

New Light on BLOOD ATONEMENT

In *The Mormon Kingdom*, vol. 1, pages 31-42, we show that the early Mormon leaders taught the doctrine of "Blood Atonement." The Church's own newspaper, the *Deseret News*, quoted Brigham Young, the second President of the Mormon Church as saying:

Now take a person in this congregation . . . and suppose that he is overtaken in a gross fault, that he has committed a sin that he knows will deprive him of that exaltation which he desires, and that he cannot attain to it without the **shedding of his blood**, and also knows that by having his blood shed he will **atone for that sin**, and be **saved and exalted** with the Gods, is there a man or woman in this house but what would say, "shed my blood that I may be saved and exalted with the Gods?"

All mankind love themselves, and let these principles be known by an individual, and he would be glad to have his blood shed. That would be loving themselves, even unto an eternal exaltation. Will you love your brother or sisters likewise, when they have committed a sin that cannot be atoned for without the shedding of their blood? **Will you love that man or woman well enough to shed their blood?**

I could refer you to plenty of instances where men have been righteously slain, in order to atone for their sins. I have seen scores and hundreds of people for whom there would have been a chance (in the last resurrection there will be) **if their lives had been taken and their blood spilled** on the ground as a smoking incense to the Almighty, but who are now angels to the devil . . . I have known a great many men who left this church for whom there is no chance whatever for exaltation, but **if their blood had been spilled, it would have been better for them** . . .

This is **loving our neighbor as ourselves**; if he needs help, help him; and if he wants salvation and it is **necessary to spill his blood** on the earth in order that he may be saved, **spill it . . . that is the way to love mankind**. (Sermon by Brigham Young, delivered in the Mormon Tabernacle, February 8, 1857, printed in the *Deseret News*, February 18, 1857)

In *The Mormon Kingdom*, vol. 1, we list ten offenses for which a person might have been put to death by the early Mormon leaders. They are: murder, adultery or immorality, stealing, using the name of the Lord in vain, refusing to receive the gospel, marrying an African, covenant breaking, apostasy, lying and counterfeiting.

Joseph Fielding Smith, who recently became the tenth President of the Mormon Church, made this statement concerning the doctrine of Blood Atonement:

Joseph Smith taught that there were certain sins so grievous that man may commit, that they will place the transgressors beyond the power of the atonement of Christ. If these offenses are committed, then the blood of Christ will not cleanse them from their sins even though they repent. Therefore their only hope is to have their own blood shed to atone, as far as possible, in their behalf. (*Doctrine of Salvation*, vol. 1 page 135)

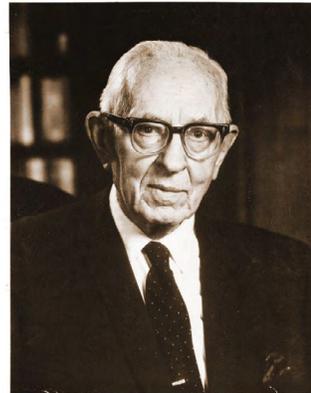
Although Joseph Fielding Smith admits that Joseph Smith taught "Blood Atonement," he is willing to admit that the Mormon people never actually practiced it:

But that the Church practices "Blood Atonement" on apostates or any others, which is preached by ministers of the "Reorganization" is a damnable falsehood for which the accusers must answer. . . .

Did you not know that not a single individual was ever "blood atoned," as you are pleased to call it, for apostasy or any other cause? (*Ibid.*, pages 136-137)

In volume 2 of *The Mormon Kingdom* we plan to show that Joseph Fielding Smith's statement is far from the truth. We feel that we can document the fact that well over 100 people lost their lives because of the Mormon doctrine of "Blood Atonement" and the idea that those who opposed the Church should be put to death.

One case of "Blood Atonement" was reported by Sarah S. Leavitt in her record book:



Joseph Fielding Smith
93-year-old leader of
the Mormon Church

The first person I spoke to after I entered Salt Lake was Dr. Vaun. He came running out of a house and appeared much pleased to see me. He said, "Well, Mrs. Leavitt, I have joined the church." Of course, I was glad and was in hopes he had repented of his sins and would forsake them. But in this I was disappointed, for he sought the women's company and with the help of love powders succeeded in gratifying his hellish desires. He was called up before the authorities more than once and confessed his sins and asked forgiveness. He was forgiven and he said if he was ever found guilty again **his life should be the penalty**. He knew the **law of God required it**. He was guilty again and was **shot and killed**. Oh, the weakness and depravity of man, to sell their birthright for a mess of pottage, or in other words, sell their souls' salvation for a few moments of carnal pleasure. (*Sarah S. Leavitt Journal*, page 41)

This was probably the same case which Hosea Stout recorded in his journal on February 15, 1851:

They bring news that M.D. Hambleton on last Sunday killed Dr. J. M. Vaughan for similar conduct with Mrs. H. as took place with Dr & Foots wife last summer. (*On The Mormon Frontier, The Diary of Hosea Stout*, edited by Juanita Brooks, vol. 2, pages 393)

Gustive O. Larson, Professor of Church History at Brigham Young University, admits that "Blood Atonement" was actually practiced by the Mormons:

To whatever extent the preaching on blood atonement may have influenced action, it would have been in relation to Mormon disciplinary action among its own members. In point would be a verbally reported case of a Mr. Johnson in Cedar City who was found guilty of adultery with his stepdaughter by a **Bishop's Court and sentenced to death for atonement of his sin**. According to the report of reputable eye witnesses, judgement was executed with consent of the offender who went to his **unconsecrated grave in full confidence of salvation through the shedding of blood**. Such a case, however primitive, is understandable within the meaning of the doctrine and the emotional extremes of the Reformation. (*Utah Historical Quarterly*, January, 1958, page 62, footnote 39)

Recently the journals of Abraham H. Cannon came to light. These journals—now located in the Special Collections Department of the Brigham Young University Library—contain some very revealing information regarding the doctrine of Blood Atonement. Under the date of December 6, 1889, the Mormon Apostle Abraham H. Cannon (son of George Q. Cannon, a member of the First Presidency) recorded the following in his journal:

About 4:30 p.m. this meeting adjourned and was followed by a meeting of Presidents Woodruff, Cannon and Smith and Bros. Lyman and Grant . . . In speaking of the recent examination before Judge Anderson Father said that he understood when he had **his endowments in Nauvoo that he took an oath against the murderers of the Prophet Joseph** as well as other prophets, and if he had ever met any of those who had taken a hand in that massacre he

would undoubtedly have attempted to **avenge the blood of the Martyrs**. The Prophet charged Stephen Markham to avenge his blood should he be slain: after the Prophet's death Bro. Markham attempted to tell this to an assembly of the Saints, but Willard Richards pulled him down from the stand, as he feared the effect on the enraged people.—Bro. **Joseph F. Smith** was traveling some years ago near Carthage when he met a man who said he had just arrived five minutes too late to see the Smiths killed. Instantly a dark cloud seemed to overshadow Bro. Smith and he asked how this man looked upon the deed. Bro. S. was oppressed by a most horrible feeling as he waited for a reply. After a brief pause the man answered, "just as I have always looked up on it—that it was a d—d cold-blooded murder." The cloud immediately lifted from Bro. Smith and he found that he had his **open pocket knife grasped in his hand** in his pocket, and he believes that had this man given his approval to that murder of the prophets **he would have immediately struck him to the heart.** ("Daily Journal of Abraham H. Cannon," December 6, 1889, pages 205-206)

PHOTOGRAPH FROM THE JOURNAL OF APOSTLE CANNON.

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Photographs of the journals of Abraham H. Cannon were made before they were taken to the Brigham Young University Library. We have been offered photographs from three different sources, and therefore we are able to provide photocopies of four important pages—i. e., the pages cited above and two pages concerning the Adam-God doctrine—from these journals free upon request.

The statement cited above from the journal of the Mormon Apostle Abraham H. Cannon tends to verify our work in *The Mormon Kingdom* concerning the doctrine of Blood Atonement. On pages 131-137 of vol. 1, we demonstrated that the early Mormons had an "Oath of Vengeance" in their Temple ceremony in which they pledged themselves to avenge Joseph Smith's blood. This is verified in the quotation above by the Apostle Abraham H. Cannon, when he states that his father (George Q. Cannon, a member of the First Presidency) admitted that when "he had his endowments in Nauvoo that he took an oath against the murderers of the Prophet Joseph as well as other prophets, and if he had ever met any of those who had taken a hand in that massacre he would undoubtedly have attempted to avenge the blood of the martyrs."

The statement that Joseph F. Smith was about to murder a man with his "pocket knife" if he expressed approval of Joseph Smith's death reveals the intense hatred which the early Mormon leaders felt toward their enemies. Joseph F. Smith later became the sixth President of the Mormon Church, and his son Joseph Fielding Smith recently became the tenth President of the Mormon Church.

Statements like the ones quoted above led to the death of many people in Utah. We will have a great deal more to say about this subject in our work, *The Mormon Kingdom*. ■

A DELAY

Although we have spent a great deal of time doing research on our books, *The Case Against Mormonism* and *The Mormon Kingdom*, we did not have any pages ready to mail out with this issue of the *Messenger*. We hope, however, to finish both these volumes in the near future. So far we have completed 62 pages of *The Case Against Mormonism*, vol. 3, and 32 pages of *The Mormon Kingdom*, vol. 2.

Is Adam Christ's Father?

Brigham Young, the second President of the Mormon Church, once stated: "Now, remember from this time forth, and forever, that Jesus Christ **was not begotten by the Holy Ghost**" (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 1, page 51). This statement is in conflict with both the Bible and the Book of Mormon (see Matthew 1:18-20; Book of Mormon, Alma 7:10). In spite of the teachings of the Bible and the Book of Mormon, Joseph Fielding Smith, who recently became President of the Church, has denied that Christ was begotten by the Holy Ghost: "They tell us the Book of Mormon states that Jesus was begotten of the Holy Ghost. **I challenge that statement.** The Book of Mormon teaches **no such thing! Neither does the Bible**" (*Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 1, page 19).

Since Mormon theology teaches that God himself is a man instead of a spirit and is the **literal** father of Christ, the birth of Christ is considered a natural, rather than miraculous, occurrence. The Mormon writer Carlfred B. Broderick made these comments:

There are two basic elements in the Gospel view of sexuality as I interpret it from the scriptures. The first is that sex is good—that sexuality, far from being the antithesis of spirituality, is actually an attribute of God. . . .

In the light of their understanding that **God is a procreating personage of flesh and bone**, latter-day prophets have made it clear that despite what it says in Matthew 1:20, the Holy Ghost was not the father of Jesus. . . . The Savior was fathered by a personage of flesh and bone, and was literally what Nephi said he was, "son of the Eternal Father." (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Autumn, 1967, pages 100-101)

Brigham Young had this to say concerning the birth of Christ:

The man Joseph, the husband of Mary, did not, that we know of, have more than one wife, but **Mary the wife of Joseph had another husband.** (*Deseret News*, October 10, 1866)

The Mormon Apostle Orson Pratt stated:

The fleshly body if Jesus required a Mother as well as a Father. Therefore, the Father and Mother of Jesus, according to the flesh, must have been **associated together in the capacity of husband and wife**; hence the Virgin Mary must have been, for the time being, the lawful **wife of God the Father**: we use the term **lawful Wife**, because it would be blasphemous in the highest degree to say that He overshadowed her or begot the Savior unlawfully. It would have been unlawful for any man to have interfered with Mary, who was already espoused to Joseph; for such a heinous crime would have subjected both the guilty parties to death, according to the law of Moses. But God having created all men and women, had the most perfect right to do with His own creation, according to His holy will and pleasure: He had a lawful right to overshadow the Virgin Mary in the **capacity of a husband**, and beget a Son, although she was espoused to another; for the law which he gave to govern men and women was not intended to govern Himself, or to prescribe rules for his own conduct. It was also lawful in Him, after having thus dealt with Mary, to give her to Joseph her espoused husband. Whether God the Father gave Mary to Joseph for time only, or for time and eternity, we are not informed. Inasmuch as **God was the first husband to her**, it may be that He only gave her to be the wife of Joseph while in this mortal state, and that He intended after the resurrection to again take her as **one of his own wives** to raise up immortal spirits in eternity. (*The Seer*, page 158)

On April 9, 1852, Brigham Young, the second President of the Mormon Church, went so far as to declare that Adam "is our Father and our God" and that he is the Father of Jesus:

Now hear it, O inhabitants of the earth, Jew and Gentile, Saint and sinner! When our father Adam came into the garden of Eden, he came into it with a celestial body, and brought Eve, one of his wives, with him. He helped to make and organize this world. He is Michael, the Arch-angel, the Ancient of Days! about whom holy men have written and spoken—**he is our Father and our God, and the only God with whom we have to do.** Every man upon the earth, professing Christians or non-professing, must hear it, and will know it sooner or later. . . . When the Virgin Mary conceived the child Jesus, the Father had begotten him in his own likeness. He was not begotten by the Holy Ghost. And who is the Father? He is the **first of the human family**; . . . Jesus, our elder brother, was begotten in the flesh by the same character that was in the garden

of Eden, and who is our Father in Heaven . . . Jesus Christ was not begotten by the Holy Ghost. I will repeat a little anecdote. I was in conversation with a certain learned professor upon this subject, when I replied, to this idea—“if the Son was begotten by the Holy Ghost, it would be very dangerous to baptize and confirm females, and give the Holy Ghost to them, lest he should beget children, to be palmed upon the Elders by the people, bringing the Elders into great difficulties.” (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 1, pages 50-51)

Although this doctrine is no longer taught by the Mormon leaders, there is a great deal of evidence to show that it was taught and accepted for many years. For instance, on Wednesday, February 7, 1877, L. John Nuttall recorded in his journal that Brigham Young taught in the Temple that Jesus was the son of Adam:

Wed. 7 at Temple. I officiated as Recorder at the font—. . . Prest Young was filled with the spirit of God & revelation & said, . . . **Adam** was an immortal being when he came on this earth . . . and had **begotten all the spirit** that was to come to this earth and Eve our common Mother who is the mother of all living bore those spirits in the celestial world . . .

Father **Adam's oldest son (Jesus the Savior)** who is the heir of the family is **Father Adam's first begotten in the spirit world, who according to the flesh is the only begotten** as it is written. (In his divinity he having gone back into the spirit world, and come in the spirit to Mary and she conceived . . . (“Journal of L. John Nuttall,” vol. 1, pages 18-21, taken from a typed copy at the Brigham Young University)

As late as 1888 George Q. Cannon, a member of the First Presidency, was teaching that Adam was the father of Jesus. His son recorded the following in his journal on March 10, 1888:

As we drove home Father told me that all his success in life was due to his zeal for the work of God. . . . He asked me what I understood concerning Mary conceiving the Savior; and as I found no answer, he asked what was to prevent **Father Adam** from visiting and overshadowing the mother of Jesus. “Then,” said I, “he must have been a resurrected Being.” “Yes,” said he, “and though Christ is said to have been the first fruits of them that slept, yet the Savior said he did nothing but what He had seen His Father do, for He had power to lay down His life and take it up again. **Adam**, though made of dust, was made, as Pres. Young said, of the dust of another planet than this.”— I was very much instructed by the conversation and this days services. (“Daily Journal of Abraham H. Cannon,” vol. 10, page 178, original located at Brigham Young University, Special Collections)

On June 23, 1889, Abraham H. Cannon recorded this statement in his journal:

Father proved to my entire satisfaction this morning by passages from the Book of Mormon and Doctrine and Covenants that all men, even the sons of perdition, will be resurrected and stand before God to be judged. He believes that **Jesus Christ** is Jehovah, and that **Adam is his Father and our God**; that under certain unknown conditions the benefits of the Savior's atonement extend to our entire solar system. (“Daily Journal of Abraham H. Cannon,” June 23, 1889, page 39)

Even before the turn of the century the Mormon leaders seemed to be ashamed of the Adam-God doctrine. On November 28, 1898, George Q. Cannon stated:

I was stopped yesterday afternoon by a young man, who wanted to know whether Adam was the Father of our Lord and Savior—whether he was the being we worshipped, etc. . . . Concerning the doctrine in regard to **Adam and the Savior**, the Prophet Brigham Young taught some things concerning that; but the First Presidency and the twelve **do not think it wise to advocate these matters**. (Proceedings of the First Sunday School Convention of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, 1899, as quoted in “The Position of Adam in Latter-day Saint Scriptures and Theology,” Master's thesis, Brigham Young University, August, 1953, pages 69-70)

In our book, *The Case Against Mormonism*, vol. 3, we plan to devote a chapter to the Adam-God doctrine and one to the virgin birth in Mormon theology. ■

“Forfeiting the Game”?

In an article published in the *New York Times*, May 3, 1970, Wallace Turner wrote:

SAN FRANCISCO, May 2 — The “Book of Abraham,” which provides the theological basis for the Utah Mormon churches excluding Negroes from its priesthood, has been described as “simply the product of Joseph Smith Jr.'s imagination” by a leading scholar in a branch of the church Mr. Smith founded.

It was the Book of Abraham that Mr. Smith produced as a translation of papyri he acquired along with four Egyptian mummies in 1835.

The papyri were thought to have been destroyed in the Chicago fire of 1871. But, reasoning from crude copies, Egyptologists have argued for decades that the papyri did not say what Joseph Smith said they said, and were instead quite ordinary burial papers of the sort found with mummies.

Three years ago the original papyri from which Joseph Smith worked to produce the Book of Abraham were found in the Metropolitan Museum in New York. . . .

The growing social impact of Negro resentment of the Utah Mormons' exclusion of them from full participation in the church has served to focus further attention on the credibility of the Book of Abraham. This is because there is one short phrase among its thousands of words that is cited as the reason for prohibiting Negroes from entering the priesthood orders . . .

Black athletes at the University of Wyoming have refused to play against teams from Brigham Young University, the Utah Mormon school. Stanford University has served notice of intention to sever athletic relationships with the school, . . .

The description of the Book of Abraham as the product of Joseph Smith's imagination is in an article entitled “The ‘Book of Abraham’ in the Light of History and Egyptology,” printed in the pilot issue of “Courage: A Journal of History, Thought and Action” issued for members of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.

The author is Richard P. Howard, historian for the church branch commonly called R.L.D.S., the largest of the groups that splintered away from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints . . .

Mr. Howard pointed out that the publication in 1966 by Modern Microfilm Company of Salt Lake City of Joseph Smith Jr.'s original “Egyptian alphabet and grammar” allowed scholars to discover how the prophet worked in producing the Book of Abraham.

Mr. Howard cited the work of Dee Jay Nelson, an elder in the Utah Mormon Church and a philologist with 20 years' experience in Egyptology. Mr. Nelson took two words from the papyrus fragment and showed their translation properly to be “offspring of” or “born of.”

Joseph Smith Jr. produced a 132-word passage in the Book of Abraham and attributed it to those words, Mr. Howard wrote. He also suggested that the Prophet Joseph used the “curse of Ham” argument against Negroes as a means of reconciling differences that arose among his followers when Elijah Abel, a Negro, was ordained into the priesthood March 3, 1836, . . .

“Whatever the intent of Joseph Smith in expounding this view of the Negro,” Mr. Howard wrote, “it is clear that the ancient papyri from Egypt contained no such information.”

Mr. Howard wrote that “it may be helpful to suggest that the ‘Book of Abraham’ represents simply the product of Joseph Smith Jr.'s imagination, wrought out in the midst of what to him must have been a very crucial and demanding complex set of circumstances.” (*New York Times*, May 3, 1970)

For many years the *Salt Lake Tribune* refused to take articles critical of the Mormon Church. Times are changing, however, for the article quoted above was printed in the *Salt Lake Tribune* on May 4, 1970. While the part concerning the Mormon Egyptologist Dee Jay Nelson was not included, the *Salt Lake Tribune* contains some additional material concerning the Book of Abraham. In an article entitled “LDS Affirm ‘Abraham’” we find the following:

The First Presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints accepts the “Book of Abraham” as “scripture given to us through the Prophet (Joseph Smith),” President N. Eldon Tanner said Sunday night.

President Tanner, second counselor in the church's First Presidency, made the statement in response to an article saying the translation of the “Book of Abraham” was the product of Joseph Smith Jr.'s “imagination.”

“Our lives constantly manifest what we truly think about God!”

The article appears in a publication of the Reorganized Church . . .
 Author of the article is Richard P. Howard, historian for the RLDS. (*Salt Lake Tribune*, May 4, 1970)

Joseph Smith clearly stated that he “translated” the Book of Abraham from the papyrus, but since Egyptologists have proven that the papyrus is in reality an Egyptian funerary text known as the “Book of Breathings,” Mormon apologists are faced with a serious problem. James R. Harris, of Brigham Young University, now suggests that Joseph Smith received the Book of Abraham by revelation before he obtained the papyrus and that the papyrus was “defective” and “unnecessary” to the production of the Book of Abraham. In an article published in *Brigham Young University Studies* he made these revealing statement:

A possibility that the text of the Book of Abraham may have been defective and therefore both inadequate and unnecessary to the production of a revealed translation is explored and proposed by Todd (pages 289, 325).

We may have observed additional support for this theory about a month before Todd went to press. The second article in a series on The Three Witnesses was published by Richard L. Anderson. In a quote from a patriarchal blessing recorded in 1833, December 13, (Patriarchal Blessing Book, No. 1, pages 8-9) Oliver Cowdery (recorder) added this comment:

But before baptism our souls were drawn out in mighty prayer . . . and we diligently sought for the right of the fathers, and the authority of the Holy Priesthood, and the power to administer in the same; for we desired to be followers of righteousness and the possessors of greater knowledge, even the knowledge of the mysteries of the Kingdom of God. (See also *The Improvement Era*, September 1968, page 20) . . .

Comparing this quote with Abraham 1:2 would support the theory that a papyrus text in the hands of the prophet was not essential to production of the translation:

I sought for the blessings of the father, and the right where unto I should be ordained to administer the same; having been myself a follower of righteousness, desiring also to be one who possessed great knowledge, and to be a greater follower of righteousness and to possess a greater knowledge . . .

The near identical wording of these passages would indicate that some of the text of the Book of Abraham was revealed and recorded **before the Abraham Papyri came into the possession of Joseph Smith**. (*Brigham Young University Studies*, Autumn 1969, pages 126-127)

James R. Harris, Assistant Professor of Religious Education at Brigham Young University, has apparently uncovered the source for some of the text of the Book of Abraham, but he does not seem to realize the serious implications of this important discovery. From Dr. Harris’ comments it would appear that he is willing to accept the idea that the Book of Abraham did not come from the papyrus. He would apparently have us believe that at least some of the text of the Book of Abraham was revealed to Joseph Smith before December 13, 1833, and that Oliver Cowdery borrowed his statements from there. While this would explain the “near identical wording,” it is not facing the reality of Joseph Smith’s statements that the Book of Abraham came from the papyrus. A much more logical explanation is that Joseph Smith’s Book of Abraham is work of his own imagination and that he derived his ideas from Oliver Cowdery and several other sources.

In an article published in *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Winter 1969, page 93, Lester Bush states that “the parallels between Mormon Scripture and the contemporary pro-slavery arguments are striking.” He goes on to point out that ever before Joseph Smith received the papyri, W. W. Phelps had published an article which contains ideas similar to the Book of Abraham. This article was published in the *Messenger and Advocate* in March, 1835, and according to the *History of the Church*, Joseph Smith did not receive the papyri until July of the same year. In this article we find the following:

Is or is it not apparent from reason and analogy as drawn from a careful reading of the Scriptures, that God causes the saints, or people that fall away from his church to be **curse**d in time, with a **black skin**? Was or was not Cain, being marked, obliged to inherit **the curse**, he and his children, forever? And if so, as **Ham**, like other sons of God, might break the rule of God, by marrying out of the church, did or did he not, have a **Canaanite wife**, whereby some of

the **black seed was preserved** through the flood, and his son, Canaan, after he laughed at his grandfather’s nakedness, heired three **curse**s; one from Cain for killing Abel; one from Ham for marrying a black wife, and one from Noah for ridiculing what God had respect for? Are or are not the Indians a sample of marking with blackness for rebellion against God’s holy word and holy order? And can or can we not observe in the countenances of almost all nations, except the Gentile, a dark, sallow hue, which tells the sons of God, without a line of history, that they have fallen or changed from the original beauty and grace of father Adam? (*Messenger and Advocate*, vol. 1, page 82)

In his Book of Abraham, Joseph Smith seemed to follow the same argument used by Phelps—i.e., that Ham married a Canaanite woman and thus “the curse” was “preserved” in the land:

Now this king of Egypt was a descendant from the loins of **Ham**, and was a partaker of the blood of the **Canaanites** by birth.

From this descent sprang all the Egyptians, and thus the blood of the **Canaanites was preserved** in the land.

The land of Egypt being first discovered by a woman, who was the daughter of Ham, and the daughter of Egyptus, which in the Chaldean signifies Egypt, which signifies that which is forbidden.

When this woman discovered the land it was under water, who afterward settled her sons in it; and thus, from Ham, sprang that race which **preserved the curse** in the land. (*Pearl of Great Price*, Book of Abraham, 1:21-24)

Mormon leaders use these verses to try to prove that the Negroes were cursed and therefore cannot hold the Priesthood. John Taylor, the third President of the Mormon Church, made this statement:

And after the flood we are told that the curse that had been pronounced upon Cain was continued through Ham’s wife, as he had married a wife of that seed. And why did it pass through the flood? Because it was necessary that **the Devil should have a representation** upon the earth as well as God; . . . (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 22, page 304)

That Joseph Smith may have borrowed ideas from W. W. Phelps or Oliver Cowdery is not too surprising, for both these men were good writers, and worked with him on the papyri. In Joseph Smith’s *History* we read the following under the date of July 5, 1835: “. . . with W. W. Phelps and Oliver Cowdery as scribes, I commenced the translation of some of the characters or hieroglyphics, and much to our joy found that one of the rolls contained the writings of Abraham, . . .” (*History of the Church*, vol. 2, page 236).

JOSEPHUS

It is very possible that the writings of the Jewish historian Josephus had some influence on the Book of Abraham 1:23 we read of “the daughter of **Egyptus**, . . .” This name is not found in the Bible, but in “Flavius Josephus Against Apion,” we read: “. . . Manetho says that Sethosis himself was called **Egyptus**, . . .” (*Josephus*, translated by William Whiston, Michigan, 1966, page 612).

According to the Book of Abraham, the Lord revealed the principles of astronomy to Abraham before he went into Egypt. In Abraham 3:15 we read: “And the Lord said unto me: Abraham, I show these things unto thee before ye go into Egypt, that ye may declare all these words.” At the bottom of the explanation to Facsimile No. 3 in the Book of Abraham we find this statement: “Abraham is reasoning upon the principles of **astronomy**, in the King’s court.” While the Bible does not even use the word “astronomy,” Josephus claimed that Abraham taught the Egyptians “the science of astronomy”:

. . . Abram conferred with each of them, . . . He communicated to them arithmetic, and delivered to them the science of **astronomy**; for, before Abram came into Egypt, they were unacquainted with those parts of learning; . . . (*Josephus*, page 33)

The Mormon leaders must have been familiar with Josephus at the time the Book of Abraham was written, for in a letter, dated December 22, 1835, Oliver Cowdery stated: “. . . Josephus says that the descendants of Seth were virtuous, and possessed a great knowledge of the heavenly bodies, . . .” (*Messenger and Advocate*, vol. 2, page 236)

In *The Case Against Mormonism*, vol. 3, we will deal with this matter at greater length and show other sources from which the Book of Abraham was probably derived.

FILIBUSTER ENDS

When the papyri were given to the Mormon Church by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Dr. Hugh Nibley, of Brigham Young University, was assigned by the Church leaders to give a report to his people. He began a series of articles for the *Improvement Era* in January, 1968. This series ran for over two years, and was finally brought to a conclusion with the issue published May, 1970. Dr. Nibley was supposed to unfold “the meaning of the hieroglyphics” in this series of articles. In our last *Messenger* we stated: “There is good reason to believe that Dr. Nibley will **never** publish a translation of the papyri, for in an article he wrote in 1968, he stated: ‘. . . it is doubtful whether any translation **could do as much good as harm**’ (*Brigham Young University Studies*, Spring 1968, page 251).” This prediction seems to be proving true, for Dr. Nibley has completed his series of articles and no translation has appeared. It would appear that Dr. Nibley’s main objective was to blind the eyes of his fellow Church members so that they could not see the real issues involved in this matter. Although he used almost 2,000 footnotes, he never did deal with the main problem. In the issue for August, 1969, Dr. Nibley made this fantastic statement:

From here on the reader might as well know that this writer intends to show that the Book of the Dead fragments, the Breathing Papyrus, and the three facsimiles, that is, all the available Egyptian materials that were once in the possession of Joseph Smith, contain the elements of a single story, which happens to be the story of Abraham as told in the Book of Abraham and the early Jewish legends. (*Improvement Era*, August 1969, page 75)

Dr. Nibley’s concluding article makes it clear that he was unable to demonstrate any relationship between the papyri and the Book of Abraham. Nevertheless, he encourages members of the Mormon Church to go on stalling lest they be accused of “forfeiting the game”:

Since the basic charges against Joseph Smith emerging from the study of the newly found papyri have **not** been discussed in the pages of the *Era*, it may be well to review them briefly here. Two documents of the Joseph Smith Papyri were identified and translated in 1967/8, the one comprising sections from the Book of the Dead, the other being the much rarer but still not unknown “Sen-

sen” Papyrus or “Book of Breathings.” **Neither of these texts contained the same reading matter as the Book of Abraham**, but who said they should? . . .

What supports the idea that the Book of Abraham was thought by Joseph Smith to be a translation of the Breathing Certificate? Two things: first, that the “Breathing text” was originally adjoined to Facsimile 1 on the same strip of papyrus, and second that the symbols from the “Breathing text” are interpreted bit by bit in a writing known as “the Egyptian Alphabet and Grammar” in which the interpretation turns out to be the same as the text of the English Book of Abraham. . . . No slightest knowledge of Egyptian is necessary to convince anybody that when a symbol as brief as CAT is “translated” by an involved paragraph of over one hundred words, we are not dealing with a “translation” in any accepted sense of the word. . . . the “Alphabet and Grammar” was never given out as an official or inspired document, was never meant for publication, never placed before the Church for approval, never discussed for the record, never explained to the world as the facsimiles were. . . . 1968 priority went to the newly found papyri, which had never been translated and about which many people were understandably curious and impatient. But when it soon became apparent that those documents **did not contain any of the text of the Book of Abraham** as we have it, it was time for the Egyptologists, having done their work and done it well, either to bow out of the scene or to go on to the more important and essential problems of the facsimiles. . . . It is only the last step that counts, as the French say, and so far nobody has taken it. The hopes for a quick decision with the finding of the Joseph Smith Papyri were blasted when it became apparent on the one hand that those documents **do not contain the Book of Abraham**, and on the other that the connection between the so-called Egyptian Alphabet and Grammar and the Book of Abraham is anything but clear. The work has hardly begun, but people still seek the safe and easy solution of authority and ask with impatience, “Can’t you spare us all that speculation and surmising and comparing and illustrating and simply give us the results?” The anti-Mormons have been only too glad to do just that, but we must never let them make us forget that proof is a process, not an answer, and that there is no such thing as total knowledge. . . .

Many Latter-day Saints have not been too happy with the Joseph Smith Papyri, which instead of giving them all the answers only set them to work on a lot of problems with which none of this generation is prepared to deal. But it was the Mormons who started this game, and it is their responsibility to keep it going. They can never again leave the field **without forfeiting the game**. . . . The bringing forth of the papyrus fragments in 1967 was a reminder to the Saints that they are still expected to do their homework and may claim

OLD ORDER FORM REMOVED

no special revelation or convenient handout solutions as long as they ignore the vast treasure-house of materials that God has placed within their reach.

So far we have only taken a preliminary view of a few problems raised by Facsimile No. 1, and hardly even mentioned Facsimiles 2 and 3, . . . We have dealt entirely in possibilities, never in certitudes, possibilities being all we need to keep the door open. . . . As long as a single aspect of any problem raised by the Book of Abraham remains unexamined, as long as there is the remotest possibility that any slight detail of any significance may have been overlooked, as long as a single possible relevant text remains unread, we must hold our final word in abeyance. . . .

Who, then, is to decide these weighty matters? That is just the point: Is it necessary to decide here and now? The Mormons have always hesitated and asked for time, waiting (though rarely seeking) for further light and knowledge. Significantly, it has always been the Egyptologist, usually the very soul of caution, who have insisted on a once-for-all, here-and-now, before-we-leave-the-room decision and have been desperately determined not to prolong the discussion. That is still their policy, and it forces us to return upon their own heads the routine question that the world would confound the demolish us: You scholars have spoken; why don't you do the honest thing and admit that you **don't know a blessed thing about the facsimiles**, that you haven't made even a superficial study of them . . . Why not admit that the relationship between the "Alphabet and Grammar" and the Book of Abraham is an enigma, full of odd contradictions and unexplained anomalies? Why not admit that you are not privy to the mind of Joseph Smith? That the test of the Book of Abraham lies in what it says, not in the manner in which it may have been composed, and that a thorough test of its contents would require a scope of research that no scholar today has any intention of undertaking, a scope of knowledge that few if any scholars today possess? . . .

Until now, no one has done much more than play around with the bedizening treasury of the *Pearl of Great Price*. "They" would not, we could not make of the Book of Abraham an object of serious study. The time has come to change all that. (*Improvement Era*, May, 1970, pages 82, 83, 93 and 94)

While the evidence clearly shows that the Book of Abraham is a product of Joseph Smith's imagination, Dr. Nibley would have his people continue to stall and evade the main issue. The Mormon leaders can continue to ignore the evidence against the Book of Abraham and the anti-Negro doctrine contained in its pages, but such a course may very well lead to violence and bloodshed. In the last *Messenger* we point out that the Church-operated Brigham Young University has received a great deal of criticism from those who are seeking equal rights for the Negro. We also showed that Brigham Young University athletic teams have been met with "a gathering wave of protest" during the last two years. There is every reason to believe that this situation will get worse. The *Deseret News* for April, 4, 1970, contained these statements:

Harry Edwards, the man most responsible for mounting discontent against Brigham Young University athletic teams, vowed in Salt Lake City Friday that "Things will get worse unless Mormon (Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints) doctrine is changed." . . .

"A change of doctrine which forbids Blacks to hold the priesthood and places them in an inferior human role, is the only action by Mormon authorities which will prevent escalation of activity against BYU, and I think I could go on national television and have it stopped."

Referring to members of the press, Edwards said: "If things don't get better by next fall, those who travel with BYU should invest in hard hats and asbestos suits." (*Deseret News*, April 4, 1970)

The *Salt Lake Tribune* carried these statements in an article printed the same day:

Mr. Edwards spoke briefly in criticism of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and its doctrine of barring Negroes from the priesthood. . . .

The structure of the church "is crumbling" from within by the hierarchy's action, he said.

"If the church is destroyed, it will not be from the blacks . . . but by the fact that the 20th Century has caught up with the state of Utah," Mr. Edwards said. (*Salt Lake Tribune*, May 4, 1970)

From the information we have presented it is plain to see that if the Mormon leaders continue to ignore these problems the consequence could be disastrous. ■

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