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THE CASE AGAINST MORMONISM

VOLUME 1



By Jerald and Sandra Tanner

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1967
(Digital version 2021)

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PREFACE

In the last nine years we have come across a great deal of information concerning the history and doctrines of the Mormon Church. Many things which we have found are not generally known by the Mormon people. For this reason we feel obligated to make our findings available to others.

We are very indebted to several libraries for providing microfilms and photocopies of rare documents and books. We are particularly indebted to James Wardle, LaMar Petersen, Wesley P. Walters and Stanley S. Ivins for the help they have given to us.

The Historical Society of Quincy and Adams County, Illinois, gave us permission to use the unusual picture on the front cover. It is a photograph of a capstone from the Mormon Temple which was built in Nauvoo, Illinois. There is also an interesting story connected with this capstone. In 1844 Josiah Quincy visited Joseph Smith in Nauvoo. In his book, *Figures of the Past*, he wrote the following concerning this visit:

Near the entrance to the Temple we passed a workman who was laboring upon a huge sun, which he had chiselled from the solid rock. The countenance was of the negro type, and it was surrounded by the conventional rays.

“General Smith,” said the man, looking up from his task, “Is this like **the face you saw in vision?**”

“**Very near it,**” answered the prophet, “except” (this was added with an air of careful connoisseurship that was quite overpowering) — “except that the nose is just a thought too broad.” (*Figures of the Past*, by Josiah Quincy, as quoted in *Among the Mormons*, edited by William Mulder and A. Russell Mortensen, 1958, page 138)

We do not claim to be original with the title *The Case Against Mormonism*. R. C. Webb used it many years ago as a title for one of his books.

Bold type is used for emphasis throughout this book.

1. A MARVELOUS WORK?

In 1830 Joseph Smith, the Mormon Prophet, published the Book of Mormon—a book which purports to be a history of the “former inhabitants of this continent.” The same year he organized a church in the state of New York.

Today, there are two main groups which claim to base their teachings upon Joseph Smith’s works. They are the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is by far the largest of these two groups. Members of this church are commonly referred to as “Mormons.” The Mormons have their headquarters in Salt Lake City, Utah. In this book we will deal primarily with this church.

There is **not an honest man or woman** in this world who loves the Lord who wouldn’t join this Church if they knew what it was. (*Deseret News*, Church Section, January 22, 1966, page 16)

The story of Joseph Smith is really very interesting. When he was a young man, his family moved to the state of New York. Within a few miles of his home there was a hill which Joseph Smith later called the Hill Cumorah. According to Joseph Smith, this was no ordinary hill, for on this hill two of the greatest battles in history were fought. Bruce R. McConkie, of the First Council of the Seventy, states:

Both the Nephite and Jaredite civilizations fought their final great wars of extinction at and near the Hill Cumorah (or Ramah as the Jaredites termed it), which



Joseph Smith



Brigham Young

Miraculous Claims

The claims of Mormonism are such that they cannot be ignored. The Mormon Apostle LeGrand Richards claims that a person cannot be honest with himself and reject the Mormon Church:

hill is located between Palmyra and Manchester in the western part of the state of New York. It was here that Moroni hid up the gold plates from which the Book of Mormon was translated. (*Mormon Doctrine*, by Bruce R. McConkie, 1966, page 175)

Bruce R. McConkie also stated:

It is reported by President Brigham Young that there was in the Hill Cumorah a room containing many wagon loads of plates. (*Mormon Doctrine*, page 454)

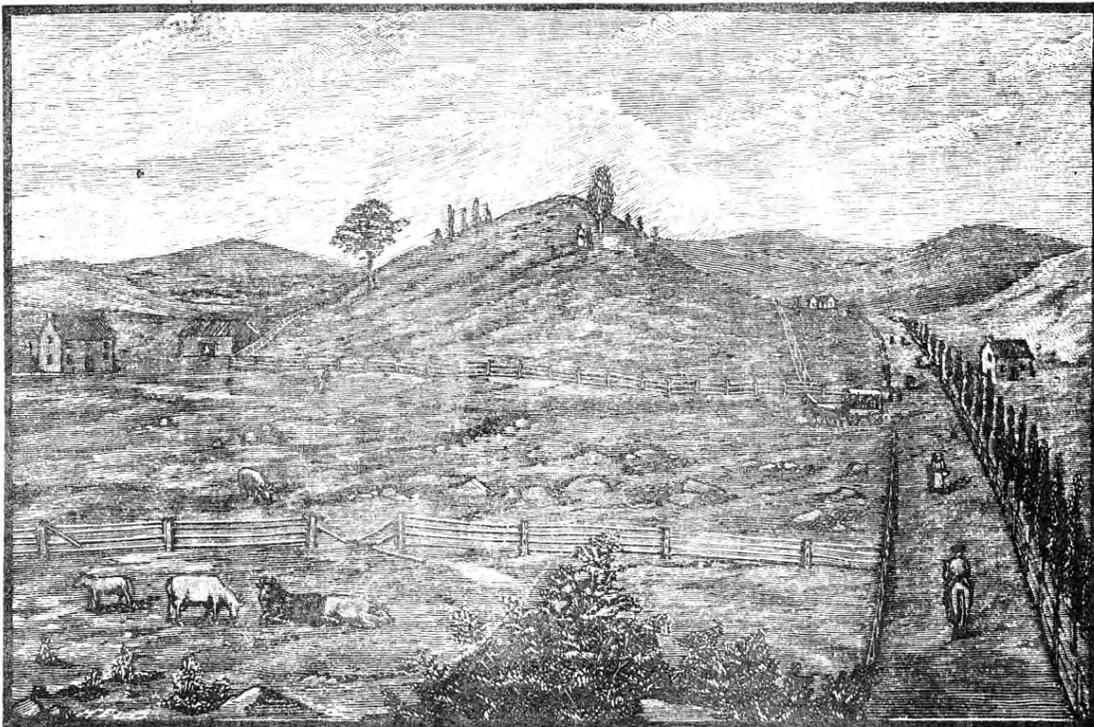
An ordinary person would probably see nothing of importance about this hill, but to the Mormons this is one of the most important places on earth.

While Joseph Smith was digging a well for Clark Chase, he found “a chocolate-colored, somewhat egg-shaped stone” (*Comprehensive History of the Church*, by B. H. Roberts, Vol. 1, page 129). This might have been just an ordinary stony (maybe a little unusual in appearance), but to Joseph Smith it was a “Seer Stone.” This stone had been prepared by God, and through it Joseph Smith received revelations.

Joseph Smith claimed that on the night of September 21, 1823, he had a visitor. But this was no ordinary visitor, it was an Angel. The Angel told Joseph Smith that gold plates were buried in the Hill Cumorah. The next day Joseph Smith found these plates, and, if his story is true, he made the greatest discovery in the history of archaeology. Archaeologists have searched for years trying to piece together the history of the ancient inhabitants of this land, but Joseph Smith turned over one stone and found all the answers. Underneath this stone he found a box which contained the gold plates.



The Angel Delivering the Gold Plates to Joseph Smith



The Hill Cumorah

Joseph Smith claimed that the plates contained “an account of the former inhabitants of this continent, and the source from whence they sprang.” More important than this, however, they contained “the fulness of the everlasting Gospel. “According to the Mormon leaders, the Book of Mormon is far superior to the Bible because it contains the “pure” words of Christ. The Bible, they claim, has been altered by wicked Priests. The Mormon Apostle LeGrand Richards states:

. . . the “everlasting gospel” could **not** be discovered through reading the Bible alone, this is the only Christian church in the world that did not have to rely upon the Bible for its organization and government; . . . if we had no Bible we would still have all the needed direction and information through the revelations of the Lord “to his servants the prophets” in these latter-days. (*A Marvelous Work and a Wonder*, by LeGrand Richards, 1966, page 41)

After the Mormon Church was organized, Joseph Smith gave a revelation which stated that the Saints were to gather to Jackson County, Missouri. To the Mormon leaders, this was no ordinary land; they taught that this was the place where the “Garden of Eden” was located. Bruce R. McConkie stated:

The early brethren of this dispensation taught that the Garden of Eden was located in what is known to us as the land of Zion, an area for which Jackson County, Missouri, is the center place. (*Mormon Doctrine*, page 20)

In Daviess County, Missouri, Joseph Smith found the remains of an altar which he claimed was built in the days of Adam. Bruce R. McConkie stated:

At that great gathering Adam offered sacrifices on an altar built for the purpose. **A remnant of that very altar** remained on the spot down through the ages. On May 19, 1838, Joseph Smith and a number of his associates stood on the remainder of the pile of stones at a place called Spring Hill, Daviess County, Missouri. (*Mormon Doctrine*, page 21)

Edward Stevenson, who was personally acquainted with Joseph Smith, made this statement in 1893:

I was with the Prophet Joseph Smith sixty miles northeast of Liberty jail in 1838, less than one year before he was imprisoned there. We were standing with others on the hill Adam-Ondi-Ahman. The Prophet said, pointing to a mound of stones:

“There is where **Father Adam built an altar** when he was driven from the Garden of Eden and offered up sacrifice unto the Lord.”

He further said that the Garden of Eden was in or near Independence, the center stake of Zion. I thought it a great privilege to be at that time with the Prophet, and to hear his words regarding the mound and pile of

rocks laid up at so early a period of the world’s history. (*Reminiscences of Joseph the Prophet*, by Edward Stevenson, 1893, page 40)

The Mormon Apostle Orson Pratt stated:

Adam-ondi-ahman, the Valley of God, where Adam dwelt, was located about fifty miles north of Jackson County, in the State of Missouri. The Lord has revealed to us that Adam dwelt there towards the latter period of his probation. (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 16, page 48)

In June, 1834, while traveling toward Independence, Missouri, Joseph Smith discovered a “skeleton of a man.” This was no ordinary skeleton, however. It was revealed to Joseph Smith by “the Spirit of the Almighty” that “the person whose skeleton” was before him was “Zelph” a “white Lamanite and a “man of God,” who was killed “during the last great struggle of the Lamanites and Nephites” (*History of the Church*, Vol. 2, pages 79-80).

In the year 1835 a man came to Kirtland, Ohio, with some Egyptian mummies and rolls of papyrus. Joseph Smith examined the rolls and stated that “one of the rolls contained the writings of Abraham, another the writings of Joseph of Egypt” (*History of the Church*, Vol. 2, page 236). When Josiah Quincy visited Nauvoo in 1844, Joseph Smith showed him the papyrus rolls. Josiah Quincy later wrote:

“And now come with me,” said the prophet “and I will show you the curiosities.” So saying, he led the way to a lower room, where sat a venerable and respectable-looking lady. “This is my mother, gentlemen. The curiosities we shall see belong to her. They were purchased with her own money, at a cost of six thousand dollars;” and then, with deep feeling, were added the words, “And that woman was turned out upon the prairie in dead of night by a mob.” There were some pine presses fixed against the wall of the room. These receptacles Smith opened, and disclosed four human bodies, shrunken and black with age. “These are mummies,” said the exhibitor. “I want you to look at that little runt of a fellow over there. He was a great man in his day. Why, that was Pharaoh Necho, King of Egypt!” Some parchments inscribed with hieroglyphics were then offered us. They were preserved under glass and handled with great respect. “That is the handwriting of Abraham, the Father of the Faithful,” said the prophet. “This is the autograph of Moses, and these lines were written by his brother Aaron. Here we have the earliest account of the Creation, from which Moses composed the First Book of Genesis.” . . . We were further assured that the prophet was the only mortal who could translate these mysterious writings, and that his power was given by direct inspiration. (*Figures of the Past*, by Josiah Quincy, as quoted in *Among the Mormons*, edited by William Mulder and A. Russell Mortensen, 1958, pages 136-137)

In 1843 “six brass plates” were found near Kinderhook, Illinois. At least one of these plates is still in existence, but it is considered to be of little importance. Joseph Smith, however, claimed that these plates were ancient records:

I have translated a portion of them, and find they contain the history of the person with whom they were found. He was a descendant of Ham, through the loins of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and that he received his kingdom from the Ruler of heaven and earth. (*History of the Church*, Vol. 5, page 372)

Although Joseph Smith lived to be only 38 years old, the Mormon leaders claim that he had numerous visits from “glorious personages” from heaven. Not only was he visited by God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ, but also by John the Baptist, Peter, James, John, Moses, Elijah, Elias, Michael, Raphael, Nephi, Moroni, Mormon, and possibly others. The Mormon Apostle LeGrand Richards stated:

If heavenly messengers (prophets who have lived upon this earth) have visited this earth in this dispensation, bringing messages from God, as claimed by the Prophet Joseph Smith, then we have the most important message that can go out to the world today, which invites investigation. (*A Marvelous Work and a Wonder*, by LeGrand Richards, 1966, page 5)

Obviously, Joseph Smith was either one of the greatest prophets who ever walked the face of the earth, or the whole thing is a fraud from beginning to end. John Taylor, the third President of the Mormon Church, made this statement:

. . . if God has not spoken, if the angel of God has not appeared to Joseph Smith, and if these things are not true of which we speak, then the whole thing is an **imposture from beginning to end**. There is no half-way house, no middle path about the matter; it is **either** one thing or the other. (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 21, page 165)

Joseph Fielding Smith, a member of the First Presidency of the Mormon Church, has made this statement:

Mormonism, as it is called, must **stand** or **fall** on the **story of Joseph Smith**. He was either a prophet of God, divinely called, properly appointed and commissioned, or he was one to the biggest **frauds** this world has ever seen. **There is no middle ground**.

If Joseph Smith was a deceiver, who wilfully attempted to mislead the people, then **he should be exposed**; his claims should be refuted, and his doctrines shown to be false, for the doctrines of an impostor cannot be made to harmonize in all particulars with divine truth. If his claims and declarations were built upon fraud and

deceit, there would appear many errors and contradictions, which would be easy to detect. The doctrines of false teachers will not stand the test when tried by the accepted standards of measurement, the scriptures. . . . I maintain that Joseph Smith was all that he claimed to be. . . . Attacks have been made from the beginning to the present, and yet every one has failed. The world has been unable to place a finger upon anything that is inconsistent, or out of harmony in the revelations to Joseph Smith, with that which has been revealed before, or predicted by the prophets and the Lord himself. (*Doctrines of Salvation*, Vol. 1, 1959, pages 188-189)

The Only True Church?

The Mormon Church sends missionaries throughout the world with the message that God has spoken from heaven and restored the true Church of Christ to the earth. These missionaries are instructed to teach that the Mormon Church is the only true church and that Joseph Smith was a Prophet of God. The missionaries are instructed from a handbook which even tells them how to bear their testimony. We find the following on page 3 of this handbook:

2. Set your testimony apart.
 - a. Pause slightly.
 - b. Look contact in the eye.
 - c. Bear testimony in a natural tone of voice. (*A Uniform System For Teaching Investigators*, published by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, page 3)

The missionary proceeds to teach the contact that his church is false and that the Mormon Church is the only true church. Conclusion number nine, which the contact is supposed to reach, is:

There was a complete apostacy and **my church is false**. (*A Uniform System For Teaching Investigators*, page 9)

The Mormon Church teaches that all other churches are in a state of apostacy. More than fifty pages of the introduction to the *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints* is devoted to proving that all churches except the Mormon Church are in apostacy. The following is found on page XL:

Nothing less than a complete apostasy from the Christian religion would warrant the establishment of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

The Mormon leaders claim that in 1820 God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ visited Joseph Smith (who was only fourteen years old) and told him that all other churches were false. In the *Pearl of Great Price*, the following statement is attributed to Joseph Smith:

End of sample pages.
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