
CHAPTER TWENTY TWO



THE GREAT APOSTASY

INTRODUCTION

It is apparent from the existence of the many protestant churches that a considerable number of spiritual leaders during the reformation felt the Catholic Church had lost its way, that it was no longer guided by a pope who communed with God, as had the twelve apostles. None of these leaders, at least to my knowledge, claimed direct revelation from God in establishing a new church. They knew many of the practices of Catholicism were wrong and simply made doctrinal changes by reason, through study of the scriptures and I presume, prayer but experienced no theophany or heavenly direction, per se. Though their efforts were certainly laudable, at least from a protestant or LDS viewpoint, and signaled the rustling of later restoration, they received no approval from a heavenly Being. With some scriptures having been altered over the preceding centuries and others lost, it seems probable that their best efforts could only correct a portion of any prevailing error in practices of worship in the universal church. Existing scriptures were their only resort. At best, they could only correct that, which was plainly declared therein and that only with surety if they were guided by the Holy Spirit. Even so, it is my understanding that all protestant churches who lay claim to any type of authority, describe the same as scriptural authority. One can reasonably ask; "What scripture or scriptures are they speaking of and by whose interpretation of those scriptures?" A claim of authority to direct God's work on earth requires validation of some sort, which has been given by the Supreme Authority whose work it is, even Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior, or so it seems to me. Similar authority in temporal matters is standard practice among men and is

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the only logical means of directing any business, governmental or other type of institution requiring a cadre of people to function efficiently. Does it seem logical that the Lord would allow any individual, no matter how well intended, to direct his work simply because he believes it to be true? Such thought staggers the imagination.

I intend to draw liberally from a book written by Tad R. Callister, who in my opinion offers the best summation of evidence regarding the Great Apostasy that I have come across. That isn't to say I haven't read the discussions of many other authors, not the least of whom is the renowned LDS scholar, Hugh Nibley, whose work is well

recognized by all Christian historians. Even so, I found Mr. Callister's book the easiest to draw from. He cites Dr. Nibley in places as well as many other non-LDS figures

including the ante-Nicene fathers who led the Church from the Apostle's demise up to the Nicene Council of A.D. 325, at which, I understand, the universal or real beginning of Catholicism took place. As has been my practice in previous chapters, his quotes will be italicized and those quotes of his that are repeated herein will be in bold italics.

Let me begin by repeating a quote of his from chapter 20 regarding Roger Williams. "*Roger Williams (A.D. 1603-1683), the founder of Rhode Island and a strong proponent of religious freedom, sensed something was missing in his day and age: 'The Apostasy ... hath so far corrupted all [Christian churches], that there can be no recovery out of that apostasy until Christ shall send forth new apostles to plant the churches anew.'* At one point he declined to continue as pastor of the Baptist Church because there was '**no regularly constituted church on the earth, nor any**

person qualified to administer any church ordinances; nor can there be until new apostles are sent by the Great Head of the Church for whose coming I am seeking.”

Similar comments of other reformers of Protestantism can also be found, indicating many devout men recognized the need for the authority spoken of by Paul in Hebrews 5:4. Even so, Protestantism flourished because of the obvious corruption within the so-called universal church. Such an event was essential to prepare people for the eventual restoration with its God given authority. To emphasize this point, I turn once more to Mr. Callister who then quotes Orson F. Whitney, an apostle and a prominent leader in the early LDS Church who served with Joseph Smith.

THE STRENGTH OF OUR POSITION

“Elder Orson F. Whitney, an apostle of the restored Church, once told of a learned Catholic theologian who spoke to him as follows: ‘You Mormons are all ignoramuses. You don’t even know the strength of your position. It is so strong that there is only one other tenable in the whole Christian world, and that is the position of the Catholic Church. The issue is between Catholicism and Mormonism. If we are right, you are wrong; if you are right, we are wrong; and that’s all there is to it. For, if we are wrong, they are wrong with us, since they are a part of us, and went out from us; while if we are right, they are apostates whom we cut off long ago. If we have the apostolic succession from St. Peter, as we claim, there is no need for Joseph Smith and Mormonism; but if we have not that succession, then such a man as Joseph Smith was necessary, and Mormonism’s attitude is the only consistent one. It is either the perpetuation of the gospel from ancient times, or the restoration of the gospel in later days.’ That indeed is the issue: Did Christ’s Church continue uninterrupted for 2000 years since the meridian of time, or was there a cessation of that church followed by a restoration.”

Before closing this introduction, I want to include a few more remarks I found in Mr. Callister’s introduction to his book. A few will seem similar to some of my comments in chapter 20 but his presentation of the same concepts may clear up my remarks to a degree and further emphasize their importance for the searcher of truth. First,

in regard to the eternal nature of the gospel, I provide this paragraph from his book.

“Since God loves all his children in all ages, his gospel was introduced to the earth in the beginning of time [Moses 5:58-59]. Adam taught this gospel to his children, but eventually it was rejected due to the wickedness of his posterity. When the people softened their hearts and again became receptive to the truth, the gospel message was restored. This pattern repeated itself in the days of Enoch, Noah, Abraham and Moses [Mark 12:1-9]. Each period when the gospel was committed to the earth is called a dispensation, and each period when it was rejected and ultimately lost from the earth is called an apostasy. In the meridian of time our Savior, the greatest prophet of all, Jesus Christ, restored the gospel to the earth, only to have it subsequently rejected and perverted, as in the past dispensations, thus bringing about what is known as the great apostasy. This book focuses on the evidences of the great apostasy and the gospel restoration through the prophet Joseph Smith in what is known as ‘the dispensation of the fullness of times’ [Ephesians 1:10]. His comments here parallel mine made in chapter 20 regarding the source of the many religions and denominations we find today.

Mr. Callister then talks about the sources of his quotations as follows. *“In presenting this material I have relied first and foremost upon the testimony of the scriptures and prophets, and, second, upon the writings of early Christian writers. Many of these early Christian writers are known as Ante-Nicene Fathers, because they lived after the ascension of Christ but before the Nicene Council was held in A. D. 325. A significant portion of their writings is contained in a ten volume set known as ‘The Ante-Nicene Fathers’; it is frequently referred to throughout this book [his book]. While some may be unfamiliar with such names as Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Hippolytus, Tertullian and Origen, these are some of the prominent men who were writers and/or leaders of the church in the wake of the apostles death. ...*

In most cases the early Christian writers appear to have been good and bright men, but they were not prophets. As a result, even though they present an invaluable historical perspective of the early church and offer many insights into its theology, their writings are not the equivalent of scripture. ...

The words of the prophets are the ‘Supreme Court’ on spiritual matters. Any other opinions of men — whether they be that of the early Christian writers, theologian, ministers, psychologists, or otherwise — are of little or no worth if they contradict the scriptures in any way. Thus the writings of the early Christians help us better understand the scriptures but they do not overrule them. ...”

Mr. Callister then makes some remarks, which are directed to any reader not of the LDS faith. I include them now for a purpose that will be obvious to the reader. *“I recognize this book [Mr. Callister’s that is] will likely be read principally by members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints ‘LDS’. I have many good friends, however, who are not of the LDS faith, and for whom I have the greatest respect. They love the Savior and strive to keep his commandments. While we have doctrinal differences, as discussed in this book, many of our mission goals are similar. Their churches are also active in providing for the homeless, caring for the elderly, encouraging morality, and sponsoring humanitarian aid on a world-wide basis. Accordingly, I hope I have said nothing in this book that would offend my non-LDS friends or others of similar beliefs. While I have attempted to speak candidly and truthfully on doctrinal and historical matters, it has not been my intent to disparage in any way their exemplary lives or Christ-like service.*

On one occasion a friend asked me if Mormons believed they were better than other people. I responded that I thought there were many people of other faiths better than I was, including him, but I did believe he would be an even better man if he had the truths I had, and I should be less of a man if they were absent from my life. Hopefully, this book can add to the light and truth which my non-LDS friends already possess in part.”

Mr. Callister has an obvious concern for the feelings of any reader of non-LDS faith in the above remarks and demonstrates his respect for their efforts to live gospel principles. I echo his remarks for those of my family who likewise might not be of LDS faith but live the principles of their faith in a diligent way. I have no intention of demeaning their faith or efforts but like Mr. Callister, I want to present my view regarding gospel truths, which have been reinforced by his discussion because this will provide them with additional historical truth.

I reiterate again that evidence today of an apostasy is provided by the very existence of Protestantism but also with a few additional remarks that might be helpful. These, being general in nature, might help the reader prepare for the more specific remarks to follow.

Obviously the founders of the various faiths in Protestantism felt that the Catholic Church didn’t meet the standards they saw in the scriptures and, as time went on, neither did other preceding forms of Protestantism that evolved meet the expectations of many who were still searching. That search for a church meeting the standards, as understood and derived from the scriptures by earnest individuals, was the motivating force behind the founding of each and every faith within Protestantism. One cannot fault such a search or even the contributions such men and women made in their quest but they can ask, *“Did they establish the true Church of Christ?”* After all, that’s no different than the question those good and humble men and women asked, before they established each new Protestant faith. Surely the increasing availability of the Bible among laity after the printing press invention, their rising protests of abuse by the existing church, and their increasing desire for truth were part of the Lord’s preparation of mankind for the needed restoration, which was to follow. The restoration of the “Dispensation of the Fullness of Times” was yet to come (Ephesians 1:10). Exactly why Joseph and the church he was instrumental in founding were persecuted so severely by those who had accepted the rise of similar institutions is some-what of a mystery to me. I can only attribute it to the visions he claimed with their associated revelation granting him the authority to found the only true church, even that of Jesus Christ, the author of man’s salvation and its Supreme Head. It is his Church and he governs it through revelation to his chosen leaders. In so doing, it negates the authority of all other churches and thus their claim to represent Christ’s work.

13 EVIDENCES OF THE APOSTASY

There are at least thirteen evidences of such an apostasy, which I have come across in my reading and which Mr. Callister carefully lays out. The apostasy was gradual in nature, beginning during the lives of Christ’s apostles and continuing to at least the council of Nicaea in 325 A.D. Though one might question the authority of Mr. Callister’s personal conclusions,

his quotations of scripture and various known authorities writing throughout the last two millenniums speak for themselves and provide substance for his and my own conclusions. In addition, I quote Mr. Callister's personal remarks, where I find his conclusions edifying, logical and in harmony with the evidence at hand. First, I will list the 13 categories enumerated by Mr. Callister and then proceed with a discussion of each major point.

- 1) *"The apostles were killed and revelation ceased.*
- 2) *The scriptures both testify the apostasy was in progress in New Testament times and prophesy of its completeness before the second coming of Christ.*
- 3) *The Bible ended, which would not have happened had the Church continued.*
- 4) *The gifts of the Spirit were lost.*
- 5) *The dark ages became a historical fact.*
- 6) *Many teachings became perverted or were lost and new ones invented.*
- 7) *Many gospel ordinances were perverted or lost and new ones invented.*
- 8) *The simple mode of prayer was changed.*
- 9) *The scriptures were removed from the hands of the lay membership.*
- 10) *Wickedness, sanctioned by the existing church, was egregious and prolonged.*
- 11) *There was a discernible decline in moral standards and church discipline.*
- 12) *The church no longer bore Christ's name.*
- 13) *The priesthood was lost."*

Now, quoting Mr. Callister, I summarize the effect of these evidences. *"The foregoing evidences – spiritual, intellectual, and historical in nature – while independent in their own right; also complement and supplement each other. When viewed as a whole and, not as solitary threads, they weave a consistent and unmistakable pattern showing that Christ's Church was ultimately lost from the earth".* Mr. Callister devotes a chapter to the discussion of each of these points, which, though interesting throughout, I can hardly include. Thus I will take the few comments I feel are particularly pertinent

from each, to make my points. The reader, of course, can go to my source for a more complete and comprehensive discussion of each of these subjects if he or she has the interest. The book is available or can be made so in any LDS book store around the country. I would even encourage any person truly interested in the possible validity of the restoration to make such an effort. It will be worth your time.

1. THE APOSTLES' DEMISE

Paul tells us in Ephesians 2:20 that the Church was *"built upon the foundation of apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone"*. In Ephesians 4: 12-13, we read about the need of such a foundation when he said, *"for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith"*. In other words, as Mr. Callister said, *"the apostles kept the doctrine pure and the saints unified"* or as Paul states further in verse 14, *"we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men"*.

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The New Testament only records four new apostle-ships after the original 12 to my knowledge, they being Matthias, James, Barnabas and Paul. Matthias was called immediately upon Christ's ascension. LDS scholar, Kent Jackson, had this to say regarding the latter three, *"These three were called in Church history – before A. D. 50. But neither scripture nor other historical evidence gives us any indication of the calling of others. It thus seems reasonable to suggest that near the middle of the first century, the calling of apostles came to an end and the apostle-ship died out. As far as we know, by the 90s only John remained. When he left his public ministry around A. D. 100, apostle-ship ceased, and the keys of the kingdom were taken"*.

Israel was also deprived of prophets from about 400 B. C. until Christ restored the Church. Micah describes Israel's state or condition with the absence of prophets in Micah 3: 6-7 wherein he says, *"therefore night shall be unto you that ye shall not have a vision; and it shall be dark unto you, that ye shall not divine; and the sun shall go down over the prophets, and the day shall be dark over them. Then shall the seers be ashamed and the diviners confounded: yea, they shall all cover their lips; for there is no*

answer of God". The same condition would apply to the church after the death of Christ's apostles, for there seems to be no dispute about the end of the apostolic age. The real question is whether the bishops of the church really became the equivalent of apostles with the bishop of Rome eventually becoming the supreme bishop or the Pope.

Catholic historians, themselves, have no scriptural or other written evidence that supports their claim of apostolic succession of the pope (bishop of Rome) through Peter. One of their prominent professors of theology at Gregorian University in Rome, Francis A. Sullivan, wrote a book entitled *"From Apostles to Bishops"*. Therein he said, **"One conclusion seems obvious: Neither the New Testament nor early Christian history offers support for a notion of apostolic succession as 'an unbroken line of Episcopal ordination from Christ through the apostles down through the centuries to the bishops of today'"**.

After the death of the apostles, the Church operated as local congregations, and not under a central authority as it had under the twelve with Peter at its head. Apparently, from time to time, certain bishops of Rome tried to assume authority but it wasn't until about 858 A. D. that such an assumption of authority succeeded according to my source, Mr. Callister. Apparently, the fact that Rome had long been the political capital of the world and, with Peter's earlier death in Rome, religious authority now seemed to merge with it. This gave the bishop of Rome license to claim supreme authority, though not without opposition as described in the following comments.

A couple of statements from other bishops regarding these attempts will provide an idea of the kind of resistance various bishops of Rome met. Firmilian (A. D. 230 – 268), the bishop of Caesarea, is recorded in the *'Ante-Nicene Fathers 5:394, 396* as criticizing Stephen, then bishop of Rome thusly, **"I am justly indignant at this open and manifest folly of Stephen ... who so boasts of the place of his episcopate, and contends that he holds the succession from Peter ... with so many bishops throughout the world"**. That same reference on page 565 speaks of a council of 87 bishops called by Cyprian, bishop of Carthage in North Africa. They wrote in regard to Stephen's attempt to exert command over the African Council of Bishops, as follows, **"For neither**

does any of us set himself up as a bishop of bishops, nor by tyrannical terror does any compel his colleague to the necessity of obedience; since every bishop, according to the allowance of his liberty and power, has his own proper right of judgment, and can no more be judged by another than he himself can judge another". In other words, these bishops, at that time, believed the church was directed locally with no overall central power existing. Mr. Callister lists many more references, which dispute the pope's succession of apostolic authority through Peter but those above make my point. It appears the pope's real authority came through the political authority of Rome and was not ecclesiastical in nature as granted by a legitimate apostle. There was no clear dividing line between government and the church at that time.

Apparently, there are those who believe apostles are no longer needed because the church was firmly established by the time they died. They likewise say revelation ceased with the Bible and is no longer necessary. Yet the very fractionalization of the church after the apostles' deaths would indicate otherwise. Likewise, the protestant movement itself would indicate confusion among the many sincere seekers of truth in Christianity. In 1 Corinthians 14: 33, Paul tells us *"For God is not the author of confusion"*, and in numerous places in the Bible he, as well as our Savior have emphasized the need for unity among those professing Christianity. In my mind, logic tells me that God would not place more than one recipe for salvation on the earth to contend separately with the available organized forces of evil. In fact, the need for unity is expressed throughout the scriptures with John 17: 21 being the most perfect example, wherein Jesus said, *"That they may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me"*. It is difficult enough to resist the adversary and teach our children the truth in this hectic world we live in without confusion of doctrine.

The New Testament points to the need for a central authority that communes with God to keep the doctrine pure and help congregations around the world meet their various needs in different social and political climates including new problems brought on by technology. Logic, once again, tells me that such authority is needed to receive revelation and guidance to maintain the unity Christ spoke of in the

foregoing reference. Such authority would be given through a prophet and apostles that Paul spoke of with specific direction for the Church coming through Christ's designated Prophet. This would be in the same sense as that described by the prophet Amos of the Old Testament in Amos 3: 7 quoted earlier as follows, "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets". Without such central authority and direction, guidance of Church is left up to the will of man and his imperfections, regardless of how kind and righteous he may be. Nowhere in the scriptures is there indication of a lack of need of apostles and prophets nor is there for their removal from the earth, save through apostasy.

2. SCRIPTURAL WITNESSES OF APOSTASY

According to Mr. Callister, "there are more than seventy scriptures in the Bible that speak of the apostasy", many of which come from the New Testament. Once again, I will simply include a few that I feel are most pertinent, because of time and space. Rest assured, you can dig up the remaining ones yourself by consulting "apostasy" in the topical guide of an LDS Bible.

Although the early chapters of Genesis provide a brief history of the posterity of Adam down to the calling of Moses, as a prophet, any later references to future apostasies would necessarily apply to either the apostasy immediately prior to Christ or to one, which would occur after his ascension. Actually, they might also apply to both, which appears to be the case in many instances, so I am told. The fact that an apostasy did occur before the scattering of Israel; in spite of the refusal of Jewish leadership to so admit; indicates God can and does remove his Church and its legitimate leadership if, in his omniscient mind, such is warranted. Those individuals who hunger and thirst after truth and its righteousness must then go without legitimate leadership until God deems it appropriate to call another prophet. With this in mind, I will now proceed to include both scriptures and quotations by eminent scholars regarding the scriptures, to establish this witness.

In Isaiah 29: 13, that great prophet describes the future apostasy as follows, "Wherefore the Lord said, ... this people draw near to me with their mouth, and with their lips do honor me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their

fear toward me is taught by the precept of men". In the same sense, Amos looking toward the future prophesied in Amos 8: 11-12 as follows, "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the lord: and they shall wander from sea to sea, and from north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the Lord, and shall not find it". Though these two prophecies apply to Israel of that time, they also apply to Christ's Church at the Apostles demise.

The New Testament abounds with prophecies of an apostasy. In fact, the epistles written to the various churches by the apostles, who already recognized the beginnings of such apostasy, were sent to them for instruction to correct certain heretical practices. Christ prophesied of the impending disaster as described in Matthew 24: 9-12 saying, "Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another. And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold". With reference this prophecy of Christ, Justin Martyr (A. D. 110-165) said, "For He said

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we would be put to death, and hated for his name's sake; and that many false prophets and false Christs would appear in His name, and deceive many: and so has it come about. For many have taught Godless, blasphemous, and unholly doctrines, forging them in His name".

Paul commented on the impending apostasy in many places, making it quite clear in his second letter to the Thessalonians that Christ's second coming would not occur until after a falling away. In the book of 2 Thessalonians 2:2-3 he states, "Be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor letter from us, as that day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition".

Cyril, the bishop of Jerusalem, who served in the fourth century A. D. observed in his writings, "Thus wrote Paul, and now is the falling away. For men have fallen away from the right faith And formerly the heretics were

manifest; but now the Church is filled with heretics in disguise. For men have fallen away from the truth, and have itching ears. ... Most have departed from right words, and rather choose evil, than desire the good. This therefore is the falling away”.

Finally, the apostle John spoke of the Saints or the Church being overcome in all nations in Revelations chapter 13 verse 7. Speaking of Satan, he tells us, “*And it was given unto him to make war with the Saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations*”. This scripture certainly doesn’t speak of Satan simply impeding the progress of the Church but rather in his overcoming it for a season, which implies its absence from the earth or apostasy for a time, at least in my mind. One can find many more references to an apostasy in the New Testament if he or she is willing to take time to search the writings of the apostles. The reality of the apostasy is obvious from the scriptures. Thus, the authority held by the apostles disappeared with it.

3. THE BIBLE ENDED

I continue to lean on Mr. Callister and his research in citing historical facts regarding the ending of the Bible and its termination as evidence of an apostasy. He begins his discussion with the following preface in which it is made obvious that which could be overlooked.

“The Bible ends about 100 A.D. Why did it end? If Christ’s Church had continued, would the Bible have ended, or would it have continued with ongoing epistles from the apostles to the various congregations of churches – warning them and guiding them as necessary – just as it had done from the time of Christ’s ascension to approximately A.D. 100? Many fail to understand that the majority of epistles in the New Testament were written to correct some error that was infiltrating the Church, to resolve some issue that was disputed, or to clarify some doctrinal point that was contended”.

Frederic W. Farrar, (1831 – 1903), an English clergyman and writer, summarized some of the apostate conditions highlighted in the New Testament epistles as follows, **“The epistle to the Corinthians exhibits to us a Church of which the discipline was inchoate [not fully formed] and the morality deplorable. The**

Epistle of the Colossians proves that there had been an influx of gnosticizing heresies, which illustrated the fatal affinity of religious error to moral degradation. The Pastoral Epistles show that these germs of sinful practice and erroneous theory had blossomed with fatal rapidity. In the epistle of St. Jude and the Second Epistle of Peter we see perhaps still later development of these tendencies”.

As mentioned before, the epistles were written primarily to correct the errors rapidly infiltrating the Church. Mr. Callister asks this question, which I believe, all laymen who seek the truth regarding religion, should consider themselves, namely, “Does it seem likely that there was some magical moment in time – about A.D. 100 (when the Bible ended) – when all error had been eliminated from the Church, when all doctrine had been clarified, when all the Saints had been perfected, and thus no new epistles were needed”? The obvious answer to that is no, which no one can dispute with any degree of logic or truth. Mr. Farrar includes in his remarks **“the fatal affinity of religious error to moral degradation”**, which obviously describes the average human being unless constantly guided by the heavens above. I re-emphasize here the

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changing tactics of the adversary as society’s technology changes in bringing new and ever more ways to tempt mankind.

Paraphrasing some later remarks regarding the closing of the heavens or the end of revelation, as conventional Christianity believes or did believe in 1830; he asks why there are so many different opinions on vexing problems and doctrinal issues of today? He cites some of them such as abortion, same gender marriages, the role of women and the priesthood, grace versus works and the necessity of baptism. He answers that question as follows, *“The answer is resounding: Because the apostles had been killed, the Bible had ended, and no new epistles were forthcoming to bring us to ‘one Lord, one faith, one baptism”* (Ephesians 4:5.

Time and again the Bible speaks of the need for unity among the Saints. Surely there can be only one true Church sanctioned by Christ if there be any at all. I believe all sincere Christians have to answer that question for themselves through sincere prayer and scripture study, believing that the Lord will eventually

direct them through their efforts to His Church. Of course, writings of various theological scholars can also be beneficial but one should compare any discussion they provide with the scriptures. Truth and valid scriptural interpretation don't conflict. Prayer will help the sincere in heart ascertain true scriptural meaning through the Holy Spirit. God hears the prayers of even the most willful sinners if they are sincere in asking for direction.

Mr. Callister points out that many people sincerely believe that the New Testament was God's final chapter of His revealed word but he tells us, *"the evidence points to a contrary conclusion"*. He then goes on to list four such evidences, which I include here in summary of my own for brevity.

First, in John 21:25, that beloved apostle said, ***"there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written"***. Mr. Callister explains that John was saying there was much additional information, which the world didn't have in written form at that time. He then tells us that such acts and teachings of the Savior would surely give us new insights and motivation to live better lives and then asks the question, *"Would anyone want to exclude that treasury of revelation by claiming the Bible was the end of God's word?"* I don't believe any sincere seeker of truth would but there are many who haven't thought the consequences of such a conclusion through. By closing one's mind to such a possibility, they automatically exclude the future discovery of sacred texts from their study before examining them. Certainly there are numerous books of questionable authenticity that have come to light but why should the learned scholars of King James' day be the final authority on what is or isn't legitimate scripture?

For me, I prefer to keep an open mind and examine the issues for myself, which come via inspired scholars of today. If such books harmonize with the Bible and cast new light on the gospel, thus providing greater understanding, I can profit from their teachings. Excerpts from the various copies of the book of Enoch, the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Nag Hammadi library are cases in point. Likewise, the so-called apocryphal books included in the Catholic Bible but excluded from the King James Bible may be of some value. In short, there is

no such thing as too much truth if we accept it according to our ability to digest the same and apply it in our everyday lives. Since all truth emanates from God, the true believer must necessarily accept it. His primary requirement is to assure himself it harmonizes with that already obtained, which assurance is gained by virtue of study and Spiritual confirmation in the prayer of an earnest seeker of truth. All truth can be circumscribed into one great whole. Different sources of truth do not conflict but harmonize to expand one's understanding of the beautiful gospel provided through Jesus Christ.

Second, Mr. Callister points out that some fifteen books, prophesies, letters and visions are mentioned in the Bible itself by various writers, as being authentic but are not found therein. We assume that the compilers of that sacred volume, i.e. those appointed by King James, didn't have access to the necessary manuscripts for their study and approval. Why else would they have been left out? Paraphrasing Mr. Callister, *"Would those who believe the Bible is the final summation of God's word, reject such sources, should they come forth?"*

Third, the New Testament apparently contains only a portion of the words of the apostles. Mr. Callister asks, *"Does it seem likely that Peter, the chief apostle, should have only eight chapters, or twelve pages (1 and 2 Peter), of teachings after thirty years of ministry? Or that Andrew and Philip and Bartholomew and Simon and others who were, likewise, apostles of Jesus have nothing worthy of recording? The truth is, there must be volumes of the word of God which are absent from the Bible – all of which are sources of revelation"*.

Fourth, he asks, *"does it seem reasonable that there would be no new problems after the Bible ended, no clarification of doctrine necessary, no further revelation required to shed light for a growing church in a changing climate?"* The answer seems obvious to me, even with my limited understanding. The so-called universal church or Catholic Church of the dark ages was beset with problems, which culminated in Protestantism. Many of the moral problems of today seem different than in biblical times or at least they stem from different means or manifestations of sin. The necessary revelation was not forthcoming during the reformation because prophets had been taken from the earth and, repeating Amos once more, chapter 3 verse 7, *"Surely the Lord God will do nothing,*

but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets". Yes, the Bible would have continued through revelation to God's chosen emissaries on earth, namely the prophets, had an apostasy not occurred. Such was and is still needed to help mankind contend with the mores of an ever changing society. That, I am confident, is true.

4. THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT WERE LOST

No real Christian questions the recorded miracles that Christ performed in the New Testament, nor do they question that the 12 apostles were given this same power after his ascension, as clearly pointed out in the New Testament. This is noted by Tertullian (A.D. 140 – 230), wherein he said, Christ had given his apostles the **"power ... of working the same miracles which he worked Himself"**. In Acts 3:6, Peter said to a man lame since birth, **"Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk"**. In Acts 5:12, Luke records, **"by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people"** and in Acts 5:16 he described multitudes coming out of the cities, **"bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one"**. Mr. Callister cites many other examples but these are sufficient to make the point. He also describes the loss of the gifts of the Spirit as cited by various theologians and remarks, **"With rare exception, after the second or third century A.D., there is no mention of miracles, healings, prophecies, speaking in tongues, or other gifts of the Spirit"**.

In support of the foregoing statement regarding the loss of the gifts of the Spirit, he quotes several sources but I will limit myself to one rather long one made by John Wesley (A.D. 1703 – 1791), the founder of Methodism wherein he Mr. Wesley said, **"It does not appear that these extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost (speaking of 1 Corinthians 13) were common in the Church for more than two or three centuries. We seldom hear of them after that fatal period when Emperor Constantine called himself a Christian. ... From this time they (the spiritual gifts) almost totally ceased; very few instances of the kind were found. The cause of this was not (as has been vulgarly supposed,) because there was no more occasion for them, because all the world has become Christians. This is a miserable mistake; not a twentieth part of it was then Christian. The real cause was, "the**

love of many," almost all Christians, so called, was "waxed cold". The Christians had no more the Spirit of Christ than the other Heathens. The Son of Man, when he came to examine his Church, could hardly "find faith upon the earth". This was the real cause why the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost were no longer to be found in the Christian Church; because the Christians were turned Heathens again, and only had a dead form left.

5. THE DARK AGES ARE A HISTORICAL FACT

Once again, I turn to Mr. Callister to pose, what I believe, is a relevant question in the following. **"If Christ's Church is designed to perfect us physically, spiritually, intellectually, and socially (Ephesians 4:12) and if Christ's Church had been the dominant force in Western civilization following the fall of the Roman Empire (A.D. 476), then one might ask, 'Would there have been a period of dark ages? Or would it instead be a period of 'light ages'?"** He goes on to indicate that there is, apparently, a scholastic movement afoot to disavow the period known as the 'Dark Ages', but adds, **"it would be hard to justify that the latter half of the first millennium was an enlightened period of Western civilization"**. He cites three historians, namely William Manchester, Paul Johnson and Norman F. Cantor who take issue with the apparently politically incorrect term, 'Dark Ages', and who have stated their understanding of that period of time. I include only one at this point, that of Norman Cantor, an eminent scholar of medieval history, for emphasis.

He stated in his work, "Inventing the Middle Ages", the following; **"In spite of perpetual variety and debate, we can assert the basic facts about the Middle Ages in a manner that reflects a broad, if not universal, consensus among academic medievalists. The magnificent Roman Empire in Western Europe went into irrevocable economic, political and military decline sometime after the middle of the fourth century. ... The once-great Roman Empire, it's beautiful cities, it's capable government and law courts, it's deeply learned schools and libraries, descended into the twilight of the Dark Ages of the sixth and seventh centuries, in which literate civilization survived only in a handful of ecclesiastical centers, mostly walled Benedictine**

monasteries". In summary this period of retrogression was described by Cantor as, "**four hundred years of decline, fragmentation and enfeeblement**", though he doesn't apparently accept the term "dark ages".

Some describe the Dark Ages as being at least 500 years, others a thousand, while some don't want to use the term at all, as mentioned. Why the latter is beyond me but a prolonged period of decline rather than the significant progress we might expect of an area enlightened by a single unified church, occurred in Western Europe in the latter half of the first millennium. That condition is fact, I believe, regardless of the historian involved and is more than just an assumption. One might attribute the decline spoke of to causes other than an apostasy but surely evidence of the positive influence of the so-called universal church should be apparent.

6. MANY TEACHINGS WERE PERVERTED, OTHERS LOST AND NEW ONES INVENTED

Mr. Callister devotes 115 pages of his book, "**The Inevitable Apostasy**", to this particular topic. I point this out because of its extensive nature and the fact that I will only include a few points I feel are particularly pertinent. You shall see that his remarks center in the various quotations of recognized authority throughout the last two millenniums.

Let me begin with a quotation of an early Christian author, Hegesippus, (A.D. 110-180), who was in turn quoted by Eusebius (A.D. 270-340), both of which were related by Mr. Callister, for completeness.

*"The Church continued until then [shortly after the death of the apostles] as a pure and uncorrupted virgin; whilst if there were any at all, that attempted to pervert the sound doctrine of the saving gospel, they were yet skulking in dark retreats; **but when the sacred choir of the apostles became extinct, and the generation of those that had been privileged to hear their inspired wisdom, had passed away, then also the combination of impious error arose by fraud and delusion of false teachers.** These also, as there were none of the apostles left, henceforth attempted, without shame, to preach their false doctrine against the gospel of truth".* (The section in bold was included for emphasis.)

With this general statement highlighting the overall problem, I now list the teachings that were perverted, lost or invented as given in

detail by Mr. Callister. These three categories are somewhat intertwined, in my view. It seems that perversion can lead to outright loss and such loss can raise the need for invention of replacement teachings. I will only add his detail and a few of my own comments as stated above. This book is already far too long but I feel the need to complete my objective, even to help my posterity understand what this particular progenitor became in the course of life through his beliefs, experiences, effort and actions.

NATURE OF GOD

John, the Beloved, emphasized the need for man to understand the nature of God in John 17:3 wherein he states, "*This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent*". Besides describing their nature, this verse also points out that the only true God or God, the Father, is a distinct being separate from Jesus Christ or God, the Son whom he sent.

Their oneness in both unity and purpose, along with the Holy Ghost, has somehow evolved into a mystery wherein the Trinity is triune in nature, or three in one and has inexplicably become one substance and one God. Mr. Callister states, "*... early Christian writers came to the erroneous conclusion that God was some immaterial essence*". He then quotes Tertullian (A.D. 140-230) who recognized this corrupting influence, in saying, "**No doubt, after the time of the apostles, the truth respecting the belief of God suffered corruption, but it is equally certain that during the life of the apostles their teaching on this great article did not suffer at all**". He then continues, Callister that is, by telling us that, "*Unfortunately there is much confusion in the Christian world today about the nature of God and the relationship between the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost and whether they are material or immaterial beings*". He (Mr. Callister) then asks a series of questions, which has certainly helped me solidify my own understanding of this topic. I list these here to help the reader who might be in a quandary regarding this question, him or herself. "*Do you believe that God the Father and Jesus Christ are the same being or separate beings? Do you believe God has a material body or instead is some immaterial, indefinable entity? Do you believe Jesus was resurrected with a glorified body of flesh and bones and, if so, does he have a material body in heaven today? If Christ retained his resurrected body, does God the Father also have a similar glorified body of*

flesh and bones, since Jesus is in his Father's express image (Hebrews 1:3)? If Jesus, however, does not have a glorified physical body in heaven today, then what happened to his resurrected body, and what was the purpose of his resurrection? Logic tells me that Christ retained his resurrected body to fulfill its purpose and likewise, his Father and our Father in heaven has a similar body. Nowhere in the scriptures, to my knowledge, does it speak of any immaterial essence. This latter idea has apparently come from philosophical sources that corrupted the Church in the early centuries of the first millennium, once again, amplifying the need for revelation.

Mr. Callister cites John 10:30 wherein Christ said, *"I and my Father are one"*, as the source of much of the confusion. This apparently leads some to believe they are one and the same person. Of course this statement can also be interpreted as one in unity, in purpose and will, which would be my conclusion, when considering it in context with the rest of the 17th chapter. He goes on to quote several scriptures, which in my mind make any other conclusion incongruous with the Father and the Son being the same personage, such as Christ's prayer in the garden or his plea to the Father wherein he said, *"My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"* He cites Hippolytus (A.D. 170-236) who made this statement. ***"Understand that He [Jesus] did not say 'I and the Father am one but are one'. For the word are [,] is not said of one person, but it refers to two persons, and one power. He has Himself made this clear, when He spake to His Father concerning the disciples, 'The glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one'. ... Are all one body in respect of substance, or is it that we have become one in power and disposition of unity of mind."*** Mr. Callister offers many other quotations regarding the corporeal nature of God and Jesus Christ as glorified men but I will leave such investigation up to the reader.

PRE-MORTAL EXISTENCE

Most Christian churches, that is both Catholic and Protestant, teach that man's spirit is created at the time of his mortal birth, yet they seem to believe that Christ existed as a spirit before birth, that angels existed in that pre-earth life

and Satan likewise was there. However the scriptures clearly point to mankind's existence in the pre-mortal realm as well. When the Lord spoke to Jeremiah he said, *"Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations (Jeremiah 1:5)"*. Similarly, Paul was aware of this doctrine as shown by the following quotes. *"For whom he did foreknow [or knew before birth], he did also predestinate [foreordain]"* (Romans 8:29). Similarly, in writing to Timothy with reference to God, he said, God *"hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling ... before the world began"*. Thus, they too were called or foreordained before birth even as Jeremiah. Other evidences of our pre-mortal existence as spirit children of our heavenly Father including Ecclesiastes 12:7 wherein we read *"Then shall the dust return to earth as it was: and the spirit shall return to God who gave it"*. Likewise Paul, in speaking to the Hebrews said, *"We have had*

"Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, ...

fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?" Several other scriptures could be cited but I will move on to early Christian writers.

Mr. Callister quotes Origen (A.D. 185-255) on this subject rather extensively, a portion of which I include here. According to Callister, as recorded in the Anti-Nicene Fathers, Origen gave the following opinion on why people were born with certain dispositions. ***"It appears to me [to] give no other answer, so as to show that no shadow of injustice rests upon the divine government, that by holding that there were certain causes of prior existence, in consequence of which the souls, before their birth in the body, contracted a certain amount of guilt in their sensitive nature, or in their movements, on account of which they have been judged worthy by Divine Providence of being placed in this condition. For a soul is always in possession of free-will, as well as when it is in the body as when it is without it; and freedom of will is always directed either to good or evil. ... And it is probable that these movements furnish grounds for merit even before they do anything in this world; so that on account of these merits or grounds they are, immediately on their birth, and even before***

it, so to speak, asserted by Divine Providence for the endurance either of good or evil. ... We must suppose that there sometimes existed certain causes anterior to bodily birth". Apparently a little later Origen continued with this statement. *"But since these rational creatures themselves ... were endowed with the power of free-will, this freedom of will incited each one to either progress by imitation of God, or reduced him to failure through negligence. And this, as we have already stated, is the cause of diversity among rational creatures* [some advanced above others in the pre-mortal life]. *... Now God, who deemed it just to arrange his creatures according to their merit, brought down these different understandings into the harmony of one world*". Because one's state in this life is governed by pre-mortal choices, Origen reasoned that Jacob was honored above Esau due to *"the deserts of his previous life"*. As I understand it, Origen derived his beliefs from earlier Christian writers such as Clement of Rome, etc. Then, according to Mr. Callister, Origen's teachings of pre-mortal life were condemned by a church edict known as 'anathemas against Origen and, of course, was no longer taught in Catholicism and thus, apparently, the Protestant faiths as well.

My own experiences of life, as well as those of many other people, seem in harmony with the doctrine of a pre-mortal life. I have already mentioned my own children, grandchildren and great grandchildren are a diverse bunch of bananas though they came from the same stalk. Even though there is much we don't understand, about such differences at birth, many must certainly stem from earlier spiritual experiences, interests and effort. Mr. Callister poses what I believe are legitimate questions. He asks, *"Why was Mozart a musical genius in his early childhood? Did he develop those remarkable skills in a few brief childhood years? Or did he develop the predominance of those skills over a long period of time in a pre-mortal existence and then bring them with him at his birth?"* Each of us must ask ourselves similar questions as we earnestly seek the truth regarding a pre-mortal existence. Failure to do so simply denotes a lack of concern and/or effort. If it is true, it adds and important dimension for us to consider.

This, of course, indicates the necessity of the atonement as seen before the world was and consequently the fall was necessarily foreseen as well.

THE FALL OF ADAM

Christianity in general regards the fall of Adam as a tragic event and I, prior to recent years, viewed it in much the same light. I suppose I was slow in grasping the significance of this doctrine in my early years in the Church because I knew such little detail about the purpose of our existence and God's overall plan for his children. It has really been my service in the temple that has stimulated my desire to understand the "Plan of Salvation" more fully, prompting me to read rather extensively. It seems to me that there is little in the Bible to shed light on the necessity of the fall. Clarification is primarily offered in the restored gospel and latter day revelation. However, Mr. Callister cites Revelation 13:8 wherein John speaks of the *"Lamb slain from the foundation of the world"*. This, of course, indicates the necessity of the atonement as seen before the world was and consequently the fall was necessarily foreseen as well. Thus, it's reasonable to conclude that both are part of God's master plan. Mr. Callister speaks of the fall in this way, *"While all the doctrines of Christianity are critical to understanding the gospel of Jesus Christ, there are two doctrines that form the crux of Christianity – The fall of Adam and the atonement of Jesus Christ. One cannot understand the atonement without first*

understanding the fall any more than one can understand calculus without first understanding algebra. One is a prerequisite to the other".

He then goes on to describe a couple of misconceptions common to most of Christianity. The first is simply that Adam and Eve could have had children without the fall, which is based on Genesis 3:16 where we are told, *"In sorrow thou shalt bring forth children"*. Many believe this means that if they had not sinned, they could bring forth children without sorrow. However, latter day revelation is more explicit. In 2 Nephi 2:23 in reference to the Garden we are told, *"And they would have had no children"*. The Pearl of Great Price supports this statement with, *"Were it not for our transgression we never would have had seed"* (Moses 5:11). Our own logic, born of life's experiences, tells us that this must be so because children born in the Garden would be deprived of mortal experience and its associated growth. We know that growth of any

sort in life demands challenge with an associated effort on the part of the individual.

A second misconception is that Adam and Eve experienced unparalleled joy in the presence of God, while in the Garden. Once again the Book of Mormon comes to the rescue by clarifying such a state. Therein we are told, *“They would have remained in a state of innocence, having no joy, for they knew no misery; doing no good, for they knew no sin”* (2 Nephi 2:23). Mr. Callister cites a remark by one, Professor John Fiske, a Harvard philosopher, who seemed to grasp the dilemma of such a condition by saying, *“Clearly, for strong and resolute men and women an Eden would have been a fool’s paradise. How could anything, fit to be called character, have ever been produced there? ... We can at least begin to realize distinctly that unless our eyes had been opened at some time, so that we might come to know the good and the evil, we should never become fashioned in God’s image. We should have been the denizens of a world of puppets, where neither morality nor religion could have found place or meaning”*. Paraphrasing Mr. Callister, these two misconceptions led many to conclude that the fall was not part of God’s master plan but rather a tragic step backwards.

GRACE VERSUS WORKS

These are two more doctrines where some misconception seems to abound. Just what is the relationship between the two? Are works really needed if we are saved by grace? Are those who simply say, *“I accept Christ as my Savior”* but demonstrate no effort to repent or do any good works in life, really worthy of being saved in spite of continuing sin? Such questions apparently arise because of scripture such as, *“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: It is a gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast.”* (Ephesians 2:8-9) as well as, *“Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. ... The devils also believe and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead”*. The two verses seem contradictory to many Christians. How can both be true?

Can such views be harmonized or must one or the other be cast aside to satisfy our individual understanding? Mr. Callister cites David W. Bercot, an ardent student of early Christian authors, who among other things wrote a book whose title was “A Dictionary of Early Christian

Beliefs”. In a related work with a title of “Will the real Heretics Please stand Up”, Bercot listed quotations of Clement of Rome, Polycarp, Barnabas, Hermas, Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Hippolytus, Cyprian and Lactinius, all early Christian writers who emphasized the need for good works while maintaining we are saved by grace. He then tells us that the problem arises from a fallacious form of argumentation known as **“the false dilemma”**. It asserts that there are only two possibilities regarding salvation: one being a gift from God and the other, something we earn by our works. He then noted, **“The early Christians would have replied that a gift is no less a gift simply because it is conditioned on obedience”**. He also noted that grace and works are inextricably connected and concludes, **“The early Christians believed that salvation is a gift from God but that God gives His gift to whomever He chooses. And He chooses to give it to those who love and obey him”**.

Mr. Callister emphasizes that, *“We recognize the fact that we do not earn our salvation – all the good works in the world cannot save a single man. But as small as it might be in the total equation, we must contribute the best we have to offer”*. This is also plainly stated by the Book of Mormon prophet, Nephi, who wrote, *“For we know it is by grace we are saved, after all we can do”* (2 Nephi 25:23). C. S. Lewis compared grace and works to a pair of scissors by saying the debate between grace and works is **“like asking which blade in a pair of scissors is most necessary”**. Obviously, both are.

BAPTISM

Though many Christian churches believe baptism is essential if one is to be saved, some have apparently down-graded this ordinance to a mere recommendation. Callister tells us, *“There was no mistake about the early Churches stand on this subject”*. He then quotes David W. Bercot again. The latter tells us, **“A person wasn’t viewed [by the early Christian writers] as saved or born again until the entire process, including water baptism and receiving the Holy Ghost, were fulfilled. ... That, in a nutshell, is what the primitive church believed, and when I say the church believed it, I mean it was universally held. In the entire set of ‘The Ante-Nicene Fathers’ – in all ten volumes – I think just about every one of those writers somewhere discusses baptism, and every single one of them**

presents this same view – no exceptions". I underlined "receiving the Holy Ghost", which is referred to as baptism by fire by many. It will be covered in more detail later under the ordinance of "Laying on of Hands". This seems sufficient to point out the absolute requirement of baptism for admission into the early Church. Callister provides other quotations the reader may wish to investigate, as well, in his book, "The Inevitable Apostasy". They also are of value.

A PHYSICAL RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD

Apparently, among many Christians, a heretical teaching emerged that flesh was evil; therefore mankind's resurrection will be a glorified spiritual body rather than a physical one in nature. This has occurred even though the scriptures are full of comments regarding a physical resurrection. In 1 Corinthians 15:21-22, Paul states, "*For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive*". Similarly, in Romans 8:11 he tells us, "*If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies*". Likewise, we read in the Old Testament in Job 19:25-26, "*For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God*".

Also many Christian writers taught of a physical resurrection. Among them, according to Callister, once again, Tertullian wrote, "**He, therefore, will not be a Christian who shall deny this doctrine [of a bodily resurrection] which is confessed by Christians**". In my mind, this also should suffice for this particular perversion of the resurrection, though I don't know what you, the reader believes.

THE DOCTRINE OF DEIFICATION

"In the Holy Scriptures, where God himself speaks, we read of a unique call directed to us. God speaks to us human beings clearly and directly: 'I said, ye are gods, sons of the Most High – all of you' (Psalms 82:6; John 10:34). Do we hear that voice? Do we understand the meaning of this calling? ... In other words, we are each destined to become a god, to be like God himself, to be united with him. ... This is the purpose of life: that we may be participants, sharers in the nature of God ... to become just like God, true Gods". Paraphrasing the words of J. B.

Haws, writer of the paper from which this quote came, this unusual passage sounds like something Joseph Smith might have said or possibly one of the later presidents of the LDS Church but it is not. Instead, Mr. Haws says, "*No, this passage comes from a book written in 1976 by Christoforos Stavropoulos, a Greek Orthodox scholar and ordained priest. And Professor Stavropoulos is by no means some theological maverick. His straight forward call for theosis – human deification – matches the prominence given to that doctrine in all of Eastern Orthodox thought*".

I began this section with the preceding statements to emphasize the important fact that the restored gospel, as taught by the Latter Day Saints, is not alone in teaching this important doctrine. Mr. Haws said, a little later in the paper, "*Like Eastern Orthodox Christians, Latter Day Saints equate human salvation, in its fullest sense, with human deification – that is, we also believe that humans can become gods*". However, whereas the Eastern Orthodox Churches trace theosis or deification back to the time of the apostles, Latter Day Saints claim its restoration through revelation to Joseph Smith from that same source, even Jesus Christ. The important point here, in my purpose, is that several of the ante-Nicene fathers, from whom Eastern Orthodox Christianity claims authority, taught the same doctrine including St. Irenaeus, St. Athanasius, Justin Martyr, Cyprian and Theophilus. It appears to have been dropped by the Roman Catholic Church and thus not inherited by later Protestantism. Far from being blasphemous, as some people say, it recognizes the omnipotence and omniscience of God and his ability to transform mere humans into gods through a process we might term a miracle. Disbelief in such a doctrine automatically places limitation on the power of God and more importantly, lowers our own sights pertaining to our God-given potential. Such an attitude might, in and of itself, be blasphemous. Accepting theosis immediately raises our sights and gives purpose and reason to life. Even more importantly, it provides motivation to become like Christ through faith and obedience, ultimately relying on his grace for perfection.

Mr. Callister quotes early Christian writers, literary quotations, historical references, scripture and everyday logic to bolster up the reasonableness of this doctrine in the sight of the Western Christianity. Because of time and space, once again, I will only include a few of his

scriptural quotations and referenced writers. In Romans 8:16-17 Paul declares; *“The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ”*. Likewise the Savior himself promises the faithful in Revelations 3:21, *“To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne”*. Why would anyone want to remove this potential of mankind through salvation when it provides both the ultimate motivation for living the gospel and its ultimate joy?

As far as writers are concerned, let me begin with Origen (185-255 A.D.) who elaborated on the concept of multiple Gods by saying, ***“And thus the first-born of all creation, who is the first to be with God, and to attract to himself divinity, is a being of more exalted rank than the other gods beside Him, of whom God is the God. ... The true God, then, is The God, and those who are formed after Him are gods, images, as it were, of Him the prototype.*** He, realizing that some may take issue with such a concept, later said, ***“They may fear that the glory of Him who surpasses all creation may be lowered to the level of those other beings [exalted men] called gods”***. ... To allay these fears he then said, ***“There is but one God the Father and to us there is but one Jesus Christ”***.

From a Latter Day Saint standpoint, President Hinkley, now deceased, has written; ***“This lofty concept [i.e. deification] in no way diminishes God the Eternal Father. He is the Almighty. He is the Creator and Governor of the universe. He is the greatest of all and will always be so”***.

C. S. Lewis, whom many Protestants as well as Latter Day saints quote, expressed his belief in this doctrine at length. I will include just a part of it taken from Mr. Callister's book. Speaking as if Christ were talking, Mr. Lewis says; ***“Make no mistake, if you let Me, I will make you perfect. ... You have free will, and if you choose, you can push Me away. But if you do not push Me away, understand that I am going to see this job through. ... I will never rest, nor let you rest, until you are literally perfect – until my Father can say without reservation that He is well pleased with you, as He said he was well pleased with Me. This I can do and will do. But I will not do anything less. ... You must realize from the outset that the***

goal toward which He is beginning to guide you is absolute perfection; and no power in the whole universe, except you yourself, can prevent Him from taking you to that goal. That is what you are in for. And it is very important to realize that”.

I will complete this section with a little bit of logic advanced by Mr. Callister. He cites The Gospel of Philip, discovered in the Nag Hammadi library, which simply states an obvious fact, namely; ***“A horse sires a horse, a man begets a man, a god brings forth a god”***. Since the scriptures make frequent mention of us as children of God, why not accept the fact that we are gods in embryo and thus recognize our divine potential. Such recognition in its fullness can motivate humans to learn of God and the Savior, while keeping the commandments and through God's grace move steadily towards

Since the scriptures make frequent mention of us as children of God, why not accept the fact that we are gods in embryo and thus recognize our divine potential.

perfection. Quoting Mr. Callister, *“The difference between man and God is significant, but it is one of degree, not kind. It is the difference between an acorn and an oak tree, a rose bud and a rose, a son and a father. In truth, every man is a god in embryo, in fulfillment of that eternal law that like begets like”*. I can think of nothing more beautiful, more desirable, more worthy or motivational for an individual's effort than to know and seek this potential God has placed in each of us. Other goals in life become pale before it. Though they may be necessary to life and even constitute a part of our ultimate goal, they are necessarily subordinate in nature. Our focus in life can become character building rather than acquiring material assets. We will then find joy in this life through righteous associations and actions rather than in the accumulation of material goods. Through his love and guidance, God will provide sufficiently for us.

PREACHING THE GOSPEL TO THE DEAD

According to Mr. Callister; ***“A modern Christian evangelical writer, John Sanders”***, in a book entitled ‘What About Those Who Have Never Heard?’ ***“noted that the question, ‘What is the fate of those who die never hearing the gospel of Christ?’ is ‘far and away . . . the most asked apologetic question on U.S.***

college campuses”. He then lists five different doctrines of Christian churches, which are used in an attempt to explain such an apparent travesty of justice.

The first is “Exclusivism”. This doctrine is also known as “Restrictivism”. Paraphrasing Callister, proponents of this doctrine contend that the only people saved are those who hear and accept the gospel of Jesus Christ while in the flesh. Others simply lose out because God has predetermined his elect. They, the elect, are placed in a position in this life to hear the gospel while others don’t receive such an opportunity. Such theory is against scriptural teaching (See 1 Timothy 2:4), is not in harmony with the mercy and fairness we expect of God and undermines the purpose of mortality. If such is the case, we might ask, “What is the purpose of mortality”? That is, if our status in the eternities has already been predetermined.

The second is simply “everyone has an opportunity before death.” Supposedly, such opportunity comes in the form of angelic visitations, through dreams or some other type of divine enlightenment. As Mr. Callister points out, this doctrine would negate the saving nature of gospel ordinances such as baptism and bestowal of the Holy Ghost. The absolute necessity of baptism has already been discussed. Likewise, the scriptures don’t support such a theory nor does history verify it.

The third is “Inclusivism”. Quoting Mr. Callister, *“The proponents of this doctrine acknowledge that Christ is the exclusive Savior and Redeemer of the world, but argue that once he performed his atonement it was efficacious for all men, even if they never heard of Christ or had faith in him, provided they lived good lives and were true to the light they received”*. Paraphrasing some of his additional remarks, he tells us that those who embrace such doctrine negate the basic principle of faith in Jesus Christ and all the ordinances of the Church with the exception of the atoning act itself. There has to be a better way to accomplish it, which is in harmony with the scriptures.

Universalism is the fourth doctrine meant to answer the problem. According to Callister *“This doctrine declares there is good in all religions throughout the world, regardless of whether or not they are Christian, and that God accepts all good; therefore all people who are moral will be saved regardless of the atonement of Jesus Christ. Such an argument ... completely*

undermines Christ’s exclusive role as Savior. It converts Christ’s role from Savior and Redeemer to moral philosopher and teacher”.

He then quotes C. S. Lewis regarding Christ, as follows. ***“I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: ‘I’m ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don’t accept his claim to be God’. That is one thing we must not say. ... You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at his feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to”***.

Fifth, post mortal evangelism. This doctrine is taught in the New Testament and was taught by early Christian writers. Basically, it teaches that everyone will have an opportunity to hear the gospel in this life or in the spirit world. According to Callister, a noted evangelist by the name of Donald Bloesch observed, ***“We do not wish to build fences around God’s grace. ... We can affirm salvation on the other side of the grave, since this has scriptural warrant”***. The scripture causing the greatest consternation over this particular doctrine is found in Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians, chapter fifteen. In verses 15-20 and 29 we read, *“for if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which have fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept. ... Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? Why are they then baptized for the dead?”*

Couple this with Peter’s statements about Christ’s preaching to the spirits in prison in the third and fourth chapters of first Peter, as follows. ! Peter 3:19-20; 4:6 *“By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; Which sometimes were disobedient, when once the long suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. ... For, for this cause was the gospel preached to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to men in the spirit”*. From these scriptures it seems obvious that all people will have a

chance to hear the gospel and make their own decision regarding it, either in this life or on the other side of the grave. Likewise, it seems to me, that certain ordinances, such as baptism, must be performed by those so authorized among the living as described by Paul.

MULTIPLE HEAVENS

The scriptures are replete with references of multiple rewards given individually according to one's faithfulness. There are also references to multiple heavens. For instance Paul spoke of differing levels of glory in verses 39-42 of 1 Corinthians 15. Therein we read, "*All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, and another of birds. There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption*". This indicates to me that our bodies will differ in their makeup or glory and will depend upon our ultimate reward. Though this reward cannot be earned, as stated earlier, it is given according to our faithfulness, which is measured by our faith, works and the dedication we display in living the commandments given to us. John spoke of this in Revelations 20:13, wherein he said, "*They were judged every man according to his works*". Paul also spoke of a third heaven in 2 Corinthians 12:2. This would indicate the existence of at least three heavens but to my knowledge, no definite number or maximum is set forth or even mentioned in the Bible.

Even so, Clement of Alexandria referred to three kinds of work, which dictate the degree of glory one would inherit according to Callister. He tells us that Clement then went on to specify the type of behavior associated with those who go to the highest degree of glory: "***And the perfect inheritance belongs to those who attain to 'a perfect man' according to the image of the Lord***". I assume this image he speaks of refers to Christ's statement in Matthew 5:48, "*Be ye therefore perfect even as your Father in Heaven is perfect*" or from Paul's description of a perfect man in Ephesians 4:13, 'as the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ'. Nephi summarizes the process in 2 Nephi 25:23 as; "*for we know that it is by grace we are saved, after all we can do.*"

MARRIAGE

Marriage has come under attack since the beginning of time, I suspect, because it is ordained of God. We see such an attack in various ways but primarily in divorce proceedings because of obvious abuse of some type, infidelity or probably more commonly, because of some sort of incompatibility. Exactly what is the case is often open to question. We also see celibacy among the priesthood of some Christian churches or maybe I should say the Catholic Church with various negative

Paul states, "*Never-the-less, neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord*".

ramifications. This denial for those holding the priesthood constitutes a heresy born of apostasy during the demise of the primitive Church, which in turn has produced many problems.

Marriage is ordained of God as expressed in Genesis 2:18. "*And the Lord said, 'It is not good that man should be alone; I will make a help meet for him'*". Additionally the Lord tells us in verse 24 of the same chapter, "*Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh*". This latter comment by the Lord speaks to the unity he expects in a truly successful marriage. Mr. Callister points out that, "*Marriage was not spoken of in terms of 'may' but 'shall'*". He then remarks, "*This is understandable, because the primal command was 'be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth'*" (Genesis 1:28). It is God's means of bringing spirits into mortality to test their use of agency.

That marriage should not be denied the priesthood is evident by Matthew's remark in Matthew 8:14, wherein he writes, "*And when Jesus was come unto Peter's house, he saw his wife's mother laid, and sick with a fever*". Of course, Peter was the chief apostle and became president of the Church after Christ's ascension. According to Callister, Clement of Alexandria spoke of the apostles who were married. He also tells us that Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea, quotes Clement while responding to those rejecting marriage. "***And they', says he, 'reject even the apostles'! Peter and Philip, indeed, had children, Philip also gave his daughters in marriage to husbands, and Paul does not demur in a certain epistle to mention his own wife, whom he did not take***

about with him, in order to expedite his ministry the better. ... Such was the marriage of those blessed ones, and such was their perfect affection”.

Finally, in closing this particular section on earthly marriage, I will include a portion of the quote from Newsweek Magazine, as given by Mr. Callister. **“Historically, there is no lack of precedent. Priests were married for Christianity’s first thousand years. . . . The forces that pushed the church towards its 12th-century stand on celibacy were political as well as spiritual, including the worry that sons of the clergy would inherit church titles and property. ... So the clergy became celibate”.**

The preceding remarks on earthly marriage speak to its perversion in the church of the middle ages. Additionally, the concept of Eternal Marriage was completely lost during the apostasy, even though it is scripturally correct. As evidence of this, consider 1 Corinthians 11:11, in which Paul states, *“Never-the-less, neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord”.* Similarly, Peter tells us, *“Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honor unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life’.* (Bold for emphasis) Such scriptures obviously indicate that man and woman, legally married under proper priesthood authority, will be together on the other side of the grave. I believe our own logic speaks to such a union through the yearnings of our heart. What would heaven be without an association with those we love, including progenitors, spouse and posterity of all generations?

This heresy of celibacy stems, at least in part from Christ’s statement in Matthew 22:29-30 wherein he said, *“Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are angels of God in heaven”.* Quoting Mr. Callister, *“The Savior’s response was in reference to people such as the Sadducees who did not believe in the resurrection or ‘the power of God’ (specifically, the power to seal couples for eternity). In other*

words, for those who are not married with the ‘power of God’ while on the earth, but chose to be married with man’s power only”. Mr. Callister then quotes the renowned bible scholar J. R. Dummelow as provided in the following paragraph.

“The pre-Christian book of Enoch says that ‘the righteous after the resurrection shall live so long that they shall beget thousands’. The received doctrine is laid down by Rabbi Saadia, who says, ‘As the son of the widow Serepton, and the son of the Shumanite, ‘ate, drank and doubtless married wives, so shall it be in the resurrection’; and by Mainonides, who says, ‘Men after the resurrection will use meat and drink and beget children, because the Wise Architect makes nothing in vain, it follows of necessity that the members of the body are not useless, but fulfill their functions”.

I believe the foregoing at least points to the reasonableness of the eternal marriage doctrine.

I believe most couples, who truly love and respect each other, yearn for such an association with one another as well as with their posterity. It is a doctrine of great worth to mankind and provides a much better perspective of what our eternal existence can become beyond the veil.

This particular doctrine was restored with the restoration of the gospel. The ordinance is performed in holy temples by those given the priesthood authority to seal families together for eternity (based upon

the spouses’ worthiness). I believe most couples, who truly love and respect each other, yearn for such an association with one another as well as with their posterity. It is a doctrine of great worth to mankind and provides a much better perspective of what our eternal existence can become beyond the veil. It is an essential part of the ‘plan of salvation’, which plan grows more beautiful with each small step of comprehension one receives through their growing faith. I personally, cannot conceive of a reward as beautiful as the Lord has promised without my dear wife and my progeny. I look forward to meeting and associating with my progenitors as well. Won’t it be wonderful to receive first-hand accounts of their mortal lives as we spend the eternities together?

ABORTION

I have no intention of trying to persuade anyone on either side of this issue. More able people than I have been arguing this issue since before the Roe versus Wade decision and I can only cite my own position, which rests on moral

authority and not that of the courts. Because the law allows abortion, every person has to make his own decision regarding it, as well as any other legal moral issue. Ultimately, we will all face the consequence of such decisions and our associated acts, when we come before our maker at the last judgment. It makes no difference whether we believe in God or not, all will still face that judgment spoken of by the prophets in the scriptures. Such judgment is made clear throughout the scriptures and those not accepting it will then learn the bitter truth.

I will begin with a statement by Mr. Callister. *“There are certain burning issues today that were likewise burning issues in the early Church. One such issue is abortion. Those who favor it refer to themselves as pro-choice, while those who oppose it refer to themselves as pro-life. The right to choose and the right to life are cornerstones of our democracy, and for this reason there exist such intense feelings over which cause is right and which cause should prevail.”* As Callister points out, difficult questions arise and there are sincere brilliant people on both sides of the controversy.

He then goes on to say, *“As insightful as the powers of reason are, history has demonstrated that reason alone neither has nor ever will resolve issues such as abortion. Why is that? Because the issue of abortion is a moral issue, just as was the slave issue, and like slavery, abortion requires the same God who spoke on Mount Sinai and delivered the Ten Commandments to speak with authority on this matter today.”* Of

course, many people don't accept God's authority and believe man's actions are governed solely by civil law. They are left to their own reason, walking in their own benighted understanding and are left to reap the consequences of their actions, be they immediate or yet future.

If one accepts God as his maker and counselor, he might well ask, “Has God spoken on this particular moral issue?” According to Callister, early Christian writers have preserved the position of the primitive Church on this matter and it seems to me, that position was undoubtedly established through the original apostles as coming from Christ. Following are some comments and quotes from his book. He

tells us, *“They spoke clearly, unequivocally, and repeatedly on this sensitive topic. There is ... a remarkable unity and directness on the subject. For example, The Didache (A.D. 80-140), a church manual of early Christianity, instructed the new proselyte before he was baptized: ‘Thou shalt not murder a child by abortion nor kill them when born’.”* ... *“The author of ‘The Epistle of Barnabas’ is equally clear in his condemnation of abortion: ‘Thou shalt not murder a child by abortion, nor again shalt thou kill it when it is born’.* The Constitution of the Holy Apostles (c. third or fourth century) records a similar warning: *‘Thou shalt not slay thy child by causing abortion, nor kill that which is begotten’.*” He cites other quotations by Tertullian, Athenagoras, Minucius Felix and Clement of Alexandria with remarks describing abortion's abominations therein.

In 1991 the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints made this statement: *“In view of the wide spread public interest in the issue of abortion, we reaffirm that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints has consistently opposed elective abortion. ... We have repeatedly counseled people everywhere to turn from this devastating practice of abortion for personal or social convenience”.*

In a note to the chapter discussing abortion, Mr. Callister made this comment, citing (True to the

“On the personal level, a belief in the power of genes necessarily diminishes the potency of such personal qualities as will, the capacity to choose, and a sense of responsibility for those choices – if it's in the genes, you're not accountable.”

Faith: A Gospel Reference, 4). *“The leaders of the Church of Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints have said that there are some ‘exceptional circumstances’ under which an abortion might*

justifiably be performed, such as: (1) if pregnancy is a result of incest or rape, (2) if the mother's life or health is in serious jeopardy, and (3) if the fetus has such serious defects it will not survive beyond birth. However, these exceptional circumstances ‘do not automatically justify an abortion’. Those who find themselves faced with such circumstances should consider an abortion only after discussing the matter with their local Church leaders and after earnest prayer and confirmation that such a decision is correct.” I have inserted these last two statements to define the Church's stand on this difficult subject as well as my own stand.

In my opinion, a pro-choice stance opens the gates for women to choose without concern for

the fetus. In most cases, the choice is strictly selfish and is used simply as a means of contraception, providing a way out of responsibility for one's actions. In such cases, abortion is the equivalent of murder and even more horrific because of the inability of the victims to defend themselves. The extenuating circumstances, which might justify such an act, are spelled out in the last quote of the preceding paragraph. No other situation that I can imagine would justify such an act. Thus, I believe society, as a whole, should limit abortions to those specified in the quote referred to. Let the individuals involved then make a choice in those limited conditions and deal with the results according to their own conscience. As it is, there is no doubt in my mind that our maker will hold our society accountable at the judgment bar, if not before. We, as a society and personally, cannot escape his judgment.

HOMOSEXUALITY

Mr. Callister introduces the subject with this quote. *"From the earliest times, homosexuality has been condemned of the Lord. One of the reasons Sodom and Gomorrah was destroyed by fire was because homosexuality was so prevalent among the citizens"* (Genesis 19:5-9; Jude 1:7). Quoting the latter but expanding it to include verse 8, *"Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. Likewise these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities"*. Jude then continues in verse ten explaining the ignorance of such individuals because of their subjection to the desires of the flesh. *"But these speak evil of those things which they know not; but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves"*. In my view, when they give in to such impulses, they are submitting to Satan and/or one of his angels. All sin damages or destroys true spirituality or that light that comes from God, depending upon its gravity. Repentance is the only cure.

In anticipation of those who claim one is born with this particular problem, that is, through genetics, I refer you now to the excerpts from an article in the April 21, 1997 issue of U. S. News and World Report entitled **"POLITICS OF BIOLOGY"**, as provided in chapter 19. It certainly points out that genes have become an escape mechanism for many types of behavior

including homosexuality. Though my major interest here is the topic of homosexuality, one can see that genetic influences are only part of the problem. To say I can't help it because I was born that way is simply a convenient excuse with no more validity than any other weakness we all are plagued with. As mentioned in the article on **"The Politics of Biology"** about midway in chapter 19 we find this comment. *"On the personal level, a belief in the power of genes necessarily diminishes the potency of such personal qualities as will, the capacity to choose, and a sense of responsibility for those choices – if it's in the genes, you're not accountable."*

To accept human weaknesses as resulting totally from genetics is to negate the power of our spiritual qualities or the very essence of our human potential. Such thought fits in nicely with the concept of all things around us occurring by chance, from the universe through all life including humanity. It contradicts any purpose in our lives as well as that for all God's creations and necessarily leads men to lower goals, in my opinion but the reader must decide for himself.

7. MANY ORDINANCES WERE PERVERTED, OTHERS LOST AND NEW ONES INVENTED

We now cite Isaiah 24:5 wherein that great prophet foresaw the apostasy and so prophesied regarding the ordinances and everlasting covenant. *"The earth is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, **changed the ordinances, broken the everlasting covenant"***. As mentioned by Mr. Callister, Paul also sensed this when he enjoined the saints at Corinth: *"Keep the ordinances as I have delivered them to you"*. Mr. Callister then goes on to say, *"Unfortunately the ordinances were not kept in their pristine state. Clement of Rome (A. D. 30 – 100) noted that the Corinthian saints '**neither [walk] in the ordinances of His commandments nor [live] according to that which becometh Christ'**. Astonishingly, even Pope Adrian VI in A. D. 1522 acknowledged the corruption of ordinances: '**We know well that for many years things deserving of abhorrence have gathered around the Holy See. Sacred things have been misused, ordinances transgressed, so that in everything there has been a change for the worse.**'"*

For reference, I will list those ordinances that were changed according to my major source, Mr. Callister, while making only a few brief

comments about each, as you might suspect in one's autobiography.

BLESSING BABIES

The scriptures set the example for this ordinance during Christ's earthly ministry as we find in Mark 10: 16 and Matthew 19: 13 – 15. In both instances, the scriptures tell us that Christ laid or put his hands upon the babies and blessed them but they make no reference to baptism. Webster tells us 'to christen' means to give a child a name at baptism, the latter of which neither Christ did nor does the LDS Church. The ordinance of the latter is specified in D.&C. 20:70, which states, "Every member of the Church of Christ having children is to bring them unto the elders of the church, who are to lay their hands upon them in the name of Jesus Christ, and bless them in his name".

Infant Baptism thus became a new ordinance around 200 A. D. and was not practiced by the original Christian Church. It appears from the research that Mr. Callister has done, that the doctrine of Infant Baptism came into being for two reasons. The first is the concept of the original sin or Adam's fall, while the second stems from several scriptures, which refer to a new convert being baptized with all his house.

As to the first, the scriptures are replete with verses mentioning the resurrection of both the just and the unjust or all mankind. While there are differing degrees of salvation in the broad sense, the LDS Church holds that Christ paid the price of the original sin for all mankind and thus resurrection is a free gift to all. In my mind, even common sense tells me that I shouldn't be accountable for someone else's sin but only for my own. Further comments regarding this doctrine will be given later.

As to the second reason justifying Infant Baptism, Mr. Callister has this to say, "Contrary to the assertion of these advocates for infant baptism, the language of four of the five scriptures cited by them excludes, rather than includes, infants from being baptized. Why is this? Because, only those who believed or rejoiced or were devoted to the ministry joined the church".

There are, of course, specific scriptures in latter day canon decrying the practice of infant

baptism but maybe of more interest to a nonmember would be the conclusion of one, Professor Kurt Aland of the University of Munster who wrote a book entitled "Did the Early church Baptize Infants"? His comment is given by Mr. Callister as follows: "**It can be no accident . . . that all our information about the existence of infant baptism comes from the period between A. D. 200 and 250. . . . For the time before this we do not possess a single piece of information that gives concrete testimony to the existence of infant baptism. . . . To this day [1963] nobody can prove an actual case of the baptism of an infant in the period before A. D. 200. That our entire sources, at least when allowed their literal sense, have in view only the baptism of adults, or at best the baptism of older children, can be little contested**". He then cites one, John Winebrenner, an ardent student on the subject as saying, "**While from the earliest period, the baptism of believers appears on every page of history, her voice is dumb respecting infant baptism for two hundred years after Christ**". Such quotations coupled with the lack of any concrete evidence to the contrary certainly supports the LDS scripture mentioned earlier. He also cites others too lengthy for me to include except the closing comment of Justin Martyr (A. D. 110 – 165) who said, "**All these features make the presupposition of a participation of infants in the baptismal event appear unthinkable**". He was referring to the requirement for candidates for baptism to be convinced

of the truth of Christian teaching and will thus undertake to lead a life in accordance with it, which obviously excludes infants. They can hardly make up their minds as infants.

BAPTISM BY IMMERSION

I don't pretend to know the baptismal mode that the various churches require for their members but I do know that some require immersion while others do not. Pouring water on an individual or sprinkling an individual suffices for some. All scriptures referring to baptism in the New Testament appear to require immersion as the mode. Similarly, Paul speaks of "one Lord, one faith, one baptism" in Ephesians 4: 5, which indicates anything other than immersion is not valid. Likewise he speaks of the mode in Romans 6: 3 – 5 wherein we read, "Know ye

While there are differing degrees of salvation in the broad sense, the LDS Church holds that Christ paid the price of the original sin for all mankind and thus resurrection is a free gift to all.

not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into his death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in a newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection". According to Mr. Callister, it appears that the doctrine of pouring and sprinkling came into being about A. D. 250 by virtue of an interpretation of the Didache by Cyprian, which I won't go into. Let's go on now to another baptismal ordinance, which to my knowledge is only practiced by the LDS Church in holy temples. The principle was given to Joseph Smith through revelation.

BAPTISM FOR THE DEAD

It appears evident that the ancient church after the death of Christ did, in fact, practice baptism for the dead. I repeat some earlier scriptures here for ease in following this particular ordinance. In speaking of Christ after his crucifixion, Peter said in 1 Peter 3: 19 – 20, *"By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison. Which sometimes were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is eight souls were saved".* Then again in 1 Peter 4: 6 we read, *"For for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit".* Finally we read Paul's remark to the Corinthians wherein he questions in 1 Corinthians 15: 29, *"Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? Why are they then baptized for the dead?"* Mr. Callister cites a quotation from "The Shepherd of Hermas"; an ancient text, which was written by an unknown author or maybe by a Hermas who lived prior to A. D. 160. That particular individual was greeted by Paul in Romans 16:14. Another possibility is the brother of Pius I according to Mr. Callister. He also indicates this text was widely read and valued by early Christians, being in the form of an allegory given to the author by a divine teacher as a vision. Therein, it speaks of the apostles being baptized for the dead as well as those who have died preaching the gospel to those who had died previously. In the context of an after-life, such a doctrine makes sense and appears to be the only solution for a just God to be sure all mankind has an opportunity to accept or reject

the gospel. Consequently, both logic and scripture point to preaching of the gospel to the dead as well as the ordinance of baptism being administered for them also.

THE SACRAMENT

The sacrament, which is also known as the Eucharist or communion, was altered as well. Mr. Callister describes this change as follows. *"As instituted by the Savior it [the sacrament] was simple and solemn – one took the bread and wine and blessed it in remembrance of him."* This is the procedure followed in all LDS chapels, that is, when the sacrament is passed.

In the third century there was introduced (1) long sacramental prayers, (2) pomp and ceremony, (3) vessels of gold and silver, (4) disputations as to what time – morning, noon, or evening – the sacrament should be administered, and (5) the doctrine of transubstantiation. This latter doctrine taught that the bread and wine were mystically transformed into the flesh and blood of Christ, and that such transformation somehow added to the spirituality of the participant. This contrasts with the LDS doctrine or belief, quite

Consequently, both logic and scripture point to preaching of the gospel to the dead as well as the ordinance of baptism being administered for them also.

adequately described by Callister as follows. *"As one partakes of the bread he is reminded of the flesh of Christ, which was crucified and resurrected, thus bringing about immortality for all. As one drinks the cup he is reminded of the blood of Christ that was shed in the Garden and on the cross, thus bringing about the opportunity of eternal life (life in the presence of God) for all. Thus, the bread reminds us of Christ's triumph over physical death, and the water (or wine) reminds us of his triumph over spiritual death. As we stretch forth our hand to partake of these tokens or emblems, we recommit ourselves to take upon us the name of Jesus Christ and to follow his example. Such a process helps us into spiritual alignment with Christ. These acts of remembering Christ and committing to be more like him invite God's Spirit into our lives. Accordingly, there is no need for a mystical transformation of the tokens.*

THE LAYING ON OF HANDS

As you have undoubtedly noticed, I am quoting as much if not more from Mr. Callister's *"The*

Inevitable Apostasy” than I am recording of my own thoughts on these particular changes. That’s, of course, because he is much better versed than I and has done a remarkable job of explaining these ordinances as well as providing appropriate references. If I were to use my own words, I would simply be rephrasing the same thoughts, undoubtedly leaving some out and/or expressing them in poorer grammar while arriving at the same conclusions. Thus, you, the reader, benefit from his expertise rather than having to suffer from mine.

Now, continuing with an excerpt from his book, regarding the subject at hand, I quote: *“In Christ’s original church there was a doctrine and ordinance known as **“the doctrine ... of laying on of hands”** (Hebrews 6:2). This doctrine included at least three ordinances that were performed by the laying on of hands: first, confirmation (the giving of the gift of the Holy Ghost); second, priesthood ordinations and setting apart of those in various callings of the ministry; and third, the healing of the sick and other related blessings of personal comfort and direction. In each case, the laying on of hands was symbolic of the Lord’s hands being laid on the recipient’s head (D&C 36:2) and the dispensing of divine power and direction to the recipient”*. That introductory statement sets the stage for a brief description of the need for the ordinances mentioned above, i.e. the gift of the Holy Ghost, ordinations in the priesthood, setting members apart and healing the sick. They follow, individually, wherein I will provide my understanding, coupled with remarks by Mr. Callister and any references he includes.

THE GIFT OF THE HOLY GHOST

In Acts, chapter six, seven devout men were called as assistants to the twelve apostles then preaching the gospel. Among them was one, Philip, who was later sent to Samaria to serve. There he converted several people whom he also baptized as described in chapter eight. When the apostles heard of his success, they sent Peter and John to them to administer the gift of the Holy Ghost. After praying for them, we read in verse 16, *“(For as yet he was fallen on none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus”*.) Then, the ordinance is administered in verse 17 wherein we read, *“Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost”*. In chapter 19 we read of Paul and his preaching in Ephesus. Apparently, many people there had accepted the

gospel as preached by John the Baptist through some unnamed minister. Paul then baptized them again in the name of Jesus Christ and bestowed the gift of the Holy Ghost upon them as described earlier in verses 5 & 6.

PRIESTHOOD ORDINATIONS

There are several references to the use of the ordinance of “The Laying on of Hands” in conferring the priesthood on a worthy person and or setting them apart to serve in particular offices. Let’s begin with Moses and Joshua in Numbers 27:23. Therein we read, *“And he [Moses] laid his hands upon him [Joshua], and gave him a charge, as the Lord commanded by the hands of Moses”*. Going back to Acts, chapter six, we read of the setting apart of the seven men previously referred to who had been appointed to assist the twelve. After naming the men in verse 5, they set them apart for the duties involved in verse 6 wherein we read, *“Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands upon them”*. Later, in chapter 13, verse 3, we read of Paul and Barnabas being given authority through the ordinance in discussion for their future service. *“And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away”*. There are other references made in Timothy to this particular ordinance wherein Paul advises Timothy to treat it with great respect (1 Timothy 4:6; 14 and 5:22).

As Callister points out, *“There seems to be little question about what procedure was followed in the early church to confer the priesthood upon a man – hands were laid upon his head by one having authority. Eusebius so noted: ‘**There were appointed** [priesthood leaders] **also, with prayer and the imposition of hands, by the apostles, approved men, unto the office of deacons’**. It was another reminder that *priesthood ordination comes only by the laying on of hands”*. It also intimates the need for authority. Paraphrasing, he goes on to say, that remnants of this ordinance are found today; but in Christ’s Church it was not an occasional event – but a divinely authorized means of conferring the priesthood of God on worthy men.*

PRIESTHOOD BLESSINGS

Quoting Callister, *“In the ancient Church, hands were laid on the sick and faithful to give them blessings of health and comfort and direction. The Savior laid his hands upon the sick and they were healed (Mark 6:5; 8:23; Luke 13:13). Likewise, the Savior instructed his apostles to*

'lay hands on the sick and they shall recover' (Mark 16:18). *With this power and divine injunction to heal, the scriptures tell us, 'by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people'* (Acts 5:12). *With this power Paul visited the father of Publius, who was 'sick with a fever and of a bloody flux ... and laid hands on him, and he healed him'* (Acts 28:8)". That this power to heal the sick is available to any worthy priesthood holder is evident by the counsel of James in James 5:14 wherein he said, **"Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord"**. Going back to Callister's book, he quotes Irenaeus (A.D. 120 – 202) who tells us, **"Wherefore, also, those who are in truth his disciples ... heal the sick by laying their hands upon them, and they are made whole"**. In the above I have made the scriptures in bold italics to separate them from Mr. Callister's discussion. Elders have the authority to perform this particular ordinance on a regular basis in the LDS Church for all its members.

TEMPLE ORDINANCES AND COVENANTS

Callister defines the ordinance as follows: *"an ordinance is a physical act, symbolic of a spiritual truth that is required by God in order to*

In addition, there were certain other ordinances in the primitive Church, which were of such a sacred nature that they only briefly alluded to or not at all by the early Christian writers of the New Testament and other documents.

make a man or woman eligible for additional blessings of heaven". The New Testament mentions various ordinances including the laying on of hands as previously discussed, baptism, blessing children, etc. In addition, there were certain other ordinances in the primitive Church, which were of such a sacred nature that they were only briefly alluded to or not at all by the early Christian writers of the New Testament and other documents. These include ordinances performed in LDS temples today as given by revelation to Joseph Smith.

Dr. Hugh Nibley gives a marvelous rundown on various texts, some 200 in number, which have been discovered since the beginning of the twentieth century. They include apocryphal texts, i.e. those not being accepted by the LDS

Church or any other to my knowledge, as canonized or accepted scripture, various Pseudepigrapha, the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Nag Hammadi Library of the upper Nile and various early Christian authors and works. They contain much regarding Christ's 40-day ministry among his disciples after his resurrection. One can discount them because they aren't canonized scripture but neither have they been proven false, in most cases. Among the early Christian authors and works are titles such as Acts of Thomas, Acts of John, Epistle of Barnabas, Epistle of the Apostles, Clement of Rome's First and Second Epistle to the Corinthians as well as his Recognitions, Psalms of Thomas, Revelation to Peter, etc. The Nag Hammadi Library contains such books as The Gospel of Philip, Gospel of Thomas, Apocryphon of John, Apocalypse of Adam, First Apocalypse of James, etc. Dr. Nibley ably points out consistent themes through many, if not all, of these texts pertaining to Christ's forty-day ministry. They include references to sacred ordinances remarkably similar to those given to Joseph Smith by revelation and performed in LDS Temples today.

Though this may not prove their use in the early Christian Church, it certainly points out that very probability. Callister points out that both the New Testament and early Christian writings speak of a body of Church theology that was reserved for those who are spiritually prepared. He tells us, *"Paul spoke of these people as 'stewards of the mysteries of God' (I Corinthians 4:1)"*. He also quotes Origen as saying that in Christian circles the higher ordinances were reserved and taught only to those proving their selves worthy. Origen says the following, *"Whoever is pure not only from all defilements, but from what are regarded as lesser transgressions, let him be boldly initiated in the mysteries of Jesus, which are properly made known only to the holy and the pure"*. This is similar to the requirement an LDS member must meet to participate in temple worship.

From all the reading I have been able to do, it seems apparent that the temple ordinances were given to the early saints and practiced by them among the qualified. Work for the dead such as baptism, described by Paul, didn't occur until after Christ's resurrection even though these ordinances can be traced back to Adam according to Dr. Nibley. I suppose this is due to the fact that Christ was the first fruits of those that slept and such ordinances would be of no

avail until his resurrection. That work is apparently part of that spoken of earlier as being reserved for the “Dispensation of the Fullness of Times”.

OTHER CORRUPTIONS OF THE ORDINANCES

Mr. Callister speaks of changes in worship services and cites Erasmus (A.D. 1466 – 1536) who roundly condemned the corruption of worship services. He then moves on to excommunication as a means of disciplining errant members and points out how it turned into a political weapon used against those who were believed heretic. Rather than simply losing their membership as the early Church had practiced, they were banished from home, their property confiscated, deprived of civil rights and of a Christian burial. Today, of course, in the United States and most other countries practicing Christianity such treatment is against civil law. The limit of the authority of the LDS Church is that of simple excommunication coupled with an effort to reclaim the errant member. It was described earlier in this chapter in the 4th verse or first part of the quotation of Doctrine and Covenants 134.

CONCLUSION

In concluding this particular section on the apostasy, Mr. Callister includes a quotation by Machiavelli (1469 – 1527), an Italian statesman. Apparently he was one of the most powerful political thinkers of the day and gave the following stark assessment of the state of the church and its ordinances. I will limit my personal remarks but will once again point out that the Protestant movement, though guided by God, was but a forerunner to the restoration. It could in no way restore the church to the pure form of the apostolic Church without revelation regardless of the sincerity and effort of the various reformers. Only God himself could replace the lost and/or corrupted ordinances through intervention by revelation, a principle long since discarded. The fact is that all protestant churches, by their very nature are heretic movements from the apostate version of the apostolic Church, which leaves only The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints as a possible candidate for Christ’s Church in the latter days. I know, through 47 years of experience in attendance, study and prayer that this church is what it purports to be, even the restored Church of Christ. Obviously, those not of my faith will feel differently and I respect that. However, the only way such individuals can

draw a valid conclusion regarding the same, is to take the test as described in Moroni 10:4-5. This must be taken in all sincerity as mentioned by that ancient prophet. After all, “Will an earnest truth seeker object to such a test”?

Machiavelli said, *“Had the religion of Christianity been preserved according to the ordinances of the Founder, the state and commonwealth of Christendom would have been far more united and happy than they are. Nor can there be a greater proof of its decadence than the fact that the nearer people are to the Roman Church, the head of their religion, the less religious they are. And whoever examines the principles on which that religion is founded, and sees how widely different from those principles its present practice and application are, will judge that her ruin or chastisement is near at hand”.*

8. THE MODE OF PRAYER WAS CHANGED

This change in the universal or Catholic Church constitutes the eighth evidence of a universal apostasy from Christ’s Church. Quoting Callister, *“The framework for meaningful prayer was clearly defined in the New Testament;*

First we pray to God the Father. In the Sermon on the Mount, the Savior told his disciples, ‘Pray to the Father which is in secret (Matthew 6:6)’. He then gave them the example to follow; ‘After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven (Matthew 6:8)’. Tertullian noted: ‘Prayer begins with a testimony to God, and with the reward of faith, we say ‘Our Father who art in the heavens’. Accordingly, our prayers begin with a petition to our Father in heaven because it is he that listens to and answers our prayers”.

“Second, we pray in the name of and through the mediation of Jesus Christ, because he is our Savior and our ‘mediator between God and man’ (1 Timothy 2:5). Jesus counseled, ‘Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it unto you’ (John 16:23). . . . Eusebius (A.D. 270 – 340) recognized that the members of the primitive church prayed to God the Father through the Son, exactly as the Lord taught. . . . He noted ‘But thanks be to God, the omnipotent and universal sovereign, thanks also to the Saviour and Redeemer of our souls, Jesus Christ, through whom we pray’.

Third, we say our individual prayers with sincerity of heart – not as a memorized recitation. . . . In this regard the Savior instructed: ‘But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions’

(Matthew 6:7).” After quoting similar comments by Irenaeus (A.D. 115 – 202), Clement of Alexandria (A.D. 160 – 200) and Cyprian (A.D. 200 – 258), Callister tells us, “Our heartfelt feelings are our passport to heavenly ascent. Fortunately, we are always eligible to pray – sin does not close the doors to heaven, appointments are not required, there are no busy signals, no long distant charges, no recommends required. There is but one essential ingredient: sincerity of heart and mind”.

Apparently, apostate prayer in the post – apostolic Church began with prayers to certain angels. Callister indicates, Origen (A.D. 185 – 255) warned the Saints against any such action: **“This knowledge, making known to us their nature [the angels’], and the offices to which they are severally appointed, will not permit us to pray with confidence to any other than the Supreme God, who is sufficient for all things, and that through our Saviour the Son of God”**.

Later, methods of prayer drifted even further a-field. Quoting Callister once again, “In time the ongoing church advocated prayers to patron saints rather than to the Father of us all, through patron saints rather than through the Son, and memorized prayers in lieu of prayers from the heart. It is astonishing that the simple manner of prayer, laid out so carefully by the Lord, could be so twisted and perverted by man”. I second that comment. With my small degree of engineering logic, reciting memorized prayers for personal prayers seems completely illogical, at least to me. If I am the son of a personal God, then my own heartfelt prayer is the only sincere expression I can offer to solicit my Father’s aid. Such a personal prayer expresses my recognition of a personal need for Divine grace and assistance in pursuing the gospel and acknowledging his power to help me.

One last comment by Roger Williams, as quoted by Callister seems useful. Beginning with Callister’s remarks and concluding with William’s, “Roger Williams (1603 – 1683), also spoke of errors that crept into the church, including ‘the doctrine of praying to saints and worshipping images’. As to these heresies, he wrote: **‘the doctrine [praying to saints and worshipping idols] strikes at the root of the great commandment (which the papists call part of the first), ‘Thou shalt not bow down to**

them nor worship them’ – that is, not any image whatsoever. It is gross, open, palpable idolatry, such as can neither be denied nor excused; and tends directly to destroy the love of God which is, indeed, the first and great commandment’.” Obviously, all Protestants don’t pray in the manner of a Catholic. They also offer earnest personal prayers and seem to recognize the error of this practice. I would even go so far as to say that I would expect some Catholics may likewise offer up their heart-felt thanks while seeking divine direction from a benevolent Father but such isn’t recognized by the Catholic hierarchy as far as I know. No, they would have a member pray to Mary or some other patron saint that is powerless to intervene on the petitioner’s behalf, having no authority.

9. THE SCRIPTURES WERE REMOVED FROM THE LAY MEMBERS

This ninth evidence of the universal apostasy came as a surprise to me in that I wasn’t aware that the general populace of the early Church had personal access to the writings of the prophets or the scriptures. Apparently, they had had such access for some time after the demise of the apostles. It may surprise you

as well. Quoting Callister once again;

“In the early Church the scriptures were accessible and regularly read by the Saints ... yet it was not too many years thereafter that the scriptures were found only in the hands of the clergy. To make matters worse, the scriptures were often unavailable in the language of the layman. Moshheim, a noted historian, referred to these tragic conditions: ‘A severe and intolerable law was enacted, with respect to all interpreters and expositors of the scriptures, by which they were forbidden to explain the sense of these divine books, in matters of faith and practice, in such a manner as to make them speak a different language from that of the church and the ancient doctors. The same law declared that the church alone (meaning the ruler, the Roman Pontiff) had the right of determining the true meaning and signification of scripture. To fill up the measure of these tyrannical and iniquitous proceedings, the church of Rome persisted obstinately in affirming, though not always with the same imprudence and plainness of speech’, “that

If I am the son of a personal God, then my own heartfelt prayer is the only sincere expression I can offer to solicit my Father’s aid.

the holy scriptures were not composed for the use of the multitude, but only for that of their spiritual teachers; and, of consequence, ordered these divine records to be taken from the people in all places where it was allowed to execute its imperious demands”.

William Manchester had this to say regarding medieval so-called Christians. *“Although they called themselves Christians, medieval Europeans were ignorant of the Gospels. The Bible existed only in a language they could not read. The mumbled incantations of Mass were meaningless to them. They believed in sorcery, witchcraft, hobgoblins werewolves, amulets, and black magic and were thus indistinguishable from the pagans”.*

I think it is sufficiently clear that the apostate church, in fear of its own leadership survival, went to great effort to be sure that the lay membership knew only what they wanted them to know and thus act like robots acting in command of those in charge. As will be shown in the next chapter, many Protestant reformers suffered all kinds of torture up to and including death to bring the scriptures to the masses. Contrast this view to the teachings of many of the Protestant churches today as well as the restored Church. In the former case, I know that Bible study is a regular practice in many of them. Similarly, in the LDS Church, members are admonished to make regular scripture study a daily practice and, in fact, to feast upon the words of Christ. Scriptures can mean different things at different times to different people as they progress and grow and should be applied to one’s self for real benefit. It is only when we feel as though the prophets or Christ himself is speaking to us personally that the word of God can really penetrate our souls to create change or real comfort and repentance. In regard to doctrine or scripture applicable to the Church as a whole, we, as members, are entitled to the Holy Spirit and can reach the same understanding as the apostles and prophets. Such is made clear in 2 Peter 1:20-21. We might close the remarks regarding this particular evidence with a quote from Acts 17:11 wherein Luke notes that when Paul left Thessalonica for Berea, the Saints in Berea *“were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily”.*

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This admonition by Paul was discredited by the Catholic Church as Moshheim said. The restored gospel doesn’t fear the study of scripture by members, because the Holy Ghost will testify to all the same message of truth.

10. WICKEDNESS WITHIN THE CHURCH

Mr. Callister devotes some thirteen pages to this particular evidence quoting various Protestant leaders, historians and even Catholic leaders. I will open with the opening comments of Callister in this particular chapter. I think it makes the point that his intent is not to disparage the Catholic Church or its members but to simply make more evident common historical knowledge available to all who are interested.

“The purpose of this chapter is not to disparage the Catholic Church or its members. Many of them are exemplary Christians who render great service. Nonetheless, there is an undeniable history of clerical misconduct, so visible, so documented, and so prolonged that no one can honestly ignore this evidence of the apostasy. This does not mean that some good did not remain in the ongoing church (for it did); rather, it means that the Church of Jesus Christ did not continue in its fullness.”

Most people have read or heard of the Spanish inquisitions, as well as the payment of money, (sale of indulgences) etc. for the forgiveness of sins. Some gifts, if they were large enough, even excused the individual of future transgressions. This made virtually any future act permissible if such a doctrine were, indeed, approved of God. Even reason can’t accept

such a thought. I won’t deal with these but rather include a few select quotes from Callister’s book as taken from other identified sources. On page 269 he tells of Erasmus, a Catholic monk *“who believed that reformation was necessary but who wanted to make such changes from within rather than from without, was an especially valuable witness because he remained loyal to the Catholic Church. He wrote, ‘there are priests now in vast numbers, enormous herds of them, seculars and regulars, and it is notorious that very few of them are chaste. The great proportions fall into lust and incest and open profligacy’.*

In fairness to the clergy and Erasmus, I also include this quote by Callister regarding them.

“While Erasmus attacked the hypocrisy of the clergy at large, he also acknowledged that there were many good clerics: ‘I could give you a long list of theologians, men celebrated for their holy lives, men of extraordinary learning and of the very highest standing’. While Durant was likewise critical of the male clergy and acknowledged there were nuns that betrayed their oaths, he nonetheless paid tribute to the nuns at large: ‘In one aspect the church was a continent-wide organization for charitable aid. ... All nuns but a few human sinners devoted themselves to education, nursing and charity; their ever widening ministrations are among the brightest and most heartening features of medieval and modern history’.” ...

“The reformers, while recognizing there were some good clerics and nuns, were irate with the widespread wickedness they saw among much of the clergy, as evidenced by the following comment of Wycliffe: ‘They, [the clergy] run fast, by land, and by water, in great peril of body and soul, to get rich benefices; but they will not knowingly go a mile to preach the gospel. ... Since they so much love worldly riches, and labor for them night and day, in thought and deed, and labor so little for God’s worship and the saving of Christian souls, who can excuse these covetous clerks from simony and heresy? Neither God’s law nor man’s law, nor reason, nor good conscience. ... They are angels of Satan to lead men to hell. ... They hurt their parishioners in many ways – by example of pride, envy, covetousness and unreasonable vengeance – cruelly cursing for tithes and evil customs. ... They are not angels of God but of the fiend’. ... One could hardly give a more damning description of a cleric or be one more fully chastised.

So depraved was Christianity as a whole that Luther made this startling admission: ‘I have sought nothing beyond the reforming of the Church in conformity with the Holy Scriptures. The spiritual powers have not only been corrupted by sin, but absolutely destroyed: so that there is now nothing in them but a depraved reason and a will that is the enemy and opponent of God. I simply say that Christianity has ceased to exist among those who should have preserved it’.

Similar to other reformers, Calvin could not remain silent about what he saw. ... in a letter

of scathing denunciation to Cardinal James Sadolet, [Calvin] wrote the following: ‘I will not press you so closely as to call you back to that form which the apostles instituted (though in it we have the only model of a true church, and whosoever deviates from it in the smallest degree is in error), ... Men of all ranks know by experience that they [the clergy] are active only in robbing and devouring.

It is scarcely possible that the minds of the common people should not be greatly alienated from you by the many examples of cruelty, avarice, intemperance, arrogance, insolence, lust, and all sorts of wickedness, which are openly manifested by men of your order, but none of these would have driven us to the attempt which we made under a strong necessity. That necessity was, that the light of divine truth had been extinguished, the word of God buried, the virtue of Christ left in profound oblivion and the pastoral office subverted. Meanwhile, impiety so stalked abroad, that almost no doctrine of religion was pure from admixture, no ceremony free from error, no part, however minute of divine worship untarnished by superstition’.

There are many other quotes to add to the ones presented. I have selected those that seemed most pertinent to me but anyone desiring to know more can go to Callister’s book on the apostasy called “The Inevitable Apostasy and the Promised Restoration” to find the same. However, in the interest of space and time I will let these suffice for the tenth evidence.

11. THE DECLINE OF MORAL STANDARDS AND LOSS OF CHURCH DISCIPLINE

It is evident that the apostolic Church, as founded by Christ, required high moral standards and enforced the same. Many of the epistles were written expressly to buoy up moral standards in the various branches of the original Church around the Mediterranean. Obviously, heretic principles were already creeping into the Church at that early date. An example is Paul’s first letter to the saints at Corinth wherein he counseled them as follows: “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy: for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.” Obviously, Paul felt strongly about this principle and, I believe we can be assured, preached the same throughout the Church.

From a text of the 3rd or 4th century known as *"The Constitution of the Holy Apostles"*, Callister records the following. [This text] *recognized the consequences if the sinner was not disciplined: 'Sin which passes without correction grows worse and worse, and spreads to others. . . . If, therefore, we neglect to separate the transgressor from the Church of God, we will make the Lord's house a den of thieves. For it is the bishop's duty not to be silent in the case of offenders.'*"

Cyprian (A.D. 200 – 258) also spoke on this subject describing the negative results of improper discipline. ***"For where can the medicine of indulgence profit, if even the physician himself, by intercepting repentance, makes easy way for new dangers, if he only hides the wound, and does not suffer the necessary remedy of time to close the scar? This is not to cure, but, if we wish to speak the truth, to slay."***

Callister quotes at another point a respected historian, Edwin Hatch saying; *"Sadly, the church was no longer a moral beacon for the world, because it was no longer the Church of Christ. There was little, if any, difference between the morality of a Christian and pagan. The respected historian, Edwin Hatch, so noted: 'The church was gradually transformed from being a community of saints – of men who were bound together by the bond of a holy life, separated from the mass of society, and in antagonism to it – to a community of men whose moral ideal and moral practice differed in but few respects from those of their Gentile neighbours.'" A little earlier he quotes another noted historian, Jacob Burckhardt, as follows, which further emphasizes the decay of morality in the universal church with its cause and effect. ***"History does not record a heavier responsibility than that which rests upon the decaying church. She set up as absolute truth, and by the most violent means, a doctrine which she had distorted to serve her own aggrandizement. Safe in the sense of her own inviolability, she abandoned herself to the most scandalous profligacy, and, in order to maintain herself in this state, she levelled mortal blows against the conscience and the intellect of nations, and drove multitudes of the noblest spirits, whom she had inwardly estranged, into the arms of unbelief and despair."*** Once again, though Callister includes a good deal of*

additional information on the subject, I will let this suffice for my purposes.

12. THE ONGOING CHURCH NO LONGER BORE CHRIST'S NAME

Callister begins this chapter with the following statement. *"It seems intriguing, almost ironic, that from the time of the apostasy until the beginning of the nineteenth century no church was named after Jesus Christ"*. He includes a note here explaining that the church mentioned in the Book of Mormon referred to itself as 'The Church of God' or the 'Church of Christ'. Of course, my family was raised primarily in a church known as 'The Church of Christ', which I believe was a spinoff of 'The First Christian Church' in Boise. Various churches of Christ also exist in the south and probably in other areas of the country today. However, I believe his statement is correct in that all these churches were founded after 1900, though that is an opinion. I couldn't find a date of the latter's establishment. Maybe my readers will include someone who knows the date of that denomination's founding. Continuing on with Mr. Callister; ***"With all the Christian churches that were created as 'spin off' of the Reformation, why did none of them think of calling themselves the 'Church of Christ'? It seems such an obvious conclusion – if it were Christ's church, it would be named after him. . . . Paul rebuked those who took upon them a name other than Christ's: 'For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, . . . that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I am of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?'" (1 Corinthians 1:11-13).***

Luther was rightfully concerned when his followers started to call themselves Lutherans. In response he pled with them: 'I pray you leave my name alone and call yourselves not Lutherans but Christians. Who is Luther? My teaching is not mine. I have not been crucified for anyone. . . . How then does it befit me, a miserable bag of dust and ashes, to give my name to the children of Christ? Cease, my dear friend, to cling to these party names and distinctions; away with them all, let us call ourselves only Christians after him from whom our teaching comes!'

Of course, the LDS Church whose full name is 'The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day

Saints' was so named in 1830. The term "latter day" was included to differentiate today's church from the church in the meridian of time. The name to be used by the Nephites was given by revelation in the 27th chapter of 3 Nephi by the Savior himself. From that scripture as well as logic, it seems to me, any church authorized by the Savior would certainly include his name in its title. Of course, Paul's comment, referred to earlier, makes that same point.

13. THE PRIESTHOOD WAS LOST

I will approach this particular topic under the same sub-headings that Callister uses. In so doing, I will insert some of my own remarks, which I believe will complement his. As has been the case in earlier commentaries, quotes by Callister will be in italics while quotes of other authorities taken from his book will be in bold italics. It's the only way I know of adequately distinguishing between the two. As you have probably noticed, I have also used bold italics in some cases for emphasis.

WHAT IS THE PRIESTHOOD AND ITS PURPOSE?

I certainly had little understanding of the priesthood prior to my joining the LDS Church, having read the scriptures only in a random manner while growing up. I remember no emphasis on this subject in the Church of Christ but only recollect referring to our minister as the preacher or maybe reverend. I vaguely remember Uncle Guy and I suppose dad and other men being deacons and blessing the sacrament. I don't know the process used in giving them that office. As time went on I realized Catholics had priests and supposedly other churches as well. I suspect that many of my siblings as well as their posterity find themselves in the same boat, not being acquainted with the LDS Church or another emphasizing the priesthood. If that is the case, they must also suffer from ignorance in this particular subject.

Consequently, I will begin with a general definition as taken from Webster. He says that "the priesthood is both the collective body of priests in a church and also the office held by a priest. A priest, in turn, is an **ordained** person trained and **authorized** by a bishop to be an intermediary between the people and God by conducting sacred rites, administering the sacrament, etc." Notice the terms authorized and ordained, which mean to give or delegate power to perform a given act. I think common

sense alone tells us that simply desiring to act for another person, let alone God, is insufficient to provide an individual with authority, no matter how well meaning he or she may be. As I have previously stated, such authority ultimately comes from God through one previously authorized to so administer.

I then turned to bishop in Webster and found the following: "a member of the highest order in the Christian Church. For most Christians the office represents the essential nature of Church order, and the reality of the Church's **authority delivered by Christ to his Apostles and transmitted by them.**" I used bold italics for "authority delivered by Christ to his Apostles" and transmitted by them to emphasize its requirement. As mentioned earlier, Catholics claim that authority via Peter and the Bishop of Rome, now known as the Pope. However, it was also made evident that they have no valid claim thus nullifying the Catholic Church's authority. As noted earlier, if that is the case, then all Protestant churches likewise lack authority, they broke away from the Catholic Church with none claiming receipt of authority via some divine means. With this rather lengthy preamble I will now get into the meat of the sub-title of my subject, which is "What is the Priesthood and its purpose?"

Callister tells us, "The priesthood is the power to act for God and perform his work as though he himself were present. When the Savior commissioned his apostles **he gave them power** [Matthew 10:1], and when he called the seventy he said, **'I give unto you power'** [Luke 10:19] – meaning he gave unto them the priesthood. Later he likens this power to the power of attorney used in legal situations. He tells us, "The priesthood is like a spiritual power of attorney given by God to mortals. With this power a man can teach with authority, heal the sick, perform miracles, administer the saving ordinances, and regulate the affairs of the Church, just as the Savior would do if he were present. Thus, the priesthood becomes a form of divine investiture of authority by which acts and words of the priesthood bearer become the acts and words of the Savior. Later he tells us, "On yet another occasion the Savior prophesied that his disciples would bear testimony before governors and kings, and then informed them that **'it is not ye that speak, but the spirit of your Father which speaketh in you'** [Matthew 10:20]. President Joseph F. Smith taught: **'The Holy Priesthood is that authority which God**

has delegated to man by which he may speak the will of God as if angels were here to speak for themselves'. ... Each time a worthy priesthood bearer gives a blessing or performs an ordinance he is entitled to think God's thoughts, to speak his words, and to be his hands. In this regard, President Joseph F. Smith elaborated: 'When a man who holds the Priesthood does that which is righteous, God is bound to acknowledge it as though he had done it Himself.'"

After more scriptural examples of the Apostles performing God's work with great power, Callister notes that Stephen, who wasn't an apostle, confounded the Jews in Acts 9:22 and points out that such priesthood authority was not isolated to the apostles alone. Then in his closing paragraph on this subtitle, he cites four great purposes of the priesthood, which I will quote in its entirety. "Armed with the power of God these priesthood men accomplished at least four great purposes: first, they taught the word of God with power; second, they performed the sacred ordinances with divine validity; third, they governed the affairs of the Church in an orderly way; and fourth, they administered blessings to the human family. This priesthood power is the heart of the Church – it pumps into every organ of the body. Take it away, and the teachings lack power; the ordinances lack validity; the administration lacks direction; and the Church lacks its full validity to bless. Without the priesthood, the Church is no more than another man made institution – a worthy service club of sorts, but it has no power to save."

WHO HELD THE PRIESTHOOD

Callister then continues on with the following. "There are many sincere people who are non-Christians, but sincerity alone does not make them eligible for the saving powers of Christ's atonement. They must also have faith in Jesus Christ and be obedient to his commandments. Likewise, there are many sincere Christians, but sincerity alone does not mean they hold the priesthood. They must be called of God and be ordained by the laying on of hands.

... The Lord declared how his priesthood power is dispensed: **'Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you.'** (John 15:16). Accordingly, two elements must be

present: first, God must choose, and second, the chosen man must be ordained by someone else who holds the priesthood." Note #4 to this chapter seems worthy of quoting as given by Callister, "Lactinius (A.D. 250 – 325) spoke of the need for a man to be ordained in order to be an authorized representative of Christ. Speaking of the forty-day period immediately following Christ's resurrection, he said, **'He [Christ] opened their [the apostles'] hearts, interpreted to them the scripture, which hitherto had been wrapped up in obscurity, ordained and fitted them for the preaching of His word'** (The Ante-Nicene Fathers, 7:301). Self-appointment is not a hallmark of Christ's Church. The book of Hebrews declared: **'No man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.'** (Hebrews 5:4) In making reference to this scripture, 'The Constitution of the Holy Apostles' (c. third or fourth century) stated: **For we have affirmed only that no one snatches the sacerdotal dignity to himself, but either receives it from God, as Melchizedec and Job, or from the high priest, as Aaron from Moses.'** ... **If, therefore, Christ did not glorify himself without the Father, how dare any man thrust himself into the priesthood who has not received that dignity from his superior, and do such things which it is lawful only for the priests to do. ... To be a Christian is in our own power; but to be an apostle, or a bishop, or any other such office, is not in our own power, but at the disposal of God, who bestows such gifts.'**" I could go on citing many other such quotations given by Callister or by others but I believe this establishes the fact that no individual has a right to take priesthood authority upon himself,

regardless of his sincerity or goodness. It must be bestowed by someone in authority who has received the same from Christ. Now let's move on to yet a different aspect of the

priesthood, even the keys mentioned earlier.

WHAT ARE THE KEYS OF THE PRIESTHOOD?

I can't improve on Callister's introductory paragraph for this particular sub-topic anymore than I can on other topics he discusses and will consequently quote him verbatim. "The keys of the priesthood are the rights of presidency. They are the right to direct how and when certain powers of the priesthood should be used.

Callister then continues on with the following. "There are many sincere people who are non-Christians, but sincerity alone does not make them eligible for the saving powers of Christ's atonement."

Each righteous priesthood bearer has certain inherent powers of the priesthood that are not subject to keys. In other words, when a man receives the priesthood he receives the right to use certain powers according to his righteous discretion. This includes the power to give priesthood blessings to his family or those in need. It includes the power to administer to the sick, and the power to dedicate his home. There are other priesthood powers, however, that may not be utilized without the approval of those who hold priesthood keys. For example, one cannot baptize, one cannot confirm, one cannot ordain without authorization from the one who holds the keys to direct such work. It is like having a car with a powerful engine but being unable to activate it without the keys.

Today these priesthood keys are held by prophets and apostles, stake presidents, bishops, quorum presidents, mission presidents and temple presidents. The Savior personally gave those keys to Peter: **'I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven'** (Matthew 16:19). He then explained the power and purpose behind these keys: **'Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven'** (Matthew 18:18)". I might interject here that all the keys of the kingdom are held by the presiding prophet and apostles while certain portions of them are granted to those of lesser offices to allow them to regulate the

Today these priesthood keys are held by prophets and apostles, stake presidents, bishops, quorum presidents, mission presidents and temple presidents.

affairs over which they preside. Thus, certain assigned keys become the rights of a given presidency. Callister asks the question, "Why, then, may some powers of the priesthood be exercised without keys and certain others only after the appropriate key or approval is given? It is a matter of order in God's Church. Those ordinances that require supervision of multiple priesthood bearers (such as the sacrament), or those that must be recorded on the records of the Church (such as blessing babies, baptisms, confirmations, ordinations, and temple work), need to be regulated by someone who holds the keys to insure that they are orderly and properly performed, and where appropriate, witnessed and recorded on the records of the Church. In addition, the saving and exalting ordinances

must be supervised by someone who holds the keys, to insure that they are performed in the Lord's designated way." According to Callister, Ignatius (A.D. 35-107) recognized this when he wrote to the Smyrnaeans saying, **"It is not lawful apart from the bishop ... to baptize ... but whatsoever he should approve, this is well pleasing also to God; that everything which ye may do may be sure and valid. ... He that doeth aught without the knowledge of the bishop rendereth service to the devil."**

WHAT HAPPENED TO PRIESTHOOD AND ITS KEYS?

Callister tells us, "With the death of the apostles there were still men holding the priesthood on the earth, but they did not hold the necessary keys to perpetuate the priesthood. Without the apostles and the keys they held, the course of priesthood extinction was unalterably fixed." He then makes reference to a quote by President Joseph F. Smith basically stating that it might have continued had the Lord seen fit to inspire and direct a given Melchizedek Priesthood holder to reorganize it but that apparently didn't happen because of wide spread wickedness and heresies. He then continues, "That is why we no longer hear references to the Melchizedek and Aaronic priesthoods within a short time following the Savior's ascension. ... After the death of the apostles the priesthood soon vanished. To emphasize this further, I quote once again a statement by Roger Williams (A.D. 1603-1683), the founder of Rhode Island and a strong proponent of religious freedom. He sensed something was missing in his day and age: **'The Apostasy ... hath so far corrupted all [Christian churches], that there can be no recovery out of that apostasy until Christ shall send forth new apostles to plant the churches anew.'** At one point, he declined to continue as pastor of the Baptist Church because there was **'no regularly constituted church on earth, nor any person qualified to administer any church ordinances; nor can there be until new apostles are sent by the Great Head of the Church for whose coming I am seeking.'**"

To further emphasize the loss of the priesthood and thus the authority to carry out the sacred functions of the Church, I will add another quote taken from Callister's book, which is attributed to Francis A. Sullivan, a Catholic professor of theology. After having researched the topic of apostolic succession, extensively, he made this

statement: **“One conclusion seems obvious: Neither the New Testament nor early Christian history offers support for a notion of apostolic succession as an unbroken line of Episcopal ordination from Christ through the apostles down through the centuries to the bishops of today”**. Or as Callister remarks, *“Simply stated, there was no ongoing succession of priesthood from the days of the primitive Church. At some point the priesthood line was severed, and the priesthood was lost.”*

Callister reviews once more the scriptural evidence in the Bible regarding the need for apostolic authority through which men are ordained to the priesthood, citing Hebrews 5:4, Exodus 28:1 and 29:7, Acts 1:22 and Hebrews 5:1 and 8:3. He emphasizes again that sincerity, well meaning and a righteous life is not sufficient for one to take upon himself the priesthood of God but all individuals so desiring must be ordained by one having received that authority through an unbroken chain dating back to Christ, who’s Church it is. Roger Williams, sensing this need clearly expressed the same.

Callister closes this particular section with the following; *“The loss of the priesthood did not mean the ongoing church did not have some truth – it did, but understandably it was only equivalent of a dim candle light. ... Honest searchers after truth were groping in the darkness, unable to find the truths that had been lost or corrupted in the great apostasy. Fortunately, with the advent of the reformers and finally the Restorers, the bright light of the gospel was restored.”* To that comment, I add my own; *“I have had the privilege of experiencing the same and bear witness of its beauty and power as experienced in my life and the lives of my loved ones.*

THE SUMMATION

Mr. Callister closes his discourse on the great apostasy with a summation consisting of questions regarding the loss and perversion of various doctrines and ordinances as well as a table comparing the doctrines of the early Church with those of the later perversions along with the scriptural evidence supporting that of the former. He adds a personal testimony of one, Jordan Vajda, a Catholic priest who joined the LDS Church. I will include the questions as a review and the testimony of Mr. Vajda but you

will have to go to Callister’s book to enjoy his comparisons.

“The evidence has been submitted. The issue is before us: Was Christ’s Church taken from the earth, or did it continue in its pristine state? ... In summation one might ask, ‘What were the fruits of the ongoing church? Did they parallel the fruits of the original Church?’ Perhaps the following questions will reveal the answer.

If Christ’s Church continued, where were the apostles who were the stabilizing and unifying power of the Church? Why all the scriptures and prophecies about an apostasy if there were no such event? Why did the Bible end if revelation from heaven continued? What happened to the miracles, prophecies, and revelations that were so abundant in Christ’s Church? Why a period of the dark ages if Christ and his gospel were the light of the world? What happened to the doctrines of pre-mortal existence, post mortal evangelism, proxy baptism, and eternal marriage? Why did they vanish from the canon of the ongoing church when they appeared in the canon of the New Testament? Why were the pure and simple ordinances of the gospel, such as baptism by

“The evidence has been submitted. The issue is before us: Was Christ’s Church taken from the earth, or did it continue in its pristine state? ...”

immersion and the sacrament, tampered with and altered from their original forms? Where in the scriptures did the Lord announce the doctrine of

*infant baptism or sprinkling or transubstantiation? Why was the divine manner of prayer altered from pouring out one’s heart in petitions to God to reciting memorized prayers in petition to Saints? Why were the scriptures – the spiritual lifeline of man – removed from the layman’s access and sequestered in the hands of the clergy? In referring to the clergy, why would John Huss, expressing the sentiments of his fellow reformers, say, ‘**And these very ones who ought to be leaders in imitating Christ are his chief enemies**’? Why did the moral standards of the church decline and eventually become no better than the standards of the world? Where is the evidence that the priesthood continued in the church, blessing the lives of the people and being administered by men of God?*

How many question marks can the honest searcher endure before recognizing that the Church of Jesus Christ was taken from the earth? Some people need only a toothpick on

the shoulder to get their attention; others need a two by four. At some point, if we fail to accept the truth before us, we become subject to the criticism leveled by Winston Churchill about an earlier prime minister: His rather sarcastic remark was, ‘Occasionally he stumbled over the truth, but hastily picked himself up and hurried on as if nothing had happened’.

In all sincerity, I repeat a previously asked question of my own, **“If one is convinced that the ongoing Catholic or universal church had lost its way through apostasy, where do any of the Protestant faiths obtain their right to the priesthood or the authority vested therein”?**

Jordan Vajda, a Catholic priest who joined The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, shared this wonderful; perspective: ***‘I can now say I have experienced the Holy Spirit’s confirming witness in my life that the LDS Church is true, and I cannot deny my conscience. I have no doubts or hesitations about my new found faith in the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. Having said that, though, I in no way deny the beauty or truthfulness that can be found in the Catholic Church; I remain grateful for my Catholic heritage and upbringing. What I have found in the LDS Church is a fullness, not a monopoly.’***

I really can’t see how any sincere person seeking the truth can deny the reality of the apostasy in spite of the good they find in their own faith as well as the many friends they have found therein. I can appreciate the fact that it is difficult to give up a practice that has much good in it but in reality one is not giving up that good but only adding to it through the fullness of the gospel as promised by Paul in Ephesians 1:10 wherein he said; *“That in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him:” ...*

Any sincere seeker of the highest degree of salvation can hardly dismiss the claims of the LDS Church without a deep study of its origin and doctrine accompanied by sincere prayer regarding the reality of it being founded by Jesus Christ. If true, such an organization is exactly what any sincere seeker of spiritual understanding seeks. Its establishment is a blessing, second only to the atonement itself, upon which Christianity is founded. If true, it is indeed the pearl of great price, which one would

quickly grasp when recognized. He or she must have the truth because such truth is the only means whereby one can be guided to that salvation all earnest seekers are after. It is also a priceless gift he or she can share with loved ones who are also on the mission of seeking truth. If false, such deception will soon be revealed by such study and prayer. Only pride, stubbornness or lack of interest can hold the sincere seeker of truth from an honest evaluation of the claims set forth by Joseph Smith. All are human characteristics that must be overcome to find a fullness of the authority and truth only Christ can provide in salvation.

In my own case, doubt with its many questions has fled and each new piece of information I come across simply increases the plan of salvation’s beauty, as I have come to know it. Faith with its many manifestations has replaced the earlier doubt I experienced and I now bask in the beauty of its promises as I approach that time we all must face as we exit mortality.

The one wish or gift I would like to leave to all of my siblings, all my cousins near and far and their various families is a sincere desire to examine the claims of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints as restored through Joseph Smith. I wouldn’t ask them to accept my word or testimony or anyone else’s. I would advise one to listen to them and consider their testimonies but one must learn for themselves. Sincere desire accompanied by scripture study and prayer is the key and it will invite the Holy Spirit who testifies of its reality and truthfulness. Such is promised by the prophet Moroni in Moroni 10:4 a promise I know is true. Depending upon one’s spiritual state, one may go through the process described in Alma 32 beginning with verse 26 and continuing to the end, as I did. I walked that same walk and can now testify that faith, as expressed in prayer, scripture study, obedience to principles learned and perseverance, will reward the sincere seeker of truth, with manifestations of the same through the Holy Spirit. One will learn the reality of the Holy Spirit being God’s communicator to man as well as the reality of the restoration through Joseph Smith. Continued study, prayer and obedience accompanied by receipt of ordinances administered with priesthood authority will reward the investigator with a vision of life’s purpose and God’s beautiful plan of salvation. Of this I testify in all humility and sincerity and I do so in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.