

MORMONISM LIKE WATERGATE?

An Answer to Hugh Nibley

Contains Joseph Smith's Suppressed 1831 Polygamy Revelation Commanding
Mormons to Marry Indians to Make Them "White and Delightful."



Joseph Smith Preaching to the Indians

By Jerald and Sandra Tanner

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Mormonism Like Watergate?

On October 7, 1973, the *Salt Lake Tribune* published an article written by John William Fitzgerald in which he accused the Mormon Church of a cover-up similar to that of the Watergate affair. This article must have come as quite a shock to the Mormon leaders. The very morning that it appeared, Harold B. Lee, the 11th President of the Mormon Church arose in general conference and made these statements:

But some of the greatest of our enemies are those within our own ranks. . . . sometimes we have to say just like the Master said, "The devil must have entered into them."

A few years ago, we had a woman who had written some scurrilous things about the Prophet Joseph Smith. (Mention was made of it here in the conference at that time.) Shortly thereafter, I met someone on the street and they asked me if there had been a revelation or an utterance at the recently concluded general conference that might be considered as a prophecy. And I said, "Did you hear the closing remarks of President George Albert Smith. . . . If you did, you heard a prophet speaking, and let me tell you what he said," . . . President George Albert Smith said:

"Many have belittled Joseph Smith, but those who have will be forgotten in the remains of mother earth, and the odor of their infamy will ever be with them. . . ."

We have had some who, writing in the public press occasionally, are among those who have fallen by the wayside. They befool the honored family names that they have. They have disgraced the honors that we had given to them in times past. They are trying to join the forces of the enemy against the work of the Lord. And we can say to them, as President George Albert Smith said then, "Those who have will be forgotten in the remains of mother earth, and the odor of the infamy will ever be with them but honor, majesty and fidelity to God, exemplified by the leaders of this church and attached to their names, will never die." (*The Ensign*, January 1974, page 126)

Before getting into trouble with the Mormon leaders, Dr. Fitzgerald had served for over twenty years as a Mormon Chaplain in the Utah National Guard. His Master's thesis, written at Brigham Young University, was entitled "A Study of the Doctrine and Covenants." One Apostle thought so much of this study that he asked Fitzgerald to write an article for the Church's *Improvement Era*.

At any rate, Dr. Fitzgerald could not accept the anti-Negro doctrine, and when the Joseph Smith Papyri were rediscovered in 1967, he felt that the translation made by Egyptologists disproved the Book of Abraham and the anti-Negro doctrine found in its pages. Like Grant Heward, he began to publish his dissenting views on the anti-Negro doctrine and the Book of Abraham. He was called in and disfellowshipped. He was warned that if he continued to publicize his views he would be excommunicated. Dr. Fitzgerald could not be muzzled, however, and after a letter was published in the newspaper which criticized the Book of Abraham and the anti-Negro doctrine, he was excommunicated from the Church.

In a speech delivered July 1, 1973, Fitzgerald made the following comments:

And so, it makes me very sad, indeed, that because I have dissented peacefully and in good conscience, and have declared that I believe that the discrimination against the Negro is wrong, unethical, and un-Christian, and immoral, that it has no real revelation-value, not in Scripture or out of it, that my name has been withdrawn from the rolls of the Mormon Church.

The President of the Holladay Stake, supported by his counsellors, the High Council of that Stake, under orders of The First Presidency of the Church, and supported by them, have excommunicated me from the L.D.S. Church. (*The Freedom of Religion and the Freedom From Religion*, page 12)

It was after his excommunication that John William Fitzgerald wrote his article comparing the Watergate cover-up to that found in the Mormon Church. Two weeks after Fitzgerald's article appeared, two articles attacking his position appeared in the *Salt Lake Tribune*. In one of these articles Verle A. Workman wrote: "The church does not cover-up like the Watergate affair" (*Salt Lake Tribune*, October 21, 1973, page 14 B).

After these articles attacking Fitzgerald's views were published, an employee of the paper called us and said that the attitude of those connected with the paper was changing. (In the past the *Salt Lake Tribune* had taken a pro-Mormon position and criticism of the Church was almost unheard of.) He stated that although he was not on the board which approves articles for the Common Carrier Department, he believed that if we submitted an article, they would accept it. We were very skeptical of this idea. In the past the *Salt Lake Tribune* had not even permitted us to place a paid advertisement concerning a photographic reprint of Joseph Smith's *Book of Commandments*. The employee of the *Salt Lake Tribune* insisted, however, that things had changed. Because of this encouragement and because of the fact that the *Tribune* had published Dr. Fitzgerald's article, we decided to take a chance. To our astonishment, the article was accepted and printed in its entirety on November 11, 1973. The reader will find a copy of this article on pages 2 and 3 of this book.

ARTICLE CRITICIZED

Since the Sunday edition of the *Salt Lake Tribune* falls into the hands of hundreds of thousands of people, the response was tremendous. While we received a number of very favorable phone calls from Mormons, we also received harassing calls and letters. We were called such names as "Devil," "Mrs. Satan," "crackpot," etc., and were warned that God would have to punish us. Some of the people who were critical did maintain a sense of humor. One woman, for instance, sent us a card with the words "With Sympathy" on the front. Inside the card she had written this comment: "Anyone who has spent so many hours studying and researching and cannot recognize the truth deserves my deepest sympathy."

Mormon Records, Like Watergate, Embarrassing

By Jerald and Sandra Tanner

We read with interest Verle A. Workman's rebuttal to John W. Fitzgerald and his statement that the Mormon Church "does not cover up like the Watergate affair." (Common Carrier, Oct. 21, 1973) In the same article Mr. Workman says: "In relation to the so-called cover-ups by the LDS leaders subsequent to the Manifesto of 1890, the official position of the church was not to cover up, but rather to excommunicate members in disobedience to the LDS Manifesto (1890)." While it is true that the Mormon Church now excommunicates members for practicing polygamy, at the turn of the century it was secretly practiced by the leaders of the church and an attempt was made to cover up this fact. This defiance of the law finally brought the Mormon leaders into serious trouble with the United States Government. Few people realized to what extent the leaders of the church had broken their promises to obey the law 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 Right Hon. Reed Smoot, a Senator From the State of Utah, to Hold His Seat." This investigation began in 1903 and took years to complete. The testimony provides devastating evidence against the claims of the Mormon leaders, and reminds a person of the Watergate investigation. Pres. Joseph F. Smith, the sixth president of the Mormon Church, had to admit that he

had violated both the laws of the land and the laws of God:

Eleven Children

"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)

Sen. 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.'

Sen. Overman: 'Is there not a revelation that you shall abide by the laws of the State and of the land?'"

Mr. Smith: 'Yes, sir.'

Violates Laws?

Sen. 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., pp. 334-335)

After a great deal of testimony had been taken, the Committee on Privileges and Elections submitted a report in which the following was stated — the reader can find

this report in the Reed Smoot Case, Vol. 4, pp. 476-482:

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 . . . as late as 1896 one Lillian Hamlin became the plural wife of Abraham H. Cannon, who was then an apostle of the Mormon Church . . . it was generally reputed in the community and understood by the families of both Abraham H. Cannon and Lillian Hamlin that a marriage had taken place between them; that they had been married on the high seas by Joseph F. Smith . . .

Plural Marriage

"George Teasdale, another apostle of the Mormon Church, contracted a plural marriage with Marion Scholes since the Manifesto of 1890 . . . 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 of more plural wives since the manifesto . . . 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 . . . All the facts and circumstances surrounding the transaction point to the conclusion that every one of the witnesses named left the country at the insistence of the rulers of the Mormon Church and to avoid testifying before the committee . . . 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, of whom Mr. Smoot is one, 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."

Smoot Case

From the evidence presented in the Reed Smoot Case it is plain to see that the Mormon leaders did not give up the practice of polygamy at the time of the Manifesto. It was only after the Smoot

investigation that they were forced into complying with the law.

Mr. Workman also makes a serious error when he says that there have been no important changes in Joseph Smith's history or his published revelations. He would have us believe that only "grammar and vocabulary of the unlearned prophet" were corrected. Actually, changes of great importance have been made. For instance, in Joseph Smith's time many people believed in working with divining rods to find buried treasures and to obtain revelations. In 1829 Joseph Smith gave a revelation purporting to come from God in which he endorsed the idea that Oliver Cowdery had a gift from God to work with a divining rod. When this revelation was first printed in Joseph Smith's "Book of Commandments" in 1833 it contained this statement: "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 . . ." (Book of Commandments 7:3) When this revelation was reprinted, Joseph Smith decided to cover up the fact that he had endorsed the use of a divining rod. Today this revelation reads as follows: "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." (Doctrine and Covenants 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.

David Whitmer, of the Three Witnesses to the Book of Mormon, wrote a pamphlet in 1887 in which he frankly admitted that important changes have been made in the revelations:

"Some of the revelations as they are now 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 . . . I will prove by a revelation . . . which is changed in the Doctrine and Covenants, . . . that God called Brother Joseph to translate the Book of Mormon only, and that he was not called to organize and establish the church any more than the rest of us Elders . . . The way this revelation has been changed, 22 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.

Translate Book

"This part of this revelation in the Book of Commandments read thus: 'And he (Joseph) 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.'

But in the Doctrine and Covenants it has been changed and reads thus:

"And you have a gift to translate the plates, and this is the first gift that I bestowed upon you, and I have commanded you 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.'

"May God have mercy on the heads of the church for their tran(s)gression is my prayer." (An Address To All Believers In Christ, pp. 56-58)

The altered verse David Whitmer speaks of is found in the Doctrine and Covenants 5:4.

Doctrine Changes

Mr. Workman claims that "The church has not authorized doctrinal changes in the first vision of Joseph Smith, . . ." The truth of the matter, however, is that the church suppressed an account of the first vision for over 130 years. It was only after it fell into the hands of critics of the church that the Mormon leaders allowed it to be published in the Brigham Young University Studies, Spring 1969, pp. 278-281. This account is in the handwriting of Joseph Smith himself and is the earliest written account of the vision. The reason it was suppressed is very obvious; the official account of the first vision states that both God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ appeared to Joseph, whereas this account says that only Jesus appeared in the vision.

Mr. Workman's contention that Joseph Smith's "History of the Church" has not been changed is certainly far from the truth. At one time we made a study and found that more than 62,000 words were either added or deleted since Joseph Smith's history was first published.

Can't Agree

We certainly cannot agree with Mr. Workman when he says that "The church does not cover up like the Watergate affair." It appears to us that the church is still involved in a cover-up. If the Mormon leaders are not involved in a cover-up, why have they denied access to the hand-written manuscripts of Joseph Smith's history? Also why is it that the diaries of Joseph Smith have never been published? Is there something in these diaries that the members of the church are not supposed to see? One of the best examples of a continuing cover-up is the one concerning the Book of Abraham papyrus. This papyrus from which Joseph Smith "translated" the Book of Abraham was rediscovered and presented to the Mormon Church by the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1967. In the church's publication, The Improvement Era, February 1968, we were told that Dr. Hugh Nibley was going to unfold "the meaning of the hieroglyphics and illustrations on these valuable manuscripts." Six years have passed and still no translation has been published by the Mormon Church. The Mormon Egyptologist Dee Jay Nelson translated the fragment of papyrus identified as the very source of the Book of

Abraham. He found that it was in reality the Egyptian "Book of Breathings" — a pagan document which has absolutely nothing to do with Abraham or his religion. His work proved beyond all doubt that the anti-Negro doctrine found in the Book of Abraham is without foundation in fact. Instead of allowing the truth concerning this matter to be known, the Mormon leaders wanted the matter to be kept quiet. They would not even allow Nelson's book to be advertised in their newspaper.

When we think of Watergate we cannot help but think of Mormonism. In both cases records were preserved, and in both cases they have become a source of embarrass-

ment. President Nixon and the Mormon leaders would do well to consider the following statement by Jesus himself: "For there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known. Therefore whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the housetops." (Luke 12:2-3)

In conclusion we must commend the Salt Lake Tribune for taking a strong stand against President Nixon when he was suppressing the tapes and for allowing John W. Fitzgerald the freedom to express his views.

Editor's note: Today's Common Carrier article was written by Jerald and Sandra Tanner, 1350 S. West Temple, Salt Lake City, Utah. Views are their own and do not represent any recognized organization.

Comments expressed in Common Carrier do not necessarily reflect those of The Salt Lake Tribune.

Articles selected for this department are selected by a board of lay editors who work independent of Tribune reporter and editorial policies. The board, representing a cross-section of the community, consists of Bruce S. Jenkins, referee in Federal Bankruptcy Court, chairman; Marlene M. Young, editor and general manager of the Holladay-Cottonwood Area News, vice chairman; Frank Caley, international vice president for the asbestos workers; Mrs. Eugene L. Bliss, past president, League of Women Voters of Salt Lake City and of Utah; and Dr. Lionel A. Maldonado, assistant professor of sociology, University of Utah.

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Mail statements to Common Carrier, The Salt Lake Tribune, P.O. Box, 867, Salt Lake City, Utah, 84110.

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One anonymous letter, dated November 12, 1973, did not seem to be written in a humorous vein. It read as follows:

Your long article is the *Salt Lake Tribune*, that is so anti-Mormon and anti-just, that it cannot be passed by without some rebuttal in defense of a Church and its people whom you hate as indicated in your writings.

Adolph Hitler, was perhaps the greatest master of lies this World has ever known, and his policy of making false accusations against others of the very sins or crimes he himself was most guilty of, was well known, you have evidently used his technique in your writings.

What motivated you to write such an astounding article without any proven facts to support your statements, is without doubt, one of the most diabolical and sinister statements of hypocrisy, I have ever read in news print.

The Mormons were driven out of the state of Missouri by people of your breed, and after great deal of privation and suffering, they settled here in this Valley of Salt water and sage brush, hostile Indians and wild animals. Now while you enjoy the comforts of life they created, even to most the food you eat, you bite the hand that feeds you with such writings as this in the *Tribune*.

The identical same spirit you manifest in your writings, existed in the days of Christ, as we read in the scriptures, the Cry, "Crucify, Crucify Crucify Him." Now where in Hell do you people think you have the right to pass judgement on the Mormon People in the first place,—are you so perfect and without sin that you have that right? Christ said, "he without sin cast the first stone," so why don't you give that some serious thought and hide your faces in shame, for surely your Article does reveal your character, or rather your lack of character.

Your address indicates you are not too well off, as you live in the low income part of the city, perhaps you blame the Mormons for that, and as for a Watergate cover-up by the Mormon Church, what are you trying to cover up, by your own false witnesses against the Church?

If you and John Fitzgerald hate the Mormons so bad why do you live among them, why don't you go where the Mormons won't bother your Royal Majesty, North Viet Nam, for example? (Letter dated November 12, 1973)

NIBLEY RESPONDS

On November 25, 1973, Dr. Hugh Nibley, perhaps the most famous defender of the Mormon Church, published a response to our article in the *Salt Lake Tribune*. This article is filled with misinformation and seems to have been written with the intent to cover up many of the facts which have recently come to light. Many people wondered why we did not respond to Dr. Nibley's attack in another issue of the paper. Actually, we wanted to respond, but we were told that the *Tribune* had already gone too far and that they would not allow any response to Dr. Nibley. From the phone calls and letters we received we can understand why the *Salt Lake Tribune* did not dare to carry on the controversy. Obviously, the Mormon Church was already upset over the matter. If the *Salt Lake Tribune* continued on the same course it could have led to an open confrontation with the Church and perhaps even to financial ruin because a large part of the subscribers are Mormons. On November 20, 1973, the *Salt Lake Tribune* published the following letter:

Editor, *Tribune*: It is with some degree of astonishment that I witness a supposedly responsible newspaper allowing its pages to be used for the purpose of printed attacks on an organized religion. . . . I am aware that Jerald and Sandra Tanner are disaffected Mormons who have devoted their entire lives and all of their resources to attacking the LDS Church. If they feel that they must do this in order to justify to themselves their own past actions, that is their own business. But let them expend their own resources

for such drivel rather than give them a free half page in a public newspaper. . . . I feel no need to defend my religion against such malicious attacks. After all, my knowledge of its truthfulness comes from a source far superior to any intellectual arguments that can be made by someone with a personal vendetta.

But that still leaves us with the question of the proper use of "Common Carrier." Let's return to public issues which affect all of us and leave religion out of it. (*Salt Lake Tribune*, November 20, 1973)

Since we knew that the *Salt Lake Tribune* would not accept another article from us and that an attack on our previous article would probably appear on November 25, 1973, we tried to publish a paid advertisement concerning our book *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* in this issue. This book certainly demolishes the arguments which appeared in Dr. Nibley's article. Dr. Jennings G. Olson, of the Department of Philosophy at Weber College, made these comments concerning it:

. . . there is now in existence a book which every Mormon and interested non-Mormon should study and ponder. . . . it is called *Mormonism: Shadow or Reality?* . . . it is tightly packed with serious, responsible research which no one can deny is the **most comprehensive and thorough analysis and evaluation of Mormonism ever produced in the history of the Church.**

Any Mormon of Elemental identification who wants to "answer" the Tanners will have his hands full for a long time to come because the Tanners have the microfilm sources from the early Mormon Church which no one before has had in such abundance. . . . I seriously doubt Dr. Nibley will take this new revised book on, because he is quoted often enough in it to be identifiable as one of the major contributors to Mormonism's obfuscation of issues and he has actually contributed (unknowingly perhaps) to the growing painful dilemmas now facing the Elemental Mormonism I have previously identified, . . .

But if Dr. Nibley or anyone else decides to "answer" the Tanner's book point for point I certainly promise to study that book carefully and review it in public. In the mean time I will state publically this book of the Tanner's is a major contribution in the search for integrity and truth about Mormonism, and I shall quote from it a number of times. ("The Uniqueness of Mormonism: An Evaluation," by Dr. Jennings G. Olson, October 7, 1972, pages 22, 23)

The *Salt Lake Tribune* rejected our ad for *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* and in a letter dated November 21, 1973, Robert E. Cutler, the Advertising Director for the *Tribune*, wrote as follows:

Enclosed is your check . . . which you submitted for a four column by five inch advertisement featuring your book, "Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?" . . . in the *Salt Lake Tribune* on Sunday, November 25.

The publisher of the *Salt Lake Tribune* has reviewed this advertising and prefers not to publish it.

In his article in the *Tribune*, Dr. Nibley never mentioned our book. He apparently did not want anyone to read the other side of the argument. Instead, he began his article by putting in a plug for a book he is writing:

First of all let me make perfectly clear that I have not paid Jerald or Sandra Tanner a cent for the fine publicity they have given my forthcoming book. It is all about the "Book of Breathings" and is 800 pages long. (*Salt Lake Tribune*, November 25, 1973, page 2G)

That the *Tribune* would allow Dr. Nibley free space to advertise his book, yet reject our paid advertisement seemed very unjust.

On November 26, 1973, we resubmitted the advertisement to the *Salt Lake Tribune*, and in a letter accompanying the ad we wrote:

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Last week we submitted an ad to your paper, and it was rejected by Robert E. Cutler. I can hardly believe that your paper would be so unfair as to allow Hugh Nibley to attack us and not allow us to even publish a paid advertisement in reply. I notice that Dr. Nibley was allowed to mention his own book and an ad for Deseret Book was published right below his Common Carrier article. Now, we believe that your newspaper has the right to reject any advertising that you wish, but under these circumstances it appears to be a double standard. . . . I am resubmitting the ad and wish it to be published in the first section of the issue for Sunday, December 2, 1973. If there is anything offensive in the ad please tell us what it is.

After we sent this letter, the *Tribune* called us on the phone and stated that they had decided to run the ad if we would delete the title "MORMONISM LIKE WATERGATE?" This was certainly a strange request because the *Tribune* itself had printed the following title on our article of November 11, 1973: "MORMON RECORDS LIKE WATERGATE EMBARRASSING." At any rate, we allowed them to delete the words, and they finally printed the ad on December 9, 1973.

THE STRANGE ACCOUNT

In his article Dr. Nibley would lead the reader to believe that the Church has not suppressed their records. Concerning Joseph Smith's "Strange Account" of the First Vision, Dr. Nibley stated:

. . . in 1969 as soon as the 1832 version of the first vision was found, it too was photographically reproduced and published, along with all the other known versions. (*Salt Lake Tribune*, November 25, 1973)

This statement is certainly far from the truth. Actually Paul Cheesman included the "strange" account of the First Vision as Appendix D in his thesis "An Analysis of the Accounts Relating Joseph Smith's Early Visions." This thesis, written at Brigham Young University, was not published and if it had not been for another student who had become disillusioned with the Church it might never have come to light. This student called our attention to the thesis which contains this important document, and in 1965 we published it under the title "Joseph Smith's Strange Account of the First Vision." This was four years before Dr. Nibley claims that it was discovered! For evidence of this see the *Salt Lake City Messenger*, October 1965, page 2.

It was only after we published it that it began to appear in Mormon publications. James B. Allen, of Brigham Young University, was the first Mormon writer to publish it in *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Autumn 1966 pages 39-40. In a letter to the editor of *Dialogue*, published in the issue for Winter 1966, LaMar Petersen wrote the following:

In the editors' preface to the autumn issue it states that portions of two early accounts by Joseph Smith of his First Vision are here printed "for the first time." This is an error. Modern Microfilm Company of Salt Lake City, Jerald and Sandra Tanner proprietors, published one of these accounts (the one referred to by Mr. Allen on page 39 as having been written "about 1833") more than a year ago in a work entitled *Joseph Smith's Strange Account of the First Vision*. . . . (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Winter 1966, page 9)

Finally, four years after we published the document the Mormon leaders allowed *Brigham Young University Studies* to publish a photograph of it (see *Brigham Young University Studies*, Spring 1969, page 281). At the top of the next column the reader will find a photograph of this document.

miraculous even in the likeness of him who created them
and when I awoke upon these things my heart was
and well hath the voice manifested the first time in
his heart there is no god my heart exclaimed all all
these bear testimony and they heard my voice
and omnipotent power a being who made all things
underneath and abideth all things in their houses who
filleth the earth who was and is and will be from all
eternity by the testimony and when I considered all these things
and that having seen such to worship him as was
high above and above and in heart therefore I went
to the Lord for then my name is to whom I could go
to obtain mercy and the Lord heard my cry in the wilderness
and while in a state of calling upon the Lord a pillar
of light above the brightness of the sun at noon day
came down from above and rested upon me and I was filled
with the spirit of God and the Lord appeared the heavens opened
me and I saw the Lord and he spoke unto me saying
Joseph thy being are paganism thou art a man of the world
slavery and death my commandment is to hold I am the
Lord of glory I was crucified for the world that all them
who believe on my name may have eternal life the words
birth in sin and at thy birth and some death God is
not one they have turned aside from the Gospel and
keep not commandment they have 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 I have said by the mouth of the prophets
and of the book and so I come quickly as it was
written of me in the book in the glory of my Father
and my soul was filled with love and for many days I
could rejoice with great joy and the Lord was with me
but could find none that would believe the heavenly
vision inasmuch I produced these things in my hand
and set them forth and that afterwards.

There is evidence that the Mormon leaders have been aware of a "strange" account of the First Vision for at least 20 years, and that it has been deliberately suppressed. Levi Edgar Young, who was the head of the Seven Presidents of Seventies in the Mormon Church, told Lamar Petersen that he had examined a "strange" account of the First Vision and was told not to reveal what it contained. The following is from notes by LaMar Petersen of an interview with Levi Edgar Young which was held on February 3, 1953.

His curiosity was excited when reading Robert's Doc. History reference to "documents from which these writings were compiled." Asked to see them. **Told to get higher permission.** Obtained that permission. Examined the documents. Written, he thought, about 1837 or 1838. Was told **not to copy or tell what they contained.** Said it was a "strange" account of the First Vision. Was put back in vault. **Remains unused, unknown.**

Dr. Nibley's statement that the early account of the First Vision was photographically reproduced by the Church "as soon as" it was discovered is certainly a misrepresentation of the facts.

The reason the Church suppressed this account is very obvious: it only mentions one personage appearing in Joseph Smith's First Vision, whereas the account that the Church publishes today in the *Pearl of Great Price* says that two personages appeared. These personages have been identified as God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ.

Speaking of the "strange" account of the First Vision, James B. Allen, of Brigham Young University, wrote as follows: "In this story, **only one personage was mentioned**, and this was obviously the

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Son, for he spoke of having been crucified” (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Autumn 1966, page 40). It is apparent from the “strange” account that Joseph Smith did not see God the Father, and that he made up this part of the story after he wrote the first manuscript. This, of course, throws a shadow of doubt upon the whole story.

It is interesting to note that the “strange” account is the earliest account of the First Vision in existence. Dean C. Jessee, of the LDS Church Historian’s Office, admits that

Joseph Smith wrote . . . the portion containing the details of his First Vision. This is the only known account of the Vision in his own hand. (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Spring, 1971, page 86)

For more information on the First Vision see *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* pages 143-148, 579-580.

SUPPRESSED 1831 REVELATION

Recently a revelation given by Joseph Smith, which was suppressed for over 140 years, has come to light. This revelation completely destroys Dr. Nibley’s argument that the Mormon Church does not suppress documents. According to Mormon leaders, this revelation was supposed to have been given to Joseph Smith in 1831. They maintain that it supports the doctrine of polygamy and that it is a forerunner to the revelation on polygamy—given July 12, 1843—which appears in the *Doctrine and Covenants* as Section 132. Joseph Fielding Smith, who was LDS Church Historian and later became the tenth president of the LDS Church, made this statement in a letter written to J. W. A. Bailey in 1935:

It is refreshing that you do not wish to raise an argument with me, and I will say that I care not to enter into any argument with you in relation to the origin of plural marriage. So far as I am concerned it is a settled question. The evidence before me is conclusive so far as I am concerned. . . .

The exact date I cannot give you when this principle of plural marriage was first revealed to Joseph Smith, but I do know that there was a revelation given in July 1831, in the presence of Oliver Cowdery, W. W. Phelps and others in Missouri, in which the Lord made this principle known through the Prophet Joseph Smith. Whether the revelation as it appears in the *Doctrine and Covenants* as first given July 12, 1843, or earlier, I care not. It is a fact, nevertheless, that this principle was revealed at an earlier date. (Letter dated September 5, 1935, typed copy)

In 1943 Joseph Fielding Smith told Fawn Brodie about this revelation, but he would not allow her to see it:

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 possession of the church library, to be examined. (*No Man Knows My History*, New York, 1971, page 184, footnote)

Michael Marquardt, a young Mormon scholar who became very disturbed with the Church’s policy of suppressing important records, became interested in this revelation. Mr. Marquardt is the same man who brought to light another revelation on polygamy which was dated July 27, 1842. In this revelation Joseph Smith instructed Sarah Ann Whitney’s father to allow her to enter into plural marriage with him. This revelation, which had been suppressed since 1842, was published in Michael Marquardt’s book *The Strange Marriages of Sarah Ann Whitney* . . . , and also in the *Salt Lake City Messenger* for May 1973. Not long after it was published, Hyrum Andrus, of the Brigham Young University, brought out his book *Doctrines of the Kingdom*. In this book Dr.

Andrus admits that this revelation is in the “Church Historian’s Library.” He goes even further, however, by quoting portions of the revelation itself. A comparison of these extracts with those published by Michael Marquardt shows that Mr. Marquardt had obtained an accurate copy of the revelation (see *Doctrines of the Kingdom*, pages 476 and 550).

At any rate, Mr. Marquardt began to do research with regard to the 1831 revelation. He found that some Mormon scholars had copies of this revelation, but they had had to promise not to make any copies. Finally, Mr. Marquardt learned what appears to be the real reason why the revelation was suppressed—i.e., that the revelation commanded the Mormons to marry the Indians to make them a “white” and “delightsome” people.

Now, to a Christian who is familiar with the teachings of the Bible, the color of a man’s skin makes no difference. In Mormon theology, however, a dark skin is a sign of God’s displeasure. In the Mormon publication *Juvenile Instructor*, the following statements appeared:

We will first inquire into the results of the approbation or displeasure of God upon a people, starting with the belief that a black skin is a mark of the curse of heaven placed upon some portions of mankind. Some, however, will argue that a black skin is not a curse, nor a white skin a blessing. In fact, some have been so foolish as to believe and say that a black skin is a blessing, and that the negro is the finest type of a perfect man that exists on the earth; but to us such teachings are foolishness. We understand that when God made man in his own image and pronounced him very good, that he made him **white**. We have no record of any of God’s favored servants being of a black race. All His prophets and apostles belonged to the most handsome race on the face of the earth—Israel, who still, as represented in the scattered tribe of Judah, bear the impress of their former beauty. In this race was born His Son Jesus, who, we are told was very lovely, and “in the express image of his Father’s person,” and every angel who ever brought a message of God’s mercy to man was beautiful to look upon, clad in the purest white and with a countenance bright as the noonday sun. (*Juvenile Instructor*, Vol. 3, page 157)

The mark set upon Cain was without doubt such a mark as was placed upon the descendants of the rebellious sons of Lehi . . . We are expressly informed that “the Lord did cause a skin of blackness to come upon them.” They were to be made loathsome to the people of God, unless they repented of their iniquities. Not only did this curse fall upon them, but all they who intermarried with them, or mingled with them, were cursed with the same blackness and loathsomeness; . . .

From this it is very clear that the mark which was set upon the descendants of Cain was a skin of blackness, and there can be no doubt that this was the mark that Cain himself received; 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. (*Ibid.*, Vol. 26, page 635)

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

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

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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 delightsome, that they might not be enticing unto my people the Lord God did cause a **skin of blackness** to come upon them.

And thus saith the Lord God: I will cause that they shall be loathsome unto thy people, save they shall repent of their iniquities.

And cursed shall be the seed of him that mixeth with their seed; for they shall be cursed even with the same cursing. And the Lord spake it, and it was done. (Ibid., 2 Nephi 5:21-23)

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 . . . they were cursed; and the Lord God set a mark upon them. . . .

And this was done that their seed might be distinguished from the seed of their brethren, . . . that they might not mix and believe in incorrect traditions which would prove their destruction.

And it came to pass that whosoever did mingle his seed with that of the Lamanites did bring the same curse upon his seed. (Ibid., Alma 3:6-9)

. . . this people shall be scattered, and shall become a dark, a filthy, and a loathsome people, beyond the description of that which ever hath been amongst us, . . . (Ibid., Mormon 5:15)

The Book of Mormon states that when the Lamanites repented of their sins they became white like the Nephites:

And it came to pass that those Lamanites who had united with the Nephites were numbered among the Nephites;

And their curse was taken from them, and their skin became white like unto the Nephites;

And their young men and their daughters became exceedingly fair, and they were numbered among the Nephites, and were called Nephites. (Ibid., 3 Nephi 2:14-16)

The Book of Mormon also promised that in the last days the Lamanites—i.e., the Indians—would repent and become a “white and delightsome people”:

And the gospel of Jesus Christ shall be declared among them; . . . and their scales of darkness shall begin to fall from their eyes; and many generations shall not pass away among them, save they shall be a white and delightsome people. (Ibid., 2 Nephi 30:5-6)

These teachings have caused the Mormon Church some embarrassment. The anti-Mormon writer Gordon H. Fraser stated:

Among the tribes that have been baptized by the Mormon missionaries, there have been dark-skinned Utes and fairly light-skinned Navajos. Their skin color has not been altered in the least because of their adherence to the Mormon doctrines. (*What Does the Book of Mormon Teach?* by Gordon H. Fraser, Moody Press, 1964, page 46)

Spencer W. Kimball, who recently became the twelfth president of the Mormon Church, feels that the Indians are actually becoming a “white and delightsome people.” In the LDS General Conference, October of 1960, Mr. Kimball stated:

I saw a striking contrast in the progress of the Indian people today as against that of only fifteen years ago. Truly the scales of darkness are falling from their eyes, and they are fast becoming a white and delightsome people. . . .

The day of the Lamanites is nigh. For years they have been growing delightsome, and they are now becoming white and delightsome, as they were promised. In this picture of the twenty Lamanite missionaries, fifteen of the twenty were as light as Anglos; five were darker but equally delightsome. 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. There was the doctor in a Utah city who for two years had had an Indian boy in his home who stated that he was some shades lighter than the younger brother just coming into the program from the reservation. 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.

The day of the Lamanites has come. . . . today the dark clouds are dissipating. (*Improvement Era*, December 1960, pages 922-923)

While Spencer W. Kimball seems to feel that the Indians are to be made white by the power of God, Michael Marquardt learned that Joseph Smith’s 1831 revelation says they are to be made white through intermarriage with the Mormons. Because of this fact, the Mormon leaders seemed to feel that it was necessary to keep this revelation from their people. Only the most trusted men, such as Dr. Hyrum Andrus, were allowed a copy of it. It was only after a great deal of research that Mr. Marquardt was able to obtain the following typed copy of this revelation:

Part Substance

of a revelation by Joseph Smith Jr., given over the boundary, west of Jackson County, Missouri, on Sunday morning, July 17, 1831, when seven Elders: viz., Joseph Smith Jr., Oliver Cowdery, W. W. Phelps, Martin Harris, Joseph Coe, Ziba Peterson and Joshua Lewis united their hearts in prayer, in a private place, to inquire of the Lord who should preach the first sermon to the remnant of the Lamanites and Nephites and the people of that section, that should assemble that day in the Indian country, to hear the Gospel and the revelations according to the Book of Mormon.

Among the company, there being neither pen, ink nor paper, Joseph remarked that the Lord could preserve his words, as he had ever done, till the time appointed, and proceeded:

1 Verily, Verily, saith the Lord, your Redeemer, even Jesus Christ, the light and the life of the world, he cannot discern with your natural eyes, the design and the purpose of your Lord and your God, in bringing you thus far into the wilderness, for a trial of your faith, and to be especial witnesses, to bear testimony of this land, upon which the zion of God shall be built up in the last days, when it is redeemed.

2 Verily, inasmuch as ye are united in calling upon my name to know my will concerning who shall preach to the inhabitants that shall assemble this day to learn what doctrine you have to teach them, you have done wisely, for so did the prophets anciently, even Enoch, and Abraham, and others; and therefore, it is my will that my servant Oliver Cowdery should open the meeting with prayer; that my servant W. W. Phelps should preach the discourse; and that my servants Joseph Coe and Ziba Peterson should bear testimony as they shall be moved by the Holy Spirit. This will be pleasing in the sight of your Lord.

3 Verily, I say unto you, you are laying the foundation of a great work for the salvation of as many as will believe and repent, and obey the ordinances of the Gospel, and continue faithful to the end: For, as I live, saith the Lord, so shall they live.

4 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 unto you wives of the Lamanites and Nephites, that their posterity may become white, delightsome and just, for even now their females are more virtuous than the gentiles.**

5 Gird up your loins and be prepared for the mighty work of the Lord to prepare the world for my second coming to meet

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the tribes of Israel, according to the predictions of all the holy prophets since the beginning; For the final desolation decreed upon Babylon: For, as the everlasting gospel is carried from this land, in love for peace, to gather mine elect from the four quarters of the earth, for Zion—even so shall rebellion follow after, speedily, with hatred for war until the consumption decreed hath made a full end of all the kingdoms and nations, that strive to govern themselves by the laws and precepts, and force and powers of men under the curse of sin, in all the world.

6 Verily, I say unto you, that the day of vexation and vengeance is nigh at the doors of this nation, when wicked, ungodly and daring men will rise up in wrath and might, and go forth in anger, like as the dust is driven by a terrible wind; and they will be the means of the destruction of the government: and come the death and misery of men's souls, but the faithful among my people shall be preserved in holy places, during all these tribulations.

7 Be patient, therefore, possessing your souls in peace and love, and keep the faith that is now delivered unto you for the gathering of scattered Israel, and lo, I am with you, though you cannot see me, till I come: even so. Amen.

Reported by W. W. P.

About three years after this was given, I asked brother Joseph, privately, how "we," that were mentioned in the revelation could take wives from the "natives" as we were all married men? He replied, instantly "In the same manner that Abraham took Hagar and Keturah; and Jacob took Rachel, Bilhah and Zilpah; by revelation—the saints of the Lord are always directed by revelation.

According to what Mr. Marquardt could learn, the original revelation is preserved in a vault in the LDS Church Historian's Library. The paper on which it is written has the appearance of being very old.

There is a second copy of the revelation in the Church Historian's Library. This appears in a letter from W. W. Phelps to Brigham Young. The letter is dated August 12, 1861. Michael Marquardt has been able to obtain a copy of this letter. The reader will notice that except for the opening and closing lines, this letter is almost identical to the other document:

President B. Young I have the pleasure of sending you
The Substance

of a revelation by Joseph Smith Junr. given over the boundary, west of Jackson co. Missouri, on Sunday morning July 17, 1831, when seven Elders, viz: Joseph Smith Jun., Oliver Cowdery, W. W. Phelps, Martin Harris, Joseph Coe, Ziba Peterson and Joshua Lewis united their hearts in prayer, in a private place, to inquire of the Lord who should preach the first sermon to the remnants of the Lamanites and Nephites, and the people of that section, that should assemble that day, in the Indian Country, to hear the gospel and the revelations according to the Book of Mormon.

Among the company there being neither pen, ink or paper, Joseph remarked that the Lord could preserve his words, as he had ever done, till the time appointed, and proceeded:—

1 Verily, Verily, saith the Lord, your Redeemer, even Jesus Christ, the light and the life of the world, ye cannot discern with your natural eyes, the design and the purpose of your Lord and your God, in bringing you thus far into the wilderness, for a trial of your faith, and to be especial witnesses, to bear testimony of this land, upon which the zion of God shall be built up in the last days, when it is redeemed.

2 Verily, inasmuch as ye are united in calling upon my name to know my will concerning who shall preach to the inhabitants that shall assemble this day to learn what doctrine you have to teach them, you have done wisely, for so did the prophets anciently, even Enoch, and Abraham, and others; and therefore, it is my will that my servant Oliver Cowdery should open the meeting with prayer; that my servant W. W. Phelps should preach

the discourse; and that my servants Joseph Coe and Ziba Peterson should bear testimony as they shall be moved by the Holy Spirit. This will be pleasing in the sight of your Lord.

3 Verily, I say unto you, you are laying the foundation of a great work for the salvation of as many as will believe and repent, and obey the ordinances of the Gospel, and continue faithful to the end: For, as I live, saith the Lord, so shall they live.

4 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 unto you wives of the Lamanites and Nephites, that their posterity may become white, delightful and just, for even now their females are most virtuous than the gentiles.

5 Gird up your loins and be prepared for the mighty work of the Lord to prepare the world for my second coming to meet the tribes of Israel, according to the predictions of all the holy prophets since the beginning; For the final desolation decreed upon Babylon: For, as the everlasting gospel is carried from this land, in love for peace, together mine elect from the four quarters of the earth, for Zion—even so shall rebellion follow after, speedily, with hatred for war until the consumption decreed hath made a full end of all the kingdoms and nations, that strive to govern themselves by the laws and precepts, and force and powers of men under the curse of sin, in all the world.

6 Verily, I say unto you, that the day of vexation and vengeance is nigh at the doors of this nation, when wicked, ungodly and daring men will rise up in wrath and might, and go forth in anger, like as the dust is driven by a terrible wind; and they will be the means of the destruction of the government: and come the death and misery of men's souls, but the faithful among my people shall be preserved in holy places, during all these tribulations.

7 Be patient, therefore, possessing your souls in peace and love, and keep the faith that is now delivered unto you for the gathering of scattered Israel, and lo, I am with you, though you cannot see me, till I come: even so. Amen.

Reported by W. W. P.

About three years after this was given, I asked brother Joseph, privately, how "we," that were mentioned in the revelation could take wives from the "natives" as we were all married men? He replied, instantly "In the same manner that Abraham took Hagar and Keturah; and Jacob took Rachel, Bilhah and Zilpah; by revelation—the saints of the Lord are always directed by revelation."

Respectfully I have the faith to be, as ever
August 12, 1861 W. W. Phelps

HIDES IMPORTANT PART

Dr. Hyrum Andrus, of Brigham Young University, actually quotes part of this revelation as it appears in the letter, but he is very careful to suppress the fact that the wives to be taken were Lamanites:

The Prophet understood the principle of plural marriage as early as 1831. William W. Phelps stated that on Sunday morning, July 17, 1831, he and others were with Joseph Smith over the border west of Jackson County, Missouri, when the latter-day Seer received a revelation, the substance of which said in part: "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." According to Elder Phelps, the revelation then indicated that in due time the brethren would be required to take plural wives. (*Doctrines of the Kingdom*, by Hyrum L. Andrus, Salt Lake City, 1973, page 450)

In footnote 37 on the same page, Dr. Andrus gives his source for this information as "Letter of William W. Phelps to Brigham Young, August 12, 1861, Church Historian's Library, Salt Lake City, Utah" (*Ibid.*, page 450).

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The reader will notice that in his quotation from the revelation, Dr. Andrus suppressed the important portion concerning the Indians. His quotation ended with “. . . ye shall know when ye receive a fulness.” The revelation, as cited in Phelps’ letter, actually reads:

. . . ye shall know when ye receive a fulness by reason of the anointing: For it is my will, that in time, ye should take unto you **wives of the Lamanites** and Nephites, **that their posterity may become white, delightful** and just, for even now their females are most [more?] virtuous than the gentiles.

In his book, Dr. Andrus also cites the end of the W. W. Phelps letter:

About the year 1834. William W. Phelps asked the Prophet how a man could take wives in addition to his first one. The reply was instantaneous: “In the same manner that Abraham took Hagar and Katurah; and Jacob took Rachel, Bilhah and Zilpah; by revelation: the Saints of the Lord are always directed by revelation.” (*Doctrines of the Kingdom*, pages 459-460)

The reader will notice that again Dr. Andrus is careful not to cite anything concerning the Indians. The letter itself, however, makes it plain that the wives were to be Indians:

About three years after this was given, I asked brother Joseph, privately, how “we,” that were mentioned in the revelation could take wives from the “natives” as we were all married men? He replied, instantly, “In the same manner that Abraham took Hagar and Katurah; and Jacob took Rachel, Bilhah and Zilpah; by revelation—the saints of the Lord are always directed by revelation.”

BOOTH CONFIRMS REVELATION

Since we are unable to examine the original revelation, it is very difficult to determine when it was actually recorded. From W. W. Phelps’ letter to Brigham Young we know that the revelation had to have been recorded by 1861. As we understand it, the first document—containing only the revelation and Phelps’ comment—appears to be older than the letter dated August 12, 1861.

The introduction to the revelation indicates that there was “neither pen, ink nor paper” at the time Joseph Smith uttered the revelation. It is possible that it could have been recorded any time between 1831 and 1861. W. W. Phelps served as scribe on a number of occasions during Joseph Smith’s lifetime. If the revelation and the note at the bottom were written at the same time, then obviously the revelation could not have been written until sometime after 1834. It could be, however, that the note was added at a later time. It will not be possible to decide this vital question unless the Mormon leaders allow scholars to closely examine the document itself or allow photographs of it to be printed.

Regardless of when the revelation was actually written on paper, we have found definite historical proof that such a revelation was given in 1831. The proof 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 stated:

In addition to this, and to co-operate with it, it has been made known by revelation, that it will be pleasing to the Lord, should they form a matrimonial alliance with the Natives; and by this means the Elders, who comply with the thing so pleasing to the Lord, and for which the Lord has promised to bless those who do it abundantly, gain a residence in the Indian territory, independent of the agent. It has been made known to one, who has left his 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. It was easily perceived that this permission, was perfectly suited to

his desires. I have frequently heard him state, that the Lord had made it known to him, that he is as free from his wife as from any other woman; and the only crime that I have ever heard alleged against her is, she is violently opposed to Mormonism. But before this contemplated marriage can be carried into effect, he must return to the state of N.Y. and settle his business, for fear, should he return, after that affair had taken place the civil authority would apprehend him as a criminal. (*Ohio Star*, December 8, 1831)

We had originally discovered Booth’s statement in an 1834 reprint of his letters, but Michael Marquardt found a microfilm copy of the original paper in the Mormon Church’s Genealogical Library in Salt Lake City.

On June 7, 1831, Joseph Smith had received a revelation in which Ezra Booth was commanded to go to Missouri:

Wherefore, verily I say unto you, let my servants Joseph Smith, Jun., and Sidney Rigdon . . . journey to the land of Missouri. . . .

And again, let my servant Isaac Morley and my servant Ezra Booth take their journey, also preaching the word by the way unto this same land. (*Doctrine and Covenants*, Section 52, verses 3 and 23)

Joseph Smith tells that “Elders Morley and Booth arrived” in Jackson County, Missouri in July, 1831 (*History of the Church*, Vol. 1, page 191). On page 216 of the same volume, Joseph Smith tells that Booth wrote the “series of letters” which were published in the *Ohio Star*.

Since Ezra Booth did go to Missouri and was well acquainted with the Elders, his letter furnishes irrefutable proof that Joseph Smith gave the revelation commanding the Mormons to marry the Lamanite women.

On March 6, 1885, S. F. Whitney, Newel K. Whitney’s brother, made an affidavit which furnishes additional evidence that there was a revelation on this subject:

Martin Harris . . . claimed he had a revelation when he first came to Kirtland for him to go to Missouri, and obtain an Lamanite Indian squaw for a wife to aid them in propagating Mormonism. Martin told me soon after Joseph, the prophet, left Kirtland, that, two years before, he had told him that as his wife had left him he needed a woman as other men. (*Naked Truths About Mormonism*, Oakland, California, January, 1888, page 3)

It is very interesting to note that Martin Harris, one of the three witnesses to the Book of Mormon, was one of the “seven Elders” present when the 1831 revelation was given.

“BLEACHING” THE LAMANITES

Like Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, the second president of the Mormon Church, taught that the Indians would become white:

Here are the Lamanites, another example. Their wickedness was not so great as those who slew the Son of God. . . . they sunk into wickedness, and evil principles the most degrading, and have become loathsome and vile. Still, the curse will be removed from them . . . and they will become “a white and delightful people.” (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 2, page 143)

While Brigham Young never released the 1831 revelation, there is evidence that he was familiar with its teaching that the Indians should be made white through inter-marriage. In a book published in 1852, William Hall gives this information:

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

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

(*The Abominations of Mormonism Exposed*, Cincinnati, 1852, pages 58-59)

Mrs. Mary Ettie V. Smith claimed that when she was coming west, her husband took a plural wife from among the Indians:

Although Wallace did not allow me to associate with any other women among our neighbors, yet I heard enough so convince me my husband was not living up in good faith to our mutual understanding of the terms on which I had consented to live with him again.

It was currently reported that during my absence he had lived with a squaw, who was in the habit of visiting our house for food and whatever we had to give her. She was young and pretty, and had the prettiest Indian baby I had ever seen. . . . Wallace was supposed to be the father of the Indian girl’s pretty baby. . . . he acknowledged the whole. The Indian girl was his spiritual wife, and her child was his. The Indians, he said, were the sons of the Lamanites, recognized by the Prophet. (*Mormonism: Its Rise, Progress, and Present Condition*, 1870, pages 119-120)

On pages 131-132 of the same book, Mrs. Smith tells of a conversation she had with the Mormon Apostle Orson Hyde concerning this matter:

Wallace . . . then went to Orson Hyde, . . . I was then sent for to come to Orson’s house, and I went. When I arrived there I found him at home. He received me very kindly, and said, “Sister Ettie, why do you object to living with your husband?” I told him I had not time to go into all the circumstances of the case. That I had a great many objections. That what most interfered with my notions of propriety was the way he courted some of the “sisters,” especially the Indians, by the Mormons known as the Lamanites. That Wallace was very anxious to assist in the fulfilment of that prophesy of our Prophet, which foretold that these Lamanites “should become a white and delightsome people,” and that he had already commenced the work among them. . . . Orson Hyde said, “The reasons you have given do not constitute a lawful excuse for leaving your husband, according to the laws of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.”

I then rose up to go, as I did not propose to discuss the matter with him. But he stopped me, and said, “You may, if you wish, be ‘sealed’ to me, and then you know there would be no risk to run, in case you should die. Otherwise, if by chance you should drop away, having no husband to raise you at the last day, you could not be ‘resurrected’ as a saint, and would only be raised like any Gentile, as a servant for the Saints, i.e., for the Mormons.” (*Mormonism: Its Rise, Progress, and Present Condition*, pages 131-132)

The fact that the Mormon Apostle Orson Hyde encouraged marriage with the Lamanites is verified in the diary of Hosea Stout:

Tuesday 9 May 1854. Judge Appleby organized the County of Green River . . .

Elder Hyde held a meeting in the evening. In the discourse he recommended the marrying of squaws in the most positive and strong terms and particularly the immediately taking Mary an old haggard mummy looking one who had been here all winter. He was very eloquent on the occasion all of which was generally understood

to be squinting at M. M. Sanders who already seemed to have some inklings that way and was well pleased with fair opportunity thus to safely commit himself so he readily bit at the bait and the courtship commenced immediately after meeting by interpreters for he could not talk with her. She wanted time to consider he being a stranger & she don’t like him much any how. The affair created an unusual amount of fun & jokes among the disinterested.

Wednesday 10 May 1854. About noon today the proxied courtship between Sanders & Mary the Shoshone (the flower of the desert as Elder Hyde called her) was brought to close and they both were launched into a State of matrimony by Elder Hyde, who acted the Parson . . .

Friday 12 May 1854. . . . Sanders came with us to Bridger to purchase some goods for “Flower of the desert,” which however we afterwards learned she would not accept and even refused to have any thing to do with him. The matrimonial alliance thus entered into has proved a signal failure. (*On the Mormon Frontier*, Vol. 2, pages 516-517)

Since Brigham Young did not publish the 1831 revelation the Mormon people were somewhat divided over the issue of marrying the Indians. According to Juanita Brooks, Marion J. Shelton wrote the following to Brigham Young in a letter dated December 18, 1858:

As this is Sunday, we had quite an interesting day in meeting. The Great and all absorbing question of amalgamation with the natives was spoken upon at length by Brother Fream, one of our Seventies. He holds forth that it is our duty, as Latter-day Saints, to take the Lamanite women to wife and by that means make them our fast friends. He was opposed by Father Groves, who said that the Indians in these mountains are the descendants of the Gadianton Robbers, and that the curse of God is upon them, and we had better let them alone. The Bishop put a stop to further teaching of the doctrine of amalgamation, saying that he had received no orders to instruct the brethren to take Indian wives. (*Utah Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 12, page 31)

On March 4, 1863, Brigham Young wrote a letter to Jacob Hamblin in which he stated:

I have written to Br. E. Snow in relation to marrying Moqui girls, informing him that the brethren were at liberty to do so; but that in case a person at the time had a wife, the parties would have to come here to have the ceremony performed, otherwise they can be married there. (*Utah Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 12, page 32)

Jacob Hamblin made this comment concerning some trouble caused by the desire of the “brethren” to marry the Indians:

On my arrival at the Muddy [*sic*] as I returned, I found the Missions there in rather a precarious situation. The brethren that were there had taken rather an unwise course with the Indians in regard to taking Indian women. When I went down I told them it was a delicate [*sic*] matter for them to handle and not to say anything about it at present. But as they felt very impatient to take squaws, the young bucks had become very jealous of them and waylaid them to shoot them. . . . (Ibid., page 32)

Both Jacob Hamblin and Ira Hatch took wives from the Lamanites. Juanita Brooks states:

On October 11, Jacob Hamblin and his group of missionaries arrived on their way to the Moquich Indians. . . . There were also two Indian girls—Jacob Hamblin’s Indian wife, Eliza, and Ira Hatch’s Indian wife. (*John D. Lee*, by Juanita Brooks, 1961, page 263)

In his journal John D. Lee recorded that he got into some trouble because he married “a squaw to H. Barney.” In September, 1858, Lee recorded:

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On the Night of the 18 I was Notified to appeared before Bishop Davies to answer the charge of being accused of Marrying a squaw to H. Barney contrary to the order of the [P. H.]. I appeared & answered to the complaint. I told them that I Did make a Sham Mariage of the affair but did it for good & that too by the Bishop's council. The Bishop Said that he was aware of that, but that his Prest. Ordered him to Disfellowship the Parties until that they should appear before high council. (*A Mormon Chronicle: The Diaries of John D. Lee—1848-1876*, edited by R. G. Cleland and J. Brooks, 1950, Vol. 1, page 181)

In a letter dated November 19, 1858, Brigham Young wrote the following:

To the Authorities at cedar city & Harmony.
Dear Brethren:

I have taken Pains to enquire into the Matter of Bros. Lee & Barney at Harmony about marrying an Indian girl. It appears the Parties were all honest in their intentions, & if the Brethren at that place had not raised Such a regular Pow-wow over it; there would not have been any harm done or at least all might have been made right. If Bro. Barnny, or any other good man, wishes to take an Indian girl for a wife, he should first gain her affections, & take Pains to instruct her, & then have her sealed to him by the proper authority, the same precise[l]y as a white woman. There is a right & wrong way to do & if the Brethren have suffered for their folly, it is all right if therby you can learn wisdom. I learned that Bro. Lee & Barney have been restored to fellowship which is all right, and I trust that here after there will not be so much ado as the chorus of the old Song has it all, about nothing at all.

I remain ever your Bro. in Christ,
Brigham Young (Ibid., page 184)

Lee said that in 1859 the Mormon Apostle Amasa Lyman advised him to marry his Indian girls:

Sat., Aug. 5th [6th]. Do. do. do. About 12 noon Elder A. Lyman & [1]st Lady, his Son & Lady arrived at my House & sent for Me. I was at work in the Field. I came & had an interview with him upon Special business. He also advised me to have my Indians girls, Alace & Alnora Married to me by Jacob Hamblin in order to throw a shield of Protection arround them, &c. That he did consider them capable of understanding the nature of a marriage covenant, &c. (Ibid., page 214)

Under the date of March 10, 1860, Lee records:

About 11 at Night Bishop Wm. Crousby, Hamblin & Leavitt arrived from G. S. L. c. Dudley Leavitt had an Indian girl seald to him by A. Lyman; the girl was raised by J. C. L. Smith's widow. (Ibid., page 242)

Under the date of May 29, 1859, John D. Lee recorded the following in his journal:

I also gave Moquetus (chief) a young horse for an Indian girl some 8 years of age, also traded for a buckskin. (*Journals of John D. Lee, 1846-47 and 1859*, edited by Charles Kelly, 1938, page 212)

Juanita Brooks says that

The traffic in Indian children had been going on for nearly a century. Raiding bands usually exchanged the captured children for horses belonging to Mexican traders. The Mormons sometimes purchased these unfortunate youngsters from their Indian owners and sought to civilize, educate, and Christianize rather than to enslave them. . . . Perhaps the best expression of the Mormon philosophy regarding the Indians is found in the following paragraph in the *History of Brigham Young*, p. 46, under date of May 13, 1851:

"I spoke upon the importance of the Iron County Mission and the advantages of the brethren filling it. I advised them to buy

up the Lamanite children as fast as they could, and educate them and teach them the Gospel, so that not many generations would pass ere they would become a white and delightsome people, and said that the Lord could not have devised a better plan than to have put us where we were in order to accomplish that thing. I knew the Indians would dwindle away, but let a remnant of the seed of Joseph be saved." (*A Mormon Chronicle*, Vol. 1, page 322)

In footnote 94 in the book, *On the Mormon Frontier*, Vol. 2, page 428, Juanita Brooks stated:

Brigham Young's message encouraged the purchase of Indian children by the Mormon people, charging them to educate these children and teach them the gospel. He insisted that ". . . it is essentially purchasing them into freedom instead of slavery."

The law provided that when any person purchased such a child, he should go before the probate judge and make out an indenture that the apprenticeship should not exceed twenty years; that the master should send his ward to school at least three months of each year between the ages of seven and sixteen; that the apprentice should be clothed in a comfortable and becoming manner, according to his master's condition in life. *Laws of Utah*, 1852, pages 91-92.

Juanita Brooks gives the following information concerning the Salmon River Mission:

Very early, some of the Mormon leaders recommended that the missionaries marry Indian women as a means of cementing the friendship between the races. . . .

The Elders who were sent to the Salmon River Mission were given similar instructions by Brigham Young and his party, who visited them in May, 1857. At least three different missionaries tell of them, all under date of Sunday, May 10, 1857. Milton G. Hammond says simply, "The president and members of the Twelve all spoke. Pres. Young spoke of Elders marrying natives." William H. Dame, of Parowan, who was one of President Young's party, wrote in his journal: "Meeting was held at 10 a.m. All the presidency spoke on the subject of this and other missions among the Indians. Young men might take squaws to wife. . . ." The mission clerk, David Moore, gave a somewhat more detailed account:

"Sunday, May 10, [1857]. Brethren all called in Center of fort for Meeting. Pres. H. C. Kimball & Wells addressed Missionaries as well as the Brn. [Brethren] present on the importance of the Missionaries being faithful in the discharge of their duties and for them to marry the Native women. That the Marrege [*sic*] tie was the strongest tie of friendship that existed &c. &c. after which Pres. B. Young said, he did not wish the Brethren to feel in a hurry about anything but to live their Religion and when the Lord opened they [*sic*] way before them so that they Could Marry Girls they would be very likely to be enabled to keep them. But if the Brn. were to Marry those old ranegadoes [*sic*] they would be off with the first Mountaineer that Came along. . . ."

As a result of these teachings, at least three of the brethren married Indian women. . . . As to the Indian women whom they had taken as wives the *L. D. S. Journal History* of April 9, 1858, records: "Two squaws who had married the brethren refused to come, fearing the soldiers would kill all the Mormons." (*Utah Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 12, pages 28-30)

T.B.H. Stenhouse gives this information concerning the Salmon River Mission:

Before any of the married brethren could make love to a maiden with the view of making her a second, third, or tenth wife, he was expected to go and obtain Brigham's permission, . . . He sent at one time a mission to Fort Limhi, Salmon River, to civilize the Indians. The brethren were counselled not to take their families with them, but they were to live with the Indians, to educate and civilize them, and to teach them various trades and farming.

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When Brigham and Heber afterwards visited the missionaries to see how they were succeeding, Heber, in his quaint way, told them that he did not see how the modern predictions could well be fulfilled about the Indians becoming “a white and delightful people” without extending polygamy to the natives. The approach of the United States army, in 1857, contributed to break up that mission, but not before Heber’s hint had been clearly understood, and the prophecy half fulfilled! Heber was very practical, and believed that the people should never ask “the Lord” to do for them what they could do themselves, and, as all “Israel” had long prayed that the Indians might speedily become a “white and delightful people,” he thought it was the duty of the missionaries to assist “the Lord” in fulfilling his promises. This was not the first time that a Mormon prophet attempted to aid in bringing to pass the prophecies of “the Lord.” More than one missionary appears to have thoroughly understood him! (*The Rocky Mountain Saints*, 1873, pages 657-59)

In a footnote on page 659 of the same book, Mr. Stenhouse stated:

One young man replied to Brother Heber that it was the teaching of the Church that the elders should always follow their “file-leaders,” and that “if President Young and he should each take a squaw to wife and thus set the example, they would certainly follow suit.” That ended the “bleaching” of the “Lamanites.” There was no further instruction upon the fulfillment of the modern prophecies.

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

Although Smith, speaking of the Indians, in his Book of Mormon, p. 66, says, “Cursed shall be the seed of him that mixeth with their seed: for they shall be cursed with the same cursing.” Brigham now teaches that “the way God has revealed for the purification of the Indians, and making them “a white and delightful people,” as Joseph prophesied, is by us taking the Indian 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)

William Hall claimed that “Brigham Young was married to two young squaws, . . . near Council Bluffs . . . and they were ‘sealed up’ to him, and became his spiritual wives” (*The Abominations of Mormonism Exposed*, pages 64-65). Hall speaks of this in great detail on pages 121-123 of the same book, but so far we have been unable to find any additional documentation for his statement. Even if this did occur, most of the Mormons must have been unaware of it. Otherwise, the young man in Utah would not have asked Heber C. Kimball and Brigham Young to “each take a squaw to wife and thus set the example.” The reader will remember that the Apostle Amasa Lyman advised John D. Lee to marry his Indian girls. Juanita Brooks, however, says that “There is no evidence that Lee ever married an Indian girl. According to family tradition, he refused to do so until Brigham Young or other leaders among the church authorities took Indian wives themselves” (*A Mormon Chronicle*, Vol. 1, page 327).

According to Lee, on May 12, 1849, Brigham Young said that he did not want to take the Indians “in his arms until the curse is removed”:

Pres. B.Y. Said that he did not apprehend any danger from the Indians. Neither did he feel, as Some of the Brethren do, he does not want to live among them & take them in his arms until the curse is removed from off[f] them. . . . But we will take their children & shool them & teach them to be clenly & to love morality & then raise up seed among them & in this way they will be brought back into the presance & knowlege of God . . . (*A Mormon Chronicle, The Diaries of John D. Lee*, Vol. 1, page 108)

It would appear, then, that Brigham Young would not follow Joseph Smith’s revelation to take “wives of the Lamanites and Nephites, that their posterity may become white, delightful and just, . . .” Even though the revelation said that “their females are more virtuous than the gentiles,” Brigham Young built up his “kingdom” with women who were already “white” and “delightful.” The Mormon writer John J. Stewart lists fifty-three of Brigham Young’s wives and then states:

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*, by John J. Stewart, 1961, page 96)

If Brigham Young did not follow the 1831 revelation to marry the Lamanites, we must remember that he was only following Joseph Smith’s example, for Smith also married “white” women.

Even though Brigham Young suppressed Joseph Smith’s 1831 revelation and chose “white” women in preference to the Lamanites, he did at least encourage others to marry them “that the curse of their color shall be removed and they restored to their pristine beauty.”

After Brigham Young’s death the idea that the Indians should be made “white and delightful” through inter-marriage began to fall into disrepute. Juanita Brooks states:

By this time the interest in the Indians had definitely waned. To the settlers, wrestling with the problems of water-ditch and alkali, the natives were certainly not an asset. However often they were baptized and ceremoniously presented with a new shirt, they were not “white and delightful.” As the frontier receded the men who had taken Indian wives, even through obedience to counsel, were looked down upon by neighbors who were less zealous or who had arrived later. (*Utah Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 12, page 33)

Since Brigham Young’s time the church has tended to frown upon interracial marriage with the Indians, even though there is no written rule against the practice. Bruce R. McConkie, who recently was elevated to the position of an Apostle in the Mormon Church, made these statements:

Certainly the caste systems in communist countries and in India, for instance, are man made and are not based on true principles.

However, in a broad general sense, **caste systems have their root and origin in the gospel itself**, and when they operate according to the divine decree, the resultant **restrictions and segregation are right and proper and have the approval of the Lord**. To illustrate: Cain, Ham, and the whole negro race have been cursed with a black skin, the mark of Cain, so they can be identified as caste apart, a people with whom the other descendant of Adam should not intermarry. . . . In effect the Lamanites belonged to one caste and the Nephites to another, and a mark was put upon the Lamanites to keep the Nephites from intermixing with and marrying them. . . . Deity in his infinite wisdom, to carry out his inscrutable purposes, has a caste system of his own, a system of segregation of races and peoples. . . . It is only by a knowledge of pre-existence that it can be known why some persons are born in one race or caste and some in another. (*Mormon Doctrine*, by Bruce R. McConkie, 1966, page 114)

The Mormon Apostle Mark E. Petersen made these comments in an address delivered at Brigham Young University:

What should be our attitude as Latter-day Saints toward negro and other dark races? . . . We cannot escape the conclusion that because of performance in our pre-existence some of us are born as Chinese, some as Japanese, some as Indians, some as Negroes, some as Americans, some as Latter-day Saints. These are rewards and punishments, fully in harmony with His established policy in dealing with sinners and saints, rewarding all according to their deeds. . . .

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Now let's 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. . . . In placing a curse on Laman and Lemuel, He engaged in 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. Who placed the Chinese in China? The Lord did. It was an act of segregation. When He placed only some of His chosen people in the tribe of Judah, the royal tribe, wasn't that an act of segregation? And when He gave the birthright only to Ephraim, wasn't that an act of segregation?

The Lord segregated the people both as to blood and place of residence. 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—as a punishment and as a sign to all others. He forbade intermarriage with them under threat of extension of the curse. (2 Nephi 5:21) . . .

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. . . . 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 that 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 a celestial resurrection. . . .

Well, what about the removal of the curse? We know what the Lord has said in the Book of Mormon in regard to the Lamanites—they shall become a White and a delightful people. I know of no scripture having to do with the removal of the curse from the Negro. . . .

Now what is our policy in regard to inter-marriage? . . . I think the Lord segregated the Negro and who is man to change that segregation? . . . what God hath separated, let not man bring together again.

What is our advice with respect to intermarriage with Chinese, Japanese, Hawaiians and so on? I will tell you what advice I give personally. If a boy or girl comes to me claiming to be in love with a Chinese or Japanese or a Hawaiian or a person of any other dark race, I do my best to talk them out of it. I tell them that I think the Hawaiians should marry Hawaiians, the Japanese ought to marry the Japanese, and the Chinese ought to marry Chinese, and the Caucasians should marry Caucasians, just exactly as I tell them that Latter-day Saints ought to marry Latter-day Saints. And I'm glad to quote the 7th chapter of Deuteronomy to them on that. I teach against inter-marriage of all kinds. (*Race Problems—As They Affect the Church*, by Mark E. Petersen, at BYU, August 27, 1954)

Mark E. Petersen is second in line to become President of the Mormon Church. The Apostle Petersen and other Mormon leaders who are opposed to intermarriage will probably be very embarrassed now that the 1831 revelation has come to light. The fact that they have suppressed this revelation plainly shows that they do not really believe that it came from God. They have been involved in a cover-up to protect the image of Joseph Smith.

FITS HISTORICAL SETTING

Besides the fact that Ezra Booth mentions the 1831 revelation only five months after it was given, there is other evidence to show that it is authentic. For one thing, we find that it is dated July 17, 1831. The Mormon Historian Joseph Fielding Smith said that

July 17, 1831, was the "first "Sabbath" after Joseph Smith arrived in Jackson County (*Essentials in Church History*, page 129). In Joseph Smith's own *History of the Church*, he claims that on that day he was "over the boundary" and that Lamanites were present when a discourse was given:

The first Sabbath after our arrival in Jackson county, Brother W. W. Phelps Preached to a western audience over the boundary of the United States, wherein were present specimens of all the families of the earth; Shem, Ham and Japheth; several of the Lamanites or Indians—representative of Shem; quite a respectable number of negroes—descendants of Ham; and the balance was made up of citizens of the surrounding country, . . . (*History of the Church*, Vol. 1, pages 190-191)

The reader will remember that the revelation also was supposed to have been given "over the boundary" and goes on to state that "W. W. Phelps should preach the discourse" on that occasion. This, of course, agrees with Joseph Smith's *History of the Church*.

We agree with Mormon writers that the 1831 revelation is a forerunner to the published revelation on plural marriage, although the revelation does not specifically mention it. As W. W. Phelps' note at the end of the revelation seems to indicate, it would have been difficult for him or Joseph Smith to have taken wives from among the Lamanites without entering into plural marriage. Ezra Booth's letter indicates that one of the men who knew of the revelation felt that he was "entirely free from his wife, and . . . at liberty to take him a wife from among the Lamanites," even though he had not obtained a divorce. This, then, appears to be the beginning of plural marriage among the Mormons.

We know from many sources that plural marriage was being considered by the Mormon leaders in the early 1830's. Joseph F. Smith, the sixth president of the Mormon Church, once stated:

"The great and glorious principle of plural marriage was first revealed to Joseph Smith in 1831, but being forbidden to make it public, or to teach it as a doctrine of the Gospel, at that time, he confided the facts to only a very few of his intimate associates. Among them were Oliver Cowdery and Lyman E. Johnson. . . ." (As quoted in the *Historical Record*, Vol. 6, 1887, page 219)

The Mormon Apostle John A. Widtsoe stated:

The evidence seems clear that the revelation on plural marriage was received by the Prophet as early as 1831. (*Joseph Smith—Seeker After Truth*, page 236)

In his new book, *Doctrines of the Kingdom*, Hyrum Andrus gives this information:

Others also testified that Joseph Smith knew the doctrine of plural marriage as early as 1831. Orson Pratt, who traveled about that time as a missionary companion to Lyman Johnson, son of John Johnson, in whose home the Prophet then lived, said: "Lyman Johnson . . . told me himself that Joseph had made known to him as early as 1831, that plural marriage was a correct principle, that God had revealed it to him, but that the time had not [then] come to teach or practice it in the church, but that the time would come."

Joseph F. Smith gave some indication of the nature of the initial revelation on plural marriage. He stated at the funeral services of Elizabeth Ann Whitney, who gave her daughter Sarah Ann to Joseph Smith as a plural wife, that when the Prophet "received the revelation in relation to the eternity of the marriage covenant, which includes plural marriage, in 1831, the Lord showed him those women who were to engage with him in the establishment of that principle in the Church, and at that time some of these women were named and given to him, to become his wives when the time should come that this principle should be established."

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The beginning of the practice of plural marriage by Joseph Smith is somewhat obscured by a lack of detailed evidence, but he apparently started while he lived in the vicinity of Kirtland, Ohio. He later told Mrs. Julia H. Johnson “that when the Lord required him to move in plural marriage, . . . his first thought was to come and ask her for some of her daughters.” (*Doctrines of the Kingdom*, by Hyrum Andrus, 1973, page 451)

It was less than a year after Joseph Smith gave the revelation to marry Lamanites that his name was linked with Nancy Johnson. The Mormon writer John J. Stewart claims that Joseph Smith may have entered into plural marriage “in the early or mid-1830’s.” On page 31 of his book, *Brigham Young and His Wives*, he states that “Nancy Johnson” may have been Joseph Smith’s first plural wife. In March, 1832, Joseph Smith was mobbed. Eli Johnson (the brother of Nancy Marinda Johnson) claimed that Joseph Smith was “too intimate” with his sister. The following is found in the *Braden and Kelley Debate*:

In March, 1832, Smith was stopping at Mr. Johnson’s, in Hiram, Ohio, and was mobbed. The mob was led by Eli Johnson, who blamed Smith with being too intimate with his sister Marinda, who afterwards married Orson Hyde. Brigham Young, in after years, twitted Hyde with this fact, and Hyde, on learning its truth, put away his wife although they had several children. (*The Braden and Kelley Debate*, 1955 reprint, page 202)

While Joseph Smith was still living in Ohio his name was linked with Fanny Alger. In a letter dated January 21, 1838, Oliver Cowdery, one of the three witnesses to the Book of Mormon, plainly stated that Joseph Smith had an “affair” with Fanny Alger:

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 deserted 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)

Mormon writers admit that there was a connection between Joseph Smith and Fanny Alger, however, they claim that Fanny Alger was Joseph Smith’s plural wife and that he was commanded by God to enter into polygamy.

Andrew Jenson, who was the Assistant LDS Church Historian, made a list of 27 women who were sealed to Joseph Smith. In this list he said the following concerning Fanny Alger: “Fanny Alger, one of the first plural wives sealed to the Prophet” (*Historical Record*, Vol. VI, May 1887, page 233). The Mormon Apostle John A. Widtsoe stated:

It seems that Fannie Alger was one of Joseph’s first plural wives. She lived many years after the Prophet’s death and never denied her relationship to him. (*Joseph Smith—Seeker After Truth*, page 237)

The Mormon writer John J. Stewart gives this interesting information:

Benjamin F. Johnson, another close friend to Joseph . . . says, “In 1835, at Kirtland, I learned from my sister’s husband, Lyman R. Sherman, who was close to the Prophet, and received it from him, ‘that the ancient order of Plural Marriage was again to be practiced by the Church.’ This, at the time, did not impress my mind deeply, although there lived then with his family [the Prophet’s] a neighbor’s daughter, Fannie Alger, a very nice and comely young woman . . . toward whom not only myself but everyone, seemed partial, for the amiability of her character; and it was whispered even then that Joseph loved her.” Johnson,

a Church patriarch at the time of writing, put his finger on the beginning of Oliver Cowdery’s and Warren Parrish’s downfall—Parrish was the Prophet’s secretary: “There was some trouble with Oliver Cowdery, and whisper said it was relating to a girl then living in his (the Prophet’s) family; and I was afterwards told by Warren Parrish, that he himself and Oliver Cowdery did know that Joseph had Fannie Alger as wife, for they were spied upon and found together.” . . . “Without doubt in my mind,” says Johnson, “Fannie Alger was, at Kirtland, the Prophet’s first plural wife, in which, by right of his calling, he was justified of the Lord, . . .” One of the charges against Cowdery when he was excommunicated was that he had insinuated that Joseph was guilty of adultery. (*Joseph Smith the Mormon Prophet*, pages 103-104)

Dr. Hyrum Andrus says that “Though Joseph Smith may have had other women in mind to be plural wives at an earlier time, evidence can only be found to support the claim that Fanny Alger was the first woman with whom he had a plural connection” (*Doctrines of the Kingdom*, page 452).

Oliver Cowdery was not only aware of Joseph Smith’s “affair” with Fanny Alger, but he was also present when Joseph Smith gave the revelation which authorized marriage to the Lamanites. Even though Cowdery was one of the Book of Mormon Witnesses, Mormon writers have not hesitated to accuse him of adultery. Hyrum Andrus stated:

The transgression of Oliver Cowdery was a case in point, Brigham Young explained that soon after the Prophet received the initial revelation on plural marriage he made known the principle to Oliver Cowdery “under a solemn pledge that he would not reveal it, nor act upon it, until the Lord otherwise commanded.” But Oliver “did not keep his pledge, but acted upon it in a secret manner, and that was the cause of his overthrow.” President Young reportedly quoted Oliver as saying: “Br. Joseph, why don’t we go into the order of polygamy, and practice it as the ancients did. We know it is true, then why delay?” The Prophet replied: “I know that we know it is true and from God, but the time has not yet come.” When this did not satisfy Cowdery, Joseph Smith said: “Oliver, if you go into this thing it is not with my faith or consent.” But disregarding the warning, Cowdery “took to wife Miss Anne Lyman, cousin to Geo. A. Smith [and] from that time he went into [spiritual] darkness and lost the Spirit.”

George Q. Cannon and George A. Smith, as counselors in the First Presidency, expressed the view that Oliver Cowdery’s adulterous relationship was the root cause of his excommunication from the Church. President Cannon said: “He transgressed the law of God; he committed adultery; the Spirit of God withdrew from him, and he . . . was excommunicated from the Church.” (*Doctrines of the Kingdom*, pages 467-468)

In a footnote on page 450 of the same book, Dr. Andrus claims “Brigham Young said that Joseph Smith received the revelation on plural marriage ‘as early as in the year 1831.’—*Journal History*, August 26, 1857.”

CHURCH LEADERS EMBARRASSED

The first seven Presidents of the Mormon Church practiced polygamy, but today it has become a source of embarrassment for the Church. Even though Joseph Smith’s revelation on polygamy—i.e., the revelation given in 1843—is still published in the *Doctrine and Covenants* as Section 132, the Church leaders now forbid their people to practice it. This has led to a great deal of conflict, and thousands of people in Utah still practice polygamy even though the Church leaders threaten those who do with excommunication. On February 22, 1974, the *Salt Lake Tribune* reported:

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ST. GEORGE (UPI) — A 48-year-old former seminary teacher for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints pleaded guilty to a charge of bigamy Thursday and was freed to return to his three young wives. . . .

The Utah attorney general's office initiated bigamy charges against Foster in January after receiving pleas from a Kansas doctor, father of one of Foster's three wives. . . . Foster has been excommunicated from the LDS Church on ecclesiastical charges of polygamy. . . .

His wives range in age from 22 to 26.

The attorney general's office said Foster was a high school seminary teacher in the Provo area when he divorced his wife and began marrying his students. Prosecutors said all three current wives are former students of Foster's at the seminary, where high school youngsters attend religious classes one hour a day. (*Salt Lake Tribune*, February 22, 1974, page 8C)

For a thorough study of polygamy in the Mormon Church, see our book *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* pages 202-249.

Since the Mormon leaders are already embarrassed over polygamy and their racial doctrines, it is no wonder that they have tried so hard to suppress the 1831 revelation. The cover-up of this revelation certainly refutes Dr. Nibley's claim that the church has nothing to hide.

COVER-UP ON NEGRO DOCTRINE

The Mormon leaders have suppressed a number of very important documents concerning their anti-Negro doctrine. Michael Marquardt has recently given us a copy of some extracts from the journal of Wilford Woodruff which clearly show that the anti-Negro doctrine was born out of prejudice, and did not come by revelation. Wilford Woodruff, who later became the fourth president of the Mormon Church, recorded in his journal an address delivered by President Brigham Young in 1852. Portions of this address have been quoted by many Mormon writers, but they have never dared print some very significant portions of it. The following is taken from the copy furnished by Mr. Marquardt:

Governor B. Youngs address before the legislative assembly of the Territory of Utah upon slavery He remarked that the whole world were slaves Eve partook of the forbidden fruit & also Adam & it brought slavery upon all their posterity in some way or other & the will continue untill we become righteous enough to drive the devil & evil from the Earth. Adam had two sons Kane (*sic*) & Abel. Cain was more given to evil than Abel Adam was called to offer sacrifice also his sons the sacrifice of Abel was more acceptable than Canes & Cain took it into his heart to put Abel out of the way so he killed Abel the Lord said I will not kill Cane But I will put a mark upon him and it is seen in the face of every Negro on the Earth and it is the decree of God that that mark shall remain upon the seed of Cain & the curse untill all the seed of Abel should be redeemed and Cane will not receive the priesthood ~~untill~~ or salvation untill all the seed of Abel are redeemed **any man having one drop of the seed of Cane in his in him (*sic*) cannot hold the priesthood** & if no other Prophet ever spake it before I will say it now in the name of Jesus Christ I know it is ture [true?] & others know it the Negro cannot hold one part of Government But the day will come when all the seed of Cane will be Redeemed & have all the Blessings we have now & a great deal more But the seed of Abel will be ahead of the seed of Cane to all Eternity let me consent to day to mingle my seed with the seed of Cane it would Bring the same curse upon me And it would upon any man And if any man mingle his seed with the seed of Cane the ownly way he could get rid of it or have salvation would be to come forward & have his head cutoff & spill his Blood upon the ground it would also take the life of his children It is said if a man kills another that he takes that that he cannot give if a mans

head is cut off his life is not destroyed or his spirit that lives his tabernacle is destroyed But I can make as good tabernacles as I can if you do not believe it look at my children. Much blood was shed in ancient days both of man & Beast the firstlings & best of the flock was sacrificed on the Altar & in some instances many men & almost whole Nations was sacrificed or put to death because of their sins & wickedness this was the ownly way they could be saved at all if Jesus Christ had not had his Blood shed the Blood that He received from his Mother Mary the world would not have been saved. Their is not one of the seed of old Cane that is permitted to rule & reign over the seed of Abel and you nor I cannot help it. Those that do bear rule should do it in righteousness I am opposed to the present system of slavery the Negro should serve the seed of Abram but it should be done right dont abuse the Negro & treat cruel It has been urged here that many of the Jews were Black. Whenever the seed of Judah mingled with the seed of Cane they lost their priesthood & all Blessings. As an ensample let the Presidency, Twelve Seventies, High Priests Bishops & all the Authorities say now: We will all go & mingle with the seed of Cane and they may have all the privileges they want we lift our hands to heaven in support of this that moment we loose the priesthood & all Blessings & we would not be redeemed untill Cane was. I will never admit of it for a moment Some may think I dont know as much as they do But I know that I know more than they do. The Lord will watch us all _____ the Devil would like to rule part of the time But I am determin [*sic*] He shall not rule at all and Negroes shall not rule us. I will not admit of the Devil ruling at all I will not consent for the seed of Cane to vote for me or my Brethren if you want to know why we did not speak of it in the Constitution it was because it was none of their Business Any man is a citizen Black white or red and if the Jews come here with a part of the Canaanite Blood in them they are citizins & shall have their rights but not to rule for me or my Brethren those persons from the Islands & foreign countries know nothing about governing the people The Canaanite cannot have wisdom to do things as the white man has. We must guard against all evil I am not going to let this people damn themselves as long as I can help it. ("Wilford Woodruff's Journal," January 16, 1852, typed copy)

In an article published in *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Lester E. Bush, Jr., made these statements about this important address:

Though Brigham Young reaffirmed his stand on priesthood denial to the Negro on many occasions, by far the most striking of the known statements of his position was included in an address to the Territorial legislature, January 16, 1852, recorded in Wilford Woodruff's journal of that date. . . . Other significant points in the address include Young's statement, "The Negro cannot hold one part of Government" . . . he would "not consent for the seed of [Cain] to vote for me or my Brethren"; "the Canaanite cannot have wisdom to do things as white man has"; miscegenation required blood atonement (offspring included) for salvation; and the curse would someday be removed from the "seed of Cain." (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Spring 1973, page 26)

While Brigham Young felt that the "curse" could be removed from the Indians by intermarriage, he would never consent to such a policy with regard to the Negro. In a sermon which was published by the Mormon Church in 1865, Brigham Young stated:

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)

According to the "Excerpts from the Weekly Council Meetings of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles," this doctrine was still being taught in 1897. In the report for December 15, 1897, we read:

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President Cannon said he had understood President Taylor to say that a man who had the priesthood who would marry a woman of the accursed 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, George Q. Cannon taught the same doctrine:

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. (Ibid.)

Notice that George Q. Cannon attributed this doctrine to Joseph Smith. Lester Bush feels that “A more likely origin for these ‘quotations’ was Brigham Young, who expressed similar sentiments on many occasions without reference to Joseph Smith” (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Spring 1973, page 33). Joseph Smith certainly did not approve of intermarriage with the Negro. Under the date of February 8, 1844, this entry appears in his *History of the Church*: “Held Mayor’s court, and tried two negroes for attempting to marry white women: fined one \$25, and the other \$5” (*History of the Church*, Vol. 6, page 210). Even though Joseph Smith was opposed to miscegenation with the Negro, we must agree with Mr. Bush that the idea of blood atonement for this offence originated with Brigham Young.

The reader will notice that in Brigham Young’s statement, as recorded in Wilford Woodruff’s Journal, the penalty for a person marrying a Negro was to have his head cut off. Although we know of no white man being put to death for this offense, there was a Negro who had his head cut almost entirely off. The Mormon writer Harold Schindler gives this information concerning a murder that occurred near Salt Lake City in 1866:

Police officers and spectators reacted with mixed emotions when the mutilated body of a Negro, Thomas Colbourn, also known as Thomas Coleman and Nigger Tom, was found behind the old arsenal two miles east of the city on the night of December 11. His throat had been cut so deeply from ear to ear the head had nearly been severed; a sign pinned to the victim’s bare chest warned: “Notice To All Niggers! Warning! Leave White Women Alone!!!” . . . Whatever ramifications and intrigues were involved in his vicious slaying, the coroner considered the matter too insignificant to justify the expense of an inquest, and as in the case of John Gheen, neglected even to list the case in his register of violent deaths. As far as officialdom was concerned no crime had been committed; the body was unceremoniously dumped into an unmarked grave and forgotten. (*Orrin Porter Rockwell*, by Harold Schindler, pages 341-342)

Harold Schindler says that some people believed that “The ‘White Women’ sign was a decoy to divert suspicion from the real motive, . . .” (Ibid., page 342). Regardless of the real motive, however, the fact that no inquest was held shows that the people were influenced by Brigham Young’s “blood atonement” doctrine and his bias against Negroes.

While the Mormon leaders no longer preach that a person who intermarries with the Negro should have his “head cut off” or that the Negro should live in slavery, they still quote portions of Brigham Young’s 1852 address as justification for keeping the priesthood from Negroes. The Apostle Mark E. Petersen, for instance, cites the portion of the speech where Brigham Young

says that “one drop” of Negro blood will keep a person from the priesthood; then he states:

We must not intermarry 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 intermarried 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*, Address by Mark E. Petersen at Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, August 27, 1954)

SUPPRESSED COUNCIL MINUTES

In 1972 Michael Marquardt learned that the University of Utah Library had some very important papers concerning the anti-Negro doctrine of the Mormon Church, but that they did not want the Tanners to obtain them because they would quote them out of context and embarrass the Church. Eventually Mr. Marquardt obtained a copy of these papers, and we published them in their entirety in *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* pages 582-585. The material in these papers certainly did not have to be taken out of context, for nothing could be more embarrassing for the Church than to have them published in their entirety.

These papers were found in the George A. Smith collection—Smith served as President of the Church from 1945 to 1951—and were listed as “Excerpts from the Weekly Council Meetings of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, Dealing with the Rights of Negroes in the Church, 1849-1940.” These papers certainly throw a great deal of light on the development of the anti-Negro doctrine. From them it is plain to see that the doctrine forbidding Negroes the priesthood or access to the temple rites grew out of rumor and prejudice. They also reveal the state of confusion that the Mormon leaders found themselves in as they tried to formulate their anti-Negro doctrine.

At any rate, after we published these papers, the Mormon scholar Lester E. Bush, Jr., brought out an article in *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* which cited many references from the Council minutes found in the George A. Smith papers. Mr. Bush went a step further, however, and found that the Adam S. Bennion papers not only contain Council minutes found in the George A. Smith papers but also other important Council minutes and letters from the Church leaders concerning the anti-Negro doctrine. Mr. Bush said that these important papers were at “Brigham Young University” (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Spring 1973, page 51, footnote 27). We have learned, however, that when the Mormon leaders became aware of Bush’s article, they ordered that the Adam S. Bennion papers on the Negro be removed from the Brigham Young University Library.

Since Lester E. Bush, Jr., had access to these important papers before they were suppressed, he has written a very revealing article which we highly recommend to those who have any interest in the Mormon doctrine concerning the Negro. The Mormon writer Gordon C. Thomasson has to admit that “Lester Bush’s well written article is by far the most comprehensive and responsible effort to date at giving an historical context within which the denial of the priesthood to Negroes can be understood” (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Spring 1973, page 69). Even Dr. Hugh Nibley concedes that “Brother Bush” has given an “excellent study,” though he refuses to accept the serious implications involved. Dr.

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Nibley claims, in fact, that God has revealed to him that the anti-Negro doctrine is divinely inspired:

... every individual must solve the “Negro question” for himself. . . . The most impressive lesson of Bush’s paper is how little we know about these things—and how little we have tried to know. . . . Am I not turning my back on my brother in not sharing the work of the priesthood with him. Not at all! . . . Nothing sounds more brutal and direct than Brigham Young’s, “The negro must serve!” But what is so bad about serving in the light of the Gospel? . . . The greater the tribulation here the greater the glory hereafter, while he who is exalted in this world shall be abased in the next. If we really took the Lord’s teachings seriously, we would be envious of the Negroes. . . . So now the whole issue boils down to asking whether it is really God and not man who has ordered this thing. Members and non-Members alike who up until now have laughed at the thought of asking such a question are suddenly exercised by it. And so it gives me great pleasure to be in a position to answer the question with an unequivocal affirmative: it is indeed the Lord’s doing. How do I know it? By revelation—which I am in no position to bestow upon others; this goes only for myself. (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Spring 1973, pages 73-77)

ABEL’S BLESSING REVEALED

Outwardly the Mormon doctrine concerning the Negro seems to be firm and absolute. “One drop of Negro blood,” the Mormon leaders declare, would prevent a man from holding the priesthood. Joseph Fielding Smith who later became the tenth President of the Church, once made this statement:

In the “Reorganized” Church they have a few, at least, of the Negro race, that they have “ordained to the priesthood” but it is contrary to the word of God. (*Origin of the Reorganized Church and the Question of Succession*, page 130)

Although Joseph Fielding Smith condemned the Reorganized Church for ordaining Negroes, it is now clear that while he served as Church Historian he was covering up the fact that a number of Negroes were ordained in his own Church. The most well-known was Elijah Abel, who was ordained while Joseph Smith was President of the Church. Some Mormons have claimed that Elijah Abel was “light of color” and that Joseph Smith was not aware of the fact that he had Negro blood when he allowed him to be ordained. In the book *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* pages 271-272, we show that Joseph Smith and other Mormon leaders were well aware of Abel’s lineage. One document relating to this matter which the Mormon leaders have tried very hard to suppress is the patriarchal blessing of Elijah Abel. This blessing was given to Abel by Joseph Smith’s father. Hyrum Andrus says that “Joseph Smith established the office of Patriarch to the Church by ordaining his father, Joseph Smith, Sr., to that calling, December 18, 1833. The Patriarch was sustained by the Saints as a prophet, seer, and revelator” (*Doctrines of the Kingdom*, page 191).

Since Elijah Abel’s patriarchal blessing was supposed to have been given by revelation, it becomes very significant. While the original record book containing Elijah Abel’s blessing is suppressed in the Church Historical Department, the blessing was copied into the report of the Council meeting for June 4, 1897. Before the Mormon leaders were able to remove the Bennion papers on the Negro from the Brigham Young University Library, a copy of Abel’s blessing had been made. Lester E. Bush, Jr., cites portions of this blessing in his article in *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, but it has never been published in its entirety. Michael Marquardt has furnished us with the following copy of Abel’s blessing:

A blessing under the hands of Joseph Smith, Sen., upon Elijah Abel, who was born in Frederick County, Maryland, July 25, 1808.

Brother Abel, in the name of Jesus, I lay my hands upon thee (*sic*) head to bless thee, and thou shalt be blessed even forever. I seal upon thee a father’s blessing, because thou art an orphan, for thy father hath never done his duty toward thee, but the Lord hath had his eye upon thee, and brought thee through straits, and thou hast come to be reckoned with the saints of the Most High. Thou hast been ordained an Elder and anointed to secure thee against the power of the destroyer. Thou shalt see His power in laying waste the nations, and the wicked slaying the wicked, while blood shall run down the streets like water, and thy heart shall weep over their calamities. Angels shall visit thee, and thou shalt receive comfort. They shall call thee blessed, and deliver thee from thine enemies. They shall break thy bands and keep thee from affliction. They (*sic*) name is written in the Lamb’s Book of Life. Thou shalt travel in the East, and visit foreign countries, speak in all the various tongues, and thou shalt be able to teach different languages. Thou shalt see visions of this world and other worlds, and comprehend the laws of all kingdoms, and confound the wisdom of this generation. Thy life shall be preserved to a good old age. Thou must seek first the kingdom of heaven and all blessings shall be added thereto. Thou shalt be made equal to thy brethren, and thy soul be white in eternity and thy robes glittering: thou shalt receive these blessings because of the covenants of thy fathers. Thou shalt save thy thousands, do much good, and receive all the power that thou needest to accomplish thy mission. These and all the blessings which thou canst desire in righteousness, I seal upon thee, in the name of Jesus. Amen. W. A. Cowdery, Assistant Recorder. (“Patriarchal Blessing Book,” Vol. 2, page 88, typed copy)

Now, if this patriarchal blessing was given by revelation, then it proves that God himself was unaware of the fact that the Negro should not hold the priesthood. It says plainly that Elijah Abel had “been ordained an Elder,” and the promise that Abel’s soul would “be white in eternity” shows that it was known that he was a black man. The reader will also notice that the blessing states that Abel was to be “made equal” to his brethren. This blessing seems to show that neither the early Mormons nor their God were aware that the Negro could not hold the priesthood.

There are reports of another early patriarchal blessing which may be even more important than the blessing given to Elijah Abel. In 1962 Ralph Higbee, an employee of a microfilm company which did a great deal of work for the Church, told of seeing a patriarchal blessing given to a Negro which said that the curse had been removed. In April of 1965 Michael Marquardt saw what must have been the same blessing. He reports that he obtained permission from the Church Historian Joseph Fielding Smith to examine a microfilm which contained the first three volumes of patriarchal blessings given during Joseph Smith’s lifetime. As he was going through the microfilm he discovered a blessing given to a descendant of “Ham”—i.e., a Negro. Mr. Marquardt believes that the blessing was given either by Joseph Smith, Sr., or by his son Hyrum. However this may be, the blessing went on to state that through the blood of Christ the “curse” has been removed. Unfortunately, Mr. Marquardt was not allowed to make any notes at the time he was looking at this film. Joseph Fielding Smith stated: “It is not intended that patriarchal blessings should become public property” (*Doctrines of Salvation*, Vol. 3, page 172). On pages 248-249 of the same book, however, Joseph Fielding Smith quotes brief portions of seven patriarchal blessings, five of which were given by Joseph Smith, Sen. In *Brigham Young University Studies* for Summer 1971, Chad J. Flake reproduces the entire blessing of Newel K. Whitney—this blessing contains many parallels to the one given to Abel.

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After seeing Whitney's blessing photographically reproduced, we would think that there would now be no restrictions on the other blessings. Actually, the truth of the matter is that the restrictions seem to be even more strict than when Joseph Fielding Smith was Church Historian. Michael Marquardt was not allowed to copy out of the early patriarchal books, but at least Smith allowed him to see them. Today even the top Mormon scholars are not allowed to see the early patriarchal blessing books. The Mormon leaders apparently realize that if the patriarchal blessing which tells of the "curse" being removed from a descendant of "Ham" were to be made public, it might entirely destroy all basis for the anti-Negro doctrine.

The idea that the "curse" could be removed from the descendants of Ham when they received Christ might even find some support in a strange doctrine taught by Joseph Smith. On June 27, 1839, Joseph Smith taught that a Gentile could receive a heavenly blood transfusion which would "purge out the old blood":

... as the Holy Ghost falls upon one of the literal seed of Abraham, it is calm and serene; and his whole soul and body are only exercised by the pure spirit of intelligence; while the effect of the Holy Ghost upon a Gentile, is to purge out the old blood, and make him actually of the seed of Abraham. That man that has none of the blood of Abraham (naturally) must have a new creation by the Holy Ghost. In such a case, there may be more of a powerful effect upon the body, and visible to the eye, than upon an Israelite, while the Israelite at first might be far before the Gentile in pure intelligence. (*History of the Church*, Vol. 3, page 380)

Brigham Young taught the same doctrine in one of his sermons:

Again, if a pure Gentile firmly believes the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and yields obedience to it, in such a case I will give you the words of the Prophet Joseph—"When the Lord pours out the Holy Ghost upon that individual he will have spasms, and you would think that he was going into fits."

Joseph said that the Gentile blood was actually cleansed out of their veins, and the blood of Jacob made to circulate in them; and the revolution and change in the system were so great that it caused the beholder to think they were going into fits. (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 2, page 269)

If this doctrine were really true, it would seem that the Negro could have his "old blood" purged out so that he could hold the priesthood. Joseph Fielding Smith, however, would have his people believe that the Negro is not a Gentile: "The African Negroes, according to Mormon teachings, are not Gentiles" (*Answers to Gospel Questions*, Vol. 1, page 138).

Brigham Young also felt that Jewish blood was so bad that it had to be purged out:

Can you make a Christian of a Jew? I tell you, nay. If a Jew comes into this Church, and honestly professes to be a Saint, a follower of Christ, and if the blood of Judah is in his veins, he will apostatize. He may have been born and bred a Jew, have the face of a Jew, speak the language of the Jews, and have attended to all the ceremonies of the Jewish religion, and have openly professed to be a Jew all his days; but I will tell you a secret—there is not a particle of the blood of Judaism in him, if he has become a true Christian, a Saint of God; for if there is, he will most assuredly leave the Church of Christ, or that blood will be purged out of his veins. We have men among us who were Jews, and became converted from Judaism. For instance, here is brother Neibaur; do I believe there is one particle of the blood of Judah in his veins? No, not so much as could be seen on the point of the finest cambric needle, through a microscope with a magnifying power of two millions. (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 2, page 142)

While Brigham Young taught that both Jewish and Gentile blood would be "purged out," he seemed to feel that Negro blood remained after conversion.

At any rate, although we do not have access to the blessing which says the "curse" had been removed, we do have Elijah Abel's blessing. This blessing alone is enough to prove that the anti-Negro doctrine came by evolution rather than by revelation.

After Brigham Young's death, some of the Mormon leaders questioned whether Elijah Abel's ordination to the priesthood had been a mistake. According to Lester Bush, Abel used his patriarchal blessing in his own defense:

... two years after Brigham Young's death, a story was circulated that Joseph Smith taught that Negroes could receive the priesthood. As these instructions were allegedly given to Zebedee Coltrin, John Taylor went for a first hand account. ... Coltrin replied that on the contrary Joseph Smith had told him in 1834 that "the Spirit of the Lord saith the Negro had no right nor cannot hold the Priesthood." Though Coltrin acknowledged washing and anointing a Negro, Elijah Abel, in a ceremony in the Kirtland temple after receiving these instructions, he stated that in so doing he "never had such unpleasant feelings in my life—and I said I never would Annoint another person who had Negro blood in him. [*sic*] unless I was commanded by the Prophet to do so." Coltrin did not mention ordaining Abel a seventy (at the direction of Joseph Smith?), but he did state that he was a president of the seventies when the Prophet directed that Abel be dropped because of his "lineage." Abraham Smoot, ... added that he had received similar instructions in 1838.

President Taylor reported the account to the Quorum of the following week, and Joseph F. Smith disagreed. Abel had not been dropped from the seventies, for Smith had seen his certifications as a seventy issued in 1841 and again in Salt Lake City. Furthermore, Abel had denied that Coltrin "washed and anointed" him, but rather stated that Coltrin was the man who originally ordained him a seventy. Moreover, "Brother Abel also states that the Prophet Joseph told him he was entitled to the priesthood." Abel's patriarchal blessing was read, verifying among other things that he was an elder in 1836. ... John Taylor ... observed that mistakes had been made in the early days of the Church which had been allowed to stand, and concluded that "probably it was so in Brother Abel's case; that he, having been ordained before the word of the Lord was fully understood, it was allowed to remain." ...

Abel was convinced of his right to the priesthood, ... Not only had the Prophet knowingly allowed him to hold the priesthood, Abel argued, but his patriarchal blessing also promised him that he would be "the welding link between the black and white races, and that he should hold the initiative authority by which his race should be redeemed." His patriarchal blessing had come close to this sentiment, "Thou shalt be made equal to thy brethren, and thy soul be white in eternity and thy robes glittering; thou shalt save thy thousands, do much good, and receive all the power that thou needest to accomplish thy mission." (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Spring 1973, pages 31-32)

Although Joseph F. Smith, the sixth President of the Mormon Church, later changed his story concerning Abel, in a Council meeting on August 22, 1895, he indicated that Abel was ordained "under the direction" of Joseph Smith:

President Joseph F. Smith told of Brother Abel having been ordained a Seventy and afterwards a High Priest at Kirtland under the direction of the Prophet Joseph Smith. ("Excerpts from the Weekly Council Meetings of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles ... as printed in *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* page 582)

Lester Bush says that he has not found any evidence that Abel was ordained a High Priest, but we know that he was ordained an Elder and a Seventy with Joseph Smith's approval. Some Mormon apologists have claimed that Abel's ordination was a

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mistake and that when his lineage was discovered “his Priesthood was suspended.” Abel’s patriarchal blessing completely destroys the argument that he was ordained by mistake, and Bob Phillips has made the startling discovery that the Church has continued to ordain some of Abel’s descendants to the priesthood (see *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* pages 269-272).

It is interesting to note that Elijah Abel’s grandson was also named Elijah Abel. He was ordained an Elder in 1935. Below is a photograph from the Record of Members of the Logan Tenth Ward for the years 1927-1943. This photograph proves that Abel’s grandson was ordained. Since the Genealogical Library refused to make photocopies of this type of record, we had a very hard time obtaining the photographic proof we desired. (See *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* page 576, for information on how we finally obtained this photograph.)

No. 81	{Cancellation}	Name in Full	Elijah Ables
Father's Name	Leasiah Ables		
Born at	Logan, Utah	DAY MONTH YEAR	26 Dec 1892
Blessed by			
Baptized by	Fred Hilgen Jr.	30 June 1917	
Confirmed by	Forenzo Eggerly	30 June 1917	
Priesthood when received	Ordained	By	
Ordained	By	J. C. Hoganson	5 July 1935
Ordained	By	Lawson L. Hill	29 Sept 1935
Ordained	By		
Ordained	By		

After we published this photograph, Mormon apologists were completely defeated in their arguments. The Mormon writer John L. Lund seems willing to admit that Abel’s descendants were ordained:

It is also apparently true that several other Negroes, including some of Elijah Abel’s descendants, have been ordained to the Priesthood. . . . It is admitted that the Priesthood has been mistakenly given to some Negroes who are light of color. (*The Church and the Negro*, 1967, page 78)

The Mormon leaders can be very unjust and hypocritical about this whole matter. While the Abels are allowed to hold the priesthood, Lester Bush says that on August 28, 1947, “the Quorum upheld a decision by John Widtsoe denying a temple recommend to a ‘sister having one thirty-second of negro blood in her veins’ . . .” (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Spring 1973, page 66, note 184)

There is evidence that special favors have been granted to others besides the Abels. Lester Bush states:

With the concurrence of President McKay, a young man of known Negro ancestry was ordained to the priesthood after receiving a patriarchal blessing which did not assign him to a “cursed” lineage. In another case, President McKay authorized two children with Negro ancestry to be sealed in the temple to the white couple who had adopted them. (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Spring 1973, page 45)

In time this double standard is bound to catch up with the Mormon leaders.

NIGERIAN MISSION FAILS

Although the Bible teaches that the Gospel is to be carried to all people, including the Negro, the Mormon Church has tried to avoid doing missionary work among the Negro people. Bruce R. McConkie, who recently became an Apostle in the Church, stated: “Negroes in this life are denied the priesthood; . . . The gospel message of salvation is not carried affirmatively to them . . .” (*Mormon Doctrine*, Salt Lake City, 1966, page 527). This has generally been the policy of the Church, but on January 11,

1963, the President of the Mormon Church surprised the world by announcing that the Church was going to send a mission to Nigeria.

A few months after the Church announced the mission it became apparent that something was wrong. On August 7, 1963, we called the Mormon Church offices and asked if there was still going to be a mission to Nigeria. The woman in the Missionary department stated that conditions were “unsettled.” Then she stated: “We have been asked not to give out any information about it.”

Eleven years have passed and it now appears that the Nigerian Mission is a complete failure. Lester Bush gives this information:

Sadly, the Nigerian government became more fully aware of the scope of Mormon teachings on the blacks, and denied the Church resident visas. . . . The initial plan envisioned the creation of a large number of independent Sunday schools to be visited periodically by the missionaries to teach and administer the sacrament and other ordinances. Estimates for the number of “Nigerian Mormons” who would have been involved ranged from 10,000 to 25,000, nearly all of whom were Biafrans. (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Spring 1973, page 45)

Because the Nigerian government refused to give resident visas to the Mormon missionaries, the Nigerians decided to go ahead on their own. *Time Magazine* reported:

. . . 7,000 Ibibio, Ibo and Efik tribesmen in eastern Nigeria, . . . have gone on ahead to organize their own branch of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. . . . Fascinated by the dramatic life of the Mormon prophet, Anie Dick Obot of Uyo decided to form a branch of the church in Nigeria, . . .

Church chiefs are somewhat at a loss on how to deal with their new African converts, especially since the Nigerian government will not give resident visas to any missionaries from the U. S. “This is quite a unique situation,” admits Hugh D. Brown, Mormon first counselor. (*Time Magazine*, June 18, 1965, page 56)

On July 1, 1972, Anie Dick Obot wrote a letter in which he stated:

Greetings to you in Christ Precious Name. I am the Bishop in charge Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints in Nigeria, and we are 48 congregations with the total membership of 20,698.

Just about six months later Obot claimed that he had given up the idea of establishing Mormonism in Nigeria. In a letter dated December 21, 1972, he stated:

. . . I am no more with the Organisation of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints and I will never go back to that group.

Obot claimed that he learned the truth about Mormonism after “Dr. O. J. Udo who was at BYU, Provo, Utah” returned to Nigeria. After that he decided to leave the group he had directed.

Lamar S. Williams had been set apart by the Mormon Church in Salt Lake City to direct the missionary work in Nigeria. His work turned out to be a complete failure. In a letter to Williams, dated January 23, 1973, E. E. Akpan informed him that the Nigerians were rapidly defecting from Mormon teachings:

Praise the Lord, greetings to you in Jesus Christ precious Name. We are the group Bishop E. A. Attah led to join with you, but now seeing the truth revealed to us about the mormon teachings we have decided in our General Conference of 18th - 21st Jan., 1973 to adopt the name above.

The name which the Nigerians adopted was “Grace and Truth Church.”

In the same letter, E. E. Akpan went on to explain that they had been reading our book *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* and that this had raised questions in their minds concerning the truthfulness of Mormonism. E. E. Akpan went on to state:

Mormonism Like Watergate?

We see no way to affiliate with mormon group, and you did not reveal this to us upon your visit to us and when visiting us you did not stay at our home.

Therefore with many other reasons we are no more with mormon organisation . . .

We are no longer be known and called Church of Jesus Christ of LDS, and we are no more with your organisation please. All the 25 congregations have withdrawn from Mormon organisation.

Thank you, God bless you. Amen. (Letter from E. E. Akpan, dated January 23, 1973)

In his reply to E. E. Akpan, La Mar S. Williams made these comments:

I am sorry to hear that you have changed your mind regarding your affiliation with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. . . .

I am sorry to learn that you were unfortunate enough to read such unfavorable literature as *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* by Jerald and Sandra Tanner. They have done much to discredit the church by the material they have published which is misleading in its nature and misunderstood by those who read it. According to information I have received, Mr. and Mrs. Tanner are not in good standing in our church, and if I were you, I would disregard any literature printed by them. . . . May the Lord continue to bless you in your religious activity. (Letter dated February 27, 1973)

The reader will notice that we have photographically reprinted all four of these letters in this booklet.

From the information we have presented, the reader can see that the Nigerian mission was a complete failure. Michael Marquardt recently did some research with regard to this mission and found that the Mormon Church only claims to have 25 members in Nigeria, and there is some question as to how many of these members are white.

BOOK OF ABRAHAM COVER-UP

One of the most important cover-ups that the Mormon leaders have engaged in is the one concerning the Book of Abraham. Dr. Hugh Nibley has been deeply involved in this cover-up.

Joseph Smith claimed that the Book of Abraham was a translation of a roll of Egyptian papyrus which the Mormons purchased in 1835. This book is now published in the *Pearl of Great Price* which is one of the four standard works of the Mormon Church. According to David O. McKay, the ninth President of the Mormon Church, it contains the only scriptural basis for denying Negroes the Priesthood:

I know of no scriptural basis for denying the Priesthood to Negroes other than one verse in the Book of Abraham (1:26). . . . (*Mormonism and the Negro*, Part 2, page 19)

At any rate, while Egyptologists questioned the authenticity of Joseph Smith's work because of his interpretation of three

drawings included in the printed version of the "Book of Abraham," they were unable to prove that the text of the book itself was mistranslated because the original papyrus had become lost. On November 27, 1967, however, the entire picture changed, for the *Deseret News* announced that

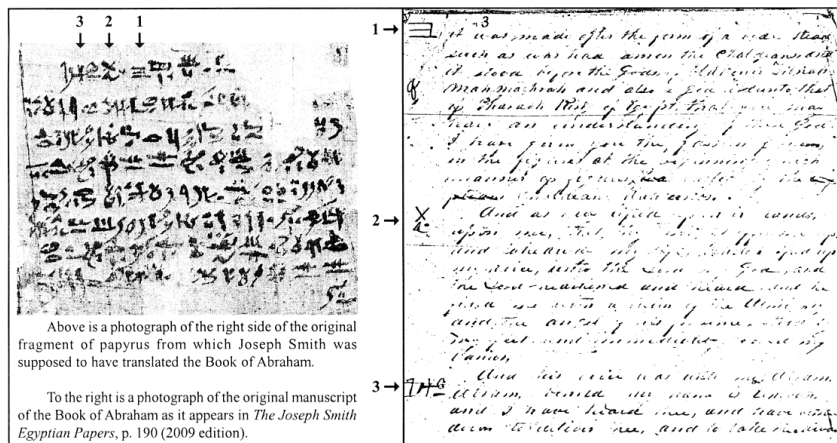
A collection of pa[p]yrus manuscripts, long believed to have been destroyed in the Chicago fire of 1871, was presented to The Church . . . by the Metropolitan Museum of Art. . . . Included in the papyri is a manuscript identified as the original document from which Joseph Smith had copied the drawing which he called "Facsimile No.1" and published with the Book of Abraham. (*Deseret News*, November 27, 1967, page 1)

While the Church leaders were willing to admit that the drawing which Joseph Smith used for Fac. No. 1 in the Book of Abraham was among the manuscripts, they were reluctant to admit that the fragment of papyrus from which Joseph Smith "translated" the text for the Book of Abraham itself was among the collection.

In the *Salt Lake City Messenger* for March 1968, we pointed out that the fragment of papyrus which Dr. Nibley labeled "XI. Small 'Sensen' text (unillustrated)" was the very fragment Joseph Smith "translated" the Book of Abraham from. The identification of this fragment as the original from which Joseph Smith translated the Book of Abraham has been made possible by a comparison with *Joseph Smith's Egyptian Alphabet and Grammar*. This document was suppressed by the Mormon leaders for 130 years. When we obtained a microfilm copy of it in 1966, we immediately published it. Even before our publication, however, Dr. James R. Clark, of the Brigham Young University, had admitted that the Egyptian characters Joseph Smith used for his Book of Abraham are found in the "Egyptian Alphabet and Grammar":

. . . 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. . . . One manuscript is the 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*, Salt Lake City, 1962, pages 172-173)

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*. Below is photographic proof that the Sensen Papyrus is the source of the Book of Abraham.



Above 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.

To the right is a photograph of the original manuscript of the Book of Abraham as it appears in *The Joseph Smith Egyptian Papers*, p. 190 (2009 edition).

Mormonism Like Watergate?

Bishop A. D. Obot
P. O. Box 53,
ABAK,
South Eastern State,
Nigeria, West Africa
December 21, 1972.

Religious Research Center
P. O. Box 3,
Alta Loma, Calif. 91701
U.S.A.

Dear Brother in Christ,

Greetings to you in Jesus Christ Precious Name. Thank you very much for your booklet, Three reasons not to become a mormon.

Since on August 1972, I am no more with the Organisation of the Church Of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints and I will never go back to that group. I am in the Crusades group. I have passed your booklet to the Mormon group of which I believe the booklet will reveal more to them and they will spread it round.

My self I donot know more about them until Dr. O. J. Udo who was at BYU, Provo, Utah return back home and he told me all about Mormon and from there I resign and make up my mind to be Crusader.

I hope to hear from you, God bless you and lead you to do his good work Amen.

Yours Sincerely


A. D. Obot

ADO

Mormonism Like Watergate?

Bishop A. D. Obot,
P.O. Box 53,
ABAK,
South Eastern State,
N i g e r i a, West Africa,

July 1st, 1972.

Elder J. B. Peterson,
Religious Research Center,
P.O. Box 3,
Atta Loma, California 91701,
U.S.A.

Dear Elder Peterson,

Greetings to you in Christ Precious Name. I am the Bishop in charge Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints in Nigeria, and we are 48 congregations with the total membership of 20,698.

Your letter of Feb. 1, 1972 was mishanded by the Post Office and latter was redirected to me at ABAK and I have it yesterday with pleasure. I am still in charge of the work.

We will appreciate very much to hear from you. The Government do not prevent any true Religious group coming to Evangelize the people, but those who are not truthful to themselves. If you want to come into the country to do religious work tell us and we will tell you what to do and to apply for your visa.

We will give to you one hundred percent support to get your visa: The last civil war of thirty months has ruined us and we thank the Lord who led us to live.

Write soon, we will hold our General Council on July 26th to 30th, 1972 at IBUSA - Midwest State.

God bless you also lead you to do his will - A m e n.

Yours sincerely,


A. D. Obot,
President.

Mormonism Like Watergate?

GRACE AND TRUTH CHURCH,
Ikot Ebak P.o.,
O P O B O,
South Eastern State,
Nigeria, West Africa.

23rd January, 1973.

Elder L.S. Williams,
47 E. South Temple Street,
Salt Lake City, Utah.,
U. S. A:

Dear Elder William,

Praise the Lord, greetings to you in Jesus Christ precious Name. We are the group Bishop E. A. Attah led to join with you, but now seeing the truth revealed to us about the mormon teachings we have decided in our General Conference of 18th - 21st Jan., 1973 to adopt the name above.

MORMONISM - SHADOW OR REALITY?

BY

JERALD & SANDRA TANNER:

ENLARGED EDITION:

We notice many things, the most important is: The Negro in mormon theology page 262, If God curse Negro, and not pleasing with the Black skin, as believed by the Church of Jesus Christ of LDS Mormon organisation, so the whole Africa as a nation and other black skinned people are not redeemed by Christ?

We see no way to affiliate with mormon group, and you did not reveal this to us upon your visit to us and when visiting us you did not stay at our home.

Therefore with many other reasons we are no more with mormon organisation what about the teaching of Jesus Christ in Matt. 28:19. Should the Gospel be preached to the white only?

We are no longer be known and called Church of Jesus Christ of LDS, and we are no more with your organisation please. All the 25 congregations have withdrawn from Mormon organisation.

Thank you, God bless you. Amen.

Yours Faithfully,



E. E. AKPAN,
SECRETARY FOR

GRACE AND TRUTH CHURCH:

BEA.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

47 E. SOUTH TEMPLE ST. SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH 84111

February 27, 1973

Mr. E. E. Akpan
Ikot Ebak P. A.
OPOBO
South Eastern State
Nigeria, West Africa

Dear Mr. Akpan:

Please accept my appreciation for your correspondence of January 23rd.

I am sorry to hear that you have changed your mind regarding your affiliation with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We believe that you have every right to choose the religion that you would like to follow. I thank you for your thoughtfulness in letting me know by correspondence.

I am sorry to learn that you were unfortunate enough to receive such unfavorable literature as Mormonism-Shadow or Reality? by Jerald and Sandra Tanner. They have done much to discredit the church by the material they have published which is misleading in its nature and misunderstood by those who read it. According to information I have received, Mr. and Mrs. Tanner are not in good standing in our church, and if I were you, I would disregard any literature printed by them. We believe with all our heart that the gospel should be preached to every kindred, tongue and people. It is for every race.

I am a bishop and have some black members in my congregation. They are active and faithful members. We love them and they are full supporters of the church.

If we can help you in any way, kindly let us know. May the Lord continue to bless you in your religious activity.

Sincerely yours,



LaMar S. Williams
Missionary Department

LSW/elc

Mormonism Like Watergate?

In *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* pages 311-314 we furnished additional proof that the “Sensen” papyrus is the source from which Joseph Smith “translated” the Book of Abraham.

At any rate, this fragment of papyrus has now been translated by three different Egyptologists, and they have all come to the conclusion that it is in reality an appendage to the Egyptian “Book of Breathings,” and has nothing to do with Abraham or his religion. It is in fact a pagan funerary document.

Instead of facing the truth concerning this matter, the Mormon leaders have done everything they could to avoid it. They have appointed Dr. Hugh Nibley to defend the Book of Abraham and to show that it is divinely inspired.

Since the “Sensen” papyrus provides the real devastating evidence against the Book of Abraham, Dr. Nibley has finally decided that he must some way disassociate the two documents. In the *Salt Lake Tribune*, for November 25, 1973, Dr. Nibley stated:

It would seem that Mr. and Mrs. Tanner have been hopelessly hung up from the first on one issue, to which they perpetually revert with a sort of hypnotic fascination. It is the claim that the Book of Breathings has been “identified as the very source of the Book of Abraham.” Identified by whom? By them, to be sure. The minute I saw the text I declared that it could not possibly be the source of the Book of Abraham because it was a “Sen-sen” text—that being about all I could make out of it at the time. This displeased my colleagues at BYU who were desperately hoping that we had struck pay dirt, . . . (*Salt Lake Tribune*, November 25, 1973)

This is an amazing statement to be coming from Hugh Nibley. Has Dr. Nibley completely forgot that in 1968 he publicly admitted that “the little ‘Sensen’ scroll” supplied “the symbols for the Book of Abraham”? At a meeting held at the University of Utah on May 20, 1968, Dr. Nibley stated:

Within a week of the publication of the papyri students . . . called 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 “Sen-sen” 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 mindreaders.

Writing in *Brigham Young University Studies*, Dr. Nibley stated:

It has long been known that the characters “interpreted” by Joseph Smith in his Egyptian Alphabet and Grammar are treated by him as super-cryptograms; and now it is apparent that the source of those characters is the unillustrated fragment on which the word Sen-sen appears repeatedly. This identifies it as possibly belonging to those writings known as the Book of Breathings, though that in turn is merely “compilations and excerpts from older funerary spells and burial formulas.” (*BYU Studies*, Spring, 1968, page 249)

In the LDS Church’s *Improvement Era* Dr. Nibley conceded that “the original papyri” which Joseph Smith used in “preparing the text of the Book of Abraham” had been located:

. . . the presence on the scene of some of the original papyri, including those used by the Prophet in preparing the text of the Book of Abraham and the Facsimiles with their commentaries, has not raised a single new question, though, as we shall see, it has solved some old ones. (*Improvement Era*, May, 1968, page 54)

Dr. Nibley made this admission in *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*:

But after all, what do the papyri tell us? That Joseph Smith had them, that he studied them, and that the smallest and most insignificant-looking of them is connected in some mysterious way to the *Pearl of Great Price*. (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Summer, 1968, page 102)

It is almost impossible to believe that Dr. Nibley could make these statements, and then turn right around and claim that the “Sensen” papyrus is not connected with the Book of Abraham.

Dr. Nibley would almost make it appear that we are the only ones who believe that the “Sensen” papyrus is the source Joseph Smith used for the Book of Abraham. Actually, Hugh Nibley’s own instructor in Egyptology, Professor Klaus Baer, accepts this identification. Speaking of the “Sensen” fragment, he states: “Joseph Smith thought that this papyrus contained the Book of Abraham” (*Dialogue*, Fall 1968, page 111). In footnote 11 of the same article Klaus Baer states that “This identification is now certain.”

The Mormon Egyptologist Dee Jay Nelson made these statements:

What do the newly discovered “Metropolitan Papyri” have to do with the Book of Abraham? The original ancient Egyptian text from which Joseph Smith “translated” the Book of Abraham has been found! . . .

How do we know that Joseph Smith “translated” the Book of Abraham from column 1 of the Hor Sensen Fragment No. 1? Joseph Smith tells us that it is so in the most positive of ways by supplying a list of the ancient characters and attaching to it the “translation.” This list of characters, though crudely copied, precisely matches the first two lines of hieratic characters in column 1 on the Hor Papyrus Fragment No. 1. Joseph Smith’s character list and the attached “translation” is found in the notebook entitled *Grammar and Alphabet of the Egyptian Language*. Before the disclosure that the Joseph Smith Papyri had been found in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City, I had succeeded in identifying the characters accompanying Joseph Smith’s “translation” as traditional hieratic and had, in spite of the poor quality of the copy, identified several individual characters, but it was Grant Heward who later pointed out to me that the characters drawn by Joseph Smith in the left hand margin of the Grammar and Alphabet were the same as in the original Hor Sensen text. The fact is indisputable. (*The Joseph Smith Papyri*, Part 2, 1968, pages 13-14)

The Mormon scholars Richley Crapo, John Tvedtnes and Benjamin Urrutia have all admitted that there is a relationship between the “Sensen” papyrus and the Book of Abraham. Thomas Stuart Ferguson, one of the most well-known scholars in the Mormon Church, not only accepted the identification but also came to the conclusion that the Book of Abraham is a forgery. Before coming to this conclusion, however, Mr. Ferguson had devoted a great deal of his life trying to prove the Book of Mormon by archaeology. He was recognized by the Mormon people as a great defender of the faith and had written at least three books on the subject—one of them in collaboration with Milton R. Hunter of the First Council of the Seventy. His book *One Fold and One Shepherd* has been very popular with the Mormons. Mr. Ferguson was the founder of the New World Archaeological Foundation—now known as the Brigham Young University New World Archaeological Foundation.

On November 12, 1968, Thomas Stuart Ferguson wrote us a letter in which he said: “You are doing a great thing—getting out some truth on the Book of Abraham.” On December 2, 1970, he paid us a visit and among other things he told us that he had given

Mormonism Like Watergate?

up the Book of Abraham. A few months later Mr. Ferguson wrote a letter in which he severely criticized Dr. Nibley's defense of the Book of Abraham. In this letter he went on to state:

... he could not, he dared not, he did not, face the true issue: "Could Joseph Smith translate Egyptian?" I clipped every one of his articles, and have them in a single file—and I have reviewed them—looking in vain for that issue.

We have now published copies of Joseph Smith's working notebook . . . By study of the **Grammar**, the recovered papyrus, and the illustrations, it is perfectly obvious that we now have the original [*sic*] manuscript material used by Jos. Smith in working up the Book of Abraham. Prof. Klaus Baer of Univ. of Chicago, Prof. Lutz of U. C. (Berkeley), Prof. Lesko (U. C. Berkeley) and Egyptologist Dee Jay Nelson, all agree that the original manuscript Egyptian text translates into the Breathing Permit of Hor (Egyptian God). Baer's translation was published by *Dialogue*. . . . The work of the two UC professors was done at my request and is unpublished. All 4 agree with each other, and without having conferred or collaborated. . . .

Joseph Smith announced, in print (*History of the Church*, Vol. II, page 236) that "one of the rolls contained the writings of Abraham, another the writings of Joseph of Egypt . . ." Since 4 scholars, who have established that they can read Egyptian, say that the manuscripts deal with neither Abraham nor Joseph—and since the 4 reputable men tell us exactly what the manuscripts do say—I must conclude that Joseph Smith had not the remotest skill in things Egyptian-hieroglyphics. To my surprise, one of the highest officials in the Mormon Church agreed with that conclusion when I made that very statement to him on Dec. 4, 1970—privately in one-to-one [c]onversation. . . .

The attempts, including Nibley's, to explain away and dodge the trap into which Joseph Smith fell when he had the audacity to translate the Chandler texts, and keep the original Egyptian texts around, are absurd, in my view. . . .

Of course the dodge as to the Book of Abraham must be: "We don't have the original manuscript from which the Book of Abraham was translated." I conclude that we do have it and have translations of it. (Letter dated March 13, 1971)

For more information on this subject see *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* pages 102, 103, 332 and 333.

In his desperate attempt to save the Book of Abraham, Dr. Nibley now claims that the portion of the papyrus which Joseph Smith "translated" as the Book of Abraham is still lost. Writing in the *Salt Lake Tribune* for November 25, 1973, Dr. Nibley stated:

The Abraham Papyrus may have belonged on the same roll as the Book of Breathings and Facsimile 1, but if so, it was in the section that has been cut off and lost.

Just What Happens

If it seems strange that the illustration to one story should accompany the text of another, the Joseph Smith papyrus is proof that that is just what happens, for, Abraham or not, the scene depicted in Facsimile No. 1 is nowhere referred to in the text that follows it—it belongs somewhere else, following the strange Egyptian custom. Only by matching up the fibers, in fact, is it possible to show that the conflicting text and vignette really were put on the same strip of papyrus. (*Salt Lake Tribune*, November 25, 1973, page 2 G)

Dr. Nibley would have us believe that the scroll started with Facsimile No. 1 from the Book of Abraham. This was followed not by the Book of Abraham, but by the Book of Breathings (an Egyptian funerary document). Finally, after the Book of Breathings was copied, the rest of the Book of Abraham was added. It is this portion of the scroll which Dr. Nibley claims is missing. What a fantastic and unreasonable theory! This idea reminds us of the story of the eighteen-minute gap in President Nixon's tape. The most important part is conveniently missing!

Dr. Nibley claims that there is no relationship between the papyrus Joseph Smith used in Facsimile No. 1 and the text of the Book of Breathings which follows on the same scroll. Does he not realize that the name of the deceased—i.e., "Hor"—appears on both fragments of papyrus?

In his attack on us in the *Salt Lake Tribune*, Hugh Nibley says that we produce "as evidence the opinions of a mysterious 'Mormon Egyptologist' whose credentials they prefer not to discuss. It is the purest Watergate."

If Dr. Nibley had taken the time to read *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* page 317, or *The Joseph Smith Papyri*, Part 2, he would have discovered that we have given a great deal of information about Dee Jay Nelson's qualifications. In his article Mr. Nibley directly attacks Mr. Nelson:

It is inexcusable for those who presume to set themselves up as a light to be as oblivious to what is going on as Mr. Nelson and the Tanners seem to be.

In making this attack Dr. Nibley seems to forget the comments he previously made concerning Dee Jay Nelson and his work. Writing in the *Brigham Young University Studies* in 1968, Hugh Nibley stated:

The publication of the Joseph Smith Egyptian Papyri has now begun to bear fruit. Two efforts at translation and commentary have already appeared, the one an example of pitfalls to be avoided, the other a conscientious piece of work for which the Latter-day Saints owe a debt of gratitude to Mr. Dee Jay Nelson. . . .

The first of the two studies can be dismissed with a few words. It appeared in a local newsheet, *The Salt Lake City Messenger*, for March, 1968, as a clincher to what was blatantly called "The Fall of the Book of Abraham," . . .

It is a different story when we come to Mr. Dee Jay Nelson's work, the *Joseph Smith Papyri*. This is a conscientious and courageous piece of work—courageous because Brother Nelson has been willing to do what Gardiner advises all Egyptologists to do: to set up a target for others to shoot at. Aware of the delicacy of the problem, Nelson has been careful to consult top-ranking scholars where he has found himself in doubt. He has taken the first step in a serious study of the Facsimiles of the *Pearl of Great Price*, supplying students with a usable and reliable translation of the available papyri that once belonged to Joseph Smith. . . .

In the *Pearl of Great Price* Joseph Smith opened the door to the study of other worlds. . . . It would now seem that the Latter-day Saints are being pushed by force of circumstances through the door they have so long been reluctant to enter. And to Mr. Dee Jay Nelson goes the credit of being the first to make the plunge. (*BYU Studies*, Spring 1968, pages 245, 247 and 254)

It is interesting to note that we had to print the work by Dee Jay Nelson which Dr. Nibley refers to because the LDS Church did not want a translation of the papyri.

As late as October, 1968, Dr. Nibley was still commending Mr. Nelson's work. In a letter to Mr. Nelson, dated October 1, 1968, Dr. Nibley wrote:

Dear Brother Nelson:

I hope like anything that you did not interpret my long churlish silences as indicative of indifference, disapproval or misgiving. Anything but. I watch your work with interest while cooking my own pot of stew. . . .

May I ask you to be patient for a little while until I can give your admirable work at least some of the attention it deserves.

It is really hard to believe that Dr. Nibley can so completely reverse his position in so short a time.

In his article in the *Salt Lake Tribune*, Hugh Nibley tries to make it appear that the Mormon Church has nothing to hide with regard to the papyri and is zealous to get the truth out:

Mormonism Like Watergate?

Coverup? The instant the church got possession of the papyri, photos were sent out to all the world. . . . Such frankness and candor in publication is virtually unheard of in the academic world. (*Salt Lake Tribune*, November 25, 1973)

These statements are certainly misleading. In our book *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* pages 294-369, we show that the church has fought off the truth about the Book of Abraham for many years. Actually, the papyri might never have come to light if it had not been for critics of the church. Wesley P. Walters was on the track of the papyri and had even written to the Metropolitan Museum just before the church announced the discovery on November 27, 1967. The Mormon Church leaders must have realized that if they did not publish the documents someone else would.

Dr. Nibley himself had photographs of the papyri in the “summer of 1966.” He showed them to a friend who is an Egyptologist. When this Egyptologist was pressed for information on the subject, he wrote:

If it keeps the Mormons happy to hide a few papyri that are probably of interest to no one but themselves, why not? . . . I regret that my position in this matter must be essentially frustrating and seem stubbornly pigheaded to those to whom combatting the Mormons is a matter of great importance. (Letter dated September 2, 1967)

If the Church leaders were really so anxious to get out the truth, why did they not publish *Joseph Smith’s Egyptian Alphabet and Grammar*. For 130 years they suppressed this document because it proves that Joseph Smith did not understand the Egyptian language. Even Hugh Nibley admitted that *Joseph Smith’s Egyptian Alphabet and Grammar* “was hidden and suppressed . . . because it was nobody else’s business” (*Brigham Young University Studies*, Winter 1968, page 176). Writing in the *Brigham Young University Studies*, Summer, 1971, page 398, Dr. Nibley says that the Egyptian Alphabet and Grammar was “wisely kept out of circulation, for such things could easily be misinterpreted by malicious minds.”

It is also interesting to note that the Church Historian’s Office suppressed an actual piece of papyrus from Joseph Smith’s collection. The 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 346)

When we printed *Joseph Smith’s Egyptian Alphabet and Grammar* in 1966, we included a photograph of this fragment. Grant Reward identified it as an actual fragment of papyrus, and in the *Salt Lake City Messenger* for April 1966, we stated that the Egyptian Alphabet and Grammar included “a photograph of an actual piece of papyrus which may be part of the ‘Book of Abraham’ or the ‘Book of Joseph!’”

Almost two years after we published the photograph of this document, the Mormon leaders decided to make photographs of it available to scholars. The Church Section of the *Deseret News* carried this statement on February 10, 1968:

An interesting development in the work going on at BYU by Dr. Hugh Nibley on the papyri fragments turned over to the Church by the New York Museum of Art is the locating of another fragment in the vaults at the Church Historian’s office.

The latest fragment “find” has been in the vaults as long as A. William Lund and Earl E. Olson, assistant Church historians, can remember. . . .

The fragment is part of a collection the Church has regarding the Egyptian Alphabet and Grammar prepared by the Prophet Joseph Smith. (*Deseret News*, February 10, 1968)

The fact that the Mormon leaders suppressed this fragment for 130 years, refutes Hugh Nibley’s claim that there has been no cover-up.

Not only have the Mormon leaders been guilty of suppressing original documents which would have revealed the truth about the Book of Abraham, but they have refused to provide a translation of the papyri for their people. Six years ago the *Improvement Era* stated that Dr. Nibley was going to unfold “the meaning of the hieroglyphics and illustrations on these valuable manuscripts.” No translation of the papyri ever appeared in the pages of *Improvement Era*—the Church magazine. Now Dr. Nibley tells us that he has prepared an 800-page book on the papyri:

It is all about the “Book of Breathings” and 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. (*Salt Lake Tribune*, November 25, 1973)

Dr. Nibley does not say whether this will include an actual translation of the Joseph Smith Papyri. If he ever does publish a translation of the papyri, however, it will only be because he was forced into it.

It is interesting to note that Dr. Nibley has now had photographs of the papyri since “the summer of 1966,” and the original papyri have been at Brigham Young University since they were presented to the Church, yet he has failed to produce a translation. Dee Jay Nelson completed his “Translation and Preliminary Survey” in less than two months. Hugh Nibley has had photographs of the papyri for about eight years, but no translation has appeared. Dr. Nibley now admits that he was not really prepared to translate the papyri when he received it:

Then there was the matter of Egyptian. A few courses at Berkeley and Chicago were hardly adequate for dealing with the peculiar document . . . It has taken at least five more years to learn Egyptian as well as I should have known it in the first place. Most of all, however, it was the Book of Breathings itself that stopped the clock, as final returns were repeatedly postponed to hear from some new precinct. (*Salt Lake Tribune*, November 25, 1973)

If Dr. Nibley was not qualified for the translation of the papyri, why did he accept the job? Why did he allow the *Improvement Era* for January 1968 to state that he “is eminently qualified for the project he has undertaken”?

In a letter dated February 8, 1968, Dr. Nibley stated that the “papyri are not difficult to translate,” and that he had “made a translation of some of the papyrus.” If he actually did make a translation, why didn’t he publish it? Perhaps the real truth of the matter was revealed in an article Nibley wrote in 1968: “. . . it is doubtful whether any translation could do as much good as harm” (*Brigham Young University Studies*, Spring 1968, page 251). It would seem to us that the Mormon leaders did not choose Dr. Nibley to direct the investigation of the papyri because of his ability to translate, but rather because of his ability to cover up and obscure the real issues involved.

In a letter to Dee Jay Nelson, dated June 27, 1967, Hugh Nibley claimed that he did not want to become involved in the “P.G.P. business”—the “P.G.P.” is the *Pearl of Great Price*, which, of course, contains the Book of Abraham:

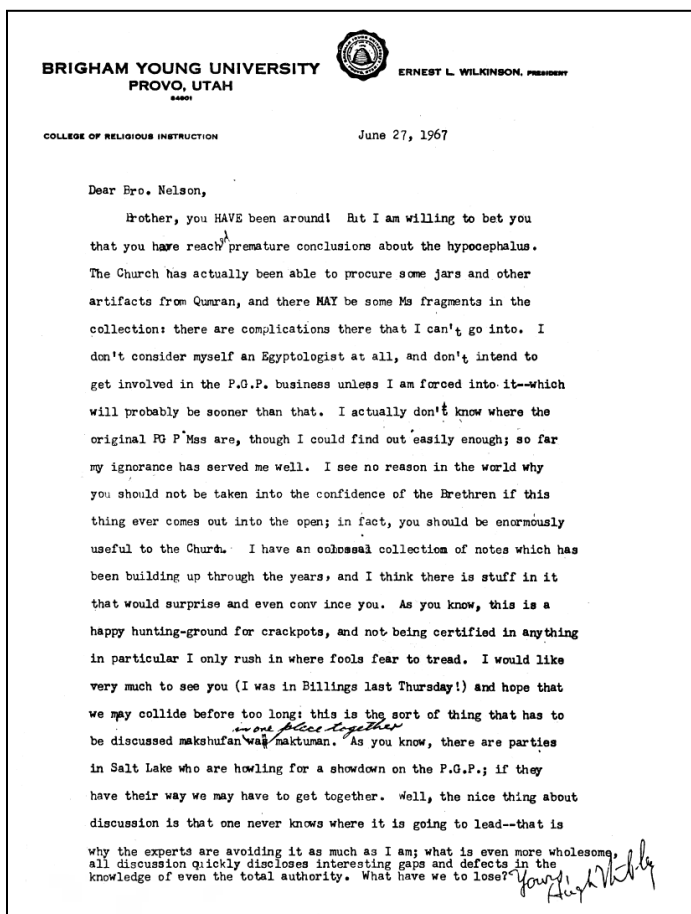
Dear Bro. Nelson,

Brother, you HAVE been around! . . . 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—which will probably be sooner than that. I actually don’t know where the original PGP Mss are, though I could find out easily enough; so far my ignorance has

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served me well. I see no reason in the world why you should not be taken into the confidence of the Brethren if this thing ever comes out into the open; in fact, you should be enormously useful to the Church. . . . As you know, there are parties in Salt Lake who are howling for a showdown on the P.G.P.; if they have their way we may have to get together. Well, the nice thing about discussion is that one never knows where it is going to lead—that is why the experts are avoiding it as much as I am. . . . (Letter from Hugh Nibley to Dee Jay Nelson, dated June 27, 1967)

Since this letter reveals a great deal about Hugh Nibley's role as defender of the Book of Abraham we have photographically reproduced it below.



Dr. Nibley's letter plainly shows that we were the ones who wanted to bring things out into the open—"howling for a showdown"—and that he was "avoiding" the confrontation over the Book of Abraham. While we have no personal animosity towards Hugh Nibley, we feel that his role in the Book of Abraham cover-up must be exposed so that the Mormon people can know the truth.

In this investigation we have found that Dr. Nibley can not even get his facts straight with regard to events which happened in the last ten years. How, then, can we trust him to tell us about events which happened thousands of years ago?

NOTHING TO HIDE?

In his article in the *Salt Lake Tribune*, Hugh Nibley would have the reader believe that the Mormon Church does not engage in cover-ups. Dr. Nibley seems to have a very short memory, for one of the best examples of suppression involves his great-grandfather's

journal. In a letter dated March 8, 1961, Hugh Nibley informed us of the Alexander Neibaur Journal:

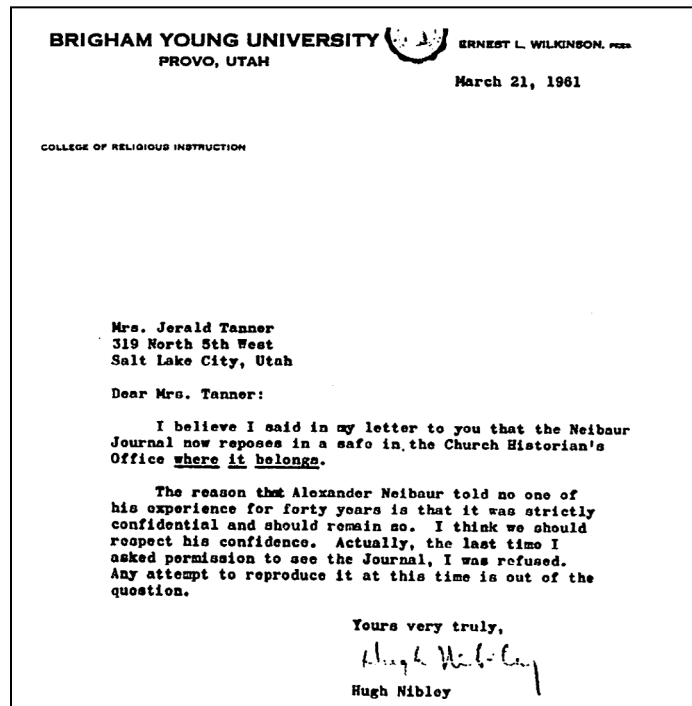
"The day my great-grandfather heard that remarkable account of the First Vision from Joseph Smith he wrote it down in his journal; and for 40 years after he never mentioned it to a soul. Therefore, when I came across the story unexpectedly I handed the book over to Joseph Fielding Smith and it is now where it belongs—in a safe."

Upon learning that this journal was in the possession of the LDS Church Historian, we wrote and requested a copy of it. Joseph Fielding Smith replied as follows:

Private journals are filed in this office with the understanding that they will be available to members of the family, but not to the general public. The furnishing of copies of journals also follows this ruling.

I am sorry but this office is not in a position to furnish you with the microfilm or photograph of the Alexander Neibaur journal which you requested in your letter. The ten dollars you enclosed is herewith returned.

Two things should be noted about Joseph Fielding Smith's reply: First, he refused to make a copy of the journal. Second, he stated that journals were placed in the Historian's Office with the understanding that relatives could not only see, but also obtain copies of the journals. Strange as it may seem, however, on March 21, 1961, we received a letter from Hugh Nibley in which he stated that even he was refused permission to see this journal. Below is a photograph of that letter.



It is strange indeed that Dr. Nibley would be denied permission to see his own great-grandfather's journal especially since he was the one that donated it to the historians Office.

As we have already mentioned, Hugh Nibley claimed that the Church photographically reproduced the "strange" account of the First Vision as soon as it was discovered. This, of course, was untrue, for we had published it some four years before. At any rate, after telling that the Church published photographs of

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the papyri and the accounts of the First Vision, Dr. Nibley stated: “these are the ‘tapes’; with them before him any reader can judge for himself; all the rest is mere opinion and interpretation” (*Salt Lake Tribune*, November 25, 1973).

While we are happy to have these few “tapes,” there are thousands of “tapes” that are still being suppressed. The Joseph Smith diaries, for instance, should have been photographically reproduced by the Church. Why have the Church leaders refused to do this? We notice that since our article in the *Tribune*, the Church magazines have printed brief extracts and photographs of a few unimportant pages from Joseph Smith’s diaries. Such a token offering is hardly worth mentioning, and historians will never be satisfied until these diaries are published in their entirety.

Like President Nixon, the Mormon leaders have given all kinds of reasons why their documents cannot be made public (see

Mormonism—Shadow or Reality? pages 5-13), but these excuses all break down under investigation. There can only be one reason why they have suppressed these records, and that is that they do not want the truth concerning Joseph Smith and the origin of the Church to come out.

We feel that the suppression of truth by government officials is a wicked practice, but deceit and cover-up by religious leaders can be much worse. Political leaders can only bring us into temporal bondage, but religious deception can lead to spiritual bondage. According to Jesus, the condition of our soul should be our most important concern:

For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? (Matthew 16:26)