

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

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DISCERNER

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THIRTY-TWO YEARS WITH RELIGION ANALYSIS SERVICE

Prof. John E. Dahlin, Editor



It seems altogether appropriate that I should bring to our readers some observations after having given this long period as its Director, and also as the Editor of its publication, *The Discerner*. Obviously, this long time of service has given a valuable continuity in the work; and this should be an asset to the organization. When I assumed the task, I expected to serve only on a temporary basis to meet a need at that time in the office. This was in the year 1955. At that time, both the President and Vice-President had resigned and had accepted positions distant from the Minneapolis area. But the fact is that

I have served as the Director of our organization ever since I assumed the responsibility 32 years ago. And, to this position, I have been elected annually during this entire period. The work has offered a real challenge to me ever since I assumed the leadership of the task. It has involved much responsibility in this specialized ministry. I fully believe that the Lord directed me to serve in this capacity.

At the time when I assumed the task, I was a full-time Professor at Northwestern College, and taught Church History in the Seminary. In addition, I had a program regularly on Northwestern College Network radio station. This continued over a period of 36 years. My teaching position ceased with my retirement two decades ago, except for teaching courses in the evening school, usually once each week. My retirement allowed me more time to Religion Analysis Service, which I believe has been helpful to this ministry.

THE OVER-ALL MINISTRY OF RELIGION ANALYSIS SERVICE

As I already have pointed out, ours is a specialized work designed to counteract the many false teachings of our time. These unscriptural

systems are usually classified as cults. They work entirely separate from all the established religious denominations, and they chart their own course with a distinct name which identifies each group. These organizations have taken on a great intensity in their activities during the recent years. Our work is to enlighten as many people as possible, with regard to their threat to Biblical Christianity. The literature supplied by our organization is designed to provide adequate information to all who get our publication, and inquire about the false teachings, and respond later by ordering the literature needed. The present-day cults constitute a real threat by deceiving people in accepting the false teachings offered by the cults. This very needy help is provided by sound and carefully selected literature from our office; and, we frequently help people in need of counsel through letters written to them, or by conversation by means of the telephone. It is our judgment that we have the best literature available in our country. No other organization has specialized in this ministry as we have done throughout the years. In contrast to this Biblically-based literature, the cultists have distributed an enormous quantity of their publications, coupled with their clever propaganda. We have, as it were, met their unbiblical claims head-on. Their false doctrines are pointed out and refuted through our ministry.

According to the record of the Apostles of the first-century A.D., we follow their technique in rejecting the teachings of the cults. Paul, Peter, John and Jude followed a distinct method in dealing with error. Let me illustrate this for you: A certain per-

son ordered a great deal of literature from us on a cultic group with which he was associated. From his own statement, he said he read the literature sent to him by our office so that he might be fully equipped to refute this material. It led, however, to his conversion to Jesus Christ. His eyes were opened to the real truth, and God gave him grace that enabled him to abandon the false teachers and commit himself to accept God's inspired truth. He also told of the happiness which had come to his life. Many others, also, have testified of the happy experience they have had since their acceptance of Christ as their Savior.

Another person whom I have known for half-a-century, told me a remarkable story of what Christian literature has achieved in his life. This is the story: A man handed him a tract as he was walking down a street in a large city. The young man who received the tract threw it down on the sidewalk, and he was about to continue his walk. He saw the person who had given him the tract across the street, and he was wiping away his tears. He quickly picked up the tract, thinking he would read it when he returned to his room. This he did. It brought him to his knees, and he turned to the Lord asking Him to save him from his sins. The man was saved through the reading of a single Gospel tract. Some years later, he went to South America as a missionary, and when he reached the middle years in life he was chosen as the director of one of the largest missionary organizations in the world.

We have tried our very best in presenting God's Word in our ministry in literature. The Lord has promised that "My Word will not

return unto me void" (Isaiah 55:11). This blessed promise has given encouragement to me during my ministry for the Lord.

TO THOSE WHO ARE CLOSEST TO THE MINISTRY

I am now referring to our Board of officers in our ministry. Throughout this long period we have had usually from 10 to 12 members in this capacity. Some have served for longer periods, others for fewer years. The one whose article appears in this issue has served during the entire period, except for one very short period. He gave 40 years to this time of service on our Board. These men have been ministers, laymen, educators, and others in business. I assume there have been 40 individuals in all who have been associated directly with the work. I do not recall a single one who has regretted serving on the Board. Some were with us when the ministry was small. Now, since our ministry is much larger, it has been a greater inspiration to all of us who are closely associated with Religion Analysis Service. Since we are non-profit and no fees are involved in membership, we have entirely depended on the gifts of people who value the ministry of our organization. In recent years, prices have sky-rocketed in the operational cost, particularly in the printing and postal rates. Through the years, those faithful few who have labored in the office have received a very modest salary. Economically considered, I am not aware of any other agency having spent so small an amount for overhead costs. Books and printing have tripled in price, and postage is "completely out of line," as we sometimes state it. We have

not raised the price of *The Discerner* for many years. Organizations working mainly behind the scenes, in a very important ministry such as ours, have an appeal, as well as fascination. In a long-time ministry such as mine, having been involved in many activities of service, I do not know of any work more challenging that has helped thousands of people who are misdirected through false teachings which have stripped them of the assurance of salvation and the blessing of the Gospel.

In his extraordinary ministry, the Apostle Paul knew the centrality of the Christian work. He was fully aware of the opposition to the Gospel ministry.

ENCOURAGEMENTS IN OUR MINISTRY

While being confronted with many problems each year, we are much encouraged by the many communications which we receive from our friends and supporters of this ministry in literature. I have thought at times these testimonies should be compiled in pamphlet-form for distribution. Their encouragement serves as a stimulus to us who serve in the work of Religion Analysis Service. These testimonies come to us by letter and telephone, and many times in person. They indicate that this ministry of ours is highly appreciated. They come from many in lowly stations as well as from people in the highest places of responsibility. I might mention the late Dr. William Culbertson, President of The Moody Bible Institute for over two decades. He and his family were associated with our church when I served as the Pastor at Evanston, Ill. He appreciated the ministry of

Religion Analysis and he stated in letters he did not allow his name to be placed on various Boards of References, but he made an exception for our work because he considered it a very vital ministry. He believed this ministry was extremely important. We thank God for these many fine testimonies.

WE ARE ENCOURAGED BY THE MANY WHO SUSTAIN OUR MINISTRY

A considerable number in our constituency support our ministry in literature. Without these gifts, we would be unable to continue the work. Most of the gifts are relatively small, but when they come regularly, it adds up to a considerable amount. Many give sacrificially who have limited resources. They are good stewards. Paul mentioned, in his Corinthian Letter, those who gave sacrificially to a worthy cause. Despite the fact that they lacked means, they still participated to support the cause. Some with more means are equally dedicated to supporting a cause which has real merit. One woman has regularly given \$300.00 each year. I received this amount a few days ago. When given this amount over a decade, it adds up to a considerable sum. In many of the letters of appreciation for the helpful ministry of Religion Analysis, they almost unanimously mention our magazine, *The Discerner*. We have tried to give out God's Word in a unique ministry. God has promised that "My Word shall not return void" (Isa. 55:11).

Paul had experienced a real collision with the forces of darkness. Might we listen to his pertinent statement regarding his missionary ministry, and also as pastor, teacher,

and counselor, and as the writer of the major portion of the New Testament: "But we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Eph. 6:12). He was fully aware of this great conflict in which he was involved. All but one part of the spiritual equipment was in defense, and one for offensive warfare—and it was the powerful Word of God. It is understandable why such large portions of the New Testament writings are involved in defense against the forces of darkness. The Apostle gives us encouragement that we may be victorious in this spiritual warfare in which there is a necessary involvement.

We regret that there are only a few organizations which have specialized in giving real help to those who are misguided and confused through the inroads made by the cults in recent decades. To us in Religion Analysis Service it has been a continuous challenge in bringing help to those in the present-day struggle against the forces of darkness. In no previous period of history have so many forces concentrated to oppose God and righteousness as during these latter days. We find this in the theatrical area, in literature with its pornographic appeal on television, national periodicals, art, and pictures, and in books and public display appeals to the sensuous element in unregenerated human beings. This generation is in the sphere of a breakdown of society. Total dedication to God is the remedy to our generation. We pray that God will continue to honor the ministry of Religion Analysis Service in a time of great spiritual need.

FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS

By Rev. Herbert V. Caneday

When our sovereign God has a special work to be done, He first equips chosen servants for the task, then unites them in a bond of fellowship, striving toward His objective. His command to build the tabernacle in the wilderness was preceded by specific preparation of individuals to contribute their time, talents, or materials for the task. Six times this is mentioned in Exodus Chapter thirty-five, and summarized thus: "And Moses called Bezaleel and Aholiab, and every wise hearted man, in whose heart the Lord had put wisdom, even every one whose heart stirred him up to come unto the work to do it" (Exo. 36:2).

In that same manner, God prepared the hearts of a dozen or more persons and brought them together in willingness of heart to combine their concern, talents, and efforts to counter the rising tide of false cults. The result was the birth of RELIGION ANALYSIS SERVICE, INC., in July 1946. It was not by chance that the inception of this ministry was concurrent with the first wave of rising cultism that followed the war. The exponential increase of false systems since that time further underscores its timeliness and imperative need.

Many of the founders of this ministry came from backgrounds touched by spiritual error. Dr. Charles L. Feinberg, and another minister, had come out of Judaism. One had a Mormon father who deserted his family; one had been a Seventh-Day Adventist missionary until set free by the truth; another had been saved out of Romanism; others, including the writer, had

learned in their pastorates, the need to fortify Christians both to resist error themselves, and to aid others endangered by it.

Initial organizational sessions were held in June of 1946 as committees drew up a constitution, articles of incorporation, and pondered the choice of a name. Religion Analysis Service was the final selection, which despite its length, was the only name that truly expressed the thrust of this ministry. By mid-July of that year a Board of Directors was constituted, out of which officers were elected. All of these persons were from the Twin Cities area. A dozen outstanding national, evangelical leaders agreed to serve on our Advisory Board, and gave their hearty endorsement to this ministry.

From its inception, Religious Analysis Service has sought to be a clearing house for the best anti-cultic books, pamphlets, and articles available from reputable sources, and to offer these to concerned persons. Additionally, we have published tracts on subjects not well covered by other writers. Through widely-read periodicals, Christians at home and abroad have been made aware that a service is in existence to aid them in their efforts to find truth for themselves or to assist those ensnared in falsehood. Knowledge of this ministry reaches to national pastors on foreign fields, prompting their request for materials to combat the false cults that are making inroads among their people. Their appeals for assistance coupled with their lack of funds, has prompted us to send literature without charge. We

see this as our duty and a wise investment that meets the approval of the supporters of RELIGION ANALYSIS SERVICE.

Whether presented by the spoken word or printed message, our objective is not to merely refute error, thereby leaving truth-seekers in a spiritual vacuum; but to give them the antidote of Biblical truth that can turn them from darkness to light. We accepted the Scriptural injunction: "In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves: if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil . . ." (II Tim. 2:25, 26).

Like all Christian ministries that disseminate literature, we find it impossible to calibrate the results achieved. However, reports come to us of persons not just diverted from cults, but are brought to saving faith in Christ through the printed page. One Roman Catholic adherent ordered material about that system with the intention of analyzing and refuting it to us. God sovereignly used the material he had ordered to bring him to salvation. Our task is to distribute the truth and trust the results to Him who declared: "... My word shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."

We proposed at the outset to publish a small periodical by which to keep our growing constituency informed of changes in the realm of falsehood, and stimulate Christians to recognize error in its most subtle guises. This writer suggested that an appropriate name would be *THE*

DISCERNER. Testimonies of persons delivered from false religions have been published in its pages, as well as articles by prominent Christian leaders designed to strengthen, fortify, and encourage the readers in their witness to endangered souls.

In addition to *THE DISCERNER*, our own writers have presented articles on numerous cults, which have been accepted for publication in major Christian magazines. Some have been republished in other papers, reaching a still wider scope of readers. Constant change in the stance, methods, and message of the cults call for research and updating of literature.

As the last charter member still on the Board of Directors, this writer recalls that we all had a distinct awareness of the making of religious history, and that the development of a work to counter the cults was an imperative at that time. That truth is underscored by the bold proliferation of false systems since 1946. At that time, the existence of angels, Satan, demons, and demon possession was openly ridiculed by non-Christians. Since then, these concepts have been almost universally accepted, and with them witchcraft, Satan-worship, exorcism, and accompanying unspeakable abominations have been given prominence in the news media. Universities that formerly scoffed at a spirit world, have made room for courses on witchcraft and parapsychology.

During these forty years, false cults of the "home grown" metaphysical varieties have multiplied rapidly; but even more alarming is the proliferation of imported systems of eastern mysticism.

Error and deception have swept this land and the world in a spiritual tidal wave that cannot be less than a harbinger of worse to come. Satan knows his time is short, and he is perfecting his techniques in preparation for the great world-wide delusion at the end of this age.

Religion Analysis Service was conceived in prayer, and brought forth in

faith for "such a time as this." Then and now, the encouraging assurance remains: "He hath not left himself without a witness . . ." (Acts 14:17); and ". . . when the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall raise up a standard against him" (Isa. 59:19). As we move nearer our Lord's return, the need for this ministry grows greater.

"GURU MA AND THE CHURCH TRIUMPHANT"

by Roy E. Knuteson, Ph.D
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For those of us who specialize in cult-watching, it is an endless job. Since the founding of Religion Analysis Service in 1950, there has been an ever-increasing parade of false religions everywhere. We used to study and write about the seven or eight standard deviations from orthodoxy, but now they number in the thousands. New ones are born every month, and they come in all shapes, sizes, and colors.

One of the many false prophets that Jesus predicted to "appear and deceive many persons" (Matthew 24:11) is a woman named "Guru Ma." For those who have never heard of her yet, she is in reality, Elizabeth Clare Prophet, the 48-year-old leader and visionary of "The Church Universal and Triumphant," now headquartered in Montana. It is one of the fastest-growing New Age churches in America.

In 1961, Elizabeth met her late husband, Mark Prophet, and together they formulated a philosophical theological system that has captured the minds of many in the Yuppie

Generation. From a small start in Boston, the movement grew and moved to Malibu, California, where they owned 250 acres of choice property worth millions of dollars. In 1985, Guru Ma moved the headquarters of her church to a 33,000-acre ranch in Montana that runs five miles along the edge of Yellowstone Park, and eight miles along the Yellowstone River. It is a beautiful setting, backgrounded by majestic mountains and called "Camelot."

Prophet is developing a self-sustaining community of people who construct their own homes, farm the land, raise cattle, and pursue their New Age religion without interference from the outside world. From this center, which is supported by the tithes of its members and the profits from book sales and seminar courses, Guru Ma intends to change the thinking of America.

Clare Prophet says she is a prophet of God who has been sent to warn this nation of an impending nuclear attack by Russia in the next two to five

years. She claims to have received this revelation from a "St. Germaine," one of many "ascended Masters" that she says she communicates with regularly.

"St. Germaine" is supposed to be a re-incarnated figure from antiquity, who in previous manifestations was the prophet Samuel, Mary's husband, Joseph, Christopher Columbus, and Francis Bacon! Prophet's followers believe that this mysterious spirit-being is the "Lord of the Seventh Ray" who is ushering in a new age through Guru Ma. The 2,000-year-old age of Jesus is disappearing, they say, and this new master of chemistry and manipulator of nature is now here to reveal centuries-old truth to those who belong to "The Keepers of the Flame," which, of course, is Prophet's group. This "flame" is alleged to be one-sixteenth of an inch high and burns in every person's heart. It is their goal to call forth this "divine fire" and thus reveal truth.

Prophet's "church" is a unique blend of Hinduism, existentialism, and mysticism, which, as all New Age religions hold in common, includes reincarnation, soul-travel, mind alteration, and immediate revelations. The question for her followers is not: "Is it true?," but "Does it work?" The devotees of this cult are interested, not in historic fact, but rather, in the immediate results of serenity, happiness, energy, and material possessions.

Guru Ma is able, for the moment, to provide these in good measure.

Prophet's books are best-sellers among the New Agers, and four of them are on the B. Dalton New Age list. These include: "St. Germaine on Alchemy," "The Lost Years of Jesus," "Lords of the Seven Rays," and "Studies in Human Aura." In addition, her many video tapes and seminars are hot items with many in yuppie-dom today.

What shall we say to all of this? Born-again believers immediately discern the error of this movement. That is the work of the Holy Spirit. We recognize this as another manifestation of demonic activity in these last days. Peter describes Guru Ma and the Church Triumphant perfectly when he writes: "They secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Sovereign Lord that bought them—bringing swift destruction on themselves. Many will follow their shameful ways and will bring the way of truth into disrepute. In their greed, these teachers will exploit you with stories they have made up. Their condemnation has long been hanging over them, and their destruction has not been sleeping" (II Peter 2:1-3 NIV).

(Dr. Roy E. Knuteson had written a number of articles in THE DISCERNER during the past decade. His articles are well written, clear, and informative. Our readers appreciate them very much. I have known him as a former student, and also a college professor and pastor.

Editor)

HOW DO THEY COMPARE?

Dr. Edgar James

Have you ever considered how the religions of the world compare with Christianity?

Not only are there many "isms" of

the world, such as Mohammedanism, Buddhism, and Marxism, but there are Eastern religions and "new age" movements. What are the differences

between these beliefs and Christianity? The Bible shows us some important distinctions.

First, the religions of the world believe in man's own morality as the way to heaven. They believe that man is basically good and can work his way to God. But the Bible teaches that no one can make it to heaven on his own steam. Our righteousness is like "filthy rags" (Isa. 64:6).

No one can swim the entire distance from Miami to Bermuda. All would drown. What we need is someone who can take us to Bermuda. This is where Jesus Christ comes in. He is the One who gives us His righteousness when we accept Him.

The religions of the world also hold to an essential system of ethics. They hold to sets of instructions on how to live a good life. But the Bible teaches that man's essential problem is not knowing how to live. Rather, he lacks the power to live.

The good news is that Jesus Christ, the One who invaded human history, does for us what we cannot do for ourselves. He said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6). It

is only through Him that we can come to God.

The religions of the world are exactly that—religions. A religion, according to Webster, is "the practice of religious observances or rites." But the Bible teaches that Christianity is much more than the practice of one's belief. Rather, it is a relationship with the true and living God. It is being able to come into the presence of the holy God and have fellowship with Him.

The Bible teaches that those who trust Christ are good—not because of what they do but because of what they are. They have accepted Christ as their Savior, have His righteousness, and therefore can live and serve Him in this world.

(This brief submitted article is worthy of a page in THE DISCERNER. Everet Waleen is a Christian layman from Holdrege, Nebraska. He writes also timely articles which are quite widely distributed. He and his wife committed themselves to Christ more than one-half of a century ago when I was the pastor of the Holcomb Church in that community. They are now physically disabled, to a great extent, and live in a Christian institution. They are close friends of mine and support our ministry in literature.

Editor)

CHRISTIAN INFLUENCE OVERESTIMATED

Charles Colson

Christianity's influence on society is probably weaker than at any time since the fifth century, "when barbarian hordes over-ran Europe," Charles Colson told 3,000 evangelicals at a September conference in Washington, D. C.

"What we see are pagan values on the ascendance and Christian values on the decline," said Colson, founder of Prison Fellowship Ministries. "For the first time in Western civilization

we are attempting to live as a culture without God."

Colson urged those attending the Congress on the Bible II to decide what the Bible means in the individual's life, and what personal beliefs "mean to me in terms of power, money, and every other aspect of life."

—from *Christian Herald*
(December 1987 issue)

REORGANIZED SAINTS

Christian or Mormon?

By Carol and Jack Eskridge

Recently we received a letter saying, "I have pondered this question: Do you think it is possible for a person in the Reorganized Church of Mormonism to really be saved because they do have simple faith in the Lord Jesus Christ? Is the Christ they hear about in that system the same Christ of Romans 10:9? I have wondered if souls within RLDS can really be trusting in Christ and have the blessing of John 5:24 although they may not be in the intelligence of it as we who are outside."

These questions touched our hearts, for many times since leaving the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints we have pondered like questions. While the RLDS scoffs at such terms as "saved" or "born again," God is gracious and the possibility of salvation through simple faith in Jesus is always there. A RLDS member will quickly tell you, "I am not a Mormon, because our church does not believe in polygamy, plurality of gods, pagan temple rites with baptism for the dead nor the blasphemous phrase: 'As man is, God once was; As God is, man may become.'" Because "his church" does not teach such obviously pagan teachings, the RLDS member is fooled into believing he is not a Mormon. His church history has been so toyed with that he honestly believes that Joseph Smith, who founded the Mormon movement, was not the author of the Utah Mormon system. However, the RLDS members rigidly cling to many of the anti-Christian philosophies of Joseph Smith, and they honor his son, grand-

sons, and great-grandsons as their prophet-presidents.

Eight years after the founding of the Mormon church, Joseph Smith sat down to write what is called today "The First Vision story," which tells of an experience he had during a revival in his hometown. He tells of going to a grove to pray for an answer as to which church to join and seeing two identical beings. Smith wrote that one pointed to the other saying: "This is my beloved Son, hear him." This Jesus told Joseph to join none of the churches because their creeds were all an abomination to him. This is the Christ they hear about in their system. The Latter-Day Saints have been hearing him with his modern revelations that glorify the work of men ever since.

When Smith claimed to receive golden plates engraved with the history of Israelites who settled in the Americas, he concealed them until such time as **The Book of Mormon** was published and, so he claimed, the angel who gave them once more retrieved them. This book is considered scripture and is loved by RLDS as the Christian loves his Bible. The underlying reason for this is because it is the only place where he can find the Gospel in his religion. **The Book of Mormon** plagiarizes the writings of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, as well as other New Testament writers, using their phrases out of context 200 times. It contains whole chapters of Isaiah and many words from other Old Testament writers. Since it uses all these Biblical passages from the King James Bible

and sounds so authentic to the RLDS member who has not made a studious comparison of it with the Bible, he cannot understand why the Christian has such a distaste for the book.

A person who challenges the RLDS member with some facts about the book will be pegged as someone who has heard lies about Joseph Smith and is out to pick on the RLDS.

Once a person accepts *The Book of Mormon* he must also accept Smith as a prophet and the church he founded as the only true church. From this point the golden plates become golden chains, ever binding the believer into a "church system." The church becomes his God and the priesthood becomes God's representative and voice on Earth. Mormonism's system of priesthood binds every level of a person's life. The RLDS' *Doctrine and Covenants*, its third book of scripture, the real book of law and guidance in priesthood matters, says: "And this greater priesthood administereth the Gospel and holdeth the key of the mysteries of the kingdom, even the key of the knowledge of God." To the discerning Christian, this may sound like the serpent's offer to Eve in the Garden of Eden. But to the RLDS member, the priesthood is what makes his church more than just the same boring routines and same old pastor every week.

Jesus often repeated, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." Now, an RLDS member can hear the Gospel many times without hearing it at all—he simply can't receive what he thinks he is hearing. He has heard from his church, his parents, and his extra-biblical scriptures that he has more "light" than that left-in-the-

dark Christian he is acquainted with. The RLDS member will ask a Christian which church he belongs to, and then proceed to judge him on what he thinks of that particular church—especially if the person is a fundamental, Bible-believing type whom he considers to have narrow views of heaven and hell.

As a Latter-Day Saint, he believes that many "plain and precious" things were removed from the Bible by conniving priests during the early church era—his Book of Mormon implies this. He believes that he is neither Catholic nor Protestant, but a member of the Church of Christ restored in these latter days. He considers himself an eternal pre-existent being (thus minimizing Jesus' incarnation) who has far greater light than the Christian who reads only his Bible. He feels his "Inspired Version" is the only Bible guaranteed foolproof because God personally inspired Joseph on every word to add to or take away from the King James Version. (Joseph's Bible is not a translation, but a KJV that has been altered to fit Smith's philosophy.)

The Latter-Day Saint has accepted a Gospel based on good works. It is his obedience to the ordinances of the church, and his good deeds that earn him his salvation. He does not stop to think that it would be a cruel God, indeed, who would send His only begotten Son to die on the cross to atone for our sins if we through good works could earn our own way into His kingdom. When you tell an RLDS member that salvation is by God's grace through faith, what he hears you saying is, "I don't believe that I have to be good." He does not know that the second birth creates a new

heart that will never let you rest and that you are now "His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works" (Eph. 2:10). He doesn't know that Lord who will pick you up when you slip and fall and say to you, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus . . ." (Romans 8:1).

He has been conditioned to "be nice" and all too often confuses good behavior with good works. Worse, because his salvation depends on his good behavior, he has been encouraged to make "good impressions;" this glorifies the church. He is unable to see deception in this. Mormonism teaches there is no heaven or hell as the Bible teaches it. Instead there are three degrees of glory to attain. He does not understand that all our righteousness is as filthy rags to God (Isaiah 64:6).

When the RLDS member's good works are questioned, he grows angry, as did Cain, and he strikes out at what he feels are the faults of Christian churches or Christians in general. If one is witnessing to an RLDS member, one must not get side-tracked while he plays accuser of the brethren. He cannot understand how the Christian can question his religion when he is so "good." Ordinarily he does not smoke, drink or swear and has followed "cunningly devised fables," (II Peter 1:16), so well that he has become clean on the outside and sweetly masks an interior full of the dead bones of false prophets.

However, once he comprehends the self-righteous arrogance that Mormonism breeds, he is free to acknowledge that he needs a Savior, that Jesus paid the price for his sins

and he needs Him as his own personal Lord. His genuine repentance for having followed the teachings of a man over and above those that God has laid down, brings the freedom and joy that comes with breaking the fetters of those golden chains of Mormonism.

Ever since Joseph's "First Vision" experience, the Mormon has felt it his right to go to the throne of God and petition for answers, and he expects a spiritual experience of one sort or another will come bearing his answer. If his spiritual experience involves a dead relative, he finds it ridiculous that the Christian says this is not good. Again, his lack of knowledge is from either not knowing the Bible or from not taking the Bible seriously. He feels sorry for the Christian who does not have these exciting experiences and feels that the Christian lacks a lot of the greater gifts of God.

The Apostle Paul warned those who "received not the love of the truth . . . God shall send them strong delusion" (II Thess. 2:10-11). Not having learned the wisdom of godly fear, the Latter-Day Saint boldly sets up his latter-day idols in his heart, petitions God for an answer that God has already placed in His Word, and then waits for a spiritual experience such as a dream, a vision, a prophecy from a priesthood member, or maybe just a burning feeling in his bosom (Ezekiel 14). From his earliest days he has been indoctrinated with the idea that the Mormon who has these experiences is somewhat godlier than those who don't. He would not dream of searching God's Word in the Bible as a source of all of life's answers for he considers the manufacturer's handbook out of date!

The Bible gives warning, telling us to test the spirits, warning us that some seducing spirits would come even as angels of light. Because the Bible makes plain the Gospel, every myth-maker must destroy its effectiveness to seduce a following. Thus Paul teaches Timothy wisdom when he says, "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils" (I Timothy 4:1). The Mormon has departed so far from the faith that he cannot understand the simplest Christian concepts; he uses the same words, but within a different context. The Apostle John explains that such groups separated themselves from Christian fellowship, "... they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us" (I John 2:18-19).

But, there's great hope. Now is the time to tell the RLDS member the Gospel. Many are eager to hear it

from someone who cares and who will take the time to be patient in helping remove the blinders that Mormonism has placed over their eyes. Once more, the sands of Mormonism are shifting. The current RLDS Prophet and his counselors have wandered into the new age with great zeal for a "world" church, the peace movement, religious pluralism, and the ordination of women. They are now minimizing some of Joseph's teachings to make room for an ever-expanding world view. Christians brokenheartedly watch the fall-out as people leave the RLDS church confused, turned-off to God, angry, or worse, clinging ever more tightly to Joseph Smith instead of reaching for Jesus. The sad part is that so few of them have ever heard the real Gospel. Now is the time!

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NOTES CONCERNING OUR NEW CATALOG

Most of you have received our new 1988 Catalog by now. There are several things which must be said about it. Already, even before it was in the mail, there were price changes. There were also two items that went out of print. These were "*TRANSCENDENTAL MEDITATION: A MYSTIC CULT OF SELF INTOXICATION*" by Litsen Chang, listed on page 32. Also, "*WHATEVER HAPPENED TO BIBLICAL TONGUES?*" by Leonard J. Coppes, listed on page 10.

There is another interesting situation that will affect some of your

orders. The title, "*LIKE LAMBS TO THE SLAUGHTER*" by Johanna Michaelsen, listed on page 27, was promised by the publisher to be ready just before our Catalog would be printed. However, we are now advised that it is still in the editing process and will not be available for some time. I trust that you will keep this in mind.

Should you order anything from our Catalog which we cannot supply at the time of ordering we will keep the title on back order and note a credit to you on your invoice. Back ordered titles will be sent as soon as

they become available.

I should also mention that while we do try to supply the best and most accurate information, we do not [at least I do not personally] agree with every statement that is made in our books. Some authors, while presenting accurate information on a cult, will have a theological quirk (at least I think it is) with which we cannot agree. PLEASE read with discernment!

Oh yes; we will not charge for back-ordered items until they are mailed.

Some of you have written and asked about the comic-book type of publications published by Jack Chick. While we do not list them in the catalog, I do have a supply of the large ones, 79¢ each, on hand. If you know what the title is, you may order from us. Should you want a listing of the titles we have, I would be happy to send one.

As you know, our organization is, by and large, a very small operation with only one person working in the office. The bulk of the researching and analyzing is done in the office. Because of limited time, it is just not possible to research all of the publications available. I do, therefore, ask your help. Should you find any infor-

mation regarding a cult or non-Christian religion in any publication, I would really appreciate it if you would send me the article or a copy of it. Some of you have done this in the past, and I thank you so very much. Every little bit helps since it is our ministry to get out the truth and provide, as much as possible, the latest information to those who call on us for help.

Since beginning this, it has come to my attention that one other item is out of print, "*FIFTEEN REASONS WHY I CANNOT BELONG TO A LODGE*," listed on page 31. I will try to get this small 6-page tract reprinted and will let our readers know in another issue of *THE DISCERNER*.

May I also mention that we have a copy of a booklet [at one time listed in our Catalog but now out of print] which we can reprint, should we have the funds available. It is "*THE SCHOLASTIC DISHONESTY OF THE WATCHTOWER*," by Michael Van Buskirk. Our printer has put a price tag of \$675.00 on this project. Should any of you feel led to designate funds for this, I would certainly appreciate hearing from you.

E. E.

GIFT SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE WELCOME

A considerable number of readers of *The Discerner* write expressing their appreciation of our magazine. It appears timely at the beginning of the year to send gift subscriptions to your friends. They will value your thoughtfulness. The price has not changed for many years. It still is only \$2.00 a year.

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PERTINENT QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

John E. Dahlin, Editor

QUESTION . . . Have certain disturbances and problems within various cultic groups resulted in a diminished expansion among these groups?

ANSWER . . . No doubt, these disturbances and problems within these groups have resulted in considerable hindrances to them in their expansionism objectives. Our reference is to the following groups: The Unification Church, Scientology, The Seventh Day Adventists, and The Jehovah's Witnesses. These developments have cast a dark shadow on the claims of Divine Inspiration and Infallibility of their leaders with regard to their teachings. The recent developments cannot be glossed over.

QUESTION . . . Has the present-day diminishing of the opposition to cultic teachings stimulated the efforts of these groups in their program of expansionism?

ANSWER . . . It seems clear that the weakening of the opposition to the cults by major religious organizations will serve to encourage the efforts of these groups to initiate a more vigorous program of action by the spurious groups. Many cultic groups have already achieved respectability among a number of major denominations. This, in itself, serves as an encouragement to cultic groups to move ahead vigorously.