

Lectures on Mormonism - I

Introduction

Mormonism is a religious phenomenon centered around the teachings of its founder, Joseph Smith, Jr., and *The Book of Mormon*. It has grown from its humble beginnings to international proportions in something less than 150 years. Its modern proponents claim it to be the fastest-growing religious body in the United States. Most of us can verify its spreading influence by observing that there are Mormon "Missions" and "Wards" springing up in many sections of the country where, only decades ago, Mormonism was known only as

some vague, polygamy-related, Rocky Mountain religious sect, casually referred to in history books and Max Brand novels.

It is the opinion of this writer that one of the important factors contributing to the rapid spread of this system, has been the lack of accurate information regarding its true claims and doctrines. In these lectures we shall attempt to present some carefully documented material regarding the background and claims of Mormonism, along with the evidence which we believe demonstrates conclusively that this system is false.

Background and Claims

As previously mentioned, Joseph Smith, Jr., is recognized as the founder of this religious system. Smith claimed that while he was yet a teen-ager, in 1820, God appeared to him, telling him not to join any religious sect. In 1823, Smith alleges that the angel Moroni came to him with the information that God had a special purpose for him. The angel supposedly revealed to him the location of the "golden plates" of Nephi which contained an ancient sacred record. At last young Joseph claims to have received the plates and was commissioned by God to translate them with the help of the "Urim and Thummim" which were found with the plates. The result of this alleged translation was published by Smith in 1830 and called, *The Book of Mormon*. Soon afterwards, along with a handful of new disciples, Smith organized the church. Of course, he was recognized as the "President, Prophet, and Seer" of this group. *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints*, with headquarters in Salt Lake City, is the largest of the modern groups who claim to be this original church.

The aforementioned *Book of Mormon* claims to be a history of North and/or Central America from immediately after the Tower of Babel, to about the year 400 A.D. a period of about 4000 years. It claims that this continent was peopled by two principal groups, the *Jaredites* and the *Family of Lehi*. The Jaredites are said to have come here from Babel, but were destroyed by war in

about 590 B.C. Lehi, according to the *Book of Mormon*, immigrated from Jerusalem to these shores in about 600 B.C. His descendants split into two nations, the righteous *Nephites*, and the wicked *Lamenites*. In one decisive battle, the Lamenites annihilated the Nephites. The accursed descendants of the Lamenites, we are asked to believe, are to be found among the American Indians! *The Book of Mormon* tells us of the existence of the Lord's church on this continent and even a personal visit of Christ to the ancient inhabitants. Our Mormon friends assure us that this book is not only historical; rather, they claim, it contains "the fulness of the Everlasting Gospel".

Along with *The Book of Mormon*, the various LDS (Latter-Day Saint) groups generally recognize some other "standard" books. The *Doctrine And Covenants* purports to be a collection of revelations from God given, principally, to Joseph Smith, on a wide variety of subjects. *The Pearl of Great Price* is a collection of Smith's writings and supposed translations, accepted by the Salt Lake City Mormons, but rejected by other Book of Mormon-believing groups. Parts of the *Pearl of Great Price* have been the subject of considerable controversy among Mormon scholars in recent years. We shall describe this matter further later in this series.

In addition to these writings, we have to keep in mind that the line of president-prophets who succeeded Smith, claimed to receive "revelations" and to speak with divine authority, roughly paralleling Roman Catholic claims regarding the Pope. Thus, the doctrine of "continuous revelation" pervades the woof and warp of Mormonism.

Why Examine Mormon Claims?

Christians have definite responsibility toward any teaching which is presented as truth. We should be eager to learn anything which has a bearing on God's Will for us. This was clearly the attitude of the early disciples. Reflect on the words, "gladly" and "readiness of mind" in *Acts 2:41* and *17:11*. This does not mean, however, that we should swallow every doctrine that comes along. Quite to the contrary, we are taught to "Prove all things", then, and only then, to "hold fast to that which is good" - *1 Thess. 5:21*. The noble Bereans of *Acts 17*, "searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so." John tells us to "try the spirits whether they are of God . . ." - *1 John 4:1*. So, because of the claims and successes of Mormonism, Christians ought to give it a serious and careful examination.

But our duty does not end there. Should we discover error and inadequacy in the Mormon claims, we are further obligated to expose it to the world for what it is. Paul said, "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, *but rather reprove them*" - *Eph. 5:11*.

While the above is all the authorization we need to examine and consequently oppose Mormonism, we nevertheless have found it interesting that at least one early Mormon writer encouraged such examination. Orson Pratt was one of the original "twelve apostles" of Mormonism. He has stated more succinctly than any other, the terrible issues at stake regarding *The Book of Mormon*. Pratt wrote:

"This book must be either *true* or *false*. If true, it is one of the most important messages ever sent from God to man, affecting both the temporal and eternal interests of every people under heaven . . . If false, it is one of the most cunning, wicked, bold deep-laid impositions ever palmed upon the world, calculated to deceive and ruin millions who will sincerely receive it as the word of God . . ." - Orson Pratt's Works, 1899 Edition, p. 63.

Who can disagree with this statement? Pratt further wrote:

"If after a rigid examination, it be found an imposition, it should be extensively published to the world as such; the evidences and arguments upon which the imposture was detected should be clearly and logically stated, that those who have been sincerely yet unfortunately deceived, may perceive the nature of the deception, and be reclaimed, and that those who continue to publish the delusion, may be exposed and silenced, not by physical force, neither by persecutions, bare assertions, nor ridicule, but by strong and powerful arguments - by evidences adduced from scripture and reason." - *Ibid.*, p. 69.

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We can only concur with Pratt's statement and interpret it as an open invitation.

Actually, Pratt was only repeating, in principle, what Joseph Smith represented to be a command of God in *Doctrine And Covenants 71:7*:

"Wherefore, confound your enemies; call upon them to meet you both in public and in private; and inasmuch as ye are faithful their shame shall be made manifest."

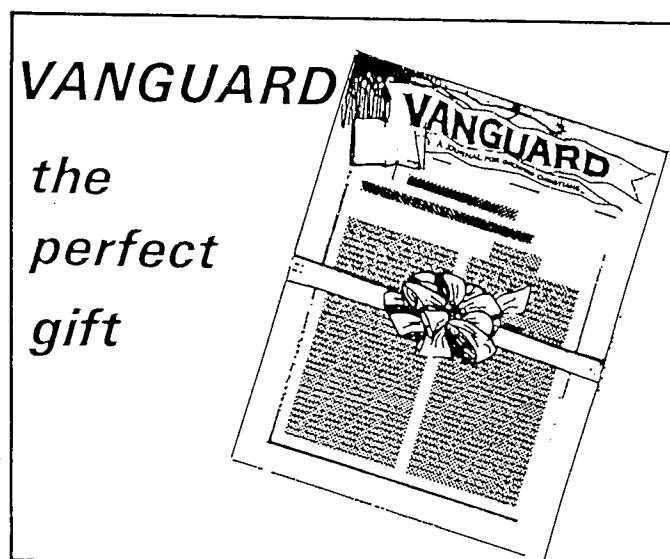


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It is sad, but true, fact that not many modern Mormons share Orson Pratt's enthusiasm toward examination of their doctrine. Very few Mormons indeed have been willing to obey what they claim is revelation and meet those who oppose them in open, public discussion of their teachings.

Nevertheless, the reasons and authorization for such examination are clearly established.

To Be Continued



Lectures on Mormonism

The Attitude of Mormonism Toward The Bible

In order to understand the Mormon rationale for and attachment to *The Book of Mormon* and other "latter-day revelations", we need to be familiar with their attitude toward the Bible.

One of the hardest public critics of the Bible among the Mormons was the "apostle" Orson Pratt. Pratt took the position in both pulpit and print that the Bible had been hopelessly corrupted through the centuries and, therefore, could not possibly be considered as sufficient guide. In the book previously referred to, Pratt wrote:

"What shall we say then, concerning the Bible's being a sufficient guide? Can we rely upon it in its present known corrupted state, as being a faithful record of God's word? We all know that but a few of the inspired writings have descended to our times, which few quote the names of some twenty other books which are lost, and it is quite certain that there were many other inspired books that even the names have not reached us. What few have come down to our day, have been mutilated, changed and corrupted, in such a shameful manner that no two manuscripts agree. Verses and even whole chapters have been added by unknown persons; and even we do not know the authors of some whole books; and we are not certain that all those which we do know were wrote [sic] by inspiration. Add all this imperfection to the uncertainty of the translation, and who, in his right mind, could, for one moment, suppose the Bible in its present form to be a perfect guide? *Who knows that even one verse of the whole Bible has escaped pollution, so as to convey the same sense now that it did in the original?* [Emphasis mine - RHW] Who knows how many important doctrines and ordinances necessary to salvation may be buried in oblivion in some of the lost books? Who knows that even the ordinances and doctrine that seem to be set forth in the present English Bible, are anything like the original?" - *Pratt's Works*, P. 140.

The above statement comes as quite a shock to some folks who have been under the impression that

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Mormons are a "Bible-believing" people. It is true that many modern Mormons affirm their confidence in the Bible. But this only proves their ignorance of their own doctrine or gross inconsistency.

If the Bible is indeed as corrupt and unreliable as Pratt seemed to think, it again shows considerable inconsistency when he and his modern counterparts try to use the Bible to establish some of their doctrines. We need to impress on them that they cannot have it both ways. We must not let them run to Ezekiel 37, 1 Corinthians 15:29, etc., when they feel such are favorable to their doctrine, and then turn right around and reject other passages which they feel are damaging to them, on the ground they are unreliable. If, as Pratt said, Mormons cannot *know* that *even one verse* of the Bible has escaped corruption and mistranslation, then how can they do anything but reject it entirely? But, if they should consistently reject the Bible, then they would have to give up a substantial part of *The Book of Mormon* as well, since it contains hundreds of verbatim quotations from the King James Version of the Bible! So they find themselves in a very difficult and untenable position. As a matter of fact, there are *twenty-six complete chapters* of the Bible found intact in *The Book of Mormon*. These are - Isaiah 2 through 14, 18, 19, 21, 48 through 52, and 54; Matthew 5 through 7 and 1 Corinthians 13. These twenty-six chapters constitute *11 percent* of the total chapters in the Utah Edition of *The Book of Mormon*, and *23 percent* of the chapters in the Independence, Mo. Edition. Are we to say that somewhere between 11 and 23 percent of *The Book of Mormon* is corrupted and unreliable?! Verily, how unequal are the legs of the lame and false teachers.

A characteristic Mormon defense at this point is to suggest that Orson Pratt's views are not accepted as authoritative by modern Mormons. We

reply by observing three important facts: First, Pratt's position on the Bible has never been *renounced by the LDS Church*; Second, his writings are still in print and being sold today under the auspices of the LDS Church; and, Third, Pratt was merely repeating and enlarging upon what he had first read in *The Book of Mormon*. Compare these statements in *The Book of Mormon* with what Pratt wrote:

"And after they go forth by the hand of the twelve apostles of the Lamb, from the Jews unto the Gentiles, thou seest the foundation of a great and abominable church, which is most abominable above all other churches; [Mormons usually explain this is the Roman Catholic Church - RHW] for behold, *they have taken away from the gospel of the Lamb many parts which are plain and most precious; and also many covenants of the Lord have they taken away.* And all this have they done that they might blind the eyes and harden the hearts of the children of men. Wherefore, thou seest that after the book hath gone forth through the hands of the great and abominable church, that *there are many plain and precious things taken away from the book, which is the book of the*

Lamb of God." [Above emphasis mine - RHW] - *1 Nephi 13:26-28* (Utah Edition, p. 35-36, RLDS Edition.)

So, as you can see, it really does not matter if our Mormon friends wish to reject the statements of Orson Pratt. They are still saddled with the equivalent views in *The Book of Mormon*.

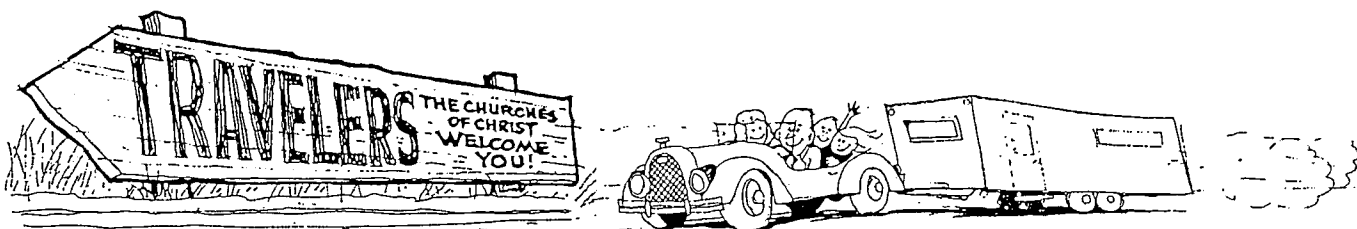
Thinking through the consequences of their position on the Bible is a depressing experience. They want us to believe that shortly after 100 A.D. the Bible became so unreliable that, in the words of *The Book of Mormon*:

"... because of these things which are taken away out of the gospel of the Lamb, an exceeding great many do stumble, yea, insomuch that satan hath great power over them." - *1 Nephi 13:29* or p. 36.

This means that for over 17 centuries - until 1830 - God had left mankind without any guide except a Bible which was so unreliable as to cause people to stumble into Satan's power. Such a concept of God is not worthy of a people who claim to love Him.

But, as we shall see, this attitude toward the Bible is one which they *must* espouse at all costs, as it is the very basis of their defense of *The Book of Mormon* and other "latter-day revelations".

-To be continued -



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Lectures on Mormonism - III

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Completeness of New Testament Eliminates the Book of Mormon

Why do the Mormons insist that the Bible is incomplete and corrupted? The answer is simply because this is the only way to justify the existence of another "revelation". It should be obvious that if *all* truth that God intended for man is contained in the Bible, that leaves no room for *The Book of Mormon* and other "latter-day revelations". Orson Pratt expressed the position very clearly:

"If it could be proven from scripture that God had revealed all that He ever intended to reveal, then a professed revelation would not require investigation; for it would be known at once, that everything of the kind was an imposition. It would be folly in the extreme to inquire whether a professed revelation were true or false; for if God had declared in His word that no more was to be given, all writings or books purporting to be a new revelation could not be otherwise than false." - *Orson Pratt's Works*, p. 70.

This is an extremely significant point. It is really *the* crucial issue, the resolution of which makes all other considerations irrelevant. Let us therefore direct our attention to this matter.

1. *Jesus promised ALL TRUTH to the apostles.*

Jesus said to the apostles: "Howbeit when he the Spirit of truth, is come, he, will guide you into *all truth*. . . " - John 16:13. There cannot be any more truth than "all truth". So, either Jesus intended for the apostles to receive the Mormon "truths" or else they are no part of truth. But, did the apostles *receive* "all truth" by means of the Holy Spirit?

2. *The apostles received ALL TRUTH.*

The apostle Peter affirmed: "According as his

divine power hath given unto us *all things* that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue."

- 2 Peter 1:3. See also Ephesians 3:5; 1 Cor. 2:12-13, etc. Notice the apostolic claim was that they indeed received that which Jesus promised - ALL truth. But these men did not receive *The Book of Mormon*, admittedly. The conclusion is inescapable: *The Book of Mormon* is not the truth.

3. *They delivered what they received.*

One has but to read the book of Acts to observe that what the apostles were promised, even what they received, they also delivered. In Romans 6:17, Paul speaks of "that *form* of doctrine which was delivered you (whereunto ye were delivered - ASV)". The truth, into which the apostles and prophets were guided by the Spirit, constituted a "Form" or "pattern" which they instructed to be passed on to others. Paul instructed Timothy, "Hold fast the *form* of sound words, which thou hast heard of me. . . " - 2 Timothy 1:13. Also, Timothy was commanded, "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." - 2 Timothy 2:2. Observe that the "form of doctrine" (all truth) received by Paul, was committed to another man (Timothy), who was instructed to commit it to still other "faithful men", who, in turn, were to pass it on to others. Thus, it becomes clear that the apostolic word was to be the sufficient standard of authority to be distributed among all disciples.

Another pertinent fact regarding this comprehensive body of truth from the apostolic men, is that their delivering of it was a "one-time shot". It was done by them "one time for all time". This is the import of Jude 3, where the writer urges, ". . . that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was *once delivered* unto the saints." The Greek word for "once", used by Jude, is HAPAX, which J.F. Thayer defines as, "Used of what is so done as to be of perpetual validity and never need repetition once for all." - *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, p. 54. Most translations after the King James Version render the word, "once for all". The same word is used in Hebrews 9:27,28 and 10:10, where the "once for all" meaning is clear. Jude 3 precludes the idea that "the faith" had to be "re-delivered" in 1830 or any other time.

4. *The truth was recorded in writing.*

The only way the apostolic teaching which contained "all truth" could come to us today would be in written form. As a matter of well-known fact, we do have that which was given to the apostles and delivered in the 1st Century - the New Testament scriptures. The New Testament penmen wrote with the understanding that their work was to be a comprehensive standard of authority. The following list was used by Brother Eldred Stevens in 1952 when he debated a Roman Catholic priest by the name of Eric Beevers:

The Scriptures Furnish:

1. All necessary things that Jesus did.
John 20:30-31
2. All necessary things that Jesus taught
Acts 1:1-2
3. Certainty of His actions and teachings
Luke 1:3-4
4. Belief in Jesus as the Christ . . . John 20:30-31
5. Life in the Name of Jesus . . . John 20:30-31
6. Fellowship with the apostles . . . 1 John 1:3
7. Joy that is full 1 John 1:4
8. Protection against sin 1 John 2:1
9. Blessings of God Rev. 1:3
10. Revelation of the mysteries
Rom. 16:25-26, Eph. 3:3
11. Commands of the Lord 1 Cor. 14:37
12. Understanding equalling Paul's . . . Eph. 3:4
13. Memory of what apostles preached
2 Pet. 1:15
14. Teaching of the Holy Ghost . . . 2 Pet. 1:21
15. Criterion for recognizing true prophet
2 John 10; Acts 17:11
16. Knowledge of what "will come to pass" . . .
Rev. 1:1
17. "Every good work" 2 Tim. 3:17

After reading all of these scripture references carefully, we might ask: What more could we possibly need than these things which are furnished by the written word?

5. *The scriptures guaranteed against corruption*

Our Mormon friends might well agree with us, at least in part, to this point. But, as we have already seen, they claim that the original scriptures became corrupted and even parts deleted. What does that part of the scriptures which we possess, say about the possibility of corruption?

Peter declared: "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of *incorruptible*, by the word of God, *which liveth and abideth for ever*." - 1 Peter 1:23. Any man who has the audacity to affirm that the word can be or has been corrupted, flies in the face of this passage. (See also Psalms 12:6-7). But what is the "word of God" which "lives and abides for ever"? Even from the Mormon point of view, it

could not possibly be "continuous revelation", for, remember, they believe that revelation ceased by the end of the 1st century in the Old World and by 421 A.D. in the New World, not to be "alive" again until 1830. So, what was it that has continued from the 1st Century right on through to the present hour? It is, of course, the New Testament scripture. Observe 1 Peter 1:25, where Peter positively identifies the enduring word about which he is speaking: "But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And *this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.*" Therefore, the same word preached by the apostles is that which God has guaranteed will "live and abide forever", Mormon doctrine to the contrary, notwithstanding!

It is a matter of some interest that the scholars who have studied the thousands of available ancient New Testament manuscripts, unanimously conclude that the New Testament text has been transmitted to us essentially as they were written, without addition or subtraction. Even one Mormon scholar agrees. We are speaking of *Dr. Richard Lloyd Anderson, Professor of History and Scripture at Brigham Young University*. Dr. Anderson wrote:

"In tracing the history of manuscript investigation, the student finds that two great facts emerge. First, no new manuscript discovery has produced serious differences in the essential story. This survey has disclosed the leading textual controversies, and together they would be well within one percent of the text. Stated differently, all manuscripts agree on the essential correctness of 99% of the verses in the New Testament. The events and the great truths contained there are agreed upon by all major manuscripts of the New Testament.

"The second great fact that such a survey demonstrates is the progress that has placed the world in possession of manuscripts very near the time of their writing. . . ." [At this point, Dr. Anderson quoted from Sir Frederic Kenyon, a great scholar who affirmed the accuracy of the New Testament text - RHW]

"*We are now much closer to the time of the writing of some New Testament books than when Kenyon made the foregoing confident appraisal, and we possess other confirming manuscripts. There is more reason today, then, to agree with him that we possess the New Testament 'in substantial integrity' and to underline that 'the variations of text are so entirely questions of detail, not of essential substance.'*" - from *Papers Of The Fourteenth Annual Symposium On The Archaeology Of The Scriptures*, presented April 13, 1963, pages 57 & 58.

We have established that the apostles were

promised *ALL* truth; that they received *ALL* truth; that they delivered *ALL* truth, "once for all", in written form; and that that word has God's guarantee that it would "live and abide forever". Since we have, therefore, *all* truth in the New Testament today, this leaves no room for any other purported "revelation".

We respectfully submit that this proves beyond doubt that neither *The Book of Mormon*, nor any other "latter-day revelation" is part of the truth.

To be Continued



Lectures on Mormonism - IV

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Mormonism Contradicts The Bible

In the last section we concluded that since the Bible is the *final* and *complete* revelation of God to man, Mormonism, therefore, cannot be otherwise than false. The accuracy of this conclusion is verified by other lines of evidence. If Mormonism is, in fact, the product of human wisdom, we should expect to find in its writings discrepancies and contradictions, especially when compared to the Bible. We propose to demonstrate that such contradictions between the Mormon "inspired" literature and the Bible actually exist. We realize, of course, that sometimes two statements which only *appear* to be contradictory can be satisfactorily reconciled by carefully considering all the facts. But what we shall be considering in this lecture will be *actual, irreconcilable* contradictions between the Bible and Mormonism.

The Mormon Priesthood And The Bible

Remember that the principal characters of *The Book of Mormon* are the family of Lehi, who are said to have left Palestine for this continent about the time of the Prophet Jeremiah. A number of references are found in *The Book of Mormon* where the claim is made that these characters obeyed the Law of Moses. For instance:

"And we did observe to keep the judgments, and the statutes, and the commandments of the Lord in all things according to the law of Moses." - 2 Nephi 5:10 (p. 95 RLDS).

Also:

"And, notwithstanding, we believe in Christ, we keep the law of Moses, and look forward with steadfastness unto Christ until the law shall be fulfilled." - 2 Nephi 25:24 (p.143).

Keeping the above claim carefully in mind, recall that the Law of Moses permitted only those of the sons of Aaron, and of the tribe of Levi to be Priests. (See Exodus 28:1; Numbers 3:10; etc.). As a matter of fact, our Lord Himself could not have been a High Priest on the earth because He was not of the Tribe of Levi (Hebrews 7:13-14; 8:4).

It is true that *The Book of Mormon* represents Lehi and his righteous descendants, the Nephites, as doing many things found in the Law of Moses. In fact, they are shown to be officiating in *priestly* functions:

"And it came to pass that they did rejoice exceedingly, and did offer sacrifice and burnt offerings unto the Lord." - 1 Nephi 5:9 (p.14).

"And it came to pass that I, Nephi, did consecrate Jacob and Joseph that they should be *priests* and teachers over the land of my people." - 2 Nephi 5:26 (p.97) [Jacob and Joseph were the sons of Nephi. - RHW].

The problem here is that *The Book of Mormon* elsewhere states that the Nephites were *not* of the priestly tribe of Levi! Notice the following texts:

"And it came to pass that my father, Lehi, also found upon the plates of brass a genealogy of his fathers; wherefore, he knew that he was a descendant of Joseph; yea, even that Joseph who was the son of Jacob." - 1 Nephi 5:14 (p. 15).

"And Aminadi was a descendant of Nephi, who was the Son of Lehi, who came out of the land of Jerusalem, who was a descendant of Manasseh, who was the son of Joseph." - Alma 10:3 (p. 334).

The Nephites are said to be *Manessehites*, not Levites, yet some of them are found to be functioning as priests and, at the same time, reported to be "keeping the Law of Moses", which Law authorizes only Levites to the priestly office! But, this is the kind of discrepancy we expect to find in a system of error.

Such discrepancies regarding the priesthood do not end with the above. In the *Pearl of Great Price*, 56:69, Smith claims that in May 1829, no less personage than John the Baptist appeared to both him and Oliver Cowdery, laid his hands upon them, thereby conferring the *Aaronic Priesthood*! Youngsters hardly in their teens have this "priesthood" conferred on them in the LDS Church today. We have already seen from the Bible that only the descendants of Aaron could have this priesthood. But we are asked to believe that Smith and Cowdery, two uncircumcised Gentiles, could receive this priesthood that even Jesus Christ could not have! (See again Hebrews 7:13-14; 8:4).

Brigham Young once made an effort to explain how men of Gentile blood could receive that priesthood which was reserved for only certain ones among the Jews. Young declared:

"The Book of Mormon came to Ephraim, for Joseph Smith was a pure Ephraimite, and the Book of Mormon was revealed to him, and while he lived he made it his business to search for those who believed the Gospel.

"Again, if a pure Gentile firmly believes the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and yields obedience to it, in such a case I will give you the words of the Prophet Joseph - 'When the Lord pours out the Holy Ghost upon that individual he will have spasms, and you would think that he was going into fits.'

"Joseph said that the Gentile blood was actually cleansed out of their veins, and the blood of Jacob made to circulate in them; and the revolution and change in the system were so great that it caused the beholder to think they were going into fits." - *Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 11, p. 269.

Brigham Young's "explanation" is not only humorous, but it serves only to compound the difficulty. For, remember that the priesthood in the law of Moses was limited to those in the tribe of Levi - not Ephraim! Recall also that the Book of Mormon characters were supposed to be of the half-tribe of Manasseh (Alma 10:3), not Ephraim. Young not only missed the teaching of the Bible, but appears to have confused his Book of Mormon teaching!

Another "priesthood" which exists in the LDS organization is the *Melchizedek Priesthood*, Peter, James, and John supposedly appeared to Smith and Cowdery not long after May, 1829, and conferred this priesthood upon them (*Pearl of Great Price*, 56:72). The priesthood of Melchizedek is certainly the subject of Bible teaching. Melchizedek was the King of Salem, and the priest of the Most High God in the days of Abram (Genesis 14:18). No further mention is made in the Bible of Melchizedek until we come to a cryptic reference in Psalms 110:4 about one whom God had sworn

would be "a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek". The statement of this prophetic psalm would remain a mystery were it not for the fact that in the book of Hebrews, this very passage is repeatedly quoted with reference to *only one Person*: Jesus Christ, our High Priest - "Called of God an high priest after the order of Melchizedek". (See Hebrews 5:5-6, 9-10; 6:19-20; 7:11-17, 20-24, & 28 where every reference is to Jesus alone.) According to the Bible, there was to be *only one more priest* similar to Melchizedek, and that is fulfilled in the High Priesthood of Jesus.

We shudder to recall that God caused the earth to swallow Korah and company when they sought the priesthood to which they were not entitled (Numbers 16). Saul lost a kingdom because, among other things, he "forced himself" to assume the prerogatives of the priests (1 Sam. 13). Uzziah received the curse of leprosy until the day of his death, because he tried to function as a priest which 'appertained not unto him' (2 Chron. 26). But the evil deeds of all these bold usurpers are made to seem less reprehensible in the face of the presumptions of Joseph Smith, Jr. For, he not only arrogated to himself the Aaronic priesthood which even Jesus Christ could not have, but also claimed possession of the Melchizedek priesthood which belonged to the Son of God alone!!

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One final word regarding the Mormon priesthood and the teaching of the Bible: In Hebrews 5:1 we learn that *every* high priest was ordained of God in order that they might "offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins". The Old Testament priests qualified in that they offered the blood of animals for sin. Jesus Christ qualifies as High Priest in that He offered His own precious blood for the sins of man. Pray tell, what "gifts and sacrifices for sin" were offered by Joseph Smith? And, what sacrifices are being offered for sin by the multitude of Mormon High Priests throughout the world today?

Mormon teaching on the priesthood plainly contradicts what is taught in the Bible.

To Be Continued

Lectures on Mormonism - V

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Mormonism Contradicts The Bible -2

Keep in mind that we are working from the well-known premise that Truth does not contradict Truth. If we can demonstrate that the Mormon "inspired" literature is in conflict with known truth - the Bible - this will be further evidence of the falsity of this religious system.

The God of Mormonism and the Bible

The nature of Deity is one of the most fundamental subjects dealt with in the Bible. Virtually every Bible reader is familiar with the statements of scripture relating to the fact that *there is only one God*. To mention only a few: Mark 12:29 - "The Lord our God is one Lord"; Ephesians 4:6 - "... one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all"; Isaiah 44:8 - "Is there a God beside me? yea, there is no God, I know not any"; Isaiah 43:10 - "Before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me"; and Isaiah 44:6 - "I am the first and I am the last; and beside me there is no God."

In view of these plain passages, it might be surprising to some to learn that our LDS friends hold to two inter-related ideas: (1) that there are a plurality of gods; and (2) that man, if he is faithful, will someday become a god! This teaching is summarized for us by the late Joseph Fielding Smith, grand-nephew of Joseph Smith, Jr., Church Historian, apostle, and President of the LDS Church. Mr. Smith wrote:

"Joseph Smith taught a plurality of gods, and that man by obeying the commandments of God and keeping the whole law will eventually reach the power and exaltation by which he also will become a god."

- *Doctrines of Salvation*, Vol. 1, p. 98.

In a footnote attached to this sentence, Mr. Smith cites *Doctrines and Covenants* 132:17, 19-25, 29-32, 37, & 49, where these ideas are also expressed. The idolater is the only one mentioned in the Bible to whom is ascribed the idea of a plurality of gods. Paul said, "... there is none other God but one. For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,) but to us there is but one

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God, the Father," - 1 Corinthians 8:4-6. The god of Mormonism is clearly not the same as the God of the Bible.

But conflict with the Bible on this subject does not end here. Review quickly these familiar Bible statements: "God is a spirit. . ." - John 4:24; and, "A spirit hath not flesh and bones. . ." - Luke 24:39. Set over against these simple passages is *Doctrine and Covenants* 130:22 - "The Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man's. . .!"

Joseph Smith elaborated on the "tangible" nature of God at the funeral of a friend, King Follette. Smith is reported to have said,

"God himself was once as we are now, and is an exalted man, and sits enthroned in yonder heavens! That is the great secret. If the vail were rent today, and the great God who holds this world in its orbit, and who upholds all worlds and all things by his power, was to make himself visible - I say, if you were to see him today, you would see him like a man in form - like yourselves in all the person, image, and very form as a man; for Adam was created in the very fashion, image and likeness of God, and received instruction from, and walked, talked, and conversed with him, as one man talks and communes with another." - *The King Follett's Discourse*, p. 8.

The God of the Bible, being a spirit, does *not* have a body of flesh and bones - if we accept the words of Jesus. We have thus established another clear-cut contradiction between the Bible concept of God and that of Mormonism.

One of the more bizarre doctrines regarding the Father which came out of the Mormon system, seems to have been the brain-child of Brigham Young. Young declared:

"Now hear it, O inhabitants of the earth, Jew and Gentile, Saint and sinner! When our father Adam came into the garden of Eden, he came into it with a *celestial body*, and brought Eve, *one of his wives*, with him. He helped to make and organize this world. He is MICHAEL, the Archangel, the ANCIENT OF DAYS! about whom holy men have written and spoken - *HE is our FATHER and our GOD, and the only God with whom WE have to do.*" - *Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 1, p. 50.

This is the source of the "Adam-God" doctrine which modern Mormons vehemently deny. Reject it as they may, this still does not alter the fact that Brigham Young declared it openly on more than one occasion. Joseph Fielding Smith, and other Mormon apologists, insisted that Young's statements have been misunderstood and misrepresented. All we can do is view his own words and judge how Young's contemporaries understood his statements. Heber C. Kimball, Mormon leader and apostle, made the following public declaration not long after Brigham Young's original pronouncement:

"I have learned by experience that there is but one God that pertains to this people, *and He is the God that pertains to this earth - the first man.* [emphasis mine - RHW] That first man sent his own Son to redeem his brethren; his life was taken, his blood shed, that our sins might be remitted." - *Journal of Discourses*, Vol. IV, p. 1.

So, there can be no doubt that this "Adam-God" identity was taught at one time. We are, of course, happy that modern Mormons reject this absurd doctrine. But, in doing so, they challenge the testimony of Brigham Young, who was the second President, Prophet, and Seer of their church, indicting him as a false prophet. If they can consistently question his authority, then we suggest they also challenge the authority of the first "Prophet", Joseph Smith, Jr.

It is obvious that one cannot accept the Bible and at the same time agree with the Mormon concept of the nature and identity of God.

Mormonism And The Virgin Birth

We now proceed to show a direct contradiction between the tenets of Mormonism and one of the most treasured doctrines of the Bible - the Virgin Birth of Christ. As we shall see, this is directly related to the preceding material.

In Matthew 1:18-20, we read the familiar passage:

"Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, *she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.* . . . Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost."

In view of other teaching, which we shall consider in a moment, it is surprising to find that *The Book of Mormon* agrees with the Bible at this point:

"And behold, he shall be born of Mary, at Jerusalem [note conflict with Bible here - RHW] which is the land of our forefathers, she being a virgin, a precious and chosen vessel, who shall be overshadowed and *conceive by the power of the Holy Ghost*, and bring forth a son, yea, even the Son of God." - Alma 7:10 (p. 323 RLDS) [above emphasis mine - RHW].

Now, compare the above with the pronouncements of "President and Prophet" Brigham Young:

"When the virgin Mary conceived the child Jesus, the Father had begotten him in his own likeness. *He was not begotten by the Holy Ghost.* . . ."

". . . . Jesus, our elder brother, was begotten *in the flesh* by the same character that was in the garden of Eden, and who is our father in Heaven.

". . . Now remember from this time forth, and for ever, *that Jesus Christ was not begotten by the Holy Ghost.*" - *Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 1, pp. 50-51.

One year and three months after the above statement was made, Young again declared:

". . . for he is the ONLY-begotten of the Father, which could not be if the Father did not actually beget him *in person.*" - *Ibid.*, p. 238.

In addition to reiterating the "Adam-God" idea, notice the outright denial of the Biblical affirmation that Jesus was conceived "of the Holy Ghost". But, more shocking than this, reflect on Young's statements that Jesus was begotten "*in the flesh*" and "*in person*" by the Father, who, according to their teaching, "*hath a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man's.*" (An "*in person*". "*in the flesh*" causing of Mary to conceive, cannot be otherwise than a grotesque denial of the Virgin Birth of Jesus!

There are many other contradictions between the writings of Mormonism and the Bible. Some are at least as obvious and perhaps better known than the few we have presented. However, it is not within the purview of these lectures to exhaust all the available evidence. We set out merely to demonstrate that there are serious, irreconcilable contradictions between Mormonism and the Bible which reinforces the conclusion that the Mormon system is not of God.

We believe we have accomplished that purpose.

- To Be Continued-

Lectures on Mormonism - VI

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Contradictions In Mormon Writings - 1

As we have suggested before, it is with no surprise that we observe irreconcilable contradictions between Mormon literature and the Bible. But this same phenomenon is also observable between the recognized "inspired works" of Mormonism. Such contradictions can be accounted for only by concluding that the Mormon system is of human origin.

A Contradiction Concerning Polygamy

For some fifty years after Joseph Smith introduced the subject, the practice of polygamy was a source of persecution and internal strife for the Mormons. To this very day there are renegade "fundamentalist" groups who still defend and practice polygamy, claiming that they are the only ones true to the Mormon "restoration". It was not until 1890 that Mormon President Wilford Woodruff issued the famous "Manifesto" which, in effect, removed official endorsement of polygamy. However, the "inspired" statements in both *The Book of Mormon* and *Doctrine and Covenants* regarding polygamy still remain. It might be a matter of astonishment to some that these statements are contradictory, as we now proceed to demonstrate.

The only thing to be found in *The Book of Mormon* regarding polygamy is plain, unequivocal condemnation of the practice:

"Behold, David and Solomon truly had many wives and concubines, which thing was abominable before me, saith the Lord. . . . Wherefore, my brethren, hear me, and hearken to the word of the Lord; For there shall not any man among you have *save it be one wife*; and concubines he shall have none." - *Jacob 2: 24,27* (p. 171 RLDS) [emphasis mine, RHW]

Again,

"Behold, the Lamanites your brethren, whom ye hate because of their filthiness and cursing which hath come upon their skins, are more righteous than you; for they have not forgotten the commandment of the Lord, which was given unto your fathers - that they should have *save it were one wife*, and concubines they should have none. . . ." *Jacob 3: 5* (p. 173) [my emphasis, RHW].

Now, there can be absolutely no doubt that *The Book of Mormon*, on this particular issue, is consistent with the Bible in denouncing the practice of polygamy. As a matter of fact, this *Book of Mormon* teaching is consistent with *Section 101:4*, of the *original 1835 Edition of Doctrine and Covenants*, which reads as follows:

"Inasmuch as this church of Christ has been reproached with the crime of fornication, and polygamy: we declare that we believe, that one man should have one wife; and one woman but one husband, except in case of death, when either is at liberty to marry again."

This section was included in every Utah edition of *Doctrine and Covenants* until 1876, when it was then removed and *Section 132* (which authorized polygamy), was inserted!! Apparently it was felt that the credulity of the LDS members, however vast, could not abide two "revelations" in the same book - one commanding, and the other condemning, polygamy! But the newly-added *Section 132*, still contradicted the teaching of *The Book of Mormon*:

"David also received many wives and concubines, and also Solomon and Moses my servants, as also many others of my servants, from the beginning of creation until this time; and in nothing did they sin save in those things which they received not of me. David's wives and concubines were given unto him of me, by the hand of Nathan. . . and in none of

these things did he sin against me SAVE in the case of Uriah and his wife." - *Doctrine and Covenants* 132:38-39 [emphasis mine, RHS].

We fail to see how a contradiction could be more plain. On the one hand, *The Book of Mormon* states that the many wives and concubines of David and Solomon were "abominable" unto God; while, on the other hand, *Doctrines and Covenants* states, concerning the same practice of David and Solomon, that "in nothing did they sin"! Sometimes Mormon apologists attempt to reconcile these statements by suggesting that David sinned only when he took wives without the consent of God. However, notice the text in Section 132 above states that in the matter of having "wives and concubines", David sinned only in the single case of "Uriah and his wife". The contradiction is still there and will ever stand as eloquent testimony to the human origin of Mormonism.

A Contradiction Concerning The State of The Dead

One of the unique practices among the Utah Mormons is the performing of baptism in one of their temples, which baptism is usually on the behalf of some of their dead relatives who died without Mormonism. This practice explains the LDS penchant for genealogical research. Any faithful Mormon will tell us that this "baptism by proxy" will enable that dead relative to be judged as though he had submitted to proper baptism while yet alive. This practice is authorized by "revelation" in *Doctrine and Covenants*, Section 124, among other places.

However, this is another instance in which the teaching of *Doctrine and Covenants* is flatly contradicted by *The Book of Mormon*. *The Book of Mormon* has a great deal to say about the state of the dead. So far as the *wicked* are concerned, the following two statements are representative:

"For behold, if ye have procrastinated the day of your repentance even until death, behold, ye have become subjected to the spirit of the devil, and *he doth seal you his*; therefore, the spirit of the Lord hath withdrawn from you, and hath no place in you, and the devil hath all power over you; and *this is the final state of the wicked.*" - *Alma* 34:35 (p. 431).

Also,

"And, in fine, wo unto all those who die in their sins; for they shall return to God, and behold his face, *and remain in their sins.*" - *2 Nephi* 9:38 (p. 110) [above emphasis mine, RHW].

So, mark well the fact that *The Book of Mormon* affirms that when the *wicked* die, they will remain in their sins and this is their "final state". Among all the unbaptized, that leaves only the *infants* and the *ignorant*. *The Book of Mormon* speaks regarding these classifications, even discussing the subject of baptism, as follows:

"For behold that all little children are alive in Christ, *and also all they that are without the law*. For the power of redemption cometh on all them that have no law; wherefore, he that is not condemned, or he that is under no condemnation, cannot repent; and *unto such baptism availeth nothing* - But it is a mockery before God, denying the mercies of Christ, and the power of his Holy Spirit, *and putting trust in dead works.*" - *Moroni* 8: 22-23 (p. 770) [emphasis mine, RHW].

Now if it is true that the *wicked* die, go to their FINAL state, and REMAIN IN THEIR SINS, according to *The Book of Mormon*, obviously it would do no good to be baptized in behalf of any of them. But what about *infants* and the *ignorant*? Observe, please, that *The Book of Mormon* not only affirms, "unto such baptism availeth nothing", but also claims that to practice it in those cases constitutes "mockery before God, denying the mercies of Christ, and the power of his Holy Spirit, and putting trust in dead works"!

There is just no way to reconcile the "baptism for the dead" doctrine with *The Book of Mormon*. Since they are plainly contradictory, this confirms our conclusion that Mormonism cannot come from God; rather, it is from man.

-To Be Continued-

MEETINGS COMING UP

July 9-14. Second and Walnut Street, Paragould, Arkansas, with Jerry D. Eubanks doing the preaching. Local preacher is Paul C. Keller.

August 7-11. Millertown, Kentucky, with J. David Tant preaching.

September 4-7. Thayer Street, Akron, Ohio, an annual series of lectures, with a number of brethren speaking.

.....

LECTURES ON MORMONISM - VII

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Contradictions in Mormon Writings -2

Again we remind you that *truth* does not *contradict truth*. We are demonstrating that there are, in fact, actual, irreconcilable contradictions in the "inspired" literature of Mormonism.

A Contradiction Regarding The Atonement of Christ

As we have already observed, there are many areas in which we find agreement between the Bible and some of the teachings of Mormonism. One such area of agreement relates to the effect of the sacrifice made by Christ. Here is the statement from *The Book of Mormon*:

"... until they shall be persuaded to believe in Christ, the Son of God, and the atonement, which is infinite for all mankind." - 2 Nephi 25:16. [above emphasis mine - RHW]

However, "President, Prophet, and Seer" Brigham Young contradicted this doctrine of Christ's infinite atonement in one of the most chilling and shocking positions to be taken by a religious leader.

Young declared in a sermon at the Bowery, Salt Lake City, on September 21, 1856, the following:

"There are sins that men commit for which they cannot receive forgiveness in this world, or in that which is to come, and if they had their eyes open to see their true condition, they would be perfectly willing to have their blood spilt upon the ground, that the smoke thereof might ascend to heaven as an offering for their sins; and the smoking incense would atone for their sins, whereas, if such is not the case, they will stick to them and remain upon them in the spirit world.

"... And furthermore, I know that there are transgressors, who if they knew themselves, and the only condition upon which they can obtain forgiveness, would beg of their brethren to shed their blood, that the smoke thereof might ascend to God as an offering to appease the wrath that is kindled against them, and that the law might have its course. I will say further; I have had men come to me and offer their

lives to atone for their sins.

"It is true that the blood of the Son of God was shed for sins through the fall and those committed by men, *yet men can commit sins which it can never remit.*"

- Journal of Discourses, Vol. IV, pp. 53-54
[Above emphasis mine -RHW]

Now, after you have recovered your breath and composure, listen to this alleged "Prophet" attempt to tie his devilish doctrine onto the sweet words of Jesus about 'loving your neighbor as yourself':

"All mankind love themselves, and let these principles be known by an individual, and he would be glad to have his blood shed. That eternal exaltation. Will you love your brothers or sisters likewise, when they have committed a sin that cannot be atoned for without the shedding of their blood? Will you love that man or woman well enough to shed their blood? That is what Jesus meant. . . .

"This is loving our neighbor as ourselves; if he needs help, help him; and if he wants salvation and it is necessary to spill his blood on on the earth in order that he may be saved, spill it. Any of you who understand the principles of eternity, if you have sinned a sin requiring the shedding of blood, except the sin unto death, would not be satisfied nor rest until your blood should be spilled, that you might gain that salvation you desire. *That is the way to love mankind.*" - Ibid., pp. 219-220. [Above emphasis mine - RHW]

The above is the main source of the infamous "Human Blood Atonement Doctrine", the remnants of which are still seen in the Utah Penal System. In 1977, a condemned murderer in Utah made national headlines by insisting that he not only be executed, but that his execution be administered by a *firing squad*, so that his blood might be spilled.

Now, in all fairness, and to the credit of the good sense of most modern Mormons, they almost unanimously reject Young's "blood-atonement" doctrine. But, again, this places them in an extremely awkward position of "picking and choosing" which statements they wish to accept from the one who claims to be a divinely-appointed "Prophet and Seer". But their rejection of this hideous teaching does not remove the fact that

Brigham Young *did* teach it within the framework of a system which claims to depend upon its "continuous revelation". Consistency would demand that they reject the entire system, as it is obvious that it is self-contradictory and, therefore, not of God.

A Contradiction Concerning The Godhead

In 1835, Joseph Smith published the original edition of *Doctrine And Covenants*. In this edition was to be found the *Lectures On Faith*, which consisted of seven lectures by Smith, accompanied with questions and answers. These lectures were included in every edition of *Doctrine And Covenants* until 1921, at which time it was removed. It is, however, still published by and available from the Latter-Day Saints publishing outlets.

In *Lecture 5, paragraph 2*, Smith wrote:

"There are *two personages* who constitute the great, matchless, governing, and supreme, power over all things . . . They are the Father and the Son - *the Father being a personage of spirit*, glory, and power, possessing all perfection and fullness, the Son, who was in the bosom of the Father, *a personage of tabernacle* . . ."

On the next page Smith asked:

"How many personages are there in the Godhead? Two: the Father and Son." [Emphasis mine - RHW]

This early doctrine of Smith is openly contradicted by the alleged revelation in *Doctrine And Covenants 130:22*:

"The Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man's: the Son also; but the Holy Ghost has not a body of flesh and bones, *but is a personage of Spirit*."

Surely the contradiction is plain for all to see: In this statement, notice that there are *three personages*, not two; and also, the Father is said to be a *personage of flesh and bones*, just like the Son. Whereas the *Lectures On Faith* contrasted the Father (personage of spirit) with the Son (personage of tabernacle), the *Doctrine And Covenants* asserts that the Father and Son are *both* fleshly, and in contrast to the Holy Ghost who is a "personage of Spirit". No wonder that it was eventually decided to remove the *Lectures On Faith*. It was hardly "expedient" to have such an obvious contradiction in the same book.

That modern Mormons believe there are three persons in the Godhead is confirmed by "Apostle" James E. Talmage:

"*The Godhead: The Trinity* - - Three personages composing the great presiding council of the universe have revealed themselves to man." -*The Articles of Faith*, p. 39.

Even, more recently, "Apostle" LeGrand Richards wrote:

"We have considered the mission and operations of the Holy Ghost as the *third personage* of the Godhead." - *A Marvelous Work And A Wonder*, p. 126. [Emphasis mine - RHW]

We must ask our Mormon friends which time Joseph Smith was telling the truth - when he taught there were *two personages* or, when he taught there were *three personages* in the Godhead? And, which is it going to be? Is the Father a *personage of spirit* or, is He a *personage of tabernacle*? The Mormons cannot have it both ways. The contradiction is there and is obvious.

There are numerous other instances in which we find irreconcilable contradictions in the so-called "inspired" writings of Mormonism. These we have presented are, we submit, more than sufficient to demonstrate that our initial conclusion was accurate: Mormonism is not of God.

-To Be Continued-

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