

Kangaroo Court

by Hugh Nibley

A study in Book of Mormon Criticism

It is the inalienable right of every questioned document, as of every accused person, to be represented by competent counsel, heard by an impartial jury, and sentenced by a qualified judge, being convicted or acquitted only on evidence and not on hearsay. To expect such extravagant justice for the Book of Mormon is to ask for the moon. Counsel for the defense often does the client more harm than good and is automatically branded as prejudiced merely by taking the job; and where will one find an impartial jury, a disinterested judge, or a willingness to test the Book of Mormon on its merits and not on the authority of wild and conflicting rumors about the manner of its origin? Still, however faint the chances of a fair trial may be, even that book has a right to its day in court, if only on the hazard, that it may be genuine after all.

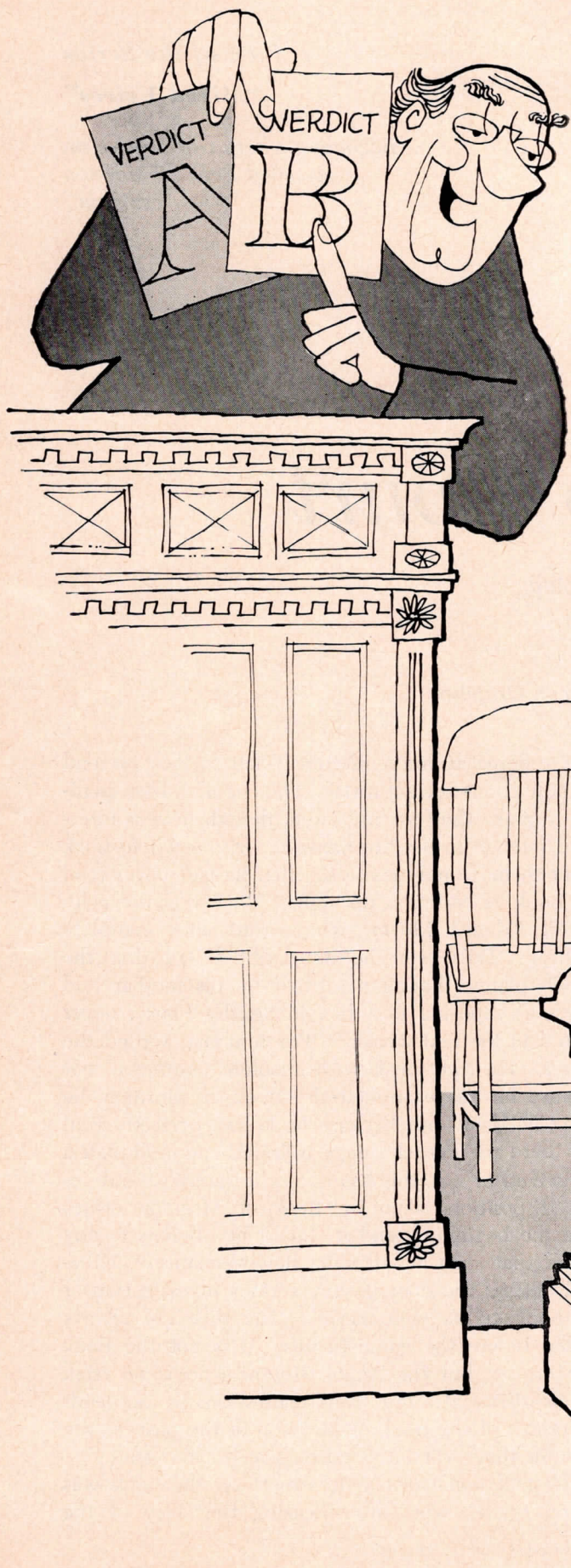
Has the Book of Mormon ever been given a fair hearing? From the statements of policy which we are about to quote it will be quite apparent that it most definitely has not. For such a procedure would require a perfectly straight-faced examination of its claims *as if* they were valid! Let us suppose, for the sake of argument and legal theory, that the accused is innocent, that the Book of Mormon is not a fraud but a genuine text as it purports to be. By what divination would its latest critics, Mrs. Brodie and Doctors O'Dea and Cross (representative of the English, sociology, and history departments, respectively), be

able to detect its authenticity? What do they pretend to know about ancient texts? The one man best qualified to make the tests indicated, though he was interested enough in the Mormons to write a whole book about them, frankly confessed that he had never read the Book of Mormon through.¹ That was the celebrated Eduard Meyer, who wrote with complete finality: "There can be no doubt at all that the golden plates, though described by his mother and others as reposing in a box in Smith's house, never existed in the real world."² For him that settled the matter: He can speak with absolute assurance, *not* because he has examined the Book of Mormon—he didn't need to!—but because he knows perfectly well that there are no such things as angels and gold plates.

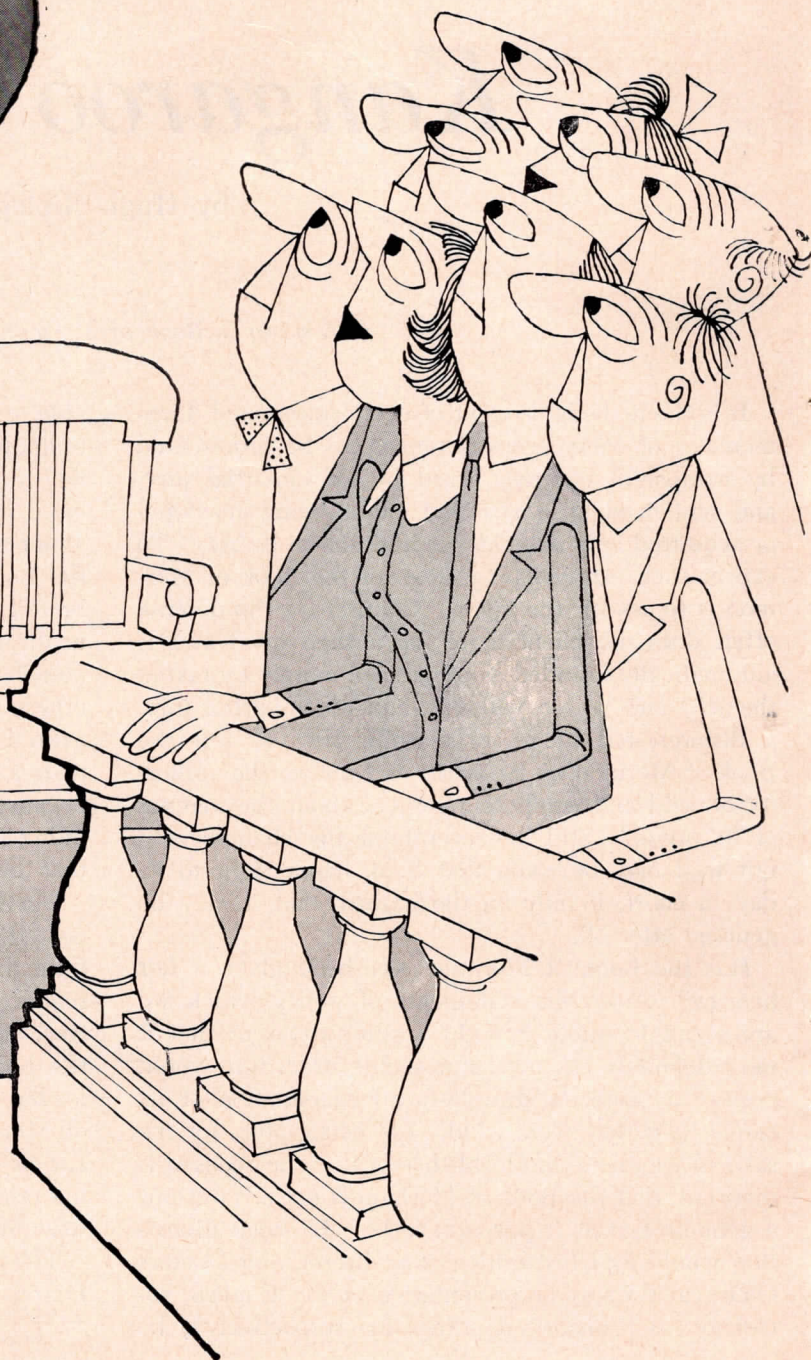
Justified or not, this has been the standard and accepted position taken by Book of Mormon critics from the beginning, and it should be obvious to any reader that such an attitude, however sincere, effectively closes the door on any serious investigation of the book on its own merits. The dice are always loaded before the game begins: It is not the Book of Mormon, but the Angel Moroni who is on trial. Let us glance at a few frank confessions by the leading critics of the Book of Mormon in the past, to see whether they ever intended to give it a fair trial.

The first non-Mormon to report on the book was David Marks, who, after hearing the story of the

(See page 186 for footnotes.)



The jury is instructed to choose between A and B, with the specification that A has been disqualified before the contest; with that understandable limitation the jury may favor whichever they will.



angel and the plates from the Whitmer family, approached his task with a settled conviction that the thing was a fraud: "I wished to read it, but could not, in good conscience, purchase a copy, lest I should support a deception"—a fine, open-minded approach which ran small risk of disillusionment. Before he was halfway through, Marks gave up the job, finding "the style so insipid, and the work so filled with manifest imposture, that I could feel no interest in a further perusal." Yet generations of Book of Mormon critics were to quote Marks' final verdict on the book as the ultimate in scholarly objectivity.³

Within a year of the publication of the Book of Mormon, Alexander Campbell delivered a blast against it which was hailed at the time as demolishing once and for all its claims to divine revelation. By the author's confession, it was a superficial study, his intention being "... not to honor him [Smith] by too minute examination and exposition. . . . If this prophet and his three prophetic witnesses had aught of speciosity [i.e. any attractive or challenging quality] about them or their book," he explains, "he [Campbell] *would have* examined it and exposed it in a different manner. . . ." As it is, he begs his readers' pardon for even looking at the thing: "For noticing of which I would have asked forgiveness from all my readers, had not several hundred persons of different denominations believed it. On this account alone has it become necessary to notice it. . . ."⁴

Campbell's last remark is significant: an urgent sense of public duty has animated the Book of Mormon critics from the first, and rightly so. Unless the Book of Mormon is what it pretends to be, it is a regrettable imposture. If scholarship has any obligation to society to protect the layman from predatory quacks and impostors, no more urgent occasion or perfect opportunity for the exercise of true learning can be imagined than that offered by the bold, uncompromising challenge of the Book of Mormon. If it is weak, it should have been knocked over long ago; if it can't be knocked over, the public should be told as much. As long as it stands, it is a standing rebuke to scholarship.

The call to duty was heard from the first. Even a month before Campbell's attack, a newspaper editorial voiced dissatisfaction with the delinquency of the learned:

"We have long been waiting, with considerable anxiety, to see some of our contemporaries attempt to explain the immediate causes, which produced that anomaly [sic] in religion and literature . . . The Book of Mormon, or the Gold Bible.

"The few notices heretofore given in the public prints, are quite vague and uncertain, and throw but faint light on the subject."⁵

Thus from the very beginning the challenge was thrown out to the world to explain the Book of Mormon if it could, and a flood of conflicting stories and theories soon followed—but no one ever put the Book of Mormon to a real test.

The first full-time scholar to comment on the Book of Mormon was Professor Rafinesque of Philadelphia, who in 1832 was reported as observing, "This work is ridiculous enough, it is true; as the whole Book of Mormon bears the stamp of folly, and is a poor attempt at an imitation of the Old Testament Scriptures, and is without connection, object, or aim . . . and how can it be otherwise as it was written in Ontario County, New York."⁶ We are grateful no end to the professor for his staunch confession of faith, that a religious book produced in Ontario County could not possibly be anything but a fraud ("can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?"); for while he has done the Book of Mormon no damage, he leaves the world in no doubt that he has firmly closed his mind against any serious investigation of it.

What was intended to be a thorough and conclusive examination of the whole Mormon position, *Mormonism Exposed, Internally and Externally*, by Origen Bachelier in 1838 was prefaced by the enlightening admission that "To make an earnest attack on Mormonism, as if it had any plausible pretensions to credulity, would argue great want of discernment and good sense on the part of the one who might thus assail it." Even to raise the hypothetical question, could this be true? is to brand oneself an idiot; yet only by that approach can the Book of Mormon or any suspected text be examined. After promising to demolish the Book of Mormon once for all, Mr. Bachelier lamely decided to limit his examination to an absolute minimum, "briefly to expose some of the defects and absurdities of the book. . . ."⁷ Thus, following a common practice of Book of Mormon critics, he attempts to disarm his jilted public by begging their pardon not for having delivered so little after promising so much, but for having written anything at all on such an offensive theme! Only a sense of obligation towards his "fellow citizens," he protests, can "justify the course I pursue, in stooping to notice an affair so intrinsically worthless and contemptible as the Mormon imposture."⁷

In the same year in which Bachelier's work appeared, the Scotchman H. Stevenson was fighting the fires of fanaticism in the Old World with a widely acclaimed lecture against the Book of Mormon, in which he stood foursquare on the proposition, "that a Church which pretends to work miracles in these latter ages, proves itself to be an apostate Church."⁸ How refreshingly direct! Even to propose testing the Book of Mormon as one does the Bible is for Stevenson a

proposition outrageous "for its foolishness and its wickedness!" Nay, true or false, the Book of Mormon simply cannot be tested: "As the Book of Mormon has a suspicious aspect, on account of there being no history to contradict it, so likewise, it has the disadvantage of no history to confirm it."⁹ It is beyond examination.

E. D. Howe, in the 1840 edition of his anti-Mormon classic, which first appeared in 1834, recognizes in the usual terms both the necessity and the futility of attacking the Book of Mormon. "The task has been a laborious one, and we acknowledge but little has been effected," he confesses, "we should have abandoned the task, were it not that so many of our worthy fellow citizens have been seduced by the witcheries and mysterious necromancies of Smith and his colleagues, from the paths of wisdom and truth, into folly and madness."¹⁰ "The task," he announces in his introduction, "however loathsome, shall be honestly pursued." He admits he is helpless against those who are foolish enough to read the Book of Mormon: "In our review, we are left without weapons to combat the credulous Mormon believer," his only hope being to reach "any mind . . . who has not inhaled the malaria of the impostor."¹¹ With all his talk of base passions, witcheries, spells, and loathsome tasks, no one is going to accuse Mr. Howe of a cool and unemotional approach to the Book of Mormon, however much he may protest that his appeal is all to the wisdom and sanity of an enlightened age.

In 1841 William Harris repeated the now familiar formula: Public duty requires an investigation of the Book of Mormon, but no serious approach is required by the subject itself. The only apology which he offers, this author says of himself, "for having treated that which is in itself so contemptibly ridiculous, with so much gravity, is, that well meaning, though weak minded persons, are daily imposed upon by the plausible statements of Mormon teachers. . . ."¹²

Three famous anti-Mormon books appeared in 1842, each one containing plain statements of its author's conviction that study of the Book of Mormon is a sheer waste of time. For the Reverend Clark, ". . . deceit and imposture are enstamped upon every feature

of this monster, evoked by a money digger and juggler from the shades of darkness."¹³ "That its claims to divine origin are wholly unfounded," he has his star witness say, "needs no proof to a mind unperturbed by the grossest delusions."¹⁴ As for himself, "This we consider one of the most pernicious features of the *historical romance*—that it claims for itself an entire equality in point of divine authority with the sacred canon."¹⁵ This was Mr. Stevenson's objection, it will be recalled: The question is not whether the claim is true or not but simply whether the claim is made. Any book that claims to be as holy as the Bible is proved by that very claim to be a monstrous

deception—there is no need at all to search the book to see what it says.

Mr. Kidder is quite blunt: "Our own humble opinion is, that just as much correct knowledge and real information may be drawn from the above nondescript and heterogeneous medley of contents, as from a perusal of the entire volume of 570 pages."¹⁶ The "medley of contents" referred to is a very brief outline of the Book of Mormon; the author admits freely that it isn't even a good outline, a "nondescript and heterogeneous" thing, and

yet he solemnly assures the student that he can learn just as much from that garbled table of contents about the Book of Mormon as he can from reading the whole book. What a program for the serious scholar! Of course Kidder assures us that the only reason he would touch the thing at all is that duty calls him: "Americans have been criminally indifferent to their duty both of informing themselves and the world of its true character. . . . The leaven of corruption has begun to work far and near."¹⁷ If it is criminal indifference to neglect the Book of Mormon under such dire circumstances, what shall we say of this scholar who having taken up the challenge with a yell of defiance, tells us that he can go no farther than to give us a little outline of the Book of Mormon, and lets it go at that?

In a letter addressed to Joseph Smith, Professor Turner minces no words in the matter of public duty. "It is my right, it is the right of every American citizen, of every Christian, of every honest man, to arraign and resent (Continued on page 184)

GLORY AT HAND

by Lois Snelling

He looked with yearning eye and saddened heart
Toward distant peaks where stood the Holy
Place,
To which his feet, by circumstance restrained,
Would never go nor would a dream be gained
Of meeting there his Master face to face.

He stooped to aid a weary one in pain . . .
One more of all the chain that held him bound;
And then into his heart a voice spoke clear
And soft, "This face you bathed is mine. 'Tis
here,
And not on distant peaks I must be found."

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Kangaroo Court

(Continued) the perfidy of your career," he writes, protesting that only that sense of obligation can induce him to "submit to the ungrateful task" of dealing with a book and an author "which might well be left to putrefy, amid the pestilence you have produced." Under such circumstances impartiality in our scholar would be a positive vice: "To treat you with even ordinary respect, is to treat them [i.e., "your... awfully deluded people"] with the most wanton and unfeeling cruelty."¹⁸ Obviously these were the days when professors read their Cicero. What blows the top from this particular vessel of high-pressure academic righteousness is not the specific message of Joseph Smith and his book, but the idea of the thing: "It is not your peculiar opinions, as you well know, but your *impious pretensions*, which honest and Christian men reject, with loathing and abhorrence."¹⁹ Again, it is not on the basis of its particular contents, but solely on its claims to revelation that the Book of Mormon is to be judged.

This point is well illustrated in Mr. Kidder's review of Professor Turner's book. If Turner is all twisted up about the authorship of the Book of Mormon, as Kidder claims he is, who cares? "... the question at issue here is one of comparative unimportance." Turner's reasoning may be weak and his evidence shaky, but that is all one as long as we agree that the Book of Mormon is a vicious fraud, "we hail his work as one of... an eminently practical bearing."²⁰

These three masterpieces usually keep company with the latter work of Thomas Gregg, which contains the usual declarations of contempt for the Book of Mormon and alarm at its effectiveness: "That a book... below the dignity of criticism, should find tens of thousands of persons of ordinary intelligence throughout Christendom, who accept it as a Revelation from God to man, is indeed a moral phenomenon unparalleled in the nineteenth century.... Many pages might be written, filled with instances of the senseless, ridiculous, incongruous, and blasphemous character of the work," to accept which "is to eschew holiness and goodness, and to dethrone the Almighty."²¹ To save the world from

such devastation, one might suppose that no number of pages would be too great to dedicate to the cause—as many as "might be written." Still our investigator limits himself to a few brief notices because after all the book, he says, is "below the dignity of criticism."

J. H. Hunt, a relatively conscientious critic, was frank enough to entitle a chapter of his on the Book of Mormon (1844), "A Brief Notice of Several Books, Deemed Unworthy of Serious Attention."²² So deemed by whom? The critic who deems a book unworthy of his attention should leave the criticizing of it to others who are willing to give it serious thought.

Here we have a paradox. Having announced that nothing is so urgently needed as a thorough study of the Book of Mormon, one crusader after another stops dead in his tracks with the lame excuse that the thing is not worth bothering about. And while we are told again and again that no human being in possession of his faculties would give a second thought to the book, we are also told that it is making terrible inroads among an enlightened citizenry. "No argument, or mode of reasoning, could induce anyone to believe that in the nineteenth century, in the United States, and in the blaze of science, literature, and civilization, a sect of religionists could arise on *delusions and impositions*." So one intellectual wrote in 1855, and adds the bemused confession: "But such are the facts, and we are forced to believe them."²³ This might be taken as an interesting commentary on the Book of Mormon: An intelligent man is confronted by a situation which, he tells us in the strongest language, nothing on earth could induce him to accept as possible—but there it is! Though they are contrary to everything we can or will believe, "such are the facts, and we are forced to believe them." Had he examined the Book of Mormon itself more closely, Mr. Reynolds might have been forced to believe many things which his training and vanity had told him were impossible.

"The reader will not be long," Mr. Taylder promises in the introduction to *The Mormons' Own Book*, "in judging whether his [Joseph Smith's] statements are the transcript of an enthusiast who unconsciously invested facts with the coloring of his imagination, or the

cunningly-concocted after-thoughts of a knave. . . ."²⁴ Here the reader is given two damning alternatives in advance and told which one he is going to choose. With such helpful prompting he need not be long in reaching his conclusion, and the irksome obligations of serious research are gracefully sidestepped. With the same considerate forethought, Mr. Bays sent copies of the Anthon Transcript to a number of scholars, asking for their opinion of it—but *not* for their impartial opinion! With the transcript went a lurid covering letter, making it perfectly clear just what infamous claims were made for the document, and leaving the recipients in no doubt as to what effect a word in its favor might have on their reputations. The answer of the most eminent of the professors consulted gives the whole thing away. "The document which you enclose," the reply begins, "raises a *moral* rather than an *linguistic* problem." And as a moral problem the professor treats it.²⁵ Any chance of an impartial linguistic test was out of the question under such circumstances, yet this was one of the few attempts made to judge the Book of Mormon by severely objective standards.

The first volume of the eminent *American Anthropologist* includes a study of some length with the promising title, "The Origin of the Book of Mormon." Instead of displaying the deep scientific penetration and archaeological acumen we have a right to expect from such a source, the author confines his entire study to the grammatical mistakes in the book, resting his case principally on the antiquated use of "which" for "who," apparently unaware of the same usage in the Bible. He dismisses the book itself as "only grotesque. . . ." Yet for all that "a portentous danger sign . . . a monstrosity born of deceit and bred in falsehood . . . a monster of iniquity and deceit. . . ." And what is it in the book that makes this expert so forget his cool scientific detachment? It is not anything the Book of Mormon actually *says* that upsets him: "its teachings and precepts are not in themselves immoral. . . . For the Book of Mormon is not an immoral book. There is no polygamy in it . . . there is nothing immoral in the book." No, what alarms and enrages him is not what the Book of Mormon says, but what it pretends to be: "its adherents have discovered a

most dangerous weapon against the moral world in this doctrine of '*a continuing revelation*.'" That is the cloven hoof—as usual, it is not the Book of Mormon, but the Angel Moroni that is being put on trial: "To accept . . . any dispensation formulated in the terms of 'Thus saith the Lord,' is a portentous danger sign to enlightened civilization."²⁶ Note that since this gentleman is not willing to accept *any* claim to revelation, the problem of *testing* such a claim never arises. In the same spirit, Professor Beardsley founds his Book of Mormon criticism on the unshakable rock that "the modern mind rejects everything supernatural."²⁷ Granted that premise, *of course* the Book of Mormon is a fraud. But the challenge of the Prophet is to test the possibility of revelation by using the book as evidence, in which case we cannot start out by rejecting the book out of hand because we know that revelation is impossible. That is exactly what we do *not* know.

The work of Linn, often hailed as the first really scientific study of Mormonism, is a good example of the backward approach. "The Mormon Bible," he announces, "both in a literary and theological sense, is just such a production as would be expected to result from handing over to Smith and his fellow-translators" a mass of Spaulding's material and new doctrinal matter for collation and copying."²⁸ Notice that he begins with definite expectations and finds in the Book of Mormon exactly what he expects. He advises the student to do the same: "an exam-

ination of its contents is useful, therefore, rather as a means of providing the fraudulent characters of its pretensions to divine revelation than as a means of ascertaining what the members of the Mormon church are taught."²⁸ Here the student is actually warned against reading the book to learn whether it is true or not, but is instructed to approach it with just one object in mind, "as a means of proving the fraudulent character of its pretensions to divine revelation." And what rules does Mr. Linn have for telling when a writing is or is not the product of divine revelation? The usual rule, of course: There is no such thing!

Shortly after Linn's book appeared the Fallows published their widely circulated *Mormon Menace*. "What sane person," they ask at the outset, "can believe that this man really believed that a glorious angel came from God and revealed to him the hiding place of these golden plates?"²⁹ The question is rhetorical; merely to state it is to have your answer. However effective polemically, it closes the door to any real investigation. If the whole thing is simply out of the question to any sane person, what sane person is even going to think about it?

(To be continued)

FOOTNOTES

¹Ed. Meyer, *Ursprung und Geschichte der Mormonen* (Halle: Niemeyer, 1912), p. 5, n.1.

²*Ibid.*, p. 19.

³*The Life of David Marks, To the 26th Year of His Age, Written by Himself* (Limerick, Me.: Office of the *Morning Star*, 1831), pp. 340-1. This happened

Pleadings from the Dead

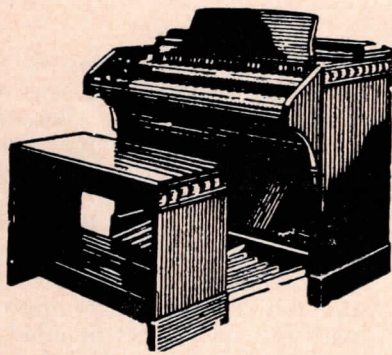
(Continued) Farnsworth brought him the names he had just received from England on the Farnsworth family, some of the names going back to ancient times. He was their representative to help them to attain perfection. He and his family were faithful in the performance of the temple ordinances for them.

This experience of my great-grandfather has been a marvelous inspiration to all of us. You can imagine the joy when he bore in power his testimony to the world.

There are sealings yet to be done,

and we are planning to complete them as far as possible by arranging the names into complete family groups.

Many people on this earth have loved ones waiting for this work to be done for them. I sincerely pray that we will all have a greater desire to search for our ancestors and become united to them in the bonds of sealing, so that when we stand before the bar of God to be judged, he will say, "Well done, my good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter into the joy of thy Lord."



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on March 29, 1830. Marks' statement, p. 341, "From all the circumstances, I thought it probably had been written by an infidel, to see how much he could impose on the credulity of men . . ." is quoted with slight alteration and no acknowledgment by E. D. Howe, and lifted from him by others in the same way.

⁴Campbell's study first appeared in the *Millennial Harbinger* for February 7, 1831 (Vol. II, 85-96); it is most readily available in Dr. Francis W. Kirkham, *A New Witness for Christ in America*, Vol. II (Independence, Mo.: Zion's Printing and Publishing Co., 1951), pp. 101-9. Our quotation is from Kirkham, p. 105. (Italics ours.)

⁵*The Reflector*, Palmyra, New York, January 6, 1831; quoted by Kirkham, *op. cit.*, II, 65.

⁶Quoted in Josiah Priest, *American Antiquities* (Albany: Hoffman & White), 5th ed., 1835, p. 76. The first edition was 1832.

⁷Origen Bacheiler, *Mormonism Exposed, Internally and Externally* (New York City, 1838), quoted by Kirkham, II, 159-160.

⁸H. Stevenson, *Lecture on Mormonism* (Newcastle: J. Blackwell & Co., 1839), p. 24.

⁹*Ibid.*, pp. 8-9.

¹⁰E. D. Howe, *History of Mormonism: or a Faithful Account of that Singular Imposition and Delusion* (Painesville: Printed by the Author, 1840), pp. 93-94.

¹¹*Ibid.*, pp. 74-75.

¹²Wm. Harris, *Mormonism Portrayed* (Warsaw, Ill.: Sharp and Gamble, 1841), Intd., cited in Kirkham, *op. cit.*, II, 166-7.

¹³Rev. John A. Clark, *Gleanings by the Way* (Philadelphia: W. J. & J. K. Simon, 1842), p. 259.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, p. 250.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, p. 282.

¹⁶Daniel P. Kidder, *Mormonism and the Mormons* (New York: Carlton & Porter, 1842), p. 60.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, p. 8.

¹⁸Prof. J. B. Turner, *Mormonism in All Ages* (New York: Platt & Peters, 1842), p. 300. (In Kirkham, II, 190.)

¹⁹*Ibid.*, p. 302. (Kirkham II, 192.)

²⁰Kidder, *op. cit.*, pp. 336f.

²¹Thos. Gregg, *The Prophet of Palmyra* (New York: J. B. Alden, 1890), pp. 35, 75, 95. The first statement is quoted by Gregg from S. S. Harding.

²²Jas. H. Hunt, *Mormonism* (St. Louis: Ustick & Davies, 1844), Ch. VI, pp. 39ff.

²³John Reynolds, *My Own Times* (Illinois, 1855), p. 563.

²⁴T. W. P. Taylder, *The Mormons' Own Book* (New Ed., London: Partridge & Co., 1857), p. xxiv.

²⁵Davis H. Bays, *The Doctrines and Dogmas of Mormonism* (St. Louis: Christian Publishing Co., 1897), p. 263.

²⁶P. J. Pierce, "The Origin of the Book of Mormon," *The American Anthropologist* N.S. Vol. I. (1899), p. 694. (Italics ours.)

²⁷H. M. Beardsley, *Joseph Smith and His Mormon Empire* (Boston, New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1931), pp. 79f. Beardsley is ready to accept "The Mormon version" of the story of the Book of Mormon "if we related it in modern terms . . . shorn of its supernatural aspects." As if the wise men of 1830 objected to anything else than its supernatural aspects!

²⁸Wm. A. Linn, *The Story of the Mor-*

mons (New York: Macmillan, 1923), pp. 89-90. (1st ed., 1901.)

"Rt. Rev. Samuel Fallows & H. M. Fallows, *The Mormon Menace* (Chicago: Woman's Temperance Publ. Assn., 1903), p. 16.

Prisoner's Base

(Continued) spirits in prison whom the Lord visited, and there are some spirits in prison whom we can visit. Some are prisoners of ignorance; some the prisoners of disobedience, sloth, or indifference. Messengers are needed to "go to the rescue" and "touch" lives before sin has made so many encroachments upon their souls that rescue becomes impossible.

A recent speaker in stake conference said that when he was a young man President McKay had put his hand on his shoulder. He had never forgotten. He said, "President McKay touched me." Many people can say that of President McKay. President McKay not only touches people with his hands; he also touches them with his example and his spirituality and his faith, and he brings them over to the Lord's side of the line.

The most worth-while work in the world is to touch the lives of people with the spirit of the gospel. For those who do will see the fulfilment of the great promise when the King shall "... say to them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

"For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink. . . .

"I was in prison, and ye came unto me." (Matt. 25:34-36.)

APOLOGY TO A FRIEND

by Marian Boyle Monahan

The storm subsides,
and in my heart resides
A deep regret where only
love for you should be.
Give back my ugly searing
words of spite
That in the night glow hot
to torture me.
I'll hide them deep in
cushioned dark
To keep them ever still
and dead,
Those biting, vicious
words of mine
I wish unsaid.

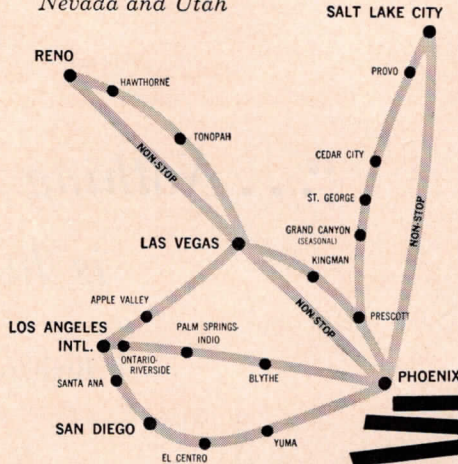
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Part Two

by Hugh Nibley, Contributing Editor

One of the few critics ever to do a serious piece of work on the Book of Mormon was H. C. Sheldon. In coming to grips with the problem, he tells us exactly what his position is. "The primary question is, Are those claims credible, or do they bear unmistakably the stamp of falsehood and imposture?" A leading question, indeed, but at last we have someone who at least recognized the possibility of an alternative—Linn reads the book avowedly to prove it false, Taylder gives us our choice of whether Smith was one kind of liar or another, but Mr. Sheldon is actually willing to recognize an "either/or" situation. Only in the next sentence he takes it all back: "Many conditions, some of which are of compelling force, *shut up the critical investigator to the second alternative.*"³⁰ What chicanery! Our guide tells us that the "primary question" for consideration is whether the Book of Mormon is true or false, and then calmly informs us that the first alternative is under no circumstances to be examined. The jury is instructed to choose between A and B, with the specification that A has been disqualified before the contest; with that understandable limitation the jury may favor whomever they will.

As early as 1835 one editor announced a policy that was to become standard procedure in dealing with the Book of Mormon, "an artifice so vile, shallow and contemptible, that it can never deceive one intelligent person; therefore we think it unworthy of so much as a contradiction!"³¹ This is exactly the position taken in what has been hailed as recently as 1950 as the most thorough and devastating attack ever made on the Book of Mormon, a study by W. F. Prince, published in the *America Journal of Psychology* in 1917.³² We shall deal with this study later, but first let Dr. Prince tell us how matters stand with science and the Book of Mormon:

"Since the odd contents of the volume lamentably or ludicrously fall before every canon of historical criticism, scholars have not thought it worth while to

discuss the notion of its ancient authorship, unless briefly for pragmatic and missionary purposes."³³

Here we have it again: the only reason any scholar consults the Book of Mormon is to debunk it for polemical purposes—pragmatic and missionary. The historical question raised by the book is purely and simply that of its ancient authorship—a problem that scholars have never discussed, according to Prince. Why not? we ask. Because it cannot stand up to critical investigation—it falls before every canon of historical criticism. Has it been tested by *any* of those canons? Of course not, it isn't worth the trouble!

This absurd position, that the Book of Mormon has failed to pass a test which has never been given it because of its failure to pass, etc., is neatly confirmed by the learned LaRue in 1919. "What of the book itself?" he asks, "*No serious consideration has ever been given it by men of science.* It is considered a fabrication. . . ."³⁴ Since it is a fabrication, why should any man of science waste his time with it? The answer is, that only by spending a lot of time with it can any man of science prove that it is a fabrication in the first place. But such reasoning does not count: "How could three rational men address 'all nations, kindreds, tongues and people,'" LaRue asks, "and say that God had told them that these plates had been translated by the gift and power of God. . . .?" Another rhetorical question, and quite pointless besides, since the problem of how they *could* do so is over-ridden by the admitted fact that they *did*.

Writing in the following year, C. S. Jones, after an almost unbelievably confused and inaccurate account of the contents of the Book of Mormon makes his point: "It would be easy, pitably easy, if it were not supererogatory, to pulverize this claim . . . but *cui bono?*"³⁵ *Cui bono* being Latin for "what's the use?" We now have the comforting assurance that if the scholars and scientists have neglected the Book of Mormon it has not been because they were too busy

with more important things—for anything as “pitifully easy” as the debunking of the book, a crying need in our society, should not require more than a few easy hours of a good man’s time. Why don’t they get at it? “What’s the use?” asks Mr. Jones, a strange question from one who feels that the world is in desperate need of a book by him entitled *The Truth about the Mormons*.

No anti-Mormon book has been pushed more diligently in high places than Arbaugh’s University of Chicago thesis on *Revelation in Mormonism*. Arbaugh informs us that “apart from specialized treatises, there is only one scientific book on Mormonism,” and that is Linn’s work, “. . . quite incomplete, out of date, and defective, presenting a maze of indigested facts.”³⁶ In view of such a state of sorry neglect, one might expect Arbaugh himself to do some real digging on the Book of Mormon, especially since revelation in his story. But no: he disarmingly informs us that where the book is concerned he is going to take his information from a single collection of third-and fourth-hand reports made by the Reverend Charles A. Shook in 1912.³⁷ For Mr. Arbaugh, “The fact that Mormonism is fantastic, interesting, and available for study as no other religion is, makes its study a pleasant task.” It presents no real problem because it is simply “fantastic”—you don’t have to worry about proving or disproving fantastic things, do you?

As recently as 1957 the same Arbaugh has got out a pamphlet which he modestly describes as “an authoritative handbook on Mormonism—concise . . . scholarly . . . objective.” “This is not an exposure of Mormonism,” he cries with liberal magnanimity. “One complaint which can be urged against exposures is that they sometimes confuse hearsay with fact.”³⁸ But not Arbaugh; no prejudice for him! He will write no scandalized exposure, but give his little book the neutral and unemotional title of *Gods, Sex, and Saints: The Mormon Story*, and promises to tell us, without a spark of ill feeling, how “the integrative



Failed to pass a test which was never given because of failure to pass it.

principle of sex" operates in this "polytheistic mystery cult." Thus with a preliminary barrage of loaded words Mr. Arbaugh prepares us for his exercise in semantics—for he admits that he has shifted his ground from the historical to the semantic approach—no need to bother about facts here!³⁸

One of the "exposures" which Dr. Arbaugh condemns for confusing hearsay with fact is Mrs. Brodie's much-heralded novel, recently hailed by a reviewer as *the* work of "primary scholarship" on the Mormons.³⁹ "Scholars of American literary history have remained persistently uninterested in the Book of Mormon," Mrs. Brodie writes in this book. "No sociologist has troubled to draw parallels between the Book of Mormon and other sacred books, like the Koran and Science and Health, though all are . . . an obscure compound of folklore, moral platitude, mysticism, and millennialism."⁴⁰ That should be enough to show how deep Mrs. Brodie herself has gone in her "primary scholarship." She is quite unaware of Eduard Meyer's work though she could not possibly have avoided him in any serious study of the Book of Mormon or the Koran, and she apparently thinks that people who study and compare ancient and modern religious texts are known as sociologists.⁴⁰ But she is right about one thing—the Book of Mormon has been persistently neglected. A search in the latest encyclopedias, American and foreign, will disclose long articles on the Dead Sea Scrolls but never an article on the Book of Mormon.⁴¹

Mr. C. S. Braden in a book devoted to the subject of modern scriptures refuses to touch the Book of Mormon except to note: "Naturally it [the story of the Book of Mormon] has been doubted by those outside the faith, and every effort has been made to find a more plausible explanation of the sources of these scriptures. . . . In an age such as ours," he writes, "critical of all claims that run counter to what may be scientifically proven, the Mormon has a heavy burden of proof upon him. . . ."⁴² Here, surely is a convenient concept of the function of a textual critic. Mr. Braden it is who challenges the book, and then Mr. Braden denies any responsibility for proving his case. He dares the Mormons to convince him, and refuses to study their book.

A Catholic priest prefaces a recent discussion of the Book of Mormon with a helpful statement of policy: "I, of course, hold that Mormon beliefs, differing as they do from the beliefs of Christians during two thousand years, are irreconcilable with the Christian faith."⁴³ In view of that "of course," one wonders why Father Rumble bothers even to pretend to be investigating the thing, but a reading of the pamphlet will readily show that he is innocent of any dangerous researches.

In an ambitious historical study of the Book of Mormon published in 1954, Professor Meinhold of Kiel wrote: "To presume to believe on the existence of the 'golden plates,' is in spite of the witnesses, *unerhört* [unheard of, unthinkable]."⁴⁴ *Unerhört* is no argument and no proof; it is the evasion of a task which the world has a right to expect of an honest scholar, and like Eduard Meyer before him, Meinhold sidesteps the responsibility with a shrug. Speaking of such responsibility, A. E. Housman wrote, years ago, that no scholar, no matter how learned, may be "allowed to fling his opinions in the reader's face without being called to account and asked for his reasons."⁴⁵ One of the best commentaries on this text is one of the latest: Dr. O'Dea has observed, not without a touch of Irish wit, that "the Book of Mormon has not been universally considered by its critics as one of those books that must be read in order to have an opinion of it."⁴⁶ We have seen why.

From the brief survey of critical policy just presented, one fact stands out conspicuously—the fact that from first to last the foremost objection to the book, an objection that far outweighs all others both as to the frequency and feeling with which it is put forward, is that it is hopelessly out of place in our modern, scientific, enlightened society. What amazes the first commentator is that such a thing can exist "at this enlightened age of the world": Campbell "sets the question . . . forever at rest, to every *rational* mind"; E. D. Howe is alarmed that "great numbers of people in our enlightened country" should fall for such a thing; the Reverend Clark is astonished that it should find followers "in enlightened New England"; Gregg finds it "simply astounding that any human being . . . can be found so credulous as to believe it"; and so on. This completely disqualified the comfortable thesis, that while the Book of Mormon may have impressed the rustic America of a century ago, "in an age such as ours" it simply won't hold up. Forty years ago a critic wrote that if Joseph Smith had "lived at a later age, he would have been laughed to scorn at once."⁴⁷ The fact is that he *was* laughed to scorn at once: in 1830 his book was if anything even more obnoxious to enlightened liberalism and modern education than it is today. "We must not forget," one investigator reminds us, "that Mormonism arose almost yesterday, amid universities and libraries," and not in a primitive world.⁴⁸ "The modern mind," writes Beardsley, "will reject the Mormon version of the golden plates and Urim and Thummim, as either delusions or fraud."⁴⁹ But in that respect the mind of 1830 was quite as "modern" as the mind of 1930. When Mrs. Brodie announces that twentieth-century science has finally "disembowelled" the Book of Mormon we wait (Continued on page 300)

slowly down the hill to see the results. Jim's afraid to get there and see, Nora thought, aching to spare him disappointment.

But before they reached the hole they saw muddy water boiling up, spilling out over the ground.

"We've got an artesian spring, Nora," Jim said, his voice betraying his excitement. "I thought so yesterday but was afraid to say anything.

This is the storage place for the water those hills over there have been soaking up over the years. I guess this vein of rock runs from there."

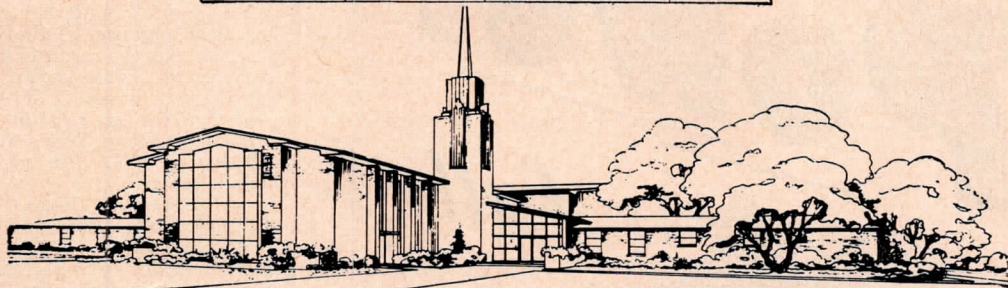
Perhaps the spring was not so unusual, Nora thought. But to be tapped by a bush! She had prayed. She couldn't help wondering. . . .

"This means we can hold on," Jim said.

"I know."

A few days later when Nora was adjusting the tarp over the little bare-limbed olive tree she discovered a tiny, fuzzy green bud. Relief and happiness flooded through her. She felt it was an omen of good things to come; perhaps the end of the drought. But, anyway, the things that choose to grow here were rugged. They, too, would survive.

Z C M I

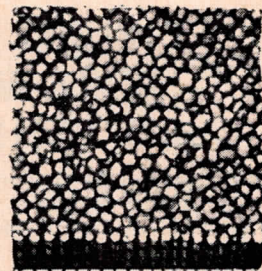


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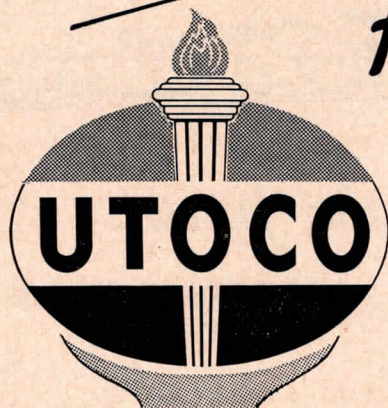
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(Continued) for the lurid details—but we wait in vain. Not a single twentieth-century argument does she produce: not one new argument against the Book of Mormon has come forth since the first decade of its appearance!

(To be continued)

FOOTNOTES

³⁰Henry C. Sheldon, *A Fourfold Test of Mormonism* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1914), p. 10. (Italics ours.)

³¹J. Bobb, in *The Western Expositor*, Dec. 10, 1835.

³²Prince's study "proved beyond dispute thirty years ago" exactly when and where the Book of Mormon was conceived, according to W. R. Cross, *The Burned-over District* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1950), p. 144.

³³W. F. Prince, in *Am. Journal of Psychology* 28 (1917), p. 373.

³⁴Wm. Earl LaRue, *The Foundations of Mormonism* (New York: E. H. Revell, Co., 1919), p. 77. (Italics ours.) "A higher critical appraisal of the Book of Mormon, which was the result of this creative effort of Joseph Smith, would be extremely interesting," wrote C. F. Potter, *The Story of Religion as told in the Lives of its Leaders* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1929), p. 531. But such has never been undertaken.

³⁵C. Sheridan Jones, *The Truth about the Mormons* (London: Wm. Rider, 1920), p. 4.

³⁶Geo. B. Arbaugh, *Revelation in Mormonism* (U. of Chicago Thesis, 1932), (reprinted 1950), p. v.

³⁷*Ibid.*, p. vii.

³⁸G. B. Arbaugh, *Gods, Sex, and Saints: The Mormon Story* (Rock Island, Ill.: Augustana Press, 1957), pp. 5-6; "There is need for clarity at the point of semantics rather than for stories about the latest polygamists."

³⁹D. L. Morgan, "The 'Peculiar People'" *Sat. Rev. of Literature*, Dec. 28, 1957, p. 9.

⁴⁰Fawn M. Brodie, *No Man Knows My History* (New York: A. Knopf, 1946), p. 67. Meyer's work (see note 1, above) contains not only the classic comparison of Joseph Smith with Mohammed but also a detailed comparison of their revelations and their books. The work is not mentioned by Mrs. Brodie.

⁴¹All that the *Encyclopedia Americana* (1957 ed., s.v. "Mormon") has to say about the Book of Mormon itself is that "many editions have been published, millions of copies have been distributed, and the work has been translated into many different languages." The *Britannica* has not a word to say about the contents of the Book of Mormon.

⁴²C. S. Braden, *The Scriptures of Mankind, An Introduction* (New York: Macmillan, 1952), pp. 481-2.

⁴³L. Rumble, *Mormons or Latter-day Saints* (Tract, Paulist Press, 1950), Introduction (Kirkham, *op. cit.*, II, 304-7.)

⁴⁴P. Meinhold, "Die Anfänge des Amerikanischen Geschichtsbewusstseins," *Saeculum V* (1954), pp. 85-86.

⁴⁵In his edition of Manilius, *Astronomicon*, Vol. V, pp. xxxiii.

⁴⁶Thos. F. O'Dea, *The Mormons* (Uni-

versity of Chicago Press, 1957), p. 26.

⁴²Stuart Martin, *The Mystery of Mormonism* (New York: Dutton & Co., 1920), p. 16.

⁴³Geo. Seibell, *The Mormon Saints* (Pittsburgh: Lessing Co., 1919), p. 7.

⁴⁴See above note 27.

Editor's Page

(Continued) which caused the Savior to give his life for the salvation of the human family.

Self-Control.—Great as are the virtues of truth, justice, wisdom, and benevolence, they do not seem so practical and applicable to daily life as the virtue of self-control. Indeed, if these elements of true manhood are not attained by, they are at least manifested through, self-control. Self-control means the government and regulation of all our natural appetites, desires, passions, and affections; and there is nothing which gives man such strength of character as the sense of self-conquest—the realization that he can make his appetites and passions serve him, and that he is not a servant to them.

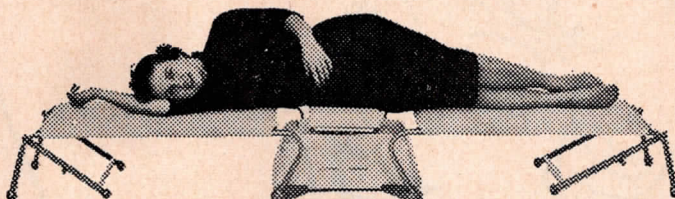
The comprehensiveness of this virtue may be best understood by naming others included by it. Some of these are: temperance, bravery, fortitude, cheerfulness, hopefulness, sobriety, chastity, independence, tolerance, patience, submission, continence, purity.

In our efforts to develop true manhood, we must accept Christ as the way, the truth, and the life. He not only possessed truth, justice, wisdom, benevolence, and self-control, and taught them, but also practised them. And herein is the secret of manly strength: that is, the doing of that which one knows to be right. A man cannot truly believe in God and Jesus Christ, in their divinity, omnipotence, and power, who daily violated their teachings and commandments.

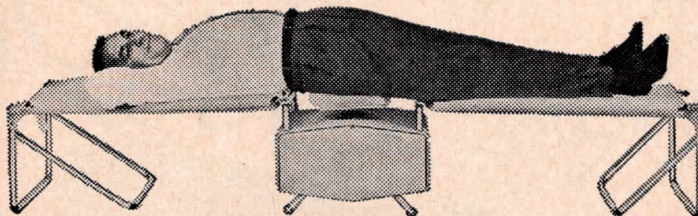
What we need today is the gospel of application—the gospel that is preached by noble acts, that commands the attention and respect of everyone. The life of Christ was the life of true manhood. The gospel of Christ points to the attainment of it; the Church is an ideal means of developing it; but true moral character is attained only by each individual's practising daily the virtues that give not only character but also happiness and eternal life.

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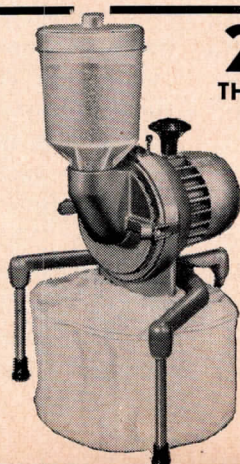
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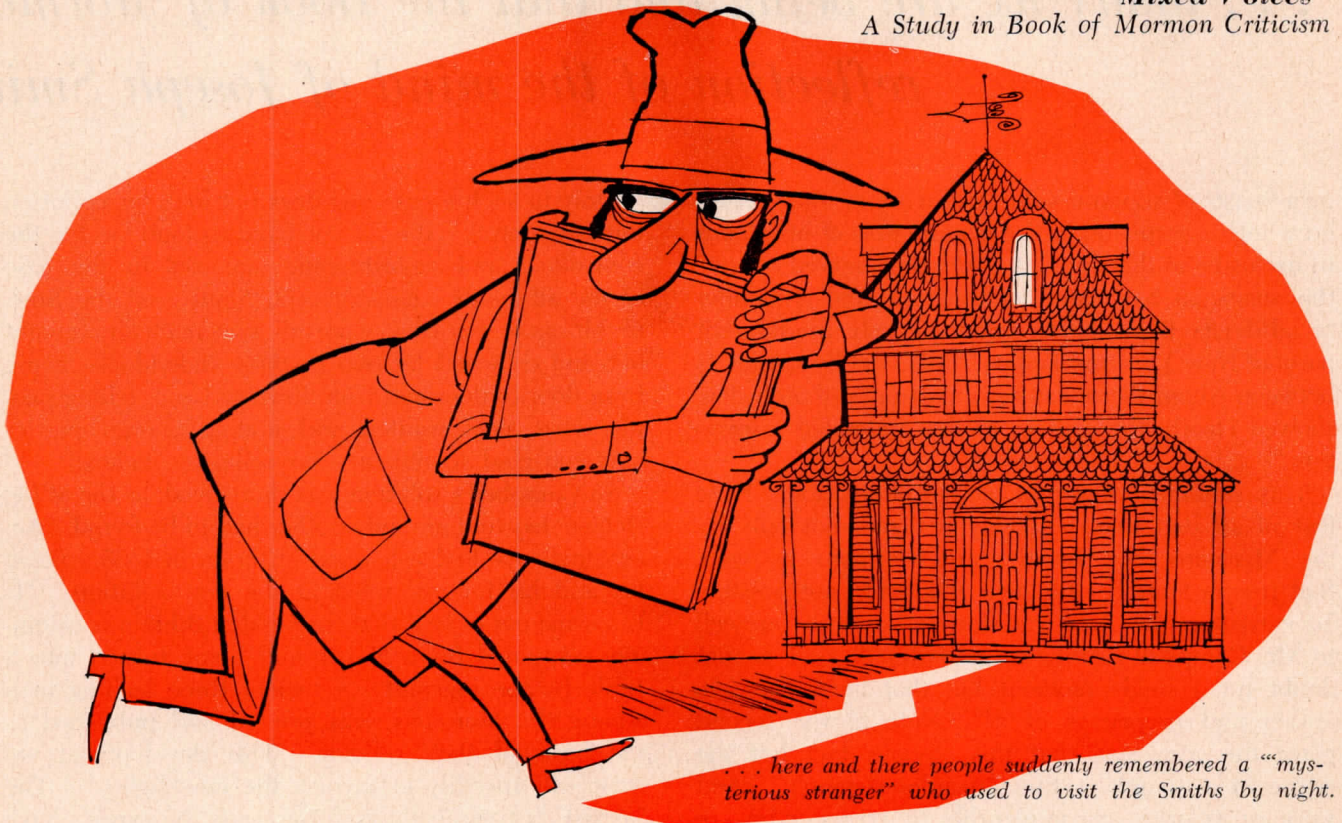
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Part One

by Hugh Nibley

Here We Are Again:—The logical point of departure for a study of Book of Mormon criticism happens to be, at present, the present; for today's researches have just achieved the completion of a full circle in the mystic discipline. At the moment the critics are right back where they started from 130 years ago. Such is the progress of scholarship. Today we are being told that the Book of Mormon can be explained fully as a faithful reflection of the mind of Joseph Smith and the world he grew up in. Which is exactly what Alexander Campbell said in the beginning.¹ Indeed, the latest criticisms of the book can do no better than to quote Campbell's thesis word for word:

"This prophet Smith, through his stone spectacles, wrote on the plates of Nephi, in his Book of Mormon, every error and almost every truth discussed in New York in the last ten years. . . ."

Furthermore, Campbell observes, "there never was a book more evidently written by one set of fingers. . . . I cannot doubt for a single moment but

that he is the sole author and proprietor of it." That pretty well covers it: Smith was the author of the book, and its substance is a distorted image of his own times.

Now if all this was so perfectly obvious, then as now, why on earth did the critics forsake such a neat and comfortable explanation to wander for a hundred years in a wilderness of speculation and contradiction? It was because the theory of the local origin collapsed at a touch. No sooner had Mr. Campbell's explanation been received with cries of joy and relief² than it was seen that the picture had not been clarified by it at all, but made much messier. An article in the *American Whig Review* explains the new embarrassment:

"Those who were acquainted with the early life of the founder of Mormonism, with his ignorance and character for stupidity, wondered much at the publication of so invention-displaying and elaborate a work, of which he claimed to be the sole author and proprietor, and as the prophet daily lived down his

. . . today we are being told that the Book of Mormon reflection of the mind of Joseph Smith

own boasts of superior value and wisdom, the wonder grew into a suspicion of the genuineness of his claims to exclusive authorship. A short time served to give this suspicion basis and confirmation, and a number of affidavits filed almost simultaneously in different parts of New York and Pennsylvania, and by witnesses between whom there was no opportunity of collusion, showed clearly the sources of the pretended inspiration."³

This statement deserves close examination. Note first of all that it was quickly realized, not only by the Mormons, but by the anti-Mormons as well, that Joseph Smith by his own wits could not possibly have written the Book of Mormon—and so farewell to Mr. Campbell's sublime certitudes: ". . . I cannot doubt for a single moment but that he is the sole author and proprietor of it!" Note in the second place the admission that this obvious fact left the critics in a quandary—they "wondered much." And since quandaries are intolerable to critics, who are never at a loss to invent explanations, it is not the least surprising that "the wonder grew into a suspicion." From embarrassment to wonder and from wonder to suspicion: is there any doubt what the next step will be? Is suspicion ever at a loss to discover villainy? All at once, and last of all, comes the evidence: "almost simultaneously" people everywhere start remembering a certain unpublished and unregretted novel, a dull, befuddled composition that no one had the patience to read but the names of whose characters were remembered with crystal clarity by people who had forgotten all about the book until then. Then another "double-take" made it necessary to explain how Smith could have got hold of the book, and, presto! another brain-wave hit the public, and here and there people suddenly remembered a "mysterious stranger" who used to visit the Smiths by night, some three to ten and more years before! There is your answer, and no funny business, either: "there was no opportunity of collusion" between the "witnesses."

Only in such a case one does not look for collusion but for control. We do not have to look far for the controlling and co-ordinating agencies in the case of the affidavits against Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon, for they were all systematically sought out and collected by two or three individuals, going from door to door and from town to town, telling people what they wanted and finding certain parties only too glad to oblige. No collusion, indeed!⁴

So Campbell's solution was short-lived, as the *Whig Review* has told us, and another had to be found. Accordingly we find a learned historian in 1835 voicing his and his fellows' relief at the new solution: "It has come out *at last*, that the Golden Bible was originally composed for a Novel, and being turned into a Bible by the ingenuity of two or three leading men among the Mormons, was printed and published as the basis of their religion. This development we trust will speedily extinguish the new lights."⁵ The "at last" is typical; through the years the experts have continued to attack from every angle, and periodically we hear the joyful cry that *at last* they have struck pay dirt.⁶

The alternative theory having collapsed, and since it is much too late in the day to think up another one, the critics have no choice today but to go back to the old original theory of Campbell. But if that theory was so readily discredited (please note: it was *not* supplanted by the Spaulding theory, but broke down of its own accord, and the Spaulding substitute was only found after a desperate interval of frantic searching), if it could not stand up for a year on its own merits, why should it work now? For the good reason that lots of things are forgotten in 125 years! The theory that Joseph Smith composed the Book of Mormon raises questions and involves corollaries which a hundred years ago were readily seen to present an insuperable obstacle to its acceptance. But the modern world can very easily overlook those questions and corollaries, and present-day critics are trying hard to do so.

but . . . nothing could be America

can be explained as a faithful and the world he grew up in

One of the latest and most conscientious critics of the Book of Mormon, Dr. O'Dea, finds the answer to the whole thing just as simple and obvious as it was to Alexander Campbell:

"There is a simple common-sense explanation which states that Joseph Smith was a normal person living in an atmosphere of religious excitement that . . . led him from necromancy into revelation, from revelation to prophecy, and from prophecy to leadership. . . . To the non-Mormon . . . such an explanation on the basis of the evidence at hand seems far the most likely and safest."⁷

The trouble with this position is that all "the evidence at hand" refutes it. To be consistent with his own position Dr. O'Dea must accept without question a number of perfectly untenable corollaries; for example, he accepts emphatically the proposition that as "a normal person" Smith reacted to the common stimulus of his environment just the way other people did, so that his Book of Mormon is in fact "a primary source for the intellectual history of the common man."⁷ Even his claims to revelation were but a "legitimate product of the intensified experience of the region."⁸ Dr. Cross goes even further; for him all of the prophet's revelations, including the Book of Mormon, are "nothing more than what happens to any man who enjoys great responsibility. . . . It might have happened to almost any one of Joseph's fellow Yankee migrants."⁹ Even the alleged treasure-digging and the finding of the plates "was by no means peculiar and quite naturally seemed authentic to ordinary folks," according to this authority, who notes that such a composition as the Book of Mormon "would scarcely seem fanciful, possibly not even novel, to their contemporaries."¹⁰

The modern school has dug in so deeply on this ground that it will be necessary for us to labor the obvious by way of calling their reluctant attention to it. Two fundamental corollaries of the theorem that Joseph Smith wrote the Book of Mormon are 1) that it was not beyond his ability to write such

a book, and 2) that the book itself, as the product of a normal mind under the influences of everyday stimuli supplied by a given environment, was necessarily quite at home in that environment. Our modern critics accept these corollaries, but the contemporaries of Joseph Smith *could not*, however eager they were to explain the Book of Mormon. For they knew too much and they saw too much. Dr. Francis Kirkham has devoted the better part of a large book to quotations in which contemporaries of Joseph Smith, hostile or friendly, all express complete conviction that he could not possibly have written the book. And even more clear and emphatic is the unanimous verdict that nothing could be more completely out of place in nineteenth century America than Joseph Smith and his book.

We are apt to forget this unless we look at the record. Today, the experts find it not only convenient but also essential to their argument to forget how the world has reacted to Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon. Let us refresh their memories by listing in chronological order some thoroughly representative remarks by leading critics.

1830's

A month after the appearance of the Book of Mormon, the liberal Palmyra *Reflector* warned Oliver Cowdery that he might end up being sent as a convict to the Simsbury Mines for daring to proclaim its message in "the principal cities of the Union."¹¹ Could this be the doctrine "that naturally seemed quite authentic to ordinary folks?" In August 1833 a widely-heralded mass-meeting in Jackson County, Missouri, unanimously voted that all Mormons should leave "the country," that no more should be allowed to enter "the country," that the Mormon printing press should be destroyed (this was immediately done) and all publication by Mormons forthwith and forever cease. The reason for this perfectly illegal action was clearly stated and clearly understood:

"The community especially fears that . . . the life and property of other (Continued on page 388)

more completely out of place in 19th century than Joseph Smith and his book.

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Just Another Book

(Continued) citizens would be insecure, under the administration of men who are so ignorant and superstitious as to believe that they have been the subjects of miraculous and supernatural cures; hold converse with God and his angels, and possess and exercise the gifts of divination, and of unknown tongues."¹²

In vain the newspapers around the country pointed out that you could not throw the Constitution out of the window simply because people had crazy religious ideas: "We regard the Mormons as a sect of deluded and deceived fanatics, yet they have their rights and privileges. . . ." ¹³ In vain the governor of the state asked why the Mormons alone of all fanatics should be so treated: "It is not long," he wrote, "since an impostor assumed the character of Jesus Christ, and attempted to minister as such; but I never heard of any combination to deprive him of his rights."¹⁴ At the same time a learned judge in the same state, acting in his official capacity, urged the Mormons to give up the cause of all their troubles, and warned them of what would happen, rights or no rights, if they did not: "The Honorable Judge Rydland . . . addressed the Mormons warning them against the danger of suffering themselves to be led by pretenders to the high prerogatives of the Prophets of God."¹⁵ Such is the specific crime with which he charges them. A year later a western editor compared the Mormons with the early Christians; he also called the Book of Mormon "an artifice so vile, shallow, and contemptible that it can never deceive one intelligent individual; therefore we think it unworthy to so much notice as a contradiction!" But the remarkable thing about this perfect-

ly orthodox statement is that the author, who was a freethinker, went right on to speak of Moses and Christ and of the Old and New Testaments in the very same terms, sagely observing that the world's opinion of the Book of Mormon was also "unquestionably the opinion of the learned ancients, concerning the former revelations."¹⁶ It was a direct hit which went unnoticed in the general cry, voiced by the *Missouri Argus* in 1838, that though the Mormons may be Christians, still they were "a sect with a peculiar creed, distinct from that professed by the rest of Christians."¹⁷ The general impression of the Mormons on American society at the time is eloquently expressed in the verses of Josiah Canning, the New England "poet":

"Now MORMON, with his golden plates,
Says he has opened heaven's gates,
And hangs out many tempting baits
To prove the fact;
And old JOE SMITH, his agent,
prates

With school-boy tact.

"Here in our own, our goodly land,
Some zealot has enrolled a band,
Whose object is to take command

From HEAVEN, I think!
The last accounts they seem to stand
Upon the brink.

* * * *

"That heathenism should be done
Beneath New England's CHRISTIAN sun,

's a crying shame—a grievous one;
And into jail

Theimps should tarred and feathered run,

Or ride a RAIL."¹⁸

Here it will be seen that the objections are raised to the Mormons in staid New England as in wild


Missouri (and they are purely religious objections), and the same rough treatment is recommended for them. But today we are being told that such doctrines "would scarcely seem fanciful, possibly not even novel" in those early times. Who is kidding whom?

It was the oddness of Mormonism that arrested the attention of the Fabulous Forties, when the critics looked for the peculiar and found it everywhere. Everything about Mormonism was fantastic. Josiah Quincy said of the stately Nauvoo Temple, "It certainly cannot be compared to any ecclesiastical building which may be discerned by the natural sight."¹⁹ To Mr. Kidder Mormonism was "threatening to unsettle the grounds of all rational belief. . . ."²⁰ Wherever the Mormons went, "their fanatical religious zeal and some of their tenets and practices . . . were inconsistent or incompatible with the civilization surrounding them."²¹ We are accustomed to boast of the intelligence of the nineteenth century," wrote the scandalized editor of the eminent *Dublin University Magazine* in 1843, "to laud ourselves on the march of mind in these modern days, and to speak of the popular delusions by which past generations were misled, as the spectral shadows of 'the long night now gone down the sky.' Mormonism is a bitter reply to our self-laudation. . . ."²² "How in the name of common sense," an English minister wrote to his nephew who had become a Mormon elder, "could you be so simple, as to let such a poor, weak deluded creature, commit such *blasphemy*, as to put his hands on your head, and tell you that you should have the Holy Ghost descend upon you?—I would much rather have a pig's foot on my head, if it was well boiled."²³

1850's

Everyone knows that the Mormons "are a queer, eccentric set; that they have got odd notions into their heads respecting religion and the Bible . . ." a London editor observed in 1850.²⁴ Charles Dickens was bemused at the idea of people "seeing visions in an age of railways"; it was just too incongruous for words.²⁵ "It is most humiliating to our country and our age!" cries a devout American commenting on the same anomaly in 1853, "Who

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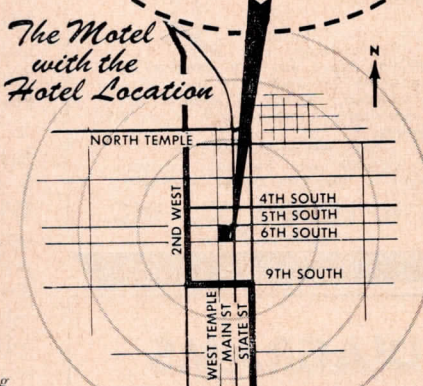
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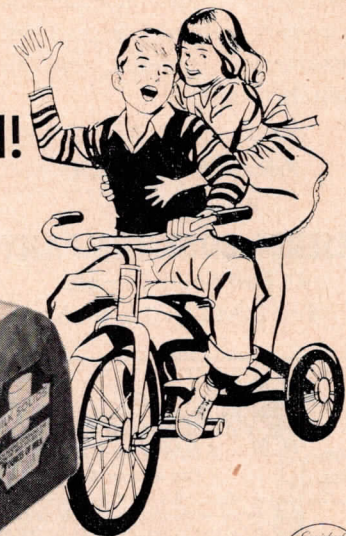
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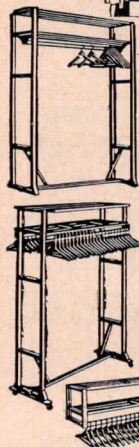
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would opine that, in our happy land, in a nation of voters, freemen, newspapers, periodical literature, and general reading, such a gross and detestable imposture as Mormonism could find disciples and devotees?"²⁶ Speaking of the death of the Prophet, the most noted literary journal of the age says, "we cannot deny that in his punishment, the wrath of lawless men fulfilled the righteousness of God." Actually it was "a death too honorable for his deserts. . . . To call such a man a martyr is an abuse of language."²⁷ When one considers that this was written in Scotland, far from the political or economic troubles of the American frontier, and by a man who prided himself on his cool intellectual detachment, who had never had any contact with Joseph Smith, it is hard to argue that Mormonism was simply a normal product of the times. "It has been observed with some reason," an important American journal remarked in 1854, "that had a Rabelais or a Swift told the story of the Mormons under the veil of allegory, mankind would probably have entered a protest against the extravagance of the satirist."²⁸

An editorial in the eminent *Putnam's Monthly* for March 1855, replies with a resounding "No!" to its own question: "Shall Utah be admitted to the Union?" It is the doctrines of the Church regarding God and man that decide the issue.²⁹ A later thesis on the same subject in the *Forum* reached the same conclusions:—the Mormons are as different from the rest of society as the wild redskins, totally devoid of "the virtues upon which alone Christian people can build republican institutions."³⁰ In the same year, John Reynolds, a shrewd observer, wrote:

"In all the great events and revolutions in the various nations of the earth nothing surpasses the extraordinary history of the Mormons. The facts in relation to this singular people are so strange, so opposite to common sense, and so great and important, that they would not obtain our belief if we did not see the events transpire before our eyes. No argument, or mode of reasoning, could induce anyone to believe that in the nineteenth century, in the United States . . . a sect of religionists could arise on *delusion* and *imposture*."³¹

Yet our present-day critics do not

even raise an eyebrow. They were born yesterday. A hundred years ago the critics agreed that "Mormonism is . . . the product of a bewildered brain, when it has evidence both of a *moral* and *metaphysical* nature, to prove that it cannot by *possibility*—I may almost say human or divine—be true! Before Mormonism can be true, the *nature* of man, the *nature* of truth, and the *nature* of Deity himself, must be *totally* subverted. . . . Nothing less than a total abcession in these parts can be tolerated."³²

FOOTNOTES, PART II, Part I

¹A. Campbell, in *The Millennial Harbinger* II (Bethany Virginia, 1831), p. 93; The passage is cited at length by W. R. Cross, *The Burned-over District*, (Ithaca, 1950), as an authentic explanation of the Book of Mormon.

²Campbell "unequivocally and triumphantly sets the question of the divine authenticity of the 'Book' forever at rest, to every rational mind." Thus the *Painesville Telegraph*, May 17, 1881, cited by F. Kirkham, *New Witness for Christ in America*, II, 99.

³*The American Whig Review*, Vol. 7, June 1851, p. 140.

⁴The subject of the affidavits will be treated below in a separate section.

⁵D. Griffiths, Jr., *New Settlements of Ohio* (London: Westley & Davis, 1835), p. 140.

⁶The works of Linn, Arbaugh, Brodie, Morgan, Davis, to name only a few, all promise to produce the true story of the Book of Mormon—at last! In such pathetic hopefulness the Rev. J. E. Mahaffey published his *Found at Last! Positive Proof that Mormonism Is a Fraud and the Book of Mormon a Fable* (Augusta, Georgia: Chronicle Job Office, 1902).

⁷T. F. O'Dea, *The Mormons* (University of Chicago Press, 1957), p. 27.

⁸*Ibid.*, p. 13.

⁹Cross, *op. cit.*, p. 140.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, p. 81.

¹¹*Palmyra Reflector*, June 1, 1830, in Kirkham, *op. cit.*, II, 50.

¹²*Missouri Intelligencer and Boone's Lick Advertiser*, Aug. 10, 1833. Also reported in the *Jeffersonian Republican* (Missouri), for Aug. 17, 1833.

¹³*Missouri Intelligencer and Boone's Lick Advertiser*, June 21, 1834.

¹⁴Letter from Governor Daniel Dunklin June 6, 1834, printed *idem*, for July 5, 1834.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, for June 28, 1834.

¹⁶J. Bobb, in *The Western Expositor* for Dec. 10, 1835.

¹⁷*Missouri Argus* for Dec. 20, 1838.

¹⁸Josiah D. Canning, "The Review," in *Poems* (Greenfield, Massachusetts: Phelps & Ingersoll, 1838), pp. 107-8. The poem is dedicated to Daniel Webster.

¹⁹Josiah Quincy, *Figures of the Past* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1901), p. 389.

²⁰D. Kidder, *Mormonism and the Mormons* (New York, 1842).

²¹J. S. Morton, *Illustrated History of Nebraska* (Lincoln: J. North & Co., 1906) II, 125, speaking of the 1840's. This is

clearly illustrated in Francis Parkman's *Oregon Trail*.

²²Editorial, "Mormonism; or, New Mohammedanism in England and America," *Dublin University Magazine*, March 1843, p. 283.

²³Rev. P. Alcock, *Latter-day Saints, A Letter to His Nephew, E. H. Webb, Elder in the Church of the Latter-day Saints* (Bristol: Wm. Taylor, 1842), p. 3.

²⁴Editorial, "What Is Mormonism?" in *Sharpe's London Magazine*, N.S. 5 (1850), p. 55.

²⁵Charles Dickens, *Household Words*, July 19, 1851.

²⁶S. H. Cox, *Interviews: Memorable and Useful* (New York: Harpers, 1853), p. 293.

²⁷W. J. Conybeare, in *The Edinburgh Review*, 1854, pp. 169-170.

²⁸Editorial in *The National Magazine*, IV, No. 6, June 1854, pp. 481-2.

²⁹Editorial in *Putnam's Monthly* V, xxvii (March 1855), p. 226. The Mormons can only be compared with "a body of savages." *Ibid.*, pp. 225, 236.

³⁰H. L. Dawes, "The Admission of Utah," *Forum* (no date), p. 482.

³¹John Reynolds, *My Own Times* (Illinois, 1855), p. 562.

³²J. T. Peck, D. D., *The History of the Great Republic* (New York: Broughton & Wyman, 1868), p. 504.

³³H. Caswall, in W. S. Parrott, *The Vail Uplifted* (London: 1865), p. 19: "I should be showing great want of charity to my countrymen, if I willingly allowed them to think well of the 'Latter-day' doctrine."

³⁴*Ibid.*, p. 33, 39, quoting Rev. O. C. Duke of Omaha.

³⁵C. H. Brigham, "The Mormon Problem," in *Old and New*, May 1870, pp. 638f, 629.

³⁶Editorial, "The Mormon Theocracy," in *Scribner's*, July, 1877, pp. 391-2.

³⁷T. deWitt Talmage, *The Brooklyn Tabernacle, A Collection of 104 Sermons* (N.Y.: Funk & Wagnalls, 1884), pp. 55-56. In an earlier sermon, pp. 36-37, Talmage labors to implicate the Mormons in the assassination of President Garfield.

³⁸F. A. Noble, D. D., *The Mormon Iniquity* (Chicago: Jameson & Morse, 1884), p. 3.

³⁹R. W. Beers, *The Mormon Puzzle and How to Solve It* (New York, Chicago: Funk & Wagnalls, 1887) p. 17, reluctantly adding: "But thus far it has successfully withstood even the fiercest opposition."

⁴⁰J. P. Newman, D. D., "The Mormon Question," in the Rt. Rev. S. Fallows, *Hot Shot fired at Fashions Follies and Society's Abominations* (Chicago: Standard Publishing Co., 1889), pp. 99-100, 108.

⁴¹It was drawn up "by order of the Presbytery of Utah, April 8, 1897. Endorsed by the Congregational Association of Utah, October 14, 1897. Endorsed by the Baptist Association of Utah, Sept. 7, 1898." League for Social Service (New York City), *Ten Reasons Why Christians Cannot Fellowship the Mormon Church* (New York: 105 E. 22 St., 1898).

⁴²*Ibid.*, p. 3. Italics ours.

⁴³*Ibid.*, pp. 3-8.

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, p. 14. The expression "God-Man" would shock a Moslem or Jew quite as much as any Mormon teaching about God shocked these liberal Protestants!

⁴⁵S. Laing, *Modern Science and Modern Thought* (London: Chapman & Hall Ltd., 1898), p. 231.



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Just Another

by Hugh Nibley Contributing Editor

1860's

While American passions had full play in other directions in the 1860's, England carried on the great tradition of anti-Mormon raillery. "Although it is not generally a Christian duty to speak ill of anyone, especially after he has gone to answer for himself before his Judge," wrote a venerable vicar in a long dissertation on Joseph Smith, "yet in the case of a deceiver, whose lying doctrines have perverted thousands from the right way, the ordinary course of duty is reversed."³³ For Smith alone the otherwise universal law of Christian charity is suspended. Another English divine describes Mormonism as "the great masterpiece of Satan, in these last days, embracing every possible principle of antagonism to the word of God, whilst unblushingly parading itself as the purest form of Christianity extant."³⁴ Yet the same man "thoroughly endorses" the statement of an American clergyman: "I have never yet conversed with a lay Mormon whom I believed to be a hypocrite. Their whole soul seems launched upon their infatuation, and for it they readily leave home and property. . . . What churchmen and churchwomen such people would make—humble although they are—if they were correctly informed and judiciously controlled!"³⁴

1870's

"The Mormons are beginning to realize," C. H. Brigham reported in 1870, "that their system has no sympathy outside of their own community, that the civilized world is against them, and that they are classed with Pariahs and lepers. . . . The gracious doctor who praises them from their platform holds them up to scorn and horror in the pages of his book."³⁵ As if the Mormons had not had reason before 1870 to know that! The "Mormon Problem"

according to this authority, is the challenge of the question: "What is to become of this people? . . . Can this small body of insolent religionists defy much longer the will and force of the American nation? Can this blot on the civilization of the nineteenth century be longer tolerated?"³⁵

An interesting editorial in *Scribner's*, 1877, noted that the treatment of the Mormons "is the *sole* apparent exception to the American rule of universal toleration. . . . The only church born in the country, with American prophets and apostles . . . has passed through what its own historians call 'ten general persecutions.'

"Here is a suggestive record: The Latter Day Saints have settled in twelve different places in the United States, and have invariably become embroiled with their neighbors unless the latter abandoned the vicinity *en masse*. In New York, while the church was yet confined to two families, they kept three townships in an uproar with quarrels and lawsuits, and sixty neighbors of the Prophet united in a deposition that they would not believe him or any of his party on oath."

Here there can be no question of the threat of growing political or economic power. Polygamy? our editor asks: "But the record excludes that idea; the Mormons had more trouble with the world before they adopted polygamy than since." At a loss for an explanation, he must seek it in "something peculiar to Mormonism that takes it out of the sphere of religion."³⁶ Here he entirely forgets that as the persecution was uniform, so the explanation for it is uniform in every decade. Economic, political, social, and geographical circumstances changed rapidly, but the attacks did not change—the two unchanging factors in the picture are the persecutions and the religious teaching of the Mormons, and the persecution is always explicitly leveled at the teaching.

Book?

PART TWO

1880's

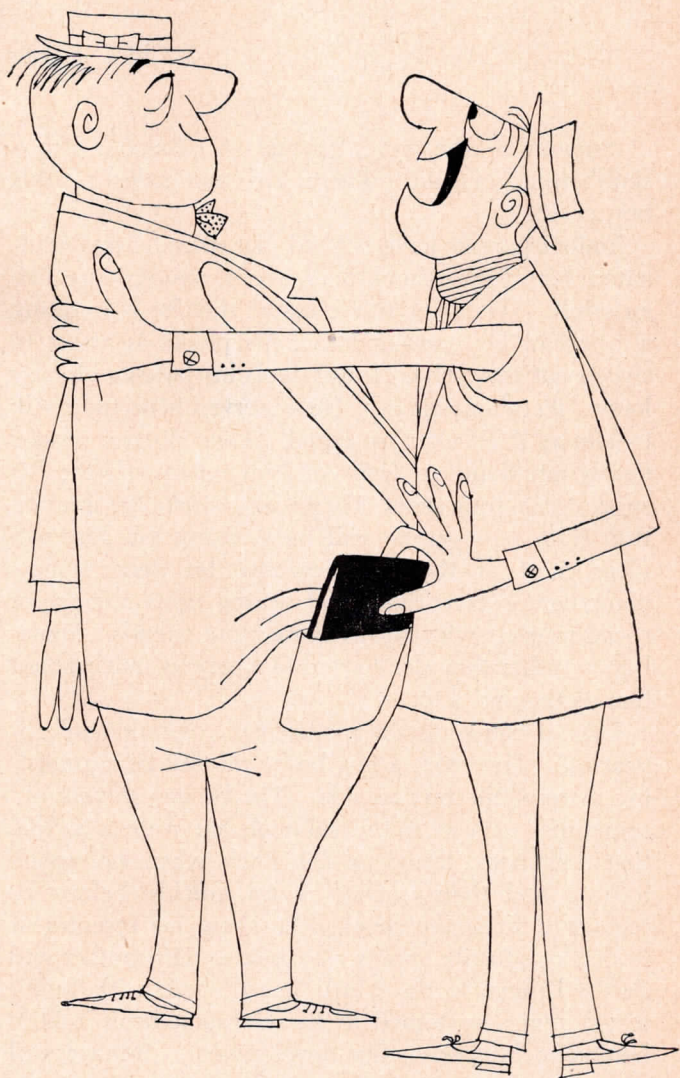
The "gracious doctor" referred to above was T. deWitt Talmage, whose sermons, delivered from his huge Brooklyn Tabernacle were the most widely syndicated in the country. When deWitt Talmage spoke, all America listened and approved. And he called for nothing less than an extermination of the Mormons:

"O good people of the United States . . . I have to tell you that unless we destroy Mormonism, Mormonism will destroy us. . . . Every day as a nation we consent to Mormonism we are defying the hail and the lightning . . . and the earthquake of an incensed God."

It made no difference that the Mormons seemed to be very nice people—"I never addressed a more genial audience in my life . . ."—the whole thing had to go, if necessary "by howitzer and bombshell, and bullets and cannon-ball. If a gang of thieves should squat on a territory and make thievery a religion how long would the United States government stand for it?"³⁷

All through the eighties eminent ministers echoed these sentiments. Mormonism was "an evil, peculiar, enormous, and prophetic of untold disaster. . . ."³⁸ "It is acknowledged to be the Great Modern Abomination, the most pernicious heresy of this century. . . . Throughout the whole land it is universally despised and execrated; and if popular odium could extinguish it, it would speedily be sunk in the slimy depths of the Great Salt Lake."³⁹ In 1889 the Reverend J. P. Newman meditated and commented on the impossibility of ever assimilating the Mormons into civilized society.

"We prophesied that it would be short-lived; we esteemed it as a standing joke. . . . Then it was said that the evil would (Continued on page 501)



The genial and forced camaraderie of some of the present-day critics of Mormonism is that of the man who finds it easier to pick your pocket by affectionately locking arms with you than by hitting you over the head.

Just Another Book?

(Continued) succumb under the march of civilization. . . . They said the locomotive would sound the death-knell of Mormonism, that it would be the trump of its doom. They said, 'Complete the railway from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and this relic of barbarism will disappear.' Whereas the neigh of the iron horse has been the bugle of advance for Mormonism. . . . Then it was foretold that Mormonism was an anomaly, out of accord with the spirit of the age; that its perpetuity was an impossibility; that it would wither under the genius of our institutions; that the very spirit of the age would rise in its majesty and overshadow the evil; whereas, this evil genius has remained and hurled defiance at the genius of our civilization. . . . They said, 'Let Congress legislate . . . and before the authority of the law the evil would disappear' . . . The people said, 'Let this Arch-Mormon die! . . . let that man Brigham Young die, and Mormonism will cease!'"⁴⁰

Newman's own solution for the problem was simple, direct, and unconstitutional: "Disfranchise the Mormon, not merely the polygamist, but the Mormon. . . ." ⁴⁰ The thought of treating any other religious body in such a way would have filled the good man with horror, but the rules don't count where Mormons are concerned.

1890's

In 1898 the League for Social Service published a declaration with the title, *Ten Reasons Why Christians Cannot Fellowship the Mormon Church*. The list of officers of the league, including such eminent names as those of Washington Choate, Jane Addams, Margaret Sangster, the Reverend Edward Everett Hale, reads like a roster of American liberalism. Those good people did not originate the document but, generously and impulsively sponsoring any cause put before them as liberal, had approved it on recommendation by the leading churches.⁴¹ So here we are as near as we can get to an official statement of why Mormons are not Christians:

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"There is, however, a line of demarcation that Christians cannot overlook, that they cannot disregard. . . . The question is *purely* a religious question. It goes to the very root of Christian belief and duty."⁴²

So the objection to the Mormons is not social, economic, political, or moral, after all, but *purely religious*. The "Mormon Problem" is simply, "Why cannot Christians walk in fellowship with Mormons, in religion, as they do with each other?" The first objection is that the Mormons claim that they alone have the true gospel, the second that "their so-called revelations of the present are

put on the same level with the Bible," the third that they regard "Joseph Smith as a prophet of God," the fourth that they believe "that authority to officiate in the gospel is vested only in the said priesthood . . . that it is invested with the very power of God himself," the fifth that "the Mormon church teaches a doctrine of God that is antagonistic to the Scriptures, dishonoring to the Divine Being and debasing to man."⁴³ Note these objections to the Mormons are all about what they *believe*, and not what they have done; and that these beliefs are accurately described as "purely religious" ones. These beliefs alone set them off completely from all the

"Never make life smaller"

Richard L. Evans



We have talked before of the fact that there is nothing we ever do that fails to have its effect on others. People sometimes say that their lives are their own, and that what they do shouldn't concern anyone else. But everything, in fact, sooner or

later does concern someone else. When anyone ignores the laws of health, for example, and becomes ill, others have to care for him. When anyone flaunts or forgets the laws of safety and is injured, others have to care for him. No one can hurt himself without hurting others also. What hurts us does hurt others. What affects us does affect others. Furthermore, we have received so much from others,* present and past, that we have an obligation to work, to produce, to contribute to the health, to the happiness, to the enrichment of the world. And if we acquire habits, or do those things, or take unto ourselves that which would impair our own output, that which would impair our own capacity or our own powers, we are somehow robbing ourselves and others also—for the world is the product of what everyone has done or made or added to it or taken from it, plus all that the Lord God has given. And it is sobering to consider how much of the time and effort and teaching and thinking and working of others has gone into the making of each of us, including our environment and opportunities. A thoughtful teacher thus pleaded with his pupils: "Never make life smaller"¹—not in any dimension. Don't destroy, but contribute. Don't impair your own powers, or impair the powers or property or possibilities of others. Remember the parable of the talents: It isn't enough just to hold on to what we have—or just to let habits keep their hold on us—or to let life become less. We have an obligation to do, to develop, to work, to produce, to think, to repent, to improve. We shall all be judged by what we do or fail to do with our time and our talents and with all that is ours. And we owe ourselves and all others, and the Lord God who gave us life, an obligation to improve ourselves and our environment—and others also—and never let life become less.*

¹Dr. Henry Beston.
*Revised.

"The Spoken Word," from Temple Square presented over KSL and the Columbia Broadcasting System, April 12, 1959. Copyright 1959.

Christian world. After adding five more intolerable beliefs to the list—which, however, unlike the first five, are incorrectly presented and not very convincing—the indictment reaches its ringing conclusion:

“Nothing in Common

“With such a so-called church and system of doctrine, Christians can have nothing in common but the need of the great salvation of the God-Man, Christ Jesus.”⁴⁴

“It is a very curious and remarkable fact,” wrote the eminent British scientist, S. Laing, in 1898, “that while so many highly intellectual attempts have been made in vain in modern times to found new sects and religions, the only one which has had any real success is that which is based on the most gross and vulgar imposture—Mormonism.”⁴⁵

FOOTNOTES

⁴⁰H. Caswall, in W. S. Parrott, *The Vail Uplifted* (London: 1865), p. 19: “I should be showing great want of charity to my countrymen, if I willingly allowed them to think well of the ‘Latter-day’ doctrine.”

⁴¹*Ibid.*, p. 33, 39, quoting Rev. O. C. Duke of Omaha.

⁴²C. H. Brigham, “The Mormon Problem,” in *Old and New*, May 1870, pp. 638f, 629.

⁴³Editorial, “The Mormon Theocracy,” in *Scribner’s*, July, 1877, pp. 391-2.

⁴⁴T. deWitt Talmage, *The Brooklyn Tabernacle, A Collection of 104 Sermons* (N.Y.: Funk & Wagnalls, 1884), pp. 55-56. In an earlier sermon, pp. 36-37, Talmage labors to implicate the Mormons in the assassination of President Garfield.

⁴⁵F. A. Noble, D. D., *The Mormon Iniquity* (Chicago: Jameson & Morse, 1884), p. 3.

⁴⁶R. W. Beers, *The Mormon Puzzle and How to Solve It* (New York, Chicago: Funk & Wagnalls, 1887) p. 17, reluctantly adding: “But thus far it has successfully withstood even the fiercest opposition.”

⁴⁷J. P. Newman, D. D., “The Mormon Question,” in the Rt. Rev. S. Fallows, *Hot Shot fired at Fashions Follies and Society’s Abominations* (Chicago: Standard Publishing Co., 1889), pp. 99-100, 108.

⁴⁸“It was drawn up ‘by order of the Presbytery of Utah, April 8, 1897. Endorsed by the Congregational Association of Utah, October 14, 1897. Endorsed by the Baptist Association of Utah, Sept. 7, 1898.” League for Social Service (New York City), *Ten Reasons Why Christians Cannot Fellowship the Mormon Church* (New York: 105 E. 22 St., 1898).

⁴⁹*Ibid.*, p. 3. Italics ours.

⁵⁰*Ibid.*, pp. 3-8.

⁵¹*Ibid.*, p. 14. The expression “God-Man” would shock a Moslem or Jew quite as much as any Mormon teaching about God shocked these liberal Protestants!

⁵²S. Laing, *Modern Science and Modern Thought* (London: Chapman & Hall Ltd., 1898), p. 231.



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Part Two

Just Another Book

Concluding last month's chapter
by Hugh Nibley

1900's

The verdict of a much-reprinted book appearing first in 1900 is that "For *climacteric comicality* Mormonism should be awarded the palm. Its romancing is refreshing in its very audaciousness. Jules Verne dreaming is here eclipsed; Baron Munchausen marvels seem commonplace. Of absurdities Pelions are piled upon Ossas, but the pile rises ever higher.



Untruth was never more picturesque. From first to last the history of this cult is dramatic and spectacular. One feels that he has stumbled upon a scene in the Arabian Nights, rather than upon a sober chapter of real religion."⁴⁶

An investigator in 1906 found that all the peculiarities of the Mormons "center in and are an outgrowth of their strange religious beliefs," beliefs which he can only describe as "grotesque and monstrous," yet which "at the same time have won a following unsurpassed in devotion."⁴⁷ If the Mormons could only cure themselves of their bizarre taste for the grotesque and monstrous, and purge their religion "of its gross errors of doctrine," all would be well.⁴⁸ "It seems almost beyond belief," one scholar wrote in 1919, "that such a hybrid of fraud and superstition as Mormonism could be brought forth by the most enlightened age of the world . . . a terrible canker has attacked the heart of Christianity at home. . . ." ⁴⁹ Mormonism "may hope to survive," writes a typical representative of the new "liberal" school, "only if it is brave enough to jettison its out-of-date creed and face the future boldly,

shorn of its absurdities and blasphemies. . . . That the Mormon Church will become the force predicted for it by its leaders, early and present-day, is impossible. That its doctrine could attract intellectual men is an insult to intellect. That it can continue to exist as a religious force is to expect too much."⁵⁰

"We talk much about 'respecting' this or that person's religion," wrote G. K. Chesterton in an essay on the Mormons, "but the way to respect a religion is to treat it as a religion: to ask what are its tenets and what are their consequences." For Chesterton: "The basic Mormon belief is one that comes out of the morning of the earth, from the most primitive and even infantile attitude," namely the idea regarding God, "not that He was materialized once, as all Christians believe . . . but that He was materially embodied from all time; that he has a local habitation as well as a name." This he calls a "barbaric but violently vivid conception," and bids us view the Mormons as "a number of dull, earnest, ignorant, black-coated men with chimney-pot hats, chin beards or mutton-chop whiskers, [who] managed to reproduce in their own souls

The Grab Bag

by Hugh Nibley

How does the Book of Mormon critic of today go about his work? His point of departure is an article of faith: "Painstaking research can uncover the source of all his [Joseph Smith's] ideas."¹ Actually this statement of Mrs. Brodie's is nonsense, since no research can ever uncover the indisputable source of any man's ideas, let alone those of a man whose world, with all the myriad sights and sounds that *might* conceivably have given him those ideas, has passed away over a century ago. Armed with this naive credo and a determination to "uncover" something, the critic looks about him for something he has read or heard that reminds him of something in the Book of Mormon, and as soon as he has found it announces to the

world that he has at last discovered the indubitable source of the Book of Mormon.

Silly as it sounds, this is exactly how the experts operate.² They begin by declaring the book a typical product of its times; but if it is typical, it must be of a type—there must be other books like it. Where were they? Search as they would, the scholars could find nothing closer to the Book of Mormon than, of all things, the Koran, a writing about as far from Smith's time, place, and culture as it is possible to get.³ The most casual reading will show, moreover, that it would be hard to name two writings less alike than those two. Many Moslems, for example, have rejected the popular nineteenth *sura* (chapter) of the

the richness and peril of an ancient Oriental experience."⁵¹

It is a gaudy picture, and a phony one, but it leaves us in no doubt as to how a top-flight intellectual of the 1920's classified the Mormons: the only parallel Chesterton can think of is not that of the ancient Hebrews but of his own weird idea of them.⁵² It was at least an improvement on the psychic deductions of Theodore Schroeder who a few years before had found the whole key to Mormonism in the doctrine of a heaven "whose greatest and only advertised bliss will be intensified animalism, prolonged through eternity."⁵³

In all this it would be hard to tell who rates the Mormons lower, the Liberals or the Fundamentalists. The cry of the latter is that "from first to last there is not one teaching peculiar to Mormonism which is not contrary to the Bible and to evangelical Christianity." Its "ghastly ideas" of a God who has a body, the necessity of good works for salvation, etc., "cannot but be viewed with abhorrence by all true Christians. . . . We ought to care greatly that such evil beliefs are even held by the Mormons themselves. . . ."⁵⁴ There

should be a limit to freedom of religion, and Mormonism is it. A very recent "study" deplors the fact that "Mormons are generally considered by many to be 'Fundamentalists,'" since nothing could be greater than the gap between the two: "Mormons deny the Scriptural doctrine of the Trinity and the Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. Mormonism denies the authority of the Bible. . . . Mormon theology denies the virgin birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. . . ."⁵⁵ Such conclusions may be absurd, but they make it clear enough that the "Fundamentalists" are as determined as anyone else to have no part of the Mormons.

Anyone familiar enough with the febrile literature from which we have been quoting to attempt writing his own book on the Mormons should recognize that nothing is more characteristic than the insistence of the critics on every side, that the Mormons are not like any other Christians or like any other people in the Western world. They may be compared with primitive Christians by freethinkers, or with primitive Hebrews or Moslems by people who have only the vaguest homemade conception of what the latter might

have been like, but all are agreed that their presence in our western civilization is completely and incredibly incongruous.

Critics may be permitted at this late date to try their hand at winning friends and influencing people by telling the Mormons of today that they are just ordinary folk with an ordinary church. But to say that such was also the case in the days of Joseph Smith and Brigham Young is neither honest nor sporting. The genial and forced camaraderie of some of the present-day critics of Mormonism is that of the man who finds it easier to pick your pocket by affectionately locking arms with you than by hitting you over the head. The new humane approach is simply an obvious maneuver to rob the Church of a glorious history and to play down every remarkable circumstance of its origin. When it reaches the point of being told that while the Book of Mormon may seem very strange to *us*, to the *contemporaries* of Joseph Smith it "would scarcely seem fanciful, possibly not even novel," it is high time to protest. For even the most superficial acquaintance with the literature will show (Continued on page 565)

Koran because it contains in the story of Joseph and his brethren an episode of human history: ". . . it is entirely worldly history [they protest], and it is unthinkable that this physical history should ever be part of the holy Book revealed by God."⁴ The reader can soon convince himself that the Koran really is remarkably innocent of "physical history," while the Book of Mormon purports to contain whole books of it. That alone should indicate how much the two books have in common.

But while some saw in Smith "another Mohammed preparing another *Koran*,"⁵ others found in his work typical "*Swedenborgian* illusions,"⁶ a writer in Hastings' *Encyclopedia* even discovering in the Book of

Mormon "references to Swedenborgianism with its three heavens." The fact that there is no such doctrine mentioned in the book does not deter this investigator, who finds in the same source traces of "the *Washingtonian* movement for total abstinence."⁷ Though religious men in every age have abstained from strong waters, yet the Mormons can only have got the Word of Wisdom (*not* mentioned in the Book of Mormon!) from the Washingtonians, because they happened to be active at the time. These two instances illustrate how the critics operate.

"The theological ideas of the Book of Mormon," according to J. H. Snowden, "are also easily traced to their sources . . . the Nephites were *Old School*



So Joachim or Anselm or Ethan Smith or Rabelais or somebody takes a stick and draws a circle in the sand, and forthwith the adroit and wily Joseph turns out a beautifully running mechanism that tells perfect time.

*Presbyterians.*⁸ Since that is such an easy and obvious conclusion, it is strange that Mr. John Hyde in a very thorough attack on the Book of Mormon comes to the opposite conclusion, that in the book "Calvinism repels him [Smith], and he opposes it," while actually "Universalism affects his sympathies."⁹ Yet E. D. Howe insists that Universalism is not the hero but the villain of the book,¹⁰ which shows strong influence of the seventeenth century *French Mystics*.¹¹ According to the same authority, in the Book of Mormon "the Arian doctrine is denied"; yet the Rev. H. Mattison insists that the book is simply "*Modern Arianism*."¹² Others find that "*Methodism* abounds in the Book of Mormon" and can flatly declare: "The Mormons are Wesleyans."¹³ But Charles Francis Adams, who visited Joseph Smith in 1844, just as flatly declares, "His theological system is very nearly

Christian Unitarianism."¹⁴ Today, however, Mr. Davis tells us that "it opposed deism, evangelism, and the Arminianism of Methodists and Unitarians alike."¹⁵ Mr. Beers and others see in the Book of Mormon a rehash of *Millerism*, ignoring the fact that "Miller . . . began his lectures in 1831," after the book was well on its way.¹⁶ Dr. Bierderwolk insists that the new Church was nothing but a *Baptist* community,¹⁷ while the Baptists themselves insist that the Mormons were *Campbellites*, though Campbell for his part classed them with the first *Quakers*.¹⁸ At the other extreme scholars not only charge Smith with "toying with *Catholicism*,"¹⁹ but even insist that "the Church of the Latter-Day Saints . . . is in connection with the Church of Rome, and is even daughter to that great scarlet whore of Babylon."²⁰ With equal confidence others accuse the Book of Mormon of being an anti-

Catholic book.²¹ "The doctrine of the book is wholeheartedly and completely *Arminian*,"²² according to Dr. O'Dea, while Davis counters by describing Mormonism as the antithesis of Arminianism, especially in its rejection of "the omnipresent, inscrutable, 'Buddhistic' God of modern religions."²³ A German encyclopedia, the *Grosse Brockhaus*, see predominant *Gnostic* elements in both Mormonism and the Book of Mormon,²⁴ while a learned journal of fifty years ago found their doctrine "formed on *Buddhistic* principles."²⁵ The astute Gunnison thought Mormonism was strongly influenced by the teachings of the *Transcendentalists* and that Joseph Smith "and his followers have fallen in with the spiritual philosophy of the day, and added the doctrine of affinities of minds and sympathy of souls."²⁶ Others argued that the Book of Mormon "... must have been written by an *atheist*," as a sort of practical joke, the work of "a fearless infidel" undertaken as "... a ridicule upon the Holy Bible."²⁷ With the charges of atheism went those of "*Deism, Owenism, Socialism*..."²⁸ Chesterton sees the Mormon Church "... soaking itself solely in the Hebrew Scriptures."²⁹

"Mormonism borrowed most of its ideas from the 'Campbellite,' or *Disciples of Christ Church*," according to the new Arbaugh, who proceeds to describe the basic Campbellite doctrines in a way that makes it clear that nothing could be less like Mormonism.³⁰ Certainly none was better qualified to speak for Campbellism than the elder Campbell, who in denouncing "—the infernal Book of Mormon—" stated as the basic proposition of his own faith "—the all-sufficiency and alone-sufficiency of the . . . Bible," which makes the Book of Mormon the embodied antithesis of Campbellism.³¹ The Campbellites accused the Baptists of trying to fob off Mormonism on them and the latter returned the charge.³² This is an amusing game of hot potato that the sects played among themselves, tossing the Book of Mormon at each other as a deadly missile. It is still going on, for in 1956 a Jesuit writer described the "whole body of new revelation as derived from the Reformation principle of religious freedom carried to the extreme." Mr. Davis on the contrary informs us that the Mormons were actually "opposed to individualism of any kind."³³ And while one school of thought sees in the new religion "a reaction against stern New England Calvinism," the same Mr. Davis assures us that the very opposite was the case: it was rather a reaction against "the rising tide of liberalism and individualism."³⁴

This business of capitalizing on chance resemblances of detail to explain the Book of Mormon reaches the consummation of absurdity in the recent revival of the theory that the book was simply a steal from the writings of a thirteenth century monk, the Abbot

Joachim of Flora, because Joachim uses the expression "... the everlasting Gospel, . . ." which is found in the Bible but *not* in the Book of Mormon!³⁵ It seems that the Book of Mormon incorporates "... many of the almost forgotten tales of the monk Cyril and the Abbot Joachim, . . ."³⁶ though Smith could only have found out about them from Mosheim, whose work did not appear in English until 1839, who quotes none of the "forgotten tales" in his unflattering paragraph on Joachim, who never mentions Cyril.³⁷

One expert confidently assures us that it was the great French satirist Rabelais who inspired the Book of Mormon, for in his *Gargantua* Rabelais tells of "... a man digging in the earth, and suddenly alighting upon a brazen tomb, in which were deposited nine gold flagons, upon which were engraved innumerable Egyptian hieroglyphics, and with them a large pair of golden spectacles, by the employ of which the said man was enabled to decipher the said mysterious characters. With this fancy of the Frenchman Smith had become acquainted; and being full of craft and cunning, at once appropriated it to his deceptive purposes, and out of it concocted the story of his golden bible and spectacles."³⁸

Others have pointed to suspicious doctrinal parallels between the Book of Mormon and the writings of St. Anselm—though they are unwilling to read the one and unable to read the other. Even so these scholars have missed the really striking resemblance between Joseph Smith and Anselm for the latter "as a simple, innocent boy" firmly believed and "publicly asserted before others" that he had climbed the mountains near his home one day and seen God face to face.³⁹ Isn't that Joseph Smith all over?

If you want parallels we can give you dozens of them. In the approach to the Book of Mormon we quoted a long passage from Solon of Athens that might have come right out of the Book of Mormon—why not take that as proof positive that the book is simply a steal from the Greeks?—the evidence is just as good as any other.⁴⁰ The old cycle, prosperity, pride, sin, and destruction is found again and again in Greek and other literature, ancient and modern; there is no need for Dr. O'Dea to brand it Arminianism when it occurs in the Book of Mormon—it would be just as accurate to label it by any of a dozen other names.

The Book of Mormon critics have made an art of explaining a very big whole by a very small part. The game is to look for some mysterious person or document from which Joseph Smith might have got the few simple and obvious ideas and then cry triumphantly, "At last we have it! Now we know where the Book of Mormon came from!"

"If someone will only (Continued on page 546)

medan sensualism, and the fanaticism of the *early church*; and its good and evil . . . with the convenient idea of transmigration of souls, from the *Persian*.”⁴¹ It is all as easy as that—the student “will not fail to remark” these parallels. Why a feeling of dependence on God must come from the Brahmins instead of Schleiermacher, or what resemblance there is between Gnostic aeons and Mormon dispensations, or why anthropomorphism is identical with sensualism, or when and where any Mormon has ever preached trans-

BOY AND GIRL

by Ruby Zagoren

Until a boy is just past two
He likes to cuddle close to you.

A girl, no matter what her years,
Will try to kiss away your tears;

When she has scarcely learned to
walk
There is some mother in her talk.

migration of souls, our authority does not explain. An eminent encyclopedia of religion can tell us that in the Book of Mormon “Calvinism, Universalism, Methodism, chiliasm, Catholicism, deism, and free masonry are discussed, . . . not by name,” of course, but “in a manner that strikingly corresponds to Smith’s relations to these systems,” thereby proving the Book of Mormon a fraud. But just where will one find out exactly what Smith’s “relations to these systems” were, in order to make the “striking” comparison?

Principles and . . . personal peace

Richard L. Evans

The Grab Bag

(Continued) show me how to draw a circle,” cries the youthful Joseph Smith, “I will make you a fine Swiss watch!” So Joachim or Anselm or Ethan Smith or Rabelais or somebody takes a stick and draws a circle in the sand, and forthwith the adroit and wily Joseph turns out a beautifully running mechanism that tells perfect time!

This is not an exaggeration. The Book of Mormon in structure and design is every bit as complicated, involved, and ingenious as the works of a Swiss watch, and withal just as smoothly running. With no model to follow and no instruction of any kind (Where was the model? Who could instruct?) the writer of that book brought together thousands of ideas and events and knit them together in a most marvelous unity. Yet the critics like to think they have explained the Book of Mormon completely if they can just discover where Joseph Smith *might* have got one of his ideas or expressions!

It does not relieve the absurdity of the situation very much to point to more than one possible source for the Book of Mormon. “The ecclesiastical student will not fail to remark that Mormonism is an eclectic religious philosophy, drawn from *Brahmin mysticism*—the dependence of God, the *Platonic* and *Gnostic* notion of Eons . . . Moham-



Some recent weeks ago we talked of being in the world, but not of it, and of the impossibility of pleasing all people. And now currently we recall this quotation accredited to a significant source: “I cannot give you the formula for success, but I can give you the formula for failure—try to please everybody.”¹ The fact is that people of principle cannot please all people—nor in fact can people without principle. And there is the further fact that people cannot abandon principles and live their lives in peace. “Nothing can bring you peace but the triumph of principles,”² said Emerson. We all have to decide on what principles we will make our decisions, on what principles we will live our lives. Every person has to decide sooner or later, and the sooner he decides the simpler will be his decisions. And to those who are yet young this reminder comes out of the experience of the past: “The principles now implanted in thy bosom will grow, and one day reach maturity; and in that maturity thou wilt find thy heaven or thy hell.”³ Horace Mann said it in these sentences: “In vain do they talk of happiness who never subdued an impulse in obedience to a principle. He who never sacrificed a present to a future good, or a personal to a general one, can speak of happiness only as the blind do of colors.”⁴ “Expedients are for the hour; principles for the ages.”⁵ And the whole question of right or wrong is involved in a choice between the two. There must be standards that can be counted on—or there isn’t anything that anyone can count on. And the sooner in life we learn to live by principles, the sooner we shall have that peace of which Emerson spoke—the peace that comes with the triumph of principles, with the living of law, with the keeping of commandments, with the setting aside of a selfish and indulgent self.

¹Motto attributed to the late Herbert Bayard Swope.

²Emerson, *Self Reliance*.

³David Thomas.

⁴Horace Mann.

⁵Henry Ward Beecher.

“The Spoken Word,” from Temple Square presented over KSL and the Columbia Broadcasting System, April 26, 1959. Copyright 1959.

Why, in the Book of Mormon, naturally, since there is no other source!

Mr. Van Pelt informs us that in the Book of Mormon "there are passages also which betray a dependence upon other books, such as the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Methodist Discipline."⁴³ Since the passages in question are quite short, one wonders why our authority does not produce them; the reason for the omission is quite plain: the passages actually "betray a resemblance" no greater than any two texts chosen at random on the same subject would betray.⁴⁴ Yet another religious encyclopedia, taking up where the Schaff-Herzog leaves off, informs an unsuspecting world that "... the speech of Nephi [which speech?] contains quotations from the Westminster Confession of Faith."⁴⁵ With such a fine start a contemporary treatise takes up the cry: "Nephi who purports to be a pre-Christian prophet, uses *verbatim* quotations from the 17th Century Westminster Confession of Faith."⁴⁶

Finally Father Rumble assures us that "Mormon managed . . . to engrave on his golden plates quotations word for word from the Westminster Confessions."⁴⁷ What started out as passages that "betray a dependence" of one text on another—a purely subjective judgment—finally emerge after passing from hand to hand with no checking of original sources, as nothing less than word for word quotations. This is a highly characteristic procedure in Book of Mormon criticism, converting cautious speculation to damning certitude by the simple process of whispering from ear to ear.

To prove that Campbellite teaching "prevades the Mormon Bible," one critic has only to point out that in both "baptism was important . . . and expectation of the coming and millennial reign of Christ, are unequivocally reproduced."⁴⁸ Of course these things have been basic in Jewish and Christian eschatology from the beginning—but Joseph Smith could only have got them from the Campbellites, because this particular writer wants it that way. One seminarist has sought to demonstrate that "In its theological position and coloring the Book of Mormon is a volume of Disciple theology." Only to support his thesis he must argue that the book underwent "two several redactions" [sic]

LEFT-OVER PROBLEM

by Ida M. Pardue

Some housewives are very shrewd

At using up those bits of food.

In feeding six—I find it rough

Just to cook and serve enough.

which cleverly conceal the fact.⁴⁹ Mormons have no right to resent such tricks, however, since the Bible is treated with the same perfect liberty by the same critics: "Every scholar goes his own way and according to his private predilection chooses what is genuine and what is secondary in the book."⁵⁰ "Private predilection" is the key to the grab-bag method.

FOOTNOTES

¹See F. M. Brodie, *No Man Knows My History*, pp. 68-70.

²The method is discussed by S. Zeitlin, in *Jewish Quarterly Review*, XLII (1952), who notes, p. 150: "One can always find for one's purpose ideas parallel with those in ancient writings," or modern.

³The parallel between Joseph Smith and Mohammed was frequently noted even by contemporaries of the Mormon prophet, writes Ed. Meyer, *Ursprung u. Geschichte der Mormonen* (Halle, 1912), p. 67. A recent reflection on this is worth quoting: it is G. B. Arbaugh's remark, in *Gods, Sex and Saints* (Augustana Press, 1957), p. 10, that Mormonism "in fundamental respects is more alien to Christianity than is Islam," i.e., modern Christianity is closer to Islam than Mormonism is. How true!

⁴I. Goldzieher, *Vorlesungen über den Islam* (Heidelberg, 1925), p. 194.

⁵T. W. Young, *Mormonism: Its Origin, Doctrines and Dangers* (Ann Arbor: Geo. Wahr, 1900), pp. 7-8.

⁶C. W. Ferguson, *The Confusion of Tongues, A Review of Modern Isms* (New York: Doran & Co., 1928), p. 369.

⁷Hastings *Encyclopedia of Religion & Ethics*, Vol. XI, p. 85.

⁸J. H. Snowden, *The Truth about Mormonism* (New York: Doran, 1926), p. 113.

⁹John Hyde, Jr., *Mormonism, Its Leaders and Designs* (New York: W. P. Ftridge, 1857), p. 281.

¹⁰E. D. Howe, *History of Mormonism* (Painesville: 1840), p. 70.

¹¹Howe, in *The Painesville Telegraph*, February 15, 1831 (Cit. F. Kirkham, *op. cit.*, II, 58.)

¹²Howe, *History*, p. 40; H. Mattison, *A Scriptural Defence of the Doctrine of the Trinity, or a Check to Modern Arianism*, etc. (New York: Huntington & Savage, 1851.)

¹³J. Hyde, *op. cit.*, p. 281. Editor of

Galaxy Magazine (New York), II (1866), p. 356: The *Encyclopedia Illustrada* in its article on Mormons, p. 1126 describes the Book of Mormon as a mixture of the Spaulding manuscripts "and Joseph Smith's fanatical Wesleyan ideas."

¹⁴Henry Adams, Jr., "Charles Francis Adams Visits the Mormons in 1844," in *Proceedings of the Mass. Historical Soc.*, LXVIII (Oct., 1944-May 1947) (Boston, 1952), p. 286.

¹⁵D. B. Davis, "The New England Origins of Mormonism," *New England Quarterly* XXVI (1953), p. 158.

¹⁶R. W. Beers, *The Mormon Puzzle and How to Solve It* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1887), p. 34: "Millerism in particular was attracting great attention at that time, and so they incorporated into the 'Book of Mormon' its leading tenets." The remark as to the date of Miller's teaching, which began "when the Mormon Church was only a year old," is from J. D. Kingsbury, *Mormonism* (New York: Congreg. Home Missionary Soc., No date), p. 6.

¹⁷W. E. Biederwolf, *Mormonism under the Searchlight* (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 1956), p. 3: "The first 2,000 converts came, nearly every one of them, out of the Baptist churches of Western Pennsylvania and Eastern Ohio." This is strictly untrue. *The Galaxy Magazine* article, *loc. cit.*, calls the Mormons "Wesleyan Baptists."

¹⁸A. Campbell, quoted in *Painesville Telegraph*, February 15, 1831; (Kirkham, II, 93).

¹⁹J. Remy, *Journey to Great Salt Lake City* (London, 1861), I, 231-2.

²⁰J. Theobald, *Mormonism Harpooned* (London: W. Horsell, 1855), p. 24.

²¹Thus F. M. Brodie, *op. cit.*, pp. 59-60.

²²T. F. O'Dea, *The Mormons* (Ithaca, 1956), p. 28.

²³Davis, *op. cit.*, p. 155.

²⁴*Der Grosse Brodtkhaus*, s. v. "Mormonen."

²⁵*Ed. in Knowledge, A Weekly Magazine* (New York), Vol. I, No. 9, Aug. 2, 1890, p. 186.

²⁶J. W. Gunnison, *The Mormons or Latter-Day Saints* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1856), p. 61.

²⁷E. D. Howe, *op. cit.*, pp. 54, 19. Actually a quote from David Marks. Cf. J. B. Turner, *Mormonism in All Ages*, p. 6: "Atheism and Romanism, its natural allies."

²⁸J. Theobald, *The Overthrow of Infidel Mormonism* (London: W. Horsell, 1850), p. 18. The charge was a common one.

²⁹G. K. Chesterton, *Uses of Adversity* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1921), p. 189.

³⁰Arbaugh, *op. cit.*, pp. 9-10.

³¹See F. Kirkham, *New Witness*, II, 89, 92, quoting the *Painesville Telegraph*, February 15, 1831. A Campbellite preacher refused to occupy a pulpit in which a Mormon had been invited to speak, protesting that "the man proclaimed another gospel written in another book." *Ibid.* II, 113. Campbellites do not believe there ever was a great apostasy, that the Holy Ghost was ever had among any but the original apostles, that re-baptism is necessary, that a definite organization is required for the church, etc., to name only a few of the fundamental differences listed by Campbell, *loc. cit.*

³²D. J. Burnett, a Campbellite leader's discussion of this (April 7, 1831) is given in Kirkham, *op. cit.*, II, 113.

³³J. A. Hardon, S. F., *The Protestant*

Churches of America (Westminster, Md.; Newman Press, 1956), p. 179. Davis, *op. cit.*, p. 163.

³⁸Davis, *op. cit.*, pp. 148, 154.

³⁹D. H. C. Bartlett, *The Mormons or, Latter-Day Saints, Whence Came They?* (Liverpool: J. A. Thompson & Co., 1911), p. 9.

⁴⁰A. M. Redwood, "Mormonism," in W. C. Irvine (Ed.), *Heresies Exposed* (New York: Loizeaux Brothers, 28th Printing, 1955), pp. 128, 130.

⁴¹Redwood suggests, *loc. cit.*, that Rigdon's copy (hypothetical) of Mosheim was used. J. von Mosheim in the 1839 ed. of his *Ecclesiastical History*, II, 312-314, describes the teaching of Joachim as "Franciscan mysticism," maintaining that after "two imperfect ages (or dispensations) . . . the true and eternal Gospel" was finally taught by St. Francis, who was the angel mentioned in Rev. 14:6, and "that the Gospel of Christ would be abrogated in the year 1260," etc. And this is supposed to be the source of the Book of Mormon!

⁴²W. S. Parrott, *The Veil Uplifted; or the Religious Conspirators of the Latter-Day Exposed* (Bristol: J. B. Taylor & Sons, 1865), p. 13.

⁴³Eadmer, *Vita Anselmi* in Migne, *Patrologiae Latinae*, Vol. 158: columns 50-51. The scholars in question refer to the doctrine of Atonement in Anselm's *Cur Deus homo?* oblivious of its remarkably feudalistic and chivalric quality.

⁴⁴H. Nibley, *An Approach to the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1957), pp. 42.

⁴⁵J. W. Gunnison, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

⁴⁶Hastings, *op. cit.*, XI, p. 85.

⁴⁷Schaff-Herzog *Encyclopedia*, VIII, p. 13.

⁴⁸The passage in the *Confession of Faith*, Ch. 32-33 reads: "After death the souls of the wicked are cast into hell, where they remain in torments, reserved to the judgment of the great day. In which day all persons shall appear before the tribunal of Christ, to give an account of their thoughts, words and deeds, and to receive according to that which they have done in the body, whether good or evil. The end of God's appointing this day is for the manifestation of His justice. For then shall the righteous go into everlasting life, but the wicked shall be cast into eternal torments." (Quoted in Riley,

Founder of Mormonism, p. 132.) It would be hard to find a more thoroughly standardized statement of Biblical teachings regarding the last judgment. The official Catholic teaching is the same (Bern. Bartmann, *Manuale de Teologia Dogmatica* (Alba: Edizioni Paoline, 1949), III, 430-433). Indeed this is one of the few Christian doctrines on which nearly all churches, as well as the Jewish doctors, agree, and it could hardly be otherwise, since it is all set forth so clearly in the scriptures. The last judgment is a favorite theme of churchmen, ancient, medieval, and modern, who never tire of repeating over and over again almost word for word the story quoted above. "If the speech of Nephi to his brethren be compared with the Westminster Standards," writes Riley (*loc. cit.*), "a close parallelism will be disclosed." But no closer than with a hundred other sources.

⁴⁹Hastings *Encyclopedia*, XI, p. 86.

⁵⁰H. Davies, *Christian Deviations* (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1954), p. 80.

⁵¹L. Rumble, *Mormons or Latter-Day Saints* (St. Paul, 1950), Tract, quoted in Kirkham, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 304-7.

⁵²H. C. Sheldon, *Fourfold Test of Mormonism* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1914) pp. 43-44. Cf. D. P. Kidder, *Mormonism & The Mormons* (1842), pp. 336f; J. Hyde, *op. cit.*, p. 281.

⁵³P. Whittitt, in *Concise Dictionary of Religious Knowledge* (New York: 1891), article on "Mormons."

⁵⁴W. A. Irwin, in *Vetus Testamentum*, III (1953), pp. 61f, speaking of research on Ezekiel.

TO MY MOTHER

by R. H. Grenville

Like treasures in a teakwood chest,
Rich souvenirs of life remain
In memory—all I could wrest
From love and longing, joy and pain.
There beauty is, and youth, and
spring;
Old dreams, like tatters of fine lace,
And one incomparable thing,
One flawless cameo—your face.

May Through December

(Continued) mittee, who with Mrs. Merlin Madsen originated the idea, with sons, granddaughters, and even great-great-grandsons in original musical guitar numbers, the aged couple sat complacently at home, in front of the coal and wood fire where the old stove merrily sent out its warm glow, listening to a recording from Governor George D. Clyde and Mayor Adiel Stewart of Salt Lake City. Fortunately, because of modern invention, the lovely voices of the "Singing Mothers," will continue to cheer them, and a TV motion picture can be shown on family occasions.

It was on December 11, 1878 that "Uncle Peter," then a tall handsome youth, went to St. George in advance, to welcome his blushing bride, who had been his childhood sweetheart since they were thirteen. The honeymoon took place in the "old surrey" when they "cousined" (which interpreted means staying with one's relatives along the way).

Finances were limited for the two "lovebirds" and always have been, but love made up for what was lacking in worldly goods.

The story of their struggle when he served in every capacity in Indianola, where he was bishop, dentist, undertaker, banker, carpenter, farmer, would take a book to tell.

In the audience December 11, 1958 was a gray-haired man, who reported that "Peter" said he practised painless dentistry; "it was more painless for him than for us, which I can testify to, but what could we have done without him, he even had dentist tools, but no certificate."

Mr. Petersen also served the Indians, for he was their friend, and practised President Young's admonition: "It is better to feed them than fight them."

It is small wonder that the little home, which has been added upon nearly every ten years since 1870 is so dear to them, and to all their living 253 blood descendants.

As one crosses the hearthstone,

for rock foundation still forms the foothold, and enters the warm kitchen, one finds a spirit of love. The walls are covered with family pictures; the old organ even helps show these off. Then one enters the parlor, where upon urgent persuasion the old violin was brought out and great-great-grandchildren danced to the strains of the "fiddler" who used to play for a dollar fifty cents a night or for vegetables.

This scribe's mind again reverted to Mr. Guest's poem which says:

"Ye've got t' sing an' dance fer years,
ye've got t' romp an' play,
An learn t' love the things ye have by
usin' 'em each day;
Even the roses 'round the porch
must blossom year by year
Afore they 'come a part o' ye, sug-
gestin' someone dear. . . .
Ye're got t' love each brick an' stone
from cellar up t' dome
It takes a heap o' livin' in a house
to make it home."

This certainly was true of the Petersen home; for their folk formed

Just Another Book

(Continued) that the Book of Mormon was as baffling, scandalizing, and hated a book in the first week of its appearance as it has ever been since. The idea that the Book of Mormon was simply a product of its time may be a necessary fiction to explain it but it is a fiction none the less. If they may be trusted in nothing else, the voluminous writings of the anti-Mormons stand as monumental evidence for one fact: that Mormonism and the Book of Mormon were in no way a product of the society in which they arose.

FOOTNOTES

⁴⁰Edgar E. Volk, *The Mormon Monster* (Chicago: F. H. Revell Co., 1900), quoting G. H. Combs. This is the "standard" Baptist work on Mormonism.

⁴¹G. A. Irving, "The Ways of the Mormons," *Outlook*, Dec. 26, 1906, p. 1064.

⁴²*Ibid.*, p. 1068.

⁴³Geo. Seibel, *The Mormon Saints* (Pittsburgh: Lessing Co., 1919), pp. 3-4, protesting that in this study "nought is set down in malice."

⁴⁴Stuart Martin, *The Mystery of Mormonism* (New York: Dutton & Co., 1920), pp. 307ff.

⁴⁵G. K. Chesterton, *The Uses of Adversity* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1921), pp. 184, 188, 189.

⁴⁶*Ibid.*, p. 189; "In other words, this strange sect, by soaking itself solely in the Hebrew Scriptures, had really managed to reproduce the atmosphere of those Scriptures as they are felt by Hebrews rather than by Christians." How does G. K. know how an "atmosphere" feels to another person?

⁴⁷Theodore Schroeder, "The Sex-Determinant in Mormon Theology," in *The Alienist and Neurologist*, May 1908, p. 12.

⁴⁸Rev. J. D. Nutting, *Why Care about Mormonism?* (Cleveland: Utah Gospel Mission, 1926), pp. 1-2 (Tract).

⁴⁹W. R. Martin, *The Rise of the Cults* (An Introduction to Non-Christian Cults), (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Pub. House, 1955), pp. 51-52.

Denmark Celebrates the American Independence Day

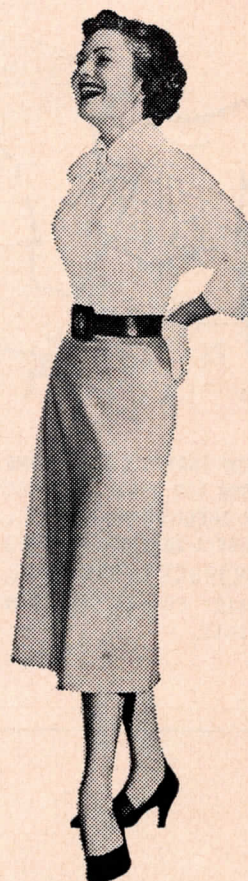
(Continued) have an atmosphere all their own—a unique and deep feeling due to the rare combination of emigrant loyalty to the new nation mingled with rejoicing in never quite forgotten memories of an earlier home. Thus do strong and good husbands and wives celebrate their new festival together with

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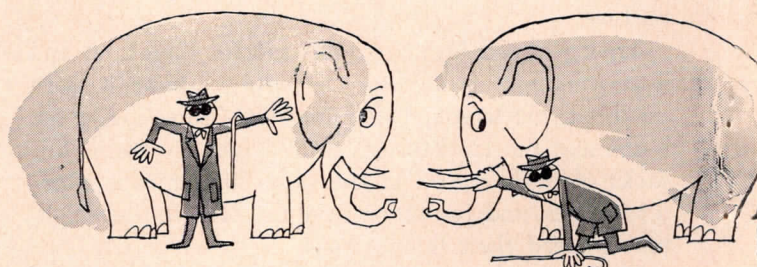
What Frontier, What Camp Meeting?

by Hugh Nibley
Contributing Editor

Nearly all present-day critics insist on an atmosphere of extreme religious hysteria, "a time of strange wild religious excitement," as essential to the production of the Book of Mormon.⁵¹ The heat and passion of the backwoods revival meeting provide the fiery crucible in which the book was forged.⁵² The frontier and the camp meeting between them set the stage for the Book of Mormon.

In spite of its respectable distant New England background, a recent and typical study reports, "Mormonism was unquestionably a product of the frontier, the strangest, most ambiguous, adventurous, and colorful of all the movements emanating from that turbulent region."⁵³ The latest investigators, however, have been seriously questioning this proposition. Mrs. Brodie has an easy time showing that western New York in Joseph Smith's time was not primitive frontier at all, but thoroughly settled and civilized. Yet after all that she remains true to the party line: the matter of the Book of Mormon "is drawn from the American frontier."⁵⁴ But others have now taken the magic out of that magic word and demythologized the myth of the frontier.

"Mormonism has usually been described as a frontier religion," writes Cross, and hastens to correct the error: "The church did not rise during the pioneering era of western New York. Its early recruits came

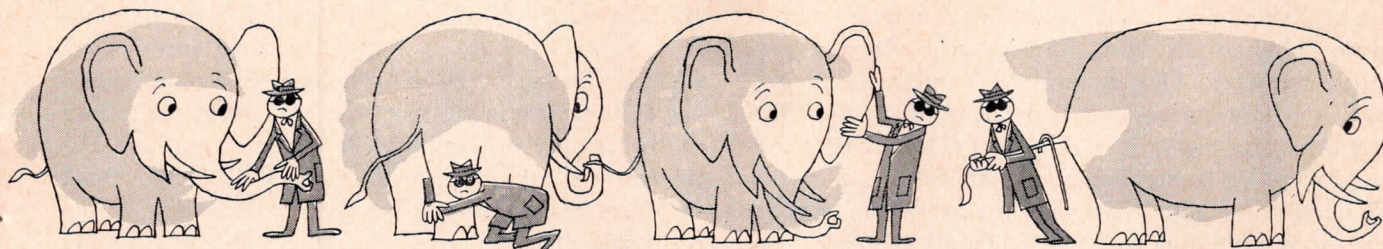


Why he's exactly like a wall

... more like a spear

from many sects, but invariably from the longest settled neighborhoods of the region. Joseph's peregrinations [in the early days] . . . were always eastward, not westward . . . the Church of the Saints was not a frontier phenomenon in origin." Even if you call Western New York the frontier, "its impact upon the region and period from which it sprung was extremely limited," Mormonism receiving its greatest strength from abroad.⁵⁵ Mr. Davis confirms this verdict: "But Upstate New York in the 1820's," he writes, "was not a frontier, . . . actually, the frontier was the place where Mormonism was nearly extinguished, while the final settlement came a thousand miles beyond the frontier."⁵⁶ The theory that Mormonism was a product of the frontier will not stand up to any examination.

Equally groundless is the common claim that the element of supernatural intervention in the Book of Mormon was a response to the stimulus of the camp meeting. "There are no detailed descriptions of the revivals in Palmyra and Manchester between 1822 and 1827, when they were at their wildest," writes Mrs. Brodie.⁵⁷ If she had really wanted to find out what the revivals were like at the time and place indicated, Mrs. Brodie could have had a quite adequate description from the autobiography of Nancy Towle, the traveling revivalist who operated in upper New York State between the years 1818 and 1831. From her we learn that the pathological camp meetings that Smith is supposed to have attended are a myth of the critics.⁵⁸ The preaching routine of the time was standardized and stereotyped: if Smith ever got his religion "from the mouth of the wilderness preacher," it is passing strange that his own sermons



... obviously some sort of snake ... no, round and tall like a tree ... he is exactly like a huge fan ... unmistakably like a rope

and writings do not remotely resemble theirs. Particularly repugnant to Miss Towle and her fellow evangelists is Smith's claim that "The gift has returned back again, as in former times, to illiterate fishermen." To which Miss Towle's reaction was: "Are you not ashamed, of such pretensions? You who are no more, than any ignorant ploughboy of our land! Oh! blush, at such abominations!"⁵⁹ So far were the revivalists from admitting any kind of inspiration. The idea of supernatural manifestations, which Joseph Smith is also supposed to have picked up from the revivals, was completely foreign to them. When she speaks of healing, Miss Nancy makes it perfectly clear that she means only the healing of the soul; when she rushes to the side of the sick and the dying, it is to exhort them to prepare to meet Jesus; when she speaks of death it is with genuine terror and despair;⁶⁰ she is constantly on guard against accepting for a moment as supernatural any of the many experiences and manifestations that she so often meets with in the course of her neurotic career.⁶¹ The revivalists had a definite technique and enthusiasm of their own, but it was of a totally different nature from that found among the Mormons, concerning which one observer noted ninety years ago:

"This enthusiasm is different in style and expression from the religious enthusiasm of many of the Christian sects. The excesses of revivals are not favored by the leaders for this practical Church. There is no frenzy in their prayers, and the worship in their Tabernacle is as decent as that of a Puritan Church. But under this quiet exterior, there is a spirit of fanatical devotion, deep and earnest. . . ."⁶²

Could one ask for plainer evidence that the Mormon

tradition is not that of the camp meeting and the frontier?

From Miss Towle we learn that the revival meetings of Joseph Smith's day were not held in fields, woods, and tents, but in regular churches and in good order.⁶³ It was only in the British Isles that Miss Towle herself preached in tents and in the open air; her message there was the same as in America, and met with the same response—there was nothing "frontier" about it.⁶⁴

Miss Towle has a good deal to say about the bitter revelries among the ministers, (" . . . rotten-hearted professors. . . . Oh! these men-appointed leaders, how despicable they often, to me, appear!") and so makes it clear that Joseph Smith was not exaggerating (as is often claimed) when he told of how meanly they treated him.⁶⁵ From Nancy Towle we can learn what the atmosphere of the revivals really was: Religious feeling ran high; rivalry was intense and sometimes bitter;⁶⁶ but the wild orgiastic rites of the camp meeting, of which we have heard so much, were totally foreign to her experience and to the world of the youthful Joseph Smith. Only twice in all her long experience did Miss Towle see anyone faint at a meeting—once in Cumberland and once in Nova Scotia—and the sight surprised and disturbed her: "Such a thing," she says, "never happens in the 'New England revivals.'"⁶⁷

As early as 1842 the *Methodist Quarterly Review* severely criticized an English writer for describing Mormonism as a frontier religion. The Mormon converts, the reviewer pointed out, came not from the frontier or even from America, but from that very "sound, enlightened, Protestant England" that the

British writer boasts about!⁶⁸ As to the Book of Mormon resembling American preaching, at revivals or anywhere else, nothing could be more absurd: "We now fear, that the reviewer [in England] knows just as little about what is said 'at meeting' as he does about the contents of the Book of Mormon, and this is almost nothing at all."⁶⁹

Dr. O'Dea Bloweth Where He Listeth:—Dr. O'Dea should have considered some of these things before propounding his favorite thesis on the Book of Mormon: "The book is obviously an American work." How, "obviously?" Well, "American sentiments permeate the work." For example? "Taxation is oppressive, and lawyers are not to be trusted."⁷⁰ In what nations is that not true? Has Dr. O'Dea never heard of Moliere or Aristophanes or Rabelais? Again the "obligation of the clergymen to work" in Alma's church is right out of New England: but why not right out of Cluny, or the Qumran Community, or the *Didache*? Alma's going "from one body to another, preaching unto the people repentance and faith on the Lord" (Mos. 25:15), is for O'Dea "a scene strongly reminiscent of the camp meeting" though he admits else-

where that camp meetings belong to the *post* Book of Mormon period.⁷¹ But Dr. O'Dea's job as a critic is not simply to report what Book of Mormon scenes and incidents suggest to his mind, but to prove when he suggests a source, that the matter concerned *could not possibly*

have come from any other source. After all, the man who by some mysterious process can borrow the ideas of thirteenth century monks, Brahmin sages, French satirists, and Washingtonian reformers may at any given moment be stealing from *any* conceivable source, so that no critic can ever be sure of his ground. But Dr. O'Dea is: he finds that in the Book of Mormon "the closeness to violence was thoroughly American." But what could be more thoroughly Italian or Greek or Irish or Roman or Arabic or Hebrew, etc., than "closeness to violence?"⁷² Nancy Towle actually left England to get away from a "closeness to violence," in comparison of which America was a haven of calm.⁷²

In his too ready analysis Dr. O'Dea goes far enough to contradict himself soundly, for though the Book of Mormon according to him draws its "fundamental theme" from Calvinism and revivalism, it does so "without either the stress on human depravity of the

former or the excessive emotionalism of the latter." That is to say, what we find in the book is Calvinism and revivalism—but with their essential elements left out: "In contrast to the extremes of religious enthusiasm that were soon to follow upon the revivals . . . later in the decade, the intellectuality of the Book of Mormon and its appeal as a reasonable answer to the problems of existence and salvation are quite obvious." (P. 31.) So what the Book of Mormon offers is not a resemblance but a "quite obvious" *contrast* to the ways and teachings of those religious enthusiasts who are supposed to have inspired it! O'Dea even labors the indiscretion: "In fact, in catching and committing to print the hopes and exaltations of the revival meeting and in doing so without the distractions and emotional excesses . . . the Book of Mormon was admirably suited to become . . . the scriptures of an American Church." (P. 40.) Passing by the fact that the book was never meant to become *the* scriptures of any church, and that the great appeal of Mormonism and the Book of Mormon has in the past not been to Americans but to people of other lands, we must hasten to point out that "emo-

tional excesses" are no extraneous fixture of the revival meeting but the very substance of those "hopes and exaltations" without which it would not be a revival meeting. To say that the young fanatic Joseph Smith succeeded in separating revivalism from emotionalism *m a k e s* about as much sense as

to talk of separating Romanism from Rome or separating the front of a piece of paper from the back. Calvinism and revivalism "without either the stress on human depravity of the former or the excessive emotionalism of the latter" are simply *Hamlet* with *Hamlet* left out.

Though Riley assures us that "Joseph Smith knew as little about Arminius as Arminius did of him," and Davis insists that Mormonism is a revolt against Arminianism,⁷³ Dr. O'Dea finds "The doctrine of the book is wholeheartedly and completely Arminian." The proof? "Men, says the Book of Mormon, will be judged by God according to their works," which Arminius also taught.⁷⁴ But so did a thousand other Christian teachers, ancient, medieval, and modern, to say nothing of the scripture itself.

Again, we learn that the democratic creed of the Book of Mormon is purely American—except that it is not: "Yet this con- (Continued on page 610)

BIRTHDAY CAKE

by Christie Lund Coles

The flames climb high
Then sink;
Wax falls upon
The white, the pink;

The shadows move
Grotesque and tall
Against the curtain
And the wall;

Her breath comes fast;
Her blue eyes shine;
A moment here
I know her mine.

Yet, few the years
I shall make
The dainty small girl's
Birthday cake.

function. There is no "town." At priesthood meeting and Sunday School it is not uncommon to see the uniforms of the Navy, Army, Air Force, Coast Guard, Marines, and occasionally a member of the Geodetic Survey. All of these services have important missions to perform on "The Pearl of the Aleutians," or called by most, "The Rock."

The Adak LDS Group is attached to the West Anchorage Branch, but visits to the "home" branch are rare, since it is some 1500 miles distant, and the only way is by expensive commercial aircraft, or "space-available" ships. With fairly limited facilities, the group has had to function almost when and where it could. For quite some time, priesthood meeting and Sunday School were held in a small TV room of the Armed Forces TV Service. It was disconcerting, especially to the youngsters, to try to hold religious services in such an atmosphere. The group changed from morning to afternoon hours and was able to meet in the small auditorium of a religious education building annexed to the base chapel. This was an improvement for the ten to twenty members who came out. Now, the group has moved into the base chapel where a more sacred atmosphere can be maintained. The size of the attendance is dictated by work schedules, transportation, and the weather.

With constantly rotating personnel, it is difficult to hold together the few officers of the group, or even to plan ahead from one Sunday to the next. Brother O. C. Ford is group leader. He, his wife Zelma, and sons Barry and Leslie have been on Adak almost three years. Both Fords are government employees of the Navy. Assistant group leader and Sunday School teacher is L. M. (Bob) Whittaker, an Air Force 1/Lt., and Navy-man Vaughn Failner is assistant group leader. Uray Funk, another civilian employee, was replaced as priesthood teacher by Don Bowers, of the Naval communications station. A Navy tug cook, Alex Briskie from American Samoa was group secretary until his rotation, and that position is now filled by Marine Master Sergeant Stanley Titcombe. Teaching the youngsters has been assigned to Sister Jo Whittaker, Sister Ford, and Sister D. E. Seyboldt. Many of these officers are active in many other activities.

Brother Ford is president of the Adak chapter of P-TA, and Brother Whittaker is publicity chairman of P-TA and the Boy Scouts. Since the departure of Brother Dale Brown many months ago, the group has been without an accompanist. A record player and organ accompaniment records are used.

In addition to priesthood meeting and Sunday School, the group meets each Sunday evening at one of three homes for fireside. These are government quarters, since there are no "private" homes on the island. A regular lesson is presented, except the last Sunday of each month which is given to a social-type gathering. Among the few members and investigators the "Mormon movement" can be traced to all corners of the world. Needless to say, a great deal of spare time is used in telling and showing pictures of faraway places, reminiscing, and yearning. Considering the twice weekly mail and a once-a-month boat with packages, this remote outpost hears a lot about "home" and warmer climes.

But even here, thousands of miles from home, the power of the gospel was illustrated not long ago. The chance meeting of two priesthood members brought to light a distant relationship. For many years, one had supposed his father to be dead and could find nothing on his paternal genealogy. Not only did the meeting prove the father to be alive, but also revealed the missing genealogy line, and the work was completed.

When the westward movement of the Mormons began over a hundred years ago, few then could visualize the magnitude of the gospel and just how far west it would go. But, here on Adak, just as in other places of the world, the Church continues to be an ever-present influence and inspiration in the lives of the small LDS Group. As long as the elements will permit, the Adak Latter-day Saints will continue to worship, and join in fellowship that will make the stay on "The Rock" a little less lonely and an experience that will long be remembered.

What Frontier, What Camp Meeting?

(Continued) fession of faith, so characteristic of the milieu, did not pass without qualification. . . . Whether it was the problems of de-

veloping his 92 B. C. plot or his reflection upon his experience with his contemporaries that gave him pause, Joseph appended a profound warning." (P. 35.) That is, it *should* have been "characteristic of the milieu," according to Dr. O'Dea's calculations, yet it was not, because that rascal Joseph Smith insisted on forcing it into another milieu—that of 92 B. C. We challenge Dr. O'Dea to name a century between the first and the twentieth A.D. in which the "content" of which he speaks was not only present but also conspicuous in the Christian world: the Reformation was only one of many expressions it has taken through the centuries. Again, it is impossible to take any position regarding baptism that has not been taken by one religious group or another in the past; so while the Book of Mormon concept of baptism conforms to none of the familiar Christian patterns, it may be broken down arbitrarily into fragments that may be held to suggest aspects of baptism as practised by somebody or other, and so claim to have discovered the source of the Book of Mormon ideas on the subject, as Dr. O'Dea does.⁷⁵

Parallels to Taste:—The grab-bag method exemplified by Dr. O'Dea makes it possible for the experts, each feeling his own part of the elephant, to propound with perfect confidence diametrically conflicting explanations of the Book of Mormon. Thus some scholars tell us that the Book of Mormon could only have been written by "a man of learning," that "the real author . . . was well acquainted with the classics,"⁷⁶ while others insist that "only an ignorant man could have produced it."⁷⁷

Today certain professors find that "the intellectuality of the Book of Mormon and its appeal as a reasonable answer to the problems of existence and salvation are quite obvious,"⁷⁸ and assure us that the book "satisfied the inbred desire of Yorkers to achieve an orderly, intellectual formulation of their beliefs."⁷⁹ Can this be the same book which Dr. Davis is calling "the gibberish of a crazy boy?"⁸⁰

For Professor Meinhold the Book of Mormon contains no history, but a wonderful *philosophy* of history. For Professor Arbaugh it is the other way round: "Mormon scriptures contain items of purported history, but,

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significantly, no philosophy of history."⁸¹

Investigators as different as Gibbs, Brodie, and Eduard Meyer have commented on the remarkable consistency of the Book of Mormon, which for Mr. Bernard DeVoto was nothing but a "yeasty fermentation, formless, aimless, and inconceivably absurd."⁸² Years later, to be sure, DeVoto admitted he was lying, but the solid majority of scholars are still with him.⁸³

Critics have detected fraud in the Book of Mormon on the one hand in their discovery that it "determines none of the great questions pending the world at large, but only minor difficulties that would have been likely to reach a western village,"⁸⁴ and on the other hand in the equally astute discovery that it simply reflects the great issues about which "men in different parts of the country were thinking. . . ."⁸⁵ Again, which is it to be, great issues or small, that damn the Book of Mormon?

While one school of investigators sees in the Book of Mormon an "altogether remarkable production of an over-imaginative mind . . ." the work of "an audacious and original mind . . . marvellously fecund imagination," etc.,⁸⁶ others can detect only "a perfect destitution of inventive power in its writer." "Not a spark of imagination or invention enlivens the weary sameness of the annalist."⁸⁷

A learned English divine in 1886 felt to reject the Book of Mormon *in spite of* "all its air of sincerity and truth; for all the striking and often beautiful passages that it contains."⁸⁸ Yet how many critics detect those qualities in the work? The usual reaction is: "In nothing does the line, style, invention, conception, content and purpose reveal the hand of a master, let alone of Divine inspiration."⁸⁹

FOOTNOTES

⁸¹Quote is from J. D. Kingsbury, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

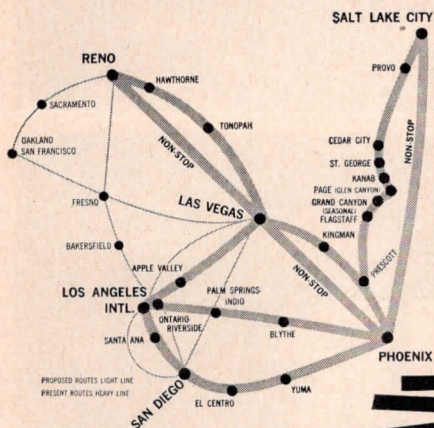
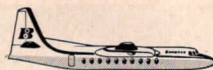
⁸²The Book of Mormon itself is "interspersed with the catch-words of the Methodist camp meeting exhorter," according to Hastings' *Encyclopedia* XI, 86. For a particularly gaudy description see Leon Lemonnier, *Les Mormons* (Paris: Gallimard, 1948), p. 17; and George Townshend, *The Conversion of Mormonism* (Hartford: Church Missions Publishing Co., 1911) pp. 13f.

⁸³E. S. Bates, *American Faith* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1940), p. 341. I. W. Riley, *Founder of Mormonism* (1902), p.

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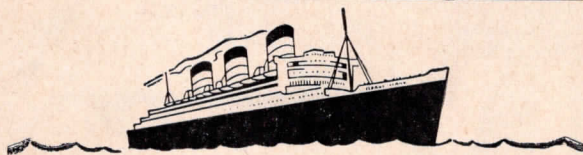
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85, goes even further: "... the contents of the Book of Mormon can be traced to ... ideas which Joseph picked up in the Indian country where he lived." Not merely frontier—Indian country!

⁵⁴Fawn M. Brodie, *No Man Knows my History*, (New York: A. Knopf, 1946) pp. 9-10.

⁵⁵W. R. Cross, *Burned-Over District*, pp. 146-8, 138-140.

⁵⁶D. B. Davis, *New England Quarterly*, 26: 151.

⁵⁷Brodie, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

⁵⁸Nancy Towle, *Vicissitudes Illustrated* (Charleston: J. L. Burges, 1832). It is plain that Mrs. Brodie read only the part dealing with Towle's visit to Kirtland in 1831, which she distorts in her usual fashion, reporting, e.g., that Miss Towle "blundered" into Kirtland (Brodie, p. 103), while Miss Towle's own account is that she had long planned and carefully arranged her visit to that place.

⁵⁹N. Towle, *op. cit.*, p. 146.

⁶⁰*Ibid.*, pp. 198, 157.

⁶¹For example, *ibid.*, pp. 124-5. The worst thing she can call people is "superstitious," *ibid.*, p. 54.

⁶²J. Remy, *op. cit.*, I, ciii.

⁶³She commiserates a fellow-evangelist for being forced by unusual circumstances to preach in the open air at the risk of her health, *ibid.*, p. 54, cf. p. 82.

⁶⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 33, 53.

⁶⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 170, 185, 171, 212, 21, 17.

⁶⁶She tells how "the very bigoted Methodists" of Geneva, New York, near Palmyra, refused her their chapel, p. 152. Though she tried hard to get herself persecuted, "that honor," she reports, "was denied me." *Ibid.*, pp. 41, 62-63, cf. 17, 23, 28, 41, 54, 94, etc. Only the Mormons had that honor, p. 146.

⁶⁷*Ibid.*, pp. 165, n. 1; 164f, 165, n. 1.

⁶⁸*The Methodist Quarterly Review* (ed. Geo. Peck, D.D.), XXV (1843) Vol. 3, p. 126, cf. 128.

⁶⁹*Ibid.*, p. 126, cf. pp. 123f.

⁷⁰T. O'Dea, *The Mormons*, p. 32.

⁷¹*Ibid.*, p. 28. On page 31 we read that "the extremes of religious enthusiasm ... follow upon the revivals ... later in the decade. ..." Yet these extremes are supposed to have produced the Book of Mormon.

⁷²*Ibid.*, p. 102; only in Britain did Miss Towle have fears for her life, *op. cit.*, p. 59; she vividly describes the poverty, violence, and insecurity of English lower society. Recently Chief Justice Jackson observed that the American public differs most sharply from the European in its abhorrence of violence: mob action is the rule in European political history, the exception in America.

⁷³Riley, *op. cit.*, p. 135; Davis, *op. cit.*, pp. 154-5, 158.

⁷⁴O'Dea, *op. cit.*, p. 28, cf. p. 27: "... its [the Book of Mormon's] fundamental theme combines the concomitance of righteousness and prosperity of the later Calvinists with the call to repentance and humility of revivalistic Christianity." If Dr. O'Dea troubled to read such odd items as the Bible, the Greek Poets, or the Fathers of the Church he would discover that these teachings are by no means a monopoly of Calvinists and revivalists.

⁷⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 35-36, accusing the Book of Mormon of "ambiguity on the question of baptism" because it does not conform to one pattern but suggests Baptist, Arminian, Catholic, and Episcopalian ideas.

⁷⁶E. D. Howe, *Mormonism* (1840), p. 21.

⁷⁷Van Pelt, in *Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia* VIII, 13.

⁷⁸O'Dea, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

⁷⁹Cross, *op. cit.*, p. 145.

⁸⁰Davis, *op. cit.*, p. 148.

⁸¹P. Meinhold, in *Saeculum V* (1954), p. 86. G. Arbaugh, *Revelation in Mormonism*, p. 5.

⁸²Ed. Meyer, *Ursprung und Geschichte der Mormonen.*, p. 78; Meinhold, *op. cit.*, p. 67. B. De Voto, in *The American Mercury*, Jan. 1930, p. 5.

⁸³De Voto, in *The Improvement Era*, 49 (Mar. 1946), p. 154. See Francis W. Kirkham, *A New Witness for Christ in America II*, 351-3. D. B. Davis' article of 1953, *op. cit.*, is a faithful echo of the earlier De Voto.

⁸⁴J. Hyde, *Mormonism*, p. 281; J. B. Turner, *Mormonism in All Ages*, p. 203.

⁸⁵H. M. Beardsley, *Joseph Smith and His Mormon Empire* (Boston, New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1931), p. 81.

⁸⁶M. A. Sbresny, *Mormonism: As It Is Today* (London: A. H. Stockwell, no date), p. 25; cf. Beardsley, *op. cit.*, p. 4; J. F. Gibbs, *Lights & Shadows of Mormonism* (Salt Lake Tribune Publishing Co., 1909), p. 57; F. Brodie, *op. cit.*, pp. 42, 48.

⁸⁷D. P. Kidder, *Mormonism* (1842), p. 255.

⁸⁸G. Wotherspoon, *Mormonism* (London, 1886), p. 16.

⁸⁹M.H.A. Van Der Valk, *De Profeet der Mormonen Joseph Smith, Jr.* (Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1921), pp. 106-7.

Where Unto Shall I Liken It?

(Continued) sistence to develop it, there will be few more rewarding activities.

The following may be helpful to a teacher in learning to teach on the concept level of his students:

1. Teachers should become acquainted with the vocabulary level of their students. Teachers often do not realize the distance between their vocabulary level and that of their students. It might be helpful to examine their schoolbooks and to find out what magazines and other printed matter they read. Listen carefully when they speak and notice the terms they use *consistently*. This should give a pretty good indication of their vocabulary concept level.

2. Lesson outlines are generally written with no particular locality or community pattern in mind. If the teacher does not adapt the abstract part of the lesson somewhat to farm vernacular, the vernacular of a particular geographical area or urban locale, and so on, the students may actually not be able to picture the



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by Hugh Nibley

The Comparative Method

as such is neither good nor bad. It can be abused (as what tool can not?), but to condemn it outright because of its imperfections would put an end to all scholarship.

The fundamental rule of the comparative method is, that if things resemble each other there must be some connection between them, and the closer the resemblance the closer the connection. For example, if anyone were to argue that the Book of Mormon was obviously stolen from Solomon Spaulding's *Manuscript Story* (the document now at Oberlin College) because the word "and" is found to occur frequently in both texts, we would simply laugh at him. If he brought forth as evidence the fact that kings are mentioned in both books, he might not appear quite so ridiculous. But if the *Manuscript Story* actually referred by name to "cureloms and cumoms" we would be quite sure of a possible borrowing (though even then we would not have proven a direct borrowing). This hypothetical case illustrates the fact that there are degrees of significance in parallels. Recently a Protestant minister pointed to seventy-five resemblances between the Book of Mormon and the *Manuscript Story*: None of them alone is worth anything, but his position is that there are so many that taken altogether they must be significant.⁹⁰ The trouble is that it would be very easy to find seventy-five equally good parallels between the Book of Mormon and any other book you can name. As an actual example, to prove that the Book of Mormon and the *Manuscript Story* are related, this investigator shrewdly notes that in both books "men arise and make addresses," "both [books] pronounce woe unto the wicked mortals," "both mention milk," in both "adultery was a crime," "both had counsellors," etc. What kind of "parallels"

are these? Seventy-five or seven hundred fifty, it is all the same—such stuff adds up to nothing.⁹⁰

But the most publicized list of parallels of the Book of Mormon and another work is B. H. Roberts' comparison of that book with Ethan Smith's *View of the Hebrews*.⁹¹ Commenting on this, Mrs. Brodie wrote: "The scholarly Mormon historian, B. H. Roberts once made a careful and impressive list of parallels between the *Views of the Hebrews* and the Book of Mormon, but for obvious reasons it was never published."⁹² The most obvious reason for not publishing it would be to any textual critic as it was to Elder Roberts, that the "careful and impressive list of parallels" is quite worthless either to prove or disprove the Book of Mormon.

In the first place, only eighteen parallels are listed, and neither Mrs. Brodie nor Mr. Hogan adds anything to the list. This, then is the best we can do for Ethan Smith's parallels. If there were only eighteen ideas in all the Book of Mormon and about the same number in Ethan Smith's book, then the eighteen parallels would be indeed suspicious. But there are not only eighteen ideas in the Book of Mormon—there are hundreds! So if we are going to use such a tiny handful as evidence they had better be good. But when we consider the Roberts' parallels, we find that they are not only very few, but without exception all perfectly ordinary. In fact, Mr. Hogan in his recent treatment of the subject has unwittingly robbed the eighteen parallels of any significance by going to considerable pains to point out in his introduction that the ideas shared by Ethan and Joseph Smith were not original to either of them, but were as common in the world they lived in as the name Smith itself. He would agree with Mr. Cross that "neither Solomon Spaulding, for whom some have claimed authorship of a manuscript which became the Book of Mormon, nor Joseph Smith required any originality to speculate in this direction. . . ."⁹³ No originality was required in these matters because these things were public

property. This being the case why would Joseph Smith need to steal them from Ethan Smith?

Take Parallels Number 2 and 4 in Roberts' list for example: *Both claim a Hebraic origin for the Indian.* But so did everybody else. In 1833 Josiah Priest wrote, "... the opinion that the American Indians are descendants of the lost Ten Tribes, is now a popular one, and generally believed. . . ." ⁹⁴ In that case Joseph Smith must have known as much about it as Ethan Smith—no need for pilfering.

No. 5 *The idea of a lost or buried book* is found in both documents. Again what could be commoner? This is Mr. Hogan's prize exhibit and parting shot: Ethan Smith had suggested that the best evidence for a connection between the Indians and the ancient Hebrews would be the finding of an actual inscription "on some durable substance in evident Hebrew language and character." Of course it would; inscriptions in ancient languages on durable material (they could hardly be in modern languages on perishable materials) have been throughout history the best-known link between ancient and living civilizations. Yet Ethan Smith's idea that a Hebrew inscription would be the best tie-up between the Jews and the Indians is presented here as a brilliant and novel idea, the provocation that set Joseph Smith on the high-road to forgery, according to Mr. Hogan, who concludes his study with the weighty words: "If an enterprising and imaginative writer needed any final provocation, this would seem to be it." As if "an energetic and imaginative writer," of all people, needed to be told that it is ancient writings that tell about ancient people.

No. 14. In Ethan Smith's book is reported that an Indian chief once said that "he knew it to be wrong, if a poor man came to his door hungry and naked, to turn him away empty. For he believed God loved the poorest of men better than he did proud rich men." Again, would Joseph Smith or any Christian have to go to Ethan Smith's book to learn this? If



... but if you put the two together, what do you get? Another parallel, Egyptian hieroglyphics!

the Indian's words were quoted in the Book of Mormon it would be a different thing: but what compassionate human being, Christian or not, has not held this philosophy? Here is another version of the same thing:

No. 16. An early traveler quoted by Ethan Smith tells of some Indians who were "loving, and affectionate to their wives and children. . . ." The Book of Mormon reports indirectly that the Nephites also loved *their* children. And this, believe it or not, is taken as strong proof that the Book of Mormon was stolen from the *View of the Hebrews*.

No. 15. It is the same with polygamy: in Ethan Smith's book a Delaware chief deploras the recently adopted practice in his tribe of picking up a number of wives and casting them off as soon as one grew tired of them. The fact that the Indian recognizes such a practice as immoral can only indicate according to Ethan Smith the influence of "Israelitish tradition . . . as taught by the Old Testament as if mankind had no other source of morality. Yet here his naive reasoning is sounder than the proposition that the prohibition of more than one wife to the Nephites must have come from this particular source. Actually, this is no parallel at all since there is no resemblance between the practices described.

A number of parallels in the list are attributed to Joseph Smith's stealing from the *View of the Hebrews*, when he could more easily have found the same material in the Bible. This reaches the point of absurdity in parallel No. 12 where Joseph Smith gets the idea of quoting Isaiah from Ethan since the latter "quoted copiously and chiefly from Isaiah in relation to the scattering and gathering of Israel." This is the equivalent of accusing one scholar of stealing

from another because they both quote "copiously and chiefly" from Homer in their studies of Troy. Since ancient times Isaiah has been *the* source for information on the scattering and gathering of Israel. Any student writing a term paper on that subject would deserve to be flunked if he failed to quote from that prophet without ever having heard of Ethan Smith!

Parallel No. 11 is a related case: "The view of the Hebrews has many references to both the scattering and the gathering of Israel in the last days. The second chapter is entitled 'The Certain Restoration of Judah and Israel' and in this section are quoted nearly all the references to Isaiah that are referred to and quoted *more fully* in the Book of Mormon." Which would Joseph Smith be more likely to go to in treating this subject, Mr. Ethan Smith or the Bible? Obviously the Bible is the source used since it is here quoted more fully than it is in Ethan's book. But did Joseph need Ethan to tell him to consult the Bible in the first place?

Again, No. 10, the first chapter of the *Views of the Hebrews* is devoted to the destruction of Jerusalem. Since the book claims to be searching out the lost ten tribes, it is hard to conceive how it could begin otherwise. There have been many dispersions from Jerusalem, as the Book of Mormon tells us, and many destructions: the one told of in the Book of Mormon is a *totally different* one from that described by Ethan Smith, which took place hundreds of years before it. It is hardly likely that the Bible-reading Smiths first discovered that Jerusalem was destroyed by perusing the pages of Ethan's book. Neither did Joseph need Ethan Smith to tell him (No. 6) that God's people anciently had inspired prophets and heavenly gifts. This has always been a conspicuous part of Indian

PEACE

by Ruth K. Kent

A storm is threatening the beach today;
The screaming sea gulls swoop in weird delight
While gleeful waves tattoo a roundelay
Against the restless sands, the clouds benight
The sun and playful winds conspire to strum
The branches on the stalwart pines as Thor
Beats thunder drums; all nature must succumb
Whenever tempests frolic near the shore.
There was a time on earth when Jesus said,
To seas that foamed in fury, "Peace, be still."
Then all was quiet as the sacred dead;
The elements are subject to his will.
So why should not the struggling nations cease
Their bickerings, and pray to God for peace?

tradition, but given the popular belief that the ancient Americans were of Israel, Joseph Smith would have no choice but to attribute to them the divine gift possessed by God's people. Among these divine gifts was the Urim and Thummim (No. 7) *described* in the Bible, and only dimly and indirectly hinted at by Ethan Smith in describing an article of clothing worn by medicine men—quite a different article from the Urim and Thummim of either the Book of Mormon or the Bible.

The trouble with this last parallel is that it is not a parallel at all, but only something that is made into one by egregiously taking the part for the whole. The same faulty reasoning characterizes the first of the parallels in the list, No. 1: the *place of origin of the two works*. Ethan Smith's book was written in Vermont, and Joseph Smith was born in Vermont. That would be a very suspicious coincidence were it not that Joseph Smith left Vermont as a child at least eight years before the *View of the Hebrews* was published. The time scale which invalidates the argument of place of origin is actually given as another parallel between the two books. Parallel No. 3: *the time of production*—it is held to be most significant that the publication of Ethan Smith's first edition and the appearance of the Angel Moroni occurred in the same year. We must confess our failure to detect anything in Ethan Smith's book that might have suggested the Angel Moroni. All that is proved by the dates is that the *View of the Hebrews* came out first, so that Joseph Smith *could* have used it. Of course, if *View of the Hebrews* had appeared *after* the Book of Mormon there would be no case—though Mrs. Brodie tries very hard to hint that Joseph Smith stole from Josiah Priest, whose book did not appear until 1833!⁹⁵ Even Mrs. Brodie concedes that "it may never be proven that Joseph ever saw the *View of the Hebrews*," but even if he had seen it, that would prove nothing unless we could discover something in the Book of Mormon that could not possibly come from any other source.

What the critics seem to consider the most devastating of all the parallels in the list, the one most often mentioned and on which B. H. Roberts concentrates most of his attention, is No. 9, which deals with the general relations of the ancient Americans to each other. The most obvious and immediate objection to the popular theory that the Indians were the ten tribes was that the ten tribes were civilized and the Indians were not. Since colonial times there were two things that everybody knew about aboriginal America: (1) that it was full of savages, and (2) that it was full of ruins left by people who were *not* savages. If the Indians were from the ten tribes, then they must have fallen from a higher estate, and that estate was mutely

witnessed by the ruins. Using these general speculations as his starting point, Ethan Smith, like any intelligent man, goes on with his own surmises: When the civilized ten tribes arrived in the New World, they found themselves in a wilderness teeming with game, (1) "*inviting them to the chase*, most of them (2) *fell into a wandering and idle hunting life*," while "the more sensible parts of this people" continued in their civilized ways and left behind them the ruins that fill the land. "It is highly probable," Ethan Smith continues to speculate, "that the more civilized part of the Ten Tribes of Israel after they settled in America, became (3) *wholly separated* from the hunting and savage tribes of their brethren; that the latter (4) *lost the knowledge* of their having descended from the same family with themselves; that the civilized part continued many centuries; that (5) *tremendous wars were frequent* between them and their savage brethren." Then gradually (6) "*in process of time* their savage jealousies and rage annihilated their more civilized brethren." No other explanation is possible, he thinks: "What account can be given of this, but that the savages exterminated them, after (7) *long and dismal wars*." As to the state of the savages, "We cannot so well account for their evident degeneracy in any way" except the Bible way: "as that it took place under the vindictive Providence, as has been noted, to accomplish (8) *divine judgments denounced against the idolatrous Ten Tribes of Israel*." (Italics ours.)

Now consider the eight points from the viewpoint of the Book of Mormon. (1) It was *not* the joy of the chase that led the Lamanites into the wilderness—the greatest hunters in the Book of Mormon are Nephites; (2) the less civilized group did *not* upon arriving in America "fall into a wandering . . . life," they were wanderers when they got here, and so were their brethren. (3) In the Book of Mormon "the more civilized part" of the people *never* becomes "wholly separated . . . from their brethren," the two remaining always in contact. (4) The more savage element never "lost the knowledge" of their descent: The Lamanites always claimed in fact that the Nephites had stolen their birthright. (5) The wars were neither tremendous nor frequent—they are almost all in the nature of sudden raids; they involved small numbers of people, and, except for the last great war, they are brief. (6) It was *not* the savage jealousy and rage of an inferior civilization that destroyed the higher civilization—that higher civilization had broken up completely before the last war by its own corruption, and at the time of their destruction the Nephites were as debased as their rivals. (7) It was *not* a process of gradual extermination (Continued on page 759)

Thomas A. Edison. Young Tom was expelled from school because of his ambitions. Before he could read he wanted to study high school subjects. He was labeled incorrigible by his exasperated teacher and sent home to his worried parents. Even at home his ambitions soon created a neighborhood panic. Finally his mother decided to guide all these big ideas into more constructive channels. By the time young Tom was 9 he and his mother had carefully read Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Hume's *History of England*, Sears' *History of the World*, Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*, and *The Dictionary of Sciences*. Such was the early guidance of a boy's career whose inventions later created industries worth more than twenty-five billion dollars.

Ninth, we certainly will not want to close this list of achievements without mentioning just one more—Junior's sense of humor. Most 21-year-olds have a fathomless capacity for humor, but like other human qualities it should have matured.

In his childhood days Junior responded to the "humor of absurdity." He loved the absurdity of slapstick comedy, pie-throwing contests, or seeing an elderly woman slip on the ice and crash to the sidewalk.

In later years Junior tastes enough of life to feel sympathy for people in unfortunate situations. He seldom laughs at people slipping or falling. He identifies his own feelings with those of the victim. His sense of humor now requires more subtle things. He graduates to the level of "hidden meaning humor."

Finally, however, Junior should attain the rich, warm glow of grown-up humor. Adult humor is hearty but not boisterous. It is not laughter to be heard but laughter to be felt. It grows out of the deep, golden depths of the human personality which reflect the vast richness of life. It is the laughter of a father who is smothered under an avalanche of welcoming arms as a bevy of little people shout, "Daddy's home!" It is the laughter of the happy hunter as he brings home the game at the end of the day. Adult humor is the music of the heart—tuned in on the universe.

Reflections of a Parent

But whether our son has attained all of these desirable things or

only part of them, the important thing is that suddenly he is 21! It seems almost impossible to realize it. He grew up so fast. Now we are sorry we didn't take time to enjoy him more. Perhaps in the twilight of a quiet summer evening we thumb through the pages of the family album. It sparks some happy memories for a mom and dad. As a baby he was the cutest little fellow in the town. At four he was a monkey on wheels—all over the place. At six the camera caught him proudly grinning without his two front teeth. Age 10 was truly his golden year. And wasn't he sprouting out of his Sunday suit at 13! Then there are all those wonderful high school pictures. You can almost see yourself in every scene and remember how it used to be in your day, at your school. The college pictures are great, too, but not quite so sentimental. And there is his picture in uniform. He made a handsome serviceman! No wonder the girls fell for him. Funny how he seemed sort of oblivious to it. Except, of course, for Jo Anne. How lovely she looks in her wedding dress. They make a marvelous couple. . . .

As a mom and dad look back over the past fifth of a century, they seem caught between the sentimental flood of happy memories and the relief they feel for a mission ac-

complished. They know they made some mistakes, but they marvel how well it turned out after all. One thing they can't help mentioning—how some of Junior's childhood vices turned out to be his grownup virtues. They remember how they worried over his destructive proclivities—how he took the family clock apart, unstrung the bedroom radio, wrecked the first family TV. Now he earns his living mending such things! Or they remember worrying about his reading so much but now they are proud as punch that he made the national honor fraternity. They think of Nancy Hanks Lincoln gently scolding her boy for being a dreamer and not splitting the rails for the farm fence. And all the time she was raising one of America's greatest presidents! Mother Nature surely has a way of fooling parents.

Perhaps this is why raising a boy so often seems like a chore. Only when the job is practically completed does it suddenly seem like the greatest happiness of a lifetime. And how great the reward of parents who were blessed with a boy who really tried. It makes a mom and dad know that it was all worth while, and they cannot help saying with the wisdom of the ages:

Raising boys is a partnership between parents and God; how much better to build men than mend them!

The Comparative Method

(Continued from page 747)

but of a quick and violent end.

(8) Finally the downgrading of the Lamanites is *not* the fulfilment of prophecies about the ten tribes after the pattern of the destruction of God's people (that would be the *Nephites*), their degeneracy is given a unique explanation that cannot be found either in Ethan Smith or the Bible. (*To be continued*)

FOOTNOTES

⁹⁰Jas. D. Bales, *The Book of Mormon*, (1958).

Even to work out the small number of seventy-five parallels Bales had to pad heavily. Thus, both the Book of Mormon and the Spaulding Manuscript talk about great civilizations, as what history does

not? This parallel is broken down into such inevitable points of resemblance as "both [books] refer to great cities," "both . . . represented as having some scientific knowledge," "Both knew something of mechanical arts," "both used iron," "both used coins" (the words "coin" and "coins" are *not* mentioned in the Book of Mormon), "both constructed fortifications," "both exceeded the present Indians in works of art and ingenuity," etc. Now all these things are inevitable accompaniments of any civilization: They are not separate and distinct points of resemblance at all. One might as well argue that since both books mention people, both imply that people have hands, hands have fingers, etc., and thus accumulate "parallels" by the score.

⁹¹M. B. Hogan, "A Parallel," a matter of chance versus coincidence," in the *Rocky Mountain Mason*, Jan. 1956, pp. 17-36. Elder Roberts' manuscript is still in manuscript form.

⁹²Brodie, *op. cit.*, p. 47, n. 2.

⁹³Cross, *op. cit.*, p. 81.

⁹⁴Josiah Priest, pp. 75-76.

⁹⁵Brodie, *op. cit.*, p. 47 cf. 49, 45, 101.

The Comparative Method

by Hugh Nibley

To establish any connection at all between the books of the two Smiths it is absolutely imperative to find something perfectly unique and peculiar in both of them. Yet there is not *one single thing* in common between *View of the Hebrews* and the Book of Mormon that is not also found in the Bible. Parallel No. 9 promises to be the exception to this containing as it does significant details that are not found in the Bible: yet it is in these very details that the two books are in complete disagreement! Another false parallel is No. 10, the destruction of Jerusalem: Ethan Smith speaks of one destruction, the Book of Mormon of another, but the Bible speaks of both. Here the parallel is not between the two Smiths at all—they are talking of wholly different events—but between them and the Bible only. Again, there is an indirect reference to American hieroglyphics in Ethan Smith which leads to parallel No. 8 with the query: "Was this sufficient to suggest the strange manner of writing in the Book of Mormon in the 'learning of the Jews and language of the Egyptians' but in altered Egyptian?" In other words, the two sources have the mention of *Egyptian hieroglyphics* in common:—only the word *Egyptian* does *not* appear in Ethan Smith; and the word *hieroglyphics* does *not* appear in the Book of Mormon; but if you put the two together, what do you get? Egyptian hieroglyphics! In the same way, Ethan Smith contains a brief mention of Quetzalcoatl, though nothing could be farther from his mind than to suggest that Quetzalcoatl might be Christ, while the Book of Mormon contains mention of Christ without the slightest hint that he might be Quetzalcoatl: put *them* together, and you have parallel No. 18: The common teaching of both books that Christ was Quetzalcoatl! Again, because Joseph Smith (*not* the Book of Mormon) and Ethan Smith both mention Ezekiel 37, our critics are convinced that the former is stealing from the latter, though their interpretations of the celebrated passage are *entirely different*: it is suspicious for Joseph Smith even to mention a uni-

versally discussed chapter of the Bible if Ethan Smith has already mentioned it.

Finally parallel No. 12: Granted that the Indians are the descendants of the lost ten tribes, as everyone believed in 1830, what Christian would not feel an obligation towards them? Ethan Smith's view that "the American Gentile nation [the United States]" should "become the Savior of Israel in America," is a perfectly natural one, and is assumed to offer another parallel to the teaching of the Book of Mormon. Nothing could be farther from the mark: the Book of Mormon never looks to the United States government, the American people, or Christian civilization to save the Indians—it tells a very different story of what is to happen.

So after all Ethan Smith turns in a perfect score; not a single blemish mars the target. In every case where the Book of Mormon *might* have borrowed from him, it might much more easily have borrowed from the Bible or prevailing popular beliefs. In the few cases where he deals in common with the Book of Mormon with matters not treated in those other sources, the two books are completely at variance.

Grab-bag Research:—Any conscientious student likes to find support for his own theories and ideas in the writings of others, and when he comes upon a particularly helpful or enlightening passage joyfully quotes it. Yet if Joseph Smith says there was once a great civilization in Central America, and quotes Josiah Stout to back him up, it is plain that Smith is stealing from Stout—even though Stout's book came out three years later than his! Plagiarists conceal the sources of their information; they do not shout them from the housetops; but if a Mormon leader is so careless as to quote a non-Mormon writer by way of illustrating or supporting a Mormon teaching, he has given everything away; he has openly declared the true source of Mormon revelation. Sidney Rigdon "openly quoted from a book by Thomas Dick on one occasion. This proves to Mrs. (Continued on page 854)



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great commandments to guide our accomplishment. One of these is "Thou shalt not covet." God has given each one of us sufficient for all of our needs. We must learn to trust and be true to those gifts.

One of the greatest leadership lessons we may learn is "Thou shalt not covet." For "Lo, your own house is the house with the golden windows."

The Comparative Method

(Continued from page 848)

Brodie that he had read the book—therefore Joseph Smith had read it or heard of it—therefore Smith got his cosmology from it—therefore Mr. Davis⁹⁶ now tells us that Mormon leaders "drew in ideas at random from local preachers, pseudo-scientific books, and 'philosophers' like Thomas Dick." And this statement is bred of nothing more than an airy word from Mrs. Brodie.⁹⁷

If we were to ask an IBM machine, a super-electronic memorizer, associator, and classifier of data, to tell us which cultural, historical, and intellectual influences are most prominent in the Book of Mormon, we would consider the machine's response utterly worthless unless we had first stocked it with ten thousand times more facts than any human mind contains. Yet every Book of Mormon critic thinks he can answer the question by referring to whatever tiny patch of knowledge he happens to sit on. What do we trust in the critics? Certainly it cannot be their knowledge—it must be instinct. Today we are asked to accept mystic explanations of the Book of Mormon which, lacking any solid foundation, rest their case on Joseph Smith's reactions to "latent facets" of Puritanism (O'Dea) or to "historic responses" of the Reformation (Davis). All the prevailing environmental theories of Mormonism and the Book of Mormon insist that both were the product of an intensely local setting, suited to the extremely limited intellectual horizon of Smith and his followers, yet Mr. Cross and Dr. O'Dea tells us that it was not Mr. Davis' old New Englanders to whose thoughts Joseph Smith gave such welcome expression but a very different stock, the "Yorkers." Mr. Armytage, however, shows us that Mormonism was exactly and peculiarly what the sturdy North country farmers and artisans



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of England wanted to hear⁹⁸ while the same holds true for Welsh miners, Scandinavian fishermen, prosperous Swiss burghers, and South Pacific Islanders. Davis's "fourteen-year-old ragamuffin" certainly had a knack: "Why should the gibberish of a crazy boy," he asks, "send thousands of people trekking off to establish a theocracy beyond the Rocky Mountains?"⁹⁹ The question is admirably put, and he can find but one possible answer for it: It was because the crazy boy told all those people exactly what they wanted to hear, giving them a doctrine so perfectly suited to their taste that they would undergo any toil or danger for it. One hundred years ago Monsieur Remy accounted for the success of Joseph Smith by observing that he had simply combined all that was most enticing in all religions into one religion. Look what our crazy boy Joseph is doing! What we want to know is *how* he does it. After all, what the latest explanations of Smith and his book amount to is the profound discovery that he succeeded where others failed because he always happened to do just the right thing.

The vast depth and breadth of the grab-bag guarantee that our Book of Mormon investigators will never run out of parallels and analogies which they may hail as significant or not as they choose. But it also guarantees that none of them will ever have the last word. To the end their ideas about the Book of Mormon remain strictly their own, and they are welcome to them. But any pretense to scientific or scholarly finality under the circumstances is but an illusion. Our poorly trained scholars, satisfied that modern science has emancipated them from old methods and chores, are quite unaware that the critics of an earlier day were just as well-educated and emancipated as they, and that they are only repeating in their shallow researches what has already been done by men of greater diligence and authority—and duly marked off as wasted effort.

(The end)

⁹⁸D. D. Davis, *op. cit.*, p. 167.

⁹⁷Brodie, *op. cit.*, p. 69 "... the book can best be explained ... by his responsiveness to the provincial opinions of the time."

⁹⁸W. H. G. Armytage, "Liverpool, Gateway to Zion," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 48 (1957), pp. 39-40. For sheer misinformation Mr. Armytage's article sets a record even among anti-Mormon writers.

⁹⁹Davis, *ibid.*