

# WILL BENSON BE KING?

## MORMON LEADER STRIVES FOR POLITICAL POWER

On February 24, 1980, the *Salt Lake Tribune* carried a full-page advertisement concerning our new book, *The Changing World of Mormonism*. In this ad we demonstrated that many important changes have been made in Mormon doctrine. Two days after this was published, Ezra Taft Benson, who is President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles and next in line to lead the Mormon Church, spoke at Brigham Young University. In this speech he claimed that the "Living Prophet" is "More Vital to Us Than the Standard Works"—i.e., the Bible, Book of Mormon, *Doctrine and Covenants* and *Pearl of Great Price*. He went on to warn: "Beware of those who would pit the dead prophets against the living prophets, for the living prophets always take precedence." Using this type of reasoning a Mormon could set aside the teachings of Joseph Smith and Brigham Young when they disagree with the "Living Prophet."

It would appear from President Benson's speech that he wants his people to allow the "Living Prophet" to do their thinking in temporal as well as spiritual matters. This is reminiscent of the ward teacher's message for June, 1945:

When our leaders speak, the thinking has been done. When they point the way, there is no other which is safe. When they give direction, it should mark the end of controversy. (*Improvement Era*, June 1945, page 354)

Ezra Taft Benson's speech has caused great consternation among Mormons who want to "do their own thinking." One thing they really fear is his attempt to mix politics with religion. He indicates that the Prophet has a right to dictate to his people on political matters and even to "lead them in government. Alma was the head of the Church and of the government in the Book of Mormon; Joseph Smith was mayor of Nauvoo and Brigham Young was governor of Utah . . . Those who would remove prophets from politics would take God out of government." Those who know of President Benson's previous attempts to involve the Church in politics realize the danger that lies ahead if he should become the "Living Prophet." This is a very real possibility because Spencer W. Kimball, the present leader, is four years older than Benson and now in poor health (during the last several months Kimball has undergone surgery twice to drain "an accumulation of fluid between his brain and skull" (*The Ensign*, January 1980, page 80).

### The Mormon Kingdom

From the very beginning Mormon Church leaders were inclined to meddle in politics. Joseph Smith himself set up a secret "Council of Fifty" and had himself ordained to be a king. In 1853 William Marks, who had been a member of the Council of Fifty, revealed: "I was also witness of the introduction (secretly,) of a kingly form of government, in which Joseph suffered himself to be ordained a king, to reign over the house of Israel forever; . . ." (*Zion's Harbinger and Baneemy's Organ*, St. Louis, July, 1853, page 53).

In his master's thesis for Brigham Young University, Klaus J. Hansen tells that George Miller, who had been a member of the Council of Fifty, admitted that Joseph Smith was ordained to be a king: "Rumors implying that the Prophet assumed royal pretensions are somewhat substantiated by George Miller who stated on one occasion that 'In this council we ordained Joseph Smith as King



Ezra Taft Benson

on earth' " ("The Theory and Practice of the Political Kingdom of God in Mormon History, 1829-1890," master's thesis, BYU, 1959, typed copy, page 114).

In *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Summer 1966, page 104, Mr. Hansen frankly admitted that "Joseph Smith did start a political kingdom of God and a Council of Fifty; he was made king over that organization. . . ."

When Fawn Brodie stated that Joseph Smith was anointed king, Dr. Hugh Nibley claimed that there was not enough evidence to support this accusation. Since that time, however, a great deal of new evidence has come to light, and now many Mormon scholars are willing to concede that Joseph Smith was made king. For instance, Kenneth W. Godfrey, who was director of the LDS Institute at Stanford University, admitted that Joseph Smith was "Ordained 'King over the Immediate House of Israel' by the Council of Fifty" (*Brigham Young University Studies*, Winter 1968, pages 212-213). Among other things, Dr. Godfrey's footnote refers us to the "Diary of George A. Smith, May 9, 1844," which is in the "Library of the Church Historian." In a dissertation written at Brigham Young University, Dr. Godfrey observed:

Davidson states that Joseph Smith had himself anointed King and Priest . . . in a revelation dated 1886 given to President John Taylor, mention is made of Joseph Smith being crowned a king in Nauvoo. Not only was he ordained a king but the leading members of the Church were assigned governmental responsibilities. Brigham Young was to be president, John Taylor vice president, members of the Church were assigned to represent different states in the house and senate of the United States, and a full cabinet was appointed. ("Causes of Mormon Non-Mormon Conflict in Hancock County, Illinois, 1839-1846," Ph.D. dissertation, BYU, 1967, pages 63-65)

In his book, *Joseph Smith, the Mormon Prophet*, page 204, Mormon writer John J. Stewart related that "(The Prophet established a confidential Council of Fifty, or 'Ytfif,' comprised of both Mormons and non-Mormons, to help attend to temporal matters, including the eventual development of a government, in harmony with preparatory plans for the second advent of the Saviour.)"

### Joseph Smith For President

In 1844 the Council of Fifty decided to run Joseph Smith for the presidency of the United States. Klaus J. Hansen said that "the Council of Fifty, while seriously contemplating the possibility

of emigration, also considered a rather spectacular alternative, namely, to run its leader for the presidency of the United States in the campaign of 1844. . . . Smith and the Council of Fifty seems to have taken the election quite seriously, much more so, indeed, than both Mormons and anti-Mormons have heretofore suspected” (*Quest for Empire*, page 74).

The elders of the church were actually called to “electioneer” for Joseph Smith (*History of the Church*, vol. 6, page 322). Mormon writer John J. Stewart refers to those who were sent to campaign as a “vast force of political missionaries” (*Joseph Smith, the Mormon Prophet*, page 209).

Under the date of January 29, 1844, this statement is attributed to Joseph Smith in the *History of the Church*: “If you attempt to accomplish this, you must send every man in the city who is able to speak in public throughout the land to electioneer. . . . There is oratory enough in the Church to carry me into the presidential chair the first slide” (vol. 6, page 188).

The fact that Joseph Smith would allow himself to be crowned king shows that he was driven by the idea of gaining power. It is very possible that Smith seriously believed that he would become president and that he would rule as king over the people of the United States. The attempt by Joseph Smith to become president seems to have been a treasonous plot to bring the United States Government under the rule of the priesthood. George Miller, who had been a member of the Council of Fifty, recorded in a letter dated June 28, 1855:

It was further determined in Council that all the elders should set out on missions . . . and do everything in our power to have Joseph elected president. If we succeeded in making a majority of the voters converts to our faith, and elected Joseph president, in such an event the dominion of the Kingdom would be forever established in the United States; and if not successful, we could fall back on Texas, and be a kingdom notwithstanding. (Letter by George Miller, as quoted in *Joseph Smith and World Government*, by Hyrum Andrus, 1963, page 54)

## The Living Prophet Is King

The practice of ordaining the President of the Mormon Church as “king on earth” did not cease with the death of Joseph Smith. It is reported that Brigham Young, the second president, was ordained king, and the Mormon Apostle Abraham H. Cannon states that there was a discussion in the Council of Fifty as to whether John Taylor, the third president, should be ordained king:

Father [George Q. Cannon, a member of the First Presidency] said Moses Thatcher’s drawing away from his brethren commenced as far as his knowledge concerning it went, at a time when the Council of Fifty met in the old City Hall, and Moses opposed the proposition to anoint John Taylor as Prophet Priest and King, and Moses’ opposition prevailed at that time. (“Daily Journal of Abraham H. Cannon,” December 2, 1895, page 198; original at Brigham Young University Library)

The journal of Franklin D. Richards seems to show that Taylor was anointed king on February 4, 1885, (see *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* page 418). While we do not know whether the President of the Mormon Church is still anointed king, Apostle Bruce R. McConkie makes it plain that he is in reality “the earthly king”:

1. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints as it is now constituted is the kingdom of God on earth. . . . The Church and kingdom are one and the same. . . .

The Church (or kingdom) is not a democracy; . . . The Church is a kingdom. The Lord Jesus Christ is the Eternal King, and the President of the Church, the mouthpiece of God on earth,

is the earthly king. All things come to the Church from the King of the kingdom in heaven, through the king of the kingdom on earth. (*Mormon Doctrine*, 1979, pages 415-416)

## Benson’s Political Involvements

While most scholars believe that the Council of Fifty died out sometime around the turn of the century, in the book *Mormon Spies, Hughes and the C.I.A.*, page 51, we explored the possibility that it may have continued to exist in this century. We noted that on September 13, 1967, we received a letter from a man who had come to Utah to do research on Mormonism. In this letter he asserted:

Concerning the present status of the Council of the Fifty, I was told by an instructor at BYU that the Council exists today. Both Apostle Benson & a son (the John Bircher) are on it. I will write him and see if he will talk with you. He is in a very precarious situation, having apostacized but not having been excommunicated or fired from the “Y.” When he discovered this evidence on the 50, he was called into the Vice President office & sworn to secrecy. (I believe there was a mild threat used-at least he implied this. . . . (Letter dated September 13, 1967; for more information on this see *Mormon Spies, Hughes and the C.I.A.*, pages 51-52)

While this is certainly “hear-say information” which cannot be checked unless the Church releases all of the secret records of the Council of Fifty, there is a great deal of evidence showing that Apostle Benson would like to involve the Church deeply in politics. In other words, his goals are consistent with those of the Council of Fifty. If the Council of Fifty is not in existence at the present time, it seems reasonable to believe that Benson might want to reestablish it. He would certainly have the power to do this if he became the “Living Prophet.”

In any case, at one time Benson served as Secretary of Agriculture under President Eisenhower. Although he is not a member of the John Birch Society, his activities on its behalf have caused other Church leaders a great deal of embarrassment. On January 4, 1964, Drew Pearson made the following comment concerning Ezra Taft Benson: “Benson has become so extreme in his views that the Mormon Church, of which he is one of the Twelve Apostles, has quietly transferred him abroad to head the church’s European mission” (*San Francisco Chronicle*, January 4, 1964).

President David O. McKay denied the accusation, but the newspapers let the “cat out of the bag” when they published two letters written to Rep. Ralph R. Harding. One of them was written by Joseph Fielding Smith, who became the tenth president of the Church:

“I am glad to report to you that it will be some time before we hear anything from Brother Benson, who is now on his way to Great Britain where I suppose he will be at least for the next two years. When he returns, I hope his blood will be purified.” (*Salt Lake Tribune*, February 21, 1964)

On September 25, 1968, a newsman sent us a letter which contained this information about Benson:

Had an interesting telephone conversation with Elder Benson the other day. He said he could have had the American Independent Party vice presidential nomination, but turned it down after consultation with President McKay.

Since the death of Joseph Fielding Smith, the Apostle Benson has risen to great power in the Mormon Church. On February 25, 1974, the Brigham Young University’s *Daily Universe* reported the following:

SALT LAKE CITY (AP)—President Ezra Taft Benson, . . . said, in an interview this week, it is “entirely possible” the president of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

(Mormon) will one day declare support for a political candidate . . . President Benson stands next in the traditional line of ascension to the Mormon presidency. . . .

President Benson, . . . said he has never had to separate his religion from his politics. . . .

Asked if a good Mormon could be a liberal Democrat, President Benson said, "I think it would be very hard if he was living the gospel and understood it."

In an article entitled, "Benson Tells Party Support," we find the following:

Ezra Taft Benson, . . . has praised the principles of the American Party as "divine and eternal," according to an Associated Press story Sunday.

In remarks confirmed by *The Tribune*, the former secretary of agriculture . . . said, "Never in a decade have I read a set of principles of any party that come so close to the philosophy which I have and which I think my own church people have." (*Salt Lake Tribune*, November 4, 1974)

Some have speculated that the Freeman Institute may be in some way connected with the Mormon Kingdom. While we have no way of knowing whether this is true, the Institute was founded by Benson's friend W. Cleon Skousen, a former F.B.I. agent who was devoted to J. Edgar Hoover. Mr. Skousen also served as Chief of Police in Salt Lake City and as professor of ancient scriptures at the Church's BYU. Ezra Taft Benson seems to be deeply committed to the purposes of the Institute. In 1976 a "Special Invitation" to the "grand opening of the new national headquarters building" stated that "President Ezra T. Benson will be the featured speaker." The *Ogden Standard Examiner* for February 25, 1980, reported that Benson spoke at a gathering of the Institute in Scottsdale, Arizona. *Utah Holiday* magazine for February 1980, gave this information:

Generally the impact of the far-right is discounted. An exception is the Benson/Skousen following. Representative Irvine considers Skousen's Freeman Institute the most cohesive and influential conservative group in the state. They reportedly claim 5,000 members in the Salt Lake area which would make them a rather formidable organization, especially in light of their ability to control the nominating process. By heavy mass meeting participation it is relatively easy for a well organized minority to push through their candidate, which is what frequently happens. . . .

Ezra Taft Benson, . . . has the most instantly recognizable conservative image of any Utahn, and it extends nationwide. (pages 29-30)

According to *Sunstone*:

Mark A. Benson, a regional representative of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has been appointed Vice-president and Director of Development for the Freeman Institute. . . .

The new vice-president is the son of Ezra Taft Benson, President of the Council of Twelve Apostles. (Jan.-Feb. 1980, page 50)

The Freeman Institute is growing rapidly in America and is spreading to other countries as well.

In any case, Ezra Taft Benson realizes that he is very close to the position of "Prophet, Seer and Revelator," or as Apostle McConkie would phrase it, "king of the kingdom on earth." It would appear from some of his statements that he is now polishing the crown in anticipation of the day he becomes President. The following extracts from his speech of February 26, 1980, make this very plain:

My beloved brothers and sisters. I am honored to be in your presence today. . . . As a Church we sing the song, "We Thank Thee, Oh God, For A Prophet." Here then is the grand key—Follow The Prophet—and here now are Fourteen Fundamentals In Following the Prophet, the President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

**FIRST: *The Prophet is the only man who speaks for the Lord in Everything.*** . . . Did you hear what the Lord said about the words of the Prophet? We are to "give heed unto all his words"—as if from the Lord's "own mouth."

**SECOND: *The Living Prophet is More Vital to Us Than the Standard Works.*** . . .

**THIRD: *The Living Prophet is More Important to Us Than a Dead Prophet.*** . . . the most important prophet so far as you and I are concerned is the one living in our day and age to whom the Lord is currently revealing His will for us. Therefore the most important reading we can do is any of the words of the Prophet contained each week in the Church Section of the *Deseret News*, and any words of the Prophet contained each month in our Church magazines. Our marching orders for each six months are found in the General Conference addresses which are printed in the *Ensign* magazine. . . .

Beware of those who would pit the dead prophets against the living prophets, for the living prophets always take precedence.

**FOURTH: *The Prophet Will Never Lead the Church Astray.*** . . .

President Marion G. Romney tells of this incident which happened to him: I remember years ago when I was a Bishop I had President (Heber J.) Grant talk to our ward. . . . he put his arm over my shoulder and said: "My boy, you always keep your eye on the President of the Church, and if he ever tells you to do anything, and it is wrong, and you do it, the Lord will bless you for it." Then with a twinkle in his eye, he said, "But you don't need to worry. The Lord will never let his mouthpiece lead the people astray." (*CR*, October 1960, page 78.)

**FIFTH: *The Prophet is Not Required to Have Any Particular Earthly Training or Credentials to Speak on Any Subject or Act on Any Matter at Any Time.*** . . . We haven't yet had a prophet who earned a doctorate degree in any subject, but as someone said, "A prophet may not have his PhD but he certainly has his LDS." . . .

**SIXTH: *The Prophet Does Not Have to Say "Thus Saith the Lord" to Give Us Scripture.***

Sometimes there are those who haggle over words. They might say the prophet gave us counsel but that we are not obligated to follow it unless he says it is a commandment. But the Lord says of the Prophet, "Thou shalt give heed unto all his words and commandments which he shall give unto you." (*D&C* 21:4.) . . .

Said Brigham Young, "I have never yet preached a sermon and sent it out to the children of men, that they many not call scripture." (*JD* 13:95.)

**SEVENTH: *The Prophet Tells Us What We Need to Know, Not Always What We Want to Know.*** . . .

Said President Harold B. Lee: "You may not like what comes from the authority of the Church. It may contradict your political views. . . . Your safety and ours depends upon whether or not we follow . . . Let's keep our eye on the President of the Church." (*CR*, October 1970, pages 152-153.)

But it is the living Prophet who really upsets the world. . . . the living prophet gets at what we need to know now, and the world prefers that prophets either be dead or mind their own business. Some so-called experts of political science want the prophet to keep still on politics. . . .

**EIGHTH: *The Prophet is Not Limited by Men's Reasoning.***

There will be times when you will have to choose between the revelations of God and reasoning of men—between the prophet and the politician or professor. . . .

**NINTH: *The Prophet Can Receive Revelation on Any Matter—Temporal or Spiritual.*** . . .

**TENTH: *The Prophet May be Involved in Civic Matters.***

When a people are righteous they want the best to lead them in government. Alma was the head of the Church and of the government in the Book of Mormon; Joseph Smith was mayor of Nauvoo and Brigham Young was governor of Utah. . . . Those who would remove prophets from politics would take God out of government.

**ELEVENTH: *The Two Groups Who Have the Greatest Difficulty in Following the Prophet Are the Proud Who Are Learned and the Proud Who Are Rich.*** . . .

**TWELFTH: *The Prophet Will Not Necessarily be Popular with the World or the Worldly.*** . . .

**THIRTEENTH: *The Prophet and His Counselors Make Up the First Presidency—The Highest Quorum in the Church.*** . . .

**FOURTEENTH: *The Prophet And the Presidency—The Living Prophet and the First Presidency—Follow Them and Be Blessed—Reject Them and Suffer.*** . . .

I testify that these fundamentals in following the living prophet are true. . . . how close do out [*sic*] lives harmonize with the words of the Lord's anointed—the living Prophet—President of the Church, and with the Quorum of the First Presidency. ("Fourteen Fundamentals in Following The Prophets," by President Ezra Taft Benson, BYU Devotional Assembly, February 26, 1980)

We have reprinted this speech in its entirety together with an address by Apostle Bruce R. McConkie entitled, "All Are Alike Unto God." McConkie's speech relates to the new revelation granting blacks the priesthood. Like Benson's speech, it recommends blind-obedience to the "Living Prophet." Both of these speeches are available from Modern Microfilm Co. for \$2.00 under the title, *Following the Brethren*.

We also recommend our book, *Mormon Spies, Hughes and the C.I.A.* which sells for \$2.95. This book gives a great deal of information about the involvement of Mormonism in government. Although we do not want to sound too extreme, we are rather concerned about what could happen if Benson becomes President. We remember that Heber C. Kimball, a member of the First Presidency in Brigham Young's time, once predicted that "The Nations will bow to this kingdom, sooner or later, and all hell cannot help it" (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 7, page 170).

## WOMEN IN MORMON THEOLOGY

The recent excommunication of Sonia Johnson has caused national attention to be focused on the place of women in the Mormon Church. Mormon leaders have apparently been concerned for some time that this issue would finally come to a head. Just after President Spencer W. Kimball issued the revelation granting blacks the priesthood, he did his best to make sure that women did not get the idea that he could be pressured into another revelation:

HONOLULU (AP) — The President of the Mormon Church said Monday the church will not extend the priesthood to women, now that it has ordained its first black priest. (*Salt Lake Tribune*, June 13, 1978)

*Time* magazine for August 7, 1978, reported that "Kimball states that unlike blacks, it is 'impossible' that women would ever attain priesthood."

While we feel that the Mormon Church has many good teachings concerning women and the family, there is definitely a belief in the inferiority of women which stems back to the teachings of Joseph Smith and Brigham Young. Joseph Smith for instance, established a doctrine of polygamy which held Mormon women in bondage for many years. (A chapter of 86 pages dealing with this subject is found in our new book *The Changing World of Mormonism*.) Smith's revelation concerning the subject is still printed as Section 132 of the *Doctrine and Covenants*. After Joseph Smith's death, Brigham Young led the Church. Notwithstanding the fact that he had many wives, Brigham Young admitted that "There are probably but few men in the world who care about the private society of women less than I do" (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 5, page 99).

Although Young promoted the sealing of women and men in temple marriage for eternity, he seemed to feel that the sealing of men to men (one man would be adopted to another as his son) was even a more solemn ordinance. In a speech given September 4, 1873, Brigham Young maintained: "But we can seal women to men, but not men to men, without a Temple" (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 16, page 186). Kimball Young observed:

To understand the role and status and the accompanying self-images of men and women in polygamy, we must recall that Mormondom was a male-dominated society. The priesthood which only men could hold—was in complete control and celestial marriage, either monogamous or polygamous, exemplified the higher status of men. Women were viewed as of lesser worth, to be saved only through men holding the priesthood. . . .

That this masculine principle went deep, and far more fantastically that the Saints could comprehend, is shown in a sermon by Brigham Young, reported by John Read. In a letter to one of his wives Read said that Brigham referred to some future time "when men would be sealed to men in the priesthood in a more solemn ordinance than that by which women were sealed to man, and in a room over that in which women were sealed to man in the temple of the Lord." (*Isn't One Wife Enough?* pages 279-280)

For more information on the sealing of men to men, see our book, *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* pages 480-483.

While Brigham Young did not care much for the "private society of women," he taught that a man's place in heaven depended to a great extent on the size of his family. His wife, therefore, should bear as many children as possible:

Sisters, do you wish to make yourselves happy? Then what is your duty? It is for you to bear children, in the name of the Lord, . . . bring forth in the name of Israel's God, that you may have the honour of being the mothers of great and good men . . . are you tormenting yourselves by thinking that your husbands do not love you? I would not care whether they loved a particle or not; but I would cry out, like one of old, in the joy of my heart, "I have got a man from the Lord!" . . . "I have borne an image of God!" (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 9, page 37)

On another occasion Brigham Young admonished:

. . . I am going to set every woman at liberty and say to them, Now go your way, my women with the rest, go your way And my wives have got to do one of two things; either round up their shoulders to endure the afflictions of this world, and live their religion, or they may leave, for I will not have them about me. I will go into heaven alone, rather than have scratching and fighting around me. I will set all at liberty. "What, first wife too?" Yes, I will liberate you all. . . .

I wish my women, and brother Kimball's and brother Grant's to leave, and every woman in this Territory, or else say in their hearts that they will embrace the Gospel—the whole of it. . . . say to your wives, "Take all that I have and be set at liberty; but if you stay with me you shall comply with the law of God, and that too without any murmuring and whining. You must fulfil the law of God in every respect, and round up your shoulders to walk up to the mark without any grunting."

Now recollect that two weeks from to morrow I am going to set you at liberty. But the first wife will say, "It is hard, for I have lived with my husband twenty years, or thirty, and have raised a family of children for him, and it is a great trial to me for him to have more women;" then I say it is time that you gave him up to other women who will bear children. If my wife had borne me all the children that she ever would bare, the celestial law would teach me to take young women that would have children. (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 4, pages 55-57)

Fanny Stenhouse, who left the Church in Brigham Young's day, made these interesting observations:

In my unhappy condition, I thought that perhaps I might derive some consolation from the sermons in the Tabernacle . . . But instead of obtaining consolation, I heard that which aroused every feeling of my soul to rebellion. . . . I heard that woman was an inferior being, designed by the Lord for the special glory and exaltation of man, that she was a creature that should feel herself honoured if he would only make her the mother of his children—a creature who if very obedient and faithful through all the trials and tribulations in life, might some day be rewarded by becoming one of her husband's queens, but should even then shine only by virtue of the reflected light derived from the glory of her spouse and lord. He was to be her "saviour," for he was all in all to her; and it was through him alone and at his will that she could obtain salvation. We were informed that man was the crowning glory of creation, for whom all things—woman included—were brought into being; and that the chief object of woman's existence was to help man to his great destiny.

Not a sentence—indeed, not a word—did we ever hear as to the possibility of womanly perfection and exaltation in her own right; . . . The great object of marriage, we were told, was the increase of children. . . . if some woman was found objecting to polygamy on account of its crushing and degrading effects upon women generally, then, . . . she was told in the coarse language of Brigham Young himself, that "Such women had no business to complain; it was quite enough honour for them to be permitted to bear children to God's holy Priesthood." . . . It was painfully clear to my understanding, then as now, that in Mormonism woman was to lose her personal identity. All that Christianity had done to elevate her was to be ruthlessly set aside and trampled under foot, and she was instantly to return to the position which she occupied in the darkest ages of the world's existence. (*Tell It All*, pages 181-182)

Although the Church no longer allows the practice of polygamy, some of the teachings concerning the inferiority of women persist in its theology. Church leaders teach, for instance, that plural marriage will be practiced in heaven. Mormon apologist John J. Stewart proclaims:

The Church has never, and certainly will never, renounce this doctrine. The revelation on plural marriage is still an integral part of LDS scripture, and always will be. If a woman, sealed to her husband for time and eternity, precedes her husband in death, it is his privilege to marry another also for time and eternity, providing that he is worthy of doing so. Consider, for instance, the case of President Joseph Fielding Smith of the Council of the Twelve, one of the greatest men upon earth. . . . After the death of his first wife President Joseph Fielding Smith married another, and each of these good women are sealed to him for time and all eternity. (*Brigham Young And His Wives*, Salt Lake City, 1961, page 14)

In his book *Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 2, page 67, President Smith remarked: ". . . my wives will be mine in eternity. I don't know how some other people feel, but that is a glorious thought to me. That helps to keep me sober."

Every Mormon woman, therefore, faces the possibility of living in a polygamous relationship in heaven if she dies first and her husband decides to be sealed to another woman. A woman, of course, cannot be sealed for eternity to more than one husband. Because a woman is not granted the same privilege as a man a problem has arisen for those doing work for the dead. In a newsletter published by Sandy First Ward we find the following:

. . . Brother Christiansen talked about new rulings concerning sealings for the dead. It is now possible for a woman that was married more than once to be sealed to ALL

her husbands, providing that in life she had not been sealed to any of her husbands.

The First Presidency of the Church has ruled that rather than try to decide which husband a deceased woman should be sealed to, she can be sealed to all of them. However, only one sealing will be valid and accepted before God. God and the woman will decide which one of the sealings will be accepted on Judgment Day. (*Tele-Ward*, Sandy First Ward, January 25, 1976, vol. V, no. 2, page 5)

In 1976 the First Presidency announced a new rule which discriminates against a woman who wishes to obtain her endowments in the temple after marriage:

A wife whose husband is not endowed should not be given a recommend to receive her endowments. . . . A worthy man whose wife has not received her endowments may be given a recommend to receive his own endowments. (*General Handbook of Instructions*, Number 21, 1976, page 54)

Christian theology teaches that males and females will be equal in the resurrection:

But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection. (Luke 20:35-36)

Mormon Church leaders teach that both men and women can attain Godhood. Apostle Bruce R. McConkie says that "Godhood is not for men only; it is for men and women together" (*Mormon Doctrine*, 1979, page 844).

While at first glance it appears that this would make men and women equal, a more careful examination of the doctrine reveals just the opposite. According to Mormon theology, Church members follow the same plan of eternal progression as God the Father. Mormon leaders claim God is just an exalted man who has a wife known as the "Eternal Mother." Apostle McConkie explains:

Implicit in the Christian verity that all men are the spirit children of an Eternal Father is the usually unspoken truth that they are also the offspring of an Eternal Mother. . . .

This doctrine that there is a Mother in Heaven was affirmed in plainness by the First Presidency of the Church . . .

Mortal persons who overcome all things and gain an ultimate exaltation will live eternally in the family unit and have spirit children, thus becoming Eternal Fathers and Eternal Mothers. (*Mormon Doctrine*, 1979, pages 516-517)

Now, if the "Eternal Mother" really had gained equality with her husband, we would expect the Mormons to pray to her. The Apostle Orson Pratt, however, made it plain that the "Eternal Mother's" Godhood does not really amount to much since she is in "the most perfect obedience" to her "great head":

But if we have a heavenly Mother as well as a heavenly Father, is it not right that we should worship the Mother of our spirits as well as the Father? No; for the Father of our spirits is at the head of His household, and His wives and children are required to yield the most perfect obedience to their great Head. It is lawful for the children to worship the King of Heaven, but not the "Queen of heaven," . . . Jesus prayed to His Father, and taught His disciples to do likewise; but we are nowhere taught that Jesus prayed to His heavenly Mother: . . . (*The Seer*, page 157)

It would appear, then, that in Mormon theology the claim that a woman can obtain "Godhood" amounts to very little. Like the present "Heavenly Mother," she will be required to yield the most perfect obedience" to her "great Head"—i.e., her husband, while she continues to give birth to "many millions" of spirit children.

Apostle Pratt explained:

In the Heaven where our spirits were born, there are many Gods, each one of whom has his own wife or wives which were given to him previous to his redemption, while yet in his mortal state. Each God, through his wife or Wives, raises up a numerous family of sons and daughters; . . . As soon as each God has begotten many millions of male and female spirits, . . . he, in connection with his sons, organizes a new world, . . . where he sends both the male and female spirits to inhabit tabernacles of flesh and bones. . . . The number of the sons and daughters of God, born in Heaven before this earth was formed, is not known by us. . . . Seventy thousand million, therefore, is a rough approximation to the number . . . Add to seventy thousand million, the third part which fell, namely, thirty-five thousand million, and the sum amounts to one hundred and five thousand million which was the approximate number of the sons and daughters of God in Heaven before the rebellion which broke out among them.

31. If we admit that one personage was the Father of all this great family, and that they were all born of the same Mother, the period of time intervening between the birth of the oldest and the youngest spirit must have been immense. If we suppose, as an average, that only one year intervened between each birth, then it would have required, over one hundred thousand million of years for the same Mother to have given birth to this vast family. . . . if it required one hundred thousand million of years to people a world like this, as above stated, it is evident that, with a hundred wives, this period would be reduced to only one thousand million of years. (*Ibid.*, pages 37-39)

Since the Mormon Church changed the anti-black doctrine, many Mormon women have come to see that they are the ones who will be “second class” citizens in heaven. Mormon leaders used to explain that blacks could not hold the priesthood because they were not valiant in the pre-existence, but no reason has been given for the inferiority of women in Mormon theology.

## AN UPDATE ON FALL of the BOOK of ABRAHAM

In the *Salt Lake City Messenger* for March 1968, we announced the “FALL OF THE BOOK OF ABRAHAM.” Subsequently we published a number of books showing that Joseph Smith’s “Book of Abraham” had been proven untrue (see especially *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* pages 294-369). During the past few years we have received a number of inquiries as to whether there has been any change in the situation with regard to the Book of Abraham. Our reply is that although there have been a few new developments, the case against the Book of Abraham stands as firm as it did over a decade ago.

In our new book, *The Changing World of Mormonism*, we give this information about the “Fall of the Book of Abraham”:

The Book of Abraham was supposed to have been written on papyrus by Abraham about 4,000 years ago. According to Mormon writers, this same papyrus fell into Joseph Smith’s hands in 1835. He translated the papyrus and published it under the title, “The Book of Abraham.” The Book of Abraham was accepted by the Mormon Church as Scripture and is now published as part of the *Pearl of Great Price*—one of the four standard works of the church. . . .

For many years Joseph Smith’s collection of papyri was lost, but on November 27, 1967, the Mormon owned *Deseret News* announced:

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

Included in the papyri is a manuscript identified as the original document from which Joseph Smith had copied the drawing which he called “Facsimile No. 1” and published with the Book of Abraham.

The importance of this find cannot be overemphasized, for now Joseph Smith’s ability as a translator of ancient Egyptian writing can be put to an absolute test. . . .

After receiving the papyri from the Metropolitan Museum, Mormon leaders turned them over “to Dr. Hugh Nibley, scholar, linguist at Brigham Young University, . . . for further research and study” . . .

Dr. Nibley began a series of articles for the *Improvement Era* in January, 1968. This series ran for over two years, and was finally brought to a conclusion with the issue published May, 1970. Although Dr. Nibley was supposed to unfold “the meaning of the hieroglyphics” in this series of articles, no translation of the Joseph Smith Papyri ever appeared in this series. It would appear that Dr. Nibley’s main objective in this series was to blind the eyes of his fellow church members so that they could not see the real issues involved in this matter.

Although he used almost 2,000 footnotes, he never did deal with the main problem.

Dr. Nibley gave this excuse for not translating the papyri in an article published in *Brigham Young University Studies*, (Spring 1968, page 251): “We have often been asked during the past months why we did not proceed with all haste to produce a translation of the papyri the moment they came into our possession. Well, for one thing others are far better equipped to do the job than we are, and some of those early expressed a willingness to undertake it. But, more important, it is doubtful whether any translation could do as much good as harm.”

In the *Salt Lake Tribune* for November 11, 1973, we criticized Dr. Nibley for not producing a translation of the papyri. He replied that he had prepared a book which “is 800 pages long, but that is not enough to account for keeping the impatient Tanners waiting for six years. What took up all that time was having to find out about a lot of things” (*Salt Lake Tribune*, November 25, 1973). This book, which many people believed would answer the objections of the critics and save the “Book of Abraham,” was finally published by the church’s Deseret Book Company in 1975 under the title, *The Message of the Joseph Smith Papyri: An Egyptian Endowment*. . . .

Although Dr. Nibley’s book is nicely printed and bound, the contents are very disappointing. Of the eleven fragments of papyrus which were discovered, ten of them contain significant Egyptian messages which can be translated. We would expect that any book about the papyri would at least have a translation of all these pieces. Dr. Nibley’s book, however, only contains a translation of two fragments! Among the fragments which Dr. Nibley has not translated is the original of “Facsimile No. 1” in the “Book of Abraham.” This fragment contains a number of lines of hieroglyphs which relate to the meaning of the drawing. The reason Dr. Nibley has not translated these lines seems obvious: they show that “Facsimile No. 1” is not a picture of “Abraham fastened upon an altar” as Joseph Smith proclaimed, but rather a picture of an Egyptian by the name of Hor being prepared for burial. We will have more to say about this later. (*The Changing World of Mormonism*, pages 329, 330, 334-336)

In the *Salt Lake City Messenger* for April 1976 we pointed out that Dr. Nibley's book contains some very serious errors. H. Michael Marquardt has prepared a good rebuttal entitled, *The Book of Abraham Papyrus Found: An Answer to Dr. Hugh Nibley's Book "The Message of the Joseph Smith Papyri: An Egyptian Endowment."*

As we have already shown, Dr. Nibley's book was published in 1975. In 1979, however, he spoke at the Sunstone Theological Symposium and his statements seem to discredit his own book:

I refuse to be held responsible for anything I wrote more than three years ago. For heaven's sake, I hope we are moving forward here. After all, the implication that one mistake and it is all over with—how flattering to think in forty years I have not made one slip and I am still in business! I would say that about four fifths of everything I put down has changed, of course. (*Sunstone*, December 1979, page 49)

Dr. Nibley would have us believe that the science of Egyptology is in a constant state of upheaval. Now, while it is true that there will always be refinements, the basic principles remain the same. We feel that the constant state of confusion that Dr. Nibley finds himself in is caused by his attempt to defend a work of Joseph Smith's own imagination—i.e., the Book of Abraham. While our case against the Book of Abraham stands on the same unshakeable foundation it did 12 years ago, Dr. Nibley has to constantly change his ideas. First, he was going to answer the critics in the *Improvement Era*. When this did not work, he prepared a book which "is 800 pages long"—actually 305 large printed pages. Four years later, however, he says that "I refuse to be held responsible for anything I wrote more than three years ago." After all this one would think that Dr. Nibley would give up, but instead he threatens the critics with the possibility of still another book: "Of these things and much, much more we speak in what we hope is a forthcoming book" (*Ibid.*, page 51).

### Dr. Nelson?

Although Dr. Nibley was not able to translate the papyri at the time it came to light, there was an elder in the church who was qualified—Dee Jay Nelson. When Nibley learned of Nelson's ability as an Egyptologist, he wanted him to help defend the church. In a letter dated June 27, 1967, he told Nelson that he could "see no reason in the world why you should not be taken into the confidence of the Brethren if this thing ever comes out into the open; in fact, you should be enormously useful to the Church . . . there are parties in Salt Lake who are howling for a showdown on the *P.G.P.*; if they have their way we may have to get together."

On January 4, 1968, Dee Jay Nelson visited with Dr. Nibley at Brigham Young University and examined the original papyri. Dr. Nibley agreed that Nelson should translate the papyri, and he sent a note to N. Eldon Tanner, a member of the First Presidency, stating that "it would be a good idea to let Prof. Dee J. Nelson have copies" of the papyri. Mr. Nelson translated the papyri, but he was unable to find any mention of Abraham or his religion in any portion of the papyri. He found the names of many pagan gods who were worshiped by the Egyptians but nothing concerning the God of Abraham. After completing his translation, Mr. Nelson contacted us and asked if we wanted to print it. Since the translation proved unfavorable to the church, it was obvious that the church would not print it. When we completed the publication we tried to advertise it in the *Deseret News* but church leaders would not allow the ad to be run.

Unfortunately, about ten years after completing his translation of the Joseph Smith Papyri, Dee Jay Nelson put forth the claim that he had a doctor's degree from an institution he later identified as Pacific Northwestern University. On February 13, 1980, we attended a lecture in Brigham City, Utah, where we heard Mr.

Nelson proclaim he had a Ph.D. in anthropology. We became a little suspicious, however, when he failed to give the name of the school. A few weeks later a woman called us from Arizona and said that Nelson had claimed the school he had attended was in Seattle. When she called information, however, she was unable to locate it. We tried the same thing and obtained a similar result. On March 11-12, 1980, we wrote to Nelson asking for documentation which would prove he had a doctor's degree. Mr. Nelson did send us a photograph of what purports to be his diploma from Pacific Northwestern University. After examining this document and another paper he sent, we became very suspicious that Pacific Northwestern University was not a legitimate university. We contacted a noted educator from the University of Utah who checked with Dr. James Bemis, Executive Director of the Higher Commission of the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges, and found that Pacific Northwestern University was only a "diploma mill of the worst kind." We confirmed this report by calling the U.S. Postal Department in Seattle and the King County Attorney's Office. (More information concerning this matter will be sent to the reader free upon request.)

In the letter of March 11-12, 1980, we made it clear to Mr. Nelson what we would do if his claim concerning a doctor's degree could not be substantiated:

It is with great sorrow that I sit down to write this letter to you. I feel, however, as the publisher of four of your booklets I am obligated to find out the truth about certain matters that have recently come to my attention. . . . While it is true that I have never published anything about you having a Dr.'s degree, any statements you have made about this matter subsequent to the translation of the Joseph Smith Papyri could have a tendency to reflect upon my integrity in the eyes of many people.

If I were to overlook misrepresentation on the part of non-Mormon writers I would be operating on a double standard. You will no doubt remember what we wrote about "Dr. Webb"—the great defender of the Mormon faith. It is summed up in our new book, *The Changing World of Mormonism*, page 333:

The other Egyptologists whom Spalding contacted rendered a similar verdict—i.e., the "Book of Abraham" was a work of Joseph Smith's imagination and had no basis in fact. . . . Mormon historian B. H. Roberts admitted that there "were no Egyptian scholars in the church of the Latter-day Saints who could make an effective answer to the conclusions of the eight scholars who in various ways pronounced against the correctness of Joseph Smith's translation . . ." (*A Comprehensive History of of[sic] the Church*, vol. 2, page 139).

The Mormons, however, did receive help from a writer who called himself "Robert C. Webb, Ph.D." Fawn M. Brodie claimed that Robert C. Webb's real name was "J. E. Homans," and that he was "neither an Egyptologist nor a Ph.D." (*No Man Knows My History*, 1957, page 175). From this it is rather obvious that the Mormon leaders were guilty of deception.

Strange as it may seem, Dr. Sidney B. Sperry, of Brigham Young University, confirmed the fact that Robert C. Webb was no Ph.D.: "He wrote a wonderful book, . . . under the name of Robert C. Webb, Ph.D. I regret that the brethren let him put down Robert C. Webb, Ph.D., because he was no Ph.D." (*Pearl of Great Price Conference*, December 10, 1960, 1964 ed., page 9). On page 6 of the same publication, Dr. Sperry stated that Dr. Webb's "real name was J. C. Homans."

At any rate, the Mormon church was able to survive Spalding's attack on the "Book of Abraham" with very little injury because church members felt that "Dr. Webb" had answered the critics. Writing in the *Improvement Era*, April 1913, N. L. Nelson stated: "Dr. Webb has, indeed, vindicated the prophet better than he knew himself." (*The Changing World of Mormonism*, page 333)

If it turns out that you do not have a Dr.'s degree, honesty would demand that I make a public statement to that effect. Otherwise, I would find myself in the same position as the Mormon leaders who concealed the true identity of "Dr. Webb." It is my firm belief that "there is nothing covered; that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known" (Matthew 10:26). I feel that the Lord wants Christians to be honest even though it costs us a great deal.

I doubt that the Mormon Church leaders will ever have the courage to directly attack you concerning the issue of credentials because of their use and support of "Dr. Webb." Even Dr. Hugh Nibley defended "Dr. Webb" in the Church's own publication, *Improvement Era*:

Thus reassured, Bishop Spalding proceeded to demolish R. C. Webb: "We feel that we should be in a better position to judge the value of the opinions of Robert C. Webb, PhD . . . if we were told definitely who he is. . . . If Dr. Talmage . . . would inform us what the author's real name is, where he received his degree, and what academic position he holds, we should be better able to estimate the value of his opinions." Here it is again: The bishop is not interested in Webb's arguments and evidence, but in his status and rank—considerations that are supposed to bear no weight whatever with honest searchers after truth—Nullus in verba! What on earth have a man's name, degree, academic position, and, of all things, opinions, to do with whether a thing is true or not? (*Improvement Era*, January 1968, page 22)

At any rate, even though the Mormon Church will probably remain officially silent concerning your credentials, I feel that my conscience will not allow me to keep silent if there is a problem. I realize, of course, that the question of your credentials does not affect the validity of your translation, and that the Church is in a real bind with regard to the matter since its chief defender, Dr. Hugh Nibley, has written that your work is reliable:

The publication of the Joseph Smith Egyptian Papyri has now begun to bear fruit. Two efforts at translation and commentary have already appeared, the one an example of pitfalls to be avoided, the other a conscientious piece of work for which the Latter-day Saints owe a debt of gratitude to Mr. Dee Jay Nelson. . . . This is a conscientious and courageous piece of work—. . . Nelson has been careful to consult top-ranking scholars where he has found himself in doubt. He has taken the first step in a serious study of the Facsimiles of the *Pearl of Great Price*, supplying students with a usable and reliable translation of the available papyri that once belonged to Joseph Smith. (*Brigham Young University Studies*, Spring 1968, pages 245 & 247)

Although we have used your translation of the Joseph Smith Papyri in a number of publications, we do not feel that our case against the Book of Abraham rests upon it. We have the testimony of some of the world's greatest Egyptologists—i.e., Professor Richard Parker of Brown University and Professors Klaus Baer and John A. Wilson (now deceased) of the University of Chicago's Oriental Institute. Even before you came on the scene our friend Grant Heward had identified the papyrus Joseph Smith used in the production of the Book of Abraham as the "Book of Breathings"—a pagan funerary document (see *Salt Lake City Messenger*, March 1968). I had studied the Egyptian language on my own before you came to Salt Lake and was able to test your work at various points. I knew therefore that it was generally a "reliable translation" as Dr. Nibley has admitted. . . .

Now, concerning your work at Rocky Mountain College: I have called the school and confirmed that you teach "Egyptology" in the "New Horizons" continuing education program. Lorri Keck, the director of this program, informs me that no credit is given for these classes. (I do not accuse you of

hiding this fact, because you previously sent me a "Course Schedule" for Spring, 1976, which said the classes were "non-credit.") Mrs. Keck, however, is disturbed because you have been calling yourself a Professor of Egyptology at Rocky Mountain College. . . . Since the classes you teach are "non-credit," this appears to be somewhat misleading. . . .

I must confess that I feel disappointed and sad because of this whole matter—somewhat like the feeling I had when I realized the Book of Mormon was not an authentic ancient document but rather a product of the 19th century. In any case, I feel it is my obligation to make this information available to the public. . . . I am convinced that our case against the Book of Abraham is absolutely devastating, and I would not want to weaken it in any way by trying to cover up or remain silent concerning such an important matter. (Letter from Jerald Tanner to Dee Jay Nelson, March 11-12, 1980)

On March 29, 1980, the *Ogden Standard-Examiner* printed an article by Charles F. Trentelman which contains the following:

An investigation of the credentials of Dee Jay Nelson . . . shows he does not hold a doctor's degree from a university. . . .

The discovery has caused considerable consternation among his supporters in Salt Lake City. . . . Jerald and Sandra Tanner, publishers of numerous books and papers attacking the LDS Church, say they are concerned by claims made by Nelson in recent months.

Mrs. Tanner said they investigated the claims and found Nelson's diploma was from . . . a diploma mill, an operation that sells diplomas without requiring any schooling. . . .

Efforts by the *Standard-Examiner* to contact Nelson have been unsuccessful. His wife says Nelson is in Egypt doing more study. She declined to comment on her husband's credentials except to say Nelson had written a letter to the Tanners, explaining the whole situation. . . .

The *Standard-Examiner* . . . was referred to Dr. Klaus Baer, University of Chicago Oriental Institute, as the leading Egyptologist in the country and the man who, if anyone, would know of Nelson. . . .

Baer said that, so far as he knew, Nelson had no formal education in Egyptian, although "he has certainly learned Egyptian somewhere." . . .

As to the papyri in question, Baer said Nelson's translation is "essentially" correct.

Baer said he prepared a translation of the same papyri, . . . and the translations say basically the same thing. . . .

In his letter to the Tanners, Nelson describes contacting Pacific Northwestern University in 1977 and inquiring about obtaining a doctorate. . . .

Mrs. Tanner told the *Standard-Examiner* she and her husband tried to find out about Pacific Northwestern University and learned from federal authorities in Seattle that it had been ordered to shut down, although no charges were brought against it.

## Source of Book of Abraham

When the original papyri were located in 1967, many members of the Mormon Church felt that Joseph Smith's work would be vindicated. As it turned out, however, just the opposite occurred. Within six months from the time the Metropolitan Museum gave the papyri to the Church, the "Book of Abraham" had been proven untrue! The fall of the Book of Abraham has been brought about by the identification of the actual fragment of papyrus from which Joseph Smith 'translated' the book. The identification of this fragment has been made possible by a comparison with *Joseph Smith's Egyptian Alphabet and Grammar*—handwritten documents we photographically reproduced in 1966. Dr. James R. Clark, of Brigham Young University, gives this information:



... there are in existence today in the Church Historian's Office what seem to be two separate manuscripts of Joseph Smith's translations from the papyrus rolls, ... One manuscript is the Alphabet and Grammar. ... Within this Alphabet and Grammar there is a copy of the characters, together with their translation of Abraham 1:4-28 only. (*The Story of the Pearl of Great Price*, 1962, pages 172-173)

When the Mormon magazine, *Improvement Era*, printed sepia photographs of the papyri, the fragment of papyrus from which Joseph Smith translated the "Book of Abraham" was printed as the very last photograph. It is found on page 41 of the February 1968 issue, and is labeled: "XI. Small 'Sensen' text (unillustrated)."

All of the first two rows of characters on the papyrus fragment can be found in the manuscript of the "Book of Abraham" that is published in *Joseph Smith's Egyptian Alphabet and Grammar*.

Dr. James R. Clark reveals that there is another handwritten manuscript "in the Church Historian's Office in Salt Lake City. The characters from which our present book of Abraham was translated are down the left-hand column and Joseph Smith's translation opposite, so we know approximately how much material was translated from each character" (*Pearl of Great Price Conference*, December 10, 1960, 1964 ed., pages 60-61)

The Brigham Young University had photographs of this manuscript which Mr. Grant Heward was able to examine. This manuscript goes further than the one in the *Alphabet and Grammar*, and Mr. Heward found that the characters on this manuscript continue in consecutive order into the fourth line of the papyrus. This brings the text to Abraham 2:18. (For a photographic reproduction of four pages of this manuscript and a comparison of the characters on it with those found on the papyrus see *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* pages 312-313.) A careful examination of this manuscript reveals that Joseph Smith used less than four lines from the papyrus to make forty-nine verses in the "Book of Abraham." These forty-nine verses are composed of more than 2,000 English words! After a thorough examination of the evidence, Mormon scholar Richley Crapo had to concede "the startling fact that one of the papyri of the Church collection, known as the Small Sen-Sen Papyrus, contained the same series of hieratic symbols, which had been copied, in the same order, into the Book of Abraham manuscript next to verses of that book! In other words, there was every indication that the collection of papyri in the hands of the Church contained the source which led to a production of the Book of Abraham. It was naturally this document which I immediately began to translate" (*Book of Abraham Symposium*, LDS Institute of Religion, Salt Lake City, April 3, 1970, page 27).

Although Dr. Hugh Nibley later reversed his position in an attempt to save the Book of Abraham, in 1968 he frankly admitted that the papyrus Joseph Smith used for the text of the Book of Abraham had been located (see *Improvement Era*, May, 1968, page 54). At a meeting held at the University of Utah, Dr. Nibley declared:

Within a week of the publication of the papyri students calling my attention ... to the fact that, the very definite fact that, one of the fragments seemed to supply all of the symbols for the Book of Abraham. This was the little "Sensen" scroll. Here are the symbols. The symbols are arranged here, and the interpretation goes along here and this interpretation turns out to be the Book of Abraham. Well, what about that? Here is the little "Sensen," because that name occurs frequently in it, the papyrus, in which a handful of Egyptian symbols was apparently expanded in translation to the whole Book of Abraham. This raises a lot of questions. It doesn't answer any questions, unless we're mind readers. (Speech given by Hugh Nibley, University of Utah, May 20, 1968; see also *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Summer 1968, page 102).

As we indicated earlier, Grant Heward examined the papyrus which has been identified as the source of the Book of Abraham and concluded that "it is probably a part of the Egyptian 'Book of Breathings'" (*Salt Lake City Messenger*, March 1968). This identification was soon confirmed by several prominent Egyptologists. In *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* page 317, we reproduced three different translations of the papyrus Joseph Smith used as the basis for his Book of Abraham. To save space here we will only include Professor Richard Parker's translation. This translation was published in *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*—a periodical published by a group of liberal Mormons but not controlled by the Church leaders. In *Dialogue*, Richard Parker was listed as "Wilbour Professor of Egyptology and Chairman of the Department of Egyptology at Brown University." Mormon apologist Hugh Nibley said that Professor Parker is "the best man in America for this particular period and style of writing." His translation reads as follows:

1. [ . . . . . ] this great pool of Khonsu
2. [Osiris Hor, justified], born of Taykhebyt, a man likewise.
3. After (his) two arms are [fast]ened to his breast, one wraps the Book of Breathings, which is
4. with writing both inside and outside of it, with royal linen, it being placed (at) his left arm
5. near his heart, this having been done at his
6. wrapping and outside it. If this book be recited for him, then
7. he will breath like the soul[s of the gods] for ever and
8. ever (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Summer 1968, page 98)

Except for a few minor variations, the other two renditions of the text are essentially in agreement with Professor Parker's. The "Book of Abraham," therefore, has been proven to be a spurious work. The Egyptologists find no mention of Abraham or his religion in this text. The average number of words that the three Egyptologists used to convey the message in this text is ninety-two, whereas Joseph Smith's rendition contains thousands of words. It is impossible to escape the conclusion that the Book of Abraham is a false translation.

After the publication of the papyri it became very obvious that Dr. Nibley was unprepared to deal with the problems related to the translation of the Book of Abraham and that he had no real answers to give his people. At one point he became so desperate to save the Book of Abraham that he suggested that the "Sensen" text may have a second meaning unknown to Egyptologists:

... you very often have texts of double meaning ... it's quite possible, say, that this "Sensen" papyrus, telling a straight forward innocent little story or something like that, should contain also a totally different text concealed within it. ... they [the Egyptians] know what they're doing, but we don't. We don't have the key. (Speech by Hugh Nibley, University of Utah, May 20, 1968)

When Marvin Cowan asked Professor Richard Parker if the papyri could have a second meaning, he replied that he knew of "no Egyptologist who would support such a claim" (Letter dated January 9, 1968).

Although Dr. Nibley gave some support to the theory that the papyrus might have a second or hidden meaning, he seems to have come to his senses and now realizes that such an idea cannot be successfully maintained. Unfortunately, however, he has come up with another theory which is as fantastic as the first: that the Book of Abraham is still lost and the "Sensen" papyrus has no relationship to it. It is, in fact, "the directions for wrapping up the Joseph Smith papyri with the mummy" (*The Message of the Joseph Smith Papyri*: . . . , page 6). According to Dr. Nibley's theory, Joseph Smith's scribes mistakenly copied the characters from the "Sensen" papyrus into the three handwritten manuscripts of the Book of Abraham:

Is the Book of Abraham a correct translation of Joseph Smith Papyri X and XI? No, the Book of Breathings is not the Book of Abraham! . . . Doesn't the text of the Book of Abraham appear in a number of manuscripts in columns running parallel with characters from the Book of Breathings? Yes, the brethren at Kirtland were invited to try their skill at translation; in 1835 the Prophet's associates, . . . made determined efforts to match up the finished text of the Book of Abraham with characters from the J.S. Papyrus No. XI . . . (*Ibid.*, page 2)

Dr. Nibley's suggestion that Joseph Smith's scribes added the wrong characters in the translation manuscripts is absolutely preposterous. That Joseph Smith would allow his scribes to copy the characters from the wrong papyrus into three different manuscripts of the Book of Abraham is really beyond belief. A person might almost as reasonably conclude that the Book of Abraham itself was made up by Joseph Smith's scribes. Dr. Nibley's attempt to separate the "Sensen" papyrus from the Book of Abraham cannot be accepted by those who honestly examine the evidence. The reader should remember that Nibley himself originally accepted the "Sensen" text as the source of the Book of Abraham.

Nibley, of course, has to maintain that the rediscovered papyri do not contain the portion which Joseph Smith translated as the Book of Abraham. A number of Mormon apologists have blindly followed Dr. Nibley into this grave error. Caleb A. Shreeve, Sr., for instance, wrote the following in an advertisement which appeared in the *Ogden Standard-Examiner* on March 24, 1980:

Joseph Smith (Dec. 31, 1835) describes the writing of Abraham Papyri as, "Beautifully written on papyrus, with **black, and small part red, ink or paint, in perfect preservation**" (*HC*. 2:348). To date, (1980) a papyrus fitting Joseph's description has not been found.

If Mr. Shreeve had cited the first part of the quotation from the *History of the Church*, vol. 2, page 348, it would have changed the whole meaning of the statement:

The record of Abraham and Joseph, found with the mummies [*sic*], is beautifully written on papyrus, with black, and a small part red, ink or paint, in perfect preservation.

The reader will notice that when the entire statement is quoted it becomes plain that it is referring to the records of both Joseph and Abraham. In other words, it is a statement about Joseph Smith's Papyri collection in general, not just the one roll which Joseph Smith called the Book of Abraham. This is made very clear in another entry in Joseph Smith's *History*:

. . . I commenced the translation of some of the characters or hieroglyphics, and much to our joy found that one of the rolls contained the writings of Abraham, another the writings of Joseph of Egypt, etc. (*History of the Church*, vol. 2, page 236)

Now, when we understand that Joseph Smith believed the Book of Abraham was written on a different roll of papyrus than the Book of Joseph, it becomes clear that he was referring to the collection of papyri in general and not specifically to the Book of Abraham. Among the papyri that were rediscovered in 1967 there are pieces which contain rubrics—i.e., portions written in red ink. In *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* pages 354-355, we prove conclusively that they are from the roll of papyrus the early Mormons designated as the "Book of Joseph." When they are translated, however, they turn out to be nothing but portions of the Egyptian Book of the Dead.

At any rate, the fact that Joseph Smith chose the papyrus identified as the Book of Breathings as the source for his Book of Abraham is established by irrefutable evidence. To begin with, Joseph Smith used the drawing at the beginning of the Book of

Breathings roll as Facsimile No. 1 for his Book of Abraham. It does not contain red ink and the workmanship appears to be no better or well-preserved than that found on Papyrus XI. This in itself would completely destroy the argument advanced by Shreeve and Nibley, but the evidence becomes even stronger as we look into the matter. The writing in the columns to the side of the fragment used for Fac. No. 1, which Dr. Nibley does not dare to translate, mentions that the papyrus was made for Hor, and this is the same name mentioned in the Book of Breathings text which follows on Papyrus XI. Second, even Dr. Nibley has to admit that before the papyrus was cut up by the early Mormons, Papyrus XI followed immediately after Fac. No. 1 on the roll: "It can be easily shown by matching up the cut edges and fibres of the papyri that the text of the Joseph Smith 'Breathing' Papyrus (No. XI) was written on the same strip of material as Facsimile No. 1 and immediately adjoining it" (*The Message of the Joseph Smith Papyri*, page 13). On page 3 of the same book, Dr. Nibley has to admit that even Joseph Smith's own scribes felt that the text of the Book of Abraham followed right after Fac. No. 1: "Since this is an illustration to the Book of Abraham, it has naturally been assumed that the text that follows the drawing could only be that of Abraham—even the brethren at Kirtland assumed that."

The strongest evidence that Joseph Smith believed that Papyrus XI was the Book of Abraham is found in the fact that the characters from this fragment were used in the translation manuscripts. Dr. Nibley's suggestion that this was only the work of his scribes cannot be accepted. All evidence, then, points to one unmistakable conclusion: Joseph Smith believed that Papyrus No. XI was the Book of Abraham. Although Dr. Nibley does not dare give a translation of the writing on the papyrus fragment used as Fac. No. 1 in the Book of Abraham, he has published a translation of Papyrus XI. His work agrees in substance with the translations we have published in *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* page 317. In fact, Dr. Nibley includes the names of many pagan gods in his translation of the Book of Breathings (see *The Message of the Joseph Smith Papyri*, pages 19-23). Dr. Nibley cannot find anything about Abraham in this text, but to soften the disappointment he tries to relate it to the Mormon temple ceremony. Why he would want to equate the Egyptian religion with Mormonism is really a mystery to us. The Egyptian religion is so filled with magic and other pagan practices.

## Egyptian Study Hurts Church

Just after the rediscovered Joseph Smith Papyri were turned over to the Church, Dr. Hugh Nibley lamented the fact that Mormon scholars were not prepared to deal with the issue. He went so far as to say that "LDS scholars are caught flat-footed by this discovery" (*Daily Universe*, BYU, December 1, 1967). Since that time some Mormons have taken a serious interest in the study of Egyptology. This research, however, has only tended to increase the problems facing the Church. Michael Dennis Rhodes, for instance, has made a study and translation of Fac. No. 2 in the Book of Abraham which has been published in *Brigham Young University Studies*. Joseph Smith claimed that Fac. No. 2 was "A Fac-simile From The Book of Abraham," but in *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* pages 334-346, we demonstrate it is in reality a hypocephalus—a disk which was placed under the head of the mummy. We show, in fact, that Egyptologists can even read the name of the mummy from the disk. Michael Dennis Rhodes confirms that it is indeed a "hypocephalus" and that "The text of the hypocephalus itself seems to be an address to Osiris, the god of the Dead, on behalf of the deceased, Sheshonk" (*Brigham Young University Studies*, Spring 1977, page 274). Rhodes translation of Fac. No. 2 contains absolutely nothing about Abraham. It only mentions the pagan gods of the Egyptians. For instance, on the edge of the disc he reads:

“Edge: I am Djabyt in the House of the Benben in Heliopolis, so exalted and glorious. [I am] a copulating bull without equal. [I am] that Mighty God in the House of the Benben in Heliopolis . . . that Mighty God . . .” On page 260 of the same article, Michael Dennis Rhodes says that “the meaning of the hypocephalus is intimately connected with chapter 162 of the Book of the Dead. . . .” This is certainly an astonishing statement to find in a publication printed by the Mormon Church’s own university. One would think that if it is a “Fac-simile From the Book of Abraham,” it would be “intimately connected” with the Book of Abraham—not the Book of the Dead. In any case, Rhodes goes on to point out that the cow found in Fac. No. 2 is in reality a pagan goddess:

This is the cow Ihet, mentioned in chapter 162 of the Book of the Dead, which should be drawn on a piece of new papyrus. This picture of a cow is common to almost all hypocephali. Ihet is a form of Hathor, the personification of the power of nature. She is also connected with Mehweret (Greek Methryr), another cow goddess who symbolized the sky. (*Ibid.*, page 272)

*In Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* pages 341-343, we show that one of the scenes shown in Fac. No. 2 of the Book of Abraham is actually a pornographic representation of an ithyphallic god known as Min which was altered to cover up this fact in current printings of the *Pearl of Great Price*. Joseph Smith claimed that the scene “Represents God sitting upon his throne, . . .” While it is easy to believe a pagan deity might be represented in such a way, it would be hard to believe that Abraham would draw an obscene picture of God.

It is interesting to note that Michael Dennis Rhodes agrees that an ithyphallic god is shown in Fac. No. 2:

7. A seated ithyphallic god with a hawk’s tail, holding aloft the divine flail. . . .

The seated god is clearly a form of Min, the god of the regenerative, procreative forces of nature, perhaps combined with Horus as the hawk’s tail would seem to indicate. . . . The procreative forces, receiving unusual accentuation throughout the representation, may stand for many divine generative powers, not least of which might be conjoined with the blessings of the priesthood in one’s posterity eternally. (*Ibid.*, page 273)

*In Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* pages 335-344, we prove that portions of the original hypocephalus from which Joseph Smith prepared Facsimile No. 2 were either missing or damaged when he obtained it and that he falsely inserted material from both the Book of the Dead and the Book of Breathings papyri to fill in the blank spaces. The fact that he did not know what he was doing is very obvious because he inserted hieratic characters from the Book of Breathings where hieroglyphic characters should appear. To make matters even worse, he inserted characters upside down to the rest of the text. In plain language, then, Fac. No. 2 is a falsified reconstruction of the original disc. Michael Dennis Rhodes confirms this on page 263 of his article in *Brigham Young University Studies*:

When persuing Facsimile 2, one is immediately struck by the contrast between most of the hieroglyphic signs, which are readily recognizable, and the signs of the right third of the figure on the outer edge as well as the outer portions of the sections numbered 12-15. On closer examination, these prove to be hieratic and inverted (that is, upside down to the rest of the text). And, most surprising of all, these hieratic characters are recognizable as a fairly faithfully rendered copy of lines 2, 3, and 4 of the Church papyrus XI, which contains a portion of the Sensen papyrus or Book of Breathings. Especially clear is the actual word, *snsn*, in section 14, and part of the name of the possessor of the papyrus, . . . repeated twice. Why this was done I am not sure. I can only postulate that these portions of

the hypocephalus were damaged (a common enough occurrence because of the extremely fragile condition of these documents) and someone (the printer, one of the Prophet’s associates, or Joseph Smith himself) copied these characters off the Sensen papyrus so that the facsimile would look complete. In support of this view is an ink drawing of Facsimile 2 in the Church Historian’s Office which shows blanks in these sections.”

One of the best articles published on the Book of Abraham facsimiles appears in *Sunstone* for December 1979. It is written by Edward A. Ashment of the Translation Department of the Mormon Church. Mr. Ashment is at present working on his Ph.D. in Egyptology from the University of Chicago. While we cannot agree with Ashment when he maintains that Joseph Smith “can yet be a prophet” even though he gave false restorations of the facsimiles, we do feel that his—especially the footnotes—will find that it is actually a devastating attack on the work of Hugh Nibley. For example, in *BYU Studies*, Autumn 1968, page 95, Dr. Nibley claims that “no clear instances” of restoration have been demonstrated in Fac. No. 1. To this Ashment responds:

In relation to the lion-couch scene of Facsimile 1 (Plate 1) it has been claimed that “no clear instances” of restoration “have been demonstrated.” However, close examination of the evidence leads to the conclusion that such instances indeed are demonstrable. (*Sunstone*, December 1979, page 33)

Joseph Smith maintained that Fac. No. 1 shows the “priest of Elkenah attempting to offer up Abraham as a sacrifice.” In *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* pages 348-350, we show that it is really the Egyptian god of the dead Anubis and that he should have the head of a jackal. This portion of the papyrus where the head should appear had broken off and Joseph Smith falsely restored a human head. On page 36 of his article, Ashment declared: “With high probability, Fig. 3 should be restored as Anubis and not as a human-headed individual.”

With regard to Fac. No. 2, Edward Ashment freely admits that it has been incorrectly restored:

Finally, attention must be given to the hieroglyphic texts of Facsimile 2 . . . they are very important in that they help to conclusively identify the damaged areas . . . as well as to provide information about the “instruction [Joseph Smith gave to Reuben Hedlock] concerning the arrangement of the writing on the large cut, illustrating the principles of astronomy [i.e., Facsimile 2].”

It comes as no surprise then, that the areas in which the Prophet conceivably could have given “instruction” to Reuben Hedlock “concerning the arrangement of the writing” are those where lacunae [i.e., gaps] exist in the CH document but in which the Hedlock version has material, mostly written upside down and backwards in a different script, the subject matter of which radically differs from that of the rest of the texts on the hypocephalus. . . .

The basic document with all of the conjecturally restored material reveals, in addition to the vignettes already discussed, many signs that have come from the small *snsn* text (or Papyrus Joseph Smith XI, which was originally attached to Papyrus Joseph Smith I—see Plate 8); . . . As already noted, these texts are part of a different contextual unit, written upside down and backwards in the hypocephalus, and are in a different script from the rest of its texts. Why those characters were chosen, apparently by the prophet, to fill in the lacunae is not exactly known, for other signs written in hieroglyphic instead of hieratic were available and their style would have more closely approximated that of the hypocephalus. One possibility may be that those particular signs may have been well-known to the prophet in relation to the Book of Abraham manuscripts (Plate 9), with the result that he “gave instruction” to Hedlock to arrange them within the hypocephalus. (*Sunstone*, December 1979, page 42)

In his attempt to save the Book of Abraham, Dr. Hugh Nibley has tried to separate Joseph Smith as far as possible from the Kirtland Egyptian Papers—i.e., the papers we published as *Joseph Smith's Egyptian Alphabet and Grammar*. Edward Ashment, however, feels that Dr. Nibley is in error on this matter:

Consequently, the fact that the prophet “gave instruction concerning the writing on the large cut,” together with the fact that that same writing is connected with the Book of Abraham manuscripts, implies that the prophet had some positive connection with the production of the Joseph Smith Egyptian Papers. Therefore, even though involvement with them on his part has been disputed, thoughtful reexamination of the evidence leads to the conclusion that the prophet was connected with the entire project. (*Ibid.*, page 42)

It seems that Ashment has demolished Dr. Nibley’s arguments at every turn. In his reply to Ashment Nibley conceded:

Since hearing Brother Ashment I have to make some changes in what I have said already. Do I have to hang my head and go hide or something like that because I have been discredited? These things are being found out all the time. There are lots of things that Brother Ashment pointed out that I should have noticed; but I notice I could point out a lot of things that he has not noticed.

But who can do all that stuff? . . . the main thing is to move on into unexplored territory, and go into it with the careful, meticulous examination that he has. (*Sunstone*, December 1979, page 51)

Those who have carefully followed this controversy since the discovery of the papyri in 1967 are aware of the fact that Dr. Nibley, the Church’s chief defender, has stubbornly fought against the truth with regard to the Book of Abraham. Although he has put up many smoke screens to try to divert attention from the real problems, he has not been successful in silencing the opposition. Many Mormons, in fact, have lost confidence in him because of his inability to fulfil his promises about saving the Book of Abraham. Now that one of the Mormon Church’s own scholars has attacked him, Dr. Nibley replies: “I refuse to be held responsible for anything I wrote more than three years ago” (*Ibid.*, page 49).

While the whole foundation for Dr. Nibley’s arguments seems to be crumbling, we can point with confidence to the case we have prepared against the Book of Abraham. Our arguments are just as

good as when we first advanced them twelve years ago. Our case is not based on any one man or any wild speculation, but rather on the science of Egyptology, original documents and careful research. We feel, in fact, that the case against the Book of Abraham is irrefutable. Those who are interested will find the evidence clearly presented in *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* A condensed version appears in our new book, *The Changing World of Mormonism*.



**April Tanner**

Over a year ago our daughter April decided she was interested in the possibility of full-time Christian service. She has attended Simpson College (a Bible school in San Francisco) this past year and has really grown in her Christian commitment. Instead of working this summer, April has decided to take a step of faith and become involved in a difficult missionary project. In her prayer letter she says:

I have been accepted as a team member on the Teen Missions Tamboboan, Philippines Team. The team of 30 teens plus leaders will build a church for the nationals . . . On Sundays we will be sharing our love for the Lord in surrounding villages through personal testimonies and song. . . . This experience will give me a first-hand look at and involvement with missions. I am asking my friends to contribute to Teen Missions International, Inc., to enable them to cover my expenses as a summer missionary . . .

April’s expenses will amount to over \$1,700. So far she has raised about half this amount. Perhaps some of our readers will be interested in helping her (all gifts are tax-deductible). Checks must be made out to TEEN MISSIONS INTERNATIONAL, INC., and mailed to April Tanner, 1350 South West Temple, Salt Lake City, Utah 84115.