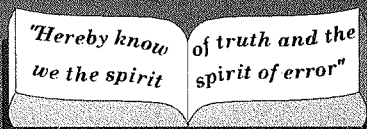


The Discerner



Volume 20, Number 2

April • May • June 2000

AN INTERDENOMINATIONAL HERESY-EXPOSING QUARTERLY

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EDITORIAL

By William A. BeVier

We are pleased to present another issue of THE DISCERNER. Will you look at your mailing label? If it reads 20-2 or the cover reads Vol. 20, No. 2 your subscription expires with this issue.

In this issue we complete the two articles started in the last issue. First is Caroline Alexander's article on the occult and how it is penetrating our society. In an earlier issue we featured an article reporting how the U.S. Department of Defense has given official recognition for the occult to operate within our military. The targets for the occult appears primarily to be women and children. Reminds one of the warning in 2 Timothy 3:6-7.

Our second continuation is Robert C. Hill's article presenting the Christadelphians. It should be noted that some of their aberrant teachings are also held by other cults. Unfortunately, their false doctrines are being spread on the Internet, now accessible to millions of people including children.

The next article is by Rev. John Hornok, a reprint of a tract we stock at RAS. John Hornok and his Wife have ministered for many years in Salt Lake City, Utah, the heart of "Mormon land." They raised their family there. Two of their sons, after graduating from seminary, have returned to Utah to pastor churches in the Salt Lake City area. We need to pray for these "Gentiles" whom God has called to minister in the midst of the Latter-Day Saints. The article is especially relevant today because the Mormons are increasingly trying to gain acceptance as evangelical Christians. This is a misnomer if there ever was one, as John Hornok's tract indicates. Incidentally, the name of the Hornok ministry is Utah Bible Mission.

I invite your attention to the next item in this issue titled "Books...Books...Books." Our world is constantly changing in many ways, and the field of literature is no exception. We are forced to change with it when it comes to available literature.

Our issue closes with two book reviews and a video review. Needless to say, we will not be stocking Don Stoner's book. We will stock Ed Decker's book, but not the reviewed video.

We take this opportunity to announce an addition to our Board. Steve Lagoon, author of two books on the cults, has accepted an invitation to join the Board. We welcome him.

It seems summer is coming earlier than usual this year. Contributions to RAS drop off each summer, as they do with most Christian ministries, but this year the decrease has already started. It is hoped that prayer support has not also dropped and that each of you will remember that the expenses of this ministry continue, even in the summer.

The World of the Occult and Its Infiltration into Modern Society

By Caroline Alexander

PART III

In part III the availability of an easy access to pagan/Satanic material will be exposed as well as suggested responses for Christians caught up in this demonic battle.

As is true of most cults, occult practitioners will utilize whatever is beneficial from another tradition, Christian or otherwise. As there is the ever-growing popular mode of home-schooling among Evangelical Christians, there is also available "educational" material for Pagan home schooling. Each Wiccan tradition has meticulously compiled a history, philosophy, ritualistic practices, lessons in spell-casting and whatever else the Wiccan parent deems necessary in the formation of her youngster. Many states have given certification to these curricula, barring the religious portion.

Another way that the pagan mind-set infiltrates society is through the multitudinous volumes and periodicals that are now easily accessible. For instance, there is an attractive, professionally prepared catalogue published by Llewlynn Publishers entitled New World's of Mind and Spirit. Each edition focuses on a different theme, e.g., Wicca, New Age, and covers numerous subjects dealing with the occult and how to incorporate its philosophy into one's daily life. Several websites are listed for networking and support.

Two books which have been selling extremely well are Teen Witch by Silver Ravenwolf and Book of Shadows by Phyllis Currott (both published in 1998). Ravenwolf is a Wiccan priestess, wife and mother of four children all being trained as witches. She is the director of the International Wiccan/Pagan Press Alliance. Her book was written especially for the teen seeker. According to a recent review, Teen Witch "gives teens their own handbook on what it takes and what it means to be a witch." Teen Witch gives practical advice for dealing with everyday life in a magical way. From homework and crabby teachers to parents and dating, this book guides teens through the ups and downs of life as they move into adulthood. Spells are provided that address their specific concerns such as the "Call Me Spell" and

“The Exam Spell,” and many more. (New Worlds of Mind and Spirit, 10/98).

Currott’s book, entitled Book of Shadows, is strictly for the adult reader. She is president emerita of the oldest and largest international religious organization in the Wiccan tradition. She is also an Ivy League practicing attorney. Her book “chronicles her ascent to the position of Wiccan High Priestess and her efforts to reconciled her newfound spirituality with her struggles as a woman rising through the ranks of the corporate world.” (Taken from: cover jacket of P. Currott’s Book of Shadows. NY, NY: Broadway Books, 1998).

Another growing means of disseminating the evils of the occult is the emergence of the Wiccan training schools. These institutions operate like colleges. A perspective witch may attend classes on a campus or may choose to obtain a degree through various correspondence courses, or even through the World-Wide Web. Each course brings the student a level higher in attaining the right to become a practitioner of Wicca. After completing the required course work, a person then decides whether to join a coven or grotto or grove (group of witches) or to practice as a solitary.

One such school is Our Lady of Enchantment located in Nashua, New Hampshire. It bills itself as “the Number One School of Witchcraft, Magic and Arcane Arts.” Along with being a “seminary” it is a federally recognized church, a school and a non-profit organization. Its foundress is Lady Sabrina. Along with courses, this school also offers religious services, sabbat celebrations and full and new moon rituals. An example of the courses offered are as follows: “Earth Religion and Power”; “Spell Crafting and Natural Magic”; “Herbology”; “Prophecy and Prediction”; “The Ritual Ceremony and Magic of Ancient Egypt” and “Metaphysics I & II.” The average cost ranges from \$120.00 to \$150.00, plus materials.

Along with the Wiccan schools is a less formal means of interesting people in the practice of the Craft. These are the rapidly growing witch camps. They are organized much like a Christian Bible camp or secular resort. They offer an attractive and “balanced” vacation for initiated witches or those seriously considering embracing the Craft. They are present in almost every state. One example is Trillium, a witch camp located in Charlotte, Vermont. It offers campers “a week of myth, magic and mystery.” The following invitation is issued:

We reclaim the name witches to its first meaning – changers – to heal a damaged earth. Please join us as we embark on a journey

of spiritual and personal growth. Together we will dance, drum, chant and trance to deepen our connection to the earth and to the sacred in our lives. The week of Myth, Magic and Mystery is a week of ritual, magic and community. This week is not a festival; it is an intensive [sic.]. Each day is filled with pathwork [sic.], a time to learn and deepen our magical skills for personal growth and transformation. Small group sharing, optional workshops offered by other campers, and group meetings that shape the week complete our daytime schedule. Evening rituals with Starhawk and Reclaiming draw us more deeply into ourselves and into the community of beings on this Earth.

“A Christian must have a strong faith as well as knowledge in order to discern the truth and recognize evil.”

Then there are the invitations sent out through organizations such as the Unitarian Universalist Association. One of their ads stated: [The minister and his assistant] “will be offering Paganism 101 this Spring. It will consist of 9 or 10 sessions. In the class we will discuss Unitarian Universal Paganism and the history of paganism. We will also be doing ritual. I can guarantee that [the course] will be exciting.” (Unitarian Universalist Church; Manchester, NH, 02/99). Also offered is an invitation from

The Covenant of Unitarian Universalist Pagans to receive their “great monthly newsletter,” either by e-mail or “snail mail.”

These examples are only a small fraction of the many lures out there enticing the seeker, Christian and unchurched alike, to explore neo-Paganism and its many “freedoms.” In order to confront all of this mind-boggling information, a Christian must have a strong faith as well as knowledge in order to discern the truth and recognize evil. Hosea 4:6 gives a stern warning: “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to Me: seeing thou has forgotten the Law of God, I will also forget thy children.”

PART IV

In conclusion, some suggestions for a Christian response will be offered. From all that has been revealed, it is obvious that it is not an earthly battle that Christians are up against. Paul warns the Church in Ephesus to be prepared:

Put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places (Ephesians 6:11-12).

The same admonition is relevant for Christians today, perhaps more so with advanced technology aiding Satan and his minions in spreading their spiritual poison throughout the world.

Paul warns Christians to be ready, but how is that accomplished? It is not enough to strongly advise a person to stop any occult activities. First, this can't be accomplished by human will-power alone, and second, if a person is able with the grace of God, to give up such sinful practices, something has to be offered in their place or the vacuum created will be filled with some other wicked habits.

First, let's look at some of the negative or "clean-up-your-act" remedies leading to total severance from the world of the occult.

1. Repudiation – make a clean and utter break with the Powers of Darkness. Burn all occult tools, images, instruction manuals and lessons, charms or medallions. "Many of them also who used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men; and they counted the price of them and found it 50,000 pieces of silver. So mightily grew the Word of God which made this clean sweep!" (W. J. McCormick. Out of the Devil's Parlour. Carryduff, Belfast, Ireland: Great Joy Publications, 1983).
2. Repent – have a complete change of mind toward what God hates. In Galatians 5 Paul includes witchcraft and sorcery as "works of the flesh" and warns "that those who practice such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God" (verse 21). Jesus also warned, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3).

Following one's rejection of occult practices and beliefs must come a positive substitute to enable the new believer to resist Satan's attempts to lure a person back to his old sinful ways. Here are some suggestions:

1. Trust Jesus Christ as your Savior. Surrender all to Him and acknowledge Him as your Lord (Romans 10:9). That is the first thing (McCormick, Ibid.).
2. Encourage the penitent to seek God's forgiveness for past involvement with the occult. Sometimes it starts as an innocent snare:

curiosity about such items as horoscopes, the Ouija board, tarot cards, fantasy role-playing games, etc. However, "ignorant" a person may have been, these are sins that now need to be confessed (I John 1:8-9).

3. If the inquirer is anxious because of the uncertainties of life, wanting to know the future, offer the assurance that God has promised to "never leave you nor forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5). We are to "seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you" (Matthew 6:33). The Bible tells us that "no good thing will He withhold from those who walk uprightly" (Psalm 84:11). We can leave it all with Him (Philippians 4:6).
4. Suggest praying especially about the involvement in the occult so that the person never becomes entangled with it again. Encourage a serious commitment to Bible study. This is a way of redeeming the misspent hours of occult involvement. "...redeeming the time, because the days are evil" (Ephesians 5:6).
5. Encourage the inquirer to seek fellowship with committed Christians and to get involved with a Bible-teaching church for worship, Bible study, prayer, and witnessing. With this new identity, all former occult relationships should be severed.
6. Pray with the inquirer for complete deliverance and restoration or a first-time commitment to the Lord. (Points 3-6 taken from Charles Ward. The Billy Graham Christian Worker's Handbook. Minneapolis, MN: World-wide Publications, 1996).

Finally, what does God's Word say about any contact with the occult world, and how did Jesus Himself respond when Satan tempted Him? Almighty God states very clearly that He and He alone is to be worshiped. "Thou shalt have no other gods before Me" (Exodus 20:3). Jesus said, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6).

It was Jesus Himself, who according to the Gospel of Matthew, was led by Satan to a high mountain peak. There Satan showed Jesus "the nations of the world and all their glory."

"I'll give it all to you," said Satan, "If you'll only kneel down and worship me."

Jesus told him, "Get out of here, Satan. The Scriptures say, 'Worship only the Lord God. Obey only Him.'"

Jesus faced the temptation of hedonism and Satan worship very squarely. He understood what the alternatives were. On the one hand He was offered pleasurable self-indulgence; on the other hand He was offered a shameful death by crucifixion. For some reason He chose the latter; but for what reason?

Probably there were two reasons. First, He recognized that true happiness is found only when man submits to God's direction. Second, He loved us so much that His own desires were forgotten. If He chose a cross to save you, it is unthinkable that you should callously turn your back on Him and choose Satan and self-gratification. (Wm. J. Petersen. Those Curious New Cults. New Canaan, Connecticut: Keats Publishing, 1973.)

The Devil in the Mirror and Other Christadelphian Theology

By Robert C. Hill, ThB

PART II

NEW MATH? FAITH + WATER = SALVATION

The Christadelphians also teach that water baptism is essential for salvation. This view is erroneous in that it implies Christ's sacrifice was not sufficient for our salvation and that something else must be added to His death, burial and resurrection for the forgiveness of sins. From their publication, *Baptism essential to salvation*, baptism into Christ accomplishes three things:

1. It provides a cover which blots out past sins by forgiveness; 2. It inducts one into Christ Jesus providing a basis of fellowship with God; 3. It provides a means of access to the divine throne of mercy ensuring the continued forgiveness of sins after baptism, when such are confessed and forsaken (*Herald of the Coming Age*, vol. 42, no. 1, n.d., p. 12).

Co-mingled with this water baptism for salvation is obedience. The Christadelphians believe, "Those who are so baptized and learn thus to deny themselves in order to serve God, are assured of a resurrection to life eternal at the coming of the Lord Jesus" (10).

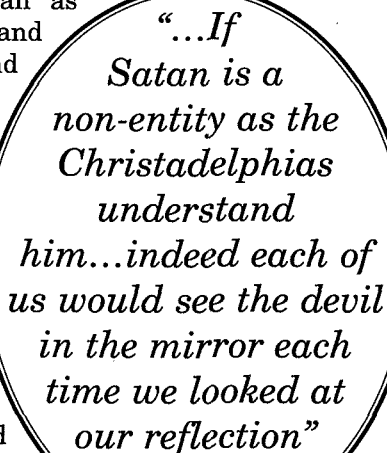
It is always interesting to read key passages from Scripture in light of other theological persuasions because many times it will reveal a heavy interjection of reading back one's theology in the text. Take for example, the thief on the cross (Luke 23:39-43). The thief was promised to be with Christ that very day in paradise, and this passage rightly demonstrates what has come to be known in today's language as an example of a *deathbed* conversion. Yet, the Christadelphians will insist that John baptized him, "It is also obvious that the thief had heard of Jesus before he was impaled upon the cross, and doubtless, had been previously baptized...he was evidently familiar with the teaching of Christ.... His crime was perhaps a minor one, if it was not a miscarriage of justice as in the case of Jesus" (13).

This is quite a stretch, particularly in light of Mark's account where "Those who were crucified with Him were also insulting Him" (Mark 15:32). The weight of the thief being baptized lightens in view of Mark's passage weighing in favor of conversion and salvation apart from water. Wayne Grudem writes, "To say that baptism or any other action is *necessary* for salvation is to say that we are not justified by faith alone, but by faith plus a certain 'work,' that work of baptism" (Systematic Theology, p. 981). Water baptism is correctly understood in terms of obedience to Christ but not as essential to salvation.

THE DEVIL IN THE MIRROR?

One item listed in the Christadelphian *Doctrines to be Rejected*, which is included in their *Statement of Faith*, is their denial of a personal devil. Indeed, one writer states "the idea of an external, supernatural source of spiritual evil...lie [sic.] in paganism." This evil comes from man "as being the originator of sin, and evil" and that "biblical labels 'satan' [sic.] and 'devil,' are in fact common terms meaning a generic 'enemy,' 'adversary' or 'slanderer'" (*Response to Mainstream Christianity: The Source of Evil*, p.1 <http://www.christadelphia.org>, accessed 1-16-2000).

The denial of a real, personal devil is not without major problems. Indeed, Jesus believed in the reality of such a creature and had numerous encounters with him and his dominions. One only has to go the temptation sequence to verify Christ's encounter with creation's primary adversary the devil, Satan (Cf., Matt. 4:1-11; Mark 1:13; Luke 4:1-14). In Matthew's account both *devil* (vs. 1, 5, 8, 10) and *Satan* (vs. 13) are used interchangeably (also note Rev. 12:9; 20:2). However, if one were to believe the Christadelphians, they claim that the word Satan "has been used in various ways which indicates that it is not 'another name for the Devil,' as some suggest" (*The Truth About Lucifer*, vol. 41, no. 6, p. 11, n.d.). Well, if Jesus declared Satan as the name of the devil, then we should too!



"...If
*Satan is a
non-entity as the
Christadelphians
understand
him...indeed each of
us would see the devil
in the mirror each
time we looked at
our reflection"*

Other passages include Jesus witnessing Satan's falling from heaven (Luke 10:18). How is one to make sense of the passage where Jesus tells Peter that Satan wants to sift him like wheat, if there is no devil (Luke 22:31)? Scripture describes Satan entering Judas the night of our Lord's betrayal (John 13:27). If Satan was merely man's own evil, then how does it come from the outside of the inner man?

Furthermore, the apostle Paul explains to the Corinthian congregation that he was going to turn one of their sinning members over to Satan for the destruction of his flesh (1 Cor. 5:5; also, 1 Tim. 1:10). Once again, it is hard to imagine this Satan as a non-entity. If there is any doubt at this point, read Jude 9. In that passage archangel Michael is arguing with the devil over the body of Moses. Left to the Christadelphian understanding of the devil, Michael would have to be having a dispute against "fallen human nature, with its evil propensities..." as that is exactly how the *devil* is defined (15). Indeed, each of us would see the devil in the mirror each time we looked at our reflection. One need not go any further as the above passages clearly teach us that there exists an evil creature, fallen from heaven, whose name is Satan.

SLEEP AFTER DEATH?

The Christadelphians also teach rejection of an immortal soul and a denial of any conscious awareness after death. They also hold to annihilationism for the damned. One publication states, "Never does the Bible suggest that a person continues to live after the death of the body.... Instead, the Bible's offer of immortality [is] at the coming of Jesus Christ" (*Why is Man Mortal*, vol. 38, no. 3, May 92, p. 1, May 1992). Furthermore, they teach that a belief in the soul of man continuing to exist after death is "rooted in man's desperate endeavors to deny the absolute reality of death, in the hope that life will continue..." (p. 3). This major tenant of the Christian faith is said to be "not taught within the pages of the bible [sic.]. It is a philosophy which owes it [sic.] origin entirely to pagan mythology, and finds no part in the faith of the ancient Hebrews; nor is it taught by Christ and his [sic.] apostles in the New Testament Scriptures" (p. 5).

There are many similarities between the Christadelphians and the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society [Jehovah's Witnesses] concerning the soul and the afterlife. Their arguments place emphasis on death and grave to such an extent that the context in which these words are located in Scripture is often overlooked. One example is the

use of Ecclesiastes 9:10. Here the reader will find, within the context, a referent to doing things that the living do in the world and nothing at all to what the Christadelphians are reading into the text, that the dead have nothing to do in the afterlife (intermediate state) where they are located. Norman L. Geisler and Ron Rhodes in their book, When Cultists Ask, give a powerfully biblical response regarding the denial of conscious awareness after death:

1. Enoch was taken to be with God (Gen. 5:24; Heb. 11:5).
2. David spoke of bliss in God's presence after death (Pa. 16:10-11).
3. Elijah was taken up into heaven (2 Kings 2:1, 11-12).
4. Moses and Elijah were conscious on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matt. 17:3).
5. Jesus said He went to the Father the day He died (Luke 23:48).
6. Jesus promised that the repentant thief would be with Him in paradise the very day he died (Luke 23:43).
7. Paul said it was far better to die and be with Christ (Phil. 1:23).
8. Paul affirmed that when we are "absent from the body" that "we are present with the Lord" (2 Cor. 5:8).
9. The writer of Hebrews refers to heaven as a place where "the spirits of just men [are] made perfect" (Heb. 12:23).
10. The "souls" of those martyred during the tribulation were conscious in heaven, singing and praying to God (Rev. 6:9).
11. Stephen, as he was being stoned to death, said, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!" (Acts 7:59).
12. Jesus, in speaking about Old Testament saints Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, said that God "is not the God of the dead, but of the living" (Luke 20:38). Jesus was saying, "Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, though they died many years ago, are actually living today. For God, who calls Himself the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, is not the God of the dead but of the living" (266-7).

The believer then goes to be with Lord immediately following death, while the unbeliever awaits the final judgment (Cf., Matt. 25:41, 46; Mark 9:43-48; Rev. 20:11-15).

CONCLUSION

Like many others trying to find the *true* faith, John Thomas, the founder of the Christadelphian movement, has taken the wrong pathway. He rightfully sought to question what he had been taught in light of Scripture. Yet, he overlooked sound methodology in his quest for truth. At the end of the day the Evangelical tenants of faith, grounded in the Word of God, through good interpretative methodology overlooks the rising mound of theological doctrines unable to maintain consistent support from the full weight of Scripture.

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Ten Reasons Why I Cannot Be a Mormon (Latter-Day Saint)

By Rev. John Hornok

1. MORMONISM DOES NOT TEACH THAT THE BIBLE IS THE INFALLIBLE WORD OF GOD.

"We believe the Bible to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly; we also believe the Book of Mormon to be the word of God" (Articles of Faith, No. 8).

As Christians we believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be the verbally inspired Word of God, the final authority for faith and life, inerrant in the original writings, infallible and God-breathed (II Tim. 3:16-17; II Pet. 1:20-21; Matt. 5:18).

2. MORMONISM TEACHES THAT GOD IS AN EXALTED MAN AND HAS A PHYSICAL BODY.

"God himself was once as we are now, and is an exalted man" (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 345). "The Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man's...." (Doctrines & Covenant, Sec. 131:22).

The Bible says, "God is not a man..." (Num. 23:19). "God is a Spirit; and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). "A spirit hath not flesh and bones..." (Lk. 24:39).

3. MORMONISM TEACHES THAT CHRIST AND THE DEVIL ARE BROTHERS.

"...that Lucifer, the son of the morning, is our elder brother and the brother of Jesus Christ" (Mormon Doctrine by Bruce McConkie, pp. 163-4).

The Bible says the devil is a created being, created by God. "Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee" (Ezekiel 28:15). "For by Him (Christ) were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by Him and for Him..." (Col. 1:15-17).

4. MORMONISM TEACHES THAT JESUS CHRIST WAS MARRIED AND THAT HE IS POLYGAMOUS.

“We say it was Jesus Christ who was married at Cana of Galilee” (Journal of Discourses, Vol. 2, p. 80). Mormonism teaches that Jesus was the natural child of Adam and Mary. “When the Virgin Mary conceived the Child Jesus...He was not begotten by the Holy Ghost. And who is his Father? He is the first of the human family” (Brigham Young. Journal of Discourses, pp. 50-51).

The Bible says, “In the beginning was the Word (Christ), and the Word was with God, and the Word was God;... The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us...” (John 1:1, 14). “Then Mary said unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered.... The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee...” (Lk. 1:34-35).

5. MORMONISM TEACHES THAT THE TRUE CHURCH CEASED TO EXIST UNTIL IT WAS RESTORED TO JOSEPH SMITH.

The church (LDS) was restored April 6, 1830 by Joseph Smith (Doc. & Cov., 20:1).

Jesus Christ said, “I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matt. 16:18). “For other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ” (I Cor. 3:11). “...Are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone” (Eph. 2:20).

6. MORMONISM TEACHES ANOTHER (PERVERTED) GOSPEL THAN THAT OF THE BIBLE.

The gospel to Mormonism is: “Faith, Repentance, Baptism, Receiving the Holy

Ghost by laying on of hands. Morality, Loyalty, Tithing, Word of Wisdom, Duty, Celestial Marriage (for eternity)” (LDS chart on FREE AGENCY and Articles of Faith, No. 4).

The Bible says, “Moreover brethren, I declare unto you the gospel... how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures” (I Cor. 15:1, 3-4). “If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed” (Gal. 1:9).

7. MORMONISM TEACHES SALVATION FOR THE DEAD BY PROXY WATER BAPTISM.

This doctrine is based on one misunderstood Scripture: "Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? Why then are they baptized for the dead?" (I Cor. 15:29).

Paul did not practice baptism for the dead. He excluded himself by using the pronoun "they" rather than "we" or "ye." He is asking a question rather than making a statement. "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Heb. 9:27).

8. MORMONISM TEACHES GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH FOR THE DEAD.

"Let us, therefore, as a church and a people, and as Latter-day Saints, offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness; and let us present in his holy temple, when it is finished, a book containing the records of our dead, which shall be worthy of all acceptation" (Doc. & Cov., Sec. 128:24).

The Bible says, "Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies" (Tim. 1:4). "But avoid foolish questions and genealogies..." (Titus 3:9).

9. MORMONISM TEACHES THAT THERE ARE MODERN DAY PROPHETS AND MODERN DAY REVELATIONS FROM GOD.

Mormonism claims that Joseph Smith received the Aaronic Priesthood from John the Baptist. The Melchizedek Priesthood and Apostleship was restored by Peter, James and John shortly afterwards in 1829 (Doc. & Cov., Sec. 13).

The Bible says, "God...hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds" (Heb. 1:1-2). The test of a prophet is given in Deut. 18:20-22.

10. MORMONISM TEACHES THAT SALVATION DEPENDS UPON GOOD WORKS AND ACCEPTANCE OF JOSEPH SMITH.

"No man who rejects the testimony of Joseph Smith can enter the kingdom of God" (Doctrines of Salvation, vol. I, p. 190). "Men have work to do if they would obtain salvation" (Doctrines of Salvation, vol. III, p. 91).

The Bible teaches that salvation is provided by Jesus Christ alone. "For there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:10-12). "For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God. Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:8-9).

BOOKS...BOOKS...BOOKS

In our selection of literature we have many changes that occur. Some of the books we carry are revised and updated. We will bring to your attention a few of those that have made changes. We also have replaced some out-of-print literature with similar material, or have located copies of those books.

The booklet, A Biologist Looks at the Book of Mormon (listed in our 1999-2000 catalog as MO-1) has been replaced by the extensively revised and enlarged 15th edition, The Book of Mormon in the Light of Science, by the same author, Dr. Thomas D. Key. The book is listed under the same catalog number, MO-1. This book is 92 pages and the cost is \$5.00.

The book, Astronomy and the Bible, by Dr. Donald DeYoung, the second edition, has been reprinted in 2000. It provides updated questions and answers on astronomy and the universe. It is an excellent resource for schools and home. This book has the same catalog number and price listed in our 1999-2000 catalog (LEV-1, \$9.00).

We are offering in tract form an article which was published in THE DISCERNER (Vol. 17, No. 4, Oct.-Dec. 1997). The title is "Is Cremation Christian?" by Dr. Roy E. Knuteson (an RAS Advisory Board member). The book titled Cremation Is It Christian? By James Fraser is no longer in print. The tract is available under the same catalog number (LMT-12) and is \$.15.

The booklet we have carried in the past and have been listing as "being reprinted" is now reprinted and in stock. The title is primarily the same, World Council of Churches: The Shaky Ship Sails On and is listed under the same catalog number (LE-8). The price is \$1.00. It has been updated and is a compilation and revision of articles published over the past 20 years in Foundation Magazine, Los Altos, CA. It is firsthand documentation and analysis of the liberal agenda of the World Council of Churches.

We call to your attention two books we have added to our inventory. The book Oneness Pentecostalism: New Truth or Old Heresy, by Steve Lagoon and Thomas D. Sheehy, has just been released. Portions of this book were printed as a series of three articles in THE DISCERNER (Vol. 14, Numbers 10, 11, 2, 1994). The catalog number is: MS-10, price \$8.00. The back cover carries an endorsement by the President of RAS.

The second book is The Question of Freemasonry by Ed Decker. This book is being reviewed in this issue of THE DISCERNER. It is published by Huntington House, 45 pp. Catalog number is: LM-19, price \$3.50.

Two books previously listed as out-of-print are now on our shelves (in limited quantity). UFO'S in the New Age by William Alnor. Catalog number NA-48, price \$12.95, and Decker's Complete Handbook on Mormonism by Ed Decker, MO-10, price \$19.95.

Many books have had an increase in price. We list below the ones we have had to change:

Kingdom of the Cults, p. 3,	\$26.95
Christianity in Crisis (p.b.), p. 6,	\$12.99
Nine Gifts of the Spirit, p. 7,	\$2.50
Satan's Underground, p. 11,	\$10.95
Crisis of Conscience, p. 14,	\$12.95
Truth About Church of Christ, p. 18,	\$4.95
Oneness Pentecostal & Trinity, p. 19,	\$16.95
Secret Sect, p. 19,	\$10.95
History & Beliefs of Mormonism, p. 21,	\$10.95
Mormonism, Mama & Me, p. 22,	\$12.95
Wedding Dress, p. 23,	\$5.95
With This Ring, p. 23,	\$5.95
Millennium, p. 25,	\$10.95
New Age Cults & Religions, p. 26,	\$12.95
Ravaged By the New Age, p. 27,	\$10.95
Unmasking the New Age, p. 28,	\$12.95
Two Babylons, p. 31,	\$18.95
The White Lie, p. 32,	\$15.00
World Council of Churches, p. 34,	\$1.50
Collapse of Evolution, p. 34,	\$10.95
Earth's Earliest Ages, p. 35,	\$13.95
Genesis Flood, p. 35,	\$13.95
The World That Perished, p. 35,	\$11.95
Against the Tide, p. 37,	\$7.95
Baptism (Ironside), p. 40,	\$1.95
"Fundamentalism" and the Word of God, p. 41,	\$7.95
God Has Spoken, p. 41,	\$8.95
Antichrist, p. 43,	\$12.95
Things to Come, p. 44,	\$26.95

BOOK REVIEW

A New Look at an Old Earth

By Don Stoner

Harvest House Publishers, Eugene, OR 97402, 1997, 256 pages

Reviewed by Bolton Davidheiser

This book is similar to the writings of Dr. Hugh Ross and, in fact, Dr. Ross wrote the Foreword. The Bible is made to agree with the origin of the world by a Big Bang, something like fifteen to twenty billion years ago. And according to them, the light “in the beginning” (Genesis 1:3) was sunlight, the sun having been created before the first day of the creation week instead of the fourth. This concept of the sun being created “in the beginning” and merely revealed on the fourth day by the removal of an obscuring cloud, was previously, and apparently originally, postulated by Dr. C. I. Scofield in his famous Bible notes, though neither Mr. Stoner nor Dr. Ross give Dr. Scofield credit.

Dr. Ross backs up this interpretation by citing Hebrew grammar, but Dr. Arnold Fruchtenbaum, Director of Ariel Ministries, Tustin, California, wrote in private correspondence, “A simple exegesis requires the verse [Genesis 1:16] in the passage to read that the sun, moon, and stars were actually made on the fourth day. Here again Dr. Ross is simply playing with the text to try to arrive at a preconceived notion, but his conclusions simply are not natural to the text... Hebrew is my field, and I have to wonder if Dr. Ross ever had first year basic Hebrew grammar since he seems to make mistakes that somebody finishing a course in Hebrew 101 simply would not make.”

Appeal is made frequently to the “double revelation theory,” the concept that the Bible and nature are two revelations by the same Author and therefore they must agree. This sounds good, but when there are problems apparently still unresolved, these people – double revelationists in general – seem to put their trust in the book of nature (current scientific theory) rather than in the Bible. Mr. Stoner writes, “If the Bible does not specify that the universe is young [is this indeed the case?], and God’s universe itself testifies that it is old, then the question should be settled....” There are studies in the Hebrew of Genesis 1 and Exodus 20:9-11 refuting this. They have been reviewed by various authors and are too detailed to include here.

On page 132 the author writes, “As God’s Bible reflects the individual styles of its many human recorders, so also His universe retains the marks of His various channels of creation – sometimes supernatural....” At this point there is a footnote illustrating such a supernatural

act in creation, which reads, "For example, the cosmic explosion which scientists call the Big Bang exemplifies a supernatural act of creation."

Various authors have pointed out problems with the Big Bang theory. The December 15, 1997, issue of the *Meta Research Bulletin* reports a strong new falsifying test which definitely would falsify the Big Bang, and adds that preliminary results would rather suggest that the test will in fact falsify the Bib Bang. Furthermore, it lists ten top problems with the Big Bang. Also there are problems with various "inflation" accommodations to the Big Bang theory.

Dr. Andrei Linde (pronounced Leen-deh) pointed out while at Stanford University that "if you work out the physical equations governing the big bang, they predict that such a universe would be very small...." It is estimated the universe contains about 10 to the 88th power elementary particles. But he says that "a typical theoretical big bang model envisions a universe with only ten elementary particles in it! This is perhaps the most serious problem in the big bang model. It gives a false prediction about the size of the universe. For a number of years, this mathematical flaw in a big bang theory was not taken seriously by many scientists." Professor Linde also is concerned with another problem, which does not seem to bother most Big Bangers: How could everything come from nothing, contrary to the basic first law of thermodynamics? That is, matter and energy can neither be created nor destroyed, [that is, other than by God] though one can be transformed into the other. Further, the finding of eight to twelve billion years for the age of the universe according to the Hubble telescope, in contrast to the usually accepted fifteen to twenty, if confirmed, will not allow sufficient time since the Big Bang for the production of the universe and evolution of life on earth.

The concept of the expanding universe, starting with a Big Bang, comes from the work of Edwin Hubble, based upon the red shift in the spectra of distant galaxies. According to their red shifts, quasars are the objects farthest from us, but Halton Arp (Ph.D., California Institute of Technology, cum laude, and for twenty-nine years staff astronomer at the Mount Wilson and Palomar Observatories) shows evidence of quasar being associated with relatively nearby galaxies. For this he has been persecuted and no longer permitted to work in prominent observatories. His name does not appear in the index of Mr. Stoner's book

Also, with a Big Bang origin for the universe, theoretically particles of matter and antimatter at the start were produced in equal numbers and should have destroyed each other, leaving nothing – no universe, no sun, no earth, no us. So it has to be believed that somehow there was a slightly higher percentage of particles of matter produced than antimatter.

Mr. Stoner offers the same argument as Dr. Ross concerning the depletion of the earth's magnetic field – the dynamo theory, with reversals in the earth's magnetic field associated with buildups to compensate for depletion. Even Dr. J. A. Jacobs, the authority used by Dr. Ross, presents evidences against the correlation of reversals in the earth's magnetic field and reversals indicated by surface phenomena, such as rocks and ancient pottery. Dr. Thomas Barnes (Professor Emeritus of Physics, and a specialist in magnetism at the University of Texas, El Paso) and Dr. Russell Humphreys (physicist, Sandia National Laboratories), creationists, have written in this area, upholding a young earth. Extrapolating backward in time, Dr. Barnes calculates that 10,000 years ago the earth's magnetic field would have been too great to permit life on earth. Dr. Humphreys acknowledges figures corresponding to Biblical chronology.

There is a long discussion about dust on the moon. Evolutionists suspected great depths of cosmic dust on the moon because of its age, which could trap astronauts landing there. Since this has been found not to be so, the evolutionists make different speculations for the lack of large amounts of dust. Mr. William Overn, creationist and project engineer for the Mariner IV spacecraft to Mars, gives his rebuttal to this. He spent many hours at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, which had the responsibility for the problem of dust on the moon.

Mr. Stoner says the argument that dinosaur and human footprints occur together at the Paluxy site in Texas “has been abandoned by most young-earth creationists.” This is not the case. There has been a problem about manlike footprints in the Taylor trail, and for this reason the popular film, *Footprints in Stone*, based upon the Taylor trail, was recalled. But that has not ruled out human footprints even in this trail. The matter is discussed by Robert Helfinstein and Jerry Roth in their book, *Texas Tracks and Artifacts*, 1994. Furthermore, a footprint in the Clark trail was examined by the Dallas Crime Forensic Department and declared human.

In addition to Texas, manlike footprints together with dinosaur tracks have been reported in Pennsylvania, Ohio, West Virginia, Kentucky, Colorado, Oklahoma, Utah, Nevada, and Arizona, and also in Asia, Switzerland, Germany, and the former USSR.

If even *one* authentic human footprint is found with dinosaur tracks, that is sufficient to verify their contemporary existence.

In August, 1978, the Paluxy River was almost dry. The charred branch of a tree was found, largely embedded in limestone, at the same level as dinosaur tracks. It was two inches in diameter and about seven feet of its length were exposed. It was in the form of charcoal. Apparently it was originally covered with mud and thus prevented

from burning to ash. For anything contemporary with dinosaurs, carbon-14 dating would be useless, as this dating method is alleged to go back only to about forty thousand years, while dinosaurs are said to have died out around sixty-five million years ago. But a sample of the wood was carbon-14 dated by Dr. Reisner Berg at the University of California, Los Angeles. The result was an estimated age of twelve thousand years for the wood sample. (Reported in the *Creation Research Society Quarterly*, September 1979). Evolutionists say man was here longer ago than that. Either men and dinosaurs lived together or there is something faulty with the dating method.

Furthermore, according to Richard Leakey (*Origins*, 1977, page 122), "Applying a rough time scale, we can say that the step from [*Homo*] *erectus* to [*Homo*] *sapiens* occurred around half a million years ago, and the refinement to [*Homo*] *sapiens sapiens* perhaps fifty thousand years ago." Isaac Asimov (*Science and Creationism*, 1984, page 182) wrote the same thing, "*Homo sapiens* itself – the present human species, people like you and me – has walked the earth for at least 50,000 years." That puts modern man living longer ago than the time of the carbonated stick, which was found at the same level as dinosaur tracks.

In 1938 Professor W. G. Burroughs, head of the Geology Department of Berea College in Kentucky, and Dr. C. W. Gilmore, Curator of Vertebrate Paleontology of the Smithsonian Institution, both evolutionists, reported the finding of man-like footprints in an outcrop of sandstone. There were three pairs of tracks, showing quite distinct left and right footprints. As at the Paluxy site, some said that maybe Indians carved the footprints. A sculptor stated that the physical nature of the rock (sandstone) excluded the possibility of carving without leaving chip marks. A microscopic examination showed a clustering of sand grains at places where there would be most compaction due to the shape of the foot. Also the density of sand grains was less outside the footprints than inside. Moreover, there was a ridge around the footprints as the soft mud was pushed up while the weight that made the footprints pushed down at the time of their production. The rock was declared of Carboniferous age, millions of years before the dinosaurs.

Also there is the highly published case of a sandal print over a Cambrian trilobite in Utah, with human footprints reported in the vicinity. The Cambrian period is said to have ended around six hundred million years ago. Life at that time supposedly consisted exclusively of invertebrate forms, though evidences have been found of fish and woody plants, not reported in textbooks.

The book being reviewed does not mention radiohalos, which may be the best *scientific* evidence against evolution and great lengths of evolutionary time. The halos thus give some credence to the much

ridiculed expressions *creation science* and *scientific creationism*. These terms are improperly understood by the evolutionists, who continue to use them to ridicule creationists, asserting that creationists claim creation was scientific. Their intended use by creationists is *not* that creation was produced scientifically (it was not) but that problems in creation versus evolution may be discussed on a scientific basis without reference to religion or the Bible. In a book, *Science and Creationism*, edited by anthropologist Ashley Montagu, nineteen evolutionists contributed papers. I counted one hundred twenty-seven times these authors ridiculed or made slurring, sarcastic, or otherwise critical remarks about these terms, in addition to the times reference was made to them without comment.

More topics considered in this book could be discussed, such as varves, the speed of light, Biblical versus evolutionary time, and even the ethics of Jesus turning water into wine at Cana.

In an appendix the author presents some predictions. One is that "No evidence will ever turn up that men preceding modern man ever wore clothes. Although it can be argued that clothes were needed for warmth in the Ice Age climate, I am betting that the Neanderthals and other prehumans had sufficient body hair."

Originally the Neanderthals were reconstructed as brutes walking with bent knees and head thrust forward. This has been shown erroneous. They walked as we walk and they had brains equal in size and even larger than ours. At first it was claimed the quality of their large brains was inferior to ours, but this also has been retracted. They are placed in the same genus with us, *Homo*, and commonly in the same species but with a different subspecies, *Homo sapiens neanderthalensis*. We are *Homo sapiens sapiens*. Anthropologists say that in Israel modern man and Neanderthals lived contemporaneously and close together, and they even present evidence that modern man was there first. Their long belief was that we evolved from Neanderthals, but evidence against this seems to be increasing.

As in the case of the writings of Dr. Ross, this book is strong in promoting the existence of God but weak in explaining to the reader the way of salvation through faith in the redemption offered to us through the sacrifice made on the cross by our Lord Jesus Christ. We are all sinners, fallen from a perfect creation. God demands perfection, which now is impossible for us to achieve through any accomplishments or good deeds of our own. It is for us to believe in Jesus as Savior, to accept His death on the cross in our behalf, the atonement for sins, and through repentance and belief to accept His sacrifice as the only way of our salvation.

BOOK REVIEW

The Question of Freemasonry

By Ed Decker

Reviewed by Leslie E. Buege

The name Ed Decker is familiar to many who will recognize him as the author and co-author of books on Mormonism. RAS has five books by him dealing with this subject. We also carry a 219-page book of his where he looks at the beliefs and rituals of Freemasonry. This review is of a small 49-page booklet that he says is written as a "word of warning... not the Masonic fraternity at large, but to those Masons who claim to be both Masons and Christians!" The publisher, Huntington House, calls this "a pocket primer on a pervasive subject."

Ed Decker is a former Mormon who has done extensive research into the intricacies of the cult of Mormonism. He has also studied deeply into the Masonic origins, purposes and doctrines because of the exact parallel he has seen with the "mysteries" of Mormonism. This led him to believe that the "esoteric doctrines of Freemasonry separate it, just as unequivocally as do those of Mormonism, from the Christian theology." He said the same is true for every branch of Masonry, including the Shriners, the Blue Lodge, the Eastern Star, the DeMolay, Job's Daughters, the Rainbow Girls, the Scottish Rite and the York Rite.

In this booklet he deals with such subjects as:

- How did Freemasonry get started?
- What do the original Masonic documents say regarding the Bible, Jesus Christ, and Satan?
- What about all the good community works the Shriners and Masons do?

Most everybody probably knows of at least one person who is either a Mason or a member of one of the many branches of Masonry. Sometimes it is a friend, neighbor, co-worker or even a relative or family member. I know of three Masons who are relatives in my family or my wife's, one is still living, and two more I know were co-workers. Knowledge of the Masons allowed me to witness to two of these individuals. I witnessed firsthand their lack of knowledge of the Bible through my discussions with them. It is my belief that a person who has a good understanding of the doctrines of the Bible, and who believes in the infallibility of the Scriptures, will never become a Mason in the first place. But if they do, it shouldn't be long before they would recognize the conflict between their teachings and the Bible and therefore would leave the Lodge.

A good portion of the book contains quotations from the universally approved doctrinal book on Freemasonry, Morals and Dogma of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry, (1966 edition) by Albert Pike, Grand Commander, 1859-1891. The author does not use "anti-Masonic" publications when explaining their true theological position. Only their own publications are used.

One of the first things the author exposes from their own writings is that they are a "religious institution" and that Buddha was the "first Masonic legislator." This is important because they will usually deny that they are a religious organization. Their religion is universal religion in that they accept the false gods of many religions along with the true God of Christianity. Osiris, an ancient Egyptian god who is graphically represented by the "all-Seeing eye," is one of the false gods that they accept.

The author quotes from Albert Pike's book stating, "There is no book of which so little is known as the Bible." Pike goes on to say, "All truly dogmatic religions have issued from the Kabulah and return from it." The author explains that, "The Kabulah is a system of ancient Jewish magic and mysticism"

These are but a few sampling showing the serious nature of Freemasonry and why it isn't compatible with Biblical Christianity.

This is an excellent booklet that gets to the key differences between Biblical Christianity and Freemasonry. It is short and easy reading with illustrations showing some of the symbols they use. If I gave the book to a non-Christian and they eventually left Freemasonry, I would make sure that the person heard a clear presentation of the Gospel and were given the opportunity to accept the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Savior.

Video

Religion Analysis Service does not stock or sell videos, but now and then one comes to our attention which we believe would be beneficial to our constituency. Such a one is titled "Seventh-day Adventism, The Spirit Behind the Church." It is available from Grace Upon Grace Productions, P.O. Box 39607, Phoenix, AZ 85069. The telephone number is: (602) 973-4768. Their web-site is: www.sdaoutreach.org Their e-mail address is: sda@sdaoutreach.org

This video was prepared by Jeremiah Films in 1998. Jeremiah Films has a reputation for sound, quality videos.

The video gives the background of Ellen G. White, testimonies of former Seventh-day Adventists, quotations from Ellen White's own writ-

ings (she is still the source of authority for most SDAs). Many of her "false prophecies" are documented. Also, references are given to changes that have been made in Ellen G. White's writings by subsequent SDAs. SDA is still a salvation by works. They have now published their own "Clear Word Bible" (1994). This volume adds distortions to the Bible supporting their own doctrines. They also now have a new "study Bible."

The early connections between leaders of the SDAs and the Jehovah's Witnesses is documented. The plagiarisms by Ellen White are documented. Ellen White's unusual dietary laws are reported (Cf., vegetarians). Only vegetarians, according to Ellen White, will be raptured.

The video refers to some evangelical Christians who have been deceived by the SDAs and who have tried to present SDA as evangelical Christians.

Complete documentation for the video is available from the address in Arizona.

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