

WHAT EVERYONE OUGHT TO KNOW
ABOUT THE HISTORY, DOCTRINE, AND PRACTICE
OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS
OR
WHY I CAN'T BE A MORMON
AND
MY BIBLE-BASED HOPE AS A CHRISTIAN

BY

GERHOLD L. LEMKE
2109 Baldwin Street
Sturgis, SD 55785

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INTRODUCTION

What can I say first, and best, that will motivate a person with any degree of interest at all in Mormonism to decide that this work is worth the attention that it takes to read it? Someone might say: "Well, this man was never a Mormon, so how can he ever appreciate what I have found by experience among the Latter-Day Saints!" I might well reply: "Since you accept the Apostle Paul as one who experienced true joy in the Lord, would you listen to one who claims the theology of Paul?"

I could say that it is my intention not to rob you of your faith leaving you with nothing at all to believe, but rather to provide you with a key to understanding God's true way of salvation for every lost sinner. (This begins on page 18 of this work.)

I could argue that if your Mormon leaders have challenged all who disagree with them to prove them wrong, then it is the responsibility of every LDS member to listen to anyone coming forward with arguments against Mormon doctrine and for true apostolic Christianity. If you want me to listen to you, which I do that I might understand you, then if you are truly interested in converting me, should you not at least listen to me so as to understand "where I'm coming from"?

You must realize that you put me at a disadvantage if you tune me out, if you act as if to say: "Listen to what I have to say, this is my witness, take it or leave it." If I quote to you from the Bible, your reply would be: "But is that correctly translated?" If I mention historical facts unfavorable to the LDS, you would say: "But did it actually happen so long ago; was that written by an anti-Mormon? No one who isn't one of us can be trusted." If I show you contradictions within Mormonism, you could say: "Someday God will give another revelation that will explain everything." And if all else fails, you can say: "I have received the Spirit, and you, not being a Latter-Day Saint, have not been given my right point of view!"

But are these your answers, or answers that have been given to you by people you trust because you know what good people they are? Do you know the whole Bible well enough to compare every religion with it - or are you willing to trust the judgment of someone else with such an important matter as the eternal destiny of your soul?

I have been told by Mormon missionaries that I should pray for wisdom on the basis of James 1:5, that God should give me a sign that Mormonism really is true. You may say: "God gave me a sign!" Did He? Would you expect God to tell you to believe things today that He told believers of Bible times to reject? Do you really know what God in the Bible tells us to believe and to reject? If God in the Bible already states that something is true, should I presume to ask Him to change everything just for me and make what was always wrong suddenly right?

Joseph Fielding Smith, the tenth President of the LDS Church, said, as you probably know:

"If Joseph Smith was a deceiver, who wilfully attempted to mislead the people then he should be exposed; his claims should be refuted, and his doctrines shown to be false, for the doctrines of an imposter cannot be made to harmonize in all particulars with divine truth. If his claims and declarations were built upon fraud and deceit, there would appear many errors and contradictions, which would be easy to detect. The doctrines of false teachers will not stand the test when tried by the accepted standards of measurement, the scriptures." (Doctrines of Salvation, by Joseph F. Smith, Vol. I, p.188.)

So if I accept this challenge, you might rightly ask: "What are your qualifications? Have you done your homework? Do you have the background for the task? Let me tell you - with the reminder that objective truth should be received for its own sake, not because of the personality of qualifications of the person who seeks it out. A pearl of great price (Matthew 13:46) does not become more or less valuable because of the person who finds it and shows it to someone else.

I was born in 1944, and grew up with four siblings in a Lutheran parsonage. The world of nature was always at our doorstep, so I have an enduring interest in the natural sciences, anthropology, and archeology. After grade school, I went through the challenging requirements of our Synod's pastoral training program - Latin and German starting in high school, Greek and Hebrew starting in our four-year college, religion every year, plus everything else that you'd expect of public education in science, mathematics, history, music, athletics, English, etc. Our Synod's four-year seminary program continued most of the above and also prepared us for parish responsibilities, which I got into starting in 1970. All this time, and to the present, I have been reading everything in every field that has come my way.

In addition to Bible studies for the members of my parishes, I have prepared myself so as to be able to take for a whole day if necessary with anyone who has been persuaded, without really going into it for himself, that evolutionism is true and Genesis is not. I have read the Koran and studied the writings of Bahauallah for the sake of witnessing to members of the Bahai faith. I've marked the New World Translation (the Jehovah's Witnesses' Bible) to show by it that Jesus truly is the Son of God, One with the Father and the Holy Spirit. I have helped with local archeology projects under the direction of the South Dakota State Archeological Research Center at Ft. Meade right outside of Sturgis. And now, after all this and much more, and after almost 20 years of contacts with Mormons and Mormonism, the time has come to do something for the benefit of the Latter-Day Saints.

Some writers on Mormonism are satisfied to examine only its doctrine and practice, and this I will do. But I believe that I also owe it to you to examine Mormon history, and especially the character of Joseph Smith, Jr. I must, because Joseph F. Smith himself said:

"Mormonism, as it is called, must stand or fall on the story of Joseph Smith. He was either a prophet of God, divinely called, properly appointed and commissioned, or he was one of the biggest frauds this world has ever seen. There is no middle ground."
(Joseph F. Smith, Ibid., vol.1, p.188.)

This work, then, will begin with a look at Joseph Smith and his associates. Then we'll have to discuss the origin of the Book of Mormon and compare it with the Bible and current LDS teachings. Mormon doctrine will be examined, with emphasis on the true Christian attitude toward Law and Gospel. And finally, there will be a number of items of interest that are my own contribution to the volumes on Mormonism.

Our purpose shall be to determine if Mormonism is indeed included under the indictment of the Apostle Paul (Romans 10:3):

"For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God."

Writing a fair history on any topic is a difficult task. Objectivity, it is said, is impossible, since everyone has a point of view. One has to discover what happened, why it happened, what the circumstances were. One has to analyze the viewpoint of those who reported what they experienced. One has to determine if writers a century later have ignored facts or possibilities unfavorable to their argumentation. And when the Bible is involved, a writer must know how a passage actually applies, and use it fairly, in context. This is what a reader should expect as he works with a writer to discover what is true.

JOSEPH SMITH, JR. - THE MAN AND HIS CLAIM TO FAME

The following information is from the LDS pamphlet, The Prophet Joseph Smith's Testimony. Joseph Smith, Jr. was born on December 23, 1805, in the town of Sharon, Vermont. When he was about ten years old his father, Joseph Smith, Sr. moved the family to Palmyra, NY, and some four years later to Manchester, in the same county.

"Some time in the second year after our removal to Manchester, there was in the place where we lived an unusual excitement on the subject of religion. Great multitudes united themselves to the difference religious parties...Some were contending for the Methodist faith, some for the Presbyterian, and some for the Baptist." Smith says that he was 15 at the time. Not knowing which group to join, he says, he found in the Bible (James 1:5) "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God... and it shall be given him." So, he says, he prayed alone in the woods in the spring of 1820, and he says, he saw two personages in the air above him.

"One of them spake unto me, calling me by name, and said, pointing to the other - 'This is My Beloved Son, Hear Him!'" Then he was told, he says, that all the contending religions were wrong, and that he should join none of them. Some days later, he says, he met one of the Methodist preachers who was very active in the revival going on; he told him of the vision, and was told that it "was all of the devil." Persecution followed for three years. (This is written in 1838.)

On September 21, 1823, Smith says, the angel Moroni appeared to him, telling him of a book of golden plates hidden in the ground with "the fulness of the everlasting Gospel" in it. With it were "two stones in silver bows - and these stones, fastened to a breastplate, constituted what is called the Urim and Thummim - deposited with the plates...and that God had prepared them for the purpose of translating the book." Unless Smith was commanded otherwise, he was not to show these things to anyone else.

The next day, Smith says, he found the hiding place not far from the top of a high hill (now Hill Cummorah, pictured in copies of the Book of Mormon). He dug out a flat, rounded stone, the edges covered all around with earth, and raised it with a lever. This stone was the lid for a box "formed by laying stones together in some kind of cement." The messenger told him to return to the place at the same time each year; at the end of four years he would be allowed to take the plates.

In October, 1825, Smith hired with Josiah Stool, Chenango County, NY, and was later "put to board with a Mr. Isaac Hale, of Harmony, Susquehanna County, Pennsylvania. It was there I first saw my wife, (his daughter), Emma Hale. On the 18th of January, 1827, we were married, while I was yet employed in the service of Mr. Stool."

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On September 22, 1827, Smith says, the angel let him take the plates and everything with them for purposes of translation. To avoid persecution in Manchester, Joseph and Emma moved in with her parents in Susquehanna County, PA, December, 1827. There he began to copy and translate the characters of the golden plates.

At this point, the Testimony omits these details: Emma was the first scribe as Joseph "translated" from the plates without removing the tablecloth which covered them. He used the stones which he called Urim and Thummim in giving the translation. In early spring, 1828, Martin Harris moved to Harmony to help with the translating. On June 14, 1828, Harris took the first 116 pages of manuscript home to show to his wife so that she might be convinced of their truthfulness. After they disappeared, God supposedly gave Smith a set of smaller plates covering the exact period of "history" given in the 116 pages.

On June 15, 1828, the firstborn son of Joseph and Emma Smith died. According to The Amboy Journal (April 30, May 21, June 11, 1879) Joseph Smith joined the Methodist Church in Harmony, PA, in June of 1828. He "presented himself in a very serious and humble manner, and the minister, not suspecting evil, put his name on the class book, in the absense of some of the official members." This happened on a Wednesday. The following Sunday Joseph Lewis (a cousin of Emma Smith) and Joshua McKune (a local preacher) found Smith before the time of church meeting and told him that without recantation and confession of his questionable activities of the past "his name would be a disgrace to the church." So that same day he asked that his name be taken off the class book. (Marvin Cowan, Mormon Claims Answered, pages 7-8.)

Mormons will probably deny that Smith disobeyed the 1820 command that he should join no Christian denomination, which here he did.

The Testimony continues: On April 5, 1829, Oliver Cowdery, a school teacher, came to Smith, and two days later began to write for him as he translated. Smith says he never met Cowdery before this. (Note: We're not informed that Cowdery and Smith were cousins.) On May 15, 1829, Smith says, he and Cowdery received the Aaronic and Melchizedek priesthoods when John the Baptist appeared to them acting "under the direction of Peter, James and John, who held the keys of the Priesthood of Melchizedek." Their church was organized on April 6, 1830, according to the laws of New York State, with six men as founders.

Our information for the rest of this history comes from How to Respond to the Latter Day Saints, by Edgar Kaiser (Concordia, 1977).

In 1831, Smith and his followers moved to Kirtland, Ohio, a village near Cleveland. Joseph Smith called it "the eastern boundary of the promised land." Thirty men were sent to explore Independence, MO, as a possible site for the New Jerusalem. Meanwhile, a temple was built in Kirtland and dedicated in 1836. The colony in Independence met opposition and moved to Far West, MO. Many apostatized at Kirtland. The Mormon bank failed owing \$150,000 to non-Mormon creditors. More people left. Threatened by a warrant for his arrest on a charge of banking fraud, Joseph fled Kirtland in the night with Sidney Rigdon, heading for Far West, MO. They were followed by 600 of the Kirtland Saints. Things went no better at Far West, and 8000 Saints crossed the Mississippi River eastward and began to build Nauvoo 30 miles north of Quincy, IL. (The poor of industrial England were eager converts for LDS envoys.)

In 1840, the Illinois legislature gave the Saints the Nauvoo Charter which established the city as an almost independent city-state, having authority to make and enforce its own laws, have its own military organization, establish schools, and develop its own court system. Nauvoo saw three major theological developments: new

ideas about God and man, new rituals, and the establishment of a basis for polygamous families.

"It was the excommunication of two contractors, William Law and Robert Foster, that erupted in violence. Setting up a church of their own, these men published one issue of its newspaper, the Nauvoo Expositor, exposing the practice of polygamy among the Nauvoo leaders, including signed affidavits declaring knowledge of the polygamy revelation. Acting on poor judgment, the city council, at the urging of Joseph, ordered the press destroyed and its type scattered. The injured owners charged Joseph Smith with rioting and violating their civil rights.

"For some time, the once friendly non-Mormon neighbors had become increasingly alarmed at the power and strength of the growing movement. The riot gave them a good excuse to try to curtail that growing power. Governor Ford gave Joseph a promise of safe conduct if he would peaceably come to Carthage to face the riot charge...Ford then went to Nauvoo to address the Mormons, thinking the militia in Carthage had obeyed his orders to disband and go home." But a mob of 150 men, mostly members of the Warsaw militia, acting in collusion with the Carthage Greys who were supposed to guard the prisoners, came to the jail and killed Joseph and Hyrum Smith. (Kaiser, pages 10-12.)

Let us now examine the history, doctrine and practice of the Latter-Day Saints, remembering the words of Paul (Galatians 1:6-8):

"I marvel that we are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel:

Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.

But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed."

WHEN DID THE ANGEL MORONI FIRST APPEAR TO JOSEPH SMITH?

The official CLD account of Joseph Smith's first vision, written in May of 1836, is now Mormon scripture, part of The Pearl of Great Price. The problem that a non-Mormon has with it is that there was no revival such as Smith describes in 1820. Also, the official version was Smith's third account of what he says happened. Let me say it again: THERE WAS NO 1820 REVIVAL - THE REVIVAL THAT SMITH DESCRIBES TOOK PLACE IN 1824, and this can not be made to agree with the chronology given in the official LDS version of the first vision.

The following information comes from MORMONISM!, by Dr. Robert Sumner (Sword of the Lord Publishers, Murfreesboro, TN, 1981):

"While the average Mormon today knows nothing but the third and 'official' account, the first time a scribe took pen and paper in hand to write the story was 11 or 12 years after it happened. ...In that version he was 16 years old, a 'pillar' of light ('fire' was written first, then crossed out) came down and rested upon him, the Lord appeared, spoke his name, told him his sins were forgiven, and spoke of the wickedness of the day. There was no mention of either angels or the appearance of God the Father.

"In 1834, 14 years after the supposed vision, he and Oliver Cowdery collaborated in the Latter-Day Saints Messenger and Advocate

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about the early days of the church, but no mention of any kind was made of a vision. How strange that an official history would omit such a vital cornerstone of the church's foundation!

"The second account of the vision was in Smith's daily journal under date of November 9, 1835, following a visit by Robert Matthias, an ex-con and fellow mystic. This account...speaks of a 'pillar of fire' (instead of light), two personages appearing, the word about his sins being forgiven, and a statement that he 'saw many angels in this vision.' The personages were not identified in this account as the Lord Jesus Christ and God the Father, and his age reverted to 'about 14 years old.' This was the first mention of 'angels' and did not specifically mention 'the Lord.'

"...Was Smith 16 or 14 years old at the time? Was it a pillar of fire or a pillar of light? Were angels present or absent? Were there 'two' personages or only one? Was it the Son who spoke or the Father? Did He say, 'Joseph my son thy sins are forgiven thee' or 'This is my Beloved Son, hear Him'?Strangely, for a matter of such import, Brigham Young never mentioned the vision even one time in all of his voluminous writings. Why?" (Sumner, MORMONISM!, pages 23-24.)

Before reading on, one might study 2 Corinthians 11:13-15.

Mormon missionaries admit that the great revival in Palmyra was in 1824, but then they would persuade me to accept the possibility that Smith was remembering some lesser revival in the Palmyra area in 1820. (Mormons rely on a 1938 history by a Mormon, Willard Bean, who wrote of a revival breaking out in "the spring of 1820." But his particulars concerning its leader, Rev. Jesse Townsend, are all wrong. And his citation of the Religious Advocate of Rochester - which didn't begin publication there until 1825 - clearly refers to the 1924 revival.)

THERE IS NO WAY FOR US TO PROVE WHETHER OR NOT JOSEPH SMITH HAD A VISION, BUT, WHEN RECORDS ARE AVAILABLE, WE CAN DETERMINE HIS TRUTHFULNESS IN THE ACCOUNT THAT HE GIVES OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF HIS VISION.

In his work, Mormon Claims Answered, Marvin W. Cowan writes:

"The statistical records kept by the various churches also show that no revival occurred in 1820 in Palmyra. The Presbyterian Church recorded revivals in 1817, 1824, 1829 etc., but none in 1820. The Palmyra Baptist Church gained exactly 5 by baptism in 1820. The Methodist circuit which included Palmyra showed net losses of 23 in 1819, 6 in 1820, and 40 in 1821. This hardly gives the picture of a revival in 1820 where 'great multitudes united themselves to the different religious parties' as the P.of G. P.^{of} Joseph Smith 2:5 says. But by September 1825 the revival in Palmyra had ended. The Presbyterians showed an increase of 99, the Baptist 94, and the Methodist circuit including Palmyra increased by 208! ...If there was no revival in 1820, the impetus which caused Smith to ask God which church was right was missing. If it was the 1824-25 revival that brought about Smith's question, Mormon history and chronology is hopelessly confused!" (Cowan, p.5.)

One would suppose that after Joseph Smith removed the golden plates from Hill Cumorah in 1827 there would have been evidence of his digging. But there was none, as is reported in Who Really Wrote the Book of Mormon, by Cowdrey, Davis & Scales. This book records a statement given by Mr. Lorenzo Saunders (pages 127-129):

"...The time he (Smith) claimed to have taken the plates from the hill was on the 22 day of September, in 1827, and I went on the next Sunday following with five or six other ones and we hunted the side hill by course and could not find no place where the ground had been broke. There was a large hole where the money diggers had dug a year or two before, but no fresh dirt."

(In view of Smith's choice of the dates Sept. 21-22 for his meetings with the angel and the taking of the plates, one wonders what significance there might be in the fact that this is the time of the autumnal equinox, Sept. 23, which is important in astrology.)

WHAT THE MORMON LEADERSHIP DOESN'T TELL YOU ABOUT JOSEPH SMITH

Concerning the parentage of Joseph Smith, Jr. we have this from John H. Gerstner, The Theology of the Major Sects (page 41-42):

"Joseph Smith, Sr. was a prophet in his own right, as his son seems to have appreciated, judging from the striking similarity between two of their alleged visions. And Lucy Mack Smith likewise was a worthy mother of the prophet, for she not herself the daughter of Solomon Mack who displayed some knack for the occult? She herself was what we today call 'psychic.'"

(Since Smith in his Testimony says that his family was very poor, I wonder why, when people let Mormon missionaries into their homes for the first time, one of the first pictures that they are shown is a picture of young Joseph in front of a beautiful white frame house. Isn't this a subtle suggestion that people having such a home must be "quality folk," whose opinions should be received with proper respect? Don't the Mormons want us to be attracted to them by their outward circumstances before we begin to have a look at their beliefs. Remember this the next time that you are shown Joseph's big white house.)

In his Testimony, Joseph Smith says of the years 1820 through 1823:

I frequently fell into many foolish errors, and displayed the weakness of youth, and the foibles of human nature, which, I am sorry to say, led me into divers temptations, offensive in the sight of God. In making this confession, no one need suppose me guilty of any great or malignant sins."

I submit that the record shows that the "foibles of human nature" of Joseph Smith, Jr. were not limited to the years 1820 through 1823. One would think that someone, knowing himself to be chosen by God for a holy work, would take pains not to do anything that would reflect unfavorably upon his message. For St. Paul writes (1 Timothy 3:2-7):

"A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife...of good behavior...not covetous....Moreover he must have a good report of them that are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil."

Mrs. S.F. Anderick, born in 1809, was a neighbor of the Smith family. This is her testimony, sworn before ES. Baker, Notary Public for Monterey County, California, June 24, 1887:

"...Jo (Smith, Jr.) was pompous, pretentious, and active at parties. He claimed, when a young man, he could tell where lost or hidden things and treasures were buried or located with a forked witch hazel. He deceived many farmers, and induced them to dig nights for chests of gold, when the pick struck the chest, someone usually spoke, and Jo would say the enchantment was broken, and the chest would leave." (C., D. & S., Ibid., p.133.)

On March 20, 1826, Joseph Smith was tried and convicted in the court house at Bainbridge, NY, of being a "glass-looker" or fortune teller. The original records of Judge Albert Neely (who received a \$2.68 fee for handling the misdemeanor) and the record of Constable DeZeng, who served the warrant on Smith, are preserved. His offense was that for a fee he pretended to be able to locate buried treasure by looking into a certain stone. Fawn Brodie, in No Man Knows My History (pages 427-429), prints the original court testimonies.

Mormons always said that Smith was innocent, but since Neely's records were discovered by Wesley Walters on July 28, 1971, in Norwich, NY, what more can be said in his defence? (Read Mat. 6:24.)

We have another testimony concerning Smith's search for 'easy money' from Mr. K. Bell, sworn to before Justice of the Peace D.C. Hill in Painesville Township, Ohio, May, 1885:

"I attended the first Mormon meeting Pratt and Cordery held in Painesville. My brother Milo, from Broome County, NY, was present. They told about Prophet Jo Smith finding the gold plates, and said they saw them. My brother ridiculed them after the meeting. He told me he knew Jo Smith when he was digging near the Susquehanna River for Captain Kidd's money. Jo had a peep-stone through which he claimed to see hidden or buried treasure. Jo sold shares to all who would buy, and kept the money. He said they would make a circle, and Jo Smith claimed if they threw any dirt over the circle the money chest would leave. They never found any money." (C., D. & S., Ibid., pages 140-141.)

Mormons can't deny that ten years later, August, 1836, Smith made one final attempt to locate hidden treasure. On July 11, 1836, Andrew Jackson had issued his specie circular, forbidding agents to accept anything but gold and silver for the sale of public land. (This began a deflationary trend that brought on the great panic of 1837.) There was still \$13,000 owing on the Kirtland temple. The \$10,000 borrowed in 1831 to start the United Order had to be repaid in September. The \$30,000 borrowed that spring had to be met in November. With no other way out, Smith decided to follow up on a story in the Painesville Telegraph concerning "a vast treasure buried beneath an old house in Salem, Massachusetts," where he had been once as a youth. A convert named Burgess offered to lead Smith to the exact location. Smith disguised the trip with Rigdon, Cowdery, and Hyrum Smith as an ordinary mission tour, but D&C 111 shows what was really on their minds. "We speak of these things with regret," Ebenezer Robinson wrote in his story of the whole affair. (Brodie, Ibid., pages 192-193.)

The Mormon leaders didn't come back emptyhanded. Smith managed to borrow \$5,600 in New York City. Later, Hyrum Smith and Oliver Cowdery obtained credit for \$60,000 worth of goods in the East. This made it possible to borrow smaller amounts in the Kirtland area.

To postpone the day of reckoning, the Mormon leaders in November, 1836, organized the Kirtland Safety Society Bank Company with a capital stock of "not less than four million dollars." Sidney Rigdon president and Joseph Smith, Jr. cashier. The problem of debts was to be solved by simply printing new notes which, whenever possible, were to be exchanged for hard money. (This was in a day of "frenetic land speculation," when the number of authorized banks in Ohio jumped from 11 in 1830 to 33 in 1836. There were 300 different kinds of authorized notes in circulation.) On January 27, 1837, faced with a run on the bank and no money to pay creditors, Smith closed the bank. Rigdon, however, kept issuing notes until June, when he was brought to court for "making spurious money." Mormon leaders ended up owing to non-Mormon individuals and firms well over \$150,000. (Brodie, Ibid., pages 187-204.) This is the background to D&C 121, 122, 123.)

Comment on all the above: When I read the excerpts of Alex Haley's Roots in the Reader's Digest (April-May, 1977) it seemed to me too much of a coincidence that a man who just happened to be an author looking for a good story should beat all the odds and trace his ancestry back to a great-great-great-great-great-grandfather, Kunta Kinte, who just happened to be a memorable person. And this he did when there are hardly any genealogical records for black people in America before the Civil War! Later, newsmen reported that Haley was calling his work "Faction" ("true" as a fictional historical novel is true) after reporters retracing his steps proved that Haley had invented the most important parts of his book. Haley was also made to pay some half-million dollars to a novelist whose African novel he was shown to have plagiarized. But in anything, truth can never completely catch up with a lie, and there will always be people believing the Kunta Kinte/Alex Haley relationship.

So now I say that it is too much of a coincidence for a gold digger to have been chosen by God to discover the golden plates of the Book of Mormon. There are other "coincidences" having to do with the origin of the Book of Mormon, and we will examine them. As was the case with Alex Haley, we will be talking about dishonesty for gain, and the possibility of plagiarism. And we will do it all knowing how impossible it is for truth to catch up with a lie.

HOW DOES A MAN DIE?

If we had only D&C 135:1-3, we would be left with the impression that Joseph Smith, Jr. died like a true martyr, without resisting his enemies, like Jesus (Luke 23:34) or Stephen (Acts 7:54-60) or like the Apostle Paul who was "ready to be offered" (2 Timothy 4:6-8).

This is what most Mormons believe today. Why doesn't the LDS Church tell everyone the whole story so that we can judge for ourselves what kind of a martyr Joseph Smith, Jr. was?

"To seal the testimony of this book and the Book of Mormon, we announce the martyrdom of Joseph Smith the Prophet, and Hyrum Smith the Patriarch. They were shot in Carthage jail, on the

27th of June, 1844, about five o'clock pm, by an armed mob - painted black - of from 150 to 200 persons. Hyrum was shot first and fell calmly, exclaiming: I am a dead man! Joseph leaped from the window, and was shot dead in the attempt, exclaiming: O Lord my God!.....

"Joseph Smith, the Prophet and Seer of the Lord, has done more, save Jesus only, for the salvation of men in this world, than any other man that ever lived in it...Like most of the Lord's anointed in ancient times, (he) has sealed his mission and his works with his own blood; and so has his brother Hyrum." (D&C 135:1-3.)

In D&C 135:4, Smith is recorded as having said, "I am going as a lamb to the slaughter." (See Isaiah 53:7, 1 Peter 2:23.) But according to DHC, Vol. VI, pages 617-618, a Mormon history:

"Joseph sprang to his coat for his six-shooter, Hyrum for his single barrel, Taylor for Markham's large hickory cane, and Dr. Richards for Taylor's cane. All sprang against the door, and balls whistled up the stairway, and in an instant one came through the door. ...Hyrum was retreating back in front of the door and snapped his pistol, when a ball struck him in the left side of the nose, and he fell on his back on the floor saying, 'I am a dead man'. ...Joseph reached round the door casing, and discharged his six-shooter into the passage, some barrels missing fire."

John Taylor, who became the third Prophet of the LDS Church, was wounded, but recovered, and later wrote in The Gospel Kingdom (p.360.):

"(Joseph) opened the door slightly, and snapped the pistol six successive times. Only three of the barrels, however, were discharged. I afterwards understood that two or three were wounded by these discharges, two of whom, I am informed, died."

What was done to Joseph Smith and his brother was certainly wrong, breaking the commandment: "Thou shalt not kill." (Exodus 20:13.) And we do not deny that they both had every right to defend themselves! But I do say that it is the greatest possible misrepresentation to fail to tell us and the membership of the LDS Church that the man who is supposed to have said: "I am going like a lamb to the slaughter" later killed two of his attackers with a six-shooter. (Read the full story in detail, with a description of events leading up to the murders, in Fawn Brodie's book, No Man Knows My History, pages 380-395.)

So the damage was done. Now the Mormons had their martyrs; and you can see what use they have made of them, beginning with D&C 135. Who knows..? Just suppose that Joseph Smith had survived for a few more years. Might he not eventually have self-destructed like the Rev. Jim Jones in Guyana, Nov. 18, 1978? Would Brigham Young (1801-1877) have become the leader that he was if Smith had still been directing all the affairs of his church? Things were not going well at all for the Mormons when their prophet died.

Just take a moment to compare Smith and Young with Jim Jones, and you will find that there are many parallels. Jones expected his followers to turn over their property to the Peoples Temple; and for a time the early LDS Church advocated community of property. Jones called himself a prophet of God, then Christ Himself. Jones got in trouble with the IRS; and the Mormons angered authorities everywhere. Jones moved to Guyana, a sanctuary where his form of mind-control was not challenged. The Mormons eventually founded Salt Lake City. Jim Jones attracted people who were "seeking an escape from freedom;" and Smith and Young were commanding figures who

found people to obey their every word. Jones in San Francisco was an important vote-getter; and the Mormons dominated Nauvoo. In both instances, the people allowed their leaders to set their own standards of right and wrong. Study Mat. 7:15, Rom. 16:18, 2 Pt. 2:1-3 for a commentary on cult leaders.

Cults do try to exercise mind-control. According to President J. Ruben Clark, Improvement Era (June 1945, p.354): "When our leaders speak, the thinking has been done. When they propose a plan it is God's plan..." Mormonism is an autocracy.

WHO WAS THE AUTHOR OF THE BOOK OF MORMON?

Nobody can prove who the author or authors of the Book of Mormon may have been. Joseph Smith himself had little schooling, but he was an imaginative person. (Mohammed coun't read or write, but he dictated the Koran and his helpers read it back to him.) Joseph Smith could have had help in writing the Book of Mormon. Just compare its relatively clear and organized style with his Book of Abraham (1835), which isn't very clear or interesting at all.

Anyone who wants to examine all sides of the question regarding the authorship of the Book of Mormon should begin by reading 3 books: 1) Who Really Wrote the Book of Mormon?, Cowdrey, Davis & Scales, supports original authorship by Solomon Spaulding, an idea that began in 1833. Since these authors say that Sidney Rigdon played a major part in turning Spaulding's work into the Book of Mormon, one should read 2) Sidney Rigdon 1793-1876, by F. Mark McKiernan. Finally, there is 3) No Man Knows My History, by Fawn M. Brodie, a biography of Smith in which Brodie argues that he was capable of writing everything himself.

We can begin with Who Really Wrote the Book of Mormon?

When Mormon missionaries first arrived in Conneaut, Ohio, in 1832, and gave a public reading of part of the Book of Mormon, Justice of the Peace Aaron Wright is remembered to have remarked: "Old Come-to-Pass has come to life again!" With this remark Justice Wright was voicing his conviction that he had heard the words just read before, that Rev. Solomon Spaulding was the true author of the parts of the Book of Mormon that he had just heard read. (CD&S, pages 41,64.)

Solomon Spaulding was born in Ashford, CT, February 20, 1761. He served as a private in the Revolutionary War. He entered Dartmouth College in preparation for the ministry and graduated in 1785. He was a Congregational evangelist for about 10 years. In 1795 he married Matilda Sabine. Spaulding joined a brother, Josiah, in a mercantile business in Cherry Valley, NY. In 1799, the Spaulding brothers moved the store to Richfield, and began buying large tracts of land in Ohio and Pennsylvania on speculation. In 1809 Solomon moved his family to Salem (now called Conneaut) in NE Ohio, to superintend the land. With his health failing, Spaulding spent his leisure time writing novels. Solomon moved to Pittsburgh in 1812 in hopes of printing his second novel, Manuscript Found, to pay off his debts. They lived in Amity, not far from Pittsburgh, until Solomon died on October 20, 1816. He was known as "Old Come-to-Pass" because of one of his favorite literary phrases. He was not a great novelist; but that didn't stop him from reading his productions to any who would listen.

CD&S argue that Spaulding's first novel, Manuscript Story, was abandoned in favor of a second, Manuscript Found, which expanded on the themes of the first novel

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and was written in the style of the King James Version (KJV) of the Bible. This second novel, they say, was stolen by Sidney Rigdon from the Pittsburgh print shop where it had been left in hopes of its being printed. No copies of this second novel are known to exist today. The LDS Church maintains that there never was a Manuscript Found and that Rigdon and Smith thus could not have used it in producing the Book of Mormon.

But what about Manuscript Story, which eventually turned up and was published by Deseret Publishers in 1886? Could it have been used as an outline? In their preface to this edition, the Mormons say:

"...There is not one sentence, one incident, or one proper name common to both, and...the oft boasted similarity in matter and nomenclature is utterly false."

Cowdrey, Davis & Scales say, however, that they "found scores of similarities. This careful comparison convinced Cowdrey that the Mormon Church had lied to him." (Ibid., p247.) We let the reader judge for himself whether or not the following quotations from Manuscript Story resemble anything having to do with Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon.

Compare Smith's account of the discovery of the "golden plates" with:

"As I was walking...I happened to tread on a flat stone. ...With the assistance of a lever I raised the stone. But you may easily conjecture my astonishment when I discovered that its ends and sides rested on stones and that it was designed as a cover..."

Compare Alma 37:23 and Mosiah 8:13,17 with Manuscript Story's seer, Hamack, who had:

"...a stone which he pronounced transparent, through this...he could behold...dark...intrigues...things present and things to come... discover hidden treasure, secluded from the eyes of other mortals... such was the clearness of his sight..."

Compare Alma 48:8, 49:4,18, 53:4 with Manuscript Story, (p74):

"...the walls were formed of dirt which was taken in front of the fort..." (Pieces of timber inserted on top of the walls) "were about seven ft. in length from the ground to the top... A deep canal or trench would likewise be formed."

There are similar speculations on the solar system (Alma 30:44) and on community of property. Misspelling similarities include the substitution of the past tense -t instead of -ed, for instance.

Were there similarities between the second Spaulding manuscript as it was remembered by those who heard readings from it, and the Book of Mormon? There were, according to many testimonies gathered by one Philastus Hurlbut, excommunicated from the Mormons in June, 1833. He spent August and September, 1833, interviewing citizens of Conneaut, Ohio, and eventually sold his collected affidavits to Eber Howe for \$500.00. Howe used them to publish his book, Mormonism Unveiled.

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John Spaulding, another of Solomon's brothers, said:

"...I have recently read the Book of Mormon and to my great surprise I find nearly the same historical matter, names, & c., as they were in my brother's writings. I well remember that he wrote in the old style, and commenced about every sentence with 'And it came to pass,' or 'Now it came to pass.'" (Ibid., p33.)

John N. Miller, an employee of Spaulding and his partner, Henry Lake, who ran a forge in Conneaut in 1811, gives this statement:

"...Many of the passages in the Mormon book are verbatim from Spaulding, and others in part. The names of Nephi, Lehi, Moroni, and in fact all the principle names, are brought fresh to my recollection by the Golden Plates." (Ibid., p37.)

We hear again from Justice Aaron Wright:

"...In conclusion, I will observe that the names of, and most of the historical part of the Book of Mormon, were as familiar to me before I read it as most modern history. If it is not Spaulding's writing, it is the same as he wrote; and if Smith was inspired, I think it was by the same spirit Spaulding was, which confessed to be the love of money." (Ibid., p41.)

Matilda Spaulding, Solomon's wife, provided a statement published in The Boston Recorder of 1839:

"...In the town of New Salem there are numerous mounds and forts... These ancient relics...became objects of research for the curious... Mr. Spaulding...conceived the idea of giving an historical sketch of this long lost race...and as the Old Testament is the most ancient book in the world, he imitated its style as nearly as possible." (Ibid., pages 43-44.)

Finally, we have this important testimony by Dr. Cephas Dodd, the physician who tended Spaulding during his final illness in Amity. He wrote on the flyleaf of his copy of the Book of Mormon:

"This work, I am convinced by facts related to me by my deceased patient, Solomon Spaulding, has been made from the writings of Spaulding, probably by Sidney Rigdon, who was suspicioned by Spaulding with purloining his manuscript from the publishing house to which he had taken it; and I am prepared to testify that Spaulding told me that his work was entitled, 'The Manuscript Found in the Wilds of Mormon; or Unearthed Records of the Nephites.' From his description of its contents, I fully believe that this Book of Mormon is mainly and wickedly copied from it. Cephas Dodd, June 5, 1881." (Ibid., p74.)

Cowdrey, Davis & Scales (Ibid., pages 91-94) give us a biography of Sidney Rigdon. He was born in Library, PA, Feb. 19, 1793. As a teenager he was dragged by a horse and injured his head. According to one of his brothers, Sidney's mental powers "did not seem to be impaired" but he was thereafter always "inclined to run into wild and visionary views." At 19, Rigdon traveled to Pittsburgh, where he stayed intermittently during 1812-16. He was seen to be close friends with JH

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Lambdin, a worker at Patterson's print shop, where the Spaulding manuscript was. In 1822 Rigdon became the minister of the First Baptist Church of Pittsburgh. About this time, he is said to have shown the Spaulding manuscript to a Dr. Winter as being a great curiosity.

After being excommunicated on October 11, 1823, from teaching irregular doctrine, Rigdon joined the Disciples of Christ (Campbellites) and preached for them, eventually moving to Bainbridge, Ohio. Mrs. A. Dunlap, a niece of Rigdon's wife, remembered:

"...During my visit Mr. Rigdon went to his bedroom and took from a trunk which he kept locked a certain manuscript. He came out into the other room...and commenced reading it. His wife at that moment came into the room and exclaimed. 'What! you're studying that thing again?' Or something to that effect...He said, ...'This will be a great thing some day.'" (Ibid., p107.)

F. Mark McKiernan's book, Sidney Rigdon 1793-1876, tells us that Rigdon was one of four key men in the Campbellite church until August, 1830, when he broke with Alexander Campbell over the question of introducing community of property in the church.

"In 1830 he withdrew his congregation at Mentor, Ohio, from the Campbellite fellowship because the Disciples of Christ would not implement all of the practices of the New Testament church into their own beliefs; thus, for a few months Rigdon's congregation was not affiliated with any religious denomination." (p.11.)

Isn't it just too much of a coincidence that, when the stage was set for Rigdon's appearance and the conversion of his congregation to Mormonism, God supposedly gave Joseph Smith, Jr. a revelation to evangelize the Lamanites (Indians) to the west? (D&C 32, introduction, Oct. 1830.) Did Cowdery's group of four even talk to any Indians? Or did they just travel almost 300 miles to Kirtland (when they might have gone to 100 other places), "convert" Rigdon, and bring him back?

In December 1830, with Rigdon at his side, Smith received a "revelation" (D&C 35:20) that Rigdon was to be his right-hand man.

In 1831, Rigdon persuaded Smith and his 60 followers to move to Kirtland, Ohio. With 150 converts from the Campbellites already in Ohio, the new colony numbered over 200 people, and gained the prestige of having Sidney Rigdon as one of its leaders. CD&S argue that Rigdon was preaching Mormon ideas for years before 1830, and thus the groundwork was done for the conversion of his flock.

Fawn M. Brodie, in Appendix B of her book (442-456), argues that there is no basis for the Spaulding/Rigdon theory. She says that the Book of Mormon lacks the "unmistakable literary mannerisms" and the "florid sentiment" of Spaulding's Manuscript Story. (p.450.) On the other hand, one could argue that a plagiarist would know enough to make the changes necessary to suit his purposes.

McKiernan tells us that while as a boy he was constantly reading, Rigdon taught himself English grammar, and "was very precise in his language." (p14.) Wouldn't this make him just the man for the job?

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Rigdon himself, even after leaving the Mormons, always denied having anything to do with the writing of the Book of Mormon. Hearing this, we shouldn't overlook the fact that in leaving the Mormons Rigdon hoped to bring people back to principles given in the Book of Mormon which Brigham Young's followers rejected. (Sidney Rigdon)

It would have been impossible for Rigdon and Smith to "find" and publish the Book of Mormon during the lifetimes of any who might bear witness concerning Rigdon's association with the Spaulding manuscript. The great coincidence of the September 22 1827, date when Smith was finally allowed to take the "golden plates" is that the shop foreman, Silas Engles, who had the responsibility of inspecting all new manuscripts for Patterson, and who could still connect Rigdon with Spaulding's suspicions, died in July of 1827. The shop worker, Lambdin, had died two years earlier, August 1, 1825. (CD&S.)

Why did Rigdon take the code name "Pelagoram"? (In D&C 78:9.) Could it be that he was thereby giving us a clue that he knew and was in agreement with the ancient heresy of a British monk, Pelagius, the opponent of his orthodox contemporary, St. Augustine (AD 354-430)? Pelagius held the following heretical views:

"(1) Man has no original sin inherited from Adam. Sin is not a fault of nature but is purely a matter of will. (2) Each person is created like Adam, with perfect freedom to do good or evil. Hence an entirely sinless life is possible, and man can save himself by his own good works. (3) Infant baptism is useless because man has no hereditary or original sin. New-born children are sinless. (4) While salvation is possible without the Law and the Gospel, or by divine grace, these greatly facilitate the attainment of salvation. Christ helps us by his good example, as Adam hurt us by his bad example." (A History of the Christian Church, by Lars Qualben; T. Nelson and Sons, NY, 1933, pl24.)

If Mormons recognize many of their doctrines in the Pelagian views above, what happens to their claim to fame as originators of God's truth through special revelation?

There is one more possibility concerning the authorship of the Book of Mormon.

"A theory with more evidence to support it concerns the View of the Hebrews by Ethan Smith. This book was published first in 1823 and then enlarged and reprinted in 1825. On October 11, 1825 a review of that book appeared in the Wayne Sentinel newspaper of Palmyra, NY. Ten months later on August 11, 1826, Joseph Smith Sr's name appeared in that paper showing he was \$5.60 delinquent in paying for his subscription. Thus, the edition of the paper which reviewed View of the Hebrews was in the Smith home. That book had so many similarities to the B of M that Mormon historian BH Roberts compiled a list of eighteen parallels between the two books shortly before he died... With a book like View of the Hebrews to start him thinking, Joseph's imagination could easily have filled in the details." (Cowan, P45.)

Smith was interested in books on the American Indians. Among the books that he donated to the Nauvoo Library and Literary Institute were Incidents of Travel in Yucatan, Stephens; Travels in Central America, Stephens; Voyages and Travels of Ross Perry and Others; a Bible dictionary, etc. It is also noteworthy that a modern

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LDS pamphlet called Christ in America quotes from Incidents of Travel in Central America, by Stephens. A chronicler of the Toltecan Indians is quoted as saying that the Toltecs were Israelites released by Moses from the tyranny of Pharaoh. Under the leadership of a man named Tanub, they drifted from continent to continent until finally they came to a part of the kingdom of Mexico and founded a city.

(Note: The recent contention of Who Really Wrote the Book of Mormon? that the handwriting of Solomon Spaulding in Manuscript Story matches that of the "unknown scribe" in twelve pages of the Book of Mormon manuscript is answered by the LDS in Time, July 11, 1977.)

WHY JOSEPH SMITH COULD HAVE WRITTEN THE BOOK OF MORMON BY HIMSELF

The Book of Mormon didn't appear out of a clear blue sky, nor was Joseph Smith, Jr. such an unlikely candidate for its authorship. Fawn Brodie gives the following information in her biography of Smith.

Joseph Smith, Jr. wasn't the first author in his family. In 1810 his mother's father, Solomon Mack, published at his own expense his autobiography detailing his "trials and misadventures." Joseph's mother, Lucy Smith, also wrote her Bio-graphical Sketches of Joseph Smith the Prophet and His Progenitors for Many Generations (Liverpool 1853). Lucy read her father's book to all her children. (Brodie, pages 3-4.)

Joseph Smith, Jr. wasn't the first religious leader in his family. "Jason Mack, Lucy's eldest brother, ran sharply counter to the religious and economic traditions of New England when he became a 'Seeker' and set up in New Brunswick a quasi-communistic society of thirty indigent families whose economic and spiritual welfare he sought to direct." (p4.)

Joseph Smith, Jr. wasn't first in his family to scorn organized religion. The father of Joseph Smith, Sr., Asael, "had frankly gloried in his freedom from ecclesiastical tyranny. The son remained aloof from any church until the one organized by his own son, looking instead to his own dreams - called 'visions' by his wife - for spiritual guidance." "Joseph and Lucy spent twenty years together in New England, yet neither joined a denomination." (Ibid., p.5.)

Joseph Smith, Jr. wasn't first to think about talking with God. Like her father, Lucy "accepted a highly personalized God to whom she would talk as if He were a member of the family circle." (p.5.)

Joseph Smith, Jr. didn't have to break new ground in getting people to accept the idea of prophets in their own time. There was Isaac Bullard, a champion of free love and communism who started in Vermont in 1817, moving through New York into Missouri. There was Ann Lee, mother of the Shakers, some of whom built a community in 1826 just thirty miles from Palmyra. There was also Jemima Wilkinson who established a colony 25 miles from Joseph's home and said that she was Christ. Her activities were duly reported in the Palmyra newspaper. (Ibid., pages 12-13.)

Joseph Smith, Jr. wasn't handicapped by his lack of schooling. "The settlers in the old Northwest Territory demanded personality rather than diplomas from the men who called them to God." (Ibid., 14.)

Joseph Smith, Jr. didn't have to originate the idea of digging for gold. "'We could name, if we pleased,' said one Vermont weekly, 'at least five hundred respectable men who do in the simplicity and sincerity of their hearts believe that immense treasures lie concealed upon our Green Mountains.'" (Reprinted in the

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Wayne Sentinel, 2-16-1825.) Smith had one Walters, called a "vagabond fortune teller" by the Palmyra Reflector, to show him how to influence people. "Walters claimed to have found an ancient Indian record that described the locations of their hidden treasure. This he would read aloud to his followers in what seemed to be a strange and exotic tongue but was actually, the newspaper editor declared, an old Latin version of Caesar's (Cicero's) Orations." (18-19.)

Joseph Smith, Jr. wasn't the first to claim a vision. In his book, The Life....of Elias Smith (Portsmouth, NH, 1815, p.58), the author, a dissenting preacher in Vermont, claimed that at age 16 he saw "the Lamb upon Mt. Sion" and a bright glory in the woods near Woodstock. There was also Asa Wild of Amsterdam, NY, who talked with "the awful and glorious majesty of the Great Jehovah," and had learned "that every denomination of professing Christians had become extremely corrupt." This was printed in the Wayne Sentinel (Oct. 22, 1823). (Ibid., pages 22-23.) If local papers printed such items, why is there no record at all of the persecution that Smith says he began to suffer after his "first vision in 1820? Could it be that he made it all up ten years later?

Joseph Smith, Jr. didn't have to first discover in the Book of Mormon ideas about the destruction of ancient peoples in New York State. The Palmyra Register (Jan. 21, 1818) speculated about people who were "'doubtless killed in battle and hastily buried.'" The Palmyra Herald (Feb. 19, 1823) said: "'What wonderful catastrophe destroyed the first inhabitants is beyond the researches of the best scholar.'" (p.34.)

Joseph Smith, Jr. didn't have to originate the idea of plates. The Western Farmer (Palmyra, Sept. 19, 1821) reported "that diggers on the Erie Canal had unearthed 'several brass plates' along with skeletons and fragments of pottery." (Brodie, Ibid., p.35.)

So it doesn't surprise us to read in Lucy Smith's Biographical Sketches (p.85) concerning her son Joseph before he was 20 years old:

"During our evening conversations, Joseph would occasionally give us some of the most amusing recitals that could be imagined. He would describe the ancient inhabitants of this continent, their dress, mode of travelling, and the animals upon which they rode; their cities, their buildings, with every particular; their mode of warfare; and also their religious worship. This he would do with as much ease, seemingly, as if he had spent his whole life with them."

And this was long before Smith got to examine the Golden Plates!

It has been pointed out that the Book of Mormon contains subjects of interest to people living in the early 1800's, while having nothing to say about important questions that have arisen since then. One wonders why God would allow this, when the Bible is timeless in the help that it gives to people of every age and circumstance!

Fawn Brodie points to Smith's attacks on the Catholic Church early in his writings (1 Nephi 14), and then informs us that the building of the Erie Canal "had brought a tremendous influx of Irish labor... Their priests had followed after, and Catholic church spires had risen successively westward - Albany, Geneva, Rochester, Buffalo...Rochester, next door to Palmyra, blistered the Roman Church at every opportunity, the Rochester Observer calling it 'the Beast' and 'the mother of abominations.'" LHK 445

The Rochester Observer calling it 'the Beast' and 'the mother of obominations.'" The Rochester Album published an inflammatory article on February 29, 1928. The next month when Martin Harris joined Smith in Harmony, he could have brought him news of these things. (Ibid., pages 59-60.)

Brodie also says that late in 1826 William Morgan, the author of a new book exposing the secret rites and oaths of Freemasonry, was abducted by masked men who gave him a mock trial in Canadaigua (nine miles from Smith's home) before he disappeared. Trials beginning in January, 1827, ended in acquittal, fanning anti-Masonry feelings for more than a year. "So it happened that Joseph Smith was writing the Book of Mormon in the thick of a political crusade...and he quickly introduced into the book the theme of the Gadianton band, a secret society whose oaths for fraternal protection were bald parallels of Masonic oaths, and whose avowed aim was the overthrow of the democratic Nephite government." (Ibid., pages 63-66.) (Helaman 6-11; 3 Nephi 1-2; etc.)

Brodie recommends A Critical Study of Book of Mormon Sources, by Wesley M. Jones (Detroit, 1964), who maintained that, like a first novel, Smith's book "can be read to a limited degree as autobiography. It contains clues to his conflict with members of his own family, especially his brothers. ...One can see in Lehi and his six sons an extraordinary resemblance to Joseph Smith, Sr. and his six sons. Two brothers even share the same names, Joseph and Samuel." (p.413.)

"The basic inner conflict in Joseph Smith's life was not, I believe, a conflict between his telling the truth or not telling the truth, but rather between what he really was and what he most desperately wanted to be." (Ibid., p.417.)

LAW AND GOSPEL PROPERLY UNDERSTOOD

I promised earlier that I would not rob anyone of his faith in the beliefs of Mormonism without offering something far better, the true and only key to understanding God's true way of salvation for lost sinners. We are talking about a correct distinction between LAW and GOSPEL.

The difference, as I show it to Sunday School children, is found in these two simple questions: "Does God like (love) us because we do the things that make Him happy? Or does God like (love) us because it is His nature to want to love us?" Or, to make the issue more personal: "Do your parents love you because you always behave and obey them? Or do they love you even when you are naughty?" The first question in each case establishes a law relationship; the second is gospel.

The thing that I find most dismaying about the LDS Church is its misuse of the word gospel, as when it speaks of "the ordinances of the gospel," which is a total contradiction of terms in Christianity. I can only compare this misuse of the word gospel with the Russian misuse of the word peace. To Americans, peace means world-wide disarmament and good relationships with the people of every nation. To the communist leaders of Russia, "peace" means that they have conquered the world and in doing so have sent every enemy to the peace of the grave.

To a true Christian, gospel is summed up in John 3:14-18, which tells about Jesus, our perfect Substitute, and the necessity of looking only to Him for wholeness. To the Mormon Church, "gospel" means that everyone must work hard to obey the special ordinances of the LDS Church and thus earn favor with God and, ultimately, a divine status equal to that now enjoyed by the only true God. (But read 1 Cor. 1:18-24.)

For a Mormon, salvation is by obedience, not by faith. Faith is a principle to be obeyed, not the gift of God which lays hold of His salvation. Repentance is an ordinance to be obeyed, not a Spirit-worked change of heart. Baptism is a meritorious act of obedience, not a sacrament of God's grace. When Mormons say that Jesus saves, they mean only that Jesus gives release from mortal death by providing a resurrection for all men. All will be resurrected, but everything to be received after that is only by one's success in doing good works. But study Titus 3:5-7, Romans 10:13, words of the Apostle Paul!

We see the law-orientation of the LDS Church in a speech given by Thomas Monson, "Your Jericho Road," at a general conference in the Mormon Tabernacle, Sunday, April 3, 1977. He said that Jesus gives us "examples" of what our conduct ought to be. And in talking about Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan, Monson said: "When we follow in the footsteps of that Good Samaritan, we shall follow the pathway which leads to perfection." This is all law. It has nothing to do with gospel.

Hear also the LDS Plan of Salvation, (1978, p.20). "Paul knew there was only one name under heaven whereby men might be saved, and that obedience to Christ's law was necessary for salvation." Law!

In "A Testimonial of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, by the Osmonds," part of John 14:2-3 is quoted. Then we find this commentary: "What a marvelous promise! A plan has been given us to follow so that we can earn that reward if we so choose." (See also Newsweek, September 1, 1980, p.68, on Mormon ideas of "free will.")

We see law-orientation in this quotation from Welcome to Relief Society, a 1975 LDS pamphlet which describes the Society's principles of helpful benevolence. "If you live up to these principles, how great and glorious will be your reward in the celestial Kingdom!"

But doesn't Phil. 2:12 support the Mormon view of good works? Plan of Salvation (p.6.) says: "In brief, a man has to prepare himself for a future exaltation in the eternities to come. He is called upon to 'work out (his) own salvation with fear and trembling.'"

Our answer: Here the Apostle Paul is talking to Christians, people who are completely saved by the gospel that Paul has preached to them. So Paul is warning them not to grow lax, not to lose the grace they have received. Rather, they should "work" at that which gives and preserves us in salvation. They should be concerned for their "fellowship in the gospel" (Phil. 1:5), "holding forth the word of life." (2:16.) Simply put, these Christians should be seeing to their "own" (2:12) salvation by paying constant attention to God's Word in which God, in love, gives us everything. This Word everyone must believe for himself. No one can say: "Because I belong to a certain church I shall be saved." Once God gives us free salvation by faith in the merits of His Son, how can anyone still talk about "working" to earn it?

The rule of interpretation here is: Take a verse in its context. And, since it is possible to find in the Bible a verse or two that may appear to support any pre-conceived opinion formed before beginning to look for "proof passages," one must listen to everything that the Bible says on any particular subject. With regard to Paul's understanding of "work" in Phil. 2:12, one should read Romans 3:20, "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin." And again in Galatians 3:11 - "But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith."

One can't entirely blame the founders and followers of Mormonism for not properly distinguishing between law and gospel. The sad fact of the matter is that there are so many millions of people in this world who claim to represent Christianity but who are relying, to a greater or lesser extent, on themselves for their eternal salvation.

In answer to the question: "What is your hope of heaven?" these people say: "I try to live by the Golden Rule, to help people whenever I can. I pray a lot. I think that God regards those who try to keep His commandments, however imperfectly."

But this is all law thinking. This minimizes sin and inflates the value of self-chosen so-called "good works." This orientation toward the law ignores God's standard of perfection for any who would try to save themselves by trying to obey the law. For God says: "Ye shall be holy: for I the Lord your God am holy." (Levit.19:2.)

The great attraction of the law is that it appeals to sinful human pride, the thought that if you do anything wrong you'd rather make it right yourself. This is fine for human relationships. But this is soul-destroying whenever Satan fools anyone into believing that he can do anything himself to earn forgiveness. St. Paul says:

"The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men." (Rom. 1:18.)

"By the law is the knowledge of sin. ...For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." (Rom. 3:20,23.)

"The wages of sin is death." (Rom. 6:23.) "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified." (Rom. 3:20.)

"Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." (Rom. 3:28.)

"I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." (1:16.)

"(We are) justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." (Rom. 3:24.)

"Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." (Rom. 10:4.)

"The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternam life through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Rom. 6:23.)

This is God's "Amazing Grace" which is celebrated in the popular song. This is the true Christian doctrine of justification by grace for Christ's sake through faith alone. This is what the Lutheran Reformation starting in 1517 was all about. This is the way of salvation which James E. Talmage says "has exercised an influence for evil since the early days of Christianity." (Articles of Faith, 2nd. edition, 1901, p.120.)

In his preface to the Revelation of St. John, Martin Luther wrote that: "The doctrine of work-righteousness had to be the first doctrine against the Gospel, and it also remains the last, except that it is always getting new teachers and new names."

Read again Jesus' parable of the Pharisee and the publican found in Luke 18:9-14. The Pharisee was law-oriented. Listen to him: "I am better than the worst members of society; I fast often; I tithe, etc." He doesn't ask God for anything; he thinks that he is doing everything necessary to earn God's favor. But the publican throws himself entirely on the mercy of God - and he goes home forgiven.

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We must suppose that the publican, having received God's free forgiveness, would then most certainly express his heartfelt joy by devoting his life to serving God and helping his fellow man. (Matthew 22:37,39.) He would occupy himself with fruits of faith - motivated by love responding to God's love, and not be the demands of the law. (Study James 2:26, 2:23, and Romans 4:3-8. Study Luke 19:1-10.)

Only the God-appointed works that follow a person's conversion to faith in Jesus' all-sufficient redemption are pleasing to God. Any works that anyone would do so as to "earn a ticket to heaven" can only offend God. (Isaiah 64:6.) For thereby a person tells God: "I don't need your gift of a Savior who offered the only perfect sacrifice for sin. I will make an atonement myself. Don't include my sins in the count of sins of which St. John writes: 'The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.'" (1 John 1:7.)

The only hope for anyone with such a self-righteous attitude is that God might yet awaken the self-satisfied conscience and soften the hard shell of pride which rejects the love and mercy of God in the payment that Jesus made for the sins of the world.

LeGrand Richards, in the Mormon manual, A Marvelous Work and a Wonder (1958 revised 1969) says - and we disagree - that all who preach grace are saying that "salvation comes through a lip confession of a belief in Christ" (p.275) without such a confession of faith needing to be followed by "works of righteousness." We point out again that, whereas the LDS Church sees "good works" as things that must be done because God demands them, evangelical Christians see good works pleasing to God as things that a Christian has to do because of the response of love within him that can't fail to find an outlet. This is a response to the God who assures a believer of forgiveness of every sin.

Finally, we should examine how the LDS confusion with regard to good works and the law influences their concept of heaven and hell. In Plan of Salvation (p.25) we read:

"We hear the question: 'Do not the scriptures say that it is "eternal punishment" and "everlasting punishment"?' Yes, but let us not put a private interpretation on these terms. Let us correctly understand their meaning.

"Eternal punishment is God's punishment; everlasting punishment is God's punishment. In other words, it is the name of the punishment God inflicts, he being eternal in his nature.

"Whosoever, therefore, receives God's punishment receives eternal punishment, whether it is endured one hour, one day, one week, one year, or an age. 'And they were judged every man according to their works' (Revelation 20:13).

"Some shall be beaten with few and some with many stripes. (See Luke 12:47-48.) Here we have plainly set forth the fact that all men are not punished alike, that some receive a greater punishment than others. "As their works are, so shall be the punishment awarded them." (See Talmage, Articles of Faith, pages 146-147.)

Comment: Our gospel interpretation is that the works mentioned in Rev. 20:12-13 are simply the public evidence of the faith in the merit of Christ that God gave to a believer during his time of grace. Since the Judgment is public, the works are cited as public evidence of faith which only God can see existing, or lacking, in our hearts.

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Compare also Rev. 14:13: "...Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord... their works do follow them." Here again, works are only evidence of being "in the Lord" by a saving faith. One might say that since the works "follow" they cannot be a ticket to hand to a gatekeeper before heaven's door is opened. They "follow." And in heaven we will rejoice in the good that it pleased God to do through us.

With regard to the LDS opinion given above that hell need not last forever for an individual, we need only ask: "Does heaven last forever?" Let's just substitute "reward" for "punishment," and read:

"Whosoever, therefore, receives God's reward receives eternal reward, whether it is (enjoyed) one hour, one day, one week, one year, or an age. 'And they were judged every man according to their works.' ...As their works are, so shall be the reward awarded them."

If "eternal" means eternal in the Mormon sense, then one might reason that if hell ends for a person after a day of punishment for one sin, then heaven would end after a day of reward for one "good work."

Why must we insist that God should explain everything about heaven, or hell, to our satisfaction now? For God says: "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." (Isaiah 55:9.) (Study Luke 16:19-31.)

In July, 1843, murder was a serious sin for a Mormon, unpardonable "blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, which shall not be forgiven in the world nor out of the world." (D&C 132:27.)

But this has been changed, in agreement with Joseph Smith's idea of atonement by a shedding of one's own blood. For we read that John D. Lee, a man adopted by Brigham Young as his son, and a leader in the Sept., 1857, Mountain Meadow Massacre, excommunicated from the Saints, had proxy work done for him on May 8-9, 1961, to reinstate him to LDS membership and blessings. (Lee was executed by a firing squad in line with the Mormon idea that if a murderer's blood is shed for his crime, he atones - whereas if someone is executed by hanging, his blood is not shed and he does not atone. The law of the State of Utah provides for execution of murderers by a firing squad.)

Bruce McConkie (Mormon Doctrine, p.93) fails to recognize that God's grace means the free forgiveness of every sin when he writes:

"Man may commit certain grievous sins - according to his light and knowledge - that will place him beyond the reach of the atoning blood of Christ. If then he would be saved he must make sacrifice of his own life to atone - so far as in his power lies - for that sin, for the blood of Christ alone under certain circumstances will not avail."

In answer to this, we would remind the LDS that Jesus forgave the "grievous sin" of His enemies who sought His death, without their blood having to be shed (Luke 23:24, Acts 3:17). Also, we can't forget this: "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." (1 John 1:7.) Note again that word: ALL! (See also: 1 Peter 1:18-19, Revelation 1:5, Romans 3:25, 4:25, and 1 Corinthians 15:3.)

Apparently, the people who need to fear most that hell will last forever for them are those who believe and then reject the Mormon faith. These are "sons of perdition." (L&C 76:31-49.) With such a threat hanging over them, is it any wonder that Mormons prefer not to listen to anyone who might want to show them the errors of LDS doctrines?

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For a fuller presentation of God's way of salvation for mankind, a study worth your full attention, I give you This We Believe, parts III, IV & V, published by the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, with 24 pages (Northwestern Publishing House, 3624 W. North Ave., Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53208). (For those who might want to study the entire work, the other topics are: I. God and His Revelation - II. Creation, Man and Sin - VI. The Means of Grace - VII. The Church and its Ministry - VIII. The Church and the State - IX. Jesus' Return and the Judgment.)

III. CHRIST AND REDEMPTION

1. We believe that Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God, who was with the Father from all eternity (John 1:1,2). In the fullness of time he took a true and complete, yet sinless, human nature to himself (Gal. 4:4) when he was conceived as a holy child in the Virgin Mary through a miracle of the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:35). The angel testified, "What is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 1:20). Jesus Christ is that unique person in whom the true God and a true human nature are inseparably united in one, the holy God-man, Immanuel.

2. We believe that he at all times possessed the fullness of the Deity, all divine power, wisdom and glory (Col. 2:9). This was evident at times when he performed miracles (John 2:11). But while he lived on earth, he took on the form of a servant, humbling himself by laying aside the continuous and full display and use of his divine characteristics. During this time we see him living as a man among men, enduring suffering, and humbling himself to the shameful death on the cross (Phil. 2:7,8). We believe that he rose again from the grave with a glorified body, ascended and is exalted on high to rule with power over the world, with grace in his church, with glory in eternity (Phil. 2:9-11).

3. We believe that Jesus Christ, the God-man, was sent by the Father to humble himself for the redemption of mankind and that he was exalted as evidence that his mission was accomplished. Jesus came to fulfill the Law (Matt. 5:17), so that by his perfect obedience all men should be accounted righteous (Rom. 5:18,19). He came to bear "the iniquity of us all" (Isa. 53:6), ransoming us by his sacrifice for sin on the altar of the cross (Matt. 20:28). We believe that he is the God-appointed substitute for man in all of this: his righteousness is accepted by the Father as our righteousness, his death for sin as our death for sin (2 Cor. 5:21). We believe that his resurrection gives full assurance that God has accepted this atonement for all (Rom. 4:25).

4. We believe that in Christ God reconciled the world to himself" (2 Cor. 5:19), that Jesus is "the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). The mercy and grace of God are all-embracing; the reconciliation through Christ is universal; the forgiveness of sins has been gained as an accomplished fact for all men. Because of the substitutionary work of Christ, God has justified, that is, declared the verdict of "not guilty" upon all mankind. This forms the firm, objective basis for the sinner's assurance of salvation.

5. We reject any teaching that limits the work of Christ as to either its scope or its completeness, thereby failing to recognize the universality of redemption or the full payment of the ransom.

6. We reject the views which see in the Gospel accounts the church's proclamation and interpretation of Jesus Christ rather than a true account of what actually happened in history. We reject the attempts to make the historicity of events in Christ's life, such as his virgin birth, his miracles or his bodily resurrection, appear unimportant or even doubtful. We reject the attempts to stress a "present encounter with the living Christ" in such a way that Jesus' redemptive work in the fullness of time, as recorded in Scripture, would lose its importance.

This is what Scripture teaches about Christ and redemption. This we believe, teach and confess.

IV. JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH

1. We believe that God has justified, that is, declared all sinners righteous in his eyes for the sake of Christ. This is the central message of Scripture upon which the very existence of the church depends. It is a message relevant to people of all times and places, of all races and social strata, for "the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men" (Rom. 5:18). All need justification before God, and Scripture proclaims that all are justified, for "the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men" (Rom. 5:18).

2. We believe that the individual receives this free gift of forgiveness through Christ, not by works, but only by faith (Eph. 2:8,9). Justifying faith is trust in Christ and his redemptive work. This faith justifies, not because of any inherent virtue, but only because of the salvation prepared by God in Christ, which it embraces (Rom. 3:28; 4:5). On the other hand, although Jesus died for all, Scripture tells us that "whoever does not believe will be condemned" (Mark 16:16). The unbeliever loses the forgiveness won for him by Christ.

3. We believe that man cannot work this justifying faith, or trust, in his own heart, because "the man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him" (1Cor. 2:14). In fact "the sinful mind is hostile to God" (Rom. 8:7). It is the Holy Spirit who moves the heart trustingly to recognize that "Jesus is Lord" (1 Cor. 12:3). This the Holy Spirit works by means of the gospel (Rom. 10:17). We believe, therefore, that man's conversion is entirely the work of God's grace. Rejection of the gospel is, however, wholly man's fault.

4. We believe that already in eternity God chose those individuals whom he would in time convert through the gospel of Christ and preserve in the faith to eternal life (Eph. 1:4-6; Rom. 8:29-30). This election to faith and salvation in no way was caused by anything in man, but shows how completely salvation is ours by grace alone (Rom. 11:5-6).

5. We reject every teaching that man in any way contributes to his salvation. We reject all efforts to present faith as a condition man must fulfill to complete his justification. We likewise reject any teaching which says that it does not matter what one believes so long as one has faith.

6. We reject any suggestion that the doctrine of justification by faith can no longer be meaningful to modern man, together with all attempts of man to justify himself or his existence before God.

7. We reject the false and blasphemous conclusion that those who are lost were elected by God to damnation, for God "wants all men to be saved" (1 Tim. 2:4).

This is what Scripture teaches about justification by faith. This we believe, teach and confess.

V. GOOD WORKS AND PRAYER

1. We believe that faith in Jesus Christ is a living force within the Christian that will invariably produce works which are pleasing to God. "Faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead" (Jas. 2:17). A Christian as a branch in Christ the Vine brings forth good fruit (John 15:5).

2. We believe that faith does not set up its own standards to determine what is pleasing to God (Matt. 15:9). True faith, instructed by the Word of God, delights to do only that which conforms to the holy will of God. It recognizes that God's will finds its fulfillment in perfect love, for "love is the fulfillment of the law" (Rom. 13:10).

3. We believe that these works which are fruits of faith must be distinguished from works of civic righteousness performed by unbelievers. When unbelievers perform works that outwardly appear as good and upright before men, these works are not good in God's sight, for "without faith it is impossible to please God" (Heb. 11:6). While we recognize the value of mere civic righteousness for human society, we know that the unbeliever through his works of civic righteousness cannot even begin to do his duty to God.

4. We believe that in this world even the best works of a Christian are still tainted with sin. The flesh, the old Adam, still afflicts the Christian so that he fails to do the good he wants to do, and does the evil he does not want to do (Rom. 7:19). He must confess that all his righteousnesses are like filthy rags (Isa. 64:6). For the sake of Christ, however, these imperfect efforts of Christians are graciously considered holy and acceptable by our heavenly Father.

5. We believe that also a life of prayer is a fruit of faith. Confidently, through faith in their Savior, Christians address the heavenly Father in petition and praise, presenting their needs and giving thanks. Such prayers are a delight to our God, and he will grant our petitions according to his wisdom.

6. We reject every thought that the good works of Christians contribute toward gaining salvation.

7. We reject every attempt to abolish the unchanging law of God as an absolute standard by which to measure man's conduct.

8. We reject the view that man himself in every situation must determine what "love" demands. We recognize this as a device of Satan to destroy the knowledge of God's holy will and to undermine the consciousness of sin.

9. We reject any view that considers prayer a means of grace or that looks upon it as helpful simply because of its psychological effect upon the one who prays.

10. We reject the view that all prayers are acceptable to God, and we hold the prayers of all who do not know Christ to be vain babblings addressed to false gods.

This is what Scripture teaches about good works and prayer. This we believe, teach and confess.

THE BOOK OF MORMON CONTRADICTS THE BIBLE (AND MORMON DOCTRINE)

Apostle Orson Pratt said: "If we compare the historical, prophetic, and doctrinal parts of the Book of Mormon with the great truths of science and nature, we find NO CONTRADICTIONS - NO ABSURDITIES - NOTHING UNREASONABLE." (Articles of Faith, James Talmage, p.505.)

In a speech at Brigham Young University, "Profile of a Prophet." Hugh B. Brown said: "...For over 100 years some of the best students and scholars of the world have been trying to prove that the Book of Mormon is not the Word of God, and they've taken the Bible to try to prove it; and not one of them has been able to prove that anything he wrote was not in strict harmony with the Scriptures...I know that Joseph

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Smith was a prophet of God! ...By the whisperings of the Holy Spirit one may come to know; and by those whisperings, I say, I do know, and I thank God for that knowledge, and pray for his blessing upon all of you."

Shall we believe the Book of Mormon because a man claims that the Holy Spirit told him that it was written by a prophet of God? Or shall we believe the Book of Mormon only if it agrees with all the Bible?

Take your Book of Mormon and study it from the beginning.

- 1) The pictures in the front. Why are there no maps such as we have in the Bible locating just about everything from Bible history? BYU archeologists admit that they haven't found any city, river, mountain, or body of water mentioned in the Book of Mormon. Church News, July 29, 1978, says that there is no geography of the Book of Mormon!
- 2) Pictures of gold plates. Mormons ask us: "How could Joseph Smith make up the possibility of writing on metal plates before such writing was known to archeology?" I reply: Just read Exodus 28. In Ex. 28:30 Smith found "the Urim and the Thummim," which interested him greatly. And then, just a few verses later, he could read (Ex. 28:36): "And thou shalt make a plate of pure gold, and grave upon it, like the engravings of a signet, HOLINESS TO THE LORD." So the LDS pamphlet, Gold Plates used Anciently (Deseret, 1963) simply doesn't apply.
- 3) Pictures of Indian relics. No amount of wishful thinking by Mormons has ever shown the remains of Central or South American Indians to be connected with Hebrew civilization.
- 4) The page of testimonies. If it is so important that we are to believe the Book of Mormon because of the testimony of men, then why aren't we told that all three of the first witnesses quit the Mormon Church, and that the first five of the eight witnesses likewise apostatized, leaving just the three Smiths to bear witness? Shall we believe such testimony, and not the testimonies given previously about Smith and his book, some of the witnesses being of an age when they might expect soon to meet their Maker?

In view of the fact that 8 of the 11 witnesses apostatized, we are amazed by this in LeGrand Richard's A Marvelous Work and a Wonder, (p.71): "Not one of these witnesses ever denied his testimony, even though each was subjected to much persecution and ridicule." If this is true, why do the LDS mention Cowdery in the following poem?

"Or prove that Christ was not the Lord	
Because that Peter cursed and swore	
Or Book of Mormon not His word	(<u>Times and Seasons</u> ,
Because denied, by Oliver...."	vol. II, p.482.)"

Joseph Smith included John Whitmer in a characterization that he gave of his first three witnesses: "Such characters as...David Whitmer, Oliver Cowdery, and Martin Harris are too mean to mention and we had liked to have forgotten them." (Documentary History of the Church, vol. III, p.232.) Yet LeGrand Richards says (p.55): "Each of these three witnesses passed from this life to meet his reward with a confirmation of the truth of his testimony upon his lips." Is this documented?

Oliver Cowdery was a Methodist in Tiffin, Ohio, in 1843. He is said to have been rebaptized into the Mormon Church in 1848. When he died in March, 1850, a Methodist minister buried him. David Whitmer joined three Mormon splinter groups but died

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rejecting the LDS Church and its priesthood. Martin Harris, after being excommunicated from the LDS, was a firm believer in Shakerism. In his old age he rejoined the LDS Church and was brought to Utah. There is no evidence that he ever renounced his "greater testimony" for Shakerism. (Cowan, p.47.)

What good are three witnesses "too mean to mention"? When Smith returned from a five week tour in Canada during the summer of 1837, he found that Whitmer, Harris and Cowdery had "pledged their loyalty" to a young girl who claimed to be able to read the future in a black stone. She would "dance herself into a state of exhaustion before her followers, fall upon the floor, and burst forth with revelations." (Brodie, p.205.) If Smith couldn't rely on his three witnesses, why should we?

5) The testimonies. The last sentence of the first testimony reads: "And the honor be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, which is one God. Amen." Smith says (D&C 130:22): "The Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man's; the Son; also; but the Holy Ghost has not a body of flesh and bones, but is a personage of Spirit." Mormons explain that "which is one God" means that three separate beings are "one in purpose and will." But the sentence as given suggests nothing more than the essence of God. To express the meaning of the LDS, this should read: "...who are one God," that is, one in purpose. See also 3 Nephi 11:36.

The Bible says "God is a Spirit" (John 4:24). Then in Luke 24: 37-39, Jesus, the incarnate Son of God, defines "spirit," saying: "A spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have." If the LDS say that such Bible references as: "Thou hast a mighty arm: strong is thy hand..." (Psalm 89:13) prove that God has a flesh-and-blood body, we must answer that such references are anthropomorphic picture language, the "arm" and "hand" of God indicating His power. Likewise, the "feathers" and "wings" of God (Psalm 91:4) picture His protecting love. And "the Lord thy God is a consuming fire" (Deut. 4:24) speaks of His holiness. (Study Hosea 11:9, Num. 23:19, Rom. 1:22-23.)

6) Martin Harris, the third Witness. A lawyer, John Clark, Palmyra, NY, said that he asked Martin Harris if he saw the plates with his natural eyes. Harris replied, "...I saw them with the eyes of faith; I saw them just as distinctly as I see anything around me - though at the time they were covered with a cloth."

7) 1 Nephi 1:17. "...I have abridged the record of my father." It has been said that for an "abridgement," the Book of Mormon wastes words like a drunken sailor wastes his money. Example: 4 Nephi 1:6.

8) 1 Nephi 4:7-19. Here Nephi says that God told him to kill his enemy, Laban, while Laban lay 'fallen to the earth' in the dark street "drunken with wine." So he did. But why not just let him lie there, or tie him up in a dark corner? David was more righteous in his conduct toward King Saul! (1 Sm. 24:4-7, 26:7-12. Ps 7:4b.) David trusted God to help him. Perhaps Nephi was inspired by the same spirit that inspired Hamlet (Act 3, Scene 3) who had a change to murder his uncle while he was praying, but postponed the killing to a time when he might catch his uncle "drunk, asleep, or in his rage...That his soul may be as damned...as hell."

9) 1 Nephi 7:1. If Mormon polygamy was established to "raise up seed," to provide good Mormon bodies to be inhabited by pre-existent spirits. then if "daughters" in this verse suggests plural marriage, how can this agree with 1 Nephi 16:7-8 which describes monogamous marriages?

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- 10) 1 Nephi 11:18. Here the 1830 edition has been changed by adding the three important words: "...the mother of the Son of God..."
- 11) 1 Nephi 1 72. The people of God here claim that God blessed them while they ate raw meat in the wilderness, even though the knowledge of fire was available to them (17:11-12), besides which they say they were trying to keep God's commandments (17:13,15). In the Bible (1 Sm. 14: 31-33) it was a sin for pious Jews to eat meat "with the blood" even when they were very hungry. (Lv. 3:17, 7:26, 17:10, 19:26.)
- 12) 1 Nephi 19:10. Here, supposedly, there were to be "three days" of darkness at the time of Jesus' death. If it is argued that this might be referring only to the New World, Helaman 14:27 says that darkness should cover the face of the whole earth for the space of three days." The Bible says that there were three hours of darkness before Jesus died (Lk. 23:44). The Saturday and Easter Sunday following had the usual periods of darkness and light (Lk. 24:1).
- 13) 1 Nephi 22:15. Here the Bible is quoted (Mal. 4:1) supposedly in 588-570 BC, long before Malachi wrote it toward 440 BC!
- 14) 2 Nephi 2:22-25. Who says that Adam had to sin that mankind might have children and that we "might have joy"? Adam's only accomplishment by his sin was that his son Seth was born in "his image" (Gn. 5:3), that is, sinful, and not in God's image (Gn. 1:27), that is, righteousness and true holiness (Eph. 4:24). See Rm. 5:12-21, which says that instead of bringing us "joy" Adam gave us "sin...death...condemnation... judgment," making it necessary for Christ to come and make all right. Moses 6:8-10 and D&C 107:43 wrongly speak of Seth's likeness to Adam as being only physical.
- 15) 2 Nephi 5:15-16. Where are the ruins of this great temple built "like unto Solomon's temple"? If this building is dated 588-570 BC, and if Nephi and his people who arrived in 600 BC did the building, how many people were there to do the work? A few dozen? For Solomon's temple "the levy was thirty thousand men," 70,000 to bear burdens; 80,000 "hewers in the mountains," 3300 overseers (1 Kgs. 5:13-18). The Nephites could have used the help of a few Mohammedan jinn!
- 16) 2 Nephi 30:6. Here "white and delightful" was changed in 1981 to "pure and delightful" amid much fanfare that now black people can be ordained into the Mormon priesthood. This being the case, someone ought to check footnote f, turn back to 2 Nephi 5:21, and change "...the Lord God did cause a skin of blackness to come upon them."
- 17) Jacob 3:5. Polygamy is condemned. Mosiah 11:1-2. Ether 10:5.
- 18) Mosiah 2:38-39, 3:25,27. Hell is forever, "a never-ending torment." Yet Apostle John Widstoe, Joseph Smith - Seeker after Truth, said: "In the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, there is no hell. All will find a measure of salvation." (Pages 177-178.) In 2 Nephi 28:21-23, Satan is the author of the "no hell" doctrine.
- 19) Mosiah 3:17. If no other name than that of Christ is given for our salvation, then why is the highest heaven closed to everyone who doesn't accept the name of Joseph Smith as the greatest prophet of God?
- 20) Mosiah 8:13. If a seer can translate, why didn't McKay, in his turn as "Prophet, Seer, and Revelator" translate the Book of Abraham papyri in the late 1960's instead of giving them to Nibley and Nelson?

21) Mosiah 14:5. If the Mormon Church would preach nothing but this verse copied from the Bible (Isaiah 53:5) we would have nothing for which to fault it, and it would have the pure gospel.

22) Mosiah 21:28. The 1830 Book of Mormon edition read: "...that king Benjamin had a gift...." - But then someone discovered that Benjamin died back in Mosiah 6:5, so now 21:28 reads: "that king Mosiah" The same correction is made in Ether 4:1.

How does this agree with Smith's claim to being an inspired, perfect translator? Or what about the statement of Oliver Huntington: "Every word and every letter was given to him by the power of God"?

23) Alma 5:48. If Jesus here is "the Only Begotten of the Father," how could the Father have begotten other pre-existent spirit children?

24) Alma 7:10. This says that Jesus would be born of Mary "at Jerusalem which is the land of our forefathers, ..who shall be overshadowed and conceive by the power of the Holy Ghost..." In 1 Nephi 1:4 Jerusalem is called "the great city, not a "land." The Bible (Mic. 5:2, Lk. 2:4-7) identifies Bethlehem as the birthplace of Jesus. Brigham Young said: "Now remember from this time forth, and forever, that Jesus Christ was not begotten by the Holy Ghost." (Journal of Discourses, V. I, p.51.) Jesus is, instead, supposed to be the literal son of the Father, who Young also said was Adam.

25) Alma 11:4-17. Why has not one of the 11 kinds of coins listed here ever turned up in the Americas? The coins of the Bible are well-known, since wherever you have people you have coins being lost and turning up again centuries later. Therefore: no coins, no Nephites.

26) Alma 13:18. The Bible (He. 7:3) says that Melchizedek was "without father, without mother, without descent...." So how could Alma 13:18 say that he "did reign under his father"? (The point of the Hebrews passage is that the Levites had to prove their family line, but Melchizedek's priesthood was greater without lineage.) So also Christ, of the tribe of Judah, could be our great High Priest.

27) Alma 29:4. In 1830, this verse had 8 words that don't appear now. These were: "yea, decreeth unto them decrees which are unalterable..." After God supposedly gave Smith D&C 56:4, "Wherefore I, the Lord, command and revoke, as it seemeth me good," the contradiction had to be removed. Compare with Mormon 9:9-10 and Moroni 8:18.

28) Alma 34:31-35. If this is true, that this life is God's time of grace for us during which we are to be saved, or lost, then how can the LDS baptism for the dead be true?

29) Alma 46:13,15. If people are called Christians here in 73 BC, how can the Bible (Ac. 11:26) say: "...the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch," this being around AD 41?

30) Helaman 5:9. Here it is rightly said that "man can be saved, only through the atoning blood of Jesus Christ." So how could Young limit this by saying: "...The blood of the Son of God was shed for sins through the fall and those committed by men, yet men can commit sins which it can never remit"? (Journal of Discourses, V. IV, p. 54.)

31) 3 Nephi 18:8. Why don't Mormons use wine today, as this commands? Jesus used "the fruit of the vine" (Mt. 26:29). Was that water? Can you be "The Church of Jesus Christ" if you don't listen to Him? Moroni 5:2.

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32) 4 Nephi 1:28. Can Mormons say that LDS growth shows God's favor? This says: "And this church did multiply exceedingly because of iniquity, and...the power of Satan who did get hold upon their hearts."

There is a great contradiction between Joseph Smith's statement: "The Book of Mormon is the most correct of any book on earth" (DHC 4: 461) and the undeniable fact that between the years 1830 and 1977 the LDS Church has found it necessary to make, by one count, 3913 real changes in the text of this "most correct" book. More than 200 more changes were made in the 1981 Book of Mormon. Not every change can be executed by Joseph Smith's much-publicized lack of formal education.

THE BOOK OF MORMON AND THE AMERICAN INDIANS

What is the origin of the American Indians? Just as every age has its favorite topics, this was one of the questions of the time of Solomon Spaulding and Joseph Smith. The first settlers in the New York-Pennsylvania-Ohio area had the question ever before them because of the extensive large and small Indian mounds that they found and often excavated. Solomon Spaulding in particular was greatly interested in mounds near his home in Conneaut, Ohio. Such preachers as Cotton Mather, Roger Williams, and Jonathan Edwards had talked about the possibility of an Indian/Israelite relationship.

Because of the publication of the Book of Mormon in 1830 with its story of three migrations across the Pacific to the New World (the first from the Tower of Babel, the second leaving Jerusalem in 600 BC - (not the "lost" tribes) the Smithsonian Institution (founded in 1846) was bombarded with the question: "Is it so?" In the 1880's the Smithsonian sent out many expeditions that concentrated on mounds of the Hopewell culture (centered in southern Ohio) that are supposed to be most closely connected with the great slaughter and burial of millions of combatants in the wars with which the "history" of the Book of Mormon ends, AD 321-421.

What did the Smithsonian archeologists find? Nothing that could be connected with artifacts of the Near East or Palestine. Countless burials were excavated which the Mormons would say are the remains of people descended from the family of Nephi, a Semite. But the Hopewell bones are found to have Mongoloid, not Semitic, traits. In particular, the front (incisor) teeth of just about every Hopewell skull are found to be "shovel-shaped," a major Mongoloid trait. In other words, the people who were supposed to have died en masse at Hill Cumorah in New York State after long years of fighting throughout the area WERE NOT SEMITES, AND THUS COULD NOT HAVE BEEN DESCENDANTS OF NEPHI.

How, then, was the New World populated? The National Geographic, in "The Search for the First Americans," by Thomas Canby (Sept. 1979, pages 330-363) gives the most recent answer of archeological science.

"They came out of Asia, bearing with them such Mongoloid traits as coppery skin, dark eyes, straight black hair, wide cheekbones, and distinctly curved incisors characterized by anthropologists as shovel-shaped.

"They came by way of the Bering Strait, the only place where the New World is visible from the Old." (p.332.)

Although every scientist may have his own slightly different ideas in interpreting the data provided by the archeologists - who still have a lot of digging to do - and who generally aren't guided by the Genesis account of the origin of man - you can't argue with shovel-shaped incisor teeth! We'll say it again - THIS IS NOT A SEMITIC TRAIT!

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The author above didn't mention another Mongoloid trait: the Mongoloid spot - a patch of bluish skin at the base of the spine on the lower back. This "spot" can be inches across or hardly noticeable at all. It is common (especially in infancy) among American Indians and across the Bering Strait into Mongolia, Korea, etc.

However the New World was populated, linguists tell us that no Indian languages are related to Hebrew - and languages don't change that much in 200 years that you can't trace their development.

According to 2 Nephi 5:21, God caused a "skin of blackness to come upon" the unbelieving Lamanites who were previously "white, and exceeding fair and delightful" so that "they might not be enticing unto my people." (If God did it once, why not now?) Again, in 3 Nephi 2:15, we read of some Lamanites who became believers that "their curse was taken from them, and their skin became white like unto the Nephites." (If God did it once, why not now?)

If this really happened, our advice to any LDS Prophet and Seer who finds himself in need of something to reveal would be: Tell us how and when God changed the genes of Semites to give them Mongoloid characteristics, and why some of these changes "spilled over" into Asia. Tell us when the languages were changed - maybe when the Lamanites became unbelievers? If so, could the Nephites still understand them?

An LDS pamphlet, Christ in America, by Mark Petersen, argues that the story in the Book of Mormon about Jesus coming to the New World after His resurrection is supported by countless legends of a Great White God who helped the native races and promised to return.

We ask: How many Bible details did these legends pick up in the time between the coming of European explorers with Christian missionaries and the later date at which the legends were collected and written down? If these was an original White God myth, who can prove that venturesome Europeans did not reach American shores in expeditions unknown to modern historians? There is much speculation on this subject. If American aborigines had contact with a supernatural being, who can say that it wasn't Satan? "For Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light." (2 Cor. 11:14.)

THE BOOK OF MORMON AND ARCHEOLOGY

The LDS Church would have us believe that all the ancient Indian buildings and artifacts found in South, Central and North America were left behind by the people described in the Book of Mormon. This, however much they work at it, they have never proved to the satisfaction of anyone not a Mormon. One Mormon anthropologist, M. Wells Jakeman, (UAA Newsletter, No. 57, March 25, 1959, p.4) admits that this is the case:

"So far as it is known to the writer, no non-Mormon archaeologist at the present time is using the Book of Mormon as a guide in archaeological research."

There are museums full of artifacts, and books full of pictures of everything found from every civilization mentioned in the Bible, but the pictures found in the front of the latest editions of the Book of Mormon show only the remains of Mayan or Aztec civilizations, or a Persian gold tablet from the fourth century BC.

One wonders: if only half the archeological remains in the New World were left by the godly Nephites, and if those Nephites had a true Jewish appreciation for the commandment: "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth" (Exodus 20:4), then how is it that every site of any im-

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portance among the great Indian civilizations is scattered with big and small works of art, carvings of animals, people or gods? Jews living in Jerusalem in the days of Jesus had a hard enough time living with the Roman eagle on its standard with the occupying legions.

Why didn't the Nephites leave one single scrap of pottery marked with a Hebrew letter or name? If, as it is claimed, Hebrew was not suitable for the golden plates, why wasn't it used elsewhere - as we find it used in Palestine on signets, coins, etc.? If just one such object were every found, don't you suppose that the LDS leaders would shout the news from the housetops?

I asked a Mormon missionary once if he thought that in the final wars between the Nephites and the Amalekites there might not have been at least 1,000,000 brass shields carried into battle by the combatants. He readily accepted the possibility, together with a minimum weight of 10 pounds of metal in each. So I asked: What happened to 5000 tons of brass shields, a convoy of 500 trucks hauling 10 tons each, which seem to have disappeared into thin air? Has anyone found just one? And remember, this is in the eastern United States where countless native copper points and other artifacts of much smaller size than shields have been found over the past 300 years! Why haven't the Mormons done any excavation at their Hill Cumorah (Mormon 6:1-15)? Is there nothing to be found there?

We haven't even said anything about metal helmets, or any other of the weapons manufactured in Alma 43:18-19, Ether 15:15, etc. Remember this the next time you are thrilled by the picture of "Samual the Lamanite Prophecies" opposite p. 396 in the Book of Mormon.

The followers of Joseph Smith, Jr. can only live in hope that some day something will be found that will prove what they have been taught to believe. Meanwhile, if they don't know anything better, if they don't have the saving hope and joy of true Christians who have found everything in Christ Jesus, they will hold to what they have, and what has them. For to apostatize, and then to find in the end that the Book of Mormon had been right all along, would mean that they would be denied even the lowest heaven in eternity.

Not at all concerned about a lack of facts to substantiate his opinions, President Charles Penrose gives us this from p.5 of the pamphlet Rays of Living Light (underlining my own, for emphasis):

"The Book of Mormon has since been published in many languages and submitted to the scrutiny of the religious and scientific world, and no one as yet has been able to point out wherein it disagrees with the Jewish Scriptures or with the facts gained by antiquarian research and scientific investigation. Yet it was brought forth in this age by an unlearned youth, not acquainted with the world, reared in rural simplicity, without access to the literature of the time, and without even the ordinary acquirements of the schoolboy of the present."

This just is not true! The Joseph Smith of 1820 learned much by the time that he sat down to "translate" eight years later.

The attitude of the author above, who evidently didn't study the great amount of material that I found just a part of in doing this, must be: "Please, don't confuse me with facts!"

JOSEPH SMITH, JR. - THE TRANSLATOR

There are conflicting stories as to how Joseph Smith, Jr. went about the work of translating the Book of Mormon. Sumner tells us:

"One account says they were translated by the 'Urim and Thummim,' a supposed combination of breastplate and spectacles (see Pearl of Great Price, Joseph Smith 2:35). Yet Joseph's wife, Emma, and two of the three witnesses, Martin Harris and David Whitmer, say he performed the feat by placing a 'seer stone' into his hat. He would put his face down into the hat and peer at this stone... The top line would contain character from the golden plates and directly underneath would be the English equivalent. Smith would then dictate the translation to a scribe who would write it down and read it back. If it were absolutely correct, the lines would disappear and the next two lines would be seen. If there were any error in the scribe's translation, the lines would remain until it had been corrected." (pp.25-26.)

1) In Joseph Smith's Testimony, we are told how some time after he received the golden plates he began copying the characters off the plates, and then began translating some of them "by means of the Urim and Thummim." Then Smith says that he gave Martin Harris a copy of some of the characters. Harris says that he went to New York City and found a Prof. Anthon who "stated that the translation was correct, more so than any he had before seen translated from Egyptian."

This testimony does nothing to help us trust the Book of Mormon. If, according to Mormon 9:32, the plates were written in "reformed Egyptian," of which it is said: "...none other people knoweth our language (9:34), how could Anthon approve the translation? Later Anthon gave his version of Harris' story, saying that his report was perfectly false," and that Harris was "simple hearted," being deceived.

2) A better chance to prove his credentials as a translator came when Joseph Smith's first 116 pages of manuscript were stolen by the wife of Martin Harris, who challenged Smith to do it over again. The following is from Edgar Kaiser's How to Respond to the Latter Day Saints.

"Progress was slow and after two months' work only 116 pages had been completed...Harris was fascinated by the contents of the book and begged Joseph to permit him to take these 116 pages home to show his wife, so that she, an outspoken skeptic of the entire venture, might be convinced. Against his better judgment, Joseph gave him permission...Mrs. Harris promptly stole the 116 pages and challenged Joseph Smith to translate them all over again. 'If this be a divine communication, the same being who revealed it to you can easily replace it,' taunted Mrs. Harris. Knowing that to retranslate would invite comparisons and the exposure of his story, Joseph nearly despaired. But inquiring of the Lord, he claims to have received a 'revelation' which forbade him to retranslate the first part of the plates..." (Kaiser, pages 26-27.)

We have the LDS account of these events in D&C 10.

"...The evil design was to await the expected re-translation of the matter covered by the stolen pages, and then to discredit the translator by showing the discrepancies created by the alterations. That this wicked purpose had been conceived by the evil one, and was known to the Lord even while Mormon, the ancient Nephite historian, was making his abridgement of the accumulated plates is shown in the Book of Mormon." (The Words of Mormon 3-7.)

This is wonderful, that God should have seen to it that Mormon would give a second version of the same history lost in Smith's first 116 pages of manuscript! But couldn't words erased from an original writing and changed by another hand be detected by almost anyone? If Mrs. Harris hadn't just burned the pages, whoever had them would have to produce them to make the feared comparison. It seems to be too convenient that Smith should be told not to retranslate.

3) Despite his claim to being expert in languages, we see from his writings that Joseph Smith didn't know much, if any, Greek. For instance, in D&C 4:5, Smith lists: "... faith, hope, charity and love," apparently having 1 Cor. 13:13 in mind. Obviously, he didn't know that agape, the Greek word translated as "charity" in the old English of the KJV, already means love. If Smith had in mind today's English word "charity" in the sense of "giving alms," as in Acts 10:2,4, then he should have written: "... faith, hope, love and charity" in that order, the word "charity" being the Greek word which now gives us the word eleemosynary in English, used in Acts 10:2,4 for alms.

Likewise, in D&C 110:11-13, Smith and Cowdery claim to have seen "Moses, Elias and Elijah" during a worship service on April 3, 1836, at the Temple at Kirtland, Ohio. Didn't they know that Elias and Elijah are the same man? In the Hebrew Old Testament we have such names as: Elijah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Jonah. In the Greek New Testament we have the same men called: Elias (Mt. 17:3), Esaias (Lk. 4:17), Jeremias (Mt. 16:14), and Jonas (Mt. 12:39-41). Note how in the KJV the -ah ending changes to the -as ending in all four names. (See also D&C 76:100.) Messiah of the OT and Messias (Jn. 4:25) refer to one Person.

(Still looking at D&C 110:13-15, we find Elijah telling Smith & Cowdery that on that day they are seeing the fulfillment of Malachi 4:5-6, the end of the Old Testament. But Jesus Himself, in the next book of the Bible (Mt. 11:7-15) says that John the Baptist in preparing the way for the ministry of Christ was the true fulfillment!)

4) Joseph Smith was no expert in Hebrew, either. In D&C 95:7 we read: "And for this cause I gave unto you a commandment that you should call your solemn assembly, that your fastings and your mournings might come up into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth, which is by interpretation, the creator of the first day, the beginning and the end."

Here the great Mormon "translator" confused "Lord of Sabaoth" (Rm. 9:29, quoted from Isaiah 1:9) with "Lord of the sabbath" (Mark 2:28, from Exodus 20:11) which in this case has to do with the Jewish day of rest on the seventh day. These are not the same Hebrew words!

(Note: The Hebrew alphabet is used in Psalm 119, if you will turn to it, which is an acrostic psalm, meaning that in the Hebrew the first word of each of the first 8 verses starts with the letter Aleph, or A. The next 8 verses start with words beginning with the letter Beth, B. These Hebrew letters with their pronunciation may not be given in your KJV; if not, any good dictionary will show them in order.)

To begin, the Hebrew word Sabaoth has the root letters Ts-B-A, and is plural, with an -(o)T ending. These root letters are found standing ahead of verses 137-9-1 and 169 in Psalm 119. The Hebrew word means host, and can refer to men (1 Sm. 17:45, "Lord of hosts") or to the angels (Lk. 2:13, "heavenly host"). The word sabbath, meaning rest, has the root letters Sh-B-T, standing ahead of 161-9-169 in Psalm 119.

And not we can see what the actual Hebrew equivalent for Smith's "Creator of the first day, the beginning and the end," might be.

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In "the Lord, the Creator" (Isaiah 40:28; see also "created" in Gn. 1:1, 2:3) the root letters are B-R-A, letters 9-153-1 as above, and mean to create. We also have "that created thee" (Isaiah 43:1), from a different word, root letters Y-Ts-H, numbered 73-137-153. There is "Maker" (Is. 17:7, "made" in Gn. 2:2), Ay-Si-H, using letters numbered 121-161-33. And then also "my Maker" (Job 36:3), P-Ay-L, using letters 129-121-89 in Psalm 119.

The words "first day" (Gn, 1:5) are Y(o)-M A-Kh-D. We find "the beginning to the end" (Ec. 3:11) to be R-A-Sh and S(o)-P.

We repeat: Not one of these words are Sabaoth. "Lord of Sabaoth" simply means Jehovah of hosts, with the idea of Commander-in-Chief.

5) Someone must have told Joseph Smith that the Hebrew suffix -im is another plural ending. (He probably learned it from a Jewish rabbi, Joshua Seixas, hired to teach Hebrew in the school of the Prophets which was organized in March, 1833.) For instance, "Cherubims" (in Gn. 3:24, KJV) could omit the -s since one angel is a "cherub." In the last two lines of Smith's explanation of Facsimile No.1 of the Book of Abraham, Smith gives us his spelling of the Hebrew Shamayim, "heaven." And in the Old Testament, the Hebrew word "God" is usually plural: Elohim.

In Abraham 4:1, Smith writes: "And then the Lord said: Let us go down. And they went down at the beginning, and they, that is the Gods, organized and formed the heavens and the earth. (Compare Gn. 11:7 and 1:1, which Smith used.) Also in Abraham 4:27 we read: "So the Gods went down to organize man in their own image, in the image of the Gods to form they him, Male and female to form they them." (Compare Gn, 1:27.) Thus the KJV is "improved" and "correctly translated," in the process giving us polytheism and a basis for three heavens.

Smith should have known that when the Queen of England starts a sentence with: "We shall..." there is still only one queen. A plural can indicate majesty and power. Why shouldn't the Triune God refer to Himself as "us" in Gn. 11:7 and still be One God? (Dt. 6:4, 4:35, Is. 43:10-11, 1 Cor. 8:4-6.) "God is one," Ga. 3:20. If oneness here meant "alike in purpose," Paul should have written: "The Gods are one." But in the Greek these words are singular.

Certainly Smith would have agreed with the translation of Exodus 32:1, where elohim is translated "gods." The plural is found again in 32:4, but in both cases the reference is to one god, the golden calf! Likewise, in 1 Sm. 5:7, the same Hebrew plural form of "god" is used twice, first to refer to the one true God of Israel, then to refer to the one Philistine god, Dagon. This proves that although the Jews used the name Elohim with an -im ending they never forgot that He was still their One God, while the heathen Canaanites had their many idols.

6) Another noteworthy attempt at translation by Joseph Smith, Jr. is recorded by Smith in his journal, Monday, May 1, 1843:

"I insert facsimiles of the six brass plates found near Kinderhook... I have translated a portion of them, and find they contain the history of the person with whom they were found. He was a descendant of Ham, through the loins of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and that he received his kingdom from the Ruler of heaven and earth." (History of the Church V. V, p.372.)

Later, the makers of the plates (B. Whitton, R. Wiley, W. Fugate) confessed that they had etched them with "hieroglyphs" copied from a box of Chinese tea. The plates, "aged" with acid, were buried with some bones near Kinderhook, Pike County, Illinois, in 1843, and then "discovered" in the presence of two Mormons. Smith declared them authentic and then, as he says above, he translated some of them. A surviving plate at the Chicago Historical Society was tested for its antiquity in 1980. The test proved that both the metal and the method of etching were from the 19th century. The writing on the plates is in the Lo language of China.

And now we have the August, 1981, issue of Ensign, an official LDS publication, saying: "Joseph Smith did not make the hoped-for translation. In fact, no evidence exists that he manifested any further interest in the plates after early examination of them."

If the Deseret News (Sept. 3 & 10, 1856) and the Millennial Star (Jan. 15, 1859) are to be believed, Smith was fooled, as he admits. Is a true prophet of God deceived by the dishonesty of others? (Study 1 Kgs. 14:1-6, 2 Kgs, 5:20-27, Acts 5:1-11.) Smith often said: "A prophet is a prophet only when he is acting as such." (Brodie, p. 291.)

JOSEPH SMITH, JR. - "TRANSLATOR" OF THE BOOK OF ABRAHAM

When I was first given a copy of the Mormon Book of Abraham, and saw the explanation of Facsimile No.1, supposedly an idolatrous priest trying to offer up Abraham as a sacrifice, I remarked without any further study of the matter that this couldn't be right, it was simply an Egyptian illustration of embalming. And I went to a library a short time later and found more pictures of the same thing.

The story of the Book of Abraham is really quite interesting. Dr. Hugh J. Nibley's version of the story is found in The Message of the Joseph Smith Papyri (Salt Lake City, Deseret Book Co., 1975) one of the most expensively produced books that I have seen in years, with 305 pages, 8 1/2 x 11 in. folio, well-illustrated, including true photographs of the original Facsimiles 1 - 3 of the Book of Abraham.

The story begins with the family of a priest of Amon-Re at Thebes, Egypt, whose name was Horsiese. This man was born in the tenth year of the reign of Caesar Augustus and he died at the age of 83 in the year AD 64. According to Nibley, the coffin and body of Horsiese were discovered in a three-chamber tomb with 13 other members of his family on the west bank of the Nile River across from Luxor, Egypt. An Englishman, Sir Frederick Henniker, was watching the native "resurrection men" when the discovery was made. Telling the story in 1823, Sir Henniker said that the workers offered him the haul, unopened, for four guineas. "It proved to be Grecian-Egyptian, the first of its kind hitherto discovered." What happened in the next decade is a bit uncertain.

Leaving Nibley's book for a bit, we open LeGrand Richard's work, A Marvelous Work and a Wonder (Deseret Book Co., Salt Lake City, Utah, 1969). On pages 425-427 we read:

"It appears that in the year 1828, a French explorer named Antonio Sebolo, secured permission from Mehemit Ali, the viceroy of Egypt, to explore for antiquities. Three years later, in 1831, Sebolo entered some catacombs near the place where stood formerly the ancient city of Thebes. Eleven of the mummies, found in perfect state of preservation, he carried away with him to Paris."

Sebolo died before he reached that city, and the mummies finally came to a nephew, Michael Chandler, in New York City.

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"'On opening the coffins,' the Prophet tells us, 'he (Mr. Chandler) discovered that in connection with two of the bodies, was something rolled up with the same kind of linen, saturated with the same bitumen, which when examined, proved to be two rolls of papyrus.' These rolls of papyrus were beautifully written 'with black, and a small part red, ink or paint, in perfect preservation.'"

A stranger told Chandler to find Joseph Smith to read the papyri for him. Chandler toured the larger cities of the eastern states with his mummies, and was told they were authentic.

"It was not until July 3, 1835, that Mr. Chandler reached Kirtland with the Egyptian mummies. Immediately, it appears, he sought out the Prophet Joseph Smith. 'There were four human figures,' the latter writes in his history, 'together with... hieroglyphic figures and devices. As Mr. Chandler had been told I could translate them, he brought me some characters, and I gave him the interpretation, and like a gentleman, he gave me the following certificate:

Kirtland, July 6, 1835

"This is to make known to all who may be desirous, concerning the knowledge of Mr. Joseph Smith, Jun., in deciphering the ancient Egyptian hieroglyphic characters in my possession, which I have, in many eminent cities, showed to the most learned. And, from the information that I could ever learn or meet with, I find that of Mr. Joseph Smith, Jun., to correspond in the most minute matters.

Michael H. Chandler, Traveling
with and proprietor of Egyptian
mummies.'

"Soon after receiving this certificate from Mr. Chandler some of the Saints in Kirtland purchased from him the mummies and the papyrus. Thereupon, the Prophet, with William W. Phelps and Oliver Cowdery as scribes, began to translate the strange hieroglyphics. To their infinite joy, they found that one of the rolls contained the writings of Abraham, whereas the other contained writings of Joseph, who was sold into Egypt. The first of these the Prophet translated in part. It recounts the trials of Abraham in the idolatrous home of his fathers, and his miraculous deliverance...."

After Smith's death, his family sold their four mummies and the rolls which were displayed at various places until they were destroyed in a museum in the great Chicago fire of 1871.

So today, as part of the Pearl of Great Price, we have the Book of Abraham, as it says in the introduction:

"Translated from the Papyrus, by Joseph Smith. A translation of some ancient Records, that have fallen into our hands from the catacombs of Egypt. - The writings of Abraham while he was in Egypt, called the Book of Abraham, written by his own hand, upon papyrus."

Mark those words: "...written by his own hand."

And what about Chandler's certificate in which he asserted that Smith's decipherment (before he began serious translation work) corresponded "in the most minute matters" with what others had told him previously?! If Smith alone could translate, how could others have gotten the same results previously? Was Chandler a reliable witness?

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The famous Rosetta Stone found in Egypt in August, 1799, had only been deciphered by Champollion in 1822, and was just starting to serve as a key to the demotic script and the older hieroglyphic Egyptian. A grammar worked out from the Rosetta Stone wasn't published until 1837. It wouldn't be until the 1880's that Adolf Erman, in Europe, would bring rules and order to the study of the ancient Egyptian language. So how could the United States be full of Egyptian experts?

Unfortunately for the LDS Church, the most important papyri were not involved in the Chicago fire of 1871. On November 27, 1967, Prof. Aziz S. Atiya of the University of Utah discovered eleven fragments of the papyri that Joseph Smith, Jr. had used in giving his church the Book of Abraham. They were found in the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art. "Evidence was uncovered to trace the sale of the papyri by Emma Smith, on May 26, 1856, to A. Combs, and finally to the museum." (Brodie, p. 422.) Notations on the margins of the heavier material backing some of the papyri were in Smith's handwriting.

LDS Church leaders were happy to get the papyri, and gave them to an LDS Egyptologist, Dr. Dee Jay Nelson, to translate. Nelson and three non-Mormon scholars all found that they said essentially the same thing and that they had nothing at all to do with Abraham or the Hebrew religion. Dr. Nelson expected that the LDS Church would cease publication of the Book of Abraham because it was a fraud, but this didn't happen. So Nelson and his family quit the church, saying in one letter (February 15, 1976) "The scientific world finds the Book of Abraham an insult to intelligence."

(Remember: "It is impossible for a man to be saved in ignorance." D&C 131:6. And in the pamphlet, Temple Square in Salt Lake City, by Deseret, we read: "One of the noteworthy precepts of 'Mormon' philosophy is that 'the glory of God is intelligence.'" So, why is the Book of Abraham, "an insult to intelligence," still published?)

So what were the Joseph Smith papyri? Nothing more than very worn and abbreviated copies of the Egyptian "book of Breathings" and the "Book of the Dead," safe-conduct passports through the dangers that might threaten a person on his way to eternity. Such scrolls were mass-produced by heathen priestly scribes for a steady market through ages of Egyptian history. They were called "Books of the Dead" by the grave robbers who always found them while searching for more precious ritual objects wrapped with a mummy.

In his book, Nibley admits that the 1967 papyri were once part of the three Facsimiles (which the Mormons never lost) since the papyrus fibers match exactly where the writing was separated from the pictures. Nibley, who is head of Ancient Studies at Brigham Young University, admits that Nelson's translation is correct. But then he insists that the true Book of Abraham papyrus is still lost since, obviously, there is nothing at the present time that resembles the Book of Abraham.

But this last opinion is wrong. Brodie says that in 1968 Jerald Tanner published a copy of Joseph Smith's "Egyptian Alphabet and Grammar," formerly unknown except to Mormon archivists. Tanner together with Grant Heward found that Smith did use the 1967 in producing his Book of Abraham. They pointed out that "The characters from fewer than four lines of the papyrus make up forty-nine verses of the Book of Abraham, containing more than two thousand words." (p.423.)

"It is also interesting that the long passage in Abraham 1:16-19 was translated by Smith from JUST ONE SYMBOL (khon, moon god) on the papyri. And his translation in that passage includes 10 proper names! How do you explain this? Also, Abraham 1:11 (containing 61 words) is Smith's 'translation' from just one Egyptian symbol - which Egyptologists tell us merely means 'the' or 'this.'" (MORMONISM!, Sumner, p.30.)

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(This reminds me of a dialogue between Alice and Humpty Dumpty in Lewis Carroll's Through the Looking-Glass, in which Alice's companion describes his use, and abuse, of words. "'When I use a word, 'Humpty Dumpty said, in rather a scornful tone, 'it means just what I choose it to mean - neither more nor less.' 'The question is,' said Alice, 'whether you can make words mean so many different things.' 'The question is,' said Humpty Dumpty, 'which is to be master - that's all.'")

And what about the fact that the 1967 papyri had Smith's notations and were once part of the Facsimiles papyri? On this Nibley quotes an authority to the effect that Egyptian scribes commonly illustrated their writings with pictures having nothing at all to do with a text.

For a second opinion on this matter, I wrote to the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago, and received this reply (May 2, 1980) from Donald Whitcomb, Assistant Curator for Middle Eastern Archaeology:

"Thank you for your letter of April 25th. I am not familiar with Mr. Nibley's book but I understand that he was educated here in Chicago. Concerning your question, I find it very surprising that illustrations should not follow the subject matter on Egyptian papyri, but one should check the particular source."

Nibley gives a reconstruction of the beginning of the Book of Breathing papyri that he identifies as J.S. X & XI, the same text used by Joseph Smith, Jr. in "translating" the Book of Abraham:

"Osiris is to be as one towed into the great Lake of Khonsu, after he hath taken possession of his heart one wraps the Book of Breathing, which is with writing both inside and outside of it, with royal linen, it being placed at his left arm near his heart, this having been done at his wrapping and outside it. As for the one for whom this writing is made, he shall go on breathing along with the Bas of the gods for time and for eternity. ..."

If I can understand Nibley's involved reasoning, he says that the magic writings of the Books of the Dead and other literature give a "literal" translation, just words, that have nothing at all to do with true and far more valuable esoteric meanings hidden under the words.

"Mormon scholars have concluded...that the scrolls...might have provided the 'catalyst' that fired Smith's imagination and opened him to direct revelations about Abraham." (Time, August 7, 1978, p.56.)

In the end, you can prove nothing to anyone who holds the view that Joseph Smith was able to "translate" by direct revelation from God, and, that he didn't even have to look at the papyri that he was working with in giving us the Book of Abraham. BUT, IS THAT TRANSLATION?

Nibley admits that the 1967 papyri weren't by Abraham's hand as the introduction to the Book of Abraham claims. The papyri are written in the newer hieratic Egyptian script, not hieroglyphs, which are found only in a few lines near the Facsimiles. Nor could any book of the Dead be by Abraham, since these scrolls weren't written on papyrus for "common people" before about the time of Moses. And if it is argued that the esoteric content of these writings may have started with Abraham, the fact is that their beginnings are to be found 500 years before Abraham, on the walls of the burial vaults of Egyptian nobility!

If the Facsimiles themselves are authentic, as Nibley says, having to do with Abraham, as Smith said, can we trust Smith's interpretation of them? Look at Facsimile No. 1, figure 1. This is not "the Angel of the Lord." In hundreds of similar embalming illustrations, this is the all-important Ba, or Ka, the spirit or identity of the body, which may leave the body at death, but can never go very far away after death. Figure 2 is not Abraham, but a pagan priest of Isis, according to the now-published hieroglyph caption.

Figure 3 in Facsimile No. 1 has the head torn off in the perfectly copied original published by Nibley, and, when published by Smith, was given a human head. Facsimile No.1 is "a well-known scene from the Osiris mysteries, with Anubis, the jackal-headed god...ministering to the dead Osiris on the bier." (Quoted by Brodie, p.422.) One wonders what Smith would have done with a jackal-headed "idolatrous priest of Elkenah attempting to offer up Abraham as a sacrifice"!

(Note: Nibley is "on his own" with regard to his opinions about the Book of Abraham, though he is the head of the Ancient Studies Institute. A letter from F.M. Gibbons, Secretary to the First Presidency, Aug. 22, 1975, received by John L. Smith, stated: "...the writings of Dr. Hugh Nibley concerning the papyri scrolls have been done entirely on his own responsibility and do not have the official approval and sanction of the Church." Yet Deseret Book Co. did the printing.)

Still looking at Facsimile No. 1, notice the four "idols" under the lion couch. These are not idol statues with the names that Smith imagines for them. They are just canopic vases with god-head covers, made to receive the internal organs removed in mummification.

- No. 5 is Qebehsenuf, the hawk god, holding the intestines.
- No. 6 is Duamutef, the jackel god, holding the stomach.
- No. 7 is Hapi, the ape god, in charge of the lungs.
- No. 8 is Imset, a human-figured god, holding the liver.

What did Smith call them? No. 5 was the god of Elkenah. (This is a Jewish family name, Elkanah, borrowed and slightly changed from Exodus 6:24.) No. 6 was the god of Libnah, Smith says. (This is the name of one of the places where the Israelites camped after leaving Mt. Sinai, Nu. 33:20.) Smith's god of Mahmackrah, No. 7, I can't identify. No. 8 was the god of Korash. (This resembles the family name Korah, borrowed from Gn. 36:5, also Ex. 6:24, which gave Smith Elkenah.)

Isn't it a great coincidence that two names of the idolatrous gods of Egypt just happen to appear together in one verse of Exodus, where they are nothing more than Jewish family names?

For Facsimile No. 2, the identification of figure 6 seems to be the only guess on Smith's part close to being half right.

In Facsimile No. 3, figure 1 isn't Abraham. And the crown does not represent the Priesthood; it is the double crown of Upper & Lower Egypt. Figure 2 isn't Pharaoh, but the goddess Isis, holding an ankh in her right hand. (This is a favorite item of jewelry today, a symbol of immortality.) Figure 3 is wrongly identified. Figure 4 Dr. Nibley rightly identifies as Maat, "righteousness." (A brother in the ministry, who started studying hieroglyphs on his own in college, tells me that any inquiry into the truth of God lost by the Egyptians through apostasy following the Flood ought to start with a study of the word ma'at, "righteousness." Why didn't Smith give us such a study?)

The 1981 LDS Triple-Combination has made some changes in the Book of Abraham pictures, but they still don't appear quite like the 1851 originals. Since changes are still being made, someone ought to do something with the verse in the Book of Abraham (2:14) which says that Abraham was 62 years old when he first left Haran for Canaan. He was 75 years old when this happened, according to Gn. 12:4.

HOW SHALL WE KNOW THAT SOMETHING IS TRULY SO?

In D&C 9 there is a "REVELATION given through Joseph Smith the Prophet to Oliver Cowdery ...April, 1829." In this section, God is supposedly telling Cowdery to be patient while taking the translation from Smith, and not to desire the right to translate for himself. How is he to know that this message is from God? D&C 9:8 tells him:

"...you must study it out in your mind; then you must ask me if it be right, and if it is right I will cause that your bosom shall burn within you, therefore, you shall feel that it is right."

Mormon missionaries tell potential proselytes that they should pray to God about what they have been told that they might "gain a testimony" in confirmation of what the missionaries tell them. (Moroni 10:4-5.)

So let's "turn the tables" just one time. Let's suppose that we have found one of the lost 116 pages described on pages 34-35 of this work. Let us suppose that it was found tucked inside the back cover of an 1830 edition of the Book of Mormon (now worth \$5000 in good condition). Let us ask the missionaries when we read it to them if they feel an inward "burning" when they hear it. If they won't accept our reasons for saying that Joseph Smith was a deceiver, then let them prove that the following wasn't lost from the Book of Mormon!

THE BOOK OF BENJAMIN (A Page Found)

38. Thus it was that the inhabitants of the wilderness found them leaders to guide them in the way of the ancient prophets.

39. For, behold, what was received by them in times past was according to their ignorance as they followed the way of the de-
ceivers of mankind.

40. But when they harkened unto the emissaries of the Nephites sent forth by Abinadom they were blessed exceedingly and they worshipped the Lord of this world in their hearts.

CHAPTER 14.

1. Harken now unto me my sons, Mosiah, Helorum, Helaman; and listen to the words of your father that ye may be wise in your days.

2. Remember ye the saying of King Solomon, king in Jerusalem, who wrote with good intent: Give answer to a fool according to his folly.

3. Do ye rather be men of good will, re-

membering your place as the sons of a prophet and a king.

4. For it shall come to pass that in your conversation with the children of Nephi that ye shall advise them in all their doings.

5. Know, then, that all people talk most of one of three things: whether it be of other people, which is easiest, or of earthly things, which is necessary, or of thoughts and dreams, which is of greatest value to the children of

6. If it be that ye hear any converse of the affairs of others, do ye warn them, lest they bear a false witness against a neighbor.

7. Say to them: Slander not nor defame any whom God loves, but defend them and speak well of them as you would others should do for you in all matters.

8. And if it should come to pass that a man is concerned only about affairs of this world, the getting of gain, the triumph of some over others in competitions of skill,

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9. Do ye say to them: What shall it profit you if ye should gain the whole world and lose your own soul?

10. Is it not God who gives to each his own according to his good pleasure?

11. Behold, this is the highest good of all, that every soul seek after wisdom and learning, and that every man impart to another his own thought, the pictures of his imagination.

12. For a man may be solitary, and a man may lack an abundance of the necessities of life,

13. But if he have not wherewith to concern his mind he shall be less than the best that he might be, and he shall not have attained unto that for which God in his goodness hath made him.

14. So say I, king Benjamin, to you of the land of Zarahemla.

15. And I say to you, my sons, that ye should receive my words as being more precious to you than many gold-encrusted jewels, though they be written upon plates of brass by the.....

One should note that it is written in The Book of Mosiah 1:8 (p. 134 in the Book of Mormon): "And many more things did king Benjamin teach his sons, which are not written in this book."

If it is claimed that no one could give us another book like the Book of Mormon, you should know that I averaged just 4 minutes a verse in composing my "page found." And if I had copied more from the Bible, as Smith copied some 27,000 words (out of 275,000 words) from the KJV I could have gone faster. What took much more time than the writing was reading in the Book of Mormon beforehand to discover the setting and situation that I required.

My "page found" resembles the Book of Mormon in its frequent use of the word behold (13:39, 14:11) and "it shall come to pass" (14:4). We also have a good proportion of "ye" and "you." I made use of Bible passages (14:2,6,9 and a few words elsewhere). I used names known in the Book of Mormon. The general principle of three topics of conversation reflects a recently published observation. I misused the word "conversation" (14:4) as Smith might have done in using the KJV, in which it means a way of living (1 Tm. 4:12), and not talking with someone. Since the Book of Mormon picks up out-of-place-and-time expressions like a rolled snowball picks up gravel and leaves, I borrowed "slander nor defame...defend them and speak well of them" (14:7) from a current English edition of Dr. Martin Luther's Small Catechism (NPH 1956). Though division into chapter and verse would not have appeared on a "page found," I did it for convenience sake. I had to "remove" a great many spelling and punctuation errors since many thousands of such corrections were made in the Book of Mormon after the 1830 edition.

WAS JOSEPH SMITH A "PROPHET" OF FUTURE EVENTS?

The test of a prophet of God is given in Dt. 18:22: "When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, not come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him." How does Joseph Smith measure up to this test?

(The Mormon test of authenticity is given in D&C 129. Mormons say that Smith was a prophet because he saw God, but 2 Pe. 1:21 says that a prophet is one through whom God speaks. See Dt. 13:1-5.)

1) In the original edition of Doctrine and Covenants, Section 9, there was once this revelation through Joseph Smith to Oliver Cowdery:

"And thy brother Oliver shall continue in bearing my name before the world; and also to the church. And he shall not suppose that he can say enough in my cause; and lo I am with him to the end."

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This revelation was removed from the 1952 D&C. Why? Because Cowdery apostatized. Since God would not lie, this leaves only Joseph Smith as a false prophet. And what about the honesty of a church that will not admit the possibility that he could ever be wrong?

2) In 1835, Smith prophesied that the coming of the Lord was "nigh," and that "fifty-six years should wind up the scene." (History of the Church, vol. II, p.182.) So, did anything happen in AD 1891? See also D&C 130:14-17 (April 2, 1843) pointing to the same year.

3) In D&C 84:4-5, 90:36-37, Smith said that God said that a temple would be built in Independence, MO, "in this generation." And that: "Zion...shall not be removed out of her place. I, the Lord, have spoken it. Amen." Then, on August 2, 1833, (D&C 97:19), God supposedly told Smith to write: "And the nations of the earth shall honor her, and shall say: Surely Zion is the city of our God, and surely Zion cannot fall, neither be moved out of her place, for God is there, and the hand of the Lord is there. Smith was at Kirtland, Ohio, when he gave this "revelation." If he were a true prophet, he would have known that TWO WEEKS EARLIER, JULY 20, 1833, ZION WAS "MOVED," AND LEADING LDS OFFICIALS WERE RUN OUT OF INDEPENDENCE, MISSOURI!

Of course, Smith had an explanation ready in case Zion did fail in Independence: "Zion shall escape if she observe to do all things whatsoever I have commanded her. But if she observe not to do whatsoever I have commanded her, I will visit her...with sore affliction." (D&C 97:25:26.) And in D&C 124:49-54 it is the fault of the enemies of Mormonism who will be punished by God for their opposition to the Saints. But should any opposition at all have prevented God from carrying out such great promises as those found in D&C 45:66-70 and D&C 57:1-3 (July, 1831)?

D&C 56:4 (June, 1831) reads: "Wherefore I, the Lord, command and revoke, as it seemeth me good; and all this to be answered upon the heads of the rebellious, saith the Lord." (BUT SEE: Nu. 23:19.)

4) The Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith (p. 302) says this:

"I prophesy in the name of the Lord God of Israel, unless the United States redress the wrongs committed upon the Saints in the state of Missouri and punish the crimes committed by her officers that in a few years the government will be utterly overthrown and wasted, and there will not be so much as a potsherd left..." Was this ever fulfilled?

5) The Mormons make much of Smith's "prophecy" in D&C 87:1-4 given December 25, 1832, predicting the Civil War. The rebellion would begin in South Carolina, the northern and southern states would be divided. the southern states would ask Great Britain and other nations for help. Slaves would rise against their masters and be "disciplined for war."

Again on April 2, 1843 (D&C 130:12), Smith said: "The commencement of the difficulties which will cause much bloodshed previous to the coming of the Son of Man will be in South Carolina." And 130:13 adds: "It may probably arise through the slave question."

Did any of the Old Testament prophets, who time after time began with: "Thus saith the Lord!" ever say: "It may probably..."?

But what about the Civil War predictions? Looking at it from the 1980's, one may be impressed. But if you were reading any newspapers at all, or just visiting with the ubiquitous "man on the street" in 1832, you would have known that Smith was simply giving his followers the general trend of opinion and speculation at the time. (And they did not even print this prophecy in D&C until after the Civil War began!)

Check any encyclopedia which gives a good outline of the life of John C. Calhoun (1782-1850), a native of South Carolina, who became vice president of the United States in 1824. As a political philosopher, Calhoun was a champion of state rights. Note that before Smith's Dec. 25, 1832, "prophecy," South Carolina just a month earlier had declared the federal tariff act of July 14, 1832, null and void. If Smith were really a prophet, he might have said that the first shots of the Civil War would be fired at Ft. Sumter, which the federal government began building in 1829 at the harbor entrance of Charleston, SC.

If Isaiah, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, gave his people the name of Cyrus (Is. 44:28) as their deliverer from captivity in Babylon 175 years before Cyrus came on the scene (2 Chr. 36:22-23), why didn't Smith prove his prophetic ability in AD 1832 by giving us a name such as that of Abraham Lincoln 30 years before the Emancipation Proclamation? (It just so happened that Abraham Lincoln, a young politician, was on the November, 1840, Illinois ballot in Nauvoo.)

(I could pretend to be a prophet! When Pope John Paul died some years ago after only 33 days in office, one minute after I heard the TV news announcement, I said to myself: "The next man will call himself John Paul II." I knew this had to be because I remembered why the name John Paul had been chosen in the first place, and I felt that choosing the same name would honor the memory of the first John Paul.)

6) D&C 87:5 says: "And it shall come to pass also that the remnants who are left of the land will marshal themselves, and shall become exceeding angry, and shall vex the Gentiles with a sore vexation."

This appears to be a prediction of Indian wars on the frontiers. The revelation is dated Dec. 25, 1832. But who wasn't afraid of the Indians, still a power to be respected on the Great Plains? It was only 4 months earlier (Aug. 27, 1832) that Black Hawk (1767-1838) a chief of the Sac Indians, had surrendered after a year of warfare.

7) In a "revelation" given Jan. 19, 1841 (D&C 124:16-17), Smith says with three conditional "if"s that Dr. John C. Bennett would "stand by" him "in the hour of affliction." Bennett, instead, brought about Smith's downfall. Read Fawn Brodie's book for the details.

JOSEPH SMITH, JR. - ONE "REVELATOR" AMONG MANY

The LDS Church says that God's revelation of truth did not cease with the New Testament. If we would grant this, then we say: "Prove that Smith's revelations are better than those of other 'prophets'!"

Mohammed, AD 570-632

Mohammed, founder of Islam, was born in Mecca, Arabia. "In the fifteen years following his marriage, Mohammed became greatly concerned over the superstition and ignorance of the Arabs. ...When he was forty years of age, he felt himself to be elected by God to preach the true religion. According to Moslem tradition, he received his call from God through the Angel Gabriel... He became judge, lawgiver,

and social arbiter of his followers, establishing principles incorporated later in the Koran, and precedents incorporated in the Sunna, the body of tradition of Islam which is supplementary to the Koran...

"The Koran is the earliest known work in Arabic prose; it is divided into 114 suras, or chapters, of various lengths. ...The Koran is regarded as above criticism; it is not to be proved, but is itself the standard of merit." (Universal Standard Encyclopedia, 1956, pages 5812-6816.)

Mohammed's main theme was to show God's great design for man: His reward for those who are righteous, and punishment for the wicked. (This is law-theology, the religion of unregenerate mankind.) "There is no god but God and Mohammed is the messenger of God" is the Muslim profession of faith. We can be sure that when they hear their Koran read to them, the hearts of Muslims "burn within them."

One great danger of Islam (a word meaning "submission to the will of God") is its influence on the social, economic and political life of its believers. (A biblical parallel would be found in 1 Cor. 10:31.) Likewise, one attraction of Mormonism is that every aspect of the daily lives of its members is in some way influenced by their beliefs.

Though illiterate, Mohammed produced great Arabic literature. By comparison, Dr. S. Sperry at BYU has said: "We must recognize that almost no Book of Mormon writings reach the high literary levels found in the Old Testament. ...Seldom or never do they rise to the heights or grandeur that one finds in Isaiah; they never equal the philosophic concepts and literary perfection of Job." (Our Book of Mormon, p.79.)

Smith shared Mohammed's idea of heaven: "...a continuation of all earthly pleasures -- work, wealth, sex, and power." (Brodie, p. 295.) If the LDS Church rejects Islam, yet agrees with many of Mohammed's concepts, can it call Smith the only latter-day inspired prophet?

Anyone who reads the Koran will note that many parts of it were revealed" to Mohammed shortly after people came to the prophet with questions needing to be answered.

We find this to be true also with regard to Joseph Smith. His "Word of Wisdom" (1833), for instance, came at a time when "Ohio was engulfed in the rising tide of temperance agitation." Smith was only "deferring to the pressure of the times, for he was too fond of earthly pleasures to become a temperance crusader." Brigham Young described the circumstances that led to the revelation: Emma complained bitterly after each gathering of Joseph's leading men in a room above the kitchen. For "the first thing they did was to light their pipes, and, while smoking, talk about the great things of the kingdom, and spit all over the room." By the end of 1836, Rigdon, "a fanatical temperance enthusiast," had his way, and "forced through a vote for total abstinence; Joseph bowed to public opinion, replaced wine with water in the communion, and let the High Council do its worst." (Brodie, pages 166-167.)

Bahauallah (Prince Husayn Ali), AD 1817-1892.

Beginning as a follower of Babism in 1850, this Persian prophet declared that he was the "Manifestation" promised by the Bab, whose religion Islam called heretical. Bahauallah preached Bahaism, its principle teachings being: "that God can be known only through His 'manifestation,' that God continues endlessly to reveal Himself to mankind, and that the duty of present-day humanity is to unite under one religious faith and in one social order." (Univ. Stan. Ency., p.608.)

If followers of Bahauallah are wrong in insisting that no one can truly know God without their prophet, then what about Brigham Young's statement: "No man or woman in this dispensation will ever enter into the celestial kingdom of God without the consent of Joseph Smith"? (Journal of Discourses, V.VII, p. 289.)

William Miller, AD 1782-1849.

William Miller was a contemporary of Joseph Smith, and a product of his times. Following contemporary interest in the "end times," he began studying Bible prophecy, and by 1826 was sure that the Second Coming would occur about 1843. (But see Matthew 24:36.) In 1838 he published Evidence from Scripture and History of the Second Coming of Christ, About the Year 1843. By 1842, there were an estimated 50,000 adventists and another million with adventist sympathies.

Although reluctant to make a prediction more specific than "about 1843," Miller in Jan., 1843, set the date between March 21, 1843, and March 21, 1844. When those dates passed, he reset the time to Oct. 22, 1844. Miller died five years later, almost forgotten.

Among the adventists who weren't altogether turned off by their experience, Mrs. Ellen White picked up on the idea that Jesus' visible return had not taken place because the world wasn't ready for Him yet, the Church having observed the wrong sabbath day for 1,500 years. Mrs. White has her followers today in the Seventh-Day Adventists.

If William Miller was a product of his religious environment, who can say that Joseph Smith, Jr. was not just as influenced by the religious atmosphere of his times?

If Joseph Smith was just as much a failure at predicting future events as Miller was, which of the two, if either, are to be believed in their claim to a "divine call"? Not to be outdone, Smith made a prediction of Jesus' Second Coming (D&C 130:14-15, April 2, 1843): "I was once praying very earnestly to know the time of the coming of the Son of Man, when I heard a voice repeat the following: 'Joseph, my son, if thou livest until thou art eighty-five years old, thou shalt see the face of the Son of Man' therefore let this suffice." (Note the "IF.")

Emanuel Swedenborg, AD 1688-1772.

According to the Journal of Oliver Huntington, v.3, p.166, Joseph Smith said, "The inhabitants of the moon are more of a uniform size than the inhabitants of the earth, being about 6 feet in height. They dress very much like the Quaker style and are quite general in style, or the fashion of dress. They live to be very old; coming generally near a thousand years." This is recorded also in The Young Woman's Journal, v.3, no.6, pages 263-264. On Jan. 20, 1969, Edwin Aldrin, Jr. and Neil Armstrong landed on the moon, and found no evidence of human occupation. Does this prove that Joseph Smith, Jr. was a false prophet?

A Mormon that I talked with explained this by saying that people bothered Smith so often with silly questions that with regard to this question he simply decided to "pull their leg" a bit and describe the moon people. I'll grant that this is now it may have happened.

But where did Smith get the idea of moon people? I submit the possibility, which others might research further, that Smith had access to some or all of the collected works of Emanuel Swedenborg.

Emanuel Swedenborg was born Jan. 29, 1688, in Stockholm, Sweden. His father was a professor of theology, and Emanuel became a writer on many topics. Beginning in 1745 and until his death (on the day he had foretold) March 29, 1772, Swedenborg devoted himself to recording the visions which, he claimed, he received by the will of God. In 1784, James Glen brought copies of Swedenborg's writings from London to Philadelphia and started Swedenborgian reading circles there and elsewhere.

The following is from A Compendium of Swedenborg's Theological Writings, by Rev. Samuel Warren, 1875, based on an earlier compendium:

"That even upon the Moon there are inhabitants is well known to spirits and angels; and in like manner, that there are inhabitants upon the moons...which revolve about Jupiter and Saturn. ...In stature they were like children of seven years, but more robust." (p.724.)

"In all the heavens there is no other idea of God than of a Man. ...It is from the fact that God is Man that all angels and all spirits are men in perfect form. ...It is known from Gn. 1, 26-27, that men were created after the image and likeness of God; and also that God was seen as a Man by Abraham." (p.3) (Emphasis in the original.)

"The image of God and the likeness of God are not destroyed with man, but are as if destroyed; for they remain implanted in his two faculties that are called rationality and liberty." (p.29.) The fall of man was brought about by "a desire to investigate the mysteries of faith by means of things sensuous and known." (p.27.)

"All things were created of substance...and as God alone is substance in itself...it is evident that the existence of things is from no other source." (p.15) "That God was triune before the world was created the Sacred Scripture does not teach." (p.87.)

On p.165, Swedenborg speculates on how the Urim and Thummim gave God's messages to man. Later he writes much on the priesthood.

"Every man whose soul desires it is capable of seeing the truths of the Word in the light." (p.232.) "A new church is always provided by the Lord when an old church comes to its end." (p.325.)

"In the ancient time the Egyptians knew Jehovah; for the Ancient church was also in Egypt...The Egyptian hieroglyphics were nothing else (but church writing); for spiritual things were signified." (p.353.)

"Conjugal love remains after death with those that come into heaven; who are those that become spiritual on earth." (p.445.) "Marriages in the heavens differ from the marriages on earth in this, that marriages on earth...are for the procreation of offspring; but not in the heavens." (p.449.) All angels and spirits were once men. (p.577.)

"One morning I was looking up into heaven, and saw over me expanse above expanse; and I saw that the first expanse which was near opened, and presently the second which was higher, and lastly the third which was the highest." (p.451.)

"It is well known in the other life that there are many earths, and men upon them, and spirits and angels from them. ...There are many earths, inhabited by men." (p.718.) "It has been granted me of the Lord to converse...with spirits and angels from other earths." (p.719.)

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"There are many who during their abode in the world, through simplicity and ignorance, have imbibed falsities as to faith...but have not, like others, lived in hatred, revenge, and adulteries. These in the other life...are kept for a certain time in the lower earth, that they may put off their false principles." (p.601.)

Since much of the above could pass for good Mormon thinking, one would suppose that by now Swedenborg has been made an honorary Saint.

Hoping to find out if Smith or his companions had access to any of the works of Swedenborg, I wrote to Salt Lake City, and received this from Donald Schmidt, Director, Library-Archives, HISTORICAL DEPARTMENT East Wing, 50 East North Temple Street (12 February 1982):

"Because I did not carefully look at all of the material that was given to the Seventies library in Nauvoo, I do not feel that it would be appropriate for me to say that there was no access to any of the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg. A look at that which the Prophet Joseph Smith gave to the library does not include any of the writings of Swedenborg. ..."

Someone should spend more time following up on a Swedenborg and Smith connection, beginning with D&C 130:19, 131:1,6,7, and concentrating on D&C 88 & 93, noting the similarities of form and content.

Brodie (pages 171-172) says that in 1835 Smith had been reading Thomas Dick's Philosophy of a Future State, and that Sidney Rigdon even quoted from it in 1836. Brodie points to comparisons between Dick's work and the Book of Abraham which Smith began working on in 1835. Could it be that Thomas Dick was influenced by Swedenborg?

DO YOU REALLY MEAN TO SAY....?

- 1) Can you really believe the LDS doctrine of eternal progression, a "revelation" of President Lorenzo Snow: "As man is, so God was; as God is, man may be"? Who first suggested this idea of people becoming like God? Satan, the great deceiver (Gn. 3:5). Smith said: "You have got to learn to be gods yourselves...the same as all the gods have done before you." (DHC v.Vi, p.306.) As Adam and Eve listened to Satan and lost their home in Eden, so all who believe the promises of Joseph Smith will lose their place in heaven. (Re. 22.)
- 2) LeGrand Richards (pages 12-13) says that according to Deuteronomy 4:28 no god is the true God if He cannot "see, nor hear, nor eat, nor smell." Therefore, the God of the Christians, an invisible Spirit, is a false god, he says. But in comparing Himself with heathen idols in Dt. 4:28, isn't God simply saying that He is alive, "the living God" (Ps. 42:2) while idols are inanimate objects of man's making? Richards should have noticed Dt. 4:15-16 where Moses reminds Israel that they saw "no manner of similitude" at Sinai, and that they should make no idol for themselves after "the similitude of any figure, the likeness of male or female." So, can we really believe "that God is literally a procreating father and that he is married to a Mrs. God, or divine mother"? (Newsweek Sept. 1, 1980, p.68.)
- 3) Can Mormons say that God "has" a spirit, and not "is" Spirit, when Alma 22:9-11 says He "is the Great Spirit"? (See John 4:24.) How could Jesus say: "I am in the Father, and the Father in me" (John 14:11) if both the Son and the Father are beings of flesh and bone?

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- 4) Do Mormons really think that there was a time when Jesus was not? What, then, happens to Alma 13:9, which says that Jesus "is without beginning of days or end of years"? (Study Re. 1:8, Is. 9:6.)
- 5) Are we really to follow a "prophet" and "translator" who changes Scripture to suit his pre-conceived notions? Joseph Smith, in saying that he saw the Father and the Son in 1820, found himself in conflict with 1 Jn. 4:12: "No man hath seen God at any time." In his "Inspired Version of the Bible" Smith solved this problem by adding: "No man hath seen God at any time, except them who believe." Is this honest?
- 6) Shall we allow the blasphemous assertion of Brigham Young that Jesus married Mary and Martha, and Mary Magdalene? Was His having children by them a correct conclusion from "He shall see his seed"? (Is. 53:10.) (See Journal of Discourses I:50, II:82.) Jesus called His followers His family (Mk. 3:31-35). True Christians are the seed that Jesus foresaw following His Calvary and Easter Sunday victory.
- 7) Are we not to consider it strange that every edition of Doctrine and Covenants since 1920 no longer has the LDS "Lectures on Faith"? Of these Smith, Cowdery, Rigdon and FG Williams said in a February 17, 1835, Preface, that the "Lectures" contained "the leading items of the religion which we have professed to believe" and that they were published because "the church was evil spoken of in many places," having "its faith and belief misrepresented" as if to say that the Mormons were "disbelieving the Bible."

When you read the "Lectures on Faith" and see how they teach the doctrine of the Trinity, the eternal existence of the Godhead, the "unchangeableness" of deity, etc., you can see how they would have to be dropped so as not to conflict with Mormon teachings today.

If it is true that God "was once a man like us," as Joseph Smith told a crowd of some 20,000 people two months before his death (King Follett Discourse), his words being recorded by four scribes and published in Times and Seasons (August 1, 1844) then the 1835 "Lectures on Faith" would have to be discarded, since in Section III we read:

"But it is equally as necessary that men should have the idea that he is a God who changes not, in order to have faith in him as it is to have the idea that he is gracious and long suffering. For without the idea of unchangibleness (sic) in the character of the Deity, doubt would take the place of faith."

Truly spoken! Nevertheless, Mormonism dismisses the "Lectures on Faith," saying that they were just study outlines for class work.

- 8) In D&C 49:16 (March, 1831) it is said: "Wherefore, it is lawful that he should have one wife, and they twain shall be one flesh..."

How then could God contradict Himself with a new "revelation" making polygamy right for the Mormons? (D&C 132.) If Joseph Smith pointed to the polygamy of men of God in the Old Testament, would he have us copy any other of the sins or weaknesses of God's believers, such as Noah, who got drunk? (Gn. 9:20-21.) (See 1 Tm. 3:2,12.)

Didn't the word of the Apostle Paul (1 Cor. 7:2) settle the matter of plurality of wives for the Mormon "apostles"? Why did they have to wait for the U.S. Government to force the issue? (D&C, pages 256-257.)

9) Shall we allow the false witness of D&C 132:1, 37,38, which says that Isaac and Moses also had "many wives and concubines"? Who says so? (Concerning D&C 132:39, study: 2 Sm.12:1-2 Sm. 14:49-50, 1 Sm. 18:20-21, Lv. 20:14, Dt. 27:23, 2 Sm. 3:6-7.) D&C 132:54 threatened Emma, but Joseph was "destroyed" the next year.

10) Shall we follow a man, Joseph Smith, who, contrary to the Bible (Lv. 18:18) married 5 pairs of sisters, and who married at least 12 women who were married to other men at the very time that he married them? (Brodie, No Man knows My History, a biography of Joseph Smith.) One might study 2 Tm. 3:1-7 to see how it applies.

11) According to the LDS Church News, on November 12, 1977, the LDS "Prophet" Spencer W. Kimball was saying: "Only through celestial marriage can one find the strait way, the narrow path. Eternal life cannot be had in any other way..." Really? Shall we, then, just cross out Jn. 10:7-9 and Jn. 14:6-7 from our Bibles?

In Mt. 18:15-18, Jesus is talking about forgiveness of sins when he mentions "binding" and "loosing" on earth and in heaven. This has nothing to do with the LDS interpretation that Mt. 18:18 serves as a support for their idea of celestial marriage. They should study Lk. 20:35 and Rm. 7:2, on marriage ending at death.

12) Where does the Bible teach the Mormon idea that unmarried people and couples whose marriages are not sealed by temple endowments will be only angels in the next life? (That is why Jesus had to marry?)

13) Why should a "Church of Jesus Christ" practice secret temple worship when Jesus said: "In secret have I said nothing" (Jn. 18:20)? One lady testified:

"According to what I had been told by the members before I went through the temple, I had expected to be uplifted to a higher plane, almost to celestial heaven!...I see the temple ceremony as a show of buffoonery, altogether undigestible, which amounts to a ridiculous farce. It is a conglomerate of bloody oaths and clandestine Masonic rites. I was very disappointed and let down by the crudeness of the dialogue of the play actors." (Sumner, p.35.)

(For a complete step-by-step description of LDS marriage and sealing read: Mormon Claims Answered, by Marvin W. Cowan, pages 91-95.)

14) If, as shown previously, the Book of Mormon had nothing good to say about secret societies, how could Joseph Smith, Jr. on March 15, 1842, in Nauvoo, set up a lodge of the Illinois Masonic Order which, within 6 months, had 206 candidates? (Brodie, pages 279-283.)

"Joseph taught his men simply that the Masonic ritual was a corruption of the ancient ritual of Solomon, and that his own was a restoration of the true Hebraic endowment." (Brodie, p.282.)

15) Can we really accept what Smith says he was told in 1820, that all the churches with all their creeds were an "abomination" in God's sight? If Smith was right in saying that the true Church no longer existed by the time he came on the scene, what do we make of the promise of Jesus: "...I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Mt. 16:18)? (Study also 2 Tm. 4:3-4.)

LeGrand Richards argues, concerning the work of the Protestant reformers: "Can a living branch be taken from a dead tree? Or, must there be a new planting, a restoration?" (p.3.) But, according to the promise of Jesus, we could call it a tree dead but for a few roots still nourishing a few branches. (Study 1 Kgs. 19:9-18.)

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In an LDS pamphlet, The Falling Away and Restoration of the Gospel of Jesus Christ Foretold, Dr. Martin Luther is quoted as saying: "...I simply say that Christianity has ceased to exist among those who should have preserved it." The LDS heading to the Luther quotation reads: "Christianity Has Ceased to Exist." But any student of Luther would know that the reformer was talking about the clergy of the Roman Church, not the true faith of many who remained Christians in spite of bad leadership. (See again Is. 55:11, a promise of God.)

If St. Paul speaks of "a falling away first" (2 Th. 2:2-3), would not Mormonism qualify as part of the falling away? The Bible does teach that apostasy had already begun in the first century (1 Jn. 2:18-19) and would increase (2 Tm. 3:13), but never does the Bible speak of a total apostasy. And if the Last Day will find hardly any believers on earth (Mt. 24:22-24) then how can the Mormons boast of their expansion (membership passing 5,000,000 in 1982) and their eventual hope of converting the whole world before Judgment Day?

16) The LDS pamphlet, Which Church is Right?, says that God intended that a quorum of 12 Apostles should always be maintained. But in telling us of the selection of Matthias to replace Judas Iscariot, we are not reminded of the qualifications given (Ac. 1:21-22) that Judas' replacement should have "compained with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us," and that he should be "a witness with us of his resurrection." When this generation passed there could be no more apostles. Paul's case was special. (Ac. 22:3-21, Ga. 1:11-24.)

17) The Mormons, in saying that they have restored the original New Testament Church on earth, say that their name, which mentions Jesus Christ, proves it. Likewise their various positions such as deacon, elder, prophet, apostle, etc., prove that they are the only right people of God. But have they restored all things rightly?

The head of the LDS Church is called a Prophet. Under him you find their 12 Apostles. Why don't they follow 1 Cor. 12:28, which says: "And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers"? (See also Eph. 2:20, 4:11, and note the -s on "Prophets," whose work, as we find it in the Old Testament, is mainly preaching, telling Israel: "You should listen to what God told you through Moses!") How many know that the Greek word apostello is translated "messenger" in 2 Cor. 8:23, KJV? How many realize that the Latin word from which the LDS get "missionary" means the same as the Greek word, apostello, "apostle," both meaning someone SENT OUT?

18) If the Mormons have restored the original Church of God, and if they are right in saying that there can only be one "Prophet" at a time for God's true Church, then why were many Old Testament prophets men who lived and prophesied at the same time?

How could the LDS office of "President" be a "restored" office if there never was such an office in the Bible in the first place?

How can the LDS priesthood be "restored" if LDS priests don't sacrifice animals as the Jewish priests did? God Himself indicated that the office of the priesthood was at an end in the tearing of the veil in the temple at Jesus' death (Mt. 27:51). Today Jesus is our only High Priest and Mediator (Jn. 14:6, 1 Tm. 2:5, He.7:25).

19) How can we believe that John the Baptist appeared in 1829 to confer the Aaronic Priesthood on Smith and Cowdery? Would John have gone against God's command that this was for Aaron's descendants of the tribe of Levi alone? (Nu. 3:5-10.) How can any priesthood be a part of any authentic renewed Church, when the Mormons admit that there was no priesthood in the Church of the original Apostles? When Zacharias, father of John the Baptist, is mentioned (Lk. 1:5-25, 57-65), his office was still part of God's Old Testament covenant with Israel.

Read Col. 2:14, He. 7:18-19, 10:9b, 7:24.

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20) How can we believe the Mormon claim that the book of Mormon contains "the fulness of the Gospel" (D&C, Part Second, XIII, verse 5, 1835 original edition) when it is silent about Mormon doctrines of: a) Plurality of gods, b) Pre-earthly existence for all mankind, c) No priesthood for Blacks - a doctrine changed, d) Divinely approved plural marriage, e) Celestial marriage, contrary to Jesus' words in Mk. 12:24-25, f) Genealogies, g) Baptism for the dead, h) Temporary hell, i) Godhood promised to man?

21) If one of the reasons for the existence of Mormonism is that God gives revelations to mankind to help him through changing times, why haven't we had many revelations for the past century in which "times have changed" more than in any age of previous human experience?

22) If the LDS Church faults Christendom for having an imperfectly preserved Bible, what do they say about the imperfections in the Book of Mormon, and the fact that D&C 27 now has 18 verses when in 1833 as part of the Book of Commandments it had only 7 verses as "revealed"?

Or what about the original Articles of Faith, now printed on a small card for any likely prospect? As Smith gave them, there were 14 articles, but later No. 11 was dropped, leaving just 13 articles.

11. "We believe in the literal resurrection of the body, and that the dead in Christ will rise first, and that the rest of the dead live not again until the thousand years are expired."

No. 4 had a fifth ordinance, The Lord's Supper, which is missing from the current Articles of Faith. The original No. 8 had: "We believe in the Word of God recorded in the Bible." Later this was changed to: "We believe the Bible to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly..."

Question: How can the LDS continue to print their revised Articles of Faith, and still sign the name JOSEPH SMITH at the end of the thirteen articles, when they aren't the same as Smith first gave them? Why don't they at least honestly note the changes in a footnote?

23) Why should Mormons fault Christianity for its many denominational divisions, and not tell how the LDS Church split into many fragments after Smith died? The Reorganized Church is the next largest group.

24) Are we really to believe that the skin color of a person is determined by his conduct in pre-existence, that Blacks were not "valiant" spirits, so were sent to earth to inhabit black bodies? According to Time (August 7, 1978, p.55), LDS President Kimball "says flatly that Mormonism no longer holds to such a theory." What does the average Mormon believe? Have LDS missionaries never promised people of non-white races that if they convert they will be white in the next life? Can anyone prove that Adam and Eve, or Noah and his wife, were white?

25) Mormons would prove their idea of pre-existence in "the world of spirits" (the First Estate) before birth with: "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: "and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." (Ec. 12:7.) LeGrand Richards says (p.300):

"Thus the spirit shall return to God, which it could not do if it had never been with him, just as the body shall return to the earth, which it could not do if it had not been taken therefrom."

Comment: The word return can't prove how long anything was in a certain place to start with. I can return a stereo record pressed and mailed the same day - or was it first played by the employees at work for a few years? So why can't a soul return to the God who has the power to create a new person, body and soul, as He will, together?

Richards himself is inconsistent in his use of the word "return." He says that Jr. 31:6-14 was a prophecy of LDS mission work in the northern countries of Europe, followed by the move from Nauvoo to Salt Lake City. Richards emphasizes Jr. 31:8, which says: "A great company shall return thither." But the 20,000 Saints driven out of Nauvoo were never in Salt Lake City to start with, so how could they return, in the sense that the LDS use the word in Ec. 12:7? (Pages 230-232 in Richards.) Jeremiah's prophecy was really fulfilled by the return of Jews to Jerusalem when their captivity ended.

26) Are we really to believe that Satan (Lucifer) is a spirit-brother of Jesus? Was this information in Moses 4:1-4 really from God?

27) Reading Moses 5:10-11 we ask: Was Adam's fall truly a blessing for all mankind, not a curse? Impossible! (See p.29 of this work.)

28) Why should we praise the LDS for genealogical research when St. Paul warns against "endless genealogies"? (1 Tm. 1:4, Tt. 3:9.) We should believe that the names collected are necessary for baptism for the dead, which is impossible (He. 9:27)? I'd rather have my name written in the Lamb's "book of life." (Re. 22:19.) (On this record keeping and proxy baptism, see Time, August 22, 1969, p.52.)

If Paul actually believed in baptism for the dead (1 Cor. 15:29), why wasn't he baptized a thousand times for the Jews for whom he was so greatly concerned? (Ro. 9:1-5, 10:1-4.)

29) In the spring of 1838, when Smith accompanied a party of Mormons exploring north of Far West in northwest Missouri, someone discovered on a high bluff overlooking a river the ruins of what might have been an altar, and led the "Prophet" to it. Smith said: "...Upon this very altar Adam himself offered up sacrifices to Jehovah. ...Here Adam, the Ancient of Days, shall come to visit his people..." (History of the Church, v.3, p.35.) Are we supposed to believe that in the world-wide Flood of Noah's day (Gn. 7:11), when the surface of the whole earth was changed, this area in Missouri remained untouched?

30) We must believe LeGrand Richards (pages 63-64), that Moses' words of blessing in Dt. 33:13-17 were given with Joseph Smith, Jr. first in mind? The "mountains" (33:15) are the Rocky Mts. of the Americas? "He shall push the people together" (33:17) means LDS authority?

Jacob gave his son Joseph a greater blessing (Gn. 49:22-26) because he was the eldest son of his first-loved wife (Gn. 29:18).

31) Are we really to believe the Mormons when they tell us that the "stick of Joseph" (Eze. 37:19) which was to become "one" with the "stick of Judah" represents the Book of Mormon someday to be one with the Bible? Why don't the LDS let Exekiel interpret his own prophecy, which he does just a few verses later (Eze. 37:22)?

32) And what shall we say when Joseph Smith is "inspired" to change and add to the Book of Genesis in his "Inspired Version of the Bible," giving us Gn. 50:24-33 as a "prophecy" of Smith's coming?

33) Why should we accept the LDS claim that the Bible as we have it is incomplete when St. Peter assures us that God has "given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness" (2 Pe. 1:3)?

34) Are we really to believe Elder Bruce McConkie, a member of the "General Authorities," who said: "The Bible is true because the Book of Mormon is true"? Does the tail wag the dog?

McConkie also said: "The Book of Mormon...answers the most important religious question in the world: Was Joseph Smith called of God? People will be saved or damned by the way they answer that question." This last line is true (only not in the way McConkie intended). The most important of life's questions is: "How am I saved in Christ?"

35) In D&C 18:23 (June, 1829) we read: "Jesus Christ is the name which is given of the Father, and there is none other name given whereby man can be saved." What shall we say when today no one can be received into the LDS Church without placing absolute trust in Joseph Smith? (James B. Allen, at BYU, said of Smith's "first vision" in 1820 that: "Its importance is second only to the belief in the divinity of Jesus." Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought, Autumn, 1966, p. 29.)

36) When Jesus told Peter to forgive a sin "seventy times seven" times (Mt. 18:21-22, 23-35), He didn't qualify this with the stipulation that the person who sinned should repent before receiving Peter's forgiveness. If "The disciple is not above his master" (Mt. 10:24) in suffering persecution, can it be any different in forgiving sins? (See Lk. 23:34, where Jesus forgave the final blows of His enemies.)

How, then, can the LDS give us D&C 98:23-44, verse 44 reading: "But if he trespass against thee the fourth time (i.e., not being at all repentant) thou shalt not forgive him, but shalt bring these testimonies before the Lord; and they shall not be blotted out until he repent and reward thee four-fold..."?

37) Brigham Young said: "I doubt whether it can be found from the revelations that are given and the facts as they exist, that there is a female in all the regions of hell." (J. of D. V.8, p.222.) Not even Jezebel? (1 Kgs. 16:29-33, 17:1, 18:1, 17-40, 19:1-2, 21:1-16, 21:23-26, 2 Kgs. 9:30-37.) Nor Athaliah? (2 Kgs. 11:1-16.)

38) Many people think that Mormonism is what it wants to appear to be: Just another branch of Christianity. But it is not; it is a cult. Orson Pratt, one of the original LDS 12 Apostles, said:

"The nature of the Book of Mormon is such, that if true, no one can possibly be saved and reject it; if false, no one can possibly be saved and receive it." (Divine Authority of the Book of Mormon, introduction.) He was right (as we see it).

39) We are supposed to believe that with their Monday family nights Mormonism is supposed to be a "family" religion. But do they really do any better than any other religion or cult? The state of Utah is about 75% Mormon. Since achieving statehood there were only two years between 1890 and 1976 when Utah's divorce rate was lower than the national average! Teen suicides have been well above the national average since 1963. Similar statistics in other categories could be given.

40) If "Mormons take care of their own," then why were government welfare expenditures in 1977, per capita, \$73.00 in Utah, compared to \$53.00 in Arizona and \$96.00 in Colorado? (Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1977, p.257.) What about Ga. 6:10?

41) Mormons say much about intelligence and education. But consider their best school, Brigham Young University. Prof. Hugh Nibley said:

"Some time ago, when it was pointed out that BYU graduates were the lowest in the nation in all categories of the graduate record examination, the institution characteristically met the challenge by abolishing the examination.: (Dialogue, V. XII, Summer, 1978, p.106.) What shall we think about this?

42) If Mormons today are to shun alcohol, according to D&C 89, given through Joseph Smith on February 27, 1833, why did Smith authorize a brewery in Nauvoo? How could Smith have a "fully equipped Tavern bar" in his own home? (The Saints Herald, Jan. 22, 1935, p.110.) And how could Brigham Young build a distillery and sell alcohol in Utah?

If in the Lord's Prayer they pray, "Lead us not into temptation," why do Mormons today run businesses that deal in alcoholic beverages?

Was it really honest to change official records of the LDS Church by removing Joseph Smith's references to his own smoking and drinking? Would he have received a "temple recommend" pass today? Smith was sharing a bottle of wine with two of his companions in the Carthage jail the afternoon of the day that he died. (Brodie.)

HOW CHRISTIAN CHURCHES SHOULD NOT AID THE CHURCH OF THE "SAINTS"

In Japanese jujitsu, the strength and weight (and mistakes) of an opponent are used against him to bring about his downfall. Every Christian denomination (Is. 55:11) loses members to Mormonism, some more, some less. So we ask: "Where are the weaknesses, the mistakes that can be used against us when an individual is considering Mormonism?"

1) A church member used to the leadership of a hierarchy won't be bothered by the orders given from above in the LDS system. (Study: Mt. 23:8-13,15, Lk 9:46-48, Eph. 2:19-22.)

When a church member hears an emphasis in his church on apostolic succession and the necessity of an ordained priesthood, will he not be more likely to listen to Mormons saying: "We have that, too"?

2) A church member, hearing from his pastor or reading in church publications that miracles never happened - that the Bible isn't God's Word for man but a record of man's thoughts about God - or that Jesus is not divine, will look for a body of believers who say that they accept these things. (Gn. 1:1, 7:11-24, 11:1-9, Ex. 14 & 20:1, Jos. 6:20, Ps. 119, Jr. 1:1-2, Jn. 1:1-18, Mk. 9:2-10, etc.)

3) A church member following the same formalized ritual every Sunday and seeing no attempts to explain a liturgy or make it interesting will look elsewhere when he is told of something better. (Mt. 15:8.)

4) The member of a church that claims continuing revelation of truth from God and that adds continually to its "tradition" won't be bothered by Mormon claims for the Prophet Joseph Smith, Jr. (Study: Mt. 15:1-9, Col. 2:8, Ga. 1:6-9, 1 Pe. 1:18-21.)

5) A church member, or prospective member, finding the congregation on a Sunday morning apparently unfriendly, will start looking for a more friendly welcome. 1 Cor. 11:18-21, 33-34.)

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6) A person growing up in a church where the worship is interrupted by frequent emotional outbursts and where real nourishment from the Word is lacking will look elsewhere. (1 Cor. 14:1-40.)

7) A church member, seeing that baptism is not highly regarded for the washing away of sins for all, won't see LDS baptism as anything more than a rite of initiation. (Ac. 22:16, 16:33, 1 Pe. 3:21.)

8) A church member used to the idea of immersion being the only proper method of baptism will find himself agreeing with the LDS. But in the Bible there is an instance where the Greek word baptizo, translated "wash" in the KJV, could not possibly signify immersion: "And when the Pharisee saw it, he marveled that he (Jesus) had not first washed before dinner." (Lk. 11:38.) This shows that the Greek word for "baptize" can be used at times for washing only part of the body, in this case the hands. The Bible should never be forced to a narrowness of meaning that is not in the words of the Bible itself.

9) If a church preaches "salvation by character," how shall it answer a member who says "I know so many wonderful, law-abiding, helpful, friendly, church-going Mormons! Certainly they can't all be walking the 'wide' way to destruction!"? (Mt. 7:13-14.)

Comment: In daily life, one might admit that the officers of a business are corrupt, and still buy their company's product if they say that it's the best on the market. But to do this in spiritual matters is dangerous. Can we join an atheist in his unbelief if we notice that he lives an outwardly moral life? Or do we "Search the scriptures" (Ac. 17:11) to determine the truth of a Prophet's claims?

God warns us: "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." (Pr. 14:12, 16:25.)

10) When a church member has always been taught to believe that there is an opportunity to be purged of one's sins after death in preparation for heaven, won't he welcome the same man-made idea in Mormonism?

11) When a church member hears that Jesus was "just a man," as the song would have it (Jesus Christ, Superstar), shall he not listen more favorably to the "God was once a man" idea of the LDS?

12) Why should Christians today not be satisfied with "the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jd. 3), the faith by which New Testament believers of the early Church received eternal salvation without any need of "Latter-day revelations? Can truth change?

13) If any church makes tithing (10%) a law to be obeyed, what does Mormonism do differently? (Why should a Christian's love-response be limited to 10% if God blesses him so that he could give more?)

14) If a church member receives anything else than wine in communion, will he reject the Mormon use of water? In both cases, you have a church rule making use of wine sinful, when the Bible only warns us against the abuse of anything. (Ps. 104:14-15, 1 Tm. 5:23, Dt. 21:20, Pr. 23:20-21, 1 Tm. 6:10, Ga. 5:19.) Nor do the LDS obey the command to use "bread and wine" (D&C 20:75-79. See p.47 of this work.) At the organization of the Saints on April 6, 1830, bread and wine were used, so why don't they still do it? Why should Christians set an example of changing the elements that Jesus used at the Last Supper? The health-ruining habits of individual Christians don't help, either, in advertizing their faith to others.

- 15) If a church member is trained to think much of a coming Millenium, the LDS can say that they believe in it, too. "For the great Millennium, of which I have spoken... shall come." (D&C 43:30.)
- 16) When a denomination becomes infected with the idea that Jesus need not be the only "Way" to heaven, and so decreases its overseas and home mission activities, won't a person be more attracted to the ongoing proselytizing activities of the Mormons?
- 17) How shall a church member who belongs to a denomination that allows women clergy and ladies doing church council work answer a Mormon who may point to 1 Tm. 2:12, 3:2, and 1 Cor. 14:34?
- 18) How shall an adult church member be warned against the errors of Mormonism when, as a child, he found that Mormons associating with him in a Scouting program were very nice people? If a Boy Scout is taught to respect every religious opinion per se (not just one's constitutional right to any opinion) then how shall he later be turned from respect for LDS ideas? If a Boy Scout is taught that it is possible to "do one's duty to God" to earn His favor, then how shall he see the Mormon error of attempting the same thing?

According to Christianity Today (Oct. 2, 1981), the LDS Church sponsors 17,000 Boy Scout units (238,000 boys), compared to the Roman Catholic Church with 11,000 units (though the Catholics and Methodists have a larger total number of boys participating). Scouting was adopted by the LDS Church in 1913, just three years after it came to America from England. At 12, when a boy enters Scouting, he becomes a "deacon." At 14, when he enters Varsity Scouting, he becomes a "teacher." At 16, when he becomes an Explorer, he becomes a "priest" in the LDS Church. Although some Mormons will deny it, others admit that Scouting is used for gaining new members for their Church.

- 19) If a church member can be a member in good standing, and also belong to a Masonic lodge or other secret society in which one isn't permitted to offer every prayer in Jesus' name, then will he see in the Masonic-like rituals of the Mormon temples anything to reject? If as a lodge member he learns a law-orientation of good works meriting heaven, will he disagree with the same principle in Mormonism?
- 20) If a church member receives no factual information on the errors of Mormonism, and as a result knows only that the Mormons have a Tabernacle Choir that sings Handel's Messiah, has he been properly warned?

MORMONISM TODAY, AND PROSPECTS FOR THE FUTURE

A Religious News Service article (Jan. 5, 1982) says that from 1973, when Spencer W. Kimball became President, followers of Mormonism increased from 3.3 million to about 4.9 million in 1981. The number of missionaries increased from 17,000 to 29,500 in eight years.

If the leaders of the LDS follow established precedent, their 13th Prophet, President, Seer and Revelator will be Ezra Taft Benson. According to Newsweek (Oct. 19, 1981, p.109) Mormons are most concerned about Benson's "autocratic attitude about the role of the Prophet." "In a widely publicized speech last year, Benson told an assembly of Mormons at Brigham Young University that salvation depended upon accepting his personal 'fourteen fundamentals in following the Prophets.' ...Benson insisted that 'the Prophet is the only man that speaks for the Lord in everything.' He can...receive revelation on any matter, temporal or spiritual, including 'civic matters.' Furthermore he aruges, 'the living Prophet is more vital to us than the standard works,' including the Bible and the Book of Mormon, and his word supersedes the statements of previous

Prophets, such as church founder Joseph Smith Jr. ...

"As long as Kimball wears the mantle of Mormon Prophet, Benson's words carry no more theological weight than those of other high-ranking church elders. That will change if Benson ever succeeds Kimball--and as the most senior of Mormon elders, he is supposed to."

Comment: We can only think of the words of Jesus concerning some very religious people of His day: "In vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." (Mt. 15:9.)

SOME CLOSING THOUGHTS

Is it really "persecution" if I see someone sleepwalking where he might get hurt, and wake him up, knowing that I may be interrupting an interesting dream? Is this long work just another example of the persecution that supposedly proves the "rightness" of the LDS Church? Never! Mormons should consider 1 Pe. 2:20 and Ga. 4:16.

How should I be expected to react to a religion that gives us a hymn saying that Joseph Smith so loved "the Saints" that "For them he lived, for them he died... Now unchanged in death with a Savior's love he (Joseph) pleads my cause in the courts above...He waits on Zion's shore to welcome the Saints for evermore." This is IDOLATRY!

My warning in this work is the same found in D&C 50:3, which is: "And also Satan hath sought to deceive you, that he might overthrow you."

This work, of necessity, was mostly "bad news." But study the "good news" as I gave it, pages 18-26, and may God open your heart to receive it as His truth for your eternal salvation!

Jesus invites you"

"Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls." (Mt. 11:28-29.)

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Concerned Christians Witness to Mormons has 3 pages on "Understanding Your Mormon Friend." It gives 20 "Terminology Differences" by Sandra Tanner. (The LDS have their definitions of: Pre-existence, Fall, Sin, Repentance, Atonement - salvation by grace, Redeemed, Gospel, Born Again, True Church, Authority - priesthood, Baptism, Sons of God, Eternal Life, Immortality, Heaven, Kingdom of God, Hell, Godhead, Holy Ghost, Virgin birth.) There is a chart on "The Mormon Idea of Heaven." There are 22 topics for which good three-source quotations are given. Three pages compare changes from the first Book of Mormon, the Book of Commandments (now Doctrine and Covenants), and the Articles of Faith.

(One of the 21 contributors and compilers of this work was Rev. David Schultz of Mesa, Arizona.)

A suggestion: Once a Christian pastor or lay person has studied the issues of Mormonism as covered in this work, a local newspaper might print a letter inviting anyone to an open meeting at church to hear what this work or other materials offer. Orders could be taken for people wanting materials to give to Mormon neighbors to read.

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