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PREFACE

Some of the material which follows was first printed under the title *The Negro in Mormon Theology*. In 1965 an enlarged edition was printed under the title *Joseph Smith's Curse Upon the Negro*.

Because of a continued demand for this material we are bringing out this condensed edition. Most of the important material which appeared in *Joseph Smith's Curse Upon the Negro* is included in this printing. The reader will also find some new material.

The Appendix contains a copy of a speech given by Alvin R. Dyer. At the time that he made this speech, Mr. Dyer was President of the European Mission for the L.D.S. Church. At the last L.D.S. Conference he was elevated to the position of an Apostle. This speech, which was not supposed to be given to an "investigator," was given to us by a woman whose husband had served on a mission for the church. In a letter to us, dated March 17, 1967, she stated:

... my husband received this Dyer talk on his mission—apparently it's standard "enlightened reference material."

Part of this speech is printed in *The Church and the Negro*, by John L. Lund, 1967, p. 97.

December 8, 1967

THE NEGRO IN MORMON THEOLOGY

In Mormon theology a black skin is a sign of God's displeasure. In the *Juvenile Instructor*, a Mormon publication, the following appeared:

We will first inquire into the results of the approbation or displeasure of God upon a people, starting with the belief that a black skin is a mark of the curse of heaven placed upon some portions of mankind. . . . We understand that when God made man . . . he made him white. We have no record of any of God's favored servants being of a black race. (*Juvenile Instructor*, Vol. 3, p. 157)

The Book of Mormon tells of a people being cursed with a black skin:

. . . wherefore, as they were white, and exceeding fair and delightsome, that they might not be enticing unto my people the Lord God did cause a skin of blackness to come upon them. (Book of Mormon, 2 Nephi 5:21)

Although Mormon theology teaches that anyone who is born with a dark skin is inferior, the Negro is considered the most inferior of all. Joseph Fielding Smith, the Mormon Historian and member of the Council of Twelve Apostles, has made this statement concerning the Negro:

Not only was Cain called upon to suffer, but because of his wickedness he became the father of an inferior race. (*The Way to Perfection*, p. 101)

Joseph Fielding Smith has even stated that the Negro's dark skin is emblematical of eternal darkness:

. . . we will also hope that blessings may eventually be given to our Negro brethren, for they are our brethren—children of God—notwithstanding their black covering emblematical of eternal darkness. (*The Way to Perfection*, p. 102)

The following statement concerning the "pure Negro" is found in the *Juvenile Instructor*:

Their skin is quite black, their hair woolly and black, their intelligence stunted, and they appear never to have arisen from the most savage state of barbarism. (*Juvenile Instructor*, Vol. 3, p. 157)

Because the Mormons believe that the Negro is cursed by God, they do not allow him to hold the priesthood or to go through the temple. The Mormon writer John L. Lund stated:

The Church leaders from the earliest times up to and including the present have never changed their position concerning the Negro. Simply stated, no one who is a descendant of Cain may function in any capacity requiring Priesthood. (*The Church and the Negro*, 1967, p. 111)

The Mormon position concerning the Negro was clearly stated in a letter written by the First Presidency of the Mormon Church in 1947. In this letter the following appears:

From the days of the Prophet Joseph even until now, it has been the doctrine of the Church, never questioned by any of the Church leaders, that the Negroes are not entitled to the full blessings of the Gospel. (Letter from the First Presidency of the Mormon Church, July 17, 1947, as quoted in *Mormonism and the Negro*, by John J. Stewart, pp. 46-47)

Bruce R. McConkie, of the Council of the Seventy, stated:

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

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

Wallace Turner, a correspondent for the *New York Times*, made this statement concerning this matter:

The Negro Mormon can hold no office whatsoever in a church which offers some office to every one of its male members at some time in his life. A gray-haired Negro Mormon who may have spent his adult life in the careful practice of all the complicated and demanding rules set down by the LDS church stands disenfranchised before the altar where a youth whose beard is just beginning to fuzz may preside. A twelve-year-old boy may become a member of the Aaronic priesthood, more than this Negro man has been able to achieve through a lifetime of devotion. To hold any church office, a Mormon must be a member of the priesthood. (*The Mormon Establishment*, Boston, 1966, pp. 243-244)

Pre-Existence

To understand the Mormon attitude toward the Negro, a person must first understand the Mormon doctrine of pre-existence. One of the basic doctrines of the Mormon Church is that the spirit of man existed before the world was created. Joseph Smith once stated: “. . . the soul, the mind of man, the immortal spirit. All men say God created it in the beginning. The very idea lessens man in my estimation; I do not believe the doctrine, I know better . . . I am going to tell of things more noble . . . the mind of man is as immortal as God himself . . . God never did have power to create the spirit of man at all” (*Times and Seasons*, Vol. 6, pp. 310 and 311).

From this doctrine of the pre-existence of the soul, came the idea of some spirits being more noble than others. In the Book of Abraham this statement appears:

Now the Lord had shown unto me, Abraham, the intelligences that were organized before the world was; and among all these there were many of the noble and great ones;

And God saw these souls that they were good, and he stood in the midst of them, and he said: These I will make my rulers . . . and he said unto me: Abraham, thou art one of them; thou wast chosen before thou wast born. (*Pearl of Great Price*, Book of Abraham, 3:22–23)

The Mormon leaders teach that the “more noble” or choice spirits are to be born as Mormons, and that the spirits who were not valiant in their “first estate” are born with a dark skin. Joseph Fielding Smith stated:

There is a reason why one man is born black and with other disadvantages, while another is born white with great advantages. The reason is that we once had an estate before we came here, and were obedient; more or less, to the laws that were given us there. (*Doctrines of Salvation*, Vol. 1, p. 61)

The Negro is considered to have been more unfaithful than any of the spirits who were allowed to take bodies. In a letter dated April 10, 1963, Joseph Fielding Smith stated:

According to the doctrine of the church, the Negro, because of some condition of unfaithfulness in the spirit—or pre-existence, was not valiant and hence was not denied the mortal probation, but was denied the blessings of the Priesthood.

Bruce R. McConkie, of the Council of Seventy, stated:

Those who were less valiant in pre-existence . . . are known to us as the negroes. Such spirits are sent to earth through the lineage of Cain, the mark . . . being a black skin. (*Mormon Doctrine*, pp. 476–477)

The Mormon historian B. H. Roberts made this statement:

Only those, however, who wickedly rebelled against God . . . became the devil and his angels. Others there were, who may not have rebelled against God, and yet were so indifferent in their support of the righteous cause of our Redeemer, that they forfeited certain privileges and powers granted to those who were more valiant for God and correct principles. We have, I think, a demonstration of this in the seed of Ham . . . I believe that race is the one through which it is ordained those spirits that were not valiant in the great rebellion in heaven should come; who through their indifference or lack of integrity to righteousness, rendered themselves unworthy of the Priesthood and its powers, and hence it is withheld from them to this day. (*The Contributor*, Vol. 6, pp. 296–297)

The Mormon Apostle Mark E. Petersen gives the following information concerning the doctrine of pre-existence:

Is there reason then why the type of birth we receive in this life is not a reflection of our worthiness or lack of it in the pre-existent life? . . .

. . . can we account in any other way for the birth of some of the children of God in darkest Africa, or in flood-ridden China, or among the starving hordes of India, while some of the rest of us are born here in the United States? We cannot escape the conclusion that because of performance in our pre-existence some of us are born as Chinese, some as Japanese, some as Indians, some as Negroes, some as Americans, some as Latter-day Saints. These are rewards and punishments, fully in harmony with His established policy in dealing with sinners and saints. . . .

Let us consider the great mercy of God for a moment. A Chinese, born in China with a dark skin, and with all the handicaps of that race seems to have little opportunity. But think of the mercy of God to Chinese people who are willing to accept the gospel. In spite of whatever they might have done in the pre-existence to justify being born over there as Chinamen, if they now, in this life, accept the gospel and live it the rest of their lives they can have the Priesthood, go to the temple and receive endowments and sealings, and that means they can have exaltation. Isn't the mercy of God marvelous?

Think of the Negro, cursed as to the Priesthood . . . This negro, who, in the pre-existence lived the type of life which justified the Lord in sending him to the earth in the lineage of Cain with a black skin, and possibly being born in darkest Africa—if that negro is willing when he hears the gospel to accept it, he may have many of the blessings of the gospel. in spite of all he did in the pre-existent life, the Lord is willing, if the Negro accepts the gospel with real, sincere faith, and is really converted, to give him the blessings of baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost. If that Negro is faithful all his days, he can and will enter the celestial kingdom. He will go there as a servant, but he will get celestial glory. (*Race Problems As They Affect the Church*, An Address by Elder Mark E. Petersen at the Convention of Teachers of Religion on the College Level, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, August 27, 1954)

In 1845 Orson Hyde, an Apostle in the Mormon Church, explained that the Negroes were inferior spirits who lent an influence to the devil in the pre-existent state:

At the time the devil was cast out of heaven, there were some spirits that did not know who had authority, whether God or the devil. They consequently did not take a very active part on either side, but rather thought the devil had been abused, and considered he had rather the best claim to the to the government. These spirits were not considered bad enough to be cast down to hell, and never have bodies; neither were they considered worthy of an honourable body on this earth; but it came to pass that Ham, the son of Noah, saw the nakedness of his father while he lay drunk in his tent, and he with "wicked joy," ran like Rigdon, and made the wonderful disclosure to his brethren; . . . The conduct of the former brought the curse of slavery upon him . . . Now, it would seem cruel to force pure celestial spirits into the world through the lineage of Canaan that had

been cursed. This would be ill appropriate, putting the precious and vile together. But those spirits in heaven that rather lent an influence to the devil, thinking he had a little the best right to govern, but did not take a very active part any way were required to come into the world and take bodies in the accursed lineage of Canaan; and hence the Negro or African race. (*Speech of Elder Orson Hyde*, delivered before the High Priests' Quorum, in Nauvoo. April 27th, 1845, printed in Liverpool, p. 30)

The Mormon writer John J. Stewart claimed that the Negro was lucky to even receive a body:

In our society today, from which situation is the Negro suffering most: (1) In not being permitted to hold the Priesthood in the LDS Church, or (2) In having a black skin and other Negroid features, which stigmatize him in the eyes of most Whites?

The answer is obvious.

And who controls the fact of his having these Negroid features? His Creator, of course.

When God allows a spirit to take on a Negroid body, do you suppose He is unaware of the fact that he will suffer a social stigma?

Therefore, if you say this Church is unjust in not allowing the Negro to bear the Priesthood, you must, to be consistent, likewise say that God is even more unjust in giving him a black skin.

. . . Is it not possible to see an act of mercy on the part of God in not having the Negro bear the Priesthood in this world, in view of his living under the curse of a black skin and other Negroid features? . . . With the social prejudice against him, imagine the obstacles that the Negro would encounter in attempting to honor and magnify his Priesthood.

I believe that we should recognize the mercy as well as the justice of God in all things. The very fact that God would allow those spirits who were less worthy in the spirit world to partake of a mortal body at all is further evidence of his mercy. (*Mormonism and the Negro*, part 1, pp. 48–50)

Alvin R. Dyer, who has recently been made an Apostle in the Mormon Church, made these statements in a talk given to a group of missionaries in 1961:

Why is it that you are white and not colored? Have you ever asked yourself that question? Who had anything to do with your being born into the Church and not born a Chinese or a Hindu, or a Negro? Is God such an unjust person that He would make you white and free and make a Negro cursed under the cursing of Cain that he could not hold the Priesthood of God? . . .

When you begin to get the answers to these questions, then perhaps you will understand why the Gospel of Jesus Christ is being preached in the world today . . .

I want to talk to you just briefly about this, not with any information that you would convey to your investigators, but that you, yourselves, may have a better understanding of what we are doing in the mission field today . . . There were three divisions of mankind in the pre-existence, and when you are born into this life, you are born into one of these three divisions of people. There is an imposed judgment placed upon everyone who leaves the Spirit World . . . When

they left the Spirit World, they had already been judged by what they had done in the Spirit World and in their previous life. From what judgment is determined how they shall be born in this life? When you understand that, you know that God is not unjust to cause a righteous spirit to be born as a cursed member of the black race or to be cursed as one of the other people who have been cursed. Everything is in order. The procreation of man is orderly and in accordance with the plan of life and salvation.

In keeping with this thought, when Noah went into the Ark, here again he took with him his three sons—one representing the chosen lineage, the second representing the lineage of adoption and the third representing the cursed lineage.

... I suppose, and you may have often heard missionaries say it or have asked the question: Why is a Negro a Negro? And, you have heard this answer. "Well, they must have been neutral in the pre-existence or they must have straddled the fence." That is the most common saying—they were neither hot nor cold, so the Lord made them Negroes. This, of course, is not true. The reason that spirits are born into Negro bodies is because those spirits rejected the Priesthood of God in the pre-existence. This is the reason why you have Negroes upon the earth.

You will observe that when Cain was influenced by the power of Lucifer to follow him . . . Cain rejected the counsel of God. He rejected again the Priesthood as his forebearers had done in the pre-existence. Therefore, the curse of the pre-existence was made institute through the loins of Cain. Consequently, you have the beginning of the race of men and women into which would be born those in the pre-existence who had rejected the Priesthood of God. . . . Ham reinstated the curse of the pre-existence when he rejected the Priesthood of Noah, and in consequence of that he preserved the curse on the earth. Therefore, the Negroes to be born thereafter, or those who were to become Negroes, were to be born through the loins of Ham,

All of this is according to a well worked-out plan, that these millions and billions of spirits awaiting birth in the pre-existence would be born through a channel or race of people. Consequently, the cursed were to be born through Ham. . . . The cursed people are the descendants of Ham. The chosen people are the descendants of Shem . . . Through these lineages the spirits that compare with their station are born in this life. This is why you have colored people, why you have dark people and why you have white people. . . .

I don't know whether the knowledge or the revelation of these things will have an effect upon you as a missionary, but I know that it has an effect upon me, . . . the day will come when you know who you are, because you are a person of nobility. You may not fully know that now, but you were a person of nobility in the pre-existence. If you were not, you would have been born into one of these other channels, and you would not have been born in this day and age, because the Lord has withheld the choice spirits of the pre-existence to come forth in this, the last dispensation, . . . I have always thought and have proven the point many times that if you will place into the mind of a boy or a girl, firm , that they are noble persons born of noble heritage in the pre-existence, they will never stoop to anything that is sordid. . . . I have made known to you today something you may not have known before, but you know them now because the Spirit bears record. ("For What Purpose," a talk by President Alvin R. Dyer at the Missionary Conference in Oslo, Norway, March 18, 1961, printed in full in the Appendix)

The Mormon writer John L. Lund made this statement:

It is the Mormon belief that in our pre-mortal state there were a large number of individuals who, due to some act or behavior of their own in the pre-existence, forfeited the right to hold the Priesthood during their mortal lives, . . . We are told by our prophets, both ancient and modern, that these individuals would all be assigned to the same race . . . That group is known today as the Negroid race. . . . The Negro is thus denied the Priesthood because of his own behavior in the pre-existence. (*The Church and the Negro*, 1967, pp. 42–43)

Melvin J. Ballard, who was a Mormon Apostle, made this statement:

Of the thousands of children born today, a certain proportion of them went to Hottentots of South Africa; thousands went to Chinese mothers; thousands went to Negro mothers; thousands to beautiful white Latter-day Saint mothers. Now you cannot tell me that all these spirits were just arbitrarily designated, marked, to go where they did, . . .

Why is it in this Church we do not grant the Priesthood to the Negroes? . . . I am convinced it is because of some things they did before they came into this life that they have been denied the privilege. (*Melvin J. Ballard—Crusader for Righteousness*, p. 218, as quoted in *The Church and the Negro*, p. 28)

Sons of Cain

Joseph Smith definitely taught that the Negroes were the descendants of Cain. Under the date of January 25, 1842, he stated:

In the evening debated with John C. Bennett and others to show that the Indians have greater cause to complain of the treatment of the whites, than the Negroes, or sons of Cain. (*History of the Church*, Vol. 4, p. 501)

In the Book of Moses, a revelation given to Joseph Smith in December 1830, it is stated that the “children of Canaan” were black:

For behold, the Lord shall curse the land with much heat, and the barrenness thereof shall go forth forever; and there was a blackness came upon all the children of Canaan, that they were despised among all people. (*Pearl of Great Price*, Book of Moses 7:8)

Brigham Young, the second President of the Mormon Church, declared that the flat nose and black skin were part of the mark put upon the descendants of Cain

Cain slew his brother. Cain might have been killed, and that would have put a termination to that line of human beings. This was not to be, and the Lord put a mark upon him, which is the flat nose and black skin . . . (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 7, pp. 290–291, as quoted in *Mormonism and the Negro*, part 2, p. 14)

John Taylor, the third President of the Mormon Church, stated that a descendant of Cain came through the flood so that the devil might be properly represented upon the earth:

Why is it that good men should be tried? Why is it, in fact, that we should have a devil? Why did not the Lord kill him long ago? Because he could not do without him. He needed the devil . . . When he destroyed the inhabitants of the antediluvian world, he suffered a descendant of Cain to come through the flood in order that he might be properly represented upon the earth. (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 23, p. 336)

The Mormon leaders teach that it was Ham's descendants who were "cursed as to the priesthood." They claim that Ham married a Negro woman named Egyptus, and that the curse was continued "through Ham's wife." Bruce R. McConkie stated: "Noah's son Ham married Egyptus, a descendant of Cain, thus preserving the negro lineage through the flood" (*Mormon Doctrine*, p. 477). John Taylor, third President of the Mormon Church, made this statement:

And after the flood we are told that the curse that had been pronounced upon Cain was continued through Ham's wife, as he had married a wife of that seed. And why did it pass through the flood? because it was necessary that the Devil should have a representation upon the earth as well as God; . . . (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 22, p. 304)

In the Book of Abraham (the Book of Abraham is found in the *Pearl of Great Price* and is one of the four standard works of the Mormon Church) the following appears:

Now this king of Egypt was a descendant from the loins of Ham, and was a partaker of the blood of the Canaanites by birth.

From this descent sprang all the Egyptians, and thus the blood of the Canaanites was preserved in the land.

The land of Egypt being first discovered by a woman, who was the daughter of Ham, and the daughter of Egyptus, which in the Chaldean signifies Egypt, which signifies that which is forbidden

When this woman discovered the land it was under water, who afterward settled her sons in it; and thus, from Ham, sprang that race which preserved the curse in the land.

Now the first government of Egypt was established by Pharaoh, the eldest son of Egyptus, the daughter of Ham, and it was after the manner of the government of Ham, which was patriarchal.

Pharaoh, being a righteous man, . . . seeking earnestly to imitate that order established by the fathers in the first generations, in the days of the first patriarchal reign, even in the reign of Adam, and also of Noah, his father, who blessed him with the blessings of the earth, and with the blessings of wisdom, but cursed him as pertaining to the priesthood. (*Pearl of Great Price*, Book of Abraham 1:21-26)

In the *Juvenile Instructor* this statement appeared:

When God cursed Cain for murdering his brother Abel, He set a mark upon him that all meeting him might know him. No mark could be so plain to his fellow-men as black skin. This was the mark God placed upon him, and which his children bore. After the flood this curse fell upon the seed of Ham, through the sin of their father, and his descendants bear it to this day. The Bible tells us but little of the races that sprang from Ham, but from that little, and from

the traditions of various tribes, we are led to believe that from him came the Canaanites, the Philistines, the Egyptians and most of the earliest inhabitants of Africa. (*The Juvenile Instructor*, Vol. 3, p. 157)

The Mormon writer Arthur M. Richardson made this statement concerning the Negro:

Referring to Elder Hyde's statement we find, then, that those assigned to a dishonorable body on this earth came through the accursed lineage of Canaan through Ham's wife who was a descendant of the first murderer Cain, . . . (*That Ye May Not Be Deceived*, pp. 6 and 7)

Briefly stated, then, the Mormon doctrine concerning the Negro is this: In the "pre-existence" the Negroes "lent an influence to the Devil." Because of their "unfaithfulness in the spirit world," they were "assigned to a dishonorable body on this earth." They come through "the accursed lineage of Canaan," and are "marked" with a "flat nose" and a "black covering" which is "emblematical of eternal darkness." They are a "vile" and "inferior" race. In fact, they are a "representation" of the "Devil" upon the earth. They are "not equal with other races where the receipt of certain spiritual blessings are concerned," and they are "not entitled to the full blessings of the Gospel." They are "denied the priesthood," and they cannot be married in a Mormon temple. But, "in spite" of all they "did in the pre-existence," they can be baptized and receive the Holy Ghost. If a Negro is faithful all his life he will enter the celestial kingdom. The Apostle Mark E. Petersen says the Negro will be only a "servant" there, but he will get a "celestial glory."

One Drop

The Mormon leaders have been very opposed to intermarriage with the Negro. The following appeared in the *Juvenile Instructor*:

We do not believe in the permanency of a race descended from people so wide apart as the Anglo-Saxon and Negro. In fact we believe it to be a great sin in the eyes of our Heavenly Father for a white person to marry a black one. And further, that it is a proof of the mercy of God that no such race appear able to continue for many generations. (*Juvenile Instructor*, Vol. 3, p. 165)

Brigham Young, the second President of the Mormon Church, stated that if a person who belongs to the chosen seed mixes his blood with the Negro the penalty is death on the spot:

Shall I tell you the law of God in regard to the African race? If the white man who belongs to the chosen seed mixes his blood with the seed of Cain, the penalty, under the law of God, is death on the spot. This will always be so. (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 10, p. 110)

One reason the Mormon leaders are so opposed to intermarriage is that they teach "one drop of Negro blood" would prevent a person from holding the priesthood. The Mormon Apostle Mark E. Petersen explained as follows:

Now what is our policy in regard to inter-marriage? As to the Negro, of course, there is only one possible answer. We must not inter-marry with the Negro. Why? If I were to marry a Negro woman and have children by her, my children would all be cursed as to the priesthood. Do I want my children cursed as to the priesthood? If there is one drop of negro blood in my children, as I have read to you, they receive the curse. There isn't any argument, therefore, as to inter-marriage with the Negro, is there? There are 50 million Negroes in the United States. If they were to achieve complete absorption with the white race, think what that would do. With 50 million Negroes inter-married with us, where would the priesthood be? who could hold it, in all America? Think what that would do to the work of the Church! (*Race Problems As They Affect the Church*, An Address by Elder Mark E. Petersen delivered at the Convention of Teachers of Religion on the College Level, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, August 27, 1954)

Brigham Young, the second President of the Mormon Church, stated:

Any man having one drop of the seed of Cain in him cannot receive the priesthood; . . . (Wilford Woodruff, by Mathias F. Cowley, p. 351, quoted in *That Ye May Not Be Deceived*, p. 8)

Mark E. Petersen quoted this same statement, however, he attributed it to Wilford Woodruff (actually the statement was originally made by Brigham Young but is found in the book, *Wilford Woodruff*):

President Woodruff added, "The Lord said, 'I will not kill Cain, but I will put a mark upon him, and that mark will be seen upon every face of every Negro upon the face of the earth. And it is the decree of God that that mark shall remain upon the seed of Cain, until the seed of Abel shall be redeemed, and Cain shall not receive the Priesthood until the time of that redemption. Any man having one drop of the blood of Cain in him cannot receive the Priesthood.'" (*Race Problems As They Affect the Church*, An Address by Elder Mark E. Petersen)

The Mormon Historian Joseph Fielding Smith made this statement in a letter to Morris L. Reynolds:

The descendants of Cain were barred from the blessings of the Priesthood. They may be baptized for the remission of their sins, but they cannot hold the Priesthood by divine decree, as pointed out in the Book of Abraham. It would be a serious error for a white person to marry a Negro, for the Lord forbid it. (Letter by Joseph Fielding Smith, May 9, 1966)

David L. Brewer interviewed several Mormon Church leaders. He quoted one leader as stating:

What can a Negro definitely want that I can't give him? He may want to go into the temple. He'll tell us we're discriminating, and I suppose we are, aren't we? Any red blooded American doesn't want his children to marry Negroes. (*Utah Elites and Utah Racial Norms*, by David L. Brewer, Ph.D. dissertation, University of Utah, August, 1966, p. 148)

The Mormon writer John L. Lund stated:

Brigham Young made a very strong statement on this matter when he said, "I would like the President of the United States and all the world to hear this. Shall I tell you the law of God in regard to the African race? If the white man who belongs to the chosen seed mixes his blood with the seed of Cain, the penalty under the law of God, is death on the spot. This will always be so." God has commanded Israel not to intermarry. To go against this commandment of God would be to sin. Those who willfully sin with their eyes open to this wrong will not be surprised to find that they will be separated from the presence of God in the world to come. This is spiritual death.

.....

The reason that one would lose his blessings by marrying a Negro is due to the restriction placed upon them. "No person having the least particle of Negro blood can hold the Priesthood." It does not matter if they are one-sixth Negro or one-one hundred and sixth, the curse of no Priesthood is still the same. If an individual who is entitled to the Priesthood marries a Negro, the Lord has decreed that only spirits who are not eligible for the Priesthood will come to that marriage as children. To intermarry with a Negro is to forfeit a "Nation of Priesthood holders." (*The Church and the Negro*, by John L. Lund, 1967, pp. 54-55)

Outwardly the Mormon doctrine concerning the Negro seems to be firm and absolute. "One drop of Negro blood," the Mormon leaders declare, would prevent a man from holding the priesthood. The truth is, however, that some people with Negro blood are being ordained to the priesthood in the Mormon Church, in spite of the fact that the Mormon leaders have tried to prevent it. John M. Whitaker related in his journal the struggle he had when a man he suspected of having Negro blood applied for a Temple Recommend. It is interesting to note that Joseph F. Smith, the sixth President of the Mormon Church, was unable to help him decide whether the man was part Negro:

On the 10th, had a long conversation with brother Nelson Holder Ritchie, father of 12 children and living in the Pleasant view ward. As soon as he crossed the threshold of the front door, I felt that he had Negro blood in him. He came for a recommend to go through the temple and I asked him many questions concerning his birth. He told me his father was a pure blooded Cherokee Indian and that he never knew his mother, but was told by some friends she was very dark, Creole or mulatto, and a woman by the name of Nancy McNeal raised him. He told me he explained to his present wife before he married her all he knew of his genealogy and they want to go through the temple. He has been faithful and a good provider and saw no reason why he could not; but that feeling still persisted and I had many conversations with him on the matter and finally sent for his wife and learned all the facts she knew, still I felt the same and told them how I felt. They were really disturbed over the matter and I told them I would take their genealogy and all the facts and submit the case to the First Presidency of the Church. I did and they held several meetings with the Twelve and finally President Smith sent for me and said: "Johnny (he always called me by that name for years) We have fully considered the case of Brother Ritchie, and have concluded that as you are common judge in Israel, we return the case to you to

decide.” That was a terrible responsibility, but I again had several meetings with the Richies and finally told them I still felt the same, that I appreciated they were good saints, and that feeling as I did, I dare not issue a recommend to the temple unless my feeling changed; that if they remained faithful and true, if they did not go to the Temple and died without getting in the Temple, the Lord would give them all that they were entitled to, but according to my understanding of the gospel anyone with Negro blood was not entitled to the temple rights. They said their children, at least some of them had already been to the temple for their marriage. So I told them to be faithful and no one could eventually hinder them from receiving all blessings earned by them, but not to think I had any personal feelings in the least, but must not go against my continued impressions. I made them feel that I was responsible also for anything I did to hinder good people from going to the Temple, that thus far, no one has been given a recommend to go to the Temple by me unless my blessing went also. This case was a source of considerable sorrow to me for I believe they were good saints but [I] never gave the recommend. (“John M. Whitaker Journal,” Vol. 2, p. 625, typed excerpts)

Negroes in Priesthood

In the anti-Mormon book, *Mormon Portraits*, we read that a “colored man” by the name of Elijah Abel was ordained to the Priesthood in the Mormon Church in the days of Joseph Smith. Strange as it may seem, Andrew Jenson (who was the Assistant Church Historian) admitted that Elijah Abel was a Negro and that he had been ordained to the Priesthood:

Abel, Elijah, the only colored man who is known to have been ordained to the Priesthood, . . . he was ordained an Elder March 3, 1836, and a Seventy April 4, 1841, an exception having been made in his case with regard to the general rule of the Church in relation to colored people. . . . In Nauvoo he was intimately acquainted with the Prophet Joseph Smith . . . In 1883, as a member of the Third Quorum of Seventy, he left Salt Lake City on a mission to Canada, during which he also performed missionary labors in the United States. Two weeks after his return he died, Dec. 25, 1884, of debility, consequent upon exposure while laboring in the ministry in Ohio. He died in full faith of the gospel. (*L.D.S. Biographical Encyclopedia*, Vol. 3, p. 577)

In a meeting held May 31st, 1879, Zebedee Coltrin was reported as saying: “. . . Brother Abel was ordained a Seventy because he had labored on the Temple, . . .” (“Journal History,” as quoted in *Mormonism and the Negro*, part 2, p. 10).

At the funeral of Eugene Burns, who was Elijah Abel’s grandson, a Patriarch by the name of Miner spoke of Elijah Abel’s “loyalty and service to Joseph the Prophet.” The following appeared in the *Salt Lake Tribune*:

Eugene Burns, colored, died last week at his home, 249 East Sixth South street, of a severe attack of typhoid fever of short duration and was buried last Sunday. He was employed as a scene shifter at the Salt Lake theater before his death. He was 24 years of age and was to have been married on the day on which his funeral occurred.

Funeral services over the remains of the dead man were held at the residence Sunday afternoon. At the request of the family Rev. D. A. Brown, pastor of the First Baptist church, conducted the services. Following his remarks of condolence and sympathy to the bereaved friends who had gathered, Patriarch Miner, president of one of the quorums of the seventies of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, made a few remarks. In the course of the dissertation he stated in substance that all that ever existed of the dead man lay in the casket before the altar.

Soul Was Doomed.

He further said that an Ethiopian could not reach the state of exaltation necessary to entrance into heaven. His soul was doomed before his birth. The patriarch's remarks caused awe and consternation among the hearers and precipitated an ecclesiastical scrimmage. The Rev. Mr. Brown replied to the remarks of the patriarch, referring to a quotation from the Bible to prove his contention that any man can be saved on the conditions of salvation laid down in the Scriptures. Bishop N. A. Empey, president of the State Fair association, attempted to reply to Mr. Brown, but was denied permission to talk. Accordingly the war of ideas was averted and the services continued.

Burns was a grandson of Abel, the body servant of Joseph the Prophet. Abel was a negro, and, according to the remarks of Patriarch Miner, is the only one of his race who ever succeeded in gaining entrance within the pearly gates. The reason he was so successful in accomplishing that feat, according to the patriarch, was his loyalty and service to Joseph the Prophet, and his belief that the Mormon religion is the only one that ever happened.

Abel, Son of Ham.

Abel, the son of Ham and body servant of Joseph the Prophet, died and was translated. The children whom he left in this world may never be exalted to that state, according to the patriarch. The reason assigned by the patriarch for the non-admission of Ethiopians to the other side is the fact of their dusky skins. No man with black skin may enter the gates of heaven, said the patriarch.

Truth Never Hurts.

"This is hardly the place to bring forth matters of truth," said the venerable patriarch as he ascended the pulpit after Mr. Brown had concluded his remarks, "but the truth ought always to be told. The truth never hurts."

Immediately before the altar rested the casket containing the remains of the young man. In life he was upright, his friends said, and naught had been said against him. The church edifice was packed to the doors with sorrowing friends. Both black and white, who had known him in life, attended the services to mourn his death. There were tears and sorrow from relatives and friends.

What Miner Said.

"I repeat, the truth must be told," continued the aged man in continuing the strange panegyric. He quivered and shook in the throes of intense excitement. "I am president of a quorum of seventies of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. I am here to bear testimony not to the man who is dead, but to his grandfather, Abel.

Stayed With the Prophet.

"I cannot refrain from speaking of the exceptional qualifications of Abel, the body servant or Joseph the Prophet. His loyalty to the prophet was wonderful.

He stayed constantly at his side until the prophet was translated. He believed implicitly in the Mormon faith and was rewarded for that belief. For his services to the prophet and his faith in our religion he was raised to the order of the Melchisedek priesthood. He was the only colored man who ever lived that belonged to that order.

Three Classes of Spirits.

“It is not to be wondered at, too, when you consider the teachings of our church in relation to the colored people. We believe that there are three orders of spirits. In the first class are included the spirits that have never been incarnated. Having never been given a human body they are doomed to grope in darkness throughout eternity. There is no redemption for them.

“The second class includes the spirits which have been incarnated. They have been given the privilege of coming into the world and being redeemed through the plan of salvation that is open to us. That class is the whites.

“The third and last class of spirits is the class that fell. Because of their fall they are compelled to reside in bondage. They are given carnate bodies, but can never lift the yoke of bondage. That class of spirits includes the negroes.

“Abel, the body servant of the prophet believed in Joseph Smith as a prophet and the latter-day dispensation. Hence he was exalted, and, so far as is known, he is the only one of his race who ever overcame the conditions of his bondage.

Just One Chance.

“For the colored race, however, there is an exalted state in the next world into which they may go. Provision has been made in the teachings of the Prophet Joseph so that the negro may step up into that preliminary state of exaltation, and when he gets there a chance is given him to accept redemption, according to the teachings of Joseph Smith.”

Mr. Brown Objects.

Mr. Brown immediately arose and declared that no such teachings existed in the Bible. In refutation of the assertions of the patriarch he read several selections from the Bible, citing instances where men with black skins had been saved. He attempted to calm the feelings that had been aroused by the remarks of the patriarch, He offered assurances of hope and salvation to the friends of the dead man.

Bishop N. A. Empey then attempted to gain the attention of the audience to reply to Mr. Brown. He was refused the privilege of speaking by those in charge of the services.

Burns’s family are Mormons, though the young man is said to have never affiliated himself with the church. He was a member of the Stage Men’s union and other orders of this city. Members of the union were pallbearers and the union attended the services in a body. (*Salt Lake Tribune*, November 1, 1903, page 8)

Although we were aware of the fact that Elijah Abel held the Priesthood in the Mormon Church, we were very astonished to learn that his descendants have also been ordained to the Priesthood.

The information concerning the ordination of Elijah Abel’s descendants was found by Bob Phillips—Mr. Phillips has done a tremendous job of tracing Elijah Abel’s descendants. The following is a copy of a chart, given to us by Mr. Phillips, showing that Elijah Abel and his descendants were ordained to the priesthood:

The Negro in Mormon Theology

Ordinations to Priesthood

Elijah Able	Ordained an Elder March 3, 1836. Ordained a Seventy April 4, 1841. Nauvoo, Illinois
Enoch Able (son of Elijah)	Ordained an Elder November 10, 1900. by John Q. Adams Logan 5th Ward, Utah
Elijah Able (grandson of Elijah) son of Enoch	Ordained a Priest July 5, 1834. by J.C. Hogenson Ordained an Elder September 29, 1935. by Reuben S. Hill Logan 10th Ward, Utah

After receiving this chart we began to search through the records in the Genealogical Society—which is owned by the Mormon Church—to see if we could confirm the statement that Elijah Abel’s descendants have been ordained to the Priesthood. With the help of Bob Phillips, we were able to find information that proves that the Negro blood in the Abel family has not prevented some of them from holding the Priesthood. In fact, we have obtained a photograph of Elijah Abel’s grandson’s ward membership record, which shows that he was ordained to the Priesthood. The Genealogical Library would not make a photocopy of this record. After a great deal of trouble, however, we found a way to get one. We have reproduced this photograph in this study (see next page).

Enoch Abel (Elijah’s son) evidently married a “white” woman by the name of Mary Jordi. The people in Enoch Abel’s ward must have known that he was a Negro, for when the local newspaper announced his death they called him a “colored” man:

Enoch Able, a colored resident of the Fifth ward, died at noon on Thursday, of pneumonia. Able left a wife and large family in destitute circumstances. (*The Journal*, Logan City, Utah, Saturday, February 23, 1901)

Enoch Abel had a son that he named Elijah. Sometime between 1917 and 1925 he was ordained to the Priesthood, for the Church Census Records for 1925 list him as a Deacon. The photograph on the next page shows that he was ordained a Priest in 1934 and an Elder in 1935. This definitely proves that the Negro blood in the Abel family has not prevented some of them from being ordained.

Bob Phillips states that there are at least sixty descendants of Elijah Abel (not to be confused with his grandson who was also named Elijah) in the Mormon Church. At least forty of these live within a radius of 100 miles of Salt Lake City, and, of course, some of them hold the Priesthood and are doing missionary work for the Church. Elijah Abel had six daughters. Therefore, many of his descendants do not have the name of Abel. Some of their children were apparently adopted into “white” families in Utah. It is evident, then, that some members of the Mormon Church who believe that they are “white” are in reality part Negro. Bob Phillips claims that some of Elijah Abel’s descendants think he was an “Indian.” Perhaps some of those people who are defending the Mormon doctrine concerning the Negro are themselves descendants of Elijah Abel.

No. 81	{Cancellation}	Name in Full Elijah Ables	Sex M
Father's Name Eason H. Ables	DAY MONTH YEAR	Mother's Maiden Name Mary J. [unclear]	DAY MONTH YEAR
Born at Logan, Utah	26 Dec 1892	Received from Daniel [unclear]	1 May 1925
Blessed by		Mission to	
Baptized by Fred Gilgen Jr.	30 June 1917	Married to	
Confirmed by Lorenzo Eggert	30 June 1917	Temple or Civil	
Priesthood when received	Ordained		
Ordained Priest	By J. C. Hoganson	Removed to	
Ordained elder	By Randall L. Hill	Excommunicated for	
Ordained	By	Died of	
Ordained	By	Cancelled [see instructions]	

A photograph from the Record of Members of the Logan Tenth Ward for the years 1927–1943. This photograph proves that Elijah Abel (the grandson of the Negro Elijah Abel) was ordained to the priesthood. Notice that he was ordained a priest July 5, 1934 and an elder September 29, 1935. This photograph was obtained with great difficulty from a microfilm in the Genealogical Library in Salt Lake City, Utah. The serial number for this microfilm is 6360 and the part number is 22.

There have been other Negroes, who were not related to the Abel family, who have held the Priesthood in the Mormon Church. William E. Berrett, Vice Administrator of the Brigham Young University, tells of a Negro who was ordained to the Priesthood:

It appears that one person of Negro blood had been ordained an Elder by William Smith while he was on his mission in New York State as evidenced by a letter appearing in *Journal History*, June 2, 1847:

“At this place (Batavia, New York) I found a colored brother by the name of Lewis, a barber and an Elder in the Church ordained by William Smith. This Lewis, I am also informed, has a son who is married to a white girl and both are members of the Church.” (*Mormonism and the Negro*, part 2, p. 7)

Another Negro who was apparently ordained to the Priesthood was Edward Leggroan. In the 1914 Church Census the Leggroans are listed as “Colored.” Kate B. Carter reproduces the following letter from Sarah Leggroan:

Dear Mrs. Carter:

Edward Leggroan lived in the 9th Ward. He was a deacon. In those days the deacons cleaned the church, looked after the lamps and fire. There was another family came at the same time from Mississippi, Samuel D. Chambers and Amanda, his wife, and a son Peter. Amanda is Edward Leggroan’s sister.

Sincerely,

Sarah Leggroan

(*The Negro Pioneer*, Daughters of Utah Pioneers, Lesson For May, 1965, p. 547)

L. H. Kirkpatrick stated: “The reason there might have been other colored members in full standing is that some of the first converts and branches of the Church were long on faith, but short on records” (*Pen*, Winter, 1954, p. 12).

The Mormon Historian Joseph Fielding Smith has done his best to cover up the fact that Negroes have been ordained. On June 8, 1960, a woman, who is a member of the Mormon Church, wrote a letter to Joseph Fielding Smith asking him concerning the ordination of Negroes. In this letter she stated:

Dear Brother Joseph Fielding Smith,

.....

Last night at our Mutual class we were studying the 38 Sec. of Doctrine and Covenant[s] verse 16, where in—All flesh is mine and I am no respecter of persons.

This led on to discussion and some one remarked that negroes were ordained Elders in the early church.

Will you please tell me who the man was, at what time did this happen, and who ordained him? . . . Was more than one negro ordained an Elder? . . .

The answer she received was postmarked June 10, 1960, and read:

Negroes were not ordained in the early Church

Lately the truth about Elijah Abel has become more generally known, and in a letter dated April 10, 1963, Joseph Fielding Smith stated: “. . . this statement that Elijah Abel was so ordained has traveled to the end of the earth.” In the same letter Joseph Fielding Smith admitted that Elijah Abel was ordained:

It is true that elders of the church laid hands on a Negro and blessed him “apparently” with the Priesthood, but they could not give that which the Lord had denied. It is true that Elijah Abel was so “ordained.”

In less than three years Joseph Fielding Smith had to change his story from “Negroes were not ordained in the early Church” to “It is true that elders of the church laid hands on a Negro and blessed him ‘apparently’ with the Priesthood, . . . It is true that Elijah Abel was so ‘ordained.’”

It is very interesting to note that Joseph Fielding Smith has criticized the Reorganized Church for ordaining a “few” Negroes:

In the “Reorganized” Church they have a few, at least, of the Negro race, that they have “ordained to the priesthood” but it is contrary to the word of God. (*Origin of the Reorganized Church and the Question of Succession*, p. 130)

A. William Lund, Assistant Church Historian, is still unwilling to admit the truth about Elijah Abel. In a letter to Morris L. Reynolds, dated June 21, 1966, he stated:

You ask the question, “Was Elijah Able only part negro, and could a person tell that he had negro blood?”

The only answer I can give you is, I do not know if Elijah Abel was part negro or not.

William E. Berrett, Vice Administrator of the B.Y.U., admitted that two Negroes were ordained, however, he stated that in a meeting held May 31, 1879, the “leaders of the Church reapproved” that Negroes could not hold the Priesthood. William E. Berrett states that Elijah Abel was “light of color,” and he infers that the man who ordained him may not have known that he was a Negro. He quotes Zebedee Coltrin as making this statement: “Brother Coltrin further said: Brother Abel was ordained a seventy . . . and when the Prophet Joseph learned of his lineage he was dropped from the Quorum, and another was put in his place” (*Mormonism and the Negro*, part 2, p. 10). This argument is absolutely ridiculous, for even Zebedee Coltrin admits that he knew that Elijah Abel was a Negro:

In the washing and anointing of Brother Abel at Kirtland, I annointed him and while I had my hands upon his head, I never had such unpleasant feelings in my life. And I said, “I never would again annoint another person who had Negro blood in him unless I was commanded by the Prophet to do so.” (*Mormonism and the Negro*, part 2, p. 11)

If Zebedee Coltrin knew that Elijah Abel was a Negro, is it possible to believe that Joseph Smith did not know? It should be remembered that Joseph Smith lived in Kirtland at the time Elijah Abel was there.

Arthur M. Richardson uses the same type of argument as William E. Berrett. He states that Elijah Abel was ordained “without the Prophet Joseph’s knowledge and that when he found out he had Elijah Abel dropped from the quorum. (Church Library)” (*That Ye May Not Be Deceived*, p. 8).

Notice that the only source Mr. Richardson gives for this statement is the “Church Library.” Since the Church Library has thousands of books and manuscripts,

we feel that Mr. Richardson should have been more specific in his reference. In his other references he tells the name of the book and the page number. Perhaps he was referring to the statement by Zebedee Coltrin; if so, it must be remembered that this statement was made at least thirty years after the event was supposed to have occurred. But even if it was possible for Mr. Richardson to prove that Elijah Abel was “dropped from the quorum,” how would he explain the fact that “In 1883” Elijah Abel was a “member of the Third Quorum of Seventy?”

The Mormon writer John L. Lund admits that Elijah Abel was ordained: “History records an incident of Elijah Abel, a Negro, being given the Priesthood” (*The Church and the Negro*, p. 76). Nevertheless, Mr. Lund argues that Elijah Abel was later dropped from his Priesthood Quorum:

... when the Church leaders became aware that this man had Negro blood, his Priesthood was suspended . . .

That Elijah Abel was a good man is not in question. The fact that he held the Priesthood is also a matter of record. . . . Once it was discovered that Elijah Abel was of Negroid ancestry, he was dropped from his Priesthood Quorum (1879). . . . he did have Negro blood and was therefore not eligible for the Priesthood. (*The Church and the Negro*, pp. 76–77)

Like Mr. Richardson, Mr. Lund’s only source for this statement is listed as: “Record in Church Historian’s office.” And, strange as it may seem, on the same page that Mr. Lund states that Elijah Abel was dropped from his quorum, he quotes Andrew Jensen (who was the Assistant Church Historian) as saying that Elijah Abel was still a member of the “Third Quorum of Seventy” in “1883.” On the next page, Mr. Lund makes his argument even weaker, for he admits that Elijah Abel’s descendants were apparently ordained:

It is also apparently true that several other Negroes, including some of Elijah Abel’s descendants, have been ordained to the Priesthood. It is the policy of the Church in these and other cases to suspend the Priesthood from those who are known to be of the seed of Cain. It is admitted that the Priesthood has been mistakenly given to some Negroes who are light of color. However, the Church wishes to follow the order of heaven and the commandments of God; therefore, when Negro ancestry is discovered in a man who holds the Priesthood, he is suspended in the use of that Priesthood. (*The Church and the Negro*, p. 78)

It is not possible for us to believe that the Mormon leaders ordained Elijah Abel by mistake, took his Priesthood away and then “mistakenly” ordained his descendants. Mr. Lund claims that the policy of the Church is to “suspend the Priesthood” from those who have Negro blood, yet he furnishes no evidence to show that Elijah Abel’s descendants have been suspended in the use of their Priesthood. We do not believe that the Mormon leaders will suspend the Priesthood from Elijah Abel’s descendants. We feel that they would rather keep the matter quiet. If they really believe that it is “contrary to the word of God” to ordain Negroes (as Joseph Fielding Smith claims) why don’t they search out the descendants of Elijah Abel and take away their Priesthood? Of course they will not do this because they know that there are many other people in the Church who have Negro blood in them. According to an article in *Time Magazine*, almost all white people have at least a small amount of Negro blood in them:

A glance tells that many Americans who are classified as Negro have plenty of European “blood”; white people with Negro blood are harder to distinguish, their African genes may not affect their appearance and they usually do not know that some of their ancestors “passed.” In the *Ohio Journal of Science*, Sociologist Robert P. Stuckert of Ohio State University attempts to estimate how many white Americans have some African ancestry . . . When Dr. Stuckert has constructed his table for each census year, he reaches the conclusion that of 135 million Americans classified as white in 1950, about 28 million (21%) had some African ancestry. Of the 15 million classified as Negro, slightly more than 4,000,000 (27%) were of pure African descent. During 1941–50, he estimates, about 155,000 Negroes moved into the white category . . . people with ancestors who lived in the Roman Empire, including England and part of Germany, are descended from a broad cut of the empire’s population.

The Roman Empire had no color line, and streams of people moved through it for centuries in every direction. Africans including those with Negro ancestry, fought in the legions, traveled as merchants or seamen. Everywhere they went they left their immortal genes; so few white Americans can claim to have none of them, and none can prove it. (*Time Magazine*, June 30, 1958, p. 47)

If Brigham Young’s statement that even one drop of Negro blood would exclude a person from the Priesthood were true, many of the Mormons would have to relinquish their Priesthood. It would be impossible to do as much missionary work in the South as the Mormon Church does and not convert many people who have Negro ancestry. Speaking of Brigham Young’s statement, Jim Todd made this observation:

Sweeping as this statement is, it can have no literal meaning without causing great, if not total reduction, in the numbers holding the LDS priesthood.

Of course Brigham Young made his statement a long time ago, and did not have access to later scientific concepts. Nevertheless as his words stand, they comprise an absolute bar. Unfortunately for Pres. Young, absolutes do have a way of being quite impractical. . . .

It has been claimed that probably no European is totally free of Negro genes. . . . It is one thing to say that most Europeans have relatively few Negro genes. That fact is certainly true. But they do have some, certainly more than the “one drop” mentioned by Brigham Young.

Obviously, few if any Europeans are barred from the LDS priesthood. Yet do not Brigham Young’s words require they should be so barred? Where, then, could the line be drawn?

What possible method could be used to detect a person who had a single Negro ancestor as few as four generations ago? Furthermore, what if the colored ancestor was eight or ten generations back?

As a matter of actual fact, even if possession of relatively large amounts of Negro genes did, in theory, bar such a person (who probably would not even know of his Negro ancestry), the fact could not be detected, and he would be routinely ordained to the priesthood along with all the other 12-year-old LDS

males. Therefore, unless drastically modified, there is no way Brigham Young's statement can have any real meaning.

Yet just what are the reasons that the Negro is denied the LDS priesthood? Are they only trivial and unimportant? An apparent injustice such as this which moves against the winds of change merits a reasonable and public explanation. Why is there at present no convincing, or even any official, explanation

Perhaps sooner rather than later, the LDS hierarchy will consider this an issue of the times, and either resolve it or clarify it. (*The Daily Utah Chronicle*, November 22, 1966)

Unhappy

The Mormon Historian Joseph Fielding Smith would have us believe that the Negroes who are in the Church accept their position without question:

Fortunately for the Negro, he is not denied entrance into the Church. . . . We have in the Church many good, honest, faithful Negroes who fully understand. (*Answers to Gospel Questions*, Vol. 2, p. 178)

This statement is in direct contradiction to a statement made by a Negro member of the Church by the name of Monroe Fleming. In a letter to us, Mr. Fleming stated:

Dear brother Tanner:

I wish to state that the statement that the Negro is contented as a member in the church without the priesthood, is not true. I know most of the members of the Negro race in the Church and know that they feel that they should have the priesthood if they live a life based upon the principles of the Gospel.

Sincerely,
M. H. Fleming.

Kate B. Carter made this statement concerning a Negro woman who was a member of the Mormon Church:

She had a great desire to go to the temple, and when she found that the temple was closed to Negroes, she scratched her arm until it bled and said: "See, my blood is as white as anyone's." (*The Negro Pioneer*, p. 523)

On page 535 of the same book, Mrs. Carter quotes Mary Lee Bland Ewell as saying:

Mammy Chloe loved the Gospel. I taught her to read, and she often remarked: "I'd be willen, honey, to be skinned alive if I could jus' go in dat Temple."

Edgar Whittingham, a Negro member of the Mormon Church, made these statements:

When I made it known that I had decided to take steps to become a member of the Church, my friend, the person who actually taught me the Gospel or discussed it with me . . . very hesitatingly approached me one day and said that he had something very special to tell me. Then he proceeded to explain the curse on the Negroes. Naturally I was deeply hurt and greatly upset about it. I guess

my emotions got the best of me. I didn't do anything irrational, but having been deeply wounded in the house of my friends, I left the Church and stayed away for approximately a year. . . . In time I gradually overcame the emotional hurt and after much reflective thinking, I returned to the LDS branch. . . . Up until the time I was told that because I was a Negro I could not hold the Priesthood, my knowledge of Christianity in the Methodist Church had persuaded me to believe that regardless of color we would all have the opportunity to do the same things or acquire the same glories. My reaction to being told I could not hold the priesthood was that it was a stigma of discrimination. Now this is the general belief that I think most Negroes hold today. Perhaps the only reason I am a member of the Church today is that I heard the Gospel before I had known of this particular curse. . . .

I've had contact with many Negroes since joining the Church who have not pursued their interests in the Church because they were repelled by awareness of inability to acquire full Priesthood fellowship. Even as a member of the Church, I still find the "curse" very difficult to understand. I find others also have difficulty understanding this problem. . . . I believe that through revelation a change may be made. . . . Whether or not Negroes will receive the Priesthood during my life I don't know. . . . ("Is the Negro My Brother?" Unpublished paper of Dr. Wilford S. Smith, as quoted in *The Church and the Negro*, pp. 70–72)

Objections

Many objections can be found to the Mormon doctrine concerning the Negro.

One of the most important objections to this doctrine is that it is not in harmony with the Bible. In Acts 10:34 we read: "Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him." In Acts 10:28 Peter said, ". . . God hath showed me that I should not call any man common or unclean." William E. Berrett admits that the Bible does not lend much support to the idea that the Negro should be forbidden any rights in the Church:

While the Bible contains no account of a Negro bearing the Priesthood of God, one would find rather scant material upon which to base any policy limiting the rights and participation of the Negro in God's Church. (*Mormonism and the Negro*, part 2, p. 3)

Although the Book of Mormon states that the Indians were cursed with a dark skin, it does not say anything concerning the Negro. In fact, it states that "all men are privileged the one like unto the other and none are forbidden" (Book of Mormon, 2 Nephi 26:28). In 2 Nephi 26:33 this statement appears: ". . . he inviteth them all to come unto him and partake of his goodness; and he denieth none that come unto him, black and white, bond and free, male and female; and he remembereth the heathen; and all are alike unto God, both Jew and Gentile."

David O. McKay, who is President of the Mormon Church, made the following statement:

I know of no scriptural basis for denying the Priesthood to Negroes other than one verse in the Book of Abraham (1:26); however, I believe, as you suggest, that the real reason dates back to our pre-existent life. (*Mormonism and the Negro*, part 2, p. 19)

The Mormon Historian Joseph Fielding Smith admits that he has not found any scriptural basis for not allowing the Negro to hold the Priesthood other than the statement in the Book of Abraham, which is part of the *Pearl of Great Price*. He states as follows:

It is true that the negro race is barred from holding the Priesthood, and this has always been the case. The Prophet Joseph Smith taught this doctrine, and it was made known to him, although we know of no such statement in any revelation in the Doctrine and Covenants, Book of Mormon, or the Bible. (*The Improvement Era*, Vol. 27, p. 565)

For Cain's Sin?

The second Article of Faith of the Mormon Church reads as follows: "We believe that men will be punished for their own sins, and not for Adam's transgression" (*Pearl of Great Price*, p. 60).

To avoid the idea that Cain's descendants were punished for his "transgression," the Mormon leaders have taught that the Negroes were "indifferent in their support of the righteous cause" in the pre-existence. Gaylon L. Caldwell made the following statement:

This doctrine is not without logical difficulties, however. Considering the Latter-day Saint dictum that "man is punished for his own sins" the curse on Cain is understandable and consistent with Mormon philosophy, since the Mormon scripture insists that he sinned knowingly and willfully. But how is one to account for the penalty on all his alleged descendants? An arbitrary God who would permit millions of people to be deprived of the priesthood, and hence its concomitant blessings, by accident of birth simply does not fit into the Mormon theology. As would be expected, this problem has led to the formulation of several theses. One of the most popular was framed by B. H. Roberts from a suggestion by Orson Hyde, early Apostle. Roberts suggested that since all spirits before living in the flesh had an opportunity to prove their fidelity to God and His laws during the "war in heaven" some of them might have been neutral, or proved less valiant than others, and thus lost the right of priesthood during their earthly sojourn. (*Western Humanities Review*, Winter 1959, p. 105)

The Mormon writer John J. Stewart stated:

Note, also, that part of Cain's curse was to have as his posterity those spirits unable to bear the Priesthood in this life. . . .

"To suppose that the Negroes, the descendants of Cain, are born with black skins and are denied the Priesthood merely to perpetuate God's curse upon Cain, is alike an affront to reasoning man and to the justice and mercy of God. (*Mormonism and the Negro*, part 1, pp. 44 and 45)

Strange as it may seem, however, the idea that the Negroes did something wrong in the pre-existence (which the Mormon Church leaders now teach) is contradicted by a statement which Brigham Young attributes to Joseph Smith:

President Brigham Young, answering a question put to him by Elder Lorenzo D. Young . . . said that Joseph Smith had declared that the negroes were not neutral in heaven, for all the spirits took sides, but the posterity of Cain are black because he (Cain) committed murder. He killed Abel and God set a mark upon his posterity. But the spirits are pure (i.e. innocent. See D.C. 93:38) that enter their tabernacles and there will be a chance for the redemption of all the children of Adam, except the sons of perdition. (*The Way to Perfection*, by Joseph Fielding Smith, pp. 105–106)

To show how confused the Mormon writers are concerning the pre-existence, we need only compare two statements they have made concerning Cain. John J. Stewart implies that Cain was “valiant” in the pre-existence and did not fall to the temptations of Satan until he came to this earth:

Cain, a son of Adam and Eve, apparently had quite a different record in the Spirit world. He was likely one of the valiant ones there, and thus was born into this world under the most favorable circumstances, of a noble sire and mother, and was even privileged to walk and talk with God. (*Mormonism and the Negro*, part 1, p. 39)

Bruce R. McConkie, on the other hand, states:

Though he was a rebel and an associate of lucifer in pre-existence, and though he was a liar from the beginning whose name was Perdition, Cain managed to attain the privilege of mortal birth. (*Mormon Doctrine*, 1958, p. 102)

Negroes and the Gospel

The Bible teaches that the Gospel is to be carried to all people. Jesus is recorded as saying: “. . . go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15). Jesus also said: “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost . . .” (Matthew 28:19).

Philip was actually commanded to preach the gospel to an Ethiopian; see Acts 8:26-39. An Ethiopian is defined in the dictionary as a Negro. Jeremiah asks, “Can the Ethiopian change his skin” (Jeremiah 13:23). In Acts 8:38 it tells us that Philip baptized the Ethiopian.

Although the Bible teaches that the Gospel is to be carried to all people, including the Negro, the Mormon Church has tried to avoid doing missionary work among the Negro people. Bruce R. McConkie, of the Counsel of the Seventy, stated:

The gospel message of salvation is not carried affirmatively to them . . . (*Mormon Doctrine*, p. 477)

William E. Berrett, Vice Administrator of the Brigham Young University, stated:

. . . no direct efforts have been made to proselyte among them. (*Mormonism and the Negro*, part 2, p. 5)

The Mormon writer Arthur M. Richardson very bluntly stated:

. . . The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, has no call to carry the gospel to the negro, and it does not do so. (*That Ye May Not Be Deceived*, p. 13)

The Mormon publication, *The Pearl of Great Price*, is used by Mormon writers to justify not taking the Gospel to the Negro. In the Book of Moses, which is part of the *Pearl of Great Price*, we read:

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

And it came to pass that Enoch continued to call upon all the people, save it were the people of Canaan, to repent. (*Pearl of Great Price*, Book of Moses 7:8 and 12)

The Mormon Historian Joseph Fielding Smith stated:

The Canaanites before the flood preserved the curse in the land; the Gospel was not taken to them, and no other people would associate with them. (*The Way to Perfection*, p. 108)

The Mormon Apostle Mark E. Petersen made this statement:

When he told Enoch not to preach the gospel to the descendants of Cain who were black, the Lord engaged in segregation. (*Race Problems As They Affect the Church*, Address by Mark E. Petersen, August 27, 1954)

The Mormon writer Authur M. Richardson made this statement:

Also, the gospel was not carried to this segregated black group.

“And it came to pass that Enoch continued to call upon all the people, save it were the people of Canaan, to repent.”

These quotations so far point out that the Negroes tread the earth with black dishonorable bodies as a judgment of God because at the time of decision in the pre-existence they were faint-hearted and exhibited an infirmity of purpose—they were not valiant in the cause of the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, they were entitled to no better earthly lineage than that of the first earthly murderer, Cain. They were to be the “servant of servants.” They were to be segregated. No effort was made to carry the gospel to them as a people. (*That Ye May Not Be Deceived*, pp. 9–10)

In 1947 the Mormon Church was considering doing missionary work in Cuba. On June 20, 1947, a Mission President wrote Lowry Nelson, a “nationally prominent sociologist” (who was also a member of the Mormon Church) desiring to know whether missionary work could be done in Cuba without bringing people with Negro blood into the church. In this letter he stated:

A short time ago at the request of the first presidency I visited Cuba in view of doing missionary work on that island. While there I met Mr. Chester W. Young . . . He was very helpful to us and in the course of our conversation I learned that he was very well acquainted with and wished to be remembered to you. . . .

He advised me that you spent some two years in Cuba making a study of rural communities. Your study there would be very helpful to us. I would appreciate your opinion as to the advisability of doing missionary work particularly in the rural sections of Cuba, knowing, of course, your concept of the Negro and his position as to the Priesthood.

Are there groups of pure white blood in the rural sections, particularly in the small communities? If so, are they maintaining segregation from the negroes? The best information we received was that in the rural communities there was no segregation of the races and it would be difficult to find, with any degree of certainty, groups of pure white people. (Letter dated June 20, 1947, typed copy)

On June 26, 1947, Lowry Nelson replied. In this reply he stated:

The attitude of the Church in regard to the Negro makes me very sad. . . . I do not believe that God is a racist. But if the Church has taken an irrevocable stand, I would dislike to see it enter Cuba or any other island where different races live and establish missionary work. The white and colored people get along much better in the Caribbean and most of Latin-America than they do in the United States. . . . For us to go into a situation like that and preach a doctrine of "white supremacy" would, it seems to me, be a tragic disservice. . . . I am sad to have to write you and say, for what my opinion is worth, that it would be better for the Cubans if we did not enter their island—unless we are willing to revise our racial theory. To teach them the pernicious doctrine of segregation and inequalities among races where it does not exist, or to lend religious sanction to it where it has raised its ugly head would, it seems to me, be tragic. It seems to me we just fought a war over such ideas. (Letter dated June 26, 1947, typed copy)

On October 8, 1847, Lowry Nelson wrote to the First Presidency protesting the church's doctrine concerning the Negro. On November 12, 1847, the First Presidency—i.e. George A. Smith, J. Rueben Clark and David O. McKay—wrote him a letter in which they stated:

We feel very sure that you understand the doctrines of the Church. They are either true or not true. Our testimony is that they are true. Under these circumstances we, may not, permit ourselves to be too much impressed by the reasonings of men, however well-founded they may seem to be. We should like to say this to you in all kindness, and in all sincerity, that you are too fine a man to permit yourself to be led off from the principles of the Gospel by worldly learning. You have too much of a potentiality for doing good and we therefore prayerfully hope that you can re-orient your thinking and bring it in line with the revealed word of God.

Twenty years later Lowry Nelson wrote a letter which shows that he was not satisfied with the answer given by the First President. In this letter he stated:

. . . it is twenty years ago this summer that I was first shocked into a realization of the implications of the present policy and began a "dialogue" with the First Presidency. I had spent twelve months beginning in September, 1945, making a study of rural life in Cuba for the Department of State. The following year, 1947, a friend of college days was sent by the Church Authorities to investigate

the possibility of establishing mission work there. Upon learning of my having been in Cuba, he wrote me to inquire if I had found many white people there. In retrospect, I realize that I was very naïve. But the truth is, that it was my first real confrontation with this question. Inevitably, in growing up in a Mormon Utah village, I had become familiar with such phrases as “white and delightful,” “cursed with a dark skin,” the “third who sat on the fence,” but they were just “phrases” that went in one ear and out the other. The Negro never came to our village. In my correspondence with the First Presidency, I was truly troubled to find myself in opposition to a fixed dogm

. . . mission work among the blacks has been studiously avoided. Witness my Cuban inquiry.

7. Since we claim to be a universal church whose message is to go to “every kindred, tongue, and people,” how can we justify the exclusion of over 100 million human beings? (Letter by Lowry Nelson, published in *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Vol. 2, No. 3, Autumn, 1967, pp. 8–9)

Nigerian Mission

On January 11, 1963, the President of the Mormon Church surprised the world by announcing that the church was going to send a mission to Nigeria. Wallace Turner made this statement in the *New York Times*:

The Mormons are vigorous proselyters, maintaining missions all over the world, except in the Negro nations in Africa. They have a mission among the whites in the Union of South Africa.

Earlier this year a plan was announced to send a mission to Nigeria, but the mission has not left Salt Lake City. (*New York Times*, Western Edition, June 7, 1963)

A few months after the Church announced the mission it became apparent that something was wrong. On August 7, 1963, we called the Mormon Church offices and asked if there was still going to be a mission to Nigeria. The woman in the Missionary department stated that conditions were “unsettled.” Then she stated: “We have been asked not to give out any information about it.”

It has now been more than four years since the Church announced this mission, but the mission has still “not left Salt Lake City.” It appears that before the Mormon Church was able to establish their mission, Ambrose Chukwu—a Nigerian student who was attending college in California—wrote an article which was published in the *Nigerian Outlook*. In this article he warned the Nigerians of the Mormon doctrine concerning the Negro. In another article in the same paper, the Editor of the *Nigerian Outlook* promised to help keep the Mormon Church out of Nigeria:

Elsewhere on this page we publish an article by a Nigerian in the United States on a new but dangerous religious organization known as Latter Day Saints. The formation of a religious body in far away America should not have been the concern of any Nigerian but for the fact that this sect, otherwise known as Mormons, believe as a cardinal of their faith that the Negro race is not equal to any other race in the eyes of God, as a result of which Negroes who are foolish enough to choose Mormonism as their religion can never be ordained priests.

Our correspondent has gone into great pains to expose this organisation because he fears it may come to Nigeria thoroughly disguised. . . . These so-called Latter Day Saints must be recognised for what they are—godless Herrenvolkism—and must not be allowed into this country.

. . . Since the United States Government preaches the equality of all races, Mr. Kennedy must ban this anti-Negro organization that preaches heretic doctrines.

We must congratulate our correspondent for having the courage of warning us in good time and we would like to assure him that he has our full support in his campaign against this evil body. (*Nigerian Outlook*, March 5, 1963, published in Enugu, Nigeria)

Ambrose Chukwu was successful in his attempt to keep the Mormon missionaries out of Nigeria. The Nigerian government has refused to give resident visas to the Mormon missionaries. Dr. Glen W. Davidson made this statement concerning the failure of the Nigerian mission: “Most of the Mormon hierarchy did not regret their inability to send missionaries into ‘black Africa’ nearly as much as they regretted the unfavorable publicity” (*The Christian Century*, September 29, 1965, p. 1184).

Prejudice?

At the time the Mormon leaders were formulating their doctrine concerning the Negro, slavery was an accepted practice in the southern part of the United States and other parts of the world. In many places Negroes were treated as animals. Some people thought they were “without souls and made only to serve the white man.”

The Mormon leaders, of course, would not want us to believe that their leaders were influenced by the prejudice of their time. John J. Stewart stated

The Prophet’s whole life shows beyond doubt that he was not afraid of persecution nor public censure nor ridicule. He openly taught his convictions of truth, no matter how much trouble and hardship it brought upon him. He even gave his life rather than yield to such pressure or to compromise on truth.

To suppose that he would curry the favor of the world by manifesting a prejudice against the Negro is an affront to this courageous man, and to the known facts of history. (*Mormonism and the Negro*, part I, p. 15)

In the *Utah Chronicle* (the newspaper published by the Associated Students of the University of Utah) for April 7, 1965, the following statement appeared in a letter to the editor:

. . . Joseph Smith and other church leaders brought upon themselves the wrath of the non-Mormons in the communities where they lived by denouncing slavery and the suppression of human rights and dignity. This has been a consistent and unwavering stand by church leaders throughout the history of the church.

Actually, the truth of the matter is that the leaders of the Mormon Church did show prejudice against the Negro, and some of them declared that slavery was a divine institution.

It would appear that at first the Mormon Church had no doctrine concerning the Negro. By the year 1833, however, some members of the Mormon Church began to compromise with regard to the Negroes to appease their slave holding neighbors. In the Mormon Church paper, *The Evening and Morning Star*, July 16, 1833, the following appeared:

Having learned with extreme regret, that an article entitled, "Free People of Color," in the last number of the *Star*, has been misunderstood, we feel in duty bound to state, in this *Extra*, that our intention was not only to stop free people of color from emigrating to this state, but to prevent them from being admitted as members of the Church. (Reprinted in the *History of the Church*, Vol. 1, pp. 378-379)

John J. Stewart claimed that Joseph Smith invited an abolitionist to speak in Kirtland:

In the early 1830's he wrote and published in the *Messenger and Advocate*, the Church newspaper at Kirtland, Ohio, an editorial suggesting that leading men in the southern states should take measures to liberate the slaves, so that the Negro could enjoy the blessings of a free nation. He also invited an abolitionist to give a public speech in Kirtland, at a time when abolitionists were generally hated in the North as well as in the South. (*Mormonism and the Negro*, part 1, p. 16)

Mr. Stewart does not tell which issue of the *Messenger and Advocate* contains this information, however, there is an article written by Joseph Smith for the *Messenger and Advocate* (later reprinted in the *History of the Church*) which shows that he favored the practice of slavery and was very opposed to abolitionists. Joseph Smith stated:

DEAR SIR:—This place (Kirtland) having recently been visited by a gentleman who advocated the principles or doctrines of those who are called Abolitionists, and his presence having created an interest in that subject, if you deem the following reflections of any service, or think they will have a tendency to correct the opinions of the Southern public . . . you are at liberty to give them publicity. . . . I fear that the sound might go out, that "an Abolitionist" had held forth several times to this community . . . all, except a very few, attended to their own vocations, and left the gentleman to hold forth his own arguments to nearly naked walls. I am aware that many, who profess to preach the Gospel, complain against their brethren of the same faith, who reside in the South, and are ready to withdraw the hand of fellowship, because they will not renounce the principle of slavery, and raise their voice against every thing of the kind. This must be a tender point, and one which should call forth the candid reflections of all men, and more especially before they advance in an opposition calculated to lay waste the fair states of the South, and let loose upon the world a community of people, who might, peradventure, overrun our country, and violate the most sacred principles of human society, chastity and virtue.

. . . I do not believe that the people of the North have any more right to say that the South shall not hold slaves, than the South have to say the North shall.

How any community can ever be excited with the chatter of such persons, boys and others, who are too indolent to obtain their living by honest industry,

and are incapable of pursuing any occupation of a professional nature, is unaccountable to me; and when I see persons in the free states, signing documents against slavery, it is no less, in my mind, than an army of influence, and a declaration of hostilities, against the people of the South. What course can sooner divide our union?

After having expressed myself so freely upon this subject, I do not doubt, but those who have been forward in raising their voices against the South, will cry out against me as being uncharitable, unfeeling, unkind, and wholly unacquainted with the Gospel of Christ. . . . the first mention we have of slavery is found in the Holy Bible. . . . And so far from that prediction being averse to the mind of God, it remains as a lasting monument of the decree of Jehovah, to the shame and confusion of all who have cried out against the South, in consequence of their holding the sons of Ham in servitude.

. . . but I can say, the curse is not yet taken off from the sons of Canaan, neither will be until it is affected by as great a power as caused it to come; and the people who interfere the least with the purposes of God in this matter, will come under the least condemnation before Him; and those who are determined to pursue a course, which shows an opposition, and a feverish restlessness against the decrees of the Lord, will learn, when perhaps it is too late for their own good, that God can do his own work, without the aid of those who are not dictated by His counsel. (*History of the Church*, by Joseph Smith, Vol. 2, pp. 436–438)

In the same issue of the *Messenger and Advocate* (April, 1836) in which Joseph Smith defended slavery, this statement by W. Parrish appeared:

Not long since a gentleman of the Presbyterian faith came to this town (Kirtland) and proposed to lecture upon the abolition question. Knowing that there was a large branch of the church of Latter Day Saints in this place, who, as a people, are liberal in our sentiments; he no doubt anticipated great success in establishing his doctrine among us. But in this he was mistaken. The doctrine of Christ and the systems of men are at issue and consequently will not harmonize together. . . . we stand aloof from abolition society[e]s. . . .

And although political demagogues, and religious fanatics, in their blind zeal, may bustle and rage . . . yet God's curse pronounced by his servant Noah will remain upon them; and Canaan must dwell in the tents of Shem and be his servant until He, who pronounced it shall order it otherwise. And all the abolition societies that now are or ever will be, cannot cause one jot or tittle of the prophecy to fail. . . . We would ther[e]fore be distinctly understood, that we do not countenance the abolition system, nor fellowship those who advocate its principles; . . . (*Messenger and Advocate*, Vol. 2, pp. 295–296)

In the same issue another article appeared which denounced the abolitionists. In this article we find the following

What benefit can the slave derive from the long harrangues and discussions held in the north? Certainly the people of the north have no legal right to interfere with the property of the south, neither have they a right to say they shall, or shall not, hold slaves. . . .

Where can be the common sense of any wishing to see the slaves of the south set at liberty. . . . Such a thing could not take place without corrupting all civil and wholesome society, of both the north and the south! Let the blacks of the south be free, and our community is overrun with paupers, and a reckless mass of human beings, uncultivated, untaught and unaccustomed to provide for themselves the necessaries of life—endangering the chastity of every female who might by chance be found in our streets—our prisons filled with convicts, and the hangman wearied with executing the functions of his office! This must unavoidably be the case, every rational man must admit, who has ever travelled in the slave states, or we must open our houses, unfold our arms, and bid these degraded and degrading sons of Canaan, a hear[t]y welcome and a free admittance to all we possess! A society of this nature, to us, is so intolerably degrading, that the bare reflection causes our feelings to recoil, and our hearts to revolt. . . . the project of emancipation is destructive to our government, and the notion of amalgamation is devilish!—And insensible to feeling must be the heart, and low indeed must be the mind, that would consent for a moment, to see his fair daughter, his sister, or perhaps, his bosom companion, in the embrace of a NEGRO!

. . . There is a strange mysteriousness over the face of the scripture with regard to servitude. The fourth son of Ham was cursed by Noah, . . . When it will be removed we know not, and where he now remains in bondage, remain he must till the hand of God interposes. As to this nation his fate is inevitably sealed, so long as this form of government exists. (*Messenger and Advocate*, Vol. 2, pp. 299–301)

In 1838 Joseph Smith answered the questions “which were frequently” asked him. Question number thirteen was concerning slavery:

Thirteenth—“Are the Mormons abolitionists?”

No, unless delivering the people from priesthood, and the priests from the power of Satan, should be considered abolition. But we do not believe in setting the negroes free. (*History of the Church*, Vol. 3, p. 29)

Toward the end of his life Joseph Smith seemed to change his mind somewhat concerning the Negro and even spoke against slavery. Under the date of January 2, 1843, Joseph Smith recorded this statement in his history:

Had I anything to do with the negro, I would confine them by strict law to their own species, and put them on a national equalization. (*History of the Church*, Vol. 5, p. 218)

After Joseph Smith’s death, however, the Mormon leaders continued to speak against the Negro. The following appeared in the April 1, 1845, issue of the *Times and Seasons* (the *Times and Seasons* was a Mormon publication and was edited by John Taylor, who later became President of the Church):

The descendants of Ham, besides a black skin which has ever been a curse that has followed an apostate of the holy priesthood, as well as a black heart, have

been servants to both Shem and Japheth, and the abolitionists are trying to make void the curse of God, but it will require more power than man possesses to counteract the decrees of eternal wisdom. (*Times and Seasons*, Vol. 6, p. 857)

Because the Mormon Church believed the Negroes were an “inferior race” it was easy for them to accept the practice of slavery. Slavery was an accepted practice in the territory of Utah. The following appeared in the *Millennial Star* in 1851:

We feel it to be our duty to define our position in relation to the subject of Slavery. There are several men in the Valley of the Salt Lake from the Southern States, who have their slaves with them. (*Millennial Star*, 1851, p. 63)

In his Master’s thesis, James Boyd Christensen wrote the following:

In 1850 Utah was the only western territory which had Negro slaves. It was one of the few places in the United States where Negro and Indian Slavery occurred in the same locale in the same period. It is interesting to draw a parallel between the attitudes of the Mormon colonizers toward the Negro slavery and the Indian slave trade. In short, they countenanced slavery of Negroes among them while they abhorred the slave traffic among the Indians and legislated against it. (“A Social Survey of the Negro Population of Salt Lake City, Utah,” Unpublished Master’s thesis, University of Utah, pp. 11–12)

On page 98 of the same thesis Mr. Christensen states:

The slaves were held primarily by converts to the Mormon Church from the South. According to the compromise of 1850, Utah was left open to slavery, and by the compromise of 1859 it was to be a slave state when admitted to the Union.

James Boyd Christensen also made this statement:

It is logical to assume that the slaves desired their freedom in Utah as much as they did in California, but after 1850, Utah was open to slavery, and they could legally be held as slaves, while California was free territory.

During the period from 1850 until the Emancipation Proclamation of President Lincoln, Negro slave trading was carried on to a small extent in the territory. (“A Social Survey of the Negro Population of Salt Lake City, Utah,” thesis, University of Utah, pp. 8–9)

The *Salt Lake Tribune* gives definite proof that slave trading was carried on in the Utah territory:

Patrick J. Sullivan, employee of a Salt Lake Abstract firm, while searching the records for real estate information, came across the copy of a bill of sale for a negro boy named “Dan” in a book containing transactions for the year 1859.

The slave was sold by Thomas S. Williams of “Great Salt Lake City” to William H. Hooper, same address, for \$800. . . . (*Salt Lake Tribune*, May 31, 1939)

Brigham Young, the second President of the Mormon Church, taught that slavery was a “divine institution” and that the Civil War could not free the slaves. He stated:

Ham will continue to be servant of servants, as the Lord decreed, until the curse is removed, will the present struggle free the slave? no; but they are now wasting away the black race by thousands . . .

Treat the slaves kindly and let them live, for Ham must be the servant of servants until the curse is removed. Can you destroy the decrees of the Almighty? You cannot. Yet our Christian brethren think that they are going to overthrow the sentence of the Almighty upon the seed of Ham. They cannot do that, though they may kill them by thousands and tens of thousands. (*Millennial Star*, Vol. 25, p. 787; also published in *Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 10, p. 250)

On October 9, 1859, Brigham Young made this remark:

. . . the Lord put a mark upon him, which is the flat nose and black skin. Trace mankind down to after the flood, and then another curse is pronounced upon the same race—that they should be the “servant of servants;” and they will be, until that curse is removed; and the abolitionists cannot help it, nor in the least alter that decree. (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 7, p. 290)

In a sermon delivered August 31, 1856, Brigham Young stated:

If Utah was admitted into the Union as a sovereign State, and we chose to introduce slavery here, it is not their business to meddle with it; and even if we treated our slaves in an oppressive manner, it is none of their business and they ought not to meddle with it. (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 4, p. 40)

A. L. Neff in his book, *History of Utah*, gives us some very interesting information concerning Brigham Young’s viewpoints on slavery:

The Mormon viewpoint with reference to the peculiar institution of the South was admirably set forth in the famous interview between abolitionist Horace Greeley, editor of the *New York Tribune*, and President Brigham Young, at Salt Lake City, July 13, 1859:

H.G.—What is the position of your church with respect to slavery?

B.Y.—We consider it of divine institution, and not to be abolished until the curse pronounced on Ham shall have been removed from his descendants.

H.G.—Are any slaves now held in this territory?

B.Y.—There are.

H.G.—Do your territorial laws uphold slavery?

B.Y.— Those laws are printed—you can read for yourself. If slaves are brought here by those who owned them in the states, we do not favor their escape from the service of those owners. (*History of Utah*, by A. L. Neff, p. 618)

Horace Greeley was disturbed because the Mormon people did not seem to be opposed to slavery. The Mormon Historian B. H. Roberts made this statement concerning Mr. Greeley’s visit to Salt Lake City:

Mr. Greeley was disappointed in the lack of abolition sentiment in Salt Lake City, which he resented by saying at a banquet given in his honor: "I have not heard tonight, and I think I never heard, from the lips of the journals of your people, one word in reprehension of that national crime and scandal, American chattel slavery. * * * This obstinate silence, this seeming indifference on your part, reflects no credit on your faith and morals, and I trust they will not be persisted in. (*Comprehensive History of the Church*, by B. H. Roberts, Vol. 4, p. 533)

John Taylor, who became the third President of the Mormon Church, made this statement concerning Horace Greeley:

I was thrown in his society in travelling from Boston, and occasionally met him afterwards; but I would not talk to him: I felt myself superior to such a mean contemptible cur. I knew he was not after truth, but falsehood.

This Greeley is one of their popular characters in the East, and one that supports the stealing of niggers and the underground railroad. . . . I speak of him, because he is one of the prominent newspaper editors in the Eastern country, and he is a poor, miserable curse. (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 5, p. 119)

Catharine V. Waite, a non-Mormon writer, claims that in a speech delivered March 3, 1863, Brigham Young stated:

You have just heard read the Message of Governor Harding. . . . While being fair of speech, and specious of promise, and lavish in his expressions of good-will toward us, he has been insidiously at work to prejudice the General Government against us, and in the secrecy of his private room has concocted measures which he urged upon Congress to pass, which, if successful, would deprive us of the dearest rights of freemen, and render us the abject subjects of this man, who has been sent here to govern the Territory. Man, did I say?—thing, I mean,—a nigger worshipper,—a black-hearted abolitionist is what he is, and what he represents; and that I do naturally despise. (*The Mormon Prophet*, by Mrs. C. V. Waite, pp. 90–91)

Although the *Deseret News* gave a summary of this speech, they did not report it in full. There are, however, sermons by Brigham Young which are printed in the *Journal of Discourses* which sound very similar to this one. In a sermon delivered August 31, 1856, Brigham Young stated:

Brother Robbins also spoke of what they term the "nigger drivers and nigger worshippers," and observed how keen their feelings are upon their favourite topic slavery. (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 4, p. 39)

In another sermon Brigham Young stated:

The rank, rabid abolitionists, whom I call black-hearted Republicans, have set the whole national fabric on fire. *Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 10, p. 110)

The Territory of Utah gave up the practice of slavery along with the slave-holding states, however, the fact that they countenanced it when it was being practiced shows how insensitive they were to the feelings of the Negro people. Even after the slaves were set free the Mormon leaders continued to talk against the Negro. John Taylor, the third President of the Mormon Church, said that the Negroes are a “representation” of the “devil” upon the earth. In the year 1884, Angus M. Cannon stated that the Negroes could not enter the highest celestial glory of the kingdom of God. The *Salt Lake Tribune* reported him as saying the following:

I feel it an insult heaped upon Mr. Caine to ask him to go to Washington as our Delegate, because he [he ?] will have to tell Congress that he believes in the highest law known to God and man, but has not had courage to live up to it. . . . I had rather see a colored man, who is my friend here, sent to Washington, because he is not capable of receiving the priesthood, and can never reach the highest celestial glory of the kingdom of God. This colored man could go and stand upon the floor of Congress as the peer of every man there, and would be able to say conscientiously that he had not accepted the doctrine of plurality, because he could not. This man could not, of course, represent the kingdom of God in these valleys of the mountains, but would be a consistent Delegate. (*Salt Lake Tribune*, Oct. 5, 1884)

The information which we have presented clearly shows that Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, John Taylor and other Mormon leaders did “curry the favor of the world by manifesting a prejudice against the Negro,” and their doctrine concerning the Negro obviously grew out of the prejudice that they had in their own hearts.

Civil Rights

The Mormon Church has been very slow in allowing the Negroes equal rights. In the *First Year Book in the Seventy's Course in Theology*, written by the Mormon historian B. H. Roberts, and published in 1931, the idea of integration and social equality for the Negro is condemned. Mr. Roberts stated:

Perhaps the most convincing book in justification of the south in denying to the negro race social equality with the white race is the one written by William Benjamin Smith, entitled *The Color Line, A Brief in Behalf of the Unborn*, from which the following is a quotation:

Here, then, is laid bare the news of the whole matter: Is the south justified in this absolute denial of social equality to the negro, no matter what his (personal) virtues or abilities or accomplishments?

We affirm, then that the south is entirely right in thus keeping open at all times, at all hazards, and at all sacrifices an impassible social chasm between black and white. This she must do in behalf of her blood, her essence, of the stock of her Caucasian race. . . . The moment the bar of absolute separation is thrown down in the south, that moment the bloom of her spirit is blighted forever, . . . That the negro is markedly inferior to the Caucasian is proved both craniologically and by six thousand years of planet-wide experimentation; and that the commingling of inferior with superior must lower the higher is just as

certain as that the half-sum of two and six is only four (*The Color Line*, pp. 7–12). (*First Year Book in the Seventy's Course in Theology*, pp. 231–233)

Mark E. Petersen, a present day Apostle in the Mormon Church, made this statement:

The discussion on civil rights, especially over the last 20 years, has drawn some very sharp lines. It has blinded the thinking of some of our own people, I believe. They have allowed their political affiliations to color their thinking to some extent, and then, of course, they have been persuaded by some of the arguments that have been put forth.

... We who teach in the Church certainly must have our feet on the ground and not be led astray by the philosophies of men on this subject any more than on any other subject.

.....
I think I have read enough to give you an idea of what the negro is after. He is not just seeking the opportunity of sitting down in a cafe where white people eat. He isn't just trying to ride on the same streetcar or the same Pullman car with white people. It isn't that he just desires to go to the same theater as the white people. From this, and other interviews I have read, it appears that the negro seeks absorption with the white race. He will not be satisfied until he achieves it by intermarriage. That is his objective and we must face it. We must not allow our feeling to carry us away, nor must we feel so sorry for negroes that we will open our arms and embrace them with everything we have. Remember the little statement that we used to say about sin, "First we pity, then endure, then embrace."

.....
Now let's talk segregation again for a few moments. Was segregation a wrong principle? When the Lord chose the nations to which the spirits were to come, determining that some would be Japanese and some would be Chinese and some Negroes and some Americans, He engaged in an act of segregation. ... When he told Enoch not to preach the gospel to the descendants of Cain who were black, the Lord engaged in segregation. When He cursed the descendants of Cain as to the Priesthood, He engaged in segregation.

.....
Who placed the Negroes originally in darkest Africa? Was it some man, or was it God? And when He placed them there, He segregated them. ...

The Lord segregated the people both as to blood and place of residence. ... He certainly segregated the descendants of Cain when He cursed the Negro as to the Priesthood, and drew an absolute line. You may even say He dropped an Iron curtain there.

.....
Now we are generous with the negro. We are willing that the Negro have the highest kind of education. I would be willing to let every Negro drive a Cadillac if they could afford it. I would be willing that they have all the advantages they can get out of life in the world. But let them enjoy these things among themselves. I think the Lord segregated the Negro and who is man to change that segregation? It reminds me of the scripture on marriage, "what God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." Only here we have the reverse of the thing—what God hath separated, let not man bring together again. (*Race Problems As They*

Affect the Church, An Address by Apostle Mark E. Petersen, delivered at the Convention of Teachers of Religion on the College Level, Brigham Young University, August 27, 1954)

Bruce R. McConkie, of the Council of the Seventy, stated:

Certainly the caste systems in communist countries and in India, for instance, are man made and are not based on true principles.

However, in a broad sense, caste systems have their root and origin in the Gospel itself, and when they operate according to the divine decree, the resultant restrictions and segregation are right and proper and have the approval of the Lord. To illustrate: Cain, Ham, and the whole negro race have been cursed with a black skin, the mark of Cain, so they can be identified as a caste apart, a people with whom the other descendants of Adam should not intermarry. (*Mormon Doctrine*, 1958 Edition, pp. 107–108)

This teaching has deeply affected the attitude of the Mormon people toward the Negro. George A. Meyer made the following criticism of this teaching:

The saddest part about holding to, and teaching such a doctrine, is not that it keeps Negroes from a position of honor in the Church. . . . The tragedy consists in what the doctrine does to the minds of church people who accept it. Psychologists know that it is practically impossible for a person who has been taught in childhood that God put a curse on certain people to be able to accept those people in normal, civilized, unselfconscious association. If, in addition, the curse is related to a black skin, certain prominent facial features, the impossibility is heightened. Add to that, the denial of the right of such people to perform what the child's religion tells him is the most lofty privilege, that of being a priest in his God's service, and the child's mind is filled with a subtle kind of poison

A person who has been taught such ideas in Sunday School, during his most impressionable years, can scarcely avoid becoming insensitive to the many injustices and discriminations that exist in our society for the people he believes his God has cursed. This insensitivity towards the pain and hurt and indignity inflicted upon fellow human beings, is one of the hardest things to understand about Mormon people, who themselves know that they too, in times past, were a minority that received harsh and discriminatory treatment from fellow citizens . . . (*A Critique of Mormonism and the Negro*, by George A. Meyer, as quoted in *A Negro on Mormonism*, pp. 23–24)

J. D. Williams has written a pamphlet in which he compares the discrimination in Utah to that in Mississippi. He states:

Thirteen hundred miles, as Jim Crow flies, separate Oxford, Mississippi and Salt Lake City, Utah. Yet history and social patterns go far to bridge that distance. . . . Oxford, Mississippi is really no farther removed from the Utah Capitol than the nearest Salt Lake City restaurant that refuses to serve a Negro.

Thus it is no accident that Mississippi and Utah, miles apart by land, should find themselves simultaneously confronted in 1962–63 with vexing questions concerning the rights of man. (*Mississippi, Utah, and Civil Rights*, by J. D. Williams, pp. 26–27, copy at Utah State Historical Society)

The *Pearl of Great Price* is sometimes quoted in justification of segregation. The Mormon writer Arthur M. Richardson states:

That the seed of Cain were black and segregated is verified from the writings of Moses, as revealed through the Prophet Joseph Smith.

And Enoch also beheld the residue of the people which were the sons of Adam; and they were a mixture of all the seed of Adam save it were the seed of Cain, for the seed of Cain were black, and had not place among them.

Segregation of the Blacks from the Whites has a very ancient, honorable and authoritative history behind it. (*That Ye May Not Be Deceived*, p. 9)

On page 15 of the same book Mr. Richardson states:

But what is worse is the total lack of Christian leadership in the so-called Christian world, a leadership which for the most part endorses present-day programs that would rob the White race of its earned and God-rewarded place in the scheme of things.

However, there is no lack of that leadership in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Today, as of old, His Church is in line with the preserved word of God. Its Living Oracles hold to the color line drawn by God. By following the precepts of the latter-day restored Church no one need stumble over the racial question.

Dr. Glen W. Davidson made this statement:

The campaign in California last fall to strike down legislation which would bar discrimination in housing was openly supported from the pulpit by a number of local Mormon bishops and stake (district) presidents. This came as a shock to the liberals of the church. It is an even greater embarrassment for them to learn that until the California mission headquarters was moved to Oakland in 1964, the church went to court on several occasions to block Negroes from moving into the San Francisco neighborhood in which the headquarters was located. (*The Christian Century*, September 29, 1965, p. 1184)

A Negro by the name of Daily Oliver wrote the following letter which was published in the *Utah Chronicle* (the student newspaper published at the University of Utah) on May 28, 1965:

Dear Editor:

In answer to Mr. Johnson:

I am a Negro who has lived in Salt Lake City for several years too long. Why am I still here? I don't know!!!

The purpose of this letter is to inform you of an experience I had with the LDS Church.

When I was a Boy Scout my troop was located in a local LDS Ward. It was necessary for me to attend (Mutual) weekly meetings in order for me to be a Boy Scout.

Making a long story short, I was in the recreation hall one day when the bishop called me to the side and told me that I could not come to the recreation

hall again. The reason being I was a Negro. With this experience and many others with the LDS Church, I have formed negative attitudes toward your Church. Subjectively, then, my views of the LDS Church cannot be false.

Daily Oliver

The Mormon Church has found itself in trouble with the NAACP. Dr. Glen W. Davidson relates the following:

Throughout the spring and summer of 1963 the Salt Lake chapter of the N.A.A.C.P. tried unsuccessfully to meet with the members of the first presidency in regard to civil rights matters. Frustrated in its efforts, the chapter decided to picket Temple Square during the 133rd semiannual L.D.S. General Conference in October of that year unless the first presidency made known its stand on civil rights. . . . The N.A.A.C.P. chapter, which includes a number of Mormons, knew it would need the support of the L.D.S. Church if legislation were ever to be passed guaranteeing basic civil rights for minority groups in Utah. Utah had become the only western state without such laws. (*The Christian Century*, September 29, 1965, p. 1185)

On October 5, 1963, the following statement appeared in the *Deseret News*:

Albert B. Fritz, NAACP branch president, said at a civil rights meeting Friday night that his organization promised not to picket the 133rd Semi-Annual General Conference of the Church on Temple Square.

He added, however, that the NAACP will picket Temple Square, next Saturday if the Church does not present an "acceptable" statement on civil rights before that day. (*Deseret News*, October 5, 1963)

The Mormon leaders apparently feared the bad publicity that would result from this demonstration, for on October 6, 1963, Hugh B. Brown, a member of the First Presidency, made a statement to the effect that the church supported civil rights. In 1965, however, the Mormon leaders again found themselves in trouble with the NAACP. Dr. Glen W. Davidson made this statement:

Discussion of the race issue was stymied in the Council of Apostles until the spring of 1965. The Utah state legislature had before it several civil rights bills. Rumor fanned speculation that the church was working behind the scenes for defeat of the bills. . . . Again, after great difficulty representatives of the local chapter of the N.A.A.C.P. were allowed to meet with the first presidency. Again, McKay was absent. . . .

As a compromise—and to get the delegation out of their office—the two counselors agreed to place an unsigned editorial in the *Deseret News* supporting a fair employment and housing bill. Though the editorial was to be unsigned, readers of the church-owned daily would understand it to have the support of the first presidency. But no editorial appeared. Asked why, President Tanner replied, "We have decided to remain silent." . . .

Next day, Sunday, the N.A.A.C.P. organized and led a prayer march which called on Mormon leaders to use their influence in behalf of moral justice. Approximately 300 people participated in the march from the federal office

building to the steps of the church administration building. (*The Christian Century*, September 29, 1965, pp. 1185–1186)

This demonstration did not end the trouble that the Church has had with the NAACP. The following appeared in the *Salt Lake Tribune*:

DENVER—A proposal protesting policies of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was passed unanimously Saturday for consideration in September at the national board meeting by delegates to the annual convention of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

The measure was introduced by the Salt Lake City and Ogden branches of the organization.

The original proposal was not approved outright by the convention because of a legal technicality, said Steve Holbrook, Bountiful, a Salt Lake delegate.

The measure calls for the organization to petition foreign embassies to refuse to grant visas to LDS missionaries. (*Salt Lake Tribune*, July 4, 1965, p. A-3)

The following is from the July 2, 1965, issue of the *Salt Lake Tribune*:

The proposed resolution was offered by the Salt Lake City and Ogden branches of the NAACP. It also urged that embassies in South America, Asia and Africa “refuse to grant visas to missionaries and representatives of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints . . . until such time as the doctrine of non-white inferiority is changed and rescinded by that church and a positive policy of support for civil rights, is taken by the same church.”

On May 3, 1966, this article appeared in the *Deseret News*:

The Salt Lake City board and membership of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People issued a sharply worded resolution Monday night attacking The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

The resolution charged that the Church “has maintained a rigid and continuous segregation stand.”

The resolution also charged that the Church has made “no effort to counteract the wide-spread discriminatory practices in education, in housing, in employment, and other areas of life.” The statement said the discrimination was due, in part, to the “official race policy of the LDS Church.

The statement ended by warning all branches of the NAACP to “be skeptical concerning any favorable support for civil rights by Church members.”

The resolution was signed by Salt Lake City branch president John Driver, secretary Mary Adams and D. Stephen Holbrook—head of the local NAACP branch’s press and publicity.

The following appeared in the *Chicago Sun-Times*:

SALT LAKE CITY (AP)—Dr. Sterling M. McMurrin, a distinguished critic and authority on Mormonism, thinks time is running out on the Mormon Church to exert any influence or leadership on what he called “the greatest moral struggle of our time”—civil rights. (*Chicago Sun-Times*, April 5, 1965)

Dissatisfaction

That many members of the Mormon Church are dissatisfied over the anti-Negro doctrine is very evident. The Mormon writer John J. Stewart admits this is true:

Yet, because of the popular beliefs and traditions of the world, there are at least two points of doctrine and history of this Church about which many LDS themselves—to say nothing of non members—feel ill at ease or critical. One of these is its doctrine regarding the Negro. (*Mormonism and the Negro*, part 1, p. 7)

On March 8, 1960, Sterling McMurrin gave a speech at the Trinity A.M.E. Church in Salt Lake City. In this speech he stated:

I am a member of the Mormon Church, and though I am not especially orthodox in the Mormon religion, I feel very close to my church and have a great love for my people. I feel very keenly the situation in which the Mormon people find themselves, entertaining a religious doctrine of racial discrimination, which certainly is unworthy of a Church and unworthy of a religion and, I believe myself, unworthy of what is in many respects the praiseworthy and great tradition of the Mormon Church. I frankly deplore the entertainment of such a doctrine and the attitudes that may accompany it in my Church. I have a very sincere hope that in some way or another this belief will eventually be dissolved in the teachings of the Mormon Church . . . One of the difficulties, I think, is that the Mormon Church has always been involved in the notion of revelation, and it is one thing to have an interpretation of the Bible changed after 50 years or so if you decide some other interpretation is more satisfactory and thus change the picture and belief, but it is another thing to be a Mormon and some way or other get it established that this is a divine revelation. We don't change revelation in the same manner than [that?] you change Bible interpretation. I say this in spite of the fact that I really believe, if I don't die in the very near future, I will live to see the time when this doctrine is dissolved. I don't mean repudiated. . . . I imagine by some technique they will dissolve the doctrine on the Negro, rather than repudiate it. . . . I have discussed this with some of the leading officials of the Mormon Church and I find very often there is far more of a liberal attitude in the matter than many people would suspect, and one of the leading officials of the Church told me not very long ago (and by a leading official I mean a general authority, not a bishop or a stake president)—he told me not very long ago that he did not believe that the Negroes were under any kind of curse and so far as he was concerned this was not a doctrine of the Church, and never was, but certainly a number of people believe that it is and was. This is not a kind of solid front being set up by an institution against the Negroes, but it is a situation which is shot through with all kinds of ambiguities with regard to the problem and an institution in which there are many people of very liberal attitudes who simply do not believe the doctrine and who are embarrassed by it . . . that is the attitude of a very great number of orthodox Mormons who have moral feeling that dictates that this kind of theological nonsense should not be palmed off on the people. It is not only nonsense, but bad nonsense; it is immoral. ("The Mormon Doctrine and the Negro," a speech by Sterling McMurrin, March 8, 1960)

In the October 22, 1963, issue of *Look Magazine*, Jeff Nye, a young Mormon, wrote the following:

The Mormon Church taught me that the Negro was not equal to the white in terms of religious rights and opportunities. It taught me that the Negro was cursed with loss of God's priesthood and that the evidence, or mark, of this curse was his dark skin. Consequently, the Negro could not hold the priesthood in the Mormon Church and was thus unequal to the white in a very important sense. . . .

Today, if a Negro becomes interested in the Church, he can join, . . . But he cannot pass the sacrament, as the 12- and 13-year-old boys do. He cannot prepare the sacrament, as the 14- and 15-year-olds do. Nor can he bless the sacrament or perform baptisms, as the 16-, 17- and 18-year-olds do. . . .

Lacking the priesthood, a Negro can never hold any position of leadership in the Church, because the priesthood is the prerequisite for any position of authority.

. . . .

If we Mormons believe that God is directing our Church, we can hope that God is preparing a new revelation that will revise our present Negro doctrine. If we do not believe this, we can hope that the more liberal element of the Mormon leadership will produce a doctrinal change as the problem intensifies. JEFF NYE ("Memo from a Mormon," *Look*, October 22, 1963, pp. 74, 76 and 79)

Wallace Turner observes:

A ferment is working in the Mormon community over the Negro question, particularly among the intellectual element. The mistreatment of Negroes by the LDS church is the reason given by many intellectuals who candidly admit that they have become silent, concealed apostates.

Even among many who cling tenaciously to their belief, there is a swelling opinion that the church is dead wrong on this issue. (*The Mormon Establishment*, 1966, p. 246)

The following statement appeared in an article in *Time Magazine*:

Outwardly secure and successful, the unique religion created by Joseph Smith and carried to Utah by Brigham Young is nonetheless at a testing time. Much as in the churches of mainstream Christianity, Mormonism is being prodded out of its old ways by a new generation of believers who temper loyalty to the faith with a conviction that its doctrines need updating. Worried about the relevance of Mormonism, some of them are all but openly critical of the policies fostered by the church's venerable, conservative hierarchy. . . . The doctrine most under fire within the church is the traditional teaching that Negroes, the cursed sons of Cain, are not eligible for the priesthood, . . . [J. D.] Williams calls it "un-Christian and theologically unsound," says that the teaching "looks so anachronistic that it engenders hostility in the world around us."

Interior Secretary Stewart Udall, a Mormon who describes himself as "deeply troubled by the issue," says that the church's policy "is like granting citizenship and saying 'you can't hold office.'" (*Time*, April 14, 1967, p. 104)

Paul Hughes, publisher's consultant of *Reveille Magazine*, wrote an article in which he stated:

George Romney has precipitated a crisis in the Mormon Church that may well rank with the plague of the locusts, and this time there are no providential gulls in sight.

As a liberal Republican aspiring to the presidency, Romney can point to a commendable civil rights record during his governorship in Michigan. As one of the Latter-day Saints, Romney is compelled at the same time to point to a church which officially sanctifies race prejudice and which declares today, as it has for over a century, that people with black skins are inferior creatures because that's just the way the Lord wants them.

This may eventually fragment Romney into warring halves. More important, it could thrust the Mormons, who have always referred proudly to themselves as a "peculiar people," completely outside the pale of American life. There is, however, a third threat which is not nearly as well known: Interior tensions, accelerating now for many years, may shatter the church beyond all redemption. . . . the Mormons themselves do not know exactly how they painted themselves into this suffocating corner. They quote vague traditions. They refer to conflicting scriptural justifications. They consult their highest officers, and the truth is that they don't really know, either. (*The Oregonian*, Portland, Oregon, April 2, 1967)

Interior Secretary Stewart Udall wrote a letter which was published in *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*. The following appeared in this letter:

It was inevitable that national attention would be focused on what critics have called the "anti-Negro doctrine" of the L.D.S. Church. As the Church becomes increasingly an object of national interest, this attention is certain to intensify, for the divine curse concept which is so commonly held among our people runs counter to the great stream of modern religious and social thought.

We Mormons cannot escape persistent, painful inquiries into the sources and grounds of this belief. Nor can we exculpate ourselves and our Church from justified condemnation by the rationalization that we support the Constitution, believe that all men are brothers, and favor equal rights for all citizens.

. . . It must be resolved because we are wrong and it is past the time when we should have seen the right. A failure to act here is sure to demean our faith, damage the minds and morals of our youth, and undermine the integrity of our Christian ethic.

. . . .

My fear is that the very character of Mormonism is being distorted and crippled by adherence to a belief and practice that denies the oneness of mankind. We violate the rights and dignity of our Negro brothers, and for this we bear a measure of guilt; but surely we harm ourselves even more.

What a sad irony it is that a once outcast people, tempered for nearly a century in the fires of persecution, are one of the last to remove a burden from the most persecuted people ever to live on this continent. (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Vol. 2, No. 2, Summer, 1967, pp. 5-6)

A number of Mormons responded to Stewart Udall's letter. Some were in agreement with him. For instance, Lowry Nelson stated: ". . . Stewart Udall has spoken for thousands of his concerned and thoughtful fellow churchmen" (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Autumn, 1967, p. 8).

On the other hand, a number were opposed to Udall's statements. Paul C. Richards made these comments in his reply to Udall:

Mr. Udall must think the Church is made up of extremely gullible people. Otherwise he never would have set himself up as he did to try to influence the members.

The Church is either true or it isn't. If it changes its stand on the strength of the "great stream of modern religious and social thought," it will be proven untrue. If that happens, the more serious members would do well to join the Cub Scouts. It's cheaper and there is less work and less criticism.

If the Church is true, it will hold to its beliefs in spite of its members. If it is false, more power to the easy-way-out philosophers who claim to know the "imperious truths of the contemporary world." (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Autumn, 1967, p. 6)

At the Crossroads

Joseph Fielding Smith, a member of the First Presidency of the Mormon Church, admitted that the leaders have received "a flood of correspondence from all parts of the Church" asking why the policy cannot be changed. In a letter dated February 14, 1963, Joseph Fielding Smith declared: "I am getting a little fed up on the idea that so many people think I am responsible for the Negro not holding the priesthood." Apparently Joseph Fielding Smith is beginning to feel the effect of the pressure exerted by the critics, for he is not talking in the same manner that he did a few years ago. At one time he had stated: "Not only was Cain called upon to suffer, but because of his wickedness he became the father of an inferior race" (*The Way to Perfection*, p. 101). By 1962, however, he was stating:

"The Latter-day Saints, so commonly called 'Mormons' have no animosity towards the Negro. Neither have they described him as belonging to an 'inferior race.'" (*Deseret News*, Church Section, June 14, 1962, p. 3)

While Joseph Fielding Smith is not speaking against the Negro in the same manner that he used to, the Mormon Apostle Ezra Taft Benson is openly opposing the civil rights movement. The *Deseret News* reported him as saying:

LOGAN, Utah — Former agriculture secretary Ezra Taft Benson charged Friday night that the civil rights movement in the South had been "fomented almost entirely by the Communists."

Elder Benson, a member of the Council of the Twelve . . . said in a speech at a public meeting here that the whole civil rights movement was "phony."

.....
"The pending 'civil rights' legislation is, I am convinced, about 10 per cent civil rights and 90 per cent a further extension of socialistic federal controls," Elder Benson said. "It is part of the pattern for the Communist take-over of America." (*Deseret News*, December 14, 1963)

The leaders of the Mormon Church are beginning to realize they are faced with a dilemma. If they continue to bar the Negro from the Priesthood the Mormon Church will suffer a great loss of prestige throughout the world. One writer stated that this doctrine of discrimination against the Negro has “seriously hurt the public image of the Mormon Church.” The *Los Angeles Times* for August 27, 1967, carried an article in which the following appeared:

The deeply rooted Mormon attitude apparently discriminating against Negroes because of their race is becoming a burning issue in that church and beyond the church. . . .

The increasing heat of racial pressures in the country has brought it into focus as one of the few uncracked fortresses of discrimination.

A Revelation

If the Mormon Church should decide to give the Priesthood to the Negro they will be making a doctrinal change which could cause dissension within the Church—especially among the segregationists who have been drawn to the Church because of its doctrine of discrimination against the Negro. To make a doctrinal change of this magnitude would be to place all of the other doctrines of Mormonism in question.

Nevertheless, it would appear that at least some of the Mormon Church leaders feel that a change must be made. In the Western Edition of the *New York Times* for June 7, 1963, Wallace Turner stated that the Mormon Church leaders were seriously considering the consequences of making a change:

SALT LAKE CITY, June 3 — The top leadership of the Mormon church is seriously considering the abandonment of its historic policy of discrimination against the Negroes.

. . . .

One of the highest officers of the church said today that the possibility of removing this religious disability against Negroes has been under serious consideration.

“We are in the midst of a survey looking toward the possibility of admitting Negroes,” said Hugh B. Brown, one of the two counselors serving President David O. McKay in the First Presidency of the Mormon church.

“Believing as we do in divine revelation through the President of the church, we all await his decision,” Mr. Brown said.

Mr. Brown . . . said he believed that if the change were made, it would be a doctrinal revision for Mormonism of a magnitude matching the abandonment of polygamy in 1890. (*New York Times*, Western Edition, June 7, 1963)

Wallace Turner later made this statement concerning this interview:

Every scrap of information I’ve gathered about Mormons and Negroes points to Hugh Brown as the liberal voice at the top of the church. I suspect that when he told me those things in that interview in 1963, he hoped the change was to come.

However, the odds are all against its coming anytime soon in the terms he described—a revelation by the president of the church. David O. McKay is the most liberal LDS president in sight for a long time to come. Yet, he made it plain

in 1964 that he felt it unlikely that any revelation would come that would lift from Negroes their historic disability in LDS doctrine and practice.

He was in Oakland, California, in November, 1964 . . . then the question was asked directly, in the proper words to discover whether the prophet, seer, and chief revelator thought doctrine on Negroes would be changed to allow them to hold the priesthood. He said:

“Not while you and I are here.”

That would seem to end for many years the possibility of a revelation on that subject. (*The Mormon Establishment*, pp. 261–262)

The Mormon writer John L. Lund argues that the Church cannot have a revelation to change the Negro doctrine:

Brigham Young revealed that the Negroes will not receive the Priesthood until a great while after the second advent of Jesus Christ. . . .

In view of what President Young and others have said, it would be foolish indeed to give anyone the false idea that a new revelation is immediately forthcoming on the issue of the Negroes receiving the Priesthood. . . . our present prophets are in complete agreement with Brigham Young and other past leaders on the question of the Negro and the Priesthood. . . .

Social pressure and even government sanctions cannot be expected to bring forth a new revelation. . . . It would be wise to emphasize that all the social pressure in the world will not change what the Lord has decreed to be. Let those who would presume to pressure the Prophet be reminded that it is God that inspires prophets, not social pressure. . . . The Negroes will not be allowed to hold the Priesthood during mortality, in fact, not until after the resurrection of all of Adam’s children. The other stipulation requires that Abel’s seed receive the first opportunity of having the Priesthood. . . . the last of Adam’s children will not be resurrected until the end of the millennium. Therefore, the Negroes will not receive the Priesthood until after that time. (*The Church and the Negro*, 1967, pp. 45–48)

It may be true that the Mormon leaders will not have a revelation concerning the Negro, but they probably will try “by some technique” as Sterling McMurrin said, to “dissolve the doctrine on the Negro.”

An Honest Solution

The honest solution to the problem facing the Mormon leaders is not to have another “revelation,” but to repudiate the doctrine. They must admit that Joseph Smith, Brigham Young and other Mormon leaders taught doctrines that cannot be accepted as coming from God. For instance, Brigham Young (the second President of the Church) said that slavery was a “divine institution,” and that the Civil War could not free the slaves (see *Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 10, p. 250). Brigham Young was wrong, however. The Civil War did free the slaves. If Brigham Young was wrong when he said that the Civil War could not free the slaves, what assurance can we have that he was not also wrong when he said the Negroes could not have the Priesthood?

He also said that if a person who belongs to the chosen seed mixes his blood with the Negro the penalty is “death on the spot.” (This is found in the *Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 10, p. 110.) Obviously, the Mormons do not believe this statement by Brigham Young or they would be putting many people to death. Brigham Young called this the “law of God” and said that “this will always be so.” Now, if Brigham Young was wrong about this, what assurance have we that he was right when he said that the Negro could not hold the Priesthood? Why should we disregard this teaching, which Brigham Young called the “law of God,” and yet hold to his teaching that the Negro can’t have the Priesthood?

Brigham Young’s statement that “any man having one drop of the seed of Cain in him cannot receive the priesthood,” is as impossible to believe as his other two statements. At the very time Brigham Young said this Elijah Abel (a Negro) was holding the Priesthood. Elijah Abel lived longer than Brigham Young, and was still “a member of the Third Quorum of Seventy” in 1883. Thus we see that all during the time Brigham Young was President of the Mormon Church there was a Negro in the Priesthood. And at the very time that the Mormon Apostle Mark E. Petersen gave the speech in which he stated that a person with “one drop of negro blood” could not hold the Priesthood, Elijah Abel’s grandson was an Elder in the Mormon Church.

We are told that 28 million Americans who are classified as white have some Negro ancestry. How would it be possible for the Mormon Church to keep these people out of the Priesthood?

APPENDIX

FOR WHAT PURPOSE?

The following is a talk given by President Alvin R. Dyer at the Missionary Conference in Oslo, Norway, on March 18, 1961. It is recommended that each missionary read this message several times in order to get a better understanding of the purpose of the Restored Gospel.

We have talked a lot about missionary work and heard the testimonies of those who have spoken. I want to talk to you a little bit now about something that is not missionary work, and what I say is not to be given to your investigators by any matter of means.

In the Korean War there was a thing that took place that I don't know as it brought disgrace upon our country, but it tends to prove the fact that so many of the young men of America didn't have the concept of liberty and freedom as sponsored by our own beloved country. This was such a shock to our leaders that a program was instituted throughout the country, which still carries on, to better prepare our young people to meet the future, both physically and mentally. I was disillusioned at what took place.

Always in my life I have thought a 'Yankee,' or an American was just about the greatest of everything in the world. I have always been a kind of hero worshipper anyway, and a great football player or a great baseball player or something like that has been more or less my ideal. Anything American was the best. I still feel that way when it comes to my personal, inward feelings. I still have an affinity for that

There was an episode that took place in the Korean War that was very hard for me to take, and hard for me to understand. I am sure that it was much harder for those who were in it who were called upon to endure the privations of that war or any war for that matter. After the war was over, the information concerning the behavior of our young men who had been captured by the Koreans (Communist Koreans) revealed the fact that they behaved most ashamedly and with almost cowardice. In the interrogations that were made of our young men, there were less than 5% of them that even knew why they were fighting and what was meant by liberty and freedom and the American way of life. Less than 5% of them were reactionary to the point that they wanted to fight to live, though they had been taken prisoners, and I know that that must not have been a very easy life. But the official records, also, revealed that 38% of the American soldiers that were taken prisoner by the Koreans who died in prison camps, didn't die from starvation or from any punishment. They simply quit and laid down and died, because they did not have the moral stability to fight. This was the disgraceful thing about all of it. Nearly 4 out of 10 of the American Korean prisoners died because they did not have the will to live. They did not have any reason or rhyme for what they were there for.

When this became known to our leaders, they immediately called into conference a great body of men and established in America what they called a physical fitness program. Ezra Taft Benson and Marion D. Hanks and several others from the Church were called upon, and they are still serving on it. I was glad to see that President Kennedy has reinstated this program among our young people.

You might say [say?], “What has that to do with us?” It doesn’t have a great deal to do with us except that I would feel rather embarrassed as a leader of the Church if anyone of our missionaries did not know why he is in the mission field. If you were asked the question as to why you were here and what you were doing in the mission field, and all you could say is that “I am here preaching the Gospel, and I have been sent out here. I know that Gospel is true, and I have a testimony of it.” If that is all you could say, you don’t have a full understanding of the purpose of missionary work.

I have always felt that if you would place in the hearts and minds of anybody the reasons for doing things and the purpose behind it, you wouldn’t have to worry about what that person would do. If you young men and women know why you are here and why the Lord is so anxious for us to preach the Gospel today, and then would ask yourselves a number of questions connected with that such as: Why is it that you were born today instead of 2,000 years ago? Why is it that you are sitting in this room today and were for some reason not born in the day of Moses or in the day when Christ was upon the earth? Or do you think that that is just something haphazard—that it just happened that way—that nobody had anything to do with it. You would ask another question maybe. Why is it that you are white and not colored? Have you ever asked yourself that question? Who had anything to do with your being born into the Church and not born a Chinese or a Hindu, or a Negro? Is God such an unjust person that He would make you white and free and make a Negro cursed under the cursing of Cain that he could not hold the Priesthood of God? Who do you think decided and what is the reason behind it? Then maybe you would ask yourselves another question. Why is it that you were kept in the Spirit World until the last dispensation to come forth among the children of men? Was there any reason for that, and what decided it?

When you begin to get the answers to these questions, then perhaps you will understand why the Gospel of Jesus Christ is being preached in the world today, and the plan of salvation is taking its effect upon people. I think that every missionary ought to know the answers to those questions. When he does know the answers, he stands before the Lord without excuse to go forth and labor with all his strength to serve the Lord.

There isn’t anyone in this room that would have the fantastic notion that this life is of any great duration. This life is merely a pinpoint or speck in the eternity of man’s existence. It is over so fast that it is merely a short period of time in the existence of eternal life of man here upon the earth just a few short hours in the plan of the gospel according to the Lord’s reckoning of time. The whole plan of life—its whole period—comes and goes within just a few short hours of the Lord’s time. To us it is many thousands of years.

I want to talk to you just briefly about this, not with any information that you would convey to your investigators, but that you, yourselves, may have a better understanding of what we are doing in the mission field today and why it is that we come to you with encouragement to work with all your strength to get people into the church and why we set goals.

It isn't for the purpose of a goal. That is just a kind of a game between us to become physically motivated to go out and do our best work and work as a team and as a mission. The real purpose behind this is more far-reaching than that.

I will read to you from the *Pearl of Great Price*, "And the Lord said unto me:" speaking to Abraham, "These two facts do exist, that there are two spirits, one being more intelligent than the other; there shall be another more intelligent than they, I am the Lord thy God, I am more intelligent than they all."

This statement of Abraham's is directly connected with the Degrees of Glory, because we talk that when people die, all shall be resurrected who are born in this life—Sons of Perdition and all. They are then, after the Spirit World, assigned into one of these three Degrees of Glory—The Celestial, the Terrestrial, and the Telestial. Others who were spun off out of that go into outer darkness, because there is no light in them. They can no longer repent, and because they can no longer repent, they can no longer be governed by law. Therefore, they become Sons of Perdition and are not worthy to go into a Degree of Glory. The consequence of that is that they shall go with Lucifer and the disembodied spirits who never were permitted to take upon themselves a body of flesh and bone

You remember the scripture that missionaries very often use in Corinthians when Paul is speaking of the three divisions of people. We often use that scripture as a resurrection scripture, but we do not apply it properly. If you will read it carefully, it says, "Such are they in the resurrection," which means that Paul is calling to the attention of those that listen to him that there are three Degrees of Glory of people who are in preparation on the earth while they live here. Now, let's suppose, to make this more plain, that the earth would end at this instant, that there would be no one upon the earth, that life would cease and that judgment was immediate. Obviously, the people who had been living on the earth would be assigned to one of these three places. Therefore, the people who are living upon the earth today are the embryos of these three kingdoms.

The suggestion here by Abraham is that they were born into this life with the same degree of division. There were three divisions of mankind in the pre-existence, and when you are born into this life, you are born into one of these three divisions of people. There is an imposed judgment placed upon everyone who leaves the Spirit World just the same as there will be when they leave this life and go into one of three places. When they left the Spirit World, they had already been judged by what they had done in the Spirit World and in their previous life. From what judgment is determined how they shall be born in this life? When you understand that, you know that God is not unjust to cause a righteous spirit to be born as a cursed member of the black race or to be cursed as one of the other people who have been cursed. Everything is in order. The precreation of man is orderly and in accordance with the plan of life and salvation.

In keeping with this thought, when Noah went into the Ark, here again he took with him his three sons—one representing the chosen lineage, the second representing the lineage of adoption and the third representing the cursed lineage. Thereafter, when men began to be born again into this life, they were born through one of these three sons of Noah, either through the lineage of Shem, Japeth, or Ham. Those who have been cursed in the pre-existence were born through this lineage of Ham.

I suppose, and you may have often heard missionaries say it or have asked the question: Why is a Negro a Negro? And, you have heard this answer. "Well, they must have been neutral in the pre-existence or they must have straddled the fence. That is

the most common saying—they were neither hot nor cold, so the Lord made them Negroes. This, of course, is not true. The reason that spirits are born into Negro bodies is because those spirits rejected the Priesthood of God in the pre-existence. This is the reason why you have Negroes upon the earth.

You will observe that when Cain was influenced by the power of Lucifer to follow him and to fall down and worship him in the beginning, it was then that the Lord came to him and said, Cain, if you will abide the law—if you will keep the commandments, you too can be acceptable unto me, but Cain rejected the counsel of God. He rejected again the Priesthood as his forebearers had done in the pre-existence. Therefore, the curse of the pre-existence was made institute through the loins of Cain. Consequently, you have the beginning of the race of men and women into which would be born those in the pre-existence who had rejected the Priesthood of God.

There is another division in the pre-existence—those who were not valiant in the acceptance of the Gospel. You see, there is a great difference between one who accepts, and one who accepts and does nothing about it. We had a division in the pre-existence who did not reject the Priesthood, neither did they fully accept the plan of salvation that was advanced by the Christ. They, therefore, in accordance with the plan of the Gospel, became those of the lineage of adoption.

I want to read to you a very important scripture in the Old Testament. We talk about studying books and reading manuscripts to prepare ourselves to teach the Gospel, but there are very few missionaries who have even studied the Old Testament. The 10th Chapter of Genesis, according to my information has had at least 2,000 volumes written about it—just about this chapter. It is so important, because the whole plan and purpose of life was understood by the ancient people of Israel, and they knew and understood what was meant by the teachings of the Old Testament here given to us by Moses. I want to read something to you and make an explanation. “And Ham, the father of Canaan,” this is in the 9th chapter of Genesis, “saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brethren without. And Shem and Japeth took a garment, and laid it upon their shoulders, and went backward, and covered the nakedness of their father; and their faces were backward and they saw not their father’s nakedness.” Now, that is a Jewish story—that is a Hebrew story, in legend form that merely implies the fact that Ham reinstated the curse of the pre-existence when he rejected the Priesthood of Noah, and in consequence of that he preserved the curse on the earth. Therefore, the Negroes to be born thereafter, or those who were to become Negroes, were to be born through the loins of Ham.

All of this is according to a well worked-out plan, that these millions and billions of spirits awaiting birth in the pre-existence would be born through a channel or race of people. Consequently, the cursed were to be born through Ham. We cannot accept this story literally, because in order to understand that you have to read the *Pearl of Great Price* very carefully, because in the early days when the Egyptian government was established under its first rulers, the Pharaohs, they set up a system that was exactly like the Priesthood of God. It was exactly like the Patriarchal Order, but they said knowing they could not have the birthright, they thought to capitalize on the form or the order of administration. The *Pearl of Great Price* tells us specifically that they knew that they could not hold the Priesthood, yet they used the same type of organization. Gradually, the sons of Pharaoh began to denounce that concept and assumed unto themselves that

they were the princes and not the descendants of Shem. There is a great deal more to it than that, but I wanted to point this out to you. That all of this that we talk about with people is not just merely a little message that we proclaim to them, but all that we are doing is part of a great plan that was inaugurated under the direction of the Christ in the pre-existence.

Listen to what Noah said to his other two brethren: And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his young son had done unto him. And he said, “Cursed be Canaan, and a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren.” And he said, “Blessed be the Lord God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant.” Who is Shem? Shem is what is known as the father of the Shemites or the Semitics. He became the father of the children of Israel, through the loins of Shem and descendants were born: Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and then the twelve sons or the twelve princes of Israel. Therefore, Shem became the father, or the progenitor, of those who were to be born into this life who were the noblest of the intelligences who Abraham speaks of here when he said, notwithstanding that these two spirits are intelligent and one is more intelligent than the other. He said, there is still another spirit or another division that is more intelligent than both of them. Then, subsequent to that, he said to Abraham, “Now the Lord has shown unto me, Abraham, the intelligences that were organized before the world was; and among all these there were many of the noble and great ones; and God saw these souls that they were good, and He stood in the midst of them, and He said: These I will make my rulers; for He stood among those that were spirits, and He saw that they were good; and He said unto me: “Abraham, thou art one of them; thou wast chosen before thou wast born.” This is true with everyone who fits into the category of the descendants of Shem who became the literal sons and daughters of Israel.

This is a part of the plan the world does not know anything about. The Christian churches never mention it. They never teach it, because they know nothing about it.

Noah made another promise at this time, and he said, “God shall enlarge Japeth, and he shall dwell in the house or tent of Shem.” What is the house or tent of Shem? — the House of Israel. Therefore, the descendants of Japeth shall be enlarged, and they shall be permitted to dwell in the House of Israel. Therefore, we call the descendants of Japeth the children of the adoption. Now, who are the descendants of Japeth? The descendants of Japeth are in all of Europe. They are in America; they are in Japan and Korea. They are in India, and all of these people can be traced. For example, we have here the venerations of Shem as the Lord gives it to us in Chapter 10 of the Book of Genesis. These ancient prophets were careful to preserve these generations, and these genealogies, knowing their full meaning, which the world doesn’t understand, but which we know by revelation from the Lord.

Now these are the generations of the sons of Noah, Shem, Ham, Japeth: and unto them were sons born after the flood. The sons of Japeth: Gomer, they are the French—Magog, they are the Slavs—and Madai, they are the Hindu, the Korean, the Indian, the Japanese and the Filippo. We know who the people are who migrated eastward through India into the area of the Tungus and then into Korea and Japan. This is the reason today why we are having such tremendous success among the Koreans and the Japanese, because it is the day the Gospel is to be preached to them. Then he goes on to say: Javan—the people of Greece, and Italy, and of Turkey; and of Meehech—the Meshechites, the Muskavites, the Russians; and of Tiras—the Syberians. These were the descendants of Japeth.

The day was to come, according to Noah, that these people and their descendants would come in and dwell in the tent, or the house of Shem or the House of Israel. You have to know that and understand it to know what the Lord is doing today in preaching the Gospel unto the Gentile, because this is the day of the Gentile. We are preaching the Gospel to the Gentile. They are the people of Europe. They are the people of America. This is the time of the Gentile. Only one portion of the House of Israel is being called, and they are the children of Ephraim.

Everyone of you here, I assume, has had a Patriarchal Blessing. Is there anyone here who is not of the lineage of Joseph? You see what I mean? They are the only ones of the House of Israel that are being called—the lineage of Joseph through Ephraim, and there is a reason for that.

I want to mention again the teachings of Christ unto the Nephites. You will find this in the 21st chapter of Third Nephi; and the sign of the Father's work, the glorious destiny of the repentant Gentiles, the condemnation predicted for the impenitent and the coming of the new Jerusalem, or the city of Zion. Then the Lord, Himself, speaking unto the Nephites said this: "And verily I say unto you, I give unto you a sign, that ye may know the time when these things shall be about to take place—that I shall gather in, from their long dispersion, my people, O House of Israel, and shall establish among them again my Zion." Then He goes on to tell that the first of this day shall be the day of the Gentile and you read that entire chapter. It won't take long to do it, but He says in that day, "For my sake shall the Father work a work which shall be a great and a marvelous work among them; and there shall be among them those who will not believe it, although a man shall declare it unto them;" the prophet Joseph Smith, "But behold, the life of my servant shall be in my hand; therefore, they shall not hurt him, although he shall be marred because of them. Yet I will heal him, for I will show unto them that my wisdom is greater than the cunning of the devil."

The Prophet Joseph Smith suffered martyrdom, but he was not harmed, and he said to his brother in Carthage prison just before he was shot: "Fear not brethren. They may take our lives and destroy the body, but they cannot kill us." This is what the Lord is saying here. If you will read the rest of the chapter, you will read how the gospel is to be taken to the Gentiles. The Lord said in verse 22: "But behold! If the Gentiles will repent"—meaning who?—the French, the German, the Norwegian, the Swedish, the Finlander, the people of Denmark and the people all over the countries of Europe. "If they will repent and harken unto my words, and harden not their hearts, I will establish my church among them, and they shall come in unto the covenant and be numbered among this the remnant of Jacob, unto whom I have given this land for their inheritance." This was spoken of before by Nephi, and you will read it in the 13th and 14th chapters of the Book of Mormon where the Lord makes plain that the day will come when the Gentiles will receive the gospel and will come in and be numbered among the children of Israel.

I just read one of these scriptures although there are many found in First Nephi. There is another found in First Nephi, the 14th chapter, starting with the first verse: "And it shall come to pass that if the Gentiles"—everyone who is not a Jew, is a Gentile. But correctly speaking, the Gentiles are the descendants of the House of Japeth, the oldest son of Noah. The cursed people are the descendants of Ham. The chosen people are the descendants of Shem—the three sons of Noah. Through these lineages the spirits that compare with their station are born in this life. This is why you have colored people,

why you have dark people and why you have white people. The Lord is speaking of the Gentiles. “And it shall come to pass that if the Gentiles,” the descendants of Japeth, “shall harken unto the Lamb of God in that day that he shall manifest himself unto them in word, and also in power, in very deed unto the taking away of their stumbling blocks.” In other words, where they have resisted the Church, resisted conversion, the Lord will remove the stumbling blocks, “and if they harden not their hearts against the Lamb of God, they shall be numbered among the seed of their father; yea, they shall be a blessed people.” You see, this is the Promise that was made anciently by Noah when he blessed Japeth. Because why? Because he did not rebel against the Priesthood that Noah held like Ham did, and neither did Shem.

We have a fulfillment of this scripture. When the Kirtland Temple was finished, there was a number of ancient prophets that made their appearance in the Temple. The Christ was the first to come and receive the Temple and gave instruction to Joseph Smith, many of which we have not been privileged to know about. Following this there appeared unto them Moses, and then came Elias, and then cam[e] Elijah—each of them committing the keys of their specific work. Let me call your attention to the key of Elias. In the first place, who is Elias? Elias is Noah. Here we have the same ones who gave the covenant unto Japeth anciently, that he would be blessed and that he would come in and dwell in the House of Shem. He returned to earth to give the key unto the prophet Joseph Smith to fulfill the promise made to Abraham that through the loins of Abraham, or the chosen seed, all the children of the earth would be blessed. Soon after 1836 the Lord gave the revelation to send missionaries and commence work among the Gentiles in England and labor in 1850 in France and then in Northern Italy and then these other countries. This was not done however until Noah returned the “Key.”

You see, as in Elias the gospel of Jesus Christ would be preached unto the Gentiles. Don't you see what we are doing is a great deal more important than just filling a two and one-half year period as a missionary and then going home? We are working out the plan which the Father laid in the beginning as to what would transpire.

What has actually happened? The Lord is preparing men and women today to become heirs of the Celestial Kingdom. This is the only work that is being done. The work for the Terrestrial Kingdom has not even been started yet. It will not start until the work for the Celestial Kingdom is finished. When all who are to go into the Celestial Kingdom have been received and have been designated for the Kingdom, then the work will start for those who are to go into the Terrestrial Kingdom, and the Terrestrial Kingdom will continue until all have made covenant and have received the promise to go into that Kingdom. All of these things will be done in their proper order.

Why is the work being done for the Celestial Kingdom first? Why is it that in our Patriarchal Blessings it says that you will come forth in the morning of the First Resurrection? Because only those who come forth in the First Resurrection will go into the Celestial Kingdom. Those who come forth in the evening of the First Resurrection will go into the Terrestrial Kingdom, and this will be the end of the First Resurrection. The second Resurrection will be for those who go into the Celestial Kingdom and those who eventually become Sons of Perdition. All of this is in accordance with a well-worked out plan of procreation and of judgment until the final work that the Lord has intended for men is over.

There is another thing that you must understand for yourselves, in order to understand this whole thing; and that is that this life, or the day of this life, so far as

the Gospel is concerned, begins the day you were born and ends after the period of the Spirit World—not when you die in this life. So, the day of this life, so far as the plan of life is concerned is from the day you were born until the end of your period in the Spirit World. For this reason then we can function and carry on the program that the Lord has intended in the Spirit World so that they can be preached to and have done for them here upon the earth the necessary work, and that work will be bound in the worlds that are to come.

Now, I want to go back again to the statement of Abraham and to emphasize here the importance of what we are doing. “Now the Lord has shown unto me, Abraham, the intelligences that were organized before the world was; and among all these there were many of the noble and great ones; and God saw these souls that they were good, and He stood in the midst of them and He said: These I will make My rulers.” All right, what did the Lord mean by that? I call your attention now to the washing and anointing that you received in the Temple. All of you have been through the Temple, I assume. When you went into the washing and anointing room where you were washed and anointed with water and oil, you were given a new name, and you were promised that someday you would be called up to be a king and priest; or a queen and a priestess. Don’t ever suppose that that is for this life. It is not. It is for the next life, and the Lord is preparing today the rulers that will be administrators of these degrees of Glory after the Spirit World. The consequence of this is that the Celestial Kingdom must be peopled first because it becomes the kingdom of administration, so all of it becomes part of the plan.

The Terrestrial Kingdom will receive its administrators through the Christ and the Melchizedek Priesthood, and there will be a system of government established upon that kingdom. The Celestial Kingdom will receive its administration through the ministering angels of the Celestial Kingdom, and they will have their form of government, but they will exist and live under a government. They will be controlled by laws and regulations of advancement and development and growth—all in accordance with the plan of the Lord—the same in the Terrestrial and Celestial Kingdoms.

Now, let us suppose that we were a board of directors here today and we were going to establish a vast corporation that would hire millions of men and women. Would we go out and hire all these men right at the outset, or would we first build an administrative building and hire our executives or administrators and then place them over to control and govern? It is the same thing in the plan of life. The Celestial Kingdom must be founded first because it becomes the kingdom of administration. The Lord has revealed these things to us. They are very plain, and what we are striving for today is to find those whom the Lord wants to make His rulers.

We like to think, I know, and I do too, that the Gospel is going to be received by everyone, but it isn’t. I call to your attention the statements of the Christ when He said, “Strait is the gate and narrow is the way and few there be that find it.” There won’t be many but these the Lord has chosen in the pre-existence. If they are worthy and prove their worthiness in this life and this probation, then they receive the endowment. When they get the endowment, they are promised that they will be leaders. We call them kings and priests, but the correct word in our terminology would be administrators, a leader, an executive, who will have power to govern and control millions and millions of people who will go into the other Degrees of Glory.

Now you see how the plan opens up, and there is purpose and meaning as to what we are doing? I have often said this. It is a frightening thought, but it is undoubtedly true,

that only those who are worthy of leadership will enter the Celestial Kingdom, because that is the Kingdom of administration. Others who are less valiant who do not have the qualifications of leadership and direction will necessarily have to settle for the Terrestrial Kingdom.

I don't know whether the knowledge or the revelation of these things will have an effect upon you as a missionary, but I know that it has an effect upon me, because if I am to fulfill my destiny and my purpose here in this life as has been given to me and proven to me by my pre-existence—pre-existent identity, then I would do everything in my power to measure up to what I was in the pre-existence, because if we could, this day, by some miraculous means be permitted to see who we were, I wouldn't be President Dyer up there or you wouldn't be Elder Smith or Brown or President Gunderson. Oh, no! You would be someone else, and the day will come when you know who you are, because you are a person of nobility. You may not fully know that now, but you were a person of nobility in the pre-existence. If you were not, you would have been born into one of these other channels, and you would not have been born in this day and age, because the Lord has withheld the choice spirits of the pre-existence to come forth in this, the last dispensation, and the reason for this is obvious. Why? Because Christ will establish His kingdom in this dispensation. He came into the world once and was rejected. Why? Because in the world will be just that many righteous spirits who supported Him and sustained Him and who accepted Him in the pre-existence. That is why today I am telling you how to preach the Gospel to the people. They do not need to have long teaching. These people today who are accepting the Gospel know all about it because they have been selected to know. That is why they recognize when they feel the charge and the impact of testimony and spirit. Then it all unfolds to them, and many of them are even more brilliant than we are because of the place which they held.

This is not like any other day in the history of the world. The Lord is preparing to make His stand. The Lord is now preparing to establish His kingdom—the kingdom that will govern the earth for 1,000 years before we go into the judgment period that leads unto the establishment of the Degrees of Glory. In consequence of that, He has wisely chosen the ones that are to come into the world in this day and age. It is a battle. He fought the power of Lucifer in the pre-existence. He has to use His best spirits to defeat him, and here again He will have to do the same things, and He knows that. Now, what does that mean—“in a probation”?

In the wisdom of our Heavenly Father, He has made this life a probation which means that a person who is born in a lower division can accelerate through this life to a higher division. For example, if a colored person, being born into the Telestial Division will receive and accept the Gospel, he can be elevated to the Celestial division or the Terrestrial division. That is the purpose of a probation. That is why the Lord set the plan of the Gospel so that those who had not merited it in the pre-existence may merit it here through this life of probation. Don't you see that? Don't you see the purpose of the probation, the planning of the Gospel, to provide even this last opportunity in this life while men are taking upon themselves the element of body to have another chance to improve their place over what they had done in the pre-existence?

Now, I want to read to you from the Book of Mormon on that. This scripture will have new meaning to you, I am sure, as you understand the things that I have spoken. The prophet Alma understood this very plainly, and I want you to pay particular attention to

what he says. This is found in the 34th chapter beginning with the 31st verse. I am sure you have read it, but let's read it now for this concept. "Yea, I would that ye would come forth and harden not your hearts any longer; for behold, now is the time and the day of your salvation." What is the time and day?—from the beginning of birth to the end of the Spirit World. That is the time and the day of your salvation. "And therefore, if ye will repent and harden not your hearts, immediately shall the great plan of redemption be brought about unto you." Don't you see?

All a man has to do is repent and open his heart to the Lord and immediately the plan will be made known to him. That doesn't say the missionary will make it known to him—the power of the Holy Ghost will make it known unto him. He, already, knows it because he stood in the councils and supported and sustained this plan. He recognizes Christ. He recognizes the prophets, etc. "For behold, this life is the time for men to prepare to meet God."

If life did not extend beyond the grave, then why did Christ go to the Spirit World? Why do we send our missionaries to the Spirit World—undoubtedly where Elder Wheat went? Isn't it something that he was driving on the highway doing missionary work? In the twinkling of an eye, he was doing missionary work in the Spirit World. He had changed from life to death still a missionary. It came upon him, and he never even knew what happened. I know just as well as I know anything that he is preaching the Gospel there.

Many of the people of the world like the descendants of Meshech who are living in Russia, live and die without hearing the Gospel and go to the Spirit World. We do not have access to them, so the Lord teaches them the Gospel in the Spirit World, because their government won't let us do it here. Then, their descendants hear of it, and they, themselves, wield a great influence. In this way, the Gospel is preached unto all nations, kindreds and tongues.

"Now behold, this life is the time for men to prepare to meet God. Behold, the day of this life is the day for men to perform their labors." Now, listen closely, "and now, as I said unto you before, as ye have had so many witnesses, therefore, I beseech you that ye do not procrastinate the day of your repentance until the end." What is the end?—the end of the Spirit World—which is given us to prepare for eternity. "Behold, if we do not improve our time while in this life, then cometh the night of darkness wherein there can be no labor performed." It is just as simple as anything can be simple.

I wanted to talk to you about that today, because I wanted you to know the reason why you are preaching the Gospel. There is a purpose behind it and knowing this as you do and knowing your nobility—what kind of a missionary are you going to be from this day to the end of your mission? I know what kind you want to be. There will be no more wasted time, because it is imposed upon you—the necessity of continuing your nobility, that you may prove your place—That you may be a ruler and a king and a queen and a priestess as you were promised in the Temple of God if you were faithful in fulfilling your obligations

I have always thought and have proven the point many times that if you will place into the mind of a boy or a girl, firstly, that they are noble persons born of noble heritage in the pre-existence, they will never stoop to anything that is sordid. They just won't do it. You don't need the preachings and the harrassments of young people. All you need to do is to accept that as your ideology, and what you do from now on will be the

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important thing in your life, because I have made known to you today something you may not have known before, but you know them now because the Spirit bears record.

May the Lord bless you in it and bless you with this knowledge. I bear record of its truthfulness in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

