

Changing World of Mormonism

January is a month we are anxiously awaiting, for this is when Moody Press plans to release our new book, *The Changing World of Mormonism*. This is a condensed and updated version of *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?*—a book which has sold over 32,000 copies and which Bible scholar Norman L. Geisler claims has “shaken” the “historical and theological foundations” of Mormonism.

The title, *The Changing World of Mormonism*, is especially fitting for this work because even while we were in the process of preparing it, the Mormon Church made a major revision of its doctrine concerning blacks.

DEATH OF THE ANTI-BLACK DOCTRINE

David Briscoe and George Buck refer to June 9, 1978, as “Black Friday” because this was the day that Mormon leaders announced the death of the anti-black doctrine (see *Utah Holiday*, July 1978, page 33). Prior to that time blacks of African lineage were not allowed to hold the Priesthood nor go through the temple even though they lived exemplary lives.

The Mormon position concerning blacks was clearly stated in a letter written by the First Presidency on July 17, 1947:

From the days of the Prophet Joseph even until now, it has been the doctrine of the Church, never questioned by any of the Church leaders that the Negroes are not entitled to the full blessings of the Gospel. (Letter from the First Presidency, quoted in *Mormonism and the Negro*, by John J. Stewart and William E. Berrett, pages 46-47)

Bruce R. McConkie, who now serves as an Apostle in the Mormon Church, wrote the following in a book published in 1958:

Negroes in this life are denied the priesthood; under no circumstances can they hold this delegation of authority from the Almighty. The gospel message of salvation is not carried affirmatively to them . . .

Negroes are not equal with other races where the receipt of certain spiritual blessings are concerned . . . (*Mormon Doctrine*, 1958, page 477)

In the July 1978 issue of the *Salt Lake City Messenger* we pointed out that in the past Mormon leaders have taught that the doctrine could not be changed. President Brigham Young, for instance, emphatically affirmed that blacks could not hold the Priesthood until AFTER the resurrection:

Cain slew his brother . . . and the Lord put a mark upon him, which is the flat nose and black skin. . . . How long is that race to endure the dreadful curse that is upon them? That curse will remain upon them, and they never can hold the Priesthood or share in it until all the other descendants of Adam have received the promises and enjoyed the blessings of the Priesthood and the keys thereof. Until the last ones of the residue of Adam’s children are brought up to that favourable



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position, the children of Cain cannot receive the first ordinances of the Priesthood. (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 7, pages 290-291)

When all the other children of Adam have had the privilege of receiving the Priesthood, and of coming into the kingdom of God, and of being redeemed from the four quarters of the earth, and have received their resurrection from the dead, then it will be time enough to remove the curse from Cain and his posterity. . . . he is the last to share the joys of the kingdom of God. (*Ibid.*, vol. 2, page 143)

The First Presidency of the Church reaffirmed Brigham Young’s teaching in 1949 (see *Mormonism and the Negro*, Part 2, page 16), and in 1967, N. Eldon Tanner, was quoted as saying:

“The church has no intention of changing its doctrine on the Negro,” N. Eldon Tanner, counselor to the First President told Seattle during his recent visit here. “Throughout the history of the original Christian church, the Negro never held the priesthood. There’s really nothing we can do to change this. It’s a law of God.” (*Seattle Magazine*, December 1967, page 60)

The Mormon apologist John L. Lund wrote the following:

Brigham Young revealed that the Negroes will not receive the Priesthood until a great while after the second advent of Jesus Christ, . . . our present prophets are in complete agreement with Brigham Young and other past leaders on the question of the Negro and the Priesthood. . . .

Social pressure and even government sanctions cannot be expected to bring forth a new revelation . . . all the social pressure in the world will not change what the Lord has decreed to be. . . .

The prophets have declared that there are at least two major stipulations that have to be met before the Negroes will be allowed to possess the Priesthood. The first requirement relates to time. The Negroes will not be allowed to hold the Priesthood during mortality, in fact, not until after the resurrection of all of Adam’s children. The other stipulation

requires that Abel's seed receive the first opportunity of having the Priesthood. . . . Negroes must first pass through mortality before they may possess the Priesthood ("they will go down to death"). Reference is also made to the condition that the Negroes will have to wait until after the resurrection of all of Adam's children before receiving the Priesthood. . . . the last of Adam's children will not be resurrected until the end of the millennium. Therefore, the Negroes will not receive the Priesthood until after that time . . . this will not happen until after the thousand years of Christ's reign on earth. . . .

The second major stipulation that needs to be met . . . is the requirement that Abel's seed receive the opportunity of holding the Priesthood first. (*The Church and the Negro*, 1967, pages 45-48)

Because Church leaders stressed for over a hundred years that blacks would never be able to hold the Priesthood DURING MORTALITY, the Mormon people were surprised when they learned of the death of the anti-black doctrine. They were aware of the fact that the change tended to undermine the concept that they were led by a "living prophet" who could not yield to the pressures of the world. Even though most Mormons claim they are happy with the doctrinal change regarding blacks, there is evidence that the "revelation" came as a real shock. A class at Brigham Young University which conducted a "random telephone survey" of Utah County residents found that 79 percent of those interviewed did not expect a change at this time. Furthermore, many people compared the news to an announcement of some kind of disaster or death:

Some 45 percent of those who heard of the doctrine from personal sources expressed doubt that the news was true. This compares with only 25 percent of those who learned from media sources. Sixty-two percent of the former group expressed shock, compared with 52 percent of the latter. . . .

Those surveyed appeared surprised by the announcement, Haroldsen said. Thirty-nine percent said they did not think "it would ever happen" that the priesthood would ever be given to blacks.

Another 44 percent expected it years in the future, after Christ's return, during the Millennium, or "not in my lifetime." . . .

In trying to explain how they reacted to the news, 14 persons compared its impact with that of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. Another 13 compared it to the news of the death of an LDS Church president. Eight compared it to a natural disaster, especially the Teton dam break.

Others compared the news with the death of a family member or friend, with a declaration of war, or other major political event. (*The Daily Universe*, June 22, 1978)

The Mormon people apparently realized the deep doctrinal implications this change involved, and therefore they associated it with death or disaster. If they were really pleased with the change, why did they not relate it with a happy event like marriage, the birth of a child or the end of a war? We feel that this survey unwittingly reveals what Church members really thought of the change.

OLD TEACHINGS BECOME INOPERATIVE

The reader will remember that when the public began to find out the real truth about Watergate, President Nixon's press secretary Ron Ziegler said that statements which had previously been made were now "inoperative." What he really meant, of course, was that the past denials were untrue.

Like the early statements concerning Watergate, the pronouncements and revelations that Mormon leaders used to support the anti-black doctrine have now become "inoperative." Although he did not use this word, the Apostle Bruce R. McConkie recently conceded that the old teachings concerning blacks were given "without the light and knowledge that now has come into the world":

I would like to say something about the new revelation relative to our taking the priesthood to those of all nations and races. . . . There are statements in our literature by the early brethren which we have interpreted to mean that the Negroes would not receive the priesthood in mortality. I have said the same things, and people write me letters and say, "You said such and such, and how is it now that we do such and such?" And all I can say to that is that it is time disbelieving people repented and got in line and believed in a living, modern prophet. Forget everything that I have said, or what President Brigham Young or President George Q. Cannon or whomsoever has said in days past that is contrary to the present revelation. We spoke with a limited understanding and without the light and knowledge that now has come into the world.

We get our truth and our light line upon line and precept upon precept. We have now had added a new flood of intelligence and light on this particular subject, and it erases all the darkness and all the views and all the thoughts of the past. They don't matter any more.

It doesn't make a particle of difference what anybody ever said about the Negro matter before the first day of June of this year (1978). It is a new day and a new arrangement, and the Lord has now given the revelation that sheds light into the world on this subject. As to any slivers of light or any particles of darkness of the past, we forget about them. ("All Are Alike Unto God," by Apostle Bruce R. McConkie of the Council of the Twelve, pages 1-2)

Because of the new revelation concerning blacks, Bruce R. McConkie has had to make a number of changes in his "best-seller," *Mormon Doctrine*. This is not the first time that Apostle McConkie has been forced to revise his book. The original 1958 edition was suppressed because it contained anti-Catholic material (see *The Case Against Mormonism*, vol. 1, pages 8-9). When a new edition appeared in 1966, Apostle McConkie wrote that "experience has shown the wisdom of making some changes, clarifications, and additions." At any rate, when the "25th Printing" of Apostle McConkie's book appeared in 1979, the majority of the anti-black material was deleted or changed. For instance, the section on "NEGROES" (pages 526-528 of the new printing) was completely rewritten and no longer contains McConkie's statement that "Negroes are not equal with other races where the receipt of certain spiritual blessings are concerned . . ." Nor does it contain McConkie's long explanation of how blacks were "less valiant" in the pre-existence and therefore had "spiritual restrictions imposed upon them during mortality . . ." In another section, RACES OF MEN, McConkie originally wrote:

We know the circumstances under which the posterity of Cain (and later of Ham) were cursed with what we call negroid racial characteristics. (*Mormon Doctrine*, 1958, page 554)

This has been softened to read:

We know the circumstances under which the posterity of Cain (and later of Ham) were born with the characteristics of the black race. (*Mormon Doctrine*, 1979, page 616)

In the 1958 edition, page 314, Apostle McConkie had written that “Negroes are thus descendants of Ham, who himself also was cursed, apparently for marrying into the forbidden lineage.” This was shortened to: “Ham was cursed, apparently for marrying into the forbidden lineage, . . .” (*Mormon Doctrine*, 1979 printing, page 343)

On page 102 of the 1958 printing, Apostle McConkie wrote the following:

As a result of his rebellion, Cain was cursed with a dark skin; he became the father of the Negroes, and those spirits who are not worthy to receive the priesthood are born through his lineage. He became the first mortal to be cursed as a son of perdition.

In the 1979 printing of McConkie’s *Mormon Doctrine*, page 109, this has been changed to read:

As a result of his rebellion, Cain was cursed and told that “the earth” would not thereafter yield him its abundance as previously. In addition he became the first mortal to be cursed as a son of perdition.

The reader will notice that Apostle McConkie has changed the statement so that it no longer reads that “Negroes” are cursed with a black skin. In the 1979 printing McConkie does go on to talk of the “dark skin,” but he calls it a “mark” rather than a “curse”: “The Lord placed on Cain a mark of a dark skin, and he became the ancestor of the black race.”

Although we believe that Apostle McConkie has the right to change his own writings, we feel that these changes tend to undermine his claim to have “all of the keys of the kingdom of God on earth” (*Mormon Doctrine*, 1979 printing, page 45). In any case, we feel that McConkie’s book may have to undergo even more revision. Although he apparently tried to remove all material unfavorable to blacks, he seems to have missed the following in his section entitled, CASTE SYSTEM:

However, in a broad general sense, caste systems have their root and origin in the gospel itself, and when they operate according to the divine decree, the resultant restrictions and segregation are right and proper and have the approval of the Lord. To illustrate; Cain, Ham, and the whole negro race have been cursed with a black skin, the mark of Cain, so they can be identified as a caste apart, a people with whom the other descendants of Adam should not intermarry. (*Mormon Doctrine*, 1979, page 114)

EXISTENCE OF NEW REVELATION QUESTIONED

In the July 1978 issue of the *Salt Lake City Messenger* we observed: “One thing that should be noted about the new ‘revelation’ is that the Church has failed to produce a copy of it. All we have is a statement by the First Presidency which says a revelation was received.” We went on to say:

We seriously doubt that President Kimball will put forth a written revelation on the bestowal of priesthood on blacks. We doubt, in fact, that any such document exists. What probably happened was that the leaders of the Church finally realized that they could no longer retain the anti-black doctrine without doing irreparable damage to the Church. Under these circumstances they were impressed with the fact that the doctrine had to be changed and this impression was referred to as a revelation from God. In a letter to the Editor of the *Salt Lake Tribune*, June 24, 1978, Eugene Wagner observed:

. . . was this change of doctrine really a revelation from the Lord, or did the church leaders act on their own? Why don’t they publish that revelation and let the Lord speak in his own words? All we saw was a statement of the First Presidency, and that is not how a revelation looks.

When God speaks the revelation starts with the words: “Thus sayeth the Lord . . .” It seems when the Lord decides to change a doctrine of such great importance he will talk himself to the people of his church. If such a revelation cannot be presented to the members it is obvious that the first presidency acted on its own, most likely under fear of public pressure to avoid problems of serious consequences and to maintain peace and popularity with the world.

At the 148th Semiannual Conference of the Mormon Church, members of the church were asked to “accept this revelation as the word and will of the Lord,” but the only document presented to the people was the letter of the First Presidency, dated June 8, 1978 (see *The Ensign*, November 1978, page 16).

On June 2, 1979, the Church Section of the *Deseret News* announced that “The statement of the First Presidency telling of the revelation extending the priesthood to ‘all worthy male members of the Church’ released June 9, 1978, will also be added to the *Doctrine and Covenants*.” The reader will notice that it is only the “statement . . . telling of the revelation” that will be added to the *Doctrine and Covenants*.

Some Mormons have put forth the rumor that the power of God was manifested as on the day of Pentecost when President Kimball gave the “revelation.” Kimball himself seems to be trying to dispel this idea. The following statement about the “revelation” appeared in *Time* on August 7, 1978, page 55:

In other renditions it came complete with a visitation from Joseph Smith . . . In an interview, his first since the announcement, Kimball described it much more matter of factly to *Time* staff writer Richard Ostling: “I spent a good deal of time in the temple alone, praying for guidance, and there was a gradual and general development of the whole program, in connection with the Apostles.”

For some time after the anti-black doctrine was changed, Mormon leaders were reluctant to inform their own people of the details surrounding the giving of the “revelation.” Finally, six months after the event, the Church News staff asked President Kimball if he would “care to share with the readers of the church news any more of the circumstances under which that was given?” President Kimball’s answer is very revealing. He makes no reference to a voice or any written revelation. In fact, his statement gives the impression that it was only a feeling or an assurance that he received:

President: . . . It went on for some time as I was searching for this, because I wanted to be sure. We held a meeting of the Council of the Twelve in the temple on the regular day. We considered this very seriously and thoughtfully and prayerfully.

I asked the Twelve not to go home when the time came. I said, “now would you be willing to remain in the temple with us?” And they were. I offered the final prayer and I told the Lord if it wasn’t right, if He didn’t want this change to come in the Church that I would be true to it all the rest of my life, and I’d fight the world against it if that’s what He wanted.

We had this special prayer circle, then I knew that the time had come. I had a great deal to fight, of course, myself largely, because I had grown up with this thought that Negroes should not have the priesthood and I was prepared to go all the rest of my life till my death and fight for it and defend it as it was. But this revelation and assurance came to me so clearly that there was no question about it. (*Deseret News*, Church Section, January 6, 1979, page 19)

In his speech, "All Are Alike Unto God," pages 2-3, Apostle Bruce R. McConkie told how the "revelation" was received. His description indicates that there was no spoken or written revelation—only a very good "feeling":

The result was that President Kimball knew, and each one of us knew, independent of any other person, by direct and personal revelation to us, that the time had now come to extend the gospel and all its blessings . . . to those of every nation, . . . including the black race. . . . it was a revelation of such tremendous significance and import; one which would reverse the whole direction of the Church, . . . The Lord could have sent messengers from the other side to deliver it, but he did not. He gave the revelation by the power of the Holy Ghost. Latter-day Saints have a complex: many of them desire to magnify and build upon what has occurred, and they delight to think of miraculous things. And maybe some of them would like to believe that the Lord himself was there, or that the Prophet Joseph Smith came to deliver the revelation . . . which was one of the possibilities. Well, these things did not happen. The stories that go around to the contrary are not factual or realistic or true, . . . I cannot describe in words what happened; I can only say that it happened and that it can be known and understood only by the feeling that can come into the heart of man. You cannot describe a testimony to someone.

Because of the circumstances under which the revelation on blacks came, many people have referred to it as "a revelation of convenience." We may never know all the details which led President Kimball to seek this revelation, but it is obvious that it was the result of pressure from many sources. In the July 1978 issue of the *Messenger* we pointed out that the Church was faced with an almost impossible situation in Brazil where so many of its members had black ancestry. Since that time we have learned from a source within the Church that Church leaders were very concerned that they were going to lose their tax exempt status on property they own in the United States. In the months just prior to the revelation, Church leaders were carefully watching developments in a case in Wisconsin in which an organization was about to lose its tax exempt status because of racial discrimination. The Church leaders finally became convinced that the tide was turning against them and that they would lose their tax exempt status in Wisconsin and eventually throughout the United States because of their doctrine of discrimination against blacks. This was probably only one of many factors which entered into the decision to admit blacks into the priesthood, but it may very well have been the "straw that broke the camel's back."

ADDING OLD REVELATIONS

On April 3, 1976, the Church Section of the *Deseret News* announced that "Two revelations received by former Presidents of the Church, were accepted as scripture Saturday afternoon, April 3, by vote of Church membership."

This was certainly a surprising move for the Mormon leaders to make. Since one of the revelations which was canonized was given by Joseph F. Smith, we feel that it is possible this move was made to counter some statements which we printed in *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* We cite the following from that book:

Although the Mormon Church claims to be led by revelation, Joseph F. Smith, the sixth President of the Mormon Church, testified as follows in the Reed Smoot Investigation:

Senator Dubois. — Have you received any revelations from God, which has been submitted by you and the apostles to the body of the church in their semiannual

conference, which revelation has been sustained by that conference, through the upholding of their hands?

Mr. Smith. — Since when?

Senator Dubois. — Since you became President of the Church.

Mr. Smith. — NO, SIR; NONE WHATEVER.

Senator Dubois. — Have you received any individual revelations yourself, since you became President of the church under your own definition, even, of a revelation?

Mr. Smith. — I CANNOT SAY THAT I HAVE.

Senator Dubois. — Can you say that you have not?

Mr. Smith. — No; I cannot say that I have not.

Senator Dubois. — Then you do not know whether you have received any such revelation as you have described or whether you have not?

Mr. Smith. — Well, I can say this: That if I live as I should in the line of my duties, I am susceptible, I think, of the impressions of the Spirit of the Lord upon my mind at any time, just as any good Methodist or any other good church member might be. And so far as that is concerned, I say yes; I have had impressions of the Spirit upon my mind very frequently, but they are not in the sense of revelations. (*Reed Smoot Case*, vol. 1, pages 483-484)

On page 99 of the same volume Joseph F. Smith stated: "I have never pretended to nor do I profess to have received revelations." From this it is plain to see that just because a man is ordained a "Prophet, Seer, and Revelator," it does not necessarily mean that he is. If Joseph F. Smith was only as susceptible to the impressions of the Spirit of the Lord as "any good Methodist," then why should his word be trusted above that of a good Methodist?

Although the Mormon Church is supposed to be led by revelation, the evidence of this revelation is very hard to find. The Manifesto of 1890 is the last revelation, if it can be termed a revelation, that has been added to the *Doctrine and Covenants*. So we can see that the last revelation that was added . . . is eighty years old. . . .

The Reorganized LDS Church has continued to add new revelations to their *Doctrine and Covenants*, but the Utah Mormon Church has not added a new revelation since . . . 1890. It is interesting to note that during the last century, when new revelations were being added to the *Doctrine and Covenants*, the Mormon leaders were condemning the Catholics for not adding new revelations to their "sacred canon." The Mormon Apostle Orson Pratt stated:

That the Romanists have continued in their apostasy until the present day is demonstrated from the fact that they have not added one single book to their canon since they first formed it. Now, if there had been any prophet or apostle among them, during the last seventeen centuries, they certainly would have canonized his epistles, revelations, and prophecies, as being equally sacred with those of the first century. As they have not done this, it shows most clearly, that even they, themselves, do not consider that they have had apostles, prophets, and revelators among them, during that long period of time. . . . since the first century, the Catholics must have had many tens of thousands of revelators, and yet, strange to say, none of their revelations are permitted to enter the sacred canon . . . Here, indeed, is a strange inconsistency! Even the Catholic church herself, evidently places no confidence in the popes and bishops, the pretended successors of St. Peter and the rest of the apostles; if she did, she would have canonized their revelations along with the rest of the revelations of the New Testament. What must we conclude then, as to her bishops holding "the rank and functions of apostles?" We can but conclude that it is all an imposition—a wicked soul-destroying imposition, practiced upon the nations by a corrupt apostate church . . . Well might the revelator John,

... call her “The mother of harlots and abominations of the earth!” (*Orson Pratt’s Works*, “The Bible Alone An Insufficient Guide,” pages 38-39)

The very words used by Orson Pratt concerning the Catholics could now be applied to the Mormon Church, for “if there had been any prophet or apostle among them,” during the past eighty years, “they certainly would have canonized his epistles, revelations, and prophecies, . . .” The Church “evidently places no confidence” in the last six Presidents; “if she did, she would have canonized their revelations along with the rest of the revelations” in the *Doctrine and Covenants*. (*Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* 1972, page 184)

It is difficult to resist the idea that the Mormon leaders decided to canonize the “new” revelations to offset the criticism found in *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* That they would choose a revelation given to Joseph F. Smith is especially interesting. This purported revelation was given less than two months before Joseph F. Smith’s death in 1918 at a time when he “was very ill.” He had served as “Prophet, Seer and Revelator” for some seventeen years before receiving this revelation. The reader will remember that Joseph F. Smith had previously admitted he had served as “Prophet, Seer, and Revelator” for some time without receiving any revelation: “I have never pretended to nor do I profess to have received revelations.”

The other revelation which the Mormons canonized was given to Joseph Smith on January 21, 1836. As we will show later, this revelation was falsified when printed by the Church to avoid a major contradiction.

In the manuscript for our new book, *The Changing World of Mormonism*, we wrote the following: “Joseph F. Smith once stated that any new revelations would be added to the *Doctrine and Covenants*, but Mormon leaders have decided that these two revelations should be added to the *Pearl of Great Price* instead (*Deseret News*, Church Section, April 3, 1976).”

President Smith’s statement appears as follows in *The Reed Smoot Case*, vol. 1, page 489:

... if the Lord should reveal His mind to His people and it should be accepted by His people in the way that He has appointed, it would then become a matter to be added to the Book of *Doctrine and Covenants*.

The Mormon leaders now seem to realize that they made a mistake when they added the revelations into the *Pearl of Great Price*. The Church Section of the *Deseret News* for June 2, 1979, reported that these revelations will be transferred to the *Doctrine and Covenants*:

Joseph Smith’s Vision of the Celestial Kingdom and Joseph F. Smith’s Vision of the Redemption of the Dead have been transferred from the *Pearl of Great Price* to become Sections 137 and 138, respectively, in the *Doctrine and Covenants*. . . .

The decision to place these revelations in the *Doctrine and Covenants* has been made by the First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve.

The fumbling around with these “new” revelations only tends to emphasize that the Mormon Church is led by fallible men rather than by direct revelation from God.

IMPORTANT CHANGE IN CANONIZED REVELATION

After the two revelations mentioned above were canonized by the Mormon Church, H. Michael Marquardt, a student of Mormon history, discovered that the one concerning Joseph Smith’s vision of the Celestial Kingdom had been altered. Mr. Marquardt found that this revelation was recorded in Joseph

Smith’s own diary under the date of January 21, 1836. In Joseph Smith’s diary the revelation read as follows:

The heavens were opened upon us and I beheld the celestial Kingdom of God. . . . I saw father Adam and Abraham and Michael and my father and mother, my brother Alvin, . . . (*Joseph Smith’s 1835-36 Diary*, January 21, 1836; printed by Modern Microfilm Co.)

When the Mormon leaders printed this revelation they deleted the words “and Michael” without any indication. It reads as follows in the new edition of the *Pearl of Great Price*:

The heavens were opened upon us, and I beheld the celestial kingdom of God. . . . I saw Father Adam and Abraham; and my father and my mother; my brother Alvin, . . . (*Pearl of Great Price*, 1976, page 63, verses 1, 5)

At first glance the deletion of the words “and Michael” does not appear too important. In Mormon theology, however, a serious problem is created by the statement, “I saw father *Adam* and Abraham *and Michael*.” According to Joseph Smith’s other revelations, Adam is Michael. In the *Doctrine and Covenants* 107:54 we read: “And the Lord appeared unto them, and they rose up and blessed *Adam*, and called him *Michael*, the prince, the archangel.” In 27:11 we read: “And also with *Michael*, or *Adam*, the father of all, the prince of all, the ancient of days.” Thus it is clear that if Adam is Michael, Joseph Smith could not have seen “*Adam*, and Abraham *and Michael*.” Mormon leaders must have been aware that this would create a problem in Mormon theology, and therefore they deleted the words “and Michael” from the revelation.

This change was apparently made sometime while the Church was under Brigham Young’s leadership. The fact that the change was made after Joseph Smith’s death is evident from Mr. Marquardt’s research. He found that the revelation was copied into the handwritten manuscript of the *History of the Church* (Book B-1, page 695), with the words “*and Michael*” still included. Mr. Marquardt also found that the words were in the duplicate copy of the “Manuscript History,” (Book B-2, page 618). This is significant because the Mormon leaders did not even start the duplicate copy until almost a year after Joseph Smith’s death (see *Brigham Young University Studies*, Summer 1971, page 469). This would mean that the change had to have been made after Smith’s death. By the time the revelation was published in the *Deseret News*, September 4, 1852, the words “and Michael” had been deleted. Thus it appears that the change took place sometime between 1845 and 1852 and that current Mormon leaders have canonized a falsified revelation.

With regard to the vision of the Celestial Kingdom, it is also interesting to note that the Mormon leaders have only canonized the first part of the vision. Over 200 words which appear in Joseph Smith’s diary are not included. (*The History of the Church* 2:380-81 also bears witness to this fact.) Among the words missing from the canonized revelation, we find the following:

... I also beheld Elder McLellin in the South, standing upon a hill surrounded with a vast multitude preaching to them and a lame man standing before him supported by his crutches, he threw them down at his word and leaped as a heart, by the mighty power of God . . .

It would probably prove to be embarrassing if the Mormon leaders canonized this prophecy about McLellin, because the *History of the Church* informs us that he was “excommunicated from the Church at Far West. Thence forward he took an active part in the persecution of the Saints in Missouri, and at

one time expressed the desire to do violence to the person of Joseph Smith, . . . Subsequently he attempted what he called a reorganization of the Church, . . .” (vol. 3, pages 31-32).

In the same revelation Joseph Smith claimed that he “saw the 12 apostles of the Lamb who are now upon the earth who hold the keys of this last ministry in foreign lands standing together in a circle . . . and I finally saw the 12 in the celestial Kingdom of God . . .”

In the Bible, Jesus predicted that the Apostle Judas would fall; Joseph Smith, however, seemed to be oblivious to what was about to happen to his Apostles. At least half of the Apostles were eventually excommunicated, and four of them apparently died out of the church (see *Essentials in Church History*, 1942, pages 663-665). Since Apostles William E. McLellin and William Smith (Joseph Smith’s own brother) tried very hard to destroy the Mormon Church, we wonder how Joseph Smith could have seen “the 12 in the celestial Kingdom of God.” In any case, the present-day leaders of the Mormon Church did not seem to feel that it would be wise to canonize this part of the revelation.

CRITICISM STILL VALID

Even though the leaders of the Mormon Church have decided to make three additions to the *Doctrine and Covenants*, our criticism that the Church does not fulfill its claim to present-day revelation still stands. To begin with, the revelations which are to appear as Sections 137 and 138 of the *Doctrine and Covenants* can hardly be considered as “new” revelations. The one given to Joseph F. Smith is sixty-one years old, and the revelation given to the Prophet Joseph Smith is 143 years old.

The fact that the statement on blacks is to be added to the *Doctrine and Covenants* also fails to show the Church is led by revelation. The June 1978 declaration on blacks is not a revelation, but only a statement that a revelation has been received. Furthermore, President Kimball himself made a statement that gives the impression that it was only a feeling or assurance that he received. The reader will remember that President Joseph F. Smith admitted that “any good Methodist or any other church member” is susceptible to “impressions of the Spirit of the Lord.” If the Mormon leaders really believe they are led by revelation, why don’t they canonize a revelation by Spencer W. Kimball which begins with the words, “Thus saith the Lord your God . . .”

That Mormon leaders do not give the declaration on blacks the same status as the “visions” of Joseph Smith and Joseph F. Smith is obvious from the fact that they are not going to give it a section number in the new *Doctrine and Covenants*. The Church’s magazine, *The Ensign*, for August 1979, page 75, explained:

. . . yet-to-be printed copies of the *Doctrine and Covenants* will contain three new additions . . .

The two visions to be transferred from the *Pearl of Great Price* to the *Doctrine and Covenants* are Joseph Smith’s Vision of the Celestial Kingdom and Joseph F. Smith’s Vision of the Redemption of the Dead. These two additions will become sections 137 and 138 in the *Doctrine and Covenants*. . . .

The third addition . . . will be the proclamation of 9 June 1978 . . . The proclamation will be known as Official Declaration—2. Official Declaration—1 will be the title of the announcements discontinuing plural marriage that are already part of the *Doctrine and Covenants*.

SUPPRESSED REVELATIONS

While present Mormon leaders are canonizing two revelations given by former Presidents of the Church, they are suppressing others. For instance, on September 27, 1886,

President John Taylor gave a revelation in which the Lord was supposed to have told him that plural marriage would always be a part of the Church:

My son John . . . how can I revoke an everlasting covenant; for I the Lord am everlasting & my everlasting covenants cannot be abrogated nor done away with; but they stand for ever. . . . I have not revoked this law nor will I for it is everlasting & those who will enter into my glory must obey the conditions thereof, even so Amen.

The reader will find a discussion of this matter in *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* pages 242-243.

Another revelation which Mormon leaders have suppressed is one given by Joseph Smith in 1831 on the practice of polygamy. We first published this revelation in 1974 in the book *Mormonism Like Watergate?* pages 7-8. The reason it was suppressed was that it commanded the Mormons to “take unto you wives of the Lamanites and Nephites, that their posterity may become white, delightsome and just, for even now their females are most [*sic*] virtuous than the gentiles.”

In Mormon theology the Lamanites and Nephites are the Indians. The Book of Mormon teaches that the Indians were cursed with a dark skin:

And the skins of the Lamanites were dark, according to the mark which was set upon their fathers, which is a curse upon them because of their transgression . . . (Book of Mormon, Alma 3:6)

The Book of Mormon states, however, that in the last days the Indians will repent and “many generations shall not pass away among them, save they shall be a white and delightsome people” (*Ibid.*, 2 Nephi 34:5-6).

Even after we published this important revelation on marriage to the Indians, Mormon writers failed to come to grips with its existence. Donna Hill did mention it in her book, *Joseph Smith: The First Mormon*, published in 1977, but it was 1979 before Church Historian Leonard J. Arrington and his assistant Davis Bitton publicly acknowledged its existence. In their new book, *The Mormon Experience*, page 195, we find the following:

A recently discovered document is a copy of a purported revelation of 1831 that instructed seven missionaries in Missouri as follows: “For it is my will, that in time, ye should take unto you wives of the Lamanites and Nephites that their posterity may become white, delightsome and just, for even now their females are more virtuous than the gentiles.”

Although we are glad to see the Church Historian acknowledge the reality of this revelation, the statement that it was “recently discovered” does not square with the facts. Joseph Fielding Smith, who was LDS Church Historian and later became the tenth President of the Church, told of the revelation’s existence in a letter written in 1935:

. . . I do know that there was a revelation given in July 1831, in the presence of Oliver Cowdery, W. W. Phelps and others in Missouri, in which the Lord made this principle known through the Prophet Joseph Smith. (Letter from Joseph Fielding Smith to J.W.A. Bailey, dated September 5, 1935, typed copy)

Fawn Brodie wrote that “Joseph F. Smith, Jr., the present historian of the Utah Church, asserted to me in 1943 that a revelation foreshadowing polygamy had been written in 1831, but that it had never been published. In conformity with the church policy, however, he would not permit the manuscript, which he acknowledged to be in possession of the church library, to be examined” (*No Man Knows My History*, 1971, page 184, footnote).

In the light of this evidence, it would have been better for Arrington and Bitton to have stated that the revelation had been suppressed for a long time rather than to have stated that it was “recently discovered.”

At any rate, a speech given by Mormon President Spencer W. Kimball at the LDS General Conference, October of 1960, might mislead one into believing that he would rejoice over Joseph Smith’s 1831 revelation about marrying Indians to turn them white:

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

The day of the Lamanites is nigh. For years they have been growing delightful, and they are now becoming white and delightful, as they were promised. In this picture of the twenty Lamanite missionaries, fifteen of the twenty were as light as Anglos; . . . The children in the home placement program in Utah are often lighter than their brothers and sisters in the hogans on the reservation.

At one meeting a father and mother and their sixteen-year-old daughter were present, the little member girl . . . was several shades lighter than her parents . . . There was the doctor in a Utah city who for two years had had an Indian boy in his home who stated that he was some shades lighter than the younger brother just coming into the program from the reservation. These young members of the Church are changing to whiteness and to delightfulness. One white elder jokingly said that he and his companion were donating blood regularly to the hospital in the hope that the process might be accelerated.

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

Now while it is true that President Kimball is very concerned about the fulfillment of the Book of Mormon prophecy that the Indians will become a “white and delightful people,” he is apparently unable to accept Joseph Smith’s 1831 revelation because he believes that Indians are to be turned white by the power of God and is opposed to intermarriage with them. In 1958 he gave an address which touched on this subject. President Kimball’s statement was reprinted in the Church Section of the *Deseret News* on June 17, 1978:

“. . . there is one thing that I must mention, and that is interracial marriages. When I said you must teach your young people to overcome their prejudices and accept the Indians, I did not mean that you would encourage intermarriage.”

President Kimball’s teaching on intermarriage with the Indians appears to be diametrically opposed to Joseph Smith’s 1831 revelation. In view of President Kimball’s feelings, we seriously doubt that he will ever allow this revelation on marrying Indians to be canonized in the *Doctrine and Covenants*. The fact that the Mormon leaders have suppressed this revelation seems to indicate that they do not really believe that it came from God. It is obvious, then, that they have been involved in a cover-up to protect the image of Joseph Smith.

If the Mormon leaders had canonized Joseph Smith’s 1831 revelation on the Indians instead of his 1836 revelation on the Celestial Kingdom, it would have caused many people to lose faith in President Kimball, and if they had canonized John Taylor’s revelation that Mormons should continue to practice polygamy instead of Joseph F. Smith’s vision, it would have caused serious problems in the Church. Mormon apologists

cannot explain why some revelations are canonized and others suppressed, but it is obvious to anyone who seriously studies the matter that Mormon authorities have often given false revelations. David Whitmer, one of the three witnesses to the Book of Mormon, frankly admitted that Joseph Smith himself gave a false revelation:

. . . that some of the brethren should go to Toronto, Canada, and that they would sell the copy-right of the Book of Mormon. Hiram page and Oliver Cowdery went to Toronto on this mission, but they failed entirely to sell the copy-right, returning without any money. Joseph was at my father’s house when they returned. I was there also, and am an eye witness to these facts. . . . Well, we were all in great trouble; and we asked Joseph how it was that he had received a revelation from the Lord for some brethren to go to Toronto and sell the copy-right, and the brethren had utterly failed in their undertaking. Joseph did not know how it was, so he enquired of the Lord about it, and behold the following revelation came through the stone: “Some revelations are of God: some revelations are of man: and some revelations are of the devil.” So we see that the revelation to go to Toronto and sell the copy-right was not of God, but was of the devil or of the heart of man. . . . I will say here, that I could tell you other false revelations that came through Brother Joseph . . . Many of Brother Joseph’s revelations were never printed. The revelation to go to Canada was written down on paper, but was never printed. (*An Address to All Believers in Christ*, by David Whitmer, Richmond, Missouri, 1887, page 31)

The Mormon leaders complain that the Catholics withheld the scriptures from the common people, and yet they keep some of Joseph Smith’s revelations hidden from their own people.

APOSTLE PETERSEN AND THE ADAM-GOD DOCTRINE

On April 9, 1852, Brigham Young, the second President of the Mormon Church, publicly preached his famous Adam-God doctrine. In this sermon he stated:

Now hear it, O inhabitants of the earth, Jew and Gentile, Saint and sinner! When our father Adam came into the garden of Eden, he came into it with a celestial body, and brought Eve, one of his wives, with him. He helped to make and organize this world. He is Michael, the Archangel, the Ancient of Days! about whom holy men have written and spoken — He is our Father and our God, and the only God with whom we have to do. Every man upon the earth, professing Christians or non-professing, must hear it, and will know it sooner or later. . . . When the Virgin Mary conceived the child Jesus, the Father had begotten him in his own likeness. He was not begotten by the Holy Ghost. And who is the Father? He is the first of the human family; . . . Jesus, our elder brother, was begotten in the flesh by the same character that was in the garden of Eden, and who is our Father in Heaven. Now, let all who may hear these doctrines, pause before they make light of them, or treat them with indifference, for they will prove their salvation or damnation. (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 1, pages 50-51)

After Brigham Young’s death, his Adam-God doctrine fell into disrepute. In 1976 the Mormon Apostle Mark E. Petersen wrote a book in which he attacked this doctrine as unscriptural:

To say that Adam is God is, of course, opposed utterly and completely to the scriptures as well as to our Articles of Faith, . . . to say that we have nothing to do with “any God but Adam,” . . . violates all the teachings of the gospel of Christ, who taught us to pray to the Father in the name of Christ, . . . (*Adam: Who Is He?* page 14)

Apostle Petersen claimed that Brigham Young was misquoted and brought forth some new information which he maintained would establish his case:

Elder Charles C. Rich, of the Council of the Twelve, was present on a day when President Young gave an address that was wrongly reported as saying Adam was Deity. In the copy of the *Journal of Discourses* that he had, Elder Rich referred to the misquotation as it appears in the *Journal of Discourses*, and in his own hand he wrote the following as the correct statement made by President Young: "Jesus our elder Brother, was begotten in the flesh by the same character who talked with Adam in the Garden of Eden, and who is our Heavenly Father." (This signed statement is in the hands of the Church Historian.) . . .

On the face of it the mistake is obvious and was quickly noted by Elder Rich, who was present and heard the sermon. Hence the correction that he made. (*Adam: Who Is He?* pages 16-17)

After *Adam: Who Is He?* appeared in print, Bob Witte marshaled evidence to show that Apostle Petersen was inaccurate in his statement about Apostle Rich correcting Brigham Young's statement (see the enlarged edition of *Where Does It Say That?*). Chris Vlachos has recently written an article which completely smashes Apostle Petersen's whole thesis:

What seems to be a good case made by Mr. Petersen crumbles, however upon cross-examination. C. C. Rich, who Petersen claims "was present and heard the sermon," was in reality not even in Salt Lake City on that day! Rich left San Bernardino, California, on March 24, 1852, for the Great Salt Lake. He did not reach his destination until April 21. Under this date, the LDS Journal History records:

April 21, 1852:

Elder Chas. C. Rich and thirteen others arrived today in G.S.L. from California.

In the May 1, 1852 issue of the Mormon *Deseret Weekly* the following announcement was made:

Elder C. C. Rich arrived on Wednesday, the 21 of April, in company with 13 others . . . direct from San Bernardino.

Hosea Stout, in his journal, also noted the event:

Wednesday 21st April 1852 . . . Gen. Rich and some 15 others arrived today from California by the South rout all well.

Furthermore, not only was C. C. Rich absent on the ninth, but the reference Petersen claims was written by C. C. Rich "in his own hand" was in reality written and signed by his son, Ben E. Rich, many years after the sermon was delivered!

Whether Mr. Petersen was deliberately seeking to suppress the facts or not, the truth is that there is no evidence whatsoever that Brigham Young was misquoted. As we shall see, Young came under much criticism from outside and from within the Mormon Church for teaching that Adam was God the Father. If he had merely been misquoted, Brigham simply could have corrected his hearers and accusers. Instead, however, Young continued to affirm and preach this doctrine against all opposition. (*The Journal of Pastoral Practice*, vol. III, no. 2, 1979, pages 99-100)

Although Apostle Petersen does not acknowledge making a mistake with regard to this important matter, he has made some very revealing changes in the 1979 printing of his book. He admits, in fact, that Charles Rich was not present and that the statement was in reality written by his son, Ben E. Rich:

Elder Charles C. Rich was not present on the day when President Young gave an address that was wrongly reported as saying Adam was our Father in heaven. [See *JD* 1:51.1 The sermon was delivered April 9, 1852, and Elder Rich returned April 21. In a copy of the *Journal of Discourses* Elder Ben E. Rich, son of Elder Charles C. Rich, referred to the misquotation as it appears in the *Journal of Discourses*, and in his own hand corrected the statement to read as follows: "Jesus our Elder Brother, was begotten in the flesh by the same character who talked with Adam in the Garden of Eden, and who is our Father in heaven." In this same statement Ben E. Rich wrote "As corrected above is what Prest. Young said, as testified to me by my father, C. C. Rich." (This signed statement is in the hands of the Church Historical Department.) . . .

On the face of it the mistake is obvious. We find in Genesis 2:15-16 and 3:8-9 that God walked and talked with Adam in the Garden of Eden. (*Adam: Who Is He?* 1979 printing, pages 16-17)

The reader will notice that in the 1976 printing, Apostle Petersen asserted: "Elder Charles C. Rich, of the Council of the Twelve, was present on a day when President Young gave an address that was wrongly reported . . ." In the 1979 printing this was changed to read: "Elder Charles C. Rich was not present on the day when President Young gave an address that was wrongly reported . . ." The 1976 printing assured us that "Elder Rich referred to the misquotation as it appears in the *Journal of Discourses*, and in his own hand he wrote the following . . ." This was changed to read that "Elder Ben E. Rich, son of Elder Charles C. Rich, referred to the misquotation as it appears in the *Journal of Discourses*, and in his own hand corrected the statement . . ." Apostle Petersen originally stated: "On the face of it the mistake is obvious and was quickly noted by Elder Rich, who was present and heard the sermon. Hence the correction that he made." In the 1979 printing this was altered to read: "On the face of it the mistake is obvious. We find in Genesis 2:15-16 and 3:8-9 that God walked and talked with Adam in the Garden of Eden."

It is very difficult to understand how Apostle Petersen could make such a serious mistake. We wonder, too, why he continues to use this material when it is of no real value. Since Charles C. Rich was not present, and since his son, Ben E. Rich, who recorded the material, had not even been born, we cannot see that it provides any substantial help to Apostle Petersen's thesis. In fact, that he would even use such material shows that he is totally unprepared to deal with the issue of the Adam-God doctrine.

If Apostle Petersen had taken the time to carefully examine the thesis written by Rodney Turner, who now teaches religion at the Church's own Brigham Young University, he could never have made the mistake of claiming that Brigham Young was misquoted. After presenting a great deal of evidence to prove that Brigham Young believed Adam was God, Rodney Turner observed:

Was Brigham Young Misquoted?

It is the writer's opinion that the answer to this question is a categorical no. There is not the slightest evidence from Brigham Young, or any other source, that either his original remarks on April 9, 1852, or any of his subsequent statements were ever misquoted in the official publications of the Church. . . .

In the light of Brigham Young's attitude toward the errors of others, and in view of the division created by his remarks concerning Adam, it would be stretching one's credulity to the breaking point to believe that he would have remained silent had he been misquoted. . . . Brigham Young would surely have referred to those misquotations at sometime or other—he never did. . . . The complete absence of any real evidence to the contrary obliges the writer to conclude that Brigham Young has not been misquoted in the official publications of the Church. ("The Position of Adam in Latter-day Saint Scripture and Theology," M.A. thesis, Brigham Young University, August, 1953, pages 45-47)

On page 58 of the same thesis, Rodney Turner states:

A careful, detached study of his available statements, as found in the official publications of the Church, will admit of no other conclusion than that the identification of Adam with God the Father by President Brigham Young is an irrefutable fact.

In *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* and in *The Changing World of Mormonism*—we show that Brigham Young continued to teach the Adam-God doctrine until the time of his death. In fact, in 1873 President Young was quoted by the Church's *Deseret News* as saying that God Himself revealed this doctrine to him:

How much unbelief exists in the minds of the Latter-day Saints in regard to one particular doctrine which I revealed to them, and which God revealed to me — namely that Adam is our Father and God — . . . (*Deseret News*, June 18, 1873)

Chris Vlachos, of the Utah Christian Mission, has gleaned a great deal of new evidence from manuscript sources to prove that Brigham Young vigorously defended his Adam-God doctrine:

During a discourse given on Sunday night, February 19, 1854, Brigham Young again addressed the question of who begot Jesus Christ in the flesh. Speaking of Christ, he asked:

Who did beget him? His Father, and his father is our God, and the Father of our spirits, and he is the framer of the body, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Who is he. He is Father Adam; Michael; the Ancient of days. . . .

While Brigham in his discourse of 1852 may have been unclear, in this 1854 address there is no question about his meaning. Here Brigham distinctly names Adam as God the Father. Wilford Woodruff, Mormon Apostle and later Church President, had no doubt about what Brigham meant. Referring to this discourse under the date of February 19, 1854, in his journal, Woodruff recorded:

He [Brigham Young] said that our God was Father Adam He was the Father of the Savior Jesus Christ—Our God was no more or less that ADAM, Michael the Arkangel.

It should be noted that Brigham identifies Adam as the "Father of our spirits." . . . By referring to Adam as the Father of our spirits, Brigham was clearly identifying him as the being whom Mormons address as "Heavenly Father." . . .

Though Richards and most of the other Church authorities accepted their prophet's declaration as the word of God, there was one member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles who openly opposed Brigham in his views. That man was Orson Pratt. Under the date of September 17, 1854, LDS Apostle Wilford Woodruff recorded in his journal the details of a

confrontation between Young and Pratt. . . . When Young declared some of Orson's doctrines to be false, Pratt retaliated against the prophet by voicing his disbelief in the Adam-God doctrine:

Brother Pratt also thought that Adam was made of the dust of the Earth Could not believe that Adam was our God or the Father of Jesus Christ President Young said that He was that He came from another world . . . He told Brother Pratt to lay aside his Philosophical reasoning & get revelation from God to govern him & enlighten his mind more. . . .

This dispute between the Mormon Prophet and his Apostle continued for several years. Because of his disbelief in the Adam-God teaching and in other doctrines of Young, Pratt was for years upon the point of being severed from the Church. (*The Journal of Pastoral Practice*, vol. III, no. 2, 1979, pages 101-104)

In his article, Chris Vlachos not only presents a great deal of evidence to prove that Brigham Young taught the Adam-God doctrine, but he shows clearly that this was a serious violation of the commandment, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me" (Exodus 20:3) and the grave implications for present-day Mormons:

While throughout the flow of Bible history we see God proclaiming that He alone is to be worshiped, at the same time we find prophets who were not of God taught the contrary. True prophets would never be found teaching the people to worship another god—whether it was a stone idol, an imaginary god dwelling in heaven, or a deified man. . . . when these living oracles of God spoke as prophets, they were moved to proclaim, "Thou shalt worship the LORD thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." . . .

Holding fast to these truths let us turn now to Brigham Young, a man who claimed for himself the station and office of prophet of God. Recent history records the lives of few men who have possessed the leadership qualities that Young exhibited. For thirty years he presided as Prophet, Seer, and Revelator over the Mormon Church, a people claiming to be led by prophets of God as in the days of ancient Israel. . . . Their priesthood claims sole possession of the authority or power needed to act on behalf of God, and they consider all other "Christian churches" to be in a state of apostasy, who at best teach a partial truth about the gospel of Christ. Now if Brigham Young, Mormon prophet from 1847 to 1877, were a false prophet all along, then the claims of those who have sought to derive their priesthood authority through him are empty and void. If Brigham taught false doctrine, that cuts the ground from under Mormonism's claim of latter-day prophetic revelation and the Mormon Church is not divinely led. . . .

The Mormon Church must base the truth of her claims on the authenticity of Brigham's calling. Yet, we shall see that Brigham Young, who presided over the Mormon Church longer than any other man, did indeed advance false doctrine that focused worship on a god other than the Lord God of Israel. . . .

An examination of the evidence, however, will admit to no other conclusion than that Brigham Young did teach that Adam was Heavenly Father, the Father of men's spirits as well as the Father of Jesus Christ in the flesh. . . . The doctrine that he taught for over 25 years was false doctrine and the LDS Church admits this today. It has, in effect, sided with Orson Pratt and has adopted his arguments and views as being right. However, in doing this it has unknowingly admitted that Brigham was not an inspired prophet of God. . . .

The implications certainly are obvious. The claims of Utah LDS Church utterly collapse when they claim to be the only true church and the sole possessor of God's authority.

The Mormon, furthermore, faces the dilemma of being unable to be certain that his present prophet is advancing true doctrine. Perhaps the present teachings of the living prophet will be tomorrow's false teachings of a dead prophet. Perhaps the present revelations which the modern President claims to have received will be swept under the carpet as was the revelation concerning Adam that Brigham Young claimed to have received from God.

Today's Mormon cannot hide behind a testimony that the living prophet is advancing correct doctrine. His testimony holds no more weight than the strong testimonies which past members had concerning the truth of Brigham's Adam-God teaching. . . .

This frightening dilemma in which the Mormon finds himself is not peculiar to him or to his people, but is the snare in which all men find themselves when they put their trust in men. To trust in the arm of flesh is really to have no hope at all. . . .

God invites all men today to place their trust in Him directly through His Son, Jesus Christ. Unlike a false prophet who teaches the people to follow a strange god, Jesus can be fully trusted to lead us to His Father. By His death, Christ has secured a place in the presence of God for all who place their trust in him. Those who trust Him can be absolutely sure that He will never fail. (*Ibid.*, pages 94-96, 118, 119)

Bob Witte, of Ex-Mormons for Jesus, has reprinted Chris Vlachos article under the title, *Adam is God???* It is available from Modern Microfilm Company for \$.95. We highly recommend this excellent study of the Adam-God doctrine.

A LIVING PROPHET?

As Mormonism continues to change its doctrines apologists for the Church are stressing that Mormons are led by "living prophets" and are not bound by the teachings of the past. This is certainly very poor reasoning. As Chris Vlachos points out, "Perhaps the present teachings of the living prophet will be tomorrow's false teachings of a dead prophet." The people in Brigham Young's day firmly believed that he was a "living prophet," and when he said that "Adam" is "our Father and our God, and the only God with whom we have to do," they accepted the doctrine. Elder James A. Little explained: "I believe in the principle of obedience; and if I am told that Adam is our Father and our God, I just believe it" (*Millennial Star*, vol. 16, page 530).

Today, the "living prophet" Spencer W. Kimball denounces the Adam-God teaching as false doctrine:

"We warn you against the dissemination of doctrines which are not according to the scriptures and which are alleged to have been taught by some of the General Authorities of past generations. Such, for instance is the Adam-God theory.

"We denounce that theory and hope that everyone will be cautioned against this and other kinds of false doctrine." (*Deseret News*, Church Section, October 9, 1976)

We believe that President Kimball is right in denouncing the Adam-God doctrine, but does this not mean that Brigham Young was a false prophet?

Joseph Smith claimed that God revealed to him that plural marriage was an essential part of the doctrine of the Church (see *Doctrine and Covenants*, Section 132). President Brigham Young said that "The only men who become Gods, even the Sons of God, are those who enter into polygamy" (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 11, page 269). John Taylor, who became the third President of the Mormon Church, once declared: ". . . we are not ashamed . . . to declare that we are polygamists. . . . that we are firm, conscientious believers in polygamy, and that it is part and parcel of our religious creed" (*Life of John Taylor*, page 255).

Today, the Mormon leaders are firmly opposed to the practice of polygamy. Assistant Church Historian Davis Bitton

says: "Today probably no modern people is more antipolygamist than the orthodox Mormons, . . ." (*Journal of Mormon History*, vol. 4, 1977, page 101). While early Mormon leaders taught that polygamy was absolutely essential to exaltation, the Apostle Bruce R. McConkie proclaimed just the opposite: "Plural marriage is not essential to salvation or exaltation" (*Mormon Doctrine*, 1958, page 523). The Apostle McConkie also stated: "Any who pretend or assume to engage in plural marriage in this day, when the one holding the keys has withdrawn the power by which they are performed, are guilty of gross wickedness. They are living in adultery, have already sold their souls to Satan, and (whether their acts are based on ignorance or lust or both) they will be damned in eternity" (*Ibid.*).

While McConkie maintained that those practicing polygamy today will be "damned in eternity," the early Mormon leaders declared that the Church would be "damned" if it ever gave up the practice. Heber C. Kimball, First Counselor to Brigham Young, warned:

Some quietly listen to those who speak against the Lord's servants, against his anointed, against the plurality of wives, and against almost every principle that God has revealed. Such persons have half-a-dozen devils with them all the time. You might as well deny "Mormonism," and turn away from it, as to oppose the plurality of wives. Let the Presidency of this Church, and the Twelve Apostles, and all the authorities unite and say with one voice that they will oppose that doctrine, and the whole of them would be damned. (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 5, page 203)

The Mormon authorities have not only "united" against the practice of polygamy, but they have decided to give blacks the Priesthood and "all of the privileges and blessings which the gospel affords" (*Deseret News*, June 9, 1978). According to Brigham Young, if the Church ever did this, it would lose the Priesthood and go to destruction. The following is taken from a typed copy of a speech given by Brigham Young in 1852 (the spelling errors of the original are retained in this copy):

It is a great blessing to the seed of Adam to have the seed of Cain for servants, . . . Let this Church which is called the kingdom of God on the earth [say]; we will summons the first presidency, the twelve, the high counsel, the Bishoprick, and all the elders of Isreal, suppose we summons them to appear here, and here declare that it is right to mingle our seed, with the black race of Cain, that they shall come in with with us and be partakers with us of all the blessings God has given us. On that very day, and hour we should do so, the preisthood is taken from this Church and kingdom and God leaves us to our fate. The moment we consent to mingle with the seed of Cain the Church must go to desstruction,—we should receive the curse which has been place upon the seed of Cain, and never more be numbered with the children of Adam who are heirs to the priesthood untill that curse be removed. (Brigham Young Addresses, Ms d 1234, Box 48, folder 3, dated Feb. 5, 1852, located in the LDS Historical Dept.)

The Mormon people are now faced with a serious dilemma; if they really believe Brigham Young was a prophet, then it follows from his statement that the Church has lost the Priesthood, been put under "the curse" and is going to destruction! Apostle Bruce R. McConkie would like us to completely forget what was taught in the past. We have previously quoted him as saying:

. . . it is time disbelieving people repented and got in line and believed in a living, modern prophet. Forget everything

that I have said, or what President Brigham Young or President George Q. Cannon or whomsoever has said in days past that is contrary to the present revelation. ("All Are Alike Unto God," page 1)

We feel that it would be very difficult to forget what has been taught in the past. We cannot help but remember that as recently as 1974 Apostle McConkie questioned the spirituality of Church members who believed it was time for a new revelation on the blacks. In a conference message delivered October 4, 1974, he stated:

Am I valiant in the testimony of Jesus if my chief interest and concern in life is laying up in store the treasures of the earth, rather than the building up of the kingdom? . . .

Am I valiant if I am deeply concerned about the Church's stand on who can or who cannot receive the priesthood and think it is time for a new revelation on this doctrine? . . .

Am I valiant if I engage in gambling, play cards, go to pornographic movies, . . . (*The Ensign*, November 1974, page 35)

In 1974 Apostle McConkie was reproving his people for even suggesting that there should be a "new revelation" on the blacks, but now that the "revelation" has come, he says that it is "time *disbelieving people repented* and got in line and believed in a living, modern prophet." It appears to us that the people Apostle McConkie accused of not being valiant are the ones who were right all along. We feel that the Church leaders should be the ones to "repent" for teaching false doctrine.

BYU COMPUTER STUDY

During the last two or three years the newspapers have carried some sensational stories concerning the Book of Mormon. On June 25, 1977, the *Los Angeles Times* reported that three handwriting experts had declared that portions of the Book of Mormon were written by Solomon Spalding. Now that the controversy over this issue has somewhat subsided, the Mormon Church has countered with the startling claim that a computer study has yielded evidence favorable to the authenticity of the Book of Mormon. The *Provo Herald* for October 7, 1979, contained this information:

Statisticians, using modern computer techniques to digest and analyze the Book of Mormon word by word, are debunking the 150-year-old claims that the book is the work of just one man.

Utilizing a computer to identify "wordprints" or word use patterns that scientifically differentiate between individual writing styles, researchers have uncovered what they claim is conclusive evidence that the Book of Mormon is the work of many authors.

This is in direct contradiction to critics who claim the book is a fictional work written in the 1820s by Joseph Smith, the prophet-founder of the LDS Church, or by Solomon Spalding, . . .

The research was done by Dr. Alvin C. Rencher, a professor of statistics at Brigham Young University, and Dr. Wayne A. Larsen, a statistician for the Eyring Research Center, both located in Provo.

"The overwhelming evidence given here should permanently lay to rest the alternative theories that Joseph Smith or Solomon Spalding wrote the Book of Mormon," a report on the study says. . . .

Wordprint comparisons between the Book of Mormon and the known 19th century writings of Joseph Smith and Mr. Spalding show conclusively that neither of these persons, authored the book, the scientists say.

In fact, their research indicates that the book was authored by at least 24 different writers, and possibly more, whose styles bear no resemblance to that of Joseph Smith, Mr. Spalding or other 19th century writers whom they examined. . . .

One of the tests went so far as to indicate that "odds against a single author exceeded 100 billion to one," the statisticians noted in the report.

Are the conclusions of the study final? "I don't think the last word is in yet," Dr. Rencher says. But he also says he is confident the research is valid and the statistical methods used in the study are sound. . . .

Wordprints are developed by feeding passages of 1,000 word minimum for each author into a computer and analyzing the frequency of what Dr. Rencher calls "non-contextual words" such as *and, for, it, as, be* and *which*.

Different authors develop different patterns in the frequency of use of such words—patterns not related to the context of the material but constant throughout the individual's writing.

That makes the wordprint a useful tool for identification of authorship, much like a fingerprint or voiceprint can be used to identify an individual, Dr. Rencher said.

While we certainly do not profess to be computer experts, we can make a few preliminary comments about the study and wait for a response by non-Mormon authorities in the field.

To begin with, the list of "24 Major Book of Mormon Authors Used in the Study," seems to be somewhat padded (see *The New Era*, November 1979, page 11). For instance, we find Isaiah listed as one of the authors. Since Isaiah is a book in the Bible and since the Book of Mormon itself acknowledges that it is quoting from Isaiah, we do not feel that it should be included in this study. If we are going to include Bible authors as part of the list of "Book of Mormon Authors," we might as well add Moses, Matthew and Malachi (see Book of Mormon, pages 161, 423-429, 446-448).

The BYU researchers stretch the matter even further by including the "Lord" as "quoted by Isaiah" as part of the "24 Major Book of Mormon Authors." Also included in this list are the "Lord," "Jesus" and the "Father." It would appear, then, that the BYU researchers have created four "Book of Mormon Authors" out of the Father and the Son! On page 11 of their study in *The New Era*, the researchers admit: "Since the term *Lord* can refer either to the Father or the Son, we separated the words attributed to the Lord from those attributed to the Father or to Christ." From this it would appear that the list of "24 Major Book of Mormon Authors," is a preconceived listing of authors rather than the results actually obtained from a computer.

Actually, we are very much in favor of computer studies with regard to the Book of Mormon. We would especially like to see a study showing the parallels between the King James Version and the Book of Mormon. We feel that such a study could provide some very important evidence regarding the authenticity of the Book of Mormon. As to the use of a computer in the analysis of different styles we are not certain that the results would be as conclusive. We feel that there are many factors that could affect such a study. Just as in the analysis of handwriting, we are concerned that the interpretation of the data can be affected by the person who studies it. We remember that many years ago a computer expert declared that all of the letters of Paul in the Bible were forgeries except for the book of Romans! Of course we were not willing to accept such a startling claim just on the basis of a computer study, and we doubt that a Mormon would receive it without additional evidence.

In 1972 Herbert Guerry began a computer study on the Book of Mormon to determine authorship. When information about the study was published in a tract by an individual belonging to the Reorganized Church, Dr. Guerry felt he had been "grossly" misrepresented. The tract had stated that "Authentic authorship of books and papers can apparently be established by computer comparisons of grammar and language usage peculiar to each individual." Dr. Guerry's reply to this statement was as follows: "False. Or, rather, we simply do not

know enough yet to be able to make such claims. Moreover, it just might turn out that writers' styles are not sufficiently unique to allow us to make positive identifications" (*Saints' Herald*, August 1975, page 16).

The tract said that "Apparently one's language is unique much like one's fingerprints." Dr. Guerry replied that "This is a paraphrase of a speculation I made often at Idaho State University: what I usually said was that I wanted to find out whether or not one's prose style was as unique as one's fingerprints."

The tract alleged that "The government believes in the method and recently granted \$200,000 for a computer analysis of the Federalist Papers to determine authorship." Dr. Guerry protested: "False again . . . or at best misleading. The federal government funds much research, but to do so does not mean that the government 'believes in' a particular method. When the government funds a research project of this type it, in effect, is only saying that the project has sufficient merit to deserve support. . . . Many people have done authorship determination studies, and they use many different methods. My methods differ from those of the two recent studies of the Federalist Papers [these latter two studies, incidentally, reached differing conclusions]."

The tract stated that "There was no match between the Book of Mormon and any contemporary author of that period." The reply to this was as follows: "False, since no clear results about the authorship of the Book of Mormon have yet emerged from the study except perhaps, that it was not written by Solomon Spaulding or Sidney Rigdon, but this is hardly an amazing result." Dr. Guerry went on to state that "The study has shown nothing yet about Smith's relationship to the Book of Mormon, . . ."

The Mormon scholar Elinore H. Partridge made these observations on the analysis of a person's style of writing:

A stylistic analysis, even an objective, statistical analysis, is not as certain a means of establishing authorship as handwriting. . . .

Some of the linguists who have done stylistic studies have suggested that the style of a person is as unique as his fingerprints. If one could adequately describe a person's style, he would then have a stylistic "register" unique to that person. Unfortunately, things are not quite that simple. A person's fingerprints do not change, but his style often does. Furthermore, everyone adjusts his style to suit various occasions. The language we use in speaking to a colleague or a friend differs from the language we use in a formal speech or paper. However, a careful analysis of someone's style can usually identify certain features which that person uses on a variety of occasions. Even when a person's style changes, as it often does, during his lifetime, a trained observer can usually trace the changes and identify continuing characteristics. ("Characteristics of Joseph Smith's Style and Notes on the Authorship of the Lectures on Faith," Task Papers in LDS History, no. 14, December 1976, pages 1-2)

On page 23 of the same study we find the following:

Joseph Smith's writing is characteristically marked by series of related ideas joined by simple conjunctions: *and*, *but*, *for*. In his handwritten manuscripts, he used neither punctuation nor capitalization as sentence markers. When his writing has been edited, or when someone else wrote words which he dictated, the result is an unusually large number of sentences beginning with *for*, *and*, or *but* [almost three out of five sentences].

After reading these statements by Elinore H. Partridge, we decided to see how Joseph Smith's style with regard to these words compared to the Book of Mormon. We picked at random Alma, Chapter 2, and found that about 62 percent of the sentences begin with *and*, *for* or *but*. This compared well with

the statement that "almost three out of five sentences" (about 60 percent) of Smith's sentences begin with these three words. We applied the same test to Joseph Smith's "strange" account of the First Vision, which we have photographically reproduced in the book *Joseph Smith's 1832-34 Diary*. We found that 61 percent of the sentences tested began with these words. We also made a study of a portion of Solomon Spaulding's printed manuscript, but found that he only used these three words about 10 percent of the time. Elinore H. Partridge claims that Rigdon only used these words about 5 percent of the time in the material she studied.

In any case, we feel that there are some very serious problems with regard to the text of the Book of Mormon which will make it very difficult to examine with a computer. One thing that presents a real challenge is that the Book of Mormon is filled with material which has been plagiarized from the Bible and other sources. For instance, it is very obvious that 1 Nephi, Chapter 18, borrows from Mark, Chapter 4. The reader will notice the identical material in the two extracts which follows:

. . . there arose a great storm . . . the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. (Mark 4: 37,39)

. . . there arose a great storm . . . the winds did cease, . . . and there was a great calm. (1 Nephi 18:13,21)

The storm in the book of Nephi was supposed to have occurred about 600 years before the one recorded in Mark. The only logical conclusion for this similarity is that the author of the Book of Mormon lived in the 19th century and borrowed from the King James Version of the Bible. In *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* and *The Changing World of Mormonism*, we show a large number of passages that have been lifted from the King James Version without any indication. In another study which we made (*The Case Against Mormonism*, vol. 2), we listed 400 parallels between the New Testament and the Book of Mormon. H. Michael Marquardt has also made a good summary of the issue in his pamphlet *The Use of the Bible in the Book of Mormon and Early Nineteenth Century Events Reflected in the Book of Mormon*.

It seems that almost every time we carefully examine a portion of the Book of Mormon we find more parallels. We feel, however, that a computer would reveal many more. This would be in addition to the large amount of material which is acknowledged to have been included from the Old Testament.

We feel, therefore, that if a computer could actually be programmed to sort out writing styles, it would, no doubt, show more than 24 different authors. We would probably find Moses, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Job, David, Solomon, Ezekiel, Daniel, Jonah, Micah, Malachi, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Paul, James, Peter, Jude, etc. The Book of Mormon also seems to have parallels to the Apocrypha, the Westminster Confession, and other publications (see *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?*). We feel that it will be very difficult to make an accurate stylistic analysis of a book which plagiarizes from so many different sources.

Even if a researcher were able to struggle through this pitfall, there is another problem when it comes to comparing Joseph Smith's style to that found in the Book of Mormon. This is that Joseph Smith (or his scribes) continued to borrow from other authors in his later writings. For instance, we find this statement attributed to Joseph Smith in his *History of the Church* 2:349-50:

I was then unknown to Mr. Chandler, neither did he know that such a book or work as the record of the Nephites, had been brought before the public. From New York, he took his collection on to Philadelphia, . . .

Research has revealed that these are really the words of Oliver Cowdery and are taken from a letter which was published in the *Messenger and Advocate*, December 1835, vol. 2, page 235:

Bro. Smith was then unknown to Mr. Chandler, neither did he know that such a book or work as the record of the Nephites had been brought before the public. From New York he took his collection to Philadelphia, . . .

This is just a brief example. Actually, hundreds of words have been taken from this letter by Cowdery and inserted into the *History of the Church* as if Joseph Smith was the author. We could cite many other examples of this process. What started out as harmless plagiarism turned into out-and-out falsification after Joseph Smith's death. He had completed less than 40 percent of the *History of the Church* before passing away, but the Mormon leaders tried to make it appear that he had written all six volumes. They did use some original documents which Smith was responsible for, but they altered the words to suit their purposes. In many places they had nothing to follow and had to falsify material from sources such as other people's diaries and newspapers to fill in the void. For example, on August 13, 1842, the local newspaper, *The Wasp*, reported:

. . . Joseph Smith was arrested upon a requisition of Gov. Carlin, . . . Mr. Rockwell was arrested at the same time as principal. . . they left them in care of the Marshal, without the original writ by which they were arrested, and by which only they could be retained, and returned back to Gov. Carlin for further instruction,—and Messrs. Smith and Rockwell went about their business. . .

As to Mr. Smith, we have yet to learn by what rule of right he was arrested to be transported to Missouri for a trial of the kind stated.

When this was republished in the *History of the Church* it was changed to the first person to make it appear that Joseph Smith had written it:

. . . I was arrested . . . on a warrant issued by Governor Carlin, . . . Brother Rockwell was arrested at the same time as principal. . . they left us in the care of the marshal, without the original writ by which we were arrested, and by which only we could be retained, and returned to Governor Carlin for further instructions, and myself and Rockwell went about our business.

I have yet to learn by what rule of right I was arrested to be transported to Missouri for a trial of the kind stated. (*History of the Church*, vol. 5, pages 86-87)

Even Joseph Smith's famous Rocky Mountain Prophecy was interpolated into the *History of the Church* as if he had written it (see *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* pages 133-34).

In 1965 we published a book entitled, *Changes in Joseph Smith's History*, in which we charged that most of Joseph Smith's *History* was not written until after his death. For some time the Mormon historians kept silent about this serious charge, but finally they had to admit that the *History of the Church* had been falsified. Dean C. Jessee, of the Church Historical Department, conceded that "At the time of Joseph Smith's death, the narrative was written to August 5, 1838" (*Brigham Young University Studies*, Summer 1971, page 466). On page 472 of the same article, Dean Jessee admitted that "The Joseph Smith History was finished in August 1856, seventeen years after it was begun." Since Joseph Smith died in 1844, this would mean that the *History* was not finished until 12 years after his death. The Church's 1978 printing of the *History of the Church* still claims on the title page of each volume that it is the "History of Joseph Smith, the Prophet, BY HIMSELF."

The Mormon scholar Hugh Nibley says that "A forgery is defined by specialists in ancient documents as 'any document which was not produced in the time, place, and manner claimed by it or its publishers'" (*Since Cumorah*, page 160). Under this definition the *History of the Church* must be classed as a forgery. While it does contain some very important information about Joseph Smith, most of it "was not produced in the time, place, and manner claimed by it or its publishers."

Although the *History of the Church* contains hundreds of pages of material attributed to Joseph Smith, it is of little value to those who seek to find his style of writing. Even one of the Assistant Church Historians, Davis Bitton, has had to admit that "for researchers in early Mormon history Rule Number One is 'Do not rely on the DHC; never use a quotation from it without comparing the earlier versions'" (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Winter 1968, page 32).

Mormon scholar Marvin S. Hill made this observation about the *History of the Church*:

One reason that Brodie concluded that Joseph had veiled his personality behind a "perpetual flow of words" in his history may be that she assumed he had dictated most of it. We now know that large portions of that history were not dictated but were written by scribes and later transferred into the first person to read as though the words were Joseph's. That fact makes what few things Joseph Smith wrote himself of great significance. (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Winter 1972, page 76)

We would challenge the BYU researchers to make a computer study of Joseph Smith's *History of the Church*. We feel that they would find far more than 24 authors involved in the production of that work.

We assume that the BYU computer experts used authentic specimens from Joseph Smith's writings to compare with the Book of Mormon. We asked Dr. Alvin C. Rencher about this matter on the phone. He replied that he could not specifically remember just what sources they had used for Joseph Smith, but he claimed that they had been verified as authentic by historians in the Church. In any case, anyone who attempts this type of research in the future should be aware of the fact that Joseph Smith's *History of the Church* is not a dependable source for the study of his style of writing. Elinore H. Partridge felt that the Church's published sources were not reliable for stylistic analysis. For this reason she used some of Joseph Smith's own letters and early diaries for her study. She says that the manuscripts she "found most useful included ten letters and parts of a letterbook, and small sections of two diaries. . . I studied the parts of the Letterbook, dated 1832-33, the 1832-34 Diary, and the 1835-36 Diary which were in Joseph Smith's handwriting" ("Characteristics of Joseph Smith's Style . . ." page 4).

The Mormon leaders suppressed Joseph Smith's diaries for many years, but recently we obtained copies of and printed both the 1832-34 and the 1835-36 diaries. We feel that they are very valuable in showing that Joseph Smith had the ability to write the Book of Mormon and that they are very important when it comes to stylistic analysis. As we indicated before, we have also included a photographic copy of Joseph Smith's 1832 account of the First Vision in the publication *Joseph Smith's 1832-34 Diary*. We feel that the style of this writing agrees very well with that found in the Book of Mormon. For instance, the account begins, "I was born . . . of goodly parents . . ." This reminds us of 1 Nephi 1:1: "1 Nephi, having been born of goodly parents, . . ." Joseph Smith's "strange" account of the First Vision sounds very much like the conversion of Enos in the forest. In the "strange" account we read: ". . . I cried unto the Lord . . . and he spake unto me saying Joseph my Son thy Sins are forgiven thee." The Book of Mormon account says: ". . . I cried unto him . . . And there came a voice unto me, saying: Enos, thy sins are forgiven thee, . . ." (Enos, verses 4-5).

When the Book of Mormon was first published, some people ridiculed it because it was filled with the expression, "And it came to pass." Joseph Smith was bothered by this criticism and in later years tried to not use this expression. If we examine the 1832 account, however, we find that it was really a part of his early style. For instance, at one place in the manuscript he stated: "... and it came to pass when I was seventeen years of Age . . ."

If we had the time and space, we could cite a number of other things that tend to make us believe that the two works came from the same pen.

In trying to determine the value of the BYU computer study we have been hindered because of the unavailability of material. Alvin Rencher told us that a larger study would appear in a forthcoming book, but he said he had been "asked not to release copies until the editorial process is complete" (Letter dated November 14, 1979). In the same letter he said that "The *New Era* article is the only thing available so far." He did enclose a copy of a letter written on November 6, 1979, and while it does not add much to our knowledge of the study, it does show that the first edition of the Book of Mormon was not used: "We are, of course, aware that there have been many changes since the first edition, (mostly minor). Someday we may repeat the study using the 1830 edition. Our experience with this present study would indicate that no new conclusions would be reached. Two different linguists have told us that the many minor changes from the 1830 edition really attest to the fact that the translation is from a Hebrew-like language. That is, the present edition is much better English. The 1830 edition is better Hebrew."

While we do not really know how much difference it would make, we do feel that the use of a later edition would have a definite affect on stylistic analysis (see our study *3,913 Changes in the Book of Mormon*). We would be especially interested in seeing a study comparing the "strange" account of the First Vision with the unchanged text of the 1830 Book of Mormon.

As to the claim that the grammatical errors in the Book of Mormon tend to prove it was translated from "a Hebrew-like language," we feel that this is only wishful thinking. Joseph Smith's other documents and letters have the same type of grammatical errors in them. We do not feel that anyone would argue that a letter to his wife Emma came from a Hebrew-like language just because it contains grammatical errors. We tend to agree with the Mormon historian B. H. Roberts when he wrote:

... such errors in grammar and diction as occur in the translation are just such errors as might reasonably be looked for in the work of one unlearned in the English language. . . . it cannot be claimed that the Nephite original is responsible for verbal inaccuracies and grammatical errors. . . . Are these flagrant errors in grammar chargeable to the Lord? To say so is to invite ridicule. The thoughts, the doctrines, are well enough; but the awkward, ungrammatical expression of the thoughts is, doubtless, the result of the translator's imperfect knowledge of the English language. . . . (*Defense of the Faith*, pages 278-308)

B. H. ROBERTS' SECRET MANUSCRIPT

We are often asked how a young man like Joseph Smith could produce a work like the Book of Mormon. As we have already indicated, we feel that the Bible was the main source. Many of the stories found in the Bible were simply rewritten and inserted into the Book of Mormon. Hundreds of passages have been lifted from the New Testament and appear in the Book of Mormon in the style of the King James Version.

Besides the Bible, however, Joseph Smith had access to a great deal of source material. One of the most interesting books which was published prior to the Book of Mormon was Ethan Smith's *View of the Hebrews*. The first edition was printed in

1823; it was soon sold out and an enlarged edition appeared in 1825. The Mormon historian B. H. Roberts read *View of the Hebrews* and evidently became concerned because of the many parallels between it and the Book of Mormon. He prepared a manuscript in which these parallels are listed. Copies of Roberts' list of parallels were "privately distributed among a restricted group of Mormon scholars," and in January 1956 Mervin B. Hogan had them published in *The Rocky Mountain Mason*. A careful reading of B. H. Roberts' work leads one to believe that he had serious doubts about the Book of Mormon. Roberts listed eighteen parallels between *View of the Hebrews* and the Book of Mormon. In his fourth parallel he stated: "It is often represented by Mormon speakers and writers, that the Book of Mormon was the first to represent the American Indians as the descendants of the Hebrews; holding that the Book of Mormon is unique in this. The claim is sometimes still ignorantly made" (page 18).

Some new evidence concerning B. H. Roberts' interest in *View of the Hebrews* has recently come to light. It has been discovered that Roberts wrote a manuscript of 291 pages entitled, "A Book of Mormon Study." In this manuscript 176 pages were devoted to the relationship of *View of the Hebrews* to the Book of Mormon. The manuscript was never published and remained in the family after his death.

A false rumor concerning this suppressed manuscript has recently been circulated—i.e., that B. H. Roberts tried to answer the objections which he himself had raised in his shorter work of eighteen parallels. This idea is certainly far from the truth. We have recently had the privilege of studying Roberts' work and have found that it not only fails to answer the objections to the Book of Mormon mentioned in the shorter work, but that it raises many new problems as well.

Truman G. Madsen, professor of philosophy at Brigham Young University, concedes that B. H. Roberts did prepare a manuscript entitled, "Book of Mormon Study," but he maintains that Roberts was merely using "the 'Devil's Advocate' approach to stimulate thought":

Later, in March of 1922, Roberts prepared a draft of a written report to the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve. It included a further discussion of the linguistic problems and other points as well. The study of such books as those of Josiah Priest, Ethan Smith, and others led him to examine such questions as: What literary and historical speculations were abroad in the nineteenth century? Could Joseph Smith have absorbed them in his youth and could these influences have provided the ground plan for such a work as the Book of Mormon? Did Joseph Smith have a mind "sufficiently creative" to have written it? And what internal problems and parallels within the Book of Mormon called for explanation? In confronting such questions Roberts prepared a series of "parallels" with Ethan Smith's *View of the Hebrews*; a summary of this analysis excerpted passages from Ethan Smith's work and lined them up in columns with comparable ideas in the Book of Mormon. Examination of such questions was contained in a typewritten manuscript entitled "Book of Mormon Study."

About this particular study, certain points must be kept in mind if it is not to be gravely misunderstood. First, it was not intended for general dissemination but was to be presented to the General Authorities to identify for them certain criticisms that might be made against the Book of Mormon. . . .

Second, the report was not intended to be balanced. A kind of lawyer's brief of one side of a case written to stimulate discussion in preparation of the defense of a work, already accepted as true, the manuscript was anything but a careful presentation of Robert's thoughts about the Book of Mormon or of his own convictions. . . .

Teachers who have used the "Devil's Advocate" approach to stimulate thought among their students, lawyers who in preparation of their cases have brought up what they consider

the points likely to be made by their worthy opponents—all such people will recognize the unfairness of taking such statements out of context and offering them as their own mature, balanced conclusions. For ill-wishers to resurrect Roberts's similar "Devil's Advocate" probings is not a service to scholarship, for they are manifestly dated. And it is a travesty to take such working papers as a fair statement of B. H. Roberts's own appraisal of the Book of Mormon, for, as this paper abundantly demonstrates, his conviction of its truth was unshaken and frequently expressed down to the time of his death. (*Brigham Young University Studies*, Summer 1979, pages 440-442)

While there is no evidence that B. H. Roberts publicly repudiated the Book of Mormon, a careful reading of his manuscript, "A Book of Mormon Study," leads one to believe that he was in the process of losing faith in its divine origin. Although he may have started out merely playing the part of the "Devil's Advocate," we feel that he played the role so well that he developed grave doubts about the authenticity of the Book of Mormon. The following quotations from Roberts' manuscript should be of interest to the reader. In Part I, Chapter 14, of his study B. H. Roberts summarized:

... was Joseph Smith possessed of a sufficiently vivid and creative imagination as to produce such a work as the Book of Mormon from such materials as have been indicated in the preceding chapters—from such common knowledge as was extant in the communities where he lived in his boyhood and young manhood; from the Bible, and more especially from the "View of the Hebrews," by Ethan Smith? That such power of imagination would have to be of a high order is conceded; that Joseph Smith possessed such a gift of mind there can be no question. . . .

A superabundance of evidence of Joseph Smith's power of imagination exists outside of the Book of Mormon. If the Book of Mormon be regarded as of merely human origin, then, of course, to those so regarding it, the rest of Joseph Smith's work falls to the same plane. . . .

In the light of this evidence, there can be no doubt as to the possession of a vividly strong, creative imagination by Joseph Smith, the Prophet, An imagination, it could with reason be urged, which, given the suggestions that are to be found in the "common knowledge" of accepted American Antiquities of the times, supplemented by such a work as Ethan Smith's "View of the Hebrews," would make it possible for him to create a book such as the Book of Mormon is.

In Part II, Chapter 1, of B. H. Roberts' manuscript "A Book of Mormon Study," we find this surprising observation:

If from all that has gone before in part I, the view be taken that the Book of Mormon is merely of human origin; that a person of Joseph Smith's limitations in experience and in education; who was of the vicinage and of the period that produced the book—if it be assumed that he is the author of it, then it could be said that there is much internal evidence in the book itself to sustain such a view.

In the first place there is a certain lack of perspective in the things the book relates as history that points quite clearly to an undeveloped mind as their origin. The narrative proceeds in characteristic disregard of conditions necessary to its reasonableness, as if it were a tale told by a child, with utter disregard for consistency.

These are not the words of an "anti-Mormon" writer, but the words of the Mormon historian B. H. Roberts—one of the greatest scholars the Church has ever known. Roberts not only prepared the "Introduction and Notes" for Joseph Smith's *History of the Church*, but he also wrote the six-volume work, *A Comprehensive History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-*

day Saints. He is also noted for his many works defending the Book of Mormon.

The following is found in Part II, Chapter 2, of Roberts' manuscript:

The same lack of perspective and of consistency is also manifest in the early movements of both Jaredite and Nephite colonies after arriving "to the promised land." Also the same tendency to parallel incidents and characteristics as we have noted in the formation of the two colonies, and the incidents of their wilderness journey and sea voyage. It may be asked, what of this parallelism? What does it amount to? If such a question should be asked the opponent of the Book of Mormon would answer with emphasize—"This of it. It supplies the evidence that the Book of Mormon is the product of one mind, and that, a very limited mind, unconsciously reproducing with only slight variation its visions." And the answer will be accepted as significant at least, if not conclusive.

In Part II, Chapter 3, Roberts wrote:

There were other anti-Christ among the Nephites, but they were more military leaders than religious innovators, yet much of the same character in spirit with these dissenters here passed in review; but I shall hold that what is here presented illustrates sufficiently the matter taken in hand by referring to them, namely that they are all of one breed and brand; so nearly alike that one mind is the author of them, and that a young and undeveloped, but piously inclined mind. The evidence, I sorrowfully submit, points some will contend to Joseph Smith as their creator. It is difficult to believe that they are the product of history, that they come upon the scene separated by long periods of time, and among a race which was the ancestral race of the red man of America.

In the next chapter B. H. Roberts maintains:

The allusions here to absurdities of expressions and incidents in the Book of Mormon, are not made for the purpose of ridiculing the book, or casting any aspersions upon it; but they are made to indicate what may be fairly regarded as just objects of criticism under the assumption that the Book of Mormon is of human origin, and that Joseph Smith is its author. For these absurdities in expression; these miraculous incidents in warfare; these almost mock—and certainly extravagant—heroics; . . . are certainly just such absurdities and lapses as would be looked for if a person of such limitations as bounded Joseph Smith undertook to put forth a book dealing with the history and civilization of ancient and unknown peoples.

In *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* pages 84-85, we show that "Another book which Joseph Smith may have read before 'translating' the Book of Mormon was written by Josiah Priest. It was entitled *The Wonders of Nature and Providence Displayed*, and was published in 1825 at Albany, New York." It is interesting to note that B. H. Roberts also felt that this book could have furnished structural material for the Book of Mormon:

A number of years ago in my treatise on the Book of Mormon under the general title "A New Witness for God." I discussed the subject "Did the Book of Mormon antedate works in English on American antiquities, accessible to Joseph Smith and his associates." . . . it was insisted upon that books sufficient for a ground plan of the Book of Mormon, and accessible to Joseph Smith, did not exist. . . .

The writer at the time being considered did not take sufficiently into account the work of Josiah Priest's . . . Priest himself, indeed, published a book . . . *The Wonders of Nature and Providence*, copyrighted by him June 2nd, 1824, and printed soon afterwards in Rochester, New York, only some twenty miles distant from Palmyra, near which place the Smith family then began to reside. It will be observed that this book

preceded the publication of the Book of Mormon by about six years. At the time I made for my "New Witnesses" the survey of the literature on American Antiquities, traditions, origins, etc., available to Joseph Smith and his associates, this work of Priest's was unknown to me; as was also the work by Ethan Smith, *View of the Hebrews*—except by report of it, and as being in my hands but a few minutes.

In this book *The Wonders of Nature and Providence*, . . . Mr. Priest begins to argue at length that the Indians may be descendants of the Israelites. . . . he quotes in all about forty writers, . . . who advocated in one way or another, that the American Indians are Israelites. . . . it is altogether probable that these two books, Priest's *Wonders of Nature and Providence*, 1824; and Ethan Smith's *View of the Hebrews* . . . were either possessed by Joseph Smith or certainly known by him, for they were surely available to him, and of course, with all the collection of quoted matter . . . some forty or fifty earlier authors in all being quoted. . . .

Moreover, on subjects widely discussed, . . . there is built up in course of years, a community knowledge of such subjects, usually referred to as matters of common knowledge . . . Such "common" knowledge existed throughout New England and New York . . . the prevailing ideas respecting the American Indians throughout the regions named, were favorable to the notion that they were of Hebrew origin, . . . And with the existence of such a body of knowledge, or that which was accepted as "knowledge," and a person of vivid and constructive imaginative power in contact with it, there is little room for doubt but that it might be possible for Joseph Smith to construe "a theory of origin for his Book of Mormon, in harmony with these prevailing notions; and more especially since this common knowledge" is set forth in almost hand-book form in the little work of Ethan Smith, . . . It will appear in what is to follow that such "common knowledge" did exist in New England; that Joseph Smith was in contact with it; that one book, at least, with which he was most likely acquainted, could well have furnished structural outlines for the Book of Mormon; and that Joseph Smith was possessed of such creative imaginative powers as would make it quite within the lines of possibility that the Book of Mormon could have been produced in that way. ("A Book of Mormon Study," Part I, Chapter 1)

In Part I, Chapter 7, of the same manuscript B. H. Roberts asked this question:

Could an investigator of the Book of Mormon be much blamed if he were to decide that Ethan Smith's book with its suggestion as to the division of his Israelites into two peoples; with its suggestion of "tremendous wars" between them; and of the savages overcoming the civilized division—led to the fashioning of these same chief things in the Book of Mormon?

B. H. Roberts made this comment in Part I, Chapter 13:

As to the first consideration, in this case, priority of production of Ethan Smith's book, and priority of sufficient duration for it to become generally known in the vicinity where both books were produced—there is absolute certainty. For Ethan Smith's book ran through two editions in New England before the Book of Mormon was published. As to the second consideration, in this case, the likelihood of Joseph Smith coming in contact with Ethan Smith's book is not only very great, but amounts to a very close certainty. For being published in an adjoining county to the one in which their home had been for so long, and the interest in the subject being very general, not only in New England but in New York also, it would be little short of miraculous if they did not know of Ethan Smith's book.

Further on in the same chapter Roberts made these observations:

But now to return from this momentary divergence to the main theme of this writing—viz, did Ethan Smith's *View of the Hebrews* furnish structural material for Joseph Smith's Book of Mormon? It has been pointed out in these pages that there are many things in the former book that might well have suggested many major things in the other. Not a few things merely, one or two, or a half dozen, but many; and it is this

fact of many things of similarity and the cumulative force of them, that makes them so serious a menace to Joseph Smith's story of the Book of Mormon's origin. . . .

The material in Ethan Smith's book is of a character and quantity to make a ground plan for the Book of Mormon: . . .

Can such numerous and startling points of resemblance and suggestive contact, be merely coincidence?

B. H. Roberts also felt that the Bible could have provided seeds for Joseph Smith's fruitful imagination:

Matthew and Zechariah, then, could well be thought of as furnishing material for the Book of Mormon signs of the Birth of Messiah.

So also as to the Book of Mormon signs of Messiah's death and resurrection . . . The three hours darkness, expanded to three days of darkness; the evidently momentary earthquake of Matthew, to three hours of earth quaking; the local rending of rocks in Matthew, to the rending of a continent; and the fear of a Roman Centurion and those that were with him, to the terror of a whole people.

With these things as suggestions as to signs for Messiah's birth and death and resurrection, and one of conceded vivid, and strong and constructive imaginative powers to work them all out, need not be regarded as an unthinkable procedure and achievement. (*Ibid.*)

In *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* pages 64-65, we demonstrated that the great revivals which swept New York in the 1820s are reflected in the Book of Mormon. B. H. Roberts also considered this to be a possibility:

It is clearly established now that these scenes of religion frenzy, were common in the vicinage where Joseph Smith resided in his youth and early manhood. . . . Joseph Smith himself came in contact with these emotional phenomena in his own experience after their rebirth in the early decades of the 19th century.

The Question is, did his knowledge of these things, lead to the introduction of similar ones into the Book of Mormon narrative? I think it cannot be questioned but what there is sufficient resemblance . . . to justify the thought that the latter might well have suggested, and indeed become the source of the former. (*Ibid.*, Part U, Chapter 5)

In Part II, Chapter 6, of his manuscript, B. H. Roberts observed:

There can be no doubt but what the style of preaching, exhortation, warning, praying, admonition together with the things emphasized and the ends aimed at in such work of the Christian ministry as came to the attention of Joseph Smith, was all largely and deeply influenced by those first and greatest evangelical popular preachers of Protestant Christianity, John Wesley, George Whitefield, Jonathan Edwards, and Dr. Thomas Coke, et al.

Roberts gives lengthy extracts from some of the religious writings that would have been available to Joseph Smith. One quotation from the "Eighteen Sermons" by George Whitefield, published in 1808, contains this statement: ". . . Methinks I see . . . the Judge sitting on his throne, . . ." This reminds us of Alma's statement in the Book of Mormon, Alma 36:22: ". . . me thought I saw . . . God sitting upon his throne, . . ."

After a careful examination of B. H. Roberts' manuscript, "A Book of Mormon Study," we have come to the conclusion that he has done an excellent job of compiling the evidence to show that Joseph Smith could have written the Book of Mormon from the material available to him. Although Roberts' study has not been published, we are happy to report that Wesley P. Walters has prepared an article analyzing this manuscript for *The Journal of Pastoral Practice*, vol. III, no. 3. We felt that Walters' article was so important that we reproduced it in its entirety. Also we have included some very revealing photographs taken from Roberts' original manuscript. This reprint of Wesley P. Walters' article is now available from Modern Microfilm Co. for \$2.00 a copy.