

## Book Reviews

WILLIAM J. WHALEN. *The Latter-day Saints in the Modern-Day World*. New York: The John Day Company, Inc. 319 pp., \$5.95.

Mr. Whalen gives the following titles to the chapters of his book: "Mormonism Today"; "Joseph Smith, Jr."; "The Book of Mormon"; "Kirtland, Missouri, and Nauvoo"; "Brigham Young and His Successors"; "Mormon Theology"; "Are Mormons Protestants?"; "Polygamy"; "Church Organization and the Priesthood"; "Wealth of the Mormon Church"; "Temple Rites"; "Mormonism and Freemasonry"; "Family Life and Welfare Programs"; "The Word of Wisdom"; "Mission System"; "Mormonism and the Negro"; "Brigham Young University"; "Other Latter-day Saints"; and "Mormonism Faces the Future."

In his preface Mr. Whalen says: "Although this is probably not the kind of book which a Mormon missionary would loan to a prospective convert, I have tried to be objective and to sift out the fabrications and myths which characterize many anti-Mormon tracts. I did not write this book as an attack on the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints although I have explored subjects which Church authorities would rather leave unmentioned."

Although in many places he seems to achieve his goal very well, in others, regrettably, he falls far short of his stated ideal. Nevertheless, he seems to have attained a rather remarkable grasp of many contemporary aspects of the Church and its operation. Even here, however, he makes many errors of interpretation and errors of fact.

For example, on page 143 he says: "The Church also allows anyone to hold this office [bishop] who can prove he is a lineal descendant of Aaron, the first high priest of the Jews, even though he has not undergone Mormon ordination." This statement is incorrect. No one has authority to act in the name God merely by lineal descent. He must be ordained by one who is God's legal administrator. The unique aspect of a lineal descendant's being called to be bishop is that he may serve without

counselors whereas others called to that office must have counselors.

On page 144 the author says, speaking of the quorums of the priesthood, they "hold regular meetings and elect their own officers." Quorums do not elect their officers. The president is chosen by those who preside over him; then he has the prerogative of choosing his counselors. Those men who are chosen as president and counselors are subsequently presented to the other members of the particular quorum for their sustaining vote.

On page 152 the author writes unqualifiedly, "Employees of these stores [ZCMI and Deseret Book Store] find the tithe listed as a payroll deduction on their checks." This statement is untrue regarding Deseret Book Company and grossly misleading concerning ZCMI. Of ZCMI's approximately 1,000 employees about 50 *at their personal request* have their tithing withheld. Perhaps it should be understood that the Church does not control ZCMI. Although it is the largest single stockholder, it is only one of over 1,300 stockholders.

On page 165 he says, speaking of one's entering the temple, "He presents his credentials to the doorkeeper and contributes a stipend for the upkeep of the temple." Here we have a truth and a falsehood. One is obliged to present a recommend from his bishop to the doorkeeper at the temple, but there is no provision for contributing stipends or free will offerings of any kind at the temple.

The author says the Church strongly discourages mixed marriages, in which assertion he is correct. However, on page 208 he also says, "The Mormon husband in such a mixed marriage would find the road blocked if he desired to advance to the higher Mormon priesthood. . . ." If he is referring to the offices of the Melchizedek Priesthood, which is what the Mormon means by the higher priesthood, he is in error, for certainly men do hold the Melchizedek Priesthood whose wives are not members of the Church.

On page 213 Mr. Whalen says: "Indeed some grandparents and great-grandparents may be thought to have achieved the godhead so that they are entitled to a high degree of honor and reverence." The reader should by all means observe the phrase "may be thought." This idea is clearly a projection of Mr. Whalen, and certainly not a doctrine of the Church.



On page 294 he says, "but when President McKay leaves the scene, Brown [President Hugh B. Brown] will go back to his ward; he is not an apostle nor is he now in the line of succession." Any Latter-day Saint and thousands of others know this is clearly in error. President Brown was sustained as an Apostle and a member of the Council of the Twelve on April 6, 1958.

These are some of many inaccuracies contained in Mr. Whalen's book. The book's more serious defects have to do with Mr. Whalen's treatment of such chapters as those dealing with Joseph Smith, the *Book of Mormon*, Brigham Young, polygamy, temple rites, etc. Although he asserted at the outset he was not writing an attack on the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and I suppose he must be taken at his word, he nonetheless resorted to many of the "fabrications and myths which characterize many anti-Mormon tracts" in his conscious or unconscious effort to discredit the Prophet Joseph Smith and Brigham Young. One chapter is titled "Brigham Young and His Successors," and yet fourteen pages of it are devoted to Brigham Young and only three pages to his *seven* successors.

Some errors, misconceptions, innuendos, etc., might have been avoided had Mr. Whalen not attempted to compact so much into so few pages as he treated some parts of his subject matter. On the other hand, it appears that certain passages were deliberately removed from their original contexts to convey a malicious implication or that the reader may make his own unwarranted false inference. For example, on page 58 Mr. Whalen quotes Brigham Young as saying of Joseph Smith, "If he acts like a devil, he has brought forth a doctrine that will save us, if we abide by it. He may get drunk every day of his life, sleep with his neighbor's wife every night, run horses and gamble . . . but the doctrine he has produced will save you and me and the whole world." No source is given for this quotation and the reader is left to conclude that this was Brigham Young's considered opinion of Joseph Smith. However, when one reads the passage in its context in the discourse Brigham Young gave in the Tabernacle in Salt Lake City on November 9, 1856, he will find that Brigham Young was recalling an incident which had occurred many years before. Brigham Young said: "I recollect a conversation I had with a priest who was an old friend of ours, *before I was personally acquainted with the Prophet Joseph.*" The man accused the Prophet of many things. Brigham

Young continued: "I said, hold on, Brother Gillmore, here is the doctrine, here is the Bible, the Book of Mormon, and the revelations that have come through Joseph Smith the Prophet. *I have never seen him, and do not know his private character.* The doctrine he teaches is all I know about the matter, bring anything against that if you can." (Italics ours.) It was then that Brigham Young said what Mr. Whalen quotes him as having said. (See *Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 4, pp. 77-78.) Unfortunately, arrangements of passages out of context such as this, and other selected statements, and things given only in part are terribly misleading to one who does not know them.

In spite of the book's inadequacies, some of which are gross, it is interesting and written in an easy and uncomplicated style, the over-all effect of which will probably be to stimulate an even increased interest in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and the Restored Gospel. Many will no doubt be struck with the incongruity of many things attributed to Joseph Smith and Brigham Young and the obviously remarkable characteristics of the Gospel and the Church. One is compelled to agree with Mr. Whalen's concluding sentence: "The student of Mormonism who would predict an early reversal of its expansion and growth would have to anchor his judgment on evidence other than that provided by its first 130 years."

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