

## Are Christians Mormon?\*

Truman G. Madsen\*\*

For a hundred and fifty years the question has been repeatedly asked worldwide, "Are Mormons Christian?" We have struggled through the semantic tangles to answer that with an unqualified "yes." In his heart every Mormon knows that this question is much like asking, "Is Hamlet Shakespearian?" It might be said, "After all, Hamlet is a manifestation of Shakespeare. In fact, Hamlet *is* Shakespeare." Precisely. And so, the Mormon knows that Mormonism is the most vital twentieth century manifestation of Christ. Unlike Hamlet, it is alive. If it is less than that it is nothing.

Here the plan is to reverse the question and ask, "Are Christians Mormon?" This is not mere word play. In our time there are renowned and influential spokesmen and writers in all the major wings of Christendom—and they are not on the periphery but at the center—who are defending and teaching what, a century ago, Joseph Smith almost alone taught. For teaching it he, and his immediate heirs, gave their lives. No one of these spokesmen has pulled it all together, but there are pieces and fragments everywhere.

Before we outline these in a way that must be at best, a beginning, may I offer just four cautions:

First, tracing trends and movements and shifts is always a selective affair. Just as powerful as the movements I am going to chronicle are counter movements equally influential that could lead one to the conclusion that Christianity today has never been farther away from its original moorings. Moreover, those who have swung towards us have sometimes swung pendulum-like too far the other way.

Second, terminology is deceptive. Men may speak similarly

---

\*A Brigham Young University Forum address given 4 June 1974.

\*\*Dr. Madsen, professor of philosophy at Brigham Young University, holds the Richard L. Evans Chair of Christian Understanding. He is also the director of the Institute of Mormon Studies.

but *mean* and *feel* differently. And, as you know, the theological vocabulary is notoriously vague.

Third, the focus on belief is misleading because religion is much more than belief—it involves values, commitments, kinds of loyalty, and cultures.

Finally, there is—as our missionaries more than anyone in the world may know—a tremendous chasm between what professional writers may say theologically, philosophically, and what actually penetrates to the grass roots. Between the theoretician and the layman there is an ocean.

But after those precautions, let us proceed with boldness.

#### THE NATURE OF GOD

When the Boy Prophet emerged from the grove now called Sacred, he announced an unqualified testimony that God is a person. In doing so he offended the traditional sensitivities of every official Christian church. They had used the word “person”—and still do—but only in a most attenuated form, ascribing to the Eternal, consciousness, will, some kind of individuality, but denying the full-bodied characteristics of personality that we associate with the word.

Today that has remarkably changed. There are many who are saying that either the God of the Christian heritage *is* a person—a God like Jesus the Christ—or Christianity is simply false. Nels F. S. Ferre, for one, has said, “We must return to the categories of the New Testament and abandon the categories of the philosophers.”<sup>1</sup> Three recent articles have almost identical titles, “Is the God of the Philosophers the Same as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob?”<sup>2</sup> And their answer is

---

<sup>1</sup>“The Christian faith, we have said, needs to develop its own framework for expressing its universal message. Too long has it been limited by being couched within the thought stance of substance philosophy, while the newer process metaphysics is also unable to do full justice to the universal nature of the Christian faith. . . . The three categories of the New Testament which fundamentally define God, the Ultimate, are spirit, personal purpose, and love. We turn, therefore, to . . . these categories as the substrates from which the Christian framework can be formulated without recourse to alien, limiting, and distorting philosophies.” Nels F. S. Ferre, *The Universal Word* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1969), p. 91.

<sup>2</sup>Norbert Samuelson, “That the God of the Philosophers is Not the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,” *Harvard Theological Review* 65 (January 1972): 1-27; Robin Atfield, “The God of Religion and the God of Philosophy,” *Religious Studies*, vol. 9, no. 1 (March 1973): 1-9. Catholic Karl Rahner also makes the distinction in “Visions and Prophecies”: “Out of the infinite possibilities of his freedom (who is the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, not that of the philosophers) God could reveal this or that. . . .” Rahner, *Inquiries* (New York: Herder & Herder, 1964), p. 106.

"no." Judah Halevi, Pascal, and Martin Buber, to name three recent philosophers, have said so.

A new interest in the question of whether we must delimit the word "being" and add the word "becoming" in our understanding of God is widespread.<sup>3</sup> Having studied under two well-known theologians, I can report a like instinct in them. One, still alive, has written in summary, "The Mormons are right." This is Charles Hartshorne of the University of Texas who has said that God is in some senses perfect but in other and important senses not; that there is yet process in God; that we must avoid, as Whitehead once said, "paying metaphysical compliments to God" which turn out to be insults.<sup>4</sup>

The other, dead, is Paul Tillich. And I happen to know, as few do, that shortly before his death, having written three volumes identifying God with "Being Itself," with the Ground of Being, and denying all personal attributes, he keenly and tragically regretted it and fervently said, "If only I could do it over I would rewrite my book in terms of 'Spirit.'" <sup>5</sup> The next step would have been "person."

Robert McAfee Brown,<sup>6</sup> John Cobb, Jr., and many others are taking similar ground. We are no longer alone.<sup>7</sup>

Related to this is a comment of a prominent philosopher

<sup>3</sup>One of the classic systematic presentations of the strength of "finitism" in theology is William Pepperell Montague's *Belief Unbound* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1930). The "process philosophy" movement, involving such men as William James, Alfred North Whitehead, Charles Hartshorne and others, is particularly concerned with the subject. Cf. Hartshorne's *Man's Vision of God* (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1941); Charles Hartshorne and William L. Reese, eds., *Philosophers Speak of God* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953); and Paul Tillich, "Tillich's Doctrine of God," in *The Theology of Paul Tillich*, ed. Charles W. Kegley and Robert W. Bretall (New York: Macmillan, 1961).

<sup>4</sup>In a personal letter dated 31 December 1972, Hartshorne, speaking of "tendencies in modern thought with affinities to Mormonism," also referred to Fechner, Leguier, Bergson, W. E. Hocking, Varisco, James Ward, and John Elov Boodin.

<sup>5</sup>This according to conversations in his last months with Nels F. S. Ferre and John Dillenberger. See Tillich's volume, *Biblical Religions and the Search for Ultimate Reality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955). This book has been called a "brilliant compromise" between Being and personality. Careful reading will show it retains the word "person" only as an unavoidable human projection.

<sup>6</sup>In Brown's response to Sterling McMurrin's *Theological Foundations of Mormonism* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1965), he speaks of tendencies in contemporary theology toward a positive estimate of personality. *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, vol. 1, no. 1 (Spring 1966), especially pp. 112-13.

<sup>7</sup>John B. Cobb, Jr., *A Christian Natural Theology* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1965). See my review in *BYU Studies*, 6 (Spring-Summer 1965), pp. 186-88.

of education who has gone through, one by one, the traditional theistic categories like immutability, self-fulfilledness, absolute happiness, and then said, "I see no evidence in the scriptures nor any reasons discovered in logical analysis to believe that Jesus attributed any of these mythological traits to God."<sup>8</sup> Jesus spoke of God as "Father."

#### THE NATURE OF MAN

Intertwined with this is the remarkable testimony we have struggled to bear as to the nature of man, the witness that there is something, even now, divine in mankind. This was offensive to anti-religionists and humanists for on their view man is much less than a superman and has only this life to work out his folly; offensive to the traditional Catholics because in their view there is a chasm between the nature of man and God and man only has dignity to the degree that he receives what they call "salvific grace." It was offensive to Fundamentalists and Calvinists because in their view man is afflicted with pride and in the worst view utterly depraved—a worm. The doctrine has seemed even more out of step with the mental weather of our time, for national and world catastrophe in the last fifty years has so shaken our confidence in man, so undercut the foundations of assurance, that today nihilism is popular and it is as if writers have chosen up sides to see who can declare the most sophisticated despair.

Out of step with all this, we have gone on saying that these writers are not describing all of real life, but only life without God; not being honest, but only morbid; not being true to experience, but only to a projected face of experience; and not undercutting genuine faith in God, but only their disillusioned false faiths.

Today others are seeing man's potential. Rufus Jones, the Quaker mystic, has written in nearly thirty books, "The old dualism must go"—the dualism that absolutely separates man and God.<sup>9</sup> Henri Bergson closes his book, *Two Sources of Re-*

<sup>8</sup>Dean E. Turner, "The Careful Heart," (unpublished manuscript). Professor Turner's work also contains a complimentary section on the Mormon defiance of the traditional reading of "omnipotence," "omniscience," and "omnipresence."

<sup>9</sup>"The two-world theory has become impossible to those who think in the terms of this generation. It is a dead conception. We have come back, by the help of psychology and modern philosophy, to the position of the first apostle of Christianity that every person lives and moves and has this real being in God." Rufus Jones, *The Radiant Life* (New York: Macmillan, 1944), p. 150.

*ligion and Mortality*, saying, "The universe is a machine for the making of Gods."<sup>10</sup> Elton Trueblood has recently written, "Christianity is palatable not only because Jesus is like God, but because God is like Jesus."<sup>11</sup> And so may man be.

The Jesuit paleontologist, Teilhard de Chardin, in *The Phenomenon of Man* cited evidence that the ultimate purpose undergirding even the cells and matter-in-motion of the cosmos is to produce Christs—Christogenesis, the emerging of a great and glorious personality.<sup>12</sup> Karl Rahner, certainly the most influential and also the most officially renowned Catholic theologian, has written, "It is not possible to speak theologically about God without at the same time saying something about man and vice versa."<sup>13</sup> Exactly.

Third, there was the claim that caused all to wince, of con-

---

<sup>10</sup>Henri Bergson, *The Two Sources of Morality in Religion* (New York: Henry Holt, 1935). Bergson's concluding lines read: "Mankind lies groaning, half crushed beneath the weight of its own progress. Men do not sufficiently realize that the future is in their own hands. Theirs is the task of determining first of all whether they want to go on living or not. Theirs is the responsibility, then, for deciding if they want merely to live, or intend to make just the extra effort required for fulfilling, even on their refractory planet, the essential function of the universe, which is a machine for the making of gods" (p. 306).

<sup>11</sup>"The deepest conviction of all Christian theology is the affirmation that the God of all the world is like Jesus Christ. Because the logical development is from the relatively known to the relatively unknown, the procedure is not from God to Christ, but from Christ to God." Elton Trueblood, *The Humor of Christ* (New York: Harper & Row, 1964), p. 32.

<sup>12</sup>"Though frightened for a moment by evolution, the Christian now perceives that what it offers him is nothing but a magnificent means of feeling more at one with God and of giving himself more to him. In a pluralistic and static Nature, the universal domination of Christ could, strictly speaking, still be regarded as an extrinsic and super-imposed power. In a spiritually converging world this 'Christic' energy acquires an urgency and intensity of another order altogether. If the world is convergent and if Christ occupies its center, then the Christogenesis of St. Paul and St. John is nothing else and nothing less than the extension . . . of the noogenesis in which cosmogenesis—as regards our experience—culminates. Christ invests himself organically with the very majesty of his creation. . . . Evolution has come to infuse new blood, so to speak, into the perspectives and aspirations of Christianity. In return, is not the Christian faith destined, is it not preparing, to save and even to take the place of evolution?" Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *The Phenomenon of Man* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1959), pp. 296-97. See also "Pierre Teilhard de Chardin: The Christianization of Evolution," *Critical Issues in Modern Religion*, Roger Johnson and Ernest Wallwork, eds. (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1973), pp. 122-33. See also Dietrich Bonhoeffer: "The image of Jesus Christ impresses itself into daily communion on the image of the disciple. . . . That image has the power to transform our lives, and if we surrender ourselves utterly to him, we cannot help bearing his image ourselves. We become the sons of God, we stand side by side with Christ, our unseen Brother, bearing like him the image of God." Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* (New York: Macmillan, 1937), p. 337. The concluding chapter, "The Image of Christ," pp. 337-44, is devoted to this subject.

<sup>13</sup>See Rahner's *Spirit in the World* (New York: Herder & Herder, 1968), p. xvii.

tinual revelation. The Christian churches, in the absence of revelation, had tightened their views protectively, defensively, either around a holy man, the pope and hierarchy, or around a holy book, the Bible, which was alleged to be all-sufficient and only-sufficient. Religious knowing came only through that word and all other claims were treated as emotional extravagance.

#### OF CONTINUAL REVELATION

Today it is different. Again the Quakers, George Fox, Rufus Jones, Elton Trueblood, speak (in these exact words) of continual revelation, by which they mean the cultivation of the inner light.<sup>14</sup> And they have abandoned the more extreme forms of mysticism—its world-hating, its denying of the subject-object distinction, its plea that one day we may be, in a metaphysical sense, one with the Ultimate. Instead, they are talking very intimately about what we would mean by the present influence of the light of Christ.

Among the Catholics, theologian Avery Dulles (son of John Foster Dulles) has argued there cannot be a Christian church without prophets.<sup>15</sup> Among the Protestants the traditional ap-

---

<sup>14</sup>See, for example, George Fox, *The Journal of George Fox* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1911); Rufus Jones, *The Inner Life* (New York: Macmillan, 1916), *Spiritual Energies in Daily Life* (New York: Macmillan, 1922), *The Testimony of the Soul* (New York: Macmillan, 1937), *Spirit in Man* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1941), *New Eyes for Invisibles* (New York: Macmillan, 1943); and David Elton Trueblood, *The Common Ventures of Life* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1949), *The Essence of Spiritual Religion* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1936), and *The Knowledge of God* (New York: Harper & Row, 1939).

<sup>15</sup>"Through documents such as those just mentioned ["The Decree on Ecumenism," nos. 4, 6, 7; and "The Constitution on the Church in the Modern World," nos. 4, 11, 33, 44 of Vatican II] Vatican II expressed the Church's need for prophetic guidance and in so doing faced up to the needs of our day. . . . The current demand for prophets in the Church is due in part to the revolutionary changes in our time. . . . The rapidly evolving secular culture of our day puts questions to the Church for which there are no ready-made solutions. Scrutinizing the signs of the times, Christianity must re-interpret its own doctrine and goals in relation to the world today. To effect this transposition without loss of substance is a task calling for prophetic insight."

"Churchmen are always tempted to suppress prophecy, for it is a disturbing element. By upsetting men's settled views and destroying their complacencies, it continually threatens the unity and stability of the institutional Church. Yet the Church needs prophecy." Avery Dulles, S. J., *The Survival of Dogma* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1971), pp. 131, 132 and the entire chapter, "The Permanence of Prophecy in the Church," pp. 125-33; see also, Dulles' *Revelation Theology* (New York: Herder & Herder, c1969), *Revelation and the Quest for Unity* (Washington: Corpus Books, [1968]), and "The Succession of Prophets in the Church," in *Apostolic Succession: Rethinking a Barrier to Unity*, vol. 34 of *Concilium—Theology in the Age of Renewal* (New York: Paulist Press, 1968).

proach to mystery has slowly collapsed. Karl Barth had insisted that one could only speak dogmatically of what had been written;<sup>16</sup> Bultmann, that one could speak only of its so-called existential impact,<sup>17</sup> Emil Brunner, that a revelation comprehended would not be one,<sup>18</sup> Martin Luther, that God is hidden (*deus abs conditus*);<sup>19</sup> and the mystics, that God is known, if at all, "in a cloud of unknowing."<sup>20</sup> Tillich likewise insisted that God is essential mystery not simply the not-yet-known, but an in-principle-unknowable. One comes away from the encounter with two things: 1) the knowledge that he has had the encounter with the mystery, and 2) that the mystery is mysterious.<sup>21</sup>

All that has changed.

There is new recognition that the word "mysteries" as it appears in the New Testament and in its background literature means something more, something one can reach through with knowledge or gnosis—not simply on the ground of faith

<sup>16</sup>"Where it happens that the biblical authority authenticates itself by actually obtaining a hearing and obedience, there it has evidently spoken understandably and been understood; there, evidently, exposition of the Bible has taken place. . . ."

"Who is it that expounds the Bible? We answer with the ancient axiom which must be the axiom of all hermeneutics: *Scriptura scripturae interpres*. With respect to the Holy Scriptures, that means: These writings, as God's Word in human words, expound themselves, are in themselves . . . everywhere perfectly clear and transparent." Karl Barth, *God Here and Now* (New York: Harper & Row, 1964), p. 52; also pp. 18, 40-41, 45.

<sup>17</sup>Rudolph Bultmann, "New Testament and Mythology," reprinted in *Kerygma and Myth*, ed. Hans Werner Bartsch (New York: Harper & Row, 1961), pp. 1-44. Also, *Theology of the New Testament* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1955), 2:237-41.

<sup>18</sup>"The first and most important fact that we can know about God is ever this: *we* know nothing of Him, except what He Himself has revealed to us. God's revelation of Himself always occurs in such a way as to manifest more deeply His inaccessibility to our thought and imagination. All that we can know is the world. God is not the world. Therefore He is also exalted above all our knowledge. He is Mystery." Emil Brunner, *Our Faith* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons), pp. 11-12.

<sup>19</sup>Martin Luther, "Bondage of the Will," in *Martin Luther*, ed. John Dillenberger (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1961), especially pp. 190-92. See also John Dillenberger, *God Hidden and Revealed* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1953). For further sources, Dillenberger's bibliography and footnotes include references for Barth, Boehme, Brunner, Harnack, Heim, Hendry, Hermann, Luther, Otto (especially), Ritschl, and Watson.

<sup>20</sup>See the expressions of this view in Thomas S. Kepler, comp., *The Fellowship of the Saints* (New York: Abingdon Cokesbury, 1948).

<sup>21</sup>"Knowledge of revelation is knowledge about the revelation of the mystery of being to us, not information about the nature of beings and their relation to one another." ". . . the ground of revelation is neither a cause which keeps itself at a distance from the revelatory effect nor a substance which effuses itself into the effect, but rather the mystery which appears in revelation and which remains a mystery in its appearance." Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), pp. 129, 156.

(which was the Protestant claim), but with knowledge.<sup>22</sup> All together more susceptible now to the claim of revelation, even the pope speaks frequently of it, uses the word, and prays for a restoration or renewal."<sup>23</sup>

It has been terrifying to men in charge of men's souls to be so bereft. They now recognize that while damning prophets, they themselves have been cast in the role. For any man at any time to say, "If you will do so and so, you will be saved," is to make prophecy. It is either true or false. And suddenly the recognition comes that Christ did not say there would be no prophets (that would have been a categorical way of enabling Christians to avoid deception). Instead he gave tests for distinguishing the true from the false.<sup>24</sup>

Recently I attended a New Life Mission with a group of ministers who reported on their efforts to regain the young blood of various churches. "Brethren," one of them said after the report (which was all negative), "we are supposed to be teaching good news. That is what the word 'gospel' means. Brethren, I wonder if we have any good news to preach!" When we left, a close Methodist friend of mine said, "You know, Madsen, I think I can write a book now. It will be titled *The Gospel That Is Really Good News*. It will be about you Mormons." It is the essence of the trend to deny that no news is good news and to affirm that a living prophet would be a more reliable guide than a dead one.

The experience of the absence of revelation has led often to disillusion and a "sell out" to secularism, to quote Robert Fitch.<sup>25</sup> But there is now a new concern to let God speak, whatever he may say, even in condemnation.

That leads to the implicit insult in the Mormon witness, namely, that there has been an apostasy. We have offered to Christians, in a way, their own medicine. They have usually

<sup>22</sup>Raymond E. Brown, *The Semitic Background of the Term "Mystery" in the New Testament*. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1968).

<sup>23</sup>See passages cited in Hugh Nibley's *Since Cumorah* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1970), chapter 1.

<sup>24</sup>"Since, then, all this is possible, it becomes a matter of great importance to recognize what it is in a particular case that answers the cry of the tormented heart: the empty echo in which, all unawares, one hears only oneself, or the answer in which God is perceived. Hence the problem of a criterion for the discerning of prophets, their voices and visions, will ever and again become urgent in the Church." Karl Rahner, *Inquiries* (New York: Herder & Herder, 1964), p. 90. Cf. Matthew 7:15, 16; 24:11, 24; and Mark 13:22.

<sup>25</sup>Fitch was reviewing critically the immensely popular book by Harvey Cox, *The Secular City* (New York: Macmillan, 1966), which commends the "secularization" of Christianity.



insisted that only when you come to recognize how sinful you are can you become receptive to the redemption. But while maintaining that man was totally sinful they yet believed that the church was invincible. Joseph Smith came to report not that the apostasy was evidence of the restoration but that the restoration was evidence of the apostasy.

It is as if a group had fallen off a sinking ship and a hundred individual dinghies were now around struggling for life and someone announced, "Let's get together at least close enough to vote on which way is north." And someone then said, "A ship is approaching." One does not wisely cling to his raft when he can board a luxury liner. Yet many have preferred their rafts.

Today, we need no longer clamor about changes that have occurred since the ancient and primitive New Testament church. Theologians themselves are saying it and saying it in agony. They are providing diagnosis and are hopefully more open to the Lord's therapy.

Just in terms of factual almanacs the evidence is clear that the churches have declined in self-esteem, in status, in numbers, in financial support, and in what is now being called a "clergy shortage." While population has expanded, church attendance has diminished.<sup>26</sup> And yet we can be grateful much is still alive, much is still productive.<sup>27</sup> (Joseph Smith did not con-

<sup>26</sup>While U. S. population increased an average of 1.4% per year from 1960 to 1970, within the last ten years mainline Protestant denominations have reported a serious decline in church membership. The Chicago Tribune reports that American Baptist Churches have lost 5%; Episcopal, down 4.8%; United Presbyterian, 3.5%; and the Christian Church (Disciples), 2.4%. (*San Francisco Examiner & Chronicle*, 5 May 1974, p. 21) Between 1965 and 1970 United Methodist membership dropped by 400,000 (3.6%), and between 1968 and 1970 the three largest Lutheran bodies in the United States lost 130,000. (Dean Kelly, *Why Conservative Churches Are Growing* [New York: Harper & Row, 1972]). "Weekly or near-weekly church attendance by Protestants dropped only 2%, from 38% to 36%, from 1972-1973, while Jewish attendance also fell 2%, from 9% to 7%. However, among Catholics, it took a steeper plunge, falling 13% from 61% to 48%. (George Cornell, "Statistical Look at Faith in the U. S.," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 9 February 1974).

<sup>27</sup>"Cash contributions reported by 39 Protestant bodies increased \$229 million to \$4.6 billion in 1972. Average contributions per person rose to \$9.16 from \$3.35. . . . Seminary school enrollments totaled at 31,698, an all-time high" (*San Francisco Examiner & Chronicle*, 5 May 1974, p. 21).

From 1958 to 1970, "conservative" churches in the United States showed a healthy increase in membership: Assemblies of God, 2.1%; Church of the Nazarene, 2.6%; Salvation Army, 2.9%; Seventh-day Adventists, 3.2%; Pentecostal Holiness Church, 3.9%; Jehovah Witnesses, 5%; Latter-day Saints, 5.6%. From 1967-1970, the Southern Baptist Convention increased 2.26% per year (approximately to 12 million, presently). Kelly, *Conservative Churches*.

demn people; he condemned, in the name of God, certain suffocating creeds.)

Today many are saying of the original vitality in radical form, "it's gone." Dozens of articles speak of things "lost"—lost dimension, lost radiance, et al. The Paulist fathers of the Roman Catholic faith have been writing painfully about the "impasse" the church has reached.<sup>28</sup> Kierkegaard, a hundred years after his death, has become as influential as any living man. And he wrote ceaselessly that the church was "sick unto death"—not because he hated Christ, but because he loved him.<sup>29</sup> And to a similar degree, though from a different plateau, Nietzsche wrote, not against Christ as he appears in the New Testament, but against what he called the "burial" of Christ in the official doctrines.<sup>30</sup>

When, ten years ago, the altogether brief and faddish movement, Christian Atheism, arose, *Time* magazine printed on their cover, "Is God Dead."<sup>31</sup> Our answer would have been: "The God of whom you speak was never alive." The God of the creeds is an idolatric fiction (this is now being acknowledged widely) and as a result the church is sick—it is worse than sick, say some, it is dead. That tree, originally nourished by divinity, has become barren and unfruitful. What can be done? Well, they say, "the reformation continues" among the Protestants. But so also does the decline.<sup>32</sup>

#### OF ONE CHURCH

And this has given new status to the next staggering statement we made, that there *ought* to be *one church*. Time was

<sup>28</sup>*Concilium's* General Secretariat article, "Prophets in the Secular City," concentrates on "prophecy as a general religious phenomenon and on the assertion that the Churches need a new prophecy in order to emerge from the present impasse" (New York: Paulist Press, 1968), 37:133. See also "Le eveil du prophetisme," *Informations Catholiques Internationales* 303 (1 January 1968): 3-12; and Cardinal F. König, "Propheten Mussen Lästig Werden," in *Worte Zur Zeit* (Vienna, 1968), pp. 249-55.

<sup>29</sup>Soren Kierkegaard, *Attack Upon 'Christendom'*, trans. Walter Lowrie (Boston: Beacon Press, c1968), and Kierkegaard, *The Sickness Unto Death* (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1954).

<sup>30</sup>Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Anti-Christ* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1968).

<sup>31</sup>"Is God Dead?" *Time*, vol. 87, no. 14 (8 April 1966).

<sup>32</sup>At a Wittenberg University symposium on "The Relevance of the Reformation to Our Day" in 1967, Roman Catholic theologian James E. Kraus declared, "We must have reform—we must have it to be the free sons of God we are called to be. . . . If the Reformation is dead, we are dead. It is as simple as that. . . . I may wonder here with you, how alive in your church [speaking to Protestants] is this spirit of the Reformation, today on its 450th anniversary?" The Reverend James E. Kraus, quoted in, "If Reformation Dead, We are

when the churches rejoiced in diversity, when they said, we are enriched by our differences, when the standard approach to conflict was, God has taken account of all the individual traits of men and therefore does not require the same patterns for *any* set of men. All of us can speak for him and with him and by him. We need not worry.

No longer. Today there is the recognition in the ecumenical movement that the diversity of Christendom is not a compliment but a scandal.<sup>33</sup> There have been literal organizational reunions as the Congregational merger with the Evangelical Reform Church or the harmonizing of the United Church of Canada. There is talk of one American Protestant church numbering some twenty million that would bring together the larger segments of Protestantism.<sup>34</sup> The official Catholic hierarchy has tried to encourage dialogue—to agree to talk even if that talk does not yield agreement.<sup>35</sup> There has been a Federation or World Council of churches where at least policy decisions relating to universal world problems can be hammered out.<sup>36</sup>

Henry Leiper has written, "Unless individual Christians become united first of all in the will to obey Christ's command

---

Dead,' Theologian Says," the Springfield, Ohio *Sun*, 1 November 1967. See also *Concilium* issue entitled, *Ongoing Reform of the Church*, ed. Alois Muller and Norbert Greinacher (New York: Herder & Herder, 1972).

<sup>33</sup>"Christ the Lord founded one Church and one Church only. However, many Christian communions present themselves to men as the true inheritors of Jesus Christ: all indeed profess to be followers of the Lord but differ in mind and go their different ways, as if Christ himself were divided. Such division openly contradicts the will of Christ, scandalizes the world, and damages the holy cause of preaching the Gospel to every creature." "Decree on Ecumenism," Article 1 (Vatican II), quoted in Xavier Rynne, *The Third Session* (New York: Farrar, Strauss & Giroux, 1965), p. 351.

<sup>34</sup>The Consultation on Church Union began preparations in 1963 for the union of the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., the Protestant Episcopal Church, the Methodist Church, the United Church of Christ, Disciples of Christ, and Evangelical United Brethren Church (See Kyle Hanselden, "Fusion at Oberlin," *The Christian Century* 80 [3 April 1963]:422-23.) For the past few years, COCU has been foundering. Several denominations have withdrawn active support, and the entry of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the A. M. E. Zion, and the Christian Methodist Episcopal, have created additional difficulties. (See "Will COCU Survive?" *Christianity Today*, 16 (28 April 1972):33; "COCU Fragmented," *Christianity Today*, 16 (9 June 1972):27; and "Ecumenism and COCU," *America*, 126 (24 June 1972):643-44.

<sup>35</sup>"Today, in many parts of the world, under the inspiring grace of the Holy Spirit, many efforts are being made in prayer, word and action to attain that fulness of unity which Jesus Christ desires. The sacred council exhorts all the Catholic faithful to recognize the signs of the times and to take an active and intelligent part in the work of ecumenism." Article 4, "Decree on Ecumenism," Vatican II, in Rynne, *Third Session*, pp. 354-55.

<sup>36</sup>Norman Goodall, "A New Era for the World Council of Churches," in *Ecumenical Progress* (London: Oxford University Press, 1972), pp. 1-20, and Thomas Wieser, ed. *Planning for Mission* (London: Epworth Press, 1966).

that they be one in love, then never will the sin of ecclesiastical disunity be overcome."<sup>37</sup> To which we would add that until we are united under the power of God in his church we will not fully regain the power to love and be one. Thus comes the admission, all but universal, that radical disarray is division, is misreading of divine intent, is distortion of Christ's prayer before Gethsemane that "they all may be one."

#### PATTERNS OF REVISION

Out of this concern came Vatican II, the second Ecumenical Council for the Catholics. It is a standard joke (I meet it frequently talking to priests) that Pope John said, "Let us open the windows," and that Pope Paul has been trying in vain to close them. Let's just look at these three categories:

First, the abandonments that resulted from Vatican II: 1) The rejection of what had heretofore been sacred tradition. No longer is it sacred. The Aristotelian overlay, as it is called, the Thomistic (St. Thomas Aquinas) philosophicalizing of the Gospel tradition, is now rebuked in favor of a return to "Biblical theology."<sup>38</sup> 2) Abandonment of many of the classical arguments for a purely rationalistic God, trying to find God at the end of a syllogism. As Gustave Weigel put it, "We must begin with the New Testament revelation of God and then connect him to the cosmos. We cannot do it the other way."<sup>39</sup> 3) The rejection of the Roman curia that condemned all heretical books.<sup>40</sup> 4) The rejection of many of the traditional shrines

<sup>37</sup>Henry S. Leiper, "Reunion and the Ecumenical Movement," in *Protestant Thought in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Arnold S. Nash (New York: Macmillan, 1951), pp. 249-71.

<sup>38</sup>"Bible and Church—these have been the two great growth points in twentieth-century Catholic theology. Today we have a new ecclesiology and a new biblical theology—both new to us but more faithful than what they replace to the Church and the Bible as in truth the latter have always been." Adrian Hastings, *A Concise Guide to the Documents of the Second Vatican Council* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1968), 1:147. Cf., H. Vorgrimler, ed., *Dogmatic vs. Biblical Theology* (Baltimore: Helicon, 1964); also, Roland E. Murphy and Carl J. Peter, "The Role of the Bible in Roman Catholic Theology," *Interpretation* (January 1971), pp. 78-112. See also Robert McAfee Brown and Gustave Weigel, *An American Dialogue* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1960), and Weigel's "The Scriptures and Theology," in *Catholic Theology in Dialogue*, ed. Gustave Weigel (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1961), chapter 2.

<sup>39</sup>In a statement to the author.

<sup>40</sup>Joseph Clifford Fenton, "The Roman Curia and the Ecumenical Council," *American Ecclesiastical Review*, 148 (March 1963):185-98; "Catholic Updating—How Far and How Fast?" *U. S. News and World Report*, 9 October 1967; Peter Hebbleth Waite, S. J., "A Brief Guide to the Reformed Roman Curia," *Month*, vol. 39, no. 3 (March 1968):164.

and pilgrimages.<sup>41</sup> 5) A toning down of Mariology.<sup>42</sup> 6) An outright denial of Leo the XII's exclusivistic claims that there is no salvation outside the Catholic Church.<sup>43</sup>

Second, what did they embrace? They embraced putting the mass in the vernacular.<sup>44</sup> Now there is a spate of articles which say the mass is not the original ceremony.<sup>45</sup>

They embraced further involvement of the laity. There is an article saying that the Mormon missionary program which involves young laymen and laywomen is one hundred times more effective than others. That is an unhealthy ratio. They have revived, as they put it, the "deaconate." What does that mean? It means that a layman—not an ordained and professional priest—can take the mass into homes.<sup>46</sup> More, they have

<sup>41</sup>"Catholics Concerned in Lack of Devotion to Virgin Mary," *Atlantic Journal* (21 November 1972); "Mary Devotions Drop," *Arizona Republic* (10 February 1973).

<sup>42</sup>Catholic theologian Right Reverend Jorge Medina Estevez, commenting on Vatican II's treatise on Mary (chapter 8 of "Constitution on the Church") said, "The promulgated text is much more cautious than the original official text. It says nothing about universal mediation [of Mary], nor does it determine its content. Whenever it uses the title it does so together with others and with two explanations: first, that it is to be understood in such a way that nothing can increase or diminish the dignity and efficacy of Christ, the unique mediator; that consequently such mediation is by way of participation in the divine goods in a way that it cannot be placed on the same level as Christ's mediation or become one with it." John H. Miller, ed., *Vatican II: An Interfaith Appraisal* (South Bend, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1966), p. 311. The title of "co-redemptress," common to many other official pronouncements on Mary does not appear in Vatican II documents.

<sup>43</sup>Article 15 of Vatican II's "Constitution on the Church" states, "The Church recognizes that in many ways she is linked with those who, being baptized, are honored with the name of Christian, though they do not profess the faith in its entirety or do not preserve unity of communion with the successor of Peter. . . . They are consecrated by baptism, in which they are united with Christ. . . . They also share with us in prayer and other spiritual benefits. Likewise we can say that in some real way they are joined with us in the Holy Spirit, for to them too He gives His gifts and graces whereby He is operative among them with His sanctifying power. . . ." Cited in Rynne, *Third Session*, pp. 308-9. Cf. also, Article 3 of "Decree on Ecumenism," pp. 353-54.

<sup>44</sup>See "Mass in Vernacular," *Christianity Today*, 8 (11 September 1964): 53. See also, William F. Buckley, Jr., "The End of the Latin Mass," in *The Jeweler's Eye* (New York: G. P. Putman's Sons, 1968), pp. 319-24.

<sup>45</sup>For example: Reginald H. Fuller, "The Double Origin of the Eucharist," *Biblical Research* 8 (1963):60-72; Oscar S. Brooks, "The Johannine Eucharist," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 82 (September 1963):293-300; George W. Polley, Jr., "Toward a More Biblical View of the Lord's Supper," *Foundations* 7 (October 1964):335-40; E. E. Thornton, "Lord's Supper: A New Form and Renewed Authenticity," *Pastoral Psychology* 18 (April 1967):12-19; and A. R. C. Leaney, "What Was the Lord's Supper?" *Theology* 70 (February 1967):52-56.

<sup>46</sup>"It is the duty of the deacon . . . to administer baptism solemnly, to be custodian and dispenser of the Eucharist, to assist at and bless marriages in the name of the Church, to bring Viaticum to the dying, to read the Sacred Scripture to the faithful, to administer sacramentals, to officiate at funeral and burial services. . . ."

"Since these duties . . . can be fulfilled only with difficulty in many

reinterpreted the passage about anointing with oil in James. No longer is it last rites or extreme unction. Today they view it, closer to the original, as administering to the sick. And Catholic "home teachers" for so they are, do that.<sup>47</sup> They've embraced "collegiality,"<sup>48</sup> which is another word for the counselor idea, presidencies, trinities of organization. They have embraced Abraham as the rock rather than, or in addition to, Peter.<sup>49</sup> And they have regained the idea of covenant and the notion of an ancient Israel of which the Church must be the modern expression.<sup>50</sup>

Third, they are considering abandoning many other things. They have talked about the doctrine of the "real presence" in the Eucharist. Many progressive theologians favor an "analogical" presence doctrine.<sup>51</sup> They have given up or are recommending giving up a strict reading of papal infallibility as in the writings of Hans Kuhn.<sup>52</sup> They have outvoted the pope on the rights of divorce and birth control. Eight hundred American bishops simply said, "We do not accept what you have said."<sup>53</sup> They are troubled by their heretofore ven-

---

regions . . . the diaconate can in the future be restored as a proper and permanent rank of the hierarchy." Article 29, "Constitution on the Church," pp. 320-21.

<sup>47</sup>Frederick R. McManus, "The Neglected Sacrament of Anointing," *The American Ecclesiastical Review*, vol. 160, no. 1 (January 1969):47-53.

<sup>48</sup>"The order of bishops, which succeeds to the college of apostles and gives this apostolic body continued existence, is also the subject of supreme and full power over the universal Church, provided we understand this body together with its head the Roman pontiff. . . . The power of binding and loosing, which was given to Peter, was granted also to the college of apostles, joined with their head." Article 23, "Constitution on the Church," pp. 313-14. Chapter 3 of the Constitution (Articles 18-29) is concerned with collegiality.

<sup>49</sup>Abraham. See footnotes to Hugh Nibley's article, "Setting the Stage—The World of Abraham," *The Improvement Era* 73 (January 1970):60.

<sup>50</sup>This arises from the renewed emphasis on Israel as the people of God, and the Pope's frequent use of the phrase, particularly in "Constitution on the Church."

<sup>51</sup>Conservatives insist on the "real presence" (Christ is corporeally and substantially present in both the wafer and the wine), while progressives want to say that there is a similarity, a relation, between the element and the presence of Christ. Cf. Raymond A. Adams, S. J., "The Holy Spirit and the Real Presence," *Theological Studies* 29 (March 1968):37-51, and "Sacramental Theology; The Eucharist in Recent Literature," *Theological Studies* 32 (June 1971):233-77.

<sup>52</sup>Hans Küng, *Infallible?* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1972).

<sup>53</sup>"Statements on the Encyclical Human Life by U. S. Bishops, Washington Theologians, Cardinal John Heenan, Cardinal Patrick O'Boyle, Bishop John J. Wright," *Catholic Mind* (September 1968), pp. 1-8; "Catholic Priests: Growing Split over Birth Control," *U. S. News & World Report* 65 (16 September 1968):16; "Encyclical Crisis," *Commonweal* 88 (6 September 1968):588-94; "Bishop's Ruling on Birth Control," *U. S. News & World Report* 65 (25 November 1968):10; and "Pope and Birth Control," *Time* 92 (9 November 1968):40-42.

erated notion of natural law which is absolute, acknowledging that if there are such laws we do not fully know them.<sup>54</sup> One Catholic scholar has just written an article saying, "Farewell to the Original Sin."<sup>55</sup> They are concerned about pedobaptism.<sup>56</sup> They are modifying certain forms of the classical view of hell and they are campaigning to abandon celibacy.<sup>57</sup> These are all steps toward the original revelations of Christ, ancient and modern.

#### OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS

And now the category of spiritual gifts. We insist on the part of the restoration that *all* of the gifts and blessings and powers that one can trace historically in the Book of Acts or trace as promises in the counsels of prophets, need to be central to the church or the church is no longer Christ's. That has been met with the charge that these gifts ended with John the Revelator, that those who claimed face-to-face communion with God or spiritual charismatic gifts from Him were lunatics. First they claimed these gifts were absent, then unimportant, then undesirable, and finally, impossible.

But it is clear in our generation that as nature abhors a vacuum, a religious man cannot abide the absence of these gifts. Everything in the Book of Acts has been sought, often in counterfeit forms. There are prophetesses and soothsayers, clairvoyants and numerologists, astrologers and horoscopes, witch-cultivation, demon worship, dark rituals, death scenes, ouija boards, and mind-blowing drugs. Now among both Protestants and Catholics and even to a lesser extent among Ortho-

<sup>54</sup>N. H. G. Robinson, "The Problem of Natural Theology," *Religious Studies*, vol. 8, no. 4 (December 1972):319-33.

<sup>55</sup>Julius Gross, "Abschied von der Erbsünde," *Zeitschrift für Religions und Geistesgeschichte*, vol. 23, no. 4 (1971):369-73. See also his "Abalards Umdeutung des Erbsündendogmas," *Zeitschrift*, vol. 15, no. 1 (1963):14-33.

<sup>56</sup>Gross, "Abschied von der Erbsünde," pp. 369-73.

<sup>57</sup>"In fact the initial draft constitutions, sent to the bishops before the Council [Vatican II] began, included one on the deposit of faith which had a chapter devoted to the 'last things'. This was very much akin to the approach of the manuals, an individualistic approach; it included a lengthy section on the punishments of hell. This draft constitution never, in fact, got discussed at all, but the last things reappeared two years later in our chapter 7 [of the "Constitution on the Church"], but now with an altered approach." Hastings, *A Concise Guide*, p. 59. "A Statement on Celibacy by U. S. Catholic Bishops," (November 1969), *Catholic Mind*, January 1970, pp. 55-64; "Celibacy in the Church, vol. 78 in *Concilium—Religion in the Seventies*, ed. William Bassett and Peter Huizing (New York: Herder & Herder, 1972); "Statement by U. S. Bishops on Clerical Celibacy," (November 1967), *Catholic Mind* (January 1968), pp. 6-7.

dox Jews, the plea is that we must seek God's way of feeling, God's way of responding.

So there are what are called the underground church movements, the holiness movements, the cultivation of glossolalia or spontaneous speaking in tongues.<sup>58</sup> In Ann Arbor, for example, Protestants and Catholics meet together each week in a Catholic basilica to cultivate the gift of tongues and interpretation of tongues, the gift of healing, and the gift of prophecy.<sup>59</sup> "Faith-healing" has become almost big business in this country.<sup>60</sup> And the other gifts are no longer officially or unofficially claimed to be unessential. We can argue whether the phenomena are genuine or counterfeit. What we cannot argue is the thirst for them and the new recognition that they were anciently part and parcel of the church.

#### OF SACRED MARRIAGE

That leads to the remarkable and somewhat strange teaching central from the beginning in the restoration that marriage is of God and that the traditional views disparaging the relationship of man and woman were not true to the Gospel but were a distortion, often through the unbiblical influence of the Greek distrust of matter.

One verse has been widely used against marriage in the New Testament and it can be used just as well as evidence for it. The question, you remember, was put by the Sadducees who were playing on the view that there could be marriage in heaven. The nub of their question was, "*Which* marriage will

<sup>58</sup>Maria von Trapp, for example, in her autobiography, *Maria* (Carol Stream, Illinois: Creation House, 1972), offers a personal testimonial ascribing the "new Pentecost" to Pope John who had prayed for it. She says the initial outburst occurred at Notre Dame University and then spread to Ann Arbor, Michigan. Her group takes seriously the idea that evil spirits work upon them and all seek baptism in the Holy Spirit. This charismatic renewal has brought her to a new sense of prayer, to a new conception of the gifts spoken of in the Book of Acts. She believes that she "uttered some beautiful, very melodious words" but she does not remember. The following day came love and joy and peace (p. 196). Similar events occurred in Indonesia, Africa, India, Pakistan, and the South Sea Islands.

<sup>59</sup>"New Charismatic Age," interview with Leo Jozef Suenens (Roman Catholic) by D. R. Campion, *America* 126 (13 May 1972):503-5; W. Hendrick, "Tongues: A Critical Analysis," (4 parts) *Christian Standard*, 17, 24, 31 January, and 7 February 1970; W. Mills, "Reassessing Glossolalia," *Christian Century* (14 October 1970), p. 1217; S. L. Bergquist, "Revival of Glossolalic Practices in the Catholic Church," *Perkins School of Theology Journal* 27 (Summer 1973):32-37; "Spiritual Healing," ed. E. M. Stern, *Journal of Pastoral Counseling* 6 (Fall-Winter 1971-72):2-67.

<sup>60</sup>See, for example, "Oral Roberts: Rousing Return to T. V.," *Christianity Today* (28 March 1969), p. 40.



be binding." Later, on the misreading of Paul and further the misleading of Augustine and Thomas Aquinas, who placed celibacy above parenthood, Christendom came to frown somewhat on marriage.

We have rarely appealed to the glorious symbolism that Jesus himself used. He called himself the bridegroom. He hinted of the sacramental meal as the marriage feast, and likewise spoke of the eventual parousia—his great and glorious second coming, his descent in the clouds of heaven with his worthy hosts. Through symbolism he taught, we believe, that divine families encircled by his fire and light are the very essence of life and eternal life and that without them this earth—indeed this cosmos—will have missed the measure of its creation.

Today we are no longer alone. Spokesmen as varied as Mrs. Norman Vincent Peale,<sup>61</sup> Presbyterian Peter Marshall (the man called Peter),<sup>62</sup> atheist-become-Anglican C. S. Lewis,<sup>63</sup> the Swedenborgians,<sup>64</sup> reformation theologian John Dillenberger,<sup>65</sup> and a New Testament scholar named William E. Phipps,<sup>66</sup> have argued in effect that the separation of man and woman is the fall and that wickedness will persist until they are reunited.

In the new discovery of a Gospel of Philip at Nag Hammadi in upper Egypt we read, according to R. Wilson,<sup>67</sup> not only of the origin of mankind but the necessity for the reintegration of humanity by means of [listen] baptism, the sacrament, and sacred marriage.

We have (and this is only a footnote) spoken, oh so cautiously, of a heavenly mother. Traditional Christianity, following the Romans, has placed a mother in heaven. She has been, says the dogma, assumed bodily into heaven.<sup>68</sup> (And I

<sup>61</sup>Ruth Peale, *The Adventures of Being a Wife* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., Prentice-Hall, 1971).

<sup>62</sup>See, for example, Catherine Marshall, *Christy* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1971). See also LeGrande Richards' interview with a Baptist minister in the *Conference Report* for October 1971, pp. 84-85.

<sup>63</sup>C. S. Lewis, *A Grief Observed* (Greenwich, Conn.: Seabury Press, 1961).

<sup>64</sup>Cf. Emanuel Swedenborg, *The Delights of Wisdom Pertaining to Conjugal Love* (1768); Sig Synnestvedt, *The Essential Swedenborg* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1970), pp. 66-75.

<sup>65</sup>In conversation with the author.

<sup>66</sup>William E. Phipps, *The Sexuality of Jesus* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973).

<sup>67</sup>R. McL. Wilson, "Introduction," *The Gospel of Philip* (New York: Harper & Row, 1962).

<sup>68</sup>Mary was "adorned by God with sanctifying grace from the first instant of her existence," hence was not subject to original sin, and was therefore taken

said humorously to my friend, the Jesuit, "That's exactly what she was—*assumed* into heaven.") They have said that Mary, the mother of Christ, was in some ways co-redemptress with Christ and is the intimate channel for our communion with the divine<sup>69</sup> We do not want to follow that form. But we have from the beginning said there are two, there is God and Goddess, in the ultimate scheme of things.

And today? Well, again Tillich speaks in lamentation about what he called the "intolerable male character" of Protestant symbolism.<sup>70</sup> Too often, too much, the Christian had spoken only the pronoun "he" and there needed to be somehow—and he had no recommendation on how—the recognition of "she" and "they," that is both male and female. But multiplying metaphysical mirrors does not increase the light. It remained for the restoration to clarify this. Today too many refuse, because guilt and terror yield slowly, the recognition that marriage is of God in some eternal sense.

#### THE DOCUMENT EXPLOSION

Now let me be even more rapid in a kind of summary. These changes have come about under pressure—not only ours, but the pressures of the real world. But something else is happening that is bringing about this revolution. And it is happening almost under our noses and without our notice. It is the revolution caused by the uncovering and recovering of ancient documents. Since 1947 over one hundred thousand documents have come to light which shed a tremendous flood of light on the world before Christ as well as the world shortly after. The Dead Sea Scrolls was just a little wave; there is

---

directly into heaven. See Karl Rahner, *Mary, The Mother of the Lord* (New York: Herder & Herder, 1963), especially p. 43.

<sup>69</sup>Ambrose (A.D. 339-397) taught that through Mary "salvation was given to all" (*Expositio in Lucam* 2.17) and ". . . worked the salvation of the world and conceived the redemption of all [in Christ]" (*De Ubstitutione Virginis* 33), cited in Hilda Graef, *Mary: A History of Doctrine and Devotion* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1963), p. 83. Anselm (d. 1109) taught that Christ was the "judge of the world" and Mary the "reconciler (*reconciliatrix*) of the world." Graef, *Mary*, p. 212.

Eadmer (d. 1124) taught that "sometimes salvation is quicker if we remember Mary's name than if we invoke the name of the Lord Jesus" because "Her Son is the Lord and Judge of all men, discerning the merits of the individuals, hence he does not at once answer anyone who invokes him, but does it only after just judgment. But if the name of his Mother be invoked, her merits intercede so that he is answered even if the merits of him who invokes her do not deserve it." Graef, *Mary*, p. 216.

<sup>70</sup>In his lectures on religious symbolism at Harvard.

<sup>71</sup>Footnote cancelled.

now a flood—a total Christian library from upper Egypt<sup>72</sup> confirming, embellishing, establishing a world view that is incredibly similar to that which Joseph Smith taught the world.

I studied at Harvard during what was called the "Welhausen Era," an era that is now defunct. The approach to the Old Testament was to deny its historicity almost *carte blanche*, to speak of it as great literature, to speak of it as poetic allegory, and to separate it rather completely by the Marcionite heresy from the New Testament. That will no longer do. No scholar with any sensitivity to the documents can say this.

The Qumran community—only a part of their records are so far translated—was, as Frank Cross<sup>73</sup> calls it, a "church of anticipation." Many things that Christians had heretofore supposed were original, unique, and singular in Jesus are very patently there—as much as two hundred years before. That, to them, is a terrible indictment of Christ. For us, it is exactly what he himself has taught—a dispensation plan and pattern of history. Christ came before; and Christ will come after. *He* was the Jehovah who manifested himself to the Old Testament prophets. And Adam and Eve, both genuine historical persons, were by him taught the fullness—the all—of the gospel.

Today there is a temple scroll, still not completely translated into English, twenty-eight feet long confirming our own understanding.<sup>74</sup> There is a gospel called the Gospel of Thomas which rings like the King Follett Discourse, assuming that man is already in one sense divine.<sup>75</sup> There is a Gospel of Philip

<sup>72</sup>There are over 2,000 books, articles, reviews, and dissertations already published on this spectacular discovery, as recorded in David M. Scholer, *Nag Hammadi Bibliography: 1948-1969*, vol. 1 in *Nag Hammadi Studies* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1971). This bibliography is continued in annual supplements which bring the total items to 2,998 as of 1972. See David M. Scholer, "Bibliographia Gnostica Supplementum I," *Novum Testamentum* 13 (1971), pp. 322-336; "Supplementum II," *Novum Testamentum* 14 (1972), pp. 312-31; and "Supplementum III," *Novum Testamentum* 15 (1973), pp. 327-45. One of the earliest accounts of the discovery and its contents is Jean Doresse, *The Secret Books of the Egyptian Gnostics* (New York: The Viking Press, 1960). For reports of recent progress see James M. Robinson, "The Coptic Gnostic Library Today," *New Testament Studies* 14 (1968), pp. 383-401, and James M. Robinson, "The International Committee for the Nag Hammadi Codices: A Progress Report," *New Testament Studies* 18 (1972):236-42.

<sup>73</sup>Frank Moore Cross, Jr., *The Ancient Library of Qumran and Modern Biblical Studies* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1968), e. g., pp. 181-84.

<sup>74</sup>Being presently translated by Miguel Yadin and Father Millet.

<sup>75</sup>(49) Jesus said: Blessed are the solitary and elect, for you shall find the Kingdom; because you come from it (and) you shall go there again. (50) Jesus said: If they say to you: "From where have you originated?", say to them: "We have come from the Light, where the Light has originated through itself. It [stood] and revealed itself in their image." If they say to you: "(Who) are you?" say: "We are his sons and we are the elect of the Living

which reads like Section 132, that marriage is the highest sacrament.<sup>76</sup>

"Is the Gospel of Thomas a fifth gospel?" I asked Helmut Koester at Harvard? He replied, "No, but it is another witness for Christ." "Do the Dead Sea Scrolls suggest that the expectation of Christ presupposes a restitution of all things?" I asked Krister Stendahl, a world authority on Matthew. He replied, "Definitely." "Do the gifts of the spirit," I asked historian Timothy Smith at Johns Hopkins, "characterize the New Testament? Was there a pentecostal movement in Acts?" He replied, "Yes."

Such a cosmology is shown in these documents! It involves the preexistence of all mankind, all intelligences; it involves teaching of living prophets, councils, groups, twelves. It involves patriarchs and prophetic blessings, a panoply of angels and archons who visit mankind, descending and ascending. It involves ordinances which are *eternal* and *exceptionless* through which men have contact with the mysteries and powers of godliness. It speaks of sealing. It speaks of becoming possessors of the all, the fullness of the glory of the Father—not simply becoming like Christ in some distant behavioral sense, but like him in nature. It speaks of the sacredness of ancient Israel, its scattering and gathering; of the creation drama; of the patterns of rising and falling which resemble in breathtaking similarity the ups and downs of the Book of Mormon. It speaks of glory, of light, of fire. It speaks of transmitting these blessings by the laying on of hands. (And within the current year, the Anglicans, who had not heretofore done it, began laying on hands in their ordination procedures.) It speaks of the early Church as the extension of Christ's will for mankind.

In Coptic, in 1969, we discovered a prayer—the sacramental prayer it was alleged—and the words are almost identical to those in 3 Nephi.<sup>77</sup> There is the notion that the worthies could come and sup and feast with Christ and that even the Lord's Prayer, which asks "give us this day our daily bread," is a plea

---

Father." If they ask you: "What is the sign of the Father in you?", say to them: "It is a movement and a rest." *The Gospel According to Thomas* (New York: Harper & Row, 1959, p. 29 [Log. 49-50, pl. 89, 27-34; and pl. 90, 1-7]).

<sup>76</sup>R. McL. Wilson, *The Gospel of Philip: Translated from the Coptic Text with an Introduction and Commentary* (New York: Harper & Row, 1962). See also an article by Robert M. Grant, "The Mystery of Marriage in the Gospel of Philip," *Vigiliae Christianae* 15 (1961):129-40.

<sup>77</sup>Sacrament. See volume 66 of BIFAO (*Bulletin de L' Institut Francais d' Archeologie Orientale*).

for a sacramental foretaste—the identical pattern one finds in the Doctrine and Covenants Section 27.

There is talk of priesthood authority, Aaronic and Melchizedek orders. There is talk of church authority so close to what we teach that the New English Bible, which has now been done without anti-papists as translators, teaches our doctrine of authority—clearly. There is talk of geographic changes in the cosmos, of worlds without number, of temples with their molten seas and qualifications of entry and holies of holies, of ordinances—including marriage—and even of mirrored bridal chambers.<sup>78</sup>

One can read these today and feel that the Doctrine and Covenants itself is a giant apocalypse, that the great and ancient prophets Enoch and Abraham and Moses and Adam fit our descriptions and not the traditional and philosophical overlays. How could the Boy Prophet, who has been dead more than a full century, have done this? Only when an Arab boy near the Dead Sea or archaeologists in Northern Egypt stumbled onto records easily translatable did we suddenly have the sources. What do they show? The laws of evidence become more and more compelling. Joseph Smith had special contact with the original Authors.

The terminology of these books and even of contemporary theological writing picks up phrases which we thought we alone knew. For example: the new and everlasting covenant, Zion—the people of God, the measure of creation, the New Jerusalem, charismatic gifts, the special role of Enoch and Elijah, sealing, the winding up scene, Abrahamic astronomy, anointing, dispensation, Michael the Adam, the garments of the priesthood, white covenant robes, prayer patterns and orders, work for the dead, records on plates, Urim and Thummin, etc.

#### WHAT NOW?

What is the conclusion? Let me bring it to three points. First, we should rejoice and be exceedingly wary. For while during the first generation Mormonism was thought to be utterly outlandish, we may live to see the generation in which it will be thought to be utterly obvious. The attending attitude in each case is the same—indifference. Unless we can testify

<sup>78</sup>See the *Gospel of Philip*, saying 61 (113:12).

with spiritual splendor that God has restored more than a pastiche, a glorious divine unity, unless we can bear witness that there is power from God in all that we witness, others will simply say, "We already have it. There is no more. Goodbye."

Second, it is alleged that Brigham Young offered a tantalizing prediction a century ago.<sup>79</sup> He said the time would come when the elders would no longer testify and face rigid persecution of the basic truths of the gospel, for the constraint of evidence would have led much of the world to recognize them. The one thing they would go forth to the world to bear witness of was authority. The ultimate question would be, "Who has been commissioned of God?" And the final evidence for authority is not words. It is life, it is radiance, it is the expression of the Christ that is genuinely within.

And so I close with these words. If we would only testify to the truth as we see it, it would turn out at once that there are hundreds, thousands, millions of men just as we are who see the truth as we do; are afraid, as we are, of seeming to be singular by confessing it; and are only waiting, again as we are, for someone to proclaim it. As Leo Tolstoy is reported to have said to President Andrew White of Cornell, if Mormonism could be true to its foundation and remain unchanged for four generations, it might well become the most powerful social influence in the world. Tolstoy was concerned with the social; we are concerned as well with the vertical—with the divine. Social transformation can only come in the wake of individual transformation under the power of the living Christ. I bear witness that this is so in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

---

<sup>79</sup>We say "alleged" because we have not been able to find a printed source to footnote, although the statement seems to be fairly widely known.