

# MAJOR PROBLEMS OF MORMONISM



By Jerald and Sandra Tanner

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**1989**  
(Digital version 2014)

Utah Lighthouse Ministry  
[www.utlm.org](http://www.utlm.org)



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## Preface

The Apostle Paul admonishes Christians to “Prove all things; hold fast that which is good” (1 Thessalonians 5:21). In the thirty years we have been doing research on Mormonism, we have always tried to keep this statement in mind. Since we were once Mormons and have a deep love and concern for our people, we have tried to produce a work that will be read and appreciated by Mormons who are seeking the truth as well as outsiders who know little about the subject.

As early as 1965, Wallace Turner, a correspondent for the *New York Times*, realized the effectiveness of such an approach:

Dr. Thomas F. O’Dea . . . insists that the church is in the midst of a crisis. . . . in keeping with Dr. O’Dea’s theory of the sleeping crisis, one of the most influential apostates of the 1960s have been a young machinist, who with his wife, left the church and now makes a living printing books and documents which contradict official Mormon pronouncements.

His name is Jerald Tanner. His wife, Sandra, is a great-great-granddaughter of Brigham Young. . . . They lived in the summer of 1965 in an old house at 1350 S. West Temple Street . . . He and Nathan Eldon Tanner, the high LDS official, are both descended, he thought, from John Tanner, the man who helped Joseph Smith in the 1830s. Both the young man and his wife grew up in the LDS church. He drifted away first and she followed. . . . the three of us sat in the high-ceilinged living room of the old house and discussed the general question of how one feels on leaving the company of the Saints.

“It was a long time before I could admit I didn’t believe the Book of Mormon,” said Sandra Tanner, dangling Brigham Young’s great-great-great-grandchild on her knee. “It was weeks after that before I could say it out loud.” . . .

The Tanners operate as the Modern Microfilm Company [now Utah Lighthouse Ministry]. They specialize in copying books and documents that are out of print, or have been suppressed in one way or another, but that bear on the history and doctrine

of the LDS church. When I talked with them, they had thirty-one titles for sale. The best seller was *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* . . . the Tanners have signed individual statements setting out their religious experience. Jerald Tanner wrote that he was born and reared in the Mormon church . . . He considers himself a Protestant, a believer in Christ and in the doctrines of eternal salvation preached by Protestants. However, he now refuses to accept any of the doctrine that belongs exclusively to the LDS church. . . .

Sandra Tanner’s statement shows that she had doubts about her religion, but was generally able to contain them—until “I met Jerald and we began studying the Bible and Mormonism together. As we studied I began to see the contradictions between the Bible and the teachings of the Mormon church.”

As a child she had been taught to admire her ancestor, Brigham Young. This was the point at which Jerald Tanner made his attack on her faith. He did it in Brigham’s own words.

“Then Jerald had me read some of Brigham Young’s sermons in the *Journal of Discourses* on Blood Atonement,” Mrs. Tanner wrote.

“I was shocked! I knew what Brigham Young was saying was wrong but I couldn’t reconcile these sermons with the things I had always been taught concerning him. I knew these were not the words of a Prophet of God.

“As I studied I not only found errors in Mormonism, I also began to comprehend there was something wrong in my own life. As I studied God’s word I realized I was a sinful hypocrite.”

That day as she talked in the living room of the old house across from the ballpark in Salt Lake City, she remembered her first meeting with Jerald Tanner. She was visiting her grandmother.

“I fell in love with him,” she said quite simply and without embarrassment. Then she used a typical Mormon analogy to explain what she thinks their present life purpose to be. “What we do is more of a mission, you might say.” . . .

“There also is the demonstration by the Tanners that an apostate from the Mormon church generally takes with him their techniques of indefatigable research and argument that he was taught while in the church’s embrace. The Tanners’ masterwork, *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* is an intricate weaving of arguments from many sources against the fundamental precepts of the Saints’ doctrine—that Joseph Smith, Jr., was a prophet of God and that his production of the Book of Mormon, the revelations set down in *Doctrine and Covenants*, and further writings in the *Pearl of Great Price* represented the fruits of divine inspiration. . . .

With the Tanners the church today finds itself faced by its own techniques of argument and its own words turned back against it . . . The campaign is effective, too, and of this there is no doubt. (*The Mormon Establishment*, 1966, pages 153-160, 162)

As Wallace Turner has indicated, the *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* has been our major work on the LDS Church. In an introduction to *The Changing World of Mormonism*, published in 1980, Wesley P. Walters, an authority on Mormonism who has served as Contributing Editor for the *Journal of Pastoral Practice*, wrote the following:

“Oh, this stuff is dynamite!” exclaimed a prestigious director of a Mormon Institute of Religion. “I tell you, though you may not believe it, I have seen people get utterly crushed, almost devastated with some of the material that the Tanners have reproduced.”

“I will tell you,” he continues, “there was an Institute teacher here, not long ago . . . who lost his testimony and went out of the church on the basis of this stuff.”

That description of the effects of Jerald and Sandra Tanner’s publishing efforts to unmask Mormonism is hardly an overstatement. . . .

Their major work, *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* has sold more than thirty thousand copies without any advertising campaign, simply because it is the most definitive work in print on the fallacies of Mormonism. . . .

The Mormon authorities have usually answered the Tanners by the silent treatment, apparently feeling that the less exposure their work received the better it would be for the church.

During the past few years some members of the Mormon Church have become convinced of the integrity of our work because of the way we handled the Mark Hofmann situation. As most people who have an interest in Mormonism are aware, Mr. Hofmann turned out to be a forger who was exposed after he killed two people with bombs. In 1984, however, he was a highly respected

Mormon document dealer who had an inside track with the church’s hierarchy in selling his forged documents to the church.

In February 1984 we were shown extracts from Hofmann’s notorious White Salamander Letter, a document which supported our position concerning Joseph Smith’s involvement in magical practices and cast the Mormon Church in a very bad light. Fortunately, and we believe it was through God’s help, we were able to detect the fact that portions of it seemed to have been plagiarized from *Mormonism Unveiled*, an anti-Mormon book published by E. D. Howe in 1834. We discussed the matter at some length and agreed that regardless of the problems it might cause, we must make our findings public. Consequently, in the March 1984 issue of the *Salt Lake City Messenger*, we stated that we had “reservations concerning the authenticity of the letter, and at the present time we are not prepared to say that it was actually penned by Martin Harris. . . . We will give the reasons for our skepticism as we proceed with this article.” We went on in the same newsletter to reveal the disturbing parallels between the Salamander letter and E. D. Howe’s book.

Nineteen months before local and federal investigators even began working on the Salt Lake bombing’s case, we were conducting our own investigation of the documents Mark Hofmann was selling to the Mormon Church and other collectors. During that period we published a great deal of material which cast doubt on both the documents and Mr. Hofmann. Both Mormons and non-Mormons, however, seemed to feel that we were way off base and were persecuting an innocent man. After the bombings, however, many people began to change their minds, and finally in 1987 Mark Hofmann confessed to both the bombings and the forgeries. In his confession he confirmed the theory we had suggested in February 1984—i.e., that Howe’s book could be the source of the White Salamander Letter: “. . . the idea for the white salamander derived from the toad in A. D. Howe’s book” (*Hofmann’s Confession*, page 440). Mr. Hofmann also confirmed a number of other theories we had printed prior to the bombings.

After authorities began to investigate Mark Hofmann, we were visited by *New York Times* reporter Robert Lindsey. Mr. Lindsey said that investigators had recommended that he obtain our material because it agreed with the theories they were working on. In 1988 Simon and Schuster published a book Robert Lindsey had written on the subject. In this book, Mr. Lindsey gave some good publicity to our work:



Tanner was a machinist turned publisher whose historical research, probably more than that of anyone else except Fawn Brodie, had given birth to what was being called “the new Mormon history.” . . . In 1964 Jerald Tanner quit his machinist’s job and he and Sandra began writing a book based on their research. From those beginnings would spring an extraordinary mom-and-pop temple of anti-Mormonism in the heart of Mormondom, the Utah Lighthouse Ministry. . . . Steve Christensen—and the church—lost the battle to keep the [Salamander] letter’s existence a secret. The disclosure was not in *Time* but in Jerald Tanner’s *Salt Lake City Messenger*. . . . There was probably no one in the Salt Lake Valley who was more anxious to believe the letter was genuine than Tanner. . . . But Tanner told his readers he had reservations about it because some passages reminded him of other nineteenth-century documents he had studied while researching Joseph Smith’s involvement in magic. (*A Gathering of Saints: A True Story of Money, Murder and Deceit*, pages 128, 130, 132)

The fact that Mormon officials continued to deal with Mark Hofmann and buy his documents while we were printing information against his claims has caused a number of faithful church members to wonder about the inspiration of their leaders. In any case, the whole affair has certainly given a great deal of publicity to our work. More information concerning the Mark Hofmann scandal and its effect on the church will be found later in this book.

Unfortunately, although our major work, *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* has proved to be very effective in bringing many Mormons to the truth, it contains more material than the average person wishes to read. In 1980 Moody Press published a condensed version under the title, *The Changing World of Mormonism*. This book has been received very well and continues to fill the need of those who do not wish to read all the material found in *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* Nevertheless, the fact that it still contains almost 600 pages has forced Moody Press to ask a price that is greater than the average paperback book. For these reasons we decided to reduce the material even further and to offer a price which will be very appealing to the average reader. In this book we have tried to deal with the major problems of Mormonism in the least amount of space possible and yet present enough documentation to make the issues convincing. Those who want more information will want to consult either *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* or *The Changing World of Mormonism*. In addition, there are other books that we sell which go into even greater detail on certain subjects. For those who are interested in keeping up on the latest discoveries and information

concerning Mormonism we publish a newsletter entitled, *The Salt Lake City Messenger*. It is available free upon request to those who write us at Utah Lighthouse Ministry, PO Box 1884, Salt Lake City, Utah 84110 [or online at utlm.org].

In this book we do not claim to deal with all of the problems of Mormonism. A number of very important issues have not been dealt with because of a lack of space. For example, we feel that one of the most serious problems has to do with changes which Joseph Smith made in Facsimile No. 2 in his “Book of Abraham.” To present this problem and the photographic evidence which supports it would take too much room. (Those who are interested in this matter can find the information laid out in *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* pages 335-345.)

We would especially like to thank Wesley P. Walters, H. Michael Marquardt, LaMar Petersen, James D. Wardle, Grant Heward, and Jerry Urban for all the help they have provided during the last two or three decades. Both Mormons and non-Mormons have furnished us with important information, and a number of libraries have greatly assisted by allowing photographs to be made of many of their books and manuscripts.

The reader will notice that we have used *italicized* type for emphasis throughout this book.

## A Brief Look at Mormon History

- 1805** — Joseph Smith born on December 23
- 1820** — The Father and Son appear to Smith
- 1823** — The Angel Moroni informs Smith about the gold plates containing the Book of Mormon
- 1826** — Smith is arrested for being “a disorderly person” — i.e. using a “seer stone” to divine the location of buried treasures
- 1827** — Smith marries Emma Hale • Receives the gold plates on September 22
- 1830** — The Book of Mormon is published in Palmyra, N.Y. • Mormon Church organized
- 1831** — Joseph Smith moves to Kirtland, Ohio
- 1833** — Smith’s revelations are printed in the *Book of Commandments* • Mormons driven from Jackson County, Missouri
- 1835** — Joseph Smith’s revelations are reprinted in the *Doctrine and Covenants* • Smith receives papyrus manuscripts which he claims were written by Joseph and Abraham in Egypt
- 1836** — Kirtland Temple is dedicated • Joseph Smith received revelation to form a bank at Kirtland
- 1837** — Kirtland Bank fails • Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon are found guilty of illegal banking practices • Book of Mormon witness Oliver Cowdery accuses Smith of committing adultery with Fanny Alger
- 1838** — Joseph Smith flees from Kirtland in the night to avoid “legal process” • Mormons gather at Far West, Missouri • A secret band known as the “Danites” is organized in the church • A mob murders seventeen Mormons at Haun’s Mill • War breaks out with the Missourians • Joseph Smith surrenders to the Missouri Militia • Smith and other Mormons are charged with “treason, murder, arson, burglary, robbery, larceny and perjury”
- 1839** — Smith escapes and flees to Illinois • The city of Nauvoo is founded by the Mormons
- 1841** — Joseph Smith gives revelation on building a temple in Nauvoo and baptism for the dead • Smith secretly practicing polygamy
- 1842** — Joseph Smith’s translation of the Book of Abraham is printed • Smith continues to marry plural wives • Smith becomes a Mason and introduces temple endowment ceremony
- 1843** — Joseph Smith dictates his revelation on plural marriage
- 1844** — Joseph Smith organizes secret Council of Fifty and runs for the presidency of the United States • The *Nauvoo Expositor* reveals that Smith is practicing polygamy • Smith orders the *Expositor* to be destroyed and is “charged with riot” in the destruction of the press • Joseph and Hyrum Smith are held in the Carthage Jail and are murdered in cold blood by a mob that attacks the jail • Brigham Young becomes leader of the church
- 1845** — The Illinois legislature “repeals the city charter of Nauvoo”
- 1846** — Mormon apostles leave Nauvoo early (February 4) to avoid being arrested by the U.S. Government on counterfeiting charges • Mormons in temporary settlements in Iowa and Nebraska
- 1847** — Mormons arrive in the territory of Utah
- 1852** — The practice of polygamy is publicly admitted • Brigham Young preaches his notorious Adam-God sermon
- 1857** — Brigham Young and other Mormon leaders preach “blood atonement” doctrine • Troops sent to Utah to put down the “Mormon rebellion” • Mormons drive off cattle owned by the government and burn wagons
- 1858** — Utah War ends • Brigham Young and other Mormons charged with “treason” are given a pardon by the president of the United States
- 1862** — A “federal law was passed defining plural marriage as bigamy and declaring it a crime”
- 1877** — Brigham Young dies
- 1880** — John Taylor becomes third president
- 1882** — The “Edmunds Anti-Polygamy bill became law” • Those who continue to live in polygamy to be disfranchised
- 1887** — President John Taylor, who is hiding from the law, dies in exile
- 1889** — Wilford Woodruff becomes fourth president • President Woodruff gives a revelation in which God informs the church that it is not to yield to the government’s pressure against polygamy
- 1890** — President Woodruff claims to have a new revelation that the church must give up the practice of plural marriage • Woodruff yields to the pressure and issues the Manifesto which declares the church will no longer allow polygamy
- 1898** — Lorenzo Snot becomes fifth president
- 1901** — Joseph F. Smith becomes sixth president
- 1904** — The United State Senate begins an investigation (the Reed Smoot Case) which demonstrates that Mormon leaders were secretly continuing the practice of plural marriage
- 1906** — President Joseph F. Smith found guilty of unlawful cohabitation
- 1918** — Heber J. Grant becomes seventh president
- 1945** — George Albert Smith becomes eighth president
- 1951** — David O. McKay becomes ninth president
- 1967** — The teaching that blacks are cursed and cannot hold the priesthood described as a “burning issue” in the church
- 1968** — Noted Egyptologists declare that Smith “Book of Abraham” is a false translation of the papyri
- 1970** — Joseph Fielding Smith becomes tenth president
- 1972** — Harold B. Lee becomes eleventh president
- 1973** — Spencer W. Kimball becomes twelfth president
- 1978** — President Kimball claims that he has a new revelation that blacks should be admitted to the priesthood
- 1985** — Ezra Taft Benson becomes thirteenth president

## 1. A Marvelous Work?

In 1830 the Mormon prophet Joseph Smith published the Book of Mormon—a volume of over 500 pages 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, the two main groups which claim to base their teachings upon Joseph Smith’s works are the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints [now known as the Community of Christ]. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is by far the largest of these two groups, claiming to have about seven million members. The church’s magazine, *The Ensign*, May 1988, page 20, reported a membership of “6,440,000” members “at the close of 1987.” The same publication indicated that the church had “34,750” full-time missionaries and that “227,284” converts were baptized into church during 1987.

Members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, headquartered in Salt Lake City, Utah, are commonly referred to as “Mormons” or “Latter-day Saints” (abbreviated as LDS).

Besides being one of the fastest growing churches in the world, the LDS Church is one of the richest. Bill Beecham and David Briscoe gave this information in *Utah Holiday*, March 22, 1976, pages 4-6:

Today, the LDS church is a religious and financial empire with . . . assets in the *billions of dollars* and an income in contributions and in sales by church-controlled corporations estimated at more than \$3 million a day. . . .

There has never been an accounting of modern church income or wealth. The church’s last disclosure of expenditures was made 17 years ago. . . .

Asked by two Associated Press reporters why this information is now withheld, President N. Eldon Tanner of the church’s First Presidency said, “It was determined that continued publication of the expenditure was not desirable.” He did not elaborate. Asked about church income, he replied, “I don’t think the public needs to have that information.”. . .

Church holdings, as outlined in the Associated Press report, would rank the church among the nation’s top 50 corporations in total assets—those with \$2 billion or more. Church property included more than 5,000 mostly-religious buildings throughout the world, a 36-story apartment house in New York City, a 260,000 acre ranch near Disney World in Florida, a village in Hawaii and an estimated 65 acres of business and religious property in downtown Salt Lake City, including a \$33 million headquarters building.

In 1980 Michael Parrish published an article which contained this statement: “. . . the AP came up with revenues of some \$3 million a day in 1975. David Briscoe, of the AP news team recently said he thought the figure would exceed \$4 million today” (*Rocky Mountain Magazine*, Jan.–Feb. 1980, page 23).

### Miraculous Claims

The validity of Mormonism rests upon the claims of Joseph Smith. When Smith 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 called the “Hill Cumorah.” According to Smith, this was no ordinary hill, for on this hill two of the greatest battles in history were fought. Apostle Bruce R. McConkie says: “Both the Nephite and Jaredite civilizations fought their final great wars of extinction at and near the *Hill Cumorah* . . . which 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*, 1979, page 175). Apostle McConkie further stated: “It is reported by President Brigham Young that there was in the Hill Cumorah a room containing many wagon loads of plates” (*Ibid.*, 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 stone (maybe a little unusual in appearance), but to Joseph Smith it became a “seer stone.” This stone was supposed to have 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 sent from God. The angel told 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 the land, but Joseph Smith turned over one stone and found all the answers. Underneath this stone he found a box which held the gold plates. 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 charge, has been altered by wicked priests. Mormon Apostle LeGrand Richards claimed that “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 . . .” (*A Marvelous Work and a Wonder*, 1966, page 41).

After the Mormon church was organized, Joseph Smith gave a revelation which stated that the Saints were to gather at Jackson County, Missouri. To other Mormon leaders, this was no ordinary land; they taught, in fact, that it was the place where the “Garden of Eden” was located. Apostle McConkie explained: “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 some rocks which he maintained were the remains of an altar built by Adam. Apostle McConkie continued: “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” (page 21). Oliver B. Huntington added further details in an article published in the Mormon publication, *The Juvenile*

*Instructor*, November 15, 1895, pages 700-701:

Adam’s Altar . . . Joseph said, “That altar was built by our Father Adam and there he offered sacrifice.” . . . according to the words of the Prophet Joseph, mankind in that age continued to emigrate eastwardly until they reached the country on or near the Atlantic coast; and that *in or near Carolina Noah built his remarkable ship*, in which he, his family, and all kinds of animals lived a few days over one year without coming out of it.

In the year 1835 a man came to Kirtland, Ohio, with some mummies and rolls of papyrus. Joseph Smith examined the papyri 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). As we will show later, when Josiah Quincy visited Nauvoo in 1844, Joseph Smith pointed out “the handwriting of Abraham . . . the autograph of Moses” and some lines written by “his brother Aaron.” Smith translated the “writings of Abraham” and they are published by the church today in the *Pearl of Great Price* under the title, “The Book of Abraham.”

The Mormons claimed that Joseph Smith’s power as a “seer” extended far beyond this earth. In 1892 the following statement by Oliver B. Huntington appeared in the church publication, the *Young Woman’s Journal*, vol. 3, pages 263-264:

Nearly all the great discoveries of men in the last half century have, in one way or another, either directly or indirectly, contributed to prove Joseph Smith to be a Prophet.

As far back as 1837, I know that he said *the moon was inhabited* by men and women the same as this earth, and that they lived to a greater age than we do, that they live generally to near the age of 1000 years.

He described the men as averaging near six feet in height, and dressing quite uniformly in something near the Quaker style.

While very few Mormons today would try to defend Joseph Smith’s ideas about the “inhabitants of the moon,” the church still teaches that the Book of Mormon is scripture, that Adam’s altar is in Missouri, and that the Book of Abraham was actually translated from the Egyptian papyrus.

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 by John the Baptist, Peter, James, John, Moses, Elijah, Elias, Michael, Raphael, Nephi, Moroni, Mormon and possibly others.

bad for your growing, impressionable girls. Comedies, farces, operas of the lighter sorts, dramas, concerts and negro shows are good to cheer and amuse all, even the dear innocent girls, so once a week, say, we will allow Our Girl to visit a theatre. Out of door sports in winter or summer are excellent if conducted by the proper people and in proper places. It is self-evident that reading and quiet games are beneficial to all. Yet, see to it that the book is elevating in tone and treatment, and full of such thoughts as you want impressed on the plastic young mind. The games will be interesting, if you will help to make them so. The point is, that you yourselves must enter into every one of these amusements and attend every one that you allow your daughter to attend if that is at all possible. If you are kept at home, you will find your girls will be willing to get most of their innocent "fun" at home, if you will allow them to invite their young friends to share

their pleasure. Don't scowl and be cross when the young visitors come in, but welcome them with a smile, and do you take the lead of their fun and frolic; at least take the leading-strings in your own firm yet gentle hands, turning the current whenever it seeks to approach danger-spots, and with all the enthusiasm you can muster enter into the youthful sports and plays. I know one mother who goes down upon her knees in company with her young daughters just before the young visitors arrive and asks the blessings of God to rest within the portals of that house and upon the heart of every inmate and visitor while enjoying themselves together. I may add, the young people love to visit at that house and consider it an honor to be invited there. In one last word let me call your attention to the fact that you must insist upon one especial point in every sort and kind of amusement and that last word, that especial point, is *moderation*.

### OUR SUNDAY CHAPTER.

THE INHABITANTS OF THE MOON.  
O. B. HUNTINGTON.

ASTRONOMERS and philosophers have, from time almost immemorial until very recently, asserted that the moon was uninhabited, that it had no atmosphere, etc. But recent discoveries, through the means of powerful telescopes, have given scientists a doubt or two upon the old theory.

Nearly all the great discoveries of men in the last half century have, in

one way or another, either directly or indirectly, contributed to prove Joseph Smith to be a Prophet.

As far back as 1837, I know that he said the moon was inhabited by men and women the same as this earth, and that they lived to a greater age than we do—that they live generally to near the age of a 1000 years.

He described the men as averaging near six feet in height, and dressing quite uniformly in something near the Quaker style.

In my Patriarchal blessing, given by the father of Joseph the Prophet, in Kirtland, 1837, I was told that I should preach the gospel before I was 21 years of age; that I should preach the gospel to the inhabitants upon the islands of the sea, and—to the inhabitants of the moon, even the planet you can now behold with your eyes.

The first two promises have been fulfilled, and the latter may be verified.

From the verification of two promises we may reasonably expect the third to be fulfilled also.

ONE truth after another men are finding out by the wisdom and inspiration given of God to them.

The inspiration of God caused men to hunt for a new continent until Columbus discovered it. Men have lost millions of dollars, and hundreds of lives to find a country beyond the north pole; and they will yet find that country—a warm, fruitful country, in-

habited by the ten tribes of Israel, a country divided by a river, on one side of which lives the half tribe of Manasseh, which is more numerous than all the others. So said the Prophet. At the same time he described the shape of the earth at the poles as being a rounded elongation, and drew a diagram of it in this form:



which any one can readily see will allow the sun's rays to fall so near perpendicular to the center that that part of the earth may be warmed and made fruitful. He quoted scripture in proof of his theory which says that "the earth flieth upon its wings in the midst of the creations of God," and said that there was a semblance in the form of the earth that gave rise to the saying.

CEDAR FORT, Utah,  
Feb. 6, 1892.

### HOUSEHOLD DEPARTMENT.

#### DAINTY HOUSEKEEPING.

LUCY PAGE STELLIE.

I HAVE in mind, as I write, one of those mirth-provoking cartoons that give one some suggestion of truth as well. It was two pictures of a kitchen that was prepared for the new servant. The first showed how tastily it was fixed with a flowering plant in the window, a pretty chintz ruffle on the mantle shelf with a few tasteful ornaments, with a comfortable rocking chair with a neat tidy upon it, and

so on. The next picture showed the kitchen after Bridget had *unfixed* the place to suit herself. The flowering plant was reduced to a few dry stems. Some utensils were on the shelf, the tidy from the rocking chair was gone, and perfect havoc was wrought generally by the iconoclastic Bridget. To be sure, Bridget's early education was not conducive to elegance and refinement of surroundings, her only thought being the accomplishment of what she is paid to do.

It seems to me that a lady's sur-

It should be obvious that 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 church, set forth the issue in these terms:

... 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 halfway 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, the tenth president of the church, likewise maintained:

Mormonism, as it is called, must stand or fall on the story of Joseph Smith. He is either a prophet of God, divinely called, properly appointed and commissioned, or he is one of 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 . . . I maintain that Joseph Smith was all that he claimed to be. (*Doctrines of Salvation*, 1959, vol. 1, pages 188-189)

### The Only True Church?

The LDS 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 LDS Church is the only true church and that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God. They are supposed to persuade the contact that his church is false and that he should join “the true church of Jesus Christ.” In 1979 the LDS Church reprinted a missionary manual entitled, *Missionary Discussions for the Jewish People*. On pages JC-15 and JC-17 we find the following:

Missionary: After the days of the Apostles, revelation from heaven to the Church of Jesus Christ ceased, and divine authority was taken from the earth. This was the beginning of the *false Christianity* that has now multiplied into hundreds of rival churches. . . . In spite of the attempts of the reformers to reestablish the Messiah’s original church, they had no authority or revelation from God; and the final result of their efforts was to replace *one apostate church with hundreds of apostate churches*.

More than fifty pages of the Introduction to the *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* are devoted to proving that all churches except the LDS Church are in a state of apostasy. The following, for

example, 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.”

Mormons affirm that in 1820 God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ visited Joseph Smith and told him that he “must join none” of the churches,

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, having a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof.” (*Pearl of Great Price*, Joseph Smith 2:18-19)

Mormon Apostle Orson Pratt wrote:

The gates of hell have prevailed and will continue to prevail over the Catholic Mother of Harlots, and over all her Protestant Daughters; the apostate Catholic church, with all her popes and bishops, together with all her harlot daughters shall be hurled down to hell . . . (*Pamphlets by Orson Pratt*, page 112)

Although the present-day leaders of the LDS Church are becoming more subtle in their attacks on other churches, they still teach that the LDS Church is the only true church and that all others are in a state of apostasy. Those who are not Mormons are considered inferior. Tenth president, Joseph Fielding Smith, asserted that Mormons “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” (*Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 1, page 236).

Third president, John Taylor, boasted: “. . . we are the only people that know how to save our progenitors, how to save ourselves . . . we in fact are the saviours of the world . . .” (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 6, page 163). In the *History of the Church*, vol. 7, page 287, Brigham Young even claimed, “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*.” President Joseph Fielding Smith added that there is “no salvation without accepting Joseph Smith . . . if he told the truth. . . . 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 it is clear that the claims of the LDS 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.

## 2. The Doctrine of Plural Marriage

Dr. Hugh Nibley, who is considered by many to be the top apologist in the Mormon Church, made this astounding claim concerning his church:

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*, 1946, page 46)

It does not take much research to show that Hugh Nibley is completely mistaken when he says that the LDS Church has not changed its doctrine. One of the most important doctrinal changes which occurred within the last hundred years was that regarding polygamy. Even since Dr. Nibley wrote his booklet, another major change has taken place—i.e., the so-called anti-black doctrine has been abandoned.

While it is certainly commendable for churches to lay aside beliefs that are incorrect, the Mormon leaders are faced with a peculiar problem. They claim that they are led by direct revelation from God, and therefore do not make any serious doctrinal mistakes. They alone, it is claimed, have the true gospel and authority to operate in God's name. Therefore, the evidence of serious doctrinal changes destroys the claim that God Himself is guiding the LDS Church through revelation.

### The Origin of Polygamy

The LDS Church has officially changed its stance on marriage more than once. It originally endorsed monogamy as the only true system of marriage. Later polygamy was declared to be God's highest form of marriage, and finally the church reverted back to the strict practice of monogamy.

Joseph Smith was obviously reflecting on the question of whether polygamy was right or wrong when he wrote the Book of Mormon. He ended up taking a very strong stand against it. In Jacob 2:23-24 we read:

But the word of God burdens me because of your grosser crimes. For behold, thus saith the Lord: This people begin to wax in iniquity; they understand not the scriptures, for they seek to excuse themselves in committing whoredoms, because of the things which

were written concerning David, and Solomon his son.

Behold, David and Solomon truly had many wives and concubines, which thing was abominable before me, saith the Lord.

The first edition of the *Doctrine and Covenants*, printed in 1835, also denounced the practice of plural marriage:

Inasmuch as this church of Christ has been reproached with the crime of fornication, and polygamy: we declare that we believe, that one man should have one wife; and one woman, but one husband, except in the case of death, when either is at liberty to marry again. (*Doctrine and Covenants*, 1835 edition, 101:4)

This statement is very important because the *Doctrine and Covenants* is one of the four standard works of the LDS Church. This denial of polygamy was printed in every edition of the *Doctrine and Covenants* until the year 1876. At that time the Mormon leaders inserted section 132, which permits a plurality of wives. Obviously, it would have been too contradictory to have one section condemning polygamy and another approving of it in the same book! Therefore, the section condemning polygamy was completely removed from the *Doctrine and Covenants*.

The section which was added to the *Doctrine and Covenants* in 1876 contained a revelation given by Joseph Smith on July 12, 1843. It is still published in the *Doctrine and Covenants* even though the church has gone back to practicing monogamy. The following is taken from Joseph Smith's revelation (the reader will notice that it begins by contradicting the statement in the Book of Mormon which said that "David and Solomon truly had many wives and concubines, which thing was abominable before me . . ."):

Verily, thus saith the Lord unto you my servant Joseph, that inasmuch as you have inquired of my hand to know and understand wherein I, the Lord justified my servants Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as also Moses, David and Solomon, my servants, as touching the principle and doctrine of their having many wives and concubines . . .

Therefore, prepare thy heart to receive and obey the instructions which I am about to give unto you; for all those who have this law revealed unto them must obey the same.

For behold, I reveal unto you a new and an everlasting covenant; and if ye abide not that covenant, then are ye damned; for no one can reject this covenant and be permitted to enter into my glory. . . .

And again, verily I say unto you, if a man marry a wife by my word, which is my law, and by the new and

SECTION CL  
MARRIAGE.

1 According to the custom of all civilized nations, marriage is regulated by laws and ceremonies: therefore we believe, that all marriages in this church of Christ of Latter Day Saints, should be solemnized in a public meeting, or feast, prepared for that purpose: and that the solemnization should be performed by a presiding high priest, high priest, bishop, elder, or priest, not even prohibiting those persons who are desirous to get married, of being married by other authority. We believe that it is not right to prohibit members of this church from marrying out of the church, if it be their determination so to do, but such persons will be considered weak in the faith of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

2 Marriage should be celebrated with prayer and thanksgiving; and at the solemnization, the persons to be married, standing together, the man on the right, and the woman on the left, shall be addressed, by the person officiating, as he shall be directed by the holy Spirit; and if there be no legal objections, he shall say, calling each by their names: "You both mutually agree to be each other's companion, husband and wife, observing the legal rights belonging to this condition; that is, keeping yourselves wholly for each other, and from all others, during your lives." And when they have answered "Yes," he shall pronounce them "husband and wife" in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by virtue of the laws of the country and authority vested in him: "may God add his blessings and keep you to fulfill your covenants from henceforth and forever. Amen."

3 The clerk of every church should keep a record of all marriages, solemnized in his branch.

4 All legal contracts of marriage made before a person is baptized into this church, should be held sacred and fulfilled. Inasmuch as this church of Christ has been reproached with the crime of fornication, and polygamy; we declare that we believe, that one man should have one wife; and one woman, but one husband, except in case of death, when either is at liberty to marry again. It is not right to persuade a woman to be baptized contrary to the will of her husband, neither is it lawful to influence her to leave her husband. All children are bound by law to obey their parents; and to influence them to embrace any religious faith, or be baptized, or leave their parents without their consent, is unlawful and unjust. We believe that all persons who exercise control over their fellow

been given unto my servant Joseph, and who are virtuous and pure before me; and those who are not pure, and have said they were pure, shall be destroyed, saith the Lord God.

53 For I am the Lord thy God, and ye shall obey my voice; and I give unto my servant Joseph that he shall be made ruler over many things; for he hath been <sup>a</sup>faithful over a few things, and from henceforth I will strengthen him.

54 And I command mine handmaid, Emma Smith, to abide and <sup>c</sup>cleave unto my servant Joseph, and to none else. But if she will not abide this commandment she shall be <sup>b</sup>destroyed, saith the Lord; for I am the Lord thy God, and will destroy her if she abide not in my law.

55 But if she will not abide this commandment, then shall my servant Joseph do all things for her, even as he hath said; and I will bless him and multiply him and give unto him an <sup>a</sup>hundredfold in this world, of fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters, houses and lands, wives and children, and crowns of <sup>b</sup>eternal lives in the eternal worlds.

56 And again, verily I say, let mine handmaid <sup>a</sup>forgive my servant Joseph his trespasses; and then shall she be forgiven her trespasses, wherein she has trespassed against me; and I, the Lord thy God, will bless her, and multiply her, and make her heart to <sup>b</sup>rejoice.

57 And again, I say, let not my servant Joseph put his property out of his hands, lest an enemy come and destroy him; for <sup>a</sup>Satan <sup>b</sup>seeketh to destroy; for I am the Lord thy God, and he is my servant; and

behold, and lo, I am with him, as I was with Abraham, thy father, even unto his <sup>a</sup>exaltation and glory.

58 Now, as touching the law of the <sup>a</sup>priesthood, there are many things pertaining thereunto.

59 Verily, if a man be called of my Father, as was <sup>a</sup>Aaron, by mine own voice, and by the voice of him that <sup>b</sup>sent me, and I have endowed him with the <sup>a</sup>keys of the power of this priesthood, if he do anything in my name, and according to my law and by my word, he will not commit <sup>a</sup>sin, and I will justify him.

60 Let no one, therefore, set on my servant Joseph; for I will justify him; for he shall do the sacrifice which I require at his hands for his transgressions, saith the Lord your God.

61 And again, as pertaining to the law of the priesthood—if any man espouse a virgin, and desire to espouse <sup>a</sup>another, and the first give her consent, and if he espouse the second, and they are virgins, and have vowed to no other man, then is he justified; he cannot commit adultery for they are given unto him; for he cannot commit adultery with that that belongeth unto him and to no one else.

62 And if he have <sup>a</sup>ten virgins given unto him by this law, he cannot commit adultery, for they belong to him, and they are given unto him; therefore is he justified.

63 But if one or either of the ten virgins, after she is espoused, shall be with another man, she has committed adultery, and shall be destroyed; for they are given unto him to <sup>a</sup>multiply and replenish the earth, according to my commandment, and

53a Matt. 25: 21 (14-28);  
D&C 52: 13.

54a D&C 42: 22.  
to Marriage, Hus-  
bands.

b Acts 3: 23; D&C 25: 15.

55a Mark 10: 30 (28-31).

b D&C 132: 22 (22-24).

to Family, Eternal.

56a Matt. 6: 15 (12-15).

to Family, Love  
within; Forgiveness.

b Gen. 21: 6; D&C 25: 9.

57a to Devil; Enemies.

b Matt. 10: 28; Rev. 12:  
12 (12-17).

c D&C 132: 37.

58a D&C 84: 19 (19-26).

59a Heb. 5: 4 (1-6).

to Priesthood,  
Qualifying for.

b to Jesus Christ,  
Authority of.

c to Priesthood, Keys of  
d 1 Jn. 5: 18.

61a to Marriage, Plural.

62a D&C 132: 48. See also  
D&C, Official Declara-  
tion 1.

63a Gen. 1: 22 (20-25);  
Jacob 2: 30.

A comparison of the teaching on marriage in the first edition of the *Doctrine and Covenants*, Section 101, (on the left) with the current edition, Section 132, (on the right). Notice that polygamy was condemned in the 1835 edition but is approved in the revelation on July 12, 1843. The section denouncing the practice was deleted from the *Doctrine and Covenants* in 1876.



everlasting covenant . . . they shall pass by the angels, and the gods, which are set there, to their exaltation . . .

Then they shall be *gods*, because they have no end

. . .

God commanded Abraham, and Sarah gave Hagar to Abraham to wife. . . .

Was Abraham, therefore, under condemnation? Verily I say unto you, Nay; for I, the Lord, commanded it. . . .

Abraham received concubines, and they bore him children; and it was accounted unto him for righteousness . . .

David also received many wives and concubines, and also Solomon and Moses my servants, . . . and in nothing did they sin save in those things which they received not of me.

David's wives and concubines were given unto him of me, . . .

And let mine handmaid, Emma Smith, receive all those *that have been given unto my servant Joseph*, and who are virtuous and pure before me; and those who are not pure, and have said they were pure, shall be destroyed, saith the Lord God. . . .

Let no one, therefore, set on my servant Joseph; for I will justify him; . . .

And again, as pertaining to the law of the priesthood—if any man espouse a virgin, and desire to espouse another, and the first give her consent, and if he espouse the second, and they are virgins, and have vowed to no other man, then is he justified; he cannot commit adultery with that that belongeth unto him and to no one else.

And if he have *ten virgins* given unto him by this law, he cannot commit adultery, for they belong to him, and they are given unto him; therefore is he justified. (*Doctrine and Covenants*, section 132, verses 1, 3, 4, 19, 20, 34, 35, 37, 39, 52, 60-62)

Just when and how the practice of plural marriage started in the Mormon church has caused much controversy. There is evidence, however, to show that it was secretly practiced when the church was in Kirtland, Ohio, in the 1830s. In the Introduction to volume 5 of Joseph Smith's *History of the Church*, Mormon historian B. H. Roberts reveals that the "date of the heading of the Revelation [July 12, 1843] . . . notes the time at which the revelation was committed to writing, not the time at which the principles set forth in the revelation were first made known to the Prophet." Mormon writer, John J. Stewart, commented: ". . . Joseph as a servant of God was authorized to enter plural marriage, and it is not at all unlikely that he did so in the early or mid-1830s. Perhaps Nancy Johnson or Fanny Alger was his first 'plural' wife at Hiram or Kirtland, Ohio" (*Brigham Young and His Wives*, page 31). Oliver Cowdery, one of the three witnesses to the Book of Mormon, claimed that

there was a relationship between Joseph Smith and Fanny Alger but he felt it was an adulterous relationship. In a letter dated January 21, 1838, Cowdery wrote:

When he [Joseph Smith] was there we had some conversation in which in every instance I did not fail to affirm that what I had said was strictly true. A *dirty, nasty, filthy affair of his and Fanny Alger's* was talked over in which I strictly declared that I had never deviated from the truth in the matter, and as I supposed was admitted by himself. (Letter written by Oliver Cowdery and recorded by his brother Warren Cowdery; see photograph in *The Mormon Kingdom*, vol. 1, page 27)

As we have shown, Mormon apologists put the best possible light on this embarrassing situation. Andrew Jenson, who was the Assistant Church Historian, made a list of 27 women who were sealed to Joseph Smith. In this list he talked of "Fanny Alger, one of the first plural wives sealed to the Prophet" (*Historical Record*, May 1887, vol. 6, page 233).

In any case, Mormon leaders admit that by July 12, 1843, when the revelation was supposed to have been given, Joseph Smith had already acquired a number of plural wives. The revelation itself makes it clear that he was already involved with a number of women besides his wife, Emma: "And let mine handmaid, Emma Smith, *receive all those that have been given* unto my servant Joseph . . ." (*D&C* 132: 52).

In verse 54 of the same revelation, Joseph's first wife was threatened with destruction: ". . . I am the Lord thy God, and will destroy her if she abide not my law." It is interesting to note, however, that it was Joseph who was destroyed. He was killed less than a year after this revelation was written, whereas Emma lived until 1879.

The revelation itself (verse 61) makes it clear that the first wife must "give her consent." Joseph Smith, however, did not follow the rules of his own revelation, for he took plural wives without seeking consent. Emily Dow Partridge, for instance, testified that she and her sister were married to Joseph without Emma's consent or knowledge:

. . . the Prophet Joseph and his wife Emma offered us a home in their family . . . We had been there about a year when the principle of plural marriage was made known to us, and I was married to Joseph Smith on the 4th of March 1843, Elder Heber C. Kimball performing the ceremony. My sister Eliza was also married to Joseph a few days later. This was done *without the knowledge of Emma Smith*. Two months afterward she consented to give her husband two wives, providing he would give her the privilege of choosing them. She accordingly chose my sister Eliza and myself, and to save family trouble Brother Joseph thought it best to

have another ceremony performed. Accordingly on the 11th of May, 1843, we were sealed to Joseph Smith a second time, in Emma's presence . . . From that very hour, however, Emma was our bitter enemy. We remained in the family several months after this, but things went from bad to worse until we were obligated to leave the house and find another home. (*Historical Record*, May, 1887, vol. 6, page 240)

As we have already indicated, Assistant Church Historian Andrew Jenson listed 27 women who were sealed to Joseph Smith. The Mormon author John J. Stewart, however, states that Smith "married many other women, perhaps three or four dozen or more . . ." (*Brigham Young and His Wives*, page 31). In *No Man Knows My History*, Fawn M. Brodie included a list of 48 women who may have been married to Joseph Smith. Stanley S. Ivins, who was considered to be "one of the great authorities on Mormon polygamy," said that the number of Joseph Smith's wives "can only be guessed at, but it might have gone as high as sixty or more" (*Western Humanities Review*, vol. 10, pages 232-233). Before his death, Mr. Ivins prepared a list of 84 women who may have been married to Joseph Smith during his lifetime. We published this information in the book, *Joseph Smith and Polygamy*, pages 41-47. While Ivins was not certain that every woman listed was actually married to Joseph Smith, he pointed out that there may have been others who were married to Smith whose names did not appear on the list. In preparing this list, Ivins did a great deal of research in the Nauvoo Temple records, the Endowment House records and other genealogical records. After his study was completed, some of the temple records in the LDS Genealogical Library were restricted and are no longer available.

In the Preface to the second edition of her book, *No Man Knows My History*, Fawn Brodie revealed:

. . . over two hundred women, apparently at their own request, were sealed as wives to Joseph Smith after his death in special temple ceremonies. Moreover, a great many distinguished women in history, including several Catholic saints, were also sealed to Joseph Smith in Utah. I saw these astonishing lists in the Latter-day Saint Genealogical Archives in Salt Lake City in 1944.

Mormon Apostle John A. Widtsoe admitted that "Women no longer living, whether in Joseph's day or later, have also been sealed to the Prophet for eternity" (*Evidences and Reconciliations*, single volume edition, pages 342-343). If the Mormon doctrine concerning plural marriage were true, Joseph Smith would have hundreds of wives in the resurrection. In his article published in *Western Humanities Review*, vol. 10, pages 232-233, Stanley S. Ivins gave this information concerning the number of wives Brigham Young had:

Brigham Young is usually credited with only twenty-seven wives, but he was sealed to more than twice that many living women, and to at least 150 more who had died.

Mormon writer John J. Stewart lists the names of 53 women who were sealed to Brigham Young and then he makes this statement: "There were perhaps one or two others, plus the some 150 dead women whom he had sealed to him; also a few women who were sealed to him after his death" (*Brigham Young and His Wives*, 1961, page 96). At one time President Young boasted: "I don't begin to have as many as I shall have by and by, . . ." (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 8, page 222). On another occasion he asserted: "Brother Cannon remarked that people wondered how many wives and children I had. He may inform them, that I shall have wives and children by the million, and glory, and riches and power and dominion, and kingdom after kingdom, and reign triumphantly" (*Ibid.*, page 178).

Stanley B. Kimball claims that Heber C. Kimball, a member of the First Presidency under Brigham Young, had 43 wives. Kimball, however, believed that in the resurrection he would be able to have thousands of wives:

Supposing that I have a wife or a dozen of them, and she should say, "You cannot be exalted without me," and suppose they all should say so, what of that? . . . Suppose that I lose the whole of them before I go into the spirit world, but that I have been a good, faithful man all the days of my life . . . do you think I will be destitute there. No, the Lord says there are more there than there are here. . . .

In the spirit world there is an increase of males and females, there are millions of them, and if I am faithful all the time, and continue right along with brother Brigham, we will go to brother Joseph and say, "Here we are brother Joseph; we are here ourselves are we not, with none of the property we possessed in our probationary state, not even the rings on our fingers?" He will say to us, "Come along, my boys, we will give you a good suit of clothes. Where are your wives?" "They are back yonder,; they would not follow us." "Never mind," says Joseph, "Here are thousands, have all you want." (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 4, page 209)

Some of the Mormon men seemed to have an insatiable desire for plural wives. Wilford Woodruff, the fourth president of the church, was sealed to about 400 dead women. According to the journal of the Mormon Apostle Abraham H. Cannon, a man could have up to 999 wives sealed to him for eternity:

THURSDAY, APRIL 5th, 1894. . . . I met with the Quorum and Presidency in the temple. . . . President

Woodruff then spoke “. . . In searching out my genealogy I found about four hundred of my femal[e] kindred who were never married. I asked Pres. Young what I should do with them. He said for me to have them sealed to me unless there were more than [than] 999 of them. the doctrine startled me, but I had it done . . .” (“Daily Journal of Abraham H. Cannon,” April 5, 1894, vol. 18, pages 66-67; original located at the Brigham Young University Library)

### **Taking Other Men’s Wives**

The fact that Joseph Smith asked for other men’s wives was made very plain in a sermon given in the Tabernacle by Jedediah M. Grant, second counselor to Brigham Young. In this sermon, delivered February 19, 1854, Grant revealed:

When the family organization was revealed from heaven—the patriarchal order of God, and Joseph began, on the right and on the left, to add to his family, what a quaking there was in Israel. Says one brother to another, “Joseph says all covenants are done away, and none are binding but the new covenants: now suppose Joseph should come and say he wanted your wife, what would you say to that?” “I would tell him to go to hell.” This was the spirit of many in the early days of this Church. . . .

What would a man of God say, who felt aright, when Joseph asked him for his money? He would say, “Yes, and I wish I had more to help to build up the kingdom of God.” Or if he came and said, “I want your wife?” “O yes,” he would say, “here she is, there are plenty more.” . . . Did the Prophet Joseph want every man’s wife he asked for? . . . If such a man of God should come to me and say, “I want your gold and silver, or your wives,” I should say, “Here they are, I wish I had more to give you, take all I have got.” (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 2, pages 13-14)

Wilhelm Wyl, a Mormon critic, made this assertion:

Joseph Smith finally demanded the wives of all the Twelve Apostles that were at home then in Nauvoo. . . . Vilate Kimball, the first wife of Heber C. Kimball, . . . loved her husband, and he, . . . loved her, hence a reluctance to comply with the Lord’s demand that Vilate should be consecrated . . . They thought the command of the Lord must be obeyed in some way, and a “proxy” way suggested itself to their minds. They had a young daughter only getting out of girlhood, and the father apologizing to the prophet for his wife’s reluctance to comply with his desires, . . . asked Joe *if his daughter wouldn’t do as well as his wife*. Joe replied that she would do just as well, and the Lord would accept her instead. The half-ripe bud of womanhood was delivered over to the prophet. (*Mormon Portraits*, 1886, pages 70-72)

The fact that Joseph Smith demanded Heber C. Kimball’s wife but actually married his daughter is verified in the book, *The Life of Heber C. Kimball*, written by the Mormon Apostle Orson F. Whitney:

It was no less than a requirement for him to surrender his wife, his beloved Vilate, and give her to Joseph in marriage! . . .

Three days he fasted and wept and prayed. Then, with a broken and bleeding heart, but with soul self-mastered for the sacrifice, he led his darling wife to the Prophet’s house and presented her to Joseph. . . . Joseph wept at this proof of devotion, and embracing Heber told him that was all the Lord required. . . .

The Prophet joined the hands of the heroic and devoted pair, . . . Heber and Vilate Kimball were made husband and wife for all eternity. . . .

Soon after the revelation was given . . . Helen Mar, the eldest daughter of Heber Chase and Vilate Kimball, was given to the Prophet in the holy bonds of Celestial Marriage. (*The Life of Heber C. Kimball*, pages 333-335, 339)

Ann Eliza Young, who had been married to Brigham Young, charged that Joseph Smith was guilty of adultery:

Joseph not only paid his addresses to the young and unmarried women, but he sought “spiritual alliance” with many married ladies . . . He taught them that all former marriages were null and void, and that they were at perfect liberty to make another choice of a husband. The marriage covenants were not binding, because they were ratified only by Gentile laws. . . . consequently all the women were free. . . .

One woman said to me not very long since, while giving me some of her experiences in polygamy: “The greatest trial I ever endured in my life was living with my husband *and deceiving him, by receiving Joseph’s attentions* whenever he chose to come to me.”

This woman, and others, whose experience has been very similar, are among the very best women in the church; they are as pure-minded and virtuous women as any in the world. They were seduced under the guise of religion, . . .

Some of these women have since said they *did not know who was the father of their children*; this is not to be wondered at, for after Joseph’s declaration *annulling all Gentile marriages, the greatest promiscuity was practiced*; and, indeed, all sense of morality seemed to have been lost by a portion at least of the church. (*Wife No. 19*, 1876, pages 70-72)

The Mormon Apostle John A. Widtsoe admitted that Joseph Smith was sealed to married women, but he claimed that they were not to be his wives until after death:

Smith, and has been handed down to his successors.

I do not care how many devils rap, it is no trouble to me. I say, rap away, and give as many revelations as you please, whether you are good spirits or bad ones, it does not trouble my cranium. Rap away, for I trust in the anchor of my soul that is sure and steadfast, in the Priesthood of God upon the earth.

What would a man of God say, who felt aright, when Joseph asked him for his money? He would say, "Yes, and I wish I had more to help to build up the kingdom of God." Or if he came and said, "I want your wife?" "O yes," he would say, "here she is, there are plenty more."

There is another main thread connected with this, that I have not brought out. You know in fishing with the hook and line, if you draw out suddenly on the line when you have got a large trout, you may break your line; you must therefore angle a little, and manage your prize carefully. I would ask you if Jehovah has not in all ages tried His people by the power of Lucifer and his associates; and on the other hand, has He not tried them and proved them by His Prophets? Did the Lord actually want Abraham to kill Isaac? Did the Prophet Joseph want every man's wife he asked for? He did not, but in that thing was the grand thread of the Priesthood developed. The grand object in view was to try the people of God, to see what was in them. If such a man of God should come to me and say, "I want your gold and silver, or your wives," I should say, "Here they are, I wish I had more to give you, take all I have got." A man who has got the Spirit of God, and the light of eternity in him, has no trouble about such matters.

I am talking now of the present day. There was a time when we could be tried pretty severely upon

these points, but I now could pick you out hundreds of men that cannot be tried in this way, but they will hand over every thing they possess. They understand the nature of such doctrines, and the object of such requirements. They know it is to prove the people, both men and women, and to develop what they will do. How can the Priesthood judge the people, if it does not prove them.

If ever you are brought into the presence of God, and exalted to a seat in His celestial kingdom, it will be by virtue of the Holy Priesthood, therefore you have got to be proved, not only by being tempted by the devil, but the Priesthood will try you—it will try you to the core. If one thing won't try you, something else will be adopted, until you are like the passive clay in the hands of the Potter. If the Lord our God does not see fit to let the devil loose upon you, and mob you, He will employ some other means to try you as in a crucible, to prove you as gold is tried seven times in the furnace.

The world philosophizes about the "Mormons," about their leaders, and the life they are living. There are a thousand conjectures among them in relation to the "Mormons." The grand secret is told in a few words; the fact is, the Almighty God has spoken from the heavens, sent heavenly messengers, and organized His Church, restored the Holy Priesthood, established His government on the earth, and exerted his power to extend it, and send forth His word. And that Priesthood understands the principles and motives by which men are actuated, and it understands the workings of the devil on the earth; that Priesthood knows how to govern, when to strike, and when not to strike.

Some things in this Church start up at times, that you would think the whole Church would be rent asunder, like the clans of Scotland. Clanism,

That day has come, and the other day has past. I have known men from Nauvoo, men who were there worth \$150 or \$200,000, come here with nothing but a handkerchief, containing a change of shirts, under their arms. They left their property there; and what we did not leave in hell's kitchen we left at Devil's Gate. The devil has a gate where he may catch everything that is not to do us good, but that is calculated to create a craving appetite for that which is not here.

There are some of this people who have been kept as long as they have, only upon the principle of their being fondled and pampered. If they could not have the privilege of nursing at the breast and have a full supply, or the use of a sugar teat to keep them alive, they would dwindle and die; they must have something to suck, in order to keep them alive and in existence, for they are nothing but pets; pets they are, and pets they will go to hell, but will find no sugar teats there.

Probably a few will leave next spring; they are all fair weather while they are in our midst, but when it comes spring they will leave. Thank the Lord for that; and while I feel as I do now, I shall be thankful for everything that transpires from this time henceforth, that is, if I live my religion.

Supposing that I have a wife or a dozen of them, and she should say, "You cannot be exalted without me," and suppose they all should say so, what of that? They never will affect my salvation one particle. Whose salvation will they affect? Their own. They have got to live their religion, serve their God, and do right, as well as myself. Suppose that I lose the whole of them before I go into the spirit world, but that I have been a good, faithful man all the days of my life, and lived my religion, and

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had favour with God, and was kind to them, do you think I will be destitute there. No, the Lord says there are more there than there are here. They have been increasing there; they increase there a great deal faster than we do here, because there is no obstruction. They do not call upon the doctors to kill their offspring; there are no doctors there, that is, if they are there, their occupation is changed, which proves that they are not there, because they have ceased to be doctors. In this world very many of the doctors are studying to diminish the human family.

In the spirit world there is an increase of males and females, there are millions of them, and if I am faithful all the time, and continue right along with brother Brigham, we will go to brother Joseph and say, "Here we are brother Joseph; we are here ourselves are we not, with none of the property we possessed in our probationary state, not even the rings on our fingers?" He will say to us, "Come along, my boys, we will give you a good suit of clothes. Where are your wives?" "They are back yonder; they would not follow us." "Never mind," says Joseph, "here are thousands, have all you want." Perhaps some do not believe that, but I am just simple enough to believe it.

Help brother Brigham along, help brother Heber, brother Daniel, the Twelve, and every other good person. I am looking for the day, and it is close at hand, when we will have a most heavenly time, one that will be romantic, one with all kinds of ups and downs, which is what I call romantic, for it will occupy in full all the time, so that we may never become idle, nor sleepy, nor cease being active in the things of God, which will prevent dotage.

Am I thankful now? I never was more thankful in my life than I am to-day, to see this people. I know

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A photograph from the LDS Church's publication, *Journal of Discourses*, vol. 2, page 14, Jedediah M. Gran, second counselor to Brigham Young, frankly admitted that Joseph Smith asked for some men's wives.

A photograph from the *Journal of Discourses*, vol. 4, page 209, Heber C. Kimball, a member of the First Presidency, maintained there would be thousands of women in heaven to choose from.

7. Another kind of celestial marriages seems to have been practiced in the early days of plural marriage. It has not been practiced since Nauvoo days, for it is *under Church prohibition*. Zealous women, married or unmarried, . . . considered their condition in the hereafter. Some of them asked that they might *be sealed to the Prophet for eternity*. They were not to be his wives on earth, in mortality, but only after death in the eternities. . . . Such marriages led to misunderstandings by those not of the Church, . . . Therefore any ceremony *uniting a married woman*, for example, *to Joseph Smith for eternity* seemed adulterous to such people. Yet, in any day, in our day, there may be women who prefer to spend eternity with another than their husband on earth. (*Evidences and Reconciliations*, 1960, page 343)

John A. Widtsoe's statement that Joseph Smith did not live with the married women to whom he was sealed is certainly false. Patty Bartlett Sessions, the wife of David Sessions, made it very clear in her private journal that he was married to Joseph Smith for both "time" and "eternity":

"I was sealed to Joseph Smith by Willard Richards Mar 9, 1842, in Newel K. Whitney's chamber, Nauvoo, for time and all eternity . . . Sylvia my daughter was present when I was sealed to Joseph Smith. I was after Mr. Sessions' death sealed to John Parry for time on the 27th, March, 1852, GSL City." (Journal of Patty Sessions, as quoted in *Intimate Disciple, Portrait of Willard Richards*, 1957, page 611)

Mary Elizabeth Rollins Lightner, the wife of Adam Lightner, stated: "Joseph said I was his before I came here and he said all the Devils in Hell should never get me from him. I was sealed to him in the Masonic Hall, . . . by Brigham Young in February 1842 and then again in the Nauvoo Temple by Heber C. Kimball . . ." (Affidavit of Mary Elizabeth Rollins Lightner, as cited in *No Man Knows My History*, page 444). In a speech given at Brigham Young University (see *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* pages 215-216), Mrs. Lightner said that Joseph claimed an "angel" came with a "drawn sword" and told him that if he did not enter into polygamy "he would slay him." She frankly admitted that she "had been dreaming for a number of years that I was his [Joseph's] wife." Since both Joseph and herself were already married, she "felt it was a sin." Joseph, however, convinced her that the "Almighty" had revealed the principle and while her "husband was far away," she was sealed to him.

In Stanley Ivin's list of 84 women who may have been married to Joseph Smith, we find the following: "22.—MARY ELIZABETH ROLLINS LIGHTNER. Daughter of John Rollins and *wife of Adam Lightner*. . . Married Lightner on August 11, 1835. Married Joseph

Smith in February, 1843 (Brodie, *No Man Knows My History*, page 444). On January 17, 1846, she was sealed to Joseph Smith for eternity and to Brigham Young *for time*. However, *she remained with her legal husband* and came to Utah with him in 1863." It would appear, then, that Mary E. Lightner had two different husbands for "time" and a third for "eternity." Mormon writer John J. Stewart confirms this in his book *Brigham Young and His Wives*, page 89: "17. Mary Elizabeth Rollins. Born April 8, 1818 at Luna, New York; died December 17, 1913. The wife of a non-Mormon, Adam Lightner. Sealed to the Prophet Joseph in February, 1842, at the age of 23, and again January 17, 1846, at which time she was sealed to Brigham for time."

In our publications, *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* and *Joseph Smith and Polygamy*, we present so much evidence that it is hard to escape the conclusion that Joseph Smith and Brigham Young were living in adultery. In an unpublished sermon by President Brigham Young, which has been preserved in the Historical Department of the Mormon Church, he revealed that it was possible for a man who held a "higher power" in the priesthood to take someone else's wife without a divorce:

I will give you a few words of *Doctrine* . . . Br Watt will write it, but it is not my intention to have it published; therefore pay good attention, and store it up in your memories. . . . Can a woman be freed from a man to whom she is sealed? Yes, but a bill of divorcement does not free her. . . . How can a woman be made free from a man to whom she has been sealed for time and all eternity? There are two ways. . . . The second way in which a wife can be separated from her husband, while he continues to be faithful to his God and his priesthood, I have not revealed, except to a few persons in this Church, and a few have received it from Joseph the prophet as well as myself. If a woman can find a man holding the keys of the priesthood [*sic*] *with higher power and authority than her husband, and his is disposed to take her he can do so*, otherwise she has got to remain where she is. In either of these ways of separation, you can discover, there is *no need for a bill of divorcement*. To recapitulate. First if a man forfeits his covenants with a wife, or wives, becoming unfaithful to his God, and his priesthood, that wife or wives are *free from him without a bill of divorcement*. Second. If a woman claims protection at the hands of a man, *possessing more power in the priesthood [*sic*] and higher keys*, if he is disposed to rescue her and has obtained the consent of her husband to make her his wife *he can do so without a bill of divorcement*. ("A few words of Doctrine," a speech given by President Brigham Young in the Tabernacle on October 8, 1861; photocopy of a document in the LDS Church Historical Department, Brigham Young Addresses, Ms/d/1243/Bx49/fd 8)

## Strange Marriages

On July 25, 1857, the following appeared in the church's publication *Latter-Day Saints' Millennial Star*:

The Polygamist . . . was not permitted by the law of Moses to marry the sister of his wife. (See Leviticus xviii. 18) Neither was he permitted to marry a mother and daughter. "And if a man take a wife and her mother, it is wickedness; they shall be burnt with fire both he and they; that there is no wickedness among you." (See Leviticus xx. 14.) . . . the Polygamist Israelite was under a law restricting him within certain limits. Though he had a right to marry many wives, yet he had no right to marry a mother and daughter or two sisters. (vol. 19, pages 473-474)

In the debate between Orson Pratt and John F. Newman, held in 1870, Apostle Pratt argued the correct rendering of Leviticus 18:18 was that a man should not marry sisters. Even though Pratt may have won this point, he proved that the Mormon practice of polygamy was not even based on the Old Testament, for Pratt himself was guilty of marrying two sisters. The Mormon writer T. Edgar Lyon admitted that Orson Pratt was inconsistent:

This controversy also illustrates one of the inconsistencies of the Mormon contention that their polygamy was biblical. They did not abide by the rules of plural marriage as set forth in the Bible. Pratt himself had married two sisters. Others had done the same thing and even married mothers and daughters. ("Orson Pratt—Early Mormon Leader," M. A. Thesis, University of Chicago, 1932, typed copy, page 104)

Although the early Mormon leaders wanted to return to the Old Testament practice of putting adulterers to death, they did not want to accept Leviticus 20:14, which said that when a man married "a wife and her mother" they should be put to death. If they had accepted this, Joseph Smith would have been one of the first to die, for he had married a woman and her mother. Fawn Brodie wrote: "The prophet married five pairs of sisters: Delcena and Almera Johnson, Eliza and Emily Partridge, Sarah and Maria Lawrence, Mary Ann and Olive Grey Frost, and Prescinda and Zina Huntington. Patty and Sylvia Sessions were mother and daughter" (*No Man Knows My History*, page 336). The fact that Patty and Sylvia Sessions were mother and daughter is verified by the Mormon writer Claire Noall: "Sylvia Lyon, Patty's daughter and the wife of Windsor J. Lyon, was already sealed to Joseph. This afternoon she was to put her mother's hand in the Prophet's" (*Intimate Disciple*, page 317).

Fanny Stenhouse, who at one time had been a firm believer in Mormonism and had even allowed her husband to take another wife, wrote the following:

It would be quite impossible, with any regard to propriety, to relate all the horrible results of this disgraceful system. . . . Marriages have been contracted between the nearest of relatives; and old men tottering on the brink of the grave have been united to little girls scarcely in their teens; while unnatural alliances of every description, which in any other community would be regarded with disgust and abhorrence, are here entered into in the name of God . . .

It is quite a common thing in Utah for a man to marry two or even three sisters. . . . I know also another man who married a widow with several children; and when one of the girls had grown into her teens he insisted on marrying her also . . . The mother, however, was much opposed to this marriage, and finally gave up her husband entirely to her daughter; and to this very day the daughter bears children to her step-father, living as wife in the same house with her mother! (*Tell It All*, 1874, pages 468-469)

The anti-Mormon writer Joseph H. Jackson charged that Joseph Smith "feigned a revelation to have Mrs. Milligan, his own sister, married to him spiritually." That Smith believed that a man could be married for eternity to his own sister has been confirmed by an entry added to Joseph Smith's private diary after his death. It appears under the date of October 26, 1843, and reads as follows:

The following named deceased persons were sealed to me (John M. Bernhisel) on Oct. 26th, 1843, by Pres. Joseph Smith —  
 Maria Bernhisel, Sister —  
 Brother Samuel's wife, Catherine Kremer  
 Mary Shatto (Aunt) . . .  
 Recorded by Robt. L. Cambell  
 July 29, 1868 (Joseph Smith's Diary, October 26, 1843, Church Historical Department)

The reader will notice that Bernhisel claims that he was sealed to his sister by Joseph Smith. Now, if the doctrine of Celestial Marriage were true, in the resurrection John Bernhisel would find himself married to his own sister, Maria Bernhisel!

There is evidence that John Taylor, who became the third president of the LDS Church, promised his own sister that she could be sealed to him. Under the date of February 25, 1889, L. John Nuttal, a very prominent Mormon, recorded the following:

. . . Agnes Schwartz & her daughter Mary called this morning to see Prest. Woodruff, on her family matters, which he promised to write to her about. She said that her brother John the late President John Taylor had told her some 30 years ago that if She could not be reconciled to continue with any of her husbands she might be sealed to his brother William or himself, and she now wanted to be sealed to him. This is a very curious proceeding & which I dont understand. (Journal of L. John Nuttall, vol. 2 pages 362-363 of typed copy at Brigham Young University Library)

### Fake Marriages and Excommunications

Joseph Smith went to great lengths to conceal his practice of plural marriage. H. Michael Marquardt discovered that he even had a pretended marriage performed to cover up his own marriage to Sarah Ann Whitney. On July 27, 1842, the Mormon Prophet gave a revelation to Newel K. Whitney, that he was to seal his daughter, Sarah Ann, “to Joseph Smith, to be his wife.”

In his booklet, *The Strange Marriages of Sarah Ann Whitney to Joseph Smith the Mormon Prophet, Joseph C. Kingsbury and Heber C. Kimball*, Mr. Marquardt reveals how he discovered that Joseph Smith actually performed a “pretended” marriage ceremony between Sarah Ann Whitney and Joseph C. Kingsbury so that his own relationship with her would not be noticed. Mr. Marquardt cited the following from “The History of Joseph C. Kingsbury,” a document that is now in the Western Americana section of the University of Utah Library:

. . . on 29th of April 1843 I according to President Joseph Smith Couscil [*sic*] & others agreed to Stand by Sarah Ann Whitney as supposed to be her husband & had a prete[n]ded marriage for the purpose of Bringing about the purposes of God . . .

Marquardt also found that Joseph Smith signed a document in which he stated: “I hereby certify, that I have upon this the 29th day of April 1843, joined together in marriage Joseph C. Kingsbury and Sarah Ann Whitney, in the City of Nauvoo, Illinois.” It seems difficult to believe that a man professing to be a prophet of God would perform a “pretended” marriage to cover up his own iniquity. In his pamphlet, Mr. Marquardt goes on to show that after Joseph Smith’s death, Sarah Ann Whitney continued to live with Joseph C. Kingsbury in this “pretended” marriage—he referred to her as Sarah my Supposed wife.” While still living with Kingsbury, she married the Apostle Heber C. Kimball for time and sealed to Joseph Smith for eternity in the Nauvoo temple on January 12, 1846. She became pregnant with Apostle

Kimball’s child but continued to live with Kingsbury until after the child was born. For more information on these strange marriages see Michael Marquardt’s pamphlet, *The Strange Marriages of Sarah Ann Whitney*. Marquardt’s research has brought into focus the total disregard Joseph Smith had for marriage vows. Not only did he break the sacred vows he took with his first wife, Emma, but he also encouraged Sarah Ann Whitney to take false vows pledging herself to Joseph C. Kingsbury to cover up the fact that she would be having a sexual relationship with Joseph Smith. The marriage ceremony which was supposed to be used at that time contained the following: “You both mutually agree to be each other’s companion, husband and wife, observing the legal rights belonging to this condition; that is *keeping yourselves wholly for each other, and from all others, during your lives*” (*Doctrine and Covenants*, 1835 edition, section 101, verse 2).

According to the diary of Joseph Smith’s private secretary, William Clayton, Smith would go so far as to initiate a fake excommunication from the church to make it appear that he did not believe in polygamy:

Thursday 19. . . . Prest. J . . . began to tell me that E. was turned quite friendly & kind. . . . He said it was her advice that I should keep M [Clayton’s plural wife Margaret] at home and it was also his council. Says he just keep her at home and brook it and if they raise trouble about it and bring you before me *I will give you an awful scourging & probably cut you off from the church and then I will baptize you & set you ahead as good as ever.* (William Clayton’s Diary, October 19, 1843, Andrew Ehat’s typed extracts)

In the Mormon paper, *Times and Seasons*, Joseph Smith actually announced the excommunication of a man who had been preaching polygamy:

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 1844

NOTICE.

As we have lately been credibly informed, that an Elder of the Church of Jesus Christ, of Latter-day Saints, by the name of Hiram Brown, has been *preaching polygamy, and other false and corrupt doctrines*, in the county of Lapeer, state of Michigan.

This is to notify him and the church in general, that he has been *cut off from the church, for his iniquity*; and he is further notified to appear at the Special Conference, on the 6th of April next, to make answer to these charges.

Joseph Smith

Hyrum Smith

Presidents of said Church

(*Times and Seasons*, vol. 5, page 423)

An index to the *Times and Seasons* reveals nothing further concerning Hiram Brown, and he is not mentioned at all in the large index of Joseph Smith's *History of the Church* compiled by E. Keith Howick. If he was, in fact, a real person, it is possible that this was an example of the type of fake excommunication mentioned in Clayton's diary. In any case, it was undoubtedly a propaganda move by the Smith brothers to cover their own tracks.

### One-Wife System Condemned

At the time the Mormon church was practicing polygamy, the leaders of the church became very bitter against the one-wife system. The church's newspaper, *Deseret News*, April 22, 1857, reported that Heber C. Kimball, the First Counselor to Brigham Young, ridiculed monogamy:

I have noticed that a man who has but one wife, and is inclined to that doctrine, soon begins to wither and dry up, while a man who goes into plurality looks fresh, young and sprightly. Why is this? Because God loves that man, and because he honors his word. Some of you do not believe it but I also know it. For a man of God to be confined to one woman is small business . . . I do not know what we should do if we had only one wife a piece.

In a sermon reported in the *Deseret News*, August 6, 1862, Brigham Young argued:

Monogamy, or restrictions by law to *one-wife*, is *no part of the economy of heaven among men*. Such a system was commenced by the founders of the Roman empire. . . . Rome became the mistress of the world, and introduced this order of monogamy wherever her sway was acknowledged. Thus this monogamic order of marriage so esteemed by modern Christians as a Holy Sacrament and divine institution, is nothing but a system established by a set of robbers . . .

Why do we believe in and practice polygamy? Because the Lord introduced it . . . "And is that religion popular in heaven? It is the only popular religion there, . . ."

Apostle George A. Smith boasted:

. . . we have the best looking men and handsomest women, and if they envy us our position, well they may, for they are a poor, narrow minded, pinch-backed race of men, who chain themselves down to *the law of monogamy and live all their days under the dominion of one wife*. They ought to be ashamed of such conduct, and the still fouler channel which flows from their practices; and it is not to be wondered at that they should envy those who so much better understand the social relations. (*Deseret News*, April 16, 1856)

Brigham Young claimed that the one-wife system was a "source of prostitution and whoredom throughout all the Christian monogamic cities . . ." (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 11, page 128). The following appeared in the *Millennial Star*, vol. 15, page 227:

. . . *the one-wife system not only degenerates the human family, both physically and intellectually*, but it is entirely incompatible with philosophical notions of immortality; it is a lure to temptation, and has always proved a curse to a people.

### Adam, God and Christ Polygamists

President Brigham Young declared: "When our father Adam came into the garden of Eden, he came into it with a celestial body, and brought Eve, one of his wives with him" (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 26, page 115). In a sermon given in the Tabernacle in 1885, H. W. Naisbitt stated: ". . . it is said that Joseph Smith the Prophet taught that Adam had two wives" (*Ibid.*).

Some of the leading authorities of the church went so far as to proclaim that both the Father and the Son were polygamists. Jedediah M. Grant, Second Counselor to Brigham Young, asserted: "A belief in the doctrine of a plurality of wives caused the persecution of Jesus and his followers. We might almost think they were 'Mormons'" (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 1, page 346).

Speaking of the marriage in Cana of Galilee, Apostle Orson Hyde declared:

. . . no less a person than Jesus Christ was married on that occasion. If he was never married, his intimacy with Mary and Martha, and the other Mary also whom Jesus loved, must have been highly unbecoming and improper to say the least of it.

I will venture to say that if Jesus Christ were now to pass through the most pious countries of Christendom with a train of women, such as used to follow him, . . . he would be mobbed, tarred, and feathered, and rode not on an ass, but on a rail . . . Object not, therefore, too strongly against the marriage of Christ, . . . (*Ibid.*, vol. 4, pages 259-260)

. . . I said, in my lecture on Marriage, at our last Conference, that Jesus Christ was married . . . that Mary, Martha, and others were his wives, and that he begat children. (*Ibid.*, vol. 2, page 210)

When the "gentiles"—i.e. non-Mormons—stated that polygamy was one of the "relics of barbarism," Brigham Young replied: "Yes, one of the relics of Adam, of Enoch, of Noah, of Abraham, of Isaac, of Jacob, of



and reputation here that it has in London, New York, Boston, Philadelphia, or Washington, then we might be comparatively silent while such vices carried the popular sway. But anything unusual, and of a corrupting character in our midst, excites in us an indignation that often finds vent in maledictions upon the heads of the demons that attempt to introduce it.

If there were none but Latter-day Saints living in Utah, we should have no occasion to speak upon this subject as we do; but being infested by those "*who profess the pure morality of the religion of Jesus,*" such as the *Charleston Mercury* endorses and eulogizes, we are constrained to speak in great plainness. I will now leave this subject, knowing that he or she that is righteous will be righteous still; and they who are filthy will be filthy still.

I discover that some of the Eastern papers represent me as a great blasphemer, because I said, in my lecture on Marriage, at our last Conference, that Jesus Christ was married at Cana of Galilee, that Mary, Martha, and others were his wives, and that he beget children.

All that I have to say in reply to that charge is this—they worship a Savior that is too pure and holy to fulfil the commands of his Father. I worship one that is just pure and holy enough "to fulfil all righteousness;" not only the righteous law of baptism, but the still more righteous and important law "to multiply and replenish the earth." Stir not at this! for even the Father himself honored that law by coming down to Mary, without a natural body, and begetting a son; and if Jesus beget children, he only "did that which he had seen his Father do."

But to return to our subject—the fellowship of the world. Unite with them just as far as you require them to unite with you, and upon the same principle. If they are hungry, feed

them when in your power. If they are in distress, trouble, or difficulty, relieve them. Take them in when strangers, if they ask you. Be kind unto them and courteous; yet remember that God has given to you His Holy Spirit as a standard, to which the world should come. It is your duty to honor that standard, and to keep it erect. If the world have fellowship and union with you, let it be in the Spirit of the Lord. But if you allow that standard to fall in your own hearts, or to become recumbent, and you slide back into the spirit of the world and unite with them, you have virtually struck your colors to the enemy, and gone over to his side! The salt has lost its savor, and is become powerless to save. It is only fit to be cast out and trodden under foot of men.

If you love and respect the welfare of the world, never allow yourselves to imbibe their spirit, or to become one with them. For if you do, you cannot be a savior, but need one as well as they; for you both stand upon one and the same level. The world hated the Savior before they hated us, and they killed him because he would never unite in heart and spirit with them. They will kill some of us for the same cause. But blessed are the man and the woman that are hated by the world because they will not be one with them. "Do them all the good you can, and as little harm as possible."

In conclusion, the present is an important era, an era in which the nations are becoming angry. They thirst for each other's blood; and who knows but that all nations will, respectively, file off under the heads of Greek and Roman, or "Gog and Magog," to fight the terrible battles spoken of in sacred writ?

Ye Saints of Latter-days, keep your lamps trimmed and burning, that you walk not in darkness. Ye virgins, wise and foolish, awake, for, behold, the

the five virgins are actually virgins or females who are to be married to the Bridegroom, then all the rest of the saints would constitute the guests. Are not these five wise virgins the "honorable Wives" which the Psalmist represents the Son of God as having taken from among king's daughters?

From the passage in the forty-fifth Psalm, it will be seen that the great Messiah who was the founder of the Christian religion, was a Polygamist, as well as the Patriarch Jacob and the prophet David from whom He descended according to the flesh. Paul says concerning Jesus, "Verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham." (Heb. 2: 16.) Abraham the Polygamist, being a friend of God, the Messiah chose to take upon himself his seed; and by marrying many honorable wives himself, show to all future generations that he approbated the plurality of Wives under the Christian dispensation, as well as under the dispensations in which His Polygamist ancestors lived.

We have now clearly shown that God the Father had a plurality of wives, one or more being in eternity, by whom He beget our spirits as well as the spirit of Jesus His First Born, and another being upon the earth by whom He beget the tabernacle of Jesus, as His Only Begotten in this world. We have also proved most clearly that the Son followed the example of his Father, and became the great Bridegroom to whom kings' daughters and many honorable Wives were to be married. We have also proved that both God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ inherit their wives in eternity as well as in time; and that God the Father has already begotten many thousand millions of sons and daughters and sent them into this world to take tabernacles; and that God the Son has the promise that "of the increase of his government there shall be no end;" it being expressly declared that the children of one of His Queens shall be made Princes in all the earth. (See Psalm 45: 16.)

Jesus says there shall be weeping

and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out." (Luke 13: 28.) There are many in this generation so pious that they would consider themselves greatly disgraced to be obliged to associate with a man having a plurality of wives; would it not be well for such to desire a place separate from the kingdom of God, that they may not be contaminated with the society of these old Polygamists? And then it would be so shocking to the modesty of the very pious ladies of Christendom to see Abraham and his wives, Jacob and his wives, Jesus and his honorable wives, all eating occasionally at the same table, and visiting one another, and conversing about their numerous children and their kingdoms. Oh, ye delicate ladies of Christendom, how can you endure such a scene as this? Oh, what will you do, when you behold on the very gates of the holy Jerusalem the names of the Twelve sons of the four wives of the Polygamist Jacob? If you do not want your morals corrupted, and your delicate ears shocked, and your pious modesty put to the blush by the society of polygamists and their wives, do not venture near the holy Jerusalem, nor come near the New Earth; for Polygamists will be honored there, and will be among the chief rulers in that Kingdom.

Peter says, Likewise ye wives be in subjection to your own husbands, \* \* \* \* even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him Lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well." (1 Peter 3: 1, 6.) The females in the first age of Christianity considered it a great honor to become the daughters of Abraham, but now they have become so righteous that they think it a disgrace to be found in the society of a Polygamist; and no doubt they would think their characters ruined for ever, if any one should be so immodest as to call them the daughters of the Polygamist Abraham. But we will tell them how to avoid this deep disgrace; they can cease to do well; for Peter says that it is only on

Moses, David, Solomon, the Prophets, of Jesus and his Apostles” (*Ibid.*, vol. 11, page 309). On another occasion Brigham Young remarked: “The Scripture says that He, the Lord, came walking in the Temple, with his train; I do not know who they were, unless His wives and children; . . . (*Ibid.*, vol. 13, page 309).

Mormon Apostle Orson Pratt taught:

. . . the great Messiah who was the founder of the Christian religion, was a *polygamist*, . . . the Messiah chose . . . by marrying many honorable wives himself, show to all future generations that he approbated the plurality of Wives under the Christian dispensation, . . .

We have now clearly shown that *God the Father had a plurality of wives*, one or more being in eternity . . . We have also proved that both *God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ inherit their wives in eternity* . . . If you do not want your morals corrupted, and your delicate ears shocked, and your pious modesty put to the blush by the society of polygamists and their wives, do not venture near the New Earth; for polygamists will be honored there, and will be among the chief rulers in the Kingdom. (*The Seer*, November 1853, page 172)

Some members of the church still maintain that God and Christ are polygamists. For instance, John J. Stewart, writing in 1961, made these comments: “. . . plural marriage is the patriarchal order of marriage lived by God and others who reign in the Celestial Kingdom” (*Brigham Young and His Wives*, page 41). In his book, *Joseph Smith, the Mormon Prophet*, written in 1966, Stewart still claimed that plural marriage is being “lived by God” (page 69).

Joseph Fielding Smith, who served as the tenth president of the church in the 1970s, advised caution about publicly teaching that Christ was married. On March 17, 1963, J. Ricks Smith sent Smith a letter which he asked: “In the Temple ceremony we are told that only through Temple marriage can we receive the highest degree of exaltation and dwell in the presence of our Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ. Christ came here to set us the example and, therefore, we believe that he must have been married. Are we right?” Joseph Fielding Smith replied: “Yes! But do not preach it! The Lord advised us not to cast pearls before swine!”

Even though the current Mormon leaders are very quiet about the matter, a belief in the doctrine of Celestial Marriage almost compels a person to also believe that God is a polygamist. While church leaders no longer allow the practice of polygamy here on earth, they maintain that it will be lived in heaven. President Joseph Fielding Smith remarried after the death of his first wife, and in his book, *Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 2, page 67, he remarked: “. . . my wives will be mine in eternity.”

Harold B. Lee, the eleventh president of the church, also remarried after his wife’s death and was looking forward to a polygamous relationship in heaven. He, in fact, wrote a poem in which he reflected:

My lovely Joan was sent to me;  
So Joan joins Fern  
That *three might be*, more fitted for eternity.  
“O Heavenly Father, my thanks to thee.”  
(*Deseret News 1974 Church Almanac*, page 17)

According to Mormon doctrine, those who enter into celestial marriage become Gods and continue to have spirit children throughout all eternity. Mormon leaders still publicly teach that all the people born on this earth were once conceived by God the Father in a preexistent state. Orson Pratt once calculated that “one hundred and five thousand million . . . was the approximate number of the sons and daughters of God in Heaven . . .” (*The Seer*, page 38). Apostle Pratt then reasoned: “If we suppose, as an average, that only one year intervened between each birth, then it would have required, over one hundred thousand million years for the same Mother to have given birth to this vast family.” One page 39 of the same book, Pratt went on to argue:

If the Father of these spirits, prior to his redemption, had secured to himself, . . . many wives, . . . the period required to people a world would be shorter, . . . with a hundred wives, this period would be reduced to only one thousand million of years. . . . While the Patriarch with his hundred wives, would multiply worlds on worlds . . . the other, who had only secured to himself one wife, would in the same period, just barely have peopled one world.

Using Apostle Pratt’s reasoning and the fact that Mormonism teaches that those who go through the temple ceremony become Gods, it is clear that if God the Father is a monogamist, Presidents Joseph Fielding Smith and Harold B. Lee, with their two wives, will eventually have more spirit children and more kingdoms than the God of Israel! Since Joseph Smith and Brigham Young had hundreds of women sealed to them, their power would increase much more rapidly. President Wilford Woodruff, who had himself sealed to “about four hundred of my femal[e] kindred,” would become more powerful than either Smith or Young, and if anyone took advantage of the “doctrine” that a man could be sealed to 999 wives, he would by-pass them all.

Some Mormons who believe that God is married seem to be shocked when they find out that the early church leaders taught that He was a polygamist. The fact that they are embarrassed by the matter seems to show that they do not really believe that polygamy is a righteous practice.

## Essential to Salvation

During the period in which the Mormon church was openly practicing polygamy, the leaders of the church were declaring that it was absolutely essential for exaltation. One woman testified as follows in the Temple Lot Case: “Yes, sir. President Woodruff, President Young, and President John Taylor, taught me and all the rest of the ladies here in Salt Lake *that a man in order to be exalted in the Celestial Kingdom must have more than one wife*, that having more than one wife was a means of exaltation” (*Temple Lot Case*, 1893, page 361).

Joseph F. Smith, who served as the sixth president of the church, made this emphatic declaration concerning the importance of polygamy:

Some people have supposed that the doctrine of plural marriage was a sort of superfluity, or non-essential to the salvation of mankind. In other words, some of the Saints have said, and believe that a man with one wife, sealed to him by the authority of the Priesthood for time and eternity, will receive an exaltation as great and glorious, if he is faithful, as he possibly could with more than one. I want here to enter my protest against this idea, for I know it is false . . . therefore, *whoever has imagined that he could obtain the fullness of the blessings pertaining to this celestial law, by complying with only a portion of its conditions, has deceived himself*. He cannot do it. When that principle was revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith . . . he did not falter, although it was not until an angel of God, with a drawn sword, stood before him and commanded that he should enter into the practice of that principle, or he should be utterly destroyed, or rejected. . . .

If then, this principle was of such great importance that the Prophet himself was threatened with destruction . . . it is useless to tell me that there is no blessing attached to obedience to the law, or that a man with only one wife can obtain as great a reward, glory or kingdom as he can with more than one . . .

I understand the law of celestial marriage to mean that every man in this Church, who has the ability to obey and practice it in righteousness and will not, *shall be damned*, I say I understand it to mean this and nothing less, and I testify in the name of Jesus that it does mean that. (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 20, pages 28-31)

In 1891 the First Presidency and Apostles of the Mormon church made the following statement in a petition to the President of the United States:

We, the first presidency and apostles of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, beg to respectfully represent to Your Excellency the following facts:

We formerly taught to our people that polygamy or celestial marriage as commanded by God through Joseph Smith was right; that it was a necessity to man’s highest exaltation in the life to come.

That doctrine was publicly promulgated by our president, the late Brigham Young, forty years ago, and was steadily taught and impressed upon the Latter-Day Saints up to September, 1890. (*Reed Smoot Case*, vol. 1, page 18)

The following appeared in the *Latter-Day Saints’ Millennial Star*, vol. 47, page 711:

Upwards of forty years ago the Lord revealed to His Church the principle of celestial marriage. . . . the command of God was before them in language which no faithful soul dare disobey.

“For, behold, I reveal unto you a new and an everlasting covenant and if ye abide not that covenant, then are ye damned; for no one can reject this covenant, and be permitted to enter into glory. . . .”

Damnation was the awful penalty affixed to a refusal to obey this law. It became an acknowledged doctrine of the Church; it was indissolubly interwoven in the minds of its members with their hopes of eternal salvation and exaltation in the presence of God . . . Who could suppose that . . . Congress would enact a law which would present the alternative to religious believers of being consigned to a penitentiary if they should attempt to obey a law of God which would deliver them from damnation!

Joseph Smith told Heber C. Kimball that if he didn’t enter into polygamy “he would lose his apostleship and be damned” (*Life of Heber C. Kimball*, page 336).

Brigham Young made this uncompromising statement on August 19, 1866: “The only men who become Gods, even the sons of God, are those who enter into polygamy” (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 11, page 269).

## Never Will Be Done Away

John Taylor, the third president of the church, claimed that he believed in keeping all the laws of the United States “except one” —i.e., “The law in relation to polygamy” (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 20, page 317). Thomas G. Alexander, of Brigham Young University, admitted that “long after the 1879 Reynolds decision, Church members brought to bar for sentencing told federal judges that the law of God was higher than the law of the land and deserved prior obedience. The Manifesto officially ending polygamy as Church practice was not issued until 1890, and excommunication for practicing

plural marriage did not come until 1904” (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Summer 1966, page 128). The Mormons continued to openly preach polygamy until the year 1890. During this period the leaders taught that it was going to be a permanent part of the church and that it would never be stopped. Heber C. Kimball, First Counselor to Brigham Young, made these emphatic statements concerning polygamy:

The principle of plurality of wives never will be done away, although some sisters have had revelations that, when this time passes away and they go through the veil, every women will have a husband to herself. (*Deseret News*, November 7, 1855)

Some quietly listen to those who speak . . . against the plurality of wives, and against almost every principle that God has revealed. Such persons have half-a-dozen devils with them all the time. You might as well deny “Mormonism,” and turn away from it, as to oppose the plurality of wives. Let the Presidency of this Church, and the Twelve Apostles, and all the authorities unite and say with one voice that they will oppose the doctrine, and the whole of them will be damned. (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 5, page 203)

I speak of plurality of wives as one of the most holy principles that God ever revealed to man, and all those who exercise an influence against it, unto whom it is taught, man or woman will be damned, . . . the curse of God will be upon them, and poverty, and distress, and vexation of spirit will be their portion; . . . (*Ibid.*, vol. 11, page 211)

It would be as easy for the United States to build a tower to remove the sun, as to remove polygamy, or the church and kingdom of God. (*Millennial Star*, vol. 28, page 190)

John Taylor, who became the third president of the church, said he considered those who opposed “polygamy” as “apostates and not interested in this Church and kingdom” (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 11, page 221). In the *Journal of Discourses*, vol. 25, pages 309-310, John Taylor was reported as saying:

God has given us a revelation in regard to celestial marriage. . . . they would like us to tone that principle down and change it and make it applicable to the views of the day. This we cannot do; nor can we interfere with any of the commands of God to meet the persuasions or behest of men. I cannot do it, and will not do it.

I find some men try to twist around the principle in any way and every way they can. They want to sneak out of it in some way. Now God don’t want any kind of sycophancy like that. . . . We have also been told that “it

is not mete that man who will not abide my law shall preside over my Priesthood,” . . . If God has introduced something for our glory and exaltation, we are not going to have that kicked over by any improper influence, either inside or outside of the Church of the living God.

Apostle Orson Pratt strongly affirmed that it was absolutely essential that polygamy not be given up by the church:

God has told us Latter-day Saints that we shall *be condemned if we do not enter into that principle*; and yet I have heard now and then . . . a brother or sister say, “I am a Latter-day Saint, but I do not believe in polygamy.” Oh, what an absurd expression! What an absurd idea! A person might as well say, “I am a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ, but I do not believe in him.” One is just as consistent as the other. . . . If the doctrine of *polygamy*, as revealed to the Latter-day Saints, *is not true, I would not give a fig for all your other revelations that come through Joseph Smith the Prophet; I would renounce the whole of them*, because it is utterly impossible, . . . to believe a part of them to be divine—from God—and a part of them to be from the devil; . . . The Lord has said that those who reject this principle reject their salvation, they shall be damned, saith the Lord; . . .

Now I want to prophecy a little. . . . I want to prophecy that all men who *oppose the revelation* which God has given in relation to polygamy *will find themselves in darkness*; the Spirit of God will withdraw from them the very moment of their opposition to that principle, until they will finally go down to hell and be damned, if they do not repent. . . . if you do not become as dark as midnight there is no truth in Mormonism. (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 17, pages 224-225)

President Brigham Young warned: “Now if any of you will deny the plurality of wives and continue to do so, I promise that you will be damned; . . .” (*Deseret News*, November 14, 1855). In the *Deseret News* for October 10, 1866, Brigham Young responded to a question which was frequently asked: “Do you think that we shall ever be admitted as a State into the Union without denying the principle of polygamy? If we are not admitted until then, we shall never be admitted.”

George Q. Cannon, who served in the First Presidency of the church, declared: “If plural marriage be divine, as the Latter-day Saints say it is, no power on earth can suppress it, unless you crush and destroy the entire people” (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 20, page 276). Cannon viewed those who wanted to yield the practice as “apostates already in heart. They are more dangerous than our open enemies” (*Juvenile Instructor*, vol. 20, page 156). He looked at the suggestion of giving

up polygamy until public opinion softened “as from the devil,” and went on to say: “If there are any in the Church who cannot stand the pressure instead of talking compromise, let them withdraw quietly from the Church” (*Ibid.*).

Apostle Orson Hyde boasted that “polygamy” is the “very principle that will break in pieces the power that would set it aside” (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 13, page 183).

In the *Latter Day Saints’ Millennial Star*, vol. 41, pages 242-243, the following was printed:

... the God of Israel . . . commanded Joseph Smith, the prophet, and the Latter-day Saints, to obey this law, “or you shall be damned,” saith the Lord. Now, after having obeyed the law for many years, the Congress of the United States, and the supreme judges of the nation, stand forth and say, “You shall be damned if you do obey it.” Now Latter-day Saints, what are we going to do under the circumstances? God says, “We shall be damned if we do not obey the law.” Congress says, “We shall be damned if we do.” It places us precisely in the . . . position that it did the Hebrews in the fiery furnace, and Daniel in the den of lions. . . . Now who shall we obey? God or man? My voice is that we obey God. . . . The Congress of 1862, and the supreme judges of 1879, in their acts and decisions, have taken a dangerous and fearful step; their acts will sap the very foundation of our government, and it will be rent asunder, . . .

The Mormons did everything they could to escape the federal deputies. Kimball Young gives this information:

In addition to false names, disguises, and ruses, a whole system of information gathering, signaling, and spotting informers was developed. For example, the church authorities would pass the word down to the smaller communities of movements of federal deputies out of Salt Lake City, in the direction of any particular town. (*Isn’t One Wife Enough?* page 396)

Wilford Woodruff, who became the fourth president of the church, had an armed guard to protect him. In a letter written in 1887, Woodruff wrote:

I have a large stout man who goes with me every \_\_\_\_\_ (where?) night and day [he] carries 2 pistols & a double barrel shot gun and says he will shoot the marshals if they come to take me (Don’t tell anybody this) so I am \_\_\_\_\_ well garded . . . (Letter from Wilford Woodruff to Miss Nellie Atkin, dated September 3, 1887, microfilm copy of the original)

In an article published in the *Latter Day Saints’ Millennial Star*, October 28, 1865, it was clearly stated that the Mormons could not give up polygamy and that there would not be a revelation to suppress the practice:

It is time that members of the Government and the public at large should understand the true state of the question, and the real issues involved in these propositions. The doctrine of polygamy with the “Mormons,” is not one of that kind that in the religious world is classed with “non-essentials.” It is *not an item of doctrine that can be yielded, and faith in the system remain*. “Mormonism” is that kind of religion the entire divinity of which is invalidated, and its truth utterly rejected, the moment that any one of its leading principles is acknowledged to be false, . . .

The whole question, therefore, narrows itself to this in the “Mormon” mind. *Polygamy was revealed by God, or the entire fabric of their faith is false*. To ask them to give up such an item of belief, is to ask them to relinquish the whole, to acknowledge their Priesthood a lie, their ordinances a deception, and all that they have toiled for, lived for, bled for, prayed for, or hoped for, a miserable failure and a waste of life.

All this Congress demands of the people of Utah. It asks the repudiation of their entire religious practice to-day; and inasmuch as polygamy is, in “Mormon” belief, *the basis of the condition of a future life, it asks them to give up their hopes of salvation hereafter*. . . . We have shown that in requiring the relinquishment of polygamy, they ask the *renunciation of the entire faith of this people*. No sophistry can get out of this. “Mormonism” is true in every leading doctrine, or it is false as a system altogether. . . .

There is no half way house. The childish babble about another revelation is only an evidence how half informed men can talk. The “Mormons” have either to spurn their religion and their God, and sink self-damned in the eyes of all civilization at the moment when most blest in the practice of their faith, or go calmly on to the same issue which they have always had—“Mormonism” in its *entirety* the revelation of God, or *nothing at all*. . . . those who so unwisely seek to stir up the Government to wrath, will yet learn there is but one solution of the “Mormon” problem—“Mormonism” allowed in its entirety, or “Mormonism” wiped out in blood.

### 3. The Manifesto

The government increased the pressure against polygamy, but the Mormons were determined to continue the practice. Shortly before the revelation known as the Manifesto (which declared an end to the practice of polygamy) was given, Lorenzo Snow, who later became president of the church, was claiming that no such revelation would ever come. When Snow was on trial for practicing polygamy, Mr. Bierbower, the prosecuting attorney, predicted that if he was convicted, “a new revelation would soon follow, changing the divine law of celestial marriage.” To this Lorenzo Snow responded:

Whatever fame Mr. Bierbower may have secured as a lawyer, he certainly will fail as a prophet. The severest prosecutions have never been followed by revelations changing a divine law, obedience to which brought imprisonment or martyrdom.

Though I go to prison, *God will not change his law of celestial marriage*. But the man, the people, the nation, that oppose and fight against this doctrine and the Church of God, will be overthrown. (*Historical Record*, page 144)

Although Lorenzo Snow said that the “severest prosecutions have never been followed by revelations changing a divine law,” Wilford Woodruff, the fourth president of the church, issued the Manifesto in 1890. He claimed the Manifesto was given to stop the persecution the church would have to go through if the Mormons continued to practice polygamy. He states:

The Lord showed me by vision and revelation exactly what would happen if we did not stop this practice . . . all ordinances would be stopped . . . many men would be made prisoners . . . I went before the Lord, and I wrote what the Lord told me to write . . . (*Evidences and Reconciliations*, 3 volume edition, pages 105-106)

Before Wilford Woodruff became president of the LDS Church, he maintained that the church could not give up polygamy:

If we were to do away with polygamy, it would only be one feather in the bird, . . . do away with that, then we must do away with prophets and Apostles, with revelation and the gifts and graces of the Gospel, and finally our religion altogether and turn sectarians and do as the world does, . . . We just can't do that, . . . we shall obey him in days to come as we have in days past. (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 13, page 166)

On January 26, 1880, Wilford Woodruff even claimed to have a revelation which threatened the United States

with destruction if it continued to oppose the “Patriarchal Law”—i.e., plural marriage:

Thus saith the Lord unto my servant Wilford Woodruff. . . . it is not my will that mine Elders should fight the Battles of Zion for I will fight your Battles. . . .

The Nation is ripened in iniquity and the Cup of wrath of mine indignation is full, and I will not stay my hand in Judgment upon this Nation . . .

And I say again *wo* unto that Nation or House or people, who *seek to hinder my People from obeying the Patriarchal Law of Abraham* which leadeth to a Celestial Glory . . . for whosoever doeth these things shall be damned Saith the Lord of Hosts and shall be broken up & washed away from under Heaven by the Judgments which I have sent forth and shall not return unto me void. (*Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, January 26, 1880, edited by Scott G. Kenney, 1983, vol. 7, pages 615-617)

Less than a year before he issued the Manifesto, President Woodruff received a revelation that he should not yield to the pressure of the government. Under the date of December 19, 1889, Apostle Abraham H. Cannon recorded the following in his journal:

During our meeting a revelation was read which Pres. Woodruff received . . . Propositions had been made for the Church to make some concessions to the Courts in regard to its principles. Both of Pres. Woodruff's counselors refused to advise him as to the course he should pursue, and he therefore laid the matter before the Lord. The answer came quick and strong. The *word of the Lord was for us not to yield one particle of that which he had revealed and established*. He had done and would continue to care for his work . . . The whole revelation was filled with words of the greatest encouragement and comfort, and my heart was filled with joy and peace during the entire reading. It sets all doubt at rest concerning the course to pursue. (*Journal of Abraham H. Cannon*, December 19, 1889)

According to the Mormon historian D. Michael Quinn, Mormon church leaders considered the possibility of signing a document like the Manifesto on December 20, 1888, and rejected the idea: “After this overwhelming repudiation, Woodruff told the apostles, ‘Had we yielded to that document every man of us would have been under *condemnation before God*. *The Lord never will give a revelation to abandon plural marriage*’” (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Spring, 1985, page 35). Because of the fact that Wilford Woodruff had previously taught that polygamy would not be discontinued and had even claimed to have revelations to that effect, the other leaders of the church were confused by his Manifesto. Apostle Cannon's journal shows that there was division among the highest

leaders of the church at the time the Manifesto was issued (see *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* page 234).

While the Manifesto was approved by the membership of the church, the Mormon writer Russell R. Rich admits that “not even among the general authorities of the Church was there unanimous support for abolishing the practice (*Brigham Young University Week, Those Who Would Be Leaders*, page 71).

In October, 1891, President Woodruff testified that the Manifesto not only prohibited any more plural marriages, but that it also forbid the unlawful cohabitation of those who were already in polygamy:

Q. . . . I want to ask you, President Woodruff, whether in your advice to the church officials, and the people of the church, you have advised them that your intention was, and that the requirement of the church was, that the polygamous relations already formed before that should not be continued; that is, there should be no association with plural wives; in other words, that unlawful cohabitation as it is named and spoken of should also stop, as well as future polygamous marriages? A. Yes, sir; that has been the intention. (Testimony of Wilford Woodruff as quoted in *Reminiscences of Early Utah*, by R. N. Baskin, 1914, page 246)

While Wilford Woodruff and other Mormon leaders were publicly stating that members of the church should observe the law, they were secretly teaching that it was all right to break the law concerning unlawful cohabitation. This is evident from a number of entries in the journal of Apostle Abraham H. Cannon. For instance, on October 2, 1890, he wrote: “It was, however, resolved that ‘we use our private influence at present to prevent our brethren from going into Court and promising to obey the law; . . .’”

Under the dates of October 17 and 18, 1890, Apostle Cannon recorded the following in his journal:

Uncle David came in about noon and told me . . . a deputy marshal . . . told him that there were papers out for my arrest, . . . I got Chas H Wilcken to investigate . . . Bro. Wilcken came and informed me that he had bought Doyle off, and had got his promise that I should not be molested, nor should any other person without sufficient notice being given for them to escape, and to get witnesses out of the way. He gave Bro. Wilcken the names of some 51 persons whose arrest he intended to try to effect . . . A messenger was therefore despatched to give these people warning. Thus with a little money a channel of communication is kept open between the government offices and the suffering and persecuted Church members.

Although the leaders of the Mormon church had promised to obey the law of the land, many of them broke

their promises. Few people, however, realized to what extent until they were called to testify in the “Proceedings Before the Committee on Privileges and Elections of the United States Senate in the Matter of the Protests Against the Hon. Reed Smoot, a Senator From the State of Utah, to Hold His Seat.” Joseph F. Smith, who was the sixth president of the church, testified as follows in the Reed Smoot Case:

The CHAIRMAN. Do you obey the law in having five wives at this time, and having them bear to you eleven children since the manifesto of 1890?

Mr. SMITH. Mr. Chairman, I have not claimed that in that case I have obeyed the law of the land.

The CHAIRMAN. That is all.

Mr. SMITH. I do not claim so, and I have said before that I prefer to stand my chances against the law. (*Reed Smoot Case*, vol. 1, page 197)

Mr. TAYLER. You say there is a State law forbidding unlawful cohabitation?

Mr. SMITH. That is my understanding.

Mr. TAYLER. And ever since that law was passed you have been violating it?

Mr. SMITH. I think likely I have been practicing the same thing even before the law was passed. (*Ibid.*, page 130)

The CHAIRMAN. . . . you are violating the law?

Mr. SMITH. The law of my State?

The CHAIRMAN. Yes.

Senator OVERMAN. Is there not a revelation published in the Book of Covenants here that you shall abide by the law of the State?

Mr. SMITH. It includes both unlawful cohabitation and polygamy.

Senator OVERMAN. Is there not a *revelation that you shall abide by the laws of the State and of the land?*

Mr. SMITH. Yes, sir.

Senator OVERMAN. If that is a revelation, *are you not violating the laws of God?*

Mr. SMITH. I have admitted that, Mr. Senator, a great many times here. (*Ibid.*, pages 334-335)

When Senator Hoar was questioning President Joseph F. Smith concerning polygamy, Smith finally stated: “I presume I am the greatest culprit” (*Ibid.*, page 312).

B. H. Roberts, the Mormon historian, gave this testimony:

The CHAIRMAN. In living in polygamous cohabitation you are living in defiance of the manifesto of 1890, are you not?

Mr. ROBERTS. Yes, sir; in defiance of the action of the church on the subject.

The CHAIRMAN. And that was divinely inspired, as you understand?

Mr. ROBERTS. I think so.

The CHAIRMAN. And you are living in defiance of the law of the land?

Mr. ROBERTS. Yes, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. Then you are *disregarding both the law of God and of man?*

Mr. ROBERTS. I suppose I am. (*Reed Smoot Case*, vol. 1, page 718)

Francis M. Lyman, one of the twelve Apostles, testified as follows:

Senator HOAR. . . . You have said more than once that in living in polygamist relations with your wives, which you do and intend to do, you knew that you were *disobeying this revelation?*

Mr. LYMAN. Yes, sir.

Senator HOAR. And that in disobeying this revelation you were *disobeying the law of God?*

Mr. LYMAN. Yes, sir.

Senator HOAR. . . . you say that you, an apostle of your church, expecting to succeed, if you survive Mr. Smith, to the office in which you will be the person to be the medium of Divine revelations, are living and are known to your people *to live in disobedience of the law of the land and of the law of God?*

Mr. LYMAN. Yes, sir. (*Reed Smoot Case*, vol. 1, page 430)

Charles E. Merrill, the son of Apostle Marriner W. Merrill, testified that he took a plural wife after the Manifesto and that his father performed the ceremony:

Mr. TAYLER. . . . when was it you married your second wife; that is, the second wife you now have?

Mr. MERRILL. In the fall of 1888.

. . . .

Mr. TAYLER. And the next marriage took place in 1891?

Mr. MERRILL. Yes, sir.

Mr. TAYLER. Who married you in 1891?

Mr. MERRILL. My father.

Mr. TAYLER. When were you married?

Mr. MERRILL. I could not give you the exact date, but it was in March.

Mr. TAYLER. 1891?

Mr. MERRILL. Yes, sir.

Mr. TAYLER. Was your father then an apostle?

Mr. MERRILL. Yes, sir. (*Reed Smoot Case*, vol. 1, pages 408-409)

Walter M. Wolfe, who was at one time professor of geology at Brigham Young College, claimed that Apostle John Henry Smith made this statement to him:

“Brother Wolfe, don’t you know that the manifesto is only a trick to beat the devil at his own game.” (*Reed Smoot Case*, vol. 4, page 13)

Anthony W. Ivins, who later became of member of the First Presidency of the LDS Church, was appointed by the church leaders to perform plural marriages in Mexico after the Manifesto. His son, Stanley S. Ivins, told us that his father received instructions after the Manifesto to perform marriages for time and all eternity outside of the Mormon temples. He received a ceremony for these marriages (which Stanley S. Ivins had in his possession). He was sent to Mexico and was told that when the First Presidency wanted a plural marriage performed they would send a letter with the couple who were to be married. Whenever he received these letters from the First Presidency, he knew that it was all right to perform the ceremony. After his father’s death, Stanley S. Ivins copied the names of those who had been married in polygamy into another book and then gave the original book to the Mormon leaders. Wallace Turner says that “More than fifty polygamist marriages were easily identifiable, beginning in June, 1897, when three men from Utah were married at Juarez, . . . They had crossed over into Mexico just for the marriage ceremony, then went back into the United States. However, Ivins refused to perform marriages for the regular population of the Mormon colonies because the men lacked the letters from Salt Lake City which he considered to be his authority for the ceremony. However, by 1898 polygamous marriages were being performed routinely in Mexico by other Mormon leaders” (*The Mormon Establishment*, 1966, page 187). Stanley Ivins claimed that his father continued to perform plural marriages for the church until the year 1904. In the *Reed Smoot Case*, Walter M. Wolfe testified that Ovena Jorgensen told him how she had obtained approval from George Q. Cannon, of the First Presidency, to enter into polygamy:

Mr. WOLFE. . . . I asked her how it had happened, and she said that some years before she had gone into service at the house of this man Okey; . . . He had asked her to marry him and she had declined, saying that it was impossible on account of the manifesto, . . . In August, 1897, Okey and the girl went together to see President Wilford Woodruff, and they laid the case before him. He brushed them aside with a wave of his hand and said he would have nothing to do with the matter, but referred them to President George Q. Cannon. George Q. Cannon asked if the girl had been through the Temple and received her endowments. They told him no. He said that must be done first and then he would see as to



the rest of it. They went through the Temple and the girl received her endowments. Then they were given a letter by President George Q. Cannon to President Ivins, of the Juarez Stake, and they went to Mexico.

The CHAIRMAN. Who was the letter to?

Mr. WOLFE. President A. W. Ivins, of the Juarez Stake.

The CHAIRMAN. Mexico?

Mr. WOLFE. Mexico; yes, sir. They went to Mexico, and there the girl told me the marriage ceremony was performed, and they returned to Utah. (*Reed Smoot Case*, vol. 4, page 11)

Stanley S. Ivins confirmed the fact that his father, Anthony W. Ivins, performed the marriage ceremony. Stanley Ivins related to us that Walter Wolfe's testimony concerning this marriage hurt the church's image so much that the First Presidency of the church sent Anthony Ivins a letter requesting him to go back to Washington, D. C. and give false testimony before the Committee on Privileges and Elections of the United States Senate. The First Presidency of the LDS Church actually wanted him to lie under oath and state he did not perform the ceremony. Stanley Ivins said that even if Walter Wolfe's testimony did damage the image of the church, his father refused to go back to Washington, D. C. and lie about the marriage.

Frank J. Cannon, the son of George Q. Cannon and formerly United States Senator from Utah, gave this important information:

Late in July, 1896, when I was in New York on business for the Presidency, I received a telegram announcing the death of my brother, Apostle Abraham H. Cannon. . . . I realized that my father would have a greater stroke of sorrow to bear than I; . . .

I found him and Joseph F. Smith in the office of the Presidency, . . . He rose and put his hand on my shoulder with a tenderness that it was his habit to conceal. "I know how you feel his loss," he said hoarsely, "but when I think what he would have had to pass through if he had lived—I cannot regret his death." . . .

With a sweep of his hand toward Smith at his desk—a gesture and a look the most unkind I ever saw him use—he answered: "A few weeks ago Abraham took a plural wife, Lillian Hamlin. It became known. He would have had to face a prosecution in Court. His death has saved us from a calamity that would have been dreadful for the Church—and for the state."

"Father!" I cried. "Has this thing come back again! And the ink hardly dry on the bill that restored your church property on the pledge of honor that there would never be another case—" I had caught the look on Smith's face, and it was a look of sullen defiance. "How did it happen?"

My father replied: "I know—it's awful. I would have prevented it if I could. I was asked for my consent, and I refused it. President Smith obtained the acquiescence of President Woodruff, on the plea that it wasn't an ordinary case of polygamy but merely a fulfillment of the biblical instruction that a man should take his dead brother's wife. Lillian was betrothed to David, and had been sealed to him in eternity after his death. I understand that President Woodruff told Abraham he would leave the matter with them if he wished to take the responsibility—and President Smith performed the ceremony." (*Under the Prophet in Utah*, pages 176-177)

According to the diary of Abraham H. Cannon, his father, George Q. Cannon, a member of the First Presidency, lamented the fact that his sons could not raise up seed to David through polygamy: "My son David died without seed, and his brothers cannot do a work for him, in rearing children to bear his name because of the manifesto" (Journal of Abraham H. Cannon, April 5, 1894, vol. 19, page 70). From an entry in Apostle Cannon's diary for October 24, 1894, it would appear that the Mormon leaders had decided that a plural marriage could be performed in Mexico to raise up seed to David. Although the diary has been damaged at this point and a few words are missing, the remaining portion shows that the Mormon leaders did not take the Manifesto seriously:

After meeting I went to the President's Office and \_\_\_\_\_ Father [George Q. Cannon] about taking a wife for David. I told him David had taken Anni[e] \_\_\_\_\_ cousin, through the veil in life, and suggested she might be a good pe\_\_\_\_\_ sealed to him for eternity. The suggestion pleased Father very much, and \_\_\_\_\_ Angus was there, He spoke to him about it in the presence of the Presidency. \_\_\_\_\_ not object providing Annie is willing. The Presidents Woodruff and Smith both sa[i]d they were willing for such a ceremony to occur, if done in Mexico, and Pres. Woodruff[f] promised the Lord's blessing to follow such an act. (Journal of Abraham H. Cannon, October 24, 1894, vol. 18, page 170)

Mormon scholar D. Michael Quinn, formerly professor of American History at Brigham Young University, has found another important reference which he feels proves beyond all doubt that "President Woodruff personally authorized Apostle Abraham H. Cannon to marry a new plural wife . . ." This reference is also in Apostle Cannon's own journal:

“Father [George Q. Cannon] also spoke to me about taking some good girl and raising up seed by her for my brother David. . . . Such a ceremony as this could be performed in Mexico, so Pres. Woodruff has said.” (Abraham H. Cannon Journal, October 19, 1894, as cited in *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Spring 1985, page 62)

It is startling, to say the least, that President Wilford Woodruff approved of and promised “the Lord’s blessing” on the plural marriage which was being planned. This was four years after he published a “solemn” denial of the practice in the Manifesto: “We are not teaching polygamy or plural marriage, not permitting any person to enter into its practice . . .” (*Doctrine and Covenants*, Official Declaration)

It was some two years after the plural marriage was approved by the First Presidency that Abraham Cannon actually took Lillian Hamlin as his plural wife. The evidence indicates that Joseph F. Smith, who became the sixth president of the church, married the couple himself. President Smith denied that he performed the ceremony, but he acknowledged: “I accompanied Abraham H. Cannon and his wife on that trip” (*Reed Smoot Case*, vol. 1, page 111). When President Smith was asked when he first learned that Lillian Hamlin was Apostle Cannon’s wife, he responded: “The first that I suspected anything of the kind was on that trip, because I never knew the lady before” (*Ibid.*). Like the other Mormon leaders, Joseph F. Smith was supposed to be doing all in his power to prevent the practice of polygamy, yet his testimony gives the impression that he was oblivious to what was going on when he went on the trip with Lillian Hamlin and Apostle Cannon:

Mr. TAYLOR. Did you see them at Los Angeles?

Mr. SMITH. Yes, sir.

Mr. TAYLOR. Were you out in a boat from there?

Mr. SMITH. Yes, sir.

. . . .

Mr. TAYLOR. Did you have any talk on that journey or after you left Salt Lake—after you first heard or learned that Lillian Hamlin was the wife of Abraham Cannon—as to when they were married?

Mr. SMITH. No, sir.

Mr. TAYLOR. Did you have any talk with either of them?

Mr. SMITH. Not in the least.

Mr. TAYLOR. Not in the least?

Mr. SMITH. Not in the least, sir; and no one ever mentioned to me that they were or were not married. I simply judged they were married because they were living together as husband and wife.

. . . .

Mr. TAYLER. Did you say anything by way of criticism to Abraham Cannon?

Mr. SMITH. No, sir. (*Reed Smoot Case*, vol. 1, pages 127-128)

Mr. TAYLER. Now, . . . I gather from your statement the officials of the church have been ever since 1890, and are now, very sensitive as to the charge that plural marriages have been solemnized.

Mr. WORTHINGTON. Since the manifesto?

Mr. TAYLER. Since the manifesto.

Mr. SMITH. Yes, I think we have been very sensitive about that.

. . . .

Mr. TAYLER. What inquiry did you make to find out whether Abraham H. Cannon, one of the twelve apostles of the church, had made a plural marriage?

Mr. SMITH. I made no inquiry at all.

. . . .

Mr. TAYLER. Did you have any interest in finding out whether there had been—

Mr. SMITH. Not the least. (*Ibid.*, pages 476-477)

Unfortunately, Abraham H. Cannon’s 1896 journal is not available. D. Michael Quinn informs us that “Apostle Cannon’s 1896 diary is the only volume missing of his many diaries . . .” (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Spring 1985, pages 83-84). John Henry Hamlin, however, testified that his sister, Lillian Hamlin, was married to Apostle Cannon. When he was asked who performed the ceremony, he replied: “Well, our understanding was that President Joseph F. Smith married her.” Wilhelmina C. Ellis, who had been one of Apostle Cannon’s wives, testified that Abraham Cannon was not married to Lillian Hamlin until he went on the trip with President Smith:

Mr. TAYLER. What conversation did you have with him then about his going away and about his getting married again? What did he say first about going?

Mrs. ELLIS. He told me he was going to marry her for time, and that she would be David’s wife for eternity.

. . . .

Mr. TAYLER. What did he say about Miss Hamlin?

Mrs. ELLIS. . . . he said she was going with him and President Smith.

. . . .

Mr. TAYLER. . . . What did Mr. Cannon say to you shortly before his death about his having married Miss Hamlin?

Mrs. ELLIS. He told me he had married her and asked my forgiveness.

Mr. TAYLER. What else did he say about it?

Mrs. ELLIS. He said he had never had a well day since he had married her. I think it killed him. (*Reed Smoot Case*, vol. 2, page 143)

Because her husband was not married to Lillian Hamlin when he left on the trip with Joseph F. Smith and came back as her husband, Mrs. Ellis inferred that President Smith had performed the marriage ceremony. She admitted, in fact, that she had frequently stated that Smith did marry them. Since Abraham H. Cannon had previously written that “Presidents Woodruff and Smith both sa[id] they were willing for such a ceremony to occur,” it would be stretching our credulity to believe President Smith’s denial that he knew anything about the marriage. It is difficult, in fact, to deny Frank Cannon’s charge that his father [George Q. Cannon] told him that President Smith performed the ceremony. While those who knew about this marriage usually felt that Joseph F. Smith married the couple “on the high sea” just off the coast of California, Mormon scholar D. Michael Quinn seems confident that the ceremony was performed in the Salt Lake Temple. His research in temple records reveals the following:

When Lillian Hamlin was endowed in the Salt Lake Temple on 17 June 1896, she was sealed by proxy to the deceased David H. Cannon. Abraham H. Cannon was the proxy, and Joseph F. Smith performed the sealing. The next day, the Smiths and Cannons left Salt Lake City for California. Therefore, Joseph F. Smith actually performed his only post-Manifesto polygamous marriage as a proxy marriage in the Salt Lake Temple for Abraham H. Cannon but could legally claim that he [was] simply officiating in a sealing on behalf of the deceased brother. (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Spring, 1985, page 84)

Professor Quinn bases this argument on the fact that the records of earlier sealings for the dead indicate the “one ceremony united the living woman for eternity to the deceased husband and for time to the proxy husband.” While Quinn’s argument is persuasive, the fact that Joseph F. Smith traveled with the couple after the temple ritual may still leave open the possibility that it was a separate ceremony in California or on the “high sea”—i.e., beyond the boundary of the United States. In any case, Quinn’s discovery of temple records linking President Smith to a sealing ceremony in which both Apostle Cannon and Lillian Hamlin participated just the day before he traveled with the couple seems to sew up the case against Joseph F. Smith.

Apostle Abraham H. Cannon’s journals not only reveal that the Mormon leaders approved of polygamy after the Manifesto, but they also show they were considering the idea of a secret system of concubinage wherein men and women could live together without actually being married:

Father [George Q. Cannon] now spoke of the unfortunate condition of the people at present in regard to marriage. . . . I believe in concubinage, or some plan whereby men and women can live together under sacred ordinances and vows until they can be married. . . . such a condition would have to be kept secret, until the laws of our government change to permit the holy order of wedlock which God has revealed, . . . — — President Snow. “I have no doubt that concubinage will yet be practiced in this church . . .” — — Pres. Woodruff: “If men enter into some practice of this character to raise a righteous posterity, they will be justified in it . . .” (*Journal of Abraham H. Cannon*, April 5, 1894, vol. 18, page 70)

As we have shown earlier, Joseph Smith’s revelation regarding polygamy also said that concubinage was justifiable in God’s sight: “Abraham received concubines and they bore him children; and it was accounted unto him for righteousness, . . .” (*Doctrine and Covenants*, 132:37).

After making a long and careful study of the Mormon church’s attitude toward polygamy, the Committee on Privileges and Elections submitted the report in which it claimed that the Manifesto was a deception:

A sufficient number of specific instances of the taking of plural wives since the manifesto of 1890, so called, have been shown by the testimony as having taken place among officials of the Mormon Church to demonstrate the fact that the leaders in this church, the first presidency and the twelve apostles, *connive at the practice of taking plural wives, and have done so ever since the manifesto was issued* which purported to put an end to the practice. . . . as late as 1896 one Lillian Hamlin became the plural wife of Abraham H. Cannon, who was then an apostle . . . The prominence of Abraham H. Cannon in the church, the publicity given to the fact of his taking Lillian Hamlin as a plural wife, render it practically impossible that this should have been done without the knowledge, the consent, and the connivance of the headship of that church.

George Teasdale, another apostle of the Mormon Church, contracted a plural marriage with Marion Scholes since the manifesto of 1890. . . . Charles E. Merrill, a bishop of the Mormon Church, took a plural wife in 1891, . . . The ceremony . . . was performed by

his father, who was then and until the time of his death an apostle in the Mormon Church. It is also shown that John W. Taylor, another apostle of the Mormon Church, has been married to two plural wives since the issuing of the so-called manifesto.

Matthias F. Cowley, another of the twelve apostles, has also taken one or more plural wives since the manifesto. . . . Apostles Taylor and Cowley, instead of appearing before the committee and denying the allegation, evade service of process issued by the committee for their appearance and refuse to appear after being requested to do so, . . .

It is also proved that about the year 1896 James Francis Johnson was married to a plural wife, . . . the ceremony in this instance being performed by an apostle of the Mormon Church. To these cases must be added that of Marriner W. Merrill, another apostle; J. M. Tanner, superintendent of church schools, Benjamin Cluff, jr., president of Brigham Young University; Thomas Chamberlain, counselor to the president of a stake; Bishop Rathall, John Silver, Winslow Far, Heber Benion, Samuel S. Newton, a man named Okey, . . . and Morris Michelson about the year 1902. . . .

It is morally impossible that all these violations of the laws of the State of Utah by the contracting of plural marriages could have been committed without the knowledge of the first presidency and the twelve apostles of the Mormon Church. . . . it was shown by the testimony of one of the twelve apostles and of other witnesses that "under the established law of the church no person could secure a plural wife except by consent of the president of the church." . . .

It is a fact of no little significance in itself, bearing on the question whether polygamous marriages have been recently contracted in Utah by the connivance of the first presidency and twelve apostles of the Mormon Church, that the authorities of said church have endeavored to suppress, and have succeeded in suppressing, a great deal of testimony by which the fact of plural marriages contracted by those who were high in the councils of the church might have been established beyond the shadow of a doubt. Before the investigation had begun it was well known in Salt Lake City that it was expected to show on the part of the protestants that Apostles George Teasdale, John W. Taylor, and M. F. Cowley, and also Prof. J. M. Tanner, Samuel Newton and others who were all high officials of the Mormon Church had recently taken plural wives, and that in 1896 Lillian Hamlin was sealed to Apostle Abraham H. Cannon as a plural wife . . . All, or nearly all, of these persons except Abraham H. Cannon, who was deceased, were then within reach of service of process from the committee. But shortly before the investigation began all these witnesses went out of the country.

Subpoenas were issued for each one of the witnesses named, but in the case of Samuel Newton only could the process of the committee be served. Mr. Newton refused to obey the order of the committee, alleging no reason or excuse for not appearing. It is shown that John W. Taylor was sent out of the country by Joseph F. Smith on a real or pretended mission for the church. . . .

It would be nothing short of self-stultification for one to believe that *all these important witnesses chanced to leave the United States at about the same time* and without reference to the investigation. All the facts and circumstances surrounding the transaction point to the conclusion that every one of the witnesses named left the country at the instance of the rulers of the Mormon Church and to avoid testifying before the committee.

It was claimed by the protestants that the records kept in the Mormon temple at Salt Lake City . . . would disclose the fact that plural marriages have been contracted in Utah since the manifesto with the sanction of the officials of the church. A witness who was required to bring the records in the temple at Salt Lake City refused to do so after consulting with President Smith. . . . it was shown by the testimony, and in such a way that the fact could not possibly be controverted, that a majority of those who give the law to the Mormon Church are now, and have been for years, living in open, notorious, and shameless polygamous cohabitation. The list of those who are thus guilty of violating the laws of the State and the rules of public decency is headed by Joseph F. Smith, the first president, "prophet, seer, and revelator" of the Mormon Church, . . .

The list also includes George Teasdale, an apostle, John Henry Smith, an apostle; Heber J. Grant, an apostle; M. F. Cowley, an apostle; Charles W. Penrose, an apostle; and Francis M. Lyman, who is not only an apostle, but the probable successor to Joseph F. Smith as president of the church. Thus it appears that the first president and eight of the twelve apostles, a considerable majority of the ruling authorities of the Mormon Church, are noted polygamists. . . .

These facts abundantly justify the assertion made in the protest that "the supreme authorities in the church, . . . to wit, the first presidency and twelve apostles, not only connive at violation of, but protect and honor the violators of the laws against polygamy and polygamous cohabitation." . . . the testimony upon that subject, taken as a whole, can leave no doubt upon any reasonable mind that the allegations in the protest are true, and that those who are in authority in the Mormon Church, . . . are encouraging the practice of polygamy among the members of that church, and that polygamy is being practiced to such an extent as to call for the severest condemnation in all legitimate ways.

*The Manifesto of Deception*

Against these facts the authorities of the Mormon Church urge that in the year 1890 what is generally termed a manifesto was issued by the first presidency of that church, suspending the practice of polygamy among the members of that church. It may be said in the first place that this manifesto *misstates the facts* in regard to the solemnization of plural marriages within a short period preceding the issuing of the manifesto. It now appears that in a number of instances plural marriages had been solemnized in the Mormon Church, and, in the case of those high in authority in that church, within a very few months preceding the issuing of the manifesto. (*Reed Smoot Case*, vol. 4, pages 476-482)

While the Committee on Privileges and Elections was hampered by the Mormon church's attempt to impede the investigation and to suppress evidence, it did find enough evidence to put the church in a very embarrassing position. When we published the 1972 edition of *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* we felt that we had enough new evidence to completely disprove the claim that polygamy in the Mormon church ended with the Manifesto (see pages 231-244). We were, of course, somewhat limited in our research because we did not have access to a great deal of important material in the LDS Archives. Fortunately, however, one of the church's most qualified historians, D. Michael Quinn, began researching this matter. While he certainly did not have access to all of the secret records of the church, he was entrusted with some extremely important church documents and was able to ferret out enough material to write what many people consider to be the definitive work on the subject. His article is entitled, "LDS Church Authority and New Plural Marriages, 1890-1904." It is found in the Spring 1985 issue of *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*. Although he claims to be a believer in Mormonism, he believes in honest history and pulls no punches in his presentation. Dr. Quinn gives the following information in his article:

Ninety percent of new polygamous marriages contracted from September 1890 through December 1904 *directly involved Church authority*. . . . On 11 September 1901, the *Deseret Evening News* branded as "groundless" and "utterly false" the statement of a Protestant minister that "one of the Apostles had recently taken an additional wife," when in fact four apostles had married plural wives so far that year. . . .

The year 1903 was the climax of post-Manifesto polygamy with Church authority. . . . apostles were

performing new polygamous marriages in the United States and Mexico, where both the stake patriarch and president were also officiating for residents of the Juarez Stake. The stake president had, furthermore, been authorized by the First Presidency to perform plural marriages for U. S. residents with the necessary letters from Salt Lake City. In addition, for the first time since the establishment of the Canadian settlement of Mormons, the Church president authorized local Church authority to perform plural marriages there for Canadian Mormons. . . . It has often been assumed that documents still under the direct control of the First Presidency in various closed repositories were necessary to specify the details of Church authority and new polygamy after the Manifesto. Although those presently unavailable manuscripts would bring further corroboration and precision, sufficient information exists to verify the participation of Church authorities in new plural marriages from September 1890 through the end of 1904. . . . When Byron H. Allred asked for permission to marry the young woman who accompanied him to the President's office on 4 October 1890, President Woodruff patiently explained the reasons he had issued the Manifesto and then told Allred to move as soon as possible with his intended plural wife to Mexico where Alexander F. Macdonald would perform the ceremony. Anson B. Call was bold enough to come to Woodruff's own home . . . President Woodruff told him to sell all his property in the United States and move to Mexico with his intended wife. . . . Apostle Young, . . . performed at least five plural marriages there [in Mexico] when he returned in May-June 1894. Among these plural marriages was one for Franklin S. Bramwell, then a stake high councilman, who later wrote, "When I took my second wife I had a letter signed by President Woodruff himself and went to Mexico with a personal letter from Prest. George Q. Cannon." . . . In June 1897, the First Presidency authorized Juarez Stake President Anthony W. Ivins to perform polygamous ceremonies in Mexico, and in the fall President Woodruff authorized Anthon H. Lund to perform two plural marriages aboard ship, one on the Pacific Ocean and one on the Great Lakes. . . .

Circumstantial evidence indicates that Wilford Woodruff married Madame Mountford as a plural wife in 1897. . . .

In the last year of his life, Wilford Woodruff thus maintained a *public stance that was at variance with his private activities* regarding polygamy. When Protestant ministers charged the Church with allowing new plural marriages, President Woodruff wrote the editor of the Protestant newspaper that "no one has entered into plural marriage by my permission since the Manifesto was issued." . . .

The First Presidency's office not only authorized these post-Manifesto plural marriages in Mexico as performed by the presiding authority there, but also was aware of and recorded the plural marriages that visiting apostles performed in Mexico. . . . during the presidency of Lorenzo Snow in 1901, four apostles (including Brigham Young, Jr.) married plural wives . . . John W. Taylor claimed that he married two plural wives in August 1901 with the permission of the Church president; but the clearest evidence that Lorenzo Snow gave permission individually to the apostles to marry plural wives in 1901 comes from Heber J. Grant, who later wrote: "Before I went to Japan [in July 1901] my President intimated that I had better take the action needed to increase my family," and Grant's notebook indicates that President Snow gave this permission on 26 May 1901: "Temple Fast mtg—17 years since Gusta and I married—She willing to have me do my duty. & Pt Snow. . . ."

After George Q. Cannon's death in April 1901, Joseph F. Smith, as sole counselor, was one who sent prominent Mormons to Matthias F. Cowley for polygamous ceremonies; and upon Lorenzo Snow's death in October 1901, his successor Joseph F. Smith promoted and protected new polygamous marriages more actively than the two previous Church presidents.

By the fall of 1903, Joseph F. Smith had decided to expand new polygamous marriages even further. . . .

Joseph F. Smith continued the familiar pattern of denying publicly what was happening privately throughout these years. More significantly he was keeping his own counselors and half of the apostles in the dark about what he and the other half were doing to promote new polygamous marriages. . . . Joseph F. Smith divided the Church against itself and apostle against brother apostle over the question of new polygamous marriages. He did it with the best intent—to preserve "the principle" as well as to protect the institution of the Church by filling official minutes of quorum meetings with repudiations of what he was actually allowing individual Church officers to do with his authorization and blessing as Church president. This allowed plausible denial to the Church's enemies, but the policy created double definitions of authority, sanction, permission, knowledge, validity, loyalty, and truth—a wind that would begin to reap the whirlwind in 1904. (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Spring 1985, pages 56, 58-60, 62, 65, 72, 73, 90, 93, 95 and 96)

According to Professor Quinn, Heber J. Grant, who served as the seventh president of the church from 1918 until 1948, did not actually go through with the plural marriage which President Snow suggested that he enter into on May 26, 1901 (*Ibid.*, page 73). Grant did,

however, have problems with the law after the Manifesto. In 1899—nine years after Woodruff's Manifesto—he was convicted of unlawful cohabitation (see the *Daily Tribune*, September 9, 1899). In 1903 Heber J. Grant had to flee the country to avoid being arrested. According to the testimony of Charles Mostyn Owen, Grant had been boasting about his relationship "with two women as his wives." Mr. Owen "went before the county attorney and swore to an information for him, and a warrant was issued on that information." Before Grant could be arrested, "He left suddenly on the night of the 10th of November last year—1903." Owen said that Grant had gone to England and was still there while the Smoot investigation was going on (see *Reed Smoot Case*, vol. 2, pages 401-402).

As we have shown, D. Michael Quinn maintains that Joseph F. Smith was more actively involved in promoting polygamy after the Manifesto than the other presidents of the church. Professor Quinn has put forth a devastating case against President Smith. This is very interesting because Joseph F. Smith emphatically denied in his testimony given in the Reed Smoot Case that polygamy was ever approved by church leaders after the Manifesto:

Mr. SMITH. . . . It has been the continuous and conscientious practice and rule of the church ever since the manifesto to observe that manifesto with regard to plural marriages; and from that time till to-day *there has never been, to my knowledge, a plural marriage* performed in accordance with the understanding, instruction, connivance, counsel, or permission of the presiding authorities of the church, or of the church, in any shape or form; and I know whereof I speak, gentlemen, in relation to that matter. (*Reed Smoot Case*, vol. 1, page 129)

The CHAIRMAN. . . . You have said that you know of no instance of plural marriages since 1890?

Mr. SMITH. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. Will you state whether you have performed any plural marriages outside the State of Utah?

Mr. SMITH. No, sir; I never have.

THE CHAIRMAN. Either in Mexico or—

Mr. SMITH. Nowhere on earth sir.

The CHAIRMAN. Do you know of any such?

Mr. SMITH. No, sir; I do not. (*Ibid.*, page 177)

If the Committee on Privileges and Elections had possessed the documentation which Dr. Quinn has compiled, Joseph F. Smith would probably have been prosecuted for perjury. On page 98 of his article, Quinn pointed out that President Smith was "risking a perjury indictment by concealing any evidence detrimental to the

Church as an institution or to any individual (including himself) who acted in his capacity as a Church official in promoting post-Manifesto polygamy. As President Smith told another prospective witness in the Smoot case, ‘We should consider the interests of the Church rather than our own.’”

Although the Senators felt that President Smith was not telling the truth, they also knew that it would be very difficult to prosecute him since he had control over most of the witnesses. Professor Quinn has found evidence that Joseph F. Smith did, in fact, obstruct the investigation by the Committee on Privileges and Elections just as the report had charged:

. . . Joseph F. Smith throughout 1904 maintained that despite his best efforts, the subpoenaed apostles were either too ill or too recalcitrant to testify in the Smoot investigation.

It is far more probable, however, that the Church president did not want the Senate to question anyone who had married and fathered children by post-Manifesto plural wives. . . . President Smith told Apostle [Abraham Owen] Woodruff midway through April conference, “You would not be a good witness,” [and] advised him to “stay in retirement” to avoid subpoena in Utah, and to prepare immediately to preside over the LDS mission in Germany. . . . Five days after he presented the second Manifesto, Joseph F. Smith instructed California Mission President Joseph E. Robinson to move his two post-Manifesto plural wives and their children from Salt Lake City to Mexico to avoid a subpoena.

A plural wife of John W. Taylor later provided the background to the letters her husband and Apostle Cowley sent to Joseph F. Smith about refusing to testify before the Senate Committee. “He received two contradictory letters in the mail, for him to sign and return. One said he would go to Washington, and the other said he would *not* go to Washington. Nellie cried: ‘John, you don’t intend to place yourself in a trap by signing both those letters, do you?’ He pointed at the signature of President Joseph F. Smith and said, ‘I will do what my Prophet orders me to do.’” President Smith used the letter for each man he felt the circumstances of April 1904 required. . . . President Smith sent George Teasdale to Mexico to avoid testifying. The apostle chafed at this forced exile, and President Smith relented enough to have George F. Gibbs notify Teasdale in August 1904 that he and Apostle Cowley could leave Mexico and speak at three stake conferences in Arizona, provided that the local stake authorities did not publish any reference to their visit in the *Deseret News* or local papers and that they provide no information on their itinerary. (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Spring 1985, pages 100-101)

Joseph F. Smith, the sixth president of the church, not only had the power to avoid being indicted for perjury, but was also able to escape prosecution in Utah for many years. It was sixteen years after the Manifesto was issued when President Smith was finally convicted of unlawful cohabitation. The church’s *Deseret Evening News*, for November 23, 1905, reported: “. . . President Smith appeared forthwith and entered a plea of guilty and was fined three hundred dollars. The fine was promptly paid and the defendant discharged.”

### A Trail of Dishonesty

The Mormon Apostle John A. Widtsoe once boasted: “The Church ever operates in full light. There is no secrecy about its doctrine, aim, or work” (*Evidences and Reconciliations*, single-volume edition, page 282). On page 226 of the same book, Apostle Widtsoe commented: “From the beginning of its history the Church has opposed unsupported beliefs. It has fought half-truth and untruth.” Widtsoe’s statements can hardly be supported by the existing facts. Untruth and secrecy were used by the church leaders to cover up polygamy. D. Michael Quinn has discovered that in just “thirteen and a half years” after the Manifesto, when the leaders of the church were deeply involved in secretly promoting the practice of polygamy, “the First Presidency individually or as a unit published twenty-four denials that any new plural marriages were being performed” (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Spring, 1985, page 9).

A careful examination of Mormon history reveals that this pattern of dishonesty stemmed from Joseph Smith himself. Smith always publicly denied the practice, and as we have already shown, he was even willing to perform a fake excommunication to hide the practice. Under the date of May 3, 1844, the *History of the Church*, vol. 6, page 411, reported that Joseph Smith responded as follows to the accusation that he “kept six or seven young females as wives”:

What a thing it is for a man to be accused of committing adultery, and having *seven wives*, when *I can only find one*.

I am the same man, and as innocent as I was fourteen years ago; and I can prove them all perjurers.

In his article in *Dialogue*, page 21, D. Michael Quinn noted that Joseph Smith has “more than thirty plural wives” at the time he made this denial. We have previously cited a notice printed in the *Times and Seasons* in which both Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum, who was a member of the First Presidency of the church,

signed a statement saying Hiram Brown had been cut off from the church for “preaching polygamy, and other false and corrupt doctrines.” The next month, Hyrum Smith wrote the following for the *Times and Seasons* (March 15, 1844, vol. 5, page 474):

. . . brother Richard Hewitt . . . states to me that some of your elders say, that a man having a certain priesthood, may have as many wives as he pleases, and that doctrine is taught here: I say unto you that that man teaches false doctrines, for there is no such doctrine taught; neither is there any such thing practiced here. And any man that is found teaching privately or publicly any such doctrine, is culpable, and will stand a chance to be brought before the High Council, and lose his license and membership . . .

The article on marriage, which was published in the early editions of the *Doctrine and Covenants* was frequently used by the early Mormon church to counteract the report that polygamy was being practiced. On September 1, 1842, this statement appeared in the *Times and Seasons* (vol. 3, page 909):

Inasmuch as the public mind has been unjustly abused . . . we make an extract on the subject of marriage, showing the rule of the church on this important matter. The extract is from the Book of Doctrine and Covenants, and is the only rule allowed in the church.

“. . . Inasmuch as this church of Christ has been reproached with the crime of fornication, and polygamy; we declare that we believe, that one man should have one wife; and one woman, but one husband, . . .”

In volume 4, page 143, of the *Times and Seasons*, we find the following: “We are charged with advocating a plurality of wives, and common property. Now this is as false as the many other ridiculous charges which are brought against us. No sect have [*sic*] a greater reverence for the laws of matrimony, or the rights of private property, and we do what others do not, practice what we preach.” In the *Latter-Day Saints’ Millennial Star*, vol. 3, page 74, the following denial appeared:

But, for the information of those who may be assailed by those foolish tales about two wives, we would say that no such principle ever existed among the Latter-Day Saints, and never will; . . . the Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and also all our periodicals are very strict on that subject, indeed far more so than the bible.

After Joseph Smith’s death the denials of polygamy continued to come forth in Mormon publications. When someone stated that Joseph Smith taught polygamy, the *Latter-Day Saints’ Millennial Star* (vol. 12, pages 29-30) called it a lie:

12th Lie — Joseph Smith taught a system of polygamy.

12th Refutation. — The Revelations given through Joseph Smith, state the following: . . . “We believe that one man should have one wife.” *Doctrine and Covenants*, page 331.

As late as 1850 John Taylor, who became the third president of the church, denied that the Mormons believed in the practice of plural marriage:

We are accused here of polygamy, . . . and actions the most indelicate, obscene, and disgusting, such that none but a corrupt and depraved heart could have contrived. These things are too outrageous to admit of belief; . . . I shall content myself by reading our views of chastity and marriage, from a work published by us containing some of the articles of our Faith. “Doctrine and Covenants,” page 330 . . . Inasmuch as this Church of Jesus Christ has been reproached with the crime of fornication and polygamy, we declare that we believe that one man should have one wife, and one woman but one husband, except in the case of death, . . .” (A tract published by John Taylor in 1850, page 8; found in *Orson Pratt’s Works*, 1851 edition)

On page 23 of his article in *Dialogue*, Dr. Quinn revealed that John Taylor had twelve wives when he made this denial: “By this date in 1850, John Taylor had married twelve polygamous wives who had already borne him eight children.”

In his book, *Joseph Smith—Seeker After Truth*, 1951, page 324, Apostle John A. Widtsoe insisted that “The record of Joseph’s life is one of honesty. He taught honesty in all affairs; he insisted that his people be honest; . . .” It does not take much research to show that these statements concerning Joseph Smith are completely false. He not only deceived his own wife about polygamy, but was willing to go to almost any length to keep some of his own followers in the dark concerning what he really believed. Those who were close to him seem to have picked up his deceptive ways. Consequently, the record of at least the first six presidents of the church is filled with duplicity. Even though it is not as evident today, it still persists among some of the leaders of the church. For example, in *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* pages 242-243, we present uncontradictable evidence that John Taylor, the third president of the church, gave a revelation on September 27, 1886, in which the Lord was supposed to have told him that the law concerning plural marriage could never be changed: “Thus saith the Lord . . . how can I revoke an everlasting covenant; for I the Lord am everlasting & my everlasting covenants cannot be abrogated nor done away with; but they stand forever. . . . I have not revoked this law *nor will I for it is everlasting* . . .” Later church leaders not only suppressed this revelation, but they even denied its



He comes to tell your honorable body, that the temple your fathers erected to freedom, whither their sons assembled to hear her precepts and cherish her doctrines in their hearts, has been desecrated; its portals closed, so that those that go up thither, are forbidden to enter.

He comes to tell your honorable body, that the blood of the heroes and patriots of the revolution, who have been slain by wicked hands for enjoying their religious rights, the boon of heaven to man, has cried, and is crying in the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth, saying, 'redress, redress our wrongs, O Lord God of the whole earth.'

He comes to tell your honorable body, that the dying groans of infant innocence, and the shrieks of insulted and abused females—and many of them widows of revolutionary patriots have ascended up into the ears of Omnipotence, and are registered in the archives of eternity, to be had in the day of retribution, as a testimony against the whole nation, unless their cries and groans are heard by the representatives of the people, and ample redress made, as far as the nation can make it, or else the wrath of the Almighty will come down in fury against the whole nation.

Under all these circumstances, your memorialist prays to be heard by your honorable body, touching all the matters of his memorial; and as a memorial will be presented to congress this session, for redress of our grievance, he prays your honorable body will instruct the whole delegation of Pennsylvania, in both houses, to use all their influence in the national councils, to have redress granted.

And, as in duty bound, your memorialist will ever pray.

SIDNEY RIGDON, P. M.

## TIMES AND SEASONS.

CITY OF NAUVOO,

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 1844.

### NOTICE.

As we have lately been credibly informed, that an Elder of the Church of Jesus Christ, of Latter-day Saints, by the name of Hiram Brown, has been preaching Polygamy, and other false and corrupt doctrines, in the county of Lapeer, state of Michigan.

This is to notify him and the Church in general, that he has been cut off from the church, for his iniquity; and he is further notified to appear at the Special Conference, on the 6th

of April next, to make answer to these charges.  
JOSEPH SMITH,  
HYRUM SMITH,  
Presidents of said Church.

### THE GATHERING.

(Continued.)

Jared and his brother, together with the families that were with them, and their several offsprings, were greatly blessed of God, for a length of time upon this continent; they prospered exceedingly. They were blessed with communion with the Lord, with revelations, visions, faith wisdom, and in all temporal blessings they became a great people. But when they transgressed the laws of God, the curse of Jehovah fell upon them, and they were swept from the face of the earth, according to the word of the Lord.

Abraham was made use of, he was selected and chosen as a peculiar personage, to whom God would commit his laws and ordinances, and to his seed after him, and in order that he might accomplish his purposes, he gave unto him, the land of Canaan as his inheritance, that he might be selected and set apart from all other nations; and this was the only principle upon which God could teach him his law, and establish the priesthood. It is true, that Abraham obtained it by faith, but then if he had not possessed faith, he would not have been a fit personage for the Lord to select, through whom he could communicate his will, and preserve a chosen seed upon the earth. Abraham, through a long train of afflictions, and in many trials, had proven his unflinching integrity and faithfulness to God, for many years, and when the Lord saw that he was a proper person to exalt, he said unto him, 'get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee, and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and curse them that curse thee, and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.' And when Abraham had journeyed to the place appointed, 'the Lord appeared unto him and said: unto thy seed will I give this land,' and he afterwards entered into a covenant with Abraham, saying, 'unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates. The Kenites, and the Kennizites, and the Kadmonites, and the Hittites, and the Perrizites, and the Rophaines, and the Ammorites, and the Canaanites, and the Girgashites, and the Jebustites.'

That land was given unto Abraham, and unto his seed, for an everlasting inheritance, and Isaac, and Jacob were heirs with him, of the same promise. The land was allotted unto the

The voice of reason, the voice of humanity, the voice of the nation, and the voice of heaven seem to say to the honest and virtuous, throughout the State of Missouri; *Wash yourselves, make you clean, lest your negligence should be taken by the world, from the mass of facts before it, that you are guilty!* Let there be one unison of hearts for justice, and when you reflect around your own firesides, remember that fifteen thousand, once among you, now not, but who are just as much entitled to the privileges and blessings you enjoy as yourselves; like the widow before the unjust judge, are fervently praying for their rights. When you meditate upon the massacre at Hawn's mill, forget not that the constitution of your state holds this broad truth to the world: that none shall "be deprived of life, liberty, or property, but by the judgment of his peers, or the law of the land." And when you assemble together in towns, counties or districts, whether to petition your legislature to pay the damage the saints have sustained in your state, by reason of oppression, and misguided zeal; or to restore them to their rights according to republican principles and benevolent designs, reflect, and make honorable, or annihilate, such state law as was in force in your state, in 1838; viz: "If twelve or more persons shall combine to levy war against any part of the people of this state, or to remove forcibly out of the state, or from their habitations, evidenced by taking arms and assembling to accomplish such purpose, every person so offending shall be punished by imprisonment in the penitentiary for a period not exceeding five years, or by a fine not exceeding five thousand dollars: and imprisonment in the county jail not exceeding six months."

Finally, if honor dignifies an honest people; if virtue exalts a community; if wisdom guides great men; if principle governs intelligent beings; if humanity spreads comfort among the needy; and if religion affords consolation by showing that charity is the first, best and sweetest token of perfect love: then, O ye good people of Missouri, like the woman in scripture who had lost one of her ten pieces of silver, arise, search diligently till you find the lost piece, and then make a feast and call in your friends for joy.

With due consideration

I am the friend of

all good men,

JOSEPH SMITH.

Nauvoo, Ill., March 8, 1844.

Nauvoo, March 15, 1844.

To the brethren of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latterday Saints, living on China Creek, in

Hancock County, Greeting:—Whereas brother Richard Hewitt has called on me to-day, to know my views concerning some doctrines that are preached in your place, and states to me that some of your elders say, that a man having a certain priesthood, may have as many wives as he pleases, and that doctrine is taught here: I say unto you that that man teaches false doctrine, for there is no such doctrine taught here; neither is there any such thing practised here. And any man that is found teaching privately or publicly any such doctrine, is culpable, and will stand a chance to be brought before the High Council, and lose his license and membership also: therefore he had better beware what he is about.

And again I say unto you, an elder has no business to undertake to preach mysteries in any part of the world, for God has commanded us all to preach nothing but the first principles unto the world. Neither has any elder any authority to preach any mysterious thing to any branch of the church unless he has a direct commandment from God to do so. Let the matter of the grand councils of heaven, and the making of gods, worlds, and devils entirely alone: for you are not called to teach any such doctrine—for neither you nor the people are capacitated to understand any such principles—less so to teach them. For when God commands men to teach such principles the saints will receive them. Therefore beware what you teach! for the mysteries of God are not given to all men; and unto those to whom they are given they are placed under restrictions to impart only such as God will command them; and the residue is to be kept in a faithful breast, otherwise he will be brought under condemnation. By this God will prove his faithful servants, who will be called and numbered with the chosen.

And as to the celestial glory, all will enter in and possess that kingdom that obey the gospel, and continue in faith in the Lord unto the end of his days. Now, therefore, I say unto you, you must cease preaching your miraculous things, and let the mysteries alone until by and by. Preach faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; repentance and baptism for the remission of sins; the laying on of the hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost: teaching the necessity of strict obedience unto these principles; reasoning out of the scriptures; proving them unto the people. Cease your schisms and divisions, and your contentions. Humble yourselves as in dust and ashes, lest God should make you an example of his wrath unto the surrounding world. Amen.

In the bonds of the everlasting covenant,

I am

Your obedient servant,

HYRUM SMITH.

A photograph from the *Times and Seasons*, vol. 5, page 423. Hiram Brown was cut off from the church for teaching polygamy and other "false and corrupt doctrines."

Another photograph from the *Times and Seasons*, vol. 5, page 474. Hyrum Smith, who was Joseph Smith's brother and a member of the First Presidency, called polygamy a "false doctrine."

existence. These denials continue right up to the present time. In his University of Utah Senior Honors Project Summary, “The New Mormon History,” pages 76-77, Richard Stephen Marshall quoted both Reed Durham and Max Parkin, two of the top scholars in the LDS Church, as saying that the leaders of the church have not told the truth about the 1886 revelation:

The official Church position on the 1886 revelation is that it never was given and does not exist. . . . [Mark E.] Petersen’s book calls the 1886 revelation spurious. Historical evidence would seem to indicate, in contradiction to the book, that the revelation was given and is at present moment contained in the Church archives.

Reed Durham told this writer that it is “an out and out lie” to say that the 1886 revelation does not exist. He said, “I could stand before the Bar of God and prove that revelation was given. I have minutes of the meetings of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles referring to it.”

While Durham calls it an “out and out lie” to deny the revelation was given, Max Parkin, one of his colleagues calls it a “lie of expediency.” He says that the mandate to carry the gospel, as taught by the Church, to all the nations of the world, is compelling to the degree that historical doctrines which could prove embarrassing to the Church, and thus hinder missionary work, are better covered or disavowed.

One page 105 of his article in *Dialogue*, Professor Quinn mentioned:

. . . the saga of new plural marriages among the Mormons continued after 1904. It does not take a very close reading of the First Presidency letter of October 1904 to realize that it rescinded only authorizations given by Presidents Woodruff and Snow to seal marriages out of the temple and did not mention any similar authorizations given by Joseph F. Smith. And so the ambiguity persisted, enough to allow certain General Authorities in the next three years to make fewer than ten exceptions to what was now almost a universal ban on new polygamy.

President Joseph F. Smith issued what is known as the “Second Manifesto” on April 6, 1904. This document claimed that since the Manifesto given in 1890, no plural marriages “have been solemnized with the sanction, consent or knowledge of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints” (*Ibid.*, page 10). Although President Smith’s statement is certainly untruthful, the Smoot investigation put a great deal of pressure on the church leaders and they ceased performing new plural marriages. Unfortunately, however, the insincerity of the Mormon leaders after the Manifesto left such a credibility gap that many Mormons continued to hold to polygamy even after the church withdrew its support of the practice. Like Joseph Smith, they secretly entered into polygamy, and

even though the Mormon church excommunicated a large number of them, the movement did not die out. Consequently, almost a century after Wilford Woodruff issued the Manifesto, there are thousands of people who are still practicing polygamy in Utah. The Mormon writer John J. Stewart observed that “Satan is exploiting the doctrine and history of plural marriage in our church by persuading many men and women to rebel against current Church policy on the matter and thus forfeit their membership in the Church . . . apostate sects are mushrooming throughout Mormondom in greater numbers than ever before, with the basic doctrine that plural marriage must be lived regardless of what the Church policy is” (*Brigham Young and His Wives*, page 15). On December 27, 1965, the *New York Times* reported that as “many as 30,000 men, women and children live in families in which polygamy is practiced.” In 1966 the Mormon writer Leonard J. Arrington claimed that this was a “far-fetched estimate.” The following year, however, Ben Merson reported:

“Today in Utah,” declares William M. Rogers, former special assistant to the State Attorney General, “there are more polygamous families than in the days of Brigham Young. At least 30,000 men, women and children in this state are now living in plural households—and the number is rapidly increasing.” Thousands now live in the adjoining states of Idaho, Nevada, Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico and Arizona—plus sizable populations in Oregon, California, Canada and Mexico. (*Ladies’ Home Journal*, June 1967, page 78)

Because they claim to go back to the fundamental doctrines of Mormonism, those who believe in practicing polygamy today are usually known as Mormon “Fundamentalists.”

### **Adjusting to a Change in Doctrine**

Notwithstanding Hugh Nibley’s claim that the Mormon church has never had to change “any part of its doctrine in the last hundred years,” it is evident to anyone who investigates the matter that there has been a major doctrinal revision with regard to polygamy. John Taylor, the third president of the church, once declared: “. . . we are not ashamed . . . to declare that we are polygamists . . . that we are firm, conscientious believers in polygamy, and that it is a part and parcel of our religious creed” (*Life of John Taylor*, page 255). We have already shown that President Brigham Young stressed: “The only men who become Gods, even the Sons of God, are those who enter into polygamy” (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 11, page 269). On another occasion Brigham Young became so zealous to establish polygamy that he declared that a man who would not enter into polygamy would have his wife taken from him in the resurrection and given to another.

Now, where a man in this church says, "I don't want but one wife, I will live my religion with one," he will perhaps be saved in the Celestial kingdom; but when he gets there he *will not find himself in possession of any wife at all*. He has had a talent that he has hid up. He will come forward and say, "Here is that which thou gavest me, I have not wasted it, and here is the one talent," and he will not enjoy it but it *will be taken and given to those who have improved the talents they received*, and he will find himself *without any wife*, and he will remain *single forever and ever*. (*Deseret News*, September 17, 1873)

The reader will remember also that in the *Reed Smoot Case*, vol. 1, page 18, the Mormon leaders freely acknowledged that until 1890 they taught that polygamy was essential for exaltation:

We, the first presidency and apostles . . . respectfully represent to Your Excellency the following facts: We formerly taught to our people that polygamy or celestial marriage as commanded by God through Joseph Smith was right; that it was a necessity to man's highest exaltation in the life to come.

Today the Mormon leaders teach that "Plural marriage is not essential to salvation or exaltation" (Statement by Bruce R. McConkie in *Mormon Doctrine*, 1979, page 578). Apostle McConkie went on to state: "All 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." In an early printing of his book (1958), Apostle McConkie went much further in condemning those who were currently practicing polygamy: "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" (page 523).

The Mormon leaders find themselves in a very strange situation. On the one hand, they have to uphold polygamy as a righteous principle, but on the other, they have to discourage members of the church from actually entering into its practice. If they completely repudiated the doctrine of polygamy, they would be admitting that Joseph Smith was a deceiver, that the church was founded on fraud, and they would have to abandon Section 132 of the *Doctrine and Covenants*. If, however, they openly preached and defended the doctrine, many people would probably enter into the practice and bring disgrace upon the church. Their position is about the same as a person saying, "My church believes in water baptism, but we are not allowed to practice it." Because of this peculiar dilemma, church officials prefer that there is not much discussion of plural marriage.

The state of confusion the Mormon leaders find themselves in with regard to polygamy is well illustrated by the comments of Apostle McConkie in the 1958 printing of *Mormon Doctrine*. In the same statement he said that God commanded "his ancient saints to practice plural marriage"; that "Millions of those who entered this order have, in and through it, gained for themselves eternal exaltation in the highest heaven of the celestial world"; that Joseph Smith and other Mormon leaders entered into practice "in all virtue and purity of heart"; that "the holy practice will commence again after the Second Coming of the Son of Man and the ushering in of the millennium"; yet, in spite of all this, those who enter into polygamy today are "living in adultery," have "sold their souls to Satan," and "will be damned in eternity" (pages 522-523).

Is it any wonder that many Mormon people are confused over the practice of polygamy? They are taught that the Prophet Joseph Smith and the six men who followed him as president of the church entered into plural marriage in "virtue and purity of heart," yet they are warned that if they follow their example they will be living in "adultery."

Like Apostle McConkie, the Mormon writer John J. Stewart speaks of Christ's "millennial reign, when the Gospel in its fulness including plural marriage, will be lived by worthy members of the Church" (*Brigham Young and His Wives*, page 73). As we have already shown, two of the last four presidents of the church have publicly expressed that they are looking forward to living in polygamy in heaven. Since the Mormon people are taught that polygamy was right in Joseph Smith's time and that it will be practiced in heaven, is it any wonder that many of them are entering into the practice today? As long as the Mormon leaders continue to publish Joseph Smith's revelation on polygamy (*Doctrine and Covenants*, Section 132), there will, no doubt, be many people who will enter into the practice. They cannot completely repudiate this revelation, however, without destroying their doctrine concerning temple marriage because the two doctrines were revealed in the same revelation. (Temple marriage, of, course, is the marriage of a man and woman for time and all eternity in a secret ritual performed only in a Mormon temple.)

The fact that polygamy and temple marriage stand or fall together was made very clear by Charles Penrose, who was later sustained as first counselor in the First Presidency, at a conference in Centerville, Utah: "Elder Charles W. Penrose . . . showed that the revelation . . . was [the] only one published on Celestial Marriage, and *if the doctrine of plural marriage was repudiated so must the glorious principle of marriage for eternity, the two being indissolubly interwoven with each other*" (*Millennial Star*, vol. 45, page 454). Apostle Orson Pratt

argued that “if plurality of marriage is not true or in other words, if a man has no divine right to marry two wives or more in this world, then marriage for eternity is not true, and your faith is in vain, and all the sealing ordinances and powers pertaining to marriages for eternity are vain, worthless, good for nothing; for as sure as one is true the other also must be true” (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 21, page 296). Apostle Teasdale also testified: “I bear my solemn testimony that plural marriage . . . is a necessity, and that the Church of Christ in its fulness never existed without it. Where you have *the eternity of marriage you are bound to have plural marriage*; bound to; and it is one of the marks of the Church of Jesus Christ in its sealing ordinances” (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 25, page 21).

Although the LDS Church no longer sanctions polygamy on earth, in Mormon doctrine all women who marry for eternity in the temple have to face the possibility that they could end up living in polygamy in heaven without their consent. If the wife should die before the husband, he is allowed to be sealed to another woman for eternity. The woman, however, is not allowed to be sealed to two husbands for eternity. Joseph Fielding Smith, who became the tenth president of the church, explained how the rules of the temple discriminate against women: “When a man and a woman are married in the temple for time and all eternity, and then the man dies and the woman marries another man, she can be married to him for time only” (*Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 2, page 78).

At any rate, the Mormon apologist John J. Stewart made it very clear that although the church does not allow a man to practice polygamy at the present time, the doctrine of plural marriage is still an “integral part of LDS scripture”:

. . . the Church’s strictness in excommunicating those advocating and practicing plural marriage today has apparently been misconstrued by not a few loyal Church members as an acknowledgement that the evil falsehoods . . . and other misconceptions about plural marriage, are true, and that the Church’s near silence on the doctrine today is further evidence that it regrets and is embarrassed by the whole matter of plural marriage. Such an inference is, of course, unjustified and unrealistic. The Church has never, and certainly will never, renounce this doctrine. The revelation on plural marriage is still an integral part of LDS scripture, and always will be. If a woman, sealed to her husband for time and eternity, precedes her husband in death, it is his privilege to marry another also for time and eternity, providing that he is worthy of doing so. Consider, for instance, the case of President Joseph Fielding Smith . . . one of the greatest men upon earth. Both his grandfather Patriarch Hyrum Smith, a brother of the Prophet, and his father, President Joseph F. Smith, lived plural marriage, . . . After the death of his first wife President Joseph Fielding Smith married another, and each of these good women are sealed to him for time and all eternity. (*Brigham Young and His Wives*, pages 14-15)

## 4. New Revelation Regarding Blacks

In 1978 the LDS Church announced that the Prophet Spencer W. Kimball had received a revelation which opened up the priesthood to blacks. The change of the so-called “anti-black doctrine” was probably the most significant doctrinal change the church has made in the twentieth century.

The doctrine which the Mormon leaders used to teach concerning blacks was clearly set forth in a letter written by the First Presidency in 1947:

From the days of the Prophet Joseph even until now, it has been the doctrine of the Church, never questioned by any of the Church leaders, that the Negroes are not entitled to the full blessings of the Gospel. (Letter from the First Presidency of the Mormon Church, July 17, 1947, as cited in *Mormonism and the Negro*, by John J. Stewart, 1960, pages 46-47.

Bruce R. McConkie, who later served as an Apostle in the church, made this statement in 1958:

Negroes in this life are denied the priesthood; under no circumstances can they hold this delegation of authority from the Almighty. . . . The gospel message of salvation is not carried affirmatively to them . . .

The negroes are not equal with other races where the receipt of certain spiritual blessings are concerned, particularly the priesthood and the temple blessings that flow therefrom, but this inequality is not of man’s origin. It is the Lord’s doing. . . . (*Mormon Doctrine*, 1958, page 477)

After the anti-black doctrine was altered, Apostle McConkie’s book was revised to reflect the change of doctrine (see 1979 printing, page 529).

In 1966 Wallace Turner, a correspondent for the *New York Times*, explained what it meant to be denied the priesthood:

The Negro Mormon can hold no office whatsoever in a church which offers some office to every one of its male members at some time in his life. A gray-haired Negro Mormon who may have spent his adult life in careful practice of all the complicated and demanding rules set down by the LDS Church stands disenfranchised before the altar where a youth whose beard is just beginning to fuzz may preside. A twelve-year-old boy may become a member of the Aaronic priesthood, more than this Negro man has been able to achieve through a lifetime of devotion. To hold any church office, a Mormon must be a member of the priesthood. (*The Mormon Establishment*, pages 243-244)

Blacks were also forbidden the right to participate in the temple endowment ceremonies—a very important part of the Mormon religion.

Mormon theology has always taught that a black skin is a sign of God’s displeasure. This teaching comes directly from Joseph Smith’s Book of Mormon. In 2 Nephi 5:21 we read of a people being cursed with a black skin: “And he had caused the *cursing* to come upon them, yea, even a sore cursing, because of their iniquity . . . wherefore, as they were white, and exceeding fair and delightful, that they might not be enticing unto my people the Lord God did cause *a skin of blackness to come upon them.*” In Alma 3:6 we read: “And the skins of the Lamanites were dark, according to the mark which was set upon their fathers, which was a curse upon them because of *their transgression . . .*”

Joseph Smith taught that the Lamanites eventually destroyed the white-skinned people (Nephites) and that the American Indians are the descendants of the ancient Lamanites. In his Book of Moses, Joseph Smith told of a group of people in the Old World who were cursed with a black skin: “For behold the Lord shall curse the land with much heat, . . . and there was a blackness came upon all the children of Canaan, that they were despised among all people” (*Pearl of Great Price*, Book of Moses 7:8).

Joseph Smith taught that the “Negroes” are the “sons of Cain” (*History of the Church*, vol. 4, page 501). Mormon leaders are taught that “As a result of his rebellion, Cain was cursed with a dark skin; he became the father of the Negroes, and those spirits who are not worthy to receive the priesthood are born through his lineage” (*Mormon Doctrine*, 1958, page 102). Brigham Young asserted: “Cain slew his brother. . . . and the Lord put a mark upon him, which is a flat nose and black skin” (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 7, page 290). The church’s publication, *Juvenile Instructor*, vol. 26, page 635, printed the following: “. . . the mark which was set upon the descendants of Cain was a skin of blackness, . . . in fact, it has been noticed in our day that men who have lost the Spirit of the Lord, and from whom His blessings have been withdrawn, have turned dark to such an extent as to excite the comments of all who have known them.”

Joseph Fielding Smith, who became the tenth president of the church in 1970, noted: “Not only was Cain called upon to suffer, but because of his wickedness he *became the father of an inferior race*” (*The Way to Perfection*, page 101). On the following page Smith stated that the “negro brethren” have a black covering *emblematical of eternal darkness.*”

John Taylor, who became the third president of the church, declared that “a descendant of Cain” was allowed to come through the flood in order that “the devil” might be “properly represented upon the earth” (*Journal of*

*Discourses*, vol. 23, page 336). The Mormon leaders have taught that it was Ham's descendants who were "cursed as to the priesthood." Ham, they maintained, married a "Negro" woman named Egyptus, and the curse was continued "through Ham's wife." Bruce R. McConkie claimed that "Noah's son Ham married Egyptus, a descendant of Cain, thus preserving the Negro lineage through the flood" (*Mormon Doctrine*, page 477). McConkie's interpretation is based on Joseph Smith's Book of Abraham:

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

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

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

When this woman discovered the land it was under water, who afterward settled her sons in it; and thus, from Ham, sprang that race which *preserved the curse* in the land.

Now the first government of Egypt was established by Pharaoh, the eldest son of Egyptus, the daughter of Ham, . . .

Pharaoh, . . . judged his people wisely . . . seeking earnestly to imitate that order established by the fathers in the first generations, . . . even in the reign of Adam, and also of Noah, his father, who blessed him with the blessings of the earth, and with the blessings of wisdom, but *cursed him as pertaining to the Priesthood*. (*Pearl of Great Price*, Book of Abraham 1:21-26)

Although Mormon theology taught that anyone born with a black skin was inferior, the Negro was considered to be at the bottom of the scale and therefore could not hold the priesthood. To really understand the anti-black doctrine, however, a person must know something about the Mormon doctrine of pre-existence. One of the basic teachings of the church is that the spirit of man existed before the world was created. Joseph Smith once stated:

. . . the soul, the mind of man, the immortal spirit. All men say God created it in the beginning. The very idea lessens man in my estimations; I do not believe the doctrine, I know better . . . I am going to tell you of things more noble . . . The mind of man is as immortal as God himself. . . . God *never did have power to create the spirit of man at all*. (*Times and Seasons*, vol. 5, page 615; reprinted in *History of the Church*, vol. 6, pages 310-311)

From this doctrine of the pre-existence of the soul emerged the idea of some spirits being more noble than

others. In Joseph Smith's Book of Abraham, it was stated that Abraham was one "of the noble" spirits or "intelligences that were organized before the world was . . ." (*Pearl of Great Price*, Book of Abraham 3:22-23). The Mormon leaders teach that the "more noble" or choice spirits are born as Mormons. Apostle Pratt declared: ". . . among the Saints is the most likely place for these spirits to take their tabernacles, . . . They are sent to that people that are *the most righteous of any other people upon the earth*; . . . This is the reason the Lord is sending them here, . . . The Lord has not kept them in store . . . waiting for their bodies all this time to send them among the Hottentots, the African negroes, the idolatrous Hindoos, or any other of the fallen nations . . . They are not kept in reserve in order to come forth to receive such a degraded parentage upon the earth; . . ." (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 1, page 63). The Negro is considered to have been more unfaithful than any of the spirits who were allowed to take a body. In a letter dated April 10, 1963, President Joseph Fielding Smith said: "According to the doctrine of the church, the Negro, because of some condition of *unfaithfulness* in the spirit—or pre-existence—was *not valiant* and hence was not denied the mortal probation, but was denied the blessings of the priesthood." The noted Mormon historian B. H. Roberts revealed the following concerning the "rebellion in heaven": "Only those, however, who wickedly rebelled against God were adjudged to deserve banishment from heaven, and become the devil and his angels. Others there were, who may not have rebelled against God, and yet were *so indifferent in their support of the righteous cause* of our Redeemer, that they forfeited certain privileges . . . We have, I think, a demonstration of this in the seed of Ham . . . I believe that race is the one through which it is ordained those spirits that were not valiant in the great rebellion in heaven should come; who through their *indifference or lack of integrity to righteousness*, rendered themselves unworthy of the Priesthood and its powers, and hence it is withheld from them to this day" (*The Contributor*, vol. 6, pages 296-297).

Mormon Apostle Mark E. Petersen gave the following information concerning the doctrine of pre-existence and how it affects the various races:

Let us consider the great mercy of God for a moment. A Chinese, born in China with a dark skin, and with all the handicaps of that race seems to have little opportunity. But think of the mercy of God to Chinese people who are willing to accept the gospel. In spite of whatever they might have done in the pre-existence to justify being born over there as Chinamen, if they now, in this life, accept the gospel and live it the rest of their lives they can have the Priesthood, go to the temple and

receive endowments and sealings, and that means they can have exaltation. Isn't the mercy of God marvelous?

Think of the Negro, cursed as to the Priesthood. . . . This negro, who, in the pre-existence lived the type of life which justified the Lord in sending him to the earth in the lineage of Cain with a black skin, and possibly being born in darkest Africa—if that negro is willing when he hears the gospel to accept it, he may have many of the blessings of the gospel. In spite of all he did in the pre-existent life, the Lord is willing, if the Negro accepts the gospel with real, sincere faith, and is really converted, to give him the blessings of baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost. If the Negro is faithful all his days, he can and will enter the celestial kingdom. He will go there as a servant, but he will get celestial glory. (*Race Problems—As They Affect the Church*, Address by Apostle Mark E. Petersen at the Convention of Teachers of Religion on the College Level, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, August 27, 1954)

Because of these teachings the Mormon leaders had very strong feelings against intermarriage with blacks. Brigham Young, the second president of the church, gave this warning:

Shall I tell you the law of God in regard to the African race? If the white man who belongs to the chosen seed mixes his blood with the seed of Cain, the penalty, under the law of God, is death on the spot. This will always be so. (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 10, page 110)

One reason the Mormon leaders were so opposed to intermarriage was that they taught a single drop of “Negro blood” would prevent a person from holding the priesthood. President Brigham Young made this emphatic declaration: “Any man having one drop of the seed of Cain in him cannot receive the priesthood; . . . (*Wilford Woodruff*, by Matthias F. Cowley, page 351, as cited in *That Ye May Not Be Deceived*, page 8). Apostle Mark E. Petersen expressed the church’s concern:

We must not inter-marry with the Negro, Why? If I were to marry a Negro woman and have children by her, my children would all be cursed as to the Priesthood. Do I want my children cursed as to the priesthood? If there is one drop of Negro blood in my children, as I have read to you, they receive the curse. There isn't any argument, therefore, as to inter-marriage with the Negro, is there? There are 50 million Negroes in the United States. If they were to achieve complete absorption with the white race, think what that would do. With 50 million Negroes inter-married with us, where would the Priesthood be? Who could hold it, in all America? Think what that would do to the work of the Church! (*Race Problems—As They Affect the Church*, August 27, 1954)

Outwardly the Mormon doctrine concerning the blacks seemed to be firm and absolute. In *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* however, we gave evidence to show “that some people with Negro blood are being ordained to the priesthood.” We also marshalled a great deal of evidence to show that the doctrine was both unscriptural as well as unsound. We showed, for instance, that the doctrine had its roots in prejudice. While toward the end of his life Joseph Smith mentioned setting the slaves free, he was basically a racist at the time he produced the Book of Abraham. In an article Joseph Smith wrote for the *Messenger and Advocate* (reprinted in the *History of the Church*), he indicated that he favored the practice of slavery and was very opposed to abolitionists:

. . . I fear that the sound might go out, that “an Abolitionist” had held forth several times to this community, . . . I am aware that many, who profess to preach the Gospel, complain against their brethren of the same faith, who reside in the South, and are ready to withdraw the hand of fellowship, because they will not renounce the principle of slavery, . . . I do not believe that the people of the North have any more right to say that the South *shall not* hold slaves, than the South have to say the North shall. . . . the first mention we have of slavery is found in the Holy Bible, . . . it remains as a lasting monument of the decree of Jehovah, to the shame and confusion of all who have cried out against the South in consequence of their holding the sons of Ham in servitude. . . . the curse is not yet taken off from the sons of Canaan, neither will be until it is affected by as great a power as caused it to come; and the people who interfere the least with the purposes of God in this matter, will come under the least condemnation before Him; and those who are determined to pursue a course, which shows an opposition, and a feverish restlessness against the decrees of the Lord, will learn, when perhaps it is too late for their own good, that God can do His own work, without the aid of those who are not dictated by His counsel. (*History of the Church*, vol. 2, pages 437-438)

In 1838 Joseph Smith was asked, “Are the Mormons abolitionists?” He replied, “No, unless delivering the people from priestcraft, and the priests from the power of Satan, should be considered abolition. But we do not believe in setting the Negro free” (*History of the Church*, vol. 3, page 29). It is clear, therefore, that Joseph Smith believed there was a curse on the sons of Ham when he wrote the portion of the Book of Abraham which indicated that the descendants of “Ham” were “cursed” as “pertaining to the Priesthood.” Unfortunately, the Mormon leaders who followed canonized the Book of Abraham in the *Pearl of Great Price*, and it became one of the four standard works of the church.

After the Mormons came to Utah, “they countenanced slavery of Negroes among them” (“A Social Survey of the Negro Population of Salt Lake City, Utah,” unpublished Master’s thesis by James Boyd Christiansen, University of Utah, pages 11-12). Christiansen also noted that “In 1850 Utah was the *only* western territory which had *Negro slaves*.” When Horace Greeley asked President Brigham Young his position on slavery, he responded: “We consider it of divine institution, and not to be abolished until the curse pronounced on Ham shall have been removed from his descendants” (*History of Utah*, by A. L. Neff, page 618). Young went so far as to predict that the Civil War would not free the slaves:

Ham will continue to be servant of servants, as the Lord decreed, until the curse is removed. Will the present struggle free the slave? No; but they are now wasting away the black race by thousands. . . .

Treat the slaves kindly and let them live, for Ham must be the servant of servants until the curse is removed. Can you destroy the decrees of the Almighty? You cannot. Yet our Christian brethren think that they are going to overthrow the sentence of the Almighty upon the seed of Ham. They cannot do that, though they may kill them by thousands and tens of thousands. (*Millennial Star*, vol. 25, page 787)

Because of their belief that the blacks were cursed by God, the Mormon leaders found it very difficult to believe that civil rights were desirable. In 1954, Apostle Mark E. Petersen argued that segregation should be preserved:

Now lets talk segregation again for a few moments. Was segregation a wrong principle? When the Lord chose the nations to which the spirits were to come, determining that some would be Japanese and some would be Chinese and some Negroes and some Americans, He engaged in an act of segregation. . . .

Who placed the Negroes originally in darkest Africa? Was it some man, or was it God? And when He placed them there, He segregated them. . . . At least in the cases of the Lamanites and the Negroes we have the definite word of the Lord Himself that He placed a dark skin upon them as a curse . . . He forbade intermarriage with them under of extension of the curse (2 Nephi 5:21). And He certainly segregated the descendants of Cain when He cursed the Negro as to the Priesthood, and drew an absolute line. You may even say He dropped an Iron curtain there. . . .

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? It reminds me of the scripture on marriage, “what God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.” Only here we have the reverse of the thing—what God hath separated, let not man bring together again. (*Race Problems—As They Affect the Church*, August 27, 1954)

Ezra Taft Benson, the thirteenth president of the church, openly opposed the civil rights movement in the 1960s. The church’s newspaper, *Deseret News*, December 14, 1963, reported:

Former agriculture secretary Ezra Taft Benson charged Friday night that the civil rights movement in the South had been “fomented almost entirely by the Communists.”

Elder Benson, a member of the Council of the Twelve of the Church . . . said in a speech at a public meeting here that the whole civil rights movement was “phony.”

### Pressure Brings Revelation

During the 1960s and 1970s a great deal of pressure was put on the LDS Church to abandon the anti-black doctrine. This pressure came from both members and non-members of the church. In 1967, Interior Secretary Stewart Udall wrote a letter which was published in *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Summer 1967, pages 5-6. Udall, who is himself a Mormon, urged the church to change the doctrine concerning blacks:

It was inevitable that national attention would be focused on what critics have called the “anti-Negro doctrine” of the L.D.S. Church. As the Church becomes increasingly an object of national interest, this attention is certain to intensify. . . .

This issue must be resolved . . . It must be resolved because we are wrong and it is past time when we should have seen the right. A failure to act here is sure to demean our faith, damage the minds and morals of our youth, and undermine the integrity of our Christian ethic.

Protests were mounted against the church’s Brigham Young University and even the LDS Church itself. The Mormon leaders, however, claimed that since the anti-black teaching was a doctrine of the church there was no way it could be changed except through revelation from God. The Mormon writer John L. Lund argued that there could be no change in the doctrine until after Christ’s thousand year reign on earth:

Brigham Young revealed that the Negroes will not receive the priesthood until a great while after the Second Advent of Jesus Christ, . . .



In view of what President Young and others have said, it would be foolish indeed to give anyone the false idea that a new revelation is immediately forthcoming on the issue of the Negroes receiving the Priesthood. . . . our present prophets are in complete agreement with Brigham Young and other past leaders on the question of the Negro and the Priesthood. . . .

Social pressure and even government sanctions cannot be expected to bring forth a new revelation. This point is mentioned because there are groups in the Church, as well as out, who feel that pressure on the Prophet will cause a revelation to come forth. It would be wise to emphasize that all the social pressure in the world will not change what the Lord has decreed to be.

The prophets have declared that there are at least two major stipulations that have to be met before the Negroes will be allowed to possess the priesthood. The first requirement relates to time. The Negroes will not be allowed to hold the Priesthood during mortality, in fact, not until after the resurrection of all of Adam's children. The other stipulation requires that Abel's seed receive the first opportunity of having the Priesthood. . . . the last of Adam's children will not be resurrected until the end of the millennium. Therefore, the Negroes will not receive the Priesthood until after that time. . . . this will not happen until after the thousand years of Christ's reign on earth. (*The Church and the Negro*, 1967, pages 45-48)

The same year that John L. Lund published his book, N. Eldon Tanner, a member of the First Presidency, declared that no change in doctrine could be expected:

Even such harsh criticism has done nothing to budge Mormon officials from their adamant position. "The church has no intention of changing its doctrine on the Negro." N. Eldon Tanner, counselor to the first President, told SEATTLE during his recent visit here. "Throughout the history of the original Christian church, the Negro never held the priesthood. There's really nothing we can do to change this. It's a law of God." (*Seattle Magazine*, December, 1967, page 60)

On August 17, 1951, the First Presidency of the church issued a statement which endorsed Brigham Young's teaching that the blacks could not receive the priesthood until after the resurrection. In this statement, they wrote the following:

The prophets of the Lord have made several statements as to the operation of the principle. President Brigham Young said: ". . . They will go down to death. And when all the rest of the children have received their blessings in the holy priesthood, then the curse will be removed from the seed of Cain, and they will then come up and possess the priesthood, . . ." (Statement of the First Presidency, cited in *Mormonism and the Negro*, part 2, page 16)

Joseph Fielding Smith, who became the tenth president of the church in the early 1970s, taught that blacks would never hold the priesthood as long as "time endures" (*The Way to Perfection*, page 101). In a meeting in Barratt Hall on October 11, 1958, Joseph Fielding Smith commented that "the Lord will, in due time, remove the restrictions. Not in this world but the time will come . . ."

In the 1972 edition of *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* page 292, we commented: "If the pressure continues to increase on the Negro question, the leaders of the Mormon Church will probably have another revelation, or (as Sterling McMurrin said) 'by some technique' they 'will dissolve the doctrine on the Negro.'" Many Mormons believed this could never happen. The Mormon apologist John L. Lund argued:

Those who believe that the Church "gave in" on the polygamy issue and subsequently should give in on the Negro question are not only misinformed about Church History, but are apparently unaware of Church doctrine. . . . Therefore those who hope that pressure will bring about a revelation need to take a closer look at Mormon history and the order of heaven. . . . It was the Lord's decision to send those spirits who proved themselves unworthy of the Priesthood in the pre-existence through the lineage of Cain. . . . Negroes are kept from holding the Priesthood because of something they did before they came to earth; . . . Those who would try to pressure the Prophet to give the Negroes the Priesthood do not understand the plan of God nor the order of heaven. Revelation is the expressed will of God to man. *Revelation is not man's will expressed to God.* All the social, political, and governmental pressure in the world is not going to change what God has decreed to be. . . . Church leaders from the earliest times up to and including the present have never changed their position concerning the Negro. Simply stated, no one who is a descendant of Cain may function in any capacity requiring the Priesthood. (*The Church and the Negro*, pages 104, 105, 107, 109, 111)

Notwithstanding the claim by Mormon prophets and apologists that the anti-black doctrine could not be changed while "time endures," on June 9, 1978, the church's *Deseret News* carried the startling announcement by the First Presidency that a new revelation had been received and that blacks could henceforth hold the priesthood:

. . . we have pleaded long and earnestly in behalf of these, our faithful brethren, spending many hours in the upper room of the Temple supplicating the Lord for divine guidance.

He has heard our prayers, and by revelation has confirmed that the long-promised day has come when

every faithful, worthy man in the church may receive the holy priesthood, . . . including the blessings of the temple. Accordingly, all worthy male members of the church may be ordained to the priesthood without regard to race or color.

Since we had probably printed more material critical of the Mormon anti-black doctrine than any other publisher, the new revelation came as a great victory and a vindication of our work. We printed our first criticism of this doctrine in 1959. This was certainly not a popular cause to espouse in those days. Those of us who had criticized the church for its racial teachings were ridiculed for attempting to change the doctrine. In fact, one irate Mormon had threatened to punch Sandra in the nose because of this issue.

Even though most Mormons claim they are happy with the doctrinal change with regard to blacks, there is evidence that the “revelation” came as a real shock. A class at Brigham Young University which conducted a “random telephone survey of Utah County residents found that 79 percent of those interviewed did not expect a change at this time. Furthermore, the Brigham Young University student paper reported that many people compared the news about the doctrinal change to an announcement of some kind of disaster or death:

Thirty-nine percent said they did not think “it would ever happen” . . . 40 percent expected it years in the future, after Christ’s return, during the Millennium, or “not in my lifetime.” . . .

In trying to explain how they reacted to the news, 14 persons compared its impact with that of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. Another 13 compared it to the news of the death of an LDS Church president. Eight compared it to a natural disaster, especially the Teton dam break

Other compared the news with the death of a family member or friend, with a declaration of war, or other major political event. (*The Daily Universe*, June 22, 1978)

The Mormon people apparently realized the deep doctrinal implications this change involved and that their prophet would be accused of having a revelation to escape the criticism of the world and accommodate critics of the anti-black doctrine. It was probably for these reasons that they associated the revelation with death or disaster. If they were really pleased with the revelation, why did they not equate it with a happy event like marriage, the birth of a child or the end of a war? This survey seems to have unwittingly revealed what church members really thought of the change.

In the 1982 edition of *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* we observed:

. . . the Mormon Church’s change on the doctrine concerning blacks is a very good move because it will undoubtedly help blacks obtain equality in Utah and will probably prevent much bloodshed and trouble. Nevertheless, we must point out the Brigham Young and other leaders have been misrepresented in order to make the change palatable to the Mormon people. For instance, the Church’s *Deseret News* would have us believe that the change was a fulfillment of a prophecy uttered by Brigham Young: . . . while it is true that Brigham Young believed that blacks would eventually receive the priesthood, he made it clear that this was not to happen until AFTER the resurrection.

Brigham Young went so far as to proclaim that if the church gave “all the blessings of God” to the blacks prematurely, the priesthood would be taken away and the Church would go to destruction. This address is preserved in the Church Historical Department. H. Michael Marquardt has provided a typed copy (which retains the spelling errors of the original). We extract the following from Brigham Young’s speech:

. . . the Lord told Cain that he should not receive the blessings of the priesthood nor his seed, until the last of the posterity of Abel had received the priesthood, until the redemption of the earth. . . . Let this Church which is called the kingdom of God on the earth; [say] we will summons the first presidency, the twelve, the high counsel, the Bishoprick, and all the elders of Israel, suppose we summons them to appear here, and here declare that it is right to mingle our seed with the black race of Cain, that they shall come in with us and be pertakers with us of all the blessings God has given us. On that very day, and hour we should do so, the priesthood is taken from this Church and kingdom and God leaves us to our fate. The moment we consent to mingle with the seed of Cain the Church must go to destruction,—we should receive the curse which was placed upon the seed of Cain, and never more be numbered with the children of Adam who are heirs to the priesthood until that curse be removed. (Brigham Young Addresses, MS d 1234, Box 48, folder 3, dated February 5, 1852, located in the LDS Church Historical Department)

President Brigham Young’s address presents the Mormon leaders with a serious dilemma; if they really believe Young was a prophet, then it follows that the church has lost the priesthood, been put under “the curse” and is going to destruction! In spite of Brigham Young’s emphatic warning against giving blacks “all the blessings God has given us,” the present leaders have announced that blacks will now receive “all the privileges and blessings which the gospel affords (*Deseret News*, June 9, 1978).

After the First Presidency made their statement, many people became confused over the church’s position on

possess the kingdom, and to have the whole of it under his own control, and not allow any body else the right to say one word, what did he do? He killed his brother. The Lord put a mark on him; and there are some of his children in this room. When all the other children of Adam have had the privilege of receiving the Priesthood, and of coming into the kingdom of God, and of being redeemed from the four quarters of the earth, and have received their resurrection from the dead, then it will be time enough to remove the curse from Cain and his posterity. He deprived his brother of the privilege of pursuing his journey through life, and of extending his kingdom by multiplying upon the earth; and because he did this, he is the last to share the joys of the kingdom of God.

Here are the Lamanites, another example. Their wickedness was not so great as those who slew the Son of God. Jesus revealed himself to them after he was slain, preached to them the Gospel. But in the fourth generation the Priesthood was driven from their midst, and after that, the laws, ordinances, and power of the Gospel ceased to be with them. Is their curse as great as that of those in Palestine? No, it is light, in comparison. They began to thirst for each other's blood, and massacred each other, from generation to generation, until they sunk into wickedness, and evil principles the most degrading, and have become loathsome and vile. Still, the curse will be removed from them before it will be removed from the children of Judah; and they will become "a white and delightsome people."

Brother Ballantyne, and many of our brethren in distant lands write, "O, how we would rejoice to have the privilege of visiting our mountain home!" I would rather undertake to convert five thousand Lamanites, than

to convert one of those poor miserable creatures whose fathers killed the Savior, and who say, "Amen to the deed," to this day. Yea, I would rather undertake to convert the devil himself, if it were possible.

Then I say to the Elders in those regions, be not astonished if you have to see hard times. And if I had a voice that would reach the ears of all those Elders, I would say, **LEAVE THEM, AND COME HOME, THE LORD DOES NOT REQUIRE YOU TO STAY THERE, FOR THEY MUST SUFFER AND BE DAMNED.**

Now, sisters, write to your husbands who are in regions where the Gospel has been preached anciently, to come home; and I say to all the Elders who are in lands where the Gospel has been preached previous to our day, come away from that people, and leave them to live and die in their sins and ignorance. For the sins of their fathers are a sweet morsel to them, and they take pleasure in their wickedness; therefore, *let them alone*, and come home, and preach to the Lamanites.

There are many in this city who can bear witness to an incident I will now relate. Last spring, when we visited Walker, the Indian chief, he was dull and sulky, and lay in his tent, and would not come out to meet me. I went into his tent, and the first thing he said was, "Brother Brigham, lay your hands upon me, for my spirit has gone away from me, and I want it to come back again." He was full of anger, for his people had been fighting, and he did not know whether to turn on to the side of peace or of war.

We laid hands upon him, and he felt better. At his request, we sung some "Mormon" hymns, and, as we left his tent, he was full of the good Spirit, and would not injure this people, no, not one particle. He was full of kindness, and love to God, and to all His works. He travelled with us

were destroyed by the Indians. That unfortunate affair has been laid to the charge of the whites. A certain judge that was then in this Territory wanted the whole army to accompany him to Iron county to try the whites for the murder of that company of emigrants. I told Governor Cumming that if he would take an unprejudiced judge into the district where that horrid affair occurred, I would pledge myself that every man in the regions round about should be forthcoming when called for, to be condemned or acquitted as an impartial, unprejudiced judge and jury should decide; and I pledged him that the court should be protected from any violence or hindrance in the prosecution of the laws; and if any were guilty of the blood of those who suffered in the Mountain Meadow massacre, let them suffer the penalty of the law; but to this day they have not touched the matter, for fear the Mormons would be acquitted from the charge of having any hand in it, and our enemies would thus be deprived of a favorite topic to talk about, when urging hostility against us. "The Mountain Meadow massacre! Only think of the Mountain Meadow massacre!" is their cry from one end of the land to the other.

"Come, let us make war on the Mormons, for they burnt government property." And what was the government doing there with their property? They were coming to destroy the Mormons, in violation of every right principle of law and justice. A little of their property was destroyed, and they were left to gnaw, not a tile, but dead cattle's bones. I was informed that one man brought the blood hounds to hunt the Mormons in the mountains, and that the poor devil had to kill them and eat them before spring to save himself from starving to death, and that he was fool enough to acknowledge it

afterwards in this city. This is the kind of outside pressure we have to meet with. Who wanted the army of 1857 here? Who sent for them? Liars, thieves, murderers, gamblers, whoremasters, and speculators in the rights and blood of the Mormon people cried to government, and government opened its ears, long and broad, saying, "I hear you, my children, lie on, my faithful sons Brochus, Drummond and Co.," and so they did lie on until the parent sent an army to use up the Mormons. Now I say, for the consolation of all my brethren and sisters, they cannot do it; and that is worse to them than all the rest; they cannot do it.

The rank, rabid abolitionists, whom I call black-hearted Republicans, have set the whole national fabric on fire. Do you know this, Democrats? They have kindled the fire that is raging now from the north to the south, and from the south to the north. I am no abolitionist, neither am I a pro-slavery man; I hate some of their principles and especially some of their conduct, as I do the gates of hell. The Southerners make the negroes, and the Northerners worship them; this is all the difference between slaveholders and abolitionists. I would like the President of the United States and all the world to hear this.

Shall I tell you the law of God in regard to the African race? If the white man who belongs to the chosen seed mixes his blood with the seed of Cain, the penalty, under the law of God, is death on the spot. This will always be so. The nations of the earth have transgressed every law that God has given, they have changed the ordinances and broken every covenant made with the fathers, and they are like a hungry man that dreameth that he eateth, and he awaketh and behold he is empty.

The following saying of the prophet is fulfilled: "Now also many nations

A photograph from the *Journal of Discourses*, vol. 2, page 143. Brigham Young declared the curse should not be removed from the blacks until after the resurrection.

A photograph from the *Journal of Discourses*, vol. 10, page 110. Brigham Young argued that marriage to an African should be punished by "death on the spot."

interracial marriage. It soon became apparent, however, that the church ban had been lifted. Joseph Freeman, the first black man ordained to the priesthood after the change, indicated that he wanted to be sealed in the temple to his wife who was not of African descent. Church spokesman Don LeFevre responded to the question:

That is entirely possible, said Mr. LeFevre. . . .  
 “So there is no ban on interracial marriage. If a black partner contemplating marriage is worthy of going to the Temple, nobody’s going to stop him—if he’s marrying a white, an Oriental . . . if he’s ready to go to the Temple, obviously he may go with the blessings of the church.” (*Salt Lake Tribune*, June 14, 1978)

The *Tribune* for June 24, 1978, announced that Apostle Thomas S. Monson sealed Freeman to his wife in the Salt Lake Temple.

Apostle Bruce R. McConkie admitted that before the revelation was given he had said that “Negroes would not receive the priesthood in mortality”:

. . . people write me letters and say, “You said such and such, and how is it now that we do such and such?” And all I can say to that is that it is time disbelieving people repented and got in line and believed in a living, modern prophet. *Forget everything that I have said, or what President Brigham Young or President George Q. Cannon or whomever has said in days past that is contrary to the present revelation.* We spoke with a limited understanding and without the light and knowledge that now has come into the world. . . . It doesn’t make a particle of difference what anybody ever said about the Negro matter before the first day of June of this year (1978). (“All Are Alike Unto God,” pages 1-2)

One thing that should be noted about the new “revelation” is that the church has failed to produce a copy of it. All we have is a statement by the First Presidency which says a revelation was received. Joseph Smith, the first Mormon Prophet, printed many of his revelations in the *Doctrine and Covenants* and other church publications, and the early Mormon Church even mocked the Catholics because they did not allow the revelations given by their popes to enter the “sacred canon.” In refusing to canonize or even make public the new “revelation” on blacks, the Mormon leaders are now practicing the very thing the Catholics were accused of doing. The *Salt Lake Tribune* for June 13, 1978, reported: “Kimball refused to discuss the revelation . . . saying it was a ‘personal thing.’”

We seriously doubt that the church will ever put forth a written revelation on the bestowal of priesthood on blacks. We doubt, in fact, that any such document

exists. What probably happened was that the leaders of the church finally realized that they could no longer retain the anti-black doctrine without doing irreparable damage to the church. Under these circumstances they were impressed with the fact that the doctrine had to be changed and this impression was referred to as a revelation from God. In a letter to the editor of the *Salt Lake Tribune*, June 24, 1978, Eugene Wagner asked the church leaders why they did not “publish that revelation and let the Lord speak in his own words? All we saw was a statement of the First Presidency, and that is not how a revelation looks. When God speaks the revelation starts with the words: ‘Thus sayeth the Lord . . .’ It seems when the Lord decides to change a doctrine of such great importance he will talk himself to the people of his church. If such a revelation cannot be presented to the members it is obvious that the first presidency acted on its own, most likely under fear of public pressure to avoid problems of serious consequences and to maintain peace and popularity with the world.”

At the 148th Semiannual Conference of the church, members were asked to “accept this revelation as the word and will of the Lord,” but the only document presented to the people was the letter of the First Presidency, dated June 8, 1978. This same letter was later added to the *Doctrine and Covenants* as “Official Declaration — 2,” but still no written revelation was printed (see *Doctrine and Covenants*, 1981 edition, pages 293-294). Although church leaders were reluctant to inform their own people of the details surrounding the giving of the “revelation,” six months after the event President Spencer W. Kimball finally shared some of the circumstances concerning the matter. President Kimball’s comments are very revealing. He made no reference to a voice or any written revelation; in fact, his statement gives the impression that it was only a feeling or an assurance that he received:

I asked the Twelve not to go home when the time came. I said, “Now would you be willing to remain in the temple with us?” And they were. I offered the final prayer and I told the Lord if it wasn’t right, if He didn’t want this change to come in the Church that I would be true to it all the rest of my life, and I’d fight the world against it if that’s what He wanted.

We had this special prayer circle, then I knew that the time had come. I had a great deal to fight, of course, myself largely, because I had grown up with this thought that Negroes should not have the priesthood and I was prepared to go all the rest of my life till death and fight for it and defend it as it was. But this revelation and assurance came to me so clearly that there was no question about it. (*Deseret News*, Church Section, January 6, 1979, page 4)

President Kimball's statement gives the impression that the church leaders were considering changing the doctrine without any revelation from the Lord. If he had already received a revelation, Kimball would not be praying to know "if He [the Lord] didn't want this change to come in the church." He did not receive a negative answer but instead had an "assurance" that "the time had come." In his speech, "All Are Alike Unto God," Apostle Bruce R. McConkie indicated there was no spoken or written revelation—only a very good "feeling":

The result was that President Kimball knew, and each one of us knew, independent of any other person, by direct and personal revelation to us, that the time had come . . . The Lord could have sent messengers from the other side to deliver it, but he did not. . . . Latter-day Saints have a complex: many of them desire to magnify and build upon what has occurred, and they delight to think of miraculous things. And maybe some of them would like to believe that the Lord himself was there, or that the Prophet Joseph Smith came to deliver the revelation . . . Well, these things did not happen. . . . I cannot describe in words what happened; . . . You cannot describe a testimony to someone.

Years before the church had a revelation on the blacks we had written: "The honest solution to the problem facing the Mormon leaders is not to have another 'revelation,' but to repudiate the doctrine. They should admit that Joseph Smith, Brigham Young and other leaders taught doctrines that cannot be accepted as coming from God" (*Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* page 293). It is obvious that the announcement of a new revelation on the blacks is just an attempt to save face and evade some of the real issues concerning the doctrine. Writing five years before the revelation, O. Kendall White, Jr., indicated that the idea of giving a new revelation stems from an unwillingness to admit the errors of the past:

Since they believe in "continuing revelation," Mormons have a mechanism that enables them to reverse previous positions without repudiating the past. . . . That the church will invoke such a mechanism to resolve the racial issue is not too unlikely . . . this approach has a serious drawback. It is the tendency not to acknowledge the errors of the past. While revelation could be used to legitimate a new racial policy and to redefine Mormon relations with black people, Mormons might still be unwilling to condemn the racism involved in their history. They might be inclined to argue that Mormons in earlier periods were under a different mandate than the one binding them. This obviously implies that the church is never wrong. Thus, change may come through the notion of continuing revelation, but the racist aspects of Mormon history will not

necessarily be condemned. (*The Journal of Religious Thought*, Autumn-Winter, 1973, pages 57-58)

It would appear that church leaders have done exactly what Mr. White warned against; they have used revelation as a means of side-stepping the real issues involved. Mario S. DePillis pointed out that "the revelation leaves unsolved other racist implications of the Book of Mormon and the *Pearl of Great Price* . . . (*New York Times*, June 11, 1978). One issue which the new revelation does not resolve is the teaching concerning pre-existence. In the past Mormon leaders have stressed that blacks were cursed as to the priesthood because of "unfaithfulness" in the "pre-existence." Church leaders should explain if they believe black babies born after the new "revelation" were inferior spirits in the pre-existent state. By giving a "revelation" on the blacks without explaining its implications, the Mormon leaders are leaving their people in a dense doctrinal fog.

### **Making Indians White**

Another thing church officials should explain is whether they are repudiating the Book of Mormon teaching that a dark skin is given by God as a "curse." Not only is the Book of Mormon filled with this teaching, but the Mormon leaders themselves have been very concerned about the Indians eventually becoming "a white and delightful people." We now have evidence that Joseph Smith even gave a revelation concerning how this was supposed to be accomplished. Joseph Fielding Smith told Fawn Brodie about this revelation:

Joseph F. Smith, Jr., the present historian of the Utah Church, asserted to me in 1943 that a revelation foreshadowing polygamy had been written in 1831, but that it had never been published. In conformity with the church policy, however, he would not permit the manuscript, which he acknowledged to be in the possession of the church library, to be examined. (*No Man Knows My History*, 1971, page 184, footnote)

H. Michael Marquardt, a student of Mormon history who became very deeply disturbed with the church's policy of suppressing important records, became interested in this revelation. He found that some Mormon scholars had copies of the revelation, but had to promise not to make additional copies. Finally, however, Mr. Marquardt learned what appears to be the real reason why the revelation was suppressed: it commanded the Mormons to marry the Indians to make them a "white" and "delightful" people! It was only after a great deal of research that Mr. Marquardt was able to obtain a typed copy of the revelation. We printed this revelation in its entirety in *Mormonism Like Watergate?* (pages 7-8). The important part of the revelation reads as follows:

Verily, I say unto you, that the wisdom of man, in his fallen state, knoweth not the purposes and the privileges of my holy priesthood, but ye shall know when ye receive a fulness by reason of the anointing: For it is my will, that in time, ye should take wives of the Lamanites and Nephites, that their posterity may become white, delightsome and just, for even now their females are more virtuous than the gentiles.

In 1976 we were able to examine a microfilm of the original revelation and sometime later obtained a photocopy of it (see photograph in *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* page 230-B). In 1975 Leonard J. Arrington, who was serving as Church Historian, confirmed to Robert N. Hullinger the existence of the revelation but indicated that it was not available for study at that time. Finally, in 1979 Leonard Arrington and his assistant Davis Bitton published the important portion of the revelation in *The Mormon Experience*, page 195. This revelation was recorded by W. W. Phelps sometime between 1831 and 1861. Although we do not know the exact date it was penned, Phelps says that Joseph Smith gave the revelation on July 17, 1831. We have also found definite historical proof that such a revelation was in existence in 1831. The evidence is derived from a letter written by Ezra Booth and published in the *Ohio Star* only five months after the revelation was given! In this letter, Ezra Booth wrote:

. . . it has been made known by revelation, that it will be pleasing to the Lord, should they form a matrimonial alliance with the Natives; . . . It has been made known to one, who has left a wife in the state of N.Y. that he is entirely free from his wife, and he is at liberty to take him a wife from among the Lamanites. (*Ohio Star*, December 8, 1831)

This letter furnishes irrefutable proof that Joseph Smith gave the revelation commanding the Mormons to marry the Lamanite (Indian) women.

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

The speech of Young was in substance as follows:  
“. . . We are now going to the Lamanites, to whom we intend to be messengers of instruction. . . . We will show them that in consequence of their transgressions a curse has been inflicted upon them—in the darkness of

their skins. We will have intermarriages with them, they marrying our young women, and we taking their young squaws to wife. By this means it is the will of the Lord that the curse of their color shall be removed and they restored to their pristine beauty . . .” (*The Abominations of Mormonism Exposed*, pages 58-59)

In 1857 John Hyde, Jr., made the following comments:

. . . Brigham now teaches that “the way God has revealed for the purification of the Indians, and making them ‘a white and delightsome people,’ as Joseph prophesied, is by us taking the squaws for wives!!” Accordingly several of these tawny beauties have been already “sealed” to some of the Mormon authorities. (*Mormonism: Its Leaders and Designs*, pages 109-110)

Although Joseph Smith’s 1831 revelation commanding Mormons to marry Indians to make them “white” was suppressed, recent leaders have continued to teach the Book of Mormon doctrine that the Indians become white when they turn to Mormonism. President Spencer W. Kimball, who gave the revelation which allowed blacks to hold the priesthood, strongly endorsed that teaching. In the October 1960 LDS General Conference, Kimball observed:

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

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

The reader will notice that Spencer W. Kimball used the Book of Mormon phrase, “a white and delightsome people.” This is actually a quotation from 2 Nephi 30:6. Nephi prophesied that in the last days the gospel would be declared to the Indians, and “many generations shall not pass away among them, save they shall be a white and

delightful people.” Mormon critic Gordon H. Fraser, who worked among the Indians, did not accept the claim that the Indians were becoming white. He claimed that the “skin color” of the Indians “has not been altered in the least because of their adherence to the Mormon doctrines” (*What Does the Book of Mormon Teach?* page 46). The Mormon leaders were obviously embarrassed about this Book of Mormon doctrine, and three years after President Kimball gave the revelation removing the curse from the blacks, the *very verse* Kimball used to support the idea that the Indians were becoming white was *altered*. As we have shown, 2 Nephi 30:6 originally stated that the Indians “shall be a white and delightful people.” In 1981 this embarrassing statement was changed to read that the Indians “shall be a *pure* and delightful people.” The church’s publication, *The Ensign*, October 1981, pages 17-18, tried to justify the change by stating that in the 1840 edition of the Book of Mormon Joseph Smith corrected typographical errors” which had “crept into the Book of Mormon,” and that “this passage was changed to read ‘a pure and delightful people,’ but for some reason later printings reverted to the original wording.” In *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* page 96-A, we noted “that Church leaders are unable to produce any documentary evidence to support their claim that this was merely a correction by Joseph Smith of a typographical error.” The original handwritten manuscript of the Book of Mormon, the first printing (1830 edition) and the 1837 edition all agree that the wording should be “white.” The change, therefore, appears to be a deliberate attempt to change the original teaching of the Book of Mormon.

Although this one passage has been altered, the doctrine that God cursed the Lamanites with a black skin is still found in a number of other verses (see 1 Nephi 12:23, 2 Nephi 5:21 and Jacob 3:8). In addition, in 3 Nephi 2:15 we read this concerning some of the Lamanites: “And their curse was taken from them, and their skin became white like unto the Nephites.” In any case, the church no longer seems proud of its teaching that “a black skin is a mark of the curse of heaven placed upon some portions of mankind” (*Juvenile Instructor*, vol. 3, page 157). Ron Baker, of the Associated Press questioned church spokesman Jerry P. Cahill concerning this matter:

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

Although the Mormon leaders have failed to face some important issues with regard to skin color and pre-existence, we feel that in opening up the priesthood to blacks they have made a major concession which will gradually weaken racism throughout the church. With the change in policy, we anticipate that the church will make many more converts. On the other hand, many members have become disillusioned because of the church’s handling of the racial issue, and the new “revelation” has tended to confirm in their minds that the Lord had nothing to do with the whole matter in the first place.

## 5. Censorship and Suppression

The fact that Mormonism is changing is obvious to anyone who studies the history of the church with an open mind. Many things that were approved of when Mormonism first began are now condemned. Besides plural marriage and the anti-black doctrine, the Latter-day Saints have also abandoned doctrines like rebaptism and the law of adoption which were so important in the early Mormon church that God had to give special revelations concerning them (see *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* pages 5-6, 480-483). Many other doctrinal changes could be cited.

Since the Mormon leaders were embarrassed by the many important changes they made in the policies and doctrines of the church, they found it necessary to actually alter church records to prevent their people from finding out the truth. In another chapter we will show that thousands of changes were made in Joseph Smith's *History of the Church* and that over sixty percent of this history was compiled after Smith's death. This is very important because Mormon leaders have maintained that it was finished before Joseph Smith's death and that it has never been changed or tampered with. If any legal document had been changed in the same way that the *History of the Church* has, someone would have been in serious trouble.

In the year 1855, Mormon Apostle Parley P. Pratt published a book entitled, *Key to the Science of Theology*. In 1965, the Mormon-owned Deseret Book Company printed the "Ninth Edition" of this book. We compared the 1965 reprint with the original 1855 edition and found that many important changes had been made. Hundreds of words concerning the doctrine of polygamy were deleted without any indication, and many of Apostle Pratt's statements concerning the Godhead were changed or deleted without any indication.

Joseph Smith's mother, Lucy Smith, wrote a book, *Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith*, which was published by Apostle Orson Pratt in 1853. By the year 1865, however, Brigham Young began to frown upon this book. The First Presidency of the church ordered that the book "should be gathered up and destroyed, so that no copies should be left; . . ." (*Latter-Day Saints' Millennial Star*, vol. 27, pages 657-658). Later Brigham Young ordered a "committee of revision" to go through Lucy Smith's book and change it to meet with his approval. Subsequently, a new edition was published by the church. In comparing the first edition with the edition printed in 1954, we found that 2,035 words were added, deleted or changed without any indication.

Censorship, therefore, seems to be a very important thing in the LDS Church. It is apparently felt that more converts can be won to the church with a bogus history than with a factual one.

Because of the fact that many church policies and doctrines have been changed, and since many changes were made in vital records of the church before they were published, it became necessary for the Mormon leaders to hide these records from members of the church. In 1961 we were denied access to Joseph Smith's diaries and a number of other documents which were very important to our research. Even the most faithful Mormon scholars were often refused access to vital documents. The noted church scholar Dr. Hugh Nibley admitted that he was "refused" access to his own great-grandfather's journal (see photo of his letter in *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* pages 11-12). Ralph W. Hansen, formerly manuscript librarian for Brigham Young University, also complained of "the relative inaccessibility to scholars of the files of the Church Historian's Office . . ." (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Spring 1966, page 157).

After we were denied access to church records in 1961, we began a campaign to force the Mormon leaders to make these documents available. We felt that the documents belonged to the Mormon people and should be published or made available so that all could read them. After *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* began publication in 1966, a number of Mormon writers joined us in openly denouncing their church's policy of hiding the records. The growing chorus against the LDS Church's suppressive policy finally had an effect. Mormon leaders began to feel that the negative publicity was leading people to believe that they were hiding something sinister. They reasoned, therefore, that it would be better to have a more open policy to counteract the bad publicity the church was receiving.

Prior to 1972, a member of the LDS Church's Quorum of the Twelve Apostles filled the position of Church Historian. This helped the Apostles to keep a very tight control over the documents. Joseph Fielding Smith, for instance, ruled the Church Historian's Office with an iron hand for many years and would not allow scholars the access they desired. On January 15, 1972, however, we were surprised to learn that the church leaders had broken away from tradition and had appointed Leonard J. Arrington, a "noted Utah educator and author," as the new Church Historian. This was certainly a surprise since Dr. Arrington had in the past been critical of the fact that the church had not "seen fit to publish" the "diaries of leading Mormons" nor "to permit qualified historians to use them without restriction" (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Spring 1966, page 26).



While the appointment of Leonard Arrington as church Historian was certainly a surprise, the choice of James B. Allen and Davis Bitton as assistant historians made some wonder what direction the church was headed in. Allen had previously published an article which seemed to undermine Joseph Smith's story of the First Vision, and Bitton had written an article in which he made an attack on the accuracy of Joseph Smith's *History of the Church*. We suggested that the only reasonable explanation for the appointment of these liberal historians was that the policy of suppressing the records had failed and that the Mormon leaders were trying to present a new image to the world. They were apparently trying to make it appear that they were proud of the records that they had suppressed for so many years.

In any case, after his appointment, Dr. Arrington announced great plans for the Historical Department. Many of them, however, were thwarted by Ezra Taft Benson and others who believed that it was wrong to tell the whole truth about Mormon history. Benson, who believed that there should be a cover-up with regard to certain things that occurred in the past, became President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles and later became the thirteenth president of the church.

### **Historians in Trouble**

Dr. Arrington's problems began just after his appointment to the office of Church Historian when he announced the formation of a group known as "Friends of Church History." When about 500 people showed up for the first meeting, the General Authorities apparently became alarmed that such a large group studying history might uncover things which would prove embarrassing to the church. Orders were given to hold up the project, and no meetings were held after November 30, 1972.

Leonard Arrington's most important project was to oversee the production of a sixteen-volume sesquicentennial history of the LDS Church. These volumes were to be authored by prominent Mormon scholars. Dr. Arrington states: "We have signed contracts for 16 persons, . . . Each requires several years of intensive research . . . We hope all 16 volumes will be ready by 1980" (*Salt Lake Tribune*, April 26, 1975). Unfortunately, the 150th anniversary of the church—the sesquicentennial celebration of 1980—passed without a single volume being published!

From what we have been able to learn, some of the scholars were too frank in their presentation of Mormon history, and this caused great consternation among some of the apostles. For some period of time

church leaders dragged their feet in an effort to delay or even cancel publication of the volumes. Church leaders found themselves in a difficult bind because the church's Deseret Book Company had signed an agreement with the sixteen authors which would be binding in court. In order to suppress the history without the possibility of lawsuits, the General Authorities decided to pay each author who had finished his work \$20,000 (those who had not completed their volumes were to receive a smaller amount). Since there were sixteen authors to be paid off and other costs involved, the church may have spent hundreds of thousands of dollars in order to bring this endeavor to a halt. That the Church leaders would approve this massive project and then abort it after some of the church's top scholars had spent years working on it shows a total lack of inspiration as well as a disregard for truth.

In the *Salt Lake City Messenger*, January 1979, we warned: "There is reason to believe that Benson wants to remove Arrington from his position as Church Historian. . . . It is also reported that it is becoming increasingly difficult for Mormon scholars to get access to documents in the Historical Dept." While some Mormons felt that we were exaggerating the depth of the problem, on July 3, 1980, the *Salt Lake Tribune* reported that Dr. Arrington was being removed from the LDS Church Office Building, where the church documents are stored, to the Brigham Young University:

The history research division of the Mormon church's historical department will move to Brigham Young University, officials announced Wednesday. . . . Most of the division's personnel will be transferred to BYU, where they will become part of the faculty and staff.

While President Spencer W. Kimball claimed this was "a forward step" for the Historical Department, it was obvious to anyone who really examined the situation that this was actually a demotion for Leonard Arrington. The fact that church leaders put a forty-five mile gap between Dr. Arrington and the church records—i.e., the distance between Salt Lake City and Brigham Young University—made it clear that they wanted to get Arrington as far away from the Church Office Building as possible and to reduce his influence with the Mormon people. Finally, it was announced that G. Homer Durham had replaced Leonard Arrington as Church Historian. Davis Bitton, who served as Assistant Church Historian under Arrington, later wrote an extremely interesting article entitled, "Ten Years in Camelot: A Personal Memoir." In this article, Professor Bitton told of the rise and fall of Arrington's dream of uncensored Mormon history:

Between 1972 and 1982 I was part of the team of historians located in the Church Office Building under the direction of Leonard J. Arrington. It was a golden decade—a brief period of excitement and optimism—that someone has likened to Camelot. But it came to an end. . . . On one occasion Leonard and I were advised to *leave a chapter on polygamy out of our book*. . . . Polygamy is a large and important part of our history. . . . Thinking that we could render service by producing a concise, low-key treatment of the subject, we proposed such a work to our superiors. *They declined*. . . . polygamy is such a sensitive subject that some General Authorities preferred to avoid mentioning it at all. Church magazines were not supposed to mention the practice. . . .

The euphoria of being part of something like the Historical Division in 1972 is hard to convey. It seemed like a heaven-sent opportunity. Our leaders were behind us, liked us, encouraged us. We had available one of the great collections of primary source material in the world. . . . but there is a downside to this story, what I might refer to as the “decline” of the History division. . . . We were puzzled and dismayed when an outspoken General Authority criticized us for including the entire text of a Brigham Young letter alluding to a Word of Wisdom problem. . . .

One member of the Historical Department, a librarian, regularly went through anything we published, underlined passages he considered inappropriate, and sent these annotated copies to his personal contacts among the General Authorities. We were certainly aware of this and simply hoped that small minds would be so recognized by those in positions of responsibility. . . . But the behind-the-scenes, over-the-back-fence rumor-mongering was insidious. . . .

It did not help that the decade of our existence was a time when Jerald and Sandra Tanner were publishing a variety of works with the specific purpose of refuting or embarrassing the Church. Those ex-Mormons had begun their publishing activity before the Historian’s Division was ever created, and they would continue it long after. . . . I was dismayed when an honor’s thesis produced by a University of Utah student lumped the work of the historians of the History Division (for which he showed little appreciation) together with the publications of the Tanners. For him, it was all “the New Mormon History.” Guilt by association is a devastating thing, as we discovered.

There were other straws in the wind. With the publication of *The Story of the Latter-day Saints*, the generally favorable reception was tempered by criticism. When Elder Ezra Taft Benson addressed a meeting of institute teachers, he mentioned three deficiencies in that work. . . .

One of my personal disappointments was the lack of mutual respect and a willingness to discuss. Never

were our critics willing to sit down and talk over matters with us. . . . I may be pardoned a personal suspicion that critics, especially those who have not put in the same hours of back-breaking research in the archives, are afraid to discuss such matters across the table with historians who have done their homework. . . .

I can state objectively that the decision was made to scuttle the sixteen volume history . . . to sharply circumscribe the projects that were approved, to reject any suggestions, however meritorious, for worthy long-range projects, to allow the division to shrink by attrition, and finally to reassign the remaining historians to a new entity, the Joseph Fielding Smith Institute of Church History, which would be affiliated with Brigham Young University. . . .

Leonard J. Arrington was called as Church Historian in 1972. He was sustained at general conference that year and for the next couple of years. . . . Finally, in 1982, he received a letter honorably releasing him. That same year Elder G. Homer Durham, . . . was named Church Historian.

If you visit the East Wing of the Church Office Building you will find in the hallway a gallery of portraits. These are the Church Historians, from Oliver Cowdery to G. Homer Durham. *But where is Leonard Arrington? Nowhere to be seen*. The official explanation is that to be a Church Historian one has to be a General Authority. A brief period of our history, awkwardly embarrassing to someone, is thus erased. (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Autumn 1983, pages 9, 13, 16-19)

The Mormon leaders’ attempt to offset criticism by appointing a real historian (Leonard Arrington) and a crew of professionally trained people turned out to be a disaster for the church. As the historians began their work, they saw that the problems were much deeper than anyone had realized. Instead of providing additional evidence for Mormonism, the original foundational documents proved to be very embarrassing. Some of the prominent historians, therefore, began to lose faith in the church and to search for some type of “middle ground.” At first the Mormon leaders seemed to be oblivious to what was happening, but as time went on they began to comprehend the gravity of the situation.

The suppression of the 16-volume sesquicentennial history was done very quietly, but the details eventually leaked out. The removal of the Historical Department from “the main source of manuscripts at Church Headquarters” had to be announced publicly, but, as we have shown, it was called “a step forward.” Actually, it was “a step forward” in Benson’s plan to negate the influence of Leonard Arrington and the historians who

worked with him. Church leaders apparently realized that Dr. Arrington was too prominent a man to publicly take issue with, and therefore they sought to gradually dissolve his influence. Consequently, no official announcement was made when Arrington was released from his position as Church Historian. Moreover, no announcement was made when G. Homer Durham succeeded him. It was in May 1982, when *Sunstone Review* asserted that “Elder G. Homer Durham . . . was called and set apart as Church Historian on February 2.” This was certainly a very strange procedure. Dr. Arrington had been publicly “sustained in the April 1972 General Conference” (*Ibid.*), but no announcement was ever made by the Church that he had been released. Durham, on the other hand, apparently replaced Arrington without being publicly sustained in the April 1982 conference. This seems to have been a rather underhanded way of removing Dr. Arrington from his position.

James L. Clayton, a historian from the University of Utah, became very disturbed about the direction in which his church was moving. In a speech delivered February 25, 1982, he protested:

. . . just within the past few days, I understand the archives of the LDS Church have been closed to all research in the diaries, the letter books and other sensitive materials of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve back to the 1830s—diaries and letters long open to and currently being used by scholars. Many projects of considerable worth are now stymied or will be finished with incomplete sources. The release of Leonard J. Arrington as Church Historian—the most significant Mormon historian since B. H. Roberts, in my judgment; the apparent refusal to complete already signed contracts with other historians working on the multi-volume history of the church; the movement of the Historical Department . . . to BYU, these events raise serious questions regarding the nature and direction of historical enquiry on Mormonism.

After the sensitive church documents were withdrawn from scholars in 1982, George Raine reported that when questioned about the matter “the church responded that these have been withdrawn temporarily for reclassification and reevaluation, and they are still available with permission from the managing director of the church historical department” (*Salt Lake Tribune*, February 28, 1982). This statement appears to have been a misrepresentation of the facts. Some five years later Ronald W. Walker, Professor of History at Brigham Young University, admitted that he was unable to examine important documents which were necessary for his research. Professor Walker, who had been working on a book about President Heber J. Grant, sadly noted:

Because current LDS archival policy limits the access and use of materials, particularly those of the presidents of the church, I have been unable to verify many of my footnote citations. (*Journal of Mormon History*, vol. 13, 1986-87, page 38, footnote 1)

In a speech given on August 6, 1987, Apostle Dallin Oaks admitted that “the Church closes or restricts access to certain documentary materials.” Oaks spoke of the need to protect living individuals and then went on to set forth a principle which would seem to give an excuse for suppressing any material in the archives that might be embarrassing to the church:

In addition, our belief in life after death causes us to *extend this principle to respect the privacy of persons who have left mortality* but live beyond the veil. Descendants who expect future reunions with deceased ancestors have a continuing interest in their ancestors’ privacy and good name. (“Recent Events Involving Church History and Forged Documents,” page 7)

This reasoning could be used to withhold any revealing document written by a church leader. Suppose, for instance, that the church had a devastating letter of Joseph Smith with regard to his participation in magical practices. Using this rationale, church leaders could decide that since such a letter would hurt Joseph Smith’s “good name” and disturb the Mormon people it would be best to keep it locked away in a vault.

This type of reasoning seems absurd to those who look at the issue with an open mind. It could, in fact, be used to suppress the Bible. Would Noah want his descendants to know that he got drunk on wine, or would Lot want his incest revealed? The same might be said of David’s adultery or the account of Peter denying the Lord.

President Ezra Taft Benson and Apostle Boyd K. Packer have taken a harsh stand against historians who probe too deeply into the past. They have warned them that they must concentrate on printing only material which is favorable to the church. Professor D. Michael Quinn, one of the best historians in the church, finally came to the conclusion that these church leaders had gone too far. In an emotionally charged speech, he attacked the suppressive policies advocated by both Benson and Packer. The *Seventh East Press* reported:

Mormon apostles Ezra Taft Benson and Boyd K. Packer are advocating a kind of religious history which borders on idolatry, asserted D. Michael Quinn, associate professor of history at BYU in a recent lecture to the university’s student history association.

In an address entitled “On Being a Mormon Historian,” Quinn, who holds a PH.D. in history from

Yale University, addressed recent criticisms made against Mormon historians by Elders Benson and Packer and BYU Professor of Political Science Louis Midgley. . . .

Quinn also discussed Elder Benson's counsel against "environmental explanations" of the background of revelations and Church history. Quinn stated that to ignore such backgrounds in a non-religious history is "inept at best and dishonest at worst." . . .

Commenting on Elder Packer's statement that historians should "demonstrate the hand of the Lord in every hour and every moment of the Church," Quinn expressed the belief that such an approach demonstrates the "view that the official acts and pronouncements of the prophets are always the express will of God," a position which Quinn sees as "the Mormon equivalent of the Roman Catholic doctrine of papal infallibility." Such a doctrine of infallibility, Quinn explained, denies the principle of free agency . . . . While sacred history shows God's leaders as "understandable human beings with whom people can identify and still revere the prophetic mantle," Elders Benson and Packer, Quinn asserted, expect a history which makes LDS leaders "flawless and benignly angelic." Such a history of "demigod-like Church leaders," Quinn stated, "borders of idolatry."

While Quinn noted that Elder Packer accused Mormon historians of ignoring "fundamentals before presenting advanced information," Quinn expressed the opinion that in reality Elder Packer "is not advocating a gradual exposure to historical truth, but excludes that possibility." He further asserted that Elder Packer's approach is not the same as Paul's recommendation of milk before meat, but rather a steady diet of milk. "A diet of milk alone," Quinn observed, "will stunt the growth, if not kill, a child."

Quinn also accused Packer of advocating a history of the Church that denies any information which might be used against the Church by anti-Mormons. "Using this standard," Quinn stated, "much of the Old Testament, the Gospel of John, and many of Paul's epistles would not have been included in the Bible."

Quinn tearfully expressed discouragement at being labeled subversive and advocated following the example of sacred history in approach and philosophy. (*The Seventh East Press*, November 18, 1981)

Dr. Quinn finally resigned his position at Brigham Young University, and compared the church's school to a prison camp of the mind (see *Salt Lake Tribune*, July 30, 1988).

## 6. The First Vision

The Mormon Apostle LeGrand Richards claimed that "one of the most important and momentous events in this world's history" occurred on "a beautiful spring day in 1820" when "God, the Eternal Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, appeared to Joseph Smith and gave instructions concerning the establishment of the kingdom of God . . ." (*A Marvelous Work and a Wonder*, 1966, page 7).

Joseph Smith first published his story of this remarkable vision in 1842 in the Mormon publication *Times and Seasons*, vol. 3, pages 728 and 748:

So in accordance with my determination, to ask of God, I retired to the woods . . . I saw a pillar of light exactly over my head, . . . 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 spoke unto me, calling me by name, and said, (pointing to the other) "This is my beloved Son, hear him."

. . . 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 . . . many other things did he say unto me which I cannot write at this time.

This story is now published in the *Pearl of Great Price*, one of the four Standard Works of the church, and is accepted as scripture by the Mormon people. Mormon Apostle John A. Widtsoe made this comment concerning Joseph Smith's First Vision:

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. (*Joseph Smith—Seeker After Truth*, page 19)

Fawn M. Brodie was one of the first to cast serious doubt upon the authenticity of Joseph Smith's story of the First Vision. She claimed that it was first published "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" (*No Man Knows My History*, 1957, page 24).

For years the Mormon leaders insisted that Joseph Smith told only one story concerning the First Vision. Preston Nibley declared: "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*, 1944, page 30). At the very time Preston Nibley made this statement the Mormon leaders were suppressing at least two highly significant accounts of the First Vision which were written prior to the official 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 church, told LaMar Petersen that he had examined a "strange account of the First Vision which was kept in a vault and was told not to reveal what it contained. We wrote to LDS Church Historian Joseph Fielding Smith about it, but the letter was never answered. We had almost given up hope of ever seeing this document when, to our great surprise, two "strange" accounts of the vision came to light. The first appeared in an unpublished Brigham Young University thesis entitled, "An Analysis of the Accounts Relating Joseph Smith's Early Visions," by Paul R. Cheesman. We were convinced that this account was written by Joseph Smith and were the first to publish it to the world in 1965 under the title, *Joseph Smith's Strange Account of the First Vision*. Because the document was so unusual, some members of the church doubted its authenticity. Although the Mormon leaders would make no public statement concerning the document, Professor James B. Allen, who later became Assistant Church Historian, confirmed its validity and called it "One of the most significant documents of that period yet discovered." He went on to say that 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).

The Mormon leaders suppressed this account of the First Vision for over 130 years, but after we printed it thousands of copies were distributed throughout the world. Finally, four years after we published it, the Church Historian's Office made a public statement confirming the authenticity of the manuscript. Dean C. Jessee, who was "a member of the staff at the LDS Church Historian's Office," claimed that the document was written in 1831 or 1832:

On at least three occasions prior to 1839 Joseph Smith began writing his history. The earliest of these is a six-page account recorded on three leaves of a ledger book, written between the summer of 1831 and November 1832. . . .

The 1831-32 history transliterated here contains the *earliest known account* of Joseph Smith's First Vision. (*Brigham Young University Studies*, Spring 1969, pages 277-278)

In an article printed in *BYU Studies*, Summer 1971, page 462, Dean Jessee made it clear that not only was this the first extant account of the First Vision, but it was the only account in "the actual handwriting of Joseph Smith." Below is the important part of this account taken directly from a photograph of the original document:

. . . 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 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 the world lieth 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 this 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 w[r]itten of me in the cloud clothed in the glory of my Father . . .

A careful examination of this document reveals why the church leaders suppressed it for 130 years. Although there are a number of contradictions between this account and the official account published by the church, the most serious discrepancy involves the number of personages in the vision. In the later version, which is published in the *Pearl of Great Price*, Joseph Smith said: ". . . I saw two personages." In the first account, however, the Mormon prophet only mentions one personage: ". . . I saw the Lord . . ." The context makes it very clear that the personage was Jesus Christ and that Joseph Smith did not include God the Father in his first handwritten account of the vision. Mormon historian James B. Allen commented: "In this story, only one personage was mentioned, and this was obviously the Son, for he spoke of having been crucified" (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Autumn 1966, page 40).

Paul R. Cheesman tried to excuse the fact that the account which was suppressed only mentions one personage by stating: "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." This explanation does not seem reasonable. Actually, in the first account Joseph Smith quotes the Lord as saying more words than in the official version. Speaking of the "account of 1832," Mormon writer Milton V. Backman

marvelous even in the likeness of him who created them  
 and when I considered upon these things my heart exclaim-  
 ed well hath the wise man said <sup>it is as if</sup> <sup>that</sup> the first <sup>that</sup> <sup>was</sup> in  
 his heart there is no God my heart exclaimed all  
 these bear testimony and they speak an omnipotent  
 and omnipresent power a being who maketh day and  
 darkness and bindeth all things in their courses who  
 filleth eternity who was and is and will be from all  
 eternity to eternity and when I considered all these things  
 and that being <sup>that</sup> <sup>was</sup> <sup>such</sup> <sup>to</sup> <sup>worship</sup> <sup>him</sup> <sup>as</sup> <sup>wor-</sup>  
 ship 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 hearkned my cry in the wilderness  
 and while in <sup>the</sup> <sup>attitude</sup> <sup>of</sup> <sup>calling</sup> <sup>upon</sup> <sup>the</sup> <sup>Lord</sup> a pillar of  
 fire 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 <sup>the</sup> <sup>Lord</sup> <sup>opened</sup> <sup>the</sup> <sup>heavens</sup> <sup>upon</sup> <sup>me</sup>  
 and I saw the Lord and he spake unto me saying  
 Joseph <sup>my</sup> <sup>son</sup> thy sins are forgiven thee go thy way <sup>and</sup> <sup>keep</sup> <sup>my</sup> <sup>commandments</sup>  
 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 <sup>with</sup> <sup>me</sup> <sup>in</sup> <sup>heaven</sup>  
 both in sin <sup>and</sup> <sup>at</sup> <sup>thy</sup> <sup>time</sup> <sup>and</sup> <sup>none</sup> <sup>doeth</sup> <sup>good</sup> <sup>no</sup>  
 not one they have turned aside from the Gospel and  
 keep not <sup>my</sup> <sup>commandments</sup> 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 iniquities and to bring to pass  
 that which <sup>has</sup> <sup>been</sup> <sup>spoken</sup> <sup>by</sup> <sup>the</sup> <sup>mouth</sup> <sup>of</sup> <sup>the</sup> <sup>prophets</sup>  
 and of <sup>the</sup> <sup>apostles</sup> behold and lo I come quickly as it was  
 written of me in the cloud <sup>in</sup> <sup>the</sup> <sup>glory</sup> <sup>of</sup> <sup>my</sup> <sup>Father</sup>  
 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  
~~and~~ ~~about~~ ~~the~~ ~~same~~ ~~matter~~ ~~and~~ ~~about~~ ~~after~~ ~~many~~ ~~days~~

A photograph of Joseph Smith's first handwritten account of the First Vision. This is the only account in Smith's own handwriting.

said: “It is possible that after dictating the account, Joseph recognized the desirability of modifying certain statements . . . Often when people record biographical sketches or historical incidents, they write and rewrite until their ideas are clearly expressed” (*Joseph Smith’s First Vision*, 1971, page 124). While it is true that many people have to “write and rewrite until their ideas are clearly expressed,” we do not feel that Joseph Smith could have left out the most important part of the story by accident. If God the Father had really 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.

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

In 1971 another “strange” account of the First Vision came to light. It was found in Joseph Smith’s 1835-36 diary. This account had not been mentioned before because the LDS Church had kept Joseph Smith’s diaries from the public. At any rate, Dean C. Jessee prepared a typescript of this “strange” account for *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Spring 1971, page 87. We quote the following from that account:

. . . 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 person walking towards me, I strove again to pray, but could not the noise of walking seemed to draw nearer, I sprung upon my feet, and looked around, but saw no person or thing that was calculated to produce the noise of walking, I kneeled again my mouth opened and my tongue liberated, and I called on the Lord in mighty prayer, a pillar of fire appeared above my head, it presently rested down upon me . . . and filled me with joy unspeakable, 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 unto me that Jesus Christ is the Son of God; and I saw many angels in this vision I was about 14 years old when I received this first communication. . . .

In this account of the First Vision there is absolutely nothing to show that the personages were God and Christ. The statement, “he testified 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 probably would have said: “He testified also unto me that Jesus Christ was His son.” Another strange element is Joseph Smith’s claim that there were “many angels in this vision.” Neither of the other versions indicate that there were “many angels.”

We now have three different handwritten manuscripts of the First Vision. They were all written or dictated by Joseph Smith, and yet 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.

It is also interesting to note that there has been an important change in Joseph Smith’s *History of the Church* with regard to the First Vision. On May 29, 1852, the church’s newspaper, *Deseret News*, printed the portion of Joseph Smith’s *History* which involved a statement Joseph Smith claimed that it was only a visitation of angels:

. . . I received *the first visitation of angels*, which was when I was about fourteen years old; . . .

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 changed the wording so that the word “angels” was completely left out:

. . . I received *my first vision*, which was when I was about fourteen years old; . . . (*History of the Church*, vol. 2, page 312)

The church has absolutely no manuscript evidence to support this change in Joseph Smith’s *History of the Church*. The original handwritten manuscript for this part of the *History* reads exactly like the *Deseret News*: “. . . I received the first visitation of *angels* . . .” (Manuscript History, Book B-1, page 642). In addition to this Joseph Smith’s 1835-36 Diary, page 37, provides supporting evidence for the word “angels”: “. . . I received the first visitation of *angels*. . .” The fact that Mormon historians had to make such a serious change in Joseph Smith’s *History* after his death further weakens the case for the First Vision.

Some Mormon apologists now appear to be retreating from the claim that God the Father appeared to Joseph Smith in the First Vision. Lauritz G. Petersen, formerly

Research Supervisor at the Church Historian's Office, wrote a letter in which he stated: "We are not concerned really with which of the two Versions of the First Vision is right . . . whether he saw one or two the fact remains that Jesus Christ is mentioned in both of them." Petersen's attempt to make the discrepancy appear trivial does not impress those who are familiar with Mormon history. This is actually a very important matter, for Mormon leaders have relied on this vision to prove their doctrine of a plurality of gods. They have stated that this vision proves that God and Christ are two distinct personages and that they both have a body of flesh and bone. God Himself, they argue, is only an exalted man. Fourteen years before we printed Joseph Smith's "strange" account of the First Vision, Mormon Apostle John A. Widtsoe proclaimed:

It was an extraordinary experience. Never before had God the Father and God the Son appeared to mortal man. . . . It shattered many a false doctrine taught throughout the centuries. . . . Men had held up their hands in horror at an anthropomorphic God, . . .

The First Vision clarified this whole matter. . . . 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. . . .

From the early days of Christianity, the erroneous doctrine of the nature of God had led to . . . 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. . . . 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 4-7)

The fact that Joseph Smith's first written account of the First Vision only mentioned one personage is consistent with what he believed about God when he wrote the Book of Mormon. 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 Father, being one God*, . . . (Book of Mormon, Mosiah 15:1, 2, 5)

The Book of Mormon tells of a visitation of the Father and the Son to the "brother of Jared," but the account is not speaking of 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, . . . (Ether 3:14)

The Book of Mormon clearly teaches that God the Father is a Spirit, and the first edition of the *Doctrine and Covenants* also contained a reference which stated that God is a Spirit. The evidence, therefore, indicates that Joseph Smith did not believe that God the Father had a body at the time he wrote his first account of the First Vision. Towards the end of his life, however, he changed his mind and decided that God was only an exalted man. Since he changed his mind concerning the Godhead, he evidently decided to change his story concerning the First Vision.

In *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* pages 143-162D, we demonstrated the confusion that has surrounded the First Vision ever since Joseph Smith first told his story. We also cover much of Wesley P. Walters' research showing that the vision could not have occurred in 1820 as Joseph Smith claimed. The evidence, in fact, shows that it could not have happened until 1824-25.

David O. McKay, the ninth president of the church, maintained that the First Vision is the very "foundation of this Church." Mormon apologist Paul R. Cheesman has stated that the LDS Church "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," page 64). Apostle Widtsoe boasted: The story of the First Vision need only 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 rests on a very sandy foundation. In fact, the way the story was changed by Joseph Smith makes it very difficult to believe that he had any type of a vision.



## 7. Trillions of Gods

In the book of Isaiah 44:8 we read: “. . . Is there a God besides me? Yea, there is no God; I know not any.” As we have already pointed out, Joseph Smith’s first published work, the Book of Mormon, seems to be in harmony with the teachings of the Bible, for it states that there is only one God. In Alma 11:26-31 we read as follows:

Now Zeezrom said unto him: Thou sayest there is a true and living God? And Amulek said: Yea, there is a true and living God. Now Zeezrom said: Is there more than one God? And he answered, No. Now Zeezrom said unto him again: How knowest thou these things? And he said: An angel hath made them known unto me.

The Bible teaches that “God is a Spirit” (John 4:24). The Book of Mormon also says that God is a Spirit. In Alma 18:26-28, the following is found: “And then Ammon said: Believest thou that there is a Great Spirit? And he said, Yea. And Ammon said: This is God.” The Book of Mormon, as we have already shown, teaches that Christ was “God himself” manifest in “the flesh” (Mosiah 15:1-5).

By the year 1844, Joseph Smith had completely disregarded the teachings of the Book of Mormon, for he declared that God was just an exalted man and that men could become Gods:

First, God himself, who sits enthroned in yonder heavens, is a man like unto one of yourselves, that is the great secret. . . . I am going to tell you how God came to be God. We have imagined that God was God from all eternity. . . . 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)

Mormon Apostle Orson Pratt made this statement concerning the plurality of Gods:

If we should take a million of worlds like this and number their particles, we should find that there are more Gods than there are particles of matter in those worlds. (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 2, page 345)

The LDS Church teaches that God the Father had a Father, and that God’s Father also had a Father, and so on. Brigham Young, the second president of the church, declared:

He [God] is our Father—the Father of our spirits, and was *once a man in mortal flesh* as we are, and is now an exalted being.

How many Gods there are, I do not know. But there never was a time when there were not Gods . . .

It appears ridiculous to the world, under their darkened and erroneous traditions, that God has once been a finite being; . . . (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 7, page 333)

Mormon Apostle Orson Pratt made it clear that God was once in a fallen state, died and was redeemed from the grave:

The Gods who dwell in the Heaven have been redeemed from the grave in a world which existed before the foundations of this earth were laid. They and the Heavenly body which they now inhabit were once in a fallen state. . . . they were exalted also, from fallen men to Celestial Gods to inhabit their Heaven forever and ever. (*The Seer*, January 1853, page 23)

We were begotten by our Father in Heaven; the person of our Father in Heaven was begotten on a previous heavenly world by His Father; and again, He was begotten by a still more ancient Father; and so on, from generation to generation, from one heavenly world to another still more ancient, until our minds are wearied and lost in the multiplicity of generations and successive worlds, and as a last resort, we wonder in our minds, how far back the genealogy extends, and how the first world was formed, and the first Father was begotten. But why does man seek for the first, . . . why then, do you seek for *a first personal Father in an endless genealogy*? (*Ibid.*, September 1853, page 132)

In a speech published in *The Ensign*, November 1975, page 80, Spencer W. Kimball, the twelfth president of the church, made some comments which were broadcast to those serving in the priesthood:

Brethren, 225,000 of you are here tonight. I suppose 225,000 of you may become gods. There seems to be plenty of space out there in the universe. And the Lord has proved that he knows how to do it. I think he could make, or probably have us help make, worlds for all of us, for every one of us 225,000.

On April 3, 1977, the *Salt Lake Tribune* reported:

President Spencer W. Kimball . . . told members of his faith Saturday night that they can attain godhood . . .

President Kimball said that “What man is, God has been and what God is, man seeks to become.”

On another occasion President Kimball stressed:

“Man can transform himself, but he has in him the seeds of Godhood that can grow. He can lift himself by his very bootstraps.” (*Ibid.*, September 18, 1974)

Marion G. Romney, who was second counselor in the First Presidency, referred to God as follows: “God is a perfected, saved soul enjoying eternal life” (*Ibid.*, October 6, 1974).

Because of their belief that God is only an exalted man, Mormon leaders teach that He had a mother as well as a wife. Brigham Young once stated: “Brother Kimball quoted a saying of Joseph the Prophet, that he would not worship a God who had not a Father; and I do not know that he would if he had not a mother; the one would be as absurd as the other” (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 9, page 286). Although Mormons do not worship God’s wife, they teach that she is our “Eternal Mother.” Apostle Bruce R. McConkie explained the doctrine:

Implicit in the Christian verity that all men are the spirit children of an Eternal Father is the usually unspoken truth that they are also the offspring of an Eternal Mother. An exalted and glorified Man of Holiness (Moses 6:57) could not be a Father unless a Woman of like glory, perfection, and holiness was associated with him as a Mother. The begetting of children makes a man a father and a woman a mother whether we are dealing with man in his mortal or immortal state.

This doctrine that there is a Mother in Heaven was affirmed in plainness by the First Presidency of the Church . . . they said that “man, as a spirit, was begotten and born of heavenly parents, and reared to maturity in the eternal mansion of the Father,” that man is the “offspring of *celestial parentage*,” and that “all men and women are in the similitude of the *universal Father and Mother*, and are *literally the sons and daughters of Deity*.” (*Mormon Doctrine*, 1979, page 561)

Christian theology teaches that males and females will be equal in the resurrection:

But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection. (Luke 20:35-36)

LDS Church leaders teach that both men and women can attain Godhood. Apostle McConkie said that “Godhood is not for men only, it is for men and women together” (*Mormon Doctrine*, page 844). While at first glance it appears that this would make men and women equal, a more careful examination of the doctrine reveals just the opposite. According Mormon theology, church members follow the same plan of eternal progression as God the Father. Now, if the “Eternal Mother” had really gained equality with her husband, we would expect the Mormons to pray to her. Apostle Orson Pratt, however, made it plain that the Eternal Mother’s Godhood is rather

insignificant when it is compared to her husband’s power. She, in fact, is to be in “the most perfect obedience” to her “great head”:

But if we have a heavenly Mother as well as a heavenly Father, is it not right that we should worship the Mother of our spirits as well as the Father? No; for the Father of our spirits is at the head of His household, and His wives and children are required to yield the most perfect obedience to their great Head. It is lawful for the children to worship the King of Heaven, but not the “Queen of heaven.” . . . Jesus prayed to His Father, and taught His disciples to do likewise; but we are nowhere taught that Jesus prayed to His heavenly Mother: neither did he pray to the Holy Ghost as his Father. (*The Seer*, page 159)

It would appear, then, that in Mormon theology the claim that a woman can obtain “Godhood” amounts to very little. Like the present “Heavenly Mother,” she will be required to “yield the most perfect obedience” to her “great Head”—i.e., her husband, while she continues to give birth to “many millions” of spirit children throughout all eternity. President Brigham Young once stated: “The man is the head and God of the woman, but let him act like a God in virtuous principles . . .” (Sermon of Brigham Young, as quoted in *Journals of John D. Lee*, 1846-47 and 1859, edited by Charles Kelly, 1938, page 81). Mormon theology would seem to teach that women who enter unto “Godhood” will find themselves serving their own husband in eternity rather than the God of the Bible. The more one studies the church’s teaching concerning the Mother God, the more obvious it becomes that women are considered to be spiritually inferior in Mormon theology. Since the church changed the anti-black doctrine, many Mormon women have come to see that they are the ones who will be “second class” citizens in heaven. Mormon leaders used to explain that blacks could not hold the priesthood because they were not valiant in the pre-existence, but no reason has been given for the inferiority of women in Mormon theology.

In *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* pages 164-172B, we show that although the Mormon leaders claim to have all the answers concerning the Godhead, a careful examination of their teachings reveals that they themselves are in a serious state of confusion. The honest investigator soon finds that the answers they give do not solve the real problems and that many of the answers are built upon the sandy foundation of change or falsification. The evidence clearly shows that the Mormon concept of God changed from a belief in one God to a plurality of Gods and finally culminated in the Adam-God doctrine—a doctrine that was later abandoned because it was considered blasphemous.

## 8. The Adam-God Doctrine

The Adam-God doctrine was a natural outgrowth of the doctrine of a plurality of Gods. Although this doctrine was not publicly taught until 1852, Adam was held in high esteem at the very beginning of the Mormon church. Adam, in fact is still venerated by Mormon leaders. Joseph Fielding Smith, who became the tenth president of the church in 1970, said that he did not “accuse Adam of a sin. . . . it is not always a sin to transgress a law” (*Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 1, page 114). Sterling W. Sill, who served as an Assistant to the Council of the Twelve Apostles, made these comments in 1965:

This old sectarian doctrine, built around the idea of man’s natural depravity and weakness inherited from Adam, is at the root of innumerable problems among us. Adam was one of the greatest men who ever lived . . .

Under Christ Adam yet stands at our head. . . . Adam fell, *but he fell in the right direction. He fell toward the goal.* . . .

Adam fell, but he fell upward. (*Deseret News*, Church Section, July 31, 1965, page 7)

It was on April 9, 1852, that Brigham Young, the second president of the Mormon church, startled the Christian world when he publicly preached the Adam-God doctrine:

Now hear it, O inhabitants of the earth, Jew and Gentile, Saint and sinner! When our father Adam came into the garden of Eden, he came into it with a celestial body, and brought Eve, one of his wives, with him. He helped to make and organize this world. He is MICHAEL, *the Arch-angel*, the ANCIENT OF DAYS! about whom holy men have written and spoken—*HE is our FATHER and our GOD, and the only God with whom WE have to do.* Every man upon the earth, professing Christians or non-professing, must hear it, and *will know it sooner or later.* . . . the earth was organized by three distinct characters, namely, Eloheim, Yahovah, and Michael, these three forming a quorum, as in all heavenly bodies, and in organizing element, perfectly represented in the Deity, as *Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.* (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 1, pages 50-51)

Although some members of the Mormon church had a hard time accepting Brigham Young’s revelation concerning Adam, the church’s publication *Latter-Day Saints’ Millennial Star*, vol. 16, page 534, made it very clear that it was a doctrine which had to be accepted:

Concerning the item of doctrine alluded to by Elder Caffall and others, viz., that Adam is our Father and God, I say do not trouble yourselves, . . . If, as Elder Caffall remarked, there are those who are waiting at the door of the Church for this objection to be removed, tell such, the prophet and Apostle Brigham Young has declared it, and that it is the word of the Lord.

Brigham Young continued to teach the Adam-God doctrine until his death in 1877. In 1873 he publicly declared that the doctrine had been revealed to him by God Himself:

How much unbelief exists in the minds of the Latter-day Saints in regard to one particular doctrine which I revealed to them, and which God revealed to me—namely that Adam is our Father and God . . . Our Father Adam helped to make this earth, . . . He brought one of his wives with him . . . Then he said, “I want my children who are in the spirit world to come and live here. . . . I once dwelt upon an earth something like this, in a mortal state. . . . I want my children that were born to me in the spirit world to come here and take tabernacles of flesh that their spirits may have a house, a tabernacle, or a dwelling place as mine has,” and where is the mystery? (*Deseret Evening News*, June 14, 1873)

President Brigham Young not only taught that Adam was the God whom Mormons should worship, but he also claimed that Jesus Christ was his son. In the notorious address delivered in the Mormon tabernacle on April 9, 1852, he asserted:

When the Virgin Mary conceived the child Jesus, the Father had begotten him in his own likeness. He was not begotten by the Holy Ghost. And who is the Father? He is the first of the human family; . . . Jesus, our older brother, was begotten in the flesh by the same character that was in the garden of Eden, and who is our Father in Heaven. (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 1, pages 50-51).

Wilford Woodruff, who became the fourth president of the Mormon church, recorded these interesting statements in his journal (photographs of these pages are found in our book, *LDS Apostle Confesses Brigham Young Taught Adam-God Doctrine*):

He [Brigham Young] said that our GOD was Father Adam He was the Father of the Savior Jesus Christ—Our God was no more or less than ADAM. (Wilford Woodruff Journal, February 19, 1854)

. . . [Orson Pratt] could not belie[ve] that Adam was our God or the Father of Jesus Christ—President You[n]g said that he was . . . (*Ibid.*, September 17, 1854)



Feb 15<sup>th</sup> I spent the time in school at-attended the children meeting in the evening near our prayer & spoke & sang

16<sup>th</sup> I spent the time at home during the day in school & the evening with the children of the 12<sup>th</sup> ward

17<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup> I spent the time trying to settle accounts

19<sup>th</sup> Sunday E. D. Woolley was called upon to preach a funeral sermon or rather upon the resurrection of the dead in some of the spirits had advanced some erroneous ideas concerning the resurrection Another Woolley had some incorrect ideas when he closed President Young followed & made many good remarks he said that who should have the same beneficial identical body that our spirits occupied while in this life our graves would literally be opened and our bodies come forth the question was asked if children that died in infancy lost any thing He said No a portion would not lose any thing they had not got children that died in infancy would be provided for in some way

→ 20<sup>th</sup> He said that our God was Father Adam He was the Father of the Savior Jesus Christ Our God was no more or less than ADAM. Michael the Archangel I attended meeting in the prayer circle in the evening & then went & preached to the 13<sup>th</sup> ward.

20<sup>th</sup> I spent the day at home in school with my children

21<sup>st</sup> I spent the day in the Council House Eldon <sup>19<sup>th</sup> 1855</sup> delivered a long and interesting address in the evening among his remarks he said what stony drink or any evil thing brings a man down from his dignity to a brute it has no power to exalt him I spent the evening with the 12<sup>th</sup> ward

22<sup>nd</sup> I spent the day at home & attended meeting in the evening at the 12<sup>th</sup> ward with the children & had a good time

23<sup>rd</sup> I spent the day at home with my children

24<sup>th</sup> I spent the day at home in the Council House and had an interesting discourse from Eldon Jimball

25<sup>th</sup> I spent the day at home with my children in school

26<sup>th</sup> Sunday we have a severe snow storm through this day & spent the day at home

27<sup>th</sup> The eastern mail came into day brought dates up to Dec 22<sup>nd</sup> containing the floating news of the day Europe is in war. China in revolution Hispania in civilizational burnd up at New York with many other things out to move

lead me." I was trying to think of the place where God is not, but it is impossible, unless you can find empty space; and there I believe He is not. If you can find such a place, it will become useful for a hiding place to those who wish to hide themselves from the presence of the Lord, in the great day of accounts. I will close this sermon, as I intend to preach another before I present the subject I more particularly wish to speak upon.

My next sermon will be to both Saint and sinner. One thing has remained a mystery in this kingdom up to this day. It is in regard to the character of the well-beloved Son of God, upon which subject the Elders of Israel have conflicting views. Our God and Father in heaven, is a being of tabernacle, or, in other words, He has a body, with parts the same as you and I have; and is capable of showing forth His works to organized beings, as, for instance, in the world in which we live, it is the result of the knowledge and infinite wisdom that dwell in His organized body. His son Jesus Christ has become a personage of tabernacle, and has a body like his father. The Holy Ghost is the Spirit of the Lord, and issues forth from Himself, and may properly be called God's minister to execute His will in immensity; being called to govern by His influence and power; but He is not a person of tabernacle as we are, and as our Father in Heaven and Jesus Christ are. The question has been, and is often, asked, who it was that begat the Son of the Virgin Mary. The infidel world have concluded that if what the Apostles wrote about his father and mother be true, and the present marriage discipline acknowledged by Christendom be correct, then Christians must believe that God, is the father of an illegitimate son, in the person of Jesus Christ! The infidel fraternity teach that to their disciples. I will tell you how it is. Our

Father in Heaven begat all the spirits that ever were, or ever will be, upon this earth; and they were born spirits in the eternal world. Then the Lord by His power and wisdom organized the mortal tabernacle of man. We were made first spiritual, and afterwards temporal.

Now hear it, O inhabitants of the earth, Jew and Gentile, Saint and sinner! When our father Adam came into the garden of Eden, he came into it with a celestial body, and brought Eve, one of his wives, with him. He helped to make and organize this world. He is MICHAEL, the Archangel, the ANCIENT OF DAYS! about whom holy men have written and spoken—He is our FATHER and our GOD, and the only God with whom we have to do. Every man upon the earth, professing Christians or non-professing, must hear it, and will know it sooner or later. They came here, organized the raw material, and arranged in their order the herbs of the field, the trees, the apple, the peach, the plum, the pear, and every other fruit that is desirable and good for man; the seed was brought from another sphere, and planted in this earth. The thistle, the thorn, the brier, and the obnoxious weed did not appear until after the earth was cursed. When Adam and Eve had eaten of the forbidden fruit, their bodies became mortal from its effects, and therefore their offspring were mortal. When the Virgin Mary conceived the child Jesus, the Father had begotten him in his own likeness. He was not begotten by the Holy Ghost. And who is the Father? He is the first of the human family; and when he took a tabernacle, it was begotten by his Father in heaven, after the same manner as the tabernacles of Cain, Abel, and the rest of the sons and daughters of Adam and Eve; from the fruits of the earth, the first earthly tabernacles were originated by the Father, and so

A photograph from Wilford Woodruff's Journal, February 19, 1854. Woodruff later became the fourth president of the church. The arrow points to the place where Woodruff quoted Brigham Young as saying: ". . . our God was Father Adam He was the Father of the Savior Jesus Christ—Our God was no more or less that ADAM."

A photograph from the Journal of discourses, vol. 1, page 50. Brigham Young declared that Adam is "our Father and our God, and the only god with whom we have to do."

. . . President Brigham You[n]g . . . said Adam was Michael the Ar[c]h angel & he was the Father of Jesus Christ & and was our God & that Joseph taught [word illegible] this Principl[e]. (*Ibid.*, December 16, 1869)

Just before his death, Brigham Young reaffirmed his teaching that Adam was God the Father and that Jesus was his son. On February 7, 1877, L. John Nuttall, recorded the following in his journal:

Wed 7 . . . Prest Young was filled with the spirit of God & revelation & said, . . . Father Adam's oldest son (Jesus the Savior) who is the heir of the family is Father Adam's first begotten in the spirit world, who according to the flesh is the only begotten as it is written. In his divinity he having gone back into the spirit world, and come in the spirit to Mary and she conceived . . . (Journal of L. John Nuttall, vol. 1, pages 18 and 21; a photograph from the original journal is found in *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* page 178-D)

The Mormon leaders continued to believe in the Adam-God doctrine after Brigham Young's death (see *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* page 177), but eventually the doctrine fell into disrepute and members of the church who continued to believe it were actually excommunicated. In a talk given at the BYU Marriott Center on June 1, 1980, Mormon Apostle Bruce R. McConkie warned that the doctrine which Brigham Young claimed God revealed to him was actually of the devil:

There are those who believe, or say they believe, that Adam is our father and our God, . . . The devil keeps this heresy alive . . . It is contrary to the whole plan of salvation . . . and anyone who has received the temple endowment and who yet believes the Adam-God theory does not deserve to be saved.

For many years the Mormon church was engaged in a cover-up with regard to the Adam-God doctrine. Mormon Apostle John A. Widtsoe wrote:

. . . there are those who have nursed the irrational conclusion that President Young implied that Adam and God, the Father, are one and the same individual.

Brigham Young's much-discussed sermon says that "Jesus was begotten in the flesh by the same character that was in the Garden of Eden, and who is our Father in heaven." Enemies of the church or stupid people, . . . have heralded far and wide that the Mormons believe that Jesus Christ was begotten of Adam. (*Evidences and Reconciliations*, 3 volumes in 1, page 56)

While the General Authorities of the Mormon church emphatically denied that Brigham Young taught the Adam-God doctrine, we marshalled a great deal of

evidence in *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* which seemed to be irrefutable. A number of other scholars gathered even more material showing that Brigham Young taught the Adam-God doctrine and that Jesus was Adam's son. Finally, Mormon Apostle Bruce R. McConkie caved in under the weight of all this evidence and admitted almost everything we had written in our book. In a letter to Eugene England, dated February 19, 1981, he conceded that Brigham Young did teach the Adam-God doctrine and also acknowledged that it was a false doctrine:

This may well be the most important letter you have or will receive. . . . I want you to know that I am extending to you the hand of fellowship though I hold over you at the same time, the scepter of judgment. . . .

On Sunday, June 1, 1980, I spoke at one of the multi-stake firesides . . . I said: "There are those who believe or say they believe that Adam is our father and our God, that he is the father of our spirits and our bodies, and that he is the one we worship." I, of course, indicated the utter absurdity of this doctrine and said it was *totally false*. . . . I have received violent reactions from Ogden Kraut and other cultists in which they have expounded upon the views of Brigham Young and others . . . They have plain and clear quotations saying all of the things about Adam which I say are false. *The quotations are in our literature* and form the basis of a worship system followed by many of the cultists who have been excommunicated . . . I also received, of course, your material in which you quote from Brigham Young and others of the early Brethren saying God is progressing in knowledge. . . .

Now may I say something for your guidance and enlightenment. . . . As it happens, I am a great admirer of Brigham Young and a great believer in his doctrinal presentations. He was called of God. He was guided by the Holy Spirit in his teachings in general. He was a mighty prophet. He led Israel the way the Lord wanted his people led. . . . He completed his work and has gone on to eternal exaltation.

Nonetheless, as Joseph Smith so pointedly taught, *a prophet is not always a prophet, only when he is acting as such*. Prophets are men and they make mistakes. Sometimes they *err in doctrine*. . . .

Yes, *President Young did teach that Adam was the father of our spirits*, and all the related things that the cultists ascribe to him. . . . He expressed views that are *out of harmony with the gospel*. But, be it known, Brigham Young also taught accurately and correctly, the status and position of Adam in the eternal scheme of things. What I am saying is, that Brigham Young contradicted Brigham Young, and the issue becomes one of which Brigham Young we will believe. The answer is we will believe the expressions that accord with the teachings in the Standard Works. . . . *As for me and my house, we will have the good sense to choose*

*between the divergent teachings of the same man and come up with those that accord with what God has set forth in his eternal plan of salvation. . . . I do not know all of the providences of the Lord, but I do know that he permits false doctrine to be taught in and out of the Church . . . If we believe false doctrine, we will be condemned. If that belief is on basic and fundamental things, it will lead us astray and we will lose our souls. . . . people who teach false doctrine in the fundamental and basic things will lose their souls. The nature and kind of being that God is, is one of these fundamentals. I repeat: Brigham Young erred in some of his statements on the nature and kind of being that God is and as to the position of Adam in the plan of salvation, but Brigham Young also taught the truth in these fields on other occasions. And I repeat, that in his instance, he was a great prophet and has gone on to eternal reward. What he did is not a pattern for any of us. If we choose to believe and teach the false portions of his doctrines, we are making an election that will damn us. . . .*

*If it is true, as I am advised, that you speak on this subject of the progression of God at firesides and elsewhere, you should cease to do so. . . . it is my province to teach to the Church what the doctrine is. It is your province to echo what I say or to remain silent. You do not have a divine commission to correct me or any of the Brethren. . . . If I lead the Church astray, that is my responsibility, but the fact still remains that I am the one appointed with all the rest involved so to do. . . . those at the head of the Church have the obligation to teach that which is in harmony with the Standard Works. If they err then be silent on the point and leave the event in the hands of the Lord. If I err, that is my problem; but in your case if you single out some of these things and make them the center of your philosophy, and end up being wrong, you will lose your soul. . . .*

*Now I hope you will ponder and pray and come to a basic understanding of fundamental things and that unless and until you can on all points, you will remain silent on those where differences exist between you and the Brethren. This is the course of safety. I advise you to pursue it. If you do not, perils lie ahead. . . . I am taking the liberty of so speaking to you at this time, and become thus a witness against you if you do not take the counsel. (Letter from Apostle Bruce R. McConkie, to Eugene England, dated February 19, 1981; photographically reproduced in *LDS Apostle Confesses Brigham Young Taught Adam-God Doctrine*)*

It seems strange that Apostle McConkie would write such a threatening letter to Eugene England. As far as we know, England did not teach the Adam-God doctrine. It seems that his only offense was that he believed Brigham Young's teaching that God is progressing in knowledge. In any case, now that Apostle McConkie has admitted that "President Young did teach" the Adam-

God doctrine, Mormons should seriously consider the grave implications of the matter. This teaching is clearly a violation of the commandment, "thou shalt have no other gods before me" (Exodus 10:3). In his book, *Mormon Doctrine*, 1979, page 270, Apostle McConkie said: "There is no salvation in the worship of false gods. For such false worship the Lord imposed the death penalty in ancient Israel (Deut. 13:6-11). Since McConkie admits that Brigham Young taught the Adam-God doctrine and says that those who believe it today do "not deserve to be saved," we do not see how he can still maintain that Brigham Young was "a mighty prophet." We feel, in fact, that there is only one conclusion that an unbiased person could possibly reach—i.e., Brigham Young was a false prophet who tried to lead his people into serving another god. In his booklet, *Adam is God???* pages 3-4, Chris Vlachos observed:

Now if Brigham Young, Mormon prophet from 1847 to 1877, were a false prophet all along, then the claims of those who have sought to derive their priesthood authority through him are empty and void. If Brigham taught false doctrine, that cuts the ground from under Mormonism's claim of latter-day prophetic revelation and the Mormon Church is not divinely led. . . . Brigham Young, who presided over the Mormon Church longer than any other man, did indeed advance false doctrine that focused worship on a god other than the Lord God of Israel.

According to the reasoning that Apostle McConkie used in his letter, Brigham Young could teach the Adam-God doctrine and go "on to eternal reward," but those who accept this doctrine today stand in danger of losing their souls. While McConkie threatens Mormons who believe the doctrine with damnation, Brigham Young gave the same warning to those who rejected it. After stating that Adam "is our Father and our God, and the only God with whom WE have to do," President Young made this emphatic declaration:

Now, let all who may hear these doctrines, pause before they make light of them, or treat them with indifference, for they will prove their salvation or damnation. (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 1, pages 50-51)

While we feel that Bruce R. McConkie was correct in denouncing the Adam-God doctrine, if we accepted Brigham Young as a prophet, we would be forced to believe that McConkie was the one who lost his soul. Apostle McConkie certainly made "light" of Brigham Young's teachings concerning Adam. On page 4 of his letter he spoke of the "utter absurdity" of the Adam-God doctrine and claimed that it was "totally false."

## 9. The Virgin Birth

The idea that God is only an exalted man has led Mormon leaders to proclaim a doctrine about the birth of Christ which is very shocking to orthodox Christians. President Brigham Young once asserted: “Now, remember from this time forth and for ever, that Jesus Christ was *not begotten by the Holy Ghost*” (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 1, page 51). This statement is in conflict with both the Bible and the Book of Mormon. In Matthew 1:18 and 20 we read: “Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. . . . for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.” The Book of Mormon agrees with the Bible on this point, for in Alma 7:10 we find:

And behold, he shall be born of Mary, at Jerusalem which is the land of our fore-fathers, she being a virgin, a precious and chosen vessel, who shall be overshadowed and conceive by the power of the Holy Ghost, and bring forth a son, yea, even the Son of God.

In spite of these plain statements, Joseph Fielding Smith, the tenth president of the LDS Church, denied that the Book of Mormon and the Bible teach Christ was begotten by the Holy Ghost: “They tell us the Book of Mormon states that Jesus was begotten of the Holy Ghost. I challenge the statement. The Book of Mormon teaches no such thing! Neither does the Bible” (*Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 1, page 19).

The reason Joseph Fielding Smith objected to the teaching that Jesus was begotten by the Holy Ghost is that, according to Mormon theology, this would make Jesus the son of the Holy Ghost rather than the Son of God the Father. This idea arises from an improper understanding of the term Holy Ghost. This term means exactly the same as the term Holy Spirit. The *American College Dictionary* defines the term “Holy Spirit” as “the Holy Ghost.” Now, since the Bible tells us that God is a Spirit and that He is holy, it is apparent that God Himself must be the Holy Spirit. So we see that there is no contradiction in saying that Jesus was begotten by the Holy Ghost and also is the Son of God.

Since Christians believe that God is a Spirit, they view the conception of Christ as a miraculous event having nothing to do with sex or any physical act. Mormon theology, on the other hand, teaches that God is an exalted man and that Christ was conceived through a sexual act between Mary and God the Father. In other words, the birth of Christ is considered a natural, rather than a miraculous occurrence. Joseph Fielding Smith, Jr.,

made this plain in his book, *Religious Truth Defined*, page 44: “The birth of the Savior was a natural occurrence unattended with any degree of mysticism, and *the Father God was the literal parent of Jesus in the flesh* as well, as in the spirit.” President Joseph Fielding Smith declared: “Christ was begotten of God. He was not born without the aid of Man, and that Man was God!” (*Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 1, page 18).

Apostle Bruce R. McConkie further explained:

These name-titles all signify that our Lord is the only Son of the Father in the flesh. Each of the words is to be understood *literally*. Only means *only*; Begotten means *begotten*; and Son means *son*. Christ was begotten by an Immortal Father *in the same way that mortal men are begotten by mortal fathers*. (*Mormon Doctrine*, 1979, pages 546-547)

And Christ was born into the world as the *literal* Son of this Holy Being; he was born in the same personal, real, and *literal sense that any mortal son is born to a mortal father*. *There is nothing figurative about his paternity*; he was begotten, conceived and born in the *normal and natural course of events*, . . . Christ is the *Son of Man*, meaning that his Father (the Eternal God!) is a Holy Man. (*Ibid.*, page 742)

The Mormon writer Carlfred B. Broderick made these comments:

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

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

President Brigham Young had this to say concerning the birth of Christ: “The man Joseph, the husband of Mary, did not, that we know of, have more than one wife, but Mary the wife of Joseph had another husband” (*Deseret News*, October 10, 1866). The same type of reasoning led Apostle Orson Pratt to say:

The fleshly body of Jesus required a Mother as well as a Father. Therefore, the Father and Mother of Jesus, according to the flesh, must have been associated together in the capacity of Husband and Wife; hence the Virgin Mary may have been, for the time being, the lawful wife of God the Father: we use the term lawful Wife, because it would be



against him, and he should be frowned upon by all high-minded and virtuous persons. Wealth, influence and position should not screen him from their righteous indignation. His sin is one of the blackest in the calendar of crime, and he should be cast down from the high pinnacle of respectability and consideration, to find his place among the worst of felons.

Every virtuous woman desires a husband to whom she can look for guidance and protection through this world. God has placed this desire in woman's nature. It should be respected by the stronger sex. Any man who takes advantage of this, and humbles a daughter of Eve to rob her of her virtue, and cast her off dishonored and defiled, is her destroyer, and is responsible to God for the deed. If the refined Christian society of the nineteenth century will tolerate such a crime, God will not; but he will call the perpetrator to an account. He will be damned; in hell he will lift up his eyes, being in torment, until he has paid the uttermost farthing, and made a full atonement for his sins. It is this very class of men, though not all of them, who have set up such a howl against the doctrine of polygamy, which is so much despised and which was believed in and practiced by the ancients—by the very men who are held up to us as patterns of all the piety that was ever exhibited through man upon the face of the earth.

This matter was a little changed in the case of the Savior of the world, the Son of the living God. The man Joseph, the husband of Mary, did not, that we know of, have more than one wife, but Mary the wife of Joseph had another husband. On this account infidels have called the Savior a bastard. This is merely a human opinion upon one of the inscrutable doings of the Almighty. That very babe that was cradled in

the manger, was begotten, not by Joseph, the husband of Mary, but by another Being. Do you inquire by whom? He was begotten by God our heavenly Father. This answer may suffice you—you need never inquire more upon that point. Jesus Christ is the only begotten of the Father, and he is the Savior of the world, and full of grace and truth. It is not polygamy that men fight against when they persecute this people; but, still, if we continue to be faithful to our God, he will defend us in doing what is right. If it is wrong for a man to have more than one wife at a time, the Lord will reveal it by and by, and he will put it away that it will not be known in the Church.

I did not ask Him for the revelation upon this subject. When that revelation was first read to me by Joseph Smith, I plainly saw the great trials and the abuse of it that would be made by many of the Elders, and the trouble and the persecution that it would bring upon this whole people. But the Lord revealed it, and it was my business to accept it.

Now, we as Christians desire to be saved in the kingdom of God. We desire to attain to the possession of all the blessings there are for the most faithful man or people that ever lived upon the face of the earth, even him who is said to be the father of the faithful, Abraham of old. We wish to obtain all that father Abraham obtained. I wish here to say to the Elders of Israel, and to all the members of this Church and kingdom, that it is in the hearts of many of them to wish that the doctrine of polygamy was not taught and practiced by us. It may be hard for many, and especially for the ladies, yet it is no harder for them than it is for the gentlemen. It is the word of the Lord, and I wish to say to you, and all the world, that if you desire with all your hearts to obtain the

pure, and sublime attributes which are perfected in all their fulness in themselves.

If none but Gods will be permitted to multiply immortal children, it follows that each God must have one or more wives. God, the Father of our spirits, became the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ according to the flesh. Hence, the Father saith concerning him, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." We are informed in the first chapter of Luke, that Mary was chosen by the Father as a choice virgin, through whom He begat Jesus. The angel said unto the Virgin Mary, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore, also, that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." After the power of the Highest had overshadowed Mary, and she had by that means conceived, she related the circumstance to her cousin Elizabeth in the following words: "He that is Mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is His name." It seems from this relation that the Holy Ghost accompanied "the Highest" when He overshadowed the Virgin Mary and begat Jesus; and from this circumstance some have supposed that the body of Jesus was begotten of the Holy Ghost without the instrumentality of the immediate presence of the Father. There is no doubt that the Holy Ghost came upon Mary to sanctify her, and make her holy, and prepare her to endure the glorious presence of "the Highest," that when "He" should "overshadow" her she might conceive, being filled with the Holy Ghost; hence the angel said, as recorded in Matthew, "That which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost;" that is, the Holy Ghost gave her strength to abide the presence of the Father without being consumed; but it was the personage of the Father who begat the body of Jesus; and for this reason Jesus is called "the Only Begotten of the Father;" that is, the only one in this world whose fleshly body was begotten by the Father. There were millions of sons

and daughters whom He begat before the foundation of this world, but they were spirits, and not bodies of flesh and bones; whereas, both the spirit and body of Jesus were begotten by the Father—the spirit having been begotten in heaven many ages before the tabernacle was begotten upon the earth.

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

As God the Father begat the fleshly body of Jesus, so He, before the world began, begat his spirit. As the body required an earthly Mother, so his

A photograph from the *Journal of Discourses*, vol. 11, page 268. Brigham Young claimed that Mary had another husband.

A photograph from *The Seer*, page 158. Apostle Orson Pratt asserted that Mary and God the Father associated together in the capacity of husband and wife.

blasphemous in the highest degree to say that He overshadowed her or begat the Saviour unlawfully. It would have been unlawful for any man to have interfered with Mary, who was already espoused to Joseph; for such a heinous crime would have subjected both the guilty parties to death, according to the law of Moses. But God having created all men and women, had the most perfect right to do with his own creation, according to His holy will and pleasure: He had a lawful right to overshadow the Virgin Mary in the capacity of a husband, and beget a Son, although she was espoused to another; for the law which He gave to govern men and women was not intended to govern Himself, or to prescribe rules for his own conduct. It was also lawful in Him, after having dealt with Mary, to give her to Joseph her espoused husband. Whether God the Father gave Mary to Joseph for time only, or for time and eternity, we are not informed. Inasmuch as God was the first husband to her, it may be that He only gave her to be the wife of Joseph while in this mortal state, and that He intended after the resurrection to again take her as one of his own wives to raise up immortal spirits in eternity. (*The Seer*, October 1853, page 158)

Brigham Young maintained that “The birth of the Saviour was as natural as are the births of our children; it was the result of natural action. He partook of flesh and blood—was begotten of his Father, as we were of our fathers” (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 8, page 115). In a sermon delivered in the Tabernacle on April 9, 1852, President Young climaxed his teaching with the following explanation:

... remember from this time forth, and for ever, that Jesus Christ was *not begotten by the Holy Ghost*. I will repeat a little anecdote. I was in conversation with a certain learned professor upon the subject, when I replied, to this idea—“if the Son was begotten by the Holy Ghost, it would be very dangerous to baptize and confirm females, and give the Holy Ghost to them, lest he should beget children, to be palmed upon the Elders by the people, bringing the Elders into great difficulties.” (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 1, page 51)

The LDS doctrine concerning the birth of Christ certainly raises more questions than it answers. For instance, in Mormon theology we learn that both Jesus and Mary were previously born to God the Father and His wife in a pre-existent state. From this it is clear that Jesus was the spirit brother of Mary. Since Mary was the spirit daughter of the Father, wouldn't this make an incestuous relationship for God to have had a sexual relationship with her? A careful examination of the Mormon teaching concerning the conception of Christ reveals that it is far closer to paganism than it is to Christianity!

## 10. Joseph Smith

The importance of Joseph Smith in Mormon theology cannot be overemphasized. President Brigham Young made many boastful statements concerning the importance of Joseph Smith:

Well, now, examine the character of the Savior, and examine the characters of those who have written the Old and New Testaments; and then compare them with the character of Joseph Smith, the founder of this work . . . and you will find that *his character stands as fair as that of any man's mentioned in the Bible*. We can find no person who presents a better character to the world when the facts are known than Joseph Smith, Jun., the prophet, and his brother Hyrum Smith, who was murdered with him. (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 14, page 203)

... no man or woman in this dispensation will ever enter into the celestial kingdom of God *without the consent of Joseph Smith*. . . . Every man and woman must have the certificate of Joseph Smith, junior, as a passport to their entrance into the mansion where God and Christ are . . . I cannot go there without his consent. . . . He reigns there as supreme a being in his sphere, capacity, and calling, as God does in heaven. (*Ibid.*, vol. 7, page 289)

... I am an Apostle of Joseph Smith. . . . all who reject my testimony will go to hell, so sure as there is one, no matter whether it be hot or cold . . . (*Ibid.*, vol. 3, page 212)

I will now give my scripture—“Whosoever confesseth that Joseph Smith was sent of God . . . that spirit is of God; and every spirit that does not confess that God has sent Joseph Smith, and revealed the everlasting Gospel to and through him, is of Antichrist . . . (*Ibid.*, vol. 8, page 176)

Heber C. Kimball, a member of the First Presidency under Brigham Young, said that the time would come when people would “prize brother Joseph Smith as the Prophet of the Living God, and look upon him as a God, . . .” (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 5, page 88). Mormons tend to elevate Joseph Smith almost to the same level as Jesus Christ. Mormon writer, John J. Stewart surmised that Smith was “perhaps the most Christ-like man to live upon the earth since Jesus himself” (*Joseph Smith, the Mormon Prophet*, page 1). It is interesting, however, to compare this with a statement attributed to Joseph Smith in the *History of the Church*, vol. 5, page 335: “I am not so much a ‘Christian’ as many suppose I am. When a man undertakes to ride me for a horse, I feel disposed to kick up and throw him off, and ride him.”

The following appeared in *Tiffany's Monthly* in 1859, page 170:

People sometimes wonder that the Mormon can revere Joseph Smith. That they can by any means make a Saint of him. But they must remember, that the Joseph Smith preached in England, and the one shot at Carthage, Ill., are not the same. The ideal prophet differs widely from the real person. To one, ignorant of his character, he may be idealized and be made the impersonation of every virtue. He may be associated in the mind with all that is pure, true, lovely and divine. Art may make him, indeed, an object of religious veneration. But remember, the Joseph Smith thus venerated, is not the real, actual Joseph Smith . . . but one that art has created.

### A Fighting Prophet

Joseph Smith was a man of great physical strength. He enjoyed wrestling and other sports where he could display his strength. Under the date of March 13, 1843, we find this entry in the *History of the Church*, vol. 5, page 302: "I wrestled with William Wall, the most expert wrestler in Ramus and threw him."

On a number of occasions Joseph Smith allowed his anger to get the best of him. Benjamin F. Johnson, who almost worshipped Smith, admitted that he sometimes lost his temper and resorted to physical violence:

. . . although so social and even convivial [*sic*] at times, he would allow no arrogance or undue liberties. Criticisms, even by his associates, were rarely acceptable. Contradictions would arouse in him the lion at once. By no one of his fellows would he be superseded. In the early days at Kirtland, and elsewhere, one or another of his associates, were rarely acceptable. Contradictions would arouse in him the lion at once. By no one of his fellows would he be superseded. In the early days at Kirtland, and elsewhere, one or another of his associates were more than once, for their impudence, helped from the congregation by his foot. (Letter by Benjamin F. Johnson, 1903, as printed in *Testimony of Joseph Smith's Best Friend*, pages 4-5)

Calvin Stoddard once testified that "Smith came up and knocked him in the forehead with his flat hand—the blow knocked him down, when Smith repeated the blow four or five times, very hard—made him blind—that Smith afterwards came to him and asked his forgiveness" (*Conflict at Kirtland*, page 132). In the same book, page 268, Mormon writer Max Parkin quotes Luke Johnson as saying that when a minister insulted Joseph Smith at Kirtland, Ohio, Smith "boxed his ears with both hands, and turning his face towards the door kicked him into the street . . ." The *History of the Church*, vol. 5, page 316, tells of a fight Joseph Smith had in Nauvoo: "Josiah Butterfield came to my house and insulted me so outrageously that I kicked him out

of the house, across the yard, and into the street." Page 524 of the same volume relates another incident where Joseph Smith became so angry at a man by the name of Walter Bagby that he "struck him two or three times." Smith was fined "for the assault," and later admitted that he had tried to choke Bagby: "I met him, and he gave me some abusive language, taking up a stone to throw at me: I seized him by the throat to choke him off" (*Ibid.*, page 531). In Joseph Smith's diary under the date of January 1, 1843, he related that he "whipped" seven men at once and on another occasion had "whipped" a Baptist minister "till he begged."

Joseph Smith seemed to have a very deep interest in military matters which is reflected in the Book of Mormon. It is filled with accounts of wars and bloodshed. Dr. Hugh Nibley claims there are "170 pages of war and alarms" in that book. Only four years after Smith published the Book of Mormon, he organized an army and marched "to Missouri to 'redeem Zion.'" This project was a complete failure. In 1838 he had the Mormons organized into an army at Far West, Missouri, but he ended up surrendering to the militia. At Nauvoo, Illinois, the Mormons organized the Nauvoo Legion. Robert Bruce Flanders explains: "The crowning provision of the charter gave the city its own little army, the famous Nauvoo Legion. . . . The Legion was therefore independent of and not subject to the military laws of Illinois" (*Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi*, page 100). On pages 112-113, Flanders goes on to state: "The record clearly reveals that Lieutenant General (he preferred the full title) Smith set great store by his military role. . . . As the city grew, so did the Legion, exciting apprehension among gentiles in the vicinity concerning the nature and intent of the Mormon kingdom."

Joseph Smith loved military displays (see *History of the Church*, vol. 5, page 3) and seems to have desired to lead a large army. He, in fact, prepared a "Petition to the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States, dated 26th March, [1844] asking the privilege of raising 100,000 men to extend protection to persons wishing to settle Oregon and other portions of the territory of the United States, and extend protection to the people in Texas" (*History of the Church*, vol. 6, page 282; see page 277 for the text of this petition).

Joseph Smith's military plans and maneuvers were very disturbing to the non-Mormons who lived around Nauvoo. On July 21, 1841, the anti-Mormon paper, *Warsaw Signal* reported:

How military these people are becoming! Everything they say or do seems to breathe the spirit of military tactics. Their prophet appears, on all occasions, in his sp[er]idid regimental dress[,] signs his name Lieut. General, and more titles are to be found in the Nauvoo Legion, than any one book on military tactics can produce; . . . Truly fighting must, be a part of the creed of these Saints!

The first Mormon Prophet seems to have envisioned himself as a great military leader. His diary for April 2, 1842, tells of a dream and interpretation which indicated that the U. S. Government would plead with Smith for his help against a foreign foe.

### Greater Than Jesus?

In 1843 Charlotte Haven wrote some letters from Nauvoo which contain some candid observations about Joseph Smith:

Joseph Smith . . . is evidently a great egotist and boaster, for he frequently remarked that at every place he stopped going to and from Springfield people crowded around him, and expressed surprise that he was so “handsome and good looking.” (*Overland Monthly*, December, 1890, page 621)

He talked incessantly about himself, what he had done and could do more than other mortals, and remarked that he was “a giant physically and mentally.” In fact, he seemed to forget that he was a man. . . . They say he is very kindhearted, and always ready to give shelter and help to the needy. (*Ibid.*, page 623)

I rushed out with the umbrella to shield Mrs. Smith, the others followed, . . . Mrs. Smith was pleasant and social, more so than we had ever seen her before, . . . while her husband is the greatest egotist I ever met. (*Ibid.*, page 631)

Josiah Quincy related:

In a tone half-way between jest and earnest, and which might have been taken for either at the option of the hearer, the prophet put this inquiry: “Is not here *one greater than Solomon*, who built a Temple with the treasures of his father David and with assistance of Hiram [*sic*], King of Tyre? Joseph Smith has built his Temple with no one to aid him in the work.” (*Figures of the Past*, as cited in *Among the Mormons*, page 138)

A reporter who visited Joseph Smith wrote in 1843:

We spent about an hour . . . the prophet himself, with amazing volubility, occupying the most of the time, and his whole theme was himself. Let us give what turn we would to the conversation, he would adroitly bring it back to himself. . . . he said: “The world persecutes me, it has always persecuted me . . . When I have proved that I am right, and get all the world subdued under me, I think I shall deserve something.” (*The New York Spectator*, September 23, 1843)

The *History of the Church* contains some statements which seem to show that Joseph Smith felt he was almost equal with God:

I am a lawyer; I am a big lawyer and comprehend heaven, earth and hell, to bring forth knowledge that

shall cover up all lawyers, doctors and other big bodies. (vol. 5, page 289)

Don’t employ lawyers, or pay them for their knowledge, for I have learned that they don’t know anything. *I know more than they all.* (vol. 5, page 467)

I combat the errors of ages; I meet the violence of mobs; I cope with illegal proceedings from executive authority; I cut the gordian knot of powers, and I solve mathematical problems of universities, with truth—diamond truth; and *God* is my “right hand man.” (vol. 6, page 78)

God made Aaron to be the mouth piece for the children of Israel, and He will *make me be god to you* in His stead, and the Elders to be mouth for me; and if you don’t like it, *you must lump it.* (vol. 6, pages 319-320)

If they want a beardless boy to whip all the world, I will get on the top of a mountain and crow like a rooster: I shall always beat them. . . . *I have more to boast of than ever any man had.* I am the only man that has ever been able to keep a whole church together since the days of Adam. A large majority of the whole have stood by me. Neither Paul, John, Peter, nor Jesus ever did it. *I boast that no man ever did such a work as I. The followers of Jesus ran away from Him*, but the Latter-day Saints never ran away from me yet. (vol. 6, pages 408-409)

### A King For President

Toward the end of his life, Joseph Smith seems to have become obsessed with a desire for power and fame. He set up a secret “Council of Fifty” and had himself ordained to be a King. In 1853 William Marks, who had been a member of the Council of Fifty, revealed:

I was also witness of the introduction (secretly,) of a kingly form of government, in which *Joseph suffered himself to be ordained a king*, to reign over the house of Israel forever; which I could not conceive to be in accordance with the laws of the church, but I did not oppose this move, thinking it none of my business. (*Zion’s Harbinger and Baneemy’s Organ*, St. Louis, July 1853, page 53)

When Fawn Brodie stated that Joseph Smith was anointed King, Dr. Hugh Nibley argued that there was not enough evidence to support this accusation. Since that time a great deal of new evidence has come to light. For instance, under the date of April 11, 1844, Joseph Smith’s private secretary William Clayton, who was himself a member of the Council of Fifty, recorded the following in his journal: “We had a glorious interview. Pres. J. was voted our P. P. & K. with loud Hosannas” (William Clayton Journal, April 11, 1844, as cited by Andrew Ehat in *Brigham Young University Studies*, Spring 1980,

page 267). In a footnote on the same page Ehat said that the letters “P. P. & K.” stood for “Prophet, Priest and King.” That this interpretation is correct is verified by William Clayton himself in some “Reflections” he wrote in his journal on January 1, 1845: “In this Council was Prest Joseph chosen our Prophet, Priest and King by Hosannas” (*Ibid.*, page 268).

D. Michael Quinn, who served as professor of American History at Brigham Young University, revealed that there is even an unpublished revelation revealing that Joseph Smith was ordained as King:

Although it has been suggested that William Marks’ statements referred to conventional LDS temple rites rather than to a theocratic ceremony, the evidence does not support this objection. Aside from the contemporary account of William Clayton and some reminiscent descriptions by William Marks, the revelation to the Council of Fifty on 27 June 1882 also stated that God called Joseph Smith, Jr., “to be a Prophet, Seer and Revelator to my Church and Kingdom; and to be a King and Ruler over Israel.” (*BYU Studies*, Winter, 1980, page 186)

That the ceremony included an anointing with oil seems to be verified by the fact that it was used when John Taylor, the third president of the church, was made King in 1885. Dr. Quinn cites the following from a “Manuscript in Franklin D. Richards Miscellaneous Papers, Church Archives”:

... President Taylor stated the object of the Council directed Br Nuttall to read a Revelation which he said he received more than a year ago requiring him to be anointed & set apart as a King Priest and ruler over Israel on the Earth . . . L. Snow consecrated a bottle of oil. Counselor Cannon anointed President John Taylor and we all laid hands on the Pres. & Geo. Q. sealed the anointing according to a written form which had been prepared. (*Ibid.*, page 187)

Quinn feels that Joseph F. Smith, the sixth president, may have been anointed King because in 1911 he was addressed “as ‘prophet, President and King’ in a letter regarding the Council of Fifty” (*Ibid.*, page 188).

In any case, the same year that Joseph Smith was anointed King, the Council of Fifty decided to run him for the presidency of the United States. Mormon writer Klaus J. Hansen said that “the Council of Fifty, while seriously contemplating the possibility of emigration, also considered a rather spectacular alternative, namely, to run its leader for the presidency of the United States in the campaign of 1844. . . . Smith and the Council of Fifty seem to have taken the election quite seriously, much more so, indeed, than both Mormons and anti-Mormons have heretofore suspected” (*Quest for Empire*, page 74).

The elders of the church were actually called to electioneer for Joseph Smith. At a special meeting of the elders on April 9, 1844, Brigham Young declared: “It is now time to have a President of the United States. Elders will be sent to preach the Gospel and electioneer” (*History of the Church*, vol. 6, page 322). Mormon writer John J. Stewart referred to those who were sent to campaign as a “vast force of political missionaries” (*Joseph Smith, the Mormon Prophet*, page 209). On January 29, 1844, Joseph Smith boasted: “There is oratory enough in the Church to carry me into the presidential chair the first slide” (*History of the Church*, vol. 6, page 188). On March 7, 1844, Smith was reported to have said: “When I get hold of the Eastern papers, and see how popular I am, I am afraid myself that I shall be elected . . .” (*Ibid.*, page 243).

The fact that Joseph Smith would allow himself to be crowned King shows that he was driven by the idea of gaining power. It is very possible that Smith seriously believed that he would become president and that he would rule as King over the people of the United States. This attempt to become president seems to have been a treasonous plot to bring the United States government under the rule of the priesthood. Klaus J. Hansen observed: “But what if, through a bold stroke, he could capture the United States for the Kingdom? The Council of Fifty thought there might be a chance and nominated the Mormon prophet for the Presidency of the United States” (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Autumn 1966, page 67). At any rate, before the election took place Joseph Smith was assassinated. Thus he was unable to establish the kingdom he had planned.

### **Destruction of the Expositor**

One of the most important factors leading to Joseph Smith’s death was his interference in politics. On July 15, 1842, this statement appeared in the *Sangamo Journal*, published at Springfield, Illinois: “We received the Mormons into this state as we did every other sect. Disclosures have shown that the head of that church acts not under the influence of that pure religion which Jesus Christ established upon the earth; and that his vaulting ambition would secure to himself the control of our State elections.” Thomas Ford, who was governor of Illinois at the time of Joseph Smith’s assassination, similarly explained: “But the great cause of popular fury was that the Mormons at several preceding elections had cast their vote as a unit, . . . This one principle and practice of theirs arrayed against them in deadly hostility all aspirants for office who were not sure of their support, all who have been unsuccessful in elections, and all who were too proud to court their influence, all their friends and connections” (*History of Illinois*, as quoted in *History of the Church*, vol. 7, pages 2-3).

Joseph Smith admitted that the Mormons were united in their politics but claimed they “were driven to union in their elections by persecution” (*History of the Church*, vol. 5, page 232). Although it is true that the Mormons were persecuted, evidence shows that much of this persecution was the result of Joseph Smith’s intemperate speech and actions (see *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* page 256). In discussing factors that stirred the conflict in Illinois, Mormon scholar Kenneth W. Godfrey wrote:

Antagonism toward the Mormon Prophet was further incited when it was correctly rumored, that he had been ordained “King over the Immediate House of Israel” by the Council of Fifty. . . . newspapers and tracts repeatedly charged that the Prophet conducted himself like a dictator and that his actions were not only treasonable but a violation of the constitutional principle that church and state should be disassociated. Thus, his kingly ordination only incensed the populace, and his untimely death became even more inevitable.

The Prophet’s mayoral order, with the consent of the city council, to destroy the *Nauvoo Expositor* became the immediate excuse to stamp out his life. . . . Perhaps in retrospect both Mormons and Gentiles were partly to blame for conflict which developed between them. (*Brigham Young University Studies*, Winter 1968, pages 212-214)

The *Nauvoo Expositor*, spoken of by Kenneth Godfrey, was to be printed in Nauvoo by prominent Mormon defectors who opposed Joseph Smith’s political ambitions and the practice of polygamy. Mormon writer John J. Stewart summarized the problem: “They attempted to set up their own church with William Law as President. They bought a press and published a newspaper entitled the *Nauvoo Expositor*, . . . Joseph Smith as mayor ordered the *Expositor* press destroyed” (*Brigham Young and His Wives*, page 34). Mormon writers often refer to the *Nauvoo Expositor* as a scandalous and vile publication, but in reality it advocated high morals and obedience to the law. This newspaper was strongly opposed to Joseph Smith’s “political schemes.” The thing that really disturbed the Mormon leaders, however, was that the *Nauvoo Expositor* exposed Joseph Smith’s secret teaching on polygamy. In an affidavit published in the *Expositor*, June 7, 1844, Austin Cowles charged:

. . . the Patriarch, Hyrum Smith, did in the High Council, of which I was a member, introduce what he said was a revelation given through the Prophet; . . . according to his reading there was contained the following doctrines; 1st, the sealing up of person to eternal life, against all sins, save that of shedding innocent blood or of consenting thereto; 2nd, the doctrine of a plurality of wives, or marrying virgins; that “David and Solomon had many wives, yet in this they sinned not save in the matter of Uriah.

The Mormon leaders claimed that Austin Cowles had lied, but eight years after Joseph Smith’s death they published the revelation on polygamy. A careful reading of the revelation (now printed in the *Doctrine and Covenants* as Section 132) proves beyond all doubt that the statements in the *Expositor* were true. Thus it is clear that the *Expositor* was condemned on the basis of false testimony given by Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum. In the synopsis of the proceedings of the Nauvoo City Council we find the following:

Mayor (Joseph Smith) said, if he had a City Council who felt as he did, the establishment (referring to the *Nauvoo Expositor*) would be declared a nuisance before night. . . .

Councilor Stiles said . . . he would go in for suppressing all further publications of the kind.

Councilor Hyrum Smith believed the best way was to smash the press and pi the type. (*History of the Church*, vol. 6, pages 441, 445)

The Nauvoo City Council “passed an ordinance declaring the *Nauvoo Expositor* a nuisance” and ordered the press to be destroyed. Under the date of June 10, 1844, we find the following in Joseph Smith’s *History*: “The Council . . . issued an order to me to abate the said nuisance. I immediately ordered the Marshal to destroy it without delay. . . . About 8 p.m., the Marshal returned and reported that he had removed the press, type, printed paper, and fixtures into the street, and destroyed them” (*History of the Church*, vol. 6, page 432). Mormon historian B. H. Roberts admitted that “the legality of the action of the Mayor and City Council was, of course, questionable, though some sought to defend it on legal grounds; but it must be conceded that neither proof or argument for legality are convincing. On the grounds of expediency or necessity the action is more defensible” (*History of the Church*, vol. 6, page xxxviii). Mormon writer John J. Stewart reports that after the *Expositor* was destroyed, “The apostate publishers dashed away to Carthage, squealing like stuck pigs, and before Justice of the Peace Thomas Morrison, a notorious Mormon hater, sued out a writ for the arrest of Joseph and seventeen other Church and city officials, on a charge of riot” (*Joseph Smith, the Mormon Prophet*, page 320).

Charles A. Foster, one of the publishers of the *Expositor*, wrote the following in a letter dated June 11, 1844: “. . . a company consisting of some 200 men, armed and equipped, with muskets, swords, pistols, bowie knives, sledge-hammers, &c, assisted by a crowd of several hundred minions, . . . marched to the building, and breaking open the doors with a sledge-hammer, commenced the work of destruction. . . . They tumbled the press and materials into the street and set fire to them,

and demolished the machinery with a sledge-hammer, and injured the building very materially” (*Warsaw Signal*, June 12, 1844). Foster’s description of the destruction of the press sounds more like a mob scene than a legal act. Vilate Kimball, the wife of Heber C. Kimball and a faithful Mormon, wrote: “June 11th. Nauvoo was a scene of excit[e]ment last night. Some hundreds of the brethren turned out and burned the press of the opposite party” (Letter published in *Life of Heber C. Kimball*, page 350). Mormon author William E. Berrett acknowledged:

The destruction of the *Nauvoo Expositor* . . . proved to be the spark which ignited all the smoldering fires of opposition into one great flame. It offered the occasion for which the apostates from the Church were waiting, a legal excuse to get the Prophet and other leaders into their hands. The cry that the “freedom of the press” was being violated, united the factions seeking the overthrow of the Saints as perhaps nothing else would have done. (*The Restored Church*, page 255)

At first, Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum fled to Iowa to avoid arrest, but they were accused of being cowards and urged to return to save Nauvoo from the possibility of destruction. They finally went to Carthage, Illinois, where they were arrested for destroying the printing press. The Smiths were allowed to post bail for this offense but were then held on a charge of treason against the State of Illinois. While they were being held at Carthage a mob attacked the jail and both Joseph and Hyrum were shot dead by their assailants. This, of course, was a very cowardly act and even anti-Mormon writers refer to it as “cold-blooded murder.”

In the LDS Church’s *Doctrine and Covenants*, 135:3-4, we find these words concerning Joseph Smith’s death:

*Joseph Smith, the Prophet and Seer of the Lord, has done more, save Jesus only, for the salvation of men in this world, than any other man that ever lived in it. . . . When Joseph went up to Carthage to deliver himself up . . . he said: “I am going like a lamb to the slaughter; . . .”*

While we agree with the Mormons that there is no way to justify the unlawful and brutal acts of the mob at Carthage, we feel that it is going beyond the facts to compare the death of Joseph with that of Jesus. The Mormon leaders seems to be appealing to Isaiah 53:7: “He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he openeth not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.” In the New Testament it is claimed that Christ fulfilled this prophecy (see Acts 8:32). He died without resistance. In 1 Peter 2:23 we read: “Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again, when he suffered, he

threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously.” When Peter tried to defend Jesus with the sword, Jesus told him to “put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?” (John 18:11).

Most Mormons believe that Joseph Smith died without putting up a struggle, but the actual truth is that he died in a blazing gunfight with his enemies. In the *History of the Church*, vol. 6, pages 617-618, the following account is given concerning Smith’s death:

Immediately there was a little rustling at the outer door of the jail, and a cry of surrender, and also a discharge of three or four firearms followed instantly. . . . Joseph sprang to his coat for his *six-shooter*, Hyrum for his single barrel. . . .

When Hyrum fell, Joseph exclaimed, “Oh dear, brother Hyrum!” and opening the door a few inches he *discharged his six shooter* in the stairway (as stated before), two or three barrels of which missed fire.

Joseph, . . . dropped *his pistol* on the floor, and spring into the window . . . and he fell outward into the hands of his murderers . . .

John Taylor, who became the third president of the church, testified concerning the death of Joseph Smith:

He, however, instantly arose, . . . and pulling the six-shooter left by Brother Wheelock from his pocket, opened the door slightly, and snapped the pistol six successive times; only three of the barrels, however, were discharged. I afterwards understood that *two or three were wounded by these discharges, two of whom, I am informed died.* (*History of the Church*, vol. 7, pages 102-103)

From the preceding information it can be seen that the death of Joseph Smith can in no way be compared to the death of Jesus. Jesus did go like a “lamb to the slaughter,” but Joseph Smith died like a raging lion.

Today the Joseph Smith of Mormon adoration is a highly romanticized version of the real Joseph Smith. While possessing natural abilities and talents, his personal character was far from the saintly image his followers mold him into. His strong egotism and drive for power, together with his deceptive practices, led ultimately to his destruction.

## 11. The Word of Wisdom

On February 27, 1833, Joseph Smith gave the revelation known as the “Word of Wisdom” which appears as section 89 of the *Doctrine and Covenants*. This revelation was supposed to have come directly from God—verse 4 has the words, “thus saith the Lord unto you,” and other verses use the words, “I, the Lord.” In this revelation we read that the use of “wine or strong drink” is “not good, neither meet in the sight of your Father, only in assembling yourselves together to offer up your sacraments before him” (verse 5). Verse 7 says that “tobacco is not for the body,” and in verse 9 we read that “hot drinks are not for the body or the belly.” Although there is evidence that in the early history of the church all hot drinks were forbidden, the LDS Church today interprets “hot drinks” to mean tea or coffee because they contain caffeine. The leaders of the church also teach that beer, wine, whiskey and all other alcoholic beverages are forbidden. In verses 12-13 of the revelation, “the Lord” indicates that meat should not be eaten “only in times of winter, or of cold or famine.” At the present time, however, “The admonition to eat little meat is largely ignored, as are some other points of the revelation” (*Joseph Smith, the Mormon Prophet*, page 90).

It has been suggested that the temperance movement led to Joseph Smith’s “Word of Wisdom.” Leonard J. Arrington, who later became Church Historian, provided this enlightening information:

In recent years a number of scholars have contended that the revelation is an outgrowth of the temperance movement of the early nineteenth century. According to Dean D. McBrien, . . . the Word of Wisdom was a remarkable distillation of the prevailing thought of frontier America in the early 1830’s. Each provision in the revelation, he claimed, pertained to an item which had formed the basis of widespread popular agitation in the early 1830’s:

“A survey of the situation existing at Kirtland when the revelation came forth is a sufficient explanation for it. The temperance wave had for some time been engulfing the West. . . . In 1826 Marcus Morton had founded the American Temperance Society. . . . In June 1830, the *Millennial Harbinger* quoted . . . an article from the *Philadelphia Journal of Health*, . . . which article most strongly condemned the use of alcohol, tobacco, the eating intemperately of meats. . . . Temperance Societies were organized in great numbers during the early thirties, six thousand being formed in one year. . . . On October 6, 1830, the Kirtland Temperance Society was organized . . . This Society at Kirtland was a most active one. . . .”

McBrien then goes ahead to point out that the Temperance Society succeeded in eliminating a distillery in Kirtland on February 1, 1833, just twenty-seven days before the Latter-day Saint revelation counseling abstinence was announced, and that the distillery at Mentor, near Kirtland, was also closed at the same time. (*Brigham Young University Studies*, Winter 1959, pages 39-40)

The fact that the revelation was given at Kirtland, when the Temperance society was very strong, certainly makes one wonder if Joseph Smith obtained some of his inspiration from there. In his book, *The Burned-Over District*, pages 211-212, Whitney R. Cross points out:

. . . the temperance movement . . . began much earlier. . . . during the 1830’s it attained national scope. . . . Further, if alcohol was evil because it frustrated the Lord’s design for the human body, other drugs like tea, coffee, and tobacco must be equally wrong . . . Josiah Bissell, . . . had even before the 1831 revival “got beyond Temperance to the Cold Water Society—no tea, coffee or any other slops.”

### Joseph’s Example

The Word of Wisdom is now considered to be one of the most important revelations in the LDS Church. Any Mormon who continues to break the Word of Wisdom is considered to be weak in the faith. Breaking the Word of Wisdom, in fact, is regarded as a sin which can bar a person from the temple. Joseph Fielding Smith maintained that the habit of drinking tea can “bar” a person from the “celestial kingdom of God”:

SALVATION AND A CUP OF TEA. . . . my brethren, if you drink coffee or tea, or take tobacco are you letting a cup of tea or a little tobacco stand in the road and *bar you from the celestial kingdom of God*, where you might otherwise have received a fulness of glory? (*Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 2, page 16)

Mormon writer John J. Stewart claimed that Joseph Smith “carefully observed the Word of Wisdom, and insisted upon its observances by other men in high Church positions . . .” (*Joseph Smith, the Mormon Prophet*, page 90). Mr. Stewart also said that “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.” Although most members of the church feel that Joseph Smith, the founder of the Mormon church, “carefully observed the Word of Wisdom,” research reveals just the opposite.



In fact, Joseph Smith, the very man who introduced the temple ceremony into the church, would not be able to go through the temple if he were living today because of his frequent use of alcoholic beverages!

On page 72 of his book, *Sounding Brass*, Mormon defender Hugh Nibley wants to know where the evidence is that Joseph Smith drank. We would answer by saying that this evidence is found throughout Smith's own *History of the Church*. For example, under the date of May 2, 1843, the following statement is recorded in Joseph Smith's *History*: "Wednesday, 3. — Called at the office and *drank a glass of wine* with Sister Jenetta Richards, made by her mother in England, and reviewed a portion of the conference minutes" (*History of the Church*, vol. 5, page 380). For other examples of Joseph Smith drinking wine see *History of the Church*, vol. 2, pages 369 and 378. On page 369, Joseph Smith said "our hearts were made glad with the fruit of the vine."

Joseph Smith continued to disobey the Word of Wisdom until the day of his death. The *History of the Church*, vol. 6, page 616, records the following incident in the Carthage jail: ". . . the guard wanted some *wine*. Joseph gave Dr. Richards two dollars to give the guard; . . . the guard immediately sent for a *bottle of wine, pipes, and two small papers of tobacco*; . . . Dr. Richards uncorked the bottle, and presented a *glass to Joseph*, who tasted, as brother Taylor and the doctor, . . ." We do not know how often Joseph Smith used tobacco, but we do know that at one time, "he rode through the streets of Nauvoo *smoking a cigar*" ("Joseph Smith as an Administrator," M.A. thesis, by Gary Dean Guthrie, Brigham Young University, May 1969, page 161).

The Mormon leaders have made three important changes concerning the Word of Wisdom in Joseph Smith's *History of the Church*. In one instance, Joseph Smith asked "Brother Markham" to get "a pipe and some tobacco" for Apostle Willard Richards (see Joseph Smith's *History* as printed in the *Millennial Star*, vol. 24, page 471). In later printings of the *History of the Church*, vol. 6, page 614, the pipe and tobacco are transformed into "medicine." On another occasion Joseph Smith related that he gave some of the "brethren" a couple of dollars, with directions to replenish" their supply of "whisky" (*Millennial Star*, vol. 21, page 283). In modern editions of the *History of the Church*, vol. 5, page 450, twenty-three words have been deleted from this reference to cover up the fact that Joseph Smith encouraged the "brethren" to disobey the Word of Wisdom. In a third instance, Joseph Smith frankly admitted that he "Drank a glass of beer at Moessers" (*Millennial Star*, vol. 23, page 720). These words have been entirely omitted without any indication in recent printings of the *History of the Church* (see vol. 6, page 424).

Two interesting entries in Joseph Smith's diary were omitted when the *History of the Church* was compiled. In the one instance, (March 11, 1843) Joseph Smith told of having "*tea* with his breakfast." When his wife asked how he like it, he replied that "if it was a little stronger he should like it better." In the second reference "Joseph prophesied in the name of the Lord that he would drink *wine*" with Orson Hyde "in the east" (Joseph Smith Diary, January 20, 1943).

All of the early Mormon apostles seem to have used alcoholic beverages after the Word of Wisdom was given (see *History of the Church*, vol. 4, page 120). On June 3, 1847, Hosea Stout recorded some interesting information concerning Apostles Orson Hyde, Parley P. Pratt and John Taylor (Taylor later became the third president of the church):

. . . Prests O. Hyde, P. P. Pratt and John Taylor also came in. . . Says I. "I hope you will all conform to the rules of the police then." "Certainly" says Taylor "Bring on the jug" says I at which they were presented with a large jug of whiskey. . . . they all paid due respect to the jug . . . (*On the Mormon Frontier; The Diary of Hosea Stout*, vol. 1, page 259)

Since Joseph Smith and other Mormon leaders did not observe the Word of Wisdom, members of the church became confused over the matter. George A. Smith related that a family "arrived in Kirtland, and the Prophet asked them to stop with him . . . Sister Emma, in the mean time, asked the old lady if she would have a cup of tea . . . or a cup of coffee. This whole family apostatized because they were invited to take a cup of tea or coffee, after the Word of Wisdom was given" (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 2, page 214).

When Almon W. Babbitt was brought to trial by the church in 1835, one of the charges against him was "that he was not keeping the Word of Wisdom." In his own defense, Babbitt "said that he had taken the liberty to break the Word of Wisdom, from the example of President Joseph Smith Jun., and others, but acknowledged that it was wrong . . ." (*History of the Church*, vol. 2, page 252).

### **Joseph Smith's Bar**

In Nauvoo, Joseph Smith not only broke the Word of Wisdom himself, but he also encouraged others to do the same by selling liquor. In fact, an ordinance was passed in 1843 which authorized "that the Mayor of the city [Joseph Smith] be and is hereby authorized to sell or give spirits of any quantity as he in his wisdom shall judge to be for the health and comfort or convenience of such travelers or other persons as shall visit his house from time to time" (*History of the Church*, vol. 6, page 111). Joseph Smith's own son related the following:

About 1842, a new and larger house was built for us . . . and a sign was put out giving it the dignified name of “The Nauvoo Mansion” . . . Mother was to be installed as landlady, and soon made a trip to Saint Louis. . . .

When she returned Mother found installed in the keeping-room of the hotel—that is to say, the main room where the guests assembled and where they were received upon arrival—a bar, with counter, shelves, bottles, glasses and other paraphernalia customary for a fully-equipped tavern bar, and Porter Rockwell in charge as tender.

She was very much surprised and disturbed over this arrangement, . . . “Joseph,” she asked, “What is the meaning of that bar in this house? . . . How does it look,” she asked, “for the spiritual head of a religious body to be keeping a hotel in which is a room fitted out as a liquor-selling establishment?”

He reminded her that all taverns had their bars at which liquor was sold or dispensed. . . .

Mother’s reply came emphatically clear, though uttered quietly: “Well, Joseph, . . . I will take my children and go across to the old house and stay there, for I will not have them raised up under such conditions as this arrangement imposes upon us, nor have them mingle with the kind of men who frequent such a place. You are at liberty to make your choice; *either that bar goes out of the house, or we will!*”

It did not take Father long to make the choice, for he replied immediately, “Very well, Emma; I will have it removed at once”—and he did. (*The Saints’ Herald*, January 22, 1935, page 110)

Oliver Boardman Huntington, a faithful Mormon, recorded the following incident in his journal:

Robert Thompson was a faithful just clerk for Joseph Smith . . . Joseph said to brother Thompson one day, “Robert I want you to go and get on a buss go and *get drunk and have a good spree*, If you don’t you will die.”

Robert did not do it. He was [a] very pious exemplary man and never guilty of such an impropriety as he thought that to be. In less than 2 weeks he was dead and buried. (Journal of Oliver B. Huntington, typed copy at Utah State Historical Society, vol. 2, page 166)

### **Brigham Young’s Distillery**

President Brigham Young spoke a great deal about the Word of Wisdom, but he seemed to have a difficult struggle applying it to his own life. According to Hosea Stout’s diary (*On the Mormon Frontier*, vol. 1, page 75), Brigham Young declared on September 27, 1845: “. . . I am and ever intend to be the Master of my passions . . . some may say that I am in the habits of taking snuff and tea yet I am no slave to these passions and can leave these off if they make my brother affronted. . . .” In 1854 Brigham Young drank coffee on a regular basis (see *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* page 408). On April 7,

1867, Brigham Young acknowledged in the Tabernacle that he had chewed tobacco for many years:

. . . it is not my privilege to drink liquor, neither is it my privilege to eat tobacco. Well, bro. Brigham, have you not done it? Yes, for many years, but I ceased its habitual practice. I used it for toothache; now I am free from that pain, and my mouth is never stained with tobacco. (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 12, page 404)

On the way to Utah, Brigham Young counseled the Mormons to “make beer as a drink” (*John D. Lee*, page 116). Historian Hubert Howe Bancroft says that “the first bar-room in S.L. City, and the only one for years, was in the Salt Lake House, owned by President Young and Feramorz Little” (*History of Utah*, page 540, footnote 44). Stanley P. Hirshon wrote:

In Utah the church dominated the liquor trade. In 1856 Caleb Green freighted six tons of tobacco, rum, whiskey, brandy, tea and coffee across the plains for Young, and two years later, *The New York Times* reported that the “principal drinking-saloon and gambling-room are in the Salt Lake House, a building under the control of the Church and the immediate superintendency of Heber C. Kimball.” . . . Young tried his best to rid himself of rival brewers. (*The Lion of the Lord*, page 285)

On June 7, 1863, Brigham Young acknowledged publicly that he had built a distillery:

When there was no whisky to be had here, and we need it for rational purposes, I built a house to make it in. When the distillery was almost completed and in good working order, an army was heard of in our vicinity and I shut up the works; I did not make a gallon of whisky at my works, because it came here in great quantities, more than was needed. (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 10, page 206)

Hubert Howe Bancroft recorded: “Peter K. Dotson, . . . came to Salt Lake City in 1851, and was first employed by Brigham as manager of a distillery, . . .” (*History of Utah*, page 573, footnote 2). On July 26, 1890, Judge Orlando W. Powers gave a speech in which he charged:

. . . notwithstanding the fact that the city had gone into the whisky business on its own hook, on August 19, 1862, it granted Brigham Young a license to distill peaches into brandy. . . . Brigham Young kept an open account on the city books, and this account shows that from 1862 to 1872 there were 235 different charges for liquor purchased by him amounting in the aggregate to \$9316.66, . . .

An examination of the official records of the United States shows that from 1862, . . . until the coming of the Union Pacific railroad in 1869, which was the beginning of the Gentile era in Utah, thirty-seven

ment is based. That assumption may be true, but it is often false; and when neither logic nor the logician can determine which, then syllogising is mere building on the sand. Therefore it is well for us that the Lord does not arm the messenger of salvation with sophistry, but with truth, because those who have the truth and the ability to apply it can at once discern the specious falsehoods of dishonest claptrap, and send conviction and remorse into the hearts of those who thought to confound them. Witness the answers of Christ to the Scribes and Pharisees, and see also the admirable handling of Zeezrom, the lawyer, by Amulek (Book of Mormon, pars. 239-40).

Let no one suppose, however, that the mere profession of truth enables men to use this power. They must, as before stated, have the ability to apply it. Now, the Lord's mode of imparting this ability is through the gift of the Holy Ghost; and the Holy Ghost leads men into truth without the noise and clamour of debate, wherein men generally lose the very truths they are debating about, and get the spirit of the Devil, which causes them to hate and often to destroy each other. If the Saints would testify with power, or the Priesthood preach with effect, they must be earnest in their work, and so live that the good Spirit will dictate them continually.

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

I received the following letter:—

*Joel H. Walker to Joseph Smith—Proposes to Join Prophet in Western Volunteer Movement.*

BOSTON, May 9th, 1844.

MY DEAR SIR.—Being so closely confined in the postoffice in this city, where I have been but a short time, I have not, before this morning been aware that you had petitioned Congress in relation to raising a military force to protect our Southern Frontier.

My purpose in addressing you is to offer my services, either in military or civil duty, as I am so much confined that my health must suffer if I remain a great length of time.

If I can make myself known to you by reputation which I think possible, I have every confidence, if in your power, you will favor my wishes.

At any rate, I hope you will write me at your earliest convenience upon receipt of this.

distilleries existed in this Territory. . . . These facts, taken from public records, dispose of the charge that the Gentiles invaded a temperance community. (*The Salt Lake Tribune*, July 14, 1908)

According to John D. Lee, Brigham Young kept a large supply of liquor. Under the date of May 14 [15th], 1867, Lee recorded in his journal:

About 5 P.M. Prest. B. Young & suite arrived . . . On the following day I went to see him. . . . He had a decanter of splendid wine brought in of his own make & said, I want to treat Bro. Lee to as Good an article, I think, as can be bought in Dixie. The wine indeed was a Superiour article. He said that he had some 300 gallons & treated about 2000\$ worth of liquers yearly & continued that we [he] wish[e]d that some one would take his wine at 5\$ per gallon & sell it, where upon Pres. D. H. Wells said that he would take 200 gals. at 6\$ a gallon &c. (*A Mormon Chronicle, The Diaries of John D. Lee*, vol. 2, pages 71-72)

Dr. Leonard J. Arrington felt that “The strong and increased emphasis on the Word of Wisdom which characterized the official Mormon attitude throughout the remainder of the century appears to have begun in 1867. . . . President Young came to be unalterably opposed to the expenditure of money by the Saints on imported tea, coffee, and tobacco. It was consistent with the economics of the time that he should have had no great objection to tobacco chewing if the tobacco was grown locally. It was also consistent that he should have successfully developed a locally-produced “Mormon” tea to take the place of the imported article” (*BYU Studies*, Winter 1959, pages 43-44).

In his sermons Brigham Young occasionally discussed the idea of Mormons producing their own tea, coffee, tobacco and whiskey:

You know that we all profess to believe the “Word of Wisdom.” . . . We as Latter-day Saints, care but little about tobacco: but as “Mormons” we use a great deal. . . . The traders and passing emigration have sold tons of tobacco, besides what is sold here regularly. I say that \$60,000 annually is the smallest figure I can estimate the sales at. Tobacco can be raised here as well as it can be raised in any other place. . . . If we use it, let us raise it here. I recommend for *some man to go to raising tobacco. . . . go to and make a business of raising tobacco* . . . We annually expend only \$60,000 to break the “Word of Wisdom,” and we can save the money and still break it, if we will break it. (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 9, page 35)

It is true that we do not raise our own tobacco: we might raise it if we would. We do not raise our tea; but we might raise it if we would, for tea-raising, this is as good a country as China; and the coffee bean can be

raised a short distance south of us. . . . We can sustain ourselves; and as for such so-called luxuries as tea, coffee, tobacco and whiskey, we can produce them or do without them. (*Ibid.*, vol. 11, pages 113-114)

Brigham Young also recommended that the Mormons make wine. Leonard J. Arrington informs us that Young wanted most of the wine to be sold to the Gentiles:

The attempts of the Latter-day Saints in southern Utah and elsewhere to make wine are all illustrative of the dominating philosophy of economic self-sufficiency. . . . The intention was to sell most of the wine in the mining communities in southern Utah and Nevada. Brigham Young instructed as follows: “First, by lightly pressing make a white wine. Then give a heavier pressing and make a colored wine. Then barrel up this wine, and if my counsel is taken, this wine will not be drunk here, but will be exported, and thus increase the fund.” More of the Dixie wine was consumed in the Mormon settlements than church officials had hoped, however, and the enterprise was discontinued before 1900. (*BYU Studies*, Winter 1959, pages 46-47)

Nels Anderson gives this information on Mormon involvement in wine-making:

The St. George Tithing Office reported on March, 1887, a supply of 6,610 gallons of wine, . . . The tithing office at St. George received wine of many grades. . . .

Thus the *church found itself the chief single producer of wine in the Dixie area*. . . . Because the tithing offices held the largest amount of wine for the market at any time, it was in a position to name the price. . . .

Dixie brethren did not follow Brother Brigham’s counsel. *They drank so much of the wine that by 1890 drunkenness was a worry to church leaders*. The tithing office discontinued accepting wine for tithes and abandoned its own presses. (*Deseret Saints*, 1966, pages 373-374)

In 1867 President Young observed that most of the bishops in the church broke the Word of Wisdom:

You . . . ask the Bishops—“Do you keep the Word of Wisdom?” The reply will be “Yes; no, not exactly.” . . . “Do you drink whisky?” “No.” “Well, then, why do you not observe the Word of Wisdom?” “Well, this tobacco, I cannot give up.” . . . You go to another ward, and perhaps the Bishop does not chew tobacco, nor drink tea nor coffee, but once in a while he takes a little spirits, and keeps whiskey in his house, in which he will occasionally indulge—Go to another ward, and perhaps the Bishop does not drink whisky nor chew tobacco, but he “cannot give up his tea and coffee.” And so it goes through the whole church. Not every Bishop indulges in one or more of these habits, but most of them do. I recollect being at a trial not

long since where quite a number of Bishops had been called as witnesses, but I could not learn that there was one who did not drink whiskey, and I think that most of them drank tea and coffee. . . . I think that we have some Bishops in this city who do not chew tobacco, nor drink liquor nor tea nor coffee to excess. . . . If a person is weary, worn out, cast down, fainting, or dying, a brandy sling, a little wine, or a cup of tea is good to revive them. Do not throw these things away, and say that they must never be used; they are good to be used with judgment, prudence, and discretion. Ask our Bishops if they drink tea every day, and in most cases they will tell you they do if they can get it. (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 12, pages 402-403)

As we have already indicated, since Brigham Young's time the church has become very strict about its members observing the Word of Wisdom.

### Hypocrisy?

Orson Pratt once quipped: "I do not wonder that the world say that the Latter-day Saints do not believe their own revelations. Why? Because we do not practice them" (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 17, page 104).

We have shown that Joseph Smith, the founder of the church, did not keep the Word of Wisdom, yet, according to Joseph Fielding Smith, the Prophet Joseph Smith taught that a member of the church could not hold an office unless he observed it:

. . . Joseph Smith, who presided, gave his decision as follows: "No official member in this Church is worthy to hold an office after having the word of wisdom properly taught him; and he, the official member, neglecting to comply with or obey it." This decision was confirmed by unanimous vote. (*Essentials in Church History*, page 169)

It is certainly perplexing that Joseph Smith could break the Word of Wisdom and yet retain his position as president of the church. The thing that makes this especially strange is that when members of the church did not observe the Word of Wisdom, this was sometimes used against them if they were tried for their fellowship. Leonard J. Arrington noted: "Moreover, when a council at Far West tried a high church official (David Whitmer) for his fellowship, the first of five charges against him was that he did not observe the Word of Wisdom" (*BYU Studies*, Winter 1959, page 40). As we have already shown, when Almon W. Babbitt was charged with not observing the Word of Wisdom, his only defense was that he "had taken the liberty to break the Word of Wisdom, from the example of Joseph Smith, Jun., and others." We have also shown that after Joseph Smith's death, Brigham

Young and other Mormon leaders did not observe the Word of Wisdom.

Heber C. Kimball, who was a member of the First Presidency, once claimed that "virtuous Saints, . . . will not sell whiskey, and stick up grogeries, and establish distilleries" (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 2, page 161). This seems like an outlandish statement for a Mormon leader to make in light of the fact that Joseph Smith sold whiskey in Nauvoo, and that Brigham Young built a distillery and sold alcoholic beverages in Utah. Even the Mormon-owned Zions Cooperative Mercantile Institution (now known as ZCMI) sold the items forbidden in the Word of Wisdom. On October 7, 1873, George A. Smith, a member of the First Presidency, boasted: "We are doing a great business in tea, coffee, and tobacco in the Cooperative Store" (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 16, page 238).

As late as 1908, the *Salt Lake Tribune* accused the Mormon leaders of trying to monopolize the liquor business in Utah:

. . . the Mormon priesthood . . . resisted to the utmost the establishment of liquor houses by Gentiles here for a good while, not because they were liquor houses, but because the Gentiles were getting the trade. . . . This fierce effort to retain the liquor traffic here as a monopoly of the church was quite in accord with the present status of affairs here where *the church is running the biggest liquor business in the State*, through its Z.C.M.I. drug store and also through the big liquor business done by Apostle Smoot in his drug store at Provo. (*Salt Lake Tribune*, July 14, 1908)

Although the Word of Wisdom contains some good precepts, it is obviously a product of the thinking of Joseph Smith's time. Alcoholic beverages were condemned by the temperance movement years before Joseph Smith gave his "revelation." While Smith was correct in stating that tobacco is harmful, we do not feel that this proves his "revelation" is divinely inspired. The *Wayne Sentinel*—a newspaper printed in the neighborhood where Joseph Smith grew up—published these statements concerning tobacco three years before Joseph Smith gave the Word of Wisdom: "It is really surprising that a single individual could be found, who, after experiencing the distressing sensation almost invariably produced by the first use of tobacco, would be willing to risk their recurrence a second time: . . . Tobacco is, in fact, an absolute poison. . ." (*Wayne Sentinel*, November 6, 1829).

While Mormons presently make much of abstinence from tobacco and alcoholic beverages, little is said about the Word of Wisdom cautioning against the use of meat except "in times of winter, or of cold or famine." With the exception of tea and coffee, "hot drinks" are freely used.

## 12. Wine and Curses

There are several Old Testament practices that have found their way into Mormonism; one of these is the practice of cursing one's enemies. Both the Bible and the Book of Mormon state that this practice was to cease with the coming of Christ. Since His coming, we are supposed to rely upon Him and let Him take all hate out of our hearts. If we have no hate, we will have no desire to curse our enemies or wish any evil upon them. The words which Jesus spoke in the Sermon on the Mount are also recorded in the Book of Mormon: "And behold it is written also, that thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy; but behold I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them who despitefully use you and persecute you" (3 Nephi 12:43-44). In the Bible, Romans 12:14, we are counseled: "Bless them which persecute you; bless, and curse not."

In spite of these clear teachings in both the Bible and the Book of Mormon, Joseph Smith gave a revelation which sanctioned the cursing of one's enemies: "And inasmuch as mine enemies come against you . . . ye shall curse them; And whomsoever ye curse, I will curse, and ye shall avenge me of mine enemies" (*Doctrine and Covenants* 103:24-25).

The cursing of enemies was actually carried out in the Kirtland temple. Apostle George A. Smith left us this account:

The Lord did actually reveal one principle to us there, and that one principle was apparently so simple, and so foolish in their eyes, that a great many apostatized over it, because it was so contrary to their notions and views. It was this, after the people had fasted all day, they sent out and got wine and bread, . . . and they ate and drank, and prophesied, and bore testimony, . . . some of the High Council of Missouri stepped into the stand, and as righteous Noah did when he awoke from his wine, commenced to curse their enemies. You never felt such a shock go through any house or company in the world as went through that. There was almost a rebellion because men would get up and curse their enemies. . . . Some of the brethren thought it was best to apostatize. . . . The Lord dared not then to reveal anything more; He had given us all we could swallow . . . (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 2, page 216)

The statement by Mormon Apostle George A. Smith could lead one to believe that wine was used to excess in the Kirtland temple. This idea is supported

by a number of statements that have been printed. In a statement dated February 27, 1885, Mrs. Alfred Morley charged: "I have heard many Mormons who attended the dedication, or endowment of the Temple, say that very many became drunk. . . the Mormon leaders would stand up to prophecy and were so drunk they said they could not get it out, and would call for another drink. Over a barrel of liquor was used at the service" (*Naked Truths About Mormonism*, Oakland, Calif., April, 1888, page 2). William E. McLellan, who had served as an Apostle in the Mormon church, commented: "As to the endowment in Kirtland, I state positively, it was no endowment from God. Not only myself was not endowed, but no other man of the five hundred who was present—except it was with wine" (*True Latter-Day Saints' Herald*, XIX, 437, as cited by LaMar Petersen in *Hearts Made Glad*, page 137).

The fact that the Mormons fasted for some time and then drank an excessive amount of wine probably led many of them to curse their enemies and to believe they had seen visions. William Harris made this report in 1841:

In the evening they met for the endowment. The fast was then broken by eating light wheat bread and drinking as much wine as they saw proper. Smith knew well how to infuse the spirit which they expected to receive; so he encouraged the brethren to drink freely, telling them that the wine was consecrated, and would not make them drunk . . . they began to prophecy, pronouncing blessings upon their friends, and curses upon their enemies. If I should be so unhappy as to go to the regions of the damned, I never expect to hear language more awful, or more becoming the infernal pit than was uttered that night. The curses were pronounced principally upon the clergy of the present day, and upon the Jackson county mob in Missouri. After spending the night in alternate blessings and cursings, the meeting adjourned. (*Mormonism Portrayed*, pages 31-32)

The early Mormon leaders frequently cursed their enemies after the episode in the Kirtland temple. Heber C. Kimball, first councilor to Brigham Young, was a real expert at pronouncing curses and went so far as to curse the President of the United States. Below are some extracts from his sermons:

There are poor, miserable curses in our midst . . . I wish I had some stones; I want to pelt your cursed heads, for you lie like hell. . . .

There is a poor curse who has written the bigger part of those lies . . . and I curse him, in the name of Israel's God, and by the Priesthood and authority of Jesus Christ; and the disease that is in him shall sap and

dry up the fountain of life and eat him up. . . . That is the curse of that man; it shall be so, and all Israel shall say, Amen. [The vast congregation of Saints said, "Amen."] . . . May God Almighty curse such men, . . . and every damned thing there is upon the earth that opposes this people. I tell you I feel to curse them to-day. (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 5, page 32)

Will the President that sits in the chair of state be tipped from his seat? Yes, he will die an untimely death, and God Almighty will curse him; and He will also curse his successor, if he takes the same stand; . . . God Almighty will curse them, and *I curse them in the name of Jesus Christ*, according to my calling; . . . (*Ibid.*, page 133)

And may God Almighty curse our enemies. [Voices: "Amen."] I feel to curse my enemies: and when God won't bless them, I do not think he will ask me to bless them. If I did, it would be to put the poor curses to death who have brought death and destruction on me and my brethren. . . . Poor rotten curses! And the President of the United States, . . . he shall be cursed in the name of Israel's God, and he shall not rule over this nation, . . . and I curse him and all his coadjutors [*sic*] in his cursed deeds, in the name of Jesus and by the authority of the Holy Priesthood; and all Israel shall say amen. (*Ibid.*, page 95)

In Romans 12:20 we read, "Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him. . . ." According to Charles L. Walker, Brigham Young taught just the opposite: Sun., Apr. 28. Went up to the Tabernacle . . . Bro. Brigham . . . said that those who sell their provisions to feed our enemies

either man or woman should be cursed, and said he, I curse them in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and the congregation shouted, Amen" ("Diary of Charles L. Walker," 1853-1901, excerpts typed, page 13).

Jesus said, "Love your enemies," but Apostle George A. Smith remarked: "You must know that I love my friends, and God Almighty knows that I do hate my enemies" (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 5, page 110).

Jesus also taught that we should "pray for" our enemies. Heber C. Kimball prayed for his enemies in the following manner: "Pray for them? Yes, I pray that God Almighty would send them to hell. Some say across lots; but I would like to have them take a round about road, and be as long as they can be in going there" (*Ibid.*, page 89). In his letter written in 1903, Benjamin F. Johnson admitted that "In Missouri we were taught to 'pray for our enemies, that God would damn them, and give us the power to kill them.'" Apostle George A. Smith said: ". . . we were then very pious, and we prayed the Lord to kill the mob" (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 5, page 107).

There are many other Old Testament practices in Mormonism. This should be sufficient, however, to convince the reader that the early Mormon leaders have sometimes followed Old Testament practices in preference to the clear teachings of Christ. Fortunately, the present leaders of the church have tried to steer a course away from these antiquated teachings. Although they still print Joseph Smith's revelation concerning the cursing of enemies, they do not curse their enemies in the Tabernacle as Brigham Young and the other leaders once did.

### 13. Changes in Joseph Smith's History

In 1838 Joseph Smith started writing the account of his life which is now published by the church. Smith began publishing this history in the *Times and Seasons* in 1842. It was published in installments, and therefore only part of the history appeared in print before Joseph Smith's death. The church leaders continued to publish the history in the *Times and Seasons* after his death until they were driven from Nauvoo. The remainder of the history was published in the *Millennial Star* and also in the *Deseret News*. After the turn of the century the *History of the Church* was reprinted in seven volumes and has been republished several times since then.

Mormon leaders have claimed that Joseph Smith's *History of the Church* is the most accurate history in the world and that it has never been changed or falsified in any way. President Joseph Fielding Smith boasted: "The most important history in the world is the history of our Church, and it is the most accurate history in all the world, it must be so" (*Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 2, page 199). Apostle Widtsoe claimed that these volumes prove "that Joseph Smith told the truth. . . . There is in them no attempt to 'cover up' any act of his life. . . . all has been published" (*Joseph Smith—Seeker After Truth*, pages 256-257). Apostle Widtsoe also maintained that Joseph Smith's history is "an unusually accurate historical document. . . . The history is trustworthy. No flaws have been found in it" (*Ibid.*, page 297). In the preface to volume 1 of Joseph Smith's *History of the Church* (page vi), we find the claim that "no historical or doctrinal statement has been changed."

Notwithstanding the many claims put forth concerning the accuracy of the *History* by church officials, the truth is that Mormon historians broke almost all the rules of honesty in their publication of Joseph Smith's *History of the Church*. It is a well-known fact that when an omission is made in a document it should be indicated by ellipses points. Mormon historians have almost completely ignored this rule; in many cases they have deleted thousands of words without any indication. They have also added thousands of words without any indication. They have changed spelling, grammar, punctuation, and rearranged the words. There can be no doubt that the changes were deliberate, although there may have been a few typographical errors. For instance, we have already shown that three important changes were made to cover up the fact that Joseph Smith broke the "Word of Wisdom" and allowed his followers to

do the same. It would be very difficult to believe that a "pipe and tobacco" could just accidentally turn into *medicine*, or that Joseph Smith's "glass of beer" would just fall out of the text. Certainly, no one would argue that these changes happened by accident, for they bear unmistakable evidence of falsification.

Mormon historians have also changed some of Joseph Smith's prophecies that did not come to pass. Many exaggerated and contradictory statements were either changed or deleted without indication. Crude or indecent statements were also deleted. Joseph Smith quoted the enemies of the church as using the name of the Lord in vain many times in the history, but much of this profanity has been removed by Mormon leaders. In the first printed version of the *History*, Joseph Smith cursed his enemies, condemned other churches and beliefs and called the President of the United States a fool. Many of these extreme statements were omitted or changed. Mormon leaders did not dare let their people see the real Joseph Smith. They would rather falsify the *History of the Church* than allow Joseph Smith's true character to be known. Moreover, they have deceived their people by claiming that no historical or doctrinal statement has been changed.

Although we do not have room for any kind of a detailed study of the changes in this book (those who are interested can read our publication *Falsification of Joseph Smith's History*), one of the most interesting changes relates to the name of the angel who was supposed to have appeared in Joseph Smith's room and told him about the Book of Mormon plates. In the *History*, as it was first published by Joseph Smith, we learn that the angel's name was Nephi: "He called me by name and said . . . that his name was *Nephi*" (*Times and Seasons*, vol. 3, page 753).

In modern printings of the *History of the Church*, vol. 1, page 11, this has been changed to read Moroni: "He called me by name, and said . . . that his name was *Moroni* . . ."

The original handwritten manuscript clearly shows that the name was originally written as "Nephi," but that someone at a later date wrote the word "Moroni" above the line (see photograph in *Mormonism—Shadow of Reality?* page 136). In *Falsification of Joseph Smith's History*, page 13, we showed that this change was made after Joseph Smith's death. An examination of the duplicate copy of the handwritten manuscript, Book A-2, provides additional evidence that the change was not made during Joseph Smith's lifetime. This manuscript was not even started until about a year after Smith's death. Like the other manuscript (Book A-1), it has



the day. While this was progressing great numbers were being baptized in the font.

Those who wish for further information concerning the scenes of the Sabbath in Nauvoo, or any other day in the week would do well to "come and see." W. WOODRUFF.

### HISTORY OF JOSEPH SMITH.

(Continued.)

While I was thus in the act of calling upon God I discovered a light appearing in the room which continued to increase until the room was lighter than at noon-day, when immediately a personage appeared at my bedside standing in the air for his feet did not touch the floor. He had on a loose robe of most exquisite whiteness. It was a whiteness beyond any thing earthly I had ever seen; nor do I believe that any earthly thing could be made to appear so exceedingly white and brilliant, his hands were naked and his arms also a little above the wrist. So also were his feet naked, as were his legs a little above the ankles. His head and neck were also bare. I could discover that he had no other clothing on but this robe, as it was open so that I could see into his bosom. Not only was his robe exceedingly white but his whole person was glorious beyond description, and his countenance truly like lightning. The room was exceedingly light, but not so very bright as immediately around his person. When I first looked upon him I was afraid, but the fear soon left me. He called me by name, and said unto me that he was a messenger sent from the presence of God to me, and that his name was Nephi. That God had a work for me to do, and that my name should be had for good and evil, among all nations, kindreds, and tongues; or that it should be both good and evil spoken of among all people. He said there was a book deposited written upon gold plates, giving an account of the former inhabitants of this continent, and the source from whence they sprang. He also said that the fullness of the everlasting gospel was contained in it, as delivered by the Saviour to the ancient inhabitants. Also that there were two stones in silver bows, and these stones fastened to a breastplate constituted what is called the Urim and Thummim, deposited with the plates, and the possession and use of these stones was what constituted seers in ancient or former times, and that God had prepared them

for the purpose of translating the book. After telling me these things he commenced quoting the prophecies of the Old Testament, he first quoted part of the third chapter of Malachi; and he quoted also the fourth or last chapter of the same prophecy though with a little variation from the way it reads in our Bibles. Instead of quoting the first verse as reads in our books he quoted it thus; "For behold the day cometh that shall burn as an oven, and all the proud yea and all that do wickedly shall burn as stubble, for they that cometh shall burn them saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch," and again he quoted the fifth verse thus, "Behold I will reveal unto you the Priesthood by the hand of Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord." He also quoted the next verse differently, "And he shall plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to the fathers, and the hearts of the children shall turn to their fathers, if it were not so the whole earth would be utterly wasted at his coming." In addition to these he quoted the eleventh chapter of Isaiah saying that it was about to be fulfilled. He quoted also the third chapter of Acts, twenty second and twenty third verses precisely as they stand in our New Testament. He said that that prophet was Christ, but the day had not yet come when "they who would not hear his voice should be cut off from among the people," but soon would come.

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He also quoted the second chapter of Joel from the twenty eighth to the last verse. He also said that this was not yet fulfilled but was soon to be. And he further stated the fulness of the gentiles was soon to come in. He quoted many other passages of scripture and offered many explanations which cannot be mentioned here. Again he told me that when I got those plates of which he had spoken (for the time that they should be obtained was not yet fulfilled) I should not show them to any person, neither the breastplate with the Urim and Thummim only to those to whom I should be commanded to show them, if I did I should be destroyed. While he was conversing with me about the plates the vision was opened to my mind that I could see the place where the plates were deposited and that so clearly and distinctly that I knew the place again when I visited it.

488 June 18 34

I should be glad, if you, or some of the other gentlemen who joined you in your communication, would keep a close correspondence with these parties, and by each mail write me.

The character of the state has been injured in consequence of this unfortunate affair; and I sincerely hope it may not be disgraced by it in the end.

With high respect your obedient servant

(Signed,) Daniel Dunklin

~~the same day, June 6<sup>th</sup> we resumed our journey, and~~  
~~one of the copies (written in a house) (reference see page 13)~~  
~~in the evening of the 4<sup>th</sup> encamped in a part of a grove~~  
~~near a spring, in Macon county, where was a~~  
~~branch of the church. <sup>cases the area settlement</sup>~~  
~~Some in the course of the day were joined by my~~  
~~brothers Hyrum Smith, and Lyman Wight, with a~~  
~~company of volunteers which they had gathered in~~  
~~Michigan. The whole company now consisted~~  
~~of two hundred and five men and twenty five~~  
~~luggage wagons with two and three horses each.~~  
~~\* We <sup>reorganized the camp, I was acknowledged Commander in Chief, and</sup>~~  
~~reorganized at Salt River until the 13<sup>th</sup> of July~~  
~~and repairing, which was done by selecting Lyman~~  
~~Wight, General, of the camp. I chose twenty men for~~  
~~my life guards, <sup>considering of two companies</sup> my brother Hyrum was~~  
~~chosen Captain, <sup>for the 1<sup>st</sup> Co</sup> George St. Smith <sup>also Roger often Captain of the second</sup> my armory~~  
~~bearer. The remainder of the <sup>company</sup> were organized <sup>into Companies of ten.</sup>~~  
~~at Salt River. While at Salt River General~~  
~~Wight marched the camp on the prairie, inspected our~~  
~~firelocks, <sup>ordered a</sup> discharge of the same at targets, by platoons,~~  
~~drilled us about half a day and returned to <sup>camp</sup> the~~  
~~bank of the river. <sup>(Note 11 page 13)</sup>~~

\* June 4<sup>th</sup> Governor Dunklin wrote to W. W. Phelps and others as follows, Mailed at "City of Jefferson 9<sup>th</sup> June 1834."

"Herewith you have a second order for the delivery of your arms now in the possession of the Militia of Jackson County. Col Lucas has resigned his command, he informs me.

If Lt. Col. Pitcher shall be arrested before you receive this, you will please hold up the order until I am informed who may be appointed to the command of the regiment. -

Respectfully, Daniel Dunklin.

A photograph of page 488 of "Joseph Smith's Manuscript History," Book A-1. Notice the words that have been crossed out and the words that have been interpolated between the lines.

the name “Nephi” with the name “Moroni” interpolated above the line.

It is interesting to note that Joseph Smith lived for two years after the name “Nephi” was printed in the *Times and Seasons*, and he never printed a retraction. In August, 1842, the *Millennial Star*, vol. 3, page 53, printed in England, also published Joseph Smith’s story stating that the angel’s name was “Nephi.” On page 71 of the same volume we read that the “message of the angel Nephi . . . opened a new dispensation to man. . . .” The name was also published in the 1851 edition of the *Pearl of Great Price* as “Nephi.” In 1878 Apostle Orson Pratt changed the *Pearl of Great Price* to read “Moroni.”

At the bottom of page 120 of volume 1 of the *History of the Church*, there is nothing to indicate that a deletion has been made, but approximately 3,400 words which were printed in the *Times and Seasons* have been deleted. These words were very complimentary to Sidney Rigdon. Since Rigdon was excommunicated after Joseph Smith’s death, it was apparently felt best to remove Joseph Smith’s praise concerning him. An examination of the original handwritten manuscript reveals that these words have been crossed out, which proves that this was an intentional deletion.

On the other hand, in the *History of the Church*, vol. 1, pages 295-297, seventy-four words are added which were not in the *Times and Seasons* (see vol. 5, page 673). This interpolation reads as follows:

About the 8th of November I received a visit from Elders Joseph Young, Brigham Young, and Heber C. Kimball of Mendon, Monroe county, New York. They spent four or five days at Kirtland, during which we had many interesting moments. At one of our interviews *Brother Brigham Young and John P. Greene spoke in tongues*, which was the first time I had heard this gift among the brethren; others also spoke, and I received the gift myself.

This insertion was made after Joseph Smith’s death in an obvious attempt to glorify Brigham Young. The interpolation was too large to be inserted into the handwritten manuscript at its proper place (“Manuscript History,” Book A-1, page 240), therefore it was written in the “Addenda” which follows page 553. (The Addenda contains a great deal of material which was to be inserted into Joseph Smith’s *History* and was obviously written after his death.) In *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* page 138, we have a photograph from the Addenda showing the words concerning Brigham Young which were to be added to the *History of the Church*. A close examination of this photograph reveals that although the Mormon leaders added most of this interpolation into Joseph Smith’s *History* in its printed form, they omitted

two lines. These lines contain some very important information: “Brother Joseph Young is a great man, but *Brigham is a greater, and the time will come when he will preside over the whole church.*”

Although Mormon historians added the part about Brigham Young speaking in tongues, they have never dared to add the rest—i.e., the prophecy about Brigham Young becoming the leader of the church. We must remember that many people questioned the leadership of Brigham Young. In fact, Apostle William Smith, Joseph Smith’s brother, left the church and stated that he once heard Joseph say that if Brigham Young ever led the church “he would certainly lead it to destruction” (*Warsaw Signal*, October 29, 1845). However this may be, Mormon historians never dared add in the “prophecy” found in the Addenda. They probably realized that the dissenters would question such a statement in Joseph Smith’s history and ask for proof. An examination of the original manuscript, of course, would soon reveal that the prophecy is a forgery made after Brigham Young had become the leader of the church!

Not only has the *History* been changed since it was first printed, but there is also evidence to prove that changes were made before it was first published. In other words, even the first printed version of the history is inaccurate. It does not agree with the handwritten manuscript. Charles Wesley Wandell, who worked in the Church Historian’s Office after the death of Joseph Smith, must have been one of the first to accuse the leaders of the church with falsifying the *History*. In 1855 he commented in his journal:

I notice the interpolations because having been employed (myself) in the Historian’s office at Nauvoo . . . in compiling this very autobiography, I know that after Joseph’s death his memoir was “doctored” to suit the new order of things, and this, too, by the direct order of Brigham Young to Doctor Richards and systematically by Richards. (Statement from the journal of Charles Wesley Wandell, as printed in the Reorganized Church’s *Journal of History*, vol. 8, page 76)

In 1965 we published a book entitled *Changes in Joseph Smith’s History*, in which we showed that thousands of words were added, deleted or changed since Joseph Smith’s *History of the Church* was first published. In this book we went even further and began to question whether Joseph Smith was really the author of such a large work. We suggested, in fact, that large portions were probably derived from other sources and changed to the first person to make it appear that Joseph Smith was the author. After we published that book, a great deal of information came to light which supported our conclusions concerning the falsification of Joseph Smith’s *History*. In the 1970s we

learned that the LDS Church had traded microfilms of rare documents with the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints and that the Reorganized Church had films of all of the original handwritten manuscripts of Joseph Smith's history. Although we live within two miles of the LDS Church Historical Department, the church's restrictive policy forced us to travel to Independence, Missouri, the location of the headquarters of the RLDS Church, to see the Joseph Smith collection. Our examination revealed the duplicity of the early Mormon historians. After our brief examination of the entire manuscript—i.e., books A-1 through F-1—we concluded that the history was in a deplorable state. Thousands of words—sometimes entire pages—were crossed out so that they would be deleted and many pages of material were interpolated after Joseph Smith's death.

In *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* pages 128-131, we told how we were fortunate enough to obtain a microfilm of the newspaper the Mormons published in Nauvoo. It was originally called *The Wasp*, but the name was later changed to *The Nauvoo Neighbor*. At any rate, the microfilm not only proved that the changes in Joseph Smith's *History* were deliberate falsifications, but it provided evidence to show that Joseph Smith did not finish the *History of the Church* and that it was actually completed after his death. In our study of the film we found articles that were slightly reworked and inserted in the *History* as if they were the very words of Joseph Smith himself. For example, in *The Wasp* for August 13, 1842, the following was written about Joseph Smith:

... *Joseph Smith* was arrested upon a requisition of Gov. Carlin, ... Mr. Rockwell was arrested at the same time as principal. ... these officers ... left *them* in care of the Marshal, without the original writ by which *they* were arrested, and by which only *they* could be retained, and returned back to Gov. Carlin for further instruction, —and *Messrs. Smith* and Rockwell went about *their* business ... *we* have yet to learn by what rule of right *he* was arrested to be transported to Missouri for a trial of the kind stated. (*The Wasp*, August 13, 1842)

The reader will notice from the following quotation that this same material was changed to the first person and inserted in the *History of the Church* as if it were part of Joseph Smith's personal narrative:

... *I* was arrested ... on a warrant issued by Governor Carlin, ... Brother Rockwell was arrested at the same time as principal. ... these officers ... left *us* in the care of the marshal, without the original writ by which *we* were arrested, and by which only *we* could be retained, and returned to Governor Carlin for further instructions, and *myself* and Rockwell went about *our*

business. *I* have yet to learn by what rule of right *I* was arrested to be transported to Missouri for a trial of the kind stated. (*History of the Church*, vol. 5, pages 86-87)

### Over Sixty Percent After Joseph Smith's Death

As we did more research with regard to the *History of the Church* we saw that all evidence pointed to the conclusion that Joseph Smith never finished his *History*. As early as 1965, we had printed the evidence we had on this subject, but we were very skeptical as to whether Mormon writers would receive it because of the heavy blow it would deal to the foundation of the Mormon Church. For a number of years there was complete silence, but in 1971 Dean C. Jessee, of the LDS Church Historian's Office, published an article that contained some very startling admissions. We were very pleased that this article verified our contention that Joseph Smith did not finish his *History of the Church* and that it was actually completed after his death. Mr. Jessee revealed:

Not until Willard Richards was appointed secretary to Joseph Smith in December 1842 was any significant progress made on the *History*. At the time he began writing, not more than 157 pages had been completed, covering events up to November 1, 1831. By May 8, 1843, he had written 114 pages beyond W. W. Phelps' last entry. *At the time of Joseph Smith's death, the narrative was written to August 5, 1838. . . .*

By February 4, 1846, the day the books were packed for the journey west, the *History* had been completed to March 1, 1843. . . . resumption of work on the *History* occurred on "Dec. 1, 1853 [when] Dr. Willard Richards wrote one line of *History* being sick at the time—and was never able to do any more." . . .

The remainder of Joseph Smith's *History of the Church* from March 1, 1843 to August 8, 1844, was completed under the direction of George A. Smith. . . .

The Joseph Smith *History* was finished in August 1856, seventeen years after it was begun. (*Brigham Young University Studies*, Summer 1971, pages 466, 469, 470, 472)

Dean C. Jessee frankly admitted that the manuscript was only completed to page 812 at the time of Joseph Smith's death (*Ibid.*, page 457). Since there were almost 2,200 pages, this would mean that over sixty percent of Joseph Smith's *History* was not compiled during his lifetime!

### Rocky Mountain Prophecy Added

One of Joseph Smith's greatest prophecies has been undermined by research in the handwritten manuscript of the *History of the Church*. This is his 1843 prophecy that the Mormons would come to the Rocky Mountains and become a mighty people.

According to the *History of the Church*, vol. 5, page 85, Joseph Smith himself was supposed to have said the following:

While the Deputy Grand-Master was engaged in giving the requisite instructions to the Master-elect, I had a conversation with a number of brethren in the shade of the building on the subject of our persecutions in Missouri and the constant annoyance which has followed us since we were driven from that state. *I prophesied* that the Saints would continue to suffer much affliction and would be *driven to the Rocky Mountains*, many would apostatize, others would be put to death by our persecutors or lose their lives in consequence of exposure or disease, and some of you will live to go and assist in making settlements and build cities and see the Saints become *a mighty people in the midst of the Rocky Mountains*.

In our book, *Falsification of Joseph Smith's History*, page 10, we made the following comment about this prophecy:

There is some evidence that Joseph Smith considered going west to build his kingdom, but since we now know that the Mormon Historians actually compiled Joseph Smith's *History* after his death and that they drew from many sources, we cannot help being suspicious of the authorship of this prophecy. An examination of the original handwritten manuscript would probably help solve this problem, but the Mormon leaders are still suppressing this portion of the manuscript.

Just after we wrote this statement the situation changed and we were able to examine a photograph of the portion of the handwritten manuscript which contained the prophecy ("Manuscript History," Book D-1, page 1362). This photograph revealed that the part concerning the Mormons becoming "a mighty people in the midst of the Rocky Mountains" was crammed in between the lines of the text in a much smaller handwriting. This indicated that the famous prophecy had been added to the manuscript sometime after this page was originally written. Furthermore, Dean Jessee's study showed that the page itself was not even written until July 4, 1845—i.e., over a year after Joseph Smith's death! We reasoned that if the page was not written until July 4, 1845, then it was likely that the interpolation containing the prophecy was not added until after the Mormons came to Utah. Later we found additional evidence which further undermines the authenticity of this prophecy. We discovered that the "duplicate copy of the History" (*BYU Studies*, Summer 1971, page 469), Book D-2, page 2, also has the "Rocky Mountain Prophecy" written in very small handwriting between the lines. In other words, it was obviously added to this manuscript at a later time.

The situation, then, boils down to the following: we have two handwritten manuscripts, Books D-1 and D-2. Neither of these books were even started until after Joseph Smith's death. In both cases the prophecy was jammed in between the lines in smaller handwriting. From this evidence we are forced to the conclusion that the famous "Rocky Mountain Prophecy" is not authentic. There is also no support for it in Joseph Smith's diary, and Mormon scholars have been unable to come up with anything to support the authenticity of the prophecy. Davis Bitton, who served as Assistant Church Historian, has written almost five pages concerning this matter. He frankly stated that "there is *no such prophecy in the handwriting of Joseph Smith* or published during the Prophet's lifetime, but it was referred to in general terms in 1846 during the trek west. After the arrival in the Salt Lake Valley the prophecy was frequently cited and became *more specific as time went on*" ("Joseph Smith in the Mormon Folk Memory," unpublished paper by Davis Bitton, September 28, 1974, page 16). Mr. Bitton went on to admit that the prophecy is an "insertion" which was added into the manuscript as "an afterthought" (page 18). He also noted that there are other "changes that make one suspect that the later compilers of the history, notably George A. Smith and his assistants in the 1850s, were *determined to have Joseph Smith contemplating the precise location where the Saints had by then settled* (see pages 17-18).

There is another important change in Joseph Smith's *History* that seems to be related to this matter. In the *History* as it was first published in the *Millennial Star*, vol. 23, page 280, the following words were attributed to Joseph Smith: "The Lord had an established law in relation to the matter: there must be a particular spot for the salvation of our dead. I verily believe *this* will be *the* place. . . ." In the *History of the Church*, vol. 6, page 319, this has been changed to read: "The Lord has an established law in relation to the matter: there must be a particular spot for the salvation of our dead. I verily believe *there* will be *a* place. . . ." The reason for this change of wording is obvious: the Mormon were driven from Nauvoo in 1846, just two years after Joseph Smith was supposed to have said "this will be the place." It is reported that when Brigham Young looked over the valley where Salt Lake City now stands, he stated: "This is the place." A temple was built in Salt Lake City and work for the dead is performed in this temple. The change in the location of the headquarters of the church seemed to make is necessary to change Joseph Smith's *History*.

### **Douglas Prophecy Discredited**

In addition to the evidence provided by the handwritten manuscript of Joseph Smith's *History*, some extracts from the diaries of William Clayton,

which leaked out of the First Presidency's Office, have also undermined another one of Joseph Smith's famous prophecies—i.e., the prediction that Steven A. Douglas would “aspire to the presidency of the United States.” This prophecy appears in Joseph Smith's *History of the Church*, vol. 5, page 394, under the title, “The Great Prophecy on the Head of Steven A. Douglas”:

Judge, you will aspire to the presidency of the United States; and if ever you turn your hand against me or the Latter-day Saints, you will feel the weight of the hand of Almighty upon you; . . .

Mormon historian B. H. Roberts made this comment concerning the prophecy:

Two great prophecies by Joseph Smith belong to this period. The first was in relation to the removal of the saints to the valleys of the Rocky Mountains; the other was a most remarkable prediction concerning Steven A. Douglas, . . . (*A Comprehensive History of the Church*, vol. 2, page 181)

In the *History of the Church*, a note appearing in brackets on page 393 of vol. 5 indicated that this prophecy was actually taken “from the journal of William Clayton, who was present.” In other words, it was supposed to have been copied from Clayton's diary into the “Manuscript History” of the church. Since Clayton was Joseph Smith's private secretary, he recorded some very sensitive information in his diaries. The First Presidency of the Mormon church kept the Nauvoo diaries suppressed in their vault, but at one time they allowed the Historical Department to have them so that James B. Allen, who served as Assistant Church Historian under Leonard Arrington, could examine them. This turned out to be a real mistake because James B. Allen and Dean Jessee proceeded to make a typescript. Jessee then allowed a Mormon scholar to make typed extracts from the copy he and Allen had produced. Eventually, the scholar's notes leaked out at Brigham Young University and were widely circulated. We perceived the importance of Clayton's statements and printed them under the title, *Clayton's Secret Writings Uncovered*. The Mormon scholar was very embarrassed that Clayton's writings had fallen into the hands of critics of the church and filed a lawsuit against us. Although we eventually won the lawsuit, it took a great deal of time and money to prevail. After we won in the 10th circuit court of appeals on December 30, 1985, the Mormon scholar appealed to the Supreme Court of the United States. The Supreme Court, however, refused to hear the case and allowed our victory to stand.

At any rate, we subpoenaed the original diaries stored in the First Presidency's vault. The church fought this

move, claiming that they were private documents, and the Judge agreed with this position. We were, however, allowed to take the testimony of James B. Allen, who worked on the typescript of the original diaries. He verified that our reproduction was accurate: “I can stipulate this: That whatever I have obviously, in the copy that I made, and the material that the Tanners published is just almost verbatim. There is little, tiny differences here and there but almost verbatim of that . . .” (Deposition of James B. Allen, page 27). On page 92 of his deposition, Dr. Allen testified: “. . . I spent quite a bit of time, a good part of the day trying to make comparisons and the only difference I found is very minor in terms of a period or punctuation mark here and there that is natural in transcribing.”

Since the extracts we had obtained covered the very day Clayton was supposed to have recorded the Douglas prophecy in his diary, we compared the diary entry with the *History of the Church*. Our examination revealed that while the diary does mention Douglas, the famous prophecy is not included. Joseph Smith is quoted as saying the following on May 18, 1843:

. . . “I prophesy in the name of the Lord God that in a few years this government will be utterly overthrown and wasted so that there will not be a potsherd left” for their wickedness in conniving at the Missouri mobocracy. The Judge appears very friendly & acknowledged the propriety of the prests. remarks. (William Clayton Diary, May 18, 1843, typed excerpts, page 42)

The account published in the *History of the Church* is about 160 words longer than the one found in Clayton's diary. It differs in two very important aspects: One, additional words appear in Joseph Smith's prophecy that the United States would be “utterly overthrown.” These words change the prophecy to make its fulfillment conditional upon the performance of the United States Government. Two, the entire prophecy concerning Douglas has been inserted. In the quotation from the *History of the Church* which is printed below, we have marked the important additions with italics and the words which are actually in Clayton's diary are in regular type:

. . . I prophesy in the name of the Lord God of *Israel*, unless the United States redress the wrongs committed upon the Saints in the state of Missouri and punish the crimes committed by her officers that in a few years the government will be utterly overthrown and wasted, and there will not be so much as a potsherd left, for their wickedness in *permitting the murder of men, women and children, and the wholesale plunder and extermination of thousands of her citizens to go unpunished, thereby perpetrating a foul and corroding blot upon the fair*

*fame of this great republic, the very thought of which would have caused the high-minded and patriotic framers of the Constitution of the United States to hide their faces with shame. Judge, you will aspire to the presidency of the United States; and if ever you turn your hand against me or the Latter-day Saints, you will feel the weight of the hand of Almighty upon you; and you will live to see and know that I have testified the truth to you; for the conversation of this day will stick to you through life.*

He [Judge Douglas] appeared very friendly, and acknowledged the truth and propriety of President Smith's remarks. (*History of the Church*, vol. 5, page 394)

Instead of confirming the famous prophecy concerning Douglas, William Clayton's diary seems to provide devastating evidence against it. All it contains is the false prophecy that the United States would be destroyed. Joseph Smith's diary for May 18, 1843, is also silent concerning the prophecy. The manuscript for the *History of the Church* cannot be used as evidence for the prophecy because this portion was not written during Joseph Smith's lifetime. Dean C. Jessee, in fact, shows that it was not written until 1854 or 1855 (*BYU Studies*, Summer 1971, page 441). This, of course, would be 10 or 11 years after Joseph Smith's death! If the prophecy concerning Douglas was made up in the 1850s, as the evidence seems to indicate, then it has no real value.

In his deposition, pages 90-91, James B. Allen testified that he could find nothing to support the version of the prophecy found in the *History of the Church* in the Clayton diary: ". . . as I remember there is a general prophecy that is ascribed to Douglas that was supposed to come from the William Clayton Diaries. In my transcription of that particular date, and I think this is reflected in the material the Tanners published, what is in the Clayton Diaries is not what is said in other publications to have been in the Clayton Diaries." When Dr. Allen was asked if he knew of any other source the extended Douglas prophecy could have come from, he responded: "I do not know a primary source for that." From Allen's testimony, it is clear that the Douglas prophecy which appears in the *History of the Church* is not based on anything that was written in Clayton's diary in 1843. The claim in the *History* that it was taken "from the journal of William Clayton," therefore, appears to be spurious.

Mormon historian B. H. Roberts maintained that Joseph Smith's prophecy concerning Douglas "is one of the most remarkable prophecies either in ancient or modern times" (*History of the Church*, vol. 3 page 395). When all the evidence is examined, however, it becomes clear that this purported prophecy is only the work of someone's fertile imagination and has no basis in fact.

### Joseph Smith's Diaries Misused in History

Since we now know that more than sixty percent of Joseph Smith's *History of the Church* was not compiled until after his death, the question arises as to what sources Mormon historians used to create the purported history. We know that they used newspapers and journals of other Mormon leaders and that much of the material came only from memory. It was, of course, written in the first person to make it appear that Joseph Smith was the author. We have always felt that Joseph Smith's private diaries were used in preparing the history, but we were denied access to them. It was August, 1976, when we were finally able to examine them on microfilm at the RLDS headquarters in Missouri. Finally, a limited printing of the diaries, which was done without the Mormon church's cooperation, was published in 1987 by Signature Books.

One of the first things we noticed is that there are large periods of Joseph Smith's life that are not covered by extant diaries—unless, of course, the Mormon leaders are still suppressing some of his diaries. As we indicated earlier, at the time of Joseph Smith's death, his *History* had only been completed to August 5, 1838. Since Smith died in June, 1844, this left a period of almost six years which the Mormon historians had to fill in from Joseph Smith's diaries and other sources. Now, there are a few brief diaries from 1838 to 1839, but for the next three years there was no extant diaries. Scott Faulring, however, says that "some Joseph Smith journal entries" from about 1841-42, were kept in "The Book of the Law of the Lord," a manuscript which "is generally restricted from access" (*An American Prophet's Record: The Diaries and Journals of Joseph Smith*, pages 242-243). The last period of Joseph Smith's life, December 21, 1842—June 22, 1844, is covered by four diaries. It seems, therefore, that only three of the last six years of Joseph Smith's lifetime as it appears in the *History of the Church* can actually be checked against his diaries.

Unfortunately, these diaries do not contain the important information that we would expect to find about Joseph Smith's life. Many pages are left blank or only contain information on the weather or other trivial matters. The value of the diaries decreases even more when we learn that a large part of the entries were not written in the first person, but rather by Joseph Smith's scribe Willard Richards. For instance, under the date of October 20, 1843, we read this entry in Joseph Smith's diary: "heard that Joseph went to Ramus yesterday has not returned."

In any case, our examination of the diaries reveals that although they were used as one source for Joseph Smith's *History*, there was no attempt to accurately follow

the text of the diaries. Mormon officials chose only the portions of the diaries which suited their purposes. Where a portion did not say what they wanted, they altered it or ignored it completely, sometimes using an entirely different source. For example, in his diary Joseph Smith related a dream and its interpretation which tended to discredit his famous prophecy about the Civil War. This material was simply omitted in Joseph Smith's *History*.

The early Mormon historians were not too sensitive about Joseph Smith's inability to observe the Word of Wisdom and copied some things that later embarrassed church leaders so much that the entries had to be altered or removed. Nevertheless, some material which related to Joseph Smith's attitude toward the Word of Wisdom never made it into the printed text. As we have already shown, in his diary Joseph Smith "prophesied" he would "drink wine" with Orson Hyde in the east, but this was never used in the *History of the Church*. His statement concerning how much he liked strong "tea" was also omitted. One statement, recorded in Joseph Smith's diary under the date of May 19, 1844, must have caused some concern: "eve I talked a long time in the bar Room . . ." In the *History of the Church*, vol. 6, page 398, this was changed to read: "In the evening I talked to the brethren at my house."

The diaries of Joseph Smith deal another heavy blow to the credibility of Joseph Smith's *History of the Church*. No wonder Mormon leaders suppressed these diaries for so long.

The precarious nature of trying to write Joseph Smith's history after his death and palm it off as though he were the author is demonstrated by an amusing incident. Under the date of December 28, 1843, the following is recorded in Joseph Smith's diary: "[At] Home. Sister Emma sick, had another *chill*" (*An American Prophet's Record*, page 258). In a speech delivered at BYU on August 6, 1987, the Mormon scholar Dean Jessee, who is an expert on Joseph Smith's history, said that the "compiler of the [Joseph Smith] history misread the word *chill* for the word *child*, and thereby created an event that did not occur." In the *History of the Church*, vol. 5, page 209, the statement concerning Emma's illness was expanded from seven words to twenty-two, and the *chill* was transformed into "a son":

On my return home, I found my wife Emma sick. She was delivered of a *son*, which did not survive its birth.

The Mormon officials who worked on Joseph Smith's *History* after his death were obviously aware that there was no child living at that time who could have been born on December 26, 1842. They, therefore, made

Joseph Smith say that the child "did not survive its birth." How they were able to determine that this nonexistent child as "a son" rather than a daughter is somewhat of a mystery. While this humorous incident is not really too important as far as history goes, it certainly shows the folly of forging a first-person type of history after someone's death.

### History Causing Concern

In his book, *Trials of Discipleship: The Story of William Clayton, a Mormon*, the Mormon scholar James B. Allen acknowledged that Joseph Smith was credited for things he did not do:

Comparing the entries in Clayton's journal with the *History of the Church* provides an interesting insight into the way the *History* was compiled. It is obvious that Clayton was the source for this part. But in the *History of the Church* Clayton is not mentioned at all—on either date—and Joseph Smith is portrayed as the one selling the property and receiving the money. Clayton, of course, was always acting as Joseph's agent, and it appears as if whoever compiled this portion of the *History of the Church* was simply trying to give the prophet credit for doing as much as possible. This is also an example of the way Clayton was frequently subordinated—his activities overshadowed or ignored. But the fact that he was one of those who worked on compiling the *History of the Church* may be evidence that he willingly took subordination without complaint. (*Trials of Discipleship*, 1987, page 106)

Dr. Allen also made these revealing comments about the *History*:

One problem with Joseph Smith's published *History of the Church*, however, is that it does not reflect Joseph himself as much as it reflects the image of Joseph as he was seen by scribes and journalists. The *History* is written in the first person, as if Joseph were doing the writing, though usually the first person account of an event is really a paraphrase or adaptation of someone else's account. At times the only essential difference is that "Joseph," "he," or "President Smith" is changed to "I." . . . William Clayton's journal provided many such entries, which suggests that much of the "first person" Joseph Smith portrayed in the *History* is, in reality, only the Joseph Smith that William Clayton or someone else saw and heard. Even with that qualification, however, the work is invaluable, but there is a continuing concern with whether the history as reported is always the way Joseph saw it or would have written it. . . . Clayton was one of several scribes who kept the "Book of the Law of the Lord." . . . it also contains some manuscript sources used in compiling the *History*, and about sixty-one pages of this material were written by Clayton,



mostly in the third person, and later transposed to the first person for the sake of the published history. (*Ibid.*, pages 116 and 118)

At the time we began making our discoveries concerning changes and authorship of Joseph Smith's *History of the Church* it would have been almost heresy for a Mormon writer to openly criticize it. As the evidence against the *History* has continued to mount, some of the top scholars have begun to voice their discontent. In an article published in 1976, Dean Jessee conceded that there have been "numerous alterations, discrepancies, editorial irregularities, and other variations that appear suspicious in an age of precise literary style and historical method" (*Journal of Mormon History*, vol. 3, page 23). On page 37 of the same article, Jessee commented:

To further the question of authorship, since Joseph Smith's diary did not provide an unbroken narrative of his life, gaps were bridged by using other sources, changing indirect discourse to direct as if Joseph had done the writing himself. . . . by transferring other people's words and thoughts to Joseph Smith, this editorial method produced a distorting effect for those who would study his personality from his personal writings.

Marvin S. Hill, of the church's Brigham Young University, also acknowledged the problem:

One reason that Brodie concluded that Joseph had veiled his personality behind a "perpetual flow of words" in his history may be that she assumed he had actually dictated most of it. We now know that *large portions* of that history were *not dictated* but were written by scribes and later transferred into the first person to read as though the words were Joseph's. That fact makes what few things Joseph Smith wrote himself of great significance. (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Winter 1972, page 76)

Davis Bitton, who served as Assistant Church Historian under Leonard Arrington, frankly admitted that the *History of the Church* "does not come off well" when measured against a standard like "the monumental edition of Jefferson papers" (*Ibid*, Winter 1968, page 31). Dr. Bitton charged that the "basic text" of Joseph Smith's *History* has "not been treated with proper respect," and went on to concede that many "changes have been made." On page 32 of the same article, he made the astonishing statement that "for researchers in early Mormon history Rule Number One is 'Do not rely on the *DHC* [the *Documentary History of the Church*]; never use a quotation from it without comparing the earlier versions.'"

In 1981 Howard C. Searle, a Mormon scholar who was serving the Salt Lake Institute of Religion, made these revealing comments:

Anyone familiar with the methodology involved in the compilation of the *History of the Church* will recognize that one of its main problems is the confused and misleading authorship. To quote reliably from this source, one should first answer two questions: (1) who wrote the original source? and (2) How has it been edited for publication? . . . many of the first-person passages . . . are neither the Prophet's personal writings nor even his dictation. . . . In terms of pages in the original manuscript history, only thirty-five percent had been written up to the time of the Prophet's death, and none of this was in his own handwriting. . . . Elder [Willard] Richards apparently felt that he had the necessary investiture of authority to permit him to write for, and as if he were, the Prophet Joseph Smith. . . . Brigham [Young] continued the practice of allowing clerks to write in the first person for Joseph until it was finished in 1857. . . .

After the deaths of the original compilers of the history, there was a tendency in the church to forget or ignore the methodology of the early scribes and Church historians who wrote it and to attribute all of the first-person material in the history to Joseph Smith himself. . . .

By the turn of the century the project of publishing the entire history in accessible book form was undertaken by George Q. Cannon, a member of the First Presidency. In an unpublished preface, he asserted that the history "was written by the Prophet himself or under his own direction during his lifetime." . . . In less than fifty years from the time the history was completed, the methods involved in its compilation were either obscured or ignored to the point that it was commonly assumed the history was the personal writing or dictation of the Prophet. In spite of several recent articles on the subject, nothing has significantly modified this belief as far as the general Church membership is concerned. (*BYU Studies*, Winter 1981, pages 102, 111, 114, 117, 119-120)

Since the Mormon scholar Dean Jessee revealed that over sixty percent of the *History* was not compiled during Joseph Smith's lifetime, church leaders have done nothing to dispel the myth concerning Smith's authorship of the *History*. They have, in fact, continued to perpetuate the false idea that he was the author. The 1978 printing of the *History of the Church* still had this statement on the title page: "History of Joseph Smith, the Prophet *by Himself*."

Now that their own scholars have admitted that Joseph Smith's *History* was not finished until after his death and that many sources not written by Joseph were put in "the first person" to make it appear that they were written by Smith, Mormons need to come to grips with the serious implications of this whole matter. Mormon scholar Hugh Nibley says that "a forgery is defined by specialists in ancient documents as 'any documents

which was not produced in the time, place, and manner claimed by it or its publishers” (*Since Cumorah*, page 160). Under this definition, the *History of the Church* must be classified as a forgery. While it does contain some very important information about Joseph Smith, most of it “was not produced in the time, place, and manner claimed by it or its publishers.”

## 14. Prophets, Seers and Revelators

The LDS Church claims to be the only church on earth which is actually led by a living prophet who can receive revelations directly from God. Bruce R. McConkie explained that “Any new revelation for the Church would, of course, be presented to the people by the President of the Church, he being *the mouthpiece of God* on earth” (*Mormon Doctrine*, 1979, page 606). On page 701 of the same book, Apostle McConkie informs us that “The President of the Church holds the office of seership. . . . and the members of the Council of the Twelve, together with the Presidency and Patriarch to the Church, are chosen and sustained as prophets, seers, and revelators to the Church.”

The LDS Church condemns the Catholics for teaching that the Pope is infallible, yet it teaches essentially the same thing. President Brigham Young once boasted: “The Lord Almighty leads this Church, and he will never suffer you to be led astray if you are found doing your duty. You may go home and sleep as sweetly as a babe in its mother’s arms, as to any danger of your leaders leading you astray . . .” (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 9, page 289).

Wilford Woodruff, the fourth president of the church, proclaimed: “The Lord will never permit me or any other man who stands as President of this Church to lead you astray. It is not in the programme” (Statement by President Wilford Woodruff, as published in *Doctrine and Covenants*, 1981 edition, following Official Declaration—1, page 292).

Since President Woodruff’s death, Mormon leaders have continued to stress that the Lord will “never permit” the president of the church to lead anyone astray. Mormons are encouraged to put all their trust in the church authorities and try not to do their own thinking if it conflicts with what the leaders teach. The ward teachers’ message for June, 1945, made the matter very plain:

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

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

Heber C. Kimball, First Counselor to Brigham Young, exhorted the Mormon people to “learn to do as you are told, . . . if you are told by your leader to do a thing, do it, *none of your business whether it is right or wrong*” (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 6, page 32).

On September 6, 1857, Thomas B. Marsh declared that the president of the church “is not called a Pope, but names do not alter realities, and therefore he is a Pope” (*Ibid.*, vol. 5, page 208).

Joseph Smith himself gave a revelation in which the Mormons were commanded to “give heed unto all his words and commandments which he shall give unto you . . . his word ye shall receive, *as if from mine own mouth*, in all patience and faith” (*Doctrine and Covenants* 21:4-5). On one occasion Joseph Smith boasted: “God made Aaron to be the mouthpiece for the children of Israel, and He will make me to be *god to you* in His stead, and the Elders to be mouth for me; and *if you don't like it, you must lump it*” (*History of the Church*, vol. 6, pages 319-320).

Ezra Taft Benson, the thirteenth “Prophet, Seer and Revelator” of the LDS Church, clearly laid out his beliefs concerning the importance of the president of the church in a speech given at Brigham Young University. He dogmatically asserted that the “Living Prophet” is more important than “The Standard Works”—i.e., the Bible, Book of Mormon, *Doctrine and Covenants* and *Pearl of Great Price*. He also maintained that the most important reading material is found in the current church magazines and the *Deseret News*:

. . . As a Church we sing the song, “We Thank Thee, Oh God, for a Prophet.” Here then is the grand key—*Follow the Prophet*—and here now are Fourteen Fundamentals in Following the Prophet, the President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

FIRST: The Prophet is the Only Man Who Speaks For the Lord *in Everything*. . . .

SECOND: The Living Prophet is *More Vital to Us Than the Standard Works*. . . .

THIRD: The Living Prophet is More Important Us Than a Dead Prophet. . . . the most important prophet so far as you and I are concerned is the one living in our day and age to whom the Lord is currently revealing His will for us. Therefore the most important reading we can do is in any of the words of the Prophet contained each week in the Church Section of the *Deseret News*, and any words of the Prophet contained each month in our Church magazines. Our marching orders for each six months are found in the General Conference addresses which are printed in the *Ensign* magazine. . . .

Beware of those who would pit the dead prophets against the living prophets, for the living prophets

always take precedence. (“Fourteen Fundamentals in Following the Prophet,” by President Ezra Taft Benson, BYU Devotional Assembly, February 26, 1980, pages 1-5)

### Joseph Smith's Prophecies

Mormon writers state that Joseph Smith's claim to be a prophet is established by the fulfillment of his prophecies. Actually, a careful examination of the evidence seems to prove just the opposite. As we have already shown, two of the greatest prophecies attributed to Joseph Smith—i.e., the prophecy concerning the Mormons coming to the Rocky Mountains and the one concerning Steven A. Douglas—have been found to be forgeries written after his death. Another prophecy which is often used as evidence of Joseph Smith's prophetic calling is that concerning the Civil War—given on December 25, 1832, and printed in the *Doctrine and Covenants* as Section 87. Unlike the other two prophecies, this revelation can be traced directly to Joseph Smith. It states that “beginning at the rebellion of South Carolina, . . . war will be poured out *upon all nations*, . . . For behold the Southern States shall be divided against the Northern States, . . .” (verses 1-3). While the Mormon people believe this revelation proves Joseph Smith was a prophet, Larry Jonas points out that Smith undoubtedly received the idea for it from the views of his time:

On July 14, 1832, Congress passed a tariff act which South Carolina thought was so bad, she declared the tariff null and void. President Andrew Jackson alerted the nation's troops. At the time Smith made his prophecy, the nation expected a war between North and South to begin at the rebellion of South Carolina. This can be confirmed in a U. S. history book. Better yet, let me confirm it from a Latter-day Saints Church publication, *Evening and Morning Star*, . . . the issue which came out for January 1833. The news of South Carolina's rebellion was known before January 1833. It was known before December 25, 1832 but it was not available in time for the December issue. It takes quite a while for news to be set up even today in our dailies. We would expect it to wait for a month to come out in a monthly. The example contains the information available to the church before the paper hit the street. The example and the prophecy are strangely similar. . . . Both consider the pending war a sign of the end—which it was not. In fact, the war expected in 1832 did not come to pass. . . .

Far from being evidences of Smith's divine calling, the most famous prophecies which he made are evidences that he can copy views of his time. (*Mormon Claims Examined*, 1961, page 52)

One further fact that supports the argument that Joseph Smith borrowed from the “views of his time” is that there is another article printed in the January 1833 issue (vol. 1, issue 8) of the original paper, *The Evening and the Morning Star*, which has the title, “Rebellion in South Carolina.” Interestingly enough, Joseph Smith’s revelation has the words “beginning at the rebellion of South Carolina” in the first verse. That Joseph Smith was familiar with the fact that South Carolina had rebelled at the time he gave the revelation is obvious from a statement he made concerning the matter in the *History of the Church*, vol. 1, page 301. There can be little doubt, therefore, that the revelation was inspired by the fact that South Carolina had already rebelled. This rebellion did not end in war, but the Civil War did start in 1861 because of trouble in South Carolina. Some of the Mormon leaders apparently considered the revelation as a failure when the war did not break out in the early 1830s. It was never published during Joseph Smith’s lifetime, and although it is included in the handwritten manuscript of the *History of the Church*, it was suppressed the first two times that Joseph Smith’s *History* was printed. It is obvious that this was a deliberate omission on the part of the Mormon historians, for over 300 words were deleted without any indication! Mormon historian B. H. Roberts informs us that the revelation was not printed until 1851 (seven years after Joseph Smith’s death). Brigham Young and other Mormon leaders apparently did not have much confidence in this revelation at first because they waited nineteen years before they actually published it. As war appeared more eminent, Joseph Smith’s prophecy was dusted off and printed by the church, and eventually it came to be used as evidence that Joseph Smith was a true prophet.

While the first portion of verse 3 of Joseph Smith’s prophecy concerning the “Southern States” being “divided against the Northern States” could be applied to the Civil War, the remaining portion of the verse appears to have miserably failed. It states that “the Southern States will call on other nations, even the *nation of Great Britain*, as it is called, and they shall *also call upon other nations*, in order to defend themselves against *other nations*; and then war shall be poured out upon all nations.” This obviously is a prediction that a world war involving “all nations” would take place. As it turned out, however, war was not poured out upon “all nations” as Joseph Smith had prophesied.

In addition to this problem, some material which appeared in Joseph Smith’s diary which relates to the “war” was omitted when his *History of the Church* was compiled. In Smith’s diary, under the date of April 2, 1843, we find an interpretation of a dream by Apostle Orson Hyde which Joseph Smith had received. The

interpretation says that the “United States” will be “invaded by a foriegn [*sic*] foe, probably England,” and the “U. S. Government will call on Gen. [Joseph] Smith to defend probably all this western territory and offer him any amount of men he shall desire & put them under his command.” The reason this material was suppressed is obvious: Joseph Smith was dead by the time the Civil War started, and therefore the interpretation could not be fulfilled. This interpretation of the dream that was suppressed seems to undermine the prophecy on the Civil War. It should be noted also that the part omitted should have appeared in the middle of a portion of Joseph Smith’s *History* (vol. 5, pages 323-324) which was later canonized as a revelation in Section 130 of the *Doctrine and Covenants*. In other words, Section 130 contains the abbreviated material from the *History of the Church*. The portion that was suppressed should have appeared between verse 11 and 12.

In any case, the fact that Joseph Smith predicted a civil war is not too remarkable. Many people believed there would be a civil war before it actually took place. The December 1840 issue of the *Millennial Star*, vol. 1, page 216, quoted an article from the *New York Herald* which contained the following. “We begin to fear this unhappy country is on the eve of a bloody civil war, a final dismemberment of the Union. . . .” Taken as a whole, Joseph Smith’s prophecy shows no special insight into the future. The revelation, in fact, contains inaccuracies which tend to invalidate it. (For more information on this matter see *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* pages 190-192.)

### The Canadian Revelation

David Whitmer, one of the three witnesses to the Book of Mormon, tells of a false revelation that Joseph Smith gave:

When the Book of Mormon was in the hands of the printer, more money was needed to finish the printing of it. We were waiting on Martin Harris who was doing his best to sell a part of his farm, in order to raise the necessary funds. After a time Hyrum Smith and others began to get impatient. . . . Brother Hyrum was vexed with Brother Martin, and thought they should get the money by some means outside of him, and not let him have anything to do with the publication of the Book, or receiving any of the profits thereof if any profits should accrue. . . . Brother Hyrum said it had been suggested to him that some of the brethren might go to Toronto, Canada, and sell the copy-right of the Book of Mormon for considerable money: and he persuaded Joseph to inquire of the Lord about it. Joseph concluded to do so. He had not yet given up the stone. Joseph looked into the hat in which he placed the stone, and *received a revelation that some of the brethren should go to*

Toronto, Canada, and that they would sell the copy-right of the Book of Mormon. Hiram Page and Oliver Cowdery went to Toronto on this mission, but they failed entirely to sell the copy-right, returning without any money. Joseph was at my father's house when they returned. I was there also, and am an eye witness to these facts. . . . Well, we were all in great trouble, and we asked Joseph how it was that he had received a revelation from the Lord for some brethren to go to Toronto and sell the copy-right, and the brethren had utterly failed in their undertaking. Joseph did not know how it was, so he enquired of the Lord about it, and behold the following revelation came through the stone: "Some revelations are of God: some revelations are of man: and some revelations are of the devil." So we see that the revelation to go to Toronto and sell the copy-right was not of God, but was of the devil or the heart of man. (*An Address to All Believers in Christ*, 1887, pages 30-31)

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

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

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

### A Temple in Zion

Even Joseph Smith's printed revelations are filled with problems. For instance, in a revelation given to Joseph Smith, September 22 and 23, 1832, "Jesus Christ" spoke of "the city of New Jerusalem" which "shall be built, . . . in the western boundaries of the State of Missouri, and dedicated by the hand of Joseph Smith, Jun., . . ." (*Doctrine and Covenants*, Section 84, verses 2-3). Verses 4-5 of the revelation go on to say:

Verily this is the word of the Lord, that the city New Jerusalem shall be built by the gathering of the saints, beginning at this place, even the place of the temple, which temple shall be reared in this generation.

For verily this generation shall not all pass away until an house shall be built unto the Lord, and a cloud shall rest upon it, . . .

Verse 31 also promises that the "house shall be built unto the Lord in this generation, upon the consecrated spot as I have appointed —" The reader will notice that this revelation, given in 1832, plainly states that a temple would be built in the western boundaries of the state of Missouri—that is, in Independence, Missouri—before all of those that were then living passed away. The leaders of the church understood this revelation to mean exactly what it said, and although the Mormons were driven from Independence—Jackson County, Missouri—they expected to return and fulfill the prophecy. In the 1870s Apostle Orson Pratt still maintained that the temple would be built in his generation: "There are many . . . still living, whose faith in returning to Jackson County, and the things that are coming, is as firm and fixed as the throne of the Almighty" (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 13, page 138). On page 362 of the same volume, Apostle Pratt contended:

. . . God promised in the year 1832 that we should, before the generation then living had passed away, return and build up the City of Zion in Jackson County.

. . . We believe in these promises as much as we believe in any promises ever uttered by the mouth of Jehovah. The Latter-day Saints just as much expect to receive a fulfillment of that promise during the generation that was in existence in 1832 as they expect that the sun will rise and set to-morrow. Why? Because God cannot lie. He will fulfill all His promises. He has spoken, it must come to pass. This is our faith.

In 1871, Apostle Pratt again spoke of the prophecy that the temple "will be reared" in "the generation when this revelation was given." He then stated: "But says the objector, 'thirty-nine years have passed away.' What of that? The generation has not passed away; all the people that were living thirty-nine years ago have not passed away; but before they do pass away this will be fulfilled" (*Ibid.*, vol. 14, page 275). In 1874 (vol. 17, page 111) Pratt brought the subject up again:

This was given forty-two years ago. The generation then living was not only to commence a house of God . . . but was actually to complete the same, . . . if you believe in these revelations you just as much expect the fulfillment of the revelation as of any one that God has ever given in these latter times, . . . we Latter-day Saints expect to return to Jackson County and to build a Temple there before the generation that was living forty-two years ago has all passed away. Well, then, the time must be pretty near when we shall begin that work.

Klaus J. Hansen shows that as late as 1900, Lorenzo Snow, the fifth president of the church, was still hoping that the prophecy would be fulfilled:

In 1900, Woodruff's successor, Lorenzo Snow, affirmed at a special priesthood meeting in the Salt Lake Temple that "there are many here now under the sound of my voice, probably a majority, who will live to go back to Jackson County and assist in building that temple." (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Autumn 1966, page 74)

As late as 1935, Joseph Fielding Smith, who later became president of the church, maintained that "there will be some of that generation who were then living when this revelation was given who shall be living when this temple is reared. . . . I have full confidence in the word of the Lord and that it shall not fail" (*The Way to Perfection*, page 270). In a more recent book, however, Joseph Fielding Smith concluded: "It is also reasonable to believe that no soul living in 1832, is still living in mortality on the earth" (*Answers to Gospel Questions*, vol. 4, page 112). It has now been over a century and a half since Joseph Smith gave the prophecy that the temple would be built in that generation. It is obvious, therefore, that the prophecy has utterly failed.

### **Bennett Fools Joseph's God**

If Joseph Smith actually received revelations, they must have been from a god who had only a limited knowledge of what was taking place. This becomes obvious when we examine the evidence concerning Smith's relationship with John C. Bennett. Although Joseph Smith received a letter "from a person of respectable character" stating that Bennett was a wicked man, he ignored the warning and honored him in many ways. Bennett, in fact, became one of Smith's best friends. He was elected Mayor of the city of Nauvoo, and at one point he was even made an "Assistant President" of the church (*History of the Church*, vol. 4, page 341). In January, 1841, Joseph Smith even gave a revelation from "the Lord" commending John C. Bennett for his love and good works:

Again, let my servant John C. Bennett help you in your labor in sending my word to the kings and people of the earth, and stand by you, even you my servant Joseph Smith, in the hour of affliction; and his reward shall not fail if he receive counsel.

And for his love he shall be great, for he shall be mine if he do this, saith the Lord. I have seen the work which he hath done, which I accept if he continue, and will crown him with blessings and great glory. (*Doctrine and Covenants* 124:16-17)

With regard to the revelation, it is interesting to note that President Brigham Young later acknowledged

that "John C. Bennett and others never had any faith nor interest only to prostitute every female that they could; men that were ordained unto this condemnation" (Sermon by Brigham Young, Jan. 23, 1847, as printed in *Journals of John D. Lee, 1846-47 and 1859*, page 57). While John C. Bennett was at first held in high esteem by Joseph Smith, Bennett later became one of his worst enemies. In a letter to Governor Carlin, dated June 24, 1842, Joseph Smith said that Bennett's "general character is that of an adulterer of the worst kind, . . ." (*History of the Church*, vol. 5, page 42). Smith went on in the same letter to admit that he had learned that "More than twenty months ago Bennett went to a lady in the city and began to teach her that promiscuous intercourse between the sexes was lawful and no harm in it, . . . he seduced a respectable female with lying, and subjected her to public infamy and disgrace. . . . he made the attempt on others, and by using the same language, seduced them also." Joseph Smith later admitted that soon after Bennett became a member of the Mormon Church, a letter was received in Nauvoo from "a person of respectable character and residing in the vicinity where Bennett had lived. This letter cautioned us against him, setting forth that he was a very mean man, and had a wife and two or three children . . . but knowing that it is no uncommon thing for good men to be evil spoken against, the above letter was kept quiet, but held in reserve" (*History of the Church*, vol. 5, page 36). On June 25, 1842, the Mormon newspaper, *The Wasp*, printed a letter which claimed that John C. Bennett's "wife left him under satisfactory evidence of his adulterous connections; nor was this his only fault; he used her bad otherwise." It must have been very embarrassing for the Mormon leaders to have to publish information on Bennett's evil activities, especially since Joseph Smith had honored him and even received a revelation, purporting to come from God, stating that John C. Bennett would be "great" because of "his love." The only conclusion one can draw from all this is that John C. Bennett fooled the god of the *Doctrine and Covenants*!

### **The Kinderhook Plates**

Joseph Smith not only claimed to be a prophet who received direct revelations from God, but he also maintained that he was a "seer" who could translate ancient writings which could not be deciphered by worldly wisdom. As we will show later, this claim was disproved when he mistranslated an Egyptian mortuary text known as the Book of Breathing into the "Book of Abraham"—now canonized in the *Pearl of Great Price*. One of his most serious blunders, however, was when he claimed he translated a portion of the Kinderhook plates which turned out to be modern forgeries created specifically for the purpose of entrapping him.

On May 1, 1843, the Mormon publication, *Times and Seasons*, reprinted an article which claimed that a “resident in Kinderhook” dreamed “three nights in succession” that in a mound near his home “there were treasures concealed.” Ten or twelve men dug into the mound and “found SIX BRASS PLATES.” These plates were later brought to Nauvoo. In a letter written from that city, dated May 2, 1843, Charlotte Haven said that when Joshua Moore “showed them to Joseph, the latter said that the figures or writing on them was similar to that in which the Book of Mormon was written, and if Mr. Moore could leave them, he thought that *by the help of revelation he would be able to translate them*” (*Overland Monthly*, December 1890, page 630). Although it has been speculated that the church might have a manuscript copy of Joseph Smith’s “translation,” no evidence concerning this matter has been put forth. There is proof, however, that Joseph Smith did accept these plates as authentic and even claimed that he had translated a portion of them. The evidence comes from the diary of William Clayton, Joseph Smith’s private secretary. Clayton wrote the following:

I have seen 6 brass plates . . . covered with ancient characters of language containing from 30 to 40 on each side of the plates. *Prest J. has translated a portion and says they contain the history of the person with whom they were found* and he was a descendant of Ham through the loins of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and that he received his kingdom from the ruler of heaven and earth. (William Clayton’s Journal, May 1, 1843, as cited in *Trials of Discipleship—The Story of William Clayton, a Mormon*, page 117)

The information in Clayton’s journal was deemed so important that it was used as a basis for the story of the Kinderhook plates which is printed in the *History of the Church*. The following is attributed to Joseph Smith:

I insert fac-similes of the six brass plates found near Kinderhook, . . .

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

Since Clayton’s journal was apparently used as the major source for the statement attributed to Joseph Smith in the *History of the Church*, it shows that the highest leaders of the church at the time the *History* was compiled believed that Joseph Smith did, in fact, “translate a portion” of the plates. The *History* was “carefully revised under the strict inspection of President

Brigham Young, and approved by him” (*History of the Church*, vol. 1, preface, page vi).

In any case, after the plates were found, nine “citizens of Kinderhook” certified that R. Wiley took the “six brass plates” from “a large mound, in this vicinity” (see *Times and Seasons*, vol. 4, page 186). Unfortunately for the Mormon position, it was later revealed that the plates were forgeries. On April 25, 1855, W. P. Harris, who was one of the nine witnesses to the discovery of the plates, wrote a letter in which he stated that the plates were not genuine:

. . . I was present with a number at or near Kinderhook, and helped to dig at the time the plates were found . . . I washed and cleaned the plates and subsequently made an honest affidavit to the same.

But since that time, Bridge Whitten said to me that he cut and prepared the plates and he . . . and R. Wiley engraved them themselves, and that there was nitric acid put upon them the night before that they were found to rust the iron ring and band. . . .

Wilbourn Fugit appeared to be the chief, with R. Wiley and B. Whitten. (Letter printed in the *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society*, 1912, vol. 5, no. 2, pages 271-273, as quoted in *The Book of Mormon?* by James D. Bales, pages 95-96)

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

I received your letter in regard to those plates, and will say in answer that they are a humbug, gotten up by Robert Wiley, Bridge Whitton and myself . . .

We read in Pratt’s prophecy that “Truth is yet to spring out of the earth.” We concluded to prove the prophecy by way of a joke. . . . Bridge Whitton cut them out of some pieces of copper; Wiley and I made the hieroglyphics by making impressions on beeswax and filling them with acid and putting it on the plates. . . . A certain Sunday was appointed for the digging. . . . a number of citizens were there to assist in the search, there being two Mormon elders present . . . some time elapsed before the plates were discovered. I finally picked them up . . . Sharp, the Mormon Elder, leaped and shouted for joy and said, Satan had appeared to him and told him not to go (to the diggings), it was a hoax of Fugate and Wiley’s, but at a later hour the Lord appeared and told him to go, the treasure was there. . . . a man assuming the name of Savage, . . . took them to Joe Smith. (Letter of W. Fugate, as cited in “The Kinderhook Plates,” by Welby W. Ricks, reprinted from the *Improvement Era*, September 1962)

At the time of the Civil War the Kinderhook plates were lost. M. Wilford Poulson, a former teacher at Brigham Young University, told us that he found one of the original plates in the Chicago Historical Society

Museum, but it was mislabeled as one of the original gold plates of the Book of Mormon. The plate which he found has been identified as no. 5 in the facsimiles found in the *History of the Church*. While Professor Poulson's research led him to believe that the plate was a forgery, Welby W. Ricks, who was President of the BYU Archaeological Society, hailed the discovery as a vindication of Joseph Smith's work:

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

The plates are now back in their original category of *genuine*. . . . Joseph Smith, Jun., stands as a true prophet and translator of ancient records by divine means and all the world is invited to investigate the truth which has sprung out of the earth not only of the Kinderhook plates, but of the Book of Mormon as well. ("The Kinderhook Plates," *Improvement Era*, September, 1952, pages 637, 660)

In 1965, three years after Mr. Ricks made the triumphant announcement that the Kinderhook plates were genuine and that Joseph Smith's work had been vindicated, George M. Lawrence, a Mormon physicist, was given permission to examine and make "some non-destructive physical studies of the surviving plate." In his "Report of a Physical Study of the Kinderhook Plate Number 5," George Lawrence wrote: "The dimensions, tolerances, composition and workmanship are consistent with the facilities of an 1843 blacksmith shop and with the fraud stories of the original participants." Since Mr. Lawrence was only allowed to make non-destructive tests, some Mormon scholars would not accept his work as conclusive. In 1980, however, the Mormon scholar Stanley P. Kimball was able "to secure permission from the Chicago Historical Society for the recommended destructive tests. These tests, involving some very sophisticated analytical techniques, were performed by Professor D. Lynn Johnson of the Department of Materials Science and Engineering at Northwestern University." Professor Kimball described the results of the tests in the official LDS Church publication, *The Ensign*, August 1981, pages 66-70:

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

As a result of these tests, we concluded that the plate . . . is *not of ancient origin*. . . . the plate was etched with acid; and as Paul Cheesman and other scholars have pointed out, ancient inhabitants would probably

have engraved the plates rather than etched them with acid. Secondly, we concluded that the plate was made from a true brass alloy (copper and zinc) typical of the mid-nineteenth century; whereas the "brass" of ancient times was actually bronze, an alloy of copper and tin.

In the *Mormon History Association Newsletter*, June 1981, Stanley B. Kimball was quoted as saying:

The time has come to admit that the Kinderhook Plate incident of 1843 was a light-hearted, heavy-handed, frontier-style prank, or "joke" as the perpetrators themselves called it. That from the beginning anti-Mormons seized upon the incident to discredit Joseph Smith should not deter us from consigning the episode to the limbo of faked antiquities and to place forever the Kinderhook Plates on the bosom of the Cardiff Giant.

### Serious Implications

We have previously noted that both the Clayton journal and the *History of the Church* claim that Joseph Smith "translated a portion" of the Kinderhook plates and found that they contain the history of "a descendant of Ham through the loins of Pharaoh, king of Egypt . . ." Besides these references, there is other contemporary evidence that Joseph Smith "translated a portion" of the plates. On May 7, 1843, just after Clayton penned the source which later appeared in the *History of the Church*, Apostle Parley P. Pratt wrote a letter containing the following:

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

The reader will notice that Pratt's account agrees with that published in the *History of the Church* in stating that the Kinderhook plates contain information about a descendant of "Ham."

If Joseph Smith had not been murdered in June 1844, it is very possible he might have published a complete "translation" of these bogus plates. Just a month before his death it was reported that he was "busy in translating them. The new work which Jo. is about to issue as a translation of these plates will be nothing more nor less than *a sequel to the Book of Mormon*, . . ." (*Warsaw Signal*, May 22, 1844). The fact that Joseph Smith was actually preparing a translation of the plates is verified by a broadside published by the Mormon newspaper, *The Nauvoo Neighbor*, in June 1843. On this broadside, containing facsimiles of the plates, we find the following: "The contents of the Plates, together with



a Fac-Simile of the same, will be published in the *Times and Seasons*, as soon as the translation is completed.”

One Mormon scholar has argued that the “brevity” of Joseph Smith’s translation of the Kinderhook plates “precludes the possibility” that Joseph Smith’s “abilities as a translator” might be “called into question.” We cannot agree with this conclusion. We feel that Joseph Smith’s work on these fraudulent plates casts serious doubt upon his ability as a translator of Mormon scriptures like the Book of Mormon and the Book of Abraham. Smith’s work on the Kinderhook plates was supposed to have revealed that they “contain the history of the person with whom they were found. He was a descendant of Ham, through the loins of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and that he received his kingdom from the Ruler of heaven and earth” (*History of the Church*, vol. 5, page 372). Now, in order to derive this much information from the plates it would have been necessary to have “translated” quite a number of the words. A man who could make such a serious mistake with regard to the Kinderhook plates is just the type of man who would pretend to translate the Book of Abraham from Egyptian papyri which he knew nothing about or to translate the Book of Mormon from golden plates which were not made available to scholars. James D. Bales made this observation concerning the importance of the Kinderhook episode:

What does it all add up to? Does it merely mean that one of the “finds” which the Latter Day Saints believed supported the Book of Mormon does not support it, and that there is no real blow dealt to the prophetship of Joseph Smith? Not at all, for as Charles A. Shook well observed—in a personal letter to the author—“*Only a bogus prophet translates bogus plates.*” Where we can check up on Smith as a translator of plates, he is found guilty of deception. How can we trust him with reference to his claims about the Book of Mormon? *If we cannot trust him where we can check him, we cannot trust him where we cannot check his translations.* . . . Smith tried to deceive people into thinking that he had translated some of the plates. The plates had no such message as Smith claimed that they had. Smith is thus shown to be willing to deceive people into thinking that he had the power to do something that could not be done. (*The Book of Mormon?* pages 98-99)

A complete treatment of the Kinderhook affair is found in our book, *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* pages 111-115, 125G-125I.

### **No New Revelation**

On April 3, 1976, the Church Section of the *Deseret News* announced that “Two revelations received by former Presidents of the Church, were accepted as

scripture Saturday afternoon, April 3, by vote of Church membership.”

This was certainly a surprising move for the Mormon leaders to make. Since one of the revelations which was canonized was given by Joseph F. Smith, we feel that it is possible this move was made to counter some statements we printed in 1972 in *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* We cite the following from that book:

Although the Mormon Church claims to be led by revelation, Joseph F. Smith, the sixth President of the Mormon Church, testified as follows in the Reed Smoot Investigation:

“Senator Dubois. — Have you received any revelations from God, which has been submitted by you and the apostles to the body of the church in their semiannual conference, which revelation has been sustained by that conference, through the upholding their hands?

“Mr. Smith. — Since when?

“Senator Dubois. — Since you became President the Church.

“Mr. Smith. — No, sir; none whatever.

“Senator Dubois. — Have you received any individual revelations yourself, since you became President of the church under your own definition, even, of a revelation?

“Mr. Smith. — I cannot say that I have.

“Senator Dubois. — Can you say that you have not?

“Mr. Smith. — No; I cannot say that I have not.

“Senator Dubois. — Then you do not know whether you have received any such revelation as you have described or whether you have not?

“Mr. Smith. — Well, I can say this: That if I live as I should in the line of my duties, I am susceptible, I think, of the impressions of the Spirit of the Lord upon my mind at any time, just as any good Methodist or any other good church member might be. And so far as that is concerned, I say yes; I have had impressions of the Spirit upon my mind very frequently, but they are not in the sense of revelations.” (*Reed Smoot Case*, vol. 1, pages 483-484)

On page 99 of the same volume Joseph F. Smith stated: “I have never pretended to nor do I profess to have received revelations.” . . .

Although the Mormon Church is supposed to be led by revelation, the evidence of this revelation is very hard to find. The Manifesto of 1890 is the last revelation, if it can be termed a revelation, that has been added to the *Doctrine and Covenants*. So we see that the last revelation that was added to the *Doctrine and Covenants* is eighty years old. . . .

The Reorganized LDS Church has continued to add new revelations to their *Doctrine and Covenants*, but the Utah Mormon Church has not added a new revelation since they added the Manifesto of 1890. It

is interesting to note that during the last century, when new revelations were being added to the *Doctrine and Covenants*, the Mormon leaders were condemning the Catholics for not adding new revelations to their “sacred canon.” The Mormon Apostle Orson Pratt stated:

“That the Romanists have continued in their apostasy until the present day *is demonstrated from the fact that they have not added one single book to their canon* since they first formed it. Now, if there had been any prophet or apostle among them, during the last seventeen centuries, they certainly would have canonized his epistles, revelations, and prophecies, as being equally sacred with those of the first century. As they have not done this, it shows most clearly, that even they, themselves, *do not consider that they have had apostles, prophets, and revelators among them*, during that long period of time. . . . Why then has the church showed such great partiality? Why has she placed Pope St. Peter’s writings in the sacred canon, and left all the writings of the other Popes out? . . . Here, indeed, is a strange inconsistency? Even the Catholic church herself, evidently places no confidence in the popes and bishops, the pretended successors of St. Peter and the rest of the apostles; if she did, she would have canonized their revelations along with the rest of the revelations of the New Testament. . . . Well might the revelator John, . . . call her ‘THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH!’” (*Orson Pratt’s Works*, “The Bible Alone An Insufficient Guide,” pages 38-39)

The very words used by Orson Pratt concerning the Catholics could now be applied to the Mormon Church, for “if there had been any prophet or apostle among them,” during the past eighty years, “they certainly would have canonized his epistles, revelations, and prophecies, . . .” The Church “evidently places no confidence” in the last six presidents; “if she did, she would have canonized their revelations along with the rest of the revelations” in the *Doctrine and Covenants*. (*Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* page 184)

It is difficult to resist the idea that the Mormon leaders decided to canonize two “new” revelations to offset the criticism found in *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* That they would choose a revelation given to Joseph F. Smith is especially interesting. This purported revelation was given less than two months before his death in 1918 at a time when he “was very ill.” He had served as “Prophet, Seer and Revelator” for some seventeen years before receiving this revelation. As we have shown, at the very time he was serving as “Prophet” of the LDS Church he testified: “I have never pretended to nor do I profess to have received revelations.”

The other revelation which the Mormons canonized was given to Joseph Smith on January 21, 1836. The two “revelations” which the church added to the *Doctrine and Covenants* can hardly be considered as “new” revelations. The one given to Joseph F. Smith is now seventy years old, and the revelation given to Joseph Smith is 152 years old. On September 20, 1976, the *Salt Lake Tribune* reported: “President Kimball said the church is based on ‘revelations of God.’ He declined to say if he has had any in his three years as president and prophet.” As we have already shown, on June 9, 1978, President Kimball claimed he had a revelation that blacks could receive the priesthood. Although the church has failed to produce a copy of this purported revelation, it has inserted a statement concerning the revelation in the *Doctrine and Covenants*. Like the Manifesto, it is not given the dignity of a section number and is merely referred to as “Official Declaration—2.”

If the Mormon leaders really believe they are led by revelation, why don’t they canonize a revelation by a living prophet which begins with the words, “Thus saith the Lord your God”? Spencer W. Kimball finally died in 1985, and although he served as “Prophet, Seer, and Revelator” for over a decade, he did not issue any revelation which the church deemed worthy of canonization. His successor, Ezra Taft Benson has also failed to produce any new revelation.

The LDS Church has now [in 1989] had thirteen “Prophets.” Excluding the Manifesto and the statement on blacks, only three of these men received revelations which were added to the “four standard works” of the church. None of the last seven presidents have received revelations that have been canonized. Where, then, is the evidence of present-day revelation? We are told that revelation is found in the conferences of the church, when the leaders of the church speak under the inspiration of the Lord, but how can we know when they are speaking under the Spirit of the Lord? Obviously, much of what has been said at the conferences of the church down through the years was not spoken under the inspiration of the Lord. In fact, if a leader of the church were to stand up in conference today and expound on the same things Brigham Young taught, he would stand the chance of being excommunicated from the church; yet it was Brigham Young himself who stated: “I have never yet preached a sermon and sent it out to the children of men, that they may not *call scripture*” (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 13, page 95).

The search for revelation, that is, present-day revelation, in Mormonism is really in vain. The sermons given in conference may be considered as revelation today, but fifty years from now they may be rejected as many of Brigham Young’s sermons are today.

During the past two decades Mormon leaders have been faced with some serious problems. Their response to these problems clearly shows that they are not led by revelation. In addition, some of the church's problems appear to be complicated by the fact that most of the top Mormon leaders are very old. David O. McKay, the ninth president of the church, lived to be ninety-six years old. He was in very poor health toward the end of his life and was hardly in any condition to function as "Prophet, Seer, and Revelator" for the church. Instead of appointing a younger man after McKay's death, church leaders chose Joseph Fielding Smith who was ninety-three years old. Smith lived to be ninety-five, and the leadership of the church passed to Harold B. Lee who was seventy-three years old. Lee lived for less than two years and Spencer W. Kimball became president. Kimball continued as president until his death at the age of ninety. The current president, Ezra Taft Benson, is now eighty-nine years old.

Since the apostle with the most seniority is always chosen president of the church, there seems to be little hope of younger leadership. It seems, in fact, that the Mormon system works in such a way as to bring a man into the most important position in the church at the very time in his life when he is least able to adequately perform the task. While it is claimed that these men are "living prophets," they seem to become mere figureheads as they advance in age.

### **Mark Hofmann Tests the Prophets**

As we have already pointed out, not long after Mormonism was established a deceiver by the name of John C. Bennett pulled the wool over Joseph Smith's eyes and cast serious doubt on his claim that he was led by revelation. The Kinderhook episode added further evidence against Smith's claims. During the 1980s another impostor arose and succeeded in laying a snare for the church leaders which has led many to question the claim that there is a special pipeline between Mormonism and God. Mark Hofmann, who had served as a missionary for the LDS Church and was married in the temple, became well-known to the General Authorities of the church in 1980 when he claimed that he found the original Anthon Transcript—a sheet of paper which was supposed to contain characters copied by Joseph Smith himself from the gold plates of the Book of Mormon. The LDS Church's newspaper, *Deseret News*, for May 3, 1980, reported that this was "the oldest known Mormon document as well as the earliest sample of the Prophet's handwriting." The LDS Church published color photographs of the document and an article containing "compelling reasons for accepting it as genuine" in the July 1980 issue of *The Ensign*. The Mormon hierarchy were completely sold

on the document, and, according to Church Archivist Donald Schmidt, Mr. Hofmann was eventually given "roughly \$20,000" worth of items from the Church Archives in exchange for this single sheet of paper and a Bible in which it was supposed to have been found. Mormon leaders and church scholars were elated with Hofmann's discovery. Hugh Nibley, the church's most noted apologist, was certain the transcript was genuine and went so far as to proclaim that it contained Egyptian characters which could be translated. In the Provo *Herald*, May 1, 1980, Dr. Nibley triumphantly announced: "Of course it's translatable." He went on to say that "Nobody could have faked those characters." Members of the church, of course, expected that the translation would vindicate Joseph Smith's work on the Book of Mormon. As it turned out, however, the church was never able to publish a translation and Mormon scholars became rather quiet about Hofmann's remarkable find.

Less than a year after Mark Hofmann made his first discovery, the church disclosed that he had uncovered another very significant document. This was a handwritten sheet showing that Joseph Smith designated his son, Joseph Smith III, to succeed him as "A Seer, and a Revelator, and a Prophet, unto the Church." The Mormon newspaper, *Deseret News*, March 19, 1981, announced that "[Earl E.] Olson and other LDS officials said they are convinced the blessing is authentic." This was a very controversial document because it indicated that Joseph Smith III—not Brigham Young—was Joseph Smith's true successor. Nevertheless, Mormon leaders believed it was genuine and Mark Hofmann was compensated with material from the Church Archives. Donald Schmidt later testified that the rare documents which Mr. Hofmann received from the church were valued "in the neighborhood of \$20,000." After the discovery of the blessing document, Mark Hofmann began turning up an astounding number of important Mormon documents, some of which were very controversial.

At first we could see no reason for doubting the "compelling" evidence Mormon scholars mounted in defense of the Hofmann documents. In February 1984, however, we encountered some evidence which made us wonder about the authenticity of the important documents Mark Hofmann had been selling the LDS Church and other collectors. The erosion of our faith in Mr. Hofmann began just after we obtained extracts from an important document he was selling which is known as the Salamander letter—a letter purportedly written by Book of Mormon witness Martin Harris in 1830. We had just completed a book entitled, *Mormonism, Magic and Masonry*, in which we presented evidence linking early Mormonism to magic. We felt that the Salamander letter would provide additional evidence to support our case. As

we read the extracts from the Salamander letter, however, we were shocked to find that there were important parallels to E. D. Howe's *Mormonism Unveiled*, which was first published in 1834—some four years after the Salamander letter was supposed to have been penned. In the *Salt Lake City Messenger* for March 1984, we wrote that we had “some reservations concerning the authenticity of the letter, and at the present time we are not prepared to say that it was actually penned by Martin Harris.”

In the same issue of the *Messenger*, we pointed out the “disturbing” parallels to Howe's book and that although “the average person would have a difficult time forging these things, there are probably a number of people who could do the job. . . . While we would really like to believe that the letter attributed to Harris is authentic, we do not feel that we can endorse it until further evidence comes forth.”

On August 25, 1984, John Dart wrote the following in the *Los Angeles Times*: “. . . unusual caution . . . has been expressed by Jerald and Sandra Tanner, . . . The Tanners' *suggestion of forgery* has surprised some Mormons, who note that the parallels in wording could be taken as evidence for authenticity.” The *Deseret News* for September 1, 1984, reported: “. . . outspoken Mormon Church critics Jerald and Sandra Tanner suspect the document *is a forgery*, they told the *Deseret News*. Jerald Tanner . . . says similarities between it and other documents make its veracity doubtful. . . . Another disturbing aspect, Tanner said, was the letter seemed out of character for Harris.”

By August 1984, it seemed clear that the evidence we had found against the Salamander letter cast doubt on all the important discoveries Mark Hofmann had made since 1980. On August 22, 1984, Utah Lighthouse Ministry published the first part of a pamphlet called *The Money Digging Letters*. On page 9 of that publication the following statement appeared: “. . . a number of important documents have come to light during the 1980's. The questions raised by the Salamander letter have forced us to take a closer look at some of these documents.”

In spite of the warnings which we printed, LDS Church leaders continued to deal with and help Mark Hofmann until the middle of October, 1985. On the 15th of that month Salt Lake City was rocked with the news that bombs had killed two people. One was a Mormon bishop named Steven F. Christensen. It was later discovered that Mr. Christensen had been working secretly with the LDS Church and Mark Hofmann to obtain the McLellin collection. Mr. Hofmann had convinced the Mormon leaders that if the McLellin collection fell into the hands of the enemy it would cause great embarrassment to the

church. These documents were to be purchased by an anonymous buyer who would eventually donate them to the church. In this way the documents could be suppressed from the knowledge of the public.

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

SALT LAKE CITY, Feb. 13—Court documents indicate that prosecutors will try to prove that a murder suspect here set out to extort hundreds of thousands of dollars from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints by forging embarrassing historical documents and then offering to sell them secretly to church leaders. . . .

Prosecutors say that Mr. Hofmann, . . . set out in the early 1980's to defraud the church by selling it forged documents that cast doubt on the validity of the Book of Mormon and other aspects of church teachings. . . . Prosecutors speculate that the church officials may have placed most of the documents in their vault without authenticating them because they were regarded as potentially embarrassing to the church.

Court documents indicate that some prosecutors in the Salt Lake County Attorney's office believe Mr. Hofmann's goal was not only to obtain money from the church through the sale of the documents but also to establish enough credibility that he could shape the world's perception of Mormonism.

This view is shared by a man here who was the first to suggest that Mr. Hofmann was forging his documents. He is Jerald Tanner, a former Mormon who heads Utah Lighthouse Ministry, which for decades has been challenging the truth of much of Mormon doctrine.

In an interview, Mr. Tanner said he decided . . . that the Hofmann documents might be forgeries, even though some of them . . . supported his own iconoclastic views of Mormonism.

In a newsletter that he publishes with his wife, Sandra, Mr. Tanner began raising questions about their authenticity, . . .

But if senior Mormon officials were aware of his warnings, they apparently paid little attention. Several of the church's highest officials have acknowledged

negotiating to acquire documents from Mr. Hofmann until the day of the first two bombings. (*New York Times*, February 3, 1986)

Mark Hofmann had a very clever plan to fool the Mormon leaders. He forged documents which were both favorable and unfavorable to the church. In addition, he forged a large number which were neutral in their content. While the Salamander letter was embarrassing to the church, Hofmann forged another letter by Martin Harris which contained a glowing testimony to the visionary experience he had concerning the divine authenticity of the Book of Mormon:

. . . as I was praying unto the Lord . . . lo there appeared to view a holy Angel, . . . the Angel did take up the plates [the gold plates of the Book of Mormon] and turn them over so as we could plainly see the engravings thereon, and lo there came a voice from heaven saying "I am the Lord," and that the plates were translated by God . . .

The Hofmann documents which were favorable to the LDS Church were proudly displayed in church publications. The church's *Ensign* magazine, December 1983, printed an article which was filled with pictures of documents that came through Hofmann. On the other hand, the unfavorable documents, which the public were not aware of, were buried in the church's vaults. In the *Salt Lake Tribune*, February 6, 1986, we find the following: "Sources close to the investigation have said the church apparently did little to authenticate many of these documents before they were purchased . . . 'They just wanted them off the streets,' the source said." The leaders of the LDS Church had a great deal of faith in "Brother Hofmann" (see *Deseret News*, Church Section, May 3, 1980). In the *Salt Lake Tribune*, April 19, 1986, Mike Carter referred to the "blind trust of LDS officials in bombing suspect Mark W. Hofmann . . ." Mr. Carter went on to say that it "was apparent that church leaders, including President Hinckley, trusted Mr. Hofmann implicitly . . ."

The Mormon leaders have lost a great deal of credibility through the Hofmann affair. While it is true that both Mormon and non-Mormon historians were fooled by Mr. Hofmann, as a general rule historians do not claim to be inspired by God. The Mormon leaders, on the other hand, boast of having special guidance from the Lord. According to Ezra Taft Benson, the present Prophet, Seer and Revelator of the church, "The Prophet Will Never Lead the Church Astray" ("Fourteen Fundamentals in Following the Prophet," as cited in *Following the Brethren*, page 5). President Benson maintained that the leaders of the church have special discernment which is far superior to "earthly knowledge":

FIFTH: *The Prophet is Not Required to Have Any Particular Earthly Training or Credentials to Speak on Any Subject or Any Matter at Any Time.*

Sometimes there are those who feel their earthly knowledge on a certain subject is superior to the heavenly knowledge which God gives to His Prophet on the same subject. . . . We haven't yet had a prophet who earned a doctorate degree in any subject, but as someone said, "A prophet may not have his PhD but he certainly has his LDS." We encourage earthly knowledge in many areas, but remember if there is ever a conflict between earthly knowledge and the words of the prophet, you stand with the prophet and you'll be blessed and time will vindicate you. (*Ibid.*, page 6)

On page 10 of the same speech, President Benson went on to say: "NINTH: *The Prophet Can Receive Revelation on Any Matter—Temporal or Spiritual.*" As we think of President Benson's statements concerning the special powers of a prophet, we cannot help but remember a photograph of his predecessor, Spencer W. Kimball, the twelfth Prophet, Seer and Revelator of the LDS Church, which appeared in the Church Section of the *Deseret News* on May 3, 1980. President Kimball is flanked by Mark Hofmann, President N. Eldon Tanner, President Marion G. Romney, Apostle Boyd K. Packer and Apostle Gordon B. Hinckley. Neither President Kimball nor any of the other General Authorities were able to detect anything wrong with either "Brother Hofmann" or the Anthon transcript which he was palming off on them. Although President Kimball was supposed to be a "seer" and have the power to "translate all records that are of ancient date" (Book of Mormon, Mosiah 8:13), he was unable to translate the purported Book of Mormon characters which appear on the so-called Anthon transcript. Instead of using the "seer stone," as Joseph Smith would have done, he examined the characters with a magnifying glass. Not only did he fail to detect that the characters were only the doodlings of Mark Hofmann, but he was oblivious to the fact that the church was being set up to be defrauded of a large amount of money and many valuable items out of its archives. Moreover, he entirely failed to see the devastating and embarrassing effect this transaction and others which followed would have on the LDS Church. If ever revelation from the Lord was needed, it was on that day in 1980 when Mark Hofmann stood in the presence of President Kimball.

Mormon Apostle Bruce R. McConkie maintained that the church leaders have the gift of discernment: ". . . the gift of the discerning of spirits is poured out upon presiding officials in God's kingdom; they have it given to them to discern all gifts and spirits, lest any come among the saints and practice deception. . . . even 'the thoughts and intents of the heart' are made known"

(*Mormon Doctrine*, 1979, page 197). While the Mormon leaders claim to have the same powers as the ancient Apostles in the Bible, their performance with regard to Mark Hofmann certainly does not match up to that of Apostle Peter when he caught Ananias and Sapphira red-handed in their attempt to deceive the church with regard to a financial transaction: “But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land?” (Acts 5:3).

It would seem that if the same powers were functioning in the LDS Church today, the “Prophet, Seer and Revelator” would have received a revelation warning him concerning Mark Hofmann’s cunning plan to defraud and disgrace the church. If the LDS Church was ever led by revelation, it has been lacking since Mr. Hofmann came into the church offices with the “Anthon transcript.” The inability of the Mormon leaders to detect the religious fraud perpetrated upon them raises a question as to their testimony with regard to the Book of Mormon. After all, if they could not determine that Hofmann’s documents—which were supposed to be only 150 years old—were forgeries, how can we trust their judgment with regard to a record which is supposed to be ten times as old? They have seen and inspected Mark Hofmann’s documents, but they have never seen the gold plates from which the Book of Mormon was translated. While it could be possible that Joseph Smith really had some kind of metal plates, how would the present leaders of the LDS Church know if they were genuine or fabricated?

With regard to the inability of the Mormon leaders to detect that the Hofmann documents were fraudulent, a person might try to argue that these documents were not really important spiritual writings, and therefore the Lord did not see fit to intervene when the General Authorities examined them. The truth of the matter, however, is that they contain extremely important material directly relating to spiritual affairs. The Salamander letter, for example, changes the story of the Angel Moroni appearing to Joseph Smith to that of a cantankerous and tricky “old spirit” who transforms himself from a white salamander and strikes Joseph Smith. Moreover, some of the writings attributed to Joseph Smith which Hofmann sold to the church purport to contain revelations from the Lord Himself! For instance, the Joseph Smith III Blessing document gives this message from the Lord: “Verily, thus saith the Lord: if he abides in me, his days shall be lengthened upon the earth, but, if he abides not in me, I, the Lord, will receive him, in an instant, unto myself.” The 1838 letter of Joseph Smith, another forgery which the LDS Church acquired, is in its entirety a revelation purporting to come from the Lord. It begins

with the words, “Verily thus Saith the Lord,” and ends with the word “Amen.” The fact that the Mormon leaders were unable to recognize the spurious nature of these revelations casts doubt upon their ability to discern the truthfulness of the other revelations given by Joseph Smith. It has always been claimed that it is virtually impossible for a person to write a revelation that would compare with Joseph Smith’s. It now appears, however, that there is someone who can write revelations comparable to Joseph Smith’s and that it is even possible to get them past the scrutiny of the highest leadership of the LDS Church.

Mark Hofmann’s forgery scheme has been referred to as “an attempted blackmail of the Mormon church itself” (*Chicago Tribune*, October 25, 1985). The purported 1825 letter of Joseph Smith to Josiah Stowell is a good example of Hofmann’s attempt to play upon the fears of the Mormon leaders. This letter has Joseph Smith attempting to help a money-digger find buried treasure. Smith tells him that the “treasure must be guarded by some clever spirit” and gives instruction as to how to use a “hasel stick” to determine if the buried treasure has been located. While there is a great deal of evidence documenting Joseph Smith’s involvement in this type of magical practice, Mormon leaders must have felt that it would be just too devastating to church members to allow them to read a letter signed by Joseph Smith which confirmed his occultic activities. Consequently, “on or about January 11, 1983,” Gordon B. Hinckley, a member of the LDS Church’s First Presidency, secretly purchased the letter from Mark Hofmann for “\$15,000.” If the contents of this letter had not been embarrassing, the church’s *Deseret News* undoubtedly would have published a photograph of it with a large headline announcing that the earliest known letter of Joseph Smith had been discovered.

As it turned out, the letter was put in a vault and very few people knew of its existence. In 1984 a typescript of the letter leaked out and we published it in *The Money-Digging Letters*. One would think that after we printed the contents of the letter the LDS Church would admit that it had the document. Instead, however, the church decided to “stonewall.” At about the time we printed the letter, we had a discussion with one of the top historians in the LDS Church, who lamented the fact that the church had allowed itself to become involved in a cover-up situation with regard to the 1825 letter. On April 29, 1985, *Salt Lake Tribune* reporter Dawn Tracy wrote:

A letter reportedly written by Mormon Church founder Joseph Smith describing money-digging pursuits . . . seems to have disappeared from view. . . .

Research historian Brent Metcalfe said he knows from “very reliable, first-hand sources” the letter exists, and the Mormon Church has possession of it.

Church spokesman Jerry Cahill denied the claim.

“The church doesn’t have the letter,” said Mr. Cahill. “It’s not in the church archives or the First Presidency vault.” . . .

Someone may be playing word games, said George Smith, . . .

“The church clearly has possession of the letter,” he said. “If the exact question isn’t asked, someone can wink and say the church doesn’t have it.”

No, said Mr. Cahill, the church does not have possession of the letter.

On May 6, 1985, the *Salt Lake Tribune* published a letter to the editor by George Smith. In this letter he revealed that “some scholars have reported seeing it at the church offices, . . . A number of scholars have photocopies of the letter, . . .” When it became apparent to the church leaders that the letter was going to be published in a major newspaper without their consent, they decided to back down and admit the existence of the document. Jerry Cahill, Director of Public Affairs for the LDS Church, claimed in a letter to the editor that he had not lied about the matter to Dawn Tracy, but he admitted that his earlier statement was incorrect: “My statement, however, was in error, . . . The purported letter was indeed acquired by the church. For the present it is stored in the First Presidency’s archives . . .” (*Salt Lake Tribune*, May 7, 1985).

Not too long after Cahill wrote his apology, the church released a copy of the letter to the press. It was very obvious to those who knew the truth about the matter that the Mormon leaders were caught in a very embarrassing cover-up with regard to the letter and that they only published it because their own scholars were preparing to leak it to the press. Since President Hinckley secretly bought this letter in 1983 and never mentioned its existence, it is obvious that church leaders intended to suppress it. *Time* magazine for May 20, 1985, reported that “The church offered no explanation for withholding news of the earliest extant document written by Smith, . . .” Church leaders were able to hide the fact that they had the letter for 28 months! In the *Salt Lake Tribune*, October 20, 1985, Dawn Tracy revealed that even top Mormon historians, including the Church Archivist, were kept in the dark concerning the purchase of the 1825 letter: “Don Schmidt, retired LDS Church archivist said members of the First Presidency didn’t tell him or church historians about the 1825 letter. Nor did they ask him or anyone in his department to authenticate the letter.”

The action of the church leaders in buying up and suppressing Mark Hofmann’s documents raises another

important question: if they were willing to pay thousands of dollars to buy forgeries which tended to discredit Joseph Smith, how many authentic documents have they bought up and locked away in church vaults? The fact that the General Authorities of the church believed in and bought Mr. Hofmann’s forgeries reveals a great deal about their own thinking concerning the original Prophet. They must have known from other things they have read that Joseph Smith was deeply involved in money-digging and magic or they would not have been so easily persuaded to buy Hofmann’s documents. The impression one gets is that the Mormon leaders know that Joseph Smith was not really like the image the church has presented to the people, but that they must maintain that image at all costs—even if it means they have to buy up and suppress documents.

It now seems incontestable that Mark Hofmann deliberately set out to weaken faith in Mormonism through forgery. His attempt was rather successful for a number of years, but eventually he was overthrown by his own selfishness and ambition. In the end he brought disgrace on himself and on his family. But, even though Mr. Hofmann’s designs against the LDS Church did not pan out as he had hoped, he did administer a wound to the church which may never be healed. His close involvement with church leaders has clearly revealed that the church’s claim of latter-day revelation is without foundation. Apostle Dallin Oaks and other Mormon leaders have fought desperately to counteract the damage Hofmann has done to the church and to try to save the concept that the church is run by revelation.

In his confession Mark Hofmann said that he could “look someone in the eye and lie” and that he didn’t believe that “someone could be inspired” in a religious sense as to what “my feelings or thoughts were” (*Hofmann’s Confession*, vol. 1, page 99). On page 112 he boasted that he “wasn’t fearful of the Church inspiration detecting the forgery.” It is evident that Mr. Hofmann has put the claim of revelation in the church to the acid test and found that the so-called “*living oracles*” are just as fallible as other men. Apostle Oaks and other Mormon officials find themselves in a very embarrassing position. At a time when revelation was really needed, they seemed to be completely oblivious to what was going on. Apostle Dallin Oaks tried to explain the complete failure of the church’s revelation system in the following manner:

Some have asked, how was Mark Hofmann able to deceive Church leaders?

As everyone now knows, Hofmann succeeded in deceiving many: experienced Church historians, sophisticated collectors, businessmen-investors, a lie detector test and analysis by national experts, and

professional document examiners, . . . But why, some still ask, were his deceits not detected by the several Church leaders with whom he met?

In order to perform their personal ministries, Church leaders cannot be suspicious and questioning of each of the hundreds of people they meet each year. Ministers of the gospel function best in an atmosphere of trust and love. In that kind of atmosphere, they fail to detect a few deceivers they meet, but that is the price they pay to increase their effectiveness in counseling, comforting, and blessing the hundreds of honest and sincere people they see. (“Recent Events Involving Church History and Forged Documents,” pages 10-11; printed in *The Ensign*, October, 1987))

Apostle Oaks has not really answered the question. It is obvious that Mark Hofmann was not meeting with church leaders for “counseling, comforting, and blessing.” He was, in fact, meeting with them for the express purpose of deceiving them so that they would give him large amounts of money or genuine documents in exchange for his fraudulent ones. Although Apostle Dallin Oaks would have us believe that “Criticism is particularly objectionable when it is directed toward Church authorities,” there seems to be no way around the conclusion that they must bear a great deal of the responsibility in the Hofmann affair. If they had been open and forthright about historical documents, Mr. Hofmann would not have approached them with his blackmail-like deals with the idea of obtaining large amounts of money. That Mark Hofmann knew they were suppressing important church documents and were anxious to keep anything embarrassing from falling into the hands of church critics set the stage for the tragic events which followed. While Mormon scholars have been blamed for not being more careful, it is the General Authorities of the church who are primarily responsible. For the most part Mormon scholars want an open history and would not have an interest in buying up documents to hide them. We feel that the scholars were honestly trying to learn the truth about the documents. They made no special claims of infallibility. The church leaders, on the other hand, who claimed to have special powers of revelation, played into Mr. Hofmann’s hands time after time. Mark Hofmann did such a good job of convincing church officials that he was trying to help the church that he was given privileged access to material in the archives. Hofmann returned the favor by using the very knowledge he obtained from the documents to create new forgeries to palm off on the church.

If the Mormon leaders were truly led by revelation, Mark Hofmann’s nefarious plan could have been thwarted in 1980. At the very outset President Spencer W. Kimball would have been able to detect that the characters on the

purported “Anthon transcript” were not really taken from the gold plates of the Book of Mormon and the church would have refused Hofmann the \$20,000 worth of trade items he wanted in exchange for the document. If the church had rejected this “discovery” and not published it to the world, it is unlikely that Hofmann would have ever achieved the reputation he had as a Mormon document dealer. The LDS Church and other Mormon collectors would not have lost hundreds of thousands of dollars and many genuine documents to Mr. Hofmann. President Gordon B. Hinckley would not have secretly bought up the 1825 Joseph Smith letter which later caused so much embarrassment to the church. Moreover, church leaders would have been able to discern that Hofmann’s so-called McLellin collection was nothing but a figment of his own imagination. Hugh Pinnock, a General Authority in the church, would not have arranged for Hofmann to get a loan of \$185,000 to buy the collection and therefore would not have had to pay the loan off with his own money. Bishop Steven Christensen, of course, would not have found himself involved with Hofmann and the church with regard to the McLellin collection, and both Christensen and Kathleen Sheets would probably be alive today. (For a detailed study of the Hofmann affair see our book, *Tracking The White Salamander—The Story of Mark Hofmann, Murder and Forged Mormon Documents.*)

The evidence which we have presented here points plainly to one inescapable conclusion: the claim that the LDS Church is led by a “living Prophet” who has direct revelations from God is nothing but an idle boast.



## 15. Changes in the Revelations

The *Doctrine and Covenants*, which contains the revelations of Joseph Smith, is one of the four standard works of the LDS Church. It is accepted as divinely inspired scripture by the Mormon people. Mormon Apostle John A. Widtsoe has asserted that “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, page 254).

Contrary to Apostle Widtsoe’s statement, anti-Mormon writers have not been afraid to discuss the *Doctrine and Covenants*. In fact, they have made some very serious charges against it. The most important charge being that the revelations found in the *Doctrine and Covenants* have been changed. Some Mormon writers have acknowledged 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 Brigham Young University, John William Fitzgerald revealed: “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, BYU, 1940, page 329).

In another thesis written at Brigham Young University, Melvin J. Petersen acknowledged that “Many words were added to the revelations” in the *Doctrine and Covenants* (“A Study of the Nature of and Significance of the Changes in the Revelations as Found in a Comparison of the *Book of Commandments* and Subsequent Editions of the *Doctrine and Covenants*,” Master’s thesis, BYU, 1955, typed copy, page 147). On pages 162-163 of the same thesis, Mr. Petersen wrote:

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

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

### 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, *A Book of Commandments, For the Government of the Church of Christ*. Mormon writer William E. Berrett explains:

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

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

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

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

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

The exact number of copies of the *Book of Commandments* salvaged before the mob destroyed the

printing press is not known. RLDS Church Historian Richard P. Howard thinks there may have been “several hundred at least, since a number of references to the *Book of Commandments* were made in the writings of church leaders of that period” (*Restoration Scriptures*, 1969, page 200). David Whitmer, one of the three witnesses to the Book of Mormon, said that the “revelations were printed in the *Book of Commandments* correctly. . . . 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*, Richmond, Missouri, 1887, page 56).

That the church approved of the *Book of Commandments* and used it from 1833 until 1835 can 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 . . . ‘Let no man break the laws of the land . . .’” (*History of the Church*, vol. 2, page 129). In the same letter (page 133) outsiders were advised to “examine the Bible, the Book of Mormon, and the Commandments . . .”

Book of Mormon witness David Whitmer said that “Joseph and the brethren” received the *Book of Commandments* “at first as being printed correctly, but they soon decided to print the *Doctrine and Covenants*” (*An Address to Believers in the Book of Mormon*, 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. This was not the case, however, and David Whitmer objected to what was done:

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

## Study of Changes

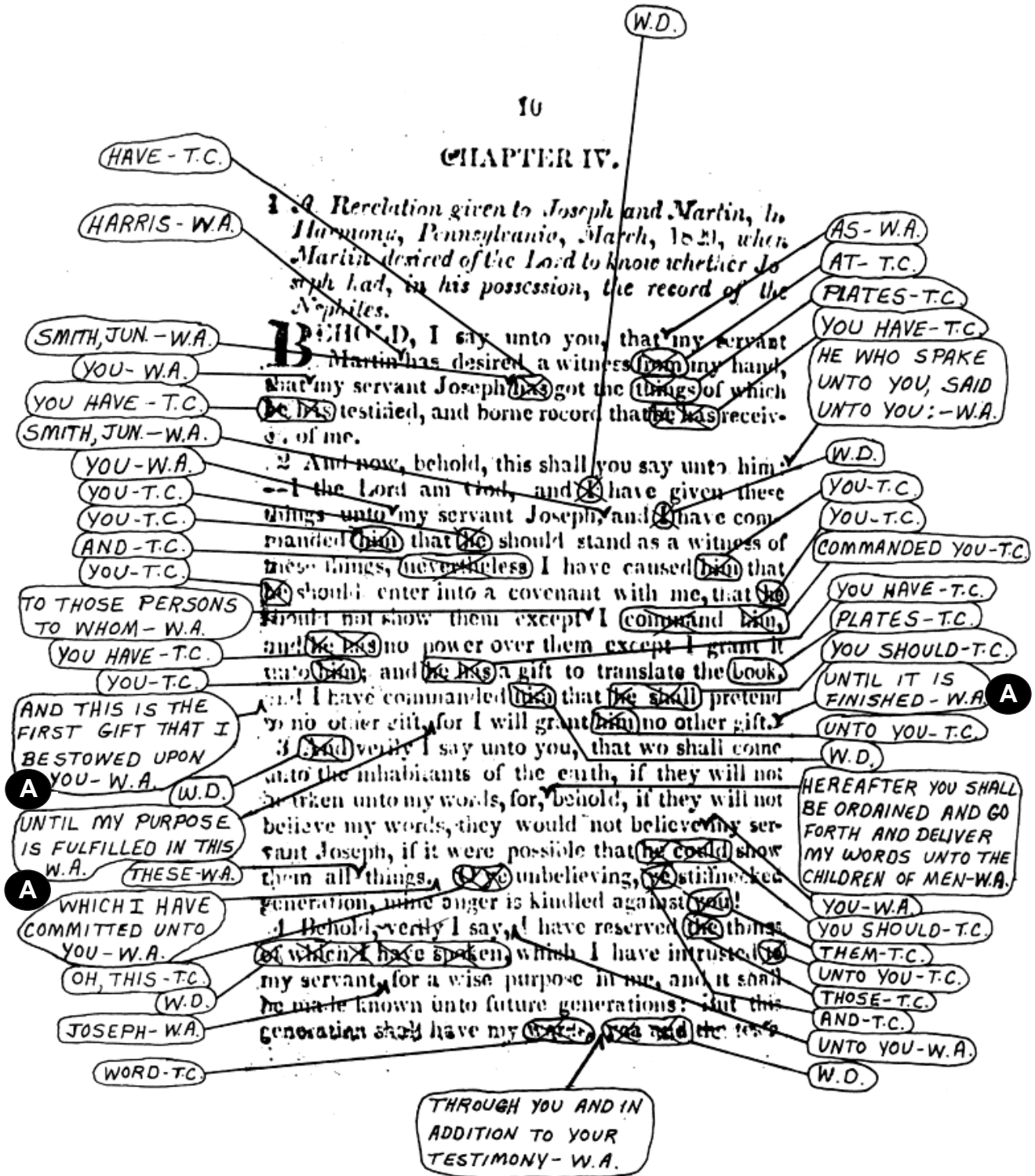
In order to show some of the important changes that were made in the revelations we obtained photographs of the original *Book of Commandments* (the original book is now supposed to be worth about \$50,000). We compared these pages with the revelations as published in the 1966 printing of the *Doctrine and Covenants* and marked the changes on the photographs. Therefore, in the pages which follow the text is an exact photographic reproduction of the original pages of the *Book of Commandments*, and the handwriting shows the changes that would have to be made in the text to bring it into conformity with recent printings of the *Doctrine and Covenants*. Although there have been many changes in the chapter headings, we have not bothered to mark them. In our book, *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* pages 17-30, we have a more extensive study of the changes in the revelations. In this work, however, we have only included photographs of eight pages from the *Book of Commandments*. The reader will notice that we have assigned a letter to some of the changes that we want to discuss later in the study.

### KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS

W. A. . . . . Words Added  
 W. D. . . . . Words Deleted  
 T. C. . . . . Textual Change

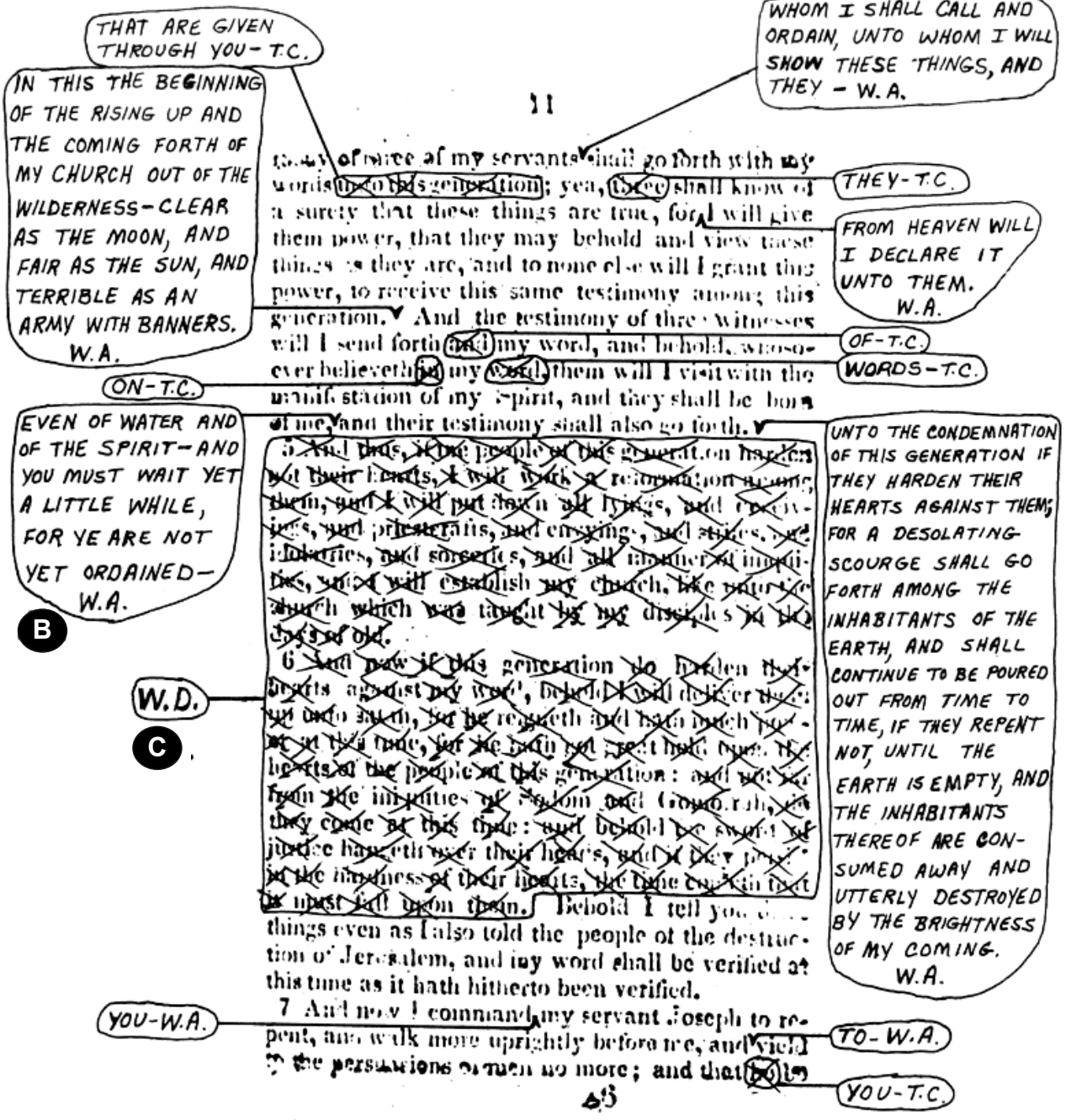
Book of Commandments - Chapter 4  
Compare Doctrine and Covenants - Section 5:1-11

W.A. = Words Added  
W.D. = Words Deleted  
T.C. = Textual Change



Book of Commandments - Chapter 4  
Compare Doctrine and Covenants - Section 5:11-22

W.A. = Words Added  
W.D. = Words Deleted  
T.C. = Textual Change



11

... of mine of my servants shall go forth with my  
~~word~~ ~~to this generation~~; yea, ~~they~~ 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, whoso-  
 ever 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.

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 things, and I will  
~~destroy~~ ~~the~~ ~~priesthoods~~, and enying, and strifes, and  
~~idolatries~~, and sorceries, and all manner of impu-  
~~rities~~, 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~~ ~~into~~ ~~their~~ ~~own~~ ~~hands~~, for he receiveth and hath much pay-  
~~ment~~ ~~at~~ ~~the~~ ~~end~~, for he hath not ~~repented~~ ~~his~~ ~~iniquities~~. The  
 hearts of the people of this generation: and will  
~~be~~ ~~delivered~~ ~~from~~ ~~the~~ ~~iniquities~~ ~~of~~ ~~Salom~~ ~~and~~ ~~Gomorrah~~, ~~in~~  
~~the~~ ~~days~~ ~~of~~ ~~old~~: and behold, the sword of  
 justice hath ~~been~~ ~~drawn~~ ~~over~~ ~~their~~ ~~heads~~, and ~~it~~ ~~will~~ ~~fall~~ ~~upon~~ ~~them~~. Behold I tell you  
 things even as I also told the people of the destruc-  
 tion of Jerusalem, and my word shall be verified at  
 this time as it hath hitherto been verified.

7 And now I command my servant Joseph to re-  
 pent, and walk more uprightly before me, and ~~yield~~  
 to the persuasions of men no more; and that ~~shall~~

Book of Commandments - Chapter 6  
 Compare Doctrine and Covenants - Section 7:1-8

W.A. = Words Added  
 W.D. = Words Deleted  
 T.C. = Textual Change

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.

2 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.

3 And the Lord said unto me: Verily, verily I say unto thee, because thou desiredst this, thou shalt tarry ~~until~~ I come in my glory:

4 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 desired 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 undertaken a greater work.

5 Verily I say unto you, ye shall both have according to your desires, for ye both joy in that which ye have desired.

FOR IF YOU SHALL ASK WHAT YOU WILL, IT SHALL BE GRANTED UNTO YOU W.A.

OVER DEATH-W.A.

UNTIL-T.C.

DESIRED-T.C.

DESIRED-T.C.

THAT HE MIGHT DO MORE, OR-W.A.

UNTO HIM-W.A.

LIVE AND-W.A.

AND SHALT PROPHECY BEFORE NATIONS, KINDREDS, TONGUES AND PEOPLE-W.A.

MIGHTEST-T.C.

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. -W.A.

CHAPTER VII.

1 A Revelation given to Oliver, in Harmony, Pennsylvania, April, 1829.

COWDERY-W.A.

**O**LIVER, verily, verily I say unto you, that assuredly as the Lord liveth, ~~who~~ is your God and your Redeemer, even so ~~surely~~ shall you receive 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 ~~has~~ been spoken, by 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.

WHO-T.C.

SURELY-T.C.

HAS-T.C.

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.

THY GIFT-W.A.

3 O remember, these words and keep my commandments. Remember this is your gift. Now this is not all, for you have another gift, which is the gift of ~~working with the rod~~: behold it has told you things: behold there is no other power save God, that can cause this ~~rod~~ 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~~.

E ARRON-T.C.

MANY-W.A.

GIFT OF AARON TO BE WITH YOU-W.A.

THEREFORE, DOUBT NOT, -W.A.

HAVE KNOWLEDGE CONCERNING IT. T.C.

THE POWER OF W.A.

W.D. E

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. - W.A.

4 Remember that without faith you can do nothing.

GIFT-T.C.

AND-T.C.

Book of Commandments - Chapter 15  
Compare Doctrine and Covenants - Section 18:2-11

W.A. = Words Added  
W.D. = Words Deleted  
T.C. = Textual Change

spirit in many instances, that the things which you have written are true :

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.

**F**  
THE FOUNDATION OF - W.A.

**F**  
UPON THE FOUNDATION OF W.A.

4 Wherefore if you shall build up my church, ~~and~~ my gospel, and my rock, the gates of hell shall not prevail against you.

W.D.

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-T.C.  
JOSEPH SMITH, JUN.  
W.A.

6 Wherefore as thou hast been baptized by the ~~hand~~ of my servant, according to that which I have commanded him :

W.D.

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  
W.A.

10 And now Oliver, I speak unto you, and also unto David, by the way of commandment :

COWDERY  
W.A.

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  
T.C.

B?

W.A. = Words Added  
W.D. = Words Deleted  
T.C. = Textual Change

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 - T.C.

HE IS TO - W.A.

~~and take the lead of meetings; but none of these  
offices is he to do when there is an elder present, but  
in all cases is to assist the elder.~~

W.D.

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, nei-  
ther hardness with each other, neither lying or back-  
biting, nor evil speaking;

IF OCCASION  
REQUIRES - W.A.

W.D.

39 And see that the church meet together often,  
and also see that all the members do their duty;

W.D.

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  
W.A.

W.D.

W.D.

OR LAY ON HANDS;  
THEY ARE, HOWEVER,  
T.C.

41 But neither the teachers nor deacons have au-  
thority to baptize or administer the sacrament, but  
to warn, expound, exhort and teach, and invite  
all to come unto Christ.

AND HE IS TO BE  
ORDAINED - W.A.

AND SAID CONFERENCES  
ARE - W.A.

42 Every elder, priest, teacher or deacon, is to be  
ordained according to the gifts and callings of God  
unto him, by the power of the Holy Ghost which is  
in the one who ordains him.

SAID CONFERENCES  
T.C.

W.D.

TO BE DONE AT THE  
TIME. THE ELDERS ARE  
TO RECEIVE THEIR  
LICENSES FROM OTHER  
ELDERS, BY VOTE OF  
THE CHURCH TO WHICH  
THEY BELONG, OR  
FROM THE CONFERENCES  
W.A.

WHATEVER - W.A.

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, to do church business whatever is neces-  
sary.

W.D.  
MAY - T.C.  
CERTIFICATE - W.A.

TO - W.A.  
DUTIES - T.C.

44 And each priest or teacher, who is ordained by  
a priest, is to take a certificate from him at the time,  
which when presented to an elder, he is to give him  
a license, which shall authorize him to perform the  
duty of his calling.

OR DEACON - W.A.  
SHALL ENTITLE  
T.C.

W.D.

45 The duty of the members after they are receiv-  
ed by baptism.

46 The elders or priests are to have a sufficient

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.

W.A.

G



Book of Commandments - Chapter 28  
Compare Doctrine and Covenants - Section 27

W.A. = Words Added  
W.D. = Words Deleted  
T.C. = Textual Change

60

H

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

1 *A Commandment to the church of Christ, given in Harmony, Pennsylvania, September 4, 1830.*

**L**ISTEN 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.

W.D.

AND YE SHALL BE CAUGHT UP THAT WHERE I AM YE SHALL BE ALSO. -W.A.

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 BREAST-PLATE OF RIGHEOUSNESS, 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, -W.A.

MORONI, WHOM I HAVE SENT UNTO YOU TO REVEAL THE BOOK OF MORMON, CONTAINING THE FULNESS OF MY EVER-LASTING 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 -W.A.

BUT-T.C.  
 REPENTS-T.C.  
 HAS COMMITTED T.C.  
 IT-W.A.  
 W.D.  
 NOR-T.C.  
 W.D.  
 CONCERNING THESE THINGS - W.A.  
 FOR THEIR SUPPORT - W.A.  
 WILT-T.C.  
 REMEMBER THE POOR AND - W.A.  
 I OF -T.C.  
 THEM-T.C.  
 AND INASMUCH AS YE IMPART OF YOUR SUBSTANCE UNTO THE POOR, YE WILL DO IT UNTO ME W.A.  
 TO IMPART - W.A.  
 OR HAS APPOINTED - W.A.  
 OR HIGH PRIETS, - W.A.  
 HIS COUNSELORS, W.A.  
 AFTER THEY ARE LAID BEFORE - W.A.  
 AND - W.A.  
 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 - W.A.  
 THESE TESTIMONIES CONCERNING THE CONSECRATION OF - W.A.  
 THEY - T.C.  
 SHALL BE MADE ACCOUNTABLE UNTO ME - W.A.  
 W.D.  
 BY CONSECRATION - W.A.  
 AGREEABLE TO MY COMMANDMENTS - T.C.  
 BE AMPLY SUPPLIED AND - W.A.  
 WHO HAS NEED - W.A.  
 FROM TIME TO TIME - W.A.  
 THE - W.A.  
 THOSE - T.C.  
 W.D.  
 HAVE - T.C.  
 THEREFORE - T.C.  
 AND HIS COUNCIL - W.A.  
 TO HIS WANTS - T.C.  
 HIGH COUNCIL T.C.  
 W.D.  
 FOR THE PUBLIC BENEFIT OF THE CHURCH AND BUILDING HOUSES OF WORSHIP - W.A.  
 WHEN - T.C.  
 THAT - T.C.

24 Thou shalt not speak evil of thy neighbor, ~~or~~ 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.

26 If thou lovest me, thou shalt serve me and keep all my commandments; and behold, thou shalt consecrate ~~and~~ 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 ~~he~~ can not be taken from the church, ~~he shall appoint~~ every man a steward over his own property, or that which he has received, ~~as~~asmuch as is sufficient for himself and family:

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:

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:

## Important Changes

As we indicated earlier, we have placed letters by some of the changes which we wish to discuss.

**Change A** (see page 108). David Whitmer, one the three witnesses to the Book of Mormon gave this interesting information concerning this significant change:

After the translation of the Book 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 that 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*, page 32)

The fact that Joseph Smith was not planning on doing any other work besides the Book of Mormon is 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 not only claimed the gift of translating the Book of Mormon, but he had asserted that God had given him a special gift to make an inspired translation of the Bible (his so-called *Inspired Version*). A short time after this, he brought forth another book of scripture known as the Book of Abraham. Certainly the revelation commanding Joseph Smith to pretend to no other gift but to translate the Book of Mormon could not remain in its original form. The church had decided to go beyond the Book of Mormon and accept Joseph Smith's other writings as Scripture. This change in church policy necessitated a change in the revelation. Therefore, it 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*, 5:4).

The basic meaning of this revelation was changed by these insertions, making it appear that the Lord would grant Joseph other gifts besides that of translating the Book of Mormon. David Whitmer observed:

The way this 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 109). 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 warning years later? It would have to be given at the time in order to do any good. Many of the changes in the revelations appear to be equivalent to locking the barn door after the horse has gotten out.

**Change C** (see page 109). Notice that 154 words have been deleted from verses 5 and 6 of this revelation without any indication. The Mormon apologist Melvin J. Petersen said that “Joseph Smith . . . was dissatisfied with the wording of verses five and six in portraying the concept he had received, and therefore he omitted verses five and six of Chapter four and rewrote in their place verse three of the 1835 edition . . .” (“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 140). Mr. Petersen seemed to feel that Joseph Smith had a perfect right to do this. Although we agree that Smith had a right to revise his own writings, we do not feel that he had a right to revise the revelations which he claimed to be the very words of God. In the very first revelation that was published in the *Book of Commandments*, verses 2 and 7, we read:

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

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

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

**Change D** (see page 110). The revelation is supposed to contain a translation of a parchment written by the Apostle John. Mormons claim Joseph Smith translated this parchment by means of the Urim and Thummim. When this revelation was published in the *Book of*

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

Mormon writers are unable to explain why Joseph Smith changed this revelation. In his thesis, pages 154-155, Melvin J. Petersen admitted:

When the 1835 edition of the *Doctrine and Covenants* was published this revelation had many additions and a few changes. . . . 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. . . . 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.

Actually, there are only three logical explanations as to why this revelation does not read the same in the *Doctrine and Covenants* as it did 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 Apostle John that he did not utter. This explanation, of course, would mean that Joseph Smith was guilty of deception.

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 cast serious doubt upon Joseph Smith's ability as a translator. Any individual who left out 109 words (43% of the text) in the translation of such a short document would be considered a very poor translator!

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 related that Dr. Sidney B. Sperry "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 answer be right or wrong cannot be determined until further evidence is brought to light upon the problem" (page 155).

This explanation would also make Joseph Smith irresponsible, to say the least, because he did not put in "the little dots which indicate that one is making deletions" (a failure for which Mormons have faulted anti-Mormon writers). 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 seems to have been enough room to include these words. More important, in *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* page 28, we have a photograph of a copy of this revelation in the handwriting of Joseph Smith's scribe, Frederick G. Williams. This photograph proves beyond all doubt that the text of the revelation now published by the LDS Church in the *Doctrine and Covenants* has been doctored, for the manuscript agrees with the *Book of Commandments*.

**Change E** (see page 111). This is one of the most important changes in the *Doctrine and Covenants*. The reader will note that the revelation originally told Book of Mormon witness Oliver Cowdery that he had "the gift of working with the rod." This has been changed in the *Doctrine and Covenants* to "the gift of Aaron." Later in this book we will show that this change was made to cover up the fact that Cowdery was involved in the occultic practice of divining with a rod. That God would endorse such a practice is very strange because it was commonly used by those involved in witchcraft and money-digging.

**Change F** (page 112). David Whitmer was deeply disturbed by this change. In his pamphlet, *An Address to All Believers in Christ*, pages 58-59, he wrote:

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. . . . 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 Conventions [*sic*] 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: . . . I want to repeat that I was present when Brother Joseph received this revelation through the stone: . . . I know of a surety that it was changed when printed in the Doctrine and Covenants [*sic*]. . .

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.

**Change G** (see page 113). Notice that 97 words have been added to the end of verse 44. David Whitmer had the following to say concerning this interpolation:

The next change of importance is in a revelation 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 [vv. 65-67 in current Utah ed.] is the part added, 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 H** (see page 114). Notice that over 400 words have been added to this revelation. Part of the interpolation concerns the visitation of Peter, James, and John to Joseph Smith. The Mormon leaders claim that they restored the Melchizedek priesthood. Book of Mormon witness David Whitmer, however, maintained that the Melchizedek priesthood came into the church by a process of evolution rather than by revelation:

In no place in the word of God does it say that an Elder is after the order of Melchisedec, or after the order of the Melchisedec Priesthood. An Elder is after the order of Christ. This matter of “priesthood,” since the days of Sydney Rigdon, has been the great hobby and stumbling-block of the Latter Day Saints. Priesthood means authority; and authority is the word we should use. I do not think the word priesthood is mentioned in the New Covenant of the Book of Mormon. Authority

is the word we used for the first two years in the church—until Sydney Rigdon’s days in Ohio. This matter of two orders of priesthood in the Church of Christ, and lineal priesthood of the old law being in the church, *all originated in the mind of Sydney Rigdon*. He explained these things to Brother Joseph in his way, out of the old Scriptures, and got Brother Joseph to inquire, etc. He would inquire, and as mouthpiece speak out the revelations just as they had it fixed up in their hearts. As I have said before, according to the desires of the heart, the inspiration comes, but it may be the spirit of man that gives it. How easily a man can receive some other spirit, appearing as an Angel of Light, believing at the time that he is giving the revealed will of God; . . . This is the way the High Priests and the “priesthood” as you have it, was introduced into the Church of Christ *almost two years after its beginning*—and after we had baptized and confirmed about two thousand souls into the church. (*Ibid.*, page 64)

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

. . . Oliver Cowdery, with Joseph Smith’s assistance, had written eight articles . . . which appeared in the *Messenger and Advocate*, the official Church organ at Kirtland, Ohio, beginning with the October, 1834 issue. The reader was informed that “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.” . . .

Thousands of words were used to relate the dramatic story of Joseph’s early quest for guidance . . . This 1834 account, being several years closer to the events described, might well be more accurate than the version of 1842, but the reader of the two accounts is likely to become confused at certain obvious discrepancies. . . .

In the 1842 history Joseph continued his narrative with the story of the Restoration of the Holy Priesthood which had been lost to the earth since shortly after the

advent of the Savior. The Restoration was a double event: the first half being an ordination of Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery by the resurrected John the Baptist with the bestowal of the Aaronic, or lesser, Priesthood on May 15, 1829, and the second being the conferring of the Melchizedek Priesthood with the gift of the Holy Ghost by Peter, James, and John sometime later. The “full history—correct, particular, and minute” of 1834 should surely contain the details of these miraculous events, but though there is indeed an ecstatic account of the ordination by an angel, other particulars are notably lacking: The angel is unidentified (if Joseph and Oliver knew him to be John the Baptist they did not reveal it), there is no mention of two Priesthoods, Aaronic or Melchizedek, lesser or higher, no promise of the Holy Ghost, no visit of Peter, James and John (which in 1834 should have been a matter of historical record for five years), no mention of the baptism and ordination of each other, and finally, a different wording of the angelic conferment. . . .

The important details that are missing from the “full history” of 1834 are likewise missing from the *Book of Commandments* in 1833. The student would expect to find all the particulars of the Restoration in this first treasured set of 65 revelations, the dates of which encompassed the bestowals of the two Priesthoods, but they are conspicuously absent. . . . The notable revelations on Priesthood in the *Doctrine and Covenants* before referred to, Sections 2 and 13, are missing, and Chapter 28 gives no hint of the Restoration which, if actual, had been known for four years. More than four hundred words were added to this revelation of August 1829 in Section 27 of the *Doctrine and Covenants*, the additions made to include the names of heavenly visitors and two separate ordinations. The *Book of Commandments* gives the duties of Elders, Priests, Teachers, and Deacons and refers to Joseph’s apostolic calling but there is no mention of Melchizedek Priesthood, Seventies, High Priests, nor High Councilors. These words were later inserted into the revelation on Church organization and government of April, 1830, making it appear that they were known at that date, but they do not appear in the original, Chapter 24 of the *Book of Commandments* three years later. Similar interpolations were made in the revelations now known as Sections 42 and 68.

There seems to be no support for the historicity of the Restoration of the Priesthood in journals, diaries, letters, nor printed matter prior to October, 1834. (*Problems In Mormon Text*, by LaMar Petersen, 1957, pages 5-8)

The evidence leads us to conclude that David Whitmer’s suggestion that the “two orders of priesthood” in the Mormon church “originated in the mind of Sydney Rigdon” fits the historical picture far better than the idea

of a Restoration by heavenly messengers. For more information on this subject see our work *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* pages 179-182.

**Change I** (see page 115). 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 early Mormons were accused of attempting “to establish communism.” The change in the revelation was evidently made to cover up the truth about what was really going on. Fawn Brodie noted:

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*, 1957, page 106)

Joseph Smith finally decided that the United Order would not work out, and therefore it became necessary to change the revelation to cover up the original plan.

Besides the thousands of words which were added, deleted or changed in the revelations after they were published in the *Book of Commandments* and other early Mormon publications, an entire section on marriage has been removed. Also, the Lectures on Faith, which comprised seventy pages of the 1835 edition of the *Doctrine and Covenants*, have been completely removed from every edition printed since 1921. All of these alterations have been made within just a century and a half. Imagine what would have happened to the Bible if the churches that preserved it had altered it at the same rate the Mormons have modified the *Doctrine and Covenants*. We would be lucky to have anything the way it was originally written!

### **Canonizing a Falsified Revelation**

On April 3, 1976, the Church Section of the *Deseret News* reported that “Two revelations received by former Presidents of the Church, were accepted as scripture

Saturday afternoon, April 3, by vote of Church membership.” After these two revelations were canonized, H. Michael Marquardt, a student of Mormon history, discovered that the one concerning Joseph Smith’s vision of the Celestial Kingdom (now printed as Section 137 in the *Doctrine and Covenants*) had been altered to protect Joseph Smith’s image. Mr. Marquardt found that this revelation was recorded in Joseph Smith’s own diary. In the diary we read:

The heavens were opened upon us and I beheld the celestial Kingdom of God, . . . I saw father Adam, and Abraham *and Michael* and my father and mother, my brother Alvin . . . (Joseph Smith’s Diary, January 21, 1836, page 136; original in LDS Historical Department)

In the version which appears in the new edition of the *Doctrine and Covenants* (137:1, 5), the words *and Michael* have mysteriously disappeared:

The heavens were opened upon us, and I beheld the celestial kingdom of God, . . . I saw Father Adam and Abraham; and my father and my mother; my brother Alvin, . . .

At first glance the deletion of the words *and Michael* does not appear too important. In Mormon theology, however, a serious problem is created by the statement, “I saw father Adam and Abraham *and Michael*.” According to Joseph Smith’s other revelations ADAM IS MICHAEL. In the *Doctrine and Covenants* 107:54 we read: “And the Lord appeared unto them, and they rose up and blessed *Adam, and called him Michael*, the prince, the archangel.” In 27:11 we find this statement: “And also with *Michael, or Adam*, the father of all, the prince of all, the ancient of days.” Thus it is clear that if Adam is Michael, Joseph Smith could not have seen “*Adam, and Abraham and Michael*.” Mormon leaders must have been aware that this would create a problem in Mormon theology, and therefore they deleted the words *and Michael* from this revelation.

Working with evidence obtained from manuscripts, Mr. Marquardt discovered that the change was made after Joseph Smith’s death, sometime between 1845 and 1852, and that current Mormon leaders have canonized a falsified revelation.

With regard to the vision of the Celestial Kingdom, it is also interesting to note that the Mormon leaders have only canonized the first part of the vision. Over 200 words which appear in Joseph Smith’s diary were not included. (The *History of the Church*, 2:380-81, also bears witness to this fact.) Among the words missing from the canonized revelation, we find the following:

. . . I also beheld Elder McLellin in the South, standing upon a hill surrounded with a vast multitude preaching to them and a lame man standing before him supported by his crutches, he threw them down at his word and leaped as a hart, by the mighty power of God . . .

It would have proved to be embarrassing if the Mormon leaders had canonized this false prophecy about McLellin because the *History of the Church*, vol. 3, pages 31-32, informs us that he was “Excommunicated from the Church at Far West. Thence forward he took an active part in the persecution of the Saints in Missouri, and at one time expressed the desire to do violence to the person of Joseph Smith, . . . Subsequently he attempted what he called a reorganization of the Church, . . .”

In the same revelation Joseph Smith claimed he “saw the 12 apostles of the Lamb who are now upon the earth who hold the keys of this last ministry in foreign lands standing together in a circle . . . and I finally saw the 12 in the celestial Kingdom of God . . .”

In the Bible, Jesus predicted that the Apostle Judas would fall; Joseph Smith, however, seemed to be oblivious to what was about to happen to his apostles. At least half of the apostles were eventually excommunicated, and four of them apparently died out of the church (see *Essentials in Church History*, 1942, pages 663-665). Since Apostles William E. McLellin and William Smith (Joseph Smith’s own brother) tried very hard to destroy the Mormon church, we wonder how Joseph Smith could have seen “the 12 in the celestial Kingdom of God.” In any case, the present-day leaders of the LDS Church did not seem to feel that it would be wise to canonize this part of the revelation.

### Unthinkable?

Mormon leaders have been very free in accusing others of making changes. Apostle Mark E. Petersen maintained that “deliberate falsifications and fabrications were perpetrated” in the Bible (*As Translated Correctly*, 1966, page 4). On page 27 of the same book, Apostle Petersen wrote: “It seems unthinkable to the honest and devout mind that any man or set of men would deliberately change the text of the Word of God to further their own peculiar purposes.”

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

Now, certainly after we see the charges made against the Bible by Mormon leaders, we would expect to find 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 preserved exactly as they were first given. Yet, upon careful examination, we find thousands of words added, deleted or changed. How can the Mormon leaders explain this? On pages 164-165 of his thesis, the Mormon apologist Melvin J. Petersen argued that Joseph Smith had the “power” to “*revise, correct, omit; or change any of his writings* in order that he might manifest more clearly what God revealed through him. . . . A prophet cannot be justly criticised when he rewrites the commandments he received from God, for he is only doing that which is part of his role as a prophet.”

It is hard for us to understand how Mr. Petersen can reason in this way. David Whitmer pointed out the absurdity of such an idea when he wrote: “Is it possible that the minds of men can be so blinded as to believe that God would give these revelations—command them to print them in His Book of Commandments—and then afterwards command them to change and add to them some words which change the meaning entirely? As if God had changed his mind entirely after giving his word? Is it possible that a man who pretends to any spirituality would believe that God would work in any such manner?” (*Saints’ Herald*, February 5, 1887).

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*. Among the names signed on this purported document we find that of Apostle William E. McLellin. In later years, however, McLellin charged that this “testimony” was a “base forgery.” It is reported that McLellin’s faith “was first shaken by the changes in the revelations.” At one time he referred to “that mutilated and altered *Doctrine and Covenants*” (see *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* page 31).

Since William E. McLellin was one of the “Twelve Apostles” in the early Mormon church, his statements are certainly important. Even more significant, however, is the fact that David Whitmer, one of the three special witnesses to the Book of Mormon, would write a book in which he criticized Joseph Smith for changing the revelations. He stated:

. . . when the Book of Doctrine and Covenants was published . . . 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. . . . When it was 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. (*An Address to All Believers in Christ*, page 61)

On page 49 of the same book, David Whitmer charged:

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 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.

As we have indicated earlier, we have additional information on the changes in the revelations in *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* pages 14-31D, and we have even more material in our work, *The Case Against Mormonism*, vol. 1, pages 131-191.



## 16. Witchcraft & Money-Digging

In the *Salt Lake City Messenger* for August, 1971, we announced one of the most important document discoveries ever made concerning Mormonism. This was the unearthing by Pastor Wesley P. Walters of an original document which is older than the LDS Church itself. The document, found in the basement of a jail, proves that Joseph Smith was a “glass looker” and that he was arrested and brought before a Justice of the Peace for that practice in Bainbridge, New York, in 1826. The importance of this document cannot be overstated, for it establishes the historicity of the account of Joseph Smith’s run-in with the law which was first published in *Fraser’s Magazine*, February, 1873, vol. VII, pages 229-230. We quote the following from that publication:

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### **State of New York v. Joseph Smith.**

Warrant issued upon written complaint upon oath of Peter G. Bridgeman, who informed that one *Joseph Smith* of Bainbridge was a *disorderly person and an impostor*.

Prisoner brought before Court March 20, 1826. Prisoner examined: says that he came from the town of Palmyra, and had been at the house of Josiah Stowel in Bainbridge most of time since; had small part of time been employed in looking for mines, but the major part had been employed by said Stowel on his farm, and going to school. That he had a *certain stone* which he had occasionally looked at to *determine where hidden treasures* in the bowels of the earth were; that he professed to tell in this manner where gold mines were a distance under ground, and had looked for Mr. Stowel several times, and had informed him where he could find these treasures, and Mr. Stowel had been engaged in digging for them. That at Palmyra he pretended to tell by looking at this stone where coined money was buried in Pennsylvania, and while at Palmyra had frequently ascertained in that way where lost property was of various kinds; that he had occasionally been in the habit of *looking through this stone to find lost property for three years*, but of late had pretty much given it up on account of its injuring his health, especially his eyes, making them sore; that he did not solicit business of this kind, and had always rather declined having anything to do with this business.

Josiah Stowel sworn: says that prisoner had been at his house something like five months; had been employed by him to work on farm part of time; that he pretended to have skill of *telling where hidden*

*treasures in the earth were by means of looking through a certain stone*; that prisoner had looked for him sometimes; once to tell him about money buried in Bend Mountain in Pennsylvania, once for gold on Monument Hill, and once for a salt spring; and that he positively knew that the prisoner could tell, and did possess the art of seeing those valuable treasures through the medium of said stone; that he found the [word illegible] at Bend and Monument Hill as prisoner represented it; that prisoner had looked through said stone for Deacon Attleton for a mine, did not exactly find it, but got a p---[word unfinished] of ore which resembled gold, he thinks; that prisoner had told by means of this stone where a Mr. Bacon had buried money; that he and prisoner had been in search of it; that prisoner had said it was in a certain root of a stump five feet from surface of the earth, and with it would be found a tail feather; that said Stowel and prisoner thereupon commenced digging, found a tail feather, but money was gone; that he supposed the money moved down. That prisoner did offer his services; that he never deceived him; that prisoner looked through stone and described Josiah Stowel’s house and outhouses, while at Palmyra at Simpson Stowel’s, correctly; that he had told about a painted tree, with a man’s head painted upon it, by means of said stone. That he had been in company with prisoner digging for gold, and had the most implicit faith in prisoner’s skill.

Arad Stowel sworn: says that he went to see whether prisoner could convince him that he possessed the skill he professed to have, upon which *prisoner laid a book upon a white cloth*; and proposed looking through *another stone* which was white and transparent, hold *the stone to the candle, turn his head to book, and read*. The deception appeared so palpable that witness went off disgusted.

McMaster sworn: says he went with Arad Stowel, and likewise came away disgusted. Prisoner pretended to him that he could discover objects at a distance by holding this white stone to the sun or candle; that prisoner rather declined looking into a hat at his dark coloured stone, as he said that it hurt his eyes.

Jonathan Thompson says that prisoner was requested to look for chest of money; did look, and pretended to know where it was; and that prisoner, Thompson, and Yeomans went in search of it; that Smith arrived at spot first; was at night; that Smith looked in hat while there, and when very dark, told how the chest was situated. After digging several feet, struck upon something sounding like a board or plank. Prisoner would not look again, pretending that he was alarmed on account of the circumstances relating to the trunk being buried, [which] came all fresh to his mind. That the last time he looked he discovered

Chenango County to Albert Neely

People } Assault & Battery  
 vs }  
 Thomas Braze } Trial at G. & Lead battery  
 same }  
 vs } Justice  
 Thomas Braze } James Humphrey  
 same } Le Kend Tarkie  
 vs } Albert Neely  
 Thomas } To my fees in trial  
 Sherman } of above cause 3 3, 68

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People } Assault & Battery  
 vs }  
 Samuel May } To my fees in this case \$1.99  
 March 22. 1826 }

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same }  
 vs }  
 Joseph Smith } Misdemeanor  
 The Glass looker }  
 March 20. 1826 } To my fees in examination  
 of the above cause 3 2.68

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same }  
 vs }  
 Newell Evans } Champerty  
 Sept 2. 1826 } To examination of above cause 2.18

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same } Assault & Battery  
 vs }  
 Newell Evans } To my fees in above cause 1.45

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same } Petit Larceny  
 vs }  
 Robert Sumell } To fees in above cause 1.85  
 Oct 3. 1826 }

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same } Assault and Battery  
 vs }  
 Isa Church } To fees in above cause 2.50  
 Nov 9. 1826 }  
 Albert Neely, Just. of Peace 8 16 37

same  
 vs  
 Joseph Smith  
 The Glass looker  
 March 20, 1826

Misdemeanor  
 To my fees in examination of  
 the above cause 2.68

Above is a photograph of Justice Albert Neely's bill showing the costs involved in several trials or examinations held in 1826. The fifth item from the top mentions the examination of "Joseph Smith The glass looker." When the letter s was repeated in documents of Joseph Smith's time, as in the word "Glass," the two letters appeared as a p (see the words "Assault" in items 1, 4, 7 & 9). To the left we have made a typescript of the portion of the bill which mentions Joseph Smith. This bill proves that the published record from Neely's docket book is authentic.

distinctly the two Indians who buried the trunk, that a quarrel ensued between them, and that one of said Indians was killed by the other, and thrown into the hole beside the trunk, to guard it, as he supposed. Thompson says that he believes in the prisoner's professed skill; that the board which he struck his spade upon was probably the chest, but *on account of an enchantment the trunk kept settling away from under them when digging*, that notwithstanding they continued constantly removing the dirt, yet the trunk kept about the same distance from them. Says prisoner said that it appeared to him that salt might be found at Bainbridge, and that *he is certain that prisoner can divine things by means of said stone*. That as evidence of the fact prisoner looked into his hat to tell him about some money witness lost sixteen years ago, and that he described the man that witness supposed had taken it, and the disposition of the money:

And therefore *the Court find the Defendant guilty*. Costs: Warrant, 19c. Complaint upon oath, 25 1/2c. Seven witnesses, 87 1/2c. Recognisances, 25c. Mittimus, 19c. Recognisances of witnesses, 75c. Subpoena, 18c. - \$2.68.

Although the Bainbridge court record was printed a few times, it did not become very well known until Fawn Brodie printed it in her book, *No Man Knows My History*. Mrs. Brodie was excommunicated for writing this book, and Mormon leaders declared that the "court record" contained in it was a forgery (see *Deseret News*, Church Section, May 11, 1946). Apostle John A. Widtsoe wrote: "This alleged court record . . . seems to be a literary attempt of an enemy to ridicule Joseph Smith. . . . There is no existing proof that such a trial was ever held" (*Joseph Smith—Seeker After Truth*, 1951, page 78).

Mormon scholars continued to deny the authenticity of the court record until Wesley P. Walters made his discovery in 1971. The document which Walters found is Justice Albert Neely's bill showing the costs involved in several cases he heard in 1826. The fifth item from the top mentions the examination of "Joseph Smith The Glass Looker." Below is a photograph of this portion of the document.

Joseph Smith  
The Glass Looker  
March 20 - 1826

Middemore

To my fees in examination  
of the above case 3 2.68

The fact that the document says that Joseph Smith was a "Glass Looker" fits very well with the published version of the hearing before Justice Neely. In fact, this statement alone seems to show that the published account is authentic. Besides this, however, Neely's bill provides additional evidence. It states that the examination took place on "March 20, 1826," and this is precisely the date found in the published account: "Prisoner brought before Court March 20, 1826" (*Fraser's Magazine*, February 1873, page 229). In Albert Neely's bill the fee for this examination is listed as "2.68," and this is the exact figure found in the printed record: "Costs: . . . \$2.68." In the face of this evidence it is impossible to continue to deny the authenticity of the printed record.

In addition to Justice Neely's bill for his examination of "Joseph Smith The Glass Looker," Wesley Walters discovered the bill of Constable Philip M. De Zeng. De Zeng wrote in his bill that he wanted \$1.25 for "Serving Warrant on Joseph Smith . . ." He also wrote concerning his "Attendance with Prisoner two days & 1 nigh[t]. . ." We have included a photograph of this document in *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* page 35.

Before Pastor Walters made his discovery of the bills, Mormon scholars were willing to admit that if the 1826 court record were authentic, it would disprove Mormonism. Dr. Francis W. Kirkham made these statements:

A careful study of all facts regarding this alleged confession of Joseph Smith in a court of law that he had used a seer stone to find hidden treasure for purposes of fraud, must come to the conclusion that *no such record was ever made*, and therefore, is not in existence. . . . had he [Joseph Smith] made this confession in a court of law as early as 1826, or four years before the Book of Mormon was printed, and this confession was in a court record, it would have been impossible for him to have organized the restored Church. (*A New Witness for Christ in America*, vol. 1, pages 385-387)

If a court record could be identified, and if it contained a confession by Joseph Smith which revealed him to be a poor, ignorant, deluded, and superstitious person—unable himself to write a book of any consequence, and whose church could not endure because it attracted only similar persons of low mentality—if such a court record confession could be identified and proved, then it follows that *his believers must deny his claimed divine guidance* which led them to follow him. . . . How could he be a prophet of God, the leader of the Restored Church to these tens of thousands, if he had been the superstitious fraud which "the pages from a book" declared he confessed to be? (*Ibid.*, pages 486-487)

The noted Mormon apologist Hugh Nibley published a book in which this statement appeared: “. . . if this court record is authentic it is *the most damning evidence in existence against Joseph Smith*” (*The Myth Makers*, 1961, page 142). On the same page we read that such a court record would be “the most devastating blow to Smith ever delivered.” Because he could see the serious implications of the matter, Dr. Nibley tried in every way possible to destroy the idea that the court record was an authentic document. After Wesley Walters discovered the bills relating to the examination of Joseph Smith before Justice Neely, Dr. Nibley and most other Mormon apologists became strangely silent. Professor Marvin S. Hill, of Brigham Young University, was one of the first to try to deal with the new discovery. He differed with both Kirkham and Nibley by stating that even if Joseph Smith was guilty of “glass looking,” this did not prove that he was a religious fraud. In an article published in *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Winter 1972, pages 77-78, Dr. Hill acknowledged:

There may be little doubt now, as I have indicated elsewhere, that *Joseph Smith was brought to trial* in 1826 on a charge, not exactly clear associated with *money digging*. . . . For the historian interested in Joseph Smith the man, it does not seem incongruous for him to have hunted for treasure with a seer stone and then to use it with full faith to receive revelations from the Lord.

In the book, *The Mormon Experience*, 1979, pages 10-11, former LDS Church Historian Leonard J. Arrington and his assistant Davis Bitton conceded that Joseph Smith was tried as a “glass looker”:

Smith’s self-admitted employment by Josiah Staal resulted in the youth’s being brought to trial in 1826, charged with either vagrancy or disorderly conduct. Bills drawn up by the local judge and constable refer to Smith as a “glass looker” (one who, by peering through a glass stone, could see things not discernible by the natural eye). The bills class the offense as a misdemeanor and indicate that at least twelve witnesses were served subpoenas.

In his *History of the Church*, vol. 1, page 17, Joseph Smith admitted that he was hired by “an old gentleman by the name of Josiah Stowel, . . . he took me, with the rest of the hands, to dig for the silver mine, . . . Hence arose the very prevalent story of my having been a money-digger.” Smith, however, suppressed the fact that he used a “seer stone” to find treasures and said nothing about his arrest in Bainbridge. While Mormon historian B. H. Roberts was silent concerning Joseph Smith’s trouble with the law, he did mention that Stowel had sought out Smith because of his “gift of seership”:

Near Bainbridge was an extensive cave, . . . a local legend had it that it was an old mine formerly worked by Spaniards; and that they had concealed within it much of the treasure they had discovered, . . .

Mr. Staal believed this legend and had employed men to explore the cave for treasure. Having heard of *Joseph Smith’s gift of seership*, he came to the Smith residence to employ him in this undertaking. Joseph hired out to Mr. Staal and went with him . . . where for something like a month they vainly sought to find the “hidden treasure.” (*A Comprehensive History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, vol. 1, page 82)

Joseph Smith’s own mother wrote that “a man, by the name of Josiah Staal, came from Chenango county, New York, with the view of getting Joseph to assist him in digging for a silver mine. He came for Joseph on account of having heard that *he possessed certain keys, by which he could discern things invisible to the natural eye*” (*Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith The Prophet* . . . , by Lucy Smith, 1853, pages 91-92).

As early as 1831, A. W. Benton wrote concerning Joseph Smith’s encounter with the law in Bainbridge:

For several years preceding the appearance of his book [the Book of Mormon], he was about the country in the character of a *glass-looker*: pretending, by means of a certain stone, or glass, which he put in a hat, to be able to discover lost goods, hidden treasures, mines of gold and silver, &c. . . . In this town, a wealthy farmer, named Josiah Stowell, together with others, spent large sums of money in digging for hidden money, which this Smith pretended he could see, and told them where to dig but they never found their treasure. At length the public, becoming wearied with the base imposition which he was palming upon the credulity of the ignorant, for the purpose of sponging his living from their earnings, had him arrested as a *disorderly person*, tried and condemned before a court of Justice. (*Evangelical Magazine and Gospel Advocate*, April 9, 1831, page 120)

In May 1988, H. Michael Marquardt went back to Norwich, New York, and found some important bills in the Office of History which is located in the Chenango County Historical Society. These 1826 bills provide strong support for the authenticity of the Neely bill (see our article in the *Salt Lake City Messenger*, July 1988). Research by Wesley P. Walters and Michael Marquardt’s new discoveries combine to establish beyond any doubt that the transcript of Joseph Smith’s legal difficulties, which was first published in 1873, is authentic.

The evidence seems to show that Joseph Smith appeared before Justice Neely for what was known as “an examination” (see *A New Conductor Generalis: Being*

a *Summary of the Law Relative to the Duty and Office of Justices of the Peace, Sheriffs, Coroners, Constables, Jurymen, Overseers of the Poor, &c, &c*, Albany, New York, 1819, pages 141-143). This seems to be like the “preliminary hearing” we have today where the accused is bound over for trial at a later date. It would appear from page 109 of the same publication that since Justice Neely found Joseph Smith “guilty” of being a “disorderly person” he could have immediately sentenced him to “sixty days” in the “bridewell or house of correction, at hard labor,” but instead he bound him over to be tried by three justices at a later date. These justices could have ordered “him to be detained, at hard labor, for any future time not exceeding six months, and during his confinement to be corrected by whipping, according to the nature of the offence, as they shall think fit” (*Ibid.*). Since we do not have the rest of Justice Neely’s docket book nor any other extant record concerning the matter, it is difficult to determine what finally happened in this case. It is possible that Joseph Smith could have admitted his guilt and struck an agreement with the county. Many times officials who wanted to cut expenses would be willing to let prisoners go if they would agree to leave the county where the crime took place.

On March 8, 1842, Justice Joel K. Noble, who had acquitted Joseph Smith of some charges brought against him in 1830, wrote a letter in which he spoke of Joseph Smith’s “first trial”—i.e., the case before Justice Neely. According to Justice Noble, Smith “was condemned” at that time. Wesley P. Walters wrote:

Mr. Noble succinctly states that the “whisper came to Jo., ‘Off, Off!’” and so Joseph “took Leg Bail,” an early slang expression meaning “to escape from custody.” . . . What is obviously happening is that the justices are privately suggesting to this first offender to “get out of town and don’t come back,” and in exchange they will not impose sentence. . . . Judge Nobel’s statement agrees precisely with an early account of this 1826 trial published just five years after the trial had taken place. It was written by a young medical doctor who lived in South Bainbridge at the time, Dr. Abram Willard Benton, who like Mr. Noble mentions that Joseph had been involved in glass looking, and that he had been “tried and condemned.” Dr. Benton adds that because Joseph was a minor at the time, being 20 years old, “and thinking he might reform his conduct, he was designedly allowed to escape.” Therefore, the court, though it found him guilty of being in violation of the law, had intentionally not imposed sentence as a way of showing mercy on this youthful offender. Young Joseph, aware that returning to the Bainbridge area might find him suddenly sentenced to jail, was careful to return, as Noble puts it, “in Dark corners” and “in the Dark.” (*Joseph Smith’s Bainbridge, N.Y., Court Trials*, Part 2, page 123)

For more information concerning this matter see the *Salt Lake City Messenger*, July 1988.

While we do not know exactly what happened after Justice Neely pronounced Joseph Smith “guilty,” an examination of the law concerning “disorderly persons” leads to the conclusion that Smith would have had a very difficult time avoiding conviction if he had remained for his trial at the Court of Special Sessions. According to *A New Conductor Generalis*, page 108, the following would be “deemed disorderly persons”:

All Jugglers;

All who pretend to have skill in physiognomy, palmistry, or like crafty science or pretend to tell fortunes, or to discover where lost goods may be found; . . . 1 R. L. 1813. p. 114.

Webster’s 1828 dictionary gives this definition for the word *juggle*: 1. To play tricks by slight of hand; to amuse and make sport by tricks, which make a false show of extraordinary powers. 2. To practice artifice or imposture.” Joseph Smith’s practice of “glass looking”—i.e., using a seer stone to divine things not seen by the natural eye—would certainly be viewed as making a “false show of extraordinary powers.” The printed transcript says that Smith was charged with being “a disorderly person and an impostor.” Joseph Smith’s practice of “glass looking” would also fall into the category of a “crafty science” mentioned in the law. Moreover, in the examination before Justice Neely, Smith admitted that he had “been in the habit of looking through this stone to find lost property for three years.” As the reader can see, the law deemed anyone who used a “crafty science . . . to discover where lost goods may be found” as a “disorderly person.” In his docket record, Justice Neely was careful to record the statements concerning Joseph Smith’s “glass looking” and his claim to find “lost goods.” As we have shown, he wrote the following from Jonathan Thompson’s testimony—a witness who seemed favorably disposed towards Joseph Smith: “Thompson says that he believes in the prisoner’s professed skill; . . . he is certain that prisoner can divine things by means of said stone. That as evidence of the fact prisoner looked into his hat to tell him about some money witness lost sixteen years ago, and that he described the man that witness supposed had taken it, and the disposition of the money:” The fact that the transcript seems to focus in on the very things that would convict Joseph Smith as a “disorderly person” under the laws of early New York bears witness to its authenticity.

Joseph Smith found himself on the horns of a dilemma. Since he knew that there were a number of witnesses who would testify concerning his involvement

in the “crafty science” of “glass looking,” he could hardly deny the charge. Moreover, Joseph Smith’s own employer, Josiah Stowell, was a devout believer in his ability at divination and testified that he “had the most implicit faith in prisoner’s skill.” Jonathan Thompson testified in a similar vein. Ironically, it seems that Smith’s best friends were his worst enemies as far as his attempt to escape the penalty of the law. The more they defended his ability as a diviner, the less chance he had of being acquitted. If Joseph Smith were to deny that he had ability to see the treasures and lost goods in his stone, he would disillusion his closest followers in the money-digging business. Under these circumstances, the best he could do was to try to minimize his involvement. He, therefore, claimed that “of late” he had “pretty much” given up the practice of divination and “that he did not solicit business of this kind, and had always rather declined having anything to do with this business.”

While Mormon apologists have labored very hard since 1945 to try to undermine the authenticity of the 1826 court case, their efforts have been in vain. Dale Morgan, Stanley Ivins, Wesley Walters and Michael Marquardt have heaped up a mountain of evidence which seems to be irrefutable.

### **The Implications**

Now that the authenticity of the Neely record has been established, the LDS Church leaders are faced with a dilemma. If this were just a case that involved a young man getting into trouble with the law, Mormon critics would be foolish to spend their time rehashing the story. Most people would allow Joseph Smith the right to make a few youthful mistakes without maintaining that it would seriously affect his role as a prophet. The issue, however, is much more serious than just the transgression of an early New York law which many today would regard as antiquated. What is involved here is the question of whether Joseph Smith was a true prophet of God or merely a man entangled in occultic practices. The implications of this matter are very serious indeed. Once we accept the validity of the documents concerning Joseph Smith’s trouble with the law, we are forced to admit that he was engaging in witchcraft and magical practices at the very time he claimed he was being tutored by the Angel Moroni to receive the gold plates of the Book of Mormon.

The court record shows that Smith was searching for buried treasure in 1826, and according to his own story, the plates for the Book of Mormon were taken from the Hill Cumorah the following year. Joseph Smith claimed that he had known that the plates were buried in the Hill Cumorah since 1823. He made this statement concerning the discovery of the plates:

Having removed the earth, I obtained a lever, which I got fixed under the edge of the stone, and with a little exertion raised it up. I looked in, and there indeed did I behold the plates. . . .

I made an attempt to take them out, but was forbidden by the messenger, and was again informed that the time for bringing them forth had not yet arrived, neither would it, until four years from that time . . .  
(*Pearl of Great Price*, Joseph Smith 2:52-53)

Now, it is interesting to note that in the Neely record Joseph Smith confessed that “for three years” prior to 1826 he had used a stone placed in his hat to find treasures or lost property. According to Smith’s own statement, then, he began his money-digging activities in about 1823. The reader will remember that the angel was supposed to have informed Joseph Smith of the gold plates on September 21, 1823. From this it would appear that Joseph Smith became deeply involved in money-digging at the very time the messenger told him of the gold plates and that he was still entangled in these occultic practices for at least three of the four years when God was supposed to be preparing him to receive the gold plates for the Book of Mormon. These facts seem to undermine the whole story of the divine origin of the Book of Mormon.

A careful examination of Joseph Smith’s story of the coming forth of the Book of Mormon and even the text of the book itself reveals that it is just an extension of the money-digging practices so clearly portrayed in the transcript. At the time the Book of Mormon was printed many people were engaged in searching for buried treasures. For instance, on February 16, 1825, the *Wayne Sentinel* (a newspaper published in Joseph Smith’s neighborhood) reprinted the following from the *Windsor (Vermont) Journal*:

*Money digging* — We are sorry to observe even in this enlightened age, so prevalent a disposition to credit the accounts of the Marvellous. Even the frightful stories of money being hid under the surface of the earth, and enchanted by the Devil or Robert Kidd, are received by many of our respectable fellow citizens as truths. . . .

A respectable gentleman in Tunbridge, was informed by means of a dream, that a chest of money was buried on a small island. . . . After having been directed by the mineral rod where to search for the money . . . he and his laborers came . . . upon a chest of gold . . . the chest moved off through the mud, and has not been seen or heard of since.

Many of the people who were digging for buried treasure were very superstitious and involved in witchcraft. There were many strange stories connected with these treasure hunts. Martin Harris, one of the three witnesses to the Book of Mormon, related the following:

Mr. Stowel [the man who hired Joseph Smith to find buried treasures and testified before Justice Neely] was at this time at old Mr. Smith's digging for money. It was reported by these money-diggers, that they had found boxes, but before they could secure them, they would *sink into the earth*. . . . There were a great many strange sights. One time the old log school-house south of Palmyra, was suddenly lighted up, and frightened them away. Samuel Lawrence told me that while they were digging, a large man who appeared to be eight or nine feet high, came and sat on the ridge of the barn, and motioned to them that they must leave. . . . These things were real to them, I believe, because they were told to me in confidence, and told by different ones, and their stories agreed, and they seemed to be in earnest—I knew they were in earnest. (An interview with Martin Harris, published in *Tiffany's Monthly*, May, 1859, page 165)

On another occasion Martin Harris admitted that he participated in some money-digging and that a stone box slipped back into the hill:

Martin Harris (speaking to a group of Saints at Clarkston, Utah, in the 1870's): I will tell you a wonderful thing that happened after Joseph had found the plates. Three of us took some tools to go to the hill and hunt for some more boxes, or gold or something, and indeed we found a stone box. . . . but behold by some unseen power, it *slipped back into the hill*. (Testimony of Mrs. Comfort Godfrey Flinders, *Utah Pioneer Biographies*, vol. 10, page 65, as cited in an unpublished manuscript by LaMar Petersen)

At the time the Book of Mormon came forth many people believed in "peep stones." These stones were sometimes placed in a hat and used to locate buried treasure. The following, taken from the *Orleans Advocate*, appeared in the *Wayne Sentinel* on December 27, 1825:

Wonderful Discovery.—A few days since was discovered in this town, by the help of a *mineral stone*, (which becomes transparent *when placed in a hat* and the light excluded by the face of him who looks into it, provided he is fortune's favorite) a monstrous potash kettle in the bowels of old mother Earth, filled with the purest bullion. . . . His Satanic Majesty, or some other invisible agent appears to keep it under marching orders; for no sooner is it dug on to in one place, than it moves off like "false delusive hope," to another still more remote.

In an affidavit dated December 11, 1833, Willard Chase claimed that Joseph Smith found his seer stone while he was helping dig a well. The Mormon historian B. H. Roberts accepted the story that the stone was found while digging a well:

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

Book of Mormon witness Martin Harris had a great deal to say about Joseph Smith's "stone":

"These plates were found at the north point of a hill two miles north of Manchester village. Joseph had a stone which was dug from the well of Mason Chase, . . . In this stone he could see many things to my certain knowledge. *It was by means of this stone he first discovered these plates*.

"In the first place, he told me of this stone, and proposed to bind it on his eyes, and run a race with me in the woods. A few days after this, I . . . was picking my teeth with a pin . . . The pin . . . dropped from my fingers into shavings and straw. . . . I then took Joseph on surprise, and said to him—I said, 'Take your stone.' . . . He took it and placed it in his hat—the old white hat—and placed his face in his hat. I watched him closely to see that he did not look one side; he reached out his hand beyond me on the right, and moved a little stick, and there I saw the pin, which he picked up and gave to me. . . . There was a company there in that neighborhood, who were digging for money supposed to have been hidden by the ancients. Of this company were old Mr. Stowel—I think his name was Josiah—also old Mr. Beman, also Samuel Lawrence, George Proper, Joseph Smith, Jr., and his father, and his brother Hiram Smith. They dug for money in Palmyra, Manchester, also in Pennsylvania, and other places. When Joseph found this stone, there was a company digging in Harmony, Pa., and they took Joseph to look in the stone for them, and he did so for a while, and then he told them the enchantment was so strong that he could not see, and they gave it up. . . .

"The money-diggers claimed that they had as much right to the plates as Joseph had, as they were in company together. They claimed that Joseph had been a traitor, and had appropriated to himself that which belonged to them. For this reason Joseph was afraid of them, and continued concealing the plates. . . . He found them by looking in the stone found in the well of Mason Chase. The family had likewise told me the same thing. . . .

"Joseph said that the angel told him to quit the company of the money-diggers. That there were wicked men among them. He must have no more to do with them. He must not lie, nor swear, nor steal." (*Tiffany's Monthly*, 1859, pages 163, 164, 167, 169)

After Joseph Smith's death, the stone he used to translate the Book of Mormon was brought to Utah. Under the date of February 25, 1856, Hosea Stout recorded the following in his diary: "President Young exhibited the Seer's stone with which the Prophet Joseph Smith discovered the plates of the Book of Mormon, to the Regents this evening . . . It was about the size but not the shape of a hen's egg" (*On the Mormon Frontier, The Diary of Hosea Stout*, vol. 2, page 593).

### **Book of Mormon From the Stone**

All the evidence points to the inescapable conclusion that Joseph Smith used an occultic device known as a "peep stone" or "seer stone" to translate the Book of Mormon. In the Book of Mormon itself we read: "And the Lord said: I will prepare unto my servant Gazelem, a stone, which shall shine forth in darkness unto light . . ." (Alma 37:23). In the *Doctrine and Covenants* 78:9, Gazelem is identified as "Joseph Smith, Jun."

Joseph Smith claimed that his Urim and Thummim—which he used to translate—consisted of "two stones in silver bows" (*History of the Church*, vol. 1, page 12). It would appear, then, that Joseph Smith fastened two of his "seer stones" together to make his "Urim and Thummim." The testimony given in the 1826 examination shows that as early as 1826 Joseph Smith was using two different stones. Mormon scholar D. Michael Quinn pointed out that Joseph Smith had a number of seer stones:

The brown and white stones are the only ones Smith was known to have used in his religious ministry, but Brigham Young told the apostles on 30 September 1855 that Smith had *five seer stones*. Without describing any of them, Young indicated that Smith obtained three stones before beginning his residence at Nauvoo in 1839, and found two more before his death in 1844 (Bullock 1855). . . .

Young's 1855 statement makes it clear that Smith did not regard his seer stones simply as relics of his youth. Rather, as church president Smith continued to discover new seer stones. (*Early Mormonism and the Magic World View*, 1987, pages 199-200)

In the same book Dr. Quinn has pictures of seer stones used by Joseph Smith and Book of Mormon witnesses.

In any case, Joseph Smith's father-in-law, Isaac Hale, noticed a definite relationship between the method Joseph Smith used to translate the Book of Mormon and the way he searched for buried treasures. In an affidavit, published in 1834, Hale wrote:

I first became acquainted with Joseph Smith, Jr. in November, 1825. He was at that time in the employ of a set of men who were called "money diggers;" and his occupation was that of seeing, or pretending to see by

means of a stone placed in his hat, and his hat closed over his face. In this way he pretended to discover minerals and hidden treasure. . . . young Smith . . . asked my consent to his marrying my daughter Emma. This I refused, and gave him my reasons for so doing, some of which were, that he was a stranger, and followed a business that I could not approve; . . . while I was absent from home [he] carried off my daughter, . . . they were married . . . In a short time they returned, . . .

Smith stated to me that he had given up what he called "glass looking," and that he expected to work hard for a living. . . . He also made arrangements with my son, . . . to go up to Palmyra, . . . after this, I was informed they had brought a wonderful book of plates down with them. . . . The manner in which he pretended to read and interpret, was the same as when he looked for the "money diggers," with the stone in his hat, and his hat over his face, while the book of plates was at the same time hid in the woods! (Affidavit of Isaac Hale, as printed in the *New York Baptist Register*, June 13, 1834)

The reader will notice that Joseph Smith claimed he was able to read the Book of Mormon plates without looking at them in exactly the way that Arad Stowell testified in the 1826 "examination" that Smith claimed he could divine the contents of a modern book: ". . . prisoner [Joseph Smith] laid a book upon a white cloth, and proposed looking through another stone . . . turn his head to book, and read." Speaking of the translation of the Book of Mormon, Mormon writer Arch S. Reynolds noted that "the plates were not always before Joseph during the translation. His wife and mother state that the plates were on the table wrapped in a cloth while Joseph translated with his eyes hid in a hat with the seer stone or the Urim and Thummim. David Whitmer, Martin Harris and others state that Joseph hid the plates in the woods and other places while he was translating" (*How Did Joseph Smith Translate? 1952*, page 21).

David Whitmer, one of the three witnesses to the Book of Mormon, frankly admitted that Joseph Smith placed the "seer stone" into a hat to translate the Book of Mormon:

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

As we have already shown, Martin Harris, who was also one of the three witnesses to the Book of



Mormon, freely acknowledged that Joseph Smith used his seer stone to help the money-diggers in their quest for buried treasure. Harris also revealed that he used the stone to translate the Book of Mormon. In Andrew Jenson's *Historical Record*, vol. 6, page 216, we find the following: "On Sunday, Sept. 4, 1870, Martin Harris addressed a congregation of Saints in Salt Lake City. He related . . . that the Prophet possessed a seer stone, by which he was enabled to translate as well as from the Urim and Thummim, and for convenience he then used the seer stone."

The reader will remember that the Mormon historian B. H. Roberts also admitted that Joseph Smith sometimes used a "Seer Stone" to "translate the characters engraven on the plates."

Joseph Smith's wife, Emma, related the following to her son: "In writing for your father I frequently wrote day after day, after sitting by the table close to him, he sitting with his face buried in his hat, with the stone in it, and dictating hour after hour with nothing between us" (*Saints' Herald*, May 19, 1888, page 310).

In a letter dated March 27, 1876, Emma Smith said that the entire Book of Mormon, that we have today, was translated by the use of a single stone. David Whitmer claimed that he never did see Joseph Smith use what was later known as the Urim and Thummim—i.e., the two stones set in silver bows. This information is found in an article by James E. Lancaster:

According to the testimony of Emma Smith and David Whitmer, the angel took the Urim and Thummim from Joseph Smith at the time of the loss of the 116 pages. This was in June, 1828, one year before David became involved with the work of translation. David Whitmer could never have been present when the Urim and Thummim were used. All of this he clearly states in his testimony to Brother Traugher:

"With the sanction of David Whitmer, and by his authority, I now state that he does not say that Joseph Smith ever translated in his presence by aid of Urim and Thummim, but by means of one dark colored, opaque stone called a 'Seer Stone,' which was placed in the crown of a hat, into which Joseph put his face, so as to exclude the external light . . ." (*Saints' Herald*, November 15, 1962, page 16)

One thing that has caused confusion is that the "seer stone" was sometimes called the Urim and Thummim (see *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* pages 42-43). Joseph Fielding Smith, who became the tenth president of the church, commented:

The statement has been made that the Urim and Thummim was on the altar in the Manti Temple when that building was dedicated. The Urim and Thummim so spoken of, however, was the seer atone which was

in the possession of the Prophet Joseph Smith in early days. This seer stone is now in the possession of the Church. (*Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 3, page 225)

The fact that Joseph Smith used a stone, which he placed in a hat to translate the Book of Mormon, has caused a great deal of embarrassment to church leaders because it seems to be identical to the occultic practice of crystal gazing. Although Joseph Fielding Smith admitted that Joseph Smith's seer stone is still "in the possession of the Church," it is never displayed to the public. It is claimed, in fact, that it is hidden away in the First Presidency's vault.

As we examine the Book of Mormon story in the light of the money-digging activities of the 1820s, we notice how similar the discovery of the Book of Mormon is to Joseph Smith's claims concerning the buried treasure he could see in the stone he put in his hat. In both cases the treasure was buried in the earth, and as we have shown, Martin Harris, one of the three witnesses to the Book of Mormon, maintained that Joseph Smith found the Book of Mormon plates "by looking in the stone found in the well of Mason Chase." Moreover, Smith claimed that he could find buried gold for the money-diggers and in the case of the Book of Mormon he found gold plates which were buried in the Hill Cumorah. Like the treasures Smith told the money-diggers he could see in his stone, the plates from which the Book of Mormon was "translated" were supposed to have been a very valuable treasure.

The idea of the Angel Moroni guarding the gold plates before Joseph Smith obtained them seems to have stemmed from a story Smith told Jonathan Thompson. Thompson related the following in Justice Neely's court: "Prisoner would not look again, . . . pretending that he was alarmed on account of the circumstances relating to the trunk . . . the last time he looked he discovered distinctly the two Indians who buried the trunk, that a quarrel ensued between them, and that one of said Indians was killed by the other, and thrown into the hole beside the trunk, to guard it, as he supposed." It is hard to resist the idea that the spirit guardian of the treasure was transformed into the Angel Moroni.

The idea of treasures slipping into the earth, as testified to by Josiah Stowell and Jonathan Thompson, appears to have been incorporated into the Book of Mormon itself. In Helaman 13:34-36 we read: "Behold, we lay a tool here and on the morrow it is gone; and behold, our swords are taken from us in the day we have sought them for battle. Yea, we have hid up our treasures and they have slipped away from us, because of the curse of the land. O that we had repented in the day that the word of the Lord came unto us; for behold the land is cursed, and all things are become slippery, and we cannot

hold them.” In Mormon 1:18 we read that the people “began to hide up their treasures in the earth; and they became slippery, because the Lord had cursed the land, that they could not hold them, nor retain them.”

That Joseph Smith was engaged in occultic practices at the very time God was supposed to be preparing him to receive the golden plates of the Book of Mormon seems to place his work in a questionable light, and the fact that he embodied some of these magic elements into his new religion undermines the very foundation of the church he created. We agree with the assessment of the Mormon apologist Francis W. Kirkham. As we have shown, Mr. Kirkham allowed no middle ground. He frankly conceded that if the court record could be proven true, Joseph Smith’s followers “*must deny his claimed divine guidance* which led them to follow him. . . . How could he be a prophet of God, the leader of the Restored Church to these tens of thousands, if he had been the superstitious fraud which ‘the pages from a book’ declared he confessed to be?” The observation which appears in Hugh Nibley’s book, *The Myth Makers*, is also very close to the truth: “. . . if this court record is authentic it is *the most damning evidence in existence against Joseph Smith*.” While Dr. Nibley set out to prove that “the whole structure of anti-Mormon scholarship rests on trumped up evidence” (*Ibid.*, Foreword), the tide has turned against him. Not only has the authenticity of the 1826 court record been established since Nibley wrote his book, but a number of discoveries have come to light which are equally, if not more damaging to Joseph Smith’s claims.

### **The Treasure Hunt Revelation**

Joseph Smith’s interest in treasure hunting continued even after he published the Book of Mormon. Ebenezer Robinson, who was at one time the editor of the Mormon paper, *Times and Seasons*, gave the following information:

A brother in the church, by the name of Burgess, had come to Kirtland and stated that a large amount of money had been secreted in a cellar of a certain house in Salem, Massachusetts. . . . Don Carlos Smith told us with regard to the hidden treasure. His statement was credited by the brethren, and steps were taken to try and secure the treasure, . . . (*The Return*, vol. 1, page 105)

Ebenezer Robinson goes on to state: “We soon learned that four of the leading men of the church had been to Salem, Massachusetts, in search of the hidden treasure spoken of by Brother Burgess, viz: Joseph Smith, Hyrum Smith, Sidney Rigdon and Oliver Cowdery. They

left home on the 25th of July, and returned in September.” Joseph Smith’s *History of the Church* (vol. 2, page 464) tells of this trip: “On Monday afternoon, July 25th, in company with Sidney Rigdon, Brother Hyrum Smith, and Oliver Cowdery, I left Kirtland, . . . and arrived in Salem, Massachusetts, early in August, where we hired a house, and occupied the same during the month . . .” While at Salem Joseph Smith wrote the following in a letter to his wife:

My beloved Wife: . . . With regard to the great object of our mission, you will be anxious to know. We have found the house since Bro. Burgess left us, very luckily and providentially, . . . The house is occupied, and it will require much care and patience to rent or buy it. We think we shall be able to effect it; if not now within the course of a few months. (Letter written by Joseph Smith, dated August 19, 1836, as cited in *The Saints’ Herald*, December 1, 1879, page 357)

On August 6, 1836, Joseph Smith actually claimed to receive a revelation concerning this treasure hunt. In this revelation, which is still published in the *Doctrine and Covenants*, we find the following:

I, the Lord your God, am not displeased with your coming this journey, notwithstanding your follies.

I have much treasure in this city for you, . . . and its wealth pertaining to gold and silver shall be yours.

Concern not yourselves about your debts, for I will give you power to pay them . . . inquire diligently concerning the more ancient inhabitants and founders of this city;

For there are more treasures than one for you in this city. (*Doctrine and Covenants*, Section 111, verses 1, 2, 4, 5, 9, 10)

Notwithstanding the purported revelation from God, Mr. Robinson informs us that the treasure was never found, and Joseph Smith was unable to pay his debts as the revelation had promised.

### **Working with the Rod**

One very important change Joseph Smith made in his revelations was an obvious attempt to cover up the endorsement of Book of Mormon witness Oliver Cowdery’s supposed gift from God to work with a divining rod. Although we have already shown photographic proof concerning this change earlier in this book, we felt it might be helpful to include a typed comparison of the important portion of the revelation as it was first published in the *Book of Commandments* with the way it has been changed to read in recent editions of the *Doctrine and Covenants*.

*Book of Commandments:* Now this is not all, for you have another gift, which is the gift of *working with the rod*: behold it has told you things: behold there is no other power save God, that can cause this *rod of nature, to work in your hands . . .* (7:3)

*Doctrine and Covenants:* Now this is not all thy gift, for you have another gift, which is the *gift of Aaron*; behold, it has told you many things;

Behold, there is no other power, save the power of God, that can cause this *gift of Aaron to be with you*. (8:6-7)

The reader will notice that the words “working with the rod” and “rod of nature” have been entirely deleted from this revelation without any indication!

The money-diggers used divining rods to find buried treasures, and they were sometimes used as “a medium of revelation” with regard to other matters. Those who used divining rods were at times referred to as “rodsmen.” Richard P. Howard, RLDS Church Historian, made some startling admissions in a book published by his church:

Several writers have established that both in Vermont and in western New York in the early 1800’s, one of the many forms which enthusiastic religion took was the adaptation of the witch hazel stick. . . . For example, the “divining rod” was used effectively by one Nathaniel Wood in Rutland County, Vermont, in 1801. Wood, Winchell, William Cowdery, Jr., and *his son, Oliver Cowdery*, all had some knowledge of and associations with the various uses, both secular and sacred, of the forked witch hazel rod. Winchell and others used such a rod in seeking buried treasure; . . . when Joseph Smith met Oliver Cowdery in April, 1829, he found a man peculiarly adept *in the use of the forked rod . . .* and against the background of his own experiments with and uses of oracular media, Joseph Smith’s April, 1829, affirmations about Cowdery’s unnatural powers related to *working with the rod* are quite understandable. . . .

By the time that Joseph Smith approached the reinterpretation and *rewording* of this document for the 1835 edition of the *Doctrine and Covenants*, he had had time and experience necessary to place his 1829 assessment of the meaning of Cowdery’s gift of working with the rod in a somewhat more accurate perspective. Both he and Cowdery had developed away from an emphasis on the religious or mystical meanings in such mechanical objects as the water witching rod. Joseph’s 1835 wording of this document . . . left behind the apparent 1829 reliance upon external media, which by 1835 had assumed in Joseph’s mind overtones of superstition and speculative experimentation. (*Restoration Scriptures*, 1969, pages 211-214)

Marvin S. Hill, of the LDS Church’s Brigham Young University, has admitted that “when Oliver Cowdery took up his duties as a scribe for Joseph Smith in 1829 he had a rod in his possession which Joseph Smith sanctioned . . .” (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, 1972, page 78). Professor Hill went on to state: “Some of the rodsmen or money diggers who moved into Mormonism were Oliver Cowdery, Martin Harris, Orrin P. Rockwell, Joseph and Newel Knight, and Josiah Stowell.” It is interesting to note that Marvin Hill includes two of the three witnesses to the Book of Mormon in his list of “rodsmen or money diggers.”

In *Brigham Young University Studies*, Fall 1978, Mormon scholar D. Michael Quinn gave some interesting information concerning the use of “the rod” by early church leaders. In his book *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View*, Dr. Quinn went much further:

Several generations of the Smith family had been influenced by the magic world view before the 1800s. . . . Of Smith’s ancestors, B. H. Roberts, a ranking Mormon leader at the turn of the twentieth century observed: “It may be admitted that some of them believed in fortune telling, in warlocks and witches . . . To be credulous in such things was to be normal people.” . . . Jesse Smith’s letter to his nephew provides independent substantiation for the neighborhood claims that Joseph Sr. in the 1820s used a divining rod for treasure hunting . . . about 1800 a religious group began using forked divining rods for revelatory purposes in Vermont, not too far from the families of Joseph Smith, Sr., and William Cowdery (father of future Book of Mormon scribe Oliver Cowdery). At Middletown, Vermont . . . Nathaniel Wood was instructing his followers that “they were descendants of the ancient Jews, . . .” They . . . used a “cleft stick, or *rod*,” to discover “The hidden treasures of the earth” and to receive instructions by “*a nod of assent . . . from the rods*,” including a revelation “that they must build a temple”. . . it is unlikely that the Cowdery family six miles away would have been unaware of the so-called “Wood Scrape.” . . . Barnes Frisbie wrote in 1867, “I have been told that Joe Smith’s father resided in Poultney at the time of the Wood movement here, and that he was in it, and one of the leading rodsmen. Of this I cannot speak positively, for the want of satisfactory evidence. . . . I have before said that Oliver Cowdery’s father was in the ‘Wood scrape.’” . . . A connection between William Cowdery and the Wood Scrape would help to explain why his son Oliver had a rod through which he received revelations. . . .

Certainly the biblical heritage of scepter-like staffs must be taken into consideration, but the ubiquitous divining rod of American *folk magic* provides a more plausible explanation for the context and meaning of Cowdery's "gift." Aaron's rod (rendered "the gift of Aaron" in the 1835 *Doctrine and Covenants* instead of "working with the rod" and "rod of nature" in the 1833 *Book of Commandments* . . .) was never used as an instrument of or an aid to revelation in the Bible. . . . The only reference in the Bible to the use of a staff for revelation is a divine condemnation of the practice, . . . the language of the 1829 revelation to Cowdery seems to require the conclusion that his was a forked divining rod of American *folk magic*. The revelation itself uses the words "working with the rod" and "to work in your hands," both of which reflect contemporary American terms to describe the operations of the *forked divining rod*: . . .

It is important to recognize that the 1829 revelation validated as "the work of God" an instrument of *folk magic* that Cowdery had already been using for revelations before he met Smith or encountered what would become Mormonism ("behold it has told you things"). Furthermore, this revelation gave divine sanction to Cowdery's continued use of the rod for revelations . . . This would *not be the only magical instrument* that would become divinely approved for use in Mormonism, and it is important to understand that the revelation to Oliver Cowdery is only one example in early Mormonism of *God's ratifying* the previous and continued use of *folk magic*. . . .

Friendly sources were silent about [Joseph] Smith's teenage experience with divining rods, but hostile Palmyra neighbors provided some information. They stated that . . . this treasure digging of Joseph Sr. and Joseph Jr. began about 1819 . . . The neighbors also reported that young Joseph began seeking treasure about this same time with a hazel divining rod . . .

Isaac Butts, just one year younger than Smith, was an eye-witness to some of the Smith's activities. "Young Jo had a *forked witch-hazel rod* with which he claimed he could locate buried money or hidden things. Later he had a peep stone which he put into his hat and looked into it. I have seen both". . . If neighbor chronology is accurate, Joseph Smith, Jr., would have been about thirteen years old when he began using a divining rod. Residents of Waterloo, New York, reported that he occasionally worked there and used "mineral rods digging for gold in various places" (Kendig 1876, 129). (*Early Mormonism and the Magic World View*, (1987) pages 28-36)

On pages 204-206 of the same book, Dr. Quinn gives this information about rod working in the church:

Like seer stones, divining rods were also used by some prominent early Mormons after the organization of the church. While en route to a mission in 1837, Apostle Heber C. Kimball dreamed that Joseph Smith gave him a rod "about three and a half feet in length" to guide the ship. According to Kimball family tradition, Smith later gave "a rod" to Kimball and to Brigham Young because of their faithfulness . . . the use of a staff-like or a forked rod to obtain revelation would have constituted, by everyone's definition, a form of *divination*.

Kimball used a *rod of divination* during at least twenty years of his apostolic ministry. . . . as he started making daily diary entries in 1844, Kimball recorded frequent occasions when he used a rod as part of a sacred prayer ritual. On 6 June 1844, he wrote, "last nite I clothed myself and offerd up the Sines of the Holy Preasthood . . . I *inquired by the rod* it was said my family was well . . . and that Congress would not do anything fore us" . . .

The most prominent use of a rod in Utah occurred in 1847 when Brigham Young evidently *used Oliver Cowdery's rod*, which he had received from his brother Phineas Young, and "pointed out" where the Saints' *new temple should be built* (Lund 1901). But in the twentieth century, church leaders have largely ignored divining rods, and there is no evidence that they were used in divination after the death of Heber C. Kimball in 1868.

(In *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* pages 47-49, we reproduced a number of affidavits and statements linking Joseph Smith to peep stones, divining rods and money-digging.)

### Animal Sacrifices

Animal sacrifices were a part of the magic ritual which accompanied money-digging. On page 144 of his book *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View*, Dr. Quinn gives this information: "A cousin of Smith's wife Emma reported that Smith 'translated the book of Mormon by means of the same peep stone, and under the same inspiration that directed his enchantments and dog sacrifices; it was all by the same spirit' (H. Lewis 1879)." In a magic book known as *The Greater Key of Solomon*, page 122, we read that "In many operations it is necessary to make some sort of sacrifice unto the Demons, and in various ways. . . . Such sacrifices consist of the blood and sometimes of the flesh." The evidence seems to show that Joseph Smith did make sacrifices to the demons. In an affidavit published in 1834, William Stafford, one of the neighbors of the Smith family, reported the following:

Joseph Smith, Sen., came to me one night, and told me that Joseph Smith Jr. had been looking in his glass, and had seen, not many rods from his house, two or three kegs of gold and silver, . . . Joseph, Sen. first made a circle, twelve or fourteen feet in diameter. This circle, said he, contains the treasure. He then stuck in the ground a row of witch hazel sticks, around the said circle, for the purpose of keeping off the evil spirits. Within this circle he made another, of about eight or ten feet in diameter. He walked around three times on the periphery of this last circle, muttering to himself something which I could not understand. He next stuck a steel rod in the centre of the circles, and then enjoined profound silence upon us, lest we should arouse the evil spirit who had the charge of these treasures. After we had dug a trench about five feet in depth around the rod, the old man . . . went to the house to inquire of young Joseph the cause of our disappointment. He soon returned and said, that Joseph had remained all this time in the house, *looking in his stone and watching the motions of the evil spirit*—that he saw the spirit come up to the ring and as soon as it beheld the cone which we had formed around the rod, it caused the money to sink. . . . another time, they devised a scheme, by which they might satiate their hunger, with the mutton of one of my sheep. They had seen in my flock of sheep, a large, fat, black weather. Old Joseph and one of the boys came to me one day, and said that Joseph Jr. had discovered some very remarkable and valuable treasures, which could be procured only in one way. That way, was as follows:—That a *black sheep* should be taken on to the ground where the treasures were concealed—that after *cutting its throat* it should be led around in a circle *while bleeding*. This being done, *the wrath of the evil spirit would be appeased*: the treasures could then be obtained, and my share of them was to be four fold. To gratify my curiosity, I let them have a large fat sheep. They afterwards informed me, that the sheep was killed pursuant to commandment; but as there was some mistake in the process, it did not have the desired effect. This, I believe, is the only time they ever made money-digging a profitable business. (*Mormonism Unveiled*, 1834, pages 238-239)

The reader will notice that it was a “black” sheep that was supposed to have been sacrificed. This is interesting because *The Greater Key of Solomon*, page 122, says that “Sometimes white animals are sacrificed to the good Spirits and black to the evil.” In any case, the Mormon apologist Richard L. Anderson says that, “If there was such an event of a borrowed sheep, it had nothing to do with dishonesty” (*Brigham Young University Studies*, Spring 1970, page 295). On page 294 of the same article, Professor Anderson quotes the following from M. Wilford Poulson’s notes of a conversation with Wallace Miner: “I once asked Stafford if Smith did steal

a sheep from him. He said no, not exactly. He said, he did miss a black sheep, but soon Joseph came and admitted he took it for sacrifice but he was willing to work for it. He made wooden sap buckets to fully pay for it.” C. R. Stafford testified concerning the same incident: “Jo Smith, the prophet, told my uncle, William Stafford, he wanted a fat, black sheep. He said he wanted to cut its throat and make it walk in a circle three times around and it would prevent a pot of money from leaving” (*The Naked Truths About Mormonism*, January 1888, page 3).

In the Book of Mormon Joseph Smith condemned animal sacrifices after the death of Christ (3 Nephi 9:19), but according to Wandle Mace, a devout Mormon, he later called for the sacrifice of a lamb in the Kirtland temple: “Joseph told them to go to Kirtland, and cleanse and purify a certain room in the Temple, that they *must kill a lamb and offer a sacrifice* unto the Lord which should prepare them to ordain Willard Richards a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles” (“Journal of Wandle Mace,” page 32, microfilmed copy at Brigham Young University). While in this instance Joseph Smith wanted the sacrifice made to the Lord, there are a number of accounts which indicate Joseph Smith was offering sacrifices to the demons in his earlier years (see our book *Mormonism, Magic and Masonry*, pages 32-34).

### Joseph Smith’s Magic Talisman

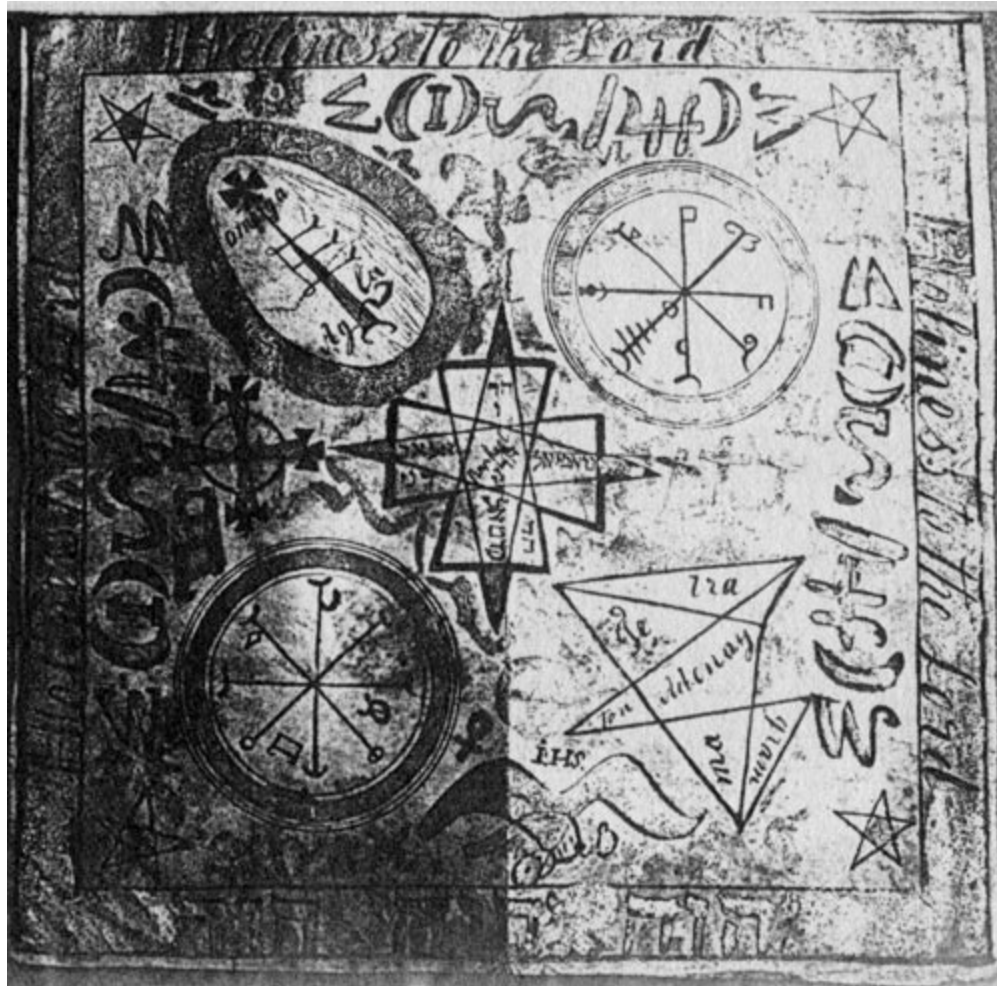
In 1974 Reed Durham, who was director of the LDS Institute of Religion at the University of Utah and president of the Mormon History Association, made a discovery that was so startling that it caused great consternation among Mormon scholars and officials. Dr. Durham found that what had previously been identified as the “Masonic jewel of the Prophet Joseph Smith” was in reality a “Jupiter talisman.” This is a medallion which contains material relating to astrology and magic. Dr. Durham, apparently not realizing the devastating implications of his discovery, announced this important find in his presidential address before the Mormon History Association on April 20, 1974:

. . . I should like to initiate all of you into what is perhaps the strangest, the most mysterious, occult-like esoteric, and yet Masonically oriented practice ever adopted by Joseph Smith. . . . All available evidence suggests that Joseph Smith the Prophet possessed a *magical Masonic medallion, or talisman*, which he worked during his lifetime and which was evidently on his person when he was martyred. His talisman is in the shape of a silver dollar and is probably made of silver or tin. . . . the talisman, . . . originally purchased from the Emma Smith Bidamon family, fully notarized by that

Both sides of Joseph Smith's Magic Talisman



One of Hyrum Smith's Magic Parchments



family to be authentic and to have belonged to Joseph Smith, can now be identified as *a Jupiter talisman*. It carries the sign and image of Jupiter and should more appropriately be referred to as the Table of Jupiter. And in some very real and quite mysterious sense, this particular Table of Jupiter was the most appropriate talisman for Joseph Smith to possess. Indeed, it seemed meant for him, because on all levels of interpretation: planetary, mythological, numerological, astrological, mystical cabalism, and talismatic magic, the Prophet was, in every case, appropriately described.

The characters on the talisman are primarily in Hebrew, but there is one inscription in Latin. Every letter in the Hebrew alphabet has a numerical equivalent and those numerical equivalents make up *a magic square*. By adding the numbers in this Jupiter Table in any direction . . . the total will be the same. In this case, on the Jupiter Table, 34. . . .

There is the one side of the talisman belonging to the Prophet Joseph Smith. . . . at the bottom is the Jupiter sign. . . . The cross at the top represents the *spirit of Jupiter*, . . .

I wasn't able to find what this was, for—as I said—two months; and finally, in a magic book printed in England in 1801, published in America in 1804, and I traced it to Manchester, and to New York. It was a magic book by Francis Barrett and, lo and behold, how thrilled I was when *I saw in his list of magic seals the very talisman which Joseph Smith had* in his possession at the time of his martyrdom. . . .

*In astrology*, Jupiter is always associated with high positions, getting one's own way, and all forms of status. . . .

So closely is magic bound up with the stars and astrology that the term astrologer and magician were in ancient times almost synonymous. The purpose of the Table of Jupiter in talismanic magis [magic?] was to be able to *call upon the celestial intelligences assigned to the particular talisman*, to assist one in all endeavors. The names of the deities which we gave to you, who could be invoked by the Table were always written on the talisman or represented by various numbers. Three such names were written on Joseph Smith's talisman: Abbah, Father; El Ob, Father is God or God the Father; and Josiphiel, Jehovah speaks for God, the Intelligence of Jupiter.

When properly invoked, with Jupiter being very powerful and ruling in the heavens, these intelligences—*by the power of ancient magic*—guaranteed to the possessor of this talisman the *gain of riches*, and favor, and power, and love and peace; and to confirm honors, and dignities, and councils. Talismatic magic further declared that any one who worked skillfully with this Jupiter Table would obtain the power of stimulating anyone to offer his love to the possessor of the talisman, whether from a friend, brother, relative, or even any female. (*Mormon Miscellaneous*, published by David Martin, vol. 1, no. 1, October 1975, pages 14-15)

In his speech Reed Durham not only correctly identified what was previously known as Joseph Smith's "Masonic jewel" as a magic talisman, but he presented a great deal of evidence which seemed to link the Book of Mormon and the Mormon temple ceremony to Masonry. Dr. Durham soon found that the Mormon hierarchy did not want him delving into these matters. He was severely criticized by church scholars and officials and was even called in by President Spencer W. Kimball. Durham finally found it necessary to issue a letter in which he reaffirmed his faith in Joseph Smith and said that he was sorry for the "concerns, and misunderstandings" that his speech had caused. He later said that he "went through hell" because of the problems the speech had caused. On May 4, 1977, a noted Mormon scholar sought further information from Dr. Durham on the magic and Masonic connections to Mormonism. In his reply, Durham sadly revealed that he had been silenced by church officials:

I am sorry, but because of the nature of the subject matter, the Brethren have requested that I do no more with the subject again—I am not to release info. or have any more to say on the subject. . . . I will be obedient to my Brethren and be still.

While it has certainly been a blow to Mormon history that the church has been able to successfully silence a noted scholar like Reed Durham, we feel that Durham's identification of Joseph Smith's magic talisman ranks as one of the most significant discoveries made by a Mormon scholar.

Dr. Durham was unable to determine just when Joseph Smith obtained his talisman, but W. D. Purple, who attended Smith's 1826 examination, related that a witness at the legal proceedings by the name of Thompson claimed that Joseph Smith told Josiah Stowel that a "charm" had been placed on a box of treasure and that "certain talismanic influences" were necessary to break the enchantment. The Jupiter talisman is probably the type of talisman a money-digger would be interested in because it was supposed to bring its possessor "the gain of riches, and favor, and power." Regardless of when Joseph Smith obtained his talisman, we do know that it was very important to him and that he possessed it up to the time of his death. Wesley P. Walters says that "Charles E. Bidamon, who sold the talisman to the Wood collection, stated in his accompanying affidavit: 'Emma Smith Bidamon the prophet's widow was my foster mother. She prized this piece very highly on account of its being one of the prophet's intimate possessions (Charles E. Bidamon Affidavit. Wood Coll. #7-J-b-21).'"

In his work, *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View*, [1987] pages 62-76, D. Michael Quinn gives a great deal of information concerning Joseph Smith's talisman.

The discovery of evidence to prove Joseph Smith's 1826 run-in with the law was certainly a devastating blow to Mormonism, for it proves that Smith was a believer in magical practices. Reed Durham's find that Joseph Smith possessed a magic talisman is also very significant because it seems to indicate that Smith continued to hold these ideas until the time of his death.

### Hyrum Smith's Magic Paraphernalia

Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum are considered by the Mormon people to have been two of the greatest men who ever lived. The *Doctrine and Covenants*, 135:6, says that "their names" will "go down to posterity as gems for the sanctified." Like his brother Joseph, Hyrum seems to have also had an interest in the occult. A few years ago we were given photocopies of some material which Mormon scholars claim was in Hyrum's possession at the time of his death. We compared it with the same book Reed Durham used to identify Joseph Smith's Jupiter talisman (*The Magus*, by Francis Barrett) and found that it is definitely magic material (see our book, *Mormonism, Magic and Masonry*, for detailed information on the subject).

These "Relics" of Hyrum Smith were described in 1963 by Pearson H. Corbett, a Mormon apologist, on page 453 of his book, *Hyrum Smith—Patriarch*:

Dagger, Masonic ten inch, stainless steel—wooden handle—Masonic symbols on blade.

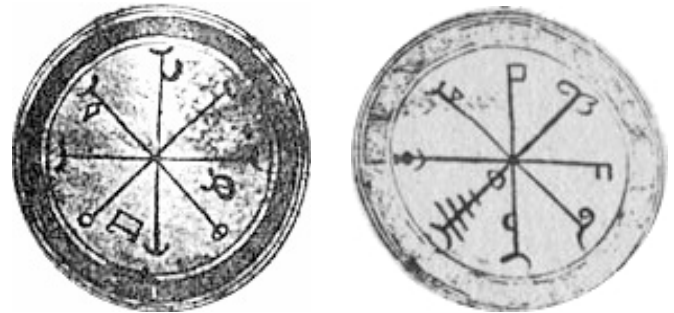
Emblematic parchments—Masonic—three, original hand painted on heavy bodied paper—on border appears initials "I. H. S."

.....  
Pouch, Masonic cotton fabric 4" by 4" with draw string attached.

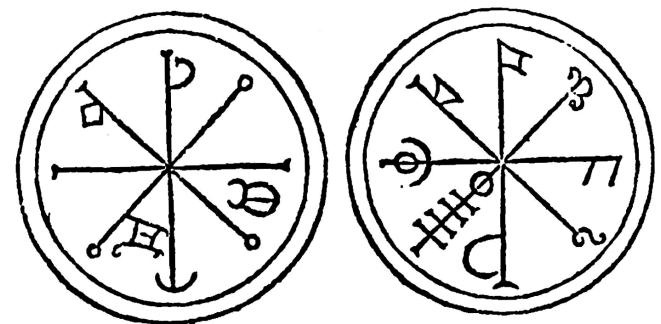
At the time we wrote about these important items (1982), they were in the possession of Eldred G. Smith, Church Patriarch Emeritus. He was convinced that they belonged to his great-great grandfather, Hyrum Smith, and he was willing to admit that they may be "cabalistic" in origin—i.e., linked to occult or mystic writings. We understand that at one time he freely displayed these relics to groups of people. He later became more cautious about the matter because he was not sure what they really were and did not want to embarrass the church. His son, Gary Smith, gave this information about the items:

"My father has told me as well as my great-uncle . . . that all of these artifacts were brought across the plains by Mary Fielding Smith, the widow of Hyrum Smith . . ." (Statement by Gary Smith, cited by D. Michael Quinn in *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View*, page 78).

On page 135 of this book the reader will find a photograph of one of Hyrum Smith's magic parchments. On this parchment we find two circular objects. Below we have extracted the two objects for the purpose of comparing them with material related to witchcraft.



These two circular objects are found in books about magic. In fact, we found them in a very old book, *The Discoverie of Witchcraft*, by Reginald Scot. This book was printed in 1584, before the King James Version of the Bible appeared, and was photographically reprinted in 1971. The following is taken from page 401 of that book. The reader will notice that the round objects are just like the ones in the Hyrum Smith parchments.

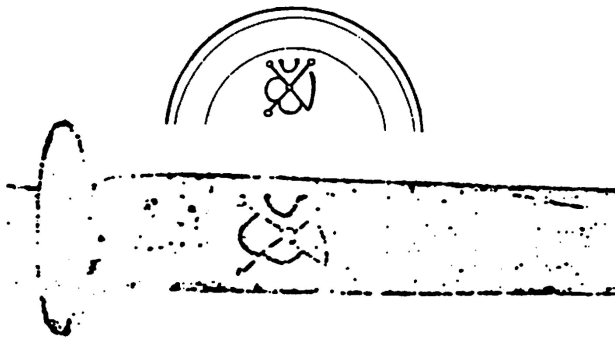


Under one of the objects in *The Discoverie of Witchcraft* we find this message: *Whoso beareth this sign about him, all spirits shall do him homage.* These circular objects are apparently pentacles or talismans. It would be difficult for those not involved in magic to distinguish a pentacle from a talisman (see *The Encyclopedia of Occult Sciences*, page 332).

The reader will remember that when Pearson Corbett spoke of the Hyrum Smith "Relics," he listed a "Dagger"



with what he thought were “Masonic symbols on blade.” We compared photocopies of this knife with Barrett’s book (the book Dr. Durham used to identify Joseph Smith’s Jupiter talisman) and found that the markings on it were also derived from magic. Some of the markings, in fact, are found on a Mars talisman which is right next to the Jupiter talisman (see drawings in *The Magus*, facing page 174). On the one side of the talisman we find the Hebrew characters forming the word *Adoni* (Lord). These same characters are found on the knife. On the second side of the talisman we find what is known as the “Seal of Mars.” This is also found on the second side of the knife. Below is a comparison of the Seal of Mars as it appears on the talisman (above) with the way it appears on the knife.



Knives, of course, play a very important part in magic rituals. In his book, *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View*, D. Michael Quinn has a very good photograph of the “magic dagger” which has come down through the Smith family (see Fig. 43). He speculates that Joseph Smith and his father may have used this dagger when they “drew magic circles in the 1820s.” If the Smiths had the dagger during those early years, it is very likely that it could have been used to cut the throats of the animals which were sacrificed to the demons.

Pearson Corbett refers to one of Hyrum Smith’s relics as a “Pouch, Masonic cotton fabric . . .” It is believed that this pouch was used to hold the magic parchments.

After we had done our research linking the Hyrum Smith material to witchcraft, we learned that a Mormon scholar by the name of Arturo de Hoyos had compiled an unpublished manuscript on the same subject. Although we did our research independently, we both arrived at the conclusion that the Hyrum Smith material was derived from magic. In his manuscript, “The Masonic Emblem & Parchments of Joseph & Hyrum Smith,” de Hoyos acknowledged that items on the parchments were associated with “witchcraft, black magic, and the occult . . .” He also noted:

These parchments have been termed “Masonic,” although they bear no direct relation to the Masonic ritual. There are however certain aspects of the parchments which do bear some relationship to Freemasonry. . . . One cannot help but wonder the reason why the Prophet Joseph Smith, and his brother, Hyrum, the Patriarch, would possess articles such as they did unless they actually believed that these articles possess some sort of supernatural power, or that they were a “key” to receiving power or protection.

In 1987 Signature Books published D. Michael Quinn’s monumental work on the relationship between Mormonism and magic. In his book Dr. Quinn agreed with the research we had published and with the work of Arturo de Hoyos on the Hyrum Smith material. Although Quinn claimed he did not believe that his “analysis disparages Joseph Smith’s integrity or prophetic claims,” he did admit the following:

In what follows most Mormons will not find a story with which they are familiar. Instead, they will discover that *Joseph Smith evidently participated extensively in magical pursuits* and that he shared with others of his contemporaries a magic view of the world. For myself, I have found that the “official version” of early Mormon history is sometimes incomplete in its presentation and evaluation of evidence, and therefore inaccurate in certain respects. (*Early Mormonism and the Magic World View*, Introduction, pages xx-xxi)

Dr. Quinn felt that the evidence concerning Joseph Smith’s participation in magic could not be set aside:

Beyond the documents indicating that during the 1820s Joseph Smith and his family used divining rods and seer stones as part of the folk magic of treasure seeking, Smith family members themselves provided evidence of their involvement in more esoteric manifestations of Christian occultism. These direct evidences are of two kinds: statements suggesting the family’s participation in these activities, and magic artifacts in the early possession of family members according to Smith descendants, relatives, or their Mormon associates. . . . several of these relics have been preserved through completely separate chains of ownership (i.e., provenance). The magic artifacts attributed to the Smith family and certain statements by family members and early associates either imply or affirm that Joseph Smith and his family believed in and used ritual magic, astrology, talismans, and magic parchments. . . .

Historical understanding cannot grow by ignoring or dismissing evidence that seems unusual or inconsistent with traditional perceptions, . . .

In response to the affidavits of some Palmyra residents that the Smiths in the 1820s neglected their farm and other necessary work in order to dig for treasure, Lucy Mack Smith seemed to confirm that her family practiced ritual magic. In the first draft of her dictated 1845 history she stated, “let not my reader suppose that because I shall pursue another topic for a season that we stopt our labor and went at trying to win the faculty of Abrac[,] drawing Magic circles or sooth saying [*sic*] to the neglect of all kinds of business [W]e never during our lives suffered one important interest to swallow up every other obligation but whilst we worked with our hands we endeavored to remember the service of & the welfare of our souls”. . . Joseph Smith’s mother did not deny her family’s participation in occult activities but simply affirmed that these did not prevent family members from accomplishing other, equally important work. . . .

By the early 1820s, “Faculty of Abrac” had become a well-known phrase linking magic and divinity. . . . Medieval and early modern magic manuscripts in England used “Abrac” and “Abraca” as one of the names of God in conjurations. . . . As early as 1831, their neighbors stated that both Smith and his father drew circles for treasure hunting. . . .

Confirming these stories, the Hyrum Smith family has preserved as an heirloom the kind of dagger necessary for ritual magic. The first public announcement of its existence was an inventory of Hyrum Smith’s “relics” in an authorized biography which described the artifact as “Dagger, . . . Masonic symbols on blade” (Corbett 1963, 453). Photographs of the dagger have been in print since 1982, and slides of the Smith dagger were screened at a public convention in Salt Lake City in 1985 (Tanner and Tanner 1982a, 3; Tanner and Tanner 1983, 11, 15; Fillerup; figs. 43-44). . . . the inscriptions on the Smith family dagger have nothing to do with Freemasonry and everything to do with ceremonial magic. . . . One side of the Smith family dagger is inscribed with the Hebrew word “Adonay,” next to which are the astrological symbol of Mars and the magic sigil, or seal, for the Intelligence of Mars. The other side of the dagger is inscribed with the magic seal of Mars. . . .

Possession alone may not be proof of use, but in this case Hyrum Smith, by 1844, possessed an instrument designed for drawing the kind of magic circles that Palmyra neighbors claimed the Smiths were drawing on the ground in the 1820s as part of their treasure-digging activities. In addition, Lucy Smith’s manuscript history virtually confirmed the allegation that her husband and son drew magic circles in the 1820s, . . . Hyrum was the obvious heir of his father’s sacred relics at the death of Joseph Sr. . . . Mars (inscribed on the magic dagger) was the planet governing 1771, the year of Joseph Smith Sr.’s birth. . . .

That astrology was important to members of the Smith family is also indicated by both friendly and unfriendly sources. Without giving further details, Brigham Young stated in 1861 that “an effort was made in the days of Joseph to establish astrology” (*Young Office Journal*, 30 Dec. 1861). . . . the Hyrum Smith family also possessed magic parchments inscribed with the astrological symbols of the planets and the Zodiac . . . and the Emma Smith Bidamon family preserved a magic artifact consecrated to Jupiter, the ruling planet of Joseph Smith Jr.’s birth. . . . Two of the Smith family’s magic parchments . . . depend directly on Ebenezer Sibly’s *Complete Illustration of the Occult Sciences*, . . . the inscriptions on Joseph Smith’s Jupiter talisman indicated its use as an implement in ceremonies of spirit conjuration, and the influential manuscript “Key of Solomon” defined a Jupiter talisman’s use strictly in terms of ceremonial magic: “This defendeth and protecteth those who invoke and cause the Spirits to come”. . . . That ceremonial purpose of the Jupiter talisman in Joseph Smith’s possession in 1844 was consistent with the ceremonial purposes of the magic parchments in the possession of his brother Hyrum in 1844. . . . (*Early Mormonism and the Magic World View*, pages 53-58, 69)

On pages 78-79, Professor Quinn gives this information:

While the Smith family’s belief in astrology can be demonstrated only circumstantially and inferentially, the Smiths left direct evidence of their practice of ritual magic. In addition to the magic dagger, among Hyrum Smith’s possessions at his death were three parchments—lamens, in occult terms—inscribed with signs and names of ceremonial magic. . . . Like the dagger, photographs of these magic parchments have been in print since 1982 (de Hoyos 1982, 4-22; Tanner and Tanner 1982a, 1-3; Tanner and Tanner 1983, 6-9; *Salt Lake Tribune*, 24 Aug. 1985, B-1). . . . The dagger may have belonged originally to Joseph Smith, Sr., and the parchments may be artifacts from the time of the coming forth of the Book of Mormon.

Dr. Quinn feels that the parchments had a definite relationship to money-digging:

That this “Holiness to the Lord” magic parchment was designed to invoke “good spirits” in connection with treasure seeking is suggested by yet another symbol. Directly to the right of the Raphael figure and above the Tetragrammaton figure are three crosses. . . . Although this could be a reference to the crucifixion at Golgotha, Scot defined two separate uses of three crosses, both of which pertained to treasure seeking. First, he specified that “there must be made upon a

hazell wand three crosses” as part of “the art and order to be used in digging for monie, revealed by dreamer,” and later in his discussion he provided an illustration of a shield-symbol with three crosses at the top to summon a spirit “to tell thee of hidden treasures that be in anie place, he will tell it thee: or if thou wilt command him to bring to thee gold or silver, he will bring it thee” . . . the use of the previously discussed angel symbols from Reginald Scot’s 1665 edition of his *Discourse* indicates that all three Smith family parchments were created to aid treasure seeking. Immediately before Scot’s chapter that discussed Jubanladace, Nal-gah, and Pah-li-Pah, the last paragraph of the preceding chapter stated, “*When Treasure hath been hid, or any secret thing hath been committed by the party; there is a magical cause of something attracting the starry spirit back again, to the manifestation of that thing. Upon all which, the following Chapters do insist more largely and particularly*” . . . Therefore, the three Smith parchments adopted the names and symbols of Jubanladace directly (and Nal-gah and Pah-li-Pah through Sibly’s later version) from a chapter of Scot’s 1665 *Discourse* that provided information about good angels necessary for successful treasure-seeking conjurations. . . . these two lamens of the Joseph Smith family were designed to be used by an unmarried, pure young man or woman in summoning and communicating with a divine spirit as part of a treasure quest. . . . the central purpose of the “Holiness to the Lord” parchment was to enable such a pure youth to summon and communicate with a divine spirit as part of a treasure quest, which both Mormon and non-Mormon sources indicated was a preoccupation of the Joseph Smith family only up to 1827. (*Ibid.*, pages 107-108,110-111)

D. Michael Quinn has done a great deal of important research with regard to the provenance of the Smith magic paraphernalia and has shown how these items relate to the magical practices of the time.

Professor Quinn feels that Joseph Smith may have been involved in “spirit conjurations” when he received the visitation concerning the gold plates which he used to translate the Book of Mormon:

Smith began praying late Sunday night on 21 September 1823. According to astrological guides, Sunday night was the only night of the week ruled by Jupiter . . . Jupiter, Smith’s ruling planet, was the most prominent astrological symbol on the Smith family’s golden lamens for summoning a good spirit. . . .

Oliver Cowdery wrote that Smith began praying earnestly that Sunday night about “eleven or twelve” in order “to commune with some kind of messenger” (1835, 1:79). Scot’s frequently cited 1665 instructions

for conjuration (the edition upon which the Smith family’s “Jehovah, Jehovah, Jehovah” parchment was based) specified that spirit conjurations should begin “at 11 a clock at night,” and in describing a particular conjuration “at 11 a clock at night; not joyning to himself any companion, because this particular action will admit of none . . . providing beforehand the two Seals of the Earth, drawn exactly upon parchment . . . but if he desires it, they will engage to bring him the most pretious [*sic*] of their Jewels and Riches in twenty four hours; discovering unto him the way of finding hidden treasures and the richest mines” . . . The Smith’s “Holiness to the Lord” parchment has those two seals . . .

Smith’s prayer “to commune with some kind of messenger” on 21 September 1823 occurred once the moon had reached its maximum fullness the previous day and just before the autumnal equinox. The 1665 edition of Scot’s works . . . specified, “And in the composition of any Circle for Magical feats, the fittest time is the brightest Moon-light” . . . the hour and day in which Smith prayed “to commune with some kind of messenger” was pinpointed in magic books as being ideal for the invocation of spirits. Also, the angel of that hour, Raphael, figured prominently at the center of the Smith family’s most significant lamen . . . which was constructed to aid in a treasure quest . . . Young Joseph walked alone to that hill on 22 September 1823, when the moon was in its second day in Aries, which astrology specified was a day “good to find treasures hid” . . .

Significantly, Oliver Cowdery’s account, the first published history of early Mormonism, sketched a folk magic context for the events of 22 September 1823 on the hill: “he had heard of the power of enchantment, and a thousand like stories, which held the hidden treasures of the earth” . . . Cowdery’s report that Smith was prevented from obtaining the gold treasure by a thrice-repeated “shock [that] was produced upon his system” echoed treasure folklore of the 1820s that treasure-seekers could be “instant[an]eously struck, without attaining their object, as with an electric shock” . . .

All official and unofficial, . . . sources agree that Smith was not able to obtain the gold plates on 22 September 1823. Instead, he returned to the hill on exactly the same day each year until 1827. None of these accounts explains why the visits had to occur each year on exactly the same day. Magic provides a possible explanation: “Should nothing result [from the attempt at necromancy], the same experiment must be renewed in the following year, and if necessary a third time, when it is certain that the desired apparition will be obtained, and the longer it has been delayed the more realistic and striking it will be” . . . (*Early Mormonism and the Magic World View*, 1987, pages 120-122, 125, 133-134)

## A Serious Matter

The Bible strongly condemns the practice of magic throughout its pages. In the Old Testament we read:

There shall not be found among you any one . . . that *useth divination*, or an observer of times, or an *enchanter*, or a *witch*,

Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a *necromancer*.

For all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord: and because of these abominations the Lord thy God doth drive them out from before thee. . . .

For these nations, which thou shalt possess, hearkened unto observers of times, and unto diviners: but as for thee, the Lord thy God hath not suffered thee so to do. (Deuteronomy 18:10-12, 14)

In the New Testament “witchcraft” is listed among the evil “works of the flesh,” and Apostle Paul warned that those who do “such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God” (Galatians 5:19-21).

The current leaders of the LDS Church have turned away from many of the occultic practices which played such an important role in the church Joseph Smith founded. In fact, the church hierarchy have publicly condemned magic. Mormon Apostle Bruce R. McConkie wrote concerning the evils of “divination, necromancy, and witchcraft,” and went on to say: “Sorcery has been a sinful evil in all ages. . . . at the Second Coming of the Lord sorcerers will be destroyed. . . .” (*Mormon Doctrine*, 1979, page 747).

Most Mormons have not been aware of Joseph Smith’s involvement in the occult because there has been a cover-up. Wesley P. Walters has pointed out that it was Joseph Smith himself who started that cover-up in the 1830s.

It is interesting to note that as early as 1828 members of the Methodist Church were forced to make a decision with regard to Joseph Smith. He had taken steps to join their church, but they felt his dealings in witchcraft made him unfit to be a member. The Utah Christian Tract Society has prepared an article about this matter from material furnished by Wesley Walters (see the newsletter for July-August 1971). In this article we find the following.

Perhaps the death of his first-born son on June 15, 1828 induced him to seek membership in the Methodist Church. . . . The “prophet” Joseph’s role as a Methodist member did not last very long, however, only three days—according to statements made by his wife’s cousins, Joseph and Hiel Lewis. . . . they told of their earlier years with Joseph Smith in Pennsylvania and of his uniting with the Methodist class:

“He presented himself in a very serious and humble manner, and the minister, not suspecting evil, put his name on the class book, in the absence of some of the official members.” (*The Amboy Journal*, April 30, 1879, page 1)

When Joseph Lewis . . . learned of this act, he felt that Joseph’s manner of life rendered him unfit to be a member . . . Mr. Lewis gave further details about the incident . . . he wrote:

“I, with Joshua McKune, . . . thought it was a *disgrace to the church to have a practicing necromancer, a dealer in enchantments* and bleeding ghosts in it. So on Sunday we went . . . and talked to him some time . . . Told him that his occupation, habits and moral character were at variance with the discipline, . . . that there should have been recantation, confession and at least promised reformation—That he could that day publicly ask that his name be stricken from the class book, or stand investigation. He chose the former, and did that very day make request that his name be taken off the class book.” (*The Amboy Journal*, June 11, 1879, pg. 1).

It is certainly strange that Joseph Smith would try to join the Methodist Church after God was supposed to have warned him “that I must join none of them, for they were all wrong; . . .” (*Pearl of Great Price*, Joseph Smith, verse 19). For more information on this matter see *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* pages 162 and 162A.

With the mounting evidence of Joseph Smith’s involvement in witchcraft, members of the Mormon church are faced with a very weighty decision—i.e., can they accept as a prophet a man who was involved in occult practices at the very time he was supposed to have been receiving revelations from God? From the standpoint of the Bible, the question can only be answered no. As one former follower of Joseph Smith expressed it, a person must “come out from the company of Joseph the sorcerer.”

## 17. The Book of Mormon

According to Joseph Smith, on the night of September 21, 1823, when he was seventeen years old, an angel appeared to him and stated that gold plates were buried in the Hill Cumorah which was near his house. The angel explained that the plates contained “an account of the former inhabitants of this continent,” and that they also contained “the fulness of the everlasting Gospel.” Four years later, on September 22, 1827, he received the plates, and sometime later he began to translate them by the power of God. The translation was published in 1830 under the title of *The Book of Mormon*.

Mormon Apostle Orson Pratt declared:

The Book of Mormon claims to be a divinely inspired record. . . . If false, it is one of the most cunning, wicked, bold, deep-laid impositions ever palmed upon the world, *calculated to deceive and ruin millions . . . if true, no one can possibly be saved and reject it: if false, no one can possibly be saved and receive it. . . .*

If, after a rigid examination, it be found an imposition, it should be extensively published to the world as such; the evidences and arguments on which the imposture was detected, should be clearly and logically stated. . . .

But on the other hand, if investigation should prove the Book of Mormon true . . . the American and English nations . . . should utterly reject both the Popish and Protestant ministry, together with all the churches which have been built up by them or that have sprung from them, as being entirely destitute of authority . . . (*Orson Pratt's Works*, “Divine Authenticity of the Book of Mormon,” Liverpool, 1851, pages 1-2)

Our study, stretching over a period of thirty years, has led us to the conclusion that the Book of Mormon is not an ancient or divinely-inspired record, but rather a product of the nineteenth century. In this chapter we hope to state “clearly and logically” the “evidences and arguments on which the imposture was detected.”

### **Book of Mormon Witnesses**

Joseph Smith claimed that after the Book of Mormon was translated, he returned the gold plates to the angel. Therefore, there is no way to know if there really were any gold plates or whether the translation was correct. Smith, however, did have eleven men sign statements claiming that they had seen the plates. The testimonies of these eleven men are recorded in the forepart of the Book of Mormon in two separate statements. In the first statement, Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer and Martin Harris claimed that an angel of God showed the plates to

them. The second statement is signed by eight men who claimed to see the plates, although they did not maintain that an angel was present. This statement is signed by Christian Whitmer, Jacob Whitmer, Peter Whitmer, Jun., John Whitmer, Hiram Page, Joseph Smith, Sen., Hyrum Smith and Samuel H. Smith.

Apostle John A. Widtsoe said that the eleven men who testified to the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon had “spotless reputations.” Non-Mormons, on the other hand, have made many serious charges against the witnesses. Some of the most damaging statements against the Book of Mormon witnesses, however, came from the pen of Joseph Smith himself and other early Mormon leaders. In fact, Joseph Smith gave a revelation in July of 1828 in which Martin Harris, one of the three witnesses, was called a “wicked man,” who “has set at naught the counsels of God, and has broken the most sacred promises” (*Doctrine and Covenants* 3:12-13).

There is little doubt that the Book of Mormon witnesses were very gullible. For instance, Hiram Page had a peep stone which he used to obtain revelations. Joseph Smith himself admitted that Page gave false revelations through his stone and that other Book of Mormon witnesses were influenced by his revelations:

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

Although Joseph Smith was able to prevail against the revelations given through Hiram Page’s peep stone, a more serious situation developed at Kirtland. Apostle George A. Smith related that “the spirit of apostasy became more general. . . . One of the First Presidency, several of the Twelve Apostles, High Council, Presidents of Seventies, the witnesses of the Book of Mormon, Presidents of Far West, and a number of others standing high in the Church were all carried away in this apostasy . . .” (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 7, pages 114-115). The three witnesses were finally excommunicated from the church. Martin Harris, one of the three witnesses, accused Joseph Smith of “lying and licentiousness.” The Mormon leaders in turn published an attack on the character of Martin Harris. The *Elders’ Journal*—a Mormon publication edited by Joseph Smith—said that Harris and others were guilty of “swearing, lying, cheating, swindling, drinking, with every species of debauchery . . .” (*Elders’ Journal*, August 1838, page 59).

In 1838 Oliver Cowdery, one of the three witnesses, had serious trouble with Joseph Smith. He accused Smith of adultery, lying and teaching false doctrines. Finally, in Far West, Missouri, the division became so great that the Mormons drove out the dissenters. David Whitmer, who was also one of the three witnesses, claimed that at that time God Himself told him to leave the Mormons:

*If you believe my testimony to the Book of Mormon; if you believe that God spake to us three witnesses by his own voice, then I tell you that in June, 1838, God spake to me again by his own voice from the heavens, and told me to “separate myself from among the Latter Day Saints, for as they sought to do unto me, so should it be done unto them.” In the spring of 1838, the heads of the church and many of the members had gone deep into error and blindness. . . . all of the eight witnesses who were then living (except the three Smiths) came out; Peter and Christian Whitmer were dead. Oliver Cowdery came out also. (An Address to All Believers in Christ, by David Whitmer, pages 27-28)*

Joseph Smith was so upset with David Whitmer that he belittled him in a letter to the church: “God suffered such kind of beings to afflict Job. . . . This poor man who professes to be much of a prophet, has no other dumb ass to ride but David Whitmer. . . . Poor ass!” (*History of the Church*, vol. 3, page 228). Before driving the dissenters from Far West, Missouri, the Mormons wrote them a very threatening letter in which we find the following concerning some of the Book of Mormon witnesses:

. . . Oliver Cowdery had been taken by a State warrant for stealing, . . . in which nefarious transaction John Whitmer had also participated . . . Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, and Lyman E. Johnson, united with a gang of counterfeiters, thieves, liars, and blacklegs of the deepest dye, . . . we will put you from the county of Caldwell: so help us God. (Letter dated June 1839, as cited in *Senate Document 189*, February 15, 1841, pages 6-9)

The “Far West Record,” a record book containing minutes of meetings in the early Mormon church, has some very important information regarding the allegation that Oliver Cowdery was involved in the bogus money business. It gives this testimony by Fredrick G. Williams and Joseph Smith:

F. G. Williams testifies that Oliver Cowdery told him that there was a certain man in the Church who could compound metal and make dies, that he could make money so that it could not be detected and if it was the case it was no harm to take that money and pass it. . . .

Joseph Smith jr testifies that Mr Sapham . . . came to him and told him that a warrant was about to be issued against Oliver Cowdery for being engaged in making a purchase of Bogus money & dies to make the counterfeit money with after which himself and President Rigdon went to see him, (Oliver) and talked with him about it, when he denied it after which they told him *if he was guilty he had better leave the country*; but if he was inocent to stand a trial & he should come out clear; but that night or the next *he left the country*. (*Far West Record—Minutes of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1830-1844*, edited by Donald Q. Cannon and Lyndon W. Cook, 1983, pages 168-169)

From this information it would appear that Joseph Smith was almost an accessory after the fact, since he warned Oliver Cowdery to flee from the law if he was guilty. At any rate, Joseph Smith’s testimony was given at the time Oliver Cowdery was being tried for his membership in the church. The eighth charge against Cowdery read as follows: “Eighth—For disgracing the Church by being connected in the bogus business, as common report says” (*History of the Church*, vol. 3, page 16). According to Joseph Smith, the eighth charge against Cowdery was “sustained” (*Ibid.*, page 17). Joseph Smith also testified that “Oliver Cowdery took him one side and said, that he had come to the conclusion to get property and if he could not get it one way he would another, God or no God, Devil or no Devil, property he must, . . . have . . .” (*Far West Record*, page 168). Since six of the nine charges against Cowdery were sustained on April 12, 1838, he was “considered no longer a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints” (*History of the Church*, vol. 3, page 17).

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

While we have no way of knowing whether the Book of Mormon witnesses were as evil as Joseph Smith and the other early Mormon leaders claimed, the church’s

campaign to vilify them leaves the Mormon apologist in an untenable position. If the charges are true, then it follows that the witnesses were completely unreliable men whose word with regard to the Book of Mormon cannot be taken at face value. If, on the other hand, the charges are false, it raises a very important question: how could Joseph Smith slander and libel God's chosen witnesses to the Book of Mormon?

### Credulous Witnesses

Some of the Book of Mormon witnesses were so credulous that they were influenced by James Jesse Strang who claimed he was Joseph's successor. Strang, like Joseph Smith, claimed that he found some plates that he translated with the Urim and Thummim. He had witnesses who claimed they saw the plates and their testimony is recorded in almost the same way that the testimony of the eleven witnesses is recorded in the Book of Mormon. Brigham Young and other Mormon leaders denounced Strang as an impostor, but some of the Book of Mormon witnesses became very interested in his claims. On January 20, 1848, James J. Strang wrote the following:

... early in 1846 the tract reprint of the first number of the *Voree Herald*, ... strayed into upper Missouri. Immediately I received a letter from Hiram Page, one of the witnesses of the Book of Mormon, and a neighbor and friend to the Whitmers' who lived near him, and they rejoiced with exceeding joy that God had raised up one to stand in place of Joseph. ... He [Page] goes on to say that all the witnesses of the Book of Mormon living in that region received the news with gladness, and finally that they held a council in which David and John Whitmer and this Hiram Page were the principle actors; ... sent up to me as a prophet of God to tell them what to do. ... last April (1847) I received another letter from the same Hiram Page, ... they invite me to come to their residence in Missouri and receive from them, David and John Whitmer, church records, and manuscript revelations, ... These documents they speak of as great importance to the church, and offer them to me as the true shepherd who has a right to them ... (*Gospel Herald*, January 20, 1848)

In a letter to David Whitmer, dated December 2, 1846, William E. McLellin said that James J. Strang "told me that *all the witnesses to the book of Mormon yet alive were with him*, except Oliver" (*The Ensign of Liberty*, Kirtland, Ohio, April, 1847). John Whitmer, one of the eight witnesses, wrote the following in his history of the church [it was later crossed out]: "God knowing all things

prepared a man whom he visited by an angel of God and showed him where there were some ancient record hid, ... whose name is James J. Strang. ... and Strang Reigns in the place of Smith the author and proprietor of the Book of Mormon" (*John Whitmer's History*, page 23).

Martin Harris, one of the three witnesses to the Book of Mormon, joined the Strangite movement and even went on a mission to England for the Strangites. The Mormon Church's own publication *Latter-Day Saints' Millennial Star* had a great deal to say about Martin Harris when he arrived in England:

One of the witnesses to the Book of Mormon, yielded to the spirit and temptation of the devil a number of years ago—turned against Joseph Smith and became his bitter enemy. He was filled with the rage and madness of a demon. One day he would be one thing, and another day another thing. He soon became *partially deranged* or shattered, as many believed, flying from one thing to another. ... In one of his *fits of monomania*, he went and joined the "Shakers" or followers of Anna Lee. ... but since Strang has made his entry ... Martin leaves the "shakers," whom he knows to be right, ... and joins Strang. ... if the Saints wish to know what the Lord hath said to him they may turn to ... the Book of Doctrine and Covenants, and the person there called a "wicked man" is no other than Martin Harris ...

Just as our paper was going to press, we learned that Martin Harris, ... had landed in Liverpool, ... there was a strangeness about him, and about one or two who came with him ... *A lying deceptive spirit* attends them, and has from the beginning ... they know that they are *of their father, the devil*, who was a liar from the beginning, and abode not in the truth. (*Millennial Star*, November 15, 1846, vol. 8, page 124-128)

Although the Book of Mormon witnesses were attracted to Strang for a short time, they soon became interested in a movement which William E. McLellin (who served as an apostle under Joseph Smith) was trying to start. Five of the Book of Mormon witnesses definitely supported McLellin's movement and another gave some encouragement to it. Martin Harris was baptized and even joined two others in a "Testimony of Three Witnesses" that David Whitmer was Joseph Smith's true "Successor in office" (*The Ensign of Liberty*, December 1847, pages 43-44). The Mormons who went to Utah, of course, felt that Brigham Young was to be leader of the church. William E. McLellin told how David Whitmer, one of the three witnesses to the Book of Mormon, gave revelations supporting his organization and condemning the Mormon church (see *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* page 57).

Those who are investigating the Book of Mormon only have the testimony of eleven men to rely upon. They should, therefore, check carefully to be certain that they were honorable men. If the Book of Mormon witnesses were honest, stable and not easily influenced by men, we would be impressed by their testimony. Unfortunately for the Mormon position, however, we find that this was not the case. The evidence shows that they were gullible and given to both receiving and following false revelations. They certainly do not appear to be dependable guides with regard to religious matters.

Since the testimony of the three witnesses who claimed they saw the angel is especially important, we want to summarize the information we have on their character (more documentation concerning this matter is found in *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* pages 51-59. and in *The Case Against Mormonism*, vol. 2, pages 2-34).

### **Martin Harris**

Martin Harris seems to have been extremely unstable in his religious life. G. W. Stodard, a resident of Palmyra who knew Harris for “about thirty years,” made an affidavit in which he stated: “Although he possessed wealth, his moral and religious character was such, as not to entitle him to respect among his neighbors. . . . He was first an orthodox [*sic*] Quaker, then a Universalist, next a Restorationer, then a Baptist, next a Presbyterian, and then a Mormon” (*Mormonism Unveiled*, 1834, pages 260-261). Although the Mormon apologist Richard Anderson questions that there were actually “five religious changes before Mormonism,” in his book *Investigating the Book of Mormon Witnesses*, 1981, page 167, he admits that Martin Harris “displays a certain instability,” and on page 111 he refers to his “religious instability.” Harris’ instability certainly did not cease when he joined the Mormon church. Dr. Anderson, in fact, admitted that Harris “changed his religious position eight times” during the period when he was in Kirtland, Ohio:

The foregoing tendencies explain the spiritual wanderlust that afflicted the solitary witness at Kirtland. In this period of his life he *changed his religious position eight times*, . . . Every affiliation of Martin Harris was with some Mormon group, except when he was affiliated with the Shaker belief, . . . (*Improvement Era*, March 1969, page 63)

As we have shown, the early Mormons in England noted that Martin Harris seemed “deranged . . . flying from one thing to another.” Mormon writer E. Cecil McGavin admitted that “Martin Harris was an unaggressive, vacillating, easily influenced person who was no more pugnacious than a rabbit. . . . His conviction of one day

might vanish and be replaced by doubt and fear before the setting of the sun. He was changeable, fickle, and puerile in his judgment and conduct” (*The Historical Background for the Doctrine and Covenants*, page 23, as cited in an unpublished manuscript by LaMar Petersen).

After changing his mind about religion many times, Martin Harris returned to the Mormon church. There is evidence to show, however, that he was still not satisfied (see *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* page 58). Joseph Smith’s own revelations referred to Harris as a “wicked man,” and the church’s publication *Millennial Star* said that he was an “evil” man. Dr. Storm Rosa said, “My acquaintance with him induces me to believe him a *monomaniac*. . . .” This seems like a serious charge, but the Mormons themselves publicly stated that Harris had “fits of monomania.” Harris’ wife made some very serious charges against his character, but they are not actually much worse than those made by the Mormons. Mrs. Harris stated that Martin had “mad-fits.” The Mormons said that when he left the church he “was filled with the rage and madness of a demon.” She stated that Martin was a liar. The Mormons admitted that when he came to England “a lying deceptive spirit” attended him. Harris’ wife stated that Mormonism had made him “more cross, turbulent and abusive to me.” Joseph Smith himself later classified Martin Harris as one of those who was “too mean to mention.”

### **Oliver Cowdery**

The evidence seems to show that Cowdery was rather credulous. According to Joseph Smith, Cowdery was led astray by Hiram Page’s “peep-stone.” He was excommunicated from the Mormon church in 1838 and became a Methodist. In 1841 the Mormons printed a poem which indicated that the Book of Mormon was “denied” by Oliver. He accused Joseph Smith of adultery. The Mormons, on the other hand, claimed that Oliver “committed adultery.” Joseph Smith listed Cowdery among those who were “too mean to mention,” and the Mormons claimed that he joined “a gang of counterfeiters, thieves, liars, and blacklegs.” Joseph Smith himself also indicated that there was reason to believe that Cowdery purchased “bogus money and dies” and that he “left the country” to avoid prosecution.

Cowdery seems to have returned to the Mormon church before his death, but David Whitmer maintained that Cowdery died believing Joseph Smith was a fallen prophet and that his revelations in the *Doctrine and Covenants* must be rejected:

I did not say that Oliver Cowdery and John Whitmer had not endorsed the *Doctrine and Covenants* in 1836. . . . I stated that they “came out of their errors



(discarding the *Doctrine and Covenants*), repented of them, and *died believing as I do to-day*,” and I have the proof to verify my statement. If any one chooses to doubt my word, let them come to my home in Richmond and be satisfied. In the winter of 1848, after Oliver Cowdery had been baptized at Council Bluffs, he came back to Richmond to live. . . . Now, in 1849 the Lord saw fit to manifest unto John Whitmer, Oliver Cowdery and myself nearly all the errors in doctrine into which we had been led by the heads of the old church. We were shown that the *Book of Doctrine and Covenants* contained many doctrines of error, and that it must be laid aside. . . . They were led out of their errors, and are upon record to this effect, rejecting the *Book of Doctrine and Covenants*. (*An Address to Believers in the Book of Mormon*, 1887, pages 1-2)

### **David Whitmer**

David Whitmer was also very gullible. He was influenced by Hiram Page’s “peep-stone,” and, according to Joseph Smith’s mother, by a woman with a “black stone,” in Kirtland Ohio. Joseph Smith identified David Whitmer with those who were “too mean to mention,” and called him a “dumb ass.” The Mormons also accused Whitmer of joining with a “gang of counterfeiters, thieves, liars and blacklegs.”

David Whitmer evidently supported James J. Strang for awhile, then changed his mind and supported the McLellin group. Whitmer was to be the prophet and head of the McLellin church in the late 1840s. He gave a revelation in which the Lord was supposed to have told him the Mormons “polluted my name, and have done continually wickedness in my sight.” Whitmer also claimed that “in the bright light before him he saw a small chest or box of very curious and fine workmanship.”

David Whitmer never returned to the Mormon church. Toward the end of his life he was a member of the “Church of Christ”—another small group which believed in the Book of Mormon. Just before his death, Whitmer published his booklet *An Address to All Believers in Christ*. It is in this work that he challenged the Mormons by saying that if they believed his testimony with regard to the Book of Mormon, they must also believe that God Himself told him to leave the Mormon church.

Apostle John A. Widtsoe said that the Book of Mormon plates were seen and handled “by eleven competent men, of independent minds and spotless reputations.” We have demonstrated, however, that these witnesses were easily influenced by men and therefore were not competent witnesses. Contrary to Apostle Widtsoe’s statement, these witnesses were not men of “spotless reputation,” but rather men whose word could not always be relied upon. Some of them even gave false revelations in the name of the Lord. Mormons ask us

to accept David Whitmer’s testimony to the Book of Mormon, but will they accept Whitmer’s revelations which he gave when he was with the McLellin group? Certainly not. Neither will they accept his statement that “God spake to me again by His own voice from the heavens, and told me to ‘separate myself from among the Latter Day Saints.’” While Mormon apologists often argue that we do not have any evidence that David Whitmer ever denied his testimony to the Book of Mormon, they seem to be oblivious to the fact that they do not have any evidence to show that Whitmer ever denied that God told him to leave the Mormons or that he ever actually repudiated the revelations he gave while he was with the McLellin group.

It would appear that some of the witnesses to the Book of Mormon would follow almost anyone who had a peep stone or claimed to have been visited by an angel. Take, for instance, their willingness to believe in the claims of the deceiver James J. Strang who claimed to translate ancient plates with the Urim and Thummim. The reader will remember that Martin Harris even served on a mission for the Strangites. This was not the only time that Harris endorsed a religion which claimed to have a sacred book given directly by the Lord. As we have already shown, in the *Millennial Star* the Mormons admitted that Martin Harris joined the Shakers: “In one of his fits of monomania, he went and joined the ‘Shakers’ or followers of Anne Lee.” The Shakers believed that “Christ has made his second appearance on earth, in a chosen female known by the name of Anna Lee, and acknowledged by us as our Blessed Mother in the work of redemption” (*Sacred Roll and Book*, page 358). The Shakers, of course, did not believe the Book of Mormon, but they had a book entitled *A Holy, Sacred and Divine Roll and Book; From the Lord God of Heaven, to the Inhabitants of Earth*. More than sixty individuals gave testimony to the *Sacred Roll and Book*, which was published in 1843. Although not all of them mention angels appearing, some tell of many angels visiting them—one woman related eight different visions. On page 304 of this book, we find this testimony: “We, the undersigned, hereby testify, that *we saw the holy Angel* standing upon the house-top, as mentioned in the foregoing declaration, holding the Roll and Book.” This is followed by the signatures of eight witnesses.

Joseph Smith only had three witnesses who claimed to see an angel. The Shakers, however, had a large number of witnesses who claimed they saw angels and the “Roll and Book.” There are, in fact, over a hundred pages of testimony from “Living Witnesses.” The evidence shows that Book of Mormon witness Martin Harris accepted the *Sacred Roll and Book* as a divine revelation. Clark Braden stated: “Harris declared repeatedly that he *had*

as much evidence for a Shaker book he had as for the Book of Mormon” (*The Braden and Kelly Debate*, page 173). There is a Mormon source which indicates that Martin Harris even claimed to have a greater testimony to the Shakers than to the Book of Mormon. In a thesis written at Brigham Young University, Wayne Cutler Gunnell revealed that on December 31, 1844, “Phineas H. Young [Brigham Young’s brother] and other leaders of the Kirtland organization” wrote a letter to Brigham Young in which they stated: “There are in this place all kinds of teaching; Martin Harris is a firm believer in Shakerism, says *his testimony is greater than it was of the Book of Mormon*” (“Martin Harris — Witness and Benefactor to the Book of Mormon,” 1955, page 52).

The fact that Martin Harris would even join with such a group shows that he was unstable and easily influenced by men. Therefore, his testimony that the Book of Mormon was of divine origin is really meaningless. How can we put our trust in men who were constantly following after movements like the Shakers, Strangites, and the McLellin group? We feel that the Book of Mormon witnesses have been “weighed in the balances” and found wanting.

Fawn Brodie felt that since some of the witnesses talked of the “size, weight, and metallic texture of the plates,” it is possible that “Joseph built some kind of makeshift deception.” While the testimony of the eight witnesses could be explained simply by admitting that Joseph Smith had some type of bogus plates, the testimony of the three witnesses is more difficult to explain. They, of course, claimed that the “angel of God” showed them the plates. Nevertheless, when we take into consideration how credulous and visionary the three witnesses were, even this testimony is not impressive. In fact, as far as the claim for the visitation of angels is concerned, the Shakers had a much more impressive case with their *Sacred Roll and Book*.

Besides the angel that was supposed to have appeared to the three witnesses to the Book of Mormon, there were many other occasions in the history of Mormonism when angels were supposed to have made an appearance. Joseph Smith declared that on March 27, 1836, the Kirtland Temple was “filled with angels” (*History of the Church*, vol. 2, page 428). Under the date of March 30, 1836, Smith wrote that the Savior appeared and that “angels ministered to others” in the temple and that it would go down in history “as the day of Pentecost” (page 433). Those who read only Joseph Smith’s account of this “endowment” are apt to be very impressed. William E. McLellin, however, gives an entirely different story. He claims that there was “no endowment” (*Ensign of Liberty*, March 1848, page 69). McLellin’s statement

is rather important because he was one of the Twelve Apostles at the time the endowment was supposed to have been given. On page 7 of the same publication, McLellin joined with five others in testifying that “the anticipated endowment” was “a failure!!” Ironically, David Whitmer, of the three witnesses Mormons rely on to prove the Book of Mormon, called the story of the endowment “a trumped up yarn.” In fact, a reporter stated that Whitmer absolutely denied the manifestations in the temple (in the article it reads “temple at Nauvoo,” but it must refer to the Kirtland temple since Whitmer left the church before the Nauvoo temple was built):

The great heavenly “visitation,” which was alleged to have taken place in the temple at Nauvoo, was a grand fizzle. The elders where assembled on the appointed day, which was promised would be a veritable day of Pentecost, but there was no visitation. No Peter, James and John; no Moses and Elias, put in an appearance. “I was in my seat on that occasion,” says Mr. Whitmer, “and I know that the story sensationally circulated, and which is now on the records of the Utah Mormons as an actual happening, was *nothing but a trumped up yarn . . .*” (*The Des Moines Daily News*, October 16, 1886)

When we look at the testimony of the three witnesses to the Book of Mormon or the report of happenings in the Kirtland Temple, we must remember that many of the early Mormons were very easily influenced and could be worked up into a state of excitement in which they actually believed that they saw visions. For example, Book of Mormon witness John Whitmer, who served as Church Historian under Joseph Smith, related the following.

For a perpetual memory, to the shame and confusion of the Devil, permit me to say a few things respecting the proceedings of some of those who were disciples, and some remain among us, and will, . . .

Some had visions and could not tell what they saw. Some would fancy to themselves that they had the sword of Laban, and would wield it as expert as a light dragon; some would act like an Indian in the act of scalping; some would slide or scoot on the floor with the rapidity of a serpent, which they termed sailing in the boat to the Lamanites, preaching the gospel. And many other vain and foolish maneuvers that are unseemingly and unprofitable to mention. Thus the Devil blinded the eyes of some good and honest disciples. (*John Whitmer’s History*, pages 4-5)

It seems that some early Mormons could see almost anything in vision. John Pulsipher recorded the following in his journal: “. . . while I was at work in the woods, about one mile from the Temple, . . . there was a steamboat past [*sic*] over Kirtland in the air! . . . it was seen by a number

of persons. . . . Old Elder Beamon, who had died a few months before was seen standing in the bow of the Boat. . . . The boat went steady along over the city passed right over the Temple and went out of sight to the west!” (As cited in *Conflict at Kirtland*, page 331).

There is a great deal more that could be mentioned concerning the Book of Mormon witnesses, angels and gold plates. Those who are interested in studying the matter further should see Chapter 5 of *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* An even more detailed account is found in our *Case Against Mormonism*, vol. 2, pages 1-62.

### **Ancient or Modern?**

In 1831 Alexander Campbell made these observations concerning the Book of Mormon:

This prophet Smith, through his stone spectacles, wrote on the plates of Nephi, in his book of Mormon, every error and almost every truth discussed in New York for the last ten years. He decides all the great controversies;—infant baptism, ordination, the trinity, regeneration, repentance, justification, the fall of man, the atonement, transubstantiation, fasting, penance, church government, religious experience, the call to the ministry, the general resurrection, eternal punishment, who may baptize, and even the question of free masonry [*sic*], republican government, and the rights of man. (*Millennial Harbinger*, February 1831, page 93)

The Mormon writers, George Reynolds and Janne M. Sjodahl, admit that the Book of Mormon deals “with a number of modern theological controversies,” but they claim that “Religious controversies must have been, to a large extent, the same anciently as they are today” (*Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, vol. 1, page 419). While there is some truth in this statement, there are just too many things in the Book of Mormon that are similar to Joseph Smith’s environment to be explained away in this manner.

The Book of Mormon not only makes the mistake of trying to solve all the great religious controversies of the 19th century, but it also contains material from books that had not even been written at the time the Nephites were supposed to have existed. For example, the author of the Book of Mormon seems to have been acquainted with the Westminster Confession—a document adopted by the General Synod of the Presbyterian Church in 1729. The *Westminster Confession and Catechisms* were a vital part of the Presbyterian faith in the 19th century. According to Joseph Smith, his “father’s family was proselyted to the Presbyterian faith” before he produced the Book of Mormon. Since the *Westminster Confession and Catechisms* were sold at the Wayne Bookstore in Palmyra

(see *Wayne Sentinel*, January 26, 1825), it is very likely that the Smith family possessed them. Joseph Smith may have heard his brothers learning the catechisms at various times or he could have read the “Confession and Catechisms” himself. Although the Book of Mormon’s theology is not Calvinistic, certain portions of it strongly resemble the *Westminster Confession and Catechism*. For instance, the Westminster Confession, Chapter 32, is probably the source for Alma, Chapter 40. This is demonstrated in the comparison printed below. We will use “The Westminster Confession” (abbreviated as WC) as printed in *The Confession of Faith: The Larger and Shorter Catechisms*, Philadelphia, 1813. The letters BM will be used as an abbreviation for the Book of Mormon.

1: *Both claim to give information concerning the state of man after death:*

BM: . . . the state of the soul between death and the resurrection . . . (Alma 40:11)

WC: . . . the State of Men after Death, and of the Resurrection . . . (chapter 32)

2: *Both state that the souls of men return to God after death:*

BM: . . . the spirits . . . are taken home to that God who gave them life (Alma 40:11)

WC: . . . their souls . . . return to God who gave them (32:1)

3: *Both claim that the righteous are received into a state of peace:*

BM: . . . the spirits of those who are righteous are received into a state of happiness, . . . (Alma 40:12)

WC: The souls of the righteous, . . . are received into the highest heavens, . . . (32:1)

4: *Both state that the wicked are cast out into darkness:*

BM: . . . the spirits of the wicked, . . . shall be cast out into outer darkness; . . . (Alma 40:13)

WC: . . . the souls of the wicked are cast into hell, . . . and utter darkness, . . . (31:1)

5: *Both state that the souls of the wicked remain in darkness until the judgment:*

BM: . . . the souls of the wicked, yea, in darkness, remain in this state, . . . until the time of their resurrection (Alma 40:14)

WC: . . . the souls of the wicked. . . remain in . . . darkness, reserved to the judgment of the great day (32:2)

6: *Both state that the soul will be united again with the body at the time of the resurrection:*

BM: . . . the souls and the bodies are re-united, . . . (Alma 40:20)

WC: . . . bodies . . . shall be united again to their souls . . . (32:2)

There are other parallels between the Book of Mormon and the Westminster Confession which we do not have room to include here (see *Case Against Mormonism*, vol. 2, pages 70-72).

In *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* pages 84-85, we presented evidence suggesting that the author of the Book of Mormon was familiar with Josiah Priest's book, *The Wonders of Nature and Providence Displayed*, published in 1825 at Albany, New York. The *Wayne Sentinel*, a newspaper published in Joseph Smith's neighborhood, and a dream which his father had in 1811 may have also furnished structural material for the Book of Mormon.

### **Lifting From the Bible**

Although a number of books and newspapers could have suggested ideas for creating the Book of Mormon, the King James Version of the Bible, which was not published until A.D. 1611, probably had more influence on the author than any other book. At the time Joseph Smith began his "translation" of the Book of Mormon there was a controversy going on over the value of the Apocrypha. Although the King James Version of the Bible originally included the fourteen books known as the Apocrypha, many Protestants felt that these books were not inspired and should not be included in the canon. By Joseph Smith's time it had been removed from many Bibles, but when Joseph purchased a Bible in the late 1820s he picked one which contained "the Apocrypha," and evidence indicates that he had a real interest in it (see *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* page 72). The presence of the Apocrypha in Smith's Bible seems to solve the mystery of the origin of the name "Nephi." While "Nephi" is not found in either the Old or the New Testament of the Bible, it is one of the most important names in the Book of Mormon. At least four men in the Book of Mormon are named "Nephi." It is also the name of several books in the Book of Mormon, a city, a land, and a people. Mormon scholars have never been able to find the source of this name. Dr. Wells Jakeman admitted that "there does not seem to be any acceptable Hebrew meaning or derivation

for this name." He states, however, that the name Nephi might have been derived from "the name of the young Egyptian grain god Nepri or Nepi." Dr. Nibley, on the other hand, feels that the name was derived from another Egyptian source. Other Mormon writers have suggested entirely different sources for this name.

While Mormon writers seem to be in a state of confusion with regard to this name, the King James translation of the Apocrypha seems to settle the matter. In a "word-for-word reprint" of the original 1611 Edition of the King James Bible, we find the word "Nephi" in the Apocrypha, 2 Maccabees 1:36: "And Neemias called this thing Naphthar, which is as much to say as a cleansing: but many men call it Nephi" (*The Holy Bible*, King James Version, 1611 edition).

It is obvious, then, that Joseph Smith must have lifted the name "Nephi" out of his own copy of the Bible which contained the Apocrypha. There are many other parallels between the Apocrypha and the Book of Mormon which we do not have room to include here. Since the apocryphal books were written hundreds of years after the Nephites were supposed to have left Jerusalem, the parallels tend to demonstrate that the Book of Mormon is not the ancient record it claims to be.

There can be no doubt that the first books of the Bible furnished a great deal of source material for the writing of the Book of Mormon. The book of Genesis, for instance, seems to have had a real influence upon the first few chapters of the Book of Mormon. Two of Nephi's brothers, Joseph and Jacob, have names taken from the book of Genesis. His mother's name is Sariah, which reminds us of Abraham's wife Sarah—also called Sarai (Gen. 17:15). Ismael—a friend of the family—is also a name taken from Genesis (see 17:18). The name Laban is likewise found in Genesis (see 24:29).

The story of Nephi in some ways parallels the story of Joseph found in Genesis, and the story of Moses leading the children of Israel out of bondage seems to have been the source for a good deal of the material found in the first book of Nephi and the book of Ether.

The Mormon leaders claim that the Nephites had the Old Testament books which were written prior to the time they left Jerusalem—i.e., about 600 B.C. More than eighteen chapters of Isaiah are found in the Book of Mormon. The Ten Commandments and many other portions of the Old Testament are also found in the Book of Mormon. In this book we cannot even begin to list all of the verses that are taken from the Old Testament. Since it is claimed that the Nephites had the books written before 600 B.C., we are not too concerned about quotations taken from them. The Book of Mormon, however, borrows from books written after 600 B.C.

For instance, the book of Daniel seems to have had some influence on the Book of Mormon, and important verses from the book of Malachi, written about 400 B.C., were utilized by Nephi more than a century before they were even penned! (see *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* page 73).

Mark Twain observed that the Book of Mormon “seems to be merely a prosy detail of imaginary history, with the Old Testament for a model; followed by a tedious plagiarism of the New Testament” (*Roughing It*, page 110). The ministry of Christ seems to have been the source for a good deal of the Book of Mormon. For instance, the story of Christ raising Lazarus from the dead appears to have had a definite influence upon the story of Ammon in the Book of Mormon. (The story of Ammon was supposed to have taken place in “about B.C. 90,” or about 120 years before Christ began his public ministry.) The following are some of the parallels between the two stories (the letters BM refer to the Book of Mormon and KJV are an abbreviation for a modern printing of the King James Version).

1: *In both stories a man seems to die and a period of time passes:*

BM: And it came to pass that after two days and two nights they were about to take his body and lay it in a sepulchre . . . (Alma 19:1)

KJV: Then when Jesus came, he found that he had lain in the grave four days already (John 11:17)

2: *Both Martha and the queen use the word “stinketh.”*

BM: . . . others say that he is dead and that he stinketh . . . (Alma 19:5)

KJV: . . . by this time he stinketh . . . (John 11:39)

3: *Both Ammon and Jesus use the word “sleepeth” with regard to the man.*

BM: . . . he sleepeth . . . (Alma 19:8)

KJV: . . . Lazarus sleepeth . . . (John 11:11)

4: *Both Ammon and Jesus say that the man will rise again.*

BM: . . . he shall rise again . . . (Alma 19:8)

KJV: . . . Thy brother shall rise again (John 11:23)

5: *The conversation between Ammon and the queen contains other phrases that are similar to those used by Jesus and Martha.*

BM: And Ammon said unto her: Believest thou this? And she said unto him: . . . I believe . . . (Alma 19:9)

KJV: Jesus said unto her . . . Believest thou this? She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe . . . (John 11:25-27)

6: *In both cases the man arose.*

BM: . . . he arose . . . (Alma 19:12)

KJV: . . . he that was dead came forth . . . (John 11:44)

That there are so many parallels between Alma 19 and John 11, is almost impossible to explain unless one admits that plagiarism is involved. There are not only many similar thoughts, but even a use of uncommon words and expressions. For example, both Martha and the queen use the word “stinketh.” It is significant that this is the only time this word is used in the Book of Mormon and it is only used one other time in the Bible. Both Ammon and Jesus use the word “sleepeth.” This word is only used twice in the Book of Mormon and only appears seven times in the entire Bible. It seems obvious, too, that the author of the Book of Mormon was plagiarizing from the Bible rather than the other way around. The Nephites could not have the King James Version of the New Testament and the Apostle John certainly did not have the Nephite scriptures. The only logical conclusion, therefore, is that sometime after the King James Bible was published in 1611 A. D. someone borrowed from it to create the story in the Book of Mormon.

In the Book of Mormon we read the story of a great storm which the Nephites encountered on the way to the “promised land” (see 1 Nephi 18:6-21). This story bears a remarkable resemblance to a story concerning Jesus in Mark 4:37-39. The two stories use identical language when speaking of the storm. In 1 Nephi 18:13 we read: “. . . there arose a great storm . . .” Mark 4:37 also says: “. . . there arose a great storm . . .” In both cases people in the boat became concerned that they would “perish” and seek help from their spiritual leader. In both stories, after the leader comes forth, the storm ceases. Almost identical wording appears in both accounts concerning the calming of the sea. 1 Nephi 18:21 states: “. . . the winds did cease . . . and there was a great calm.” In Mark 4:39 we read: “. . . the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.” It is very obvious that the author of the Book of Mormon has borrowed from Mark, yet the book of Nephi is supposed to be about 600 years older than the book of Mark. Therefore, the appearance of this story in the Book of Mormon proves beyond all doubt that it is not an ancient book.

## CHAPTER 19.

*A wonderful conversion—Abish the Lamanite woman—Lamanite king and queen espouse the faith—Ammon establishes the church in Ishmael.*

1. And it came to pass that after two days and two nights they were about to take his body and lay it in a sepulchre, which they had made for the purpose of burying their dead.

5. Therefore, if this is the case, I would that ye should go in and see my husband, for he has been laid upon his bed for the space of two days and two nights; and some say that he is not dead, but others say that he is dead and that he stinketh, and that he ought to be placed in the sepulchre; but as for myself, to me he doth not stink.

8. And he said unto the queen; He is not dead, but he sleepeth in God, and on the morrow he shall rise again; therefore bury him not.

9. And Ammon said unto her: Believest thou this? And she said unto him: I have had no witness save thy word, and the word of our servants; nevertheless I believe that it shall be according as thou hast said.

12. And it came to pass that he arose, according to the words of Ammon; and as he arose, he stretched forth his hand unto the woman, and said: Blessed be the name of God, and blessed art thou.

## CHAPTER 11

*Jesus testifies he is the resurrection and the life—Mary and Martha testify of him—He raises Lazarus from the dead—Caiaphas speaks prophetically of the death of Christ.*

11 These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep.

14 Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead.

17 Then when Jesus came, he found that he had lain in the grave four days already.

24 Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.

25 Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:

26 And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?

27 She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.

34 And said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see.

39 Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh; for he hath been dead four days.

44 And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.

Selected verses from chapter 19 of Alma in the Book of Mormon (on the left) compared with verses from chapter 11 of John in the Bible (on the right). The verses in the Book of Mormon were supposed to have been written over a century and a half before the book of John was penned. The close relationship between the texts provides evidence that the Book of Mormon story was plagiarized from the King James Version of the Bible.

**MORONI, 7**

44. If so, his faith and hope is vain, for none is acceptable before God, save the meek and lowly in heart; and if a man be meek and lowly in heart, and confesses by the power of the Holy Ghost that Jesus is the Christ, he must needs have <sup>2</sup>charity; for if he have not charity he is nothing; wherefore he must needs have charity.

45. And charity suffereth long, and is kind, and envieth not, and is not puffed up, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, and rejoiceth not in iniquity but rejoiceth in the truth, beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

46. Wherefore, my beloved brethren, if ye have not charity, ye are nothing, for charity never faileth. Wherefore, cleave unto charity, which is the greatest of all, for all things must fail—

**MORONI, 10**

8. And again, I exhort you, my brethren, that ye <sup>a</sup>deny not the gifts of God, for they are many, and they come from the same God.

And there are different ways that these gifts are administered, but it is the same God who worketh all in all, and they are given by the manifestations of the Spirit of God unto men, to profit them.

9. For behold, to one is given by the Spirit of God, that he may teach the word of wisdom;

10. And to another, that he may teach the word of knowledge by the same Spirit;

11. And to another, exceeding great faith; and to another, the gifts of healing by the same Spirit;

12. And again, to another, that he may work mighty miracles;

13. And again, to another, that he may prophesy concerning all things;

14. And again, to another, the beholding of angels and ministering spirits;

15. And again, to another, all kinds of tongues;

16. And again, to another, the interpretation of languages, and of divers kinds of tongues.

17. And all these gifts come by the Spirit of Christ; and they come unto every man severally, according as he will.

**1 CORINTHIANS, 13**

2 And though I have the gift of <sup>a</sup>prophecy, and understand all <sup>b</sup>mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.

3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed the <sup>a</sup>poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.

4 <sup>a</sup>Charity <sup>b</sup>suffereth long, and is <sup>c</sup>kind; charity <sup>d</sup>envieth not, charity vaunteth not <sup>e</sup>itself, is not puffed up.

5 Doth not behave <sup>f</sup>itself <sup>g</sup>unseemly, seeketh not her <sup>h</sup>own, is not easily <sup>i</sup>provoked, thinketh no evil;

6 Rejoiceth not in <sup>j</sup>iniquity, but rejoiceth in the <sup>k</sup>truth;

7 Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

8 (Charity never <sup>l</sup>faileth); but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.

**1 CORINTHIANS, 12**

4 Now there are diversities of <sup>a</sup>gifts, but the same <sup>b</sup>Spirit.

5 And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord.

6 And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.

7 But the manifestation of the <sup>a</sup>Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.

8 For to one is <sup>a</sup>given by the <sup>b</sup>Spirit the <sup>c</sup>word of <sup>d</sup>wisdom; to another the word of <sup>e</sup>knowledge by the same Spirit;

9 To another <sup>a</sup>faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of <sup>b</sup>healing by the same Spirit;

10 To another the working of <sup>a</sup>miracles, to another <sup>b</sup>prophecy, to another <sup>c</sup>discerning of spirits, to another <sup>d</sup>divers kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of <sup>e</sup>tongues;

11 But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.

A comparison of verses from the 7th and 10th chapters of Moroni in the Book of Mormon (to the left) with the 13th and 12th chapters of 1 Corinthians in the Bible (to the right). According to Moroni 7:1, in that chapter Moroni is quoting "the words of my father Mormon, which he spake concerning faith, hope and charity; . . ." In reality the words are plagiarized from Apostle Paul's letter to the Corinthians (chapter 13). The 10th chapter of Moroni purports to be Moroni's own words, but it is obvious that they are taken from the 12th chapter of Paul's letter to the Corinthians. That both Mormon and Moroni would independently come up with almost the same words as Paul over three centuries after he wrote 1 Corinthians seems totally beyond belief. The evidence clearly shows that the author of the Book of Mormon plagiarized the Bible.

As we have already shown, the Nephites were not supposed to have had the books of the New Testament because they were written hundreds of years after they left Jerusalem. Nevertheless, we find a large number of New Testament verses and parts of verses strewn throughout the Book of Mormon. The following list of parallels between the Book of Mormon and the New Testament is just a sample (the reader will find many more parallels in *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* pages 74-78). All of the verses from the Book of Mormon were supposed to have been written between 600 B.C. and A.D. 33.

KJV: made them white in the blood of the Lamb (Rev. 7:14)  
 BM: made white in the blood of the Lamb (1 Nephi 12:11)

KJV: shall be saved; yet so as by fire (1 Cor. 3:15)  
 BM: shall be saved, even if it so be by fire (1 Nephi 22:17)

KJV: O wretched man that I am (Rom. 7:24)  
 BM: O wretched man that I am (2 Nephi 4:17)

KJV: death and hell delivered up the dead (Rev. 20:13)  
 BM: death and hell must deliver up their dead (2 Nephi 9:12)

KJV: he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still (Rev. 22:11)  
 BM: they who are righteous shall be righteous still, and they who are filthy shall be filthy still (2 Nephi 9:16)

KJV: endured the cross, despising the shame (Heb. 12:2)  
 BM: endured the crosses of the world, and despised the shame (2 Nephi 9:18)

KJV: to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life (Rom. 8:6)  
 BM: to be carnally-minded is death, and to be spiritually-minded is life (2 Nephi 9:39)

KJV: the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world (John 1:29)  
 BM: the Lamb of God, who should take away the sins of the world (1 Nephi 10:10)

KJV: steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work (1 Cor. 15:58)  
 BM: steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in good works (Mosiah 5:15)

KJV: Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free (Gal. 5:1)  
 BM: stand fast in that liberty wherewith God has made them free (Alma 58:40)

KJV: Marvel not that . . . Ye must be born again (John 3:7)  
 BM: Marvel not that all mankind . . . must be born again (Mosiah 27:25)

KJV: come out from among them, and be ye separate, . . . and touch not the unclean thing (2 Cor. 6:17)  
 BM: come ye out from the wicked, and be ye separate, and touch not their unclean things (Alma 5:57)

KJV: And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up (John 3:14)  
 BM: And as he lifted up the brazen serpent in the wilderness, even so shall he be lifted up who should come (Helaman 8:14)

In our work, *The Case Against Mormonism*, vol. 2, pages 87-102, we listed 400 parallels between the New Testament and the Book of Mormon, and we feel that we could have located more if we had the time to make a very careful search. We found over a hundred quotations from the New Testament in the first two books of Nephi alone, and these books were supposed to have been written between 600 and 545 B.C.! [see our book, *Joseph Smith's Plagiarism of the Bible in the Book of Mormon*]

The evidence against the Book of Mormon on the grounds of plagiarism is absolutely devastating. Although we have read the attempts by Mormon apologists to explain away the evidence, they just do not hold up under examination. The only reasonable explanation is that the author of the Book of Mormon had the King James Version of the Bible. And since this version did not appear until A.D. 1611, the Book of Mormon could not have been written prior to that time. The Book of Mormon, therefore, is a modern composition and not a "record of ancient religious history."

Around the turn of the 20th century, B. H. Roberts, one of the greatest apologists the Mormon church has ever produced, began to try to work out an explanation for the King James verses in the Book of Mormon. He claimed that it was possible that Joseph Smith did in fact use the King James Version in some cases where it agreed with the gold plates of the Book of Mormon. While this does not really explain the quotations Nephi used 600 years before the New Testament was written,



it did satisfy some Mormons who were anxious to get some kind of an explanation. On the other hand, B. H. Roberts' attempt to plow around this serious problem did not impress one reader of the *Salt Lake Tribune*. On December 6, 1903, the following appeared in a letter to the *Tribune*:

The only way, therefore, to lift Nephi out of this fatal situation is for Elder Roberts to show that he had, in addition to the Jewish Scriptures, a copy of our English Bible with him back there in the wilderness [in] 600 B. C., or else a copy of Shakespeare. Or else let Mr. Roberts agree with me according to the evidence, that Mr. Nephi was simply a very modern gentleman from New York or Pennsylvania, having in his possession both the Bible and Shakespeare, and then the difficulty is solved. . . . if Joseph Smith turned aside to quote from our English Bible, as Elder Roberts admits that he did, then what was to prevent him from putting into the Book of Mormon, when it suited him, quotations from other English books, from Shakespeare, from books on geography and history? . . . What prevented him from putting in his own views? Undoubtedly, that is just what he did, for the book utterly fails. The statement and admission of Elder Roberts gives us all the light we need as to its modern origin and spurious character. (Letter cited from the *Tribune* in *Defense of the Faith and the Saints*, vol. 1, pages 347 and 351)

Since B. H. Roberts' death, many scholars have wrestled with the evidence of plagiarism in the Book of Mormon. In the early 1960s the authors of this book struggled with this painful question and were forced to conclude that the Book of Mormon was a product of the 19th century. We presented a great deal of evidence to this effect in a number of publications, and many Mormon scholars are coming to the same conclusion. Even some of those who believe Joseph Smith used ancient gold plates to produce the Book of Mormon find themselves in a very compromised position. Some Mormon scholars, in fact, are beginning to maintain that the Book of Mormon is both ancient and modern! In the Spring 1987 issue of *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Blake T. Ostler has a very long article that puts forth the point of view that there was an ancient record but Joseph Smith expanded the text with his own comments:

It is my purpose to . . . offer a theory of the Book of Mormon as Joseph Smith's expansion of an ancient work by building on the work of earlier prophets to answer the nagging problems of his day. In so doing, he provided unrestricted and authoritative commentary, interpretation, explanation, and clarifications based on insights from the ancient Book of Mormon text and the King James Bible (KJV). The result is a modern world

view and theological understanding superimposed on the Book of Mormon text from the plates. (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Spring 1987, page 66)

On page 70 of his article, Mr. Ostler commented:

The prophecies of the discovery of America and the role of a gentile nation in the Book of Mormon can be most reasonably explained, in my opinion, as popular nineteenth-century concepts inserted in the text by Joseph Smith (1 Ne. 13:10-20).

The reader who takes the time to examine the verses cited by Ostler, 1 Nephi 13:10-20, will find that Nephi identifies himself three times in these verses as the actual author of the prophecies. The words "I, Nephi, beheld" are found in verses 16, 19 and 29. What we have in these examples goes far beyond adding some explanatory material to the text. If Blake Ostler's theory is correct, this would mean that Joseph Smith was actually impersonating the ancient Nephite prophets Abinadi, Mormon and Nephi! That Ostler believes that Joseph Smith was taking the role of Abinadi to present his own views is obvious from his comment about Mosiah 15 on page 97 of his article: ". . . Joseph Smith here addresses, through Abinadi, how the Son can be both fully man and fully God."

To us the expansion theory seems like a theory of desperation put forth by someone who feels that the Book of Mormon must be salvaged at any cost. Once we admit that Joseph Smith used plagiarism and included his own ideas in the book, how can we trust the rest of his "translation"? Such a mixture would throw the entire book into question. While this theory seems to provide a way of escape from some serious questions about the text of the Book of Mormon, it opens up the floodgate to many other serious problems. How could a person really trust any of the text once it is admitted that Joseph Smith was capable of putting his own words into the mouths of the ancient Nephite prophets? Once a person goes so far as to admit that Joseph Smith made up part of the story, it is very easy to go one step further and conclude that the Nephites only existed in Joseph Smith's own fertile imagination. While Mr. Ostler has not followed his research to its logical conclusion, he has presented a very interesting and provocative article. That *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* would print such a long article on this sensitive subject shows that there is a great deal of interest in the subject of the historicity of the Book of Mormon among Mormon scholars. At the Sunstone Theological Symposium, August 1986, Marvin Hill, a professor of history at church-owned Brigham Young University, went so far as to assert that the Book of Mormon does not have to be history to be true:

. . . everybody's questioning *whether the plates existed and whether the Book of Mormon is history* and so on. The stopping place for all of that is if you believe that Joseph is a prophet and if what he had to say is inspired. The *Doctrine and Covenants* doesn't have to be history to be true, and my feeling is that the *Book of Mormon may not have to be history to be true.*

We do not see how Mormon historians can accept the Book of Mormon as true and yet claim that it doesn't have to be historical. Apparently, what they are trying to tell us is that it is a good religious novel which contains inspiring thoughts, even though it was not written in ancient times as Joseph Smith affirmed.

Although Mormon intellectuals are trying to deal with the question of plagiarism in the Book of Mormon, so far church leaders have not been willing to come to grips with the question. This was made very clear in 1985 when Stan Larson lost his job with the church. Dr. Larson, who is considered to be one of the top scholars in the LDS Church, made a detailed study of 3 Nephi, chapters 12-14, and found unmistakable evidence that this portion of the Book of Mormon "is not a genuine translation from an ancient language" which appeared on the gold plates; instead, he discovered that it was plagiarized from the King James Version of the Bible. He even found that the plagiarism occurred some time after the "1769 printing" of the King James Version. In the September 1977 issue of the church publication, *The Ensign*, page 91, Stan Larson was referred to as "coordinator of the standard works translation in the Church Translation Services." After church officials learned of his study, however, he was forced to resign (see *Salt Lake City Messenger*, January 1986, pages 26-29).

### **Origin of the Indians**

Joseph Smith's mother tells that he had a great interest in the "ancient inhabitants" of this continent and that before he "translated" the Book of Mormon he used to entertain the family with stories about them:

He would describe . . . their dress, mode of traveling, and the animals upon which they rode; their cities, their buildings, with every particular; their mode of warfare; and also their religious worship. This he would do with ease, seemingly, as if he had spent his whole life among them. (*History of Joseph Smith by His Mother*, 1854 ed., page 83)

Since many people were discussing the question of the origin of the ancient inhabitants of this continent when Joseph Smith was a boy, it is not surprising that he would take an interest in the subject. The *Palmyra Register* for May 26, 1819, reported that one writer "believes (and we think with good reason) that this country was once

inhabited by a race of people, at least, partially civilized, & that this race has been exterminated by the forefathers of the present and late tribes of Indians in this country." It is interesting to note that the Book of Mormon states that the Nephites were a civilized people who were destroyed by the Lamanites—a wicked people—for their sins.

The *Wayne Sentinel*, published at Palmyra, printed the following on July 24, 1829:

The Aborigines . . . (judging from the traces discovered of the progress which they made in civilization, and the arts and sciences, as developed by the western antiquities) must have been but a little behind the present generation in many respects. When we look at the stragglers Indians who . . . reveal the ravages of intemperance and almost every other loathsome vice, we can hardly persuade ourselves that they are remnants of the powerful race of people who, as it were but yesterday, stretched from the Atlantic to the Pacific . . . and we may suppose that some dreadful plague, some national calamity swept them from the face of the earth; or perhaps that like Sodom and Gomorrah of old, their national sins became so heinous, that the Almighty in his wrath utterly annihilated them. . . .

An article published in the *Palmyra Herald* on February 19, 1823, said that one group of people might have "crossed the Pacific Ocean, and made settlements in North America" and that the "descendants of Japheth might afterwards cross the Atlantic, and subjugate" the first group. The article goes on to state: "What wonderful catastrophe destroyed at once the first inhabitants, with the species of the mammoth, is beyond the researches of the best scholar and greatest antiquarian." There are some very interesting parallels between this article and the Book of Mormon which are discussed in *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* page 82.

During and even before Joseph Smith's time it was believed by many people that the Indians were the Lost Ten Tribes of Israel. Although the Book of Mormon does not claim that the Indians are the Lost Ten Tribes, it does maintain that they are descendants of Joseph, thus making them Israelites. Because of this similarity anti-Mormon writers have suggested that Joseph Smith borrowed his idea concerning the origin of the Indians from the thinking of his time. Many books and articles had been published prior to the coming forth of the Book of Mormon which contained the idea that the Indians were of Israelite origin. In 1816, at Trenton, New Jersey, Elias Boudinot published a book entitled, *A Star in the West; or, a Humble Attempt to Discover the Long Lost Tribes of Israel. . . .* On pages 279-280 of this book we find the following rhetorical question: "What could possibly bring greater declarative glory to God, or tend more essentially to affect and rouse the nations of the earth, . . . and thus call their attention to the truth of divine

revelation, than a full discovery, that these wandering nations of Indians are the long lost tribes of Israel. . . .”

Furthermore, the following was published in the *Wayne Sentinel* (the paper to which the family of Joseph Smith apparently subscribed) on October 11, 1825: “Those who are most conversant with the public and private economy of the Indians, are strongly of opinion that they are the *lineal descendants of the Israelites*, and my own researches go far to confirm me in the same belief.”

### The Devil’s Advocate?

One of the most interesting books on this subject which was published prior to the Book of Mormon was Ethan Smith’s *View of the Hebrews*. The first edition appeared in 1823; it was soon sold out and an enlarged edition appeared in 1825. The Mormon historian B. H. Roberts read *View of the Hebrews* and evidently became concerned because of the many parallels between it and the Book of Mormon. He prepared a manuscript in which these parallels are listed. After his death copies of Roberts’ list of parallels were “privately distributed among a restricted group of Mormon scholars,” and in January 1956 Mervin B. Hogan had them published in *The Rocky Mountain Mason*. A careful reading of B. H. Roberts’ work leads one to believe that his faith in the Book of Mormon had been somewhat shaken. Notice some of his comments:

Query: Could all this have supplied structural work for the Book of Mormon? (page 20)

Was this sufficient to suggest the strange manner of writing the book of Mormon in the learning of the Jews, and the language of the Egyptians, but in an altered Egyptian? (page 22)

Query: Would this treatise of the destruction of Jerusalem suggest the theme to the Book of Mormon author, is the legitimate query, since the *View of the Hebrews* was published seven to five years before the Book of Mormon? (pages 24-25)

Query: Did the author of the Book of Mormon follow too closely the course of Ethan Smith in this use of Isaiah, would be the legitimate query? (page 25)

B. H. Roberts lists eighteen parallels between *View of the Hebrews* and the Book of Mormon. In his fourth parallel Roberts states: “. . . It is often represented by Mormon speakers and writers, that the Book of Mormon was the first to represent the American Indians as the descendants of the Hebrews; holding that the Book of Mormon is unique in this. The claim is sometimes still ignorantly made” (page 18). In parallel no. 5, Roberts points out that the idea of the Indians having a lost book may have been suggested by Ethan Smith’s book. In

parallel no. 9, he shows that the story of the Lamanites destroying the Nephites and their culture could have been derived from *View of the Hebrews*.

While the release of B. H. Roberts’ list of parallels shocked many Mormons, it was later discovered that this was only “the tip of the iceberg.” Roberts had, in fact, prepared two large manuscripts that were suppressed for many years because of the fear that the contents would prove harmful to the LDS Church. The manuscripts are entitled, “Book of Mormon Difficulties: A Study” and “A Book of Mormon Study.” Mormon apologist Truman G. Madsen, acknowledged:

. . . in March of 1922, Roberts prepared a draft of a written report to the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve. . . . The study of such books as those of Josiah Priest, Ethan Smith, and others led him to examine such questions as: What literary and historical speculations were abroad in the nineteenth century? Could Joseph Smith have absorbed them in his youth and could these influences have provided the ground plan for such a work as the Book of Mormon? Did Joseph Smith have a mind “sufficiently creative” to have written it? And what internal problems and parallels within the Book of Mormon called for explanation? In confronting such questions Roberts prepared a series of “parallels” with Ethan Smith’s *View of the Hebrews*; a summary of this analysis excerpted passages from Ethan Smith’s work and lined them up in columns with comparable ideas in the Book of Mormon. Examination of such questions was contained in a typewritten manuscript entitled “Book of Mormon Study.”

About this particular study, certain points must be kept in mind if it is not to be gravely misunderstood. First, it was *not intended for general dissemination* but was to be presented to the General Authorities to identify for them certain criticisms that might be made against the Book of Mormon. (*Brigham Young University Studies*, Summer 1979, page 440)

Professor Madsen went on to suggest that B. H. Roberts’ faith in the Book of Mormon remained firm and that he was merely using “the ‘Devil’s Advocate’ approach to stimulate thought.” He went on to say:

For ill-wishers to resurrect Roberts’s similar “Devil’s Advocate” probings is not a service to scholarship, . . . it is a travesty to take such working papers as a fair statement of B. H. Roberts’s own appraisal of the Book of Mormon, for as this paper abundantly demonstrates, his conviction of its truth was unshaken and frequently expressed down to the time of his death. (*Ibid.*, page 442)

While it is true that there is no evidence that B. H. Roberts publicly repudiated the Book of Mormon, a careful reading of his manuscripts leads one to believe that he was in the process of losing faith in its divine origin. Although Roberts may have started out merely

playing the part of the “Devil’s Advocate,” we feel that he played the role so well that he developed grave doubts about the authenticity of the Book of Mormon. In any case, we obtained photocopies of the typewritten manuscripts, which contain Roberts’ own handwritten notations, and published them in 1980 under the title, *Roberts’ Manuscripts Revealed*. In 1985 the University of Illinois Press released Roberts’ secret manuscripts in a book entitled, *Studies of the Book of Mormon*. This new printing of the Roberts’ manuscripts has been nicely typeset with an introduction by Brigham A. Madsen—not to be confused with Truman Madsen.

In his secret manuscripts B. H. Roberts made these revealing comments:

. . . was Joseph Smith possessed of a sufficiently vivid and creative imagination as to produce such a work as the Book of Mormon from such materials as have been indicated in the preceding chapters—from such common knowledge as was extant in the communities where he lived in his boyhood and young manhood; from the Bible, and more especially from the *View of the Hebrews*, by Ethan Smith? That such power of imagination would have to be of a high order is conceded; that *Joseph Smith possessed such a gift of mind there can be no question*. . . .

In the light of this evidence, there can be no doubt as to the possession of a vividly strong, creative imagination by Joseph Smith, the Prophet, an imagination, it could with reason be urged, . . . would make it *possible for him to create a book such as the Book of Mormon is*. (*Studies of the Book of Mormon*, pages 243 and 250)

If from all that has gone before in Part 1, the view be taken that the Book of Mormon is merely of human origin; that a person of Joseph Smith’s limitations in experience and in education, who was of the vicinage and of the period that produced the book—if it be assumed that he is the author of it, then it could be said there is *much internal evidence* in the book itself to sustain such a view.

In the first place there is a *certain lack of perspective* in the things the book relates as history that *points quite clearly to an undeveloped mind* as their origin. The narrative proceeds in characteristic disregard of conditions necessary to its reasonableness, as if it were a *tale told by a child, with utter disregard for consistency*. (*Ibid.*, page 251)

These are not the words of an “anti-Mormon” writer, but the words of the Mormon historian B. H. Roberts—one of the greatest scholars the church has ever known. Roberts not only prepared the “Introduction and Notes” for Joseph Smith’s *History of the Church*, but he also

wrote the six-volume work, *A Comprehensive History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*. He is also noted for his many works defending the Book of Mormon. In any case, on page 259 of the same work, Roberts continues to lay out the problems in the Book of Mormon:

The same *lack of perspective and of consistency* is also manifest in the early movements of both Jaredite and Nephite colonies after arriving “to the promised land.” Also the same tendency to parallel incidents and characteristics as we have noted in the formation of the two colonies, and the incidents of their wilderness journey and sea voyage. It may be asked, what of this parallelism? What does it amount to? If such a question should be asked the opponent of the Book of Mormon would answer with emphasis—“This of it. It supplies the evidence that the Book of Mormon is the product of one mind, and that, a very limited mind, unconsciously reproducing with only slight variation its visions.” And the answer will be *accepted as significant at least, if not conclusive*.

After telling of a number of Anti-Christes whose history is given in the Book of Mormon, B. H. Roberts observed:

There were other Anti-Christes among the Nephites, but they were more military leaders than religious innovators, yet much of the same kidney in spirit with these dissenters here passed in review; but I shall hold that what is here presented illustrates sufficiently the matter taken in hand by referring to them, namely that they are all of one breed and brand; so nearly alike that *one mind is the author of them*, and that a young and undeveloped, but piously inclined mind. The evidence *I sorrowfully submit; points to Joseph Smith as their creator. It is difficult to believe that they are the product of history*, that they come upon the scene separated by long periods of time, and among a race which was the ancestral race of the red man of America. (*Ibid.*, page 271)

In the next chapter B. H. Roberts made these comments about the Book of Mormon:

The allusions here to absurdities of expressions and incidents in the Book of Mormon are not made for the purpose of ridiculing the book, or casting undue aspersions upon it; but they are made to indicate what may be fairly regarded as just objects of criticism under the assumption that the Book of Mormon is of human origin, and that Joseph Smith is the author. For these absurdities in expression; these miraculous incidents in warfare; those almost mock—and certainly extravagant—heroics; these lapses of the main characters about

conditions obtaining, are certainly *just such absurdities and lapses* as would be looked for if a person of such limitations as bounded Joseph Smith undertook to put forth a book dealing with the history and civilization of ancient peoples. (*Ibid.*, page 277)

In his earlier three-volume work, *A New Witness for God*, published in 1909, B. H. Roberts had insisted that Joseph Smith did not have access to books from which he could create a “ground plan” of the Book of Mormon. In his secret writings, however, Roberts acknowledged in *A New Witness for God* that he

did not take sufficiently into account the work of Josiah Priest . . . Priest himself, indeed, published a book . . . *The Wonders of Nature and Providence*, copyrighted by him June 2nd, 1824, and printed soon afterwards in Rochester, New York, only some twenty miles distant from Palmyra, . . . this book preceded the publication of the Book of Mormon by about six years. At the time I made for my *New Witness* the survey of the literature on American antiquities, traditions, origins, etc., available to Joseph Smith and his associates, this work of Priest’s was unknown to me; as was also the work by Ethan Smith, *View of the Hebrews*—except by report of it, and as being in my hands but a few minutes. . . . it is altogether probable that these two books . . . *were either possessed by Joseph Smith or certainly known by him*, for they were surely available to him, and of course, with all the collection of quoted matter . . . some forty or fifty earlier authors in all being quoted. . . .

Moreover, on subjects widely discussed, and that deal in matters of widespread public interest, there is built up in the course of years, a community of knowledge of such subjects, usually referred to as “matters of common knowledge”. . . Such “common knowledge” existed throughout New England and New York in relation to American Indian origins and cultures; and the prevailing ideas respecting the American Indians throughout the regions named were favorable to the notion that they were of Hebrew origin, . . . And with the existence of such a body of knowledge, or that which was accepted as “knowledge,” and a person of vivid and constructive imaginative power in contact with it, *there is little room for doubt that it might be possible for Joseph Smith to construct a theory of origin for his Book of Mormon in harmony with these prevailing notions*; and more especially since this “common knowledge” is set forth in almost handbook form in the little work of Ethan Smith . . . It will appear in what is to follow that such “common knowledge” did exist in New England, that Joseph Smith was in contact with it; that one book, at least, with which he was most likely acquainted, could well have *furnished structural outlines for the Book of Mormon*; and that Joseph Smith was possessed of such creative imaginative powers as would make it quite within the lines of possibility that

the Book of Mormon could have been produced in that way. (*Studies of the Book of Mormon*, pages 152-154)

On page 192 of the same book, B. H. Roberts asked this question:

Could an investigator of the Book of Mormon be much blamed if he were to decide that Ethan Smith’s book with its suggestion as to the division of his Israelites into two peoples; with its suggestion of “tremendous wars between them”; and of the savages overcoming the civilized division led to the fashioning of chiefly these same things in the Book of Mormon?” Roberts felt that “the likelihood of Joseph Smith coming in contact with Ethan Smith’s book is not only very great, but amounts to a very close certainty.” (page 235)

Further on in the same chapter, B. H. Roberts made these observations:

But now to return . . . to the main theme of this writing—viz., did Ethan Smith’s *View of the Hebrews* furnish structural material for Joseph Smith’s Book of Mormon? It has been pointed out in these pages that there are many things in the former book that might well have suggested many major things in the other. Not a few things merely, one or two, or a half dozen, but many; and it is this fact of many things of similarity and the cumulative force of them that makes them so serious a menace to Joseph Smith’s story of the Book of Mormon origin. . . .

The material in Ethan Smith’s book is of a character and quantity to make a *ground plan for the Book of Mormon*: . . .

Can such numerous and startling points of resemblance and suggestive contact be merely coincidence? (*Ibid.*, pages 240 and 242)

B. H. Roberts also felt that the Bible could have provided seeds for Joseph Smith’s fruitful imagination:

Matthew and Zachariah, then, could well be thought of as furnishing material for the Book of Mormon signs of the Birth of Messiah.

So also as to the Book of Mormon signs of Messiah’s death and resurrection. . . . The three hours darkness, expanded to three days of darkness; the evidently momentary earthquake of Matthew, to three hours of earth quaking; the local rending of rocks in Matthew, to the rending of a continent; and the fear of a Roman centurion and those that were with him, to the terror of a whole people.

With these things as suggestions as to signs for Messiah’s birth and death and resurrection, and one of conceded vivid, and strong and constructive imaginative powers to work them all out, need not be regarded as an unthinkable procedure and achievement. (*Ibid.*, pages 237-238)

In an article published in the *The Ensign*, December 1983, pages 11-19, Professor Truman Madsen tried to minimize the importance of B. H. Roberts' parallels between *View of the Hebrews* and the Book of Mormon:

Are there "striking parallels" between the Book of Mormon and Ethan Smith's 1823 novel, *View of the Hebrews*, a fictional account of Israelites from the lost Ten Tribes who migrated to the Americas after the destruction of Jerusalem? Elder Roberts confirmed for his missionaries that any such parallels are abstract, even empty. . . .

Ethan Smith published a book on revelation in 1833, . . . He also republished *View of the Hebrews*, revised and enlarged, in 1835. Both books were published long after the Book of Mormon began circulation. If critics can claim that Joseph Smith was aware of Ethan Smith's novel, it surely can also be claimed that Ethan Smith was aware of Joseph Smith's.

The Mormon apologist Truman Madsen made two very glaring errors in this article. The errors are so serious, in fact, that they would lead one to believe that he has never read *View of the Hebrews*. 1. He referred twice to Ethan Smith's book as a "novel." Anyone who has read the book knows that it is not a novel. In the bibliography to *Studies of the Book of Mormon*, page 347, we read: "Ethan Smith's *View of the Hebrews* was, of course, not a 'novel' in any sense of the word, but was a serious analysis of current archeological discoveries and the known cultural studies of Indian tribes in order to prove the theory that the American Indians were of Israelitish descent." 2. Professor Madsen also maintained that Ethan Smith "republished *View of the Hebrews*, revised and enlarged, in 1835 . . . long after the Book of Mormon began circulation." Dr. Madsen is ten years off on his dating. The correct date appears on the title page as "1825." This is substantiated in the preface "For The Second Edition" which ends, "Poultney, April 1, 1825." Instead of the "enlarged" edition being published five years after the Book of Mormon (as Madsen claims), it actually was in print five years *before* the Book of Mormon. This, of course, demolishes Madsen's claim that Joseph Smith could not have used the "enlarged" edition to create the Book of Mormon.

As we have already noted, Professor Madsen claimed that B. H. Roberts was only using "the 'Devil's Advocate' approach to stimulate thought" when he wrote his controversial studies of the Book of Mormon. A careful examination of these manuscripts, however, leads one to believe that Roberts was struggling with serious doubts about the authenticity of the Book of Mormon. Fortunately, the recent publication of B. H. Roberts' secret manuscripts by the University of Illinois

Press includes some new and important evidence concerning his frame of mind after he completed his studies. It comes from the "Personal Journal of Wesley P. Lloyd, former dean of the Graduate School at Brigham Young University and a missionary under Roberts in the Eastern States Mission." Lloyd claimed that he had had a "surprising" conversation with B. H. Roberts and recorded the revealing information Roberts related to him in his journal on August 7, 1933—less than two months before Roberts' death:

Roberts went to work and investigated it from every angle but could not answer it [some critical questions concerning the Book of Mormon] satisfactorily to him self. At his request Pres. Grant called a meeting of the Twelve Apostles and Bro. Roberts presented the matter, told them frankly that he was stumped and ask for their aide [*sic*] in the explanation. In answer, they merely one by one stood up and bore testimony to the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon. George Albert Smith in tears testified that his faith in the Book had not been shaken by the question. . . . No answer was available. Bro. Roberts could not criticize them for not being able to answer it or to assist him, but said that in a Church which claimed continuous revelation, a crisis had arisen where revelation was necessary. After the meeting he wrote to Pres. Grant expressing his disappointment at the failure . . . It was mentioned at the meeting by Bro. Roberts that there were other Book of Mormon problems that needed special attention. Richard R. Lyman spoke up and asked if they were things that would help our prestige and when Bro. Roberts answered no, he said then why discuss them. This attitude was too much for the historically minded Roberts. . . . Bro. Roberts made a special Book of Mormon study. Treated the problem systematically and historically and in a 400 type written page thesis set forth a revolutionary article on the origin of the Book of Mormon and sent it to Pres. Grant. It's an article far too strong for the average Church member but for the intellectual group he considers it a contribution to assist in explaining Mormonism. He swings to a psychological explanation of the Book of Mormon and shows that the plates were not objective but subjective with Joseph Smith, that his exceptional imagination qualified him psychologically for the experience which he had in presenting to the world the Book of Mormon and that the plates with the Urim and Thummim were not objective. He explained certain literary difficulties in the Book . . . These are some of the things which has made Bro. Roberts *shift his base on the Book of Mormon*. Instead of regarding it as the strongest evidence we have of Church Divinity, he regards it as the one which needs the most bolstering. His greatest claim for the divinity of the Prophet Joseph lies in the *Doctrine and Covenants*. ("Journal of Wesley P. Lloyd," August 7, 1933, as cited in *Studies of the Book of Mormon*, pages 23-24)

## Changes in the Book of Mormon

In 1965 we published a photographic reproduction of the original 1830 edition of the Book of Mormon showing that thousands of changes were made in the text since it was first published. We printed this study under the title, *3,913 Changes in the Book of Mormon*. Most of the changes are related to the correction of grammatical and spelling errors, but there are some that alter the meaning of the text. According to Joseph Smith's own testimony, there should not have been any reason to make changes in the Book of Mormon. He stated that when he and the witnesses went out to pray concerning it, "We heard a voice from out of the bright light above us, saying, 'These plates . . . have been translated by the power of God. The translation of them which you have seen is correct . . .'" (*History of the Church*, vol. 1, pages 54-55). On another occasion Joseph Smith stated that he "told the brethren that the Book of Mormon was the most correct of any book on earth . . ." (*Ibid.*, vol. 4, page 461).

The four most important changes Joseph Smith made in the Book of Mormon are related to the doctrine of the Godhead. A significant change was made in 1 Nephi 13:40. In the 1830 edition it was stated that the very purpose of the Nephite records was to make known that Christ is the Eternal Father: ". . . These last records, . . . shall make known to all kindreds, tongues, and people, that the Lamb of God is the Eternal Father and Savior of the world . . ." (Book of Mormon, 1830 ed., page 32). In the current Utah edition, 1 Nephi 13:40, three words have been interpolated: "These last records, . . . shall make known to all kindreds, tongues, and people, that the Lamb of God is *the Son of* the Eternal Father, and the Savior of the world. . . ." Similar changes concerning the Godhead were made in three other places in the text of the Book of Mormon (see *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* pages 165-166).

An important change concerning the name of a king was made in the book of Mosiah. In the 1830 edition of the Book of Mormon, page 200, we read: ". . . king *Benjamin* had a gift from God, whereby he could interpret such engravings . . ." In modern editions this has been changed to read: ". . . king *Mosiah* had a gift from God, whereby he could interpret such engravings . . ." (Mosiah 21:28). From chronology found in the Book of Mormon (see Mosiah 6:3-7 and 7:1), it would appear that king Benjamin should have been dead at this time. The name, therefore, was changed to Mosiah. Another change involving these names is found in the Book of Ether. On page 546 of the first edition of the Book of Mormon, we read: ". . . for this cause did king *Benjamin* keep them. . . ." In modern editions (Ether 4:1) this has been changed to read: ". . . for this cause did king *Mosiah* keep them. . . ."

It is interesting to note that even the statement by the eight witnesses to the Book of Mormon has been altered. In the 1830 edition the last page contained this statement: ". . . Joseph Smith, Jr. the *Author and Proprietor* of this work, has shewn unto us the plates. . . ." In modern editions it was changed to read: ". . . Joseph Smith, Jun., the *translator* of this work, has shown unto us the plates. . . ."

In the first edition of the Book of Mormon, page 87, this statement appears: ". . . the mean man boweth down. . . ." In modern editions (2 Nephi 12:9) this has been changed to read: ". . . the mean man boweth *not* down. . . ."

Although it must be admitted that the author of the Book of Mormon had ability and imagination, the first edition bears all the earmarks of a person who did not have a great deal of education. On page 31 of the first edition we read: ". . . neither will the Lord God suffer that the Gentiles shall forever remain in that state of awful *woundedness*. . . ." In modern editions (1 Nephi 13:32) this was changed to read: "Neither will the Lord God suffer that the Gentiles shall forever remain in that awful state of *blindness*, . . ."

On page 214 of the first edition we read: "My soul was *wrecked* with eternal torment. . . ." This was changed to read as follows in modern editions (Mosiah 27:29): "My soul was *racked* with eternal torment. . . ."

One of the most frequent mistakes in the first edition of the Book of Mormon was the use of "was" instead of "were." The following are extracts from the first edition in which "was" has been changed in later editions to "were":

- . . . Adam and Eve, which *was* our first parents . . . (1830 BOM page 15) [1 Nephi 5:11]
- . . . the bands which *was* upon my wrists . . . (1830 BOM page 49) [1 Nephi 18:15]
- . . . the priests *was* not to depend . . . (1830 BOM page 193) [Mosiah 18:26]
- . . . those that *was* with him. (1830 BOM page 195) [Mosiah 19:18]
- . . . there *was* many . . . (1830 BOM page 209) [Mosiah 26:1]
- . . . I had much desire that ye *was* not in the state of dilemma . . . (1830 BOM page 241) [Alma 7:18]
- . . . they *was* angry with me, . . . (1830 BOM page 248) [Alma 9:32]
- . . . there *was* no wild beasts . . . (1830 BOM page 460) [3 Nephi 4:2]

Another common mistake in the first edition was the use of the word "is" when it should read "are." The following are extracts from the first edition in which the word "is" has been changed to "are" in later editions:

... there *is* save it be, two churches . . .  
 (1830 BOM page 33) [1 Nephi 14:10]  
 . . . the words which *is* expedient . . .  
 (1830 BOM page 67) [2 Nephi 3:19]  
 And whoredoms *is* an abomination . . .  
 (1830 BOM page 127) [Jacob 2:28]  
 . . . here *is* our weapons of war . . .  
 (1830 BOM page 346) [Alma 44:8]

Another mistake in the first edition was the use of the word “a” where it was not necessary. In the following extracts “a” has been deleted in later editions:

... as Ammon and Lamoni was *a* journeying thither  
 . . . (1830 BOM page 280) [Alma 20:8]  
 . . . he found Muloki *a* preaching . . .  
 (1830 BOM page 284) [Alma 21:11]  
 . . . had been *a* preparing the minds . . .  
 (1830 BOM page 358) [Alma 48:7]  
 . . . Moroni was *a* coming against them . . .  
 (1830 BOM page 403) [Alma 62:31]

On page 260 of the first edition the following statement appeared: “Behold, the Scriptures are before you; if ye will *arrest* them, it shall be to your own destruction.” In modern editions (Alma 13:20) this has been changed to read: “Behold the scriptures are before you; if ye will *wrest* them it shall be to your own destruction.”

The extracts that follow are from the first edition; the word “no” has been changed to “any” in later editions:

... have not sought gold nor silver, nor *no* manner  
 of riches . . . (1830 BOM page 157) [Mosiah 2:12]  
 . . . they did not fight against God *no* more . . .  
 (1830 BOM page 290) [Alma 23:7]  
 . . . neither were there Lamanites, nor *no* manner of  
 Ites . . . (1830 BOM page 515) [4 Nephi 1:17]

On page 289 of the first edition this statement appeared: “. . . or Omner, or Himni, nor *neither* of their brethren . . .” In the modern edition (Alma 23:1) this has been changed to read: “. . . or Omner, or Himni, nor *either* of their brethren . . .”

In *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* pages 90-93, we included a much longer list of changes, but the examples we have cited here should give the reader an idea of some of the more interesting changes in the Book of Mormon. Many Mormons have claimed that there have never been any changes in the Book of Mormon. Although this is certainly incorrect, some anti-Mormons have gone to the other extreme and tried to make it appear that the Book of Mormon has been completely rewritten. As we stated earlier, most of the 3,913 changes which we found were related to the correction of grammatical and spelling errors and do not really change the basic meaning of the text.

Actually, the changes in the Book of Mormon do not even begin to compare with the serious changes found in Joseph Smith’s revelations and in the *History of the Church*. Although we must not overemphasize the changes in the Book of Mormon, even changes in spelling and grammar are important when we consider the claims concerning the translation which were made by Joseph Smith and the witnesses to the book. Smith claimed that the Book of Mormon was “the most correct of any book on earth,” and Martin Harris said that the words which appeared on the seer stone would not disappear until they were correctly written. Oliver B. Huntington recorded in his journal that in 1881 Joseph F. Smith, who later became the sixth president of the Mormon church, taught that the Lord gave Joseph Smith the exact English wording and spelling that he should use in the Book of Mormon:

Saturday Feb. 25, 1881, . . . Heard Joseph F. Smith describe the manner of translating the Book of Mormon . . . Joseph did not render the writing on the gold plates into the English language in his own style of language as many people believe, but every word and every letter was given to him by the gift and power of God. . . . The Lord caused *each word spelled as it is in the book to appear* on the stones in short sentences or words, and when Joseph had uttered the sentence or word before him and the scribe had written it properly, that sentence would disappear and another appear. And if there was *a word wrongly written or even a letter incorrect* the writing on the stones would remain there. . . . and when corrected the sentence would disappear as usual. (“Journal of Oliver B. Huntington,” page 168 of typed copy at Utah State Historical Society).

Anti-Mormon writers criticized the grammar of the Book of Mormon stating that God could not make the many grammatical mistakes found in the Book of Mormon. Finally, the Mormon church leaders became so embarrassed about the grammar that they decided to abandon the idea that God gave Joseph Smith the English that is found in the Book of Mormon; their new idea was that God just gave Joseph Smith the idea and that he expressed it in his own words. This new theory makes it easier to explain why grammatical and spelling changes were made, but it does not explain changes such as the one where “Benjamin” was changed to “Mosiah.”

As we have already noted, when a person examines the unchanged text of the 1830 edition of the Book of Mormon, it becomes very obvious that it was written by someone without a great deal of education. The style and the type of mistakes which are found in the first edition of the Book of Mormon are similar to those found in a document written by Joseph Smith in the early 1830s (see *Mormonism —Shadow or Reality?* pages 88-89). This evidence has led many critics to conclude that



Joseph Smith himself was the author of the Book of Mormon. Although we lean toward this point of view, we must admit that at the present time the evidence is not conclusive, and it is even possible that there were two or more individuals involved in writing the book.

### **Book of Mormon Archaeology**

Some members of the LDS Church have made fantastic claims about archaeologists using the Book of Mormon. For instance, we were informed that a letter which was written to Earnest L. English on May 3, 1936, was duplicated and “distributed to LDS church members by leaders (local) in Cleveland, Ohio in 1959.” We quote the following from that letter:

The inquiry you made regarding the Book of Mormon is a commendable one and I will be pleased to mention the part which it played in helping the government to unravel the problem of the aborigines. . . . it was 1920 before the *Smithsonian Institute* officially recognized the *Book of Mormon* as a record of any value. *All discoveries* up to that time were found to *fit the Book of Mormon accounts* and so the heads of the Archaeological Department decided to make an effort to discover some of the larger cities described in the Book of Mormon records.

*All members of the department were required to study the account* and make rough-maps of the various populated centers. . . . During the past fifteen years the Institute has made remarkable study of its investigations of the Mexican Indians and it is true that the *Book of Mormon* has been the guide to almost all of the major discoveries.

When Col. Lindbergh flew to South America five years ago, he was able to sight heretofore undiscovered cities which the archaeologists at that Institute had mapped out according to the locations described in the Book of Mormon. This record is now quoted by the members of the Institute as *an authority* and is recognized by *all advanced students in the field*.

Because of many false statements disseminated by members of the LDS Church, such as the one cited above, the Smithsonian Institution has been forced to publish a statement concerning these matters. In an introduction to the statement we find the following:

Your recent inquiry concerning the Book of Mormon has been received in the Smithsonian's Department of Anthropology.

The Book of Mormon is a religious document and *not a scientific guide*. The Smithsonian Institution *does not use it* in archeological research. Because the Smithsonian Institution receives many inquiries regarding the Book of Mormon, we have prepared a

“Statement Regarding the Book of Mormon,” a copy of which is enclosed for your information.

The four-page statement begins with a denial of the claims put forth by Mormon enthusiasts:

1. The Smithsonian Institution *has never used the Book of Mormon in any way* as a scientific guide. Smithsonian archeologists see *no direct connection* between the archeology of the New World and the subject matter of the book. (“Statement Regarding the Book of Mormon,” Smithsonian Institution, Spring 1986)

In a letter dated February 4, 1982, the National Geographic Society also denied that archaeologists place any weight on the Book of Mormon:

I referred your inquiry to Dr. George Stuart, the staff archaeologist of the Society. He informed me that neither the Society nor any other institution of equal prestige has ever used the Book of Mormon in locating archaeological sites. Although many Mormon sources claim that the Book of Mormon has been substantiated by archaeological findings, this claim has *not been verified scientifically*.

In 1973, Michael Coe, one of the best known authorities on archaeology of the New World, wrote an article for *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*. In this article he addressed the issue in a very forthright manner:

Mormon archaeologists over the years have almost unanimously accepted the Book of Mormon as an accurate, historical account of the New World peoples. . . . Let me now state unconditionally that as far as I know *there is not one professionally trained archaeologist*, who is not a Mormon, *who sees any scientific justification for believing the foregoing to be true*, and I would like to state that there are quite a few Mormon archaeologists who join this group. . . .

The bare facts of the matter are that nothing, *absolutely nothing*, has ever shown up in any New World excavation which would suggest to a dispassionate observer that the Book of Mormon, as claimed by Joseph Smith, is a historical document relating to the history of early migrants to our hemisphere. (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Summer 1973, pages 41, 42 & 46)

Fortunately, some Mormon scholars are beginning to admit that archaeology does not furnish any evidence for the Book of Mormon. Dee F. Green, Assistant Professor of Anthropology at Weber State College, was one of the first to openly criticize “Book of Mormon archaeology.” His criticism is very significant because he

was at one time deeply involved in archaeological work at the LDS Church's Brigham Young University. In 1958-61 he served as editor of the *University Archaeological Society Newsletter*. In his article, published in *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Dee Green made it plain that archaeological evidence did not prove the Book of Mormon:

Having spent a considerable portion of the past ten years functioning as a scientist dealing with New World archaeology, I find that nothing in so-called Book of Mormon archaeology materially affects my religious commitment one way or the other, and I do not see that the *archaeological myths so common in our proselytizing program* enhance the process of true conversion. . . .

The *first myth we need to eliminate is that Book of Mormon archaeology exists*. Titles on books full of archaeological half-truths, dilettanti on the peripheries of American archaeology calling themselves Book of Mormon archaeologists regardless of their education, and a Department of Archaeology at BYU devoted to the production of Book of Mormon archaeologists do not insure that Book of Mormon archaeology really exists. If one is to study Book of Mormon archaeology, then one must have a corpus of data with which to deal. We do not. The Book of Mormon is really there so one can have Book of Mormon studies, and archaeology is really there so one can study archaeology, but the two are not wed. At least they are not wed in reality since *no Book of Mormon location is known with reference to modern topography*. Biblical archaeology can be studied because we do know where Jerusalem and Jericho were and are, but we *do not know where Zarahemla and Bountiful* (nor any other location for that matter) *were or are*. It would seem then that a concentration on geography should be the first order of business, but we have already seen that twenty years of such an approach has *left us empty-handed*. (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Summer 1969, pages 76-78)

### **Ferguson's Doubts**

While we found Dee F. Green's admissions rather startling, they cannot begin to compare with the surprise we received on December 2, 1970, when we received a visit from Thomas Stuart Ferguson. Mr. Ferguson devoted a great deal of his life trying to prove the Book of Mormon by archaeology and was considered by the Mormon people as a great defender of the faith. He wrote at least three books on the subject. His book, *One Fold and One Shepherd*, was recommended to one of the authors of this work (Jerald) as containing the ultimate case for the authenticity of the Book of Mormon. On the jacket of that book, we find this information about Ferguson:

Thomas Stuart Ferguson, 47, President of the New World Archaeological Foundation, is a distinguished student of the earliest high civilizations of the New World. He, with Dr. A. V. Kidder, dean of Central American archaeologists, first planned the New World Archaeological Foundation in 1952. . . . He raised \$225,000 for the field work, incorporated the Foundation (being an attorney), assisted in the initial explorations in Central America and Mexico and has actively directed the affairs of the Foundation since its inception.

At one time the LDS Church itself granted \$250,000 to help Thomas Stuart Ferguson with his plan to prove the Book of Mormon through archaeological research. Ferguson really believed that archaeology would establish the authenticity of the Book of Mormon. In his book, *One Fold And One Shepherd*, page 263, he stated: "The important thing now is to continue the digging at an accelerated pace in order to find more inscriptions dating to Book of Mormon times. Eventually we should find decipherable inscriptions . . . referring to some unique person, place or event in the Book of Mormon." In 1962 Mr. Ferguson said that "Powerful evidences sustaining the book are accumulating."

The first indication we had that Mr. Ferguson was losing his faith in Mormonism was just after Joseph Smith's Egyptian Papyri were rediscovered. In 1968 he wrote us a letter saying that we were "doing a great thing—*getting out some truth on the Book of Abraham*." This was a significant statement since we were presenting evidence that the Book of Abraham was not a correct translation of the papyri. Later we heard a rumor that he had given up Joseph Smith's Book of Abraham, but this hardly prepared us for his visit on December 2, 1970. At that time, Mr. Ferguson told us frankly that he had not only given up belief in the Book of Abraham, but that he had come to the conclusion that Joseph Smith was not a prophet and that Mormonism was not true. He told us that he had spent twenty-five years trying to prove Mormonism, but had finally come to the conclusion that all his work in this regard had been in vain. He said that his training in law had taught him how to weigh evidence and that the case against Joseph Smith was absolutely devastating and could not be explained away.

Mr. Ferguson found himself faced with a dilemma, for the LDS Church had just given him a large grant (\$100,000 or more) to carry on the archaeological research of the New World Archaeological Foundation. He felt, however, that this foundation was doing legitimate archaeological work, and therefore he intended to continue the work. Since Ferguson was a dedicated believer at the time he founded the organization, he was certain that it would turn up evidence that the

Book of Mormon was an authentic record. In a letter dated April 23, 1952, Thomas Stuart Ferguson said “the archeological data now available is entirely inadequate” for testing the Book of Mormon. He predicted, however, that the “next ten years of excavations in Mexico and Guatemala should enable us to make the archeological tests.” In response to a letter Hal Hougey wrote in 1972 which reminded him that he had predicted in 1961 that Book of Mormon cities would be found within 10 years, Mr. Ferguson sadly wrote:—“Ten years have passed . . . I sincerely anticipated that Book-of-Mormon cities would be positively identified within 10 years—and time has proved me wrong in my anticipation” (Letter dated June 5, 1972). When the archaeological research failed to provide the confirmation which he expected, he became completely disillusioned with Joseph Smith’s claims.

A few months after Thomas Stuart Ferguson revealed to us that he had come to the conclusion that the Book of Mormon was a spurious production, he wrote us a letter in which he said: “I think I will be in SLC in June—and if so, I’ll call on you again. I enjoyed my visit with you. . . . *I certainly admire you for the battle you are waging—virtually single handed.*”

Unfortunately, Mr. Ferguson seems to have had a very difficult time communicating his loss of faith to those he was close to. He told us, for instance, that he did not dare tell one of his sons the truth about the Book of Mormon because the shock would cause him too much trauma. While Mr. Ferguson no longer believed in the divine authenticity of the Book of Mormon, he still attended the LDS Church. In a letter to James Still, dated December 3, 1979, Ferguson frankly stated:

I lost faith in Joseph Smith as one having a pipeline to deity . . . I give Joseph Smith credit as an innovator and as a smart fellow. I attend, sing in the choir and enjoy my friendships in the Church. In my opinion it is the best *fraternity* that has come to my attention . . .

Nevertheless, in 1975 Thomas Stuart Ferguson prepared a 29-page paper in response to papers written by Mormon apologists John Sorenson and Garth Norman. It was entitled, *Written Symposium on Book-of-Mormon Geography: Response of Thomas S. Ferguson to the Norman & Sorenson Papers*. In this response, page 4, Mr. Ferguson wrote: “With all of these great efforts, it cannot be established factually that anyone, from Joseph Smith to the present day, has put his finger on a single point of terrain that was a Book-of-Mormon geographical place. And the hemisphere has been pretty well checked out by competent people. Thousands of sites have been excavated.” Ferguson pointed out in his paper that the text of the Book of Mormon makes it very clear that certain

items should be found in archaeological excavations and that these items are not present in the sites proposed. He noted, for instance, that “Thousands of archeological holes in the area proposed have given us not a fragment of evidence of the presence of the plants mentioned in the Book of Mormon . . .” (page 7). On page 29 he concluded by saying: “I’m afraid that up to this point, I must agree with Dee Green, who has told us that to date *there is no Book-of-Mormon geography*. I, for one, would be happy if Dee were wrong . . .

In a letter to Mr. and Mrs. H. W. Lawrence, dated February 20, 1976, Thomas Stuart Ferguson plainly stated that the Book of Mormon “is fictional” and this is the reason there is “no Book-of-Mormon geography”:

Herewith is a copy of my recent (1975) paper on Book of Mormon matters. . . . It was one of several presented in a written symposium on Book of Mormon geography [*sic*]. (My thesis is that Book of Mormon geography involves a lot more than playing with topography and terrain.) The real implication of the paper is that you can’t set Book of Mormon geography down anywhere—because it is fictional and will never meet the requirements of the dirt-archeology. I should say—what is in the ground will never conform to what is in the book.

On February 9, 1976, Thomas Stuart Ferguson wrote another letter in which he gave this advice:

. . . Mormonism is probably the best conceived myth fraternity to which one can belong.

Why not say the right things and keep your membership in the great fraternity, enjoying the good things you like and discarding the ones you can’t swallow (and keeping your mouth shut)? Hypocritical? Maybe. . . . thousands of members have done, and are doing, what I suggest you consider doing. Silence is golden—etc. . . .

Perhaps you and I have been spoofed by Joseph Smith. Now that we have the inside dope—why not spoof a little back and stay aboard? Please consider this letter confidential—for obvious reasons. I want to stay aboard the good ship, Mormonism—for various reasons that I think valid. First, *several of my dearly loved family members want desperately to believe* and do believe it and they each need it. It does them far more good than harm. Belonging, with my eyes wide open is actually fun, less expensive than formerly, and no strain at all. . . . *I never get up and bear testimony* . . .

Kindly do not quote this letter and please do not cite me.

If Mr. Ferguson could have seen the results of the “spoof” he played on his family, he might have had second thoughts about the wisdom of such a course. As it turned out, after his death his son, Larry S. Ferguson,

was convinced that his father wanted his book, *One Fold and One Shepherd*, revised and republished to the world. He talked Bruce W. Warren, of Brigham Young University, into working on the revision, and in 1987 it was published under the title, *The Messiah in Ancient America*. In the Preface, page xiii, Dr. Warren wrote the following: ‘The Ferguson family wanted the new book to be a tribute to Thomas Stuart Ferguson and *his abiding testimony of the Book of Mormon* and the divinity of the Messiah, Jesus the Christ.’”

Larry Ferguson maintains that his father discussed revising his book before his death. Although we do not really know what Thomas Stuart Ferguson told his son before his death, it seems impossible to believe that he would have wanted it reprinted. While it is only a matter of speculation, it is possible that his son might have asked him why it was not reprinted and that he may have responded by saying it needed to be revised. If Mr. Ferguson had never leveled with his son concerning his true beliefs about the Book of Mormon, he would naturally understand his father’s statement to mean that it needed some changes made to reflect archaeological studies that were made since it went out of print. The real meaning of such a statement, of course, would be that it needed to be revised to show that the Book of Mormon “is fictional . . . what is in the ground will never conform to what is in the book” (Letter dated February 2, 1976).

The new book is seriously flawed because there is no mention of the fact that Ferguson was a complete unbeliever in the Book of Mormon during the last 12 or 13 years of his life. Bruce Warren was undoubtedly aware of Ferguson’s 29-page paper criticizing the Sorenson and Norman papers, but he did not even refer to this important research in the revised publication. If Ferguson were alive today, he would undoubtedly be shocked to find his name attached to a book which contains a map showing “Possible Book of Mormon Locations.” The reader will remember that Ferguson wrote that “there is no Book-of-Mormon geography.”

The fact that Thomas Stuart Ferguson was not forthright with members of his family with regard to the Book of Mormon has placed them in a very embarrassing position. They have published a book which would lead people to believe that he was a true believer. The truth, of course, is that Ferguson believed that archaeology disproved the Book of Mormon. The appearance of the revised book with Ferguson’s name on it, has caused scholars to probe into the last years of his life. A great deal of documentary evidence has been discovered to show that from 1970 until his death in 1983, Mr. Ferguson was secretly undercutting the Book of Mormon. In fact, just two months before his death he was working on a project

which he felt would show that the Book of Mormon was in reality a 19th century production. The evidence concerning this matter will appear in a forthcoming publication.

We cannot help but sympathize with men like Thomas Stuart Ferguson and B. H. Roberts who labored for many years to prove the Book of Mormon true and then found out that their faith was based on erroneous assumptions. It would have been very difficult for these men to make a public statement repudiating the Book of Mormon. They would have been considered traitors who allowed themselves to come under the power of the Devil. Nevertheless, when we consider the consequences of remaining silent, we cannot help but feel that both these men made a drastic mistake when they failed to make a firm public stand.

### Christianity Missing

A century ago M. T. Lamb, a writer who was critical of the Book of Mormon, laid out the archaeological case against the Book of Mormon:

We shall find a great many other representations of the Book of Mormon equally at fault, squarely and flatly contradicted by the facts of ancient American history.

For instance, what can be more clearly stated than the religious condition of this country, especially Central America, for a period of over two hundred years after Christ? A *Christian* civilization prevailed all over both continents.

It is not necessary here to repeat the passages in the Book of Mormon which describe such civilization. . . . It is only needful now to show that nothing could be wider from the truth, unless all ancient American history is a lie, and its ten thousand relics tell false tales.

It may be stated in a general way that there never has been a time upon this western hemisphere within the historic period, or within three thousand years past, *when a uniform civilization of ANY KIND prevailed over both continents.*

But this will be considered hereafter. We are to learn now—

1st. That a Christian civilization has never existed in Central America, not even for a day.

2d. The people of Central America, as far back as their record has been traced (and that is centuries earlier than the alleged beginning of Nephite history), *have always been an idolatrous people*, as thoroughly heathen as any which the history of the world has described, worshipping idols the most hideous in form and feature that have ever been found upon earth, and accompanying that worship by human sacrifices as barbarous as the annals of history have recorded. . . . A sad fatality, is it not, dear reader, that in the very region of country where the Book of Mormon fixes magnificent

temples and sanctuaries erected by a Christian people for the worship of the true God, there should be dug up out of the ruins of old temples and palaces such relics of the real religion of these ancient peoples? All the records that have come down to us make it certain that these horrid idols instead of the Lord Jesus were worshipped throughout Central America 2000 years ago. It would indeed be a bright page in Central American history if the assertions of the Book of Mormon were true. But no such bright spot can be discovered either in the Nahuatl or the Mayan records. For more than three thousand years it was one unbroken record of superstition and human slaughter. . . . The entire civilization of the Book of Mormon, its whole record from beginning to end is flatly contradicted by the civilization and the history of Central America. (*The Golden Bible; or, The Book of Mormon. Is It From God?* 1887, pages 284-289)

In the century which has passed since Lamb made his criticism, Mormon archaeologists have failed to turn up any evidence to refute his charges. Although some people have been misled into believing the situation has changed, it is clear that Mormon archaeologists are still in the same predicament which Lamb described—i.e., as far as any real evidence for the Book of Mormon is concerned they are empty-handed. This was pointed out at the Sunstone Symposium held on August 25, 1984. After a non-Mormon scholar made some critical comments concerning the relationship of the Book of Mormon to archaeology, two Mormon anthropologists responded to the challenge. Their comments were anything but encouraging to believers in the Book of Mormon. Dr. Ray T. Matheny, Professor of Anthropology at the church's Brigham Young University, admitted that what has been found so far is disappointing:

No evidence has been found in the new world for a ferrous metallurgical industry dating to pre-Columbian times. And so this is a king-size kind of problem, it seems to me, for so-called Book of Mormon Archeology. This evidence is absent. . . .

There is talk [in the Book of Mormon] of use of bow and arrow with spear points that may have been associated with metal too. Ship-building and sailing, use of magnetic compass, overseas navigation, wheeled vehicles drawn by horses, tent manufacture, linen manufacture, many agricultural products from the Old World, wheat and barley, vineyards and wine presses, domestic animals from the Old World, glass manufacture, and so forth. All these paint a scene that seem to be quite foreign to what I am familiar with in the archeological record of the new world. . . . I really have difficulty in finding issue or quarrel with those opening chapters of the Book of Mormon [i.e., the first 7 chapters which only relate to Lehi and his family around

the area of Jerusalem]. But thereafter *it doesn't seem like a translation to me*. It seems more like a transliteration. And the terminologies and the language used and the methods of explaining and putting things down are 19th century literary concepts and cultural experiences one would expect Joseph Smith and his colleagues would experience. And for that reason I call it a transliteration, and I'd rather not call it a translation after the 7th chapter. And I have *real difficulty in trying to relate these cultural concepts* as I've briefly discussed here *with archeological findings* that I'm aware of. . . .

If I were doing this cold like John Carlson is here, I would say in evaluating the Book of Mormon that it *had no place in the New World whatsoever*. I would have to look for the place of the Book of Mormon events to have taken place in the Old World. It just *doesn't seem to fit anything* that he has been taught in his discipline, nor I in my discipline in anthropology, history; there seems to be *no place for it. It seems misplaced*. It seems like there are anachronisms. It seems like the items are *out of time and place*, and trying to put them into the New World. And I think there's a great difficulty here for we Mormons in understanding what this book is all about. ("Book of Mormon Archeology," Response by Professor Ray T. Matheny, Sunstone Symposium, August 25, 1984, typed copy transcribed from a tape-recording, pages 23, 25, 26, 30-31)

Bruce Warren, Professor of Anthropology at BYU, said that he hoped that the situation would change in the next 25 years, but he admitted that "today there really is no Book of Mormon archeology" (*Ibid.*, page 42).

### The Anthon Transcript

In the Book of Mormon 9:32-33, we read as follows:

And now, behold we have written this record according to our knowledge, in the characters which are called among us the *reformed Egyptian*, being handed down and altered by us, according to our manner of speech. And if our plates had been sufficiently large we should have written in Hebrew; but the Hebrew hath been altered by us also; and if we could have written in Hebrew, behold, ye would have had no imperfection in our record.

Mormon critic M. T. Lamb felt that it was very difficult to believe that Jews, who lived 600 years before Christ, would be using the Egyptian language:

Lehi had lived all his lifetime, . . . in the city of Jerusalem, surrounded constantly by those who spoke only the Hebrew language. . . . In the second place, the Jews hated the Egyptians with a bitter hatred, and it is therefore inconceivable that a true-born Jew a real lover of his own people, loyal and patriotic as he professes

to have been, would have been willing thus to insult his people, or that the Jews around him would have endured the insult. In the third place, the ancient Jew had an unusual veneration for his mother tongue, the sacred Hebrew. . . . Now that such a man with such a venerated language could have accepted instead the Egyptian tongue, which was associated only with ignominy and dishonor, [is] the height of absurdity. . . . The second statement is still more objectionable—that there were found in the possession of a man by the name of Laban, a relative of Lehi’s, and also a resident of the city of Jerusalem, certain brass plates upon which were engraven, in the Egyptian language, the five books of Moses, containing the law, the entire history of the Jews from the first down to Laban’s time, . . . All this engraven in the Egyptian language. . . . This is more improbable and absurd than the first statement. (*The Golden Bible*, pages 89-91)

Even the Mormon apologist J. N. Washburn had to admit that this is a real problem:

The point at issue is not that Father Lehi, the Jew, could read and understand Egyptian, though this is surprising enough. . . . No, the big question is how the scripture of the Jews . . . came to be written in Egyptian. . . . If I were to suggest what I think to be the most insistent problem for Book-of-Mormon scholarship, I should unquestionably name this one: account for the Egyptian language on the Plates of Brass, and the Brass Plates themselves! (*The Contents, Structure and Authorship of the Book of Mormon*, page 81)

At any rate, Joseph Smith stated that he made a copy of some of the characters on the gold plates and that Martin Harris showed them to Professor Charles Anthon. According to Joseph Smith’s *History of the Church*, vol. 1, page 20, Martin Harris claimed that “Professor Anthon stated that the translation was correct, more so than any he had before seen from the Egyptian.” Since Professor Anthon was not an Egyptologist, and since the science of Egyptology was just in its infancy at the time, even Mormon scholars have questioned this statement about Anthon’s endorsement of the translation (see *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* page 105). In a letter dated February 17, 1834, Professor Anthon absolutely denied that he had endorsed the translation:

The whole story about my pronouncing the Mormon inscriptions to be reformed Egyptian hieroglyphics is *perfectly false*. . . . the paper contained anything else but Egyptian hieroglyphics. (Letter by Charles Anthon, as cited in *Comprehensive History of the Church*, vol. 1, page 103)

According to Mormon historians, “a fragment of the transcript of the Book of Mormon characters” which

was submitted to Professor Anthon is still in existence (see *Ibid.*, vol. 1, page 100). This is not to be confused with a forgery created by Mark Hofmann which was at first accepted by the LDS Church and proclaimed to be the very original. While the Hofmann document could not be traced back beyond its “discovery” in 1980, the real Anthon transcript came through the hands of Book of Mormon witness David Whitmer and there is no question with regard to its authenticity. Egyptologists who have examined the Anthon transcript have been unable to make any kind of a translation. Klaus Baer, of the University of Chicago, felt that the characters were nothing but “doodlings.” Mormon Egyptologist Edward H. Ashment commented:

Nephi clearly had to learn the same type of Egyptian as did his father . . . that type of Egyptian presumably would be recognizable as a known form of ancient Egyptian.

The characters on the Anthon Transcript *are not thus recognizable*. The author has studied them with one of the world’s foremost Demoticists. They have *resisted decipherment* as Demotic and stand just as little chance of representing earlier forms of ancient Egyptian. (*Sunstone*, May-June 1980, page 30)

Whether Joseph Smith copied the characters or made them up, the Anthon transcript provides no evidence for Joseph Smith’s translation of the Book of Mormon because no one is able to read it. On the contrary, as M. T. Lamb points out, it actually provides a great deal of evidence against the authenticity of the Book of Mormon:

. . . throughout North America, according to the Book of Mormon, this reformed Egyptian was the universal language of the people fifteen hundred years ago, when the Book of Mormon was compiled. . . . Joseph Smith has preserved for us and for the inspection of the world, a specimen of the characters found on the plates . . . now, unfortunately for the claims of the Book of Mormon, we are able to learn precisely what kind of characters were used in Central America by its ancient inhabitants. They have been preserved in imperishable marble. Engraven upon stone in such a way as to retain to the end of time a silent though solemn rebuke to the false and foolish pretensions of the author of this book.

In the ruins of the two oldest cities of Central America, Copan and Palenque, are found in abundance the strange hieroglyphics, . . . Thousands of these mysterious characters are scattered about, engraven over ruined doorways and arches, upon the sides and backs of hideous-looking idols carved in stone, upon marble slabs, on the sides of immense pillars, here and there through the ruins of magnificent palaces and monster heathen temples. . . .

These same hieroglyphics have been preserved in other forms—for the ancient Mayas had books . . . An examination of the three that are now known to be preserved, shows the same characters that are found upon the stone tablets, idols, etc., . . . and represent the actual written language of the ancient Mayas—a people who are known to have occupied Central America, and been the sole occupants of a portion of that country at the very time, and covering the whole period, when, . . . the Nephites lived and flourished there. . . . A woeful fatality, is it not? that there should not be even one of Mr. Smith’s characters that bears a family likeness, or the least particle of resemblance to the characters actually used by the ancient inhabitants of Central America! . . . we should find, in thousands of places, these reformed Egyptian characters engraved upon marble blocks and granite pillars. . . . But need we say that just the contrary of all this is found to be true. . . . It would therefore be sheer nonsense to imagine that the assertions of the Book of Mormon may after all have been true, but that through the lapse of time all traces of such a written language may have disappeared. Stone and marble, and gold and silver, and copper and brass are not liable to disappear in the brief period of 1500 years. (*The Golden Bible*, pages 259-272)

In 1959 the Mormon archaeologist Ross T. Christensen frankly admitted that “‘reformed’ Egyptian” is a “form of writing which we have not yet identified in the archaeological material available to us” (*Book of Mormon Institute*, December 5, 1959, BYU, 1964 ed., page 10). John A. Wilson, who was Professor of Egyptology at the University of Chicago, summarized the situation in a letter to Marvin Cowan: “From time to time there are allegations that picture writing has been found in America. . . . In no case has a professional Egyptologist been able to recognize these characters as Egyptian hieroglyphs. From our standpoint there is no such language as ‘reformed Egyptian’” (Letter from John A. Wilson, dated March 16, 1966). Richard A. Parker, of the Department of Egyptology at Brown University, added his corroboration that, “No Egyptian writing has been found in this hemisphere to my knowledge” (Letter to Marvin Cowan, dated March 22, 1966). In the same letter Professor Parker stated: “I do not know of any language such as Reformed Egyptian.”

### **Compared to Biblical Archaeology**

Apostle Orson Pratt once boasted: “This generation have more than *one thousand times* the amount of evidence to demonstrate and forever establish the divine Authenticity of the Book of Mormon than they have in favor of the Bible!” (*Orson Pratt’s Works*, “Evidences of the Book of Mormon and Bible Compared,” page 64).

We feel that this statement is far from the truth. The only support for the existence of the gold plates is the testimony of eleven witnesses, and as we have already shown, this testimony cannot be relied upon. A comparison of the archaeological evidence for the Book of Mormon with the evidence for the Bible clearly shows the weakness of the Mormon position. This, of course, is not to imply that there are no problems connected with biblical archaeology, or that archaeological evidence alone can prove the Bible to be divinely inspired. Frank H. H. Roberts, Jr., of the Smithsonian Institute, commented in a letter written to Marvin Cowan on January 24, 1963: “Archaeological discoveries in the Near East have verified some statements in the Bible referring to certain tribes, places, etc. On the other hand there is no way in which they could verify the narrative parts of the Bible such as the actions, words, deeds, etc. of particular individuals.” In the same letter he continued: “There is no evidence whatever of any migration from Israel to America, and likewise no evidence that pre-Columbian Indians had any knowledge of Christianity or the Bible.”

The noted Mormon apologist Dr. Hugh Nibley frankly admitted that no ancient inscription mentioning the Nephites has ever been found, and that “nothing short of an inscription which could be read and roughly dated would bridge the gap between what might be called a pre-actualistic archaeology and contact with the realities of Nephite civilization” (*Since Cumorah*, page 243).

While the Nephites are never mentioned in any ancient inscription, the existence of the Israelites is verified by many inscriptions dating back hundreds of years before the time of Christ. The “earliest archaeological reference to the people of Israel” is a stele of the Egyptian ruler Merneptah, dated about 1220 B.C., which is now in the Egyptian Museum in Cairo. Information concerning this stele is given in *The Biblical World* (pages 380-381). The following is a translation of a portion of the stele:

*Israel* is laid waste, his seed is not; Hurru (i.e. Syria) is become a widow for Egypt.

The noted Egyptologist John A. Wilson acknowledged that “an Egyptian scribe was conscious of a people known as Israel somewhere in Palestine or Transjordan” (*The Culture of Ancient Egypt*, 1965, page 255).

Many ancient inscriptions mentioning the Israelites have been found, and some inscriptions even give the names of kings mentioned in the Bible. The New Testament mentions a number of rulers that are known to have lived around the time of Christ. For instance, the Bible tells us that Jesus was crucified under Pontius Pilate. That Pilate was an actual historical person was

proved beyond all doubt in 1961 when “an inscription with the name Pontius Pilate was found in the theater excavations” at Caesarea (*The Biblical Archaeologist*, September 1964, page 71).

The fact that the Jews were in Palestine at the time the Bible indicates is proven by hundreds of ancient Hebrew inscriptions that have been found on rocks, pieces of pottery and coins. Portions of every book of the Old Testament, except for the book of Esther, have also been found in the manuscripts known as the Dead Sea Scrolls. In addition many inscriptions from other countries verify that the Jews were present in Palestine.

When we turn to the Book of Mormon, however, we are unable to find any evidence at all that the Nephites ever existed. We must agree with the Mormon archaeologist Dee F. Green whom we have already quoted as saying:

The first myth we need to eliminate is that Book of Mormon archaeology exists. . . . Biblical archaeology can be studied because we do know where Jerusalem and Jericho were and are, but we do not know where Zarahemla and Bountiful (nor any other location for that matter) were or are.

### **Beyond the Book of Mormon**

Although Joseph Smith once said that “the Book of Mormon was the most correct of any book on earth, and a man would get nearer to God by abiding its precepts, than by any other book,” he departed from many of its teachings and proclaimed doctrines that were in direct contradiction to it. While the Book of Mormon is still the primary tool used to bring converts into the church, the *Doctrine and Covenants* and *Pearl of Great Price* have taken its place as far as doctrine is concerned. President Joseph Fielding Smith said that “the book of *Doctrine and Covenants* to us stands in a peculiar position *above them all*” (*Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 3, page 198). Many of the doctrines the Mormon leaders currently teach are diametrically opposed to the teachings of the Book of Mormon.

## **18. The Mormon Kingdom**

In another chapter we told how Joseph Smith was obsessed with a desire for power and fame and how he set up a secret “Council of Fifty” and had himself ordained to be “a king, to reign over the house of Israel forever.” We also noted that the same year that Joseph Smith was ordained King he announced that he was running for the presidency of the United States.

We have demonstrated that although Mormon apologist Hugh Nibley argued against the claim that Joseph Smith was ordained King, evidence has come forth which has forced Mormon scholars to admit that the ceremony actually took place. For instance, Joseph Smith’s own private secretary William Clayton, who was himself a member of the Council of Fifty, wrote in his journal that “In this Council was Prest Joseph chosen our Prophet, Priest and King by Hosannas.” Moreover, D. Michael Quinn, who served as professor of American History at Brigham Young University, has revealed that a “revelation to the Council of Fifty on 27 June 1882 also stated that God called Joseph Smith, Jr., ‘to be a Prophet, Seer and Revelator to my Church and Kingdom; and to be a King and Ruler over Israel.’” (For more documentation concerning this matter see *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* pages 414-418, 427A-427B.)

### **A Secret Government**

The Mormon Apostle Orson Hyde once boasted: “What the world calls ‘Mormonism’ will rule every nation” (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 7, page 53). John Taylor, who later became the third president of the church, asserted: “. . . this is that kingdom . . . it will not only govern all people in a religious capacity, but also in a political capacity” (*Ibid.*, vol. 11, page 53). Heber C. Kimball claimed that “the nations *will bow to this kingdom*, sooner or later, and all hell cannot help it.” The Council of Fifty was set up to bring about one-world government under the power of the Mormon priesthood. Mormon writer J. D. Williams explained:

And in the case of the Grand Council of the Kingdom, the Church obviously contemplated far more than “giving advice.” Believed to have been organized in March, 1844, the Grand Council (or “Council of Fifty”) was to be the government of the Kingdom of God (which Kingdom was not the Church but the ultimate governing body for *all mankind*). The Council was composed of two non-Mormons and forty-eight to fifty Mormon high priests. . . .



The picture is one of a *secret government*, responsible not to the governed but to ecclesiastical authority, which will provide benign rule for all people, *without election*. (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Summer 1966, pages 46-47)

In 1967 the Mormon writer Klaus J. Hansen noted that “The official records of the Council of Fifty, with one small significant exception are not available for research . . .” (*Quest For Empire*, page 214). Writing in *The John Whitmer Historical Association Journal*, 1981, vol. 1, page 17, Dr. D. Michael Quinn referred to the “still unavailable minutes of the Council of Fifty. These minutes are in the vault of the LDS First Presidency’s office.”

George Miller, who had been a member of the Council of Fifty under Joseph Smith, later made these revealing comments about Joseph Smith’s plan for gaining control of the United States:

It was further determined in Council that all the elders should set out on missions to all the States to get up an electoral ticket, and do everything in our power to have Joseph elected president. If we succeeded in making a majority of the voters converts to our faith, and *elected Joseph president*, in such an event *the dominion of the Kingdom would be forever established in the United States*; and if not successful, we could fall back on Texas, and be a kingdom notwithstanding. (Letter by George Miller, dated June 28, 1855, as quoted by Hyrum Andrus in *Joseph Smith and World Government*, 1963, page 54)

As we have already pointed out, Joseph Smith was assassinated before the election and his plan to “capture the United States for the kingdom,” as Klaus J. Hansen expressed it, was thwarted. After Smith’s death, Brigham Young became “King.” In *Quest For Empire*, page 200, footnote 74, Hansen gave this information:

Former Bishop Andrew Cahoon, whose father Reynolds Cahoon had been a member of the Council of Fifty, testified in 1889: “The *King* of that Kingdom that was set up on the earth was the *head of the Church*. Brigham Young proclaimed himself King here in Salt Lake Valley before there was a house built, in 1847.”

The early Mormon leaders felt that it would not be long before they would be taking over the U. S. Government. In 1856 Heber C. Kimball, a member of the First Presidency, seems to have given a veiled reference to the fact that Brigham Young had been ordained “King”:

The Church and kingdom to which we belong will become the kingdom of our God and his Christ, and brother Brigham Young will become President of the United States. . . . he will be something more; but we do not now want to give him the name: but he is called and ordained to a far greater station than that, and he is foreordained to take that station, and he has got it; and

I am vice-President; and brother Wells is the Secretary of the Interior . . .

You don’t believe that; but I can tell you it is one of the smallest things that I can think of. You may think that I am joking but I am perfectly willing that brother Long should write every word of it; for I can see it just as naturally as I see the earth and the productions thereof. (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 5, page 219)

The historian Hubert Howe Bancroft claimed that on July 24, 1857, Brigham Young “repeated the words uttered ten years before, prophesying even now that at no distant day he would himself become president of the United States, or dictate who should be president” (*History of Utah*, page 505). President Young referred to himself as “the dictator, counsellor, and adviser of the people of God” (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 9, page 267). He claimed, in fact, that he had “the right to dictate about everything connected with the building up of Zion, Yes even to the ribbons the women wear; and any person who denies it is ignorant” (*Ibid.*, vol. 11, page 298). Brigham Young, of course, became Governor of the Territory of Utah. The historian Bancroft says that after September 1851, “there were none to dispute the authority of the governor, and for several years *his will was law*” (*History of Utah*, page 481). At the time of the “Utah War” President Buchanan “determined that Brigham should be superseded as governor, . . .” (*Ibid.*, page 495). Nevertheless, because Brigham Young was both President of the church and “King,” he continued to rule the Mormons with an iron hand.

There can be no question that President Young used his position as “Prophet, Priest and King” to exploit his people. It is a well-known fact that a person who has money to invest stands a very good chance of becoming rich. Brigham Young and other early Mormon leaders used the church’s funds and became wealthy. Leonard J. Arrington, who later served as Church Historian, wrote the following:

Brigham Young and other church authorities, when need required it, *drew on the tithing resources of the church*, and at a later date repaid part or all of the obligation in money, property, or services. *No interest seems to have been paid* for the use of these funds. . . . This ability to draw, almost at will, on church as well as his own funds, was a *great-advantage to Brigham Young* and was certainly one of the reasons for his *worldly success*. . . . while Brigham Young was probably the *largest borrower* of funds from the trustee-in-trust, he was certainly not the only one. (“The Settlement of the Brigham Young Estate,” 1877-1879, Reprinted from the *Pacific Historical Review*, vol. 21, no. 1, February 1952, pages 7-8)

Although Brigham Young claimed that his riches came because of his ability, the evidence shows that he

used tithing funds for purposes of speculation and paid no interest to the church. Orlando W. Powers, who served as associate justice of the supreme court of Utah, charged that Young even had access to funds in the treasury of Salt Lake City:

After the Liberal Party had secured control of the city of Salt Lake, I procured an investigation to be made of the city records, which had been written up by the Mormon city recorders from the earliest time, . . .

The leading officials of the church seem to have had access to the city's treasury. On one occasion Brigham Young borrowed from the city of Salt Lake \$10,000 . . . In 1873 he borrowed \$14,000. The records show that other leading church officials at times borrowed from the city. (*The Reed Smoot Case*, vol. 1, pages 804-805)

John Cradlebaugh, who served as associate justice of the Second Judicial District in early Utah, made these comments about President Young:

Brigham himself is king, priest, lawgiver, and chief polygamist. . . . He selects for himself the choicest spots of land in the Territory, and they yield him their productions, none daring to interfere.

The timber in the mountains for a great distance from Salt Lake City belongs to him, and it is only by delivering each third load, as he shall order, that the gates are open and the citizens allowed to pass up City creek can[y]on to obtain it. . . . The cattle on a thousand hills exhibits his brand. He fixes his pay—he *pays himself*. (Appendix to the *Congressional Globe*, February 23, 1863, pages 121-122)

The historian Hubert Howe Bancroft maintained that “Brigham was certainly a millionaire, . . .” (*History of Utah*, page 675). On page 247 of his book, *The Lion of the Lord*, Stanley P. Hirshon revealed:

Within months of his migration to Utah a thousand dollars in debt, Young by his own admission was rich. “Before I had been one year in this place,” he bragged in 1850, “the wealthiest man who came from the mines, Father Rhodes, with seventeen thousand dollars could not buy the possessions I had made in one year!” During the 1860's the prophet's personal income averaged \$32,000 a year, and in the 1870 census he declared personal property worth \$102,000 and real estate valued at \$1,010,600.

The reader must remember that the value of the dollar has declined at a remarkable rate during the last century. In Brigham Young's time a million dollars would have been considered as a vast fortune. In any case, Brigham Young's demanding spirit is clearly revealed in a letter he wrote to Samuel Brannan:

If you want to continue to prosper, do not forget the Lord's treasury, . . . And when you have settled with the treasury, I want you to remember, that Bro. Brigham has long been destitute of a home and suffered heavy losses and incurred great expense in searching out a location and planting the church in this place, and he wants you to send him *a present of twenty thousand dollars in gold dust*, to help him in his labors. This is but a trifle when gold is so plenty, but it will do me much good at this time.

I hope that Bro. Brannan will remember that, when he has complied with *my request*, my council will not be equal with me unless you *send \$20,000 more* to be divided between Bros. Kimball and Richards, who like myself are straitened; *a hint to the wise is sufficient*, so when this is accomplished, you will have our united blessing, and our hearts will exclaim “God bless Bro. Brannan and give him four fold, for all he has given us.” . . . but should you withhold, when the Lord says give; your hopes and pleasing prospects *will be blasted* in an hour you think not of—and no arm can save. (Letter by Brigham Young, “Journal History,” April 5, 1849, pages 3-4, as cited in *Orrin Porter Rockwell; Man of God, Son of Thunder*, page 191)

### Church and State Combined

In early Utah the leaders of the Mormon church completely did away with the idea that the church and state should be separated. John Taylor, who became the third president, made this statement: “Was the kingdom that the Prophets talked about, that would be set up in the latter times, going to be a Church? Yes. And a State? Yes, it was going to be both Church and State, to rule both *temporarily [sic]* and *spiritually*” (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 6, page 24). On another occasion John Taylor remarked: “We used to have a difference between Church and State, but it is all one now” (*Ibid.*, vol. 5, page 266). Speaking of members of the legislature in early Utah, Heber C. Kimball boasted that “they hold the Priesthood, and there is no person there only those who hold it—the leading men of Israel” (*Ibid.*, vol. 6, page 129). The historian Bancroft observed that “The history of Utah is the history of the Mormon priesthood in its attempt to subordinate the state to the church, and make the authority of the priesthood superior to that of the United States government” (*History of Utah*, page 375).

Klaus J. Hansen shows that the church tried very hard to control early Utah through the Council of Fifty:

On December 9, 1848, the Council of Fifty met at the house of Heber C. Kimball to deliberate on the advisability of petitioning Congress for a territorial government. . . . Not surprisingly, all the officers of the proposed government were members of the Council of Fifty, with Brigham Young as governor. . . .

The Council of Fifty, in creating the State of Deseret, paid lip service to the doctrine of the sovereignty of the people and the democratic practices of a constitutional convention and free elections. Actually, the new government was formed through the highly centralized and autocratic control of its own organization. Significantly, all officers of the constitutional convention and all members of the various committees drafting the constitution were members of the Council. . . . At the election on March 12, 655 votes were cast for state officers, but *no record* of an election for the legislature has so far been found. Indeed, it is quite likely that no election occurred. Hosea Stout recorded in his diary that he was mystified by what procedure he had received his mandate. In view of the circumstances, the most likely explanation is that the Council of Fifty simply hand-picked the assembly. The executive and judicial branches of the new government were *filled entirely by members of the Council of Fifty*. . . . a combination of facts seems to indicate that the probate courts acted as the extended arm of the Council, administering the laws of the kingdom of God on a local level. . . . Since the Council of Fifty controlled both the executive and legislative branches of government, the leaders of the political kingdom of God, through the probate courts, could influence the administration of the counties. . . .

When Brigham Young and the Council of Fifty initiated steps to gain either territorial status or become a state of the Union they did so not because they loved the United States, but because they had no choice. Failure to initiate the move undoubtedly would have aroused the suspicion of Washington. . . . The Council of Fifty, through its actions, revealed that it hoped to maintain as much control as possible while giving the appearance of fully cooperating with the government of the United States. (*Quest For Empire*, pages 126, 128, 130-132, 134)

### Voting One Way

Brigham Young and other early Mormon leaders were deeply concerned about teaching their people to all vote one way. John Taylor, who later became the third president, frankly stated that at “our elections we generally vote as a unit” (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 11, page 355). On another occasion Taylor commented: “Some people say, ‘You folks always vote together,’ we would be poor coots if we did not, and just as bad as the rest of you.” Brigham Young was very opposed to democratic elections. The following statements are taken from his discourses:

. . . every government lays the foundation of its own downfall when it permits what are called *democratic elections*. If a party spirit is developed, the formation

of one party will be speedily followed by another; and furthermore, the very moment that we admit this, we admit the existence of error and corruption somewhere. (*Ibid.*, vol. 14, page 93)

This is one objection which outsiders have to the Latter-day Saints: they all go and *vote one way*. *Is it not right to do so?* . . . Suppose that we do all actually vote one way, or for one man for our delegate to Congress, and have no opposing candidate, and get the best there is, is that not better than having opposition? . . . Then let us all vote one way, and think and act one way, . . . (*Ibid.*, vol. 13, page 219)

Stanley S. Ivins wrote the following concerning the political situation in early Utah:

Under this divinely directed system, there could be little need for such democratic procedures as political parties and competing elections. . . .

For the first twenty years, political activity in Utah was based upon theocratic philosophy. Elections were held, but they did not mean much. A single list of properly selected candidates would be submitted to the people, who would go through the motions of voting for them. There was no law against voting for someone else, but the balloting was not secret, so that anyone not voting right could be easily identified and branded an apostate. And since apostasy was just about the greatest of sins, very few wanted to be charged with it. . . . The church publication, “The Millennial Star,” explaining how such things were handled in Utah, said that if there was disagreement at the meeting for making nominations, “the Prophet of God, who stands at the head of the Church, decides. He nominates, the convention endorses, and the people accept the nomination.” It added that there was free speech in the Territorial Legislature, “but any measure that cannot be unanimously decided on, is submitted to the President of the Church, who, by “the wisdom of God, decides the matter, and all the Councilors and Legislators sanction the decision” (*M. S.*, vol. 29, page 746).

A check of the official returns from 18 annual elections in Utah, beginning in 1852, showed that there was little dissatisfaction with the approved candidates. The 1867 election was the only one which was *unanimous*, but there was only *one dissenting vote* in 1857, four in 1853, six in 1864, twelve in 1852, and fourteen in 1860. The largest opposition vote was 702 in 1869, with 622 of them coming from the Gentile city of Corinne, . . . Next largest was 619 in 1866, . . . Of the 96,107 votes cast, over this eighteen year period, 96 per cent went to the regular candidates. And if the known Gentile ballots are eliminated, the percentage rises to 97.4. (*The Moses Thatcher Case*, by Stanley S. Ivins, pages 2-3)

Klaus J. Hansen gives this interesting information concerning the political control of the church:

. . . *absence of the secret ballot* assured that only the most recalcitrant would dare oppose the official slate. . . .

Casting a vote in opposition to approved candidates was severely frowned upon, . . . Running for political office without church approval, however, was a much more serious matter. In the Mormon colony of San Bernardino, . . . B. F. Grouard and F. M. Van Leuven *were disfellowshipped* simply because they ran for political office *against other church members nominated by the authorities*, who, incidentally, also happened to be members of the Council of Fifty. Another case of wilful opposition to the political counsel of church leaders occurred in 1854. One of the candidates nominated . . . Albert P. Rockwood, had incurred the dislike of a group of voters, who nominated a candidate of their own, Stephen H. Hales, in opposition. According to John Hyde, Jr., a Mormon apostate, Hales obtained the majority; “Stephen Hales was accordingly sent for by Brigham, who gave him a severe reprimand for daring to allow his name to be used as an opponent of ‘the church nomination.’” Hales was compelled to resign, and Rockwood seated instead. The most important fact of this incident, apparently unknown to Hales and his supporters, and to Hyde, was that Rockwood belonged to the Council of Fifty. (*Quest For Empire*, pages 137-138)

In 1853 Brigham Young made some comments which showed that Dr. Bernhisel, a member of the Council of Fifty, was actually chosen as a delegate to Congress in a religious service held in the Mormon Tabernacle:

If we wish to make political speeches, and it is necessary, for the best interest of the cause and kingdom of God, to make them on the Sabbath, we do it. . . .

Brother Kimball has seconded the motion, that Doctor Bernhisel be sent back to Washington, as our delegate. All who are in favour of it, raise your right hands. (More than two thousand hands were at once seen above the heads of the congregation.)

This has *turned into a caucus meeting*. It is all right. I would call for an opposite vote if I thought any person would vote. I will try it, however. (Not a single hand was raised in opposition.) (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 1, page 188)

Some years later Brigham Young boasted: “. . . if we had to elect the President of the United States, you would *never see a dissenting vote*” (*Ibid.*, vol. 5, page 228).

The church’s political party was known as the “People’s Party.” Mormon writer J. D. Williams says:

Statehood for Utah was delayed because Congress was convinced that the Mormons had too many wives

and too few political parties. . . . the parties were few enough, all right—just one. . . . But this one-party system came under challenge in 1869, when a group of Brigham Young’s critics . . . were excommunicated from the Church and moved almost at once to set up a party of their own. . . . (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Summer 1966, pages 36-37)

Some writers claim that because of persecution the Mormons were driven to vote one way. This is completely untrue; the non-Mormons were forced to form the “Liberal Party” to combat the domination of the Mormon church in politics. This party had a very difficult time at first. Even the Mormon historian B. H. Roberts had to admit that the Liberal Party received unjust treatment (see *Comprehensive History of the Church*, vol. 5, pages 307-309).

Stanley S. Ivins says that toward the end of the 19th century the church was confronted with a serious problem:

Faced with the growing strength of the Liberal Party and the fact that, under the existing Mormon versus Gentile political division, the prospect of statehood for Utah was very dim, someone decided that it was time for a change. So, in the spring of 1891, the People’s Party was disbanded, the Mormons were advised to divide on national party lines, and local Republican and Democratic organizations were formed. On the surface, this action suggested that the church was getting out of politics. (*The Moses Thatcher Case*, page 4)

J. D. Williams gives this interesting information:

Then came the dramatic, now humorous, sequence of events in which theocracy served as midwife for the birth of democracy in Utah. Sometime in 1891 . . . at a meeting of the leaders of the People’s Party (the Church party), the First Counselor in the Church Presidency, George Q. Cannon, made an appearance. President Cannon informed the party officials that the First Presidency of the Church wanted the existing parties scrapped and the national parties instituted in their place. He then warned that the old religious warfare would be perpetuated under new labels if all the People’s Party became Democrats and the Liberals became Republicans.

So the word went forth from that meeting that Mormons should join both national parties. And as the word moved down the hierarchy, some imaginative bishops at the ward level gave “practical translation” to the advice: They stood at the head of the chapel aisle and indicated that the Saints on the one side (dare we say “right”?) should become Republicans and those on the other (left?) should become Democrats. (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Summer 1966, pages 37-38)

During the early part of the 20th century the Mormon church found itself being investigated by the U. S. Senate because its leaders had continued the practice of polygamy and had exercised too much control in politics (see *The Reed Smoot Case*, published in 4 volumes). While this did not end the church's involvement in politics, it certainly weakened its control over the people.

### Are Kings Still Anointed?

Although there are some people who feel that the Council of Fifty is still secretly functioning within the Mormon church, no hard evidence has been put forth to substantiate that claim (see our book *Mormon Spies, Hughes and the C.I.A.*). Most scholars feel that the Council dissolved sometime around the turn of the century. Mormon scholar D. Michael Quinn wrote: "On 3 January 1932, Heber J. Grant [the seventh president of the church] recorded that he and Franklin S. Richards were the only surviving members of the Council, and with the death of President Grant on 14 May 1945 the technical survival of the Council of Fifty ended" (*Brigham Young University Studies*, Winter 1980, page 191). Whether or not the Council of Fifty still exists, its goal of "one-world government" under the control of the Mormon priesthood remains alive within the LDS Church. In an article published in *Rocky Mountain Magazine*, January-February 1980, page 17, Michael Parrish related:

... in the words of one believer, a former instructor at church-owned Brigham Young University: "The Mormons do intend to take over the world, certainly world government. There's no secret about that—it's in the writings of Joseph Smith right on down. The Constitution of the United States will 'hang by a thread' and the church will save it by establishing a theocracy."

In his book, *The Progress of Man*, pages 417-418, Joseph Fielding Smith, who later became the tenth president, said:

... there is a nucleus of a government, formed since that of the United States, which is perfect in its nature, having emanated from a Being who is perfect. But some may enquire, is it right—is it lawful for another government to be organized within the United States, of a theocratical nature? Yes, perfectly so!

In his book, *The Way to Perfection*, pages 290-291, Joseph Fielding Smith told of a secret meeting to be held in Missouri prior to Christ's return:

Until this grand council is held, Satan shall hold rule ... but at that time thrones are to be cast down and man's rule shall come to an end ... Preparation for this work is now going on. ... This council in the valley of Adam-ondi-Ahman is to be of the greatest importance to this world. At that time there will be a transfer of authority

from the usurper and impostor, Lucifer, to the rightful King, Jesus Christ. ... When this gathering is held, the world will not know of it; the members of the Church at large will not know of it, yet it shall be preparatory to the coming in the clouds of glory of our Savior Jesus Christ as the Prophet Joseph Smith has said. The world cannot know of it. The Saints cannot know of it—except those who officially shall be called into this council ...

Before Ezra Taft Benson became president of the church, he seemed to be deeply involved in political affairs. Although he was not a member of the John Birch Society, his activities on its behalf embarrassed many members of the church (see *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* pages 426-427). The *Salt Lake Tribune* for November 4, 1974, reported that, "President Ezra Taft Benson, ... said, in an interview this week, it is 'entirely possible' the president of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormon) will one day declare support for a political candidate."

In a speech delivered at BYU on February 26, 1980, Benson proclaimed that the "Prophet" has a right to dictate to his people on political matters and even to "lead them in government. Alma was the head of the Church and of the government in the Book of Mormon; Joseph Smith was mayor of Nauvoo and Brigham Young was governor of Utah. ... Those who would remove prophets from politics would take God out of government."

Those who remembered President Benson's previous attempts to involve the church in politics were very concerned when he became "Prophet, Seer and Revelator" for the church. So far, however, we have not seen any evidence that Benson has tried to outwardly involve the church in his own political plans, and his age might very well preclude him from making any major changes in the future.

We have already shown that there is conclusive evidence to show that Joseph Smith was anointed "King." It appears that there was no opposition to this in the Council of Fifty. William Marks, in fact, stated that he "did not oppose this move, thinking it none of my business." John Taylor, the third president of the church, did not have it as smooth. His ordination to be "King" was opposed by Apostle Moses Thatcher. Writing in his journal, Apostle Abraham H. Cannon recorded:

Father [George Q. Cannon, a member of the First Presidency] said Moses Thatcher's drawing away from his brethren commenced as far as his knowledge concerning it went, at a time when the Council of Fifty met in the old City Hall, and Moses opposed the proposition to anoint John Taylor as Prophet, Priest and King, and Moses opposition prevailed at that time. Moses has constantly opposed the increase of power in the hands of the President of the Church. ("Daily Journal of Abraham H. Cannon," December 2, 1895, page 198; original at Brigham Young University Library)

Apostle Thatcher only prevailed temporarily in stopping Taylor from becoming King. As we have already shown, Franklin D. Richards later wrote that John Taylor was “anointed & set apart as a King Priest and Ruler over Israel” in 1885. Thatcher later had serious problems with other church leaders over politics and was dropped from the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

Since D. Michael Quinn has discovered that Joseph F. Smith, the sixth president of the church, was addressed “as ‘Prophet, President and King’ in a letter [written in 1911] regarding the Council of Fifty” (*BYU Studies*, Winter 1980, page 188), it seems likely that the practice of anointing the president of the church as a “King” continued into the early part of the 20th century. This, of course, raises the question as to whether such a practice still takes place in the LDS Church. Although we cannot actually prove that this is the case, Apostle Bruce R. McConkie made it clear that the president of the church is in reality “the earthly king” of the Mormon people:

1. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints as it is now constituted is the kingdom of God on earth. . . . The Church and Kingdom are one and the same. . . . The Church (or kingdom) is not a democracy; . . . The Church is a kingdom. The Lord Jesus Christ is the Eternal King, and the President of the Church, the mouthpiece of God on earth, is the earthly king. All things come to the Church from the King of the kingdom in heaven, through the king of the kingdom on earth. (*Mormon Doctrine*, 1979, pages 415-416)

## 19. Blood Atonement

The Mormon doctrine of “blood atonement,” the teaching that certain sins can only be atoned for by the shedding of the sinner’s own blood, was explained by Brigham Young in a discourse given September 21, 1856:

There are sins that men commit for which they cannot receive forgiveness in this world, or in that which is to come, and if they had their eyes open to see their true condition, they would be perfectly willing to *have their blood spilt upon the ground*, that the smoke thereof might ascend to heaven as an offering for their sins; and the smoking incense *would atone for their sins*, whereas, if such is not the case, they will stick to them and remain upon them in the spirit world.

I know, when you hear my brethren telling about *cutting people off from the earth*, that you consider it is strong doctrine, but is to *save them*, not to destroy them. . . . I know there are transgressors, who if they knew themselves, and the only condition upon which they can obtain forgiveness, would beg of their brethren to *shed their blood*, that the smoke thereof might ascend to God as an offering to appease the wrath that is kindled against them, and that the law might have its course. I will say further; I have had men come to me and *offer their lives to atone for their sins*.

It is true that the blood of the Son of God was shed for sins through the fall and those committed by men, yet men can commit *sins which it can never remit*. As it was in ancient days, so it is in our day. . . . There are sins that can be atoned for by an offering upon an altar, as in ancient days, and there are sins that the blood of a lamb, or a calf, or of turtle doves, cannot remit, but they must be *atoned for by the blood of the man*. That is the reason why men talk to you as they do from this stand; they understand the *doctrine* and throw out a few words about it. You have been taught that doctrine, but you do not understand it. (Sermon by Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, vol. 4, pages 53-54; also published in the *Deseret News*, October 1, 1856, page 235)

Since this sermon was published in the official organ of the Mormon church and was reprinted in the church’s own publication in England, there can be no doubt that “blood atonement” was an important doctrine of the church. In addition, there are many other sermons, diaries, and manuscripts which contain information on this doctrine. For instance, J. M. Grant, who was a member of the First Presidency under Brigham Young, made some very strong statements concerning blood atonement:

Some have received the Priesthood and a knowledge of the things of God, and still they dishonor the cause of truth, commit adultery, and every other abomination beneath the heavens, . . . they will seek unto wizards that peep, . . . get drunk and wallow in the mire and filth, and yet they call themselves Saints, . . . there are men and women that I would advise to go to the President immediately, and ask him to appoint a committee to attend to their case; and then let a place be selected, and *let that committee shed their blood.*

We have those amongst us that are full of all manner of abominations, those who need to have their blood shed, for water will not do, their sins are of too deep a dye. . . . I would ask how many covenant breakers there are in this city and in this kingdom. I believe that there are a great many; and if they are covenant breakers we need a place designated, where we can shed their blood. (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 4, pages 49-50; also published in *Deseret News*, October 1, 1856)

The “blood atonement” doctrine taught by the early Mormon leaders is particularly objectionable to Christians for two reasons: 1. It indicates that killing a sinner or allowing one’s self to be killed can atone for sin. There is nothing in the Bible to support such a doctrine. 2. Brigham Young’s claim that there are “sins” which the blood of the Son of God “can never remit,” seems to be diametrically opposed to the Apostle John’s claim that “the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us *from all sin*” (John 1:7). Hebrews 10:12 claims that Jesus “offered one sacrifice for sins for ever,” and verse 26 says that “if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth *no more sacrifice for sins.*”

When we look into the early Mormon publications and manuscripts we find that there were many crimes that the Mormon church leaders taught were worthy of death. The following is a list of those crimes:

**1 — Murder.** These words are attributed to Joseph Smith in the *History of the Church*, vol. 5, page 296:

In debate, George A. Smith said imprisonment was better than hanging. I replied, I was opposed to hanging, even if a man kill another, *I will shoot him, or cut off his head, spill his blood on the ground*, and let the smoke thereof ascend up to God; and if ever I have the privilege of making a law on the subject, I will have it so.

Joseph Smith’s journal for March 4, 1843, has essentially the same material although the words “cut his throat” are used instead of “cut off his head” (see *An American Prophet’s Record: The Diaries and Journals of Joseph Smith*, edited by Scott H. Faulring, 1987, page 326). It is interesting to note that the early Mormons

believed in beheading and incorporated this into their laws in Utah. Martin R. Gardner gives this information:

In 1851 the General Assembly of the state of Deseret, controlled by members of the Council of Fifty, adopted a criminal code that imposed capital punishment for the crime of murder: “Be it further ordained, that when any person shall be found guilty of murder, . . . he, she or they shall suffer death by being shot, hung or beheaded.” . . .

The Deseret Assembly and later the territorial legislature were the first American lawmakers to adopt beheading or the firing squad as modes of execution. Except for a few aberrations during colonial times, beheading was never employed in any American jurisdiction and had ceased to be used in Britain one hundred years before the Mormons adopted it in 1851. While shooting was acceptable for military executions, hanging was the exclusive means of state executions in other jurisdictions when the firing squad was introduced into Utah law. Utah stood alone in its use of beheading and shooting and thus was unique in literally “spilling the blood of the murderer on the ground.” . . . Three of the most vigorous advocates of blood atonement in early Utah, Brigham Young, Jedediah M. Grant and Heber C. Kimball, were directly involved in the 1851 Deseret Assembly that introduced beheading and the firing squad into Utah law. . . . All three were also members of the Council of Fifty. . . . Given the political influence of the Council and its commitment to blood atonement, the sudden and novel emergence of beheading and the firing squad in the law of Utah seems to be a religious phenomenon. (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Spring 1979, pages 13-14)

While a “statutory revision of the criminal law removed beheading” in 1888, the law still allows the murderer to be shot so that his blood can flow and atone for his sin. Joseph Fielding Smith wrote:

. . . the founders of Utah incorporated in the laws of the Territory provisions for the capital punishment of those who wilfully shed the blood of their fellow men. This law, which is now the law of the State, granted the condemned murderer the privilege of choosing for himself whether he die by hanging, or whether he be *shot and thus have his blood shed in harmony with the law of Gods and thus atone*, so far as it is in his power to atone, for the death of his victim. Almost without exception the condemned party chooses the latter death. (*Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 1, page 136)

Although it was deleted in later printings of the book, in the 1958 edition of *Mormon Doctrine*, page 314, Bruce R. McConkie once warned that “hanging or execution on a gallows *does not comply with the law of blood atonement*, for the blood is not shed.” In answer to





inquiry dated October 18, 1962, Joseph Fielding Smith stated: "It is wrong to hang any one who has committed murder, or to kill by gas. The Lord said his blood should be shed." Almost eighteen years after Smith made this comment, the Utah Legislature banned the practice of hanging. The *Salt Lake Tribune*, for March 8, 1980, reported: "Although there is little public awareness, Utah takes a historic step this summer when it discontinues hanging as an option for capital punishment. . . . The new code flatly states: 'The warden shall see that the judgment of death is executed by shooting the defendant at the state prison.'" This change in the law did not last for very long; Utah now has a law which allows the murderer a choice between shooting or lethal injection.

There can be no doubt that over the years the blood atonement doctrine has had a real influence on Utah's laws. The *Salt Lake Tribune*, January 28, 1968, reported:

Japanese District and Family Court Judge Hiroshige Takasawa, after more than a year of research studies of Utah's "unique" form of capital punishment, has found "evidence that present laws stem from early Mormon philosophy of blood atonement."

**2 — Adultery and Immorality.** Bruce R. McConkie once lamented: "Modern governments do not take the life of the adulterer, and some of them have done away with the supreme penalty where murder is involved—all of which is further evidence of the direful apostasy that prevails among the peoples who call themselves Christians" (*Mormon Doctrine*, 1958, page 104). Apostle McConkie deleted this statement in later editions of his book, and in a letter dated October 18, 1978, he virtually denied the doctrine of blood atonement. Nevertheless, when his book was revised in 1979 to reflect the change of doctrine concerning blacks, he left in the section entitled: "BLOOD ATONEMENT DOCTRINE." In this section McConkie affirmed that "under certain circumstances there are some serious sins for which the cleansing of Christ does not operate, and the law of God is that men must then have their own blood shed to atone for their sins" (pages 92-93).

While modern church leaders seem to be confused over "blood atonement," President Brigham Young was not ambiguous about the doctrine. In one sermon he proclaimed:

Let me suppose a case. Suppose you found your brother in bed with your wife, and *put a javelin through both of them, you would be justified*, and they would *atone for their sins*, and be received into the kingdom of God. I would *at once do so* in such a case; and under such circumstances, I have no wife whom I love so well that I would not *put a javelin through her heart*, and I would do it with clean hands. . . .

There is not a man or woman, who violates the covenants made with their God, that will not be required to pay the debt. *The blood of Christ will never wipe that out, your own blood must atone for it . . .* (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 3, page 247)

Heber C. Kimball, a member of the First Presidency, boasted: ". . . our females . . . are not unclean, for we wipe all unclean ones from our midst: we not only wipe them from our streets, but we wipe them out of existence . . . so help me God, while I live, I will lend my hand to wipe such persons out: and I know this people will" (*Millennial Star*, vol. 16, page 739). Kimball also stated that if he was ever guilty of seducing "any woman in God's world, I say, sever my head from my body" (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 7, page 20). On another occasion Kimball warned: "But they cannot whore it here; for, gentlemen, if there is anything of that kind, we will slay both men and women. We will do it, as the Lord liveth—we will slay such characters" (*Ibid.*, vol. 6, page 38). Apostle George A. Smith added: "The principle, the only one that beats through the heart of the entire inhabitants of this Territory, is simply this: The man who seduces his neighbor's wife must die, and her nearest relative must kill him!" (*Ibid.*, vol. 1, page 97).

**3 — Stealing.** Joseph Smith once remarked: "I despise a thief above ground" (*Times and Seasons*, vol. 4, pages 183-184). Brigham Young said that he was "perfectly willing to see thieves have their throats cut; . . ." (*History of the Church*, vol. 7, page 597). On another occasion President Young commented:

If you want to know what to do with a thief that you may find stealing, I say kill him on the spot, and never suffer him to commit another iniquity. . . . I have trained myself to measure things by the line of justice. . . . If you will cause all those whom you know to be thieves, to be placed in a line before the mouth of one of our largest cannon, well loaded with chain shot, I will prove by my works whether I can mete out justice to such persons, or not. I would consider it just as much my duty to do that, as to baptize a man for the remission of his sins. (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 1, pages 108-109)

**4 — Using the Lord's Name in Vain.** In the journal of Hosea Stout (vol. 2, page 71; page 56 of typed copy at Utah State Historical Society), Brigham Young is recorded as saying: ". . . I tell you the time is coming when that man uses the name of the Lord is used [*sic*] the penalty will be affixed and immediately be executed on the spot . . ."

**5 — For Not Receiving the Gospel.** Brigham Young once proclaimed: "The time is coming when justice will

be laid to the line and righteousness to the plummet; when we shall ask, ‘Are you for God?’ and if you are not heartily on the Lord’s side, you will be hewn down” (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 3, page 226).

**6 — For Marriage to an African.** In the section on the anti-black doctrine we have already quoted Brigham Young as saying the following: “Shall I tell you the law of God in regard to the African race? If the white man who belongs to the chosen seed mixes his blood with the seed of Cain, the penalty, under the *law of God is death on the spot*. This will always be so” (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 10, page 110). Brigham Young taught that the children of such a union should also be destroyed. Wilford Woodruff, who became the fourth president of the church, recorded in his journal an address delivered by President Young in 1852. In this address we find the following:

And if any man mingles his seed with the seed of Cane [*sic*] the ownly [*sic*] way he Could get rid of it or have salvation would be to Come forward & have his head cut off & spill his Blood upon the ground. It would also take the life of his Children. (*Wilford Woodruff’s Journal*, vol. 4, page 97)

According to the “Excerpts From the Weekly Council Meetings of the Quorum of the Twelve,” a document preserved in the George A. Smith papers at the University of Utah Library, this doctrine was still being taught in 1897. In the report for December 15, 1897, we read:

President Cannon said he had understood President Taylor to say that a man who had the priesthood who would marry a woman of the accused seed, that if the law of the Lord were administered upon him, he would be killed, and his offspring, for the reason that the Lord had determined that the seed of Cain should not receive the priesthood in the flesh . . . (“Excerpts From the Weekly Council Meetings of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, Dealing with the Rights of Negroes in the Church, 1849-1940,” as published in *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* page 582)

On August 22, 1895, in this same source, George Q. Cannon commented:

President Cannon remarked that the Prophet Joseph taught this doctrine: That the seed of Cain could not receive the Priesthood . . . and that any white man who mingled his seed with that of Cain should be killed, and thus prevent any of the seed of Cain’s coming into possession of the priesthood.

**7 — For Covenant Breaking.** We have previously quoted Jedediah M. Grant, the second counselor to Brigham Young, as suggesting that “covenant breakers”

should come before a committee who would “shed their blood.” On another occasion President Grant exclaimed:

What disposition ought the people of God to make of covenant breakers . . . Putting to death transgressors would exhibit the law of God, no difference by whom it was done; that is my opinion. . . . It is their right to baptize a sinner to save him, and it is also their right to *kill a sinner to save him*. . . . We would not kill a man, of course, unless we killed him to save him. . . .

Do you think it would be any sin to kill me if I were to break my covenants? . . . Do you believe you would kill me if I broke the covenants of God, and you had the Spirit of God? Yes; and the more Spirit of God I had, the more I should strive *to save your soul by spilling your blood*, when you had committed sin that could not be remitted by baptism. (*Deseret News*, July 27, 1854)

Heber C. Kimball, the first counselor to Brigham Young, declared: “. . . if men turn traitors to God and His servants, their blood will surely be shed, or else they will be damned, and that too according to their covenants” (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 4, page 375).

**8 — For Apostasy.** Brigham Young threatened:

I say, rather than that apostates should flourish here, I will unsheath my bowie knife and conquer or die. (Great commotion in the congregation, and a simultaneous burst of feeling, assenting to the declaration.) Now, you nasty apostates, clear out, or judgment will be put to the line, and righteousness to the plummet. (Voices, generally, “go it, go it.”) If you say it is right, raise your hands. (All hands up.) Let us call upon the Lord to assist us in this, and every good work. (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 1, page 83)

On another occasion Brigham Young explained:

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

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

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

This is loving our neighbor as ourselves; if he needs help, help him; and if he wants salvation and it is necessary to spill his blood on the earth in order that he may be saved, spill it. Any of you who understand the principles of eternity, if you have sinned a sin requiring the shedding of blood, except the sin unto death, would not be satisfied nor rest until your blood should be spilled, that you might gain that salvation you desire. *That is the way to love mankind.* (*Deseret News*, February 18, 1857; also reprinted in *Journal of Discourses*, vol. 4, pages 219-220)

In a manuscript written in 1839, Reed Peck said that Joseph Smith claimed he had a revelation in which Apostle Peter told him that he had killed Judas: “He [Joseph Smith] talked of dissenters and cited us to the case of Judas, saying that Peter told him in a conversation a few days ago that [he] himself hung Judas for betraying Christ . . .” (*The Reed Peck Manuscript*, page 13). Although this doctrine was kept secret at first, when the Mormons were settled in Utah they began to teach it openly. On December 13, 1857, Heber C. Kimball preached the following:

Judas lost that saving principle, and they took him and killed him. It is said in the Bible that his bowels gushed out; but they actually kicked him until his bowels came out. . . . Judas was like salt that had lost its saving principles—good for nothing but to be cast out and trodden under foot of men. . . . It is so with you, ye Elders of Israel, when you forfeit your covenants. . . . I know the day is right at hand when men will forfeit their Priesthood and turn against us and against the covenants they have made, and they will be destroyed as Judas was. (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 6, pages 125-126)

**9— For Lying.** Brigham Young made this statement in 1846: “I . . . warned those who lied and stole and followed Israel that they would have their heads cut off for that was the law of God and it should be executed” (“Manuscript History of Brigham Young,” December 20, 1846, typed copy; original in LDS Church Archive).

**10— For Counterfeiting.** On February 24, 1847, Brigham Young declared: “I swore by the Eternal Gods that if men in our midst would not stop this cursed work of stealing and counterfeiting *their throats should be cut*” (*Ibid.*).

**11— For Condemning Joseph Smith or Consenting to His Death.** Norton Jacob quoted Brigham Young as saying: “A man may live here with us and worship what God he pleases or none at all, but he must not blaspheme the God of Israel or damn old Joe Smith or his religion, for we will *salt him down in the lake*” (*Quest for Empire*, page 127). Joseph F. Smith, who served as the sixth president of the church, once admitted that he was about to stab a man with his pocket knife if he even expressed approval of the murder of Joseph Smith. Under the date of December 6, 1889, Apostle Abraham H. Cannon recorded the following in his journal:

About 4:30 p.m. this meeting adjourned and was followed by a meeting of Presidents Woodruff, Cannon and Smith and Bros. Lyman and Grant. . . . Bro. Joseph F. Smith was traveling some years ago near Carthage when he met a man who said he had just arrived five minutes too late to see the Smiths killed. Instantly a dark cloud seemed to overshadow Bro. Smith and he asked how this man looked upon the deed. Bro. S. was oppressed by a most horrible feeling as he waited for a reply. After a brief pause the man answered, “Just as I have always looked upon it—that it was a d\_\_\_d cold-blooded murder.” The cloud immediately lifted from Bro. Smith and he found that he had his open pocket knife grasped in his hand in his pocket, and he believes that had this man given his approval to that murder of the prophets he *would have immediately struck him to the heart.* (“Daily Journal of Abraham H. Cannon,” December 6, 1889, pages 205-206; see *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* page 403, for an actual photograph from the journal).

### Blood Atonement in Actual Practice

Although the doctrine was openly proclaimed and put into practice in the 1850s, so many gentiles came to Utah that the church leaders found it impossible to continue the practice. As we have shown, Joseph F. Smith was such a firm believer in the doctrine of blood atonement that he almost killed a man at Carthage. His son, Joseph Fielding Smith, who served as the tenth president of the church, taught the doctrine. Nevertheless, he could not seem to face the fact that it was actually practiced in early Utah. In his book *Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 1, pages 133-136, he stated:

Just a word or two now, on the subject of blood atonement . . . *man may commit certain grievous sins*

—according to his light and knowledge—that will place him beyond the reach of the atoning blood of Christ. If then he would be saved he must make sacrifice of his own life to atone—so far as in his power lies—for that sin, for the blood of Christ alone under certain circumstances will not avail. . . . Joseph Smith taught that there were certain sins so grievous that man may commit, that they will place the transgressor beyond the power of the atonement of Christ. If these offenses are committed, then the blood of Christ will not cleanse them from their sins even though they repent. Therefore their only hope is to have their own blood shed to atone, as far as possible, in their behalf. . . . And men for certain crimes have had to atone as far as they could for their sins wherein they have placed themselves beyond the redeeming power of the blood of Christ.

After expressing a belief in the doctrine of blood atonement, however, President Smith turned right around and said that it was never actually practiced by the Mormon church. As we have demonstrated in *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* and *The Mormon Kingdom*, vol. 2, Joseph Fielding Smith’s claim that it was believed in but never practiced is far from the truth. Many people lost their lives in Utah because of this doctrine. One example is found in the *Confessions of John D. Lee*:

The most deadly sin among the people was adultery, and many men were killed in Utah for that crime.

Rosmos Anderson . . . married a widow lady somewhat older than himself, and she had a daughter that was fully grown at the time of the reformation. The girl was very anxious to be sealed to her stepfather, and Anderson was equally anxious to take her for a second wife, but as she was a fine-looking girl, Klingensmith desired her to marry him, and she refused. At one of the meetings during the reformation Anderson and his step-daughter confessed that they had committed adultery, believing when they did so that Brigham Young would allow them to marry when he learned the facts. Their confession being full, they were rebaptized and received into full membership. They were then placed under covenant that if they again committed adultery, Anderson should suffer death. Soon after this a charge was laid against Anderson before the Council, accusing him of adultery with his step-daughter. This council was composed of Klingensmith and his two counselors; it was the Bishop’s Council. . . . the Council voted that Anderson must die for violating his covenants. Klingensmith went to Anderson and notified him that the orders were that he must die by having his throat cut, so that the running of his blood would atone for his sins. . . . His wife was ordered to prepare a suit of clean clothing, in which to have her husband buried, and was informed that he was to be killed for his sins, . . .

Klingensmith, James Haslem, Daniel McFarland and John M. Higbee dug a grave in the field near Cedar City, and that night, about 12 o’clock, went to Anderson’s house and ordered him to make ready to obey the Council. . . . They went to the place where the grave was prepared; Anderson knelt down upon the side of the grave and prayed, Klingensmith and his company then cut Anderson’s throat from ear to ear and held him so that his blood ran into the grave.

As soon as he was dead they dressed him in his clean clothes, threw him into the grave and buried him. They then carried his bloody clothing back to his family, and gave them to his wife to wash, when she was again instructed to say that her husband was in California. She obeyed their orders.

No move of that kind was made in Cedar City, unless it was done by order of the “Council” or of the “High Council.” I was at once informed of Anderson’s death. . . . The killing of Anderson was then considered a religious duty and a just act. It was justified by all the people, for they were bound by the same covenants, and the least word of objection to thus treating the man who had broken his covenant would have brought the same fate upon the person who was so foolish as to raise his voice against any act committed by order of the Church authorities. (*Confessions of John D. Lee*, 1880, pages 282-283)

On February 15, 1851, Hosea Stout recorded in his journal that he heard “news that M. D. Hambleton on last Sunday killed Dr. J. M. Vaughan for similar conduct with Mrs. H. as took place with Dr. & Foots wife last summer” (*On The Mormon Frontier; The Diary of Hosea Stout*, vol. 2, page 393). This was probably the same case of blood atonement that Sarah S. Leavitt told of in her record book:

The first person I spoke to after I entered Salt Lake was Dr. Vaun. . . . He said, “Well, Mrs. Leavitt, I have joined the church.” Of course, I was glad . . . But in this I was disappointed, for he sought the women’s company and with the help of love powders succeeded in gratifying his hellish desires. . . . He was called up before the authorities . . . He was forgiven and he said if he was ever found guilty again his life should be the penalty. He knew *the law of God required it*. He was guilty again and was shot and killed. Oh, the weakness and depravity of man, to sell their birthright for a mess of pottage, or in other words, sell their souls’ salvation for a few moments of carnal pleasure. (*Sarah S. Leavitt Journal*, typed copy, page 41)

According to Stout’s printed diary (page 396), President Young spoke “on the part” of the murderer, and he was never brought to trial.

## The Danites

Heber C. Kimball once counseled: “. . . when it is necessary that blood should be shed, we should be as ready to do that as to eat an apple . . . as brother Taylor says, you may dig your graves, and we will slay you, and you may crawl into them” (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 6, pages 34-35). This seeming indifference to the gravity of taking another person’s life may have stemmed from the conflicts the Mormons had with their neighbors while Joseph Smith was still alive. Although it is true that in a number of cases the Mormons received unfair and even violent treatment from their enemies (e.g., the Haun’s Mill massacre), Joseph Smith’s claim that God gave him a revelation sanctioning the cursing of his enemies and commanding the Mormons to “avenge me of mine enemies” only made matters worse. The evidence, in fact, shows that Joseph Smith went so far as to endorse the establishment of a secret organization known as the Danites which was committed to vengeance against the church’s enemies. This band not only targeted the gentiles, but even dealt with dissenters from the church. David Whitmer, one of the three witnesses to the Book of Mormon, revealed the following concerning the Danites:

In the spring of 1838, the heads of the church and many of the members had gone deep into error and blindness. . . . In June, 1838, at Far West, Mo., a secret organization was formed, Doctor Avar being put in as the leader of the band; a certain oath was to be administered to all the brethren to bind them to support the heads of the church in everything they should teach. All who refused to take this oath were considered dissenters from the church, and certain things were to be done concerning these dissenters, by Dr. Avar’s secret band. . . . my persecutions, for trying to show them their errors, became of such a nature that I had to leave the Latter Day Saints; . . . (*An Address to All Believers in Christ*, by David Whitmer, Richmond, Mo., 1887, pages 27-28)

John Whitmer, one of the eight witnesses to the Book of Mormon, also commented concerning the Danite band:

Joseph Smith, Jr., S. Rigdon, and Hyrum Smith moved their families to this place, Far West, in the spring of 1838. As soon as they came here, they began to enforce their new organized plan, which caused dissensions and difficulties, threatenings and even murders. . . . on the 19th of June, 1838, they preached a sermon called the Salt Sermon, in which these Gideonites understood that they should *drive the dissenters*, as they termed those who believed not in their secret bands, in fornication, adultery or midnight machinations. . . . They had threatened us, to kill us, if we did not make restitutions to them, by upholding them

in their wicked purposes and designs. . . . when we were on our way home from Liberty, Clay County, we met the families of Oliver Cowdery and L. E. Johnson, whom *they had driven from their homes, and robbed them of all their goods, save clothing, bedding, etc.*

While we were gone Jo. and Rigdon and their band of Gadiatons kept up a guard, and watched our houses, and abused our families, and threatened them, if they were not gone by morning, they would be *drove out, and threatened our lives*, if they ever saw us in Far West. (*John Whitmer’s History*, page 22)

Mormon apologists have been somewhat divided concerning the Danite band. Some have denied that it even existed. For instance, John Taylor, who became the third president of the church, made this claim: “I have heard a good deal about Danites, but I *never heard of them among the Latter-day Saints*. If there was such an organization, I never was made acquainted with it . . .” (*History of the Church*, vol. 3, page 168, footnote). Others have admitted the existence of the secret organization but denied that Joseph Smith was connected with it. Mormon writer William E. Berrett has taken this position. Although he would have us believe that Joseph Smith was in the dark concerning what was going on, Mr. Berrett freely admits that “Such a band as the ‘Danites’ *did exist*, as historians affirm; . . . The organization had been for the *purpose of plundering and murdering the enemies of the Saints*” (*The Restored Church*, 1956, pages 197-198).

Joseph Smith himself made some very contradictory statements about this organization. On one occasion he said that it was organized but claimed that he did not have any knowledge of it at the time (see *History of the Church*, vol. 3, pages 178-182). On another occasion, however, Joseph Smith passed the whole thing off by saying, “The Danite system alluded to by Norton *never had any existence*” (*Ibid.*, vol. 6, page 165). Fortunately for the cause of truth, some new and important evidence came to light when H. Michael Marquardt was working on a transcript of Joseph Smith’s early diaries—a work which we later published. In 1838 Joseph Smith had his scribe George W. Robinson keep a diary which was called “The Scriptorium Book of Joseph Smith Jr President of The Church of Jesus Christ, of Latter-day Saints in all the world.” This diary contains a very important entry under the date of July 27, 1838, which has been crossed out. Mr. Marquardt worked very carefully with this portion of the record and was finally able to decipher most of the words. He discovered that the entry related to the Danite band. It not only confirmed the existence of the band but said it was organized for the purpose of making things right and cleansing the Church. When Mormon scholar Scott H. Faulring later made his

transcription of Joseph Smith diaries, he felt that this portion of the text was very important and therefore sought permission to see the original manuscript. In a footnote on page 198 of *An American Prophet's Record, The Diaries and Journals of Joseph Smith*, Mr. Faulring states: "This transcription has been reconstructed from a microfilm copy of the original manuscript at the archives of the Historical Department, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. My request for access to the original manuscript for verification was denied by historical department administrators. The paragraph is cancelled out in the original." On the same page, Scott Faulring gives his rendition of this remarkable text. Except for a few letters it agrees very well with that given by H. Michael Marquardt. The most important difference is the word "revelation" which is written above the line. Mr. Marquardt transcribed it as "Revel\_r." In any case, Faulring's transcription reads as follows:

Thus far, according to the order /revelation/ of the Danites. We have a company of Danites in these times, to put to right [.....] that which is not right, and to cleanse the Church of every great evil which has hitherto existed among us inasmuch as they cannot be put to right [ - ] by teachings and [----] any or part of them [ - ] on the [ -- ] of [ -- ] They came up to consecrate, by companies of tens, [ - ] by th[... ] [ --- ]

It is certainly too bad that the church would not allow Mr. Faulring to study the original manuscript. An examination of the original document might have helped him to identify more of the words which were obliterated. We produced a photograph of this important text between pages 13 and 14 in our publication *Joseph Smith's 1838-39 Diaries*.

Joseph Smith's "Scriptory Book" agrees with other evidence about the Danites. For instance, Reed Peck records: "I heard Avard, on one occasion, say that the Danites were to consecrate their surplus property, and to come in by tens to do so . . ." Joseph Smith's "Scriptory Book" confirms this when it says that the Danites "came up to consecrate, by companies of tens, . . ."

While it is extremely interesting that Joseph Smith's own "Scriptory Book" would contain an entry concerning the Danites, the whole matter is made even more intriguing by the fact that there has been an attempt to obliterate the entry. Joseph Smith's *History of the Church* relies on the "Scriptory Book" for the entries of July 26 and 28, but the entry for July 27—i.e., the portion concerning the Danites—has been omitted.

In the *Comprehensive History of the Church*, vol. 1, pages 500-501, the Mormon historian B. H. Roberts commented about testimony given after the war in Missouri:

It is in this testimony and principally in the statement of Dr. Avard, that *the existence of the "Danites" in the "Mormon" Church is affirmed*. Avard declared that about four months before the date of his testimony, . . . "a band called the 'Daughter of Zion' (afterwards called the 'Danite Band') was formed of the members of the Mormon church, the original object of which was to drive from the county of Caldwell all those who dissented from the Mormon church; in which they succeeded admirably and to the satisfaction of all concerned."

In 1839 Reed Peck compiled his account of the activities of the Danites:

Some time previous to this secret meetings had been held in F West . . . I attende[d] one about the last of June and heard a full disclosure of its object—Jared Carter Geo W. Robinson and Sampson Avard, under the instruction of the presidency, had formed a secret military society, called the "daughter of Zion". . . The principles taught by Sampson Avard as spokesman were that "As the Lord had raised up a prophet in these last days like unto Moses it shall be the duty of this band to obey him in all things, and whatever he requires you shall perform being ready to give up life and property for the advancement of the cause[.] When any thing is to be performed *no member shall have the privilege of judging whether it would be right or wrong but shall engage in its accomplishment and trust God for the result*[.]

It is not our business or place to know what is required by God, but he will inform us by means of the prophet and we must perform[.] If any one of you see a member of the band in difficulty in the surrounding country contending for instance with an enemy, you shall extricate him even if in the wrong if you have to do with his adversary as Moses did with the Egyptian[.] Put him under the sand and both pack off to Far West and we will take care of the matter ourselves. No person shall be suffered to speak evil or disrespectfully of the presidency[.] The secret signs and purposes of the society are not to be revealed on pain of death" &c &c[.] About 50 persons were initiated into the Society at the time I was introduced . . .

I was appointed Adjutant of the band . . . All the principles of the Society tended to give the presidency unlimited power over the property, persons and I might say with propriety lives of the members of the church as physical force was to be resorte[d] to if necessary to accomplish their designs[.] The blood of my best fiend must flow by my own hands if I would be a faithful Danite should the prophet command it[.] Said A McRae in my hearing "If Joseph should tell me to kill Vanburen in his presidential chair I would immediately start and do my best to assassinate him let the consequences be as they would . . . Captains of fifties & Captains of tens and all these officers with the privates were to be under the administration of the presidency of the church and

wholly subject to their control[.] At a meeting for the organization of the Danites Sampson Avard presented the society to the presidency who blessed them and accepted their services as though they were soon to be employed in executing some great design[.] They also made speeches to the society in which great military glory and conquest were represented as awaiting them. . . . In the fore part of July the “brother of Gideon” or Jared Carter Capt Genl of the Danites having complained to Joseph Smith of some observations made by Sidney Rigdon in a sermon was tried for finding fault with one of the presidency and deprived of his station and Elias Higbee was appointed in his stead[.]

Carter’s punishment according to the principles of the Danites should have been death[.] In the evening after the trial . . . D. B. Huntington stated that *Joseph declared during the examination that he should have cut Carter’s throat on the spot* if he had been alone when he made the complaint[.] Huntington also said that on his trial Carter came within a finger point of losing his head. Sampson Avard related at the same time the arrangements that had been made by the presidency and officers present at the trial respecting the dissenters—Said he, “all the head officers are to be furnished by the presidency with a list of dissenters both in Ohio and Missouri and if for example I meet with one of them who is damning and cursing the presidency, I can curse them too and if he will drink I can get him a bowl of brandy and after a while take him by the arm and get him one side in the brush when I will into his guts in a minute and put him under the sod.” When an officer has disposed of a dissenter in this way he shall inform the presidency, and them only with whom it shall remain an inviolable secret. In July the law of consecration took effect which required every person to give up to the bishop all surplus property of every discription not necessary for their present support[.] Sampson Avard the most busy actor and sharpest tool of the Presidency informed John Corril and Myself that “all persons who attempted to deceive and retain property that should be given up would meet with the fate of Ananias and Saphira who were killed by Peter.” (*The Reed Peck Manuscript*, pages 9-12; a photographic copy of the original manuscript is at the University of Utah Library)

In a dissertation written at Brigham Young University, Mormon scholar Leland Gentry observed that “Latter-day Saint historians have generally been unwilling to concede that the Mormons of 1838 did the burning or plundering which the non-Mormons charged against them” (*A History of the Latter-day Saints in Northern Missouri From 1836 to 1839*, page 383). On pages 385 and 387, Gentry acknowledged:

The evidence tends to support the view that both sides engaged in incendiary acts.

The charge of theft raises another interesting point. As formerly noted, the Danites were taught to *take from*

*the Gentiles and consecrate to the Church.* Nearly every person who testified at the trial against the Mormon leaders made mention of this fact. John Clemenson stated that “it was frequently observed among the troops [at Diahman] that the time had come when the riches of the Gentiles should be consecrated to the Saints.” Jeremiah Myers testified that “the consecrated property . . . was dealt out to those in need” by Bishop Vinson Knight.”

On pages 328-329 of the same dissertation, Leland Gentry wrote:

By the time that Doniphan ordered the Saints to form in their own defense, the Danite movement had entered its third phase, namely, *pillaging, spoiling, and burning the property of all who opposed the Saints.*

After the Mormons were finally driven from Missouri, they gathered in Illinois and built the city of Nauvoo. John D. Lee, who served as a member of the Mormon church’s secret Council of Fifty, revealed that some enemies of the church were killed in Nauvoo by orders from the church leaders: “I knew of many men being killed in Nauvoo by the Danites. It was then the rule that all the enemies of Joseph Smith should be killed; and I know of many a man who was quietly put out of the way by the orders of Joseph and his Apostles while the Church was there.” According to Lee, the police in Nauvoo functioned like the Danite organization had done in Missouri:

Whatever the police were ordered to do, they were to do and ask no questions. Whether it was right or wrong mattered not to them, they were responsible only to their leaders, and they were amenable only to God. I was a confidant among them, and they let me into the secret of all they did, and they looked to me to speak a good word for them with Brigham, as they were ambitious to please him and obtain his blessing. I knew that I was in their full confidence, and the captain of the police never asked me to do anything he knew I was averse to doing. Under Brigham Young, Hosea Stout was Chief of Police. They showed me where they buried a man in a lot near the Masonic Hall. They said they got him tight and were joking with him while some men were digging his grave. They asked him to go with them into a pit of corn, saying it was fully grown. They told him they had a jug of whiskey cached out there. They led him to his grave, and told him to get down there, and hand up the jug, and he should have the first drink. As he bent over to get down, Rosswell Stevens struck him with his police cane on the back of the head and dropped him. They then tightened a cord around his neck to shut off his wind, and then they covered him up, and set the hill of corn back on his grave to cover up any tracks that might lead to his discovery.

Another man they took in a boat, about two o'clock at night, for a ride. . . . the man who sat behind him struck him upon the head and stunned him. They then tied a rope around his neck and a stone to the other end on the rope, and sent him to the bottom of the Mississippi River. There was another man whose name I have forgotten, who was a great annoyance to the Saints at Nauvoo. He generally brought a party with him when he came to the city, and would threaten them with the law, but he always managed to get away safely. They (the Saints) finally concluded to entrust his case to Howard Egan, a policeman, . . . He took a party of chosen men, or "destroying angels," and went to La Harp, a town near the residence of this man, and watched an opportunity when he would pass along. They "saved" him, and buried him in a wash-out at night. In a short time afterwards a thunder storm washed the earth away and exposed the remains. (*Confessions of John D. Lee*, page 159)

Notice that John D. Lee stated that the Mormon police committed murders for the church and that "Under Brigham Young, Hosea Stout was Chief of Police." Hosea Stout was a member of the Danite Band and later served as a body guard for Joseph Smith. Besides serving as Chief of Police in Nauvoo, he was an officer in the Nauvoo Legion. Fortunately, Hosea Stout's diary has survived and proves to be one of the most revealing documents that we have had access to. The fact that it was written by a faithful Mormon makes it even more significant. In his diary Stout frankly tells of some of the violent methods used by the Mormon leaders. For instance, under the date of April 3, 1845, Hosea Stout recorded the following in his diary:

In the morning I went to the Temple and was roughly accosted by Brs Cahoon & Cutler about a circumstance which took place last night at the Temple. They said that the old Police had beat a man almost to death in the Temple. To which I replied I was glad of it and that I had given orders to that effect in case anyone should be found in the Temple after night and they had only done as they were told, or ordered, . . . we concluded to lay the matter before President Brigham Young and get his advice, . . . Brother Brigham came to us and we related the matter to him and he approved of the proceedings of the Police and said he wanted us to still guard the Temple to regulate the matters there which was done to our satisfaction and justification. (*On The Mormon Frontier; The Dairy of Hosea Stout*, vol. 1, page 32)

Under the date of January 9, 1846, Hosea Stout recorded:

When we came to the Temple some what a considerable number of the guard were assembled and among them was William Hibbard . . . He was evidently come as a spy. When I saw him I told Scott that we must "bounce a stone off of his head." to which he agreed we prepared accordingly & I got an opportunity & hit him on the back of his head which came very near taking his life. But few knew anything about what was the matter he left the ground out of his senses when he came to himself he could not tell what had happened to him &c. (vol. 1, page 103)

Other entries in Hosea Stout's diary show that he was a very brutal man (see *The Mormon Kingdom*, vol. 2, page 7).

In another chapter we have shown that Joseph Smith formed a secret "Council of Fifty" in Nauvoo. Mormon writer Klaus J. Hansen says that "several important Danites were among those initiated into the Council of Fifty in 1844" (*Quest for Empire*, page 58). Mr. Hansen admits that the Council of Fifty may have been involved in the practice of "blood atonement":

The law of blood atonement was still another law revealed from heaven . . . If, according to this doctrine, a member of the kingdom committed the crimes of murder and adultery, or if he betrayed one of his fellow Mormons to the enemies of the church, or revealed the secrets of the kingdom, he could save his soul only if he expiated for the crime by the shedding of his blood. Blood atonement was, of course, a form of capital punishment. Yet because of its theological implications, and because the Council of Fifty was to administer it, the doctrine was surrounded with an aura of mystery, terror, and holy murder. The Council of Fifty heightened the atmosphere of fear and secrecy associated with this practice by conducting cases involving the possibility of blood atonement in utmost secrecy for fear of public repercussions. (*Ibid.*, page 69)

### Using the Mean Devils

President Brigham Young once boasted: "And if the Gentiles wish to see a few tricks, we have 'Mormons' that can perform them. *We have the meanest devils on the earth in our midst, and we intend to keep them, for we have use for them*; and if the Devil does not look sharp, we will cheat him out of them at the last, for they will reform and go to heaven with us" (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 6, page 176). Brigham Young was undoubtedly referring to men like Orrin Porter Rockwell and Bill Hickman when he made this statement. Hickman later confessed that he had committed murders which had been ordered by Brigham Young and Apostle Orson Hyde. In *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* pages 444-447, we give evidence that Bill Hickman robbed and murdered the enemies of the church and that he had the



approval and protection of Mormon leaders in carrying out his crimes. That the Mormon leaders approved of Hickman's crimes is clear from the journal of John Bennion. In 1860 Bennion felt that William Hickman and his brother, George Hickman, should be punished for their evil deeds, but he soon learned that Bishop Gardiner "had been bound & could not act" and that Orson Hyde—President of the Twelve Apostles—taught that a man should not be punished for stealing from the "gentiles." The following is taken from Bennion's journal:

Sat 13 went to the city met Bp Gardiner had a talk with him about W. A. Hickmans wicked course for some time past he said that up till now he had been bound & could not act I told him I was not bound neither was I afraid to expose the wickedness of any man that it was my duty to expose we got home about sun down in the evening I met with Bp & councillors & parties concerned [to] try George Hickman for stealing mules when about to commence trial Elder Hyde come in and by Bp Gardners sollicitation he preached and the trial was postponed after meeting Bp council & Elder Hyde had a long talk in my house br Hyde said speaking of stealing that a man may steal & be influenced by the Spirit of the Lord to do it that Hickman had done it years past and that he never would institute a trial against a brother for stealing from the gentiles but stealing from his brethren he was down on it he laid down much teaching on the subject

S 14th went to meeting at the mill to hear br Hyde . . . he give much good instruction spoke on last nights intention to try Hickman give it as the word of the Lord to set him free for the past, bid him go & sin no more. ("John Bennion Journal," October 13 and 14, 1860, original journal at Utah State Historical Society)

Since this evidence comes from John Bennion's journal—not from an anti-Mormon or unfriendly source—it cannot be easily dismissed.

In his confessions Bill Hickman tells that he received orders from Brigham Young through Apostle Hyde to eliminate Jesse Hartley, a man whom the church leaders did not trust:

. . . one Mr. Hartley came to us from Provo City. This Hartley . . . had married a Miss Bullock, of Provo, . . . at the April Conference, Brigham Young, before the congregation, gave him a tremendous blowing up, calling him all sorts of bad names, and saying he ought to have his throat cut, . . .

I saw Orson Hyde looking very sour at him, and after he had been in camp an hour or two, Hyde told me that he had orders from Brigham Young, if he came to Fort Supply to have him used up. "Now," said he, "I want you and George Boyd to do it." . . . Boyd came to me and said: "It's all right, Bill; I will help you to

kill that fellow." One of our teams was two or three miles behind, and Orson Hyde wished me to go back . . . Hartley stepped up and said he would go . . . Orson Hyde then whispered to me: "Now is your time; don't let him come back." We started, and about half a mile on had to cross the can[y]on stream . . . While crossing, Hartley got a shot and fell dead in the creek. . . .

I went on and met Hosea Stout, . . . I then told him all that had happened, and he said that was good. (*Brigham's Destroying Angel*, 1904, pages 97-98)

In 1872 Bill Hickman made a confession of his crimes to R. N. Baskin. Mr. Baskin, who later served as mayor of Salt Lake City and became a member of the supreme court of the State of Utah, gave this report in his book, *Reminiscences of Early Utah*, page 150:

The Danites were an organization in the Mormon church. Its existence was stated by Bill Hickman in his confession made to me. He gave me the names of more than a score of its active members, among whom were a number of reputed notorious Danite assassins. He stated that the members were bound by their covenants to execute the orders of the priesthood, and that when a direct order or intimation was given to "use up" anyone, it was always executed by one or more of the members, according to the circumstances of the case. That such an organization existed is conclusively shown by the numerous mysterious murders which were never investigated by the executive officers of the Territory, or any attempt made to prosecute the guilty parties. The Mormon sermons, the confessions of Hickman and Lee, and numerous other circumstances made plain its existence. Hickman confessed to me that he personally knew of thirteen persons having been murdered, some of them by him, and others by various Danites; that at one time he *murdered a man by the name of Buck at the personal request of Brigham Young*.

In 1979, there was an attempt by Church Historian Leonard J. Arrington and Hope A. Hilton, a great-granddaughter of Bill Hickman, to undermine Bill Hickman's confession which was published in *Brigham's Destroying Angel*. Their thesis was that Hickman had written a manuscript, but that "a skilled anti-Mormon journalist," J. H. Beadle, had altered it to link Brigham Young and the Mormon hierarchy to the crimes:

Unquestionably, Bill wrote an autobiography that served as the basis for the book. Although it is no longer extant, family members report having seen the manuscript, and *Brigham's Destroying Angel* could not have been prepared without such a personal history. On the other hand, enough manuscript material in Bill's handwriting survives for us to assert with confidence that the published draft of *Brigham's Destroying Angel*

was *not written by Hickman*. The style is different, and the editorializing and sensationalizing are alien to Bill's spirit. . . . unquestionably the autobiography was subjected to tampering, if not ghost-writing, and was almost certainly given a market orientation by Beadle. We are confident that the editorializing, the facile attempts to connect Brigham Young with nefarious doings, are part of the editing by John Beadle. Hickman's own statement to William H. Kimball about *Brigham's Destroying Angel* after it appeared in published form was as follows (this statement relayed to Orson F. Whitney by Kimball on November 15, 1892): "My book is a lie from the beginning to the end—from the boar through. . . . I was bribed to write that book. I was told that I could make fifty thousand dollars out of it, and that is why I did it." (Leonard J. Arrington and Hope A. Hilton, "William A. ('Bill') Hickman: Setting the Record Straight," Task Papers in LDS History, No. 28, Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1979, Foreword, pages i-ii)

On pages 33-34 of the same paper, we find the following: "Beadle, who was in the process of writing an anti-Mormon book, . . . did edit the manuscript to make it count for the maximum in the anti-Mormon cause, and did introduce phrases that linked Brigham Young and the 'Mormon Hierarchy' to criminal activities."

The claim by Arrington and Hilton that Bill Hickman denied the accuracy of the published book is based primarily on the statement of William H. Kimball. There are at least two reasons why this statement seems very questionable: First, it was not "relayed to Orson F. Whitney by Kimball" until "November 15, 1892," which was twenty years after *Brigham's Destroying Angel* was published and nine years after Bill Hickman's death. Hickman, of course, could not reply to a statement made after his death. Second, the statement does not come from a neutral party, but rather from a man who had every reason to try to discredit the book. As we will show later, Bill Hickman claimed that Kimball was an accessory to a murder he had committed and even helped him bury the body.

The assertion by Arrington and Hilton that Beadle was the one who linked the Mormon leaders to Hickman's crimes was certainly based only on wishful thinking. They did not produce any manuscript evidence to support such a conclusion. Moreover, their own paper contains information which makes their position untenable. On page 53 of their study, they cite the following from a letter written by Brigham Young on September 27, 1871: "They have, I am informed, brought before their exclusive, packed grand jury one Wm. Hickman . . . and, he evidently to save himself from justice, has laid at my door some or all of those crimes . . ."

Now, if Bill Hickman would testify before a grand jury that Brigham Young was guilty of the crimes—and it is very clear that he did give such testimony—why would he hesitate to put the same claim in his manuscript? The evidence clearly shows that Hickman planned to openly testify against the Mormon leaders when they were brought to trial. It also seems naive to assume that the anti-Mormons would be willing to give Hickman a bribe of \$50,000 to link the Mormon leaders to his crimes, but accept a manuscript from him which, according to the Arrington-Hilton thesis, provided absolutely no evidence to that effect until it was altered by Beadle.

Fortunately, Hope A. Hilton seems to have done further research on the matter and in a new book on Bill Hickman she has repudiated the idea that J. H. Beadle added the material linking Brigham Young to the crimes. Mrs. Hilton now states:

I do not question whether Hickman *actually wrote Brigham's Destroying Angel*. It is *too accurate in its details to have been written by anyone else*. . . .

I have relied on Hickman's *Brigham's Destroying Angel* . . . for facts of Hickman's life that can be corroborated from other sources. . . . Beadle did not have access to Brigham Young's daily office journal or to other sources available today which confirm many of the book's first-hand statements. . . . one of the most compelling questions about Hickman is why he implicated Brigham Young, Hosea Stout, William Kimball, and others *both in his book and in court*. ("Wild Bill" Hickman and the Mormon Frontier, 1988, Preface, pages x-xi)

On page 127 of her book, Hope Hilton wrote: "To his daughter, Katharine Hickman Butcher, Hickman told the truth when he wrote on 7 January 1872 from the Fort Douglas prison: 'I have written a rough book, but no more rough than true.'" In the preface to her book, page xi, Mrs. Hilton stated:

. . . avowedly anti-Mormon editor, J. H. Beadle, wrote the preface to the autobiography and the first chapter. He also wrote the bitter diatribe against Young and the Mormons on pages 137-139, probably the first paragraph on page 192, and several other brief inserts, sometimes adding only a single word. Except for these additions, *Hickman's mind and hand are the book's undisputed source*.

Although there is no reason to believe that Mrs. Hilton is trying to deceive her readers, those who do not have a copy of *Brigham's Destroying Angel* to refer to may be inclined to believe that Beadle played a larger role in editing the text than he actually did.

At the end of the preface the name “J. H. Beadle” appears. The first chapter, likewise, contains a statement that makes it clear that Beadle is the author: “CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTORY HISTORY. BY THE EDITOR.” Pages 137-139 are also separated from Hickman’s writings with the words: “BY THE EDITOR.” It would appear, then, that Mrs. Hilton now believes that only “the first paragraph on page 192, and several other brief inserts,” were added to the text. It is also clear that she is not even certain that Beadle added the paragraph on page 192 because she begins her statement with the word “probably.” Furthermore, she says that “only a single word” is added in some of the “other” places.

It is interesting to note that J. H. Beadle made these comments concerning his role in editing the manuscript:

I then agreed to take charge of his [Hickman’s] manuscript, and, to use his own language, “Fix it up in shape, so people would understand it.” My first intention was to re-write it entirely, speaking of Hickman in the third person; but one perusal satisfied me that it would be far better as he had written it. I have thought it best, also, to preserve his own phraseology nearly exactly, only inserting a word occasionally where absolutely necessary to prevent mistake. . . . I think every critic must admit that our sentimental and religious murderer has a singularly pleasing style.

A perusal of some of the letters of Bill Hickman, which Hope Hilton has included in her book, shows that Hickman was qualified to write such a book.

In any case, in 1979 Arrington and Hilton felt they could “assert with confidence that the published draft of *Brigham’s Destroying Angel* was not written by Hickman.” Today, however, Hope Hilton feels that “Hickman’s mind and hand are the book’s undisputed source.” Although we would like to know just what evidence brought her to this conclusion, we are very happy that Mrs. Hilton has been honest enough to repudiate the old theory. We feel that her book is a valuable contribution to the study of Bill Hickman. It includes some very important material from the LDS Church Archives which we did not have access to before. While we always felt that Bill Hickman was receiving his orders from Brigham Young and other Mormon leaders, “*Wild Bill*” *Hickman and the Mormon Frontier* furnishes a great deal of information showing that Hickman was deeply involved with Brigham Young. On pages 12-13 of her book, Mrs. Hilton pointed out:

Young assigned Hickman to oversee covert spying activities, to “subdue” the enemies of the church, and to serve as his chief bodyguard. Hickman and others in a tightly knit group served Smith in Nauvoo and Young in Winter Quarters . . . From 1850 to 1853, they shared the duties of government with Young’s secret political organization, the Council of Fifty. . . . Hickman was not

a Mormon during the Danite heyday in Missouri, and there is no reliable evidence that the Danites, as such, survived after 1838 as an organization. However, that some *vigilante Mormons, notably Hickman, continued to espouse the Danite philosophy* they had been taught by *church leaders* of “attacking the Gentiles to preserve the Saints” seems apparent.

In the earlier paper, pages 43-44, Arrington and Hilton had questioned the authorship of a story in *Brigham’s Destroying Angel* concerning the murder of a “half-breed Indian.” They even suggested that “Beadle transposes the event to 1848 [instead of 1849] in order to involve Brigham Young.” In her new book, Mrs. Hilton no longer seems to question the date of the murder or the authorship of the statement:

Most surviving evidence reveals that Bill Hickman, Brigham Young, and Orson Hyde were close friends. Perhaps the events recounted in Hickman’s autobiography account for these bonds. According to his memoir, Hickman killed a half-breed Indian who had joined the Mormon church but subsequently threatened Young’s life. Later, he killed a notorious horse-thief who was seeking revenge against Hyde. Hickman admits to both killings and claims they were the first acts of violence performed at Young’s request. Young gratefully promised to make him “a great man in the Kingdom” some day. . . . Hyde would later go to great lengths to defend Hickman, . . . In the spring of 1848, Brigham Young left Nebraska . . . he requested that Bill stay behind to protect Hyde, . . . (pages 19-20)

After Brigham Young left, Bill Hickman murdered two more Indians. In their 1979 paper, page 43, Arrington and Hilton revealed that Joseph Young, Brigham Young’s brother, wrote him a letter on June 26, 1849, stating:

. . . this “bloody fray” reminded him of the tragic scene at Haun’s Mill—“an outrage on the principles of humanity.” The outrage was “unprovoked on the part of the Indians and without council or pretext for such cruelty. William Hickman is a cold blooded murderer, and as such he stands before every tribunal of justice in Heaven and on Earth and when the Judge of all the Earth makes inquisition for innocent blood it will be found dripping from the hands of William Hickman.”

On June 1, 1849, Apostle Orson Hyde wrote a letter to Brigham Young in which he defended Bill Hickman:

“Brother Hickman has gone to the valley. You may hear some bad accounts of him, but don’t kill him till I come! It may be that my testimony may have a little bearing in his case! He is sometimes a little rash and may shoot an innocent Indian, mistaking him for an Omaha horse thief.” (“*Wild Bill*” *Hickman and the Mormon Frontier*, page 24)

Notwithstanding the fact that Brigham Young was warned by his own brother that Bill Hickman was “a cold blooded murderer,” he continued to use him in early Utah to rob and assassinate enemies of the church.

Orrin Porter Rockwell, like Bill Hickman, was known to have killed many people in early Utah, yet he seems to have been shielded from prosecution by the Mormon church. Rockwell was one of the first to become a member of the church, and soon became one of Joseph Smith’s intimate friends. In Missouri Rockwell joined the dreaded Danite Band and was later initiated into the secret Council of Fifty. The Mormon apologist Nicholas Van Alfen had to admit that Orrin Porter Rockwell sometimes took the law into his own hands: “One cannot resist the conclusion that Porter nourished a growing hatred and an attitude of revenge against the type of men that characterized lawlessness and brutality. He became a peril to them because at times he was *his own court, judge and executioner*” (*Porter Rockwell—The Mormon Frontier Marshal*, 1964, pages 47-48). On page 96 of the same book, Nicholas Van Alfen stated that “Porter always said that he never killed a man unless he deserved it.” The reader will remember that the early Mormon leaders maintained that thieves should have their “throats cut.” Rockwell seemed to be anxious to put this teaching into practice. According to Van Alfen, “John F. Everet, an old timer of Springville, Utah, knew Rockwell . . . Mr. Everet praised Porter highly but criticized him because too often he did not bother with the courts. If a man stole a horse and had to be chased a hundred miles, it was *not likely that the thief would be brought in alive.*”

After the Mormons had been driven from Missouri, they were filled with hatred and revenge. Joseph Smith felt that “Lieutenant Governor Boggs” was chiefly responsible for the situation and strongly suggested that according to the “law of heaven” Boggs’ blood should flow for his evil deeds:

All earth and hell cannot deny . . . a more wholesale butcher, or murderer of mankind ever went untried, unpunished, and unhung—since hanging is the popular method of execution among the Gentiles in all countries professing Christianity, instead of *blood for blood*, according to the *law of heaven*. (*History of the Church*, vol. 1, page 435)

On May 6, 1842, an attempt was made on the life of Lilburn W. Boggs. Three weeks later (May 28) the Mormon newspaper, *The Wasp*, published a communication signed by “Vortex” which contained this statement: “Boggs is undoubtedly killed, according to report, but who did the noble deed remains to be found out.” Mormon writer John J. Stewart commented: “Unfortunately for Joseph, the Mormons and mankind generally, Boggs recovered despite three bullet wounds in the head and

neck” (*Joseph Smith, the Mormon Prophet*, page 171). Some people felt that not long before the attempted assassination Joseph prophesied that Boggs would die a violent death, and anti-Mormon writers have always accused Joseph Smith of sending Orrin Porter Rockwell to shoot him. Mormon writer Harold Schindler has done a great deal of research on this matter, and although he does not definitely state that Rockwell pulled the trigger, he does bring out the fact that Rockwell was in the area and that he was using an assumed name. The evidence against Rockwell is presented in Mr. Schindler’s book, *Orrin Porter Rockwell; Man of God, Son of Thunder*.

### The Aiken Massacre

On page 9 of his book, Schindler cited the *Salt Lake Tribune*, June 11, 1878, as saying it was estimated that Rockwell “participated in at least a hundred murders for the Church, . . .” Mormon apologist Nicholas Van Alfen admitted that Rockwell “killed many men” but insisted that “these cases were always in the performance of his duty as an officer” (*Porter Rockwell—The Mormon Frontier Marshal*, page 93). We have, of course, already quoted Van Alfen as saying that “at times” Rockwell was “his own court, judge and executioner.” In any case, one of the cruelest deeds the Mormons ever engaged in was the Aiken massacre. Evidence shows that Rockwell was deeply involved in this tragedy. J. H. Beadle gave the following information concerning this cold-blooded transaction:

The party consisted of six men . . . on reaching Kaysville, twenty-five miles north of Salt Lake City, they were all arrested on the charge of being spies for the government! . . . The Aiken party had stock, property, and money estimated at \$25,000. Nothing being proved against them they were told they should be “sent out of the Territory by the Southern route.” Four of them started, leaving Buck and one of the unknown men in the city. The party had for an escort, O. P. Rockwell, John Lot, \_\_\_\_ Miles, and one other. Then they reached Nephi, one hundred miles south, Rockwell informed the Bishop, Bryant, that his orders were to “have the men used up there.” Bishop Bryant called a council at once, and the following men were selected to assist: J. Bigler (now a Bishop), P. Pitchforth, his “first counselor,” John Kink, and \_\_\_\_ Pickton. . . . the selected murderers, at 11 p.m., started from the Tithing House and got ahead of the Aikins’, who did not start till daylight. The latter reached the Sevier River, when Rockwell informed them they could find no other camp that day; they halted, when the other party approached and asked to camp with them, for which permission was granted. The weary men removed their arms and heavy clothing, and were soon lost in sleep . . . the

escort and the party from Nephi attacked the sleeping men with clubs and the kingbolts of the wagons. Two died without a struggle. But John Aiken bounded to his feet, but slightly wounded, and sprang into the brush. A shot from the pistol of John Kink laid him senseless. "Colonel" also reached the brush, receiving a shot in the shoulder from Port Rockwell, and believing the whole party had been attacked by banditti, he made his way back to Nephi. With almost superhuman strength he held out during the twenty-five miles, . . . ghastly pale and drenched with his own blood, staggering feebly along the street of Nephi. . . . his story elicited a well-feigned horror.

Meanwhile the murderers had gathered up the other three and thrown them into the river, supposing all to be dead. But John Aiken revived and crawled out on the same side, and hiding in the brush, heard these terrible words:

"Are the damned Gentiles all dead, Port?"

"All but one—the son of a b \_\_\_\_ ran."

Supposing himself to be meant, Aikin lay still till the Danites left, then, . . . set out for Nephi. . . . to return to Nephi offered but slight hope, but it was his only hope, . . . He sank helpless at the door of the first house he reached, but the words he heard infused new life into him. The woman, afterwards a witness, said to him, "Why, another of you ones got away from the robbers, and is at Brother Foote's."

"Thank God, it is my brother," he said, and started on. The citizens tell with wonder that he ran the whole distance, his hair clotted with blood, reeling like a drunken man all the way. It was not his brother, but "Colonel." . . .

Bishop Bryant came, extracted the balls, dressed the wounds, and advised the men to return, as soon as they were able, to Salt Lake City. . . .

According to the main witness, a woman of Nephi, all regarded them as doomed. They had got four miles on the road, when their driver, a Mormon named Wolf, stopped the wagon near an old cabin: informed them he must water the horses; unhitched them, and moved away. Two men then stepped from the cabin, and fired with double-barreled guns; Aikin and "Colonel" were both shot through the head, and fell dead from the wagon. Their bodies were then loaded with stone and put in one of those "bottonless springs"—so called—common in that part of Utah. . . .

Meanwhile Rockwell and party had reached the city [Salt Lake City], taken Buck and the other man, and started southward, plying them with liquor. . . . they reached the Point of the Mountain. There it was decided to "use them up," and they were attacked with slungshots and billies. The other man was instantly killed. Buck leaped from the wagon, outran his pursuers, their shots missing him, swam the Jordan, and came down it on the west side. He reached the city and related all that occurred, which created quite a stir. Hickman was then

sent for to "finish the job," which he did as related in the text. (*Brigham's Destroying Angel*, pages 206-210)

Bill Hickman claimed that he was summoned to Brigham Young's office. When he arrived, he asked President Young what he wanted. Young answered:

"The boys have made a bad job of trying to put a man out of the way. They all got drunk, bruised up a fellow, and he got away from them at the Point of the Mountain, came back to this city, and is telling all that happened, which is making a big stink." He said I must get him out of the way and use him up. (*Ibid.*, page 128).

Hickman goes on to say that the last surviving member of the Aiken party trusted a man by the name of George Dalton. Dalton was able to lure the man out to a secluded spot beyond "the Hot Springs three miles north of the city" where Hickman was waiting in ambush and shot him "through the head" (*Ibid.*, page 129). The next day Bill Hickman "went to Brigham Young's, told him that Buck was taken care of, and there would be no more stink about his stories. He said he was glad of it. Buck was the last one of the Aiken's party . . ." (pages 128-130).

There can be no doubt that the Mormons did take the Aiken party as prisoners and murdered them as related by J. H. Beadle and Bill Hickman. Under the date of November 3, 1857, Hosea Stout recorded the following in his diary: "Cal mail came and six cal prisoners taken at Box Elder supposed spies" (*On The Mormon Frontier, The Diary of Hosea Stout*, vol. 2, page 644). On November 20, 1857, Stout made this very revealing entry in his diary:

O. P. Rockwell with 3 or four others started with 4 of the prisoners, which we had been guarding for some days, South to escort them through the settlements to Cal via South route The other two are going to be permitted to go at large and remain till spring and the guard dismissed. (*Ibid.*, page 645)

Mormon writer Harold Schindler has done an excellent job of compiling the evidence concerning the Aiken massacre. His research leads to the unmistakable conclusion that Rockwell was involved in the bloody deed (see *Orrin Porter Rockwell: Man of God, Son of Thunder*; 1966, pages 268-279).

Less than two years after the Aiken massacre, U. S. Marshall P. K. Dotson held a warrant for Orrin Porter Rockwell's arrest. Dotson found it impossible to make the arrest, and Rockwell retained his freedom for twenty years. He was in full fellowship with the Mormon church during this period, and on June 1, 1873, he was called

on a mission to Grass Valley (*Ibid.*, page 356). Finally, on September 29, 1877, Rockwell was arrested for his part in the Aiken massacre. He was 64 years old at the time. On June 9, 1878, Orrin Porter Rockwell died, and therefore he did not have to face a trial which could have been very embarrassing for the Mormon Church.

### **Cursing the United States**

After the death of Joseph Smith, the Mormons became very bitter against their enemies and went so far as to blame the United States Government for their troubles. Mormon Apostle Orson Pratt wrote the following in 1845: “Brethren awake!—be determined to get out from this evil nation next spring. We do not want one saint left in the United States after that time. Let every branch . . . be determined to flee out of Babylon, . . .” (*Times and Seasons*, vol. 6, page 1043). On May 14, 1848, Oliver B. Huntington reported the following in his diary:

. . . the spirit of God rested upon *Brigham that he cursed the Nation by the authority and power of God and the Priesthood* given him and all the Saints said amen. He was never known to curse so much in his life as on that day. The nation, the land of Missouri, that sickness should not allow any but the righteous to live upon it, and old Colonel Miller, . . . All the Saints said amen. (“Oliver B. Huntington Diary,” May 14, 1848, as cited in *The Lion of the Lord*, page 88)

Brigham Young had hoped to take the Mormons “beyond the boundaries of the United States,” but the Mexican War “changed these calculations” (*Quest for Empire*, page 115). Therefore, the Mormon leaders still found themselves under the power of the United States Government. Although Brigham Young was allowed the privilege of being Governor, the federal government appointed a number of officials that displeased the Mormon leaders. While it is true that Brigham Young’s idea of establishing a kingdom was bound to bring him into conflict with the government of the United States, it should be acknowledged that the officials sent by the government were not perfect. In his zeal to establish the kingdom, Brigham Young was ready to capitalize on any mistake made by the federal government. In 1855, the *New York Herald* quoted one of Brigham Young’s speeches:

. . . It is reported that I have said that whoever the President appoints, I am still Governor. I repeat it, all hell cannot remove me. (Cries of “Amen.”) . . . I’ll say as I did the other day, when the flag was hauled down from before the military quarters—*Let them take down the American flag; we can do without it.*” (Great applause, stamping of feet and yells.) (*New York Herald*, May 4, 1855, as cited in *The Lion of the Lord*, pages 158-159)

On September 6, 1857, Hosea Stout recorded the following in his diary: “President B. Young in his Sermon declared that the thre[a]d was cut between us and the U. S. and that the Almighty recognised us as a free and independent people and that no officer appointed by government . . . should come and rule over us from this time forth” (*On The Mormon Frontier, The Diary of Hosea Stout*, vol. 2, page 636). Heber C. Kimball, a member of the First Presidency, warned his people: “We have declared our independence . . . when the time of the test comes, as the Lord God Almighty lives, if you then leave us or betray us, that is the end of you” (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 5, page 275).

One of the main incidents which finally triggered what is known as the “Utah War” was a raid the Mormons made on the office of Judge George P. Stiles. Nels Anderson reported:

Stiles took the position that the United States marshal and not the territorial marshal should have jurisdiction over serving writs and impaneling juries. The former office was usually a Gentile; the latter, a Mormon, an important factor in selecting jurors. Because of this opposition, three Mormon lawyers —James Ferguson, J. C. Little, and Hosea Stout—in February, 1857, created a disturbance in the court of Judge Stiles. Not satisfied with breaking up the court and forcing its adjournment, these lawyer-Saints raided the office of Judge Stiles, took possession of some of his books, and carried some of his documents and papers to an outhouse and burned them. (*Deseret Saints*, page 160)

Historian Hubert Howe Bancroft revealed that non-Mormon officials became fearful and left the territory: “After the departure of Drummond, the only gentile official remaining in the territory was Garland Hurt, . . . and none were found willing to accept office in a territory where it was believed they could only perform their duty at peril of their lives” (*History of Utah*, page 492). Nels Anderson says that Senator Stephen A. Douglas

. . . spoke with authority of reports which indicated . . . the church was inciting the Indians to acts of hostility, and that the Danites, or “Destroying Angels,” were robbing and killing American citizens. . . . [Abraham] Lincoln . . . ventured the opinion that perhaps territorial status should be repealed and Utah placed under the judicial control of neighboring states. The Mormons, he said, “ought somehow [to] be called into obedience.” . . .

President Buchanan felt impelled to take action . . . He met the situation by calling the Mormon problem one of civil disobedience. . . . General Scott dispatched orders to General W. S. Harney . . . instructing him to outfit a detachment of 2,600 men and officers for garrison service in Utah to restore order and support civil authority. (*Deseret Saints*, pages 167-168)

Instead of submitting, the Mormon leaders decided to resist the federal government. Heber C. Kimball threatened the troops with death. He told his people: "Listen to the counsel of God . . . our enemies shall be overcome every time before they cross that Big Mountain, if we have to do it ourselves. . . . *We intend to kill the poor curses ourselves*, before they get to the Big Mountain" (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 5, page 135). On another occasion he boasted:

Will we have manna? Yes. The United States have 700 waggons loaded with . . . all kinds of things, and then 7,000 head of cattle; and there are said to be 2,500 troops with this, and that, and the other. . . . Suppose the troops don't get here, but all these goods and cattle come. . . .

Send 2,500 troops; here, our brethren, to make a desolation of this people! God Almighty helping me, I will fight until there is not a drop of blood in my veins. Good God! I have wives enough to whip out the United States; for they will whip themselves. Amen. (*Ibid.*, pages 94-95)

At that time the Mormon leaders did everything they could to turn their people against the U. S. Government and to stir them up to resist the troops sent by the President. Church authorities misrepresented the intentions of the government by stating that the troops were going to kill the men and steal their women. On September 27, 1857, Heber C. Kimball publicly asserted that the U. S. troops "sang all manner of songs, telling how they were going to kill brother Brigham and all those who would uphold 'Mormonism;' . . . They swore that they would *use every woman* in this place at their own pleasure—that they would slay old Brigham and old Heber; . . ." (*Ibid.*, page 274). In his diary Charles L. Walker recorded that Apostle Ezra T. Benson maintained that the troops intended "to destroy every man, woman and child that was a Mormon and wipe us out of existence" ("Diary of Charles L. Walker," Excerpts typed, page 2). Mr. Bancroft shows that these charges were without foundation in fact (see *History of Utah*, pages 497 and 537).

### The Utah War

When the Mormon leaders told their people that the troops were coming to rape their women and destroy everyone who would not renounce Mormonism, it caused a great deal of fear in the hearts of those who trusted them. Under the direction of President Young the Mormon people prepared to fight the U. S. Government troops. On September 15, 1857, Young issued a proclamation in which he stated:

Therefore, I, Brigham Young, governor, . . . Forbid all armed forces, of every description from coming into this territory under any pretense . . . That all forces in

said territory hold themselves in readiness to march, at a moments notice, to repel any and all such invasion. . . .

Martial law is hereby declared . . . and no person shall be allowed to pass or repass into or through, or from this territory, without a permit from the proper officer. (*A Comprehensive History of the Church*, vol. 4, page 274)

In simple language, Brigham Young's "proclamation" meant that he intended to resist the U. S. troops when they tried to enter the territory of Utah. In his *History of Utah*, page 499, Bancroft noted that "instead of the troops living on the Mormons, the Mormons lived on the troops, *stampeding their cattle, plundering or destroying their provision trains*, and only after all fear of active hostilities had been removed, selling them surplus grain at exorbitant rates." Mormon historian B. H. Roberts said that the Mormons did not wish to shed blood, but he admitted that they destroyed government property:

A council of war was held by the Nauvoo Legion officers . . . It was decided in the council to begin active operations against the "Expedition." . . . General Wells ordered Major Lot Smith to . . . intercept the supply trains . . .

While Smith's command was burning the first train a guard from the second came up to see what was going on. . . . Fifty-one wagons and their contents were completely destroyed in this first burning. . . . There were twenty-five wagons in this third train, . . .

The amount of property destroyed in burning these seventy-four wagons was considerable; . . . (*Comprehensive History of the Church*, vol. 4, pages 278, 280, 283 and 285)

It is very interesting to note that when indictments were issued against the Mormon leaders and others for treason, the notorious "Destroying Angels" or "Danites" Bill Hickman and Orrin Porter Rockwell were included. Mormon writer Harold Schindler comments:

A grand jury empaneled by the "court" returned a true bill against twenty Mormons by name . . .

A glance at the first eight names on the blanket indictment showed Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, Daniel H. Wells, John Taylor, George D. Grant, Lot Smith, Porter Rockwell, and William A. Hickman. All were charged with *treason*, in that they "wickedly, maliciously and traitorously levied *war against the United States*." (*Orrin Porter Rockwell*, page 282)

As it finally turned out, President Buchanan offered the Mormons who were charged with treason a pardon if they were willing to "submit themselves to the authority of the government."

Although the Mormons did not shed the blood of the United States troops, they robbed and destroyed their provisions and thus caused hardships that undoubtedly

led to the death of many soldiers. Mr. Bancroft claimed that the Utah war “cost several hundred lives.” It would, of course, be hard to determine just how many of these men would have lived if the Mormons had not destroyed their provisions.

In spite of the strong rhetoric used by the Mormon leaders, when it came right down to it, they seemed to be apprehensive about killing the U. S. troops. While the fear of a serious confrontation with the United States Government probably prevented a bloody war, the Mormons did not hesitate to kill many innocent civilians in Utah at that time. The Mountain Meadows Massacre, the Aiken Massacre and a number of other cruel murders were committed during this period of rebellion.

### **Mountain Meadows Massacre**

Mormon historian B. H. Roberts called the Mountain Meadows Massacre “the most lamentable episode in Utah history, and in the history of the church” (*Comprehensive History of the Church*, vol. 4, page 139). The details of the Mountain Meadows Massacre are as follows: In 1857 a company of emigrants led by Charles Fancher was passing through Utah. Joseph Fielding Smith wrote:

. . . About the time the news arrived in Salt Lake City of the coming of an army, there was passing through the city under command of Captain Fancher, a company of emigrants from Arkansas and Missouri. This company consisted of about thirty families, numbering one hundred and thirty-seven persons. The Arkansas emigrants appeared to be respectable and well-to-do. With them there traveled a rough and reckless company calling themselves “Missouri Wild Cats,” who conducted themselves in keeping with the name. (*Essentials in Church History*, page 513)

Juanita Brooks, a Mormon scholar who has written the definitive work on the Mountain Meadows Massacre, gave this information:

This group . . . knowing the fate of the Donner Party the year before, decided to take the southern route. They followed a few days behind President George A. Smith on his journey south ordering the people to keep their grain and *not to sell a kernel to any gentiles*. This, of course, was hard on travelers who faced the desert and had expected to replenish their stores in Utah. The Fancher train was well-to-do; they had cash to pay or goods to trade, but *no one would sell*. (*John D. Lee*, 1962, page 203)

Mormon writer William E. Berrett observed:

. . . there was a constant string of emigrant trains passing through the territory . . . The feelings between such emigrants and the Saints was not always a wholesome one. . . .

A crisis in feeling was reached during the time that a large company of Arkansas emigrants were on their way to California . . .

The evidence concerning their actions in passing through the southern settlements is so conflicting that it is difficult to determine the entire truth. . . .

The Indians were thoroughly aroused. All the accumulated insults of the many caravans caused them to seek vengeance. . . .

Ordinarily the influence of the settlers was exerted to keep the peace, and at any cost prevent an attack upon emigrant trains. At this time it appears that restraint was not used. (*The Restored Church*, pages 466-467)

Brigham Young warned Captain Van Vliet:

“If the government persists in sending an army to destroy us, in the name of the Lord, we shall conquer them. If they dare to force the issue, I shall not hold the Indians by the wrist any longer, for white men to shoot at them; they shall go ahead and do as they please. If the issue comes, you may tell the government to *stop all emigration* across this continent, for the Indians *will kill all who attempt it.*” (*Comprehensive History of the Church*, vol. 4, page 155, note 32)

B. H. Roberts maintained that this statement by Young was made a few days after the Mountain Meadows Massacre and therefore had nothing to do with the massacre. He also stated that it “constituted a warning instead of a threat.” In the 1970 edition of her book, *The Mountain Meadows Massacre*, pages vii-viii; Juanita Brooks called attention to a very revealing entry in the journal of Brigham Young:

Under the date of September 1, 1857, the entry reads: “Kanosh the Pavaunt chief with several of his band visited me gave them some council and presents. A spirit seems to be taking possession of the Indians to *assist Israel*. I can hardly restrain them from *exterminating the Americans.*” This seems very significant. . . . it seems that Kanosh was given private audience. He was the chief who had killed Captain John W. Gunnison and several of his men . . . Whether or not Kanosh and his band were at the Mountain Meadows we do not know, but we can now be more certain that the Mormon war strategy was to use the natives as “the battle-ax of the Lord.” . . .

As the company of emigrants passed through Utah, the feelings became very bitter. Juanita Brooks states:

At Parowan, the gates of that fort were closed and the company passed by the town. Here one man, William Leany, recognized a member of the company, William Aiden, as the son of a man who had befriended him while he was on a mission. He gave Aiden some vegetables from his garden, knowing well that he was acting in direct opposition to the official orders. A few days later he was called out of his house and struck over the head by one of the local police on the charge that he had rendered “aid and comfort to the enemy.” He was left for dead, and indeed never did recover fully from the blow.



At Cedar City, the last place on the road where they could get provisions, the conduct of some of the Missourians was such that the local police tried to arrest them, . . . Since the people would not sell nor trade any foodstuff at all, some of the emigrants proceeded to help themselves; thus as they left the town, a trail of hate and resentment remained behind them. (*John D. Lee*, page 206)

Juanita Brooks acknowledges that prior to the emigrants arriving in southern Utah, “There was much preaching of ‘blood atonement’ . . .” (*Ibid.*, page 188). Now, according to the teachings of Brigham Young, the emigrants had committed at least one sin which was deserving of death —i.e., they had stolen some food. As we have shown, he said that the Mormons should blood atone anyone caught stealing. Mormon Apostle Orson Hyde made these chilling hints concerning the matter:

Suppose the shepherd should discover a wolf approaching the flock, what would he be likely to do? Why, we should suppose, if the wolf was within proper distance, that he would kill him at once . . . in short, that he would shoot him down, kill him on the spot. If the wolf was not within shot, we would naturally suppose he would set the dogs on him; and you are aware, I have no doubt, that these shepherd dogs have very pointed teeth, . . .

Now don’t say that brother Hyde has taught strong things, for I have only told you what takes place between the shepherd and the flock, when the sheep have to be protected.

If you say that the Priesthood or authorities of the Church here are the shepherd, and the Church is the flock, you can make your own application of this figure. It is not at all necessary for me to do it.

It is all the same to me whether they want to destroy the flock, or destroy, steal, and carry off the property of the flock. . . . the best way to sanctify ourselves, and please God our heavenly Father in these days, is to rid ourselves of every thief, . . . It would have a tendency to place a terror on those who leave these parts, that may prove their salvation when they see the heads of thieves taken off or shot down before the public. (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 1, pages 72-73)

Now, the emigrants had not only stolen some food from the Mormons, but some of them claimed they had persecuted them in Missouri and Illinois. Brigham Young had once said: “. . . in regard to those who have persecuted this people . . . we could take the same law they have taken, viz., mobocracy, and if any miserable scoundrels come here, cut their throats” (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 2, page 311). On another occasion President Young declared: “I will tell you how much I love those characters. If they had any respect to their own welfare, they would come forth and say, whether

Joseph Smith was a Prophet or not, ‘We shed his blood, and now let us atone for it;’ and they would be willing to have their heads chopped off that their blood might run upon the ground, and the smoke of it rise before the Lord as an incense for their sins. I love them that much” (*Ibid.*, page 186). The reader will remember that the sixth president of the LDS Church admitted that he once had “his open pocket knife grasped in his hand” ready to kill a man if he even expressed approval of the murder of Joseph Smith.

Mormon historian B. H. Roberts said that much of the boasting and threats of retaliation on the part of the emigrants may have been “mere bravado,” but he admits that these statements placed them in a dangerous position:

. . . it was *suicidal* to indulge in that bravado and such ranting. . . . to make these boasts, and to indulge in these threats at a time when great excitement prevailed in the “Mormon” settlements, and the *war spirit* of the people was aroused by reports of the approach of an invading army. . . . was, under all the circumstances, to invite *calamity*. . . . fear became a weighty argument in determining the fate of the emigrant company. (*Comprehensive History of the Church*, vol. 4, pages 154-155)

The reader will remember that the Mormon leaders had told the people that the army was coming to rape their women and destroy those who would not renounce Mormonism. In addition, Mormon Apostle George A. Smith had come south shortly before the emigrants preaching war. According to his own statement, when he preached at Harmony his “discourse partook of the military more than the religious” (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 5, pages 221-222). He also said that “one single sentence is enough to put every man in motion.”

What made it even worse for the emigrants was that one of them boasted that he had a gun which was used to shoot Joseph Smith. Although this statement probably had no basis in fact, it helped to seal the fate of the emigrants. Juanita Brooks states that when “the Sunday service at Cedar City of September 6” was over “a special priesthood meeting was called at which the problems connected with the Fancher Train were discussed.” Mrs. Brooks quoted part of the discussion as follows:

“I think they should be *done away with*, at least the one that bragged that he carried the gun . . . I think that we are all bound by our covenants to see that he does not live to do any more damage.”

“There were others just as bad as he was.”

“But how will you get them? They are all well-armed, and we would lose more than we would gain. Any attempt to take one of them would mean the lives of the posse that went after him.”

So the discussion went on, some in favor of “doing away with” the men who had been the chief offenders, others preferring to let them all go . . .

Thus events followed one another, leading inexorably to the final tragedy . . . Strong hatred, deep-seated beliefs, and greed were all combined in the drama. That this was a wealthy train with good wagons and ox teams and horses; with a large herd of cattle; and with loads of household goods and necessities was without doubt a factor with some who were involved. Their own deep religious convictions increased in potency—that “the blood of the Prophet should be avenged” and that by their own covenants, taken in the Nauvoo Temple or in the Endowment House, they were bound to help carry out God’s will. (*John D. Lee*, pages 207-208)

Mormon historian B. H. Roberts admitted that such a meeting was held: “It was customary for the local leading men at Cedar and from the smaller settlements in its vicinity to gather in a council meeting after the close of the regular Sunday services of the church . . . At such a meeting on the 6th of September the question concerning the conduct of, and what ought to be done with, the Arkansas emigrants was brought up and debated. Some of the council were in favor of destroying them, and others were not” (*Comprehensive History of the Church*, vol. 4, page 149). Juanita Brooks said that the Mormons wanted the Indians to attack the emigrant train:

. . . here again was summarized all the evidence that those in authority in the church would approve of the destruction of the emigrant train, if it could be done by the Indians. Lee had accompanied George A. Smith in his travels through the southern settlements, and from the various conversations along the road as well as from the public speeches, convinced himself that this action would be in harmony with the course to be taken in the approaching war. . . .

As a result of the conversation that night, it was agreed that they would *stir up the Indians* further and encourage them to attack the company and rob them of their cattle and goods. At this point there was no decision to exterminate them. Everything was to be done by the Indians, under the direction of a few white men. (*The Mountain Meadows Massacre*, page 77)

On page 95 of the same book, Mrs. Brooks pointed out:

Lee’s statement that the original plan was to stir up the Indians to the attack seems to be true, with the Mormons brought in later when it became evident that the Indians alone could not commit the crime. Certainly the final responsibility must rest squarely upon *the Mormons*, William H. Dame as commander, and those under him who helped to form the policy and to carry out the orders.

On pages 56-57 of her book, Juanita Brooks stated:

The Indians, being “the battle-ax of the Lord,” could logically do the work, for they had no qualms about shedding blood, even innocent blood. Since the Big Mormon Chief wanted them to help with this war, here was a good place to begin. So the natives had followed and annoyed the company, happy in the sense of *Mormon approval*; they sent out runners to other bands for reinforcements in this exciting and thrilling game.

When it became evident that the Indians could not overpower the emigrants, the Mormons came up with an insidious and cowardly plan to destroy them. Mormon apologists have been forced by the weight of the evidence to admit that there was a conspiracy between the settlers and the Indians. Even President Joseph Fielding Smith, who was deeply involved in distorting Mormon history, had to concede that a cunning plan was laid for the destruction of the gentiles:

. . . Early in September the emigrant train of the Arkansas and Missouri companies camped in the little valley known as the Mountain Meadows. . . . their conduct had aroused the Indian tribes who now surrounded their camp in hostile attitude. As near as can be ascertained, on the morning of the 7th of September at the break of day, the attack upon the emigrants began. . . . The Indians sent runners throughout the surrounding country calling for reinforcements from among their tribes and for John D. Lee, who had been in close touch with Indian affairs as their farmer, to come and lead them to victory. . . . Later, *other white men* appeared upon the scene. . . . Some of them remained, willingly or by coercion, to participate in the massacre which followed. . . . The victims discovered that *white men were in league with the Indians*, and this knowledge sealed their fate. It was determined by those making the attack that no emigrant should live who could tell the tale.

On the morning of Friday the 11th, Lee induced the emigrants to surrender *under promise of protection* and conveyance to a place of safety. They were led to a place where the Indians were in ambush, and at a given signal a volley of shots rang out, both Indians and *white men participating in the outrage*. Seventeen children of tender years—ranging in age from a few months to seven years—were all that were spared. (*Essentials in Church History*, pages 515-516)

Mormon writer William E. Berrett gave this description of the massacre:

It was a *deliberately planned massacre, treacherously carried into execution*. On the morning of September 11, *a flag of truce* was sent to the emigrant camp and terms of surrender proposed. The Emigrants were to *give up their arms*. The wounded were to be loaded into wagons, followed by the *women and*

*children*, and the men to bring up the rear, single file. Thus they were to be conducted by the whites to Cedar City. This was agreed to, and the march began. . . . The *white men* at a given signal, *fell upon the unarmed emigrant men*. . . . Only the smallest children were spared. (*The Restored Church*, pages 468-469)

### The Cover-Up

John D. Lee, who was involved in the massacre, later confessed the treacherous role he played in persuading the emigrants to surrender. Lee had always been a very dedicated Mormon and was accustomed to following orders. He joined the Danite Band in Missouri and was later initiated into the secret Council of Fifty. He claimed that he was ordered by his superiors to become involved in the massacre. Although he could not prove it, he believed that Brigham Young had sent Apostle George A. Smith to southern Utah to stir up the people to attack the Fancher train. He also claimed that he met with Brigham Young just after the massacre and gave him all the details and that Young was involved in a cover-up and obstruction of justice. In his confession, John D. Lee wrote:

General George A. Smith held high rank as a military leader. He was one of the twelve apostles of the Church . . . and as such he was considered by me to be an inspired man. His orders were to me sacred commands, which I considered it my duty to obey, without question or hesitation. . . .

The General told me to tell the Indians that the Mormons were their friends, and that the Americans were their enemies, . . . that the Americans had a large army just east of the mountains, and intended to come over the mountains into Utah and kill all of the Mormons and Indians in Utah Territory; . . .

We had ridden along about a mile or so when General Smith said, "Those are savage looking fellows. I think they would make it lively for an emigrant train if one should come this way."

I said I thought they would attack any train that would come in their way. Then the General was in a deep study for some time, when he said, "Suppose an emigrant train should come along through this southern country, making threats against our people and bragging of the part they took in helping kill our Prophets, what do you think the brethren would do with them? Would they be permitted to go their way, or would the brethren pitch into them and give them a good drubbing?"

I reflected a few moments, and then said, ". . . The brethren believe the government wishes to destroy them. I really believe that any train of emigrants that may come through here will be attacked, and probably

all destroyed. I am sure they would be wiped out if they had been making threats against our people. Unless *emigrants have a pass from Brigham Young*, or some one in authority, they will certainly never get safely through this country."

My reply pleased him very much, and he laughed heartily, and then said, "Do you really believe the brethren would make it lively for such a train?"

I said, "Yes, sir, I know they will, unless they are protected by a pass, and I wish to inform you that unless *you want every train captured* that comes through here, you must inform Governor Young that if he wants emigrants to pass, without being molested, he must send orders to that effect to Colonel Wm. H. Dame or Major Isaac C. Haight, so that they can give passes to the emigrants, *for their passes will insure safety*, but nothing else will, except positive orders of Governor Young, as the people are all bitter against the Gentiles, and full of religious zeal, and anxious to avenge the blood of the Prophets."

The only reply he made was to the effect that on his way down from Salt Lake City he had had a long talk with Major Haight on the same subject, and that Haight had assured him, and given him to understand, that emigrants who came along *without a pass from Governor Young could not escape* from the Territory.

We then rode along in silence for some distance, when he again turned to me and said, "Brother Lee, . . . I believe they will do just as you say they will with the wicked emigrants that come through the country making threats and abusing our people". . .

General Smith did not say one word to me or intimate to me, that he wished *any emigrant* to pass in safety through the Territory. But he led me to believe then, as I believe now, that he did want, and expected every emigrant to be killed that undertook to pass through the Territory while we were at war with the Government. I thought it was *his mission to prepare the people for the bloody work*.

I have always believed, since that day, that General George A. Smith was then visiting Southern Utah to prepare the people for the work of exterminating Captain Fancher's train of emigrants, and I now believe that he was sent for that purpose by the direct command of Brigham Young.

I have been told by Joseph Wood, Thomas T. Willis, and many others, that they heard George A. Smith preach at Cedar City . . . that he told the people of Cedar City that the emigrants were coming, and he told them that they must not sell that company *any grain or provisions* of any kind, for they were a mob of villains and outlaws, and the enemies of God and the Mormon people.

Sidney Littlefield, of Panguitch, has told me that he was knowing to the fact of Colonel Wm. H. Dame sending orders from Parowan to Maj. Haight, at Cedar

City, to exterminate the Fancher outfit, and to kill every emigrant without fail. . . .

The knowledge of how George A. Smith felt toward the emigrants, and his telling me that he had a long talk with Haight on the subject, made me certain that it was the wish of the *Church authorities* that Fancher and his train should be *wiped out*, and knowing all this, I did not doubt then, and I do not doubt it now, either, that Haight was acting by full authority from the Church leaders, and that the orders he gave to me were just the orders that he had been directed to give, when he ordered me to raise the Indians and have them attack the emigrants.

I acted through the whole matter in a way that I considered it my religious duty to act, and if what I did was a crime, it was a crime of the Mormon Church, and not a crime for which I feel individually responsible. . . .

From that day to this it has been the understanding with all concerned in that massacre, that the man who divulged the secret should die; he was to be killed, wherever he was found, for treason to the men who killed the emigrants, and for his treason to the Church. No man was at liberty to tell his wife, or any one else, nor were the brethren permitted to talk of it even among themselves. Such were the orders and instructions, from Brigham Young down to the lowest in authority. The orders to lay it all to the Indians, were just as positive as they were to keep it all secret. . . .

The first time I heard that a messenger had been sent to Brigham Young for instructions as to what should be done with the emigrants, was three or four days after I had returned home from the Meadows. Then I heard of it from Isaac C. Haight, when he came to my house and had a talk with me. He said: "We are in a muddle. Haslem has returned from Salt Lake City, with orders from Brigham Young to let the emigrants pass in safety." . . .

I at once saw that we were in a bad fix, and I asked Haight what was to be done. . . .

Haight then told me that it was the orders of the Council that I should go to Salt Lake City and lay the whole matter before Brigham Young. . . . When I arrived in the city I went to the President's house and gave to Brigham Young a *full, detailed statement of the whole affair, from first to last*—only I took rather more on myself than I had done. . . .

I then went over the whole affair and gave him as full a statement as it was possible for me to give. I described everything about it. I told him of the orders Haight first gave me. I told him everything. I told him that "Brother McMurdy, Brother Knight and myself killed the wounded men in the wagons, with the assistance of the Indians. We killed six wounded men."

He asked me many questions, and I told him every particular, and everything I knew. I described everything very fully. I told him what I had said against killing the women and children.

Brigham then said: "Isaac (referring to Haight) has sent me word that if they *had killed every man, woman and child in the outfit, there would not have been a drop of innocent blood shed by the brethren*; for they were a set of murderers, robbers and thieves." . . . I gave him the names of every man that had been present at the massacre. I told him who killed various ones. In fact I gave him *all the information there was to give*.

When I finished talking about the matter, he said: "This is the most unfortunate affair that ever befel[!] the Church. I am afraid of treachery among the brethren that were there. If any one tells this thing so that it will become public, it will work us great injury. I want you to understand now, that you are never to tell this again, . . . It must be kept a secret among ourselves. When you get home, I want you to sit down and write a long letter, and give me an account of the affair, charging it to the Indians. . . . I can then make use of such a letter to keep off all damaging and troublesome enquiries." . . .

I went to see him again in the morning. When I went in, he seemed quite cheerful. He said, "I have made that matter a subject of prayer. I went right to God with it, and asked Him to take the horrid vision from my sight, if it was a righteous thing that my people had done in killing those people at the Mountain Meadows. God answered me, and at once the vision was removed. I have evidence from God that He has overruled it all for good, and the action was a righteous one and well-intended

"The brethren acted from pure motives. . . . I sustain you and all of the brethren for what they did. All that I fear is treachery on the part of some one who took a part with you, but we will look to that." . . . It has generally been reported that Brigham Young was anxious to help Judge Cradlebaugh arrest all the guilty parties. There is not one word of truth in the whole statement. Brigham Young knew the name of every man that was in any way implicated in the Mountain Meadows Massacre. . . .

If Brigham Young had wanted one man, or fifty men, or five hundred men arrested, all he would have had to do would have been to say so, and they would have been arrested instantly. There was no escape for them if he ordered their arrest. Every man who knows anything of affairs in Utah at that time knows this is so.

It is true that Brigham made a great parade at the time, and talked a great deal about bringing the guilty parties to justice, but he did not mean a word of it—not a word. He did go South with Cradlebaugh, but he took good care that Cradlebaugh caught no person that had been in the massacre.

I know that I had plenty of notice of their coming, and so did all the brethren. It was one of Brigham Young's cunning dodges to blind the government. (*Mormonism Unveiled: Or The Life And Confessions Of The Late Mormon Bishop John D. Lee*, 1880, as cited in *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* pages 501-503, 510-511)

According to Juanita Brooks, Bishop Klingsmith verified John D. Lee's charge that Brigham Young was engaged in a cover-up: "Later, in his testimony at the first trial of John D. Lee, Klingsmith insisted that he visited Brigham Young in company with Lee and Hopkins, and that the three discussed the disposition *of the spoil*. 'Let John D. Lee take care of it, in as much as he is the Indian Agent now. What you know of this affair, *say nothing about it*,' he quoted Brigham Young as saying" (*The Mountain Meadows Massacre*, pages 161-162). On page 219 of the same book, Mrs. Brooks charged: "While he did not order the massacre, and would have prevented it if he could, *Brigham Young was accessory after the fact*, in that he knew what had happened, and how and why it happened. Evidence of this is abundant and unmistakable, and from the most impeccable Mormon sources. . . . he understood well that their acts had grown out of loyalty to him and his cause, . . ."

While Brigham Young later admitted that John D. Lee came to give him details concerning the massacre, he testified that when Lee "commenced giving an account of the massacre," he "told him to stop, as from what I had already heard by rumor, I did not wish my feelings harrowed up with a recital of details" (Court Record, the second Lee trial, Sept., 1876, Deposition of Brigham Young, as cited in *Comprehensive History of the Church*, vol. 4, page 160). As we have shown, John D. Lee emphatically stated that he gave Brigham Young "all the information there was to give." Even if this were not the case, the Mormon historian B. H. Roberts admitted that Jacob Hamblin—a very prominent Mormon—gave Brigham Young a full report of the massacre right after it took place:

Jacob Hamblin, a reputable witness, testified at the second Lee trial that "soon after it [the massacre] happened," he *reported to Brigham Young* and George A. Smith what Lee had told him of the affair; of the *part that white men had taken in it*; and that in greater detail than he had given it, or was able to give in his testimony in court, because he then more clearly remembered it; and that Brigham Young said to him that "as soon as we can get a court of justice we will ferret this thing out, but till then, don't say anything about it." All this seems to have been *forgotten* in the Smith "report." (*Ibid.*, page 166)

When B. H. Roberts spoke of Jacob Hamblin's account having "been *forgotten* in the Smith 'report,'" he is referring to a letter George A. Smith wrote to Brigham Young on August 17, 1858. The reader will remember that John D. Lee said that after he told Brigham Young all about the massacre, President Young instructed him to write a letter to him "charging it to the Indians." George A. Smith's letter also appears to have been

written for the purpose of deception. He claims he had been down in southern Utah where he had "gathered some information" relating to the "horrible massacre." While Lee maintained that there were about 54 men, including two bishops and other prominent local church leaders, involved in the massacre, Apostle Smith's letter indicated that the white men came to Mountain Meadows to save the emigrants from the Indians: "On the 9th Major Haight, with a party of about 50 men, started from Cedar City to endeavor to *relieve the emigrants*, and arriving at Mountain Meadows the next morning, found *the Indians* had killed the entire company, with the exception of a few small children, . . ." (*Ibid.*, page 164) On page 167, B. H. Roberts tried to blame the fact that George A. Smith had "forgotten" that Jacob Hamblin had previously given him and Brigham Young a detailed report on the whole matter on the "state of chaos in Utah" at that time. We feel that it is extremely difficult to give credence to the idea that George A. Smith could forget that some of his own people had been involved in such a treacherous massacre; it seems far more reasonable to believe that Apostle Smith simply did not tell the truth in this letter and that it was part of the cover-up which was directed by Brigham Young.

Almost six years after the Mountain Meadows Massacre took place and after both John D. Lee and Jacob Hamblin had given him the gruesome details concerning Mormon involvement, Brigham Young was still trying to place all the blame on the Indians. In a sermon delivered March 8, 1863, he declared:

Nearly all of that company were destroyed *by the Indians*. That unfortunate affair has been laid to the charge of the whites. A certain judge that was then in this Territory wanted the whole army to accompany him to Iron county to try *the whites* for the murder of that company of emigrants. . . . but to this day they have not touched the matter, *for fear the Mormons would be acquitted from the charge of having any hand in it*, and our enemies would thus be deprived of a favorite topic to talk about, when urging hostility against us. "The Mountain Meadow massacre! Only think of the Mountain Meadow massacre!" is their cry from one end of the land to the other. (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 10, pages 109-110)

Juanita Brooks gives this information concerning Judge Cradlebaugh's attempt to bring the guilty parties to justice:

In April, 1859, Judge Cradlebaugh and his military escort started south, . . . The court and its bodyguard had everything against them from the beginning, for word had traveled ahead and all the suspected had gone into hiding.

That both John D. Lee and Isaac C. Haight were warned in advance is shown clearly in their diaries. . . . the Judge made out writs for some thirty-six men, . . . Of all these thirty-six writs, not one was served, and the marshal, unable to make a single arrest, wrote a formal statement to justify his failure. . . .

Forced at last to admit that they could do nothing, the Judge and his escort started back to Salt Lake City, and the local leaders came out of hiding. (*The Mountain Meadows Massacre*, pages 173, 174, 177 and 178)

The facts clearly show that Brigham Young and many other Mormons were attempting to obstruct justice. Judge Cradlebaugh himself had this to say about his attempt to prosecute the guilty parties:

Sitting as a committing magistrate, complaint after complaint was made before me of murders and robberies. . . . and darkest in this appalling catalogue of blood, the cowardly, cold-blooded butchery and robbery at the Mountain Meadows. At that time there still lay all ghastly under the sun of Utah the unburied skeletons of one hundred and nineteen men, women, and children, the hapless, hopeless victims of the Mormon creed. . . . I was the first Federal judge in that part of the Territory after the occurrence. . . . I determined to visit that part of my district, and, if possible, expose the persons engaged in the massacre, which I did in the early part of the year 1859. . . . I was visited by the Indian chiefs of that section, . . . One of them told me, in the presence of the others, that after the attack had been made, a white man came to their camp with a piece of paper, which, he said, Brigham Young had sent, that directed them to go and help to whip the emigrants. . . . He . . . gave the names of John D. Lee, President Haight, and Bishop Higbee, as the big captains. . . .

While at Cedar City I was visited by a number of apostate Mormons, who gave me every assurance that they would furnish an abundance of evidence in regard to the matter, so soon as they were assured of military protection. In fact, some of the persons engaged in the act came to see me in the night, and gave a full account of the matter, intending, when protection was at hand, to become witnesses. They claimed that they had been forced into the matter *by the bishops*. . . .

A great portion of the property was taken to Cedar City, deposited in the tithing office, and then sold out; the bed clothes upon which the wounded had been lying, and those taken from the dead, were piled in the back room of the tithing office, and allowed to remain for so great a length of time that when I was there eighteen months after the room was still offensive.

What a commentary upon the condition of affairs in our country! Mormonism revelling upon the spoils obtained by murder, while seventeen orphan children are turned penniless upon the world. . . .

It has been said we have courts in Utah, and the question is frequently asked, why do not the courts act? The uniform testimony of the judges is to the effect that the *courts are powerless*. More than fifteen Federal judges who have gone to the Territory have so stated. They have again and again told you that the entire legislation of the Territory is to prevent the administration of the laws; that *the church authorities are determined that the laws shall not be enforced* in the Federal courts; that the grand and trial jurors are Mormons, who are taught that the Mormon church laws are the higher laws, and should prevail, and who refuse, therefore, to discharge their sworn duties, and have invariably refused to punish any Mormon for an offense committed against an anti-Mormon. ("Utah and the Mormons," a Speech of Hon. J. Cradlebaugh, in the House of Representatives, February 7, 1863, as printed in Appendix to the *Congressional Globe*, February 23, 1863, pages 122-123)

In May 1861, Brigham Young visited the site of the Mountain Meadows Massacre. His actions on this trip demonstrated that he approved of the massacre and that he was shielding John D. Lee and others from the law. Juanita Brooks gives this information about President Young's trip south:

When he came to the stone monument at Mountain Meadows, . . . he walked a short distance away . . . Then he came back to the pile of stones, built into a rude pyramid some twelve feet high and crowned by a hewn cross of cedar upon which were painted the words VENGEANCE IS MINE SAITH THE LORD, I WILL REPAY. A flat stone at the bottom bore the inscription, "120 men, women, and children murdered in cold blood early in Sept. 1857. From Arkansas," And on another slab, "Erected by Company K, 1st Dragoons May, 1859."

Brigham Young walked around the monument, studied the inscriptions, and then raising his right arm to the square, he said impressively, "*Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord, and I have taken a little of it.*" Without another word, he returned to his wagon and rode on. Riding with the company were horsemen from the south who thought they understood what he meant. One immediately threw a lasso rope around the cross, and turning his horse suddenly, jerked it down . . . The others dismounted quickly and began tearing down the stones, scattering them in every direction, until before the wagon train was well on the road, the monument was demolished. . . .

For Lee this [i.e., Brigham Young's trip] had been a rewarding experience indeed. The President had expressed approval of his mill . . . Best of all, he had seemed to approve of his efforts. Referring to the

massacre, he lamented the death of the women and children, though “under the circumstances this could not be avoided.” “The men merited their fate,” he said. As for the people who would have betrayed their brethren into the hands of the enemies, he had not language strong enough to express his scorn.

“For that thing they will be damned and go down to hell,” he thundered. “I would be glad to see one of these traitors, though I don’t suppose there is any here now. They have run away.” (*John D. Lee*, pages 265-268)

While Brigham Young’s cover-up concerning the massacre certainly slowed down the wheels of justice, it grew increasingly difficult to keep the truth from surfacing. Juanita Brooks informs us that prior to 1870 “there had been a growing discontent among members of the church with the policy of the leaders.” Concerning one group of men she states:

Worse still, they said, Brigham Young gave public recognition to men who had participated in the Mountain Meadows massacre. The *Utah Reporter*, published in Corrine, ran a series of open letters addressed to Brigham Young, demanding that those guilty of that outrage be brought to justice. If the authorities had not specifically ordered the massacre, they were *accessories after the fact by shielding the guilty*. (*Ibid.*, page 288)

Finally, thirteen years after the massacre, Brigham Young was forced to excommunicate John D. Lee (or at least claim that he was excommunicated). After Lee’s excommunication, he was arrested and brought to trial. Mrs. Brooks says that “the jury could not agree on a verdict, the eight Mormons being for acquittal and the four gentiles for conviction. Now the whole thing must be gone over again, . . .” (*Ibid.*, page 341). After being confined for some time, Lee was “admitted to bail” while he awaited the second trial. Lee’s wife, Emma, “told that in late August a messenger arrived at Lonely Dell with word from the authorities counseling Lee to jump his bonds and leave the country. Rather than have this horrible affair rehearsed again, they would assume the full responsibility to his bondsmen. The messenger arrived too late. He came via Kanab, while Lee returned via Skutumpah, so they had missed each other and there was no way for them to get together. Thus the hand of fate reached out to cast the fatal die” (*Ibid.*, page 358).

In her book, *The Mountain Meadows Massacre*, pages 219-220, Juanita Brooks claimed:

The church leaders decided to sacrifice Lee only when they could see that it would be impossible to acquit him without assuming a part of the responsibility themselves. It was a case where the duties of a statesman

were weighed against the loyalties of a personal friend, and the duties of the statesman, of necessity, were given precedence. To air the whole story would have done injury to the church, both among its own membership and in the eyes of the world, and this token sacrifice had to be made. Hence the farce which was the second trial of Lee. The leaders evidently felt that by placing all the responsibility squarely upon him, already doomed, they could lift the stigma from the church as a whole.

At John D. Lee’s second trial, he was convicted of murder in the first degree, and on March 23, 1877, he was executed at the Mountain Meadows. Just before he was shot, he made a statement in which he said:

It seems I have to be made a victim—a victim must be had, and I am the victim. . . .

I am a true believer in the gospel of Jesus Christ. I do not believe everything that is now being taught and practiced by Brigham Young. I do not care who hears it. . . .

I studied to make this man’s will my pleasure for thirty years. See, now, what I have come to this day!

I have been *sacrificed* in a cowardly, dastardly manner. I cannot help it. It is my last word—it is so. . . . Sacrifice a man that has waited upon them, that has wandered and endured with them in the days of adversity, true from the beginnings of the Church! And I am now singled out and am sacrificed in this manner! What confidence can I have in such a man! I have none, and I don’t think my father in heaven has any. (*The Mountain Meadows Massacre*, pages 208-209)

The teachings of Brigham Young and other church leaders certainly brought John D. Lee to a terrible end. Although at the present time we have no evidence that Brigham Young specifically ordered the massacre, he had stated in his “proclamation” that “no person shall be allowed to pass . . . from this territory, without a permit from the proper officer.” Lee felt that it was highly significant that no pass had been given to the emigrants to leave the territory and, as we have already shown, he claimed that he had discussed the matter with George A. Smith. Lee claimed that Apostle Smith told him he had talked with Major Haight and that “Haight had assured him, and given him to understand, that emigrants who came alone without a pass from Governor Young could not escape from the Territory.” Lee felt, in fact, that Apostle Smith had been sent by Young to stir up the people against the emigrants and that Smith seemed pleased when Lee told him that the people in southern Utah would “wipe out” emigrants who made threats against the Mormons. Mormon writer Hope A. Hilton suggests that the lack of a pass was a factor in both the Aiken and Mountain Meadows massacres:

Young feared movement of any kind through the territory, reasoning that spies could lead troops north . . . and attack the territory from behind. Franklin McNeal tried to disobey the proclamation and was imprisoned for three or four months in Salt Lake City. He blamed Young and Wells for his internment and after the war attempted to sue them. He was shot and killed a year later in a personal feud with Joe Rhodes, an acquaintance of Bill Hickman. A group known as the Aiken Gang stumbled onto the Utah militia making preparations for war and were *executed for violating Young's proclamation*. Even an immigrant train, headed for California, was not allowed passage through the territory, the men being executed by zealous Mormons and Indians at Mountain Meadows in southern Utah. (*"Wild Bill" Hickman and the Mormon Frontier*, page 69)

The teachings of Brigham Young and others on blood atonement and vengeance on the enemies of the church also entered into Lee's decision to go along with the massacre. Speaking of the massacre, Juanita Brooks observed that Brigham Young and George A. Smith "did preach sermons and set up social conditions which made it possible" (*The Mountain Meadows Massacre*, page 219). On page 35 of the same book, Mrs. Brooks states:

Not only did George A. Smith carry significant orders to both the military and the Indians, but his preaching to the people in general was of such an inflammatory nature that it roused them to a high emotional pitch. Because of this, the fatal relationship between his visit and the massacre which followed scarcely a month later can hardly be overemphasized.

J. Forney, who was Superintendent of Indian Affairs for the Utah Territory, said that the Mountain Meadows Massacre was "a crime that has no parallel in American history for atrocity." While it is difficult to comprehend the treachery involved, this was something that John D. Lee and other Danites had been familiar with since 1838. The reader will remember that according to Reed Peck, the leader of the Danite band taught that it was right to pretend to be friends with a man who was "damning and cursing the presidency" in order to find a good opportunity to kill him. He went on to boast that he could "curse them too and if he will drink I can get him a bowl of brandy and after a while take him by the arm and get him one side in the brush when I will into his guts in a minute and put him under the sod." We have also shown that John D. Lee claimed that the Mormon police in Nauvoo, Illinois, told him how they had done this very thing to a man. They were joking with the man and led him to his grave under the pretext that he would find "a jug of whiskey" in the pit. Instead, they struck

him on the head, "tightened a cord around his neck" and "covered him up."

John D. Lee also told of an incident which "transpired at the old distillery in Cedar City, just before the massacre" (*Confessions of John D. Lee*, page 273). Lee claimed that three men came "to Cedar City one evening." They were "so poor and destitute that the authorities considered they were dangerous men. . . . That the will of God, as made known through Haight and Klingensmith, might be done, these helpless men were coaxed to go to the old distillery and take a drink. . . . The party drank considerable, and when the emigrants got under the influence of the whisky the brethren attacked them, and knocked the brains out of two of the men with the king bolt of a wagon. The third man was very powerful and muscular; . . . but after a brief struggle he was overcome and killed." Lee tells of other cases where deceit was used in order to assassinate the enemies of the church.

Duplicity, of course, played a major role in the Aiken massacre. Hope Hilton shows that the Mormons offered "to escort" the party out of the territory but murdered them instead (*"Wild Bill" Hickman and the Mormon Frontier*, page 70). This massacre involved a number of different acts of treachery. First, four members of the party were told that they were being taken out of the territory by Orrin Porter Rockwell and his men. Instead, however, two of them were killed and two others wounded by the Mormons. Second, the two who were wounded were told they would be escorted back to Salt Lake City. They were, of course, ambushed as they proceeded along the trail. Third, after the first four members of the group were killed, Rockwell and his men seem to have befriended one of the two remaining members of the Aiken group who had previously been "permitted to go at large" and an attempt was made on his life. J. H. Beadle said that both the surviving members of the Aiken group were present on this occasion and that one was killed. Harold Schindler, on the other hand, only mentions A. J. Jones, whom Bill Hickman knew only as "Buck," as being present and claims that the last member of the Aiken party, John Chapman, "survived his visit to Utah" (*Orrin Porter Rockwell: Man of God, Son of Thunder*, page 279). In any case, the attempted assassination was bungled. The man was only bruised up and returned to Salt Lake City where he began to tell the story. Fourth, Mormon officials then contacted a Mormon by the name of George Dalton to betray his friend by leading him out onto a lonely road so that he could be assassinated. According to Bill Hickman, he was told that when the Aiken party "first came into the Territory, they had all stopped twelve miles north of the city, and remained several weeks in the neighborhood



where George Dalton lived; that Dalton was in town, and they [the Mormon officials] had got him to see this man (whose name I had never heard, only he was called Buck), and take him home with him, for he had confidence in Dalton. They said that Dalton understood it, and they were waiting for me to come and meet him on the road" (*Brigham's Destroying Angel*, pages 128-129). Hickman, as we have already shown, then shot him through the head.

We could present a great deal of additional evidence concerning the treachery that the early Mormons used against their enemies, but this should be sufficient to convince the reader that the method used at Mountain Meadows was not unique. The only thing that was different was that there were women and children involved and that a larger number of people were targeted for destruction.

While the Mormon leaders now have to admit that members of the church were involved in the massacre, they are still hiding relevant documents and covering up the whole truth about the affair. Even though it is clear that the leaders of the church were preaching at that time that it was not only acceptable but sometimes pleasing in the sight of the Lord for blood to be shed, the church simply does not want to take any responsibility for the crime committed at Mountain Meadows.

President Brigham Young was sustained as the Prophet, Seer and Revelator of the LDS Church, and the people were told to follow his teachings "right or wrong." He referred to his teaching concerning blood atonement as a "doctrine" of the church. Is it any wonder, then, that after hearing Brigham Young's "doctrine" of blood atonement and Heber C. Kimball's admonitions, that some members of the church did not see anything wrong with killing a company of emigrants?

### Young Indicted for Murder

The massacres of the Fancher train and the Aiken party were certainly not the only cases of blood atonement in early Utah. We have already told of the murders of Ramos Anderson and Dr. Vaun for adultery and the slaying of Jesse Hartley for opposing the church. John D. Lee tells of other people who were "blood atoned." In addition, Hosea Stout related that on February 27, 1858, "several persons *disguised as Indians* entered Henry Jones' house and dragged him out of bed with a whore and *castrated him* by a square & close amputation" (*On The Mormon Frontier; The Diary of Hosea Stout*, vol. 2, page 653). Two months later both Henry Jones and his mother were blood atoned in Payson—allegedly for incest. James Monroe was murdered for adultery. Three "apostates named Potter, Wilson and Walker," were

arrested by the Mormons for stealing and were shot. Only Walker survived and later he seems to have disappeared. In Springville Garder G. Potter, William R. Parrish and his son, William B. Parrish, were assassinated for apostasy. All of these murders seem to have been committed by people who believed in the "doctrine" of blood atonement (see *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* pages 545-559).

Due to the secrecy surrounding blood atonement, the reported cases may represent only a portion of those who were actually put to death. R. N. Baskin, who served as a Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Utah, was not sure how many people were blood atoned in early Utah, but he noted:

In the excavations made within the limits of Salt Lake City during the time I have resided there, *many human skeletons have been exhumed in various parts of the city*. The present City cemetery was established by the first settlers. I have never heard that it was ever the custom to bury the dead promiscuously throughout the city; and as no coffins were ever found in connection with any of these skeletons, it is evident that the death of the persons to whom they once belonged did not result from natural causes, but from the use of criminal means, . . . That the Danites were bound by their covenants to execute the criminal orders of the high priesthood against apostates and alleged enemies of the church is beyond question. . . . How many murders were secretly committed by that band of assassins will never be known, but an estimate may be made from the number mentioned in the confessions of Hickman and Lee, and the number of human skeletons which have been exhumed in Salt Lake City, the possessors of which were evidently murdered and buried without a knell, coffin, or Christian ceremony. (*Reminiscences of Early Utah*, pages 154-155)

However this may be, an historian who takes an honest look at conditions in early Utah is forced to the conclusion that there is no way all these murders could have been committed and the killers allowed to remain free unless the church itself was involved in a conspiracy. The following statements are taken from "the remarks of Judge Cradlebaugh upon the occasion of his releasing the Grand Jury" from further service:

This day makes two weeks from the time you were impanelled. . . . the court took the unusual course of calling your attention to particular crimes—the horrible massacre at the Mountain meadows. It told you of the murder of young Jones and his mother, and of pulling their house down over them and making that their tomb, it told you of the murder of the Parrishes and Potter, and Forbes, almost within sight of this court house. . . .

The court has had occasion to issue bench warrants to arrest persons connected with the Parrish murder; had

them brought before it and examined; the testimony presents an unparalleled condition of affairs. It seems that the whole community were engaged in committing that crime. There seems to be a *combined effort on the part of the community to screen the murderers from the punishment* due for the murder they have committed.

I might call your attention to the fact that when officers seek to arrest persons accused of crimes they are not able to do so; the parties are screened and secreted by the community. Scarcely had the officers arrived in sight of the town of Springville before a trumpet was sounded from the walls of the town. This, no doubt, was for the purpose of giving the alarm. The officers were there to make arrests. The officers leave the town, and in a short time a trumpet sounds again from the wall for the purpose of announcing that the danger was over. Witnesses are screened; others are intimidated by persons in that community. . . .

Such acts and conduct go to show that the community there *do not desire to have criminals punished*, it shows that the Parrishes and Potter were *murdered by counsel, that it was done by authority*; . . . (*The Valley Tan*, March 29, 1859, page 3)

U. S. Marshal P. K. Dotson became very frustrated when he tried to serve warrants on about 40 men involved in the Mountain Meadows massacre, the Aiken massacre and other crimes. He wrote the following in a letter to Judge Cradlebaugh:

I have received from you certain warrants of arrest against many persons, in your Judicial district, charged with murder, . . .

I regret to inform you that it is not in my power to execute any of these processes, I have made repeated efforts by the aid as well of the military, as of the civil posse, to execute the warrants last alluded to, but without success. *So great is the number of persons engaged in the commission of these crimes, and such the feeling of the Mormon Church, and the community in their favor*, that I *cannot rely* on a civil posse to aid me in arresting them. . . . ("Journal History," June 3, 1859, as cited in *Orrin Porter Rockwell; Man of God, Son of Thunder*, pages 292-293)

As unbelievable as it may seem, J. M. Grant, a member of the First Presidency of the church, publicly admitted that Brigham Young interfered with a grand jury and also made it clear that the laws of Utah were not administered in the courts:

Last Sunday, the President chastised some of the Apostles and Bishops who were on the grand jury. Did he fully succeed in clearing away the fog which surrounded them, and in removing blindness from their eyes? No, for they could go to their room and again disagree, though, to their credit, it must be admitted

that a brief explanation made them unanimous in their action. . . .

Several had got into the fog to suck and eat the filth of a Gentile law court, ostensibly a court of Utah, though I call it a Gentile court. . . .

A brief examination will soon convince a person, of only ordinary observation, that *the laws of Utah are not administered in our courts*, and that the judges must know that fact, . . .

I want the Gentiles to understand that we know all about their whoredoms and other abominations here. If we have not invariably killed such corrupt scoundrels, those who will seek to corrupt and pollute our community, I swear to you that we mean to, and to accomplish more in a few hours, towards clearing the atmosphere, than all your grand and traverse juries can in a year. . . . we are determined to do right, and to set at defiance wickedness and wicked men, and to send them to hell across lots, as quick as we can. (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 3, pages 233-235)

It was obvious to many people in early Utah that Brigham Young was responsible for the death of many people, but with the power he had it would be almost impossible to convict him. After Bill Hickman confessed to committing murders for the church, some felt that there might be a chance of successfully prosecuting President Young for ordering the murder of Richard Yates. Hickman gave this information about the death of Yates:

One Yates, a trader . . . came to Bridger twice, buying beef cattle for the Government. . . . We kept watch of the United States camps every day, . . . One day they moved up the creek about four miles, and we saw a vacancy between them and their cattle. We made a rush and drove off seven hundred and fifty head, . . .

About this time it was noised about that Yates had let the soldiers have his ammunition, and that he was acting the spy for them. . . . One of the Conover boys . . . saw a lone man traveling . . . after learning his name, Yates, he marched him to Bridger, where he was placed in the big stone corral and a guard placed over him. . . .

I will here state that the office I held was that of independent captain, amenable to none but the head commanding general or governor, Brigham Young, . . . I was asked to take the prisoner, Yates, to the city with me, . . . He had a fine gold watch and nine hundred dollars in gold, . . . we traveled about halfway down Echo Canon to where the general's headquarters were located, . . . I delivered General Wells [a member of the First Presidency under Brigham Young] some letters, . . . and asked him what I should do with my prisoner. He said: "He ought to be killed; but take him on; you will probably get an order when you get to Col. Jones' camp" . . . within three or four miles of the camp, we

met Joseph S. Young, a son of Brigham's, . . . He hailed me (I being behind) and said his father wanted that man Yates killed, and that I would know all about it when I got to Jones' camp.

We got there about sundown, and were met outside by Col. Jones, . . . He took me aside and told me he had orders when Yates came along to have him used up, . . . Supper was brought to us, and Yates soon went to sleep on his blankets. Flack and Meacham spread their blankets and soon went to sleep also. . . . No person was to be seen, when Col. Jones and two others, Hosea Stout and another man whose name I do not recollect, came to my camp-fire and asked if Yates was asleep. I told them he was, upon which his brains were knocked out with an ax. He was covered up with his blankets . . . and a grave dug some three feet deep near the camp by the fire-light, all hands assisting. Flack and Meacham were asleep when the man was killed, but woke up and saw the grave digging. The body was put in and the dirt well packed on it, . . .

The next day I took the nine hundred dollars, and we all went to headquarters. . . . Flack and I went to Brigham's office. . . . He asked what had become of Yates? I told him. He then asked if I had got word from him? I told him that I had got his instructions at Jones' camp, and also of the word I had got from his son Jo [Joseph Young]. He said that was right, and a good thing. I then told him I had nine hundred dollars given me to bring in, that Yates had at the time he was captured. I told him of the expense I had been to during the war, and asked him if I might have part of the money? He gave me a reprimand for asking such a thing, and said it must go towards defraying the expenses of the war. I pulled out the sack containing the money, and he told me to give it to his clerk . . . The money was counted, and we left. (*Brigham's Destroying Angel*, pages 122-126)

Brigham Young's son admitted meeting with Hickman about Yates but claimed it was to save him. Stanley P. Hirshon wrote:

In 1871, Joseph A. Young, the prophet's son, described to the *New York Tribune* how he met Hickman at the outskirts of the city and urged him to bring Yates in alive. Hickman, however, told the *New York World* a different story. Joseph said Young wanted the prisoner "taken care of," . . . Significantly, neither Joseph nor Hickman denied that Mormons had murdered Yates. (*The Lion of the Lord*, pages 176-177)

Joseph Young's statement certainly raises some interesting questions: If an order had not been given that Yates was to die, why would he be urging Hickman to bring him in alive? Moreover, if Joseph Young was really concerned about Hickman bringing in Yates alive, why didn't the Mormons punish Hickman when he came in without him? The fact that the Mormon leaders did not punish Hickman for this murder seems to show that

they were responsible for the crime. That Hickman did not seem concerned about keeping Yates' death a secret is made plain by a statement written by Dan Jones:

"This Yates was a personal friend of mine, a kind-hearted, liberal man . . . One very cold morning about sunrise, Hickman and two others came to my camp. . . . he took me outside and asked me if I knew Yates. I told him I did. 'Well, we have just buried him,' he said." (*Forty Years Among the Indians*, as cited by Juanita Brooks in *On the Mormon Frontier*, vol. 2, page 643, note 13)

In the same footnote, Mrs. Brooks commented:

That some Mormons did confiscate Yates' property is shown in the diary of Newton Tuttle, . . . "Sat 24 . . . Lewis Robinson got back from Green river he took 48 Horse & colts 36 pair of blankets &c that belonged to Yates . . ."

J. H. Beadle said that Yates' "remains have been disinterred from the spot named by Hickman, and the chain of evidence is complete. Hosea Stout, a Mormon lawyer of considerable prominence, who was arrested for complicity in this murder, and on Hickman's testimony, admits that Yates was killed as a spy; but insists that he was not present and had no knowledge of the transaction; that Yates was delivered to Hickman to be taken to the city, and neither he nor any other officer saw him again" (*Brigham's Destroying Angel*, pages 205-206). That Hosea Stout was on the scene at the time of the murder is verified by his own diary: "Sunday 18 Oct 1857. . . . Some 700 head of the captured cattle passed today being driven by teamsters who left the enemy. At dark W. A. Hickman came in with Mr Yates a prisoner" (*On The Mormon Frontier, The Diary of Hosea Stout*, vol. 2, page 643). There is little doubt that Stout would resort to violence against a man suspected of being a spy. We have previously quoted from Stout's diary for January 9, 1846. In that entry Hosea Stout said that he thought "William Hibbard" was "a spy" and that "I told Scott that we must 'bounce a stone off his head.' . . . I got an opportunity & hit him on the back of his head which came very near taking his life" (*Ibid.*, vol. 1, page 103).

R. N. Baskin, who was responsible for the indictment of Brigham Young, gave this information:

I knew that the indictment of Brigham and others would cause great excitement, especially among the polygamic element of the Mormon church, and if a collision occurred it it [*sic*] would be at the time Brigham was arrested on the charge of murder. To meet such a contingency the United States marshal had appointed about one hundred deputies, . . . I knew that the arrest of anyone except Brigham would not be resisted.

I therefore had Hawkins arrested and tried before taking any steps in the other cases. During that trial the street in front of the courtroom was daily crowded by hundreds of men, many of whom were armed and whose demeanor was most threatening towards the court. . . . Brigham was then arrested on the charge of lewd and lascivious cohabitation, and brought into court. He gave bonds, just as the others were required to do. . . . a few days later I had a warrant issued for his arrest on the murder charge. . . . Evidently some of the marshal's deputies betrayed him, as Brigham learned of his intended arrest. . . . Brigham finally decided that instead of resisting he would make a journey to "the south" for his health. . . . In the height of the excitement, and when the armed mob was menacing the court, a number of prominent Gentiles called upon me and stated that they had reliable information that, unless the prosecutions were stopped, the prominent Gentiles who had taken an active part in opposing the Mormon "system" would be assassinated; that they had been appointed a committee to advise me of the fact and request me to dismiss the cases. I told the spokesman he would make a splendid angel, and as I did not intend to grant the request, he had better prepare to go to Abraham's bosom. He replied that the matter was "too serious to treat facetiously." . . . This was not the only time I had been subjected to a fire from the rear by men who should have encouraged instead of opposed me. (*Reminiscences of Early Utah*, pages 54-56)

Under the date of December 13, 1871, Wilford Woodruff recorded the following in his journal:

. . . spent the Evening at the Presidets office with the Twelve . . . & many others & Expressed our views concerning Presidt Brigham Young coming home to stand his trial . . . all thought it wisdom & good policy for him to Come to the City & stand his trial . . . Yet all agreed to leave it with him to decide as the spirit might dictate. (*Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, vol. 7, page 45)

Brigham Young finally returned, and on January 2, 1872, Woodruff noted:

. . . the United States Marshall Came to Presidents Youngs office & Served an Inditement upon him for Murders. . . . MCkean the Judge Refused Bail But put Presidet Young into the Hands of the Marshall to be Confined in one of Presidet Youngs own Homes. (*Ibid.*, page 52)

Unfortunately, the case against Brigham Young for murder never came to trial. Harold Schindler says that "the United States Supreme Court handed down a decision in the Englebrecht case which set aside all legal proceedings in Utah during the previous eighteen months and declared null and void indictments found against nearly one hundred and forty persons. The landmark opinion resulted in all charges being dropped against

Young, Wells, Stout, Kimball and ironically, Hickman himself" (*Orrin Porter Rockwell; Man of God, Son of Thunder*, page 355). Almost everyone agreed that Bill Hickman had committed many murders. After Hickman became disillusioned with Mormonism, even Apostle Woodruff spoke of his "damnable murders" (*Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, vol. 7, page 36). That Hickman could commit the atrocious crimes he did while the Mormons were in power without being punished seems to show that he was being protected by church leaders. These leaders did everything they could to make it difficult to enforce the law. By the time Hickman confessed to his crimes, the legal system in Utah was in such disarray that neither Young nor Hickman had to stand trial.

Writing in *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Autumn 1966, pages 86-87, Thomas G. Alexander commented:

The federal decision in Clinton V. Englebrecht provided the legal basis for throwing out 130 indictments found by grand juries drawn in accordance with the practice in United States courts rather than the territorial statutes. This solved nothing, however, because the disputes over the appointment of the territorial Marshall tied the hands of the court; the courts became little more than boards of arbitration, and by June, 1874, a backlog of ninety-five cases had built up in Third District Court.

McKean and other Gentiles believed that the Mormons were afraid to allow trials of their brethren accused of murder and other crimes before impartial juries. The judge wrote to U. S. Attorney General George H. Williams in the fall of 1873 complaining that he could neither convict the guilty nor protect the innocent and that Utah had become a "theocratic state, under the vice regency of Brigham Young."

While all the evidence seems to show that everyone who opposed the Mormon church in early Utah risked the possibility of losing their property or even their lives, things are different today. The police in Salt Lake City give full protection to both Mormons and Gentiles. Wallace Turner observed:

A modern apostasy can be understood through the story of the Tanner couple. The fact that today they can live comfortably in Salt Lake City, relatively unmolested by the LDS church (beyond a letter or so from anguished apostles) demonstrates as much as anything could the way the church has changed. In the old days, those who disagreed had better be able to defend themselves. (*The Mormon Establishment*, 1966, page 163)

### Restoring the Mean Devils

The reader will remember that President Brigham Young once boasted: "We have the meanest devils on the earth in our midst, and we intend to keep them, for we

have use for them; . . .” Young went on to say that “if the Devil does not look sharp, we will cheat him out of them at the last, for they will reform and go to heaven with us.”

Although Orrin Porter Rockwell was certainly a cold-blooded murderer, the Mormon church stood behind him. Joseph F. Smith, who later became the sixth president of the church, said the following at his funeral:

“He had his little faults, but Porter’s life on earth, taken altogether, was one worthy of example, and reflected honor on the Church. . . .” (As cited in *Orrin Porter Rockwell: Man of God, Son of Thunder*, page 18)

In the case of John D. Lee, it is very clear that the Mormon leaders felt they had to put some distance between Lee and the church. As we have already stated, he was excommunicated and the blame for the Mountain Meadows massacre was laid at his door. From this one would think that the church had given up all hope it would be able to “cheat” the Devil out of the soul of John D. Lee. Strange as it may seem, however, the Mormon church leaders finally decided to reinstate “membership and former blessings to John D. Lee.” On May 8 and 9, 1961 “the necessary ordinances were performed in the Salt Lake Temple” (*John D. Lee*, page 376).

With Bill Hickman, Brigham Young found himself faced with a very difficult situation. Hickman became such a notorious criminal that it became increasingly difficult to sustain him as a member in good standing. Even members of the church were demanding that some action be taken. Moreover, Hickman was not yielding to President Young’s authority. Hope Hilton says: “Both men were irreconcilably hardened towards each other” (“*Wild Bill Hickman and the Mormon Frontier*,” page 120). On page 119 of the same book, Mrs. Hilton says Hickman wrote a letter to Young in which “he must have threatened to ‘disclose all.’” Finally, “Without a bishop’s court, trial, or stated complaint, he was denied his church membership on 12 June 1868” (*Ibid.*).

This was not the end, however. As in the case of John D. Lee, the church later changed its position and moved to “cheat” Satan out of another one of his “meanest devils.” Hope Hilton reported:

Forty-nine years after Bill Hickman died, his nephew Josiah Edwin Hickman, a professor of history at Utah State University, approached the First Presidency of the Mormon church and asked that Bill Hickman be reinstated into the church posthumously. He recorded his meeting with church leaders in his journal: “March 22, 1934—I went to Salt Lake again . . . I saw President [Heber J.] Grant to get his sanction to reinstate my uncle. President Grant, A[nthony]. W. Ivins [his counselor], and [Apostle] George F. Richards all freely gave me permission to do his work, feeling that he had for years done much good for the Church but had fallen away. I am authorized to have all former blessings bestowed

on him.” William A. Hickman was rebaptized by proxy into the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints on 5 May 1934. (*Ibid.*, pages 137-138)

There seem to be some very serious implications with regard to reinstating membership and former blessings to John D. Lee and Bill Hickman. Mormon leaders have taught that a person who deliberately sheds innocent blood can “never gain salvation.” Apostle Bruce R. McConkie declared:

Murder, the unlawful killing of a human being with malice aforethought or under such circumstances of criminality that the malice is presumed, “is a sin unto death” (1 John 5:16-17), a sin for which there is “no forgiveness” . . . meaning that a murderer can never gain salvation. . . . He cannot join the Church by baptism; he is outside the pale of redeeming grace. . . . they are not forgiven in the sense that celestial salvation is made available to them. . . . they shall go on to a celestial inheritance. (*Mormon Doctrine*, 1979, page 520)

Joseph Fielding Smith, who became the tenth president of the church, proclaimed:

MURDERERS DENIED VICARIOUS ORDINANCES. . . . we do not have the privilege of performing the ordinances for murderers who shed innocent blood, nor for those who take their own lives. These are left in the hands of the Lord. If we find in our record one of this kind, we should pass by him and not attempt to do work for him. (*Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 2, page 192)

As we have shown, John D. Lee was reinstated to “membership and former blessings.” Since the Mormon leaders laid the blame for the Mountain Meadows massacre squarely on his shoulders, one would think that he would never have his blessings reinstated. Joseph Fielding Smith made this very clear:

It was a crime for which there can be no apology or excuse, a thing treacherous and damnable in the extreme. . . . The “Mormon” people had been taught from the beginning: “Thou shalt not kill.” Murder, according to their teaching, committed wantonly, was a sin for which there was no forgiveness in this life neither in the life to come. . . . John D. Lee was excommunicated from the Church with injunction from President Young that under no circumstances should he ever be admitted as a member again. (*Essentials in Church History*, pages 511, 512, 516)

Joseph Fielding Smith was one of the most powerful leaders in the church at the time John D. Lee was reinstated to “membership and former blessings” in 1961. Why would he allow such a thing to happen?

The church’s official newspaper, *Deseret News*, October 11, 1871, charged that “The Notorious Bill Hickman” was “a self-confessed murderer, whose hands are said to be red with the blood of many innocent

victims, . . .” (As cited in “*Wild Bill*” *Hickman And the Mormon Frontier*, page 126). One would think that Mormon teachings would have prevented Hickman from ever being reinstated, yet we find that he was not only taken back into the church, but he was also to have “all former blessings bestowed on him.” Since both Hickman and Lee were married to a number of wives for eternity, they will, according to Mormon teachings, become Gods and reign with their wives for all eternity. This seems extremely unfair because other Mormons who are descendants of murderers are told they “do not have the privilege of performing the ordinances for murderers who shed innocent blood . . .”

In allowing these special concessions to these notorious assassins, the Mormon leaders seem to be granting favors which are against their own rules, unless, of course, they are claiming that Lee and Hickman only participated in “righteous” killings. Is this a tactful acknowledgment that the early church leaders either condoned or ordered these acts?

## 20. The Hereafter

Joseph Smith seems to have been a firm believer in the orthodox teachings of Christianity concerning heaven and hell when he first began his work. Before many years had passed, however, he had developed some very unique doctrines concerning the hereafter.

### Degrees of Glory

On February 16, 1832, Joseph Smith gave a revelation which states that there will be three degrees of glory after the resurrection (see *Doctrine and Covenants*, Section 76). In other words, heaven will be segregated into different compartments. In the *History of the Church*, this teaching appears:

Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God . . . A man may be saved, after the judgment, in the terrestrial kingdom, or in the telestial kingdom, but he can never see the celestial kingdom of God, without being born of water and the Spirit. (vol. 1, page 283)

Joseph Fielding Smith, who became the tenth president of the church, claimed:

Those who *reject the gospel*, but live honorable lives, shall also be heirs of salvation, but not in the celestial kingdom. The Lord has prepared a place for them in the terrestrial kingdom. Those who live *lives of wickedness* may also be heirs of salvation, that is, they too *shall be redeemed* from death and from hell eventually. (*Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 2, page 133)

This doctrine of three degrees of glory is certainly not in harmony with the teachings of the Book of Mormon. In 1 Nephi 15:35 we read that there is only a heaven and a hell:

And there is a place prepared, yea, even that awful hell of which I have spoken, and the devil is the foundation of it; wherefore the *final state* of the souls of men is to  *dwell in the kingdom of God*, or to  *be cast out* because of that justice of which I have spoken.

In Alma 5:24, 25, and 39, we read that those who are deemed unworthy to dwell in heaven with the patriarchs and holy prophets are cast out because they belong to the kingdom of the devil:

Behold, my brethren, do ye suppose that such an one can have a place to sit down in the kingdom of God, with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob, and also all the holy prophets, . . . I say unto you, Nay; except ye make our Creator a liar from the beginning, . . . ye cannot suppose that such can have place in the kingdom of heaven; but they *shall be cast out* for they are the children of the *kingdom of the devil*. . . if ye

are not the sheep of the good shepherd, of what fold are ye? Behold, I say unto you, that *the devil is your shepherd* and ye are of his fold; and now, who can deny this? Behold, I say unto you, whosoever denieth this is a liar and a child of the devil.

The LDS Church uses a statement made by Paul in the Bible, 1 Corinthians 15:40, to try to prove there are three degrees of glory:

There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another.

The first thing that should be noted about this verse is that it does not use the word “telestial”; this is a word that was made up by Joseph Smith. Apostle Bruce R. McConkie maintained that “The fact that some of these are telestial bodies has been lost from the King James Version of the Bible” (*Mormon Doctrine*, 1966, page 777). Apostle McConkie and other Mormon writers are, of course, unable to furnish any evidence that this has been deleted from the Bible or even that “telestial” is an actual word.

The second thing that should be noted is the meaning of the words “celestial” and “terrestrial.” The *American College Dictionary* tells us that the meaning of celestial is “pertaining to the spiritual or invisible heaven; heavenly . . .” So we see that the word *celestial* simply means “heavenly” and the word *terrestrial* means “earthly.” In *Young’s Literal Translation of the Holy Bible*, the original Greek words are rendered as “heavenly” and “earthly” instead of “celestial” and “terrestrial”: “. . . and there are heavenly bodies, and earthly bodies; but one is the glory of the heavenly and another that of the earthly. . . .”

The third thing that should be noted concerning this verse is the setting in which it appears. A careful examination of the context, verses 35-54, reveals that Paul was comparing our earthly body with the body we shall receive in the resurrection; he was not speaking of three kingdoms in heaven. All of us now have a terrestrial or earthly body, but in the resurrection we shall have a celestial or heavenly body. Verse 44 makes it clear that Paul was speaking of the difference between the body we now have and the body we shall receive in the resurrection: “It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.”

Therefore, we see that the doctrine of three degrees of glory cannot be derived from the Bible, neither can it be supported from the Book of Mormon. Both books condemn this teaching.

### **Having Spirit Babies Forever**

Joseph Smith not only broke heaven up into three different kingdoms, but he also divided the “celestial”

kingdom into compartments: “In the celestial glory there are three heavens or degrees; And in order to obtain the highest, a man must enter into this order of the priesthood [meaning the new and everlasting covenant of marriage]” (*Doctrine and Covenants* 131:1, 2). It is clear from this that the only ones who enter into the highest division in the “celestial” kingdom are those who are married for time and eternity in a Mormon temple.

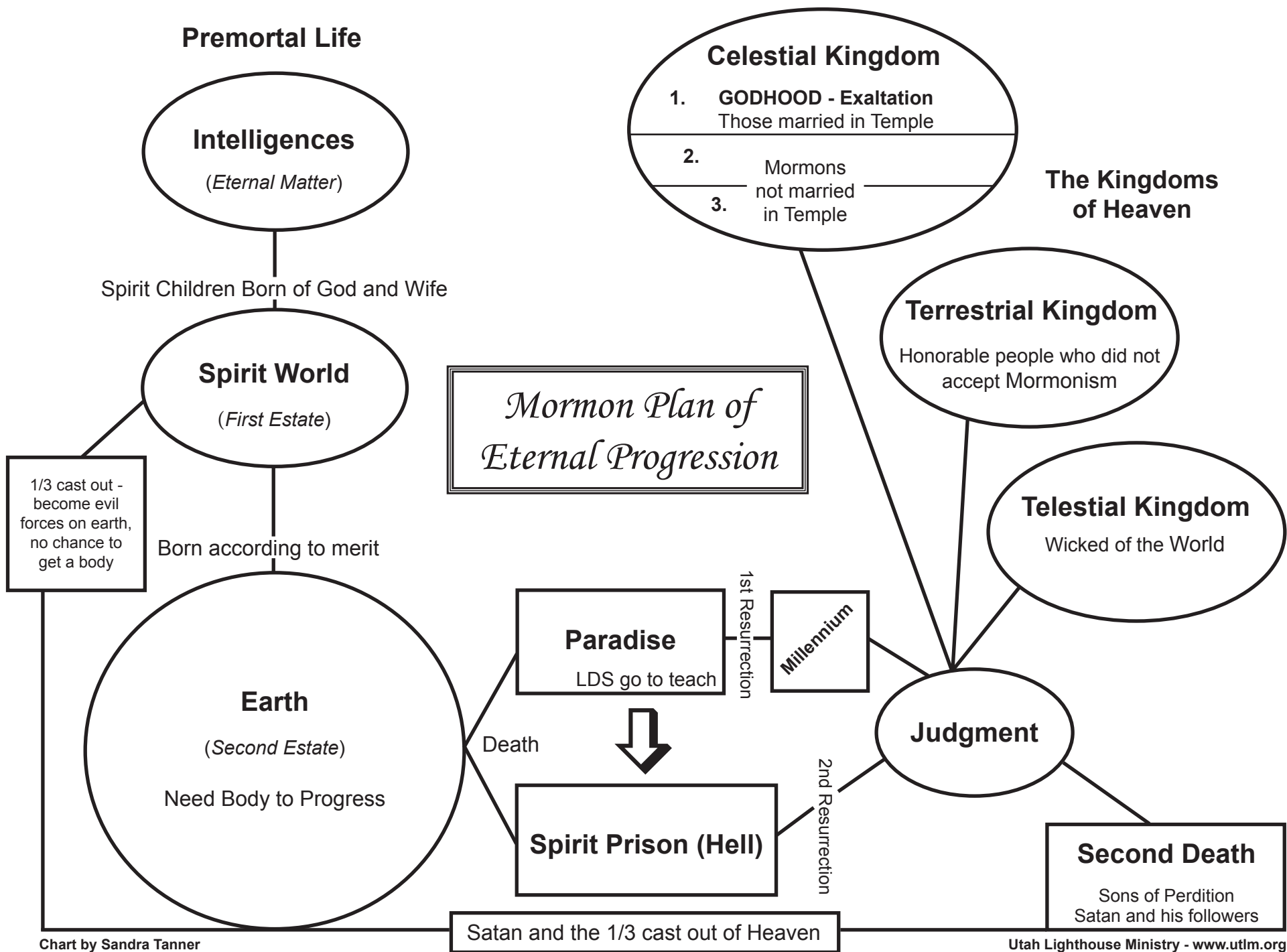
The Mormon doctrine of pre-existence plays an important role in the function of those who obtain the “highest” glory in the “celestial kingdom.” In chapter 5 we demonstrated that Joseph Smith taught that God did not have power to create the “spirit of man.” He claimed, in fact, that the spirit existed eternally:

I have another subject to dwell upon . . . the soul, the mind of man, the immortal spirit. All men say God created it in the beginning. The very idea lessens man in my estimation; I do not believe the doctrine, I know better. Hear it all ye ends of the world, for God has told me so. . . . I am going to tell of things more noble—we say that God himself is a self-existing God; . . . Who told you that man did not exist in like manner upon the same principles? . . . The *mind of man is as immortal as God himself*. . . . I take my ring from my finger and liken it unto the mind of man, the immortal spirit, because it has no beginning. . . . All the fools, learned and wise men, from the beginning of creation, who say that man had a beginning, proves that he must have an end and then the doctrine of annihilation would be true. But, if I am right I might with boldness proclaim from the house tops, that *God never did have power to create the spirit of man at all*. . . . intelligence exists upon a self-existent principle, it is a spirit from age to age, and there is *no creation about it*. . . . (*Times and Seasons*, vol. 5, page 615)

We have already shown that according to Mormon teachings God and his wife or wives were the parents of all the spirits who later come to be born on earth. In other words, we were all supposed to have been part of one immense family of spirit children in heaven. Those who are accounted worthy to become Gods and Goddesses after the resurrection are likewise to give birth to spirit children throughout all eternity, and these spirits will eventually take bodies on other worlds.

Milton R. Hunter, who was a member of the LDS Church’s First Council of the Seventy, wrote the following:

Joseph explained . . . that *the Gods were to be parents of spirit children* just as our Heavenly Father and Mother were the parents of the people of this earth. (*The Gospel Through the Ages*, 1958, page 120)





Revelations were given by the Lord to the Prophet Joseph relative to several phases of the eternal progression of man. In the first stage, man was an eternally existent being termed an intelligence. In that sphere of existence each individual was naturally conscious. "He must have the power to distinguish himself from other things—the 'me' from the 'not me' . . ."

The next realm where man dwelt was the spirit world. According to Mormon concept eternally-existing intelligences were clothed with spirit bodies in the mansion of their Eternal Father. . . . numerous sons and daughters were begotten and born of heavenly parents into that eternal family in the spirit world. . . . There in the spirit world they were reared to maturity, becoming grown spirit men and women prior to coming upon this earth. . . .

Following his stay in the spirit world, man comes on earth in a probationary state preparatory to the eternal existence beyond the mortal confines of this world. . . .

Eventually, however, mortal death comes upon all. . . . In due time, all will rise from the grave . . . those who are recorded in "the Lamb's book of life" will enter celestial glory. There some of them will become angels and others priests and kings, or in other words, Gods. (*Ibid.*, pages 126-128)

Mormon Apostle Orson Pratt set forth some important details and problems concerning the birth of spirit children to celestial beings:

25. In the Heaven where our spirits were born, there are many Gods, each one of whom has his own wife or wives . . . Each God, through his wife or wives, raises up a numerous family of sons and daughters; . . . each father and mother will be in a condition to multiply forever and ever. As soon as each God has begotten many millions of male and female spirits, and his Heavenly inheritance becomes too small, to comfortably accommodate his great family, he, in connection with his sons, organizes a new world, after a similar order to the one which we now inhabit, where he sends both the male and female spirits to inhabit tabernacles of flesh and bones. . . . The inhabitants of each world are required to reverence, adore, and worship their own personal father who dwells in the Heaven which they formerly inhabited. . . . The number of the sons and daughters of God, born in Heaven before this earth was formed, is not known by us. They must have been exceedingly numerous, . . . The amount of population now on the globe, is estimated in round numbers at one thousand million. If we take this estimation for the average number per century, during the seven thousand years of its temporal existence it will amount to seventy thousand millions [i.e., 70 billion]. . . . It will be seen, from this estimation,

that about seventy thousand million sons and daughters were born in Heaven, and kept their first estate, . . . If we admit that one personage was the Father of all this great family, and that they were all born of the same Mother, the period of time intervening between the birth of the oldest and the youngest spirit must have been immense. If we suppose, as an average, that only one year intervened between each birth, then it would have required, over one hundred thousand millions of years for the same Mother to have given birth to this vast family. The law, regulating the formation of the embryo spirit, may, as it regards time, differ considerably from the period required for the formation of the infant tabernacle of flesh. Should the period between each birth, be one hundred times shorter than what is required in this world, (which is very improbable,) it would still require over one thousand million of years to raise up such a numerous progeny. But as heavenly things are, in many respects, typical of earthly, it is altogether probable that the period required for the formation of the infant spirit, is of the same length as that required in this world . . . If the Father of these spirits, prior to his redemption, had secured to himself, through the everlasting covenant of marriage, many wives, . . . the period required to people a world would be shorter, within certain limits, in proportion to the number of wives. For instance, if it required one hundred thousand million of years to people a world like this, as above stated, it is evident that, with a hundred wives, this period would be reduced to only one thousand million years. (*The Seer*, March 1853, pages 37-39)

Apostle Pratt's description of the function of a Mormon woman who advances to Godhood reminds one of the role played by a queen bee. The queen bee, of course, produces swarms of offspring—as many as 2,500 a day! Her main purpose appears to be to produce more bees. Mormon scholar Eugene England seems to be repelled by the concept concerning spirit children taught by Apostle Pratt and other "influential Mormons and teachers of religion." He maintains that if "humans can already produce test-tube babies and clones, God has certainly found more efficient ways to produce spirit children than by turning celestial partners into mere birth machines. To anticipate such a limited, unequal role for women in eternity insults and devalues them" (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Winter 1987, page 148). On page 153 of the same article, Mr. England speaks of "the insulting concept discussed above, that women are needed chiefly as birth machines for spirit children." While many Mormon women would agree with England, the teaching seems too embedded in Mormon theology to be torn out without endangering the entire doctrine of

“eternal progression.” Apostle Bruce R. McConkie made it very plain that spirit children are literally born to the Eternal Father and Mother:

Our spirit bodies had their beginning in pre-existence when we were born as the spirit children of God our Father. Through that birth process spirit element was organized into intelligent entities. (*Mormon Doctrine*, 1979, page 750)

As we have shown in another chapter, although Mormon theology teaches that a woman can obtain “Godhood,” it really amounts to almost nothing. She is still required to “yield the most perfect obedience” to her “great Head” (her husband). While her husband will be worshipped by their spirit children and manifest himself to them after they go to an earth to experience mortality, she will apparently have no contact with them there. According to Apostle Orson Pratt, “the children, so far as we are informed, have never been commanded to pray to her or worship her” (*The Seer*, page 159). Apostle Pratt, in fact, said that it was “not” lawful “to worship” the Mother God. Unlike the Father God who receives “the exalted name-title” of Elohim (*Mormon Doctrine*, 1979, page 224), the Eternal Mother receives no special name or title. The Mormon writer Grethe B. Peterson made these comments about the Eternal Mother:

Our Heavenly Mother has been with us since the beginning of the Church, but for reasons that are unknown to us at this time, or for reasons that have not yet been explored, she has remained on the “edge of our religious consciousness”. . . Our theology provides for the male/female concept of deity, yet our religious practices do not. Our Mother in Heaven is, and yet she is not. Why, if her existence was taught by the Prophet Joseph and acknowledged by leaders of the Church from the 19th century down to the present, isn’t our Mother in Heaven a central part of our religious life and practices?. . . many women feel that the personal knowledge of a Heavenly Mother cannot be shared or even talked about for fear of being misunderstood or for making common an intensely private and sacred knowledge. . . . I keep thinking about the statement made by a dear friend as she was describing her feelings about her personal search for her Heavenly Mother. She said, “Sometimes I feel like a motherless child.” (*Sunstone*, September-October 1980, pages 16-17)

Many Mormon women have serious reservations about the concept of having billions of spirit children every time their husbands decide to people another world. They believe that this teaching smacks of confusion and mass production. Melodie Moench Charles has publicly expressed her opposition to the teaching:

Nineteenth-century Mormon theology shows a pre-occupation with attaining power and status in the millennium and in heaven. . . . I find this heavenly structure neither reasonable nor appealing. . . . Two levels of heavenly kingdoms exist in our theology. . . . This second kind of kingdom is made up of the children conceived in heaven who will inhabit earths created by their parent gods. Creating includes not only making a world, but peopling it through procreating, through sexual union with one’s spouse. . . . From Joseph Smith he [Parley P. Pratt] “learned the true dignity and destiny of a son of God, . . . It was from him that I learned that the highest dignity of womanhood was, to stand as queen and priestess to her husband, and to reign for ever and ever as the queen mother of her numerous and still increasing offspring”. . .

Our theology currently gives women no hope that their participation in priesthood will ever be great enough to allow them to create anything but children. Some women might be excited by the possibility of providing the womb through which a never-ending stream of children would be born, but I am not. . . . Gene England rightly called this limited, unequal role for women in eternity “absurd” “humiliating” and “degrading”. . .

Our temple ceremony has some further limiting, unequal, and degrading implications for women’s heavenly existence. Each woman is promised that she might eventually be a queen and priestess *to her husband*, while her husband is promised that he might eventually be a king and a priest *to God*. . . . males are linked directly to God, and women to God only through their husbands . . . This link takes on a twist when people being married [in the temple] are symbolically brought into heaven by a male playing the role of God. A man is brought into heaven by an anonymous male temple worker playing that role. But a woman is brought into heaven by her husband playing the role of God to her. So not only does the temple ceremony suggest that women reach God through their husbands, but that husbands, on some level, *act as god to their wives*. . . .

An essential part of this theology of marriage in heaven is polygamy. While it is unlikely that the Church will again promote polygamy in mortality, it is still a vital part of Mormon heaven. As *Doctrine and Covenants* 131 and 132 explain, polygamy in heaven enables celestial beings to procreate kingdoms over which a righteous man would preside as god. I say “man,” because while the woman is a participant, the focus is completely on the male and his kingdom. . . . As long as *Doctrine and Covenants* 132 remains in our scriptural canon, heavenly polygamy is a part of Mormon theology.

Heavenly polygamy, more than anything else in our theology, reduces people to things. Emily Dow Partridge, a plural wife to Joseph Smith and Brigham

Young, complained, “even our own people seemed to think that the Lord had given men plural wives for stepping stones for them and their first wives to mount to glory on”. . . The greater the number of wives and children a man has in heaven, the greater his power, kingdom, and eternal glory. In the worst materialistic sense rather than in the best metaphorical sense, wives and children were a man’s riches. Benjamin F. Johnson remembered that “the Prophet taught us that Dominion & power in the great Future would be Commensurate with the no[.] of ‘Wives, Children & Friends’ that we inherit here”. . .

Rather than seeing any compelling reason to think that we must populate heavenly kingdoms into existence so that these kingdoms can be our eternal reward, I see a compelling reason not to believe that God authored this system. It again reduces people to things. . . Each spirit child is one more being for its parents to be sovereign Lords over. . .

Heavenly Mother is not an equal partner with Heavenly Father in any sense. . . Since she has no sphere of operations, she has no power. . . I can’t see any reason now to let such a degrading concept of the female deity continue to exist without protest. . . Our theology has allowed her no authority nor power; she gets no acknowledgment for her distinctive contributions, whatever they are. She has no self apart from her husband . . .

I can’t change the reality of what heaven is. My wishing, hoping, and needing won’t make it what I want it to be. But neither does Brigham Young’s or Joseph Smith’s. I believe that they and other Mormon males projected their own needs and desires into heaven, and that their heaven probably does not resemble actual heaven any more than my ideal heaven does. . .

I have said all of this not to complain, but rather to encourage Church members and leaders to rethink our theology of heaven. The nineteenth-century Mormon men who fleshed out the theological skeleton provided by scriptures and revelation fleshed it out according to their own cultural prejudices. They structured it to compensate themselves for the deprivations they felt they suffered on earth. But their prejudices and their needs should no longer be misread as representing heavenly reality: they are time-bound, not eternal. It is time to reject those aspects of Mormon heaven that are uninspired, unreasonable, unfair, damaging, and serve no virtuous end. (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Autumn 1988, pages 76, 78-82, 84-86)

Mormon leaders, of course, will argue that women will be perfectly happy when they arrive in the heaven described in their theology. Childbirth will not be painful in heaven, and all the other details and problems will be worked out. Even so, since Mormon theology limits Gods and Goddesses to physical bodies, it seems that it would be very difficult for either the “Heavenly Father” or the

“Heavenly Mother” to give much individual attention to billions of children. In any case, toward the end of this chapter we will show that there are even more serious problems with the doctrine of “eternal progression.”

### **Smith’s Attempt to Destroy Hell**

Because the Universalists were claiming that man would not receive eternal punishment for his sins, the question of justice and mercy was a burning issue during Joseph Smith’s lifetime. Evangelist Charles G. Finney tells of an incident that took place in the 1820s:

. . . a Universalist minister came in and began to promulge his objectionable doctrines. . . . The great effort of the Universalist was of course to show that sin did not deserve endless punishment. He inveighed against the doctrine of endless punishment as unjust, infinitely cruel and absurd. . . . how could a God of love punish men endlessly? . . . I took up the question of the justice of endless punishment, and discussed it through that and the next evening. There was general satisfaction with the presentation. (*Charles G. Finney*, pages 48-49)

Like Charles G. Finney, Joseph Smith originally took a very strong stand against the doctrine of the Universalists. When we examine the Book of Mormon we see that it is filled with this controversy. In Alma 1:3 we read of a wicked man who “had gone about among the people, preaching to them that which he termed to be the word of God.” In the fourth verse of the same chapter it becomes clear that this man was a Universalist in his doctrine:

And he also testified unto the people that all mankind should be saved at the last day, and that they need not fear nor tremble, but that they might lift up their heads and rejoice; for the Lord had created all men, and had also redeemed all men; and, *in the end all men should have eternal life.* (Alma 1:4)

The reader will notice that this wicked man taught that “all mankind should be saved at the last day.” In the Universalist publication, *Gospel Advocate*, we find many similar expressions: “The Universalists believe . . . all men will ultimately enjoy happiness . . .” (*Gospel Advocate*, February 17, 1826, page 47). “. . . he both can and will save all mankind with an everlasting salvation . . .” (page 47). “. . . all men will finally be saved” (page 178).

Universalists taught that “the devil is a nonentity, and an endless hell of brimstone a bugbear . . .” (*Gospel Advocate* (August 25, 1826), page 245). The Book of Mormon, on the other hand, warned against such a teaching:

And behold, others he flattereth away, and telleth them there is no hell; and he saith unto them: I am no devil, *for there is none*—and thus he whispereth in their ears, until he grasps them with his awful chains, . . . and all that have been seized therewith must . . . go into the place prepared for them, even a lake of fire and brimstone, which is endless torment. (2 Nephi 28:22-23)

Although Joseph Smith vigorously opposed the doctrine of the Universalists and supported the orthodox position concerning hell in his Book of Mormon, within a year of its publication he had completely changed his mind. In a revelation given to Martin Harris in March, 1830, Joseph Smith proclaimed: “Nevertheless, it is not written that there shall be no end to this torment, but it is written endless torment” (*Doctrine and Covenants* 19:6). B. H. Roberts explained: “Christians believed that to receive eternal punishment was to be punished eternally. This popular Christian error was corrected in a revelation to Martin Harris . . .” (*Outlines of Ecclesiastical History*, page 408). Joseph Fielding Smith likewise stated that “eternal punishment, or everlasting punishment, does not mean that a man condemned will endure this punishment forever . . .” (*Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 2, page 160)

When Joseph Smith became converted to the ideas of the Universalists he completely repudiated the teachings of the Book of Mormon. It would almost appear that he had completely forgotten what he had previously written. In his later theology he taught that eternal punishment would eventually come to an end, but in the Book of Mormon he emphatically stated that eternal punishment is as eternal as the life of the soul:

Now, repentance could not come unto men except there were a punishment, which also was eternal as the life of the soul should be affixed opposite to the plan of happiness, which was as eternal also as the life of the soul. (Alma 42:16)

In Mosiah 2:38-39, we read that it is a final doom: “Wherefore if that man repenteth not, and remaineth and death an enemy to God, . . . mercy hath no claim on that man; therefore his final doom is to endure a never ending torment.” In 3 Nephi 27:11 and 17, it is made clear that the wicked can never return:

. . . and by and by the end cometh, and they are hewn down and cast into the fire, from whence there is no return . . . And he that endureth not unto the end, the same is he that is also hewn down and cast into the fire, from whence they can no more return, because of the justice of the Father.

Although Joseph Smith took a great deal of space in the Book of Mormon to warn against an “awful hell,” toward the end of his life he seemed to be indifferent and even flippant concerning this matter (see *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* page 198). The fact that Joseph Smith

completely reversed his position concerning hell has led to a great deal of confusion among the Mormon people.

John A. Widtsoe taught that “very few will be so condemned” as to become the “sons of perdition” because “very few have the knowledge required.” Apostle Widtsoe went on to state:

All others, who are not classed as sons of perdition, will be “redeemed in the due time of the Lord”; that is they will all be saved. *The meanest sinner will find some place in the heavenly realm. . . .* In the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, *there is no hell*. All will find a measure of salvation. . . . The gospel of Jesus Christ has no hell in the old proverbial sense. (*Joseph Smith—Seeker After Truth*, pages 177-178)

It is interesting to note, however, that the Book of Mormon claims it is the devil who will say there is no hell. In 2 Nephi 28:21, 22 we read:

And others will he pacify, and lull them away into carnal security, . . . and thus the devil cheateth their souls, and leadeth them away carefully down to hell. And behold, others he flattereth away, and telleth them there is no hell; . . . and thus he whispereth in their ears, until he grasps them with his awful chains, from whence there is no deliverance.

It is certainly strange that Apostle Widtsoe would teach the very thing that the Book of Mormon so strongly condemns.

### Mormon Purgatory

Milton V. Backman, Jr., Professor of Church History at Brigham Young University, acknowledged that “Joseph Smith . . . accepted the Roman Catholic concept that there was an intermediate or preparatory stage between death and a final judgment” (*Seminar on the Prophet Joseph Smith*, BYU, February 18, 1961). Joseph Fielding Smith claimed: “Even the wicked of the earth . . . shall at last come forth from the prison house, repentant and willing to bow the knee and acknowledge Christ, . . .” (*Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 2, pages 220-221). President Smith also stated: “It is decreed that the unrighteous shall have to spend their time during this thousand years in the prison house prepared for them where they can repent and cleanse themselves through the things which they shall suffer” (*Ibid.*, vol. 3, page 60).

Heber C. Kimball, a member of the First Presidency under Brigham Young added: “That is loving the wicked, to send them there to hell to be burnt out until they are purified. Yes, they shall go there and stay there and be burnt, like an old pipe that stinks with long usage and corruption, until they are burnt out, and then their spirits may be saved in the day of God Almighty” (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 4, page 223).

In accepting the Roman Catholic concept of a purgatory or “preparatory stage between death and a final judgment,” the Mormon church leaders have had to lay aside the teachings of the Book of Mormon. In Alma 34:32-35 it is made very clear that there is no chance for repentance after death:

For behold, this life is the time for men to prepare to meet God; . . . I beseech of you that ye do not procrastinate the day of your repentance until the end; for after this day of life, which is given us to prepare for eternity, behold, if we do not improve our time while in this life, then cometh the night of darkness wherein there can be no labor performed.

Ye cannot say, when ye are brought to that awful crisis, that I will repent, that I will return to my God. Nay, ye cannot say this; for that same spirit which doth possess your bodies at the time that ye go out of this life, that same spirit will have power to possess your body in that eternal world.

For behold, if ye have procrastinated the day of your repentance even until death, behold, ye have become subjected to the spirit of the devil, and he doth seal you his; therefore, the Spirit of the Lord hath withdrawn from you, and hath no place in you, and the devil hath all power over you; and this is the final state of the wicked.

### An Ever-Expanding Hell

In the Bible we read that hell was originally “prepared for the devil and his angels,” but people who refuse to repent shall also “go away into everlasting punishment . . .” (Matthew 25:41-46). Mormons often ridicule Christians who believe in the Biblical teaching concerning hell. Apostle John A. Widtsoe commented:

How men could devise so horrible a future for any one of God’s children is a striking evidence of the apostasy from the simple loving gospel of Jesus Christ. . . . the correction of this evil doctrine had to be made. (Joseph Smith—Seeker After Truth, page 175)

While Joseph Smith tried to destroy the biblical teaching concerning hell, his doctrine of “eternal progression” seems to create a hell which is infinitely larger than the mind is able to comprehend. The Mormon hell, in fact, turns out to be a place or places of punishment which will continue to claim captives at an increasingly greater rate throughout all eternity.

To begin with, Mormonism teaches that the devil and his angels were born to the Heavenly Father and the Heavenly Mother in the pre-existence as spirit children. In other words, they were originally part of the family of spirits who were to come to earth to receive bodies. Instead, however, they rebelled, were cast out, and became the “sons of perdition.” While Mormons believe that “very few” of the spirits who come to earth will

end up in hell, they affirm that all those who followed the devil in the preexistence are to go to an everlasting hell. Bruce R. McConkie made this statement concerning them: “Their lot is to wallow in wickedness to all eternity. They are spiritually dead eternally” (*Mormon Doctrine*, 1979, page 756). On page 281 of the same book, Apostle McConkie says that when “the sons of perdition come forth in the resurrection, they ‘rise to that resurrection which is as the lake of fire and brimstone.’”

According to a revelation given by Joseph Smith, a “third” of the spirits born to God and his wife became sons of perdition and were thrust down to hell:

. . . the devil was before Adam, for he rebelled against me, saying, Give me thine honor, which is my power, and also a third part of the hosts of heaven turned he away from me because of their agency; And they were thrust down, and thus came the devil and his angels; And, behold, there is a place prepared for them from the beginning, which place is hell. (*Doctrine and Covenants* 29:36-38)

Apostle Orson Pratt estimated that there were about 35 billion spirit children of God who were sent to this eternal hell:

. . . about seventy thousand million sons and daughters were born in Heaven, and kept their first estate, . . . seventy thousand million, however great the number may appear to us, are but two-thirds of the vast family of spirits who were begotten before the foundation of the world: the other third part of the family did not keep the first estate. Add to seventy thousand million, the third part which fell, namely thirty-five thousand million, and the sum amounts to one hundred and five thousand million which was the approximate number of the sons and daughters of God in Heaven before the rebellion which broke out among them. (*The Seer*, March 1853, page 38)

Mormon writer Eugene England speaks of “the 80 billion or so people demographers compute will have lived on earth by 2000 A. D.” (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Winter 1987, page 148). The figure given by Mr. England is similar to that given by Apostle Orson Pratt. If 80 billion people will eventually live on earth, then it follows that the “sons of perdition” number 40 billion. The number could be even higher, however, because the figure of “80 billion” on earth does not include the millennium and, according to Apostle McConkie, children “will be born” during this period of “1000 years” (*Mormon Doctrine*, page 497).

While Mormon apologists criticize others for believing in the idea of eternal punishment of the wicked, their church’s own doctrine has already consigned 40,000,000,000 or more of God’s own spirit children to eternal damnation. This, however, is just the tip of the

iceberg. If the doctrine of “eternal progression” is true, this same thing has already happened on innumerable worlds. In a discourse given February 18, 1855, Apostle Orson Pratt expressed the view that there are already countless Gods and worlds: “If we should take a million of worlds like this and number their particles, we should find that there are more Gods than there are particles of matter in those worlds” (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 2, page 345).

The Mormon couple who looks forward to Godhood should be aware of the serious implications of their theology. If the doctrine of “eternal progression” is true, they will be faced with a great deal of heartache. To begin with, in the hereafter they will vividly recall their pre-existent state in which a third of their own family fought against their Heavenly Father and became sons of perdition. On the positive side, they will have a spirit child who will become the “redeemer” of their earth, but this will be offset to some extent by the fact that one of their other sons will turn out to be a “tempter.” President Brigham Young made this comment about the matter:

How many earths are there? I observed this morning that you may take the particles of matter composing this earth, and if they could be enumerated they would only be a beginning to the number of the creations of God; and they are continually coming into existence, and undergoing changes and passing through the same experience that we are passing through. *Sin is upon every earth* that ever was created, . . . Consequently *every earth has its redeemer, and every earth has its tempter*, and every earth, and the people thereof, in their turn and time, receive all that we receive, and pass through all the ordeals that we are passing through. (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 14, pages 71-72)

The worst thing of all, however, is that according to Mormon theology the couple who aspires to Godhood will probably have to send billions of their own spirit children to an eternal hell. In the revelation to Joseph Smith which we referred to earlier, Jesus is purported to have said that “a third part” of the spirit children were lost “because of their agency” (*Doctrine and Covenants* 29:36). Since part of the eternal plan is to give the spirit children free agency, this opens the door so that the spirits can choose to become sons of perdition. Now, if the current Mormon God suffered a loss of at least 40,000,000,000 children, it seems highly unlikely that those who receive Godhood under him will have a better rate of success. In any case, after the couple goes through this great loss, it will be time to start another world. This same process of having spirit children to populate worlds is supposed to continue throughout all eternity.

To those who have even an elementary understanding of mathematics, it is obvious that the Mormon doctrine of “eternal progression” would create an immeasurable number of sons of perdition. Although Apostle Orson Pratt did not discuss the multiplication of the sons of perdition, he did give some idea of how rapidly the number of worlds and Gods would increase under the Mormon plan:

As yet, we have only spoken of the hundred fold ratio as applied to his own children; but now let us endeavor to form some faint idea of the multiplied increase of worlds peopled by his grandchildren, over which he, of course, would hold authority and dominion as the Grand Patriarch of the endless generations of his posterity. If, out of the whole population of the first redeemed world, only one million of sons were redeemed to the fulness of all the privileges and glory of their Father, they, in their turn, would now be prepared to multiply and people worlds the same as their Father, . . . While their Father, therefore, was peopling the second world, these million of redeemed sons would people one million of worlds. . . . secondly, there would be the two redeemed worlds or heavens inhabited by his children; and, thirdly, there would be the one million of heavens inhabited by his grandchildren. We have only estimated, as yet, the second generation of worlds. If the estimate be carried still further in the same ratio, it will be found that the number in the third generation amounts to one billion three million and three worlds. The fourth generations would people over a trillion, and the fifth over a quadrillion of worlds; while the one-hundredth generation would people more worlds than could be expressed by raising one million to the ninety-ninth power. Any mathematician who is able to enumerate a series of 595 figures, will be able to give a very close approximation to the number of worlds peopled by the descendants of one Father in one hundred thousand million of years, according to the average ratio given above. Now this is the period in which only one world could be peopled with one wife. While the Patriarch with his hundred wives, would multiply worlds on worlds, systems on systems, more numerous than the dust of all the visible bodies of the universe, . . . (*The Seer*, page 39)

The person who accepts the Mormon doctrine of “eternal progression” is forced by mathematics to conclude that eventually quadrillions of worlds will be created by the Gods every second and that this will go on forever and ever. While this idea might really appeal to a man who is interested in obtaining “authority and dominion as the Grand Patriarch of the endless generations of his posterity,” there is a very gloomy downside to the story since every second that passes

quadrillions of spirits will become “sons of perdition” and be lost forever, and this number will rapidly increase throughout all eternity!

While Joseph Smith claimed he was trying to straighten out the Christian world with respect to the hereafter, it seems that he has only produced more confusion. He has separated the one superlative heaven which Jesus taught into a number of different compartments which will cause a segregated condition in the afterlife. While Smith’s doctrine concerning the “sealing” of families together for “time and all eternity” seems to promise that Mormons will have their children in the resurrection, his doctrine of “eternal progression” seems to take them far away. If the children are faithful, they will be off creating their own worlds throughout eternity. Moreover, Joseph Smith’s attempt to evade the biblical teaching concerning hell led him into such a state of confusion that he ended up creating a hell which looms as an ever expanding black hole sucking in “a third part” of the spirit children of worlds innumerable to eternal destruction.

## 21. Fall of the Book of Abraham

According to Mormon writers, the “Book of Abraham” was supposed to have been written on papyrus by Abraham about 4,000 years ago. This very same papyrus, it is claimed, was acquired by Joseph Smith in 1835. He translated the papyrus and published it under the title, “The Book of Abraham.” The Book of Abraham was accepted by the LDS Church as scripture and is now published as part of the *Pearl of Great Price*—one of the four standard works of the church.

If the papyrus were really written by Abraham, as the Mormons contend, its discovery would have to be rated as one of the most important finds in the history of the world. To say that the papyrus would be worth a million dollars would be greatly under-estimating its value, for it would be older than any portion of the Bible. The late Brigham Young University Professor Sidney B. Sperry observed:

If a manuscript were to be found in the sands of Egypt written in Egyptian characters with the title of “The Book of Abraham,” it would cause a sensation in the scholarly world. Our people do profess to have such a scripture containing but five chapters which was written by Abraham . . . (*Ancient Records Testify in Papyrus and Stone*, 1938, page 39)

On page 83 of the same book, Dr. Sperry boasted:

. . . the Book of Abraham will some day be reckoned as one of the most remarkable documents in existence . . . the writings of Abraham . . . must of necessity be older than the original text of *Genesis*.

From this it is plain to see that if the “Book of Abraham” is an authentic record of Abraham, its value to the world could not be estimated. If, on the other hand, the papyrus was not really written by Abraham, then Joseph Smith was guilty of misrepresentation, and serious doubt is cast upon the Book of Mormon and other writings which he claimed were scripture.

### The Papyri Rediscovered

For many years Joseph Smith’s collection of papyri was lost, but on November 27, 1967, the Mormon-owned *Deseret News* announced:

NEW YORK — A collection of pa[p]yrus manuscripts, long believed to have been destroyed in the Chicago fire of 1871, was presented to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints here Monday by the Metropolitan Museum of Art. . . . Included in the papyri is a manuscript identified as the original document from which Joseph Smith had copied the drawing which he called “Facsimile No. 1” and published with the Book of Abraham.

The importance of this find cannot be overemphasized, for now Joseph Smith's ability as a translator of ancient Egyptian writing can be put to an absolute test.

In February 1968, the *Improvement Era*, a Mormon publication, announced that there was an "unprecedented interest generated throughout the Church by the recovery of 11 pieces of papyrus that were once the property of the Prophet Joseph Smith." While many members of the church felt that Joseph Smith's work had been vindicated, Dr. Hugh Nibley, who was supposed to be the LDS Church's top authority on the Egyptian language, warned his people that there was trouble ahead. On December 1, 1967, the *Daily Universe*, published at Brigham Young University, reported these statements by Dr. Nibley:

"The papyri scripts given to the Church do not prove the Book of Abraham is true," Dr. Hugh Nibley said . . . Wednesday night. "LDS scholars are caught flat footed by this discovery," he went on to say.

In order to understand the problems involved, it is necessary to give a brief history of the papyri. Joseph Smith's *History of the Church* contains the following account of the discovery of the papyri:

The records were obtained from one of the catacombs of Egypt, . . . by the celebrated French traveler, Antonio Sebolo, . . . he made a will of the whole, to Mr. Michael H. Chandler. . . . On opening the coffins, he discovered . . . two rolls of papyrus . . . (*History of the Church*, vol. 2, pages 348-349)

After receiving some mummies along with the papyri, Mr. Chandler traveled about exhibiting them. He arrived in Kirtland, Ohio, in 1835. Joseph Smith became interested in the papyri, and the Mormons purchased both the papyri and the mummies from Mr. Chandler. Joseph Smith examined the papyri and made the startling announcement that they were the writings of Abraham and Joseph of Egypt:

. . . I commenced the translation of some of the characters or hieroglyphics, and much to our joy found that one of the rolls contained the writings of Abraham, another the writings of Joseph of Egypt, etc. . . . (*History of the Church*, vol. 2, page 236)

In 1842 Joseph Smith published his translation of the "Book of Abraham" in the *Times and Seasons*. Three drawings from the "Book of Abraham" were included in this work.

During the time that Joseph Smith possessed the papyri many people were allowed to see them. Josiah Quincy, who met with Joseph Smith in Nauvoo, gave the following account of his visit:

The prophet referred to his miraculous gift of understanding all languages. . . . "And now come with me," said the prophet, "and I will show you the curiosities." . . . "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. . . . "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. (*Among the Mormons*, pages 136-137)

In Joseph Smith's time the science of Egyptology was in its infancy. Therefore, Joseph Smith's work as a translator could not be adequately tested. The knowledge of hieroglyphic, hieratic and demotic Egyptian writing had been lost many centuries before, and it was not until the beginning of the nineteenth century that there appeared much hope of deciphering these strange writings. Just before the turn of the century (1799) some French soldiers found a stone with Greek, demotic and hieroglyphic writings upon it. This is known as the Rosetta Stone. Since the Greek writing recorded the same information as the Egyptian, it was used as a key to decipher Egyptian writings. At the time Joseph Smith received the papyri there were only a very limited number of scholars who understood anything about the Egyptian language. Egyptologist E. A. Wallis Budge claimed that in 1837 "scarcely a dozen people in the whole world had any real knowledge" of the language.

From this information it is plain to see that there was little chance of Joseph Smith's work coming into conflict with the science of Egyptology during his lifetime. Joseph Smith was murdered in 1844, and within a few years the Mormons came out West. Smith's mother, as well as his widow, refused to go West, and consequently the Mormon church lost control of the collection of papyri. Nevertheless, Joseph Smith had included three drawings in his "Book of Abraham," and also gave an interpretation of much of the material which appeared in these drawings.

By the year 1860, the science of Egyptology had advanced to the point where some people felt that it could be used to test Joseph Smith's ability as a translator. The printed facsimiles from the "Book of Abraham" were submitted to Egyptologist M. Theodule Deveria. Deveria not only accused Joseph Smith of making a false translation but also of altering the scenes shown in the facsimiles. In 1912 another attack was made upon the Book of Abraham. A minister by the name of F. S. Spalding sent the printed facsimiles found in that book to



some of the foremost Egyptian scholars for their opinion. The Egyptologists all rendered a similar verdict—i.e., the “Book of Abraham” was a work of Joseph Smith’s imagination and had no basis in fact. James H. Breasted, Ph.D., Haskell Oriental Museum, University of Chicago, for instance, gave this assessment:

. . . these three facsimiles of Egyptian documents in the “Pearl of Great Price” depict the most common objects in the mortuary religion of Egypt. Joseph Smith’s interpretations of them as part of a unique revelation through Abraham, therefore, very clearly demonstrates that he was totally unacquainted with the significance of these documents and absolutely ignorant of the simplest facts of Egyptian writing and civilization. (*Joseph Smith, Jr., As a Translator*, pages 26-27)

The church leaders did not know how to deal with Spalding’s pamphlet. Mormon historian B. H. Roberts admitted that there “were no Egyptian scholars in the church” who could effectively deal with this attack on the Book of Abraham. The Mormons, however, did receive help from a professional writer who called himself “Robert C. Webb, Ph.D.” Fawn M. Brodie asserted that Robert C. Webb’s real name was “J. E. Homans,” and that he was “neither an Egyptologist nor a Ph.D.” (*No Man Knows My History*, 1957, page 175). From this it is rather obvious that the Mormon leaders were guilty of deception. Strange as it may seem, the Mormon scholar Dr. Sidney B. Sperry confirmed the fact that Robert C. Webb did not have a Ph.D.: “He wrote a wonderful book, . . . under the name of Robert C. Webb, Ph.D. *I regret* that the brethren let him put down Robert C. Webb, Ph.D., because he *was no Ph.D.*” (*Pearl of Great Price Conference*, December 10, 1960, 1964 ed., page 9). On page 6, Dr. Sperry said that Dr. Webb’s “real name was J. C. Homans.” (Ironically, a man by the name of Dee Jay Nelson who later took the opposite point of view—i.e., that the Book of Abraham was a false translation—bought a doctor’s degree from a diploma mill. For more information concerning “Dr. Webb” and “Dr. Nelson” see *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* 1987 edition, pages 300, 309-311.

At any rate, the LDS Church was able to survive Spalding’s attack on the Book of Abraham with little injury because church members felt that “Dr. Webb” had answered the critics. Writing in the church’s *Improvement Era*, April 1913, N. L. Nelson stated: “Dr. Webb has, indeed, vindicated the prophet better than he knew himself.”

After the excitement over Spalding’s pamphlet died down, the Mormons took little interest in the science of Egyptology. Then, in 1967, the church announced the rediscovery of the Joseph Smith Papyri and Dr. Nibley had to admit that “LDS scholars are caught flat footed by

this discovery.” It is our belief that a number of people in the church knew of the existence of the papyri long before the church announced that it had been rediscovered and that this information was suppressed until Mormon critic Wesley P. Walters approached the Metropolitan Museum about the matter. In *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* pages 302-306, we show that a Mormon scholar, Walter Whipple, knew that the papyri were in the museum as early as 1962, five years before the rediscovery was announced. It is also interesting to note that the church itself had an actual piece of papyrus from Joseph Smith’s collection which was suppressed for 130 years. We printed a photograph of it in 1966 in Joseph Smith’s Egyptian Alphabet and Grammar. Mormon writer Jay M. Todd now admits that Dr. James R. Clark, of Brigham Young University, knew about this fragment for thirty years but was told to suppress this information: “Outside of a few associates, Dr. Clark had kept the fragment a matter of confidence, under instructions from the Historian’s Office, for over 30 years” (*The Saga of the Book of Abraham*, page 364).

### **No Gift to Translate**

After receiving the papyri from the Metropolitan Museum, Mormon leaders turned them over “to Dr. Hugh Nibley, scholar, linguist at Brigham Young University, . . . for further research and study” (*Improvement Era*, February 1968, page 13). This turned out to be a very serious mistake. To begin with, the fact that the papyri were passed on to Dr. Nibley is almost an admission that church leaders are not guided by revelation as they claim. As we have stated earlier, the LDS Church is led by a man who is sustained by the people as “Prophet, Seer, and Revelator.” The Book of Mormon says that a “seer” can “translate all records that are of ancient date” (Mosiah 8:13). Apostle John A. Widtsoe maintained that if “records appear needing translation, the President of the Church may at any time be called, through revelation, to the special labor of translation” (*Evidences and Reconciliations*, vol. 1, page 203).

Since the church claims to have the “seer stone” and is supposed to be led by a “Prophet, Seer, and Revelator,” we might expect a translation by this means. Instead, however, the papyri were sent to Dr. Nibley to be translated by “the wisdom of the world.” Thus, it appears that the prophet does not have the gift to translate languages as previously claimed.

Since Mormon leaders apparently did not have the gift to translate the papyri themselves, they should have turned the job over to qualified Egyptologists. Instead of doing this, however, they gave the task to Dr. Hugh Nibley. Now there is no doubt that Dr. Nibley is an intelligent man and that he knows several different

languages, but this did not qualify him to deal with the Egyptian language. Egyptian is very difficult to master and takes many years of experience for a person to become skilled in working with it. Dr. Nibley had taken some classes in the Egyptian language, but this was not sufficient to qualify him for the job of translating the papyri. He admitted that he was not an Egyptologist in a letter to Dee Jay Nelson, dated June 27, 1967 (see *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* page 308, for a photograph of this letter): “I don’t consider myself an Egyptologist at all, and don’t intend to get involved in the P. G. P. business unless I am forced into it. . . .” When Dr. Nibley spoke of the “P. G. P.” he was, of course, referring to the *Pearl of Great Price* which contains the “Book of Abraham.” Even though Nibley claimed that he was not an Egyptologist and that he did not want to get involved in the argument concerning the authenticity of the Book of Abraham, he allowed himself to become more deeply involved defending the Book of Abraham than anyone else in the church.

Professor Nibley began a series of articles for the *Improvement Era* in January 1968. This series stretched over two years, and was finally brought to a conclusion with the issue published May, 1970. Although Nibley was supposed to unfold “the meaning of the hieroglyphics” in these articles, no translation of the Joseph Smith Papyri ever appeared in this series. It would appear that Dr. Nibley’s main objective in this series was to blind the eyes of his fellow church members so that they could not see the real issues involved in this matter. Although he used almost 2,000 footnotes, he never dealt with the main problem. In an article published in *Brigham Young University Studies*, Spring 1968, page 251, Nibley said that he was “often asked during the past months why we did not proceed with all haste and produce a translation” of the Joseph Smith Papyri. He went on to state that “it is doubtful whether any translation could do as much good as harm.” This is certainly a very revealing statement concerning Hugh Nibley’s thinking.

In the *Salt Lake Tribune*, November 11, 1973, we publicly criticized Dr. Nibley for his failure to produce a translation. He replied that he had prepared a book which “is 800 pages long, but that is not enough to account for keeping the impatient Tanners waiting for six years. What took up all that time was having to find out about a lot of things” (*Ibid.*, November 25, 1973). This book, which many people believed would answer the objections of the critics and save the Book of Abraham, was finally published in 1975 under the title, *The Message of the Joseph Smith Papyri: An Egyptian Endowment*. Although the book was nicely printed and bound, the contents were very disappointing. Of the eleven fragments of papyrus which were discovered, ten of them contain significant

Egyptian messages which can be translated. We would expect that any book about the papyri would at least have a translation of all these pieces. Dr. Nibley’s book, however, only contains a translation of two fragments! Among the fragments which he did not translate is the original of “Facsimile No. 1” in the Book of Abraham. This fragment contains a number of lines of hieroglyphs which relate to the meaning of the drawing. The reason Nibley did not translate these lines seems obvious: they show that Facsimile No. 1 is not a picture of “Abraham fastened upon an altar” as Joseph Smith proclaimed, but rather a picture of an Egyptian by the name of Hor being prepared for burial. We will have more to say about this later.

At any rate, the Mormon leaders did not commission any non-Mormon Egyptologists to translate the papyri. Instead they dropped them in the lap of Hugh Nibley, who was not really qualified to make a translation. It now seems obvious that church authorities just wanted Nibley to stall for as long as he could with the hope that they would find some way of dealing with the problem.

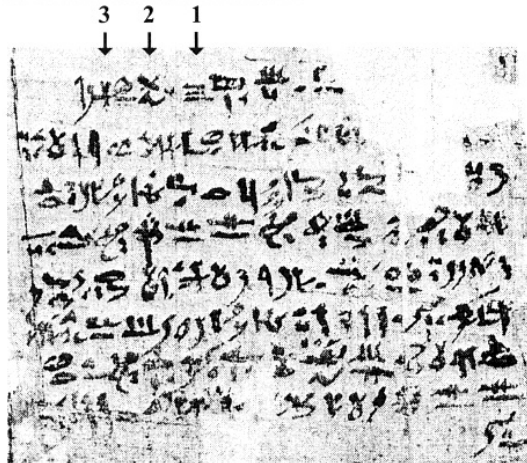
### Source of the Book of Abraham


As we stated before, when the papyri were located many members of the church felt that Joseph Smith’s work would be vindicated. We quoted Hugh Nibley, however, as warning that the papyri “do not prove the Book of Abraham is true” and that LDS scholars were “caught flat footed” by the discovery. While Dr. Nibley and a few others may have realized that the papyri could not be used to prove Joseph Smith’s work true, they evidently were not aware of the devastating blow that the papyri were about to deal to the Book of Abraham. Within six months from the time the Metropolitan Museum gave the papyri to the church, the Book of Abraham had been proven untrue!


The fall of the Book of Abraham was brought about by the identification of the actual fragment of papyrus from which Joseph Smith “translated” the book. On page 220 of this book the reader will find a photograph of the right side of this fragment of papyrus.


The identification of this fragment as the original from which Joseph Smith claimed to translate the Book of Abraham has been made possible by a comparison with *Joseph Smith’s Egyptian Alphabet and Grammar*—handwritten documents we photographically reproduced in 1966. Dr. James R. Clark of Brigham Young University gave this information:

. . . there are in existence today in the Church Historian’s Office what seem to be *two separate manuscripts of Joseph Smith’s translations from the papyrus rolls*, presumably in the hand writing of Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery. . . . One manuscript is the



1 →  -3  
 it was made after the form of a cedar stem  
 such as was had among the Chaldaeans  
 it stood before the Gods, Allonin Sibilan  
 Manmachrah and also a god idolante that  
 of Tharakh West of Egypt. that you may  
 have an understanding of their God.  
 I have given you the golden figures  
 in the figures at the beginning of each  
 manuscript of yours, the copies of the  
 plates Chaldean Hieroglyphs.

2 →  X  
 And as you lifted up your hands  
 upon me, that I might appear up  
 and take care of you, I have lifted up  
 my voice, unto the Lord my God, and  
 the Lord hath heard and heard and he  
 hath answered a voice of the Lord my  
 God, and the Lord hath answered my  
 prayer, and I have heard my voice, and I  
 have heard my voice, and I have heard my  
 voice.

3 →  H-G  
 And his voice was unto me, Allonin  
 Sibilan, heard my name is known,  
 and I have heard me, and have heard  
 down to receive me, and to take the voice

At the top is a photograph of the right side of the original fragment of papyrus from which Joseph Smith was supposed to have translated the Book of Abraham.

The bottom photograph is from the original manuscript of the Book of Abraham as it appears in Joseph Smith's *Egyptian Alphabet and Grammar*.

Alphabet and Grammar. . . Within this Alphabet and Grammar there is a *copy of the characters, together with their translation of Abraham 1:4-28* only. The second and separate of the two manuscripts contains none of the Alphabet and Grammar but is a manuscript of the text of the Book of Abraham as published in the first installment of the *Times and Seasons* March 1, 1842. (*The Story of the Pearl of Great Price*, 1962, pages 172-173)

Mormon leaders were either unaware of the fact that the gift of papyri included the very fragment which was put forward by Joseph Smith as the text of the Book of Abraham, or they hoped no one else would notice it. The following statement appeared in the Mormon paper, *Deseret News*, November 28, 1967: “As far as has yet been determined, the papyri do not contain any of the original material translated as the Book of Abraham itself.” When the Mormon magazine, *Improvement Era*, printed sepia photographs of the papyri, the fragment of papyrus from which Joseph Smith “translated” the Book of Abraham appeared as the very last photograph. It is found on page 41 of the February 1968 issue, and is labeled: “XI. Small ‘Sensen’ text (unillustrated).”

All of the first two rows of characters on the papyrus fragment can be found in the manuscript of the Book of Abraham that is published in *Joseph Smith’s Egyptian Alphabet and Grammar*. On page 220 of this book is a photograph of the original fragment of papyrus from which Joseph Smith was supposed to have translated the Book of Abraham. Just below it is a photograph of the original manuscript of the Book of Abraham as it appears in *Joseph Smith’s Egyptian Alphabet and Grammar*. We have numbered some of the characters on the first line of the fragment of papyrus so that the reader can compare them with the characters found in the handwritten manuscript.

The reader will probably be startled at the large number of English words which Joseph Smith “translated” from each Egyptian character. We will have more to say about this later.

As James R. Clark indicated, there is another copy of the Book of Abraham manuscript in the Church Historical Department. Dr. Clark gives the following information about that manuscript:

I have in my possession a photostatic copy of the manuscript of the Prophet Joseph Smith’s translation of Abraham 1:1 to 2:18. . . . The *characters from which our present book of Abraham was translated are down the left-hand column and Joseph Smith’s translation opposite*, so we know approximately *how much material was translated from each character*. (*Pearl of Great Price Conference*, December 10, 1960, 1964 ed., pages 60-61)

This manuscript goes further than the one in the *Alphabet and Grammar*. The characters continue in consecutive order into the fourth line of the papyrus, and this brings the text to Abraham 2:18. This is interesting because when Joseph Smith printed the first installment of the Book of Abraham in the *Times and Seasons*, he ended it at this point (see a photographic reproduction of four pages of this manuscript and a comparison of the characters on it with those found on the papyrus in *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* pages 312-313). A careful examination of this manuscript reveals that Joseph Smith used less than four lines from the papyrus to make forty-nine verses in the Book of Abraham. These forty-nine verses are composed of more than 2,000 English words!

Klaus Baer, an Egyptologist at the University of Chicago, concluded concerning the “Sensen” fragment: “Joseph Smith thought that this papyrus contained the Book of Abraham” (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Autumn 1968, page 111). In footnote 11 of the same article, Professor Baer observed: “This identification is now certain.” Mormon scholar Richley Crapo likewise observed:

In December of 1967, I was able to examine the original papyri in the vaults of the BYU library and obtain one of the first released sets of photographic copies. . . . A more careful examination of these revealed the startling fact that one of the papyri of the Church collection, known as the Small Sen-Sen Papyrus, contained the same series of hieratic symbols, which had been copied, in the same order, into the Book of Abraham manuscript next to verses of that book! In other words, there was every indication that the collection of papyri in the hands of the Church contained the source which led to a production of the *Book of Abraham*. It was naturally this document which I immediately began to translate. (*Book of Abraham Symposium*, LDS Institute of Religion, Salt Lake City, April 3, 1970, page 27)

Although Hugh Nibley later reversed his position in an attempt to save the Book of Abraham, in 1968 he frankly admitted that Joseph Smith used the “Sensen” papyrus for the text of the Book of Abraham. At a meeting held at the University of Utah on May 20, 1968, Dr. Nibley made these comments:

Within a week of the publication of the papyri students began calling my attention, . . . to the fact that, the very definite fact that, *one of the fragments seemed to supply all of the symbols for the Book of Abraham*. This was the little “Sensen” scroll. Here are the symbols. The symbols are arranged here, and the interpretation goes along here and *this interpretation*

turns out to be the Book of Abraham. Well, what about that? Here is the little “Sensen,” because that name occurs frequently in it, the papyrus in which *a handful of Egyptian symbols was apparently expanded in translation to the whole Book of Abraham*. This raises a lot of questions. It doesn’t answer any questions, unless we’re mind readers.

### **Only the Book of Breathings**

In the *Salt Lake City Messenger* for March 1968, we stated that Grant Heward, a Mormon who studied the Egyptian language and was later excommunicated for rejecting the Book of Abraham, felt that the fragment of papyrus Joseph Smith used as the basis for his Book of Abraham was in reality a part of the Egyptian “Book of Breathings.” This identification has been confirmed by several prominent Egyptologists. In order to understand what the “Book of Breathings” is about we must have some understanding of the Egyptian “Book of the Dead.” According to Egyptologists, the Book of the Dead was a document which “was dominated by magic” that was buried with those who died in ancient Egypt. It was supposed to have been written by the god Thoth and contained “many charms which enabled the dead to reach the world of the hereafter.” In his book, *Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt*, Egyptologist James Henry Breasted made these comments:

There were sumptuous and splendid rolls, sixty to eighty feet long and containing from seventy-five to as many as a hundred and twenty-five or thirty chapters . . . the Book of the Dead itself, as a whole, is but a far-reaching and complex illustration of the increasing dependence on magic in the hereafter . . . Besides many charms which enabled the dead to reach the world of the hereafter, there were those which prevented him from losing his mouth, his head, his heart, . . . to prevent his drinking-water from turning into flame, to turn darkness into light, to ward off all serpents and other hostile monsters, . . . a short chapter might in each case enable the dead man to assume the form of a falcon of gold, . . . a Phoenix, a heron, a swallow, a serpent . . . a crocodile, a god, and, best of all, there was a chapter so potent that by its use a man might assume any form that he desired. . . . To call it the Bible of the Egyptians, then, is quite to mistake the function and content of these rolls. (pages 293-296)

Those who have studied the Book of the Dead know that it was written by a very superstitious people, and is quite different from the religion taught in the Bible. The Book of Breathings is an outgrowth of the Egyptian Book of the Dead. It did not appear until the later stages of Egyptian history—just a few centuries before the time of Christ. E. A. Wallis Budge states:

The “Book of Breathings” is one of a number of short funeral works, . . . it was addressed to the deceased by the chief priest conducting the funeral service. . . . The “Book of Breathings” represents the attempt to include all essential elements of belief in a future life in a work shorter and more simple than the Book of the Dead. (*The Book of the Dead, Facsimiles of the Papyri of Hunefer, Anhai, Kerasher and Netchemet*, London 1899, page 33)

The fact that the papyrus Joseph Smith used as the basis for his Book of Abraham is in reality the Book of Breathings cannot be disputed because the name “Book of Breathings” appears clearly on the fourth line of the fragment. Even Dr. Hugh Nibley has translated the words “Book of Breathings” from this fragment of papyrus (see *The Message of the Joseph Smith Papyri*, page 20). In 1968 two Egyptologists from the University of Chicago’s Oriental Institute, Professors John A. Wilson and Klaus Baer, identified the papyrus as the “Book of Breathings.” Richard A. Parker of Brown University also confirmed the fact that what Joseph Smith claimed was the “Book of Abraham” was in reality the “Book of Breathings.” The editors of *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* (Summer 1968, page 86) stated that Professor Parker “would provisionally date the two Book of Breathings fragments in the Church’s possession to the last century before or the first century of the Christian era . . .”

### **Three Witness Against the Book of Abraham**

In the Book of Mormon we find this statement: “And in the mouth of three witnesses shall these things be established . . .” (Ether 5:4). Joseph Smith’s witnesses to the Book of Mormon were not trained in the science of Egyptology, and therefore could not possibly know whether Joseph Smith’s “gold plates” were authentic or whether he translated them correctly. In the case of the Book of Abraham, however, we have a different story. Three men who have been trained in the science of Egyptology have examined the text Joseph Smith claimed as the basis for the Book of Abraham and have declared that it is in reality the “Book of Breathings”—a pagan text having nothing at all to do with Abraham or his religion. (Actually, to be more precise we should say that the portion which Joseph Smith used is the instructions for wrapping up the Book of Breathings with the mummy.)

The first witness against the Book of Abraham is Dr. John A. Wilson. The *New York Times*, August 31, 1976, gave this information about him: “Dr. John A. Wilson, professor emeritus of Egyptology at the University of Chicago, died yesterday. . . . Dr. Wilson succeeded Dr. James H. Breasted in 1936 as director of the university’s Oriental Institute, holding the post for a decade and

later serving as director again in 1960-61.” Although Dr. Wilson did not actually publish a translation of the “Book of Abraham” Papyrus, he did examine it, and indicated it was only a “mortuary text” known as the “Book of Breathings” (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Summer 1968, page 68).

The second witness is Klaus Baer. *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Autumn 1968, page 109, gave this information concerning him: “Klaus Baer is Associate Professor of Egyptology at the University of Chicago’s Oriental Institute, and was one of Professor Hugh Nibley’s primary tutors in the art of reading Egyptian characters.” Klaus Baer’s translation appears on pages 119-120 of the same issue.

The third witness against the Book of Abraham is Professor Richard A. Parker, Chairman of the Department of Egyptology at Brown University. Hugh Nibley had a copy of Richard Parker’s translation of the “Sensen” text before it appeared in *Dialogue*, and in a speech delivered at the University of Utah on May 20, 1968, he stated: “. . . Professor Parker has translated that controversial little thing called the ‘Sensen’ papyrus, the little section, that text that matches up with some of the Book of Abraham.” Instead of attacking Professor Parker’s translation, as we might have expected the church’s chief apologist to do, Dr. Nibley praised it: “. . . here is Parker’s translation of the ‘Sensen’ papyrus . . . Parker is the best man in America for this particular period and style of writing. And Parker agreed to do it and he’s done it. So it’s nice.”

Besides the translations provided by Professors Baer and Parker, there have been a number of others who have given renditions. To save space here we will only include Professor Parker’s translation:

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

Except for a few minor variations, other renditions of the text are essentially in agreement with Professor Parker’s. The Book of Abraham, therefore, has been proven to be a spurious work. Egyptologists find no mention of either Abraham or his religion in this text. The

average number of words that the Egyptologists used to convey the message in this text is eighty-seven, whereas Joseph Smith’s rendition contains thousands of words. It is impossible to escape the conclusion that the Book of Abraham is a product of Joseph Smith’s imagination.

When Dr. Nibley spoke at the University of Utah on May 20, 1968, he admitted that if Joseph Smith was “really translating the papyri,” he did it in a way that is unknown to Egyptologists:

By what process could the Book of Abraham have been squeezed out of a few dozen brief signs? Nobody has told us yet. Was Joseph Smith really translating the papyri? If so, it was *not in any way known to Egyptology*. . . . Did he really need these symbols? This is a funny thing. Are they actually the source upon which he depended? Well, if he really depended on them, he must really have been translating them. But, you say, he couldn’t possibly have been translating. Could he have used this as a source at all? These questions arise. If he was merely faking, of course, pretending to be translating them, well, he wouldn’t need the Egyptian text at all. Yet *he used one*, and he used it secretly. . . . Why does he ignore the wealth of handsome illustrated texts at his disposal to concentrate only on the shortest and ugliest and most poorly written of the lot? . . . Well, all sorts of questions arise.

At one point Hugh Nibley became so desperate to save the Book of Abraham he suggested that the “Sensen” text may have a second meaning unknown to Egyptologists (see *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* pages 319-320). Although Dr. Nibley briefly gave support to the idea that the papyrus might possibly have “a totally different text concealed within it,” he seems to have come to realize that such an idea cannot be successfully maintained. Unfortunately, however, he came up with another theory which is as fantastic as the first: that the “Sensen” papyrus has no relationship to the Book of Abraham. It is, in fact, nothing but “the directions for wrapping up the Joseph Smith papyri with the mummy” (*The Message of the Joseph Smith Papyri: An Egyptian Endowment*, page 6). According to Nibley’s theory, Joseph Smith’s scribes were trying to match up the finished text of the Book of Abraham to the fragments of papyrus and mistakenly copied the characters from the “Sensen” papyrus into the handwritten manuscripts of the Book of Abraham. This suggestion seems absolutely preposterous. That Joseph Smith would allow his scribes to copy the characters from the wrong papyrus into three different manuscripts of the Book of Abraham is really beyond belief. A person might almost as reasonably conclude that the Book of Abraham itself was made up by Joseph Smith’s scribes. Dr. Nibley’s attempt to divorce the “Sensen” papyrus from the Book of Abraham

cannot be accepted by anyone who honestly examines the documents. For more evidence to show that Dr. Nibley is making a grave error in trying to separate the Book of Abraham from the “Sensen” papyrus the reader should see our article in the *Salt Lake City Messenger*, April 1976, and H. Michael Marquardt’s pamphlet, *The Book of Abraham Papyrus Found: An Answer to Dr. Hugh Nibley’s Book “The Message of the Joseph Smith Papyri: An Egyptian Endowment.”*

### **Complete Confusion**

Since the original papyrus contains nothing about Abraham, some Mormon apologists have suggested that Joseph Smith may have obtained the Book of Abraham by way of direct revelation and not from the papyrus. Those who try to use this escape will find themselves trapped by the words of Joseph Smith himself. At the beginning of the handwritten manuscript Joseph Smith asserted that it was a “Translation of the Book of Abraham written by his own hand upon papyrus and found in the catacombs of Egypt.” The introduction to the Book of Abraham still maintains that it was “Translated From the Papyrus, By Joseph Smith” (*Pearl of Great Price*, The Book of Abraham, Introduction). Joseph Smith not only claimed that he translated it from the papyrus, but according to the *History of the Church*, vol. 2, page 351, he affirmed that it was “a correct translation.”

In *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* pages 322-324, we examine the Egyptian words which appeared in the handwritten manuscripts of the Book of Abraham and show how Joseph Smith mistranslated them. In one case we show that Smith derived 177 English words out of the word “Khons”—the name of an Egyptian moon-god. The fact that he would make 177 English words from one Egyptian word is absolutely astounding! It shows very clearly that he did not have any understanding of the Egyptian language and that the Book of Abraham is a work of his own imagination.

The Book of Breathings papyrus that Joseph Smith mistakenly used as the basis for his Book of Abraham is far removed from Abraham in both time and content. To begin with, many scholars believe that Abraham lived in the twentieth century B. C., yet Professors Parker and Baer date the papyrus to about the time of Christ. Joseph Smith, of course, maintained it was written by Abraham’s “own hand upon papyrus.”

The contents of the Book of Breathings are certainly foreign to the teachings concerning Abraham found in the Bible. The Bible says he rejected paganism, whereas the Book of Breathings is filled with pagan gods and practices. The names of at least fifteen Egyptian gods or goddesses are mentioned on the “Sensen” papyri which Joseph Smith had in his possession, but there is not one

word about Abraham. Mormon apologists have not been able to explain how Joseph Smith derived the Book of Abraham from this pagan text. The fact that they are in a real dilemma over this matter is very evident from their writings. At a Book of Abraham Symposium, Mormon scholar Dr. Henry Eyring confessed:

Now, the Lord didn’t need the Book of Abraham—those scrolls. He was pretty well clear on everything without that. . . . the essential ingredient in the Book of Abraham is whatever the Prophet was inspired to write down. . . . I also wouldn’t look into the matter to find out whether I thought Joseph Smith was a Prophet, . . . it seems to me evident that he was much more than that. . . . it wouldn’t make a bit of difference to me if the scholars, studying the scrolls that led the Prophet to think about the problem of Abraham and write about it—it wouldn’t make a bit of difference to me if they discovered that it was a bill of lading for wheat in the Lower Nile. You see, some people don’t feel that way about it. But I think the Lord actually inspired Joseph. (*Book of Abraham Symposium*, April 3, 1970, page 3)

We wonder if Dr. Eyring has thought out the serious implications of such a statement. It seems almost equivalent to saying, “I don’t care if the gold plates Joseph Smith used for the Book of Mormon were nothing but a Maya record telling of sacrifices offered to the earth gods at Palenque.”

Some Mormon scholars even suggested that the “Sensen” papyrus was “used as a memory device by Abraham (and perhaps by his descendants), each symbol or group of symbols bringing to mind a set number of memorized phrases relating to Abraham’s account of his life, . . .” (*Newsletter and Proceedings of the Society for Early Historic Archaeology*, BYU, October 25, 1968, pages 1-4). Mormon scholar Benjamin Urrutia even suggested that the ancient Israelites feared the Egyptians were going to destroy the Book of Abraham and therefore:

. . . best way to save the book would have been to camouflage it to look like an Egyptian document instead of a Semitic one. . . . An enterprising Hebrew, whom we shall call X, conceived a code in which every character of a Mizraite [Egyptian] funerary inscription, with only a few minor (though significant) changes, was the equivalent of two verses, more or less, of the book he was trying to save, the original of which no longer exists. . . . the Book of Abraham plus X’s manipulations equals the Papyrus Joseph Smith. . . . once the BA [Book of Abraham] was rendered into code, what chance was there of ever decoding it again? X being dead, the secret was lost, and not a convention of all the world’s cryptographers could find it again. . . . What was the key to the lost code? The answer: the Urim and Thummim . . . Therefore, my friends, cease raging, cease imagining

vain things. Joseph was a prophet, not a linguist. Dr. Baer is a linguist, not a prophet. Each of these men did what he could do, and admirably well, but he could not have done the same kind of translation the other did (even from the same document). (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Summer 1969, pages 130, 131, 134)

The theories that have been put forth with regard to this issue clearly demonstrate the great lengths to which Mormon writers will go in their attempt to save the Book of Abraham. It seems that they will propose almost any fantastic thesis rather than accept the simple truth that the Book of Abraham is a spurious work. These new theories certainly are not in harmony with Joseph Smith's statements concerning the papyrus and the translation. Joseph Smith never mentioned anything about a "memory device" or a "code"; instead, he plainly stated: ". . . I commenced the translation of some of the characters or hieroglyphics, and much to our joy found that one of the rolls contained the writing of Abraham . . ." (*History of the Church*, vol. 2, page 236) If the Book of Abraham is not an actual translation of the papyrus, then it is obvious that the introduction to it that appears in the *Pearl of Great Price* is a complete misrepresentation.

### **The Facsimiles**

Although the translation of Papyrus XI provides the greatest evidence against the Book of Abraham, we feel that a very good case can be made against the book on the basis of the facsimiles printed in its pages. Facsimile No. 1, for instance, has now been identified as a part of the same scroll from which the "Sensen" text was taken. In other words, Facsimile No. 1 is in reality an illustration from the Book of Breathing. Fortunately, the original papyrus from which Facsimile No. 1 was copied is among the eleven fragments which were rediscovered at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (see photograph on page 226 of this book). Professor Richard Parker comments concerning this papyrus: "This is a well-known scene from the Osiris mysteries, with Anubis, the jackal-headed god, on the left ministering to the dead Osiris on the bier. The pencilled(?) restoration is incorrect. Anubis should be jackal-headed" (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Summer 1968, page 86). Professor Klaus Baer gave this information: "The vignette on P.JS I is unusual, but parallels exist on the walls of the Ptolemaic temples of Egypt, the closest being the scenes in the Osiris chapels of the roof of the Temple of Dendera. The vignette shows the resurrection of Osiris (who is also the deceased owner of the papyrus) and the conception of Horus. Osiris (2) is represented as a man on a lion-couch (4) attended by Anubis (3), the jackal-headed god who embalmed the dead and thereby assured their resurrection and existence in the hereafter" (*Ibid.*, Autumn 1968, pages 117-118).

It is interesting to note that Professor Baer has proved beyond all doubt that this is part of the same scroll which contained the small "Sensen" papyrus that Joseph Smith used as the basis for the text of the Book of Abraham. Dr. Hugh Nibley had confirmed that before the papyrus was cut by the early Mormons to be mounted on paper, Papyrus XI followed immediately after Facsimile No. 1 on the roll:

It can be easily shown by matching up the cut edges and fibers of the papyri that the text of the Joseph Smith "Breathing" Papyrus (No. XI) was written on the same strip of material as Facsimile No. 1 and *immediately adjoining it*. (*The Message of the Joseph Smith Papyri*, page 13)

The text of the Book of Abraham itself shows that the drawing appearing as Facsimile No. 1 was supposed to be at the beginning of the scroll. In Abraham 1:12 we read:

And it came to pass that the priests laid violence upon me, that they might slay me also, as they did those virgins upon this altar; and that you may have a knowledge of this altar, I will refer you to *the representation at the commencement of this record*.

As we have already shown, Joseph Smith was "translating" from the small "Sensen" text. Since he was working from right to left, the drawing would have to appear on the right side of the scroll to be at the "commencement of this record." Abraham 1:14 also speaks of Facsimile No. 1 as being "at the beginning" of the record.

The reader will notice that the original papyrus fragment from which Facsimile No. 1 was copied has several rows of hieroglyphs which were not included in the printed facsimile. This writing becomes very significant when we try to determine what the drawing is about. In the photograph on page 226 of this book the reader will see the hieroglyphs which appear on the two sides of the drawing. There is another row just above the arm of the standing figure, but most of it has broken off.

Dr. Hugh Nibley has implied that this writing contains some "extraordinary" message, but he has never had the courage to provide a translation of the text. Fortunately, Egyptologist Klaus Baer has translated the characters on this fragment:

Lines 1-3 give the titles, name and parentage of the man for whose benefit *the Breathing Permit* was written:

. . . the prophet of Amonrasonter, prophet [?] of Min Bull-of-his-Mother, prophet [?] of Khons the Governor . . . Hor, justified, son of the holder of the same titles, master of secrets, and purifier of the gods Osorwer, justified [?] . . . Tikhebyt, justified. May your ba live among them, and may you be buried in the West . . .



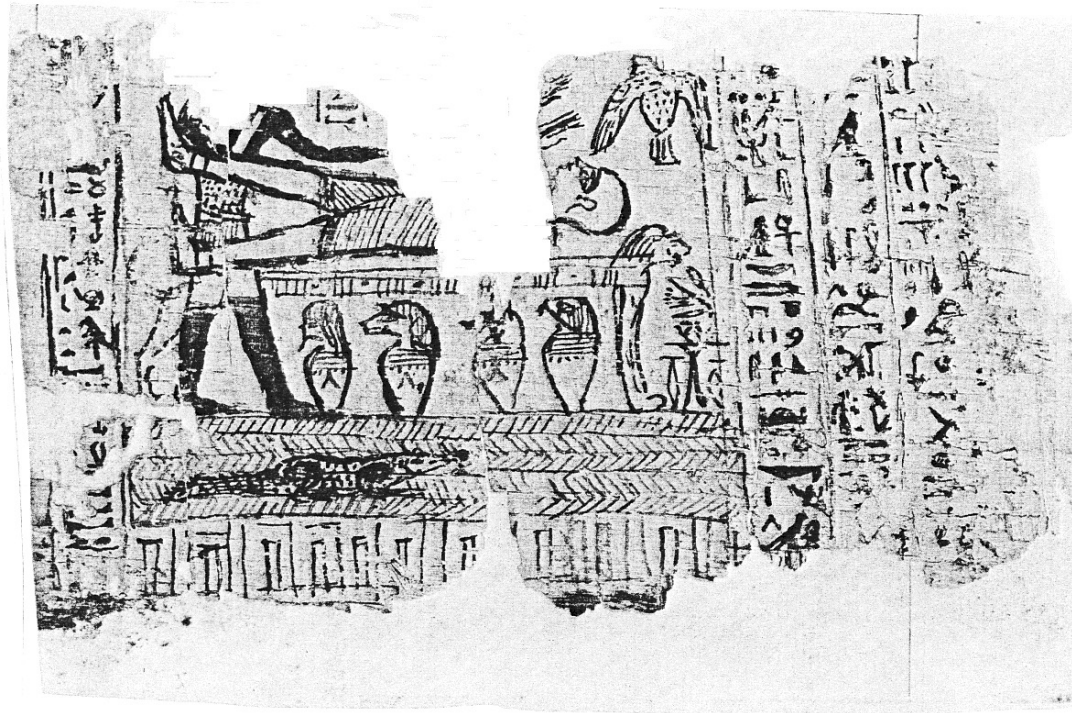
A FACSIMILE FROM THE BOOK OF ABRAHAM

No. 1



EXPLANATION OF THE ABOVE CUT

Fig. 1. The Angel of the Lord. 2. Abraham fastened upon an altar. 3. The idolatrous priest of Elkenah attempting to offer up Abraham as a sacrifice. 4. The altar for sacrifice by the idolatrous priests, standing before the gods of Elkenah, Libnah, Mahmackrah, Korash, and Pharaoh. 5. The idolatrous god of Elkenah. 6. The idolatrous god of Libnah. 7. The idolatrous god of Mahmackrah. 8. The idolatrous god of Korash. 9. The idolatrous god of Pharaoh. 10. Abraham in Egypt. 11. Designed to represent the pillars of heaven, as understood by the Egyptians. 12. Rau-keeyang, signifying expanse, or the firmament over our heads; but in this case, in relation to this subject, the Egyptians meant it to signify Shaumau, to be high, or the heavens, answering to the Hebrew word, Shaumahyeem.



A photographic comparison of the original papyrus from which Facsimile No. 1 was copied (on the right) with the printed version which appears in the *Pearl of Great Price* (on the left). Notice that the printed version has Joseph Smith's interpretation. Facsimile No. 1, however, does not contain the Egyptian writing which appears on the original papyrus.

Too little is left of line 4 to permit even a guess at what it said. Insofar as I can make it out, line 5 reads:

May you give him a good, splendid burial on the West of Thebes just like . . . (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Autumn 1968, pages 116-117)

The reader will notice that Klaus Baer reads the names “Hor” and “Tikhebyt” on this fragment. These are the very names that appear in the text of the “Sensen” fragments. This establishes beyond all doubt that the fragment reproduced as Facsimile No. 1 is part of the pagan funeral text known as the Book of Breathings. The names of Egyptian gods are written on the fragment, and the word *burial* appears twice on this piece of papyrus. It is interesting to note that Klaus Baer translates the word *Thebes* from the fifth line of the fragment. Hugh Nibley says that the mummies were “found in Thebes” (*Improvement Era*, February 1968, page 21), and Klaus Baer states that “all the known copies” of the Book of Breathings “seem to come” from Thebes. Furthermore, the gods mentioned in the text are the very gods that were worshiped at Thebes. All evidence, therefore, points to the unescapable conclusion that this is a pagan document and that it could not have been written by Abraham of the Bible. No wonder Dr. Nibley refused to provide a translation of this important text.

Egyptologists who have examined the papyrus fragment from which Facsimile No. 1 was copied believe that Joseph Smith’s interpretation of it is totally incorrect. What Joseph Smith called “Abraham fastened upon an altar” is in reality Osiris lying upon his bier. The “idolatrous priest of Elkenah” is the god “Anubis” ministering to Osiris.

The Egyptians believed that Osiris was killed by his brother Set. The body was found by Isis, and he was embalmed by Anubis. Osiris was resurrected and became the god of the dead.

The four jars that appear below the bier in Facsimile No. 1 prove that it is a funerary scene. These canopic jars were used to hold the soft parts of the body, which were removed during the embalming process. Joseph Smith’s statement that they are the gods of Elkenah, Libnah, Mahmackrah, and Korash is completely wrong.

Egyptologists have always claimed that the Mormons altered the scene shown in Facsimile No. 1. They claim that the standing figure (Anubis) should have a jackal’s head instead of a human head. Some Egyptologists claim that the knife in Anubis’ hand has been added and that the bird should have a human head. Mormon apologists ridiculed Egyptologists for making these charges, but now that the original papyrus has been located the entire picture has changed. The Mormon position has been considerably weakened because the portions of the papyrus which have been in question—the parts that would have contained the head of Anubis, the head of

the bird, and the knife—are missing! In *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* we present a thorough study of all three of the facsimiles published in the Book of Abraham. We show that Joseph Smith and his successors made drastic alterations in Facsimile No. 2. One of the scenes shown in Facsimile No. 2 was actually a pornographic representation of an ithyphallic god!

### The Moment of Truth

Although the Book of Abraham is a small book, it has generated a great deal of controversy. It not only supports the doctrine of a plurality of gods, but it also provided the basis for the “anti-black doctrine.” President David O. McKay, in fact, stated that the Book of Abraham contained the only “scriptural basis” for denying blacks the priesthood. The loss of confidence in the Book of Abraham by intellectuals in the church undoubtedly played a part in convincing Mormon leaders it was time for a new revelation which would allow blacks to hold the priesthood.

The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints [now the Community of Christ], seems to have come to grips with the Book of Abraham issue. RLDS Church Historian Richard P. Howard suggested that it was “the product of Joseph Smith Jr.’s imagination, . . .” (*New York Times*, May 4, 1970). The Utah Mormon leaders, on the other hand, simply refuse to face the truth concerning the matter. Two years after Egyptologists had demonstrated that Joseph Smith’s work on the papyri was erroneous, the LDS Church made it clear that it was standing behind the Book of Abraham:

The First Presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints accepts the “Book of Abraham” as “scripture given to us through the Prophet (Joseph Smith),” President N. Eldon Tanner said Sunday night. (*Salt Lake Tribune*, May 4, 1970)

This, of course, did not end the matter; eighteen years after this article appeared the church was still engaged in trying to explain this difficult issue. The church’s magazine, *The Ensign*, July 1988, pages 51-53, had an article by Michael D. Rhodes which was supposed to answer the following question: *Why doesn’t the translation of the Egyptian papyri found in 1967 match the text of the Book of Abraham in the Pearl of Great Price?* In this article Rhodes clearly laid out the problem which faced the church:

First of all, from paleographic and historical considerations, the Book of Breathings papyrus can reliably be dated to around A. D. 60—much too late for Abraham to have written it. . . . when one compares the text of the book of Abraham with a translation of the Book of Breathings; they clearly are not the same.

Michael Rhodes then proceeds to give “possible explanations why the text of the recently discovered papyri does not match the text in the *Pearl of Great Price*.” One of Rhodes suggestions was that the “copy of Abraham’s record” which Joseph Smith used “possibly passed through the hands of many scribes and had become editorially corrupted to the point where it *may have had little resemblance to the original, . . .*” For this reason Joseph Smith may have used the “Urim and Thummim, or simply through revelation” revealed what Abraham had originally written. Michael Rhodes gives other farfetched reasons as to why Joseph Smith’s work does not agree with that done by Egyptologists.

That the Mormons would continue to endorse the Book of Abraham in the face of the evidence that has been presented is almost beyond belief. We feel that those who honestly examine this matter will see that the evidence to disprove the Book of Abraham is conclusive. We have shown that the very original papyrus fragment Joseph Smith claimed as the basis for the Book of Abraham has been identified and that this fragment is in reality a part of the Egyptian Book of Breathings—a pagan text which contains absolutely nothing concerning Abraham or his religion.

Perhaps one reason the Mormon leaders refuse to face the facts concerning the Book of Abraham is that to do so would cast a shadow of doubt upon the authenticity of the Book of Mormon. Egyptologist Samuel A. B. Mercer observed: “. . . both books were translated from the same Egyptian language, and if the translator failed in the translation of the one book, our faith in his translation of the other must necessarily be impaired . . .” (*The Utah Survey*, September 1913, page 5). The Mormon leaders cannot repudiate the Book of Abraham without seriously discrediting the validity of the Book of Mormon.

Dr. Hugh Nibley has stated:

. . . a few faded and tattered little scraps of papyrus may serve to remind the Latter-day Saints of how sadly they have neglected serious education. . . . Not only has our image suffered by such tragic neglect, but now in the moment of truth the Mormons have to face the world unprepared, after having been given a hundred years’ fair warning. (*Brigham Young University Studies*, Winter 1968, pages 171-172).

Truly, this is the moment of truth for the Mormon people. The Book of Abraham has been proven untrue, and even Dr. Nibley was unprepared to deal with the situation. For many years we called upon the Mormon leaders to repudiate the Book of Abraham and the anti-black doctrine contained in its pages. They finally yielded to pressure and allowed blacks to hold the priesthood. We feel, however, they should go one step further and admit that the Book of Abraham is a work of Joseph Smith’s own imagination.

## 22. Temple Work

In order to really understand present-day Mormonism and the strong hold it has upon people, it is necessary to know about the work that goes on in Mormon temples. The ceremonies performed in these temples are secret, and only “worthy” members of the LDS Church are allowed to participate in them.

### Baptism for the Dead

The Mormon doctrine of baptism for the dead was first practiced in Nauvoo, Illinois. Wilford Woodruff, who later became president of the church, reported:

Joseph Smith himself . . . went into the Mississippi River one Sunday night after meeting, and baptized a hundred. I baptized another hundred. The next man, a few rods from me, baptized another hundred. We were strung up and down the Mississippi, baptizing for our dead. (*The Deseret Weekly*, vol. 42:554, as cited in *Temples of the Most High*, by N. B. Lundwall, 1962, page 69)

On May 2, 1843, Charlotte Haven wrote a letter in which she told of watching the Mormon elders baptizing for the dead in the “icy cold” river. She was very surprised “when the name George Washington was called out” (*Overland Monthly*, December 1980, pages 629-630).

Mormon leaders teach that the spirits of people who have died before receiving a Mormon baptism cannot enter the celestial kingdom of heaven until a person is baptized for them by proxy—i.e., a living person is immersed on behalf of the dead person. According to the *History of the Church*, vol. 4, page 599, Joseph Smith made these comments:

Chrysostum says that the Marchionites practiced baptism for their dead. “After a catechumen was dead, they had a living man under the bed of the deceased; then coming to the dead man, they asked him whether he would receive baptism, and he making no answer, the other answered for him, and said that he would be baptized in his stead; and so they baptized the living for the dead.” The church of course at that time was degenerate, and the particular form might be incorrect, but the thing is sufficiently plain in the Scriptures, hence Paul, in speaking of the doctrine, says, “Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? Why are they then baptized for the dead?” (I Cor. xv:29).

Bible scholars are divided as to the meaning of the verse which is cited above. Even if this verse did apply to a living person being baptized for someone else, as the Mormons maintain, this would not prove that faithful Christians were practicing it. Paul does not say that “we” are baptized for the dead, but rather that “they” are

baptized for the dead. The use of the word “they” instead of the word “we” could make a great deal of difference in the meaning of the statement. If a Protestant remarked: “Why do they then pray for the dead, if the dead rise not at all,” it would not mean that he was endorsing the Catholic doctrine of prayers for the dead. If, however, he were to say: “Why do we then pray for the dead, if the dead rise not at all,” we would assume that he believed in prayers for the dead.

Mormon Apostle Orson Pratt frankly admitted that the Bible does not contain any information as to how baptism for the dead should be performed:

This doctrine *may have been* as important as baptism to the living. Does the written or unwritten word of God with which Christendom are acquainted, inform them anything about how this ceremony is to be performed? Does it inform them who is to officiate? Who is the candidate in behalf of the dead? What classes of the dead are to be benefited by it? . . . All these important questions *remain unanswered by scripture and tradition.* (*Orson Pratt's Works*, 1891, page 205)

While Apostle Pratt felt that this important evidence concerning baptism for the dead was probably lost or taken out of the Bible, there is no evidence to support such an accusation. The fact that Christ never mentioned baptism for the dead is strong evidence that no such doctrine existed among orthodox Christians.

Although Joseph Smith performed baptism for the dead in the Mississippi River, it is now performed only in temples. The Mormon people are very zealous about this work for the dead, for they believe they are saving their ancestors. President John Taylor boasted: “. . . we are the only people that know how to save our progenitors, . . . we in fact are *the saviours of the world*, if they ever are saved . . .” (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 6, page 163). President Wilford Woodruff felt that he and a “brother McCallister” had saved John Wesley, Columbus, and all of the presidents of the United States except three:

. . . two weeks before I left St. George, the spirits of the dead gathered around me, wanting to know why we did not redeem them. . . . These were the signers of the Declaration of Independence, and they waited on me for two days and two nights I straightaway went into the baptismal font and called upon brother McCallister to baptize me for the signers of the Declaration of Independence, and fifty other eminent men, making one hundred in all, including John Wesley, Columbus, and others; I then baptized him for every President of the United States, except three; and when their cause is just, somebody will do the work for them. (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 19, page 229)

The Mormons are spending millions of dollars doing genealogical research in order to find the names of those who have died outside of the faith so that they can do proxy baptisms for them. Bruce R. McConkie wrote concerning this matter:

Before vicarious ordinances of salvation and exaltation may be performed for those who have died . . . they must be accurately and properly identified. Hence, genealogical research is required. . . the Church maintains in Salt Lake City one of the world's greatest genealogical societies. Much of the genealogical source material of various nations of the earth has been or is being microfilmed by this society; millions of dollars is being spent; and a reservoir of hundreds of millions of names and other data about people who lived in past generations is available for study. (*Mormon Doctrine*, 1966, page 308-309)

The Church Section of the *Deseret News* for April 23, 1966, told of a woman who “searched 15 years” before she found the “names of four new ancestors” for whom she had been looking. It is certainly sad that the Mormon church spends so much time and money searching for the names of the dead when there are so many needy people struggling to stay alive. It would seem far better to spend this money and time on the living and let the Lord take care of the dead. Because of this emphasis on work for the dead, one Mormon has compared the church to the ancient Egyptians. The Egyptians, of course, spent a fantastic amount of time and money building pyramids and doing other work for the dead.

The Book of Mormon says that the false churches “rob the poor because of their fine sanctuaries” (2 Nephi 28:13), yet the Mormon church has spent many millions of dollars building beautiful temples. The Salt Lake Temple, for instance, cost millions of dollars and took almost forty years to build. The *Salt Lake Tribune*, August 31, 1974, reported that the Washington D. C. temple “is indeed marble, 288 feet high, \$15 million worth, and . . . one of the most expensive church edifices to rise in recent years.” The *Deseret News 1987 Church Almanac* has pictures of 42 temples that the church has already built, and indicated that seven others were in planning or under construction.

Most of the “endowments” performed in Mormon temples are for the dead; therefore, when we add the millions of dollars spent for temples and their upkeep to the millions spent on genealogical research, we find that the Mormons are similar to the ancient Egyptians in their attitudes toward the dead. This obsession with the dead approaches very close to ancestral worship. Adney Y. Komatsu, a member of the First Quorum of Seventy in the LDS Church, made these comments at the 146th General Conference of the LDS Church:

May I share with you this afternoon an experience that happened to a young couple who were members of the Church in Japan . . . the couple joined with others in seeking out their ancestors and in planning to have the temple work done for them. The girl searched diligently through shrines, cemeteries, and government record offices, and was able to gather seventy-seven names . . . As this young couple joined their family members . . . they displayed their book of remembrance. . . . They discussed with those relatives assembled their ancestral lines and the importance of completing the genealogical research. It was difficult for their nonmember families to understand the reasons for a Christian church teaching principles such as “ancestral worship,” for this was a Buddhist teaching and tradition. (*The Ensign*, May 1976, page 102)

Joseph Fielding Smith, who later became the tenth president of the church, proclaimed that the “greatest commandment given us, and made obligatory, is the temple work in our own behalf and in behalf of our dead” (*Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 2, page 149). On page 146 of the same book, we read: “The Prophet Joseph Smith declared, ‘The *greatest* responsibility in this world that God has laid upon us is to *seek after our dead*.’”

Jesus never taught anything about baptism for the dead or seeking after our dead. In fact, he said:

. . . the first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself There is none other commandment greater than these. (Mark 12:29-31)

The Bible says nothing about doing extensive genealogical research to save the dead. On the contrary, Apostle Paul advised: “But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain” (Titus 3:9).

Perhaps the most embarrassing thing to the Mormon Church concerning the doctrine of baptism for the dead is the Book of Mormon itself. The Book of Mormon is supposed to contain “the fulness of the everlasting Gospel” (see *Pearl of Great Price*, Joseph Smith—History 1:34), yet it never mentions the doctrine of baptism for the dead, *not even once!* The word “baptism” appears twenty-five times in the Book of Mormon. The word “baptize” is found twenty-eight times. The word “baptized” appears eighty-five times, and “baptizing” is found six times, but the doctrine of baptism for the dead is not mentioned at all! The excuse that the teaching of baptism for the dead was removed from the Bible

certainly could not be used to explain its absence in the Book of Mormon. The Catholics never had the Book of Mormon and therefore they could not be charged with removing it. Moreover, the Book of Mormon condemns the very ideas that led to the practice of baptism for the dead. For instance, it plainly indicates that there is no chance for people to repent after death if they have known the gospel and have rejected it (see Alma 34:32-35). The Book of Mormon also teaches that those who have died without hearing the gospel are automatically saved and do not need baptism (see Moroni 8:22-24).

### Temple Marriage

The LDS Church teaches that it is necessary for members to be married or sealed in the temple so that they can obtain the highest exaltation in the hereafter. This work is done for both the living and the dead. The doctrine of temple marriage comes from Section 132 of the *Doctrine and Covenants*, which is a revelation given to Joseph Smith on July 12, 1843. Joseph Fielding Smith, who became the tenth president of the church, explained the need for temple marriage: “If you want salvation in the fullest, that is exaltation in the kingdom of God, so that you may become his sons and his daughters, you have got to go into the temple of the Lord and receive these holy ordinances which belong to that house, which cannot be had elsewhere” (*Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 2, page 44). On page 60 of the same book, Joseph Fielding Smith said that those who do not marry in the temple “are cutting themselves off from exaltation in the kingdom of God.” He went on to give this warning:

SORROW IN RESURRECTION IF NO ETERNAL MARRIAGE. These young people who seem to be so happy now, when they rise in the resurrection—and find themselves in the condition in which they will find themselves—then there will be weeping, and wailing and gnashing of teeth, and bitterness of soul; and they have brought it upon themselves . . .

On page 61 of the same book, the following statement appears: “CIVIL MARRIAGE MAKES SERVANTS IN ETERNITY,” and on page 62 we read: “CELESTIAL MARRIAGE MAKES GODS IN ETERNITY.”

Spencer W. Kimball, the twelfth president of the LDS Church, went so far as to say that eternal life only comes through temple marriage:

Only through celestial marriage can one find the strait way, the narrow path. Eternal life cannot be had in any other way. The Lord was very specific and very definite in the matter of marriage. (*Deseret News*, Church Section, November 12, 1977)

President Kimball's statement that only those who go through a secret temple ritual can have eternal life is in direct contradiction to the teaching of Christ. The Bible clearly affirms that "whosoever believeth in him [Jesus] should not perish, but *have eternal life*" (John 3:15).

As we indicated earlier, Mormonism teaches that those who marry in the temple will have power to continually beget spirit children in heaven. Apostle Bruce R. McConkie explained:

Those who gain eternal life (exaltation) also gain *eternal lives*, meaning that in the resurrection they have *eternal "increase," "a continuation of the lives."* Their spirit progeny will "continue as innumerable as the stars; or, if ye were to count the sand upon the seashore ye could not number them." (*D. & C.* 131:1-4; 132:19-25, 30, 55.)

"Except a man and his wife enter into an everlasting covenant and be married for eternity, while in this probation, by the power and authority of the holy priesthood," the Prophet says, "they will cease to increase when they die; that is, they *will not have any children after the resurrection.*" (*Mormon Doctrine*, 1979, page 238)

In previous chapters we have shown that Mormon theology teaches that even God Himself has a wife and that in the pre-existence we were spiritually born and lived as His sons and daughters. If the Mormon doctrine of "sealing" were true, we would expect to find evidence that Jesus was married in the temple. No such evidence has been found. The Bible never mentions the doctrine of eternal marriage. In fact, Jesus seems to have taught just the opposite:

And Jesus answering said unto them, The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage: But they which shall be *accounted worthy* to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, *neither marry, nor are given in marriage*: Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection. (Luke 20:34-36)

Apostle LeGrand Richards frankly admitted that the "principle of eternal marriage did not come to the Prophet Joseph Smith by reading the Bible, but through the revelations of the Lord to him" (*A Marvelous Work and a Wonder*, page 195). While Mormon apologists have a hard time explaining the fact that the Bible does not support the doctrine of temple marriage, they are faced with an even greater problem when they turn to the Book of Mormon. It is supposed to contain "the fulness of the everlasting Gospel," yet it does not contain even one passage to support the doctrine of temple marriage! Temple marriage or sealing, like many other Mormon doctrines, was not a part of the original Mormon faith.

The first edition of the *Doctrine and Covenants*, published in 1835, page 251, made it plain that marriages were not to be performed in a secret ceremony and that marriages entered into before baptism were considered "sacred and fulfilled":

... all marriages in this church of Christ of Latter Day Saints, should be solemnized in a *public* meeting, or feast. ... All legal contracts of marriage made before a person is baptized into this church, should be held *sacred and fulfilled*.

### **Connected with Polygamy**

As we have shown earlier in this book, the revelation which contains the information concerning temple marriage is also the revelation which contains the teaching of polygamy—i.e., section 132 of the *Doctrine and Covenants*. Therefore, polygamy and temple marriage stand or fall together. While it is true that the LDS Church does not allow a man to have more than one living wife, if his wife precedes him in death, he can be sealed to another woman for eternity. As we have noted, LDS Church presidents Joseph Fielding Smith and Harold B. Lee, who presided over the church in the 1970s, both wrote concerning the fact that they were looking forward to living with their plural wives in heaven. While Mormon men are allowed more than one wife in heaven, a woman can have but one husband. President Joseph Fielding Smith explained:

When a man and a woman are married in the temple for time and all eternity, and then the man dies and the woman marries another man, she can be married to him *for time only*.

When a man marries a woman who was married previously to her husband in the temple but who has now died, he does so, or should, with his eyes open. If the children are born to this woman and her "time" husband, he has no claim upon those children. They go with the mother. This is the law. Certainly a man cannot in reason expect to take another man's wife, after that man is dead, and rear a family by her and then claim the children.

*If he wants a family of his own, then he should marry a wife that he can have in eternity.* (*Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 2, pages 78-79)

Because the Mormons believe that a woman can have only one husband in heaven, a problem has arisen for those doing work for the dead. In a newsletter published by Sandy First Ward, we find the following:

... Brother Christiansen talked about new rulings concerning sealings for the dead. It is now possible for a woman that was married more than once *to be sealed to ALL her husbands*, providing that in life she had not been sealed to any of her husbands.

The First Presidency of the Church has ruled that rather than try to decide which husband a deceased woman should be sealed to, she can be sealed to all of them. However, *only one sealing will be valid* and accepted before God. God and the woman will decide which one of the sealings will be accepted on Judgment Day. (*Tele-Ward*, Sandy First Ward, January 25, 1976, vol. 5, no. 2, page 5)

The *General Handbook of Instructions*, published by the LDS Church in 1983, indicated that a divorced man who married his first wife in the temple could be sealed to another woman without canceling the first sealing. On the other hand, the manual makes it clear a woman must cancel any previous sealing before a new sealing can be approved:

If a worthy man who has had a wife sealed to him remarries after the wife's death or their divorce, his new wife may be sealed to him if she has not been sealed to a husband already. The *man does not need to have the first sealing canceled and does not need the first wife's permission*. If he and his first wife were divorced, the divorce must be final before he can remarry. . . .

A living woman can be sealed to *only one husband*. A living woman who has been married more than once in civil ceremonies, but is sealed to one of her husbands, has made her choice. *She cannot be sealed to any other husband unless the first sealing is canceled*. . . .

If a woman is sealed to a husband, and he is excommunicated later, their sealing, though suspended and not in effect, *must be canceled before she can be sealed to another husband*. . . (pages 40-41)

### A Secret Ceremony

While the revelation commanding temple marriage is printed in the *Doctrine and Covenants*, the ritual itself is supposed to be kept secret. Nevertheless, throughout the years numerous Mormons who became alienated from the church exposed the ceremony. Over two dozen of these accounts have been printed. Because the ritual is kept secret many false impressions and charges of gross immorality have been circulated. On February 18, 1846, the *Warsaw Signal* charged that those who participated in the ritual were "in a state of nudity" throughout the ceremony. In response to this article a woman who had been through the endowment and become disillusioned with the whole affair wrote a letter to the editor in which she stated that the ceremony had been misrepresented:

Mr. Sharp: — Dear Sir: — I discover by your paper, . . . that you have been wrongly informed. . . .

I went into this pretended holy operation . . . We were first received past the Guard into a private room . . . this was the room of preparation or purification— We were divested of all our apparel, and in a state of

perfect nudity we were washed from head to foot,—a blanket was then thrown about our persons, and then commencing at the head we were anointed from head to foot with sweet oil . . . We were then clothed in white robes. All this was done by sisters in the church—none others were present—it is false to say that men and women are admitted together in an indecent manner. We were then conducted into a room called the Garden of Eden . . . a very dandy-like fellow appeared with a black cap[e] on, that had a long tail attached to it; he . . . induced some of our sisters to eat of the "forbidden fruit." . . . The Lord pronounces a curse upon him . . . We were then presented with aprons, . . . we passed into another room . . . This was called the Terrestrial Kingdom . . . After a considerable parade and ceremony, we passed into another room, or Celestial Kingdom. Here I saw . . . Brigham Young, with a white crown upon his head, and as I have since been told, representing God himself. We passed this room without much ceremony into another. . . . we took upon ourselves oaths and obligations not to reveal the secrets of the priesthood. . . . In one place I was presented with a new name, which I was not to reveal to any living creature, save the man to whom I should be sealed for eternity, . . . and from all that I can gather, all the females had the same name given them, but we are not allowed to reveal it to each other, . . . I have forgotten a part of the penalties. (*Warsaw Signal*, April 15, 1846, page 2)

Increase McGee Van Dusen and his wife exposed the temple ritual in 1847, and their account was reprinted many times. On February 12, 1906, the *Salt Lake Tribune* published the temple ceremony. In 1931 W. M. Paden published a pamphlet entitled, *Temple Mormonism—Its Evolution, Ritual and Meaning*. While this was believed to be one of the most accurate accounts of the ritual, since its publication Mormon leaders have made a number of important changes in the ceremony. Because of this fact we published an account in *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* (pages 462-473) which we felt was very accurate and up to date as of 1969. It was written by a man who had been through the temple ceremony about 120 times, and even active Mormons who were familiar with the ritual have confirmed its accuracy. We understand that some minor changes have been made in the ceremony since we published it, but it is basically the same as it was in 1969. In 1982, Chuck Sackett published the temple ceremony in a pamphlet entitled, *What's Going On In There?* [There were major changes in the temple ceremony in 1990. See our book, *Evolution of the Mormon Temple Ceremony: 1842-1990*.]

Actually, we can get some idea of what goes on in the temple simply by searching through Mormon publications and journals. One of the more revealing statements by Brigham Young about the endowment is

found in the diary of L. John Nuttall, February 7, 1877, and was printed in *God, Man and the Universe*, page 334. In this entry President Young mentioned washings, anointings, garments, the new name, keywords, signs, tokens and penalties. He also stated that there was a veil with certain marks on it.

According to a “Price List Issued by The General Board of Relief Society” on June 1, 1968, men who desired to go through the temple were required to have the following “Articles for Temple Wear”: robe, cap, apron, shield, garments (old style), shoes or heavy moccasins, trousers, shirt, tie, hose, and belt. Except for the “garments,” Mormons are only required to wear the special temple clothing when they are inside the temple. The “garments,” however, are extremely important, and Mormons must wear them for the rest of their lives. William J. Whalen disclosed:

The devout Mormon who has received his “endowments” in the temple will wear sacred temple undergarments at all times. Resembling a union suit, now abbreviated at the knees, the undergarments are worn by both men and women, awake and sleeping. It is said that older Mormons refuse to take off these garments completely even while taking a bath; they will hang one leg out of the tub so that they will never lose contact with the garments. Mystic signs are embroidered on them to remind the wearers of their temple obligations. (*The Latter-day Saints in the Modern Day World*, 1964, pages 18-19)

On page 168 of the same book, Mr. Whalen indicated that the temple garments had “been abbreviated in recent years especially in the interests of feminine fashions.” The fact that the garments have been abbreviated is very interesting, for the early Mormon leaders taught that they could not be changed. President Joseph F. Smith made this emphatic declaration before the changes were made:

The Lord has given unto us garments of the holy priesthood, and you know what that means. And yet there are those of us who mutilate them, in order that we may follow the foolish, vain and (permit me to say) indecent practices of the world. In order that such people may imitate the fashions, they will not hesitate to mutilate that which should be held by them the most sacred of all things in the world, next to their own virtue, next to their own purity of life. They should hold these things that God has given unto them sacred, *unchanged and unaltered from the very pattern in which God gave them*. Let us have the moral courage to stand against the opinions of fashion, and especially where fashion compels us to break a covenant and so commit a *grievous sin*. (*The Improvement Era*, vol. 9:813, as cited in *Temples of the Most High*, page 276)

In 1918 the First Presidency of the LDS Church sent a message to the bishops in which the following appears:

FIRST: The garments worn by those who receive endowments must be white, and of the approved pattern; they must *not be altered or mutilated*, and are to be worn as intended, *down to the wrist and ankles, and around the neck*.

Please inform all to whom you issue recommends that these requirements are imperative . . . The Saints should know that the pattern of endowment garments was *revealed from heaven*, and that the blessings promised in connection with wearing them will not be realized if any unauthorized change is made in their form, or in the manner of wearing them. (*Messages of the First Presidency*, by J. R. Clark, 1971, vol. 5, page 110)

Although the Mormon leaders vigorously maintained that the “garments” must be “worn as intended, down to the wrist and ankles, and around the neck,” and that they could not be altered from “the very pattern in which God gave them,” women’s fashions caused the arms and legs to be shortened and the neckline to be lowered. Until 1975, however, Mormon leaders still required members of the church to wear the “old style” garments when they were taking part in the temple ritual. After the temple ceremony was over, they would replace these garments, which came down to the wrists and ankles, with the abbreviated type. In our book *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* page 463, we have included a photograph of the “old style” garments.

The major change in the length of the garments was made in 1923. On June 14 of that year, the First Presidency of the church sent out a letter to various church leaders which contained the following:

For some time past the First Presidency and Council of Twelve have had under consideration the propriety of permitting certain *modifications in the temple garment*, . . . it was unanimously decided that the following modifications may be permitted, and a garment of the following style be worn by those Church members who wish to adopt it, namely:

- (1) Sleeve to elbow.
- (2) Leg just below knee.
- (3) Buttons instead of strings.
- (4) Collar eliminated.
- (5) Crotch closed.

. . . .

Will you kindly advise the Bishops of your Stake of these changes, being careful to give the matter no unnecessary publicity.

This letter is not to pass from your hands, nor are copies to be furnished to any other person.



Such a change, of course, could not be made without the gentiles noticing it. The *Salt Lake Tribune*, June 4, 1923, reported:

While minor modifications of the temple garment, it is said, have been made at various times during past years, the latest order in permission is regarded by younger members of the church as most liberal and acceptable. . . . the old-style garment is faithfully adhered to by many of the older and sincerely devout members of the church. These regard the garment as *a safeguard against disease and bodily harm*, and they believe that to alter either the texture of cloth or style, or to abandon the garment altogether would bring evil upon them.

One good woman . . . hearing of the change that has recently come about, went to the church offices and uttered fervid objection. "I shall not alter my garments, even if President Grant has ordered me to do so. . . . The pattern was revealed to the Prophet Joseph and Brother Grant has no right to change it," she said.

Since 1923, the temple garment has been abbreviated even more. The sleeves no longer come down to the elbow, nor do the legs hang down over the knee. The Mormon leaders now seem to put more emphasis on the importance of the marks in the garment than the garment itself.

As we indicated earlier, until 1975 Mormon leaders required members of the church to wear the "old style" garments when they went through the endowment ceremony. On November 10 of that year, a change was made that permitted members to wear the abbreviated garments in the temple. In the letter that was sent out to "All Temple Presidents," it was suggested that "temple presidents not purchase any more of the long-sleeve, long-leg garments for rental purposes." This statement leads one to the conclusion that Mormon leaders were embarrassed by the "old style" garments and wanted to gradually phase them out.

### **Changes in the Temple Ceremony**

The fact that changes have been made in the Mormon temple ceremony can be demonstrated by comparing earlier accounts with the one we published in *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* Some of these changes were made after the turn of the century. [Note: Major changes made in April, 1990. See *Evolution of the Mormon Temple Ceremony: 1842-1990*.]

### **Changing the Oaths**

Ebenezer Robinson, who had been editor of the church's *Times and Seasons*, made this statement concerning the original endowment ritual:

Here was instituted, undoubtedly the order of things which represented the scenes in the Garden of Eden, which was called in Nauvoo, the "Holy Order," a secret organization. The terrible oaths and covenants taken by those who entered there were known only to those who took them, as one of the members said to me, "I could tell you many things, but if I should my life would pay the forfeiture." (*The Return*, vol. 2, pages 346-348, typed copy, page 153)

These oaths have been greatly modified since Joseph Smith's time. The changes seem to have been made during the first half of the 20th century. Below are comparisons of the oaths as they were published in *Temple Mormonism* in 1931 with the way they are given today. The first oath we will deal with was printed as follows in 1931:

We, and each of us, covenant and promise that we will not reveal any of the secrets of this, the first token of the Aaronic priesthood, with its accompanying name, sign or penalty. Should we do so; we agree that *our throats be cut from ear to ear and our tongues torn out by their roots.* (*Temple Mormonism*, page 18)

This oath has been changed to read:

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (think of the new name) do covenant and promise that I will never reveal the First Token of the Aaronic Priesthood, together with its accompanying name, sign and penalty. Rather than do so I would suffer my life to be taken. (*Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* page 468)

The second oath was printed in as follows by Paden's *Temple Mormonism* in 1931:

We and each of us do covenant and promise that we will not reveal the secrets of this, the Second Token of the Aaronic Priesthood, with its accompanying name, sign, grip or penalty. Should we do so, *we agree to have our breasts cut open and our hearts and vitals torn from our bodies and given to the birds of the air and the beasts of the field.* (*Temple Mormonism*, page 20)

This has been softened to:

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (think of the first given name), do covenant and promise that I will never reveal the second token of the Aaronic Priesthood, together with its accompanying name, sign and penalty. Rather than do so I would suffer my life to be taken. (*Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* page 470)

The third oath, as printed in *Temple Mormonism*, page 20, read:

We and each of us do covenant and promise that we will not reveal any of the secrets of this, the First Token of the Melchizedek Priesthood, with its accompanying name, sign or penalty. Should we do so, we agree that

*our bodies be cut asunder in the midst and all our bowels gush out.*

This has been modified to read as follows:

I covenant in the name of the Son that I will never reveal the first token of the Melchizedek Priesthood or sign of the nail, with its accompanying name, sign or penalty. Rather than do so I would suffer my life to be taken. (*Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* page 471)

Although the oaths are no longer as bloodcurdling as they used to be, Mormons who go through the temple still act out the penalties by drawing the thumb across the throat, stomach, etc., as they take these oaths and are told that “The representation of the penalties indicates different ways in which life may be taken” (*Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* page 468).

To the early Mormon people these oaths were a very serious matter. Earlier in this book we quoted from a discourse by Heber C. Kimball, a member of the First Presidency under Brigham Young, concerning the teaching that the Christians killed Judas for betraying Christ. In this same speech, Kimball seems to refer to the penalty of the First Token of the Melchizedek Priesthood—i.e., “. . . we agree that our bodies be cut asunder in the midst and all our bowels gush out”:

Judas lost that saving principle and they took him and killed him. . . . they actually kicked him until his bowels came out.

“I will suffer my bowels to be taken out before I will forfeit the covenant I have made with Him and my brethren: Do you understand me?. . . I know the day is right at hand when men will forfeit their Priesthood and turn against the covenants they have made and they will be destroyed as Judas was.” (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 6, pages 125-126)

A person can only begin to imagine how serious these oaths must have been to the Mormon people when the doctrine of “Blood Atonement” was practiced. Now that the oaths have been modified and the practice of “Blood Atonement” abandoned, the Mormon leaders do not have as much control over their people.

### **Oath of Vengeance**

One of the oaths which was formerly taken in the temple ritual was the source of so much trouble that the Mormon leaders finally removed it entirely from the ceremony. This oath was printed in *Temple Mormonism*, page 21, as follows:

You and each of you do solemnly promise and vow that you will pray, and never cease to pray, and never

cease to importune high heaven to avenge the blood of the prophets on this nation, and that you will teach this to your children and your children’s children unto the third and fourth generation.

A great deal of testimony has been given concerning this oath, and although all of the witnesses did not agree as to its exact wording, there can be little doubt that such an oath was administered to the Mormon people after Joseph Smith was murdered. John D. Lee related that the following occurred after Smith’s death:

. . . Brigham [Young] raised his hand and said, “I swear by the eternal Heavens that I have unsheathed my sword, and I will never return it until the blood of the Prophet Joseph and Hyrum, and those who were slain in Missouri, is avenged. This whole nation is guilty of shedding their blood, by assenting to the deed, and holding its peace.”. . . Furthermore, every one who had passed through their endowments, in the Temple, were placed under the most sacred obligations to avenge the blood of the Prophet, whenever an opportunity offered, and to teach their children to do the same, thus making the entire Mormon people sworn and avowed enemies of the American nation. (*The Confessions of John D. Lee*, page 160)

Some Mormon apologists have argued that there was no “oath of vengeance” in the temple ceremony, but the “Daily Journal of Abraham H. Cannon” makes it very plain that there was such an oath. Under the date of December 6, 1889, Apostle Cannon recorded the following in his diary:

About 4:30 p. m. this meeting adjourned and was followed by a meeting of Presidents Woodruff, Cannon and Smith and Bros. Lyman and Grant. . . . In speaking of the recent examination, before Judge Anderson Father [President George Q. Cannon] said that he understood when he had his endowments in Nauvoo that *he took an oath against the murderers of the Prophet Joseph* as well as other prophets, and if he had ever met any of those who had taken a hand in that massacre he would undoubtedly have *attempted to avenge the blood of the martyrs*. (“Daily Journal of Abraham H. Cannon,” December 6, 1889, pages 205-206)

Earlier in this book we have shown that Apostle Cannon went on to relate that Joseph F. Smith, who became the sixth president of the church, was about to murder a man with his pocket knife if he even expressed approval of Joseph Smith’s death.

The oath of vengeance undoubtedly had a great deal to do with the massacre of about 120 men, women and children at Mountain Meadows and other murders which were committed in early Utah (see *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* pages 493-515, 545-559).

Just after the turn of the century the Mormon leaders found themselves in serious trouble because of the oath of vengeance. Many people believed that this made them sworn enemies of the United States Government. Church leaders were questioned at great length concerning this oath in the “Reed Smoot Case.” The oath of vengeance, or at least a form of it, seems to have remained in the temple ceremony even after the Senate investigation. Stanley S. Ivins told us that he took it in 1914. All vestiges of it seem to have been removed by 1927. In a letter from George F. Richards to the president of the St. George temple, dated February 15, 1927, we find the following:

In sealing for the dead, whether one or both be dead, omit the kissing. Omit from the prayer in the circle all reference to avenging the blood of the Prophets.

Omit from the ordination and lecture all reference to retribution. . . .

This letter is written with the approval [of] the Presidency.

While those who went through the endowment ceremony in early times claimed that they were put in bathtubs for the washing ceremony, this no longer seems to be the case. Participants are covered with a “shield” (like a poncho) and the washing and anointing ceremonies seem to be more refined than they were in former times (see *What’s Going On In There?* by Chuck Sackett, 1982, pages 6-7). [Note: This ceremony was changed again in January 2005. See *Evolution of the Mormon Temple Ceremony*, pages 185-188.)

In the books, *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* and *The Mormon Kingdom*, vol. 1, we discussed a number of other changes made in the temple ceremony. We also presented a great deal of testimony showing that the oaths taken in the temple were originally very crude.

### **Masonry in the Temple Ceremony**

Apostle Bruce R. McConkie claimed that the ordinances performed in the temple were given to Joseph Smith “by revelation” and suggested that “many things connected with them” came from the papyrus which contained the Book of Abraham. Since the Book of Abraham has been completely discredited, Mormons must look elsewhere for the origin of the temple ceremony. It seems clear to those who seriously investigate the subject that part of the temple ritual came from Freemasonry. In fact, the similarities between the temple ceremony and the ritual of the Masons are very striking.

### **Joseph Smith a Mason**

Although Joseph Smith’s early writings are filled with material that condemns secret societies, the presence

of the Danite band among the Mormons indicates that by 1838 his attitude toward secret societies had changed. After Joseph Smith arrived in Nauvoo, he became a Mason, formed the Council of Fifty, and established the secret temple ceremony. The following statement is recorded in Joseph Smith’s *History of the Church*, vol. 4, page 551, under the date of March 15, 1842: “In the evening I received the first degree in Free Masonry in the Nauvoo Lodge, assembled in my general business office.” The record for the very next day reads: “I was with the Masonic Lodge and rose to the sublime degree” (vol. 4, page 552).

Mormons who joined the Masonic Lodge soon found themselves in trouble with the organization. They had inducted large numbers into the fraternity and had departed from some of the “ancient landmarks.” Finally, the Masons refused to allow the Mormons to continue “a Masonic Lodge at Nauvoo” (*Mormonism and Masonry*, by S. H. Goodwin, page 34).

Joseph Smith’s actions with regard to Masonry infuriated many members of the fraternity. Nevertheless, Smith remained a Mason and Mormon writers admit that he gave the Masonic signal of distress just before he was murdered. E. Cecil McGavin wrote:

When the enemy . . . killed Hyrum Smith, Joseph stood at the open window, his martyr-cry being these words, “O Lord My God!” This was not the beginning of a prayer, because Joseph Smith did not pray in that manner. This brave, young man . . . started to repeat the distress signal of the Masons, expecting thereby to gain the protection its members are pledged to give a brother in distress. (*Mormonism and Masonry*, by E. Cecil McGavin, 1956, page 17)

In early Utah the Masons banned Mormons from the fraternity because of the things that had happened in Nauvoo. One of the most important reasons given was that Joseph Smith stole part of the Masonic ritual and included it in his own temple ceremony.

### **No Coincidence**

The relationship between the Mormon temple ceremony and Masonry is far too close to be called a coincidence. The fact that both Mormons and Masons have a temple in which they administer secret ceremonies is striking, but when we compare the ritual and learn that Joseph Smith himself was a Mason, we are forced to the conclusion that he borrowed from Masonry.

In our study we have had access to two books which give the Masonic ritual. They were reprinted by Ezra A. Cook Publications, Inc., Chicago, Illinois. The first is Capt. William Morgan’s *Freemasonry Exposed*, which was first published in 1827. The second is *Richardson’s*

*Monitor of Freemasonry*. This book was published some time after Morgan's exposé, but it is important because it gives some of the "higher degrees" not mentioned by Morgan.

In our book, *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* pages 486-489, we show twenty-seven parallels between the ritual of the Masons and the Mormon temple ceremony. Although we will include these parallels here, we will not give the documentation to prove each parallel as we did in our larger work. Because some of the details of the temple ceremony have been changed in recent years, we are using the pamphlet *Temple Mormonism—Its Evolution, Ritual and Meaning*, New York, 1931, to make our comparison.

1: Both Masons and Mormons have what is called "the five points of fellowship."

MORMONS: The *five points of fellowship* are given by putting the inside of the right foot to the inside of the Lord's, the inside of your knee to his, laying your breast close to his, your left hands on each other's backs, and each one putting his mouth to the other's ear, in which position the Lord whispers:

Lord — "This is the sign of the token:

"Health to the navel, *marrow in the bones*, . . ."  
(*Temple Mormonism*, page 22)

MASONS: He (the candidate) is raised on what is called the *five points of fellowship*, . . . This is done by putting the inside of your right foot to the inside of the right foot of the person to whom you are going to give the word, the inside of your knee to his, laying your right breast against his, your left hands on the back of each other, and your mouths to each other's right ear (in which position alone you are permitted to give the word), and whisper the word *Mahhah-bone* . . . He is also told that *Mahhah-bone* signifies *marrow in the bone*. (*Freemasonry Exposed*, pages 84-85)

2: When the candidates receive "The First Token of the Aaronic Priesthood," they make a promise similar to the oath taken in the "First Degree" of the Masonic ritual.

MORMONS: . . . we will not reveal any of the secrets of this, the first token of the Aaronic priesthood, with its accompanying name, sign or penalty. Should we do so, we agree that our throats be cut from ear to ear and our tongues torn out by their roots. (*Temple Mormonism*, page 18)

MASONS: . . . I will . . . never reveal any part or parts, art or arts, point or points of the secret arts and mysteries of ancient Freemasonry . . . binding myself under no less penalty than to have my throat cut across, my tongue torn out by the roots, . . . (*Freemasonry Exposed*, pages 21-22)

3: In both ceremonies the thumb is drawn across the throat to show the penalty.

4: Those who receive the "First Token of the Aaronic Priesthood" give a grip that is similar to that used by the Masons in the "First Degree" of their ritual.

5: Some of the wording concerning the "grip" is similar.

MORMONS: (. . . Peter now takes Adam by the right hand and asks:)

Peter—"What is that?"

Adam—"The first token of the Aaronic Priesthood"

Peter—"Has it a name?"

Adam—"It has."

Peter—"Will you give it to me?"

Adam—"I can not, for it is connected with my new name, but this is the sign." (*Temple Mormonism*, page 20)

MASONS: The Master and candidate holding each other by the grip, as before described, the Master says, "What is this?"

Ans. "A grip"

"A grip of what?"

Ans. "The grip of an Entered Apprentice Mason."

"Has it a name?"

Ans. "It has."

"Will you give it to me?"

Ans. "I did not so receive it, neither can I so impart it." (*Freemasonry Exposed*, pages 23-24)

6: The oath of the "Second Token of the Aaronic Priesthood" is similar to that taken in the second degree of Masonry.

MORMONS: "We and each of us do covenant and promise that we will not reveal the secrets of this, the Second Token of the Aaronic Priesthood, with its accompanying name, sign, grip or penalty. Should we do so, we agree to have our breasts cut open, and our hearts and vitals torn from our bodies and given to the birds of the air and the beasts of the field." (*Temple Mormonism*, page 20)

MASONS: "I . . . most solemnly and sincerely promise and swear, . . . that I will not give the degree of a Fellow Craft Mason to any one of an inferior degree, nor to any other being in the known world, . . . binding myself under no less penalty than to have my left breast torn open and my heart and vitals taken from thence . . . to become a prey to the wild beasts of the field, and vulture of the air, . . ." (*Freemasonry Exposed*, page 52)

7: Both have a similar sign.

MORMONS: The sign is made by placing the left arm on the square at the level of the shoulder, placing the right hand across the chest with the thumb extended and then drawing it rapidly from left to right and dropping it to the side. (*Temple Mormonism*, page 20)

MASONS: The sign is given by drawing your right hand flat, with the palm of it next to your breast, across your breast from left to the right side with some quickness, and dropping it down by your side; . . . (*Freemasonry Exposed*, page 53)

8: Both have a similar grip.

9: In both cases a “name” is used.

10: The promise made when receiving the “First Token of the Melchizedek Priesthood” resembles the oath given by the Masons in the third or “Master Mason’s Degree.”

11: The sign of the penalty is similar in both cases.

12: In both cases a “name” is used.

13: The conversation at the “veil” in the temple ceremony is very similar to that of the “Fellow Craft Mason” when he is questioned concerning the “grip.”

MORMONS: Lord—“What is this?”

Endowee—“The second token of the Melchizedek Priesthood—The Patriarchal Grip or Sure Sign of the Nail.”

Lord—“Has it a name?”

Endowee—“It has.”

Lord—“Will you give it to me?”

Endowee—“I can not for I have not yet received it.” (*Temple Mormonism*, page 22)

MASONS: . . . “What is this?”

Ans. “A grip.”

“A grip of what?”

Ans. “The grip of a Fellow Craft Mason.”

“Has it a name?”

Ans. “It has.”

“Will you give it to me?”

Ans. “I did not so receive it, neither can I so impart it.” (*Freemasonry Exposed*, page 54)

14: Both the Masons and the Mormons have a vow regarding “chastity.”

15: The grip known as “The Sign of the Nail” seems to be similar to one given by Masons in one of their higher degrees.

16: The “Oath of Vengeance” which used to be found in the Mormon temple ceremony resembles an oath in one of the higher degrees of Masonry.

17: Both Mormons and Masons change clothing before going through their rituals.

18: Both Mormons and Masons wear an apron.

19: In one of the higher degrees the Masons anoint the candidate. This is somewhat similar to the anointing ceremony in the Mormon temple ritual.

20: Both Mormons and Masons give what they call a “new name” to the candidate.

21: In the Mormon temple ceremony the candidate cannot pass through the veil until he has given certain signs and words. In the Royal Arch Degree the Masons use veils. The “Principal Sojourner” cannot enter the Third Veil except “By the words, sign, and word of exhortation of the Master of the Second Veil” (*Richardson’s Monitor of Free-Masonry*, pages 76-77).

22: In the Mormon temple ceremony a man represents Adam. The Masons also have a man who personates Adam in the degree of “Knight of the Sun.”

23: In the Mormon temple ceremony a man represents God. In the Mason’s Royal Arch Degree a man “personates the Deity.”

24: Both the Mormons and the Masons consider the square and the compass to be extremely important. The marks of the square and the compass appear on the Mormon temple garments and on the veil.

MORMONS: We now have the veil explained to us. We are told that it represents the veil of the temple. The marks are the same as those on the garments—the compass on the left and the square on the right side. (*Temple Mormonism*, page 22)

MASONS: . . . the three great lights in Masonry are the Holy Bible, Square and Compass. . . . the Square, to square our actions, and the Compass to keep us in due bounds with all mankind, . . . (*Freemasonry Exposed*, pages 22-23)

25: In the Masonic ritual the point of the compass is pressed against the left breast of the candidate. The Mormon temple garment has the mark of the compass on the left breast.

MORMONS: The marks are the same as those on the garments—the compass on the left . . . (*Temple Mormonism*, page 22)

MASONS: The candidate then enters, the Senior Deacon at the same time pressing his naked left breast with the point of the compass, . . . (*Freemasonry Exposed*, page 19)

26: The angle of the square is pressed against the right breast in the Masonic ritual. The mark of the square appears on the right breast of the Mormon temple garment.

MORMONS: . . . the square on the right side, . . . (*Temple Mormonism*, page 22)

MASONS: As he enters, the angle of the square is pressed hard against his naked right breast, . . . (*Freemasonry Exposed*, page 50)

27: A mallet is used by both the Masons and the Mormons in their ceremonies.

Other parallels between the Mormon temple ceremony and the Masonic ritual could be shown, but these should be sufficient to demonstrate to the reader that Joseph borrowed heavily from the Masons when he established the endowment ceremony. Besides borrowing from Masonic ritual, the early Mormons also used Masonic emblems on their temples. Mormon writer E. Cecil McGavin admitted that there were similarities:

Masons who visit the Temple Block in Salt Lake City are impressed by what they call the Masonic emblems displayed on the outside of the Mormon Temple.

Yes, the “Masonic emblems” are displayed on the walls of the Temple—the sun, moon and stars, “Holiness to the Lord,” the two right hands clasped in fellowship, the All-seeing eye, Alpha and Omega, and the beehive. Masonic writers tell us that the Mormon Temple ritual and their own are slightly similar in some respects.

Without any apologies we frankly admit that there may be some truth in these statements. (*Mormonism and Masonry*, Preface)

Mormon apologist Dr. Hugh Nibley conceded that the Masonic “rites present unmistakable parallels to those of the temple” (*What Is A Temple*, BYU Press, 1968, page 247).

Since many members of the early Mormon church were Masons and were familiar with its ritual, Joseph Smith must have realized that he would be accused of stealing the ceremonies from Masonry. In what was apparently a move to offset this criticism, Joseph Smith claimed that Masonry once had the true endowment and that it had become corrupted through the passage of time. In a letter dated June 17, 1842, Apostle Heber C. Kimball told of Smith’s explanation: “. . . there is a similarity of preas Hood [priesthood?] in Masonry, Bro. Joseph Ses [says?] Masonry was taken from priesthood but has become degenerated. But menny things are perfect” (*Heber C. Kimball—Mormon Patriarch and Pioneer*, by Stanley B. Kimball, 1981, page 85). On page 91 of the same book, Stanley Kimball stated: “Joseph allegedly told his private secretary, ‘Freemasonry was the apostate endowment as sectarian religion was the apostate religion.’”

In trying to explain why their temple ritual resembles that of the Masons, some Mormons claim that the endowment was given in Solomon’s temple and that the Masons preserved part of the ceremony. E. Cecil McGavin speculates concerning this matter:

Yes, there may be some similarities in the rituals of the Mormons and the Masons, . . . In the light of the evidence supplied by Masonic historians, the conclusion is forced upon us that some of the features of the ritual once administered in Solomon’s Temple have persisted in Masonry. . . .

Since some of the Masonic ritual has descended from Solomon’s time, altered and corrupted by the passing centuries, should one be surprised to find a few similarities when the Temple ritual is again established? . . .

If the facts were available and the original sources extant, it would doubtless be apparent that everything in the ritual of the Mormons that the Masons say was taken from their ceremonies, dates back to Solomon’s time. (*Mormonism and Masonry*, pages 192-194)

William J. Whalen made this reply in rebuttal to McGavin’s attempted explanation:

McGavin accepts the most fanciful claims to antiquity put forth by such discredited Masonic historians as Mackey, Anderson and Oliver. These early Masonic writers were wont to claim Solomon, Adam, and most of the upright men of the Old Testament as early lodge brothers. *Modern Masonic historians date the origin of the lodge in the early eighteenth century* and recognize that these pioneer speculative Masons simply adopted the story of the building of Solomon’s temple as a dramatic background for their initiations. . . .

A few elements of modern Masonry here and there can be traced to the medieval guilds of working masons, but no one with a scholarly reputation would try to maintain that the degree system as it is worked now—and as it was worked in Nauvoo in 1842—could have possibly been derived from Solomonite rites. (*The Latter-day Saints in the Modern Day World*, pages 203-204)

Historically there seems to be only one logical explanation for the many parallels between the temple ceremony and Masonry, and that is that Joseph Smith borrowed from the Masons. The reader should remember that it was on March 16, 1842, that Joseph Smith “was with the Masonic Lodge and rose to the sublime degree” (*History of the Church*, vol. 4, page 552). Less than two months later (May 4, 1842), Joseph Smith introduced the temple endowment ceremony. According to Joseph Smith’s *History of the Church*, vol. 5, pages 1-2, it was in the same room “where the Masonic fraternity meet occasionally” that he instructed his followers “in the principles and order of the Priesthood, attending to washings, anointings, endowments and the communication of keys pertaining to the Aaronic Priesthood, and so on to the highest order of the Melchisedek Priesthood, . . .”

With this very close connection between Mormonism and Masonry, it seems inconceivable that Mormon apologists would claim that Joseph Smith did not borrow from Masonry.

The Mormon leaders find themselves faced with several embarrassing questions regarding the temple ritual and Masonry. Many members of the church wonder how they can believe in a secret temple ritual when the Book of Mormon condemns all secret societies, bands and oaths. In fact, it plainly states that “the Lord *worketh not* in secret combinations” (Ether 8:19).

Furthermore, there is the question of why Joseph Smith would become a Mason in the first place. In spite of all the statements in the Book of Mormon which condemn secret societies, Joseph Smith joined with four others in stating:

We further, caution our brethren, against the impropriety of the organization of bands or companies, by covenants, oaths, penalties, or secrecies, . . . pure friendship, always becomes weakened, the very moment you undertake to make it stronger by penal oaths and secrecy. (*Times and Seasons*, vol. 1, page 133)

Benjamin F. Johnson claimed Joseph Smith told him that “Freemasonry was the apostate endowment.” Why would Joseph Smith join an organization that he believed was in a state of apostasy? A. C. Lambert, who was a very prominent Mormon educator, made these interesting comments in “A Private Notebook” written in 1962:

The traditional Mormon story about Freemasonry now is that the Prophet Joseph Smith, . . . did go into Masonry for a short time but left it when the Prophet discovered that it did not give him the protection that he and other Mormons had thought to find when they entered Masonry. Second, it came to be known that “Masonry is the priesthood of the Devil,” in a conspiratorial and debased imitation of the true Priesthood of God and its true symbols, emblems, and ceremonies. . . .

But these positions never do answer the question of why the true Prophet, Seer, and Revelator of God, in daily communion with God, and under God’s daily guidance, should ever have been suckered into the Devil’s imitation priesthood in the first place, and it does not explain why the Prophet and the other leaders stayed so enthusiastically in Masonry as long as they did and with as many of their own trusting brethren going into Masonry as did go in. (“Mormonism and Masonry: A Tabooed and Difficult Subject,” an unpublished manuscript, 1962, pages 4-5; copy in special collections at University of Utah)

Mormon leaders now claim that it is not right for members of the church to join the Masons or other

secret societies. Joseph F. Smith, who became the sixth president of the church, said that those who “are identified with these secret organizations” are “not fit to hold” important offices in the church (see *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* page 491).

Joseph Smith’s own words about “the impropriety of the organization of bands or companies, by covenant, or oaths, by penalties or secrecies” could certainly be used against the Mormon temple ceremony. John A. Widtsoe, however, maintained that “the temple endowment is not secret. All who meet the requirements for entrance to the temple may enjoy it” (*Evidences and Reconciliations*, vol. 1, page 24). Apostle Widtsoe’s reasoning with regard to this matter is very poor. All secret societies allow their own members to participate in their own rituals. The Mormon temple ceremony is kept secret from outsiders, and, after all, isn’t this what makes a secret society?

At any rate, the connection between Mormonism and Masonry can be briefly summarized as follows:

- 1 — Both Mormonism and Masonry have secret ceremonies that are performed in secret temples.
- 2 — The “Masonic emblems” are displayed on the walls of the Mormon temple.
- 3 — The Mormon temple ritual is similar in many respects to that used by the Masons.
- 4 — Joseph Smith and many of the most prominent members of the Mormon church were also members of the Masonic lodge.
- 5 — Temple ceremonies were actually performed in the Masonic hall in Nauvoo.

Reed Durham, who served as president of the Mormon History Association, carefully examined the parallels between Mormonism and Masonry. Although Dr. Durham still maintained that Joseph Smith was a prophet, he had to admit that Masonry had a definite influence upon Mormonism:

. . . I am convinced that in the study of Masonry ties a pivotal key to further understanding Joseph Smith and the Church. . . . Masonry in the Church had its origin prior to the time Joseph Smith became a Mason. . . . It commenced in Joseph’s home when his older brother became a Mason. . . .

I have attempted thus far to demonstrate that Masonic influences upon Joseph in the early Church history, preceding his formal membership in Masonry, were significant. However, these same Masonic influences exerted a more dominant character as reflected in the further expansion of the Church subsequent to the Prophet’s Masonic membership. In fact, I believe that there are few significant developments in the Church, that occurred after March 15, 1842, which did not have some *Masonic interdependence*. . . . There is absolutely no question in my mind that the Mormon ceremony

which came to be known as the Endowment, introduced by Joseph Smith to Mormon Masons, had an immediate inspiration from Masonry. This is not to suggest that no other source of inspiration could have been involved, but the *similarities between the two ceremonies are so apparent and overwhelming that some dependent relationship cannot be denied*. They are so similar, in fact, that one writer was led to refer to the Endowment as Celestial Masonry.

It is also obvious that the Nauvoo Temple architecture was in part, at least, *Masonically influenced*. Indeed, it appears that there was an intentional attempt to utilize Masonic symbols and motifs. . . . Can anyone deny that Masonic influence on Joseph Smith and the Church, either before or after his personal Masonic membership? The evidence demands comments . . . if we, as Mormon historians, respond to these questions and myriads [*sic*] like them relative to Masonry in an ostrich-like fashion, with our heads buried in the traditional sand, then I submit: there never will be “any help for the widow’s son.” (*Mormon Miscellaneous*, October 1975, pages 11, 12, 16)

Although Mormon apologists would have us believe that Joseph Smith received the temple ceremony by revelation from God, the evidence is against such a claim. It clearly shows that he borrowed heavily from Masonry as he formulated the ritual. Also, the continual rewording and updating of the ceremony shows plainly that it is not from God.

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NOTE ADDED MARCH 1, 1991

On May 3, 1990, the *New York Times* made the startling announcement that the LDS Church had changed some of its secret temple ceremony. The penalties, which played such a prominent part in the earlier versions, have now been completely removed and other important changes have been made. In a new book entitled, *Evolution of the Mormon Temple Ceremony: 1842-1990*, we give the complete text of the recently revised “endowment ceremony” and also show all the changes that have been made in the ritual.

## 23. Mormon Scriptures and the Bible

The LDS Church accepts the Bible (King James Version) as one of its four standard works. The Book of Mormon quotes large portions of the King James Version of the Bible, and Joseph Smith’s other revelations are filled with material from the Bible. Since the King James Version was printed about 200 years before Joseph Smith was even born, it is in no way dependent upon Mormon scriptures. Joseph Smith’s works, on the other hand, could not stand if the Bible were proven false, for many of his revelations are built upon the historical accuracy of the Bible, even though they may differ in doctrinal content. Nevertheless, many Mormons, seemingly ignorant of the fact that they are undermining the whole foundation of their own church, have made some vicious attacks on the Bible. Most of these attacks are not based upon sound historical evidence or methods. In fact, they reveal a lack of knowledge concerning Bible history and problems. Heber C. Snell, a former LDS Institute director, observed that when the LDS Church was first organized it “had two sacred books, the Bible and the Book of Mormon,” but that in time the Bible declined “to the position of third or even fourth place among the Church’s sacred books.” He went on to state: “My work, as a teacher of the Bible in L.D.S. collegiate institutions over a period of a quarter of a century, has failed to convince me that our people have made much advancement in biblical knowledge” (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Spring 1967, pages 56-57).

Although Joseph Smith initially tied his new religion to the historical reliability of the Bible, Mormonism seems to have been influenced to some extent by an attack Thomas Paine made on the Bible in the 1790s. In this work Paine spoke of “the stupid Bible of the church, that teacheth man nothing” (*The Age of Reason*, reprinted by the Thomas Paine Foundation, New York, page 189). Paine felt that “it is impossible to translate from one language to another, not only without losing a great part of the original, but frequently of mistaking the sense . . .” (*Ibid.*, page 32). It is interesting to note that Joseph Smith also cast doubt upon the translation of the Bible, for in “The Articles of Faith,” printed in the *Pearl of Great Price*, he wrote: “8. We believe the Bible to be the word of God *as far as it is translated correctly*; we also believe the Book of Mormon to be the word of God.”

In his pamphlet, “Spiritual Gifts,” published in *Pamphlets by Orson Pratt*, pages 70-71, Apostle Orson Pratt used arguments which strongly resemble those advanced by Thomas Paine:



... the Bible in ... all the languages of the earth, except the original in which it was given, *is not the word of God*, but the word of uninspired translators ... so far as the uninspired translators and the people are concerned, *no part* of the Bible can, with certainty, be known by them to be the word of God. ... The Hebrew and Greek manuscripts ... are evidently very much corrupted, ... This uncertainty, combined with the imperfections of uninspired translators, renders the Bibles of all languages, at the present day, emphatically *the words of men*, instead of the pure word of God.

In “The Bible Alone An Insufficient Guide” (*Orson Pratt’s Works*, 1851, pages 44-47), published in the 1850s, Apostle Pratt further declared:

Many Protestants say they take the Bible as their only rule of faith ... What evidence have they that the book of Matthew was inspired of God, or any other books of the New Testament? The only evidence they have is tradition. ... How are the Protestants then to know without new revelation, that any one book of the Bible was divinely inspired? ... What shall we say then, concerning the Bible’s being a sufficient guide? Can we rely upon it in its present known corrupted state, as being a faithful record of God’s word? We all know that but a few of the inspired writings have descended to our times, which few quote the names of some twenty other books which are lost, ... What few have come down to our day, have been *mutilated, changed, and corrupted*, in such a shameful manner that no two manuscripts agree. ... Add all this imperfection to the uncertainty of the translation, and who, in his right mind, could, for one moment, suppose the Bible in its present form to be a perfect guide? 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?

While we would expect an open enemy of Christianity like Thomas Paine to make the statements he did about the Bible, it is quite shocking to find a man who professed to be a Christian making such an attack upon the Bible. Even Brigham Young felt that Apostle Pratt went too far in his attack on the Bible (see *Journal of Discourses*, vol. 3, page 116). Apostle Pratt’s statement that the Bible may have been changed so much that we can’t even rely upon one verse sounds very strange in light of the fact that the Book of Mormon quotes hundreds of verses from the Bible, and in almost all cases these verses carry the same meaning as they do in the Bible. Thus it is plain to see that the Bible cannot be discredited without casting serious doubt on the Book of Mormon itself. If the Bible is all wrong, then the Book of Mormon is also. Nevertheless, Mormon leaders and scholars continue to assail the reliability of the Bible, and, as we have already stated, they seem to be oblivious to the fact that they are undermining their own religion.

## Evidence Compared

Orson Pratt once boasted:

This generation have *more than one thousand times* the amount of evidence to demonstrate and for ever establish the Divine Authenticity of the Book of Mormon than they have in favor of the Bible! (*Orson Pratt’s Works*, “Evidences of the Book of Mormon and Bible Compared,” page 64)

While Apostle Pratt’s statement may impress those who have only read material written by Mormon apologists, it is a complete misrepresentation of the facts. We have already shown that the only evidence for the Book of Mormon is the testimony of the witnesses and that this testimony cannot be relied upon.

As far as historical and manuscript evidence is concerned Joseph Smith’s scriptures have absolutely no foundation. The “record of the Nephites”—i.e., the Book of Mormon—was never cited by any ancient writer, nor are there any known manuscripts or even fragments of manuscripts in existence older than the ones dictated by Joseph Smith in the late 1820s.

Joseph Smith’s “Book of Moses” is likewise without documentary support. The only handwritten manuscripts for the “Book of Moses” are those dictated by Joseph Smith in the early 1830s.

Since Joseph Smith’s revelations in the *Doctrine and Covenants* do not purport to be translations of ancient records, we would not expect to find any ancient manuscript evidence concerning them. There is one revelation, however, which purports to be a translation of a “record made on parchment by John and hidden up by himself.” This revelation, printed in the *Doctrine and Covenants* as Section 7, has no documentary support for its claims.

The “Book of Abraham” purports to be a translation of an ancient Egyptian papyrus. However, the original papyrus is in reality the Egyptian “Book of Breathings” and has absolutely nothing to do with either Abraham or his religion. Consequently, we have no evidence for the “Book of Abraham” prior to the handwritten manuscripts dictated by Joseph Smith between 1835 and 1842. It is obvious, then, that there is no documentary evidence for any of Joseph Smith’s religious works that dates back prior to the late 1820s.

When we turn to the Bible, however, we find a great deal of historical evidence—some of which dates back more than 2,000 years—showing that the Bible was known and used in early times. While this in itself does not prove that the Bible is divinely inspired, it does give a person a basis for faith.

## Dead Sea Scrolls

Apostle Orson Pratt stated that the “oldest manuscripts of any of the books of the Old Testament at the present day date from the twelfth century of the Christian Era.” While this statement may have been true in Orson Pratt’s time, the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls has changed the entire picture. We now have some manuscripts that date back prior to the time of Christ. These scrolls were discovered in 1947 in caves near the Dead Sea. Frank Moore Cross, Jr., describes the scrolls:

A sketch of the contents of Cave IV may be helpful. . . . 382 manuscripts have been identified from this cave. . . . slightly more than one fourth of the total, are biblical. *All* of the books of the Hebrew canon *are now extant*, with the exception of the Book of Esther. . . .

Three very old documents have been found . . . They include an old copy of Samuel, preserved in only a handful of fragments; a patched and worn section of Jeremiah, . . . and a copy of Exodus . . . of which only a column and a few tatters are extant. . . .

The archaic Samuel scroll can date scarcely later than 200 B.C. A date in the last quarter of the third century is preferable. The Jeremiah is probably slightly later. The archaic Exodus . . . appears to be no later than the old Samuel fragments and probably is earlier.

One copy of Daniel is inscribed in the script of the late second century B.C. . . .

The biblical scrolls from Qumran span in date about three centuries. A few archaic specimens carry us back to the end of the third century [B.C.], as we have seen. The heavy majority, however, date in the first century B.C. and in the first Christian century . . . (*The Ancient Library of Qumran*, New York, 1961, pages 39, 40, 42, 43)

Dr. Gleason L. Archer points out that although the Isaiah scrolls “discovered in Qumran Cave 1 . . . were a thousand years earlier than the oldest dated manuscript previously known (A.D. 980), they proved to be word for word identical with our standard Hebrew Bible in more than 95 per cent of the text. The 5 per cent of variation consisted chiefly of obvious slips of the pen and variations in spelling” (*A Survey of Old Testament Introduction*, page 19).

Bible scholars have reason to rejoice over the discovery of manuscripts of Isaiah dating back to ancient times. Mormon scholars, on the other hand, are faced with a dilemma, for although these manuscripts support the text of the Bible, they cast doubt on Joseph Smith’s “Inspired Revision” of the Bible and his “translation” of the text of Isaiah found in the Book of Mormon. For years Mormon scholars have labored to prove that

the text of Isaiah in the Book of Mormon is actually a translation of an ancient copy of Isaiah and is therefore superior to the translation found in the Bible. They have attempted to show parallels between the text of Isaiah found in the Book of Mormon and that found in some ancient manuscripts. We have shown, however, that these parallels are of little value because the manuscripts were known and studied in Joseph Smith’s time and this information would have been available to him (see our work, *Mormon Scriptures and the Bible*, pages 9-10).

If Mormon scholars could find similarities between the text of the Book of Mormon and documents that were not known in Joseph Smith’s day, this type of evidence would be impressive. The Dead Sea Scrolls, for instance, should provide a great deal of evidence for the Book of Mormon if it is really an ancient record. The Isaiah scroll found at Qumran Cave 1 should have caused a great deal of joy among Mormon scholars, for here is a manuscript of Isaiah which is a thousand years older than any manuscript previously known. Surely, if the Book of Mormon were true, this manuscript would be filled with evidence to support the text of Isaiah in the Book of Mormon and thus prove beyond all doubt that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God. Instead of proving the Book of Mormon, however, it has turned out to be a great disappointment to Mormon scholars. Lewis M. Rogers, who was serving as Assistant Professor of Religion at Brigham Young University, wrote a paper entitled, “The Significance of the Scrolls and a Word of Caution.” In this paper he reminded his people that “their hopes and emotions make them vulnerable. It is quite possible that claims for the Book of Mormon and for L.D.S. theology will not be greatly advanced as a consequence of this discovery” (*Progress in Archaeology*, BYU, 1963, pages 46-47).

Wayne Ham wrote his M. A. thesis for the Department of Biblical Languages at Brigham Young University in 1961. His thesis compared the St. Marks Isaiah scroll with the Book of Mormon. After making this study, Mr. Ham was forced to conclude that the Isaiah scroll did not support the text found in the Book of Mormon:

Latter Day Saints were hopeful that these Isaiah scrolls would bring some supportive evidence for the Book of Mormon. The Dead Sea Isaiah scroll, which dates probably from the second century B.C., predates by one thousand years what was previously considered to be the oldest surviving text of the Old Testament.

After a thorough investigation of the matter, . . . this writer found *no noteworthy instances of support for the Book of Mormon claims*. (*Courage*, vol. 1, no. 1, September 1970, page 20)

Even the noted Mormon apologist Dr. Sidney B. Sperry of Brigham Young University had to admit that the Dead Sea Scrolls did not help the case for the Book of Mormon:

After reading the Scrolls very carefully, I come to the conclusion that *there is not a line in them that suggests that their writers knew the Gospel as understood by Latter-day Saints*. In fact, there are a few passages that seem to prove the contrary. . . . I have compared in some detail the text of the scroll with its parallels in the Book of Mormon text. This tedious task has revealed that the scroll *seldom agrees with the departures of the Book of Mormon text* from that of the conventional Masoretic text of Isaiah and consequently the Authorized Version. . . . The Isaiah scroll is *of relatively little use* to Latter-day Saints as showing the antiquity of the text of Isaiah in the Book of Mormon. . . . The Scrolls undoubtedly contribute much to the history of Judaism and Christianity, . . . Their practical importance to Latter-day Saints is relatively small. (*Progress in Archaeology*, pages 52-54)

### **Evidence for New Testament**

Apostle Orson Pratt stated that the “oldest manuscripts of the New Testament which this age are in possession of are supposed to date from the sixth century of the Christian era.” He mentioned both the Codex Vaticanus and the Codex Alexandrinus. Scholars now feel that the Codex Vaticanus “was written about the middle of the fourth century and contained both Testaments . . .” (*The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*, by Bruce M. Metzger, 1964, page 47). The Codex Alexandrinus was probably written “about the fifth century” (*Ibid.*, page 46).

The same year (1859) that Orson Pratt was making one of his most heavy-handed attacks on the Bible, Constantin Tischendorf discovered the Codex Sinaiticus, which turned out to be one the most important manuscripts of the Bible. George E. Ladd informs us that “Codex Sinaiticus, dates from the early fourth century, and has proved to be one of the best texts we possess of the New Testament” (*New Testament and Criticism*, 1967, page 62).

These three ancient manuscripts are very important as far as the text of the New Testament is concerned. Some of the most zealous enemies of Christianity concede that they are authentic.

F. F. Bruce, a Christian writer from the University of Manchester and a New Testament authority, surveys the documentary evidence for the New Testament:

The evidence for our New Testament writings is ever so much greater than the evidence for many writings of classical authors, the authenticity of which no-one dreams of questioning. . . .

There are in existence about 4,000 Greek manuscripts of the New Testament in whole or in part. The best and most important of these go back to somewhere about AD 350. . . .

Perhaps we can appreciate how wealthy the New Testament is in manuscript attestation if we compare the textual material for other ancient historical works. For Caesar’s Gallic War (composed between 58 and 50 BC) there are several extant MSS, but only nine or ten are good, and the oldest is some 900 years later than Caesar’s day. Of the 142 books of the Roman history of Livy (59 BC–AD 17) only thirty-five survive; these are known to us from not more than twenty MSS of any consequence, only one of which, and that containing fragments of Books iii-vi, is as old as the fourth century. Of the fourteen books of the Histories of Tacitus (c. AD 100) only four and a half survive; of the sixteen books of his Annals, ten survive in full and two in part. The text of these extant portions of his two great historical works depends entirely on two MSS, one of the ninth century and one of the eleventh. . . . The History of Thucydides (c. 460–400 BC) is known to us from eight MSS, the earliest belonging to c. AD 900, and a few papyrus scraps, belonging to about the beginning of the Christian era. The same is true of the History of Herodotus (c. 480–425 BC). Yet no classical scholar would listen to an argument that the authenticity of Herodotus or Thucydides is in doubt because the earliest MSS of their works which are of any use are over 1,300 years later than the originals.

But how different is the situation of the New Testament in this respect! In addition to the two excellent MSS of the fourth century mentioned above, which are the earliest of some thousands known to us, considerable fragments remain of papyrus copies of books of the New Testament dated from 100 to 200 years earlier still. (*The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?* 1967, pages 15-17)

Floyd V. Filson provides further details concerning the papyrus manuscripts: “. . . it is in Egypt that the overwhelming majority of papyri have survived . . . it is the papyri which give us manuscripts that go further back than the fourth century” (*The Biblical Archaeologist*, September 1957, page 55). In *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* (page 379), we included a photograph from *The Biblical Archaeologist*, September 1957, page 61. This photograph shows “Rylands Greek Papyrus 457, dated about 125–130 A.D., the oldest known fragment of a New Testament manuscript. It contains John 18:31-33 on one side and 18:37-38 on the other.” J. A. Thompson

argues that this fragment provides evidence “that John’s Gospel, far from being a late second-century production as some have maintained, was in fact far earlier, and more likely to have been written in the first century, or at least very early in the second” (*The Bible and Archaeology*, page 437).

F. F. Bruce adds this interesting information about the papyrus manuscripts:

In addition to the two excellent MSS of the fourth century . . . considerable fragments remain of papyrus copies of books of the New Testament dated 100 to 200 years earlier still. The Chester Beatty Biblical Papyri, . . . contained most of the New Testament writings. One of these, containing the four Gospels with Acts, belongs to the first half of the third century; . . .

A more recently discovered papyrus manuscript of the same Gospel [Gospel of John], . . . is the Papyrus Bodmer II, whose discovery was announced by the Bodmer Library of Geneva in 1956; it was written about AD 200, and contains the first fourteen chapters of the Gospel of John with one lacuna . . . and considerable portions of the last seven chapters. (*The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?* pages 17-18)

Besides the thousands of Greek manuscripts, there is additional evidence for the text of the New Testament found in early translations into other languages and in quotations found in the writings of early Christians.

### **“130,000 Different Readings”**

Orson Pratt proclaimed in a discourse delivered in 1859:

All the most ancient manuscripts of the New Testament known to the world differ from each other in almost every verse. . . . The learned admit that in the manuscripts of the New Testament alone there are no less than one hundred and thirty thousand different readings. . . . No one can tell whether even one verse of either the Old or New Testament conveys the ideas of the original author. Just think, 130,000 different readings in the New Testament alone! (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 7, pages 27-28)

In his book, *The World and the Prophets*, page 188, Mormon apologist Dr. Hugh Nibley charged that “there are more than 8,000 ancient manuscripts of the New Testament, no two of which read exactly alike!” Now, while it is true that there are many different readings in manuscript copies of the New Testament, Mormon writers have greatly exaggerated the importance of this matter. Gleason L. Archer, a Christian scholar, acknowledges that there are “discrepancies among the handwritten copies.” He goes on, however, to say that it is “almost unavoidable that this should have been the case. No man alive can sit down and copy out the text of an

entire book without a mistake of any kind” (*A Survey of Old Testament Introduction*, page 18). F. F. Bruce further clarified the matter:

It is easily proved by experiment that it is difficult to copy out a passage of any considerable length without making one or two slips at least. When we have documents like our New Testament writings copied and recopied thousands of times, the scope for copyists’ errors is so enormously increased that it is surprising there are no more than there actually are. Fortunately, if the number of MSS increases the number of scribal errors, it increases proportionately the means of correcting such errors, so that the margin of doubt left in the process of recovering the exact original wording is not so large as might be feared; it is in truth remarkably small. (*The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?* page 19)

In a footnote on page 55 of the book, *Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts*, we find this illuminating comment:

Dr. Hort, whose authority on the point is quite incontestable, estimates the proportion of words about which there is some doubt [in the New Testament] at about one-eighth of the whole; but by far the greater part of these consists merely of differences in order and other unimportant variations, and “the amount of what can in any sense be called substantial variation . . . can hardly form more than a thousandth part of the entire text.” (*Introduction to the New Testament in the Original Greek*, page 2)

Mormon leaders claim that the Catholics conspired to alter the Bible. In the Book of Mormon itself 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. . . . 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, . . . 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, I Nephi 13:26-29)

Joseph Fielding Smith, Jr., son of the tenth president of the church, said that “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” (*Religious Truths Defined*, page 175).

Apostle Mark E. Peterson alleged that there were deliberate changes, deletions and forgeries” made in the Bible (see *As Translated Correctly*, page 14).

While it is true that there are various readings in the original handwritten manuscripts of the Bible, the Book of Mormon’s charge that the Catholics deliberately conspired to remove “many plain and precious things” out of the Bible is proven false by the Dead Sea Scrolls and other important manuscripts which have been discovered. The Book of Mormon definitely states that the changes in the Bible were made after the time of Christ and after the formation of the Catholic Church:

The book . . . is a record of the Jews . . . when it proceeded forth from the mouth of a Jew it contained the plainness of the gospel of the Lord . . . these things go forth from the Jews in purity unto the Gentiles . . . thou seest the foundation of a great and abominable church . . . they have taken away from the gospel of the Lamb . . . after the book hath gone forth through the hands of the great and abominable church . . . there are many plain and precious things taken away from the book . . . (Book of Mormon, I Nephi 13:23-28)

In 1832 the Mormon publication, *The Evening and the Morning Star* (vol. 1, no. 1, page 3), said that the changes in the Bible were made “by the Mother of Harlots while it was confined in that Church,—say, from the year A.D. 460 to 1400.”

The “great Isaiah scroll” found at Qumran provides important evidence to show that the Catholics did not take away “many plain and precious things” from the Bible. This scroll is dated at about 100 B.C., and therefore could not have been touched by the Catholics. Also it should be remembered that this scroll is a Jewish production, and the Book of Mormon claims that the Jews had the Scriptures in their “purity.” Why, then, does this scroll fail to support the text of Isaiah as found in the Book of Mormon or Joseph Smith’s “Inspired Revision” of the Bible?

The Catholic Church certainly was not in existence prior to the time of Christ, and even President Joseph Fielding Smith had to admit that the Catholics did not become the “ruling power in religion” until after “the beginning of the fourth century” (*Essentials in Church History*, page 10). Papyrus manuscripts found since the turn of the century prove that the Scriptures could not have been rewritten by a “great and abominable church.” Floyd V. Filson observed that “the text of the Gospels previously known from manuscripts of the fourth century and later agrees substantially with the text which we find in these third and second century fragments (second century fragments are admittedly rare and small)” (*The Biblical Archaeologist*, February 1961, page 3).

Sir Fredric Kenyon, who was the director of the British Museum and a well-known authority on Bible manuscripts, noted:

The interval then between the dates of original composition and earliest extant evidence becomes so small as to be in fact negligible, and the last foundation for any doubt that the Scriptures have come down to us substantially as they were written has now been removed. Both the authenticity and the general integrity of the books of the New Testament may be regarded as finally established. (*The Bible and Archaeology*, page 288, as cited in *The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?* page 20)

Because of recent discoveries of papyrus manuscripts, Mormon scholars are faced with a serious dilemma. In light of these discoveries, it is no longer possible to maintain Joseph Smith’s teaching that the Catholics conspired to change the Bible. Richard L. Anderson of Brigham Young University is undoubtedly one of the best authorities on Bible manuscripts in the LDS Church. In a paper which Dr. Anderson wrote, he seemed to be warning his people against the idea that the New Testament has been drastically altered:

This process of uncovering the major papyrus manuscripts of the New Testament has largely taken place not only in our own century, but in our own generation. . . . Almost the whole New Testament is represented in the papyrus fragments. The only two exceptions now are I and II Timothy. The real achievement, then, is that the antiquity of the text has now been pushed back almost another century. . . . the gap now separating the time of the writing of the New Testament and the oldest preserved manuscripts is now generally no more than 200 years, and as we shall soon see in the case of the letters of Paul and two of the Gospels, that gap has been narrowed by at least another fifty years. . . . the most impressive of the Beatty papyri are the extensive portions of what originally was a collection of Paul’s letters, . . . thought by leading papyrologists to be no later than 200 A.D. This means that the oldest collection of Paul’s letters now dates from a maximum of 150 years after Paul wrote. With such an early collection, the question naturally arises how the text is different from the traditional one. Differences lie in numerous details, but the outstanding conclusion is that there is *little, if any, significant change*. . . .

Among the Bodmer Papyri, the greatest treasures are the copies of the Gospels dating back to the end of the second century. . . . the most impressive contribution of the new manuscripts of Luke and John is not the few differences, but the *extent of the agreement* with the life and teachings of Christ as preserved in other manuscripts. . . . For a book to undergo progressive uncovering of its manuscript history and come out with so little debatable in its text is a great tribute to its essential authenticity. . . . no new manuscript discovery

has produced serious differences in the essential story.

... It is true that the Latter-day Saints have taken the position that the present Bible is much changed from its original form. However, greatest changes would logically have occurred in writings more remote than the New Testament. . . .

Joseph Smith said that “many important points touching the salvation of man, had been taken from the Bible, or lost before it was compiled.” . . . Major losses might occur by elimination of whole books rather than alterations of those admitted as canonical. Nor do subsequent changes have to be based on open changes of the writings. The forces of evil are more effective at changing the meaning of true terms and concepts than removing them. (*Fourteenth Annual Symposium of the Archaeology of the Scriptures*, Brigham Young University, 1963, pages 52-59)

These statements must have come as a surprise to Mormon writers who believed that the Catholics conspired to change the Bible, especially since they came from the pen of one of their most noted scholars.

Before Mormon writers accuse Christians of altering the Bible they should take a serious look at some of their own revelations published in the *Doctrine and Covenants*. If the churches that preserved the Bible these many centuries had altered it at the same rate that Joseph Smith changed his revelations, we would be lucky to have anything the same as it was originally written.

### Inspired Version?

Mormon Apostle Bruce R. McConkie informs us that “the Prophet [Joseph Smith] corrected, revised, altered, added to, and deleted from the King James Version of the Bible to form what is now commonly referred to as the *Inspired Version of the Bible*. . . . *the marvelous flood of light and knowledge revealed through the Inspired Version of the Bible is one of the great evidences of the divine mission of Joseph Smith*” (*Mormon Doctrine*, 1979, pages 383-384).

Actually, the Inspired Version of the Bible has been the source of much embarrassment for LDS Church leaders. It was never published during Joseph Smith’s lifetime. Joseph Smith’s wife Emma retained the manuscript and would not turn it over to Brigham Young. Instead, Emma waited until 1866 and gave it to Young’s adversaries, the leaders of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints [now Community of Christ], who published it the following year. Since Brigham Young was thwarted in his effort to obtain the manuscript, he tried to play down its importance: “That made us very anxious, in the days of Joseph, to get the new translation; but the Bible is good enough as it is, it will answer my purpose . . .” (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 3, page 116).

This statement by President Young seemed to throw in question the revelations given by Joseph Smith, for Smith claimed that he was commanded by God to make this revision of the Scriptures. In a revelation given January 10, 1832, we read:

Now, verily I say unto you my servants, Joseph Smith, Jun., and Sidney Rigdon, saith the Lord, it is expedient to translate again; . . . preach in the regions round about until conference; and after that it is expedient to continue the work of translation until it be finished. (*Doctrine and Covenants*, 73:34)

Mormon scholar Reed Durham pointed out the importance of the work:

. . . God had commanded him to make that Revision . . . There are eighteen sections in the *Doctrine and Covenants* wherein the Lord gives commands and specific instructions relating to the Revision. (“A History of Joseph Smith’s Revision of the Bible,” Ph.D. dissertation, Brigham Young University, 1965, pages 23-24)

When the Reorganized Church printed the Inspired Version in 1867, Brigham Young was very much opposed to the idea of members of his church receiving it from an “apostate” organization. A century later, however, the Reorganized Church’s printing of the Inspired Version was available at the Mormon-owned Deseret Book Store and Mormon scholars were using it in their writings. Before Joseph Fielding Smith became president of the church in 1970, he claimed that he wanted the church to publish its own edition of the Inspired Version. Nevertheless, although Smith served as president for over two years, he did nothing towards bringing the Inspired Version into print. In 1974 the Mormon leaders obtained microfilm copies of the original manuscripts of the Inspired Version from the Reorganized Church, but even with the handwritten text available to them, they continued to drag their heels with regard to publication. In *The Changing World of Mormonism*, page 385, we wrote the following:

The Mormon church is faced with a peculiar dilemma with regard to Joseph Smith’s “inspired revision.” They cannot reject it entirely without admitting that he was a deceiver. On the other hand, if they were to print the revision and fully endorse it, they would be faced with equally unsurmountable problems. The contents of the “inspired revision” actually contradict doctrines that are now taught in the Mormon church. Therefore, the Mormon church can neither fully accept nor fully reject the Inspired Version of the Bible. They claim that Joseph Smith was inspired to translate, and then turn right around and use the King James Version. Joseph Fielding Smith stated:

“The Church uses the King James Version of the Bible because it is the best version translated by the power of man” (*Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 3, page 191).

In 1979 it was rumored that the church was about to print the Inspired Version. As it turned out, however, the new LDS Bible was only a printing of the King James text with “Excerpts from the Prophet Joseph Smith’s translation . . . Short excerpts are provided in the footnotes; longer excerpts are provided in the Appendix.”

Two things should be noted about this Bible: *One*, the portions taken from Joseph Smith’s “translation” have not been canonized. The shorter excerpts are merely footnotes to the King James text and the larger ones are separated from the Bible text by 793 pages of material—i.e., a “Topical Guide” and a “Bible Dictionary.” Moreover, the excerpts are printed in very small type, which seems to indicate that they are of secondary importance. *Two*, the book contains only “excerpts” from Smith’s translation. In other words, the Mormon leaders have included only the portions which they deemed advisable. For instance, Joseph Smith’s revision of Matthew 5:40-41 is neither found in the footnotes nor in the longer excerpts. Smith had tried to destroy Jesus’ teaching about going the extra mile in his Inspired Version, but in doing this he had directly contradicted the “translation” he gave in the Book of Mormon (3 Nephi 12:40-41) which reads the same as the King James Version.

At any rate, the fact that the Mormon leaders would print only “extracts” from Joseph Smith’s translation and still use the King James Version leads one to believe they lack confidence in his revision.

Since the Mormon leaders cannot come right out and say that Joseph Smith made mistakes in his Inspired Version, they have devised another excuse to keep from fully endorsing it. They claim that Joseph Smith never finished the translation. Joseph Fielding Smith argued that it was Joseph Smith’s “intention to do more, but because of persecution this was not accomplished” (*Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 3, page 191). Reed Durham claimed that “the Revision was incomplete because after it was finished it still contained errors and contradictions” (“A History of Joseph Smith’s Revision of the Bible,” page 128). While we certainly agree that Joseph Smith’s “translation” still contained “errors and contradictions,” there is evidence to show that at one time the early Mormons considered it to have been complete. In fact, as we have shown, in the *Doctrine and Covenants* 73:4, Joseph Smith was commanded to “continue the work of translation *until it be finished*.”

In the *History of the Church*, under the date of February 2, 1833, vol. 1, page 324, we find this statement by Joseph Smith: “I completed the translation and review of the New Testament, on the 2nd of February, 1833,

and sealed it up, no more to be opened till it arrived in Zion.” Five months later Joseph Smith claimed that he had finished the entire Bible. In a letter dated July 2, 1833, signed by Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, and F. G. Williams, the following appears: “We this day *finished the translation of the Scriptures*, for which we return gratitude to our Heavenly Father . . .” (*History of the Church*, vol. 1, page 368)

In the *Doctrine and Covenants*, Joseph Smith was definitely commanded to print the Inspired Version: In Section 104, verse 58, he was told to print “the fulness of my scriptures,” and in 124:89 William Law was ordered to “hearken to the counsel of my servant Joseph, . . . and *publish the new translation* of my holy word unto the inhabitants of the earth.” These commandments were never obeyed. Mormon writer Arch Reynolds seemed puzzled over the matter:

Why the Bible was not published is still an enigma; of course the Saints were unsettled: they were persecuted, but many other works were published so why not the Holy Scriptures? . . . The Lord gave Joseph a commandment to publish the Bible to the world, and the Lord prepared the way to accomplish this but it was not fulfilled. (“A Study of Joseph Smith’s Bible Revision,” typed copy, page 32)

Even with all the money and printing presses that the LDS Church has today, it still has not obeyed the command to publish the Inspired Version to “the inhabitants of the earth.”

Perhaps the strangest thing of all concerning the Inspired Version of the Bible is the fact that Joseph Smith himself did not take it seriously. For instance, he ignored his own “inspired” renderings concerning the Godhead. Arch Reynolds remarked:

At times Joseph Smith ignored his own renderings of the Inspired Bible and quoted the King James version in his letters, sermons, etc. . . . In twenty-six different quotations to different parties in and out of the Church . . . in the first six volumes of the *History of the Church*, they are like the King James Bible although he had given previous varied renderings in the Inspired Bible. . . . The above various renderings as given by Joseph differing in essential parts from both the King James and his previous revision show that he had grown in doctrine and had broadened in learning German, Greek, and Hebrew. (*Ibid.*, pages 20, 21, 25)

While it took many scholars, who were authorities in Greek and Hebrew, years to complete the King James Version of the Bible, Joseph Smith began his work without any knowledge of these languages and completed it in three years. Although some Mormon scholars now hesitate to call Joseph Smith’s Inspired Version a translation, Robert J. Matthews points out that

“every reference to it in the *Doctrine and Covenants* and the *History of the Church* calls it a translation” (*BYU Studies*, Autumn 1968, page 3).

Mormon critic R. C. Evans felt that Joseph Smith did not translate “a single word.” He noted that Smith “had no manuscript of any kind” and that there “is no evidence that he compared any originals with each other.” He went on to say:

Here is the secret of Smith’s power to translate. He read the Bible, thought that such and such a change should be made, either by adding a few verses, or taking away a few verses. If he had the burning sensation in his bosom it was right, and so he cut and slashed away at the Word of God to his heart’s content, and the result is the Mormon Bible. (*Forty Years in the Mormon Church—Why I Left It!* 1920, pages 111-112)

Joseph Smith not only made many unnecessary changes in the Bible, but he also failed to see the places where the text of the Bible really did need correction (see *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* pages 389-390; *Mormon Scriptures and the Bible*, pages 34-38). While this is certainly a serious defect in Joseph Smith’s work, even more objectionable is the fact that he made changes which cannot be supported by any evidence. For instance, John 1:1 in the King James Version reads: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”

Joseph Smith, however, changed this verse to read: “In the beginning was the gospel preached through the Son. And the gospel was the word, and the word was with the Son, and the Son was with God, and the Son was of God” (Inspired Version, John 1:1). Smith seems to have played havoc with what was once a short and meaningful verse. To our knowledge, his rendition is not supported by any manuscript evidence. In fact, in *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* page 384, we show that “Papyrus Bodmer II,” dated about 200 A.D., reads exactly like the King James Version.

Mormon writer Robert J. Matthews admitted that “in the main the passages revised by Joseph Smith are not supported by the three great parchment manuscripts,” nor by the “papyrus manuscripts and fragments, nor by the Dead Sea Scrolls” (“Joseph Smith’s Revision of the Bible,” 1968, typed copy, page 17).

In his Inspired Version, Joseph Smith even indicated that the book of Genesis originally contained a prophecy concerning the Book of Mormon and that his own name was mentioned there. He, in fact, added over 800 words into Genesis 50:24. In this large interpolation we find the following.

A seer shall the Lord my God raise up, who shall be a *choice seer* . . . And that seer will I bless, and they that seek to destroy him shall be confounded; for this

promise I give unto you; for I will remember you from generation to generation; and his name *shall be called Joseph*, and it shall be after the name of his father. . . .

The reader will notice that the “choice seer” was to be “called Joseph, . . . after the name of his father.” Joseph Smith was obviously referring to himself, for his father’s name was Joseph.

The Septuagint—a Greek version of the Old Testament said to have been translated from the Hebrew before the time of Christ—offers no support for Joseph Smith’s “inspired revision” of Genesis 50:24, but instead is almost identical with the King James Version. It is almost impossible to believe that such a prophecy could have been dropped from both the Greek and Hebrew manuscripts without being detected. Mormon writer Merrill Y. Van Wagoner admits the difficulty but suggests that such changes were planned by the “Spirit of Darkness” (see *The Inspired Revision of the Bible*, pages 33-34).

Besides adding his own name to the Bible, Joseph Smith added many of his own views. For instance, his bias against blacks is apparent in several interpolations he made in the book of Genesis. In the Inspired Version, Genesis 7:10, 14 and 29 we read:

And there was a *blackness* came upon all the children of Cainan, that they were despised among all people. . . . Enoch continued to call upon all the people, save it were the people of Cainan, to repent. . . . the seed of Cain *were black, and had not place among them*.

In the King James Version, Genesis 9:26 reads: “And he said, Blessed be the Lord God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant.” In his Inspired Version, Joseph Smith changed this to indicate that a “veil of darkness” came upon Canaan: “And he said, Blessed be the Lord God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant, and a *veil of darkness shall cover him*, that he shall be known among all men” (*Inspired Version*, Gen. 9:30).

One of the most unusual things concerning Joseph Smith’s Inspired Version is that he put New Testament quotations and practices into the Old Testament. For instance, the Inspired Version indicates that Adam was baptized and received the Holy Ghost:

And he called upon our father Adam . . . he also said unto him, If thou wilt, turn unto me and hearken unto my voice, and believe, and repent of all thy transgressions, and be baptized, even in water, in the name of mine Only Begotten Son, who is full of grace and truth, which is Jesus Christ, the only name which shall be given under heaven, whereby salvation shall come unto the children of men; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, asking all things in his name, and whatsoever ye shall ask it shall be given you. (*Inspired Version*, Gen. 6:52-53)



Mormons have always had a great deal to say about apocryphal books and claim that many books were removed from the Bible. Some of them, in fact, seem to delight in taunting Christians by claiming they do not have a complete Bible. Since Joseph Smith was supposed to have been “inspired” in his work on the Bible, we would expect to find the so-called “lost books” restored in his Inspired Version. While Smith did make some interpolations in the Bible, he did not restore any of the “lost” books. In a letter written by Joseph Smith and his counselors, we find this statement: “We have not found the Book of Jasher, nor any other of the lost books mentioned in the Bible as yet; nor will we obtain them at present” (*History of the Church*, vol. 1, page 363). Instead of restoring the “lost books,” Joseph Smith actually ended up with one less book than we have in the King James Version. He claimed that “The Songs of Solomon are not inspired writings” and removed this book from his Bible.

Robert J. Matthews, who has served as Director of Academic Research for the Department of Seminaries and Institutes in the LDS Church, has done a great deal of research on Joseph Smith’s Inspired Version. In an article published in *Brigham Young University Studies*, Dr. Matthews admitted the possibility that Joseph Smith may have added material which was never contained in the original manuscripts of the Bible:

The question might be raised whether the Prophet actually restored the text as Matthew wrote it, or whether, being the seer that he was, he *went beyond Matthew’s text* and recorded an event that actually took place during the delivery of the Sermon, but which Matthew did not include. This cannot be determined with certainty; . . . it is unlikely that he would “add or take from” unless he did it by the authority of divine revelation. . . . The how of the Prophet’s revision of the Sermon on the Mount calls for an expression of inspiration and could represent either a restoration of material that was once in Matthew’s account of the Sermon, or could *go beyond Matthew* and reiterate an event immediately behind the text . . . which Matthew did not record.

Another example of direct discourse found only in the Inspired Version is Matthew 9:18-21 . . . As with the earlier example the question may again be asked whether this encounter between Jesus and the Pharisees actually took place as recorded in the Inspired Version. It is either historical or it is not. If not historical then it would simply be a literary device used by the Prophet to convey a doctrine; but since the Prophet is not known to use devices of this kind . . . there is considerable reason to believe that the Prophet regarded this passage as a statement of historical fact. . . . the Inspired Version at

this point represents either a restoration of Matthew’s original record or *an addition of an event* that took place in the ministry of Jesus which Matthew did not record . . . It is probable that the Inspired Version is many things, and that only portions of it represent restorations while other portions may be *explanations, interpolations, enlargements, clarifications* and the like.

The science of textual criticism offers an objection to the Inspired Version being a restoration of the original text on the basis that the Prophet’s work is not extensively supported by the many ancient manuscripts and fragments of the Bible . . . this may possibly be accounted for in two ways. First, no original manuscripts of the Bible are available, and even the earliest available documents are removed from the originals by many decades. Corruption of the texts could have taken place in the intervening years. Second, many of the passages in the Inspired Version may be reiterations of events which were *either not recorded* by the Biblical writers or were *lost before the Bible was compiled*, in which case even the *original Bible manuscripts would not contain the information*. . . . the Inspired Version is many things. There are passages that are strongly persuasive of being restorations of the original text, or even of historical events *beyond the text*. There are other passages that may be *inspired explanations, but not necessarily restorations*. (*BYU Studies*, Winter 1969, pages 170-174)

Mormon apologist Hugh Nibley has disclosed that “Whatever translation comes by the gift and power of God is certainly no translation in the ordinary sense. . . . Joseph Smith has made it clear that his inspiration is by no means bound to any ancient text, but is free to take wings at any time” (*BYU Studies*, Autumn 1969, page 71). Dr. Nibley and other Mormon scholars would, no doubt, like to prove that Joseph Smith carefully followed the ancient texts which he claimed to translate, but since the evidence is so clearly against such an idea, they are forced to say that Joseph Smith’s inspiration went beyond the written texts. This seems to be an extremely compromised position and comes very close to rejecting Joseph Smith’s entire work. The question comes to mind: Where do you draw the line between “inspiration” and “imagination”?

In 1969 Richard P. Howard, Church Historian for the Reorganized Church, released information which showed there were a number of different manuscripts involved in the production of the Inspired Version and that Joseph Smith often revised his own revisions and left the manuscripts in a very confused state:

When one turns to nearly any page of OT #3 containing substantial initial revision of the King

James Version, different colors of ink appear, showing later revisions, written between the lines or on separate scraps of paper and pinned to the manuscript pages. (*Restoration Scriptures*, page 122)

. . . the manuscripts indicate rather clearly that Joseph Smith, Jr., by his continued practice of rerevising his earlier texts (occasionally as many as three times), demonstrated that he did not believe that at any of those points of rerevision he had dictated a perfectly inerrant text by the power or voice of God. . . . It is thus unnecessary and could be misleading to appear to claim “direct” revelation in the determination of the entire text of the Inspired Version as the preface written for the 1867 edition apparently implied. (*Ibid.*, page 151)

Richard P. Howard’s admission that Joseph Smith rerevised his earlier text “occasionally as many as three times” is certainly a serious indictment against Smith’s work and plainly shows that his Inspired Version is anything but “inspired.” The fact the he could not make up his mind shows that he was tampering with the Scriptures according to his own imagination rather than receiving revelation from God. The many changes in the “inspired” renderings certainly tend to undermine confidence in Joseph Smith’s work on the Bible.

In his book, *Joseph Smith—Seeker After Truth*, page 251, Apostle John A. Widtsoe boasted that the Inspired Version is “a remarkable evidence of the prophetic power of Joseph Smith.” We cannot accept this statement, for a careful examination of his work reveals unmistakable evidence that it is merely a human production and contains many serious errors.

Mormon writer Milton R. Hunter made a fantastic claim concerning Joseph Smith’s works:

The Prophet Joseph Smith produced for the world three new volumes of holy scriptures, . . . and, in addition, he revised the Bible. No prophet who has ever lived has accomplished such a tremendous feat. There are only 177 pages in the Old Testament attributed to Moses, while Joseph Smith either translated through the gift and power of God or received as direct revelation from Jehovah 835. (*Deseret News*, Church Section, July 18, 1970, page 14)

While we must agree that Joseph Smith produced a great deal of material that purports to be Scripture, it does not appear that this material bears any evidence of divine inspiration.

## 24. Facing the Truth

Reality is sometimes very hard to face. For instance, on July 26, 1969, the *Salt Lake Tribune* reported that members of the International Flat Earth Society still did not believe the earth is round. They felt that the moon landing was “part of a great deception by NASA” and that the “astronauts are hypnotized into believing they go into space.” It is easy to look at this and smile, but if we are honest with ourselves we must admit that all of us at some point has had difficulty facing the truth.

One of the most trying encounters we ever had with reality was when we discovered that the Book of Mormon was untrue. We found it very difficult to tell our friends that we no longer believed it was translated from gold plates. A professor we knew, who served at the church’s Brigham Young University for many years, made an extensive study of Mormon history. Unfortunately, however, after spending much time and money to make this investigation, he was afraid to release his findings. He told us that the reason he would not disclose what he had found was that he feared too many people would apostatize from the LDS Church.

Jesus once stated: “And ye shall know the truth, and the truth will set you free” (John 8:32). Why is it, then, that we fear the truth if it will make us free? One reason, of course, is our pride. We do not like to admit that we have been wrong. Another is our fear of what other people will think if we deviate from what they believe to be true and acceptable. It seems so much easier to just go along with the crowd. As Jesus himself expressed it: “How can you believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?” (John 5:44).

### Exalts the Pride of Man

The LDS Church, which professes to teach the true way of salvation, teaches many things that are not compatible with the teachings of Christ. For instance, Christ taught that a man must be meek and lowly: “. . . Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 18:3). Mormonism, on the other hand, tends to exalt the pride of man. Joseph H. Weston, who joined the LDS Church three days after completing a book on the church, exclaimed:

Mormons don’t grovel before God, prating their unworthiness and imploring mercy. They are not slaves! They are men, made in the image of God! They *proudly stand, hold their heads high*, and put out their hands to shake that of God in greeting, as any *worthy* son would be expected to respectfully but *proudly stand* before a wise and good father. (*These Amazing Mormons*, page 82)

The reader should compare this with the following statement made by Jesus: “So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do” (Luke 17:10).

On page 21 of his book, Joseph Weston spoke of a Mormon communion service:

There was no groveling and humbling of the dignity of man, . . . The almost start[ling] effect, psychologically, of this ultra-simple communion service was to *completely obliterate the feeling of supplication and meekness* engendered at such a time in many other churches. A man didn’t feel that he drew nigh—“Unworthy as to so much as gather up the crumbs from His table”—Not at all! He felt that *he sat as an equal and guest at Jesus’ table*, . . .

In his M. A. thesis for the University of Utah, “The Social Psychological Basis of Mormon New-Orthodoxy,” Owen Kendall White, Jr. made these interesting observations concerning Mormon theology:

This dual nature of Mormonism often obscures its liberalism . . . Because of a commitment to biblical literalism, Mormon theology is frequently regarded as another expression of conservative orthodox Christianity. This popular notion is fundamentally inaccurate, for it fails to recognize that *the basic liberal doctrines of Mormon theology oppose the central doctrines of orthodox Christianity*. . . . The basic Mormon doctrines of God, man, and salvation are radical departures from traditional Christian thought. . . .

In contrast with the sovereign God of Christian orthodoxy and neo-orthodoxy, the Mormon God *is finite*. This is indicated in the fact that God is not the only reality with necessary existence. That is, He is not the Creator of all that is. (pages 85-86)

From the above description of God, it should be apparent that the Mormon God is a *heretical departure* from traditional Christianity, and the traditional Christian terminology of omnipotence and omniscience are not justifiably applied to the Mormon God. . . .

The Mormon conception of man is an even more heretical departure from Christian orthodoxy than the doctrine of God. . . . this very claim that the human predicament is not really a predicament in the traditional sense, that man’s natural state, present state, is really more good than bad, is a radical denial of traditional Christian theology. . . .

Mormonism rejects the notion that man’s condition is best described by “depravity.” . . . to the Mormon

*the fall is a fall upward rather than downward*. . . . the Mormon doctrine of salvation not only provides further evidence of Mormon optimism, but it also argues for a claim that Mormon theology, in opposition to traditional Christian theology, is *man-centered rather than God-centered*. . . .

Nowhere is the *man-centered* character of Mormon theology more clearly evident than in the Mormon conception of salvation. For, Mormon doctrines of salvation are radically different from the doctrine of salvation by grace which permeates Christian orthodoxy. . . . There is an almost complete dearth of Pauline theology within Mormonism. . . . Seldom do they quote him [Paul] on the subject of salvation, and, when they do, they distort his concept of grace to mean man will be physically resurrected by the gracious act of God. Mormonism *denies* traditional doctrines of grace. . . . Because of this emphasis upon salvation by merit and the idea that man’s destiny is Godhood, the Mormon doctrine of salvation, along with the doctrines of God and man, stand as rank heresy within the orthodox Christian world. . . . Mormon theology on the doctrines of God, man, and salvation is a *radical departure* from Christian orthodoxy.

While the God of Christian orthodoxy is absolute, the God of Mormonism is finite . . . the Mormon doctrine of salvation emphasizes merit instead of grace. Although the theology has a doctrine of grace in the notion that Christ overcame physical and spiritual death, it is not to be confused with orthodox Christian conceptions of grace. For exaltation, the real salvation of man, is dependent upon works. . . .

If the author were to describe the fundamental difference between Mormon theology and orthodox Christianity in one sentence, he would suggest that while orthodox Christianity *is God-centered*, Mormon theology *is man-centered*. . . . it is the notion that God has a physical body that leads to Mormon claims that man is literally, not figuratively, the offspring of God. Through its entire history, Mormonism has employed its extremely anthropomorphic conception of God to illustrate the similarities rather than the differences between God and man. (pages 95, 96, 98, 100, 101, 103, 107, 108, 110-112, 118-120, 122)

Although one might expect that such a penetrating analysis of Mormon theology would come from the pen of an orthodox Christian, O. Kendall White, Jr., is a Mormon scholar who has a very good understanding of the doctrines of both Mormonism and orthodox Christianity. (In 1987 Signature Books published a book by White based on his M. A. thesis entitled, *Mormon Neo-Orthodoxy: A Crisis Theology*.)

It is certainly strange that Mormon leaders have rejected so many of the basic doctrines of Christianity, especially since these same doctrines are found in the Book of Mormon. For example, the Book of Mormon teaches that “the *natural man is an enemy to God*, . . . and will be, forever and ever, unless he yields to the enticings of the Holy Spirit, . . .” (Mosiah 3:19). President Brigham Young, on the other hand, proclaimed that “it is the unnatural ‘man that receiveth not the things of God’ . . . The *natural man is of God*” (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 9, page 305).

As Owen Kendall White, Jr., indicated, present-day Mormonism rejects the doctrine that salvation is by grace. The Book of Mormon, however, teaches this doctrine: “. . . it is only in and through *the grace of God* that ye are saved” (2 Nephi 10:24). The fact that the Book of Mormon teaches salvation by grace has caused some division in the church, and there are a few Mormon writers who are going back to the teaching of the Book of Mormon on this subject. (For more information concerning grace and works see our book, *A Look at Christianity*, pages 8, 17, 18)

### **Church Not Lost**

The Mormon hierarchy has made the tragic mistake of pointing their people toward an organization instead of toward the Savior. They claim that their church is the only true church and that all others are false and have no authority. This, of course, tends to make people more concerned about an organization than about their relationship with Christ.

Mormonism teaches that shortly after the death of Christ, the whole Christian world fell into a state of complete apostasy. In the Bible, however, Jesus said: “. . . upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell *shall not prevail against it*” (Matthew 16:18). While it is true that there was a great apostasy throughout the Christian world, there is no evidence that there was ever a time when there were not true Christians upon the earth. In John 1:12 we read: “But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.” We feel that in all ages there have been those who have believed in Jesus and have “become the sons of God.” Consequently, they were members of His Church—the spiritual union of believers in Christ. Although at times the numbers may have been small, Jesus promised that “where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them” (Matthew 18:20).

### **Jerald Tanner’s Testimony**

I was born and raised in the Mormon church, and before I was eight years old I felt that it was the only true

church. I remember being told that a certain man who was excommunicated from the church was possessed of the devil. I can recall walking past this man’s house and being afraid of him because I firmly believed that he was possessed of the devil. I believed that a person would almost have to be possessed of the devil to leave “the true church.” My conviction was so strong that I was shocked to hear a boy in Sunday school say that he didn’t know for certain that the church was true. I felt that it was strange indeed for a person to be a member of the Mormon church and yet not know it was the only true church.

I believed very strongly that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God and that I belonged to the only true church. When I was about eighteen years old I had to face reality. I can remember that the first time I saw David Whitmer’s pamphlet, *An Address to All Believers in Christ*, I threw it down in disgust. After throwing it down, however, I began to think that perhaps this was not the right way to face the problem. If David Whitmer was wrong in his criticism of Joseph Smith, surely I could prove him wrong. So I picked up the pamphlet and read it through. I found that I could not prove David Whitmer wrong, and that the revelations Joseph Smith gave had been changed. I later went to Independence, Missouri, and saw a copy of the original *Book of Commandments*, which confirmed David Whitmer’s statement that the revelations had been changed.

Since that time I have found more and more proof that the church in which I was raised is in error. The most important thing that I found, however, was not that the church was in error, but that I myself was in error. I found that I was a sinner in need of a Savior. The Mormon church had taught me good morals, but they had not taught me much concerning the power of Christ that could change my life. There was much talk about Joseph Smith, but very little talk about Christ. Consequently, I began to think I had the power within myself to overcome sin. I didn’t see how much I needed the help of God to overcome it. So I turned from one sin to another until I was deeply in bondage to sin. I found no help in the Mormon church; they were too busy preaching about the glory of the church, Joseph Smith, etc. They were too busy singing “praise to the man who communed with Jehovah” and “We thank thee O God for a prophet” to tell me about the Savior I needed so badly. They were too busy talking about missions, tithing, the welfare plan, etc., to talk about the Christ. Consequently, there was almost nothing in the services that could give life and peace to my dying soul. Perhaps I should mention, however, that there was one thing that really touched my heart, and that was when we sang the song, “Oh, It Is Wonderful!” by Charles H. Gabriel.

I stand all amazed at the love Jesus offers me,  
 Confused at the grace that so fully he proffers me;  
 I tremble to know that for me He was crucified—  
 That for me, a sinner, He suffered, He bled, and died.

Oh, it is wonderful that He should care for me!  
 Enough to die for me!  
 Oh, it is wonderful, wonderful to me!

I marvel that He would descend from His throne divine,  
 To rescue a soul so rebellious and proud as mine;  
 That He should extend His great love unto such as I;  
 Sufficient to own, to redeem, and to justify.

When we sang this song my heart burned within me. I have since learned, however, that even this song was borrowed from the Protestant faith. But regardless of where it came from, it touched me very deeply. It made me think of my Savior and the great debt I owed to Him. If there had been more songs like this in the Mormon church and if Christ had been preached instead of Joseph Smith, I would, perhaps, have received Christ into my life in the Mormon church. As it was, however, I was nineteen years old before I heard the true message of Christ preached, and that was in another church. A short time later I received Christ into my life and found peace, joy, and deliverance from sin. As the Apostle Paul expressed it: “*Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new*” (2 Cor. 5:17).

For a more detailed statement concerning my early life and how I found a personal relationship with Christ see the pamphlet, *Jerald Tanner’s Testimony*.

*Jerald Tanner*

### Sandra Tanner’s Testimony

Since I was born and raised in the Mormon church, and am a great-great-grandchild of Brigham Young, I had very strong ties to the Mormon faith. I was about seventeen before I ever attended another church. As a teenager my life centered around the Mormon church. Because I was active and paying my tithing I thought I was in pretty good standing with God. I knew I sinned but I felt my activity in church would somehow outweigh what I did wrong. I believed (as the Mormons teach) that I was inherently good. I had no fear of God’s judgment. Besides the things that were wrong in my own life, I began to have doubts about my church. Could it really be the only true church? Was polygamy really right? Why couldn’t the Negro hold the priesthood? Was temple marriage really so important? Why were its rites kept

such a secret? Did God actually command Mormons to wear special undergarments? I had many questions going through my mind.

When I started college I enrolled in the Mormon Institute of Religion class. I started asking questions in class, trying to find answers to my doubts. But one day my institute teacher took me aside and told me to please stop asking questions in class. There was a girl attending the class who was thinking of joining the church and I was disturbing her with my questions. What a surprise! I had hoped to find answers to the many things that were bothering me and now I had been silenced.

Shortly after this I met Jerald and we began studying the Bible and Mormonism together. As we studied I began to see the contradictions between the Bible and the teachings of the Mormon church.

I had grown up thinking that Brigham Young was one of the greatest men that ever lived. He was always presented to me as such a holy man—God’s prophet, seer, and revelator. Then Jerald had me read some of Brigham Young’s sermons in the *Journal of Discourses* on blood atonement. I was shocked! I knew what Brigham Young was saying was wrong but I couldn’t reconcile these statements with the things I had always been taught concerning him. I knew these were not the words of a prophet of God.

Jerald also showed me the changes that had been made in Joseph Smith’s revelations. The thought kept coming to me that if God had actually given those revelations to Joseph Smith why would they need rewriting? Surely the Creator of the universe could say it right the first time!

As I studied I not only found errors in Mormonism, I also began to comprehend there was something wrong in my own life. As I studied God’s Word I realized I was a sinful hypocrite. In spite of my sins I had thought I was right with God. Yet the Bible says: “*For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord*” (Romans 6:23).

After Jerald and I were married we started visiting the different Protestant churches. As I listened to the sermons I began to realize that God was not concerned with peoples’ church affiliations, but with a personal relationship. Christ taught a way of love, not a religious system. He stated: “*By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another*” (John 13:35). Paul taught that we should “*walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us . . .*” (Eph. 5:2).

God reaches out to man, not because he deserves it, but because God loves him. John wrote: “*Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins*” (1 John 4:10).

Paul wrote: “*But God, who is rich in mercy, . . . even when we were dead in sins, bath quickened us together with Christ . . . For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast*” (Eph. 2:4, 5, 8, 9).

I now want to share with you the particular events of the day I surrendered my heart and life to Jesus Christ:

Early one morning (October 24, 1959), I decided to listen to the radio for a while. I turned to the Christian radio station and listened to a sermon. The minister was preaching on the great love of God and the mercy offered to us through Jesus Christ. Nothing ever struck me with such force. I opened my heart to God and accepted Christ as my own personal Savior. The Holy Spirit flooded my soul with such joy that I wept for over an hour. After the sermon the station played this song written by Elton M. Roth—

I love the Christ who died on Calv'ry,  
For He washed my sins away;  
He put within my heart a melody,  
And I know it's there to stay.

In my heart there rings a melody,  
There rings a melody with heaven's harmony;  
In my heart there rings a melody,  
There rings a melody of love.

This song fully describes the way I felt. How glorious to know Christ died for my sins so I could have a new life in Him.

Our lives testify to all we meet whether or not we are truly Christians. Paul wrote: “*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law*” (Gal. 5:22-23).

*Sandra Tanner*

### **Mormonism a Shadow**

Hal Hougey observed: “The LDS use the Bible to try to prove the Book of Mormon; then they leave the Bible behind, and urge the prospect to read the Book of Mormon” (*Review of Mormon Missionary Handbook*, page 66). The LDS Church is certainly not built upon the teachings of the Bible. Mormon Apostle LeGrand Richards declared that “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 . . .*” (*A Marvelous Work and a Wonder*, page 41)

Although many Christians realize that the LDS Church has left the Bible far behind, they are surprised to learn that Mormonism is not even based on the Book of Mormon. Mormon writer John Henry Evans spoke of the “queer blunder that the whole body of the ‘Mormon’ belief is built upon the Book of Mormon.” He went on to point out:

If the Nephite record had not been revealed at all, in this dispensation, it is doubtful whether the body of “Mormon” belief would in any essential particular be different from what it is. I do not say this in disparagement of the Book of Mormon, . . . but I call attention to the fact as showing *how little* the whole body of belief of the Latter-day Saints really depends on the revelation of the Nephite record. (*Improvement Era*, vol. 16, pages 344-345)

Mormon writer Robert J. Matthews has observed that most of the unique teachings of present-day Mormonism cannot be found in the Book of Mormon or other writings from the earliest period of Mormonism:

What did the faithful convert of the Church in 1830-1831 accept as essential “Mormonism”? Was he instructed concerning marriage for time and eternity? Of the three degrees of glory in the resurrection? Was he taught concerning the temple endowment, of baptism for the dead, of patriarchal blessings, or of the word of wisdom? Was he instructed in detail concerning the various offices and quorums in the priesthood from the deacons up through the teachers, priests, elders, seventies and high priests? Was he taught concerning the quorums of the Presiding Bishopric, the First Council of Seventy, the Patriarch to the Church, the Council of the Twelve, and the First Presidency? To each of these questions *the answer must be “no”* for the simple reason that these matters had *not yet been revealed* in this dispensation and were known, if at all, only by the scant mention of some of them in the Bible and the Book of Mormon. (*Brigham Young University Studies*, Summer 1971, page 401)

With the changes and additions that have come since those simple days, the understanding of the true message of Christ has long since vanished. Today converts are swarming into the LDS Church, but very few of them really know much about Mormonism. We feel safe in saying that many of them are converted to the social program of the church rather than to its doctrines. Those who were born in the church in many cases “know” it is true but don’t know why it is true. Many Mormons will stand up in testimony meetings and dogmatically assert that Joseph Smith was a prophet and that they belong to “the only true church,” but very few of them check to make sure that their faith is based on reality. Many members of the church prefer to let their leaders do their thinking.

Fortunately, in the last few years we have seen many Mormons begin to seek after the truth. There seems, in fact, to be a growing discontent within the church and thousands are turning to the Lord. We sincerely hope and pray that this is just the beginning and that vast numbers will awaken to the true message of Christ, realizing that in Him, and Him alone, can we have salvation—salvation that brings genuine deliverance from sin and real fellowship with the God who loved us enough to die for us. For those who would like to learn more about Christianity, we recommend our book, *A Look At Christianity*.

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If you are interested in knowing about the latest publications and information available on the subject of Mormonism, you should be on our mailing list to receive the *Salt Lake City Messenger*. The *Messenger*, together with a booklist, is sent out free and without any obligation.

The Mormon writer Samuel W. Taylor commented:

. . . the *Salt Lake City Messenger* contains some of the liveliest reading ever to emerge from the city of the Saints. (*Nightfall At Nauvoo*, page 358)

Robert Jones wrote the following in the *Los Angeles Times*, March 29, 1987:

. . . Jerald Tanner, a born-again Christian who has conducted a genteel campaign of intellectual warfare against the Mormon Church . . . and his wife, Sandra, publish the *Salt Lake City Messenger*, a newsletter that disgorges any and all items that might discredit the church's claims to divine origins. A historian at Brigham Young University once remarked that the *Salt Lake Messenger* was read by more people who denied it than any publication in Utah save for *Playboy*.

The *Salt Lake City Messenger*, of course, does not contain any material that is morally offensive. It only prints the truth concerning Mormonism. Those who wish to receive a free copy of this publication in the mail, please contact us at:

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*Sandra and Jerald Tanner*

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