

SATANIC VERSES AND MORMONISM

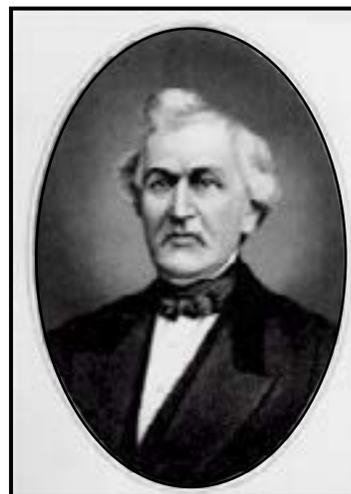
Joseph Smith was certainly not the first to claim revelations or to bring forth a new book purporting to be scripture. For instance, the story of the coming forth of the Koran, the sacred scripture of Islam, bears some interesting parallels to Joseph Smith's account of the origin of the Book of Mormon. N. J. Dawood, who translated the Koran into English, gave this information concerning its origin:

For Muslims it is the infallible word of God, a **transcript of a tablet preserved in heaven**, revealed to the Prophet Mohammed by the Angel Gabriel. . . . According to Muslim tradition, one night in Ramadhan about the year 610 [A.D.], as he was asleep or in a trance, the Angel Gabriel came to him and said: "Recite!" He replied: "What shall I recited?" The order was repeated three times . . .

he Koranic revelations followed each other at brief intervals and were at first committed to memory by professional remembrancers. During Mohammed's life-time verses were written on palm-leaves, stones, and any material that came to hand. Their collection was completed during the caliphate of Omar . . . (The Koran, 1968, Introduction, pp. 9-10)

Mohammed claimed that he was God's true prophet and that he was restoring true religion to the earth. Twelve centuries later, the Mormon prophet Joseph Smith made a similar claim. He related that he was visited by an angel who revealed that he was chosen to translate the Book of Mormon, a work containing the "fulness of the everlasting Gospel." Smith, of course, also claimed to be God's true prophet and said that he was restoring the truth which had been lost through apostasy.

In the published account of his life, Joseph Smith related that he became very disturbed when he was a youth because of the "strife among the different denominations," and this "cry and tumult" led him to ask God "which of all the sects were right—and which I should join." He was told that he must "join none of them, for they were all wrong . . . that all their creeds were an abomination in his sight; that those professors were all corrupt . . ." (*Pearl of Great Price*, Joseph Smith 2:8-19) N. J. Dawood says that Mohammed was also concerned with the fact that the Jews and Christians had "divided themselves into schismatic sects." In the scriptures given by Mohammed, we read: "Yet the Sects are divided concerning Jesus. . . . Truly, the unbelievers are in the grossest error" (The Koran, translated by N. J. Dawood, Surah 19, p. 34). In Surah 30,



David Whitmer

Book of Mormon Witness Who Worried About Satanic Verses

page 190, this warning appears: "Do not split up your religion into sects, each exulting in its own beliefs." In Surah 3, page 398, we read: "The only true faith in Allah's sight is Islam. Those to whom the Scriptures [i.e., Jews and Christians] were given disagreed among themselves through jealousy only after knowledge had been given them."

It is interesting to note that the Koran has roots that extend back into both the Jewish and Christian faiths. The Koran, in fact, claims that the Torah—the five books of Moses—was given by Allah: "To Moses We gave the Scriptures, a perfect code for the righteous . . ." (The Koran, Surah 6, p. 428). In Surah 4, page 373, we read: "We have revealed Our will to you as We revealed it to Noah and to the prophets who came after him; as We revealed it to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, and David, to whom We gave the Psalms." The Koran also has quite a bit to say about Jesus and the Gospel. For instance, on pages 381-382, Surah 5, the following appears: "There is guidance, and there is light, in the Torah which We have revealed. By it the prophets who surrendered themselves to Allah judged the Jews, . . . they gave judgement according to Allah's scriptures . . ."

After those prophets We sent forth Jesus, the son of Mary, confirming the Torah already revealed, and gave him

the Gospel, in which there is guidance and light, corroborating that which was revealed before it in the Torah . . .

On pages 388-389 (Surah 5) of The Koran, we find the following:

Allah will say: "Jesus, son of Mary, remember the favour I have bestowed on you and on your mother: how I strengthened you with the Holy Spirit . . . how I instructed you in the Scriptures and in wisdom, in the Torah and in the Gospel . . . by my leave, you healed the blind man and the leper, and by My leave restored the dead to life . . ."

The Koran even teaches that Jesus was born of a virgin:

And you shall recount in the Book the story of Mary . . . We sent to her Our spirit in the semblance of a full-grown man. . . .

"I am the messenger of your Lord," he replied, "and have come to give you a holy son."

"How shall I bear a child," she answered, "when I am a virgin, untouched by man?"

"Such is the will of your Lord," he replied. That is no difficult thing for Him. "He shall be a sign to mankind," says the Lord, "and a blessing from Ourselves. That is Our decree." (The Koran, Surah 19, p. 33)

The Koran, however, teaches that Jesus was not crucified:

They [the Jews] declared: "We have put to death the Messiah Jesus the son of Mary, the apostle of Allah." They did not kill him, nor did they crucify him, but they thought they did. . . . Allah lifted him up to His presence; He is mighty and wise. There is none among the People of the Book [i.e., Jews and Christians who possess the Bible] but will believe in him before his death; and on the Day of Resurrection he will be a witness against them. (*Ibid.*, Surah 4, pp. 372-373)

Although the Koran speaks very highly of Jesus, it is diametrically opposed to the New Testament teaching regarding his deity: "People of the Book, do not transgress the bounds of your religion. Speak nothing but the truth about Allah. The Messiah, Jesus the son of Mary, was no more than Allah's apostle and His Word which He cast to Mary: a spirit from Him. . . . Allah is but one God. Allah forbid that He should have a son!" (*Ibid.*, pp. 373-374). In Surah 18, page 90, the idea that Jesus was the Son of God is described as "a monstrous blasphemy."

Some have suggested that Joseph Smith directly borrowed from Islam. Frances E. Willard, for instance, charged: "Modern Mohammedanism has its Mecca at Salt Lake . . . Clearly the Koran was Joseph Smith's model, so closely followed as to exclude even the poor pretension of originality in his foul 'revelations'" (*The Women of Mormonism*, 1882, Introduction, p. xvi). It is obvious to those who have done research with regard to these two religions that this statement goes far beyond the truth. While the story of the coming forth of the Book of Mormon seems to have some interesting parallels to Mohammed's story, as far as we can determine, the text of the book itself seems to bear no relationship to the Koran. The Book of Mormon, published in 1830, was Joseph Smith's first

major work. By the year 1838, however, there is some evidence that Joseph Smith was sympathetic to Mohammed and seemed to identify with him. In *Senate Document 189*, page 23, we find this statement in the testimony of George M. Hinkle: "I have heard Joseph Smith, jr. say that he believed Mahomet was a good man; that the Koran was not a true thing, but the world belied Mahomet, as they had belied him, and that Mahomet was **a true prophet**." Smith felt that the Mormons had been unfairly persecuted because of their religion. Thomas B. Marsh, who had served as President of the Council of Twelve Apostles in the Mormon Church, gave an affidavit in which he stated:

I have heard the Prophet say . . . if he was not let alone, he would be a second Mohammed to this generation . . . that like Mohammed, whose motto in treating for peace was, "the Alcoran [i.e., the Koran] or the Sword." So should it be eventually with us, "Joseph Smith or the Sword." (*History of the Church*, vol. 3, p. 167)

In 1842, John C. Bennett alleged that Joseph Smith's system of polygamy "closely resembles [that of] his master and model, Mahomet . . ." (*History of the Saints*, p. 218). While Bennett's own character makes his statements somewhat questionable, it is interesting to note that both Mohammed and Joseph Smith gave revelations regarding plural marriage. In the Koran we read:

Wives of the Prophet . . . those of you who obey Allah and His apostle and do good works shall be doubly rewarded . . .

You [Mohammed] said to the man [Zeid] whom Allah and yourself have favoured: "Keep your wife and have fear of Allah." You sought to hide in your heart what Allah was to reveal [i.e., his intention to marry Zeid's wife]. You were afraid of man, although it would have been more right to fear Allah. And when Zeid divorced his wife, We gave her to you in marriage, so that it should become legitimate for true believers to wed the wives of their adopted sons if they divorced them, Allah's will must be done.

No blame should be attached to the Prophet for doing what is **sanctioned for him by Allah**. . . .

Prophet, We **have made lawful to you** the wives to whom you have granted dowries and the slave-girls whom **Allah has given you** as booty . . . and the other women who gave themselves to you and whom you wished to take in marriage. . . .

You may put off any of your wives you please and take to your bed any of them you please. Nor is it unlawful for you to receive any of those whom you have temporarily set aside. (The Koran, Surah 33, pp. 287-288)

Although the Mormon Church no longer allows its members to practice polygamy on earth, Joseph Smith's revelation on polygamy is still published in the *Doctrine and Covenants*, one of the four standard works of the Mormon Church. In this revelation we read:

Verily, **thus saith the Lord** unto you my servant Joseph, that inasmuch as you have inquired of my hand to know and understand wherein I, the Lord **justified** . . . my servants, as touching the principle and **doctrine** of their **having many wives and concubines**—

Therefore, prepare thy heart to receive and obey the instructions . . .

And let mine handmaid, Emma Smith, receive all those **that have been given unto my servant Joseph**, and who are virtuous and pure before me; and those who are not pure, and have said they were pure, shall be **destroyed**, saith the Lord God. . . . if any man espouse a virgin, and desire to espouse another, and the first give her consent, and if he espouse the second, and they are virgins, and have vowed to no other man, then is he justified; he cannot commit adultery . . . if he have **ten virgins** given unto him **by this law**, he cannot commit adultery, for they belong to him, and **they are given unto him**; therefore is he justified. (*Doctrine and Covenants*, Section 132, verses 1, 3, 52, 61-62)

Joseph Lee Robinson, a faithful Mormon, reported in his journal concerning a sermon which Joseph Smith gave in Nauvoo. Richard S. Van Wagoner gives this interesting information concerning this matter:

Joseph Lee Robinson . . . later remembered the prophet's discussing possible difficulties missionaries could encounter in "Turkey or India or to a people where it was lawful to have several wives where they practiced Polygamy." Smith envisioned a Muslim asking, "I have five wives . . . can I bring my five wives there and enjoy them as well as I can here, said the Prophet yes, the laws in Zion are such that you can bring your wives and enjoy them as well as there." (*Mormon Polygamy—A History*, p. 48)

Both Mohammed and Joseph Smith had problems with people claiming that their revelations were man-made, and both men combated their critics by challenging them to produce anything that would compare with their revelations. In the Koran we find the following:

This Koran could not have been composed by any but Allah. It confirms what was revealed before it and fully explains the Scriptures. It is beyond doubt from **the Lord** of Creation.

If they say: "It is your own invention," say: "**Compose one chapter like it.**" (The Koran, Surah 10, page 67)

If they say: "He has invented it himself," say to them: "Invent ten chapters like it. Call on whom you will of your idols, if what you say be true. **But if they fail you**, know that it is **revealed with Allah's knowledge**, and that there is no god but Him. Will you then accept Islam?" (Surah 11, page 132)

In a revelation given November, 1831, Joseph Smith's God gave a similar invitation to scoffers:

And now I, **the Lord**, give unto you a testimony of the truth of these commandments . . . seek ye out of the Book of Commandments, even the least that is among them, and appoint him that is the most wise among you;

Or, if there be any among you that shall **make one like unto it**, then ye are justified in saying that ye do not know that they are true;

But if ye cannot make one like unto it, ye are under condemnation if ye do not bear record that they are true. (*Doctrine and Covenants* 67:4, 6-8)

Mohammed seemed to feel that although the Jews received the scriptures from Allah, they had corrupted them. In the Introduction to his translation of the Koran, page 10, N. J. Dawood informs us that

Mohammed . . . firmly believed that he was the messenger of God, sent forth to confirm previous scriptures. God had revealed His will to the Jews and the Christians through chosen apostles, but they disobeyed God's commandments . . . The Koran accuses the Jews of corrupting the Scriptures and the Christians of worshipping Christ as the son of God . . . having thus gone astray, they must be brought back to the right path, to the true religion preached by Abraham.

In the Koran itself, we read: "Say: 'Who, then, revealed the Scriptures which Moses brought down, a light and a guide for mankind? The Scriptures which you have transcribed on scraps of paper, declaring some of them and **suppressing much**, although you have now been taught what neither you nor your fathers knew before?'" (The Koran, Surah 6, p. 422). The Koran claims to bring to light things that were previously suppressed:

People of the Book! Our apostle has come to reveal to you much of what you have **hidden of the Scriptures**, and to forgive you much. A light has come to you from Allah and a glorious Book . . . Our apostle has come to reveal to you Our will after an interval during which there were no apostles . . . to you We have revealed the Book with the truth. It confirms the Scriptures which came before it and stands as a guardian over them. (Surah 5, pp. 378-379, 382)

Like Mohammed, Joseph Smith taught that the ancient scriptures were given by God but that they were corrupted by men and that things were suppressed. In the Book of Mormon, 1 Nephi 13:26, 27, 29, this information appears:

Wherefore, these things go forth from the Jews in purity unto the Gentiles . . . And after they go forth . . . thou seest the foundation of a great and abominable church [the Roman Catholic Church], which is most abominable above all other churches; for behold, they have **taken away** from the gospel of the Lamb **many parts** which are plain and most precious; and also many covenants of the Lord have they taken away. . . . that they **may pervert the right ways of the Lord**, and they might **blind the eyes and harden the hearts of the children of men**. . . . because of the many plain and precious things which have been **taken out of the book** [the Bible] . . . an exceeding great many do stumble, yea, insomuch that Satan hath great power over them.

While Joseph Smith claimed that the Bible was "the word of God" only so far "as it is translated correctly," he put no such qualification on the Book of Mormon: ". . . we also believe the Book of Mormon to be the word of God" (*Pearl of Great Price*, The Articles of Faith, Article No. 8). Smith, in fact, "told the brethren that the Book of Mormon was the **most correct of any book** on earth . . ." (*History of the Church*, vol. 4, p. 461). Joseph Smith, of course, went far beyond the Book of Mormon and produced two other books of scripture—the *Doctrine and Covenants* and the *Pearl of Great Price*. Like the Koran, therefore, Joseph Smith's revelations take precedence

over the Bible. Any portion of the Bible which disagrees with the teachings of Joseph Smith is rejected as defective.

In the Koran, Mohammed added many things concerning biblical characters which are not found in the Bible itself. Allah instructed him as follows: “You shall also recount in the Book [the Koran] the story of Abraham: He was a prophet and a saintly man” (The Koran, Surah 19, p. 34). Mohammed, therefore, gave some material concerning Abraham which was not recorded in the Bible. For instance, he related that Abraham’s people tried to kill him because he condemned their idolatry and wicked ways:

And tell of Abraham. He said to his people: “Serve Allah and fear Him. That would be best for you, if you but knew it. You **worship idols** besides Allah and invent falsehoods. . . .

Abraham’s people replied: “**Kill him! Burn him!**”

But from the fire **Allah delivered him**. (The Koran, Surah 29, pp. 193-194)

Joseph Smith also revealed information concerning Abraham which is not found in the Bible. In fact, he claimed that he translated an entire book written by the patriarch himself and published it under the title, “The Book of Abraham.” Like Mohammed, Joseph Smith claimed that Abraham’s people tried to kill him and that he was delivered by God in a miraculous way:

My fathers having turned from their righteousness. . . . unto the **worshipping of the gods of the heathen, utterly refused to hearken to my voice**. . . . but endeavored to take away my life. . . . the priests laid violence upon me, that they **might slay me**. . . .

And as they lifted up their hands upon me. . . . I lifted up my voice unto the Lord my God, and the Lord hearkened and heard. . . . and the angel of his presence stood by me, and immediately unloosed my bands;

And his voice was unto me: Abraham, Abraham, behold, my name is Jehovah, and I. . . . have come down **to deliver thee**, and to take thee away from thy father’s house. . . . (*Pearl of Great Price*, Book of Abraham, 1:5, 7, 12, 15-16)

In the book, *The Rocky Mountain Saints*, written in 1873, T. B. H. Stenhouse commented: “The student of Mormonism will be struck with the similarity of experience and claims of Joseph Smith and Mohammed” (page 2). Two graduates of the Mormon Church’s Brigham Young University, Arnold Green and Lawrence Goldrup, have written an article on the danger of going too far in making parallels between Mohammed and Joseph Smith. They state, however, that while “comparisons between the Koran and the Book of Mormon are especially strained, a comparison of the Doctrine and Covenants with the Koran has some validity” (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Spring 1971, p. 54). On page 57, Green and Goldrup point out a serious doctrinal difference between Mormons and Moslems. They note that Mohammed had an “uncompromising” belief in only one God, whereas Mormons believe “men can attain **godhood** (D&C 132:20, 37).” We agree that this doctrinal dissimilarity with regard to the Godhead is a serious difference. The Koran, in fact, seems to emphatically condemn the Mormon position: “Never has Allah begotten a son, nor is there any other god besides Him.

Were this otherwise, each god would govern his own creation, each holding himself above the other. Exalted be Allah above their falsehoods!” (The Koran, Surah 23, p. 220). Spencer W. Kimball, the twelfth president of the Mormon Church, certainly did not seem to accept Mohammed’s position with regard to the plurality of Gods. In a broadcast to those serving in the priesthood, President Kimball commented: “Brethren, 225,000 of you are here tonight. I suppose **225,000 of you may become gods**. There seems to be plenty of space out there in the universe” (*The Ensign*, Nov. 1975, p. 80).

While a large number of parallels can be marshaled to support the thesis that Joseph Smith borrowed ideas from Mohammed, there are many dissimilarities and the case is far from conclusive. The parallels seem to relate to concepts rather than any direct lifting of statements from the Koran. (In the book, *Major Problems of Mormonism*, pages 149-155, we demonstrate that the King James Version of the Bible, which was not published until A.D. 1611, probably had more influence on Joseph Smith’s Book of Mormon than any other book. We note that we found “over a hundred quotations from the New Testament in the first two books of Nephi alone, and these books were supposed to have been written **between 600 and 545 B.C.**!” The evidence of plagiarism is absolutely overwhelming.)

Although the parallels to Islam may not trouble many members of the LDS Church, they do tend to show that Mormonism is not as unique as some defenders would argue. Mormons often ask how it is possible that an unlearned boy like Joseph Smith could create a religion that would bring in millions of converts and have such an influence upon the world. They feel that the growth of the church demonstrates that God’s hand is in the work. A similar question, however, might be directed back to the Mormons. How can they account for the growth of Islam? After all, for every Mormon there are about **a hundred and twenty** followers of Mohammed—the *1989 Information Please Almanac*, page 400, listed the number of Moslems at about “860,388,300.” If the Koran was not given by revelation from Allah, how could Islam have grown at the rate it did?

In the book, *The Messenger, The Life of Mohammed*, by R. V. B. Bodley, page 57, we read that there has been a controversy as to whether Mohammed could read at the time he was visited by the Angel Gabriel:

Some say that he was illiterate, others say that he was not.” In any case, Mohammed seems to have spent his youth traveling with trading caravans and has been referred to as a “lowly Arab camel driver.” Despite his lack of education, he was able to produce the Koran—a book which hundreds of millions of people revere as the word of God as well as an important “work of Classical Arabic prose.”

The Koran itself calls Mohammed “the **Unlettered Prophet**” (Surah 7, p. 253). In the Book of Mormon, 2 Nephi 27:19, Joseph Smith is referred to as “him that is **not learned**.” That Joseph Smith, who came from a humble background, was able to produce works of “scripture” which have influenced millions of people does not prove that he was inspired by God.

He had far more opportunities than Mohammed to acquire knowledge. Mohammed, for instance, lived before the invention of the printing press and therefore had no opportunity to read a printed newspaper, pamphlet or book. Joseph Smith, on the other hand, had access to his family's newspaper, *The Wayne Sentinel*, as well as many other printed works. Mormon writer Milton V. Backman acknowledged that a library was organized in Manchester in 1817 and that it "contained histories, biographies, geographies, religious treatises, and other popular works of that age" (*Joseph Smith's First Vision*, p. 32).

BATTLING SATAN

A controversy concerning the book, *The Satanic Verses* by Salman Rushdie has been brewing since last fall. After its publication in September, 1988, it was banned in a number of countries. Although Rushdie's book is a work of fiction, Moslems feel that it ridicules the prophet Mohammed. A number of people were killed and others wounded in protests concerning the book, and the Ayatollah Khomeini publicly called for the assassination of Mr. Rushdie:

Iran's Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini on Sunday rejected the apology of British writer Salman Rushdie and exhorted Moslems around the world to 'send him to hell' for the novel . . . A bounty of \$5.2 million has been put on Rushdie's head by Iranian religious leaders since Khomeini issued the death sentence. (*Salt Lake Tribune*, February 20, 1989)

In an article written by Thomas Lippman, we find this information concerning the controversy *The Satanic Verses* has generated:

Two chapters of Rushdie's novel retell, in fictionalized form, the story of Mohammed and of the founding of Islam and the creation of the Koran. In his account, the prophet's name is "neither Mahomet nor Moehammered" but "the Devil's synonym, Mahound," a name used in the past as a vulgar slur . . .

Moslems believe Mohammed was illiterate. When the words of the Koran were dictated to him by God, he did not write them down but relayed them to a scribe who recorded them. In "The Satanic Verses," the scribe is "some sort of bum from Persia by the outlandish name of Salman," which is Rushdie's name, and this Salman takes liberties with the wording of the holy book.

"Little things at first," says the rascal Salman, recounting his work as the prophet's scribe. "If Mahound recited a verse in which God was described as allhearing, all-knowing, I would write, all-knowing, all-wise. Here's the point: Mahound did not notice the alterations. So there I was, actually writing the Book, or rewriting, anyway, polluting the word of God with my own profane language. But, my good heavens, if my poor words could not be distinguished from the Revelation by God's own Messenger, then what did that mean? What did that say about the quality of the divine poetry?" (*Salt Lake Tribune*, February 19, 1989)

While we do not accept the Koran as a revelation from God, we are skeptical of attacking a religion with the use

of fictional conversations that cannot be documented with evidence. Salman Rushdie, of course, did not claim that he was giving the true story of how Mohammed received the Koran, but the use of fictional conjectures in a book on such a serious subject does not seem like a very good method. On the other hand, the Ayatollah Khomeini's order that Rushdie be assassinated is deplorable. Khomeini, of course, does not represent mainstream Moslem thought, and we agree with a statement made by Frances FitzGerald:

"To see the Ayatollah as the representative of Islam," she said, "is to see the Grand Inquisitor as the representative of Christianity." (*U.S. News & World Report*, March 6, 1989, p. 30)

If Salman Rushdie had been writing on Mormonism, he would not have had to resort to fiction when writing about "satanic verses." The first mention of Satan's attempt to pollute Mormon scriptures appears in the Preface of the first edition of the Book of Mormon. In this Preface, Joseph Smith tells how Satan inspired his enemies to alter 116 pages of the Book of Mormon [the Book of Lehi] so that they could not be used in the printed version:

As many false reports have been circulated respecting the following work, and also many unlawful measures taken by evil designing persons to destroy me, and also the work, I would inform you that I translated by the gift and power of God, and caused to be written, one hundred and sixteen pages, the which I took from the Book of Lehi . . . which said account, some person or persons have stolen and kept from me, notwithstanding my utmost exertions to recover it again—and being commanded of the Lord that I should **not** translate the same over again, for **Satan had put it into their hearts** to tempt the Lord their God, by **altering the words**, that they did **read contrary** from that which I translated and caused to be written; and if I should bring forth the same words again, or, in other words, if I should translate the same over, they would publish that which they had stolen, and **Satan** would stir up the hearts of this generation, that they might not receive this work: but behold, the Lord said unto me, I will not suffer that Satan shall accomplish his evil design in this thing: therefore thou shalt translate from the plates of Nephi, until ye come to that which ye have translated . . . I will shew unto them that my wisdom is greater than the cunning of the Devil. (Book of Mormon, 1830 edition, Preface)

Although the Preface containing this information concerning Satan's wicked plans to alter the Nephite scripture has been deleted from modern editions of the Book of Mormon, Joseph Smith gave a revelation concerning this matter which is still published in the *Doctrine and Covenants* as Section 10. In verse 14, the Lord tells Joseph Smith that he "will not suffer that Satan shall accomplish his evil design in this thing." The loss of the Book of Lehi is actually presented as a victory for the Lord because the Book of Nephi, which was translated to take its place, is supposed to be even more spiritual. Mormon critics, however, point out that if Satan actually did cause Joseph Smith's enemies to alter the words, they would have had to produce the original pages to prove

that Joseph Smith could not produce an accurate duplicate of the original. It would be almost impossible to alter the manuscript without detection. The Mormons could have taken the case to court and easily won a significant victory. Critics feel that Joseph Smith probably did not keep a copy of the 116 pages which were lost and would not have been able to reproduce an exact copy of what he had previously written. Therefore, he was forced to claim that the Lord told him that his enemies had altered the pages. In any case, the missing pages were never found.

While Joseph Smith was translating the Book of Mormon, he became concerned that he himself could be deceived and produce satanic verses. Linda King Newell and Valeen Tippetts Avery give this information:

Once, as he translated, the narrative mentioned the walls of Jerusalem. Joseph stopped. "Emma," he asked, "did Jerusalem have walls surrounding it?" Emma told him it did. "**O, I thought I was deceived,**" was his reply. (*Mormon Enigma: Emma Hale Smith*, 1984, p. 26)

Joseph Smith claimed that he was given an instrument known as the Urim and Thummim to translate the gold plates of the Book of Mormon. This instrument consisted of "two stones in silver bows" (*History of the Church*, vol. 1, p. 12). Although he used the Urim and Thummim to translate the first 116 pages which were stolen, statements by witnesses to the translation indicate that after the theft occurred, he used a "seer stone." The Mormon historian B. H. Roberts wrote:

The **Seer Stone** referred to here was a chocolate-colored, somewhat egg-shaped stone which **the Prophet found while digging a well** in company with his brother Hyrum . . . It possessed the qualities of Urim and Thummim, since **by means of it**—as well as by means of the Interpreters found with the Nephite record, **Joseph was able to translate the characters engraven on the plates.** (*Comprehensive History of the Church*, vol. 1, p. 129)

Seer stones were often used by magicians and money-diggers for divination. Evidence shows that in 1826 Joseph Smith was arrested and brought before a Justice of the Peace in Bainbridge, New York, for using his seer stone, which he placed in his hat to exclude the light, to divine the location of buried treasures (see *Major Problems of Mormonism*, pp. 122-127).

David Whitmer, one of the Three Witnesses to the Book of Mormon, was not ashamed of the fact that Joseph Smith used a seer stone to translate the Book of Mormon. Whitmer, in fact, frankly admitted that Smith followed the occultic practice of placing the stone in his hat to translate the Book of Mormon:

I will now give you a description of the manner in which the Book of Mormon was translated. Joseph would **put the seer stone into a hat, and put his face into the hat**, drawing it closely around his face to exclude the light; and in the darkness the spiritual light would shine. A piece of something resembling parchment would appear, and on that appeared the writing. . . . Thus the Book of Mormon was translated by the gift and power of God, and not by any power of man. (*An Address To All Believers In Christ*, Richmond, Missouri, 1887, p. 12)

At first, David Whitmer felt that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God and that his use of the seer stone insured that he was giving true revelations. Just before the Book of Mormon was published, however, Whitmer was greatly shocked to learn that satanic revelations could also come to Joseph Smith through the same stone:

When the Book of Mormon was in the hands of the printer, more money was needed to finish the printing of it. We were waiting on Martin Harris who was doing his best to sell a part of his farm, in order to raise the necessary funds. After a time Hyrum Smith and others began to get impatient, . . . Brother Hyrum was vexed with Brother Martin, and thought they should get the money by some means outside of him, and not let him have anything to do with the publication of the Book, or receiving any of the profits thereof if any profits should accrue. . . . Brother Hyrum said it had been suggested to him that some of the brethren might go to Toronto, Canada, and sell the copy-right of the Book of Mormon for considerable money: and he persuaded Joseph to inquire of the Lord about it. Joseph concluded to do so. He had not yet given up the stone. Joseph looked into the hat in which he placed the stone, and **received a revelation that some of the brethren should go to Toronto, Canada, and that they would sell the copyright of the Book of Mormon.** Hiram Page and Oliver Cowdery went to Toronto on this mission, but they failed entirely to sell the copyright, returning without any money. Joseph was at my father's house when they returned. I was there also, and am an eye witness to these facts. . . . Well, we were all in great trouble, and we asked Joseph how it was that he had received a revelation from the Lord for some brethren to go to Toronto and sell the copyright, and the brethren had utterly failed in their undertaking. Joseph did not know how it was, so he enquired of the Lord about it, and behold the following revelation came through the stone: "Some revelations are of God: some revelations **are of man**: and some revelations **are of the devil.**" So we see that the revelation to go to Toronto and sell the copyright was not of God, but was **of the devil** or the heart of man. (*An Address To All Believers In Christ*, 1887, pp. 30-31)

Mormon historian B. H. Roberts made these comments about Whitmer's accusation:

. . . May this Toronto incident and the Prophet's explanation be accepted and faith still be maintained in him as an inspired man, a Prophet of God? I answer unhesitatingly in the affirmative. The **revelation** respecting the Toronto journey **was not of God**, surely; else it would not have failed; but the Prophet, overwrought in his deep anxiety for the progress of the work, saw reflected in the "Seer Stone" **his own thought**, or that suggested to him by his brother Hyrum, rather than the thought of God . . . in this instance of the Toronto journey, Joseph was evidently **not directed by the inspiration of the Lord.** (*A Comprehensive History of the Church*, vol. 1, p. 165)

Joseph Fielding Smith, who became the tenth president of the church, was apparently referring to this episode in a press conference in Salt Lake City: "President Smith said he believed, as did LDS Church founder Joseph Smith, that there are three kinds of revelations [*sic*]: 'revelations from God, from man and **from the devil.**'" (*Salt Lake Tribune*, January 25, 1970)

David Whitmer said that there were “other false revelations that came through Brother Joseph as mouthpiece. . . . Many of Brother Joseph’s revelations were never printed. The revelation to go to Canada was written down on paper, but was never printed” (*An Address To All Believers In Christ*, p. 31).

The knowledge that Joseph Smith could receive satanic or man-made revelations through the same stone he used to translate the Book of Mormon must have come as a heavy blow to the special witnesses to that book. Oliver Cowdery, one of the Three Witnesses, obviously lost faith in Joseph Smith’s ability to detect satanic or man-made verses in the revelations because he wrote a letter to Smith in which he claimed “he had discovered an error” in one of his revelations (*Doctrine and Covenants* 20:37). According to Smith, Cowdery said the “quotation . . . was erroneous, and added: ‘I command you in the name of God to erase those words, that no priestcraft be amongst us!’” (*History of the Church*, vol. 1, p. 105). Although Joseph Smith strongly rebuked Oliver Cowdery, it soon became obvious that the issue concerning satanic verses was not really settled. About three months later, Joseph Smith was surprised to learn that one of the Eight Witnesses to the Book of Mormon [there are two sets of witnesses: the Three Witnesses and the Eight Witnesses] was giving satanic revelations and that other witnesses were being led astray:

To our great grief, however, we soon found that **Satan** had been lying in wait to deceive . . . Brother **Hiram Page** had in his possession a certain **stone**, by which he had obtained certain “revelations” concerning the upbuilding of Zion, the order of the Church, etc., all of which were entirely at variance with the order of God’s house . . . **many**, especially the **Whitmer family** and **Oliver Cowdery**, were believing much in the things set forth by this stone . . . (*History of the Church*, vol. 1, pp. 109-110)

Although Joseph Smith does not name all of those involved in following these satanic revelations, it could have involved most of the witnesses to the Book of Mormon. He specifically names Hiram Page and Oliver Cowdery and says that “the Whitmer family” were influenced by the revelations from this stone. Five of the Book of Mormon witnesses were from the Whitmer family. In an attempt to settle the matter, Joseph Smith claimed he received a revelation from the Lord that Hiram Page’s revelations came from Satan and that he (Joseph) was the only one who could receive revelations for the church:

Behold, I say unto thee, **Oliver** . . . no one shall be appointed to receive commandments and revelations in this church excepting Joseph Smith, Jun., . . . for he receiveth them even as Moses. . . . thou shalt be obedient unto the things which I shall give him . . . thou shalt not command him who is at thy head . . . thou shalt take thy brother, **Hiram Page**, between him and thee alone, and tell him that those things which he hath written from **that stone** are not of me and that **Satan deceiveth him** . . . (*Doctrine and Covenants* 28:1-3, 6, 11)

CHANGING REVELATIONS

Like the fictionalized story of Mohammed which Salman Rushdie has written, Mormonism has a serious problem with

changes in Joseph Smith’s revelations. According to Book of Mormon witness David Whitmer, Joseph Smith and some of the other brethren became “spiritually blinded” and made important changes in the revelations. Whitmer claimed that Joseph Smith’s scribe and confidant, Sidney Rigdon,

was a thorough Bible scholar, a man of fine education, and a powerful orator. He soon worked himself deep into Brother Joseph’s affections, and had more influence over him than any other man living. . . . Brother Joseph rejoiced, believing that the Lord had sent him this great and mighty man . . . Poor Brother Joseph! He was mistaken about this . . . Sidney Rigdon was the cause of almost all the errors which were introduced while he was in the church . . . Rigdon would expound the Old Testament scriptures of the Bible and Book of Mormon (in his way) to Joseph . . . and would persuade Brother Joseph to inquire of the Lord about this doctrine and that doctrine, and of course a revelation would always come just as they desired it. . . . Remember also that “*some revelations are of God, some revelations are of man; and some revelations are of the devil.*”

False spirits, which come as an Angel of Light, are abroad in the earth to deceive, if it were possible, the very elect. Those whom **Satan** can deceive and lead into error he deceives. (*An Address To All Believers In Christ*, p. 35)

According to David Whitmer, Sidney Rigdon, like the wicked scribe mentioned in Rushdie’s novel, managed to get his satanic or man-made ideas into Joseph Smith’s revelations. Whitmer felt that Rigdon went even further than this: he was able to convince Smith to change some of the revelations he had already dictated:

I was told that Sidney Rigdon was the cause of those changes being made: by smooth talk he convinced Brother Joseph and that committee that it was all right. . . . I will not accuse those who did it of being fully aware of the grievous error they were making when they added those items—that is, made those changes; I would rather believe that they were spiritually blinded when they did it: and that **Satan deceived them**, whispering to them that it was all right and acceptable unto God. (*Ibid*, p. 61)

In a thesis written at Brigham Young University, the Mormon apologist Melvin J. Petersen acknowledged that “**Many words** were added to the revelations” in the *Doctrine and Covenants* (“A Study of the Nature of and Significance of the Changes in the Revelations as Found in a Comparison of the Book of Commandments and Subsequent Editions of the Doctrine and Covenants,” Master’s thesis, BYU, 1955, typed copy, p. 147). On pages 162-63 of the same thesis, Mr. Petersen wrote:

. . . Joseph Smith’s language, as found in the revelations credited to him, needed correcting. There were many grammatical errors in the revelations he first published. . . . Joseph Smith in revising the first published commandments, . . . **enlarged upon them** . . . Certain **omissions were made** when unnecessary material **was deleted** from the revelations; also incidents that were past and of no significance except to a few.

While there have been some Mormon writers who have been willing to admit that Joseph Smith’s revelations have

been changed, many have not been that honest. Apostle John A. Widtsoe, for instance, maintained that the revelations “have remained unchanged. There has been no tampering with God’s Word” (*Joseph Smith—Seeker After Truth*, p. 119). Joseph Fielding Smith, who became the tenth president of the church, likewise maintained that there “was no need for eliminating, changing, or adjusting” the revelations (*Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 1, p. 170).

To properly understand the changes that have been made in the revelations we must understand the history of the *Doctrine and Covenants*. In 1833 the Mormon Church published the revelations that had been given to the church by Joseph Smith in a book entitled, *A Book of Commandments, For The Government Of The Church Of Christ*. Mormon writer William E. Berrett explains:

In the latter part of 1831, it was decided by a council of Church leaders to compile the revelations concerning the origin of the Church and its organization. The collection was to be called the “Book of Commandments.” . . . Joseph Smith received a revelation which was made the preface for the new volume and is now Section 1 of the Book of Doctrine and Covenants. In this preface we read: “Search these commandments, for they are true and faithful. . . .

After accepting the collection as scripture it was voted to print 10,000 copies. (*The Restored Church*, 1956, p. 138)

The church was unable to finish the printing of the Book of Commandments as they had planned because the printing press was destroyed by a mob. In 1835 the revelations were printed again, and the name of the book was changed to the *Doctrine and Covenants*. New revelations were added to this book and many of the previous revelations were revised. In modern editions of the *Doctrine and Covenants* we find the following on the page that follows the title page:

Certain parts were issued at Zion, Jackson County, Missouri, in 1833, under the title, *Book of Commandments for the Government of the Church of Christ*[.]

An enlarged compilation was issued at Kirtland, Ohio, in 1835, under the title, *Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of the Latter-day Saints*[.]

Book of Mormon witness David Whitmer said that “Joseph and the brethren” received the *Book of Commandments* “at first as being printed correctly, but they soon decided to print the *Doctrine and Covenants*” (*An Address to Believers in the Book of Mormon*, p. 6). The *Doctrine and Covenants* was printed in the year 1835. Since the same revelations that were published in the *Book of Commandments* were put into the first edition of the *Doctrine and Covenants*, one would expect them to read exactly the same as when they were first published. This was not the case, however, and David Whitmer objected strenuously to what had been done:

Some of the revelations as they now appear in the Book of Doctrine and Covenants have been changed and added to. Some of the changes being of the greatest importance as the meaning is entirely changed on some very important matters; as **if the Lord had changed his mind** a few years after he give [*sic*] the revelations, and after having commanded

his servants (as they claim) to print them in the “Book of Commandments;”. . . The revelations were printed in the *Book of Commandments* correctly! This I know, . . . **Joseph and the church received it as being printed correctly**. This I know. But in the winter of 1834 they saw that some of the revelations in the *Book of Commandments* had to be changed, because the heads of the church had gone too far, and had done things in which they had already gone ahead of some of the former revelations. So the book of “Doctrine and Covenants” was printed in 1835, and some of the revelations changed and added to. (Letter written by David Whitmer, published in the *Saints’ Herald*, February 5, 1887)

In order to show some of the important changes that were made in the revelations, we obtained photographs of the original *Book of Commandments* (the original book is now supposed to be worth about \$50,000). We compared these pages with the revelations as published in the 1966 printing of the *Doctrine and Covenants* and marked the changes on the photographs. The reader will find photographs of eight pages from the *Book of Commandments* in our new book, *Major Problems of Mormonism*.

In his pamphlet, David Whitmer mentions a number of important changes which the early church leaders made in the revelations. While we do not have much room to make a study of the changes here, we will give a few examples. On page 109 of *Major Problems of Mormonism*, we have a photograph of a page from Chapter 4 of the *Book of Commandments*. The photograph demonstrates that 154 words have been deleted from verses 5 and 6 of this revelation without any indication. In his BYU thesis, page 140, Mormon apologist Melvin J. Petersen said that “Joseph Smith . . . was dissatisfied with the wording of verses five and six in portraying the concept he had received, and therefore he omitted verses five and six of Chapter four and rewrote in their place verse three of the 1835 edition . . .” Mr. Petersen seemed to feel that Joseph Smith had a perfect right to do this. Although we agree that Smith had a right to revise his own writings, we do not feel that he had a right to revise the revelations which he claimed to be the very words of God. In the very first revelation that was published in the *Book of Commandments*, verses 2 and 7, we read:

Behold, this is mine authority, and the authority of my servants, and my Preface unto the *Book of my Commandments*, . . .

Search these commandments, for they are **true** and **faithful**, and the prophecies and promises which are in them, shall all be fulfilled. What **I the Lord have spoken**, I have spoken, and I excuse not myself, and though the heavens and the earth pass away, **my word shall not pass away** . . .

If these were really revelations from God, Joseph Smith could not revise them without discrediting the previous declaration.

On page 110 of *Major Problems of Mormonism*, we have a photograph of Chapter 6 of the *Book of Commandments*. This revelation is supposed to contain a translation of a parchment written by the Apostle John. Mormons claim Joseph Smith translated this parchment by means of the Urim and Thummim. When this revelation was published in the *Book*

of *Commandments* in 1833, it contained 143 words, but when it was reprinted in the *Doctrine and Covenants* in 1835, it had been expanded to 252 words. Thus we see that 109 words have been added!

On page 114 of *Major Problems of Mormonism*, we have a photograph of Chapter 28 of the *Book of Commandments*. The reader who examines the photograph will notice that over 400 words have been added to this revelation. Part of the interpolation concerns the visitation of Peter, James, and John to Joseph Smith. The Mormon leaders claim that they restored the Melchizedek priesthood. Book of Mormon witness David Whitmer, however, maintained that the Melchizedek priesthood came into the church by a process of evolution rather than by revelation:

In no place in the word of God does it say that an Elder is after the order of Melchisedec, or after the order of the Melchisedec Priesthood. An Elder is after the order of Christ. This matter of “priesthood,” since the days of Sydney Rigdon, has been the great hobby and stumbling-block of the Latter Day Saints. Priesthood means authority; and authority is the word we should use. I do not think the word priesthood is mentioned in the New Covenant of the Book of Mormon. Authority is the word we used for the first two years in the church until Sydney Rigdon’s days in Ohio. This matter of two orders of priesthood in the Church of Christ, and lineal priesthood of the old law being in the church, **all originated in the mind of Sydney Rigdon**. He explained these things to Brother Joseph in his way, out of the old Scriptures, and got Brother Joseph to inquire, etc. He would inquire, and as mouthpiece speak out the revelations just as they had it fixed up in their hearts. As I have said before, according to the desires of the heart, the inspiration comes, but it may be the spirit of man that gives it. How easily a man can receive some other spirit, appearing as an Angel of Light, believing at the time that he is giving the revealed will of God; . . . This is the way the High Priests and the ‘priesthood’ as you have it, was introduced into the Church of Christ **almost two years after its beginning** . . . (*An Address To All Believers In Christ*, p. 64)

The fact that the statement concerning the visitation of Peter, James, and John had to be interpolated into Section 28 of the *Book of Commandments* when it was reprinted in the *Doctrine and Covenants* (Section 27) provides evidence to support David Whitmer’s charge concerning the manner in which the Mormon priesthood was established. LaMar Petersen points out the serious nature of the historical problems regarding the restoration of the priesthood. He shows, for instance, that Joseph Smith’s 1842 printing of his *History* differs significantly from an account printed eight years earlier. He then goes on to state:

The important details that are missing from the “full history” of 1834 are likewise missing from the *Book of Commandments* in 1833. The student would expect to find all the particulars of the Restoration in this first treasured set of 65 revelations, the dates of which encompassed the bestowals of the two Priesthoods, but they are conspicuously absent. . . .

The notable revelations on Priesthood in the *Doctrine and Covenants* before referred to, Sections 2 and 13, are missing, and Chapter 28 gives no hint of the Restoration which, if actual, had been known for four years. More than four hundred words were added to this revelation of August 1829 in Section 27 of the *Doctrine and Covenants*, the additions made to include the names of heavenly visitors and two separate ordinations. The *Book of Commandments* gives the duties of Elders, Priests, Teachers, and Deacons and refers to Joseph’s apostolic calling but there is no mention of Melchizedek Priesthood, Seventies, High Priests, nor High Councilors. These words were later inserted into the revelation on Church organization and government of April, 1830, making it appear that they were known at that date, but they do not appear in the original, Chapter 24 of the *Book of Commandments* three years later. Similar interpolations were made in the revelations now known as Sections 42 and 68.

There seems to be no support for the historicity of the Restoration of the Priesthood in journals, diaries, letters, nor printed matter prior to October, 1834. (*Problems In Mormon Text*, by LaMar Petersen, 1957, pp. 7-8)

The evidence leads us to conclude that David Whitmer’s suggestion that the “two orders of priesthood” in the Mormon Church “originated in the mind of Sydney Rigdon” fits the historical picture far better than the idea of a Restoration by heavenly messengers. For more information on this subject see our work *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* pages 179-182. In addition, the Mormon scholar Dan Vogel has recently written a book, *Religious Seekers And The Advent of Mormonism*, which has some important information concerning the changes in the revelations relating to priesthood.

Thousands of words were added, deleted or changed in the revelations after they were published in the *Book of Commandments* and other early Mormon publications. Even after Joseph Smith’s death, the Mormon leaders continued to make changes in his revelations (see *Major Problems of Mormonism*, pp. 119-121). In spite of the fact that their own revelations have been seriously altered, church officials have been very free in accusing others of making changes. Apostle Mark E. Petersen, for instance, maintained that “deliberate falsifications and fabrications were perpetrated” in the Bible (*As Translated Correctly*, 1966, p. 4). On page 27 of the same book, Apostle Petersen wrote: “It seems **unthinkable** to the honest and devout mind that any man or set of men **would deliberately change the text of the Word of God** to further their own peculiar purposes.”

We certainly agree that it would be dishonest to change the “Word of God,” and this causes us to wonder how Mormon leaders can justify the changes in Joseph Smith’s revelations, since they consider them to be the “Word of God.” Apostle Bruce R. McConkie contended that most of the sections printed in the *Doctrine and Covenants* “came to Joseph Smith by direct revelation, the recorded words being those of the Lord Jesus Christ himself” (*Mormon Doctrine*, 1979, p. 206).

Our examination of the revelations revealed that thousands of words were added, deleted or changed. How

can the Mormon leaders explain this? On pages 164-65 of his thesis, the Mormon apologist Melvin J. Petersen argued that Joseph Smith had the “power” to “revise, correct, omit, or change any of his writings in order that he might manifest more clearly what God revealed through him A prophet cannot be justly criticized when he rewrites the commandments he received from God, for he is only doing that which is part of his role as a prophet.”

David Whitmer pointed out the absurdity of such an idea when he wrote:

Is it possible that the minds of men can be so blinded as to believe that God would give these revelations—command them to print them in His Book of Commandments—and then afterwards command them to change and add to them some words which change the meaning entirely? As if God had changed his mind entirely after giving his word? Is it possible that a man who pretends to any spirituality would believe that God would work in any such manner? (*Saints' Herald*, February 5, 1887)

David Whitmer was convinced that the portions added to Joseph Smith's early revelations were “satanic verses” which corrupted God's word. Furthermore, he completely rejected Joseph Smith's revelation on polygamy because he believed it came from the devil. Although Joseph Smith's brother, Hyrum, later accepted the principle of plural marriage, in 1843 he declared that this doctrine was from Satan:

In May 1843 . . . Hyrum, William Law and William Marks . . . were suspicious that their worst fears were true—Joseph was teaching plural marriage. . . . Hyrum spoke on 14 May . . . taking as his text Jacob 2 in the Book of Mormon—quoting the verses that are a severe denunciation of polygamy. . . . Hyrum said to the Saints, “If an angel from heaven should come and preach such doctrine, [you] would be sure to see **his cloven foot** and cloud of blackness over his head.” (Andrew F. Ehat, “Joseph Smith's Introduction of Temple Ordinances and the 1844 Mormon Succession Question,” Master's thesis, Brigham Young University, December 1982, p. 56)

Ebenezer Robinson claimed that Joseph Smith's brother, Don Carlos, stated: ““Any man who will teach and practice the doctrine of spiritual wifery will **go to hell**, I don't care **if it is my brother Joseph**”” (*The Return*, vol. 2, p. 287). Joseph Smith's own wife, Emma, felt that her husband's revelation on the subject of polygamy was either man-made or from the lower regions. Joseph Smith's private secretary, William Clayton wrote in his journal that when Joseph and Hyrum Smith came to Emma and read the revelation, she “said **she did not believe a word of it** and appeared very rebellious” (William Clayton's Diary, July 12, 1843, typed extracts by Andrew F. Ehat, as cited in *Clayton's Secret Writings Uncovered*, p. 20).

The false revelation concerning the sale of the copyright of the Book of Mormon, the many changes made in the published revelations, and the polygamy revelation all combined to undermine the faith of many important leaders in the early Mormon Church. Even before the revelation on plural marriage was given, a number of the witnesses to the Book of Mormon felt that they could not rely on Joseph Smith. In 1839 John Whitmer, who still maintained that Joseph Smith had showed him some kind of plates, came to question

whether Smith's translation was really correct, Professor Richard L. Anderson, of the Mormon Church's Brigham Young University, gives this information:

When Turley next asked bluntly why Whitmer now doubted the work, the witness indicated his inability to translate the characters on the plates: “I cannot read it, and I do not know whether it is true or not.” (*Investigating the Book of Mormon Witnesses*, p. 131)

All of the Three Witnesses to the Book of Mormon became disaffected with Joseph Smith's leadership before his death. Martin Harris later joined with the Strangites—an organization which was denounced by the Mormon leaders. Harris even went on a mission for the Strangites, and when he arrived in Liverpool with his associates, the Mormon Church publication, *Latter-Day Saints' Millennial Star*, vol. 8, pp. 124-128, said that “A lying deceptive spirit attends them . . . they know that they are of their father, the devil . . .” Mormon apologist Richard L. Anderson admitted that Harris “changed his religious position eight times” during the period when he was in Kirtland, Ohio (see *Improvement Era*, March 1969, p. 63). At one point he joined the Shakers who believed that “Christ has made his second appearance on earth, in a chosen female known by the name of Anna Lee, and acknowledged by us as our Blessed Mother in the work of redemption” (*A Sacred and Divine Roll and Book; From the Lord God of Heaven, to the Inhabitants of Earth*, p. 358). Martin 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 revealed 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: “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, p. 52).

Book of Mormon witness Oliver Cowdery left the Mormons and became a member of the “Methodist Protestant Church of Tiffin, Seneca County, Ohio.” G. J. Keen, gave an affidavit in which he said that at the time Cowdery was received into the Methodist Church, “he arose and addressed the audience present, admitted his error and implored forgiveness, and said he was **sorry and ashamed of his connection with Mormonism**” (*The True Origin of the Book of Mormon*, by Charles A. Shook, 1914, pp. 58-59). Evidently the LDS leaders were aware that Cowdery renounced Mormonism when he joined the Methodist Church since they printed a poem which questioned the position that the “Book of Mormon” had been proven untrue “Because **denied, by Oliver?**” (*Times and Seasons*, vol. 2, p. 482).

Book of Mormon witness David Whitmer also came out of the Mormon Church in 1838. Whitmer claimed that God Himself told him to leave the Mormons:

If you believe my testimony to the Book of Mormon; if you believe that God spake to us three witnesses by his own voice, than 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.” . . .

all of the eight witnesses who were then living (except the three Smiths) came out; Peter and Christian Whitmer were dead. Oliver Cowdery came out also. (*An Address To All Believers In Christ*, pp. 27-28)

Whitmer later gave a revelation in which the Lord was supposed to have told him the Mormons “polluted my name, and have done continually wickedness in my sight” (*The Ensign of Liberty*, August 1849, pp. 101-104). Whitmer’s revelations present a peculiar problem for Mormon apologists. If they are from God, then they demonstrate that Mormonism is not true. On the other hand, if they are false, they show that David Whitmer gave either man-made or satanic revelations in the name of the Lord! And if this is the case, how can we trust his statement on the Book of Mormon? Mormons ask us to accept David Whitmer’s testimony to the Book of Mormon, but will they accept his revelation that the Mormon Church “polluted” God’s name? Certainly not. Neither will they accept his statement that “God spake to me again by his own voice from the heavens, and told me to ‘separate myself from among the Latter Day Saints.’” David Whitmer never returned to the Mormon Church. While Mormon apologists often argue that we do not have any evidence that David Whitmer ever denied his testimony to the Book of Mormon, they seem to be oblivious to the fact that they do not have any evidence to show that Whitmer ever denied that God told him to leave the Mormons or that he repudiated the other revelations which he gave.

Although Book of Mormon witness Martin Harris changed his mind about religion many times, when he was eighty-eight years old he returned to the Mormon Church in Salt Lake City. There is evidence to show, however, that he was still not satisfied. (see *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* p. 58)

After Joseph Smith’s death, Oliver Cowdery was rebaptized into the Mormon Church. David Whitmer, however, maintained that Cowdery died believing Joseph Smith was a fallen prophet and that his revelations in the *Doctrine and Covenants* must be rejected:

I did not say that Oliver Cowdery and John Whitmer had not endorsed the *Doctrine and Covenants* in 1836. . . . I stated that they “came out of their errors (discarding the *Doctrine and Covenants*), repented of them, and died believing as I do to-day,” and I have the proof to verify my statement. If any one chooses to doubt my word, let them come to my home in Richmond and be satisfied. In the winter of 1848, after Oliver Cowdery had been baptized at Council Bluffs, he came back to Richmond to live. . . . Now, in 1849 the Lord saw fit to manifest unto John Whitmer, Oliver Cowdery and myself nearly all the errors in doctrine into which we had been led by the heads of the old church. . . . They were led out of their errors, and are upon record to this effect, **rejecting the Book of Doctrine and Covenants**. (*An Address to Believers in The Book of Mormon*, 1887, pp. 1-2)

PROBLEMS ALL OVER

The problems found in Mormon revelations, history and doctrine are so numerous that many volumes could be written. In fact, a number of years ago we compiled a three volume

set entitled, *The Case Against Mormonism*. Subsequently, we wrote two more volumes entitled, *The Mormon Kingdom*. These five volumes were condensed into our largest selling work, *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* Our new book, *Major Problems of Mormonism*, contains a summary of a great many of these problems as well as new material.

A large number of the problems in Mormonism relate to changes in the text of documents published by church officials. David Whitmer seemed to feel that “satanic verses” had been added to Joseph Smith’s revelations. While others would claim that these are merely man-made additions or deletions, the problem is still very serious. If these revelations were really from God why would he allow them to be falsified?

In the *Pearl of Great Price*, Joseph Smith, 2 [Joseph Smith—History], we read Joseph Smith’s story concerning God calling him and the coming forth of the Book of Mormon. This story raises serious questions to those who are knowledgeable concerning Mormon history. For instance, in the story of the First Vision, Joseph Smith claimed that “two Personages” appeared to him (verse 17). One of them pointed to the other and said: “This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!” The personages, therefore, were supposed to have been God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ, and the Mormons have always used this story to prove that “The Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man’s . . .” (*Doctrine and Covenants* 130:22). The problem, however, is that evidence has come forth from the Mormon Church Archives that Joseph Smith wrote a different account of this vision a number of years before the official account was published. This account was suppressed by the church and only a few people knew of its existence until we published it in 1965. Four years later, Dean C. Jessee, who was “a member of the staff at the LDS Church Historian’s Office,” claimed the “1831-32 history transliterated here contains the earliest known account of Joseph Smith’s First Vision” (*Brigham Young University Studies*, Spring 1969, pp. 277-278). In a later issue of *BYU Studies*, Summer 1971, p. 462, Jessee made it clear that this was not only the first extant account of the First Vision, but that it was the only account in “the actual handwriting of Joseph Smith.”

This handwritten document differs drastically from the official version in the *Pearl of Great Price*. In this account, the Mormon prophet only mentions one personage: “. . . saw the Lord . . .” The context makes it very clear that the personage was Jesus Christ and that Joseph Smith did not include God the Father in his first handwritten account of the vision. Mormon historian James B. Allen commented: “In this story, only one personage was mentioned, and this was obviously the Son, for he spoke of having been crucified” (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Autumn 1966, p. 40). A photograph of this handwritten document by Joseph Smith can be found in *Major Problems of Mormonism*, p. 56.

The only reasonable explanation for the Father not being mentioned is that Joseph Smith did NOT see God the Father, and that he made up this part of the story after he wrote the first manuscript. This, of course, throws a shadow of doubt upon the entire story. A person who would go so far

to embellish the story is the same type of person who would make up the original story. If David Whitmer had been aware of this problem, he might have suggested that “Satan” put it into Joseph Smith’s heart to add the second personage to the story of the First Vision.

The story of Joseph Smith’s second vision—the appearance of the Angel Moroni who delivered the gold plates of the Book of Mormon to Joseph Smith—also presents a serious problem. In his first handwritten history, Joseph Smith seems to have been unaware of the name of the angel who appeared to him. He merely stated that it was “an angel of the Lord.” In 1835, however, Smith identified the celestial visitor as “Moroni” and seemed to hold to this view until 1838 (see *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* p. 137). When Joseph Smith published his official version of Mormon Church history in 1842 in the *Times and Seasons*, vol. 3, page 753, it became obvious that he had changed his mind—the angel was really “Nephi”: “He called me by name and said . . . that his name was **Nephi** . . .” The church at that time seemed to accept Joseph Smith’s identification of the angel. A few months later the church’s *Millennial Star*, printed in England, also published Joseph Smith’s story stating that the angel’s name was “Nephi” (vol. 3, p. 53). On page 71 of the same volume, we read that the “message of the angel **Nephi** . . . opened a new dispensation to man . . .” The name was also published in the 1851 edition of the *Pearl of Great Price* as “**Nephi**.”

By 1878, however, church leaders had become concerned about Joseph Smith’s conflicting accounts and when Apostle Orson Pratt published a new edition of the *Pearl of Great Price* that year, the name had been altered to read “**Moroni**.” This falsified reading still appears in modern editions of the *Pearl of Great Price*: “He called me by name, and said . . . that his name was **Moroni** . . .” Some Mormon apologists have tried to argue that Joseph Smith “corrected” the original manuscript from “Nephi” to “Moroni.” While it is true that the manuscript has been tampered with, the evidence shows clearly that this was done after Joseph Smith’s death. The name was originally written as “Nephi,” but someone has written the name “Moroni” above the line (see photograph in *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* p. 136). An examination of the duplicate copy of the handwritten manuscript, Book A-2, provides conclusive evidence that the change was not made during Joseph Smith’s lifetime. This manuscript was not even started until about **a year after Smith’s death**. Like the other manuscript (Book A-1), it also has the name “Nephi” written in the text with the name “Moroni” interpolated above the line. It is obvious that if Joseph Smith had changed the first manuscript, the scribe who made the second copy would not have written the name “Nephi” in the second manuscript. It is interesting to note that Joseph Smith lived for two years after the name “Nephi” was printed in the *Times and Seasons* and never printed a retraction. H. Michael Marquardt has also pointed out that after this portion of the handwritten manuscript was printed in the *Times and Seasons*, Joseph Smith himself went over it to make corrections. In the *History of the Church*, vol. 7, page 387, we find this statement attributed to Brigham Young: “*Tuesday, April 1, 1845. — I commenced revising the History of Joseph Smith . . . President*

Joseph Smith had corrected forty-two pages before his massacre.” It is obvious, therefore, that Smith intended to have his followers understand that the angel’s name was “Nephi.” The version which the church has canonized in modern editions of the *Pearl of Great Price* was changed so that there would be no contradictions in the prophet’s stories concerning how he obtained the gold plates.

After Joseph Smith’s death, the Mormon leaders took a free hand to change anything they wanted in his *History*. In spite of the many falsifications made in Joseph Smith’s *History of the Church*, church leaders referred to it as “**the most accurate history in all the world**, it must be so” (Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 2, p. 199). Apostle John A. Widtsoe boasted that these volumes prove “that Joseph Smith told the truth. . . . There is in them **no attempt to ‘cover up’ any act of his life**” (*Joseph Smith—Seeker After Truth*, p. 257). Notwithstanding the many claims put forth concerning the accuracy of the *History* by church officials, the truth is that the church broke almost all the rules of honesty in their publication of Joseph Smith’s *History of the Church*. It is a well-known fact that when an omission is made in a document it should be indicated by ellipses points. The church, however has almost completely ignored this rule; **in many cases thousands of words have been deleted without any indication**, and in other cases **thousands of words have been added without any indication!** Some of Joseph Smith’s prophecies that did not come to pass were altered. Many exaggerated and contradictory statements were either changed or deleted without indication. Crude or indecent statements were also deleted. In the first printed version of the *History*, Joseph Smith cursed his enemies, condemned other churches and beliefs, and called the President of the United States a fool. Many of these extreme statements were omitted or changed. Mormon leaders did not dare let their people see the real Joseph Smith. They falsified the *History of the Church* rather than allow Joseph Smith’s true character to be known.

Many years ago we charged that although the title page for the *History of the Church* claimed that it was the “History of Joseph Smith, the Prophet BY HIMSELF,” evidence derived from many sources showed that a large portion of it was written after his death. Dean C. Jessee, who was a member of the staff at the LDS Church Historian’s Office, later admitted that the manuscript was only completed to page 812 at the time of Joseph Smith’s death. Since there were almost 2,200 pages, this would mean that only about 40% of the *History* was actually written during Joseph Smith’s lifetime, and that 60% was actually authored by church officials after his death! Jessee, in fact, admitted that the *History* was not completed until twelve years after Smith’s death: “The Joseph Smith History was **finished in August 1856, seventeen years after it was begun**” (*Brigham Young University Studies*, Summer 1971, pp. 466-472). Although Joseph Smith’s diaries were used as one source for the *History*, there was no attempt to accurately follow the text of these diaries. Mormon leaders chose only the portions of the diaries which suited their purposes. Where a portion did not say what they wanted, they altered it or ignored it entirely, sometimes using an entirely

different source. Furthermore, only certain periods of Joseph Smith's last six years are covered by extant diaries. To fill in the missing years newspapers and journals of other Mormon leaders were used and much of the material came only from memory. This material was **written in the first person to make it appear that Joseph Smith was the author!**

Mormon apologists have often referred to Joseph Smith's prophecies concerning the Latter-day Saints coming to the Rocky Mountains and the fact that Steven A. Douglas would aspire to the presidency of the United States but fail if he opposed Mormonism as evidence of Smith's divine calling. The evidence, however, clearly shows that both these famous prophecies found in the *History of the Church* are forgeries added after Joseph Smith's death (see *Major Problems of Mormonism*, pp. 85-88). As we have previously noted, in the Preface to the first edition of the Book of Mormon, Joseph Smith claimed that the Lord told him that "**Satan**" had put into his enemies' "hearts to tempt the Lord their God, by **altering the words**, that they did read contrary from that which I translated and caused to be written . . . I will confound those who have altered my words." In light of this warning, we wonder how later Mormon leaders could in good conscience alter Joseph Smith's revelations and other writings after his death.

ANOTHER TRAP

Some people feel that Martin Harris' wife destroyed the lost 116 pages of the Book of Mormon and consequently have questioned Joseph Smith's statement that his enemies altered these pages to entrap him. In any case, in 1843 Joseph Smith's enemies came up with an ingenious plot to discredit him as a translator. Six brass plates were purported to have been found in a mound in Kinderhook, Illinois. Mormons who saw the plates were impressed by their ancient appearance and felt that they would prove Joseph Smith's Book of Mormon. In a letter written from Nauvoo, Illinois, dated May 2, 1843, Charlotte Haven said that when Joshua Moore "showed them to **Joseph [Smith]**, 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**" (*Overland Monthly*, December 1890, page 630).

While the Kinderhook plates have often been put forth as evidence for Joseph Smith's claims concerning the Book of Mormon, there is another side to the story. Evidence now shows that the Kinderhook plates were actually modern forgeries created specifically for the purpose of entrapping Joseph Smith.

Joseph Smith accepted these plates as authentic and even claimed that he had translated a portion of them. The evidence comes from the diary of William Clayton, Joseph Smith's private secretary. The information in Clayton's journal was deemed so important that it was put in the first person and used as a basis for the story of the Kinderhook plates which is printed in the *History of the Church*, vol. 5, page 372. The following is attributed to Joseph Smith:

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.

After the plates were found, nine "citizens of Kinderhook" certified that R. Wiley took the "six brass plates" from "a large mound, in this vicinity." Unfortunately for the Mormon position, it was later revealed that the plates were forgeries. On April 25, 1855, W. P. Harris, who was one of the nine witnesses to the discovery of the plates, wrote a letter in which he stated that the plates were not genuine:

. . . I was present with a number at or near Kinderhook, and helped to dig at the time the plates were found . . . I . . . made an honest affidavit to the same. . . . since that time, Bridge Whitten said to me that he cut and prepared the plates and he . . . and R. Wiley engraved them themselves. . . . Willbourn Fugate appeared to be the chief, with R. Wiley and B. Whitten. (*The Book of Mormon?* by James D. Bales, pp. 95-96)

On June 30, 1879, W. Fugate, who was also one of the nine people who signed the certificate, wrote a letter in which he admitted his part in the hoax:

I received your letter in regard to those plates, and will say in answer that they are a **humbug**, gotten up by Robert Wiley, Bridge Whitten and myself . . . We read in Pratt's prophecy that "Truth is yet to spring out of the earth." We concluded to prove the prophecy by way of a joke. (Letter of W. Fugate, as cited in *The Kinderhook Plates*, by Welby W. Ricks, reprinted from the *Improvement Era*, September 1962)

At the time of the Civil War, the Kinderhook plates were lost. M. Wilford Poulson, of Brigham Young University, later found one of the original plates in the Chicago Historical Society Museum. The plate which he found has been identified as no. 5 in the facsimiles printed in the *History of the Church*.

While Professor Poulson's research led him to believe that the plate was a forgery, Welby W. Ricks, who was President of the BYU Archaeological Society, hailed the discovery as a vindication of Joseph Smith's work:

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** . . . 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*)

In 1965, three years after Mr. Ricks made this triumphant announcement, George M. Lawrence, a Mormon physicist, was given permission to examine and make "some non-destructive physical studies of the surviving plate." In his "Report of a Physical Study of the Kinderhook Plate Number 5," George Lawrence wrote: "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, however, the Mormon scholar Stanley P. Kimball was able “to secure permission from the Chicago Historical Society for the recommended destructive tests.” Professor Kimball described the results of the tests in the official Mormon Church publication, *The Ensign*, August 1981, pp. 66-70:

A recent electronic and chemical analysis of a metal plate . . . brought in 1843 to the Prophet Joseph Smith . . . 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 . . . **is not of ancient origin.** . . . 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.

If Joseph Smith had not been murdered in June 1844, it is very possible he might have published a complete “translation” of these bogus plates. Just a month before his death, it was reported that he was “busy in **translating them**. The new work . . . will be nothing more nor less than **a sequel to the Book of Mormon**, . . .” (*Warsaw Signal*, May 22, 1844). The fact that Joseph Smith was actually preparing to print 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.**”

In any case, it is obvious that Joseph Smith’s work on these fraudulent plates casts serious doubt upon his credibility as a translator of Mormon scriptures like the Book of Mormon and the Book of Abraham. Smith’s translation of characters on the Kinderhook plates was supposed to have revealed that the plates “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.” Now, in order to derive this much information from the plates it would have been necessary to have “translated” quite a number of the words. A man who could invent such information from bogus plates is just the type of man who would pretend to translate the Book of Abraham from Egyptian papyri which he really knew nothing about or the Book of Mormon from golden plates which he never made available to scholars. Charles A. Shook once observed: “Only a bogus prophet translates bogus plates.” While this may not be the most tactful way of putting it, this is a very serious problem which cannot be brushed aside.

The implications of this whole matter for the story of the Book of Mormon are very serious indeed. Joseph Smith, of course, claimed that he had eleven witnesses who saw the gold plates of the Book of Mormon. Smith, however, was careful not to show them to the public. He did not allow any one who was trained to detect forgery or who had studied

ancient languages to examine the original plates. In the case of the Kinderhook plates, however, they were publicly exhibited and many people had a chance to examine them. Both William Clayton and Brigham Young had the privilege of tracing or making an outline of one of the pages in their journals. Furthermore, “the *Nauvoo Neighbor* press [a Mormon newspaper] had access to them and was thus able to produce facsimiles for the published broadside” (*The Ensign*, August 1981, p. 72). The first three presidents of the Mormon Church, Joseph Smith, Brigham Young and John Taylor, all believed that the Kinderhook plates were authentic. B. H. Roberts stated that “John Taylor, the close personal friend of the Prophet—**took the find seriously**, and expressed **implicit confidence** in his editorial that the Prophet could **give a translation** of the plates. And this attitude the Church, continued to maintain; . . .” (*History of the Church*, vol. 5, p. 379, footnote). That not one of the first three prophets of the church could tell the difference between ancient plates and plates “cut from a sheet that had been rolled” in the 19th century raises a serious question concerning the validity of the testimony of Joseph Smith’s eleven witnesses concerning the plates of the Book of Mormon.

In their testimony printed in the Book of Mormon, the Eight Witnesses to that book said that the plates had “the appearance of gold.” Mormon historian B. H. Roberts said that the “weight of the plates was doubtless considerable, being of gold, and each plate six by eight inches in width and length, and the whole volume six inches thick” (*Comprehensive History of the Church*, vol. 1, p. 93). Apostle John A. Widtsoe and Franklin S. Harris, Jr., estimated that “A cube of solid gold of that size, if the gold were pure, would weigh two hundred pounds, which would have been a heavy weight for a man to carry . . .” (*Seven Claims of the Book of Mormon*, p. 37). This presents a problem because B. H. Roberts says in his history of the church (page 91) that at one time Joseph Smith had to carry the plates “between two and three miles” to his home. During this journey he was watched by his enemies and “three times he was assaulted by as many different persons” along the way. Joseph Smith’s mother said that as “he was **jumping** over a log, a man sprang up from behind it, and gave him a heavy blow with a gun. Joseph turned around and **knocked him down**, and then **ran at the top of his speed**. About half a mile further he was attacked again . . . and before he reached home he was assaulted the third time.” No one was able to catch him, however, and he arrived home with the plates (*Joseph Smith’s History By His Mother*, a photo reprint of the original 1853 edition, p. 105). In trying to deal with this problem, Widtsoe and Harris suggested that it “is very unlikely . . . that the plates were made of pure gold.” They felt that gold might have been “mixed with a certain amount of copper” and referred to the work of J. M. Sjodahl who said the plates may have “weighed less than one hundred pounds.” Even if the plates weighed only seventy-five pounds, we feel that it is unlikely that Joseph Smith could have carried them for “between two and three miles,” running “at the top of his speed,” jump over a log and fight off three assailants along the way.

It is very possible that the witnesses to the Book of Mormon may have been shown some plates cut from a sheet

of rolled metal which had been coated with gold or something that had the “appearance of gold.” Joseph Smith said that each plate was “not quite so thick as common tin” (*History of the Church*, vol. 4, p. 537). Martin Harris, on the other hand, maintained that “each of the plates was thicker than the thickest tin.” David Whitmer felt that they were about as thick as “common tin used by tinsmiths.” Mormon apologists might argue that if the plates had only been coated in some way to give them the appearance of gold, the person who made the “engravings” on them would have had a problem convincing others that they were genuine. The tool used to make the engravings would cut down into the metal below and expose the fact that the plates were not really made of gold. Apostle Orson Pratt, however, made a rather strange statement about some type of stain being on the plates where the engraving appeared: “They [the witnesses] describe these plates as being about the thickness of common tin . . . Upon each side of the leaves of these plates there were fine engravings, which were stained with a black, hard stain, so as to make the letters more legible and easier to be read” (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 7, pp. 30-31). Such a “black, hard stain” could, of course, prevent the witnesses from noticing that the color of the metal in the engraved portions was different from the rest of the plates.

There is another interesting aspect to the story: Apostle Widsor noted that “part of the plates, said to be about two-thirds, was sealed” (*Joseph Smith—Seeker After Truth*, p. 38). The printed Book of Mormon was supposed to have been translated from the unsealed portion—the remaining third. The witnesses were not allowed to look at the other two-thirds of the plates. If the plates were forgeries, it would be very difficult and time consuming to make engravings on the entire stack. By sealing two-thirds of them together, however, it would only be necessary to make engravings on the remaining third. These could be shown to the witnesses and they would probably never suspect that the other two-thirds of the plates did not have engravings on them. (For more information on this matter see *The Case Against Mormonism*, vol. 2, p. 39.) In any case, since the Book of Mormon witnesses were neither experts in ancient languages nor qualified archaeologists, it would be very easy to fool them with some “kind of makeshift deception.”

While the forged Kinderhook plates present a real dilemma for those who maintain Joseph Smith was a prophet of God, Smith’s purported translation of the Book of Abraham presents an even greater problem because it was canonized as scripture in the *Pearl of Great Price*. The Egyptian papyrus from which the Book of Abraham was translated was acquired by Joseph Smith in 1835. Smith boldly asserted that it was actually penned by the patriarch Abraham. Since the science of Egyptology was in its infancy at that time, Smith was able to publish a “translation” without fear of exposure. In 1968, however, the very piece of papyrus which Joseph Smith used to produce his “Book of Abraham” was translated by noted Egyptologists Klaus Baer and Richard A. Parker. They found it contained absolutely nothing concerning Abraham. Instead, it turned out to be a pagan funerary text known as the “Book

of Breathings”—an Egyptian funerary text filled with pagan gods and practices. The names of at least fifteen Egyptian gods or goddesses are mentioned in this work, but there is not one word about Abraham. Since the verses found in the Book of Abraham did not come from the papyrus as Joseph Smith claimed, some might argue that they were “satanic verses.” Others, of course, would say that they came from Joseph Smith’s own fertile imagination. (For more information on the Book of Abraham see *Major Problems of Mormonism*, pp. 216-228)

SATAN STILL AT WORK?

During the 1980’s an impostor by the name of Mark Hofmann arose and succeeded in laying a snare for church leaders which has led many to question the claim that there is a special pipeline between Mormonism and God. Because his scheme seemed so diabolical, some Mormons have concluded that he was inspired by Satan himself. Mr. Hofmann was a forger who went far beyond producing “satanic verses.” He, in fact, wrote entire documents for the express purpose of deceiving the leaders of the church.

Mark Hofmann, who had served as a missionary for the Mormon Church and was married in the temple, became well-known to the General Authorities of the church in 1980 when he claimed that he found the original Anthon Transcript—a sheet of paper which was supposed to contain characters copied by Joseph Smith himself from the gold plates of the Book of Mormon. The Mormon Church’s newspaper, *Deseret News*, for May 3, 1980, reported that this was “the oldest known Mormon document as well as the earliest sample of the Prophet’s handwriting.” The Mormon hierarchy were completely sold on the document, and, according to Church Archivist Donald Schmidt, Mr. Hofmann was eventually given “roughly \$20,000” worth of items from the Church Archives in exchange for this single sheet of paper and a Bible in which it was supposed to have been found. Mormon leaders and church scholars were elated with Hofmann’s discovery. Hugh Nibley, the church’s most noted apologist, was certain the transcript was genuine and went so far as to proclaim that it contained Egyptian characters which could be translated. The truth, as it later turned out, was that the paper only contained Hofmann’s own doodlings.

Less than a year after Mark Hofmann made his first discovery, the church disclosed that he had uncovered another very significant document. This was a handwritten sheet showing that Joseph Smith designated his son, Joseph Smith III, to succeed him as “A Seer, and a Revelator, and a Prophet, unto the Church.” The Mormon newspaper, *Deseret News*, March 19, 1981, announced that “[Earl E.] Olson and other LDS officials said **they are convinced the blessing is authentic.**” This was a very controversial document because it indicated that Joseph Smith III—not Brigham Young—was Joseph Smith’s true successor. Nevertheless, Mormon leaders believed it was genuine and Mark Hofmann was compensated with material from the Church Archives which had a value

“in the neighborhood of \$20,000.” After the discovery of the blessing document, Mark Hofmann began turning up an astounding number of important Mormon documents, some of which were very controversial.

In January 1983, Mark Hofmann approached Gordon B. Hinckley with a letter which was purportedly written by Joseph Smith in 1825. The contents of the letter were very embarrassing to the Mormon Church. President Hinckley, therefore, paid Hofmann \$15,000 for the letter and hid it in a vault for 28 months. Before the end of 1983, Mr. Hofmann had forged still another letter which humiliated the church and caused many members to question its divine origin. This letter, purported to have been written by Book of Mormon witness Martin Harris, was known as the Salamander letter.

In spite of the warnings which we printed in the *Salt Lake City Messenger* concerning Mr. Hofmann’s documents, Mormon Church leaders continued to deal with and help Hofmann until the middle of October, 1985. On the 15th of that month, Salt Lake City was rocked with the news that bombs had killed two people. One was a Mormon bishop named Steven F. Christensen. It was later discovered that Mr. Christensen had been working secretly with the Mormon Church and Mark Hofmann to obtain the so-called McLellin collection. Mr. Hofmann had convinced the Mormon leaders that if the McLellin collection fell into the hands of the enemy, it would cause great embarrassment to the church. These documents were to be purchased by an anonymous buyer who would eventually donate them to the church. In this way the documents could be suppressed from the knowledge of the public.

On October 16, a bomb exploded in Mark Hofmann’s car and he was critically injured. At first the police thought Mr. Hofmann was the victim of a cruel bomber. Within a short time, however, they came to believe that Hofmann himself was the bomber and that he was transporting a bomb which accidentally exploded. Mr. Hofmann was eventually charged with murdering Steven Christensen and Kathleen Sheets, the wife of another Mormon bishop. On January 23, 1987, Mark Hofmann pled guilty to the murder charges and also confessed that the Salamander letter was a forgery. He later told of the methods he used to forge many documents and boasted that he had deceived the Mormon leaders.

Mark Hofmann had a very clever plan to fool the Mormon leaders. He forged documents which were both favorable and unfavorable to the church. In addition, he forged a large number which were neutral in their content. The Hofmann documents which were favorable to the Mormon Church were proudly displayed in church publications. The leaders of the Mormon Church had a great deal of faith in “Brother Hofmann” (see *Deseret News*, Church Section, May 3, 1980). In the *Salt Lake Tribune*, April 19, 1986, Mike Carter referred to the “blind trust of LDS officials in bombing suspect Mark W. Hofmann . . .” Mr. Carter went on to say that it “was apparent that church leaders, including President Hinckley, trusted Mr. Hofmann implicitly . . .”

Because they boast of having special guidance from the Lord, the Mormon leaders have lost a great deal of credibility through the Hofmann affair. According to Ezra Taft Benson, the present Prophet, Seer and Revelator of the

church, “The Prophet Will Never Lead The Church Astray.” (“Fourteen Fundamentals In Following The Prophets,” as cited in *Following The Brethren*, page 5.) President Benson also maintained that the leaders of the church have special discernment which is far superior to “earthly knowledge.” As we think of President Benson’s statements concerning the special powers of a prophet, we cannot help but remember a photograph of his predecessor, Spencer W. Kimball, the twelfth Prophet, Seer and Revelator of the Mormon Church, which appeared in the Church Section of the *Deseret News* on May 3, 1980. President Kimball is flanked by Mark Hofmann, President N. Eldon Tanner, President Marion G. Romney, Apostle Boyd K. Packer and Apostle Gordon B. Hinckley.

Neither President Kimball nor any of the other General Authorities were able to detect anything wrong with either “Brother Hofmann” or the Anthon transcript which he was palming off on them. Although President Kimball was supposed to be a “seer” and have the power to “translate all records that are of ancient date” (Book of Mormon, Mosiah 8:13), he was unable to translate the purported Book of Mormon characters which appear on the so-called Anthon transcript. Instead of using the “seer stone,” as Joseph Smith would have done, he examined the characters with a magnifying glass. Not only did he fail to detect that the characters were only the doodlings of Mark Hofmann, but he was oblivious to the fact that the church was being set up to be defrauded of a large amount of money and many valuable items out of its archives. Moreover, he entirely failed to see the devastating and embarrassing effect this transaction and others which followed would have on the Mormon Church. If ever revelation from the Lord was needed, it was on that day in 1980 when Mark Hofmann stood in the presence of President Kimball.

Mormon Apostle Bruce R. McConkie maintained that church leaders have the gift of discernment:

. . . the gift of the discerning of spirits is poured out upon presiding officials in God’s kingdom; they have it given to them to discern all gifts and spirits, **lest any come among the saints and practice deception.** . . . even “the thoughts and intents of the heart” are made known. (*Mormon Doctrine*, 1979, page 197)

While the Mormon leaders claim to have the same powers as the ancient Apostles in the Bible, their performance with regard to Mark Hofmann certainly does not match up to that of Apostle Peter when he caught Ananias and Sapphira red-handed in their attempt to deceive the church with regard to a financial transaction (Acts 5:3).

It would seem that if the same powers were functioning in the Mormon Church today, the “Prophet, Seer and Revelator” would have received a revelation warning him concerning Mark Hofmann’s cunning plan to defraud and disgrace the church. If the Mormon Church was ever led by revelation, it has been lacking since Mr. Hofmann came into the church offices with the “Anthon transcript.”

With regard to the inability of the Mormon leaders to detect that the Hofmann documents were fraudulent, a person might try to argue that these documents were not really important spiritual writings, and therefore the Lord did not

see fit to intervene when the General Authorities examined them. The truth of the matter, however, is that they contain extremely important material directly relating to spiritual affairs. The Salamander letter, for example, changes the story of the Angel Moroni appearing to Joseph Smith to that of a cantankerous and tricky “old spirit” who transforms himself from a white salamander and strikes Joseph Smith. Although non-Mormons could plainly see that this story discredited the Book of Mormon, Mormon leaders tried to pretend that there was really no problem. The church’s *Deseret News*, Church Section, September 9, 1984, printed an article which stated that the Salamander letter “is no repudiation of Joseph Smith, but rather probably is a further witness of the Prophet’s own account of the discovery of the golden plates.” As late as August 16, 1985, the Mormon Apostle Dallin Oaks spoke at the “1985 CES Doctrine and Covenants Symposium” and tried to equate the white salamander with the Angel Moroni:

... there is another meaning of “salamander,” . . . That meaning . . . is “a mythical being thought to be able to live in fire.” . . . A being that is able to live in fire is a good approximation of the description Joseph Smith gave of the Angel Moroni . . .

Some of the purported Joseph Smith writings which Hofmann sold to the church were supposed to contain revelations from the Lord Himself! For instance, the Joseph Smith III Blessing document gives this message from the Lord: “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.” The 1838 letter of Joseph Smith, another forgery which the Mormon Church acquired, is in its entirety a revelation purporting to come from the Lord. It begins with the words, “Verily thus Saith the Lord,” and ends with the word “Amen.” The fact that the Mormon leaders were unable to recognize the spurious nature of these revelations casts doubt upon their ability to discern the truthfulness of the other revelations given by Joseph Smith. It has always been claimed that it is virtually impossible for a person to write a revelation that would compare with Joseph Smith’s. It now appears, however, that there is someone who can write revelations comparable to Joseph Smith’s and that it is even possible to get them past the scrutiny of the highest leadership of the Mormon Church.

It now seems incontestable that Mark Hofmann deliberately set out to weaken faith in Mormonism through forgery. Even though Mr. Hofmann’s designs against the Mormon Church did not pan out as he had hoped, he did administer a wound to the church which may never be healed. His close involvement with church leaders has clearly revealed that the church’s claim of latter-day revelation is without foundation.

In his confession, Mark Hofmann said that he could “look someone in the eye and lie” and that he didn’t believe that “someone could be inspired” in a religious sense to know what “my feelings or thoughts were” (*Hofmann’s Confession*, vol. 1, page 99). On page 112 he boasted that he “wasn’t fearful of the Church inspiration detecting the forgery.” It is evident that

Mr. Hofmann has put the claim of revelation in the church to the acid test and found that the so-called “living oracles” are just as fallible as other men. Mormon officials find themselves in a very embarrassing position. At a time when revelation was really needed, they seemed to be completely oblivious to what was going on. Church leaders who claimed to have special powers of revelation, played into Mr. Hofmann’s hands time after time. Mark Hofmann did such a good job of convincing church officials that he was trying to help the church that he was given privileged access to material in the archives. Hofmann returned the favor by using the very knowledge he obtained from the documents to create new forgeries to palm off on the church. If the Mormon leaders were truly led by revelation, Mark Hofmann’s nefarious plan could have been thwarted in 1980.

CONCLUSION. While people may debate concerning whether the many changes made in Mormon history and doctrine “are of man” or “of the devil,” one thing is certain: there are too many major problems in the church for one to believe that it is “the only true and living church upon the face of the whole earth, with which I, the Lord, am well pleased . . .” (*Doctrine and Covenants* 1:30). The evidence, in fact, clearly shows that the Mormon Church is man-made and is presently led by leaders who do not have the powers which they claim to possess. Those who wish to know more about these important matters should have a copy of our new book, *Major Problems of Mormonism*.



DEATH THREATS!

On March 11, 1989, the *Salt Lake Tribune* reported the following: “University of Utah law professor Edwin Firmage has received more than 150 phone calls and several death threats since he said there is no doctrinal basis for the Mormon Church’s restriction against women holding the church’s priesthood.”

While this might give outsiders the impression that modern Utah is as repressive as Iran’s Ayatollah Khomeini, death threats over religious matters are actually very rare in Mormon country. Although there are some extremists, most Mormons are rather peaceful. If we look back into the past history of the church, however, we find that book-burning and death threats were used to keep the people under control. For instance, in 1844 the newspaper, *Nauvoo Expositor*, published by Mormon dissidents, exposed Joseph Smith’s secret involvement in polygamy. According to the *History of the Church*, vol. 6, page 445, Joseph Smith’s brother, Hyrum, felt the best way to deal with the matter was to suppress the newspaper: “Councilor Hyrum Smith believed the best way was to **smash the press and pi the type.**” Joseph Smith agreed with his brother. On page 432, we read: “I [Joseph Smith] immediately **ordered the Marshal to destroy it without delay . . .**” The “press, type, printed paper, and fixtures” were taken out in the street and destroyed. This action, of course, eventually led to the murder of Joseph Smith.

In early Utah, President Brigham Young ruled with an iron hand, and like Khomenini, Young did his best to stifle religious dissent. In 1853 a man by the name of Gladden Bishop opposed the practice of polygamy and tried to set up a rival sect. On March 27 of that year, Brigham Young stood before the saints in the Tabernacle and publicly threatened the Bishop and his followers:

We have known Gladden Bishop for more than twenty years, and know him to be a poor, dirty curse. . . . Now you Gladdenites, keep your tongues still, lest sudden destruction come upon you. . . .

I say, rather than that apostates should flourish here, I will unsheath my bowie knife, and conquer or die. . . . Now you nasty apostates, clear out, or judgment will be put to the line . . . If you say it is right, raise your hands. [All hands up.] Let us call upon the Lord to assist us in this, and every good work. (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 1, p. 83)

Brigham Young was successful in stamping out the Gladdenites' opposition. The historian Hubert Howe Bancroft noted that within a few months, "most of them set forth for California, the rest recanted, and after the year 1854 we hear no more of this apostasy" (*History of Utah*, p. 644). While Gladden Bishop escaped with his life, many others were not that lucky. The "sudden destruction" which Brigham Young threatened, fell on many who opposed the Mormons in Nauvoo and early Utah. The documentation concerning this matter is found in *Major Problems of Mormonism*, pp. 175-205.



IF HE WERE SATAN

In the Spring 1989 issue of *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* an unusual article by Samuel W. Taylor appears under the title, "If I Were Satan." On page 116, the following is found:

As Satan, I would also encourage Church officials to ignore all attacks on the Church, such as the dedicated campaign of Jerald and Sandra Tanner of the Utah Lighthouse Ministry. I would simply pooh-pooh their violently unfriendly book, *Mormonism, Shadow or Reality*, issued in Salt Lake, together with the condensed version, *The Changing World of Mormonism*, published in New York [Chicago]. What do we care that the combined sales have been more than 50,000 copies? What does it matter that missionaries are hit with hard questions from readers of these books and are unprepared to answer?

It is ironic that this statement would appear in *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*. This journal has never reviewed either of the two books mentioned by Samuel Taylor! Even Lawrence Foster, a critic who feels we are "narrowminded" and "unethical," observed the following:

Despite the Tanners' extensive publication record and the hostility that they have aroused over the past two decades, to date virtually no serious public analyses of their

work have appeared. When the Tanners' arguments have been attacked in Mormon publications, as has occurred on many occasions, their names and titles of their writings have almost never been cited. Indeed, until very recently even independent Mormon scholarly journals such as *DIALOGUE* and *Sunstone*, which discuss all manner of controversial issues, have largely avoided mentioning the Tanners by name, much less analyzing their work explicitly. (*Dialogue*, Summer 1984, p. 48)

In a footnote on page 49, Professor Foster wrote:

In a letter to me . . . Lester Bush explained why *DIALOGUE* ultimately decided not to review the Tanners' books *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* and *The Changing World of Mormonism* despite their hope to make such a review: "We simply had no desire to be drawn into a sensational debate based on fragmentary data and in no way governed by any notion of intellectual responsibility."

Nothing has changed since 1984, and it seems doubtful that *Dialogue* will publish any review of our new book, *Major Problems of Mormonism*. However this may be, we have already sold over 500 copies. One ministry has ordered 150 copies and has sold almost two-thirds of these already!



NEW TRACT MINISTRY

For a long time we have felt that our ministry was lacking in the area of providing free tracts on Mormonism and Christianity. Recently, however, we were able to purchase a folding machine and have prepared six tracts that should be of interest to our readers. They are entitled, *Jesus and Joseph Smith*, *Power Over the Entire World*, *The Fall of the Book of Abraham*, *The Worst Prison of All*, *Testing the Book of Mormon*, and *Joseph Smith and the Kinderhook Plates*.

Two of these tracts, *The Worst Prison of All* and *Power Over the Entire World*, do not mention Mormonism. Below is the text of one of these tracts.

Power Over The Entire World

History is filled with the names of rulers who desired to gain great riches and rule over many people. Alexander the Great, for instance, was able to conquer most of the known world in the 4th century B.C. Napoleon, who has been described as "one of the greatest military geniuses of all time," crushed those who resisted him and created a vast empire. His success, however, went to his head. He began to believe he was invincible and eventually suffered some disastrous defeats. The battle of Waterloo, of course, ended his dream of conquering the world. He died on an island "alone and deserted by his friends and family, on May 5, 1821." The 20th century certainly has had its share of those who sought world conquest. Adolf Hitler's desire for power led to World War II and the death of millions of people.

Although they had many military victories, none of these leaders were able to bring the entire world into subjection to themselves for even a moment. Furthermore, the power and riches they did gain did not last very long. Hitler gained the support he needed in Germany in 1934, but by 1945 he found it necessary to commit suicide because his empire was crumbling. Alexander the Great did not have much time to enjoy the power he had gained. He died when he was only thirty-three years old.

In spite of the fact that no one has yet been able to gain complete control over the world, one cannot help but wonder what it would be like if it were possible to have all the power, fame and riches that the world can offer. Almost two thousand years ago, Jesus reflected on the issue of obtaining that much power and made this startling observation:

For what is a man profited if he gains the whole world, and **loses his own soul**? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? (NKJV, Matthew 16:26)

There are at least two very important points in this short verse. First, that our selfish drive to obtain pleasure, fame, money or power can lead to the loss of our eternal soul. Second, that our soul is worth more than all the things of this world. Even though we may have great success and riches in this life, if we fail to set our minds on the things of God, we are spiritually bankrupt. Jesus made this very plain in Luke 12:16-21:

Then he spoke a parable to them, saying: "The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully.

And he thought within himself, saying, 'What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops?'

So he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods.'

And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry."

But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?'

"So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."

In our attempt to find happiness through riches, fame or pleasures, we end up setting aside the things God declares to be the most important. In Matthew 22:37-40 we read:

Jesus said to him, "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is *the* first and great commandment. And *the* second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."

While Jesus calls upon us to love God and those around us with a sincere love, he cautions us against the love of things

that distract us from serving God. As our minds begin to focus more and more on the things of this world, we tend to lose sight of the spiritual things which are truly essential. In the Parable of the Sower, Jesus explained:

Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word [i.e., the word of God], and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful. (Matthew 13:22)

The Apostle John warned:

Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world.

And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever. (1 John 2:15-17)

People think that they will be very happy if they can only obtain certain things, but even if they do acquire them, the pleasure is usually very short-lived. They are soon striving for something else to fill the emptiness of their hearts. When the movie star Barbara Streisand was asked how the "reality of success" measured up to her "childhood dreams of glory," she frankly replied: "It doesn't come close. It hasn't come anywhere near it. The dream—you never achieve it and that's what is depressing. . . . to me it's a real drag that you can't hold success in your hand like a hard-boiled egg." True happiness is only found when one comes into a right relationship with God. As C. S. Lewis has explained, "God cannot give us a happiness and peace apart from Himself, because it is not there. There is no such thing" (*Mere Christianity*, p. 54). God loves us all very much and desires for us to spend eternity with him in his kingdom. Jesus himself has given the following invitation in John 3:16:

For God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

The Bible informs us that we cannot really serve God until we have been "born again" (John 3:3). It plainly states that "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). In chapter 6, verse 23, of the same book, we are informed: "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." What we need, then, is to have Jesus set us free from the chains of sin. Our own "good works" will avail us nothing, we need to pray to The Lord with a sincere heart and turn our life completely over to him. It is only through his "grace" (Ephesians 2:8-10) that we can escape the penalty of eternal separation from God and have a place in his kingdom.

All the things we can acquire in this life amount to nothing when compared with the wonderful salvation that has been

prepared for us. The Apostle Paul observed that we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out” (1 Timothy 6:7). Apostle Peter noted that in the last day “the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.” After emphasizing again that “all these things will be dissolved” he asked, “what manner of persons ought you to be?” (2 Peter 3:10-11).

When we really think about it, it becomes obvious that while some people may be able to obtain great fame and riches in this life, most of us will have to settle for less. Even if we were able to obtain these things, they would not bring us the lasting happiness we all desire. As we have already shown, Jesus said that the rich man, who was more interested in building bigger barns in which to store his goods than in serving God, was a “fool.” Moreover, Jesus declared that even if someone could gain the whole world that person would be making a tragic mistake which would result in eternal separation from God. Since God places a higher value on one human soul than he does the whole world, one would be very foolish indeed to neglect the eternal salvation which God has provided for the momentary pleasures and riches which this world has to offer.

The following poem brings to mind the importance of having one’s priorities right:



MISSIONARY WORK

There are opportunities for those who are interested in volunteering for evangelistic work in Salt Lake City this summer. If interested call (801) 486-3800 or write to: Associated Utah Christian Ministries, PO Box 750, Salt Lake City, UT 84101.

OTHER BOOKS

A Gathering of Saints: A True Story of Money, Murder and Deceit, by Robert Lindsey. An excellent account of the forgeries and murderers of Mark Hofmann. **Price: \$18.95**

The 1838 Mormon War in Missouri, by Stephen C. LeSueur. **Price: \$20.00**

“Wild Bill” Hickman and the Mormon Frontier, by Hope A. Hilton. **Price: \$9.95**

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