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### Earl W. Carlsen, *Christ's Answer to the Atheist, to the Jew: Who Wrote It?*

Paul Y. Hoskisson

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**Title**

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**Abstract** Review of *Christ's Answer to the Atheist, to the Jew: Who Wrote It?* (1987), by Earl W. Carlsen.

Earl W. Carlsen, *Christ's Answer to the Atheist, to the Jew: Who Wrote It?* Amherst, WI: Palmer, 1987. 32 pp. \$3.95.

Reviewed by Paul Y. Hoskisson

This pamphlet is not harmful, but it certainly does not speak as a good example of the cause of Christ that it claims to champion. The author of Romans 10:2 could have been speaking of pieces like *Christ's Answer* when he said, "For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge." The author can certainly be commended for his zeal.

There are, however, so many problems with this small book that one simply cannot recommend it. It is, for example, rife with typographical and grammatical errors. Consider the statement of purpose on the inside front cover ("Herein may be found new means for warming family and others with reborn gift and glow of Christianity"), and the conditional sentence on the first page ("If . . . His mission in life is as Christian claim . . ."). But these are relatively minor when compared with the errors of fact which occur throughout. These range from a misrepresentation of what "many [biblical] scholars" say (namely, that they have proved "the Bible to be historical record [*sic*]," on p. 2), to unsubstantiated claims about what the Book of Mormon says (on p. 2, the Lehitites "landed on the shores of South America"—and never mind that the "they" at the beginning of that paragraph does not have a clear antecedent), and beyond, to blatantly *false* claims about what the Book of Mormon says. According to p. 2, the most important account in the Book of Mormon is "Christ's resurrected ministry among [the Nephites] which ushered in nearly three centuries of peace." But if Christ came in A.D. 34, and the first dissensions from the Church occurred before A.D. 200 (as indicated by 4 Nephi 18-22), the claim of "nearly three centuries of peace" is simply untrue. Even matters which should be fairly easy to get right are frequently wrong: The note about the author that appears on the inside back cover fails even to give the name of the Church properly.

In his brief book, according to a statement on the inside front cover, the author presents "numerous objective evidencies [*sic*] of Christ's visit to the Americas." The "empirical [*sic*] evidence from hundreds of scholarly studies, here summarized in 52 "evidences," (p. 3; however, the bibliography at the back

of the book lists only thirteen sources) is given uncritically, and ranges from reasonably accurate renderings of acceptable instances (e.g., number 34, chiasmus) to unprovable assumptions (e.g., number 29, where Ixtlilxochitl is said to have intended "Christ" when he recorded "Quetzalcoatl") and by simple factual untruth (e.g., number 31, where we are informed that "Zac means white . . . in Hebrew! And in this day white tribes are still to be found"—in Mayan lands?!).

There are other, more reliable sources for Book of Mormon evidence.