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REORGANIZED SAINTS

Christian or Mormon?

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

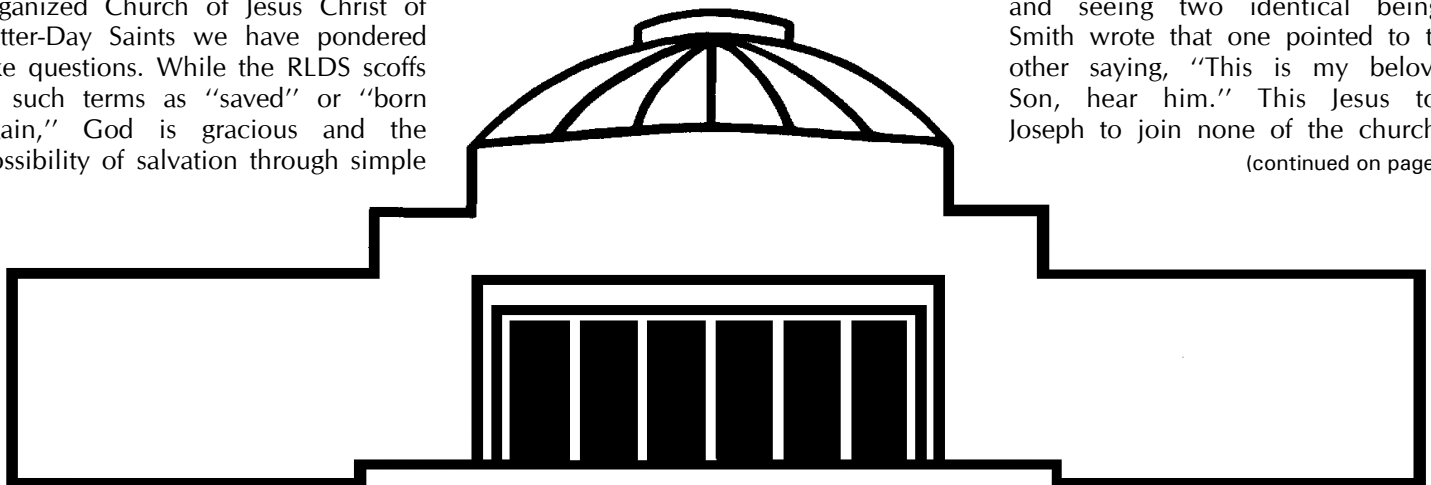
by Carol and Jack Eskridge

faith in Jesus is always there. An 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, grandsons, 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 home town. 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

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EDITORIALS

THE WATCHTOWER'S "TIME TO SPEAK"

While faithful Jehovah's Witnesses look to each new issue of **The Watchtower** for God's direction and a handful of cult-watchers check for "new light," the magazines seldom catch the public eye. The Sept. 1, 1987 **Watchtower** did.

Tucked behind four articles on spiritism is an article on a topic never before discussed in **The Watchtower**: confidentiality and Jehovah's Witnesses. An article in the **Los Angeles Times** by religion writer John Dart gave the article attention that the Watchtower seldom receives.

The Watchtower article instructs Jehovah's Witnesses to violate confidentiality rules in medical, legal and other professions by notifying Watchtower elders of a fellow Witness' sin. The article, "A Time to Speak — When?," sets forth for Witnesses a hypothetical situation of a medical assistant, named "Mary," who discovers confidential medical records of a Jehovah's Witness who had an abortion. The magazine goes on to say, "Situations like this are faced by Jehovah's Witnesses from time to time." The article then asks, "Was this the time for Mary to keep quiet, or was it the time for Mary to speak about what she had learned?"

Further, "Did she have a Scriptural responsibility to expose this information to elders in the congregation, even though it might lead to her losing her job, to her being sued, or to her employer's having legal problems?" The Watchtower's answer was "yes."

The article continues that "It is the right and loving course to encourage an erring Witness to speak with the elders, confident that they will handle the problem in a kind and understanding way." However, former Jehovah's Witnesses can testify that this will not happen.

Raymond Franz, a member of the Watchtower Society's Governing Body for nine years until his resignation in 1980, told the **Los Angeles Times** that he doubted "that those people going to the elders are going to be treated lovingly. So often people find they were dealt with in demeaning ways." Franz added that "No area of personal life is beyond their reach and rulings."

Most Jehovah's Witness elders are merely laymen elevated to the position of Watchtower authority. They are given no training in counseling for these special and delicate situations. The Watchtower's elders, with their judicial-style committee meetings or hearings, many times do more harm than good. Most Christian pastors receive seminary and post-seminary training in counseling to avoid the kind of blunders that Watchtower elders sometime commit.

An example documented in the film, **Witnesses of Jehovah**, is that of a 16-year-old Jehovah's Witness from California who became romantically involved with a married Jehovah's Witness woman. Grief-stricken and feeling guilty, the boy and his family sought for help. However, due to Watchtower policies, this help was restricted to aid from within the Society. The elders "helped" the boy by telling him that "the committee" (the Watchtower congregation's elders who constitute a sort of court) would deal with him the next day. Scared, confused and feeling helpless, the boy committed suicide rather than face the committee.

In another case, a mother whose child died because she refused permission for a blood transfusion became distressed and confused. This led her to ask questions of the elders and she soon was labeled as one of the "weaker ones." The elders eventually disfellowshipped her, which led to her suicide. Unmoved, the elders refused to hold a funeral for the woman, despite her husband's pleas.

In 1972, the Watchtower Society entered members' bedrooms, telling Jehovah's Witnesses which kinds of sexual practices between married men and women were acceptable and which weren't. In 1978, after damaging and straining marriages in some cases causing divorces — the Society changed its policy and eased its restraints. (See further Raymond Franz's **Crisis of Conscience**, pp. 43-48.)

Given the Watchtower's track record and its new "Time to Speak" policy, one can only wonder how many more will be hurt, abused, and destroyed, even if the rules are eventually discarded.

The goal of Christian discipline is restoration. Upon an erring member's sincere repentance, the church is to forgive. Watchtower elders, in too many instances, are extreme and quick in their efforts to hang before the congregation the dirty linen of one who falls into sin.

—MKG



WHO'S IN CHARGE? SHARPENING THE FOCUS ON THE WORD-FAITH MOVEMENT

I once heard a story about a television appearance by one of the prominent teachers in the Word-Faith movement. When the host asked him about reasons why people are not healed, the teacher gave the commonly cited causes — sin, lack of faith, unforgiveness, and so

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NEWS UPDATE

WF & PFO TO OPEN NAUVOO VISITORS CENTER

Watchman Fellowship and Personal Freedom Outreach have begun work on the establishment of a Christian Visitors Center in Nauvoo, Ill. Nauvoo is a focal point of Mormon tourism and evangelism. Last September, loans were secured for the purchase of a two-story structure located in downtown Nauvoo, just two blocks from the Mormon temple site.

Renovation of the Visitors Center building is expected to begin in late winter, with its formal opening and inauguration of mission work in early spring. The center also will help evangelical churches within a 75-mile radius as they spread the Gospel to those in the cults.

Nauvoo and its neighbor city, Carthage, Ill., have been the target of much Mormon public relations in recent years. Samuel W. Taylor, in the April 1987 **Restoration** magazine, wrote that "The LDS Church has purchased some 1,200 acres at the site [Nauvoo] of the historical city, including about forty of the original buildings, which are being restored to mint condition. The heart of the city will be rebuilt restored as exactly as possible to its original condition. A million-dollar visitors center has been completed. Plans call for motels, cafes, a marina, golf course — a \$50 million project."

The major focus of the center, in addition to presenting the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, will be to address the historical facts about the Mormons in Nauvoo. The Mormons themselves admit to having trouble in this area. Taylor, in the aforementioned magazine, also wrote: "For too long the Nauvoo story has been crammed into the mold of Mormon mythology, seen as part of the missionary effort rather than history. For example, the LDS church information service made a motion picture about Nauvoo which contained, according to a reputable historian, 87 errors of fact. When you can be wrong eighty-seven times in a half-hour, you are showing genuine dedication to mythology."

WF and PFO asks for the prayers and financial gifts of its supporters in making the Nauvoo Christian Visitors Center a success unto the service of the Lord Jesus.

—MKG



THE WAY TREE SPLINTERS

Several top Way International leaders have either resigned their posts or been fired by the sect's Board of

Trustees, causing many followers to distance themselves from the Now Knoxville, Ohio-based group. The exiled leaders have accused The Way's Trustees of misuse of power, false doctrine, evil intents, spiritual corruption, dereliction of duty, and, in some cases, adultery.

One important leader of the dissent is John Lynn. Lynn was ordained by The Way in 1971, working full-time for over 15 years as part of the New Knoxville staff and as a Limb and Region Coordinator. He wrote three Way books, more than any other person besides the late founder of the sect, Victor Paul Wierwille.

Last spring, the Lynn coalition sought to develop an organization called American Fellowship Services as an alternative to The Way International. According to a letter dated March 30, 1987, signed by several leaders of the new group, the entity will not replace The Way International. Further, the association claimed it will not seek tax exemption or church status. Proposed articles of association and by-laws have been drafted.

A June 1987 letter from Lynn gave some specifics concerning the gross doctrinal error on the part of Way leadership. Cited were teachings that: Adultery is not unbiblical and often is God's will; believers who disobey Way leadership are opposed by God and will be judged for it; tithing is a minimum, and giving more than 10% is essential; and the "Athletes of the Spirit" teaching which, Lynn says, negates Jesus Christ, teaches that God can direct a believer to murder, and reduces the believer to a servant of Way hierarchy.

Additional reports show Lynn also forming a group called Capital Saints, which apparently is made up largely of twigs (Way home meeting cells) that once were part of the Washington, D.C. Limb, which Lynn coordinated.

Another group forming as an alternative to The Way is the Pacific West Fellowship in Anaheim, Calif. It was founded by Steve Sann who, like Lynn, is a Way Corps graduate, clergyman, and former Limb and Region Coordinator. Sann likewise cites doctrinal and practical errors and disagreement with trustee control as reasons for departure.

Some Way followers will join one of the new organizations. Others will drop out of any kind of fellowship. PFO encourages Way followers to transfer their faith from the organization of The Way International to the person of Jesus Christ. Christians should take full advantage of this upheaval in The Way to direct its followers to faith in the Jesus of the Bible.

—JPJ

JOSEPH'S FIRST VISION STORY



UNDERMINED

by Wesley P. Walters

The Mormon Church made a big mistake in 1880 when it elevated to the level of inspired scripture Joseph Smith's story of his church's beginnings.

In this "official" account, written in 1838, Smith bases the beginning of the Mormon church on a vision he claimed to have had in 1820. In the vision, Smith claimed, two separate Gods, the Father and the Son, appeared to him and declared that all the existing Christian churches were wrong, all their creeds an abomination, and that all their members were both and hypocritical.

This story had an inherent contradiction from the start, but now newly discovered historical records show clearly how totally it conflicts with what really happened in the lives of Smith and his family.

The contradiction shows up when we look at the order of events Smith sets forth. He says that his father arrived in Palmyra township, in western New York, when he, Joseph Jr., was 10 years old; that is, in 1816. About four years later (in 1820), he writes, the family moved to a farm in the adjoining township of Manchester. Then in the second year after moving to Manchester (in 1822), he says that a religious excitement, or revival, in the neighborhood led to his retiring to the woods to pray for an understanding of which church to join. Thereupon the two deities appeared to him and informed him that all the churches were wrong.

Having led the reader to the year 1822 for this experience, he confuses the picture by claiming that this experience took place on a "beautiful,

clear day, early in the spring of eighteen hundred and twenty."

To remove this discrepancy, and in the absence of any evidence to the contrary, Mormon writers have usually placed the Smith's move to Manchester in 1818, so that "two years" after their move to the farm, the vision could occur in "eighteen hundred and twenty."

But newly discovered documents show this attempted harmonization to be impossible. The documents show that the Smiths were living in Palmyra as late as April 1822. Any move to Manchester had to have occurred after that date, and could not have been in 1818. These documents are the road tax lists for Palmyra township, giving the names of all the owners and male inhabitants 21 years of age and older, who were required to work on the roads. These tax records were micro-filmed in 1970 by Brigham Young University, but the entry of Joseph Smith, Sr. only recently has been noted. The list shows that Joseph Smith, Sr. had been required, along with other male residents in Road District No. 26, to keep the roads in that district in repair in each year from April 1817 through April 1822.

Thus the Smiths could not have been living on a farm in the adjoining township of Manchester until after April 1822.

In addition, newly discovered property assessment records, which had been buried in a basement in Ontario County, Now York, for over a century and a half, reinforce this conclusion.

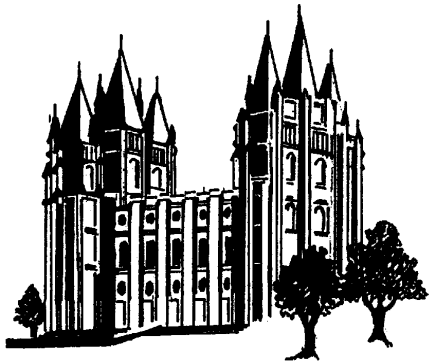
Smith's mother mentions that they contracted to buy the 100-acre farm

on Lot #1 in Manchester from the "Eversons" [sic], in three yearly payments. The assessment records show that in July 1820 the entire 300 acres of Lot #1 were taxed to "the heirs of Nicholas Evertson." It was not until the following summer (1821) that 100 acres of Lot #1 went on the property tax rolls taxed to Joseph Smith, Sr. The other 200 acres were still taxed to the Evertson heirs. In the summer of 1822, Joseph Smith, Sr. again appears taxed for 100 acres on Lot #1. in both 1821 and 1822 the farm was valued at \$700, or \$7.00 an acre. This is the price that raw, unimproved land was selling for at that time.

However, in July 1823, the assessed value rose to \$1000.00, no doubt reflecting the additional value of a dwelling. Thus it is evident that it was not until some time between the summer of 1822 and the summer of 1823 that the Smiths were able to erect a cabin on the Manchester property, raising the assessed value, and enabling them to move onto the land.

When we bring these two contemporary documents, the Palmyra Road Tax record and the Manchester assessment records, to bear on Joseph's story, it becomes clear that the Smith family did not move to Manchester until some time after April 1822 and before July 1823. If the revival, as young Smith said, did not occur until the second year after the Smiths moved to Manchester, then the revival would have occurred some time in the 1824-26 period. This is exactly when a previous study (New Light on Mormon Origins) shows that it did occur. Even Brigham Young University professor Dr. Marvin Hill has conceded that the revival Smith describes in his 1838 account did not take place until 1824.

What does all this new contemporary evidence about the Smiths' move to Manchester and an 1824 revival date mean? It means that Smith's First-Vision story is without the historical foundation it claims to have because it is contradicted by contemporary historical documents. It means that Smith's whole first vision story becomes suspect and an "inspired" Mormon scripture is flawed. It means that the story on which the Mormon Church rests its origin and its claim to be God's only true church sits on a cracked foundation. ❁



SIZING UP THE SAINTS

by M. Kurt Goedelman



Comparing the Latter-day Saints with the Reorganized Latter-Day Saints

When Joseph Smith, Jr. spoke out against the dissenters at Nauvoo, Ill., in May 1844, he claimed: "I have more to boast of than ever any man had. I am the only man that has ever been able to keep a whole church together since the days of Adam. A large majority of the whole have stood by me. Neither Paul, John, Peter, nor Jesus ever did it. I boast that no man ever did a work as I" (**History of the Church**, Vol. 6, pp. 408-409). Almost exactly one month later, the first "Prophet" of the Mormon church lay dead having been killed by a mob of angry citizens in nearby Carthage, Ill.

With the passing of the founder of the Mormon religion went his claim of the unity of the "restored" Christian church. Following Smith's slaying, several men claimed divine authority over the church. This dispute led to the formation of more than 100 factions. (See further **Divergent Paths of the Restoration** by Steven L. Shields.) While the major schisms did not develop until after Smith's death, the church he founded had problems from the beginning. Key members always seemed to be at odds with the "Prophet" and left the church. Some returned, some did not. In addition, during the early days of the church, working relations between the various Mormon missions were less than desirable. (See further **No Man Knows My History** by Fawn Brodie, pp. 144ff.)

Most of the splinter groups still proclaim Smith to be a prophet of God and founder of their church. The two largest and best known of these sects are the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS), based in Salt Lake City, Utah; and the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (RLDS), based in Independence, Mo. Many Christians today know that

these two groups are separated not only geographically, but also doctrinally. Yet there often is confusion over the theological differences between these groups.

History

Following Smith's death, most Mormons pledged their allegiance to Brigham Young. Young was a convert to the Mormon religion from its early days in Kirtland, Ohio, and was an apostle at the time of Smith's death. The movement Smith founded remained in Illinois about two years after his death, then moved to Utah's Great Salt Lake Valley under Young's direction. The LDS church is the largest of the factions with more than 6 million members.

The formal RLDS beginnings did not occur for over a decade following Joseph Smith's death. The group was officially established in 1860 in Amboy Ill., under the leadership of Joseph Smith III, although the movement had begun to take shape in the early 1850s. Since 1860, RLDS leadership has consistently been in the hands of a direct descendant of Joseph Smith, Jr. The current president, Wallace B. Smith, is Joseph's great-grandson. Around the turn of the century, the church established its current headquarters in Independence. It claims worldwide membership of nearly 250,000. It still is the second-largest of the Mormon factions.

The Conception of Doctrine

Mormon doctrine evolved throughout Smith's life. Some Mormon factions hold to Smith's original theology. Others adhere to doctrines he formed later on. Most of these groups have, in some way, redeveloped and added to the beliefs they first embraced.

Smith first taught that God was one, uncomplex deity. The 1830 edition of **The Book of Mormon** says: "...yea, the Everlasting God, was judged of the world by being rejected and crucified." Thus, in this teaching about God, He is so much a monad that the Father is the Son and the Son is the Father. Subsequent editions were modified to reflect a change from this teaching and read, "...yea, the Son of the everlasting God was judged of the world" (1 Nephi 11:32), thus distinguishing the Father from the Son in a more complex idea of deity.

Further, while every LDS missionary is quick to present his testimony that "**The Book of Mormon** is the true Word of God," it is difficult, if not impossible, to find "scriptural" backing for LDS doctrines from **The Book of Mormon**. Found in **The Book of Mormon** are ideas that contradict LDS thought: a nearly orthodox trinitarian view of God, that God is a spirit, that He is unchangeable, that man cannot achieve salvation after death (going into only one of two destinies), and that salvation is by Christ's work alone. (See further "Divine Truths in The Book of Mormon," **PFO Newsletter**, Vol. 2, No. 1. Also available in tract form.) Absent are the LDS' elaborate temple ceremony doctrines of baptism for the dead, the sealing of marriages and families for eternity and other peculiar LDS doctrines.

Scripture

The LDS says in its Articles of Faith: "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." In addition, the LDS also regards **Doctrine and Covenants, Pearl of Great**

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Price and revelations from its current prophet (president) as authorized utterances from God.

However, what the Articles of Faith quote says, in effect, is that the LDS regards the Bible as a less reliable authority than its other scriptures. Although Smith sought to give followers an improved version of the Bible — which should have eliminated the need for the qualification “as far as it is translated correctly” — the LDS contend he was killed before he could complete the final draft of his “Inspired Version.” (Although the RLDS claim Smith’s translation was completed and thus publishes, sells and utilizes the “Inspired Version.”) For this reason the LDS promotes and uses the King James Version of the Bible.

The RLDS, on the other hand, uses only three standard works. It omits **The Pearl of Great Price**, even though for a short time in the 19th century, RLDS leaders appealed to portions of this work. However, while the LDS lessens the importance of the Bible, the RLDS now disparages both the Bible and **The Book of Mormon**. The RLDS assumes that the Bible is filled with conflicts and errors and also has challenged the inspiration of **The Book of Mormon**.

The leadership of the RLDS says that even a “casual reading of the Book of Acts and the letters of Paul reveals conflicting events and teachings regarding Paul.” They regard the Bible as having “conflicting history and difficult theologies.” This leaves scripture as only a vague and confused witness to Christianity and its beliefs.

RLDS leaders further say concerning **The Book of Mormon**: “The historicity of the book cannot be proven.” They have recognized the obvious 19th century “thought and ethics” and the “medieval theology” evident in the work, which precludes it from being an ancient production. However, they do not make the validity of **The Book of Mormon** “depend upon truth or error” of the book. (See “The Identity of the Church,” First Presidency Meetings, Jan. 9, 1979, pp. 8-9.) One often gets the impression that they retain **The Book of Mormon** in their canon more from a respect for their heritage

than from a belief in its divine inspiration.

The third standard work of the RLDS church, the **Doctrine and Covenants**, remains an open canon, with additions currently being made after a formal vote of the church’s conference. The admission of women to the RLDS priesthood is an example of a contemporary revelation.

The Nature of God

LDS writers admit that their teaching about God is not of traditional Christianity. William O. Nelson, administrative assistant to the Apostles, wrote in the LDS Ensign magazine: “Latter-day Saints are sometimes accused of having an antibiblical theology because they believe that God is a glorified being of flesh and bones — not a spirit essence. Some who write anti-Mormon pamphlets insist that the LDS concept of deity is contrary to what is recognized as traditional Christian doctrine. In this they are quite correct” (**Ensign**, July 1987, pg. 56).

Smith attacked and ridiculed the biblical teaching of the Trinity, saying: “Many men say there is only one God; the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are only one God. I say that is a strange God anyhow — three in one, and one in three. It is a curious organization ... All are to be crammed into one God, according to sectarianism. It would make the biggest God in the whole world. He would be a wonderfully big God — he would be a giant or a monster” (**History of the Church**, Vol. 6, pg. 476).

According to LDS teaching, the Mormon “God himself was once as we are now, and is an exalted man, and sits enthroned in yonder heavens!” (**Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith**, pg. 345) Elohim (God the Father) once lived as a mortal on another planet and through his conquest over sin and obedience to his own God, earned the right to become a God. Further, the eternal hope of becoming one’s own God, ruling over one’s own universe, as the LDS teaches its God did, is anticipated by those who espouse to LDS doctrine.

Concerning Jesus Christ, LDS theology also differs from that of orthodox Christianity. The LDS Jesus is the first spirit offspring of the exalted man Elohim and one of his goddess wives.

Elohim’s second spirit child was Lucifer, making Jesus a spirit brother of the angel who became the devil. (See **Mormon Doctrine**, by Bruce R. McConkie, pg. 164.) Further, according to LDS teaching, when a physical body was needed for Jesus, Elohim came in person in his glorified, physical body and had sexual relations with the Virgin Mary to conceive a person who would provide Jesus with an earthly body. (See **Mormon Doctrine**, pg. 742; **Articles of Faith** by Apostle James E. Talmage, pg. 473; and **Family Home Evening**, 1972, pg. 126.) Mormons regard this unique teaching of how Jesus got his physical body as the reason for calling him God’s “only begotten Son.”

The LDS divides the Holy Spirit into two separate entities. The Holy Ghost is a third God with a spiritual body who is also limited like the Father and Son. Thus, this “God” is different from the other two “Gods” in that he does not possess a body of “flesh and bone.” He is regarded as “a personage of spirit, a Spirit Person, a Spirit Man, A spirit entity who can be in only one place at one time” (**Mormon Doctrine**, pg. 359).

This Holy Ghost, however, differs from the LDS’ Holy Spirit, which is regarded as an impersonal force which emanates from the deity. This force may be likened to electricity that is everywhere. (See **Mormon Doctrine**, pg. 753.) It is through this Holy Spirit force, which is in touch with everything in our universe, that the three localized deities keep abreast of what is happening. The Holy Spirit, as distinct from the Holy Ghost, is therefore a kind of intelligence-gathering communications network.

RLDS theology on the nature of God is more akin to that of orthodox Christianity, but lacks the clarity of the traditional doctrine of the Trinity. The RLDS publication, **Who Are The Saints?** states: “The church realizes that it experiences God not only as the Father, but also in the person of Jesus Christ and in the Holy Spirit. Yet Christians believe that there is only one God; therefore the affirmations that we make regarding God must apply to Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit as well as to the Father. However, some degree of separation must be made” (pg. 9).

While the RLDS statements may seem orthodox enough, it is difficult to locate church theological books which expand upon the triunity of God. Regarding this, Gordon H. Fraser states: "The Reorganized Church makes an affirmation of the Christian belief regarding the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, but has some reservations in accepting the doctrine of the Trinity as held by orthodox Christianity" (**Sects of the Latter-day Saints**, pg. 49). While it is easy to find stated that the Father and Son are regarded as persons in RLDS literature, it is difficult to find references to the Holy Spirit (or Holy Ghost) as a person. Rather He is mainly regarded as "the living power and presence of God" (**Who Are The Saints?**, pg. 10). Consequently it has become popular among some RLDS adherents to speak of the "Godhead" as "two persons and the power," that is the Father and the Son, with the Holy Spirit being the power of those two persons. This reminds one of the earlier teaching in the first edition of the Doctrine and Covenants that the Holy Spirit is the "mind" of the Father and Son.

Although, as stated above, references can be found in RLDS works regarding the persons of the Father and the Son, other RLDS publications would deny this. For example, The RLDS' eight-page pamphlet, "The Godhead," says that "The idea of the Trinity comes not from three separate beings but from our own human modes of thoughts and limitations of understanding." This pamphlet presents a modalistic, or Sabellian, view of the Godhead which says in effect that there are no distinctions in the Divine Being, no trinity of persons. God is one in person and merely takes upon Himself different roles or "modes" in His relationship to man.

Absent from RLDS doctrine is the exalted man-God theory, as well as mortal men progressing to become Gods, the teaching that three separate and distinct Gods form the Trinity, the incarnation of Christ as a direct result of sexual intercourse between the Father and Mary, and splitting the Holy Spirit (and Holy Ghost) into two separate entities.

Salvation

Salvation for those in the LDS is built on the final theological perspec-

tives of Joseph Smith and culminates in one becoming a God. Further, in the LDS religion, no one is really lost. All, with the exception of a few "sons of perdition," will receive some measure of glory. Heaven is divided into three degrees: the Celestial Glory, the highest, is for faithful Mormon families who have been sealed in the temple; the Terrestrial Glory is for Mormons who do not live up to all the requirements of the LDS church, and for non-Mormons who have lived good lives; and the Telestial, or lowest level, which is reserved for the wicked who are guilty of serious sins such as apostasy from the LDS church, adultery, or failure to obey the many LDS commandments such as abstaining from coffee, tea and tobacco.

The LDS church has instituted the elaborate practice of baptism for the dead. This ordinance has present church members undergoing proxy baptism for dead relatives to ensure the deceased — a chance to obtain a higher degree of glory.

Finally, the LDS regards the biblical teaching of salvation by grace alone, apart from works, as "a most pernicious doctrine" that "has exercised an influence for evil." (See **Articles of Faith**, pp. 107, 480.) The Mormon is left to work out his own salvation through faith, repentance, baptism, loyalty to the church, tithing, eternal marriage and other church activities.

In comparison, the RLDS church says: "We believe that humankind cannot be saved in the kingdom of God except by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, who loves them while they are yet in their sins, and who gave his life to reconcile them to God. Through this atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the gift of the Holy Spirit, they received power to choose God and to commit their lives to God's purposes; thus they are turned from rebellion, healed from sin, renewed in spirit, and transformed after the image of God in righteousness and holiness" (**Statement of Faith and Belief of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints**, pg. 4).

However this transformed life is focused on "the deepest human needs" of this life, as the RLDS "Presidency [Position] Papers" indicate. The "Gospel" we are told "offers no solutions

for the problem of collective evil, the question of death, nor even a solution for sin." (See "The Identity of the Church," July 9, 1979, pg. 2.)

To secure salvation and admission into the RLDS church one must be baptized. Since this requirement seems identical to that of the LDS church, it is probably a residual of the "baptismal remission of sins" apparently introduced by the early Mormon leader, Sidney Rigdon, who had defected from the ranks of Alexander Campbell, a teacher of the same doctrine. In addition, as RLDS writer Steven Shields points out in his **Latter-Day Saints Beliefs**: "The right to receive the Holy Ghost or Holy Spirit is bestowed by priesthood authorities" (pg. 19). This confines certain spiritual benefits only to the RLDS, just as the LDS confines the same benefits only to its authority.

The RLDS does not regard marriage as essential for salvation, but rather as "ordained of God; and that the law of God provided for but one companion in wedlock for either man or woman." Further, the RLDS teaches that the contract of marriage is broken by death and is not for time and eternity, as is taught by the LDS church.

Also absent from RLDS teaching is the practice of baptism for the dead. Although omitted, the result of the LDS ordinance is still a part of RLDS belief. For within RLDS theology is the belief that salvation is possible after death, since those who did not have the chance to receive the restored Gospel message will be given the opportunity after death. (See further, **RLDS Church History**, Vol. 2, pg. 16.)

The RLDS confesses a belief in the "doctrine of eternal judgment, which provides that man shall be judged and rewarded or punished according to the degree of good or evil he shall have done." (See **An Introduction to the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints**, pg. 12.)

While judgment is certain in RLDS teaching, hell is seldom mentioned and an almost universalist doctrine is promoted. **Exploring the Faith** says: "Through the judgment of God the eternal destiny of men is determined according to divine wisdom and love and according to their response to God's call to them. The principle of eternal judgment acknowledges that

Christ is the judge of all human aspiration and achievement and that he summons men to express truth in decision until all things are reconciled under God."

This emphasis on gradually improving mankind by human effort has resulted in a strong feeling among most RLDS members that man must work his own way to heaven. "Mormonism," as one RLDS scholar has noted, "has never found a place in its thought for a Pauline doctrine of unmerited grace." This is so, he points out, first because Adam's fall is regarded as a blessing rather than the cause of mankind's sinful condition. Further, Mormonism's strong emphasis on man's free agency places severe limitations on God's power to override man's sinful tendencies. Thus, "Mormon thought is incompatible with Pauline grace." (See Clare D. Vlahos, "Mormonism and the Limits of Grace," 1979, unpublished paper.)

Temples

LDS members regard their temples as most sacred places. The buildings which, once dedicated, are open only to those who faithfully support the LDS church with both their money and their lives. Today, the LDS church has built more than 40 temples worldwide to practice the secret ordinances that it teaches are necessary for exaltation.

The RLDS regard the temple as merely a public house of worship. It currently owns only one temple, the Kirtland, Ohio, temple, the first one built by Joseph Smith. Smith, as the RLDS correctly teaches, used the Kirtland temple as a place of public worship, not at that point having developed his secret ceremonies. The rituals later practiced were first taught during his last years while in Nauvoo, after joining and then learning the rites of the Masonic Lodge. These Masonic-influenced ceremonies are accepted by the LDS, but rejected by the RLDS.

Final Thoughts

While one can clearly see that the teachings of the LDS church have little in common with anything taught in the Bible, it is also evident that the RLDS, though less far-fetched in their teachings, also depart from biblical truths.

Further, both organizations assume a complete apostasy of the Christian Church on the Earth and suppose that the true Christian Church was reinstated by Joseph Smith. God's word nowhere speaks of such a total apostasy, but rather states that the "gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18), and that the Lord who began a good work in the early church "will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Philippians 1:6).

Finally, both groups look to Joseph Smith as a true prophet of God. If this is so, then all other denominations who do not regard Smith as such are certainly lacking and doing a great disservice to God. However, if Smith is not the prophet he claimed to be, but rather one of the many false prophets about whom Jesus Himself warned (Matthew 7:14, 24:24), then those espousing his teachings should reject the teachings and leave any church that would promote such teachings.

In evaluating either the LDS or RLDS, two things must be considered: Did Joseph Smith himself claim to be a prophet of God? and did Smith meet the biblical requirements of a true prophet?

It is easy to prove that Smith claimed to be a prophet of God. Both LDS and RLDS literature abound with references to Smith as "Prophet," "Seer" or "Revelator." LDS members focus their testimony on the "Prophet Joseph Smith." Smith even included a prophecy in **The Book of Mormon** as to his own coming, claiming that he would be a "Choice Seer" and that his name would be called "Joseph" after the name of his father.

To test whether Smith meets the biblical requirement of a true prophet, one need only see if all his prophecies or revelations came to pass. If even one did not, he is a false prophet (Deut. 18:21,22). Sadly, for millions who place their faith in Smith, he has failed this scriptural requirement of a true prophet.

In **Doctrine and Covenants**, Section 84, Smith prophesied that a temple would be built on the temple lot in Independence (Jackson County), Mo. This temple was to be built "in this generation." For nearly 100 years, Mormon leaders have understood

those words to mean built in the "generation" in which the revelation was given. (See Apostle George Q. Cannon, **Journal of Discourses**, Vol. 10, pg. 344.) However, today in Independence stands an empty lot with only a historical marker as tribute to the failure of this prophecy.

Again, in **Doctrine and Covenants**, Section 87, one finds Smith prophesying on Dec. 25, 1832, that a civil war would break out soon between the Northern and Southern states, which would then lead to war being poured out upon all nations. Regarding this revelation, Fawn Brodie says, "President Jackson remained ignorant of the edict of the Almighty and acted instead as if the Lord were on the side of peace. And peace continued for 28 years. The prophecy was quietly abandoned and excluded from early collections of Joseph's revelations. It was not exhumed from his private collections until 19 years later, when Brigham Young, seeing the whirlwind hour darkening, ordered its publication" (**No Man Knows My History**, pg. 124).

Finally, Smith prophesied in 1838 that one of his 12 apostles, David W. Patten, was to perform a mission endeavor in the spring of 1839. (See **Doctrine and Covenants**, Section 114:1.) However, when one examines Volume 3 of the **History of the Church** (pg. 175), we find that David W. Patten died Oct. 24, 1838, while trying to rescue three Mormons in Caldwell County, Missouri. Needless to say, Patten did not perform his mission as prophesied.

False prophecies and unscriptural doctrines make it clear that the churches Smith founded (whether LDS, RLDS or another of the 100-plus schisms), are not a restoration of the true church of God. The Jesus of the Bible is not the Jesus proclaimed by any Mormon church. The Mormon Jesus' church died out and had to be restored by Smith. Christ's true church has stood as a living witness since the day of Pentecost. The Mormon Jesus' church offers a set of rules to live by to attain salvation. The Jesus of the Bible invites all people to experience a spiritual rebirth through His atoning death upon Calvary's cross, and through faith in his death and resurrection alone, to receive the free gift of eternal life. ❁

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 the 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" (Ephesians 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 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 Thessalonians 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 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 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! ❀

EDITORIALS

(from page 2)

on. He then admitted that some Christians seem to have faith for healing yet still die for reasons we don’t know. The teacher concluded: “Sometimes God is sovereign and takes the sick person home.”

Whether the statement that God is sovereign only “sometimes” was a careless choice of words or a revealing slip is open to question. But there is no question that the nature of God’s sovereignty must be a central issue for all future analysis of and interaction with the Word-Faith movement and its leaders.

In the last few months I have received beneficial, constructive critiques of **The Health and Wealth Gospel** from Personal Freedom Outreach’s Kurt Goedelman and Steve Cannon and from Marc Drayer, who reviewed the book in the July-September 1987 PFO newsletter. While I am not ready to abandon my diplomatic approach, I have been forced to re-examine my analysis of the faith movement, and to wish that I had given more attention to the questions of “the believer’s authority,” the power of “spiritual law,” and the extent of God’s sovereignty. (These issues are discussed in my book — primarily toward the end of Chapter 7 — but could have been granted greater prominence.)

Even more to the point is the new thesis by Joseph Creech titled, “The Charismatic Faith Movement in Its Cultural Context.” Creech shows convincingly that all the distinctive doctrines of the Word-Faith movement reflect the spirit of our modern narcissistic age, in which people demand and seek the freedom to control their own lives.

Very few Christians dispute the fact that God has granted us “control” in some areas of life. Salvation is the most obvious area. Although salvation is by grace, most Christians agree that we can know we are “saved” if we consciously accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. If this is not so, the Four Spiritual Laws and nearly all forms of modern evangelism are the biggest sham of religious history.

So the issue is not so much whether we have control, but how much control we do have, and how we treat those who see the issue differently than we do. When Gloria Copeland suggests that we can control the time of our death, as she did in the September 1987 issue of the Copeland’s newsletter, we can be fairly sure that she is wrong (cf. James 4:13-16), though that error does not make her an unbeliever. When Kenneth Copeland and others make statements that suggest we have the nature and ability of God, his inflated view of our authority (which implicitly diminishes God’s authority) begins to move so far out of balance as to approach the area of heresy.

We have to be careful what we call heresy, since using this term usually implies that the people we are talking about no longer can be considered Christians. For example, Billy Graham has endorsed a book that prominently teaches, just like the Word-Faith system, that Jesus suffered “spiritual death” on the cross and was tortured for three days before being “born again” out of hell. (See Paul E. Billheimer’s **Destined For The Throne**.) This doesn’t make Billy Graham a heretic. But if one constructs a whole theological system that inflates man and deflates

(continued on next page)

God (as E.W. Kenyon may have done and as Kenneth Copeland may be doing), then perhaps the word "heretic" is none too strong.

Among the Word-Faith teachers, Copeland in particular has been opening up to a wider spectrum of Christianity — at least its charismatic sector. (He was one of the speakers at a July charismatic conference in New Orleans.) A recent report says Copeland is willing to meet with his theological critics. Whether these charismatic leaders and theologians are willing and able to confront Copeland, insisting that he make God's sovereignty central to his belief system if he wants to remain a Christian brother in their eyes, may largely determine whether my hope for increasing balance in the Word-Faith movement will remain tenable in the years to come.

—Bruce Barron

Editor's Note: In regards to Kenneth Copeland's announcement that he "wants [a] meeting with cultwatchers to discuss his recent statements," PFO gladly accepts this invitation. We are most willing to meet and discuss with him, or any other prominent Word-Faith teacher, the "presumptuous teachings of the Word-Faith movement." Please contact PFO's Midwest office for details and arrangements.



THE HOFMANN INTERVIEWS

Master forger Mark Hofmann, who planted pipe bombs that killed two Salt Lake City people, has completed his interviews with county attorneys. The interviews, part of a plea bargain to avoid the death sentence, are now part of the public record and are an embarrassment to the Mormon church.

Hofmann admitted that he used the LDS' desire to suppress documents that undermined their claims as a basis for selling the church forged documents (**Hofmann Confessions**, pp. 315-316). Mormon Apostle Gordon B. Hinckley admitted that the church acquired from Hofmann "40-some" documents at a cost running into

thousands of dollars. Most of the documents were forgeries.

The Mormon church claims for its leaders the gift of discernment. Apostle Bruce R. McConkie in his **Mormon Doctrine** maintains: "the Spirit is giving direct and daily revelation to the presiding Brethren in the administration of the affairs of the Church." Consequently, he continues, "The presence of revelation in the Church is positive proof that it is the kingdom of God on earth" (pp. 646-647, 650). McConkie added that "the gift of discerning of spirits is poured out upon presiding officials in God's kingdom." It is the presence of revelation in the Church that enables the leaders to discern "between the righteous and the wicked," for "There is no perfect operation of the power of discernment without revelation."

In Hofmann's case, however, such claimed power of revelation discernment was a miserable failure. Apostle Dallin Oaks has recently tried to excuse the leaders for the terrible blunder of being so grossly misled by Hofmann. Oaks explained that "In order to perform their personal ministries, Church leaders cannot be suspicious." They "function best in an atmosphere of trust and love." As a result they are occasionally deceived a few times, "but that is the price they pay to increase their effectiveness in counseling, comforting and blessing hundreds of honest and sincere people they see." However, Hofmann did not contact church leaders for counseling, but to sell documents, as Jerald and Sandra Tanner have correctly noted.

It was not because they were counseling and comforting Hofmann that they fell for his forgeries. It was apparently because they knew that the scenario of their founder's connection with money digging and magic was true that they wished to prevent documents that firmly established this from coming to light (**Hofmann Confessions**, pg. 354). The Hofmann forgeries, therefore, have not only established the lack of revelation and discernment on the part of the Mormon leaders, but also their basic dishonesty in dealing with their own people and the public at large.

—WPW

Editor's Note: Those interested in pursuing this matter further should see Sandra and Jerald Tanner's latest newsletter, "Hofmann Talks." Please send \$2.00 for newsletter and postage to: Utah Lighthouse Ministry, P.O. Box 1884, Salt Lake City, UT 84110.

BOOK REVIEWS

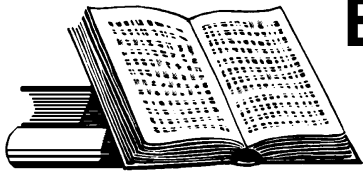
of **Great Price** is excellent in contrasting Smith's translation of the papyrus with that of professional Egyptologists. The book would benefit by providing descriptive copy for the illustration on page 88.

Walters has removed from this edition references to former Mormon Egyptologist Dee Jay Nelson. Mormons have consistently sought to discredit any publication that

mentions Nelson, citing his questionable doctoral degree. (It should be noted that Nelson's degree in anthropology has nothing to do with his ability to read Egyptian. Nelson resigned from the Mormon church in a dispute over Joseph Smith's erroneous translation of the Egyptian on the papyrus.)

This publication is not only an asset in cult evangelism, but a monument to the memory of Harry Ropp, whose love and work for the Mormon people was cut short in the 1978 crash of his private plane.

—MKG



BOOKS IN REVIEW

TWISTING THE TRUTH

by Bruce Tucker

Bethany Fellowship, 171 pages, \$5.95

Bruce Tucker, a Baptist pastor from Florida, makes his way onto the cult-research scene with **Twisting The Truth**. His contribution to the effort of educating the believer in both Christian and cultic theology is a fine one.

While many will be unfamiliar with Tucker's name, his credentials should be reassuring. He received his master's degree from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School and was a staff member of Campus Crusade for Christ.

His book is divided into four major sections, dealing with the person of Christ, the triune nature of the Godhead, salvation and the truthfulness of Christianity. He introduces all of this by telling why it is important to evangelize the cults by posing and answering objections that are many times raised.

The major thrust of Tucker's work is Christian theology — the hows and whys of our beliefs. His handling of the three major tenets of the faith in the space allowed by this publication is quite good. Tucker also analyzes cultic doctrine and how cults use the same terminology but a different dictionary. His findings are within the complete grasp of the layman. Each major section also concludes with a series of questions, making it an excellent publication for use in church study or home Bible study groups.

In addition, Tucker makes use of current cultic publications (for example, the Watchtower's **You Can Live Forever in Paradise on Earth** is repeatedly cited). This makes it relatively easy for the reader to document the cult's unbiblical teachings. He also tackles the theology of William Branham and the "Jesus Only" adherents (i.e., United Pentecostal Church, Branham and others). These groups are often overlooked and Tucker's analysis is a plus for this book.

—MKG



ARE MORMON SCRIPTURES RELIABLE?

by Harry L. Ropp

revised and updated by Wesley P. Walters
InterVarsity Press, 139 pages, \$6.95

PFO's Midwest Director Wesley P. Walters has revised, updated and enlarged the late Harry L Ropp's publication **The Mormon Papers**. The new book uses the former's subtitle, **Are The Mormon Scriptures Reliable?**, as its sole title.

The book focuses on Mormon "scriptures": **The Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants** and **The Pearl of Great Price**. The book does a thorough job of showing how unreliable these documents are. Included are examinations of Joseph Smith's "First Vision" account, New World archaeology as it relates to **The Book of Mormon**, changes in revelation and false prophecies. Two additional chapters include an examination of Mormonism's claim to be true Christianity and witnessing suggestions for Christians.

The handful of illustrations of Smith's papyrus and other manuscripts enhance the book. The facsimile (pg. 94) from the Mormon's "Book of Abraham" from **The Pearl**
(continued on page 11)



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