

MORMON SCRIPTURES AND THE BIBLE

Milton R. Hunter, of the First Council of the Seventy in the Mormon Church, recently was quoted as saying the following:

The Prophet Joseph Smith produced for the world three new volumes of holy scriptures, namely the Book of Mormon, the *Doctrine and Covenants*, and the *Pearl of Great Price*, and, in addition, he revised the Bible. **No prophet who has ever lived has accomplished such a tremendous feat.** There are only 177 pages in the Old Testament attributed to Moses, **while Joseph Smith either translated through the gift and power of God or received as direct revelation from Jehovah 835.** (*Deseret News*, Church Section, July 18, 1970, page 14)

The Mormon Apostle Orson Pratt once made this statement:

This generation have **more than one thousand times** the amount of evidence to demonstrate and forever establish the Divine Authenticity of the Book of Mormon than they have in favor of the Bible! (*Orson Pratt's Works*, "Evidences of the Book of Mormon and Bible Compared," 1851, page 64)

We have recently completed a new book entitled *Mormon Scriptures and the Bible*. In this book we have compared the evidence for the Bible with that for Mormon scriptures. This evidence clearly shows that Mormon writers are being very unrealistic when they make statements such as those quoted from the writings of Orson Pratt and Milton R. Hunter.

The Apostle Pratt's statement that there is "more than one thousand times" the amount of evidence to prove the Book of Mormon than to prove the Bible is certainly a misrepresentation. In our *Case Against Mormonism*, vol. 2, we show that the only evidence for the Book of Mormon is the testimony of the witnesses and that this testimony can not be relied upon. Many Mormons have claimed that the Book of Mormon is supported by archaeological evidence, but a careful examination reveals that there is no evidence that the Nephites—i.e., the people mentioned in the Book of Mormon—ever really existed. In fact, Dr. Hugh Nibley, who is supposed to be the Church's greatest scholar, admits that there is no definite archaeological evidence to support the story found in the Book of Mormon:

Of course, almost any object could conceivably have some connection with the Book of Mormon, but **nothing short of an inscription which could be read and roughly dated could bridge the gap between what might be called a pre-actualistic archaeology and contact with the realities of Nephite civilization.**

The possibility that a great nation or empire that once dominated vast areas of land and flourished for centuries could actually **get lost and stay lost** in spite of every effort of men to discover its traces, has been demonstrated many times since Schliemann found the real world of the Mycenaeans. . . .

So it is with the Nephites. **All that we have to go on to date is a written history. That does not mean that our Nephites are necessarily mythical,** . . . as things stand we are still in the **pre-archaeological and pre-anthropological stages of Book of Mormon study.** Which means that there is nothing whatever that an anthropologist or archaeologist as such can say about the Book of Mormon. Nephite civilization was urban in nature, . . . **It could just as easily and completely vanish** from sight as did the worlds of Ugarit, Ur, or Croesos; and **until some physical remnant of it, no matter how trivial, has been identified** beyond question, what can any student of physical remains possibly have to say about it? Everything written so far by anthropologist or archaeologists—even real archaeologists—about the Book of Mormon must be discounted, for the same reason that we must discount studies of the lost Atlantis: not because it did not exist, but because **it has not yet been found.** (*Since Cumorah*, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1967, pages 243-244)

While the Nephites are never mentioned in any ancient inscription, the existence of the Israelites is verified by many inscriptions dating back hundreds of years before the time of Christ. The "earliest archaeological reference to the people of Israel" is a stele of the Egyptian ruler Merneptah

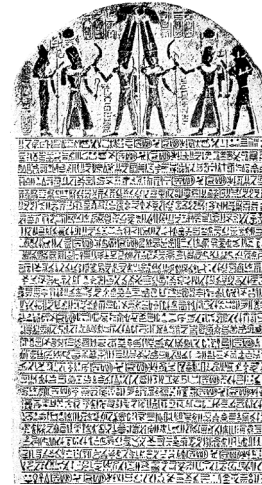


Photo of Merneptah Stele

which is now in the Egyptian Museum in Cairo. In *The Biblical World* we find this information concerning this stele:

Merneptah, son and successor of Ramesses II, ruled Egypt from ca. 1224 to ca. 1214 B.C. . . . His campaign in Palestine, waged during the fifth year of his reign (**ca. 1220 B.C.**) is commemorated on a large black granite stele which was found in Merneptah's mortuary temple in Thebes. At the top is a representation of Merneptah and the god Amun, . . . Merneptah states:

Israel is laid waste, his seed is not;

Hurru (i.e. Syria) is become a widow for Egypt.

The stele provides the first mention of Israel on ancient monuments, and provides proof that Israel was in western Palestine **by 1220 B.C.** (*The Biblical World*, edited by Charles F. Pfeiffer, Michigan, 1966, pages 380-381)

John A. Wilson, a noted Egyptologist from the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, made this comment concerning this stele:

This is the customary magniloquent claim that the god-king was victorious over all opponents, whether he had met them in battle or not. The appearance of Israel in an Asiatic context is interesting, but has no meaning in terms of armed conflict against Egypt. It merely shows that **an Egyptian scribe was conscious of a people known as Israel somewhere in Palestine or Transjordan.** (*The Culture of Ancient Egypt*, University of Chicago Press, 1965, page 255)

Many other references from ancient sources could be cited to prove that the Israelites actually existed. If Mormon writers could find evidence such as this for the Book of Mormon, we would be forced to consider its claim to be a divinely inspired record. As far as historical and manuscript evidence is concerned Joseph Smith's scriptures have absolutely no foundation. The "records of the Nephites," for instance, were never cited by any ancient writer, nor are there any known manuscripts or even fragments of manuscripts in existence older than the ones dictated by Joseph Smith in the late 1820s. Joseph Smith's Book of Moses is likewise without documentary support. The only handwritten manuscripts for the Book of Moses are those dictated by Joseph Smith in the early 1830s. Since Joseph Smith revelation in the *Doctrine and Covenants* do not purport to be translations of ancient records, we would not expect to find any manuscript evidence concerning them. There is one revelation, however, which purports to be a translation of a "record made on parchment by John and hidden up by himself." This revelation is found in the *Doctrine and Covenants* as Section 7. There is no documentary support for it other than a handwritten copy from Joseph Smith's time. The Book of Abraham purports to be a translation of an ancient Egyptian papyrus. We have already shown, however, that the original papyrus is in reality the Egyptian "Book of Breathings" and has nothing to do with Abraham or his

religion. Therefore, we have no evidence for the Book of Abraham prior to the handwritten manuscripts dictated by Joseph Smith in the 1830s. It would appear, then, that there is no documentary evidence for any of Joseph Smith's works that dates back prior to the late 1820s.

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

In the *Salt Lake City Messenger* for August, 1969, we presented some of the manuscript evidence for the New Testament. In our new book, *Mormon Scriptures and the Bible*, we go into greater detail on this subject. We show that there are thousands of handwritten manuscripts of the New Testament, some of which date back to the fourth century. One of the most important is the Codex Vaticanus. Gleason L. Archer, Jr., feels that this is “a magnificent” manuscript and states that it was written about “A.D. 325-350” (*A Survey of Old Testament Introduction*, page 40). Another important manuscript is the Codex Sinaiticus. George Eldon Ladd states that it “dates from the **early fourth century**, and has proved to be one of the best texts we possess of the New Testament” (*The New Testament and Criticism*, Michigan, 1967, page 62). The Codex Alexandrinus is another important manuscript which was probably written in the fifth century.

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

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

In recent times papyrus manuscripts which are even older than the three manuscripts mentioned above have been discovered. Although these papyrus manuscripts are “relatively fragmentary,” almost every book in the New Testament is represented. In the *Salt Lake City Messenger*, Issue 24, we printed a photograph of “Papyrus Bodmer II,” which contains the book of John and is dated about 200 A.D. An even earlier fragment from the book of John has been located. Below is a photograph taken from *The Biblical Archaeologist*, September 1957, page 61. This photograph shows “Rylands Greek Papyrus 457, dated about 125-130 A.D., the oldest known fragment of a New Testament manuscript. It contains John 18:31-33 on one side and 18:38 on the other. Both sides are shown.”



Bruce M. Metzger makes these interesting observations concerning this fragment of papyrus:

Although the extent of the verses preserved is so slight, in one respect this tiny scrap of papyrus possesses quite as much evidential value as would the complete codex. Just as Robinson Crusoe, seeing but a single footprint in the sand, concluded that another human being, with two feet, was present on the island with him, so P52 [Rylands Greek Papyrus 457] proves the existence and use of the Fourth Gospel during the first half of the second century in a provincial town along the Nile, far removed from its traditional place of composition (Ephesus in Asia Minor). Had this little fragment been known during the middle of the past century, that school of New Testament criticism which was inspired by the brilliant Tubingen professor, Ferdinand Christian Baur, could not have argued that the Fourth Gospel was not composed until about the year 160. (*The Text of the New Testament*, page 39)

DEAD SEA SCROLLS

The Mormon Apostle Orson Pratt once stated that the “oldest manuscripts of any of the books of the Old Testament at the present day date from the twelfth century of the Christian era” (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 7, page 23). While this statement may have been true on Orson Pratt's time, the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls has changed the entire picture. We now have some manuscripts that date back prior to the time of Christ.

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

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

They set out now to examine systematically all the caves in the Qumran neighborhood. They entered two hundred and sixty-seven, . . . Several of the caves contained scrolls, which, unprotected by jars, were in a state of disintegration, . . . The fragments of these collected ran into the tens of thousands. It was becoming more and more apparent that a library had been hidden here—a library which seems to have included **almost all the books of the Bible** [the Old Testament], a number of apocryphal works and the literature of an early religious sect. (*Ibid.*, page 25)

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

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

Three very old documents have been found in Cave IV. . . . they include an old copy of Samuel, preserved in only a handful of fragments; a patched and worn section of Jeremiah, . . . and a copy of Exodus . . . of which only a column and a few tatters are extant. . . .

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

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

In a recent article Frank Moore Cross writes:

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

Mormon scholars accept the authenticity of the Dead Sea Scrolls, although they have not come to grips with the serious problems which these manuscripts create for the Book of Mormon and the “Inspired Version” of the Bible. The Mormon Apostle Mark E. Petersen stated:

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

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

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

By far the most interesting and useful of all the Isaiah manuscripts for the study of the text is the complete St. Mark's Isaiah scroll . . . It too **supports the accuracy**, by and large, of the Masoretic text . . . (*More Light on the Dead Sea Scrolls*, New York, 1958, page 146)

On page 172 of the same book, Millar Burrows states that the St. Mark scroll of Isaiah gives "the complete text of the book in a manuscript which cannot be dated much after 100 B.C. at the latest."

Werner Keller made these observations about this scroll:

The text of Isaiah from the cave at Qumran had actually been copied about 100 B.C., as Professor Albright had been first to recognize. . . . the remarkable and wonderful fact is that ancient scroll of Isaiah, just like the book of the prophet in any printed Bible, whether in Hebrew, Greek, Latin, German, or any other language, has sixty-six chapters and agrees with our present-day text. (*The Bible as History*, by Werner Keller, translated by William Neil, New York, 1957, pages 423-424)

Bible scholars have reason to rejoice over the discovery of manuscripts of Isaiah dating back to ancient times. Mormon scholars, however, are faced with a dilemma, for although these manuscripts support the text of the Bible, they could turn out to be one of the strongest evidences against Joseph Smith's "Inspired Revision" of the Bible and his "translation" of the text of Isaiah found in the Book of Mormon. For years Mormon scholars have labored to prove that the text of Isaiah in the Book of Mormon is actually a translation of an ancient copy of Isaiah and is therefore superior to the translation found in the Bible. They have attempted to show parallels between the text of Isaiah found in the Book of Mormon and that found in some ancient manuscripts. In our book *Mormon Scriptures and the Bible* we show that these parallels are of little value because these manuscripts were known and studied in Joseph Smith's time.

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

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

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

The Mormon scholar Sidney B. Sperry, of Brigham Young University, frankly admits that the Dead Sea Scrolls do not help the case for the Book of Mormon:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

It is interesting to see how Dr. Sperry has to detract from the Isaiah scroll in his attempt to save the Book of Mormon. The reason that Dr. Sperry does not want to accept the date of 100 B.C. for the Isaiah scroll is quite obvious to those who are familiar with the teachings of the Book of Mormon. The Mormons claim that the Catholics conspired to alter the Bible. The Book of Mormon plainly states that these changes were made after the time of Christ and after the formation of the Catholic Church:

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

****NEW BOOK****

MORMON SCRIPTURES and the BIBLE

By Jerald and Sandra Tanner. A 53-page book dealing with such subjects as: the decline of the importance of the Bible in Mormon theology, the influences of Bible critics on Mormonism, the charge that the Catholics conspired to alter the Scriptures, a comparison of the manuscript evidence for the Bible and Mormon scriptures, the Isaiah text in the Book of Mormon in the light of the Septuagint Version and the Dead Sea Scrolls, a study of a hand-written copy of one of Joseph Smith's revelations which reveals serious changes in the printed version, Young's attempt to suppress Joseph Smith's Inspired Revision, how Smith ignored his own renderings, Smith's failure to see the places in the text of the Bible that really needed correction, the lack of support in ancient manuscripts for Smith's "Inspired" renderings, relationship of the Book of Enoch to the Inspired Revision, how Smith changes his own revision, changes in the *Pearl of Great Price*, and the changes in the "Lectures on Faith." This book is filled with new and important information. The regular price will be \$2.00, but if it is ordered before September 30, 1970, the price will be only \$1.80 — 2 for \$3.15 — 5 for \$6.30 — 10 for \$10.80.

If the “great Isaiah Scroll” found at Qumran was written 100 years before Christ as scholars claim, then it is obvious that the Catholics did not alter the book of Isaiah. Consequently, the Book of Mormon is incorrect in charging that the Catholics conspired to change the Bible.

Also it should be remembered that this scroll is a Jewish production, and the Book of Mormon claims that the Jews had the Scriptures in their “purity.” Why, then, does this scroll fail to support the text of Isaiah as found in the Book of Mormon or Joseph Smith’s Inspired Revision of the Bible?

Dr. Sperry is well aware of the fact that the Catholics did not exist before the time of Christ, and therefore he suggests that the Isaiah scroll may not have been written until about 50 A.D., but it was a persecuted minority and hardly fits the description of the “great and abominable church” found in the Book of Mormon. Joseph Fielding Smith, President of the Mormon Church, has stated that the Catholics did not become the “ruling power in religion” until after the beginning of the fourth century (*Essentials in Church History*, page 10).

Because of Old Testament manuscripts found in the area of the Dead Sea and the discovery of papyrus manuscripts of the New Testament, it is almost impossible to maintain Joseph Smith’s teaching that the Catholics conspired to change the Bible. Dr. Richard L. Anderson, one of the top authorities on Bible manuscripts in the Mormon Church, has frankly admitted that the idea that the New Testament has been drastically changed cannot be maintained in the light of new discoveries:

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

It is true that the Latter-day Saints have taken the position that the present Bible is much changed from its original form. However, **greatest changes would logically have occurred in writings more remote than the New Testament.** The textual history of the New Testament gives every reason to assume **a fairly stable transmission of the documents we possess.** . . . Major losses might occur by elimination of whole books **rather than alteration of those admitted as canonical. Nor do subsequent changes have to be based on open changes of the writings.** The forces of evil are more effective at changing the meaning of true terms and concepts than removing them. (*Fourteenth Annual Symposium of the Archaeology of the Scriptures*, Brigham Young University, 1963, pages 57-59)

The Mormon Apostle Mark E. Petersen has written a book on the Bible in which he made several serious errors. He even goes so far as to judge the text of the Bible by the text found in the Book of Mormon. The following references to the Bible are taken from the book:

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

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

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

In the Old Testament this reference reads:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Notice that the clause, “or out of the waters of baptism,” has been added. Richard P. Howard’s new book, *Restoration Scriptures*, page 117, plainly shows that these words did **not** appear in the original handwritten manuscript.

“INSPIRED REVISION”

The Mormon Apostle John A. Widtsoe gives this information concerning Joseph Smith’s “Inspired Version” of the Bible:

Joseph Smith accepted the Bible as far as it was translated correctly but felt that many errors which should corrected had crept into the work. . . . he endeavored through inspiration from on high to correct those many departures from the original text. This was not fully completed when he died, but his manuscript exists in the original and in copies, and has been published by the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. **It is a remarkable evidence of the prophetic power of Joseph Smith.** Hundreds of changes make clear many a disputed text. (*Joseph Smith—Seeker After Truth*, page 139)

Although the Mormon Church has never printed the Inspired Version, the Reorganized Church’s printing is now available at the Mormon owned Deseret Book Store, and Mormon scholars use it freely in their writings. Bruce R. McConkie, of the First Council of the Seventy, states: “. . . the marvelous flood of light and knowledge revealed through the Inspired Version of the Bible is **one of the great evidences of the divine mission of Joseph Smith**” (*Mormon Doctrine*, Salt Lake City, 1958, page 352).

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

Some of Joseph Smith’s “inspired” renderings were apparently written in rebuttal to Bible critics. For instance, Thomas Paine was very critical of the account of creation found in Genesis. The first verse of Genesis reads: “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” Paine made this comment concerning this matter:

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

Why it has been called the Mosaic account of the Creation, I am at a loss to conceive. (*The Age of Reason*, reprinted by the Thomas Paine Foundation, New York, page 20)

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

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

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

Joseph Smith not only attempted answer the critics in his Inspired Revision, but he even added prophecies concerning himself and the Book of

Mormon. In fact, he even added his own name in an interpolation of about 800 words which he added to Genesis, Chapter 50:

... and his name shall be called **Joseph**, and it shall be after the name of his father; ... the thing which the Lord shall bring forth by his hand shall bring my people unto salvation. (Inspired Revision, Genesis 50:33)

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

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

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

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

These same interpolations are found in the *Pearl of Great Price*, Book of Moses 7:8, 12 and 22.

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

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

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

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

Joseph Smith’s rendition of this verse is not supported by the Septuagint Version of the Bible—the Septuagint is a Greek version of the Old Testament said to have been translated from the Hebrew text two or three hundred years before the time of Christ. The Septuagint Version reads: “And he said, Blessed be the Lord God of Sem, and Chanaan shall be his bond-servant” (Septuagint Version, Genesis 9:26).

Joseph Smith not only made many unnecessary changes in the Bible, but he also failed to see the places where the text of the Bible really needed correction. There is one statement in the King James Version, 1 John 5:7 and 8 which scholars are certain is an interpolation. In modern versions of the Bible this statement has been removed to conform with the ancient Greek

manuscripts. Below is a comparison of the text in the King James Version and that found in the Revised Standard Version.

KING JAMES

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

REVISED STANDARD

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

In the book, *Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts*, we find the following information concerning this interpolation:

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

Even in Joseph Smith’s time this portion of 1 John was rejected by many scholars. Adam Clarke stated:

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

An examination of the writings of Mormon scholars reveals that they also question the authenticity of this verse. Arch S. Reynolds stated: “The extraneous matter added in the Authorized Version is **clearly an interpolation**, since the above is wanting in every manuscript except one before the fourteenth century, and in all early versions” (“A Study of Joseph Smith’s Bible Revision,” typed copy, page 169). Richard L. Anderson, of the Brigham Young University, stated: “One of the few major **additions that seem apparent** is 1 John 5:7. . . . **The text of the fifth century did not speak of the heavenly Trinity**, and the fact that very few Greek manuscripts add the heavenly Trinity makes it probable that this comment **was not an original part of John’s letter**” (*Fourteenth Annual Symposium on the Archaeology of the Scriptures*, Brigham Young University, 1963, page 53).

OLD ORDER FORM REMOVED

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

Many Mormon writers have claimed that Joseph Smith never completed his Inspired Revision. Evidence, however, showing that in 1833 Joseph Smith considered his "translation" as finished. In a letter dated July 2, 1833, signed by Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon and F. G. Williams, the following statement is found:

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

Earlier in this paper we quoted the Mormon Apostle John A. Widtsoe as saying that the Inspired Revision is "a remarkable evidence of the prophetic power of Joseph Smith." We cannot accept this statement, for a careful examination of his work reveals unmistakable evidence that it is merely a human production and contains many serious errors.

Within the last year or two scholars from both the Reorganized Church and the Utah Church have made some astonishing admissions concerning the Inspired Revision. Robert J. Matthews, Director of Academic Research for the Department of Seminaries and Institutes in the Utah Mormon Church, goes so far as to admit that Joseph Smith may have added material which was never contained in the original manuscripts of the Bible:

The question might be raised whether the Prophet actually restored the text as Matthew wrote it, or whether, being the seer that he was, **he went even beyond Matthew's text** and recorded an event that actually took place during the delivery of the Sermon, **but which Matthew did not include**. . . . It is probable that the Inspired Version is many things, and the **only portions it represents restorations while other portions may be explanations, interpolations, enlargements**, clarifications and the like . . . many of the passages in the Inspired Version may be reiterations of events which were either **not recorded by the Biblical writers** or were lost before the Bible was compiled, in which case **even the original Bible manuscripts would not contain the information**. (*Brigham Young University Studies*, Winter 1969, pages 170 and 173)

Richard P. Howard, Church Historian of the Reorganized Church, appears to be on the verge of repudiating the Inspired Version. In his recent book, *Restoration Scriptures*, Richard P. Howard made these statements:

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

. . . Joseph's heavy reliance on the early seventeenth century Elizabethan English language and style of the King James Version throughout his second document makes this verbal inspiration approach to the language of the early Genesis chapter of his New Translation **untenable**. (*Restoration Scriptures*, Herald Publishing House, Independence, Mo., 1969, page 77)

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

In our book, *Mormon Scriptures and the Bible*, we devote more than 20 pages to Joseph Smith's Inspired Version of the Bible. This book has 53 large 8 1/2 by 11 inch pages and covers such topics as: the influence of Bible critics on Mormonism, the Apostle Pratt's attacks on the Bible, the charge that the Catholics conspired to alter the Scriptures, a comparison of the manuscript evidence for the Bible and for Mormon scriptures, the Isaiah text in the Book of Mormon in the light of the Septuagint Version and the Dead Sea Scrolls, a study of a handwritten copy of one of Joseph Smith's "Inspired Revision,"

which reveals serious changes in the printed version, Brigham Young's attempt to suppress Joseph Smith's "Inspired Revision," Joseph Smith's failure to see the places in the text of the Bible that really needed correction, the lack of support in ancient manuscripts for Joseph Smith's "Inspired" renderings, how Joseph changed his own revision, & changes in the *Pearl of Great Price*.

The normal price for *Mormon Scriptures and the Bible* will be \$2.00, but if it is ordered before September 30, 1970, the price will be only \$1.80 — 2 for \$3.15 — 5 for \$6.30 — 10 for \$10.80.

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