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## THE SECULAR RELEVANCE OF THE GOSPEL

Louis C. Midgley

*Since Cumorah*. By Hugh W. Nibley. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co. xx + 451 pp., \$4.95.  
Louis C. Midgley is Associate Professor of Political Science at Brigham Young University.

What message has the Book of Mormon for our world? Does it speak to those who sense their own involvement in the greatness and the misery of secular existence? Hugh Nibley, in a portion of *Since Cumorah*, strives to provide an answer to these questions. We are badly in need of a serious discussion of the issues he raises. Usually, however, an abashed silence has followed his scholarly contributions. In order to see what he is up to in the closing portion of *Since Cumorah*, which is my intent in this essay, it is useful to understand something of his role in Mormon intellectual life. Nibley has been a source of dismay in certain circles, but why should he cause consternation? The answer is simple, though consequential.

Hugh Nibley has long been waging a major two-front war: his best-known campaign is against what might be called "Cultural Mormonism"; but an equally significant campaign is now under way against a form of "Sectarian Mormonism" now having some popularity, especially in certain academic circles. Both the Cultural and Sectarian types are eager to effect an accommodation of the gospel with features of the prevailing culture. That Nibley has defended the integrity of the gospel against the Cultural Mormons is rather well known; what is not nearly as well known is that he has evoked the Book of Mormon against the efforts of Sectarian Mormons to align certain American middle-class values with the gospel, as well as the recent attempts of some Mormons to sanctify a radical political ideology by attributing it to God.

In *Since Cumorah* we see Nibley in a somewhat new role; one, however, that is remarkably open and free of rancor. He has often appeared to his Mormon audience as a warrior with a verbal rapier who busies himself in the defense of the faith by impaling the enemies of Joseph Smith and the Mormon scriptures. Both *Sounding Brass* and *The Myth Makers* reveal Nibley in this role.<sup>1</sup> He has both a taste and a talent for irony, and is tempted to sarcasm and mockery. I like his style. All the blundering, pompous, self-assured folly of this world, and especially that manifest in the opposition to the gospel, deserves what it gets. Such verbal fireworks do not always accomplish their mission; however, the style and tone of *Since Cumorah* is different, and those readers who know Nibley only in one role might do well to examine the book carefully.

*Since Cumorah* is a massive effort to test the Book of Mormon. Such an endeavor is an affront to those Cultural Mormons who feel that the book has already flunked, while some Sectarians reject the scholarly enterprise as wholly irrelevant to the truth of the gospel. However, the material I wish to examine constitutes a special kind of test. Mormons who are genuinely concerned about (and perhaps even those engaged in) the current struggle over political ideologies which threatens to polarize and split the Church should give some serious attention to Nibley's argument, even though it is not presented in the familiar form of an "ism."

He begins with the recognition that among Mormons generally there is an astonishing degree of indifference toward the doctrinal content of the Book of Mormon, as well as a rather profound awareness of its prophetic message. For the Saints, the Book of Mormon is often a sign of God's revelatory activity, and, as such, they may feel a deep commitment to it. However, as Nibley points out, the book itself "claims to contain an enormously important message for whoever is to receive it, and yet until now those few who have been willing to receive it as the authentic word of God have not shown particular interest in that message." He insists, and I think correctly, that everything about the book is "of very minor significance in comparison with what the book actually has to say. As we see it, if an angel took the trouble to deliver the book to Joseph Smith and to instruct him night after night as to just how he was to go about giving it to the world . . . , that book should obviously have something important to convey. The question that all are now asking of the Bible — 'What does it have to say that is of relevance to the modern world?' applies with double force to the Book of Mormon, which is a special message to the modern world." His feeling is that "the ultimate test of the Book of Mormon's validity is whether or not it really has something to say" to our age.

Nibley's effort to show the secular relevance of the Book of Mormon will

<sup>1</sup>Nibley entered the Mormon academic scene in 1946 with *No Ma'am, That's Not History* — a criticism of Fawn Brodie's famous "biography" of Joseph Smith. This earned him the undying hostility of numerous Cultural Mormons. For some reason they could not get over the impertinence of the "upstart" Nibley criticizing the likes of Brodie, although his early impressions have now been mostly vindicated.

come as a shock to some Mormons. Thus far he has avoided being caught in the narrow, partisan controversy between the party-men whose world is either "liberal" or "conservative." But this does not mean that he has neglected to say things of relevance about problems like, for example, the current polarization of political opinion within the Church — he has, but his contributions, until recently, have been either "hidden" in essays in academic journals,<sup>2</sup> or couched in the words and hence the authority of Brigham Young. In *Since Cumorah*, and especially in the part entitled "The Prophetic Book of Mormon," there is an extended discussion of the secular relevance of the prophetic message of the Book of Mormon wherein Nibley addresses himself to issues that genuinely and deeply concern, as well as divide, the people of God.

The Nibley that surfaces at the end of *Since Cumorah* is quite likely to trouble some of his former allies. He has long been known as a critic of the efforts of those within the Church who wish to see the gospel reconciled to prevailing currents within the culture. Efforts to harmonize the gospel and the culture have taken a number of forms. Some of the most energetic efforts have come from some Mormon intellectuals who, under the influence of the Protestant liberalism of the pre-World War II period, wished to see Mormonism become fully consistent with a brand of secular humanism. Their strategy was to capitulate wherever there seemed to be a serious tension. Hugh Nibley has provided the most significant intellectual obstacle for those who strove to avoid embarrassment over the gospel by retreating into a secularized Cultural Mormonism or by transforming the gospel into a variety of Protestant liberalism or humanism.

Almost alone, Nibley has stood in the way of Mormons who have given up on the Book of Mormon as a source of doctrine (for example, because they have accepted liberal Protestant notions about man's predicament) or those who have more or less rejected the possibility that the book is genuinely the word of God. He has also become the rallying-point for opposition to the development of something like the *Kulturprotestantismus* (Cultural Protestantism) of German theological liberalism after Schleiermacher — a kind of *Kulturmormonismus* that would no longer be threatened and embarrassed by assaults from prevailing science and philosophy because the Mormon religion was to be defined simply as the highest flowering of culture and therefore fully consistent with the science and philosophy of the day.

Some Cultural Mormons have thus come to see in Nibley an ironic, biting, sarcastic, clever, erudite defender of what they understand to be an irrelevant, authoritarian theological conservatism. Further, since many have come to live and die by slogans, it has been assumed by friend and foe alike that, since Nibley is critical of those who would capitulate to the culture by

making Mormonism into a brand of Protestant liberalism or humanism, he must also be an arch political conservative. After all, these people reason, "is it not perfectly obvious that a theological liberal and a political liberal are the same thing?" Nothing could be further from the truth. *Since Cumorah* shows that his critics (and perhaps some of his Sectarian supporters) have misunderstood his position.

The argument of "The Prophetic Book of Mormon" provides a powerful and convincing antidote to counteract the poison of the narrow, partisan, extremist political ideology now being advanced by certain Mormon intellectuals. Nibley has done what no other Mormon could do (and some would not have even thought it possible): he has removed the Book of Mormon from the arsenal of weapons available to the conservatively oriented right wing. The current effort to align the gospel with a worldly political ideology and the Church with a political mass movement is a yeasty fermentation that is entirely inconsistent with the prophetic message of the Book of Mormon. Though his arguments and the conclusions are obvious, Nibley has not made a special effort to call attention to them (why buy trouble?), and it is with some reluctance that I do so. The mood among some Mormons is such that the mere hint that one does not share their social and political opinions is likely to generate a spasm of hostility, indignation, and revulsion, as well as charges of apostasy and heresy. The ideology of the Sectarials tends to include the following: (1) rejection of civil rights legislation that is intended to protect the freedom of conscience and speech and to prevent persecution and discrimination; (2) the abolition of public welfare programs; (3) opposition to taxation; (4) indifference, and even hostility, to the poor, indigent and otherwise unfortunate; (5) the encouragement of military aggression against the evil of other nations; (6) class, national and racial hatreds and conceits. Nibley argues that these cherished social and political nostrums cannot find support in the Book of Mormon and are inconsistent with the gospel.

Most Sectarials will not readily admit that I have described the content of their ideology correctly. They would, instead, want to speak in terms of fundamental principles such as individual initiative, self-reliance, freedom, or of evils such as government regulation and interference, and the welfare dole. With a peculiar kind of honesty, Nibley has torn away the silken veil which piety still draws over our own worldly ambitions and motives. What is really wrong with individual initiative, self-reliance, and so forth? Nothing if they are taken in their proper setting, but as moral absolutes they no longer conform to the law of love; they represent, instead, a crude, worldly ethic, a kind of morally blind Social Darwinism which stresses the survival of the fittest. The Book of Mormon actually describes in horror such a point of view: "every man fared in this life according to the management of the creature; therefore every man prospered according to his genius, and . . . every man conquered according to his strength . . ." (Alma 30:17). Now we often hear talk of a universal, immutable, irrevocable Law of the Harvest which determines that men get paid for whatever they do. But not according

<sup>2</sup>Nibley's "The Unsolved Loyalty Problem: Our Western Heritage," *Western Political Quarterly* 6(1953):631-57, can for example, be read both as (1) a straight examination of an issue that plagued the 4th century and which happens to have parallels with the politics of our own time, and, in addition, as (2) a subtle effort at reading a sermon to the Saints

to the gospel, which speaks for love and mercy. Nibley points out that

for charity [i.e., *agape*, love] there is no bookkeeping, no *quid pro quo*, no deals, interest, bargaining, or ulterior motives; *charity gives to those who do not deserve and expects nothing in return*; it is the love God has for us, and the love we have for little children, of whom we expect nothing but for whom we would give everything. By the Law of the Harvest, none of us can expect salvation for "all men that are in a state of nature . . . a carnal state . . . have gone contrary to the nature of God," and if they were to be restored to what they deserve would receive "evil for evil, or carnal for carnal, or devilish for devilish." (Alma 41:11, 13.) "Therefore, my son," says Alma in a surprising conclusion, "see that you are merciful unto your brethren." (Alma 41:14.) That is our only chance, for if God did not have mercy none of us would ever return to his presence, for we are all "in the grasp of justice" from which only "the plan of mercy" can save us. (Alma 42:14f.) But God does have mercy, and has declared that we can have a claim on it to that exact degree to which we have shown charity towards our fellow man. (Italics supplied.)

Then Nibley points out that "charity to be charity must be 'to all men,' especially to those evil people who hate us, 'For if ye love them which love you what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans do the same?' Nor should we demand or expect charity in return. . . . Still, we might say that the Law of the Harvest wins after all, since we must have and give charity to receive it." How does this relate to concrete political and social issues? In this way: our ambition, pride, self-confidence, and love of status, power, and wealth negate our love of God, a love which must be expressed in our love for our fellow-man. Our actions and our rationalizing social and political ideologies do not always express love, but often a carefully disguised and moralistically rationalized loathing, hatred, or indifference.

Though we seldom worship icons, our chief problem is still idolatry. We are constantly tempted to set our hearts upon our worldly treasures, and, when we do, these objects become our gods. Our worshipping (i.e., counting as divine) human ideas, philosophies, or value-systems must also be counted equally to fall under that which God forbids when he forbids us to manufacture gods from the things of this earth. Nibley argues that the Nephite practice of making gods out of their gold and silver was simply worshipping the stuff as if it were divine. When our hearts are set on power, prestige, influence, status, our luxurious homes, then our political and social views will surely reflect these concerns. Our ideologies often merely rationalize our commitments to the values of this world. Hence it is all too easy to see what really stands behind the pious slogans, rubrics, and clichés advanced by the Sectarian supporters of radical ideologies.

Earlier I mentioned six elements which are commonly found in the Sectarian political ideology. Nibley indicates that the prophetic message of the Book of Mormon speaks to each of these issues.

1. Nibley feels that the Book of Mormon fully supports efforts both to protect civil rights and to prevent persecution and discrimination.

Some have felt that the attempt of the state to implement the ideas of liberty and equality by passing and enforcing laws repugnant to a majority, i.e., laws restraining persecution, discrimination, slavery, and all violence whatever, is an infringement of free agency. But plainly the Nephites did not think so. As we have seen, they believed that no one was ever without his free agency: one can sin or do unrighteously under any form of government whatever; indeed, the *worse* the government the better the test: after all, we are all being tried and tested on this earth 'under the rule of Belial' himself, 'the prince of this world'; but since no one can ever make us sin or do right, our free agency is never in the slightest danger. *But free institutions and civil liberties are, as history shows, in constant danger. They are even attacked by those who would justify their actions as a defense of free agency, and insist that artificial barriers erected by law to protect the rights of unpopular and weak minorities are an attempt to limit that agency.* (Italics supplied.)

In addition, Nibley shows how the Book of Mormon stresses what we would call the freedom of conscience and religion, i.e., freedom to believe or not believe. The point was made by Joseph Smith in the King Follett Discourse: "Every man has a natural, and in our country, a constitutional right to be a false prophet, as well as a true prophet." Joseph Smith claimed that God suffered the establishment of the United States Constitution to provide first and foremost such freedom of conscience (Doctrine and Covenants 101) and the statement on government in the Doctrine and Covenants (Section 134) makes freedom of conscience the key to the legitimacy of human government. (Nibley has treated these themes at some length in the essay entitled "The Ancient Law of Liberty," found in *The World of the Prophets*.)

2. Nibley finds that the Book of Mormon does not necessarily oppose what we now call public welfare programs. King Benjamin's insistence on the necessity of equality resulted in his authorization of such programs. "He insisted that anyone who withheld his substance from the needy, no matter how improvident and deserving of their fate they might be, 'hath great cause to repent' (Mosiah 4:16-18). . . ." Nibley denies that these were merely private welfare activities.

3. Welfare programs need to be financed, and one method is through public taxation. Benjamin's son Mosiah

wrote equality into the constitution, "that every man should have an equal chance throughout all the land. . . ." (Mosiah 29:38.) "I desire," said the king, "that this inequality should be no more in this land . . . ; but I desire that this be a land of liberty, and every man may enjoy his rights and privileges alike. . . ." (Mosiah 29:32.) This does not mean that some should support others in idleness, "but that the burden should come upon all the people, that every man might bear his part." (Mosiah 29:34.) This was in conformance with Benjamin's policy of taxation: "I would that ye should [this is a royal imperative] impart of your substance to the poor, every man according to that which he hath . . . administering to their relief, both spiritually and temporally, according to their wants." (Mosiah 4:26) (Italics are Nibley's.)

After giving another example of a royal order (Mosiah 21:17), Nibley adds: "Here taxation appears as a means of implementing the principle of equality. Whenever taxation is denounced in the Book of Mormon, it is always because the taxer uses the funds not to help others but for his own aggrandizement." Moroni saved the constitution of Mosiah from the king-men by enforcing equality. "This drastic enforcement of equality was justified by an extreme national emergency; but both Alma and Moroni had pointed out to the people on occasion that the worst danger their society had to face was inequality." (Cf. Doctrine and Covenants 78:5-6).

4. The last seventy pages of *Since Cumorah* are brimming with references to our neglect of the poor. Nibley sees Mormon 8:36-39 as a prophetic warning to the saints in our own time.

"And I know that ye do [present tense] walk in the pride of your hearts; and there are none save a few only who do not lift themselves up in the pride of their hearts, unto the wearing of very fine apparel, unto envyings and strifes, and malice, and persecutions, and all manner of iniquities. . . ." (Mormon 8:36.) Here is our own fashionable, well dressed, status-conscious and highly competitive society. The "iniquities" with which it is charged are interesting, for instead of crime, immorality, and atheism we are told of the vices of vanity, of the intolerant and uncharitable state of mind: pride, envy, strife, malice and persecution. These are the crimes of meanness; whereas libertines, bandits and unbelievers have been known to be generous and humane, the people whom Mormon is addressing betray no such weakness. They are dedicated people: "For behold, ye do love money, and your substance, and your fine apparel, and the adorning of your churches, *more than ye love the poor and the needy, the sick and afflicted.*" (Mormon 8:37). These people do not persecute the poor (they are too single-minded for that), but simply ignore their existence: ". . . ye adorn yourselves with that which hath no life, and yet suffer the hungry, and the needy . . . to pass by you, and notice them not." (Mormon 8:39.)

5. The entire chapter on "Military History" (chapter 11) and much of the remaining seventy pages of *Since Cumorah* is devoted to warning the saints against wishing to see political power and especially military force used to punish the wickedness of other parties and nations, *no matter how wicked they may actually be*. The proper theme, Nibley maintains, should be co-existence, a word he uses over and over, and not the venerable old though utterly insane and unrighteous notion of "kill or be killed." "It is either you or me." The saints should always practice forbearance toward their enemies and strive for peace, even sometimes at the price of other values (e.g., Mosiah 20:22 and cf. several important statements by the First Presidency); they should only fight defensively and for limited objectives. War and the threat of war is God's way of showing us that both sides are bad. "Of one thing we can be sure, however — the good people never fight the bad people: they never fight anybody: . . . it is by the wicked that the wicked are punished; for it is the wicked that stir up the hearts of the children of men unto bloodshed." (Mormon 4:5.)

6. Being righteous has nothing to do with race. Likewise, according to Nibley, wickedness should not be attributed to those who do not belong to some fashionable group. It is not our business to judge other men's sins. "If they have not charity it mattereth not unto thee," the Lord told one Nephite prophet who was inordinately concerned about the sins of others. (Ether 12:37.) Instead, we must come to realize that before God we are all beggars. If we show our faith through love, God will see and respond with mercy toward us. However, when our hearts are set upon some worldly object or value, when we "seek not the Lord to establish his righteousness" (Doctrine and Covenants 1:16), we actually worship some worldly likeness instead of God. Then we lust after the riches of this world, upon which our hearts are set; then we begin to seek power and gain that we "might be lifted up one above another." The cycle is familiar: with wealth or other prosperity comes a feeling of pride and superiority, from which comes intense status-consciousness and an insatiable need for those things which assure our status (especially power and wealth). Why are we unhappy? "We seek not the Lord to establish his righteousness." Instead we set our hearts on the vain things of this world; we are anxious about the wrong things. "Please note," writes Nibley. ". . . wickedness does not consist in being on the *wrong side* — in the Book of Mormon it never does." Party, class, nation are all equally irrelevant to the question of righteousness of one and the wickedness of another group and turn us from the actual human predicament and its authentic solution.

But what about race? For the second time, Nibley has examined what he calls "The Race Question." The very title is enough to excite some anxiety, which only shows that the subject needs to be dealt with. What he examines, of course, are the ethnological teachings found in the Book of Mormon and the use of group labels (e.g., Nephite, Lamanite). The relevant issue is the problem of dark skin — "black" and "white." The terms "black" and "white" are used, Nibley argues, as *marks* of a general way of life; that is, they are cultural designations. They are marks, they are also intended by God, and they are put upon the holder by his own actions, but there is no miracle of skin color changing from light to dark ("white" to "black"?), except as one adopted a certain cultural pattern.

Nibley finds that the Book of Mormon is busy warning us about our temptation to be concerned about wealth, status, prestige, power, and influence. After all, sin is anxiety about the things of this world. The real source of our wickedness is our desire to live something that is not genuinely worthy of our love, our urge to worship a mere likeness, our tendency to be concerned about some trivial thing. The one thing we fear in this world and resent above all other things is being edged out of our (rightful?) place at the table when Mother Technology's pie is being cut. Things seem to merit status and we are *all* tempted by such ephemeral things. The trouble with the conservatively oriented political ideology with which some of the saints are now flirting and which is now being taught as God-given by some



Sectarian teachers is that it represents a setting of the heart upon the wrong things. Its motive is not charity; its much vaunted principles are merely of *this world* in spite of its many pious pretensions. The chief weakness of the Sectarian political ideology is that it is a clumsy attempt to accommodate the gospel to certain features of the prevailing culture. We are often quite anxious lest our wealth, our hard earned wealth, for example, be taxed by an evil and profligate government and given to Blacks, the poor, or someone else who did not earn it. We forget that we are all beggars before the Lord and we miss the point of the Great Commandment (Cf. Mosiah 4:16-27). We worry about our status, our influence and power, our place in this world. A vain, worldly political ideology which happens to express our fears and reflect our anxieties is seized upon as an expression of a profound truth and eagerly made a corollary of the gospel. What irony! The gospel is *not* just another ideology. The good news about Jesus Christ is an affront to all ideologies; it challenges all the presumptions we label as "isms." Our worldly wisdom is foolishness to God. We take ourselves and our world entirely too seriously when we try to insist that we can have it both ways, that our own "isms" — whatever they may be — and the gospel are both equally true. Of course, this strikes at both the Sectarian and Cultural brands of Mormonism, for they both strive to accommodate the gospel to something they prize in the secular culture.

Further, we misunderstand the gospel when we assume that we can deduce something from it (something always suspiciously like what Herbert Spencer, Frederick Bastiat, Robert Welch, John Dewey, et al. have already said) that will serve as a true political ideology.

As soon as we yield to the enticement to associate the gospel with a worldly ideology, we begin to ready the thought police. However, the Book of Mormon stands directly in the way of any such nonsense, as Nibley has often pointed out. It is not the job of the saints to go around forcing anyone, in any way, to do or not to do or believe or not to believe anything. "The Book of Mormon," according to him, "offers striking illustrations of the psychological principle that impatience with the wickedness of others (even when it is real wickedness and not merely imagined) is a sure measure of one's own wickedness. The Book of Mormon presents what has been called the 'conspiratorial interpretation of history.' People who accept such an interpretation are prone to set up their own counter-conspiracies to check the evil ones. But that is exactly what the Book of Mormon forbids above all things, since, it constantly reminds us, God alone knows the hearts of men and God alone will repay." Our commission is only to preach the gospel and not to enforce righteousness or judge anyone.

In fact, the wicked of this world are not our concern at all. Our problem is, instead, what Nibley aptly calls the "Nephite Disease," i.e., the temptation to set our hearts on the riches of this world, and our own ambition, self-righteousness and pride. This disease may not appear nearly as dreadful as those diseases which infect others. To the saints, however, it is fatal, if unchecked, while those infected by the far more ugly diseases may yet

be healed by the gospel. Nibley's thesis is that the Book of Mormon was made available to our world to warn us about the Nephite Disease. Our problem, then, is not the wickedness of others — we have no room to gloat — but our own worldliness. One should not use the Book of Mormon to blast the Russians, the Chinese, the Communists, the Blacks or anyone else whom we currently are being taught to hate and fear; its message of warning is primarily for the saints, i.e., for those who freely choose to heed the gospel message.

It is to be hoped that Nibley's book will be read and seriously considered — even more that the Book of Mormon will itself receive our attention. My experience with students at B.Y.U. convinces me that vast numbers of young Mormons, and often the most able and faithful young saints, are eager for the message of the Book of Mormon and deeply appreciate having it pointed out. It is a shame that so many students go through a long course of study on the Book of Mormon with, of all things, Bastiat's *The Law* as a guide. (This little book is an old criticism of the evils of socialism that has recently been promoted by the John Birch Society. In a number of "religion classes" at Brigham Young University it has actually been a requirement that one read Bastiat's book in order to receive an A in the study of the Book of Mormon.) Perhaps those teachers who see things more the way Nibley does — they are clearly in the majority — could arrange to have Part V of *Since Cumorah* reprinted in an inexpensive edition and made available to students as a commentary on the Book of Mormon, if such a thing seems to be needed. This would certainly seem to make more sense than the continual use of old (or new) tracts on socialism, communism or the welfare state, written by those wholly or partially ignorant of the gospel. Teaching the Book of Mormon in ways that fill the student's mind with irrelevancies, worldly nonsense, partisan political opinions (e.g., public education is an activity of the devil, or *all* public attempts to assist the poor and indigent are demonic) only makes the gospel message seem absurd and totally irrelevant to our world, and drives many young saints into fanaticism or eventual apostasy.

Some Mormons indeed are losing their faith altogether, simply because the expressions which they are expected to assimilate are quite divorced from the realities of man's actual existence. Thus instead of the gospel message appearing to have any deep relevance to life, it is now sometimes made to appear as something mostly, or even totally, irrelevant to the predicament of the secular world. However, as Nibley ably shows, the gospel is more than merely something that serves to give the unreflective a comfortable feeling; it has meaning for one caught up in the current sweep of tragic events. In fact, its message only really takes on meaning when man begins to sense that he is teetering on the rim of an abyss. For without God's mercy, our best efforts are only an heroic but still laughable gesture.

*us: A Study of the Mormon Church in Scotland and Elsewhere* (Edinburgh: The Home Board of the Church of Scotland, 5s) are no doubt reactions to proselyting activities in Great Britain. The Paterson book is an answer to Mormonism after its "sudden" appearance in Scotland. What else is new, Roy? The Order of Aaron is in print again with a doctrinal book, *Purified as Gold and Silver* by Blanche W. Beeston (Caldwell, Idaho: Caxton Printers, \$.95).

Reprints and new editions were also substantial last year and include some significant titles formerly unavailable or available only in expensive trade editions. Reprints are *Desert Saints* by Nels Anderson (Phoenix, \$2.95); Leonard J. Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom* (Nebraska, \$2.40); Whitney R. Cross, *The Burned-over District* (Harper Torchbooks, \$2.15); Wallace W. Elliott, *History of San Bernardino County, California* (from the 1883 edition, Riverside, Calif.: Riverside Museum Press, \$12.00); Norman F. Furniss, *The Mormon Conflict* (Yale, \$1.95); and Henry Inman, *The Great Salt Lake Trail* (from the 1898 edition, Minneapolis: Ross & Haines, 1966, \$8.75). A new edition of Stanley B. Kimball's *Sources of Mormon History in Illinois, 1839-48 . . . †* (Southern Illinois University) is now available. Related to Kimball's work is a new study, *A Bibliography of Illinois Imprints, 1814-1858* by Cecil K. Byrd (University of Chicago Press, \$12.50). Byrd's work describes the products of Mormon presses in Illinois. A second edition of David E. Miller's *Hole in the Rock* also came out in 1966 (University of Utah, \$5.50).

Paperbacks and pamphlets produced three interesting titles, two of which were written by Ezra Taft Benson. Elder Benson's theme in *Strength for the Battle* (Bookcraft, \$.25) and *Internal Threat to the American Way of Life* (Bookcraft, \$.35) is political rather than theological. Bookcraft has also published Fletcher B. Hammon's *Geography of the Book of Mormon* (\$.60).

Works of fiction consist of three titles this year, Gordon J. Allred's *Valley of Tomorrow*† (Bookcraft), Paul Bailey's story of Chief Walker and the Mormons, *Hawk of the Mountains* (Westernlore Press, \$5.95), and John C. Murdock's *Under the Covenant: A Story of the Mormons* (New York: Vantage, \$7.50).

Perhaps by now the reader (as well as this writer) wishes that the bibliographic outpouring of the latter half of 1966 had not been so voluminous. Have courage — for we approach the end of our new book shelf with a look at works broadly concerned with the Great Basin. William H. Goetzman, *Exploration and Empire* (New York: Knopf, \$10.00); W. Eugene Hollon, *The Great American Desert, Then and Now*† (Oxford University Press, \$6.00); Howard Roberts Lamar, *The Far Southwest, 1846-1912: A Territorial History* (Yale, \$10.00); John Upton Terrell, *War for the Colorado River*, 2 vols. (Glendale, Colorado: Clark, \$17.50) all have the same thing in common — they cannot avoid the part played by Mormons in the evolution of the American West.

\* Previously reviewed in *Dialogue*.

† To be reviewed in this or a forthcoming issue of *Dialogue*.

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## HUGH NIBLEY: A SHORT BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Louis Midgley

The name Hugh Nibley has become common coin of the Mormon realm. The household quality of the name in part depends upon the frequency with which his work appears in the *Improvement Era*. Since 1918 he is exceeded in regularity in the *Era* only by Beneficial Life. With the passing of B. H. Roberts, Nibley more than anyone else has assumed the role of defender of the Faith and the Saints. In some ways his many appearances in the pages of the *Era* have actually harmed his reputation in certain circles within the Church. Sometimes his work is rejected because he has become known as a "Church writer" or he is discounted as merely an "apologist" for Mormonism. However, those who hold such opinions are not always aware of the extent of his contribution, most especially to scholarly journals, but even in the *Era* and other Church magazines, as well as those various other forms that reach primarily the Mormon audience. (Why is it, incidentally, that Deseret Book Company and Bookcraft do not list their titles in *Books in Print*?)

Nibley has surprisingly wide interests and remarkable capacities for originality; he is an indefatigable researcher, an adroit and witty writer. *Mythmakers* is the only book I know with a funny table of contents. His craftsmanship and style as a writer, coupled with his knowledge and wit, have made him a powerful and sometimes biting social critic and defender of the Gospel. He really believes that the Gospel is true and has committed himself to its defense. He is singularly well equipped for his role in intellectual life. He regularly employs Arabic, Hebrew, Greek, Latin, German, French, Russian, Babylonian, Egyptian, Coptic and even English in his research.

He has published five books and two pamphlets. The pamphlet, *Ma'am, That's Not History* (1946), marks his entrance on the scene as an apologist. This pamphlet is a short, witty reply to Fawn Brodie. The second pamphlet, Nibley's lecture entitled *Writing and Publication in Graduate School* (Mimeographed, 1966, by the Brigham Young University Graduate School) contains his reflections on the scholarly enterprise and the state of scholarship in Mormon circles. The books are more substantial: *Lehi in the Desert and The World of the Jaredites* (1952), which in a somewhat different form appeared as two series in the *Era* between 1950 and 1952; *The Words of the Prophets* (1st ed., 1954; 2nd ed., 1962), a series of radio talks given over KSL; *An Approach to the Book of Mormon* (1st ed., 1957; 2nd ed., 1964), which was originally a priesthood lesson manual; *The Mythmaker* (1964), a very amusing and significant effort to show the confusion in the ranks of the early critics of Joseph Smith; *Sounding Brass* (1963), a satirical reply to Irving Wallace's popular "story" of Brigham Young and Ann Eliza (wife number whatever-it-was). In the near future Nibley will publish his long-awaited study of the historicity of the Pearl of Great Price. This promises to be his best scriptural study.

However, Nibley's most significant and impressive publications are not those generally known by Mormons but essays and articles published in scholarly journals and most readily known and available to specialists (and this means, for the most part, people outside the Church).

icles:

"New Light on Scaliger," *Classical Journal*, XXXVII (1942), 291-295.  
 "Versions," *Classical Journal*, XL (1945), 515-543.  
 "The Arrow, the Hunter, and the State," *Western Political Quarterly*, II (1949), 328-344. A study of the role of the marked arrow in ancient statecraft; his first essay on the origin of the state.  
 "The Hierocentric State," *Western Political Quarterly*, IV (1951), 525-533. His second important study of the origin of the state.  
 "The Unsolved Loyalty Problem: Our Western Heritage," *Western Political Quarterly*, VI (1953), 631-657. An examination of the problem of loyalty in the 4th century, with obvious significance for our own time.

"History and Religion Conflict?" in *Great Issues Forum*, Series (Religion), No. 5 (Salt Lake City: University of Utah, 1955), 39.

"Retoriosa Loquacitas: The Rise of Rhetoric and the Decline of Everything Else," *Western Speech*, XX (1956), 57-82.

"Christian Envy of the Temple," *Jewish Quarterly Review*, L (1959-60), 97-123, 229-240. A long study showing the various reactions of Christian theologians to the destruction of the Temple.

"The Passing of the Church: Forty Variations on an Unpopular Theme," *Church History*, XXX (June 1961), 131-154. He presents forty different arguments for the apostasy in the lead article of the journal of the American Association of Church Historians. The readers will be interested in two letters commenting on Nibley's argument. See Hans J. Hillerbrand, "The Passing of the Church: Two Comments on a Strange Theme," *Church History*, XXX (1961), 448-482; and a defense of Nibley by R. M. Grant, "The Passing of the Church: Comments on Two Comments on a Strange Theme," *Church History*, XXX (1961), 482-483.

"Qumran and the Companions of the Cave," *Revue de Qumran*, V (1951), 177-198.

"The Expanding Gospel," *Brigham Young University Studies*, VII (1966), 3-27. An examination of Gospel themes in the literature of the ancient world.

"Evangelium Quadragesima Dierum," *Vigiliae Christianae*, XX (1966), 11. A study of the tradition of the secret teaching of Jesus in the forty days after his resurrection.

"Counting, Toll, and Taxing," *Western Political Quarterly*, XXIX (1956), 599-630. A third important study of the state in history and pre-history.

"Jerusalem and the Christian Church," to appear in the *Encyclopedia Judaica*.

the Improvement Era:

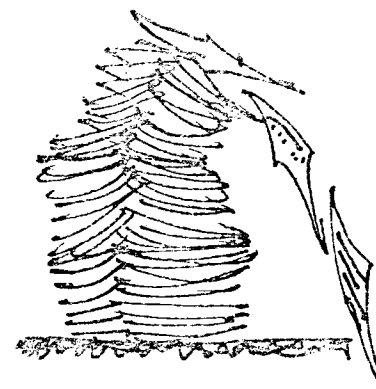
"The Book of Mormon as a Mirror of the East," Vol. 51 (April 1948)  
 "Baptism for the Dead in Ancient Time," IE, Vol. 51-52 (Dec. 1948-April 1949)

"Lehi in the Desert," IE, Vol. 53 (Jan.-Oct. 1950).

- 1951-52 "The World of the Jaredites," IE, Vol. 54-55 (Sept. 1951-July 1952).
- 1953 "The Stick of Judah and the Stick of Joseph," IE, Vol. 56 (Jan.-May 1953)
- 1953-54 "New Approaches to Book of Mormon Study," IE, Vol. 56-57 (Nov. 1953-July 1954)
- 1955 "The Way of the Church," IE, Vol. 58 (Jan. 1956-Dec. 1957)
- 1956-57 "There Were Jaredites," IE, Vol. 59-60 (Jan. 1956-Feb. 1957)
- 1959 "Mixed Voices," IE, Vol. 62 (Mar.-Nov. 1959)
- 1961 "The Liahona's Cousins," IE, Vol. 64 (Feb. 1961)
- 1961 "Censoring the Joseph Smith Story," IE, Vol. 64 (July-Nov. 1961)
- 1961 "Since Cumorah," IE, Vol. 67-68 (Oct. 1961-Dec. 1966)

Articles in the Instructor:

- 1953 "Columbus and Revelation," Vol. 88 (Oct. 1953), 319f.
- 1956 "More Voices from the Dust," Vol. 91 (March 1956), pp. 71ff.
- 1963 "The Dead Sea Scrolls, Some Questions and Answers," Vol. 98 (July 1963), pp. 233ff.
- 1965 "Early Accounts of Jesus' Childhood," Vol. 100 (Jan. 1965), pp. 35ff.



music in the church. It is more artful than a hymn, carries the modern message, and is within the time and talent limits of ordinary singing Mormons. . . .

I now have twelve published songs on LDS themes, which are being used all over the Church as sermons in various meetings. If these are not fit for the Sabbath day, the Church membership should be informed, and I should be informed at once. We are members in good faith and certainly have no wish to be performing "trash. Perhaps I have been led astray in my thinking by the tears, words, letters of gratitude and the enthusiasm of our people in all walks of life, for my Mormon Music.

I have mailed Professor Durham my two dollar packet of 12 songs so that he can see for himself just how "corny" each one is. But until our top composers can put out some real Mormon songs which fit the occasions for which we need them, and which truly appeal to our people, young and old, in a way to *deepen their gospel convictions*, I will have to recommend my own.

Marie Manwaring Anderson  
Shelley, Idaho

*The following is a response to the letter from Mimi Irving in the Autumn 1968 issue:*

I shall not, as you do, deal in *ad hominem*s. Suffice to say that I do not concur with your opinions. Modern Egyptologists are not, in fact, saying the same thing as those earlier Egyptologists, great as many of them were. Nibley went to great pains in the *Era* this year to show, via abundant quotation (rather than the unfair censorship, doctoring, and secrecy of Spaulding), just what those Egyptologists *did* say about J. Smith and about each other. I know of no sarcasm in his words. He is direct, and simply repeats what the modernists are all saying: That all of science at that time was far too heady and overconfident, and that it took an Einstein, a W. F. Albright, a Bertrand Russell, an L. Wittgenstein, et al., and a stock market crash, among other things, to bring us back to reality.

This is the age of scientific verification, random sampling, and skepticism of skepticism itself. Nibley is merely one of the best students of the age, and is highly respected

in academic circles. A general perusal of his articles (in academic journals or Church oriented publications) and books, as well as an acquaintance with the general scholarship of the past 200 years, establishes him in my mind as one of those men of whom we see only 4 or 5 per century.

Prof. David Riesman of Harvard seems to agree with this estimate of his erudition, although he is far more qualified than I to discuss the question. It was in 1963, at BYU, I believe, that he stated that Nibley was the "Thomas Aquinas" of the Mormon Church, and that his own erudition paled before Nibley's. Riesman and I are not Mormons, but religion has nothing to do with following good scientific method, and I believe in a merciless testing of any hypotheses which come my way. The fabric of Nibley's words holds together surprisingly well for a scholar who is supposed to have a "split personality" or "two masters."

Your premise that the LDS Church is built on an edifice of "contradictory beliefs" can only be demonstrated by showing just what those beliefs are, and in what way contradictory, and even McMurrin has a bit of a problem with that, as fine a philosopher as he is.

Robert F. Smith  
Ontario, California

Dear Sirs:

I would like to comment on Richard Howard's article in the Summer issue regarding the Book of Abraham and the Reorganized L.D.S. Church. There is considerable evidence showing that the Book of Abraham was more than an item of curiosity in the early R.L.D.S. Church. It is especially important to point out that the doctrine of a plurality of Gods, which this volume teaches, was believed not only by many of the membership but also by the highest leaders in those days.

Mr. Howard states that his church has taken a "conservative" position regarding the Book of Abraham because of its "doctrinal content and implications." He earlier states that the "conservative" position was that of neither endorsing nor condemning the Book of Abraham. He ties this position to the year 1896.

This may have been the "official" position of the R.L.D.S. Church in 1896, but that cer-

tainly was not the case in the early Reorganization. In those days, when the Reorganization was just getting started, the Book of Abraham was treated with utmost respect and was often quoted from by writers in official publications. The first publication issued by the Reorganization, *A Word of Consolation to the Scattered Saints*, referred to the Book of Abraham in support of priesthood lineage.

At the end of a quotation from the Book of Abraham in the first volume of the *True Latter Day Saints' Herald* (p. 270), there is the following which certainly indicates the attitude of the leaders of the early Reorganization:

... now she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man. (Book of Abraham, translated through the gift and power of the Holy Ghost by Joseph Smith.)

In 1860 the early Reorganization was arguing with the Temple Lot Church (Church of Christ or Hedrickite Church) in regard to the Doctrine and Covenants, and at that time reference was made to the Book of Abraham as follows:

Now we propose to prove that *all* revelations which Joseph gave unto the church, we are bound to "give heed unto." If the first edition of that book is divine, all the subsequent revelations which are contained in the Book of Covenants, in the Book of Abraham &c., and which he gave unto the church, are equally divine. (*True Latter Day Saints' Herald*, March, 1860, p. 63.)

The foundation of the Reorganization was based upon the acceptance of *all* these books as divine.

In the *True Latter Day Saints' Herald* for 1860, pp. 280-83, we find almost four pages defending the doctrine of a plurality of Gods, using the title of "A Plurality of Gods." It begins:

By the quotations of our Utah correspondent from the new translation of the Bible and from the Book of Abraham, it will be perceived that a plurality of Gods is a doctrine of those books. Although it is an unpopular doctrine, it is a doctrine of the common versions of the Bible. It is true that there are "plain and precious things which have been taken away" from the Bible, and this is true in reference to this subject, but there is enough remaining to show that the doctrine is true.

On p. 283 the article includes:

These scriptural evidences concerning the order of the Kingdom in the exaltation of the sons of God, show that the revelations in the New Translation of the Bible, and in the Book of Abraham, concerning the Gods, all harmonize together. When this doctrine came forth in these books, it became a stumbling block to some people. We hope that the evidence which we have presented on this subject will be advantageous in the removal of their stumbling block out of the way.

In 1865, the R.L.D.S. Church published a book entitled *A Synopsis of the Faith and Doctrines*. One chapter, or section, deals with the Godhead and a sub-section under that is entitled "A Plurality of Gods." There are several pages following devoted to scriptural references that support this doctrine.

On the basis of these and many other references at my disposal, I believe that the implication made by Howard that his Church membership rejected the Book of Abraham and the doctrines that it taught is inaccurate. In the early days of the Reorganization the membership believed not only in the Book of Abraham as scripture but also in its doctrine of a plurality of Gods.

Ward H. Forman  
Tulare, Calif.

Richard P. Howard replies:

My brief *Dialogue* article, "A Tentative Approach to the Book of Abraham" (Summer, 1968, pp. 88-92), made no attempt to document the reverence felt for the Book of Abraham by some of the leading officials of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints during the 1850s and 1860s. To have done this would have accommodated those with a concern similar to that of Mr. Forman; however, such would have been unrelated to the primary purpose of the article.

History agrees with Mr. Forman's point that the early leaders of the Reorganized Church (1852-1866) held the Book of Abraham in high regard; that they promoted its use as reprinted in the *True Latter Day Saints' Herald*; and that they espoused its doctrine of a plurality of Gods. Many other published and unpublished sources demonstrate the esteem held by some of the early



of Wisdom). It is essential that those in authority be able to effectively prescribe policies and programs in their various areas of responsibility. In this the Church is not unlike many other organizations; political, governmental or private. The membership is required to give tacit support to official Church programs and policies. It should be pointed out, however, that tacit support does not mean that members must believe the program to be inspired nor does it mean that the members need even be enthusiastic in their support. It only means that dissent, while appropriate, must not be obstreperous.

For example, we accept the Word of Wisdom in principle because it is scripture. We accept specific rules based on the principle as binding because they have been so defined by the President. We apply reason because we want the principle to have dynamic meaning in our lives.

It can be argued that the principles in Category Two necessarily exist as a result of the principles in Category One. For instance, because of our acceptance of a Supreme Being, scriptural ideas become important. Because of our acceptance of the Church as a divinely instituted organization it is necessary that we give at least tacit approval to official Church programs. Furthermore, no conflict can exist between categories or within categories. No conflict exists as the categories are now structured, and change can only come about through additional revelation. Since we are required to accept that which the President of the Church officially proclaims as revelation, all of the other essentials are dynamic, which is to say that existing essentials must change as new revelation is added. It is possible that required acceptance could be expanded by the President. The point is, however, that in the absence of any expansion, open discussion and interpretation are necessary. Opinion, from whatever source, makes neither revelation nor scripture.

In order properly to incorporate new demands of required acceptance, mental discipline is required. A particular thought process must be employed when any policy, program, or principle is brought into question. First, we must determine whether the point in question is opinion. It may be considered opinion unless specifically defined as revelation or is a policy which has been implemented through official decision making channels. This certainly does not mean that we necessarily reject what comes down as opinion. It means that we need not accept opinion without question.

A determination that the point under consideration is other than opinion means that the degree of required acceptance must be determined. The value of Category One principles is to remind us that under certain circumstances the degree of required acceptance may be absolute. Realistically, required acceptance is not usually absolute. The degree of required acceptance lies usually somewhere between the extremes of opinion and revelation; between no acceptance and total acceptance. In this vast area a reasoned approach must be introduced so as to complement the degree of required acceptance based solely upon faith.

Precise definition of Church essentials and required acceptance will result in their limitation. Certainly we operate at present with no clear definition of what is and what isn't essential. Unfortunately, because of the

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present state of affairs, a reasoned (some say intellectual) approach to personal, Church, and social problems exists under a pale of suspicion. This shouldn't be so. All too often this has resulted in needlessly inflexible behavior when current problems cry for imagination. Sadly we are engulfed in an avalanche of Mormon lore somehow defined as doctrine.



## THE JOSEPH SMITH PAPYRI

Benjamin Urrutia, p.i.t.a.p.

Why do the gentiles rage,  
And the people imagine a vain thing?  
(Psalm 2, verse 1)

The Summer and Fall issues of DIALOGUE (1968) contained certain articles on papyrus scrolls purchased by the Church from the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York in late 1967.

Some evidence has been advanced to show that "The Breathing Permit of Hôr" (one of the scrolls, sometimes called "small sensen") was used by Joseph Smith in translating the Book of Abraham. Translations of this scroll by Egyptologists Richard Parker and Klaus Baer indicated that the "Breathing Permit" scroll was written about the time of Christ and that the message of this scroll is not that of the Book of Abraham; they are saying that if Joseph Smith thought that a correct translation of "Breathing Permit" was the Book of Abraham, he was mistaken.

Professor Hugh Nibley countered with several alternate hypotheses, including one to the effect that "Breathing Permit" was written in code, which code has not as yet been broken by the Egyptologists. What follows, by Benjamin Urrutia, is an argument in support of the "code" theory.

Benjamin Urrutia, a recent convert to the Church from Guayaquil, Ecuador, was a Freshman this past year at the University of New Mexico. His study of the Joseph Smith Papyri has led him to plan to begin a major in archaeology at Brigham Young University this fall.

## INTRODUCTION

Of the subject of my study, only fragments and copies of fragments are left. These are "Joseph Smith's Egyptian Papyri" numbers 1, 10 and 11, and

the three Facsimiles of the Pearl of Great Price. But these are enough. I have glued them to a roll of paper 10x150 centimeters long (according to Doctor Baer's indications), and I have a pretty good idea of what PJS (as I shall call this document) must have looked like before it broke into pieces over a century ago.

In this essay my main objectives shall be to prove that the two titles that have been ascribed to PJS ("The Breathing Permit of Hôr" and "The Book of Abraham") are *both* correct, and that the two translations that have been offered of PJS (one covering almost all of the book, even the parts that now have been lost, the other barely a fifth of the papyrus) are *both* good and acceptable translations, each in its own way. (I have a few minor objectives too).

The reasons that make the scholars "rage" and "imagine a vain thing" are that: a) Joseph's translations of PJS is very different from their own; and b) the Book of Abraham is disproportionately long (136 very long verses) as contrasted to column I of PJS (less than 70 characters), the ground it covers.

These people obviously think they can have their cake and eat it, but they *can't* have it both ways.

### 1. A WORKING HYPOTHESIS: $BA + X = PJS$

Joseph Smith, the Prophet, is known to have made three translations of ancient records, in this order: 1) The Book of Mormon; 2) The Inspired Version of the Bible; 3) The Book of Abraham. Of these, the first is the only one that was completed, and the only one that was a "translation" in the sense of the word that is most commonly used and understood. The second was not a translation from the original Hebrew, but a correction of some (not all!) of the infinitude of errors in the King James Bible. And what was the nature of the translation of the Book of Abraham? It was quite different from either of the other two. To understand how it worked, we must learn something of the original and background of the book itself.

Abraham, who lived around two thousand years before Christ (the exact date is a matter of much controversy), was in Egypt at least once (Gen. 12 & 13). It was in this land that he wrote the book that bears his name. This document was brought back to Egypt by Abraham's grandson, Israel.

But when "there arose up a new king over Egypt who knew not Joseph" (Ex. 1:8), what became of the sacred book? Did this king, who had no respect for Israelite lives, have any respect for Israelite culture?

The best way to save the book would have been to camouflage it to look like an Egyptian document instead of a Semitic one. Most likely it was already written in Egyptian characters, but that wasn't enough.

An enterprising Hebrew, whom we shall call X, conceived a code in which every character of a Mizraite funerary inscription, with only a few minor (though significant) changes, was the equivalent of two verses, more or less, of the book he was trying to save, the original of which no longer exists. There even exists the possibility (it would be more farfetched, but also more logical) that X actually *created* "The Breathing Permit of Hôr" (BPH), to

suit his purposes, and later the Egyptians accepted it as sacred, without suspecting its origin. If this second hypothesis turned out to be true, then we would have BPH itself as what the Egyptologists used to believe the BA was: an imitation of the Book of the Dead by a non-Egyptian hand, and a forgery.

The algebraical equation at this section's heading is applicable to either variant of my hypothesis: the Book of Abraham plus X's manipulations equals the Papyrus Joseph Smith.

But once BA was rendered into code, what chance was there of ever decoding it again? X being dead, the secret was lost, and not a convention of all the world's cryptographists could find it again. The book was in all appearance, *and even in reality*, "The Breathing Permit of Hôr." What was there to be done? What was the key to the lost code? The answer: the Urim and Thummim:

And thou shalt put in the breastplate of judgment the Urim and Thummim; and they shall be upon Aaron's heart, when he goes in before the LORD; and Aaron shall bear the judgment of the children of Israel upon his heart before the LORD continually. (Ex. 28:30; read the whole chapter)

When Moses left Egypt, he took a copy of the BPH with him. Since he had the Urim and Thummim, the Book of Abraham was brought to light a second time. (It must have helped Moses in the writing of his own books). The third time was when Joseph, also using the Urim and Thummim, read once more the clue to the Book of Abraham.

But what reason have I to make all these fanciful theories? Two very good reasons: those two differences that cause so much raging and imagining of vain things, although they happily cancel each other. (That is the difference between Joseph's and the Egyptologists' translation of the same document, and the difference between the number of Egyptian characters and the number of English words. This we shall examine in detail after we take care of a few lesser problems).

Of course, the papyrus we have is not the original, but a late copy of Saïtic times. Mormon and Gentile agree on this.

### 2. FAC. 1, ORIG, FAC. 1, AND SIMILAR PROBLEMS

(Fac. 1 is my abbreviation for Facsimile Number One. Orig. Fac. 1 means the original Facsimile Number One. Similarly Fac. 2 and Orig. Fac. 2 represent Facsimile Number Two and its original, Fac. 2 and Orig. Fac. 3 are Facsimile Number Three and its original.)

The scholarly view is that when Joseph acquired his scrolls, they were scrolls no more, but had already been fragmented and pasted on maps of the Kirtland area. Furthermore, the cut-in-half papyri had already suffered this operation, and the portions that have fallen off from the paper had already done so.

Against these speculations Doctor Hugh Nibley puts up the following facts:

... the papyri were in beautiful condition when Joseph Smith got them, and ... one of them when unrolled on the floor extended through two rooms of the Mansion House. Those we have today are mounted on paper showing maps of the Kirtland area ... [which] suggests that the mounting took place only after the Kirtland period, when all thought of returning to Kirtland was given up and the precious maps had become wastepaper.

(*Dialogue*, Summer 1968, pp. 101-2)

The clumsy "penciled restoration" that Professor Parker rightly condemns ... can hardly have been the work of a Mormon hand, since it differs completely from the official copy of the papyrus that was circulated in many thousands of copies both during and after the lifetime of Joseph Smith. ... And since this is the *only* attempt to indicate the missing parts, it would seem clear that the parts were not missing when the Mormons still had the thing in their possession. This is borne out by the clear traces left behind in the dried glue by those parts of the papyrus that crumbled away after it was mounted; they show that at the time of the mounting there was room in the papyrus for the complete head and hand of the priest. It is interesting that no attempt was made to sketch in the bird's head, and also that there are no traces on the mounting paper of the head's having been broken off after the mounting. This would indicate that the "penciled restoration" of the more recently missing parts, being an attempt to supply what had been destroyed after the mounting, and also being done by a person unfamiliar with the facsimiles and certainly ... with the original, belongs to the "post-Mormon" career of the papyrus. It must not be forgotten that the papyri have been in non-Mormon hands for 111 years.

(*The Improvement Era*, September 1968, p. 72 & fn. 32)

From these two related statements by Dr. Nibley, and the article by Dr. Baer, we can dare to make the following assumptions:

1) The scrolls were still scrolls (and well-preserved, too) when they were first acquired by Joseph.

2) The fragmenting and pasting on paper came much later.

3) Even later was the cutting by half of number III (now IIIA and IIIB) and Orig. Fac. I-XI. This was probably done to get a better price on their sale to the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art. Dr. Baer has proven beyond shadow of doubt that Orig. Fac. I and XI were originally one fragment.

4) Also of late date was the falling off of those fragments that have left their remains on the glue marks behind. Most of these were restored, but in the wrong places.

5) Besides PJS, the original collection also included the BD of the female musician of Amen-Re Neferirub and the BD of the lady Taimin Mutninsikhonsu, which we shall not discuss because they have no connection either with BA or BPH, except for the misplaced fragments IVa, IVb, IVc, and IVd.

6) PJS, when whole, included Orig. Fac. I-XI, Orig. Fac. 2 no. X, column v (now lost), and Orig. Fac. 3. It measured around 10x150 centimeters.

Of course, it was read from right to left. All Egyptologists know this, and Joseph Smith knew it. For this he certainly deserves credit.

Now we shall pass to study column i of PJS, and how the original compares with its two different but correct translations.

### 3. CHAPTER ONE

(The Egyptian characters are here taken from column i of papyrus XI, which includes all the "super-cryptograms" for the Book of Abraham from 1:1 to the end.) Verses 1 to 3 are cryptographed in the hieroglyphics around Orig. Fac. 1. The rest of the Book of Abraham is hidden beneath column I of the hieratic texts. The first (that is, rightmost) sign Baer interprets as a corner of "they shall":

X meant it to mean "sign of the fifth degree of the second part," whatever *that* means. Maybe that column I is the "second part," while Orig. Fac. I is the first part.

The next few characters are missing. In the Egyptian they meant "convey Osiris"; in the X system they symbolized verses 4 to 7, except the last ten words, which correspond to the next sign:

"Inside of; in," according to the Egyptian. Corresponds to "the priest of Elkenah (Duwamutef\*) was also the priest of Pharaoh," plus verses 8, 9, 10.

Egyptian definite article. Verse 11 minus last ten words.

First half of "pool." And it was done after the manner of the Egyptians," plus verse 12.

Second half of "pool." Verses 13 and 14, except "which signifies hieroglyphics," a commentary by the English translator.

"Great. Verse 15. (Both meanings are correct).

"Khons." Verses 16 to 19. Incidentally, "Abram" was used by

Joseph instead of the "Abraham" of modern editions. Here ends the first line of column I.

Line 2 begins (at the rightmost extremity) with a character that Baer transliterates as Osiris' name. It symbolizes verses 20, 21 and 22.

Abraham 1:23-24. Baer claims this is "incorrectly restored" (we are here dealing with a missing portion of the papyrus). He would place the sign for "Hôr" instead. Likewise, he would write in "justified" in the remaining space (where Smith has *two* characters, corresponding to 25-26 and 27-28.) We won't make an issue out of this. If Joseph has a different restoration, it is because he wishes to come closer to the original intentions of X rather than those of the late Egyptian copyists.

Egyptian "born to." BA from "Now after the priest of Elkenah (Duwamutef) was smitten that he died" ... to "have I kept even unto this day."

\*Like the Greek-Roman gods, these deities had two sets of names: one Egyptian, one Semitic.

Ti (means "the") — first part of a name. BA: "and I shall endeavor to write some of these things upon this record, for the benefit of my posterity that shall come after me."

Here ends chapter One of BA. The 1½ lines of text in Egyptian read: "They shall [convey Osiris] inside the Pool Great [of] Khons. Osiris [Hôr justified] born to Ti" . . .

#### 4. CHAPTER TWO

- Khebyt ("dancer"). With this character Tikhabyt's name is concluded. Comprises the whole of verse 1 and almost all of verse 2. save the last six words:

Baer: "sign indicating a woman's name." Smith: "who was the daughter of Haran." Here BPH and BA come surprisingly close, closer than anywhere else.

"Justified." Symbolizes verses 3, 4, 5. Unfortunately, this is as far as Baer goes in providing a character-by-character translation. The rest of column I: ". . . after his arms have been . . . ed on his heart and the BP (which \* made and has writing on its inside and outside) has been wrapped in royal linen and placed under his left arm near his heart, the rest of his mummy-bandages should be wrapped over it. The man for whom this book has been copied will breathe forever and ever as the bas of the gods do."

Thus the Egyptian. What about the Semitic? Well, the rest of Column I is the clue to the rest of the Book of Abraham. By now it should be clear that "the Egyptian characters cannot conceivably have enough information channels (component parts) to convey the amount of material translated from them." (*Dialogue*, Summer 1968, p. 95). Admirably well put! From this it should also be clear that this "translation" was not a translation in the usual sense of the word (as that of the Inspired Version was not, either), and that no man, no matter how wise or imaginative, could have done it by any normal means. How then, did Joseph do it? "How did Joseph Smith translate? Well, Wilford Woodruff said he translated with the Urim and Thummim. Parley P. Pratt said he translated with the Urim and Thummim. Orson Pratt said he translated with the Urim and Thummim. He translated with a divine instrument. That was the only way he could have done it" (James R. Clark in proceeding of Brigham Young University's "Pearl of Great Price Conference," December 10, 1960). Therefore, my friends, cease raging, cease imagining vain things. Joseph was a prophet, not a linguist. Dr. Baer is a linguist, not a prophet. Each of these men did what he could do, and admirably well, but he could not have done the same kind of translation the other did (even from the same document). But this does not subtract in the least from Baer's "The Breathing Permit of Hôr" or from Smith's "The Book of Abraham" as valuable and useful documents."

\*This sentence should have a subject, but there is none. Other MSS omit the whole of it. This certainly is an extraordinary papyrus!

## THE ESTABLISHMENT CAN BE SAVED

Dear Sirs:

*I am responding to your invitation to those who have "something to say."*

*By way of identification, I am a returned missionary from Chile, a graduate in History from BYU, a former President of the Young Democrats at BYU, and currently in my second year as a Peace Corps Volunteer teaching English in Lesotho.*

*Whatever happens I would like to take the opportunity to tell you how much one as isolated as I am appreciates receiving DIALOGUE. May the Lord sustain you in a good work.*

Gary L. Parnell  
St. James Secondary School  
Mokhotlong, Lesotho, Africa

I am under 30. I am 25 to be exact. Yet the more I read about what my generation thinks and the more I see how we are analyzed by those who seem to know, the more I feel myself relegated to the ranks of an ever shrinking minority. I have surely never been among the 2% which Time Magazine called 'the wreckers.' Nor am I among the larger group of radical activists. And I am utterly repulsed by the Wallace and Birch type reactionaries though not so much by the more reasonable followers of Buckley and Goldwater.

Considering how our generation is usually divided on the scale of political inclinations, the only space left to me is among that majority of students and youth which is apathetic or at least only superficially interested in matters of political and social consequence. Not so. Not at all.

If I had to submit to our unfortunate custom of classifying individuals, I would use a term I remember from a panel discussion on extremism at BYU. I would call myself a militant moderate. I choose moderation not because I have self-consciously chosen the middle road between two extremes but because I feel that I have been deserted by those on my right and on my left and am therefore left with nowhere to stand but in the center.

May I parenthetically apologize to those who have an aversion to seeing the first person singular in print. I haven't the nerve to use "we," thus implying some non-existent consensus among a group, nor do I feel emotionally detached enough from the subject to use the passive voice.

How can I justify partial rejection and at the same time partial defense of the Establishment? To paraphrase G. K. Chesterton, I almost feel that the real trouble with U.S. society is not that it is unacceptable. The trouble is that it is nearly acceptable, but not quite.

I believe that some areas of American society which disturb me and many of my age group are, among others: impersonal bureaucracy, social injustice and the failure of the welfare state to eliminate it, and the squandering abroad of our national resources on questionable ventures while domestic imperatives are neglected. These topics should come as no surprise to anyone who has picked up a newspaper, and there is abundant material available on how the radical left feels about these things (and some indications of the opinions of the far right). But what of the young moderates?