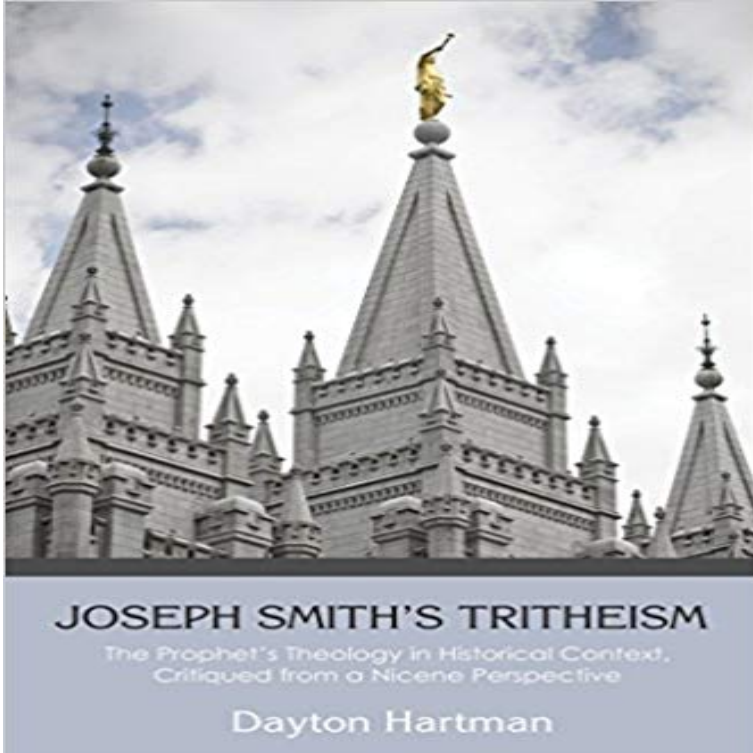


# Joseph Smiths Tritheism: The Prophets Theology in Historical Context, Critiqued from a Nicene Perspective



I have always declared God to be a distinct personage, Jesus Christ a separate and distinct personage from God the Father, and that the Holy Ghost was a distinct personage and a Spirit: and these three constitute three distinct personages and three Gods. --Joseph Smith

Few figures in North American religious history are quite as enigmatic as Joseph Smith. His unabashed adherence to tritheism gave birth to one of the most influential religious movements in American history. Many attempts have been made to engage his life and unorthodox theology. However, Joseph Smiths Tritheism is a unique text that blends church history, thoughtful theological exegesis, and evangelical apologetics in an attempt to engage Joseph Smiths theology anew. Hartman shows that a grasp of historic Trinitarian thought matters. In this context, it matters for Christians seeking to understand and evaluate the doctrine of God held by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. By carefully articulating Joseph Smiths classic tritheistic view against the historic Nicene Creed, Hartman offers the reader--whether Christian or Mormon--a framework for such a conversation. In this respect, this is a unique and timely work.

--Ed Smither, Professor of Intercultural Studies, Columbia International University

Dayton Hartmans well-researched and well-reasoned book serves as a reminder that a proper understanding of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity--in its biblical and historical context--is necessary to accurately evaluate the theological claims of Mormonism, not to mention other departures from orthodoxy. Hartman ably shows that Mormonisms view of deity is deficient and that creedal Christianity, which is a truthful distillation of the Scriptures, is not.

--Paul Copan, Pledger Family Chair Professor of Philosophy and Ethics, Palm Beach Atlantic University

In his excellent book, Dayton Hartman not

only carefully explores the basis for the historic Christian doctrine of the Trinity but he skillfully compares that Nicene orthodoxy with the tragic tritheistic theology of the Mormon prophet, Joseph Smith. Hartman provides a thoughtful explanation of the various theological, historical, and cultural influences that shaped Smiths basic beliefs about God. This is an important and valuable theological-apologetics work. --Kenneth Samples, Senior Research Scholar, Reasons to Believe In the light of Mormonisms recent claims to be a valid Christian denomination, Dayton Hartman provides a thorough critique of its tritheism. By displaying Joseph Smiths beliefs and motivations, as well as contemporary efforts to conceal this heresy, he capably shows that it is incompatible with the Bible and early Christian doctrine. A solid treatment exemplifying careful academic interaction with aberrant theology. --Winfried Corduan, Professor Emeritus of Philosophy and Religion, Taylor University This book provides a starting point for discussions on Trinitarian doctrine and its heterodox expressions. This is a thought provoking work that offers a solid foundation for further research on these (and related) issues. --Leo Percer, Associate Professor of Biblical Studies, Liberty University Baptist Theological Seminary Dayton Hartman holds a PhD in Church and Dogma History from North-West University (Potchefstroom). He serves as Lead Pastor of Redeemer Church in Rocky Mount, North Carolina, and as Adjunct Professor of Religious Studies at Judson College.

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