

THE CASE AGAINST MORMONISM

VOLUME 1



By Jerald and Sandra Tanner

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PREFACE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Bold type is used for emphasis throughout this book.

1. A MARVELOUS WORK?

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

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

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

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

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



Joseph Smith



Brigham Young

Miraculous Claims

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

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

Bruce R. McConkie also stated:

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

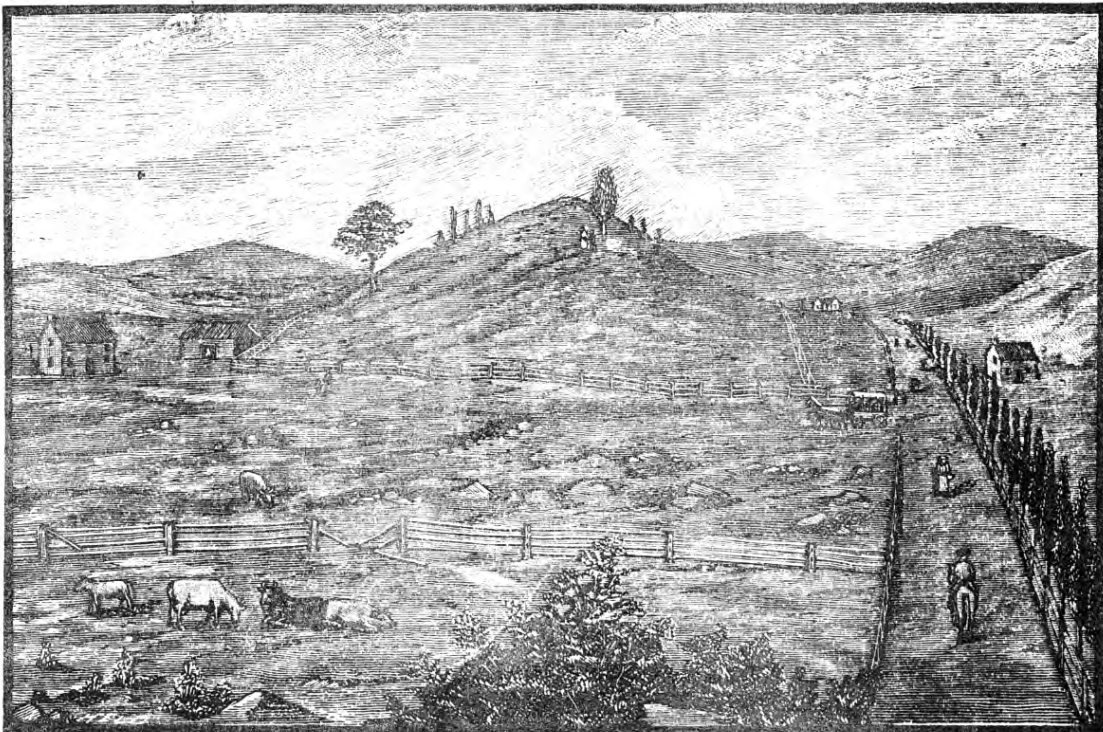
An ordinary person would probably see nothing of importance about this hill, but to the Mormons this is one of the most important places on earth.

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

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



The Angel Delivering the Gold Plates to Joseph Smith



The Hill Cumorah

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Mormon Apostle Orson Pratt stated:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Only True Church?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

TEACHING THE INVESTIGATOR

Our hope in teaching the gospel is to convert people and baptize them. Your work is not finished until your contact either understands and accepts the gospel or understands and rejects it.

I. TEACHING PRINCIPLES

A. Repetition

1. Ask questions which require the contact to think before he answers.
2. Have contact repeat ideas rather than words.
3. As your teaching progresses make certain contact agrees before proceeding.

B. Enthusiasm

1. Have the "Attitude of Success."
2. Relax. Be at ease with your contacts.
3. Show genuine interest in your contacts. Praise them for their achievements.
4. Motivate your contacts by expressing confidence in their ability. Do not rely on forceful speech or logic alone.

C. Simplicity

1. Follow the handbook dialogues.
2. Stick to the logic and scriptures given in the dialogues.
3. Answer objections with questions. Avoid the temptation to lecture.

D. Testimony

1. Remember: Conversion comes only through the Holy Ghost. Your contacts feel his presence strongest as you bear testimony.
2. Set your testimony apart.
 - a. Pause slightly.
 - b. Look contact in the eye.
 - c. Bear testimony in a natural tone of voice.

E. Addressing the contact

In all discussions except the first, the contact probably should be called "Brother Brown" rather than "Mr. Brown." This is never offensive, and it makes the contact feel much closer to being a member of the Church, since he knows that the members refer to each other in this way. People enjoy being called "brother" and "sister." If the meeting is being held in the home of a member

FIRST DISCUSSION

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST

I. OUTLINE

- A. Create need for prophet
- B. Joseph Smith story
 - 1. Nature of Godhead
 - 2. Importance of Joseph Smith
- C. Apostasy
 - 1. Set up church (Eph. 2:19-20.)
 - 2. Collapse church on flannel board
 - 3. Compare churches
- D. Baptismal date
- E. Restoration
 - 1. Divine messengers (Matt. 17:11-13.)
 - 2. Total restoration
- F. Secure commitments
 - 1. Baptism
 - 2. Study, pray, attend church

II. BASIC CONCLUSIONS*

- 1. We need a prophet today.
- 2. The Father and Son have bodies.
- 3. Joseph Smith was a prophet of God.
- 4. The Church must be the same today as it was at the time of the Savior.
- 5. Apostles and prophets are necessary in the Church today.
- 6. The priesthood is necessary to act for God.
- 7. There is no priesthood today without apostles.
- 8. I agree the Church must be like this today.
- 9. There was a complete apostasy and my church is false.
- 10. I will be baptized as I come to believe the restoration.
- 11. There was a restoration of the priesthood and the true Church.
- 12. I will study, pray, and attend church to meet a specific baptismal date.

*Conclusions given in bold face at end of each section.

A photograph of page 9 of *A Uniform System For Teaching Investigators*. Notice that the contact is supposed to reach the conclusion that his church is false.

... I asked the Personages who stood above me in the light, which of all the sects was right—and which I should join.

I was answered that I must join **none** of them, for they were **all wrong**; and the Personage who addressed me said that **all** their creeds were an **abomination** in his sight; that those professors were **all corrupt**; that: “they draw near to me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me, they teach for doctrines the commandments of men, having a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof.” (*Pearl of Great Price*, Joseph Smith, 2:18-19)

In the *Elders' Journal*—which was edited by Joseph Smith—the following appeared:

Is it any wonder then, that we say of the priests of modern days, that they are of **their father the devil**. . . . We shall always think when we see men associating with scoundrels, that they themselves are scoundrels. And there we shall leave them for the present, firmly believing, that when the day of decision has come, that we shall see **all the priests** who adhere to the sectarian religions of the day, with **all their followers, without one exception**, receive their portion with the **devil and his angels**. (*Elders' Journal*, Vol. 1, no. 4, pages 59-60)

Although it seems to contradict other statements which he made, Joseph Smith once answered a question as follows:

Question 3rd. Will everybody be damned but Mormons?

Answer. **Yes**, and a great portion of them unless they repent and work righteousness. (*Elders' Journal*, July, 1838, page 42)

The following questions and answers appear in *The Seer*, which was edited by the Mormon Apostle Orson Pratt:

Q. Who founded the Roman Catholic Church?

A. The **Devil**, through the medium of Apostates, who subverted the whole order of God . . .

Q. Did the great Protestant Reformers restore the Church of Christ to the earth?

A. **No**: . . .

Q. But did not any of the Protestant Reformers have authority to Baptize and Confirm?

A. **Not any of them**: . . .

Q. But did not the first Protestant Reformers receive their ordination and authority from the Catholics?

A. Yes: and in this manner they received all the authority that their mother church was in possession of; and the mother having derived her authority from the **Devil**, could only impart that which his Satanic majesty was pleased to bestow upon her. . . . (*The Seer*, page 205)

The Mormon Apostle Orson Pratt also wrote:

... some clearly beheld the apostate condition of all Christendom; but how to remedy the matter they knew not. . . . To withdraw themselves from the “**whore of Babylon**”—the **Catholics** or from her “**harlot daughters**”—the **Protestants**, would be very unpopular. Therefore, under these conditions, millions have continued to cling to these monstrous impositions, even to the present day. . . . Who, then, that can read the Bible, can be so entirely devoid of all common sense, as not to perceive that the whole of Christendom is as destitute of Bible Christianity, as the idolatrous Pagans? . . . they love popular darkness more than they love Bible light. (*Pamphlets by Orson Pratt*, page 83)

On page 96 of the same book Orson Pratt made this statement:

61.—The Papist and Protestant churches of modern times, notwithstanding the greatness of their numbers and their exceedingly great popularity, are impositions, under the pious name of Christianity, of the most glaring and dangerous kind.

62.—Their cunning, learned, arch-imposters have multiplied their followers to millions, and flooded all Europe and America with their pernicious doctrines. Thousands of the honest and unwary are annually led away by these fatal delusions, under the false and vain suppositions that they are embracing Christianity. . . . Oh, apostate Christianity! Oh, modern Christendom! Thou, that corruptest all nations with thine abominations, and makest merchandise of the souls of men! . . . thine eyes are closed, no more to be opened, until they are lifted up in torment, in the midst of lamentations, and woes, and miseries, and hopeless despair.

On page 112 of the same book we find the following statement by Orson Pratt:

The gates of hell have prevailed and will continue to prevail over the Catholic Mother of Harlots, and over all her Protestant Daughters; but as for the apostolic Church of Christ, she rests secure in the mansions of eternal happiness, where she will remain until the apostate Catholic church, with all her popes and bishops, together with all her **harlot daughters shall be hurled down to hell**: . . .

Max Parkin wrote the following concerning early missionary work in Ohio:

Joel Hills Johnson, the presiding elder over the branch of the Church at Amherst and a missionary, himself, taught that all the Protestant sects sprang from the Church of Rome which is the “mother of harlots [so] they [i.e. the Protestants] must consequently be her daughters.” (*Conflict at Kirtland*, by Max H. Parkin. 1966, page 158)

righteous anger. The Lord does not suffer wicked anger to be in his heart; but there is anger in his bosom, and he will hold a controversy with the nations, and will sift them, and no power can stay his hand.

The Government of our country will go by the board through its own corruptions, and no power can save it. If we can avert the blow for another season, it is probable that our enemies will have enough to attend to at home, without worrying the Latter-day Saints. Have faith, and all will be well with us. I would like this people to have faith enough to turn away their enemies. I have prayed fervently about this matter; for it has been said that the troops would come: but I have said that, if my faith will prevent it, they shall not come. If God will turn them whithersoever he will, so that they do not come here, I shall be perfectly satisfied. But another man steps up, and says to the one that prays for our enemies to be turned away, "Brother, you are a coward; damn them, let them come, for I want fight to them." Herein you perceive a conflict in our faith; and that should not be. If there was a perfect union of our faith, our enemies could never cross the Rocky Mountains; or, if they undertook to come some other way, they never could cross the Sierra Nevada Mountains, nor the Basin Rim, on our north, nor the deserts at the south. But, says one, "I want to fight." Do all such persons know that they are not right? If they will examine their hearts, they will find a wicked anger and a malice there; and they cannot get into the kingdom of God with those feelings.

Learn to control yourselves; learn to be in the hands of God as clay in the hands of the potter; and if he will turn our enemies away, praised be his name. But if it should become a duty to take the sword, let us do it

manfully and in the strength of Israel's God. Then one will chase a thousand, and two will put ten thousand to flight." The day will be in which a man will go out and say to an army of a hundred thousand men, "Do thus, and so, or we are upon you;" and they will hear the rumbling of chariots and the rushing of troops, as in the days of Elijah.

You recollect of a Prophet's telling what bread and meal should be sold for in a straitened city the following day. The enemy thought that there were millions of the Israelites after them, for they heard the rolling of chariot-wheels, the clashing of armour, and the trampling of horses, and they fled. The Prophet had told the king that he would be trodden to death in the gate, and he was; and a measure of meal was sold in the city for a penny, in fulfilment of the word of the Lord. The doctrines of salvation are the same now as they were in the days of Adam, or Elijah, or Jesus, when he was upon the earth.

While brother Taylor was speaking of the sectarian world, it occurred to my mind that the wicked do not know any more than the dumb brutes, comparatively speaking; but it is our business to hunt up and gather out all the honest portion of the nations of the earth, and give them salvation. We may very properly say that the sectarian world do not know anything correctly, so far as pertains to salvation. Ask them where heaven is?—where they are going to when they die?—where Paradise is?—and there is not a priest in the world that can answer your questions. Ask them what kind of a being our Heavenly Father is, and they cannot tell you so much as Balaam's ass told him. They are more ignorant than children.

We have the knowledge of those things; and we have the greatest reason to be thankful of any people upon the face of the earth. If others

neither have they any new revelations, and without these things no one ever was or ever can be called to the ministry?

Q. Is the Roman Catholic Church the Church of Christ?

A. No: for she has no inspired priesthood or officers, without which the Church of Christ never did nor never can exist.

Q. How long since the Roman Catholic Church lost the authority and ceased to be the Church of Christ?

A. She never had authority, and never was the Church of Christ; and consequently she could not lose that which she never was in possession of.

Q. If the Roman Catholics are not the Church of Christ, where has the Church of Christ existed since inspired men ceased from the earth:

A. She has existed in heaven where the gates of hell never can prevail against her, because she is built upon the rock; and the inspired Apostles are in heaven with her whom the Saviour promised to be with always, even unto the end of the world.

Q. What has become of the Apostles' successors?

A. The Apostles had no successors after those died off who were called by inspiration and new revelation.

Q. After the Church of Christ fled from earth to heaven, what was left?

A. A set of wicked Apostates, murderers, and idolaters, who, after having made war with the saints, and overcome them, and destroyed them out of the earth, were left to follow the wicked imaginations of their own corrupt hearts, and to build up churches by human authority, and to follow after the cunning craftiness of un-inspired men; having no Apostle, Prophet, or Revelator to inquire of God for them: and thus, because of wickedness, the Church, and Priesthood, and gifts, and ordinances and blessings of the everlasting Gospel, were taken from the earth, and reserved in heaven until the fulness of times, when it was predicted that they should again be restored among men to continue until the end should come.

Q. Who founded the Roman Catholic Church?

A. The Devil, through the medium of Apostates, who subverted the whole order of God by denying immediate revelation, and substituting in the place thereof, tradition and ancient revelations as a sufficient rule of faith and practice.

Q. Did the great Protestant Reformers restore the Church of Christ to the earth?

A. No: for they had no inspired Apostles, Prophets, or Revelators among them, without which the Church could not be restored.

Q. But did not any of the Protestant Reformers have authority to Baptize and Confirm?

A. Not any of them: for they pretended that ancient revelation was a sufficient rule of faith; and, therefore, that no new revelation was needed: and without new revelation no man could be called and authorized to administer Gospel ordinances.

Q. But did not the first Protestant Reformers receive their ordination and authority from the Catholics?

A. Yes: and in this manner they received all the authority that their mother church was in possession of; and the mother having derived her authority from the Devil, could only impart that which his Satanic majesty was pleased to bestow upon her. If thorns could bear figs—if a bitter fountain could send forth sweet water—or a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit, then the whore of Babylon could confer divine authority upon her harlot daughters. But whatever authority the mother might have pretended to confer upon the daughters, she afterwards was very careful to take from them by excommunication. Therefore, unless the Reformers received fresh authority from heaven by new revelation, they had no authority at all.

Q. Are all the Baptisms administered by the Catholics and Protestants, and the different sects which have, from time to time, dissented from them, illegal, because the ministers were not authorized?

Brigham Young, the second President of the Mormon Church, made this statement:

The Christian world, I discovered, was like the captain and crew of a vessel on the ocean without a compass, and tossed to and fro whithersoever the wind listed to blow them. When the light came to me, I saw that all the so-called Christian world was grovelling in darkness. (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 5, page 73)

On another occasion Brigham Young remarked:

We may very properly say that the sectarian world do not know anything correctly, so far as pertains to salvation . . . They **are more ignorant than children**. (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 5, page 229)

John Taylor, who became the third President of the Mormon Church, stated:

I consider that if ever I lost any time in my life, it was while studying the Christian theology. Sectarian theology is the greatest **tomfoolery** in the world. (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 5, page 240)

On another occasion he stated:

What! are Christians ignorant? **Yes, as ignorant of the things of God as the brute beast**. (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 6, page 25)

On still another occasion he remarked:

We talk about Christianity, but it is a **perfect pack of nonsense**. . . . the Devil could not invent a better engine to spread his work than the Christianity of the nineteenth century. (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 6, page 167)

Speaking in the Tabernacle on January 17, 1858, Brigham Young stated:

Brother Taylor has just said that the religions of the day were hatched in hell. The eggs were laid in hell, hatched on its borders, and then kicked on to the earth. (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 6, page 176)

On September 16, 1860, Brigham Young stated:

The Christian world, so called, are **heathens** as to their knowledge of the salvation of God. (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 8, page 171)

On October 7, of the same year, he stated:

Our Elders may tell the priests that there are fifty-one chapters in Genesis, and but few of them, if any, will know that there are only fifty. With regard to true theology, a more **ignorant** people, never lived than the present so-called Christian world. (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 8, page 199)

Speaking in the Bowery on October 21, 1860, Brigham Young remarked:

Every intelligent person under the heavens that does not, when informed, acknowledge that Joseph Smith, jun., is a Prophet of God, is in darkness, and is opposed to us and to Jesus and his kingdom on the earth. (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 8, page 223)

John Taylor made this statement:

What does the Christian world know about God? Nothing; . . . Why, so far as the things of God are concerned, they are the **veriest fools**; they know neither God nor the things of God. (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 13, page 225)

Occasionally the Mormons, find themselves in trouble with other churches because of their teaching that the other churches are in a state of apostasy. For instance, Bruce R. McConkie, who is a member of the First Council of the Seventy, made an attack on the Roman Catholic Church in his book, *Mormon Doctrine*. The Catholics were very unhappy about this attack on their church, and it is rumored that they protested against Bruce R. McConkie's book. There may have been some truth in these rumors, for the book was suppressed for a number of years.

In 1966 a new revised edition was published. In the preface Bruce R. McConkie stated that "experience has shown the wisdom of making some changes, clarifications, and additions.

A comparison of the 1958 edition with the 1966 edition reveals that some of the anti-Catholic material has been deleted. In other places the material has been toned down so that Bruce R. McConkie's true feelings concerning the Catholics are not easily recognized. On the next page is a comparison of some material that appears under the heading of "Church of the Devil."

MORMON DOCTRINE

1958 Edition

There are two scriptural senses in which the titles church of the devil and great and abominable church are used: 1. All churches or organizations of whatever name or nature—whether political, philosophical, educational, economic, social, fraternal, civic, or religious—which are designed to take men on a course that leads away from God and his laws and thus from salvation in the kingdom of God; and 2. **The Roman Catholic Church** specifically—singled out, set apart, described, and designated as being “most abominable above all other churches.” (1 Ne. 13:5)

Salvation is in Christ, . . . (*Mormon Doctrine*, 1958, page 129)

1966 Edition

The titles church of the devil and great and abominable church are used to identify all churches or organizations of whatever name or nature—whether political, philosophical, educational, economic, social, fraternal, civic, or religious—which are designed to take men on a course that leads away from God and his laws and thus from salvation in the kingdom of God.

Salvation is in Christ, . . . (*Mormon Doctrine*, 1966, pages 137-138)

Below is another comparison taken from the same section.

1958 Edition

Iniquitous conditions in the various branches of the great and abominable church in the last days are powerfully described in the Book of Mormon. (2 Ne. 28; Morm. 8:28, 32-33, 36-38; D.& C. 10:56.) **It is also to the Book of Mormon to which we turn for the plainest description of the Catholic Church as the great and abominable church.** Nephi saw **this** “church which is most abominable above all other churches” in vision. (*Mormon Doctrine*, 1958, page 130)

1966 Edition

Iniquitous conditions in the various branches of the great and abominable church in the last days are powerfully described in the Book of Mormon. (2 Ne. 28; Morm. 8:28, 32-33, 36-38; D.& C. 10:56.) Nephi saw **the** “church which is most abominable above all other churches” in vision. (*Mormon Doctrine*, 1966, 138)

Under the heading “Harlots,” Bruce R. McConkie made an attack on both the Catholics and Protestants. In the 1966 edition this has been changed.

1958 Edition

Literally an harlot is a prostitute; figuratively it is any apostate church. Nephi, speaking of harlots in the literal sense and while giving a prophetic description of the **Catholic Church**, recorded that he “saw the devil that he was the foundation of it,” that he “saw many harlots,” and that among other things “the harlots” were “the desires of this great and abominable church.” (1 Ne. 13:6-8.) Then, speaking of harlots in the figurative sense, he designated **the Catholic Church** as “the mother of harlots” (1 Ne. 13:34; 14:15-17), **a title which means that the Protestant churches, the harlot daughters which broke off from the great and abominable church, would themselves also be apostate churches.**

John saw and recorded similar things. (*Mormon Doctrine*, 1958, pages 314-315)

1966 Edition

“Literally an harlot is a prostitute; figuratively it is any apostate church. Nephi, speaking of harlots in the literal sense and while giving a prophetic description of the **church of the devil**, recorded that he “saw the devil that he was the foundation of it,” that he “saw many harlots,” and that among other things “the harlots” were “the desires of this great and abominable church.” (1 Ne. 13:6-8.) Then, speaking of harlots in the figurative sense, he designated **it** as “the mother of harlots.” (1 Ne. 13:34; 14:15-17.)

John saw and recorded similar things. (*Mormon Doctrine*, 1966, pages 343-344)

There have been other changes made in the 1966 edition of *Mormon Doctrine*, but those above should be sufficient to convince the reader that the Mormon leaders are becoming more subtle in their attacks on other churches.

The Best People?

The Mormon Church not only teaches that all other churches are in a state of apostacy, but it also makes claims that most other churches would not dare to make. John Taylor stated:

... we are the only people that know how to save our progenitors, how to save ourselves, and how to save our posterity in the celestial kingdom of God; that we are the people that God has chosen by whom to establish his kingdom and introduce correct principles into the world; and that we in fact are the **saviours** of the world, ... (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 6, page 163)

Brigham Young once boasted:

We have the smartest women in the world, the best cooks, the best mothers; and they know how to dress themselves the neatest of any others. We are the **smartest** people in the world. (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 6, page 176)

On another occasion Brigham Young remarked:

We are the only people on earth that acknowledge God and truly believe in him. The Christian and heathen world profess to believe in him; and the Jews say that they believe in him: but they do not believe in Jesus Christ. The Christians profess to believe in Jesus Christ; but, if he told the truth, not one of them really believes in him . . . This people have the true knowledge; they have it not. We have the Priesthood; they have it not. We have the way of life and salvation; they have it not. We know how to be Saints—how to save ourselves and all who will hearken to our counsel; they do not. (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 6, page 198)

Heber C. Kimball, who was a member of the First Presidency, stated:

It is true that we are the best people there are on the earth. (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 6, page 192)

Brigham Young remarked:

I remarked to brother Kimball last Sabbath, that this people are the best people that ever lived upon the earth; . . . (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 4, page 269)

Joseph Fielding Smith still maintains the idea that the Mormons are the best people on earth. On page 236 of his book, *Doctrines of Salvation*, Vol. 1, Joseph Fielding Smith states as follows:

Saints **are the best people**. We are, notwithstanding our weaknesses, **the best people in the world**. I do not say this boastfully, for I believe that this truth is evident to all who are willing to observe for themselves. We are morally clean, in every way equal, and in many ways **superior** to any other people.

Joseph Young made this statement on July 26, 1857:

I want you to tell them, and tell all the great men of the earth, that the Latter-day Saints are to be their

redeemers—that they have to look to them for their redemption, or there is none for them; and they will have to acknowledge that salvation is of Israel, and nowhere else . . .

Now, brethren, this is a consolation to us all. Believe in God, Believe in Jesus, and believe in Joseph his Prophet, and in Brigham his successor. And I add, “If you will believe in your heart and confess with your mouth that Jesus is the Christ, that Joseph was a Prophet, and that Brigham was his successor, you shall be saved in the kingdom of God,” which I pray, in the name of Jesus, may be the case. Amen (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 6, page 229)

Speaking in the Bowery in 1862, Brigham Young stated:

I have taught for thirty years, and still teach, that he that believeth in his heart and confesseth with his mouth that Jesus is the Christ and that Joseph Smith is his Prophet to this generation, is of God; and he that confesseth not that Jesus has come in the flesh and sent Joseph Smith with the fulness of the Gospel to this generation, is not of God, but is **antichrist**. All who confess that Joseph Smith is sent of God in the latter days, to lay the foundation of his everlasting kingdom no more to be thrown down, and will continue to keep his commandments, are **born of God**. (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 9, page 312)

In the *History of the Church*, Vol. 7, page 287, Brigham Young made this statement:

Every spirit that confesses that Joseph Smith is a Prophet, that he lived and died a Prophet and that the Book of Mormon is true, is of God, and every spirit that does not is of anti-Christ.

Joseph Fielding Smith, a member of the First Presidency of the Mormon Church, still maintains that it is essential to accept Joseph Smith:

No salvation without accepting Joseph Smith.

If Joseph Smith was verily a prophet, and if he told the truth . . . then this knowledge is of the most vital importance to the entire world. No man can reject that testimony without incurring the most dreadful consequences, for he cannot enter the kingdom of God. (*Doctrines of Salvation*, Vol. 1, pages 189-190)

Thus we see that the claims of the Mormon Church are of such a nature that it cannot be considered as just another church. It is either the only true church, or it is nothing but a shadow. Brigham Young himself stated:

By your own experience you know that “Mormonism,” if not true, is worse than nothing; and if true, its value is beyond our computation. (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 8, page 54)

On another occasion Brigham Young remarked:

You know the history of “Mormonism;” and if this is not the Lord’s work, we had better quit it, for we should derive no benefit from remaining in it. (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 8, page 144)

The Mormon Apostle George A. Smith once stated:

If a faith will not bear to be investigated; if its preachers and professors are afraid to have it examined, their foundation must be very weak. (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 14, page 216)

Orson Pratt, the Mormon Apostle, stated that if the Mormon religion had errors in it the Mormon people would be grateful if someone would point them out.

. . . convince us of our errors of doctrine, if we have any, by reason, by logical arguments, or by the word of God, and we will be ever grateful for the information, and you will ever have the pleasing reflection that you have been instruments in the hands of God of redeeming your fellow beings from the darkness which you may see enveloping their minds. (*The Seer*, pages 15-16)

After making a long and careful study of the Book of Mormon and the history of the Mormon Church, we have come to the conclusion that the claims made by the Mormon Church leaders are false. In this book we will try to present some of the evidence which has led to this conclusion.

2. CHANGES IN MORMONISM

The fact that Mormonism is changing is very obvious to anyone who studies the history of the church. Things that were approved of when Mormonism first began are now condemned, and things that are now approved were once condemned. An example of such a change might be the Mormon Church's attitude toward dancing. Today most wards in the Mormon Church have a recreation hall where dances are held. Dancing seems to be a vital part of the church's recreation program, but this has not always been the case. A member of the church today might be surprised to find out that if he lived in Kirtland in 1837, he might have been cut off from the church for participating in a dance. Joseph Smith made the following comment under the date of October 22, 1837:

Sunday 22. — The church in Kirtland disfellowshipped twenty-two brethren and sisters until they make satisfaction for uniting with the world in a **dance** the Thursday previous. (*History of the Church*, by Joseph Smith, Vol. 2, page 519)

On page 520 of the same volume, Joseph Smith stated:

Most of those who were complained of for participating in the recreation on the 19th and had not confessed, acknowledged their fault to the High Council on the first of November, and the remainder were required so to do **or be cut off from the church**.

Dancing was apparently introduced into the church during the Nauvoo period. Orson Hyde related the following incident:

At the same time, I do not want my mind so trammelled as brother Parley P. Pratt's once was, when **dancing was first introduced** into Nauvoo among the Saints. I observed brother Parley standing in the figure, and he was making no motion particularly, only up and down. Says I, "Brother Parley, why don't you move forward?" Says he, "When I think which way I am going, I forget

the step; and when I think of the step, I forget which way to go." (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 6, page 150)

The Mormon Apostle Heber C. Kimball made this statement concerning a dance which was held in Joseph Smith's home:

When the Prophet had a dance at his house he said everything against it he could, and now men go and practice the same things. Shall we put these things away? I say YES. (*History of the Church*, Vol. 7, page 300)

Under the date of January 1, 1844, Joseph Smith recorded the following in the *History of the Church*:

A large party took a new year's supper **at my house**, and had music and **dancing till morning**. (*History of the Church*, Vol. 6, page 155)

Samuel Richards tells that there was dancing in the Nauvoo Temple just prior to the dedication. Juanita Brooks quotes him as saying:

"... we enjoyed ourselves with prayer, preaching, administering for healing, blessing children, and music and **dancing until near midnight**. The other hands completed the painting in the lower room." (*John D Lee*, pages 86 and 87)

The Mormon writer Truman G. Madsen stated:

... a group of the Saints met in the **Nauvoo Temple**. Part of the morning was spent in sweaty, gritty cleaning and painting. ... Later, bathed and dressed in their temple robes, they participated in temple worship. ... The group next adjourned to the upstairs rooms and relished a feast of raisins and cakes. And then, **until late in the evening**, they enjoyed music and **dancing**. What? The whole of life—even **dancing**—surrounded by a **temple** of God? YES. And why not? (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, article by Truman G. Madsen, Spring, 1966, pages 130-131)

Brigham Young said the following concerning dancing in the Nauvoo temple:

Eighty-eight persons received ordinances.

....

The labors of the day having been brought to a close at so early an hour, viz.: eight-thirty, it was thought proper to have a little season of recreation, accordingly Brother Hanson was invited to produce his violin, which he did, and played several lively airs accompanied by Elisha Averett on his flute, among others some very good **lively dancing tunes**. . . . and before the **dance** was over several French fours were indulged in. The first was opened by myself with Sister Whitney and Elder Heber C. Kimball and partner. The spirit of **dancing** increased until the whole floor was covered with **dancers**, and while we **danced before the Lord**, we shook the dust from off our feet as a testimony against this nation. (*History of the Church*, Vol. 7, page 557)

On the way to Salt Lake the Mormons danced a great deal. Brigham Young wrote the following in his history:

The Twelve and Seventies spent the day in the Council House, singing, praying, **dancing** and making merry before the Lord. ("Manuscript History of Brigham Young," January 28, 1847, typed copy)

Brigham Young even told the Mormons that they could dance all night if they wanted to:

There is no harm in dancing. The Lord said he wanted His saints to praise Him in all things. It was enjoined on Miriam and the daughters of Israel to dance and celebrate the name of the Almighty, and to praise Him on the destruction of Pharaoh and his host.

For some weeks past I could not wake up at any time of the night but I heard the axes at work. Some were building for the destitute and the widow; and now my feelings are, **dance all night**, if you desire to do so, for there is no harm in it. . . .

Patriarch John Smith made some comforting remarks and exhorted the brethren and sisters to dance, sing, and enjoy themselves the best way they could.

The center of the floor was then cleared for the dance . . . ("Manuscript History of Brigham Young," February 5, 1847, typed copy)

Under the date of February 11, 1847, John D. Lee recorded in his journal the following statement by Brigham Young:

The praise and worship of God was introduced by prayer, after which Pres. B. Young spoke on this wise: Brethren and Sisters, you have met here today to join in the dance, in a recreation that all people participate in except such as have been traditioned to believe it to be

an evil. To some it is an evil. The prayers of some men are abominations before the Lord because they pray for evil things; but for a Saint to pray or dance is not sin. . . . Since this council room has been finished I have heard the music at all hours of the night and upon reflection I remembered that I had heard the axes throughout the city in building houses for the widows and fatherless at all hours of the night. How then could I find fault? So I then concluded inasmuch as they would labour all night, now they may dance all night, . . . (*Journals of John D. Lee*, 1846-1847 and 1859, edited by Charles Kelly, pages 70-71)

Joseph Fielding Smith made this statement concerning dancing among the pioneers:

Some thoughtless persons have condemned the pioneers for their dancing and merriment while on the plains, but all of this was done by **commandment of the Lord** and in the spirit of prayer and thanksgiving. (*Doctrines of Salvation*, by Joseph Fielding Smith, Vol. 3, page 342)

When the Mormons were at Winter Quarters, Brigham Young gave a revelation which approved of dancing:

If thou art merry, praise the Lord with singing, with music, with **dancing**, and with a prayer of praise and thanksgiving. (*Doctrine and Covenants*, Sec. 136, verse 28)

Although Brigham Young gave a revelation approving of dancing, he sometimes counseled against it. Under the date of April 4, 1847, the following appears in his history:

A letter was also written by the Council to Elder Nathaniel H. Felt, St. Louis, directing him to tarry and preside over the Church there. The Council advised the brethren there who were in the patriarchal order of marriage to emigrate westward this spring; and counselled the brethren to let **dancing alone**; else it would prove a snare and a trap in which the enemy would catch many souls. ("Manuscript History of Brigham Young," April 4, 1847, typed copy)

Under the date of May 29, 1847, we find this statement in Brigham Young's history:

29th — I called the camp together and remonstrated with those brethren who were giving way to trifling, **dancing**, and card playing. I warned them in the name of the Lord against the Spirit which many of the Camp possessed, and called upon them to cease their folly and turn to the Lord their God with full purpose of heart to serve him. The brethren of the Twelve, the High Priests, the Bishops, the Seventies, all covenanted to humble themselves, repent of their follies and remember

their former covenants. I then told the few who did not belong to the Church that they were not at liberty to introduce cards, **dancing**, or iniquity of any description; . . . ("Manuscript History of Brigham Young," May 29, 1847, typed copy)

As we have already stated, the Mormon leaders today completely approve of dancing. The Mormon Apostle LeGrand Richards stated:

. . . attend their dances and see how the young and the old "rejoice in the dance." Practically every ward or branch or congregation of Latter-day Saints have, adjoining their chapel, a recreation hall where the young and the old do rejoice together in the **dance** and where other activities are carried on for their enjoyment. (*A Marvelous Work and a Wonder*, by LeGrand Richards, page 233)

So we see that the Mormon Church's stand on dancing has changed over the years. At first a member might have been excommunicated for dancing, but today it is one of the most popular entertainments in the church.

Changing Doctrines

Dr. Hugh Nibley, of the Brigham Young University, claims that the Mormon Church has not changed its doctrines in the last hundred years.

Yet of **all** churches in the world only this **one** has not found it necessary to readjust **any part** of its **doctrine** in the last hundred years. (*No, Ma'am, That's Not History, a Brief Review of Mrs. Brodie's Reluctant Vindication of a Prophet She Seeks to Expose*, by Hugh Nibley, page 46)

It does not take much research to reveal the fact that Dr. Nibley is mistaken when he says that the Mormon Church has not changed its doctrine. Take for example the doctrine of plural marriage which was taught by the Mormons. John Taylor, who became the third President of the Mormon Church, once declared:

. . . we are not ashamed here in this great metropolis of America * * * to declare that we are **polygamists**. We are not ashamed to proclaim to this great nation, to rulers and people, to the president, senators, legislators, judges; to high and low, rich and poor, priests and people, that **we are firm, conscientious believers in polygamy**, and that it is part and parcel of our religious creed. (*Life of John Taylor*, page 255)

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

The only men who become Gods, even the Sons of God, **are those who enter into polygamy**. (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 11, page 269)

In the *Millennial Star*, Vol. 15, page 226, the following appeared:

The order of **plurality of wives** is an **everlasting and ceaseless order**, designed to **exalt** the choicest men and women to the **most superlative excellence, dominion, and glory**.

Today the Mormon leaders teach that polygamy is not essential for exaltation. Bruce R. McConkie stated:

Plural marriage is not essential to salvation or exaltation. Nephi and his people were denied the power to have more than one wife and yet they could gain every blessing in eternity that the Lord ever offered to any people. (*Mormon Doctrine*, 1958 ed., page 523)

The Mormon Church leaders teach that polygamy is not to be practiced today. In fact, Bruce R. McConkie stated:

Any who pretend or assume to **engage in plural marriage in this day**, when the one holding the keys has withdrawn the power by which they are performed, **are guilty of gross wickedness. They are living in adultery, have already sold their souls to Satan, and** (whether their acts are based on ignorance or lust or both) **they will be damned in eternity**. (*Mormon Doctrine*, by Bruce R. McConkie, 1958 ed., pages 522-523)

In the 1966 edition of *Mormon Doctrine* this statement has been toned down. Bruce R. McConkie still states, however, that those who practice polygamy are "guilty of gross wickedness" (*Mormon Doctrine*, 1966 ed., page 579).

Obviously, there has been a major doctrinal change regarding polygamy.

Rebaptism

Today the Mormon Church does not believe in rebaptism. Joseph Fielding Smith, the Mormon Church Historian and member of the First Presidency, stated:

It is unnecessary, however, to rebaptize persons merely as a renewal of their covenants every time they transgress in order that they may obtain forgiveness, for this would greatly **cheapen** this sacred ordinance and weaken its effectiveness. One baptism by water for the remission of sins should be enough, . . . (*Doctrines of Salvation*, Vol. 2, page 335)

In the very first issue of the *Mormon*, under the caption "Polygamy," he said:

"Since this doctrine has been promulgated by us as a part of our religious creed, every variety of opinion has been expressed by men in all classes of society. It has been talked about by religious and irreligious, professors and profane. It has been the theme in the legislative hall, the pulpit, the bar-room and the press. Polygamy and the Mormons, Mormons and polygamy have resounded everywhere. * * * In this our first issue it may be expected that something would be said in relation to this matter. This we undertake as cheerfully as any other task; for we are not ashamed here in this great metropolis of America * * * to declare that we are polygamists. We are not ashamed to proclaim to this great nation, to rulers and people, to the president, senators, legislators, judges; to high and low, rich and poor, priests and people, that we are firm, conscientious believers in polygamy, and that it is part and parcel of our religious creed. We do this calmly, seriously and understandingly, after due deliberation, careful examination and close investigation of its principles and bearings religiously, socially, morally, physically and politically! We unhesitatingly pronounce our full and implicit faith in the principle as emanating from God, and that under His direction it would be a blessing to the human family."

After drawing a vivid picture of the immoral state of the world, and allowing that some who opposed polygamy did so because they considered it as a scheme devised to still further plunge humanity into licentiousness, he continues:

"We are not surprised, then, that men of reflection and virtue, and having a knowledge of the world should

A photograph of the *Life of John Taylor*, page 255. John Taylor, who became the third President of the Mormon Church, declared that the Mormons were believers in polygamy.

May. Wed. 12.—The steamship *Wyoming* sailed from Liverpool, England, with 176 Saints, under the direction of Hugh S. Gowans and others. The company arrived at New York May 24th, and at Salt Lake City June 3rd.

Fri. 14.—Elder John B. Fairbanks died at Payson, Utah Co.

—About two hundred and fifty aged people from Salt Lake County had a pleasant excursion to Dr. Clinton's Hotel, at Lake Point, on the Great Salt Lake. This was the beginning of the Old Folks' annual excursions.

June.—General James A. Garfield arrived in Salt Lake City, on a visit.

Sat. 5.—Elder Wm. Gibson died at Salt Lake City.

Mon. 7.—Elder Ralph Harrison died in Salt Lake City, from the effects of an accident a few days previous.

Tues. 8.—Geo. W. Emery, of Tennessee, was appointed governor of Utah, in place of Samuel B. Axtell, who was removed because of his friendship to the "Mormons."

Thurs. 10.—The first Young Men's Mutual Improvement Association was organized in the 13th Ward, Salt Lake City, with H. A. Woolley as president, and B. Morris Young and Heber J. Grant as counselors.

Tues. 15.—John Burns, a railroad employe, was accidentally killed on the Utah Western (now Utah and Nevada) Railway.

Wed. 16.—The steamship *Wisconsin* sailed from Liverpool, England, with 167 Saints, under the direction of Robert T. Burton. The company arrived at New York June 27th, and at Salt Lake City July 8th.

Sat. 19.—The Territorial Supreme Court reversed the decision in the case of George Reynolds, owing to the illegality of the grand jury that found the bill of indictment.

Mon. 28.—Bishop Culbert King baptized 85 Indians of Kanosh's band, at Kanosh, Millard Co. More than two thousand Indians had been baptized previous to this time.

Wed. 30.—The steamship *Idaho* sailed from Liverpool, England, with 765 Saints, under the direction of Christen G. Larsen. The company arrived at New York July 14th, and at Ogden July 22nd.

July. Sat. 3.—Geo. W. Emery, of Tennessee, successor to Samuel B. Axtell as governor of Utah, arrived in Salt Lake City.

Sat. 10.—Martin Harris, one of the Three Witnesses to the Book of Mormon, died in Clarkston, Cache Co., 92 years of age.

Fri. 16.—Philip Klingensmith, an important witness for the prosecution in the John D. Lee case, arrived at Beaver, from California.

Sat. 17.—Pres. Brigham Young, his Counselors and others renewed their covenants by baptism at Ephraim, Sanpete Co. This example was subsequently followed by the Saints generally.

—Emeline Free Young, wife of Pres. Brigham Young, died in Salt Lake City.

Thurs. 22.—Governor Samuel B. Axtell left Salt Lake City for New Mexico, where he had been appointed chief justice.

—The trial of John D. Lee, indicted for murder, was commenced at Beaver.

August. Sun. 1.—Geo. W. Hill baptized over three hundred Indians in Box Elder County, Utah, and many of them, who were sick, were miraculously healed under his administration.

Thurs. 5.—Elder Joseph A. Young died at Manti, Sanpete Co., and Amos Fielding died in Salt Lake City.

Sat. 7.—Bishop Wm. Miller, alias "Bogus Brigham," died at Provo, Utah Co., and Elder Alphonso Green died at his residence, between Lehi and American Fork, Utah Co.

—After a long trial in the case of John D. Lee, at Beaver, the jury disagreed.

Thurs. 12.—A band of peaceable Indians were driven from their grain fields and lodges on Bear river, by U. S. authority. This was evidently the result of a conspiracy on the part of the citizens of Corinne.

Thurs. 19.—Gen. Philip H. Sheridan and wife arrived in Salt Lake City, on a visit.

Wed. 25.—Robert E. Biard, one of the Utah Pioneers of 1847, died at Lynne, Weber Co., Utah.

September.—Apostle Albert Carrington succeeded Apostle Joseph F. Smith as president of the European mission.

Wed. 1.—Geo. A. Smith, first Counselor to Pres. Brigham Young, died at his home—the Historian's Office—Salt Lake City.

Wed. 15.—The steamship *Wyoming* sailed from Liverpool, England, with 300 Saints, in charge of Richard V. Morris. The company landed in New York, Sept. 27th, and arrived at Salt Lake City, Oct. 5.

Sat. 25.—Elizabeth Henriod suicided at Nephi, Juab Co.

Mon. 27.—Elder Haden W. Church, who labored as a missionary in the Southern States, died at Shady Grove, Hickman Co., Tenn. He was formerly a member of the Mormon Battalion.

October. Sun. 3.—U. S. Grant, President of the United States, arrived in Salt Lake City, on a visit. He was met by Pres. Brigham Young and other prominent men at Ogden.

Mon. 4.—Pres. U. S. Grant and party left Salt Lake City for Denver, Colo.

Sat. 9.—At the general conference the large Tabernacle, in Salt Lake City, was dedicated. A large number of missionaries were called during the conference.

Thurs. 14.—The steamship *Dakota* sailed from Liverpool, England, with 120 Saints, in charge of Bedson Eardley. The company arrived at New York Oct. 24th, and at Salt Lake City Nov. 3rd.

Thurs. 28.—Nine buildings in Salt Lake City were destroyed by fire.

Fri. 29.—Pres. Brigham Young was arrested by U. S. Marshal Geo. R. Maxwell, by order of Judge Boreman, on a charge of contempt of court. He had not complied with the order to pay \$9,500 alimony to Ann Eliza Young.

Sat. 30.—President Brigham Young deeded some valuable real estate for the B. Y. Academy, at Provo, to the trustees of that institution.

Sun. 31.—Baron Lionel de Rothschild and party arrived in Salt Lake City, on a visit.

November. Mon. 1.—The grand jury

A photograph of the *Church Chronology*, page 94. This photograph proves that Brigham Young was rebaptized on July 17, 1875.

As we examine the early history of the Mormon Church, however, we find that rebaptism was a very popular practice among the Mormons during the days of Joseph Smith and Brigham Young. In the *Church Chronology*, under the year 1856, the following is found:

A general reformation took place throughout the Church, most of the Saints **renewing their covenants by baptism**. (*Church Chronology*, by Andrew Jensen, page 55)

The following testimony is found in the *Temple Lot Case*:

All the members of the church that came into Utah were instructed to be baptised under Brigham Young, . . .

After this, the church had another reformation, and under that **we were baptized the second time and were baptized for the same thing** . . . I do not know whether we had got **out** of Christ then or not. (*Temple Lot Case*, page 341)

Joseph Fielding Smith stated:

The question has been asked why **rebaptism** was established in the day of the Prophet Joseph Smith, why it was continued for a number of years in Utah under the direction of President Brigham Young, and why it is now abandoned?

It is true that during the administration of the Prophet Joseph Smith some members of the Church who were in transgression were again baptized, without first having lost their membership by excommunication.

After the arrival of the Pioneers in the Salt Lake Valley, and subsequently for a considerable period, **all those who entered the valley were baptized anew** at the request of President Brigham Young who, **with the Council of the Twelve, set the example** to the people who were gathering from all parts of the world. (*Doctrines of Salvation*, by Joseph Fielding Smith, Vol. 2, pages 332-333)

The Mormon Apostle Orson Pratt made this statement in 1875:

That seems to be a kind of standing ordinance for all Latter-day Saints who emigrate here, from the **First Presidency down; all are rebaptized** and set out anew by renewing their covenants. (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 18, page 160)

Brigham Young claimed that the practice of rebaptism was established by revelation:

At this time came a **revelation**, that the Saints could be baptized and **re-baptized** when they chose, and then that we could be baptized for our dear friends, . . . (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 18, page 241)

Under the date of February 4, 1857, the following is recorded in the *Church Chronology*:

. . . Apostles Orson Pratt and Ezra T. Benson, renewed their covenants by baptism. This was followed by a general renewal of covenants throughout the mission. (*Church Chronology*, page 58)

As late as 1875 Brigham Young was rebaptized. The following is recorded in the *Church Chronology* under the date of July 17, 1875:

Sat. 17.—Pres. Brigham Young, his Counselors and others **renewed their covenants by baptism** at Ephraim, Sanpete Co. This example was subsequently followed by the Saints generally. (*Church Chronology*, page 94)

August W. Lundstrom testified in the Reed Smoot Investigation that the Mormon Church discontinued the practice of rebaptism in 1898; he also testified:

Mr. Van Cott. Just what was your point with Apostle Cowley about that ordinance of rebaptism?

Mr. Lundstrom. It was in regard to the discontinuance of rebaptizing, which previously had been customary, when cases came up and rebaptizing was requested by parties; and at that time we received instructions not to rebaptize any more. (*Reed Smoot Case*, Vol. 2, page 159)

Mr. Lundstrom also testified that the Mormon Church had changed its doctrines to such an extent that it caused him to lose faith in the church:

Mr. Lundstrom. I found inconsistencies in the doctrine—changes being made. I had become a Mormon because I thought it was the only true religion. I was sincere as long as I believed it to be the true church and being revealed from God; but when I found changes creeping in—later revelations, as they were called, being open contradictions to former revelations—I began to study a little closer, and in fact I found a weak point in the wall, and when I touched it it became a large enough hole so that I could crawl through. The foundation was not solid, so I left it. My conviction that I had before fell through. Believing sincerely that it was the truth previously, I became just as well convinced after that it was not the truth. (*Reed Smoot Case*, Vol. 2, page 154)

Sealing Men to Men

Although it is a well known fact that the Mormons believe in sealing women to men and children to their parents for all eternity, few people know about the doctrine of sealing men to men. Brigham Young, second president of the Mormon Church, called the doctrine of sealing men to men “a great and glorious doctrine:”

By this power **men will be sealed to men** back to Adam, completing and making perfect the chain of the Priesthood from his day to the winding up scene. I have known men that **I positively think would fellowship the Devil, if he would agree to be sealed to them. “Oh be sealed to me, brother; I care not what you do. You may lie and steal, or anything else, I can put up with all your meanness, if you will only be sealed to me.”** Now this is not so much weakness as it is selfishness. **It is a great and glorious doctrine, but the reason I have not preached it in the midst of this people, is, I could not do it without turning so many of them to the Devil. Some would go to hell for the sake of getting the Devil sealed to them.** (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 9, page 269)

On page 270 of the same volume, Brigham Young stated:

I will recur again to the sealing power I have already glanced at. **If men are sealed to me**, it is because they want to be; and if they will be good, and hearken to my counsel and live a righteous life, I will agree to dictate and counsel them; but when **men** want to be **sealed to me** to have me feed and clothe them, and then act like the Devil, I have no more feeling and affection for them than I have for the greatest stranger in the world. Because a **man is sealed to me**, do you suppose that he can escape being judged according to his works? No.

Kimball Young gives us the following information;

That this masculine principle went deep, and far more fantastically than the Saints could comprehend, is shown in a sermon by Brigham Young, reported by John Read. In a letter to one of his wives Read said that Brigham referred to some future time “when **men would be sealed to men** in the priesthood in a **more solemn ordinance** than that by which women were sealed to man, and in a room **over** that in which women were sealed to man in the **Temple** of the Lord.” (*Isn't One Wife Enough?* page 280)

On September 4, 1873, Brigham Young made this statement:

But we can seal women to men, **but not men to men, without a temple.** (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 16, page 186)

This doctrine of sealing men to men was evidently known as the “Law of Adoption.” Juanita Brooks explains:

At this time another ceremony was instituted, which though it was of short duration and never widely practiced, was significant and important while it lasted. This was the adoption of young men and their wives to one of the leaders. The idea behind it was that in establishing the Kingdom of God upon the earth there should be also a celestial relationship. If the Prophet Joseph were to become a God over a minor planet, he must not only have a large posterity but able assistants of practical skills. Brigham Young had been “sealed” to Joseph under this law; now he in turn had some thirty-eight young men sealed to him.

Of this number, John D. Lee was second. . . . All of the men thus joined in the covenant seemed brothers in one sense, and for some of them Lee developed a genuine affection. Among others, jealousies grew up as they competed for favor.

In the same way, Lee had eighteen or nineteen young men with their wives adopted to him, most of them those he had brought into the church. He often spoke of them as George Laub Lee, W. B. Owens Lee, Miles Anderson Lee, James Pace Lee, Allen Weeks Lee, William Swap Lee. Once he referred to “Thomas Woolsey, my first adopted son,” and again to “Wm. J. Phelps, an apostate from my family.” (*John D. Lee*, by Juanita Brooks, 1962, page 73)

Juanita Brooks also stated;

The “Law of Adoption” grew out of the concept of “kingdoms, principalities, and powers” in the “Celestial Worlds.” Joseph Smith had sealed to himself a number of his most faithful followers, among them the first members of the Council of Fifty, to help to establish the Kingdom of God upon this earth and to share his exaltation hereafter.

Following that pattern, Brigham Young had adopted at least forty young men with their wives and families in **a temple ceremony**. Many of these added his name to their own and are often referred to by contemporaries as “A. P. Rockwood Young,” or “George D. Grant Young,” while others indicated the relationship by inserting a middle initial as “Adam Y. Empey” or “David Y. Candland.” (*On the Mormon Frontier, The Diary of Hosea Stout*, Vol. 1, page 178, footnote 50)

"when I would do good, evil is present with me." There is a number of people in this Church, who, when they would correct their lives, and conclude to perform the greatest good in their power, do that which brings disgrace upon them—the very thing they did not want to do. This weakness we should struggle bravely to overcome. We hold them in full fellowship in the Church of Christ because they design in their hearts to do right, but do not at all times manage to perform it. All men are not equally afflicted with these weaknesses. We have Bishops, Presidents, men of standing and experience in the kingdom of God, who, according to my judgment, do very wrong in many instances, but they may be blinded through selfishness.

I will here refer to a principle that has not been named by me for years. With the introduction of the Priesthood upon the earth was also introduced the sealing ordinance, that the chain of the Priesthood from Adam to the latest generation might be united in one unbroken continuance. It is the same power and the same keys that Elijah held, and was to exercise in the last days. "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: and he shall turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse." By this power men will be sealed to men back to Adam, completing and making perfect the chain of the Priesthood from his day to the winding up scene. I have known men that I positively think would fellowship the Devil, if he would agree to be sealed to them. "Oh, be sealed to me, brother; I care not what you do, you may lie and steal, or anything else, I can put up with all your meanness, if you will only be sealed to me." Now

this is not so much weakness as it is selfishness. It is a great and glorious doctrine, but the reason I have not preached it in the midst of this people, is, I could not do it without turning so many of them to the Devil. Some would go to hell for the sake of getting the Devil sealed to them.

I have had visions and revelations instructing me how to organize this people so that they can live like the family of heaven, but I cannot do it while so much selfishness and wickedness reign in the Elders of Israel. Many would make of the greatest blessings a curse to them, as they do now the plurality of wives—the abuse of that principle will send thousands to hell. There are many great and glorious privileges for the people, which they are not prepared to receive. How long it will be before they are prepared to enjoy the blessings God has in store for them, I know not—it has not been revealed to me. I know the Lord wants to pour blessings upon this people, but where he to do so in their present ignorance, they would not know what to do with them. They can receive only a very little and that must be administered to them with great care.

A portion of this community will not improve, will not plant out a fruit tree nor a shade tree, expecting to be driven from their homes. Such neglect of duty is the very way to bring the power of the Devil upon us. Let every man go to with his might and build a good house for his family to live in, and make them comfortable and happy, and gather around them an abundance of the blessings and comforts of life, and do it by the power of God and the Spirit of the Holy One, in all diligence and faithfulness, and let us preach the Gospel, send the Elders to gather the poor and the meek of the earth, each one doing all the time all he can to accumulate means to accelerate this great

and glorious work in the name of Israel's God, being full of faith, humility, and charity; then we have done our duty, and all we can do to further the kingdom of God.

When we are doing the work of the Lord with all our might, and the evil within us is subdued by the power of God, and the light of Christ so shines within us that we can see clearly the things of God and men truly as they are, and all is judged by a righteous judgment, then we may look at and talk about the faults of each other without in the least disturbing our peace. When we do this, working faithfully for the building up of God's kingdom, we are ready to acknowledge all things we possess to be the Lord's, holding them for him in time, not knowing what he will do with them in the future. Let us teach our families the principles of righteousness by our conduct, which will go further than mere words. Let our private life be worthy the imitation of the best on earth, for it preaches a more lasting sermon than the tongue can preach. If we pursue this course the Lord will never suffer us to be driven from our homes. "I always thought," said one, "that you were driven from Jackson county for your wickedness?" Yes, and I always, acknowledge it; it was to bring us to our senses.

The Lord wants us to live up to the spirit of the times, and in the ratio the wicked nations are going down, he wants his people to rise in intelligence and importance as statesmen, noblemen, and rulers; first learning to govern and control themselves.

I will recur again to the sealing power I have already glanced at. If men are sealed to me, it is because they want to be; and if they will be good, and hearken to my counsel and live a righteous life, I will agree to dictate and counsel them; but when men want to be sealed to me

to have me feed and clothe them, and then act like the Devil, I have no more feeling and affection for them than I have for the greatest stranger in the world. Because a man is sealed to me, do you suppose that he can escape being judged according to his works? No. Were he sealed to the Saviour, it would make no difference; he would be judged like other men. Let us do what we do from a pure and holy principle, desiring only to promote the kingdom of God and be as nigh right as possible, that when we judge, we may judge in righteousness.

One great blessing the Lord wishes to pour upon this people is that they may return to Jackson county Missouri, and establish the centre-stake of Zion. If our enemies do not cease their oppression upon this people, as sure as the Lord lives it will not be many days before we will occupy that land and there build up a Temple to the Lord. If they would keep us from accomplishing this work very soon, they had better let us alone. "I will purge the land," saith the Lord, "cut off the evil doer, and prepare a way for the return of my people to their inheritance." We pray for this, but are we preparing ourselves, to live according to the laws of Zion? This I will say, to the praise of the Latter-day Saints, there are hundreds and thousands of them who have been in the Church, some longer and some shorter, who, when you inquire about them, are paying attention to their own business; this proves that they live in peace with their God and their neighbours, doing as well as they know how. But when we speak of the officers of this Church, a great deal is required of them by the Lord and the people.

I wish to endure, and live the doctrine I preach to the people; to live with them, and with them fight the Devil until we kick the last one off from the earth.

In his diary, George Laub tells how he was sealed to John D. Lee in a temple ceremony:

... I and my wife Mary Jane with many others was adopted into John D. Lee's family, this I took upon myself the name of Lee in this manner, George Laub Lee and my wife's name Mary Jane Laub Lee in such a way that it cannot be seaparated by covenanting before God. Angels and the Present witnesses we covenant together for him to be as a father to those who are sealed to him and to do unto them as he would unto his own children and to counsell them in rituousness and to teach them all the Principles of Salvation and to share unto them of all the blessings to comfert these and all that are calculated to make them happy Both in time and in Eternity. Now we did also covenant on our side to do all the good for his upbuilding and happyness both in time & Eternity this was done in the hous of the Lord across the alter as was prepared for this Purpose of ordinances. (Diary of George Laub, as quoted in *John D. Lee*, by Juanita Brooks, 1962, page 74)

Under the date of February 8, 1846, Hosea Stout made the following statement in his journal:

On our way to the river Br. Weeks told me that he had **been sealed** to Br. John D. Lee ... (*On the Mormon Frontier, The Diary of Hosea Stout, 1844-1861*, Vol. 1, page 113)

John D. Lee made the following statement concerning the Law of Adoption:

My office was in room number one, at President Young's apartments. I kept a record of all the sealings, anointings, marriages and **adoptions**.

I was the second one **adopted** to Brigham Young. I should have been his first **adopted son**, being the first that proposed it to him, but always ready to give preference to those in authority, I placed A. P. Rockwood's name first on the list. I also had my children adopted to me in the Temple. Brigham Young had his children adopted to himself, and we were the only ones, to my knowledge, that had our children so adopted at the Temple at Nauvoo. (*Confessions of John D. Lee*, photo-reprint of the 1880 ed., pages 169-170)

John D. Lee took the doctrine of adoption very serious. He often referred to Brigham Young as "Father Young." At one time Lee was sick, and Brigham Young came to visit him. Speaking of this incident John D. Lee stated:

All was well. About 3 **Father B. Y.**, W. Woodruff and W. Richards came in, Bro. L. Stewart also. **Father B. Y.** brought and laid on my breast a cane built from one of

the branches of the Tree of Life that stood in the garden in the Temple. (*Journals of John D. Lee, 1846-47 and 1859*, edited by Charles Kelly, page 67)

On another occasion John D. Lee stated:

Walked to Pres. B. Young's, found him writing a letter. Had the pleasure of drinking a glass of wine made by himself and eating some rye and cheese presented by the hand of **Mother Young**. Spent 2 hours conversing with him and hearing him explain the **Law of Adoption**. In the meantime he suggested to me the propriety of taking some 20 or 30 of the brethren down into the settlements and take contracts of threshing and cleaning wheat ... My reply was to him, **Father, thy will be done**. He blessed me and I returned home about midnight. (*Journals of John D. Lee, 1846-47 and 1858*, edited by Charles Kelly, pages 37-38)

Evidently older men could be sealed to younger men as their sons. The historian Hubert Howe Bancroft stated:

The father may be either younger or older than the son, but in any case assumes the character of guardian, with full control of the labor and estate of the adopted son. Many young men give themselves over to the leaders as "eternal sons," in the hope of sharing the honor of their adopted parents. (*History of Utah*, by Hubert Howe Bancroft, photo-reprint of 1889 ed., page 361)

Brigham Young was evidently embarrassed because some of the "old persons," who were adopted to him, were calling him father. He stated:

I have a request to make of my family and that is that they (**especially old persons**) **omit calling me Father**. Call me Bro. Brigham. (*Journals of John D. Lee*, edited by Charles Kelly, page 82)

To Brigham Young the Law of Adoption was a serious matter. Under the date of January 6, 1847, he recorded the following in his history:

Thomas Alvord wrote to me asking for information about the order of the kingdom of God. I replied as follows:

"In answer to your questions I reply, inasmuch as you have made a covenant with bro. Samuel Bent to be **sealed to him** and be attached to **his kingdom**, you ought to keep that covenant; and when there is some one to act in his stead, or as proxy for him (as he is fallen asleep) and a Temple built for such purposes, you must attend to it, and if you should not live, you must leave on record your request with some of your relatives, or some one you shall select." ("Manuscript History of Brigham Young," January 6, 1847, typed copy)

Under the date of January 15, 1847, Brigham Young wrote:

Evening, I went to the Octagon (Dr. R's office) with Wm. G. and Ute Perkins, who conversed with me on the **principles of adoption** and the Levitical priesthood. I told them that no son of Levi has yet been found in these last days to minister at the altar. ("Manuscript History of Brigham Young," January 15, 1847, typed copy)

Under the date of January 16, 1847, the following statement was made by Brigham Young:

I said some men were afraid they would lose some glory if they were **sealed to one of the Twelve**, and did not stand alone and have others **sealed** to them. A Saint's kingdom consisted of his own posterity, and to be **sealed to one of the Twelve** did not diminish him, but only connected him according to the **law of God** by that perfect chain and order of Heaven, that will bind the righteous from Adam to the last Saint. Adam will claim us all, as members of his kingdom, we being his children. ("Manuscript History of Brigham Young," January 16, 1847, typed copy)

Under the date of February 23, 1847, Brigham Young even claimed that he saw Joseph Smith in a dream and asked him concerning the law of adoption:

23RD — . . . I related the following dream: While sick and asleep about noonday of the 17th inst., I dreamed that **I went to see Joseph**. He looked perfectly natural, sitting with his feet on the lower round of his chair. I took hold of his right hand and kissed him many times, and said to him: "Why is it that we cannot be together as we used to be, You have been from us a long time, and we want your society and I do not like to be separated from you."

Joseph rising from his chair and looking at me with his usual, earnest, expressive and pleasing countenance replied, "It is all right."

I said, "I do not like to be away from you."

Joseph said, "It is all right; we cannot be together yet; we shall be by and by; but you will have to do without me a while, and then we shall be together again."

I then discovered there was a hand rail between us, Joseph stood by a window and to the southwest of him it was very light. I was in the twilight and to the north of me it was very dark; I said, "Brother Joseph, the brethren you know well, better than I do; you raised them up, and brought the Priesthood to us. The brethren have a great anxiety to understand the **Law of Adoption** or sealing principles; and if you have a word of counsel for me I should be glad to receive it."

Joseph stepped toward me, and looking very earnestly, yet pleasantly said, "Tell the people to be humble and faithful, and be sure to keep the spirit of the Lord and it will lead them right. Be careful and not

turn away the small still voice; it will teach you what to do and where to go; it will yield the fruits of the kingdom. Tell the brethren to keep their hearts open to conviction, so that when the Holy Ghost comes to them, their hearts will be ready to receive it. They can tell the Spirit of the Lord from all other spirits; it will whisper peace and joy to their hearts; and their whole desire will be to do good, bring forth righteousness and build up the kingdom of God. Tell the brethren if they will follow the spirit of the Lord they will go right. Be sure to tell the people to keep the Spirit of the Lord; and if they will, they will find themselves just as they were organized by our Father in Heaven before they came into the world. Our Father in heaven organized the human family, but they are all disorganized and in great confusion."

Joseph then shewed me the pattern, how they were in the beginning. This I cannot describe, but I saw it, and saw where the Priesthood had been taken from the earth and how it must be joined together, so that there would be a perfect chain from Father Adam to his latest posterity. Joseph again said, "Tell the people to be sure to keep the Spirit of the Lord and follow it, and it will lead them just right." ("Manuscript History of Brigham Young," February 23, 1847, typed copy)

Under the date of February 28, 1847, Hosea Stout told that Brigham Young related his dream and called it a "vision of God":

At six went to a High Council as usual. There was not much done of interest except some remarks of President Young which I will give in short. It is in relation to a spell of sickness he had had lately.

He spoke as follows.

"Another subject which I wanted to speak of is this.

"On Wednesday morning I was taken ill and it has been asked if I had a vision.

"All that I know, is what my wife told me about it since. She said that I said, I had been where Joseph & Hyrum was.

"And again that I said, it is hard coming to life again.

"But I know that I went to the world of spirits; but what I saw I know not, for the vision went away from me, as a dream which you loose when you awake.

"The next day I had a dream.

"I dreamed that **I saw Joseph** sitting in a room, . . .

"I told him that the Latter Day Saints was very anxious to know about the **Law of Adoption** and the sealing powers &c and desired word of council from him.

. . . .

"I saw how we were organized before we took tabernacles and every man will be restored to that which he had then, and all will be satisfied. After this I turned away & saw Joseph was in the edge of the light; but where I had to go was as midnight darkness.

"He said I must go back, so I went back in the darkness.

"I want you all to remember my dream for I it is **a vision of God** and was revealed through the spirit of Joseph." (*On the Mormon Frontier; The Diary of Hosea Stout*, edited by Juanita Brooks, Vol. 1, pages 237-238)

John D. Lee recorded the following in his journal concerning Brigham Young's vision:

At 7 High Council met. Pres. related his **vision** which he had while sick. Appointed a meeting of the commanders of Co. at 9 the following morning (E.I.) the 2nd division.
VISION

He saw Jos. sitting in a splendid mansion. On coming up to him embraced in his arms and kissed him 3 times, asked him if he would return to the earth soon. He answered in the negative. He then asked the liberty of staying with him as he had long been deprived of his society. Jos. replied, you must return back and comfort the brethren, for I know their anxiety to learn their duty concerning the **Law of Adoption** and seal of the covenant. Tell them to be patient and not to grieve the Holy Spirit, . . . Remarks: **The vision I know to be of God** and the same things that he has taught him he impressed on his brethren. (*Journals of John D. Lee*, edited by Charles Kelly, page 105)

The Law of Adoption evidently caused a great deal of dissension among the Mormons. In a sermon delivered on February 16, 1847, Brigham Young stated:

Such jealousies do exist and were I to say to the elders you now have the liberty to build up your kingdoms, one half of them would lie, swear, steal and fight like the very devil to get **men** and women sealed to them. They would even try to pass right by me and go to Jos. thinking to get between mine and the 12. Some have already tried to use an influence against me, but such jealousies and selfishness shall be stopped and if the brethren do not stop it I will blow it to the four winds by making them all come and be **sealed to me** and I through my father, and he and all this church to Jos. . . .

I have gathered a number of families around me through the **Law of Adoption** and seal of the covenant according to the order of the priesthood and others have done likewise, it being the **means of salvation** left to bring us back to God. But had the keys of the priesthood been retained and handed down from father to son throughout all generations up to the present time then there could have been no necessity of the **Law of Adoption**, for we would have all been included in the covenant without it and would have been legal heirs instead of being heirs according to promise. (*Journals of John D. Lee*, edited by Charles Kelly, pages 80-81)

In the same sermon Brigham Young stated:

Those that are **adopted** into my family and take me for their counsellor, if I continue faithfully I will preside over them throughout all eternity and will stand at their head and Jos. will stand at the head of this church and will be their president, prophet and **God** to the people

in this dispensation. When we locate I will settle my family down in the order and teach them their duties. They will then have to **provide temporal blessings for me** instead of my boarding from 40 to 50 persons as I now do, and will administer spiritual blessings to them. I expect to live in the house of the Lord and receive and administer ordinances to my brethren and for the dead all the year round. (*Journals of John D. Lee*, page 83)

Brigham Young claimed that the Law of Adoption would bring great exaltation to the faithful:

Pres. B. Young said that Bros. Thomas Woolsey and John L. Tippetts had just arrived . . . Then continued his remarks on the **Law of Adoption**. Granted the brethren permission to ask questions when they did not fully comprehend his meaning. The Lord introduced the **Law of Adoption** for the benefit of the children of men as a schoolmaster to bring them back into the covenant of the P. H., not as some have supposed to add anything to his glory. This principle I ansre is not clearly understood by many of Elders in this church at the present time as it will hereafter be, and **I confess that I have had only a smattering of these things**, but when it is necessary I will attain to more knowledge on the subject and consequently will be enabled to teach and practice more and will in the meantime glorify God the bountiful giver. I have often heard elders say that they were [not] dependent on any man. I then considered and do now that they were saying more than what I in reality could say, for I consider that we are all dependent on one another for our **exaltation**, that our interests is inseparately connected (for example) what can my family do without me? Supposing they were to all turn away from me, I hold the **keys** over them through which they are to receive their **exaltation**. Would they not be like sheep that are without a shepherd and would be devoured by the wolves? (Ans.) They certainly would. Then let us change the position and say that I would cut off all my family, then what **glory** would I have with **nobody to rule over** but my own dear little self? To tell you my feelings I would rather be annihilated than to be in that situation. . . . I feel happy this night because we [are] of one mind, still should I believe that we were perfect and could not advance any further I should not be happy, but to the honor of power and glory of the faithful there is no end for your satisfaction. I will show you a rule by which you may comprehend the **exaltation of the faithful**. I will use myself as a figure and say that I am ruler over **ten sons** and soon each one of them will have **10 men sealed to them** and then they would be **rulers** over them and that would make me **ruler** over ten presidents (or rather kings), whereas before I was **ruler** over 10 subjects only. Or in other words I ruled over one kingdom whereas I now rule over 10. Then let each one of those ten get ten more and then I would be **ruler of 100 kingdoms** and so on continue through all eternity and the more honor and glory that I could bestow upon my sons the more it would add to **my exaltation** but to clip the thread of your **exaltation** then where would be your **glory**. . . .

if you wish to advance, hold up the hands of your **file leader** and as the Yankee says, **boost him ahead** and should you have 10 legions of trains follow on after you you should say to your **file leader, push ahead for I am coming with my train, boosting up at the same [time] instead of trying to pass.** To him the word would stimulate him and he would say, come on my boys, I will travel as fast as you can and on we would go in **one solid train through all eternity.**

Before I stop I will answer a question that has been repeatedly asked me (E.I.) should I have a father dead that has never heard this gospel, would it be required of me to redeem him and then have him adopted into some man's family and I be adopted to my father? (I ans. NO.) If we have to attend to the ordinances of redemption for our dead relatives we then become their saviours and were we to wait to redeem our dead relatives before we could link the chains of the P. H. **we would never accomplish it.** (*Journals of John D. Lee, 1846-47 and 1859*, edited by Charles Kelly, pages 86-89)

The following statement by Heber C. Kimball appears in John D. Lee's journal under the date of February 17, 1847:

I look upon the law of adoption as being the means of uniting families together by the connecting links of the priesthood, still I am aware that many have had trials for fear that they **had given away their birthright** when in fact they had none, not having been adopted. . . . But to urge anyone to be adopted or sealed to you it is like damming water to make it run up hill, it always breaks over unless [you] are all the time draining and is but dammed water at last. Then let it have its course. Elder O. Pratt said that he had been highly entertained with Elder Kimble's remarks and as Bro. Brigham said yesterday that no man has lost anything by being adopted, but every man has gained that have kept their covenants. . . . Dr. Richards (the Historian) addressed the collection. Said . . . I but seldom ever address this people. . . . One item that caught my attention was this thing of **jealousy**, fearing that some now is rising or gaining power and influence faster than what I am. Therefore jealousy will arise which causes an envious feelings in our bosom and we imagine **that man is lexeering** [electioneering] and using unlawful measures to gain an influence. . . . Elder W. Woodruff said he never before enjoyed himself as well as he did under the instructions of yesterday's and today's while my brethren were reasoning upon the law of adoption, seal of the covenant and priesthood, a subject of deep and thrilling interest to us all. Yet I have had but little instruction on this important subject although I have much desired. I have **never had the privilege of having anyone adopted into my family.** At the time those ordinances were attended to I was absent on a mission, consequently **have never lextioneered much** and I do not know that I have ever asked a man to be adopted into my family. And as for jealousies, I believe that I am free from them and am determined to walk according to

counsel and always have been &c. Elder G. A. Smith said he and Bro. Amasa Lyman have just returned from a mission on the other side of the river but he **durst** [not] say as Bro. Pratt and Woodruff has, that he had not lextioneered, **for I have with all my might**, but if I have lectioneered to the injury and hurt of any man I am ignorant of it. I always lectioneered but for the good of this cause and so does Bro. Pratt and all my brethren. But there is one thing that I don't like to see and that is this thing called jealousy stirring up family disturbances and broils because we are afraid that some man is gaining favor and I am not advancing as fast as they are. And in order to keep back or stop their influence we go to those that have been **sealed** and discourage them saying why didn't [you] go come with me where none but the respected are? Was you not as capable of holding the keys of presidency yourself as Bro. Lee who has probably **10 or 15 men sealed to him?** Certainly you (I use Bro. Lee present because he is the 1st man I see) were. Then you should have gone to serve the 12 and thereby caused dissatisfaction. For example suppose I was to jump every man and be **sealed to the great God** and have **3 only sealed to me.** I don't think my kingdom would be very large or my glory very great. Not more so than it would be was I sealed to the most obscure Saint in this Kingdom. I could get no more. I should be dependent on the exertion of those who were **sealed to me.** But was **I sealed** to the most obscure individual in this church and **I had 10s of 10,000 sealed to me,** would not **my glory be greater** than it would be was **I sealed to headquarters with my 3 only? Certainly it would.** It does [not] matter so much where we are **sealed** provided we form a part of link the Priesthood. Then let jealousy stop and be united that we may speedily build up the kingdom of God on the earth, &c. (*Journals of John D. Lee, February 17, 1847*, pages 91-94)

Under the date of July 13, 1846, Hosea Stout made this entry in his journal concerning the Mormon Apostle Orson Hyde:

This evening Elder O. Hyde who had moved over the river to the main camp there, came here to his camp and called a meeting and spoke at length to them on the **Law of Adoption.** The first sermon I ever heard publicly. He desired all who felt willing to do so **to give him a pledge to come into his kingdom** when the **ordinance** could be attended to but wished all to select the man whom they chose &c. (*On the Mormon Frontier; The Diary of Hosea Stout*, Vol. 1, page 178)

In a footnote on the same page, Juanita Brooks stated:

Since some of the apostles had been away on missions, they had not heard of this plan, and so could not share the possible glory. Here Orson Hyde is definitely trying to secure some adopted children; . . . The whole plan became the subject of so much controversy that it was ail dropped and the practice abandoned.

There can be little doubt that the Law of Adoption caused many bad feelings. Hosea Stout made this statement in his journal under the date of December 9, 1847:

There was a Council today at which W. W. Phelps was formally cut off from the Church & John D. Lee's case up. Most of his wives & adopted children were dissatisfied with him & I believe it was so managed to **let all go free** who chose when 2 wives & almost all of his adopted children stepped out. (*On the Mormon Frontier, The Journals of Hosea Stout*, Vol. 1, page 290)

Juanita Brooks made this comment in a footnote on the same page:

Four of Lee's adopted sons accepted their freedom at once; others continued with friendly relations but without any constraint. This action was really a **death blow** to the whole system of Adoption, already a bone-of-contention among the Mormon leaders. Once in the valley, no one honored it, so that its very existence is now largely forgotten.

Juanita Brooks has also made this comment concerning the failure of the system:

... the fact that all were set free was a death blow to the whole system of adoption. It meant that there was no tie more binding than personal desire, and weakened the ties in the family of Brigham Young as well as John D. Lee.

It was as well, for most of the other leaders had not entered into the plan, and they felt that it gave an undue economic advantage to those who had adopted sons. Polygamy they could accept, because each who was worthy could secure additional wives as he was able or as the women approached him and asked for admission into his family. But adoption, ideally carried out, would give the "father" a decided financial advantage.

In his family meeting almost a year earlier, Brigham had indicated that the system was causing jealousy and competition, ... Throughout the two-day meeting, the law of adoption was discussed among the leaders, and in spite of all the explanations and exhortations, there was some jealousy and disapproval of the plan.

... A formal decision was reached that in reality and for any practical purpose adoption was not binding to the people who had entered into it, thus causing the decline of the practice. (*John D. Lee*, 1962, pages 122-123)

Charles Kelly made this statement concerning the Law of Adoption:

Like many other Mormon doctrines, **it was but a passing fad, and is now ignored or forgotten.** (*Journals of John D. Lee, 1846-47 and 1859*, edited by Charles Kelly, page 88, footnote 87)

In 1894 Wilford Woodruff, the fourth President of the Mormon Church, repudiated the doctrine of

adoption and claimed that a man should be sealed to his own father. Wilford Woodruff admitted that some friends had been sealed to him, but he stated that he had "peculiar feelings about it":

I have not felt satisfied, neither did President Taylor, **neither has any man since the Prophet Joseph who attended to the ordinance of adoption** in the temples of our God. We have felt that there was **more to be revealed** upon this subject than we had received. Revelations were given to us in the St. George Temple, which President Young presented to the Church of God. **Changes were made there**, and we still have **more changes to make**, in order to satisfy our Heavenly Father, satisfy our dead and ourselves. I will tell you what some of them are. I have prayed over this matter, and my brethren have. We have felt, as President Taylor said, that we **have got to have more revelation** concerning sealing under the **Law of Adoption**. Well, what are these changes? One of them is the principle of adoption. In the commencement of **adopting** men and women in the **temple at Nauvoo**, a **great many persons** were adopted to **different men** who were not of the lineage of their fathers, and there was a spirit manifested by some in that work **that was not God**. **Men would go out and electioneer and labor with all their power to get men adopted to them**. One instance I will name here: A man went around Nauvoo asking **every man he could**, "You come and **be adopted to me**, and I shall stand at the **head of the kingdom**, and you will be there with me." Now, what is the truth about this? Those who were adopted to that man, if they go with him, will have to go where he is. He was a participator in that horrible scene—the Mountain Meadow massacre. ... Men are **in danger** sometimes in **being adopted** to others, until they know who they are and what they will be. Now, what are the feelings of Israel? They have felt that they wanted to be adopted to somebody. President **Young was not satisfied** in his mind with regard to the extent of this matter; President **Taylor was not**. When I went before the Lord to know who I should be adopted to (**we were then being adopted to prophets and apostles**), the Spirit of God said to me, "Have you not a father, who begot you?" "Yes, I have." "Then why not honor him?" "Yes," says I, "that is right." I was adopted to my father, and should have had my father sealed to his father, and so on back; and the duty that I want every man who presides over a temple to see performed from this day henceforth and forever, unless the Lord Almighty commands otherwise, is, **let every man be adopted to his father**. When a man receives the endowments, adopt him to **his father; not to Wilford Woodruff**, nor to any other man outside the lineage of his fathers. **That is the will of God to this people**. ... I say let every man be adopted to his father; ...

So it will be with your fathers. There will be very few, if any, who will not accept the Gospel. ... The fathers of this people will embrace the Gospel. It is my duty to honor my father who begot me in the flesh. It is your duty to do the same. When you do this, the Spirit of God will be with you. And we shall continue this work, the Lord adding light to that which we have already received.

I have had friend adopted to me. We all have, more or less. But **I have had peculiar feelings about it,** especially lately. There are men in this congregation who wish to **be adopted to me.** I say to them to-day, if they can hear me, Go and be adopted to your fathers, and save your fathers, and stand at the head of your father's house, as Saviors upon Mount Zion, and God will bless you in this. This is what I want to say, and what I want carried out in our temples. A man may say, "I am an Apostle, or I am a High Priest, or I am an Elder in Israel, and if I am adopted to my father, **will it take any honor from me?**" I would say **not.** . . . Those of you who stand here—I do not care whether you are Apostles or what you are—by honoring your fathers you will not take any honor from your heads; you will hold the keys of the salvation of your father's house, as Joseph Smith does. You **will lose nothing** by honoring your fathers and redeeming your dead. (*Millennial Star*, Vol. 56, pages 337-341)

On April 8, 1894, George Q. Cannon, a member of the First Presidency of the Mormon Church, also repudiated the Law of Adoption. He stated that since the Nauvoo period he had never thought about the Law of Adoption without having "a certain amount of fear concerning it":

. . . as has been beautifully explained this morning by President Woodruff, it is our duty to be sealed to our parents, that our lineage may be preserved; . . .

When President Young died, the St. George Temple was the only one finished, and it had barely been dedicated when he passed away. There is not a doubt in my mind that, had he lived, his mind would have been directed to this great subject and he would have inquired of the Lord to know that which was right; for in the minds of many there has been a **feeling of doubt** in regard to this **principle of adoption** as it was being practiced among us. I well remember myself in my boyhood days that which President Woodruff has referred to—the spirit that was manifested by many at the dedication of the temple at Nauvoo when the ordinances were administered there. **Some men thought to build up kingdoms to themselves;** they appeared to think that by inducing men and women to be adopted into their families they **were adding to their own glory.** From that day until the present, I have never thought of this subject of **adoption without having a certain amount of fear concerning it.**

There is nothing in the Gospel of Jesus Christ that leads to disunion. There is no true principle of the Gospel that will produce division. There is no true principle of the Gospel that will separate this people and divide them. And this **revelation** that God has given to His servant, the President of our Church, removes all the danger which seemed to threaten us through an imperfect understanding of the manner in which the law of adoption should be carried out.

To illustrate this point, let me suppose that the First Presidency of this Church were to seek to build up families for themselves from among this people, each one seeking to have men and women sealed to him in order that he might have a large following; and suppose each of the Twelve Apostles was to do the same; and

suppose the High Priests and the brethren officiating in the temples were to do the same, what would be the result? You can see at once that in a little time we would be divided into tribes and clans, each man having his own following, and each following looking to the man to whom they had been adopted for counsel and for guidance, and in this way the governing authority of the Holy Priesthood in our midst would be divided and lessened. Who can not understand the danger there would be under such a condition of affairs. But how to obviate it, how to remove it so that it no longer exist! God has removed it by making it plain that it is the duty of every man to be sealed to his father, where his father is not a man that has proved entirely unworthy. . . .

My brethren and sisters, I have this belief concerning us: that it was arranged before we came here how we should come, and through what lineage we should come. We were not born of the seed of Ham; we were not born of some questionable race; . . .

I am as convinced that it was predestined before I was born that I should come through my father as I am that I stand here. And if God chose to give to Wilford Woodruff's father the honor of begetting him, and it was so arranged before they were born, who shall step in and deprive him of the honor which God gave to him, and give it to somebody else? Reflect upon it and you will see that it would lead to endless confusion if this were done. We would be broken up in families and in our lineage, and there would be no distinction, consequently it would result in **great confusion.** . . .

My brethren and sisters, suppose that each of us should seek some great man in the Church to be sealed to. For instance, we would like to be sealed to the President of the Church, because it would be a great honor to be adopted to him, and we think, "well, that man is much better than my father. I would rather be adopted to him than to be sealed to my father. I do not think very much of my father or my mother." Now, I think, when we feel that way, that we are, to a certain extent, despising the arrangement which the Lord has made. We should not despise our origin. On the contrary, we should seek to preserve it, and honor those who have given us birth. . . . There need be no jealousy, then. There need be none to say, "Well, I am sealed or adopted to a greater man than you. I am adopted to Joseph, or to Brigham, or to John Taylor, or to Wilford Woodruff, or to this man or the other man." There will be no need to pride and plume ourselves on the fact that we are adopted to these various men, and thus divide the people asunder in their feelings, creating to a certain extent a feeling of rivalry which does not belong to the Gospel of the Son of God. Every man that reflects upon it can see that this revelation which God has given through his servant Wilford Woodruff removes that danger out of our pathway and prepares us to go forward and honor our kindred . . .

Why should a man come to one of the Apostles and be sealed to him and then trace his genealogy through him and his ancestors, and neglect his own? There have **been some cases of adoption, I suppose, where the parties have not felt clear in their minds concerning this.** This light, however, that we now have clears it all up and makes it plain; and we can see and understand it. (*Millennial Star*, Vol. 56, pages 354-358)

not accept the Gospel. Jesus, while His body lay in the tomb, went and and preached to the spirits in prison, who were destroyed in the days of Noah. After so long an imprisonment, in torment, they doubtless gladly embraced the Gospel, and if so they will be saved in the kingdom of God. The fathers of this people will embrace the Gospel. It is my duty to honor my father who begot me in the flesh. It is your duty to do the same. When you do this, the Spirit of God will be with you. And we shall continue this work, the Lord adding light to that which we have already received. I have had friends adopted to me. We all have, more or less. But I have had peculiar feelings about it, especially lately. There are men in this congregation who wish to be adopted to me. I say to them to-day, if they can hear me, Go and be adopted to your fathers, and save your fathers, and stand at the head of your father's house, as Saviors upon Mount Zion, and God will bless you in this. This is what I want to say, and what I want carried out in our temples.

The Almighty is with this people. We shall have all the revelations that we will need, if we will do our duty and obey the commandments of God. When any of us get so that we cannot receive these revelations the Lord will take us out of the way and put someone in our places who can. I am here to-day, on borrowed time, I may say. I would have been in the spirit world to-day, mingling with the spirits in the presence of God, had it not been for the cry of this people for my life when I lay at the gates of death a year ago. I have been preserved by the power of God. How long I shall live I do not know. It does not make any difference to me. But while I do live I want to do my duty. I want the Latter-day Saints to do their duty. Here is the Holy Priesthood in these mountains. Their responsibility is great and mighty. The eyes of God and all the holy prophets are watching over us. This is the great dispensation that has been spoken of ever since the world began. We are gathered together in these mountains of Israel by the power and commandment of God. We are doing the work of God. This is not our home, as far as mortality is concerned. We shall soon pass away. But while here let us fill our mission. I want to say to Brother L. Snow, Brother M. W. Merrill, Brother J. D. T. McAllister and Brother D. H. Cannon, and all associated with you, carry these things before the Lord and see for yourselves. If you are not satisfied with this order of things, go and ask the Lord about it, and the Holy Ghost will reveal to you the truth of these principles.

This is all I ought to say at this time perhaps upon this subject. I am glad to meet with you. I have had a great anxiety over this matter. I have had a great desire that I might live to deliver these principles to the Latter-day Saints, for they are true. They are one step forward in the work of the ministry and in the work of the endowments in these temples of our God. When you get to the last man in the lineage, as I said before, we will adopt that man to the Prophet Joseph, and then the Prophet Joseph will take care of himself with regard to where he goes. A man may say, "I am an Apostle, or I am a High Priest, or I am an Elder in Israel, and if I am adopted to my father, will it take any honor from me?" I would say not. If Joseph Smith was sealed to his father, with whom

been beautifully explained this morning by President Woodruff, it is our duty to be sealed to our parents, that our lineage may be preserved; that we may preserve our families in direct descent, and trace them back, ascending lineally until we reach, if it be possible, our ancestors who held the everlasting Priesthood, and who were either born in the covenant or who were sealed to their parents under the law of adoption when the Priesthood was upon the earth. This has to be done by this generation and their successors. It is the labor devolving upon us as a people to perform this. The Prophet Joseph revealed this, but he died before it was fully explained.

When President Young died, the St. George Temple was the only one finished, and it had barely been dedicated when he passed away. There is not a doubt in my mind that, had he lived, his mind would have been directed to this great subject and he would have inquired of the Lord to know that which was right; for in the minds of many there has been a feeling of doubt in regard to this principle of adoption as it was being practiced among us. I well remember myself in my boyhood days that which President Woodruff has referred to—the spirit that was manifested by many at the dedication of the temple at Nauvoo when the ordinances were administered there. Some men thought to build up kingdoms to themselves; they appeared to think that by inducing men and women to be adopted into their families they were adding to their own glory. From that day until the present, I have never thought of this subject of adoption without having a certain amount of fear concerning it.

There is nothing in the Gospel of Jesus Christ that leads to disunion. There is no true principle of the Gospel that will produce division. There is no true principle of the Gospel that will separate this people and divide them. And this revelation that God has given to His servant, the President of our Church, removes all the danger which seemed to threaten us through an imperfect understanding of the manner in which the law of adoption should be carried out.

To illustrate this point, let me suppose that the First Presidency of this Church were to seek to build up families for themselves from among this people, each one seeking to have men and women sealed to him in order that he might have a large following; and suppose each of the Twelve Apostles was to do the same; and suppose the High Priests and the brethren officiating in the temples were to do the same, what would be the result? You can see at once that in a little time we would be divided into tribes and clans, each man having his own following, and each following looking to the man to whom they had been adopted for counsel and for guidance, and in this way the governing authority of the Holy Priesthood in our midst would be divided and lessened. Who can not understand the danger there would be under such a condition of affairs. But how to obviate it, how to remove it so that it should no longer exist! God has removed it by making it plain that it is the duty of every man to be sealed to his father, where his father is not a man that has proved entirely unworthy. And when such a case arises—which will be very seldom—we have the man in our midst who has the keys of the Priesthood

Thus we see that the Law of Adoption, which Brigham Young called “a great and glorious doctrine” and “the means of salvation left to bring us back to God,” was completely repudiated by the later Mormon leaders. Wilford Woodruff, the fourth President of the Mormon Church, admitted that he had had “peculiar feelings” about the Law of Adoption, and George Q. Cannon said that “it would result in great confusion.” Below is a comparison of Brigham Young’s teaching on the Law of Adoption and the teaching of Wilford Woodruff.

Brigham Young

Before I stop I will answer a question that has been repeatedly asked me (E.I.) should I have a father dead that has never heard this gospel, would it be required of me to redeem him and then have him adopted into some man’s family and I be adopted to **my father?** (**I ans. NO.**) If we have to attend to the ordinances of redemption for our dead relatives we then become their saviours and were we to wait to redeem our dead relatives before we could link the chains of the P. H. **we would never accomplish it.** (*Journals of John D. Lee, 1846-47 and 1859*, edited by Charles Kelly, page 89)

Wilford Woodruff

I was adopted to my father, and should have had my father sealed to his father, and so on back; and the duty that I want every man who presides over a temple to see performed from this day henceforth and forever, unless the Lord Almighty commands otherwise, is, let **every man be adopted to his father.** When a man receives the endowments, **adopt him to his father;** not to Wilford Woodruff, not to any other man outside the lineage of his fathers. That is the **will of God** to this people. . . . I say let every man be adopted to his father; . . . (*Millennial Star*, vol, 56, page 338)

Although both Brigham Young and Wilford Woodruff claimed to be inspired of God, their teachings were not in harmony.

Thus we see that at least three different doctrines (i.e. plural marriage, rebaptism and the law of adoption) which were so important in the early Mormon Church that God had to give revelations concerning them were repudiated by later Mormon leaders.

Bruce R. McConkie claims that it is the apostate churches that change their doctrines:

As is commonly the case in the **apostate churches of the world**, the beliefs and doctrines of the Reorganized Church are in a **constant state of change and alteration.** They have no true apostles and prophets at their head to keep their members from being “tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine.” (*Mormon Doctrine*, 1966, pages 629-630)

Although the Reorganized Church may have changed some of their doctrines, the Mormon Church has certainly changed more of their doctrines. And, contrary to Dr. Nibley’s statement, there are probably few churches that have made as many doctrinal changes as the Mormon Church.

3. THE MYTH MAKERS

In 1961 Dr. Hugh Nibley, of the Brigham Young University, published a book entitled *The Myth Makers*. In the forward to this book, Dr. Nibley states:

... the whole structure of anti-Mormon scholarship rests on **trumped-up evidence**. ... it is high time to take a new look at a pack of story-tellers who have been getting away with too much for too long.

The whole purpose of Dr. Nibley's book seems to be to show that anti-Mormon writers are myth makers and that a person cannot depend upon what they have written. Unfortunately, there is some truth in Dr. Nibley's statements. Some anti-Mormon writers have not been careful in their research, and there has been a certain amount of myth-making. But, on the other hand, Dr. Nibley should recognize the fact that there has been a great deal of myth-making in his own church.

In this chapter we will deal with just one of the many myths that are found in Mormon books.

The Mormon Battalion

After the Mormons left Nauvoo and were established in Winter Quarters, the President of the United States called upon the Mormons to raise 500 men to serve with the U.S. Army. This group of men was known as the "Mormon Battalion." Dr. Nibley criticizes Irving Wallace for not praising the "patriotic sacrifice" of the Mormon Battalion in his book, *The Twenty-seventh Wife*:

... nowhere in his book does he mention the **great patriotic sacrifice** of the Mormon Battalion, ... Nothing could be ... more fundamental than the history of the Battalion, ... (*Sounding Brass*, 1963, page 117)

Anti-Mormon writers have claimed that the request for 500 Mormons was an act of kindness on the part of the Government. T.B.H. Stenhouse stated:

... the instructions of the Federal Government to employ the Mormon volunteers was an act of **sympathetic kindness**. The Government did **not** require them at all, but extended as far as consistent its aid. (*The Rocky Mountain Saints*, 1873, page 240)

On the other hand, many Mormons have claimed that the President was persecuting them when he asked for the Battalion. Brigham Young, the second President of the Mormon Church, even went so far as to say that President Polk should have been hung for requesting the Battalion. On September 13, 1857, Brigham Young stated:

There **cannot be a more damnable, dastardly** order issued than was issued by the Administration to this people while they were in an Indian Country, in 1846. ... while we were doing our best to leave their borders, the poor, **low, degraded curses** sent a requisition for five hundred of our men to go and fight their battles! That was **President Polk**; and he is now weltering **in hell** with old Zachary Taylor, where the present administrators will soon be, if they do not repent. ...

Our enemies are constantly yelling "Rebellion! treason!" no matter how peaceful, orderly, and loyal we may be. And now to come out in open opposition to their cursed, corrupt practices, will of course be counted treason. But let me tell you that the real, actual treason is committed in Washington, ...

There is high treason in Washington; and if the law was carried out, it would **hang up many of them**. And the very act of **James K. Polk** in taking five hundred of our men, while we were making our way out of the country under an agreement forced upon us, would **have hung him between the heavens and the earth**, if the laws had been faithfully executed. (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 5, pages 231, 232 and 235)

John Taylor, who became the third President of the Mormon Church, made this statement:

less than two United States' senators came to receive a pledge from us that we would leave the United States; and then, while we were doing our best to leave their borders, the poor, low, degraded curses sent a requisition for five hundred of our men to go and fight their battles! That was President Polk; and he is now weltering in hell with old Zachary Taylor, where the present administrators will soon be, if they do not repent.

Liars have reported that this people have committed treason; and upon their lies, the President has ordered out troops to aid in officering this Territory: and if those officers are like many who have previously been sent here, (and we have reason to believe that they are, or they would not come when they know they are not wanted,) they are poor, miserable blacklegs, broken-down political hacks, robbers, and whoremongers—men that are not fit for civilized society; so they must dragoon them upon us for officers. I feel that I won't bear such cursed treatment, and that is enough to say; for we are just as free as the mountain air.

I do not lift my voice against the great and glorious Government guaranteed to every citizen by our Constitution, but against those corrupt administrators who trample the Constitution and just laws under their feet. They care no more about them than they do about the Government of France; but they walk them under their feet with impunity. And the most of the characters they have sent here as officers cared no more about the laws of our country and of this Territory than they did about the laws of China, but walked them under their feet with all the recklessness of despots.

I do not want to be angry, nor to have my feelings wrought up; but I cannot keep quiet under the continued outrageous tyranny of the wicked.

I have said that if the brethren will have faith, the Lord will fight our battles, and we will have the privilege of living here in peace. I have counted the cost to this people of a collision with our enemies; but I cannot begin to count the cost it will be to them.

I have told you that if this people will live their religion, all will be well; and I have told you that if there is any man or woman that is not willing to destroy anything and everything of their property that would be of use to an enemy, if left, I wanted them to go out of the Territory; and I again say so to-day; for when the time comes to burn and lay waste our improvements, if any man undertakes to shield his, he will be sheared down; for "judgment will be laid to the line and righteousness to the plummet." Now the faint-hearted can go in peace; but should that time come, they must not interfere. Before I will suffer what I have in times gone by, there shall not be one building, nor one foot of lumber, nor a stick, nor a tree, nor a particle of grass and hay, that will burn, left in reach of our enemies. I am sworn, if driven to extremity, to utterly lay waste, in the name of Israel's God.

I know that the Saints, both the brethren and sisters, pray that our enemies may not come here; for their entrance is designed by our Government to be the prelude to the introduction of abominations and death. And you cannot talk to a brother, or even to a sister, but that she will tell you that, if she consents in her feelings to have our enemies come here, she feels uncomfortable, and her heart sinks within her. If I consent in my feelings to have them come here, my heart sinks within me, my buoyant spirits are gone, and I have no comfort; for I know the hellish designs concealed under the present movement. But we are free, and every

real, actual treason is committed in Washington, by the administrators of our Government sending an army to take the lives of innocent citizens. Every man is allowed by the Constitution to have what religion he pleases and to profess what religion he pleases. That liberty is guaranteed by the Constitution; "but you, 'Mormons,' an army must be sent against you, because you are Latter-day Saints." Yes, an army must be sent to drive us from the earth.

There is high treason in Washington; and if the law was carried out, it would hang up many of them. And the very act of James K. Polk in taking five hundred of our men, while we were making our way out of the country under an agreement forced upon us, would have hung him between the heavens and the earth, if the laws had been faithfully executed. And now, if they can send a force against this people, we have every constitutional and legal right to send them to hell, and we calculate to send them there.

When I get over being angry, I may preach something else; but the past travels and sufferings of this people through mobocracy are before me.

I am not speaking of the Government, but of the corrupt administrators of the Government. They make me think of a sign in New York, upon which was lettered, "All manner of twisting and turning done here." It is just so in Washington city; they can twist and turn in any and every way, to suit their hellish appetites.

Were I an officer sent to Utah for the purpose of aiding the unhallowed oppression of the innocent, (and in this connection I disclaim all personalities,) I would know the facts in the case before I would make any hostile move; and sooner than side with tyranny and murder, I would resign my commission, and say, "Take it and

stick it in your boot, and go to hell, and I will go my way." And I would rather go and raise my own potatoes for my wives and children than to hold office under such a set of administrators and bow down to their wicked designs; though, if I were of the world, I should probably do as the rest do.

I have already told you that the main cause of an army being now sent here is a political scheme for the purpose of getting money out of the United States' treasury. Politicians and traders combine to lay plans, no matter how devilish, for getting their hands into the treasury of the United States, that they may have money with which to sow corruption and gratify their debauched natures.

Some men do not realize what they are doing. I said, a few weeks ago, that the deeds of some men are out of sight. Our merchants here have fanned the flame, and what for? To peddle off my blood and yours for gold and silver. Although that design may have been out of their sight, yet such is the case; but they will not make money by the operation. Should the crisis come, they will find themselves in poor pasture, with nothing but greasewood and sage to feed upon. It will not do for them to sell us for money; for we are worth more than the Methodist society was sold for in Canada, where they were sold at three cents a head.

I am aware that you will want to know what will be the result of the present movement against us. "Mormonism" will take an almighty stride into influence and power, while our enemies will sink and become weaker and weaker, and be no more; and I know it just as well now as I shall five years hence. The Lord Almighty wants a name and a character; and he will show our enemies that he is God, and that he has set to his hand again to gather Israel, and to

Right in the midst of difficulties, in the midst of exile, when we were journeying to this place, this Government called upon us for 500 soldiers to go and fight **their** battles, when they were literally allowing us to be driven from our homes and to be robbed of millions of property without redress.

Did we send the soldiers? We did. Was it our duty to comply with such a requisition as such a time, and under such circumstances? I don't know. I think it was one of those works of supererogation which the Roman Catholics talk about. I do not think any law of God or man would have required it at our hands; . . . our enemies were seeking to entangle and destroy us from the earth. They laid that **as a trap**, thinking to catch us in it, but it did not stick. (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 5, page 152)

On February 18, 1855, Brigham Young stated:

Permit me to draw your attention, for a moment, so a few facts in relation to raising the Battalion for the Mexican war. . . . I ask, had we not reason to feel that our enemies were in the ascendant? **that even the Government**, by their silent acquiescence, were also in favor of our **destruction**? Had we not, I ask, some reason to consider them **all**, both the people and the **Government, alike our enemies**?

And when, in addition to all this, and while fleeing from our enemies, another **test** of fidelity and patriotism **was contrived by them for our destruction**, and acquiesced in by the Government, (through the agency of a distinguished politician who evidently sought, and thought he had planned, our overthrow and total annihilation,) consisting of a requisition from the War Department, to furnish a Battalion of five hundred men . . . I ask again, could we refrain from considering **both people and Government our most deadly foes**? . . . under these trying circumstances we were required to turn out of our travelling camps 500 of our most efficient men, leaving the old, the young, the women upon the hands of the residue, to take care of and support; and in case we refused to comply with so **unreasonable** a requirement, we were to be deemed enemies to the Government, **and fit only for the slaughter**.

Look also as the proportion of the number required of us, compared with that of any other portion of the Republic. A requisition of only thirty thousand from a population of more than twenty millions was all that was wanted, and more than was furnished, amounting so only one person and a half to a thousand inhabitants. If all other circumstances had been equal, if we could have left our families in the enjoyment of peace, quietness, and security in the houses from which we had been driven, our quota of an equitable requisition would **not have exceeded four persons**. Instead of this, five hundred must go, **thirteen thousand per cent above an equal ratio**, even if all other things had been equal, but under the peculiar circumstances in which it was made **comparison fails to demonstrate, and reason itself totters beneath its enormity**. And for whom were we to fight? As I have already shown, for those

that we had every reason to believe were **our most deadly foes**. . . . **History furnishes no parallel, either of the severity, and injustice of the demand**, or in the alacrity, faithfulness, and **patriotism** with which it was answered and complied. (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 2, pages 173-175)

On March 8, 1863, Bright Young stated:

Five hundred of our able-bodied men had been taken from us by the call of the Government, and went to fight the battles of their country. There are women and children sitting here to-day, whose husbands, sons and fathers went on that campaign to prove to our Government that we were loyal, who became widows and orphans in consequence of that requisition. . . . I knew then as well as I do now that the Government would call for a battalion of men out of that part of Israel, **to test our loyalty** to the Government. Thomas H. Benson, if I have been rightly informed, obtained the requisition to call for that battalion, and, in case of non-compliance with that requisition, to call on the militia of Missouri and Iowa, and other States, if necessary, and to call volunteers from Illinois, from which State we had been driven, **to destroy the camp of Israel**. . . . if the Government of the United States should now ask for a battalion of men to fight in the present battle-fields of the nation, while there is a camp of soldiers from abroad located within the corporate limits of this city, **I would not ask one man to go; I would see them in hell first**. (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 10, pages 105-107)

Wilford Woodruff, who became the fourth President of the Mormon Church, also claimed that the call for 500 men was an act of persecution. In the *History of Utah*, by Hubert Howe Bancroft, page 242, we find the following:

In his address as she gathering of the pioneers on the 24th of July, 1880, Wilford Woodruff said, "Our government called upon us to raise a battalion of 500 men to go to Mexico to fight the battles of our country. This draft was **ten times greater**, according to the population of the Mormon camp, than was made upon any other portion of our nation . . . Whether our government expected we would comply with the request or not, is not for me to say. But I think I am safe in saying that plan was laid by certain parties for our **destruction if we did not comply**."

Joseph Fielding Smith, who is the Mormon Church Historian and a member of the First Presidency of the Church, made this statement:

There is not a more patriotic people in the United States than the Latter-day Saints, for they have been weighed in the balance and not found wanting. . . . Even while the exiled Saints, who had been forced from their homes without one protecting word or action from the government in their behalf, were on their westward march, in the depths of poverty, they raised a battalion

to serve in the Mexican War. These troops loyally and cheerfully volunteered and performed their labors faithfully and well.

Thomas H. Benton, principally, and others associated with him—Thomas H. Benton was from the State of Missouri and a **very bitter enemy** of the Latter-day Saints—**prevailed** upon the President of the United States **to make this trial of the Mormon people** who were in the wilderness, asking for a battalion of 500 men. Mr. Benton felt, I am sure, positive in his own mind that under the conditions President Brigham Young would refuse, and with that refusal he would place himself apparently as an enemy of the United States, and further persecution could be heaped upon the Latter-day Saints resulting **in their destruction**. (*Doctrines of Salvation*, by Joseph Fielding Smith, Vol. 3, pages 360-361)

Duplicity?

The anti-Mormon writer R. N. Baskin claimed that the Government's request for the Mormon Battalion was a means of helping the Mormons and that the Mormon leaders misrepresented the Government's motives in calling for the Battalion:

The masses of the people in Utah were formerly taught, and yet believe, that the government made a demand on the Mormons for a battalion of five hundred men to participate in the war with Mexico, and that the demand was made for the purpose of oppressing the Mormons.

....
Both Brigham Young and Wilford Woodruff knew that the enlistment of the Mormon Battalion was requested by Colonel Little, who **represented the Mormon Church**, and that President Polk granted the request for the purpose of assisting the Mormons on their journey to the West, and not to oppress or injure them. (*Reminiscences of Early Utah*, 1914, pages 193-194)

On October 17, 1871, T.B.H. Stenhouse wrote to President Ulysses S. Grant asking for information on the Mormon Battalion. In this letter he stated:

"For over twenty years Brigham Young has used his version of this Mormon Battalion very effectively in attacking the Government, by representing that it was a cruel demand, made with the view of crippling the expedition and leaving it exposed to the attacks of the Indians. To this, he adds that the demand was made in the hope that the Mormons would refuse, and, in so refusing, furnish the Government a pretext for preventing their further exodus, under the charge that they were going to join an enemy's country.

"Ridiculous as this may appear to your Excellency, I know of nothing in all Mormon history that has been

so potential in shaping the sentiments of the Mormon people against the Government.

"I have carefully considered and traced, wherever I could, the circumstances attending this Battalion affair, and all the evidence conveys to me the very contrary of what Brigham Young asserts. It was evidently in sympathy for their unfortunate condition that the Government accepted that Battalion, and paid them for going to the place they had at that time upon their minds to go to.

"If your Excellency will order copies of all that pertains to the Mormon Battalion to be placed at my disposal. I am satisfied that the publication of the facts, in the history of Utah and the Mormons which I will shortly have in press, will do much to destroy the pernicious influence of the misstatements that have been made on the subject. It is due to the national Government that the facts should be properly understood." (*The Rocky Mountain Saints*, 1873, page 241)

He was answered by Wm. W. Belknap, Secretary of War. Enclosed was "a copy of instructions from Head Quarters Army of the West, dated June 19, 1846, for the raising of the Battalion." In these instructions we find the following:

"Sir: It is understood that there is a large body of Mormons who are desirous of emigrating to California for the purpose of settling in that country, and I have therefore to direct that you will proceed to their camps and endeavour to raise from amongst them four or five companies of volunteers to join me in my expedition . . .

"You will have the Mormons distinctly to understand, that I wish to take them **as volunteers** for twelve months, that they will be marched to California, receiving pay and allowances during the above time, and at its expiration they will be discharged and allowed to retain as their private property the guns and accoutrements to be furnished to them at this post. . . .

"With the foregoing conditions, which are hereby pledged to the Mormons, and which will be faithfully kept by me and other officers in behalf of the Government of the United States, I cannot doubt but that you will in a few days be able to raise five hundred young and efficient men for this expedition.

"Very respectfully your obedient servant,
"(Signed) S. W. Kearny. Colonel First Dragoons."
(*The Rocky Mountain Saints*, 1873, pages 242-243)

Although the Mormon leaders later claimed that the Government was trying to persecute them when they called for the Battalion, their own books and journals which were written at the time prove that they considered it a favor. John Taylor, who became the third President of the Mormon Church, wrote the following in 1846:

But to return, although we have been inhumanly and barbarously dealt with by the surrounding country where we dwelt, yet the President of the United States is **favourably disposed to us**. He has sent out orders to have five hundred of our brethren employed in an expedition that was fitting out against California, with orders for them to be employed for one year, and then to be discharged in California, and to have their arms and implements of war given to them at the expiration of the term, and as there is no prospect of any opposition, it amounts to the same **as paying them for going to the place where they were destined to go without**. They also had the privilege of choosing their own leaders. (*Millennial Star*, November 15, 1846, Vol. 8, page 117)

According to the journal of Hosea Stout, the Mormon Apostle Parley P. Pratt defended the idea of sending the 500 men that the Government requested:

... Elder P. P. Pratt ... then spoke at length **in favor** of sending off the 500 troops to Santa Fe and explained it to the satisfaction of most of the Saints. Indeed it needed considerable explaining for every one was about as much prejudiced as I was at first. (*On the Mormon Frontier, The Diary of Hosea Stout*, Vol. 1, page 177)

The next day, July 13, 1846, Hosea Stout wrote that the Mormon Apostle George A. Smith explained that the Mormons themselves had requested the Government to help them and that the calling of the Mormon Battalion was a special favor:

To day Br George A. Smith, gave an account of Col Kane the man from Washington spoken of before. Col Kane & **Elder Little** from the East he said **were the ones who brought about the order** for the 500 mormon troops and that it was **done as a special favor to us by the President** & that they brought the dispatches to Col Kearney Commander of the West, who detailed Capt. James Allen to us to execute the same. This made **the matter plain** and I was well satisfied for I found that **there was no trick in it**. (*On the Mormon Frontier, The Diary of Hosea Stout*, Vol. 1, page 178)

The most devastating evidence against the Mormon claims of persecution, however, comes from the "Manuscript History of Brigham Young." B. H. Roberts, who was the Assistant Church Historian, used the "Manuscript History of Brigham Young" in the seventh volume of the *History of the Church*. Unfortunately, however, he discontinued following it with the close of February, 1846. He claimed there was an "inadequacy" of space in that volume to continue daily entries. Nevertheless, B. H. Roberts must have read the part concerning the Mormon Battalion, for he told the truth concerning it. He admitted that the whole thing was planned by the Mormon leaders and that there was no persecution involved. B. H. Roberts stated:

... two important things happened which had an effect upon the intended movements of the exiles. The first was the activity of Jesse C. Little at Washington. D.C., who had been **appointed to preside over the Eastern States Mission** with instructions to visit Washington ... Elder Little contacted the federal administration and upon his representing the condition of the Latter-day Saint community at Nauvoo, and their westward traveling encampments, obtained the promise of President James K. Polk that an opportunity would be given for a company of at least 500 men to march with the "Army of the West" to California. ... Elder **Little had proposed to raise 1000** settlers for California in the eastern branches of the church and 1000 men from their encampments on the Missouri, but the administration decided to take into service **only 500 men**.

... Unfortunately there were many misapprehensions concerning the enlistment of this company of volunteers. For a **long time** it was represented as current traditional history that the opportunity given for enlistment was a "demand" or "requisition" or "draft"—sometimes one, sometimes another—of the United States government, unjust and out of all proportion to the membership of the church, and made from sinister motives of encompassing the destruction of the moving caravans either by scattering or annihilating them. First, in that if they refused to enlist, an excuse for halting their departure from the United States and their utter destruction would be justified; and on the other hand, if they complied and furnished the 500 young men, necessarily it would deplete their fighting force that they would fall victims to the large tribes of war-like Indians upon the plains and through the mountains. Nothing of this kind, of course, could be implied in the action of the administration at Washington, still it was so reported and believed. In the first place, **a much larger offer than 500 men was tendered to the administration, the service was almost piteously pleaded for by a representative of the church**—the president of the Eastern States Mission. ... The quota in most of the states was over-subscribed by three times the number asked for, and the United States did **not really need the service of the Mormon Battalion** of 500 men in the sense that there was a lack of volunteers. The war was a very popular one. (*History of the Church*, 1964, Vol. 7, pages 611-613)

Even though B. H. Roberts admits the truth concerning the Mormon Battalion, he is careful not to mention the fact that Brigham Young, John Taylor and Wilford Woodruff were the men who misrepresented the story of the Mormon Battalion.

Fortunately, we have been able to obtain a copy of the "Manuscript History of Brigham Young." This history proves beyond all doubt that the Mormon leaders requested the Government to help them and that President Polk did them a special favor when he called for the Battalion. Under the date of July 1, 1846, Brigham Young stated:

Noon, I addressed the assembly; wished them to make a distinction between this action of the general government, and our former oppressions in Missouri and Illinois. . . . Let the Mormons be the first men to set their feet on the soil of California. Capt. Allen has assumed the responsibility of saying that we may locate at Grand Island, until we can prosecute our journey. This is the first offer we have ever had from the government to benefit us.

I proposed that the five hundred volunteers by mustered, . . .

Elder H. C. Kimball moved that five hundred men be raised in conformity with the requisition from government, seconded by W. Richards and **carried unanimously**. (“Manuscript History of Brigham Young,” July 1, 1846, typed copy)

Under the date of July 6, 1846, Brigham Young includes a report from “Elder Jesse C. Little” which shows that the Mormons themselves were responsible for the Government calling for the Battalion:

I extract from the report of Elder Jesse C. Little:

To President Brigham Young and the Council of the Twelve Apostles:

Brethren: In your **letter of appointment to me**, dated “Temple of God, Nauvoo, January 26th, 1846,” **you suggested**, “If you [your?] government shall offer any facilities for emigrating to the Western coast, **embrace those facilities**, if possible. As a wise and faithful man, take every honorable advantage of the times you can.

“Be thou a savior and a deliverer of that people, and let virtue, integrity and truth, be your motto—salvation and glory the prize for which you contend.

“In Consonance **with my instructions**, I felt an anxious desire for the deliverance of the saints, and resolved upon visiting James K. Polk, President of the United States, to lay the situation of my persecuted brethren before him, and ask him, as the Representative of our country, to stretch forth the **federal arm in their behalf**.

“20th, I proceeded to Washington, . . .

“23rd, I went into the house of Representatives. Called upon Mr. Kendall and showed him my letters of introduction; we talked upon the subject of emigration, and he thought arrangements could be made to assist our emigration by **enlisting one thousand of our men**, arming, equipping and establishing them in California to defend the country; . . .

“27th, At eight p.m., saw Mr. Kendall who informed me the Cabinet had not fully decided; the plan offered was for me to go directly to the Camp, and have **one thousand men** fitted out and plunge into California, officered by our own men, the commanding officer to be appointed by President Polk, and to send **one thousand more** by way of Cape Horn, . . .

“5th, I visited President Polk, he informed me that we should be protected in California, and that five

hundred or one thousand of our people should be taken into the service, officered by our own men, said, that I should have letters from him, and from the Secretary of Navy to the Squadron. I waived the President’s proposal until evening, when I wrote a **letter of acceptance**.

. . . .

“30th, I started for the camp.

J. C. Little.”

(“Manuscript History of Brigham Young,” July 6, 1846, typed copy)

In a letter to “Prest. Samuel Bent & Council,” dated July 7, 1846, Brigham Young stated:

Elder Little, President of the New England churches, is here also, direct from Washington, who has been to see the President on the subject of emigrating the Saints to the western coast, and confirms all that Capt. Allen has stated to us. **The U.S. want our friendship, the President want to do us good**, and secure our confidence. The outfit of these five hundred men **costs us nothing, and their pay will be sufficient to take their families over the mountain**. There is war between Mexico and the U.S., to whom California must fall prey, and if we are the first settlers, the old citizens cannot have a Hancock or Missouri pretext to mob the saints. **The thing is from above, for our good, has long been understood between us and the U.S. Government**, but the first blow was struck sooner than we anticipated, the church would not help the Twelve over the mountains when they wanted to go, and now we will help the churches. (“Manuscript History of Brigham Young,” July 7, 1846, typed copy)

In another letter, written the same day, Brigham Young stated:

Beloved brethren: We send you another leaf of the Gospel, which you know is glad tidings, or that which bringeth salvation and we feel assured, that you will consider that salvation, which shall deliver you from the care, trouble and anxiety of raising teams to ship the poor saints over the Mountains, and this is the **Gospel we send**. . . .

The enclosed orders of Col. Kearney to Capt. Allen and his circular to the Mormons, together with the information you received from bro. Little, will give you some idea of the object of their visit to this place, which is, to raise the five hundred volunteer to march into California as United States soldiers. By this time you will probably exclaim, is this Gospel? We answer, **Yes**. . . . The pay of the five hundred men **will take their families to them**. The Mormons will then be the old settlers and have a chance to choose the best locations. The principle of the thing is **not new to us**, though we have thought best **to say but little about it; it is all right** and we will give you particulars the first opportunity. (“Manuscript History of Brigham Young,” July 7, 1846, typed copy)

On July 3, 1846, Brigham Young made a speech in which he made the following statement:

Now, suppose we refuse this privilege, what will we do, If you won't go, I will go and leave you. We told you sometime ago we would fit you out to go, and now we are ready to fit you out with Capn. Allen as the agent of the U.S. **to help us, the President has now stretched out his land to help us and I thank God and him too.** ("Manuscript History of Brigham Young," July 13, 1846, typed copy)

On August 9, 1846, the Mormon Church wrote a letter to James K. Polk, President of the United States, which was signed by Brigham Young. In this letter we find the following:

While on our way thither and beyond the borders of the states, we were met by Captn. J. Allen of your army of the West, proffering us the enrolment of five hundred men to be marched into California, . . . we were cheered with the presence of our friend, Mr. Little of New Hampshire, who assured us of **the personal friendship of the President**, in the act before us, and this assurance, though **not doubted** by us in the least, was soon **made doubly sure**, by the testimony of Col. Kane of Philadelphia, whose presence in our midst, and the ardor with which he has espoused the cause of a persecuted and suffering people, and the testimony he has borne of your Excellency's kind feelings, have kindled up a spark in our hearts . . . not a spark of love of liberty or democracy, that can not be, but love of a country or rulers, from whom previously we had received but little save neglect and persecution.

1. Resolved, that as children of the United States we have not been disappointed in our anticipations of a brighter day and a more righteous administration in our endeavors for the canvass of his Excellency James K. Polk to the Presidency.

2. Resolved that **the thanks of this people be presented to President Polk for his friendly offer of transferring five hundred of our brethren to the land of their destination** under the command of Col. Allen.

6. Therefore, resolved that we have the **fullest confidence** in the friendly protection of Prest. Polk, that our hearts are with him to do good, and sustain the best government of earth; that he may depend on our warmest gratitude and our cordial co-operation in all things that shall tend to exalt him, and our fellow creatures, and that our faith, prayers and blessings shall rest upon him, so long as he shall magnify those glorious principles he has espoused, which we trust will be eternally.

Done on the west bank of the Mo. river, near Council Bluffs, Omaha nation, Aug. 9, 1846, in general council of the Church aforesaid.

WILLARD RICHARDS, Clerk.

BRIGHAM YOUNG, President.

("Manuscript History of Brigham Young," August 9, 1846, typed copy)

R. N. Baskin quotes Henry W. Lawrence as making the following statement concerning the Mormon Battalion:

"In 1847, during the Mexican war, when the Mormons were on the frontier, all in their camps, going out to Salt Lake—or west somewhere, there was a battalion called for from the Mormons to go and fight the battles in Mexico. I always supposed, from the teachings of the Mormon leaders, that it was a requisition, and I have heard over and over the government handled roughly—denounced for calling upon the Mormon people for 500 of their best men, to cripple them right there on the banks of the Missouri, in the most trying time. The people were taught that the government had called for these men so that we would not be prepared to protect ourselves against even the Indians. It was so represented by our leaders. I used often to think that that was a most damnable thing. That was preached in sermons by Brigham Young, by George A. Smith and the other leading men of the church, time and time again. The true condition of the thing was, we afterwards found out, and it was one of the things that turned me against the system, that it was on the solicitation of the agents of this church that that battalion was asked for. Jesse S. Little was one of them. The government, out of kindness to the people, and on the solicitations of the agents of this church, asked for that battalion. They paid them one or two months' wages in advance, and that money was used to help buy teams and assistance for the people, and helped them to come out here to Salt Lake. Instead of the truth being told, they were told that it was done in order to cripple them in the face of the Indians. This was one of the things they taught the people to prejudice them against the government of the United States.

"From 1862 to 1865 the most radical talk was indulged in; since that time they have been a little more careful in their expressions. This talk was indulged in, not only by Brigham Young, H. C. Kimball, Geo. A. Smith and the twelve apostles, but by other leading men of the Mormon church. We were told that the government had allowed us to be driven from our homes, deprived of our property, the saints to be murdered, the prophets to be murdered, and that they had deprived us of all our rights as American citizens, and that by that means we were alienated from the government. Had it not been for the teachings that were given to them by the leaders, there is no reason why the people should not have been friendly to the government of the United States. If they felt that they were free from the obligations of the church, they would be a good, loyal people." (*Reminiscences of Early Utah*, by R. N. Baskin, 1914, pages 195-196)

R. N. Baskin charged that Brigham Young was guilty of "flagrant duplicity" because of his statements concerning the Mormon Battalion:

The foregoing remarks of Brigham Young on the subject of the Mormon Battalion is one among the many instances which show his **flagrant duplicity**; . . . (*Reminiscences of Early Utah*, page 197)

A careful comparison of Brigham Young's statements made in 1846 with statements he made in 1857 does seem to show "duplicity" on his part. Below is a comparison of some of his statements:

1846

Elder Little, President of the New England churches, is here also, direct from Washington, who has been to see the President on the subject of emigrating the Saints to the western coast. **The U.S. want our friendship, the President want to do us good**, and secure our confidence. The outfit of these five hundred men **costs us nothing, and their pay will be sufficient to take their families over the mountains. . . . The thing is from above, for our good, has long been understood between us and the U.S. Government**, . . . ("Manuscript History of Brigham Young," July 7, 1846, typed copy)

1857

There **cannot** be a more **damnable, dastardly order issued than was issued** by the Administration to this people while they were in an Indian country, in 1846. . . . the poor, low, **degraded curses** sent a requisition for five hundred of our men to go and fight their battles! That was **President Polk**; and he is now **weltering in hell** with old Zachary Taylor, where the present administrators will soon be, if they do not repent. . . . There is high treason in Washington; and if the law was carried out, it would hang up many of them. And the very act of James K. Polk in taking five hundred of our men, while we were making our way out of the country under an agreement forced upon us, would have **hung him between the heavens and the earth**, if the law had been faithfully executed. (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 5, pages 231, 232 and 235)

These statements by Brigham Young reveal duplicity of the very worst kind. We could compare some of the other statements which he made, but this should be sufficient to convince the reader.

Robert Mullen, in his new book, *The Latter-day Saints*, still claims that the Government's request for 500 men was a means of persecuting the Mormons:

. . . Captain James Allen of the U.S. Army sought out the leaders. He had a request, almost an **ultimatum** for the raising of a battalion . . .

Scarcely could a more **unfair demand be imagined**. Young heard that it had been sparked by Senator Thomas Hart Benton of Missouri, who insisted that the Mormons prove their loyalty and who was thought by some to be seeking an excuse to organize further persecution . . . (*The Latter-day Saints*, 1966, page 97)

The Mormon writer Leonard J. Arrington has made this statement concerning Mr. Mullen's book:

Some of his history is not very sophisticated, as when he interprets the Mormon Battalion as resulting from an unfair ultimatum from an hostile government forced upon the hapless Saints in a moment of trial and desperation (p. 97). Several other **myths** which sometimes find their way into Sunday School and seminary classes also find expression in *The Latter-day Saints*. (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Vol. 1, no. 4, page 119)

In the chapters that will follow we hope to deal with several other myths which are found in Mormon writings.

4. CENSORSHIP AND SUPPRESSION

For years we have claimed that the Mormon Church leaders have changed vital church records and suppressed important documents; now a Mormon writer has virtually admitted that this is true and has called upon the leaders of the Church to use honesty in presenting their history. Frances Lee Menlove, a Mormon psychologist, wrote the following in an article for *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*:

But the story of Joseph Smith, the early Church, the hegira across the plains, and the consequent establishment of Zion is more than just history. It is the story of God directing His People to a new Dispensation. Perhaps because the history is so fraught with theological significance, it has been **smoothed and whittled down**, a wrinkle **removed** here and a sharp edge there. In many ways it has assumed the character **of a myth**. That these courageous and inspired men shared the shortcomings of all men cannot be seriously doubted. That the Saints were not perfect nor their leaders without error is evident to anyone who cares to read the original records of the Church. But the **myths and the myth-making persist**. **Striking evidence for this is found in the fact that currently one of the most successful anti-Mormon proselyting techniques is merely to bring to light obscure or suppressed historical documents**. Reading these historical documents arouses a considerable amount of incredulity, concern, and **disenchantment** among Mormons under the spell of this mythological view of history. That individuals find these bits and pieces of history so **shocking and faith-shattering** is at once the meat of fundamentalistic heresies and an indictment of the quasi-suppression of **historical reality** which propagates the one-sided view of Mormon history.

The relevance of this to **honesty** is obvious. The net result of mythologizing our history is that the hard truth is concealed. It is **deception** to select only congenial facts or to twist their meaning so that error becomes wisdom, or to **pretend** that the Church exists now and has existed in a vacuum uninfluenced by cultural values, passing fashions, and political ideologies.

There are other temptations to public dishonesty in the Church, temptation to use pretense and distortion to forward the work of the Church. This is the dishonesty of the missionary who presents only those facts or arguments which tend to support his purpose or who

takes a scripture out of context or distorts its meaning a little to add to the evidence marshalled for the point he is making. Invoking a higher law or greater truth can also be a form of dishonesty. This occurs when someone's views are suppressed or historical manuscripts **censored**, not because they are false but because they might cause dissension or disturb the faithful or imperil unity. . . . Another motive behind some kinds of public dishonesty is the belief that the naked **truth** would be harmful to the simple believer. The assumption here is simply that the believer remains better off with his delusions intact, that faith suffers when it **bumps into reality**. The reasoning of those who distort or **suppress reality** or **alter historical manuscripts** to protect the **delusions** of the simple believer is similar to that of the man who **murders a child to protect him from a violent world**.

The very nature of the Church demands both personal and public honesty, . . . **The Church's leaders must demonstrate for its members the quest for honesty**, . . . Because of the tremendous power the Church has in molding and teaching its members, it has an especially sacred responsibility not to **misuse this power**. . . . The appearance of the Church should never be enhanced at the expense of reality. To distort the reality of the Church as it is understood, to use tricks of manipulation or "salesmanship," to distort arguments by taking them out of context or by skillful omissions, no matter how good the intentions or how noble the aim, is to provide the participants with **practice in deception** and the observers with a **blueprint for dishonesty**.

Secondly, the Church must avoid any discrepancy between the appearance and the reality. The human failings and occasional misdirections must **not be suppressed or omitted** from our books, but recognised as the manifestations of those who are less than perfect struggling within the limitations of their understanding. Not only does failure to do this provide an **example of dishonesty**, but when individuals discover that the Church they have been shown is **not** the Church as it is in actuality, they may feel that they have uncovered some dark, dangerous secret, a secret that had better be pushed to the back of the mind and forgotten—or a secret that provides evidence for abandoning their faith. There should be nothing based on fact that anyone can say about the Church that the Church has not already said about itself. (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Spring, 1966, pages 49-52)

Censorship

In chapter 2 of this book, we show that the Mormon leaders have made important changes in the policies and doctrines of the Church. Because the leaders do not want their people to know that such changes take place, they sometimes alter the church records.

An example of a change in policy that caused several changes in Mormon records is the attitude of the Mormon leaders concerning the “Word of Wisdom.” The “Word of Wisdom” is a revelation given by Joseph Smith on February 27, 1833. It forbids the use of hot drinks, alcoholic beverages and tobacco. The Mormon writer John J. Stewart made this statement concerning the “Word of Wisdom”:

... no one can hold high office in the Church, on even the stake or ward level, nor participate in temple work, who is a known user of tea, coffee, liquor or tobacco. ...

The Prophet himself carefully observed the Word of Wisdom, and insisted upon its observance by other men in high Church positions, although he seems to have been quite tolerant of others’ weakness in this regard. (*Joseph Smith The Mormon Prophet*, Salt Lake City, 1966, page 90)

In spite of this statement by John J. Stewart, Joseph Smith did not keep the “Word of Wisdom,” and at times he would even advise others to disobey it. Because of the importance that is now placed upon the “Word of Wisdom,” most members of the Mormon Church would be shocked to learn that Joseph Smith did not keep it. In fact, Joseph Smith, the man who introduced the Temple Ceremony into the Mormon Church, would not be able to go through the Temple if he were living today because of his frequent use of alcoholic beverages. In his history, Joseph Smith admitted several times that he drank wine, and under the date of June 1, 1844, he stated that he had “a glass of beer at Moessers.” The statement concerning the glass of beer was apparently very embarrassing to later Mormon leaders, for in recent editions of the *History of the Church* it has been deleted. Below is a comparison of this portion of Joseph Smith’s history as first published in the *Millennial Star* and the way it has been changed to read in recent editions of the *History of the Church*.

Then went to John P. Greene’s, and paid him and another brother \$200. **Drank a glass of beer at Moessers.** Called at William Clayton’s, ... (*Millennial Star*, vol. 23, page 720)

Then went to John P. Greene’s, and paid him and another brother \$200. Called at William Clayton’s, ... (*History of the Church*, vol. 6, page 424)

Other important changes concerning the “Word of Wisdom” were made in Joseph Smith’s history. At one time Joseph Smith encouraged the “brethren” to break the “Word of Wisdom.” Later Mormon historians, however, deleted 23 words from this statement. Below is a comparison of this statement as it was originally published and the way it has been changed to read in modern editions of the *History of the Church*.

It was reported to me that some of the brethren had been drinking whisky that day in violation of the Word of Wisdom,

I called the brethren in and investigated the case, and was satisfied that no evil had been done, **and gave them a couple of dollars, with directions to replenish the bottle to stimulate them in the fatigues of their sleepless journey.** (*Millennial Star*, Vol. 21, page 283)

It was reported to me that some of the brethren had been drinking whisky that day in violation of the Word of Wisdom.

I called the brethren in and investigated the case, and was satisfied that no evil had been done. (*History of the Church*, Vol. 5, page 450)

Another important change was made in the *History of the Church* under the date of June 27, 1844—the day of Joseph Smith’s death. In the version that was first published, Joseph Smith recommended that the Apostle Willard Richards use a pipe and tobacco to settle his stomach; in recent editions of the *History of the Church* this has been changed. Below is a comparison of the two versions.

Dr. Richards was taken sick, when Joseph said, “Brother Markham, as you have a pass from the Governor to go in and out of the jail, go and get the Doctor **a pipe and some tobacco** to settle his stomach,” and Markham went out for **them**. When he had got the **pipe and tobacco**, and was returning to jail, ... (*Millennial Star*, vol. 24, page 471)

Dr. Richards was taken sick, when Joseph said, “Brother Markham, as you have a pass from the Governor to go in and out of the jail, go and get the doctor **something he needs** to settle his stomach,” and Markham went out for **medicine**. When he had got the **remedies desired**, and was returning to jail, ... (*History of the Church*, vol. 6, page 614)

It would appear from this reference that the Apostle Willard Richards was accustomed to the use of tobacco. Tobacco would certainly not settle the stomach unless a person was accustomed to its use. Apparently Willard Richards continued to use his pipe until his death. Claire Noall relates the following:

HISTORY OF JOSEPH SMITH.

(Continued from page 706.)

A Presidential election was recently held on board the *Osprey*, and the result was as follows:—

Joseph Smith,	65 gentlemen, and 6 ladies
Henry Clay,	27 " " 3 "
Van Buren,	12 " " 0 "

Friday, 31.—"State of Illinois, }
City of Nauvoo, } ss.
May 31, 1844.

Then and there personally appeared before me, Joseph Smith, Mayor of the City of Nauvoo, the undersigned H. T. Hugins, of Burlington, Iowa Territory, and made solemn oath that Thomas B. Johnson did, on the 30th day of May, 1844, declare in his presence that he intended to bring dragoons and troops of the United States from Iowa Territory into this city, for the purpose of resisting the authority and power of the Municipal Court of said city, and that he should disregard entirely the authority of said court, and that he deemed the authority of said court of no effect. Deponent further states that said Johnson, in his said conversation, had reference to the case of Jeremiah Smith, which had been decided by said court.

H. T. HUGINS,
Subscribed and sworn to before me,
this 31st day of May, 1844,
WM. W. PHELPS, Clerk M. C."

Upon the foregoing affidavit, I issued a *capias* to arrest T. B. Johnson for threatening the peace of the city with

United States dragoons. At 10 a.m., called at my office. At 1 p.m., called to see sister Richards, who was sick. I administered to her the laying on of hands, when she felt better. Afternoon, I attended General Council, when brother Emmett made his report. Rode out in the evening to Van Orden's, and paid him \$100. Two or three Indians staid in the hall all night.

Saturday, June 1. At home. Some gentle showers.

At one, p.m., I rode out with Dr. Richards and O. P. Rockwell. Called on Davis at the Boat. Paid Manhard \$90. Met George J. Adams, and paid him \$50. Then went to John P. Greene's, and paid him and another brother \$200. Drank a glass of beer at Moessers. Called at William Clayton's, while Dr. Richards and O. P. Rockwell called at the Doctor's new house. Returned home at 4 p.m.

At 8 p.m., Peter Maughan, John Saunders, and Jacob Peart called at Dr. Richards' to consult about a coal-bed on Rock River. I suggested that it would be profitable to employ the *Maid of Iowa* in the business of carrying the coal, &c.; and all approved of this plan.

President B. Young and Elder John E. Page held a Conference in Pittsburgh.

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At one, p. m., I rode out with Dr. Richards and Orrin P. Rockwell. Called on Davis at the boat. Paid Manhard \$90. Met George J. Adams, and paid him \$50. Then went to John P. Greene's, and paid him and another brother \$200. Called at William Clayton's, while Dr. Richards and Orrin P. Rockwell called at the doctor's new house. Returned home at 4:30 p. m.

At 8 p. m., Peter Maughan, John Saunders, and Jacob Peart called at Dr. Richards' to consult about a coal-bed on Rock River. I suggested it would be profitable to employ the *Maid of Iowa* in the business of carrying the coal, &c; and all approved of this plan.

President Brigham Young and Elder John E. Page held a conference in Pittsburg.

The top photograph is from the *Millennial Star*, Vol. 23, page 720. The bottom photograph is from the *History of the Church*, 1950 edition, Vol. 6, page 424. Notice that the words "drank a glass of beer at Moessers" have been deleted.

against us; but certain circumstances make your attendance very necessary.

J. S."

A. W. Babbitt took the letter, and left the jail. He handed it to Jones, with directions to take it to Quincy forthwith. The guard being aware of the letter, told the mob that "old Joe" had sent orders to raise the Nauvoo Legion to come and rescue him. The mob gathered around Jones, and demanded the letter; some of them wanted to take it from him by force, and said that Jones should not get out of Carthage alive, as a dozen men had started off with their rifles to waylay him in the woods. Having previously ordered his horse, Jones took advantage of their disagreement, and started off at full speed. He, by mistake, took the Warsaw road, and so avoided the men who were laying in wait for him. When he emerged on the prairie, he saw the Governor and his *posse*, whereupon he left the Warsaw road for the Nauvoo road.

Dr. Southwick called at the jail. Joseph gave him a note to Governor Ford or General Deming, requesting them to furnish him with a pass.

1½ p.m. Joseph, Hyrum, and Willard dined in their room. Taylor and Markham dined below.

1½ p.m. Dr. Richards was taken sick, when Joseph said, "Brother Markham, as you have a pass from the Governor to go in and out of the jail, go and get the Doctor a pipe and some tobacco to settle his stomach," and Markham went out for them. When he had got the pipe and tobacco, and was returning to jail, a man by the name of Stewart called out, "Old man, you have got to leave the town in five minutes." Markham replied, "I shall not do it." A company of Carthage Greys gathered round him, put him on his horse, and forced him out of the town at the point of the bayonet.

3¼ p.m. The guard began to be more severe in their operations, threatening among themselves, and telling what they would do when the excitement was over.

Elder Taylor sang the following:—

"A poor wayfaring man of grief,
Hath often cross'd me on my way,
Who sued so humbly for relief
That I could never answer, Nay.

I had not power to ask his name;
Whither he went or whence he came;
Yet there was something in his eye
That won my love, I know not why.

Once, when my scanty meal was spread,
He entered—not a word he spake!
Just perishing for want of bread;
I gave him all; he blessed it, brake,

And ate, but gave me part again;
Mine was an angel's portion then,
For while I fed with eager haste,
The crust was manna to my taste.

I spied him where a fountain burst,
Clear from the rock—his strength was gone,
The heedless water mock'd his thirst,
He heard it, saw it hurrying on.

I ran and rais'd the sufferer up;
Thrice from the stream he drain'd my cup,
Dipp'd, and return'd it running o'er;
I drank and never thirsted more.

'Twas night, the floods were out, it blew
A winter hurricane aloof;
I heard his voice, abroad, and flew
To bid him welcome to my roof.

I warm'd, I cloth'd, I cheer'd my guest,
I laid him on my couch to rest;
Then made the earth my bed, and seem'd
In Eden's garden while I dream'd.

Stripp'd, wounded, beaten nigh to death,
I found him by the highway side;
I rous'd his pulse, brought back his breath,
Reviv'd his spirit, and supplied

Wine, oil, refreshment—he was heal'd;
I had myself a wound conceal'd;
But from that hour forgot the smart,
And peace bound up my broken heart.

In prison I saw him next—condemn'd
To meet a traitor's doom at morn;
The tide of lying tongues I stemm'd,
And honour'd him 'mid shame and scorn.

My friendship's utmost zeal to try,
He asked, if I for him would die;
The flesh was weak, my blood ran chill,
But the free spirit cried, "I will!"

Then in a moment to my view,
The stranger started from disguise;
The tokens in his hands I knew,
The Saviour stood before mine eyes.

He spake—and my poor name he nam'd—
"Of me thou hast not been asham'd;
These deeds shall thy memorial be;
Fear not, thou didst them unto me."

When he got through, Joseph requested him to sing it again, which he did.

Hyrum read extracts from Josephus.

4 p.m. The guard was again changed, only eight men being stationed at the jail, whilst the main body of the Carthage Greys were in camp about a quarter of a mile distant, on the public square.

4½. Joseph commenced conversing with the guard about Joseph H. Jack-

posse, whereupon he left the Warsaw road for the Nauvoo road.

Dr. Southwick called at the jail. Joseph gave him a note to Governor Ford or General Deming, requesting them to furnish him with a pass.

1:15. *p. m.*—Joseph, Hyrum, and Willard dined in their room. Taylor and Markham dined below.

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Markham
Forced
out of
Carthage.

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Once, when my scanty meal was spread,
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Just perishing for want of bread;
I gave him all; he blessed it, brake,

And ate, but gave me part again;
Mine was an angel's portion then,
For while I fed with eager haste,
The crust was manna to my taste.

This is a photograph from the *History of the Church*, 1950 edition, Vol. 6, page 614. Compare the words that are underlined with the underlined words on the previous page. The reference has been changed to make it appear that it was “medicine” which Joseph Smith recommended instead of “a pipe and some tobacco.”

While his father lay ill during the last weeks of his life, Heber John used to light **his pipe** at the hearth and take it to him. He told this story to his daughter, Rhoda Richards Stevenson. She repeated the story to me. (*Intimate Disciple, A Portrait of Willard Richards*, Salt Lake City, 1957, page 520)

At any rate, recent Mormon leaders have been very embarrassed about the early leaders' disregard for the "Word of Wisdom," and they have made several important changes in the *History of the Church* and other publications to cover up this change in policy. The Mormon Apostle John A. Widtsoe, however, claimed that they did not try to cover up anything in Joseph Smith's history. He stated:

The Prophet and the Church stand in this history free of historical interpretations and other external trappings. There are no arguments for its case. **There are no attempts to "cover over" any event.** (*Evidences and Reconciliations*, 3 volumes in 1, Salt Lake City, 1960, page 332)

It does not take much research to show that this statement is completely false. At one time we made a study of the changes in the *History of the Church* and estimated that more than 17,000 words had been added and over 45,000 deleted from the time the history was first printed. We now have evidence to show that many important changes were made before the history was first printed. These changes were made after Joseph Smith's death. In other words, the Mormon historians altered Joseph Smith's words before the first publication of his history appeared. If any legal document had been changed in the same way that the *History of the Church* has, someone would be in serious trouble.

LaMar Petersen made this interesting observation concerning the changes in Joseph Smith's history:

The reason for certain changes in the History of Joseph Smith are understandable. Joseph was sometimes more forthright than his redactors would permit. (*Problems in Mormon Text*, Salt Lake City, 1957, page 14)

We hope to deal with the changes in the *History of the Church* at greater length in a later volume.

Key to Theology

In the year 1855, the Mormon Apostle Parley P. Pratt published a book entitled *Key to the Science of Theology*. Two years later Parley P. Pratt was "assassinated" at Van Buren, Arkansas. The Church, however, has continued to reprint his book. In 1965, the Deseret Book Co., which is owed by the Mormon Church, printed the "Ninth Edition." We have compared the 1965 reprint with the original 1855 edition and have found that many important changes have been made. Some of the most important changes are concerning the doctrine of polygamy.

On the pages which follow the reader will find photographs of some pages of the original 1855 edition of the *Key to Theology*. We have compared these pages with the 1965 reprint and have marked the changes on the photographs. Therefore, the text is an exact photographic reproduction of the first edition, and the handwriting shows the changes that would have to be made in the text to bring it into conformity with the 1965 reprint. Below the reader will find a simply key to help him understand the nature of the changes. Words that are crossed out have been deleted from the text by the Mormon leaders without indication.

Key to Markings

Words added are red letters in a red box with an insertion ^ arrow showing where they are added.

Textual changes are in a green box in the text with a line through words to be changed and the new words noted in the margin. Boxes are connected with a line.

Words deleted are in a blue box with a line through the deleted words.

riches and enjoyments? Or, would you, like your heavenly Father, prompted by eternal benevolence and charity, wish to fill countless millions of worlds, with your begotten sons and daughters, and to bring them through all the gradations of progressive being, to inherit immortal bodies, and eternal mansions in your several dominions?

If such be your aspirations, remember that this present probation is the world of preparation for joys eternal. This is the place where family organization is first formed for eternity; and where the kindred sympathies, relationships, and affections take root, spring forth, shoot upward, bud, blossom, and bear fruit to ripen and mature in eternal ages.

Here, in the holy temples and sanctuaries of our God, must the everlasting covenants be revealed, ratified, sealed, bound and recorded in the holy records, and guarded and preserved in the archives of God's kingdom, by those who hold the keys of eternal Apostleship, who have power to bind on earth that which shall be bound in heaven, and to record on earth that which shall be recorded in the archives of heaven, in the Lamb's book of life.

Here, in the holy sanctuary, must be revealed, ordained and anointed the kings and queens of eternity.

All vows, covenants, contracts, marriages, of unions, not formed by revelation, and sealed for time and all eternity, and recorded in the holy archives

of earth and heaven, by the ministration of the holy and eternal PRIESTHOOD, will be dissolved by death, and will not be recognised by the eternal authorities, after the parties have entered through the veil into the eternal world.

This is heaven's eternal law, as revealed to the ancients of all ages, who held the keys of eternal priesthood, after the order of the Son of God; and, as restored with the priesthood of the Saints of this age.

~~Again, it was a law of the ancient Priesthood, and is again restored, that a man who is faithful in all things, may, by the word of the Lord, through the administration of one holding the keys to bind on earth and heaven, receive and secure to himself, for time and all eternity, MORE THAN ONE WIFE.~~

~~Thus did Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, the Patriarchs and Prophets of old.~~

~~The principal object contemplated by this law, is the multiplication of the children of good and worthy fathers, who will teach them the truth, and train them in the holy principles of salvation. This is far preferable to sending them into the world in the lineage of an unworthy or ignorant parentage, to be educated in error, folly, ignorance and crime.~~

~~The peculiar characteristics of the blessings included in the Everlasting Covenant made with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and their lineage, was the multiplicity of their seed; and the perpetuity of the royal, priestly and kingly power in their lineage.~~

~~To assist in carrying out and fulfilling this covenant, good and virtuous women were given to their faithful Prophets, rulers, and wise and virtuous men; and, as it was said of the four wives of Jacob, "These did build the house of Israel."~~

~~While peculiar blessings and encouragements were given to a good and faithful man, and to his wives and children; while they were honoured of God, and respected by all who knew them; while the father of a hundred children was had in greater honour than the hero of a hundred battles, adultery, fornication, and all unlawful intercourse was strictly prohibited, and even punished by the strictest laws—the penalty of which was death.~~

~~A daughter of Israel, who, by prostitution, was rendered unworthy, or unqualified for the duties of a virtuous wife and mother, was considered unfit to live. While the male who would thus trifle with the fountain of life, and contribute to render a female unworthy to answer the end of her creation, was also condemned to death.~~

Strict laws were also given and diligently taught to both sexes, regulating the intercourse between husband and wife. All intercourse peculiar to the sexes was strictly prohibited at certain seasons which were untimely. Nor were the bonds of wedlock and shield from condemnation, where the parties, by untimely union, excess, or voluntary act, prevented propagation, or injured the life or health of themselves or their offspring.

The object of the union of the sexes is the propagation of their species, or procreation; also for mutual affection, and the cultivation of those eternal principles of never-ending charity and benevolence, which are inspired by the Eternal Spirit; also for mutual comfort and assistance in this world of toil and sorrow, and for mutual duties towards their offspring.

Marriage, and its duties, are therefore, not a mere matter of choice, or of convenience, or of pleasure to the parties; but to marry and multiply is a positive command of Almighty God, binding on all persons of both sexes, who are circumstanced and conditioned to fulfil the same. To marry, propagate our species, do our duty to them, and to educate them in the light of truth, are among the chief objects of our existence on the earth. To neglect these duties, is to fail to answer the end of our creation, and is a very great sin.

While to pervert our natures, and to prostitute ourselves, and our strength to mere pleasures, or to unlawful communion of the sexes, is alike subversive of health, of pure, holy and lasting affection; of moral and social order; and of the laws of God and nature.

If we except murder, there is scarcely a more damning sin on the earth than the prostitution of female virtue or chastity at the shrine of pleasure, or brutal lust; or that promiscuous and lawless intercourse which chills and corrodes the heart, perverts and destroys the pure affections, cankers and destroys;

as it were, the well-springs, the fountains, or issues of life.

A man who obeys the ordinances of God, and is without blemish or deformity, who has sound health and mature age, and enjoys liberty and access to the elements of life, is designed to be the head of a woman, a father, and a guide of the weaker sex, and of those of tender age, to mansions of eternal life and salvation.

A woman, under similar circumstances, is designed to be the glory of some man in the Lord; to be led and governed by him, as her head in all things, even as Christ is the head of the man; to honour, obey, love, serve, comfort and help him in all things; to be a happy wife, and if blessed with offspring, a faithful and affectionate mother, devoting her life to the joys, cares and duties of her domestic sphere.

It frequently happens, in the course of human events, that there is, in a community, a majority of females. In such cases, human laws have no right to interfere with the divine eternal laws of nature, or of nature's God, by suffering females to be prostituted to minister to the wanton pleasures of the lawless, to become the unlawful, dishonoured mistress, the illegitimate mother, or the wretched outcast of shame, disease and crime. Nor yet, on the other hand, have human laws the right to doom a portion of heaven's fair daughters, to single wretchedness, loneliness and gloom, without the lawful privilege of becoming honoured wives and mothers.

A wise legislation, or the law of God, would punish, with just severity, the crimes of adultery or fornication, and would not suffer the idiot, the confirmed, irreclaimable drunkard, the man of hereditary disease, or of vicious habits, to possess or retain a wife; while, at the same time, it would provide for a good and capable man, to honourably receive and maintain more wives than one. Indeed, it should be the privilege of every virtuous female, who has the requisite capacity and qualifications for matrimony, to demand either of individuals or government, the privilege of becoming an honoured and legal wife and mother; even if it were necessary for her to be married to a man who has several wives; or, as Jesus said in the parable, to take the one talent from the place where it remains neglected or unimproved, and give it to him who has ten talents.

The false and corrupt institutions, and still more corrupt practices of "*Christendom*," have had a downward tendency in the generations of man for many centuries. Our physical organization, health, vigour, strength of body, intellectual faculties, inclinations, &c., are influenced very much by parentage. Hereditary disease, idiocy, weakness of mind, or of constitution, deformity, tendency to violent and ungovernable passions, vicious appetites and desires, are engendered by parents; and are bequeathed as a heritage from generation to generation. Man becomes a murderer, a thief, an adulterer, a drunkard,

often

a lover of tobacco, opium, or other nauseous or poisonous drugs, by means of the predisposition, and inclinations engendered by parentage.

The people before the flood, and also the Sodomites and Canaanites, had carried these corruptions and degeneracies so far, that God, in mercy, destroyed them, and thus put an end to the procreation of races so degenerate and abominable; while Noah, Abraham, Melchisedech, and others, who were taught in the true laws of procreation, "*were perfect in their generation,*" and trained their children in the same laws.

The overthrow of those ancient degenerate races is a type of that which now awaits the nations called "*Christian,*" or in other words, *The great whore of all the earth, for her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.*

Where is the nation called "*Christian,*" that does not uphold or permit prostitution, fornication and adultery with all their debasing, demoralizing, degenerating and corroding effects, with all their tendencies to disease and crime, to operate unchecked, and to leaven and corrode all classes of society?

Where is the "*Christian nation*" that does not prohibit the law of God, as given to Abraham and the ancients in relation to marriage?

Where is the "*Christian nation*" that punishes the crime of adultery and fornication with death, or other heavy penalties?

Where are the institutions which prohibit the

marriage of all persons disqualified by nature, or by vicious habits and practices, to answer the ends of an institution so holy and pure?

Where are the institutions which would protect, encourage, and honour the patriarch Jacob, with his four wives and their children?

Where is the community who would feel themselves honoured in associating with such a family—although, all corrupt practices would be frowned down, and all persons discountenanced, who, under the name of gentility, nobility, or royalty, glory in their conquests and victories over the principles and practices of virtue and innocence?

Echo answers, Where?—unless we look to the far-off mountains and distant vales of Deseret, a land peopled by the Latter-day Saints, and governed by the law of God, the keys of the eternal Priesthood, and organized in the New and Everlasting Covenant.

Amid these eternal mountains shall be reared the holy temple of our God, and all nations shall flow unto it, in order to be taught in His ways, and to walk in His paths, for out of Zion has gone forth the law, as predicted by the Prophet Isaiah.*

By this law those distant communities live. There the patriarch of a hundred children is had in reverence and honour. His virtuous and honourable wives are considered as mothers in Israel, the daughters of

* See the law of God on Marriage, revealed for the government of the Saints. First published at Great Salt City, Deseret, 1852.

~~Abraham and Sarah, and worthy to be numbered with the holy women of old. And there the daughters of Israel are not prostituted with impunity. There, the crimes of adultery and fornication are seldom mentioned, or known to exist. There, no virtuous female is doomed by law, or custom, to drag out a useless life in the loneliness of the cloister; the monotonous and sinful pleasures of the Harem; the haunts of vice and crime; or in the lonely and heart-rending gloom and solitude of a single life.~~

in Zion

There, in the holy chambers of the sanctuary, are revealed and ministered those sacred ordinances, covenants, and sealings, which lay the foundation of kindred sympathies, associations, and family ties, indissoluble and eternal. Ties which are stronger than death, more durable than the ramparts of their snow-clad mountains, and which will never be dissolved—

"While life, or thought, or being lasts;
Or immortality endures."

The restoration of these pure laws and practices has commenced to improve or regenerate a race. A holy and temperate life; pure morals and manners; faith, hope, charity; cheerfulness, gentleness, integrity; intellectual development, pure truth, and knowledge; and above all, the operations of the Divine Spirit, will produce a race more beautiful in form and features, stronger, and more vigorous in constitution, happier in temperament and disposition, more

intellectual, less vicious, and better prepared for long life and good days in their mortal sojourn.

Each succeeding generation, governed by the same principles, will still improve, till male and female may live and multiply for a hundred years upon the earth—

"And after death in distant spheres,
The union still renew."

The eternal union of the sexes, in and after the resurrection, is mainly for the purpose of renewing and continuing the work of procreation. In our present or rudimental state, our offspring are in our own image, and partake of our natures, in which are the seeds of death. In like manner, will the offspring of immortal and celestial beings, be in the likeness and partake of the nature of their divine parentage. Hence, such offspring will be pure, holy, incorruptible and eternal. They will in no wise be subject unto death, except by descending to partake of the grosser elements, in which are the inherent properties of dissolution or death.

To descend thus, and to be made subject to sorrow, pain and death, is the only road to the resurrection, and to the higher degrees of immortality and eternal life. It is by contrast that intelligences appreciate and enjoy. How shall the sweet be known without the bitter? How shall joy be appreciated without sorrow? Or, how shall life be valued, or its eternal

duration appreciated without a contact with its mortal antagonist—death?

Hence, the highest degrees of eternal felicity are approached by the straight gate, and the narrow path which leads through the dark valley of death, to eternal mansions in the realms of endless life. This path has been trodden by the eternal Father, by His son Jesus Christ,—and by all the sons and daughters of God, who are exalted to a fulness of joys celestial.

As has been before remarked, the union of the sexes, in the eternal world, in the holy covenant of celestial matrimony, is peculiar to the ordinances and ministrations of the Apostleship, or Priesthood after the order of the Son of God, or after the order of Melchisedec. ~~The Aaronic Priesthood, or the institutions peculiar to the law of Moses, seemed to have recognized no such ordinances or eternal covenants, hence, the Jewish ordinances of matrimony come to end by death.~~

~~Nor did the sects of the Pharisees, Sadducees, or others of that nation, conceive of anything more lasting than this life, in the covenants of matrimony. Hence, the Son of God, in answer to the Sadducees, referred to the order of the angels, in the resurrection, instead of the order of the gods.~~

Thus But, the Apostles, holding the keys of the eternal mysteries of God's kingdom, to seal both on earth and in heaven, understood and testified, that, "The man is not without the woman, nor the woman without the man in the Lord,"

All persons who attain to the resurrection, and to salvation, without these eternal ordinances, or sealing covenants, will remain in a *single state*, in their saved condition, to all eternity, without the joys of eternal union with the other sex, and consequently without a crown, without a kingdom, without the power to increase.

Hence, they are angels, and are not gods; and are ministering spirits, or servants, in the employ and under the direction of THE ROYAL FAMILY OF HEAVEN—THE PRINCES, KINGS, AND PRIESTS OF ETERNITY.

There have been many other important changes made in the *Key to Theology* which we do not have room to present here. A large number of changes have been made concerning the Godhead. We hope to present them in a chapter in a later volume.

It is very obvious that the changes which we have shown were deliberate falsifications, yet the Mormon leaders are not willing to admit that changes have been made. In a letter dated May 11, 1966, the Mormon Apostle LeGrand Richards seated:

... I know that the Church is true, **and that the original doctrines as they were revealed from heaven have not been changed**, ... (Letter to Morris L. Reynolds, dated May 11, 1966)

On page 14 of this book, we quoted Dr. Hugh Nibley, of the Brigham Young University, as making this statement: "Yet of all churches in the world only this one has not found it necessary to readjust any part of its doctrine in the last hundred years." On pages 61 and 62 of his booklet, *No, Ma'am, That's Not History*, Dr. Nibley stated:

The gospel as the Mormons know it sprang full-grown from the words of Joseph Smith. It has **never been worked over or touched up in any way**, and is **free of revisions and alterations**.

These statements by Dr. Nibley and LeGrand Richards are, of course, completely untrue. The Mormon leaders not only change the doctrines of the Church, but they also change their books to make it appear that no doctrinal changes have been made.

The changes in the *Key to Theology* were made many years after the Apostle Parley P. Pratt's death. An edition was published in 1883 (26 years after his death). We compared the 1883 edition with the original 1855 edition at the places where major changes were later made. In every instance the 1883 edition agreed with the first edition. This proves that the changes were made at least 26 years after Parley P. Pratt's death!

These changes cannot be explained away as "typographical errors" or accidental omissions. It is very evident that they were deliberate and premeditated. It is absolutely impossible to believe that every word concerning polygamy would accidentally be omitted from the reprint of this book.

Thus we see that censorship is a very important thing in the Mormon Church. It is apparently felt that more converts can be won to the church with a bogus history than with a true, factual one.

Journal of Discourses

Heber C. Kimball apparently objected to the censorship of his sermons, but Brigham Young was converted to the idea of censorship. Brigham Young once stated:

Brother Heber says that the music is taken out of his sermons when brother Carrington clips **out a word** here and there: and I have taken out the music from mine. . . .

I know that I have seen the day when, let men use language like brother Heber has to day, and many would apostatize from the true faith. In printing my remarks, I often **omit the sharp words**, ... (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 5, page 99)

After being censored, the sermons of the Mormon leaders were printed in the *Deseret News*. Later they were changed again and printed in the *Journal of Discourses*. But even after all of this censorship, many of these sermons are almost unbelievably crude and filled with doctrines which the Mormon leaders no longer teach.

On page 685 of his book *Essentials in Church History*, Joseph Fielding Smith, the Mormon Church Historian, lists the *Journal of Discourses* as a "Church" publication. The Mormon Apostle John A. Widtsoe made this statement:

... Brigham Young secured stenographic reports of his addresses. As he traveled among the people, reporters accompanied him. All that he said was recorded. Practically all of these discourses (from December 16, 1851, to August 19, 1877) were published in the *Journal of Discourses*, which was widely distributed. The public utterances of few great historical figures have been so faithfully and fully preserved. . . . The excerpts here presented came from his lips under the inspiration, at the moment, of the Power that guided his life. . . . It is marvelous that the enemies of Brigham Young, with this wealth of material before them, have found so little to use to his disadvantage. But, a dishonest or insincere man would not have had his public utterances reported and published all over the world. (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, by John A. Widtsoe, preface vi)

In the front of volume one of the *Journal of Discourses* appears a letter signed by Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball and Willard Richards (the First Presidency of the Mormon Church) from which we extract the following:

Dear Brethren—. . . Elder George D. Watt, by our counsel, . . . has been reporting the public Sermons, Discourses, Lectures, &c., delivered by the Presidency, the Twelve, and others in this city, . . . Elder Watt now proposes to publish a Journal of these Reports in

England, for the benefit of the Saints at large, and to obtain means to enable him to sustain his highly useful position of reporter. You will perceive at once that this will be a work of mutual benefit, and we cheerfully and warmly request your co-operation in the purchase and sale of the above-named Journal, and wish all the profits arising therefrom to be under the control of Elder Watt.

The *Journal of Discourses* became very rare because they were not reprinted for many years. Because the doctrines of the Church had changed, the Mormon leaders tried to suppress the *Journal of Discourses*.

LaMar Petersen has given us the following statement for publication.

STATEMENT CONCERNING THE JOURNAL OF DISCOURSES

In 1954 upon learning that the Deseret Book Company had a microfilm of the 26-volume Journal of Discourses I asked for the privilege of reading from some of the volumes on their viewer. After checking "across the street" the management announced that the privilege of reading from the Journals could not be granted.

At about this same time a young convert to the L.D.S. Church from Holland asked to see some of the Journals at the Church Historians's Office. When asked why he wished to see them he explained that his family in Holland (non-members) had been told of certain statements in the books concerning "blood atonement and other strange doctrines." He wished to reassure his family that the charges were untrue. He was denied access to the volumes and told that he was a troublemaker.


LaMar Petersen

The Deseret Book Company is owned by the Mormon Church, and the Church Administrative Offices are located directly across the street. These facts will help to explain LaMar Petersen's statement.

Another man told us that he was denied access to the *Journal of Discourses* by the Historian's Office in about the year 1941. There are many other stories of suppression concerning the *Journal of Discourses*.

In December of 1955 a very strange thing happened. The Bookcraft publishing company (a company which prints Mormon books) advertised in the *Improvement Era* (a Church publication) that they were reprinting the *Journal of Discourses* under the title, *Sound Doctrine, The Journal of Discourses Series*, edited by Bruce R. McConkie. This advertisement read as follows:

1. SOUND DOCTRINE

The Journal of Discourses Series

Edited by Bruce R. McConkie

At long last a great wealth of authoritative Information comes to light from a series of books unknown and unavailable to this generation This vital doctrinal source contains important sermons of the Presidency and the Council of the Twelve during the all important 40 year period in which most of the doctrines of the church were being revealed and recorded These sermons, delivered by men who knew the Prophet Joseph and were taught by him in public and private, are published in full \$3.00. (*Improvement Era*, December 1955, page 882, see photograph on next page)

This Christmas, give LDS Books...



1. SOUND DOCTRINE

The Journal of Discourses Series

Edited by Bruce R. McConkie

At long last a great wealth of authoritative information comes to light from a series of books unknown and unavailable to this generation. This vital doctrinal source contains important sermons of the Presidency and the Council of the Twelve during the all important 40 year period in which most of the doctrines of the church were being revealed and recorded. These sermons, delivered by men who knew the Prophet Joseph and were taught by him in public and private, are published in full. **\$3.00**

2. TO LOVE AND TO CHERISH

By Emma Mari Petersen

A moving account of the heart break and sorrow caused by flaunting the sacred ties of marriage. Told by a master story teller, "To Love and To Cherish" unfolds the absorbing drama of the terrible price one man paid and the hollow rewards he won when he set aside his family and marriage vows. The warm, inspirational counsel stimulates a desire "to love and to cherish" the marriage covenant. **\$2.00**

3. IT'S YOUR LIFE TO ENJOY

By Wendell J. Ashton

These 52 articles from the covers of the Instructor Magazine are filled with drama, anecdotes, exciting experiences and sound philosophy. Rare entertainment. **\$2.50**

4. GOLDEN NUGGETS FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT

By Ezra L. Marler

No brighter gift than these rare gems of wisdom and truth from the New Testament. Inspirational. Uplifting. **\$2.25**

5. IF I WERE IN MY TEENS

An ideal gift for teenagers to help them chart their lives. Written in retrospect by brilliant leaders of youth, this Improvement Era series sparkles with wonderful stories and down-to-earth advice and encouragement. **\$2.00**

6. STORY OF THE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE

By James R. Clark

Twenty years in the writing, this important work is one of the recommended courses of study for Special Interest classes. Tremendously interesting and complete. **\$3.00**

BOOKCRAFT — Publishers to the L. D. S. Trad

A photograph of an advertisement published by Bookcraft as it appeared in the *Improvement Era*, December, 1955, page 882. Notice that the book, *Sound Doctrine*, is among the books advertised for Christmas presents.

Even though Bookcraft had advertised this book for a Christmas gift (the advertisement appearing in the December issue of the *Improvement Era*, which would mean that it was already printed or at least close to completion), it strangely disappeared! Notice that the photograph even shows a picture of the book, and that it was volume one of a series of books.

Bookcraft apparently did not sell any copies of their *Journal of Discourses* reprint. We have asked a number of people (including two book dealers) concerning this reprint but have not been able to obtain even one copy. We wrote to the Library of Congress and asked them to search in the indexes and catalogs in the Copyright Office to see if this book had been registered with them. At the bottom of the page is a photograph of the report of the results of the search.

We checked with the Church Historian's Library, but they claimed that they did not have a copy. The book seems to have just disappeared) Why? One man who tried to find out came to the conclusion that this reprint was not a photographic reproduction and that certain parts of the sermons had been deleted. He stated that at almost the same time another group (not connected with the Church) was planning to make a photographic reprint of the original volumes of the *Journal of Discourses*. When the Church heard that this photographic reprint was going to come out they decided that they would have to destroy their reprint. They did not want the members of the Church to compare their reprint with the photographic reprint of the original. The plates were destroyed and the printed pages were used for packing material.

We tried to verify this story, but since we were unable to locate a copy of the book, *Sound Doctrine*, we cannot prove that it was altered. One man who holds a good position in the Church, however, did tell us that it was his understanding that certain portions

of the *Journal of Discourses* were to be omitted in the Church's reprint.

The fact that the photographic reprint (printed by the General Printing & Lithography Co., Los Angeles, California) was printed at about the same time is verified by a statement at the front of volume one. This statement reads: "First Reprint 1956."

We tried to get an answer from the Church and from Bookcraft as to why the book, *Sound Doctrine*, was suppressed. In a telephone conversation July 19, 1966, a man in the Church Historian's Office stated:

This was printed as *Mormon Doctrine*, but this is now out of print. You might be able to get one some place, if you are lucky, for under fifty dollars.

Since we already had a copy of *Mormon Doctrine* by Bruce R. McConkie, we knew that this statement was completely untrue. The book, *Mormon Doctrine*, has nothing to do with the *Journal of Discourses*. It is an "encyclopedic commentary" of the doctrines of the Mormon Church.

Bruce R. McConkie's secretary gave this explanation:

That ad was a little **premature**. He was working on it but **had to go to Australia and never has been able to finish it**. The Church keeps him so busy. I hope some day he will finish it.

Notice that her statement contradicts the statement given by the man in the Church Historian's Office; he stated that it was printed under the title of *Mormon Doctrine*, but she stated that Bruce R. McConkie was never "able to finish it." Her statement that Bruce R. McConkie was unable to finish it because he was called to Australia is completely untrue. We checked with the Missionary Dept. of the Church and found that he was not called to Australia until July of 1961. This gave

Result of Search:

Search in the indexes and catalogs of the Copyright Office covering the period from 1955 through January 24, 1966 under the names Bruce R. McConkie, Bookcraft Publishers (Inc.) and the title SOUND DOCTRINE, vol. 1, (The Journal of Discourses Series), failed to disclose any separate registration for a work identified under these names and this specific title.

The following registration is given as of possible interest:

DOCTRINES OF SALVATION; vol. 1, by Joseph Fielding Smith, compiled by Bruce R. McConkie. Registered in the name of Bookcraft, under A 370110, following publication Nov. 15, 1954.

Your remittance of \$5.00 has been applied in payment for this search and report.

VIA AIRMAIL

him over five years to complete the book. In the year 1958 he published a 776-page book entitled, *Mormon Doctrine*. If he could find the time to publish a book of almost 800 pages, why could he not find time to finish the book he had started in 1955?

Bookcraft publishing company gave an answer that was similar to the answer given by Bruce R. McConkie's secretary:

It was **never completed**. He was called on a mission and wasn't able to complete it. We are going to get back to it soon.

Since the answers given by the Mormon Church and by Bookcraft seem to be completely untrue, we are almost forced to the conclusion that there was something wrong with their reprint. Why would they reprint the books that they had refused to show to LaMar Petersen just one year before? Why would they begin the reprint, advertise it and then suppress it? These are questions that need answers. Since the Mormon leaders had made many changes in the book, *Key to Theology*, and since the *Journal of Discourses* contain sermons which are even more out of harmony with the teachings of the Church today, is it logical to suppose that they would want to make an accurate and complete reprint? Why would they want to bring to light the very books that they had suppressed for so many years?

It is very interesting to note that the Mormon Apostle John A. Widtsoe published a book entitled, *Discourses of Brigham Young*. In this book he took extracts from the *Journal of Discourses*, and in many cases these extracts were deliberately changed.

In one sermon Brigham Young made some very unpatriotic remarks. He even accused the government of wanting the Mormons to be destroyed. Below is a comparison of a portion of this sermon as originally published and the way John A. Widtsoe reprinted it.

... I ask, had we not reason to feel that our enemies were **in the ascendant? that even the government, by their silent acquiescence, were** also in favor of our destruction? (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 2, page 173)

... I ask, had we not reason to feel that our enemies were also in favor of our destruction? (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, 1951 ed., page 478)

Brigham Young stated that it was the "will of the Lord" that the people cease eating pork, but when John A. Widtsoe reprinted Brigham Young's sermon he deleted these words.

I know this as well as Moses knew it, and without putting it in a code of commandments. **When I tell you that it is the will of the Lord to cease eating swine's flesh, very likely some one will tell you that it is the will of the Lord to stop eating beef and mutton, and another that it is the will of the Lord to stop eating fowl and fish until the minds of the people become bewildered, so that they know not how to decide between right and wrong, truth and error.** The beef fed upon our mountain grasses is as healthy food as we need at present. (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 12, pages 192-193)

I know this as well as Moses knew it, and without putting it in a code of commandments. The beef fed upon our mountain grasses is as healthy food as we need at present. (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, page 189)

At one time Brigham Young condemned dancing. Since dancing today is a vital part of the Mormon recreation program, these words were deleted:

Go to work and start some schools, **and instead of going to parties to dance and indulge in this nonsense,** go to school and study; have the girls go, and teach them chemistry, so that they can take any of these rocks and analyze them, **tell the properties and what they are. I don't suppose there is a man here who can tell these properties.** The sciences can be learned without much difficulty. **Instead of going "right and left, balance all, promenade," go to work and teach yourselves something. Instead of having this folly,** I want to have schools . . . (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 16, page 170)

Go to work and start some schools, go to school and study; have the girls go, and teach them chemistry, so that they can take any of these rocks and analyze them. The sciences can be learned without much difficulty. I want to have schools . . . (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, page 253)

In a discourse delivered October 8, 1857, Brigham Young told the Elders not to use strong drink “until you really need it.” The clause “until you really need it” was apparently embarrassing to the Apostle John A. Widtsoe, for when he reprinted this sermon, he deleted that clause.

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, I command the Elders of Israel—those who have been in the habit of getting drunk—to cease drinking strong drink from this time henceforth, **until you really need it.** (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 7, page 337)

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, I command the Elders of Israel—those who have been in the habit of getting drunk—to cease drinking strong drink from this time henceforth. (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, page 183)

In another sermon Brigham Young claimed that the Kirtland Temple was the next temple built after Solomon’s Temple. He had evidently forgotten that the Book of Mormon taught that the Nephites had built a temple after Solomon’s time. When John A. Widtsoe reprinted this, he deleted that portion.

. . . Joseph, was commanded to build a Temple to the Most High, in Kirtland, Ohio, **and this was the next House of the Lord we hear of on the earth, since the days of Solomon’s temple.** Joseph not only received revelation . . . (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 2, page 31)

. . . Joseph, was commanded to build a temple to the Most High, in Kirtland, Ohio. Joseph not only received revelation . . . (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, page 415)

In a sermon delivered April 6, 1853, Brigham Young admitted that he was not a visionary man or given to prophecy. In reprinting this quotation the Mormon Apostle John A. Widtsoe deleted 39 words without any indication.

Wait patiently, brethren, until it is done, and put forth your hands willingly to finish it. I know what it will be. **I am not a visionary man, neither am I given to prophesying. When I want any of that done I call on Brother Heber—he is my prophet, he loves to prophesy, and I love to hear him.** I scarcely ever say much about revelations, or visions, . . . (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 1, pages 132-133)

Wait patiently, brethren, until it is done, and put forth your hands willingly to finish it. I know what it will be. I scarcely ever say much about revelations, or visions, . . . (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, page 410)

In another sermon Brigham Young taught that the principle of rebaptism was established by revelation. Since the Church no longer teaches this doctrine, John A. Widtsoe deleted Brigham Young’s mention of it.

At this time came a revelation, that the Saints could be baptized **and rebaptized when they chose, and then that we could be baptized** for our dear friends, . . . (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 18, page 241)

At this time [1840] came a revelation that we could be baptized for our dead friends, . . . (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, page 462)

Other changes have been made which we will not mention here. All of these changes have been made in spite of the fact that in the preface to the *Discourses of Brigham Young* it is claimed that no liberties have been taken with the words of Brigham Young.

No liberties have been taken, in this book, **with the words of Brigham Young.** In a few instances, errors in language or spelling, which should have been caught by the printer, have been corrected. (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, preface, page vii)

Nothing could be further from the truth. It is interesting to note that this book was copyrighted in 1954 by David O. McKay, Successor in Trust for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Thus we see that the Mormon Church is responsible for perpetuating this falsified book.

Even though the Mormon Church suppressed the *Journal of Discourses* for years, the Deseret Book Store, which is owned by the Mormon Church, now sells the photographic reprint of the *Journal of Discourses*. Since the other book stores in Salt Lake City were selling this reprint, and since the Mormon leaders would be accused of further suppression if they did not sell it, they evidently felt that it would be best to sell it in their store.

Petersen’s Speech

Statement by Jerald Tanner. Some time ago James Wardle permitted me to examine and microfilm a copy of Mark E. Petersen’s address, “Race Problems—As They Affect The Church.” Mr. Wardle’s copy was a carbon of a typed copy. Because I wanted to make sure that this copy was an accurate report of the speech, I tried to find more information concerning it. On August 14, 1963, I called the Historian’s Office of the Mormon Church. I was told that they had a copy of the speech, and that it was listed in the card catalogue. On August 15, I went to the Historian’s Office and searched in the card catalogue, however, I was unable to find the speech listed. I checked

out two books by Joseph Fielding Smith and waited for a man to come up from the basement to help me look for the speech. After some time, the librarian Mr. Petersen (not to be confused with Mark E. Petersen) asked if he could help me. When I told him what I wanted, he went into the back, and in a short time brought out a copy of Mark E. Petersen's talk. It was in mimeographed form.

I sat down and began to read. I noted that it read the same as the copy I had seen before. Therefore, I knew that the copy I had microfilmed was an authentic copy. To double check I decided to copy some extracts from it. After thinking it over, however, I asked the Librarian to make Xerox copies of the talk to save me the trouble of copying it by hand. He said he would have to find out if the Church would allow copies to be made of it. He went into the back. After he returned, I asked him if I could also obtain Xerox copies of four pages from Joseph Fielding Smith's book. He said that would be okay, however, we would have to get permission from Mr. Lund (Assistant Church Historian) to make copies of Mark E. Petersen's address. When we arrived at Mr. Lund's office, he stated that he could not give permission to make copies of it. He did say, however, that we could ask Joseph Fielding Smith, L.D.S. Church Historian. As we started toward Joseph Fielding Smith's office, I told Mr. Petersen (the Librarian) that it was not necessary to go to all that trouble, but I would like to read the copy for a while longer. He consented, and we went back into the Church Library. By this time the Xerox copies of Joseph Fielding Smith's book were ready. I picked these up and sat down to read Apostle Petersen's address. I decided to copy some portions of it by hand. After I had copied enough to fill a full page, Mr. Petersen (the Librarian) came up behind me. He said, "You were told that you could not make a copy of that." To which I replied that Mr. Lund had said that we could not make Xerox copies, but he did not say that I could not make a handwritten copy. When Mr. Petersen started to argue, I said, "Let's go see Joseph Fielding Smith." He consented and we started toward Joseph Fielding Smith's office.

While he was walking in front of me, I slipped the notes I had been taking into my back pocket. I folded the Xerox copies of Joseph Fielding Smith's book and kept them in my hand. When we arrived at Joseph Fielding Smith's office, we found that he had stepped out for a few minutes. The secretary stated that she did not know how restricted the speech was. Mr. Petersen (the Librarian) decided to leave and let me talk to Mr. Smith alone. Before he left, however, he told me to give the notes I had taken to the secretary. As I started to set down, he instructed the secretary to be sure that I gave her the notes before I left. He then walked out. After that I talked to the secretary for a while. Finally she got in touch with someone on the phone. She was told that the address was restricted. She

told me that there was nothing wrong with Apostle Mark E. Petersen's address, however, it was meant only for the "brethren" and not for the general public.

By this time I was convinced that I could not obtain a Xerox copy. As I stated earlier, I had put the notes I had taken in my back pocket and had the Xerox copies of Joseph Fielding Smith's book folded in my hand. The secretary (not knowing that I had the notes in my back pocket) assumed that the papers in my hand were the notes. She reached out her hand toward the photocopies and said she would have to take the papers. I gave them to her. Without looking at them, she sat them down on the desk and put something on top of them. I talked with her for a while and then walked out—with the notes safely tucked away in my back pocket.

The same day, August 15, 1963, I visited James Wardle. In looking through his papers I found another copy of the same speech, which had apparently been made on a spirit duplicator. Since this copy was in good condition, I asked Mr. Wardle if I could reproduce it. He very kindly consented to my request.

On August 17, 1963, I carefully compared this copy with the portions I had transcribed from the copy in the Historian's Office. I found every word to be identical. The only difference I noticed between the two copies was the date of the speech. The copy in the Historian's Office reads 1957, while the other copy reads 1954.

Threatened with a Lawsuit

Within the next few days we received phone calls from Joseph Fielding Smith's secretary and from A. W. Lund (Assistant Church Historian) pleading with us not to print Mark E. Petersen's address. Mark E. Petersen, an Apostle in the Mormon Church, was at that time serving as President of the West European Mission. About a year and a half after we printed the speech, Mark E. Petersen wrote us a very threatening letter. In this letter he stated:

It has come to my attention that you are printing and distributing some kind of publication with an inflammatory intent, to which you have attached my name.

I do not know what you are publishing, but I do know that I have never given you any permission to attach my name to any publication whatsoever, and that when you do so you run the risk of **serious legal action**.

This letter to you is to notify you that **unless you cease** and desist from such publication, and recall the copies which you have circulated, **that legal action will be instituted against you**.

Would you like to have my attorney call on you, or do you wish to comply with my request without court action? (Letter from Mormon Apostle Mark E. Petersen, February 13, 1965)

Wallace Turner, a correspondent for the *New York Times*, made this statement concerning this matter:

CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS
WEST EUROPEAN MISSION

Telephone
Leatherhead 4587

"WHITE HAYES" GIVONS GROVE
LEATHERHEAD, SURREY

Telegraphic Address
Quickmere Leatherhead

Feb. 13, 1965.

Modern Microfilm Company,
566 Center Street,
Salt Lake City, Utah.

Gentlemen,

It has come to my attention that you are printing and distributing some kind of publication with an inflammatory intent, to which you have attached my name.

May I call to your attention the fact that there are laws in the United States which protect people from having their names and their reputations infringed upon.

I have been in the publishing business all my life and therein learned what these rights are.

I donot know what you are publishing, but I do know that I have never given you any permission to attach my name to any publication whatsoever, and that when you do so you run the risk of serious legal action.

This letter to you is to notify you that unless you cease and desist from such publication, and recall the copies which you have circulated, that legal action will be instituted against you.

Would you like to have my attorney call on you, or do you wish to comply with my request without court action?

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Mark E. Petersen". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "P" and "S".

Mark E. Petersen

A photograph of a letter written by Mark E. Petersen. Mr. Petersen is an apostle in the Mormon Church. At the time he wrote this letter he was serving as President of the West European Mission. Notice that he threatens legal action.

This speech was delivered in a closed meeting. A copy of it came into the hands of James D. Wardle, the Salt Lake City barber who is a member of the Reorganized LDS church. Wardle has enjoyed many years of baiting his Utah Mormon townsmen, and made his copy available to Jerald Tanner, the LDS apostate who specializes in circulating anti-LDS materials. Tanner went to the LDS library, found a copy of the speech and assured himself that it was the same speech he had received from Wardle. But the church would not give him a copy he could take away with him.

Using the Wardle copy as his source, Tanner began to circulate the address. At that time Apostle Petersen was in England leading the mission there. In early 1965 he wrote to Tanner threatening to sue him if he did not stop publication and recall the previously issued copies of the speech. Tanner gleefully reproduced and circulated the letter. Since then Petersen has returned to Salt Lake City and no suit has been filed. (*The Mormon Establishment*, Boston, 1966, pages 253-254)

It was obvious to us that Mark E. Petersen would not carry out his threat since a lawsuit would just make things look worse for the LDS Church. As Wallace Turner stated, we reproduced his letter (together with a letter written by LeGrand Richards) and distributed thousands of copies. Many of them were distributed at the conference of the Mormon Church. Mark E. Petersen had returned from Europe to attend this conference. Although conference is held only fourteen blocks from Modern Microfilm Co., neither Mr. Petersen or his attorney called upon us. Apparently Mr. Petersen's statement that "legal action will be instituted" amounts to nothing but a threat.

One man, who has been through law school, made this statement in a letter to us:

I just got a copy of your handbill giving the threats from Apostles Petersen and Richards. If ever I saw a bluff Mark E. Petersen's letter is one.

... Now just what could his attorney do by calling on you? And if Petersen is ignorant about what you have published concerning him as he implies, just what would be the point in having his attorney call on you? What would he discuss with you? If you answer him you should ask him some of these questions and also ask him if he is not aware, with all his legal knowledge, that **truth is a complete defense to libel**.

When they start fearing the truth, their position is beginning to become precarious. Your good work is beginning to tell. Good luck and more power to you.

Another man wrote directly to LeGrand Richards and Mark F. Petersen and sent a carbon copy to us in this letter he stated:

I am today in receipt of photostats of letters you each wrote to a publisher in Salt Lake City, threatening him with a lawsuit if he published certain documents. ... These letters you wrote are such amazing and amusing attempts to bluff that I could not refrain from commenting on them. For certainly no one with even

the most elementary spluttering of common sense could be led to believe that you would be so ignorant as to institute legal action in such a situation even if you were certain of winning your case, getting many thousands of dollars in settlement, and succeeding in suppression of the published documents.

The reason I am so sure of this is that a law suit would result in the very publication, in much magnified and publicised extent, of the very things you are trying so desperately to suppress. They would then receive much more publicity and much more scrutiny and study than this publisher could otherwise dare to hope for. ...

... I must at least give you credit for having better sense than to proceed to carry out this ridiculous threat. However, should I be so fortunate as to be mistaken in that conclusion, and you do bring suit against this fine publisher, I hereby pledge myself to contribute from my own meager funds, \$100 toward his defense—and to exert whatever energies I can toward bringing this entire matter to light, in the firm conviction that such an action would tend to lessen the stranglehold the church has on this brainwashed and dominated area.

Even though the Mormon leaders tried their best to keep Apostle Petersen's speech from the general public, a portion of it ended up in the *New York Times*.

A decade ago Mark E. Petersen, one of the Twelve Apostles of the church, said in a speech at the church's Brigham Young University, at Provo, Utah:

"Now we are generous with the Negro. We are willing that the Negro have the highest kind of education. I would be willing to let every Negro drive a Cadillac if they could afford it. I would be willing that they have all the advantages they can get out of life in the world.

"But let them enjoy these things among themselves. I think the Lord segregated the Negro, and who is man to change that segregation." (*New York Times*, article by Wallace Turner, page 15, December 28, 1965)

Wallace Turner devotes five pages to Mark E. Petersen's speech in his book, *The Mormon Establishment*, and reproduces the most important portions. We hope to print this speech in full in a later volume of this work.

Suppression of Reprints

It is now a rather well-known fact that the revelations given by Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon have been changed. In a later chapter we will tell how the Mormon Church tried to keep us from reprinting the *Book of Commandments*, which contains the revelations of Joseph Smith as they were first printed. A man who did some of the photographic work on our reprint—work that had to be done before we could take it to the printer—told us that he was actually asked to **destroy our photocopies of the *Book of Commandments*** and then say that he had had an "accident" with them. He refused to do this, and we were able to bring the reprint

out. Even though we were successful in getting the book printed, the newspapers in Salt Lake City refused to let us advertise it. One of the employees at the Newspaper Agency told us that the reason the book could not be advertised was that the preface we included in the front of the book was "too controversial." He indicated the preface was controversial because it told that the revelations had been changed and that the Mormon Church had suppressed the *Book of Commandments*. A woman later called the Newspaper Agency and asked if this was true. The man she talked to told her that we had lied. He stated that they did not discriminate and that they did not refuse to take an ad from us on the *Book of Commandments*. The woman soon found out who was lying, however, for she asked him if they would accept an ad from her on the same book. His reply was that **they would not!**

A few months after our reprint of the *Book of Commandments* came out Wilford Wood published a photographic reprint of the *Book of Commandments* and the first edition of the *Doctrine and Covenants* under the title of *Joseph Smith Begins His Work*, Volume 2. He had previously published the first edition of the Book of Mormon under the title of *Joseph Smith Begins His Work*, Volume 1.

The Mormon Church leaders were apparently not as worried about Mr. Wood's reprints as they were about ours, for the Deseret Press (the church press) did the printing, and they were advertised in the Salt Lake papers.

Since Mr. Wood's reprints did not tell that the revelations and the Book of Mormon had been changed,

the church leaders did not try to suppress his book at that time. Instead, they promoted it and allowed him to display his original copy of the *Book of Commandments* in the window of the Deseret Bookstore, which is owned by the Mormon Church. The leaders of the Mormon Church evidently felt that by using reverse psychology they could make the Mormon people believe that they were glad that the *Book of Commandments* had been reprinted. Since Mr. Wood's books did not tell of the changes, the church leaders evidently felt that they were safe as long as members of the church did not compare them with the present editions. It appears, however, that members of the church did compare them and found that many changes had been made.

On October 9, 1964, a man reported to us that the Deseret Book Store had refused to sell him copies of *Joseph Smith Begins His Work* Volumes 1 and 2. On October 10, 1964, Sandra Tanner went to the Deseret Book Store and asked the clerk concerning these books. The clerk, supposing she was a Mormon, said, "President David O. McKay won't let us sell that anymore." The clerk went on to say, "We've had several people leave the Church because of those books. The priests and ministers of the other churches are using these books to confuse people. Because of the confusion we can't sell them anymore. President McKay has taken them out of circulation."

On October 13, 1964, Wesley P. Walters (a minister in Illinois) wrote to the Deseret Book Store requesting copies of *Joseph Smith Begins His Work*, Volumes 1 and 2. Below is a photographic reproduction of the answer he received:

A. H. FERRY
MANAGER

DESERET BOOK COMPANY

44 EAST SOUTH TEMPLE
SALT LAKE CITY 10, UTAH
P. O. BOX 958 — PHONE DAVIS 8-8191

October 16, 1964

W. P. Walters
117 N. Hamilton
Marietta, Illinois

Dear Mr. Walters:

Thank you for your letter ordering "Joseph Smith Begins His Works" Vol 1 & 2 by Wilford Wood. We are sorry to inform you that these two books are no longer available.

We are returning you check along with a price list of our books. May we serve you with some of these fine books?

Sincerely yours,

DESERET BOOK COMPANY

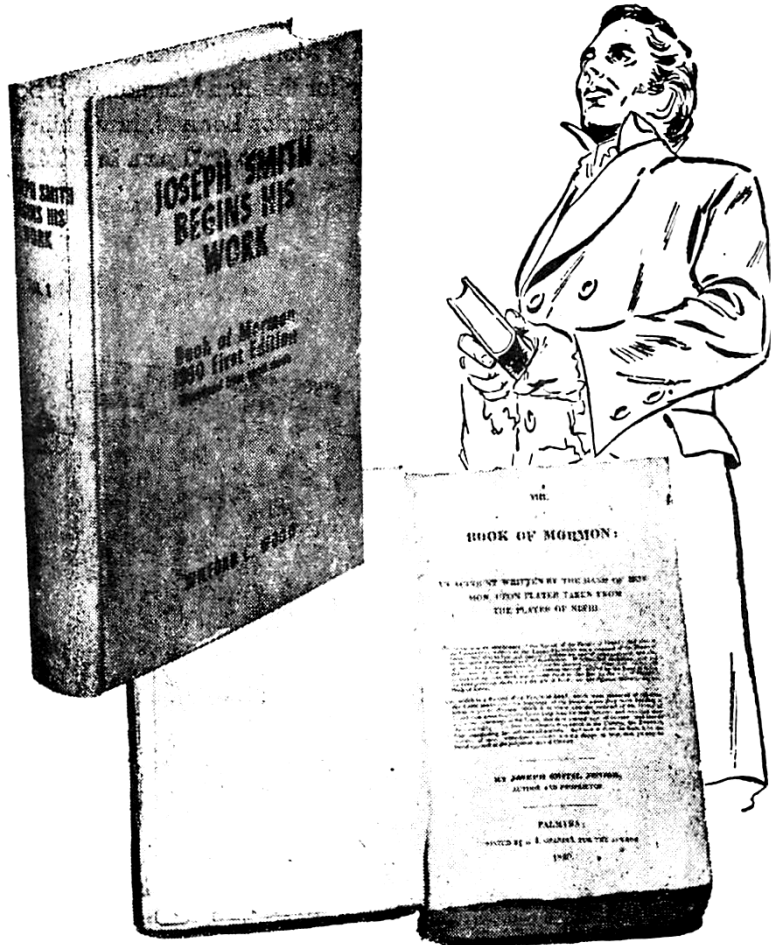
Vernon Noble
Miss Vernon Noble
Paid Order Dept.

Joseph Smith Begins His Work


*Containing facsimilies of the
Original Book of Mormon*

Here for the first time is your opportunity to own an authentically reproduced "First Edition" Book of Mormon, reprinted by a photo-offset process from original uncut sheets taken from the press of E. B. Grandin in Palmyra. Entitled "Joseph Smith Begins His Work," this history-making volume contains a complete 1830 facsimile "First Edition" Book of Mormon, rare photographs, documents and little known facts provided by Wilford C. Wood concerning the history of the Book of Mormon and its actual printing. Every student of the Book of Mormon will want a copy. Limited edition will be available so order your copy now.

\$5.95



1830 "FIRST EDITION" BOOK OF MORMON



**FIRST BOOK IN "REPRINTS
OF CLASSICS" SERIES**
*"Route From Liverpool to
Great Salt Lake Valley"*
First published in 1855, this classic historical record of the I.D.S. emigration from Europe is richly illustrated and has fascinating commentary. "First Editions" are bringing \$300 today.

\$4.00



Deseret Book Co.
44 East South Temple -- Salt Lake City, Utah

A photograph of an advertisement published by the Deseret Book Company. In the newspapers in Salt Lake City prior to the time that the Mormon leaders decided to suppress Wilford Wood's reprints. Notice that the reprint of the Book of Mormon is advertised as an "authentically reproduced" copy of the original.

An employee of the Deseret Book Store later said that those books were "out of print." This statement is completely untrue. Modern Microfilm Co. has sold hundreds of copies since the time she made this statement. Zion's Book Store (which is not controlled by the Mormon church) even had a window display of these books in April of 1966.


When we told Wilford Wood that the church was trying to suppress his books he wrote us a letter. Below is a photograph of that letter.

We understand that Wilford Wood met with the President of the church but was unsuccessful in his attempt to get the restrictions removed from the sale of his books.

HOME OF LEARNING

LEST WE FORGET

MONUMENTS - ANTIQUES
PICTURES - RELICS
RESERVATIONS



SCROLLS - MANUSCRIPTS
OLD BIBLES - DOCUMENTS
HISTORICAL RECORDS

WILFORD WOOD

UTAH, U. S. A.
October 27, 1964

Jerald Tanner
1350 South West Temple
Salt Lake City, Utah

Dear Mr. Tanner:

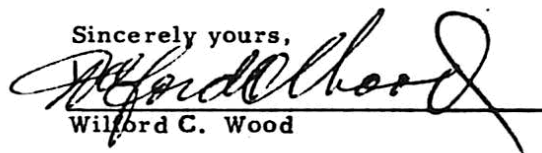
Thank you for your letter of October 11th. Mrs. Wood and I just returned from visiting the historical properties so I am answering your letter now. I would like to know if you would permit me to use your letter to show it to President McKay or those responsible for stopping the sale of the book at the Deseret Book Company. The books are sold everywhere else with no complaint and such a statement is all uncalled for.

If you would buy the books in packages of ten, they will be \$4.50 each. You can get volume 1 and volume 2 in sets in a package. Of course, you must have a store or some reason for resale at this price so that it would show that you are a wholesaler and not a retailer.

I suggest that you come and talk with me. Then I can go over it with you and decide what the conditions are and what price you should have as we must not break any contracts or commitments with any other store.

There are plenty of books, both volumes and always will be and anyone who is hurt from the original story of the Prophet Joseph Smith and the foundation of the Church upon which it is built will have to pay the consequences for pretending to love the Prophet Joseph Smith and working against him. Will be glad to meet you and talk with you but you must make an appointment. You can call me by phoning 322-2341. Thank you and wishing you much success.

Sincerely yours,


Wilford C. Wood

On March 22, 1967, Wilford Wood wrote us another letter. Below is a photograph of that letter.

Tanner Book Co.
Mr. & Mrs. Tanner
Salt Lake City, Utah
1350 So. West Temple

Dear Mr. & Mrs. Tanner:

Enclosed is a copy of a letter which I received from the Deseret News Press, also a copy of the letter that I wrote in answer.

Please do not say anything about President David O. McKay, about stopping the publishing or selling of my books Joseph Smith Begins His Work or anything bad about him.

He is still a Prophet, Seer and Revelator and President of the Church to all of those who believe in him.

Sincerely,

Wilford C. Wood

With this letter Wilford Wood enclosed a carbon copy of a letter which he wrote to Edmond C. Gruss. In this letter he stated:

Answering your letter of March 10th, . . . The answers are as follows:

One. Are these volumes presently out of print? No. They have never been out of print. . . .

Two. Did Pres. McKay stop the sale of the books at Deseret Book Store? The answer is, "No." President McKay personally approved the printing of Volume One and I personally delivered to him the first book which came off of the press.

Three. Without mentioning any names or talking about the General Authorities personally, this is what happened. **The man who is supposed to answer all the questions about the Church in the *Improvement Era* is the man who stopped the Deseret Book from selling the book.** He it is who has constantly been a thorn in my side in almost every thing that I have done historically. **He can not stand for people to hear the facts about the early history of the Church, especially those things which he can not answer.**

What a pity it is if the foundation and the establishment of the building which he lives in is wrong and far be it from me to say that anyone who belongs to the Church in this generation can claim to believe in the Prophet Joseph Smith and yet deny the facts about the restored gospel.

For your information President McKay **has told me more than once that he would see to it that the Deseret Book** sold Volumes one and two of *Joseph Smith Begins His Work*. **So far he has been unable to do so.** I love President McKay with all of my heart and I know that

he would do nothing to deny anything pertaining to the Prophet Joseph Smith. (Letter written by Wilford C. Wood to Edmond C. Gruss, dated March 22, 1967)

Those people who read the *Improvement Era* know that Joseph Fielding Smith is the "man who is supposed to answer all of the questions about the Church." For years he has written an article entitled "Your Question." Joseph Fielding Smith is one of the highest authorities in the Mormon Church. At present he serves as a Member of the First Presidency, President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles and Church Historian. Although it may be true that Joseph Fielding Smith was the man who gave the order to suppress the sale of the books, it is almost impossible for us to believe that David O. McKay, the President of the Mormon Church, does not have the power to force the Church book store to sell these books. Wilford Wood's statement that David O. McKay "has been unable" to make the Deseret Book Store sell these books would lead a person to believe that Joseph Fielding Smith has more power than the President of the Church. If David O. McKay is sincere in his desire to have the Deseret Book Store sell these books, it is hard for us to believe that he would not be able to force them to do it. He has had more than two years to work on this matter. The Mormon Church leaders do not seem to be willing to let their people know the truth concerning the changes that have been made. We hope to deal with the changes in the revelations in a later chapter, and in another volume we hope to give some information concerning the changes in the Book of Mormon.

LEST WE FORGET

STILL PICTURES
RELICS



MOTION PICTURES
ANTIQUES

WILFORD

WOOD

PICTURES

TELEPHONE - WAS. - 5200

WOODS CROSS, UTAH
XXXXXXXXXXXXXX

March 22, 1967

Edmond C. Gruss
21143 Placerita Cyn. Rd.
Newhall, California 91321

Dear Mr. Gruss:

Answering your letter of March 10th, which has been forwarded to me from the Deseret News Press who published my book, Joseph Smith Begins His Work. The answers are as follows:

- One. Are these volumes presently out of print? No. They have never been out of print. If you can not get them at Bookcraft, you can get them at Zions Book Store or if you order them in lots of ten, you can get them from me with the dealer's discount. If your money accompanies the order, they will be shipped postage free, otherwise they will be sent C. O. D..
- Two. Did Pres. McKay stop the sale of the books at Deseret Book Store? The answer is, "No". President McKay personally approved the printing of Volume One and I personally delivered to him the first book which came off of the press.
- Three. Without mentioning any names or talking about the General Authorities personally, this is what happened. The man who is supposed to answer all of the questions about the Church in the Improvement Era is the man who stopped the Deseret Book from selling the book. He it is who has constantly been a thorn in my side in almost every thing that I have done historically. He can not stand for people to hear the facts about the early history of the Church, especially those things which he can not answer.

What a pity it is if the foundation and the establishment of the building which he lives in is wrong and far be it from me to say that anyone who belongs to the Church in this generation can claim to believe in the Prophet Joseph Smith and yet deny the facts about the restored gospel.

For your information President McKay has told me more than once that he would see to it that the Deseret Book sold Volumes one and two of Joseph Smith Begins His Work. So far he has been unable to do so. I love President McKay with all of my heart and I know that he would do nothing to deny anything pertaining to the Prophet Joseph Smith.

Yours truly,

Wilford C. Wood

Copy sent to Tanners Book Co.

A photograph of a carbon copy of a letter Wilford Wood wrote to Edmond C. Gruss. Mr. Wood gives information concerning the suppression of his reprints.

Lucy Smith's Book

The Mormon Apostle Orson Pratt made this statement on July 24, 1859:

We have nothing we are ashamed of. All our writings are free and open to the public, and have been for years: . . . They all are before the public. There are none of our publications which we wish to hide up in a corner. You can learn and investigate for yourselves. (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 6, page 363)

When Orson Pratt made this statement he probably did not realize that some of his own publications would later be suppressed and destroyed. One of the publications which was later destroyed was entitled *Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith*, by his mother, Lucy Smith.

In the October, 1845, Conference of the Church, Lucy Smith "gave notice that she had written her history, and wished it printed before we leave this place" (*Times and Seasons*, Vol. 6, page 1014).

Brigham Young made this statement in the *History of the Church* under the date of November 10, 1845:

. . . several of the Twelve and others called in the afternoon; we consulted on the subject of **purchasing the copyright of Mother Smith's history**; and concluded to settle with Brother Howard Coray for his labor in compiling the same. (*History of the Church*, Vol. 7, page 519)

It was Orson Pratt, however, who finally published this book. Joseph F. Smith stated:

Lucy Smith died near Nauvoo, May 5, 1855, but years prior to this date some of her effects were left in the hands of her son, William Smith, among them being the manuscript copy of this history. From William (who was the last surviving brother of the Prophet, and whose death occurred at Osterdock, Clayton county, Iowa, November 13, 1893,) the document fell (surreptitiously it is declared by George A. Smith) into the hands of Isaac Sheen, who was at one time a member of the Church in Michigan. When in September, 1852, Apostle Orson Pratt went on a mission to England, he called on Mr. Sheen on his way East and being shown the manuscript copy, he purchased it for a certain sum of money, took it to Liverpool with him, where, **without revision and without the consent** or knowledge of President Young or any of the Twelve, it was published under his direction in 1853. (*History of Joseph Smith by his Mother*, Introduction vii, 1954 edition)

In the preface to the first edition Orson Pratt stated:

The following pages, embracing biographical sketches and the genealogy of Joseph Smith, and his Progenitors,

were mostly written previous to the death of the Prophet, and under his personal inspection.

Most of the historical items and occurrences related have never before been published. They will therefore be exceedingly interesting to all Saints, and sincere inquirers after the Truth, affording them the privilege of becoming more extensively acquainted with the private life and character of one of the greatest Prophets that ever lived upon the earth.

In 1854 the Mormon newspaper, the *Deseret News*, recommended Lucy Smith's history:

Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith, the Prophet, and his progenitors for many generations: by Lucy Smith, mother of the Prophet.

This new and highly interesting work **should be possessed by all saints** who feel in the least degree interested with the history of the latter day work. Many facts which it contains, and never before published, are of great importance to the world, and the work constitutes a valuable acquisition to the libraries of the saints. (*Deseret News*, November 16, 1854)

On the same page this statement appeared:

From a brief inspection of the "Sketches," we cordially recommend the purchase and perusal of the book.

By 1855, however, Orson Pratt stated that the book needed revision:

This work was first published in England, in 1853. I procured the manuscripts while on my last mission in the United States, and was informed, at the time, that most of the work was written under the inspection of the Prophet; but from evidences since received, it is believed that the greater part of the manuscripts did not pass under his review, as there are items which are ascertained to be incorrect.

These imperfections have undoubtedly arisen either from the impaired memory of the highly respected and aged authoress, or from the lack of correct information; or, which is most probable, from the carelessness of the scribe . . .

In future editions **the work** will be carefully **revised** and corrected so far as we have knowledge. In the meantime, it is believed that this history will be interesting to the Saints, and to the public generally, as from it they can make themselves acquainted with some of the greatest and most remarkable events of modern times.

If the schools of our Territory would introduce this work as a "Reader," it would give the young and rising generation some knowledge of the facts and incidents connected with the opening of the grand dispensation of the last days. (*Deseret News*, March 21, 1855)

According to the Gottfredson Family History, Lucy Smith's history was used for reading lessons in 1861:

The remainder of the winter I went to school. A.B. Strickland was teacher. Most of our studies was spelling from the old blue back elementary spelling book. Our **reading lessons were from a small book called *Joseph Smith, by His Mother***, Lucy Smith. Each Friday was devoted to spelling matches. (Gottfredson Family History, typed copy at the Utah State Historical Society, page 7)

In the year 1865 Brigham Young told the members of the Mormon Church that he wanted Lucy Smith's history to be suppressed:

The President then made some remarks on the book entitled "Joseph Smith and his Progenitors," requesting, those **who had copies to let him have them**, and receive value for them if they desired it. (*Deseret News*, June 21, 1865)

Joseph F. Smith made this statement concerning the suppression of this book:

It was afterwards discovered that the book contained errors, occasioned by its not being carefully compared with historical data. Some of the statements in the preface written by Elder Pratt were also in error; . . . For these reasons and others, mostly of a financial character, it was disapproved by President Young on August 23, 1865, and the edition was **suppressed or destroyed**. (*History of Joseph Smith by his Mother*, 1954 edition, Introduction vii)

Under the date of July 23, 1865 the following appears in the *Church Chronology*:

Wed. 23.—A book, entitled "Joseph Smith the Prophet," by Lucy Smith, the Prophet's mother, published by Orson Pratt and Samuel W. Richards, in England, was condemned for its inaccuracy, by the First Presidency and Twelve Apostles. (*Church Chronology*, page 73)

On October 19, 1865 the following statement by George A. Smith appeared in the *Deseret News*:

I will take this opportunity of answering, **once for all**, many questions which have been asked me as to why the book entitled "Joseph the Prophet" is **called in**; **it is called in simply because it contains many things that are not true**, and this is considered sufficient reason for calling it in.

In the *Millennial Star* for October 21, 1865, Lucy Smith's history was severely condemned by the First Presidency of the Mormon Church:

Happening lately, while on a preaching trip to Cache Valley, to pick up a book which was lying on a table in the house where we were stopping, we were surprised to find that it was the book bearing the title, on the outside, of "Joseph Smith, the Prophet," and on the title page. "Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith, the Prophet, and his progenitors for many generations, by Lucy Smith, mother of the Prophet; published for Orson Pratt by S. W. Richards, Liverpool," &c. Our surprise at finding a copy of this work may be accounted for, by the fact of our having advertised some time ago that the book was incorrect, and that it **should be gathered up and destroyed**, so that no copies should be left; and, from this, we had supposed that not a single copy could be found in any of the houses of the Saints.

We now wish to publish our views and feelings respecting this book, so that they may be known to all the Saints in all the world. In Great Britain diligence has been used in collecting and in **disposing of this work**, and we wish that same diligence continued there and also exercised here, at home, **until not a copy is left**.

The inquiry may arise in the minds of some persons. "Why do you want to destroy this book?" Because we are acquainted with individual circumstances alluded to in it, and know **many of the statements to be false**. We could go through the book and point out many false statements which it contains, but we do not feel to do so. It is sufficient to say that **it is utterly unreliable as a history, as it contains many falsehoods** and mistakes. We do not wish such a book to be lying on our shelves, to be taken up in after years and read by our children as true history, and we, therefore, expect the High Priests, the Seventies, the Elders, the Bishops, and every one in the Church, male and female, if they have such a book, **to dispose of it so that it will never be read by any person again**. If they do not, the responsibility of the **evil results** that may accrue from keeping it will rest upon them and not upon us.

Without entering into all the details of the writing of this book and its production in print, we may say that at the time it was written, which was after the death of the Prophet Joseph, mother Smith was seventy years old, and very forgetful. Her mind had suffered many severe shocks, through losing a beloved husband and four sons of exceeding promise, to whom she was fondly attached, three of whom had but recently fallen victims to mobocratic violence, and she could, therefore, scarcely recollect anything correctly that had transpired. She employed as an amanuensis a lady by the name of Coray.

Those who have read the history of William Smith, and who knew him, know the statements made in that book respecting him, when he came out of Missouri, to be utterly false. Instead of being the faithful man of God, and the Saint which he is there represented to have been, he was a wicked man, and he publicly expressed the hope that his brother Joseph would never get out of the hands of his enemies alive; and he further said that if he had had the disposing of him, he would have hung him years before.

When the book was written, mother Smith sent it to us to examine. In company with some others, who were acquainted with the circumstances alluded to in the book, we read the manuscript, and we soon saw that it was incorrect. We paid the amanuensis who wrote the book for mother Smith for a copy of the work, and that copy is now in the Historian's Office, and has been in our possession ever since we left Nauvoo. But the original manuscript was purchased of them by Orson Pratt. He had the work published in England. We do not know that Samuel W. Richards, who printed the work, knew anything about the manner in which it was written, or how brother Pratt obtained it. He printed it, we suppose, as he would any other book. But brother Pratt had it printed, and published it, without saying a word to the First Presidency or the Twelve about what he was doing. This is the way the book came into being. It was smuggled, juggled and foisted into existence as a book.

....
Many of the Saints may not know that the book is inaccurate; but those who have been instructed respecting its character, and will still keep it on their tables, and have it in their houses as a valid and authentic history for their children to read, **need rebuke. It is transmitting lies to posterity** to take such a course, and we know that **the curse of God will rest upon every one**, after he comes to the knowledge of what is here said, who keeps these books for his children to learn and **believe in lies**.

We wish those who have these books to either hand them to their Bishops for them to be conveyed to the President's or Historian's Office, or send them themselves, that they may be **disposed of**; and they will please write their names in the books, with the name of the place where they reside, and if they wish to hand them over without pay in return, state so; and if they wish to get pay for them, state whether they desire it applied on Tithing, or wish the value returned in other books. (*Millennial Star*, Vol. 27, pages 657-658)

On page 667 of the same volume this statement appeared:

Our readers will observe from the article published in this week's *Star*, from the pen of the First Presidency and the Twelve, that a call has been made for all copies of the work "Joseph Smith, the Prophet," and other publications also mentioned in that article. The reasons assigned are sufficient to justify this step, and a request has been previously made through the columns of the *Star*, that all copies of such works in possession of parties in this country, should be forwarded to the Liverpool Office. We are aware, however, that there are still several loose copies floating around through different parts of the Mission, and we would therefore be pleased to have all copies sent to us immediately, and would wish the brethren in the various Conferences to assist us in seeing this attended to. We shall receive them on the same terms as those mentioned by the First Presidency—namely, gratis, a credit on Tithing, or returned in any of the standard works of the Church.

A few years later Lucy Smith's book was still being condemned. The following statement appears in the Minutes of the School of the Prophets held in Provo, Utah:

Don Carter—Referred to the New Bible and the History of Joseph by Lucy Smith—as incorrect and wants to keep the old Bible: until we receive [it] from a correct source. (Minutes of the School of the Prophets, Provo, Utah, 1868-1871, page 52 of typed copy at the Utah State Historical Society)

The Mormon leaders talked as if Orson Pratt had made a very serious mistake in publishing the book as Mrs. Smith had written it.

About 10 or 11 years after Lucy Smith's death the Mormon leaders decided to revise her book. Joseph F. Smith stated:

While some statements contained in the work were considered somewhat overdrawn—a circumstance easily accounted for when we remember the age of Mother Smith, the losses she had sustained in the death of a husband and four sons, and the consequent lapses of her memory—its many **merits were fully recognized by the authorities, many of whom were greatly disappointed at the necessity of issuing the order to temporarily suppress its further circulation.**

Subsequently, a committee of revision was appointed by President Young consisting of President George A. Smith and Judge Elias Smith, cousins of the Prophet, men personally familiar with the family and thoroughly conversant with Church history. They were instructed carefully to **revise** and correct the original work throughout, which they did, reporting their labors to President Young to his entire satisfaction. (*History of Joseph Smith by his Mother*, 1954 edition, Introduction)

Elias Smith, who was a member of the "committee of revision;" wrote the following in his journal under the date of May 2, 1866:

Wednesday 2 got through with the session of court today as soon as I could and the remainder of the day or some part of it I spent at the Historian's office assisting George A. Smith—Church Historian in the **revision** of a book written by Lucy Smith mother of the Prophet Joseph and by some mistake misunderstanding or other consideration published in England in [blank space] as the history of "Joseph the Prophet" which was [word illegible] suppressed by the "First Presidency," in consequence of certain errors that had been in [word illegible] in the work It has been resolved by President Young to **revise** and republish it and my services have been solicited in the revision of the book or manuscript (Journal of Elias Smith, microfilm copy at Utah State Historical Society)

When Brigham Young told the “committee of revision” to “revise and correct” this book, he did not mean to put in footnotes where there was an error (as any honest historian would do) but rather to make actual changes in the text.

In comparing the first edition of Lucy Smith’s history—i.e., the edition Brigham Young tried to destroy with the edition printed in 1954, we have found that 436 words have been added, 1,379 words deleted and 220 words have been changed. This is a total of 2,035 words added, deleted or changed without any indication. In addition, 736 words have been deleted with the omissions properly indicated.

On the pages which follow the reader will find photographs of some pages of the original 1853 edition of *Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith*. We have compared these pages with the 1954 reprint and have marked the changes on the photographs. Therefore, the text is an exact photographic reproduction of the first edition, and the handwriting shows the changes that would have to be made in the text to bring it into conformity with the 1954 reprint.

Notice that on page 101 of her book, *Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith*, Lucy Smith gave a description of the Urim and Thummim which Joseph Smith was supposed to have used to translate the Book of Mormon. In the 1954 reprint this description has been deleted.

On page 107 she states that she could “see the glistening metal” of the breast-plate Joseph Smith claimed to find with the Book of Mormon plates. In the 1954 reprint this has been changed.

On the same page she states that the breast-plate was worth at least \$500.00. Since this was supposed to be a sacred item, the Mormon historians evidently felt that her concern with its monetary value was out of place. They deleted the ten words which told of its value.

On pages 216 and 217 Lucy Smith told of some trouble her husband had with the law and his escape. In the 1954 reprint many words have been deleted and changed.

On pages 218, 225 and 252 Lucy Smith talks about her son, William. She tells that he had revelations and speaks of his work for the Mormon Church. In the 1954 reprint all of the good things she said about William have been deleted. The Mormon leaders evidently feared William Smith’s influence. He had been an Apostle in the Church until after Joseph Smith’s death, but then he left the Church and stated that he once heard his brother Joseph say that if Brigham Young ever led the Church he would lead it to destruction:

In noticing the claims of Brigham Young to superior power and authority, I would here observe that I heard my brother Joseph declare before his death, that Brigham Young was a man, whose passions, if unrestrained, were calculated to make him the most licentious man in the world, and should the time ever come, said he, that this man should head the church, **he would certainly lead it to destruction.** (A Proclamation, by William Smith, as quoted in the *Warsaw Signal*, October 29, 1845)

On the other hand, the Mormon leaders who went west claimed that William Smith was “a wicked man.” They evidently felt that they must destroy his influence. This was, no doubt, the reason that they deleted the portions of Lucy Smith’s book which spoke highly of him.

On page 225 of the first edition Lucy Smith stated that her son Joseph “was tried for treason against the state of Missouri.” This has been completely changed in the 1954 reprint.

There have been many other important changes made in this book, but the changes marked on the photographs which follow should be sufficient to convince the reader of the dishonesty of the Mormon historians. These changes were made years after Lucy Smith’s death and, of course, without her approval. It is very plain to see that the changes were deliberate and made with the intent to change Lucy Smith’s story. Changing a person’s words without their approval or after they die is actually a very serious matter.

Below is the “Key to Markings” for the pages which follow.

Key to Markings

Words added are red letters in a red box with an insertion ^ arrow showing where they are added.

Textual changes are in a green box in the text with a line through words to be changed and the new words noted in the margin. Boxes are connected with a line.

Words deleted are in a blue box with a line through the deleted words.

made another discovery. His waggon also was gone. He then concluded, that a rogue had stolen them both.

"Mr. Knight," said I, "do be quiet; I would be ashamed to have you go about, waiting upon yourself—just go out and talk with Mr. Smith until William comes, and if you really must go home, your horse shall be brought, and you shall be waited upon like a gentleman. He accordingly went out, and while he was absent Joseph returned.

I trembled so with fear, lest all might be lost in consequence of some failure in keeping the commandments of God, that I was under the necessity of leaving the room in order to conceal my feelings. Joseph saw this, and said, "Do not be uneasy mother, all is right—see here, I have got a key."

I knew not what he meant, but took the article of which he spoke into my hands, and examined it upon examination, found that it consisted of two smooth three-cornered diamonds set in glass, and the glasses were set in silver bows, which were connected with each other in much the same way as old fashioned spectacles. it He took them again and left me, but said nothing respecting the Record.

In a short time he returned, and inquired of me in regard to getting a chest made. I told him to go to a certain cabinet-maker, who had made some furniture for my oldest daughter, and tell him that we would pay him for making a chest, as we did for the other work which he had done for us, namely, one half in cash and the other in produce.

Joseph remarked that he would do so, but that he did not know where the money would come from, for there was not a shilling in the house.

The following day one Mr. Warner came to him, and told him that a widow by the name of Wells, who was living in Macedon, wanted some labour done in a well, for which she would pay the money, and that she was anxious to have him (Joseph) do this labour for her. As this afforded us an opportunity to pay the cabinet maker for the chest, Joseph went

CHAP. XXIV.

JOSEPH BRINGS HOME THE BREAST-PLATE—MARTIN HARRIS AND HIS WIFE INTRODUCED—THE TRANSLATION COMMENCES—MRS. HARRIS BEGINS TO OPPOSE THE WORK.

AFTER bringing home the plates, Joseph commenced working with his father and brothers on the farm, in order to be as near as possible to the treasure which was confided to his care.

Soon after this, he came in from work, one afternoon, and after remaining a short time, he put on his great coat, and left the house. I was engaged at the time, in an upper room, in preparing some oil-cloths for painting. When he returned, he requested me to come down stairs. I told him, that I could not leave my work just then, yet, upon his urgent request, I finally concluded to go down, and see what he wanted, upon which he handed me the breast-plate spoken of in his history.

It was wrapped in a thin muslin handkerchief, so thin that I could see the glistening metal, and ascertain its proportions without any difficulty. feel

It was concave on one side, and convex on the other, and extended from the neck downwards, as far as the centre of the stomach of a man of extraordinary size. It had four straps of the same material, for the purpose of fastening it to the breast, two of which ran back to go over the shoulders, and the other two were designed to fasten to the hips. They were just the width of two of my fingers, (for I measured them,) and they had holes in the end of them, to be convenient in fastening.

The whole plate was worth at least five hundred dollars: after I had examined it, Joseph placed it in the chest with the Urim and Thummim.

Shortly after this circumstance, Joseph came to the house in great haste, and inquired, if there

AND HIS PROGENITORS.

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believe it, that I would not condemn it; 'for,' said he, 'if you do not condemn it, you shall have a testimony of its truth.' I fulfilled my promise, and thus proved his testimony to be true."

Just before my husband's return, as Joseph was about commencing a discourse one Sunday morning, Parley P. Pratt came in, very much fatigued. He had heard of us at some considerable distance, and had travelled very fast, in order to get there by meeting time, as he wished to hear what we had to say, that he might be prepared to show us our error. But when Joseph had finished his discourse, Mr. Pratt arose, and expressed his hearty concurrence in every sentiment advanced. The following day, he was baptized and ordained. In a few days he set off for Canaan, N. Y. where his brother Orson resided, whom he baptized on the nineteenth of September, 1830.

~~After Joseph ordained Parley, he went home again to Pennsylvania, for he was only in Manchester on business.~~

About this time, his trouble commenced at Colesville with the mob, who served, a writ upon him, and dragged him from the desk as he was about taking his text to preach. But as a relation of this affair is given in his history,* I shall mention only one circumstance pertaining to it, for which I am dependant upon Esquire Reid, Joseph's counsel in the case, and I shall relate it as near in his own words as my memory will admit:—

"I was so busy at that time, when Mr. Smith sent for me, that it was almost impossible for me to attend the case, and never having seen Mr. Smith, I determined to decline going. But soon after coming to this conclusion, I thought I heard some one say to me, 'You *must* go, and deliver the Lord's Anointed!' Supposing that it was the man who came after me, I replied, 'the Lord's Anointed? What do you mean by the Lord's Anointed?' He was surprised at being accosted in this manner, and replied, 'what do *you* mean, sir? I said nothing about the Lord's

Joseph's

* See *Times and Seasons*, vol. IV., Pp. 40 and 61 *Supp. to Mil. Star*, vol. xiv., p. 31.

tinued to collect means and employ hands, until the house was thoroughly completed, even to the fastenings of the doors; and when this was accomplished, there was but six dollars remaining unpaid. And this debt my husband afterwards discharged by the sale of produce.

Late in the fall, Joseph and Hyrum returned. They were overjoyed to meet us again in health, more especially on account of the perils which they had passed through during their absence. Joseph and Hyrum sat down beside me, each holding one of my hands in his, while they related the following story:—

On the first of August

“When we started on our journey, we made arrangements to have every one made as comfortable as possible; but the sufferings which are incident to such an excursion made some of the brethren discontented, and they began to murmur against us, saying, ‘the Lord never required them to take such a tiresome journey,’ and that it was folly for them to suffer such fatigue and inconvenience just to gratify us. We warned them, in the name of the Lord, to stop their murmuring; for, if they did not, the displeasure of the Almighty would be manifested in judgments in their midst. But ~~the majority~~ of them paid no attention to what we said, until one morning when they went out to harness up their horses, and found them all so lame as to be unable to travel. We then told them that this was a curse which had come upon them because of transgression; but, if they would repent, it might be removed—if not, a greater curse would come upon them. They believed what we said, and repented of their folly. The consequence was, we were soon on our journey again. It was not long, however, till the spirit of dissension arose again, and was not quelled, so as to produce any degree of good feeling, until we arrived at Missouri.

many

“Soon after arriving at the point of destination, the cholera broke out in our midst; the brethren were so violently attacked that it seemed impossible to render them any assistance. They immediately sent for us to lay hands on them, but we soon discovered that this, also, was a judgment from the Almighty; for, when we laid our hands upon them, in the name of the Lord, the dis-

has acknowledged it, by pouring out his Spirit upon us here, and revealing to us much of his will in regard to the work which he is about to perform. Furthermore, we have every thing that is necessary to our comfort and convenience, and, judging from appearances, one would not suppose that anything could occur which would break up our friendship for each other, or disturb our tranquillity. But brethren, beware; for I tell you in the name of the Lord, that there is an evil in this very congregation, which, if not repented of, will result in setting many ~~one-third~~ of you, who are here this day, so much at enmity against me, that you will have a desire to take my life; and you even *would do it*, if God should permit the deed. But brethren, I now call upon you to repent, and cease all your hardness of heart, and turn from those principles of death and dishonesty which you are harbouring in your bosoms, before it is eternally too late, for there is yet room for repentance."

He continued to labour with them in this way, appealing to them in the most solemn manner, until almost every one in the house was in tears, and he was exhausted with speaking.

The following week was spent in surmises and speculations, as to who would be the traitors, and why they should be so, &c., &c.

In the Fall
of 1836

Prior to this, a bank was established in Kirtland. Soon after the sermon, above mentioned, Joseph discovered that a large amount of money had been taken away by fraud, from this bank. He immediately demanded a search warrant of Esquire F. G. Williams, which was flatly refused. "I insist upon a warrant," said Joseph, "for if you will give me one, I can get the money, and if you do not, I will break you of your office." "Well, break it is then," said Williams, "and we will strike hands upon it." "Very well," said Joseph, "from henceforth I drop you from my quorum, in the name of the Lord."

~~Williams, in wrath, replied, "Amen." Joseph entered a complaint against him, for neglect of duty, as an officer of justice; in consequence of which the magistracy was taken from him, and given to Oliver Cowdery.~~

large number

and it was found, that a great proportion of the Church were decidedly in favour of the new party. In this spirit they went to Missouri, and contaminated the minds of many of the brethren against Joseph, in order to destroy his influence. This made it more necessary than ever, to keep a strict guard at the houses of those who were the chief objects of their vengeance.

some

disaffected

CHAP. XLVI.

JOSEPH SMITH, SENIOR, AND HIS BROTHER JOHN, GO ON A MISSION TO
THE EAST—THE DEATH OF JERUSHA SMITH.

In the year 1836, my husband and his brother John were sent on a short mission to New Portage. While there, they administered patriarchal blessings, and baptized sixteen persons.

Soon after they left for New Portage, their aged mother arrived in Kirtland from New York, after travelling the distance of five hundred miles. We sent immediately for my husband and his brother, who returned as speedily as possible, and found the old lady in good health and excellent spirits. She rejoiced to meet so many of her children, grand-children, and great grand-children, whom she expected never to see.

In two days after, her sons, John and Joseph, arrived, she was taken sick, and survived but one week; at the end of which she died, firm in the faith of the Gospel, although she had never yielded obedience to any of its ordinances. Her age was ninety-three years.

In a short time after her death, my husband and his brother John took a journey to visit all the Churches, and the following is a sketch from the journal of John Smith, of this tour:—

branches of the
Church in the East

them directions as to what he desired them to do, while he was absent from them, and, as he was about leaving the room, he said, "Well, brethren, I do not recollect anything more, but one thing, brethren, is certain, I shall see you again, let what will happen, for I have a promise of life five years, and they cannot kill me until that time is expired."

That night he was warned by the Spirit to make his escape, with his family, as speedily as possible; he therefore arose from his bed, and took his family, with barely beds and clothing sufficient for them, and left Kirtland in the dead hour of the night. The day following, the constable, Luke Johnson, an apostate, served a summons upon my husband, telling him that no harm was intended, and desired him to go immediately to the office.

I begged Johnson not to drag my husband away among our enemies, for I knew, by sad experience, the direful consequences of these civil suits. Johnson paid no attention to what I said, but hurried my husband away to the office. He was taken for marrying a couple; and as Esquire Cowdery, and the mob, did not consider that he was a minister of the Gospel, they disputed his having the right to perform this ceremony, and so fined him the sum of three thousand dollars, and, in case he should fail to pay this amount forthwith, he was sentenced to go to the penitentiary.

Luke Johnson bustled about, pretending to be very much engaged in preparing to draw writings for the money, and making other arrangements, such as were required of him by the party to which he belonged. The first opportunity that offered itself, he went to Hyrum, and told him to take his father into a room, which he pointed out to him, and, said Johnson, "I will manage to get the window out, which will set him at liberty to jump out, and go where he pleases." Mr. Smith and Hyrum, who had been together all the time, then retired from the company, who were kept from following them by Luke Johnson, who told the mob, that the prisoner had gone to consult about raising

without being licensed

drawing the bonds

he would

so that he can get

the money. In this way they were stilled, until Mr. Smith, by the help of Hyrum and John Boynton, escaped from the window.

he escaped

My husband, after travelling about four miles, stopped with brother Snow, who was father to Eliza Snow, the poetess. The old man told Mr. Smith that he would secrete him, and, calling his family together, he forbade them telling any one of his being there.

Oliver

two

~~When Johnson supposed that my husband was out of their reach, he started up and ran into the room where he had left him, saying, that he must see after the prisoner, and finding the room empty, he made a great outcry, and ran, hunting in every direction for the fugitive.~~ He came to me and inquired if Mr.

Johnson

Smith had returned home. This frightened me very much, and I exclaimed, "Luke, you have killed my husband." He denied it, but gave no further explanation. In a short time I found out where he was, and sent him both money and clothes to travel with, so that in a few days, he started with Don Carlos and brother Wilber. By this time, hand-bills were stuck up, on every public, as well as private road, offering a reward for him, and describing his person, in order, if possible, to prevent his escape. Runners were also sent throughout the country to watch for him, with authority to bring him back, in case he should be found; but, in spite of all their diligence, he succeeded in making his escape, and getting to New Portage, where he stopped with brother Taylor. Don Carlos, having accompanied his father to the above-named place, returned home again to his family; but, immediately discovering that the mob contemplated taking him for the same offence, he moved with his family to New Portage, and was there with his father, until the rest of the family were ready to remove to Missouri. Hyrum had already moved there with his family.

Edwin

Shortly after they left, a man by the name of Edward Woolley came to Kirtland to see Mr. Smith; not finding him there, he went to New Portage, and persuaded my husband to accompany him home.

to Rochester, Columbia Co.

After Mr. Smith had been at this gentleman's residence about two weeks, we became very uneasy about him ; and, as we did not know at that time whither he had gone, William set out in pursuit of him, in order to learn, if possible, whether he had met with friends, and was well provided for, or had fallen into the hands of his enemies, and been murdered, for we had as much reason to apprehend the latter calamity, as to hope for the former good fortune.

It was some time after William arrived at New Portage, before he could ascertain where my husband had gone. But as soon as he did receive the desired information he proceeded to Mr. Edward Woolley's, where he found his father in good health, but extremely anxious about the family.

~~On hearing that William was in the place, many of the inhabitants were desirous that he should preach, and he agreed to do so ; but a few declared, that if he did, they would tar and feather him. One of these was Mr. Bear, a man of unusual size and strength ; besides him there were three others. These men came into the house, just as William was taking his text, which was, "The poor deluded Mormons." The singularity of this text excited their curiosity, and they stopped in the doorway, saying, wait a little, let us see what he will do with his text ; and they waited so long, that they either forgot what they came for, or changed their minds, for they made no further moves towards using their tar and feathers. After meeting, Mr. Bear frankly acknowledged his conviction of the truth, and was baptized.~~

Immediately after this, William returned home, and his father went again to New Portage. Here he remained with Don Carlos, until we were ready to start to Missouri.

ing on of hands. We then changed her clothing, and put her into warm blankets, and, after pouring a little wine and water into her mouth, she was administered to again. This time she opened her eyes, and seemed to revive a little. I continued to employ every means that lay in my power for her recovery, and in this I was much assisted by Emma and my daughters.

My children soon began to mend, and I felt to rejoice at the prospect of returning health.

When William began to sit up a little, he told me that he had a vision during his sickness, in which he saw a tremendous army of men coming into Far West, and that it was his impression that the time would not be long before he should see it fulfilled. I was soon convinced, by the circumstances which afterwards transpired, that he was not mistaken in his opinion.

CHAP. XLIX.

TESTIMONY OF HYRUM SMITH.

HERE I shall introduce a brief history of our troubles in Missouri, given by my son Hyrum, before the Municipal Court, at Nauvoo, June 30, 1843, when Joseph was tried for treason against the state of Missouri:—

when Joseph was

on a writ of habeas corpus.

“HYRUM SMITH, sworn:—Said that the defendant now in court is his brother, and that his name is not Joseph Smith, junior, but his name is Joseph Smith, senior, and has been for more than two years past. I have been acquainted with him ever since he was born, which was thirty-seven years in December last, and I have not been absent from him at any one time, not even the space of

he besought his father to move to Illinois, but Mr. Smith would not consent to this, for he was in hopes that our sons would be liberated, and peace again be restored.

~~William continued to expostulate with him, but to no effect, as Mr. Smith declared that he would not leave Far West, except by revelation. William said that he had revelation; that he himself knew that we would have to leave Far West. Mr.~~

But

~~Smith~~ finally said that the family might get ready to move, and then, if we were obliged to go, there would be nothing to hinder us.

Our business in Far West had been trading in corn and wheat, as well as keeping a boarding house. When the mob came in, we had considerable grain on hand, but very little flour or meal, therefore we sent a man who was living with us to mill with fourteen sacks of grain; but the miller considered it unsafe to allow the brethren to remain about his premises, as the mob were near at hand, and he was afraid they would burn his buildings. Consequently, the young man returned without his grain, and, for bread-stuff, we were for a long time obliged to pound corn in a samp-mortar. Many subsisted altogether upon parched corn for some length of time.

The brethren were all driven in from the country. There was an acre of ground in front of our house, completely covered with beds, lying in the open sun, where families were compelled to sleep, exposed to all kinds of weather; these were the last who came into the city, and, as the houses were all full, they could not find a shelter. It was enough to make the heart ache to see the children, sick with colds, and crying around their mothers for food, whilst their parents were destitute of the means of making them comfortable.

It may be said that, if Joseph Smith had been a Prophet, he would have foreseen the evil, and provided against it. To this I reply, he did all that was in his power to prevail upon his brethren to move into Far West, before the difficulty commenced,

every opportunity to oblige us while we remained in the place.

Previous to our sickness in Quincy, my husband sent brother Lamoreaux to Missouri, under strict injunctions to see Joseph and Hyrum, or find out where they were before he should return. About the time that Lucy began to walk about a little, brother Partridge and brother Morley came to our house from Lima, to see if brother Lamoreaux had either written or returned. When they came we had heard nothing of him, but while they were with us he arrived in Quincy, and sent us word that he had seen neither Joseph nor Hyrum. At this information brother Partridge was in despair, and said that, when another messenger was to be sent, he would go himself, as it was hardly possible to find a man that would do as he was instructed. I listened to him some time in silence; at last the Spirit, which had so often comforted my heart, again spoke peace to my soul, and gave me an assurance that I should see my sons before the night should again close over my head. "Brother Partridge," I exclaimed, in tears of joy, "I shall see Joseph and Hyrum before to-morrow night." "No, mother Smith," said he, "I am perfectly discouraged; I don't believe we shall ever see them again in the world. At any rate, do not flatter yourself that they will be here as soon as that, for I tell you that you will be disappointed. I have always believed you before, but I cannot see any prospect of this prophecy being fulfilled, but, if it is so, I will never dispute your word again." I asked him if he would stay in town long enough to prove my sayings, whether they were true or false. He promised to do so. Brothers Partridge and Morley soon afterwards left the house, in order to get further information upon the subject.

After falling asleep that night, I saw my sons in vision. They were upon the prairie travelling, and seemed very tired and hungry. They had but one horse. I saw them stop and tie him to the stump of a burnt sapling, then lie down upon the ground to

Book Burning

For many years the Mormon Church has encouraged the destruction of publications that are critical of Joseph Smith or the Church. The *Deseret News* (the Mormon newspaper published in Salt Lake City) carried a disgraceful article in 1953, in which the following statement appeared:

Good-natured Sven A. Wiman can manage a cautious grin when his married daughter relates in English, and which he can understand pretty well, how when he returned home each evening from his part-time employment in various used book stores throughout Sweden he would produce an anti-Mormon book and then proceed to **burn it**. Sweden, you learn, has literally no end of anti-Church books, and Elder Wiman, set himself up as a **one-man cleanup committee to destroy as many of these diatribes against the Church as possible**. (*Deseret News*, Church Section, May 16, 1953, page 10)

Under Mr. Wiman's picture this statement appeared:

"AVENGING ANGEL" — Since his conversion to the Church in 1936, Sven A. Wiman has spent years working in many used book stores throughout Sweden collecting LDS books—which are generally hard to come by, and securing and **burning** anti-LDS books, —of which there are thousands.

This article gives the impression that book-burning is a good activity to be engaged in if it is directed against books critical of the Church.

In the summer of 1965 we were visited by a student from the Brigham Young University who had recently completed a mission for the Mormon Church in Texas. He related that while on his mission he was instructed to see that books critical of the Mormon Church were removed from the libraries. He said that he was instructed to take a set of new Mormon books—furnished by the Church—to each library and offer them in exchange for their old books dealing with the Church. In this way he was able to trick the librarian into giving him the older books which were critical of the Church. He said that the method was very effective in Texas, and that many of the books critical of the Church were removed from the libraries by this method.

That such a project was actually carried out by some Mormon missionaries has now been verified by the Mormon writer Samuel W. Taylor. He stated:

The sword cuts both ways, and I wonder how many good-will tours by the Tabernacle Choir would be required to repair the damage done to the Mormon image when *Playboy*, with its enormous circulation and impact on young people, published the fact that **Mormon missionaries were engaged in a campaign of book-burning?** The item was a letter from a librarian of Northampton, Mass., Lawrence Wikander, published

first in the American Library Association's *Newsletter on Intellectual Freedom*, May, 1963, and subsequently reprinted in *Playboy*. Wikander told of two Elders arriving at his library to inspect the index of Mormon material. They offered a list of "more up-to-date material" and after delivering it made the following proposition:

Now that we had these books which told the truth about their religion, undoubtedly we would like to discard other books in the library which told lies about the Mormon Church. Other libraries, they said, had been glad to have this pointed out to them.

Following the exposé in *Playboy* a friend of mine tried to find out how extensive the missionary book-burning campaign had been. A **number of returned missionaries** from both domestic and foreign missions **admitted that they had participated in it**; but data as to when and how and by whom the project had been originated was, understandably, unavailable.

Self-appointed Comstocks among us have for years been dedicated to the unholy quest of seeking out and **destroying books considered unfavorable**. Reva Stanley, biographer of her grandfather, Parley Pratt, told me that her right of free access to the stacks at Bancroft Library at University of California was curtailed when certain ones were closed because of the disappearance of rare anti-Mormon books. My brother Raymond was approached by a zealot offering a **number of rare Mormon books bearing library stamps**; the devout Saint blandly admitted **stealing them to protect the public**, but said he was sure that Raymond, with his background of research and firm testimony, would not be harmed. (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Summer, 1967, page 26)

One man told us that he had a relative who allowed the Assistant Church Historian—who has since passed away—to borrow a journal which was written by a Mormon but contained some very revealing material. When the journal was returned, it was discovered that the pages that contained this material had been torn out.

A man who had been on a mission for the Mormon Church said that in a hundred years the Church will have a beautiful history. This may be true if the Mormon Church leaders continue to encourage the destruction of books that are critical, change the history of the Church, and keep the vital records of the Church hid from those who are doing research. They may have a beautiful history, but it will be a false history. The Mormon writer Samuel W. Taylor made this statement:

In fostering the modern era of peace and friendship the positive-thinkers among us rode higher and higher in the saddle. . . . For the sake of a cherished public image and the sweet wine of praise they concocted a never-never land of Mormonism that presented a lovely (if unreal) facade for the outside world to admire and converts to embrace. . . . we encrusted our history and public image with **gilded myth and glittering distortion**. (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Summer, 1967, page 20)

The BYU Spy Ring

In February, 1967, it was revealed that a “spy ring” had been operating at the Brigham Young University which is “owned and operated” by the Mormon Church. The following appeared in the *Daily Utah Chronicle* (a newspaper published by the Associated Students of the University of Utah):

Brigham Young University is in the calm of a hurricane’s eye after being rocked with student charges of an **administration-instigated spy ring** and before the Board of Trustees acts on a request for a joint faculty-administration-board investigation on the charges.

Two political science students, Ronald Hankin and Colleen Stone described the “spy ring” to BYU studentbody Tuesday during a “free forum” speech. Hankin claims to have been asked by Steven Russell, senior political scientist, to “check up on a reaction to Pres. Ernest Wilkinson’s April 21 speech” before the studentbody. The speech was a “conservative view of totalitarianism, federal aid, capitalism and socialism.”

... Hankin said 15 students were offered the “spy task” authorized by Vice President Joseph Bentley. “We were to check up on eight teachers: . . .”

Meanwhile, the campus chapter of American Association of University Professors (AAUP) called a sudden meeting Thursday to discuss “secrecy, tenure and academic freedom.” After a two-hour meeting, the group issued a detailed resolution requesting a joint investigation on the allegations. The 100 faculty representatives issued the request to the BYU Board of Trustees, the Quorum of Twelve of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, but did not expect a reply for “several days.”

Rumor or Fact?

Chapter Pres. Briant S. Jacobs said in a statement Thursday, “Serious student allegations recently have reflected upon the atmospheric freedom at Brigham Young University. The request for investigation is to replace rum;or and apprehension with fact.”

....
A former John Birch Society member, Hankin said during the summer he “had recriminations and realized what was wrong.” At that time he began “passing information from both sides around.” Finally, “I was contacted by BYU vice presidents Lewis and Crockett about the leftist leanings of Dr. Hillam.”

The spy charges were hurled during a “free forum” session Tuesday. . . . (*Daily Utah Chronicle*, March 6, 1967)

At first Ernest L. Wilkinson, President of the BYU, evidently tried to deny the charges:

According to an Associated Press story, Wilkinson said the students were “misinformed” that **he had no knowledge of the alleged spy ring**. School spokesmen Friday said Wilkinson was out of town on business until Monday. (*Daily Utah Chronicle*, March 6, 1967)

The following appeared in the *Salt Lake Tribune* on March 13, 1967:

PROVO (AP) — Investigation has been completed into student charges of a “spy ring” at Brigham Young University, sources close to the school said Sunday.

A statement from university P[r]esident Ernest L. Wilkinson is expected sometime this week, possibly as early as Wednesday, the sources said.

A campus chapter of the American Association of University Professors requested a three-sided investigation into the student allegations which were brought out nearly two weeks ago in a student forum.

The AAUP, headed by Dr. Briant Jacobs on campus, asked for a faculty-administration-board of trustees probe into charges that an administration-endorsed “spy ring” was operating for the purpose of checking on so-called “liberal” professors.

The students’ charges brought **quick denials from the University**, which said the students who made them — Ronald Hankin and Coleen Stone — were “misinformed.”

Public release of results of the investigation must be cleared by the school’s board of trustees, which is the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saint.

Even though the BYU officials denied the existence of the spy ring, the investigation showed that such a ring did exist. Finally, Ernest L. Wilkinson was forced to admit that there was such a group:

PROVO (AP) — Brigham Young University President Ernest L. Wilkinson **acknowledged** Tuesday that a **student investigation team had existed on campus** to check on so-called liberal professors.

And Dr. Wilkinson pledged “my sincerest efforts to see that such a situation does not occur again in the future.”

The comments were in a letter to the faculty, which was read to about 10,000 students at an assembly.

Hankin disclosed the student investigation in a student sponsored forum held on campus. The disclosure led to a request for an investigation by the campus chapter of the American Association of University Professors.

The professors’ organization accepted Wilkinson’s letter Tuesday and said the issue was “completely and satisfactorily resolved.”

Some Misinformation

In his letter, Dr. Wilkinson said:

“Although there is misinformation in the charges, there was such a group, reports were made and students were under the impression they were acting with the sanction of the administration.”

He did **not** say **who** the students were reporting to, but added:

“As president, I must accept responsibility, and I regret the misunderstanding and uneasiness which has been engendered.”

Brigham Young University is owned and operated by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, commonly known as the Mormon Church. (*Salt Lake Tribune*, March 15, 1967)

Under the caption “Wilkinson Confirms ‘Spy Ring’ Charges,” the following appeared in the *Ogden Standard-Examiner* on March 14, 1967:

The existence of a student “spying” last spring at Brigham Young University was confirmed today by Dr. Ernest L. Wilkinson, school president.

In a statement addressed to the BYU faculty, Wilkinson admitted the basic truth on the charges leveled by two students, . . .

They said a group of students had been instructed to report the reaction of certain so-called “liberal” faculty-members to a speech given last April by Dr. Wilkinson on free enterprise and the American way of life.

. . . .
Wilkinson said that as BYU president he “must accept responsibility” for the incident . . .

When the charges were **first** made, the BYU administration said the students were “misinformed.” This triggered a request from the BYU chapter of the American Association of University Professors for an investigation of the allegations “by the faculty, the administration and the board of trustees.”

In an interview published by the *Daily Utah Chronicle*, Colleen Stone, one of the students who exposed the spy ring, made some very serious charges against the BYU and even claimed that they were looking for an excuse to “oust us”:

In the same *Chronicle* interview, Miss Stone said she and Hankin **could not be “ousted” from school** for the speech because the activity was authorized by the administration since it was sponsored by the student government committee. However, she said, **“I have been tailed since 1 p. m. Wednesday and they’re trying to find us doing something wrong so they can oust us.”**

. . . .
“Dean Cameron (BYU Dean of Students) told me after the speech he thought there was a conspiracy to smear the school. ‘You guys certainly set it up just right to smash us’,” she quoted the administrator. Dean

Cameron later, she said, replied that she (Miss Stone) had been misinformed.

Also in her “forum” speech, Miss Stone told the campus “We go to a university to pursue truth without limitations, yet we don’t have such an environment here; the passage of knowledge is **suppressed**.” She quoted a recent faculty meeting of the religion department as saying the position of the university was: (1) for young LDS girls to meet young LDS boys; (2) to train seminary teachers; and, (3) to provide a place where the ideas of the world can be tried by the doctrines of the Church.

BYU has no written statement pro or con on academic freedom, she said. The AAUP advises all professors who teach at private institutions to get a written statement on academic freedom for their protection. Professors at BYU have year-by-year contracts and no tenure. (*Daily Utah Chronicle*, March 6, 1967, page 5)

On March 28, 1967, “two of the BYU spies,” Mr. Hankin and Mr. Sisin, were guests in the Caucus Room at the University of Utah. They stated that they “had been subjected to a good deal of harassment. BYU people seemed to resent them as ‘squealers.’” They also stated that one of the administrators at the BYU “told them he wished they would leave, that he wished he had had their telephones bugged.” Two weeks later Ronald Hankin was “dismissed from school.” The *Deseret News* (the Mormon newspaper) claimed that there was no connection between his dismissal and his part in exposing the spy ring:

PROVO — Student Ronald Hankin, 24, was **dismissed from school** for multiple violations of BYU standards all separate from his part in disclosing a student “spy” ring, a statement, printed in the university’s weekly Faculty Bulletin, said Thursday.

It emphasized there was **no connection** with the fact that Mr. Hankin was the student who charged that classmates were being used to spy on so-called “liberal” professors.

Mr. Hankin also wrote Thursday in a letter to the *BYU Daily Universe* that his dismissal was unrelated to his allegations regarding the spy ring.

A BYU spokesman said the school normally does not announce or comment on student suspensions and that Mr. Hankin made his own suspension public.

The Faculty Bulletin statement said Mr. Hankin of Hialeah, Fla., was suspended April 10 by the University Standards Office on recommendation of the standards committee, composed of members of the faculty and administrative staff.

“Most of the infractions occurred and investigation was being made prior to the Feb. 28 student forum when Mr. Hankin made allegations regarding the ‘spy ring.’

“Mr. Hankin’s violations and the decision to suspend him were completely unrelated . . .

“In fact, the standards committee made its decision only after unusually careful investigation . . . because the committee realized there might be misunderstanding and misinterpretation . . .”

Dr. Ernest Wilkinson, BYU president, **acknowledged the existence of the spy ring** and said the administration would not permit such conditions in the future. (*Deseret News*, April 13, 1967, page 14 B)

It was only ten days after Ronald Hankin was suspended that Ernest L. Wilkinson, President of the BYU, announced that in the future students could be suspended merely because they were inactive in the Mormon Church. In the Minutes of a Faculty Meeting held April 20, 1967, we find the following:

President Wilkinson reported that with the consent of the Board of Trustees the administration has circulated to the bishops a **questionnaire** asking for the **names** of students who are **inactive in the Church** or who are not living the standards of the Church. He reported that the purpose for this is that if students are not living the standards of the university and the Church they should **not** be permitted to remain in school and thus prevent worthy members of the Church from attending.

Brother Douglas Thayer asked if such a method is being used how can a student go to his bishop in complete confidence. President Wilkinson stated that bishops are not to give information which has been given them in confidence, but if they have been informed of a student's inactivity or inability to live the standards of the Church by **another source** they are to **reveal** this to the university administration. (“Minutes of Faculty Meeting —Apr. 20,” as quoted in the *Daily Utah Chronicle*, May 18, 1967, page 1)

Ernest L. Wilkinson evidently changed the policy to suppress the anti-Church feeling that is growing at the BYU. In the *Daily Utah Chronicle*, May 18, 1967, we find this statement under the caption “BYU Revamps Standards”:

Ernest L. Wilkinson, President of Brigham Young University, announced that student activity in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints would be used as criteria to dismiss students from BYU, the church owned school in Provo.

Mr. Steven L. Covey, assistant to Wilkinson, said that there is a **great deal of anti-Church feeling** among some of the students at BYU. According to Covey, some bishops of BYU Wards of the LDS church have called on students only to have doors slammed in their faces and in general treated badly by the supposed member students. Covey stated that the Y is a church school and students who attend here realize the stipulations . . . one of the implied [implied?] rules is that members of the LDS Church will take an active part in church activities, Priesthood Meeting, MIA, Sacrament Meeting, etc.

According to Covey the university studentbody has been limited to 20, 000 students. Consequently, during the past years the academic requirements for admission to the school have risen. . . . Covey said that the general authorities of the church were [a]gainst the university becoming a haven for elite intellectual Mormons, . . . ini[t]iation of church activity into evidence for dismissal is the only way we could turn. . . . according to a bishop of a Provo Ward, the questions asked Bishops by the Wilkinson administration are as follows:

1. Does the student attend church regularly, Seldomly, Never.
2. Does the student live the word of wisdom? Yes, No, Unknown.
3. Does the student have a positive attitude towards the church and Brigham Young University?
4. Is the student active, passive, or indifferent when; it comes to church activities?

. . . . Covey, when pressed by *Chronicle* reporter Ron Scott, admitted that loopholes in the new regulations are seen by the administration. Non-members who attended the school, are at present assigned to LDS wards but are not required to attend church services, and are only obliged to live Mormon standards of morality and to obey the Word of Wisdom (the no smoking-drinking laws of the church).

The “spy ring” and other dictatorial policies by Ernest L. Wilkinson have evidently caused a good deal of trouble at the BYU. Unless some changes are made, there will probably be even more trouble in the future.

Suppressing Records

Because of the fact that many church policies and doctrines have changed, and because many changes have been made in the vital records of the church before they were published, it has become necessary for the Mormon leaders to hide these records from the members of the church.

In the preface to the book, *A New Witness for Christ in America*, Vol. 2, the Apostle John A. Widtsoe stated, “The best place to obtain information for and against the Church is the Library of the Church Historian.”

In April of 1961 we decided to put John A. Widtsoe's statement to the test. We wrote to approximately twenty of the authorities in the Mormon Church, asking for permission to have some of this information. The following is a copy of the letter which we sent to each of them:

Dear Mr _____,

The Apostle John A. Widtsoe once stated, “The best place to obtain information for and against the Church is the Library of the Church Historian.” (*A New Witness for Christ in America*, preface, page vii.)

We are writing a book and we need some of this information. As we know that the Church makes microfilms, we would like the following things microfilmed.

1. Joseph Smith's history of the church in the original handwritten form.
2. All of Joseph Smith's journals.
3. The Far West Record.
4. The original handwritten manuscript of the Book of Mormon.

Enclosed is ten dollars for this work. We are sending this same letter to several other authorities in the church. Therefore, there should be enough money to cover the cost of this work.

If there is any possible reason why we cannot obtain microfilm copies, can we come to the Historians Office and examine these manuscripts?

Sincerely,
Mrs. Jerald Tanner

The answers received concerning this request were very evasive. The first request, as to whether we could

obtain microfilms of these documents, was denied. The second request, as to whether we could go to the Historian's Office and examine the manuscripts, was simply ignored.

The letter addressed to Preston Nibley, Assistant Church Historian, was simply put into another envelope and mailed back. However, there was a notation made upon the envelope which read:

"NOT INTERESTED"

Thorpe B. Isaacson, who later became a member of the First Presidency of the Mormon Church, sent the letter back with this statement written on the top: "No one can give permission for this except First Presidency or Church Historian I am returning 10.00 you placed in letter by check for my Records T. B. Isaacson."

The Mormon Apostle LeGrand Richards very bluntly stated that he had no desire to help us. Below is a photograph of the letter we received from him.

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

**THE COUNCIL OF THE TWELVE
47 E. SOUTH TEMPLE STREET
SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH**

April 11, 1961

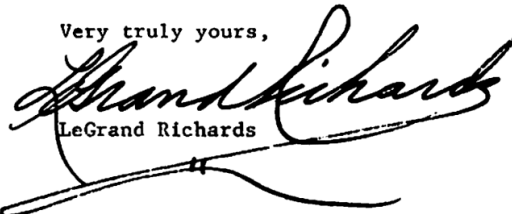
Mrs. Jerald Tanner
319 North Fifth West
Salt Lake City, Utah

Dear Mrs. Tanner:

I am returning herewith the \$10 enclosed in your letter of April 7.

I have no interest, whatever, in doing anything to furnish you information you ask for in your letter for the purpose for which you desire the same.

Very truly yours,


LeGrand Richards

LR:rs

Enc. \$10 cash

The pages which follow contain photographs of the answers that we received from the other Church authorities. Most of the letters were from the offices of the Apostles and First Presidency of the Church.

**THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS
OFFICE OF THE FIRST PRESIDENCY
SALT LAKE CITY 11, UTAH**

April 17, 1961

**Mrs. Jerald Tanner
319 North Fifth West
Salt Lake City, Utah**

Dear Mrs. Tanner:

Owing to the heavy pressure of duties pertaining to the general administration of the Church, President McKay has asked me to acknowledge for him your letter of April 7, 1961.

I have been directed to say that since the Church Historian has already refused the use of the private journals listed in your letter, this being his prerogative, his action is approved and the request is denied.

The \$10 bill sent with your letter is therefore returned to you herewith.

Sincerely,



**Assistant Secretary to:
The First Presidency**

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS
OFFICE OF THE FIRST PRESIDENCY
SALT LAKE CITY 11, UTAH

April 20, 1961

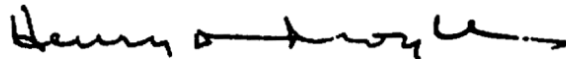
Mrs. Jerald Tanner
319 North 5th West
Salt Lake City, Utah

Dear Sister Tanner:

I am enclosing herewith my check for \$10.00, returning you the \$10.00 in currency which you enclosed in your letter of April 12th.

It would not be possible for me to render the service to you which you desire in consideration of the \$10.00 thus sent to me. I have, however, referred your letter to the Church Historian's Office with the request that they answer you directly.

Sincerely yours,



Henry D. Moyle

Enc.
HDM:ldp

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

**THE COUNCIL OF THE TWELVE
47 E. SOUTH TEMPLE STREET
SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH**

April 10, 1961

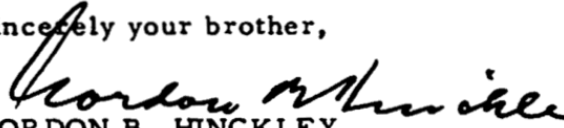
**Mrs. Jerald Tanner
319 North 5th West
Salt Lake City, Utah**

Dear Sister Tanner:

This will acknowledge receipt of your letter of April 7 with \$10.00 enclosed.

Since you request information from the Church Historian's Office, I am taking the liberty of referring this to Brother Earl Olsen, Librarian of the Historian's Office.

Sincerely your brother,


GORDON B. HINCKLEY

GBH/po

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS
THE COUNCIL OF THE TWELVE
47 E. SOUTH TEMPLE STREET
SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH

May 3, 1961

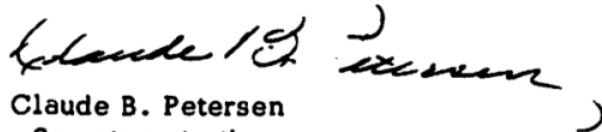
Mrs. Jerald Tanner
319 North Fifth West
Salt Lake City, Utah

Dear Mrs. Tanner:

Referring to your letter dated April 7 addressed to Elder Howard W. Hunter.

We are returning herewith the ten dollars which was enclosed with your letter. The microfilms which you request are not available.

Faithfully yours,



Claude B. Petersen
Secretary to the
Council of the Twelve

CBP:dh

Enclosure

Dear Mrs Tanner

19 April 1961

The nature of your note
and of previous communications
received from you makes me feel
you are not sincere.

While I would like to accept
your gift and apply it to the
missionary fund, I feel it best
to return it to you and counsel
you to use it and your other
talents in a wiser way.

W. A. Banks

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS
THE COUNCIL OF THE TWELVE
47 E. SOUTH TEMPLE STREET
SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH

April 19, 1961

Mrs. Jerald Tanner
319 North Fifth West
Salt Lake City, Utah

Dear Mrs. Tanner:

Enclosed is the Ten Dollars you sent to me for certain information from the Church Historian's Library. I am not in that department and am sorry that I cannot help you.

Sincerely,

George Q. Morris
George Q. Morris

Encl:
\$10.00

CCM:mbt

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS
THE COUNCIL OF THE TWELVE
47 E. SOUTH TEMPLE STREET
SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH

April 19, 1961

Mrs. Jerald Tanner
319 North Fifth West
Salt Lake City, Utah

Dear Mrs. Tanner:

Enclosed is the Ten Dollars you sent to me for certain information from the Church Historian's Library. I am not in that department and am sorry that I cannot help you.

Sincerely,


George Q. Morris

Encl:
\$10.00

JCM:mbt

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS
THE COUNCIL OF THE TWELVE
47 E. SOUTH TEMPLE STREET
SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH

April 10, 1961

Mrs. Jerald Tanner
319 No. 5th West
Salt Lake City, Utah

Dear Mrs. Tanner:

Elder Harold B. Lee has asked me to reply to your letter of April 7, 1961, in which you enclosed a \$10.00 bill with the request that certain records and journals in the Church Historian office be microfilmed. He has asked me to advise you that these carefully preserved historical records are primarily there because of the cooperation of faithful Latter-day Saints who over the 131 years of Church organization have helped to preserve these records for these faithful members and their posterity.

He is of the opinion from your former correspondence that you have no such feeling of faithfulness nor loyalty, although from your name it would be assumed that you or your husband came of Latter-day Saint ancestry. He is of the opinion that even if the library had the facilities to supply to everyone who made such requests, the information contained therein, that they would be inclined only to accommodate those who have demonstrated loyalty and faith in the Restored Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Respectfully yours,

Francis Cardall

Secretary to Harold B. Lee

P.S. He has asked me to return herewith your \$10.00.

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS
THE COUNCIL OF THE TWELVE
47 E. SOUTH TEMPLE STREET
SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH

April 15, 1961

Mrs. Jerald Tanner
319 North 5th West
Salt Lake City, Utah

Dear Mrs. Tanner:

I am returning herewith your letter of April 13th with the \$10.00 enclosure. I have nothing to do with the library of the Church Historian. I suggest that you discuss your problem with them direct.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Sterling W. Sill". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Sterling W. Sill

SWS:kj

Enclosure

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS
THE FIRST COUNCIL OF THE SEVENTY
47 E. SOUTH TEMPLE STREET
SALT LAKE CITY 1, UTAH

April 11th. 1961

Mrs. Jerald Tanner
319 North 5th. West
Salt Lake City, Utah

Dear Mrs. Tanner, -

Your letter of the 7th. of the current month was duly received together with the enclosure of a ten dollar currency note.

I am sorry that I am not in contact with the with the people who do the microfilming and am sure that the ten dollars would not go far in getting for you what you want.

My suggestion is that you make contact with the Historian's office and see what they may be able to do for you.

The book "A New Witness for Christ in America" should be available through the Deseret Book Company's store.

I am returning the currency .

Your truly


Antoine R. Ivins

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTE... IN SA...
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDING BISHOPRIC
47 EAST SOUTH TEMPLE STREET
SALT LAKE CITY 1, UTAH

April 11, 1961


Mrs. Jerald Tanner
319 North 5th West
Salt Lake City, Utah

Dear Mrs. Tanner:

In reply to your letter of April 7, may we say that
the information you requested is not available through this office.
We are, herewith, returning your \$10.00 to you.

Sincerely yours,

THE PRESIDING BISHOPRIC

BY 
Bishop Joseph L. Wirthlin

JLW/mp
Encl. - \$10.00

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS
THE COUNCIL OF THE TWELVE
42 E. SOUTH TEMPLE STREET
SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH

April 18, 1961

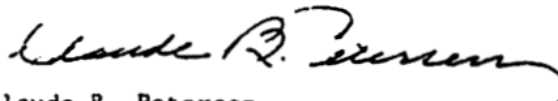
Mrs. Jerald Tanner
519 North 5th West
Salt Lake City, Utah

Dear Mrs. Tanner:

This will acknowledge receipt of your letter of April 7 addressed to Elder Richard L. Evans and your letter of April 13 addressed to Elder Marion G. Romney.

We are returning herewith the \$10 from each of these letters inasmuch as the information is not available.

Faithfully yours,



Claude B. Petersen
Secretary to the
Council of the Twelve

CBP:nd

enc. \$20

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS
OFFICE OF THE CHURCH HISTORIAN
47 E. SOUTH TEMPLE STREET
SALT LAKE CITY 11, UTAH

April 11, 1961

Mrs. Jerald Tanner
319 North 5th West
Salt Lake City
Utah

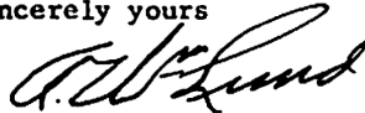
Dear Mrs. Tanner:

Elder Benson sent your letter to him to me for answer.

I am returning your letter with the \$10.00 bill enclosed.

Elder Benson is in no way interested in this matter.

Sincerely yours

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "A. W. Lund". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping "L" and "u" at the end.

Assist. Church Historian

AWL:ejo

Levi Edgar Young
SALT LAKE CITY

April 14, 1961

Mrs. Jerald Tanner
319 North Fifth West
Salt Lake City, Utah

Dear Mrs. Tanner:

Your letter of April 7 was received and the content of it was very interesting. I am very glad to know that the Prophet Joseph Smith's history will be put into a form that the original handwriting of the Book of Mormon will be seen by people in general.

I am enclosing the \$10 that you put in your letter, because I have not understood exactly why you sent it. I appreciate your thoughtfulness of me and hope that your desires may be realized.

The grandeur of Joseph Smith's life must become known to the people of the world, and I am praying daily that people by the thousands may turn to him.

Again let me thank you for your thoughtfulness of me and hope that your ideas will be successfully realized.

Sincerely yours,


Levi Edgar Young

LEY:sh

FORTY-SEVEN EAST ON
SOUTH TEMPLE STREET
SALT LAKE CITY
UTAH


J. BRIDEN CLARK, JR.

April 11, 1961

Dear Mrs. Tanner:

President Clark has received your letter of April seventh, in which you request certain information and enclose ten dollars to cover the cost. President Clark has directed me to return to you herewith the ten dollars you sent him, and to suggest that if you so desire, you might wish to write directly to the Church Historian's Office for the information you request.

Sincerely yours,



(Mrs.) Rowena J. Miller
Secretary to President Clark

Mrs. Jerald Tanner,

319 North 5th West,

Salt Lake City, Utah.

Notice that J. Reuben Clark (who was a member of the First Presidency) told his secretary to inform us that we could "write directly to the Church Historian's Office for the information. We did this, and below is a photograph of the answer we received.

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS
OFFICE OF THE CHURCH HISTORIAN
47 E. SOUTH TEMPLE STREET
SALT LAKE CITY 11, UTAH

April 17, 1961

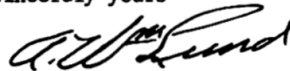
Mrs. Jerald Tanner
319 North 5th West
Salt Lake City
Utah

Dear Mrs. Tanner:

President Joseph Fielding Smith asked me to answer your letter to him.

I am returning your letter with the \$20.00 bill enclosed. Pres. Smith is in no way interested in this matter.

Sincerely yours



Assist. Church Historian

AWL:ejo

From these letters it is obvious that Apostle John A. Widtsoe's statement, "The best place to obtain information for and against the Church is the Library of the Church Historian," is completely false. Apostle Widtsoe's statement is further proved untrue by a letter we received from Earl E. Olson, who was Church Librarian, dated April 24, 1961. Below is a photograph of that letter.

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS
OFFICE OF THE CHURCH HISTORIAN
47 E. SOUTH TEMPLE STREET
SALT LAKE CITY 11, UTAH

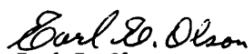
April 24, 1961

Mr. Jerald Tanner
319 North 5th West
Salt Lake City, Utah

Dear Mr. Tanner:

I am sorry but I am not in a position to furnish you with copies of any material from our office. The two dollars which you enclosed with your letter of April 22 is herewith returned.

Very truly yours,



Earl E. Olson
Librarian

Deciding to carry the matter further, we wrote to approximately 160 Mormon Bishops, asking for their support in a project to microfilm early church documents so that these microfilms could be placed in the libraries of the Brigham Young University and the University of Utah, where they would be available for public inspection. A one dollar bill was enclosed in each of the letters to the Bishops; this money was to be used for the microfilming.

The following is a list of the things that we wanted to be made available through microfilming.

1. The portion which the church owns of the original handwritten manuscript of the Book of Mormon.
2. The History of the Church, by Joseph Smith in its original handwritten form.
3. All of Joseph Smith's journals.
4. The revelations given by Joseph Smith in the original handwritten form.
5. The Far West Record.
6. The history of the church as kept by Oliver Cowdery.

Some of the Bishops were interested in this project. One Bishop wrote: "I feel this is a very worthy project and will do what I can to help it." Another Bishop stated: "... from Students standpoint it seems to be a good one." Milton V. Backman, Jr., Assistant Professor of Church History at BYU, wrote:

I do appreciate your interest in securing microfilm copies of various early church documents for the University of Utah and Brigham Young University libraries. However, I do not believe that the lack of funds has prevented the librarians from securing these documents ... if and when the Church leaders decide to allow the documents to be made available to the public in the manner you recommend I am certain that the funds will be provided.

One Bishop stated: "Such a project as you have outlined in your recent letter impresses us as a worthy one, ..." Another Bishop suggested that we write directly to Joseph Fielding Smith:

Although we feel that your program has a great deal of merit our instructions should come from the First Presidency or the Presiding Bishop's office.

....
I'm sure your efforts will be rewarded if you approach President Smith on that basis and have the instructions or requests come to us direct from the Church Offices.

Taking this bishop's advice, we wrote directly to Joseph Fielding Smith concerning this project. Mr. Smith turned our letter over to A. Wm. Lund, who answered as follows:

President Joseph Fielding Smith asked me to return your letter with the five-dollar bill enclosed therein.

He is not interested in the project you have in mind.

One bishop was more to the point than Mr. Lund; he expressed Joseph Fielding Smith's opinion of this project as follows:

Joseph Fielding Smith is opposed to this.

Obviously, the reason that Joseph Fielding Smith is opposed to this project is that the members of the Church would find out that the *History of the Church*, Joseph Smith's revelations and the Book of Mormon have been changed. It was probably felt that the contents of the other unpublished manuscripts would prove to be embarrassing if they were made available to the general public.

The Mormon Church leaders try to make it appear that there has been no falsification of the records, however, they will not allow the general public to have a film of these original manuscripts. The Mormon Historian Joseph Fielding Smith denies that changes have been made, but it can be proved beyond any doubt that there have been thousands of changes made in the *History of the Church* and other publications of the Mormon Church since they were first published. Of course we can have no idea of how many changes were made before these books were first published, but it can be definitely proven that thousands and thousands of changes have been made in these books between the first editions and the editions we have today. If Joseph Fielding Smith was sincere about wanting an accurate history, he could have released a film of all these original manuscripts, and allowed students to study them and find out what changes had been made; then the printed books could be changed back to conform with the original manuscripts. The truth is, of course, that Joseph Fielding Smith does not want the printed versions to conform with the original handwritten manuscripts; therefore, a microfilm copy of these records cannot be released.

Hugh Nibley Refused

One good example of the suppression of early Mormon documents is the story of the Alexander Neibaur journal. Hugh Nibley, professor in the departments of history and religion at the Brigham Young University, mentioned this journal in his book, *The World and the Prophets*, and in a letter dated March 8, 1961, he gave us the following information concerning it:

The day my great-grandfather heard that remarkable account of the First Vision from Joseph Smith he wrote it down in his journal; and for 40 years after he never mentioned it to a soul. Therefore, when I came across the story unexpectedly I handed the book over to Joseph Fielding Smith and it is now where it belongs—in a safe.

BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY
PROVO, UTAH



ERNEST L. WILKINSON, PRESIDENT

COLLEGE OF RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION
March 8, 1961

Mrs. Jerald Tanner
319 North 5th West
Salt Lake City, Utah

Dear Mrs. Tanner:

Marvin Wallin of Bookcraft has just latched on to a couple cases of "The World and the Prophets;" so you should be able to get it from him.

The day my great-grandfather heard that remarkable account of the First Vision from Joseph Smith he wrote it down in his journal; and for 40 years after he never mentioned it to a soul. Therefore, when I came across the story unexpectedly I handed the book over to Joseph Fielding Smith and it is now where it belongs--in a safe.

The Prophet did not like to talk about the First Vision and those to whom he told the story kept it to themselves. It was only when inevitable leaks led to all sorts of irresponsible reports that he was "induced" to publish an official version. I am treating the subject at some length in a forthcoming study.

Yours very truly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Hugh Nibley".

Hugh Nibley

/ln

BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY
PROVO, UTAH



ERNEST L. WILKINSON, PRESIDENT

COLLEGE OF RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION

March 8, 1961

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319 North 5th West
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Yours very truly,

Hugh Nibley

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Hugh Nibley".

/ln

Upon learning that this journal was in the possession of the LDS Church Historian, we wrote and requested a copy of it. Joseph Fielding Smith replied as follows:

Private journals are filed in this office with the understanding that they will be available to members of the family, but not to the general public. The furnishing of copies of journals also follows this ruling.

I am sorry but this office is not in a position to furnish you with the microfilm or photograph of the Alexander Neibaur journal which you requested in your letter. The ten dollars you enclosed is herewith returned.

Two things should be noted about Joseph Fielding Smith's reply: First, he refused to make a copy of the journal. Second, he stated that journals were placed in the Historian's Office with the understanding that relatives could not only see, but also obtain copies of the journals. Strange as it may seem, however, on March 21, 1961, we received a letter from Hugh Nibley, in which he stated that even he was refused permission to see this journal. Below is a photograph of that letter.

It is strange indeed that Dr. Nibley would be denied permission to see his own great-grandfather's journal, especially since he was the one that donated it to the historian's office. If Dr. Nibley was an enemy to the Church, this would be easier to understand. Some within the Church, however, feel that he is the Church's greatest scholar. Louis Midgley made this statement concerning Dr. Nibley:

With the passing of B. H. Roberts, Nibley more than anyone else has assumed the role of defender of the Faith and the Saints. . . . His craftsmanship and style as a writer, coupled with his knowledge and industry, have made him a powerful and sometimes biting social critic and defender of the Gospel. (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Spring, 1967, page 119)

It is certainly strange that a man who has a reputation as a "defender of the Faith and the Saints" should be denied access to his own great-grandfather's journal. Perhaps Dr. Nibley was disturbed over this matter, for in a letter to us, dated June 20, 1961, he stated:

BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY
PROVO, UTAH

ERNEST L. WILKINSON, PRESIDENT

March 21, 1961

COLLEGE OF RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION

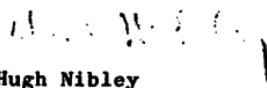
Mrs. Jerald Tanner
319 North 5th West
Salt Lake City, Utah

Dear Mrs. Tanner:

I believe I said in my letter to you that the Neibaur Journal now reposes in a safe in the Church Historian's Office where it belongs.

The reason that Alexander Neibaur told no one of his experience for forty years is that it was strictly confidential and should remain so. I think we should respect his confidence. Actually, the last time I asked permission to see the Journal, I was refused. Any attempt to reproduce it at this time is out of the question.

Yours very truly,


Hugh Nibley

HN:gj

Nothing would delight me more than to see all the Church records made available to those who would know how to use them. (Letter from Hugh Nibley, dated June 20, 1961)

In a letter to *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, LaMar Petersen made the following comment concerning the suppression of the Neibaur journal:

On page 34 Mr. Allen says: "Perhaps the closest one may come to seeing a contemporary diarist's account of the story is in the journal of Alexander Neibaur, which is located in the L.D.S. Church Historian's office." It should be noted that such journals are not open for public inspection. Several researchers have been denied access to this particular journal, including the donor. . . . (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Winter, 1966, page 9)

Hugh Nibley is certainly not the only one who has been refused access to an ancestor's journal. One man, whose father was a member of the First Presidency of the Mormon Church, told us that at one time he was refused access to his grandfather's journal. He stated that he went to the Historian's Office but was told he must get permission from Joseph Fielding Smith. He went to Joseph Fielding Smith's office, and while he was waiting, he actually heard Joseph Fielding Smith refuse the Apostle Lyman permission to read his own father's journal. After Joseph Fielding Smith had finished talking to the Apostle Lyman, he also told this man that he could not have access to his grandfather's journal. This man did, however, get access to the journal at a later date.

Another man told us that he was allowed access to an ancestor's journal. In fact, the Historian's Office even agreed to make him a typed copy for a certain amount of money. After receiving the typed copy, however, he noticed that three or four pages were deleted. He went back to the Historian's Office and was told that the omission of the material was deliberate and that they did not want him to have the portion that was deleted.

Richards' Threat

Another instance of suppression occurred when we desired access to the Joseph Lee Robinson autobiography and journal. The Apostle LeGrand Richards, a descendent of Joseph Lee Robinson was the first to draw our attention to this journal. When we went to his office he showed us some typed excerpts from the journal. After we saw these typed excerpts, we asked if we could see the original. LeGrand Richards finally consented, and took us to the L.D.S. Genealogical Library, where he checked out the microfilm of the original journal. We were allowed to read a few pages and then Mr. Richards rose to leave. We asked the woman who had brought the microfilm if we could return another time and read the journal; when she said yes, Mr. Richards promptly and

emphatically instructed her not to let us see the journal again. When we asked LeGrand Richards what he was trying to hide, he immediately walked out. On several occasions we tried to see this microfilm, but we were informed that it was out. The Church Historian's Office also refused to let us see the original journal.

In a letter written to a member of the Mormon Church, September 26, 1960, LeGrand Richards admitted that he had denied us access to this journal. He stated:

I took Sandra and her husband to the Genealogical society where they got out the microfilmed copy of my great grandfather's journal and permitted them both to read his statement in his own handwriting and after they had done that, Sandra's husband wanted to have the privilege of reading all of the journal. I told them not to permit him to do so; . . .

Some time later, contrary to the instructions of LeGrand Richards, the Genealogical Library permitted us to read the journal, and we copied some important references, which we intend to present in this work. After LeGrand Richards found out that we intended to use these references, he became fearful that the truth would become known. In a letter dated December 20, 1961, LeGrand Richards threatened us with a lawsuit, in a desperate attempt to keep the truth hid. In the letter he stated:

I have before me some of the memographed copies you mailed to me, from which I note that **contrary to my instructions**, you obtained permission from the Genealogical Department to read my great grandfather's journal and that you have made excerpts therefrom, according to your own statement which you intend to use hereafter.

This, therefore, is to advise you that if you quote from my great grandfather's journal in any of your future writings, you lay yourself **liable to a suit for damages**, since you have no permission and since I, as one of the descendants, positively object to your so quoting. (Letter written by LeGrand Richards, dated December 20, 1961)

Suppression at BYU

Another instance of suppression occurred at the Brigham Young University. Upon our first visit to the BYU Library we were permitted to see many of their microfilms and to make photocopies from the films, but when the Church Historian's Office found out that we had obtained photocopies of some early church documents they became very upset and informed the BYU Library that they were not to allow us to have access to these microfilms of rare documents. Two women who went to the BYU Library after this happened were informed that the Church Historian's Office had instructed the Library to make a list of the microfilms they had, so that they would know just what

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS
THE COUNCIL OF THE TWELVE
47 E. SOUTH TEMPLE STREET
SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH
December 20, 1961

Mr. Gerald Tanner
566 Center Street
Salt Lake City, Utah

Dear Sir:


I have before me some of the memographed copies you mailed to me, from which I note that contrary to my instructions, you obtained permission from the Genealogical Department to read my great grandfather's Journal and that you have made excerpts therefrom, according to your own statement which you intend to use hereafter.

I am advised by legal authority that while the Journals belong to the organization or library, the literary rights belong to the descendants, and that if any one descendant objects, no one has the right to copy and print anything from such journals.

I am advised that Mrs. Kate Carter of the Daughters of the Utah Pioneers was recently stopped from publishing a diary because only one of the descendants in California opposed the publication.

This, therefore, is to advise you that if you quote from my great grandfather's journal in any of your future writings, you lay yourself liable to a suit for damages, since you have no permission and since I, as one of the descendants, positively object to your so quoting.

Very truly,


LeGrand Richards

LR:rs

A photograph of a letter written by the Mormon Apostle LeGrand Richards. Notice that Mr. Richards threatened a lawsuit, in an attempt to keep the truth from becoming known.

information we had obtained. Some of the information obtained at the BYU Library will be presented in this work. When we continued to request photocopies from the Brigham Young University Library, we received a letter from the Manuscript Librarian, in which he stated:

I am returning your two recent orders uncompleted. The first one requesting copies of the Nuttall Journal is not available for photocopying since it is original manuscript material. . . .

The other items you requested are available in local libraries in Salt Lake City; **and we suggest you patronize them.** (Letter written by Ralph W. Hansen, Manuscript Librarian, Brigham Young University, dated December 7, 1961)

In the summer of 1965 a student from the BYU reported to us that he had been refused Xerox copies of one of Orson Pratt's pamphlets printed in the 1850's. The excuse he was given was that it would violate copyright laws to make a copy. Anyone familiar with the copyright laws would know that the copyright would have expired many years ago. Nevertheless, this was the excuse given to the student.

In January of 1967 we were allowed access to a typed copy of the "Manuscript History of Brigham Young," January of 1846 to July of 1847. Because we felt that it was an important document, we had it microfilmed. We decided to donate a copy of the microfilm to the BYU Library with the hope that it would be made available to the students and faculty there. We gave a copy of the film to a student from the BYU with the understanding that he would take it to the library. On May 29, 1967, the same student came to our home to buy some books. During the course of the conversation, he asked if we could make him a copy of the same film he had taken to the library. We asked him if the BYU Library had the facilities to duplicate the film. He replied that they did, and that they would duplicate other films for him, but they refused to make him a copy of the "Manuscript History" film. He stated that he never imagined that they would refuse him a copy of the very film he had taken to the BYU Library.

Excuses

Perhaps the most humorous thing of all concerning the suppression of Mormon records is the fact that they (the Church leaders) try to make it appear that nothing is being suppressed. Preston Nibley, who was Assistant Church Historian, made this statement:

Since I have been in the Church Historian's Office . . . No one has forbidden me to see whatever I wanted to see or read what I wanted to read or examine what I wanted to examine. . . .

Some of us, who are all the time looking for something new, and who have the opinion that the

Church has secrets that it is trying to protect and keep away from the public, remind me very much of the son of Sidney Rigdon, . . . (*Seminar on the Prophet Joseph Smith*, February 18, 1961, Brigham Young University Lecture Series, page 15)

In a telephone conversation September 5, 1962, Preston Nibley admitted that he didn't mean by this statement that anyone could read what they wanted or examine what they wanted to examine, but only that he (as Assistant Historian) could see what he wanted and examine what he wanted. He stated that, as Assistant Church Historian, he had certain privileges that other people did not have. He further admitted that the only time he had ever seen the Alexander Neibaur Journal was when Hugh Nibley had it, and that he had never seen it after this, and that he could not, even as Assistant Church Historian, give permission for anyone to see it.

It is very obvious that the Mormon Church is trying to hide the fact that they are concealing the church records from the general public. The church leaders make many excuses as to why these records are not available. At times these excuses appear rather silly. Lauritz G. Petersen, Assistant Librarian of the LDS Church Library, wrote a letter to us, in which he stated that the reason he could not make photographic copies of these documents was that the continual handling of these documents would damage them. In this letter, written April 19, 1961, Lauritz G. Petersen stated:

We have received numerous requests from you asking for the information given in your letter to me.

. . . Continual handling of these rare documents would damage them, **for this reason we cannot comply with your request.**

This excuse appears rather ridiculous since the documents only needed to be handled once for microfilming; this would eliminate the need of ever handling the originals again, for any number of copies could be made from this one microfilm. Furthermore, we know that many of the documents, if not all of them, have already been filmed. Lauritz G. Petersen's statement that "Continual handling of these rare documents would damage them," is, in reality, just another attempt to keep secret the fact that the Mormon Church is suppressing the records. Yet Lauritz G. Petersen is still using this excuse. On December 15, 1966, he wrote the following in a letter to a man who had requested copies from a rare book:

You asked for a Xerox copy of this, but our copy is very brittle and **we are afraid to handle it.** (Letter written by Lauritz G. Petersen, dated December 15, 1966)

A young man from California, who had recently been converted to the Mormon Church, read our book, *Changes in Joseph Smith's History*. He decided to go to the Historian's Office to see if they would allow him to

examine the original handwritten manuscript of Joseph Smith's History. He stated to us later that they told him at the Historian's Office that they were going to make a microfilm copy of the handwritten manuscript of Joseph Smith's History. They assured him that as soon as the microfilm was completed it would be made available, but that they could not let him examine the handwritten manuscript until it was on microfilm. After this young man had this conversation in the Church Historian's Office, he came to our house and told us all about it. He was certain that they had told him the truth. He assured us of their sincerity. We informed him that the handwritten manuscript of Joseph Smith's History had already been filmed, and that we could prove it. We brought out a copy of the thesis "An Analysis of the Accounts Relating Joseph Smith's Early Visions" written by Paul R. Cheesman for the Degree of Master of Religious Education at the BYU. On page 77 of this thesis Paul R. Cheesman states:

Joseph Smith started officially to write the History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints sometime near May 2, 1838. . . . This handwritten copy of the history is in possession of the Church Historian's office. **A microfilm has been made from the original** and from this film the following copy was made.

After reading this statement this young man got out of the chair he was sitting in and stated that the church leader had lied to him. He went out of the house thoroughly disillusioned with the Mormon leaders.

Wallace Turner, a correspondent for the *New York Times*, witnessed part of this incident and wrote the following concerning it:

That day an apostasy was in the making. A young man visiting Tanner was reading one of the Tanner books. In an agitated voice he exclaimed:

"That does it! That's all! I can still get out of it and I will!"

Something in the book had convinced him that one of the minor church officials had misled him about existence of a microfilm copy of a document. When his emotions had quieted, he explained that he had been converted to Mormonism in order to marry a devout Mormon girl. She had insisted that he become a Saint, and that he promise to work in the church as a condition of marriage, for the doctrine holds that she can progress in exaltation only as the wife of her husband, whose good works in the priesthood win a higher place for him and thus for her. There is a double-barreled effect to this doctrine: It gives a devout Mormon man a head start in courtship among Mormon girls; and it causes Mormon wives to urge their husbands to ever greater activity in church work.

But for this young convert standing in Jerald Tanner's house, it seemed to be all finished. He, explained his way out of the marriage.

"I can get out of it still because it wasn't consummated," he said as he left the house. (*The Mormon Establishment*, by Wallace Turner, 1966, pages 155, 156)

Another man told us that he called the Church Historian's Office in regard to a certain document. They denied that they had it. Later they admitted that they did. This man has now lost all faith in the Mormon leaders.

Juanita Brooks, a noted Utah historian, claims that the Mormon Church leaders refused to let her see some affidavits that they had in their possession. In a footnote on page 217 of her book, *The Mountain Meadows Massacre*, she stated:

Some time before his death, the late Judge David H. Morris, of St. George, Utah, told the writer of affidavits which he had taken at the order of the First Presidency of the Church from the participants in the massacre who still lived in southern Utah. He suggested that "sometime when it is convenient" he would show these to her.

After his death, the writer asked his daughter, Mrs. Paul Hafen, about them and learned that in compliance with the advice of her attorney, Orval Hafen, she had taken the affidavits to Salt Lake City and given them to David O. McKay of the first presidency of the Latter-day Saints church.

After two unsuccessful attempts to get an interview with President McKay, the writer made an appointment by long distance telephone. After traveling more than three hundred miles to keep that appointment, she was refused audience as soon as the office girl learned "specifically what is it you wish to speak to him about?"

The writer then asked for another appointment, offering to stay in the city indefinitely, if necessary. This was refused. She was, however, permitted to talk to Mr. Joseph Anderson, private secretary to the first presidency, who listened to her request and promised to do what he could for her. He asked her to return the next morning.

At that time, Mr. Anderson said that he and President J. Reuben Clark had read the affidavits and President Clark had decided that they should not be made available. The large, worn envelope which contained them and the telegram authorizing them lay on the table during this conversation. The most difficult thing to understand about all this is not so much the refusal to show the affidavits as the consistent and repeated refusal to discuss the question. (*Mountain Meadows Massacre*, by Juanita Brooks, 1962, footnote, pages 217, 218)

Most of us are familiar with the saying, "Hang your clothes on a hickory limb, but don't go near the water." This saying is certainly typical of the Mormon Church's attitude toward study and research. Truman G. Madsen, Assistant Professor of Philosophy and Religion at the BYU, admonished the students as follows:

Get into the original documents and dig for yourselves, and deepen the knowledge of the Church.

That is an **admonition and a request**.

If a person decided to follow Truman G. Madsen's advice, he would soon run into opposition. Henry D. Taylor, Assistant to the Council of Twelve Apostles, wrote the following to a member of the Mormon Church:

There are certain items in the Historians office which of necessity cannot be handled **nor made available to the public.** (Letter written by Henry D. Taylor, May 12, 1961)

Now, how is it possible to get into the original documents, if they are not available?

One woman was told very frankly, by Lauritz G. Petersen, that he could not make copies of the rare books on file at the Church Library. In a letter dated April 19, 1961, Lauritz G. Petersen stated:

We are **not permitted** to copy from rare books on file here.

A. Hamer Reiser, Assistant Secretary to the First Presidency, also made it very clear that it is against the policy of the Mormon Church to make copies of these rare books. In a letter, to a member of the church, dated May 4, 1961, Mr. Reiser stated:

I have been directed . . . to say that it is contrary to the long established policy of the Church to undertake to make microfilm copies of books in the office of the Church Historian or in the Church Historian's library. (Letter written by A. Hamer Reiser, May 4, 1961)

Mormons Protest

Some people claim that the reason we have been denied access to the records is that we have been critical of the doctrines and teachings of the LDS Church. While this may have something to do with it, it is obviously not the entire reason. A Mormon Seminary teacher told us not to feel bad because Mormon writers have the same problem we do.

Many Mormons are beginning to raise their voices against the suppression of the documents. Leonard J. Arrington, President of the Mormon History Association, stated:

It is unfortunate for the cause of Mormon history that the Church Historian's Library, which is in the possession of virtually all of the diaries of leading Mormons, has not seen fit to publish these diaries or to permit qualified historians to use them without restriction. (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Spring 1966, Vol. 1, no. 1, page 26)

Ralph W. Hansen, formerly Manuscript Librarian for the BYU, stated:

In my story I liken historical research to laboring in the boiler room of an ocean-going vessel. The boilers (scholars) run on coal (Manuscript and other original sources) or oil (secondary sources). The stokers are archivists and manuscript librarians such as myself. The boilers indiscriminantly burn coal and oil in large quantities with the same results—a fire (book or thesis).

On most ships oil, easy to use, has apparently won over coal as the favorite fuel of the boilers. However, upon close inspection it is apparent that oil burns as a slick rehash of previous knowledge, while the use of raw coal results in new knowledge or a fuller understanding of known facts.

. . . Indeed, Mormon historians have a problem not faced by their brethren in the craft: some of their coal is protected behind granite walls. Be that as it may, there are veins which may be followed until the proper engineer opens the way into the main body of fuel.

. . . Thus, while important sources in Mormon history are denied the scholar, avenues of investigation in Utah history are abundant and interesting.

Because of the relative inaccessibility to scholars of the files of the Church Historian's Office, my discussion here has centered around the collecting and use of modern records. (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Spring 1966, Vol. 1, no. 1, pages 156, 157)

To understand Mr. Hansen's simile one must know that the LDS Church Historian's Office is located in a building made of granite. In other words, he means that the Church Historian's Office suppresses many important documents concerning Mormonism.

In his book, *Ancient Records Testify*, Dr. Sidney Sperry told of one man who was allowed access to the archives of the church; however, he admitted that these archives are seldom, "if ever," opened to the Mormon people:

Some time prior to the attack made on the Book of Abraham by the Rt. Rev. F. S. Spalding, Episcopal Bishop of Utah, a gentleman purporting to be the agent of an important magazine in the East came to Salt Lake City for the purpose of obtaining data on which to base an article on the Mormon people. . . . Elder Talmage accordingly gave the magazine correspondent an insight into the workings of the Church and even gave him access to the archives of the Church that are seldom, **if ever**, opened to Latter-day Saints, let alone strangers. (*Ancient Records Testify in Papyrus and Stone*, by Dr. Sidney B. Sperry, 1938, page 72)

In a lecture at the BYU, Dr. Sperry frankly told the students that they could not see records of where the tithing is spent:

Dr. Talmage told me that in 1910, there came a gentleman to President Joseph F. Smith, representing himself as a writer . . . Dr. Talmage told me that he showed this man even the records where the tithing money went, which is something even you **cannot get**, except for your own accounts, today, but he felt inspired to do it. (*Pearl of Great Price Conference*, December 10, 1960, page 6)

Many people have tried to blame the suppression of the records on the fact that Fawn Brodie's book, *No Man Knows My History*, caused the LDS Church so much trouble. This statement is completely untrue. Although the Mormon leaders may have tightened

their restrictions after her book appeared, they were suppressing the documents long before her book was written. Dr. Sperry's statement that the archives "are seldom, if ever, opened to Latter-day Saints" was written seven years before Mrs. Brodie's book appeared.

As we stated earlier, one man was refused access to the *Journal of Discourses*, in 1941, which was four years prior to the time her book was first published.

Recently the Office of the Church Historian published a "Guide to the Historian's Office Library-Archives." In this guide the following statement appears:

Although the Library-Archives is maintained as a private facility, the materials on file are generally available for use by the earnest researcher. The materials are **not available** to those whose purpose is to discredit the Church.

Ralph W. Hansen, formerly Manuscript Librarian for the BYU, made this comment concerning the statement in the guide:

The books, periodicals, and manuscripts listed in bibliographies are of little value if the materials are not located and made available to those who might have an interest in using them. With this in mind we depart from our previous format to consider bibliographical control of Mormon Americana . . .

The study of Mormonism should begin in Salt Lake City, where, according to Norman Furniss, "The best collection of materials about the Mormons exists . . . in the archives of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. . . ." However, the Church Historian's Library is a "private facility" with the right of access controlled by the authorities who govern the Library. According to the official guide to the Library, ". . . the materials on file are *generally* available for use by the earnest researcher. The materials are not available to those, whose purpose is to *discredit* the Church" (italics mine). What does it mean to have materials available generally? Who is the judge of what scholar is out to find the truth or to discredit the Church? To further quote Dr. Furniss, "It is regrettable that the volumes are not open to the Gentile scholar, or even to most Mormon historians; the custodian of the portals, A. Wm. Lund, is adamant in his refusal to let all but the most faithful dip into this record." (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Autumn 1966, Vol. 1, no. 3, page 171)

J. D. Williams, a prominent Mormon, has also come out against the church's policy of hiding the documents. Wallace Turner wrote the following after an interview with Mr. Williams:

Professor Williams . . . was critical of the policy of secrecy attached to the church archives. This prevents historians from examining source documents. No one but a church official has access to them, although the library is a treasure house of answers to questions that have had to be answered by guesses.

"I would open it all up and be sure the truth could be known," said Williams. "Sure, some would take advantage of us and use the materials in there to hurt us. But after a while the truth would become plain. I think the truth cannot hurt us." (*The Mormon Establishment*, by Wallace Turner, 1966, pages 164, 165)

Phillip A. M. Taylor, a non-Mormon who has written articles on Mormon history, made this statement after a visit to the LDS Church Historian's Office:

In the Church Historian's Office, much the same freedom of reading was given me. There, however, a subtle change of atmosphere could be detected. A senior official insisted on checking all transcripts. From time to time, I was requested to omit a proper name from my notes. Working as I was on immigration and colonization, I found these very small annoyances when set against the magnitude of the help I received. Yet they were symptoms of an attitude which needs to be defined and criticized. . . . This Mormon attitude, I presume, is that the documents record the Lord's dealings with His Church; they are not raw material for independent research into mundane phenomena. The records, therefore, are not so much to be used as preserved.

. . . What is hidden may do no more than corroborate what is on the shelves. It may, however, contain such items as full records of the proceedings of the Council of Fifty, most important and most mysterious of Mormon institutions. . . .

How valuable would be the complete records, for the light they would shed on Mormon decisions and Mormon attitudes! As things are, no one can be sure what has been concealed, nor for what reasons. Harmless in the research upon which I was engaged in the early 1950's, this would be a crippling handicap to anyone engaged in an attempt to understand how the highest decisions were taken, or the part played in the Church's government by Brigham Young.

. . . I am sure that secrecy does more harm to the Church's reputation than could result from any disclosures from the archives; . . .

A liberal policy, if it is ever adopted, will benefit others, not myself, for I have already written my book about the Mormons. If the unlikely event of freer access to important documents leads to the writing of a satisfactory life of Brigham Young, I shall not have written it. (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Autumn, 1966, Vol. 1, no. 3, pages 109, 110)

James L. Clayton claims that the writer Wallace Stegner was denied access to diaries in the Church Historian's Office:

Stegner undoubtedly would have used more diaries if he had been given access to the Church archives. In this respect it is the Church Historian and not Stegner who is responsible for any limitations of data. (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Winter 1966, Vol. 1, no. 4, footnote, page 113)

The Mormon Church leaders condemn the Catholic Church for keeping the scriptures from the common people. Joseph Fielding Smith stated:

At first there was an attempt on the part of the powerful but corrupt clergy to destroy these copies which were prepared without authority being granted by the great Catholic Church.

Men burned at stake for owning scriptures. The English chronicler, Henry Knighton, many years before had expressed the prevailing notion about the reading of the scriptures, when he denounced the general reading of the Bible, lamenting “lest the jewel of the church hitherto the exclusive property of the clergy and divines, should be made common to the laity.” Archbishop Arundel, in England, had issued an enactment that “no part of the scriptures in English should be read, either in public or in private, or be thereafter translated, under pain of the greater excommunication.” (*Doctrines of Salvation*, Vol. 3, page 185)

Strange as it may seem, although Joseph Fielding Smith condemns the Catholics for not letting the world have the Bible, he will not allow the Mormon people to see many of their own “scriptures.” By “scriptures” we mean the revelations of Joseph Smith and the private journals written by members of the Mormon Church, for Joseph Smith, himself, stated that the private journals would be sought after as “scripture.” The following is found in the Introductory Remarks of Dr. Truman G. Madsen, at the *Seminar on the Prophet Joseph Smith*, February 18, 1961:

I have in my hand here a recorded statement of the Prophet, from the diary of Oliver Huntington. He says this:

The Prophet was one day advising the elders all to keep daily journals, for, said he, “Your journals will be sought after as history and scripture. That is the way the New Testament was written by the apostles from their memory of what had been done because they were not prompt in keeping daily journals.” (*Seminar on the Prophet Joseph Smith*, February 18, 1961, BYU Lecture Series)

RLDS Church

The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints also has a policy of suppressing vital records.

In 1961 we wrote to Charles A. Davies, RLDS General Church Historian, requesting microfilm copies of the *Book of Commandments* and the handwritten manuscript of the Book of Mormon (Joseph Smith had an extra copy of the manuscript made; the Reorganized Church has one copy and the Utah church has a portion of the other). On April 14, 1961, Charles Davies answered our letter. In his reply he stated:

In reply to your request of April 8, I regret that we are unable to grant your request. There are several difficulties which make this impossible.

The manuscript is preserved under particular storage conditions and therefore is not available for microfilming at the present time.

With reference to the *Book of Commandments*, I believe this was reprinted by the “Church of Christ” (Hedrickites). You may be able to purchase a copy by writing, Church of Christ, (Temple Lot), Independence, Missouri.

The twenty dollar bill which you forwarded to me is enclosed with this letter.

We wrote to Charles Davies again, asking him to reconsider, but he still refused. In a letter dated May 4, 1961, he stated:

Yours of April 22, in which you make further request for microfilm. As I endeavored to make clear in my last letter, I cannot offer you the service you request from this office.

I am enclosing \$5.00 which you enclosed in yours of April 22.

A few years ago we were in Independence, Missouri—where the headquarters of the Reorganized Church are located. We wanted to see a letter which Joseph Smith’s wife had written. We called the RLDS Historian’s Office and asked for permission to see the letter. We were told to call back later. We did, and were told that they had a policy which would not permit them to show a document unless it had been printed before. In other words, any item that had not been printed was not available for public inspection.

Reed Durham, a Mormon who was doing research on Joseph Smith’s Inspired Revision of the Bible, was denied access to the original manuscripts which are in the possession of the Reorganized Church. He stated:

As for the historical sources relating to the Revision in Reorganized Church history, the writer wrote that church for permission to go to the church library in Independence, Missouri and do research with sources available there. That permission was denied. (“A History of Joseph Smith’s Revision of the Bible,” Ph. D. Dissertation, Brigham Young University, 1965, page 3)

On pages 205 and 206 of the same dissertation, Reed Durham stated:

Permission was asked to go to their Church headquarters in Independence and do research and to view the manuscripts in their possession, but that permission was flatly denied.

On March 30, 1966, we received a letter from Aleah G. Koury, an Apostle in the Reorganized Church, in which he stated that they would not send us a photostat from the handwritten manuscript of the Inspired Revision:

I have received your letter and request for information on the inspired revision of the Bible. . . . Due to a policy of this department, they will not be sending a photostat and, therefore, I am enclosing the \$2.00 you sent to me for this purpose.

On March 31, 1966, we received a letter from Richard P. Howard, Acting Church Historian of the RLDS Church. In this letter he stated:

I regret that I am not in a position to photocopy portions of the original MS of the Inspired Version for general distribution. The MS is in a very deteriorated condition and does not yield to satisfactory photoduplication. I can and do answer periodic inquiries regarding textual renditions, etc., as I have done for you in this case.

That Mr. Durham was denied permission to view the original MS of the Inspired Version is true. You will note that the official and traditional stand of the Utah Church for many decades has been that the Inspired Version was not finished; therefore it cannot be endorsed. Ascribing to that predilection so staunchly as they have for so many years, Utah Mormon students would have a very strong tendency to search for evidence to buttress that viewpoint, and to favor it even if faced with evidence to the contrary. It is at this point that I feel most keenly the responsibility of determining the basis upon which access to this MS shall be had. Anyone at all familiar with professional archival procedures appreciates the fact that fragile, rare and controversial manuscript materials are simply not made available indiscriminately to those who in the judgment of the archivist might not be in a position to treat and disseminate this material in an objective, scholarly manner. Anyone not having this background, as, for example, Mr. Durham, would not be qualified to make such decisions from the professional archivist's point of view. Therefore to consider the denial of Mr. Durham's request for research privileges in this MS as a "very serious charge" (to use your term) against the RLDS Church is to be unaware of universally accepted archival practice regarding the administration of valuable manuscript materials.

After receiving this letter, we wrote to Mr. Howard requesting a photocopy of only one page from the Bible Joseph Smith used while working on the Inspired Version. Mr. Howard, likewise, denied this request:

Your letter, with \$2.00 enclosed for the purpose of photo-duplication of the old Bible used by Joseph Smith, Jr., as a reference in his work on the Inspired Version, has been received. . . . a photostat of this page, for your detailed textual approach, would not suggest anything of value, except that Revelation 1:6 was to be revised, as indicated by an "x" close by. . . . I have enclosed the two dollars you sent, as to have proceeded with the requested photocopying would have been a decided waste of money, both from your point of view and from mine, considering the fact that the marginal "x" at Revelation 1:6 does not relate in any way to the revision appearing in the original manuscript, except to indicate that there was in fact a revision.

It would almost seem that the Reorganized Church Historians have been taking lessons from the Utah Church in regard to suppressing the manuscripts. Both churches evidently have something to hide.

In this day of microfilms and photostat service there can be only one reason why these church leaders do not make the documents available, and that is that they wish to keep their people in the dark. We feel that the reason they have hid the documents is that they would show that Joseph Smith was not a prophet and that Mormonism was founded upon fraud. In the Preface to the 1637 printing of the King James Version of the Bible, the following statement appeared:

Sure we are, that it is not he that hath good gold, that is afraid to bring it to the touch stone, but he that hath the counterfeit: neither is it the true man that shunneth the light, but the malefactor, lest his deeds should be reprov'd; neither is the plain-dealing merchant that is unwilling to have the weights, or the meteyard brought in place, but he that useth deceit. (King James Version of the Bible, 1637 printing, as quoted in *The Christian Baptist*, Vol. 6, page 114)

It is certainly sad when any church undertakes to hide the truth from its members. It was Jesus, himself, who said: "For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; **neither hid, that shall not be known**" (Luke 12:2).

5. THE FIRST VISION

The Mormon leaders claim that in the spring of 1820 God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ appeared to Joseph Smith and told him that all the churches were false. Joseph Smith published this story in the Mormon newspaper, *Times and Seasons*, in 1842. The following is the description of the vision as written by Joseph Smith:

. . . there was in the place where we lived an unusual excitement on the subject of religion. It commenced with the Methodists, but soon became general among all the sects in that region of country, indeed the whole district of country seemed affected by it, and great multitudes united themselves to the different religious parties, which created no small stir and division amongst the people, . . .

I was at this time in my fifteenth year. My father's family was proselyted to the Presbyterian faith, and four of them joined that church . . .

During this time of great excitement my mind was called up to serious reflection and great uneasiness; . . .

In the midst of this war of words and tumult of opinions, I often said to myself, what is to be done? Who of all these parties are right? Or, are they all wrong together? If any one of them be right which is it, and how shall I know it?

While I was laboring under the extreme difficulties, caused by the contests of these parties of religionists, I was one day reading the epistle of James, first chapter and fifth verse, which reads. "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth unto all men liberally and upbraideth not and it shall be given him." Never did any passage of scripture come with more power to the heart of man than this did at this time to mine. . . . I at length came to the determination to "ask of God," concluding that if he gave wisdom to them that lacked wisdom and would give liberally, and not upbraid, I might venture. So in accordance with this my determination, to ask of God, I retired to the woods to make the attempt. It was on the morning of a beautiful clear day, early in the spring of eighteen hundred and twenty. It was the first time in my life that I had made such an attempt, for amidst all my anxieties I had never as yet made the attempt to pray vocally.

After I had retired into the place where I had previously designed to go, having looked around me and finding myself alone, I kneeled down and began to offer up the desires of my heart to God. I had scarcely done

so when immediately I was seized upon by some power which entirely overcome me, and had such astonishing influence over me as to bind my tongue so that I could not speak. Thick darkness gathered around me and it seemed to me for a time as if I were doomed to sudden destruction. But exerting all my powers to call upon God to deliver me out of the power of this enemy which had seized upon me, and at the very moment when I was ready to sink into despair and abandon myself to destruction, not to an imaginary ruin, but to the power of some actual being from the unseen world who had such a marvelous power as I had never before felt in any being. Just at this moment of great alarm, I saw a pillar of light exactly over my head, above the brightness of the sun; which descended gradually until it fell upon me. It no sooner appeared than I found myself delivered from the enemy which held me bound. When the light rested upon me I saw two personages (whose brightness and glory defy all description) standing above me in the air. One of them spake unto me, calling me by name, and said, (pointing to the other.) "This is my beloved Son, hear him."

My object in going to enquire of the Lord was to know which of all the sects was right? that I might know which to join. No sooner therefore did I get possession of myself, so as to be able to speak, than I asked the personages who stood above me in the light, which of all the sects was right, (for at this time it had never entered into my heart that all were wrong,) and which I should join. I was answered that I must join none of them, for they were all wrong, and the personage who addressed me said that all their creeds were an abomination in his sight; that those professors were all corrupt, ["they draw near to me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me; they teach for doctrine the commandments of men, having a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof." He again forbade me to join with any of them: and many other things did he say unto me which I cannot write at this time. When I came to myself again I found myself laying on my back, looking up into heaven. . . . I soon found however that my telling the story had excited a great deal of prejudice against me among professors of religion and was the cause of great persecution which continued to increase, and though I was an obscure boy only between fourteen and fifteen years of age and my circumstances in life such as to make a boy of no consequence in the world; yet men of high standing would take notice sufficient to excite the public mind against me, and create a hot persecution,

and this was common among all the sects: all united to persecute me. It has often caused me serious reflection both then and since, how very strange it was that an obscure boy of a little over fourteen years of age, . . . should be thought a character of sufficient importance to attract the attention of the great ones of the most popular sects of the day, so as to create in them a spirit of the hottest persecution and reviling. (*Times and Seasons*, Vol. 3, pages 727-728, 748-749)

James B. Allen, Associate Professor of History at Brigham Young University, made this statement concerning Joseph Smith's story of the "First Vision":

This singular story has achieved a position of unique importance in the traditions and official doctrines of the Mormon Church. Belief in the vision is one of the fundamentals to which faithful members give assent. Its importance is second only to belief in the divinity of Jesus of Nazareth. The story is an essential part of the first lesson given by Mormon missionaries to prospective converts, and its acceptance is necessary before baptism. (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Autumn, 1966, page 29)

On page 38 of the same article James B. Allen states:

By the 1850's the story of the vision had become an important part of church literature. In 1851 it appeared in the first edition of the *Pearl of Great Price*, published in England by Franklin D. Richards. This volume was accepted as one of the "standard works" of the Mormon Church in 1880. By this time, obviously, the story had become well known both to members and non-members alike and was being used as a basic missionary tool.

James B. Allen makes this statement on page 44 of the same article:

The story was **accepted as scripture** by the Mormons in 1880.

The Mormon Apostle LeGrand Richards makes this statement concerning Joseph Smith's vision:

On the morning of a beautiful spring day in 1820 there occurred one of the **most important** and momentous events in this world's history. God, the Eternal Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, appeared to Joseph Smith and gave instructions concerning the establishment of the kingdom of God upon the earth in these latter days. (*A Marvelous Work and a Wonder*, 1966, page 7)

On page 15 of the same book LeGrand Richards makes this statement:

The visit of the Father and the Son to Joseph Smith opened the door to the establishment of the kingdom of God upon the earth in this dispensation which was the **greatest** event of the nineteenth century.

Importance of Vision

To the Mormon people the First Vision is extremely important. They use this vision to prove that God and Christ are two distinct personages and that they both have a body. In other words, they use this vision to prove that God, Himself, is only an exalted man. George Q. Cannon, who was a member of the First Presidency of the Mormon Church, made this statement in 1883:

There was no man scarcely upon the earth that had a true conception of God; the densest ignorance prevailed; . . . But all this was swept away in one moment by the appearance of the Almighty Himself—by the appearance of God, the Father, and His Son Jesus Christ, to the boy Joseph, . . . In one moment all this darkness disappeared, and once more there was a man found on the earth, embodied in the flesh, who had seen God, . . . This revelation dissipated all misconceptions and all false ideas, and removed the uncertainty that had existed respecting these matters. The Father came accompanied by the Son, thus showing that there were two personages of the Godhead, . . . Joseph saw that the Father had a form; that He had a head; that He had arms; that He had limbs; that He had feet; that He had a face and a tongue . . .

Now, it was meant that this knowledge should be restored first of all. . . . There can be no faith that is not built upon a true conception of God our Father. Therefore, before even angels came, He came Himself, accompanied by His Son, and revealed Himself once more to man upon the earth. (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 24, pages 371-372)

The Mormon Apostle LeGrand Richards states:

This was the prophet's first vision. From this we learn among other truths, that God the Father and his Son, Jesus Christ, are **separate and distinct personages**, and that man is literally, created in the image of God. (*A Marvelous Work and a Wonder*, 1966, page 12)

Joseph Fielding Smith, who is the Mormon Church Historian, made this statement concerning Joseph Smith's vision:

JOSEPH SMITH'S GREAT HONOR.—There is no account in history or revelation extant, where ever before both the Father and the Son appeared in the presence of mortal man in glory. (*Essentials in Church History*, pages 46-47)

Joseph Fielding Smith also stated:

The vision of Joseph Smith made it clear that the Father and the Son are separate personages, having bodies as tangible as the body of man. (*Doctrines of Salvation*, Salt Lake City, 1966, Vol. 1, page 2)

Bruce R. McConkie, of the First Council of the Seventy, made this statement:

. . . Joseph Smith saw and conversed with the Father and the Son, both of which exalted personages were personally present before him as he lay enwrapped in the Spirit and overshadowed by the Holy Ghost. . . . Through it the creeds of apostate Christendom were shattered to smithereens, . . . This vision was the most important event that had taken place in all world history from the day of Christ's ministry to the glorious hour when it occurred. . . . our account of the First Vision is the **only** plain scriptural record now extant which details the personal appearance of the Father and the Son to mortal man. (*Mormon Doctrine*, 1958, page 264)

In the manual used by the Mormon missionaries the following appears:

Elder: Mr. Brown, the reason we have gathered together here today is to tell you about a prophet called by the Lord in our own time. His name was Joseph Smith. In 1820 Joseph Smith was a young man living in the state of New York. He wanted to join a church, but as he visited those in his neighborhood he found this same confusion about which we have been talking. So he decided to pray and ask God which of the churches was right. He went to a grove of trees near his father's farm and knelt in prayer. As he was praying he saw a pillar of light exactly over his head, above the brightness of the sun, which descended gradually until it fell upon him. When the light rested upon him he saw, standing above him in the air, two personages in the form of men whose brightness and glory defied all description. One of them called Joseph Smith by name and said, "This is My Beloved Son." Mr. Brown, who were these two personages?

Brown: God and Jesus Christ.

Elder: I know that Joseph Smith did see the Father and the Son. In fact, he could see them just as clearly as you can see Elder Jones and me. And he could see that his own body truly was created in the image and likeness of God. At that time the churches taught that God was only a spirit, that he had no body. **But what do we learn about God from the experience of Joseph Smith?**

Brown: That he has a real body.

Elder: Yes, he does. **The churches also taught that God the Father and Jesus Christ, His son, were both the same person. But what did Joseph Smith see?**

Brown: He saw two Personages in the form of men. (*A Uniform System For Teaching Investigators*, August 1961, pages 11-12)

The Mormon Apostle John A. Widtsoe made this statement:

It was an extraordinary experience. **Never before** had God the Father and God the Son appeared to **mortal man**. (*Joseph Smith—Seeker After Truth*, Salt Lake City, 1951, page 4)

John A. Widtsoe also stated:

The First Vision was a challenge to the religious vagaries of the day. **It shattered many a false doctrine taught throughout the centuries.** . . .

A few, and a very few, had conceived God to be a person, not merely a personage. This view had ordinarily been laid aside, since it made God more nearly like man in body and powers. Men had held up their hands in horror at an anthropomorphic God, . . .

The First Vision clarified this whole matter. It set these philosophic guesses at rest. It answered the centuries' old query about the nature of God. The Father and the Son had appeared to Joseph as persons, **like men on earth in form**. They spoke to him as persons. . . .

From the early days of Christianity, the erroneous doctrine of the nature of God had led to other equally false conclusions. . . . Christian philosophers, departing from the simple truth in Christ's teachings, began to ask if there could be more than one God. Out of their thinking came the conception that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, the Godhead, were One, a unity. . . .

This false doctrine was **laid low by the First Vision**. Two personages, the Father and the Son, stood before Joseph. The Father asked the Son to deliver the message to the boy. There was **no mingling of personalities in the vision. Each of the personages was an individual member of the Godhead**. Each one separately took part in the vision. (*Joseph Smith—Seeker After Truth*, pages 5-7)

On page 15 of the same book John A. Widtsoe states:

The First Vision spared no false tradition, however ancient and honored. It challenged the long-held beliefs of multitudes. It held up as **false** many of the teachings of the ministerial class.

In self-defense, if for no other reason, the clergy protested. Their parishioners also, who saw the cherished beliefs of childhood slipping away, frowned upon Joseph's story. The protests grew into persecution. (*Joseph Smith—Seeker After Truth*, page 15)

James B. Allen made this statement concerning the First Vision:

. . . it is used by church leaders and teachers to demonstrate for believers many other aspects of the Mormon faith: . . . perhaps most fundamental of all, the Mormon doctrine that the divine Godhead are actually separate, distinct, physical personages, as opposed to the Trinitarian concept of traditional Christianity. (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Autumn, 1966, page 30)

Stands or Falls

David O. McKay, President of the Mormon Church, has made this statement concerning the First Vision:

The appearing of the Father and the Son to Joseph Smith is the **foundation of this church**. (*Gospel Ideals*, page 85)

The importance of the First Vision to members of the Mormon Church cannot be overemphasized. Paul R. Cheesman wrote the following in his thesis:

Thus the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and the story of Joseph Smith must **stand or fall on the authenticity of the First Vision** and the appearance of the Angel Moroni. ("An Analysis of the Accounts Relating Joseph Smith's Early Visions," Master's Thesis, College of Religion, Brigham Young University, 1965, page 75)

The Mormon Apostle John A. Widtsoe stated:

The First Vision of 1820 is of **first importance** in the history of Joseph Smith. **Upon its reality rest the truth and value of his subsequent work.**

Professed enemies of Joseph Smith and his work, have felt themselves **helpless in their efforts** to destroy the reality of the First Vision and have said little about it. (*Joseph Smith—Seeker After Truth*, page 19)

Vision Criticized

Fawn M. Brodie was one of the first to cast serious doubt upon the authenticity of Joseph Smith's story of the First Vision:

One would naturally expect the local press to have given it considerable publicity at the time it allegedly occurred. And Joseph's autobiography would indeed lead one to believe that his vision of God the Father and His Son had created a neighborhood sensation: . . .

Oddly, however, the Palmyra newspapers, which in later years gave him plenty of unpleasant publicity, took no notice of Joseph's vision either at the time it was supposed to have occurred or at any other time. . . .

Moreover, Joseph's first autobiographical sketch of 1834, which we have already noted, contained no whisper of an event that, if it had happened, would have been the most soul-shattering experience of his whole youth. The description of the vision was first published by Orson Pratt in his *Remarkable Visions* in 1840, twenty years after it was supposed to have occurred. Between 1820 and 1840 Joseph's friends were writing long panegyrics; his enemies were defaming him in an unceasing stream of affidavits and pamphlets, and Joseph himself was dictating several volumes of Bible-flavored prose. But no one in this long period even intimated that he had heard the story of the two gods. At least, no such intimation has survived in print or manuscript.

. . . .
If something happened that spring morning in 1820, it passed totally unnoticed in Joseph's home town, and apparently did not fix itself in the minds of members of his own family. (*No Man Knows My History*, by Fawn M. Brodie, New York, 1957, pages 23-25)

The Mormon writer Claire Noall made this statement in rebuttal to Fawn Brodie:

Mrs. Brodie discounts completely Joseph Smith's first vision because she found no published account of it dated prior to 1834, and because Joseph did not begin to write his history until 1838, which was eighteen years after the reputed event. Actually he started his history earlier, but the manuscripts were confiscated or lost. True, Mrs. Brodie supports her doubt by the confusion of the accounts contemporary to Joseph's first statement of his vision. Nevertheless, she builds the theme of her book on this doubt. . . .

In regard to Mrs. Brodie's statement that had Joseph's alleged vision actually occurred, some publication of it would surely have appeared, it is interesting to note that the minutes of a "Family Meeting in Nauvoo," July, 1845, quote Brigham Young as saying that such a publication did occur: ". . . It [the publication] was only about a square inch, but it stated that a young man had seen an angel who had told him where to find an Indian Bible, and it went on to inquire what would happen if it should come forth." (*Intimate Disciple—Portrait of Willard Richards*, by Claire Noall, University of Utah, 1957, pages 610-611)

Obviously, Claire Noall is rather confused about Mrs. Brodie's statement. Mrs. Brodie states that the first published account of the vision appeared in 1840—not 1834. Furthermore, an announcement that Joseph Smith had seen “an angel” can hardly be used as evidence that he saw God and Christ.

Dr. Hugh Nibley, of the BYU, made this statement:

Of all Mrs. Brodie's preconceived ideas the most fundamental is her certainty that Joseph Smith did not receive revelations. . . . though Joseph Smith tells a great deal about himself Brodie does not choose to believe it.

Instead she will cling to the theory that all the prophet's thought and action was the result of a slow and gradual evolution. (*No Ma'am, That's Not History*, by Hugh Nibley, Salt Lake City, 1963, page 21)

Dr. Nibley, however, admits that Joseph Smith did not publish the story until 1842:

Joseph Smith's “official” account of his first vision and the visits of the angel Moroni was written in 1838 and **first** published in the *Times and Seasons* in 1842. (*Improvement Era*, July, 1961, page 490)

Paul Cheesman made this statement concerning this problem:

One of the problems in connection with the story's authenticity is the time-lapse between the events and the written accounts. Joseph Smith reported that the first vision took place in 1820. Joseph Smith's journal story of his visions was first published in the *Times and Seasons*, the Church's official publication, March 15, 1842. (“An Analysis of the Accounts Relating Joseph Smith's Early Visions,” page 3)

On page 4 of the same thesis Mr. Cheesman states:

Possible reasons why Joseph's story was not put into written form until eighteen years after its occurrence and then not published until four years later require attention. . . . Joseph Smith recorded other revelations as they happened, even preparing some of them for publication as early as 1831.

On pages 6 and 7 of the same thesis Paul Cheesman states:

It is possible that Joseph Smith kept this vision a secret because he felt that communications of this nature were to be treated as sacred and not to be made public at first. . . .

After eighteen years, Joseph Smith apparently felt that the need for secrecy had passed. No effort was made from that time forth to keep silent on the visitations.

Dr. Hugh Nibley also claims that Joseph Smith tried to keep the First Vision a secret. In a letter to us, dated March 8, 1961, Dr. Nibley stated:

The Prophet **did not like to talk about the First Vision and those to whom he told the story kept it to themselves**. It was only when inevitable **leaks** led to all sorts of irresponsible reports that he was “induced” to publish an official version. I am treating the subject at some length in a forthcoming study.

In the *Improvement Era* for July, 1961, Dr. Nibley stated:

But, one may ask, why should Joseph Smith have waited **so long** to tell his story officially? From his own explanation it is apparent that he would not have told it publicly **at all**, had he not been “induced” to do so by all the scandal stories that were circulating. (*Improvement Era*, July, 1961, page 522)

In the November issue of the *Improvement Era* Dr. Nibley stated:

Throughout his life Joseph Smith was never eager to tell the story of his first vision. This is a thing which the publicity-minded writers of anti-Mormon books seem quite incapable of comprehending; hungry for “success” and attention themselves, they find it simply inconceivable that Joseph Smith or any of the prophets should have “kept it close, and told no man of any of those things which they had seen.” (Luke 9:36) (*Improvement Era*, November 1961, page 813)

James B. Allen stated:

A possible explanation for the fact that the story of the vision was not generally known in the 1830's is sometimes seen in Joseph Smith's conviction that experiences such as these should be kept from the general public because of their extremely sacred nature. (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Autumn 1966, Vol. 1, no. 3, page 34)

Actually, the argument that Joseph Smith kept the vision secret is in direct contradiction to Joseph Smith's own story. Joseph Smith stated that he was persecuted because he told this story and would not deny it. He stated:

I soon found, however, that my telling the story had excited a great deal of prejudice against me among professors of religion, and was the cause of great persecution, which continued to increase; and though

I was an obscure boy, only between fourteen and fifteen years of age, and my circumstances in life such as to make a boy of no consequence in the world, yet men of high standing would take notice sufficient to excite the public mind against me, and create a bitter persecution; and this was common among all the sects—all united to persecute me. . . . though I was hated and persecuted for saying that I had seen a vision, yet it was true; and while they were persecuting me, reviling me, and speaking all manner of evil against me falsely for so saying, I was led to say in my heart: Why persecute me for telling the truth? . . . For I had seen a vision; I knew it, and I knew that God knew it, and I could not deny it, neither dared I do it; . . . (*Pearl of Great Price*, Joseph Smith 2:22 & 25)

In contradiction to the argument of secrecy, the Mormon Apostle John A. Widtsoe stated:

Whether the story of the first vision existed in written form in the early days of the Church **is not known**. Many manuscripts of that time have been lost. In some cases, secretaries deliberately carried Church records away from Church possession. But, even were they all available, minutes of meetings as they are usually kept might seldom mention the first vision, for **familiar and repeated things are often not recorded because they are taken for granted**. (*Evidences and Reconciliations*, 3-in-1 volume edition, page 334)

Perhaps one of the most damaging evidences that Joseph Smith did not see the Father and the Son in 1820, to those who believe in the restoration of the priesthood, is the fact that in the year 1832, Joseph Smith claimed to have a revelation which stated that a man could not see God without the priesthood. This revelation is published as section 84 of the *Doctrine and Covenants*. In verses 21 and 22 we read:

And **without the ordinances** thereof, and the **authority of the priesthood**, the power of godliness is not manifest unto men in the flesh;

For **without this no man can see the face of God**, even the **Father**, and live.

In 1841 the Mormon apostle Parley P. Pratt stated:

The **truth** is this: that **without the priesthood** of Melchizedek, “no man can see God, and live.” (*Writings of Parley P. Pratt*, page 306)

It is claimed that Joseph Smith saw the Father and the Son in 1820, before he was supposed to have received the Melchizedek Priesthood. Joseph Fielding Smith stated:

The Father and the Son appeared to the Prophet Joseph Smith **before** the Church was organized and **the priesthood restored** to the earth. (*Doctrines of Salvation*, by Joseph Fielding Smith, Vol. 1, page 4)

This revelation seems to show that the First Vision story was made up years after it was supposed to have

occurred. Joseph Smith did not even claim to have the priesthood in 1820, and the *Doctrine and Covenants* states that without the priesthood no man can see God and live. So, according to the *Doctrine and Covenants*, Joseph Smith could not have seen the Father and the Son in 1820.

James B. Allen, associate Professor of History at Brigham Young University, frankly admits that the First Vision “was not given general circulation in the 1830’s”:

According to Joseph Smith, he told the story of the vision immediately after it happened in the early spring of 1820. As a result, he said, he received immediate criticism in the community. There is little if any evidence, however, that by the early 1830’s Joseph Smith was telling the story in public. At least if he were telling it, no one seemed to consider it important enough to have recorded it at the time, and no one was criticizing him for it. . . .

The fact that none of the available contemporary writings about Joseph Smith in the 1830’s, none of the publications of the Church in that decade, and no contemporary journal or correspondence yet discovered mentions the story of the first vision is convincing evidence that at best it received only limited circulation in those early days. In February, 1830, for example, a farmer who lived about fifty miles from Palmyra, New York, wrote a letter describing the religious fervor in western New York and particularly the coming forth of the Book of Mormon. No mention was made, however, of the idea that Joseph Smith had beheld Deity. . . . Alexander Campbell . . . published one of the first scathing denunciations of Joseph Smith in 1832. . . . It contained no mention of the first vision. In 1834 E. D. Howe published *Mormonism Unveiled* . . . but again no mention of the first vision. In 1839 John Corrill, another Mormon apostate, published a history of the Mormons, but he made no reference at all to Joseph Smith’s claim to having conversed with the members of the Godhead. . . . as far as non-Mormons were concerned there was little, if any, awareness of it in the 1830’s. . . .

As far as Mormon literature is concerned, there was apparently no reference to Joseph Smith’s first vision in any published material in the 1830’s. . . . In 1833 the Church published the *Book of Commandments*, forerunner to the present *Doctrine and Covenants*, and again no reference was made to Joseph’s first vision. . . . The first regular periodical to be published by the Church was *The Evening and Morning Star*, but its pages reveal no effort to tell the story of the first vision to its readers. Nor do the pages of the *Latter-day Saints Messenger and Advocate*, printed in Kirtland, Ohio, from October, 1834, to September, 1836. . . . The *Times and Seasons* began publication in 1839, but, as indicated above, the story of the vision was not told in its pages until 1842. From all this it would appear that the general church membership did not receive information about the first vision until the 1840’s and that the story certainly did not hold the prominent place in Mormon thought that it does today.

As far as missionary work is concerned, it is evident that here, too, the story of the first vision had little, if any, importance in the 1830's. . . . Such important early converts as Parley P. Pratt, Sidney Rigdon, Brigham Young, and Heber C. Kimball all joined because of their conversion through the Book of Mormon, and none of their early records or writings seems to indicate that an understanding or knowledge of the first vision was in any way a part of their conversion. . . . The first important missionary pamphlet of the Church was the *Voice of Warning*, published in 1837 by Parley P. Pratt. . . . but nothing, again, on the first vision. It seems evident that, at least in the 1830's, it was not considered necessary for prospective converts to Mormonism to know the story. . . .

To summarize what has been said so far, it is apparent that the story of Joseph Smith's first vision was not given general circulation in the 1830's. Neither Mormon nor non-Mormon publications made reference to it, and it is evident that the general membership of the Church knew little, if anything, about it. Belief in the story certainly was not a prerequisite for conversion, and it is obvious that the story was not being used for the purpose of illustrating other points of doctrine. In this respect, at least, Mormon thought of the 1830's was different from Mormon thought of later years. (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Vol. 1, no. 3, Autumn, 1966, pages 30-34)

It is interesting to note that the records of the first church historians do not mention the First Vision. Oliver Cowdery was the first LDS Church historian. Joseph Fielding Smith makes the following statement concerning the records written by Oliver Cowdery:

We have on file in the Historian's Office the records written in the hand writing of Oliver Cowdery, the first historian, . . . (*Doctrines of Salvation*, Vol. 2, page 201)

The Historian's Office refused to let us have a microfilm of this history, however, the librarian, Earl Olsen, made the following admission in a letter to a member of the church:

In the records which we have on file of the writings of Oliver Cowdery, and John Whitmer, such as they are, we do **not** find a reference to the first vision. (Letter from Earl E. Olsen, Librarian, LDS Church, March 24, 1958)

Dr. Hugh Nibley, of the Brigham Young University, claimed that Joseph Smith told his great-grandfather the story of the First Vision:

The writer's great-grandfather was a Jew, and a very hardheaded and practical man. He tells in his journal, writing on the very day that the event took place, of how he cross-examined Joseph Smith on every minute detail of the First Vision and of how the Prophet satisfied him promptly and completely. (*The World and the Prophets*, by Hugh Nibley, 1954, page 21)

In a letter to us, dated March 8, 1961, Dr. Nibley stated:

The day my great-grandfather heard that remarkable account of the First Vision from Joseph Smith he wrote it down in his journal; and for 40 years after he never mentioned it to a soul. Therefore, when I came across the story unexpectedly I handed the book over to Joseph Fielding Smith and it is now where it belongs—in a safe.

Our curiosity was aroused, and we wrote to Joseph Fielding Smith, the Church Historian, concerning this journal. As we indicated on page 79 of this book, the Church Historian refused to give us a copy of this journal, and Hugh Nibley admitted that he was also "refused" access to it. (See photograph of his letter on page 79.)

Strange as it may seem, Paul Cheesman was able to get access to this journal, and he quotes from it on page 29 of his thesis:

Alexander Neibaur, a teacher who instructed Joseph Smith in German and Hebrew, recorded in his personal journal, dated May 24, 1844, the story of the first vision as related to him by Joseph after a period of instruction:

[Joseph Smith] went into the woods to pray, kneels himself down . . . saw a fire toward heaven come nearer and nearer; saw a personage in the fire; light complexion, blue eyes, a piece of white cloth drawn over his shoulders, his right arm bear [*sic*]; after a while another person came to the side of the first.

As in the case of the other second-hand accounts, there are some astonishing embellishments in this diary, but the major point—the appearance of the two persons—is still there. ("An Analysis of the Accounts Relating Joseph Smith's Early Visions," pages 29-30)

The statement that "after a while another person came to the side of the first" seems to contradict Joseph Smith's published statement that says, "When the light rested upon me I saw two Personages."

Notice that Paul Cheesman states that the entry was recorded in Alexander Neibaur's journal under the date of May 24, 1844. James B. Allen makes this statement:

Perhaps the closest one may come to seeing a contemporary diarist's account of the story is in the journal of Alexander Neibaur, which is located in the L.D.S. Church Historian's office. . . . Nibley takes the point of view that the story of the vision was not told in those early years because of its sacred nature. With reference to Neibaur's journal, however, it must be observed that Neibaur did not become associated with Joseph Smith until the Nauvoo period, in the 1840's, and that the experience referred to did not take place until well after other accounts of the vision, including Joseph Smith's, had been written and published. (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Vol. 1, no. 3, pages 34-35)

The Apostle LeGrand Richards claimed that his grandfather, Joseph Lee Robinson, wrote concerning the First Vision before Joseph Smith ever published his account in the *Times and Seasons*. In a letter to William E. Berrett he stated as follows:

. . .—my great grandfather's diary . . . indicated the Prophet Joseph had seen the Father and the Son and this was written back in 1840. (Letter from LeGrand Richards to William E. Berrett, August 29, 1960)

LeGrand Richards instructed the Genealogical Library not to allow us to see this journal. Some time later, contrary to his instructions, the Genealogical Library permitted us to read the journal. We found that it was not written until 1883, which is some 39 years after Joseph Smith's death and 63 years after the First Vision was supposed to have occurred.

The Mormon Apostle John A. Widtsoe stated:

Elder Edward Stevenson of the First Council of the Seventy who knew the Prophet, wrote:

In . . . 1834 in the midst of many large congregations, the Prophet testified with great power concerning the visit of the Father and the Son.

(*Joseph Smith—Seeker After Truth*, by John A. Widtsoe, 1951, page 23)

Unfortunately, John A. Widtsoe does not tell that this statement was published in 1893, some 59 years later and 73 years after the vision was supposed to have occurred. Although James B. Allen uses Edward Stevenson's statement, he admits that "it is easy for anyone, after many years, to read back into his own history things which he accepts at the time of the telling, . . ." (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Autumn, 1966, page 36)

The Mormon Apostle John A. Widtsoe stated that "the story of the First Vision was common knowledge among members of the Church" (*Joseph Smith—Seeker After Truth*, 1951 ed., page 24). The Mormon writer James B. Allen, on the other hand, states:

It seems apparent that if Joseph Smith told the story to friends and neighbors in 1820, he stopped telling it widely by 1830. At least it can be demonstrated that the public image of Joseph Smith and his spiritual experiences did not include the story of the first vision. . . . Non-Mormon accounts of the rise of the Church written in the 1830's made no mention of the story of the vision. It is apparent, furthermore, that belief in the vision was not essential for conversion to the Church, for there is no evidence that the story was told to prospective converts of the early 1830's. (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Autumn 1966, page 44)

John A. Widtsoe admitted that "The first vision is not mentioned in many non-Mormon books dealing with the time of Joseph Smith" (*Evidences and Reconciliations*, 3-in-1 volume ed., page 335). However, on page 336 of the same book he stated:

In fact, proof of the occurrence of the vision in Joseph Smith's early years, if needed, could be established wholly from non-Mormon sources.

John A. Widtsoe quotes Pomeroy Tucker's *Origin, Rise and Progress of Mormonism*, 1867 ed., to try to prove that the First Vision was known:

Pomeroy Tucker, the proprietor and editor of the *Wayne Sentinel* and the owner of the press on which the Book of Mormon was first printed, knew most of the persons and events connected with the early days of the Church. He was deeply prejudiced against the divine claims of Joseph Smith and looked upon them as hoaxes. Nevertheless he had reason to know the succession of events, even if he did not believe their authenticity. He writes:

About this time [he places the date about 1823] Smith had a remarkable vision. He pretended that, while engaged in secret prayer, alone in the wilderness, an "angel of the Lord" appeared to him . . . and proclaimed further that "all the religious denominations were believing in false doctrines and consequently that none of them were accepted of God as His Church and Kingdom," and also that he received a "promise that the true doctrine and the fullness of the gospel should at some future time be revealed to him." Following this, soon came another angel, (or possibly the same one,) revealing to him that he was himself to be "the favored instrument of the new revelation"; "that the American Indians . . . had their prophets and inspired writings; . . . and that, if he remained faithful, he would be the chosen prophet to translate them to the world."

Despite the **errors in dates and detail**, this statement repeats in essence the First Vision as told by the Prophet himself, and sets the time of its occurrence before the coming forth of the Book of Mormon. (*Joseph Smith—Seeker After Truth*, page 21)

Actually this account is nothing like the account published in the *Pearl of Great Price*. Instead of the Father and Son appearing, Mr. Tucker states that it was an "angel of the Lord." Notice also that the date of the vision is off. It is strange to us that John A. Widtsoe could construe this to be evidence in favor of the First Vision.

John A. Widtsoe also tried to use J. B. Turner's book, *Mormonism In All Ages*, to prove the first vision:

Professor J. B. Turner, a non-Mormon, one of the early writers on Mormonism, published a book on the Mormons in 1842. His version of the First Vision, though containing errors of date, corroborates the Prophet's story. He writes:

In the year 1823, when our prophet was about seventeen years of age, his mind became, for the first time, deeply excited on the subject of religion by Mr. Lane, a devoted and talented elder of the Methodist Church, under whose preaching there was a "great awakening."

After the revival ceased, the usual strife for proselytes between the several sects commenced. This resulted in leaving Joseph as he states, "in disgust with all the sects, and almost in despair of ever coming to the knowledge of the truth amid so many contradictory and conflicting claims." He resorted to prayer for a "full manifestation of divine approbation" and "for the assurance that he was accepted of him." This occurred sometime in the winter of 1823.

On the memorable evening of the 21st of September following . . . a form stood before him . . . [who] proceeded to inform Smith . . . the Lord had chosen him to bring forth and translate the Book of Mormon.

This early author, though confusing dates, also confirms the claim of Joseph Smith that the First Vision antedated the promise by the angel Moroni of the Book of Mormon. (*Joseph Smith—Seeker After Truth*, by John A. Widtsoe, pages 21-22)

We can see nothing in this statement that would prove that Joseph Smith saw the Father and the Son in the spring of 1820. It is interesting to note that James B. Allen frankly admits that J. B. Turner did not mention the First Vision:

In 1842 J. B. Turner published *Mormonism in All Ages*, which included one of the most bitter denunciations of the Mormon prophet yet printed, but even at this late date **no mention was made of the First Vision**. (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Autumn, 1966, page 31)

This clearly shows how the Mormon writers are divided over what should be used as evidence that Joseph Smith saw the Father and the Son.

The Mormon writer Hugh Nibley presents still another view regarding Turner's account:

In 1842 J. Turner gave the following resumé of Joseph Smith's story of the first vision: "Joseph Smith was, as he states, in disgust with all the sects, and almost in despair of ever coming to the knowledge of the truth, amid so many contradictory and conflicting claims. He resorted to prayer for 'a full manifestation of divine approbation,' and 'for the assurance that he was accepted of him.' This occurred sometime in the winter of 1823." This is the whole story as Turner tells it; the first part is obviously taken, as he avers, from Joseph Smith's own story, but the other parts, actually put in quotation marks as if they were Smith's own words, are not found in that story at all. Turner has re-edited the story until there is virtually nothing left of it. (*Improvement Era*, August 1961, page 577)

While Dr. Nibley sees this as a sinister plot by an anti-Mormon writer to suppress Joseph Smith's story, James B. Allen states that J. B. Turner had probably not even seen Joseph Smith's published account of the vision:

It is probable that Professor Turner had not seen Joseph Smith's written account of the vision when he was preparing his book, for both were published the same year. Turner shows familiarity with the earlier publications of Church history and would certainly have included the history published in the *Times and Seasons* if he had seen it. (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Autumn, 1966, footnote, page 31)

J. B. Turner's quotations (which Dr. Nibley accuses him of making up) are actually found in a letter published by the Mormons in the *Messenger and Advocate* in February of 1835. (See *Messenger and Advocate*, Vol. 1, page 78) These quotations have nothing to do with the First Vision, but were written concerning the vision of the angel Moroni. Therefore, Dr. Nibley's accusations against J. B. Turner are completely untrue.

First History

In the early years of the Mormon Church it was taught that the First Vision Joseph Smith had was in 1823 when he was seventeen years of age, and that the personage who appeared was an angel (not God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ) who told him about the Book of Mormon. Oliver Cowdery, who was one of the witnesses to the Book of Mormon and the first Church Historian, wrote a history of the Church which was published in the *Messenger and Advocate*. This history absolutely proves that the early members of the Mormon Church had no knowledge of a vision prior to the vision of the angel in Joseph's room in 1823. Francis W. Kirkham, in his book *A New Witness For Christ in America*, Vol. 1, page 17, says:

The first published consecutive account of the origin of the Church began in the October, 1834, issue of the *Messenger and Advocate*. It consists of eight letters written by Oliver Cowdery to W. W. Phelps. This account is very important as Oliver Cowdery claims in a letter published in the October, 1834, issue, but dated September 7, 1834, that Joseph Smith assisted him in the writing of the letters.

In the *Messenger and Advocate*, Vol. 1, page 13, the following statement was made concerning this history:

. . . we have thought that a **full history** of the **rise** of the church of the Latter Day Saints, and the most interesting parts of its progress, to the present time, would be worthy the perusal of the Saints. . . .

That our narrative may be **correct**, and particularly the introduction, it is proper to inform our patrons, that our brother J. Smith jr. has offered to assist us. Indeed, there are many items connected with the fore part of this subject that render his labor indispensable. With his labor and with authentic documents now in our possession, we hope to render this a pleasing and agreeable narrative, well worth the examination of the Saints.—

On page 42 it was promised that this history would contain a correct account of the events that had transpired:

Since, then, our opposers have been thus kind to introduce our cause before the public, **it is no more than just that a correct account should be given**; and since they have invariably sought to cast a shade over the truth, and hinder its influence from gaining ascendancy, it is also proper that it should be vindicated, by laying before the world a **correct statement of events** as they have transpired from time to time. (*Messenger and Advocate*, Vol. 1, page 42)

On page 78 of the *Messenger and Advocate*, the following account of Joseph Smith's vision is given:

You will recollect that I mentioned the time of a religious excitement, in Palmyra and vicinity to have been in the 15th year of our brother J. Smith Jr's. age—**that was an error in the type**—it should have been in the 17th.—You will please remember this correction, as it will be necessary for the **full understanding** of what will follow in time. This would bring the date down to the **year 1823**.

... while this excitement continued, he continued to call upon the Lord in secret for a full manifestation of divine approbation, and for, to him, the all important information, **if a supreme being did exist**, to have an assurance that he was accepted of him . . .

On the evening of the 21st of September, 1823, previous to retiring to rest, our brother's mind was unusually wrought upon the subject which had so long agitated his mind—his heart was drawn out in fervent prayer. . . . While continuing in prayer for a manifestation in some way that his sins were forgiven; endeavoring to exercise faith in the scriptures, on a sudden a light like that of day, only of a purer and far more glorious appearance and brightness, burst into the room.—. . . and in a moment a personage stood before him . . . he heard him declare himself to be a messenger sent by commandment of the Lord, to deliver a special message, and to witness to him that his sins were forgiven, . . . (*Messenger and Advocate*, Vol. 1, pages 78-79)

Several things should be noted concerning this history. First, that it claimed to be a "correct account." Second, that Joseph Smith assisted in the writing of this history. Third, that the date of the religious excitement in Palmyra was 1823 when Joseph Smith was 17 years old.

Fourth, that Joseph Smith desired to know at this time "if a Supreme being did exist." Fifth, that a "messenger sent by commandment of the Lord" appeared to him and told him that his sins were forgiven. Certainly this history refutes the story that the Father and the Son appeared to Joseph Smith in 1820. Hugh Nibley tries to belittle the importance of this history by stating:

If William Smith and Oliver Cowdery give confusing accounts of the first vision, we must remember that the Prophet knew from the first that those men were not to be trusted with too much information. . . . Were such men to be trusted with a **full** account of the first vision before it was officially given to the world? (*Improvement Era*, November 1961, pages 868-869)

This explanation for Oliver Cowdery's silence concerning the First Vision is not reasonable; if Oliver Cowdery was so unreliable, why was he chosen to be one of the three witnesses to the Book of Mormon? Could it be possible that Joseph Smith would not trust Oliver Cowdery, the first Church Historian, with the true history of the Church? Actually, Joseph Smith trusted Oliver Cowdery with some of his most important secrets. The Mormon writer Max H. Parkin stated:

... the Prophet testified "that Oliver Cowdery had been his bosom friend, therefore he entrusted him with many things." (*Conflict at Kirtland*, Masters thesis, BYU, by Max H. Parkin, 1966, page 166)

Joseph Smith even trusted Oliver Cowdery with a knowledge of the doctrine of polygamy years before it was revealed to the world. Joseph F. Smith, the sixth president of the Mormon Church, stated:

"The great and glorious principle of plural marriage was first revealed to Joseph Smith in 1831, but being forbidden to make it public, or to teach it as a doctrine of the Gospel, at that time, he confided the facts to only a very few of his intimate associates. Among them were **Oliver Cowdery** and Lyman E. Johnson . . . this great principle remained concealed in the bosom of the Prophet Joseph Smith and the few to whom he revealed it, . . . this doctrine was thus being taught by the Prophet to those whom he could **trust**—. . ." (*Historical Record*, Vol. 6, May 1887, page 219)

In trying to discredit Oliver Cowdery's history, Dr. Nibley is overlooking the fact that Joseph Smith assisted in the production of it. Therefore, if the account given was not correct, Joseph Smith himself must be held responsible for it. Joseph Fielding Smith uses this history to try to prove where the Hill Cumorah is located and he claims that this history was written under the "personal supervision" of Joseph Smith:

The quibbler might say that this statement from Oliver Cowdery is merely the opinion of Oliver Cowdery and not the expression of the Prophet Joseph Smith. It should be remembered that these letters in which these statements are made were **written at the Prophet's request and under his personal supervision**. Surely, under these circumstances, he would not have **permitted an error** of this kind to creep into the record without correction. . . .

Later, during the Nauvoo period of the Church, and **again under the direction of the Prophet Joseph Smith**, these same letters by Oliver Cowdery, were published in the *Times and Seasons*, **without any thought of correction** . . . (*Doctrines of Salvation*, Vol. 3, page 236)

The Mormon historian B. H. Roberts made the following statement concerning the Cowdery letters:

Joseph Smith's association with Cowdery in the production of these letters make them, as to the **facts** involved, practically the personal narrative of Joseph Smith. (*Comprehensive History of the Church*, Vol. 1, page 78)

Paul Cheesman does not try to deal with this problem, however, he does reproduce Oliver Cowdery's letters in Appendix F of his thesis, and he admits that "Joseph approved of Oliver's writing this particular story" (see page 64 of his thesis).

James B. Allen frankly admitted that the letters in the *Messenger and Advocate* contained no mention of the First Vision:

These letters were written with the approval of Joseph Smith, but they contained no mention of any vision prior to those connected with the Book of Mormon. (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Vol. 1, no. 3, Autumn, 1966, page 32)

Certainly the history of the church written by Oliver Cowdery proves that Joseph Smith did not see the Father and the Son in 1820. Further proof that the early Mormon Church did not teach that Joseph Smith saw the Father and the Son is found in an article published in the *Peorian Register and North-Western Gazetteer*, September 3, 1841:

The statements contained in the following article were given to the Rev. Dr. Murdock of New Haven, by a minister of the Mormons, as they were pursuing their way as fellow-passengers on board a steamboat on the Ohio river, and communicated by Dr. M to the *Hartford Observer*. . . . About the year 1823, there was a revival of religion in that region, and Joseph was one of several hopeful converts. The others were joining, some one church, and some another, in that vicinity, but Joseph hesitated between the different denominations.

While his mind was perplexed with this subject he prayed for divine direction, and afterwards was awaked one **night** by an extraordinary vision. The glory of the Lord filled the chamber with a dazzling light, and a glorious **angel** appeared to him and told him that he was a chosen vessel of the Lord to make known true religion. The next day he went into the field, but was unable to work, his mind being oppressed by the remembrance of the vision. (Reprinted in *A New Witness for Christ in America*, by Francis W. Kirkham, Vol. 2, page 410)

Orson Spencer, one of the most prominent men in the early LDS Church, wrote a letter from Nauvoo in 1842 which was published in the *Millennial Star*. In this letter he stated:

Joseph Smith, when the great designs of heaven **were first** made known to him, was not far from the age of **seventeen**. (Letter by Orson Spencer, Nov. 17, 1842, published in the *Millennial Star*, Vol. 4, page 37, reprinted in the book *Spencers Letters*, Liverpool, 1879, page 25)

Further on in his letters, Orson Spencer makes it clear and definite that it was an angel who appeared to Joseph Smith when he was seventeen years old. He stated:

His testimony **concerning the angel** that he saw, and the message that he received, if you will read it, coincides perfectly with what the two prophets had long since declared should take place. He was, indeed, an illiterate and obscure youth of **seventeen**, of humble parentage, from the mountains of Vermont; . . . (*Spencers Letters*, page 75)

Strange Accounts

For years the Mormon Church leaders have publicly maintained that Joseph Smith told only one story concerning the first vision. Preston Nibley made this statement:

Joseph Smith lived a little more than twenty-four years after this first vision. During this time **he told but one story**—. . . (*Joseph Smith the Prophet*, by Preston Nibley, Salt Lake City, 1944, page 30)

At the very time that Preston Nibley made this statement the Mormon leaders were suppressing at least two accounts of the First Vision, which were written prior to the account which Joseph Smith published in the *Times and Seasons*.

Levi Edgar Young, who was the head of the Seven Presidents of Seventies in the Mormon Church, told LaMar Petersen that he had examined a "strange" account of the First Vision and was told not to reveal what it contained. The following is from notes by LaMar Petersen of an interview with Levi Edgar Young held February 3, 1953:

A list of 5 questions was presented. Bro. Young indicated some surprise at the nature of the questions but said he heartily approved of them being asked. Said they were important, fundamental, were being asked more by members of the Church, and should be asked. Said the Church should have a committee available where answers to such questions could be obtained. He has quit going down with his own questions to Brother Joseph Fielding (Smith) because he was laughed at and put off.

His curiosity was excited when reading in Roberts' Doc. History reference to "documents from which these writings were compiled." Asked to see them. **Told to get higher permission.** Obtained that permission. Examined documents. Written, he thought, about 1837 or 1838. Was told **not to copy or tell what they contained.** Said it was a "strange" account of the First Vision. Was put back in vault. **Remains unused, unknown.**

A few years ago we became interested in the "strange" account and wrote to Joseph Fielding Smith, the Mormon Church Historian, enclosing \$1.00 and asking for a photocopy of it. Unfortunately, this letter was never answered, and we had almost given up hope of ever seeing this document. To our great surprise, however, two "strange" accounts of the First Vision have now come to light. The first appeared in the thesis, "An Analysis of the Accounts Relating Joseph Smith's Early Visions," by Paul R. Cheesman. Mr. Cheesman was a student at the Brigham Young University. He evidently wrote his thesis in rebuttal to statements we had made concerning the First Vision in our writings. Although he tries to support the First Vision story, he has reproduced a document dictated by Joseph Smith himself which not only proves that he did not see the Father and the Son in 1820, but also casts a shadow of doubt upon his entire story of the origin of the church. This document was reproduced in Appendix D of Paul R. Cheesman's thesis. Mr. Cheesman introduced this account as follows:

This account was found in a journal ledger in the Church Historian's office in Salt Lake City. The pages had been cut out but were matched with the edge of the journal to prove location. This was done in the presence and with the agreement of Earl Olsen and Lauritz Peterson of the Church Historian's office. The first page of this ledger identified Frederick G. Williams as the scribe and bore the date of 1833. Subsequent pages in the journal contained copies of letters of Oliver Cowdery, Joseph Smith, Hyrum Smith, William W. Phelps, Reynolds Cahoon, Jared Clark, Sidney Rigdon, and John Murdock. The earliest letter was dated June 14, 1829; the latest August 4, 1835.

There was no date nor indication of scribe of the account of the manuscript which follows. The information provided in the above statements seem to suggest that this account was written near 1833. Since it is recorded in the first person this would also suggest either that Joseph Smith wrote it or that he dictated it. From handwriting comparisons it would appear that the

later supposition is the more likely one. ("An Analysis of the Accounts Relating Joseph Smith's Early Visions," Master's thesis, BYU, 1965, page 126)

On pages 63 and 64 of the same thesis Paul Cheesman states:

In discussing Appendix D, which appears to be the earliest written account of the first vision, there is certain additional information given which is not directly related to the thesis, but is nevertheless historically important. In this particular narrative Joseph's scribe wrote down a number and then wrote over it. To the writer and others, it looks like a 16, indicating the year in which Joseph had the first vision (in his 16th year). . . .

This account was never published or referred to by any of the authorities of the church as far as the writer has been able to determine. From the lack of recognition and importance given this document, it seems evident that it was a draft which was started but never corrected or finished. Instead of going back over and revising, Joseph Smith evidently dictated the story later as we have it in Appendix A.

James B. Allen made the following statement concerning this document:

One of the most significant documents of that period yet discovered was brought to light in 1965 by Paul R. Cheesman, a graduate student at Brigham Young University. This is a handwritten manuscript apparently composed about 1833 and either written or dictated by Joseph Smith. It contains an account of the early experiences of the Mormon prophet and includes the story of the first vision. While the story varies in some details from the version presently accepted, enough is there to indicate that at least as early as 1833 Joseph Smith contemplated writing and perhaps publishing it. The manuscript has apparently lain in the L.D.S. Church Historian's office for many years, and yet few if any who saw it realized its profound historical significance. (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Autumn, 1966, page 35)

On page 44 of the same article, James B. Allen states:

About 1833, however, Joseph Smith apparently made a preliminary attempt to write the story, but this account was never published.

An instructor at the LDS Institute of Religion at the University of Utah told us that he was permitted to read this "strange" account 'of the First Vision in the Church Historian's Library, but he was told that he must not copy from it.

After Paul Cheesman's thesis was completed, we tried to obtain a copy of it, but we were not successful. Finally, a student at the Brigham Young University (who was disturbed that the Church leaders suppressed vital documents from their people) obtained a copy of the thesis for us.

The Church leaders had suppressed this “strange” account of the vision for over 130 years. When we received a copy of it, as it appeared in the Cheesman thesis, we published it under the title of *Joseph Smith's Strange Account of the First Vision*.

The following pages are photographic reprints of the account as it appears in Paul Cheesman's thesis.

**AN ANALYSIS OF THE ACCOUNTS RELATING
JOSEPH SMITH'S EARLY VISIONS**

**A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of the
Department of Graduate Studies in
Religious Instruction, Brigham Young University**

**In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the
Degree of Master of Religious Education**

**by
Paul R. Cheesman
May, 1965**

This thesis, by Paul R. Cheesman, is accepted in its present form by the Department of Graduate Studies in Religious Instruction of Brigham Young University as satisfying the thesis requirements for the degree of Master of Religious Education.

February 15, 1965
Date

James B. Allen
Thesis Committee

David H. Yarn. Jr.

C. C. Riddle
Department Chairman

APPENDIX D

Undated Manuscript

This account was found in a journal ledger in the Church Historian's office in Salt Lake City. The pages had been cut out but were matched with the edge of the journal to prove location. This was done in the presence and with the agreement of Earl Olsen and Lauritz Peterson of the Church Historian's office. The first page of this ledger identified Frederick G. Williams as the scribe and bore the date of 1833. Subsequent pages in the journal contained copies of letters of Oliver Cowdery, Joseph Smith, Hyrum Smith, William W. Phelps, Reynolds Cahoon, Jared Clark, Sidney Rigdon, and John Murdock. The earliest letter was dated June 14, 1829; the latest August 4, 1835.

There was no date nor indication of scribe of the account of the manuscript which follows. The information provided in the above statements seem to suggest that this account was written near 1833. Since it is recorded in the first person this would also suggest either that Joseph Smith wrote it or that he dictated it. From handwriting comparisons it would appear that the later supposition is the more likely one.

A History of the life of Joseph Smith Jr. an account of his marvilous experiences and of all the mighty acts which he doeth in the name of Jesus Christ the son of the living God of whom he beareth record and also an account of the rise of the church of Christ in the even of time according as the Lord brought forth and established by his hand firstly he receiving the testimony from on high secondly the ministering of Angels thirdly the reception of . . . [unclear word] the holy Priesthood by the ministering of . . . [unclear word] Angels to administer the letter of the Gospel. . . [unclear word] the Law and commandments as they were given unto him . . . [unclear word] and the ordinances forthly a confirmation and reception of the high Priesthood after the holy order of the son of the living God power and ordinance from on high to preach the gospel in the administrations and demonstrations of the spirit the key of the Kingdom of God conferred upon him and the continuation of the blessings of god to him etc. . . . [unclear word] I was born in the town of Sharon in the state of Vermont North America on the twenty third day of December AD 1805 of goodly parents who spared no pains to instructing me in the christian religion at the age of about ten years my father Joseph Smith Senior moved to Palmyra Ontario County in the state of New York and being in indigent circumstances was obliged to labour hard for the support of a large family having nine children and as it required the exertions of all that were able to render any assistance for the support of the Family therefore we were deprived of the bennifit of an education. Suffice it to Say I was mearly instructed in reading and writing and the ground rules of Arithmatic which constituted my whole literary acquirements. At about the age of twelve years my mind became Seriously imprest with regard to the all important concerns for the welfare of my immortal

Soul which led me to Searching the Scriptures believing as I was taught, that they contained the word of God they applying myself to them and my intimate acquaintance with those of different denominations led me to marvel exceedingly for I discovered that they did not adorn their profession by a holy walk and godly conversation agreeable to what I found contained in that Sacred depository this was a grief to my soul thus from the age twelve years to fifteen I pondered many things in my heart concerning the situations of the world of mankind the contentions and divisions the wickedness and and abominations and the darkness which pervaded the minds of mankind my mind become exceedingly distressed for I became convicted of my Sins and by Searching the Scriptures I found that mankind did not come unto the Lord but that they had apostatised from the true and living faith and there was no society or denomination that built upon the gospel of Jesus Christ as recorded in the new testament and I felt to mean for my own sins and for the Sins of the world for I learned in the Scriptures that god was the same yesterday to day and forever that he was no respecter to persons for he was God for I looked upon the sun the glorious luminary of the earth and also the moon rolling in their majesty through the heavens, and also the stars shining in their courses and the earth also upon which I stood and the beast of the field and the fowls of the heaven and the fish of the waters and also man walking forth upon the face of the earth in majesty and in strength of beauty whose power and intelligence in governing the things which are so exceeding great and marvilous even in the likeness of him who created them and when I considered upon these things my heart exclaimed well hath the wise man said it is a fool that saith in his heart there is no God my heart exclaimed all all these bear testimony

and bespeak an omnipotent and omnipresent power a being who maketh laws and decreeth and bindeth all things in their bounds who filleth Eternity who was and is and will be from all Eternity to Eternity and when I considered all these things and that that being seeketh such to worship him as worship him in spirit and in truth therefore I cried unto the Lord for mercy for there was none else to whom I could go and to obtain mercy and the Lord heard my cry in the wilderness and while in the attitude of calling upon the Lord in the 16th year of my age a pillar of light above the brightness of the sun at noon day came down from above and rested upon me and I was filled with the Spirit of god and the Lord opened the heavens upon me and I saw the Lord and he spake unto me saying Joseph my son Thy Sins are forgiven thee, go thy way walk in my Statutes and keep my commandments behold I am the Lord of glory I was crucified for the world, that all those who believe on my name may have Eternal life behold he won't lie in Sin at this time and none doeth good no not one they have turned aside from the gospel and keep not my commandments they draw near to me with their lips while their hearts are far from me and mine anger is kindling against the inhabitants of the earth to visit them according to their ungodliness and to bring to pass that which hath been spoken by the mouth of the prophets and apostles behold and lo I come quickly as it was written of me in the cloud clothed in the glory of my Father and my soul was filled with love and for many days I could rejoice with great joy and the Lord was with me but could find none that would believe the heavenly vision nevertheless I pondered these things in my heart but after many days I fell into transgression and sinned in many things which brought wound upon my soul and there were many things which transpired that cannot be written and my fathers

family have suffered many persecutions and afflictions and it came to pass when I was seventeen years of age I called again upon the Lord and he showed unto me a heavenly vision for behold an angel of the Lord came and stood before me and it was by night and he called me by name and He the Lord had forgiven me my sins and he revealed unto me that in the Town of Manchester, Ontario County N.Y. there was plates of gold upon which there was engravings which was engraved by Moroni and his father the servant of the living God in ancient days and deposited by the commandments of God and kept by the power thereof and that I should go and get them and he revealed unto me many things concerning the inhabitants of the earth which since have been revealed in commandments and revelations and it was on the 22 day of Sept. AD 1822 and thus he appeared unto me three times in one night and once on the next day and then I immediately went to the place and found where the plates was deposited as the angel of the Lord had commanded me and straightway made three attempts to get them and thus being exceedingly frightened I supposed it had been a dream of vision but when I considered I knew that it was not therefore I cried unto the Lord in the agony of my soul why can I not obtain them behold the the angel appeared unto me again and said unto me you have not kept the commandments of the Lord which I gave unto you therefore you cannot now obtain them for the time is not yet fulfilled therefore thou wast left unto temptation that thou mightest be made acquainted with the power of the adversary therefore repent and call on the Lord thou shalt be forgiven and in his own due time thou shalt obtain them/ for now I had been tempted of the adversary and sought the Plates to obtain riches and kept not the commandment that I should have an eye singled to the glory of God therefore I was chastened and sought diligently to

obtain the plates and obtained them not until I was twenty one years of age and in this year I was married to Emma Hale daughter of Isaach Hale who lived in Harmony Susquehana County Pennsylvania on the 18th January AD, 1827, on the 22nd day of Sept of this same year I obtained the plates and in December following we moved to Susquehana by the assistance of a man by the name of Martin Harris who became convinced of the vision and gave me fifty dollars to bear my expenses and because of this faith and this righteous deed the Lord appeared unto him in a vision and showed unto him his marvelous work which he was about to do and immediately came to Susquehannah and said the Lord had shown him that he must go to New York City with some of the characters so we proceeded to copy some of them and he took his Journey to the eastern City and to the learned saying read this I pray thee and the learned said I cannot but if he would bring the plates they would read it but the Lord had forbid it and he returned to me and gave them to me to translate and I said I cannot for I am not learned but the Lord had prepared spectacles for to read the Book therefore I commenced translating the characters and thus the prophcy of Isiah was fulfilled which is writen in the 29 chapter concerning the book. and it came to pass that after we had translated 116 pages tnat he desired to carry them to read to his friends that peradventure he might convince them of the truth therefore I inquired of the Lord and the Lord said unto me that he must not take them and I spake unto him (Martin) the word of the Lord and he said inquire again and I inquired again and also the third time and the Lord said unto me let him go with them only he shall covenant with me that he will not show them to only but four persons and he covenanted with the Lord that he would do according to the word of the Lord therefore he took them and took his

journey unto his friend to Palmira Wayne County and State of New York
 and he brake the covenant which he made before the Lord and the Lord
 suffered the writings to fall into the hands of wicked men and Martin
 was chastened for my transgression for asking the Lord the third time
 wherefore the plates was taken from me by the power of God and I was not
 able to obtain them for a season and it came to pass after much humility
 and affliction of soul I obtained them again wher. Lord appeared unto a
 young man by the name of Oliver Cowdery and showed unto him the plates a
 vision and also the truth of the work and what the Lord was about to do
 through me his unworthy servant therefore he was desirous to come and
 write for me to translate now my wife had written some for me to trans-
 late and also my Brother Samuel H. Smith but we had become reduced in
 property and my wives father was about to turn me out of doors I had
 not whereto go and I cried unto the Lord and he would provide for me
 to accomplish the work where unto he had commanded me.

A careful reading of this document reveals why the Church leaders have “never published or referred” to it. To begin with, Joseph Smith said that prior to the time he received his First Vision he knew that all the churches were wrong:

... by Searching the Scriptures I found that mankind did not come unto the Lord but that they had apostatised from the true and living faith and there was **no society or denomination that built upon the gospel of Jesus Christ** as recorded in the new testament ... (“An Analysis of the Accounts Relating Joseph Smith’s Early Visions,” page 128)

In the account Joseph Smith wrote later, however, he claimed that he went to the Lord to find out which church was right:

My object in going to inquire of the Lord was to know **which of all the sects was right**, that I might know which to join. (*Pearl of Great Price*, Joseph Smith, verse 18)

In the story as it was first published in the *Times and Seasons*, Vol. 3, page 748, Joseph Smith stated: “for at this time it had **never entered into my heart that all were wrong**”; this clause has been deleted in the *Pearl of Great Price* without any indication.

In the account Joseph Smith first wrote he did not mention a religious revival, however, in the account which is published today he devotes a great deal of

space to tell of this revival. In the first account Joseph Smith did not mention an evil power trying to overcome him, however, in the printed account he stated:

... I kneeled down and began to offer up the desire of my heart to God. I had scarcely done so, when immediately I was seized upon by some power which entirely overcame me, and had such an astonishing influence over me as to bind my tongue so that I could not speak. Thick darkness gathered around me, and it seemed to me for a time as if I were doomed to sudden destruction. (*Pearl of Great Price*, Joseph Smith 2:15)

In the thesis, page 129, line 8, Joseph Smith said that his first vision was “in the 16th year of my age.” In the version he wrote later, Joseph Smith said that the vision occurred when he was in his “fifteenth year” (*Pearl of Great Price*, Joseph Smith, verse 7). The Mormon Apostle John A. Widtsoe argued that the first vision had to occur in 1820 when Joseph Smith was fourteen years old:

Clearly, knowledge of the first vision was current in the early days of the Church, and was dated as the Prophet says, in 1820, when he was not yet fifteen years old. ... Whatever opinion may be held as to what he saw on that occasion, it must have occurred in 1820. Any other view would make **liars** of these witnesses, or make them connivers in untruth with the Prophet. (*Gospel Interpretations*, by John A. Widtsoe, page 119)

On page 132 of the same book John A. Widtsoe stated:

All acceptable evidence **within** and beyond the Church confirms the Prophet's story that his first vision occurred when he was between **fourteen and fifteen** years of age in the year 1820 and before the Book of Mormon revelations occurred.

The early document written by Joseph Smith would seem to destroy John A. Widtsoe's argument concerning the date of the First Vision. In fact, the early document not only contradicts the story Joseph Smith later wrote as to the date of the vision, but also as to the number of personages who appeared and what he was told on that occasion.

At this point we are going to show in parallel columns how the first account contradicts the account that was finally printed in the *Times and Seasons*:

THE STORY AS JOSEPH SMITH FIRST WROTE IT

... a pillar of light above the brightness of the sun at noon day come down from above and rested upon me and I was filled with the Spirit of god and the Lord opened the heavens upon me and I saw the Lord and he spake unto me saying Joseph my son Thy Sins are forgiven thee, go thy way walk in my Statutes and keep my commandments behold I am the Lord of glory I was crucified for the world, that all those who believe on my name may have Eternal life behold he won't lieth in Sin at this time and none doeth good no not one they have turned aside from the gospel and keep not my commendments they draw near too me with their lips while their hearts are far from me and mine anger is visit upon them according to their ungodliness and to bring to pass that which hath been spoken by the mouth of the prophets and apostles behold and Lo I come quickly as it was written of me in the cloud clothed in the glory of my father . . . ("An Analysis of the Accounts of Relating Joseph Smith's Early Visions," A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the Department of Graduate Studies in Religious Instruction, Brigham Young University, by Paul R. Cheesman, May, 1965, page 129)

THE STORY AS IT WAS LATER PRINTED

... I saw a pillar of light exactly over my head, above the brightness of the sun; which descended gradually until it fell upon me. It no sooner appeared than I found myself delivered from the enemy which held me bound. When the light rested upon me I saw two personages (whose brightness and glory defy all description) standing above me in the air. One of them spake unto me, calling me by name, and said, (pointing to the other.) "This is my beloved Son, hear him."
My object in going to enquire of the Lord was to know which of all the sects was right? that I might

know which to join. No sooner therefore did I get possession of myself, so as to be able to speak, than I asked the personages who stood above me in the light, which of all the sects was right, (for at this time it had never entered into my heart that all were wrong,) and which I should join. I was answered that I must join none of them, for they were all wrong, and the personage who addressed me said that all their creeds were an abomination in his sight; that those professors were all corrupt, "they draw near to me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me; they teach for doctrine the commandments of men, having a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof." He again forbade me to join with any of them: and many other things did he say unto me which I cannot write at this time. (*Times and Seasons*, Vol. 3, pages 748-749, reprinted in the *Pearl of Great Price*, Joseph Smith 2:16-20)

Notice that in the first account Joseph Smith said "I saw the Lord," whereas in the printed account he said "I saw two personages." This is definitely a contradiction. In the first account Joseph Smith told that the Lord said he was "crucified for the world." This would mean that the personage was Jesus Christ. Therefore, we see that Joseph Smith did not include God the Father in his first account of the vision. James B. Allen stated:

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, page 40)

Paul R. Cheesman tries to excuse this by saying:

As he writes briefly of the vision, he does not mention the Father as being present; however, this **does not indicate that he was not present.** ("An Analysis of the Accounts Relating Joseph Smith's Early Visions," page 63)

This explanation by Paul Cheesman does not seem reasonable. Actually, in the first account Joseph Smith quotes the Lord as saying more words than in the printed account. Why would he not mention the most important part of the story?

On page 18 of his thesis, Paul R. Cheesman makes a statement which, we feel, overthrows his argument that the Father might have been present even though Joseph Smith did not mention him. He states:

Paul the apostle had an experience, but he declared only that a single member of Deity appeared.

How does Paul R. Cheesman know that Paul did not see two personages? Simply because Paul did not mention two. Paul stated that Jesus appeared to

him (see Acts 22:8), but he did not say that another personage “was not present.” Obviously, Mr. Cheesman knows that there was only one personage because Paul only mentioned one. Now, since Joseph Smith only mentioned one personage, is it not fair for us to assume that he wanted it to be understood that “only a single member of Deity appeared”? If God the Father had appeared in this vision, Joseph Smith certainly would have included this information in his first account. It is absolutely impossible for us to believe that Joseph Smith would not have mentioned the Father if He had actually appeared.

On page 2 of his thesis Paul R. Cheesman states:

This thesis . . . shows that Joseph Smith was consistent in his recitation of the major aspects of his story over the years.

On page 8 of the same thesis he declares:

. . . Joseph Smith never seemed to have changed the essential elements of his story during his lifetime and was called upon to die a martyr's death to seal his witness.

We wonder how Paul Cheesman could make such statements, especially since his own thesis contained the “strange” account of the First Vision, which differed in almost every detail from the version Joseph Smith later gave. On page 25 of his thesis, Paul R. Cheesman argues:

Some critics have taken exception to certain statements from these secondary sources. One such criticism is that not all accounts agree that there were two personages present besides Joseph. In considering this issue, it must be pointed out that the account of Joseph in his journal, the Wentworth Letter, Daniel Rupp's history, Orson Pratt's account and Orson Hyde's story were all printed, contemporary accounts (i.e. written and published during the life of Joseph Smith) and indicated that two personages appeared in the vision.

In making this statement Mr. Cheesman ignores the fact that the first account Joseph Smith wrote only mentions one personage. How can he ignore the very document which he reproduces in Appendix D of his thesis? Obviously, the first account of the story should contain more accurate information than accounts written years later.

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 whole story.

Although Mr. Cheesman evidently wrote his thesis in defence of Joseph Smith's story of the First Vision, by including the “strange” account he has probably done more to destroy the First Vision story than he could ever imagine.

It not only shows that Joseph Smith was a deceiver, but it also shows that the Mormon Church leaders have been suppressing vital information from their people.

After we published the “strange” account of the vision, a Mormon Seminary teacher told us that there was still another account of the First Vision which the Mormon leaders were suppressing. To our great surprise, this second account was published in the Autumn, 1966, issue of *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*. Although *Dialogue* is published by Mormons, it has “no official connection” with the Mormon Church, and the Mormon leaders cannot dictate what can or cannot appear in this publication. This account appeared in an article by James B. Allen, Associate Professor of History at the BYU, and Bishop of the BYU Sixteenth Ward. Mr. Allen made this statement concerning the document:

Another document of almost equal importance has recently been brought to light by a member of the staff at the Church Historian's office. It is located in the back of Book A-1 of the handwritten manuscript of the History of the Church (commonly referred to as the “Manuscript History”). . . . In the back of the book, however, is a most curious and revealing document. It is curious in several ways. First, it was apparently written in 1835 by someone other than Joseph Smith, for it records the day-to-day events in the prophet's life in the third person, as if it were a scribe recording them as he observed them. Next, it is not written in the finished style that characterizes the “Manuscript History,” indicating that it was not intended for publication without some revision. . . . In short, it is almost certain that the document in the back of the book comprises the original notes from which the “Manuscript History” was later compiled, and is actually a daily account of Joseph Smith's activities in 1835, as recorded by a scribe. The importance of the manuscript here lies in the fact that the scribe wrote down what Joseph Smith said to his visitor, and he began not by telling the story of the discovery of the Book of Mormon, but with an account of the first vision. Again, the details of the story, vary somewhat from the accepted version, but the manuscript, if authentic, at least demonstrates that by 1835 the story had been told to someone. (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Autumn, 1966, pages 35-36)

On page 40 of the same article, James B. Allen quotes the document as follows:

Being wrought up in my mind respecting the subject of Religion, and looking at the different systems taught the children of men, I knew not who was right or who was wrong but considered it of the first importance to me that I should be right in matters of so much moment, matter involving eternal consequences. Being thus perplexed in mind I retired to the silent grove and there bowed down before the Lord, under a realising sense (if the Bible be true) ask and you shall receive, knock and it shall be opened, seek and you shall find, and again, if any man lack wisdom, let of God [*sic*], who giveth to all men liberally & upbraideth not. Information was what I most

desired, at this time and with a fixed determination to obtain it. I called on the Lord for the first time in the place above stated, or in other words, I made a fruitless attempt to pray. My tongue seemed to be swollen in my mouth, so that I could not utter, I heard a noise behind me like some one walking towards me, I strove again to pray, but could not; the noise of walking seemed to draw nearer; I sprang upon my feet and looked around, but I saw no person, or thing that was calculated to produce the noise of walking. I kneeled again, my mouth was opened and my tongue loosed; I called on the Lord in mighty prayer. A pillar of fire appeared above my head; which presently rested down upon me, and filled me with unspeakable joy. A personage appeared in the midst of this pillar of flame, which was spread all around and yet nothing consumed. Another personage soon appeared like unto the first; he said unto me thy sins are forgiven thee. He testified also unto me that Jesus Christ is the son of God. I saw many angels in this vision. (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Autumn, 1966, pages 40-41)

Earl E. Olson, who is now the Assistant Church Historian, has confirmed the fact that James B. Allen has accurately reproduced this document. In a letter dated October 26, 1966, he stated:

The quote which you referred to in your letter of October 21 pertaining to Joseph Smith's first vision which is recorded in Book A-1 of the Documentary History appears in the issue of *Dialogue* on page 40. We have compared the account in *Dialogue* with the original recording as we have it here and find that it is **identical word for word and has been accurately copied.** (Letter from Earl E. Olson, Assistant Church Historian, to Wesley P. Walters, dated October 26, 1966)

In this account of the First Vision there is absolutely nothing to show that the personages were God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ. The statement, "He testified also unto me that **Jesus Christ is the Son of God,**" would seem to show that the personages were not the Father and the Son. If Joseph Smith had intended to show that the personage who spoke, was Jesus, he probably would have said something like this: "He testified also unto me that He was the Son of God." On the other hand, if he intended to show that the personage who spoke was the Father he would probably have said something like this: "He testified also unto me that Jesus Christ was His Son."

Joseph Smith's statement that the second personage did not appear until after the first contradicts the version that he later published. In the later version he stated that "When the light rested upon me I saw two personages, . . ."

As if this was not bad enough, he states that there were "many angels in this vision." Neither of the other versions indicate that there were "many angels." James B. Allen remarked:

The most **unusual** statement, however, is Joseph's declaration that he **saw many angels.** (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Autumn, 1966, page 41)

Now we have three different accounts of the First Vision, and every one of them is different. The first account says there was only one personage. The second account says there were many, and the third says there were two. James B. Allen states:

As the story of Joseph Smith's vision was told and retold, both by himself and other persons, there were naturally some variations in detail. (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Autumn, 1966, page 39)

We would, of course, expect some variations in any story, but we feel that there are so many variations in Joseph Smith's story and they are of such a nature that they make it impossible to believe.

We also wonder if there might be other accounts of the vision which the Church leaders are still suppressing. It should be remembered that Levi Edgar Young felt that the "strange" account he examined was written about 1837 or 1838. Neither of the accounts we have just spoken of were written that late. Perhaps Levi Edgar Young was mistaken about the date, or perhaps there is still another "strange" account of the First Vision. It is interesting to note that Joseph Smith started to write a history prior to 1838. Under the date of October 29, 1835, we find the following in Joseph Smith's History:

Returned to our writing room, went to Dr. Williams' after my large journal; . . . and my scribe **commenced writing in my journal a history of my life;** concluded President Cowdery's second letter to W. W. Phelps, which President Williams had begun. (*History of the Church*, Vol. 2, page 293)

It could be that this is the same document which Paul R. Cheesman has reproduced, or it may be that this is still another account of the First Vision. The truth may never be known unless the Mormon leaders allow all of the records to be examined.

Revision Required

In his article on the First Vision, James B. Allen suggests that Fawn M. Brodie may have to revise her argument that the First Vision was invented sometime after 1834. Although James B. Allen's article seems to be very honest, we feel that his criticism of Mrs. Brodie is a little unfair. Actually, the Mormon writers are the ones who should revise their arguments. They are the ones that said Joseph Smith "told but one story." The Mormon Apostle John A. Widtsoe stated:

The earliest available written official account of the First Vision dates from 1838 when Joseph Smith began to write the history of the Church. (*Joseph Smith—Seeker After Truth*, page 19)

We may never know if John A. Widtsoe knew of the two “strange” accounts of the vision which were written prior to 1838, but one thing is certain, some of the Mormon leaders did know that the account written in 1838 was not the only one in the Historian’s Office. In other words, certain leaders deliberately suppressed this information. We are sure that Fawn Brodie would have used these documents if the Mormon leaders had made them available to her. These documents fit perfectly into Fawn Brodie’s thesis that Joseph Smith made up the vision many years after it was supposed to have occurred. Fawn Brodie stated:

The awesome vision he described in later years may have been the elaboration of some half-remembered dream stimulated by the early revival excitement and reinforced by the rich folklore of visions circulating in his neighborhood. Or it may have been sheer invention, created some time after 1834 . . . (*No Man Knows My History*, page 25)

On page 22 she states that “Lesser visions than this were common in the folklore of the area.” She then goes on to explain that others claimed they saw the Lord, but Joseph’s vision of both the Father and the Son dwarfed all these experiences.” If Fawn Brodie would have had access to the “strange” account which Paul R. Cheesman reproduces, she would have had the missing link to make her thesis complete. The fact that Joseph Smith only mentions Christ as being present in the vision makes it very similar to other visions “of the area.” Mormon writers admit the thing that makes Joseph Smith’s vision unique is that he saw and conversed with both the Father and the Son. Paul R. Cheesman states:

Joseph Smith’s account is **unique in that the Father and the Son appeared** together and they both spoke. To those who accept the Bible and the Book of Mormon as authentic, nowhere in these histories do we have another example that Parallels this experience in this respect. (“An Analysis of the Accounts Relating Joseph Smith’s Early Visions,” page 18)

Now that we have Joseph Smith’s first account of his vision we know that it was not unique. In 1816 a minister by the name of Elias Smith published a book in which he told of his conversion. Notice how similar it is to Joseph Smith’s first account:

Not long after these things passed through my mind, I went into the woods one morning after a stick of timber; after taking it on my shoulder to bring it to the house, as I walked along on a large log that lay above the snow, my foot slipped and I fell partly under the log, the timber fell one end on the log and the other on the snow, and held me, so that I found it difficult at first to rise from the situation I was then in. While in this situation, a light appeared to shine from heaven,

not only into my head, but into my heart. This was something very strange to me, and what I had never experienced before. My mind seemed to rise in that light to the throne of God and the Lamb, and while thus gloriously led, . . . The Lamb once slain appeared to my understanding, and while viewing him, I felt such love to him as I never felt to any thing earthly. My mind was calm and at peace with God through the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world. . . . It is not possible for me to tell how long I remained in that situation, as every thing earthly was gone from me for some time. (*The Life, Conversion, Preaching, Travels, and Sufferings of Elias Smith*, by himself, Vol. 1, pages 58 and 59, Portsmouth, N.H., 1816)

Alexander Campbell wrote the following on March 1, 1824:

I read, some time since, of a revival in the state of New York, in which the Spirit of God was represented as being abundantly poured out on Presbyterians, Methodists, and Baptists. . . . I think it would be difficult to prove that the Spirit of God had any thing to do with the aforesaid revival.

Enthusiasm flourishes, blooms under the popular systems. This man was regenerated when asleep, by a vision of the night. That man heard a voice in the woods, saying, “Thy sins be forgiven thee.” A third saw his Saviour descending to the tops of the trees at noon day. A thousand form a band, and sit up all night to take heaven by surprise. Ten thousand are waiting in anxiety for a power from on high to descend upon their souls; . . . (*The Christian Baptist*, 1955 reprint, Vol. 1, pages 148-149)

Charles G. Finney claimed to have an experience that was very similar to the one Joseph Smith told about. It occurred about 1821—almost the same time Joseph Smith claimed to have had his vision. Gilbert Seldes wrote:

Like Edwards he withdrew to the woods to wrestle with his spirit. He was overwhelmed with a sense of his own wickedness and so discouraged that he was almost too weak to stand. . . . He addressed himself directly to God and, what with inward voices and passages of Scripture dropping into his mind with a flood of light, we are assured that God directly answered him. “I told the Lord that I should take him at his word; that he could not lie, and that therefore I was sure that he heard my prayer, and that he would be found of me.”

. . . .
A few minutes later he had lost all sense of sin: all consciousness of guilt had departed from him. . . . That evening, “it seemed as if I met the Lord Jesus Christ face to face” and received a mighty baptism of the Holy Ghost. . . .

“No words can express the wonderful love that was shed abroad in my heart. I wept aloud with joy and love: . . .” (*The Stammering Century*, by Gilbert Seldes, New York, 1928, page 103)

About the only important difference between Charles G. Finney's experience and Joseph Smith's is that Charles Finney did not claim to meet the Lord until after he came out of the woods. Mr. Finney described his experience as follows:

"All my feelings seemed to rise and flow out; and the utterance of my heart was, 'I want to pour my whole soul out to God.' The rising of my soul was so great that I rushed into the back room of the front office, to pray. There was no fire and no light in the room; nevertheless it appeared to me as if it were perfectly light. As I went in and shut the door after me, it seemed as if I met the Lord Jesus Christ **face to face**. It did not occur to me then, nor did it for some time afterwards, that it was wholly a mental state. On the contrary, it seemed to me that I **saw him** as I would see any other man. He said nothing, but looked at me in such a manner as to break me right down at his feet. I have always since regarded this as a most remarkable state of mind; for it seemed to me a reality that he stood before me, and I fell down at his feet and poured out my soul before him." (*Memoirs of Charles G. Finney*, 1876, as quoted in *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, by William James, New York, 1958, page 203)

While he was in the woods Mr. Finney heard someone approaching. This resembles Joseph Smith's second account of the vision. Below is a comparison between Charles Finney's experience and Joseph Smith's second account of his vision:

JOSEPH SMITH'S ACCOUNT
Being thus perplexed in mind I retired to the silent grove and there bowed down before the Lord, . . . I called on the Lord for the first time in the place above stated, or in other words, I made a fruitless attempt to pray My tongue seemed to be swollen in my mouth, so that I could not utter, <u>I heard a noise behind me like some one walking towards me</u> . I strove again to pray, but could not; the noise of walking seemed to draw nearer; I spring upon my feet and looked around, but I saw no person, or thing that was calculated to produce the noise of walking. I kneeled again, my mouth was opened and my tongue loosed: <u>I called on the Lord in mighty prayer</u> . (<i>Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon thought</i> , Autumn, 1966, page 40)
CHARLES G. FINNEY'S ACCOUNT
He then went into the woods, where he describes his struggles. He could not pray, his heart was hardened in its pride. . . . "A great sinking and discouragement came over me, and I felt almost too weak to stand upon my knees. Just at this moment <u>I again thought I heard some one approach me</u> , and I opened my eyes to see whether it were so. But right there the revelation of my pride of heart . . . was distinctly shown to me. An overwhelming sense of my wickedness in being ashamed to have a human being see me on my knees

before God took such powerful possession of me, that I cried at the top of my voice, and exclaimed that I would not leave that place if all the men on earth and all the devils in hell surrounded me." (*The Varieties of Religious Experience*, page 170)

Gilbert Seldes stated that Charles G. Finney had a definite influence upon Joseph Smith:

Less obvious than this continuity is the interrelation of all the secondary movements of the past century. Isolated, each leader of a sect is amusing, fantastic, a little incredible: a Miller, giving the exact date of the second coming; a Matthias, declaring himself God; a Joseph Smith, writing the Book of Mormon; a Noyes, combining socialism, religion, and sexual innovations. But their full bearing only begins to be seen when we discover that they were all the children of the 1830 revivals when Charles Grandison Finney, the brigadier-general of Jesus Christ, stamped up and down the state of New York. (*The Stammering Century*, by Gilbert Seldes, page 5)

On page 100 of the same book, Gilbert Seldes stated:

Out of the ruck of revivalists in the 1820's and 30's there rise three figures; the conservative Nettleton; Lyman Beecher the compromiser; and Charles Grandison Finney, enemy to both, the reputed brigadier-general of Jesus Christ who stormed through the western counties of New York, broke into the citadels of New England, converted millionaires in New York City, and swept westward with unparalleled force until his energy finally spent itself and he rested quietly as a professor at Oberlin College. (*The Stammering Century*, page 100)

On pages 108 and 109 of the same book, we find the following:

It is not necessary to follow Finney through his extraordinary career of revivalism. He stamped up and down the northwestern counties of New York, stopping only at rare intervals to ask God where to go next, turning the cold fire of his eyes on the vain and the hostile, breaking through rigid precedents, making penitents shriek in agony, and establishing himself as a cannoneer in the service of the Lord. His autobiography recounts incident after incident, almost all trivial but mounting into the hundreds, and suggests thousands of conversions besides. . . . Startled observers noted strange sights along the trail of the revivalist. Men and women saw visions, assumed the right of prophecy, communicated directly with God.

It is interesting to note that others went out into the grove to pray because of Mr. Finney's experience:

The story of his conversion spread and the grove in which he had communed with the Holy Spirit was frequented by other anxious souls who imitated him in prayer with equally successful results. (*The Stammering Century*, page 104)

In a book published in 1830, Stephen H. Bradley told that he thought he “saw the Savior” when he was fourteen year old. William James quotes from his book:

Bradley thought he had been already fully converted at the age of fourteen.

“I thought I saw the Saviour, by faith, in human shape, for about one second in the room, with arms extended, appearing to say to me, Come. . . .”

Nine years later, in 1829, Mr. Bradley heard of a revival of religion that had begun in his neighborhood. (*The Varieties of Religious Experience*, pages 157-158)

From this it would appear that Stephen Bradley had his experience in about 1820, or about the same year Joseph Smith claimed his visitation.

Asa Wild claimed to have a revelation which is very similar to the story Joseph Smith published in the *Times and Seasons*. It was published in the *Wayne Sentinel* (the paper to which the family of Joseph Smith apparently subscribed) on October 22, 1823. Below is a comparison between Asa Wild’s story and Joseph Smith’s account:

JOSEPH SMITH’S PUBLISHED ACCOUNT

When the light rested upon me I saw two personages (whose brightness and glory defy all description) standing above me in the air. . . . No sooner therefore did I get possession of myself, so as to be able to speak, than I asked the personages who stood above me in the light, which of all the sects was right, (for at this time it had never entered into my heart that all were wrong,) and which I should join. I was answered that I must join none of them, for they were all wrong, and the personage who addresses me said that all their creed were an abomination in his sight; that those professors were all corrupt, “they draw near to me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me; they teach for doctrine the commandments of men, having a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof.” He again forbade me to join with any of them; and many other things did he say unto me which I cannot write at this time. (*Times and Seasons*, Vol. 3, page 748, April 1, 1842)

ASA WILD’S ACCOUNT

It seemed as if my mind, though active in its very nature, had lost all its activity, and was stuck motionless, as well as into nothing, before the awful and glorious majesty of the Great Jehovah. He then spake to the following purport; and in such a manner as I could not describe if I should attempt.— . . . He also told me, that every denomination of professing christians had become extremely corrupt; many of which had never had any true faith at all; but are guided only by depraved reason, . . . He told me further, that he had raised up, and was no raising up, that class of persons signified by the Angel mentioned by the Revelator, xiv. 6, 7, which flew in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach: . . . Furthermore he said that all the different denominations of professing christians, constituted the New Testament Babylon; . . .

Much more the Lord revealed, but forbids my relating it in this way, but this, I have written and published, by the express and immediate command of God; . . . (*Wayne Sentinel*, October 22, 1823)

The only thing about Joseph Smith’s vision that is unique is the claim that he saw the Father and the Son. It is interesting to note, however, that a member of the Mormon Church claimed to have a vision of the Father and the Son, which was published prior to the first publication of Joseph Smith’s vision. The following appeared in the July, 1838 issue of the *Elder’s Journal*:

Died on the 7th of May last, James G. Marsh, second son of Thomas B. Marsh, aged 14 years, 11 months and seven days.

. . . he eagerly embraced the gospel, and was baptized into the church of Jesus Christ of latter day saints, early in the spring of 1832 being between eight and nine years of age.

. . . .
It seems that the Lord had respect unto this lover of righteousness; for when he was but about nine years of age, he had a remarkable vision, in which he talked with the Father and many of the ancient prophets face to face, and beheld the Son of God coming in his glory.

. . . .
Thus ends the life of this dear youth, Who loved the way that leads to heaven

In wisdom’s paths he sought the truth His manners mild, his temper even,

In vision bright he soared above And saw the Father face to face,

He heard the Angels sing God’s love. And saw his own abiding place;

He talked with Christ, and saw his name, Within the book of life inscribed.

He’s gone to realize the same With God and Angels to abide. (*Elder’s Journal*, Far West, Mo., July, 1838, page 48)

Whether this had any influence upon Joseph Smith changing the number of personages in his vision is hard to say, but it is interesting that this vision was published prior to the time Joseph Smith’s vision appeared in print. Perhaps Joseph Smith did not want one of his followers to have a greater vision than his own.

No Revival in 1820

In Joseph Smith’s first written account he says nothing of a revival of religion, however, in the account he later published, Joseph Smith stated:

Some time in the second year after our removal to Manchester, there was in the place where we lived an unusual excitement on the subject of religion. It commenced with the Methodists, but soon became general among all the sects in that region of country, indeed the whole district of country seemed affected by it, and great multitudes united themselves to the different religious parties, which created no small stir and division amongst the people, . . .

I was at this time in my fifteenth year. My father's family was proselyted to the Presbyterian faith, and four of them joined that church, namely, my mother Lucy, my bothers Hyrum, Samuel, Harrisen, and my sister Sophronia.

During this time of great excitement my mind was called up to serious reflection . . . So in accordance with this my determination, to ask of God, I retired to the woods to make the attempt. It was on the morning of a beautiful clear day, early in the spring of eighteen hundred and twenty. (*Times and Seasons*, Vol. 3, pages 727-728)

Notice that Joseph Smith states that he went out into the woods in the spring of 1820. This would mean that the revival was going strong by the spring of 1820. The Mormon Apostle John A. Widtsoe was quoted earlier as stating that the First Vision had to occur in 1820, and that "All acceptable evidence" shows that Joseph Smith was "between fourteen and fifteen years of age" at the time. The Mormon writer Preston Nibley made this statement:

There are several accounts of the religious revival which took place **at Palmyra in the Spring of 1820.** (*Joseph Smith the Prophet*, Salt Lake City, 1944, page 21)

Preston Nibley offers three accounts to prove that there was a revival "in Palmyra in the Spring of 1820." (See *Joseph Smith the Prophet*, pages 21-26). One of the accounts is the one published by Joseph Smith in the *Times and Seasons*. Another is a statement by Joseph Smith's brother, William. Preston Nibley quotes from an interview which a "Brother Briggs" had with William Smith:

"What caused Joseph to ask for guidance as to what church he ought to join?" asked Bro. Briggs. William answered as follows:

"Why there was a joint revival in the neighborhood between the Baptists, Methodists and Presbyterians and they had succeeded in stirring up quite a feeling, and after the meeting the question arose which church should have the converts. Rev. Stockton was the president of the meeting and suggested that it was their meeting and under their care and they had a church there and they ought to join the Presbyterians, but as father did not like Rev. Stockton very well, our folks hesitated . . ." (*Joseph Smith the Prophet*, pages 23-24)

If Preston Nibley had quoted the paragraph just before it would have overthrown his argument that the revival occurred in the spring of 1820. This paragraph (which was published in the *Deseret News*, January 20, 1894) read as follows:

"Hyrum, Samuel, Katharine and mother were members of the Presbyterian church. My father would not join. He did **not** like it because a Rev. Stockton **had preached my brother's funeral sermon** and intimated very strongly that he had gone to hell, for **Alvin** was not a church member, but he was a good boy and my father did not like it."

Notice that William Smith tells that his father would not join the Presbyterian church because Reverend Stockton had intimated that Alvin "had gone to hell." Now, since Alvin did not die until 1823, this would mean that the revival could not have started before 1823. Thus we see that when the statement is taken in context it proves that the revival did NOT occur in the spring of 1820.

Preston Nibley's only other evidence for a revival in 1820 is taken from a book written by Willard Bean, a Mormon writer. Mr. Nibley states:

I shall reproduce first the account as related in "The Beginning of Mormonism."

In the year 1819 a sort of religious awakening started in Massachusetts, gradually moving down the eastern seaboard, gathering momentum as it spread, . . . After reaching New York it spread to the rural districts upstate, reaching Palmyra and vicinity in the spring of 1820. It appears that Rev. Jesse Townsend, a young Yale graduate, but recently set apart for the ministry and assigned to the pastorate of the new Presbyterian Church of Palmyra, was the first in these parts to catch the religious fervor, and accordingly started a revival. He was soon joined by the Presbyterian minister of East Palmyra, closely followed by the Baptist minister and two Methodist ministers of Palmyra.

The revival started the latter part of April, before the rural people could get onto their land to begin spring plowing, which gave the farmers a chance to attend the meetings. Even business and professional men neglected their work and all but shut up shop. By the first of May, the revival was well under way with scores of people confessing religion, and each new convert becoming a self-appointed missionary to solicit friend and neighbor. The prevailing question among people of the neighborhood was, "What shall I do to be saved?"

. . . The revival had been even more successful than the ministers had anticipated. I quote from the "Religious Advocate" of Rochester: "More than 200 souls have become hopeful subjects of divine grace in Palmyra, Macedon, Manchester, Lyons and Ontario since the late revival commenced. This is a powerful work. It is among young as well as old people. Many are ready to exclaim—'What hath God wrought?' It is the Lord's doing and it is marvelous in our eyes. The cry is yet from many, 'Come over and help us.' . . . Such intelligence must be pleasing to every child of God who rightly estimates the value of immortal souls, and wishes well to the cause of Zion."

A week later (from the same publication) . . . "It may be added that in Palmyra and Macedon, including Methodist, Presbyterian and Baptist churches, more than 400 have already confessed that the Lord is good. The work is still progressing. In neighboring towns, the number is great and still increasing. Glory be to God on high; and on earth peace and good will to all men."

During the second week in May the revival began to show signs of breaking up, and the many converts were solicited by the different preachers to join their respective churches.

(*Joseph Smith the Prophet*, by Preston Nibley, Salt Lake City, 1944, pages 21-22)

Upon first examination it would appear that this is definite proof that there was a revival in Palmyra and Manchester in 1820. A more careful check, however, reveals that these references from the *Religious Advocate* do not refer to a revival in 1820, but rather to one in 1825.

Wesley P. Walters, a Presbyterian minister (whom we consider to be one of the best authorities on Mormon history), has written an article on the First Vision which will be published in the near future. He has kindly consented to let us quote from his manuscript. Concerning the quotations from the *Religious Advocate* of Rochester, Wesley Walters shows that they could not have appeared in that publication in 1820 because “the *Religious Advocate* did not begin publication at Rochester until 1825 . . .” (“New Light on Mormon Origins from the Palmyra (N.Y.) Revival,” by Wesley P. Walters, typed copy, page 10). In footnote 43 of the same article, Mr. Walters states:

The *Religious Advocate* began publication in 1822 at Saratoga Springs, N.Y., moving to Rochester beginning January 1825. See, Gaylord P. Albaugh, “American Presbyterian Periodicals and Newspapers, 1752-1830 with Library Locations,” *Journal of Presbyterian History* (Mar. 1964) xlii, 62.

This would mean that the quotations from the *Religious Advocate* of Rochester could not have appeared before January of 1825. That they did not appear until 1825 is verified by the fact that both references were printed in the *Wayne Sentinel* under the date of March 2, 1825. In other words, these references have been used to support the date of 1820 for a revival, when in reality they have to do with a revival that was taking place in 1825. Below is a comparison which proves that the references are the same ones which appeared in the *Wayne Sentinel* in 1825.

The Mormon writers apparently have been so hard pressed to prove there was a revival in Palmyra in 1820 that they have falsely used material concerning the 1825 revival to try to prove there was a revival in 1820. In the quotation Preston Nibley takes from Willard Bean’s book it talks of “Jesse Townsend, a young Yale graduate,” starting the revival. Wesley P. Walters makes these comments concerning Bean’s account:

Some may still try to imagine that a great revival happened in spite of the evidence against it. We are convinced, however, that they will meet with no more success than Willard Bean’s attempt to substantiate Smith’s story. Bean, a Mormon and one-time sparring partner of Jack Dempsey, has put together an account that Mormon writers are still appealing to. According to Mr. Bean, a revival did break out in “the spring of 1820,”

PURPORTED REFERENCES OF 1820 REVIVAL

I quote from the *Religious Advocate* of Rochester: “More than 200 souls have become hopeful subjects of divine grace in Palmyra, Macedon, Manchester, Lyons and Ontario since the late revival commenced. This is a powerful work. It is among young as well as old people. Many are ready to exclaim—‘What hath God wrought?’ It is the Lord’s doing and it is marvelous in our eyes. The cry is yet from many, ‘Come over and help us,’ . . . Such intelligence must be pleasing to every child of God who rightly estimates the value of immortal souls, and wishes well to the cause of Zion.” (*Joseph Smith the Prophet*, pages 21-22)

A week later (from the same publication) . . . “It may be added that in Palmyra and Macedon, including Methodist, Presbyterian and Baptist churches, more than 400 have already confessed that the Lord is good. The work is still progressing. In neighboring towns, the number is great and still increasing. Glory be to God on high; and on earth peace and good will to all men.” (*Joseph Smith the Prophet*, page 22)

WAYNE SENTINEL, MARCH 2, 1825

The Revival.—The *Religious Advocate* published at Rochester, contains the following account as just received from Ontario:— “More than two hundred souls have become the hopeful subjects of divine grace in Palmyra, Macedon, Manchester, Phelps, Lyons, and Ontario, since the late revival commenced.—This is a powerful work; it is among old and young, but mostly among young people. Many are ready to exclaim, ‘what hath God wrought!’ ‘It is the Lord’s doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes.’ The cry is yet from various parts, ‘come over and help us.’ There are large and attentive congregations in every part, who hear as for their lives. Such intelligence must be pleasing to every child of God, who rightly estimate the value of immortal souls, and wishes well to the cause of Zion.” (*Wayne Sentinel*, March 2, 1825)

Religious.—An article in the *Religious Advocate* gives the pleasing fact that a revival of religion had taken place in the towns of Palmyra, Macedon, Manchester, Phelps, Lyons and Ontario, and that more than 200 souls had become hopeful subjects of Divine Grace, &c. It may be added, that in Palmyra and Macedon, including Methodist, Presbyterian and Baptist Churches, more than 400 have already testified that the Lord is good. The work is still progressing. In the neighboring towns, the number is great and fast increasing. Glory be to God on high; and on earth, peace and good will to all men. (*Wayne Sentinel*, March 2, 1825, Palmyra, N.Y.)

sparked under the ministry of Rev. Jesse Townsend, whom he describes as “a young Yale graduate . . . recently set apart for the ministry.” “The revival started the latter part of April” and by the first of May was well under way. Bean adds an account from “the Religious Advocate of Rochester” to show how extensive the awakening was. All this sounds very authentic until one begins to examine the story more closely. Jesse Townsend was not a “young Yale graduate” in 1820 since he was 54 years old and 30 years had expired since his graduation from Yale. He was not “recently set apart for the ministry” for he had been ordained in 1792. Instead of sparking a revival in Palmyra in “the spring of 1820,” he was in reality on his way west, arriving near Hillsboro, Illinois, May 25, 1820. Furthermore, the Religious Advocate did not begin publication at Rochester until 1825 and the account which Mr. Bean quotes from that journal is the same one which appeared in the Palmyra newspaper in March of 1825 in reference to the 1824 revival. In over a hundred years of historical study, this is the best confirmation that the Mormon writers have been able to produce. We do not believe that this avenue of approach will yield any fruitful results. (“New Light on Mormon Origins from the Palmyra (N.Y.) Revival,” typed copy, page 10)

In briefly looking over the *Palmyra Register* we have found no evidence of a revival in Palmyra in 1820. The issue for June 7, 1820, tells of a revival in the towns of Stillwater, Malta, Ballston, Schenectady, Amsterdam and Galway, but no mention is made of Palmyra or Manchester. The issue for August 16, 1820, tells of a revival in Homer, New York, but again there is no mention of a local revival. The issue of September 13, 1820, also speaks of revivals in cities in New York, but there is no mention of any revivals in Palmyra or Manchester.

Wesley P. Walters, of Marissa, Illinois, has made a very thorough study of the revivals in Palmyra and vicinity and has come to the conclusion that there was absolutely no revival in 1820. In a letter to us dated July 6, 1966, Rev. Walters states:

In the light of the historical records of the day, it is clear to see that there was no revival in either Palmyra or in its immediate neighborhood in the year 1820, in either the Methodist, Baptist or Presbyterian Churches. To maintain such an idea is to fly in the face of every piece of contemporary historical information. In fact, Smith could hardly have chosen a poorer year in which to locate his revival story. All the churches in all the denominations seem to have been in a slump and barely struggling to maintain their existence. (Letter from Rev. Wesley P. Walters, July 6, 1966)

In his article, “New Light on Mormon Origins From the Palmyra (N.Y.) Revival,” Wesley P. Walters states:

. . . the point at which one might most conclusively test the accuracy of Smith’s story has never been adequately explored. A vision, by its inward, personal nature, does not lend itself to historical investigation. A revival is a different matter, especially one such as Joseph

Smith describes, in which “great multitudes” were said to have joined the various churches involved. Such a revival does not pass from the scene without leaving some traces in the records and publications of the period. In this study we wish to show by the contemporary records that the revival, which Smith claimed occurred in 1820, did not really occur until the fall of 1824. We also show that in 1820 there was no revival in any of the churches in Palmyra or its vicinity. In short, our investigation shows that the statement of Joseph Smith, Jr. can not be true when he claims that he was stirred up by an 1820 revival to make his inquiry in the grove near his home. (“New Light on Mormon Origins . . .,” typed copy, pages 1-2)

The Mormon historian B. H. Roberts claimed that both Rev. Stockton and Rev. Lane were present at the revival, which he claims occurred in the spring of 1820:

In the spring of 1820 the ministers of the several churches in and about Palmyra decided upon a “union revival,” in order to “convert the unconverted.” The Presbyterians, Methodists and Baptists were the sects represented, and the **Reverend Mr. Stockton** of the Presbyterian church was the leading spirit of the movement, and chairman of the meetings. . . . The Reverend Mr. Stockton, however, insisted that the work done was largely Presbyterian work as he had been a dominating influence in the movement, and presided at the meetings. The **Reverend Mr. Lane** of the Methodist church preached a sermon on the subject, “What church shall I join?” He quoted the golden text of James— . . .

The text made a deep impression on the mind of the Prophet. (*A Comprehensive History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, by B. H. Roberts, Salt Lake City, 1930, Vol. 1, pages 51-53)

Wesley Walters, however, shows that this could not have occurred in 1820:

The records, however, of both the Presbyterian and Methodist churches, to which Mr. Stockton and Mr. Lane respectively belonged, make it clear that neither of these men were assigned to the, Palmyra area until 1824. Rev. Benjamin B. Stockton from March 4, 1818 until June 30, 1822 was serving as pastor of the church at Skaneateles, N.Y. While he did visit Palmyra for a speech to the youth missionary society in October 1822, the Palmyra newspaper still describes him as “Rev. Stockton of Skaneateles.” The earliest contemporary reference to his ministering in the Palmyra area is in connection with a wedding November 26, 1823, just a week after Alvin Smith’s death. Following this date there are several references to his performing some service there, but he was not installed as pastor of the Presbyterian Church until February 18, 1824. It is in this latter year, 1824, that Rev. James Hotchkin, in cataloging the revivals that occurred in the churches of Geneva Presbytery, writes, under the heading of the Palmyra church, that a “copious shower of grace passed over this region in 1824, under the labors of Mr. Stockton, and a large number were gathered into the church, some of whom are now pillars in Christ’s house.”

In the summer of 1819 Rev. Mr. Lane, whom Mormon writers have correctly identified as Rev. George Lane, was assigned to serve the Susquehanna District in central Pennsylvania, over 150 miles from Palmyra. He served this area for 5 years and not until July of 1824 did he receive an appointment to serve as Presiding Elder of the Ontario District in which Palmyra is located. This post he held only until January of 1825 when ill health in his family forced him to leave the ministry for a while. Any revival, therefore, in which both Lane and Stockton shared, as the accounts of Oliver Cowdery and William Smith both indicate, has to fall in the latter half of the year 1824, and not in the year 1820.

An even more surprising confirmation that this revival occurred in 1824 and not in 1820 has just recently come to light. While searching through some dusty volumes of early Methodist literature at a near-by Methodist college, imagine our surprise and elation when we stumbled upon Rev. George Lane's own personal account of the Palmyra revival. It was written, not at some years distance from the event as the Mormon accounts all were, but while the revival was still in progress and was printed a few months later. Lane's account gives us not only the year, 1824, but even the month and date. By the aid of this account, supplemented by numerous additional references which we shortly thereafter uncovered, we are able to give nearly a month-by-month progress report on the spread of the revival through the community and surrounding area, and it was indeed an outstanding revival.

By September 1825 the results of the revival for Palmyra had become a matter of record. The Presbyterian church reported 99 admitted on examination and the Baptist had received 94 by baptism, while the Methodist circuit showed an increase of 208. Cowdery's claim of "large additions" and Joseph Smith's statement that "great multitudes united themselves to the different religious parties" was certainly no over-statement.

When we turn to the year 1820, however, the "great multitudes" are conspicuously missing. The Presbyterian Church in Palmyra certainly experienced no awakening that year. Rev. James Hotchkin's history records revivals for that church as occurring in the years 1817, 1824, 1829, etc., but nothing for the year 1820. The records of Presbytery and Synod give the same picture. Early in February 1820 Presbytery reported revivals at Geneva (summer 1819), and Junius 1st and Cayuga ("lately"), all a considerable distance from Palmyra, with "prospects of a revival" at Canandaigua and Phelps, 15 and 25 miles distant. While the "effects" of these revivals were reported in September 1820 as continuing, the remainder of that year and the next showed "no distinct mention of a revival," "no special revival in any of our congregations," "no general revivals of religion during the year." Since these reports always rejoice at any sign of a revival in the churches, it is inconceivable that a great awakening had occurred in their Palmyra congregation and gone completely unnoticed.

The Baptist Church records also show clearly that they had no revival in 1820, for the Palmyra congregation gained only 5 by baptism, while the neighboring Baptist churches of Lyons, Canandaigua and Farmington showed

net losses of 4, 5 and 9 respectively. An examination of the figures for the years preceeding and following 1820 yields the same picture of no revival so far as the Baptist Church of the area is concerned.

The Methodist figures, though referring to the entire circuit, give the same results, for they show net losses of 23 for 1819, 6 for 1820 and 40 for 1821. This hardly fits Joseph Smith's description of "great multitudes" being added to the churches of the area. In fact, the Mormon Prophet could hardly have picked a poorer year in which to place his revival, so far as the Methodists were concerned. For some time prior to 1820 a sharp controversy had existed in the denomination, which in the Genesee Conference had resulted in a decline and a "loss of spirituality" throughout the entire conference. In addition, the Presiding Elder of the Ontario District reported July 1, 1824 that: "Four years since, Unitarianism or Arianism, seemed to threaten the entire overthrow of the work of God in some Circuits on this District, and on some others, divisions and wild and ranting fanatics, caused the spirits of the faithful in a degree to sink." Referring to the years just prior to 1823 he added that "for two or three years we saw no great awakenings." In the light of such depressing circumstances it is impossible that Palmyra could have experienced a glorious revival and yet the Presiding Elder of the area have failed to take note of it at all.

Another significant omission lies in the area of the religious press. The denominational magazines of that day were full of reports of revivals, some even devoting a separate section to it. These publications carried over a dozen glowing reports of the revival that broke out at Palmyra in the winter of 1816-1817. Likewise, the 1824-25 revival is covered in an equal number of reports. These same magazines, however, while busily engaged in reporting revivals during the 1819 to 1821 period, contain not a single mention of any revival occurring in the Palmyra area during that time. It is unbelievable that every one of the denominations affected by a revival such as Joseph Smith described as happening in 1820 could have completely overlooked the event. The only reasonable explanation for this massive silence is that no revival occurred at Palmyra in 1820.

We believe that the firmness of the revival date as the fall of 1824, the features of Smith's story as fitting only that date, and the absence of any revival in the year 1820 are established beyond any reasonable doubt, and will force upon Mormon writers a drastic re-evaluation of the foundation of their church. ("New Light on Mormon Origins . . ." typed copy, pages 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 15)

In a summary to his study, Wesley P. Walters stated:

Shall we suppose that Prophet Smith really had a vision as he claimed but that his mind had merely become fuzzy on the date of the happening? Since the revival is a matter of historical record and that date can't be changed, will it help any to move Smith's vision to the spring of 1825 instead of the spring of 1820? We believe not. Smith claimed that he was told about the Book of Mormon plates September 21, 1823. This was his second vision. If we move his first vision to

the spring of 1825, however, then he would already know about the plates before he ever asked for heavenly guidance. The only way, then, to make his story hang together would be to reshuffle all of his dates. This, however, would complete[ly] change the character of his story. Instead of being the naive boy of 14, he would in 1825 be a young man of 19 who in less than a year and a half will find himself a married man. Such a change would only emphasize more clearly that he must have made his story up out of whole cloth.

Joseph made his great mistake when he tried to alter the course of history by moving a whole revival back some 4 years. This defect places his entire movement upon a crumbling foundation. For our part we agree that "life is too short to follow something false, when we can follow what is true" (Richard Evans). We urge all to find in Christ alone "the way, the truth and the life."

The Mormon Apostle John A. Widtsoe stated:

Palmyra, a village in western New York State, near his home, was swept in the winter and spring of 1820 by a religious revival. (*Joseph Smith—Seeker After Truth*, page 1)

John A. Widtsoe claims that Reverend Lane took part in this revival. On page 22 of his book, the Apostle Widtsoe claims that Oliver Cowdery confirmed the date of Reverend Lane's work in Palmyra:

Oliver Cowdery in his letters confirms the story of Reverend Lane and **the date of his work in Palmyra**.

Actually, Oliver Cowdery did confirm the date as 1820. Instead he insisted that the correct date should be 1823:

You will recollect that I mentioned the time of a religious excitement, in Palmyra and vicinity to have been in the 15th year of our brother J. Smith Jr's. age—that was an error in the type—it should have been in the 17th.—You will please remember this correction, as it will be necessary for the full understanding of what will follow in time. **This would bring the date down to the year 1823.** (*Messenger and Advocate*, Vol. 1, page 78)

In footnote 10 on page 22 of his book, John A. Widtsoe states:

Reverend Lane himself confirms the dates of the revival. It was in 1820, not 1823.

Notice that John A. Widtsoe gives no source for this statement. Wesley P. Walters, as we have already shown, found that Reverend Lane was not even in the area of Palmyra until "July of 1824." When Mr. Walters wrote the LDS Church Historian's Office asking for documentation of the Apostle Widtsoe's statement, he received a letter from Lauritz G. Petersen, Assistant Librarian. In this letter Lauritz Petersen stated:

The letter that you sent to Mr. Earl Olson was handed to me to answer. I checked all the footnotes or found the footno[t]es for Mr. Widtsoe's book on Joseph Smith.

The reference made by Mr. Widtsoe on page 22 n. 10 **could not be verified. I asked Mr. Widtsoe not to insert it in the book, but he did anyway.** (Letter from Lauritz G. Petersen, Assistant Church Librarian, to Wesley P. Walters, dated December 7, 1966)

Since Wesley P. Walters is now able to prove that there was "no revival in either Palmyra or in its immediate neighborhood in the year 1820," the whole story of the First Vision now stands on very shaky ground.

Important Change

Fawn M. Brodie made this statement:

Under the date of November 15, 1835 in the *History of the Church* appears the following statement by Joseph Smith: "I gave him [Erastus Holmes] brief relation of my experience while in my juvenile years, say from six years old up to the time I received my first vision, which was when I was about fourteen years old . . ." (Vol. II, page 312). But Joseph admittedly did not begin writing his history until 1838, and the editors of this history do not state from what manuscript source in the Utah Church library this journal entry came. Access to all these manuscripts is denied everyone save authorities of the Mormon Church. (*No Man Knows My History*, footnote, page 24)

The Mormon Apostle John A. Widtsoe tried to defend the reference from the *History of the Church* by stating:

In 1835 he told one Erastus Holmes of his "First Vision which was when I was fourteen years old." Clearly the story of the First Vision was common knowledge among members of the Church. The proponents of the theory that the Prophet invented the First Vision in 1838 doubt the accuracy of the Holmes and similar references, because they hold that the Church History, the journal of Joseph Smith, **has been tampered with by later workers**. It is sad when a **drowning man does not even have a straw to which he may cling!** That seemed and seems to be the need of these critics. (*Joseph Smith—Seeker After Truth*, pages 24-25)

In spite of John A. Widtsoe's statement, a woman who was doing research at the Utah State Historical Society searched through a microfilm of the early *Deseret News* and found information which proves that the Mormon Historians deliberately altered Joseph Smith's statement. In the 1850's the *Deseret News*, (the Mormon Church's newspaper) was publishing Joseph Smith's History. In the issue of May 29, 1852, the following statement by Joseph Smith appeared:

This afternoon, Erastus Holmes, of Newbury, Ohio, called on me to inquire about the establishment of the church, and to be instructed in doctrine more perfectly. I gave him a brief relation of my experience while in my juvenile years, say from six years old up to the time I received the **first visitation of angels**, which was when I was about **fourteen years old**; also the revelations that I received afterwards concerning the Book of Mormon, and a short account of the rise and progress of the church up to this date. (*Deseret News*, Vol. 2, no. 15, Saturday, May 29, 1852)

Because this statement by Joseph Smith contradicted the teaching that the Father and the Son appeared to him in the First Vision of 1820, the Mormon Church Historians altered the words of Joseph Smith when they reprinted them in recent editions of the *History of the Church*. They altered the wording so that the word “angels” was completely left out. The following is a comparison of the way this reference was originally published in the *Deseret News* and the way it has been changed to read in the *History of the Church*:

<p>DESERET NEWS, Vol. 2, NO. 15, May 29, 1852</p> <p>... I received the first visitation of angels, which was when I was about fourteen years old; ...</p>
<p>HISTORY OF THE CHURCH, Vol. 2, Page 312</p> <p>... I received my first vision, which was when I was about fourteen years old; ...</p>

Dr. Hugh Nibley states that even God Himself, when he visits the earth, could be called an angel, however, he admits that Joseph Smith was being “evasive”:

Not to labor the point, it is perfectly correct usage to refer to any heavenly visitor as an angel. So when Joseph Smith, reviewing the past in “a brief relation” to a stranger, passes over the first vision as his “first visitation of angels” he is being both correct and **evasive**. Remember that this was some years before he was finally “induced” to come out with a public statement about the first vision; ... (*Improvement Era*, November 1961, page 868)

On page 866 of the same article, Dr. Nibley admits that Joseph Smith’s use of the word “angels” was “ambiguous,” and that the editors of the *Deseret News* ran the “risk of a misunderstanding” by using this term. He does not, however, tell the reader that this “ambiguous” term has been deleted in modern editions of the *History of the Church*. Paul Cheesman does not try to deal with this problem in his thesis. He quotes the statement Joseph Smith made concerning his First Vision, but his quote is taken from the *History of the Church*, and he does not say anything concerning the change which has been made in it. It would appear that the Mormon writers are unwilling to face this problem.

All-Important Worship

Dr. Hugh Nibley, of the Brigham Young University, criticizes the anti-Mormon writers for omitting the words “This is my Beloved Son” when giving Joseph Smith’s story. In the *Improvement Era* for August, 1961, he stated:

In its original form, the present study was burdened by quotations from more than fifty important anti-Mormon writings, all of which were guilty of deliberately disfiguring the first vision story. . . . All of them will be found busily censoring Joseph Smith’s story by calculated distortion and omission, and invariably by deleting the **all-important words** which identify the heavenly visitors. (*Improvement Era*, August 1961, page 608)

On page 577 of the same issue of the *Improvement Era*, Hugh Nibley stated:

In the following year an ambitious study in the *Dublin University Magazine* describes the first vision thus: “Into this cloud of glory, Smith,” says the narrative, “was received, and he met within it two angelic personages, who exactly resembled each other; they informed him that all his sins were forgiven.” Here again there can be no doubt that the story is told from the original, but those **all important words**, which Joseph Smith puts in italics, which identify the heavenly visitors, and which give the account of the vision its unique status are completely omitted.

If Hugh Nibley had read Joseph Smith’s first account of the vision, perhaps he would not have been so eager to criticize the anti-Mormon writers, for Joseph Smith not only omitted the “all-important” words, but he also left God the Father completely out of the vision.

The second account by Joseph Smith also did not contain the “all-important” words; in fact, it contained words which seem to show that it was NOT the Father and the Son.

It is interesting to note that it was Orson Pratt (not Joseph Smith) who first published the story of the First Vision to the world. It was published in England in 1840 under the title of interesting *Account of Several Remarkable Visions, and the Late Discovery of Ancient American Records*. Although two personages are mentioned as being present in the vision, the “all-important words which identify the heavenly visitors” are strangely missing.

On March 1, 1842, Joseph Smith published a letter in the *Times and Seasons* that he had written to John Wentworth. Joseph Smith said that he saw two personages in the First Vision, however, he did NOT include the “all-important” words. This may have been a feeler to see how the story would be accepted, for just one month later he published the official account which included the words “This is my Beloved Son, hear him.”

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DESERET NEWS.

"Truth and Liberty."

VOL. 2. GREAT SALT LAKE CITY, U. T., SATURDAY, MAY 29, 1852. NO. 15.

From Poems by J. NACK, a Deaf Mute.
The Battle of the Snakes.

AN EPISTLE TO CATHERINE.
DEAR KATE—more dear than I can tell!
No matter, though—you know it well.
Dear Kate—in this delicious weather,
I wish, don't you? we were together;
That we might wander, hand in hand,
Amid those scenes of fairy land,
Which now, to glad thy vision, rise
And fancy pictures to my eyes!
To climb the hills, the woods explore,
Or ramble by the sea-beat shore,
Where ringing waves delight thy ear
With music mine shall never hear;
Or rove where sweetest dowers embower
My pretty Kate, "a sweeter dower!"
While balmy zephyrs kiss thy brow
Of beauty—(might I kiss it now!)

"Mid scenes like these, one summer's day,
A lordly serpent wound his way;
From Rattlers' line of length he came,
And glided in a bill of fame.
His pointed tongue, his sparkling eyes,
His gorgeous robe of thousand dyes—

men being called to preach the gospel, their qualifications, &c. We had a fine discourse; it was very interesting indeed. Mr. Holmes was well satisfied, and returned and dined with me. Said Holmes has been a member of the Methodist church, and was excommunicated for receiving the elders of the Latter Day Saints into his house. Went to meeting in the afternoon. Before partaking of the sacrament, Isaac Hill's case was agitated again, and settled after much controversy, and he remained in the church, by making a humble acknowledgment before the church, and consenting to have his confession published in the "Messenger and Advocate," after which the ordinance of the Lord's supper was administered, and the meeting closed late. Returned home and spent the evening.

Monday, the 16th, at home. Dictated the following letter for publication in the "Messenger and Advocate."

TO THE ELDERS OF THE CHURCH OF LATTER DAY SAINTS.

I have shewn unto you, as my last, that there

persecution ariseth because of the world, by and by, he is offended. He also that receiveth seed among thorns, is he that receiveth the word, and the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful; but he that receiveth seed into the good ground, is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it, which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth some an hundred fold, some sixty, some thirty. Thus the Savior himself, explains unto his disciples the parable, which he put forth, and left no mystery or darkness upon the minds of those who firmly believe on his words.

We draw the conclusion, then, that the very reason why the multitude, or the world, as they were designated by the Savior, did not receive an explanation upon his parables, was, because of unbelief. To you he says, (speaking to his disciples) it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God; and why? Because of the faith and confidence they had in him. This parable was spoken to demonstrate the effects that are produced by the preaching of the word;

they preach except they be sent? As it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things. Romans 10: 14, 15. But if this man will not take our admonition, but will persist in his wicked course, we hope that he will continue trying to cast out devils, that we may have the clearer proof that the kingdom of Satan is divided against itself, and consequently cannot stand; for a kingdom divided against itself, speedily hath an end.

If we were disposed to take this gentleman upon his own ground, and justly heap upon him that which he so readily and unjustly heaps upon others, we might go farther; we might say that he has wickedly and maliciously lied about, vilified and traduced the characters of innocent men. We might invite the gentleman to a public investigation of these matters; yes, and we do challenge him to an investigation upon any or all principles wherein he feels opposed to us, in public or in private. We might further say, that we could introduce him to "Mormonism unveiled," also to the right honorable Doc-

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[Copyright Secured.]
LIFE OF JOSEPH SMITH.

Saturday morning, 14th. Thus came the word of the Lord unto me, saying, Verily thus saith the Lord unto my servant Joseph, concerning my servant Warren, behold his sins are forgiven him, because of his desires to do the works of righteousness. Therefore, inasmuch as he will continue to hearken unto my voice, he shall be blessed with wisdom, and with a sound mind, even above his fellows. Behold it shall come to pass in his day, that he shall see great things show forth themselves unto my people; he shall see much of my ancient records, and shall know of hidden things, and shall be endowed with knowledge of hidden languages; and if he desires and shall seek it at my hands, he shall be privileged with writing much of my word, as a scribe unto me for the benefit of my people; therefore this shall be his calling until I shall order it otherwise in my wisdom; and it shall be said of him in time to come, behold Warren, the Lord's scribe, for the Lord's sake, whom he hath appointed in Israel. Therefore, if he will keep my commandments, he shall be lifted up at the last day; even so, Amen.

This afternoon, Erastus Holmes, of Nowbury, Ohio, called on me to inquire about the establishment of the church, and to be instructed in doctrine more perfectly. I gave him a brief relation of my experiences while in my juvenile years, say from six years old up to the time I received the first visitation of angels, which was when I was about fourteen years old; also the revelations that I received afterwards concerning the Book of Mormon, and a short account of the rise and progress of the church up to this date. He listened very attentively, and seemed highly gratified, and intends to unite with the church.

On Sabbath morning, 15th, he went with me to meeting, which was held in the school house, as the chapel was not finished plastering. President Rigdon preached on the subject of

men being called to preach the gospel, their qualifications, &c. We had a fine discourse; it was very interesting indeed. Mr. Holmes was well satisfied, and returned and dined with me. Said Holmes has been a member of the Methodist church, and was excommunicated for receiving the elders of the Latter Day Saints into his house. Went to meeting in the afternoon. Before partaking of the sacrament, Isaac Hill's case was agitated again, and settled after much controversy, and he remained in the church, by making a humble acknowledgment before the church, and consenting to have his confession published in the "Messenger and Advocate," after which the ordinance of the Lord's supper was administered, and the meeting closed late. Returned home and spent the evening.

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Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.
But to illustrate more clearly upon this gathering. We have another parable: Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hid in a field, the which, when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof, goeth and selleth all that he hath and buyeth that field; for they work after this pattern. See the church of the

A photograph of the Deseret News, May 29, 1852. Notice that Joseph Smith stated that it was angels that appeared to him when he was fourteen years of age. This reference has been changed in recent editions of the History of the Church. The word angels has been removed.

The last account written by Joseph Smith to appear in his lifetime was published in the book *An Original History of the Religious Denominations at Present Existing in the United States*, by Daniel Rupp. This account was published in 1844 and did NOT contain the words, "This is my Beloved Son." Apparently Joseph Smith did not feel that it was very important to have these words in the story. Why, then, should the anti-Mormon writers be criticized for leaving these words out? They were simply doing the same thing Joseph Smith did.

Hugh Nibley dodges this issue by claiming that Mr. Rupp's book on the religious denominations was one of fifty anti-Mormon books that "... were guilty of deliberately disfiguring the first vision story" (*Improvement Era*, August, 1961, page 608 and footnote 52 on page 609). Actually Mr. Rupp's book did not distort the Joseph Smith story at all. Joseph Smith, himself, wrote this article. In the *History of the Church* the following statement appears concerning the article published in Mr. Rupp's book:

An article prepared by President Smith, under the title "The Latter-day Saints," is published in this work. (*History of the Church*, Vol. 6, page 428, footnote)

After Mr. Rupp's book was published, a copy was sent to Joseph Smith, who seemed very happy to receive it. He wrote a letter to Mr. Rupp in which he stated the following:

... I feel very thankful for so valuable a treasure. The design, the propriety, the wisdom of letting every sect **tell its own story**, and the elegant manner in which the work appears, have filled my breast with encomiums upon it, wishing you God speed. ...

Your work will be suitably noticed in our papers for your benefit. (*History of the Church*, by Joseph Smith, Vol. 6, page 428)

In Mr. Rupp's book Joseph Smith gives this account of the First Vision:

I retired to a secret place, and began to call upon the Lord. While fervently engaged in supplication, my mind was taken away from the objects with which I was surrounded, and I was enrapt in a heavenly vision, and saw two glorious personages, who exactly resembled each other in features and likeness, surrounded with a brilliant light, which eclipsed the sun at noonday. They told me that all the religious denominations were believing in incorrect doctrines, and that none of them was acknowledged of God as his church and kingdom. And I was expressly commanded to "Go not after them," at the same time receiving a promise that the fulness of the gospel should at some future time be made known unto me. (*Religious Denominations*, pages 404-405)

Notice that the words, "This is my beloved Son," do not appear in this account. If these were the "all-important" words (as Dr. Nibley says) why aren't they there? Why did Joseph Smith censor his own story? Apparently the Mormon Church is not too proud of this account of the First Vision that Joseph Smith wrote for Mr. Rupp's book. When a Mormon woman requested a copy of this from the Church Historian's Office she was refused. Lauritz G. Petersen, the Assistant Librarian, wrote her the following:

We are **not permitted** to copy from rare books on file here. (Letter written by Lauritz G. Petersen. April 19, 1961)

Mormon writers have found one account of the First Vision published in Joseph Smith's lifetime by a non-Mormon paper which contained the "all-important" words. James B. Allen made this statement:

Apparently not until 1843, when the *New York Spectator* printed a reporter's account of an interview with Joseph Smith, did a non-Mormon source publish any reference to the story of the first vision. (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Autumn, 1966, page 31)

This account was reprinted by Preston Nibley in his book *Joseph Smith the Prophet*:

As late as the summer of 1843, the year before the Prophet's death, there is evidence that he related the story of his first vision to a non-Mormon, ... here are two paragraphs, in which he quotes the Prophet as saying:

The Lord does reveal Himself to me. I know it. He revealed Himself first to me when I was about fourteen years old, a mere boy. I will tell you about it. There was a reformation among the different religious denominations in the neighborhood where I lived, and I became serious, and was desirous to know what church to join.

While thinking of this matter, I opened the Testament promiscuously on these words, in James, "Ask of the Lord who giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not." I just determined I'd ask Him. I immediately went out into the woods where my father had a clearing, and went to the stump where I had struck my axe when I had quit work, and I kneeled down, and prayed, saying, "O Lord, what church shall I join?" Directly I saw a light, and then a glorious personage in the light, and then another personage, and the first personage said to the second, "Behold my Beloved Son, hear Him." I then addressed this second person, saying, "O Lord, what church shall I join?" He replied, "Do not join any of them, they are all corrupt." The vision then vanished (*New York Spectator*, September 23, 1843).

(*Joseph Smith the Prophet*, by Preston Nibley, pages 30-31)

Paul R. Cheesman makes this comment concerning this account:

It will be observed that some of the details in this story vary from the standard account by Joseph Smith. Here the young boy prays immediately after reading the biblical passage, while in the earlier account the impression is left that he continued to ponder the problem for some time before he prayed. The standard account, furthermore, does not mention that he had been chopping with an axe just before the vision. Finally, the standard account suggests that both personages appeared together, rather than one following the other. It is not known whether the embellishments in the later account came from Joseph Smith himself, or reflect the editorializing of the reporter. The important point here, however, is that the story is consistent insofar as the number of heavenly personages is concerned. ("An Analysis of the Accounts Relating Joseph Smith's Early Visions," page 27)

James B. Allen stated:

The several variations in these and other accounts would seem to suggest that, in relating his story to various individuals at various times, Joseph Smith emphasized different aspects of it and that his listeners were each impressed with different things. This, of course, is to be expected, for the same thing happens in the re-telling of any story. . . . Joseph himself wrote at least two different accounts for publication. These were printed the same year in the same periodical, yet differed somewhat in their emphasis.

In this connection, four accounts are especially interesting, for they each suggest that, although two personages appeared in the vision, one preceded the other. (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Autumn, 1966, pages 42-43)

Confusion

After Joseph Smith's death the Mormon leaders still seemed reluctant to proclaim that he had seen God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ. The following appeared in the Mormon publication, the *Millennial Star*:

It would here perhaps be interesting to the inquirer to know something of the **origin** of the Book of Mormon, for the authenticity of which we have been pleading.—The late martyred servant of the Lord, Joseph Smith, being much exercised in his mind on the subject of religion, when about the age of **seventeen**, and religious revivals, as they are termed, being the order of the day; yet being dissatisfied with the contradictory nature of the principles of the various religious bodies, he was induced to retire in secret, and making his supplications unto the Lord, ask him for that wisdom which he had promised to give liberally without upbraiding.

The result of his pleadings before the Lord, was the ministration of **an angel** of the Lord, communicating unto him what was necessary for him to know, and after repeated trials of his own weakness, preparing him to

be instrumental in bringing forth the long hidden record . . . (*Millennial Star*, Vol. 6, page 69)

In 1852 the Mormon Apostle Orson Pratt stated that "both the Father and the Son" appeared to Joseph Smith (*Millennial Star*, Vol. 11, page 310), but in subsequent years he gave some very confusing accounts of the First Vision. On one occasion he quoted Joseph Smith's story of the two personages, but instead of stating that God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ appeared to Joseph Smith, he stated that it was "an angel":

By and by an obscure individual, a young man, rose up, and, in the midst of all Christendom, proclaimed the startling news that **God had sent an angel** to him; that through his faith, prayers, and sincere repentance he had beheld a supernatural vision, that he had seen a pillar of fire descend from Heaven, and saw two glorious personages . . . he heard one of these personages say, pointing to the other, "This is my beloved Son, hear ye him." . . .

This young man, some four years afterwards, was visited again by a holy angel. (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 13, pages 65-66)

On another occasion Orson Pratt stated:

Here was Joseph Smith, a boy, his very youth ought to testify in his favor, for when the Lord first revealed himself to that little boy—he was only between fourteen and fifteen years of age. Now, can we imagine or suppose that a great impostor could be made out of a youth of that age, . . . Would he stand forth and bear testimony that he had seen with his own eyes **a messenger** of light and glory, . . . And then, after having declared it, to have the finger of scorn pointed at him, with exclamations, "There goes the visionary boy! No visions in our day, no **angels** come in our day, . . ." and to have this scorn and derision and still continue to testify, in the face and eyes of all this, while hated and derided by his neighbors, that God had sent **his angel** from heaven. Can you imagine that a youth would do this? Select out some of our little boys here, **fourteen years of age**, can you imagine it to be possible for them to be impostors of this description? (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 14, pages 261-262)

Paul R. Cheesman admits that Orson Pratt's statement is confusing:

This is **confusing** and must be compared with his other statements about the story, in order to ascertain what Pratt really believed. ("An Analysis of the Accounts Relating Joseph Smith's Early Visions," page 34)

In 1854 Orson Pratt answered the question of how the Mormon Church was established. In his answer he completely ignored the First Vision:

Q. In what manner did the Lord proceed to restore his Church to the earth?

A. He **first sent an holy angel** to a young man, named Joseph Smith, and directed him where to obtain the sacred history of the ancient nations of America, and also the Urim and Thummim, and commanded him to translate these records into the English language. (*The Seer*, January, 1854, page 208)

The Apostle Parley P. Pratt, Orson Pratt's brother, also ignored the First Vision when giving a brief account of Joseph Smith's life. His account was first published in 1855:

This extraordinary personage was born in Sharon, Windsor County, Vermont, United States, December 23, 1805.

He removed with his father, during childhood, and settled near Palmyra, in Wayne County, New York. Amid these forest wilds he was reared a farmer, and inured to all the hardships, toils, and privations of a newly settled country. His education was therefore very limited. When about **seventeen years of age**, he had several open visions, in which **a holy angel** ministered to him, . . . (*Key to the Science of Theology*, 1965 reprint, page 83)

Parley P. Pratt also ignored the First Vision when he wrote the song "An Angel from on High." The first verse of this song reads:

An **angel** from on high, The long, long **silence broke**,
Descending from the sky These gracious words he spoke:
Lo in Cumorah's lonely hill A sacred record lies concealed.

The Mormons now claim that the "long, long silence," caused by the apostasy, was broken by the visitation of the Father and the Son; Parley P. Pratt, however, claimed that it was broken by "an angel" who told Joseph Smith about the Book of Mormon plates. Thus Parley P. Pratt completely ignored the First Vision in this song. J. Spencer Cornwall made this statement:

It is **surprising** that **none** of the first song writers wrote intimately of the **first vision**. Parley P. Pratt's "An Angel from on High" and "Hark Ye Mortals" referred to Cumorah and the Book of Mormon. (*Stories of Our Mormon Hymns*, page 141)

Heber C. Kimball, first counselor to Brigham Young, made this statement:

We are the people of God, we are the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the **foundation** of which, in these last days was **begun** by the Almighty **sending an holy angel** to Joseph Smith to reveal his will, . . . (*Millennial Star*, Vol. 16, page 739)

In the August 1961 issue of the *Improvement Era*,

Dr. Nibley criticizes some of the anti-Mormon writers for making no mention of the First Vision, and for not devoting enough space to it. He states as follows concerning a book published in 1909:

In a work published in Utah, . . . Josiah Gibbs in 1909 announced that "Mormon chronology begins in 1823," and proceeds to tell of Joseph Smith and the founding of the Church with no mention whatever of the first vision, . . . (*Improvement Era*, August 1961, pages 605-606)

Dr. Nibley goes on to criticize George Arbaugh for only mentioning the First Vision once in his book. He states as follows on page 607:

And that, if you please, is the only mention, in Arbaugh's whole book on Mormon revelation of the first vision, the most important revelation of all.

Before criticizing the anti-Mormon writers on this point, Dr. Hugh Nibley might have done well to have looked at his own church's publications. Before the death of Brigham Young in 1877 the First Vision was seldom mentioned in Mormon publications. When Mormon leaders did mention it they usually gave confusing accounts. George A. Smith, who was sustained as first counselor in the First Presidency in 1868, made the following statement in November of the same year:

When Joseph Smith was about **fourteen or fifteen** years old, . . . there was a revival of religion, and the different sects in the portion of the State—. . . He had read the Bible and had found that passage in James which says, "If any of you lack wisdom let him ask of God that giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not," and taking this literally, he went humbly before the Lord and inquired of Him, and the Lord answered his prayer, and revealed to Joseph, by the **ministration of angels**, the true condition of the religious world. When the **holy angel** appeared, Joseph inquired which of all these denominations was right and which he should join, and was told they were all wrong,— . . . (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 12, pages 333-334)

On another occasion George A. Smith stated:

When Joseph Smith w[a]s about **15 years old** there was, in the western part of the State of New York, a considerable excitement upon the subject of religion. . . . He was led to pray upon the subject in consequence of the declaration of the Apostle James: "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God that giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not." (James, 1st chap., 5th verse.) He sought the Lord by day and by night, and was enlightened by the vision of **an holy angel**. When this personage appeared to him, one of the first inquiries

was, "Which of the denominations of Christians in the vicinity was right?" He was told they had all gone astray, . . . (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 13, pages 77-78)

On November 20, 1870, George A. Smith made this statement:

It was in this position of perplexity and doubt that Joseph Smith was placed when he went and asked the Lord to tell him which was right; and the Lord revealed to him, through an **holy angel**, that they were all wrong, . . . (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 13, page 294)

Paul R. Cheesman made this comment concerning George A. Smith's statements:

The problem of identifying the personalities involved in the first vision becomes more intriguing in light of some of the statements of George A. Smith, cousin to the prophet and an early apostle. ("An Analysis of the Accounts Relating Joseph Smith's Early Visions," page 35)

On page one of the same thesis, Paul R. Cheesman states:

Further problems arise when accounts by other writers who knew Joseph Smith not only fill in a few missing details, but also sometimes present some **conflicting details**.

It is interesting to note that even Joseph Smith's own brother, William Smith, said that it was an angel that first appeared to him:

In 1822 and 1823, the people in our neighborhood were very much stirred up with regard to religious matters by the preaching of a Mr. Lane, an Elder of the Methodist Church, and celebrated throughout the country as a "great revival preacher." . . . Joseph, then about **seventeen** years of age, had become seriously inclined, . . .

At length he determined to call upon the Lord until he should get a manifestation from him. He accordingly went out into the woods and falling upon his knees called for a long time upon the Lord for wisdom and knowledge. While engaged in prayer a light appeared in the heavens, and descended until it rested upon the trees where he was. It appeared like fire. But to his great astonishment, did not burn the trees. **An angel** then appeared to him and conversed with him upon many things. He told him that none of the sects were right; but that if he was faithful in keeping the commandments he should receive, the (end of page 8) true way should be made known to him; . . .

The next day I was at work in the field together with Joseph and my eldest brother Alvin. Joseph looked pale and unwell, . . . and sat down by the fence, when

the angel again appeared to him, . . . (*A New Witness For Christ in America*, by Francis W. Kirkham, Vol. 2, pages 414-415, reprinted from the book, *William Smith on Mormonism*, Lamoni, Iowa, 1883)

On June 8, 1884, William Smith stated:

It will be remembered that just before the **angel** appeared to Joseph, there was an unusual revival in the neighborhood. . . . My mother attended those meetings, and being much concerned about the spiritual welfare of the family, she persuaded them to attend the meetings. Finally my mother, one sister, my brothers Samuel and Hyrum became Presbyterians. Joseph and myself did not join; I had not sown all my wild oats. . . . it was at the suggestion of the Rev. M—, that my brother asked of God. He said, "Ask of God." . . . Accordingly he went and bowed in prayer to God. While he was engaged in prayer, he saw a pillar of fire descending. Saw it reach the top of the trees. He was overcome, became unconscious, did not know how long he remained in this condition, but when he came to himself, the great light was about him, and he was told by the personage whom he saw descend with the light, not to join any of the churches. . . . You should remember Joseph was but about **eighteen** years old at this time, too young to be a deceiver. (*The Saints Herald*, Vol. 31, no. 40, page 643)

John Taylor, the third president of the Mormon Church, made the following statement on March 2, 1879:

. . . when the Prophet Joseph asked **the angel** which of the sects was right that he might join it. The answer was that none of them are right. What, none of them? No. We will not stop to argue that question; the **angel** merely told him to join none of them that none of them were right. (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 20, page 167)

On another occasion John Taylor stated:

How did this state of things called Mormonism originate? We read that **an angel** came down and revealed himself to Joseph Smith and manifested unto him in vision the true position of the world in a religious point of view. (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 10, page 127)

On still another occasion he stated:

Joseph Smith, what did you proclaim? "I called on the Lord and **a holy angel** appeared to me, and God revealed his will to me, and showed me the true position of the world religiously and every other way; . . . (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 7, page 369)

Wilford Woodruff, who became the fourth president of the Mormon Church, made this statement in 1855:

That same organization and Gospel that Christ died for, and the Apostles spilled their blood to vindicate, is again established in this generation. **How did it come?** By the ministering of **an holy angel from God**, . . . **the angel** taught Joseph Smith those principles which are necessary for the salvation of the world; . . . He told him the Gospel was not among men, and that there was not a true organization of His kingdom in the world, . . . This man to whom the **angel** appeared obeyed the Gospel; . . . (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 2, pages 196-197)

In 1869 Wilford Woodruff stated:

It **commenced** by an **angel** of God, flying through the midst of heaven and visiting a young man named Joseph Smith in the year 1827. That was the time of a great awakening among the sectarians of the day . . . This young man looked around amid the confusion among the different sects, . . . in the midst of this contention he did not know which to join. While in this state of uncertainty he turned to the Bible, and there saw that passage in the epistle of James which directs him that lacks wisdom to ask of God. He went into his secret chamber and asked the Lord what he must do to be saved. The Lord heard his prayer **and sent his angel** to him, who informed him that all the sects were wrong, and that the God of heaven was about to establish His work upon the earth. (Sermon by Wilford Woodruff, *Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 13, page 324)

Brigham Young declared that it was messengers that God first sent to Joseph Smith:

Do we believe that **the Lord sent his messengers** to Joseph Smith, and commanded him to refrain from joining any Christian church, and to refrain from the wickedness he saw in the churches, and finally delivered to him a message informing him that the Lord was about to establish his kingdom on the earth, and led him on step by step until he gave him the revelation concerning the plates? **Yes, this is all correct.** (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 18, page 239)

Paul R. Cheesman infers that these sermons may have been incorrectly reported:

It might also be remembered that the sermons given in that day were taken down by clerks **in longhand** and could not be absolutely correct. These things go far in accounting for alleged discrepancies in the oft-repeated story of Joseph Smith's visions. ("An Analysis of the Accounts Relating Joseph Smith's Early Visions," page 36)

Wilford Woodruff, however, made this statement:

Sermons reported by G. D. Watts, one of the official reporters, were considered as reported **correctly**, and when they are found in the *Journal of Discourses*, they

are considered **correct**. Some of **my own** sermons are published there, and **they are correct.** (*Temple Lot Case*, page 309)

As to the statement that "the sermons given in that day were taken down by clerks **in longhand**," the following appears in a letter written by the First Presidency of the Mormon Church which was published in the front of volume one of the *Journal of Discourses*:

Dear Brethern—It is well known to many of you, that Elder George D. Watt, by our counsel, spent **much time**, in the midst of poverty and hardships to acquire the **art of reporting in phonography, which he has faithfully and fully accomplished**; and he has been reporting the public Sermons, . . . for nearly two years, almost without fee or reward.

Phonography is defined in the *American College Dictionary* as "a system of phonetic shorthand." The Apostle John A. Widtsoe made this statement concerning the sermons published in the *Journal of Discourses*:

This book was made possible because Brigham Young secured **stenographic reports** of his addresses. As he traveled among the people, reporters accompanied him. All that he said was recorded. Practically all of these discourses (from December 16, 1851, to August 19, 1877) were published in the *Journal of Discourses*, . . . The corrections for the printer, as shown by existing manuscripts, were few and of minor consequence. (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, by John A. Widtsoe, 1954, Preface)

This statement not only shows that "stenographic reports" were made of the sermons, but also that the sermons were corrected before publication. This would seem to destroy Paul R. Cheesman's argument that the sermons may not have been reported correctly.

Mr. Cheesman apparently realized that his argument concerning the sermons being incorrectly reported did not solve the problem, for he claimed that the word "angel" could be applied to Jesus or even to God himself:

A problem of consistency is seen in the fact that John Taylor referred to the heavenly messenger as an angel. Joseph Smith, on the other hand, said that it was the Father and the Son who appeared to him in response to his inquiry concerning which church was right. It is clear from other references, however, that John Taylor believed that the Father and the Son had appeared, and it is therefore safe to assume that he used the word *angel* to refer to Christ. ("An Analysis of the Accounts Relating Joseph Smith's Early Visions," pages 31-32)

and worship Him who made the heaven, the earth, the seas and the fountains of water." You may take up Isaiah and all the prophets, and you will find that they refer to this latter-day dispensation, when the kingdom of God should be established on the earth. There never was a prophet, from Adam down, whose records we have, but had his eye upon this great dispensation of the last days. When the Lord created the earth He placed men upon it, and though the power of sin has entered it, it has not been left by the Lord to go at random. In Adam all fell, or died; but in Christ, the Apostle says all are made alive. Our worthy President has often said, when speaking upon the prevalence of sin in this world, that one of the greatest honors and blessings ever conferred on the sons of men was to come and dwell in the flesh in a sinful world like this, amid the power of evil, temptation and darkness, that they might have the privilege of overcoming them and of inheriting eternal life, which is the greatest gift of God. All the prophets have foreseen the establishment of the kingdom of God in the last days; they have seen Zion pass through all her travail and persecution to her final triumph, when she possessed great glory, power and dominion upon the land of Joseph. Daniel saw the kingdom of God, which he likens to a little stone cut out of the mountains without hands, which grew and increased in size until it filled the whole earth. Daniel said this kingdom was to be an everlasting kingdom.

Well, brethren and sisters, you and I have lived to see the dawn of the great day thus referred to by the prophets, in which the God of heaven has set His hand for the last time to establish His kingdom upon the earth; a kingdom not to be overthrown, but to remain until sin, Satan and the

power of the devil are banished from the face thereof, and until, as the prophets have said, the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our God and His Christ.

This day we have lived to see. This tabernacle, this congregation, and the multitudes through the valleys of the mountains are the fruits of this work. How did it commence? It commenced by an angel of God flying through the midst of heaven and visiting a young man named Joseph Smith, in the year 1827. That was the time of a great awakening among the sectarians of the day—a day of revivals and protracted meetings, when the people were called upon to join themselves to the sectarian churches. This young man looked around amid the confusion among the different sects, each proclaiming the plan of salvation differently, and each claiming it was right and that all others were wrong; in the midst of this contention he did not know which to join. While in this state of uncertainty he turned to the Bible, and there saw that passage in the epistle of James which directs him that lacks wisdom to ask of God. He went into his secret chamber and asked the Lord what he must do to be saved. The Lord heard his prayer and sent His angel to him, who informed him that all the sects were wrong, and that the God of heaven was about to establish His work upon the earth. This angel quoted many of the prophecies of Isaiah and Jeremiah, and told this young man that they were about to be fulfilled among the nations of the earth; and he also told him that if he would listen and render obedience to the commands of God, he should be an instrument in the hands of the Lord in establishing His kingdom upon the earth.

These visits were repeated from time to time, during which Joseph

A photograph of the *Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 13, page 324. Wilford Woodruff (who later became President of the Mormon Church) stated that it was an angel who first came to Joseph Smith.

very youth ought to testify in his favor, for when the Lord first revealed himself to that little boy, he was only between fourteen and fifteen years of age. Now, can we imagine or suppose that a great impostor could be made out of a youth of that age, and one that could reveal the doctrine of Christ as he has revealed it to this generation? Would he stand forth and bear testimony that he had seen with his own eyes a messenger of light and glory, and that he heard the words of his mouth as they dropped from his lips and had received a message from the Most High, at that early age? And then, after having declared it, to have the finger of scorn pointed at him, with exclamations, "There goes the visionary boy! No visions in our day, no angels come in our day, no more revelation to be given in our day! Why he is deluded, he is a fanatic;" and to have this scorn and derision and still continue to testify, in the face and eyes of all this, while hated and derided by his neighbors, that God had sent his angel from heaven. Can you imagine that a youth would do this? Select out some of our little boys here, fourteen years of age, can you imagine it to be possible for them to be impostors of this description? I think not. The very youth, then, of this first witness that I have named, testifies in his favor! Did God send forth servants to publish this Book of Mormon, containing the everlasting Gospel, to all the nations and kingdoms of the earth without giving more witnesses than this one I have named? No, he was more merciful to this generation than he was to the city of Nineveh; he sent more than one. He would not even permit this book to go forth as a divine revelation to this generation until he had raised up three other men—Martin Harris, David Whitmer and Oliver Cowdrey,

besides Joseph Smith. "But," says one, "perhaps they were deceived, while Joseph Smith was the impostor, they might have been sincere men!" Let us see whether they could be deceived men, and yet their testimony be given as it is here recorded. They have testified to all nations, kindred, tongues and people unto whom this work shall come, that, "we, through the grace of God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, have seen the plates which contain this record, and we testify with words of soberness that God sent forth an holy angel from heaven, and he showed unto us the plates from which this record was taken, and he commanded us to bear record of the same and to be obedient unto the commandment of God. We bear testimony of these things, and we do know it we are faithful in Christ we shall rid our garments of the blood of all men," and so forth. I have repeated to you part of the testimony of these three men.

Now is there any chance for deception here? An angel to be sent forth from God, an angel to come down from heaven clothed in glory and brightness! An angel to take these plates and turn them over leaf after leaf and show the engravings thereon! An angel to proclaim to them that they must bear testimony of it to all people, nations and tongues; and at the same time to hear the voice of God out of the heavens proclaiming that it had been translated correctly! Any chance for deception here, so far as they are concerned? Were they deceived? If so, you may as well say that Peter was deceived, that Paul was deceived, that James was deceived, that all the writers of the New Testament were deceived, that all the writers of the Old Testament were deceived, when they testify that they saw angels, for one stands on as good and sound

A photograph of the *Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 14, page 262. In this sermon, delivered on December 10, 1871, Orson Pratt states that Joseph Smith testified that it was an angel that appeared to him when he was fourteen.

On pages 37-38 of the same thesis Paul Cheesman stated:

When the same men who knew the philosophy of Joseph Smith referred to God, Christ, Moroni or other heavenly personages as angels, they seem to have been following an accepted pattern. This title does not seem to belittle the calling of the Son; it only describes a special mission. As Joseph Smith used the term *angel*, he suggested that an angel is one who is chosen to be a *messenger*. In this sense all of the visiting personages could be termed *angels*. . . . This would suggest they were using the term “angel” in the generic sense to identify any heavenly messenger, **even God**.

A brief examination of the references we have just quoted shows that Paul Cheesman’s explanation does not solve anything. For instance, Wilford Woodruff states that “The Lord heard his prayer and sent **his angel** to him,” however, if we substitute the word “Christ” for the word “angel” we read: “The Lord heard his prayer and sent **his Christ** to him.” Now, this would imply that God the Father was not present. All of these references present a similar problem. Brigham Young said that “The Lord sent **his messengers** to Joseph Smith.” Now, according to Paul Cheesman’s explanation, the word “messengers” would really mean the Father and the Son; however, if we try to substitute the words “Father and the Son” for the word “messengers” we come out with the following: “The Lord sent **his Father and Son** to Joseph Smith.”

It is interesting to note that in 1855 Brigham Young gave a sermon in which he absolutely denied that the Lord came to Joseph Smith in his First Vision:

But as it was in the days of our Savior, so was it in the advent of this new dispensation. It was not in accordance with the notions, traditions, and preconceived ideas of the American people. The messenger did not come to an eminent divine of any of the so-called orthodoxy, he did not adopt their interpretations of the Holy Scriptures. **The Lord did not come** with the armies of heaven, in power and great glory, nor send His messengers panoplied with aught else than the truth of heaven, to communicate to the meek, the lowly, and the youth of humble origin, the sincere enquirer after the knowledge of God. But **he did send his angel** to this same obscure person, Joseph Smith jun., who afterwards became a Prophet, Seer, and Revelator, and informed him that he should not join any of the religious sects of the day for they were all wrong; that they were following the precepts of men instead of the Lord Jesus; . . . (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 2, page 171)

The Mormon Apostle Orson Hyde made a similar statement:

Some one may say, “If this work of the last days be true, why did not the **Savior come himself** to communicate this intelligence to the world?” Because

to the **angels** was committed the power of reaping the earth, and it was committed to none else. (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 6, page 355)

Heber C. Kimball, the First Counselor to Brigham Young, made the following statement:

Do you suppose that **God in person** called upon Joseph Smith, our Prophet? God called upon him; **but God did not come himself and call**, . . . (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 6, page 29)

Heber C. Kimball went on to explain that rather than God coming himself, He sent messengers to Joseph Smith. Then he stated:

Why did he not come along? Because he has agents to attend to his business, and he sits upon his throne and is established at head-quarters, and tells this man, “Go and do this;” and it is behind the veil just as it is here. **You have got to learn that.** (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 6, page 29)

So we see that Paul Cheesman’s statement that Jesus or even God the Father can be referred to as an angel does not begin to answer the problem. Actually, the Mormon historians bear witness against themselves, for if it is proper to refer to the Father and the Son as “angels,” why did they delete this word from Joseph Smith’s statement that he had a “visitation of angels” when he was 14 years old? They would not have deleted this word if it had not contradicted the story that he had seen the Father and the Son. Dr. Hugh Nibley claims that even God the Father could be referred to as an angel, however, he did not hesitate to criticize an anti-Mormon writer for saying that it was an angel that appeared to Joseph Smith in 1820:

One of the most famous anti-Mormon books was John Hyde’s *Mormonism*, which goes so far as to report that “Smith pretends to receive his first vision while praying in the woods. He asserts that God the Father and Jesus Christ came to him from the heavens.” Hyde specifies the time as April 1820. Yet having admitted so much, Hyde **covers it up** later in his book when he writes: “Joseph Smith, born in 1805, sees **an angel** in 1820, who tells him his sins are forgiven. In 1823 he sees another angel.” This is an interesting example of how a **critic will refute himself to discredit Joseph Smith’s story.** (*Improvement Era*, August, 1961, pages 578-579)

Now, if John Hyde refuted himself (as Dr. Nibley says) by stating that it was an angel that appeared to Joseph Smith in 1820, then many of the leaders of the Mormon Church also refuted themselves because they stated that it was an angel. If John Hyde refuted himself by stating that it was an angel who appeared in the First Vision, did not Joseph Smith also “refute himself” when he said that it was a “visitation of angels”?

Bruce R. McConkie, of the First Council of the Seventy, has made this statement concerning the First Vision:

When Joseph Smith, then but a youth in his 15th year, went into the Sacred Grove . . . He supposed, as was then universally taught in apostate Christendom, that God was a three-in-one Spirit that filled the immensity of space, incorporeal, uncreated, immaterial, without body, parts, or passions. When he returned from that sacred spot, he had the sure knowledge—for his eyes had seen . . . that the Father and the Son were two glorified Personages in the express image of each other. (D. & C. 130:22)

If this inexperienced youth had been seeking to fabricate some great spiritual experience, he never in the world would have come back with a story that struck irreconcilably at all the creeds of Christendom and all the teachings he himself had so far received from his parents and others. **In an attempt to deceive he might have said that an angel appeared**, or that some other miraculous event transpired, but never would it have occurred to him to rock the whole religious foundation of the Christian world with such a startling claim as that which he did make. (*Mormon Doctrine*, Salt Lake City, 1958, pages 265-266)

This statement by Bruce R. McConkie becomes very interesting to those who know that Joseph Smith did say that it was a “visitation of angels” he received when he was fourteen years old.

After Brigham Young’s death the Mormon Church leaders began to stress that it was the Father and the Son who appeared to Joseph Smith. Orson Pratt (who had at least twice before stated that it was an angel that appeared in the First Vision) made this statement on September 19, 1880:

The first one that he gave to him was in the spring of 1820, before Joseph Smith was of the age of fifteen. Then a wonderful revelation was given to him, the first one he ever received. In a great and glorious open vision, in answer to his prayers, there was the manifestation of two of the great personages in the heavens—**not angels, not messengers**, but two persons that hold the keys of authority over all the creations of the universe. Who were they? **God the Eternal Father and His Son Jesus Christ**, through whom God the Father made the worlds! (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 21, page 308)

As late as the year 1889 Andrew Jenson, Assistant Church historian, quoted Joseph Smith’s story of the First Vision as follows:

When the light rested upon me. I saw two personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description, standing above me in the air. One of them spake unto me, calling me by name, and said (pointing to the other), **“this is my beloved Son, hear Him.”** (*Historical Record*, page 355)

But after quoting these “all-important words,” Mr. Jenson “covers it up” by stating that it was an angel!

Andrew Jenson continued the First Vision story as follows:

“ . . . I asked the personages who stood above me in the light, which of all the sects was right . . . I was answered that I must join none of them, for they were all wrong, and the personage who addressed me said . . . they teach for doctrine the commandments of men, having a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof.”

The angel again forbade Joseph to join any of these churches, and he promised that the true and everlasting Gospel should be revealed to him at some future time. Joseph continues:

“Many other things did he (**the angel**) say unto me which I cannot write at this time.” (*Historical Record*, page 355)

Apparently it was felt that it would be running a “risk” to leave the word “angel” in the *Historical Record* so it was reprinted and changed to read as follows:

The **holy being** again forbade Joseph to join any of these churches, and he promised that the true and everlasting gospel should be revealed to him at some future time. Joseph continues:

“Many other things did he (**the Christ**) say unto me which I cannot write at this time.” (*Historical Record*, reprinted edition, pages 355-356)

When Joseph Fielding Smith, the Mormon Church Historian, was asked concerning these changes in Mr. Jenson’s book he wrote the following:

This is in reply to the questions submitted by Sandra Tanner. These questions follow a type. I have had three or four other communications with questions such as these almost verbatim.

Those questions come from those who do not seek the truth, but rather are steeled against it. If this young lady would seek the Lord rather than **the mouthings of enemies of the Church** and obtain a testimony of the Gospel she would not be susceptible to the supposed arguments and mouthings of enemies of the Church. The Book of Mormon (words of Moroni) make a definite promise to any person who will seek prayerfully for the truth that the Lord will reveal it to them by the power of the Holy Ghost. But rather than to humbly seek for the truth too many go out of their way to seek the statements of enemies of the truth and follow them.

The Prophet Joseph Smith has given us his story in plain simple language. It matters not what anyone else may have said. Joseph Smith the Prophet declared and it is clearly and definitely published in the *Pearl of Great Price*, that the Father and the Son appeared to him and told him not to join any of the then existing churches. This is as plain as words can tell it. It is true that he did not say in so many words that it was the **Father** and the **Son** who came to him, but only a person who is willfully seeking to destroy his testimony will quibble over what he said and say that because he did not say in that many words that it was the Father and the Son, that we need

not believe that it was. . . . Who but one who deliberately wishes to quibble, will say that these **personages** were not the Father and the Son? To whom else **could** these words apply? I tell you, Bishop, only those who do not seek to know the truth will quibble over this statement. You know, and so does every other honest thinking person, that these words could **not** apply to any others than the Father and the Son.

Now those who have concocted this plot have gone to considerable trouble to find other passages which seem to contradict this. **If** they had placed half of this diligent search in prayerful, faith, the chances are that the Lord would have given them a personal revelation that this is **true**. But, **No!** They must quibble over it!

It is true that Andrew Jenson said the “Angel again forbade Joseph to loin any of these churches.” Who was the angel? **Moroni!** The holy being again forbade Joseph to join any of these churches, was **Moroni**. Now I object to anyone placing in the mouth of the Prophet Joseph Smith words that he did not utter.

I tell you Bishop, that this kind of argument is contemptible. It is used only by those who are in opposition to the work of the Lord.

This young woman asks for a “photostatic copy” of the Prophet’s statement in his own handwriting. Well, if we furnished it would that convince her? She will find a complete answer to this request in the sixteenth chapter of Luke, which I commend to her for her consideration: . . .

The Lord also had much to say about those who sought for a sign, and this causes me to wonder in the case before us. See Matthew 12:29. (Letter from Joseph Fielding Smith, Mormon Church Historian, to Bishop Warren H. Kennedy, dated November 5, 1959. Bishop Kennedy was then Bishop of the San Fernando 2nd Ward, San Fernando, California.)

Are we to believe that the “Holy Being” who was supposed to have appeared to Joseph Smith in the First Vision was “Moroni”? A careful reading of Joseph Fielding Smith’s letter would seem to indicate this. How can Hugh Nibley expect the anti-Mormon writers to get the story straight, if even the Mormon Historians can’t get it straight?

It is interesting to note that Hugh Nibley, who started out in the July 1961 issue of the *Improvement Era* to criticize the anti-Mormon writers for censoring Joseph Smith’s story, finally had to admit the following in the November 1961 issue:

The sources of LDS church history, like all human chronicles, **bristle with errors**; . . . It was utterly impossible to understand the Son without the spirit of revelation from the Father. Once one has that spirit, the truth of things is made clear **no matter how deplorable the state of the documents may be**; without it, all the “scholarship” in the world is of no avail to determine what really happened. (*Improvement Era*, November 1961, pages 868-869)

Paul R. Cheesman makes this statement on page 42 of his thesis:

In the final analysis, it is admitted that unquestioned “proof” of the actuality of this vision could not be provided, since Joseph was alone when he experienced this visitation . . . In actuality, the only method by which one might arrive at a decision as to the truth or falsity of this story would seem to be through an inner, spiritual experience; after thorough study, one would have to do exactly as the young boy claimed he did: pray, and receive one’s own witness, through the intangible power of God.

Before quoting some anti-Mormon accounts of Joseph Smith’s First Vision, Dr. Hugh Nibley stated:

We must warn the reader that the stories we are about to quote are a mess—but no more so than those we have already quoted. It has been standard procedure among anti-Mormon writers to attribute all this confusion to Joseph Smith himself, who is charged with having told a great many conflicting stories, by way of explaining why the stories told against him by his enemies never agree. To this charge the fifty writers just cited provide an adequate refutation: No two of them tell the same story even after Joseph Smith is long dead and when they all claim to be following a single original. Who is responsible for that? Not Joseph Smith and the Mormons, certainly. (*Improvement Era*, October 1961, page 724)

While we must agree with Dr. Nibley that some of the anti-Mormon writers have been dishonest, still, we feel that Joseph Smith and other Mormon leaders have told so many different stories concerning the First Vision that it has caused much confusion. We have shown that Joseph Smith told at least three different versions of the First Vision story, and all of them differed as to how many personages appeared. Brigham Young, the second President of the Mormon Church, was also confused about the First Vision. As we have shown, at one time he stated that “the Lord did not come” to Joseph Smith but only an “angel.” Most of the time, however, Brigham Young simply ignored the First Vision story. It is claimed that he had 363 of his sermons printed in the *Journal of Discourses*. In these 363 sermons one would certainly expect to find many, many references to the First Vision, but such is NOT the case. When a member of the Church wrote to the Church Historian’s Office and requested information concerning what Brigham Young said about the First Vision, she was answered by the Assistant Librarian Lauritz C. Petersen. In the reply he stated:

I have checked thru the *Journal of Discourses* which record many of the sermons of Brigham Young. **There is no mention of anything by Brigham Young on the First Vision of Joseph Smith.** (Letter written by Lauritz Petersen, dated August 31, 1959)

Hugh Nibley tried to explain Brigham Young’s reluctance to talk of the First Vision in the November 1961 issue of the *Improvement Era*. He stated:

A favorite theme of Brigham Young's was the tangible, personal nature of God, which **he never illustrates by any mention of the First Vision**. Why not? He has explained at length:

"... that man who cannot know things without telling any other living being upon the earth, who cannot keep his secrets and those that God reveals to him, never can receive the voice of his Lord... Should you receive a vision of revelation from the Almighty... you should shut it up and seal it as close, and lock it as tight as heaven is to you, and make it as secret as the grave. The Lord has no confidence in those who reveal secrets, for he cannot safely reveal Himself to such persons... If a person understands God... and the Lord reveals anything to that individual no matter what, unless he gives permission to disclose it, it is locked up in eternal silence." (JD, 4:286f.) (*Improvement Era*, November 1961, page 868)

We cannot accept Dr. Nibley's explanation for Brigham Young's silence concerning the First Vision. Dr. Nibley had already stated that before the year 1852, "it had been uniformly taught by the Church that the two visitors were the Father and the Son." Now, if this was the case, why would Brigham Young still have to keep it secret? This would be quite ridiculous to have the Church openly proclaiming that the Father and the Son had appeared, and yet to have the President of the Church keeping it "as secret as the grave." From whom would he be keeping it a secret?

Paul R. Cheesman makes this statement in defense of Brigham Young:

One critic [Jerald Tanner] has complained that Brigham Young never mentioned the First Vision in his discourses. However, Brigham Young once said:

I never saw anyone until I met Joseph Smith, who could tell me anything about the character, personality and dwelling-place of God, or anything satisfactory about angels, or the relationship of man to his maker.

In other sermons, Brigham Young said more specifically:

... the Lord sent forth His *angel* to this same obscure person, Joseph Smith, Jr., who afterwards became a Prophet, Seer and Revelator, and informed him that he should not join any of the religious sects of the day, for they were all wrong; that they were following the precepts of men instead of the Lord Jesus; that He had a work for him to perform, inasmuch as he should prove faithful before him. (*Italics mine*)

The Lord chose Joseph Smith, called upon him at fourteen years of age, gave him visions, and led him along, guided and directed him in his obscurity until he brought forth the plates and translated them, and Martin Harris was prevailed upon to sustain the printing of the Book of Mormon.

When the Lord called upon Joseph he was but a boy—a child, only about fourteen years of age. He was not filled with traditions; his mind was not made up to this, that, or the other. I very well recollect the reformation which took place in the country among the various denominations of Christians... He did not know what the Lord was going to do with him, although He had informed him that the Christian churches were all wrong, because they had not the Holy Priesthood.

("An Analysis of the Accounts Relating Joseph Smith's Early Visions," pages 36-37)

Paul R. Cheesman has apparently misunderstood our position. We did not say that "Brigham Young never mentioned the First Vision." Our contention is that Brigham Young seldom mentioned it, and when he did he gave confusing accounts. It was Lauritz G. Petersen, Assistant Church Librarian, who stated that he was unable to find any mention of the First Vision in the *Journal of Discourses*. Actually, we quote from two sermons by Brigham Young in which he mentions the First Vision. In one account Brigham Young stated that it was the Lord's "messengers" who appeared to Joseph Smith, and in the other account he stated that it was an "angel" that appeared. Our criticism is not that Brigham Young did not mention the First Vision, but rather that we have as yet been unable to locate any reference in which Brigham Young specifically identifies the personages as God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ. If he believed that it was actually the Father and the Son who appeared to Joseph Smith, he should have mentioned this fact many times.

Paul R. Cheesman's first reference from the *Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 16, page 46 says nothing about the First Vision or about Joseph Smith actually seeing the Father and the Son.

Mr. Cheesman's second reference—*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 2, page 171—only says that it was an "angel" who appeared to Joseph Smith. This is the same reference which we quoted in *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* 1964 edition, page 128. Notice, however, that Mr. Cheesman has not included the first part of the reference in which Brigham Young stated that "The Lord did not come."

Paul R. Cheesman's third reference—*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 8, page 354—also does not show that Joseph Smith saw both the Father and the Son. The statement that the Lord called upon him" cannot be used as proof that the Lord literally appeared. It must be remembered that Heber C. Kimball, the First Counselor to Brigham Young made this statement: "Do you suppose that God in person called upon Joseph Smith, our Prophet? God called upon him; but **God did not come Himself** and call,..." (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 6, page 29).

But even if we were to interpret Brigham Young's statement to mean that the Lord literally appeared to Joseph Smith, Brigham Young did NOT state that BOTH the Father and the Son appeared. To say that the Lord appeared to Joseph Smith is saying nothing more than Joseph Smith himself wrote in about 1833 in his "strange" account of the First Vision. In other words, for a reference to be of any real value to the Mormon position it must say that both the Father and the Son appeared.

Paul R. Cheesman's fourth reference is taken from the *Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 12, page 67. This reference is almost the same as the third one. It does not specifically state that both the Father and the Son appeared to Joseph Smith, and therefore is of no value to the Mormon position.

It would appear, then, that Paul R. Cheesman has no evidence to show that Brigham Young taught that God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ appeared to Joseph Smith in 1820. All evidence seems to show that Brigham Young was confused over the whole matter, and while he mentioned the First Vision on a few occasions, he usually ignored it.

Doctrinal Change

As we have shown earlier in this book, Dr. Hugh Nibley claims that the Mormon Church has never had to revise any part of its doctrine. He states that Joseph Smith's teachings "are so well-knit and perfectly logical that they have never had to undergo the slightest change or alteration during a century in which every other church in Christendom has continually revamped its doctrines (*No Ma'am That's Not History*, pages 57-58). Actually, the Mormon Church has changed many of its doctrines. One of the most severe doctrinal changes is the change concerning the Godhead. This change has, no doubt, had a real effect on the story of the First Vision. The Book of Mormon, which was first published in 1830, taught that there was but one God:

And now Abinadi said unto them: I would that ye should understand that **God Himself** shall come down among the children of men, and shall redeem his people. And because he dwelleth in flesh he shall be called the Son of God, and having subjected the flesh to the will of the Father, **being the Father and the Son**—... And thus the flesh becoming subject to the **Spirit**, or the **Son** to the **Father**, being **one God** . . . (Book of Mormon. Mosiah 15:1, 2 and 5)

The Book of Mormon tells of a visitation of the Father and the Son to the "brother of Jared." The Father and the Son mentioned, however, are not two separate personages. Only one personage appears, and this personage says:

Behold, I am he who was prepared from the foundation of the world to redeem my people. Behold, I am Jesus Christ. I am the **Father and the Son**. In me shall all mankind have light, and that eternally, even they who shall believe on my name; and they shall become my sons and my daughters. (Book of Mormon, Ether 3:14)

The Book of Mormon, clearly teaches that God the Father is a spirit. The first edition of the *Doctrine and Covenants*, likewise, contained a reference which stated that God was a Spirit:

... the **Father being a personage of spirit**, glory, and power, possessing all perfection and fullness, the Son, ... a personage of tabernacle, ... (*Doctrine and Covenants*, 1835 edition, page 53)

Since this statement was published in 1835, it would appear that Joseph Smith did not believe that God the Father had a body at the time he wrote his first account of the vision in the "wilderness." Toward the end of his life, however, Joseph Smith changed his mind and decided that God was just an exalted man. In 1844 he stated:

First, God himself, who sits enthroned in yonder heavens, **is a man like unto one of yourselves**, that is the great secret. . . . God himself; the **Father** of us all dwelt on an earth the same as Jesus Christ himself did, . . . **You have got to learn how to be Gods yourselves**; . . . No man can learn you more than what I have told you. (*Times and Seasons*, Vol. 5, pages 613-614)

Since Joseph Smith had changed his mind concerning the Godhead, he evidently decided to change his story concerning the First Vision.

The First Vision, as we have shown, is now used to support the Mormon concept of a plurality of Gods. While Joseph Smith did not actually say that the two personages were the Father and the Son, the words "This is My Beloved Son, Hear Him" would probably bring the reader to that conclusion. James B. Allen made this statement:

While not specifically named in the story, the two personages have been identified by Latter-day Saints as God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ; . . . (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Autumn, 1966, page 30)

Joseph Smith probably wanted people to believe that he had seen the Father and the Son, but he was reluctant to come out and actually say it. In some of his later sermons Joseph Smith tried to prove the doctrine of a plurality of Gods, but he did not use his own vision to prove the point. James B. Allen stated:

Present-day Mormons use it to demonstrate . . . the concept of God and Christ as distinct and separate physical beings. It is clear, of course, that Joseph Smith taught these doctrines, but it is of special interest to note that, as far as any recorded material reveals, he **never used the story of his vision specifically to illustrate them**.

When did church members begin to make such use of the story? Apparently the early teachers of the Church relied upon scriptural evidence **alone** to demonstrate the Mormon doctrine of God, and **not until well into the Utah period did they begin to use Joseph Smith's story to illustrate it**. One of the earliest recorded sermons to make this use of the story was given by George Q. Cannon on October 7, 1883. . . .

Probably there were earlier sermons or writings that used the story of the first vision to demonstrate the Mormon doctrine of God. Evidence indicates, however, that they were **rare** in these early days and that **only gradually** did this use of the story find place in the traditions of the Church. (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Autumn, 1966, pages 38-39)

As we have shown, Brigham Young did not use the First Vision to prove a plurality of Gods or that God had a body. We have quoted Dr. Hugh Nibley as saying: "A favorite theme of Brigham Young's was the tangible, personal nature of God, which he **never illustrates by any mention of the First Vision.**" James B. Allen admits that the use of the First Vision story to prove the Mormon doctrine of a plurality of Gods came only gradually and that it was not used at first:

When it was first told, the story of the vision was used primarily to demonstrate the concept that Joseph Smith had been visited by Deity and that he had been told that all contemporary churches were wrong. After Joseph's death, however, members of the Church **gradually** began to appreciate its usefulness for other purposes. By the 1880's, if not earlier, it was being used in sermons as support for the Mormon doctrine of God, although **Joseph Smith himself never used the story for that purpose.**

... It has been demonstrated that an understanding of the story of Joseph Smith's vision dawned only **gradually** upon the membership of the Church during his lifetime, and that **new** and important uses were made of the story **after his death.** (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Autumn, 1966, pages 44-45)

Conclusion

James B. Allen has stated that belief in the First Vision to a Mormon is "second only to belief in the divinity of Jesus of Nazareth." Moreover, Mr. Allen states:

In 1961 the official missionary plan of the Church required all missionaries to use the story in their first lesson as part of the dialogue designed to prove that the Father and the Son are distinct personages and that they have tangible bodies. (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Autumn, 1966, page 39)

J. Reuben Clark, who was a member of the First Presidency, made this statement:

No teacher who does not have a real testimony of the truth of the Gospel as revealed to and believed by the Latter-day Saints, and a testimony of the Sonship and Messiahship of Jesus, and of the divine mission of Joseph Smith—including in all its reality **the First Vision**—has any place in the Church school system. If there be any such, and I hope and pray there are none, he should at once resign; if the Commissioner knows of any such and he does not resign, the Commissioner should request his resignation. The First Presidency expect this pruning to be made. (*Improvement Era*, September, 1938, as quoted in "The Social Psychological Basis of Mormon New-Orthodoxy," Master's thesis, by Owen Kendall White, Jr., University of Utah, June 1967, page 162)

Thus we see that to be in good standing a Mormon must believe in Joseph Smith's First Vision. David O. McKay, President of the Mormon Church, has stated that the First Vision is the very "foundation of this

Church." Paul R. Cheesman has stated that the Mormon Church "must stand or fall on the authenticity of the First Vision and the appearance of the Angel Moroni." John A. Widtsoe has stated:

The story of the **First Vision** need only to be studied from **original sources** to assure the seeker not only of its truth, but also of the time of its occurrence. (*Joseph Smith—Seeker After Truth*, page 26)

When we examine the original sources, however, we find that the First Vision story rests upon a very sandy foundation.

Fawn M. Brodie was one of the first to cast serious doubt upon the authenticity of the First Vision story. She showed that the story was not published until "twenty years after it was supposed to have occurred." The Mormon Apostle John A. Widtsoe admitted that it was "first printed in 1840." However, he stated that the First Vision was "common knowledge among members of the Church" and so well known that "minutes of meetings as they are usually kept might seldom mention the First Vision, for familiar and repeated things are usually taken for granted." Dr. Hugh Nibley, on the other hand, apparently did not feel that this explanation was intellectually satisfying, for he claimed that Joseph Smith kept the First Vision a secret and that it was only when "leaks led to all sorts of irresponsible reports that he was 'induced' to publish an official version." Paul R. Cheesman also stated that Joseph Smith may have "kept this vision a secret." James B. Allen has admitted that "it is evident that the general membership of the Church knew little, if anything, about it." What makes the situation worse is the fact that Oliver Cowdery published a history of the Mormon Church in 1834 and 1835 which made no mention of the First Vision. Moreover, Oliver Cowdery claimed that in 1823 Joseph Smith did not even know "if a Supreme Being did exist." Certainly, if Joseph Smith had seen the Father and the Son in 1820, he would know in 1823 that a Supreme Being did exist!

The most devastating evidence against the First Vision, however, is the fact that Joseph Smith told conflicting stories. Since there was no one else present at the time Joseph Smith was supposed to have received this vision, we have to rely solely upon his word. The Mormon Apostle John A. Widtsoe stated:

Joseph Smith was alone in the sacred grove when he received his First Vision. No other human eyes or ears than his own saw and heard the divine, world-changing drama there enacted. (*Joseph Smith—Seeker After Truth*, page 338)

Before 1965 Mormon writers maintained that Joseph Smith "told but one story" about the First Vision. But now Paul R. Cheesman has brought forth a document dictated by Joseph Smith which shows that his word is not reliable. To make matters worse, in 1966 James B.

Allen brought forth another document which differs from both the official version and the first written account.

In the first written account Joseph Smith said that only one personage appeared. This personage was identified as Jesus. The second account states that there were “many” personages. The official account says there were but “two.” Which account can we believe?

The first account does not mention a religious revival, nor does it say anything about Joseph Smith reading the passage in James. In the first account Joseph Smith did not mention an evil power trying to overcome him, nor did he quote the Lord as saying that the churches’ creeds “were an abomination.” He did, however, state that the Lord appeared and said to him: “. . . Joseph my Son Thy Sins are forgiven thee, . . .”

The second account differs in several ways from the first. In this account the passage in James is mentioned. Joseph Smith adds that his tongue was swollen so that he could not speak and that he heard “the noise of walking,” and that he sprang to his feet but “saw no person.” He then tells that one personage appeared. Soon another personage followed. The second personage then spoke to him. The words “Joseph my son,” which appear in the first account are not included, but the words “thy sins are forgiven thee” are retained. The words “He testified also unto me that Jesus Christ is the son of God” are added. These words seem to show that the personages were NOT the Father and the Son. The words “I saw many angels in this vision” have been added. There is nothing in this account to indicate that the churches “were all wrong.”

The official account differs remarkably from either of the first two accounts. It tells of a religious revival, retains the part about the passage in James—which was added in the second account—and mentions an evil power trying to overcome Joseph Smith. It retains the statement that his tongue was bound, but it does not contain the statement about the strange noises. In this account “two personages” appear together. The words “thy sins are forgiven thee” which appear in both of the earlier accounts have been deleted. The words “This is my beloved Son, hear him” have been added, and, of course, the words “He testified also unto me that Jesus Christ is the son of God” have been deleted. The words “I saw many angels in this vision” have also been deleted. In this version Joseph Smith adds that the personage told him that the churches “were all wrong” and that their “creeds were an abomination in his sight.”

Now, when we look at these three accounts together we cannot help but see the evolution of the First Vision story. Fawn Brodie described Joseph Smith as “a mythmaker of prodigious talents.” Can anyone honestly look at these three different accounts of the First Vision and not admit that Mrs. Brodie was right?

Now that we have Joseph Smith’s first account of the vision we know that it was not unique. Others claimed to have similar experiences. And since Joseph Smith changed the story later on, we were inclined to believe that the whole thing was a product of his imagination.

In the official account of the First Vision Joseph Smith said that it occurred while a revival was going on in the spring of 1820. Wesley P. Walters, however, has found that there was no revival in Palmyra in the spring of 1820. There was a revival that started in the fall of

1824 and was still going in the spring of 1825. We have found that references to this revival have been falsely used to try and prove that there was a revival in 1820.

We have found that Joseph Smith claimed that in 1835 he told Erastus Holmes about his “first visitation of angels,” but that later Mormon historians have altered this to read: “my First Vision.”

We have found that after Joseph Smith’s death the Mormon leaders were very confused concerning the story of the First Vision and gave conflicting accounts of it. At one time Brigham Young stated that “the Lord did not come” and that it was only an “angel” that appeared to Joseph Smith. Heber C. Kimball, First Counselor to Brigham Young, once stated that “God did not come himself and call” upon Joseph Smith.

We have shown that Joseph Smith originally taught that the Father was a “personage of Spirit,” and that he changed his idea about this toward the end of his life and taught that the Father “is a man like unto one of yourselves.” We believe that because of this change in doctrine Joseph Smith changed his story of the First Vision so that people would believe that he had seen both the Father and the Son.

It has been shown, however, that Joseph Smith did NOT use this vision in his sermons to prove that God had a body. Dr. Hugh Nibley admitted that although Brigham Young believed that God the Father had a body, he never tried to prove it “by any mention of the first vision.” And James B. Allen admits that it was “not until well into the Utah period” that the leaders of the Mormon Church really began to use the story of the First Vision to prove that God has a body.

If the First Vision is the very “foundation” of the Mormon Church, as David O. McKay claims, it would seem that it rests upon a very shaky foundation. And if the Mormon Church “must stand or fall on the authenticity of the First Vision story and the appearance of the Angel Moroni,” as Paul R. Cheesman maintains, we feel that the only honest thing for a person to do is to renounce Mormonism in its entirety.

We feel that if the Mormon leaders would change their policy of concealing the Church records from the people, the truth about Mormonism would soon be known. Levi Edgar Young, who was the head of the Seven Presidents of Seventies in the Mormon Church, told LaMar Petersen and others that there are many secret manuscripts that the Mormon leaders do not allow their people to see. The following is from LaMar Petersen’s notes of an interview held at the Church Office Building on March 4, 1953:

Stated again that there were **many secret manuscripts in the vaults** “downstairs,” that someday they would be read and made known. Spoke of the fine handwriting in the journals because of the cost of paper. Went one time from Bro. Joseph Fielding’s to Bro. Ivins to borrow microscope [magnifying glass?]. When he returned the manuscripts **had been locked up again**. Dale Morgan had asked him: “why doesn’t the Church open its files to serious scholars doing historical research?” Bro. Young agreed that the library should be opened to all accredited students and that some day it would be.

We hope this day will soon come.

6. CHANGING THE REVELATIONS

The Mormon Apostle John A. Widtsoe stated:

The *Doctrine and Covenants* is a compilation of the revelations received by Joseph Smith to individuals and for the guidance of the Church. . . .

The book itself is a witness for the truth of the Prophet's claims. The explanations of old doctrines and presentation of new ones are convincing evidences of their divine origin. Enemies of the Church have rather carefully **avoided** the discussion of this book. **They have been afraid of it.** (*Joseph Smith—Seeker After Truth*, 1951, pages 251 and 254)

A Serious Charge

Contrary to the Apostle Widtsoe's statement, anti-Mormon writers have not been afraid to discuss the *Doctrine and Covenants*. In fact, they have made some rather serious charges concerning it. The most serious charge, we feel, is that the revelations found in the *Doctrine and Covenants* have been changed. In a book printed in 1843 Henry Caswall made this statement concerning the *Doctrine and Covenants*:

Two editions of this work were published, the first in 1833, and the second in 1835. Great inconsistencies [*sic*] exist between the several parts of the book and the editions of 1833 and 1835 are in several respects repugnant to each other. (*Prophet of the Nineteenth Century*, pages 79-80 as quoted in "A Study of the Nature of and the 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, Brigham Young University, 1955, typed copy, page 126)

Some of the Mormon writers have admitted that changes were made. For instance, the Mormon historian B. H. Roberts admitted that paragraphs were added to the revelations:

. . . some of the early revelations first published in the "Book of Commandments," in 1833, were revised by the Prophet himself in the way of correcting errors made by the scribes and publishers; and some additional clauses were inserted . . . and paragraphs added, to make the principles or instructions apply to officers not in the Church at the time some of the earlier revelations were given. (*History of the Church*, Vol. 1, page 173)

In a thesis written at BYU, the Mormon writer John William Fitzgerald made this statement:

1. Differences in wording and differences in wording that change the meaning have occurred in certain sections that appeared first in *A Book of Commandments* published in 1833 and that appeared later in *The Doctrine and Covenants* published in 1835. ("A Study of the Doctrine and Covenants," Master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1940, page 329)

On page 333 of the same thesis we find this statement:

2. Changes in wording and in meaning occur not only in the verses of corresponding chapters and sections but also in the introductions to the chapters and sections themselves.

In another thesis written at the Brigham Young University, Melvin J. Petersen stated:

Many words were added to the revelations in order to more clearly state what Joseph Smith intended to write. . . . Many times phrases were added to increase the ability of the reader to get the meaning of the verse. ("A Study of the Nature of and the 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, Brigham Young University, 1955, typed copy, page 147)

On pages 162-163 of the same thesis, Melvin J. 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, found many of them needing clarification; therefore he enlarged upon them in order that the original meaning might be more easily discerned. . . . 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.

On page 140 of the same thesis, Melvin J. Petersen stated:

Having discussed the problem of additions to the commandments as being necessary and practical with a growing organization, we find another problem arising concerning words that were omitted. . . . In the 1835 edition, Section thirty-two, verse three was added in the place of verses five and six. Why such a change? Joseph Smith, while reviewing the revelations, 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 which is identical with Section five, verse nineteen of the present 1921 edition.

In chapter forty-four of the *Book of Commandments* (Section forty-two, 1921 edition) he last three verses were left off.

Strange as it may seem, Dr. Hugh Nibley, who at one time wrote that Mormon teachings are "free of revisions," has now written a letter in which he admits that Joseph Smith's revelations have been changed. In this letter he stated:

1. **Revelations have been revised whenever necessary.** That is the nice thing about revelation—it is strictly open-ended. (Letter from Dr. Hugh Nibley to Morris L. Reynolds, dated May 12.

While there have been a few Mormons who have been willing to admit that Joseph Smith's revelations have been changed, many have not been that honest. For instance, the Mormon Apostle Parley P. Pratt definitely stated that no changes were made in the revelations. His statement is recorded in a footnote on page 173 of Vol. 1 of the *History of the Church*:

Elder Parley P. Pratt, . . . takes occasion to relate how this and other revelations were given through the Prophet. "Each sentence," says he, "was uttered slowly and very distinctly, and with a pause between each, sufficiently long for it to be recorded by an ordinary writer in long hand. This was the manner in which all

his written revelations were dictated and written. There was never any hesitation, reviewing, or reading back, in order to keep the run of the subject; neither did any of these communications undergo revisions, interlinings or corrections. **As he dictated them so they stood, so far as I have witnessed; . . .**"

The Mormon Apostle John A. Widtsoe stated:

Within a few years after its organization, the Church had received practically all necessary supplementary laws and regulations. These also have **remained unchanged. There has been no tampering with God's word.** . . . the whole body of Church laws forms a harmonious unit, which does not anywhere contradict itself nor has it been found necessary to alter any part of it. (*Joseph Smith—Seeker After Truth*, pages 119 and 122)

The Mormon writer John J. Stewart stated:

Several of his associates, sitting in his presence when some of the revelations were received, reported that Joseph would dictate them to a clerk at as fast and steady a pace as the clerk was able to write, maintaining an even flow of delivery, and **never altering the words spoken.** (*Joseph Smith the Mormon Prophet*, Salt Lake City, 1966, page 57)

The Mormon Historian Joseph Fielding Smith made this comment: concerning Joseph Smith's revelations:

Inspiration is discovered in the fact that each part, as it was revealed, dovetailed perfectly with what had come before. Where was **no need for eliminating, changing,** or adjusting any part to make it fit; but each new revelation on doctrine and priesthood fitted in its place perfectly to complete the whole structure, as it had been prepared by the Master Builder. (*Doctrines of Salvation*, Vol. 1, page 170)

The Mormon Apostle LeGrand Richards was asked if changes were made in the revelations; in his reply, dated May 12, 1966, he stated:

Now answering your questions. Your first question: "Have the early revelations of the church been revised and have some additional clauses been inserted as some people claim?" Answer: I am past eighty years of age. I have filled four missions, been bishop of three wards, president of a stake, for fourteen years the Presiding Bishop of the Church, and now for fourteen years a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, and I know of no changes that have been made during that time. I have just discussed this matter with President Joseph Fielding Smith, the Church Historian, and he indicates that in the Book of Mormon, there have been a few grammatical changes; no changes have been made that in any way change the meaning of any sentence; an "are" might be changed to a "were" to make it more grammatically correct. . . .

There may have been **a few words changed** in the *Doctrine & Covenants* and President Smith thought there had been one section left out which was instruction rather than revelation. . . .

If you have ever published a book, you will know that after it comes off the press there are always a few typographical errors or mistakes, or a sentence left out here or there. Having written and published three books, I can testify that that is true and such errors have to be corrected. . . . I know that the Church is true, and that

the original doctrines as they were revealed from heaven **have not been changed**, . . . (Letter from the Mormon Apostle LeGrand Richards to Morris L. Reynolds, dated May 11, 1966)

Hugh B. Brown, a member of the First Presidency of the Mormon Church, was also asked if the revelations had been changed. In his reply, he stated that none of the revelations have been changed. Below is a photograph of his letter.

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS
OFFICE OF THE FIRST PRESIDENCY
SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH 84143

May 13, 1966

Mr. Morris L. Reynolds
311 Nichols Hall
Idaho State University
Pocatello, Idaho

Dear Brother Reynolds,

Replying to your recent letter, which was undated, I am pleased to advise you as follows in answer to your questions.

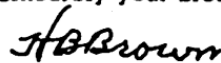
None of the early revelations of the Church have been revised, and the *Doctrine and Covenants* stands as printed including sections 5 and 7. These two sections and some others are addressed directly to certain individuals, but there are lessons in them for all of us, and therefore they have not been deleted.

The Adam-God doctrine is not the doctrine of the Church, and the reports on that subject as published in the *Journal of Discourses* are not accurate. The Godhead consists of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost.

There is no doctrine of the Church requiring the shedding of blood for the salvation where certain sins have been committed. We have been accused of such doctrine, but it is not true.

I am glad that you are investigating the Gospel and shall be glad if in any way I can be helpful.

Sincerely your brother,



Hugh B. Brown

HBB/ga

Book of Commandments

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 "The Book of Commandments." William E. Berrett, Vice Administrator of the Brigham Young University, made this statement:

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." Such a collection was made and presented to a conference of the Priesthood at Hiram, Ohio, November 1, 1831. On the first day of the conference 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. Oliver Cowdery and John Whitmer were chosen to carry the manuscript to Independence, Missouri, for printing. (*The Restored Church*, 1956, pages 138-139)

The church was unable to print as many copies 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. Joseph Fielding Smith stated:

This destruction of the *Book of Commandments* occurred in July 1833, but the publication of the revelations was retarded only until 1835, when the first edition of the *Doctrine and Covenants*, was published in Independence and others that had been subsequently received . . . (*Improvement Era*, June 1960, page 384)

The exact number of *Book of Commandments* that were printed, before the mob destroyed the printing press, is not known; however, David Whitmer (one of the three witnesses to the Book of Mormon) stated:

Early in the spring of 1833, at Independence, Mo., the revelations were printed in the *Book of Commandments*. Many of the books were finished and distributed among the members of the church . . . (*An Address to All Believers in Christ*, Richmond, Mo., 1887, page 55)

In February 1834 Wilford Woodruff (who became the fourth president of the LDS Church) wrote:

. . . I saw the Book of Commandments or revelations given through Joseph Smith, and I believed them with all my heart and rejoiced therein; and after spending several days, and holding several meetings, we returned home rejoicing. ("Journal History," February 1834, as quoted in "A Study of the Nature of and the 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, by Kelvin J. Peterson, page 142)

David Whitmer said the following concerning the printing of the *Book of Commandments*:

The revelations were printed in the *Book of Commandments* correctly. This I know, and will prove it to you.

These revelations were arranged for publication by Brothers Joseph Smith, Sydney Rigdon, Orson Hyde and others, in Hiram, Ohio, while I was there, were sent to Independence to be published, and were printed just exactly as they were arranged by Brother Joseph and the others. And when the *Book of Commandments* was printed, Joseph and the church received it as being printed correctly. (*An Address to All Believers in Christ*, by David Whitmer, page 56)

David Whitmer's statement that the church received the *Book of Commandments* as being printed correctly, is proven true by the fact that the First Presidency of the church (Joseph Smith, Sydney Rigdon, and Fredrick G. Williams) checked at least some of the revelations after they were printed in the *Book of Commandments* and noted only four typographical errors. In a letter to W. W. Phelps and others they stated:

We have found the following errors in the Commandments, as printed: fortieth chapter, tenth verse, third line, instead of "corruptable," put corrupted. Fourteenth verse of the same chapter, fifth line, instead of "respector to persons," put respector of persons. Twenty-first verse, second line of the same chapter, instead of "respector to," put respector of. Forty-fourth chapter, twelfth verse, last line, instead of "hands," put heads. (*History of the Church*, Vol. 1, page 364)

From this it is obvious that the *Book of Commandments* was printed correctly, except for a few typographical errors. That the church approved of the *Book of Commandments*, and used it from the year 1833 until 1835, can also be seen from a letter written by the leaders of the church in Missouri, in July, 1834. In this letter it was stated:

It will be seen by reference to the *Book of Commandments*, page 135, that the Lord has said to the Church—and we mean to live by His words: “Let no man break the laws of the land, . . .” (*History of the Church*, Vol. 2, page 129)

In the same letter it was stated:

. . . we entreat the philanthropist, the moralist, and the honorable men of all creeds and sects, to read our publications, to examine the Bible, the Book of Mormon, and the **Commandments**. . . . (*History of the Church*, by Joseph Smith, Vol. 2, page 133)

David Whitmer said the following concerning the *Book of Commandments*:

I say it was printed complete (and copyrighted). It was printed complete and many copies distributed among the members of the church, before the printing press owned by the church was destroyed. Brother Joseph and the brethren received it 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*, by David Whitmer, page 5)

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. However, this is not the case. David Whitmer, one of the three witnesses to the Book of Mormon, made this statement:

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 the revelations, and after having commanded his servants (as they claim) to print them in the “Book of Commandments,” and after giving his servants a revelation, being a preface unto His *Book of Commandments*, which says: “Behold this is mine authority, and the authority of my servants, and my preface unto the Book of my Commandments, which I have given them to publish unto you, oh inhabitants of the earth.” Also in this preface, “Behold I am God, and have spoken it; These commandments are of me.” “Search these commandments, for they are true and faithful.” The revelations were printed in the *Book of Commandments* correctly! This I know, and will prove it to you.

These revelations were arranged for publication by Bro. Joseph Smith, Sydney Rigdon, Orson Hyde and others, in Hiram, Ohio, while I was there; and were sent to Independence to be published, and were printed just exactly as they were arranged by Bro. Joseph and the others. And when the *Book of Commandments* was printed, 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)

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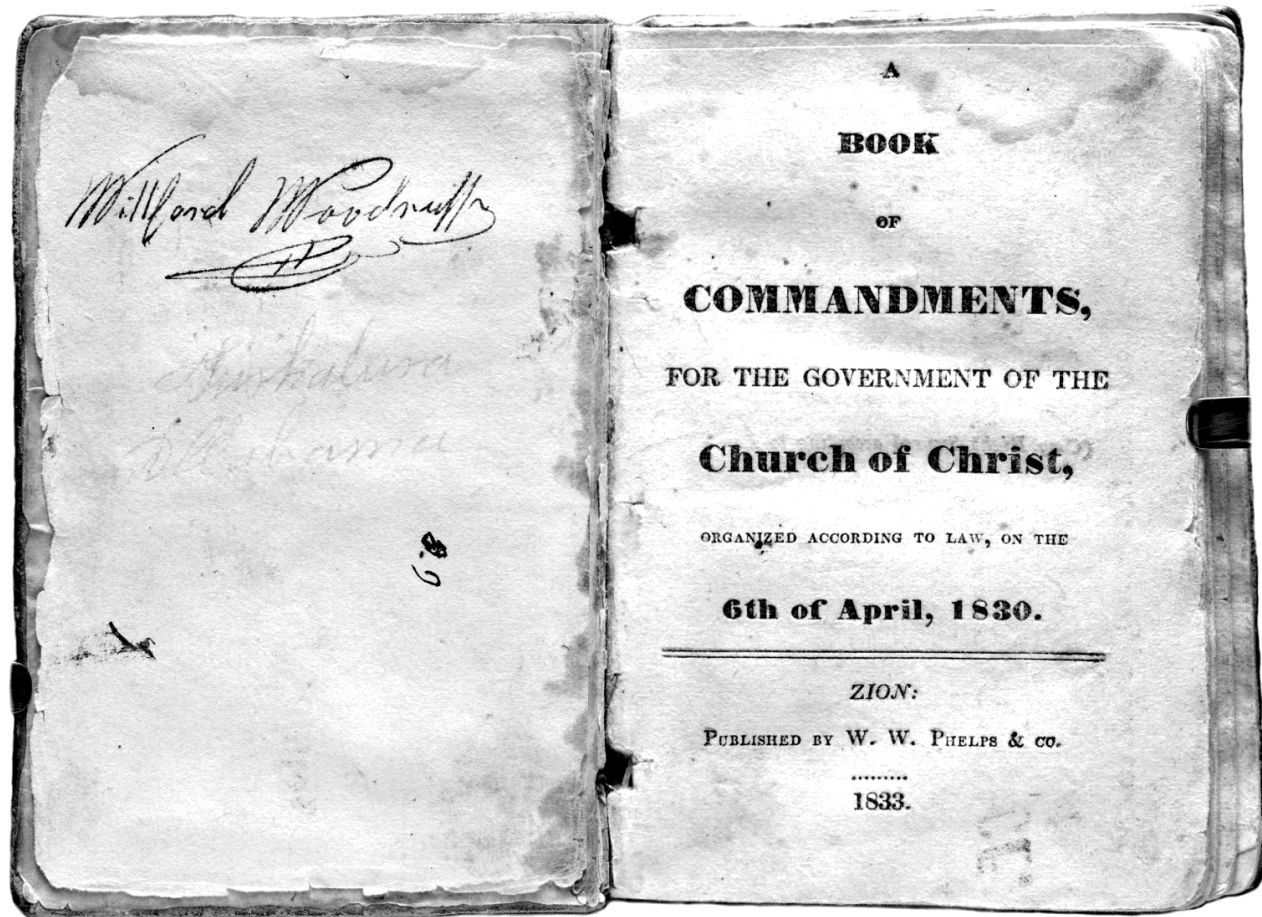
The Mormon Church has suppressed the truth concerning the *Book of Commandments* and the changes in the revelations. The Brigham Young University allowed us to make photocopies of the first 41 pages of Wilford Woodruff’s copy of the *Book of Commandments*, which they had on microfilm. When the Church Historian’s Office found that we had obtained these photocopies, they immediately sent word to the Brigham Young University Library to keep us from obtaining any more photocopies of these rare documents. Consequently, when we wrote to the Brigham Young University Library, asking for the remaining pages of the *Book of Commandments*, we received a letter in which the following statement appeared:

We are unable to send you a photocopy of the Book of Commandments. We were supplied this copy by the Church Historian’s office for the use of our patrons **but not for photo duplication** or other forms of publication . . . you will need to secure the permission of the Church Historian’s library to have it reproduced, as they own the manuscript copy. (Letter dated April 11, 1961)

Since the copyright on the *Book of Commandments* has expired, it is very obvious that the only reason they would not allow us to have these photocopies was that they wanted to keep them hid from the general public. We appealed to William E. Berrett (Vice Administrator of the Brigham Young University) to help us obtain these photocopies of the *Book of Commandments*. In a letter to us, dated April 24, 1961, William E. Berrett stated:

I find, on contacting the Director of our libraries, that we do not have in our libraries an original of Wilford Woodruff’s copy of the *Book of Commandments* but only a reproduction. The original is in the hands of the Church Historian in Salt Lake City.

I find that it is the policy of this library and the other libraries throughout the nation to make copies of any document or book available that has been published upon request but not to be reproduced where they do not own the original. This is a universal policy at the Brigham Young University library and of most libraries throughout the nation. Owners of original manuscripts may bring suit against any library that reproduces for distribution copies of the original manuscripts.



A photograph of the title page of Wilford Woodruff's *Book of Commandments*. Wilford Woodruff later became the President of the Mormon Church.

BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY
PROVO, UTAH



ERNEST L. WILKINSON, PRESIDENT

April 11, 1961

Mr. Jerald Tanner
3119 North Fifth West
Salt Lake City, Utah

Dear Mr. Tanner:

We are unable to send you a photocopy of the Book of Commandments. We were supplied this copy by the Church Historian's office for the use of our patrons but not for photoduplication or other forms of publication. Due to the fact that there is manuscript material in this copy, you would need to secure the permission of the Church Historian's library to have it reproduced, as they own the manuscript copy.

Unfortunately, none of our professional staff, either in the Special Collections or Microfilm area, are on duty on Saturday; and our student assistants are instructed not to make any photocopies. This policy is for their protection, so that they will not be held responsible for copyright violations. I am usually available Monday through Friday from 8 o'clock to 5 o'clock and would be glad to discuss any duplication which you might desire which would not violate ownership rights or stipulations under which we obtained this material.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Chad J. Flaker".

Chad J. Flaker
Special Collections

CJF/aj

enclosure

A photograph of a letter from the Brigham Young University. After the Church Historian's Office found out that we had obtained the first 41 pages of Wilford Woodruff's copy of the *Book of Commandments* from the Brigham Young University, they sent instructions to the library that we were not to have access to these rare documents.

Since Mr. Berrett stated that libraries throughout the nation would make “copies of any document or book available that has been published upon request,” we asked him if he would write to the Church library to get us photocopies of their *Book of Commandments*. In a letter dated April 27, 1961, William E. Berrett replied:

As to whether we can obtain a photograph of one of the *Book of Commandments* in the Church library . . . I do not know, but I will make inquiry for you.

Mr. Berrett did write to the Church Historian's Office, and in a letter to us dated May 5, 1961, he stated:

I regret that I cannot achieve any success in helping you obtain a copy of the *Book of Commandments* which you seem to desire. I have written to the Church Historian's Office but find that their policy will not permit them to send a photocopy of Wilford Woodruff's book or of the copy of the original *Book of Commandments* which they possess, . . .

I did not disclose to them who I wanted the copy for, but in their reply they indicated that they had refused a copy to you and that I would have to divulge the name of the individual who wanted a copy.

Not being satisfied with this answer, we wrote directly to Joseph Fielding Smith, however, he would not send us the photo-copies. The Assistant Church Historian, A. William Lund, also refused. In a letter to us dated June 12, 1961, he stated:

I am returning the five dollar bill as I am not interested in the project you have in mind.

Finally, we appealed to David O. McKay, but we were refused any help with the matter.

In 1961, with the help of several others, we had the *Book of Commandments* reprinted by photo-offset printing (the first 41 pages from the photo-copies obtained at the BYU and the remaining pages from a microfilm of the copy at Yale University). As we indicated earlier (see pages 51-52), we were not allowed to advertise this book in the Salt Lake City newspapers.

Wilford Wood later brought out a reprint of the *Book of Commandments*, but the Mormon leaders stopped the Deseret Book Co. from selling it (see pages 52-56).

Besides being printed in the *Book of Commandments*, many of these revelations were also printed in the church paper, the *Evening and Morning Star*, before they were ever printed in the *Doctrine and Covenants*. The way they were printed in the *Evening and Morning Star* agreed with the way they were printed in the *Book of Commandments*. When the revelations were altered in the *Doctrine and Covenants*, the *Evening and Morning Star* was reprinted and the revelations were also changed in it to agree with the *Doctrine and Covenants*. In other words, it was not a true reprint, but a falsified or bogus reprint.

. . . to make a bad matter worse, they reprinted the first fourteen numbers of the *Evening and Morning Star* at Kirtland in 1835, where they changed every revelation printed therein, which had harmonized with the *Book of Commandments*, so that they would be in agreement with the altered and mutilated versions as they appeared in the *Doctrine and Covenants*. (*The Book of Commandments Controversy Reviewed*, by Clarence L. Wheaton and Angela Wheaton, Independence, Mo., 1950, page 67)

The *Book of Commandments* had 65 chapters, however, it can be shown that the changes made in these revelations did not constitute all of the changes made in the *Doctrine and Covenants*. Section 68 of the *Doctrine and Covenants* was not printed in the *Book of Commandments*, but it was printed in the *Evening and Morning Star*. When it was reprinted in the *Doctrine and Covenants* it was changed.

Another example of this kind of alteration is found in a comparison of Section 68 of the *Doctrine and Covenants* with the way it was first printed in the *Evening and Morning Star*, in Independence, Missouri, for October, 1832, page 3. In this revelation as changed and altered, 323 words were added and 21 left out. (*The Book of Commandments Controversy Reviewed*, page 81)

Just how many changes were made in the *Doctrine and Covenants* can not be determined unless the church will allow all of the revelations, in their handwritten form, to be filmed. Of course, they will NOT do this. When a woman wrote the Historian's office requesting a microfilm of these revelations in their handwritten form, she received the following reply:

We are enclosing herewith a \$25.00 in currency you forwarded for a microfilm of the original handwritten revelations of Joseph Smith.

This work has never been microfilmed.

The Mormon Church will spend thousands of dollars to microfilm genealogical records, but they do not dare release a microfilm of Joseph Smith's revelations, even when the money is provided.

Melvin J. Petersen, who wrote his thesis for the BYU, found that 703 words have been changed, 1,656 words added and 453 words deleted since the revelations were first printed in the *Book of Commandments*. (“A Study of the Nature of and the Significance of the Changes in the Revelations. . .” typed copy, page 118)

Besides the thousands of changes that were made in the revelations that were first published in the *Book of Commandments* and other early publications, one whole section on marriage has been removed. Also, the Lectures on Faith, which comprised 70 pages of the 1835 edition of the *Doctrine and Covenants*, have been completely removed from later editions. (Mormon writers admit that the section on marriage and the Lectures on Faith have been removed, but very few of them will admit that there have been actual meaning changes in the revelations.)

All of these alterations have been made within 135 years. Imagine what would have happened to the Bible if the churches that preserved it had altered it at the same rate the Mormons have altered the *Doctrine and Covenants*. We would be lucky to have anything the way it was originally written! Mormon writers accuse non-Mormons of making changes, yet their own church has been guilty of this very thing. For instance, Dr. Hugh Nibley makes this statement concerning a non-Mormon writer:

He begins by telescoping a helpfully explanatory letter from Brigham Young into a short, cynical, and brutal note, **omitting the little dots which indicate that one is making deletions in a quotation**, so that the reader assumes that he has B. Y.'s own statement before his eyes. . . . This, we should warn the student, is a bit drastic; it is in fact libellous—but what are the chances of its being discovered? (*Sounding Brass*, Salt Lake City, 1963, page 118)

Evidently Dr. Nibley is well informed on the rules a writer should follow when making quotations. Why have the Mormon leaders not followed these rules? Where are the “little dots” to show that deletions have been made in Joseph Smith’s revelations ?

Study of Changes

In order to show some of the important changes that were made in the revelations we obtained photographs of Yale University’s original copy of the *Book of Commandments*. Because of the age of the book a few of the pages were not too clear; therefore, we have used photographs from another original copy of the *Book of Commandments* to replace the photographs that were unclear.

We have compared these pages with the revelations as published in the 1966 printing of the *Doctrine and Covenants* and have marked the changes on the photographs. Therefore, the text is an exact photographic reproduction of the pages of the original *Book of Commandments*, and the handwriting shows the changes that would have to be made in the text to bring it into conformity with the 1966 printing of the *Doctrine and Covenants*. Although there have been many changes in the chapter headings, we have not bothered to mark them.

The *Book of Commandments* has 160 pages in it, but since we are limited on space in this study, we have selected only the pages which contain important changes. Notice that we have assigned a letter to some of the changes that we want to discuss later in the study.

Key to Markings

Words added are red letters in a red box with an insertion ^ arrow showing where they are added.

Textual changes are in a green box in the text with a line through words to be changed and the new words noted in the margin. Boxes are connected with a line.

Words deleted are in a blue box with a line through the deleted words.

Book of Commandments - 1833 - Chapter 2
Compare Doctrine and Covenants - 1966 - Section 3:9-20

8

which is contrary to
the commandment
which I gave you

4 Behold thou art Joseph, and thou wast chosen to do the work of the Lord, but because of transgression, if thou art not aware thou wilt fall, but remember God is merciful: Therefore, repent of that which thou hast done, and he will only cause thee to be afflicted for a season, and thou art still chosen, and wilt again be called to the work; and except thou do this, thou shalt be delivered up and become as other men, and have no more gift.

art

5 And when thou deliverdest up that which God had given thee sight and power to translate, thou deliverdest up that which was sacred, into the hands of a wicked man, who has set at nought the counsels of God, and has broken the most sacred promises, which were made before God, and has depended upon his own judgment, and boasted in his own wisdom, and this is the reason that thou hast lost thy privileges for a season, for thou hast suffered the counsel of thy director to be trampled upon from the beginning.

6 Nevertheless, my work shall go forth and accomplish my purposes, for as the knowledge of a Savior has come into the world, even so shall the knowledge of my people, the Nephites, and the Jacobites, and the Josephites, and the Zoramites, come to the knowledge of the Lamanites, and the Lemuelites and the Ishmaelites, which dwindled in unbelief, because of the iniquities of their fathers, who have been suffered to destroy their brethren, because of their iniquities, and their abominations: and for this very purpose are these plates preserved which contain these records, that the promises of the Lord might be fulfilled, which he made to his people; and that the Lamanites might come to the knowledge of their fathers, and

unto

a savior
come unto

through the testimony
of their fathers — and
this testimony shall

whom the Lord has

the Nephites

inasmuch
through the testimony
of the Jews

and to

who
iniquity

CHAPTER IV.

A Revelation given to Joseph and Martin, in Harmony, Pennsylvania, March, 1829, when Martin desired of the Lord to know whether Joseph had, in his possession, the record of the Nephites.

BEHOLD, I say unto you, that my servant ^{Harris} Martin ^{as} has desired a witness ^{at} from my hand, ^{you have} that my servant Joseph ^{you have} has got the ^{plates} things of which ^{he has} he has testified, and borne record that ^{he has} he has received of me.

2 And now, behold, this shall you say unto him: ^{he who spake unto you, said unto you:}

—I the Lord am God, and ^{you} I have given these ^{you} things unto my servant Joseph, and ^{and} I have com- ^{Smith, Jun.}

^{you} manded ^{and} him that ^{you} he should stand as a witness of ^{you} these things, ^{you} nevertheless I have caused ^{you} him that ^{you} he should enter into a covenant with me, that ^{you} he

should not show them except ^{to those persons to whom} I ^{you have} command him; ^{you} and he has no power over them except ^{you should} I grant it ^{commanded you} to those persons to whom

^{you have} unto him; and ^{you} he has a gift to translate the book, ^{you have} and I have commanded ^{plates} him that ^{you should} he shall pretend ^{unto you} to no other gift, for I will grant ^{until it is finished} him no other gift. **A**

A and this is the first gift that I bestowed upon you

A until my purpose is fulfilled in this

3 ^{until it is finished} **A** And verily I say unto you, that wo shall come ^{hereafter you shall be ordained and go forth and deliver my words unto the children of men} unto the inhabitants of the earth, if they will not hearken unto my words, for, behold, if they will not believe my words, they would not believe my servant Joseph, if it were possible that ^{you should} he could show ^{you} them all things.

^{these} O ye unbelieving, ye stiffnecked ^{Oh, this} generation, mine anger is kindled against ^{and} you! ^{them}

4 Behold, verily I say, ^{unto you} I have reserved ^{those} the things ^{unto you} of which I have spoken, which I have intrusted ^{unto you} to my servant, for a wise purpose in me, and it shall be made known unto future generations: But this

^{word} generation shall have my ^{through you and in addition to your testimony,} words, ^{yea and} the testi-

Book of Commandments - 1833 - Chapter 4
Compare Doctrine and Covenants - Section 5:11-22

11

whom I shall call and ordain, unto whom I will show these things, and they

that are given through you

in this the beginning of the rising up and the coming forth of my church out of the wilderness—clear as the moon, and fair as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners.

even of water and of the spirit—and you must wait yet a little while, for ye are not yet ordained—

B

on

many of three of my servants shall go forth with my words unto this generation; yea, three shall know of a surety that these things are true, for I will give them power, that they may behold and view these things as they are, and to none else will I grant this power, to receive this same testimony among this generation. And the testimony of three witnesses will I send forth and my word, and behold, whosoever believeth in my word, them will I visit with the manifestation of my Spirit, and they shall be born of me, and their testimony shall also go forth.

from heaven will I declare it unto them.

of words

C

5 And thus, if the people of this generation harden not their hearts, I will work a reformation among them, and I will put down all lyings, and deceivings, and priestcrafts, and envyings, and strifes, and idolatries, and sorceries, and all manner of iniquities, and I will establish my church, like unto the church which was taught by my disciples in the days of old.

6 And now if this generation do harden their hearts against my word, behold I will deliver them up unto satan, for he reigneth and hath much power at this time, for he hath got great hold upon the hearts of the people of this generation: and not far from the iniquities of Sodom and Gomorrah, do they come at this time: and behold the sword of justice hangeth over their heads, and if they persist in the hardness of their hearts, the time cometh that it must fall upon them. Behold I tell you these things even as I also told the people of the destruction of Jerusalem, and my word shall be verified at this time as it hath hitherto been verified.

unto the condemnation of this generation if they harden their hearts against them; for a desolating scourge shall go forth among the inhabitants of the earth, and shall continue to be poured out from time to time, if they repent not, until the earth is empty, and the inhabitants thereof are consumed away and utterly destroyed by the brightness of my coming.

you

7 And now I command my servant Joseph to repent, and walk more uprightly before me, and yield to the persuasions of men no more; and that he be

to you

26

12

firm in keeping the commandments wherewith I
 have commanded him; and if he doeth this, behold
 I grant unto him eternal life, even if he should be
 slain.

again

8 And now I speak again concerning the man that

unto you, my
 servant Joseph,

desires the

desireth a witness: behold I say unto him, he exalt-

exalts

eth himself and doth not humble himself sufficiently

does

before me, but if he will go out and bow down be-

fore me, and humble himself in mighty prayer and

faith, in the sincerity of his heart, then will I grant

unto him a view of the things which he desireth to

desires

see

know: and then he shall say unto the people of this

generation, behold I have seen the things and I

which the Lord hath
 shown unto Joseph
 Smith, Jun.,

know of a surety that they are true, for I have seen

for

them, and they have been shown unto me by the

the Lord

my servant Martin Harris

power of God and not of man. And I command

him that he shall say no more unto them, concerning

these things, except he shall say, I have seen them,

and they have been shown unto me by the power of

God.

9 And these are the words which he shall say.—

But if he deny this, he will break the covenant which

he has before covenanted with me, and behold he

is condemned. And now except he humble him-

self and acknowledge unto me the things that he

has done, which are wrong, and covenant with me

that he will keep my commandments, and exercise

faith in me, behold I say unto him, he shall have

no such views, for I will grant unto him no views

you

of the things of which I have spoken. And if this

you

be the case, I command him that he shall do no

my servant Joseph

more, nor trouble me any more concerning this

say unto him that he shall

matter.

10 And if this be the case, behold I say unto you

thee

Joseph, when thou hast translated a few more pages,

D

18

CHAPTER VI.

1 *A Revelation given to Joseph and Oliver, in Harmony, Pennsylvania, April, 1829, when they desired to know whether John, the beloved disciple, tarried on earth. Translated from parchment, written and hid up by himself.*

For if you shall ask what you will, it shall be granted unto you

AND the Lord said unto me, John my beloved, what desirest thou? and I said, Lord, give unto me power, that I may bring souls unto thee.—

unto him

over death

And the Lord said unto me: Verily, verily I say unto thee, because thou desiredst this, thou shalt tarry till I come in my glory:—

live and

until

and shalt prophesy before nations, kindreds, tongues and people

2 And for this cause, the Lord said unto Peter:—

If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? for he desiredst of me that he might bring souls unto me: but thou desiredst that thou might speedily come unto me in my kingdom: I say unto thee, Peter, this was a good desire, but my beloved has

desired

mightest

undertaken a greater work.

that he might do more, or

3 Verily I say unto you, ye shall both have according to your desires, for ye both joy in that which ye have desired.

E

yet among men than what he has before done. Yea, he has undertaken a greater work; therefore I will make him as flaming fire and a ministering angel; he shall minister for those who shall be heirs of salvation who dwell on the earth.

And I will make thee to minister for him and for thy brother James; and unto you three I will give this power and the keys of this ministry until I come.

CHAPTER VII.

1 *A Revelation given to Oliver, in Harmony, Pennsylvania, April, 1829.*

Cowdery

OLIVER, verily, verily I say unto you, that assuredly as the Lord liveth, which is your God who and your Redeemer, even so sure shall you receive surely a knowledge of whatsoever things you shall ask in faith, with an honest heart, believing that you shall receive a knowledge concerning the engravings of old records, which are ancient, which contain those parts of my scripture of which have been spoken, by has the manifestation of my Spirit; yea, behold I will tell you in your mind and in your heart by the Holy Ghost, which shall come upon you and which shall dwell in your heart.

2 Now, behold this is the Spirit of revelation:—behold this is the Spirit by which Moses brought the children of Israel through the Red sea on dry ground: therefore, this is thy gift; apply unto it and blessed art thou, for it shall deliver you out of the hands of your enemies, when, if it were not so, they would slay you and bring your soul to destruction.

3 O remember, these words and keep my commandments. Remember this is your gift. Now thy gift this is not all, for you have another gift, which is Aaron the gift of working with the rod: behold it has told many you things: behold there is no other power save God, the power of that can cause this rod of nature, to work in your hands, for it is the work of God; and therefore whatsoever you shall ask me to tell you by that means, that will I grant unto you, that you shall know.

F

gift of Aaron to be with you

therefore, doubt not

have knowledge concerning it

the power of

F

and you shall hold it in your hands, and do marvelous works; and no power shall be able to take it away out of your hands, for it is the work of God.

4 Remember that without faith you can do noth-

gift

and

CHAPTER IX.

1 *A Revelation given to Joseph, in Harmony, Pennsylvania, May, 1829, informing him of the alteration of the Manuscript of the fore part of the book of Mormon.*

NOW, behold I say unto you, that because you delivered up so many writings, which you had those given unto you power to translate, by the means of the Urim and Thummim into the hands of a wicked man, G you have lost them, and you also lost your gift at the same time, nevertheless it has been restored unto is now you again: therefore, see that you are faithful and continue go on unto the finishing of the remainder of the work of translation as you have begun. Do not run faster or labor more than you have strength and means provided to translate, but enable you to pray always be diligent unto the end, that you may come off conquerer; yea, that you may conquer satan, and those that you may escape the hands of the servants of satan that do uphold his work.

2 Behold they have sought to destroy you; yea, even the man in whom you have trusted, has sought to destroy you and for this cause I said, that he is a wicked man, for he has sought to take away the things wherewith you have been intrusted; and he has also sought to destroy your gift, and because you have delivered the writings into his hands, behold they wicked men have taken them from you: therefore, you have delivered them up; yea, that which was sacred unto wickedness. And hath behold, satan has put it into their hearts to alter the words which you have caused to be written, or which you have translated, which have gone out of your hands; and behold I say unto you, that because they have altered the words, they read contrary from that which you translated and caused to be written; and on this wise the devil has sought to lay a cunning

23

plan, that he may destroy this work; for he **has** put **hath** it into their hearts to do this, that by lying they may say they have caught you in the words which you have pretended to translate.

3 Verily I say unto you, that I will not suffer that satan shall accomplish his evil design in this thing, for behold he has put it into their hearts to **get thee to** tempt the **thy** Lord **their** God; **for** behold they say **and think** in their hearts,

in asking to translate it over again. And then,

We will see if God has given him power to translate, if so, he will also give him power again; and if God giveth him power again, or if he **translate** **translates** again, or in other words, if he bringeth forth the same words, behold we have the same with us, and we have altered them: Therefore, they will not agree, and we will say that he has lied in his words, and that he has no gift, and that he has no power: therefore, we will destroy him, and also the work, and we will do this that we may not be ashamed in the end, and that we may get glory of the world.

and their hearts are corrupt, and full of wickedness and abominations; and they love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil; therefore they will not ask of me. Satan stirreth them up,

thinking

4 Verily, verily I say unto you, that satan has great hold upon their hearts; he stirreth them up to **do** iniquity against that which is good, that he may lead their souls to destruction, and thus he has laid a cunning plan to destroy the work of God; yea, he stirreth up their hearts to anger against this work; yea, he saith unto them, Deceive and lie in wait to catch, that ye may destroy: behold this is no harm, and thus he flattereth them and telleth them that it is no sin to lie, that they may catch a man in a lie, that they may destroy him, and thus he flattereth them, and leadeth them along until he draggeth their souls down to hell; and thus he causeth them to catch themselves in their own snare; and thus he goeth up and down, to and fro in the earth, seeking to destroy the souls of men.

but I will require this at their hands, and it shall turn to their shame and condemnation in the day of judgment.

Book of Commandments - 1833 - Chapter 9
Compare Doctrine and Covenants - Section 10:28-38

24

5 Verily, verily I say unto you, wo be unto him that lieth to decieve, because he supposeth that another lieth to decieve, for such are not exempt from the justice of God.

6 Now, behold they have altered those words, because satan saith unto them, He hath decieved you, and thus he flattereth them away to do iniquity, to tempt the Lord their God. these to get thee

7 Behold I say unto you, that you shall not translate again those words which have gone forth out of your hands; for behold, they shall not lie any more against those words; for behold, if you should bring forth the same words, they would say that you have will and yourself lied; that you have pretended to translate, but that you have contradicted your words; and behold they would publish this, and satan would harden the hearts of the people, to stir them up to anger against you, that they might not believe my words: thus will thinketh to may satan would overpower this generation, that the work your testimony in might not come forth in this generation: but behold here is wisdom, and because I show unto you wisdom, and give you commandments concerning these things, what you shall do, show it not unto the world until you have accomplished the work of translation

8 Marvel not that I said unto you, here is wisdom, show it not unto the world, for I said, show it not unto the world, that you may be preserved. Behold I do not say that you shall not show it unto the righteous; but as you cannot always judge the righteous, or as you cannot always tell the wicked from the righteous: therefore, I say unto you, hold your peace until I shall see fit to make all things known unto the world concerning the matter.

9 And now, verily I say unto you, that an account of those things that you have written, which have

35

Spirit in many instances, that the things which you have written are true :

H

the foundation of

3 Wherefore you know that they are true ; and if you know that they are true, behold I give unto you a commandment, that you rely upon the things which are written ; for in them are all things written, concerning my church, my gospel, and my rock.

H

upon the foundation of

4 Wherefore if you shall build up my church, and my gospel, and my rock, the gates of hell shall not prevail against you.

5 Behold the world is ripening in iniquity, and it must needs be, that the children of men are stirred up unto repentance, both the Gentiles, and also the house of Israel :

hands

Joseph Smith, Jun.

6 Wherefore as thou hast been baptized by the hand of my servant, according to that which I have commanded him :

7 Wherefore he hath fulfilled the thing which I commanded him.

8 And now marvel not that I have called him unto mine own purpose, which purpose is known in me :

9 Wherefore if he shall be diligent in keeping my commandments, he shall be blessed unto eternal life, and his name is Joseph.

Whitmer

10 And now Oliver, I speak unto you, and also unto David, by the way of commandment :

Cowdery

11 For behold I command all men every where to repent, and I speak unto you, even as unto Paul mine apostle, for you are called even with that same calling with which he was called.

12 Remember the worth of souls is great in the sight of God :

13 For behold the Lord your God suffered death redeemer

Book of Commandments - 1833 - Chapter 16
Compare Doctrine and Covenants - Section 19:7-20

40

might work upon the hearts of the children of men, altogether for my name's glory :

9 Wherefore, I will explain unto you, this mystery, for it is mete unto you, to know even as mine apostles.

10 I speak unto you that are chosen in this thing, even as one, that you may enter into my rest.

11 For behold, the mystery of Godliness how great is it? for behold I am endless, and the punishment which is given from my hand, is endless punishment, for endless is my name :

12 Wherefore—

Eternal punishment } Endless punishment
is God's punishment : } is God's punishment :

to repent, and keep the commandments which you have received by the hand of my servant Joseph Smith, Jun.,

13 Wherefore, I command you by my name, and in

it is

by my Almighty power, that you repent: repent, lest I smite you by the rod of my mouth, and by my wrath, and by my anger, and your sufferings be sore :

have received them; therefore I command you to

14 How sore you know not!

15 How exquisite you know not!

16 Yea, how hard to bear you know not!

17 For behold, I God have suffered these things for all, that they might not suffer, if they would repent, but if they would not repent, they must suffer even as I:

18 Which suffering caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore, both body and spirit :

and to suffer

19 And would that I might not drink the bitter cup and shrink :

20 Nevertheless, glory be to the Father, and I partook and finished my preparations unto the children of men :

with

21 Wherefore, I command you again by my Al-

to repent, lest I humble you

2 It being regularly organized and established agreeable to the laws of our country, by the will and commandments of God in the fourth month and on the sixth day of the month, which is called April :

3 Which commandments were given to Joseph, Smith, Jun.,
to be the first who was called of God and ordained an apostle of Jesus Christ, an elder of this church ;

4 And also to Oliver, who was also called of God Cowdery
 an apostle of Jesus Christ, an elder of this church, to be the second
 and ordained under his hand :

5 And this according to the grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, to whom be all glory both now and forever. Amen.

6 For, after that it truly was manifested unto this first elder, that he had received a remission of his sins, he was entangled again in the vanities of the world ;

7 But after truly repenting, God ministered unto him by an holy angel, whose countenance was as lightning, and whose garments were pure and white

other

above all whiteness, and gave unto him commandments which inspired him from on high, and gave unto him power, by the means which were before prepared, that he should translate a book;

from on high

to translate the Book of Mormon

8 Which book contained a record of a fallen people, and also the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles ;

contains

9 And also to the Jews, proving unto them, that the holy scriptures are true ;

to the world

does

this age and generation

generations

thereby showing

10 And also, that God doth inspire men and call them to his holy work, in these last days as well as in days of old, that he might be the same God forever. Amen.

also; which was given by inspiration, and is confirmed to others by the ministering of angels, and is declared unto the world by them—

11 Which book was given by inspiration, and is called the book of Mormon, and is confirmed to

yesterday, today, and

is

Book of Commandments - 1833 - Chapter 24
Compare Doctrine and Covenants - Section 20:12-25

49

others by the ministering of angels, and declared unto the world by them:

Therefore

come to a knowledge of

shall receive a crown of eternal life;

and

12 Wherefore having so great witnesses, by them shall the world be judged, even as many as shall hereafter receive this work, either to faith and righteousness, or to the hardness of heart in unbelief, to their own condemnation, for the Lord God hath spoken it, for we, the elders of the church, have heard and bear witness to the words of the glorious Majesty on high; to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

work

and those who receive it in

and reject it, it shall turn

but those who harden their hearts

has

which are in them;

13 Wherefore, by these things we know that there is a God in heaven, who is infinite and eternal, from everlasting to everlasting, the same unchangeable God, the maker of heaven and earth and all things that in them is, and that he created man male and female, and after his own image, and in his own likeness created he them;

framer

living and true God and that he should be the only

14 And that he gave unto the children of men commandments, that they should love and serve him the only being whom they should worship, but by the transgression of these holy laws, man became sensual and devilish, and became fallen man.

them

15 Wherefore, the Almighty God gave his only begotten Son, as it is written in those scriptures, which have been given of him, that he suffered temptations, but gave no heed unto them;

16 That he was crucified, died, and rose again the third day, and that he ascended into heaven to sit down on the right hand of the Father, to reign with Almighty power according to the will of the Father.

That

17 Therefore, as many as would believe and were baptized in his holy name, and endured in faith to the end, should be saved;

be

endure

Not only those who believed
after he came in the meridian
of time, in the flesh, but all
those from the beginning

50

should have eternal life

18 Yea, even as many as were before he came in the flesh, from the beginning, who believed in the words of the holy prophets, who were inspired by the gift of the Holy Ghost, which truly testified of him in all things, as well as those who should come after, who should believe in the gifts and callings of God, by the Holy Ghost, which beareth record of the Father and of the Son, which Father and Son are and Holy Ghost, is one God, infinite and eternal, without end. Amen.

spake as they

who

19 And we know, that all men must repent and believe on the name of Jesus Christ, and worship the Father in his name, and endure in faith on his name to the end, or they cannot be saved in the kingdom of God.

20 And we know, that justification through the grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, is just and true;

21 And we know, also, that sanctification through the grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, is just and true, to all those who love and serve God with all their mights, minds, and strength, but there is a possibility that men may fall from grace and depart from the living God.

man

22 Therefore, let the church take heed and pray always, lest they fall into temptation;

23 Yea, and even he that is sanctified also.

let those who are

according

24 And we know, that these things are true and agreeable to the revelation of John, neither adding to, nor diminishing from the prophecy of his book;

take heed

revelations

25 Neither to the holy scriptures;

or

26 Neither to the revelations of God which shall come hereafter, by the gift and power of the Holy Ghost;

27 Neither by the voice of God;

Book of Commandments - 1833 - Chapter 24
Compare Doctrine and Covenants - Section 20:35-48

51

Or

28 Neither by the ministering of angels, and the Lord God hath spoken it; and honor, power, and glory, be rendered to his holy name both now and ever. Amen.

29 And again, by way of commandment to the church, concerning the manner of baptism;

All those who humble themselves

desire

hearts

witness before

Jesus

to

by

30 Behold whosoever humbleth himself before God and desireth to be baptized, and comes forth with a broken heart and a contrite spirit, and witnesseth unto the church, that they have truly repented of all their sins and are willing to take upon them the name of Christ, having a determination to serve him unto the end, and truly manifest by their works that they have received the Spirit of Christ unto the remission of their sins, then shall they be received unto baptism into the church of Christ.

come

spirits

of

his

31 The duty of the elders, priests, teachers, deacons and members of the church of Christ.

32 An apostle is an elder, and it is his calling to baptize and to ordain other elders, priests, teachers and deacons, and to administer the flesh and blood of Christ according to the scriptures;

bread and wine

emblems of the

And to confirm those who are baptized into the church, by the laying on of hands for the baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost, according to the scriptures;

33 And to teach, expound, exhort, baptize, and watch over the church;

34 And to confirm the church by the laying on of the hands, and the giving of the Holy Ghost, and to take the lead of all meetings.

35 The elders are to conduct the meetings as they are led by the Holy Ghost.

according to the commandments and revelations of God.

36 The priest's duty is to preach, teach, expound, exhort and baptize, and administer the sacrament, and visit the house of each member, and exhort them to pray vocally and in secret, and also to attend to all family duties;

he may also

37 And ordain other priests, teachers and deacons,

52

and ^{he is to} take the lead of meetings; ^{when there is no elder present; but when there is an elder present, he is only to preach, teach, expound, exhort, and baptize, and visit the house of each member, exhorting them to pray vocally and in secret and attend to all family duties. In all these duties the priest} ~~but none of these offices is he to do when there is an elder present, but in all cases~~ is to assist the elder. ^{if occasion requires}

38 The teacher's duty is to watch over the church always, and be with ^{them}, and strengthen them, and see that there is no iniquity in the church, neither hardness with each other, neither lying ^{nor} backbiting, nor evil speaking;

39 And see that the church meet together often, and also see that all the members do their duty;

40 And he is to take the lead of meetings in the absence of the elder or priest, and is to be assisted always, ^{and} in all his duties in the church by the deacons; ^{if occasion requires}

41 But neither ^{the} teachers nor deacons have authority to baptize ^{nor} administer the sacrament, ^{or lay on hands; they are, however,} ~~but~~ ^{are} to warn, expound, exhort and teach, and invite all to come unto Christ.

42 Every elder, priest, teacher or deacon, is to be ordained according to the gifts and callings of God unto him, ^{and he is to be ordained} by the power of the Holy Ghost which is in the one who ordains him.

43 The several elders composing this church of Christ, are to meet in conference once in three months, or from time to time as ^{they} shall direct or appoint, ^{said conferences} to do church business ^{and said conferences} ~~whatsoever~~ ^{whatever} is necessary. ^{may}

44 ^{And} each priest ^{or} teacher, who is ordained by a priest, ^{is to} take a certificate from him at the time, ^{certificate} which when presented to an elder, ^{he is to give him} ^{shall entitle} to a license, which shall authorize him to perform the ^{duties} duty of his calling. ^{or deacon}

45 The duty of the members after they are received by baptism.

46 The elders or priests are to have a sufficient **I**

or he may receive it from a conference. No person is to be ordained to any office in this church, where there is a regularly organized branch of the same, without the vote of that church; But the presiding elders, traveling bishops, high councilors, high priests, and elders, may have the privilege of ordaining, where there is no branch of the church that a vote may be called. Every president of the high priesthood (or presiding elder), bishop, high councilor, and high priest, is to be ordained by the direction of a high council or general conference.

Book of Commandments - 1833 - Chapter 24
Compare Doctrine and Covenants - Section 20:68-76

53

time to expound all things concerning **this** church of **the** Christ to their understanding, previous to their partaking of the sacrament, and being confirmed by the laying on of the hands of the elders;

47 So that all things may be done in order.

48 And the members shall manifest before the church, and also before the elders, by a godly walk and conversation, that they are worthy of it, that there may be works and faith agreeable to the holy scriptures, walking in holiness before the Lord.

the 49 Every member of **this** church of Christ having children, is to bring them unto the elders before the church, who are to lay their hands upon them in the name of **the** Lord, and bless them in **the** name **his** of Christ.

No one 50 **There** can **not any one** be received into **this** **the** church of Christ, **who has not** arrived **to** the years **unto** of accountability before God, and is **not** capable of repentance.

51 **And** baptism is to be administered in the following manner unto all those who repent:

The person who is 52 **Whosoever being** called of God and **having** **has** **from** authority **given them of** Jesus Christ, shall go down **to baptize** into the water with **them**, and shall say, calling **the person who has presented himself or herself for baptism** **them** by name:

him or her 53 Having **authority given me** of Jesus Christ, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

54 Then shall he immerse **them** in the water, and **him or her** come forth again out of the water.

often 55 **And** it is expedient that the church meet together **oft** to partake of bread and wine, in **remem-** **the** brance of the Lord Jesus;

56 And the elder or priest shall administer it, and after this manner shall he **do**, he shall kneel with **administer it**

CHAPTER XXVI.

Hearken unto the voice of the Lord your God, while I speak unto you,

1 *A Revelation to Emma, given in Harmony, Pennsylvania, July, 1830.*

Smith

EMMMA, my daughter in Zion, a revelation I give unto you, concerning my will:

for verily I say unto you, all those who receive my gospel are sons and daughters in my kingdom.

2 Behold thy sins are forgiven thee, and thou art an elect lady, whom I have called.

and if thou art faithful and walk in the paths of virtue before me, I will preserve thy life, and thou shalt receive an inheritance in Zion.

3 Murmur not because of the things which thou hast not seen, for they are withheld from thee, and from the world, which is wisdom in me in a time to come.

Smith, Jun.,

4 And the office of thy calling shall be for a comfort unto my servant Joseph, thy husband, in his afflictions with consoling words, in the spirit of meekness.

while there is no one to be a scribe for him,

Cowdery

5 And thou shalt go with him at the time of his going, and be unto him for a scribe, that I may send Oliver whithersoever I will.

my servant

6 And thou shalt be ordained under his hand to expound scriptures, and to exhort the church, according as it shall be given thee by my Spirit:

7 For he shall lay his hands upon thee, and thou shalt receive the Holy Ghost, and thy time shall be given to writing, and to learning much.

J

in

8 And thou needest not fear, for thy husband shall support thee from the church:

9 For unto them is his calling, that all things might be revealed unto them, whatsoever I will according to their faith.

10 And verily I say unto thee, that thou shalt lay aside the things of this world, and seek for the things of a better.

11 And it shall be given thee, also, to make a selection of sacred Hymns, as it shall be given thee,

K

60

CHAPTER XXVIII.

1 *A Commandment to the church of Christ, given in Harmony, Pennsylvania, September 4, 1830.*

LISTEN to the voice of Jesus Christ, your Lord, your God and your Redeemer, whose word is quick and powerful.

2 For behold I say unto you, that it mattereth not what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, when ye partake of the sacrament, if it so be that ye do it with an eye single to my glory;

3 Remembering unto the Father my body which was laid down for you, and my blood which was shed for the remission of your sins:

4 Wherefore a commandment I give unto you, that you shall not purchase wine, neither strong drink of your enemies:

5 Wherefore you shall partake of none, except it is made new among you, yea, in this my Father's kingdom which shall be built up on the earth.

6 Behold this is wisdom in me, wherefore marvel not, for the hour cometh that I will drink of the fruit of the vine with you, on the earth, and with all those whom my Father hath given me out of the world:

7 Wherefore lift up your hearts and rejoice, and gird up your loins and be faithful until I come: even so. Amen.

and ye shall be caught up, that where I am ye shall be also.

and take upon you my whole armor, that ye may be able to withstand the evil day, having done all, that ye may be able to stand. Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, having on the breastplate of righteousness, and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, which I have sent mine angels to commit unto you; taking the shield of faith wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked; and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of my Spirit, which I will pour out upon you, and my word which I reveal unto you, and be agreed as touching all things whatsoever ye ask of me,

Moroni, whom I have sent unto you to reveal the Book of Mormon, containing the fulness of my everlasting gospel, to whom I have committed the keys of the record of the stick of Ephraim; and also with Elias to whom I have committed the keys of bringing to pass the restoration of all things spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began, concerning the last days; and also John the son of Zacharias, which Zacharias he (Elias) visited and gave promise that he should have a son, and his name should be John, and he should be filled with the spirit of Elias; which John I have sent unto you, my servants, Joseph Smith, Jun., and Oliver Cowdery, to ordain you unto the first priesthood which you have received, that you might be called and ordained even as Aaron; and also Elijah unto whom I have committed the keys of the power of turning the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to the fathers, that the whole earth may not be smitten with a curse; and also with Joseph and Jacob, and Isaac, and Abraham, your fathers, by whom the promises remain; and also with Michael, or Adam, the father of all, the prince of all, the ancient of days; and also with Peter, and James, and John, whom I have sent unto you, by whom I have ordained you and confirmed you to be apostles, and especial witnesses of my name, and bear the keys of your ministry and of the same things which I revealed unto them; unto whom I have committed the keys of my kingdom, and a dispensation of the gospel for the last times; and for the fulness of times, in the which I will gather together in one all things, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; and also with

but committeth adultery and repenteth not, shall be cast out; and he that committeth adultery and repents with all his heart, and forsaketh, and doeth it no more, thou shalt forgive him; but if he doeth it again, he shall not be forgiven, but shall be cast out.

24 Thou shalt not speak evil of thy neighbor, or nor do him any harm.

25 Thou knowest my laws, they are given in my scriptures, he that sinneth and repenteth not, shall be cast out.

L of 26 If thou lovest me, thou shalt serve me and keep all my commandments; and behold, thou shalt consecrate all thy properties, that which thou hast unto me, with a covenant and a deed which can not be broken; and they shall be laid before the bishop of my church, and two of the elders, such as he shall appoint, and set apart for that purpose.

27 And it shall come to pass, that the bishop of my church, after that he has received the properties of my church, that it can not be taken from the church, he shall appoint every man a steward over his own property, or that which he has received, inasmuch as is sufficient for himself and family:

again, if there shall be properties in the hands of the church, or any individuals of it, more than is necessary for their support after this first consecration, which is a residue to be consecrated unto the bishop, it

28 And the residue shall be kept to administer to him who has not, that every man may receive according as he stands in need: to his wants

29 And the residue shall be kept in my storehouse, to administer to the poor and needy, as shall be appointed by the elders of the church and the bishop; and for the purpose of purchasing lands, and the building up of the New Jerusalem, which is hereafter to be revealed; that my covenant people may be gathered in one, in the day that I shall come to my temple:

Book of Commandments - 1833 - Chapter 44
Compare Doctrine and Covenants - Section 42:36-48

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30 And this I do for the salvation of my people.

31 And it shall come to pass, that he that sinneth and repenteth not shall be cast out, and shall not receive again that which he has consecrated unto me:

of the church

for inasmuch as ye do it unto the least of these ye do it unto me.

32 For it shall come to pass, that which I spake by the mouths of my prophets shall be fulfilled; for I will consecrate the riches of the Gentiles, unto my people which are of the house of Israel.

the poor and the needy of my church, or in other words, unto

of
who

those who embrace my gospel among

33 And again, thou shalt not be proud in thy heart; let all thy garments be plain, and their beauty the beauty of the work of thine own hands, and let all things be done in cleanliness before me.

the poor of

34 Thou shalt not be idle; for he that is idle shall not eat the bread, nor wear the garments of the laborer.

35 And whosoever among you that are sick, and have not faith to be healed, but believeth, shall be nourished in all tenderness with herbs and mild food, and that not of the world; and the elders of the church, two or more shall be called, and shall pray for, and lay their hands upon them in my name, and if they die, they shall die unto me; and if they live they shall live unto me.

believe

with

by the hand of an enemy

36 Thou shalt live together in love, insomuch that thou shalt weep for the loss of them that die, and more especially for those that have not hope of a glorious resurrection.

37 And it shall come to pass, that those that die in me shall not taste of death, for it shall be sweet unto them; and they that die not in me, wo unto them; for their death is bitter.

38 And again, it shall come to pass, that he that hath has faith in me to be healed, and is not appointed unto death, shall be healed.

hath

you in my own due time where the New Jerusalem shall be built.

48 And behold, it shall come to pass, that my servants shall be sent ^{forth} both to the east, and to the west, to the north, and to the south; and even now let him that goeth to the east, teach them that shall be converted to flee to the west; and this in consequence of that which is ^{to come} on the earth, and ^{coming} of secret combinations.

49 Behold, thou shalt observe all these things, and great shall be thy reward.

50 ^{For unto you it is given to know} Thou shalt observe to keep the mysteries of the kingdom ^{unto thyself, for it is not given to the world to know the mysteries.} ^{but unto the world it is not given to know them.}

51 ^{Ye shall observe church covenants, such as} The laws which ye have received, and shall hereafter receive, shall be sufficient ^{for you both} here, and in the New Jerusalem. ^{and be faithful} ^{ye} ^{establish}

52 Therefore, he that lacketh ^{knowledge}, let him ask of me and I will give him liberally and upbraid him not. ^{to} ^{wisdom}

53 Lift up your hearts and rejoice, for unto you the kingdom ^{has} been given; even so: Amen. ^{or in other words, the keys of the church}

O ^{have} 54 The priests and teachers, shall have their ^{stewardships} stewardship ^{given them} even as the members; and the elders are to assist the bishop, in all things, ^{and he} ^{are to have} is to see that their families ^{are} supported out of the property which is consecrated to the ^{Lord}, either a ^{counselors} stewardship, or otherwise, as may be thought best ^{or decided} by the ^{elders} and bishop. ^{as counselors} **P**

and the bishop, also, shall receive his support, or a just remuneration for all his services in the church.

55 ~~Thou shalt contract no debts with the world, except thou art commanded.~~

56 ~~And again, the elders and bishop, shall counsel together, and they shall do by the direction of the Spirit as it must needs be necessary.~~

57 ~~There shall be as many appointed as must~~

for the good of the poor, and for other purposes, as before mentioned; or they are to receive a just remuneration for all their services,

Book of Commandments - 1833 - Chapter 44
Compare Doctrine and Covenants - Section 42

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~~needs be necessary to assist the bishop in obtaining places for the brethren from New York, that they may be together as much as can be, and as they are directed by the Holy Spirit; and every family shall have a place, that they may live by themselves.— And every church shall be organized in as close bodies as they can be; and this for a wise purpose:— even so. Amen.~~

CHAPTER XLV.

A Revelation to the elders of the church, assembled in Kirtland, Ohio, given February, 1831.

O HEARKEN, ye elders of my church, and give ear to the words which I shall speak unto you:

2 For behold, verily, verily I say unto you, that ye have received a commandment for a law unto my church, through him whom I have appointed unto you, to receive commandments and revelations from my hand.

3 And this ye shall know assuredly, that there is none other appointed unto you to receive commandments and revelations until he be taken, if he abide in me.

4 But verily, verily I say unto you, that none else shall be appointed unto this gift except it be through him, for if it be taken from him he shall not have power, except to appoint another in his stead:

5 And this shall be a law unto you, that ye receive not the teachings of any that shall come before you as revelations or commandments:

6 And this I give unto you, that you may not be

be is present also. And thus ye shall do in all cases which shall come before you.

or woman 9 And if a man shall rob, he shall be delivered or she up unto the law.

of the land or she 10 And if he shall steal, he shall be delivered up or she unto the law.

or she shall 11 And if he lie, he shall be delivered up unto the or she of the land law.

And 12 If he do any manner of iniquity, he shall be or she delivered up unto the law, even that of God.

or sister 13 And if thy brother offend thee, thou shalt take or her him between him and thee alone; and if he confess, or she thou shalt be reconciled.

or she 14 And if he confess not, thou shalt take another with thee; and then if he confess not, thou shalt deliver him up unto the church, not to the members but to the elders.

15 And it shall be done in a meeting, and that not before the world.

or sister 16 And if thy brother offend many, he shall be or she chastened before many.

or she 17 And if any one offend openly, he shall be or she rebuked openly, that he may be ashamed.

or she 18 And if he confess not, he shall be delivered up or she of God unto the law.

19 If any shall offend in secret, he shall be rebuked or she in secret, that he may have opportunity to confess or her in secret to him whom he has offended, and to God, or she church that the brethren may not speak reproachfully of or her him.

20 And thus shall ye conduct in all things.

21 Behold, verily I say unto you, that whatsoever whatever persons among you having put away their companions, for the cause of fornication, or in other words, if they shall testify before you, in all lowliness of

Selected Changes

Since we are limited for space in this study, we have cut out portions from the photographs of the *Book of Commandments* so that we can show the greatest number of changes in the least amount of space. There have been many other changes which we do not have room to show here. We have, however, tried to include all of the major changes.

Book of Commandments - 1833 - Chapter 3:2
Compare Doctrine and Covenants - Section 4:6-7

faith, virtue,
knowledge,

2 Remember temperance, patience, humility, diligence, ~~&c.~~, ask and ye shall receive, knock and it shall be opened unto you: Amen.

brotherly kindness,
godliness, charity,

Book of Commandments - 1833 - Chapter 7:4
Compare Doctrine and Covenants - Section 8:10-11

Therefore ask in faith.

ing. Trifle not with these things. Do not ask for that which you ought not. Ask that you may know the mysteries of God, and that you may translate all those ancient records, which have been hid up, ~~which~~ are sacred, and according to your faith shall it be done unto you.

and receive
knowledge from

Book of Commandments - 1833 - Chapter 16:22-24
Compare Doctrine and Covenants - Section 19:21-24

22 And I command you, that you preach nought but repentance; and show not these things, neither speak these things unto the world, for they can not bear meat, but milk they must receive:

now

until it is wisdom in me

23 Wherefore, they must not know these things lest they perish:

24 Wherefore, learn of me, and listen to my words; walk in the meekness of my Spirit and you shall have peace in me, Jesus Christ, by the will of the

I am

I came

and I do his will

Father.

Book of Commandments - 1833 - Chapter 16:33-39
Compare Doctrine and Covenants - Section 19:32-36

33 Behold this is a great and the last commandment which I shall give unto you:

concerning this matter

34 For this shall suffice for thy daily walk even unto the end of thy life.

35 And misery thou shalt receive, if thou wilt slight these counsels; Yea, even destruction of thyself and property.

the

36 Impart a portion of thy property; Yea, even a part of thy lands and all save the support of thy family.

debt thou hast
contracted with
the printer

37 Pay the printer's debt.

38 Release thyself from bondage.

thy family

39 Leave thy house and home, except when thou shalt desire to see them.

Book of Commandments - 1833 - Chapter 30:7
Compare Doctrine and Covenants - Section 28:8

7 And now, behold I say unto you, that you shall
inasmuch as they receive thy teachings thou shalt go unto the Lamanites and preach my gospel unto
them, and cause my church to be established among

Book of Commandments - 1833 - Chapter 30:8-10
Compare Doctrine and Covenants - Section 28:9-10

8 And now behold I say unto you, that it is not
revealed, and no man knoweth where the city shall Zion
be built, but it shall be given hereafter.

9 Behold I say unto you, that it shall be on the
borders by the Lamanites.

10 Thou shalt not leave this place until after the
conference, and my servant Joseph shall be appointed to rule the conference by the voice of it, and
preside over what he saith to thee, that thou shalt tell.

Book of Commandments - 1833 - Chapter 32:4-6
Compare Doctrine and Covenants - Section 30:6-8

4 For I have given unto him to build up my power
church among your brethren, the Lamanites.

5 And none have I appointed to be over him in his counselor
concerning church matters the church, except it is his brother Joseph Smith, Jun.,

6 Wherefore give heed unto these things and be
diligent in keeping my commandments, and you
shall be blessed unto eternal life. Amen.

Book of Commandments - 1833 - Chapter 34:11
Compare Doctrine and Covenants - Section 31:9

11 Be patient in afflictions, and in sufferings, re-
vile not against those that revile.

Book of Commandments - 1833 - Chapter 35:13
Compare Doctrine and Covenants - Section 33:13

13 And upon this Rock I will build my church;
yea, upon this Rock ye are built, and the gates of if ye continue
hell shall not prevail against you; and ye shall re-

Book of Commandments - 1833 - Chapter 40:23
Compare Doctrine and Covenants - Section 38:29

23 Ye hear of wars in far countries, and you say
in your hearts there will soon be great wars in far that
countries, but ye know not the hearts of them in men
your own land:

Book of Commandments - 1833 - Chapter 41:8-9
Compare Doctrine and Covenants - Section 39:10

8 But behold the days of thy deliverance are come, if thou wilt hearken to my voice, which saith unto thee:
9 Arise and be baptized, and wash away your
sins, calling on my name and you shall receive my

Book of Commandments - 1833 - Chapter 43:9-10
Compare Doctrine and Covenants - Section 41:7-8

9 And again, it is meet that my servant Joseph[^] Smith, Jun.,
should have a house built, in which to live and trans-
late.

inasmuch as he keepeth
my commandments

10 And again, it is meet that my servant Sidney[^] Rigdon
should live as seemeth him good[^]

Book of Commandments - 1833 - Chapter 44:12-15
Compare Doctrine and Covenants - Section 42:11-15

heads that he has authority, and has been regularly or-
dained by the hands of the church.

13 And again, the elders, priests, and teachers of
this church, shall teach the scriptures which are in principles of my gospel
in the bible, and the book of Mormon, in the which is
the fulness of the gospel; and they shall observe the
covenants and church articles to do them; and
these shall be their teachings.

As 14 And they shall be directed by the Spirit, which and the spirit
unto you shall be given them by the prayer of faith; and if
ye they receive not the Spirit, they shall not teach. ye

ye 15 And all this they shall observe to do, as I have
commanded concerning their teaching, until the ful- your
is ness of my scriptures are given.

Book of Commandments - 1833 - Chapter 44:43-45
Compare Doctrine and Covenants - Section 42:56-60

43 Thou shalt ask and my scriptures shall be giv- they shall be preserved
en as I have appointed; and for thy safety it is ex- in safety; and
pedient that thou shouldst hold thy peace concern-
ing them, and not teach them until ye have received them; in full

44 Then I give unto you a commandment that ye then
for shall teach them unto all men; and they also shall
be taught unto all nations, kindreds, tongues and
people.

have been given
unto thee in my
scriptures for a

45 Thou shalt take the things which thou hast re-
ceived, which thou knowest to have been my law,
to be my law, to govern my church; and he that
doeth according to these things shall be saved, and
he that doeth them not shall be damned, if he con-
tinue.

Book of Commandments - 1833 - Chapter 45:8-9
Compare Doctrine and Covenants - Section 43:8-9

instruct and edify each
other, that ye may know
how to act and direct

8 And now behold I give unto you a command-
ment, that when ye are assembled together ye shall
note with a pen how to act, and for my church[^] how
to act upon the points of my law and commandments,
which I have given:

ye 9 And thus it shall become a law unto you, being instructed in the law
sanctified by that which ye have received, that ye of my church and be
shall bind yourselves to act in all holiness and before
me; that inasmuch as ye do this, glory shall be ad-
ded to the kingdom which ye have received.

Book of Commandments - 1833 - Chapter 47:5-7
Compare Doctrine and Covenants - Section 42:80-81

And 5 But if any man shall commit adultery, he shall or she
or woman be tried before two elders of the church or more,
and every word shall be established against him by or her
two witnesses of the church, and not of the world, enemy
6 But if there are more than two witnesses it is
better :
or she 7 But he shall be condemned by the mouth of two
witnesses, and the elders shall lay the case before
the church, and the church shall lift up their hands
him or her against them, that they may be dealt with accord-
ing to the law of God

Book of Commandments - 1833 - Chapter 48:54
Compare Doctrine and Covenants - Section 45:60

54 And now, behold I say unto you, it shall not
be given unto you to know any farther than this, un- concerning this chapter
til the new testament be translated, and in it all
these things shall be made known ;

Book of Commandments - 1833 - Chapter 50:1-2
Compare Doctrine and Covenants - Section 47:1-2

BEHOLD it is expedient in me that my servant
John should write and keep a regular history,
and assist you, my servant Joseph, in transcribing
all things which shall be given you, until he is called
to further duties
2 Again, verily I say unto you, that he can also

Book of Commandments - 1833 - Chapter 51:6
Compare Doctrine and Covenants - Section 48:6

shall ye 6. And then ye shall begin to be gathered with
your families, every man according to his family,
according to his circumstances, and as is appointed
presidency and the to him by the bishop and elders of the church, ac-
cording to the laws and commandments, which ye
have received, and which ye shall hereafter receive;
even so : Amen.

Book of Commandments - 1833 - Chapter 53:41-42
Compare Doctrine and Covenants - Section 50:43-45

41 And inasmuch as ye have received me, ye are
in me, and I in you : wherefore I am in your midst ;
and I am the good Shepherd, and the stone of Israel.
He that buildeth upon
this rock shall never fall.
42 And the day cometh that you shall hear my
voice and see me, and know that I am.

Book of Commandments - 1833 - Chapter 54:39
Compare Doctrine and Covenants - Section 52:39

39 Let the residue of the elders watch over the
churches, and declare the word in the regions among round about
them.

Book of Commandments - 1833 - Chapter 55:3
Compare Doctrine and Covenants - Section 53:3

3 Take upon you mine ordinances, even that of ordination an elder, to preach faith and repentance, and remission of sins, according to my word, and the reception of the Holy Spirit by the laying on of hands.

Book of Commandments - 1833 - Chapter 59:63-64
Compare Doctrine and Covenants - Section 58:50-52

of himself or the agent, as seemeth him good or as he shall direct, to purchase lands for an inheritance for the children of God.

63 And I give unto my servant Sidney a commandment, that he shall write a description of the land of Zion, and a statement of the will of God, as it shall be made known by the Spirit, unto him; and an epistle and subscription, to be presented unto all the churches, to obtain moneys, to be put into the hands of the bishop, to purchase lands for an inheritance for the children of God, of himself or the agent, as seemeth him good, or as he shall direct. Rigdon

64 For behold, verily I say unto you, the Lord

Book of Commandments - 1833 - Chapter 64:36
Compare Doctrine and Covenants - Section 63:34

36 Nevertheless, I the Lord am with them, and will come down in heaven from the presence of God, and consume the wicked with unquenchable fire. my Father

Book of Commandments - 1833 - Chapter 65:7
Compare Doctrine and Covenants - Section 64:5

7 And the keys of the mysteries of the kingdom, shall not be taken from my servant Joseph, while he liveth, inasmuch as he obeyeth mine ordinances. Smith, Jun., through the means I have appointed

Book of Commandments - 1833 - Chapter 65:30-31
Compare Doctrine and Covenants - Section 64:23-24

until the coming of the Son of Man

30 Behold now it is called today, and verily it is a day of sacrifice, and a day for the tithing of my people;

31 For he that is tithed shall not be burned; for after today cometh the burning: at his coming

Book of Commandments - 1833 - Chapter 65:39
Compare Doctrine and Covenants - Section 64:29-30

he hath set you

39 Wherefore as ye are agents, and ye are on the Lord's errand; and whatever ye do according to the will of the Lord, is the Lord's business, and it is the Lord's business to provide for his saints in these last days, that they may obtain an inheritance in the land of Zion:

Other Changes

As we have indicated earlier, other revelations besides the ones which appeared in the *Book of Commandments* were also changed. Some of these revelations were first published in the *Evening and the Morning Star* and the *Times and Seasons*. (These, of course, were Mormon publications.)

We have cut out some of these revelations from photographs of the original publications and have marked the changes which would have to be made in them to bring them into conformity with the 1966 printed of the *Doctrine and Covenants*.

The Evening and the Morning Star - March 1833
Compare Doctrine and Covenants - Section 88:127-141

THE EVENING AND THE MORNING STAR.

Vol. I.

Independence, Mo. March, 1833.

No. 10.

REVELATION GIVEN KIRTLAND, OHIO, JANUARY 3, 1833.

And again
are
of the presidency
of the school
president
or
therefore, he
shall be first

THE order of the house prepared for the presidency and instruction in all things, that is expedient for the officers, or in other words them who are called to the ministry in the church, beginning at the highpriests even down to the deacons.

of the school of the prophets, established for their

those

of the church

them, even for all

in the house

carefully

And this shall be the order of the house:

He that is appointed to be a teacher shall be found standing in his place, which shall be prepared for him in the house of God; in a place that the congregation in the house may hear his words correctly, and distinctly, not with loud speech.

And when he cometh into the house of God, for he should be first in the house:

Behold this is beautiful, that he may be an example, let him offer himself in prayer upon his knees before God, in token of the everlasting covenant.

or remembrance

And when any shall come in after him, let the teacher arise and with uplifted hands to heaven:

Yea, even directly and salute his brother, or brethren with these words, saying:

Art thou a brother or brethren, I salute you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, in token of the everlasting covenant; in which covenant I receive you to fellowship in a determination that is fixed, immoveable and unchangeable to be your friend and brother through the grace of God, in the bonds of love, to walk in all the commandments of God blameless, in thanksgiving forever and ever.

or remembrance

Amen.

And he that cometh in, and is a brother or brethren, shall salute the teacher with uplifted hands to heaven, with this same prayer and covenant, or by saying amen, in token of the same.

if they be

president or

they

Behold, verily I say unto you, this is a sample unto you for a salutation to one another in the house of God.

an ensample

And to you the called to the ministry of the ordinances of the house of God; and ye are called to do this by prayer and thanksgiving, as the Spirit shall give utterance, in all your doings in the house of the Lord, that it may become a sanctuary, a tabernacle of the Holy Spirit, to your edification: Amen.

in the school of the prophets

and ye shall not receive any among you into this school save he is clean from the blood of this generation; and he shall be received by the ordinance of the washing of feet, for unto this end was the ordinance of the washing of feet instituted. And again, the ordinance of washing feet is to be administered by the president, or presiding elder of the church. It is to be commenced with prayer; and after partaking of bread and wine, he is to gird himself according to the pattern given in the thirteenth chapter of John's testimony concerning me.

The Evening and the Morning Star - October 1832
Compare Doctrine and Covenants - Section 68

THE EVENING AND THE MORNING STAR.

Vol. I.

Independence, Mo. October, 1832.

No. 5.

A REVELATION, GIVEN NOVEMBER, 1831.

Hyde

ordination

MY servant, Orson, was called, by his ordination, to proclaim the everlasting gospel, by the spirit of the living God, from people to people, and from land to land, in the congregations of the wicked, in their synagogues, reasoning with and expounding all scriptures unto them: And behold and lo, this is an ensample unto all those who were ordained unto this priesthood, whose mission is appointed unto them to go forth: And this is the ensample unto them, that they shall speak as they are moved upon by the Holy Ghost; and whatsoever they shall speak, when moved upon by the Holy Ghost, shall be scripture; shall be the will of the Lord; shall be the mind of the Lord; shall be the word of the Lord; shall be the voice of the Lord, and the power of God unto salvation; Behold this is the promise of the Lord unto you, O ye my servants: wherefore, be of good cheer, and do not fear, for I the Lord am with you, and will stand by you; and ye shall bear record of me even Jesus Christ, that I am the Son of the living God; that I was; that I am; and that I am to come. This is the word of the Lord unto you my servant, Orson, and also unto my servant, Luke, and unto my servant, Lyman, and unto my servant William; and unto all the faithful elders of my church: Go ye into all the world; preach the gospel to every creature; acting in the authority which I have given you; baptizing in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; and he that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned; and he that believeth shall be blessed with signs following, even as it is written: And unto you it shall be given to know the signs of the times, and the signs of the coming of the Son of man; and of as many as the Father shall bear record, to you it shall be given power to seal them up unto eternal life: Amen.

Johnson

Johnson

Hyde

E. M'Lellin

they

are

priests

covenants

remain

they

And now, concerning the items in addition to the laws and commandments, they are these: There remaineth hereafter in the due time of the Lord, other bishops to be set apart unto the church, to minister even according to the first; wherefore it shall be an high priest who is worthy; and he shall be appointed by a conference of high priests. And again, no bishop or judge, which shall be set apart for this ministry, shall be tried or condemned for any crime, save it be before a conference of high priests; and in as much as he is found guilty before a conference of high priests, by testimony that cannot be impeached, he shall be condemned or forgiven, according to the laws of the church. And again, in as much as parents have children in Zion, that teach them not to understand the doctrine of repentance; faith in Christ the Son of the living God; and of baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of the hands, when eight years old: the sin be upon the head of the parents, for this shall be a law unto the inhabitants of Zion, and their children shall be baptized for the remission of their sins when eight years old, and receive the laying on of the hands; and they also shall teach their children to pray, and to walk uprightly before the Lord. And the inhabitants of Zion shall also observe the sabbath day to keep it holy. And the inhabitants of Zion, also, shall remember their labors, in as much as they are appointed to labor, in all faithfulness, for the idler shall be had in remembrance before the Lord. Now I the Lord am not well pleased with the inhabitants of Zion, for there are idlers among them; and their children are also growing up in wickedness: They also seek not earnestly the riches of eternity, but their eyes are full of greediness. These things ought not to be, and must be done away from among them: wherefore let my servant Oliver, carry these sayings unto the land of Zion. And a commandment I give unto them, that he that observeth not his prayers before the Lord in the season thereof, let him

be had in remembrance before the judge of my people. These sayings are true and faithful: wherefore transgress them not, neither take therefrom. Behold I am Alpha and Omega, and I come quickly: Amen.

the First Presidency of the Melchizedek Priesthood, except they be literal descendants of Aaron. And if they be literal descendants of Aaron they have a legal right to the bishopric, if they are the firstborn among the sons of Aaron; for the firstborn holds the right of the presidency over this priesthood, and the keys or authority of the same. No man has a legal right to this office, to hold the keys of this priesthood, except he be a literal descendant and the firstborn of Aaron. But, as a high priest of the Melchizedek Priesthood has authority to officiate in all the lesser offices he may officiate in the office of bishop when no literal descendant of Aaron can be found, provided he is called and set apart and ordained unto this power, under the hands of the First Presidency of the Melchizedek Priesthood. And a literal descendant of Aaron, also must be designated by this Presidency, and found worthy, and anointed, and ordained under the hands of this Presidency, otherwise they are not legally authorized to officiate in their priesthood. But, by virtue of the decree concerning their right of the priesthood descending from father to son, they may claim their anointing if at any time they can prove their lineage, or do ascertain it by revelation from the Lord under the hands of the above named Presidency.

R

THE EVENING AND THE MORNING STAR.

Vol. 1.

Independence, Mo. January, 1833.

No. 8.

ITEMS IN ADDITION TO THE LAWS FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST, GIVEN APRIL, 1832.

VERILY thus saith the Lord, in addition to the laws of the church, concern-
ing women and children, who belong to the church, who have lost their
husbands, or fathers: those for their maintenance
Women have claim on their husbands, until they are taken, and, if they are no their husbands
found transgressors, they remain upon their inheritances: according to the laws of the land.
All children have claim upon their parents, until they are of age, and after that if their parents have not wherewith to give them
they have claim upon the church, or in other words, the Lord's storehouse for in
heritances. upon for their maintenance
shall have fellowship in the church. And if they are not faithful they shall not have fellowship in the church; yet they may
and the storehouse shall be kept by the consecrations of the church; and widows and orphans shall be provided for, as also the poor. Amen.

Times and Seasons – May 1840 – Vol. 1 – pages 99-100
 Compare Doctrine and Covenants – Section 121:1-4

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COPY OF A LETTER, WRITTEN BY J.
 SMITH JR. AND OTHERS, WHILE IN PRISON.
Liberty Jail, Clay Co. Mo.

To Bishop Partridge, and to the
 Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day
 Saints, in Quincy Illinois, and to those
 scattered abroad, throughout all the re-
 gions round about.

Your humble servant Joseph Smith
 jr. prisoner for Christ's sake, and the
 saints, taken and held by the power of
 mobocracy under the exterminating
 reign of his excellency Governor Lil-
 burn W. Boggs, in company with his
 fellow-prisoners and beloved brethren,
 Caleb Baldwin, Lyman Wight, Hyrum
 Smith, and Alexander McKee, send
 unto you greetings: May the grace of
 God the Father, and the Lord and
 Saviour Jesus Christ, rest upon you
 all, and abide with you for ever; and
 may faith, virtue, knowledge, temper-
 ance, patience, godliness, brotherly-
 kindness and charity dwell in you
 and abound, so that you may not be
 barren or unfruitful.

We know, that the greater part of
 you are acquainted with the wrongs,
 high toned injustice and cruelty which
 is practised upon us; we have been
 taken prisoners, charged falsely with
 all kind of crimes and thrown into
 a prison enclosed with strong walls,
 and are surrounded with a strong guard
 who are as endefatigable in watching
 us, as their master is in laying snares
 for the people of God. Therefore under
 these circumstances, dearly beloved
 brethren, we are the more ready to
 claim your fellowship and love. Our
 situation is calculated to awaken our
 minds to a sacred remembrance of
 your affection, and kindness; and we
 think that your situation will have the
 same effect; therefore, we believe, that
 nothing can separate us from the love
 of God, and our fellowship one with an-
 other; and that every species of wicked-
 ness and cruelty practised upon us, will
 only tend to bind our hearts and seal
 them together in love.

It is probably, as unnecessary for us
 to say, that we are thus treated and
 held in bonds without cause as it would
 be for you to say, that you were smit-
 ten and driven from your homes without
 any provocation; we mutually under-
 stand and verily know, that if the citi-
 zens of the state of Missouri, had not

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TIMES

abused the saints, and had been as desi-
 rous of peace as we were, there would
 have been nothing but peace and quie-
 tude to this day and we should not have
 been in this wretched place and bur-
 thened with the society of demons in
 human form and compelled to hear
 nothing but oaths and curses, and wir-
 ness scenes of drunkenness and de-
 baucheries of every description; nei-
 ther would the cries of orphans and
 widows have ascended to God or the
 blood of the saints have stained the
 soil, and cried for vengeance against
 them. But "we dwell with those who
 hated peace" and who delighted in war
 and surely their unrelenting hearts,
 their inhuman and murderous disposi-
 tion and their cruel practices, shock
 humanity, and defy description! It is
 truly a tale of sorrow, lamentation and
 woe, too much for humanity to contem-
 plate. Such a transaction cannot be
 found where Kings and Tyrants reign,
 or among the savages of the wilder-
 ness, or even among the ferocious
 beasts of the forest. To think that
 man should be mangled for sport, after
 being cruelly put to death. Women
 have their last morsel stolen from them,
 while their helpless children were cling-
 ing around them and crying for food
 and then, to gratify the hellish desires
 of their more than inhuman oppressors,
 be violated, is horrid in the extreme.

They practice these things upon the
 saints who have done them no wrong,
 had committed no crime, and who were
 an innocent and virtuous people; and
 have proved themselves lovers of God
 by forsaking and enduring all things
 for his sake. "It must needs be that
 offences come, but we to those by
 whom they come."

O God! where art thou? and where
 is the pavilion that covereth thy hiding
 place? how long shall thy hand be
 stayed, and thy pure eyes behold from
 the heavens, the wrongs and sufferings
 of thy people and of thy servants; and
 thine ears be penetrated with their
 cries? How long O Lord! shall they
 thus suffer, before thine heart shall be
 softened towards them, and thy bow-
 els be moved with compassion towards
 them? O Lord God Almighty, maker
 of heaven, earth, and seas, and of all
 things that in them is, and who control-
 eth and subjecteth the devil and the

thine eye, yea

eternal

ear

Yea

toward

are

eye

how long

these wrongs and
unlawful oppressions

toward

ND SEASONS.

dark and benighted dominions of Shale. Stretch forth thy hand, let thine eye pierce, let thy pavilion be taken up, let thy hiding place no longer be uncovered, let thine ear be inclined, let thine heart be softened, and thy bowels moved with compassion towards thy people; and let thine anger be kindled against our enemies, and in thy fury let fall the sword of thine indignation, and avenge us of our wrongs. Remember thy suffering saints, O our God! and thy servants will rejoice in thy name forever.

Dearly beloved brethren, we realize that perilous times have come, as have been testified of in ancient days, and we may look with certainty and the most perfect assurance, for the rolling in of all those things which have been spoken of by all the holy prophets: lift up your eyes to the bright luminary of day, and you can say, soon thou shalt veil thy blushing face, for at the behest of Him who said, "let there be light, and there was light," thou shalt withdraw thy shining. Thou moon, thou dimmer light, and luminary of night, shalt turn to blood. We see that the prophecies concerning the last days are fulfilling, and the time shall soon come when the "Son of man shall descend in the clouds of heaven, in power and great glory."

We do not shrink, nor are our hearts and spirits broken at the grievous yoke which is put upon us. We know that God will have our oppressors in derision, that he will laugh at their calamity, and mock when their fear cometh. We think we should have got out of our prison house, at the time Elder Rigdon got a writ of habeas corpus, had not our own lawyers interpreted the law contrary to what it reads, and against us, which prevented us from introducing our witnesses before the mock court, they have done us much harm from the beginning; they have lately acknowledged that the law was misconstrued, and then tantloized our feelings with it, and have now entirely forsaken us, have forfeited both their oaths, and their bonds, and are coworkers with the mob. From the information we received, the public mind has been for some time turning in our favor, and the majority is now friendly, and the lawyers can no longer browbeat us by

dominion

toward us

the

of thine heart with thy

TIMES AND

saying, that this or that is a matter of public opinion, for public opinion is not willing to brook all their proceedings, but are beginning to look with feelings of indignation upon our oppressors. We think that truth, honor, virtue, and innocence will eventually come out triumphant.

We should have taken out a writ of habeas corpus, and escaped the mob in a summary way, but unfortunately for us, the timber of the wall being very hard, our auger handles gave out which hindered us longer than we expected, we applied to a friend for assistance, and a very slight uncautious act gave rise to suspicion, and before we could fully succeed, our plan was discovered. We should have made our escape, and succeeded admirably well, had it not been for a little imprudence, or over anxiety on the part of our friend.

The Sheriff and Jailor did not blame us for our attempt; it was a fine breach, and cost the county a round sum; public opinion says, we ought to have been permitted to have made our escape, but then the disgrace would have been on us, but now it must come on the State. We know that there cannot be any charge sustained against us, and that the conduct of the mob the murders at Hawn's mill the exterminating order of Governor Boggs, and the one-sided, rascally proceedings of the Legislature, has damned the state of Missouri to all eternity. Gen. Atchison has proved himself to be as contemptible as any of our enemies. We have tried a long time to get our lawyers to draw us some petitions to the supreme Judges of this state, but they have utterly refused; we have examined the laws, and drawn the petitions ourselves, and have obtained abundance of proof to counteract all the testimony that is against us—so that if the Judges do not grant us our liberty they have got to act contrary to honor, evidence, law or justice, merely to please the mob; but we hope better things, and trust that before many days, God will so order our case, that we shall be set at liberty, and again enjoy the society of the saints. We received some letters from our friends, last evening, one from Emma, one from D.C. Smith and one from Bishop Partridge all breathing a kind and consoling spirit; we had been

Times and Seasons – Vol. 1 – page 101
Compare Doctrine and Covenants – Section 121:7-16

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a long time without information from our friends, and when we read those letters they were refreshing to our souls, as the gentle air and refreshing breeze; but our feelings of joy were mingled with feelings of pain and sorrow on account of the sufferings of the poor and much injured saints, and we need not say unto you that the flood gates of our hearts were open, and our eyes were a fountain of tears. Those who have not been inclosed in the walls of a prison, without cause or provocation, can have but little idea, how sweet the voice of a friend or one token of friendship is, from any source whatever, and awakens and calls into action every sympathetic feeling of the human heart, it brings to review every thing that has passed, it seizes the present with the velocity of lightning, and grasps after the future with fond anticipation; it fills the mind with tenderness and love until all enmity, malice, hatred, past differences, misunderstanding and mismanagements are entirely forgotten or are slain victims at the feet of love. When the heart is sufficiently contrite, then the voice of inspiration steals along and whispers,

My son, peace be unto thy soul, thine adversity and thy afflictions shall be but for a moment, and then if thou art faithful and endure, God shall exalt thee on high, thou shalt triumph over all thy foes, thy friends do stand by thee, and shall hail thee again with warm hearts; thou art not yet as Job, thy friends do not contend against thee, neither do they charge thee with transgression, and those who do charge thee with transgression their hope shall be blasted, and their prospects melt away, as the hoar frost melteth before the rays of the raising sun. It likewise informs us that God has set his hand to change the times and the seasons and to blind the minds of the wicked, that they may not understand his marvellous workings, that he may take them in their own craftiness, because their hearts are corrupt and the distress and sorrow which they seek to bring upon the saints, shall return upon them double; and not many years hence, they and their posterity, shall be destroyed from under heaven. Cursed are all those that shall lift up the heel against mine anointed, saith the Lord, for they have not sinned before me saith the Lord, but have done

endure it well,

they

as they did Job

hath

their

also

thine

small

and friendly hands

they

shall

burning

And also

and seal

prove them also and

that

swept

saith God, that not one of them is left to stand by the wall.

and cry they have sinned when

corrupted and the things which they are willing to bring upon others, and love to have others suffer, may come upon themselves to the very uttermost; that they may be disappointed also, and their hopes may be cut off;

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that which was meet in mine eyes, and which I commanded them, **saith the Lord.**

But Those who cry transgression, do it because they are the servants of sin, and are the children of disobedience themselves, and **swear falsely** against my servants, that they **may** bring them into bondage and death.

Wo unto them, because they have offended my little ones; they shall be severed from the ordinances of mine house, their basket shall not be full, their houses and their **lands shall be empty**, and they themselves shall be dispoised by those **who have** flattered them. They shall not have right to the priesthood, nor their posterity after them, from generation to generation; **and it would have** been better for them that a mill stone had been **hung** about their necks and they drowned in the **depths** of the sea.

Wo unto all those **who drive**, and murder, and testify against **my people**, saith the Lord of hosts, **for they shall not** escape the damnation of hell: behold mine **eye seeth**, and I know all their works, and I have in reserve, a swift judgment in the season thereof, **and they shall be rewarded according to their works.**

God has said, he would have a tried people, and that he would purify them as gold is purified; now, we think he has chosen his own crucible to try us, and if we should be so happy as to endure and keep the faith it will be a sign to this generation, sufficient to leave them without excuse; and that it will be a trial of our faith equal to that of Abraham or any of the ancients, and that they will not have much cause to boast over us, in the persecutions and trials they endured. After passing through so much suffering and sorrow, we trust that before long a ram may be caught in the thicket, so that the sons and daughters of Abraham may be relieved from their fears and anxiety, and that their faces may once more be lighted up with joy and salvation, and be enabled to hold out unto everlasting life. Now concerning the places for the location of the saints, we would say that we cannot council you in this thing as well as if we were with you; and as to the things written to you before, we did not consider them binding; we would advise, that while we remain in prison and in bondage, that the affairs of the

church be conducted by a general conference of the most faithful and respectable of the authorities of the church, and that the proceedings of the same be forwarded to your humble servants, and if there be any corrections by the word of the Lord they shall be freely transmitted, and we will cheerfully approve of all things which are acceptable to God. If any thing should have been suggested by us or any names mentioned except by commandment or "thus saith the Lord," we do not consider it binding; therefore we shall not feel grieved if you should deem it wisdom to make different arrangements. We would respectfully advise the brethren, to be aware of an aspiring spirit, which has frequently urged men forward to make foul speeches and beget an undue influence in the minds of the saints and bring much sorrow and distress in the church; we would likewise say be aware of pride, for truly hath the wise man said "pride goeth before destruction and an haughty spirit before a fall," outward appearance is not always a criterion for us to judge our fellow man by, but the lips frequently betray the haughty and overbearing mind. Flattery also, is a deadly poison; a frank and open rebuke, provoketh a good man to emulation, and in the hour of trouble he will be your best friend, but rebuke a wicked man and you will soon see manifest, all the corruption of a wicked heart, the poison of asps is under their tongue, and they cast the saints in prison that their deeds be not reproved. A fanciful, flowery and heated imagination be aware of, for the things of God are of vast importance, and requires time and experience as well as deep and solemn thought to find them out; and if we would bring souls to salvation it requires that our minds should rise to the highest heavens, search into and contemplate the lowest abyss, expand wide as eternity and hold communion with Deity. How much more dignified and noble are the thoughts of God than the vain imaginations of the human heart: how vain and trifling have been our spirits in our conferences and council meetings, as well as in our public and private conversations; too low and condescending, for the dignified characters of the called and chosen of God, who have been set apart in the mind of God

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church be conducted by a general conference of the most faithful and respectable of the authorities of the church, and that the proceedings of the same be forwarded to your humble servants, and if there be any corrections by the word of the Lord they shall be freely transmitted, and we will cheerfully approve of all things which are acceptable to God. If any thing should have been suggested by us or any names mentioned except by commandment or "thus saith the Lord," we do not consider it binding; therefore we shall not feel grieved if you should deem it wisdom to make different arrangements. We would respectfully advise the brethren, to be aware of an aspiring spirit, which has frequently urged men forward to make foul speeches and beget an undue influence in the minds of the saints and bring much sorrow and distress in the church; we would likewise say be aware of pride, for truly hath the wise man said "pride goeth before destruction and an haughty spirit before a fall," outward appearance is not always a criterion for us to judge our fellow man by, but the lips frequently betray the haughty and overbearing mind. Flattery also, is a deadly poison; a frank and open rebuke, provoketh a good man to emulation, and in the hour of trouble he will be your best friend, but rebuke a wicked man and you will soon see manifest, all the corruption of a wicked heart, the poison of asps is under their tongue, and they cast the saints in prison that their deeds be not reproved. A fanciful, flowery and heated imagination be aware of, for the things of God are of vast importance, and requires time and experience as well as deep and solemn thought to find them out; and if we would bring souls to salvation it requires that our minds should rise to the highest heavens, search into and contemplate the lowest abyss, expand wide as eternity and hold communion with Deity. How much more dignified and noble are the thoughts of God than the vain imaginations of the human heart: how vain and trifling have been our spirits in our conferences and council meetings, as well as in our public and private conversations; too low and condescending, for the dignified characters of the called and chosen of God, who have been set apart in the mind of God

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Compare Doctrine and Covenants – Section 121:26-33

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before the foundation of the world, to hold the keys of the mysteries of those things, which have been kept hid for ages and generations, which have been revealed to babes, yea to the weak obscure, and despicable ones of the earth. We would beseech you to bear with the infirmities of the weak, and at the same time exhort one another to a reformation, both teachers and taught, male and female, so that honesty, sobriety, candor, solemnity, plainness, meekness and virtue may characterise us from henceforth; and that we be like little children without malice, guile or hypocrisy; and now brethren after your tribulations, if you do these things, and exercise fervant prayer in the sight of God always, he shall give unto you knowledge, by his holy Spirit, yea he shall pour out the Holy Ghost in such copious effusion as have not been, since the creation until now; yea, the fulness of that promise which our Fathers have waited for with such anxious expectation, which was to be revealed in the last days, and held in reserve until a time when nothing shall be withheld, when all the glories of earth and heaven, time and eternity shall be manifest to all those, who have endured valiantly for the gospel of Jesus Christ. If there be bounds set to the heavens, the seas, the dry land, they shall be manifest, as well as the various revolutions of the sun, moon, and planets, and a full development of all the glorious laws by which they are governed shall be revealed in the "dispensation of the fulness of times" according to that which was ordained in the midst of the council of heaven in the presence of the eternal God, before this world was.

Ignorance, bigotry, and superstition are frequently in the way of the prosperity of this church, and are like the torrent of rain rushing down from the mountains, which floods the clear stream with mire and dirt, but when the storm is over and the rain has ceased the mire and dirt are washed away, and the stream again is pure and clear as the fountain, so shall the church appear when ignorance, superstition and bigotry are washed away. What power shall can stay the heavens, as well might man stretch forth his puny arm to stop the mighty Missouri river in its course, decreed

by the unspeakable gift of
world was
to come in the which
whether there be one
God or many gods, they
awaited
times
All thrones and dominions,
principalities and powers, shall
be revealed and set forth upon
or to
days of the
of all other gods
that should be reserved unto
the finishing and the end
thereof, when every man shall
enter into his eternal presence
and into his immortal rest.
How long can rolling waters
remain impure?

God
that has
revealed
forefathers
for the fulness of their glory;
which their minds were
pointed to by the angels, as
And also
or to
or to the sun, moon, or stars—all
the times of their revolutions, all
the appointed days, months, and
years, and all the days of their
days, months, and years, and all
their glories, laws, and set times,

S
T

or to turn it
up stream,

heads

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as to hinder the Almighty from pouring down knowledge from heaven upon the hearts of the Latter day saints: what is the Governor with his murderous party, but willows on the shore to stop the waters in their progress? As well might we argue that water is not water, because the mountain torrent sends down mire and riles the crystal stream; or that fire is not fire because it can be quenched, as to say that our cause is down because renegades, liars, priests and murderers, who are alike tenacious of their crafts and creeds have poured down upon us a flood of dirt and mire from their strong holds. No, they may rage, with all the powers of hell and pour forth their wrath, indignation and cruelty like the burning lava of mount Vesuvius, yet shall Mormonism stand. Truth is Mormonism, and God is its author, by him we received our birth, by him we were called to a dispensation of his gospel, in the beginning of the fulness of times, it was by him we received the book of Mormon, by him we remain unto this day and shall continue to remain if it be to his glory; we are determined to endure tribulation as good soldiers, unto the end: when you read this, you will learn that prison walls, iron doors, screeching hinges, guards and jailors have not destroyed our confidence, but we say, and that from experience, that they are calculated in their very nature to make the soul of an honest man, feel stronger than the powers of hell. But we must bring our epistle to a close, and send our respects to fathers, mothers, wives, and children, brothers and sisters, and be assured we hold them in sacred remembrance.

We should be glad to hear from elder Rigdon, George W. Robinson, and elder Cahoon, we remember them and would like to jog their memory a little on the fable of the bear and the two friends, who mutually agreed to stand by each other; we could also mention Uncle John Smith and others; a word of consolation and a blessing would not come amiss from any body, while we are so closely whispered by the bear. Our respects and love to all the virtuous saints. We are, dear brethren, your fellow sufferers and

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prisoners of Jesus Christ for the gospel's sake, and for the hope of glory which is in us. Amen

JOSEPH SMITH JR.,
HYRUM SMITH,
LYMAN WIGHT,
CALEB BALDWIN,
ALEXANDER McRAE.

TIMES AND SEASONS.

"TRUTH WILL PREVAIL."

Vol. I. No. 9.] NAUVOO, ILLINOIS, JULY, 1840. [Whole No. 9.

AN EXTRACT OF A LETTER WRITTEN TO
BISHOP PARTRIDGE, AND THE SAINTS
IN GENERAL: BY J. SMITH, JR. AND
OTHERS WHILE IN PRISON.

Liberty Jail, Clay co. Mo.

[Continued to the Church of Latter
Day Saints.]

We continue to offer further reflections to Bishop Partridge and to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints; whom we love with a fervent love, and always bear them in mind in our prayers to our heavenly Father. It still seems to bear heavily in our minds, that the church would do well to secure the contract of land offered them by Mr. Isaac Galland, and cultivate the friendly feelings of that gentleman, inasmuch as he shall prove himself to be a man of honor and a friend to humanity; we think his letters breath a kind and generous spirit. We suggest the idea of praying fervently for all men, particularly those who manifest any degree of sympathy for the suffering people of God. We think that the United States surveyor, Isaac Van Allen Esq. the attorney

Times and Seasons – July 1840 – Vol. 1 – pages 131-132
 Compare Doctrine and Covenants – Section 121:34-46; 122:1-4

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general, and Governor Lucas of the Iowa Territory, from the kindness they manifest, may be of great service to the church. It seems to be deeply impressed upon our minds, that the saints ought to lay hold of every opening, in order to obtain a foot hold on the earth, and be making all preparations that is within their power for the terrible storms that are now gathering in the heavens, with darkness, and gloominess and thick darkness; as spoken by the prophet, which cannot be now long time lingering; for there seems to be a whispering by the angels of heaven, who have been intrusted with the council of these matters for the last days; and who have taken council together, and among the affairs transacted by that honorable council, they have taken cognizance of the murder of our beloved brethren at Hauns mill, as well as those who were martyred with D. W. Patton, and have passed some decisions peradventure in favor of the saints, these decisions will be made known in their time. We are desirous, that in your general conferences, every thing should be discussed, with candour and propriety, lest you grieve the Holy Spirit, which should at all times be poured out upon you, when you are exercised with the principles of righteousness, and are properly affected one towards another. Be careful to remember those who are in bondage, heaviness, and deep affliction for your sake. If there are any among you, who aspire after their own aggrandizement and oppulence while their brethren are groaning in poverty, and laboring under sore trials and temptations, they cannot be benefited by the intercessions of the Holy Spirit: we ought at all times to be very careful that such high mindedness never have place in our hearts, but condescend to men of low estate, and with all long suffering, bare the infirmities of the weak. There are many called but few are chosen, and why are they not chosen? Because their hearts are set upon the things of the world and are aspiring to the honors of men; they do not learn the lesson that the rights of the priesthood, are inseparably connected with the powers of heaven; and that the powers of heaven cannot be controlled nor handled, only upon the

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principles of righteousness, that they may be conferred upon us, it is true, but when we undertake to cover our sins, to gratify our pride, vain ambition, or to exercise dominion or compulsion over the souls of the children of men, in any degree of unrighteousness; behold the heavens withdraw themselves, the Spirit of the Lord is grieved, then amen to the priesthood, or to the authority of that man; behold ere he is aware, he is left to kick against the pricks; to persecute the saints, and to fight against God. We have learned by sad experience, that it is the nature and disposition of almost all men, as soon as they get a little authority, as they suppose, to begin to exercise unrighteous dominion, hence many are called but few are chosen. No power or influence can, or ought to be maintained by virtue of the priesthood, only by persuasion, by long suffering, by gentleness, by meekness and by love unfeigned, without hypocrisy, and without guile: reprove with sharpness when moved upon by the Holy Ghost, and afterwards showing forth an increase of love towards him whom thou hast reprov'd, lest he esteem thee to be his enemy, so that he may know, that thy faithfulness is stronger than the cords of death. Let the soul be full of charity towards all men, and virtue guard thy thoughts unceasingly; then shall thy confidence wax strong in the presence of God, and the doctrines of the priesthood shall destil upon thy soul, as the dew from heaven; thy sceptre shall be an unchanging sceptre of righteousness, the Holy Ghost shall be thy constant companion, thy dominion shall be an everlasting dominion, the ends of the earth shall enquire after thy name; fools shall have thee in derision, hell shall rage against thee, while the pure in heart, the wise, the noble, and the virtuous shall seek council, authority, and blessing, constantly from under thy hand; thy people shall never be turned against thee by the testimony of traitors, although their influence shall cast thee into trouble, and into prisons, thou shalt be had in honor, and but for a small moment, and thy voice shall be more terrible in the midst of thy enemies, than the fierce lion, because of thy righteousness: and thy God shall stand

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Start - Section 122

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SEASONS.

by thee forever and ever. If thou art called to pass through tribulation, if thou art in **perils** among false brethren, if thou art in perils among robbers, if thou art accused **of** all manner of false accusations, if thine enemies fall upon thee, if they tare thee from the society of thy **parents**, and if with a drawn sword, thine enemies tare thee from the bosom of thy wife and **thy** **offspring**, while thy eldest son, although but six years of age, shall cling to thy garments, and shall say my father, my father why, cant you stay with us.—“Oh my father what are the men going to do with you”, and then he shall be thrust from thee by the sword, and thou be dragged to prison and **thy** enemies prowl around thee like wolves for the blood of the lamb; and if thou shouldst be cast into the hands of murderers, and the sentence of death be passed upon thee, if thou be cast into the deep, if the **billowing** surge conspire against thee, if fierce winds become **thy** enemies, if the heavens gather blackness, and all the elements combine to hedge up **thy** way, and above all, if the very jaws of hell shall gap open **her** mouth wide after thee; know thou my son, that all these things shall give thee experience, and shall be for thy good.

hath The son of man has descended below them all **and** art thou greater than he. Therefore hold on thy way, and the priesthood shall remain with thee, **thy** days are known, and thy years shall not be numbered less; fear not what man can do, for God shall be with thee **you** forever and ever.

therefore We would suggest the propriety of the brethren settling in such places where they may find safety, which may be found between Kirtland and Far West, it will be necessary to do so for the present, untill God shall open out a more effectual door. Again we would suggest to the brethren, that there be no organization of large bodies upon common stock principles until the Lord shall signify it in a proper manner; as it opens such a field for the avaricious, the indolent, and the corrupt hearted, to prey upon the virtuous, the industrious, and the honest. We have reason to believe that many things were introduced among the saints, before God had signified the time, and notwithstanding the principles and the

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Compare Doctrine and Covenants – Section 123:1-15

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plans may have been good, yet aspiring men, who had the form of godliness but not the substance, by their aspiring notions brought trouble, both upon themselves and the saints at large. However the time is coming, when God will signify many things, which are expected for the well being of the saints.

Start Section 123. We would likewise suggest for your consideration the propriety of the saints gathering up a knowledge of all the abuses and abuse put upon them by the people of this state, and also the loss of property, and the amount of damages which they have sustained, and also the names of all persons who have taken a part in their persecutions; perhaps it would be well for a committee to be appointed, to collect the statements and affidavits of brethren on this subject, and also to gather up the libelous publications which are about in the world, and present the whole concatenation of diabolical rascality, and nefarious and murderous impositions before the laws of government, and to the world at large. This we think is a duty enjoined upon us by our heavenly Father, and which must be attended to before we can ask Him to come out of his hiding place; and also that the nation may be left without excuse. It is a duty we owe to our country, whose laws have been trampled on, and set at naught—a duty we owe to our wives and children, who have been made to bow down with grief, sorrow, and anguish under the most damning hand of murder tyranny, and oppression, supported and urged on by the influence of that spirit, which has so strongly revited the creeds of the Father, who have inherited lies upon the hearts of the children, and filled the world with confusion and prejudice, which has been growing stronger and stronger and has become a source of corruption until the earth groans under its iniquity; it is an iron yoke and a strong band. It is a duty we owe to the widow and the fatherless, whose husbands and fathers have been murdered under its iron hand, which dark and blackning deeds, are enough to make hell itself shudder and stand aghast, and the hands of Satan to tremble and palsey. These things ought then, to be attended to with great earnestness; let no man count them as small things, for

And again, all facts, and both of character and personal injuries, as well as real property; that oppressions, find out these things and to take and all that are in the magazines, and in the encyclopedias, and all the libelous histories that are published, and are writing, and by whom, that have been practiced upon this people—that we may not only publish to all the world, but present them to the heads of government in all their dark and hellish hue, as the last effort which is on fully and completely claim that promise which shall call him forth from whole before he can send forth the power of his mighty arm. an imperative duty that God, to angels, with whom we shall be brought to stand, and also to ourselves, care hath and upheld fathers all the weight of they are the very handcuffs, and chains, and shackles, and fetters of hell. Therefore not only to our own wives and children, but an imperative that widows and pale, the very devil should

And also it is an imperative duty that we owe to all the rising generation, and to all the pure in heart—for there are many yet on the earth among all sects, parties, and denominations, who are blinded by the subtle craftiness of men, whereby they lie in wait to deceive, and who are only kept from the truth because they know not where to find it—Therefore, that we should waste and wear out our lives in bringing to light all the hidden things of darkness, wherein we know them; and they are truly manifest from heaven—

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which lieth there is much that lies in futurity pertaining to the saints, which depends upon our present action. You are aware, brethren, that a very large ship is benefitted very much, by a small helm in the time of a storm, by being kept work ways with the wind and the waves; therefore dearly beloved brethren, let us cheerfully do all things that is in our power, and then we may stand still, and see the salvation of God. ^{very} with the upmost assurance, to and for his arm to be revealed—

We further, caution our brethren, against the impropriety of the organization of bands or companies, by covenants, oaths, penalties, or secessies, but let the time past of our experience and sufferings by the wickedness of Doctor Avarad suffice, and let our covenants, be that of the everlasting covenant, as it is contained in the holy writ, and the things which God has revealed unto us; pure friendship, always becomes weakened, the very moment you undertake to make it stronger by penal oaths and secrecy. Your humble servants intend from henceforth to disapprove every thing that is not in accordance with the fullness of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and which is not of a bold, frank, and upright nature; they will not hold their peace as in times past, when they see iniquity begining to rear its head, for fear of traitors, or the consequences that shall follow, from reproving those who creep in unawares, that they may get something to destroy the flock. We believe, that from the experience of the saints in times past, they will henceforth be always ready to obey the truth, without having men's persons in admiration because of advantage, we ought to be aware of those prejudices, (which are so congenial to human nature) against our neighbors, friends and brethren of the world, who choose to differ with us in opinion, and in matters of faith: our religion is between us and our God; their religion is between them and their God: there certainly is a tie to those of the same faith which is peculiar to itself, but it is without prejudice, gives full scope to the mind, and enables us to conduct ourselves with liberality towards those who are not of our faith; this principle, in our opinion, approximates the nearest to the mind of God and is God-like. There is a duty, which we in common with all men, owe to Governments, laws, and the regula-

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tions in the civil concerns of life; these guarantee to all parties and denominations of religion equal, and indefeasible rights, all alike interested; and they make our responsibilities one towards another in matters relating to temporal affairs, and the things of this life; the former principles do not destroy the latter, but bind us stronger, and make our responsibility, not only one towards another, but unto God also: hence we say, that the constitution of the United States is a glorious standard, it is founded in wisdom, it is a heavenly banner, and is to all those who are privileged with the sweets of its liberty, like the cooling shade and refreshing water of a great rock in a thirsty and weary land: it is like a great tree under whose branches, men from every clime, can be shielded from the burning rays of an inclement sun, we are deprived of the protection of this glorious principle, by the cruelties of those who only look to the time being for pasturage; and who forget that the Mormons, as well as the Presbyterians and every other denomination, have equal rights to partake of the fruits of the great tree of our national liberty; yet notwithstanding we see what we do, and feel the effects of the cruelty of the enemies of freedom; that fruit is no less precious and delicious to our taste, we cannot be weaned from the milk, neither can we be drawn from the breast, nor will we deny our religion because of the hand of oppression, but we will hold on until death. We say that God is true, that the constitution of the United States is true, that the bible is true, the book of Mormon is true, that Christ is true, that the ministering of angels is true; and "we know we have a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, whose builder and maker is God," a consolation which our oppressors can not feel, when fortune or fate may lay its hand on them as it has on us. We ask, what is man? Remember brethren that time and chance happeneth to all men.

We subscribe ourselves your sincere friends and brethren, in the bonds of

SEASONS.

the everlasting gospel, and prisoners of Jesus Christ.

JOSEPH SMITH JR.,
HYRUM SMITH,
LYMAN WIGHT,
CALEB BALDWIN,
ALEXANDER McRAE.

Important Changes

As we indicated earlier, we have placed letters by some of the changes which we wish to discuss. We will deal with some of them at this point.

CHANGE A. (see page 140) This is certainly one of the most significant changes in the *Doctrine and Covenants*. David Whitmer, one of the three witnesses to the Book of Mormon, gives us this interesting information:

After the translation of the Book of Mormon was finished, early in the spring of 1830, before April 6th, Joseph gave the stone to Oliver Cowdery and told me as well as the rest that he was through with it, and he did not use the stone any more. **He said he was through the work God had given him the gift to perform, except to preach the gospel.** He told us that we would all have to depend on the Holy Ghost hereafter to be guided into truth and obtain the will of the Lord. (*An Address to All Believers in Christ*, Richmond, Missouri, 1887, page 32)

The fact that Joseph Smith was not planning on doing any other work besides the Book of Mormon is well verified by the revelation given in March of 1829. This revelation was printed in the *Book of Commandments* as chapter 4, verse 2 reads as follows:

... and he has a gift to translate the book, and **I have commanded him that he shall pretend to no other gift, for I will grant him no other gift.**

By the year 1835, when this revelation was reprinted in the *Doctrine and Covenants*, Joseph Smith had pretended to at least one other gift besides that of translating the Book of Mormon. He had pretended to the gift of rewording the Bible (Inspired Version), and a short time after this he brought forth the Book of Abraham. Certainly this revelation commanding Joseph Smith to pretend to no other gift but to translate the Book of Mormon could not remain in its original uncensored form. This change in church policy necessitated a change in the revelation. The Mormon Church had decided to go beyond the Book of Mormon and accept Joseph Smith's other writings as scripture. Therefore, this revelation was changed to read as follows:

And you have a gift to translate the plates; and this is **the first gift that I bestowed upon you;** and I have commanded that you should pretend to no other gift, **until my purpose is fulfilled in this;** for I will grant unto you no other gift **until it is finished.** (*Doctrine and Covenants*, section 5, verse 4)

Thus the entire meaning of this revelation was changed, making it appear that the Lord would grant

him more gifts than that of translating the Book of Mormon. At least 22 words were added to this verse to make the change. David Whitmer made this statement concerning the change in this revelation:

... he [Joseph Smith] was not called to organize and establish the church any more than the rest of us Elders. That God commanded him that he should pretend to no other gift but to translate the Book of Mormon, that God would grant him no other gift.

... as if God had commanded Joseph to pretend to no other gift but to translate the Book of Mormon, that he would "grant him no other gift," and then afterwards God had changed his mind and concluded to grant him another gift. God does not change and work in this manner. The way the revelation has been changed, twenty-two words being added to it, it would appear that God had broken His word after giving His word in plainness; commanding Brother Joseph to pretend to no other gift but to translate the Book of Mormon, and then the Lord had changed and concluded to grant Joseph the gift of a Seer to the Church. ...

May God have mercy on the heads of the church for their transgression is my prayer. (*An Address to All Believers in Christ*, pages 57-58)

CHANGE B. (see page 141) Notice that the words "you must wait yet a little while, for ye are not yet ordained" have been added to this revelation. This revelation was supposed to have been given in March of 1829. Some Mormon writers have claimed that God has a right to add to His word after it is given. But, we ask, why would the Lord wait more than five years to give them this information? What good would it do to give them this information years later? In order for a warning to do any good it has to be given right at the time.

Many of the changes in the revelations appear to be equivalent to locking the barn door after the horse has got out.

CHANGE C. (see page 141) Notice that 154 words have been deleted from verses 5 and 6 of this revelation. Melvin J. Petersen, a Mormon apologist, stated, "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 ..." ("A Study of the Nature of and the Significance of the Changes in the Revelations ..." typed copy, page 140). Melvin Petersen seems to feel that Joseph Smith had a perfect right to do this. Although we feel that Joseph 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 words of God. If this was a revelation from God, what right did Joseph Smith have to delete part of it?

David Whitmer made this statement concerning this change:

The next change I will notice is one of importance. It is in Section 4, *Doctrine and Covenants* [section 5 of current Utah Edition]: Chapter 4. *Book of Commandments*. Half a page has been left out of this revelation. I believe that the object of those who left it out was to strike out the following words:

“And thus, if the people of this generation harden not their hearts, I will work a reformation among them, and I will put down all lying, etc., * * * * and I will establish my church, **like unto the church which was taught by my disciples in the days of old.**”

They knew that the order of offices in the Church of Latter Day Saints, was not like the order in the Church of Christ of old; because the Church of Christ of old had in it only elders, priests and teachers: so they left out this part of the revelation when they published the Book of Doctrine and Covenants. (*An Address to All Believers in Christ*, page 80)

We feel that there may have been another reason for deleting these words, but we will have to deal with that in another volume.

CHANGE D. (see page 143) This revelation is supposed to contain a translation of a parchment written by the Apostle John. Joseph Smith was supposed to have translated it 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 contained 252 words. Thus 109 words had been added.

Mormon writers are unable to explain why Joseph Smith changed this revelation. Melvin J. Petersen made this statement:

In Chapter six of the *Book of Commandments* we find a revelation which was a translation from parchment upon which the Apostle John wrote his Gospel. When the 1835 edition of the *Doctrine and Covenants* was published this revelation had many additions and a few changes. (Section thirty-four.) The additional words and sentences reveal more concerning John and his ministry. How Joseph Smith had this information revealed to him, by means of the Urim and Thummim, is not clear. . . . What part revelation played in receiving this information concerning John is not known, nor is it known as to how the translation was enacted. We do know that additions and changes were made by Joseph Smith. . . .

Joseph Smith left nothing in his writings to indicate why he added to this translated version . . . and so any plausible answers will be merely conjecture. (“A Study of the Nature of and the 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, Brigham Young University, 1955, typed copy, pages 154-155)

Actually, there are only three logical explanations as to why this revelation reads different in the *Doctrine and Covenants* than it did when printed in the *Book of Commandments*. First, before reprinting this revelation in the *Doctrine and Covenants*, Joseph Smith may have decided to falsely attribute words to the Apostle John that he did not utter. This explanation would mean that Joseph Smith was a deceiver. Second, before the revelation was reprinted the Lord may have shown Joseph Smith that he had not translated the parchment correctly with the Urim and Thummim and that he must add in 109 words to make it correct. This explanation would place a shadow of doubt upon Joseph Smith’s ability as a translator. Any individual who left out 109 words of a translation would be considered a very poor translator indeed! Third, Joseph Smith may have received the full text of the revelation to begin with but suppressed part of it when the *Book of Commandments* was printed. Melvin J. Petersen states:

Doctor Sidney B. Sperry, . . . has suggested that it is possible that Joseph Smith edited the translation in its first published form and then later wrote down the complete translation as it is found in our present text. Whether this suggested answers be right or wrong cannot be determined until further evidence is brought to light upon the problem. (“A Study of the Nature of and the Significance of the Changes in the Revelations . . . , typed copy, page 155)

This explanation would also make Joseph Smith a deceiver since he did not put in “the little dots which indicate that one is making deletions.” Furthermore, there was no real reason to suppress 109 words from the revelation. This revelation is printed on page 18 of the *Book of Commandments*, and a careful examination of this page reveals that part of the page has been left blank and that there was enough room to include these words. Therefore, there would have been no reason to suppress part of the revelation.

CHANGE E. (page 143) We plan to discuss this change in a chapter on Priesthood in a later volume.

CHANGE F. (page 144) This is one of the most important changes in the *Doctrine and Covenants*, but we will have to wait until the next volume to discuss its significance.

CHANGE G. (page 145) This change will also be discussed in a later volume.

CHANGE H. (see page 148) David Whitmer made this statement concerning this change:

The next important change I will speak of, is made in a revelation which was given to Brothers Joseph Smith, Oliver Cowdery, and myself in Fayette, New York, June, 1829. I was present when Brother Joseph received it through the stone. It is Chapter 15 *Book of Commandments*, Sec. 16 *Doctrine and Covenants* [Sec. 18 in current Utah Ed.]. In the *Book of Commandments* it reads thus:

“Behold I give unto you a commandment, that you rely upon the things which are written; for in them are all things written, **concerning my church, my gospel, and my rock**. Wherefore if you shall build up my church, and my gospel, and my rock, the gates of hell shall not prevail against you.”

But in the Book of Doctrine and Covenants it has been changed and reads thus: “Behold I give unto you a commandment, that you rely upon the things which are written; for in them are all things written, concerning **the foundation** of my church, my gospel, and my rock; wherefore, if you shall build up my church upon **the foundation** of my gospel and my rock, the gates of hell shall not prevail against you.”

The change in this revelation is of great importance; the word “them” refers to the plates—the Book of Mormon: We were commanded to rely upon it in building up the church; that is, in establishing the doctrine, the order of offices, etc.: “**For in them are all things written concerning my church, my gospel, and my rock.**” But this revelation has been changed by man to mean as follows: That therein is not all things written concerning the church, but only all things concerning “the foundation of” the church—or the beginning of the church: that you must build up the church, beginning according to the written word, and add new offices, new ordinances, and new doctrines as I (the Lord) reveal them to you from year to year: . . . When the Book of Doctrine and Covenants was compiled in 1834, the church had then received many revelations to establish new offices and doctrines that are not even mentioned in the New Covenant of either of the two sacred books. They changed this revelation in order to sustain these new doctrines. If they had not made this change, the plain language of the original revelation would have condemned the Book of Doctrine and Covenants. I want to repeat that I was present when Brother Joseph received this revelation through the stone: I am one of the persons to whom it was given, therefore I know of a surety that it was changed when printed in the Doctrine and Covenants in 1834 . . . There are several of the old Book of Commandments yet in the land; bring them to light and see for yourselves that these revelations were changed just as I tell you.

These changes were made by the leaders of the church, who had drifted into error and spiritual blindness. Through the influence of Sydney Rigdon, Brother Joseph was led on and on into receiving revelations every year, to establish offices and doctrines which are not even mentioned in the teachings of Christ in the written word. In a few years they had gone away ahead of the written word, so that they had to **change these revelations**, as you will understand when I have finished. (*An Address to All Believers in Christ*, 1887, pages 58-59)

CHANGE I. (see page 154) Notice that 97 words

have been added. David Whitmer made this statement concerning this interpolation:

The next change of importance is in a revelation given in Fayette, New York, June, 1830 . . . They have put it in the Doctrine and Covenants as “Section 17,” [Section 20 in current Utah Ed.] . . .

The heading over it in the Book of Commandments is as follows: “The Articles and Covenants of the Church of Christ, given in Fayette, New York, June, 1830.” Two paragraphs have been added to it, having been thrust into the middle of it. Paragraphs 16 and 17 is the part added, [verses 65-67 in current Utah Ed.] which part speaks of high priests and other high offices that the church never knew of until almost two years after its beginning: As if God had made a mistake in the first organization of the church, and left out these high important offices which are all above an elder; and as if God had made a mistake and left these high offices out of that revelation when it was first given. Oh the weakness and blindness of man! (*An Address to All Believers in Christ*, page 59)

CHANGE J. (see page 156) Notice that in this revelation Emma Smith—Joseph’s wife—is told that she would be supported “from” the Church, but in the *Doctrine and Covenants*, it has been changed to make it appear that Joseph Smith would support her “in” the Church. The Mormon leaders have condemned other churches for having a paid ministry. This change was evidently made to cover up the fact that Joseph Smith was receiving money from the Church.

CHANGE K. (see page 157) 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. David Whitmer, however, claimed that the Melchizedek Priesthood came into the Church by a process of evolution rather than by revelation. The fact that these words concerning the visitation of Peter, James and John had to be added to the revelation tends to confirm David Whitmer’s charge. We hope to say more about this change in a chapter on Priesthood in a later volume.

CHANGE L. (see page 158) Notice that in the *Book of Commandments* the Mormons were told to “consecrate **all**” their properties to the Church, but in the *Doctrine and Covenants* they were told only to “consecrate **of**” their properties.

The Mormons were accused of attempting “to establish communism.” The change in the revelation was evidently made to cover up the truth concerning this matter. Fawn Brodie stated:

Joseph Smith set up an economic order in his church which followed with a certain fidelity the life history of the typical communistic society of his time. . . . Joseph issued a revelation setting up the United Order of Enoch. . . . Private property became church property, and private profit a community spoil. . . .

Whatever surplus the steward exacted from the land, or whatever profit the mechanic derived from his shop, was contributed to the church storehouse and treasury, the convert keeping only what was “needful for the support and comfort” of himself and family. The spirit of true Marxian communism—“from each according to his ability, to each according to his need”—was implicit in the whole system. (*No Man Knows My History*, page 106)

Sidney Rigdon may have been the one who influenced Joseph Smith to start the United Order. The Mormon writer Klaus J. Hansen states:

Parley P. Pratt, Oliver Cowdery and two other Elders, . . . stopped over at Kirtland, Ohio, and converted almost the entire Campbellite congregation of Sidney Rigdon, including Rigdon himself. These “Disciples of Christ,” who lived in a communistic order, became the nucleus for the Mormon settlement in Ohio. Joseph Smith, at first, likewise attempted to establish a communitarian society. (“The Theory and Practice of the Political Kingdom of God in Mormon History, 1829-1890,” Master’s thesis, Brigham Young University, 1959, typed copy, pages 74-75)

Fawn Brodie states: “Joseph’s enthusiasm for the United Order was always tempered by the fact that it was Rigdon’s conception” (*No Man Knows My History*, page 108). He decided that it would not work out as he had planned. Therefore, it became necessary to change the revelation to cover up the original plan.

CHANGES M, N, O, P, Q and R. These changes will be dealt with in a chapter on Priesthood in a later volume.

CHANGES S and T. (see page 175) Aleah Koury, of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, made this accusation against the Utah Mormon Church:

In order to lend support to the doctrine of a plurality of gods, the contents of a letter written by Joseph Smith and others on March 20, 1839, were deliberately altered. . . .

Approximately a year after Joseph obtained his freedom from prison, these original letters were published in the *Times and Seasons*, Nauvoo, Illinois, . . . At this time, Joseph Smith was living in the city of Nauvoo, and his brother Don Carlos Smith and Ebenezer Robinson were the editors of this church publication. If there had been errors in these letters, Joseph and those who signed them with him had ample opportunity to correct them, not only before but after publication. But it should be carefully noted that this was the only printing of these letters during Joseph’s lifetime.

However in January, 1855, more than ten years after the death of Joseph Smith, the Utah church reprinted the first letter in the *Millennial Star*, Liverpool, England, . . . and in doing so, deliberately changed and altered the letter from the original as printed in the *Times and Seasons*. This altered letter was again reprinted in the Utah church history . . . These portions of this altered letter

were placed in the 1876 edition of the Utah *Doctrine and Covenants* as revelations from God, with the preamble to Section 121 beginning: “Prayer and Prophecies, written by Joseph Smith the Prophet . . .” But at no time during Joseph’s lifetime were these letters presented either in whole or in part as a revelation from God for the church.

A comparison of the original letter written by the prophet as contained in the *Times and Seasons* and the subsequent printings in the *Millennial Star*, Utah church history, and Utah *Doctrine and Covenants* reveals some of the deliberate alterations made in order to support the doctrine of a plurality of gods. Reference to deity in the *Times and Seasons* account reads:

. . . was ordained in the midst of the council of heaven in the presence of the eternal God, before this world was.

This statement was altered in the Utah church publications to read:

. . . was ordained in the midst of the Council of the Eternal God of all other gods before this world was . . .

In addition, the following statement was also added to the Utah church publications which has no counterpart in the original letter:

A time to come in the which nothing shall be withheld, whether there be one God or many gods. they shall be manifest.

This whole fabrication was a deliberate misrepresentation to implicate Joseph Smith in the promulgation of an unscriptural doctrine of a plurality of gods foreign to the teachings of the original church. (*The Truth and the Evidence*, by Aleah G. Koury, Independence, Mo., 1965, pages 25-27)

Garland E. Tickemyer (a minister in the Reorganized LDS Church) presents an entirely different view, however. His idea seems to be that Joseph Smith himself may have changed the letter before it was printed in the *Times and Seasons*:

On March 25, 1839 while incarcerated in Liberty, Mo., Jail, Joseph Smith and his companions Hyrum Smith, Lyman Wight, Caleb Baldwin and Alexander McRae appended their signatures to a letter addressed to the church. This letter first appeared in printed form in the *Times and Seasons* in November 1839. Some years later the Utah Mormon Church included in their *Doctrine and Covenants*, Sections 121-2-3, what has been generally regarded by their critics as an altered version of that letter since it contains several hundred changes from the letter as it first appeared in the *Times and Seasons*. The writer has joined in criticisms of the Utah Mormon Church for this apparently unwarranted “doctoring” of the letter to make it compatible with their plurality of Gods views.

In the process of doing research for this thesis, the writer became aware of a claim of the Utah Mormons that they had the original letter in their archives and that their *Doctrine and Covenants* version was taken direct from the original.

On March 30, 1954, while passing through Salt Lake City, the writer spent considerable time in gaining access to this purported original letter. With the permission of Joseph Fielding Smith, he and a companion, Jay T. McCormick, made a fairly careful examination of it. It was noted that the letter was addressed to the church, but the mailing address on the back was to Emma Smith. It is evidently in the handwriting of one of Joseph's companions which is not unusual since Joseph Smith almost always used a scribe when one was available. It bears Joseph's signature along with those of his companions.

Before looking at the letter the writer asked Mr. Smith how he could be sure the letter was actually an original. Mr. Smith said we would have to judge that for ourselves.

The writer is not a handwriting expert but he has examined a number of old letters in the archives of the Reorganized church which are known to be originals. In every respect this letter in the Utah files appears to be as genuine as any that he has examined. It is well preserved, having been covered with a type of transparent Japanese silk which permits handling without damage to the paper.

The letter originally published in the *Times and Seasons* is evidently a synopsis of this letter and even the Utah Mormon *Doctrine and Covenants* version **contains only excerpts of this letter**. The gentleman in charge of the library advised us that there were a few minor and insignificant changes from the original wording. We did not attempt to compare the wording throughout because of shortage of time. Since our interest was principally in the two disputed phrases we looked for them. We found that the Utah version is a correct copy of the letter we examined so far as the two phrases are concerned.

The disputed statements "whether there be one God or many," is not a forthright endorsement of a plurality of Gods concept. However, the phrase "in the midst of the council of Gods" is a fairly obvious reference to a plurality of Gods.

We now have the first evidence in this letter of something that was written during Joseph's lifetime. Its authenticity will doubtless be questioned, however, until it is available for examination by experts. The historian advised me that only two other Reorganized Latter Day Saints had ever seen the letter. One of them was Frederick M. Smith, a former president of the Reorganized church who is said to have been shown the letter by George Albert Smith, later president of the Mormon Church. We must also take into account the fact that when the letter was published **the wording was changed**, undoubtedly with the consent of and probably by its writers. We are still left to wonder which represented Joseph Smith's true view; the one written under the stress of prison life, or the more carefully considered version that he released to the world as representing the belief of the church. One gains the impression that he or his companions may have been speculating on the possibility of eternal progression but were not sufficiently certain of their position to make it official. (Garland E. Tickemyer, "A Study of Some Representative Concepts of a Finite God in Contemporary American Philosophy with Application to the God Concepts of the Utah Mormons," M.A. thesis, University of Southern California, 1954, typed copy, pages 48-51)

If Joseph Smith suppressed the statements on the plurality of Gods when the letter was printed in the *Times and Seasons* (as Garland Tickemyer's thesis suggests), then he was guilty of deliberate deception. In a speech delivered June 19, 1844, when Joseph Smith was openly teaching the plurality of Gods, he stated:

I will preach on the plurality of Gods. . . . I am bold to declare I have taught all the strong doctrines publicly, and always teach stronger doctrines in public than in private. (*History of the Church*, Vol. 6, page 474)

If Joseph Smith suppressed the words concerning the plurality of Gods from the *Times and Seasons*, his statement quoted above would certainly be false.

Be this as it may, the Utah Mormon leaders find themselves faced with a dilemma. If they say that Joseph Smith changed the letter, they make him a deceiver. If, on the other hand, they say that the letter was changed in 1855—i.e., when Joseph Smith's History was printed in the *Millennial Star*—they implicate Brigham Young, the second President of the Mormon Church, who approved the revision of Joseph Smith's History (see *History of the Church*, Vol. 7, page 243). The Reorganized Church is in trouble if it can be shown that Joseph Smith changed the letter (which Garland E. Tickemyer's thesis seems to show), but the Utah Mormon Church is in trouble either way. Even if the references to the plurality of Gods were in the original letter, why did Joseph Smith delete them before publication? And why were many of the words—approximately 3,700—which were printed in the *Times and Seasons* later deleted?

It seems to us that both churches must come to grips with the fact that Joseph Smith himself was a deceiver. It is true that the Utah Mormon leaders made many changes in Joseph Smith's History, but the Reorganized Church leaders must admit that the pattern for this deception was established by Joseph Smith. We have shown that it was Joseph Smith who changed the story of his First Vision and the revelations which were first printed in the *Book of Commandments*. Therefore, Joseph Smith was responsible for furnishing the "blueprint for dishonesty" which the Utah Mormon leaders have used to establish their church.

Casting Stones

Mormon leaders have been very free in accusing others of making changes. For instance, they have accused the Catholics of changing the Bible. In the Book of Mormon, 1 Nephi 13:26-29, we read:

. . . thou seest the foundation of a great and abominable 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.

And all this have they done that they might pervert the right ways of the Lord, that they might blind the eyes and harden the hearts of the children of men.

Wherefore, thou seest that after the book hath gone forth through the hands of the great and abominable church, that there are many plain and precious things **taken away** from the book, which is the book of the Lamb of God.

... because of the many plain and precious things which have been taken out of the book, which were plain unto the understanding of the children of men, ... because of these things which are taken away out of the gospel of the Lamb, an exceeding great many do stumble, yea, insomuch that Satan hath great power over them. (Book of Mormon, 1 Nephi 13:26-29)

Joseph Fielding Smith, Jr. (son of the Mormon Historian Joseph Fielding Smith) made this statement:

Scholars do not deny that the original text of the Bible has been corrupted. **Truths have been removed in an attempt to preserve traditions. Faulty translations and omissions of phrases and clauses have resulted in confusion.** (*Religious Truths Defined*, page 337)

On page 175 of the same book we find the following statement:

The early “**apostate fathers**” **did not think it was wrong to tamper with inspired scripture.** If any scripture seemed to endanger their viewpoint, it was altered, transplanted or completely removed from the biblical text. All this was done that they might keep their traditions. Such **mutilation** was considered **justifiable** to preserve the so-called “purity” of their doctrines.

The Mormon Apostle Orson Pratt made this statement:

Who knows that even one verse of the whole Bible has escaped pollution, so as to convey the same sense now that it did in the original? (*Orson Pratt's Works*, 1891, page 218)

On another occasion the Apostle Orson Pratt stated:

23.—The Hebrew and Greek manuscripts of the Bible from which translations have been made, are evidently very much corrupted, ... the learned are under the necessity of translating from such mutilated, imperfect, and, in very many instances, contradictory copies as still exist. This uncertainty, combined with the imperfections of uninspired translations, renders the Bibles of all languages, at the present day, emphatically the words of men, instead of the pure word of God.

24.—In order that the nations may have a perfect standard of salvation, it is necessary that they should have the pure word of God, free from all the

imperfections of human wisdom and learning; free from the accumulating errors of ages of successive copying; free from the **mutilations and alterations of unprincipled and wicked men**; and free from the ignorance and uncertainty, arising from the absence of many lost books. (*Pamphlets by Orson Pratt*, page 71)

Mark E. Petersen, a Mormon Apostle, made this statement concerning the Bible:

Many insertions were made, some of them “slanted” for selfish purposes, while at times deliberate **falsifications and fabrications were perpetrated.** (*As Translated Correctly*, Salt Lake City, 1966, page 4)

On page 14 of the same book, Mark E. Petersen stated:

It is evident then that many of the “plain and precious” things were omitted from the Bible by failure to choose all of the authentic books for inclusion, and by **deliberate changes, deletions and forgeries**, ...

Joseph Smith himself stated:

I believe the Bible as it read when it came from the pen of the original writers. Ignorant translators, careless transcribers, or **designing and corrupt priests have committed many errors.** (*History of the Church*, Vol. 6, page 57)

Thus we see that the Mormon leaders, who have been guilty of making deliberate changes themselves, have been very critical of others. In John 8:7 we read: “He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone ...”

Unthinkable!

The Mormon Apostle Mark E. Petersen stated:

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. (*As Translated Correctly*, page 27)

We certainly agree that it would be dishonest to change the “Word of God,” but we wonder how the Mormon leaders can justify the changes in Joseph Smith’s revelations, since they consider them to also be the “Word of God.” Bruce R. McConkie stated:

As now constituted the *Doctrine and Covenants* contains 136 sections ... Most of these sections came to Joseph Smith by **direct revelation**, the recorded words being those **of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.** (*Mormon Doctrine*, Salt Lake City, 1966, page 206)

Now, certainly after we see the charges made against the Bible by the Mormon leaders, we would expect Mormon writings to be completely free of changes or alterations of any kind. Of all Mormon writings we would expect the *Doctrine and Covenants* to be the most pure and free from revision. The reason for this is that the *Doctrine and Covenants* purports to be the revelations given directly from God to Joseph Smith—not just a translation. We would expect these revelations to be completely free from alteration. We would expect to find nothing removed or changed in any way. Yet, upon careful examination, we find thousands of changes. How can the Mormon leaders explain this?

While many of the Mormons deny that the revelations were changed, some admit that changes were made but try to justify them by saying that God has a right to change His word. Melvin J. Petersen wrote:

Once a man has been recognized and accepted as a prophet and favored with communications from God, his great responsibility is to make sure, inasmuch as he has power to do so, that those to whom the communications are directed, understand what God has revealed for them. The power is his 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. (“A Study of the Nature of and the Significance of the Changes in the Revelations . . .” pages 164-165)

We cannot understand how Melvin Petersen can reason in this way. The Bible certainly does not support his ideas about changing revelations. In Deuteronomy 4:2 we read:

Ye shall **not add unto the word which I command you**, neither shall ye **diminish** ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you.

In Proverbs 30:5-6 it is written:

Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him. **Add thou not unto his words**, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.

The Bible teaches that God’s word is never to be altered once it is given. In Revelations 22:18-19 we read:

. . . If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book. And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

David Whitmer, one of the three witnesses to the Book of Mormon, made this statement:

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)

If the revelations were from God, why would they have to be changed? Was not God capable of giving the revelations right the first time? Is the God of the *Doctrine and Covenants* a changeable God? If so, he is not the God of the scriptures, for in Malachi 3:6 it is written:

For I am the Lord, **I change not**; . . .

Smooth Talk

At first Joseph Smith seemed to be very opposed to any changes being made in the revelations. When Oliver Cowdery asked him to change one of the revelations, Joseph wrote:

I immediately wrote to him in reply, in which I asked him by what authority he took upon him to command me to alter or erase, to add to or diminish from a revelation or commandment from Almighty God. (*History of the Church*, Vol. 1, page 105)

Joseph Fielding Smith said the following concerning this incident:

Joseph immediately answered by letter that he could not alter the revelations of the Lord. (*Essentials in Church History*, page 109)

Joseph Smith taught that the revelations contained the very words of Christ. Edward Stevenson related the following:

Father Sanford Porter, while living in Jackson County, Mo., in 1832, was desirous to know how the Prophet translated the characters which were engraven on the gold plates, and made it a matter of prayer. While the Prophet was receiving a revelation in Jackson County, Missouri, Father Porter was present in the room and while observing that the Prophet would speak a sentence to be written by a scribe engaged for that purpose, the scribe would say, "It is written," and if written correctly the sentence before the Prophet would disappear and another sentence would appear likewise, but if not written correctly by the scribe the sentence would remain; and after the necessary correction had been made, the sentence would disappear. (*Reminiscences of Joseph, the Prophet*, by Edward Stevenson, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1893, page 30)

On page 42 of the same booklet we find the following:

In order to show how particular the Prophet was regarding revelations which he received from the Lord, I will relate an incident which occurred in Liberty jail. While the Prophet was receiving a revelation, the late Bishop Alexander McRae was writing as Joseph received it. Upon this occasion Brother McRae suggested a slight change in the wording of the revelation, when Joseph sternly asked:

"Do you know who you are writing for?"

Brother McRae, who at once discovered his mistake, begged the Prophet's pardon for undertaking to correct the word of the Lord.

David Whitmer made this interesting statement concerning the changes in the revelations:

I want to tell the brethern, that when the *Doctrine and Covenants* was published and presented to that assembly on that occasion, a very few of the brethern knew at that time about those "changes" in revelations concerning "Joseph's gift" and "to rely upon the Book of Mormon in building up the church," etc. In time it was generally found out, and the result was as I have stated. I want to state also that Oliver Cowdery told me that Rigdon was the cause of those changes being made: by smooth talk he convinced Joseph, Oliver, and F. G. Williams that it was all right. Oliver told me that he had sorely repented of that thing; and he repented of the other errors he had been led into by Rigdon and others. Bro. John Whitmer likewise. Thank God I can say that Bro. John and Bro. Oliver come out of their errors, repented of them, and died believing as I do to-day. I stand to-day just where I and the others stood in the early days of the church when the Bible and the Book of Mormon were the rule and guide to our faith. (*Saints' Herald*, February 5, 1887)

Ebenezer Robinson stated:

On the 17th day of August, 1835, a general assembly of the church convened . . . to hear the report

of the compiling committee of said book, and determine by vote, whether they "accepted and acknowledged it as the doctrine and covenants of their faith . . ." We attended that meeting, and noticed that a majority of those voting did so upon the testimony of those who bore record to the truth of the book, as they had neither time or opportunity to examine it for themselves.

They had no means of knowing whether any alterations had been made in any of the revelations or not. (*The Return*, Vol. 1, page 89)

Most of the changes were apparently made in the 1835 edition of the *Doctrine and Covenants*. Melvin J. Petersen has a chart on page 121 of his thesis, "A Study of the Nature of and the 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*," in which he lists the editions of the *Doctrine and Covenants* and the number of changes which were made in each edition. Below are the figures given in this chart.

1835 Edition - 2643 Changes	1854 Edition - 10 Changes
1844 Edition - 18 Changes	1876 Edition - 2 Changes
1845 Edition - 36 Changes	1882 Edition - 1 Change
1846 Edition - No Changes	1921 Edition - 91 Changes
1852 Edition - 11 Changes	

Sometimes the changing of only one word can make a great deal of difference in meaning. Daniel Macgregor shows that even a capitalization change made in one of Joseph Smith's revelations may have been significant:

The attempt to use the Preface Revelation as an endorsement of the Doc. & Cov. was pure plagiarism. That Preface was given for the Book of Commandments as paragraph 2 will show: "Behold this is mine authority and the authority of my servants and my preface unto the Book of My Commandments which I have given them to publish unto you, O inhabitants of the earth."

In the original Book of Commandments the name of the Book is capitalized, emphasizing it as distinctively referring to the name of that Book. In the Doc. & Cov, this name is cut down to lower case letters with the evident intention of minimizing the name, that the term might be appropriated to some other compilation of the Commandments. (*Changing of the Revelations*, page 26)

McLellin's Charges

In the "Explanatory Introduction" to the *Doctrine and Covenants* (page v) we find what purports to be the testimony of the Twelve Apostles to the *Doctrine and Covenants*. On the next page the reader will find a photograph of this purported document.

**TESTIMONY OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES TO THE TRUTH
OF THE BOOK OF DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS.**

The Testimony of the Witnesses to the Book of the Lord's Commandments, which commandments He gave to His Church through Joseph Smith, Jun., who was appointed by the voice of the Church for this purpose:

We, therefore, feel willing to bear testimony to all the world of mankind, to every creature upon the face of all the earth, that the Lord has borne record to our souls, through the Holy Ghost shed forth upon us, that these commandments were given by inspiration of God, and are profitable for all men and are verily true.

We give this testimony unto the world, the Lord being our helper; and it is through the grace of God the Father, and His Son, Jesus Christ, that we are permitted to have this privilege of bearing this testimony unto the world, in the which we rejoice exceedingly, praying the Lord always that the children of men may be profited thereby.

THOMAS B. MARSH
DAVID W. PATTEN
BRIGHAM YOUNG
HEBER C. KIMBALL
ORSON HYDE
WM. E. McLELLIN

PARLEY P. PRATT
LUKE S. JOHNSON
WILLIAM SMITH
ORSON PRATT
JOHN F. BOYNTON
LYMAN E. JOHNSON

Among the names signed on this purported document we find that of William E. McLellin. In later years, however, McLellin claimed that this "testimony" was a "base forgery":

Apostle McLellan says: "So far as the testimony of the Twelve published in that book (Doc. & Cov.) is concerned, it was a base forgery. The Twelve left Kirtland in May, proceeding on an eastern tour. They were in the State of Maine, or at least in the east. They held their last conference in Farmington, Maine, Oct. 24th, 1835. So their testimony could not in truth be in that Assembly in Sep. 24th, 1835." *Saints' Herald*, Aug. 1, 1872. (*Changing of the Revelations*, by Daniel Macgregor, Independence, Mo., page 32)

Daniel Macgregor makes this statement concerning the "testimony":

The testimony, however, does not mention the Doc. & Cov. Never squints at it. And in view of the fact that this testimony is practically the same as that given by the same men to sustain the Book of Commandments, it is difficult to escape the suspicion that it is one and the same. It looks like another case of plagiarizing, stealing from the Book of Commandments to build up the Doc. & Cov. (*Changing of the Revelations*, page 31)

As Mr. Macgregor indicates, the testimony to the *Book of Commandments* is almost identical. It appears in Joseph Smith's history under the date of November 1, 1831:

The testimony of the witnesses to the book of the Lord's commandments, which He gave to His Church through Joseph Smith, Jun., who was appointed by the voice of the Church for this purpose; we therefore feel willing to bear testimony to all the world of mankind, to every creature upon the face of all the earth and upon the islands of the sea, that the Lord has borne record to our souls, through the Holy Ghost, shed forth upon us, that these commandments were given by inspiration of

God, and are profitable for all men, and are verily true. We give this testimony unto the world, the Lord being our helper; and it is through the grace of God, the Father, and His Son, Jesus Christ, that we are permitted to have this privilege of bearing testimony unto the world, that the children of men may be profited thereby. (*History of the Church*, by Joseph Smith, Vol. 1, page 226)

William E. McLellin had much to say about the changes in the revelations. The *Salt Lake Tribune* for October 6, 1875, printed the following statement regarding Dr. McLellin:

His faith was first shaken by the changes made in the revelations. He had been careful to keep copies of the originals, presented proof that all the early **revelations were changed three times**, and considerably amended before they appeared in their present form.

William E. McLellin is reported as saying:

"In 1835 in Kirtland another committee was appointed to fix up the revelations for print again. I was teaching their high school in the lower room, the printing office being overhead. And I was often in Joseph's office, and know positively that some of the revelations were so altered, mutilated and changed that a good scholar would scarcely know them. In one revelation I counted 20 alterations! Hence, who can depend upon them? I cannot. I will not. . . . All your trouble arises from your taking that mutilated and altered *Doctrine and Covenants*." (*Saints' Herald*, Vol. 17:556, 557, as quoted in *Changing of the Revelations*, page 6)

Chas. W. Lamb quotes this statement from a letter written by W. E. McLellin in 1877:

For instance he says: — "I found that Smith did not always tell the truth. . . . He materially altered his own revelations before they were ever printed." (*The Return*, Davis City, Iowa, November 1890, page 364)

Whitmer's Charges

David Whitmer had a great deal to say about the changes in the revelations. (It should be remembered that David Whitmer was one of the three witnesses to the Book of Mormon.) The following is taken from one of David Whitmer's pamphlets:

I want to tell the brethren, that when the Book of Doctrine and Covenants was published, and presented to the church assembly in Kirtland, Ohio, in August, 1835, as recorded in the old church papers, a very few of the brethren then knew about most of the important changes that had been put in the Book of Doctrine and Covenants. In time it was generally found out, and the result was that some of the members left the church on account of it. A few members dissented from the church as early as 1832, on account of the spiritual blindness of some of the leaders. When it became generally known that these important changes had been made in the Doctrine and Covenants, many of the brethren objected seriously to it, but they did not want to say much for the sake of peace, as it was Brother Joseph and the leaders who did it. The majority of the members—poor weak souls—thought that anything Brother Joseph would do, must be all right; so in their blindness of heart, trusting in an arm of flesh, they looked over it and were led into error, and finally all talk about it ceased. 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.

The editors of the old church papers, *Evening and Morning Star* and *Messenger and Advocate*, admit that some changes were made in some of the revelations; that they added some items to some revelations, from other revelations. 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.

Some of the Latter Day Saints have claimed that God had the same right to authorize Brother Joseph to add to any revelations certain words and facts, that He had to give him any revelations at all: but only those who are trusting in an arm of flesh and are in spiritual blindness, would pretend to make that claim; that God would give his servants some revelations, command them to publish them in His Book of Commandments, and then authorize them to change and add to them some words which change and reverse the original meaning: as if God had changed his mind after giving his word. No brethren! God does not change and work in any such manner as this; all those who believe that God does work this way, my prayer for them is that they may repent, for they are in utter spiritual blindness. (*An Address to All Believers in Christ*, by David Whitmer, Richmond, Mo., 1887, pages 57-61)

David Whitmer also stated:

You have changed the revelations from the way they were first given and as they are to-day in the Book of Commandments, to support the error of Brother Joseph in taking upon himself the office of Seer to the church. You have changed the revelations to support the error of high priests. You have changed the revelations, to support the error of a President of the high priesthood, high counselors, etc. **You have altered the revelations to support you in going beyond the plain teachings of Christ in the new covenant part of the Book of Mormon.** You have changed and altered the revelations to support the error of publishing these revelations in a book: the errors you are in, revelations have been changed to support and uphold them. **You who are now living did not change them, but you who strive to defend these things, are as guilty in the sight of God as those who did change them.** (*An Address to All Believers in Christ*, page 49)

Who's Ashamed?

At the start of this chapter we quoted the Mormon Apostle John A. Widtsoe as saying that non-Mormons have been "afraid" to discuss the *Doctrine and Covenants*. We have shown that this statement is completely untrue. Furthermore, there is evidence that the Mormons themselves were embarrassed about the *Doctrine and Covenants* when it was first published. In 1837 Joseph Smith instructed the missionaries that went to England to keep secret the fact that the church had a book of Doctrine and Covenants:

My instructions to the brethren were, when they arrived in England, to adhere closely to the first principles of the Gospel, and remain silent concerning the gathering, the vision, and the Book of Doctrine and Covenants, . . . (*History of the Church*, by Joseph Smith, Vol. 2, page 492)

Joseph Smith related the following incident that occurred in England:

. . . Elder Goodson, contrary to the most positive instructions of President Kimball, and without advising with any one, read publicly the vision from the Doctrine and Covenants, which turned the current of feeling generally, and nearly closed the door in all the region. (*History of the Church*, Vol. 2, page 505)

Eventually, however, the Mormons had to admit to the people in England that they had such a book. Wilford Woodruff, who later became President of the Mormon Church, made this statement in 1845:

I had also the pleasing reflection of knowing that I had, upon this 7th day of June, A. D. 1845, the pleasure of securing unto the church the copyright of the Book of Doctrine and Covenants . . . which book is one of the most important records ever presented to this or any other generation, and is now for sale at our office in Liverpool, and our agents throughout the United Kingdom, to the church and all who wish to purchase, of every sect and party under heaven. Let our enemies cease to accuse us of wishing to keep this work secret. . . . I entered the work at Stationers' Hall, London, and secured a certificate of the entry of the copyright, which secures unto us the right of printing it throughout the British dominions, notwithstanding the plots laid by some of our enemies in secret chambers in the city of Pittsburgh, to rob the church of the copyright of that book by entering it before me. (*Times and Seasons*, Vol. 6, pages 1005-1006)

In 1904 Francis M. Lyman, a Mormon Apostle, was questioned concerning the *Doctrine and Covenants*. He testified as follows:

Mr. WORTHINGTON. You have not mentioned the Doctrine and Covenants. Is that circulated, too?

Mr. LYMAN. **No; not so much.**

Mr. WORTHINGTON. In what proportion do you circulate the Doctrine and Covenants and the Book of Mormon?

Mr. LYMAN. Oh, the Doctrine and Covenants is not circulated as a book to make converts with. It is not circulated at all. If anybody wants it—we do not put it forward; but the Book of Mormon and the Articles of Faith. Then, there is the Voice of Warning, by Parloar P. Pratt, and Key to Theology, by Parloar P. Pratt, and works of that kind.

Mr. WORTHINGTON. In what proportion is the Doctrine and Covenants circulated, compared with the Articles of Faith, the Talmage book, which we have here?

Mr. LYMAN. We do not look upon the Doctrine and Covenants as a book to circulate at all. It is a law of the church, the word of the Lord to the church, and the law and discipline, but for the doctrines of the church we take the commentaries more. (*Reed Smoot Case*, Washington, 1904, Vol. 1, pages 444-445)

The Apostle Hyrum Smith testified as follows:

Mr. HYRUM M. SMITH. So far as I, myself, am concerned in missionary work, and those who immediately labored with me, we made no effort to circulate the Doctrine and Covenants among the people as a proselyting medium. The Book of Mormon was used extensively for that purpose.

Mr. WORTHINGTON. Then, among those who are your members and who know all about the manifesto and this matter being forbidden by law, the Doctrine and Covenants is used a great deal more than it is among people who are not members and when you are doing missionary work?

Mr. HYRUM M. SMITH. Yes, sir; and if I may be permitted to add here, I would like to do so in relation to the editions. I think it was relating to the Doctrine and Covenants that the question was asked, I believe, how it was that a number of editions had been issued recently.

Now, if I am not mistaken, and the Book of Doctrine and Covenants was referred to, I will say that, in my opinion, those books were purchased by the Latter-Day Saints themselves and not for distribution for proselyting purposes. (*Reed Smoot Case*, Vol. 1, page 510)

Conclusion

In this chapter we have shown that the Mormon leaders have denied that changes were made in Joseph Smith's revelations, yet, upon careful examination, we have found that thousands of changes have been made. The Mormon Apostle John A. Widtsoe has charged that critics have been "afraid" to discuss the *Doctrine and Covenants*. We have found, however, that this statement is completely false. Moreover, we have shown that the Mormons themselves suppressed the *Doctrine and Covenants* when it was first printed.

In a later volume we plan to present more evidence that the revelations printed in the *Doctrine and Covenants* could not have come from God.



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