

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

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END-TIME APOSTASY PAVES THE WAY FOR ANTICHRIST

Prof. John E. Dahlin, Editor

Among the significant events mentioned in the Bible prophecies is the unprecedented apostasy of the latter days. It is the forerunner to Christ's later manifestation. Peter informs us that the trend in his day was not to believe in the literal return of Christ. The Scriptures are clear, however, regarding the events at the conclusion of the age. We read, "There shall come scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation" (II Pet. 3:3-4). In the world today there is an ongoing optimism with regard to the future. The most distinct sign of the end of the present dispensation is stated in these words: "For that day shall not come, except there come the falling away first, and that the man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above that which is called God, or that is worshipped, so that he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God" (II Thess. 2:3-4). Indeed, there is the coming great apostasy at the end of the age. Usually the following clarification I have given during the many prophetic meetings which I have held dur-

ing recent decades: Many Christian people are confused today, much like people in Thessalonica were in that day, simply because they were ignorant regarding certain Biblical terminologies. They misunderstood, for example, the meaning of the **Day of the Lord**. That day was understood to mean Christ's coming for His own. The Day of Christ means the Rapture of the saints. It should be clear that the Day of Christ also comes prior to the Day of the Lord—(see I Thess. 4:13-18). **Our gathering together unto Him is the Day of Christ**, and it precedes the Day of the Lord, which comes 7 years later. The Day of Christ concerns God's children only, and it comes instantaneously. It is then that the departed saints are resurrected and appearing in glorified bodies. The living saints are translated, and together the entire company of the redeemed meet the Lord in the air (I Thess. 4:17). It should be clear that the Day of the Lord does not concern the saints at all; it involves the ungodly world and the nation Israel. Before the Day of the Lord can come, His saints have to be gathered together unto Him.

**What Specifically Will Happen
at This Point of Time?**

The Scriptural statement is clear: "Before the Day of the Lord can come, there must come the falling away first, and the man of sin, the son of perdition, must be revealed" (II Thess. 2:3-4). This refers to the rise of Antichrist. He is identical with the second beast in Revelation, Chapter 13. A very great world crisis comes upon mankind at this time. It is predicted that the Antichrist will head the last great apostasy. The climactic event actually introduces the tribulation period.

What Hinders, or Keeps Back The Appearance of Antichrist?

Obviously, the restraining one mentioned in the Scripture is a power which is superior to that of Antichrist himself. Without a doubt, this refers to the Holy Spirit who indwells the true Church. The Holy Spirit, indwelling the Church, constitutes the great restraint to Antichrist's appearing, and it prevents the avalanche of evil from engulfing the earth. With the Rapture and removal of the Church, the restraining force is removed. It is self-evident that the Holy Spirit leaves the scene when all the saints are removed from the earth. At this point of time, **The Day of the Lord** officially begins. I have no doubt about the accuracy of this interpretation of the passage. The Church of Jesus Christ simply cannot be here on earth during the Day of the Lord—Luke 21:36 makes this matter altogether clear.

We Are Not Left in The Dark Regarding The Time

In the New Testament, the order, or sequence of prophetic events are pointed out distinctly. Other preliminary developments associated

with the Day of the Lord are set forth in language that is fully comprehended. These events take place prior to the coming of the Lord for His own redeemed company. The nominal conditions within Christendom are referred to in these words: "In the last days perilous times shall come, for men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, and disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affections . . . lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away" (II Tim. 3:1-5). We are now surrounded by the conditions mentioned by the Apostle Paul. In fact, apostasy is sweeping through the area of modern Christianity.

In our own land, secular humanism is taking over in ever-widening areas. Moreover, God is dethroned in our public schools, generally speaking. The Bible is disallowed in the classrooms, and at the same time, the faulty evolutionary theory is being given the right-of-way in the educational institutions. In California, the educational board has ruled out Creationism from being taught, or even included in the textbooks in the public schools. Many of the lower courts have ruled unfavorably on the matter of including both models of Creationism concerning man's origin. The Supreme Court seems to lack the courage to rule decisively whether Creationism might be included as an alternative with regard to the model referring to man's origin. The fact is that secularism has nearly taken over as a controlling philosophy of life; and, homosexuality and lesbianism have spread across our entire land. Printed filth, and various forms of

moral rot have become prominently featured by the press, and in many televised programs, and also on the radio. Pornography has become much like an epidemic in poisoning the minds of millions of people. No doubt the Lord had this in mind when he stated these prophetic words: "When the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?" (Lk. 18:8).

Another area should be mentioned also, and that includes the activities of present-day cults. They have moved across the land like a prairie fire. In this general sphere, we have the occult making substantial inroads in our society. Drug addiction has nearly overmastered the present generation. Furthermore, abortion, immorality, and social evils are on a great increase at present. In our public schools large segments of young girls, in their early teen-age years, are becoming pregnant. School authorities seem helpless in coping with the problem. Our radio and television are increasing time allocated for every form of sports activity. While some sports may be beneficial under balanced supervision, they should not be given the dominant place in the news media, television, and radio programs. Indeed, all this matches the prophetic predictions of Paul, the Apostle. He writes, "Evil men shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being

deceived" (II Tim. 3:13). All of these developments in our society are paving the way for Antichrist who will exercise universal control during the end-time. Paul also refers to doctrines of demons being spread. It is common knowledge that satan worship is practiced, and demon teachings are becoming widely expanded.

I find no evidence that we are on the eve of a great revival and the ingathering of an enormous number of souls for God as the end-time approaches. Of course, many people will come to Christ, even during the latter days, but the Scriptures uniformly point to a general departure of the faith and world-wide ungodliness during the latter days. During my six decades of study in Bible Prophecy, and in evaluating trends, I find no support for the view that a great spiritual awakening will take place at the end of the age. No New Testament writer presents the prophetic picture in that manner. I realize that many believers hold an opposite position from mine. In the New Testament it appears clearly that the latter days will be characterized by an unprecedented period of world-wide apostasy as the age draws to a close. I am convinced that we have witnessed the beginning of the end. This article, I believe, verifies a massive departure from the historic faith during the conclusion of our age.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF DR. ERNEST PICKERING'S ARTICLE

In this issue of *THE DISCERNER*, we have included a recent article which appeared in the March issue of the *Baptist Bulletin*. It is based on the

book by Edward Dobson, in which he advocates a unity between the Evangelical Wing in Christianity with the Fundamentalist Element.

Dr. Pickering gives the subject much thought, his research is thorough, and his conclusions are convincing.

Dr. Pickering is the top man in the group known as the G A R B C; he is the moderator for their Convention, and the chairman of the Committee of 18 who have the oversight of that denomination. Recently, he was installed as President of the Northwest Baptist Seminary at Tacoma, Washington.

When he resided in our city, he was a member of our Board, Religion Analysis Service. I have spoken at the seminary of which he was the Dean at that time, and I have preached in his pulpit when he was pastor here. In addition, I have shared the responsibility as speaker with him at Bible camps and conferences. Dr. Pickering writes in a humble and gracious spirit. The article is timely and his conclusions are sound.

—John E. Dahlin

SHOULD FUNDAMENTALISTS & EVANGELICALS SEEK CLOSER TIES?

(An evaluation of Edward Dobson's book, "*In Search of Unity*")

by Dr. Ernest Pickering, President of Northwest Baptist Seminary

Is it time for fundamentalists and evangelicals to draw closer together and explore ways they can cooperate with one another?

Edward Dobson believes that such a time has come. His latest volume, *In Search of Unity*, is subtitled, "An Appeal to Fundamentalists and Evangelicals." It is an exhortation to fundamentalists and evangelicals to "stop fighting with the friends of the gospel" (p. 152), to reject the position of their respective "extremist fringes," and to build bridges of understanding that will result in a closer working relationship. Dobson continues the theme presented by Jerry Falwell in an earlier volume, *The Fundamentalist Phenomenon*, where he wrote: "In reality, there is little difference between Fundamentalists and Evangelicals . . . Only the radicals among us (to the left and to the right) divide us. I say it is time we denied the 'lunatic fringe' of our movements and worked for a great

conservative crusade to turn America back to God . . . We conservative Fundamentalists and Evangelicals can be used of God to bring about a great revival of true Christianity in America and the world in our lifetime" (pp. 222-23).

Edward Dobson, the author of the book here evaluated, is associate pastor of Thomas Road Baptist Church in Lynchburg, Virginia; vice-president for student affairs at Liberty University; and senior editor of the *Fundamentalist Journal*. Some of his major arguments are these:

(1) That the original conservatives who battled liberalism from about 1900 to 1930 set aside denominational and doctrinal differences, and united together in the common cause they had.

(2) That later on (1930 into the 1940s) the issue of ecclesiastical separation began to divide the conservatives into two camps: fundamen-

talists (those requiring complete separation from apostate groups) and evangelicals (those who permitted continued affiliation with apostate groups).

(3) That gradually other issues arose on which there were differences, thus widening the gap between the two movements.

(4) That both sides developed "extremist fringes" that exhibited bad attitudes.

(5) That Biblical separation has been carried to unwarranted extremes by fundamentalists, and that separation from those who embrace the basic fundamentals of the faith is unjustified.

(6) That there is developing a "new image fundamentalism" that is more contemporary, less offensive, and whose representatives enjoy a wider sphere of fellowship.

(7) That both sides now should repent of their bad attitudes, lay aside nonessential differences that divide them, and return to the type of cooperation evidenced by the earlier conservatives.

From the outset may we note that there are many commendable things about Dobson's position as a whole. He believes in the inerrancy of Scripture, stands for the fundamentals of the faith, and opposes theological liberalism. Some of his evaluations of fundamentalism and evangelicalism are certainly worth pondering. The book itself is cleverly crafted and designed to appeal to a wide spectrum of readers of various persuasions without alienating any of them from the author's intended purpose—to bring them together. While thankful for the good points of the book, we believe some of his conclu-

sions, and therefore his resultant appeal, are ill-founded. Because we believe this volume is a major statement of a position that conflicts with our historical position as a Fellowship, we venture an investigation of it.

Early Battles With Liberalism

Dobson joins with other contemporaries who are making much out of the fact that the "original fundamentalists" did not allow "petty differences" to divide them but joined hands in a common cause against liberalism. Such men as W. B. Riley, J. Gresham Machen, William Jennings Bryan, John Straton and many others were of differing denominational and doctrinal persuasions, and yet they fought side by side in the war against liberalism. Because they did it, we should do it. There is a "common thread" (p. 137) that unites both fundamentalists and evangelicals. They have "more that unites them than that divides them" (p. 138). Both movements, therefore, should minimize the unessential items that divide them and "return to the historic fundamentals of the faith that were so clearly established at the beginning of this century" (p. 79).

This sounds very appealing to those weary of a lot of battles, and it seems to breathe a welcome and magnanimous spirit. We must remember, however, that we cannot return to the beginning of this century. These early fundamentalists had one issue to face—the issue of modernism (liberalism). We have many more issues to face. The issues have proliferated since those earlier days. We face questions of ecumenical evangelism, new evangelicalism and its offshoots, and the pervasive

influence of the charismatic movement, to name a few. The greats of a bygone day did not have to wrestle with these matters. We understand that some believe these issues have been "created" by obstreperous and unloving fundamentalists, but we do not believe this is a fair or valid charge. We are not facing merely the issue of the apostasy but many other issues that have surfaced in the last thirty years or so, many of which impinge in some way upon the doctrine of ecclesiastical separation.

Division Over Questions of Ecclesiastical Separation

Fundamentalism and evangelicalism "represent different approaches to the issue of separation" (p. 55). We think this is a fair and accurate statement. The question is: Are those differences critical to cooperative fellowship or are they merely peripheral? Dobson pictures two divergent streams—fundamentalism and evangelicalism—in a chart. At the point where they part, two opposite views of separation are noted. The fundamentalists (separatists) believed that Scripture demanded complete separation from all apostate groups. The evangelicals, on the other hand, allowed for continuation within apostate groups as long as the individuals (or churches) were evangelical in their own persuasion. These two positions were institutionalized in the National Association of Evangelicals and its opposite, the American Council of Christian Churches, though, of course, large numbers of those of both persuasions had no organizational ties with either.

Which of the above positions is correct? Does it make any difference? Dobson says our convictions regard-

ing this issue should not influence our fellowship with other believers. "Second degree separation was separation from another evangelical who may have been tolerant of liberals by staying in a mainline denomination" (p. 63). It is not right for fundamentalists to sit in judgment on such matters (p. 64).

If we follow this line of reasoning, such bodies as the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches, the Baptist Bible Fellowship and the Independent Fundamental Churches of America have a lot of "repenting" to do. These groups (and others), as well as many unaffiliated individuals and churches, have contended over the years that it is a violation of the principles of Scripture for a true believer to remain within an apostate denomination. Now we are told to ignore this principle in order to enjoy unity with all of our brethren. It is too big a price for some of us to pay.

An Appeal For a New And Enlarged Cooperation

Should we heed the invitation of this book, what would be the basis for cooperation between fundamentalists and evangelicals?

In answering this question the author reviews the historical rise of fundamentalism (p. 37 ff.), emphasizing the famous "five fundamentals" around which early contenders for the faith rallied:

- (1) the full inspiration of the Bible;
- (2) the deity of Christ;
- (3) the substitutionary atonement;
- (4) the resurrection of Christ; and
- (5) the second coming of Christ. He

calls for a return to these "fundamentals of the faith" (p. 79) as a basis of fellowship.

To summarize his position, we believe it is fair to say it is virtually identical with that adopted by the National Association of Evangelicals back at its founding in the 1940s. That this is a correct conclusion is supported by the fact that Dobson recently has issued an appeal to the constituency of the NAE entitled "Standing Together on the Absolutes" and published in the official periodical of that body (*Action*, Sept.-Oct. 1985). Following Dobson's article, the editorial staff of the paper concludes that "this matter of separation is basically all that divides fundamentalists and many, or most, evangelicals" (p. 7).

The NAE when it was started adopted a doctrinal statement that is limited basically to the "five fundamentals." The constituency of the NAE is very broad, including Baptist groups (such as the Baptist General Conference), holiness groups (such as the Wesleyan Church) and Pentecostal bodies (such as the Assemblies of God). It also has in its membership churches that are in various old-line, apostate denominations, and many contemporary charismatics as well. It is a theological hodge-podge. Many years ago, founders of the GARBC (as well as leaders in other separatist bodies) took a long, hard look at the position of the NAE and rejected it as too broad, accommodating and loose. We now are asked to reconsider this position in a quest for unity. Many fundamental separatists decline to do so. There were important and Scriptural reasons why we rejected it initially. We believe these are still valid.

The Presence of Extremists

Dobson believes that the presence

of extremists among both evangelicals and fundamentalists has hindered the move toward more cooperation between the two. We acknowledge that there are extremists in almost any movement. Yes, there are "kooks," "nuts" and "screwballs" who call themselves fundamentalists. Many of us who are separatists often cringe at the language used and attitudes displayed by some of our brethren. We do not condone character assassination and the wild statements made by some while supposedly "defending the faith." Years ago, however, many of us determined not to "throw out the baby with the bath water." Because some unwise people muddy the water on occasion does not mean we should forsake the precious truths that are in the "tub." We also should beware of the appeal that the "middle ground" is holy ground. It may be only "comoromising ground."

What has happened is this. Many of our younger separatist pastors and leaders are not schooled in the Biblical principles and historic context of our separatist movement. Dobson, we believe, is largely correct in his observation that "Mainstream, or 'new image fundamentalism,' the kind that we knew in 1985, is far removed from the original battles and wars, some of which were purely personality conflicts. The younger fundamentalists who did not fight those battles don't have the personal and emotional involvement in them, and are looking sincerely at what it means to be a Christian, not merely a fundamentalist, in the latter part of the 20th century" (*Action*, Sept.-Oct. 1985, p. 5).

In many cases our separatist

churches and schools have failed to give our youth a structured, Scriptural and historical defense of our position. We have failed to show how the principles for which we stood then are applicable today in a different context and with different issues. As a result, many young people see us as fighting a war that is over and has no contemporary significance. They view certain fundamentalist figures with distaste, note that many of the "name" churches and popular, growing organizations are headed by persons who are not separatists, conclude that the practice of separation is an obstacle to growth and reaching of people, and so are edging (some are running) toward a more liberalized stance.

Pointing Out The Road to Unity

Dobson expresses optimism that his dream for increased unity between fundamentalists and evangelicals may be becoming a reality. In his chapter entitled "The Road Back" he cites some encouraging signs that the evangelicals may be drawing closer to the fundamentalists; namely: (1) the prominence of contenders for Biblical inerrancy; (2) the challenge of Southern Baptist conservatives to the liberalism of their denomination; (3) the influence and direction offered by Francis Schaeffer. For fundamentalists he saw as hopeful signs of a newfound "togetherness" such things as:

- (1) Jerry Falwell's appeal for unity;
- (2) the convening of Baptist Fundamentalism 84;
- (3) the published apology of Jack Van Impe for his past "exclusivism;"
- (4) and the rise of "new image" fundamentalists.

What would be involved if fundamental separatists were to travel the "road back" outlined in this volume? Most certainly it would mean cooperation with those who accept some form of "inclusivism," the principle that both Bible believers and apostates can exist within the same organization or denomination without violating Scriptural principles. Many separatists would be forced to ask: If it was wrong to adopt this principle thirty or forty years ago, what makes it right today?

To travel the road back certainly would mean cooperation with those who favor the philosophy of ecumenical evangelism popularized by Billy Graham.

Certainly if we fundamental separatists travel the road back we will be obliged to become involved in fellowship at some level with those of Pentecostal, holiness and charismatic persuasion, since these comprise a considerable percentage of the "evangelical" movement. They probably represent, for instance, a numerical majority of the groups that are part of the NAE. Fundamentalists steadfastly have refused to become involved with these groups. Charismatics, as an example, are "evangelicals" believing in the "five fundamentals," but they are an increasing problem for Bible-preaching churches.

At the conclusion of the book is a strong appeal for revival. Many of us share the author's concern for revival. We need it in our own lives and we certainly need it in our churches. Many of our fundamental, separatist churches are dry and dead and need the outpouring of power from the Lord. Let us not be misled,

however. Revival does not render obsolete and unimportant deep differences of doctrine and practice that touch on the holiness of God and affect vitally the life of His churches. To experience true revival is to be drawn more closely and to be bound more tightly to the truth of God as contained in holy Scripture. No amount of revival, even if Scriptural revival, could clear the way for us to approve, for instance, the program of uniting believers and unbelievers in evangelistic crusades. This would be a revival that contradicts God's Word, an unthinkable anomaly indeed! True revival cannot result in the compromise of truths that cannot be compromised.

A Personal Word

Permit me a personal word in conclusion. I have been involved in places of leadership in the separatist movement for over thirty years. I have been editor of a leading separatist magazine, dean of a separatist seminary, president of two separatist schools, pastor of some great separatist churches, and presently am serving as chairman of the executive body of a separatist association of churches. I have enjoyed fellowship with hundreds of separatists belonging to various bodies (and some to none). Their lives and ministry have touched my own and I have benefited thereby. While not pretending to speak officially for them, I believe I know many of them well enough to be their spokesman on this occasion.

Dr. Dobson, we want to say that we love you and those who espouse your position as brothers in Christ. We are not "hatemongers." We do not view ourselves as "extremists." Our

hearts ache as does yours for the fractured state of the visible Body of Christ. We desire growing and vital churches. We are concerned for the lost souls of men. We are not sour, dour, pugnacious persons who always are looking for someone to attack.

Many of our friends probably would number themselves among those "new image fundamentalists." While not agreeing with their position, we nevertheless seek to maintain our friendship and respect them as Christian brothers. Many of them pastor sizable churches, head Christian schools or organizations, and are articulate, winsome and influential. We thank God for all the good things about them. It is hard for us to disagree with them, to take an opposite position, and to risk lifelong friendships and much misunderstanding by doing so. We do not enjoy it. We shrink from it. But we must be true to the Word of God and to our own consciences. We do not take our stand against you or other of our Christian brethren carelessly or with a frivolous spirit. We do it with grief and struggle and, yes, even tears.

I, with others, was involved in the original conflicts over ecumenical evangelism. Some of us raised the first cries against the principles of the "new evangelicalism." We have labored for years to defend our young people, our churches and our educational institutions against the watered-down theology and middle-of-the-road philosophy held by many of those with whom you would have us unite. The arguments we hear now we recall very vividly hearing thirty years ago from those who wanted us to move "beyond the fundamentalist-modernist controversy" to a more

“centrist” position. The new evangelical movement began years ago with what one astute observer aptly called a “mood.” Moods are difficult to define sometimes, but they nonetheless can be real and potent forces. There was a mood of toleration, an acceptance of widely varying theological concepts—a mood of “broadmindedness.” We fear such moods since we have seen, within our lifetime, their final outcome—a full-blown movement steeped in compromise. We believe we sense such a mood abroad today among those who, in all sincerity no doubt, think we should broaden our bases and reshape our image.

What we say, Brother Dobson, to

you and others of your viewpoint is this: We cannot walk the “road back” with you. Our refusal arises out of no personal animosity or out of a desire to have a “good fight.” Many of us fervently wish we could quit the battle but we dare not. We want to be loyal to God, to His Word, and to His standard of holiness. Painfully conscious of our many shortcomings, nevertheless, it is our aim to imitate the balanced life of our blessed Lord Who was “full of grace and truth” (John 1:14). We want to be “speaking the truth in love” (Eph. 4:15). We have tried to do it here. Pray God we have succeeded.

—From *The Baptist Bulletin*
March 1986 issue
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A BIOLOGIST EXAMINES THE BOOK OF MORMON

by Thomas D. S. Key, Sc.D., Ed.D. (Biology), Th.D.
1613 Forrest Lane, Bainbridge, Georgia 31717
(Continued from April-June, 1986 issue)

There are some serious problems in the description of the behavior related to poisonous snakes, etc. in Ether 9:30-34. First, the notion that snakes increase as a drought increases is contradicted by the fact the reptiles are particularly sensitive to heat and lack of water, and would die off faster than other animals. Second, even with the large population of modern North America, only about twenty people die yearly by snake bite. It is certainly not realistic for Ether to claim that numerous people and animals were exterminated by snakes. Third, it is totally unlike sheep for all of them in the country to flee in one direction. Fourth, it would

not be realistic for the sheep to be driven to the south by poisonous snakes as there are much fewer snakes in the north. Fifth, snakes never cooperate with each other in driving animals in any direction. Sixth, it would be impossible for people to have eaten in such few days the countless animals that had been killed by the snakes. Seventh, it is forbidden to Jews to eat animals that have died like that. Eighth, Ether 10:21, etc., tells us that the land was densely covered with people, while Ether 10:19 says that “the land was covered with animals of the forests.” Ether 10:12 speaks of raising much grain. All of this simply does not

square with the idea of an epidemic of poisonous snakes. People, farming, and numerous predatory animals will not allow snakes to become numerous.

Satyrs (II. Nephi 23:21) and dragons (II. Nephi 23:22; 8:9; and 23:22) are mentioned as literal creatures, not figurative. Chickens (III. Nephi 10:4-6), and dogs (Alma 16:10, Mosiah 12:2, and III. Nephi 7:8) were nonexistent here at that time. In III. Nephi 20:16 and 21:12 lions are described as "beasts of the forests." Contrary to popular opinion and the Book of Mormon, Lions do not live in forests or jungles. They live in savannahs (few scattered trees). And lions never inhabited the Americas.

Silk is erroneously mentioned as being produced in the Americas at that time (I. Nephi 13:7; Alma 4:6; and Ether 9:17 and 10:24). But, silkworm moths had not yet been introduced from Asia. Clothes moths are mentioned in III. Nephi 13:19, 20 and 27:32, yet there were no woolen garments for moths to attack as sheep had not yet been introduced. Needless to say, clothes moths had not yet been introduced to North America.

II Nephi 17:15 lists two foods at that time, butter and honey. But Indians had no milk animals or honey bees. Candles are made either of bees' wax, beef tallow, or paraffin so that a reference to candles in III. Nephi 8:21 is unacceptable.

Microbiological Problems

Alma 46:40 specifically attributes "the cause of disease to . . . the nature of the climate," instead of to filth, poor diet, or microorganisms. Alma 16:1 tells us that the stench of those

killed in one battle was so strong that "the people did not go in to possess the land of Ammonihah for many years," "and their lands remained desolate." Action of bacteria, fungi, worms, insects, vultures, etc. would require no more than a few weeks at very most to dispose of these carcasses and their odors—not "many years"!

III. Nephi 17:7 mentions leprosy in 34 A.D., yet the first known case in the Americas was in 1758.

Physiological Problems

Ether 14:2 specifically says that "every man kept the hilt of the sword in his right hand," and yet a distinct minority of Jews and Indians is left-handed. Alma 57:25 asserts that all in an army of 2,060 received many wounds, yet none died.

The implied reproduction rate in the Book of Mormon is astronomical. The story starts in 600 B.C. and extends to 421 A.D. It involves a mere handful of people who supposedly travel from "the land of Jerusalem (*sic*) to the Promised Land of America. Every four or five years or so there are devastating wars that kill many thousands of people (Alma 28:2, etc.), or as Ether 15:2, says, "nearly two millions of mighty men" in addition to their wives and children. For this to be so it would be necessary for each couple to have scores of children, and for them to reach maturity in three or so years throughout the supposed period between 600 B.C. and 421 A.D.

The description of the resurrection body in Alma 40:23 is astounding to say the least. It says that nothing shall be lost, not even a hair. In light of the fact that we shed a few score

body and head hairs every week, and we "de-commission" countless blood, skin, and other cells weekly it is unrealistic to assert that all of these lost parts will be returned to us.

Ether 15:30-31 says that the beheaded Shiz raised up and struggled for breath.

Physical and Chemical Problems

Ether 2:20 says that the Lord instructed Jared to make a hole in the top and one "in the bottom" of each barge! What was the hole "in the bottom" for—to let water and wastes out? Ether 2:23 explains that if windows were put in the barges, the barges would be dashed to pieces (*sic*).

In describing Christ's crucifixion III. Nephi 8:20-23 says that the darkness was so great for three days (*sic*) that the candles and torches could not give off light! Why not?

Alma 24:16 speaks of burying swords in the earth to keep them bright. On the contrary this would speed their rusting.

Technological Problems

It is erroneous for a book supposedly written in North America at that time to mention bellows (I. Nephi 17:11), fine steel bow (I. Nephi 16:18), swords (II. Nephi 1:18, etc.) scimitars (Alma 2:12), sackcloth (II. Nephi 13:24), carts (II. Nephi 15:18, 28), chariots (Alma 18:12; 20:6; III. Nephi 21:14), numerous large buildings (Ether 10:5, etc.) many highways (Helaman 14:24), cement (Helaman 3:7, 9, 11), forts (Alma 48:8, 9; 51:27; etc.), javelin (Alma 51:34), buchel (III. Nephi 12:15), breastplates (Mosiah 8:10 and Alma 46:13), headplate and armor for the loins (Alma 46:13), compass (Alma 37:38,

44, etc.), spindles and spinning (Alma 37:40; Helaman 6:13), sickles, yoke (I. Nephi 13:5), strong cords (Alma 26:29), trumpet (III. Nephi 13:2), street corners (III. Nephi 13:5), chains (II. Nephi 15:12), viol (II. Nephi 15:12), tabret (II. Nephi 15:12), plow (Ether 10:25), fuller's soap (III. Nephi 24:2), barns (III. Nephi 13:26), and candles (III. Nephi 8:21).

Anthropological Problems

The Book of Mormon was supposedly written during the period in question, but there is no evidence that Indians had anything other than simple pictorial writing at that time. They wrote no books. It is not appropriate to find references to many official records (Helaman 3:15), jot and tittle (III. Nephi 12:18), scroll (Mormon 5:23, 9:2), and Alpha and Omega (III. Nephi 9:18).

Other cultural problems include references to mammon (III. Nephi 13:24), lawyers and judges (Alma 10:14, 15; and III. Nephi 6:1), acre (II. Nephi 15:10), "south-southeast direction" (I. Nephi 16:13), synagogues (III. Nephi 24:2), Gentiles (I. Nephi 13:19), rending of clothes, wearing sackcloth, salt trodden under foot, etc.

The Book of Mormon consistently and frequently refers to the "heart" in the sense of soul, yet Indians varied in their terminology from lungs, kidneys, liver, intestines, to heart.

II. Nephi 26:33 divides humanity into "black and white" and "Jew and Gentile"—most unrealistic for the Americas at that time.

The Book of Mormon teaches that Indians originated from Jewish settlers in the Americas that wandered

away from the Lord. I. Nephi 12:11 says that as the Jews wandered away in unbelief, "they became a dark, and loathsome, and a filthy people." I. Nephi 13:15 praises future Americans as being "white, and exceeding fair and beautiful, like unto my people before they were slain." But Palestinian Jews did not have pale skin like the British. II. Nephi 5:21, Jacob 3:3-9, and Mormon 5:15-17 say that God cursed the Indians with a dark skin. II. Nephi 5:23 and Alma 3:6-10 say that anyone who marries an Indian "shall be cursed with the same cursing." If this were true, why do people who are only part Indian not look full Indian?

II. Nephi 30:5-7 predicts that when Indians accept the Mormon Gospel, that they will again become "a white and delightsome people." III. Nephi 2:15 gives supposed examples of this. II. Nephi 13:24 says that punishment from sin shall include "instead of well set hair, baldness," yet baldness is much more common among Caucasians.

Instead of Semitic origin, Indians are distinctly Mongoloid, having straight and black hair, brown eyes, high cheekbones, skin pigmentation, occasional Mongoloid blue spot, certain blood traits, etc. Dark skin, instead of being a curse, is a protection against skin cancer. And, Indians are not innately more filthy, loathsome, or ugly than any other people.

Other Problems

Numerous historical and archaeological problems exist. The first editions of the Book of Mormon contained numerous grammatical and

spelling errors. There are many contradictions between the Book of Mormon and other Mormon writings. And, the Book of Mormon contradicts the Bible in many places. Lack of space prohibits a listing of examples of the above problems.

Conclusion

It is hoped that this paper will help my Mormon friends and other seekers after truth for as Moroni 10:4 well says,

And when ye shall receive these things, I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost.

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For further information, contact the author.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Thomas Key was educated as a professional Biologist with an equivalent of six majors in Biology at Southern Methodist University, University of California at Berkeley, Indiana University, Ball State University, and others. He recently felt called into the ministry, and is a member of Grace Gospel Fellowship. He pastors the Independent Methodist Church at Bainbridge, Georgia.

Dr. Key has no desire whatever to attack Mormons. He became interested in studying Mormonism as a result of the influence of several Mormon friends, because of early doubts about Conservative Christianity, and more recently, because of his desire to help Mormons come to know Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord.

He has authored several articles on science and the Bible, and is a firm believer in the accuracy of the Word of God.

He welcomes correspondence from concerned readers.

THEOSOPHY

By R. Alan Streett

The hub of Theosophy is a pantheistic worldview. This concept teaches that everything is a manifestation of God. All is God and God is all. Hence, man is actually divine. Sin is simply the ignorance of this fact. Once man becomes aware of his true nature, he is said to have attained a level of God-consciousness. The basis for Theosophy's system of belief is Madame Blavatsky's two volume set (totaling 6,000 pages), *The Secret Doctrine*. It was this set that had such a profound influence on Adolf Hitler's understanding of the universe. Similarly, Sirhan Sirhan fell under its power. Immediately following the assassination of Senator Robert Kennedy, Sirhan requested from his prison cell *The Secret Doctrine*.

Theosophy incorporates into its pantheistic worldview a form of Christian gnosticism. It holds that Jesus was a man who reached a state of God or Christ-consciousness. Also prevalent in this system is the concept of a hierarchy of beings who exist on different planes of the cosmos. Every human being is on a spiritual spiral upward, and will pass through each stage. This is accomplished through numerous incarnations; thus, reincarnation is a primary tenet of Theosophy.

The doctrines of heaven and hell are a mixture of Roman Catholicism and classical Buddhism. Hell, known as "kamaloka," is similar to purgatory. It is the place where the soul goes to be purged by fire and prepared for its return to earth. No soul remains in hell forever. Heaven, called

"devachan," is equivalent to the Buddhist state of Nirvana. After many cyclic rebirths, the soul is finally absorbed into the impersonal essence known as God. So to speak, the divine spark returns to its origin. In this state of nothingness man loses his identity or individuality.

Like many of the other so-called "new age" cults, Theosophy contains elements of the ancient mystery religions. Only those initiated into the sect are taught the secret truths. Candidates must go through symbolic rites similar to those found in Rosicrucianism and Free Masonry.

Theosophy has spawned many other cults such as The Anthroposophical Society founded by Rudolph Steiner and World Goodwill (Lucis Trust) founded by Alice Bailey. Adherents of Theosophy are still waiting for the appearance of a "World Teacher" or a messiah who will usher in a new age.

Theosophy is totally anti-Christian in nature. It rejects every doctrine of orthodoxy, including the virgin birth, Christ's death on the cross as an atonement for sin, His bodily resurrection and literal second coming. The Bible is looked upon as one of the holy books in existence, but it must be interpreted esoterically.

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PERTINENT QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

John E. Dahlin, Editor

QUESTION . . . What arguments are used to support the optimistic position, that we are on the eve of a great Spiritual Awakening?

ANSWER . . . These people present the unchangeableness of God, and also that He is the same yesterday, today and forever; and, in addition, God is a prayer-answering divine personality. Often they quote 2 Chron. 7:14. These statements are completely true when taken in the right context . . . If, however, the Word of God predicts a departure from the faith, with a coming apostasy, it is contrary to divine revelation that God should contradict that which He has revealed for the End Time. His verdict regarding the future cannot be changed or modified.

QUESTION . . . Does the belief that the spiritual deterioration of mankind will reach a climactic condition during the end-time cause a loss of hope for Christian people?

ANSWER . . . No, it does not. God has never led His children to follow a path of false optimism. We read: "Forever O Lord, Thy Word is settled in heaven" (Ps. 119:89). What God has foretold and decreed will be literally fulfilled.