of Nazism was displayed when Cardinal Pacelli (who later became Pope Pius XII) signed a concordat in Rome between the Vatican and Nazi Germany. Von Papen signed the document as Hitler's representative, and Pacelli there conferred on von Papen the

⁸ M. James Penton, *Jehovah's Witnesses and the Third Reich: Sectarian Politics Under Persecution*, Toronto (University of Toronto Press, 2004) See the excellent presentation of the issue on pages 7-11.

high papal decoration of the Grand Cross of the Order of Pius. In his book *Satan in Top Hat*, Tibor Koeves writes of this, stating: “The Concordat was a great victory for Hitler. It gave him the first moral support he had received from the outer world, and this from the most exalted source.” The concordat required the Vatican to withdraw its support from Germany’s Catholic Center Party, thus sanctioning Hitler’s one-party “total state.” Further, its article 14 stated: “The appointments for archbishops, bishops, and the like will be issued only after the governor, installed by the Reich, has duly ascertained that no doubts exist with respect to general political considerations.” By the end of 1933 (proclaimed a “Holy Year” by Pope Pius XI), Vatican support had become a major factor in Hitler’s push for world domination. Though a handful of priests and nuns protested Hitler’s atrocities—and suffered for it—the Vatican as well as the Catholic Church and its army of clergy gave either active or tacit support to the Nazi tyranny, which they regarded as a bulwark against the advance of world communism. Sitting pretty in the Vatican, Pope Pius XII let the Holocaust on the Jews and the cruel persecutions of Jehovah’s Witnesses and others proceed uncriticized.⁹

This Watchtower account is mostly accurate, but suffers from the same concerns that have been raised among historians by the book *Hitler’s Pope: The Secret History of Pius XII* by John Cornwell. Like the Watchtower’s biased account, Cornwell’s book has been the subject of much criticism for historical inaccuracies, primarily because it ignores the many efforts Pacelli (Pope Pius XII) made in behalf of the Jews.¹⁰

Jehovah’s Witnesses Persecuted During Holocaust

Nevertheless, the facts concerning the papal concordat with Hitler are troubling, most especially in light of the great suffering of Jehovah’s Witnesses during the Holocaust. A Reuter’s article available on the Jehovah’s Witnesses website observing the 70th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz in Poland describes in brief the experience of the Jehovah’s Witnesses and is important to note:

WARSAW, Poland—On January 27, 2015, thousands will commemorate the 70th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, a Nazi German concentration and death camp. This infamous camp, primarily used to eliminate racial

9 *Revelation: Its Grand Climax at Hand!* Brooklyn New York (Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc., 1988) 237-238.

10 See Wikipedia’s excellent discussion of the book titled “Hitler’s Pope” at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hitler%27s_Pope

groups targeted by the Nazis, was also a mechanism for persecuting Jehovah's Witnesses of various nationalities, including Germans . . . Museum records indicate that Jehovah's Witnesses were among the first prisoners sent to Auschwitz, and of the hundreds of Witnesses sent, over 35 percent died there. The Nazi government targeted the activity of Jehovah's Witnesses as early as 1933 and banned the organization throughout Germany. The Witnesses' moral principles and practices were not compatible with Nazi ideology. For example, the Witnesses would not offer the obligatory "Heil Hitler!," as they considered paying homage to Hitler a betrayal of their loyalty to God. The Witnesses also refused to perform any military-related duties, a stand the regime considered to be anti-state. "To refuse military service meant being sent to a concentration camp," explains Andrzej Szalbot, who was arrested in 1943 and sent to Auschwitz at only 19 years of age. Jehovah's Witnesses were promised immediate freedom if they signed a document renouncing their membership in the organization and declaring that its teachings were erroneous . . . Official Nazi documentation refers to Jehovah's Witnesses by using the abbreviation "IBV," which stood for Internationale Bibelforscher-Vereinigung (International Bible Students Association), the official German name of their organization. The Nazis required the Witnesses to wear a purple triangle on their uniforms. This symbol helped the Witnesses to identify their fellow believers in the camp.¹¹

Despite our fundamental differences with the Jehovah's Witnesses, we can still sympathize with their personal losses suffered under Hitler's cruelty, while also admiring their integrity in the face of persecution.

Let it also be stated in fairness, as the Watchtower itself begrudgingly acknowledges that many Catholics and Protestants also suffered in the holocaust, many risking their lives in the underground resistance. One need only to think of the theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer and all those Christians in the confessing church who valiantly defied the Nazi's.

This article will be continued in the next issue.

¹¹ JW.org, *Auschwitz Survivors Mark 70th Anniversary of Liberation, Jehovah's Witnesses Among Those Remembered*, Reuters, <https://www.jw.org/en/news/releases/by-region/poland/auschwitz-concentration-camps-liberation/>

BOOK REVIEW OF ZEALOT, THE LIFE AND TIMES OF JESUS OF NAZARETH

By Reverend Dennis Ingolfsland

Zealot, the Life and Times of Jesus of Nazareth by Reza Aslan is a New York Times bestseller, and for good reason. Aslan is a brilliant story-teller. In Aslan's story, Jesus grew up under the oppressive rule of corrupt temple officials and brutal Roman overlords. Jesus lived barely above sustenance level in a crumbling house in Nazareth, only a few miles from Sepphoris where nearly 2,000 people had once been crucified by the Romans. It was a time of numerous uprisings by Jewish rebels and would-be-messiahs who sought to overthrow Rome by force. All this helped to foster Jesus' resentment and rage against the rich and powerful.

[Continuing Aslan's portrayal] Jesus eventually became a disciple of John the Baptist. After John's death, he took up "John's mantle," preaching the kingdom of God throughout Galilee. Jesus shared the anti-Temple feelings of other Galileans and his preaching of the kingdom was "a call to revolution, plain and simple."

Armed only with zeal, Jesus was welcomed as royalty as he rode into Jerusalem and confronted the Temple authorities with his claim to be Jerusalem's rightful king. As a result, Jesus was arrested and charged with sedition. He was executed by crucifixion, which the Romans reserved for the most serious political crimes [and thus concludes Aslan's reconstruction].

So if Jesus' message was a call to revolution, as Aslan suggests, why don't the Gospels tell the story this way? Aslan's answer is that the Gospels were all written after the fall of Jerusalem by Christians who didn't know Jesus and were trying to distance themselves from the rebellion. They, therefore, revised the story of Jesus to remove the fact that he was a zealot.

I found myself not only enthralled by the story, but even agreeing in many cases. I agree with much of Aslan's historical background material (though not always with his "spin"). I agree that most Jews in Jesus' day opposed Roman rule and that some actively sought to undermine or overthrow it. I agree with the idea that Jesus thought of himself as the messiah, Israel's king, and that he envisioned a literal kingdom on earth. I also agree that Jesus was crucified by the Romans for sedition, for claiming to be King of the Jews.

But while there is much with which I agree my disagreements are far more significant.

First, just because Galilee was a violent province before and after Jesus' lifetime does not mean that Jesus grew up preaching a call to revolution. Imagine, for example, a book detailing all the violence of the civil rights era and arguing that Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. therefore, must have been an advocate of violent revolution!

Second, while I agree with Aslan that Jesus believed himself to be the Messiah, king of the Jews, Aslan seems to think that this fact must necessarily mean that Jesus was a zealot intent on overturning Roman rule. Aslan seems unaware that many Jews in Jesus' day thought the Kingdom of God would be established not by human rebellion and violence, but by the direct intervention of God. They need only wait and be faithful until God acted.

Certainly the Essenes were one such group. Interestingly enough, Aslan argued that Jesus was a disciple of John the Baptist who, says Aslan, may have been influenced by Essenes. Yet Aslan doesn't even entertain the possibility that Jesus agreed with the Essenes (and other Jews) in their view that the kingdom would come by direct divine intervention and not by human revolution.

Third, the extreme skepticism Aslan brings to the Gospels is unwarranted. He argues that the only two firm historical facts we can know about Jesus are that Jesus "was a Jew who led a popular Jewish movement in Palestine at the beginning of the first century C.E." and that Rome crucified him for it" (xxviii). Aslan seems unaware that even most of the radically skeptical Jesus scholars believe that the Gospels contain more historically reliable information about Jesus than this.

More significantly, however, although Aslan says "there are only two hard historical facts about Jesus," he builds his case on other events in the Gospels that he considers to be reliable. It appears that Aslan is very skeptical of everything that undermines his theory but accepts everything that he thinks may support his theory. Unlike many serious Jesus scholars, Aslan never sets forth the criteria by which he determines what is reliable.

Fourth, Aslan's creative writing skill is one of the strengths of the book, but it is also one of the most serious weaknesses. Many readers will no doubt find it impossible to tell where the facts end and the creative storytelling (and sometimes outright fiction) begins. For example, when Aslan describes Jesus' followers as "hiding in

Gethsemane, shrouded in darkness, and armed with swords” and adds that they “will not be taken easily” (147), the reader is led to imagine a well-armed band of resistance fighters hiding out in wait for the Romans. This is creative storytelling, to say the least.

In Aslan’s view the reason not one ancient source presents Jesus as a zealot is because they were trying to cover up Jesus’ true identity. On the other hand, a second possibility might be that the reason none of our ancient sources present Jesus as a zealot is because Jesus—like the Essenes and other Jews of his time—was not preaching rebellion against Rome but was expecting God’s direct intervention. He was warning people to repent in preparation for the day when God would directly intervene in human affairs to set up his kingdom.

This second option fits well with what we know about first century Jewish groups, it is precisely what the Gospels teach, and it does not require extensive and speculative historical re-imagination.

QUIZ: THE REFORMATION

1. This reformer ignited the Protestant Reformation by hanging his 95 Theses on the church door in Wittenberg Germany on October 31, 1517?

<u>a.</u>	Guillaume Farel	<u>c.</u>	Martin Luther
<u>b.</u>	John Knox	<u>d.</u>	William Tyndale
2. The main focus of criticism in the 95 Theses was the Roman Catholic practice of:

<u>a.</u>	Burning Candles for the Dead
<u>b.</u>	The Selling of Indulgences
<u>c.</u>	Pilgrimages
<u>d.</u>	The collection of relics

3. This man is often called the “Morning Star of the Reformation” for his advocacy of many doctrines that would later be the focus of the Reformation, most especially the preeminence of the Scriptures.

- | | | | |
|-----------|--------------------|-----------|------------------|
| <u>a.</u> | William Tyndale | <u>c.</u> | Huldrych Zwingli |
| <u>b.</u> | Desiderius Erasmus | <u>d.</u> | John Wycliffe |

4. This man led the Swiss Reformation from Geneva and was the author of the monumental work “The Institutes of the Christian Religion.”

- | | | | |
|-----------|---------------------|-----------|-------------------|
| <u>a.</u> | John Calvin | <u>c.</u> | Calvin and Hobbes |
| <u>b.</u> | Philipp Melanchthon | <u>d.</u> | Martin Bucer |

5. This saying concerning the Reformation is that he “laid the egg that Luther hatched.”

- | | | | |
|-----------|-------------------|-----------|--------------------|
| <u>a.</u> | Cardinal Cajetan | <u>c.</u> | Desiderius Erasmus |
| <u>b.</u> | Andreas Carlstadt | <u>d.</u> | John Huss |

6. The occasion for the break from Rome and the Reformation in England was:

- | | |
|-----------|---|
| <u>a.</u> | The revival of the writings of John Wycliffe |
| <u>b.</u> | The response of a tragic fire in London |
| <u>c.</u> | A growing debate about the correct hymnbook |
| <u>d.</u> | The denial of a Papal annulment of the marriage of Henry VIII, King of England. |

7. Which council was formed by the Roman Catholic Church to respond to or “counter” the Reformation:

- | | |
|-----------|---------------------------------|
| <u>a.</u> | The Council of Constance |
| <u>b.</u> | The Council of Trent |
| <u>c.</u> | The First Vatican Council |
| <u>d.</u> | The Council to end all Councils |

8. Which Sola was not one of the principles of the Protestant Reformation Catholic practice of:
- a. Sola Scriptura (Scripture alone)
 - b. Sola Fide (Faith alone)
 - c. Sola Grace (Grace alone)
 - d. Sola Musica (Sacred music alone)
9. Standing before the Holy Roman Emperor at the Diet of Worms in 1521 and being commanded to recant his beliefs, Martin Luther's famous response was:
- a. "The Pope Lies"
 - b. "Here I stand, I can do no other. God help me."
 - c. "Can I have some time to think about this?"
 - d. "Why don't we talk about this over a dinner of sauerkraut and blood sausages."
10. This Reformer gave his controversial approval to the execution of the anti-trinitarian heretic Michael Servetus?
- a. John Calvin
 - b. "Refe" the child reformer
 - c. Heinrich Bullinger
 - d. Theodore Beza

Answers:

1, c; 2, b; 3, d; 4, a; 5, c; 6, d; 7, b; 8, d; 9, b; 10, a

Personal Notes on the Articles:

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