

“The Thinking Has Been Done”

Carl Gustav Jung, one of the world's greatest psychiatrists, made these very interesting observations:

All mass movements, as one might expect, slip with the greatest ease down an inclined plane represented by large numbers. Where the many are, there is security; what the many believe must of course be true; what the many want must be worth striving for, and necessary, and therefore good. In the clamor of the many there lies the power to snatch wish-fulfillments by force; sweetest of all, however, is that gentle and painless slipping back into the kingdom of childhood, into the paradise of parental care, into happy-go-luckiness and irresponsibility. **All the thinking and looking after are done from the top;** to all questions there is an answer; and for all needs the necessary provision is made. The infantile dream state of the mass man is so unrealistic that he never thinks to ask who is paying for this paradise. The balancing of accounts is left to a higher political or social authority, which welcomes the task, for its power is thereby increased; and the more power it has, the weaker and more helpless the individual becomes. (*The Undiscovered Self*, pages 70-71)

Very few organizations would want to admit that “all the thinking and looking after are done from the top.” The Mormon Church, however, is an exception. In fact, the ward teacher's message for June 1945 contained these statements:

Any Latter-day Saint who denounces or opposes, whether actively or otherwise, any plan or doctrine advocated by the “prophets, seers, and revelators” of the Church is cultivating the spirit of apostasy . . . Lucifer . . . wins a great victory when he can get members of the Church to speak against their leaders and to “do their own thinking.” . . .

When our leaders speak, the thinking has been done. When they purpose a plan—it is God's plan. When they point the way, there is no other which is safe. When they give direction, it should mark the **end of controversy.** (*Improvement Era*, June 1945, page 354)

Brigham Young, the second President of the Mormon Church, once stated:

The Lord Almighty leads this Church, and he will never suffer you to be led astray if you are found doing your duty. **You may go home and sleep as sweetly as a babe in its mother's arms, as to any danger of your leaders leading you astray, . . .** (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 6, page 289)

Heber C. Kimball, First Counsellor to Brigham Young, made these statements:

. . . learn to do as you are told, . . . if you are told by your leader to do a thing, do it, **none of your business whether it is right or wrong.** (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 6, page 32)

If you do things according to counsel and they are wrong, the consequences will fall on the heads of those who counseled you, so don't be troubled. (*William Clayton's Journal*, page 334)

Joseph Fielding Smith, who recently became the tenth President of the Church, made this statement:

“Therefore it behooves us, as Latter-day Saints, to **put our trust in the presiding authorities of the Church.** . . .

Saints safe in following Church authorities. No man ever went astray by following the counsel of the authorities of the Church. (*Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 1, page 243)

Those of us who grew up in the Mormon Church were taught that the revelations of Joseph Smith should be received as if from God's “own mouth” (*Doctrine and Covenants* 21:5), and that the present-day leader is supposed to be God's mouthpiece on earth. A careful study of Mormon history and doctrine, however, led us the conclusion that it is wrong to allow others to do our thinking or to put trust in man.

THE SEER

In 1830 the Mormon prophet Joseph Smith, 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. Later he claimed to have power from God to revise the Bible and to receive many important revelations from heaven. In 1835 he obtained some papyri. He claimed 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). He translated the “Book of Abraham” from the papyri, and the Mormon leaders still use this book to prove that Negroes cannot hold the Priesthood. In 1843 “six brass plates” were found near Kinderhook, Illinois. Joseph Smith translated a “portion of them” and claimed that they contained the history of “a descendant of Ham.” He also 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*, by Bruce R. McConkie, page 20). He claimed that he found the very altar on which Adam offered sacrifices and stated that Noah built his ark in America. Oliver B. Huntington made these statements:

Adam's Altar, which was mentioned, I have visited many times. I sat upon the wall of stone and reflected upon the scenes that had taken place thousands of years ago right where I was. There were the rocks that Father Adam used . . .



Facsimiles of the **Kinderhook plates** from the *History of the Church*, vol. 5. Joseph Smith claimed that he translated a portion of these plates, but they later proved to be forgeries. New research indicates the characters were taken from a Chinese tea-chest.

NEW BOOK! Vol. 3 – *The Case Against Mormonism*

We are happy to announce that volume 3 of *The Case Against Mormonism* is now available in plastic binding. This volume deals with the meaning and changes in the Facsimiles in the Book of Abraham, books Joseph Smith may have used in writing the Book of Mormon and the Book of Abraham, the Mormon doctrine of a plurality of Gods, the Adam-God doctrine, the Virgin Birth, false prophecies of Joseph Smith and Brigham Young, the Word of Wisdom, the Priesthood, cursing enemies and animal sacrifice after Christ, the Mormon missionary system and many other important subjects. Price: \$2.95

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Perhaps those coals, I thought, were from wood burned by Father Adam, . . .

I felt sure, however, that the rocks were the identical rocks that he placed there, for Joseph said, "That altar was built by our Father Adam and there he offered sacrifice." . . . according to the words of the Prophet Joseph, mankind in that age emigrated eastwardly until they reached the country on or near the Atlantic coast; and that in or near Carolina Noah built his remarkable ship, in which he, his family, and all kinds of animals lived a few days over one year without coming out of it. (*The Juvenile Instructor*, Organ for Young Latter Day Saints, November 15, 1895, pages 700-701)

Mr. Huntington also claimed that Joseph Smith described the inhabitants of the moon:

"The **inhabitants of the moon** are more of a uniform size than the inhabitants of the earth, being about 6 feet in height.

"They dress very much like the quaker style and are quite general in style, or the fashion of dress.

"They live to be very old; coming generally, near a thousand years.

This is the description of them as **given by Joseph the Seer**, and he could "see" whatever he asked the father in the name of Jesus to see. (Journal of Oliver B. Huntington, page 166 of typed copy at Utah State Historical Society; original journal in Henry E. Huntington Library, Pasadena, California)

Although many people could not accept Joseph Smith's claims, there were a number of people who gave support to his ideas. Martin Harris, for instance, provided Joseph Smith with financial support and became one of the "Three Witnesses to the Book of Mormon." Like Joseph Smith, Martin Harris was a visionary man. William A. Linn gives this information:

Daniel Hendrix relates that as he and **Harris** were riding to the village one evening, and he remarked on the beauty of the moon, **Harris** replied that if his companion could only see it as he had, he might well call it beautiful, explaining that **he had actually visited the moon**, and added that it "was only the faithful who were permitted to visit the celestial regions." (*The Story of the Mormons*, New York, 1902, page 35)

Joseph Smith seemed to have great power over the mind of Martin Harris. Mary Rollins Lightner—a devout Mormon—related the following:

A few evenings after his [Joseph Smith's] visit to our house, Mother and I went over to the Smith home. . . . I sat with others on a plank . . . After prayer and singing, Joseph began talking. Suddenly he stopped and seemed almost transfixed. He was looking ahead and his face outshone the candle . . . After a short time he looked at us very solemnly and said, "Brothers and Sisters, **do you know who has been in our midst this night?**" One of the Smith family said, "An angel of the Lord." Joseph did not answer. Martin Harris was sitting at the Prophet's feet on a box. He slid to his knees, clasped his arms around the Prophet's knees and said, "I know, **it was our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.**" Joseph put his hand on Martin's head and answered, "Martin, God revealed that to you. Brothers and Sisters, the Savior has been in our midst. I want you to remember it. He cast a veil over your eyes for you could not endure to look upon him." ("Mary Elizabeth Rollins Lightner Journal," as quoted in *Conflict at Kirtland*, by Max Parkin, pages 82-83)

Although Joseph Smith was able to persuade Martin Harris to become a witness to the Book of Mormon, he had a great deal of trouble with him. In a revelation given in July of 1828, Martin Harris is called a "wicked man":

And when thou deliveredst up that which God had given thee sight and power to translate, thou deliveredst up that which was sacred into the hands of a **wicked man**,

Who has set at naught the counsels of God, and has broken the most sacred promises which were made before God, and has depended upon his own judgment and boasted in his own wisdom. (*Doctrine and Covenants*, 3:12-13)

Joseph Smith certainly made a mistake when he chose Martin Harris to be one of the three witnesses to the Book of Mormon, for it would be hard to find a more unstable person as far as religion is concerned. In an affidavit dated November 28, 1833, G. W. Stoddard, a resident of Palmyra, stated that as a farmer Harris was "industrious and enterprising," but that his "moral and religious character was such, as not to entitle him to respect among his neighbors. . . . He was first an orthodox Quaker, then a Universalist, next a Restorationer, then a Baptist, next a Presbyterian, and then a Mormon" (*Mormonism Unveiled*, by E. D. Howe, 1834, page 260-261).

Martin Harris' instability did not end when he joined the Mormon Church. In 1846 the Mormon Church's own publication, *Millennial Star*, reported the following concerning Harris:

One of the witnesses to the Book of Mormon, yielded to the spirit and temptation of the **devil** a number of years ago—turned against Joseph Smith and became his bitter enemy. He was filled with the **rage and madness of a demon**. One day he would be one thing, and another day another thing. He soon became **partially deranged** or shattered, as many believe, flying from one thing to another, as if reason and common sense were thrown off their balance. In one of his fits of **Monomania**, he went and joined the "Shakers" or followers of Anne Lee. He tarried with them a year or two, or perhaps longer, having had some flare ups while among them; but since Strang has made his entry into the apostate ranks, and hoisted his standard for the rebellious to flock to, Martin leaves the "Shakers," whom he knows to be right, and has known it for many years, as he said, and **joins Strang** . . . if the Saints wish to know what the Lord hath said of him, they may turn to the 178th page of the Book of Doctrine and Covenants, and the person there called a "**wicked man**" is no other than **Martin Harris**, . . . It is not the first time the Lord chose a wicked man as a witness. . . . **evil men like Harris**, out of the evil treasure of their hearts bring forth evil things. . . .

Just as our paper was going to press, we learned that **Martin Harris**, . . . had landed in Liverpool, . . . there was a strangeness about him, and about one or two who came with him. **A lying deceptive spirit attends them**, . . . they are of **their father, the devil**, who was a liar from the beginning, and abode not in the truth. The very countenance of Harris will show to every spiritual-minded person who sees him, that the **wrath of God is upon him**. (*Latter-Day Saint's Millennial Star*, vol. 8, November 15, 1846, pages 124-128)

The Mormon writer Richard L. Anderson admits that Martin Harris "changed his religious position eight times" during the period he was in Kirtland, Ohio:

He and other prominent dissenters in the Church were formally excommunicated in the last week of December 1837 . . . Martin Harris remained at Kirtland for the next 30 years in the condition of a fossil embedded in an earlier layer of sediment . . .

Martin Harris also felt strong resentment against Church leaders, in large part stemming from the blow to his ego in never being given a major office. If such thinking is obviously immature, it was nevertheless real to the man who had sacrificed domestic peace, fortune, and reputation to bring about the printing of the Book of Mormon and the founding of the Church. Real or supposed rejection breeds hostility and, at its worst, retaliation. . . .

The foregoing tendencies explain the **spiritual wanderlust** that afflicted the solitary witness at Kirtland. In this period of his life **he changed his religious position eight times**, including a rebaptism by a Nauvoo missionary in 1842. Every affiliation of Martin Harris was with some Mormon group except when he was affiliated with the Shaker belief, a position not basically contrary to his Book of Mormon testimony because the foundation of that movement was acceptance of personal revelation from heavenly beings. (*Improvement Era*, March 1969, page 63)

If we add the "eight times" that Martin Harris changed his religious position in Kirtland to the five changes he made before, we find that he changed his mind thirteen times! Richard Anderson is forced to admit that Martin Harris' life shows evidence of "religious instability" (*Ibid.*). The Mormon writer E. Cecil McGavin states that "Martin Harris was an unaggressive, **vacillating, easily influenced** person who was no more pugnacious than a rabbit . . . His conviction of one day might vanish and be replaced by doubt and fear before the setting of the sun. He was changeable, fickle, and puerile in his judgement and conduct" (*The Historical Background for the Doctrine and Covenants*, page 23, as quoted in an unpublished manuscript by LaMar Petersen).

At one time Martin Harris even went on a mission for the Strangites. Andrew Jenson, who was Assistant Church Historian wrote the following in the book *Church Chronology*, under the date of October 1, 1846:

— **Martin Harris** and others, followers of the apostate **James J. Strang**, preached among the Saints in **England**, but could get no influence. (*Church Chronology*, page 31)

The fact that Martin Harris would join with such a group casts a shadow of doubt upon his testimony to the Book of Mormon, for the Strangites claimed

that James Jesse Strang found some plates which he translated with the Urim and Thummim. The Mormons, of course, claim that Strang was a deceiver.

The reader will notice that Richard Anderson admitted that Martin Harris “affiliated with the Shaker belief,” although he feels that this position was “not basically contrary to his Book of Mormon testimony because the foundation of that movement was acceptance of personal revelation from heavenly beings” (*Improvement Era*, March 1969, page 63).

Now, while it is true that the Shakers believed in revelation, a Mormon could not accept these revelations without repudiating the teachings of Joseph Smith. For instance, the Shakers felt that “**Christ** has made his second appearance on earth, in a chosen **female** known by the name of Ann Lee, and acknowledged by us as our **blest mother** in the work of redemption” (*Sacred Roll and Book*, page 358). If Martin Harris accepted this teaching, he was certainly out of harmony with Joseph Smith’s revelations, for in one of the revelations we read that “the Son of Man cometh **not** in the form of a woman, . . .” (*Doctrine and Covenants*, 49:22)

The Shakers, of course, did not believe the Book of Mormon, but they had a book entitled *A Holy, Sacred and Divine Roll and Book: From the Lord God of Heaven, to the Inhabitants of Earth*. More than sixty individuals gave testimony to the “Sacred Roll and Book.” Although not all of them mention angels appearing, some of them tell of many angels visiting them—one woman told of eight different visions.

The evidence seems to show that Martin Harris accepted this book as divine revelation. In our *Case Against Mormonism*, vol. 2, page 50, we cited a very revealing statement by Clark Braden:

Harris declared repeatedly that he had as much evidence for a **Shaker book** he had as for the Book of Mormon. (*The Braden and Kelly Debate*, page 173)

Since we published this statement evidence has been brought to light from a Mormon source which shows that Harris claimed to have a greater testimony to the Shakers than to the Book of Mormon. In a thesis written at Brigham Young University, Wayne Cutler Gunnell stated that on December 31, 1844, “Phineas H. Young [Brigham Young’s brother] and other leaders of the Kirtland organization” wrote a letter to Brigham Young in which they stated:

There are in this place all kinds of teaching; **Martin Harris is a firm believer in Shakerism, says his testimony is greater than it was of the Book of Mormon.** (“Martin Harris—Witness and Benefactor to the Book of Mormon,” 1955, page 52)

The fact that Martin Harris would even join with such a group shows that he was unstable and easily influenced by men. Therefore, we feel that his testimony that the Book of Mormon was of divine origin cannot be relied upon. How can we put our trust in a man who was constantly following after movements like the Shakers? Brigham Young himself once stated:

Some of the **witnesses** of the Book of Mormon, **who handled the plates** and conversed with the angels of God, were afterwards **left to doubt and to disbelieve that they had ever seen an angel.** (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 7, page 164)

In the *Case Against Mormonism*, vol. 2, we devote a great deal of space to the witnesses to the Book of Mormon.

THE TEST

Although a great deal of evidence against Joseph Smith’s claims was presented during the 19th century, the most devastating evidence has come to light within the last few years.

Since Joseph Smith claimed that an angel took the plates from which the Book of Mormon was translated, and since both the Kinderhook plates and the Book of Abraham papyrus were lost, it appeared that Joseph Smith’s ability as a translator could not be tested. As to Joseph Smith’s claim that the moon was inhabited, very few people living in the 19th century would have believed that some day it would be possible for men to go there. In fact, as late as 1958 Joseph Fielding Smith (who recently became President of the Mormon Church) made these statements:

In relation to the present trend of science in the development of synthetic planets which, for a season revolve around the earth and the trend of science in developing guided missiles, or even the **sending of passengers to the moon** and other planets, you need not to be troubled in the least. . . . Naturally the wonders in the heavens that man has created will be numbered among the signs which have been predicted—the airplanes, the guided missiles, and man-made planets that revolve around the earth. Keep it in mind however, that such man-made planets belong to this earth, and **it is doubtful that man will ever be permitted to make any instrument or ship to travel through space and visit the moon or any distant planet.**

The Lord will permit men to go so far and no farther; and when they get beyond the proper bounds, he will check them. . . .

When man was placed on this earth it became his probationary, or mortal home. Here he is destined to stay until his earth-life is completed, . . . Here we are, and here we should be content to stay. All this talk about space travel and the visiting of other worlds brings to mind vividly an attempt long ago made by foolish men who tried to build to heaven . . . wise men will be content and will wait until the time comes when this earth is cleansed and purified from all sin for heavenly visits, and in that day they will come. (*Answers to Gospel Questions*, vol. 2, pages 189-192)

Although astronauts have now shown that Joseph Smith’s statements about the moon are not correct, a more serious problem faces the Church. In 1967 the original papyrus from which Joseph Smith translated the Book of Abraham was discovered. Egyptologists translated it and found that it has nothing to do with Abraham or his religion. In other words, Joseph Smith’s translation was proven to be completely incorrect. This was a devastating blow to the Church because the Mormon leaders had canonized the Book of Abraham and had made it the very basis of the anti-Negro doctrine.

In spite of the fact that the papyrus absolutely proves that the Book of Abraham is spurious, the Mormon leaders have decided that they cannot give it up without undermining the whole foundation of Mormonism:

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.”

The article appears in a publication of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints . . . Author of the article is Richard P. Howard, historian for the RLDS. (*Salt Lake Tribune*, May, 4, 1970, page 12B)

In a letter to the Editor of *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Autumn 1968, page 8, Naomi Woodbury suggested that the translation of the papyri by Egyptologists could “free us from our dilemma about excluding Negroes from the Priesthood. Perhaps our Father in Heaven intended the papyri to come to light now for just this purpose.” Unfortunately, in an organization where “the thinking” is done from the top, it is almost impossible for the ordinary member to oppose decisions made by the Church leaders. Jim Brield, a student at Brigham Young University, made this very clear in a statement regarding the anti-Negro doctrine of the Church:

“Most students are unconcerned. They look at it as a matter that the **Church will have to decide.** You have to understand we are taught **unquestioning obedience,**” said Jim Brield, a BYU junior. (*Salt Lake Tribune*, November 30, 1969, page 12D)

The Mormon writer Klaus Hansen makes these interesting observations in an article recently published in *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*:

To a professional historian, for example, the **recent translation of the Joseph Smith papyri** may well represent the potentially **most damaging case against Mormonism** since its foundation. Yet the “Powers That Be” at the Church Historian’s Office should take comfort in the fact that the almost total lack of response to this translation is an uncanny proof of Frank Kermodé’s observation that even the **most devastating act of disconfirmation will have no effect whatever on true believers.** Perhaps an even more telling response is that of the “liberals,” or cultural Mormons. After the Joseph Smith papyri affair, one might well have expected a mass exodus of these people from the Church. Yet none has occurred. Why? **Because cultural Mormons, of course, do not believe in the historical authenticity of the Mormon scriptures in the first place.** So there is nothing to disconfirm. (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Summer 1970, page 110)

The reader will remember that Dr. Hugh Nibley wrote a letter to the Mormon Egyptologist Dee Jay Nelson in which he stated: "I don't consider myself an Egyptologist at all, and don't intend to get involved in the P.G.P. business unless I am forced into it . . ." (Letter by Hugh Nibley dated June 27, 1967). In the *Improvement Era* for August 1968, page 56, he admitted that he was "anything but an Egyptologist." Several years ago Dr. Nibley took some classes in the Egyptian language at the University of Chicago under John A. Wilson and Klaus Baer, but it now appears that Dr. Nibley feels he knows more about the papyri than his tutors! In a letter dated December 11, 1970, Dr. Nibley wrote:

The evidence supporting the Book of Abraham is simply overpowering. In a series of articles in the *Era* that ended last June I brought up a few important points necessary to laying a foundation for serious study of the subject . . . Joseph Smith or anyone else could not possibly have faked the Book of Abraham, which I am perfectly convinced is a true record. Some of our ideas about it may call for rectification from time to time, but of the authenticity of the book there can be no doubt . . . I have studied with both **Prof. Baer and Wilson**, who translated some of the Mss.; they are splendid men but **they have no idea of what these particular manuscripts are about.** . . . Before long you will see that the Book of Abraham furnishes some of the best evidence for the divine mission of the Prophet Joseph. . . . I must ask you to be patient until this can be demonstrated more fully. (Letter from Hugh Nibley, dated December 11, 1970)

It is really hard to believe that a man could go to such great lengths to keep from facing the truth about the Book of Abraham. How long do the Mormon leaders think they can continue this deception?

The Mormon Church has already had serious trouble with Negroes over the doctrine found in the Book of Abraham that Negroes cannot hold the priesthood. Instead of facing the truth with regard to this matter and giving the priesthood to Negroes, they are trying to pacify them in other ways. Negroes have been added to the Tabernacle Choir and the football team at Brigham Young University, and on June 13, 1970, the *Deseret News* reported the following:

The bonds of brotherhood between members of the Church and a Negro congregation in Salt Lake City were fastened this week with a plea "to let all America see that blacks and whites can live peacefully together."

Some 500 persons representing the leadership of the Church, including President Joseph Fielding Smith, and of the Church of God in Christ participated in a banquet Wednesday night, climaxing the month-long "Operation Good Samaritan."

The project started when Rev. M. A. Givens Jr., minister of Deliverance Temple, Church of God in Christ, asked officials of the LDS Church to assist his congregation in raising funds to complete construction of their church building in Salt Lake City.

The Presiding Bishopric accepted the opportunity as a challenge to the Mormon youth to raise at least \$30,000 for the building. Youth in 566 wards of the 71 stakes in the Salt Lake and Bountiful areas accepted the challenge and went to work on a variety of fund-raising projects. . . .

Presiding Bishop John H. Vandenberg told the banquet-goers that with 14 more stakes to report, the youths have already raised \$32,949. He said that 28,000 young men and women participated in the project. . . .

Music for the banquet was provided by Mrs. Jessie Evans Smith, wife of President Smith, who sang two solo numbers, and the all-Negro Utah Community Choir, which also preformed two selections. (*Deseret News*, Church Section, June 13, 1970)

Although we feel that this was a good move and that many members of the Mormon Church participated in this project in a sincere effort to help the Negroes, the deed would have been more impressive if it had been performed ten or twenty years ago. Even some members of the church felt that their leaders were trying to buy off the Negro people. In a letter to the Editor of the *Salt Lake Tribune*, Bill Morrison stated:

Editor, Tribune: I noticed with incredulity an article in the *Salt Lake Tribune* (June 10) entitled "Negro Faith, LDS Join In 'Deliverance' Fund." The substance of the article was that the LDS Church was aiding the construction of the Deliverance Temple, a building owned by the Church of God in Christ, a Negro denomination.

Since I am LDS and take my religion seriously, I question the wisdom of my church leaders giving material or other aid for the purpose of building up another church. A fundamental concept of any religion is that the reason for its existence is that it, and it alone, harbors the truth necessary for salvation.

The Mormon Church adheres to this, but is engaging in support of the growth of another religion . . . the LDS Church should focus on consolidating its position rather than being concerned with building up the congregations of other churches. The money raised for building Deliverance Temple could have gone to a nonsectarian use such as aid for the mentally retarded or those physically unable to help themselves.

The question appears to be one of aiding the Negro rather than one of aiding a different religion. Would the Mormon Church give \$32,000 for construction of a Catholic cathedral? A Jewish synagogue? Probably not.

Why the Negro? The Mormon Church has **discriminated against the Negro** since its inception. Let's drop all the rhetoric excusing this and admit it. The aid therefore appears to be a case of LDS Church leaders, in their weakness, attempting to placate the Negro.

If the purpose of this aid isn't tacit support of another religion but rather an expression of guilt or an attempt at placation, does this mean that the general authorities believe God has erred in not allowing the Negro to hold the priesthood in the LDS Church? (*Salt Lake Tribune*, June 23, 1970)

Regardless of the motives of the Mormon leaders in performing this deed, we feel that it is a step in the right direction.

FROM A TEA-CHEST?

In the book *Archaeology and the Book of Mormon*, pages 25-31, we discussed the Kinderhook plates. These plates were made to trick Joseph Smith. Smith claimed that he "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).

All of the plates were lost, but in 1962 the *Improvement Era* announced that one of them had been rediscovered. It was claimed that research revealed that false statements had been made concerning the Kinderhook plates and that the "plates are now back in their original category of **genuine**." In 1965, however, George Lawrence, a Mormon physicist, examined the plate and found that "the dimensions, tolerances, composition and workmanship are consistent with the facilities of an 1843 blacksmith shop and with the fraud stories of the original participants." Mr. Lawrence submitted his study to the BYU Archaeological Society, but since they seemed reluctant to print it he allowed us to make public some of his research (see *Archaeology and the Book of Mormon*, pages 28-29). Mormon scholars will eventually have to come to grips with this problem, and John A. Wittorf has made a move in this direction. Although he still wants to maintain Joseph Smith's reputation as a translator, he cites George Lawrence's study and discusses the implications if the plates are "ultimately demonstrated to be fraudulent":

. . . a report of a physical examination of the plate in 1965 by George M. Lawrence, a Mormon physicist, contained the conclusion that:

"The plate is neither pure copper nor ordinary brass. It may be a low zinc brass or a bronze. The dimensions, tolerances, composition and workmanship are consistent with the facilities of an 1843 blacksmith shop and with the fraud stories of the original participants . . ."

In view of present archaeological evidence, neither brass nor bronze appears to have been known in North America until European times. It is thought that the first bronze in the New World was probably made in Bolivia about AD 700 . . . In light of the known use of metal in North America, brass or bronze plates in an Illinois mound, bound together with what was reported to be a rusted iron ring, should be regarded **with suspicion**. However, this would not preclude the possibility of their having been brought into North America from elsewhere. . . .

Joseph Smith's behavior with regard to the Kinderhook Plates is quite interesting when viewed in perspective. He made no attempt to purchase these artifacts on behalf of the Church, as he did in the case of the papyri from which the Book of Abraham was translated; he forwarded no specific claims for the plates with respect to the Book of Mormon, although he evidently approved of John Taylor's *Times and Seasons* editorial on the plates as evidence for the authenticity of the Book; and he left no indication that he was planning to utilize them for the production of another work of scripture as the *Quincy Whig*, with its headline "Material for Another Mormon Book," apparently expected him to do.

Accepting the find as **genuine**, Joseph had facsimile drawings of the plates made, presumably for future study. The **breivty of his translation** of "a portion of the plates" precludes the possibility that—if the plates are ultimately

demonstrated to be **fraudulent**—his abilities as a translator of ancient scripts and languages can be called into question. His interpretation may have resulted from the recognition of resemblances between several characters on the plates and those on the Egyptian papyri, with which he had been laboring.” (*Newsletter and Proceedings of the Society for Early Historic Archaeology*, Brigham Young University, October 1970, page 7)

If Joseph Smith had not been murdered in June of 1844 it is very possible that he might have published a “translation” of the of the Kinderhook plates. On May 22, 1844, just a month before his death, the *Warsaw Signal* published the following statement about these plates:

Jo. had a facsimile taken, and engraved on wood, and it now appears from the statement of a writer in the *St. Louse Gazette*, that he is busy in translating them. The new work which Jo. is about to issue as a translation of these plates will be nothing more nor less than a sequel to the Book of Mormon; . . .

However this may be, we feel that Joseph Smith’s work on the plates casts serious doubt upon his ability as a translator of “ancient scripts and languages.” He definitely stated that he “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). Now in order to obtain this much information from the plates it would have been necessary to have translated quite a number of the characters, and a man who could make such a serious mistake with regard to the Kinderhook plates is just the type of man who would pretend to translate Egyptian papyri which he knew nothing about. Since Joseph Smith’s “translations” of both the Book of Abraham and the Kinderhook plates are concerned with descendants of Ham, it is obvious that he had the Negro question in mind.

Bruce Owens, another Mormon scholar, has been able to shed additional light on the Kinderhook plates. Mr. Owens wrote to Smithsonian Institution concerning these plates, and on November 14, 1968, he received a letter in which the following appeared:

In speaking of the Kinderhook plates, Mallery says (page 760), speaking about them, that they were “. . . reported to bear a close resemblance to Chinese. This resemblance seemed no to be extraordinary when it was ascertained that the plate had been engraved by the village blacksmith, **copied from the lid of a Chinese tea-chest.**” (Letter from George Metcalf of Smithsonian Institution, dated November 14, 1968)

Mr. Owens became interested in the idea that the characters might have been “copied from the lid of a Chinese tea-chest,” and submitted the facsimiles of the Kinderhook plates to scholars. On January 10, 1969, he received a letter from Charles T. Sylvester, of the Embassy of the United States of America, Taipei, Taiwan, which contained this information:

According to Professor Li Hsueh-chih of Academia Sinica and National Taiwan University the language on the inscriptions which you sent is that of the **Lo tribe** that lives in Yunnan Province in the southwest of mainland China. Unfortunately, Professor Li said that he could identify the writing but could not read the inscription . . .

On March 19, 1969, Bruce Owens received a letter from Kun Chang, Department of Oriental Languages, University of California, Berkeley. In this letter we find this statement: “The inscriptions enclosed seem to be the ideographs used by the **Lolo** tribes in Yunnan.” The Mormon Egyptologist Dee Jay Nelson also feels that “the script is indeed that of the Lo tribe” (Letter dated August 1, 1969), but he has not been trained to actually read this language.

It is very likely that the men who made the Kinderhook plates had access to a tea-chest. According to Joseph Smith’s mother, her husband received a tea-chest before they moved to Palmyra:

. . . the only thing which had been brought for Mr. Smith from China was a small chest of tea, which had been delivered into his care, for my husband. (*Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith*, Liverpool, 1853, page 50) . . .

ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE BOOK OF MORMON

In 1969 we published our book *Archaeology and the Book of Mormon*. On January 10, 1970, we received a letter from the Mormon Egyptologist Dee Jay Nelson in which the following statements appeared:

The booklets, *The Mormon Kingdom* and *Archaeology and the Book of Mormon* arrived in the mail today. Thank you for sending them . . . I already had a copy of *Archaeology and the Book of Mormon* but sat myself down this evening and read it again from beginning to end. I must say without qualification that I indorse your views completely as put down in this work (and you may quote me as having said so).

We are very happy with this endorsement of our work. Dee Jay Nelson is probably the most qualified Egyptologist in the Mormon Church, and he has spent years trying to prove that the Book of Mormon is true.

OLD ORDER FORM REMOVED

Since printing *Archaeology and the Book of Mormon*, a number of important things relating to the Book of Mormon and archaeology have come to light. Therefore, we have added an Appendix of 22 pages to this book. This new material brings the book right up to date and increases its value. Those who have already obtained the book will be happy to know that they can obtain a copy of the new material without purchasing the entire book (price of the new Appendix alone is \$1.00).

In the new Appendix we deal with Dr. Cyrus Gordon's claim that a stone found at Bat Creek in Tennessee proves that if the Mormon Church were to accept Gordon's claim it could actually weaken their case for the Nephites.

In this Appendix we show that there is a growing division between Mormon archaeologists. From 1948 to 1961 the Department of Archaeology at Brigham Young University sent "five archaeological expeditions to Middle America," but since no evidence for the Nephites has been found interest has declined. The Mormon archaeologist Ross. T. Christensen states:

(2) The archaeology of the Scriptures, which once occupied the center of the picture, indeed was the very purpose for which the Department was created in the first place, now seems to be only a peripheral field. This great study, for which Elder Widtsoe and President McDonald had such high hopes . . . has now been relegated to the position of simply a private research interest on the part of two of the Department's five faculty members . . . it cannot be said that BYU now officially supports through its archaeology department any kind of research program in the archaeology of the Scriptures. In other words, even though the Department's original assignment in this field has never been explicitly annulled, still **no genuine official support is now forthcoming.** (*Newsletter and Proceedings of the Society for Early Historic Archaeology*, Brigham Young University, June 1970, page 8)

If the Book of Mormon were a true history, we would expect to find hundreds, if not thousands, of inscriptions written in Hebrew or reformed Egyptian in the New World. In 1958 Thomas Stuart Ferguson, a Mormon scholar who founded the New World Archaeological Foundation, stated that digging should continue at an "accelerated pace" and that "Eventually we should find decipherable inscriptions in modified (reformed) Egyptian, in a modified or pure Hebrew or in cuneiform, referring to some unique person, place or event in the Book of Mormon" (*One Fold and One Shepherd*, page 263). On December 2, 1970, we had the opportunity to ask Mr. Ferguson if any such inscription had been found. He indicated that nothing had been found. Although he believed that Bat Creek inscription was written in Hebrew, he felt that it had nothing to do with the people mentioned in the Book of Mormon. It would appear, then, that there is still no proof that the Nephites ever existed. The situation remains the same as it was when Dr. Hugh Nibley wrote these words:

Of course, almost any object could conceivably have some connection with the Book of Mormon, but nothing short of an **inscription** which could be read and roughly dated could bridge the gap between what might be called a **pre-actualistic** archaeology and contact with the realities of Nephites civilization . . . All that we have to go on to date is a written history. That does not mean that our Nephites are necessarily **mythical**, . . . Nephite civilization . . . could just as easily and completely **vanish** from sight as did the worlds of Ugarit, Ur, or Cnossos; and until some physical remnant of it, **no matter how trivial**, has been identified beyond question, what can any student of physical remains possibly have to say about it? Everything written so far by anthropologists or archaeologists—even real archaeologists—about the Book of Mormon must be discounted, for the same reason that we must discount studies of the lost Atlantis: not because it did not exist, but because it has **not yet been found.** (*Since Cumorah*, 1967, pages 243-244)

While Dr. Nibley would be willing to accept any archaeological evidence for the Book of Mormon, he seems to have closed his mind to any evidence against it. He states:

For one thing the Book of Mormon is immune to attack from the West. No matter how much archaeological evidence may pile up one way or the other, the fact remains that the Book of Mormon never claims to be telling the story of **all** the people who ever lived in the western hemisphere. . . . Thus, where research in America may conceivably bring forth a wealth of evidence to support the Book of Mormon, **no findings** can be taken as unequivocal evidence **against it.** (*Improvement Era*, November 1970, page 115)

Joseph Fielding Smith, who recently became President of the Mormon Church, has stated:

It is the personal opinion of the writer that the Lord does **not** intend that the Book of Mormon, at least at the present time, shall be proved true by any archaeological findings. (*Answers to Gospel Questions*, vol. 2, page 196)

In our book *Archaeology and the Book of Mormon* we devote a great deal of space to the problems one encounters when he tries to reconcile the Book of Mormon with archaeological discoveries. Notice the description of this book below. ■

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*Appendix Available

For those who have already purchased the book, *Archaeology and the Book of Mormon* and wish to obtain the new material found in the Appendix we are selling copies for \$1.00 each. The quantity prices are: 5 for \$4.00 — 10 for \$6.00.

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THOT: Trust in God is the perfect antidote for the fear of men and the dread of circumstances.

(Our Daily Bread, February 1971)