

CURRENT MORMON TEMPLE CEREMONY NOW AVAILABLE

As we were working on our new book, *Evolution of the Mormon Temple Ceremony: 1842-1990*, we had a very unexpected thing happen: we were offered a transcript and a tape of the new 1990 revision of the "endowment ceremony." We, therefore, decided to publish it in our new book together with the 1984 version and show all the changes which had been made in the ritual. This delayed publication for some time, but those who had ordered it and were waiting for their copies were pleasantly surprised when they received the final product. One man, who had asked for a number of copies, made this comment in a letter:

Thank you very much for the copies of your latest book. As ever, your work is excellent! A day or two before the copies arrived I was browsing through *3,913 Changes in the Book of Mormon* and had the thought that it would be nice to see the endowment changes shown in a like manner. Needless to say, I was pleasantly surprised to find that you did exactly that. Everyone with whom I have shared the book is favorably impressed. One Christian family I know is sharing it with another family who is being given the missionary discussions. I'm sure they'll find it an eye opener. I recommended they share it with the missionaries. I ran into some missionaries myself and brought up that topic, and was surprised to find that one of the elders was new, and had only gone through the 1990 version. He thought I was lying about the old one, because not even his parents told him what had been changed. His companion confirmed what I said, and the new Elder was



THE MORMON TEMPLE IN SALT LAKE CITY

obviously distressed with the whole issue. One of the last things he said was something like "I believe the Church is true and that the G. A.'s [General Authorities—i.e., the highest leaders of the church] are prophets, but I can't see God changing the temple ceremony *that* much, unless it was wrong to begin with." (Letter dated Oct. 13, 1990)

The changes which were made in the temple ceremony have stirred up a controversy within the Mormon Church. A number of Mormons who had talked to the news media concerning the changes were called in for questioning. A recent issue of the liberal Mormon magazine, *Sunstone*, reported the following:

Last spring at the April general priesthood meeting when President Gordon B. Hinckley counseled the men in the Church not to discuss the temple ordinances outside of the temple, few realized that his comments were a prelude to that soon-to-be-released new temple film which included changes in the ceremony and a streamlined narrative. . . .

It soon became obvious that Church leaders did not welcome individual Saints commenting to the press about the temple. Reportedly the First Presidency instructed area presidents to have every known member who was quoted called in by a Church official and questioned about their comments.

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Many were talked to by their bishops or stake presidents, some met with general authorities. With two exceptions, all reported that their meetings were pleasant and non-threatening. . . .

As word of the questioning spread, some were disturbed at what appeared to be an inquisitorial approach by Church leaders toward well-meaning members. Others expressed dismay that members would break their temple covenants by speaking to the press. . . . private conversations disputed just exactly what was covenanted in the temple: whether it was simply not to reveal specific covenants or not to talk about anything in the temple ceremony. . . .

One man's experience was more than a "visit." In a meeting with all three seventies in his area presidency, Ross Peterson [co-editor of *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*] was questioned at length about his comments and loyalty to the Church. The presidency referred to clippings from a thick Church file which had been gathered on him since his days in college. As a result of the questioning, Peterson's temple recommend was taken and further action was intimated if he continued to speak or write on the temple. Later, after he wrote a protest and others petitioned Church leaders, his recommend was restored.

In a similar scene in Cleveland, Ohio, Keith Norman's bishop reluctantly told him that he had been instructed to deny Norman a temple recommend for one year, after which he could have a recommend if he had repented. When Norman asked of what he needed to repent, his bishop replied, "I don't know."

In the end, many are troubled by the systematic censoring of believing members and undoubtedly this episode will be alluded to for years in discussions about the role and prerogatives of the Church and its members. (*Sunstone*, June 1990, pp. 59, 61)

SERIOUS CHANGES

Since the temple ceremony was supposed to have been given by revelation to the Mormon prophet Joseph Smith, some members of the church, like the young missionary quoted above, are very disturbed that the current church leaders would make changes in the sacred ritual. Although some Mormon apologists would have us believe that the changes were really very minor or were only made so the ceremony could be shortened, the evidence we present in *Evolution of the Mormon Temple Ceremony* clearly demonstrates that many of the changes were major and affect very important Mormon teachings.

In our last newsletter we noted that in the 1990 version of the temple ceremony the Mormon leaders removed the "penalties" for revealing the secrets. These penalties had previously been considered "most sacred." We have always felt that these penalties were not compatible with Christian teachings and have strongly opposed them in print for over twenty years.

The evidence shows that the wording with regard to the penalties was originally very strong, but has been altered over the years. In the book, *Temple Mormonism*, published in 1931, page 18, we find this information concerning the First Token of the Aaronic Priesthood:

The left arm is here placed at the square, palm to the front, the right hand and arm raised to the neck, holding the palm downwards and thumb under the right ear.

Adam—"We, and each of us, covenant and promise that we will not reveal any of the secrets of this, the first token of the Aaronic priesthood, with its accompanying name, sign or

penalty. Should we do so, we agree that our throats be cut from ear to ear and our tongues torn out by their roots." . . .

Sign—In executing the sign of the penalty, the right hand palm down, is drawn sharply across the throat, then dropped from the square to the side.

The bloody nature of this and other oaths in the temple endowment has been verified by an abundance of testimony (see *Evolution of the Mormon Temple Ceremony*, pp. 16-26). Some time in the first half of the 20th century, however, a major change was made concerning the penalties in the endowment ceremony. For example, those who received the "First Token of the Aaronic Priesthood" no longer agreed to have their throats "cut from ear to ear" and their "tongues torn out by their roots" if they revealed the First Token. Nevertheless, they were still instructed to draw their thumbs across their throats to show the penalty. In the 1984 account of the ritual, which we have published in our new book, pages 77-79, the reader can see how the wording was modified to remove the harsh language regarding the cutting of the throat and the tearing out of the tongue:

. . . we desire to impress upon your minds the sacred character of the First Token of the Aaronic Priesthood, with its accompanying name, sign and penalty, as well as that of all other tokens of the Holy Priesthood, with their names, signs and penalties . . . They are most sacred and are guarded by solemn covenants and obligations of secrecy to the effect that under no condition, even at the peril of your life, will you ever divulge them, except at a certain place that will be shown you hereafter. The representation of the execution of the penalties indicates different ways in which life may be taken. . . . We give unto you the First Token of the Aaronic Priesthood . . .

The sign is made by bringing the right arm to the square, the palm of the hand to the front, the fingers close together, and the thumb extended. . . . This is the sign. The Execution of the Penalty is represented by placing the thumb under the left ear, the palm of the hand down, and by drawing the thumb quickly across the throat, to the right ear, and dropping the hand to the side. . . .

Now, repeat in your mind after me the words of the covenant, at the same time representing the execution of the penalty.

I, _____, think of the New Name, covenant that I will never reveal the First Token of the Aaronic Priesthood, with its accompanying name, sign and penalty. Rather than do so, I would suffer my life to be taken.

In the new 1990 version of the temple ceremony all mention of penalties has been completely removed. There is nothing said about the thumb being drawn across the throat, and nothing is mentioned concerning "ways in which life may be taken":

. . . we desire to impress upon your minds the sacred character of the First Token of the Aaronic Priesthood, with its accompanying name and sign, as well as that of all other tokens of the Holy Priesthood, with their names and signs . . . They are most sacred, and are guarded by solemn covenants and obligations made in the presence of God, angels and these witnesses to hold them sacred and under no condition will you ever divulge them, except at a certain place in the temple that will be shown you. . . . we give unto you the First Token of the Aaronic Priesthood. . . . The sign is made by bringing the right arm to the square, the palm of the hand to the front, the fingers close together, and the thumb extended. This is the sign. . . .

Now, repeat in your mind after me the words of the covenant.

I, _____, think of the New Name, covenant before God, angels, and these witnesses, that I will never reveal the First Token of the Aaronic Priesthood, with its accompanying name and sign. (1990 version of the temple ceremony, as published in *Evolution of the Mormon Temple Ceremony*, p. 122)

There were two other portions of the temple ceremony which were altered to remove all references to the penalties which were obviously vestiges of the bloody oaths Joseph Smith borrowed from Freemasonry (see *Evolution of the Mormon Temple Ceremony*, pages 86, 87 and 89).

In our last newsletter we reported the removal of the “Five Points of Fellowship” from the Mormon temple ceremony. Although we had strong evidence that this part of the ritual had been deleted, we did not know exactly what happened in its place. Now that we have the transcript of the 1990 ceremony, we can clearly understand the change that has taken place.

The Five Points of Fellowship was previously an extremely important part of the temple ceremony. It was only “upon the Five Points of Fellowship through the veil” that one could receive the name of the Second Token of the Melchizedek Priesthood, The Patriarchal Grip or Sure Sign of the Nail. This is a highly secret “name”—actually a thirty-six word saying—which only the “Lord” who was behind the veil could give to those who were receiving their endowments. Mormons believe that after they die they will have to give this secret name back to the Lord before he will allow them to pass through the veil into his Presence.

In the book, *Temple Mormonism*, page 22, the Five Points of Fellowship were described as follows: “The five points of fellowship are given by putting the inside of the right foot to the inside of the Lord’s, the inside of your knee to his, laying your breast close to his, your left hands on each other’s backs, and each one putting his mouth to the other’s ear . . .” Only when the Lord and the recipient were embracing in this position could the secret name be whispered.

Since the revision of the ceremony in 1990, those who participate in the ritual no longer embrace on the Five Points of Fellowship. They are, in fact, only required to place “left arms . . . upon right shoulders.” They do not put their feet and knees together and all the wording concerning the Five Points of Fellowship has been completely deleted. The words “Five Points of Fellowship” previously appeared in five different places in the ritual—the “Lord” spoke of the “Five Points of Fellowship” twice; “Peter” referred to the “Five Points of Fellowship” twice, and the recipient mentioned them once. Below is a comparison of a portion of the 1984 version with the new revised version:

Lord: You shall receive it upon the Five Points Of Fellowship through the veil.

(The Officiator demonstrates the Five Points of Fellowship through the Veil with the temple worker who represents the Lord, as each point is mentioned.)

Peter: The Five Points of Fellowship are “inside of right foot by the side of right foot, knee to knee, breast to breast, hand to back, and mouth to ear.” The Lord then gives the name of this token, and asks:

Lord: What is that?

Peter: The Second Token of the Melchizedek Priesthood, the Patriarchal Grip of Sure Sign of the Nail.

Lord: Has it a name?

Peter: It has.

Lord: Will you give it to me?

Peter: I will, upon the Five Points of Fellowship through the Veil. (*Evolution of the Mormon Temple Ceremony*, pp. 96-97)

The reader will notice that in the 1990 revised version (shown below) all references to the Five Points of Fellowship have been deleted:

Lord: You shall receive it through the Veil.

Peter: It is received as left arms are placed upon right shoulders through the Veil.

(The Officiator places his left arm through the mark of the compass and rests his hand on the right shoulder of the Lord, as the Lord places His left arm through the mark of the square and rests his hand on the right shoulder of the Officiator. The right hands remain clasped in the Patriarchal Grip.)

Peter: The Lord then gives the name of this token, and asks:

Lord: What is that?

Peter: The Second Token of the Melchizedek Priesthood, the Patriarchal Grip or Sure Sign of the Nail.

Lord: Has it a name?

Peter: It has.

Lord: Will you give it to me?

Peter: I will, through the Veil.

(*Evolution of the Mormon Temple Ceremony*, p. 138)

The reader will notice that in the 1990 revised version all references to the Five Points of Fellowship have been deleted.

Regardless of the reason for the change, it raises serious questions concerning the inspiration of church officials. If a person was previously compelled to receive the secret information necessary to enter heaven on the Five Points of Fellowship, how can the church leaders now by-pass God’s revealed way which was supposed to have been given to the prophet Joseph Smith? Kim Sue Lia Perkes revealed that, “a former Mormon familiar with the changes said the ceremony’s climax has been eliminated. Removal of that part of the ritual, he said, is the equivalent of taking the Eucharist out of the Roman Catholic Mass.

Not all Mormons are happy with the ceremony changes.

“I certainly have Mormon friends who will see it as a step toward apostasy and an accommodation to the world,” said one practicing Mormon in Utah. (*Arizona Republic*, April 28, 1990)

One very important change in the temple ceremony is the removal of a portion of the ceremony in which the Devil hired a Christian minister to preach the “orthodox religion” to the people. This portion of the ceremony made it clear that in the eyes of the Mormon leaders the orthodox Christian religion was the Devil’s religion. In the 1984 version of the temple ritual, the Devil tells the minister that if “you will preach your orthodox religion to these people, and convert them, I will pay you well.” This, of course, led the Mormon people to believe that Christian ministers were really working for the Devil. In *Mormonism, Magic and Masonry*, page 66, we wrote: “. . . the temple ritual tries to link Christians and ministers of other churches to the Devil’s work. We feel that this is one of the most objectionable things about the ceremony, and we do not feel that a Christian would want to give any support to this type of thing.” Many other Christians protested against this part of the ceremony, and a great deal of pressure has been put on the Mormon leaders to change it.

In the new version all of the material making fun of both Protestants and Catholics has been completely eliminated. In Appendix B of *Evolution of the Mormon Temple Ceremony*, we demonstrated that over 700 words were deleted and other words changed to remove the attack on other churches!

Unfortunately, the removal of the portion of the temple ceremony which implies that Christian ministers are working for the Devil does not really solve the problem. The Mormon

Church still retains Joseph Smith's story of the First Vision in the *Pearl of Great Price*, Joseph Smith—History, verses 18-19. In this account, Joseph Smith asserted that Jesus himself told him that all other churches were wrong:

My object in going to inquire of the Lord was to know which of all the sects was right . . . I was answered that I must join none of them, for they were all wrong; and the Personage who addressed me said that all their creeds were an abomination in his sight; that those professors were all corrupt . . .

OATH OF OBEDIENCE

The Mormon leaders teach that those who receive their endowments and are married in the temple can become Gods. In a speech published in *The Ensign*, Nov. 1975, page 80, Spencer W. Kimball, the twelfth prophet of the LDS Church, made some comments which were broadcast to those men serving in the priesthood of the church: "Brethren, 225,000 of you are here tonight. I suppose 225,000 of you may become gods."

Because of their belief that God is only an exalted man, Mormon leaders teach that he had a mother as well as a wife. Although Mormons do not worship God's wife, they teach that she is their "Eternal Mother." Apostle Bruce R. McConkie explained the doctrine:

Implicit in the Christian verity that all men are the spirit children of an Eternal Father is the usually unspoken truth that they are also the offspring of an Eternal Mother. . . . This doctrine that there is a mother in Heaven was affirmed in plainness by the First Presidency of the Church . . . they said that "man, as a spirit was begotten and born of heavenly parents, and reared to maturity in the eternal mansions of the Father . . . all men and women are in the similitude of the universal Father and Mother, and are literally the sons and daughters of Deity. (*Mormon Doctrine*, 1979, p. 516)

The Mormon doctrine of "pre-existence" is very important to those who are married in the temple for time and all eternity. Like the Gods who received their endowments eons ago, those who go through the temple today and are accounted worthy to become Gods and Goddesses will also give birth to spirit children throughout all eternity. These spirits will eventually take bodies on other worlds. In *The Gospel Through the Ages*, 1958, page 120, Milton R. Hunter, who was a member of the Mormon Church's First Council of the Seventy, wrote:

. . . Joseph explained . . . that the Gods were to be parents of spirit children just as our Heavenly Father and Mother were the parents of the people of this earth.

Mormon Apostle Orson Pratt made it clear that every God would be the father of billions of children. He estimated that "seventy thousand million [i.e., 70 billion] sons and daughters were born in Heaven" to our Heavenly Father. He also stated:

Each God, through his wife or wives, raises up a numerous family of sons and daughters . . . each father and mother will be in a condition to multiply forever. As soon as each God has begotten many millions of male and female spirits . . . he, in connection with his sons, organizes a new world . . . where he sends both the male and female spirits to inhabit tabernacles of flesh and bones. . . . The inhabitants of each world are required to reverence, adore, and worship their own personal father who dwells in the Heaven which they formerly inhabited. (*The Seer*, March 1853, p. 37)

The description given by Mormon leaders of the function of a woman who advances to Godhood reminds us of the role played by a queen bee. The queen bee, of course, produces

swarms of offspring—as many as 2,500 a day! Her main purpose appears to be to produce more bees. Apostle Bruce R. McConkie made it very plain that spirit children are literally born to the Eternal Father and Mother:

Our spirit bodies had their beginning in pre-existence when we were born as the spirit children of God our Father. Through that birth process spirit element was organized into intelligent entities. (*Mormon Doctrine*, p. 750)

Many Mormon women have serious reservations about the concept of having billions of spirit children every time their husbands decide to people additional worlds. In any case, Mormon Church leaders proclaim that "Godhood is not for men only, it is for men and women together" (*Mormon Doctrine*, p. 844). While at first glance it appears that this would make men and women equal, a more careful examination of the doctrine reveals just the opposite. According to Mormon theology, church members follow the same plan of eternal progression as God the Father. Now, if the "Eternal Mother" had really gained equality with her husband, we would expect the Mormons to pray to her. Apostle Orson Pratt, however, made it plain that the Eternal Mother's Godhood is rather insignificant when it is compared to her husband's power. She, in fact, is to be in "the most perfect obedience" to her "great head":

But if we have a heavenly Mother as well as a heavenly Father, is it not right that we should worship the Mother of our spirits as well as the Father? No; for the Father of our spirits is at the head of His household, and His wives and children are required to yield the most perfect obedience to their great Head. (*The Seer*, p. 159)

It would appear, then, that in Mormon theology the claim that a woman can obtain "Godhood" amounts to very little. Like the present "Heavenly Mother," she will be required to "yield the most perfect obedience" to her "great Head"—i.e., her husband, while she continues to give birth to "many millions" of spirit children throughout all eternity. Mormon theology would seem to teach that women who enter into "Godhood" will find themselves serving their own husbands in eternity rather than the God of the Bible. The more one studies the church's teaching concerning the Mother God, the more obvious it becomes that women are considered to be spiritually inferior in Mormon theology. Since the church changed the anti-black doctrine, many Mormon women have come to see that they are the ones who will be "second class" citizens in heaven. Mormon leaders used to explain that blacks could not hold the priesthood because they were not valiant in the pre-existence, but no reason has been given for the inferiority of women in Mormon theology.

President Brigham Young once stated: "The man is the head and God of the woman, but let him act like a God in virtuous principles. . . ." (Sermon of Brigham Young, as quoted in *Journals of John D. Lee*, 1846-47 and 1859, edited by Charles Kelly, 1938, p. 81) The subservient role of women in the Mormon temple ceremony is evident when they come to the veil in the temple. A man representing Elohim (God the Father) brings the men through the veil into the Celestial Kingdom. The women, on the other hand, are brought through by their husbands. This part of the ceremony seems to be an attempt to demonstrate that "man is the head and God of the woman." In the account of the temple ritual printed in *Hand-Book on Mormonism*, 1882, p. 30, we read that the official who performs the wedding ceremony "tells the man that he must look to God, but the woman must look to her husband as her God, for if he lives in his religion, the spirit of God will be in him, and she must therefore yield him unquestioning obedience, for he is as a God unto her. . . ." On page 28 of the same book, we read of an "oath of obedience":

“The women then took the oath of obedience to their husbands, having to look up to them as their gods. It is not possible for a woman to go to Christ, except through her husband.”

In his article published in 1987, David John Buerger noted that “the endowment ceremony still depicts women as subservient to men, not as equals in relating to God. . . he is the one who acts as intermediary to God . . .” (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Winter 1987, p. 68). In the 1984 version of the temple ceremony, which is published in Appendix A of *Evolution of the Mormon Temple Ceremony*, pages 75-76, the men “covenant and promise” that they will “obey the law of God.” The women, however, agree to obey the law of their husbands:

Elohim: We will put the sisters under covenant to obey the law of their husbands. Sisters, arise.

(Female patrons stand as instructed.)

Elohim: Each of you bring your right arm to the square. You and each of you solemnly covenant and promise before God, angels and these witnesses at this altar that you will each observe and keep the law of your husband, and abide by his counsel in righteousness. Each of you bow your head and say yes.

Women: Yes.

Since the church leaders revised the endowment ceremony on April 10, 1990, women “no longer must vow to obey their husbands” (*Salt Lake Tribune*, April 29, 1990). The new ceremony reads as follows (see Appendix B of *Evolution of the Mormon Temple Ceremony*, p. 120):

Elohim: We will put each sister under covenant to obey the Law of the Lord, and to hearken to the counsel of her husband, as her husband hearkens unto the counsel of the Father. Sisters, arise.

(Female patrons stand as instructed.)

Elohim: Each of you bring your right arm to the square. You and each of you solemnly covenant and promise before God, angels, and these witnesses at this altar that you will each observe and keep the Law of the Lord, and hearken to the counsel of your husband as he hearkens to the counsel of the Father. Each of you bow your head and say “yes.”

Women: Yes.

The reader will notice that the words “the Law of their husbands” was changed to “the Law of the Lord,” and the words “the law of your husbands” have been altered to read, “the Law of the Lord.” It is also interesting to note some changes a few paragraphs earlier in the ceremony. In one place in the 1984 version, Elohim tells Adam that Eve “will obey your law in the Lord. . .” These words have been modified to, “will obey the Law of the Lord. . .” In the 1984 version, the following paragraph reads: “Eve: Adam I now covenant to obey your law as you obey our Father.” In the 1990 revision this has been changed to read: “Eve: Adam, I now covenant to obey the Law of the Lord, and to hearken to your counsel as you hearken unto Father.”

Another very interesting change concerning women occurs just before the “Law of Obedience.” In the 1984 version we are told of the punishment which is to be inflicted upon both Adam and Eve because of their transgression:

Elohim: Eve, because thou hast hearkened to the voice of Satan and hast partaken of the forbidden fruit, and given unto Adam, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow shalt thou bring forth children. Nevertheless, thou mayest be preserved in child-bearing. Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee in righteousness.

Adam, because thou has hearkened unto the voice of thy wife and hast partaken of the forbidden fruit, the earth shall be cursed for thy sake. Instead of producing fruits and flowers spontaneously, it shall bring forth thorns, thistles, briars, and noxious weeds to afflict and torment man. And by the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat thy bread all the days of thy life, for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.”

In the 1990 revision, Eve’s punishment is completely omitted. All of the words which we have emphasized above in bold type were completely deleted:

Elohim: Adam, because thou has partaken of the forbidden fruit, the earth shall be cursed for thy sake. Instead of producing fruits and flowers spontaneously, it shall bring forth thorns, thistles, briars, and noxious weeds to afflict and torment man. And by the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat thy bread all the days of thy life, for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.

It is very interesting to note that although the Lord’s words to Eve have been entirely omitted (compare Genesis 3:16), Adam is still punished with the same curse found in Genesis 3:17-19. This revision of the temple ceremony cannot be supported from the revelations of Joseph Smith (see Smith’s *Inspired Version of the Bible* and the *Pearl of Great Price*, Moses 4:22). In the 1984 version of the endowment, Eve was often overlooked. In the new version her name has been added in twenty-two places.

OTHER RECENT CHANGES

Another important change has been made in the sign for the Second Token of the Melchizedek Priesthood. In the 1984 version of the endowment ceremony, as printed in Appendix A of *Evolution of the Mormon Temple Ceremony*, page 94, we find this:

The sign is made by raising both hands high above the head (Officiator demonstrates.), and while lowering the hands repeating aloud the words:

Pay Lay Ale

Pay Lay Ale

Pay Lay Ale

As early as 1969 we pointed out a problem with this:

. . . there seems to have been a change made in this part of the ceremony, for the *Salt Lake Tribune*, February 12, 1906, gave the words as “Pale, Ale, Ale,” and *Temple Mormonism* used the words “Pale, Hale, Hale.” (*The Mormon Kingdom*, vol. 1, p. 138)

However this may be, in another portion of the temple ceremony, it is explained that “Pay Lay Ale” means “Oh God, hear the words of my mouth!”

A number of years ago a Mormon intellectual informed us that it was his understanding that one of the top scholars in the church had pointed out to church authorities that the words *pay lay ale* or *pe le el* could be translated from the Hebrew language as “mouth to God.” This, of course, could be considered to be a condensed version of “Oh God, hear the words of my mouth!” That this translation is plausible can be confirmed by consulting *Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, Hebrew and Chaldee Dictionary, word #6310—“*peh* . . . the mouth.” The Hebrew letter *Lamed* (transliterated in English as *l*) is often added on the front of words and means “to, at, for” (*Hebrew Primer and Grammar*, by C. P. Fagnani and A. B. Davidson, page 50).

Word #410 in Strong's Concordance is "ale . . . God (god)." Kyle D. Williams has also pointed out to us that the Biblical name "Lael," found in Numbers 3:24, is translated by Strong (#3815) as "(belonging) to God." At any rate, we were told that the Mormon scholar was so convincing in his presentation to the leaders of the church that they changed the wording of the temple ceremony to "Pay Lay Ale."

In the early 1980's some critics of the church began to proclaim that in Hebrew these words really meant, "Wonderful Lucifer." If this were true, this would mean that the Mormons were praying to the Devil in this part of the ceremony. We took very strong exception to this claim and pointed out that there was no way that these words could be translated "Wonderful Lucifer" (see *The Lucifer-God Doctrine*, pp. 11-15, 85-86).

In any case, many Mormons must have been bothered when they had to raise and lower their hands repeating the strange words "Pay Lay Ale" three times during the ritual. The Mormon leaders have now replaced the mysterious words with the English words which were mentioned earlier in the ceremony: "Oh God, hear the words of my mouth!" In the 1990 revision of the ritual (Appendix B of *Evolution of the Mormon Temple Ceremony*, pages 133-34), we read:

The sign is made by raising both hands high above the head (The Officiator demonstrates.), and while lowering the hands repeating aloud the words: "Oh God, hear the words of my mouth!" repeated three times.

The fact that four different versions of the sign of the Second Token of the Melchizedek Priesthood have been given over the years certainly raises a question concerning the claim that the endowment was revealed by revelation.

One of the important changes in the new ceremony is that the Lecture At The Veil has been completely removed. This lecture was previously given to all those who were passing through the ritual for the first time. It was not deemed necessary, however, for those who were going through the endowment ceremony for the dead. The words "penalty" or "penalties" were used six times in this lecture, and it also referred to the "sectarian minister" who preached false doctrine (i.e., the minister who was employed by Lucifer). We estimate that the Mormon leaders removed over 2,000 words when they took out the Lecture At the Veil!

Since the Mormon leaders claim to be led by direct revelation, one would think that if they made any changes in the endowment ceremony it would be to add important new spiritual truths. Instead, however, the great majority of the changes are deletions of material which once was an important part of the ritual. The reader who wishes to learn more about the changes made in 1990 should carefully study Appendix A of our new book, *Evolution of the Mormon Temple Ceremony: 1842 to 1990*.

Ferguson's Rejection of the Book of Mormon Verified

In our book, *Ferguson's Manuscript Unveiled*, we presented a great deal of evidence showing that the noted Mormon scholar, Thomas Stuart Ferguson, became a complete unbeliever in the Book of Mormon during the last 12 or 13 years of his life. Notwithstanding the fact that there is a collection of letters to a number of different people in which Ferguson declared his disbelief in Joseph Smith, the Book of Mormon and the Book

of Abraham, his son, Larry Ferguson, continues to maintain that he was a true believer.

After Thomas Stuart Ferguson passed away in 1983, Larry Ferguson decided that his father's book, *One Fold and One Shepherd*, a work which was written before he lost his testimony, should be revised and republished to the world. He talked Dr. Bruce W. Warren, of Brigham Young University, into working on the revision, and in 1987 it was published under the title, *The Messiah in Ancient America*. In the Preface, page xiii, Dr. Warren wrote the following: "The Ferguson family wanted the new book to be a tribute to Thomas Stuart Ferguson and his abiding testimony of the Book of Mormon and the divinity of the Messiah, Jesus the Christ." Warren also revealed that "the driving force behind the book was Larry Ferguson . . ."

Fortunately, Stan Larson, one of the top scholars in the Mormon Church, has made a serious study concerning Thomas Stuart Ferguson's beliefs during the last years of his life and has reached the same conclusion that we came to—i.e., Ferguson was not a believer in the Book of Mormon nor in the divine authenticity of the Mormon Church. Larson has written a 38-page article concerning this matter entitled, "The Odyssey of Thomas Stuart Ferguson," which is published in *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Spring 1990.

Stan Larson has gathered photocopies of many letters written by Thomas Stuart Ferguson which are now available to researchers at the University of Utah in the H. Michael Marquardt Collection, Special Collections, J. Willard Marriott Library. Although Larson could find a great deal of evidence in letters Ferguson wrote after 1970 that he had completely lost faith in Joseph Smith and the historicity of the Book of Mormon, he found no letters written during this period which supported the divine claims of Mormonism. He, in fact, noted:

When the Thomas Stuart Ferguson papers arrived at the Lee Library at Brigham Young University after his death, they contained absolutely no letters after 1967 that indicate his views on the Book of Mormon, the Book of Abraham, or Joseph Smith. . . . As far as the present collection at BYU is concerned, the fifteen-year period before his death is a blank. In contrast with his publication record in the 1940s, 1950s, and early 1960s, Ferguson published no new articles or books after 1967, nor did he reprint any of his previous work. If it were not for letters he wrote [i.e., the letters in the Marquardt Collection at the University of Utah], the last years of his life would remain unknown. (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Spring 1990, pp. 71-72)

In addition to the letters which clearly show Ferguson's unbelief, Larson has brought to light some extremely important extracts from the journal of Mormon scholar, Ronald Barney, which demonstrate conclusively that just before his death, Ferguson was working on research which he felt discredited Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon. We will have more to say about this matter later in this article.

Thomas Stuart Ferguson, who was born in Pocatello, Idaho, on May 21, 1915, devoted a great deal of his life trying to prove the Book of Mormon by archaeology and was considered by the Mormon people as a great defender of the faith. He wrote at least three books on the subject. His book, *One Fold and One Shepherd*, was recommended to one of the editors of this newsletter as containing the ultimate case for the authenticity of the Book of Mormon. On the jacket of that book (1962 edition), we find this information about Ferguson:

Thomas Stuart Ferguson, 47, President of the New World Archaeological Foundation, is a distinguished student of the

earliest high civilizations of the New World. He, with Dr. A. V. Kidder, dean of Central American archaeologists, first planned the New World Archaeological Foundation in 1952 . . . He raised \$225,000 for the field work, incorporated the Foundation (being an attorney), assisted in the initial explorations in Central America and Mexico and has actively directed the affairs of the Foundation since its inception.

The Mormon Church provided hundreds of thousands of dollars to Ferguson's New World Archaeological Foundation in the hope that it would find evidence supporting the Book of Mormon. This organization was eventually "attached to and administered through BYU."

From all that we can learn, Thomas Stuart Ferguson was a dedicated believer in the authenticity of the Book of Mormon at the time he founded the New World Archaeological Foundation. He really believed that archaeology would prove the Book of Mormon. For a number of years he was very excited about the progress of the work and seemed certain that the Book of Mormon would be vindicated soon. In his book, *One Fold And One Shepherd*, page 263, he stated: "The important thing now is to continue the digging at an accelerated pace in order to find more inscriptions dating to Book-of-Mormon times. Eventually we should find decipherable inscriptions . . . referring to some unique person, place or event in the Book of Mormon." In 1962 Mr. Ferguson said that "Powerful evidences sustaining the book are accumulating."

Although many important archaeological discoveries were made, the evidence he had desired to find to support the Book of Mormon did not turn up. At first it had all seemed so simple; since the Book of Mormon told when the Nephites were in Mesoamerica, all one had to do was find archaeological sites that dated to the period and the Book of Mormon would be established by the evidence. The fact that archaeological research failed to provide the confirmation which Mr. Ferguson expected to find must have weighed very heavily on his mind. The most serious blow to Ferguson's faith, however, came just after Joseph Smith's Egyptian Papyri were rediscovered in the Metropolitan Museum of Art. This collection, which had been lost for many years, contained the very papyrus from which Joseph Smith "translated" the Book of Abraham. The Book of Abraham is published in the *Pearl of Great Price*, one of the four standard works of the Mormon Church.

After Mr. Ferguson obtained photographs of the papyrus fragments, he consulted Professors Lutz and Lesko of the University of California. Both these Egyptologists agreed that the papyrus Joseph Smith claimed was the Book of Abraham was in reality the Book of Breathing, an Egyptian funerary text made for a man by the name of Hor (Horus). Ferguson learned that this papyrus had nothing at all to do with the patriarch Abraham or his religion. It was in its entirety a pagan text filled with the names of Egyptian gods and goddesses.

Thomas Stuart Ferguson was shaken to the core by this discovery. When the church's noted apologist, Dr. Hugh Nibley, began defending the Book of Abraham, Mr. Ferguson wrote a letter to another member of the church in which he stated:

Nibley's . . . articles on the Book of Abraham aren't worth a tinker—first, because he is not impartial, being the commissioned and paid defender of the faith. Second, because he could not, he dared not, he did not, face the true issue: "Could Joseph Smith translate Egyptian?" . . . it is perfectly obvious that we now have the original [*sic*] manuscript material used by Jos. Smith in working up the Book of Abraham. . . .

Joseph Smith announced, in print (*History of the Church*, Vol. II, page 236), that "one of the rolls contained the writings of Abraham, another the writings of Joseph of Egypt . . ." Since 4 scholars, who have established that they can read Egyptian, say that the manuscripts deal with neither Abraham nor Joseph—and since the 4 reputable men tell us exactly what the manuscripts do say—I must conclude that Joseph Smith had not the remotest skill in things Egyptian-hieroglyphics. To my surprise, one of the highest officials in the Mormon Church agreed with that conclusion when I made that very statement to him on Dec. 4, 1970—privately in one-to-one [c]onversation. . . .

The attempts, including Nibley's, to explain away and dodge the trap into which Joseph Smith fell when he had the audacity to translate the Chandler texts, and keep the original Egyptian texts around, are absurd, in my view. . . .

Of course the dodge as to the Book of Abraham must be: "WE DON'T HAVE THE ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPT FROM WHICH THE BOOK OF ABRAHAM WAS TRANSLATED. I conclude that we do have it and have translations of it." (Letter by Thomas Stuart Ferguson, dated March 13, 1971)

The first indication we had that Mr. Ferguson was losing his faith in Mormonism was just after Joseph Smith's Egyptian Papyri were rediscovered. In 1968 he wrote us a letter saying that we were "doing a great thing—getting out some truth on the Book of Abraham." This was a significant statement since we were presenting evidence that the Book of Abraham was not a correct translation of the papyri. Later we heard a rumor that he had given up Joseph Smith's Book of Abraham, but this hardly prepared us for his visit on December 2, 1970. At that time, Mr. Ferguson told us frankly that he had not only given up the Book of Abraham, but that he had come to the conclusion that Joseph Smith was not a prophet and that Mormonism was not true. Ferguson felt that our work was important and that it should be subsidized. He told us that he had spent twenty-five years trying to prove Mormonism, but had finally come to the conclusion that all his work in this regard had been in vain. He said that his training in law had taught him how to weigh evidence and that the case against Joseph Smith was absolutely devastating and could not be explained away.

He referred to Dr. Hugh Nibley's defense of the Book of Abraham as "nonsense," and told us that just before coming to visit us he had discussed the Book of Abraham with Hugh B. Brown (Brown served as a member of the First Presidency under President David O. McKay). According to Mr. Ferguson, Apostle Brown had also come to the conclusion that the Book of Abraham was false and was in favor of the church giving it up. A few years later Hugh B. Brown said he could "not recall" making the statements Thomas Stuart Ferguson attributed to him. Ferguson, however, was apparently referring to the same incident in the letter of March 13, 1971, when he stated: "I must conclude that Joseph Smith had not the remotest skill in things Egyptian-hieroglyphics. To my surprise one of the highest officials in the Mormon Church agreed with that conclusion . . . privately in one-to-one [c]onversation." When Ferguson visited with us he seemed to be absolutely convinced that Brown did not believe the Book of Abraham.

In any case, Ferguson found himself faced with a dilemma, for the Mormon Church had just given him a large grant (\$100,000 or more) to carry on the research of the New World Archaeological Foundation. He felt, however, that this foundation was doing legitimate archaeological work, and therefore he intended to continue the research. He realized that the organization he had founded to establish the authenticity of

the Book of Mormon was now actually disproving the Book of Mormon by its failure to turn up anything concerning a Christian culture existing in Mesoamerica prior to the time of Columbus.

A few months after Thomas Stuart Ferguson revealed to us that he had come to the conclusion that the Book of Mormon was a spurious production, he wrote us a letter in which he said: "I will be in SLC in June—and if so, I'll call on you again. I enjoyed my visit with you . . . I certainly admire you for the battle you are waging—virtually single handed" (Letter dated March 13, 1971). On a number of occasions when people wrote to him, Mr. Ferguson recommended that they read our publications on Mormonism.

Unfortunately, Thomas Stewart Ferguson seems to have had a very difficult time communicating his loss of faith to those he was close to. He told us, for instance, that he did not dare tell one of his sons the truth about the Book of Mormon because the shock would cause him too much emotional trauma. (Although we cannot prove it, we suspect that this may have been Larry Ferguson). Ferguson felt that he may have to put the matter off until the situation changed. While he no longer believed in the divine authenticity of the Book of Mormon, he continued to attend the Mormon Church.

In a letter to James Still, dated December 3, 1979, Mr. Ferguson frankly stated: "I lost faith in Joseph Smith as one having a pipeline to deity—and have decided that there has never been a pipeline to deity—with any man." Since he had many friends and members of his family in Mormonism and apparently felt comfortable there, he decided to remain in the church. In the same letter Ferguson stated that he still attended Mormon meetings, "sing in the choir and enjoy my friendships in the Church. In my opinion it is the best fraternity that has come to my attention . . ." With regard to the origin of the Book of Mormon, Mr. Ferguson wrote: ". . . I give Joseph Smith credit as an innovator and as a smart fellow. . . . I think that Joseph Smith may have had Ixtlilxochitl and View of the Hebrews from which to work."

In 1975 Thomas Stuart Ferguson finally mustered up his courage and prepared a 29-page paper in response to papers written by Mormon apologists John Sorenson and Garth Norman. It was entitled, *Written Symposium on Book-of-Mormon Geography: Response of Thomas S. Ferguson to the Norman & Sorenson Papers*. (We have published Ferguson's paper in our book, *Ferguson's Manuscript Unveiled*.) In this response, page 4, Mr. Ferguson wrote: "With all of these great efforts, it cannot be established factually that anyone, from Joseph Smith to the present day, has put his finger on a single point of terrain that was a Book-of-Mormon geographical place. And the hemisphere has been pretty well checked out by competent people. Thousands of sites have been excavated." Ferguson pointed out in his paper that the text of the Book of Mormon makes it very clear that certain items should be found in archaeological excavations and that these items are not present in the sites proposed. On page 29 he concluded by saying: "I'm afraid that up to this point, I must agree with Dee Green, who has told us that to date there is no Book-of-Mormon geography. I, for one, would be happy if Dee were wrong."

In a letter to Mr. & Mrs. H. W. Lawrence, dated February 20, 1976, Thomas Stuart Ferguson made very plain the reason why there is "no Book-of-Mormon geography": "Herewith is a copy of my recent (1975) paper on Book of Mormon matters. . . . The real implication of the paper is that you can't set Book of Mormon geography down anywhere—because it is fictional and will never meet the requirements of the dirt-archeology. I

should say—what is in the ground will never conform to what is in the book."

As we indicated earlier, Stan Larson, who studied the matter at great length, reached the same conclusion we did with regard to Thomas Stuart Ferguson's loss of faith. He stated:

In the middle years of his career, he organized archaeological reconnaissance and fieldwork in the area of Mesoamerica. But in the last years of his career, he concluded that the archaeological evidence did not substantiate the Book of Mormon, and so he reduced (in his mind) the geography of the book to nothing at all in the real world. . . . He had lived his life as a Latter-day Saint expecting to be the instrument of verification, believing that he would find the physical proof that would not only justify his faith in the Book of Mormon but that would convince the world as well. . . . In the end, he was theologically shipwrecked less by his failure to find persuasive archaeological support for the Book of Mormon than by his encounter with the translations of the newly discovered Joseph Smith Egyptian papyri. But though his ship ran aground and floundered, it did not sink, and he managed to salvage what he felt were worthwhile essentials. . . .

Ferguson's excitement about authenticating the Book of Abraham turned into a nightmare. His former belief system could not withstand the shock of this disillusionment. Not only did Ferguson's views of the Book of Abraham radically change, but also, domino-like, his belief in the prophetic status of Joseph Smith and the historicity of the Book of Mormon. . . .

Early in December 1970 . . . Ferguson bared his soul to people at opposing ends of the theological spectrum—on the one hand, the liberal apostle, Hugh B. Brown, and on the other hand, the anti-Mormons, Jerald and Sandra Tanner. . . .

Ferguson's skepticism became public a year and eight months later when the Tanners published an account of his visit with them in the revised edition of *Mormonism: Shadow or Reality*. . . .

Ferguson never issued any kind of retraction or revision to this account. He frankly discussed his new views in answer both to letters sent to him and to direct questions. . . . Tom Ferguson, in a sense, identified himself as a closet doubter—though one who was willing to write letters from his closet. . . .

Ferguson was a man of contrasts. His early enthusiasm for the Book of Mormon . . . changed in the last decade and a half of his life into a skeptical view that placed the source of all Book of Mormon activities in the creative mind of Joseph Smith. After many years of archaeological investigations, Ferguson, disappointed by not finding the long-hoped-for confirmation of the Book of Mormon, concluded that the book was "fictional" and that "what is in the ground will never conform to what is in the book" (Ferguson 1976b). (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Spring 1990, pp. 57, 71-73, 85-86)

As we indicated earlier, Stan Larson brought to light some extremely important material from the journal of Ronald O. Barney, Senior Archivist at the Mormon Church Historical Department. Barney had a very revealing interview with Thomas Stuart Ferguson about two and a half months before his death. Barney had his interview with Ferguson on January 4, 1983, and he recorded the matter in his journal on February 15, 1983. Ferguson died the following month (March 16, 1983). On April 19, 1984, Ronald Barney made a typed copy of the information he had recorded in his journal and added some additional recollections regarding the visit he had with Mr. Ferguson on January 4. According to Barney, Thomas Stuart Ferguson confided in him that he was working on a project which he felt would show that the Book of Mormon was in reality a 19th century production.

Stan Larson gives this information concerning the interview:

On 4 January 1983, a little more than two months before his death, Ferguson met Ronald Barney at the LDS Historical Department. Barney told Ferguson he knew of his various publications and asked if he knew how Jerald and Sandra were using his 13 March 1971 letter to James Boyack. This letter contains Ferguson's earliest known denial of the authenticity of the Book of Abraham. Barney recorded in his journal that Ferguson "began to shift in his chair, got pale and acted as if I was a General Authority that had caught him committing adultery. He apologized all over the place, said the Tanners were creeps, etc." After Barney expressed his concern for open discussion, Ferguson disclosed his current beliefs: "After having once been once [*sic*] a defender of the faith he now totally rejects the divine intervention of God in the workings of the affairs of men" (Barney 1983).

A few days later on 10 January 1983, Ferguson wrote to Barney, providing the details of his historical investigations into possible connections between Oliver Cowdery and Ethan Smith, author of *View of the Hebrews*, a suggested possible source of influence on Joseph Smith . . . (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Spring 1990, p. 83)

Ronald Barney claimed that Ferguson was also trying to link Joseph Smith with Sidney Rigdon prior to the publication of the Book of Mormon. It is clear, then, that as Mr. Ferguson entered the last months of his life he was still engaged in a project which he felt would prove that the Book of Mormon was not an ancient document. As late as February 1, 1983, about six weeks before his death, Ferguson wrote Barney a letter in which he indicated that he was still pursuing his critical research into the true origin of the Mormon Church: "I am continuing my research. It is fun and stimulating. I will look forward to meeting with you on my next trip to Salt Lake City" (Ferguson 1983b)" (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Spring 1990, p. 84).

It is also interesting to note that Mr. Ferguson told Ronald Barney the same story concerning Apostle Hugh B. Brown repudiating the Book of Abraham that he told us some twelve years earlier. In the typed material which Ronald Barney prepared on April 19, 1984, he wrote:

Beyond what is in my journal entry concerning my visit with him on January 4, 1983 I should include these things. Ferguson said that the thing that first led him to seriously question the church was the papyri [*sic*] purported to be the source of the Book of Abraham. . . . he took the evidence to Hugh B. Brown . . . he said that Brother Brown agreed with him that it was not scripture. . . . he did say that Hugh B. Brown did not believe the Book of Abraham was what the church said it was. I felt as Ferguson was telling me this that he was not making up the story. It appeared that he really believed what he was telling me. (Photocopy of statement by Ronald O. Barney, dated April 19, 1984)

Concerning the material Ronald Barney has brought to light, Stan Larson observed: "These final two letters, together with Barney's journal and reminiscence, confirm Ferguson's critical views just two months before his death. This crucial testimony functions like a kingpin to tie the last fifteen years together and is comparable to the Wesley P. Lloyd diary, which reports the non-historical view of the Book of Mormon held by B. H. Roberts just two months before he died (Roberts 1985, 22-24)" (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Spring 1990, p. 84).

In spite of the strong evidence that Thomas Stuart Ferguson completely lost faith in Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon, his son, Larry Ferguson, cannot allow himself to face the truth.

He continues to promote the sale of *The Messiah in Ancient America*—a book which continues to proclaim Thomas Stuart Ferguson's "abiding testimony of the Book of Mormon and the divinity of the Messiah, Jesus the Christ."

In a letter published in *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Fall, 1990, page 9, Larry Ferguson made this claim: "A few years before my father passed away, he, my mother, and I met with a publisher about revising, updating, and publishing *One Fold and One Shepherd*. The year or so before his death, my father cut back on his law practice and began that revision." One would think that in a "year or so" of working on the project, Thomas Stuart Ferguson could have completed a fairly good sized manuscript. Stan Larson became curious about this manuscript and asked for permission to examine it. To his surprise, he discovered there was no such manuscript:

At the time of his death Ferguson had not written a single word in a manuscript of revision. His only work on the contemplated revision was about twenty ideas for updating, jotted on small 3M "Post-it" notes. One of these notes suggested including the influence of Ethan Smith's *View of the Hebrews* on the text of the Book of Mormon, but this controversial subject is never mentioned in Warren's revision, *The Messiah in Ancient America*, even though Ferguson's radical view on this point was independently supported by Ron Barney. So, while the new book contains thousands of Thomas Stuart Ferguson's words, they represent his position when *One Fold and One Shepherd* was published in 1958 or 1962, not his ideas in 1983. (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Spring 1990, p. 85, footnote 6)

In the same footnote (pages 84-85), Stan Larson makes it clear that *The Messiah in Ancient America* is a "gross misrepresentation" of Ferguson's true feelings:

. . . since the title page presents Thomas Smart Ferguson as a coauthor with Bruce W. Warren one must examine this posthumous attribution of authorship . . . Since the clear evidence in his letters indicates that Ferguson denied the historicity of the Book of Mormon and the divinity of Jesus, it is deceptive for Warren to speak of his "abiding" testimony. . . . Warren's total association with Ferguson during the last fifteen years of his life consisted of a five-minute conversation in 1979. . . .

If the book were intended to be a tribute to Ferguson, it should have been dedicated to his memory, rather than have his name printed on the title page as a coauthor. Wishful thinking and fond memories do not change the way things had changed in Ferguson's thinking. *The Messiah in Ancient America* attributes fresh authorship to Ferguson, and this kind of an attempted reinstatement of the pre-Book-of-Abraham-papyri Ferguson is a gross misrepresentation of his real views.

Those who are interested in obtaining Stan Larson's definitive article, "The Odyssey of Thomas Stuart Ferguson," which was published in the Spring 1990 issue of *Dialogue*, can write to: Dialogue Foundation, University Station—UMC 7805, Logan, Utah 84322.

In bringing out a book by his father which is favorable to the Book of Mormon, Larry Ferguson had to side-step a great deal of evidence which appeared in letters written by his father. In addition, there are a number of people who could testify concerning Thomas Stuart Ferguson's complete rejection of the Book of Mormon. The journal of Ronald Barney is especially hard to disregard. The reader will remember that Barney is a Senior Archivist at the Mormon Church's Historical Department. It seems highly unlikely that someone in his position would make up a false story concerning the last weeks of Ferguson's life.

That Larry Ferguson was unable to produce an actual manuscript written by his father, Thomas Stuart Ferguson, certainly throws a great deal of doubt upon the claim that *The Messiah in Ancient America* represented his true feelings. Moreover, a manuscript which Thomas Stuart Ferguson wrote which demonstrated that “there is no Book-of-Mormon geography” and a “paucity of specific support” for the Book of Mormon in the findings of archaeologists in the New World has been deliberately ignored in *The Messiah in Ancient America*.

As we indicated earlier, we have photographically reproduced Thomas Stuart Ferguson’s manuscript criticizing the Book of Mormon in our book, *Ferguson’s Manuscript Unveiled*. Ferguson himself said that this manuscript was written to prove the Book of Mormon “fictional.”

.....

WESLEY WALTERS’ HOPE

We had just completed printing Wesley P. Walters’ Master’s thesis and were preparing to go to press with this newsletter, when we received word that he had passed away. We had known for some time that Wesley had serious heart problems, but his death still came as a real blow. Nevertheless, we rejoice in the fact that our good friend and associate in the work has gone home to be with the Lord. While Walters was truly a great scholar, his most important concern was his relationship with his Lord Jesus Christ. Walters also pastored a church in Marissa, Illinois, for as long as we knew him (we first met him in 1961).

Wesley Walters’ contributions in the field of Mormon history were remarkable. He was, in fact, a great detective when it came to ferreting out early Mormon documents. It was Walters who discovered the original document which verified the claim that Joseph Smith was a “glass looker” and that he was arrested and brought before a Justice of the Peace for that practice (see *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* pp. 32-39). In addition, Walters discovered that Joseph Smith’s claim that he had his First Vision in 1820 at the time of a religious revival in Palmyra, New York could not be true. There was no revival in Palmyra that year; it actually occurred in 1824-25 (*Ibid.*, pp. 156-62). Although Mormon scholar Richard L. Bushman tried to refute Walters’ arguments, he acknowledged that Walters had a very important effect on Mormon history:

The Reverend Mr. Walters’ article on the first vision raised quite a stir among Mormon scholars when an early version circulated about a year and a half ago . . . the style of his attack was both refreshing and disconcerting. . . it was free of the obvious rancor characteristic of anti-Mormon writers . . . They cannot resist twisting the knife. Mr. Walters, by contrast, sticks to his facts. . . He candidly presents his argument and bluntly tells Mormons to reevaluate the foundations of their church. That kind of frankness is far more disarming than the more pretentious variety. . . Our consternation was a genuine compliment to the quality of Mr. Walters’ work.

While Mr. Walters has put us on the spot for the moment, in the long run Mormon scholarship will benefit from his attack. . . Mormon historians asked themselves how many other questions about our early history remain unasked as well as unanswered. Not long after we saw his essay, a committee on “Mormon History in New York” sent a group of scholars east for special

research. . . Without wholly intending it, Mr. Walters may have done as much to advance the cause of Mormon history within the Church as anyone in recent years. (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Spring 1969, pp. 82-83)

Wesley P. Walters had an extremely important effect upon our own work and that of the other ministries to Mormons. While we have researched many areas of Mormon history, when we talked to Wesley Walters we clearly recognized our own inadequacies. Walters was a real historian in every sense of the word, and for this reason we constantly sought his advice. He not only spent untold hours giving us guidance, but also provided an unending stream of photocopies, microfilms and information concerning Mormon history and documents. Our work would not be in the place it is today without his help. In fact, during some of our hardest years he sent us monthly support to keep the ministry going. Wesley Walters could have acquired a far greater name for himself, but he chose to spend a great deal of his time serving others. He was constantly helping those in other ministries prepare their manuscripts and spent a great deal of his time answering letters and sending photocopies to Mormons and others who had questions. The importance of his work cannot be overstated. While we will really miss him, we thank God that we had the privilege of knowing him and benefiting from his research and wisdom.

Wesley P. Walters received the Lord into his heart long before we met him. His hope for eternal life was firmly based in the atonement and resurrection of Jesus Christ. He recognized that he was a sinner and asked God to forgive him and come into his life. His desire to bring others to know the saviour who had changed his life led him into the ministry. While he was pastoring in New York—the birthplace of Mormonism—he encountered the teachings of the Joseph Smith. His examination of LDS teachings led him to the conclusion that Mormonism was another gospel which was not founded on the teachings of the Bible (see Galatians 1:8).

Pastor Walters’ fervent desire was to bring Mormons to the hope that he had in Jesus Christ. In a tract entitled, *Enticing Words of Man’s Wisdom*, Wesley P. Walters wrote:

The world does not need another man-made, feeling-centered religion by which men try to earn their way to glory through religious deeds and temple ceremonies. It needs to hear afresh the real gospel, that while our sins have justly brought down upon us God’s great anger and condemnation, His love has brought us eternal salvation and glory by sending His Son to die for our personal sins and guilt. Those who place all their confidence in Him alone, He transforms into new creations and makes them citizens of His true Heavenly Kingdom.

As we indicated earlier, we have just finished printing Wesley Walters’ Master’s thesis, *The Use of the Old Testament in the Book of Mormon*. In this important thesis Walters demonstrated many errors Joseph Smith fell into when he wrote the Book of Mormon. His research makes it clear that in creating that book, Smith was plagiarizing the King James Version of the Bible rather than translating from ancient gold plates. We are selling this 235-page thesis for only \$7.00.

THE TANNERS: DEMONIZED AGENTS OF THE MORMON CHURCH?

When the Apostle Paul wrote to the churches of Galatia, he asked this question: “Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?” (Galatians 4:16) Paul was painfully aware of the fact that his stand for true Christianity was costing him a great deal. Many of those who are engaged in Christian work today are faced with this same problem. The truth does not always make everyone happy. In fact, it can make some people extremely angry. We found this out over thirty years ago when we left the Mormon Church and began publishing material questioning its authenticity. Because of our stand, many people began to proclaim that we were either possessed by the Devil or at least working through his power. We realize the position these people are coming from and continue to love and pray for them in spite of what they might say about us.

Recently, however, we have encountered the same type of charges from critics of the Mormon Church who feel that we are being too soft on the Mormons. Because we have taken a strong stand against sensationalism and inaccurate statements concerning Mormonism, we have found ourselves under attack. Like the Mormons, some of our critics have come to believe that we are demonized and are actually being used by the Mormon Church. In November 1988, we received a letter which contained the following: “I . . . am led to the conclusion that . . . You have never been ‘Set Free’ from the demonic spirit of Mormonism . . . You are, in fact, a plant of the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-Day Saints.”

On August 6, 1990, Ed Decker published a paper in which he suggested that his readers write to “Saints Alive . . . Brigham City, Utah, 84[3]02, and ask . . . for a copy of a report . . . prepared for the Body of Christ in Utah regarding the Tanners. . . . I agree that Jerald and Sandra stepped over the line of error into sin . . .” In the report recommended by Mr. Decker, we are charged with being in “demonic” bondage and with having “been used by the LDS Church”:

We accuse the Tanners of doing major damage to the outreach to the Mormon people for Jesus Christ. . . . The Tanners are being used mightily of Satan in this attack to quench the Holy Spirit of God. . . . We could not understand why Jerald would not accept Bill’s [Bill Schnoebelen’s] thorough answers—then we saw why. He raised up, his body shaking, and in a different sounding voice, and with his finger pointed at Bill, he shouted, “Take all that occult material and burn it!” . . . Jerald’s eyes were fixed and piercing. We looked at one another, recognizing what this was—a demonic manifestation. We offered ministry to the Tanners to break this spiritual bondage, but they refused . . .

In the past two years, we have heard comments and rumors from independent sources that the Tanners may have been used by the LDS church. We refused to believe such rumors at first . . . Then we read a thesis, in 1989, by Loftes Tryk . . . Mr. Tryk presented a very good case, and his conclusion on the Tanners was, “The Tanners were surely supplied with the selected documents by the church authorities themselves.” . . . the material the Tanners have written is critical and embarrassing, but not very damaging to the LDS church. The evidence is mounting, and it would seem that the Tanners have indeed been used by the LDS church to provide a controlled criticism of the church. (*The Tanner Problem*, pages 1-2)

We feel that these charges are as serious as any that have ever been leveled against us. At any rate, immediately after we received the document mentioned above, James Spencer,

coauthor of *Mormonism’s Temple of Doom*, issued an attack on our work. In this response, he cited the following from a letter he had written: “The Tanners have been used by our Enemy to sow division. They are loose cannons, firing indiscriminately at their own army” (*The Attack on Mormonism’s Temple of Doom*, page 20). On pages 31-32 of the same booklet, James Spencer wrote: “Jerald, in resisting us, may well find himself fighting against God . . . What Jerald has done is not only ungodly, it is clearly libelous.” In a letter dated July 20, 1990, Ed Decker supported James Spencer’s accusations against us and suggested that his publisher had “every right to seek legal redress against the Tanners for trade libel.”

James Spencer seemed to be especially upset with us because of some questions we had raised in our last newsletter concerning a letter by the late Walter Martin (dated January 6, 1989) which gave some support to the booklet *Mormonism’s Temple of Doom*—a book which we had criticized. Mr. Spencer finally released a photocopy of the entire letter. An examination of the document reveals that our questions were justified. The first sentence of the letter, which we had not seen before, shows that the statement was originally authored by Spencer himself and sent to Walter Martin: “Dear Jim, After reading the statement you sent, I made some amendments to it.” While Walter Martin’s signature at the end of the letter does make him responsible for its contents, Mr. Spencer undoubtedly found it somewhat embarrassing that he had to compose the statement for Martin. It seems reasonable to believe that this is the reason that photocopies of the original letter were not circulated.

This previously undisclosed portion of the letter plus other evidence we now have suggests that James Spencer had been pressing Martin and Christian Research Institute very hard for a statement supporting *Mormonism’s Temple of Doom*. Martin was very reluctant to contradict the official CRI statement which he himself had approved for distribution. The CRI statement, of course, strongly supported our position on the book. In a letter dated July 27, 1988, Spencer pleaded with Walter Martin to soften his stand. He even accused Martin of being cowardly in the face of spiritual warfare:

When I saw your letter . . . I was shocked, hurt and saddened. You, dear brother, after having convinced us to fly in the face of “nonrockaboatis” have chosen the easy path at our expense. . . . The resulting “chicken soup” is worse than no statement at all. . . . The old quote . . . applies: “If we don’t hang together, it is certain we shall all hang separately.” I call upon you to be courageous in the defense of the brethren in this matter. (Letter from James Spencer to Walter Martin, dated July 27, 1988)

Four months passed without any helpful response from Walter Martin. Finally on November 3, 1988, James Spencer prepared his own statement and sent it to Martin with a letter in which he stated: “My proposal is that you authorize me to insert the accompanying statement on the book. . . . I would ask that you sign one of the statements and return it to me immediately, please.”

Even after all this, Martin did not deal with the matter “immediately.” He, in fact, waited another two months (Jan. 6, 1989) before sending the statement back to Spencer! In any case, Martin’s statement does not replace the official CRI statement which is unfavorable to the book. This is very important because Ed Decker and William Schnoebelen had agreed to submit themselves to the decision of that organization. The official

CRI statement, which has Walter Martin's name at the end, has never been repudiated by CRI. It plainly states:

We understand how and why Mr. Schnoebelen arrived at his conclusion . . . We however cannot endorse his premises, nor the overall conclusion as represented in *Mormonism's Temple of Doom* . . . overall we cannot approve the booklet and all of its conclusions.

At the time of its investigation, CRI appointed Craig Hawkins to research the charges regarding the book because he "was the expert in these matters." Mr. Hawkins answered questions on the CRI radio program "The Bible Answer Man" both before and after Martin's death. James Spencer, however, questions Mr. Hawkins' ability in his response to us. We feel that his attack on Hawkins' expertise is not based on facts. In the pamphlet recommended by Ed Decker, the attack against Craig Hawkins is carried much further. While the authors do not go so far as to say he is demonized, they claim that his opinion with regard to the origin of the temple ceremony "was apparently clouded by his own involvement in the occult." Hawkins is also accused of working "behind Dr. Martin's back" in preparing his report (*The Tanner Problem*, p. 3). Craig Hawkins, however, claims that he has evidence to prove that Walter Martin fully supported his findings concerning the book. With regard to Hawkins "involvement in the occult," the charge stems from the fact that at one time he practiced martial arts. It appears that anyone who takes a strong stand against the unfounded claims of these people is liable to be accused of being influenced by the occult or of being in league with the Devil. In any case, Craig Hawkins is preparing a response to the charges made against him. He can be contacted at Apologetics Information Ministry, 3855 E. La Palma Ave, Anaheim, CA 92807.

In his critique of our July 1990 newsletter, James Spencer claims that "Walter Martin never told me ever to change one word in *Mormonism's Temple of Doom*" (page 8). While Martin or CRI may not have prepared a specific list of changes to be made, common sense should have shown Spencer and Schnoebelen that major changes would have to be made in the booklet if they were to continue printing it.

On page 8 of his attack on us, James Spencer maintained that he "was of the mind that if anybody, at any time, found an important mistake of fact in *Mormonism's Temple of Doom*, I would be glad to change it." In the interview which we had with Spencer and Schnoebelen and in our publication, *The Lucifer-God Doctrine*, we pointed out major problems in the book. For example, in *Mormonism's Temple of Doom*, pp. 12-13, Mr. Schnoebelen made a serious misrepresentation concerning his trip through Freemasonry. Both Spencer and Schnoebelen acknowledged in the tape-recorded interview that the facts were not correctly stated in the book and discussed how the wording would have to be changed to correct this very serious problem. In view of their own statements, which are preserved on tape, we expected that they would correct this misstatement of the facts which appeared in the first edition. To our surprise, however, when we obtained the new printing, we discovered that there was absolutely no attempt to correct the false claims!

Even more important than the flaw in the book which we mentioned above, James Spencer and William Schnoebelen have refused to alter the erroneous information given concerning the relationship between Mormonism and witchcraft (see *The Lucifer-God Doctrine*, pp. 41-55). How can we reconcile this with Spencer's statement that he would be "glad to change" any serious error found in the book?

While we do not have room to discuss these matters at length in this newsletter, we are preparing a booklet dealing with them entitled, *Serious Charges Against the Tanners*. In order to have a good grasp on what is going on in this controversy a person also needs to read our booklet, *The Lucifer-God Doctrine*.

WAS ED DECKER POISONED?

In the July 1990 issue of our newsletter, we commented concerning a claim by Ed Decker that he was "poisoned in Scotland" in 1986. Although he was supposed to have been given a dose of arsenic poison which was seven times stronger than that required to kill a person, he claimed that God had healed him. We stated that a man who was with Mr. Decker at the time of the alleged poisoning had "called us from Scotland and expressed his disbelief in Decker's story." The man mentioned in the article was Sam Burton, an American pastor who is doing missionary work in Scotland. We noted that, "If the 'Scotland poisoning' really did occur, there should be some witnesses available or evidence in hospital or police records which would verify the story. If Mr. Decker has any evidence to that effect, we would be willing to print it in our next newsletter." Ed Decker has faulted us for not asking him for the information we desired before going to press. He has apparently forgotten that the last time we asked for data, he would not send it and told us not to contact him any more: "Please don't write us any more. If you have something to say, say it to Dr. Martin and CRI or just issue another special edition of the messenger." Since we had no reason to feel that Mr. Decker had changed his mind about not providing information to us, we took his advice and published our doubts in the next "edition of the messenger."

It is now clear that Mr. Decker was never hospitalized in Scotland, never contacted the police and did not even consult a doctor until his return from that country some "4 or 5 days" after the incident. Ed Decker has distributed copies of letters from two American pediatricians who give information concerning the purported arsenic poisoning incident. The most important letter comes from Dr. Keith A. Rodaway. He frankly stated his opinion that, "This was arsenic poisoning, which nearly claimed this man's life." While the major portion of the letter merely gives facts concerning the poisoning which Mr. Decker "related" to Dr. Rodaway after his return from Scotland, he does claim that he examined Decker and conducted tests: "I interviewed, examined and tested this man on his return to Seattle, from Scotland and Ireland, in March 1986. . . . Blood and urine test[s] were run demonstrating hematocrit of 32, Wbc. 3,700, urinalysis showed +3 blood, +4 protein. Toxic screen revealed arsenic of 27 µg/dl. (normal 0-20 µg/dl.) He developed pustular skin eruption and paresthesias. After appropriate treatment and many prayers Ed has made a full recovery" (Letter from Dr. Keith A. Rodaway, July 19, 1990).

This letter by Dr. Rodaway does indicate that Ed Decker had some kind of a physical problem when he came into his office and a somewhat elevated level of arsenic in his body. Mr. Decker, however, has completely misunderstood the information regarding the arsenic. He seems to feel that the reading of "27 µg/dl" is a fatal dose. In a letter to Jerald, dated August 31, 1990, he made it clear that a person who drank "27 units" would undoubtedly die or at best "become deathly ill like I did and still live." A doctor in Salt Lake City who examined Dr. Rodaway's letter, however, pointed out to us that that level of arsenic is not

sufficient to prove that Decker was poisoned. Two other doctors have also given that opinion.

It is clear from Mr. Decker's letter that he does not realize that "27 µg/dl" is a relatively small amount of arsenic. The "µg" in Dr. Rodaway's letter is not referring to a milligram (mg—i.e., one-thousandth of a gram) but rather to a microgram (a millionth part of a gram). It takes 1,000 µg (micrograms) to equal 1 mg (milligram). The lethal dose of arsenic trioxide, an extremely deadly poison, is given as "about 120 mg" in *Handbook of Poisoning: Prevention, Diagnosis & Treatment*, 1987, page 221. In *Courtroom Toxicology*, 1981, vol. 3, Arse-11, we read that the "acute ingestion of only 200mg of arsenic trioxide may be fatal to an adult . . ." When these figures are converted to micrograms by multiplying by 1,000, we have from 120,000 to 200,000 µg.

We have already cited Dr. Keith A. Rodaway's statement that in Ed Decker's case "Toxic screen revealed arsenic of 27 µg/dl. (normal 0-20 µg/dl) In *Courtroom Toxicology*, however, we read that, "Urine arsenic concentrations of unexposed persons may range from 0.01-0.30 mg/L." (vol. 3, Arse-9) When the higher reading is converted to micrograms ($0.30 \times 1,000 = 300$ µg) and adjusted to deciliters ($300 \mu\text{g} \div 10 = 30$ µg) we find that Mr. Decker's reading fits within the range of "unexposed persons." Therefore, according to *Courtroom Toxicology*, instead of being a fatal dose, 27 µg seems to be 3 µg under the 30 µg limit for "unexposed persons."

We all have some arsenic in our bodies and the amount can be elevated in a number of ways. Wally Tope pointed out to us that in the book, *Courtroom Toxicology*, it was stated that just "a seafood meal" could greatly affect arsenic readings in urine samples. We suggested that this should be put to the test. Mr. Tope, therefore, ate a good deal of seafood and submitted to urinalyses. On October 19, 1990, the Nichols Institute Reference Laboratories reported that he had an arsenic concentration of "546" µg/L. When this is adjusted to the amount of arsenic in a deciliter ($546 \div 10$), we find that he had twice as much arsenic in his urine sample as Ed Decker—i.e., 54.6 µg! As we have already shown, Mr. Decker had only 27 µg! Wally Tope suffered no bad effects from what Ed Decker felt was well over the lethal dose.

However this may be, Ed Decker has actually claimed that he was "poisoned twice" in 1986. We have contacted Mr. Decker and asked him to provide documentation concerning this second attempt on his life, but he has refused to do so. The most information we have been able to find concerning this incident appears in a tape-recording of a speech he gave on June 29, 1987. On that occasion Mr. Decker revealed the following: "They can't kill me. . . . those of you who know me know I got poisoned twice last year—came close to dying both times—shouldn't of lived." This account of a second poisoning attempt raises a number of important questions. For example, if Mr. Decker came "close to dying," why is so little information given concerning it? Where and when did it occur? Are there any witnesses to this poisoning? Was Mr. Decker hospitalized or treated by a physician? It would seem that if there was any evidence regarding this attempted murder, Mr. Decker would have used it in his response to us. It is also interesting to note that both of the doctors who prepared statements for Decker were completely silent about this matter. It seems very difficult to believe that Ed Decker was poisoned twice and "came close to dying" on both occasions, yet was apparently never admitted to a hospital where tests would have verified the poisonings.

Although the details are scanty, Ed Decker has given some information concerning his first poisoning in Scotland. In the *Saints Alive In Jesus Newsletter*, April-May, 1986, he revealed:

On March 24th, I was in Northern Scotland where I was to do two television specials on Mormonism and Masonry. The television crew was set up to videotape my meetings for rebroadcast. That day, during a luncheon, I was slipped a lethal dose of arsenic in a soft drink. I spent the next six hours in terrible convulsions, yet Jesus protected me from its killing power and gave me the strength and a special anointing to do the meetings.

One question immediately arises: if Ed Decker was "in terrible convulsions" for "six hours," why was he not rushed to a hospital for treatment? In the book, *Poisoning: Toxicology—Symptoms—Treatments*, page 190, we find that in cases where a massive dose of arsenic is given, "Convulsions and coma are the terminal signs and death is from circulatory failure." If Mr. Decker was in convulsions and at the point of death itself, one would think that someone would have had the presence of mind to seek medical help.

Since Ed Decker did not go to a hospital in Scotland to verify the first poisoning and since the urinalysis which was taken "4 or 5" days later does not reveal the large amount of arsenic we would expect for someone who had received a lethal dose, we have to rely on the testimony of witnesses who were in Scotland at the time the incident took place. A great deal hinges on whether he was actually in convulsions and as sick as he claims he was during the period following the poisoning. Fortunately, Wally Tope, of Frontline Ministries, has made a very thorough investigation of the matter and has shared his private notes with us. Mr. Tope had telephone interviews with all of the witnesses who were present at the luncheon with Mr. Decker as well as people he associated with during his trip. A number of these people, who lived in Scotland and Ireland, allowed Mr. Tope to tape-record their statements.

Wally Tope's work concerning the Scotland poisoning seems to be a very significant contribution to our understanding of the incident. In two telephone conversations with us Pastor Sam Burton, who was present at the time of the purported poisoning, has confirmed the important details concerning his statements which appear in Mr. Tope's notes (in the material which follows we will refer to these notes as TN).

To begin with, Mr. Tope has found some evidence to indicate that Ed Decker had some physical problem after attending a luncheon on the day he claimed he was poisoned. At that time Mr. Decker was staying with Mr. and Mrs. James Eglinton in Inverness, Scotland. According to Mr. Tope's notes of a telephone conversation with Mrs. Eglinton (p. 59), she remembered that after Decker returned from the lunch he was sweating and seemed to be in pain. She thought that she remembered him saying that he had eaten a pizza pie which did not agree with him. Mr. Decker's friend, Eric Clarke, who was present with him at the time, said that they "had lunch at a Pizza Parlour" and that as they were leaving it was clear that Mr. Decker "was in pain and very unwell. We took him back to the home where we were staying and immediately put him to bed" (Statement of Eric Clarke, dated July 20, 1990).

While the evidence shows that Ed Decker did become ill, a serious problem with his story began to surface when Tope tried to verify Decker's claim that he "spent the next six hours in terrible convulsions." Mrs. Eglinton could not remember anything about Mr. Decker having convulsions while he was at her house. (TN, p. 59) Like his wife, Mr. Eglinton had no recollection of convulsions. (*Ibid.*, p. 57) The Eglintons seemed to remember that Mr. Decker was only in bed 3 or 4 hours, yet, according to Mr. Decker, the convulsions were supposed to have lasted "six hours."

There is another element which makes the problem even more serious: Mr. Decker's doctor, Keith A. Rodaway, mentioned that "Mr. Decker related the sudden onset of severe

vomiting and diarrhea following a meal . . . he had severe abdominal cramps, heart burn and started recurrent [*sic*] vomiting. Soon watery diarrhea ensued” (Letter dated July 19, 1990). Now, it seems obvious that if Ed Decker did indeed have six hours of “convulsions” together with “severe vomiting and diarrhea,” the family with whom he stayed would have been aware of the problem. Mr. or Mrs. Eglinton, however, could recall neither the “terrible convulsions” nor the “severe vomiting and diarrhea” (TN, pp. 57-60).

In a statement Ed Decker published on August 6, 1990, he claimed that Eric Clarke was “the one man who was with me continually before, during and after my poisoning.” Although Eric Clarke is very supportive of Mr. Decker in a statement he prepared for him on July 20, 1990, the statement itself raises serious questions. In this document, Mr. Clarke said he “travelled to all the meetings with Mr. Decker and stayed in the same homes.” We would expect, therefore, that if the poisoning story were true, there would be some mention of the serious nature of Ed Decker’s illness. As we have already shown, Eric Clarke did mention that Decker was “in pain and very unwell.” Significantly, however, Mr. Clarke mentioned neither the “terrible convulsions” nor the “severe vomiting and diarrhea.” Since Clarke was staying at the same home as Decker, the absence of this important information is highly significant. Moreover, Eric Clarke makes a very revealing observation which seems to indicate that at the time he was with Ed Decker in Scotland he did not believe that Decker was at the very point of death or even in very serious condition. He, in fact, says that it was only when Decker called him from America and informed him of the doctor’s diagnosis that he understood the gravity of the situation:

Before we left the room I prayed for him to be well enough to take the meeting that had been arranged for that evening. . . . In the light of his doctor’s later diagnosis this may appear to have been a selfish attitude on my part, but we just didn’t realise how ill he might have been. . . . I was shocked to learn of the Doctor’s diagnosis when Mr. Decker phoned me a few days after he had returned home.

Amazing as it may seem, immediately following the “convulsions,” Ed Decker arose from his bed and gave two speeches (one on Mormonism and the other on Masonry) which were preserved on video tapes. Fortunately, Wally Tope was able to obtain a video tape of the second message. Mr. Tope has provided us with an audio tape of the same sermon. When we listened to the tape-recording of Mr. Decker’s speech, we found absolutely no evidence to support the claim that he was having the problems which the doctors’ letters would lead us to believe. In fact, the tape revealed that Ed Decker’s voice was very strong and there was nothing to indicate that he was suffering pain or having any problem at all. It was actually a powerful sermon that he delivered the night of the “poisoning.”

Besides making the video tapes on the day he was poisoned, Mr. Decker spoke publicly on at least three more occasions on that trip. Eric Clarke related that there was another meeting in Scotland: “. . . we just didn’t realise how ill he might have been. He had one more meeting to take before I took him to the airport in Edinburgh” (Statement dated July 20, 1990). The plane Mr. Decker boarded in Edinburgh, however, was headed for Ireland, not America. He had two more speaking engagements there (TN, p. 36).

Dr. Charles Sweigard, who never actually treated Ed Decker, claimed in his letter that, “The Scottish brethren sent him to

Ireland where a veterinarian friend said his symptoms resembled arsenic poisoning.” There is an element of truth in this story. Ed Decker did, in fact, visit a veterinarian in Ireland, and this man did give him some type of a remedy. In 1988, Wally Tope was able to track down this veterinarian and question him at great length about Decker’s claim regarding arsenic poisoning. The veterinarian was James McCormick. Mr. McCormick has since passed away, but before his death he allowed Wally Tope to tape-record their conversations. Mr. McCormick, who had picked up Mr. Decker at the airport, did not seem to know anything about him having recurrent vomiting and diarrhea. McCormick said that Decker did complain of being unwell in a general sort of way and noted that he was lethargic and was not eating well. He felt that Mr. Decker may have had some kind of a bug (TN, pp. 33, 34, 36). The statement that James McCormick claimed that Ed Decker’s “symptoms resembled arsenic poisoning” is not supported by the tape-recorded conversation Wally Tope had with him. On the contrary, James McCormick clearly stated that he was a veterinarian surgeon and was well acquainted with the effects of arsenic poisoning. He did not have any reason to believe that Mr. Decker had been poisoned and the treatment which he gave him had nothing to do with the effects of arsenic (TN, page 36). Wally Tope played part of this tape for us, and we can verify that James McCormick completely dismissed the idea of arsenic poisoning.

Pastor Sam Burton, who was present at the luncheon where Mr. Decker was supposed to have received the arsenic, emphatically denied that Decker was poisoned. He felt that the whole thing probably grew out of paranoia (TN, p. 85). Leslie Jappy, who was also at the luncheon, also asserted the story was false (TN, p. 93).

Some people who were close to Ed Decker at the time of the “poisoning” have suggested that it is possible that the symptoms he had were really the result of a bad reaction to a prescription drug he was taking known as Indocin. We will have more concerning this matter and also other important information on the poisoning story in the pamphlet we are working on entitled, *Serious Charges Against the Tanners*.

Wally Tope is preparing a report on the same subject which will contain photocopies of documents and give actual quotations from those who were with Mr. Decker in Scotland and Ireland and allowed him to tape-record their conversations. His paper on the subject will be published under the title, *The Strange Case of Ed Decker’s “Arsenic Poisoning,”* and will be available from Frontline Ministries, PO Box 1100, La Canada, CA 91012. The price will be \$2.75 plus \$1.00 for shipping.

Wally Tope has already brought other important information to light. For example, in our last newsletter we reported that Ed Decker claimed that Mormon Apostle M. Russell Ballard gave a speech in which he admitted that ex-Mormons and “specifically” the film, *The God Makers*, had caused the church to have “a 3 million member shortfall.” Although we were suspicious of this claim when we first heard it in May 1990, we found that Wally Tope had been working on this question since March when he began examining Mr. Decker’s January 1990 newsletter. Mr. Tope provided us with a photocopy of that issue. Tope, in fact, had already initiated research which led to the discovery that there was a tape available of Ballard’s speech. In addition, he had obtained a photocopy of the Nov. 14, 1989, issue of the Provo *Herald* which he sent to us. All of the evidence combined to disprove the Ballard story, and Ed Decker and William Schnoebelen finally admitted it was erroneous (see *Saints Alive In Jesus Newsletter* July 1990)

IN THE MAIL

“Our family greatly appreciates the work you are doing to lead people into the truth. . . . a friend of ours . . . shared a copy of his *Mormonism: Shadow or Reality?* with us. It was a huge help in helping us make the decision to leave Mormonism for our return to true Christianity and a wonderful new church. . . . Thank you very much! (Letter from North Carolina)

“I can’t tell you how much I am indebted to you both for showing me the error of my beliefs in Mormonism! I was a fully active member for 19 years, having served a proselyting mission in New Zealand, a Temple Marriage and until my leaving the church served in several leadership roles in both Ward and Stake. . . . I began to doubt the church’s authenticity when speaking to a fellow worker who was a strong Christian . . . I approached my sister who had left the church about 9-10 years earlier after having studied church history with her husband. They were a great help and provided me with a copy of *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality* to read. This book is dynamite! . . . My sister and her husband had been praying fervently for years for myself and my parents (who have served 2 temple missions) to see the light and finally we have. . . . I can assure you that the work you are doing is well and truly worthwhile as myself and my parents are living proof.” (Letter from Australia)

“. . . I left the Mormon Church about a year ago (hence my decision to write a book) having been a convert for about three years. I am an Ambulanceman now . . . and have faith in Jesus Christ. . . . My ‘other half’ . . . was a Mormon, in fact I helped her towards her conversion when I was actively involved in missionary work in my local ward, she too is no longer a member . . . I did not study to criticise or prove the church false but to learn of the ‘true church.’ . . . I soon learnt of the infamous Jerald and Sandra Tanner. . . . I . . . had made plans already to serve as a missionary. I decided to go . . . I returned seven months later, and soon afterwards left. On my mission . . . I had written to Utah Lighthouse Ministry and received information that confirmed my doubts . . . When I write about my so-called opposition, it was really from the day of my Endowment . . . In actual fact I was horrified by the temple, I have never felt so far away from God in all my life. I was in a daze for many days. I expressed my feelings with other members. Some were honest enough to admit they felt the same, others implied I must of been unworthy or I should go many times to appreciate it. This I did, twenty or so I believe and I still had the same feeling that it was not of God.” (Letter from England)

“We both wish to thank you for your research and excellent work in exposing the Mormon Church. There are alot of people in Australia (Ex Mormons) who are very grateful to you both for your tremendous research work in exposing the World of Mormonism. Since we have left the Mormon Church we have found out that 15 (Fifteen) people have left the church, and all have come from the same stake that we belonged to. From what we can establish, the information, in [sic] which prompted these people to leave the church, was from your books, *Mormonism Shadow or Reality* and the *Changing World of Mormonism*, both excellent books. We want to let you know that we are grateful to you both for bringing to us the truth, it has made us free and alot happier.” (Letter from Australia)

“I really appreciate the work that you are doing. I am a former Mormon that your works helped bring out of the darkness and into the glorious light of the real gospel of Jesus.” (Letter from Ohio)

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