



Mormonism

Did Joseph Smith get a New Divine Revelation?

*An Exposure of the Strange History and Flimsy Basis of the Religion of Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, etc.,
in the Light of the Scriptures, Reason and Facts*

IN recent years Mormonism has been one of the fastest growing religions; 80,000 Mormon missionaries are said to be active in the U.S.A. and over 100 other nations; and this sect's membership is reportedly increasing by about 16,500 a month. Most of the missionaries are young men, who voluntarily serve two years or more.

Since many people are being approached by Mormons in their efforts to gain new converts, it is in order that we examine the history and teachings of this sect. In doing so, our purpose is not to ridicule or cast aspersions against any who hold to this religion, for doubtless many of them are sincere and devout, and live good lives. Rather, our purpose is to expose some of the serious errors of doctrine and practice of Mormonism, and some of the dangers in following it, and thus to help some out of this snare of the fowler (Psa. 91: 3), and to keep others from becoming ensnared in it.

The first exponent of this system of "strange doctrine" (Heb. 13: 9) was Joseph Smith, Jr., the fourth child of Joseph and Lucy Smith. He was born Dec. 23, 1805, in Sharon, Vermont, U.S.A. We are told that "his father sold blessings, and his mother was a fortune teller." The family moved to Palmyra, in Western New York, in 1816.

It is said that young Smith was extremely superstitious, and was given to strange dreams.

In his autobiography he claims that when he was in his 15th year and in search of God's wisdom, and when many of his father's family were proselyted to the Presbyterian faith, he had an angelic vision, by which he was forbidden to join any sect of Christendom.

Smith became involved in occultism—he developed a mania as a "money digger," and claimed to be able to locate buried treasure. Note this affidavit of his father-in-law, Isaac Hale (published in *Religious Creeds and Statistics*)

"I first became acquainted with Joseph Smith, Jr., in Nov. 1825. He was at that time in the employ of a set of men who were called 'money diggers,' and his occupation was that of seeing or pretending to see, by reason of a stone placed inside his hat, and his hat placed over his face: in this way he pretended to discover minerals and hidden treasures. Smith and his father boarded at my house while they were employed in digging for a mine."

THE STORY OF THE "GOLD PLATES"

Smith declares that on the night of Sept. 21, 1823, he saw a vision of an angel at his bedside, who claimed that he was "a messenger sent from the presence of God," and that his name was "Moroni." Smith claims that this angel "said there was a book deposited, written upon gold plates, giving an account of the former inhabitants of this continent, and the source from whence they sprang. He also said that the fullness of the everlasting Gospel was contained in it, as delivered by the Savior to the ancient inhabitants. Also, that there were two stones in silver bows—and these stones, fastened to a breastplate, constituted what is called the Urim and Thummim—deposited with the plates; and the possession and use of these stones were what constituted 'seers' in ancient or former times; and that God had prepared them for the purpose of translating the book."

This angel "Moroni"—if there really was such—was one of Satan's fallen angels, "which kept not their first estate" (Gen. 6: 2, 4) and were "delivered into chains [restraints] of darkness ... unto the judgment of the great day" (2 Pet. 2: 4; Jude 1: 6; see "Spiritism is Demonism"—a copy free on request). The 66 books of the Old and New Testaments, as they came from God, are His inspired Word, which is sufficient, without additional revelations, "that the man of God may be perfect, *thoroughly furnished* unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3: 16, 17).

The story of the marvelous spectacles with two crystals set in silver bows, fictitiously called the "Urim and Thummim," is indeed worthy of one of the "lying spirits," for the Urim and Thummim pertains only to the Aaronic priesthood, typically and antotypically (comp. Ex. 28: 30; 1 Sam. 28: 6; Ezra 2: 63). The Hebrew words *Urim* and *Thummim* mean *lights* and *perfections* respectively, thus referring antotypically to the enlightenments of God's Word and the perfect qualities or graces of His holy Spirit, whereby His consecrated people, His "royal priesthood" (1 Pet. 2: 9), have been able to learn His holy will.

Smith claims that in a later visit that year this angel directed him to where the plates and "spectacles" were buried (on the hill Cumorah, near Palmyra), and that he found there a stone box containing them, but was forbidden by the angel to remove them until four years later.

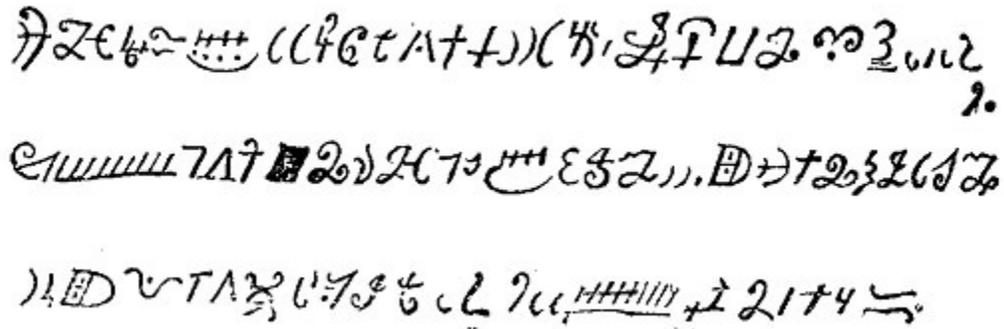
With his fake or counterfeit "Urim and Thummim," the illiterate Smith claims that he could not only read but could also translate the mystic writing on the plates—that when these "supernatural spectacles" were placed over what he called the "reformed Egyptian" characters, they appeared to him in English! Thus Smith was either himself a prevaricator and deceiver, or else he fell a victim to the deceptions of a fallen angel, "Moroni," who claimed himself to be a man of Israel, of the tribe of Manasseh, who died about 400 A.D. near Palmyra, after burying the "gold plates," *etc.*, on the hill Cumorah.

Had young Smith been a good Bible student he would have been on guard against all occult influences; and, instead of "giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils" (1 Tim. 4: 1), with their efforts to further Satan's original lie, that "Ye shall not surely die" (Gen. 3: 4; John 8:

44) but shall continue to live in a spirit world, he would at once have perceived the deception of this evil angel, who was palming himself off as an Israelite of many centuries ago.

The Spiritism of the Fox sisters was spreading like wildfire at that time, and many claimed that they had visions and spirit communications. Little wonder then that Smith's parents, who believed in and practiced the occult, and the rest of the family, also fell under this deception. Smith's mother, in describing how the family were convinced of the "wonders" following the alleged finding of the "gold plates," is quoted as having said: "I presume our family presented an aspect as singular as any that ever lived upon the face of the earth; all seated ... giving the most profound attentions to a boy, eighteen years of age, *who had never read the Bible through in his life.*" Even aside from this, he did not know the contents of the Bible very well. How strange that a special prophet of God would not have been sufficiently interested in God's Word to have made a careful study of it before becoming His special teacher of Divine Truth!

FACSIMILE OF CHARACTER SMITH ALLEGEDLY TOOK FROM PLATES OF THE BOOK OF MORMON



The image shows three lines of cursive script, which is a facsimile of the character Smith allegedly took from the plates of the Book of Mormon. The script is highly stylized and difficult to decipher, consisting of various loops, curves, and symbols that do not resemble standard English or any other known language.

THE SPAULDING MANUSCRIPT

Earlier, a Rev. Solomon Spaulding, of Cherry Valley, N.Y., had moved to Conneaut, Ohio, where he became interested in some nearby ancient mounds; he explored one of them, and exhumed from it some human bones, portions of gigantic skeletons, and various relics. He then wrote a novel called "The Manuscript Found," in which he detailed in imagery the purported history of the early settlers of North America. He took his manuscript to a Pittsburgh printer, but it was never published. Spaulding died near Pittsburgh in 1816.

A Baptist preacher named Sidney Rigdon, of the Pittsburgh area, who ministered also in Ohio, secured this manuscript from the printer. He left the Baptists and joined the Campbellites, whom also he left, later on. He became a friend of Smith, and later an ardent Mormon and leader. He evidently communicated the Spaulding story to Smith. It seems to have deeply impressed young Smith; so with his imaginative and occult turn of mind he apparently fell an easy prey to the deceptions of the "spirit" who told him of the "gold plates," of his appointment and commission as a prophet, and that God was going to reveal through him many wonderful things to humanity.

Of course, Smith, aided by Rigdon and the Spaulding story, may have concocted the entire account of the visions, the angel Moroni, the gold plates, *etc.* But the charitable view is that he himself was deceived, as a result of his previous tampering with the occult.

THE PRODUCTION OF THE BOOK OF MORMON

Martin Harris, a farmer of means near Palmyra, was urged to finance the publishing of the message of the "Gold Bible." But before selling or mortgaging his farm to do so, he pressed Smith for a sight of the plates. This being denied him, he finally demanded at least a specimen of the writing on the plates. Smith gave him a paper containing a jumble of odd-looking characters, which he said were "reformed Egyptian" copied from one of the plates. Harris first sought confirmation from a Dr. Clark, who advised him that the scheme was a hoax, devised to extort money from him. He then went to New York City to consult experts, including the scholarly Dr. Mitchell and Prof. Charles Anthon. Anthon, in a letter dated Feb. 17, 1834, that he wrote in reply to an inquiry by E.D. Howe, stated that the characters (of which the foregoing picture—reduced to about half size—is a correct copy) were "anything else but 'Egyptian Hieroglyphics'" and that he had told Harris that he regarded the matter as a scheme to cheat him out of his money and had warned him to beware of rogues. But Harris, not convinced, increased his support of Smith.

The alleged translation began late in 1827. Concealed behind a curtain, Smith allegedly by using the "supernatural spectacles" deciphered the contents of the "gold plates," and then transmitted the English wording to those who wrote it down for him: first, Harris; then, Emma Smith (Joseph's first wife); and finally, Oliver Cowdery (a blacksmith and school teacher). Smith very carefully kept the alleged "plates" from public view, even though some insisted that he exhibit them; later he declared that they, with the "magic spectacles," were carried off by an angel as soon as he had finished dictating their contents! Thus what is now known as the *Book of Mormon* came into existence. Mormons officially regard it as of equal authority with the Old and New Testaments.

CLAIMED ORDINATION FROM HEAVEN

The idea of starting a new church came into prominence; and even before the *Book of Mormon* was published (early in 1830), Smith and Cowdery claimed to have received visions and ordinations from heaven at the hands of John the Baptist! In his autobiography, p. 16, Smith states: "We on a certain day [May 15, 1829] went into the woods to pray and inquire of the Lord respecting baptism for the remission of sins, that we found mentioned in the translation of the plates." (They would have done better if they had studied God's Word on this subject—2 Pet. 1: 19; see our "Baptism" booklet—a copy free on request.)

Smith's testimony continues: "While we were thus employed ... a messenger from heaven descended in a cloud of light, and having laid his hands upon us, he ordained us saying: 'Upon you, my fellow servants, in the name of Messiah, I confer the Priesthood of Aaron, which holds

the keys of the ministering of angels, and of the Gospel of repentance, and of baptism by immersion for the remission of sins; and this shall never be taken again from the earth, until the sons of Levi do offer again an offering unto the Lord in righteousness.'" (If they had studied the Bible more carefully, they would not have fallen under the deception of this lying spirit, for they would have known that the Aaronic or Levitical Priesthood had passed away and had been supplanted by the Melchizedek Priesthood—see, *e.g.*, Hebrews, especially Chaps. 5 and 7, also 1 Pet. 2: 9; Rev. 1: 6.)

This angel, continues Smith, "gave us directions that I should baptize Oliver Cowdery, and that afterwards he should baptize me. Accordingly we went and were baptized. I baptized him first, and afterward he baptized me—after which I laid my hands upon his head and ordained him to the Aaronic Priesthood, afterwards he laid his hands on me and ordained me to the same priesthood—for so we were commanded. The messenger ... said that his name was John, the same that is called John the Baptist in the New Testament, and that he acted under the direction of Peter, James and John, who held the keys of the Priesthood of Melchizedek, which Priesthood, he said, would in due time be conferred on us, and that I should be called the first Elder of the Church, and he (Oliver Cowdery) the second."

This "messenger from heaven"—if there really was such an angel—who palmed himself off as John the Baptist, was doubtless another one of Satan's demons, for John the Baptist was dead, waiting to "rise again in the resurrection at the last day," and "the dead know not any thing" (Eccl. 9: 5, 10; Job 14: 21; Psa. 6: 5; 146: 4; Dan. 12: 2; John 5: 28, 29; 11: 23, 24; Acts 2: 29, 34; 1 Cor. 15: 22; see "Life and Immortality"—a copy free on request).

But the deception may have been perpetrated by none other than Rigdon himself, who was (if not already such) soon to become Smith's theologian, for several years later Cowdery in his *Defense*, after he had been expelled from the Mormon Church, stated of this "messenger" who had spoken to him and Smith as they were praying together in the woods and who had identified himself as John the Baptist, as follows "I received baptism by the direction of the Angel of God, whose voice, as it has since struck me, did most mysteriously resemble the voice of Sidney Rigdon."

Whether the deception of "John the Baptist" was perpetrated by Rigdon, by some other human, or by one of Satan's fallen angels, it nevertheless had the desired effect, and Cowdery joined with Smith in founding a new church, with themselves ordained as elders. Soon they baptized a number of converts. Rigdon's former close association with Alexander Campbell, whose views on baptism he had adopted, probably accounts for these baptisms with "John's baptism," for the remission of sins (Mark 1: 4), which was never effective for any except Jews in the Jewish-Age Harvest (Acts 18: 25; 19: 1-5).

WITNESSES TO "THE GOLD PLATES"

Smith was unable to produce any gold plates, which the new religion claimed for its basis; so in order to make it appear that there were such plates, it became necessary for him to produce witnesses to testify that they existed. Accordingly, three "witnesses," Cowdery, David Whitmer and Harris, early members of the new church, signed a statement (still published in the preface to the *Book of Mormon*), in brief as follows:

"We ... have seen the plates ... and we also know that they have been translated by the gift and power of God, for His voice hath declared it unto us; wherefore we know of a surety that the work is true. And we also testify that we have seen the engravings which are upon the plates; and they have been shown unto us by the power of God, and not of man; and we declare with words of soberness, that an angel of God came down from heaven, and he brought and laid before our eyes, that we beheld and saw the plates and the engravings thereon."

Since later all three of these "witnesses" gave conflicting stories of this matter, Smith became dissatisfied with their "testimony," so before the *Book of Mormon* went to press he secured eight additional "witnesses," who testified that they had "seen and hefted" the plates.

It is recorded that of the first three witnesses Cowdery was later disciplined for adultery and finally expelled from the church because of many misdoings, including disorderly conduct and counterfeiting; Harris (who was a problem to Smith because of his loose talk) finally admitted that his seeing of the golden plates was "by the eye of faith"; and, after becoming involved in a scheme with a young "seeress," who used a black stone to see into the future, he was expelled from the church as an apostate, though he was later accepted back by Brigham Young, rebaptized and readmitted to church membership, in Utah; Whitmer also, together with Cowdery and Harris, was expelled in connection with the episode of the young seeress, though later reinstated.

Of the eight additional "witnesses," consisting of four more Whitmers, Hiram Page and Joseph's own father and two brothers, within seven years all of them, except the Smiths, had either been expelled as apostates or had left voluntarily.

Thus all of the first three and five of the additional eight "witnesses" were later repudiated by Joseph Smith—all except his father and two brothers.

Smith got more and more "revelations," which conveniently helped to establish his authority in his church, to solve problems, *etc.* These were recorded in the *Book of Commandments*, later called *Doctrines and Covenants*, which also has been officially accepted as sacred scripture by vote of the Mormon Church. One "revelation," given in 1829 (Sec. 18), directed the appointment of twelve apostles. (Such appointments of apostles are contrary to the Scriptures, which show that the only Apostles in this plenipotentiary office in the Church are The Twelve, selected by Jesus, with St. Paul taking the place of Judas; see BIBLE STANDARD No. 325—a copy free on request).

The organized members began to inquire as to who was their leader, and Smith, in another "revelation," April 6, 1830, on the organization of the church, addressed to himself, announced: "Thou shalt be called a seer, a translator, a prophet, an apostle of Jesus Christ, an elder of the church through the will of God the Father, and the grace of your Lord Jesus Christ"; and the church was directed in these words, "For his word ye shall receive, as if from mine own mouth, in all patience and faith." Accordingly, the Mormon Church was formally organized in 1830.

SMITH'S CHECKERED CAREER AND DEATH

Missionaries were sent out to Ohio. The people who knew Smith—in New York and in Pennsylvania—did not look favorably on his new religion; instead, much feeling was aroused against him and his followers. So, after a visit to New York in 1830 by Rigdon, who had settled in Kirtland, Ohio (where he had a congregation), Smith had another "revelation," directing his followers to move to Ohio. They obeyed, and settled in Kirtland, where their first temple was built, though some continued on to Missouri. Soon dissension and trouble broke out in Ohio, and in 1838 Smith and Rigdon fled in haste to Missouri to escape from the law, because of their flotation of an illegal bank concern; most of the other Mormons followed; but when they in Missouri answered violence against them with violence, they were expelled.

They then located in Illinois, in a sparsely-settled section; there they built the city of Nauvoo (and its temple). Thousands of European converts were brought there by boat up the Mississippi river. Smith then took up various bad practices, including open polygamy, and led his followers to do likewise. He justified his polygamy by a convenient "Revelation on the Eternity of the Marriage Covenant, including Plurality of Wives," given in 1843 (*Doctrines and Covenants*, Sec. 132). We quote in part:

"I, the Lord, justified my servants Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; as also Moses, David and Solomon, my servants, as touching the principle and doctrine of their having many wives and concubines.

"And let mine handmaid, Emma Smith, receive all those that have been given unto my servant Joseph, and who are virtuous and pure before me.

"And again, verily I say, let mine handmaid forgive my servant Joseph his trespasses; and then shall she be forgiven her trespasses, wherein she has trespassed against me.

"And again, as pertaining to the law of the priesthood, if any man espouse a virgin, and desire to espouse another, and the first give her consent; and if he espouse the second, and they are virgins, and have vowed to no other man, then is he justified; he cannot commit adultery, for they are given unto him; for he cannot commit adultery with that that belongeth unto him and no one else."

Things went from bad to worse, until finally some influential followers rose in revolt, especially because of the "spiritual wife" and "plurality of wives" doctrines. They determined to start a

newspaper in Nauvoo and expose Smith's misdeeds and deceptions. Only one issue was ever published, with the result that Smith, as Mayor of Nauvoo, with the approval of his city council, ordered the destruction of the printing press, type forms and printed matter, which was done.

This precipitated a general uprising of non-Mormons, as well as some anti-Smith Mormons, with the result that Smith and his brother Hyrum were arrested and imprisoned in Carthage, Illinois. Before the law could deal with them as they should have been dealt with, a mob broke into the prison and, when they resisted, shot and killed them, on June 27, 1844. Had they received a just trial and punishment, things would have appeared in their true light, but their being killed by a mob gave Smith's followers an advantage, which they have exploited successfully to picture Smith as dying a martyr's death.

BRIGHAM YOUNG AND LATER MORMON HISTORY

Brigham Young, the senior of the "twelve apostles," became the next leader of the Mormons. He forthwith excommunicated his rival Rigdon, who was opposed to the polygamous ideas of Smith, and whose final act of "rebellion" was said to have been his refusal to give his daughter, Nancy, to Smith as a plural wife.

Before long the aroused non-Mormons in Illinois forced the Mormons to leave. In order to get beyond the reach of the U.S. laws, Young led his followers westward to Utah, which then belonged to Mexico. There in 1847 the Mormons founded their new headquarters, Salt Lake City, and later built their huge Temple and Tabernacle.

After Utah was ceded to the United States, in 1848, a long conflict arose between the Mormons and the U.S. Government, over the issues of polygamy, the right of entrance into Utah Territory, the Mormon treachery in perpetrating the infamous Mountain Meadows Massacre, *etc.*

Young died in 1877, leaving a fortune of between \$2,000,000 and \$3,000,000, and also 17 wives and 56 children. In 1890 the Mormons finally agreed to give up polygamy (though it is reported on good authority that it is still practiced secretly). Largely through immigration from Europe, the California gold rush beginning in 1849, the settlement of the West, and missionary efforts, the Mormon sect grew rapidly. It now boasts of a total of over 14,000,000 members.

After Smith's death six groups sprang up: The main one, noted above, is known as the "Brighamite" Mormons, or "The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints." Next in numerical strength (over 250,000) is "The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints," with headquarters in Independence, Missouri, sometimes called the "Josephite" Mormons, since it rallied to the support of Emma, Joseph Smith's first wife, and insists that his successorship must be from his direct lineage. Then there are the lesser groups, known as "Hedrickite," "Bickertonite," "Cutlerite," and "Strangite" Mormons; these followed their respective leaders, who claimed successorship by reason of visions or authorizations from Smith.

The above gives briefly the peculiar origin and the odd history and personal background leading up to present-day Mormonism. This should of itself be enough to cause any reader to avoid it; but the avoiding of it will be seen to be even more imperative when one recognizes the dangers of this ensnarement and delusion brought out by an examination of some of its teachings.

SMITH'S INSPIRED VERSION OF THE BIBLE

Satan's deceptions are always interwoven with enough truth to make them seem plausible and acceptable—otherwise they would not be deceptions. Thus to the heathen he feeds much error and little truth, but to Christians he poses as an angel of light, and he transforms his "false apostles, deceitful workers," of which Smith, whether wittingly or unwittingly, was one, into "ministers of righteousness"; and they "transform themselves into the apostles of Christ" (2 Cor. 11: 13-15).

Smith professed to be loyal to the Bible, but he wrote by the aid of "revelations" an "Inspired Version" of it; in it he made many changes and he embodied into it much that is non-Biblical and in many cases contradictory of the Scriptural teachings, to make it suit his and Rigdon's ideas. (This is contrary to the admonition of Rev. 22: 18.) Thus, *e.g.*, he added several hundred verses to Genesis alone. The accounts of creation and of Adam and his family were grossly distorted and much imaginative material was added. Several chapters of extraneous material were added on the life of Enoch, to give weight to the communistic "Order of Enoch." The account of Melchizedek was much expanded, and altered also in the book of Hebrews, thus providing "Scriptural" background for the Mormon priesthood ideas.

Note, *e.g.*, how, in support of his false doctrine that all men were created as spirits and existed as unembodied spirits in ages past, Smith, in his *Inspired Version*, makes Gen. 2: 5, 6 read:

"For I, the Lord God, created all things of which I have spoken, spiritually, before they were naturally upon the face of the earth; for I, the Lord God, had not caused it to rain upon the face of the earth. And I, the Lord God, had created all the children of men, and not yet a man to till the ground, for in heaven I created them, and there was not yet flesh upon the earth."

There are many similar distortions and additions in Smith's *Inspired Version*, of which J. L. Barker, one of his apologists, in *The Divine Church*, p. 9, states:

"Joseph Smith undertook a revision of the scripture in the only way possible—by revelation. In general, it is well not to use a single passage of scripture in proof of a point, *unless it is confirmed by modern revelation*. If a single quotation is *confirmed by modern revelation*, we may be sure of its interpretation."

THE "BOOK OF ABRAHAM"

Smith purchased from a traveling showman named Chandler the wrappings of a certain Egyptian mummy, claimed to be that of Pharaoh's daughter; and he created quite a sensation when he claimed that the papyri found in these wrappings contained writings by Abraham and Joseph. In the *Pearl of Great Price* (which includes the "Book of Moses," the "Book of Abraham" and "a choice selection from the revelations, translations and narrations of Joseph Smith," and which also has been officially accepted as sacred scripture by vote of the Mormon Church), p. 50, he describes the "Book of Abraham" as: "A translation of some ancient records, that have fallen into our hands from the catacombs of Egypt; the writings of Abraham while he was in Egypt, called the Book of Abraham, written by his own hand upon papyrus."

On pp. 50, 62 of *Pearl of Great Price* are reproductions of pages from the papyrus of this alleged "Book of Abraham," which Smith, though he knew no Egyptian, claimed that he had translated. He doubtless felt safe in perpetrating this deception, since very little was known about the Egyptian language at that time. But later developments and the examinations of his reproductions of the papyri by such eminent scholars as Dr. W. Flinders-Petrie, Dr. John H. Peters, of the University of Pennsylvania, and others, exposed his duplicity, for all these Egyptologists agreed that Smith's "translations" were utterly incorrect and that his papyri were no more than ordinary documents used in the funeral rites of a later Egyptian period, at least five hundred years after Abraham's time. 'Thousands of these are in existence and are displayed in various museums of Egyptian antiquities.

The "Book of Abraham" for a time was accepted as gospel by the Mormons in general, but was finally dropped by the Reorganized Church, though they did not reject the one who had thus deceived them, nor the *Pearl of Great Price* as a whole. The Brighamite Mormons, on the other hand, continued to hold to the fake "Book of Abraham," in defense of which a Brigham Young University professor explained, "Mormons would rather trust the inspirations of Joseph Smith than the scholarship of modern scientists."

A BLASPHEMY AGAINST JEHOVAH'S BEING

Mormonism teaches that the Almighty Jehovah, "the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity," who is "from everlasting to everlasting" (Isa. 57: 15; Psa. 90: 2), was at one time an imperfect, sinful, wretched human mortal—if words mean at all what they say. In April 1844, shortly before his death, Smith, in a discourse (often quoted by Mormons and considered as inspired) to about 20,000 people at Elder King Follett's funeral in Nauvoo, gave the final summary of his doctrine of deified man and a humanized God. From it has been formulated the stereotyped expression: "*As man now is, God once was; as God is now, man may become.*" This favorite cliché is often repeated in Mormon literature and is celebrated by the foremost Mormon writers as an "eternal truth." But note how it contradicts God's Word, in which "the eternal God" (Deut. 33: 27) Himself testifies: "I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me" (Isa.

46: 9); "I am the Lord, *I change not*" (Mal. 3: 6); "I am the Lord ... my glory will I not give to another" (Isa. 42: 8).

The following excerpts from Joseph Smith's discourse speak for themselves:

"I will go back to the beginning before the world was, to show you what kind of a being God is. God was once as we are now, and is an exalted man, and sits enthroned in yonder heavens. ... I am going to tell you how God came to be God. We have imagined and supposed that God was God from all eternity. I will refute that idea, and take away the veil, so that you may see. ... He was once a man like us; yea, God himself, the father of us all, dwelt on an earth, the same as Jesus Christ did. ... Jesus said, 'as the Father hath power to himself, even so hath the Son power' ... to do what? Why, what the Father did. The answer is obvious—in a manner to lay down his body and take it up again. Here, then, is eternal life—to know the only wise and true God; and you have got to learn how to be Gods yourselves, and to be kings and priests to God, the same as all Gods have done before you."

And based on Smith's statement in *Doctrines and Covenants* (Sec. 27): "Michael, or Adam, the Father of all, the prince of all, the Ancient of Days," Brigham Young (see his *Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 1, p. 50) stated: "When our father, Adam, came into the Garden of Eden, he came into it with a celestial body, and brought Eve, one of his wives, with him. He helped to make and organize this world. He is Michael, the archangel, the Ancient of Days, about whom holy men have written and spoken."

This blasphemous teaching against God's attributes of being is in part confirmed also in *Doctrines and Covenants* (Sec. 130), as follows: "The Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as any man's."

And who do Mormons say is this alleged huge man in the heavens? The answer is almost past belief; but it comes from no less than their great prophet, Brigham Young, who states: "Adam is God, the Supreme God, the Creator of this world, our God, and the only God with whom we have to do. He is our Father and our God. Who is the Father? The first of the human family."

A BLASPHEMY AGAINST JEHOVAH'S CHARACTER

Mormonism blasphemes the attributes not only of Jehovah's being, but also of His character. For example, it teaches the terrible doctrine of "eternal torment," which is a libel on the character, plan and purpose of an all-wise, all-just, all-loving and all-powerful Creator. The *Book of Mormon* (II Nephi 9: 16, 26; 28: 23) teaches that the "lake of fire and brimstone ... is endless torment," "whose flame ascendeth up for ever and ever, and has no end." This openly contradicts God's Word, which explains that "the lake of fire" (into which death and hell will be cast) *is*, symbolically *represents*, "the second death" (Rev. 20: 14; 21: 8); for "the wages of sin is *death*"; and the wicked "shall be punished with *everlasting destruction*"—not *everlasting preservation* (Rom. 6: 23; 2 Thes. 1: 9). "All the wicked will God *destroy*" (Psa. 145: 20; 1 Cor. 3: 17; 2 Pet. 2: 1, 12).

OTHER ERRORS OF MORMONISM

The *Book of Mormon* teaches that the very same physical body that goes down into the grave will be the body that will be resurrected (II Nephi 9: 12, 13), thus again contradicting God's Word (1 Cor. 15: 35-37), which, in answer to the questions, "How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?" states clearly, "Thou sowest not that body that shall be" (see "The Resurrection of the Dead"—a copy free).

The *Book of Mormon* teaches that all faithful people who lived and died before Jesus' First Advent and death will be greatly advantaged over the majority who have lived since Calvary, in that God has provided that they shall come forth perfect, and have a part in the First Resurrection. Thus it states (Mosiah 15: 24):

"These are they that have died before Christ came, in their ignorance, not having salvation declared unto them. And thus the Lord bringeth about the restoration of these; and they have a part in the first resurrection."

The Bible, on the contrary, teaches clearly that only the Church (established by Jesus at His First Advent) will have part in the first resurrection (Rev. 20: 4-6), and that instead of the ancients having precedence over the Gospel Church, contrariwise God has "provided some better thing for us, that they [the worthy ones who lived before Jesus' First Advent] without us should not be made perfect" (Heb. 11: 40). Even John the Baptist, the last of the Prophets (Luke 16: 16), than whom none of the Prophets had a greater message to declare, having died a few months before Jesus' death and resurrection, will not be of the spiritual Kingdom class, the Bride (John 3: 29); he will be less than the least in the Kingdom of Heaven (Matt. 11: 11). He, like all other Ancient Worthies, while not having a part in the first (chief) resurrection, to glory, honor and immortality—the Divine nature, will, nevertheless, "obtain a better resurrection" than the rest of the world (Heb. 11: 35), who will share in the general resurrection awakening. During the Thousand-year Judgment Day the Ancient Worthies will rule on earth, on the human plane, as princes in the Kingdom of God on earth (Matt. 6: 10), under the spiritual phase of the Kingdom (Psa. 45: 16; Isa. 32: 1; Luke 13: 28).

Mormonism teaches that man's future glory will depend upon marriage and offspring, and that sex relations and propagation will ever continue in the spirit realm, among the "worthy ones" who have used the powers of propagation while on earth. We read (*Doctrines and Covenants*, 132), "If a man marry him a wife in the world, and he marry her not by me ... their covenant and marriage are not of force when they are dead ... but are appointed angels in heaven ... to minister for those who [enjoy 'celestial marriage' and] are worthy of a far more, and an exceeding, and an eternal weight of glory; for these angels did not abide my law, therefore they cannot be enlarged [cannot propagate], but remain separately and singly, without exaltation in their saved condition to all eternity, and from henceforth are not gods, but are angels of God, forever and ever."

If this were true, we would be forced to conclude that if a Christian does not take at least one wife in accordance with Mormon Church sanction during the present lifetime, he will not be counted worthy of "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" beyond the grave. What, then, shall we say of Jesus Himself, who was not married? And how shall we regard His statement that other faithful ones "have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake; he that is able to receive it, let him receive it" (Matt. 19: 12)? Will those who sacrifice present earthly privileges "for the kingdom of heaven's sake" stand lower in the future than those who do not? Mormon doctrine says they will, but Jesus and His Apostles declare to the contrary.

Note St. Paul's masterful argument and advice on this point in 1 Cor. 7: 8, 9, 28, which advice applies only to the consecrated, those who seek only to do God's will in all things; it does not apply to the world in general, who have not become Jesus' footstep followers and therefore do not practice self-denial in God's service. The Church class, who have sacrificed earthly rights (Rom. 12: 1; Matt. 16: 24), have an exaltation like that of their Heavenly Bridegroom, far *above* angels, principalities and powers, and every name that is named (Eph. 1: 21; Phil. 2: 9; Heb. 1: 4, 5; 2 Pet. 1: 4; 1 John 3: 2). There is no command in the matter; true Christians who are married should not feel that they are therefore not approved by God (1 Cor. 7: 9, 28; Heb. 13: 4); each one must decide for himself what is for his best interests and how much he will give up in God's service.

BLASPHEMIES AGAINST JESUS

Mormons have much difficulty in trying to adapt their adverse theories to an acceptable concept of Jesus. In the first place, they teach (J.F. Smith, *Progress of Man*, pp. 9-11) that "Man is a spirit clothed with a tabernacle the intelligent part of which was never created or made but existed eternally—man was also in the beginning with God"; and (J.A. Widtsoe, *Varieties of American Religion*, p. 132) that "He [man] existed before he came to earth: he was with God 'in the beginning.' Man's destiny is divine. Man is an eternal being. He also is 'from everlasting to everlasting.'" Then they degrade Jesus to this same level to which they have exalted man (J.E. Talmage, *The Articles of Faith*, p. 473): "Jesus Christ is not the father of the spirits who have taken or will take bodies, for He is one of them. He is the son and they are the sons and daughters of Elohim. ... There is no impropriety ... in speaking of Jesus Christ as the older brother of the rest of human kind." They even go so far as to make Jesus a brother to the Devil and to his "wicked spirits" (J.H. Evans, *An American Prophet*, p. 241): "As for the Devil and his fellow spirits, they are brothers to man and also to Jesus."

But this is only one of their blasphemies against Jesus. They teach also that He was born in sin as a son of Adam. Note, for example, Young's *Journal of Discourses*, pp. 50, 51: "When the Virgin Mary conceived the child Jesus ... he was not begotten by the Holy Ghost. And who is his Father? He is the first of the human family. Jesus, our elder brother, was begotten in the flesh by the same character that was in the garden of Eden." And Parley P. Pratt, another Mormon theologian and co-worker with Joseph Smith, in his *Key to the Science of Theology*, p. 30, states: "Jesus Christ, a little babe like all the rest of us, grew to be a man, was filled with a divine substance or fluid, called the Holy Spirit, by which he comprehended and spake the truth."

Another Mormon blasphemy against Jesus is their teaching that He was a polygamist. According to Mormon logic, as already seen (*Doctrines and Covenants*, 132), if Jesus was not married during His earthly life, He could rise no higher than an angel in the resurrection. So they try to adapt this error to the Scriptures. Thus Orson Hyde (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. II, pp. 81, 82) states: "If at the marriage of Cana of Galilee, Jesus was the bridegroom and took unto him Mary, Martha and the other Mary, it shocks not our nerves. If there was not an attachment and familiarity between our Savior and these women, highly proper only in the relation of husband and wife, then we have no sense of propriety" and (Vol. IV, p. 259): "If he never married, his intimacy with Mary and Martha, and the other Mary also, whom Jesus loved, must have been highly unbecoming and improper, to say the best of it. ... Did he multiply, and did he see his seed? Did he know his Father's law by complying with it, or did he not? Others may do as they like, but I will not charge our Savior with neglect or transgression in this or any other duty." And he explains (p. 210): "We say it was Jesus Christ who was married whereby he could see his seed before he was crucified. I shall say here that before the Savior died he looked upon his own natural children as we look upon ours. When Mary came to the sepulchre she saw two angels and she said unto them, 'they have taken away my Lord,' or husband." Thus Mormons wrest the Scriptures to their own destruction.

ERRORS ON BAPTISM

The *Book of Mormon* contains 32 references to baptism, one of which (I Nephi 10: 7-10), through the mouth of Lehi (who allegedly was a Jew living 600 B.C.), prophesies in King James Version phraseology (showing that Smith copied it from the New Testament) the exact sequence of Jesus' baptism by John the Baptist as related in the Gospels. There are 38 references to baptism in the *Doctrines and Covenants*, one of which (68: 27) states that "their children shall be baptized for the remission of their sins when eight years old, and receive the laying on of hands." But its most amazing reference is found in Moses 6: 51-54, 62, 65, giving an elaborate account of the baptism by immersion of Adam! We quote it in part:

"God ... called unto Adam ... saying ... If thou wilt turn unto me ... and believe and repent of all thy transgressions, and be baptized, even in water, in the name of mine only begotten Son ... ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. And our father Adam spake unto the Lord and said: Why is it that men must repent and be baptized in water? And the Lord said unto Adam: Behold I have forgiven thee thy transgression in the Garden of Eden. ... And it came to pass when the Lord had spoken unto Adam, our father, that Adam cried unto the Lord, and he was caught away by the Spirit of the Lord, and was carried into the water, and was laid under the water, and was brought forth out of the water. And thus he was baptized and the spirit of God descended upon him, and thus he was born of the spirit, and became quickened in the inner man. And he heard a voice out of heaven, saying: Thou art baptized with fire, and with the Holy Ghost."

The Mormons insist that there is no salvation except by water immersion "for the remission of sins" administered by a qualified Mormon priest. Thus according to their theory, saintly

Presbyterians, saintly Methodists and other good, well-meaning people who have never undergone water immersion are doomed to the unspeakable horrors of eternal torture, for they claim that such is the penalty for unremitted sin. Is it not better to accept and believe the plain Bible teaching that the dead are dead, awaiting the resurrection, and that all will come forth during Messiah's reign, to be taught at the hands of the Heavenly Bridegroom and Bride, until none need say to his neighbor, Know the LORD, for all shall know Him from the least unto the greatest? Then the soul that will not hear that Prophet (The Christ) shall be *destroyed* from among the people—not roasted or tortured, but punished with "everlasting destruction" (see Acts 3: 19-23; 15: 14-17; Jer. 31: 31-34; Rev. 22: 17; 2 Thes. 1: 9).

The Mormons extend their teaching, that water immersion for the remission of sins is essential for salvation, to include also all the billions who have lived and died without a knowledge of the alleged "restored gospel" as it was revealed to Smith. Of course, very few of them have ever heard of Smith or his strange gospel. How then can these billions ever be saved? The Mormon teaching on *baptism for the dead* is intended to take care of this problem. It is associated with the alleged appearance of Elijah (*Doctrines and Covenants*, 110); and M. R. Hunter comments on it (*The Gospel Through the Ages*, p. 224) as follows "A week following the dedication of the Kirtland temple, April 3, 1836, Elijah appeared to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery in the temple and bestowed upon them the keys of sealing power, that all the ordinances for the dead might be performed in a valid way."

Smith (*Doctrines and Covenants*, 128) in 1842 wrote of this rite as "the ordinance that the Lord ordained and prepared before the foundation of the world, for the salvation of the dead who should die without a knowledge of the gospel"; and he declared that the books referred to in Rev. 20: 12, which will be opened on the Judgment Day, are the records of baptisms, and other rites, maintained by the official secretaries in connection with the "temple work."

Mormons teach that Jesus preached the gospel to all of the dead during the parts of three days between His death and resurrection, and that the repentant ones of these dead must be baptized by living proxies. They base these erroneous doctrines on their misapplication of such texts as 1 Pet. 3: 19 and 1 Cor. 15: 29. For the Scriptural explanation of these and other pertinent texts, see our "Baptism" booklet—free on request.

One of the most widespread activities of Mormons in their temples today is their baptisms for the dead. They are endlessly doing "work for the dead" by compiling multitudes of genealogies (to which we are not to give heed—1 Tim. 1: 4) of their ancestors and others and then being baptized for them. One Mormon recently stated that he had been baptized over five thousand times for different ones of the dead. Mormons claim that they have built their magnificent temple in Los Angeles to last throughout the Millennium, during which they will proceed to baptize, by proxy, all of the dead of the past ages who have not had a chance to respond to Smith's "restored gospel." Common sense would recognize that a thousand Mormon temples would be far too few to cope with such a task for the billions of mankind who have died since Adam's day.

WAS PROPAGATION A SIN?

The final error of Mormonism that we will note here is in connection with the propagation of the human race. The *Book of Mormon* teaches that Adam transgressed in order to bring forth offspring, and that if he had not thus "transgressed," the human race could not have been propagated. It says (II Nephi 2: 19, 20, 22-25), "If Adam had not transgressed ... they would have had no children; wherefore, they would have remained in a state of innocence, having no joy. ... Adam fell that men might be."

This is obviously an error, for "God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish [fill] the earth" (Gen. 1: 28). He gave them this instruction *before they transgressed*; and since He told them to bring forth children, it would not be any transgression for them to obey the voice of God. Note also that Eve ate first, and Adam ate later (Gen. 3: 6), which fact nullifies the claim that their sin was the propagation of offspring. Surely doing what God had commanded them to do could not be disobeying Him. Nor does God ever place His creatures in positions where they are compelled to sin in order to obey Him. If he had done so with Adam, then He, and not Adam, would have been the responsible party in the transgression. Whichever way Adam would have turned, he would have disobeyed one or the other of God's commands, according to the *Book of Mormon*.

In view of the origin and history of Mormonism, and its above-mentioned errors (and others that could be mentioned) that manifest its rickety foundation, what shall we conclude concerning it? Is it of God or of the Adversary? Obviously it is one of the religions that have sprung up here in the end of the Gospel Age "speaking lies," of which "the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils" (1 Tim. 4: 1; 2 Tim. 3: 1; 4: 3, 4).