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## Mark Bubeck and Spiritual Warfare

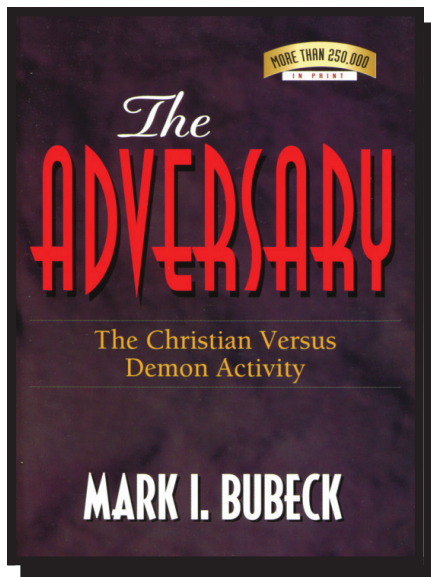
### The Cloning of Jessie Penn-Lewis

by G. Richard Fisher

Spiritual warfare could become a "hot button" topic in the Church because of an aggressive and, in some cases, a sincere but naive group who believe demons must be directly cast out of Christians. Books promoting the teaching are enjoying brisk sales in Christian bookstores while critiques of it collect dust.

For some time the ideas of Mark Bubeck have been circulating via Moody Bible College and Moody Press. Bubeck has several works on the market, his most popular being the 1975 publication, *The Adversary*. A foundational principle to Bubeck's teaching is that demons can get into Christians. He does not call it "possession," but a direct infestation, indwelling and demonization.

Though we would not put Bubeck



into the category of fringe Charismatics or Rebecca Brown,<sup>1</sup> the end result of his teaching is the same:

that Christians can have indwelling and *ancestral* demons that must be expelled.

Books propagating the teaching of generational "familiar spirits" are gaining endorsements from not only Bubeck, but people such as Warren Wiersbe, Erwin Lutzer (Pastor of Moody Church) and Charles Stanley.<sup>2</sup> One wonders how such respected names in evangelical Christianity turned up on such a list.

Bubeck's teaching gets no support from Jesus, who cast demons out of the *unsaved* with a word and never resorted to exorcisms or long renunciation prayers. They find no evidence in the story of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5), who were killed, not prayed over. Even if the new exorcists skew Jesus' metaphorical statement to Peter ("Get behind Me, Satan"—Matthew 16:23), there is no reported demon invasion, exorcism or prayer ritual which shows it was Peter's sin nature responding to confusion brought externally by Satan.

While it must be said that some of  
(continues on page 14)

#### Inside this Issue:

That's Just His Opinion? .....	Page 2
Jesus and the Pharisees .....	Page 4
The Return of Rebecca Brown, M.D. ....	Page 5

ancient forbears.

**Editor's Note:** Will Varner is Professor of Old Testament at The Master's College in Santa Clarita, Calif., and Director of their IBEX Jerusalem Campus in Israel.

#### Endnotes:

1. *Jerusalem Talmud*, "Sanhedrin," 29C.
2. Michael Stone, *Scriptures, Sects, and Visions*. Fortress Press, Philadelphia, 1980, pp. 57, 58.
3. *Judaisms and Their Messiahs at the Turn of the Christian Era*, eds: Jacob Neusner, William Green, Ernest Frerichs. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1987.
4. For a representative treatment of the Pharisees, see *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ*, Emil Schurer. T and T Clark, Edinburgh, 1979, Vol. II, pp. 381-403. For an older but sympathetic and thorough treatment, see *The Pharisees*, R. Travers Herford. Macmillan Company, New York, 1924.
5. For a treatment of the Pharisees that clearly distinguishes them from the scribes, see *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus*, Joachim Jeremias. SCM Press LTD, London, 1969, pp. 246-267.
6. Herford, pp. 210, 211.

7. Yehiel Eckstein, *What Christians Should Know About Jews and Judaism*. Word Books, Waco, Texas, 1984, pg. 255. See also the discussion in *The Jewish People and Jesus Christ*, Jacob Jocz, pp. 17-21.
8. Eckstein, op. cit., pg. 258.
9. *Antiquities of the Jews*, XVIII, 1.
10. *Mishnah Sanhedrin*, 11:3. Cited in Schurer, pg. 390.
11. *Jerusalem Talmud*, "Berachot," 14b; and *Babylonian Talmud*, "Sotah" 22b.
12. The passage from the English translation of the *Babylonian Talmud* is as follows: "AND THE PLAGUE OF PHARISEES etc. Our Rabbis have taught: There are seven types of Pharisees: the *shikmi* Pharisee, the *nikpi* Pharisee, the *kizai* Pharisee, the 'pestle' Pharisee, the Pharisee (who constantly exclaims) 'What is my duty that I may perform it?', the Pharisee from love (of God) and the Pharisee from fear. The *shikmi* Pharisee — he is one who performs the action of Shechem. The *nikpi* Pharisee — he is one who knocks his feet together. The *kizai* Pharisee — R. Nahman b. Isaac said: He is one who makes his blood flow against walls. The 'pestle' Pharisee — Rabbah b. Shila said: (His head) is bowed like (a pestle in) a mortar. The Pharisee (who constantly exclaims) 'What is my duty that I may perform it?' — but that is a virtue! — Nay, what he says is, 'What further duty is for me that I may perform it?'

The Pharisee from love and the Pharisee from fear — Abaye and Raba said to the tanna (who was reciting this passage), Do not mention 'the Pharisee from love and the Pharisee from fear'; for Rab Judah has said in the name of Rab: A man should always engage himself in Torah and the commandments even though it be not for their own sake, because from (engaging in them) not for their own sake, he will come (to engage in them) for their own sake. R. Nahman b. Isaac said: What is hidden is hidden, and what is revealed is revealed: the Great Tribunal will exact punishment from those who rub themselves against the walls" (*Sencino Edition*, Vol. VIII, pp. 112, 113).

13. Louis Feldman, "Is The New Testament Antisemitic?" *Moment*, December, 1990, pp. 32-35, 50-52.
14. Everett Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1987, pg. 408.
15. See *Babylonian Talmud*, "Shabbat", 31a.
16. Tosephta *Demai*, II, 12, 48. Cited in Jeremias, pg. 251, n. 22.
17. Cited by David Rausch, *Building Bridges*. Moody Press, Chicago, 1988, pg. 100.
18. *Babylonian Talmud*, "Gittin," 9, 10.
19. *Mishnah Yoma* 4:2; *Sukkah* 2:8, cited in *Encyclopedia Judaica*, Vol. XIV, pg. 1292.
20. Herford, op. cit., pg. 206.



#### Mark Bubeck

(continues from page 1)

Bubeck's thoughts on the world and the flesh are helpful, his views on the demonic present problems. Anyone teaching that demons can occupy Christians opens up the strange world of "deliverance" doctrines.

In *The Adversary*, Bubeck speaks of Jessie Penn-Lewis' book, *War on the Saints*, as "a classic in the study of Satan's war against believers."<sup>3</sup> It is obvious he has borrowed some of his extreme views from this woman who could be called "the Mother of all deliverance teachings."

Penn-Lewis was a Welsh mystic who wrote *War on the Saints* in 1904. Six years earlier she had suffered a breakdown and spent weeks in bed.<sup>4</sup> The current version of her book is heavily edited and a bit more palatable.

Bible expositor Donald Grey Barnhouse sounded a warning about Penn-Lewis years ago:

"Satan ... can never be on the throne of God nor can he ever come inside the body or being of one who has been born again ... We put forth this statement categorically in spite of the works of the English group known as the Overcomers, whose bible is frequently Mrs. Penn-Lewis' book, *War on the Saints*."<sup>5</sup>

Penn-Lewis believed the Church was entering the tribulation period and coinciding with that was a great demonic attack on the Church and Christians. She actually believed that demons could reside in the head, eyes, jaws, tongue, muscles of the face or in the nerve tissues of the brain in believers. They could be spatially located even in the bowels of Christians.<sup>6</sup> Bubeck, too,

purports to having discovered demons of nausea and colon,<sup>7</sup> so some of Penn-Lewis' excesses are being played out in Bubeck's books.

Bubeck has cobbled together ideas from Penn-Lewis, Charismatics, "deliverance" teachers and his own interpretations of purported encounters with demons.

In this Bubeck shows himself to be an empiricist, not a biblicist. Thomas Ice and Robert Dean Jr. show the difference:

"The empiricist will gather all the information he can from those who claim to have had some experience with an angel or a demon, or those who have helped deliver people from demonic influence. He will find out what they learned from these encounters and which methods, in their opinion, proved successful in delivering a

person from demonic oppression. He will collect these case studies and then draw conclusions about what we are to do when we encounter a demon. Even when the Bible is consulted with this process no matter how high the empiricist's view of Scripture, in practice the Bible is treated as just another voice or witness to demonic activity. This always results in adjusting the biblical teaching on demons until it fits with the conclusions of various experiences."<sup>8</sup>

The idea of demons as an internal enemy in believers cannot be found in the works of Reformers, Puritans or the historic mainstream and does not square with the Scriptures. Bubeck and his ilk would have us think that the Reformers, the great past leaders of Church history and the inspired writers of the Bible missed something.

Bubeck has developed a paranoid and simplistic view of some areas of life. This perspective often lays the blame for certain emotions and sin patterns in a believer on the doorstep of demons who can enter and control the Christian's life. Bubeck rejects the idea that a believer can be "possessed"<sup>9</sup> but says the enemy can gain ground in a believer and a direct control in internal areas (other than the spirit). This is what requires deliverance.<sup>10</sup>

Bubeck gives the following instructions when confronting a demon in the life of a worldly believer:

"Do demand that if the wicked power has divided into several parts, that he become a whole spirit. Do be prepared for the wicked power to try to hurt the person you are working with in some manner. Sudden body pains, a severe headache, a choking experience, and the like, are very often used. Command the power, naming the

symptom, to release this hold immediately in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ."<sup>11</sup>

In a long list of problems that Bubeck says could be attributed to demons,<sup>12</sup> he fails to note that these also could be attributed to a medical etiology, to sleep loss or sleep deficit, to sins and habit patterns or a number of other things.

### Bubeck's Information Source

For proof of demonic control of Christians and ancestral bondage, Bubeck refers to other "experts" in the field, teachers who agree with him. David Powlison, in one of the kindest treatments of this movement one will ever find, refers to the true source of the ancestral demons teaching:

"The notion of ancestral spirits is a bit of occult theology read *into* the Bible, not *out* of it."<sup>13</sup>

In his book, *The Rise of Fallen Angels*, Bubeck cites Moody Professor C. Fred Dickason,<sup>14</sup> who says he got some of his information from demon contacts (in Christians) who told him the truth about their lies.<sup>15</sup>

Bubeck also appeals to C. Peter Wagner.<sup>16</sup> Wagner is an extreme fringe Charismatic who has claimed he has the gift of "leg lengthening."<sup>17</sup> Some years ago Wagner called together a conference at Fuller Seminary to bind the demon of homelessness, the demon of sickness (which apparently did not work), and the demon of the Bermuda Triangle.<sup>18</sup> He also promotes the theories of Costa Rican occult psychologist Rita Cabezas, who promulgates the idea of territorial demons who rule geographical areas and must be discerned and prayed away.<sup>19</sup>

Another of Bubeck's experts is James Friesen,<sup>20</sup> who claims to have found demons lodged in people's necks and shoulders, something he got from "a flash of an idea."<sup>21</sup> He also believes in ancestral demons.<sup>22</sup>

This constant citing of experts creates, in Richard Ofshe's words, "a belief that relies not on evidence but on the constant quoting and referencing of others who hold the same belief."<sup>23</sup>

### Diminishing Christ's Work

D.L. Moody said:

"Someone has said there is always a devil at our right hand: though if we resist the devil he will flee from us. But it is different with the flesh; the flesh cleaves to us. **I believe that the flesh is the worst enemy we have.**"<sup>24</sup>

David Wells explains how the kind of ideas and teachings such as Bubeck's, empty the cross of its accomplishment:

"Oscar Cullmann has noted the uncommonly large number of New Testament passages in which Christ is spoken of as being at God's 'right hand' ... These passages testify to the powerful rule that he is now exercising in heaven and on earth. Paul admonishes his readers about Satan's strategies in Ephesians 6:10-20 only after he has told them that by virtue of the cross and resurrection, Christ is already 'far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come' ... That is to say that the warfare with demonic powers is not still awaiting some ultimate resolution: it has been won already, and Christians have entered into the victory through their union with Christ. When Paul comes to deal with spiritual warfare in Ephesians 6:10-20, he counsels believers simply to 'withstand' and 'stand,' drawing on the weapons of Christian character, the Word, and prayer."<sup>25</sup>

As one reads *The Adversary*,



Bubeck appears almost Shamanistic. In a renunciation prayer he suggests the following words advising that all Christians should pray it out loud not knowing what works of Satan have been passed on from our ancestry:

"I here and now renounce and repudiate all the sins of \_\_\_\_\_'s blood ancestors. ... I cancel out all demonic working that would want to be passed on to \_\_\_\_\_ from his blood ancestors."<sup>26</sup>

This undercuts the whole doctrine of redemption from the past (1 Peter 1).

### Ancestral Bondage

The notion that a Christian can suffer demonic influence because of the sins of an ancestor has circulated for a number of years and Bubeck has picked it up along with other errors. His explanation:

"The Word of God hints that when demonic powers get their hooks into a person's life, a problem of a transfer to succeeding generations is created. These fallen angels can control a human person only as long as that person lives. When he dies, the demonic powers continue to live. Seeking to continue their mission for Satan, they look to the most direct claim for their next work: this seems to be the deceased person's children, grandchildren, nieces and nephews. Thus demonization becomes a generational problem."<sup>27</sup>

Thomas Ice addresses these errors after examining Exodus 20:5:

"It seems clear from the passage that the basis of God's judgment or blessings are based upon the choice of each successive generation's decision to follow after the sins of their ancestors. Thus, the mode of transmission of the sins is not because the children are under a curse from sin committed by the parent. In-

stead, the sin is conveyed through the child learning the sin patterns from his parents and choosing generation after generation to persist in them. A mystical or curse transmission is not taught or implied from the text! Ezekiel 18:2-20 says that God curses each Israelite individual for his own sins and not specifically because of something that their fathers have done ... In fact *there is not one example in the entire Bible of a saved person being under a satanic curse, which had to be 'broken' by Christian exorcism or distinct confession.*"<sup>28</sup>

### Possession vs. Invasion

In *The Adversary*, Bubeck posits that a believer cannot be possessed in the same sense as an unbeliever. This unbiblical nuance is also held by Dickason and others. However, the mind and emotions are subject to invasion and control. Bubeck and others would call it "giving ground." The control is real, pervasive and determinative, according to Bubeck and an exorcistic type of renunciation prayer is the only way out. He explains it this way:

"This is like opening the door of your life and letting in the thief who is going to rob and hurt you have a place in your life ... Satan's worker will try to get more helpers to move in, and they will begin to try to dictate to you in certain given areas how you will feel, think or act. They will even try to increase their areas of hold through more deceiving and more lessening of your own will to the substitution of theirs. ... They will be so clever as to make it almost impossible to separate your own mind, will and emotions from theirs."<sup>29</sup>

Most commentators would see giving Satan ground as giving Satan an advantage. Ephesians 4:27 says, "give no place to the devil."

"Place" is recognized as a metaphor for opportunity as the context shows. When we speak lies and speak harshly to others, we give Satan a foothold by promoting his kingdom and agenda rather than God's. There is nothing in the context about indwelling demons.

Bubeck's ideas contradict such Bible verses as 1 John 1:9 and Psalm 51, which tell believers to confess and forsake our sin, not look for demon scapegoats. It circumvents the admonition of Hebrews 12 to struggle with and overcome besetting sins and continue to run with perseverance. Our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit. Demons cannot occupy God's temple.

While James 4:7 tells us to resist the devil, exorcisms and renunciation prayers are not mentioned. James says we are to humble ourselves under the hand of God, repent, change, stop befriending the world and acting like the unsaved. We are to resist, that is, stand for God. Bubeck's ideas destroy responsibility and the truth of lifelong struggle as found in the eighth chapter of Romans. Galatians commands us to put off the works of the flesh and put on the fruit of the Spirit.

### Bubeck's "Findings"

Bubeck's writings give the picture of someone who knows more than the writers of Scripture, though he probably does not intend to convey that idea. In *The Adversary*, he discovered or uncovered a "snarling, cruel, crude, vulgar demon that had taken the same name as this young man's last name."<sup>30</sup> No biblical text or evidence is sighted.

In a long passage on communication (Ephesians 4:22-32) Paul deals with sins of speech. Vulgarity is to be stopped and we are to replace it with speech that builds others up. Perhaps all that is too easy or too normal. Paul nowhere hints of having conversations and confronta-

tions with “vulgar demons.”

Bubeck continues this tack with his interpretation of his 11-year-old daughter’s stomach and colon problems.<sup>31</sup> His concern right away was demons. After repeated ritualistic prayers and in accordance with his expectations he discovered and bound the demons “Nausea,” “Colon,” “Destroyer” and “Deceiver” as well as “no-name” demons. After long nights and many renunciation prayers, protracted binding of various demons, his daughter was “cured.”

Most Christians would be troubled to learn that what Bubeck is proposing is akin to Unification Church doctrine. In *The Divine Principle*, the Rev. Sun Myung Moon teaches that believers are subject to Satan’s invasions.<sup>32</sup>

Even the Assembly of God denomination issued a position paper in 1972 that would refute the extremes of modern day “bondage breakers.” They hold the biblical position that demons are never an *internal* foe for the saved.

There is a universe of difference in our approach to the Christian life when we begin to see demonic influence as internal and determinative as opposed to external and resistible. James 1 makes it clear that the *internal* foe is always our own sin nature. It also seems very clear that Satanic attack is always an *external* influence for the Christian. The onslaughts are real and difficult but external.

Christian Research Institute writers Brent Grimsley and Elliot Miller, saw this clearly showing that pastoral care hangs on this issue.<sup>33</sup>

If interior lusts are what draw us away, then Satan can appeal externally to the foe within. That, we believe, is the biblical perspective. There is nothing in Scripture that would persuade us that demons can

come into the body and the interior realm of a Christian in any way. If our sin patterns are bound to our old nature all the hocus pocus of exorcistic rituals, renunciation prayers and acting out a script will not offset a continued lifelong struggle and prayerful watching. Bubeck’s view appeals to our quick fix, microwave generation.

Eric Sauer saw this truth clearly in the athletic figures of Scripture:

“The race looks *forward* to the heavenly goal ... Boxing points to our opposition to the enemy *in* us. ... I buffet *my body*, and bring it into bondage ... Wrestling refers to our fight with the powers of darkness *around* and *beneath* us. ... these three comparisons, in spite of their great similarity, nevertheless picture three different directions of our Christian warfare.”<sup>34</sup>

Sauer is quick to point out that the powers of darkness are “around and beneath.” Satan and demons are clearly shown in the Bible as the infernal and external enemy while the flesh is the internal double agent.

As Thomas Ice wrote, all the shenanigans of binding demons, rebuking the devil, inherited curses are all a “false mysticism.”<sup>35</sup>

### **The True Path from Bondage**

The biblical route for the growing Christian is not an excursion into the realm of the demonic, or a misty ancestral history, but what the Puritans used to call “all-around godliness.” This simply meant the week-in and week-out continuance in all the means of grace: daily prayer, Bible reading, church attendance, regular confession of sin, resisting temptation, fellowship, persistent well-doing, cutting off temptation and obeying Scripture. These are the weapons of true Christian warfare (Ephesians 6, Hebrews 10-12).

Doing all the above will free us from having to rely on magical words and mystical phrases or demon busters and deliverance shamans. Spiritual warfare is fundamentally ethical, moral and behavioral warfare. That basically is the really deep but hard way.

The big question that Bubeck and those like him have to answer is this: If Scripture gives us doctrine and instruction in righteousness and all we need to be “complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16), why is it totally silent regarding the things the deliverance teachers say are so crucial. If it is not in the Word of God where is it coming from?

The devil is only a tempter. He is called that (Luke 4:2). The real origin of evil is our own hearts (James 1:14-16). All the combustible matter is already in us. Satan and demons can only appeal to that in the believer. Let’s not fight imaginary battles, that though sensational in the short run (and good for book sales), have no lasting benefit in the long run. Exorcisms are a detour from the real world of struggle and growth.

Bubeck’s new doctrines will only divide churches and confuse believers. In the end Satan will have won because discerning Christians remained quiet on this vital issue.

Bubeck’s approach as far as depravity, the sin nature, addictions and the mastery and depth of sin (even in a believer) is shallow and deficient. Far more biblical, sensible, and productive are two works from Gary Shogren and Edward Welch, *Addictive Behavior* and *Running in Circles — How to Find Freedom from Addictive Behavior*. The first volume is designed for pastors and counselors, while the second serves as a workbook for a the one being counseled. These are hard hitting, scriptural and practical works.


The words of Thomas Ice and Robert Dean are a fitting conclusion and warning in regard to the demons in Christians teaching:

“We are calling on the body of Christ to reject the proliferating superstitions in Christendom. These beliefs are the products of human thoughts and experiences, but cannot be verified from the Bible. Possibly the fact that so many people have recently been converted out of the occult explains why spiritual warfare in many circles is increasingly resembling a ‘tit-for-tat’ battle between two sorcerers. But the Bible says that our minds are to be renewed by *God’s Word itself*, and not by the Word of God as interpreted from a non-Christian framework, especially a framework which has much in common with the occult.”<sup>36</sup>

#### Endnotes:

1. See the accompanying article, “The Curse

of Curse Theology — The Return of Rebecca Brown, M.D.,” found in this *Journal*.  
2. See for example *Reclaiming Spiritual Ground* by Jim Logan, Moody Press.  
3. Mark Bubeck, *The Adversary*, pg. 129.  
4. *Good News Broadcaster*, Nov. 1983, pp. 26-28.  
5. Donald Grey Barnhouse, *The Invisible War*, pg. 166.  
6. See further, “The Diversion of Deliverance,” *PFO Newsletter*, Vol. 5, No. 3, July-Sept. 1985, pg. 2.  
7. *The Adversary*, op. cit., pg. 121.  
8. Thomas Ice and Robert Dean Jr., *A Holy Rebellion*, pg. 30. This book is now available under the title, *Overrun by Demons*.  
9. *The Adversary*, op. cit., pg. 88.  
10. *Ibid.*, pp. 90-92.  
11. *Ibid.*, pg. 125.  
12. *Ibid.*, pp. 144-146.  
13. David Powlison, *Power Encounters*, pg. 46. Emphasis in original.  
14. Mark Bubeck, *The Rise of Fallen Angels*, pg. 59.  
15. C. Fred Dickason, *Demon Possession and the Christian*, pg. 210. For a critique of Dickason and his work, see *The Quarterly Journal*, Vol. 8, No. 2, April-June, 1988, pp. 2, 9-10.  
16. *The Rise of Fallen Angels*, op. cit.  
17. C. Peter Wagner, *How to Have a Healing Ministry in Any Church*, pg. 53-54.

18. Michael Horton, editor, *Power Religion*, pg. 64.  
19. See further, Mike Taylor, *Do Demons Rule Your Town*, Chapter 9.  
20. *The Rise of Fallen Angels*, op. cit., pg. 25.  
21. James Friesen, *Uncovering the Mystery of MPD*, pg. 231.  
22. *Ibid.*, pg. 257.  
23. Richard Ofshe, *Making Monsters*, pp. 202-203.  
24. W.H. Daniels, editor, *Moody: His Words, Work, and Workers*, pg. 389.  
25. David Wells, *God in the Wasteland*, pp. 180-181.  
26. *The Adversary*, op. cit., pg. 149.  
27. *The Rise of Fallen Angels*, op. cit., pg. 45.  
28. *Biblical Perspectives*, Vol. 5, No. 2, March-April 1992, “An Examination of False Spiritual Warfare Cliches,” pg. 5.  
29. *The Adversary*, op. cit., pg. 89.  
30. *Ibid.*, pg. 95.  
31. *Ibid.*, pp. 117-122.  
32. *The Divine Principle*, pg. 148.  
33. Brent Grimsley and Elliot Miller, *Christian Research Journal*, Summer 1993, “Can a Christian Be Demonized?,” pp. 16-19, 37-38.  
34. Eric Sauer, *In the Arena of Faith*, pp. 51-52.  
35. *Biblical Perspectives*, op. cit., pg. 6.  
36. *A Holy Rebellion*, op. cit., pg. 194. 

#### Editorials

(continues from page 2)

Mormon Apostle Bruce R. McConkie acknowledges this teaching in *Mormon Doctrine*. Under the heading, “Only Begotten Son,” he writes:

“Beloved Son, Christ, Son, Son of God, Christ is the *Only Begotten ... the Only Begotten Son ... the Only Begotten of the Father ...* These name-titles all signify that our Lord is the only Son of the Father in the flesh. Each of the words is to be understood literally. Only means *only*; Begotten means *begotten*; and Son means *son*. Christ was begotten by an Immortal Father in the same way that mortal men are begotten by mortal fathers” (pp. 546-547, italics in original).

Under the heading, “Son of God,” in the same book, he writes:

“God the Father is a perfected, glorified, holy Man, an immortal Personage. And Christ was born into the world as the literal Son of this Holy Being; he was born in the same personal, real, and literal sense that any mortal son is born to a mortal father. There is nothing figurative about his

paternity; he was begotten, conceived and born in the normal and natural course of events, for he is the Son of God, and that designation means what it says” (pg. 742).

When this writer has confronted Latter-day Saints with these statements, he repeatedly has been told, “That’s just his opinion!”

There seems to be little hesitation by Mormons to distance themselves from awkward areas of theology proclaimed by their church leaders. Yet one of the LDS church’s tactics to buttress its claim as the only true church is an appeal to the Bible.

A small cardstock handout used by Mormons is said to contain the “Seventeen Points of the True Church.” This circular says its author consulted the Bible to identify the characteristics of the first-century Christian Church, thereby allowing him to discover which is the one true Church upon the Earth today. The circular goes on to say that he found 17 distinctive characteristics of this true church, all of which the LDS church possesses. Some of them were: a restored church, a foundation of apostles and prophets, the teaching that God (the Father) and Jesus Christ (the Son) have bodies of flesh and bone, and the practice of baptism