

A **White** Pure and Delightful People

Since its beginning the Mormon Church has taught that a dark skin is a sign of God's displeasure. This teaching comes directly from Joseph Smith's Book of Mormon. The Book of Mormon teaches that about 600 B.C. a prophet named Lehi brought his family to America. Those who were righteous (the Nephites) had a white skin, but those who rebelled against God (the Lamanites) were cursed with a dark skin. The Lamanites eventually destroyed the Nephites; therefore, the Indians living today are referred to as Lamanites. The following verses are found in the Book of Mormon and explain the curse on the Lamanites:

And it came to pass that I beheld, after they had dwindled in unbelief they became a dark, and loathsome, and a filthy people, full of idleness and all manner of abominations. (Book of Mormon, 1 Nephi 12:23)

And he had caused the cursing to come upon them, yea, even a sore cursing, because of their iniquity . . . wherefore, as they were white, and exceeding fair and delightful, that they might not be enticing unto my people the Lord God did cause a skin of blackness to come upon them. (2 Nephi 5:21)

And the skins of the Lamanites were dark, according to the mark which was set upon their fathers, which was a curse upon them because of their transgression . . . (Alma 3:6)

The Book of Mormon stated that when the Lamanites repented of their sins "their curse was taken from them, and their skin became white like unto the Nephites" (3 Nephi 2:15). The Book of Mormon also promised that in the last days the Lamanites—i.e., the Indians—will repent and "many generations shall not pass away among them, save they shall be a white and delightful people" (2 Nephi 30:6).

While the Mormon Church leaders taught that Indians were cursed with a dark skin they went a step further with regard to blacks. They claimed that God would not even allow blacks to hold the priesthood. After a great deal of pressure was exerted against them, the Mormon leaders finally had a new revelation granting blacks the priesthood (*Deseret News*, June 9, 1978). In *The Changing World of Mormonism*, pages 324-325, we wrote:

One issue that Mormon leaders now seem to be dodging is that concerning skin color. As we pointed out earlier, Mormon theology has always taught that "a black skin is a mark of the curse of heaven placed upon some portions of mankind" (*Juvenile Instructor*, vol. 3, page 157). The Book of Mormon itself is filled with the teaching that people with dark skins are cursed. . .

Now that they [Church leaders] have abandoned the idea that blacks cannot hold the priesthood, they should explain . . . if they are repudiating the Book of Mormon teaching that a dark skin is given by God as a "curse." By giving a "revelation" on the blacks without explaining its implications, the Mormon leaders are leaving their people in a dense doctrinal fog.



A photograph of one of the Kinderhook plates. Joseph Smith "translated" a portion of these plates and claimed they contained the history of a descendant of Ham. Recent tests, however, show they are forgeries.

One of the most embarrassing things about the doctrine concerning the Indians is that they are not becoming "white" as the Book of Mormon prophesied. The anti-Mormon writer Gordon H. Fraser claims that the "skin color" of the Indians converted to Mormonism "has not been altered in the least because of their adherence to the Mormon doctrines" (*What Does the Book of Mormon Teach?* page 46).

It now appears that the Mormon leaders are trying to "dissolve" the doctrine that the Indians will turn white after turning to Mormonism. The Church has just released its 1981 printing of the "triple combination" which contains the Book of Mormon, *Doctrine and Covenants* and *Pearl of Great Price*. This new publication contains a very important change. Previous editions of the Book of Mormon had said that in the last days the Indians "shall be a white and delightful people" (2 Nephi 30:6). In the new edition this has been altered to read that the Indians "shall be a pure and delightful people."

The official Church magazine, *The Ensign*, tries to justify this change by stating:

Most students of latter-day scriptures are aware that from the very first printing typographical errors have crept into the Book of Mormon. . . .

The Prophet himself attempted to correct some of these kinds of errors, but his many duties prevented him from completing the project; and even so, some of his corrections

seem to have disappeared again in later editions. For example, the 1830 and 1837 printings of the Book of Mormon contained a prophecy that the Lamanites would one day become “a white and delightsome people” (2 Ne. 30:6). In the 1840 printing, which the Prophet edited, this passage was changed to read “a pure and delightsome people,” but for some reason later printings reverted to the original wording. (*The Ensign*, October 1981, pages 17-18)

It should be noted that Church leaders are unable to produce any documentary evidence to support their claim that this was merely a correction by Joseph Smith of a typographical error. There were originally two handwritten manuscripts for the Book of Mormon—a copy which was written by Joseph Smith’s scribes as he dictated it and a second “emended” copy that was prepared for the printer. Unfortunately, most of the first manuscript was destroyed through water damage. The Mormon scholar Stanley R. Larson informs us that this manuscript “does not exist for this section of the text. . . .” (“A Study of Some Textual Variations in the Book of Mormon Comparing the Original and the Printer’s Manuscripts and the 1830, the 1837, and the 1840 Editions,” Unpublished M.A. thesis, Brigham Young University, April 1974, page 283)

Fortunately, the second handwritten manuscript—the copy given to the printer to use to set the type for the first printing of the Book of Mormon—was preserved by Book of Mormon witness Oliver Cowdery and is still in excellent shape. This handwritten manuscript does contain the portion printed as 2 Nephi 30:6. It uses the word “white,” and therefore does not support the claim that Joseph Smith was only correcting a typographical error (see *Restoration Scriptures*, by Richard P. Howard, Independence, Missouri, 1969, page 49). It should be remembered also that both the first two editions of the Book of Mormon (1830 and 1837) used the word “white.” It is especially significant that the 1837 edition retained this reading because the preface to this edition stated that “the whole has been carefully reexamined and compared with the original manuscripts, by elder Joseph Smith, Jr., the translator of the book of Mormon, assisted by the present printer, brother O. Cowdery, . . .” (Book of Mormon, 1837 edition, Preface, as cited in *The Ensign*, September 1976, page 79)

Besides all the evidence from the original Book of Mormon manuscript and the first two printed editions, there is another passage in the Book of Mormon which makes it very clear that Joseph Smith believed that the Lamanites’ skins could be turned “white” through repentance:

And their curse was taken from them, and their skin became white like unto the Nephites. (3 Nephi 2:15)

We have taken this quotation directly from the new “triple combination” to show that the Mormon Church is still bound by the belief that righteousness affects skin color even though they have changed the verse appearing as 2 Nephi 30:6.

The fact that Joseph Smith believed that the Indians’ skins would actually become white seems to also be verified by a revelation he gave in 1831. In *The Changing World of Mormonism*, pages 207-214, we discuss this revelation and show that it was suppressed until 1974 when we printed it in *Mormonism Like Watergate?* Since that time the Mormon Church Historian Leonard J. Arrington and his assistant Davis Bitton published the important portion of it in their book, *The Mormon Experience*, page 195:

“For it is my will, that in time, ye should take unto you wives of the Lamanites and Nephites that their posterity may become white, delightsome and just, for even now their females are more virtuous than the gentiles.”

Like Joseph Smith, President Brigham Young taught that the Indians would “become ‘a white and delightsome people’” (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 2, page 143). While Brigham Young never released the 1831 revelation, there is evidence that he was familiar with its teaching that the Indians should be made white through intermarriage. In a book published in 1852, William Hall commented:

About the time of the breaking up of the camp at Sugar Creek, the people were called together and several speeches delivered to them by Brigham Young, and others. The speech of Young was in substance as follows:

“. . . We are now going to the Lamanites, to whom we intend to be messengers of instruction. . . . We will show them that in consequence of their transgressions a curse has been inflicted upon them—in the darkness of their skins. We will have intermarriages with them, they marrying our young women, and we taking their young squaws to wife. By these means it is the will of the Lord that the curse of their color shall be removed and they restored to their pristine beauty. . . .” (*The Abominations of Mormonism Exposed*, Cincinnati, 1852, pages 58-59)

T.B.H. Stenhouse related that Heber C. Kimball, a member of the First Presidency, spoke to some of the missionaries and

told them that he did not see how the modern predictions could well be fulfilled about the Indians becoming “a white and delightsome people” without extending polygamy to the natives, . . . (*The Rocky Mountain Saints*, 1873, pages 657-659)

Although Joseph Smith’s 1831 revelation commanding Mormons to marry Indians to make them “white” was suppressed, recent leaders have continued to teach the Book of Mormon doctrine that the Indians become white when they turn to Mormonism. Spencer W. Kimball, who became the twelfth President of the Church on December 30, 1973, has strongly endorsed that teaching. In the LDS General Conference, October 1960, Mr. Kimball stated:

I saw a striking contrast in the progress of the Indian people today . . . they are fast becoming a white and delightsome people. . . . For years they have been growing delightsome, and they are now becoming white and delightsome, as they were promised. . . . The children in the home placement program in Utah are often lighter than their brothers and sisters in the hogans on the reservation.

At one meeting a father and mother and their sixteen-year-old daughter were present, the little member girl—sixteen—sitting between the dark father and mother, and it was evident she was several shades lighter than her parents—on the same reservation, in the same hogan, subject to the same sun and wind and weather. . . . These young members of the Church are changing to whiteness and to delightsomeness. One white elder jokingly said that he and his companion were donating blood regularly to the hospital in the hope that the process might be accelerated. (*Improvement Era*, December 1960, pages 922-923)

The reader will notice that Spencer W. Kimball used the Book of Mormon phrase, “a white and delightsome people.” This, of course, is the very phrase that has now been changed to read, “a pure and delightsome people.” It is very difficult to see any evidence of inspiration in this whole matter.

In any event, the Church now wants to suppress the Book of Mormon’s teaching concerning skin color. Ron Barker, of the Associated Press, questioned Church spokesman Jerry P. Cahill concerning the matter:

Asked whether church members should assume that faithful Mormon Indians would one day become light complexioned, Cahill said they should assume that they will become a “pure and delightsome people.” (*Salt Lake Tribune*, September 30, 1981)

We can probably expect more revisions in Mormon books to cover up this embarrassing doctrine. Apostle Bruce R. McConkie, who has recently had to revise his book *Mormon Doctrine* to conform to the change on the anti-black doctrine, will undoubtedly have to revise his section on the “LAMANITE CURSE.” On pages 428-29 of the 1979 printing of *Mormon Doctrine* we find the following:

... a twofold curse came upon the Lamanites: ... “they became a dark, and loathsome, and a filthy people, full of idleness and all manner of abominations.” (1 Ne. 12:23) So that they “might not be enticing” unto the Nephites, “the Lord God did cause a skin of blackness to come upon them.” (2 Ne. 5:20-25; Alma 3:14-16) ...

During periods of great righteousness, when groups of Lamanites accepted the gospel and turned to the Lord, the curse was removed from them ... the curse was removed from a group of Lamanite converts and they became white like the Nephites. (3 Ne. 2:15-16) ...

When the gospel is taken to the Lamanites in our day and they come to a knowledge of Christ and of their fathers, then the “scales of darkness” shall fall from their eyes; “and many generations shall not pass away among them, save they shall be a white and delightsome people.” (2 Ne. 30:6) Finally, before the judgment bar of God, all who have been righteous, Lamanites and Nephites alike, will be free from the curse of spiritual death and the skin of darkness. (Jac. 3:5-9)

We believe, of course, that Apostle McConkie has the right to alter his book in any way he desires. His changes concerning the anti-black doctrine are certainly a step in the right direction. When it comes to the Book of Mormon, however, we wonder how the Mormon leaders can justify altering words that were supposed to have been translated by the power of God.

Joseph As A Translator

The Browns Fail to Save the Book of Abraham

In 1912, F. S. Spalding published a booklet entitled, *Joseph Smith, Jr., As a Translator*. In this booklet Spalding questioned the authenticity of the Book of Abraham—a work which Joseph Smith claimed he translated from an ancient Egyptian papyrus. The Book of Abraham is published in the *Pearl of Great Price*, one of the four standard works of the Mormon Church. Although Spalding presented a very good case against the Book of Abraham, he was limited because he did not have the original papyrus or the handwritten manuscripts of the Book of Abraham. Since Spalding’s time a great deal of material has come to light which demonstrates conclusively that Joseph Smith failed in his attempt to translate the Book of Abraham, the Kinderhook plates and the Book of Mormon.

BOOK OF ABRAHAM

On November 27, 1967, the Mormon-owned *Deseret News* announced:

NEW YORK—A collection of pa[p]yrus manuscripts, long believed to have been destroyed in the Chicago fire of 1871, was presented to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints here Monday by the Metropolitan Museum of Art. ...

Included in the papyri is a manuscript identified as the original document from which Joseph Smith had copied the drawing which he called “Facsimile No. 1” and published with the Book of Abraham.

In the *Salt Lake City Messenger* for March 1968 we demonstrated photographically that one of the papyrus fragments in this collection was used by Joseph Smith in producing his “translation” of the Book of Abraham. Grant Heward, an amateur Egyptologist who had previously done missionary work for the Mormon Church, pointed this out to us and also demonstrated that what Joseph Smith believed was the Book of Abraham was in reality the pagan “Book of Breathings”—an Egyptian funerary document having nothing to do with Abraham or his religion. Some of the world’s top Egyptologists later confirmed that this is a copy of the “Book of Breathings.” Professor Klaus Baer, of the University of Chicago’s Oriental Institute, and Professor Richard A. Parker, of Brown University, published translations of the papyrus in *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*—a periodical printed by a group of liberal Mormons but not controlled by the Church leaders. To save space here we will only include Professor Parker’s translation. In *Dialogue*, Richard Parker was listed as “Wilbour Professor of Egyptology and Chairman of the Department of Egyptology at Brown University.” Mormon apologist Hugh Nibley said that Professor Parker is “the best man in America for this particular period and style of writing.” His translation reads as follows:

1. [...] this great pool of Khonsu
2. [Osiris Hor, justified], born of Taykhebyt, a man likewise.
3. After (his) two arms are [fast]ened to his breast, one wraps the Book of Breathings, which is
4. with writing both inside and outside of it, with royal linen, it being placed (at) his left arm
5. near his heart, this having been done at his
6. wrapping and outside it. If this book be recited for him, then
7. he will breath like the soul[s of the gods] for ever and ever (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Summer 1968, page 98).

Except for a few minor variations other renditions of the text are essentially in agreement with Professor Parker’s. The Book of Abraham, therefore, has been proven to be a spurious work. The Egyptologists find no mention of Abraham or his religion in this text. The average number of words that the Egyptologists used to convey the message in this text is eighty-seven, whereas Joseph Smith’s rendition contains thousands of words. It is impossible to escape the conclusion that the Book of Abraham is a false translation.

THE BROWNS’ ATTACK

In 1981 Robert L. and Rosemary Brown published the book, *They Lie in Wait to Deceive*. This book purports to tell “The amazing story of how “Dr.” or “Prof.” Dee Jay Nelson, Jerald and Sandra Tanner, and other anti-Mormons work to obstruct and distort the truth.” Actually, this book is nothing but a smoke screen to divert attention from the Book of Abraham problem to Dee Jay Nelson. In this work Mr. and Mrs. Brown make a devastating attack on Nelson, a man who translated the Joseph Smith Egyptian Papyri in 1968. The Browns demonstrate that in 1978—ten years after making his translation—Nelson made the false statement that he had obtained a doctor’s degree. After a careful examination of this book, we concluded that the Browns did an excellent job of exposing some false claims made by Dee Jay Nelson. Unfortunately, however, in their zeal to destroy Mr. Nelson they have made some very serious errors. Although they have made a number of false statements concerning Dee Jay Nelson, their most flagrant violation of the principle of honesty occurs when they accuse us of being part of a cover-up. Those who are acquainted with the facts about the situation know that nothing could be further from the truth.

The Browns claim that “in the latter part of 1980,” they “sent information about Dee Jay Nelson to Moody Press”—the publisher of our book *The Changing World of Mormonism*. They go on to state that we were given “instructions to revise the section concerning Dee Jay Nelson. At this time they were also informed that no more copies of their just printed book would be released for sale, and all future editions must also be revised. In 1981, the new revised edition was printed . . . Between the Moody Press and us, it looks like the Tanners had no choice but to come clean” (*They Lie in Wait to Deceive*, page 161).

While the Browns would have their readers believe that we covered up the situation until they and Moody Press forced us “to come clean,” the truth of the matter is that we commenced our own investigation into Nelson’s credentials as soon as we became convinced there was a problem. The results of that investigation were published immediately in the *Salt Lake City Messenger*.

By March 20, 1980, we had learned that Pacific Northwestern University (the school Nelson claimed he had received his doctor’s degree from) was really a diploma mill, and we wrote to Nelson that his “claim to a doctor’s degree in anthropology cannot be substantiated. Even though we have never made this claim, we feel that it would not be right for us to continue selling your booklets.” Just about one week after we wrote this letter to Nelson, we were contacted by Charles F. Trentelman of the *Ogden Standard-Examiner*. Mr. Trentelman had heard that Nelson’s credentials had been questioned and asked us if we could throw any light on the subject. We informed him of all we had learned about Pacific Northwestern University, and on March 29, 1980, he wrote the following: “Mrs. Tanner said they investigated the claims and found Nelson’s diploma was from a university that was shut down recently by the federal government as being a diploma mill, an operation that sells diplomas without requiring any schooling” (*Ogden Standard-Examiner*, March 29, 1980).

Immediately after Mr. Trentelman’s article appeared in the *Ogden Standard-Examiner*, we published the 42nd issue of the *Salt Lake City Messenger*. This was printed in April 1980 and fully exposed Nelson’s deception with regard to the doctor’s degree. A copy of this paper was mailed to the Moody Bible Library, and there was no attempt to hide the matter from anyone. As a matter of fact, we printed somewhere in the neighborhood of 10,000 copies of this issue!

In spite of these facts, the Browns try to make it appear that we were covering up the matter. To do this they had to entirely omit any reference to the fact that we published an expose of Nelson in the April 1980 issue of the *Salt Lake City Messenger*. Instead of telling the truth about the matter, they assert that “Between the Moody Press and us, it looks like the Tanners had no choice but to come clean” (*They Lie in Wait to Deceive*, page 161). On the same page the Browns admit that they “sent information about Dee Jay Nelson” to Moody Press “in the latter part of 1980.” It should be obvious, then, that the Browns are completely misrepresenting the situation. Since we had already exposed Nelson in the April 1980 issue of the *Salt Lake City Messenger*, how could the Browns and Moody Press force us “to come clean” in the “latter part” of the same year? This, of course, just doesn’t make any sense.

In a new booklet entitled, *Can the Browns Save Joseph Smith?* we deal with other false claims which the Browns have made concerning us and Dee Jay Nelson. We show, for instance, that the Browns were incorrect in stating that

Dr. Klaus Baer’s, Dr. Richard A. Parker’s, and Dr. John A. Wilson’s translations preceded Nelson’s!

Nelson, and his supporters, likes to make it sound as if . . . he was the first to translate and publish the Egyptian document. In reality, the first scholarly publications were by Dr. Klaus Baer, Dr. Richard Parker, and Dr. John A. Wilson. (*Ibid.*, page 110)

Actually, Nelson’s work *The Joseph Smith Papyri* was advertised for sale in the *Salt Lake Tribune* on April 6, 1968, (see *Salt Lake City Messenger*, April, 1968), while the translations of Professors Baer, Parker and Wilson did not appear in *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* until the Summer and Autumn issues. In fact, Klaus Baer refers to Nelson’s publication in his article:

So far as I know, Nelson, *The Joseph Smith Papyri*, page 42, was the first to point out that the bird above the head of Osiris clearly has a human head and therefore must be his ba. In “Facsimile No. 1,” it is drawn with a falcon’s head, and I must confess with some embarrassment that I also “saw” the falcon’s head before reading Nelson’s study. (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Autumn 1968, page 118)

It would, of course, have been impossible for Professor Baer to refer to Nelson’s study unless it was already in print when he wrote his article.

The Browns accuse Nelson of lying when he said he went to President Tanner’s office to obtain photographs of the papyri which were being suppressed from the general public. In the booklet, *Can The Browns Save Joseph Smith?* we quote from a letter written by N. Eldon Tanner himself which supports Nelson’s claim. Furthermore, we reproduce a photograph of a memorandum from President Tanner’s office which verifies Nelson’s visit. Robert L. Brown has charged that “the Tanners are being deceitful” with regard to this matter. The evidence, however, completely supports our statements regarding this incident.

In our rebuttal to the Browns, we examine the charge that some of the information found in their book was obtained through secret tape recording of telephone conversations. We also show that they have cut out a paragraph from a photograph of a letter written by the Egyptologist Klaus Baer, and that the other parts of the letter have been pasted back together to make it appear that nothing is missing! The Browns have also suppressed over 900 words from a letter which we wrote. The reason for the suppression of these words is very obvious: we tell that the Mormon Church itself used a fake Ph.D. to defend the Book of Abraham at the time of Spalding’s attack. The noted Mormon scholar Dr. Sidney B. Sperry confirmed that deception was practiced in this regard:

He wrote a wonderful book . . . under the name Robert C. Webb, Ph.D. I regret that the brethren let him put down Robert C. Webb, Ph.D., because he was no Ph.D. (*Pearl of Great Price Conference*, December 10, 1960, 1964 ed., page 9)

In their book, the Browns main thesis appears to be that the critics of the Mormon Church have been discredited because one of them used a fake Ph.D. The Browns, however, completely suppressed the fact that the Church previously used a man with an assumed name as well as a fake doctor’s degree. We feel that Mr. and Mrs. Brown are operating under a double standard. They accuse us of deception, but the truth of the matter is that we were completely unaware of Nelson’s false claim to a Ph.D. As soon as we found out, we exposed him and quit selling his books. The Mormon Church leaders, on the other hand, allowed Mr. Homans to call himself “Robert C. Webb, Ph.D.” They engaged in a cover-up concerning this matter and continued to print his books for many years. As late as 1936 Church President Heber J. Grant took out a copyright on R. C. Webb’s book *Joseph Smith as a Translator*.

In any case, the Browns have tried to divert attention from the Book of Abraham problem. On the “Mormon Miscellaneous” radio program, August 3, 1981, we challenged Robert L. Brown to a public debate concerning the Book of Abraham, but he said he would only debate on the Dee Jay Nelson affair. We feel that this is just another attempt to avoid facing the real issue. As long as the Browns continue side-stepping the evidence against the Book of Abraham, their work will be of no real value.

While the whole foundation for the Book of Abraham seems to be crumbling, we can point with confidence to the case we have

prepared against the Book of Abraham. Our arguments are just as good as when we first advanced them thirteen years ago. Our case is not based on any one man or any wild speculation, but rather on the science of Egyptology, original documents and careful research. We have the testimony of some of the world's greatest Egyptologists—i.e., Professor Richard A. Parker of Brown University and Professors Klaus Baer and John A. Wilson (now deceased) of the University of Chicago's Oriental Institute. We feel that the case against the Book of Abraham is irrefutable. If the Browns feel otherwise, they should be willing to meet us in a public debate in Salt Lake City.

KINDERHOOK PLATES

While we give a detailed report concerning Joseph Smith's "translation" of the Kinderhook plates in our book *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* new and important information has recently come to light. The Mormon publication *Times and Seasons* for May 1, 1843, reported that these plates were found in a mound in Kinderhook, Illinois. In a letter written from Nauvoo, dated May 2, 1843, Charlotte Haven commented:

... Mr. Joshua Moore, ... brought with him half a dozen thin pieces of brass ... in the form of a bell ... They were recently found, he said, in a mound ... When he showed them to Joseph, the latter said that the figures or writing on them was similar to that in which the Book of Mormon was written, and if Mr. Moore could leave them, he thought that by the help of revelation he would be able to translate them. So a sequel to that holy book may soon be expected. (*Overland Monthly*, December 1890, page 630)

According to the *History of the Church*, Joseph Smith did accept these plates as authentic and even claimed that he had translated a portion of them:

Monday, May, 1.—... I insert fac-similes of the six brass plates found near Kinderhook, ...

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)

On January 15, 1844, this statement appeared in the Mormon publication *Times and Seasons*:

Why does the circumstance of the plates recently found in a mound in Pike county, Ill., by Mr. Wiley, together with ethnology and a thousand other things, go to prove the Book of Mormon true?—Ans. Because it is true! (*Times and Seasons*, vol. 5, page 406)

A number of the citizens of Kinderhook certified that the plates were taken from the mound by R. Wiley. Unfortunately for the Mormon position, however, it was later discovered that the plates were forgeries, made for the purpose of tricking Joseph Smith. W. Fugate, one of those who signed the certificate, wrote the following in a letter to James T. Cobb: "Bridge Whitton cut them out of some pieces of copper; Wiley and I made the hieroglyphics by making impressions on beeswax and filling them with acid and putting it on the plates."

At the time of the Civil War the Kinderhook plates were lost. M. Wilford Poulson, a retired teacher at Brigham Young University and a student of Mormon history, told us that he found one of the original Kinderhook plates in the Chicago Historical Society Museum, but it was mislabeled as one of the original gold plates of the Book of Mormon. The plate which he found has been identified as number 5 in the facsimiles found in the *History of the Church*. Except for an acid blotch on one side, the plate is in excellent condition. Mr. Poulson did a great deal of

research concerning the Kinderhook plates and was convinced that they were made in the 1840s as W. Fugate claimed.

Welby W. Ricks, who was President of the BYU Archaeological Society, had another opinion concerning these plates. The official Mormon publication, *Improvement Era*, accepted his view and printed the following in September, 1962:

A recent rediscovery of one of the Kinderhook plates which was examined by Joseph Smith, Jun., reaffirms his prophetic calling and reveals the false statements made by one of the finders. ...

The plates are now back in their original category of genuine.

What scholars may learn from this ancient record in future years or what may be translated by divine power is an exciting thought to contemplate.

This much remains. Joseph Smith, Jun., stands as a true prophet and translator of ancient records by divine means and all the world is invited to investigate the truth which has sprung out of the earth not only of the Kinderhook plates, but of the Book of Mormon as well. (*The Kinderhook Plates*, by Welby W. Ricks, reprinted from the *Improvement Era*, September 1962)

In 1965 George M. Lawrence, a Mormon physicist, was given permission to examine and make "some non-destructive physical studies of the surviving plate." Mr. Lawrence allowed us to quote from his study in *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* On page 113 we quoted him as saying: "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."

Since Mr. Lawrence was only allowed to make non-destructive tests, some Mormon scholars would not accept his work as conclusive.

In 1980 the Mormon scholar Stanley P. Kimball was able "to secure permission from the Chicago Historical Society for the recommended destructive tests. These tests, involving some very sophisticated analytical techniques, were performed by Professor D. Lynn Johnson of the Department of Materials Science and Engineering at Northwestern University" (*The Ensign*, August 1981, page 69).

Professor Kimball describes the results of the tests in the official Church publication *The Ensign*, August 1981:

A recent electronic and chemical analysis of a metal plate (one of six original plates) brought in 1843 to the Prophet Joseph Smith in Nauvoo, Illinois, appears to solve a previously unanswered question in Church history, helping to further evidence that the plate is what its producers later said it was—a nineteenth-century attempt to lure Joseph Smith into making a translation of ancient-looking characters that had been etched into the plates. ...

As a result of these tests, we concluded that the plate owned by the Chicago Historical Society is not of ancient origin. We concluded that the plate was etched with acid; and as Paul Cheesman and other scholars have pointed out, ancient inhabitants would probably have engraved the plates rather than etched them with acid. Secondly, we concluded that the plate was made from a true brass alloy (copper and zinc) typical of the mid-nineteenth century; whereas the "brass" of ancient times was actually bronze, an alloy of copper and tin. (*The Ensign*, August 1981, pages 66 and 70)

Back in 1970, the Mormon scholar John A. Wittorf tried to come to grips with what would happen if the Kinderhook plates were proven to be forgeries:

Accepting the find as genuine, Joseph had facsimile drawings of the plates made, presumably for future study. The brevity 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. (*Newsletter and Proceedings of the Society for Early Historic Archaeology*, BYU, October 1970, page 7)

In *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* page 113, we observed:

Although we are happy to see John A. Wittorf's honesty with regard to the Kinderhook plates, we cannot agree with him when he states that Joseph Smith's reputation as a translator will not be affected. 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 the Book of Abraham from Egyptian papyri which he knew nothing about.

The Mormon scholar Paul R. Cheesman opened the door for an entirely different approach to the problem in an article written in March, 1970. He suggested that Joseph Smith was not really the author of the statement about the translation which appeared in the *History of the Church*:

As of now, the original source of Joseph Smith's statement, under the date of May 1, 1843, concerning the Kinderhook Plate, cannot be found. Much of Volume V of the *Documentary History of the Church* was recorded by Leo Hawkins in 1853, after the saints were in Utah, and was collected by Willard Richards from journals. . . . Liberty was taken by historians of those days to put the narrative in the first person, even though the source was not as such. Verification of the authenticity of Joseph Smith's statement is still under study. In examining the diary of Willard Richards, the compiler of Volume V, the Kinderhook story is not found there. Our research has taken us through numerous diaries and letters written at this particular time, and the Kinderhook story is not mentioned. ("An Analysis of the Kinderhook Plates," an unpublished paper by Paul R. Cheesman, page 2)

Some of our readers will remember that as early as 1965 we charged that Joseph Smith was not really the author of a large portion of the material attributed to him. This was finally confirmed by Dean C. Jessee of the Church Historical Department in an article published in *Brigham Young University Studies*, Summer 1971. According to Jessee's research over 60% of Joseph Smith's *History* was compiled after his death. In any case, the idea with regard to the Kinderhook plates seemed to be that if they turned out to be forgeries, a person could get the Church off the hook by arguing that the statement attributed to Joseph Smith concerning the translation was also a forgery. This is certainly a strange way of looking at the matter—almost as if "two wrongs" would make "a right." Since the *History of the Church* was prepared by the highest officials of the Mormon Church and printed by the Church itself, to admit falsification in it is to undermine the entire foundation of Mormonism. Joseph Fielding Smith, the tenth President of the Church, claimed that the *History of the Church* "is the most accurate history in all the world, it must be so" (*Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 2, page 199).

Since the recent tests on the Kinderhook plate, Mormon apologists find themselves facing a real dilemma, and there is no way out without doing serious injury to the Church. Stanley B. Kimball chose to discredit the accuracy of the *History of the Church* rather than admit that Joseph Smith "translated" bogus plates:

It has been well known that the serialized "History of Joseph Smith" consists largely of items from other persons' personal journals and other sources, collected during Joseph

Smith's lifetime and continued after the Saints were in Utah, then edited and pieced together to form a history of the Prophet's life "in his own words." (*The Ensign*, August 1981, page 67)

Professor Kimball was apparently planning to advance the argument that since the part in Joseph Smith's *History* concerning the Kinderhook plate was not recorded until after his death and since there seems to be nothing written in any journal during his lifetime, it must have been made up by later historians. Before Kimball printed his article, however, he was informed that the Church was suppressing a journal written by William Clayton which contained evidence that Joseph Smith did "translate" a portion of the plates. This journal was hidden in the First Presidency's vault, but Kimball was able to obtain a copy of the important portion:

President J. has translated a portion and says they contain the history of the person with whom they were found, and 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. (*Ibid.*, page 73)

Professor Kimball maintains that this is the original source for the entry in Joseph Smith's *History*. Speaking of this *History*, Kimball writes:

Although this account appears to be the writing of Joseph Smith, it is actually an excerpt from a journal of William Clayton. . . . the words "I have translated a portion" originally read "President J. has translated a portion. . ." . . . this altered version of the extract from William Clayton's journal was reprinted in the *Millennial Star* of 15 January 1859, and, unfortunately, was finally carried over into official Church history when the "History of Joseph Smith" was edited into book form as the *History of the Church* in 1909. (*Ibid.*, pages 67-68)

Stanley Kimball is undoubtedly correct in assuming that Clayton's journal is the source for the entry in Joseph Smith's *History*. The two writings appear to be too similar to be coincidental. While this shows evidence of falsification on the part of Church leaders as far as the *History of the Church* goes, Clayton's journal proves that Joseph Smith claimed he had "translated a portion" of the plates. This testimony by Clayton cannot be easily set aside. For one thing, Clayton's account is contemporary with the event. According to Kimball, "in his journal entry of Monday, May 1, he included a tracing of one of the plates" (*Ibid.*, page 71). Furthermore, Clayton was Joseph Smith's scribe and was in constant contact with him. James B. Allen wrote:

Beginning in early 1842, then, William Clayton became involved in nearly every important activity in Nauvoo, including the private concerns of the Prophet. . . . He became an intimate friend and confidant of Joseph Smith, writing letters for him, recording revelations, and performing important errands. As a scribe he kept the sacred "Book of the Law of the Lord"; was officially designated to write the history of the Nauvoo Temple; helped prepare the official history of Joseph Smith (indeed, his personal journals become the source for many entries in that history); and kept various other books . . . for almost two and a half years, until Joseph's death in 1844, they were in each other's presence almost daily. (*Journal of Mormon History*, vol. 6, 1979, pages 42-43)

If anyone would be in a position to know what Joseph Smith really believed about the Kinderhook plates, it would be William Clayton.

Since Clayton's journal was apparently used for the statement about the Kinderhook Plate in the *History of the Church*, it shows that the highest leaders of the Church at the time the History was compiled also believed that Joseph Smith "translated a portion" of the plates. Wilford Woodruff (who

became the fourth President of the Church) and George A. Smith said that the *History* was “carefully revised under the strict inspection of President Brigham Young, and approved by him” (*History of the Church*, vol. 1, Preface, page VI).

Besides the Clayton journal, there is other contemporary evidence that Joseph Smith “translated a portion” of the plates. On May 7, 1843, just six days after the entry appears in Clayton’s journal, the Apostle Parley P. Pratt wrote a letter containing the following:

“Six plates having the appearance of Brass have lately been dug out of a mound by a gentleman in Pike Co. Illinois. They are small and filled with engravings in Egyptian language and contain the genealogy of one of the ancient Jaredites back to Ham the son of Noah.” (*The Ensign*, August 1981, page 73)

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

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

The fact that Joseph Smith was actually preparing a translation of the plates is verified by a broadside published by the Mormon newspaper, *The Nauvoo Neighbor*, in June 1843. On this broadside, containing facsimiles of the plates, we find the following: “The contents of the Plates, together with a Fac-Simile of the same, will be published in the *Times and Seasons*, as soon as the translation is completed.” It is certainly possible that the Church still has Joseph Smith’s unpublished work on the Kinderhook plates.

However this may be, Joseph Smith certainly fell into a trap when he claimed to translate a portion of the plates. James D. Bales brings the whole matter clearly into focus when he writes:

What does this all add up to? Does it merely mean that one of the “finds” which the Latter Day Saints believed supported the Book of Mormon does not support it, and that there is no real blow dealt to the prophethood of Joseph Smith? Not at all, for as Charles A. Shook well observed. . . . “Only a bogus prophet translates bogus plates.” Where we can check up on Smith as a translator of plates, he is found guilty of deception. How can we trust him with reference to his claims about the Book of Mormon? If we cannot trust him where we can check him, we cannot trust him where we cannot check his translations. (*The Book of Mormon?* 1958, page 98)

BOOK OF MORMON

Although the original gold plates from which the Book of Mormon was supposed to have been translated were reported to have been taken away by an angel, Joseph Smith did make copies of some of the characters from the plates. According to the account given in the *Pearl of Great Price*, Joseph Smith claimed that Martin Harris

came to our place, got the characters which I had drawn off the plates, and started with them to the city of New York. . . . I refer to his own account of the circumstances, as he related them to me after his return, which was as follows:

I went to the city of New York, and presented the characters which had been translated, with the translation thereof, to Professor Charles Anthon, a gentleman celebrated for his literary attainments. Professor Anthon stated that the translation was correct, more so than any he had before seen translated from the Egyptian. (*Pearl of Great Price*, Joseph Smith, 2:63-64)

Although Book of Mormon witness David Whitmer preserved a paper which contained Book of Mormon characters, it did not match the description given by Professor Anthon in a letter dated February 17, 1834:

This paper was in fact a singular scrawl. It consisted of all kinds of crooked characters . . . arranged in perpendicular columns, and the whole ended in a rude delineation of a circle divided into various compartments decked with various strange marks, . . . I . . . well remember that the paper contained any thing else but “Egyptian Hieroglyphics.” . . . (Letter written by Charles Anthon, as published in *Mormonism Unveiled*, 1834, pages 271-272)

On May 3, 1980, the Church Section of the Mormon Church’s newspaper, *Deseret News*, made the startling announcement that Mark William Hofmann had discovered the original document that Harris took to Professor Anthon. According to another newspaper report, Dr. Richard L. Anderson, of Brigham Young University, claimed that “‘This new discovery is sort of a Dead Sea School [*sic*] Equivalent of the Book of Mormon,’ . . .” (*The Herald*, Provo, Utah, May 1, 1980). Dr. Hugh Nibley was quoted as saying, “‘This offers as good a test as we’ll ever get as to the authenticity of the Book of Mormon,’ . . .” (*Ibid.*)

This new discovery has made it possible to decide whether Martin Harris or Professor Anthon told the truth. According to the account published in the *Pearl of Great Price*, “Professor Anthon stated that the translation was correct, more so than any he had before seen translated from the Egyptian.” In his letter, however, Professor Anthon charged that this report concerning him was incorrect and that “the paper contained any thing else but ‘Egyptian Hieroglyphics.’” To settle the matter a photograph of the original document was sent to Klaus Baer, Professor of Egyptology at the University of Chicago’s Oriental Institute. Dr. Baer replied:

What is it? Probably not Egyptian, even if here and there signs appear that could be interpreted as more or less awkwardly copied hieroglyphs or hieratic signs, . . . I suspect that one would have about the same batting average in comparing this with Chinese or Japanese or other systems that arrange signs in columns. (Letter dated May 10, 1980)

In a television interview the Mormon Egyptologist Edward H. Ashment said that the document “doesn’t come very close to being readable as demotic.” He went on to say that “it’s in a script that is entirely unique and it has no relationship, to my knowledge again, of Egyptian or to any American script.”

When the Mormon apologist Dr. Hugh Nibley was asked about the document just after its discovery, he proclaimed: “Of course it’s translatable” (*The Herald*, Provo, Utah, May 1, 1980). Almost a year and a half has passed, however, and no translation has been published. It appears that Mormon scholars have found it impossible to vindicate Joseph Smith’s claims concerning the Book of Mormon characters.

In *The Changing World of Mormonism*, pages 334-335, we pointed out that when the original Joseph Smith Papyri were rediscovered, the “Prophet, Seer and Revelator”—i.e. the President of the Church—was completely silent about the translation of the manuscripts. We also quoted the Book of Mormon as saying that a “seer” can “translate all records that are of ancient date” (Mosiah 8:13). We then stated that “it appears that the prophet does not have the gift to translate languages as has been previously claimed.” The Browns feel that they have a good answer to this accusation:

Why wasn’t the papyri given to the prophet and leader of the LDS church to translate? That the papyri was translated by several persons shows that such translation is humanly possible. Why would the prophet need to translate it?

Our Heavenly Father will not do for us what we can do for ourselves. Individually, or as a group, we grow and progress by solving our own problems. There was no need to have the papyri translated by the prophet . . . and it wasn't! (*They Lie in Wait to Deceive*, page 113)

Although the Browns seem to feel that they have answered the criticism, the discovery of the paper containing Book of Mormon characters certainly weakens their argument and puts the President of the Church in an embarrassing position. The characters on this paper are as unintelligible to scholars as those on the Kinderhook plates, yet the President of the Church had refused to get involved in the matter. Instead of using the "seer stone," which is in the Church's possession, to translate the characters, he examined them with a magnifying glass (see photograph in *Deseret News*, Church Section, May 3, 1980).

CONCLUSION. While there has always been a question as to Joseph Smith's ability as a translator, the recent tests on the Kinderhook plates, the translation of the Joseph Smith Egyptian Papyri by noted Egyptologists and the discovery of the sheet containing Book of Mormon characters all combine to show that Joseph Smith did not understand the Egyptian language. It is clear, therefore, that the "translations" he has produced are only the work of his own imagination. For more information on the question of Joseph Smith's ability as a translator we recommend the following books: *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* (dealing with the Book of Abraham and the Kinderhook plates), *The Changing World of Mormonism* (for an updated work on the Book of Abraham), *Book of Mormon "Caractors" Found* (for important information on the recently discovered sheet Harris took to Anthon) and *Can the Browns Save Joseph Smith?* (for a rebuttal to charges made by Robert L. and Rosemary Brown).

Success In New Zealand

On January 30, 1981, we received a very encouraging letter from Ronald M. Rees, Manager of Beehive Books in New Zealand. Mr. Rees has given us permission to share extracts from this letter with our readers:

No doubt you have wondered if Beehive Books is an L.D.S. bookshop. Perhaps you may be interested to learn a little about us. Nine years ago my wife Roberta and I established New Zealand's first privately owned bookshop for Latter-Day Saints. Our venture has met with success, and we now supply Mormons throughout both New Zealand and Australia with their book requirements . . . we also supply the Church owned bookshop at the Visitors' Centre adjacent to the N.Z. Temple, also many Church units throughout New Zealand and Australia, and a steady flow of members calling at the shop to make their purchases. . . .

Roberta and I are in our early thirties, and we both joined the L.D.S. Church about 17 years ago. Over the years, although we have always been fully active in the Church and have both held responsible leadership positions, we have both at times felt aware of the constant pressures. Also, working with L.D.S. publications, we have been keenly aware and disturbed by the unorthodox views expressed by many of the early Church authorities such as are found in the *Journal of Discourses*.

In September of last year together we agreed to quietly withdraw our fellowship from the Church. It caused some consternation and surprise amongst local Church leaders when both Roberta and I requested releases from our positions as High Priest's Group Leader and Spiritual Living Leader in Relief Society, and quietly slipped into what is termed "inactivity" with our three children.

At about this time a non-Member customer told us about your book "Mormonism, Shadow or Reality"—hence our letter

to you of October 17. When your catalogue arrived, we noted that "Changing World of Mormonism" was a Moody Press publication, and obtained a copy from their local representatives. After reading this book we feel very relieved to be free from the Mormon Church, and grateful to you for the efforts you and Jerald are making to reveal the untruths, paradoxes, doctrinal conflicts and errors which most Mormons are totally unaware of. We have lent your book to seven of our friends, and all have withdrawn from the Church. These fine people were all faithful and fully active . . .

Now, as to our future . . . We have completely ceased ordering L.D.S. publications, and by the end of March hope to have cleared all stocks. At that stage we intend to formally request that our names and those of our three children be removed from the records of the Church. It is our intention to promote your publications at that time. We have a very extensive mailing list of the many hundreds of Latter-Day Saints who have purchased books from us over the years, and we will be mailing each of these customers a copy of a catalogue of your publications. . . .

Naturally, you will appreciate that our decision to close down the very successful L.D.S. section of our business was a difficult one. However, we find that in conscience we can no longer promote L.D.S. Church literature. . . .

Once again, Sandra and Jerald, may we thank you for the effort and research you both made in publishing "The Changing World of Mormonism." We always found difficulty complying with the common Mormon attitude of "the thinking has been done," and with continual access to Church literature we have been troubled by contradictions in doctrine. To read your fully documented and objective appraisal of all these various questions—plus many others which local members are totally unaware of—has been quite a traumatic and shattering experience. However, our family is very happy in our new-found freedom, and reaching out to understand what Christ would have us do. We feel a sense of mission in our future, and are keen to share our newly discovered knowledge with our Mormon friends and customers. We believe that we are in a truly unique position so to do.

By June 12, 1981, Mr. and Mrs. Rees reported that "nearly 70 Mormons" had come out of the Church:

On May 17th we sent to every Mormon Church leader and every Mormon on our mailing list in New Zealand a copy of our mailer . . .

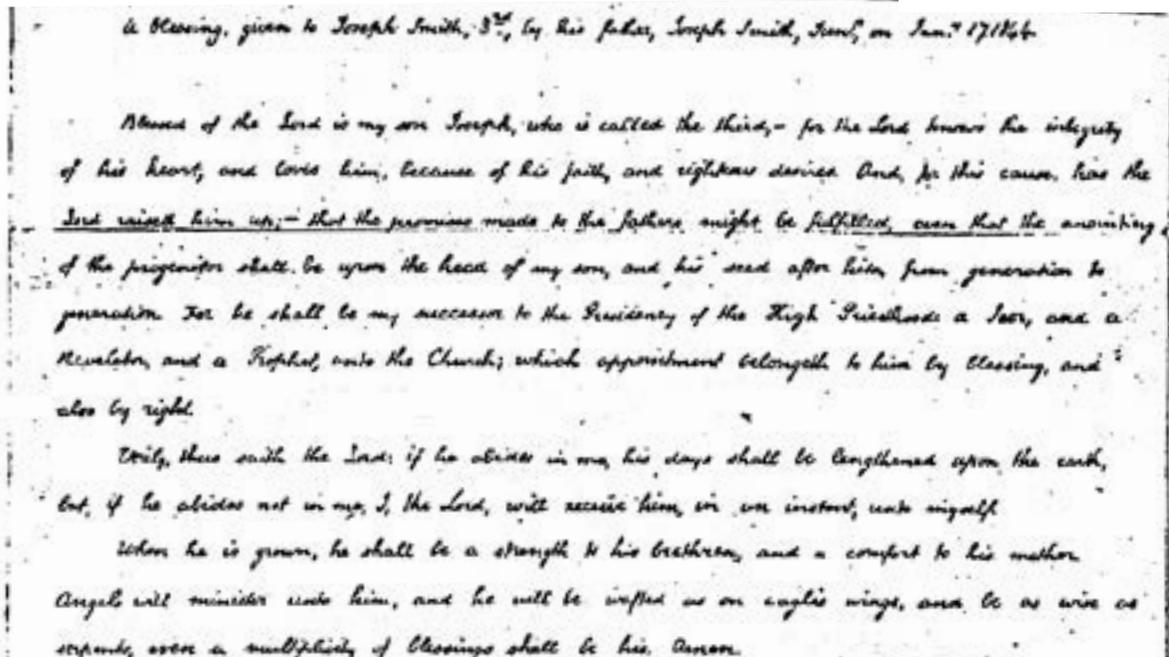
The response has been amazing. . . . The most wonderful thing is that we have been able to assist nearly 70 Mormons out of Mormonism and many of them to the real Lord Jesus Christ. We have a Mormon Bishop, 5 returned missionaries and two stake high councilmen now on our mailing list. Every day some one approaches us and we are able to show them that Mormon claims are false. . . . It really touches us when a returned missionary who has just been shown all the evidence in your books that we have in our shop says with tears in his eyes "The Church is not true and I have wasted two years of my life and all that money for nothing." Two days later he accepted the Lord and is being baptised at the end of this month. He is helping his mother and aunt out of the church. The aunt rang us earlier this week and we sent her a library copy of "Mormonism Shadow or Reality?" She phoned us back yesterday to say she had read it (must be a speed reader) and she now knows that the church is not true. She is a third generation Mormon!

Some people declare to us after seeing the truth and coming to know that Mormonism is not true. . . . "It's Me getting out of a prison." One young man who said those exact words has now accepted Christ and was baptised earlier this week.

We are very pleased to learn of these dramatic developments in New Zealand, and we hope that our readers will remember these people in prayer.

Joseph As A Prophet

AN IMPORTANT NEW DOCUMENT COMES TO LIGHT



Photograph of Joseph Smith's Blessing to His Son

The evidence we presented in another article in this issue of the *Messenger* shows that Joseph Smith failed as a translator. In this article we will show that the Mormon Church now faces a similar problem with regard to his role as a "Prophet."

Church leaders maintain that Joseph Smith was appointed by God to be president of the true church and that there has been an unbroken chain of succession in the presidency ever since that time. According to Mormon apologists, any break in the chain of succession would throw the church into a state of apostasy. President Joseph Fielding Smith attacked the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints—a group that broke off from the Utah Mormons—for failure to conform to the true plan of succession: "An ordination in the "Reorganized" church is of no more effect than is an ordination in the Methodist, Presbyterian, or Catholic church, for those officiating do not hold the priesthood, and are not recognized of God" (*Succession in the Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints*, Salt Lake City, 1975).

One of the chief differences between the Mormon Church and the RLDS Church centers around the question of who was the successor to Joseph Smith. While the Utah Mormons claim that Brigham Young was the true successor, the RLDS maintain that Joseph Smith had bestowed this right on his son Joseph Smith III. Although the Utah Church has always disputed this claim, a recent discovery proves that Joseph Smith actually did designate his son as successor. The Mormon Church's own newspaper, *Deseret News*, confirmed the authenticity of the document:

A handwritten document thought to be a father's blessing given by Joseph Smith Jr., first president and prophet of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, to his son Joseph Smith III has been acquired by the Church Historical Department. . . .

Olson and other LDS officials said they are convinced the blessing is authentic. Handwriting and the paper were examined and compared with other documents . . .

The blessing document, dated Jan. 17, 1844, is thought to have been written by Thomas Bullock, one of several men who served as clerk to Joseph Smith Jr. . . .

Church officials obtained the document from Mark William Hofmann, a collector of historical documents and antiques. He said he received it from a descendant of Thomas Bullock. . . .

The document outlines a blessing given by Joseph Smith Jr. to his son, then age 11, and includes the possibility of the son succeeding his father "to the Presidency of the High Priesthood: A Seer, and a Revelator, and a Prophet, unto the Church." (*Deseret News*, March 19, 1981)

A photograph of this important document is found above. The text of the blessing reads as follows:

A blessing given to Joseph Smith, 3rd, by his father, Joseph Smith, Jun., on Jan. 17, 1844.

Blessed of the Lord is my son Joseph, who is called the third, —for the Lord knows the integrity of his heart, and loves him, because of his faith, and righteous desires. And, for this cause, has the Lord raised him up; — that the promises made to the fathers might be fulfilled, even the anointing of the progenitor shall be upon the head of my son, and his seed after him, from generation to generation. For he shall be my successor to the Presidency of the High Priesthood: a Seer, and a Revelator, and a Prophet, unto the Church; which appointment belongeth to him by blessing, and also by right.

Verily, thus saith the Lord: if he abides in me, his days shall be lengthened upon the earth, but if he abides not in me, I, the Lord, will receive him, in an instant, unto myself.

When he is grown, he shall be a strength to his brethren, and a comfort to his mother. Angels will minister unto him, and he shall be wafted as on eagle's wings, and be as wise as serpents, even a multiplicity of blessings shall be his. Amen.

For a number of years we have maintained that “After Joseph Smith’s death it was expected that his son would someday lead the Church” (*Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* 1972, page 195). The recently discovered blessing, of course, confirms this statement.

The blessing not only fits very well with the historical evidence, but it even contains wording resembling that found in a revelation given to Joseph Smith on January 19, 1841. In the *Doctrine and Covenants* 124:57 and 59 we read:

... this anointing have I put upon his head, that his blessing shall also be put upon the head of his posterity after him. . . . let . . . his seed after him have place in that house, from generation to generation, . . .

In the blessing to Joseph Smith III we find this:

... the anointing of the progenitor shall be upon the head of my son, and his seed after him, from generation to generation.

If there is any truth to the claim that Joseph Smith was led by revelation, the blessing given to his son would seem to indicate that Joseph Smith III was the true successor and that Brigham Young wrongfully appropriated this right to himself. The idea that Brigham Young had stolen Joseph Smith’s son’s right to be President of the Church was widely discussed in the 1800s. John D. Lee, who followed Brigham Young west, made these revealing comments in a book published in 1877:

Before proceeding further, we must learn who was to be the successor of the Prophet to lead the Church. It was then understood among the Saints that young Joseph was to succeed his father, and that right justly belonged to him. Joseph, the Prophet, had bestowed that right upon him by ordination, but he was too young at that time to fill the office and discharge its solemn duties. Some one must fill the place until he had grown to more mature age. . . . a conference was held . . . Brigham Young arose . . . I myself at the time, imagined that I saw and heard a strong resemblance to the Prophet in him, and felt that he was the man to lead us until Joseph’s legal successor should grow up to manhood, when he should surrender the Presidency to the man who held the birthright. After that time, if he continued to claim and hold the position, he could not be considered anything else than an usurper, . . . Hence the course of Brigham Young has been downward ever since. . . .

I heard Mother Smith, the mother of Joseph the Prophet, plead with Brigham Young, with tears, not to rob young Joseph of his birthright, which his father, the Prophet, bestowed upon him previous to his death. That young Joseph was to succeed his father as the leader of the Church, and it was his right in the line of the priesthood. “I know it,” replied Brigham, “don’t worry or take any trouble, Mother Smith; by so doing you are only laying the knife to the throat of the child. If it is known that he is the rightful successor of his father, the enemy of the Priesthood will seek his life. He is too young to lead this people now, but when he arrives at mature age he shall have his place. No one shall rob him of it.” This conversation took place in the Masonic Hall at Nauvoo, in 1845. (*Mormonism Unveiled; Or the Life and Confessions of the Late Mormon Bishop, John D. Lee, 1877*, pages 155, 156 and 161)

On June 3, 1860, President Brigham Young gave a sermon in the Tabernacle which gives support to Lee’s claim:

What of Joseph Smith’s family? What of his boys? . . . They are in the hands of God, and when they make their appearance before this people, full of his power, there are none, but what will say—“Amen! we are ready to receive you.”

The Brethren testify that brother Brigham is brother Joseph’s legal successor. You never heard me say so. I say that I am a good hand to keep the dogs and wolves out of the flock. I do not care a groat who rises up. I do not think anything about being Joseph’s successor. That is nothing that concerns me. (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 8, page 69)

Mormon scholar D. Michael Quinn, of the Church’s Brigham Young University, concluded that Brigham Young expected Joseph Smith III or his brother to lead the Church:

Brigham Young is also alleged to have acknowledged privately and publicly prior to 1860 that Joseph Smith III had a right to preside in the Church. Not only Brigham Young, but many Mormons in the Great Basin seem to have anticipated that one day Joseph Smith III would become a leader in the Church perpetuated by the apostles. It was with wonderment that they learned he had become the president, on 6 April 1860, of a church formed by dissidents from numerous sects established after the death of Joseph Smith, Jr. Joseph Smith III was ordained president of the RLDS Church . . . As Joseph Smith III demonstrated increasing hostility to the church in Utah, Brigham Young expressed hope that the martyred Prophet’s youngest son, David Hyrum Smith would one day merit his rightful place as president of the LDS Church. (*Brigham Young University Studies*, Winter 1976, pages 228-29)

As the RLDS Church continued to oppose the Utah Mormons, feelings became very bitter and a great deal of literature was printed by both sides. Finally, on April 10, 1898, President Wilford Woodruff completely denied that Joseph Smith had set his son apart to lead the Church:

“Joseph Smith never ordained his son Joseph, never blessed him nor set him apart to lead this Church and Kingdom on the face of the earth. When he or any other man says he did, they state that which is false before high heaven.” (Statement by President Woodruff, as cited in *Priesthood and Presidency*, by Charles W. Penrose, page 22)

It should be obvious that the discovery of the blessing completely destroys President Woodruff’s case.

A TRUE REVELATION?

The second paragraph of the recently discovered blessing is extremely interesting:

Verily, thus saith the Lord: if he abides in me, his days shall be lengthened upon the earth, but, if he abides not in me, I, the Lord, will receive him, in an instant, unto myself.

Since this statement begins with the words, “Verily, thus saith the Lord,” the Utah Mormon Church will have a difficult time explaining it away. Notice that the blessing says that if Joseph Smith III “abides in me his days shall be lengthened.” While Brigham Young lived to be an old man, Joseph Smith III lived even longer. He was eighty-two years old when he died in 1914. In view of Joseph Smith III’s long life, those who believe Joseph Smith received his revelations from God are almost forced to the conclusion that his son lived a righteous life. If this is the case, why was he rejected by the Utah Mormon Church? Notice also that the revelation says that if he was not faithful, the Lord would “receive him, in an instant, unto myself.” According to Mormon belief, Joseph Smith III must have been one of the most evil men who ever lived, for he spent over fifty years of his life actively fighting the Utah Mormon Church. Now, if one were to assume that the Utah Mormon Church is really the true church, it would be difficult to understand why the Lord would allow Joseph Smith III to continue living. There could hardly be any sin worse than fighting against the Lord’s church. He certainly could not be abiding in the Lord and be actively opposing His work, and the blessing definitely states, “if he abides not in me, I, the Lord, will receive him, in an instant unto myself.”

Although the RLDS Church may proclaim that the new discovery is a victory over the Utah Church, a careful examination of all the evidence concerning succession leads one to conclude that Joseph Smith was never directed by revelation from God. It seems, in fact, that Smith had been groping in the dark for years trying to find a successor. According to David Whitmer, one of the three witnesses to the Book of Mormon, Joseph Smith

had so much confidence in me that in July, 1834, he ordained me his successor as “Prophet Seer and Revelator” to the Church. He did this of his own free will and not at any solicitation whatever on my part. I did not know what he was going to do until he laid his hands upon me and ordained me. (*An Address To All Believers In Christ*, by David Whitmer, Richmond, Missouri, 1887, page 55)

Neither Mormons nor members of the Reorganized Church can believe it was God who directed Joseph Smith to ordain David Whitmer because Whitmer later claimed that Smith was a fallen prophet and spent the last part of his life striving to build up another apostate church. Writing in 1887, Whitmer admonished:

If you believe my testimony to the Book of Mormon; if you believe that God spake to us three witnesses by his own voice, then I tell you that in June, 1838, God spake to me again by his own voice from the heavens, and told me to “separate myself from among the Latter Day Saints, for as they sought to do unto me, so should it be done unto them.” In the spring of 1838, the heads of the church and many of the members had gone deep into error and blindness. (*Ibid.*, page 27)

According to Dr. Quinn, Whitmer was not the only one Joseph Smith appointed successor:

When Joseph Smith contemplated a successor, he made an appointment without seeking prior approval of the other governing bodies of the Church. He did this in 1834 with David Whitmer and Oliver Cowdery, and in 1843 with Hyrum Smith. (*BYU Studies*, Winter 1976, page 219)

On page 232 of the same article, Quinn sadly observes:

Joseph Smith had at different times by precept or precedent established eight possible routes of legitimate succession to his place as President of the Church and of the High Priesthood on earth. As two recent analysts of LDS succession have observed: “In the first years of church government, the law of succession was in embryo stage. It seems that even in the Prophet Joseph Smith’s mind, just who would succeed him at any given moment was not always clear. There was a gradual evolution of succession principles.” Whether through oversight or as a means to test the faithful, Joseph Smith’s neglect to make explicit to the general membership an undisputed mode of succession caused thousands of his followers to falter, wander, and ultimately to reject the Church headquartered in Utah, . . .

We cannot believe that all this confusion could possibly come from the Lord. The Bible says that “God is not the author of confusion” (1 Corinthians 14:33). It would appear from the evidence presented that if the Mormon Church ever had any “priesthood,” it was lost when Brigham Young took the presidency unto himself. Our research, however, leads us to believe the Mormon Church never had any priesthood to lose. In *The Changing World of Mormonism* we show that serious changes were made in Joseph Smith’s revelations concerning priesthood, and we also demonstrate that the Mormon idea of “priesthood”

is unscriptural. The Bible teaches that the Old Testament order of priesthood was fulfilled and that Christ Himself is our High Priest. It indicates that Jesus has “an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them” (Hebrews 7:24-25).

The Bible also indicates that all Christians (not just men) are a “royal priesthood” (1 Peter 2:9). In 1 Peter 2:5 we read that “Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.” The priesthood of the Old Testament has been fulfilled, and now “As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, . . .” (John 1:12). Instead of trusting in a church to save them, the Mormon people should turn directly to Christ for salvation. The Lord Himself has said: “. . . I am the way, the truth and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6).

The work we have presented in the article concerning Joseph Smith’s ability as a translator is absolutely devastating, but if there is still any doubt in the reader’s mind, the recently discovered blessing should completely settle the matter. The blessing certainly disproves the claim that Joseph Smith was God’s true “Prophet” on the earth.

LISTEN TO HIS VOICE

Many people feel that if they have not committed any major sins they are in good standing with God and on their way to heaven. The Bible, however, makes it clear that we must believe on the Lord and receive Him into our hearts:

But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. (John 1:12-13)

Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. (John 3:3)

According to the Bible, there is no such thing as being neutral with regard to Jesus Christ. Jesus Himself said: “He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.” If we try to remain neutral we find ourselves continually resisting God’s Spirit. The Lord is speaking to us in thousands of different ways, urging us to commit our lives to Him. If we continue to say no, we become like the men in the parable who said, “We will not have this man to reign over us” (Luke 19:14). We may not openly say these words, but both our thoughts and actions will demonstrate that we are not really living for the Lord. In Matthew 7:21-23, Jesus shows that we can even do “many wonderful works” and yet not be in obedience to His Spirit:

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?

And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

If we are going to do God's will, we need to listen carefully to his voice. We read in John 10:27-28:

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:

And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.

It is through diligent prayer and reading His word that we hear the voice of God. We urge all of those who have never received the Lord to accept the wonderful gift of salvation. Those of us who already know Him should seek to listen carefully for His voice so that we will not stumble but walk in the path of His perfect will.

Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.
(Psalms 119:105)

FBI-CIA SUIT FILED

After the Mormon spy "Stan Fields" was exposed, we learned that he formerly had connections with the FBI. Because of this, we requested under the Freedom of Information Act that the FBI furnish all information that it had concerning us. FBI headquarters in Washington, D.C. provided us with some documents. A great deal of material, however, had been blacked out and eighteen pages were "withheld entirely." About a year ago (October 1980) we also requested the CIA to send any information in their files. After a great deal of stalling, on December 8, 1980 we were informed that "your request for information on the Modern Microfilm Company was inadvertently overlooked due to an administrative error and was only recently surfaced. . ." Since the CIA had failed to comply with the Freedom of Information Act in the time allotted, we appealed to the CIA Information Review Committee. Finally, on February 5, 1981, we were told that no "information or record" pertaining to Jerald Tanner could be located, but they would not tell us whether anything about Modern Microfilm Company had been found: "You will

be advised of the outcome as soon as our processing has been completed." After waiting for the information for almost a year, we felt that it was time to take action. Therefore, on September 8, 1981 we filed a suit in the United States District Court for the District of Utah (Civil Action No. C81-0670J). We have named both the CIA and the FBI as defendants in this case. This is not a suit to obtain damages, but rather an attempt to try to force the FBI into releasing the suppressed documents and to make the CIA come into compliance with the law.

WARNING ON TAXES

In the February 1981 issue of the *Messenger* we informed our readers that we were planning on forming a non-profit corporation. Unfortunately, we have still not decided exactly how to proceed with the matter. While we are very happy to receive donations, we should warn the reader that they are still not tax exempt.

NEW BOOKLETS

Can the Browns Save Joseph Smith? By Jerald and Sandra Tanner. A rebuttal to the book, *They Lie in Wait to Deceive*. Deals with the false statements and misrepresentations which appear in the Browns' work and also shows that they have side-stepped the main issue—i.e. whether Joseph Smith correctly translated the Book of Abraham. **PRICE: \$2.00** (Mail orders add 10% for postage and handling.)

Joseph Smith's Successor — An Important New Document Comes to Light. By Jerald and Sandra Tanner. Deals with Joseph Smith's blessing on his son, Joseph Smith III. Shows that the revelation contained in this blessing did not come to pass and that Brigham Young wrongfully appropriated the right of succession to himself. Provides important background information on the blessing. **PRICE: \$1.00 — 5 for \$4.00 — 10 for \$6.00.** (Mail orders add 10% for postage and handling.)

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