The Light of the Word of God

O how I love Your law!
It is my meditation all the day.
Your commandments make me wiser than my enemies,
For they are ever mine.
I have more insight than all my teachers,
For Your testimonies are my meditation.
I understand more than the aged,
Because I have observed Your precepts.
I have restrained my feet from every evil way,
That I may keep Your word.
I have not turned aside from Your ordinances,
For You Yourself have taught me.
How sweet are Your words to my taste!
Yes, sweeter than honey to my mouth!
From Your precepts I get understanding;
Therefore I hate every false way.

Your word is a lamp to my feet
And a light to my path*.*
I have sworn and I will confirm it,
That I will keep Your righteous ordinances.
I am exceedingly afflicted;
Revive me, O LORD, according to Your word.
O accept the freewill offerings of my mouth, O LORD,
And teach me Your ordinances.
My life is continually in my hand,
Yet I do not forget Your law.
The wicked have laid a snare for me,
Yet I have not gone astray from Your precepts.
I have inherited Your testimonies forever,
For they are the joy of my heart.
I have inclined my heart to perform Your statutes
Forever, even to the end.

Psalm 119:97-112

God is the Source of Light and His Word is the only Light that can guide us and show us whether or not the path we are on is the True Path or not.

Today there are many religions (or 'faiths') and men who claim to be able to guide man to Truth and to God. And as Christians we 'automatically' (or should) dismiss those which are opposed to the Gospel. If we believe that the Bible IS the Word of God - we use it as our guide, the plumb line, from which we assess the validity of comments made by those of other faiths.

It is because of the Truth of the Word of God, i.e. the Bible, that we say,

- Buddhism is wrong.
- Hinduism is wrong
- Islam with its Qur'an is wrong.
- and numerous others are wrong.

For example, where the Bible says of Jesus,

*Whoever confesses that **Jesus is the Son of God**, God abides in him, and he in God.*

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> *Who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that **Jesus is the Son of God**?*
> *The one who believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself; the one who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed in the testimony that God has given concerning His Son. And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.*
> ***1 John 4:15; 5:5; 5:10-13 (NAU)***

Islam says,

> No son (or offspring) did Allah beget,
> **Surah 23:91a (The Noble Qur'an)**
> Bracketed comments are included in the quotation.

And, where the Bible says,

> *For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that **Christ died** for our sins according to the Scriptures,*
> ***1 Corinthians 15:3 (NAU)***

> *For if the **dead** are not raised, not even Christ has been raised; and **if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless**; you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied. But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep.*
> ***1 Corinthians 15:16-20 (NAU)***

Islam says that Jesus Christ did not die, but rather someone else took His place on the cross,

> And because of their* saying (in boast), "We killed Messiah Isa (Jesus), son of Maryam (Mary), the Messenger of Allah," - but they killed him not, nor crucified him, but the resemblance of Isa (Jesus) was put over another man (and they killed that man), and those who differ therein are full of doubts. They have no (certain) knowledge, they follow nothing but conjecture. For surely; they killed him not [i.e. Isa (Jesus), son of Maryam (Mary)]:
> **Surah 4:157 (The Noble Qur'an)**
> Bracketed comments are included in the quotation.
> ** "their" meaning "the Jewish people".*

When we compare what these other religions say, against what the Bible says we dismiss them because they are contrary to the Word of God.

But what about ourselves? Shouldn't we shine the Light of the Word of God on Christian Ministries, or those who are regarded as Christian? Do we champion the Word of God, or do we champion a person or organisation which uses the words or titles of "pastor", "reverend", "father", "church" or "ministry"? Any person can register an organisation and give it a name synonymous with Christianity. As such we should not be afraid to examine the teachings and doctrines of "churches", "ministries" and their "ministers".

Christianity, as a religion is already defined. It has at its core a Book which dictates its FUNDAMENTAL, CORE and BASIC beliefs. A person, organization or institution which preaches contrary to those beliefs is NOT Christian - no matter what statements they say affirming the idea, and no matter what name they have. It is for this reason and on the basis that they contradict, dismiss or oppose the basic tenants of Christianity, that we can easily discern that:

- The Church of Jesus Christ of Later-Day Saints (Mormonism), is NOT Christian,

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- Watchtower Bible and Tract Society (Jehovah's Witnesses) are NOT Christian,
- Christian Science is NOT Christian, and
- The Roman Catholic Church is NOT Christian.

Though the protestant Christian world has no problem branding these organisation as fundamentally non-Christian - thus evaluating (judging) their doctrinal positions, it is when the Light is shone closer to "home" that many quickly retort, "Don't Judge", or "Don't be so critical" etc. How is it that we have no problem evaluating obviously dubious doctrines, yet so quickly shrink away from evaluating those who fly the banner of Christianity?

> *And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. As a result,* ***we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming****;*
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> ***Ephesians 4:11-14 (NAU)***

God has given us the Bible - His Word. In order to NOT be carried about by "every wind of doctrine" we must know THE Christian doctrine: the doctrines set out through the teachings of the Bible (in-context), in particular the New Testament.

> *For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to* ***teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God****, and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is an infant. But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil.*
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> ***Hebrews 5:12-14 (NAU)***

> *All who are under the yoke as slaves are to regard their own masters as worthy of all honor so that the name of God and our doctrine will not be spoken against. Those who have believers as their masters must not be disrespectful to them because they are brethren, but must serve them all the more, because those who partake of the benefit are believers and beloved. Teach and preach these principles.* ***If anyone advocates a different doctrine and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness****, he is conceited and understands nothing; but he has a morbid interest in controversial questions and disputes about words, out of which arise envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions, and constant friction between men of depraved mind and deprived of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain.*
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> ***1 Timothy 6:1-5 (NAU)***

Again, the plumb-line is "sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness". The ONLY record we have of the words of Jesus Christ is the Bible. So the evaluation of doctrine MUST be the Word of God, and not OUR feelings, emotions, experience, ideas, or even our denominational heritage.

> *I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths.*
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> ***2 Timothy 4:1-4 (NAU)***

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Paul's instruction to Timothy in regards to the manner of preaching the Word was to be able to "reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction". From pulpits today ministers do the same thing (and rightly so); and these actions ARE a form of judging. It is the judgement of right doctrine over bad doctrine, right actions over wrong actions, right speech over bad speech. Objective judging for the sake of correction is NOT to be dismissed. Condemnatory judgement in the evaluation of a person's **apparent** actions is to be discouraged - for it is unlikely that we will know all the facts?

> *Jesus answered them, "I did one deed, and you all marvel. For this reason Moses has given you circumcision (not because it is from Moses, but from the fathers), and on the Sabbath you circumcise a man. If a man receives circumcision on the Sabbath so that the Law of Moses will not be broken, are you angry with Me because I made an entire man well on the Sabbath? Do not judge **according to appearance**, but judge with **righteous judgment**."*
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> ***John 7:21-24 (NAU)***

In order to have purity of doctrine we must have an absolute reliance on the Bible and regard its integrity and infallibility to be without reproach. Then, when The Word of God is preached, In-Context, its doctrine will be pure.

> *But as for you, **speak the things which are fitting for sound doctrine**. Older men are to be temperate, dignified, sensible, sound in faith, in love, in perseverance. Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good, so that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, so that the word of God will not be dishonored. Likewise urge the young men to be sensible; in all things show yourself to be an example of good deeds, with **purity in doctrine**, dignified, sound in speech which is beyond reproach, so that the opponent will be put to shame, having nothing bad to say about us. Urge bondslaves to be subject to their own masters in everything, to be well-pleasing, not argumentative, not pilfering, but showing all good faith so that they will adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in every respect. For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds. **These things speak and exhort and reprove with all authority**. Let no one disregard you.*
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> ***Titus 2:1-15 (NAU)***

Unfortunately however, it is because some sway from their commitment to these points that some people are deceived into considering dubious doctrine. Or because an argument sounds good, is "loving" or "kind" that some may regard it as being Biblical or "godly" when it may not be. More often than not, Israel rejected her "critical" prophets - and this to their own detriment. God's judgement starts with the house of God, I hope we are not as quick as Israel to reject the warnings that may come beforehand. The Word of God is OUR Light, the Lamp to our feet, let us not stumble.

> *If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. Make sure that none of you suffers as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler; but if anyone suffers as a Christian, he is not to be ashamed, but is to glorify God in this name. **For it is time for judgment to begin with the household of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God**? AND IF IT IS **WITH DIFFICULTY** THAT THE RIGHTEOUS IS SAVED, WHAT WILL BECOME OF THE GODLESS MAN AND THE SINNER? Therefore, those also who suffer according to the will of God shall entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right.*
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> ***1 Peter 4:14-19 (NAU)***

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