# BRIGHAM YOUNG AND WILD BILL HICKMAN

About thirty years ago, while browsing through a collection of rare books, we encountered a dusty old book with this sensational title, *Brigham's Destroying Angel: Being the Life, Confession, and Startling Disclosures of the Notorious Bill Hickman, The Danite Chief of Utah*. In this book, Bill Hickman alleged that he had committed murders by the orders of Brigham Young, the 2nd prophet of the Mormon Church, and Apostle Orson Hyde. The appearance of the book was not impressive. It was a rather cheap looking paperback book which was edited by J. H. Beadle. Since we did not know whether we could trust either Hickman or Beadle, we dismissed the book as possibly a work of fiction and felt that it was not anything we could rely on.

We had, of course, heard of the Mormon doctrine of "blood atonement"—i. e., the teaching that certain sins can only be atoned for by the shedding of the sinner's own blood. This doctrine was explained by Brigham Young in a discourse given September 21, 1856:

> There are sins that men commit for which they cannot receive forgiveness in this world, or in that which is to come, and if they had their eyes open to see their true condition, they
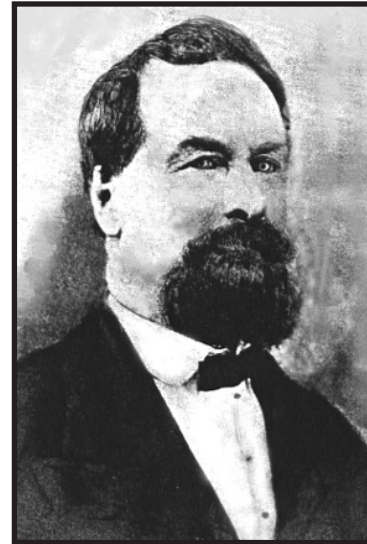
William A. Hickman

would be perfectly willing to **have their blood spilt upon the ground**, that the smoke thereof might ascend to heaven as an offering for their sins; and the smoking incense **would atone for their sins**, whereas, if such is not the case, they will stick to them and remain upon them in the spirit world.

I know, when you hear my brethren telling about **cutting people off from the earth**, that you consider it is strong doctrine, but it is **to save them**, not to destroy them. . . . I know there are transgressors, who if they knew themselves, and the only condition upon which they can obtain forgiveness, would beg of their brethren to **shed their blood**, that the smoke thereof might ascend to God as an offering to appease the wrath that is kindled against them, and that the law might have its course. I will say further; I have had men come to me and **offer their lives to atone for their sins**.

It is true that the blood of the Son of God was shed for sins through the fall and those committed by men, yet men can commit **sins which it can never remit**. As it was in ancient days, so it is in our day. . . . There are sins that can be atoned for by an offering upon an altar, as in ancient days, and there are sins that the blood of a lamb, or a calf, or of turtle doves, cannot remit, but they must be **atoned for by the blood of the man**. That is the reason why men talk to you as they do from this stand; they understand the **doctrine** and throw out a few words about it. You have been taught that doctrine, but you do not understand it. (Sermon by Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, vol. 4, pp. 53-54; also published in the Mormon newspaper *Deseret News*, October 1, 1856, p. 235)

On another occasion President Brigham Young explained:

> Now take a person in this congregation who has knowledge with regard to being saved . . . and suppose that he is overtaken in a gross fault, that he has committed a sin that he knows will deprive him of that exaltation which he desires, and that he cannot attain to it without the shedding of blood, and also knows that by **having his blood shed he will atone for that sin**, and be saved and exalted with the Gods, is there a man or woman in this house but what would say "shed my blood that I may be saved and exalted with the Gods?"
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> All mankind love themselves, and let these principles be known by an individual, and he would be **glad to have his blood shed**. That would be loving themselves, even unto an eternal exaltation. Will you love your brothers and sisters likewise, when they **have committed a sin that cannot be atoned for without the shedding of their blood? Will you love that man or woman well enough to shed their blood**? . . .
>
> I could refer you to **plenty of instances** where men have been **righteously slain, in order to atone for their sins**. I have seen scores and hundreds of people for whom there would have been a chance (in the last resurrection there will be) if their lives had been taken and their blood spilled on the ground as a smoking incense to the Almighty, but who are now angels to the devil . . . I have known a great many men **who left this Church** for whom there is no chance whatever for exaltation, but **if their blood had been spilled**, it would have been better for them, the wickedness and ignorance of the nations forbids this principle's being in full force, but the time will come when the law of God will be in full force.
>
> **This is loving our neighbor as ourselves**; if he needs help, help him; and if he wants salvation and it is necessary **to spill his blood** on the earth in order that he may be saved, **spill it**. Any of you who understand the principles of eternity, if you have sinned a sin requiring the shedding of blood, except the sin unto death, would not be satisfied nor rest until your blood should be spilled, that you might gain that salvation you desire. That is the **way to love mankind**. (*Deseret News*, February 18, 1857; also reprinted in *Journal of Discourses*, vol. 4, pp. 219-20)

At the time we first saw Hickman's confessions we had also read some material concerning the "Danites"—a secret organization which existed during Joseph Smith's lifetime which was committed to vengeance against the church's enemies. This band not only targeted the gentiles, but even dealt with dissenters from the church. David Whitmer, one of the three witnesses to the Book of Mormon, revealed the following concerning the Danites:

> In the spring of 1838, the heads of the church and many of the members had gone deep into error and blindness. . . . In June, 1838, at Far West, Mo., **a secret organization was formed**, Doctor Avard being put in as the leader of the band; a certain oath was to be administered to all the brethren to bind them to support the heads of the church *in everything they should teach*. All who refused to take this oath were considered **dissenters from the church, and certain things were to be done concerning these dissenters, by Dr. Avards secret band** . . . my persecutions, for trying to show them their errors, became of such a nature that I had to leave the Latter Day Saints; . . . (*An Address To All Believers In Christ*, by David Whitmer, Richmond, Mo., 1887, pp. 27-28)

Mormon apologists were somewhat divided concerning the Danite band. Some denied that it even existed. Others admitted the existence of the secret organization but denied that Joseph Smith was connected with it. Mormon writer William E. Berrett took this position. Although he wanted his readers to believe that Joseph Smith was in the dark concerning what was going on, Mr. Berrett freely admitted that "Such a band as the 'Danites' **did exist**, as historians affirm; . . . The organization had been for the purpose of **plundering and murdering** the enemies of the Saints" (*The Restored Church*, 1956, pp. 197-198).

Joseph Smith himself made some very contradictory statements about this organization. On one occasion he said that it existed but claimed that he did not have any knowledge of it at the time (see *History of the Church*, vol. 3, pp. 178-182). On another occasion, however, Joseph Smith passed the whole thing off by saying, "The **Danite** system alluded to by Norton **never had any existence**" (*Ibid*., vol. 6, p. 165). Fortunately for the cause of truth, some new and important evidence came to light when H. Michael Marquardt was working on a transcript of Joseph Smith's early diaries—a work which we later published. In 1838, Joseph Smith had his scribe George W. Robinson keep a diary which was called "The Scriptory Book of Joseph Smith Jr President of The Church of Jesus Christ, of Latterday Saints in all the world." This diary contains a very important entry under the date of July 27, 1838, which **has been crossed out**. Mr. Marquardt worked very carefully with this portion of the record and was finally able to decipher most of the words. He discovered that the entry related to the Danite band. It not only confirmed the existence of the band but said it was organized for the purpose of making things right and cleansing the Church.

The Mormon scholar Scott H. Faulring, who later transcribed Joseph Smith's diaries, verified that the reference related to the Danites (see *An American Prophet's Record: The Diaries and Journals of Joseph Smith*, p. 198). Unfortunately, neither Marquardt nor Faulring were allowed access to the original diaries and therefore had to depend on photocopies and microfilms. Recently, however, two prominent Mormon scholars, Dean C. Jessee and David J. Whittaker published a transcription of this highly significant entry. They also confirmed that the entry relates to the Danites. Moreover, since they had access to the original diary, they were able to decipher a number of words that neither Marquardt nor Faulring could make out. Their transcription of these words, in fact, seems to suggest that the Danites were going to use physical force to set things "right":

> . . . the bretheren or Saints . . . have come up hither Thus far, according to the order <Rev?> of the Danites, **we have a company of Danites** in these times, to **put right physically** that which is not right, and to cleanse the Church of verry great evils, which hath hitherto existed among us inasmuch as they **cannot be put to right by teachings & persuasyons**. This company or a part of them exhibited on the fourth day of July [illegible word] They came up to consecrate by companies of tens, commanded by their captain over ten. (*Brigham Young University Studies*, Winter 1988, page 14)

While Jessee and Whittaker do not seem to catch the serious implications of their transcription, they acknowledge that there was an attempt to suppress the material in this quotation: "Some of the material in this citation has been crossed out in pencil in the original by a latter hand" (*Ibid*., p. 37, n. 24).

Joseph Smith's "Scriptory Book" agrees with other evidence about the Danites. For instance, Reed Peck records: "I heard Avard, on one occasion, say that the Danites were to consecrate their surplus property, and to come in by **tens** to do so . . ." Joseph Smith's "Scriptory Book" confirms this when it says that the Danites "come up to consecrate, by companies of **tens** . . ."

While it is extremely interesting that Joseph Smith's own "Scriptory Book" would contain an entry concerning the Danites, the whole matter is made even more intriguing by the fact that there has been an attempt to obliterate the entry. Joseph Smith's *History of the Church* relies on the "Scriptory Book" for the entries of July 26 and 28, but the entry for July 27—i.e., the portion concerning the Danites—has been omitted.

In the *Comprehensive History of the Church*, vol. 1, pages 500-501, the Mormon historian B. H. Roberts commented about testimony given after the war in Missouri:

> It is in this testimony and principally in the statement of Dr. Avard, that **the existence of the "Danites" in the "Mormon" Church is affirmed**. Avard declared that about four months before the date of his testimony . . . "a band called the 'Daughter of Zion' (afterwards called the 'Danite Band') was formed of the members of the Mormon church, the original object of which was **to drive from the county** of Caldwell all those who dissented from the Mormon church; in which **they succeeded admirably** and to the satisfaction of all concerned."

We were not aware of the devastating evidence concerning the Danites found in Joseph Smith's "Scriptory Book" at the time we first saw Bill Hickman's confessions. While we were convinced that there was such a group and that "blood atonement" was actually practiced in early Utah, we were still reluctant to put a great deal of weight in Hickman's tales. Mormon authors, of course, dismissed *Brigham's Destroying Angel* as an example of the type of trash published by early anti-Mormons. Mormon apologist Hugh Nibley suggested that Hickman's confessions really came from the fertile imagination of the editor, J. H. Beadle:

> Nobody had been able to pin anything on the Mormons until 14 years later, when Bill Hickman came to the rescue with his thrice-welcome "confessions". . . a long and lurid catalogue of blood in which every major crime committed in Utah is mechanically and unimaginatively pinned on Brigham Young. . . . Hickman, as we shall see, never dreamed of such a thing until Beadle put him up to it . . . Beadle was a professional purveyor of scandal . . . we believe that those tales are **Beadle's invention** . . . The patent absurdity of the "Confessions" becomes apparent on the most superficial investigation and grows with every monotonous episode. . . . The Hickman stones were not true. (*Sounding Brass*, 1963, pp. 254, 256, 263-65)

It was only after we had made a careful study of Mormon history that we became convinced that Hickman's confessions could not be easily dismissed. We found, for instance, that John D. Lee, who had been a member of the church's secret Council of Fifty, charged that the Mormon police committed murders for the church and that "Under Brigham Young, Hosea Stout was Chief of Police." Hosea Stout was a member of the Danite Band and later served as a body guard for Joseph Smith. Besides serving as Chief of Police in Nauvoo, he was an officer in the Nauvoo legion. Fortunately, Hosea Stout's diary has survived and proves to be one of the most revealing documents that we have had access to. The fact that it was written by a faithful Mormon makes it even more significant. In his diary, Stout frankly tells of some of the violent methods used by the Mormon leaders. For instance, under the date of April 3, 1845, Hosea Stout recorded the following in his diary:

> In the morning I went to the Temple and was roughly accosted by Brs Cahoon & Cutler about a circumstance which took place last night at the Temple. They said that the old Police had beat a man almost to death in the Temple. To which I replied I was glad of it and that I had given orders to that effect in case anyone should be found in the Temple after night and they had only done as they were told, or ordered . . . we concluded to lay the matter before President Brigham Young and get his advice . . . Brother Brigham came to us and we related the matter to him and **he approved** of the proceedings of the Police and said he wanted us to still guard the Temple to regulate the matters there which was done to our satisfaction and justification. (*On The Mormon Frontier, The Dairy of Hosea Stout*, vol. 1, p. 32)

Under the date of January 9, 1846, Hosea Stout recorded: "When we came to the Temple some what a considerable number of the guard were assembled and among them was William Hibbard . . . He was evidently come as a spy. When I saw him I told Scott that we must 'bounce a stone off of his head.' to which he agreed we prepared accordingly & I got an opportunity & hit him on the back of his head which came very near taking his life. But few knew anything about what was the matter he left the ground out of his senses when he came to himself he could not tell what had happened to him &c" (*Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 103). Other entries in Hosea Stout's diary show that he was a very brutal man (see *The Mormon Kingdom*, vol. 2, p. 7).

President Brigham Young seemed to delight in the fact that he had some ruthless men who could help him out when violence seemed necessary. In fact, he once boasted: "And if the Gentiles wish to see a few tricks, we have 'Mormons' that can perform them. **We have the meanest devils on the earth** in our midst, and **we intend to keep them, for we have use for them**; and if the Devil does not look sharp, we will cheat him out of them at the last, for they will reform and go to heaven with us" (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 6, p. 176). Brigham Young was undoubtedly referring to men like Orrin Porter Rockwell and Bill Hickman when he made this statement.

As we have already stated, Hickman confessed that he had committed murders which had been ordered by President Brigham Young and Apostle Orson Hyde. In *Mormonism— Shadow or Reality?* pages 444-447, we give evidence that Bill Hickman robbed and murdered the enemies of the church and that he had the approval and protection of Mormon leaders in carrying out his crimes. That the Mormon leaders approved of Hickman's crimes is clear from the journal of John Bennion. In 1860 Bennion felt that William Hickman and his brother, George Hickman, should be punished for their evil deeds, but he soon learned that Bishop Gardiner "had been bound & could not act" and that Orson Hyde—President of the Twelve Apostles —taught that a man should not be punished for stealing from the "gentiles." The following is taken from Bennion's journal:

> Sat 13 went to the city met Bp Gardiner had a talk with him about W. A. Hickmans wicked course for some time past he said that up till now he had been bound & could not act I told him I was not bound neither was I afraid to expose the wickedness of any man that it was my duty to expose we got home about sun down in the evening I met with Bp & councillors & parties concerned [to] try George Hickman for stealing mules when about to commence trial Elder Hyde come

in and by Bp Gardners solicitation he preached and the trial was postponed after meeting Bp council & Elder Hyde had a long talk in my house br Hyde said speaking of stealing that **a man may steal & be influenced by the Spirit of the Lord to do it** that Hickman had done it years past and that he **never would institute a trial against a brother for stealing from the gentiles** but stealing from his brethren he was down on it he laid down much teaching on the subject

　　　S 14th went to meeting at the mill to hear br Hyde . . . he give much good instruction spoke on last nights intention to **try Hickman** give it as **the word of the Lord to set him free** for the past, bid him go & sin no more. ("John Bennion Journal," October 13 and 14, 1860, original journal at Utah State Historical Society)

Since this evidence comes from John Bennion's journal—not from an anti-Mormon or unfriendly source—it cannot be easily dismissed.

In his confessions, Bill Hickman tells that he received orders from Brigham Young through Apostle Hyde to eliminate Jesse Hartley, a man whom the church leaders did not trust:

　　　. . . I set out with Judge Appleby and Rev. Orson Hyde . . . When we had got . . . into East Cañon, some three or four miles, one Mr. Hartley came to us from Provo City. This Hartley . . . had married a Miss Bullock, of Provo . . . at the April Conference, Brigham Young, before the congregation, gave him a tremendous blowing up, calling him all sorts of bad names, and saying he **ought to have his throat cut** . . .

　　　I saw [Apostle] Orson Hyde looking very sour at him, and after he had been in camp an hour or two, Hyde told me that he had **orders from Brigham Young**, if he came to Fort Supply to have him **used up**. "Now," said he, "I want you and George Boyd to do it.". . . Boyd came to me and said: "It's all right, Bill; I will help you to kill that fellow." One of our teams was two or three miles behind, and Orson Hyde wished me to go back . . . Hartley stepped up and said he would go . . . Orson Hyde then whispered to me: "Now is your time; don't let him come back." We started, and about half a mile on had to cross the cañon stream . . . While crossing, Hartley got a shot and fell dead in the creek. . . .

　　　I went on and met Hosea Stout . . . I then told him all that had happened, and he said that was good. (*Brigham's Destroying Angel*, 1904 reprint, pp. 96-98)

Hickman's claim that Hosea Stout said "that was good" when he heard of the murder of Hartley reminds us of Stout's own entry in his diary when he learned that the "police had beat a man almost to death in the Temple." The reader will remember that Stout arrogantly recorded that he told those who had complained about the matter that he was "glad of it and that I had given orders to that effect . . ."

In 1872, Bill Hickman made a confession of his crimes to R. N. Baskin. Mr. Baskin, who later served as mayor of Salt Lake City and became a member of the supreme court of the State of Utah, gave this report in his book, *Reminiscences of Early Utah*, page 150:

　　　The Danites were an organization in the Mormon church. Its existence was stated by Bill Hickman in his confession made to me. He gave me the names of more than a score of its active members, among whom were a number of reputed notorious Danite assassins. He stated that the members were bound by their covenants to execute the orders of the priesthood, and that when a direct order or intimation was given to "use up" anyone, it was always executed by one or more of the members, according to the circumstances of the case. That such an organization existed is conclusively shown by the numerous mysterious murders

which were never investigated by the executive officers of the Territory, or any attempt made to prosecute the guilty parties. The Mormon sermons, the confessions of Hickman and Lee, and numerous other circumstances made plain its existence. Hickman confessed to me that he personally knew of thirteen persons having been murdered, some of them by him, and others by various Danites; that at one time he murdered a man by the name of Buck at the personal request of Brigham Young.

In 1979, there was an attempt by former Church Historian Leonard J. Arrington and Hope A. Hilton, a great-granddaughter of Bill Hickman, to undermine Bill Hickman's confession which was published in *Brigham's Destroying Angel*. Their thesis concerning the book was similar to that set forth by Dr. Hugh Nibley. They felt that Hickman had written a manuscript, but that "a skilled anti-Mormon journalists," J. H. Beadle, had altered it to link Brigham Young and the Mormon hierarchy to the crimes:

　　　Unquestionably, Bill wrote an autobiography that served as the basis for the book. Although it is no longer extant, family members report having seen the manuscript, and *Brigham's Destroying Angel* could not have been prepared writhout such a personal history. On the other hand, enough manuscript material in Bill's handwriting survives for us to assert with confidence that the published draft of *Brigham's Destroying Angel* was not written by Hickman. The style is different, and the editorializing and sensationalizing are alien to Bill's spirit. . . . unquestionably the autobiography was subjected to tampering, if not ghost-writing, and was almost certainly given a market orientation by Beadle. We are confident that the editorializing, the facile attempts to connect Brigham Young with nefarious doings, are part of the editing by John Beadle. Hickman's own statement to William H. Kimball about *Brigham's Destroying Angel* after it appeared in published form was as follows (this statement relayed to Orson F. Whitney by Kimball on November 15, 1892): "My book is a lie from the beginning to the end—from the boar through. . . . I was bribed to write that book. I was told that I could make fifty thousand dollars out of it, and that is why I did it." (Leonard J. Arrington and Hope A. Hilton, "William A. ('Bill') Hickman: Setting the Record Straight," Task Papers in LDS History, No. 28, Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1979, Foreword, pp. i-ii)

On pages 33-34 of the same paper, we find the following:

　　　Beadle, who was in the process of writing an anti-Mormon book . . . did edit the manuscript to make it count for the maximum in the anti-Mormon cause, and did introduce phrases that **linked Brigham Young** and the "Mormon Hierarchy" to **criminal activities**.

The claim by Arrington and Hilton that Bill Hickman denied the accuracy of the published book is based primarily on the statement of William H. Kimball. There are at least two reasons why this statement seems very questionable: First, it was not "relayed to Orson F. Whitney by Kimball" until "November 15, 1892," which was twenty years after *Brigham's Destroying Angel* was published and nine years after Bill Hickman's death. Hickman, of course, could not reply to a statement made after his death. Second, the statement does not come from a neutral party, but rather from a man who had every reason to try to discredit the book. As we will show later, Bill Hickman claimed that Kimball was an accessory to a murder he had committed and even helped him bury the body.

The assertion by Arrington and Hilton that Beadle was the one who linked the Mormon leaders to Hickman's crimes

was certainly based only on wishful thinking. They did not produce any manuscript evidence to support such a conclusion. Moreover, their own paper contains information which makes their position untenable. On page 53 of their study, they cite the following from a letter written by Brigham Young on September 27, 1871: "They have, I am informed, brought before their exclusive, packed grand jury one Wm. Hickman . . . and, he evidently to save himself from justice, has laid at my door some or all of those crimes . . ."

Now, if Bill Hickman would testify before a grand jury that Brigham Young was guilty of the crimes—and it is very clear that he did give such testimony—why would he hesitate to put the same claim in his manuscript? The evidence clearly shows that Hickman planned to openly testify against the Mormon leaders when they were brought to trial. It also seems naive to assume that the anti-Mormons would be willing to give Hickman a bribe of $50,000 to link the Mormon leaders to his crimes, but accept a manuscript from him which, according to the Arrington-Hilton thesis, provided absolutely no evidence to that effect until it was altered by Beadle.

Fortunately, after writing the paper with Church Historian Leonard Arrington, Hope A. Hilton seems to have done further research on the matter and in a new book on Bill Hickman she has repudiated the idea that J. H. Beadle added the material linking Brigham Young to the crimes. Mrs. Hilton now states:

> I do not question whether Hickman actually wrote *Brigham's Destroying Angel*. It is too accurate in its details to have been written by anyone else . . .
> I have relied on Hickman's *Brigham's Destroying Angel*: . . . for facts of Hickman's life that can be corroborated from other sources. . . . Beadle did not have access to Brigham Young's daily office journal or to other sources available today which confirm many of the book's first-hand statements. . . . one of the most compelling questions about Hickman is why he implicated Brigham Young, Hosea Stout, William Kimball, and others both in his book and in court. (*"Wild Bill" Hickman and the Mormon Frontier*, 1988, Preface, pp. x-xi)

On page 127 of her book, Hope Hilton wrote: "To his daughter, Katharine Hickman Butcher, Hickman told the truth when he wrote on 7 January 1872 from the Fort Douglas prison: 'I have written a rough book, but no more rough than true.'" In the preface to her book, p. xi, Mrs. Hilton stated: ". . . avowedly anti-Mormon editor, J. H. Beadle, wrote the preface to the autobiography and the first chapter. He also wrote the bitter diatribe against Young and the Mormons on pages 137-139, probably the first paragraph on page 192, and several other brief inserts, sometimes adding only a single word. Except for these additions, Hickman's mind and hand are the book's undisputed source."

Although there is no reason to believe that Mrs. Hilton is trying to deceive her readers, those who do not have a copy of *Brigham's Destroying Angel* to refer to may be inclined to believe that Beadle played a larger role in editing the text than he actually did. At the end of the preface the name "J. H. Beadle" appears. The first chapter, likewise, contains a statement that makes it clear that Beadle is the author: "CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTORY HISTORY. BY THE EDITOR." Pages 137-139 are also separated from Hickman's writings with the words: "BY THE EDITOR." It would appear, then, that Mrs. Hilton now believes that only "the first paragraph on page 192, and several other brief inserts," were added to the text. It is also clear that she is not even certain that Beadle added the paragraph on page 192 because she begins her statement with the word "probably." Furthermore, she says that "only a single word" is added in some of the "other" places.

It is interesting to note that J. H. Beadle made these comments concerning his role in editing the manuscript:

> I then agreed to take charge of his [Hickman's] manuscript, and, to use his own language, "Fix it up in shape, so people would understand it." My first intention was to re-write it entirely, speaking of Hickman in the third person; but one perusal satisfied me that it would be far better as he had written it. I have thought it best, also, to preserve his own phraseology nearly exactly, only inserting a word occasionally where absolutely necessary to prevent mistake. . . . I think every critic must admit that our sentimental and religious murderer has a singularly pleasing style.

A perusal of some of the letters of Bill Hickman, which Hope Hilton has included in her book, shows that Hickman was qualified to write such a book.

HICKMAN'S WORK FOUND?

The significant change in Mrs. Hilton's position concerning Beadle's role in editing Hickman's book and her comments concerning the matter raise some interesting questions: Why did she make such a major change in her thesis? Is it possible that she has located the original manuscript of *Brigham's Destroying Angel*? (A Mormon researcher once told us that he was on the track of this manuscript and had traced it to a vault. He did not, however, reveal where this vault was located.) Mrs. Hilton's statements concerning the matter are rather strange. She gives no reason as to why she has singled out the paragraph on page 192 as "probably" an interpolation by Beadle. (This paragraph seems to contain no significant information.) If she had compared the original manuscript, however, and noted that the paragraph did not appear there, she would be suspicious that it was added by Beadle. She, of course, would not know for certain that Beadle was the author. Anyone who had access to the manuscript could have added the words. Furthermore, those who prepare manuscripts for publication know that sometimes writers send additional material or corrections in letters to their publishers. This uncertainty might force a scholar like Hope Hilton to qualify her comment to say that the paragraph was "probably" added by Beadle.

While this is only a matter of speculation, there is a very strange reference to an important Hickman document in the earlier Arrington-Hilton paper, page 39: "As for manuscript materials, the LDS Church Archives in Salt Lake City has a short holograph autobiography, which we have used without attribution; . . ." While one would think that this would be an extremely significant document for a historian writing about Hickman, in her published book Mrs. Hilton never even refers to this document. It is obvious that something is wrong here. Why do Arrington and Hilton say they are using it "without attribution" in their original paper? Is this document something the church is trying to suppress?

Although Arrington and Hilton claimed that they used the handwritten Hickman autobiography "without attribution," there is one actual quotation from it on the first page of their paper: ". . . his grandfather told Bill that he had twenty-one blood relations in the War of the Revolution—'and not one Tory among them!'" The footnote for this citation reads as follows: "From the William A. Hickman Autobiography, holograph manuscript, Hickman Collection, Church Archives, p. 1." It is very interesting to note that the words cited are similar to the opening page of Hickman's narrative published in *Brigham's Destroying Angel*, page 25: "I had, according to my grandfather's story, twenty-one blood relatives in the Revolutionary War, 'and not a Tory among them . . .'"

We wonder if it is possible that Arrington and Hilton had access to just a portion of the original manuscript of *Brigham's Destroying Angel* at the time they wrote their paper and did not recognize it as such. It could also be possible that someone later compared the original manuscript with the published book but was forbidden to release any information concerning the manuscript's existence. Unless the church releases the handwritten "Hickman Autobiography" we may never know the truth about this matter.

In any case, in 1979, Arrington and Hilton felt they could "assert with confidence that the published draft of *Brigham's Destroying Angel* was not written by Hickman." Today, however, Hope Hilton feels that "Hickman's mind and hand are the book's undisputed source." Although we would like to know just what evidence brought her to this conclusion, we are very happy that Mrs. Hilton has been honest enough to repudiate the old theory. We feel that her book is a valuable contribution to the study of Bill Hickman. It includes some very important material from the LDS Church Archives which we did not have access to before. Although the research we had done prior to the publication of Hope Hilton's book had already led us to conclude that Bill Hickman was receiving his orders from Brigham Young and other Mormon leaders, *"Wild Bill" Hickman and the Mormon Frontier* furnishes a great deal of new information showing that Hickman was deeply involved with church leaders.

On pages 9, 10, 12 and 13 of her book, Mrs. Hilton revealed:

> On 6 May [1839], Hickman met Joseph Smith, Jr., who ordered Bill ordained to the Council of Seventy the same day. . . . Hickman seemed a natural choice to be **one of the bodyguards of the prophet Joseph**. A similar call was extended to Hosea Stout, Orrin Porter Rockwell, and Lot Smith . . . Dressed in white, surrounding their beloved prophet, these four men would have made an impressive sight. . . . [Brigham] Young assigned Hickman to oversee covert spying activities, to "subdue" the enemies of the church, and to serve as his chief bodyguard. Hickman and others in a tightly knit group served Smith in Nauvoo and Young in Winter Quarters . . . From 1850 to 1853, they shared the duties of government with Young's secret political organization, the Council of Fifty. . . . Hickman was not a Mormon during the Danite heyday in Missouri, and there is no reliable evidence that the Danites, as such, survived after 1838 as an organization. However, that some **vigilante Mormons, notably Hickman, continued to espouse the Danite philosophy** they had been taught by **church leaders** of "attacking the Gentiles to preserve the Saints" seems apparent.

Some Mormon apologists have tried to make an issue over the fact that Bill Hickman was called a "Danite" on the title page of *Brigham's Destroying Angel*. Mrs. Hilton, however, put the matter in perspective when she said that he "continued to espouse the Danite philosophy." While it is true that the original organization ceased to exist in the late 1830's, it is also clear that the church had men in early Utah who performed exactly the same function. Mormon writer Klaus J. Hansen says that "several important Danites were among those initiated into the Council of Fifty in 1844" (*Quest for Empire*, p. 58). He also admits that the Council of Fifty may have been involved in the practice of "blood atonement":

> If, according to this doctrine, a member of the kingdom committed the crimes of murder and adultery, or **if he betrayed one of his fellow Mormons to the enemies of the church, or revealed the secrets of the kingdom**, he could save his soul only if he expiated for the crime by the shedding of his blood. Blood atonement was, of course, a form of capital punishment,

> Yet because of its theological implications, and because the **Council of Fifty was to administer it**, the doctrine was surrounded with an aura of mystery, terror, and holy murder. The Council of Fifty heightened the atmosphere of fear and secrecy associated with this practice by conducting cases involving the possibility of blood atonement in utmost secrecy for fear of public repercussions. (*Ibid.*, p. 69)

It seems rather ridiculous to quibble over the word "Danite" when the evidence shows that Bill Hickman functioned in the same way that the Danite band did in Missouri. As a matter of fact, on July 5, 1857, Brigham Young himself used the word "Danite" when referring to "the boys" who took care of unruly people who came to Utah: "If men come here and do not behave themselves, they will not only find the Danites, whom they talk so much about, biting the horses's heels, but the scoundrels will find something biting their heels. In my plain remarks, I merely call things by their right names" (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 5, p. 6). Because of the circumstances surrounding Hickman's work for the Mormon leaders and in view of Brigham Young's own statement, we see no reason why a person should be disturbed if he is called a "Danite." Those who are concerned with this term, however, might refer to Hickman as a Mormon "spy" or one of the first members of "Church Security."

In the Forward to the 1979 paper by Arrington and Hilton (p. iii), Leonard Arrington indicated that Philip Jordan had "apparently confused Hickman's Church security assignments with the work of the earlier Danites. These two groups were as much unlike as the Mafia and the FBI. . . . the actions once attributed to the Danites were probably those of individuals or of Mormon security forces—deputy sheriffs, territorial militia, and/or minutemen." This statement seems rather naive in light of the evidence which was available in 1979. In any case, on page 2 of the same manuscript, we read that Hickman "was chosen as one of a group of twelve men who served as body-guards and 'protectors' of Joseph Smith. He was apparently a 'regular' with the Mormon security forces during the period (1843-1844) . . ." Later in Utah, "Bill Hickman was assigned to lead one of the parties of scouts delegated to 'spy' on the [U.S.] Army . . . Hickman's intelligence reports to Governor Young show him to have been effective in the tasks assigned to him. Some of his spies disguised themselves as California emigrants and went in among the troops. . . . Bill's personal assignment, under an official appointment from Brigham Young as Governor, was to 'keep watch on the Army.' And apparently Bill did this, and perhaps magnified his calling by keeping watch on its horses as well. At least later stories began to drift in of a group of men, allegedly connected with Hickman, who rustled some of the Army's livestock" (*Ibid.*, pp. 14, 17, 18). On page 27 of the same manuscript, we learn that in 1863, Hickman "reported [Colonel Patrick] Connor's movements and intentions to Brigham Young . . . once more carrying out an important intelligence assignment for the pioneer leader."

In her published book, Hope Hilton says that "Hickman's primary assignment was to spy on the church's enemies in Nauvoo (such as Colonel Williams), although he was also occasionally given orders to execute punishments. Bill Hickman rarely shirked an assignment from Young . . ." (*"Wild Bill" Hickman and the Mormon Frontier,* p. 15). On pages 43 and 45, Mrs. Hilton says that in Green River County, Utah, where Hickman served as "county assessor, tax collector, prosecuting attorney, and Utah territorial legislative representative" he "was also Brigham Young's eyes and ears." In his published confession, Bill Hickman tells of his meetings with Brigham Young. Mrs. Hilton confirms that Hickman had many contacts

with Young, both by mail and in person. Concerning one meeting Bill Hickman had with Brigham Young, Hilton notes: "Young's own journal recorded simply, 'Friday, June 26th, 1857: Spent the forenoon with Brother Hickman who arrived yesterday from the States'" (*Ibid*., p. 65). On page 84, she gives this information:

> During 1858-59, at least two local gangs of horse thieves were operating in Utah: Bill Hickman's and that of Joachim "Cub" Johnson. . . .
> During this time Hickman was serving Brigham Young as one of his spies. Young needed informers to watch the army and to contact prominent Gentiles about their views of the church and chose Hickman.

On page 85, Mrs. Hilton quotes the following from Brigham Young's journal: "It is rumored that five marshals left Camp Floyd yesterday sworn to arrest or kill Bill Hickman on the spot. Bill was warned and left home in time."

In the earlier paper, pages 43-44, Arrington and Hilton had questioned the authorship of a story in *Brigham's Destroying Angel* concerning the murder of a "half-breed Indian." They even suggested that "Beadle transposes the event to 1848 [instead of 1849] in order to involve Brigham Young." In her new book, Mrs. Hilton no longer seems to question the date of the murder or the authorship of the statement:

> Most surviving evidence reveals that Bill Hickman, Brigham Young, and Orson Hyde were close friends. Perhaps the events recounted in Hickman's autobiography account for these bonds. According to his memoir, Hickman killed a half-breed Indian who had joined the Mormon church but subsequently threatened Young's life. Later, he killed a notorious horse-thief who was seeking revenge against Hyde. Hickman admits to both killings and claims they were the first acts of violence performed at Young's request. Young gratefully promised to make him "a great man in the Kingdom" some day. . . . Hyde would later go to great lengths to defend Hickman . . . In the spring of 1848, Brigham Young left Nebraska . . . he requested that Bill stay behind to protect Hyde . . . (pages 19-20)

After Brigham Young left, Bill Hickman murdered two more Indians. In their 1979 paper, page 43, Arrington and Hilton revealed that Joseph Young, Brigham Young's brother, wrote him a letter on June 26, 1849, stating that "this 'bloody fray' reminded him of the tragic scene at Haun's Mill—'an outrage on the principles of humanity.' The outrage was 'unprovoked on the part of the Indians and without council or pretext for such cruelty. William Hickman is a **cold blooded murderer**, and as such he stands before every tribunal of justice in Heaven and on Earth and when the Judge of all the Earth makes inquisition for innocent blood it will be found dripping from the hands of William Hickman.'" On June 1, 1849, Apostle Orson Hyde wrote a letter to Brigham Young in which he defended Bill Hickman:

> "Brother Hickman has gone to the valley. You may hear some bad accounts of him, but don't kill him till I come! It may be that my testimony may have a little bearing in his case! He is sometimes a little rash and may shoot an innocent Indian, mistaking him for an Omaha horse thief!" (*"Wild Bill" Hickman and the Mormon Frontier*, p. 24)

Notwithstanding the fact that Brigham Young was warned by his own brother that Bill Hickman was "a cold blooded murderer," he continued to use him in early Utah to rob and assassinate enemies of the church. Mrs. Hilton informs us on page 62 of her book, that in 1857,

> . . . hands were laid on Hickman's head and he was given a blessing by church patriarch, John Young: ". . . You shall have

power over all your enemies, even to set your feet upon their necks, and no weapon that is formed against you shall prosper . . . If you are faithful you shall assist in **avenging the blood** of the prophets of God, and assist in accomplishing the great work of the last days . . ."

On April 25, 1865, Bill Hickman wrote a letter to Brigham Young in which he confided:

> If you want me to do anything, just let me know it. . . . If you want this or that, or whatever you may think, I will try. Or if you want my life you can have it without a murmer or a groan, just let me know late or early. I will be there, and there will be **no tale left behind** . . . I am on hand. (*Ibid*., p. 113)

Bill Hickman was known to have killed many people in early Utah, yet he seemed to have been shielded from prosecution by the Mormon Church. Orrin Porter Rockwell was another murderer who received protection from the church. Rockwell was one of the first to become a member of the church and soon became one of Joseph Smith's intimate friends. In Missouri, he joined the dreaded Danite band, served as a bodyguard for Joseph Smith, and was initiated into the secret Council of Fifty.

Both Hickman and Rockwell participated in the Aiken massacre. Although this slaughter did not involve as many people as the Mountain Meadows Massacre, it was certainly one of the cruelest deeds the early Mormons ever perpetrated. J. H. Beadle gave the following information concerning this cold-blooded transaction:

> The party consisted of six men . . . on reaching Kaysville, twenty-five miles north of Salt Lake City, they were **all arrested** on the charge of being spies for the Government! . . . The Aikin party had stock, property, and money estimated at $25,000. Nothing being proved against them they were told they should be "sent out of the Territory by the Southern route." Four of them started, leaving Buck and one of the unknown men in the city. The party had for an escort, O. P. Rockwell, John Lot, ____ Miles, and one other. When they reached Nephi, one hundred miles south, Rockwell informed the Bishop, Bryant, that his orders were to "have the men used up there." Bishop Bryant called a council at once, and the following men were selected to assist: J. Bigler (now a Bishop,) P. Pitchforth, his "first councillor," John Kink, and ____ Pickton. . . . The selected murderers, at 11 p.m., started from the Tithing House and got ahead of the Aikins', who did not start till daylight. The latter reached the Sevier River, when Rockwell informed them they could find no other camp that day; they halted, when the other party approached and asked to camp with them, for which permission was granted. The weary men removed their arms and heavy clothing, and were soon lost in sleep . . . the escort and the party from Nephi attacked the sleeping men with clubs and the kingbolts of the wagons. Two died without a struggle. But John Aiken bounded to his feet, but slightly wounded, and sprang into the brush. A shot from the pistol of John Kink laid him senseless. 'Colonel' also reached the brush, receiving a shot in the shoulder from Port Rockwell, and believing the whole party had been attacked by banditti, he made his way back to Nephi. With almost superhuman strength he held out during the twenty-five miles . . . ghastly pale and drenched with his own blood, staggering feebly along the streets of Nephi. . . . his story elicited a well-feigned horror.
> Meanwhile the murderers had gathered up the other three and thrown them into the river, supposing all to be dead. But John Aiken revived and crawled out on the same side, and hiding in the brush, heard these terrible words:
> "Are the damned Gentiles all dead, Port?"
> "All but one — the son of a b___ ran."
> Supposing himself to be meant, Aikin lay still till the

Danites left, then . . . set out for Nephi. . . . To return to Nephi offered but slight hope, but it was his only hope . . . He sank helpless at the door of the first house he reached, but the words he heard infused new life into him. The woman, afterwards a witness, said to him, "Why, another of you ones got away from the robbers, and is at Brother Foote's."

"Thank God, it is my brother," he said, and started on. The citizens tell with wonder that he ran the whole distance, his hair clotted with blood, reeling like a drunken man all the way. It was not his brother, but "Colonel.". . .

Bishop Bryant came, extracted the balls, dressed the wounds, and advised the men to return, as soon as they were able, to Salt Lake City. . . .

According to the main witness, a woman of Nephi, all regarded them as doomed. They had got four miles on the road, when their driver, a Mormon named Wolf, stopped the wagon near an old cabin: informed them he must water the horses; unhitched them, and moved away. Two men then stepped from the cabin, and fired with double-barreled guns; Aikin and "Colonel" **were both shot through the head**, and fell dead from the wagon. Their bodies were then loaded with stone and put in one of those "bottomless springs"—so called—common in that part of Utah. . . .

Meanwhile Rockwell and party had reached the city [Salt Lake City], taken Buck and the other man, and started southward, plying them with liquor. . . . they reached the Point of the Mountain. There it was decided to "use them up," and they were attacked with slung-shots and billies. The other man was instantly killed. Buck leaped from the wagon, outran his pursuers, their shots missing him, swam the Jordan, and came down it on the west side. He reached the city and related all that occurred, which created quite a stir. Hickman was then sent for to 'finish the job,' which he did as related in the text. (*Brigham's Destroying Angel*, pp. 206-210)

Bill Hickman claimed that he was summoned to Brigham Young's office. When he arrived, he asked President Young what he wanted. Young answered: "' The boys have made a bad job of trying to put a man out of the way. They all got drunk, bruised up a fellow, and he got away from them at the Point of the Mountain, came back to this city, and is telling all that happened, which is making a big stink.' He said I must get him out of the way and use him up" (*Ibid*., p. 128). Hickman goes on to say that the last surviving member of the Aiken party trusted a man by the name of George Dalton. Dalton was able to lure the man out to a secluded spot beyond "the Hot Springs three miles north of the city" where Hickman was waiting in ambush and shot him "through the head" (*Ibid*., p. 129). The next day Bill Hickman "went to Brigham Young's, told him that Buck was taken care of, and there would be no more stink about his stories. He said he was glad of it. Buck was the last one of the Aiken's party . . ." (*Ibid*., pp. 129-130).

There can be no doubt that the Mormons did take the Aiken party as prisoners and murdered them as related by J. H. Beadle and Bill Hickman. Under the date of November 3, 1857, Hosea Stout recorded the following in his diary: "Cal mail came and six cal prisoners taken at Box Elder supposed spies" (*On The Mormon Frontier, The Diary of Hosea Stout*, vol. 2, p. 644). On November 9, 1857, Hosea Stout recorded that he himself was "guarding the prisoners from Cal." Finally, on November 20, 1857, Stout made this very revealing entry in his diary:

O. P. Rockwell with 3 or four others started with 4 of the prisoners, which we had been guarding for some days, South to escort them through the settlements to Cal via South route The other two are going to be permitted to go at large and remain till spring and the guard dismissed. (*Ibid*., p. 645).

Mormon writer Harold Schindler has done an excellent job of compiling the evidence concerning the Aiken massacre. His research leads to the unmistakable conclusion that Rockwell was involved in the bloody deed (see *Orrin Porter Rockwell: Man of God, Son of Thunder*, 1966, pp. 268-279).

Less than two years after the Aiken massacre, U. S. Marshall P. K. Dotson held a warrant for Orrin Porter Rockwell's arrest. Dotson found it impossible to make the arrest, and Rockwell retained his freedom for twenty years. He was in full fellowship with the Mormon Church during this period, and on June 1, 1873, he was called on a mission to Grass Valley (*Ibid*., p. 356). Finally, on September 29, 1877, Rockwell was arrested for his part in the Aiken massacre. He was 64 years old at the time. On June 9, 1878, Orrin Porter Rockwell died, and therefore he did not have to face a trial which could have been very embarrassing for the Mormon Church.

Mormon Apostle Orson Hyde, the man who ordered Bill Hickman to kill Hartley and protected him in his crimes, apparently felt that Hickman and Rockwell were like shepherd dogs who protected the Mormon Church. In an address delivered in the Tabernacle on April 9,1853, Apostle Hyde made these chilling hints concerning the matter:

Suppose the shepherd should discover a wolf approaching the flock, what would he be likely to do? Why, we should suppose, if the wolf was within proper distance, that he would kill him at once . . . in short, that he would shoot him down, kill him on the spot. If the wolf was not within shot, we would naturally suppose he would set the dogs on him; and you are aware, I have no doubt, that these shepherd dogs have very pointed teeth . . .

Now don't say that brother Hyde has taught strong things, for I have only told you what takes place between the shepherd and the flock, when the sheep have to be protected.

If you say that the Priesthood or authorities of the Church here are the shepherd, and the Church is the flock, you can make your own application of this figure. It is not at all necessary for me to do it.

It is all the same to me whether they want to destroy the flock, or destroy, steal, and carry off the property of the flock . . . the best way to sanctify ourselves, and please God our heavenly Father in these days, is to rid ourselves of every thief . . . It would have a tendency to place a terror on those who leave these parts, that may prove their salvation when they see the heads of thieves taken off, or shot down before the public. (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 1, pp. 72-73)

As Bill Hickman became older, it became obvious that he was becoming increasingly difficult to control. His gun fights and public intoxication were becoming very embarrassing to the church. It was evident that he presented a danger to the flock itself. Richard S. Van Wagoner and Steven C. Walker give this interesting information in their book concerning an incident which occurred in 1860:

According to Brigham Young's office journal, "Mayor Smoot had a conversation with the President about Wm. A. Hickman, observing people see him come in and out the office, and that leads them to suppose he is sanctioned in all he does by the President. He also observed that dogs were necessary to take care of the flock, but if the Shepherd's dogs hurt the sheep it would be time to remove them." (*A Book of Mormons*, p. 122)

Brigham Young continued to support Bill Hickman for eight more years. He was, however, very upset, when Hickman went

to work for General Patrick Connor in 1863. Hope Hilton says:

> Brigham Young distrusted men who accepted government employment and advised Hickman twice during the summer of 1863 to leave Connor's employ and, as Hickman puts it, to "kidnap Connor, the Irish Ditcher, and send him over into California." Young, according to Hickman, offered $1,000, plus all expenses. "I stood up to Brigham for the first time ever, and said I would not do it," Hickman wrote . . . (*"Wild Bill" Hickman and the Mormon Frontier*, p. 110)

Mrs. Hilton says that Young and Hickman eventually became "irreconcilably hardened towards each other" (*Ibid*., p. 120). On page 119 of the same book, Hilton stated that Hickman wrote a letter to Young in which "he must have threatened to 'disclose all.'" Finally, "Without a bishop's court, trial, or stated complaint, he was denied his church membership on 12 June 1868."

In 1871, Bill Hickman met will U.S. Marshal H. Gilson and confessed he had committed murder for the church. He then appeared before a Grand Jury and "made a full statement of all the crimes committed in this Territory that I knew of . . ." (*Brigham's Destroying Angel*, page 192).

BRIGHAM YOUNG INDICTED FOR MURDER

The Mormon historian B. H. Roberts referred to the massacre of the Fancher train which Mormons and Indians committed at Mountain Meadows in 1857 as "the most lamentable episode in Utah history, and in the history of the church" (*Comprehensive History of the Church*, vol. 4, p. 139). Although we do not have the room to discuss that massacre here, the reader will find a good account of it in our book, *Major Problems of Mormonism*, pages 193-202. We have already spoken of the massacre of the Aiken party and the slaying of Jesse Hartley for opposing the church. These were certainly not the only cases of blood atonement in early Utah. In *Major Problems of Mormonism*, page 181, we reported concerning the murders of Ramos Anderson and Dr. Vaun for adultery. John D. Lee tells of other people who were "blood atoned." In addition, Hosea Stout related that on February 27, 1858, "several persons disguised as Indians entered Henry Jones' house and dragged him out of bed with a whore and castrated him by a square & close amputation" (*On The Mormon Frontier; The Diary of Hosea Stout*, vol. 2, p. 653). Two months later both Henry Jones and his mother were "blood atoned" in Payson—allegedly for incest. James Monroe was murdered for adultery. Three "apostates named Potter, Wilson and Walker," were arrested by the Mormons for stealing and were shot. Only Walker survived and later he seems to have disappeared. In Springville, Garder G. Potter, William R. Parrish and his son, William B. Parrish were assassinated for apostasy. All of these murders seem to have been committed by people who believed in the "doctrine" of blood atonement (*see Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* pp. 545-559).

Due to the secrecy surrounding blood atonement, the reported cases may represent only a portion of those who were actually put to death. R. N. Baskin, who served as a Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Utah, was not sure how many people were blood atoned in early Utah, but he noted:

> In the excavations made within the limits of Salt Lake City during the time I have resided there, many human skeletons have been exhumed in various parts of the city. The present City cemetery was established by the first settlers. I have never heard that it was ever the custom to bury the dead promiscuously throughout the city; and as no coffins were ever found in connection with any of these skeletons, it is evident that the death of the persons to whom they once belonged did not result from natural causes, but from the use of criminal means . . . That the Danites were bound by their covenants to execute the criminal orders of the high priesthood against apostates and alleged enemies of the church is beyond question. . . . How many murders were secretly committed by that band of assassins will never be known, but an estimate may be made from the number mentioned in the confessions of Hickman and Lee, and the number of human skeletons which have been exhumed in Salt Lake City, the possessors of which were evidently murdered and buried without a knell, coffin, or Christian ceremony. (*Reminiscences of Early Utah*, pages 154-155)

However this may be, an historian who takes an honest look at conditions in early Utah is forced to the conclusion that there is no way all these murders could have been committed and the killers allowed to remain free unless the church itself was involved in a conspiracy. The following statements are taken from "the remarks of Judge Cradlebaugh upon the occasion of his releasing the Grand Jury" from further service in 1859:

> This day makes two weeks from the time you were impanelled. . . . the court took the unusual course of calling your attention to particular crimes—the horrible massacre at the Mountain meadows. It told you of the murder of young Jones and his mother, and of pulling their house down over them and making that their tomb, it told you of the murder of the Parrishes and Potter, and Forbes, almost within sight of this court house. . . .
>
> The court has had occasion to issue bench warrants to arrest persons connected with the Parrish murder; had them brought before it and examined; the testimony presents an unparalleled condition of affairs. It seems that the whole community were engaged in committing that crime. There seems to be a combined effort on the part of the community to screen the murderers from the punishment due for the murder they have committed.
>
> I might call your attention to the fact that when officers seek to arrest persons accused of crimes they are not able to do so; the parties are screened and secreted by the community. Scarcely had the officers arrived in sight of the town of Springville before a trumpet was sounded from the walls of the town. This, no doubt, was for the purpose of giving the alarm. The officers were there to make arrests. The officers leave the town, and in a short time a trumpet sounds again from the wall for the purpose of announcing that the danger was over. Witnesses are screened; others are intimidated by persons in that community. . . .
>
> Such acts and conduct go to show that the community there do not desire to have criminals punished, it shows that the Parishes and Potter were murdered by counsel, that it was done by authority; . . . (*The Valley Tan*, March 29, 1859, p. 3)

U. S. Marshal P. K. Dotson became very frustrated when he tried to serve warrants on about 40 men involved in the Mountain Meadows massacre, the Aiken massacre and other crimes. He wrote the following in a letter to Judge Cradlebaugh:

> I have received from you certain warrants of arrest against many persons, in your Judicial district, charged with murder . . .
>
> I regret to inform you that it is not in my power to execute any of these processes, I have made repeated efforts by the aid as well of the military, as of the civil posse, to execute the warrants last alluded to, but without success. **So great is the number of persons engaged in the commission of these crimes, and such the feeling of the Mormon Church, and the community in their favor**, that I **cannot rely** on a civil

posse to aid me in arresting them. . . . ("Journal History," June 3, 1859, as cited in *Orrin Porter Rockwell; Man of God, Son of Thunder*, pp. 292-293)

It was obvious to many people in early Utah that Brigham Young was responsible for the death of many people, but with the power he had it would be almost impossible to convict him. After Bill Hickman confessed to committing murders for the church, some felt that there might be a chance of successfully prosecuting President Young for ordering the murder of Richard Yates. Hickman gave this information about the death of Yates:

> One Yates, a trader . . . came to Bridger twice, buying beef cattle for the Government. . . . We kept watch of the United States camps every day . . . One day they moved up the creek about four miles, and we saw a vacancy between them and their cattle. We made a rush and drove off seven hundred and fifty head . . .
>
> About this time it was noised about that Yates had let the soldiers have his ammunition, and that he was acting the spy for them. . . . One of the Conover boys . . . saw a lone man traveling... after learning his name, Yates, he marched him to Bridger, where he was placed in the big stone corral and a guard placed over him. . . .
>
> I will here state that the office I held was that of independent captain, amenable to none but the head commanding general or governor, Brigham Young . . . I was asked to take the prisoner, Yates, to the city with me . . . He had a fine gold watch and nine hundred dollars in gold . . . we traveled about halfway down Echo Canon to where the general's headquarters were located . . . I delivered General Wells [a member of the First Presidency under Brigham Young] some letters . . . and asked him what I should do with my prisoner. He said: "He ought to be killed; but take him on; you will probably get an order when you get to Col. Jones' camp" . . . within three or four miles of the camp, we met Joseph S. Young, a son of Brigham's . . . He hailed me (I being behind) and said his father wanted that man Yates killed, and that I would know all about it when I got to Jones' camp.
>
> We got there about sundown, and were met outside by Col. Jones . . . He took me aside and told me he had orders when Yates came along to have him used up . . . Supper was brought to us, and Yates soon went to sleep on his blankets. Flack and Meacham spread their blankets and soon went to sleep also. . . . No person was to be seen, when Col. Jones and two others, Hosea Stout and another man whose name I do not recollect, came to my camp-fire and asked if Yates was asleep. I told them he was, upon which his brains were knocked out with an ax. He was covered up with his blankets . . . and a grave dug some three feet deep near the camp by the fire-light, all hands assisting. Flack and Meacham were asleep when the man was killed, but woke up and saw the grave digging. The body was put in and the dirt well packed on it . . .
>
> The next day I took the nine hundred dollars, and we all went to headquarters. . . . Flack and I went to Brigham's office. . . . He asked what had become of Yates? I told him. He then asked if I had got word from him? I told him that I had got his instructions at Jones' camp, and also of the word I had got from his son Jo [Joseph Young]. He said that was right, and a good thing. I then told him I had nine hundred dollars given me to bring in, that Yates had at the time he was captured. I told him of the expense I had been to during the war, and asked him if I might have part of the money? He gave me a reprimand for asking such a thing, and said it must go towards defraying the expenses of the war. I pulled out the sack containing the money, and he told me to give it to his clerk . . . The money was counted, and we left. (*Brigham's Destroying Angel*, pp. 122-126)

Brigham Young's son admitted meeting with Hickman about Yates but claimed it was to save him. Stanley P. Hirshon wrote:

> In 1871, Joseph A. Young, the prophet's son, described to the *New York Tribune* how he met Hickman at the outskirts of the city and urged him to bring Yates in alive. Hickman, however, told the *New York World* a different story. Joseph said Young wanted the prisoner "taken care of,". . . Significantly, neither Joseph nor Hickman denied that Mormons had murdered Yates. (*The Lion of the Lord*, pages 176-177)

Joseph Young's statement certainly raises some interesting questions: If an order had not been given that Yates was to die, why would he be urging Hickman to bring him in alive? Moreover, if Joseph Young was really concerned about Hickman bringing in Yates alive, why didn't the Mormons punish Hickman when he came in without him? The fact that the Mormon leaders did not punish Hickman for this murder seems to show that they were responsible for the crime. That Hickman did not seem concerned about keeping Yates' death a secret is made plain by a statement written by Dan Jones:

> "This Yates was a personal friend of mine, a kind-hearted, liberal man . . . One very cold morning about sunrise, Hickman and two others came to my camp. . . . he took me outside and asked me if I knew Yates. I told him I did. 'Well, we have just buried him,' he said." (*Forty Years Among the Indians*, as cited by Juanita Brooks in *On The Mormon Frontier*, vol. 2, p. 643, n. 13)

In the same footnote, Mrs. Brooks commented: "That some Mormons did confiscate Yates' property is shown in the diary of Newton Tuttle . . . 'Sat 24 . . . Lewis Robinson got back from Green river he took 48 Horse & colts 36 pair of blankets &c that belonged to Yates . . .'"

J. H. Beadle said that Yates' "remains have been disinterred from the spot named by Hickman, and the chain of evidence is complete. Hosea Stout, a Mormon lawyer of considerable prominence, who was arrested for complicity in this murder, and on Hickman's testimony, admits that Yates was killed as a spy; but insists that he was not present and had no knowledge of the transaction; that Yates was delivered to Hickman to be taken to the city, and neither he nor any other officer saw him again" (*Brigham's Destroying Angel*, pp. 205-206). That Hosea Stout was on the scene at the time of the murder is verified by his own diary: "Sunday 18 Oct 1857. . . . Some 700 head of the captured cattle passed to day being driven by teamsters who left the enemy. At dark W. A. Hickman came in with Mr Yates a prisoner" (*On The Mormon Frontier, The Diary of Hosea Stout*, vol. 2, p. 643). There is little doubt that Stout would resort to violence against a man suspected of being a spy. We have previously quoted from Stout's own diary for Jan. 9, 1846. In that entry Hosea Stout said that he thought "William Hibbard" was "a spy" and that "I told Scott that we must 'bounce a stone off his head.'. . . I got an opportunity & hit him on the back of his head which came very near taking his life" (*Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 103).

R. N. Baskin, who was responsible for the indictment of Brigham Young, gave this information:

> I knew that the indictment of Brigham and others would cause great excitement, especially among the polygamic element of the Mormon church, and if a collision occurred it it [sic] would be at the time Brigham was arrested on the charge of murder. To meet such a contingency the United States marshal had appointed about one hundred deputies... I knew that the arrest of anyone except Brigham would not be resisted. I therefore had Hawkins arrested and tried before taking any steps in the other cases. During that trial the street in front of

the courtroom was daily crowded by hundreds of men, many of whom were armed and whose demeanor was most threatening towards the court. . . . Brigham was then arrested on the charge of lewd and lascivious cohabitation, and brought into court. He gave bonds, just as the others were required to do. . . . a few days later I had a warrant issued for his arrest on the murder charge. . . . Evidently some of the marshal's deputies betrayed him, as Brigham learned of his intended arrest. . . . Brigham finally decided that instead of resisting he would make a journey to "the south" for his health. . . . In the height of the excitement, and when the armed mob was menacing the court, a number of prominent Gentiles called upon me and stated that they had reliable information that, unless the prosecutions were stopped, the prominent Gentiles who had taken an active part in opposing the Mormon 'system' would be assassinated; that they had been appointed a committee to advise me of the fact and request me to dismiss the cases. I told the spokesman he would make a splendid angel, and as I did not intend to grant the request, he had better prepare to go to Abraham's bosom. He replied that the matter was "too serious to treat facetiously.". . . This was not the only time I had been subjected to a fire from the rear by men who should have encouraged instead of opposed me. (*Reminiscences of Early Utah*, pages 54-56)

Under the date of December 13, 1871, Wilford Woodruff recorded the following in his journal:

. . .spent the Evening at the Presidets office with the Twelve . . . & many others & Expressed our views concerning Presidt Brigham Young coming home to stand his trial . . . all thought it wisdom & good policy for him to Come to the City & stand his trial . . . Yet all agreed to leave it with him to decide as the spirit might dictate. (*Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, vol. 7, page 45)

Brigham Young finally returned, and on January 2, 1872, Woodruff noted:

. . .the United States Marshall Came to Presidents Youngs office & Served an Inditement upon him for Murders. . . . MCKean the Judge Refused Bail But put Presidet Young into the Hands of the Marshall to be Confined in one of Presidet Youngs own Homes. (*Ibid*., p. 52)

Unfortunately, the case against Brigham Young for murder never came to trial. Harold Schindler states:

. . . the United States Supreme Court handed down a decision in the Englebrecht case which set aside all legal proceedings in Utah during the previous eighteen months and declared null and void indictments found against nearly one hundred and forty persons. The landmark opinion resulted in all charges being dropped against Young, Wells, Stout, Kimball and ironically, Hickman himself. (*Orrin Porter Rockwell; Man of God, Son of Thunder*, p. 355)

Almost everyone agreed that Bill Hickman had committed many murders. After Hickman became disillusioned with Mormonism, even Apostle Woodruff spoke of his "damnable murders" (*Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, vol. 7, p. 36). That Hickman could commit the atrocious crimes he did while the Mormons were in power without being punished seems to show that he was being protected by church leaders. These leaders did everything they could to make it difficult to enforce the law. By the time Hickman confessed to his crimes, the legal system in Utah was in such disarray that neither Young nor Hickman had to stand trial.

Writing in *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Autumn 1966, pp. 86-87, Thomas G. Alexander commented:

The federal decision in *Clinton V. Englebrecht* provided the legal basis for throwing out 130 indictments found by grand juries drawn in accordance with the practice in United States courts rather than the territorial statutes. This solved nothing, however, because the disputes over the appointment of the territorial marshall tied the hands of the court; the courts became little more than boards of arbitration, and by June, 1874, a backlog of ninety-five cases had built up in Third District Court.

McKean and other Gentiles believed that the Mormons were afraid to allow trials of their brethren accused of murder and other crimes before impartial juries. The judge wrote to U. S. Attorney General George H. Williams in the fall of 1873 complaining that he could neither convict the guilty nor protect the innocent and that Utah had become a "theocratic state, under the vice regency of Brigham Young."

While all the evidence seems to show that everyone who opposed the Mormon Church in early Utah risked the possibility of losing their property or even their lives, things are different today. The police in Salt Lake City give full protection to both Mormons and Gentiles. Wallace Turner observed:

A modern apostasy can be understood through the story of the Tanner couple. The fact that today they can live comfortably in Salt Lake City, relatively unmolested by the LDS church (beyond a letter or so from anguished apostles) demonstrates as much as anything could the way the church has changed. In the old days, those who disagreed had better be able to defend themselves. (*The Mormon Establishment*, 1966, p. 163)

The reader will notice that the books *Brigham's Destroying Angel* and *"Wild Bill" Hickman and the Mormon Frontier* make a devastating case against the claim by Mormon apologists that the church had no connection with William Hickman's crimes. The evidence clearly shows that although President Brigham Young and Apostle Orson Hyde knew that Hickman was a thief and a cold-blooded murderer, he was used to further the interests of the church.

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* * IN THE MAIL * *

"I read two books in the past year pertaining to Hoffman and his forgeries. . . . the tanner name kept appearing in *Gathering of Saints* & *Mormon Murders*—to the extent that I became interested in your writings. I am halfway through your Mormonism [—Shadow or Reality?] . . . and was released sunday as 2nd Coun[selor]— in the . . . ward bishopric . . . about 4 weeks ago I gave a note to the other counselor . . . that said—this will probably be my last Sacrament Service and promptly left the podium . . . I hav[e]n't returned to church . . .

"As you can imagine—I am going through a difficult time. My wife is very upset . . .

"Thank you for your research—It has been overpowering to me—and answered many of my questions." (Letter from Texas)

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"I wish to thank you warmly for your faithful ministry and sending of printed material of foremost importance to us, keeping us abreast of so many events occurring within and without the Church . . . I have almost finished perusing your last book EVOLUTION ON TEMPLE CEREMONY; it is confirming what I have been feeling for years, so as to lead me

to discontinue attending temple Sessions—the only strong link that keeps me still tied with Mormonism is the Book of M. . . ." (Letter from Switzerland)

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"I count you as very special friends, although we've never met. Questions that were unresolved in me for years were clarified and openly discussed in your literature. My story, in brief, is that I rebelled against parental and church authority from age 12 to 17 when I was caught up and repented of smoking and drinking, returned to the fold, serve a mission, married in the temple, acquired a PhD . . . had five children . . . was Pres. in a Quorum of Seventy, read much church literature . . . was an officiator in the Oakland Temple, became inactive, rejected both God and Christ, drank again casually at age 36, discovered I was alcoholic at age 40, joined AA and found the spiritual basis for my life that had always eluded me as both child and man. I found God rather soon, but spent several years coming to Christ . . . In AA I discovered that I was bankrupt in all areas of my life: spiritual, mental, moral. When I abandoned myself to God, His Grace entered to expel my obsession and begin to restore me to health. I understood Paul for the first time. Service to others is the key to my life . . . For several years, theological correctness became secondary to recovery and service, but after my mother died . . . I put more time into the search, read much of your literature and on Oct. 31, 1989, I requested that my name be removed from LDS church rolls. This was quietly done soon thereafter. Life is now a coherent whole and my inner peace is great. . . . Thank you for your good work. I feel you have been used as an instrument that could reach me because you are committed to the truth and not merely to a 'cause.' The difference is important to me. I have had dear friends in the church advise me that I should suppress my doubts because of the good the church does and because of the good people in it. With far baser motives, some enemies of the church use untruths or distortions to attack it (and now you), in the belief that their 'cause' is just (as if God needed a human defender). . . . Your dedication to thorough, open research, no-holds-barred for the truth, makes me feel that I want to count you among my friends. I am thankful that you are making yourselves sharp tools in God's service. I am over 17 years sober . . . you may use my story if it can help a soul to Christ." (Letter from California)

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EMBARRASSING DOCTRINE

It has recently been brought to our attention that President Ezra Taft Benson, the current prophet of the Mormon Church, has strongly defended a doctrine which has been denied by some Mormons who are either not well informed on church doctrine or are so ashamed of the teaching that they refuse to admit its existence. This is the doctrine that Jesus Christ was conceived through a sexual act between Mary and God the Father. This doctrine, of course, is very shocking to orthodox Christians and even many Mormons find it embarrassing and difficult to accept. Consequently, although many Mormon leaders have boldly taught it from the pulpit for almost 140 years, some Mormons would like to cover it up.

This peculiar doctrine stems from Joseph Smith's teaching that God the Father is an exalted, resurrected man. Smith boldly asserted: "First, **God himself**, who sits enthroned in yonder heavens, **is a man like unto one of yourselves**, that is the great secret" (*Times and Seasons*, vol. 5, p. 613). The Mormon leaders believe that since God is an exalted man, he continues to have sex with his wife or wives to procreate the spirits who are to be born on the worlds which he creates. Mormon writer Carlfred B. Broderick frankly stated:

> There are two basic elements in the Gospel view of sexuality as I interpret it from the scriptures. The first is that **sex** is good—sexuality, far from being the antithesis of spirituality, is actually an **attribute of God** . . . In the light of their understanding that **God is a procreating personage of flesh and bone**, latter-day prophets have made it clear that despite what it says in Matthew 1:20, the **Holy Ghost was not the father of Jesus**. . . . The Savior was **fathered by a personage of flesh and bone**, and was **literally** what Nephi said he was, "Son of the Eternal Father." (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought,* Autumn, 1967, pp. 100-101)

Brigham Young, the second prophet of the Mormon Church, boldly asserted: "Now, remember from this time forth and for ever, Jesus Christ was not begotten by the Holy Ghost" (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 1, p. 51). This statement, of course, is directly contradicted by the Bible, Matthew 1:18 and 20: "Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost . . . for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost." It is interesting to note that even the Book of Mormon agrees with the Bible on this matter stating that Mary was to be "overshadowed and conceive by the power of the Holy Ghost . . ." (Alma 7-10)

In spite of these plain statements, Joseph Fielding Smith, the tenth prophet of the church, declared: "They tell us the Book of Mormon and the Bible teach that Christ was begotten by the Holy Ghost. I challenge that statement. The Book of Mormon teaches no such thing! Neither does the Bible" (*Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 1, p. 19).

In any case, since Christians believe that "God is a Spirit" (John 4:24), they view the conception of Christ as a miraculous event having nothing to do with sex or any physical act. Mormon leaders, on the other hand, consider Christ's conception as a natural occurrence. Joseph Fielding Smith, Jr., the son of the 10th prophet of the church, made this plain in his book, *Religious Truths Defined*, page 44: "The birth of the Savior was a **natural occurrence** unattended with any degree of mysticism, and **the Father God was the literal parent of Jesus in the flesh** as well as in the spirit." President Joseph Fielding Smith declared: "Christ was begotten of God. He was not born without the **aid of Man, and that Man was God**!" (*Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 1, p. 18).

Apostle Bruce R. McConkie further explained:

> These name titles all signify that our Lord is the only Son of the Father in the flesh. Each of the words is to be understood **literally**. Only means only, Begotten means begotten; and Son means son. Christ was begotten by an Immortal Father **in the same way that mortal men are begotten by mortal fathers**. (*Mormon Doctrine*, 1979, pp. 546-547)

> And Christ was born into the world as the literal Son of this Holy Being; he was born in the same personal, real, and **literal** sense that **any mortal son is born to a mortal father**. **There is nothing figurative** about his paternity; he was **begotten, conceived** and born in the **normal and natural course of events,** . . . Christ is the Son of Man, meaning that his Father (the Eternal God!) is a Holy Man. (*Ibid*., page 742)

President Brigham Young had this to say concerning the birth of Christ: "The man Joseph, the husband of Mary, did not, that we know of, have more than one wife, but **Mary the wife of Joseph had another husband**" (*Deseret News*, October 10, 1866) .Apostle Orson Pratt also taught that Mary was God's wife:

> The fleshly body of Jesus required a Mother as well as a Father. Therefore, the Father and Mother of Jesus, according to the flesh, must have been associated together in the capacity of Husband and Wife, hence the Virgin Mary must have been, for the time being, **the lawful wife of God the Father**: we use the term lawful Wife, because it would be blasphemous in the highest degree to say that He overshadowed her or begat the Saviour unlawfully. It would have been unlawful for any man to have interfered with Mary, who was already espoused to Joseph; for such a heinous crime would have subjected both the guilty parties to death, according to the law of Moses. But God having created all men and women, had the most perfect right to do with his own creation, according to His holy will and pleasure: He had a lawful right to overshadow the Virgin Mary in the **capacity of a husband**, and beget a Son, although she was espoused to another; for the law which He gave to govern men and women **was not intended to govern Himself**, or to prescribe rules for his own conduct. It was also lawful in Him, after having dealt with Mary, to give her to Joseph her espoused husband. Whether God the Father gave Mary to Joseph for time only, or for time and eternity, we are not informed. Inasmuch as **God was the first husband to her**, it may be that He only gave her to be the wife of Joseph while in this mortal state, and that he intended after the resurrection to again take her as one of his own wives to raise up immortal spirits in eternity. (*The Seer*, Oct. 1953, page 158)

President Brigham Young maintained that "The birth of the Saviour was as natural as are the births of our children; it was the result of **natural action**. He partook of flesh and blood—**was begotten** of his Father, **as we were of our fathers**" (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 8, p. 115). In a sermon delivered in the Tabernacle on April 9, 1852, President Young climaxed his teaching with the following explanation:

> . . . remember from this time forth, and for ever, that **Jesus Christ was not begotten by the Holy Ghost**. I will repeat a little anecdote. I was in conversation with a certain learned professor upon the subject, when I replied, to this idea—"if the Son was begotten by the Holy Ghost, it would be **very dangerous to baptize and confirm females**, and give the Holy Ghost to them, lest he should **beget children**, to be palmed upon the Elders by the people, bringing the Elders into great difficulties." (*Journal of Discourses,* vol. 1, p. 51)

As we indicated earlier, some Mormons are so embarrassed by the teachings of the church concerning the birth of Christ that they would like to see them abolished. Unfortunately for these apologists, President Ezra Taft Benson, the current prophet of the LDS Church, has come down firmly on the side of Brigham Young and the other prophets and apostles. In *The Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson*, a book published in 1988, President Benson steadfastly maintains that God was the father of Christ "in the most literal sense":

> A fundamental doctrine of true Christianity is the divine birth of the child Jesus. This doctrine is not generally comprehended by the world. The paternity of Jesus Christ is one of the "mysteries of godliness" comprehended only by the spiritually minded. . . .
> Thus the testimonies of appointed witnesses leave no question as to the paternity of Jesus Christ. God was the Father of Jesus' mortal tabernacle, and Mary, a mortal woman, was His mother. He is therefore the only person born who rightfully deserved the title "the Only Begotten Son of God.". . .
> The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints proclaims that Jesus Christ is the Son of God in the **most literal sense**. **The body** in which he performed His mission in the flesh **was sired by that same Holy Being** we worship as God, our Eternal Father. Jesus was not the son of Joseph, nor was He Begotten by the Holy Ghost. He is the Son of the Eternal Father. (*The Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson*, pages 6-7)

The LDS doctrine concerning the birth of Christ certainly raises more questions than it answers. For instance, in Mormon theology we learn that prior to coming to earth both Jesus and Mary were born to God the Father and His wife in a pre-existent state. From this it is clear that Jesus was the spirit brother of Mary. It has been suggested that since Mary was the spirit daughter of the Father, it would be an act of incest for God the Father to have had a sexual relationship with her. While Apostle Orson Pratt probably would have argued that God's laws were "not intended to govern Himself," the idea of God having relations with his spirit daughter who was at that very time betrothed to Joseph seems to be out of step with the teachings of the Bible. We feel that an examination of the Mormon teaching concerning the conception of Christ reveals that it is far closer to paganism that it is to Christianity!

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THE WORST WAR?

After we began working on this issue of the *Salt Lake City Messenger*, war broke out in Iraq. We, of course, feel very bad that a peaceful settlement could not be obtained, but we still pray that something may be worked out to minimize the loss of lives.

As we reflect upon the casualties, sorrow and the devastating consequences of war, we are reminded of a war we are all involved in which is far more important than any earthly war. This is the battle which is taking place with regard to the eternal destiny of our own souls. Jesus explained that there is nothing more important than this matter:

> *For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and* **lose his own soul***? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?* (Matthew 16:26)

Jesus saw things from a far different vantage point than we do, and because of his view of the entire human situation, he made this startling statement:

> *And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather* **fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell***.* (Matthew 10:28)

The Scriptures teach that we are in the camp of the enemy until we turn our lives over to the Lord. Jesus himself said:

> *He that is not with me* **is against me***; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.* (Matthew 12:30)

We are described as being "alienated" from God:

> *This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind,*
> *Having the understanding darkened,* **being alienated from the life of God** *through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart:* (Ephesians 4:17)

Many people do not really understand that they are "alienated from the life of God." Others sense that they are estranged from God and wonder why they are not able to find him in their lives. Isaiah 59:1-2 throws important light on why we have become alienated from God:

> *Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear:*
> *But* **your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you***, that he will not hear.*

J. B. Phillips observed that the "gulf between us and God is not merely an intellectual one . . . but the real gulf lies in the moral realm. You and I, through our own sins and failures, as well as by the infection of the sins of other people, are separated from God by a moral gulf" (*Plain Christianity*, p. 75).

Romans 3:23 makes it plain that "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God," and Romans 3:9 states that all are "under sin." It is because of our sinful and lost condition that we find that we have no fellowship with God. J. B. Phillips noted:

> The Diagnoses of the world's sickness . . . is that the power to love has been wrongly directed. It has either been turned in upon itself or given to the wrong things. The outward symptoms, and the results, of this misdirection are plainly obvious (at least in other people) in what we call "sin" or "selfishness." The drastic "conversion" which God-become-Man called for is the reversal of the wrong attitude, the deliberate giving of the whole power to love, first to God, and then to other people. Without this reversal He spoke quite bluntly of a world doomed to destruction. (*Your God Is Too Small,* page 121)

Because of our sinful condition we do not know the personal God who wishes to have fellowship with us.

Myron Augsburger claims that we have made a prison for ourselves:

> When Christ came into this world as our Savior he didn't come just to save us from the problems we have. He came to save us from the problem that we are. We are the problem. We are hostile toward God. We have walled up our lives against Him to shut Him out. By hundreds of ways we cut ourselves off from every effort of God to get through to us. . . . The wall we have built becomes our own prison. ("The Cross and Forgiveness," a recorded message by Myron Augsburger)

Besides teaching us that we are "alienated" from God, the Scriptures also reveal that the devil has blinded our minds so that we do not realize our lost condition:

> *But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost:*
> *In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.* (2 Corinthians 4:3-4)

Because there was no hope in man, God provided a remedy. In 2 Corinthians 5:18-19 we read:

> *And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;*
> *To wit, that* **God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself***, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.*

In "The Cross and Forgiveness," Myron Augsburger speaks of Jesus as a bridge between God and man:

> Jesus Christ didn't only come into the world to reveal God. He came into the world to be a **bridge between God and man**—to be a mediator—to put one hand in God's and the other hand in ours and bring us together. And so it is that one comes to the cross and finds that here God's forgiveness to overcome man's estrangement, man's rebellion, man's hostility, is expressed at a cost which was carried by Jesus Christ.

In John 8:12, Jesus declares: ". . . *I am* **the light of the world***; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life*." Unfortunately, men "loved darkness" and did not want the light which God had sent into the world. In John 3:19-20, the following appears:

> *And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and **men loved darkness rather than light**, because their deeds were evil.*
>
> *For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.*

J. B. Phillips observed:

> Let us look for a moment at Jesus Christ. He was, I believe, God in human form . . . He couldn't help arousing a genuine sense of sin. You can't have Light coming into a dark and dirty room without showing up the muddle and mess and dirt! The very presence of one Good Man was bound to show up the weakness and selfishness and sin of the others. (*Plain Christianity*, page 50)

As a burglar fears a policeman with a flashlight, so we are afraid that the righteous light of Jesus Christ will expose our sin and selfishness. Fortunately, if we will give up and surrender our lives to the Lord we will be saved: "*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*" (John 3:16)

Some people have felt that just an intellectual consent that Jesus is the Christ is sufficient for salvation. The Scriptures, however, teach that even the devils believe there is a God, but that they do not have salvation (see James 2:19). D. Shelby Corlett wrote:

> Faith is more than a mere mental assent to truth. There is no more moral saving benefit in a mere mental acceptance of the truth that Jesus is the Son of God than in the mental acceptance of some scientific truth. Faith is the going out of the whole inner life toward God. We do not believe in Him unless we act on it, unless we give the whole life to Him. To believe in God is a definite attitude of the heart, a surrender, a decision, an acceptance, something active and continuous, bringing a state of confidence and trust in Him. (*Christian Security*, page 15)

The message given in the Scriptures seems clear: a great spiritual war is going on between the forces of truth and those of evil. If we are not "with" Jesus, we are in the wrong army. We need to flee from Satan's army and yield ourselves to Jesus Christ. We are reminded of the people who lived in Germany at the time of Adolf Hitler. Like the devil, Hitler did not really love his people. He had his own selfish agenda, and in his lust for power he finally brought terrible destruction upon both himself and a large number of his followers. As Hitler gained power, many people could see that there was something wrong. Nevertheless, they allowed themselves to be blinded by the propaganda that was put forth. Many who wanted to stay neutral were swept into the destructive stream of wickedness.

All of us must carefully examine our own lives. Are we really on the Lord's side? If we are trying to remain neutral we are giving comfort and aid to the enemy. If we are not fully committed to Christ, we need to yield to him before it is everlastingly too late.

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