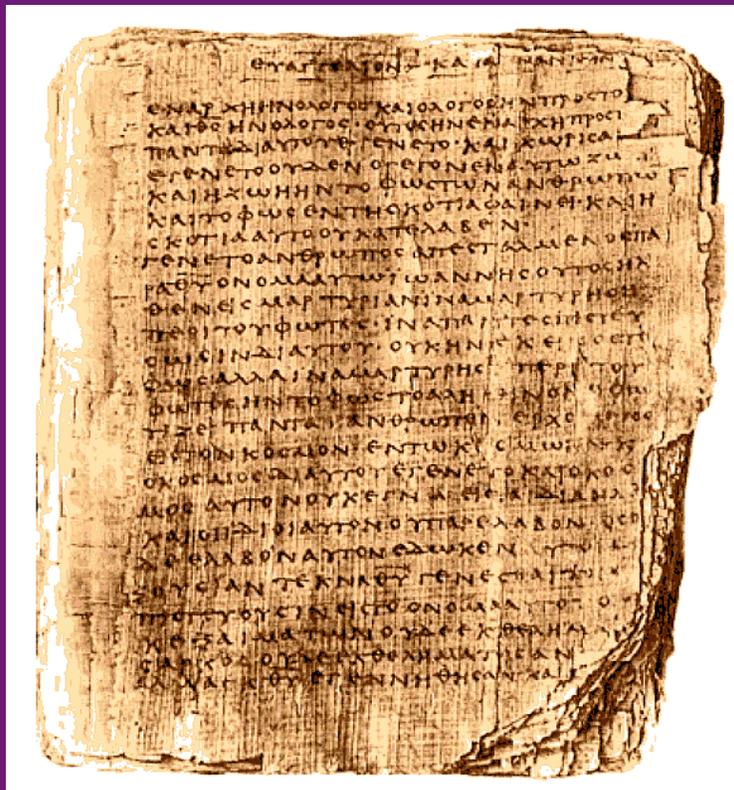


# MORMON SCRIPTURES AND THE BIBLE



Papyrus Bodmer II - About 200 A.D.

By Jerald and Sandra Tanner

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**By Jerald and Sandra Tanner**

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# MORMON SCRIPTURES AND THE BIBLE

The Mormon Church accepts the Bible as one of its four standard works. The Book of Mormon quotes large portions of the King James Version of the Bible, and Joseph Smith's other revelations are filled with material from the Bible. Since the King James Version was printed about 200 years before Joseph Smith was even born, it is in no way dependent upon Mormon scriptures. Joseph Smith's works, on the other hand, could not stand if the Bible were proven false, for many of his revelations are built upon the historical accuracy of the Bible, even though they may differ in doctrinal content. Nevertheless, many Mormons, seemingly ignorant of the fact that they are undermining the whole foundation of their own church, have made some vicious attacks upon the Bible. Most of these attacks are not based upon sound historical evidence or methods. In fact, they reveal a lack of knowledge concerning Bible history and problems. Heber C. Snell, a former LDS Institute Director, has made these interesting observations regarding the status of the Bible in the Mormon Church:

In 1830, when the Church was organized, it had two sacred books, the Bible and the Book of Mormon, . . .

From occupying the status of the first of two books of scripture in the Church the Bible became, in the course of about two decades, one of four. There are indications that it has now declined to the position of third or even fourth place among the Church's sacred books. Certainly many among the Latter-day Saints regard it as inferior in authority to the Book of Mormon and the *Doctrine and Covenants*, and some appear to subordinate it also to the *Pearl of Great Price*. . . .

This change of status of the Bible seems to be well attested by the relatively little attention given it by Church speakers and writers. One seldom hears from the pulpit a sermon or lecture dealing with it in an historical or analytical way. . . . The writer counted thirteen articles, making a total of 41 pages, in *The Contributor*, volumes 1 to 17, dealing in some fashion with it, as against thirty-six, a total of 26 pages, on the Book of Mormon. An examination of the *Improvement Era* Master Index, covering the years 1897–1940 inclusive, gave thirty-six titles under Bible, or 137 pages, as compared with 124 titles and 725 pages under Book of Mormon. . . . My work, as a teacher of the Bible in L.D.S. collegiate institutions over a period of a quarter of a century, has failed to convince me that our people have made much advancement in biblical knowledge. (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Spring 1967, pages 56–57)

The Mormon writer Kent Robson made these statements:

I am afraid that most Mormon people don't know about, nor have they thought about many of the biblical problems. Hence these people can't speak at all; they simply don't have any beliefs on some crucial issues. . . . The origin and development of the New Testament Canon has been largely ignored by Mormon writers in spite of the crucial role these investigations play in a discussion of several basic issues. I choose to believe that this disregard of biblical scholarship is not an indication of fear and insecurity vis-a-vis certain cherished beliefs, but rather reflects only a lack of knowledge among the members of the Church. (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Spring 1967, page 89)

## PAINE'S INFLUENCE

Davis Bitton has this to say concerning the "Mormonism of the nineteenth century":

For the Mormons the Bible was only one among several scriptures; its message was often described as applicable to a certain time and place in the past, with modern problems requiring new revelation; it was seen as having been corrupted, distorted, and inaccurately translated, . . . The Mormons could scarcely be charged with Bibliolatry, and it is perhaps understandable that Protestant ministers saw Mormon criticism of the Bible to be essentially the same as that of the rationalists. (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Autumn 1966, page 113)

In a footnote on the same page, Davis Bitton states: "J. B. Turner, *Mormonism in All Ages* (New York, 1842), argues rather convincingly that Mormons were so convinced of the inadequacy of the Bible and the apostate condition of Christianity that, if they ever abandoned Mormonism, they were almost inevitably agnostic toward all religion." Although Davis Bitton does not feel that Mormons were as radical in their criticism of the Bible as some others, he does feel that "rationalists such as Thomas Paine had furnished valuable ammunition" for the Mormon attack on the accuracy of the Bible.

Thomas Paine's book, *The Age of Reason*, undoubtedly had an effect upon Mormon thinking. This book, written in the 1790's, caused a great deal of controversy and was therefore well known in Joseph Smith's time. While Thomas Paine was

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a brilliant man and raised a number of important questions in his book, he wrote with such sarcasm that his work was very offensive to a Christian. In one place he talks of “the stupid Bible of the church, that teacheth man nothing” (*The Age of Reason*, reprinted by The Thomas Paine Foundation, New York, page 189). At another place he states: “This book, the Bible is too ridiculous even for criticism” (Ibid., page 131). On page 145 of the same book, Thomas Paine stated: “I have now gone through the Bible, as a man would go through a wood with an axe on his shoulder, and fell trees. Here they lie; and the priests, if they can, may replant them. They may, perhaps, stick them in the ground, but they will never make them grow.”

Thomas Paine’s book is very unusual in that he wrote the first part of his criticism of the Scriptures without access to a Bible. On page 35 of his book, we find these statements:

I recollect not enough of the passages in Job to insert them correctly; . . .

I know not how the printers have pointed this passage, for I keep no Bible; . . .

In his “Preface to Part II,” Thomas Paine wrote:

I saw many of my most intimate friends destroyed, others daily carried to prison, and I had reason to believe, and had also intimations given me, that the same danger was approaching myself.

Under these disadvantages, I began the former part of *The Age of Reason*; I had, besides, neither Bible nor Testament to refer to, though I was writing against both; nor could I procure any; notwithstanding which, I have produced a work that no Bible believer, though writing at his ease, and with a library of Church books about him, can refute. . . .

They will now find that I have furnished myself with a Bible and Testament; and I can say also that I have found them to be much worse books than I had conceived. If I have erred in anything in the former part of *The Age of Reason*, it has been by speaking better of some parts of those books than they have deserved. (*The Age of Reason*, pages 73–76)

Thomas Paine goes on to make these statements in the second part of his pamphlet:

I have spoken in a respectful manner of the book of Job in the former part of *The Age of Reason*, but without knowing at that time what I have learned since, which is, that from all the evidence that can be collected the book of Job does not belong to the Bible. (*The Age of Reason*, page 116)

. . . it is, I believe, impossible to find in any story upon record so many and such glaring absurdities, contradictions and falsehoods as are in those books. They are more numerous and striking than I had any expectation of finding when I began this examination, and far more so than I had any idea of when I wrote the former part of *The Age of Reason*. I had then neither Bible nor Testament to refer to, nor could I procure any. (Ibid., page 161)

Joseph Smith has been accused of reading Thomas Paine’s book before he wrote the Book of Mormon. Now, while this is possible, it must be conceded that the Book of Mormon for

the most part appears to be diametrically opposed to most of Paine’s ideas. For instance, Paine claimed that the first five books of the Bible were not written by Moses. The Book of Mormon, on the other hand, states plainly that they are “the five books of Moses. . . .” (1 Nephi 5:11). The Book of Mormon does contain a rather subtle attack upon the Bible, but whether this could be linked to Thomas Paine’s book would be debatable.

Thomas Paine was very critical of the account of the creation found in Genesis. The first verse of this account reads: “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” Paine made this comment concerning this matter:

The manner in which the account opens shows it to be traditionary. It begins abruptly; it is nobody that speaks; it is nobody that hears; it is addressed to nobody; it has neither first, second, nor third person; it has every criterion of being a tradition; it has no voucher. Moses does not take it upon himself by introducing it with the formality that he uses on other occasions, such as that of saying, “The Lord spake unto Moses, saying.”

Why it has been called the Mosaic account of the Creation, I am at a loss to conceive. (*The Age of Reason*, page 20)

An examination of Joseph Smith’s “inspired” translation of this portion of Scripture, leads us to believe that he was answering Thomas Paine’s argument:

. . . **The Lord spake unto Moses, saying:** . . . in the beginning I created the heaven, and the earth upon which thou standest. (*Pearl of Great Price*, Book of Moses, 2:1)

Notice that Joseph Smith adds the exact words that Thomas Paine said should be in Genesis to prove that it was written by Moses.

Thomas Paine felt that the Bible could not be trusted as “the word of God” because of the problems involved in translation:

But how was Jesus Christ to make anything known to all nations? He could speak but one language, which was Hebrew, and there are in the world several hundred languages. Scarcely any two nations speak the same language, or understand each other; and as to translations, every man who knows anything of languages knows that it is impossible to translate from one language to another, not only without losing a great part of the original, but frequently of mistaking the sense; . . . human language, more especially as there is not an universal language, is incapable of being used as an universal means of unchangeable and uniform information, and therefore it is not the means that God useth in manifesting himself universally to man. (*The Age of Reason*, pages 31–32)

Joseph Smith also cast doubt upon the translation of the Bible, for in “The Articles of Faith,” he wrote:

8. We believe the Bible to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly; we also believe the Book of Mormon to be the word of God. (*Pearl of Great Price*, page 59)

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In his pamphlet, “Spiritual Gifts,” the Mormon Apostle Orson Pratt used arguments which resemble the ideas of Thomas Paine:

God gave many revelations to Hebrew Prophets, in the Hebrew language. Some of these revelations have been translated by human wisdom into many other languages, and called the Bible. The same revelations have been translated many times by different authors: . . . These clashing translations are circulated among the people, as the words of God, when, in reality they are the words of translators; and words too, selected by their own human wisdom.

22.—The original Hebrew manuscripts and tables of stone on which the revelations of God were recorded, and also all true copies of the same, contained the pure word of God; but any translations of them into another language by uninspired men would not be the words of God, as is clearly shown by each translator, giving a different rendering from any of the others. Therefore, the Bible in English, French, German, Italian, Spanish, Danish, and indeed, in all the languages of the earth, except the original in which it was given, is NOT the word of God, but the word of uninspired translators. It may be that now and then a sentence of these uninspired translations, is rendered in the same words that would be given by an inspired translator. . . . so far as the uninspired translators and the people are concerned, **no part** of the Bible can, with certainty, be known by them to be the word of God.

23.—The Hebrew and Greek manuscripts of the Bible from which translations have been made, are evidently very much **corrupted**, . . . the learned are under the necessity of translating from such mutilated, imperfect, and, in very many instances, contradictory copies as still exist. This uncertainty, combined with the imperfections of uninspired translations, renders the Bibles of all languages, at the present day, emphatically the **words of men**, instead of the pure word of God. (*Pamphlets By Orson Pratt*, Photomechanical Reprint of Eight Pamphlets by Orson Pratt, pages 70–71)

It is very interesting to compare the words of Thomas Paine with those uttered by the Mormon Apostle Orson Pratt half a century later. In his book, *The Age of Reason*, Thomas Paine wrote:

These books, beginning with Genesis and ending with Revelation . . . are, we are told, the word of God. . . . It is a matter altogether of uncertainty to us whether such of the writings as now appear under the name of the Old and New Testament are in the same state in which those collectors say they found them, or whether they added, altered, abridged, or dressed them up.

Be this as it may, they decided by vote which of the books out of the collection they had made should be the word of God, and which should not. They rejected several; . . . we have no other external evidence or authority for believing these books to be the word of God than what I have mentioned, which is no evidence or authority at all, . . . (*The Age of Reason*, pages 18–19)

The first question, however, upon the books of the New Testament, as upon those of the Old, is, Are they genuine? Were they written by the persons to whom they are ascribed?

. . . the presumption is that the books called the Evangelists, and ascribed to Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, were not written by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, and that they are impositions. . . . they have been **manufactured**, as the books of the Old Testament have been, by other persons than those whose names they bear. (Ibid., pages 150–151)

At what time the books ascribed to Matthew, Mark, Luke and John began to appear is altogether a matter of uncertainty. There is **not the least shadow of evidence** of who the persons were that wrote them, nor at what time they were written; . . . The originals are not in the possession of any Christian Church existing, any more than the two tables of stone written on, they pretended, by the finger of God, . . .

About three hundred and fifty years after the time that Christ is said to have lived, several writings of the kind I am speaking of were scattered in the hands of diverse individuals; and as the church had begun to form itself into a hierarchy, or church government, with temporal powers, it set itself about collecting them into a code, as we now see them, called The New Testament. They decided by vote, as I have before said in the former part of *The Age of Reason*, which of those writings, out of the collection they had made, should be the word of God, and which should not. (Ibid., pages 165–166)

The Mormon Apostle Orson Pratt made these comments in a pamphlet published in the 1850’s:

41.—Many Protestants say they take the Bible as their only rule of faith: . . . How so the Protestants prove the truth of the Bible? What **evidence** have they that the book of Matthew was inspired of God, or any other of the books of the New Testament? The only evidence they have is **tradition**. . . . But how, we enquire, are uninspired men, by the use of tradition alone, to select a genuine book from the midst of a numerous collection of spurious gospels and epistles, and prophecies, which were published under the names of the apostles, and under the names of other holy men co[n]temporary with them? It would be like the chance of drawing a prize in a lottery where there were a hundred blanks to one prize. . . .

42.—If it could be demonstrated by tradition, that every part of each book of the Old and New Testament, was, in its original, actually written by inspiration, still it cannot be determined that there is one single true copy of those originals now in existence. The whole Catholic and Protestant world cannot produce the original writings of one single book of either the Old or New Testament. . . .

48.—What shall we say then, concerning the Bible’s being a sufficient guide? Can we rely upon it in its present known **corrupted state**, as being a faithful record of God’s word? We all know that but a few of the inspired writings have descended to our times, which few quote the names of some twenty other books which are lost, . . . What few have come down to our day, have been **mutilated, changed, and corrupted**, in such a shameful manner that no two manuscripts agree. Verses and even whole chapters have been added by unknown persons; and even we do not know the authors of some whole books; and we are not certain that all those which we do know, were wrote by inspiration. Add all this **imperfection** to the **uncertainty** of the translation, and who, in his right mind, could, for one moment, suppose the Bible in its present form to be a perfect guide? Who

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knows that even one verse of the whole Bible has escaped pollution, so as to convey the same sense now that it did in the original? . . . Who knows that even the ordinances and doctrine that seem to be set forth in the present English Bible, are anything like the original? The Catholics and Protestants do not know, because tradition is too imperfect to give this knowledge. There can be no certainty as to the contents of the inspired writings until God shall inspire some one to re-write all those books over again, . . . No reflecting man can deny the necessity of such a new revelation. (*Orson Pratt's Works*, "The Bible Alone An Insufficient Guide," pages 44, 45 and 47)

While we would expect an open enemy to Christianity like Thomas Paine to make the statements he did about the Bible, it is quite shocking to find a man who professed to be a Christian making such an attack upon the Bible. The Apostle Pratt's statement that the Bible may have been changed so much that we can't even rely upon one verse sounds very strange in light of the fact that the Book of Mormon quotes hundreds of verses from the Bible. In almost all cases these verses carry the same meaning as they do in the Bible. This alone should be sufficient evidence to show the Mormons that Orson Pratt was wrong in implying that we don't know "that even one verse of the whole Bible has escaped pollution, so as to convey the same sense now" as it did in the original. Thus it is plain to see that the Bible cannot be discredited without casting a shadow of doubt on the Book of Mormon also. If the Bible is all wrong, then the Book of Mormon is also.

The Mormon Apostle Mark E. Petersen is more tactful than Pratt in his criticism of the Bible. Although he claims that portions were removed from the Bible, the identical wording of scriptures found in the King James Version and the Book of Mormon has forced him to believe that "the Lord did have a hand in the translation of the King James version":

The Book of Mormon gives many detailed quotations from the records of Laban, incidentally, giving irrefutable evidence of the accuracy of the King James version, even though much of the scripture as given originally, is **now missing**.

.....

Quotations from ancient Jewish prophets appearing in the Book of Mormon are the most correct Old Testament passages in existence today. They were copied onto the gold plates directly from the plates of brass, and translated by the gift and power of God as a part of the Book of Mormon.

And yet—these passages resemble the King James translation more than any other Bible version.

This gives reason to believe that indeed the Lord did have a hand in the translation of the King James version, as the translators themselves prayed he would, since, for the most part, they were earnest, sincere and prayerful men. They had but one desire, which was to do justice to the Word of God in their translations.

Not one of the modern versions can match the language of the brass plates quotations as the King James version does.

...

The remainder of the Ten Commandments might be compared similarly. Almost word for word, the King James

translation harmonizes with the Book of Mormon account, indicating that there was an element beyond scholarship attending the preparation of the King James translation. The guidance of the Almighty must have been there in rich measure. . . .

The **harmony** between these Biblical quotations and the Book of Mormon excerpts from the same passages in the brass plates, is a great tribute to the accuracy of the King James version.

The same things may be said of the Sermon on the Mount as it appears in both the Book of Mormon and the Bible accounts. . . .

It is of more than ordinary interest, also, to compare a portion of Section 84 of the *Doctrine & Covenants* with both the King James version and the Book of Mormon version. . . .

Is not this **similarity of language**, on the part of the Lord, likewise a great tribute to the King James translation—not to suggest a divine endorsement of it? (*As Translated Correctly*, by Mark E. Petersen, Salt Lake City, 1966, pages 45, 49–53)

The Apostle Petersen feels that the quotations from Isaiah found in the Book of Mormon are "no doubt the only truly accurate quotations in existence today" (*Ibid.*, page 54). He even goes so far as to judge the text of the Bible by the text found in the Book of Mormon:

A direct reference to baptism was plainly **deleted** from Isaiah 48:1.

In the Old Testament this reference reads:

"Hear ye this, O house of Jacob, which are called by the name of Israel, and are come forth out of the waters of Judah, which swear by the name of the Lord. . . ."

And now note this same passage from the brass plates [the Book of Mormon]: "Hearken and hear this, O house of Jacob, who are called by the name of Israel, and are come forth out of the waters of Judah, **or out of the waters of baptism**, who swear by the name of the Lord. . . ." (1 Nephi 20:1)

How many similar deletions were made, no one knows, because we have only fragments from the brass plates.

But the Bible as we know it is a **different volume** from what it was—and would have been had it not been changed so much by those with selfish interests. (*As Translated Correctly*, page 67)

The Apostle Petersen certainly picked a poor example to prove his charge, for there is definite proof that the change was made in the text of the Book of Mormon rather than in the text of the Bible. The text of the original 1830 printing of the Book of Mormon reads as follows:

Hearken and hear this, O house of Jacob, which are called by the name of Israel, and are come forth out of the waters of Judah, which swear by the name of the Lord, . . . (Book of Mormon, 1830 Edition, page 52)

In modern editions of the Book of Mormon this has been changed to read:

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Hearken and hear this, O house of Jacob, who are called by the name of Israel, and are come forth out of the waters of Judah, **or out of the waters of baptism**, who swear by the name of the Lord, . . . (Book of Mormon, 1964 edition, 1 Nephi 20:1)

Notice that the clause, “or out of the waters of baptism” has been added. Richard P. Howard’s new book, *Restoration Scriptures*, page 117, plainly shows that these words did not appear in the original handwritten manuscript. Even Dr. Hugh Nibley admits that this clause did not originally appear in the Book of Mormon:

But that is not all, for the second edition of the Book of Mormon contains an addition **not** found in the first: “. . . out of the waters of Judah, or out of the waters of baptism.” It is said that Parley P. Pratt **suggested the phrase**, and certainly Joseph Smith approved it, for it stands in all the early editions after the first. Those added words are not only permissible—they are necessary. . . . Isaiah did not have to tell his ancient hearers that he had the waters of baptism in mind, but it is necessary to tell it to the modern reader who without such an explanation would miss the point—for him the translation would be a misleading one without that specification. (*Since Cumorah*, page 151)

While this clause concerning baptism was apparently added to the Second Edition of the Book of Mormon, the Mormon leaders must have been confused about it, for it does not appear in the 1888 printing of the Book of Mormon: “Hearken and hear this, O house of Jacob, who are called by the name of Israel, and are come forth out of the waters of Judah, who swear by the name of the Lord, . . .” (Book of Mormon, 1888 edition, page 50)

Thus we see that the clause concerning baptism was not in the original handwritten manuscript of the Book of Mormon, nor was it in the first edition. Even as late as 1888 the Mormon leaders were still uncertain about it, for it was not included in the edition printed that year. We do not feel that it would be right to condemn the text of the Bible on the basis of this verse from the Book of Mormon, especially since it bears all the marks of falsification.

### EVIDENCE COMPARED

The Mormon Apostle Orson Pratt made this statement: “This generation have more than one thousand times the amount of evidence to demonstrate and for ever establish the Divine Authenticity of the Book of Mormon than they have in favor of the Bible!” (*Orson Pratt’s Works*, “Evidences of the Book of Mormon and Bible Compared,” 1851, page 64). On January 2, 1859, Orson Pratt spoke in the Tabernacle in Salt Lake City. In this discourse he stated:

If the Lord will assist and strengthen me . . . I will endeavour to bring forth some few of the evidences which establish the Divine authenticity of the Book of Mormon.

I shall compare this evidence with the evidence for the Divine authenticity of the Bible. . . .

The oldest manuscripts of any of the books of the Old Testament at the present day date from the twelfth century of the Christian era. . . . We are informed by learned writers that about three centuries before Christ the Hebrew Scriptures were translated into Greek, called the Septuagint; but have we any copies of the Septuagint? No. You may search all the archives of the nations, and you cannot find one of these ancient copies. Fifteen hundred years after this supposed translation, you find some Greek and Hebrew manuscripts. . . . The oldest manuscripts of the New Testament which this age are in possession of are supposed to date from the sixth century of the Christian era. . . . We have five manuscripts in existence that were supposed to have been written as early as the sixth or seventh century after Christ. . . .

1st. The Vatican Manuscript, noted 1,209. . . .

2nd. The Clermont or Regises Manuscript, 2, 245. This dates from the seventh century. . . .

3rd. The Ephrem Manuscript. This also is said to have been written in the seventh century. . . .

4th. The Alexandrian Manuscript. This was probably made in the sixth century; Cassimer Odin says the tenth. . . .

5th. The Cambridge Manuscript, or Codex Bezae. Concerning this, Bishop Marsh says—“Perhaps, of all the manuscripts now extant, this is the most ancient.” . . .

All the most ancient manuscripts of the New Testament known to the world differ from each other in almost **every verse**. . . .

The learned admit that in the manuscripts of the New Testament alone there are no less than one hundred and thirty thousand different readings. . . . No one can tell whether even one verse of either the Old or New Testament conveys the ideas of the original author.

Just think! 130,000 different readings in the New Testament alone! . . . now let us turn to the Book of Mormon, and see if it rests upon evidences of the nature of these I have already presented to this congregation.

The Book of Mormon professes to be translated not from manuscripts containing 130,000 different readings, nor by the learning of men who can render a translation as they please; neither does it profess to be translated from altered, mutilated manuscripts manufactured by monks or impostors upon Mount Athos to impose upon Christian credulity; but it was translated from the original plates themselves . . . We defy the world to produce a true copy of the original of any book of the Bible, . . . they cannot find an original copy, or even a copy written centuries after the original writer was known to exist.

The learned have conjectured that some of those five manuscripts I have mentioned were written in the sixth century; but this is disputed. Cassimir Oudin says that the Alexandrian Manuscript, instead of being written in the sixth century, was made in the tenth. . . . There are men now living that have seen the original of the Book of Mormon—that have heard the voice of God. Where is there a man who has heard the voice of God testifying concerning the truth of King James’ translation? . . .

Therefore, the testimony establishing the truth of the Book of Mormon is far superior to that establishing the Bible in its present form. . . . any person who will carefully examine this subject will be obliged in their own hearts to say there is

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a hundredfold more evidence to prove the Divine authenticity of the Book of Mormon than what we have to prove the Palestine records. (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 7, pages 23, 24, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 36 and 37)

The Apostle Pratt's statement that there is "more than one thousand times" the amount of evidence to prove the Book of Mormon than to prove the Bible is certainly a misrepresentation. In our *Case Against Mormonism*, Vol. 2, pages 1–4, we showed that the only evidence for the Book of Mormon is the testimony of the witnesses and that this testimony can not be relied upon.

As far as historical and manuscript evidence is concerned Joseph Smith's scriptures have absolutely no foundation. The "records of the Nephites," for instance, were never cited by any ancient writer, nor are there any known manuscripts or even fragments of manuscripts in existence older than the ones dictated by Joseph Smith in the late 1820's. Joseph Smith's Book of Moses is likewise without documentary support. The only handwritten manuscripts for the Book of Moses are those dictated by Joseph Smith in the early 1830's. Since Joseph Smith's revelations in the *Doctrine and Covenants* do not purport to be translations of ancient records, we would not expect to find any ancient manuscript evidence concerning them. There is one revelation, however, which purports to be a translation of a "record made on parchment by John and hidden up by himself." This revelation is found in the *Doctrine and Covenants* as Section 7. There is no documentary support for this revelation. The Book of Abraham purports to be a translation of an ancient Egyptian papyrus. We have already shown, however, that the original papyrus is in reality the Egyptian Book of Breathing and has nothing to do with Abraham or his religion. Therefore, we have no evidence for Book of Abraham prior to the handwritten manuscripts dictated by Joseph Smith in the 1830's. It would appear, then, that there is no documentary evidence for any of Joseph Smith's works that dates back prior to the late 1820's.

When we turn to the Bible, however, we find a great deal of evidence—some of which dates back more than 2,000 years—showing that the Bible was known and used in early times. While this in itself does not prove that the Bible is divinely inspired, it does give a person a basis for faith.

### DEAD SEA SCROLLS

The reader will remember that the Mormon Apostle Orson Pratt stated that the "oldest manuscripts of any of the books of the Old Testament at the present day date from the twelfth century of the Christian Era." While this statement may have been true in Orson Pratt's time, the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls has changed the entire picture. We now have some manuscripts that date back prior to the time of Christ.

The Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered in 1947 when a boy threw a rock into a cave near the Dead Sea. He was startled by the sound of something breaking and later came back to find jars with ancient manuscripts in them. This was only the beginning, for further search by a number of people led to the discovery of many important manuscripts. When scholars

learned of these manuscripts they were elated. Edmund Wilson gives this interesting information:

Dr. Trever at once sent off prints of columns of the Isaiah scroll to Dr. W. F. Albright of Johns Hopkins, one of the ablest living Biblical archaeologists and an authority on the Nash Papyrus, which he had studied intensively over a period of years. They heard from him by air mail on March 15. He had written the same day he received the letter: "My heartiest congratulations on the greatest manuscript discovery of modern times! There is no doubt in my mind that the script is more archaic than that of the Nash Papyrus . . . I should prefer a date around 100 B.C. . . . What an absolutely incredible find! And there can happily not be the slightest doubt in the world about the genuineness of the manuscript." (*The Dead Sea Scrolls: 1947–1969*, by Edmund Wilson, New York, 1969, page 18)

They set out now to examine systematically all the caves in the Qumran neighborhood. They entered two hundred and sixty-seven, and in thirty-seven of them found pottery and other relics of human occupancy. In twenty-five of these, the pottery was identical with the jars from the original cave. Several of the caves contained scrolls, which, unprotected by jars, were in a state of disintegration, often buried under layers of dirt. The fragments of these collected ran into the tens of thousands. It was becoming more and more apparent that a library had been hidden here—a library which seems to have included almost all the books of the Bible the Old Testament, a number of apocryphal works and the literature of an early religious sect. (*Ibid.*, page 25)

Martin A. Larson gives this information in his book, *The Religion of the Occident*, page 227:

Space does not permit us to reproduce the archeological, paleographical, and other evidence which proves that the Dead Sea Scrolls were composed between 170 and 60 B. C. by a Jewish cult which flourished until 69 A. D. . . . Professor W. F. Libby of the University of Chicago subjected a piece of linen wrapping which covered one of the MSS. to the Carbon-14 Process and found that its date of origin was approximately 33 A. D. . . .

There can be no dispute concerning the authenticity of the Scrolls, which, in addition to several previously unknown and complete documents, now translated and published, include two MSS. of Isaiah and literally thousands of fragments found in various caves. Among these are portions of practically, every book of the Old Testament.

In his book, *The Ancient Library of Qumran*, Frank Moore Cross, Jr., gives this information:

A sketch of the contents of Cave IV may be helpful in the discussions to follow. At the end of four years' labor 382 manuscripts have been identified from this cave. . . . Of the manuscripts identified thus far, about one hundred, slightly more than one fourth of the total, are biblical. ALL of the books of the Hebrew canon are now extant, with the exception of the Book of Esther. . . .

Three very old documents have been found in Cave IV. . . . They include an old copy of Samuel, preserved in

## MORMON SCRIPTURES AND THE BIBLE

only a handful of fragments; a patched and worn section of Jeremiah, . . . and a copy of Exodus . . . of which only a column and a few tatters are extant. . . .

The archaic Samuel scroll can date scarcely later than 200 B.C. A date in the last quarter of the third century is preferable. The Jeremiah is probably slightly later. The archaic Exodus has not been subjected to detailed paleographical analysis; . . . Nevertheless it appears to be no later than the old Samuel fragments and probably is earlier.

One copy of Daniel is inscribed in the script of the late second century B.C. . . .

The biblical scrolls from Qumran span in date about three centuries. A few archaic specimens carry us back to the end of the third century, as we have seen. The heavy majority, however, date in the first century B.C. and in the first Christian century, . . . (*The Ancient Library of Qumran*, by Frank Moore Cross, Jr., Garden City, New York, 1961, pages 39, 40, 42 and 43)

In a recent article Frank Moore Cross writes:

For the science of palaeography, it is difficult to exaggerate the importance of these papyri. . . . the dating proposed by the writer for the archaic Samuel manuscript (ca. 225 B.C.E.) now appears to be minimal. The chronology of the Archaic Period (pre-Hasmonean) may prove too low by a generation; the archaic Samuel then would date from 275–225 B.C.E. (*New Directions in Biblical Archaeology*, edited by David Noel Freedman and Jonas C. Greenfield, Garden City, New York, 1969, page 53)

Werner Keller makes these comments concerning the Isaiah scroll:

Professor Libby was asked to conduct an investigation. He took pieces of the linen in which the Isaiah scroll had been wrapped, burned them to ashes, put them into a battery of Geiger tubes, and came to an astonishing conclusion. The linen had been made from flax which had been harvested in the time of Christ. The documents that had been wrapped in it must therefore have been older still. After exhaustive and minute examination the papyrologist came to the same conclusion. The text of Isaiah from the cave at Qumran had actually been copied about 100 B.C., as Professor Albright had been first to recognize. . . . with the discovery of the Dead Sea scroll of Isaiah we have a Hebrew text of the Bible . . . And the remarkable and wonderful fact is that ancient scroll of Isaiah, just like the book of the prophet in any printed Bible, whether in Hebrew, Greek, Latin, German, or any other language, has sixty-six chapters and agrees with our present-day text.

Seventeen sheets of leather sewn together into a length of almost twenty-three feet—this must have been what the roll of the prophet looked like as it was handed to Jesus in the synagogue at Nazareth so that he might read from it to the congregation. “And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias [Isaiah].” (Luke 4:16, 17) “Every movement of Jesus’ hands is brought closer to us,” writes Professor Andre Parrot, “for we can still see on the reverse side of the leather the marks of the readers’ fingers.” (*The Bible as History*, by Werner Keller, translated by William Neil, New York, 1957, pages 423–424)

Mormon scholars accept the authenticity of the Dead Sea Scrolls, although they have not come to grips with the serious problems which these manuscripts create for the Book of

Mormon and the “Inspired Version” of the Bible. The Mormon Apostle Mark E. Petersen makes this comment concerning the Dead Sea Scrolls:

Until recently, scholars depended on Hebrew manuscripts of the Old Testament dating only from the 9th to the 11th Centuries A.D., but now come the Dead Sea Scrolls dating back as far as the **3rd Century B. C.** They include a nearly complete text of Isaiah and fragments of all Old Testament books except Esther. (*As Translated Correctly*, pages 3–4)

While the Dead Sea Scrolls provide important documentary evidence for the Old Testament, there are some textual problems that need to be faced. Many of these problems are related to the Septuagint version of the Bible. The Septuagint is a Greek version of the Old Testament said to have been translated from the Hebrew text two or three hundred years before the time of Christ. The Mormon Apostle Orson Pratt made this statement concerning this matter:

We are informed by learned writers that about three centuries before Christ the Hebrew Scriptures were translated into Greek, called the Septuagint; but have we any copies of the Septuagint? NO. You may search all the archives of the nations, and you cannot find one of these ancient copies. Fifteen hundred years after this supposed translation, you find some Greek and Hebrew manuscripts. (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 7, page 24)

Orson Pratt is certainly in error with regard to this matter, for even in his time manuscripts of the Septuagint were known that dated back to the fourth and fifth century. The reader will remember that the Apostle Pratt mentioned both the Codex Alexandrinus and the Codex Vaticanus when he was speaking of the New Testament, but he apparently did not realize that both of these manuscripts contain the Septuagint. In the book, *Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts*, we find this information:

A. Codex Alexandrinus, in the British Museum. This was probably written in the first half of the fifth century, and contains the whole Bible, except Gen. xiv. 14–17; xv. 1–5, 16–19; xvi. 6–9; I Kingdoms [= I Sam.] xii. 18–xiv.9; Ps. xlix. (1.) 20–lxxix. (lxxx.) II, and some parts of the New Testament, which have been lost through accidental mutilation. . . .

B. Codex Vaticanus, in the Vatican Library at Rome. It contains the whole Bible, written in the fourth century, and is (apart from the papyri) the oldest and generally the best extant copy of the Septuagint. It is nearly perfect, wanting only Gen. i. 1–xlvi.28; 2 Kingd. [=2 Sam.] ii. 5–7, 10–13; Ps. cv. (cvi.) 27–cxxxvii. (cxxxviii.) 6 of its original contents, so far as the Old Testament is concerned; . . . (*Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts*, by Sir Frederic Kenyon, Revision by A. W. Adams, New York, 1965, pages 120–121)

Prior to the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, many people believed that the Septuagint was just a “loose paraphrase” of the Hebrew text. Since the discovery of these scrolls, however, many scholars have taken the Septuagint more seriously. Some feel that the Septuagint contains “a faithful and literal translation of one form of the Hebrew text” found among the Jews in ancient times (see *Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts*, page 32).

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It is interesting to note that a statement made by Stephen in the New Testament (Acts 7:14) seems to agree with the Septuagint rather than with our Old Testament. Stephen states that 75 souls went down with Jacob into Egypt. The Old Testament, however, says there were 70 (see Exodus 1:1–5). The Septuagint is in agreement with Acts 7:14 for it reads: “And all the souls born of Jacob were seventy-five” (*The Septuagint Version, Greek and English*, London, page 70). Since the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls this matter has become even more interesting to scholars, for a fragment of Exodus found in Cave IV agrees with the Septuagint. It reads: “. . . seventy-five persons” (*The Ancient Library of Qumran*, page 184, footnote 31).

Gleason L. Archer, Jr., states that “the text of I and II Samuel seems to have been more poorly preserved in the Masoretic recension [the Hebrew text from which our Old Testament was translated] than any other book in the Bible . . . a study of the Septuagint version of Samuel indicates that its *Vorlage* was in somewhat better condition than that of the Masoretic tradition, and hence it is extraordinarily useful for the textual criticism of these two books. Several important fragments have been discovered in the Qumran caves containing a Hebrew text appreciably closer to that of the Septuagint than to the MT” (*A Survey of Old Testament Introduction*, Chicago, 1968, page 273). Patrick W. Skehan also feels that the traditional Hebrew text of Samuel is inferior to other books in the Old Testament: “For with all due respects to the scholars who would have it otherwise, it has long been held by serious students of Samuel that in their case the Masoretic text presents us with a truncated text with notable omissions, both deliberate and accidental; it is a text that is much below the standard of excellence observable in the received text of other Old Testament books” (*The Biblical Archaeologist*, September, 1965, page 97).

Frank Moore Cross, Jr., gives this interesting information concerning the relationship of the Septuagint to the fragments of Samuel found in the Dead Sea Scrolls:

Initial study was directed to the historical books, especially to Samuel. The text of Samuel contained in the three scrolls from Cave IV is widely at variance with that of the traditional Masoretic Bible; it follows systematically the rendering of the Septuagint of Samuel. For example, in the few published fragments of the archaic Samuel text (4QSam<sup>b</sup>), there are some thirteen readings in which the Qumran text agrees with the Greek against the readings of the received text, four readings in which the Qumran text agrees with the traditional text against the Septuagint. The ratio of readings in agreement with the Septuagint against the Masoretic text is even higher in the large Samuel manuscript (4QSam<sup>a</sup>). . . .

All this does not mean that the Septuagint in the historical books presents a text which is necessarily superior to the Masoretic texts. The question of which witness is superior is another problem, to be decided in individual readings. It does mean that the *Septuagint* reflects accurately a Hebrew textual tradition at home in Egypt in the third–second centuries B.C., and that thanks to the Qumran manuscripts we have the means

to control its evidence. (*The Ancient Library of Qumran*, pages 179–181)

In his book, *The Bible and Archaeology*, J. A. Thompson gives the following information concerning the significance of the Dead Sea Scrolls:

Prior to the discovery of these texts, our earliest Hebrew manuscripts were dated about A.D. 900. It has always been the desire of Biblical scholars to obtain earlier manuscripts in order to make a comparison with the present-day Hebrew text. In this way they could discover how well the text had been preserved. As a result of these wonderful Qumran discoveries we now have documents as old as 100 B.C., or perhaps even earlier. . . . in the main these ancient texts agree fairly closely with the text with which we are familiar. Where they diverge they not infrequently follow the Septuagint text more closely, and this diverges from the Hebrew text in a number of places. It is evident also that there were versions of the Hebrew Bible in existence in those days that differed from both the present Masoretic and the Septuagint texts. (*The Bible and Archaeology*, 1962, page 264)

Frank Moore Cross, Jr., made these statements concerning the Dead Sea Scrolls:

. . . we must cease to date any biblical work belonging to the Former or Latter Prophets (not to mention the Torah), or any extensive pericope within these books, later than the early second century B.C. . . . It is none the less a gain to have manuscripts, albeit fragmentary and incomplete, of the books of the Pentateuch, the Prophets, especially the Twelve, dating from the second century B.C., which rule out categorically speculations about extremely late additions to prophetic works. (*The Ancient Library of Qumran*, page 164)

## ISAIAH TEXT

Millar Burrows, a noted authority on the Dead Sea Scrolls, made this statement with regard to the Isaiah scrolls:

The first of the prophetic books, Isaiah, was evidently, as we have seen, the most popular in the Qumran community. In addition to the two scrolls from Cave 1, there are more or less extensive fragments of thirteen others from Cave 4. Like the later and incomplete scroll from Cave 1, the Cave 4 fragments agree closely with the Masoretic text. This demonstration of the antiquity of our traditional text in the book of Isaiah is all the more important in view of the quite different indications in other books.

By far the most interesting and useful of all the Isaiah manuscripts for the study of the text is the complete St. Mark’s Isaiah scroll—as it may still be called for convenience, although it is now in Israel. It too supports the accuracy, by and large, of the Masoretic text (DSS. p. 304). It presents, however, a more popular, less official form of the text than the other manuscripts. It was probably less carefully written and therefore contains a greater proportion of mistakes in copying, but it also preserves a number of ancient readings which were lost in the more orthodox tradition. (*More Light on the Dead Sea Scrolls*, New York, 1958, page 146)

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On page 172 of the same book, Millar Burrows states that the St. Mark scroll of Isaiah gives “the complete text of the book in a manuscript which cannot be dated much after **100 B.C. at the latest.**” William Hugh Brownlee, another authority on the Dead Sea Scrolls makes these comments:

... we may safely assume that the traditional Hebrew text is very close to the best manuscripts of the second century B.C. A fragmentary document of Isaiah (also from Cave One) reads almost word for word and letter for letter the same as the Massoretic text, although it does contain a few important variants. Several other Isaiah Scrolls from the other Qumran caves tell the same story. Lest one exaggerate the differences between the great Isaiah Scroll and the traditional text, it must be pointed out that more often than not, except for the free use of vowel letters, even this document supports Massoretic readings. (*The Meaning of the Qumran Scrolls for the Bible*, New York, 1964, page 216)

Gleason L. Archer, Jr., made this comment about the Isaiah scrolls: “Even though the two copies of Isaiah discovered in Qumran Cave 1 near the Dead Sea in 1947 were a thousand years earlier than the oldest dated manuscript previously known (A.D. 980), they proved to be word for word identical with our standard Hebrew Bible in more than 95 per cent of the text. The 5 per cent of variation consisted chiefly of obvious slips of the pen and variations in spelling” (*A Survey of Old Testament Introduction*, page 19).

Bible scholars have reason to rejoice over the discovery of manuscripts of Isaiah dating back to ancient times. Mormon scholars, however, are faced with a dilemma, for although these manuscripts support the text of the Bible, they could turn out to be one of the strongest evidences against Joseph Smith’s “Inspired Revision” of the Bible and his “translation” of the text of Isaiah found in the Book of Mormon.

For years Mormon scholars have labored to prove that the Book of Mormon is a translation of an ancient document. Dr. Sidney B. Sperry, of Brigham Young University, states:

A Biblical expert might venture such questions as these:

1. Is the text of Isaiah in the Book of Mormon word for word the same as that of the King James version? If it is, the claims made that the original on the gold plates harks back to the time of Isaiah can be denied. . . . every Biblical scholar knows that the Hebrew text of Isaiah upon which the King James version mainly depends has been corrupted somewhat in the course of transmission through the ages. If the Book of Mormon reproduced all these corruptions, there would be plain evidence that Joseph Smith did not translate from a really ancient text of Isaiah.

2. What is the testimony of the ancient Greek, Syrian, and Latin versions of Isaiah respecting that in the Book of Mormon? These versions have also become corrupted in the course of transmission through the centuries, but by the laws of chance they ought to agree in some instances with the readings of the Book of Mormon where the latter differs from the Hebrew. . . . In general we should be prepared to admit that the science of textual criticism will throw great light on the asserted antiquity of the text of Isaiah in the Book

of Mormon. Critical tests can be most subtle and powerful in probing for slips on the part of unlearned impostors who offer amended Biblical texts for the examination of the public. . . .

In 2 Nephi 12:16 (cf. Isaiah 2:16) the Book of Mormon has a reading of remarkable interest. It prefixes a phrase of eight words not found in the Hebrew or King James versions. Since the ancient Septuagint (Greek) version concurs with the added phrase in the Book of Mormon, let us exhibit the readings of the Book of Mormon (B. M.), the King James version (K. J.), and the Septuagint (LXX) as follows:

B. M.	And upon all the ships of the sea,
K. J.	.....
LXX	And upon every ship of the sea, and upon all the ships of Tarshish and upon all the ships of Tarshish ..... and upon all pleasant pictures. and upon all pleasant pictures. and upon every display of fine ships.

The Book of Mormon suggests that the original text of this verse contained three phrases, all of which commenced with the same opening words, “and upon all.” By a common accident, the original Hebrew (and hence the King James) text lost the first phrase, which was, however, preserved by the Septuagint. The Latter lost the second phrase, and seems to have corrupted the third phrase. The Book of Mormon preserved all three phrases. Scholars may suggest that Joseph Smith took the first phrase from the Septuagint. The prophet did not know Greek, and there is no evidence that he had access to a copy of the Septuagint in 1827–29 when he translated the Book of Mormon. (*The Problems of the Book of Mormon*, Salt Lake City, 1964, pages 91–93)

While it is probably true that Joseph Smith was not familiar with Greek at the time he “translated” the Book of Mormon, Wesley P. Walters has shown that Joseph Smith did not need a knowledge of Greek to have included the “eight words not found in the Hebrew or King James versions.” To begin with, the Septuagint had been translated into English several years before Joseph Smith “translated” the Book of Mormon. An edition was printed at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in 1808. In this edition we find the following words: “. . . every ship of the sea; . . .” (*The Holy Bible . . . Translated From the Greek* by Charles Thomson, Philadelphia, 1808, Esaias 2:16). Wesley P. Walters, however, points out that the Septuagint uses the word “ship” (singular), whereas the Book of Mormon speaks of the “ships of the sea.” This is especially interesting, for Mr. Walters has found these identical words in a very well known work by Thomas Scott. Dr. Scott stated: “. . . here the Septuagint render[s] the words ‘ships of the sea.’ . . .” (*The Holy Bible, . . . With Original Notes and Practical Observations*, by Thomas Scott, Boston, 1817, Vol. 4, comment on Isaiah 2:16). The Mormon writer J. N. Washburn states:

Clearly the phrase *And upon all the ships of the sea* is an addition. No one can urge that for literary value, for aptness, for pertinence of content it does not belong, for it is entirely in harmony with the context. Where did Joseph Smith get it if not from an ancient manuscript? (*The Contents, Structure and Authorship of the Book of Mormon*, page 193).

Wesley P. Walters makes this comment concerning this matter:

I checked all the critical editions of the LXX [Septuagint] and there is no variant reading noted from any of the LXX manuscripts where “ship” appears in the plural in the phrase “ship of the sea.” Joseph had to have picked up his plural rendering from the somewhat imprecise rendering of Scott. By throwing in this extra phrase (upon all the ships of the sea) along with the words “upon all the ships of Tarshish,” he breaks up the couplet form of the preceding verses. . . . I even checked the Isaiah MS from about 100 B.C. found in the Dead Sea materials and their text follows the text translated in the King James version. This is about as much as I have been able to come up with, but I think it can be safely said that Smith is not translating an independent text tradition, but imported ideas of his own, derived from the commentaries of his day, or rather from the notes in the family Bibles of the period. (Letter from Wesley P. Walters, dated May 28, 1969)

Mormon writers have pointed out similarities between the Book of Mormon and certain Bible manuscripts which they claim Joseph Smith could not have had access to. For instance, Franklin S. Harris, Jr., states: “The Codex Alexandrinus is now in the British Museum and Joseph Smith did not have access to it. Nor was the Codex Alexandrinus used in preparing the Authorized Version because it arrived in England 17 years too late in 1628 A.D.” (*The Book of Mormon Message and Evidences*, Salt Lake City, 1961, page 51). Now, while it is true that Joseph Smith would not have had access to rare Bible manuscripts, he undoubtedly had access to the commentaries on the Bible which were prepared by men who studied these ancient manuscripts. The commentary written by Adam Clarke was one of the most popular in Joseph Smith’s time. Although the printing we have access to seems to have been reprinted from an edition published after 1830, *Adam Clarke’s Commentary* was well known in New York prior to this time. Josiah Priest’s *Wonders of Nature and Providence Displayed*, published at Albany, N.Y., in 1825, quotes extensively from Clarke’s work. There is even some evidence that one of Joseph Smith’s relatives owned a set of *Clarke’s Commentary*: In the book, *Early Methodism Within the Bounds of the Old Genesee Conference, From 1788 to 1828*, pages 332–333, we find the following:

Joe Smith, the Mormon prophet, married a niece of Mr. Lewis. After the story of the golden Bible and the miracle-working spectacles had come out, Joe undertook to make a convert of “Uncle Nat.” The old gentleman heard his tale with due gravity, and then proceeded: “Joseph, can anybody else translate strange languages by the help of them spectacles?”

“O yes!” was the answer.

“Well now,” said Mr. Lewis, “I’ve got *Clarke’s Commentary*, and it contains a great many strange languages; now, if you will let me try the spectacles, and if by looking through them I can translate these strange tongues into English, then I’ll be one of your disciples.”

This was a poser, and the only way Joe had to escape from “Uncle Nat’s” net was to get away and run.

In Isaiah 14:3 (King James Version) we read: “And it shall come to pass in *the* day that the Lord shall give thee rest . . .” In the Book of Mormon we find that the word *the* has been changed to *that*: “And it shall come to pass in *that* day that the Lord

shall give thee rest, . . .” (2 Nephi 24:3). This is very interesting because it is the very reading suggested by Adam Clarke:

Verse 3. In the day— “In *that* day” . . . The word . . . *hahu* is added in two MSS. of Kennicott’s, and was in the copies from which the Septuagint and Vulgate translated: . . . in *that* day. This is a matter of no great consequence: however, it restores the text to the common form,” almost constantly used on such occasions; and is one among many instances of a word apparently lost out of the printed copies. (*Clarke’s Commentary*, Vol. 4, page 81)

Mormon writers cite the Book of Mormon’s rendition of Isaiah 9:3 as evidence that the Book of Mormon is an ancient document. In the King James Version of the Bible we read: “Thou hast multiplied the nation, and *not* increased the Joy: . . .” In the Book of Mormon, however, the word *not* has been deleted: “Thou hast multiplied the nation, and increased the joy. . . .” (2 Nephi 19:3). Dr. Sidney B. Sperry made the following comments about this matter:

The only way in which the Book of Mormon differs from the King James text is in the omission of one word, “not.” Most scholars agree that the *not* of the Hebrew and King James version is obviously unsuitable. Some ancient versions, especially the Syriac and Targums, suggest that originally the Hebrew text did not contain the word, but rather another having the same sound but a different meaning. It is quite understandable how a scribe, writing down the text as it was dictated to him, might select the wrong word of two having the same sound. The word selected was *lo’* (“not”) instead of *lo* (“to it”), . . .

The version of Isaiah in the Nephite scripture hews an independent course for itself, as might be expected of a truly ancient and authentic record. It makes additions to the present text in certain places, omits material in others, transposes, makes grammatical changes, finds support at times for its unusual readings in the ancient Greek, Syriac, and Latin versions, and at other times no support at all. (*The Problems of the Book of Mormon*, pages 96–97)

Actually, this matter concerning the word *not* was well known even in Joseph Smith’s time. Adam Clarke stated:

Verse 3. And *not* increased the joy— “Thou hast increased their joy” Eleven MSS. of Kennicott’s and six of De Rossi’s, two ancient, read . . . *lo*, it, according to the Masoretical correction, instead of . . . *lo*, *not*. To the same purpose the Targum and Syriac. (*Clarke’s Commentary*, Vol. 4, page 64)

This fact was known even before the time of Clarke, for Matthew Poole, in his *Annotations Upon The Holy Bible*, suggests the following reading (the letter *f* must be read as an *s*): “. . . and *haft* increafed to it, or him, or them (to that nation) *their joy*” (*Annotations Upon The Holy Bible* . . . , Edinburgh, 1800, page 792). Thomas Scott’s work on Isaiah also contains this information.

It would appear, then, that the work done by Mormon apologists to prove that the Book of Mormon is an authentic record is of little value, for these things were also known in Joseph Smith’s time.

If Mormon writers could find similarities between the text of the Book of Mormon and documents that were not known in Joseph Smith's day, this type of evidence would be impressive. The Dead Sea Scrolls, for instance, should provide a great deal of evidence for the Book of Mormon if it is really an ancient record. The Isaiah scroll found at Qumran Cave 1 should have caused a great deal of joy among Mormon scholars, for here is a manuscript of Isaiah which is hundreds of years older than any manuscript previously known. Surely, if the Book of Mormon is true, this manuscript should be filled with evidence to support the text of Isaiah in the Book of Mormon and thus prove that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God. Instead of proving the Book of Mormon it has turned out to be a great disappointment to Mormon scholars. Lewis M. Rogers, who was an assistant professor of religion at Brigham Young University, wrote a paper which is entitled, "The Significance of the Scrolls and a Word of Caution." In this article he stated:

It has been noted that deviations from the Masoretic text in the newly found Isaiah scrolls were minor, indicating a faithful preservation of the accepted Scriptures. However, variations from the standard in fragments from the Book of Samuel were startling, for they appeared to follow the Greek or Septuagint rather than the Masoretic text. . . .

Latter-day Saints have cause to rejoice with other Christians and Jews for the new light and fresh perspective brought to them by the Dead Sea Scrolls, but occasionally they need to be reminded that their hopes and emotions make them vulnerable. It is quite possible that claims for the Book of Mormon and for L.D.S. theology **will not be greatly advanced** as a consequence of this discovery. (*Progress in Archaeology*, Brigham Young University, 1963, pages 46–47)

The Mormon apologist Dr. Sidney B. Sperry, of Brigham Young University, has to admit that the Dead Sea Scrolls do not help the case for the Book of Mormon:

After reading the Scrolls very carefully, I come to the conclusion that there is not a line in them that suggests that their writers knew the Gospel as understood by Latter-day Saints. In fact, there are a few passages that seem to prove the contrary. . . .

We should be especially interested in the light the Isaiah scroll throws on the problem of the Isaiah text in the Book of Mormon. I have compared in some detail the text of the scroll with its parallels in the Book of Mormon text. This tedious task has revealed that the scroll **seldom agrees** with the departures of the Book of Mormon text from that of the conventional Masoretic text of Isaiah and consequently the Authorized Version. The conclusions I come to as a result of these comparative studies may be set down as follows:

1. Despite the supposed antiquity of the scroll, its text is inferior to the conventional Hebrew text that has come down to us in the King James Version.

2. If the date assigned to the scroll is correct, we must conclude that serious changes took place in the text prior to the coming of Christ. If my thinking is correct, however, the pronouncement of Nephi concerning the perversion of the scriptures (1 Nephi 13:26) would suggest that we give thought to the possibility that the Isaiah scroll is dated a little too early—let us say about 150 years.

3. The Isaiah scroll is of relatively **little use to Latter-day Saints as showing the antiquity of the text of Isaiah in the Book of Mormon.**

4. The Book of Mormon text of Isaiah should warn us that the use of the Isaiah scroll of Qumran for purposes of textual criticism is open to grave suspicion.

What then do I see as valuable in the Scrolls? It should be understood that they have great value to the scholar in matters pertaining to Hebrew spelling, grammar and paleography. The Scrolls undoubtedly contribute much to the history of Judaism and Christianity, and specialists of the Old and New Testaments are properly much concerned with them. . . .

But aside from their technical value to scholars, I believe that the importance of the Scrolls in a religious sense has been highly overrated by certain scholars. Their practical importance to Latter-day Saints is **relatively small.** (*Progress in Archaeology*, pages 52–54)

It is interesting to see how Dr. Sperry has to detract from the Isaiah scroll in his attempt to save the Book of Mormon.

When we examine the text of Isaiah as printed in the Book of Mormon, we find that Joseph Smith has deleted or changed many of the words which were printed in italics in the King James Version. Even in his time it was a well known fact that these words were added by the translators to fill in where a literal translation of the original did not suffice. In September, 1843, the Mormon publication, *Times and Seasons*, contained a letter which stated: "Every school boy seems to know that when either of the sectarian translators failed in making the two ends of a sentence meet, he filled up the vacuity with *italic*, by which means God has been greatly helped towards expressing himself so as to be understood by the learned world, . . ." (*Times and Seasons*, Vol. 4, page 318).

An interesting example of Joseph Smith's work is found in comparing Isaiah 6:5 from the King James Version with the rendition in the 1830 edition of the Book of Mormon.

#### King James Version

Then said I, Woe *is* me! for I am undone; because I *am* a man of unclean lips, . . . (Isaiah 6:5)

#### Book of Mormon—1830

Then said I, Wo *me*! for I am undone; because I a man of unclean lips, . . . (Book of Mormon, 1830 edition, page 91)

Notice that the words "is" and "am" are in italics in the King James Version and that Joseph Smith has deleted them from the text. This plainly shows that Joseph Smith knew that the italicized words were added by the translators and that he felt it would make his "translation" more convincing if he left them out. In this particular verse, however, he made a mistake, for these words were needed to make Isaiah's meaning clear in the English language. That Joseph Smith did make a mistake is clear from the fact that in later editions of the Book of Mormon these words had to be added back into the text. In the 1964 printing we read as follows: "Then said I: Wo **is unto** me! for I am undone; because I **am** a man of unclean lips; . . ." (Book of Mormon, 1964, 2 Nephi 16:5). The reader will notice that the word "unto" has also been added to this verse.

Another example is Isaiah 6:8, which contains the words "Then said I. Here *am* I; send me." Joseph Smith deleted the italicized word "am" in the first edition of the Book of Mormon:

## MORMON SCRIPTURES AND THE BIBLE

“Then I said, Here I; send me” (Book of Mormon, 1830 Edition, page 92). In later editions, however, the word “am” was put back into the text: “Then I said: Here **am** I; send me.”

The early Mormons seemed to be proud of the fact that Joseph Smith deleted the italicized words. The Mormon publication, *The Evening and The Morning Star*, contained this statement: “The Book of Mormon, as a revelation from God, possesses some advantage over the old scripture: it has not been tinctured by the wisdom of man, with here and there an *Italic* word to supply deficiencies.—It was translated by the gift and power of God, . . .” (*The Evening and The Morning Star*, January, 1833, Vol. 1, No. 8, page 2). We feel that the removal or changing of italicized words in the Book of Mormon rendition of Isaiah does not prove that Joseph Smith was working with an ancient text. In some cases his work with the italicized words led to confusion rather than clarification.

Mormon writers have often pointed to expressions in the Book of Mormon which sound like they were translated from a Hebrew manuscript. For instance, Franklin S. Harris, Jr., stated:

Nephi tells that the brass plates contained “many prophecies which have been spoken by the mouth of Jeremiah.” “By the mouth” is not ordinary English. The expression is perfectly good Hebrew and seems to have been translated literally by Joseph Smith. (*The Book of Mormon Message and Evidences*, page 120)

While a person can maintain that this type of “Hebraism” shows that Joseph Smith was actually translating, it is more reasonable to assume that Joseph Smith picked up this expression from the King James Version of the Bible. In Zechariah 8:9, for instance, we read of words spoken “*by the mouth* of the prophets, . . .” The Mormon argument concerning “Hebraisms” in the Book of Mormon is not too convincing when we realize that Joseph Smith was very familiar with the Old Testament.

On pages 121–122 of his book, *The Book of Mormon Message and Evidences*, Franklin S. Harris, Jr., states:

Another type of Hebrew use which led to trouble has been discussed by A. S. Reynolds called an *enallage*, which in the examples given means the changing of a singular form of the verb to the plural in the first case, and the changing of a plural for a singular relative pronoun in the other. Mosiah 18:8 was changed from “Here is the waters of Mormon,” to “Here are the waters of Mormon.” The other example is from Alma 1:17, “Now the law could have no power on any man for their belief,” was changed to “Now the law could have no power on any man for his belief,” to conform with English usage. The original translations in the first edition followed the Hebrew too literally.

From this statement it would appear that Mormon scholars are even trying to capitalize on the poor grammar of the first edition of the Book of Mormon by claiming it “followed the Hebrew too literally.”

### NEW TESTAMENT EVIDENCE

The reader will remember that in his attack upon the Bible, the Mormon Apostle Orson Pratt stated that the “oldest manuscripts of the New Testament which this age are in possession of are

supposed to date from the sixth century of the Christian era.” He mentions both the Codex Vaticanus and the Codex Alexandrinus. Scholars now feel that the Codex Vaticanus was written in the fourth century. Bruce Manning Metzger, an authority on ancient Bible manuscripts, makes this statement:

B. One of the most valuable of all the manuscripts of the Greek Bible is codex Vaticanus. As its name indicates, it is in the great Vatican Library at Rome. . . .

The manuscript was written about the middle of the fourth century and contained both Testaments as well as the books of the Apocrypha, . . . (*The Text of the New Testament*, New York, 1964, page 47)

Gleason L. Archer, Jr., feels that the Codex Vaticanus is “a magnificent” manuscript and states that it was written about “A.D. 325–350” (*A Survey of Old Testament Introduction*, page 40).

The Codex Alexandrinus was probably written in the fifth century. Bruce M. Metzger states:

A. This handsome codex, dating from about the fifth century, contains the Old Testament, except for several mutilations, and most of the New Testament. It was presented in 1627 by Cyril Lucar, Patriarch of Constantinople, to King Charles I of England. Today it rests along with codex Sinaiticus in one of the prominent showcases in the Department of Manuscripts of the British Museum. (*The Text of the New Testament*, page 46)

The same year (1859) that the Mormon Apostle Orson Pratt was making one of his most vicious attacks on the Bible, Constantinus Tischendorf discovered the Codex Sinaiticus which has turned out to be one of the most important manuscripts of the Bible. Scholars feel that this manuscript was written in the fourth century. George Eldon Ladd gives this information concerning this manuscript:

After the Russian revolution, the U.S.S.R. sold the manuscript to the British Museum in London for \$500,000—a sale which attracted world-wide attention. This manuscript, called Codex Sinaiticus, dates from the early fourth century, and has proved to be one of the best texts we possess of the New Testament. (*The New Testament and Criticism*, Michigan, 1967, page 62)

Kenneth W. Clark, of Duke University, made this statement about this manuscript: “. . . it was at Saint Catherine’s monastery that Constantine Tischendorf discovered in 1859 a manuscript of the entire Bible in Greek. Written in the fourth century, Codex Sinaiticus has come to stand second only to Codex Vaticanus in age and importance, . . .” (*The Biblical Archaeologist*, May 1953 page 22). In the book, *Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts*, pages 194–195, we find this information:

The date of the manuscript is in the fourth century, probably about the middle of it. It can hardly be much earlier than A.D. 340, . . . On the other hand, comparison with other hands of the fourth century, of which more are now available than was formerly the case, seems to show that it cannot be appreciably later than the middle of the century.

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These three ancient manuscripts are very important as far as the text of the New Testament is concerned. Even enemies of Christianity concede that they are authentic. The Moslem writer Al-Haj Khwaja Nazir Ahmad stated:

There are three ancient manuscripts: the *Codex Sinaiticus*, otherwise known as the Alpha, found by Tischendorf on Mount Sinai in 1859, said to be of the fourth century; the *Codex Alexandrinus* known as A found by Cyril Luker, Patriarch of Constantinople, in 1621, which is traced to the fifth century, and the third, the *Codex Vaticanus*, otherwise known as B, said to be of the fourth century. (*Jesus in Heaven on Earth*, by Al-Haj Khwaja Nazir Ahmad, Pakistan, 1956, page 15)

F. F. Bruce, a Christian writer from the University of Manchester, makes these statements concerning the documentary evidence for the New Testament:

The evidence for our New Testament writings is ever so much greater than the evidence for many writings of classical authors, the authenticity of which no-one dreams of questioning. . . .

There are in existence about 4,000 Greek manuscripts of the New Testament in whole or in part. The best and most important of these go back to somewhere about AD 350, the two most important being the *Codex Vaticanus*, the chief treasure of the Vatican Library in Rome, and the well-known *Codex Sinaiticus*, . . .

Perhaps we can appreciate how wealthy the New Testament is in manuscript attestation if we compare the textual material for other ancient historical works. For Caesar's *Gallic War* (composed between 58 and 50 BC) there are several extant MSS, but only nine or ten are good, and the oldest is some 900 years later than Caesar's day. Of the 142 books of the *Roman History of Livy* (59 BC–AD 17) only thirty-five survive; these are known to us from not more than twenty MSS of any consequence, only one of which, and that containing fragments of Books iii–vi, is as old as the fourth century. Of the fourteen books of the *Histories of Tacitus* (c. AD 100) only four and a half survive; of the sixteen books of his *Annals*, ten survive in full and two in part. The text of these extant portions of his two great historical works depends entirely on two MSS, one of the ninth century and one of the eleventh. The extant MSS of his minor works (*Dialogus de Oratoribus*, *Agricola*, *Germania*) all descend from a codex of the tenth century. The *History of Thucydides* (c. 460–400 BC) is known to us from eight MSS, the earliest belonging to c. AD 900, and a few papyrus scraps, belonging to about the beginning of the Christian era. The same is true of the *History of Herodotus* (c. 480–425 BC). Yet no classical scholar would listen to an argument that the authenticity of *Herodotus* or *Thucydides* is in doubt because the earliest MSS of their works which are of any use are over 1,300 years later than the originals.

But how different is the situation of the New Testament in this respect! In addition to the two excellent MSS of the fourth century mentioned above, which are the earliest of some thousands known to us, considerable fragments remain of papyrus copies of books of the New Testament dated from 100 to 200 years earlier still. (*New Testament Documents—Are They Reliable?* Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1967, pages 15–17)

Bruce M. Metzger points out that “most of the papyri are relatively fragmentary,” and the majority of the other ancient manuscripts do not contain the entire New Testament. He states that the Book of Revelations is found in only 300 manuscripts. Nevertheless, he feels that the evidence for the text of the New Testament is very impressive:

Thus far 250 uncial manuscripts, have been catalogued. The minuscule manuscripts, which was mentioned above, are referred to by Arabic numbers, now total 2,646.

A subsidiary class of Greek manuscripts, . . . is devoted dictionaries. . . . these are church reading books containing the text of selections of the Scriptures appointed to be read on the several days of the ecclesiastical and the civil year, . . . Although 1,997 lectionaries of the Greek New Testament have been catalogued, only comparatively few have been critically studied. . . . Short portions of six New Testament books have been preserved on ostraca, or broken pieces of pottery used by the poorest people as writing material. . . .

In evaluating the significance of these statistics of the amount of Greek evidence for the text of the New Testament, one should consider, by way of contrast, the number of manuscripts which preserve the text of the ancient classics. Homer's *Iliad*, for example, the “bible” of the ancient Greeks is preserved in 457 papyri, 2 uncial manuscripts, and 188 minuscule manuscripts. . . .

The works of several ancient authors are preserved to us by the thinnest possible thread of transmission. For example, the compendious history of Rome by Velleius Paterculus survived to modern times in only one incomplete manuscript, from which the *editio princeps* was made—and this lone manuscript was lost in the seventeenth century after being copied by Beatus Rhenanus at Amerbach. Even the *Annals* of the famous historian Tacitus is extant, so far as the first six books are concerned, in but a single manuscript, dating from the ninth century. . . . the work of many an ancient author has been preserved only in manuscripts which date from the Middle Ages (sometimes the late Middle Ages), far removed from the time at which he lived and wrote. On the contrary, the time between the composition of the books of the New Testament and the earliest extant copies is relatively brief. Instead of the lapse of a millennium or more, as is the case of not a few classical authors, several papyrus manuscripts of portions of the New Testament are extant which were copied within a century or so after the composition of the original documents. (*The Text of the New Testament*, pages 32–35)

## PAPYRI FINDS

Since the time of Orson Pratt some of the most important discoveries concerning the New Testament have been made. In *Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts*, page 185, we find this statement:

It has already been explained (p. 40) that to the two categories of vellum manuscripts, uncials and minuscules, there has now to be prefixed a third, which has only come into existence within the last seventy-five years, and indeed has only acquired much importance within the last twenty-five. That is the category of papyri, which has added a new chapter to textual history, and has gone far to bridge the gap between the autographs of the New Testament books and the great vellum uncials.

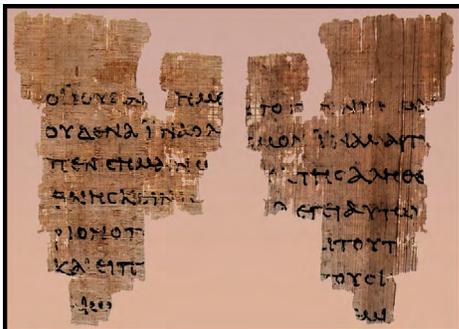
## MORMON SCRIPTURES AND THE BIBLE

Floyd V. Filson gives the following information concerning the papyrus manuscripts:

... it is in Egypt that the overwhelming majority of papyri have survived. This is because the dry climate and drifting sands which cover abandoned sites have enabled the papyrus to survive through centuries without moisture reaching it. Even so almost every papyrus manuscript found is only fragmentary.

The importance of such surviving papyrus manuscripts is that they are early. Almost no parchment manuscripts of New Testament books have survived from ancient times; a few very important ones, such as the Codex Vaticanus and the Codex Sinaiticus, date from the fourth century, and a few others from the fifth century, but it is the papyri which give us manuscripts that go further back than the fourth century. However, papyrus suffers from a serious drawback. It is fragile, and decays easily or becomes brittle and breaks in pieces; and so up to this time we have found only very limited fragments of papyrus manuscripts of New Testament books. Papyrus Bodmer II is outstanding in that so much of John is preserved in full page form. (*The Biblical Archaeologist*, September 1957, page 55)

*The Biblical Archaeologist*, September 1957, page 61, printed a photograph of the “Rylands Greek Papyrus 457, dated about 125–130 A.D., the oldest known fragment of a New Testament manuscript. It contains John 18:31–33 on one side and 18:37–38 on the other. Both sides are shown.” Below is a photograph of the Rylands Greek Papyrus 457.



In *Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts*, pages 189–190, we find this information concerning this fragment:

This scrap, measuring about 3 1/2 by 2 1/2 inches, was among some papyri acquired in 1920 by Dr. B. P. Grenfell for the John Rylands Library at Manchester, but remained unnoticed until Mr. C. H. Roberts identified it as **the oldest existing manuscript of any part of the New Testament**. It contains John xviii. 31–3, 37, 38 in a hand which can be confidently assigned to the first half of the second century. In the middle fifty years of the nineteenth century, if this scrap could have been produced and its date established, it would have created a profound sensation; for it would have convincingly refuted those who contended that the fourth Gospel was not written until the second century was far advanced. Now we see that it was not only written but had spread to a provincial town in Egypt by the middle of the second century, which goes far towards confirming the traditional date of composition in the last years of the first century.

Frank Moore Cross, Jr., also feels that the Rylands Fragment of John should be dated to “the first half of the second century A.D.” (*The Ancient Library of Qumran*, page 43). Floyd V. Filson made this statement concerning this fragment:

... it is certainly from the first half of the second century A.D., and the style of writing warrants a date about 125 or 130 A.D. It could be dated a little later or earlier. This is the earliest manuscript fragment of any New Testament book, and its date is remarkably close to the time of writing of the original Gospel. (*The Biblical Archaeologist*, September 1957, page 56)

William F. Albright, who is “one of the world’s foremost students of the ancient Near East,” made the following statement:

Meanwhile the sensational publication of a fragment of the Gospel from the early second century (C. H. Roberts, 1935) and of a roughly contemporary fragment of an apocryphal gospel dependent on John (H. I. Bell, 1935) has dealt the *coup de grace* to all radically late dating of John and has proved that the Gospel cannot be later than the first century A.D. (*From the Stone Age to Christianity*, by William Foxwell Albright, New York, 1957, page 388)

Bruce M. Metzger makes these interesting observations concerning this matter:

Although the extend of the verses preserved is so slight, in one respect this tiny scrap of papyrus possesses quite as much evidential value as would the complete codex. Just as Robinson Crusoe, seeing but a single footprint in the sand, concluded that another human being, with two feet, was present on the island with him, so p52 [Rylands Greek Papyrus 457] proves the existence and use of the Fourth Gospel during the first half of the second century in a provincial town along the Nile, far removed from its traditional place of composition (Ephesus in Asia Minor). Had this little fragment been known during the middle of the past century, that school of New Testament criticism which was inspired by the brilliant Tübingen professor, Ferdinand Christian Baur, could not have argued that the Fourth Gospel was not composed until about the year 160. (*The Text of the New Testament*, page 39)

F. F. Bruce, of the University of Manchester, gives this interesting information concerning the Rylands Fragment of John and other important discoveries:

In addition to the two excellent MSS of the fourth century mentioned above, which are the earliest of some thousands known to us, considerable fragments remain of papyrus copies of books of the New Testament dated from 100 to 200 years earlier still. The Chester Beatty Biblical Papyri, the existence of which was made public in 1931, consists of portions of eleven papyrus codices, three of which contained most of the New Testament writings. One of these, containing the four Gospels with Acts, belongs to the first half of the third century; another, containing Paul’s letters to churches and the Epistle to the Hebrews, was copied at the beginning of the third century; the third, containing Revelation, belongs to the second half of the same century.

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A more recent discovery consists of some papyrus fragments dated by papyrological experts not later than AD 150, published in *Fragments of an Unknown Gospel and other Early Christian Papyri*, . . .

Earlier still is a fragment of a papyrus codex containing John xviii. 31–33, 37 f., now in the John Rylands Library, Manchester, dated on palaeographical grounds around AD 130, showing that the latest of the four Gospels, which was written, according to tradition, at Ephesus between AD 90 and 100, was circulating in Egypt within about forty years of its composition (if, as is most likely, this papyrus originated in Egypt, where it was acquired in 1917). It must be regarded as being, by half a century, the earliest extant fragment of the New Testament.

A more recently discovered papyrus manuscript of the same Gospel, while not so early as the Rylands papyrus, is incomparably better preserved; this is the *Papyrus Bodmer II*, whose discovery was announced by the Bodmer Library of Geneva in 1956; it was written about AD 200, and contains the first fourteen chapters of the Gospel of John with but one lacuna (of twenty-two verses), and considerable portions of the last seven chapters. (*New Testament Documents—Are They Reliable?* pages 17–18)

Bruce M. Metzger gives this interesting information:

One of the oldest considerable portions of the Greek New Testament is a papyrus codex of the Gospel of John, the *Bodmer Papyrus II*. . . . According to its editor, the manuscript dates from about A.D. 200. . . . Still another early Biblical manuscript acquired by M. Bodmer is a single-quire codex of Luke and John. It originally contained about 144 pages, each measuring 10 1/4 by 5 1/8 inches, of which 102 have survived, either in whole or in part. . . . The editors, Victor Martin and Rodolphe Kasser, date this copy between A.D. 175 and 225. It is thus the earliest known copy of the Gospel according to Luke and one of the earliest of the Gospel according to John. (*The Text of the New Testament*, pages 39–41)

Floyd V. Filson made this statement: “The Bodmer Papyri, reported to have been found in Upper Egypt, must be listed with the Dead Sea Scrolls among the most remarkable finds in archaeological history (*The Biblical Archaeologist*, May 1959, page 48). In *Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts* we find this information:

We now have, as will be told in greater detail below, substantial portions of a codex containing the four Gospels and Acts written in the first half of the third century, another of the Pauline Epistles of about A.D. 200, fifty leaves of an original codex of 108 leaves containing Numbers and Deuteronomy of the early second century, a tiny scrap of St. John of the same date, together with fragments of Genesis, Deuteronomy, Psalms, Matthew and Titus also of the second century. There is even a fragment of Deuteronomy from a roll of the second century before Christ. A considerable gap in the history of the transmission of the Bible text has thus been filled by the discoveries of recent years. (*Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts*, page 43)

In the first edition of this work it was stated that “the early papyrus manuscripts of the New Testament have all perished (unless indeed some are still lying buried in the soil of Egypt, which is far from improbable).” This possibility has happily been realized, and, as has already been indicated, we now have a slender thread of tradition extending back to a point barely a generation later than the date of the Apocalypse or the Fourth Gospel. A list compiled by the Rev. P. L. Hedley in 1933 enumerated 157 New Testament fragments on papyrus (including vellum fragments found with papyri, and ostraka), and to these may now be added the Chester Beatty manuscripts and other recent discoveries, which bring the total up to 170 or more. (*Ibid.*, pages 162–163)

. . . we have a nearly complete manuscript of the Pauline Epistles, written apparently about the beginning of the third century—that is to say, more than a century before the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus. It emphatically confirms the general soundness of the text. . . . (*Ibid.*, pages 188–189)

Besides the thousands of Greek manuscripts, there is additional evidence for the text of the New Testament found in early translations into other languages:

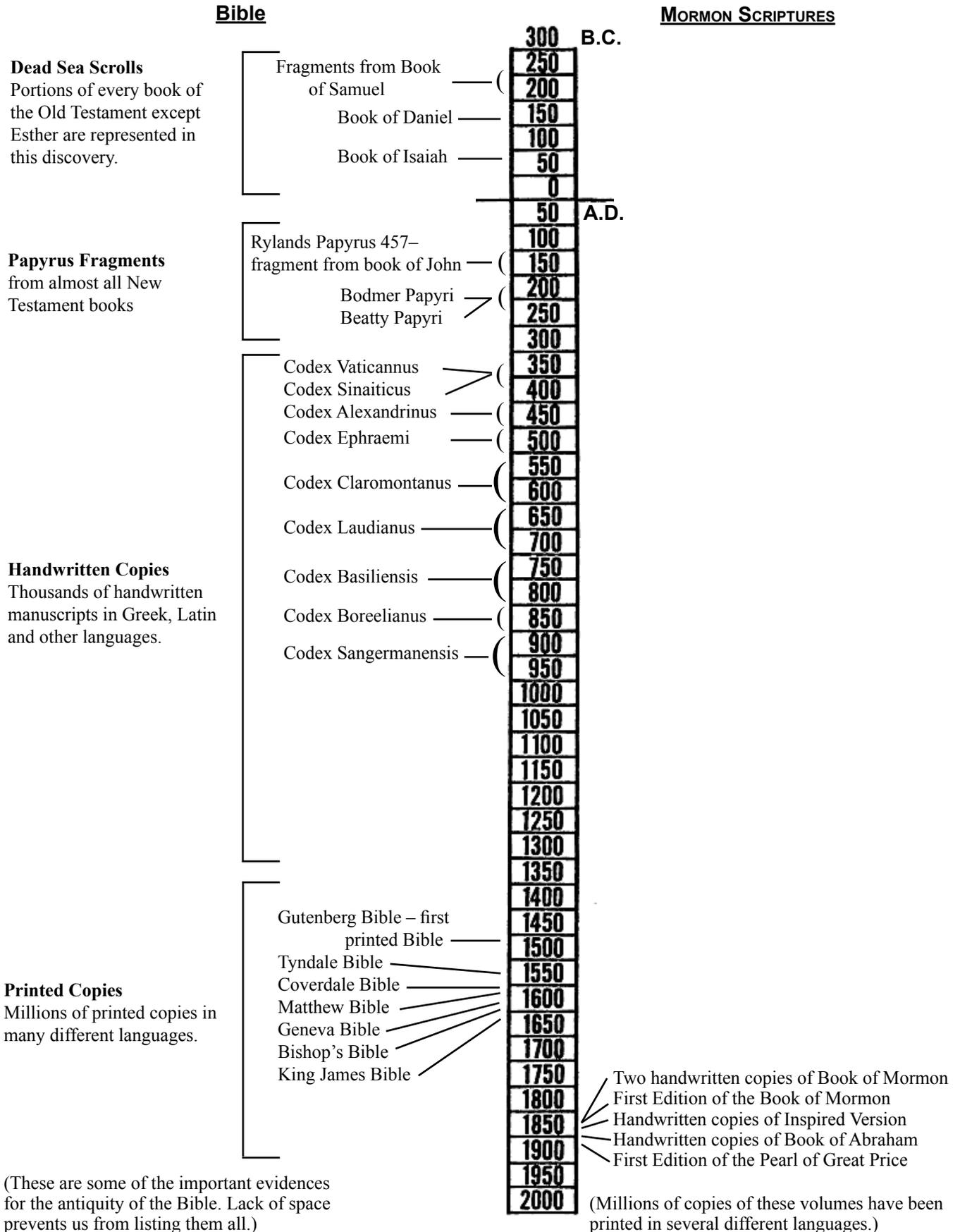
. . . the Bible has been translated into many different languages, . . . the earliest Latin translation was made before A.D. 200, and the earliest Syriac dates from the late second or early third century. Hence, if we can gather from the existing copies of these translations what were the Greek words which their authors were translating, we know (e.g. in the case of the Latin) what was read in that particular passage in a Greek MS, current in the second century when the translation was made; . . . It is true that we have not the original copies of the Latin and Syriac versions, any more than we have the originals of the Greek itself, and that a similar process of comparison of copies to that described in the last paragraph must be gone through if we are to discover the original readings of the translations; but in many cases this can be done with certainty, and then we have a very early testimony indeed to the original Greek text. . . . the service of the Versions (as the translations of the Bible into other languages are technically called) is that they tap the stream near the fountain-head. They are unaffected by any corruptions that may have crept into the Greek text after the translations were made; . . . (*Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts*, pages 57–59)

Bruce M. Metzger gives this information concerning early versions of the New Testament:

About the beginning of the third century portions of the New Testament were translated into Sahidic, and within the following century most of the books of the New Testament became available in that dialect. Indeed, to judge on the basis of widely divergent Sahidic texts, some parts of the Scriptures were translated at various times by independent translators. . . .

The Bohairic version appears to be somewhat later than the Sahidic version. . . . Recently M. Bodmer acquired an early

**A COMPARISON OF THE MANUSCRIPT EVIDENCE FOR THE BIBLE AND FOR MORMON SCRIPTURES**



papyrus codex containing most of the Gospel of John and the opening chapters of Genesis in Bohairic. . . . Rodolphe Kasser, is inclined to date the manuscript in the fourth century. . . .

Among the scattered manuscripts that preserve portions of the New Testament in the Fayyumic dialect, one of the earliest is a papyrus codex, now at the University of Michigan, which contains John vi. II–XV. 11 (with lacunae). According to its editor, Mrs. Elinor M. Husselman, the manuscript dates from the early part of the fourth century. . . .

The most significant representative of the sub-Achmimic version is a papyrus codex containing the Gospel of John. In the opinion of its editor, Sir Herbert Thompson, the manuscript dates from about A.D. 350–75. (*The Text of the New Testament*, pages 79–81)

On pages 86–87 of the same book, Bruce M. Metzger gives this information:

Besides textual evidence derived from New Testament Greek manuscripts and from early versions, the textual critic has available the numerous scriptural quotations included in the commentaries, sermons, and other treatises written by early Church Fathers. Indeed, so extensive are these citations that if all other sources for our knowledge of the text of the New Testament were destroyed, they would be sufficient alone for the reconstruction of practically the entire New Testament.

The importance of patristic quotations lies in the circumstance that they serve to localize and date readings and types of text in Greek manuscripts and versions. . . . before the textual critic can use patristic evidence with confidence, he must determine whether the true text of the ecclesiastical writer has been transmitted. As in the case of New Testament manuscripts, so also the treatises of the Fathers have been modified in the course of copying. The scribe was always tempted to assimilate scriptural quotations in the Fathers to the form of text which was current in the later manuscripts of the New Testament—a text which the scribes might well know by heart.

F. F. Bruce gives this information:

Attestation of another kind is provided by allusions to and quotations from the New Testament books in other early writings. The authors known as the Apostolic Fathers wrote chiefly between AD 90 and 160, . . . we might go on through the writers of the second century, amassing increasing evidence of their familiarity with and recognition of the authority of the New Testament writings. . . .

Nor is it only in orthodox Christian writers that we find evidence of this sort. It is evident from the recently discovered writings of the Gnostic school of Valentinus that before the middle of the second century most of the New Testament books were as well known and as fully venerated in that heretical circle as they were in the Catholic Church. (*New Testament Documents—Are They Reliable?* pages 18–19)

## “130,000 DIFFERENT READINGS”

The reader will remember that the Mormon Apostle Orson Pratt made these statements in a discourse delivered in 1859:

All the most ancient manuscripts of the New Testament known to the world differ from each other in almost every verse. . . .

The learned admit that in the manuscripts of the New Testament alone there are no less than one hundred and thirty thousand different readings. . . . No one can tell whether even one verse of either the Old or New Testament conveys the ideas of the original author.

Just think! 130,000 **different readings** in the New Testament alone! (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 7, pages 27–28)

On another occasion Orson Pratt stated: “Who knows that even one verse of the whole Bible has escaped pollution, so as to convey the same sense now that it did in the original?” The Mormon scholar Dr. Hugh Nibley has stated: “. . . when we get the so-called original texts of the Bible before us with their stately apparatus of possible corrections, emendations, suggestions, recommendations, and whatnot, we first come to realize that the holy text is a maze of a thousand passages” (*The World and the Prophets*, Salt Lake City, 1954, page 188). In a footnote at the bottom of the same page Dr. Nibley states: “There are more than 8,000 ancient manuscripts of the New Testament, no two of which read exactly alike!”

While it is true that there are many different readings in manuscript copies of the New Testament, Mormon writers have greatly exaggerated concerning the importance of this matter. Gleason L. Archer, Jr., stated:

But what about the text of the Bible as we now possess it? Is that text necessarily free from all mistakes of every kind? Not when it comes to copyists’ errors, for we certainly do find discrepancies among the handwritten copies that have been preserved to us, even those which come from the earliest centuries. Some slips of the pen doubtless crept into the first copies made from the original manuscripts, and additional errors of a transmissional type found their way into the copies of copies. It is almost unavoidable that this should have been the case. No man alive can sit down and copy out the text of an entire book without a mistake of any kind. (Those who doubt this statement are invited to try it themselves!) It would take nothing short of a miracle to insure the inerrancy of a copy of an original manuscript. (*A Survey of Old Testament Introduction*, page 18)

F. F. Bruce made these interesting observations:

It is easily proved by experiment that it is difficult to copy out a passage of any considerable length without making one or two slips at least. When we have documents like our New Testament writings copied and recopied thousands of times, the scope for copyists’ errors is so enormously increased that it is surprising there are no more than there actually are. Fortunately, if the great number of MSS increases the number of scribal errors, it increases proportionately the means of correcting such errors, so that the margin of doubt left in

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the process of recovering the exact original wording is not so large as might be feared; it is in truth remarkably small. (*New Testament Documents—Are They Reliable?* page 19)

George Eldon Ladd makes these observations concerning the various readings found in the New Testament:

Some of these textual variations involve matters of theological importance; but the majority of them do not essentially affect the meaning of the Bible, and vast numbers of textual errors deal only with trivial differences.

Errors in copying the Greek text arose when the copyist did not correctly read the text that lay before him. In I Timothy 3:16, the AV reads “God was manifest in the flesh,” while the RSV reads, “He was manifest in the flesh.” Some uncritical readers might attribute such a change to an alleged “lower theology” of the modern version; but the facts are simple. The earlier manuscripts read OC (“he who”), while many of the later manuscripts read ΘC (theos—“God”). The difference is only two small marks. (*The New Testament and Criticism*, pages 63–64)

Through the developed science of textual criticism we have achieved a relatively accurate text of the New Testament. There remain, however, numerous readings where the weight of the divergent witnesses is so evenly balanced that it is impossible to decide with certainty which reading is to be preferred. (Ibid., page 71)

In his book, *The Text of the New Testament*, Bruce M. Metzger gives this information:

With Johann Albrecht Bengel (1687–1752) we reach a new stage in the history of the textual criticism of the New Testament. While a student in theology at Tubingen his pietistic faith in the plenary inspiration of the Bible was disturbed by the 30,000 variants which had recently been published in Mill’s edition of the Greek Testament, and he resolved to devote himself to the study of the transmission of the text. With characteristic energy and perseverance he procured all the editions, manuscripts, and early translations available to him. After extended study he came to the conclusion that the variant readings were fewer in number than might have been expected, and that they did not shake any article of evangelic doctrine. (*The Text of the New Testament*, page 112)

Words and notes standing in the margin of the older copy were occasionally incorporated into the text of the new manuscript. Since the margin was used for glosses (that is, synonyms of hard words in the text) as well as corrections, it must have often been most perplexing to a scribe to decide what to do with a marginal note. It was easiest to solve his doubt by putting the note into the text which he was copying. Thus it is probable that what was originally a marginal comment explaining the moving of the water in the pool at Bethesda (John v. 7) was incorporated into the text of John v. 3b–4 (see the King James version for the addition). . . .

Odd though it may seem, scribes who thought were more dangerous than those who wished merely to be faithful in copying what lay before them. Many of the alterations which may be classified as intentional were no doubt introduced in good faith by copyists who believed that they were correcting an error or infelicity of language which had previously crept into the sacred text and needed to be rectified. . . . Despite the vigilance of ecclesiastics of Bishop Spyridon’s temperament, it is apparent from even a casual examination of a critical apparatus that scribes, offended by real or imagined errors of spelling, grammar, and historical fact, deliberately introduced changes into what they were transcribing. Since monks usually knew by heart extensive portions of the Scriptures . . . the temptation to harmonize discordant parallels or quotations would be strong in proportion to the degree of the copyist’s familiarity with other parts of the Bible. (Ibid., pages 194, 195, 196 and 197)

What would a conscientious scribe do when he found that the same passage was given differently in two or more manuscripts which he had before him? Rather than make a choice between them and copy only one of the two variant readings (with the attendant possibility of omitting the genuine reading), most scribes incorporated both readings in the new copy which they were transcribing. (Ibid., page 200)

Although some of the scribes might have made deliberate changes in Bible manuscripts, it is easy to see how marginal notes might have been included by accident. Thomas Paine was faced with this problem in his book, *The Age of Reason*. In a footnote on page 165 he states:

The former part of *The Age of Reason* has not been published two years, and there is already an expression in it that is not mine. The expression is, *The Book of Luke was carried by a majority of one voice only*. It may be true, but it is not I that have said it. Some person, who might know of the circumstance, has added it in a note at the bottom of the page of some of the editions, printed either in England or in America; and the printers, after that, have placed it into the body of the work, and made me the author of it. (*The Age of Reason*, page 165)

In *Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts* we find this information:

1. Errors of Hand and Eye. The mistakes of scribes are of many kinds and of varying importance. Sometimes the copyist confuses words of similar sound, as in English we sometimes find our correspondents write *there* for *their* or *here* for *hear*. Or he may pass over a word by accident; and this is especially likely to happen when the same word is repeated (it is then called haplography) or if two adjoining words end with the same letters. Sometimes this cause of error (known as homoioteleuton= “similar ending”) operates more widely. Two successive lines of the MS. from which he is copying end in the same or similar words; and the copyist’s eye slips from the first to the second, and the intermediate line is omitted. Sometimes a whole verse, or a longer passage, may be omitted owing to the identity of the first or last words with those of an adjoining passage. . . . sometimes the MS.

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from which he is copying is furnished with short explanatory notes or glosses in the margin, and he fails to see where the text ends and the note begins, and so copies the note into the text itself. . . . The veneration in which the sacred books were held has generally protected them against intentional alterations of the text, but not entirely so. The harmonization of the Gospel narratives, described in the last paragraph, has certainly been in some cases intentional; and that, no doubt, without the smallest wish to deceive, but simply with the idea of supplementing the one narrative from another parallel source or sources, or in order to smooth out discrepancies. . . .

One word of warning, already referred to, must be emphasized in conclusion. No fundamental doctrine of the Christian faith rests on a disputed reading. Constant references to mistakes and divergences of reading, such as the plan of this book necessitates, might give rise to the doubt whether the substance, as well as the language, of the Bible is not open to question. It cannot be too strongly asserted that in substance the text of the Bible is certain. Especially is this the case with the New Testament. The number of manuscripts of the New Testament, of early translations from it, and of quotations from it in the oldest writers of the Church, is so large that it is practically certain that the true reading of every doubtful passage is preserved in some one or other of these ancient authorities. This can be said of no other ancient book in the world. . . . the manuscripts of the New Testament are counted by hundreds, and even thousands. In the case of the Old Testament we are not quite in such a good position, as will be shown presently. In some passages it seems certain that the true reading has not been preserved by any ancient authority, and we are driven to conjecture in order to supply it. (*Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts*, pages 50, 51, 52 and 55)

In a footnote on page 55 of the same book we find this statement:

Dr. Hort, whose authority on the point is quite incontestable, estimates the proportion of words about which there is some doubt [in the New Testament] at about one-eighth of the whole; but by far the greater part of these consists merely of differences in order and other unimportant variations, and “the amount of what can in any sense be called substantial variation . . . can hardly form more than a thousandth part of the entire text.” (*Introduction to The New Testament in the Original Greek*, page 2)

Mormon leaders claim that the Catholics conspired to alter the Bible. In the Book of Mormon we read:

. . . thou seest the foundation of a great and abominable church, which is most abominable above all other churches; for behold, they have **taken away** from the gospel of the Lamb many parts which are plain and most precious; and also many covenants of the Lord have they taken away.

And all this have they done that they might pervert the right ways of the Lord, that they might blind the eyes and harden the hearts of the children of men.

Wherefore, thou seest that after the book hath gone forth through the hands of the great and abominable church, that there are many plain and precious things **taken away** from the book, which is the book of the Lamb of God.

. . . because of the many plain and precious things which have been taken out of the book, which were plain unto the understanding of the children of men, . . . because of these things which are taken away out of the gospel of the Lamb, an exceeding great many do stumble, yea, insomuch that Satan hath great power over them. (Book of Mormon, 1 Nephi 13:26–29)

Joseph Fielding Smith, Jr., who is the son of the tenth President of the Mormon Church, made these statements:

Scholars do not deny that the original text of the Bible has been corrupted. **Truths have been removed in an attempt to preserve traditions. Faulty translations and omissions of phrases and clauses have resulted in confusion.** (*Religious Truths Defined*, page 337)

The early “**apostate fathers**” **did not think it was wrong to tamper with inspired scripture.** If any scripture seemed to endanger their viewpoint, it was altered, transplanted or completely removed from the biblical text. **All this was done that they might keep their traditions.** Such  **mutilation** was considered **justifiable** to preserve the so-called “purity” of their doctrines. (*Ibid.*, page 175)

The Mormon Apostle Mark E. Petersen made these statements concerning the Bible:

Many insertions were made, some of them “slanted” for selfish purposes, while at times deliberate **falsifications and fabrications were perpetrated.** (*As Translated Correctly*, Salt Lake City, 1966, page 4)

It is evident then that many of the “plain and precious” things were omitted from the Bible by failure to choose all of the authentic books for inclusion, and by **deliberate changes, deletions and forgeries.** . . . (*Ibid.*, page 14)

Joseph Smith himself stated: “I believe the Bible as it read when it came from the pen of the original writers. Ignorant translators, careless transcribers, or **designing and corrupt priests have committed many errors**” (*History of the Church*, Vol. 6, page 57). On December 1, 1844, the Mormon publication, *Times and Seasons*, contained this statement: “Elder R. Richey followed him and showed the situation of our Bible, after passing through the hands of the Mother of Harlots” (*Times and Seasons*, Vol. 5, page 726).

While it is true that there are various readings in the original handwritten manuscripts of the Bible, the Book of Mormon’s charge that the Catholics deliberately conspired to remove “many plain and precious things” out of the Bible is proven false by the Dead Sea Scrolls and other important manuscripts which have been discovered. Anthony A. Hoekema makes these observations concerning this matter:

The Mormon contention that “after the book [the Bible] hath gone forth through the hands of the great and abominable church . . . there are many plain and precious things taken away from the book. . . .” (1 Nephi 13:28), is completely contrary to fact. The many copies of Old Testament

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manuscripts which we now possess do vary in minor matters—the spelling of words, the omission of a phrase here and there but there is no evidence whatsoever that any major sections of Old Testament books have been lost. The manuscripts found among the Dead Sea Scrolls, generally dated from about 200 to 50 B.C., include portions of every Old Testament book except Esther; studies have revealed that these documents—older by a thousand years than previously discovered Old Testament manuscripts—are substantially identical to the text of the Old Testament which had been previously handed down. As far as New Testament manuscripts are concerned, the oldest of which go back to the second century A. D., the situation is substantially the same. The variations that are found in these manuscripts . . . are of a relatively minor nature. There is no indication whatever that any large sections of material found in the originals have been lost. Most of the manuscript variations concern matters of spelling, word order, tense, and the like; no single doctrine is affected by them in any way. (*The Four Major Cults*, Michigan 1963, pages 30–31)

The Book of Mormon plainly states that the changes in the Bible were made after the time of Christ and after the formation of the Catholic Church:

The book that thou beholdest is a record of the Jews, . . . the book proceeded forth from the mouth of a Jew; and when it proceeded forth from the mouth of a Jew it contained the plainness of the gospel of the Lord, . . . these things go forth from the Jews **in purity** unto the Gentiles, . . . thou seest the foundation of a great and abominable church, which is most abominable above all other churches; for behold, they have taken away from the gospel of the Lamb many parts . . . that they might pervert the right ways of the Lord, . . . **after** the book hath gone forth through the hands of the great and abominable church, . . . there are many plain and precious things taken away from the book, which is the book of the Lamb of God. (Book of Mormon, 1 Nephi 13:23–28)

As we have shown, the “great Isaiah Scroll” found at Qumran provides important evidence to show that the Catholics did NOT take away “many plain and precious things” from the Bible. This scroll is dated at about 100 B.C., and therefore could not have been touched by the Catholics. Also it should be remembered that this scroll is a Jewish production, and the Book of Mormon claims that the Jews had the Scriptures in their “purity.” Why, then, does this scroll fail to support the text of Isaiah as found in the Book of Mormon or Joseph Smith’s Inspired Revision of the Bible?

The Catholic Church certainly was not in existence prior to the time of Christ, and Joseph Fielding Smith, President of the Mormon Church, has stated that the Catholics did not become the “ruling power in religion” until after the beginning of the fourth century:

The Church established by the Redeemer was taken from the earth . . . The great ecclesiastical organization that arose and claimed to be the Church of Christ was of gradual growth. The change from truth to error was not made all in one day. . . . In the beginning of the **fourth** century this great religious power, under the Emperor Constantine became the state religion of the Roman Empire. From that time forth its dominion spread and before many years had passed away it

became the ruling power in religion in the so-called civilized world. By it “times and laws” were changed. (*Essentials in Church History*, page 10)

In 1887 Rev. M. T. Lamb made this observation:

Have a great many of the best things in the New Testament been taken out of it by a great and abominable church since the Apostles’ day, as the Book of Mormon tells us? . . .

Such a piracy of Holy Scripture could not have occurred later than 350 A.D., because there are now in existence copies of the Bible that are between fifteen and sixteen hundred years old, copies written out by hand not later than 350 years after Christ—250 years after the death of the Apostle John. (*The Golden Bible*, page 329)

At the time M. T. Lamb wrote the above statement there was still a substantial gap between the original manuscripts and the earliest copies known to scholars. Consequently, Mormons would not accept these manuscripts as evidence against Joseph Smith’s work. Since the turn of the century, however, the situation has entirely changed, for papyrus fragments have been found which virtually close the gap and prove that the Scriptures have not been rewritten by a “great and abominable church.” Floy V. Filson stated:

Over seventy papyrus manuscripts of New Testament writing have been found. . . .

These early manuscripts, although fragmentary, make a real contribution to our knowledge. They show that in early centuries the Gospel of John was widely known in Egypt (where most of the papyri are found), and that the text of the Gospels previously known from manuscripts of the fourth century and later agrees substantially with the text which we find in these third and second century fragments (second century fragments are admittedly rare and small). (*The Biblical Archaeologist*, February 1961, page 3)

Sir Frederic Kenyon, who was the Director of the British Museum, made this statement:

“The interval then between the dates of original composition and the earliest extant evidence becomes so small as to be in fact negligible, and the last foundation for any doubt that the Scriptures have come down to us substantially as they were written has now been removed. Both the authenticity and the general integrity of the books of the New Testament may be regarded as finally established.” (*The Bible and Archaeology*, 1940, page 288, as quoted in *The New Testament Documents—Are They Reliable?* page 20)

In *Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts* we find the following:

The discoveries of Greek papyri in Egypt have materially reduced the gap between the earliest extant manuscripts of the New Testament and Septuagint and the date at which the original books were written. They have established, with a wealth of evidence which no other work of ancient literature can even approach, the substantial authenticity and integrity of the text of the Bible as we now possess it. (*Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts*, pages 318–319)

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In September, 1957, *The Biblical Archaeologist*, printed a photograph of the first page “of the Gospel of John in Papyrus Bodmer II.” Although this photograph is small most of the writing is quite readable. This papyrus is dated about 200 A.D. We feel that this papyrus provides an excellent test for Joseph Smith’s claim that the Catholics changed the Bible, and therefore we are including a photograph of it in this study. Below this we have copied the characters—written in the “Greek Uncial Script”—from the papyrus and with the help of Berry’s *Interlinear Literal Translation of the Greek*

*New Testament* we have been able to divide the words and give the English translation below each word. The fragment is damaged on the right side so we have had to restore a few words in brackets. We have numbered the lines for easy reference and have tried to end them at exactly the same place as on the original papyrus. The order of the words in a literal translation of the Greek differs from what we are accustomed to in English. Therefore, we have assigned numbers to the words so that the reader will see the order they should be read for proper understanding.

### Papyrus Bodmer II About 200 A.D.



line	Translation
1	ΕΝ ΑΡΧΗ ΗΝ Ο ΛΟΓΟΣ ΚΑΙ Ο ΛΟΓΟΣ ΗΝ ΠΡΟΣ ΤΟΝ ΘΕΟΝ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God,
2	ΚΑΙ ΘΕΟΣ ΗΝ Ο ΛΟΓΟΣ. ΟΥΤΟΣ ΗΝ ΕΝ ΑΡΧΗ ΠΡΟΣ ΤΟΝ ΘΕΟΝ and God was the Word. He was in the beginning with God,
3	ΠΑΝΤΑ ΔΙ ΑΥΤΟΥ ΕΓΕΝΕΤΟ ΚΑΙ ΧΩΡΙΣ ΑΥΤΟΥ all things by him were made, and without him
4	ΕΓΕΝΕΤΟ ΟΥΔΕ ΕΝ Ο ΓΕΓΟΝΕΝ ΕΝ ΑΥΤΩ ΖΩΗ ΗΝ was made not anything that was made. In him life was
5	ΚΑΙ Η ΖΩΗ ΗΝ ΤΟ ΦΩΣ ΤΩΝ ΑΝΘΡΩΠΩΝ and the life was the light of men.
6	ΚΑΙ ΤΟ ΦΩΣ ΕΝ ΤΗ ΣΚΟΤΙΑ ΦΑΙΝΕΙ ΚΑΙ Η and the light in the darkness shines, and the
7	ΣΚΟΤΙΑ ΑΥΤΟ ΟΥ ΚΑΤΕΛΑΒΕΝ darkness it has not overcome
8	ΕΓΕΝΕΤΟ ΑΝΘΡΩΠΟΣ ΑΠΕΣΤΑΛΜΕΝΟΣ ΠΑ There was a man sent from
9	ΡΑ ΘΥ ΟΝΟΜΑ ΑΥΤΩ ΙΩΑΝΝΗΣ ΟΥΤΟΣ ΗΛ God, name whose [was] John. He came
10	ΘΕΝ ΕΙΣ ΜΑΡΤΥΡΙΑΝ ΙΝΑ ΜΑΡΤΥΡΗΧΗ for a witness, that he might witness
11	ΠΕΡΙ ΤΟΥ ΦΩΤΟΣ· ΙΝΑ ΠΑΝΤΕΣ ΠΙΣΤΕΥ of the light, that all might
12	ΣΩΣΙΝ ΔΙ ΑΥΤΟΥ. ΟΥΚ ΗΝ ΕΚΕΙΝΟΣ ΤΟ believe through him. not was He the
13	ΦΩΣ ΑΛΛΑ ΙΝΑ ΜΑΡΤΥΡΗΧΗ ΠΕΡΙ ΤΟΥ light, but [came] that He might bear witness of the
14	ΦΩΤΟΣ ΗΝ ΤΟ ΦΩΣ ΤΟ ΑΛΗΘΙΝΟΝ Ο ΦΩ light. [That] was the light [the] true that enlightens

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15	ΤΙΖΕΙ ΠΑΝΤΑ ΑΝΘΡΩΠΩΝ ΕΡΧΟΜΕΝΟΝ every man coming
16	ΕΙΣ ΤΟΝ ΚΟΣΜΟΝ· ΕΝ ΤΩ ΚΟΣΜΩ [ΗΝ ΚΑΙ] into the world. <sup>3</sup> in the <sup>4</sup> world <sup>1</sup> He was, and
17	Ο ΚΟΣΜΟΣ ΔΙ ΑΥΤΟΥ ΕΓΕΝΕΤΟ ΚΑΙ Ο ΚΟΣ the world <sup>3</sup> by <sup>4</sup> him <sup>1</sup> was made, and the world
18	ΜΟΣ ΑΥΤΟΝ ΟΥΚ ΕΓΝΩ ΕΙΣ [Τ]Α ΙΔΙΑ ΗΛΘΕΝ him not knew. <sup>3</sup> to <sup>4</sup> his own <sup>1</sup> He came,
19	ΚΑΙ ΟΙ ΙΔΙΟΙ ΑΥΤΟΝ ΟΥ ΠΑΡΕΛΑΒΟΝ. [ΟΧΟΙ] and his own <sup>2</sup> him <sup>3</sup> not <sup>1</sup> received; <sup>2</sup> as many as
20	ΔΕ ΕΛΑΒΟΝ ΑΥΤΟΝ ΕΔΩΚΕΝ [ΑΥΤΟΙΣ] but received him <sup>3</sup> he gave <sup>1</sup> to them
21	[Ε]ΞΟΥΣΙΑΝ ΤΕΚΝΑ ΘΥ ΓΕΝΕΘΑΙ ΤΟΙΣ power <sup>3</sup> children <sup>4</sup> of God <sup>1</sup> to become [even] to those that
22	ΠΙΣΤΕΥΟΥΣΙΝ ΕΙΣ ΤΟ ΟΝΟΜΑ ΑΥΤΟ[Υ] ΟΙ ΟΥ believe on <sup>2</sup> name <sup>1</sup> his; <sup>1</sup> who <sup>4</sup> not
23	Κ ΕΞ ΑΙΜΑΤΩΝ ΟΥΔΕ ΕΚ ΘΕΛΗΜ[ΑΤΟΣ] <sup>5</sup> of <sup>6</sup> blood, <sup>7</sup> nor <sup>8</sup> of <sup>9</sup> the <sup>10</sup> will
24	ΣΑΡΚΟΣ ΟΥΔΕ ΕΚ ΘΕΛΗΜΑΤΟΣ ΑΝ[ΔΡΟΣ] <sup>11</sup> of <sup>12</sup> the <sup>13</sup> flesh, <sup>14</sup> nor <sup>15</sup> of <sup>16</sup> the <sup>17</sup> will <sup>18</sup> of <sup>19</sup> man,
25	ΑΛΛΑ ΕΚ ΘΥ ΕΓΕΝΝΗΘΗΣΑΝ· ΚΑΙ <sup>20</sup> but <sup>21</sup> of God <sup>22</sup> were born. and

In order to give the reader an idea of how this papyrus compares with the King James and Revised Standard versions of the Bible, we have made three columns. We will follow the word order suggested above for Papyrus Bodmer II.

KING JAMES VERSION	PAPYRUS BODMER II	REVISED STANDARD VERSION
<p>In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.</p> <p>There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And . . . (John 1:1–14, King James Version, as printed in <i>The New Testament in Four Versions</i>)</p>	<p>In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God; all things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light in the darkness shines, and the darkness has not overcome it.</p> <p>There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came for a witness, that he might witness of the light, that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came that he might bear witness of the light. That was the true light that enlightens every man coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came to his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him to them he gave power to become children of God, even to those that believe on his name; who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And . . . (Papyrus Bodmer II)</p>	<p>In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God; all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.</p> <p>There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He was for testimony, to bear witness to the light, that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to bear witness to the light.</p> <p>The true light that enlightens every man was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world knew him not. He came to his own home, and his own people received him not. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God; who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.</p> <p>And . . . (John 1:1–14, Revised Standard Version, as printed in <i>The New Testament in Four Versions</i>)</p>

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The reader will notice that this photograph of Papyrus Bodmer II, written about 200 A. D., reads essentially the same as both the King James Version and the Revised Standard Version. While we have only worked with the first page of this papyrus, Floyd V. Filson made these statements concerning the entire manuscript:

In one respect the manuscript may disappoint those who hear of its early date and unusually good state of preservation. Such people may hope to learn something sensational concerning the wording of the text, something which would discredit later manuscripts and find new ideas in the Gospel of John. In these days when advertisers think it necessary to insist that this year's line of motor cars, cigars, or toothpaste is "all new," it may sound tame to many to hear that P<sup>66</sup> [Papyrus Bodmer II] confirms the general accuracy of the Greek text of John behind the Revised Standard Version.

This does not mean that we can learn nothing from the manuscript. It teaches much about handwriting and the making of manuscripts about 200 A. D. . . . And it teaches a great deal about the Greek text of John about 200 A. D. Two examples: the manuscript omits 5:3b, 4 and 7:53–8:11. (*The Biblical Archaeologist*, September 1957, pages 59–60)

Because of recent discoveries of papyrus manuscripts Mormon writers are faced with a serious dilemma. It is almost impossible to maintain Joseph Smith's teaching that the Catholics conspired to change the Bible in light of these discoveries. Dr. Richard L. Anderson, of Brigham Young University, is undoubtedly one of the top authorities on Bible manuscripts in the Mormon Church. In a paper read at the "Fourteenth Annual Symposium on the Archaeology of the Scriptures," Dr. Anderson seemed to be warning his people against the idea that the New Testament has been drastically altered:

In studying a particular author in antiquity, the classical scholar typically works with a few principal manuscripts, together with a few more extensive fragments or portions of manuscripts. The New Testament scholar, however, faces the wonderful but impossible prospect of attempting to comprehend a text preserved in about 3,000 manuscripts. . . . Nor is sheer quantity most impressive, for the antiquity of his manuscripts should be the envy of all ancient studies. . . .

This process of uncovering the major papyrus manuscripts of the New Testament has largely taken place not only in our own century, but in our own generation. . . . Almost the whole New Testament is represented in the papyrus fragments. The only two exceptions now are I and II Timothy. The real achievement, then, is that the antiquity of the text has now been pushed back almost another century. Of almost eighty catalogued papyrus manuscripts and fragments, about twenty-five are dated in the third century. . . . This means that the gap now separating the time of the writing of the New Testament and the oldest preserved manuscripts is now generally no more than 200 years, and as we shall soon see in the case of the letters of Paul and two Gospels, that gap has been narrowed by at least another fifty years. To underline the extent of the findings, let us stress that some part of every book of the New Testament is represented by papyrus dated

as early as the third century, with the present exception of Philemon, I Timothy, II Timothy, I, II, and III John.

The oldest New Testament papyrus furnishes an impressive example of the function of discovery in authenticating New Testament writings. . . . The fragment itself contains about thirty percent of the words of John 18:31–33 on its face and the same percentage of the words of John 18:37–38 on the reverse. . . . But the Rylands fragment, given the number P<sup>52</sup>, shows that the Gospel of John had been written and also had been disseminated in Egypt before the middle of the second century. P<sup>52</sup>, a copy of the Gospel of John made not very many years after the writing of that Gospel, is a dramatic confirmation of the essential claim of Christianity, as it relates in fragmentary but clear form the question of Pilate, "Are you a king?"—and Jesus' affirmation, "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice."

. . . There are substantial portions from three ancient papyrus books, none later than the third century, . . . However, the most impressive of the Beatty papyri are the extensive portions of what originally was a collection of Paul's letters, given the number P<sup>46</sup>. . . . As to its antiquity. P<sup>46</sup> is thought by leading papyrologists to be no later than 200 A.D. This means that the oldest collection of Paul's letters now dates from a maximum of 150 years after Paul wrote. With such an early collection, the question naturally arises how the text is different from the traditional one. Differences lie in numerous details, but the outstanding conclusion is that there is little, if any, significant change. . . .

Only within the last decade have come what are in many ways the most important papyrus discoveries yet for New Testament study. Among a series of ancient papyri acquired, the Bodmer Library in Geneva has published a third-century copy of I Peter, II Peter, and Jude, plus two second-century copies of the Gospel of John and one of Luke. . . .

Among the Bodmer Papyri, the greatest treasures are the copies of the Gospels dating back to the end of the second century. The original publication took place in 1956 of a manuscript enumerated P<sup>66</sup>. It is a practically complete copy of the Gospel of John, which the editor dates about 200 A.D. . . . the most impressive contribution of the new manuscripts of Luke and John is not the few differences, but the extent of their agreement with the life and teachings of Christ as preserved in other manuscripts.

It is easy to get lost in debate on details and fail to see the overwhelming agreement of all manuscripts to the historical record of the New Testament. . . . For a book to undergo progressive uncovering of its manuscript history and come out with so little debatable in its text is a great tribute to its essential authenticity. In tracing the history of manuscript investigation, the student finds that two great facts emerge. First, no new manuscript discovery has produced serious differences in the essential story. This survey has disclosed the leading textual controversies, and together they would be well within one percent of the text. Stated differently, all manuscripts agree on the essential correctness of 99% of the verses in the New Testament. . . . There is more reason today, then, to agree with him [Sir Frederic Kenyon] that we possess the New Testament "in substantial integrity" and to underline that "the variations of text are so entirely questions of detail, not of essential substance."

## MORMON SCRIPTURES AND THE BIBLE

It is true that the Latter-day Saints have taken the position that the present Bible is much changed from its original form. However, greatest changes would logically have occurred in **writings more remote than the New Testament**. The textual history of the New Testament gives every reason to assume a fairly stable transmission of the documents we possess. . . .

Joseph Smith said that “many important points touching the salvation of man, had been taken from the Bible, or lost before it was compiled” (*Documentary History of the Church*, 1, 245, 1832). Major losses might occur by elimination of whole books **rather than alteration of those admitted as canonical**. Nor do subsequent changes have to be based on open changes of the writings. The forces of evil are more effective at changing the meaning of true terms and concepts than removing them. (*Fourteenth Annual Symposium of the Archaeology of the Scriptures*, Brigham Young University, 1963, pages 52–59)

These statements will probably come as a surprise to Mormon writers who claim that the Catholics conspired to change the Bible, especially since they, came from the pen of one of their own scholars.

Mormon writers are certainly not the only ones who have accused the Christians of making drastic changes in the Bible. Many critics start with preconceived ideas, and when they find Bible texts that do not agree with their theories they claim that these texts have been interpolated or changed. The Moslem writer Al-Haj Khwaja Nazir Ahmad made these statements:

I have examined the New Testament and rejected its authority as an authentic or a contemporary record. I have enquired into the origin and history of the Acts and the Epistles and shown that they hardly contain any element of truth. . . . I have ventured to indicate that genuine passages should be picked out and separated from others and that facts should be distinguished from legend and fiction. It would perhaps be safe, to accept all such passages, found in the New Testament and other early Christian literature, as go against the popular Christian dogmatic beliefs. If we follow this and the other rules of caution with sagacity, perseverance and impartiality, we shall be able to arrive at a fair approximation of the real facts. . . . The Holy Qu-ran has repeatedly exposed the corruption of the Biblical texts. (*Jesus in Heaven on Earth*, page 21)

In his attack upon Christianity Martin A. Larson made these statements:

In both Mark and Matthew we find the text declaring that husband and wife, being a single flesh, joined by God, must not be put asunder by man. Since this is in fundamental contradiction to the whole teaching of Jesus, it must be stamped as a forgery. (*The Religion of the Occident*, by Martin A. Larson, New York, 1959, page 382)

. . . In our analysis of Paul, therefore, we assume that all Gnostic elements are genuine; that these may not always be fully expressed, since it must have been the chief purpose of

the revisionists to conceal them; and that obviously non- or anti-Gnostic texts must be alterations or sheer forgeries. . . . The ten genuine Pauline epistles were probably composed between 45 and 62. Although these reflect no knowledge of any other New Testament document, they prove that Paul had read the *Logia*, or *The Sayings of Jesus*. (Ibid., page 441)

. . . Since there can be no doubt that all Pauline texts which condone the connubial relationship or repudiate celibacy, must be corruptions or forgeries, it is necessary to examine the epistles closely to see what they say on these subjects. (Ibid., pages 445–446)

On page 439 of the same book, Dr. Larson states:

Pauline Literature. The genuine epistles are the two Thessalonians, the two Corinthians, Galatians, Romans, Philippians, Colossians, Ephesians, and Philemon. Titus and the two Timothy's were not written until the second century, and must have been composed by a Pauline ideologist within the orthodox movement. At some point during the century-long struggle to include the works of Paul in the sacred Catholic literature, his genuine epistles were revised so as to exclude his celibacy and partially to conceal many of his Gnostic doctrines.

. . . . Catholic Revisions. The pristine Church taught celibacy; and Paul was the most celebrated proponent of the doctrine. By the middle of the second century, however, this ideology had become completely unacceptable in Catholic circles. As a preliminary, therefore, to Paul's elevation, long passages were inserted in First Corinthians, and elsewhere to permit the connubial relationship among Christians.

It is interesting to compare Dr. Larson's statements with those made by the Mormon writer Bruce R. McConkie. While Dr. Larson maintains that the Catholics changed Paul's epistles to cover up “his celibacy,” Bruce R. McConkie claims that Paul was married. Mr. McConkie states:

In this connection it is interesting to note that it is to Paul that advocates of celibacy turn in a fruitless search to find scripture justifying their unnatural mode of living. Paul himself was married. Of this there is no question. . . .

However, Paul wrote some things to the Corinthian Saints which have been interpreted by some to mean that he was unmarried and that he thought it preferable if others did not marry. It may well be that his expressions on marriage, as found in the King James Version of the Bible (1 Cor. 7), have come to us in changed and perverted form, as compared to what he originally wrote. (*Mormon Doctrine*, by Bruce R. McConkie, 1958 edition, page 112)

If writers would go by the evidence found in manuscripts instead of conjectures and charges of forgery where no such evidence exists, we would have a lot less confusion with regard to these matters.

# MORMON SCRIPTURES AND THE BIBLE

Before Mormon writers accuse Christians of altering the Bible they should take a serious look at some of their own revelations published in the *Doctrine and Covenants*. A careful examination of these revelations shows that thousands of words were added, deleted or changed. (For a detailed study see the *Case Against Mormonism*, Vol. 1, pages 131–191.)

Below is a photograph of a revelation as it was originally published by the Mormons in the *Book of Commandments*, Chapter 6, in 1833. We have compared this revelation with the way it appears today in the 1966 printing of the *Doctrine and Covenants* and have marked the changes that would need to be made to bring it into conformity with the 1966 printing.

Words Deleted in Blue

Words Added in Red

Textual Change in Green

*Book of Commandments* - Chapter 6

Compare *Doctrine and Covenants* - Section 7:1–8

## CHAPTER VI.

1 *A Revelation given to Joseph and Oliver, in Harmony, Pennsylvania, April, 1829, when they desired to know whether John, the beloved disciple, tarried on earth. Translated from parchment, written and hid up by himself.*

For if you shall ask what you will, it shall be granted unto you

AND the Lord said unto me, John my beloved, what desirest thou? and I said, Lord, give unto me power that I may bring souls unto thee.—

unto him:

over death

And the Lord said unto me: Verily, verily I say unto thee, because thou desiredst this, thou shalt tarry till I come in my glory.

live and

until

2 And for this cause, the Lord said unto Peter:—

and shalt prophesy before nations, kindreds, tongues and people.

desired

If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? for he desiredst of me that he might bring souls unto me: but thou desiredst that thou might speedily come unto me in my kingdom: I say unto thee, Peter, this was a good desire, but my beloved has undertaken a greater work.

mightest

desired

that he might do more, or

3 Verily I say unto you, ye shall both have according to your desires, for ye both joy in that which ye have desired.

Yet among men than what he has before done. Yea, he has undertaken a greater work; Therefore I will make him as flaming fire and a ministering angel; he shall minister for those who shall be heirs of salvation who dwell on the earth.

And I will make thee to minister for him and for thy brother James; and unto you three I will give this power and the keys of this ministry until I come.

This revelation is supposed to contain a translation of a parchment written by the Apostle John. Joseph Smith claimed to have translated it by means of the Urim and thummim. When this revelation was published in the *Book of Commandments* in 1833, it contained 143 words, but when it was reprinted in the *Doctrine and Covenants* in 1835, it contained 252 words. Thus 109 words had been added. Mormon writers are unable to explain why Joseph Smith changed this revelation. Melvin J. Petersen made this statement in a thesis written at Brigham Young University:

In Chapter six of the *Book of Commandments* we find a revelation which was a translation from parchment upon which the Apostle John wrote his gospel. When the 1835 edition of the *Doctrine and Covenants* was published this revelation had many additions and a few changes. . . . The additional words and sentences reveal more concerning John and his ministry. How Joseph Smith had this information revealed to him, by means of the Urim and Thummim, is not clear. . . . What part revelation played in receiving this informations concerning John is not known, nor is it known as to how the translation was enacted. We do know that additions and changes were made by Joseph Smith. . . .

MORMON SCRIPTURES AND THE BIBLE

Joseph Smith left nothing in his writings to indicate why he added to this translated version . . . and so any plausible answers will be merely conjecture. (“A Study of the Nature of and the Significance of the Changes in the Revelations as Found in a Comparison of the Book of Commandments and Subsequent Editions of the Doctrine and Covenants,” Master’s thesis, Brigham Young University, 1955, typed copy, pages 154–155)

New and important evidence concerning this matter has recently been called to our attention. A photograph of a copy of this revelation in the handwriting of Joseph Smith’s scribe Frederick G. Williams was published in the book, *After One Hundred Years*, by Nancy C. Williams, Independence, Mo., 1951, opposite page 102. Below is a copy of that photograph. To the side we have typed out the text of the handwritten revelation.

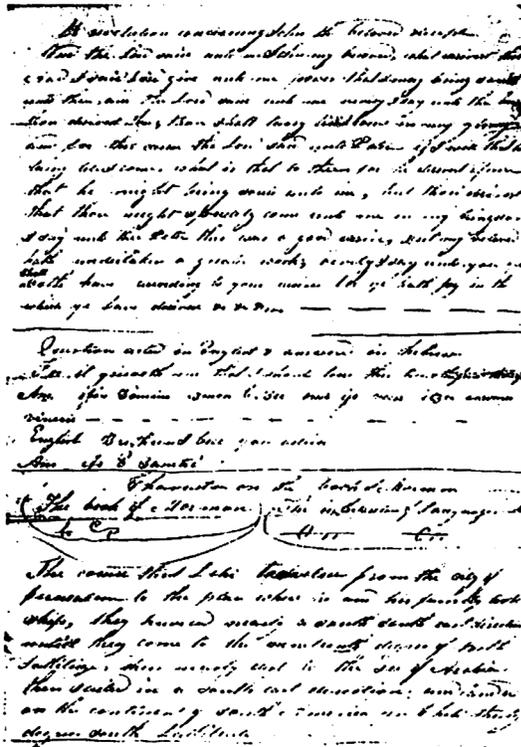
The reader will notice that this same sheet contains “Characters on the Book of Mormon” (these same characters were copied in Joseph Smith’s Egyptian Alphabet and Grammar), and a statement concerning Lehi’s travels from Jerusalem. The Mormon historian B. H. Roberts describes this sheet in his book, *New Witnesses For God*, Vol. 3. While Roberts feels that the portion concerning Lehi’s travels should not be considered as an actual revelation since there is “no heading” stating that it is a revelation, he acknowledges the authenticity of the sheet and the fact that the revelation concerning “John the beloved disciple” appears on the same sheet:

. . . it [the statement concerning Lehi’s travels] is found written on a loose sheet of paper in the hand writing of

Frederick G. Williams, for some years second Counselor in the First Presidency of the Church in the Kirtland period of its history; and follows the body of the revelation contained in *Doctrine and Covenants*. Section vii., relating to John the beloved disciple, remaining on earth, until the glorious coming of Jesus to reign with his Saints. The hand-writing is **certified** to be that of Frederick G. Williams, by his son, Ezra G. Williams, of Ogden; and endorsed on the back of the sheet of paper containing the above passage and the revelation pertaining to John. The indorsement is dated April the 11th, 1864. The revelation pertaining to John has this introductory line: “A Revelation Concerning John, the Beloved Disciple. But there is no heading to the passage relating to the passage about Lehi’s travels. . . . the paragraph is in the hand writing of Frederick G. Williams, Counselor to the Prophet, and on the same page with the body of an **undoubted revelation**, which was published repeatedly as such in the life time of the Prophet, first in 1833, at Independence, Missouri, in the *Book of Commandments*, and subsequently in every edition of the *Doctrine and Covenants* until now. (*New Witnesses For God*, Salt Lake City, 1951, Vol. 3, pages 501–502)

The reader will notice that the text of the handwritten copy of the revelation agrees with the *Book of Commandments*. This proves beyond all doubt that the text of the revelation now published by the Mormon Church in the *Doctrine and Covenants* has been falsified.

In the *Case Against Mormonism*, Vol. 1, page 141, we show that 154 words were deleted from one of the revelations without any indication. On page 157 of the same volume we show that over 400 words were added to another revelation. Many other examples could be cited.



A revelation concerning John the beloved disciple  
 And the Lord said unto me John my beloved, what desirest thou And I said Lord give unto me power that I may bring souls unto thee, and the Lord said unto me verily I say unto thee beca[use] thou desirest this, thou shalt tarry till I come in my glory and for this cause the Lord said unto Peter if I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee, for he desirest of me that he might bring souls unto me, but thou desirest that thou might speedily come unto me in my kingdom I say unto thee Peter this was a good desire, But my beloved hath undertaken a greater work; verily I say unto you ye shall both have according to your desires for ye hath joy in tha[t] which ye have desired... [3 words illegible]

## MORMON SCRIPTURES AND THE BIBLE

If the churches which have preserved the Bible these many centuries had altered it at the same rate as Joseph Smith changed his revelations, we would be lucky to have anything the same as it was originally written.

### “INSPIRED REVISION”

The Mormon writer William E. Berrett stated: “In the spring of 1831, Joseph Smith began what has come to be known as ‘The Inspired Translation of the Bible.’ It was in large part not a translation at all. It was rather a revision of the King James Bible” (*The Restored Church*, page 134). Bruce R. McConkie, of the First Council of the Seventy, gives this information:

... at the command of the Lord and while acting under the spirit of revelation, the Prophet corrected, revised, altered, added to, and deleted from the King James Version of the Bible to form what is now commonly referred to as the Inspired Version of the Bible. . . . the marvelous flood of light and knowledge revealed through the Inspired Version of the Bible is one of the **great evidences of the divine mission of Joseph Smith.** (*Mormon Doctrine*, Salt Lake City, 1958, pages 351–352)

Actually, the Inspired Version of the Bible has been the source of much embarrassment for the Mormon Church leaders. It was never published during Joseph Smith’s lifetime. Joseph Smith’s wife, Emma, retained the manuscript and would not give it to Willard Richards, who was sent by Brigham Young to obtain it. We find the following in the *History of the Church* under the date of August 19, 1844: “. . . Willard Richards called on Emma Smith, widow of the Prophet, for the new translation of the Bible: She said she did not feel disposed to give it up at present” (*History of the Church*, Vol. 7, page 260). In 1866 Emma gave the manuscript to the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints and they published it. W. W. Blair made this statement concerning this matter:

On the morning of the 3d we called on Sister Emma, the widow of the Seer, stating that we had come by direction of the church to procure the manuscript, . . . We said to her that the Church was quite willing to pay her well for the manuscript, either a stated amount or a percentage on sales, as she might choose. She replied promptly that if she had desired to sell the manuscript she could have done so long ago at a large price, for the Brighamites and others had importuned her for it and some had attempted to steal it. (*The Memoirs of President W. W. Blair*, by Fredrick B. Blair, 1908, page 122, as quoted in “A History of Joseph Smith’s Revision of the Bible,” by Reed C. Durham, Jr., Ph.D. dissertation, Brigham Young University, 1965, pages 180–181)

Since Brigham Young was unable to obtain the manuscript from Emma, he tried to play down the importance of Joseph Smith’s Inspired Translation:

That made us very anxious, in the days of Joseph, to get the **new translation**; but the Bible is **good enough just as it is**, it will answer my purpose, and it used to answer it very well when I was preaching in the world. . . .

The Bible is **good enough as it is**, . . . (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 3, page 116)

This statement by Brigham Young seems to cast a shadow of doubt upon the revelations given by Joseph Smith, for Smith claimed that he was commanded by God to make this revision of the Scriptures. In a revelation given January 10, 1832, we read:

Now, verily I say unto you my servants, Joseph Smith, Jun., and Sidney Rigdon, saith the Lord, it is expedient to translate again;

And, inasmuch as it is practicable, to preach in the regions round about until conference; and after that it is expedient to continue the work of translation until it be finished. (*Doctrine and Covenants*, Section 73, verses 3–4)

The Mormon scholar Reed C. Durham, Jr., gives the following information concerning this matter:

. . . God had commanded him to make that Revision. The command from God was reason enough, the knowledge gained from the above revelation conditioned his soul to better understand that command.

There are eighteen sections in the *Doctrine and Covenants* wherein the Lord gives commands and specific instructions relating to the Revision. (“A History of Joseph Smith’s Revision of the Bible,” Ph.D. dissertation, Brigham Young University, 1965, pages 23–24)

Booth here revealed one of the strongest points oftentimes overlooked by Latter-day Saint writers about the Revision. To the early Church members this work was considered to be an important and an essential part of the restoration work, whereas, in the present day, the Revision work is too often thought to be a lesser work not essential to the work of the Lord. Booth, however, revealed the thought of the early Church, which was consistent with the early revelations upon the subject. (*Ibid.*, page 72)

Though it was clear to the Church that it was the Lord’s will that the Revision should be published, the lack of sufficient time and money, prevented its publication during Joseph Smith’s lifetime. (*Ibid.*, page 83)

The Reorganized Church printed the Inspired Version in 1867. Brigham Young was very opposed to the idea of members of his Church receiving the Revision from an “apostate” organization. Reed Durham gives this information:

Another way that copies of the Revision became distributed among the Saints was by direct purchase from the Reorganized headquarters in Plano, Illinois. A great number of Saints sent for copies between 1868–1869, so many that it caused some alarm among the leaders of the Church. (*Ibid.*, page 250)

Dr. Durham has found evidence that the Mormon Church opposed the Revision in the “Minutes of the School of the Prophets” held in Provo, Utah. We copy the following from those minutes (the first comments were made by A. O. Smoot):

## MORMON SCRIPTURES AND THE BIBLE

There is a translation of the bible sent here by Jos. Smith jun. the prophets son—which purports to be a translation made by his father—he claims that the Mormons must pay him for it. Joseph had been to work on this translation for some time but did not complete it—at Joseph’s death these books fell into the hands of Emma—they have now complete[d] it and set it forth as Joseph’s . . . some of the saints have sent for this book, and others are about to send. I would council that the brethren do not send for this so that it will not get into the hands of our family and children. . . .

Don Carter—Referred to the New Bible and the History of Joseph by Lucy Smith—as **incorrect** and wants to keep the old Bible: until we receive [it] from a correct source and not by an apostate channel: . . .

Thos. Childs . . . any person who will send for this book . . . are weak in the faith . . . John B. Fairbanks—We are a bible of ourselves or ought to be we can make a bible of our own when we want one . . . (“Minutes of the School of the Prophets,” Provo, Utah, 1868–1871, pages 51–55 of typed copy at the Utah State Historical Society)

The Mormon Apostle Orson Pratt apparently disagreed with Brigham Young concerning the Revision. Reed Durham gives this interesting information:

President Smith [Joseph Smith’s son] once reminisced about a trip he made to Salt Lake City in 1889, where he visited Sarah Pratt, Orson Pratt’s widow. He related in detail his conversation with her about Orson’s experience and reactions relating to the occasion on which he received his copy of the Revision:

In the chat which ensued I asked her if she remembered her husband’s having received a copy of the New Inspired Translation of the Scriptures. She said she did; that he came home one day quite elated over the receipt of the book, but that there was nothing about it to indicate from whom it had come. She related how, right after supper, they had sat down together, he with the Inspired Version, and she with the King James’ turning to such passages as he directed, and together they had examined it most thoroughly, reading and comparing, until a late hour. Finally at two o’clock in the morning, he laid the book aside with a sigh, and said:

“Sarah, these men have done their work honestly! This translation is just as it was left by the Prophet Joseph in 1833. I could quickly have detected it had they tampered with or altered what he wrote. I am delighted with it, and I thank God that I have received this copy.”

If the above is an authentic account, it confirms a conclusion made in Chapter V, namely, that Orson Pratt wholeheartedly trusted the integrity and reliability of the work accomplished by the Reorganized Church in the Revision’s publication. Smith’s account related that Orson was so excited about this newly received work that he preached from it on the following Sunday and told the Saints,

. . . that he had carefully examined it, and wanted to testify that the Inspired Translation published by the Reorganized Church had been **correctly** done and was **exactly** as the Prophet Joseph had left it.

Smith related that Brigham Young did not hold the same optimistic view concerning the Revision, and that he requested Orson to modify his remarks regarding the publication. The following minutes recorded in the School of the Prophets in Provo support Joseph Smith III’s statement concerning opposing points of view existing between Orson Pratt and Brigham Young regarding the Revision. They are the notes taken of a discourse by Brigham Young to that School on July 20, 1868:

. . . if we become of one heart we will prosper—but if like a worm we divide—we are broken—but when Bro. Brigham speaks & says do this or that all the faith of the people should be united in that word . . . Orson Pratt has with stood me as he did Joseph—I asked Orson to look over the “New Translation” and found him speaking in the school—the Translation is incorrect—and it says it shall not be published until completed—referred to the note of Orson—“when opposed you I felt bitterness etc.; and when I agreed with you I have felt well and rejoiced.”

In many of his sermons, Orson Pratt quoted passages from the Revision, whereas Brigham Young never used it in any of his, which again confirms that fact that there was a difference of opinion between the two as to the value of the Revision. (“A History of Joseph Smith’s Revision of the Bible,” pages 248–250)

Although the Mormon Church has never printed the Inspired Version, the Reorganized Church’s printing is now available at the Mormon-owned Deseret Book Store, and Mormon scholars use it freely in their writings. The Mormon Apostle John A. Widtsoe made these statements:

Towards the end of the year 1830, with Sidney Rigdon as assistant, he began a somewhat full “explanation and review” of the Old and New Testaments. The work then done is a **convincing evidence of Joseph’s inspiration**. (*Joseph Smith—Seeker After Truth*, page 139)

Joseph Smith accepted the Bible as far as it was translated correctly but felt that many errors which should be corrected had crept into the work of the copyist and translators. During the first year of the Church and almost to the end of his life, he endeavored through inspiration from on high to correct those many departures from the original text. This was not fully completed when he died, but his manuscript exists in the original and in copies, and has been published by the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. It is a **remarkable evidence of the prophetic power of Joseph Smith**. Hundreds of changes make clear many a disputed text. (*Ibid.*, page 251)

Dr. Sidney B. Sperry, of Brigham Young University, makes this statement:

Between the years 1830 and 1833 the Prophet, at the Lord’s command, made a revision of the Bible by the spirit of revelation. This resulted in his putting a tremendous amount of labor into the project. Although it was never fully completed in Joseph Smith’s lifetime, the result of his labors can be seen in Holy Scriptures as published by the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Spring, 1967, page 77)

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Dr. Truman G. Madsen, of the BYU, made these interesting comments:

With the cooperation of the historians of both churches, the Institute of Mormon Studies at Brigham Young University, and other interested agencies, Dr. Matthews has compared, verse by verse, the Bernhisel manuscript, the two editions of the Reorganized Church, and, in several cases of variant readings, the original manuscript of the work in the library at Independence.

His study enables us to say:

1. The recent 1944 New Corrected Edition of the Reorganized Church, which book many interested Latter-day Saints have acquired, is faithful to the original manuscript and a most accurate printing. The editors have scrupulously worked to overcome normal scribal mistakes, typographical errors, and difficult notations (e.g., transposed sentences or confusing marginal notations). Matthews concludes that this edition is worthy of trust. (*Improvement Era*, March, 1970, page 70)

Joseph Fielding Smith claims that the Mormons could have printed the Inspired Revision themselves, for they have a copy of the manuscript. Dr. Madsen stated: "A copy of the original was made by Dr. John M. Bernhisel at Nauvoo in 1845 and is now in the Church Historian's Office in Salt Lake City but has never been published" (*Ibid.*, page 70). Reed Durham has examined the Bernhisel copy but feels that it is not complete. Nevertheless, he gives this interesting information concerning this matter:

As early as 1907, Joseph F. Smith, Jr., stated, "we have in the Historian's office, Salt Lake City, a complete record of this revision," and in 1914, he made this statement:

In regard to the manuscript of the "inspired translation," or more properly, the revision that was made by Joseph Smith, we have a complete copy of that work done by him, filed in the archives of the Church in this city. This copy was made by Dr. John M. Bernhisel, while he was living at the home of Joseph Smith. It was carefully copied, preserved and brought to the valleys of the mountains by the Latter-Day Saints when they were driven from Nauvoo. ("A History of Joseph Smith's Revision of the Bible," page 150)

Joseph Fielding Smith Jr., has been most desirous that the Church publish its own Revision, based on the Bernhisel Copy. In 1937 he wrote the following expression of this desire:

The Reorganized Church does not have all claims to the rights of publication whatever they declare to be the case. We could publish an edition if we wanted to, perhaps the reason the Church has not done so is because they think the main benefits are found in the *Pearl of Great Price* and then again it is a fact that the Prophet never finished his revision. . . . When the Church gets ready to publish the entire volume no power on earth nor in hell can stop them.

President Smith was so desirous of publishing a Church edition of the Revision, that on several occasions he proposed to the leading "brethren" in the councils that the Church publish an edition, even proposing this to the President of the

Church, Heber J. Grant. He gave an account of these proposals in letters to two different mission presidents, President Joseph F. Merrill, President of the European Mission, and President Nicholas C. Smith, President of the California Mission. To President Merrill he wrote:

Answering your inquiry in regard to "The Inspired Scriptures" I will say that several times I have suggested that we get out an edition for our own use but this has never met with very hearty approval. The last time President Grant merely said that since his predecessors had not seen fit to publish these scriptures in full that he was not inclined to do so.

To President Nicholas Smith he wrote:

I have no objection, personally, to the publication of the complete work. I have raised this question but the brethren have not seen it proper to print an edition. Perhaps some time the Lord will permit us to do so and it may be possible that other corrections may be made by inspiration. I know of no reason why the Lord could not call on another, President Grant or his successor, to do what the Prophet Joseph Smith did by revelation and commandment.

President Smith's desire has not yet been fulfilled; however, Bruce R. McConkie predicts that it will. He said:

There will be a not too distant day when all necessary changes shall be made in the Bible, and the Inspired Version—as then perfected—shall go forth to the world. (*Ibid.*, pages 270–272)

Notice Joseph Fielding Smith stated that on several occasions he suggested the Mormon Church print its own edition of the Inspired Revision, but that his idea "never met with very hearty approval." Now that Joseph Fielding Smith is President of the Mormon Church, he does not have to answer to "President Grant" and could print the Inspired Revision if he really wanted to. We do not feel that he will do it, however, since it would tend to embarrass the Church.

The Mormon Church is faced with a peculiar dilemma with regard to Joseph Smith's Inspired Revision. They cannot reject it without admitting that he was a fallen prophet. On the other hand, if they were to print the Revision and fully endorse it, they would be faced with equally unsurmountable problems. The contents of the Inspired Revision actually contradict many of the doctrines that are now taught in the Mormon Church. Therefore, the Mormon Church can neither fully accept or fully reject the Inspired Version of the Bible. They claim that Joseph Smith was inspired to translate it; however, they use the King James Version. Joseph Fielding Smith stated: "The Church uses the King James Version of the Bible because it is the best version translated by the power of man" (*Doctrines of Salvation*, Vol. 3, page 191).

Since the Mormon Church leaders cannot come right out and say that Joseph Smith made mistakes in his Inspired Version, they have devised another excuse to keep from fully endorsing it. They claim that Joseph Smith never finished the translation. Joseph Fielding Smith wrote: The revision of the Bible which was done by Joseph Smith at the command of the Lord was not a complete revision of the Bible. There are

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many parts of the Bible in which the Prophet did not change the meaning where it is incorrect. He revised as far as the Lord permitted him at the time, and it was his intention to do more, but because of persecution this was not accomplished” (*Doctrines of Salvation*, Vol. 3, page 191). In his book, *Essentials in Church History*, page 139, Joseph Fielding Smith stated: “In course of time the Prophet went through the Bible, topic by topic, revising as he was led by revelation. The work was never fully completed, . . .”

Reed Durham gives this interesting information concerning this matter:

The Revision was incomplete because after it was finished it still contained errors and contradictions. The text of Mark 15:28 in the Revision contradicts that in John 19:14–16. The latter states that Jesus had not been crucified before the sixth hour; the passage in Mark states that his crucifixion was at the third hour. I Kings 4:26 relates that King Solomon had “forty thousand stalls of horses,” but II Chronicles 9:25 reveals that he had only “four thousand.” Joseph Smith did not completely correct all passages which record that “the Lord repented” for some action, although he did correct most of them. Joseph Smith also overlooked some passages which suggested that God sent an evil spirit upon an individual, or handed [sic] someone’s heart. He revised Genesis 5:32 of the Authorized Version (Revision, Genesis 7:85) in such a way as to inform the reader that Japheth was the eldest son of Noah; but he corrected Genesis 10:21 of the Authorized Version (Revision, Genesis 10:12) to reveal that Shem was the eldest son. Joseph Smith significantly altered a passage located in II Chronicles 18:20–22, but had apparently overlooked that same passage in I Kings 22:21–23. It is apparent that Joseph Smith went to great lengths to harmonize the Gospel accounts, but occasionally failed to correct apparent errors. He corrected Mark 10:11, but failed to do the same in Matthew 19:13 and Luke 18:15. These are only a few of the passages which offer evidence of the incompleteness of the Revision. (“A History of Joseph Smith’s Revision of the Bible,” pages 128–129)

While we must admit that Joseph Smith’s Inspired Revision still contains “errors and contradictions,” there is evidence to show that at one time the Mormons considered it to have been complete. In fact, in the *Doctrine and Covenants* Joseph Smith was commanded to complete the translation:

Now, verily I say unto you my servants, Joseph Smith Jr., and Sidney Rigdon, saith the Lord, it is expedient to translate again;

And, inasmuch as it is practicable, to preach in the regions round about until conference; and after that it is expedient to continue the work of translation **until it be finished.** (*Doctrine and Covenants*, Sec. 73, verses 3 & 4)

In the *History of the Church*, under the date of February 2, 1833, we find this statement attributed to Joseph Smith:

I completed the translation and review of the New Testament, on the 2nd of February, 1833, and sealed it up, no more to be opened till it arrived in Zion. (*History of the Church*. Vol. 1, page 324)

In the *Church Chronology*, by Andrew Jenson, we find the following under the date of February 2, 1833: “Joseph Smith, jun., completed the translation of the New Testament.” Under the date of July 2, 1833, this statement appears: “Joseph the Prophet finished the **translation of the Bible**. In a letter dated July 2, 1833, signed by Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, and F. G. Williams, the following statement is found:

We this day **finished the translation of the scriptures**, for which we return gratitude to our Heavenly Father, . . . (*History of the Church*, Vol. 1, page 368)

The Mormon writer Arch S. Reynolds stated as follows:

With the above commands and the letters of the Prophet to the Saints we see that the scriptures at that time were considered finished. This is proved by revelations from the Lord commanding the printing and publishing the same as stated in another chapter. This shows that the Lord felt that the Bible contained his word and also was given in fulness. (“A Study of Joseph Smith’s Bible Revision,” by Arch Reynolds, typed copy, page 17)

In the *Doctrine and Covenants*, Sec. 104, verse 58, a commandment was given to print the Scriptures:

. . . I have **commanded** you to organize yourselves, even to shinelah [print] my words, the fulness of my scriptures, . . .

The *Doctrine and Covenants* also contains these statements:

. . . the second lot on the south shall be dedicated unto me for the building of a house unto me, for the work of the **printing of the translation of my scriptures**, . . . (*Doctrine and Covenants*, Sec. 94, verse 10)

. . . let him [William Law] from henceforth hearken to the counsel of my servant Joseph, . . . and **publish the new translation of my holy word** unto the inhabitants of the earth. (Ibid , Sec. 124, verse 89)

This commandment, however, was never fulfilled. Arch Reynolds stated:

Why the Bible was not published is still an enigma; of course the Saints were unsettled: they were persecuted, but many other works were published so why not the Holy Scriptures?

The Lord gave Joseph a **commandment** to publish the Bible to the world, and the Lord prepared the way to accomplish this but it was not fulfilled.

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The *Doctrine and Covenants* commands the Saints to teach the scriptures (Bible) as given of the Lord to Joseph to all men when it is received in full. The three commands to publish and teach them to all the world is strong evidence of the need of them to all the world. (“A Study of Joseph Smith’s Bible Revision,” page 32)

Even with all the money the Mormon Church has today, they still have not fulfilled the command to publish the Inspired Version of the Bible to the world.

Perhaps the strangest thing of all concerning the Inspired Version of the Bible is the fact that Joseph Smith himself did not take it serious. For instance, Exodus 7:1 in the King James Version reads as follows: “And the Lord said unto Moses, See, I have made thee a god to Pharaoh: . . .” In the Inspired Version of the Bible, Joseph Smith changed it to read: “And the Lord said unto Moses, See, I have made thee a **prophet** to Pharaoh; . . .” Joseph Smith was apparently trying to destroy the idea of Moses being a god, so he changed the verse to read that Moses was a prophet. In 1844, however, he again changed his mind and decided that Moses was a God. He stated:

The scriptures are a mixture of very strange doctrines to the Christian world, who are blindly led by the blind. I will refer to another scripture. “Now,” says God, when He visited Moses in the bush, (Moses was a stammering sort of a boy like me) God said, “Thou shalt be a God unto the children of Israel.” (*History of the Church*, Vol. 6, page 478)

In the *Case Against Mormonism*, Vol. 3, we give other examples which show that Joseph Smith did not take his “Inspired Version” seriously.

Arch Reynolds admits that Joseph Smith ignored his own “Inspired Version”:

At times Joseph Smith **ignored his own renderings** of the **Inspired Bible** and quoted the King James version in his letters, sermons, etc. . . .

In twenty-six different quotations to different parties in and out of the Church . . . in the first six volumes of the *History of the Church*, they are like the King James Bible although he had given previous varied renderings in the Inspired Bible. These passages are pertaining to all the principles of the gospel. . . . The above various renderings as given by Joseph differing in essential parts from both the King James and his previous revision show that he had grown in doctrine and had broadened in learning German, Greek, and Hebrew. (“A Study of Joseph Smith’s Bible Revision,” pages 20, 21, and 25, typed copy)

Reed Durham gives this information:

There is a conspicuous lack of use of the Revision in articles printed in the *Messenger and Advocate* and *Elder’s Journal*, and Bible quotations used by Joseph Smith in his discourses indicate an almost complete ignoring of that work. (“A History of Joseph Smith’s Revision of the Bible,” page 113)

After 1833, Joseph Smith prepared and delivered many discourses and sermons which have been preserved for study.

Table III records the results of the study of every Bible passage quoted by Joseph Smith in his sermons and discourses recorded in the *History of the Church*. . . .

The study indicates that Joseph Smith rarely used a corrected Bible passage from his Revision in any of his sermons or discourses. In fact, he only quoted the Revision three times; whereas 40 per cent of the Bible verses he did quote had been altered in his sermons to read differently from the way they were quoted in the Authorized Version—yet none of these corrections were included in his Revision. When he did quote Bible passages as they read in the Authorized Version, 38 per cent of them had already been altered and had a different reading in the Revision; all of these he apparently ignored in his sermons. (Ibid., pages 137–139)

If Joseph Smith was inspired by God to translate the Bible, we would at least expect to find his revision of the book of Isaiah in harmony with the text of Isaiah found in the Book of Mormon. Even a superficial examination reveals that this is not the case. The Mormon writer Ariel L. Crowley states:

Logically, therefore, the revision of the English Bible by the translator of the Book of Mormon should have embodied in it the corrections necessitated by the more perfect text of the Book of Mormon quotations.

Examination of the Inspired Version to determine whether or not this was accomplished, discloses that a start was made in that direction, many passages being exactly corrected to conform with the Book of Mormon, while in others the passage is only partially corrected, and in still others not at all. . . . The instances cited are not cited as attacks upon the revision, but as indications that the revision could not at any time have been considered by the prophet to be complete, as he, more than any other, knew the nature of the Book of Mormon text of these passages, and many more similarly uncorrected at his death. (*About the Book of Mormon*, by Ariel L. Crowley, 1961, pages 135, 136 & 138)

The Mormon writer Reed Durham gives this interesting information:

Additional evidence that Joseph Smith’s Revision was not complete is apparent from a study of the Bible (Authorized Version) passages which were quoted in the Book of Mormon. The writer has identified 618 complete Bible verses quoted in the Book of Mormon. . . .

Three additional studies comparing the altered Bible verses in the Book of Mormon with the reading of those same verses in the Revision confirm the findings of this writer: that Joseph Smith neglected to use in his Revision the majority of Bible passages which had already been divinely corrected in the Book of Mormon translation, which is a strong evidence of the Revision’s incompleteness. . . .

## MORMON SCRIPTURES AND THE BIBLE

The findings recorded in Table I identify 207 significantly altered Bible verses quoted in the Book of Mormon. If the Revision had been complete, these verses, believed to be divinely altered, should be in the Revision, . . . Table I indicates that the Revision included only 64 out of the 207 verses in its texts (31 per cent), which means that approximately 70 per cent of the significantly altered verses in the Book of Mormon were totally ignored by Joseph Smith for use in the Revision. There were 107 verses, or 52 per cent, which remained unchanged in the Revision; and 36 verses, or 17 per cent, have a reading different from both the Authorized Version and the Book of Mormon readings. If the Revision had been completed, Joseph Smith would surely have produced a greater harmony of Bible corrections in the Book of Mormon with those in his Revision of the Bible. (“A History of Joseph Smith’s Revision of the Bible,” pages 129, 130, 131 and 134)

Richard P. Howard, Church Historian for the Reorganized LDS Church, made these comments concerning the matter:

Many King James Version verses were used and/or adapted with minor revisions by Joseph Smith in the preparation of the Book of Mormon manuscript in 1829. A comparison of some of these with their corresponding passages in the New Translation (OT #3) reveals a complex and somewhat puzzling situation. (*Restoration Scriptures—A Study of their Textual Development*, by Richard P. Howard, Independence, Mo., 1969, page 115)

1. The King James Version was a significant source for parts of the Book of Mormon quoting Isaiah, Matthew, I Corinthians, etc.
2. Joseph Smith felt free to quote King James Version passages verbatim at many points and to revise them stylistically and theologically at other points in preparing the Book of Mormon text.
3. Irrespective of whether he quoted exactly or revised the King James Version in the Book of Mormon he apparently pursued an independent course, in determining for the New Translation the specific wordings of King James texts previously published in the Book of Mormon. For example, the preceding five categories seem to demonstrate the following:
  - a. Many of Joseph Smith’s revisions of King James verses as published in the Book of Mormon in 1830 were not carried over into his biblical revision. The entirety of Isaiah 48 and all but two verses of Isaiah 49 clearly show this (category 1).
  - b. Joseph Smith often retained in the New Translation King James passages precisely as he had quoted them verbatim in the Book of Mormon; quite frequently, however, he revised them (categories 2 and 3).
  - c. Some revisions of the King James text used in the Book of Mormon were maintained in the New Translation while others were given further changes (categories 4 and 5).

4. In view of this it seems justifiable to state that there is no clearly identifiable pattern that can be consistently seen in Joseph Smith’s later disposition of biblical texts previously quoted in the Book of Mormon. It would seem that sometimes in the preparation of his biblical revision Joseph Smith worked not only from his King James Version of the Bible, but that he also referred to his revisions of that text already published in the Book of Mormon. Why he retained some of these revisions, ignored others, and rerevised still others seems unanswerable on the basis of evidence now available. (*Ibid.*, pages 121 and 122)

In the Reorganized LDS publication, *Saints’ Herald*, May 1, 1965, page 23, we find this statement:

Passages used in the Book of Mormon and also in the Inspired Version differ so greatly that I fear one cannot hold to a verbal accuracy in detail. In Isaiah 48 there are more than fifty differences between the Inspired Version and the Book of Mormon text.

Reed Durham states that in 1823 “an angel named Moroni appeared to Joseph Smith to reveal to him the ancient records known as the Book of Mormon. In his initial conversation with Joseph, Moroni quoted several passages of scripture which differed from those same passages in the Authorized Version. After this, Joseph Smith no doubt questioned whether other passages were in error” (“A History of Joseph Smith’s Revision of the Bible,” pages 21–22). In his history, Joseph Smith made a point of the fact that the angel’s quotations were different from what we find in the book of Malachi:

. . . he [the angel] quoted also the fourth or last chapter of the same prophecy, though with a little variation from the way it reads in our Bibles. Instead of quoting the first verse as it reads in our books, he quoted it thus:

For behold, the day cometh that shall burn as an oven, and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly shall burn as stubble; for they that come shall burn them, saith the Lord of Hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.

And again, he quoted the fifth verse thus: Behold, I will reveal unto you the Priesthood, by the hand of Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.

He also quoted the next verse differently: And he shall plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to the fathers, and the hearts of the children shall turn to their fathers. If it were not so, the whole earth would be utterly wasted at his coming. (*Pearl of Great Price*, Joseph Smith, 2:36–39)

Since Joseph Smith emphasized the fact that the quotations were different from the King James Version of the Bible, we would expect these verses to have been changed in his Inspired Revision to agree with the message of the angel. Instead, however, Joseph Smith followed the text of the King James

## MORMON SCRIPTURES AND THE BIBLE

Version in his Inspired Revision. In fact, he marked the entire book of Malachi as “Correct” (see photograph in *Restoration Scriptures*, page 188). Below is a comparison of the way the verses from Malachi appear in Joseph Smith’s Inspired Version and the way the angel was supposed to have quoted them.

### ANGEL

For behold, the day cometh that shall burn as an oven, and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly shall **burn as** stubble; **for they that come** shall burn them, saith the Lord of Hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.

. . . Behold, I will **reveal unto** you **the Priesthood, by the hand of** Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.

. . . And he shall **plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to the fathers, and the hearts of the children shall turn to their fathers. If it were not so, the whole earth would be utterly wasted at his coming.** (*Pearl of Great Price*, Joseph Smith, 2:37–39)

### INSPIRED VERSION

For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall **be** stubble; **and the day that cometh** shall burn them **up**, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch, . . .

Behold, I will **send** you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord;

And he shall **turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.** (Inspired Revision, Malachi 4:1–6)

The Mormon writer Merrill Y. Van Wagoner made this statement:

Verses one, five, and six of chapter four, as they were quoted by Moroni, differ from the usual reading found in both the King James version and Inspired Revision. . . .

“Notice that Elijah was to reveal the Priesthood. This reference to the Priesthood is lacking in the present Hebrew text. Instance upon instance could be cited of mistranslations being carried over from the King James to the Inspired Revision and of errors going uncorrected. This in itself is indisputable evidence that the Prophet did not completely revise the Bible.

. . . The fact that the Prophet so seldom quoted or preached his revision is further testimony that he had not received the scriptures in full.

Whenever the Prophet quoted from the Bible he either retained the words of the King James version or else flatly declared it to be wrong and then gave a rendering of the passage which differed from it. He seems to take no account of his changes in the Inspired Revision, which of course was not printed. (*The Inspired Revision of the Bible*, by Merrill Y. Van Wagoner, 1963 ed., pages 48, 50 and 51)

The problem concerning the verses from Malachi becomes even more serious when we find that in the Book of Mormon Jesus himself was supposed to have related to the Nephites “the words which the Father had given unto Malachi” (3 Nephi 24:1). An examination of these words found in 3 Nephi 25:1, 5 and 6, reveal that they are also in agreement with the King James version. LaMar Petersen points out that even one of Joseph Smith’s own revelations (*Doctrine and Covenants* 133:64) quotes from the King James version of Malachi rather than following the message of the angel:

Although many years had now elapsed since his encounter with the angel, Joseph, in recording the interview, remembered the exact words that Nephi used on that memorable September night of 1823, noting perhaps as he wrote them that not only did they vary from the King James Bible, but also from his own Inspired Translation of the Scriptures (which in 1842 was still a manuscript) as well as the Savior’s quotes from Malachi in the Book of Mormon, and a revelation from God to Joseph dated November 3, 1831. (*Problems in Mormon Text*, by LaMar Petersen, Salt Lake City, 1957, page 4)

As if this is not confusing enough, Joseph Smith delivered a discourse on January 24, 1844, in which he cited Malachi 4:5 and 6. Although he followed the wording of the King James Version, he claimed that the word “turn” should be translated “bind” or “seal”—a rendering which he does not use in either the Book of Mormon or the Inspired Revision of the Bible:

The Bible says, “I will send you Elijah the Prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord; and he shall turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to the fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.”

Now, the word *turn* here should be translated *bind*, or *seal*. (*History of the Church*, Vol. 6, pages 183–184)

It becomes very difficult to take Joseph Smith’s work seriously when we find that he was so inconsistent.

While it took many scholars, who were authorities in Greek and Hebrew, years to complete the King James Version of the Bible, Joseph Smith began his work without any knowledge of these languages and completed it in three years. Arch S. Reynolds stated:

We know that Joseph Smith was not at that time familiar with either the Greek or Hebrew language; therefore it would be impossible for him to have translated the Bible from the original tongues. Later, however, the need of the knowledge of these languages was seen by him, so he studied those languages and became quite proficient in reading the holy scriptures in those tongues. But in 1830, he was unlearned in those ancient languages. So, technically speaking, he did not translate the scriptures in his Inspired Bible.

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Brother John Henry Evans concerning the inspired translation says: “In the hands of an inspired prophet of God, however, the original renderings of passages might easily be restored, for which purpose Joseph undertook the revision.” (“A Study of Joseph Smith’s Bible Revision,” page 61)

Although some Mormon scholars now hesitate to call Joseph Smith’s Inspired Version a translation, Robert J. Matthews points out that “Every reference to it in the *Doctrine and Covenants* and the *History of the Church* calls it a translation” (*BYU Studies*, Autumn 1968, page 3).

The anti-Mormon writer R. C. Evans made this comment about Joseph’s Inspired Version:

Those who wish to read this marvellous work, the new Bible translated by Joseph Smith, by direct revelation, will discover that he has not translated a single word, that he had no manuscript of any kind, that he was an ignorant young man, is admitted. There is no evidence that he compared any originals with each other, nor could he have done so if the originals were before him. The claim is that it was all done by direct inspiration from the Almighty, but to call it a **translation** is the height of impudence and nonsense.

Here is the secret of Smith’s power to translate. He read the Bible, thought that such and such a change should be made, either by adding a few verses, or taking away a few verses. If he had the burning sensation in his bosom it was right, and so he cut and slashed away at the Word of God to his heart’s content, and the result is the Mormon Bible. (*Forty Years in the Mormon Church—Why I Left It!* by R. C. Evans, Toronto, Canada, 1920, pages 111 and 112)

There is evidence to show that some of the Inspired Revision was done in “considerable haste.” Richard P. Howard, Church Historian for the Reorganized LDS Church, gives this information:

... it appears that they were greatly fatigued due to the great pressure of business commitments, and they felt a real urgency to attend to their correspondence. This being the case, one might expect to find evidence of considerable haste in the final manuscript pages of OT #3 as they neared the end of their initial work. The following two facsimiles, representing the last two pages of OT #3, appear to give substance to such an expectation. Facsimile 30, page 187, OT #3, page 118, represents a record of the consideration given to the writings of nearly seven of the Old Testament prophets. Five of them were judged “correct.” Jonah received only two revisions in Chapter III. Zechariah was revised only four times, twice in Chapter IV and twice in Chapter VI. The final page of OT #3 is shown in facsimile 31, page 188. Here were recorded the final two revisions of Zechariah (VIII:7, 13), and the entry for the book of Malachi (“Malicah”). The misspelling of Malachi may indicate a recording in considerable haste and without review, followed by the closing line, previously noted, “Finished on the 2d day of July 1833.” Close attention to these two facsimiles will help the reader to realize that the

final books of the Old Testament were apparently considered on the same day. It could be otherwise, but in any event these two pages, plus several others (pages 114–117) immediately preceding, appear to have been written at the same sitting of the scribe. . . .

All of this evidence seems to indicate that whatever consideration was given toward the close of the “translation” of the Old Testament, it was done in a very brief period of time, Suite probably on the same day, July 2, 1833, for the final ten to twelve books of the Old Testament. (*Restoration Scriptures*, page 107)

It should be noted from the table that of the total of 22,957 verses of the King James Version, Old Testament, 22, 148, or 96.5 percent appear in their exact form in the New Translation. Therefore one is led to the conclusion that the New Translation shares the great majority of the textual and ecclesiastical strengths and weaknesses of that 1611 translation of fifty-four scholars, who labored to transpose the ancient texts into the sixteenth century English style and idiom. . . .

... 100 percent of all the first twenty-four chapters of Genesis received some revision. The extent of that revision can be seen more accurately when it is realized that of the total of 659 verses represented in the King James Version of those twenty-four chapters, only 135 or 20.5 percent were changed, leaving 524 exactly as they were in the King James Version. . . .

It seems apparent from this that Joseph Smith considered some areas of the Old Testament to be in much more urgent need of revision than others. For example, twelve of the Old Testament books received no revisions at all. (*Ibid*, pages 109 and 110)

### WEAK POINTS

Joseph Smith not only made many unnecessary changes in the Bible, but he also failed to see the places where the text of the Bible really needed correction. There is one statement in the King James Version, I John 5:7 and 8, which scholars are certain is an interpolation. In modern versions of the Bible this statement has been removed to conform with the ancient Greek manuscripts. Below is a comparison of the text in the King James Version and that found in the Revised Standard Version:

#### King James Version—I John 5:7–8

... there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one. (*The New Testament in Four Versions*, page 766)

#### Revised Standard Version—I John 5:8

There are three witnesses, the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three agree. (*The New Testament in Four Versions*, page 766)

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In *Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts* we find this information:

The text is found in no Greek MSS. except a few of very late date in which it has been inserted from the Latin. It is a purely Latin interpolation of African origin, which, beginning as a gloss, first found its way into the text of Spain, where it appears in the Freising Fragments, and later in the Vulgate codices Cavensis and Toletanus. Thence it spread over Europe as an unequivocal Scripture “proof” of the doctrine of the Trinity. (*Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts*, page 258)

Bruce M. Metzger gives this information:

Among the criticisms levelled at Erasmus one of the most serious appeared to be the charge of Stunica, one of the editors of Ximenes’ Complutensian Polyglot, that his text lacked part of the final chapter of I John, namely the Trinitarian statement concerning “the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth” (I John v. 7–8, King James version). Erasmus replied that he had not found any Greek manuscript containing these words, though he had in the meanwhile examined several others besides those on which he relied when first preparing his text. In an unguarded moment Erasmus promised that he would insert the *Comma Johanneum*, as it is called, in future editions if a single Greek manuscript could be found that contained the passage. At length such a copy was found—or was made to order! As it now appears, the Greek manuscript had probably been written in Oxford about 1520 by a Franciscan friar named Froy (or Roy), who took the disputed words from the Latin Vulgate. Erasmus stood by his promise and inserted the passage in his third edition (1522), but he indicates in a lengthy footnote his suspicions that the manuscript had been prepared expressly in order to confute him.

Among the thousands of Greek manuscripts of the New Testament examined since the time of Erasmus, only three others are known to contain this spurious passage. They are Greg. 88, a twelfth-century manuscript which has the *Comma* written in the margin in a seventeenth-century hand; Tisch.  $\omega$  110, which is a sixteenth-century manuscript copy of the Complutensian Polyglot Greek text; and Greg. 629, dating from the fifteenth or, as Riggenbach has argued, from the latter half of the sixteenth century. The oldest known citation of the *Comma* is in a fourth-century Latin treatise entitled *Liber apologeticus* (ch. 4), attributed either to Priscillian or to his follower, Bishop Instantius of Spain. The *Comma* probably originated as a piece of allegorical exegesis of the three witnesses and may have been written as a marginal gloss in a Latin manuscript of I John, whence it was taken into the text of the Old Latin Bible during the fifth century. The passage does not appear in manuscripts of the Latin Vulgate before about A.D. 800. (*The Text of the New Testament*, pages 101 and 102)

Even in Joseph Smith’s time this portion of I John was rejected by many scholars. Adam Clarke stated:

Though a conscientious advocate for the sacred doctrine contained in the disputed text, and which I think expressly enough revealed in several other parts of the sacred writings, I must own the passage in question stands on a most dubious foundation. (*Clarke’s Commentary*, Vol. 6, page 929)

An examination of the writings of Mormon scholars reveals that they also question the authenticity of this verse. Arch S. Reynolds stated:

The extraneous matter added in the Authorized Version is clearly an interpolation, since the above is wanting in every manuscript except one before the fourteenth century, and in all early versions. (“A Study of Joseph Smith’s Bible Revision,” page 169)

Richard L. Anderson, of the BYU, stated:

One of the few major additions that seem apparent is I John 5:7. The observation is made that in addition to three earthly witnesses, the spirit, water, and blood, there are three heavenly witnesses, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, which are one. The text of the fifth century did not speak of the heavenly Trinity, and the fact that very few Greek manuscripts add the heavenly Trinity makes it probable that this comment was **not** an original part of John’s letter. (*Fourteenth Annual Symposium on the Archaeology of the Scriptures*, BYU, 1963, page 53)

Now, if Joseph Smith was inspired at all in his work on the Scriptures we would expect to find this interpolation removed in his “Inspired Revision.” Instead, we find that it appears exactly as written in the King James version:

For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one.

And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood; and these three agree in one. (Inspired Version, by Joseph Smith, I John 5:7 and 8)

In John 5:3 and 4 as found in the King James version we read as follows:

In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water.

For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had.

Bible scholars feel that the words we have underlined were added to the text. In the *Wycliffe Bible Commentary*, page 1082, we find the following:

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While our manuscript tradition is such that the end of verse 3 and all of verse 4 cannot be regarded as part of the original text of John, this portion is an early tradition. J. Rendel Harris found evidence in several places throughout the East of a superstition to the effect that at the New Year an angel was expected to stir the water in certain localities, enabling one person to obtain healing by being the first to get into the water after the disturbance.

George Eldon Ladd feels that the portion added was once a marginal note:

Sometimes such marginal additions involve entire verses. For instance, at John 5:3–4, the best manuscripts, some of the Old Latin manuscripts, and one of the earliest Syriac versions have the text as it is translated in the RSV, merely stating that many sick and infirm people lay near the pool of Bethzatha . . . At an early time, a copyist made a note in the margin explaining that these people were lying there waiting for the fulfillment of a popular tradition that an angel from time to time stirred the waters in the pool, giving them healing powers. A later scribe transferred this explanatory comment from the margin to the text; and it found its way into practically all late manuscripts. (*The New Testament and Criticism*, by George E. Ladd, page 67)

The Mormon writer Arch S. Reynolds states:

Verse 4th above is eliminated by all recent translators. It is clearly an interpolation. (“A Study of Joseph Smith’s Bible Revision,” page 170)

Although Joseph Smith made minor changes in verses 3 and 5 of this chapter, he leaves the portion which Reynolds says is “clearly an interpolation” in his Inspired Revision, following the exact wording of the King James version.

Another textual problem encountered by Bible scholars concerns the story of the woman who was taken in adultery and brought before Jesus. In the *Wycliffe Bible Commentary* we find this statement:

K. The Woman Taken in Adultery. 8:1–11.

Manuscript authority is strongly against the genuineness of this paragraph (including 7:53), and the language is hardly Johannine. Yet the story is clearly a true one, which early found a place in the text of the Fourth Gospel. (*Wycliffe Bible Commentary*, page 1090)

Bruce M. Metzger makes these observations concerning this matter:

The Church preserved many traditions of the deeds and sayings of Christ which had not been included in the Gospels (cf. John xxi. 25). It would be natural for these to slip into

the text of the Gospels, either from the margins of other manuscripts or from the living memory of the Church. (*The Text of the New Testament*, pages 162 and 163)

Not a few New Testament manuscripts incorporate here and there interesting details, some of which may be historically correct. The story of the woman taken in adultery, for example, has all the earmarks of historical veracity; no ascetically minded monk would have invented a narrative which closes with what seems to be only a mild rebuke on Jesus’ part: “Neither do I condemn you; go, and do not sin again.” At the same time the pericope, which is usually printed as John vii. 53–viii. II, must be judged to be an intrusion into the Fourth Gospel.

The account is lacking in the best Greek manuscripts: . . .

Even more significant is the fact that no Greek Church Father for a thousand years after Christ refers to the pericope, including even those who, like Origen, Chrysostom, and Nonnus (in his metrical paraphrase), dealt with the entire Gospel verse by verse. . . .

When one adds to this impressive and diversified list of external evidence the consideration that the style and vocabulary of the pericope differ markedly from the rest of the Fourth Gospel, and that it interrupts the sequence of vii. 52 and viii. 12f., the case against its being of Johannine authorship appears to be conclusive.

The earliest Greek manuscript known to contain the passage is codex Bezae, of the fifth or sixth century, which is joined by several Old Latin manuscripts . . . The pericope is obviously a piece of floating tradition which circulated in certain parts of the Western Church. It was subsequently inserted into various manuscripts at various places. . . . The scribe of an ancestor of fam. B inserted it in another Gospel altogether, after Luke xxi. 38. Significantly enough, in many of the manuscripts which contain the passage it is marked with an obelus . . . or an asterisk . . . indicating that, though the scribes of these manuscripts included the account, they were aware that it lacked satisfactory credentials. . . .

The best disposition to make of the pericope as a whole is doubtless to print it at the close of the Fourth Gospel (as the New English Bible does), with a footnote advising the reader that the text of the pericope has no fixed place in the ancient witnesses. (*Ibid.*, pages 223 and 224)

The Mormon writer Arch S. Reynolds feels that the story of the woman taken in adultery “was interpolated by later scribes to show that Jesus could write” (“A Study of Joseph Smith’s Bible Revision,” page 169). The Mormon writer Richard L. Anderson, on the other hand, holds out hope that this is an “authentic” story from the life of Christ:

Among the Bodmer Papyri, the greatest treasures are the copies of the Gospels dating back to the end of the second

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century. The original publication took place in 1956 of a manuscript enumerated P<sup>66</sup>. It is a practically complete copy of the Gospel of John, which the editor dates about 200 A.D. In 1961 a second copy of the Gospel of John was published, together with the Gospel of Luke, both parts of a manuscript which the editors again consider about 200 A.D. . . . There are textual problems to face here. The chief variants in John are two: First, there is absent in both P<sup>66</sup> and P<sup>75</sup> the story of the angel stirring up the water at the Pool of Bethesda (John 5:3b–4). Second, there is an absence in both P<sup>66</sup> and P<sup>75</sup> of the incident of the woman taken in adultery (John 7:58; 8:11). Caution is required in evaluating such evidence. In the first place, the oldest manuscripts are not the original text and are therefore not conclusive. In the second place, we know from the historian Eusebius of a second-century bishop, Papias, who carefully investigated apostolic teaching and considered genuine the “story about a woman who was accused before the Lord of many sins, . . .” (*H. E.* 3.39.17.) An authentic incident in Christ’s life could well have been added later to the Gospel of John, if not eliminated by the known ascetic sects of the early Church. (*Fourteenth Annual Symposium on the Archaeology of the Scriptures*, pages 56 and 57)

Even though this issue was discussed in Joseph Smith’s time, his Inspired Revision throws no new light on it. The story of the adulteress woman is included in the style of the King James version, with only minor changes in John 8:1, 2, 3, 9 and 10. Verse 11, however, contains this additional statement:

And the woman glorified God from that hour, and believed on his name. (Inspired Revision, John 8:11)

Another textual problem involves the ending of the Gospel according to Mark. George Eldon Ladd gives the following information:

Another interesting but difficult question is the ending of the Gospel of Mark. The problem is evident in the RSV handling of Mark 16. The text there ends at verse 8 with the words, “for they were afraid.” In a footnote two endings are printed: the so-called “longer ending” which appears in the AV as verses 9–20; and a short ending which reads, “But they reported briefly to Peter and those with him all that they had been told. And after this, Jesus himself sent out by means of them, from east to west, the sacred and imperishable proclamation of eternal salvation.” These two endings are printed in the RSV with the explanations: “Other texts and versions add as 16:9–20 the following passage,” and “Other ancient authorities add after verse 8 the following.”

This footnote fails, however, to indicate the complexity of the problem as it appears in the ancient texts. The fact is that at least five different endings exist for the Gospel of Mark. The “long ending,” consisting of verses 9–20 came into the text of the AV because it appears in the great

majority of the minuscules and in most of the later uncials, and was therefore a part of the prevailing text known in the seventeenth century. It can be traced back to a very early date, for it appears in a Syriac harmony of the Gospels made in the second century by Tatian. Its earliest appearance in the Greek sources is from the fifth century.

A second form of Mark ends at verse 8. As we have indicated earlier in this chapter, the two oldest and best Greek manuscripts, Sinaiticus and Vaticanus, dating from the fourth century, were not available to scholars until the nineteenth century. Both of these manuscripts lack this long ending, and conclude the Gospel abruptly at verse 8 with the words, “for they were afraid.” This so-called “short ending” appears in many manuscripts of several ancient versions or translations; and some of the ancient church fathers state that verses 9–20 were lacking in Greek manuscripts known to them. Jerome says in one place, “Almost all the Greek copies do not have this concluding portion.” . . . It is quite clear, for instance, that in the ending of Mark, the short addition and the amplification at 16:14 have such weak textual support that they cannot be seriously considered as authentic. They are obviously additions by later scribes.

This leaves the scholar with two questions: can the longer ending (16:9–20) be authentic? If not, how is the abrupt ending at 16:8 to be explained?

In answering the first question, the textual evidence is supported by literary considerations. Although the long text has ancient attestation and, even if inauthentic, was clearly produced at an early date, our two oldest and best manuscripts omit it. This textual consideration is reinforced by the literary fact that in these twelve verses, seventeen words are used which either appear nowhere else in Mark’s Gospel or are used very differently from the way Mark used them. In other words, the long ending is written in a non-Markan style. These facts, together with other considerations, have led most modern scholars to the conclusion that the long ending which appears in the AV is not authentic, but was produced by a copyist at an early date to smooth up the abrupt ending at 16:8.

. . . It is credible that very soon after its production, the fragile papyrus scroll in which Mark was written was damaged so that the last few inches were torn off, and all subsequent editions of Mark reflect this loss. . . .

This discussion points to an important fact in textual criticism. Although it can be called a science because it deals with objective facts and well-established principles, textual criticism cannot be considered a pure objective science, for at many points, as in the problem of the ending of Mark, judgments must be made, hypotheses formulated, and various possibilities debated. (*The New Testament and Criticism*, pages 71–74)

The Mormon writer Richard L. Anderson makes these comments concerning the ending of Mark:

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Scholars have debated the variations (mainly omissions) revealed by the Sinaitic and Vatican manuscripts, but there are relatively few verses open to question. One passage of particular interest is the omission of the closing verses of the Gospel of Mark, so that in these manuscripts Mark 16 ends with the fear of the women in the tomb and does not contain the full resurrection story. The question is worth a more complete discussion, but it should be clearly noted that no reputable New Testament scholar today thinks that a Gospel could have been written without testimony of the resurrection at its end. Since this is so well admitted, the more consistent solution is to accept the traditional ending of Mark, given in almost all of the manuscripts, which testifies of the resurrection. (*Fourteenth Annual Symposium on the Archaeology of the Scriptures*, pages 53 and 54)

The Inspired Revision bears no evidence that Joseph Smith was aware of this problem. Except for only four minor changes Mark has the same ending found in the King James version. It is also interesting to note that Mark 16:16–18 is found in the Book of Mormon, Mormon 9:23–24.

Another textual problem is found in the King James version, Acts 8:37. George Eldon Ladd states:

The RSV appears to omit a very wonderful verse at Acts 8:37. After Philip preached the gospel from Isaiah 53 to the Ethiopian eunuch and he had asked for baptism, the familiar version reads, "And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." One might wonder how the translators of the RSV could have omitted such a logical and beautiful confession? The fact is that the RSV has not omitted anything, for the only early support for these words is in the Old Latin manuscripts. They first appear in Greek in a sixth- or seventh-century manuscript which contains the book of Acts in Greek and Latin. An earlier Greek and Latin manuscript known as Codex Bezae (fifth or sixth century) does not have these words; and they are wanting in all of the earliest Greek texts. This confession is therefore clearly no part of the original text of Acts, but was first written in the margin of a Latin translation and found its way later from the Latin into the Greek manuscripts. (*The New Testament and Criticism*, pages 67 and 68)

In the Inspired Revision Joseph Smith included Acts 8:37, following the exact words of the King James version.

George Eldon Ladd comments as follows on the King James version and recent manuscript discoveries:

Critics have discovered ancient Greek manuscripts that give us a relatively early, accurate text in comparison to the poor late text that was used for the King James English translation. (*The New Testament and Criticism*, page 52)

Most of the textual differences in the New Testament between the Authorized Version and the modern Revised Standard Version are not based upon the speculations of critics but upon three centuries of discovery of far superior Greek manuscripts. (*Ibid.*, page 60)

Since Joseph Smith relied so heavily upon the King James version, he failed to see many of the real textual problems found in the Bible. While this is certainly a serious defect in Joseph Smith's work, even more objectionable is the fact that he made changes which cannot be supported by any evidence. For instance, John 1:1 in the King James version reads:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

Joseph Smith, however, changed this verse to read:

In the beginning was the gospel preached through the Son. And the gospel was the word, and the word was with the Son, and the Son was with God, and the Son was of God. (Inspired Revision, John 1:1)

To our knowledge Joseph Smith's rendition of this verse is not supported by any evidence. In fact, on page 22 we show that "Papyrus Bodmer II," dated about 200 A.D., reads exactly like the King James version, Joseph Smith seems to bear witness against himself on this matter, for in a revelation given May 6, 1833, we find a quotation which supports the rendering in the King James version:

Therefore, in the beginning the Word was, for he was the Word, even the messenger of salvation— (*Doctrine and Covenants*, 93:8)

The Mormon writer Robert J. Matthews made these statements:

In the main the passages revised by Joseph Smith are not supported by the three great parchment manuscripts that now enjoy popularity, nor by the thousands of papyrus manuscripts and fragments, nor by the Dead Sea Scrolls. In some few passages there is a type of similarity but these are the exception rather than the rule. Some examples of similarity are as follows:

In the King James Version it is stated that "whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of hellfire." (Matt. 5:22) The Inspired Version omits the words "without a cause." This omission is supported by the best Greek manuscripts that are in common use today and which form the basis of the modern translations of the Bible. It should be remembered that these manuscript sources were not available in the days of Joseph Smith.

Another item of interest concerns the word "conversation" as given in the King James Version of 1 Peter 2:12; 3:1 and 2 Peter 3:11. Joseph Smith used the word "conduct" instead of "conversation." The newer manuscript discoveries as reflected in the modern 20th century versions of the Bible also treat this word as "conduct" meaning behavior, rather than as "conversation." ("Joseph Smith's Revision of the Bible," by Robert J. Matthews, 1968, typed copy, pages 17 and 18)

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It is of course true that Joseph Smith did not have access to the actual Greek manuscripts, but, as we indicated earlier, he undoubtedly had the use of commentaries which would give him all the information he needed. *Clarke's Commentary*, for instance, had the information concerning the words "without a cause":

. . . *without a cause*, is wanting in the famous Vatican MS. and two others, the Ethiopic, latter Arabic, Saxon, Vulgate, two copies of the old Itala, J. Martyr, Ptolomeus, Origen, Tertullian, and by all the ancient copies quoted by St. Jerome. It was probably a marginal gloss originally, which in process of time crept into the text. (*Clarke's Commentary*, Vol. 5, page 71)

The fact that the Greek word **αναστροφή** should be translated "conduct" or "manner of life" instead of "conversation" could have been easily obtained from a commentary. Adam Clarke made the following statement concerning this Greek word in his study of Galatians 1:13:

Verse 13. Ye have heard of my conversation **την εμην αναστροφήν** My manner of life; the mode in which I conducted myself. (*Clarke's Commentary*, Vol. 6, page 389)

However this may be, we feel that Dr. Matthews has been very forthright about the matter by admitting that most of Joseph Smith's revisions "are not supported by the three great parchment manuscripts . . . nor by the thousands of papyrus manuscripts and fragments, nor by the Dead Sea Scrolls." It is interesting to note that Dr. Sperry, of the BYU, has made a similar admission with regard to the text of the Sermon on the Mount found in the Book of Mormon:

The divergent readings of the Nephite text are all interesting and thought-provoking, but lack the confirmation of practically ALL ancient Greek manuscripts of the New Testament. Nor do the ancient versions lend much support, a fact which might well be expected. . . .

The remainder of 3 Nephi 12 differs in a marked degree from the parallel readings in Matthew 5. . . . We point out here also that the Greek manuscripts of the Gospels, as well as other ancient versions offer little support to the divergent Nephite readings. (*The Problems of the Book of Mormon*, by Sidney B. Sperry, Salt Lake City, 1964, pages 105 and 106)

The best Dr. Sperry can offer his people is a hope that some day supporting evidence in the Greek manuscripts will be found:

A Latter-day Saint textual critic would be thrilled to find Greek manuscripts of the New Testament with readings like some of those in the Book of Mormon. And who knows but someday some will be found! (*Book of Mormon Institute*, B.Y.U., December 5, 1959, page 7)

In his Inspired Revision Joseph Smith even indicated that the book of Genesis originally contained a prophecy concerning the Book of Mormon and that his own name

was mentioned there. In the King James version, Genesis 50:24 reads:

And Joseph said unto his brethren, I die: and God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which he sware to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.

In his Inspired Revision Joseph Smith added about 800 words to this verse:

And Joseph said unto his brethren, I die, and go unto my fathers; and I go down to my grave with joy. The God of my father Jacob be with you, to deliver you out of affliction in the days of your bondage; for the Lord hath visited me, and I have obtained a promise of the Lord, that out of the fruit of my loins, the Lord God will raise up a righteous branch out of my loins; and unto thee, whom my father Jacob hath named Israel, a prophet; (not the Messiah who is called Shilo;) and this prophet shall deliver my people out of Egypt in the days of thy bondage.

And it shall come to pass that they shall be scattered again; and a branch shall be broken off, and shall be carried into a far country; nevertheless they shall be remembered in the covenants of the Lord, when the Messiah cometh; for he shall be made manifest unto them in the latter days, in the Spirit of power; and shall bring them out of darkness into light; out of hidden darkness, and out of captivity unto freedom.

A seer shall the Lord my God raise up, who shall be a choice seer unto the fruit of my loins.

Thus saith the Lord God of my fathers unto me, A choice seer will I raise up out of the fruit of thy loins, and he shall be esteemed highly among the fruit of thy loins; and unto him will I give commandment that he shall do a work for the fruit of thy loins, his brethren.

And he shall bring them to the knowledge of the covenants which I have made with thy fathers; and he shall do whatsoever work I shall command him.

And I will make him great in mine eyes, for he shall do my work; and he shall be great like unto him whom I have said I would raise up unto you, to deliver my people, O house of Israel, out of the land of Egypt; for a seer will I raise up to deliver my people out of the land of Egypt; and he shall be called Moses. And by this name he shall know that he is of thy house; for he shall be nursed by the king's daughter, and shall be called her son.

And again, a seer will I raise up out of the fruit of thy loins, and unto him will I give power to bring forth my word unto the seed of thy loins; and not to the bringing forth of my word only, saith the Lord, but to the convincing them of my word, which shall have already gone forth among them in the last days;

Wherefore the fruit of thy loins shall write, and the fruit of the loins of Judah shall write; and that which shall be written by the fruit of the loins of Judah, shall grow together unto the confounding of false doctrines, and laying down of contentions, and establishing peace among the fruit of thy loins, and bringing them to a knowledge of their fathers in the latter days; and also to the knowledge of my covenants, saith the Lord.

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And out of weakness shall he be made strong, in that day when my work shall go forth among all my people, which shall restore them, who are of the house of Israel, in the last days.

And that seer will I bless, and they that seek to destroy him shall be confounded; for this promise I give unto you; for I will remember you from generation to generation; and **his name shall be called Joseph and it shall be after the name of his father**; and he shall be like unto you; for the thing which the Lord shall bring forth by his hand shall bring my people unto salvation.

And the Lord sware unto Joseph that he would preserve his seed for ever, saying, I will raise up Moses, and a rod shall be in his hand, and he shall gather together my people, and he shall lead them as a flock, and he shall smite the waters of the Red Sea with his rod.

And he shall have judgment, and shall write the word of the Lord. And he shall not speak many words, for I will write unto him my law by the finger of mine own hand. And I will make a spokesman for him, and his name shall be called Aaron.

And it shall be done unto thee in the last days also, even as I have sworn. Therefore, Joseph said unto his brethren. God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land, unto the land which he sware unto Abraham, and unto Isaac, and to Jacob. (Inspired Revision, Genesis 50: 24–36)

The reader will notice that the “choice seer” was to be “called Joseph, and it shall be after the name of his father; . . .” Joseph Smith was obviously referring to himself, for his father’s name was Joseph. The Mormon Apostle Mark E. Petersen stated:

. . . indeed many plain and precious parts must have been removed from it. Add the Book of Moses, the writings of Zenos and Zenock, and the other prophets mentioned in the Bible, both Old and New Testaments, but not now included, and we would have a vastly different Bible.

One of the most interesting parts of the Old Testament as it should have been, but included in the brass plates, were the predictions pertaining to Joseph Smith, through the writings of Joseph who was sold into Egypt. . . .

But the Bible as we know it is a different volume from what it was—and would have been—had it not been changed so much by those with selfish interests. (*As Translated Correctly*, by Mark E. Petersen, Salt Lake City, 1966, pages 64 and 67)

Mark E. Petersen would have us believe that these prophecies concerning Joseph Smith and his work were removed from the Bible by “those with selfish interests.” The evidence, however, indicates just the opposite. The Septuagint Version offers no support for Joseph Smith’s Inspired Revision of Genesis 50:24, but instead is almost identical with the King James version:

And Joseph spoke to his brethren, saying, I die, and God will surely visit you, and will bring you out of this land to the land concerning which God sware to our fathers, Abraam, Isaac, and Jacob. (*Septuagint Version of the Old Testament*, London, Genesis 50:24)

It is almost impossible to believe that this prophecy could have been dropped from both the Greek and Hebrew manuscripts without being detected. The Mormon writer Merrill Y. Van Wagoner admits the difficulty but suggests that such changes were planned by the “Spirit of Darkness”:

Over twelve long verses containing the promises made by the Lord to Joseph in Egypt are lacking in the King James version. In Egypt the Lord told Joseph of Moses who should lead the Israelites from Egyptian bondage, of the complementary scriptures of the Bible and of the forthcoming Book of Mormon, and of the Prophet, whose “name shall be called Joseph, and it shall be after the name of father,” who should be raised up in the last days. (I.R., Genesis 50:24–36. Also Book of Mormon, II Nephi 3.) Again, the removal was so carefully done that the break would pass unnoticed.

To summarize, many changes which were indicated by the Prophet’s inspired corrections are of such great regularity and of such vital nature that they appear to have been made deliberately to keep the truth from man. . . . It is difficult to imagine any one individual, group, or organization having had sufficient power and influence to cause the changes to be made in both the Greek and Hebrew texts as well as in the many versions. We trust lay many of those changes which we label **planned** to the workings of the **spirit of darkness**, influencing various individuals in different ages in order to thwart the purposes of the Lord. (*The Inspired Revision of the Bible*, pages 33 and 34)

Besides adding his own name to the Bible, Joseph Smith added many of his own views. For instance, his bias against Negroes is apparent in several interpolations he made in the book of Genesis:

And there was a blackness, came upon all the children of Cainan, that they were despised among all people. . . .

And it came to pass, that Enoch continued to call upon all the people, save it were the people of Cainan, to repent. . . .

And Enoch also beheld the residue of the people which were the sons of Adam, and they were a mixture of all the seed of Adam, save it were the seed of Cain; for the seed of Cain were black, and had not place among them. (*Inspired Revision*, Genesis 7:10, 14 and 29)

In the King James version, Genesis 9:26 reads:

And he said, Blessed be the Lord God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant.

In his Inspired Revision, Joseph Smith changed this to indicate that a “veil of darkness” came upon Canaan:

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And he said, Blessed be the Lord God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant, **and a veil of darkness shall cover him, that he shall be known among all men.** (Inspired Revision, Genesis 9:30)

Joseph Smith's rendition of this verse is NOT supported by the Septuagint version. It reads as follows:

And he said, Blessed be the Lord God of Sem, and Chanaan shall be his bond-servant. (Septuagint version, Genesis 9:26)

One of the most unusual things concerning Joseph Smith's Inspired Revision is that he put New Testament quotations and practices into the Old Testament. For instance, the Inspired Revision indicates that Adam was baptized and received the Holy Ghost:

And he called upon our father Adam, by his own voice, saying, I am God; I made the world, and men before they were in the flesh.

And he also said unto him. If thou wilt, turn unto me and hearken unto my voice, and believe, and repent of all thy transgressions, and **be baptized**, even in water, in the name of mine Only Begotten Son, who is full of grace and truth, which is **Jesus Christ**, the only name which shall be given under heaven, whereby salvation shall come unto the children of men; and ye shall receive the gift of the **Holy Ghost**, asking all things in his name, and whatsoever ye shall ask it shall be given you.

.....

And it came to pass, when the Lord had spoken with Adam our father, that Adam cried unto the Lord, and he was caught away by the Spirit of the Lord, and was carried down into the water, and was laid under the water, and was brought forth out of the water; and thus he was **baptized**.

And the Spirit of God descended upon him, and thus he was born of the Spirit, and became quickened in the inner man.

And he heard a voice out of heaven, saying, Thou art baptized with fire and with the **Holy Ghost**; this is the record of the Father and the Son, from henceforth and forever. (Inspired Revision, Genesis 6:52–53, 67–69)

Notice that these verses are filled with quotations from the New Testament. In the next chapter we find this statement:

And he gave unto me a commandment, that I should baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, who is full of grace and truth, and the Holy Ghost which beareth record of the Father and the Son. (Inspired Revision, Genesis 7:13)

Wesley M. Jones made this interesting observation:

These three obscure references to Enoch would within a year, set the Mormon Prophet's fertile imagination

unwinding as we shall see. He would write a new "scripture" to supplement the Book of Mormon. He would put the words of Paul into the mouths of Moses and Enoch. (*Joseph Smith: Scripture-Maker*, by Wesley M. Jones, Oakland, California, 1966, page 4)

Joseph Smith makes a large interpolation in the fourteenth chapter of Genesis. Some of the material seems to have been taken from the book of Hebrews in the New Testament. Below is a comparison of a few phrases:

King James Version—Hebrews 12:33–34

“Who through faith subdued kingdoms, **wrought righteousness**, obtained promises, **stopped the mouths of lions**, **quenched the violence of fire**, . . .

Inspired Revision—Genesis 14:26

“Now Melchizedek . . . **wrought righteousness**; and when a child he feared God, and **stopped the mouths of lions**, and **quenched the violence of fire**.”

Many other cases of plagiarism from the New Testament could be cited in Joseph Smith's work on Genesis.

According to the King James version of the Bible Enoch was translated:

And all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty and five years: And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him. (Genesis 5:23–24)

Joseph Smith changed this to make it appear that the entire city of Zion was taken away:

And all the days of Zion, in the days of Enoch, were three hundred and sixty-five years. And Enoch and all his people walked with God, and he dwelt in the midst of Zion. And it came to pass, that Zion was not, for God received it up into his own bosom; and from thence went forth the saying, Zion is fled. And all the days of Enoch were four hundred and thirty years. (Inspired Revision, Genesis 7:76–78)

Arch S. Reynolds made these statements concerning this matter:

The book *Ruins Revisited*, p. 184, says, “Bourbourg taught that a continent had sunk on the east side of central America.” Here is where the city of Enoch is supposed to have been located—where the Gulf of Mexico now is.

President Joseph Young November 1, 1878, concerning the organization of the seventy, says, “The people of Enoch and the city and the foundations of the earth on which it stood, had partaken of so much of the immortal elements, bestowed upon them by God, through the teachings of Enoch; that it became philosophically impossible for them to remain any

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longer upon the earth; consequently, Enoch and his people, with the city which they occupied, and the foundations on which it stood, with a large piece of earth immediately connected with the foundations and the city, had assumed an aerial position with the limits of our solar system; and this in consequence of their faith.” (“Joseph Smith’s Bible Revision,” page 73)

Heber C. Kimball, who was a member of the First Presidency of the Mormon Church, made this statement: in 1860:

Now, I believe that Enoch went away from here on a piece of earth, but I do not believe that he remained idle all the time: they have been improving and cultivating the earth—they have been multiplying and increasing the inhabitants where they live. (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 8, page 107)

In his Inspired Revision, Joseph Smith claimed to restore prophecies given by Enoch. The idea to do this may have come from the fact that in 1773 James Bruce discovered what many believed to be the Book of Enoch in Abyssinia. This book was known to the primitive church but had been lost for a long period of time. It was published in English in the early 1820’s, and may have had an influence upon Joseph Smith’s work. For instance, in both works Enoch sees the “Son of Man.” In the *Book of Enoch* we read:

14. And he (i.e. the angel) came to me and greeted me with His voice, and said unto me: “This is the Son of Man who is born unto righteousness; . . .” (*The Book of Enoch*, printed in Great Britain, 1966, page 94)

In Joseph Smith’s Inspired Version we find a similar statement:

And the Lord said unto Enoch, Look; and he looked, and beheld the Son of Man, . . . (Inspired Version, Genesis 7:62)

While the Old Testament never mentions Enoch after he was translated, both the *Book of Enoch* and the Inspired Version mention him in relationship to Noah and the flood. In the *Book of Enoch* we read:

LXVI. And in those days Noah saw the earth that it had sunk down and its destruction was nigh. 2. And he arose from thence and went to the ends of the earth, and cried aloud to his grandfather Enoch: and Noah said three times with an embittered voice: “Hear me, hear me, hear me.” 3. And I said unto him: “Tell me what it is that is falling out on the earth that the earth is in such evil plight and shaken, lest perchance I shall perish with it.” 4. And thereupon there was a great commotion on the earth, and a voice was heard from heaven, and I fell on my face. 5. And Enoch my grandfather came and stood by me, and said unto me: “Why hast thou cried unto me with a bitter cry and weeping?” (*Book of Enoch*, page 85)

The Inspired Version gives a somewhat similar scene although it is Enoch who is weeping instead of Noah:

Wherefore Enoch knew and looked upon their wickedness, and their misery; and wept, and stretched forth his arms, and his heart swelled wide as eternity, and his bowels yearned, and all eternity shook.

And Enoch saw Noah also, and his family, that the posterity of all the sons of Noah should be saved with a temporal salvation.

Wherefore Enoch saw that Noah built an ark, and the Lord smiled upon it, and held it in his own hand; but upon the residue of the wicked came the floods and swallowed them up.

And as Enoch saw thus, he had bitterness of soul, and wept over his brethren, and said unto the heavens, I will refuse to be comforted. (Inspired Version, Genesis 7:48–51)

It is interesting to note that one group which broke off from the Mormon Church published *The Book of Enoch* in 1852. They stated that their publication was “Revised, corrected, and the missing parts restored by Divine inspiration, through Baneemy, Patriarch of Zion” (*Zion’s Harbinger, and Baneemy’s Organ*, St. Louis, October, 1852, page 73). On page 80 of the same publication we find the statement that “the first translation appeared in English, in 1836 or 1837.” If this were the case, it could not have been the source for Joseph Smith’s work on the Inspired Version. There is evidence, however, to show that it was published as early as 1821. Henry Alford’s *Greek New Testament*, 1874, Vol. 4, page 195, states that an “English version of this translation [The Book of Enoch] was published by Archbishop Lawrence in 1821.” According to Dr. Nibley, John Taylor—who became the third President of the Mormon Church—accepted *The Book of Enoch*:

It is interesting that President John Taylor frequently quotes from this work, and recognizes its authority in his book *The Mediation and Atonement*. (*An Approach to the Book of Mormon*, page 399)

Most scholars today consider *The Book of Enoch* to be a spurious work.

The Mormon leaders have always had a great deal to say about apocryphal books and claim that many books have been taken from the Bible. The Mormon Apostle Orson Pratt stated:

23.—So destitute were the officers of this apostate church of the spirit of revelation that they could not tell, only through tradition, which books were sacred, and which were not; and hence there arose a great contention among them on this subject, and a great variety of opinions. . . . The Word of God given in past ages, whether written or unwritten, was never considered by the true church a sufficient rule of faith

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in any dispensation since the creation of man. Such an idea was never originated in the church of God. It was the apostate Catholics that first originated the idea, . . . Well might the revelator John, speaking by the spirit of prophecy, call her “THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS” . . . it is her true name, for all the “HARLOTS” which she has brought forth have walked in the footsteps of their “Mother” in declaring against new revelation, and in pretending that ancient revelation was a sufficient rule of faith. It is to be expected that as is the *Mother*, so will be her *Harlot Daughters*. The daughters in some respects are more corrupt than the mother; for they have limited their rule of faith much more than the mother. Pope Innocent the First, (as we have already quoted), in the year 402, sat in judgment upon the books of scripture, and rejected many of them, from a compilation in the canon. Some eleven or twelve centuries after this, one of the Harlot Daughters believed that her Mother had retained too much scripture in her canon; therefore, she concluded to make a new canon of her own, which she actually did do, leaving out some half a score of books which were in her Mother’s canon. This newly-formed canon of scripture is palmed upon the British nation and the United States as a sufficient rule of faith. . . .

29.—In the meantime, another Harlot Daughter of the Catholics—the Lutherans, formed another canon, and rejected many books that the English Daughter did not. . . . If the Bible alone is a sufficient guide, which of these three Bibles shall we take? Shall we take the Catholic,—the Lutheran,—or the English Bible? The Catholic Bible contains many things that the English and Lutheran do not, and the English contains many things that the Lutheran does not. Which shall we believe? If it be answered that we are to take all that God ever has revealed and caused to be written, as our rule of faith; then it will require a revelator to bring to light some twenty sacred books that are known once to have existed, but are not now to be found in either of the three bibles mentioned above. Therefore if we are to take all of God’s written word as our rule of faith, it will require another sacred canon to be made out, including all the lost books. This cannot be done by a Roman Catholic nor Protestant council, for tradition will not supply lost books. . . .

30.—In those sacred books written by prophets, seers, and apostles which have not descended to our day, but which we know once existed, as their names are referred to in scripture—there may be many great and important doctrines and ordinances revealed that are not contained in our scriptures. Indeed, no one, without further revelation, knows whether even one-hundredth part of the doctrines and ordinances of salvation are contained in the few books of scripture which have descended to our times, how then, can it be decided that they are a sufficient guide? May there not be some great and important things contained “*in the book of Nathan the prophet, and in the prophecy of Ahijah, and in the visions of Iddo the seer, and in the book of Gad the seer?*” (Orson Pratt’s Works, “Divine Authenticity of the Book of Mormon,” pages 38, 39 and 40)

Since Joseph Smith was supposed to have been “inspired” in his work on the Bible, we would expect to find the missing

books restored in his “Inspired Version.” While he did make some interpolations in the Bible, he did not restore any of the “lost” books. Robert J. Matthews stated:

Apparently he attempted to make an amended or amplified version rather than a literal translation. Nor did he attempt to restore any of the so-called “lost books” of the Bible. (*Joseph Smith’s Revision of the Bible*, page 18)

Dr. Matthews refers us to the *History of the Church*, Vol. I, page 363. This is a letter written by Joseph Smith and his Counselors, in which was stated:

We have not found the Book of Jasher, nor any other of the lost books mentioned in the Bible as yet; nor will we obtain them at present.

Instead of restoring the “lost books” Joseph Smith actually ended up with one less book than we have in the King James Version. Reed Durham gives this information:

. . . one book was eliminated, making only 65 books in the Revision. In the original manuscript, . . . at that point, in the middle of the sheet, after Ecclesiastes and just before starting Isaiah on that page, these words appear clear and plain, “The Songs of Solomon are not inspired writings.”

The text in the Bernhisel manuscript contained only slightly different wording, stating, “Songs of Solomon not inspired writing.”

The Song of Solomon was a book of the Bible which caused a great deal of discussion among Bib[li]cal scholars and its “final acceptance in both the Jewish and Christian canons was only upon its allegorization. This fact, in addition to its highly erotic overtones and close relationship with the liturgies of the fertility cults at the time, give some reason for agreeing with Joseph Smith about its divine authenticity.” (“A History of Joseph Smith’s Revision of the Bible,” pages 64 and 65)

Joseph Smith could have obtained his ideas concerning the Song of Solomon from Adam Clarke, for Clarke took a very strong stand against the book:

. . . the name of God is not found in it; nor is it quoted in the New Testament. As to certain references which its allegorical expositors suppose are made to it, either in the Gospels, Epistles, or Apocalypse, they are not express, and do not, by any thing in or connected with them, appear unequivocally to point out this book. And after all that has been said, I am fully of opinion it is not once referred to in the New Testament. . . .

I had for a long time hesitated whether I should say any thing on this book; . . . because I did not understand it as a spiritual allegory, representing the loves of Christ and his Church. . . .

It is much better, therefore, if explained or illustrated at all, to take it in its literal meaning, and explain it in its general sense. I say general sense, because there are many passages in it which should not be explained, if taken literally, the

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references being too delicate; and Eastern phraseology on such subjects is too vivid for European imaginations. . . . I see nothing of Christ and his Church, and nothing that appears to have been intended to be thus understood; and nothing, if applied in this way, that, per se, can promote the interests of vital godliness, or cause the simple and sincere not to “know Christ after the flesh.” Here I conscientiously stand. May God help me! (*Clarke’s Commentary*, Vol. 3, pages 843 and 844)

Although Joseph Smith claimed that the Song of Solomon was “not inspired,” his revelations printed in the *Doctrine and Covenants* quote from it. In the Song of Solomon, chapter 6, verse 10, we read:

Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners?

In the *Doctrine and Covenants* we find these passages:

. . . the coming forth of my church out of the wilderness—clear as the moon, and fair as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners. (*Doctrine and Covenants* 5:14)

. . . let my army . . . become fair as the sun, and clear as the moon, and that her banners may be terrible unto all nations. (*Ibid.*, 105:31)

. . . thy church may . . . shine forth fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners. (*Ibid.* 109:73)

The Song of Solomon is the only book in the Bible which contains the words, “fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners.”

When he came to the books of the Apocrypha Joseph Smith’s inspiration seems to have completely failed. The Mormon writer Bruce R. McConkie gives this information concerning the Apocrypha:

Scholars and Biblical students have grouped certain apparently scriptural Old Testament writings, which they deem to be of doubtful authenticity or of a spurious nature, under the title of the Apocrypha. . . .

These apocryphal writings were never included in the Hebrew Bible, but they were in the Greek Septuagint (the Old Testament used by the early apostles) and in the Latin Vulgate. . . .

The Apocrypha was included in the King James Version of 1611, but by 1629 some English Bibles began to appear without it, and since the early part of the 19th century it has been excluded from almost all protestant Bibles. The American Bible Society, founded in 1816, has never printed the Apocrypha in its Bibles, and the British and Foreign Bible Society has excluded it from all but some pulpit Bibles since 1827.

From these dates it is apparent that controversy was still raging as to the value of the Apocrypha at the time the Prophet began his ministry. (*Mormon Doctrine*, by Bruce R. McConkie, 1966, page 41)

The King James version of the Bible which Joseph Smith used in his work contained the Apocrypha, but he did not attempt to translate it. George Arbaugh stated:

Scarcely knowing what to do with the Apocrypha and wearied of such work Rigdon and Smith had God rule that they need not be translated. Whoever has the Spirit can understand them as they are and who ever does not have the Spirit “cannot be benefited” anyway. (*Revelation in Mormonism*, page 78)

Joseph Smith’s revelation regarding the Apocrypha is found in the *Doctrine and Covenants* as Section 91:

Verily, thus saith the Lord unto you concerning the Apocrypha—There are many things contained therein that are true, and it is mostly translated correctly;

There are many things contained therein that are not true, which are interpolations by the hands of men.

Verily, I say unto you, that it is not needful that the Apocrypha should be translated.

Therefore, whoso readeth it, let him understand, for the Spirit manifesteth truth;

And whoso is enlightened by the Spirit shall obtain benefit therefrom;

And whoso receiveth not by the Spirit, cannot be benefited. Therefore it is not needful that it should be translated. Amen.

Notice that the revelation states that there are “many things” contained in the Apocrypha that “are true,” yet it also states that there are “many things” that are false, “which are interpolations by the hands of men.” Why, then, did not Joseph Smith remove the interpolations and restore the original text of these books? Wasn’t this supposed to be the purpose of his work on the Bible? The Mormon writer Bruce R. McConkie states:

. . . the Prophet felt impelled to inquire of the Lord as to the authenticity of the Apocrypha. From the answer it is clear that the books of the Apocrypha were inspired writings in the first instance, but that subsequent interpolations and changes had perverted and twisted their original contexts so as to leave them with doubtful value. (*Mormon Doctrine*, 1966 ed., pages 41 and 42)

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If the books of the Apocrypha were originally “inspired writings,” as McConkie maintains, we would expect to find an inspired correction of them in Joseph Smith’s Revision. The fact that he did nothing with them is certainly a mark against Joseph Smith’s seership. The Mormon Apostle Mark E. Petersen states:

Probably the best of the questionable books of the pre-Christian era were included in the Catholic and some Protestant Bibles and called the Apocrypha. In our Church we do not use these books. (*As Translated Correctly*, page 15)

Since Mormon writers have said a great deal about books being lost or suppressed from the Bible, they should consider the fact that Joseph Smith did not restore any of these books in his Inspired Version. The Book of Mormon and the Book of Abraham, of course, could not be considered as books lost from the Bible.

Speaking of lost books, it is interesting to note that both the Book of Mormon and the Book of Abraham are incomplete. According to Joseph Smith’s own statement he lost part of the Book of Mormon, which was known as the “Book of Lehi”:

I would inform you that I translated, by the gift and power of God, and caused to be written, one hundred and sixteen pages, the which I took from the **Book of Lehi**, which was an account abridged from the plates of Lehi, by the hand of Mormon; which said account, some person or persons have stolen and kept from me, notwithstanding my utmost exertions to recover it again—and being commanded of the Lord that I should not translate the same over again, for Satan had put it into their hearts to tempt the Lord their God, by altering the words, that they did read contrary from that which I translated and caused to be written; . . . therefore thou shalt translate from the plates of Nephi, until ye come to that which ye have translated. . . . (Book of Mormon, Preface, 1830 ed.)

The missing pages were never found, nor have any of the Mormon leaders since Joseph Smith’s time done anything towards restoring this lost book.

The Book of Abraham has only five chapters and is not considered to be a complete translation. The Mormon writer James R. Clark stated:

. . . Joseph Smith did not translate all of the record of the Book of Abraham and he did not publish all he translated. (*The Story of the Pearl of Great Price*, Salt Lake City, 1962, page 113)

Joseph Smith also claimed to have the Book of Joseph as part of his collection of papyri. This collection was lost and most of it has never been recovered. The portion which has survived has been translated and found to be nothing but common Egyptian funerary texts.

In his Inspired Revision of the Bible, Joseph Smith even tampered with the Sermon on the Mount. In Matthew 5:40–41 of the King James version we read:

And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also.

And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.

Joseph Smith revised these verses to remove the idea of doing extra service:

And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat let him have it; and if he sue thee again, let him have thy cloak also.

And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him a mile; and whosoever shall compel thee to go with him twain, thou shalt go with him twain. (Inspired Version of the Bible, Matt. 5:42–43)

Richard P. Howard, the Reorganized LDS Historian, made this observation concerning these changes:

But Joseph Smith was interpreting the King James text in the midst of that first, terrible decade of “Gentile” persecution of the struggling Restoration movement; consequently he sought to rephrase this text perhaps in the light of his own historical experience. . . . Joseph Smith in 1831 was attempting to interpret and expand certain passages in keeping with his own prophetic insight and in the midst of his historical situation. (*Restoration Scriptures*, page 99)

Mr. Howard also points out that in the Book of Mormon Joseph Smith had followed the exact wording of the King James version:

And if any man will sue thee at the law and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also;

And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. (Book of Mormon, 3 Nephi 12:40–41)

Robert J. Matthews, Director of Academic Research for the Department of Seminaries and Institutes in the Mormon Church, has done a great deal of research on Joseph Smith’s Inspired Version. In an article published in a recent issue of *BYU Studies*, Dr. Matthews admits the possibility that Joseph Smith may have added material which was never contained in the original manuscripts of the Bible:

The question might be raised whether the Prophet actually restored the text as Matthew wrote it, or whether, being the seer that he was, he went even **beyond Matthew’s text** and recorded an event that actually took place during the delivery of the Sermon, but which Matthew did not include. This cannot be determined with certainty; . . . it is unlikely that he would “add or take from” unless he did it by the authority of divine revelation. . . . The how of the Prophet’s revision of the Sermon on the Mount calls for an expression of

inspiration and could represent either a restoration of material that was once in Matthew’s account of the Sermon, or could go **beyond** Matthew and reiterate an event immediately behind the text which took place during the Sermon but which Matthew did not record.

Another example of direct discourse found only in the Inspired Version is Matthew 9:18–21, which tells of a confrontation between Jesus and the Pharises and relates an exchange of information about the subject of baptism that is not recorded in the King James Version. . . . As with the earlier example the question may again be asked whether this encounter between Jesus and the Pharisees actually took place as recorded in the Inspired Version. It is either historical or it is not. If not historical then it would simply be a literary device used by the Prophet to convey a doctrine; but since the Prophet is not known to use devices of this kind in the other volumes of scripture that he produced, there is considerable reason to believe that the Prophet regarded this passage as a statement of historical fact. It seems reasonable to conclude that the Inspired Version at this point represents either a restoration of Matthew’s original record or an addition of an event that took place in the ministry of Jesus which Matthew did not record but which is, nevertheless, germane to the discussion in Matthew’s account.

. . . It is probable that the Inspired Version is many things, and that only portions of it represent restorations while other portions may be explanations, interpolations, enlargements, clarifications and the like.

The science of textual criticism offers an objection to the Inspired Version being a restoration of the original text on the basis that the Prophet’s work is not extensively supported by the many ancient manuscripts and fragments of the Bible that are now in common use by scholars. However, this may possibly be accounted for in two ways. First, no original manuscripts of the Bible are available, and even the earliest available documents are removed from the originals by many decades. Corruption of the texts could have taken place in the intervening years. Second, many of the passages in the Inspired Version may be reiterations of events which were either **not** recorded by the Biblical writers or were lost before the Bible was compiled, in which case even the original Bible manuscripts would not contain the information. . . .

My analysis leads me to conclude that the Inspired Version is many things. There are passages that are strongly persuasive of being restorations of the original text, or even of historical events **beyond the text**. There are other passages that may be inspired **explanations**, but not necessarily restorations. (*BYU Studies*, Winter, 1969, Vol. IX, No. 2, pages 170–174)

The Mormon scholar Dr. Hugh Nibley has recently stated that

Whatever translation comes by the gift and power of God is certainly no translation in the ordinary sense, . . . In every case in which he has produced a translation, Joseph Smith has made it clear that his inspiration is **by no means bound to any ancient text**, but is free to **take wings** at any time. (*BYU Studies*, Autumn 1969, page 71)

Dr. Nibley and other Mormon scholars would, no doubt, like to prove that Joseph Smith carefully followed the ancient texts which he claimed to translate, but since the evidence is so clearly against such an idea, they are forced to say that Joseph Smith’s inspiration went beyond the written texts. We feel that this is a very compromised position and comes very close to rejecting Joseph Smith’s entire work. The question comes to mind: Where do you draw the line between “inspiration” and “imagination”?

The Reorganized LDS Church published and promoted Joseph Smith’s Inspired Revision, yet their own Church Historian now appears to be on the verge of repudiating it. In his recent book, *Restoration Scriptures*, Richard P. Howard made these statements:

Viewing these subjects as he did from the vantage point of his own Christian background, Joseph Smith quite naturally would have tended to read into the symbolic pre-Christian language of the Old Testament certain uniquely Christian meanings. . . . For example, references to the Holy Ghost and to the Only Begotten—terms arising from the early Christian community—help one to see that even at this early stage of development the text in a sense represents Joseph Smith’s studied theological commentary on the King James Version of the early Genesis chapters of the Bible.

. . . Joseph’s heavy reliance on the early seventeenth century Elizabethan English language and style of the King James Version throughout this second document makes this verbal inspiration approach to the language of the early Genesis chapters of his New Translation untenable. (*Restoration Scriptures*, page 79)

Whatever the case, the alterations of the King James text in Matthew 24 of the New Translation neither add materially to the content nor elucidate the theological implications of the Matthean text. (*Ibid.*, page 86)

It is thus unnecessary and could be misleading to appear to claim “direct” revelation in the determination of the entire text of the Inspired Version as the preface written for the 1867 edition apparently implied. (*Ibid.*, page 151)

## REVISING THE REVISIONS

While the Mormon Church has not printed the Inspired Revision in its entirety, a few chapters are printed in the *Pearl of Great Price*, under the title, Book of Moses. Joseph Smith’s “inspired” revision of Matthew, chapter 24, is also included in the *Pearl of Great Price*. The Mormon Church accepts the *Pearl of Great Price* as scripture, and it is one of the four standard works of the LDS Church.

When we compare the text of the Book of Moses as it was first printed in 1851 with the way it reads today we find that some serious changes have been made. In the pages that follow we show photographs of two pages of the original 1851 edition of the *Pearl of Great Price*. We have marked all the changes that would have to be made in the text to bring it into conformity with the 1965 edition of the *Pearl of Great Price*.

And the woman said unto the serpent: We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden;

serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which I, the Lord God, had made. And Satan put it into the heart of the serpent, (for he had drawn away many after him,) and he sought also to beguile Eve, for he knew not the mind of God : wherefore he sought to destroy the world, **yea**, and he said unto the Woman : yea, hath God said ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden, (and he spake by the mouth of the serpent,) **but** of the fruit of the tree which thou beholdest in the midst of the garden, God hath said ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye **taste** it, lest ye die. **For** God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. And when the Woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it became pleasant to the **eye**, and a tree to be desired to make her wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and **gave also** unto her husband with her, and he did eat. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they had been naked.”

touch

And they sewed fig-leaves together and made themselves aprons.

“ And they heard the voice of the Lord God, as they were walking in the garden, in the cool of the day ; and Adam and his wife **hid** themselves from the presence of the Lord God **among** the trees of the garden. And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where **are you going**? And he said, I heard **your** voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I beheld that I was naked, and I hid myself.

And the Lord God said unto Adam, Who **told you that you were naked**? **Have you** eaten of the tree whereof I **told you that you should not eat**? If so **you should** surely die! And the man said, The woman **whom you gave me**, and **commanded** that she should remain with me, **gave me of the fruit of the tree**, and I did eat.

And the Lord God said unto the woman, What is this **which you have done**? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.

And **again**, the Lord said unto the **woman**, I will greatly multiply **your sorrow**, and **your conception**. In sorrow you shall bring forth children, and your desire shall be to **your** husband, and he shall rule over **you**.

And the Lord God said **unto Adam**, because **you have hearkened unto the voice of your wife**, and **have eaten of the fruit of the tree of which I commanded you**, saying, **you shall not eat of it**; cursed shall be the ground for **your sake**: in sorrow **you shall eat of it all the days of your life**. Thorns also, and thistles shall it bring forth to **you**; and **you shall eat the herb of the field**.

By the sweat of **your face shall you eat bread**, until **you shall return unto the ground—for you shall surely die—for out of it you were taken**: for dust **you were**, and unto dust **you shall return**.

After Adam had been driven out of the garden, he began to till the earth, and to have dominion over all the beasts of the field, and to eat his bread by the sweat of the brow as the Lord had commanded him. And Eve also, his wife, did labor with him, and he knew her, and she bare unto him sons and daughters, and they began to multiply and to replenish the earth. And from that time forth, the sons and daughters of Adam began to divide two and two in the

And the serpent said unto the woman: Ye shall not surely die;

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## Key to Markings

Words Deleted in Blue  
Words Added in Red  
Textual Change

Pages 14 (Moses 4:5-5:1) and 16 (Moses 5:20-40; 8:13-18) of the *Pearl of Great Price*, 1851 edition.

serpent: Because thou hast done this thou shalt be cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life; and I will put enmity between thee and the woman, between thy seed and her seed; and he shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. Unto the

Adam called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living; for thus have I, the Lord God, called the first of all women, which are many. Unto Adam, and also unto his wife, did I, the Lord God, make coats of skins, and clothed them.

And I, the Lord God, said unto mine Only Begotten: Behold, the man is become as one of us to know good and evil; and now lest he put forth his hand and partake also of the tree of life, and eat and live forever,

Therefore I, the Lord God, will send him forth from the Garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken;

For as I, the Lord God, liveth, even so my words cannot return void, for as they go forth out of my mouth they must be fulfilled.

So I drove out the man and I placed at the east of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword, which turned every way to keep the way of the tree of life.

(And these are the words which I spake unto my servant Moses, and they are true even as I will; and I have spoken them unto you. See thou show them unto no man, until I command you, except to them that believe. Amen.)

And it came to pass that

and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel, and to his <sup>wroth</sup> offering; but unto Cain, and his offering, he had not respect. Now Satan <sup>to</sup> knew this, and it pleased him. And Cain was very <sup>angry</sup>, and his countenance <sup>art thou wroth</sup> fell. And the Lord said unto Cain, Why <sup>are you angry</sup>? Why is <sup>thy</sup> your countenance fallen? If <sup>you do</sup> well, <sup>will you not</sup> be accepted? And if <sup>you</sup> do not well, sin <sup>lies</sup> at the door, and Satan <sup>desires</sup> to have <sup>you</sup>; and except <sup>thee</sup> you shall hearken unto my commandments, I will deliver <sup>you up</sup>, and it shall <sup>thee</sup> be unto <sup>you</sup> according to his desire. <sup>desireth</sup>

And Cain went into the field and talked with <sup>his brother Abel</sup>. And <sup>it came to pass that</sup> while they were in the field, Cain rose up against <sup>his brother Abel</sup> and slew <sup>Abel, his brother</sup> him. And Cain gloried in <sup>what</sup> he had done, saying, I am free; surely the flocks of my brother <sup>will now fall</sup> into my hands.

And <sup>But</sup> the Lord said unto Cain, Where is Abel, <sup>your</sup> brother? And he said, <sup>thy</sup> I know not. Am I my brother's keeper? And the Lord said, What <sup>have</sup> hast <sup>hath</sup> you done? the voice of <sup>your</sup> brother's blood cries unto me from the ground. <sup>thou tillest</sup> And now <sup>you shall</sup> be cursed from the earth which <sup>has</sup> opened <sup>her</sup> mouth to <sup>receive</sup> your brother's blood from <sup>your</sup> hand. When <sup>you till</sup> the ground <sup>she</sup> it shall not henceforth yield unto <sup>you</sup> her strength. A fugitive, and a vagabond <sup>thy</sup> <sup>thee</sup> also, <sup>you shall</sup> be in the earth.

And Cain said unto the Lord, Satan tempted me because of my brother's <sup>thou didst accept</sup> flocks. And I was <sup>also angry</sup>; for his offering <sup>was accepted</sup>, and <sup>mine was</sup> not mine <sup>not mine</sup>; my punishment is greater than I can bear. Behold, <sup>you have</sup> driven me <sup>thou hast</sup> out this day from the face of <sup>men</sup>, and from <sup>your</sup> face shall I be hid <sup>also</sup>; and <sup>thy</sup> I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth; And it shall come to pass, <sup>mine iniquities</sup> every <sup>one</sup> that <sup>finds</sup> me will slay me because of <sup>my oath</sup>, for these things are <sup>whosoever</sup> not hid from the Lord. And <sup>the Lord</sup> said unto him, <sup>Therefore, whoever</sup> I slays Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold. And <sup>the Lord</sup> set a <sup>I</sup> mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him."

\* \* \* \* \*

“ And <sup>it came to pass</sup>, that Noah and his sons hearkened unto the Lord, and gave heed, and they were called the sons of God. And when these men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, <sup>that</sup> the sons of men saw that <sup>their</sup> daughters were fair, <sup>they took them wives</sup> those even as they chose. And the Lord said unto Noah, <sup>and</sup> the daughters of thy sons have sold themselves; for behold mine anger is kindled against the sons of men, for they will not hearken to my voice. And it came to pass, that Noah prophesied, and taught the things of God, even as it was in the beginning. And the Lord said unto Noah, my Spirit shall not always strive with man, for he shall know that all flesh shall die; yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years; and if men do not repent, I will send in <sup>my</sup> floods <sup>the</sup> upon them.

And in those days there were giants on the earth, and they sought Noah to take away his life; but the Lord was with Noah, and the power of the Lord was upon him.

And thou shalt rule over him,

For from this time forth thou shalt be the Father of his lies; thou shalt be called perdition; for thou wast also before the world.

And it shall be said in time to come — that these abomination were had from Cain; for he rejected the greater counsel which was had from God; and this is a cursing which I will put upon thee, except thou repent.

And Cain was wroth, and listened not any more to the voice of the Lord, neither to Abel, his brother, who walked in holiness before the Lord.

And Adam and his wife mourned before the Lord, because of Cain and his brethren.

And it came to pass that Cain took one of his brothers' daughters to wife, and they loved Satan more than God.

And Satan said unto Cain; swear unto me by thy throat, and if thou tell it thou shalt die; and swear thy brethren by their heads, and by the living God, that they tell it not; for if they tell it, they shall surely die; and this that thy Father may not know it; and this day I will deliver thy brother Abel into thine hands.

And Satan sware unto Cain that he would do according to his commands, and all these things were done in secret.

And Cain said: Truly I am Mahan, the master of this great secret, that I may murder and get gain. Wherefore Cain was called Master Mahan, and he gloried in his wickedness.

## MORMON SCRIPTURES AND THE BIBLE

James R. Harris, who was a student at the Brigham Young University, made this statement in his thesis:

Students and scholars of the L.D.S. scriptures have long been aware of some of the differences existing in the various publications of the material in our Book of Moses. To our knowledge no one has ever carefully isolated or analyzed these changes nor has any explanation been given either to justify or condemn them. ("A Study of the Changes in the Contents of the Book of Moses From the Earliest Available Sources to the Current Edition," Master's thesis, B.Y.U., 1958, typed copy, page 1)

Mr. Harris then proceeded to show the changes that have been made in the Book of Moses (which is part of the *Pearl of Great Price*). Although Mr. Harris felt that he was doing the Mormon Church a service, some members of the church evidently felt that the truth should not be known. On page 237 of his thesis Mr. Harris stated:

During the writing of this thesis an occasional inquisitive friend would ask about the nature and extent of changes in the contents of the Book of Moses. Encouraged by their interest, a variety of examples were pointed out. The reaction varied in emotional intensity but always ended with a caustic question or a prediction, such as: "Why did you pick such a subject?" or "This will disturb a lot of people." Our well-meaning friends were so **fearful** of doing **injury** to the Church that they would **abandon the search for truth**. ("A Study of the Changes in the Contents of the Book of Moses From the Earliest Available Sources to the Current Edition," page 237)

James R. Harris claimed that most of the changes in the *Pearl of Great Price* were made in the 1878 edition:

Orson Pratt was the Editor of the first American edition of the *Pearl of Great Price*. This publication became available to the public about the 21st of June 1878.

The American edition was **more drastically changed than any previous publication** by a member of the Church. (Ibid., page 226)

On pages 224 and 225 of the same thesis Mr. Harris made this comment concerning a statement made by Milton R. Hunter, of the First Council of the Seventy:

From the standpoint of omissions and additions of words, the American Edition is the most spectacular rendition. On page forty-four of his *Pearl of Great Price Commentary*, Elder Milton R. Hunter makes the following statement:

The first American edition of the *Pearl of Great Price* was published in Salt Lake City in 1878. It agreed in practically every detail with the first edition which was published by Franklin D. Richards in England in 1851.

Brother Hunter was probably not thinking in terms of specific changes in the text or he could not have made the above statement. There were 147 words omitted in the American edition, 113 of those omissions are sustained in our current edition. Some of the words added to the American edition had **impressive doctrinal implications**.

On page 237 of the same thesis Mr. Harris stated:

In his study of the changes in the *Doctrine and Covenants*, Melvin Peterson observed that the Latter Day Saints, who lived at the time Joseph Smith received revelations, were not disturbed by changes made in the revelations. Only non-members of the Church were upset because their concept of revelation was not founded upon experience.

Can we say the same for the average Latter Day Saint today? Would members of the Church become upset if suddenly confronted with some of the **more drastic changes** made in the American edition as compared with earlier publications?

There is little doubt that most members of the Mormon Church today would become very disturbed "if suddenly confronted with some of the more drastic changes," and, contrary to Melvin Peterson's statement, the members of the Mormon Church who lived in Joseph Smith's time were also disturbed by changes that were made in the revelations.

David Whitmer, one of the three witnesses to the Book of Mormon, stated that when it became known that Joseph Smith had changed his revelations, "the result was that **some of the members left the Church on account of it**" (*An Address to All Believers in Christ*, by David Whitmer, page 61).

It is interesting to note that even Moses 1:39, which Milton R. Hunter—of the First Council of the Seventy—calls "the most significant and most marvelous statement regarding the work and glory of God to be found in religious literature" (*The Gospel Through the Ages*, page 6) has been changed. In the first edition of the *Pearl of Great Price* it read as follows:

Behold, this is my work **to** my glory, to the immortality and eternal life of man. (*Pearl of Great Price*, 1851 edition, page 10)

In the 1965 edition this has been changed to read:

**For** behold, this is my work **and** my glory—to **bring to pass** the immortality and eternal life of man. (*Pearl of Great Price*, 1965 edition, Moses 1:39)

Even though the Mormon leaders had made some "drastic changes" in the 1878 edition, in 1902 they made another revision. James R. Clark, of the B.Y.U., made this statement:

## MORMON SCRIPTURES AND THE BIBLE

Evidently some time previous to the General Conference of the Church in April, 1902, the First Presidency of the Church had decided that the time had come to make a major revision of *The Pearl of Great Price*. It seems that they must have called Elder James E. Talmage of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in and given him the prime responsibility for the revision.

In proceeding with this revision, Dr. Talmage secured two copies of the 1888 Salt Lake City edition published by the Deseret News Company and proceeded to make the corrections and notes in red and black ink in those two copies. As we write this account, one of these copies with Dr. Talmage's notes in it is on our desk on loan from the Brigham Young University Library where both copies have been since they came to us with part of Dr. Talmage's collection some years after his death. (*The Story of the Pearl of Great Price*, 1962 ed., pages 207–208)

On page 206 of the same book James R. Clark has reproduced a photograph of Dr. James E. Talmage's book in which he had "made corrections and deletions for 1902 edition."

Joseph Fielding Smith, who is now President of the LDS Church, once tried to explain away the changes that were made in the Book of Mormon by saying that the printer who published the first edition was "unfriendly" and made errors which had to be corrected in later editions. The changes in the *Pearl of Great Price* can not be explained in this way, for the first edition of the *Pearl of Great Price* was published by Franklin D. Richards, who was an Apostle in the Mormon Church. Certainly he was not "unfriendly" to the Church.

In an article in the *Brigham Young University Studies*, Summer 1968, page 361, James R. Harris made these statements:

Changes have been made in the wording of every book that is included among the standard works of the Church, but misunderstandings regarding the nature, origin, and method of change have disturbed some members of the Church in every generation since the days of the Prophet Joseph Smith. . . . Unfortunately there has also been some clouding of the issue by those who have flatly denied that there have been changes or those who have not made it clear as to what they mean by "no changes."

On page 382 of the same article Mr. Harris states:

The concepts given to a prophet were and are divine; the words with which he transmitted them are and were human. Latter-day Saints should be able to accept new revelation as it flows from the living prophet, and to accept clarifications of past revelation as they come through the proper channels of authority. . . .

Those, in past generations, who were disgruntled over changes that were made in the earliest renditions of the Book of Moses or in any other scripture were worshipping dead things. Their ears were not inclined toward the living God who speaks to his Church through his living prophets. . . .

A tolerance for change has never been more vital.

Although Dr. Harris admits that changes were made in the *Pearl of Great Price*, he feels that Joseph Smith himself made the changes before his death. In other words, he feels that when the Mormon leaders changed the text of the *Pearl of Great Price* in 1878, they were bringing it into conformity with changes Joseph Smith made in the manuscripts during his lifetime.

### ENDLESS REVISIONS

The Reorganized Church Historian Richard P. Howard has recently released information which reveals that Joseph Smith's work on the Inspired Revision was anything but "inspired." He shows that there were a number of different manuscripts involved in the production of the Inspired Revision and that Joseph Smith often revised his own revisions and left the manuscripts in a very confused state:

Many texts reveal that the process was **not** some kind of automatic verbal or visual revelatory experience on the part of Joseph Smith. He often caused a text to be written in one form and later reworded his initial revision. The manuscripts in some cases show a considerable time lapse between such reconsiderations, . . .

A considerable number of places in NT #2 show that initially Joseph Smith considered certain texts in the King James Version to be either correct or in need of slight revision, but that on latter consideration he decided to amend them further. Since the manuscript pages were already written and filled to the extent that the later corrections could not be included, the problem was solved by writing the text out on a scrap of paper and pinning or sewing it to the appropriate manuscript page. (*Restoration Scriptures*, pages 93 and 96)

Therefore OT #3 represents a third draft manuscript of Section 22 and Genesis 1–7, a second draft manuscript of the remainder of the Old Testament, although revised considerably by **interpolations** written in later years between the lines and on separate scraps of paper pinned to the manuscript pages. (*Ibid.*, page 106)

July 2, 1833, has traditionally been accepted as the conclusion date of Joseph Smith's revision of the King James Bible. However, in the light of what has been stated earlier, this date should be thought of as the final manuscript entry made by the scribe on that date at the conclusion of the initial consideration of the Old Testament. Many of the texts written during that initial period of revision were reconsidered and subjected to further revision during the remaining eleven years of Joseph Smith's life.

## MORMON SCRIPTURES AND THE BIBLE

When one turns to nearly any page of OT #3 containing substantial initial revision of the King James Version, different colors of ink appear, showing later revisions, written between the lines or on separate scraps of paper and pinned to the manuscript pages. These are most likely in the handwriting of Joseph Smith, Jr. The use of darker ink, and the fact that many of them appear to be in the hand of Joseph Smith, Jr., constitute evidence that from time to time Joseph Smith reviewed his earlier work and refined revisions already made and introduced new revisions as he pressed forward toward hoped for publication. (Ibid., pages 122–123)

... the manuscripts indicate rather clearly that Joseph Smith, Jr., by his continued practice of **re-revising his earlier texts** (occasionally as **many as three times**), demonstrated that he did **not** believe that at any of those points of rerevision he had dictated a perfectly inerrant text by the power or voice of God. . . . It is thus unnecessary and could be **misleading** to appear to claim “direct” revelation in the determination of the entire text of the Inspired Version as the preface written for the 1867 edition apparently implied. (Ibid., page 151)

Richard P. Howard’s statement that Joseph Smith re-revised his earlier texts “occasionally as many as **three times**” is certainly a serious indictment against Joseph Smith’s work. The fact that he could not make up his mind shows that he was tampering with the Scriptures according to his own understanding rather than receiving revelation from God. The Mormon writer Truman G. Madsen admits that Joseph Smith revised his own revisions:

3. The documents provide indications of the mode of the Prophet’s procedure. He often revised a passage, later added to or amended it, and then, in a third attempt, clarified it further. Some of his corrections are inconclusive because the marginal note in the text is not specified as to exact placement. In some such cases we infer that he saw a problem but had not yet fully resolved it. (*Improvement Era*, March 1970, page 70)

The reader will remember that Brigham Young condemned the Inspired Version of the Bible printed by the Reorganized Church. James R. Harris, of Brigham Young University, states: “The minutes of the School of the Prophets indicate that President Brigham Young regarded the Revision “spurious” and that he brought Elder Pratt to some level of agreement with his position” (*Brigham Young University Studies*, Summer 1968, page 374, footnote 23). On the other hand, Brigham Young had “high regard” for the first edition of the *Pearl of Great Price* (see *The Story of the Pearl of Great Price*, by James R. Clark, page 205). After Brigham Young’s death the Church leaders completely repudiated his ideas concerning the accuracy of these books, for they changed the text of the *Pearl of Great Price* to agree with the Reorganized Church’s printing of the Inspired Revision. James R. Harris stated that “every major change in the American edition [of the *Pearl of Great Price*] appears in identical form in the Inspired Revision” (“A Study of the Changes in the Contents of the Book of Moses . . .” page 225).

Although James R. Harris frankly stated that the text of the *Pearl of Great Price* was changed to conform to the text found in the Inspired Version, he felt that the Bernhisel manuscript was the source for these changes. (The reader will remember that John Bernhisel made this copy in 1845 and that it is now preserved in the Church Historian’s Office.) In his thesis, James R. Harris wrote:

In an earlier chapter of this work we pointed out that the American edition was a copy of the “completed” revision of the Bible as contained in the Bernhisel manuscript. As Church Historian, a position held by Orson Pratt from 1874 until his death, Brother Pratt had access to the Bernhisel manuscript and **must** have used it as the authoritative source for the American edition of Moses. (“A Study of the Changes in the Contents of the Book of Moses . . .” typed copy, page 223)

**We insist** that Orson Pratt used the Bernhisel manuscript as the source for the American edition for two reasons. First, he **would not** be willing to trust the product of an **apostate church** (Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints). Second, he had access to a primary source in the Bernhisel manuscript. . . .

The American edition was more drastically changed than any previous publication by a member of the Church.

Orson Pratt did not assume the right to make any of the changes in the text of Moses, but he faithfully copied the contents of the Bernhisel manuscript. . . .

Several years ago the writer engaged President Joseph Fielding Smith in a conversation on the Inspired Revision and the Bernhisel manuscript. Brother Smith gave assurance that the Bernhisel manuscript is almost identical to the first edition of the Inspired Revision as published by the Reorganized Church. We would have preferred to use the Bernhisel manuscript in our linear comparison, but since it was **not available**, the Inspired Revision was the best substitute. (Ibid., pages 225–227)

(3) Our current (1921) edition of Moses came to us through a faithful copy of the “completely revised” manuscript by John M. Bernhisel. During the years immediately preceding 1878 (when the first American edition was published), Orson Pratt was the Church Historian and as such had easy access to the Bernhisel manuscript. The superiority of this “complete” revision was obvious to Brother Pratt who proceeded to make it available to the membership of the Church. The American edition, as indicated above, is a careful copy of the Bernhisel manuscript. Elder Pratt did not take it upon himself to make any changes in the text. Pratt’s 1878 publication of Moses contained some startling changes and additions, but every change and addition was the contribution of Joseph Smith laboring under the influence of the Spirit to revise the text of Genesis. (Ibid., page 245)

The reader will notice that James R. Harris’ entire thesis with regard to this matter was not based on actual comparison of the Bernhisel manuscript with the Inspired Revision.

## MORMON SCRIPTURES AND THE BIBLE

According to his own admission, he was “not” allowed to use the Bernhisel manuscript. Instead, he based his thesis on Joseph Fielding Smith’s “assurance that the Bernhisel manuscript is almost identical to the first edition of the Inspired Revision as published by the Reorganized Church.” The Mormon scholar Reed Durham was not content to base his conclusions on Joseph Fielding Smith’s statements. He obtained access to the Bernhisel manuscript, and his research led him to conclusions that differ from those reached by Harris:

In order to write authoritatively about the Bernhisel Copy of the Revision, . . . it seemed necessary for the writer to have an opportunity to personally view and make a detailed study of it. A request was therefore made to the Church Historian, Joseph Fielding Smith, Jr., and permission was granted. The manuscript portion of the Bernhisel Copy was made available for study, but Bernhisel’s copy of the marked Bible used by Joseph Smith was not made available for research at the present time. (“A History of Joseph Smith’s Revision of the Bible,” Ph.D. dissertation, Brigham Young University, 1956, page 153)

Further misunderstandings relative to the Bernhisel Copy arise when it is suggested that it was used as the primary source for the Book of Moses and Matthew, the twenty-fourth chapter found in the *Pearl of Great Price*. Joseph Fielding Smith, Jr., the present Church Historian, has stated that the Book of Moses as printed in the *Pearl of Great Price* was taken from the Bernhisel Copy. . . .

The 1851 texts of Matthew twenty-four were compared with those in the first American edition of the *Pearl of Great Price* in 1878, edited by Orson Pratt, and revealed great differences. The 1878 edition “had fifty-seven additional words, seven words omitted, and thirty-seven words changed.” The 1851 texts of the Book of Moses were compared with those in the 1878 edition, and also revealed that the 1878 edition had been “drastically changed,” having 139 punctuation changes, 208 word changes, 77 capitalized word changes, 147 words omitted, and 3,331 words added. These two editions are so different in both the texts of Matthew twenty-four and the Book of Moses that it is inconceivable that the Bernhisel Copy could have been used as a source by both, and the writer doubts that it was used by either. . . .

In terms of textual comparisons, Richards did not use the Bernhisel Copy for his 1851 edition. . . .

It is believed by some that Orson Pratt used the Bernhisel Copy in his 1878 American edition of the *Pearl of Great Price*. . . .

Textual studies in the Bernhisel Copy reveal that it too was different in many respects from Orson Pratt’s 1878 edition. . . . From the examples already given, it can be seen that some of the differences are not significant, whereas others are so strikingly different that they affect the meaning of the passage. But the over-all effect of all the differences, significant or insignificant, causes doubt as to whether or not Orson Pratt used the Bernhisel Copy. . . .

The writer concludes that Orson Pratt used two different sources for editing his Book of Moses text in the 1878 edition of the *Pearl of Great Price*, neither of them being the

Bernhisel Copy. The first source he used was the 1851 edition, upon which all printings of the *Pearl of Great Price* until the 1878 edition were based. The paragraphing of verses in the 1878 edition was exactly the same as the paragraphing done in the 1851 edition and totally unlike that in the Bernhisel Copy. The second source was the Reorganized Church’s Holy Scriptures. . . .

In Harris’ attempt to account for the exact similarity between the Book of Moses texts in the 1878 American edition and the Holy Scriptures published in 1867, he assumed that: (1) Orson Pratt had possession of the Bernhisel Copy, (2) that the Bernhisel Copy was completed, and (3) that it was exactly the same as the original manuscript. As none of these assumptions is correct, the most correct assumption might be that Orson Pratt, knowing that the source for the Revision as published by the Reorganized Church was the original manuscript and trusting that they accurately preserved that text, corrected his text to harmonize with it. (Ibid., pages 167, 168, 169, 170, 172, 174, 175 and 176)

Since Reed Durham’s dissertation was written, James R. Harris has changed his mind somewhat concerning this matter. He still feels that there “is a strong indication that Pratt used the Bernhisel or possibly some other **unknown** manuscript of equal authority,” but he now admits that “It is possible that Orson Pratt had enough confidence in the Reorganite publication of the Inspired Revision that he accepted that rendition without making any effort to check it against the primary sources available to him” (*Brigham Young University Studies*, Summer 1968, page 374).

However this may be, the Mormon leaders also made changes in the text of Joseph Smith’s *History* to bring it into conformity with the changes they had made in the Book of Moses as printed in the *Pearl of Great Price*. James R. Harris states:

Extracts from the History of the Prophet were being published in the *Times and Seasons*. The Editor of the Periodical published the extract just as the Prophet had recorded it in his history and before any revision or correction had taken place. The validity of the above statement may be questioned on the grounds that the *History of the Church* records the revelation just as it appears in the current (1902) edition of the *Pearl of Great Price*. An unwary reader might conclude that the Prophet recorded the revelation in his journal as it appears in the published *History*. Such a conclusion is not remotely possibly since the published *History* rendition contains **changes** that were not in the text until 1902, . . . No doubt it was within the right of the Editors (with the sanction of the First Presidency) to change the phraseology in those verses of the Book of Moses that were published in the *History* to conform with the standard text, which would be the “completely” revised manuscript of the Inspired Revision. Unfortunately the historical value of this section of the *History of the Church* is **greatly reduced**. (“A Study of the Changes in the Contents of the Book of Moses . . .” pages 213–214)

The “Lectures on Faith,” which were published in the first edition of the *Doctrine and Covenants* in 1835, contained extracts from Joseph Smith’s Inspired Revision. When we compare these extracts with the text which is presently published in the *Pearl of Great Price*, we find that it does not agree. Below is an example.

PEARL OF GREAT PRICE

**And I**, God, created man in **mine** own image, in the image of **mine** Only Begotten created **I** him; male and female created **I** them. (*Pearl of Great Price*, Book of Moses 2:27)

LECTURES ON FAITH

**So God** created man in **His** own image, in the image of **the** Only Begotten created **He** him; male and female created **He** them. (*Doctrine and Covenants*, 1835 edition, page 13, verse 8)

The Mormon leaders apparently realized that the two texts did not agree, and therefore the “Lectures on Faith” were changed to conform to the text found in the *Pearl of Great Price*. In the 1890 printing of the *Doctrine and Covenants* the quotation from the Lectures on Faith cited above was changed to read:

“And I, God, created man in mine own image, in the image of mine Only Begotten created I him; male and female created I them.” (*Doctrine and Covenants*, 1890, page 10, verse 8)

Finally, in 1921 the “Lectures on Faith” were entirely removed from the *Doctrine and Covenants*. The main reason for their removal was that they contained information on the Godhead which conflicted with current beliefs on this issue.

**CONCLUSION**

The many changes made in the “inspired” renderings and the suppression of evidence has tended to undermine confidence in Joseph Smith’s work on the Bible. Earlier in this book we quoted the Mormon Apostle John A. Widtsoe as saying that the Inspired Revision is “a remarkable evidence of the prophetic power of Joseph Smith.” We cannot accept this statement, for a careful examination of his work reveals unmistakable evidence that it is merely a human production and contains many serious errors.

The Mormon writer Milton R. Hunter, of the First Council of the Seventy, made this fantastic claim concerning Joseph Smith’s works:

The Prophet Joseph Smith produced for the world three new volumes of holy scriptures, namely the Book of Mormon, the *Doctrine and Covenants*, and the *Pearl of Great Price*, and, in addition, he revised the Bible. No prophet who has ever lived has accomplished such a tremendous feat. There are only 177 pages in the Old Testament attributed to Moses, while Joseph Smith either translated through the gift and power of God or received as direct revelation from Jehovah 835. (*Deseret News*, Church Section, July 18, 1970, page 14)

While we must agree that Joseph Smith produced a great deal of material which purports to be scripture, we do not feel that this material bears any evidence of divine inspiration.

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