

# CHAPTER ONE

## THE COCOON OF MORMONISM

### Introduction

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (the Mormon church or LDS) provides not only a theology, but it embraces a complete way of life wrapped within a silken spiritual cocoon, woven and designed to protect and nourish the sons and daughters of God throughout their life span or mortality on this Earth. If the reader, either a member or non-member, is to understand this church and its people, in relationship to outside society, it is first necessary to view this cocoon from within. Furthermore, this phenomenon must first be observed as through the eyes, ears, and emotions of those within, so that an empathy and an understanding can ensue. In this way, the beliefs and activities therein may be more fully understood. Only then can the reader, Mormon or non-Mormon, discern the possible effects of maintaining or piercing this protective covering.

Accordingly, the statements made throughout this chapter concerning Church theology and activity will be stated as an active Mormon might express them, are descriptive only, and are not intended to reflect the author's acceptance or rejection.

### Church Origin and Priesthood

The origin of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is described by Apostle LeGrand Richards in *A Marvelous Work and a Wonder*, 1976, page 7: "On the morning of a beautiful spring day in 1820 there occurred one of the most important and momentous events in this world's history. God, the Eternal Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, appeared to Joseph Smith and gave instructions concerning the establishment of the kingdom of God upon the earth in these latter days." Joseph Smith was told that all the religions were wrong and he was to restore the true religion in this dispensation, the dispensation of the fullness of time. Through him all offices of the priesthood were restored. Joseph holds the keys to this dispensation, and in a future time at the final wrap-up scene, he along with heads of other dispensations will turn over the keys of each dispensation to Adam, who in turn will deliver them all to Jesus Christ. The Lord speaking in revelation (Doctrine and Covenants 21: 4-5) concerning Joseph Smith as prophet, seer and revelator said "...thou shalt give heed unto all his words and commandments which he shall give unto you as he receiveth them, walking in all holiness before me; For his word ye shall receive, as if from mine own mouth, in all patience and faith." Each president succeeding him is viewed in this same manner and is considered to be a prophet, seer and revelator. Obedience to Authority is a very important principle. In answer to prayer, the individual member may receive revelation or inspiration for the benefit of himself and family, or for the church position he holds, but not for the Church itself.

### Standard Works - Books Considered Scripture

The standard scriptures of the Mormon Church consist of four books. The Bible is accepted as the Word of God as far as it is translated correctly. The Book of Mormon (B of M), from which the Church gets its name, was translated from gold plates Joseph Smith removed from the Hill Cumorah near Manchester, New York. These plates were received from and returned to an angel. The Book of Mormon gives a history of the former inhabitants of the American continents, and the teachings therein contain the fullness of the Gospel. The Doctrine and Covenants (D & C), contains revelations given to Joseph Smith with some additions by his successors in the presidency of the Church. The Pearl of Great Price (PGP), the other standard work of the Church, contains a selection from the revelations, translations, and narrations of Joseph Smith. This book includes the writings by Abraham which were translated from Egyptian papyrus.

## Theology

In making this portrayal of beliefs, we will concisely give the beliefs and practices as they currently exist without reference to other time or divergence. The Mormon people believe that as man is, God once was; and as God is, man may become. Therefore their God is an exalted resurrected personage of flesh and bone, or anthropomorphic in nature. They believe that God the Father along with his wives are the spiritual parents of our individual souls. These individual souls, sometime between conception and birth, receive physical bodies or tabernacles of flesh. Jesus Christ is not only the spiritual offspring of God, but literally the only begotten of the father, born to this Earth as the child of God the Father and Mary his mother; such conception made possible by the power of the Holy Ghost. Christ being mortal was subject to death. Christ being God was eternal and could raise himself from death. As stated in The Book of Mormon, Mosiah 15:8: "And thus God breaketh the bands of death, having gained the victory over death; giving the Son power to make intercession for the children of men". The Holy Ghost, the third member of the Godhead, is a personage of Spirit without a physical body. His function is to reveal the truth of all things. Moroni (the Nephite, and inhabitant of North America, who sealed records for their later coming forth) said in B of M, Moroni, 10:4-5.

"And when ye shall receive these things, I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true;

and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost. And by the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know the truth of all things."

Temple work and missionary work are closely allied. Every individual that has ever lived upon the Earth will have the opportunity to hear the Gospel in this life, or after death and before the last resurrection. Each person will have the option of accepting or rejecting. Those accepting and being found worthy will be heir to the Celestial Kingdom, and will be sealed by earthly ordinances to parents, mates, and children. Only those members of the Celestial kingdom who are sealed in the holy bonds of matrimony can become Gods. They will beget and rear spirit souls, and create worlds of their own, into which these spirit souls will be born into mortality. Those not heir to the Celestial Kingdom will be resurrected into one of the lesser degrees of glory; the glory of which surpasses all understanding.

The Mormon people are taught that they are a chosen people. Many of the more valiant and highly evolved spirit souls were reserved to come forth in this last dispensation to prepare the way for the second coming of Christ and his triumphal reign upon the earth.

The Mormons place great emphasis upon families, and on guidance and rearing of children, believing that "family" is most important. Emphasis is placed upon education, cooperation, fairness, and non-use of drugs, tobacco and alcohol. Generally, children are taught the virtues, ethics, and principles of conduct that are also recognized by people other than Mormons. Special emphasis is placed on chastity.

Tithing is a tenet of the Church and each member is asked and expected to give ten percent of his or her income to the Church. It is stated in D & C, 64:23: "Behold, now it is called today until the coming of the Son of Man, and verily it is a day of sacrifice, and a day for the tithing of my people; for he that is tithed shall not be burned at his coming."

#### Basic Church Organization

Having briefly outlined Mormon theology, let's review the basic organization of the Church. At the head stands the president (prophet, seer and revelator) with two counselors who are his assistants. Immediately under him are the twelve apostles, each of whom is considered worthy and capable of being president. It is from among this group, God names and calls each succeeding president. There are other people and groups of people that constitutes the general authorities. Some or all of the General Authorities receive compensation, while those below this level are considered as holding lay positions and receives no compensation. Below the General Authorities, in geographical

and jurisdictional order, are regions, stakes, and wards; or missions and branches.

### Life Style and Church Associated Friendships

Now, let's turn our attention to the lifestyle typical within the Mormon Church. Church activities, associations, and rituals provide meaning, purpose, and satisfaction that are sustaining to present members, appealing to prospective members, insure continuing membership into the following generation, and act as a strong deterrent to anyone that might consider leaving the church.

Most membership activity is at the ward or branch level with some individuals being called to stake or mission supervisory positions. Each ward is directed by a bishop (a member of the ward) who is called of God to administer to the ward with aid of counselors and clerks. The Bishop is called or appointed for an indefinite period, but normally serves for approximately five years. Each ward has priesthood, Sunday school, primary, young men and women, and relief society activities. These activities require presidencies, clerks, secretaries, teachers, advisors, group leaders, coaches, scout masters, den mothers, project leaders, sitters, librarians, etc. These positions are all unpaid and are filled from within the ward membership.

These activities and the associated administration bring many people into contact with each other, and out of these contacts grow many friendships. This contact is so universal that, outside of close family relationships, an active Mormon may not have or feel the need of extensive outside friendships. This situation prevails generally whether the person is a child or adult. If one attends the funeral of a deceased Mormon, one will readily realize this situation by the large number and wide age span of those attending.

#### Name and First Blessing

We will now follow a Mormon family through a life cycle beginning with a couple having their first child. Shortly after birth the child will be taken to Church for a name and a father's blessing. At this time two or more men who hold the Higher priesthood will hold a baby to give him or her a blessing. The spokesman will generally be the baby's father. Outside of acknowledging that the ritual is performed by authority of the Melchizedek Priesthood, and in the name of Jesus Christ, there is no set text. The father will give a name to the baby, and often bless the child with a healthy body and mind, happiness, adequate worldly means, testimony that the gospel is true, completion of a mission, marriage in the temple, and entry into the Celestial Kingdom by coming forth in the first resurrection. Some keep a copy of this blessing to later give the child.



The child immediately goes to church with the family. At the age of three, the child will be admitted to his or her first class.

### The Sacrament Ritual

The Mormons hold Sacrament Meeting each Sunday which includes the administration of the sacrament ritual. The sacrament ritual is outlined in *D & C 20:75-79*:

"75. It is expedient that the church meet together often to partake of bread and wine in the remembrance of the Lord Jesus;

"76. And the elder or priest shall administer it; and after this manner shall he administer it -- he shall kneel with the church and call upon the Father in solemn prayer, saying:

"77. O God, the Eternal Father , we ask thee in the name of thy Son, Jesus Christ, to bless and sanctify this bread to the souls of all those who partake of it, that they may eat in remembrance of the body of thy Son, and witness unto thee, O God, the Eternal Father, that they are willing to take upon them the name of thy Son, and always remember him and keep his commandments which he has given them: that they may always have his Spirit to be with them. Amen.

"78. The manner of administering the wine -- he shall take the cup also, and say:

"79. O God, the Eternal Father, we ask thee in the name of thy Son, Jesus Christ to bless and sanctify this wine to the souls of all those who drink of it, that they may do it in remembrance of the blood of thy Son, which was shed for them; that they may witness unto thee, O God, the Eternal Father, that they do always remember him, that they may have his Spirit to be with them. Amen.'"

Water is now substituted for wine.

#### Fast Sunday and Testimony Meeting

One Sunday each month (usually the first Sunday of the month) is specified as fast Sunday. On this day the Sacrament Meeting format is changed. The meeting is opened with prayer and music. After briefly conducting church business if any, new babies are named and blessed as mentioned above. Then follows the regular sacrament ritual using bread and water. The remaining time (thirty to forty-five minutes) is available for any in attendance to rise and speak. This is often referred to as a testimony meeting. This meeting often acts as a catharsis, giving people opportunity to express thankfulness to others, to express love, to ask or give thanks for forgiveness, to express appreciation for the Gospel and to testify to its truthfulness. Often a child, even of pre-school age may speak in this meeting. Such a presentation will often be similar to the following:

I want to bear my testimony.

Thank you for my daddy and my mommy,  
and my brothers and my sisters,

and my cat, Fifi.

Thank you for the nice home we live in  
and the food we eat.

Thank you for the nice school I go to.

I know the gospel is true.

In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Occasionally a humorous item will come out. One autumn, Fast Sunday immediately followed the opening day of the pheasant hunting season, in which the daily limit was three or five birds. One young daughter of a man in the Sunday School Presidency included in the thank-you items "and the 17 pheasants my daddy got yesterday".

It is important that each member of the Church acquire a testimony of the truthfulness of the Gospel. This is viewed, not as an intellectual process of examining evidence, but as a process of affirmation. Members are urged to read and study Church scriptures and literature, attend their meetings, and ask in prayer and faith for a testimony of the truthfulness of the Gospel. The Holy Ghost will affirm this truthfulness.

#### Baptism and Free Agency

Mormons are baptized by immersion after reaching the age of eight. The ceremony consists of the Words, "Having authority given me of Jesus Christ, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen." This wording is taken from the Book of Mormon, 3 Nephi, 11:25. After

baptism the individual is confirmed a member in the Church and is instructed to receive the Holy Ghost.

It is considered that a person at approximately eight years of age has reached the age of accountability. Prior to this time a child has done things as he has seen or been taught without feeling personal responsibility. However at about eight years of age each person begins to feel individual responsibility for his thoughts and actions, or begins to exercise his free agency. Mormons state strongly that they believe in the free agency of men. However to them this does not mean a choice of many avenues of thought and actions to explore. Because the Church has outlined the proper road, the individual is free to follow Church teachings and instructions and receive the resultant rewards, or to disobey and either not receive the rewards or receive punishment. A sincere person after baptism may call upon the Holy Ghost who will confirm the correct teaching or action.

#### Priesthood Ordination and Young Men Activities

The following quotations are taken from *D & C*, Sec. 107. Verse 1 states: " There are, in the church, two priesthoods, namely, the Melchizedek and Aaronic, including the Levitical Priesthood." In verse 8 it states: "The Melchizedek Priesthood holds the right of presidency, and has power and authority over all the offices in the church in all ages of the world, to administer in spiritual things." In verse 3 it is stated that prior to the time of Melchizedek this priesthood was called "the

Holy Priesthood, after the Order of the Son of God." The Aaronic priesthood is an appendage to the Melchizedek Priesthood and has power in administering outward ordinances. As stated in verse 15: "The bishopric is the presidency of this [Aaronic] priesthood, and holds the keys or authority of the same."

If found worthy, a male member may have the Aaronic priesthood bestowed upon him and be ordained to the office of deacon at twelve years of age, a teacher at age fourteen, and a priest at age sixteen. If found worthy, a male member may have the Melchizedek Priesthood bestowed upon him and be ordained to the office of elder at age nineteen, with ordination to office of seventy or high priest being made as function or position requires. The church provides class instructions for each office of the priesthood, supports the Boy Scouts of America program, and provides athletic participation and competition, dance and theatrical instruction.

#### Young Women Activities

In the Mormon church female members do not hold directly any priesthood office or function. Women are to support their husbands in their priesthood calling, and raise children unto the Lord. In the celestial kingdom wives will give birth to and raise spirit souls, preparatory to birth in mortality. The church provides class instructions for each age group, provide young women programs similar in merit to the scouting program but directed closer to feminine needs and development. Also provided

is athletic participation and competition, dance and theatrical instruction.

### Missionary Program

Mormons missionaries of the church are called by God to fulfill missions throughout the world. A young male Mormon can anticipate such a call after attaining his nineteenth birthday, and a young single female member at two or three years later in life. The Church has established a uniform system for teaching prospective members. By the use of six memorized lessons, these young people present the Mormon church to the investigator and attempts to show that the Mormon Church is the only true religion on the earth. The missionaries are taught to testify that they know Joseph Smith was a prophet of God, and that the Church of Jesus Christ has been restored to the earth. Missionaries are taught the manner in which to bear these testimonies. The testimonies of the young missionaries are quite impressive to many investigators.

This program not only recruits new members into the Church, but it strengthens the present membership. The missionary by study learns more concerning the doctrine of the church, and by his or her repeated affirmations, his or her testimony becomes deep seated. The parents, generally providing major financial support, share in the accomplishments and emotions of their young missionary son or daughter. Brothers and sisters share in the adventures and look forward to the time they may be called to go on a mission.

The church also send out older people as missionaries. Often they are older couples who are retired and can afford to maintain themselves while on a mission. They perform various tasks for the Church at mission headquarters, at visitor centers, as well as missionary proselytizing. Women with no husbands who are in relatively good health may also be called.

#### TEMPLE ENDOWMENT AND ETERNAL MARRIAGE

The temple endowment ceremony is usually received just before a missionary leaves for his mission location, or at the time of his or her marriage in the temple. The following description and definition of the endowment is taken from a tape recording made in a Mormon temple by a member of the LDS Church in July, 1990 as reported on pages 109-110, *Evolution of the Mormon Temple Ceremony 1842-1900*, by Jerald and Sandra Tanner. The speaker is the second lecturer at the beginning of the endowment ceremony.

"Brethren, you have been washed and pronounced clean, or that through your faithfulness, you may become clean from the blood and sins of this generation. You have been anointed to become hereafter Kings and Priests unto the Most High God, to rule and reign in House of Israel forever.

"Sisters, you have been washed and anointed to become hereafter Queens and Priestesses to your husbands.

"Brethren and sisters, if you are true and faithful, the day will come when you will be chosen, called up, and anointed Kings and Queens, Priests and Priestesses, whereas you are now anointed only to become such. The realization of these blessings depends upon your faithfulness.

"You have had a Garment placed upon you, which you were informed represents the garment given to Adam and Eve when they were found naked in the garden of Eden, and which is called the 'Garment of the Holy Priesthood'. This you were instructed to wear throughout your life. You were informed that it will be a shield and a protection to you inasmuch as you do not defile it, and if you are true and faithful to your covenants.

"Your Endowment is, to receive all those ordinances in the House of the Lord, which are necessary for you, to enable you to walk back to the presence of the Father, passing the angels who stand as sentinels, being enabled to give them the key words, the signs and tokens, pertaining to the Holy Priesthood, and gain your eternal exaltation.

"If you proceed and receive your full endowment, you will be required to take upon yourselves sacred



obligations, the violation of which will bring upon you the judgment of God; for God will not be mocked."

The obligations are contained in the law of obedience, law of sacrifice, law of the gospel, law of chastity, and the law of consecration. The covenant accompanying the law of consecration as quoted from page 133 of the above quoted publication:

"You and each of you covenant and promise before God, angels, and these witnesses at this altar, that you do accept the Law of Consecration as contained in the Doctrine and Covenants, in that you do consecrate yourselves, your time, talents, and everything with which the Lord has blessed you, or with which he may bless you, to the church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, for the building up of the Kingdom of God on the earth and for the establishment of Zion.

"Each of you bow your head and say 'yes.'"

Children born after this ceremony are automatically sealed to the parents for eternity. Any prior born children may be sealed by a temple ceremony wherein children are sealed to parents. Baptism and endowment ordinances are performed for the dead. A woman may be sealed to only one man, whether he be alive or dead. A man may be married and sealed to a second or later woman if the prior wife has died. In the Celestial world, polygamy will be practiced, with multiple women being sealed to one man.

### Chapter Conclusion

This concludes our description of the cocoon as it might be described by a faithful and informed member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The non-member now has a basic understanding of Mormon theology and practices.

From this point of common understanding we can move to consideration of Mormon testimonies and the origin of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saint. We will first examine how these testimonies are acquired and then search for the truth concerning the origin of the Mormon Church. Any person reading this book, Mormon and non-Mormon alike will better understand the Mormon people and the Mormon religion, and know more what his or her association is and should be. We will return to the "Cocoon" in our last chapter.

Let's venture forward, both mentally and spiritually. Our next topic for study will be the Mormon testimony.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE MORMON "TESTIMONY"

#### Introduction

Mormons are taught, from time of remembrance or entrance into the Church, that the most valuable asset they will ever have is a testimony of the truthfulness of the Gospel. Until members and non-member thoroughly understand this testimony and the manner in which it is derived, communication and understanding will be limited. Although each may feel he comprehends what is meant by a testimony, this process is not understood by most members and even less by non-members. We shall try to arrive at this greater understanding in this chapter.

The basic Mormon testimony consists of three parts. The person knows (1) that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God, (2) that Joseph restored the true Church of Jesus Christ to the earth, and (3) that the Gospel is true. If Joseph was a prophet of God, he in some manner had contact with God. This contact is reported by Joseph Smith in Abraham, Pearl of Great Price. The Pearl of Great Price, the Book of Mormon, and the Doctrine and Covenants contain, according to the Church, selected revelations of Joseph Smith directly from God or divinely guided translations of ancient records.

Today, if one desired to determine the reliability of such allegations, one would logically do the following. He or she would carefully examine the statements that the self-claimed

prophet or seer had made. He or she would attempt to determine the reliability of Joseph Smith. He or she would want to examine the historical details from independent sources. If the scripture produced is a translation of any record, he or she would want to know where that ancient record is, and if there is translation verification from independent sources. If a historical account, such as the Book of Mormon, he or she would want to know if there is archeological or legendary support. Are the various translations and revelations, consistent within their own context and with each other? These are the things we will examine in an attempt to arrive at a truth evaluation. Normally, one would think that the Mormon Church would seek and make this information available to the public or to a prospective member, especially if such items would furnish verification. These things are not provided.

The Mormon Church indoctrinating procedures are not designed to determine the truth, but are designed to instill a testimony within the member that the Gospel is true. The two are entirely different. It is absolutely essential that this distinction be made. The testifying to the truthfulness or to the falsity of a proposition, tells you only that, in his own mind, the testator "knows". The testimony does not change the veracity or falsity of the proposition. How the testator arrived at his testimony of knowing is important. If it is based upon the securing and the investigation of relevant information, his observation could be valid. If the testimony was arrived at by affirmation rites and

procedures, one can be sure he has been or is involved in mind manipulation. Affirmation "knowing" is an emotional response, and has nothing to do with the truthfulness or falsity. None of the necessary things have been done to find or determine truth. If the proposition being affirmed is false, or if a Deity is involved in the affirmation, the consequences of such affirmation process can be most serious, especially if leadership lies with one whose words are to be considered as if coming from the mouth of God. This procedure bypasses the thinking process. If a deity is involved in the affirmation, the manipulated one feels guilty or sinful if he or she questions or investigates. Using such mind conditioning procedures the Mormon Church has been very successful in instilling testimonies within the minds of its members. In this chapter we will first examine the procedures by which the members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints obtain their testimonies. Then, in following chapters, we will examine the evidence to see what truth, if any, we can discover regarding the subject matter of that to which they testify.

To show how the affirmation method is used within the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Saints we shall first examine the many influences each active member experiences from either the time of birth, or from time of conversion. We will roughly follow the sequence of the first chapter.

#### Chosen Spirit of God Bearing Early Testimony

A child is named and given a father's blessing by power of the priesthood. From a very early age the child is taught that he or she is one of God's chosen spirits to come to Earth at this time in the dispensation of the fullness of time in which Christ will return to Earth. Each child is taught that it is very important that he or she have a testimony that the Gospel is true. Often, at a Fast Sunday sacrament meeting or within a class, a child bears his or her testimony, giving thanks for his or her many blessings including food, clothing, shelter, family members, and stating that he or she knows the gospel is true.

Prophet (President) Speak as if With the Voice of God

A member from the time of first memory, or from time of conversion has been taught that the president (prophet, seer, and revelator) of the Mormon Church speaks as with the voice of God. In D & C 21:4-5 God said in revelation to Joseph Smith and in reference to Joseph himself:

"4. Wherefore, meaning the church, thou shalt give heed unto all his words and commandments which he shall give unto you as he receiveth them, walking in all holiness before me;

"5. For his word ye shall receive, as if from mine own mouth, in patience and faith."

"6. For by doing these things the gates of hell shall not prevail against you; yea, and the Lord God

will disperse the powers of darkness from before you, and cause the heavens to shake for your good, and his name's glory." (underscoring by author)

The Mormon Church teaches this not only with respect to Joseph Smith, but also with respect to each succeeding president or prophet. Often when high Church Authorities speak, they will attest that the president is prophet, seer and revelator; that Joseph Smith was a prophet; that the Gospel is true and has been restored to the earth; or that all three of these things are true.

#### The Baptized Instructed to Receive the Holy Ghost

Each child prior to baptism, at or shortly after the age of eight, is taught that he or she is now reaching the age of accountability. From this time on he or she will be held accountable for his actions, having been cleansed from prior sins by baptism. By the "laying on of hands", in a baptismal confirmation ritual he or she is directed to receive the Holy Ghost, which will guide him or her in righteousness. Because of teaching accountability at or about eight years of age, Mormons state, and strongly allege, they believe in free agency. If the subject deals with other than church related matters, this is generally found to be so. However, if the area concerns a moral tenet, church doctrine, or church history, the situation is entirely different. A person is vigorously discouraged from making any independent determination of morality, any outside verification of Church history, and any show of opposition to

church doctrine. Freedom or "free agency" in this area is very small. Here one may only affirm or accept the consequences.

#### Missionary Affirmation Procedures

When young people are called to fulfill a mission they are given instruction similar to that found on page 3 of the manual, *A Uniform System For Teaching Investigators*, published by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, August, 1961.

"D. Testimony

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

On pages 21-22 of the same manual is the following:

"Elder: The Church of Jesus Christ has been restored to the Earth, Mr. Brown. I know and testify that these things we have discussed here are true.

"Elder J: (Interrupting spontaneously) It has been a real pleasure for me to be here tonight and to participate in this



discussion, Mr. Brown. I also know that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God and that the true Church of Jesus Christ has been restored to the earth."

(underscoring by author)

The young person going on a mission may be somewhat better versed in Mormon doctrine than in the 1960's, but not by much. In the *Improvement Era*, October 1961, p.716, Joseph Fielding Smith the tenth President of the Mormon Church said:

"The missionary of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is a modern miracle. In the world the idea prevails that a man must go to school, college, get an education, be trained and get a degree to qualify him to preach and to teach the gospel of Jesus Christ, as he understands it. We call our young men and women at the beginning, really, of life,...We send them out into the world untrained,...They are unprepared, insofar as education and knowledge are concerned. Most of them have never read the Book of Mormon, a great part of them, if not the greater part, have never read the New Testament. They are not familiar with the revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants. I find this out when I interview them. But they have one thing that the world does not have, and cannot have, and that's a testimony and the determination to go out into the field, as unprepared as they are, and spend two or maybe more years bearing

witness to the restoration of the gospel, expounding the scriptures, as they learn them." (underscoring by author)

Evidently, the above writer who was the president of the Mormon church, allegedly a prophet of God, saw nothing wrong in having young men and women spend two or more years of their lives bearing witness to that which they do not know, expounding the scriptures as they learn them. What does this reveal about the integrity of the Church and its missionary program? What does it reveal about this character trait that the Church instills in its young missionaries?

Civil authorities are often reluctant to get involved in presentations of religious bodies. Because of this, conduct is allowed to exist in a religious environment that would be barred in the business community and in our justice system. In our courts it is a crime of perjury to bear false witness, to attest that something is true when one does not and cannot know factually that it is true. It is also a serious offense to induce another to bear such witness. Would one not think a religion should be as careful in presenting facts about its product and origin, as is required of business in selling its products?

Holy Ghost Attests Scriptural Truths

As portrayed by the Mormons, Moroni was the last of the Nephites on this continent, and it was he who, it is claimed, stored the tablets from which the Book of Mormon was translated. In Moroni 10:4-5, Moroni says with respect to the truthfulness of what is now known as the Book of Mormon:

"4. And when ye shall receive these things, I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost.

"5. And by the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know the truth of all things." (underscoring by author)

If for some reason you do not get a positive result, it is presumed your heart was not sincere enough, there was not real intent, or faith was not sufficient. "No" is not taken as an acceptable and valid answer. Almost anything said often enough, "with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith" will become the testimony of that individual. This may be the way a person gains a testimony, but it is not the process by which truth is found or determined!".

Conclusion - Mind Manipulation?

As stated above, a concept expressed often enough and loudly enough will gain credence and acceptance. This method of indoctrination is exceptionally well demonstrated by the testimony of members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

From an early age or from the time of conversion, A member of the Mormon Church, is told the story of the origin of the Church. He is taught to testify that the Gospel is true, that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God and that the true Church of Jesus Christ has been restored to the earth. This origin is associated with certain historical information beginning about 1820 and extending to the present. This historical information has considerable bearing upon the accuracy of these assertions. A member is given, at best, only partial historical information {or false information as one may determine later in this book}, and is deterred from seeking full information or obtaining access to all pertinent facts. He is taught not to question nor to arrive at independent conclusion; he is taught that the information is directly from God, and that God's prophet here on earth testifies to its truthfulness. He can even call upon one of the Godhead, the Holy Ghost, who will confirm this truth. To finance the cost of taking the Gospel to the world and to finance the many Church activities, the member is tithed and told by God in *D & C*, 64:23: "...for he that is tithed shall not be burned at his coming." Also, the member often finances the missions of his

children. These procedures have worked well for the Mormon Church, giving it an amazing growth rate and financial power.

It appears that the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has done an excellent job in the indoctrination and mind manipulation of its members. It is easy to see what is accomplished by these affirmation procedures, but it is difficult to assign blame. In most cases, it is those most indoctrinated that are perpetuating the system. They are fathers and mothers, church teachers, bishops, etc. Most of these people are sincere well-intentioned individuals doing what they think God wants them to do. How far up does this mind control extend? It may include some of the general authorities, but probably not all. Could high authorities of the Mormon Church sincerely believe it is right to obtain and secrete important Church documents and significant historical information? Is it conceivable to think that they consider it proper to encourage people not to seek and read relevant information?

How can each individual discern what is true for himself or herself? In our next chapter we will try to be helpful to both the Mormon and the non-Mormon reader.

## CHAPTER THREE

### INDIVIDUAL TRUTH

This chapter has been entitled "INDIVIDUAL TRUTH", because in final analysis the human mind is the conduit of all truth to which man may become aware. Would you let another determine this truth for you? You should have input as to what is truth to you. If you are a member of the Mormon Church you must not let the system, as just described in our previous chapter, keep you from investigating and making your own decision. You must recognize that the Church establishes procedures that will provide a testimony, but they discourage the steps that will lead a member to discover or determine truth based upon facts and independent judgment. If an individual permits another to control his mind, he has lost a most valuable asset and is no longer free. Until this yoke is removed, he has lost his freedom or free agency. He is unable to make his own decisions, and can only echo the voice of the controller. One truly interested in your welfare, will want you to have the most information obtainable when contemplating any matter requiring an important decision.

We have just reviewed the manner in which a member of the Church has attained his testimony. If you are a member of the Mormon Church, you may wish to determine if your testimony agrees or disagrees with known information. To do so, it is essential that your testimony be held in abeyance for a period of time, a period for investigation and discovery. Just mentally place your testimony upon a shelf while you take time to secure and examine

all pertinent information. **We dare you to be this bold!** If at the end of that examination, you find that your study and examination verifies what you already believe, retrieve your testimony from the shelf. Then you will know that it has become your individual truth, based on valid information. If you do not return to the shelf, it will be because you have removed the yoke of bondage and found your individual truth elsewhere. Either way you win. I advise any young Mormon anticipating a mission to take these steps of discovery before being called. This should be your informed decision and not solely that of your father, mother, or bishop. It should be a decision made prayerfully with full information.

If you are a prospective member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, please do not allow the touching, sincere testimonies of youthful, clean looking, clean living Mormon missionaries negate any attempt to find full information concerning that which they are selling. These testimonies have either been attained as shown in the preceding chapter, or are now being attained by the affirmation process. Why not ask them how they "know"? As in the above paragraph you should diligently seek your individual truth.

Whoever you are, do not be hurried, but make a thorough investigation. Information may be obtained at your library or bookstores. If contacted by Mormon missionaries, they will provide you with access to that information concerning the church

that they desire you to have. If you are a member of the Church, you will have available the information the Church cares for you to have. In addition it will be necessary to obtain that information the Church desires you not to have. We shall endeavor in this book to give both the position of the Mormon Church and that of conflicting information. This conflicting information is often found within the Church itself. It is believed that the information we are providing is important. At the rear of this book is a bibliography from which you may pick and select the publications that will add to your knowledge. Our recommendation would be to first secure *Mormonism - Shadow or Reality?* by Jerald and Sandra Tanner. Their research has been very thorough and objective. Diligently seek and carefully examine any secured material until you have arrived at a conclusion. If, after finding and carefully considering all information, you still have not arrived at a conclusion, you may want to try the following technique.

Each individual feels a tie to the eternal. Such feelings are expressed in many different ways, and people have varied conceptions. First, secure all pertinent information available, study and ponder it fully. If question persists, in prayer or meditation submit the entire problem to your subconscious self, to the God within, or to God (according to your understanding). Do this while feeling love for all things and all people and a strong desire to be one with the God of your heart. Say that you do not know, ask to be taught. Release your thoughts and await



an answer. Do not be impatient. At some period in time you will know where to find missing items and also what is best for you.

This process is similar to that belatedly claimed by Joseph Smith for himself but denied to members and prospective members of the Church. It is sad that the Mormon Church does not encourage such investigative process, but gives to the members and prospects only that portion of information or misinformation that best serves its purposes.

Often one that has escaped this manipulation, finds his strongest desire is that parents, spouse, children, and loved ones could also be free. Often this will not be possible, and in some cases, it is probably not desirable. Some will have been members for years. For some of them, all of their spiritual and social activity is tied to the Church. These members would have only a void if the "gospel" were taken away. If freed they will face a certain emptiness and a feeling of having been betrayed. Their social contacts could easily be gone. In some cases, the time has probably passed when the damage can be reversed, and no good can be accomplished. Some Mormon church members will sincerely believe that they have no problem, but feel that it is the "escaped" person that has the problems. However, I make an appeal for investigation by all those willing to lay aside their testimony for a brief period, those that are sincerely investigating, those that have not become convinced, those that have become silent, and those that have taken the position that

this issue is not important. It is from your ranks that must come the actions that will interrupt the generation to generation indoctrination. Also, an appeal is made to every youth of the Mormon Church, asking each to seek and find their individual truth.

In this book we will not be making comparisons to outside doctrines, or judging comparative value of teachings. We will be investigating claims of authenticity made by the Mormon Church and information that is available concerning these claims. We urge each reader to lay aside any prior conviction and come with an open mind. Allow the information to be absorbed and come to your own conclusions. We shall proceed by examining the origin of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### PIVOTAL POINT OF MORMONISM - ITS ORIGIN

#### Importance of the First Vision

The origin of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is detailed by Joseph Smith in the Pearl of Great Price, Joseph Smith - History 1. As stated at the beginning of this book, the origin of the church is referred to by Apostle LeGrand Richards as quoted from *A Marvelous Work and a Wonder*, 1976, page 7 in which he wrote: "On the morning of a beautiful spring day in 1820 there occurred one of the most important and momentous events in this world's history. God, the Eternal Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, appeared to Joseph Smith and gave instructions concerning the establishment of the kingdom of God upon the earth in these latter days." Joseph Smith, in telling the story of his first vision states: "When the light rested upon me I saw two Personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description, standing above me in air. One of them spake unto me, calling me by name, and said, pointing to the other--*This is My Beloved son. Hear him!*". (PGP, Joseph Smith Hist.1:17)

This account of the first vision has become the corner stone of the Church missionary program. Acceptance is necessary for baptism. Denial by a member is considered apostasy and is grounds for excommunication.

David O. McKay, ninth president of the Mormon Church, wrote in *Gospel Ideals* page 85: "The appearing of the Father and the Son to Joseph Smith is the foundation of this Church." Apostle John A. Widtsoe stated as recorded in *Joseph Smith - Seeker After Truth*, page 19: "The first vision of 1820 is of first importance in the history of Joseph Smith. Upon its reality rest the truth and value of his subsequent work."

In Mormon theology, this vision was the first heavenly contact with Joseph Smith. It is self-evident, as stated in *Doctrines of Salvation*, by Joseph Fielding Smith, Vol. 1, page 4: "The Father and the Son appeared to the Prophet Joseph Smith before the Church was organized and the priesthood restored to the earth." (underscoring by author) Joseph Smith received this vision in the spring of 1820; and it was first published for the Church membership in *Times and Seasons* in March and April of 1842, Vol.3, pp.727-278 and pp.748-749.

### Doctrinal Conflict

Between these two dates, on September 22 and 23, 1832, Joseph Smiths in revelation (*D & C*, 84:19-22) gives the following verses as doctrine:

"19. And this greater priesthood administereth the gospel and holdeth the key of the mysteries of the kingdom, even the key of the knowledge of God.

"20. Therefore, in the ordinances thereof, the power of godliness is manifest.

"21. And without the ordinances thereof, and the authority of the priesthood, the power of godliness is not manifest unto men in the flesh.

"22. For without this no man can see the face of God, even the Father, and live". (underscoring by author)

The contradiction of the two revelations above presents a dilemma. Each position is taken directly from the scriptures of the Church, Joseph Smith himself having been author of each presentation. If the Joseph Smith first vision story is correct, it would seem that the Doctrine and Covenants verses are false; otherwise Joseph Smith would have been dead before the Doctrine and Covenants revelation was obtained. On the other hand, if the Doctrine and Covenants revelation is valid, then it appears that the "First Vision" never occurred as presented in the Pearl of Great Price. Either situation is unthinkable to the Church and its devout members. However, the Church has existed since 1842

with this apparent discrepancy. Some people both Mormon and non-Mormon do not feel this presents a major problem. With the priesthood not upon the earth, it would only be natural to "quicken" the one to whom are to be given the keys to this dispensation so that he could accomplish his mission. Especially is this so, if he is to define the Godhead, and restore both the Gospel and the Priesthood. Some do not see meaningful conflict between the priesthood revelation and the story of the first vision. Do you?

#### Other Possibilities

However, there is one other possibility to which thought should be given. Could it be that Joseph Smith in 1832 at the time of giving the priesthood revelation had no thought that years later (1842) an account of a "First Vision" would place himself in the position of having seen God the Father in 1820? Additional information is available later in our book that could have a bearing on this question.

In our next chapter we will present and review the information available concerning the three versions of the first vision of Joseph Smith. All three now have been acknowledged by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, even to the extent of photographs being made available. In our next chapter we shall present the three versions of the "First Vision".

## CHAPTER FIVE

### JOSEPH'S FIRST VISION -- THREE VERSIONS

#### Introduction

It is purported that in the spring of 1820 Joseph Smith received his first vision. There are three manuscripts pertaining to this first vision. Although all three are in the handwriting of Joseph Smith or that of his scribe, all three differ in content. The "Earlier Version" manuscript was written in 1831-1832, about twelve years after its stated occurrence. The "Reference Version" manuscript was written in 1835, approximately fifteen years after the experience. In this Joseph Smith refers to his vision when speaking with a Jewish minister. The third "Official Version" was composed by Joseph Smith prior to publication in the Times and Seasons in 1842, approximately twenty-two years after this claimed event. This third version, is now doctrinal and is included as part of the Pearl of Great price, (Joseph Smith--History 1:8-20). When speaking of the first vision, Mormon people are always referring to this official version. Very few members of the Mormon Church are cognizant of the existence of the other two versions.

#### AUTHENTICITY

The official version of the First Vision is that written by Joseph Smith and first published in 1842 in *Times and Seasons*, Vol.3, pages 728 and 748. This version now appears in the Pearl

of Great Price, Joseph Smith--History 1, and is part of the scriptures of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

The two earlier manuscripts have been under Church control from the dates of being penned to the present. The information was suppressed until the spring 1969. Someone, either being unaware of the significance of the manuscripts, or inadvertently, permitted Paul R. Cheesman to view the manuscript containing the earlier version. This first appeared in a graduate thesis at Brigham Young University in May 1965 written by Paul R. Cheesman entitled "An Analysis of the Accounts Relating Joseph Smith's Early Visions." After Jerald and Sandra Tanner published and distributed thousands of copies of the earliest version throughout the world, the Church released photographs of both documents that we have designated as the earlier version and the reference version. These have been published in Brigham Young University Studies, Spring 1969, pages 279-285.

When making Church acknowledgment of these manuscripts Dean C. Jesse with the LDS Church Historian's office said the following concerning the earlier version:

"On at least three occasions prior to 1839 Joseph Smith began writing his history. The earliest of these is a six-page account recorded on three leaves of a ledger book, written between the summer of 1831 and November 1832. An analysis of the handwriting shows that the narrative was penned by Frederick G. Williams,



scribe to the Prophet and counselor in the First Presidency....

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

Later Dean C. Jesse issued a correction stating:

"This six-page account is the only history containing the actual handwriting of Joseph Smith, a fact that was not realized when this account was previously analyzed." (BYU Studies, Summer 1971, page 462.) (underscoring by author)

Regarding the reference manuscript, Dean C. Jesse stated: "...In this journal under the date of November 9, 1835, an interview with a Jewish minister is recorded in which Joseph Smith again relates the account of his First Vision." (Brigham Young Studies, Spring 1969, page 283)

The official version is part of the doctrinal writings of the Church; is the cornerstone of their missionary program; and non-belief is apostasy. Although acknowledging the earlier version, the author has no information indicating a general dissemination of this information has been made to the Church membership. Why not?

#### Introduction

Before we can make adequate analysis and comparisons of the three versions of the First Vision, it is necessary to outline the historical background of the period 1820 through 1842.

James B. Allen, and Associate Professor of history at Brigham Young University, clearly states the importance of the first vision as viewed by the Church today: "Belief in the vision is one of the fundamentals to which faithful members give assent. Its importance is second only to belief in the divinity of Jesus of Nazareth. The story is an essential part of the first lesson given by Mormon missionaries to prospective converts, and its acceptance is necessary before baptism."

*(Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought, Autumn, 1966, page 29).*

Was this same sentiment prevalent during the period 1820 through 1842?

#### Local Mormon Historical Facts

It should be noted that in the early years of Mormon history, members were not aware that Joseph Smith had or claimed any vision prior to 1823 when Joseph would have been 17. During this time people were taught that his first visionary experience concerned tablets or plates that resulted in the Book of Mormon. No written scripture or general Church publications taught anything concerning what is now termed the "First Vision". Also, the "Messenger and Advocate" which was the principal teaching and informational media of the Mormon Church in early days showed no teaching of this first vision nor any mention of Joseph having a

"first" visit from God the Father and His Son. Missionary and proselytizing endeavors were centered on the Book of Mormon.

The only known references to a heavenly visit prior to that pertaining to the Book of Mormon are those in the unpublished accounts we refer to as the earlier version and the reference version. This was the case up to the time of publishing the official version in the *Times and Seasons*, in 1842. As far as has been found to date, any reiterating of the First Vision by Joseph Smith or others either was not existent or was so inconsequential that such recital did not result in its mention in Mormon Church publications or in any of those of the Methodists, Baptists, or Presbyterians.

Inasmuch as Joseph stressed a religious fervor and active seeking of membership by other religious groups in the year 1820, we are including historic references pertaining to this period of time. There was a revival in the Palmyra area in 1824, four years later than the First Vision. The Palmyra Presbyterian Church reported 99 admitted on examination. The Baptist Church had received 94 by baptism. The Methodist circuit which included Palmyra showed an increase of 208. For the year 1820 the Presbyterians show nothing. The Baptist Palmyra church showed five baptisms, while the nearby Churches of Lyons, Canandaigua, and Farmington shows a combined net loss of 18 members. The Methodists figures for the entire circuit showed net losses of 23 in 1819, 6 in 1820, and 40 in 1821. In 1967 the Utah Christian Tract Society published a study by Wesley P. Walters entitled

*New Light on Mormon Origins From the Palmyra (N.Y.) Revival.*  
Within that document the reader may find the sources of these dates and numbers.

The above gives sufficient information that we may now make comparisons of the three versions. The "Earlier Version" was never edited for publication. Therefore the author has made minimal edit to make it more easily readable. The unedited transcript is included at the end of the Chapter for anyone that cares to make validation of contents.

#### Religious Fervor and Excitement?

In the official version (Joseph Smith--History 1:5-9) Joseph gives a description of exceptional religious fervor in the area and a description of his perplexity concerning this feverish activity, with him unable to decide which church was true. In the earlier version, this period was a period of individual study in which he sadly became convinced that no Church was correct. Historical records show there was little or no revival activity in 1820. However, there was extensive revival activity in 1824. In the earlier version, Joseph indicates no discrepancy with the historical information of the time. In the official version Joseph has placed this outside activity four years before it occurred. Why?

The verse references in the official version refers to verses in B of M, Joseph Smith History 1:

#### The Various Versions of the First Vision

Earlier Version

Nothing indicates any exceptional activity, except as noted below, it was a time when he pondered many things in his heart.

Official Version

"8. During this time of great excitement my mind was called up to serious reflection and great uneasiness; but though my feelings were deep and often poignant, still I kept myself aloof from all these parties, though I attended their several meetings as often as occasion would permit. In process of time my mind became somewhat partial to the Methodist sect, and I felt some desire to be united with them; but so great were the confusion and strife among the different denominations, that it was impossible for a person young as I was and so unacquainted with men and things, to come to any certain conclusion who was right and who was wrong.

" 9. My mind at time was greatly excited, the cry and tumult were so great and incessant. The Presbyterians were most decided against the Baptists and Methodists, and used all the powers of both reason and sophistry to prove their errors, or at least, to make the people think they were in error. On the other hand, the Baptists and Methodists in their turn were equally zealous in endeavoring to establish their own tenets and disprove all others."  
(underscoring by author)

The following comparison shows quite different account of activities preceding the vision. In the earlier version or account Joseph tells of his study of the scriptures, and arriving at the conclusion that no sect was right. In the official version he can not determine if any sect is correct, and decides to ask God in prayer.

Earlier Version

"...At about the age of twelve years my mind became seriously imprest with regard to the all important concerns for the welfare of my immortal soul; which lead me to searching the scriptures believing, as I was taught, that they contained the word of God. Then applying myself to them, and my intimate acquaintance with those of different denominations, led me to marvel exceedingly, for I discovered that they did not adorn their profession by a holy walk and godly conversation agreeable to what I found contained in that sacred depository. This was a grief to my soul. Thus from the age of twelve years to fifteen I pondered many things in my heart concerning the

Official Version

"10. In the midst of this war of words and tumult of opinions, I often said to myself: What is to be done? Who of all these parties are right; or, are they all wrong together? If any one of them be right, which is it, and how shall I know it?

"11. While I was laboring under the extreme difficulties caused by the contests of these parties of religionists, I was one day reading the Epistle of James, first chapter and fifth verse, which reads: *If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.*

"12. Never did any passage of scripture come with more power to the



situations of the world of mankind, the contentions and divisions, the wickedness and abominations and the darkness which pervaded the minds of mankind.

"My mind became exceedingly distressed for I became convicted of my sins. And by searching the scriptures, I found that mankind did not come unto the Lord, but that they had apostatized from the true and living faith; and there was no society or denomination that built upon the gospel of Jesus Christ as recorded in the New Testament." (underscoring by author)

47 heart of man than this did at this time to mine. It seemed to enter with great force into every feeling of my heart. I reflected on it again and again, knowing that if any person needed wisdom from God, I did: for how to act I did not know, and unless I could get more wisdom than I then had, I would never know; for the teachers of religion of the different sects understood the same passages of scriptures so differently as to destroy all confidence in settling the question by an appeal to the Bible.

"13. At length I came to the conclusion that I must either remain in darkness and confusion, or else I must do as James directs, that is, ask of God. I at length came to the

determination to 'ask of  
God,' concluding that if he  
gave wisdom to them that  
lacked wisdom, and would  
give liberally, and not  
upbraid, I might venture."  
(underscoring by author)

In the earlier version, Joseph already had determined that no church was true, but because of knowing he and all others had sinned, he asked God for mercy, for there were none else to whom he could go. In the official version, Joseph says he sought God to know which of the churches was right. This is a very different emphasis. In the earlier version there is no mention of a powerful being attempting his destruction. In the official version such a struggle is vividly portrayed.

Earlier Version

"And I felt to mean [mourn] for my own sins and for the Sins of the world. I learned in the scriptures that God was the same yesterday, today, and forever; that he was no respecter to persons, for he was God. I looked upon the sun, the glorious luminary of the earth and also the moon rolling in their majesty through the heavens, and also the stars shining in their courses, and the earth, also, upon which I stood, and the beast of the field, and the fowls of the heaven, and the fish of the waters, and also man walking forth upon the face of the earth in majesty and in strength, of beauty whose power and intelligence in governing the things which are so exceeding great and

Official Version

"14. So, in accordance with this, my determination to ask of God, I retired to the woods to make the attempt. It was on the morning of a beautiful, clear day, early in the spring of eighteen hundred and twenty. It was the first time in my life that I had made such an attempt, for amidst all my anxieties I had never as yet made the attempt to pray vocally.

"15. After I had retired to the place where I had previously designed to go, having looked around me, and finding myself alone, I kneeled down and began to offer up the desires of my heart to God. I had scarcely done so, when immediately I was seized upon by some power which entirely overcame me, and had such an astonishing

marvelous--even in the  
likeness of him who created  
them. And when I  
considered upon these  
things my heart exclaimed,  
well hath the wise man said  
it is a fool that saith in  
his heart there is no God.  
My heart exclaimed that all  
these bear testimony and  
bespeak an omnipotent and  
omnipresent power; a being  
who maketh laws and  
decreeth and bindeth all  
things in their bounds, who  
filleth eternity; who was  
and is and will be from all  
eternity to eternity. And  
when I considered all these  
things, and that that being  
seeketh such to worship  
him, worship him in spirit  
and truth. Therefore I  
cried unto the Lord for  
mercy for there was none  
else to whom I could go and  
obtain mercy."

49 influence over me as to  
bind my tongue so that I  
could not speak. Thick  
darkness gathered around  
me, and it seemed to me for  
a time as if I were doomed  
to sudden destruction.

"16. But exerting all my  
powers to call upon God to  
deliver me out of the power  
of this enemy which had  
seized upon me, and at the  
very moment when I was  
ready to sink into despair  
and abandon myself to  
destruction -- not to an  
imaginary ruin, but to the  
power of some actual being  
from the unseen world, who  
had such marvelous power as  
I had never before felt in  
any being -- just at this  
moment of great alarm, I  
saw a pillar of light  
exactly over my head, above  
the brightness of the sun,

(underscoring by author)

which descended gradually  
until it fell upon me."

(underscoring by author)

### Recount of the Visitation

The following comparison of the reports of the actual vision varies greatly, and the differences concern the very core of Mormonism. For clarity in presentation, this comparison is broken into sub-sections.

#### Prayer Answered in Each Case

In the earlier version, Joseph sought mercy from the Lord. With all churches being wrong he had no where else to go. In this earlier version Joseph, in vision, receives from the Lord a forgiveness of his sins, and is told that the Lord will come quickly. In the official version, Joseph prayed to God to be told which church was correct. He was told he must join none of them, because they were all wrong. The Lord told Joseph many other things, things that he could not write about at that time.

#### Personages Present

In the earlier version, Christ alone appears and speaks to Joseph. In the reference version, Joseph speaks of first one personage appearing followed soon by a second, and also the presence of many angels. One personage speaks to him. In the official version God the Father and His Son appear together. The Father says: "This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!"

#### Importance of the Father's Appearance

In the earlier version why would Joseph see Christ alone, change it to be two personages (one speaking) with many angels

present, and then in the official version report that he saw both God the Father and His Son, both of whom spoke to him? In the twenty-two years from 1820 to 1842, the Mormon Church had evolved quite an extended theology. The conception of God had evolved from that of the typical Protestant God to that of a resurrected man. What better proof of this evolved conception than a back-dated 1820 appearance of God the Father as a resurrected man saying unto Joseph: "This is my Beloved Son. Hear him." The Mormon Church now uses this experience as proof of this concept.



Earlier Version

"And the Lord heard my cry in the wilderness. While in the attitude of calling upon the Lord, . . . a pillar of light above the brightness of the sun at noon day came down from above and rested upon me. I saw the Lord; and he spake unto me saying: "Joseph my son, thy sins are forgiven thee. Go thy way; walk in my statutes and keep my commandments. Behold, I am the Lord of Glory. I was crucified for the world, that all those who believe on my name may have Eternal life. Behold he won't lieth in sin. At this time, none doeth good -- no, not one. They have turned aside from the gospel and keep not my commandments; they draw near to me with their lips

Official Version

"17. It no sooner appeared than I found myself delivered from the enemy which held me bound. When the light rested upon me I saw two Personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description, standing above me in the air. One of them spake unto me, calling me by name, and said, pointing to the other --This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!

"18. My object in going to inquire of the Lord was to know which of all the sects was right, that I might know which to join. No sooner, therefore, did I get possession of myself, so as to be able to speak, than I asked the Personages who stood above me in the light, which of all the sects was right--and which

while their hearts are far 52 from me. Mine anger is kindling against the inhabitants of the earth to visit them according to their ungodliness and to bring to pass that which hath been spoken by the mouth of the prophets and apostles. Behold and Lo, I come quickly as it was written of me in the cloud, clothed in the glory of my Father. And my soul was filled with love and for many days I could rejoice with great joy, and the Lord was with me."

(underscoring by author)

#### Reference Version

"...I called on the Lord in mighty prayer. A pillar of fire appeared above my head; which presently rested down upon

I should join.

"19. I was answered that I must join none of them, for they were all wrong: and the Personage who addressed me said that all their creeds were an abomination in his sight; that those professors were all corrupt; that: 'they draw near to me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me; they teach for doctrines, the commandment of men, having a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof.'

"20. He again forbade me to join with any of them; and many other things did he say unto me which I cannot write at this time.

When I came to myself again, I found myself lying on my back, looking up into heaven. When the light had departed, I had no

me, and filled me with unspeakable joy. A personage appeared in the midst of this pillar of flame, which was spread all around and yet nothing consumed. Another personage soon appeared like unto the first; he said unto me thy sins are forgiven thee. He testified also unto me that Jesus Christ is the son of God. I saw many angels in this vision. I was about 14 years old when I received this first communication." (Brigham Young University Studies, Spring 1969 pp. 284-285.) (underscoring by author)

strength; but soon recovering in some degree, I went home. And as I leaned up to the fireplace, mother inquired what the matter was. I replied, 'never mind, all is well--I am well enough off.' I then said to my mother, 'I have learned for myself that Presbyterianism is not true.' It seems as though the adversary was aware, at a very early period of my life, that I was destined to prove a disturber and an annoyer of his kingdom; else why should the powers of darkness combine against me? Why the opposition and persecution that arose against me, almost in my infancy? (underscoring by author)

### First Vision Aftermath

Following is a comparison of the vision aftermath conditions. In the earlier version, Joseph said: "And my soul was filled with love and for many days I could rejoice with great joy, and the Lord was with me". He could find none that would believe his vision so he pondered these things in his heart. This earlier version aftermath is not in conflict with historical facts. In the official version, Joseph describes the aftermath of this event as one of great hatred and prejudice aroused because of his telling of this vision. The official version disagrees with the historical facts as outlined at the first of this chapter. Whatever the version, if he reported his first vision, there was not enough credence given that mention of it ever appeared in any known public or outside church publications or records. The Mormon Church did not make it public until about 22 years later in 1842, when it published the official version in *Times and Seasons*.

Earlier Version

"But (I) could find none that would believe the heavenly vision, nevertheless I pondered these things in my heart..." (underscoring by author)

Official Version

"22. I soon found, however, that telling the story had excited a great deal of prejudice against me among professors of religion, and was the cause of great persecution, which continued to increase; and though I was an obscure boy, only between fourteen and fifteen years of age, and my circumstances in life such as to make a boy of no consequence in the world, yet men of high standing would take notice sufficient to excite the public mind against me, and create a bitter persecution; and this was common among all the sects--all united to persecute me.

"23. It caused me serious reflection then, and often has since, how very strange it was that an obscure boy,

54 of a little over fourteen years of age, and one, too, who was doomed to the necessity of obtaining a scanty maintenance by his daily labor, should be thought a character of sufficient importance to attract the attention of the great ones of the most popular sects of the day, and in a manner to create in them a spirit of the most bitter persecution and reviling. But strange or not, so it was, and it was often the cause of great sorrow to myself."

The official version differs completely from historical facts as it also differs from the earlier version, both written by Joseph Smith. After review could a reasonable person really think that the events recorded as the official version actually transpired? With there being discrepancies between the official and earlier version, would doubt not be cast upon the earlier version? Could it be that both versions are incorrect? Could it be that the First Vision never occurred? You decide.

#### First Vision -- Unedited Earlier Version

Immediately following is the Cheesman unedited transcript of the First Vision as cited above. It is included so that anyone interested may make comparison to the edited presentation above. Otherwise one may proceed directly to the next chapter in which we shall compare the Book of Abraham (part of the Pearl of Great Price) with the papyrus from which the Mormon Church says it was translated.

"At about the age of twelve years my mind became Seriously imprest with regard to the all important concerns for the welfare of my immortal Soul which lead me to Searching the Scriptures believing as I was taught, that they contained the word of God then applying myself to them and my intimate acquaintance with those of different denominations led me to marvel exceedingly for I discovered that they did not adorn their profession by a holy walk and godly conversation

agreeable to what I found contained in that Sacred depository this was a grief to my Soul thus from the age twelve years to fifteen I pondered many things in my heart concerning the situation of the world of mankind the contentions and divisions the wickeness and abominations and the darkness which pervaded the minds of mankind my mind become incedingly distressed for I became convicted of my Sins and by Searching the Scriptures I found that mankind did not come unto the Lord but that they had apostatised from the true and living faith and there was no society or denomination that built upon the gospel of Jesus Christ as recorded in the new testament and I felt to mean [mourn] for my own sins and for the Sins of the world for I learned in the Scriptures that god was the same yesterday to day and forever that he was no respecter to persons for he was God for I looked upon the sun the glorious luminary of the earth and also the moon rolling in their magesty through the heavens and also the stars shining in their courses and the earth also upon which I stood and the beast of the field and the fowls of the heaven and the fish of the waters and also man walking forth upon the face of the earth in magesty and in strength of beauty whose power and intilgence in governing the things which are so exceding great and marvilous even in the likeness of him who created them and when I considered upon these things my heart exclaimed well hath the wise



man said it is a fool that saith in his heart there is no God my heart exclaimed all these bear testimony and bespeak an omnipotent and omnipresent power a being who maketh Laws and decreeth and bindeth all things in their bounds who filleth Eternity who was and is and will be from all Eternity to Eternity and when I considered all these things and that that being seeketh such to worship him as worship him in spirit and in truth therefore I cried unto the Lord for mercy for there was none else to whom I could go and obtain mercy and the Lord heard my cry in the wilderness and while in the attitude of calling upon the Lord in the 16th year of my age a pillar of light above the brightness of the sun at noon day come down from above and rested upon me and I was filled with the Spirit of god and the Lord opened the heavens upon me and I saw the Lord and he spake unto me saying Joseph my son Thy Sins are forgiven thee, go thy way walk in my Statutes and keep my commandments behold I am the Lord of glory I was crucified for the world, that all those who believe on my name may have Eternal life behold the world lieth in sin at this time and none doeth good no not one they have turned aside from the gospel and keep not my commandments they draw near to me with their lips while their hearts are far from me and mine anger is kindling against the inhabitants of the earth to visit them according to their ungodliness and to bring to pass

that which hath been spoken by the mouth of the prophets and apostles behold and lo I come quickly as it was written of me in the cloud clothed in the glory of my Father and my soul was filled with love and for many days I could rejoice with great joy and the Lord was with me but could find none that would believe the heavenly vision nevertheless I pondered these things in my heart..." (Cheesman, Paul R., An analysis of the Accounts Relating Joseph Smith's Early Visions. pages 127-129)

## CHAPTER SIX

### THE BOOK OF ABRAHAM - ORIGIN

#### Source

We shall first examine the source of the Book of Abraham as provided by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We quote the following words that appear at the beginning of the Book of Abraham as it appears in the Pearl of Great Price.

"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. See History of the Church, vol.2, pp.235, 236, 348-351." (underscoring by author)*

In the summer of 1835, either Joseph Smith or some of the Saints at Kirtland purchased eleven mummies and the accompanying papyri from a Mr. Chandler who was exhibiting them at Kirtland, Ohio. *The History of the Church*, Vol.2, page 236, states with Joseph as spokesman:

"Soon after this, some of the saints at Kirtland purchased the mummies and papyrus,...I commenced the translation of some of the characters or hieroglyphics, and much to our joy found that one of the rolls contained the writing of Abraham, another the writings

of Joseph of Egypt, etc., - a more full account of which will appear in its place, as I proceed to examine or unfold them."

Until 1967 Mormon writers claimed that all of the original papyri from which Joseph Smith allegedly derived the Book of Abraham had been destroyed in the great Chicago fire of 1871 in which the Museum of Chicago was totally destroyed. However, on November 27, 1967, The Mormon owned Deseret News announced:

"New York-A collection of papyrus manuscripts, long believed to have been destroyed in the Chicago fire of 1871, was presented to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints here Monday by the Metropolitan Museum of Art..."

Dr. Fischer, of the Metropolitan Museum explained how this happened:

"Our first knowledge of them goes back to 1918 when our first curator, Dr. A.M. Lythgoe, was shown these fragments by Mrs. Alice Heusser, a woman who lived in Brooklyn....Her mother had been housekeeper to a person named Combs, and Combs had bought them from the family of Joseph Smith....On the death of Mr. A. Combs, they were left to Mrs. Heusser's mother....they were offered to us by the widower of Mrs. Heusser, Mr. Edward Heusser. We acquired them in 1947." (*Dialogue - A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Winter, 1967, p.58).

In 1966 Modern Microfilm Co. published a book under the name *Joseph Smith's Egyptian Alphabet and Grammar*. This book reports on a handwritten manuscript of Joseph Smith in which he has sequentially listed the characters along with their translation into the Book of Abraham. It was this comparison of sequence that identified the fragment of papyrus that is the original source. Dr. Nibley, of the Mormon Church labeled this fragment as "XI. Small 'Sensen' text (unillustrated)" (*Improvement Era*, Feb., 1968, page 41).

The most amazing thing about Joseph's translation is the large number of English words that he derived from a single Egyptian character. The meaning of the Egyptian characters are now known. We list a few examples of the voluminous words obtained from single characters:

<u>Character(s)</u>	<u>Meaning</u>	<u>Abraham, Text Provided</u>	<u>Words</u>
"the" or "this"		1,v.11 to "altar"	59
"pool" or "pond"		1,v.11 from altar, 12-14	135
"Khons"	Egyptian moon-god	1,v.16-19	177
"born to", "born of"		1,v.29-31 to "day"	130
"heart" or "breast"		2,v.12-14	95

Several prominent Egyptologists have confirmed that the Mormon papyrus is a part of the Egyptian "Book of Breathings". E.A. Wallis Budge, who was "Keeper of the Egyptian and Assyrian

Antiquities in the British Museum" described the Book of Breathings in these words:

"The 'Book of Breathings' is one of a number of short funeral works,...it was addressed to the deceased by the chief priest conducting the funeral service....The 'Book of Breathings' represents the attempt to include all essential elements of belief in a future life in a work shorter than the Book of the Dead. The ideas and beliefs expressed in it are not new; indeed every one of them may be found repeated in several places in the religious work of the ancient Egyptians....To give the work an enhanced value it was declared to be the production of Troth, the scribe of the gods." (*The Book of the Dead, Facsimiles of the papyri of Hunefer, Anhai, Kerasher and Netchemet*, by E.A. Wallis Budge, London, England, 1899, page 33.)

This same Mr. Budge states: "Sometimes the papyrus was laid loosely in the coffin, but more frequently it was placed between the legs of the deceased,...before the swathing of the mummy took place." (*The Book of the Dead, An English Translation of the Chapters, Hymns, Etc., Of The Theban Recension, with Introduction, Notes, Etc.*, London, 1901, Vol.1, pp.50-51 of Introduction).

In what era of time would the papyri held by the Mormon Church have been produced? We quote the editor of Dialogue: "Richard A. Parker is the Wilbour Professor of Egyptology at Brown University. His primary interest is in the later stages of

Egyptian language and history. He remarks that the Book of Breathings is a late (Ptolemaic and Roman periods) and greatly reduced version of the Book of the Dead. No comprehensive study of it has yet been undertaken and no manuscript has yet been published adequately. He would provisionally date the two Book of Breathings fragments in the Church's possession to the last century before or the first century of the Christian era;..." (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Summer 1968, page 86). This places the date of writing long after Abraham or Joseph of Egypt lived.

In 1968 three Egyptologists translated the papyrus Joseph Smith used as the source for his Book of Abraham. We shall quote these three renditions.

Richard A Parker, whom we shall quote first was Chairman of the Department of Egyptology at Brown University. Dr. Hugh Nibley, professor at the University of Utah and defender of Mormon Church positions, in a speech at the University of Utah said after receiving a copy of Parker's translation: "...here is Parker's translation of the "Sensen" papyrus ....Parker being the best man in America for this particular period and style of writing. And Parker agreed to do it and he's done it. So it's nice....it will be available within a month, I'm sure, in the next issue of the Dialogue." (Speech by Hugh Nibley, U. of U., May 20, 1968. as reported on page 317 of *Mormonism - Shadow or Reality?*

The second Egyptologist to be quoted is Klaus Baer, who was Associate Professor of Egyptology at the University of Chicago's Oriental Institute, and is reported to have been one of Professor Hugh Nibley's primary tutors in the art of reading Egyptian characters.

The third Egyptologist we will quote is Dee Jay Nelson, who is a Mormon scholar who has great competence in both Egyptian and Semitic languages and has done extensive work with respect to the Mormon papyrus.

#### Richard A. Parker's Translation

- "1. [.....] this great pool of Khonsu
2. [Osiris Hor, justified], born of Tayhebyt, a man likewise.
3. After (his) two arms are [fast]ened to his breast, one the Book of Breathings, which is
4. with writing both inside and outside of it, with royal linen, it being placed (at) his left arm
5. near his heart, this having been done at his
6. wrapping and outside it. If this book be recited for him, then
7. he will breath like the soul[s of the gods] for ever and
8. ever."

*(Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought,*  
Summer, 1968, page 98)



### Klaus Baer's Translation

"Osiris shall be conveyed into the Great Pool of Khons--and likewise Osiris Hor, justified, born to Tikhebyt, justified--after his arms have been placed on his heart and the Breathing Permit (which [Isis] made and has writing on its inside and outside) has been wrapped in royal linen and placed under his left arm near his heart: the rest of his mummy-bandages should be wrapped over it. The man for whom this book has been copied will breathe forever and ever as the bas of the gods do." (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Autumn, 1968, pp. 119-120)

### Dee Jay Nelson's Translation

" . . . . .the pool of The Traveler, Khensu. . . . .[Osiris Hor, who is true of word], born of Tai-Khebit, who is true of word likewise. After . . . seized, the two arms with his heart are wrapped up with the Book of Breathings made by [Isis] and which is with writing on the insides and outside of royal linen. It is placed near and wrapped up on the left side in alignment with his heart. This having been done at his final wrapping for burial. If this book is made for him then he (will) breathe like the soul[s of the gods] for ever and ever." (*The Joseph Smith Papyri*, Part 2, Salt Lake City, 1968, page 21)

The above translations covers the papyrus that Joseph Smith claims as the source of the entire Book of Abraham. Can you see how these ninety plus words in any way relate to the thousands of words contained in the Book of Abraham? Can you see where this papyrus could ever be the source of any information concerning Abraham or concerning anything Hebrew?

General authorities of the Church of Jesus Christ are well aware of this total refutation of the Book of Abraham. Why does this book still remain a part of scriptures of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints?

#### Conclusion

The Book of Abraham is completely discredited. The author is aware of no scholar attempting to support the story as told. We could end our discussion concerning the Book of Abraham at this point. However there are two other areas that might be of interest to our readers. This would be the citing of more information concerning the facsimiles found in the Book of Abraham, and also discussion as to Joseph Smith's source for the writing of the Book of Abraham.

For those interested in reading and studying more concerning the subject of the Book of Abraham, we suggest obtaining the book entitled *Mormonism -- Shadow or Reality?* by Jerald and Sandra Tanner. They have devoted a whole chapter of 76 pages to the "Fall of the Book of Abraham" It was largely through the help of

this chapter of their book that I was able to construct this condensed presentation.

### Facsimiles

For many years Egyptologists had claimed the Facsimiles in the Book of Abraham had been altered before publications. With the recovery of the papyrus from which they were taken, the reason becomes obvious. The places that have been altered are the places where the papyrus was missing or was illegible. Apparently Joseph Smith thought that these spaces should not be left blank. Accordingly these blank areas were filled as best Joseph could. If the reader has available a copy of *The Pearl of Great Price* it should be used when making the following comparison.

The Papyrus containing the very top portion of Facsimile No.1 (depicted on page 28 of the *Book of Abraham*) was missing. This lost portion would have contained, the head portion and lower arm portion of the man-like body. This facsimile shows a man's head on a man-like body with the man holding a knife in his outstretched hand. There is a bird hovering above a reclining figure lying on a lion-headed structure. Four jar like objects are situated under this structure, each capped with an animal shaped head. Joseph Smith identifies the bird as a angel of the Lord; the man like figure as the "idolatrous priest of Elkenah"; the reclining figure as Abraham; the lion-headed structure as an altar for sacrifice; and the four jar-like objects as four

idolatrous Gods; and a lower depicted serpent-like character as a fifth idolatrous God. Joseph depicts this facsimile as showing an angel of the Lord hovering nearby, as the idolatrous priest of Elkenah attempts to offer up Abraham as a sacrifice before the Gods of Elkenah, Libnah, Mahmackrah, Horash, and Pharaoh.

Actually, this scene is an often used illustration for the Book of Breathings. The human figure is that of the God Anubis and he should be shown with the head of a jackal and should have no knife in his hand. The reclining figure is that of the God Osiris. The bird represents the ba or soul of Osiris. Osiris is coming to life on his funeral couch, and the jackal headed god Anubis is effecting the resurrection of Osiris. There also is the version that this scene shows Osiris lying dead upon his lion headed bier or funeral couch in the process of being embalmed by the Jackal-headed god Anubis.

Dee Jay Nelson is quoted from page 42 of *The Joseph Smith Papyri* as saying:

"The four jars which appear below the bier in facsimile No. 1 prove that it is a funerary scene....

"Two of the Denderah wall drawings show canopic jars with humanoid and animalistic heads below the bier. They appear in exactly the same order...human-headed Amset first (at the right). Behind him are the following in this order, baboon-headed Hapy, jackal-headed Duamutef and hawk-headed Qebhsenuf. These jars

traditionally received the internal organs of a deceased person. The gods depicted on the lids of these jars were the protectors of various visceral parts. These are entirely typical."

Facsimile No. 2 depicted on page 37 of the Book of Abraham is a portrayal of a hypocephalus; this is a disk that is placed under the head of a mummy. Inasmuch as the original hypocephalus from which the facsimile was copied has not been located, the missing or unreadable areas are not available for translation. However, Dee Jay Nelson has been able to translate several bits of the readable sections. These are shown on page 345 of *Mormonism -- Shadow or Reality?*. Nothing within this facsimile gives reference to Abraham or to Hebrew thought or practice, as the Book of Abraham depicts.

Facsimile No. 3 pictured on page 41 of the Book of Abraham represents the following according to Joseph Smith comments below the facsimile: "Abraham sitting upon Pharaoh's throne, by the politeness of the king, with a crown upon his head, representing the Priesthood, as emblematical of the grand Presidency in Heaven; with the scepter of justice and judgment in his hand...Abraham is reasoning upon the principles of Astronomy, in the king's court." In attendance with him is King Pharaoh, Prince of Pharaoh (king of Egypt), Shulem (the king's principal waiter, and Olimlah (a slave belonging to the prince). Egyptologists, also have identified each of the figures. Instead

of Abraham, there is the god, Osiris; the goddess Isis instead of King Pharaoh; the goddess Maat instead of Prince of Pharaoh; Hor (a deceased person) instead of Shulem the waiter; and the God Anubis instead of Olimlah the slave. There is no reference to Abraham and no indication that anyone is discussing astronomy.

All the facsimiles are closely related to the culture and period of the accompanying mummies and the associated papyri.

#### Possible Abraham Source

The Egyptian Papyri destroys the fiction that the writings in the Book of Abraham could have preceded the writing of Genesis. However there is a strong resemblance between Genesis 12, v. 1-3, and the content of Abraham, 2, v. 3,9,11,14-16,18-23 and 25. It is expressed by some that Joseph Smith used Genesis as a framework around which to develop the doctrines as stated in Abraham. This includes the Negro doctrine of the Mormon Church, which now has been officially rescinded.

\* \* \* \* \*

We now proceed to analyze the authenticity of the Book of Mormon.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### BOOK OF MORMON - ORIGIN

#### Introduction

For our introduction we will quote from the introduction page found in the front section of the Book of Mormon.

"The Book of Mormon is a volume of holy scripture comparable to the Bible. It is a record of God's dealings with the ancient inhabitants of the Americas and contains, as does the Bible, the fullness of the everlasting gospel.

"The book was written by many ancient prophets by the spirit of prophecy and revelation. Their word, written on gold plates, were quoted and abridged by a prophet-historian named Mormon. The record gives an account of two great civilizations. One came from Jerusalem in 600 B.C., and afterward separated into two nations, known as the Nephites and the Lamanites. The other came much earlier when the Lord confounded the tongues at the Tower of Babel. This group is known as the Jaredites. After thousands of years, all were destroyed except the Lamanites, and they are the principal ancestors of the American Indians.

"The crowning event recorded in the Book of Mormon is the personal ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ among the Nephites soon after his resurrection. It puts

forth the doctrines of the gospel, outlines the plan of salvation, and tells men what they must do to gain peace in this life and eternal salvation in the life to come.

"After Mormon completed his writings, he delivered the account to his son Moroni, who added a few words of his own and hid up the plates in the hill Cumorah. On September 21, 1823, the same Moroni, then a glorified, resurrected being, appeared to the Prophet Joseph Smith and instructed him relative to the ancient record and its destined translation into the English language.

"In due course the plates were delivered to Joseph Smith, who translated them by the gift and power of God. The record is now published in many languages as a new and additional witness that Jesus Christ is the Son of the living God and that all who will come unto him and obey the laws and ordinances of his gospel may be saved.

"Concerning this record the Prophet Joseph Smith said: 'I told the brethren that the Book of Mormon was the most correct of any book on earth, and the keystone of our religion, and a man would get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book.' . . ."  
(underscoring by author)



Following, in the Book of Mormon, we have, in this order, "THE TESTIMONY OF THREE WITNESSES", "THE TESTIMONY OF EIGHT WITNESSES", and the "TESTIMONY OF THE PROPHET JOSEPH SMITH". Joseph Smith's testimony pages are essentially the same as that shown in earlier editions as "the origin of the Book of Mormon". This testimony is basically the quotation from the Pearl of Great Price, Joseph Smith-History 1, verses 29-35, 42-53, and 59-60. This section relates Joseph's story of (1) visits from the angel Moroni each year for four year; (2) receiving of the records (gold plates) and the Urim and Thummim, which were provided for the purpose of translating the records; (3) Joseph's translation of the records into the Book of Mormon; and (4) his return of the plates to the angel Moroni on May 2, 1838.

#### Testimony of the "Three" and the "Eight" Witnesses

It is difficult to understand why the testimonies of the three and the eight witnesses are included. If one is to know of the truthfulness of this book and its translation by evidence, the plates themselves would be the conclusive evidence, and no return to the angel Moroni would have been necessary. If a testimony is to be determined by faith or affirmation by the Holy Ghost as outlined in the book's introduction, the witnessing is totally superfluous. Why the inclusion?

We shall first look at the testimony of the eight witnesses, which reads as follows:

"Be it known unto all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people, unto whom this work shall come: That Joseph Smith, Jun., the translator of this work, has shown unto us the plates of which hath been spoken, which have the appearance of gold; and as many of the leaves as the said Smith has translated we did handle with our hands; and we also saw the engravings thereon, all of which has the appearance of ancient work, and of curious workmanship. And this we bear record with the words of soberness, that the said Smith has shown unto us, for we have seen and hefted, and know of a surety that the said Smith has got the plates of which we have spoken. And we give our names unto the world, to witness unto the world that which we have seen. And we lie not, God bearing witness of it."

Actually, all that they have attested is that Joseph showed them something that Joseph said were the plates that Joseph was translating. The witnesses do not have the expertise or knowledge to determine that what they were looking at were plates Joseph had received from an angel, or that Joseph had translated them accurately or otherwise, or even that what they were looking at had anything to do with ancient records or the Book of Mormon. This testimony adds or subtracts nothing, except by its very presence it becomes suspect.

We will now consider the testimony of the three witnesses, which reads as follows:

"Be it known unto all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people, unto whom this work shall come: That we, through the grace of God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, have seen the plates which contain this record, which is a record of the people of Nephi, and also of the Lamanites, their brethren, and also of the people of Jared, who came from the tower of which hath been spoken. And we also know that they have been translated by the gift and power of God, for his voice hath declared it unto us; wherefore we know of a surety that the work is true. And we also testify that we have seen the engravings which are upon the plates; and they have been shown unto us by the power of God, and not of man. And we declare with words of soberness, that an angel of God came down from heaven, and he brought and laid before our eyes, that we beheld and saw the plates, and engravings thereon; and we know that it is by the grace of God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, that we beheld and bear record that these things are true. And it is marvelous in our eyes. Nevertheless, the voice of the Lord commanded us that we should bear record of it; wherefore, to be obedient unto the commandments of God, we bear testimony of these things. And we know that if we are faithful in Christ, we shall rid our garments of the blood of all men, and be found spotless before the judgment-seat of Christ, and shall dwell with him eternally in the

heavens. And the honor be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, which is one God. Amen."

The important sentence in the above quotation is "... the voice of the Lord commanded us that we should bear record of it; wherefore, to be obedient unto the commandments of God, we bear testimony of these things." This describes a totally subjective experience. This is the essentially the same confirmation promised each reader if he will follow the affirmation procedures outlined in Moroni 10: 3-5. As with the testimony of the "eight", the testimony of the three witnesses adds or subtracts nothing. Why the inclusion? Is it that some readers, not realizing that the witnessing in no way affirms or denies anything, would be more easily drawn into ritual affirmation procedures? We shall say more about this shortly.

We have purposely not included names of the eleven witnesses. Their identity is of no consequence, inasmuch as these testimonies add or subtract nothing in determining the truth concerning the origin or content of the Book of Mormon.

However, we do note that all three of the "three" witnesses were later excommunicated from the Mormon Church. Three of the "eight" witnesses either voluntarily left or were excommunicated, two other of the eight were dead before June of 1838, and the three remaining of the eight were Joseph Smith's family members. (*Mormonism - Shadow of Reality?*, Jerald and Sandra Tanner, 1987.)

### Affirmation Procedures

Now I should like to call your attention to that part of the introduction in which testimony is mentioned and the reader is directed to Moroni 10: 3-5. Moroni reportedly says as follows:

"3. Behold, I would exhort you that when ye shall read these things, if it be wisdom in God that ye should read them, that ye would remember how merciful the Lord hath been unto the children of men, from the creation of Adam even down until the time that ye shall receive these things, and ponder it in your hearts.

"4. And when ye shall receive these things, I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost.

"5. And by the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know the truth of all things."

This is the same affirmation game we have referred to in our earlier discussions. If for some reason you do not get a positive result, it is presumed your heart was not sincere enough, there was not real intent, or faith in Christ was not sufficient. "No" is not taken as an acceptable and valid answer. Almost anything said often enough, "with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith" will become the testimony of that individual.

Whenever one is faced with this challenge, from whatever source, the time has come to secure full information concerning the matter and to follow the suggestion as outlined in our chapter named "INDIVIDUAL TRUTH". If you don't avoid this pitfall at this point you could find yourself being mind manipulated as previously outlined. Many people do not realize that the affirmation life-long procedures of the Mormon Church is the method used to build testimonies in their members and to maintain control from generation to generation. This may be the way a person gains a testimony, but it is not the process by which truth is found or determined!

#### Testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith

As mentioned in the introduction of this chapter, Joseph Smith's testimony is basically the quotation from the Pearl of Great Price, Joseph Smith-History 1, verses 29-35, 42-53, and 59-60. This section relates Joseph story of four annual visits from the angel Moroni, the receipt of the records (gold plates), and the receipt of the Urim and Thummim provided for the purpose of translating the book. Joseph tells of his translation of the Book of Mormon, and return of the plates to the angel Moroni on May 2, 1838. As discussed in a prior chapter, this is the testimony or story of the same person who had a "first vision". The "first vision" allegedly occurred in 1820, but was not made public until 1842. Three versions of this vision has been located, each greatly varying from each other. Each of the three presentations are greatly different from each other, and the final or official version is at variance with historical

information. This is the testimony of the same person that allegedly translated the Book of Abraham from Egyptian papyrus. By translation of this papyrus by Egyptologists it was shown that the Book of Abraham had nothing to do with the papyrus, and that Joseph cross-referencing must have been an exercise in fantasy. Here we have this same individual attesting to the translation of ancient records that are conveniently not available, having been returned to an angel of God. This has much to say about the character and the qualifications of the one giving this testimony and declaring that the Book of Mormon was received through the power of God.

Since there is no source material (plates) to which we can turn, we must examine the product itself, the Book of Mormon. This examination shall have nothing to do with the merit or non-merit of the doctrine espoused, but shall be examined for evidence of its authenticity or non-authenticity. This being a purported history of people living in the Americas, we will look at the archaeology of the American continents.

#### Archaeological Evidence--The Smithsonian Institution

Many years ago there was much conversation among Mormons of how archeological findings were verifying the Book of Mormon. Claims were even circulated that the Smithsonian Institute used the Book of Mormon as a guide in its archaeological endeavors and that it had been the guide to many of its discoveries. In a

letter dated Feb. 16, 1951, Frank H.H. Roberts, Jr., of the Smithsonian institute said:

"In reply to your letter of February 11, 1951, permit me to say that the mistaken idea that the Book of Mormon has been used by scientific organizations in conducting archeological explorations has become quite current in recent years. It can be stated definitely that there is no connection between the archeology of the New World and the subject matter of the Book of Mormon.[underscoring by author]

"There is no correspondence whatever between archeological sites and cultures as revealed by scientific investigations and as recorded in the Book of Mormon, hence the book cannot be regarded as having any historical value from the standpoint of the aboriginal peoples of the New World.

"The Smithsonian Institution has never officially recognized the Book of Mormon as a record of value on scientific matters, and the book has never been used as a guide or source of information for discovering ruined cities." (Letter dated Feb. 16, 1951, photographically reproduced in *The Book of Mormon -- True or False*, by Arthur Budvarson, of LaMesa, California, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1961)



Because of the many inquiries received, the Smithsonian Institution issued the following statement to save response time and effort:

"SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION  
Office of Anthropology  
Washington, D.C. 20560

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STATEMENT REGARDING THE BOOK OF MORMON

"The Smithsonian Institution has received hundreds of inquiries in recent years regarding the use of the Book of Mormon as a guide to archeological researches. Answers to questions most commonly asked are as follows:

"1. The Smithsonian Institution has never used the Book of Mormon in any way as a scientific guide. Smithsonian archeologists see no connection between the archeology of the New World and the subject matter of the Book.

"2. The physical type of the American Indian is basically Mongoloid, being most closely related to that of the peoples of eastern, central, and northeastern Asia. Archeological evidence indicates that the ancestors of the present Indians came into the New World--probably over a land bridge known to have existed in the Bering Strait region during the last Ice

Age--in a continuing series of small migrations beginning about 30,000 years ago.

"3. Present evidence indicates that the first people to reach this continent from the East were the Norsemen who arrived in the northeastern part of North America around A.D. 1000. There is nothing to show that they reached Mexico or Central America.

"4. There is increasing evidence of the spread of cultural traits to Meso-America and the northwestern coast of South America across the Pacific, beginning several thousand years before the Christian era. However, these appear to be the result of accidental voyages originating in eastern and southern Asia and show no relationship to ancient Egyptian or Hebrew cultures.

"5. We know of no authentic cases of ancient Egyptian or Hebrew writing having been found in the New World. Reports of findings of Egyptian influence in the Mexican and Central American areas have been published in newspapers and magazines from time to time, but thus far no reputable Egyptologist has been able to discover any relationship between Mexican remains and those in Egypt.

6. There are two copies of the Book of Mormon (and a part of a third copy) in the United States National Museum, and another copy was sent by the Smithsonian library to the Library of Congress for

deposit. Two of these were gift copies, and one was received by transfer from another government agency. One or two members of the staff have personal copies that were presented to them by Mormons."

[This was followed by a list of suggested reading.]

As far as the author knows this still represents the position of the Smithsonian Institution.

#### Mormon Church Archeological Efforts

Below is a brief review of the archaeological activity of the Mormon Church. Efforts in this activity was spear-headed by Thomas Stuart Ferguson. His final conclusions basically confirms the position of the Smithsonian Institution, and is totally negative as far as the Church is concerned. First we will recap the net results of this effort in the words of Jerald and Sandra Tanner, *Mormonism - Shadow or Reality?*, page 103:

"It would appear, then, that the Mormon Church is in an embarrassing position with regard to archaeology and the Book of Mormon. After the Archaeology Department at Brigham Young University failed to find any real evidence for the Book of Mormon in Mesoamerica, the Church leaders gave "large appropriations" to support Thomas Stuart Ferguson's New World Archaeological Foundation. This organization also failed to find evidence to prove the Book of Mormon, and the man who organized it, hoping that it

would prove Mormonism, ended up losing his faith in the Church."

Earlier on this same page the Tanners' report the following poignant experience with this same Mr. Ferguson:

"The first indication we had that Mr. Ferguson was losing his faith in Mormonism was just after Joseph Smith's Egyptian Papyri were rediscovered. In 1968 he wrote us a letter saying that we were "doing a great thing -- getting out some truth on the Book of Abraham"

"Later we heard a rumor that he had given up Joseph Smith's Book of Abraham, but this hardly prepared us for his visit on Dec. 2, 1970. At that time Thomas Stuart Ferguson told us frankly that he had not only given up the Book of Abraham, but that he had come to the conclusion that Joseph Smith was not a prophet and that Mormonism was not true. He told us he had spent 25 years trying to prove Mormonism, but had finally come to the conclusion that his work had been in vain. He said that his training in law had taught him how to weigh evidence and the case against Joseph Smith was absolutely devastating and could not be explained away." (underscoring by author)

Mr. Ferguson, in the 1940's and 1950's, published several articles and books very supportive of the Book of Mormon and the hoped for archaeological finds he felt sure would be forthcoming.

In March 1955 the Mormon Church made a \$200,000 commitment to Ferguson after having received a letter from him in January of 1955 that in part said:

"I know beyond a shadow of a doubt that certain of the locations discovered were occupied by Nephites during Book of Mormon times. The importance of the work cannot be over-estimated.

"After many years of careful study, the real importance of the Book of Mormon archaeology has dawned on me. It will take but a moment to explain. The Book of Mormon is the only revelation from God in the history of the world that can possible be tested by scientific physical evidence....To find the city of Jericho is merely to confirm a point of history. To find the city of Zarahemla is to confirm a point of history but it is also to confirm, through tangible physical evidence, divine revelation to the modern world through Joseph Smith, Moroni, and the Urim and Thummim. Thus Book of Mormon history is revelation that can be tested by archaeology . (Ferguson 1955)

In March of 1958 Ferguson published "One Fold and One Shepherd" at which time he was still enthusiastic about the prospect of confirming discoveries as he expressed to the First Presidency of the Mormon Church in these words:

"One cannot fake over 3000 years . . . of history and have the fake hold water under the scrutiny given

the Book of Mormon. The Book of Mormon is either fake or fact. If fake, the cities described in it are non-existent. If fact--as we know it to be--the cities will be there. If the cities exist, and they do, they constitute tangible, physical, enduring, unimpeachable evidence that Joseph Smith was a true prophet of God and that Jesus Christ lives. (Ferguson 1958)

The net result of this archaeological effort is outlined in a twenty nine page paper by Ferguson in 1975. (Ferguson 1975). In a "Plant-Life Test" Mr. Ferguson showed Book of Mormon quotations listing barley, figs, grapes, and wheat, and placed the word "none" by each item to indicate known evidence in support of these items. He then continued:

"This negative score on the plant-life test should not be treated too lightly. An abundance of evidence supporting the existence of these plants has been found in other parts of the world of antiquity. The existence of numerous non-Book-of-Mormon plants (maize, lima beans, tomatoes, squash, etc.) has been supported by abundant archaeological findings.... Art portrayals in ceramics, murals and sculptured works--of ancient plant life--are fairly commonplace. (Ferguson 1975,6-7)

In an "Animal-Life Test" , Ferguson listed Book of Mormon quotes covering ass, bull, calf, cow, goat, horse, ox, sheep, sow , and elephant. By each of these, he listed "none" by each with

the exception of elephant because of no evidence contemporary with the Book of Mormon time. He commented:

"Evidence of the foregoing animals has not appeared in any form--ceramic representations, bones or skeletal remains, mural art, sculptured art or any other form. However, in the regions proposed . . . evidence has been found in several forms of the presence in Book-of-Mormon times of other animals--deer, jaguars, dogs, turkey etc. The zero score presents a problem that will not go away with ignoring of it. Non-LDS scholars of first magnitude, some who want to be our friends, think we have real trouble here. That evidence of the ancient existence of these animals is not elusive is found in the fact that proof of their existence in the ancient old-world is abundant. The absence of such evidence in the area proposed for our consideration in this symposium is distressing and significant, in my view. (Ferguson 1975,12-13)

In listing his "Metallurgy Test", Ferguson quotes passages from the Book of Mormon that refer to metallic items listing bellows, brass, breast-plates, chains, copper gold, iron ore, plow-shares, silver, swords, hilts, engraving, and steel. By each item he places "none" indicating the total lack of evidence. Ferguson then commented as follows:

"Metallurgy does not appear in the region under discussion until about the 9th century A.D. None of the foregoing technical demands are met by the archaeology of the region proposed as Book-of-Mormon lands and places. I regard this as a major weakness in the armor of our proponents and friends....

"I doubt that the proponents will be very convincing if they contend that evidence of metallurgy is difficult to find and a rarity in archaeology. Where mining was practiced--as in the Old Testament world, mountains of ore and tailings have been found. Artifacts of metal have been found. Art portrays the existence of metallurgical products. Again, the score is zero. (Ferguson 1975, 20-21)

Ferguson then refers to the "Script Test" stating Cuneiform inscriptions should be found for the Jaredites, and Hebrew and Egyptian for the Nephites. No Cuneiform inscriptions have been found. A seal found at Tlatilco (suburb of Mexico City) shows the Hebrew name, "Hiram" apparently in Egyptian script. There was a 3-glyph inscription on a 3-inch cylinder seal identified as Egyptian by William Foxwell Albright, now deceased, but seriously questioned by other great scholars.

In a letter to Wesley P. Walters of Marissa, Illinois Mr. Ferguson said he had not decided whether the bad in the Church outweighed the good and, consequently, he was not prepared to



engage in "open warfare" (Ferguson 1971, cf. Walters 1971). In this letter Mr. Ferguson says:

"Right now I am inclined to think that all of those who claim to be 'prophets', including Moses, were without a means of communicating with deity--I'm inclined to think that when Moses was on top of the mount, he was talking to himself and decided that the only way he could get the motley crowd at the bottom of the slope to come to order and to listen to him and to heed him was to tell them that he had talked to God on the mount. If this view is correct, then prophets are nothing more than mortal men like the rest of us, except they saw a great need for change and had the courage to say they had communicated with God and had received a message for man, and were believed (though false in the basic claim that the message come from God and not from man)." (Ferguson 1971)

Apparently, western world archeology has totally shown the Book of Mormon to be false. Although redundant, it might be interesting to review some of the possible sources of the Book of Mormon. We shall do that next.

#### Possible Sources Used in Writing of Book of Mormon

Knowing of Joseph Smith's ability to write and his inability to translate ancient languages from papyri or from alleged plates, it might be interesting to speculate as to what sources

he may have used in the writing of the Book of Mormon. The Bible is one of the sources as shown by its many quotations, plus the use of biblical style languages elsewhere, sometimes similar, sometimes identical. (Marquardt, H. Michael, *The uses of the Bible in the Book of Mormon*)

It appears that two very interesting books were among those Joseph Smith used. These are:

*The View of the Hebrew, or the Tribes of Israel in America,*  
by Ethan Smith, Smith and Shutz, Poultney, Vt, 1823 and  
1825.

*The Wonders of Nature and Providence Displayed,* by Josiah  
Priest, Albany, New York, 1825.

We know that Joseph Smith was familiar with some of the works of Josiah Priest, because he quotes from one (American Antiquities) in *Times and Seasons*, Vol. 3, pages 813-814. In *The Wonders of Nature and Providence Displayed*, Josiah Priest frequently used quotes from *The View of the Hebrews*. Both authors argued that the American Indians were direct descendants of the Hebrew. Also, *The View of the Hebrew* was first issued in 1823 with an enlarged edition printed in 1825. The Book of Mormon was Published in 1830, allowing adequate time for Joseph to have used these publications. Thomas Stuart Ferguson in a letter written to a Ronald Barney dated 10 January 1983 stated that Oliver Cowdrey, a close associate of Joseph Smith was in

Poultney from 1809 to 1825, and that his three little half sisters were baptized in Ethan Smith's church. (Ferguson 1983)

The "View of the Hebrew" is of special interest because Mr. B.H. Roberts, noted historian of the Mormon Church for many years, became very interested and concerned about this book. He prepared a manuscript that he entitled *A Parallel*, wherein he made several extensive comparisons between the Book of Mormon and the 1825 edition of *The View of the Hebrew*. B.H. Roberts lists eighteen parallels. I shall respectively use "B of M", and "View" when denoting the "Book of Mormon" and "View of the Hebrew".

1. Place: Adjacent counties.

2. Title: View has "Hebrew" as part of its title.

B of M shows Mormon being an American Israelite.

3. Date: View published in 1823 and 1825.

B of M published March 1830.

4. Origin of Indians:

View lists 23 arguments that Indians are Hebrew.

B of M shows Indians as descendants of the Hebrews.

5. Source of Book:

View: a. Lost book long preserved then buried.

b. Speculation of finding Biblical fragment upon the well preserved body of a leading Israelite.

c. Story on ploughing up preserved dark yellow parchment with Bible quotations in Hebrew:

B of M reports the hidden book revealed.

Roberts: "Query: Could all this have supplied structural work for the **Book of Mormon**?"

6. Inspired Seers and Prophets:

View speaks of prophets-spirit gifts.

B of M speaks of inspired seers and prophets.

7. Urim and Thummim and Breastplate:

View uses this terminology.

B of M uses this terminology.

8. Characters that were engraved on gold plates:

View includes the following. "Whence could have been derived the knowledge of the accurate hieroglyphical paintings, ...as found among some of the Indians; unless they had learned them from people to whom the knowledge of hieroglyphics had been transmitted from Egypt, its original source.

B of M in speaking of its entire abridgment. "...And now, behold, we have written this record according to our knowledge, in the characters which are called among us the reformed Egyptian, being handed down and altered by us according to our manner of speech."

(Mormon 9:32)

Roberts: "Was this sufficient to suggest the strange manner of writing the book of Mormon in the learning of the Jews, and the language of the Egyptian, but in an altered Egyptian?"

9. Accounting for two classes of people in America. One barbarous and the other civilized:

View takes pages 171-174 to illustrate and explain.

B of M describes this division and events connected with it throughout the **Book of Mormon**.

Roberts: In making comment B.H. Roberts is referring to View. "Query: Let it be remembered that the work from which this is quoted existed from five to seven years before the publication of the **Book of Mormon**, and the two editions of the work flooded the New England states and New York."

10. Destruction of Jerusalem:

View devotes Chapter I, pages 13-46 to the destruction of Jerusalem.

B of M features the pending and actual destruction early in the book.

Roberts: "Query: Would this treatise of the destruction of Jerusalem suggest the theme to the **Book of Mormon** author, is the legitimate query, since the View of the Hebrews was published seven to five years before the **Book of Mormon**."

11. Israel:

View The second chapter is entitled "The Certain Restoration of Judah and Israel".

B of M has many references to the scattering and gathering of Israel, quoting many of the references from the View of the Hebrew.

12. Isaiah:

View This book quotes Isaiah very extensively, quoting from six different chapters of Isaiah in his second chapter and later quotes from twenty chapters of Isaiah.

B of M This book quotes most of the references to Isaiah that is referenced in the View of the Hebrews, quoting nearly all of sixteen chapters of Isaiah.

Roberts: "The Hebrew records possessed by the Nephites on brass plates are spoken of as containing more matter than the Old Testament had among the Gentiles. (I Nephi 13, 20-22).

"Query: Then why are quotations and references to this great and rich Hebrew literature confined practically to Isaiah alone?

"Query: Did the author of the **Book of Mormon** follow too closely the Course of Ethan Smith in this use of Isaiah, would be a legitimate query. **The View of the Hebrews** was published seven to five years before the **Book of Mormon**."

13. American nation to save Israel in America.

View Chapter four is an appeal to the United States to teach the gospel to the American Indians, and restore

them to the favor and blessing of God. On page 250, this instruction is written: "Go, thou nation highly distinguished in the last days; save the remnant of my people. Bring me a present of them "to the place of the name of the Lord of hosts, the Mount Zion."

B of M Much of the same information is similar to that in the **View of the Hebrew**. Quoting from the title page of the **Book of Mormon**: "Which is to show unto the remnant of the House of Israel what great things the Lord hath done for their fathers; and that they may know the covenants of the Lord, that they are not cast off forever..."

Roberts: Speaking in reference of the "View of the Hebrews" said "This is the mission of the United States, according to the **View of the Hebrews**." In speaking of the Book of Mormon item, B.H. Roberts says: "This is the mission of the United States according to the **Book of Mormon**; but the **View of the Hebrews** preceded the **Book of Mormon** by seven years!

14. Love of riches:

View Speaks of love of riches and pride.

B of M Speaks of love of riches and pride among the Nephites.

15. Polygamy:

View On page 104 relates what a Delaware Chief had said: "Longtime ago it was a good custom among his people to take but one wife and that for life. But now

they had become so foolish, and so wicked, that they would take a number of wives at a time; and then turn them away at pleasure."

B of M In Jacob 2:23-28 Jacob said of the Nephites: This people begin to wax in iniquity; they understand not the scriptures, for they seek to excuse themselves in committing whoredoms, because of the things which were written concerning David, and Solomon. . . David and Solomon truly had many wives and concubines, which thing was abominable before me, saith the Lord. . . . Wherefor, my brethren. . . . hearken to the work of the Lord; For there shall not any man among you have save it be one wife, and concubines he shall have none: for I, the Lord God, delight in the chastity of women."

16. Lamanite and Indian Virtues:

View Indian virtues applauded.

B of M Lamanite virtues applauded.

Roberts: "Were the passages in this column sufficient to suggest what appears in the left hand column?" (The left hand column is that of the Book of Mormon)

17. Civilization in America:

View Ethan Smith gives more than twenty pages describing civilization traits as evidenced by temple, pyramids, and ruined cities.



B of M Idea concerning this comes from general and incidental statements throughout the Book of Mormon that somewhat coincides with that written in the "View of the Hebrews".

18. The Messiah of the Western Continent:

View The legends of Quetzalcoatl, often referred to as the "Mexican Messiah", are told in some length and detail.

B of M The Book of Mormon is based around Christ coming to the American continent.

Roberts: "The legitimate query: Did this character spoken of in the **View of the Hebrews**, published seven years before the **Book of Mormon**, furnish the suggestion of the Christ on the western continent?"

This parallel was never published before the death of Mr. B. H. Roberts. Had he lived longer it is not known if he would or would not have published it. By the remarks and queries he made, do you think he had serious doubt concerning the Book of Mormon? After study and examination of the "View of the Hebrew" and Mr. Roberts "Parallel", the author believes Mr. Roberts was of the opinion that he had discovered one of the sources of the Book of Mormon.

On the last page (167) of the first edition of the *View of the Hebrews* (1823) are the following two paragraphs:

"The preservation of the Jews, as a distinct people, for eighteen centuries, has been justly viewed as a kind of standing miracle in support of the truth of revelation. But the arguments furnished from the preservation and traditions of the ten tribes, in the wilds of America from a much longer period must be viewed as furnishing, if possible, a more commanding testimony. And it is precisely such evidence as must have been expected in the long outcast tribes of Israel, whenever they should come to light; and just such evidence as must rationally be expected to bring them to the knowledge of the civilized world.

"The evidence discovered among the various tribes of Indians, of the truth of their Hebrew extraction, and of the divinity of the Old Testament, seem almost like finding, in the various regions of the wilds of America, various scraps of an ancient Hebrew Old Testament;--one in one wild; another in another; inscribed on some durable substance in evident Hebrew language and character, though much defaced by the lapse of ages. Surely such an event, when attended with concomitant evidence that it could be no imposition, must silence the unbeliever in ancient revelation; and add a new and powerful item to the evidences already furnished upon so interesting a subject. The evidence, actually furnished in the

traditions of the savages of America, suggest the suppositions just made, but are of a far more substantial character. It is contended that they furnish the very evidence, long desired, of the existence, and present state of the ten tribes of Israel."

Was this Joseph Smiths irresistible invitation?

In our next chapter we shall turn our attention to the Doctrine and Covenants. This book allegedly contain revelations from God to Joseph Smith.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS - ORIGIN

#### Introduction

Probably the best way to present the Doctrine and Covenants is through the Words of the Apostles of the Mormon Church on September 24, 1834, when this book was adopted as scripture. We shall quote their testimony of that date, now found in the fore part of the edition printed in February 1992:

"TESTIMONY OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES TO THE TRUTH  
OF THE BOOK OF DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS

*"The Testimony of the Witnesses to the Book of the Lord's Commandments, which commandments He gave to His Church through Joseph Smith, Jun., who was appointed by the voice of the Church for this purpose:*

"We, therefore, feel willing to bear testimony to all the world of mankind, to every creature upon the face of all the earth, that the Lord has borne record to our soul, through the Holy Ghost shed forth upon us, that these commandments were given by inspiration of God, and are profitable for all men and are verily true.

"We give this testimony unto the world, the Lord being our helper; and it is through the grace of God the Father, and His Son, Jesus Christ, that we are permitted to have this privilege of bearing this testimony unto the world, in the which we rejoice

exceedingly, praying the Lord always that the children of men may be profited thereby."

(Signed by each of the twelve apostles)

This defines the Doctrine and Covenants by the Mormon Church. Also, this testimony is superfluous in that this testimony is only that promised to each through the power of the Holy Ghost. It has nothing to do with the reality of truth, but only with one's belief. We direct, anyone interested in this aspect, to review our chapter on the book of Mormon.

The first item in determining what credence can be placed on these revelations is the character and "track record" of Joseph Smith, the seer or author. We refer you to the previous chapters concerning the "First Vision", the Book of Abraham, and the Book of Mormon. His track record is quite barren.

Our general comment on this book would be that it contains reference to many items not of universal merit. Often it speaks of problems with individual members and their families, items not usually involving the intercession of God.

We do not intend to take any position on doctrinal matters, but will comment only on a few items where there is conflict between representations of Joseph, or between representations and known facts. There are three major areas of conflict. One has to do with the time within which events are to occur. Another

has to do with conflict between monogamy and polygamy. A third item has to do with priesthood and the ability to be in the presence of God, the Father. We shall examine each of these.

### The Lord's Coming

Joseph Smith gives a revelation (D & C, Sec.84:2-5) in September, 1832, concerning the building of a temple preparatory to Christ's return. We quote:

"2. Yea, the work of the Lord concerning his church, established in the last days for the restoration of his people, as he has spoken by the mouth of his prophets, and for the gathering of his saints to stand upon Mount Zion, which shall be the city of New Jerusalem.

"3. Which city shall be built, beginning at the temple lot, which is appointed by the finger of the Lord, in the western boundaries of the State of Missouri, and dedicated by the hand of Joseph Smith Jun., and others with whom the Lord was well pleased.

"4. Verily this is the work of the Lord, that the city New Jerusalem shall be built by the gathering of the saints, beginning at this place, even the place of the temple, which temple shall be reared in this generation.

"5. For verily this generation shall not all pass away until an house shall be built unto the Lord, and a

cloud shall rest upon it, which cloud shall be even the glory of the Lord, which shall fill the house."

(underscoring by author)

Again (D & C, Sec. 84:31):

"31. Therefore, as I said concerning the sons of Moses--for the sons of Aaron shall offer an acceptable offering and sacrifice in the house of the Lord, which house shall be built unto the Lord in this generation upon the consecrated spot as I have appointed."

(underscoring by author)

A related item, in which Joseph Smith prophesied pertaining to the coming of the Lord is found in *History of the Church*, Vol.2, page 182:

"President Smith then stated that the meeting had been called, because God Commanded it; and it was made known of him by vision and by the Holy Spirit. He then gave a revelation of some of the circumstances attending us while journeying to Zion -- our trials, sufferings: and said God had not designed all this for nothing, but he had it in remembrance yet; and it was the will of God that those who went to Zion, with a determination to lay down their lives, if necessary, should be ordained to the ministry, and go forth to prune the vineyard for the last time, or the coming of

the Lord, which was nigh--even fifty-six years should wind up the scene." (underscoring by author)

These events have not taken place, and the time in which they were to occur is long past. The author remembers as a boy, older friends reporting that they had patriarchal blessing in which they were promised, if they were faithful, they would go back to Missouri to build the temple for the coming of the Lord. Now these friends are all dead. Many present members have rationalized, as instructed, that this is only the same mistake the "Apostles of Old" made after the death of Christ. However, these are supposedly revelations directly from God.

#### Monogamy Versus Polygamy

There are three main scriptures that address themselves to the question of monogamy and polygamy. All three have been provided by Joseph Smith. One is in the Book of Mormon that Joseph "translated". One was found as Section CIX (109) in each edition of the Doctrine and Covenants published from 1835 until 1876. At that time Section CIX (109) was removed and Section 132 was added. This Section shows the revelation being recorded on July 12, 1843.

We first quote the Book of Mormon statement as it appears in Jacob, 2:22-28:

"22. .... And were it not that I must speak unto you concerning a grosser crime, my heart would rejoice exceedingly because of you.



"23. But the work of God burdens me because of your grosser crimes. For behold, thus saith the Lord: This people begin to wax in iniquity; they understand not the scripture, for they seek to excuse themselves in committing whoredoms, because of the things which were written concerning David, and Solomon his son.

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

"25. Wherefore, thus saith the Lord, I have led this people forth out of the land of Jerusalem, by the power of mine arm, that I might raise up unto me a righteous branch from the fruit of the loins of Joseph.

"26. Wherefore, I the Lord God will not suffer that this people shall do like unto them of old.

"27. Wherefore, my brethren, hear me, and hearken to the work of the Lord: For there shall not any man among you have save it be one wife; and concubines he shall have none;

"28. For I, the Lord God, delight in the chastity of women. And whoredoms are an abomination before me; thus saith the Lord of Hosts." (underscoring by author)

Following is the quotation from the Doctrine and Covenants, 1835 to 1876 editions, section CIX (109), (removed in 1876):

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

"2. Marriage shall be celebrated with prayer and thanksgiving; and at the solemnization, the persons to be married standing together, the man on the right, and the woman on the left, shall be addressed by the person officiating, as he shall be directed by the Holy Spirit; and if there be no legal objections, he shall say, calling each by their names, 'You both mutually agree to be each other's companion, husband and wife, observing the legal rights belonging to this condition; that is, keeping yourselves wholly for each other, and from all others during your lives.' And when they have answered 'Yes' he shall pronounce them 'husband and wife' in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by

virtue of the laws of the country and authority vested in him: "May God add his blessings, and keep you to fulfill your covenants from henceforth and forever. Amen'

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

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

(underscoring by author)

Now we shall look at the scripture that was added to the

Doctrine and Covenants when section CIX (109) was deleted. This is Section 132 and supports polygamy. Section 132 of the Doctrine and Covenants contains sixty-six verses and is described in its preamble as *"Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet, at Nauvoo, Illinois, recorded July 12, 1843, relating to the new and everlasting covenant, including the eternity of the marriage covenant, as also plurality of wives."* We will only quote enough verses to establish the complete contradiction to the Book of Mormon and to the removed section of the Doctrine and Covenants. Verse numbers will be included in the Quotations.

"37. Abraham received concubines, and they bore him children; and it was accounted unto him for righteousness because they were given unto him, and he abode in my laws; as Isaac also and Jacob did none other things than that which they were commanded; and because they did none other things than that which they were commanded, they have entered into their exaltation, according to the promises, and sit upon thrones, and are not angels but are gods.

"38. David also received many wives and concubines, and also Solomon and Moses my servants, as also many others of my servants, from the beginning of creation until this time; and in nothing did they sin save in those things which they received not of me."

"62. And if he have ten virgins given unto him by this law, he cannot commit adultery, for they belong to

him, and they are given unto him; therefore is he justified.

"63. But if one or either of the ten virgins, after she is espoused, shall be with another man, she has committed adultery, and shall be destroyed; for they are given unto him to multiply and replenish the earth, according to my commandment, and to fulfill the promise which was given by my Father before the foundation of the world, and for their exaltation in the eternal worlds, that they may bear the souls of men; for herein is the work of Father continued, that he may be glorified."

"52. And let mine handmaid, Emma Smith, receive all those that have been given unto my servant Joseph, and who were virtuous and pure before me;..."

(underscoring by author)

It appears that the scripture found in today's Doctrine and Covenants is in complete contradiction to that contained in the Book of Mormon, the same Joseph Smith being the writer of both; each scripture supposedly revealed to him. Also Section 132 appears to be in complete contradiction to the removed section. Any non-member and many members will recognize this as a serious contradiction. Only those that could or did not temporarily set aside an affirmation testimony, could think that this evident contradiction is unimportant. How do you explain the existence

of this inconsistency? After presenting the next contradiction, we will propose a possible scenario covering the two.

### The Face of God

We more fully detailed this other conflict in our chapter concerning the pivotal point of the Church being its origin. In the official version of the "First Vision" we have God the Father pointing to Christ while speaking these words to Joseph "This is my beloved Son, hear Him!" [underscoring by author] At this time Joseph held no priesthood.

In the Doctrine and Covenants, Sec. 84, verses 19-22, Joseph, in explaining about the priesthood, makes the following statement:

"19. And this greater priesthood administereth the gospel and holdeth the key of the mysteries of the kingdom, the key to the knowledge of God....

"22. For without this no man can see the face of God, even the Father, and live." (underscoring by author)

### Explanation?

Why this contradiction? As mentioned above we said we would attempt a plausible explanation of both contradictions. First we note, the Book of Mormon was first published in 1830. The

recital of the "official version" of the First Vision was first printed and given to the Church membership in 1842, about 22 years after its purported occurrence in 1820. The above priesthood statement was given through Joseph Smith in 1832. Section 132 relating to the everlasting covenant involving plural marriages was recorded in 1843. During this period of time a unique theology was developing within the Mormon Church, The concept of the Protestant God was being discarded and God was seen as a resurrected man. Godhood was the goal that each faithful male member might aspire. During this time some members of the Church were living in polygamy, and the doctrine of plural wives was an essential part of this developing theology. At the time of writing the Book of Mormon and at the time of issuing chapter CIX (109) of the "old" Doctrine and Covenants, this evolution had not been completed, so the older concepts were still held. How best to document this change. In 1842 The Church published the detail of Joseph Smith's "First Vision" which was said to have occurred in 1820. In this vision God reveals himself as a resurrected man along with his resurrected Son. This would add credence to man becoming God. (To day the Mormon Church, especially in missionary activities, uses this as proof of this concept.) The following year (1843) the Church published Section 132, dealing with the new and everlasting covenant including the plurality of wives. With this publication the transfer to the new theology was completed. As soon as this new theology was made part of scripture it was immediately in conflict with monogamy as taught in the Book of Mormon, conflict

with the priesthood (section 84) of the Doctrine and Covenants, and in conflict with the old Section CIX (109) which was later removed.

Although appearing reasonable to us, this is only a scenario, and in no way is it intended to preclude other constructions. What is your scenario?

#### Diversion

Sometime when delving into matters as we have here, we give ourselves an importance and seriousness that may not be warranted. It could be that time looks down upon us and smiles. As late as 1892 some Mormon literature held teachings referring to people living on the moon. The following is taken from the "Journal of Oliver B. Huntington", Vol. 3, page 166 of typed copy at Utah State Historical Society, as reported in *Mormonism - Shadow or Reality?*, or page 10 of same name copy in University of Utah library.

"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 fashion of dress. They live to be very old; coming generally, near a thousand years.

"This is the description given by Joseph the seer, and he could 'see' whatever he asked the father in the name of Jesus to see."



This had general acceptance throughout the Church. In 1870 Brigham Young said as reported in the *Journal of Discourses*, Vol.13,page 271.

"Who can tell us of the inhabitants of this little planet that shines of an evening, called the Moon?...when you inquire about the inhabitants of the sphere you find that the most learned are as ignorant in regard to them as the most ignorant of their fellows. So it is in regard to the inhabitants of the sun. Do you think it is inhabited? I rather think it is. Do you think there is any life there? No question of it; it was not made in vain."

These were the thoughts of the first and second president of the Mormon Church. Maybe the "important" thoughts we have will be viewed as lightly and preposterous with the passage of another hundred and fifty years.

Excuse the digression, but it was thought a little respite could be helpful before making a recap of what we have analyzed. We will do this in our next chapter.

## CHAPTER NINE

### INVESTIGATION CONCLUSIONS

We will first recap the chapters dealing with the claims of the Mormon Church concerning its origin and the authenticity of its scriptures.

All three versions of the First Vision are in the control of the Mormon Church and are acknowledged, both as to existence and content. These three versions disagree greatly one with another. The official version also disagrees with pertinent historical information. The vision allegedly took place in 1820. The first version was recorded in 1831 or 1832. The official version was published in 1842. The deep and vital inconsistency among the versions, plus the time lapse of about twenty-two years before publication to the Church or presentations to outsiders, speaks conclusively that the official version is not correct, and, that in all probability, the event never occurred.

The Book of Abraham has been conclusively proven false by the outside translations of the papyrus manuscript from which Joseph Smith "produced" the Book of Abraham. Joseph's ability to translate ancient records has been proven totally lacking. This papyrus is in the possession of the Church which is acutely aware of the Book of Abraham being fully discredited.

The Book of Mormon has been totally refuted by the Smithsonian Institution, as having any archeology information of value. Thomas Stuart Ferguson, the Church's greatest proponent

and the person leading much of the Mormon Church archeological research, after twenty-five years of trying to prove the Book of Mormon, concluded his work had been in vain and that Mormonism was not true. The prominent Historian of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, B. H. Roberts, shortly before his death seriously questioned that Joseph Smith translated the Book of Mormon from the gold plates. By the parallels he wrote comparing the Book of Mormon to the *View of the Hebrews*, it was quite apparent that he was convinced that the *View of the Hebrews* was a major source document for the Book of Mormon.

The Doctrine and Covenants is a selection of some of the "prophesies" of Joseph Smith, and is considered a part of the Mormon scripture. Each individual must determine for himself if he thinks this book contains the revelations from God. However, the Doctrine and Covenants show non-reconcilable conflicts with both the Book of Mormon, with itself, and with the story of the First Vision. The removed section CIX (109) of the old Doctrine and Covenants and the Book of Mormon agree on polygamy being against the will of God, while Section 132 of the Doctrine and Covenants reveals that the "new and everlasting covenant" commands that the principle of plural marriage must be accepted if the person is not to be damned. At the time of receiving his First Vision in which he sees God the Father, Joseph Smith held no priesthood; in section 84 of the Doctrine and Covenants, it is stated that without the greater priesthood no man can see the face of God and live.

The author believes that the information given and the analysis presented results in the following conclusions. The story of the "First Vision" is totally refuted. Joseph Smith was not the mouthpiece of God. The Mormon Scriptures are not the product of divine revelation or God inspired translation of ancient languages. The origin of the Mormon Church is the product of men who deceived. Although the typical Mormon way of life has many positive aspects, its theology is definitely the fabrication of Joseph Smith and other early Church leaders. The weight of evidence totally proves a lack of divine communication.

We outlined the ordinances, rites, and practices of the Mormon Church in our first chapter and further referred to them in our Chapter analyzing the "testimony" of the Mormon people. It is believed that a reasonable person would conclude that these rites and practices have the effect of manipulating the minds of Church members. Any dissenters to this conclusion likely will be found among those so manipulated. It has been said by lawyers, that if one has the facts on his side, he or she should appeal to reason and arrange to have the verdict rendered by a judge; if the facts are not on one's side, he or she should appeal to the emotions and arrange for a jury to render a verdict. Does the Mormon testimony provide the appeal to the emotions and do the devout Mormons constitute the jury? Are religious testimonies used in much the same manner as commercial testimonials? Are

they used to help the sale, but providing little guarantee of substance?

As serious as the conclusion of falsity is, its seriousness is small when compared with the harm that is done by instilling a testimony of the truthfulness of such things that can so easily be shown to be incorrect. Especially, is this so, when a Deity is included in the affirmation process. To deliberately control the mind, to induce another to "know" that which is patently false, or to teach that one group of people is choice above all others, leads to future problems and stifles the advancement of the individual and society as a whole. This is too high a price for membership in any organization. Each individual should do whatever he can to oppose mind manipulation whenever and wherever he may find it.

Mind control of anyone is a dreadful thing. A person must be good by intrinsically becoming good; not through an instilled fear of God, or promise of celestial reward. Happiness is not a goal worth seeking. Happiness is a by-product of activity and attitude. The greatest asset one may possess is not a testimony, but is an open and free mind. This is one of God's greatest gifts. From this comes advancement, wisdom, and understanding.

We feel that an unbiased individual reviewing this information will come to similar conclusions as those stated

above. This colludes our discussion concerning the origin of the Mormon Church and its practices with regard to testimonies.

In our next chapter we will briefly outline important changes to the doctrines and rituals of the Mormon Church.

## CHAPTER TEN

### Wording, Doctrine, and Practice Changes

#### Introduction

There has been much comment on the changing of the wording of Mormon doctrine and history, along with accompanying doctrinal changes. If the doctrine is the revealed words of God, then changes indicate either straying from the revelations of God, or the words of God were not there originally. This approach is logical and can do much to determine the validity of many doctrinal premises. If, as it appears, the doctrine is not revelation from God, the effect of any changes in word content, procedures, or doctrine can be evaluated on its own merit, neither the original nor the amended having any relationship to divine revelation.

#### Changed Wording

The scriptures of the Mormon Church are derived primarily from the writing or dictation of Joseph Smith. At The end of Chapter Five, we have listed Cheesman's transcription of Joseph Smith's handwriting. This was such, that we had to do minimal editing to make it more easily readable. If one reviews the Mormon scriptures -- as found in the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price -- he or she becomes aware that further extensive editing would be helpful to the reader. The merit of these changes made to doctrine lies in the comparative value of the "old" and the "new", neither having anything to do with God. Many of the word changes have added

readability and have made doctrine more cohesive. For the most part this must be rated as positive.

We shall now examine a very few major changes in doctrine, ritual, and procedural changes.

#### Formal Racial Discrimination Ended

On June 9, 1978, the following announcement was made in the Deseret News, page 1A by the First Presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints:

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

"He has heard our prayers, and by revelation has confirmed that the long-promised day has come when every faithful, worthy man in the church may receive the holy priesthood, with power to exercise its divine authority and enjoy with his loved ones every blessing that flows therefrom, including the blessings of the temple. Accordingly, all worthy male members of the church may be ordained to the priesthood without regard for race or color."

This revelation is in direct contradiction of that given by Joseph Smith in the Book of Abraham 1:20-27, and the Church's denial of the Priesthood to men of black extraction. Early Church authorities taught this would not change until the end of



the millennium in which Christ returned in power and glory. To most people, members and non-members alike this was a welcome reversal of racial doctrine, doctrine that was of benefit to no one. Thanks should be given to those that extensively publicized this racial problem confronting the Mormon Church. Also, Church authorities were aware of the complete discrediting of the Book of Abraham from which the Mormon anti-negro doctrine was obtained. The Church was under heavy pressure to do something about this discrimination. With this background given, we wish to quote Elder Bruce R. McConkie of the Council of the Twelve from an article entitled "ALL ARE ALIKE UNTO GOD". Obviously this paper was prepared to disseminate information concerning the revelation. Elder McConkie reports the following:

"Obviously, the Brethren had a great anxiety and concern about this problem for a long period of time, and President Spenser W. Kimball has been exercised and sought the Lord in faith. When we seek the Lord on a matter with sufficient faith and devotion, he gives us an answer. . . .So it was a matter of faith and righteousness and seeking on the one hand, and it was a matter of divine timetable on the other hand. The time had arrived when the gospel, with all its blessings and obligations, should go to the Negro.

"Well, in that setting, on the first day of June in this year, 1978, the First Presidency and the Twelve, after full discussion of the proposition and all the premises and principles that are involved,

importuned the Lord for a revelation...." (underscoring  
by author)

Here we see the familiar pattern we have spoken of before. First you determine the sought for answer. Then you ask for a testimony or a revelation affirming that which already has been desired. As stated in the B of M, Moroni 10:4: "...and if you shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost". Again, this affirmation procedure will produce a confirming revelation or testimony, but it has nothing to do with the facts. The use of this procedure did not make Joseph the mouth-piece of God, did not make give Joseph Smith the power to translate ancient languages, and did not make the Doctrine and Covenants the revelations of God. However, it has produced some beautiful witnessing by Church Authorities, and sincere and touching testimonies by millions of Church members. This witnessing and testifying does not make the present event a true revelation from God, anymore than the original revelation establishing the discrimination in the first place.

However, we believe the reversal of this racist doctrine has served the Mormon Church and its members well, and certainly has removed much outside criticism.

We will now briefly review the changes that have taken place in the Mormon temple ceremony.

### Temple Ceremonial Changes

The changes that have taken place in the temple ceremony over the past century has softened and refined that which was quite harsh in times past. It is generally believed by many people, including church members, that much of the ceremony is patterned after Masonry ritual. Here we will briefly list the changes that have occurred. I refer you to "EVOLUTION OF THE MORMON TEMPLE CEREMONY: 1842-1990", by Jerald and Sandra Tanner for greater detail and broader coverage. Any quotations I make will be from this source. Now it is known that the source of the temple ceremony is from other than God, we can review the subject more objectively. The changes have been very good, giving a kinder more gentle presentation that has been much more acceptable and pleasant to those attending temple sessions. We shall examine these changes individually.

#### Oath of Vengeance:

Utah senator Reed Smoot was questioned concerning this oath. On June 11, 1906, the majority of the "Committee On Privileges And Elections" issued a report. In it a number of witnesses testified that an "Endowment" oath substantially said:

"'You and each of you do covenant and promise that you will pray and never cease to pray Almighty God to avenge the blood of the prophets upon this nation, and that you will teach the same to your children and to

your children's children unto the third and fourth generation."

Nothing of this or any reference of applicable penalty remains.

### Penalties and Signs:

The three tokens of the Holy Priesthood with their names, signs and penalties, were considered very sacred and the penalties below were assigned for violating the secrecy:

"Should we do so, we agree, that our throats be cut from ear to ear and our tongues torn out by their roots."

"Should we do so, we agree to have our breasts cut open and our hearts and vitals torn from our bodies and given to the birds of the air and the beasts of the field."

"Should we do so, we agree that our bodies be cut asunder in the midst and all our bowels gush out."

In the 1990 version these penalties have been totally removed, and no mention is made as to the "ways in which life may be taken". The Names and Signs are still used but modified to show less plainly the taking of life. To one believing the divinity of this ceremony, the question arises: Will sentinels or guardian angels be able to recognize the signs?

### Women's Oath of obedience;

The following wording is removed from the ceremony. Elohim (God) speaks to the female patrons who have been instructed to stand:

"Elohim: Each of you bring your right arm to the square. You and each of you solemnly covenant and promise before God, angels, and these witnesses at this altar that you will each observe and keep the law of your husband, and abide by his counsel in righteousness. Each of you bow your head and say 'yes.'" (underscoring by author)

The revised version reads as follows;

"Elohim: Each of you bring your right arm to the square. You and each of your solemnly covenant and promise before God, angels, and these witnesses at this altar that you will each observe and keep the law of the Lord, and hearken to the counsel of your husband as he hearkens to the counsel of the Father. Each of you bow your head and say 'yes.'" (underscoring by author)

#### Other Christian Churches being Churches of Satan:

The long portrayal of more than seven hundred words has been removed. This depicted other Christian Churches as being the Churches of Satan. Over time it is hoped this will mend fences with other denominations.

#### Plural wife ceremony:

In *The Seer*, February 1853, page 31, the Mormon apostle Orson Pratt told how the first wife gave her husband a second bride after completing the endowment ceremony:

"The wife stands on the left hand of her husband, while the bride stands on her left. The President, then, puts this question to the wife: 'Are you willing to give this woman to your husband to be his lawful and wedded wife for time and for all eternity?. If you are, you will manifest it by placing her right hand within the right hand of your husband.' The right hands of the bridegroom and bride, being thus joined, the wife takes her husband by the left arm..."

This section has been completely abolished with the official abolishment of polygamy.

#### Washing and Anointing:

The washing and anointing has become more symbolic. For many years no one has been cleansed by being washed in a bath. Water and oil are sparingly used in the rituals of cleansing and anointing. Participants are dressed in shields, with sides not sewn. In recent years the rituals of washing and anointing for the dead is in separate sessions from the rest of the endowment ceremony so that a person can do one or the other as desired. This has made it much less unpleasant for some, especially for those who are embarrassed by not being completely clothed.

Changed Procedure at the Vail - "The Five Points of Fellowship":

The Mormon Church uses a veil with the same markings as the Masons do. This veil is used when the Lord grants entry into the Celestial Kingdom. For the Masons' definition of the five points of fellowship we will quote from "Freemasonry Exposed", pp.84-85:

"He (the candidate) is raised on what is called the five points of fellowship....This is done by putting the inside of your right foot to the inside of the right foot of the person to whom you are going to give the word, the inside of your knee to his, laying your right breast against his, your left hands on the back of each other, and your mouths to each other's right ear (in which position alone you are permitted to give the word). and whisper the word Mahhah-bone...He is also told the Mahhah-bone signifies marrow in the bone." (underscoring by author)

For the Mormons' definition of the five points of fellowship we quote "Temple Mormonism", page 22.

"The five points of fellowship are given by putting the inside of the right foot to the inside of the Lord's, the inside of your knee to his, laying your breast close to his, your left hands on each other's backs, and each one putting his mouth to the other's ear, in which position the Lord whisper:

"Lord--'This is the sign of the token:

"Health to the navel, marrow in the bones...."



(underscoring by author)

Some of the Mormon members attending a temple session felt uneasy about this positioning. In the 1990 version of the temple ceremony all reference is omitted regarding the "five points of fellowship". This should subtly refine this portion of the ceremony. We will now discuss the temple or priesthood garment.

Changes in the Garment of the Holy Priesthood:

A member of the Mormon Church is first introduced to the garment in the endowment ritual. Quoting the endowment ritual:

"It represents the Garment given to Adam when he was found naked in the Garden of Eden, and is called the Garment of the Holy Priesthood. Inasmuch as you do not defile it, but are true and faithful to your covenants, it will be a shield and a protection to you against the power of the destroyer until you have finished your work here on earth."

The right breast of the garment is marked with a square, the left breast with a compass. How can these Masonry symbols represent a Garment given in the Garden of Eden, long before these tools were ever known?

In 1918 the First Presidency of the Church sent a letter to the bishops in which it was stated:

"The garments worn by those who receive endowments must be white, and of the approved pattern; they must not be altered or mutilated, and are to be worn as intended, down to the wrist and ankles, and around the neck."

A letter by the First Presidency date June 14, 1923 stated the following:

"After careful and prayerful consideration it was unanimously decided that the following modifications may be permitted, and a garment of the following style be worn by those Church members who wish to adopt it, namely:

- (1) Sleeve to elbow.
- (2) Leg just below knee.
- (3) Buttons instead of strings.
- (4) Collar eliminated.
- (5) Crotch closed."

In a letter dated Dec. 15, 1979 the First Presidency of the Mormon Church stated:

"After due consideration the First Presidency and Council of the Twelve have approved and authorized the Beehive Clothing Mills to manufacture two-piece garments for both men and women. These garments will be in addition to the one-piece garments."

These changes have been well received by the membership. Is it possible that one day the wearing of the garment will only be required in the temple?

We will now consider three areas, where Mormon practices have changed but the underlying doctrine evidently remains unchanged.

### Fundamentalist Issues

The most important fundamentalist issues revolve around (1) the law of consecration, (2) the "new and everlasting covenant" which includes the plurality of wives, and (3) the doctrine of "blood atonement". Each of these areas have aspects in common. All three are situations in which the Mormon Church practiced a doctrine, then discontinued the practice, but left the doctrine intact. In early Utah history the law of consecration (United Order) was practiced in Orderville, Utah and several other places. This communal type living proved unsuccessful. Other than when and where this was tried, the law of tithing has been used for securing Church finances. Today the church leadership retains what appears to be a conservative right-wing stature. However as shown in our discussion concerning the temple ceremony in chapter one, a member when attending a temple ceremony consecrates his or her time, talents, and everything with which one has been or may be blessed, to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. As far as the author knows, this consecration has not been formally enforced in recent years. Some

fundamentalists believe this law is the will of God, and that the Mormon Church is in apostasy for not following this doctrine.

With regard to the "new and everlasting covenant", many fundamentalist believe, and correctly state that the "Manifesto" abolishing polygamy changes no doctrine. We mentioned the 'new and everlasting covenant' when we discussed the conflicts within the Doctrine and Covenants. The polygamy aspect of this will be discussed at greater length in our next chapter. The fundamentalists believe the Mormon Church is in apostasy with respect to this issue.

We shall now mention the third area. Mormons do not practice Blood Atonement at this time. Again there has not been doctrinal changes accompanying the abandonment of this principle. This practice by a small minority of fundamentalists has resulted in serious tragedy. Some fundamentalists believe the church is in apostasy with regard to this principle. This subject matter will be discussed in our next chapter.

This concludes our discussion of changed wording, doctrine, and practice. Our next chapter will briefly present some of the existing and potential problems caused by the doctrines of the Mormon Church.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

### PROBLEMS CREATED BY MORMONISM

#### Danger Inherent in Mind Control of Membership

A discussion of this topic will first be directed to the current effects of certain Mormon doctrines, and then to the potential of greater problems in the future. We realize that this mind control varies from person to person depending upon the background and the fundamental strength of each individual. It is fair to say that devout Mormon Church members believe they are favored of God, and that the Church leadership speaks as with the voice of God. They know that God has revealed many truths through His prophet and will reveal more as needed for the welfare of His kingdom on earth. They have learned to follow the advice of the Church leaders at many levels--from bishops to president. It is only natural as they enter their occupations they will tend to give employers the same respect believing that whatever he directs is right and that it is proper to "testify" to the truthfulness of whatever he espouses. It is easy for them to believe that anything connected with a "good man" or respected official is genuine. Could it be that this mind-set is a cause for Utah being high in white collar crime and its residents sustaining a high rate of financial loss to sham operations and sale schemes? Could one expect this to continue into the future?

However, the potential problem is much greater. To assess this problem it is necessary to realize the teachings of early Mormon leaders that the Church would rule the world. Joseph

Smith in *History of the Church*, vol.6, page 365, stated: "I calculate to be one of the instruments of setting up the kingdom of Daniel by the word of the Lord, and I intend to lay a foundation that will revolutionize the whole world." John Taylor, third president of the Mormon Church said: "We do believe it, and we honestly acknowledge that this is that kingdom which the Lord has commenced to establish upon the earth, and that it will not only govern all people in a religious capacity, but also in a political capacity." (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 11, page 53) Heber C. Kimball, a member of the first presidency said in 1859: "And so the nations will bow to the Kingdom, sooner or later, and all hell cannot help it." (*Ibid.*, Vol. 7, page 170) (underscoring by author)

As more Mormon Church members realize the lack of validity of some of the church's claims, the church membership will consist of a higher portion of moldable individuals. The Mormon Church, to avoid embarrassment, could emphasize the importance of the current living prophet rather than spotlight the earlier prophets and the scripture they invoked. The move in this direction may have already started.

Ezra Taft Benson, now president of the Mormon Church, then heir apparent, made the following points in a address at the Brigham Young University. (Fourteen Fundamentals in Following the Prophets, BYU Devotional Assembly, Tuesday, February 26, 1980) The second fundamental stated was "The living Prophet is More Vital to Us Than the Standard Works." (underscoring by author)

Mr. Benson then quotes from writings of Wilford Woodruff concerning an incident that occurred in Kirtland attended by both Joseph Smith and Brigham Young:

"...Brother Joseph turned to Brother Brigham Young and said, 'Brother Brigham I want you to take the stand and tell us your views with regards to the living oracles and the written word of God.' Brother Brigham took the stand, and he took the Bible, and laid it down; he took the Book of Mormon, and laid it down; and he took the Book of Doctrine and Covenants, and laid it down before him, and he said: 'There is the written word of God to us, concerning the work of God from the beginning of the world, almost, to our day. And now, said he, 'when compared with the living oracles those books are nothing to me; those books do not convey the work of God direct to us now, as do the words of a Prophet or a man bearing the Holy Priesthood in our day and generation. I would rather have the living oracles than all the writing in the book.' That was the course he pursued. When he was through, Brother Joseph said to the congregation; 'Brother Brigham has told you the word of the Lord, and he has told you the truth.'

(Conference Reports, October 1897 pp. 18-19.)"

Mr. Benson's third fundamental was: "The Living Prophet is More Important to Us Than a Dead Prophet." (underscoring by author) His remarks on this third fundamental follows:

"The living prophet has the power of TNT. By that I mean 'Today's News Today.' God's revelations to Adam did not instruct Noah how to build the Ark, Noah needed his own revelation. Therefore the most important prophet as far as you and I are concerned is the one living in our day and age to whom the Lord is currently revealing His will for us. Therefore the important reading we can do is any of the words of the Prophet contained each week in the Church Section of the Deseret News, and any words of the Prophet contained each month in our Church magazines. Our marching orders for each six months are found in the General Conference addresses which are printed in the Ensign magazine.

"... Beware of those who would pit the dead prophets against the living prophets, for the living prophets always take precedence." (underscoring by author)

In case of breakdown of governmental functions here or abroad, the Church could issue revelations indicating the Church should take its "rightful" position of leadership. This is in line with church teachings, and many of those individuals with



"testimonies" would follow directions as given. Let's hope that the desire for self-fulfillment of prophecy does not result in tragedy.

One can easily underrate the potential seriousness of this problem. Its seriousness can better be put in perspective by realizing (1) that the Mormon Church maintains forty to forty-five thousand full time missionaries worldwide, (2) that it teaches that the Church is to prepare for the coming of Christ in glory, (3) that the Church is the organization through which Christ will rule the world, (4) that it has not rescinded its doctrine on the "new and everlasting covenant" (including polygamy), and (5) that it has not rescinded its teachings on blood atonement. We rate this self-fulfillment of prophecy as the greatest potential problem.

#### Polygamy

With the continuing rise in the membership in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints we can expect an increase in those groups or organizations known as Mormon fundamentalists. These are people convinced that Joseph Smith and Brigham Young were true prophets of God, but believe that later Mormon Church leaders either changed doctrine or encouraged non-compliance with early doctrine of the Church. The main issue concerns the law of consecration, the new and everlasting covenant (polygamy), and the doctrine of blood atonement.

Section 132 of the Doctrine and Covenants is described in its preface as: "Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet, at Nauvoo, Illinois, recorded July 12, 1843, relating to the new and everlasting covenant, including the eternity of the marriage covenant, as also plurality of wives." Quoted below are the first six verses of this Section:

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

"2. Behold, and lo, I am the Lord thy God, and will answer thee as touching this matter.

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

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

"5. For all who will have a blessing at my hands shall abide the law which was appointed for that

blessing, and the conditions thereof, as were instituted from before the foundation of the world.

"6. And as pertaining to the new and everlasting covenant, it was instituted for the fullness of my glory; and he that receiveth a fullness thereof must and shall abide the law, or he shall be damned, saith the Lord God." (underscoring by author)

Remaining verses of this Section, seven through sixty-six, reveals the details of this covenant of plural marriage with its rewards and further warnings about the consequences of not obeying this law.

An "OFFICIAL DECLARATION" at the end of the Doctrine and Covenants gives the wording of what is generally referred to as the "MANIFESTO":

"Inasmuch as laws have been enacted by Congress forbidding plural marriages, which laws have been pronounced constitutional by the court of last resort, I hereby declare my intention to submit to those laws, and to use my influence with the members of the Church over which I preside to have them do likewise.

"There is nothing in my teachings to the Church or in those of my associates, during the time specified, which can be reasonably construed to inculcate or encourage polygamy; and when any Elder of the Church has used language which appeared to convey any such

teaching, he has been promptly reproved. And I now publicly declare that my advice to the Latter-day Saints is to refrain from contracting any marriage forbidden by the law of the land.

"WILFORD WOODRUFF

President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

"President Lorenzo Snow offered the following.

"'I move that, recognizing Wilford Woodruff as the President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and the only man on the earth at the present time who holds the keys of the sealing ordinances, we consider him fully authorized by virtue of his position to issue the Manifesto which has been read in our hearing, and which is dated September 24th, 1890, and that as a Church in General Conference assembled, we accept his declaration concerning plural marriages as authoritative and binding."

"The vote to sustain the foregoing motion was unanimous.

"Salt Lake City, Utah, October 6, 1890."

Outside of advising the Latter-day Saints to refrain from contracting any marriage forbidden by the law of the land, the Manifesto makes no change in doctrine. The doctrine is followed by the Mormon people in temple work for the dead, and for the

living when the first wife is deceased. Fundamentalists believe sincerely that the law of God prevails; and if they do not obey, they will be damned. Therefore they choose to obey the law of God. When the identity of a polygamist is known the Mormon Church excommunicates such individual if he is still a member of record.

Most reliable estimates place the number of people living in polygamy in the western U.S.A., western Canada, and Mexico as considerably greater than the number living in such a manner at any prior time. The number so living cannot be verified but has been estimated to be around fifty to sixty thousand people. This number can only be expected to increase with the passage of time.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### Blood Atonement

Although polygamist living may be considered good, bad, or inconsequential, there is one other doctrine taught and practiced by the early Mormon Church that has on occasion been of great concern when its practice by certain fundamentalists has made headlines and has resulted in several personal tragedies. This is the doctrine of blood atonement, whereby one atones for sin by being put to death in such manner that blood is shed.

In History of the Church, Vol.5, p.296, Joseph Smith reported the following discussion concerning murder:

"In debate, George A. Smith said imprisonment was better than hanging.

"I replied, I was opposed to hanging, even if a man kill another. I will shoot him, or cut off his head, spill his blood on the ground, and let the smoke thereof ascend up to God; and if ever I have the privilege of making a law on that subject, I will have it so."

This doctrine is probably best elucidated by Brigham Young, the second president of the Mormon Church. He led the Mormons from Nauvoo, Illinois to the valleys of the Rocky Mountains and developed a large Mormon territory encompassing all or part of what is now several states of the United States. The following remarks are quoted from a sermon by Brigham Young on Feb. 8, 1857, and printed in the Deseret News, Feb.18, 1857, and in the Journal of Discourses, Vol.4, pp.219-220.

"Now take a person in this congregation who has knowledge with regard to being saved in the kingdom of our God and Father and being exalted, on who knows and understands the principles of eternal life, and sees the beauty and excellency of the eternities before him compared with the vain and foolish things of the world, and suppose that he is overtaken in a gross fault, that he has committed a sin that he knows will deprive him of that exaltation which he desires, and that he cannot attain to it without the shedding of his blood, and

also knows that by having his blood shed he will atone for that sin, and be saved and exalted with the Gods, is there a man of woman in this house but what would say, "shed my blood that I may be saved and exalted with the Gods?'

"All mankind love themselves, and let these principles be known by an individual, and he would be glad to have his blood shed. That would be loving themselves, even unto an eternal exaltation. Will you love your brothers or sisters likewise, when they have committed a sin that cannot be atoned for without the shedding of their blood? Will you love that man or woman well enough to shed their blood? ...

"I could refer you to plenty of instances where men have been righteously slain, in order to atone for their sins. I have seen scores and hundreds of people for whom there would have been a chance (in the last resurrection there will be) if their lives had been taken and their blood spilled on the ground as a smoking incense to the Almighty, but who are now angels to the devil....I have known a great many men who left this Church for whom there is no chance whatever for exaltation, but if their blood had been spilled, it would have been better for them. The wickedness and ignorance of the nations forbids this principle's being in full force, but the time will come when the law of God will be in full force.

"This is loving our neighbor as ourselves; if he needs help, help him; and if he wants salvation and it is necessary to spill his blood on the earth in order that he may be saved, spill it. Any of you who understand the principles of eternity, if you have sinned the sin requiring the shedding of blood, except the sin unto death, would not be satisfied nor rest until your blood should be spilled, that you might gain that salvation you desire. That is the way to love mankind." (underscoring by author)

Could this be a little too much loving for you? This appears to be quite a departure from the accepted definition of love. We do not desire that this book be devoted largely to detailing gruesome principles and their execution. Accordingly, instead of listing detail, we will list the offenses that were considered by early Mormon Church leaders to require death by blood atonement, along with names of the speakers or writers, and where the text has been recorded.

#### Apostasy

Brigham Young: Deseret News, Feb. 18, 1857

Journal of Discourses, Vol.4, pp. 219-220

Heber C. Kimball: Journal of Discourses, vol.6, pp. 34-35

#### Covenant Breaking

Jedediah M. Grant: Deseret News, Vol.6, page 235

Journal of Discourses, v.4, pp.49-51



Jedediah M. Grant: Deseret News: July 27, 1854

Heber C. Kimball: Journal of Discourses, v.4, page 375

#### Murder

Joseph Smith: History of the Church, by Joseph Smith,  
Vol. 5, p. 296

Joseph Fielding Smith: Doctrines of Salvation, by Joseph  
Fielding Smith, Vol.1, p. 136

#### Adultery and Immorality

Brigham Young: Journal of Discourses, vol.3, p.247  
and vol. 7, p.146

Orson Pratt: The Seer, Washington City, D.C., 1854  
page 42, and page 223

Heber C. Kimball: Journal of Discourses v.6, p.38;  
Ibid. v,7, p.19; Ibid. v.7, p.20

George A. Smith: Journal of Discourses v.1, p.97

#### Marriage to and African

Brigham Young: Journal of Discourses, v.10, p.110

#### Stealing

Brigham young: Journal of Discourses, v.1, pp.108-109

Information concerning the above and other references are detailed by Jerald and Sandra Tanner in their impressive book, *Mormonism - Shadow or Reality?*. For more information concerning this topic I refer you to their Chapter 25 (Blood Atonement), Chapter 28 (The Danites), and Chapter 33 (The Mountain Meadows Massacre) of the above mentioned publication.

References above clearly show that this Doctrine of Blood Atonement was openly proclaimed and practiced in the 1850's. However, when more non-Mormons began moving into Utah and with the United States more rigorously enforcing law and order, Church leaders were unable to continue this practice. However, as far as the author could find, the Mormon Church has never formally, by revelation or otherwise vacated this doctrine.

Some fundamentalists take the same view toward this as they do toward plural marriage. They believe in blood atonement, and do not believe that law of political jurisdictions supersedes the law of God.

James Coates, an award-winning investigative reporter for the Chicago Tribune makes the following statement on page 152 of his book *In Mormon Circles*, 1991.

"While other American boys were being brought up with the promise that they might grow up to be president of the United States, a pair of Norman Rockwell-perfect Mormon kids named Ronald and Daniel Lafferty were taught that one day they might become Gods, supreme beings in their own right ruling over a gigantic and magnificent universe. Tragically, like a dangerous minority on the fringe of Mormondom, the Lafferty brothers grew up and decided that they already were in direct communication with fellow Gods."

In March, 1984 Ronald Watson Lafferty recorded the following revelation given to Ronald and Daniel Lafferty:

"Thus sayeth the Lord unto my servants the prophets. It is my will and commandment that ye remove the following individuals in order that my work might go forward, for they have truly become obstacles in my path and I will not allow my work to be stopped.

"First thy brother's wife, Brenda, and her baby, then Chloe Low, and then Richard Stowe. And it is my will that they be removed in rapid succession and that an example be made of them in order that others might see the fate of those who fight against the true saints of God..."

On June 24, 1984, Brenda and her baby were killed, their throats slashed by Ron and Dan Lafferty. Dan Lafferty was sentenced to life in prison. Ron was sentenced to death and subsequently it was ordered that the execution be by a firing squad.

Dr. Rulon C. Allred, a naturopath, was leader of a polygamy sect in Salt Lake Valley called the Apostolic United Brethren, which also has communes in Idaho and Montana. Ervil LeBaron was leader of a Mexico-based fundamentalist cult, The Lambs of God. Dr. Allred claimed he received a revelation that Ervil LeBaron was a "false prophet", where upon Ervil and his organization was spurned. In 1981 a Utah jury convicted Ervil LeBaron of ordering the slaying of Dr. Rulon Allred which was successfully carried out by two women cult members. Ervil died in 1981 in his prison cell. He left behind a "Book of New Covenants" in which it is believed he issued a hit list including some of his own children and ranging up to members of the First Presidency of the Mormon Church.

Mr. Coats on page 164 of "In Mormon Circles" states:  
"Counting the people Ervil is known to have killed personally or to have ordered killed over the years, law officers like Utah's Dick and Paul Forbes identify twenty to thirty murders, as directly attributable to this cult, 'The Lambs of God'." On page 165 of this same book he makes the following observation:

"Indeed, it is not improper to ask whether there is something unique about Mormonism that creates a deadly fringe element along with a main body of admirable family-loving, civic-minded church-goers. Is revelation something that, like alcohol, most people

can handle without trouble, but which can drive certain vulnerable souls to wretched and dangerous excess?"

Other examples could be listed, and situations further detailed. However, the only purpose for citing this information is to call attention that this situation exists. As indicated above the early Mormon leaders recited some very gory scriptures and practices. These have not been specifically renounced by the Church. Even if they were to be renounced, the writings still exist and will be believed by some Mormon fundamentalists. As membership in the Mormon Church increases along with that of fundamentalist cults, is it not reasonable to expect that these described problems will increase?

We will now conclude our book by going to the last chapter in which we will ponder together the "Mormon Cocoon" with respect to what we have discussed and the possible results of either maintaining or piercing this cover.

## CHAPTER TWELVE

### Cocoon of Mormonism - Revisited

The Mormon people have developed a society that is generally productive, law abiding, protective, and socially fulfilling. As quoted from the opening sentence of our book: "The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (the Mormon Church) provides not only a theology, but it embraces a complete way of life wrapped within a silken spiritual cocoon, woven and designed to protect and nourish the sons and daughters of God throughout their life span or mortality on this Earth." Regardless of everything we have discussed, regardless of how overwhelming the evidence, the cocoon remains and probably will continue to remain. Some members are so tightly bound that they will see or hear nothing that endangers the cocoon. Some have become so dependent that if the "Gospel" was taken from them they would feel they could not continue. Some need the prop. Others knowing the "Gospel" is not true, elect to stay either because of family, friends and life style, or because they think it is a protection for their children. We believe that the lost of mental and spiritual freedom is to high a price to pay for this protection and security.

The General Authorities of the Mormon Church know that its members and the public as a whole are becoming more aware of the true background and origin of the Mormon Church. They have a real problem. It will be interesting to see how they deal with it. As this knowledge becomes more available, fewer members will

have testimonies. Many will treat the Church as a fraternity or a social club. The intellectual level of the Church as a whole will continue to drop. It is even possible that tithing receipts will dwindle.

The information analyzed in our book shows that the Mormon theology is without divine origin. It has been shown that Mormon testimonies have nothing to do with the truthfulness or falsity of the members' beliefs, but is an emotional activity of affirmation. It will become more difficult for members to maintain a testimony when it is more generally known that the overwhelming evidence shows that their testimony contradicts fact.

We pride ourselves on having freedom of religion. Ideally each individual has the freedom to believe whatever he or she desires. But is it proper and lawful to present physical facts known to be untrue? Can one claim to have a vision revealing God the Father when an earlier account by the same person of the same event was completely different? Can claim be made that a book is a history of the people on the American continent, when it has nothing to do with such history? Can it be claimed that another book is a true translation of the writings of Abraham, when the source document is available and its translation shows no relationship to that claimed? Should a Church be permitted to instill testimony within its members by affirmation methods confirming the truth of such falsely produced documents as

mentioned above? On the basis of such apparent misrepresentation, Mormon Church members are asked and expected to donate ten per cent of their gross income to the Mormon Church. Do misrepresentations as these constitute activities proper under the concept of freedom of religion?

It appears that these are questions that United States agencies, and departments of other countries should give serious consideration to when (1) permitting or prohibiting proselytizing by Mormon missionaries, (2) qualifying contributions received as deductible for tax purposes by the donor, (3) determining taxability to the Church of contribution income derived in part by such misrepresentations and (4) considering possible charges of mind manipulation or brain conditioning.

Because of the abundance of information now available, a diligent person may avoid or escape the cocoon if he or she desires. One's final course will depend on the answer to his or her personal and family relationships considered along with the value he or she places on the search for truth and possessing a clear and open mind.

There will be those that will feel this analysis is negative, and ask what is to be accomplished by questioning or demonstrating non-authenticity. We feel that this book is very positive and helpful. As stated before, a person does not become good because of an instilled fear of God, or from a contrived



promise of celestial reward. A person becomes good by having a great desire to be one with the God of his heart, and by living in harmony with all mankind, showing empathy and respect for all creation. As a person evolves, he must leave behind the myths wherein he is led to feel he is chosen, where he is taught fear, and where he is promised fabricated heavenly rewards. That which is done to remove an obstacle to human advancement is generally considered to be a worthwhile activity. Probably, all eternity is devoted to this seeking, finding, and becoming.

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