

Letter To Bob

By John A. Bonin

May 1998

Forward

In 1996 I met a man named Bob, who was a Mormon. He was a nice person with good morals and we became friends. As we got to know each other better we discussed (along with many other things), our religious beliefs. On this subject, however, he was dogmatic and intellectually arrogant that he knew more than non-Mormons. He would not listen to what others had to say about true Christianity. He was insistent that Mormonism was the true way to God. As Providence would have it, God had other things in mind, and Bob was suddenly thrown into Federal prison – for reasons related to the Internal Revenue Service. When I heard of this, the Lord started moving on my heart to write Bob a letter.

While in Federal prison, Bob was exposed to the Christian Bible, and started Bible study with some inmates who were Christians – for the most part because there was nothing else to do. As he participated in these studies he began questioning his Mormon beliefs. When my letter arrived he was ripe for the truth. After reading it, and getting to the bottom of the letter (where I urged him to repent of his Mormon beliefs and accept Jesus Christ as his personal Savior, he told me later that), he did so at once. His wife received a copy of the letter, and she also repented of her Mormon heretical beliefs.

When Bob got out of prison 6 months later, one of the things he did was to start contributing to various Mormon Websites, to help Mormons find a way out of their false beliefs. (Pay It Forward.)

In 2004 I met a neighbor who said he was a Mormon. As we started to become friends he impressed me as a thoughtful, kind, intelligent human being. (I have never met a Mormon who was not a kind, friendly person.) As time went on I felt led to share a copy of this letter with him. I asked him to take it home, read it, and pray about it. Three days later I met him again. He was red in the face and full of bluster. He kept saying, “Lies, lies, lies, is what you wrote! This is a bunch of lies. I don’t ever want to speak with you again!” I said to him, “Ben, I am really disappointed to hear that because I like you as a person - very much so. I had hoped we could continue to be friends.” There was a few seconds pause as he was collecting his thoughts, and then he said, “Well, I guess we can be friends, but I don’t ever want to discuss religion with you again.” Here we are three years later and Ben and I are still casual friends. We chat (over the fence, so to speak) frequently, but we have never discussed religion since that time. God willing, someday Ben will eventually repent of his Mormon beliefs and realize Jesus Christ is the only Son of God, repent of his sins, and ask Jesus to be his personal Savior.

If you are a Mormon, I pray that you will read this Letter to Bob with

an open, thoughtful, prayerful heart – asking God to lead you to His truth. He said in Jeremiah 29:13, “You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart.” I hope you find His truth while you are still are alive on planet Earth. To find out afterward will be too late! (“...it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment.” Heb 9:27)

Letter to Bob:
Written May 10, 1998

My Dear Friend,

I dislike “labels” very much. I *was* a “boy scout,” and I guess that will not offend anyone or embarrass me by saying that. Most of all, it DOES label my personality quite well - at least the boy scouts of 30 years ago. You know, Trustworthy, Loyal, Helpful, Friendly, etc. To label me with anything else is not entirely accurate because I never agree with anyone about everything they profess. Case in point, I guess I relate with the “Baptists” pretty well, but do not completely agree with everything, so I cannot say that I am Baptist. If I were to say that I was Baptist in front of a knowledgeable (about those types of things) person, then they would assume MANY things about my beliefs - some of which would not be true. So, I had better really understand all the Baptist beliefs if I am going to label myself a Baptist (or anything else, for that matter.) I hate to even use the phrase “Evangelical” or “Full Gospel,” because these have come to have different meanings than the words actually say. For the last couple of years I have un-labeled myself and am simply a “Bible-believing Christian.” Then I can start out on even ground when I discuss the things of the Lord with a Baptist, Methodist, Catholic, Mormon, or whatever.

I said all of that to say this: I am really concerned about what you currently, really, believe in. Do you have it sorted out? Two years ago you told me you were a Mormon. I did not say much to you at the time because the timing was not right, but that is when I started a real serious prayer campaign for you. That was about the time you told me that God had a “wife.” I just took it all in, and started praying that God would open your eyes to HIS *word*, and filter-out the (many-times) confusing tenants of man that we all are bombarded with. (Whether or not God has a wife is not important. Maybe He does. Maybe he doesn't. What is important about that is that you cannot pull out your Bible and prove it. It is an idea (of man) that is unscriptural, so “why bring it up?” Subsequent to that you told me you were seriously listening to John Hagee. My prayers were being answered. You were on track for the truth. Then you sent me a video about the service in Pensacola. I kept praying, as I knew you were searching, and I knew the promise of God that if you searched for

Him with all your heart that you would find him. I spoke to you about reading the Bible a couple of times and I felt that the words were falling on "deaf ears," so I let up on it rather than become a "nag." Then you ended up in the "big house" and I prayed that God would have His will with you. That the potter would form the clay - now that the potter had the clay's attention. In your last letter you put a label on yourself again when you repeated that you are a Mormon. I literally dropped my jaw when I read that! I thought, "please God, do not let him be telling people about You, and, be telling them that he is a Mormon. Any "baby in the Lord" that hears that might think that Mormon was an "OK" type of Christian - which they are NOT.

Now My friend, I know you said one of your big problems was discussing Mormon issues with people who have a lack of knowledge on the subject. I too find it disconcerting to debate a serious subject (like God) with ignorant people. However, I have that type of conversation almost daily, as most people are VERY ignorant about the word of God. Even (many) devoutly religious people have founded their basic beliefs on hear-say, innuendo, wives-tales and folk-lore. They argue and argue that they are correct, but when I ask them what their belief is "based-on" they can cite no serious foundation - certainly not the Word of God.

As you may have surmised by now (by looking at the thickness of this letter), it has taken me many days to write. I started compiling my notes in Florida, and worked my way up the coast. I took the time because I love you like a brother, and I feel you are in serious trouble. Your very soul (and that of others whom you influence) may be at stake. I pray that you will open your mind to what the (documented) facts of history and the Bible have to say concerning this matter. I know that old habits and old beliefs are hard to discard. They are like a dog with a bone, as we sometimes find our minds retreating back to them. I pray that the Lord will use me to point these things out to you. Please remember that what I am saying (and going to say) on the matter is said in "love" - not an attempt to agitate. At times I may be less than diplomatic (what else is new?) And other times it is just best to be "blunt" and straight to the point.

The best source on the subject of Mormonism is not simply talking to a Mormon or two. As finding the best source of information on the Catholic church would be an audience with the pope, or reading books written by popes, the best source of information on Mormonism will be articles and books written by the founders. If someone comes along later and says, "No. We Mormon's don't believe that," then, give them the hook, pull them off-stage, as they are not the authority on Mormon beliefs. Only the leaders are. (E.g. I have spoken with Catholics and I would tell them that Catholics believe (such-n-such) and they respond, "No, we don't believe that!" and I would have to show them in a Catholic book where that belief was outlined. IOW, many people do not really know the "official

position” of their own religions completely. You mentioned that Hank had misquoted Mormon beliefs in his book. If you think that what you are about to read (from me, here) is misquoted, or in error, then perhaps I should send you the bibliography from whence it came so you can do your own, independent, study on the subject of Mormonism - rather than what you already have come to believe from living it. There *may* be a large difference, as I seriously doubt if Hank said anything that is “academically in error” about Mormonism.

In the following enumeration of Mormon dogma I have pulled heavily from the best central source of information I know of, a book written by Dr. Walter Martin (*Kingdom of the Cults*), who documents everything with reference from whence the information came. It is the most “scientific” information available on the subject. It is not based on “wishful thinking” (or how My friend “wishes” or “hopes” or “thinks” the Mormons believe, or how My friend believes himself). Rather it is based on “official position” of the leaders. To better illustrate when I am quoting from this documented source, I will set the font to “blue,” and set my comments on that to black. In this way you can more easily discern what is IMHO and what is historic/scientific fact. Christ said, “ **He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.** So open your ears to what is being said My friend, and by the grace of God understand wherein is your eternal security.

First, let’s start with the definition of a “cult” according to Dr. Walter Martin. (You may define cult as something different, but let’s get on the same page of music here.) “A cult is any religious group which differs significantly in some one of more respects as to belief or practice from those religious groups which are regarded as the normative expressions of religion in our total culture.” You said in your letter that most people don’t even know of the 13 articles of faith, yet they dump on Mormonism. Let me explain why that is not important: If I make a thorough study of Jehovah’s Witnesses or Christian Science and I tell my friend that they are both cults, and should be avoided at the penalty of losing your soul, then my friend has the option of taking (much) time to thoroughly examine the facts of these religions, or, they can take my word for it that they are dangerous. (Depending on how much they respect me and/or my research, or how much time/interest they have in doing their own research.) Anyway, let’s say my friend decides to take my word for it. Later they run into a Christian Scientist practitioner (CS) who starts trying to explain why my friend should go to church with them. When my friend assimilates what they know at that point and tells the C S, “No, I am not interested in going because your church has very serious mis-teachings about Jesus Christ,” and the CS says, “What mis-teachings?” to which my friend responds, “Well, I’m not really

sure, I just know that CS is wrong,” then, of course the CS walks away thinking that my friend has a lack of knowledge on the subject. But is it really important to know all the chemical and scientific reasons why smoking is bad for your health, or simply stay away from it because you know it is bad for you?

As far as “ignorance,” let us decide what is germane. E.g., if I am not aware that George Washington was an avid butterfly collector in his youth, that does not make me ignorant of history. If I am not aware that George Washington was the first President of the United States, then I would have to plead ignorant (. Likewise, if I am not aware that Joseph Smith walked with a limp because he was kicked by a horse when he was twelve years old, that does not make me ignorant of Mormonism. However, I will be expounding on many *major* things about the Mormon beliefs that many people are probably ignorant about. Also, and this is *key,* I can be incorrect in my belief about whether Mary remained a Virgin after the birth of Jesus, and still get to heaven. However, I cannot be incorrect about the “virgin birth” and still get to heaven, as that is a major tenant of true Christianity. E.g., some things are incidental and other things are of major importance. Let’s not worry too much about incidentals, as they are usually the differences between whether a person claims to be a Baptist or a Methodist or a Presbyterian - which is no big deal. However, the difference between whether a person is a Baptist or a Mormon is a MAJOR, BIG deal - and the difference between heaven and hell, as **if you believe not that Jesus is the Son of God (not the spirit brother of Lucifer) then you cannot enter heaven.** (Paraphrase of Romans 10:9). But I am getting ahead of myself here. Let’s proceed with the “basics” of Mormonism. Not just to show you that I am making an informed statement when I say that Mormonism is a cult, but so that you may be fully aware of the major tenants upon which Mormonism is founded. (Which I know you *think* you already know. However, if you claim to love the Lord Jesus as your Savior, and believe in the true Virgin Birth of Christ, that God raised Christ from the dead, that Jesus is the only begotten Son of God, and that there is no other way to heaven except in belief in Him as your personal Savior, then you must have some of your facts about Mormonism different from that of the Mormon church. And if that is true (that you believe differently from the true Mormon church) then you have no business labeling yourself as a Mormon, as it does terrible damage to the body of Christ and other brothers in the Lord (who respect you.) If, on the other hand, you really do believe all that the Mormon church really teaches, then I hope that your recent, serious, studies of the Bible will deliver you from the darkness that has been shrouding your beliefs regarding the most valuable asset you currently control - the eternal salvation of your precious soul.

For My friend’s peace of mind (I certainly don’t want him to take

anything for granted () let's first start with a Historical Perspective of Mormonism: (Remember, words in blue are from Dr. Martin.)

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints is distinctive among all the religious cults and sects active in the United States in that it has by far the most fascinating history, and one worthy of consideration by all students of religions originating on the American continent. The Mormons, as they are most commonly called, are divided into two major groups, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, with headquarters in Salt Lake City, Utah, and The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints with headquarters in Independence, Missouri. Today, over 150 years after the movement's founding, the Mormons number more than 5 million adherents, own considerable stock in the agricultural and industrial wealth of America, and circle the earth in missionary activities, energetically rivaling evangelical Christianity. From its founding the Mormon Church has been characterized by thriftiness, zeal and an admirable missionary spirit. Promulgated as it is by determined, zealous, missionary-minded people who have a practical religion of "good works" and clean living, the Mormons each year spend millions of dollars in the circulation of the teachings of their chief' prophets, Joseph Smith and Brigham Young, while proselyting any and all listeners regardless of church affiliation.ⁱ

Those who would tend to write off the Mormons as an influential force in the United States would do well to remember that Mormons have more adherents listed in Who's Who in America than any other one religion, and this also holds true for the scientific honor societies of our nation. Mormon leaders have become powerful in almost all branches of American government, headed by former Secretary of Agriculture, Ezra Taft Benson, one of the Twelve Apostles who govern the Mormon Church: Treasury Secretary David M. Kennedy (now using his cabinet credentials effectively as an ambassador-at-large for the church); Treasurers Angela (Bay) Buchanan and the late Ivy Baker Priest; Education Secretary Terrel H. Bell; former Michigan governor George Romney; Marriner S. Eccles; three U.S. ambassadors to Scandinavia; and a dozen U.S. senators, to name but a few. Far from being an organization of minor influence, the Mormons are indeed a potent political and social force to be reckoned with, a fact that few informed persons would doubt.

Church Organization

The organization and general administration of the Mormon Church is directed by its "General Authorities." At the top is the First Presidency, assisted by a "Council of Twelve" apostles, the "First Quorum of the Seventy" and its Presidency, a "Presiding Bishopric," and the Patriarch of the Church. All authority resides in the Mormon "priesthood," established under the titles "Aaronic" (lesser) or

"Melchizedek" (higher), to either one of which nearly every active male Mormon twelve years of age or over, belongs. The Mormon Church administration is divided into territories made up of "wards" and "stakes," the former consisting of from five hundred to a thousand people. Each ward is presided over by a bishop and his two counselors. The wards are all consolidated into stakes, each of which is supervised by a stake president and two counselors, aided in turn by twelve high priests known as the "stake high council." Today there are approximately 8,900 wards, 1,400 stakes, 2,000 branches, and 180 missions functioning in the Mormon Church. These various auxiliary groups form a powerful coalition for mutual assistance among Mormons, and it is noteworthy that during the depression of 1929, the Mormon "storehouse" saw to it faithfully that few worthy members were in want of the necessities of life.

The average active Mormon is usually marked by many sound moral traits. He is generally amiable, almost always hospitable, and extremely devoted to his family and to the teachings of his church. (JB note: Mormons are some of the "nicest" people I ever met. I would love having them surround me as neighbors, as they are so personable.) Sad to say, however, the great majority of Mormons are in almost total ignorance of the shady historical and theological sources of their religion. (Which I *hope* is the case with you My friend, as if you *really* believe what they *really* teach, I had better step up my prayer campaign for you.) They are openly shocked at times when the unglamorous and definitely un-Christian background of the Mormon Church is revealed to them. This little known facet of Mormonism is "a side of the coin" which innumerable Mormon historians have for years either hidden from their people or glossed over in an attempt to suppress certain verifiable and damaging historical evidences. Such evidence we will review in the interest of obtaining a full picture of Joseph Smith's religion.

Early Mormon History

The seeds of what was later to become the Mormon religion were incubated in the mind of one Joseph Smith, Jr., "The Prophet," better known to residents of Palmyra, New York, in 1816, as just plain "Joe Smith." Joseph Smith, Sr., (his father) was a mystic, a man who spent most of his time digging for imaginary buried treasure. He was particularly addicted to Captain Kidd's legendary hoard! Besides this failing he sometimes attempted to mint his own money, which at least once brought him into decided conflict with the local constabulary. This fact is, of course, well-known to any informed student of Mormonism, and is bolstered by the testimony of the late Hon. Judge Daniel Woodard of the County Court of Windsor, Vermont, a former neighbor of the Smith family. Judge Woodard went on record in the Historical Magazine in 1870 with a statement to

the effect that the elder Smith definitely was a treasure hunter and that "he also became implicated with one Jack Downing, in counterfeiting but turned State's evidence and escaped the penalty".

The year 1820 proved to be the real beginning of the prophet's (Joseph Smith Jr.) call, for in that year he was allegedly the recipient of a marvelous vision in which God the Father and God the Son materialized and spoke to young Smith as he piously prayed in a neighboring wood. The prophet records the incident in great detail in his book, *The Pearl of Great Price* (Joseph Smith--History 1: 1-25), wherein he reveals that the two "personages" took a rather dim view of the Christian church, and for that matter of the world at large, and announced that a restoration of true Christianity was needed, and that he, Joseph Smith, Jr., had been chosen to launch the new dispensation. It is interesting to observe that Smith could not have been too much moved by the heavenly vision, for he shortly took up once again the habit of digging for treasure along with his father and brother, who were determined to unearth Captain Kidd's plunder by means of "peep stones," "divining rods," or just plain digging.ⁱⁱ

According to his mother, Mrs. Smith's statements (and prima facie evidence, at that), prove beyond a reasonable doubt that the prophet was a confirmed "Peek Stone" addict, that he took part in and personally supervised numerous treasure-digging expeditions, and further that he claimed supernatural powers which allegedly aided him in these searches. To remove all doubt the reader may have as to Smith's early treasure hunting and "Peek Stone" practices, we shall quote three of the best authenticated sources which we feel will sustain our contention that Smith was regarded as a fraud by those who knew him best. It should also be remembered that Joseph Smith, Sr., in an interview, later published in the *Historical Magazine* of May, 1870, clearly stated that the prophet had been a "Peek Stone" enthusiast and treasure-digger in his youth, and, further, that he had also told fortunes and located lost objects by means of a "Peek Stone" and alleged supernatural powers therein. Substantiating Joseph's father's account of his rather odd activities is the testimony of the Reverend Dr. John A. Clark after "exhaustive research" in the Smith family's own neighborhood.

(According to God's word in *Deut 18:10-14* He says: No one shall be found among you who makes a son or daughter pass through fire, or who practices divination, or is a soothsayer, or an augur, or a sorcerer,¹¹ or one who casts spells, or who consults ghosts or spirits, or who seeks oracles from the dead.¹² For whoever does these things is abhorrent to the LORD; it is because of such abhorrent practices that the LORD your God is driving them out before you.¹³ You must remain completely loyal to the LORD your God.¹⁴ Although these nations that you are about to dispossess do give heed

to soothsayers and diviners, as for you, the LORD your God does not permit you to do so. My friend, this very plainly says that no one who serves God can do what Smith did when he "had been a "Peek Stone" enthusiast and treasure-digger in his youth, and, further, that he had also told fortunes and located lost objects by means of a "Peek Stone" and alleged supernatural powers therein." God's true servant's may not be perfect (because they are human) but they certainly do not live life-styles participating in the things that are abhorrent to the Lord. Why would God choose someone like that when there are so many good men who sincerely strive to lead lives pleasing to God?)

According to Smith's account of this extraordinary revelation, which is recorded in the Pearl of Great Price (Joseph Smith--History 1:29-54), the angel Moroni, the glorified son of one Mormon, the man for whom the famous book of the same name is entitled, appeared beside Joseph's bedside and thrice repeated his commission to the allegedly awe-struck treasure hunter. Smith did not write this account down until some year's later, but even that fails to excuse the blunder he made in transmitting the angelic proclamation. This confusion appears chiefly in the earlier edition of the Pearl of Great Price wherein the former Moroni is named as messenger; yet in the latter, Joseph, with equal prophetic authority, identifies the messenger as Nephi, an entirely different character found in the Book of Mormon! This unfortunate crossing up of the divine communication system was later remedied by thoughtful Mormon scribes who have exercised great care to ferret out all the historical and factual blunders not readily explainable in the writings of Smith, Young and other early Mormon writers. In current editions, therefore, both the "revelations" agree by identifying Moroni as the midnight visitor. However, whether Nephi or Moroni carried the message to Smith apparently makes little difference to the faithful.

(Inspired scripture, absolutely, positively, does not have errors in the text that need to be corrected by anyone. Historians and scholars (down through the ages) have tried to prove the Bible wrong but have never been able to find any inaccuracies in it. It has always been correct. The apostle Paul said in 2nd Timothy 3:16, **All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness**; God is perfect. Therefore, any inspiration from Him is perfect, and without any error.)

Smith's infamous practice of polygamy was instituted at Kirtland and later confirmed by "Divine revelation." Some misinformed persons have declared that Smith was not a polygamist, but one needs only to search the famous Berrian collection in the New York Public Library for volumes of primary information to the contrary, written by

Mormon men and women who lived through many of these experiences and testified to the outright immorality of Smith and the leaders of the Mormon Church. Gradually, of course, polygamy filtered down through the entire Mormon Church so that it was necessary for the United States government to threaten to confiscate all Mormon property and to threaten them with complete dissolution in order to stamp out the then widely accepted practice.

As the Mormons grew and prospered in Nauvoo, Illinois, and as the practice of polygamy began to be known by the wider Mormon community and outsiders as well, increasing distrust of Prophet Smith multiplied, especially after one of his former assistants, John C. Bennett, boldly exposed the practice of polygamy in Nauvoo. When the prophet (or "general," as he liked to be known in this phase of his career) could tolerate this mounting criticism no more and ordered the destruction of its most threatening mouthpiece, an anti-Mormon publication entitled *The Nauvoo Expositor*, the State of Illinois intervened. The "prophet" and his brother, Hyrum, were placed in a jail in Carthage, Illinois, to await trial for their part in the wrecking of the *Expositor*. However, on June 27, 1844, a mob comprised of some two hundred persons stormed the Carthage jail and brutally murdered Smith and his brother, Hyrum, thus forcing upon the vigorously unwilling prophet's head the unwanted crown of early martyrdom, thus insuring his perpetual enshrinement in Mormon history as a "true seer." With the assassination of Joseph Smith, the large majority of Mormons accepted the leadership of Brigham Young, then forty-three years of age and the man who had previously led the Mormons from the wrath of the Missouri citizenry.

For more than thirty years, Brigham Young ruled the Mormon church, and as is still the case he inherited the divinely appointed prophetic mantle of the first prophet. So it is that each succeeding president of the Mormon church claims the same authority as Joseph Smith and Brigham Young - an infallible prophetic succession.

Young was a man of indomitable courage, possessed of a canny nature, but given to fits of ruthlessness now conveniently forgotten by Mormon historians. One such evidence of his determination to control Utah was the order which he gave to massacre over 100 non-Mormon immigrants in what has now become known as the infamous Mountain Meadows massacre. In this particular instance, for reasons known only to himself, Young entrusted to Bishop John D. Lee in 1857 the task of annihilating a wagon train of virtually helpless immigrants. This, Bishop Lee did faithfully, and 20 years later he was imprisoned, tried, convicted and executed by the government of the United States for this vicious, totalitarian action. In his memorable book, *The Confessions of John D. Lee*, a consistent

sore spot in the Mormon scheme of historical 'reconstruction' Lee confessed to his part in the infamous doings, but he swore that he acted upon the orders of Brigham Young. However, the testimony of some of his lieutenants and others connected with the massacre indicates beyond question that Young ordered and sanctioned the action. As we further study Mormon theology, it will become apparent that this was not at all beyond the limits of Young's character; he was the law in Utah; and as it has been so wisely observed, "power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely."

For the average faithful Mormon, one can not but have sympathy and regard. He is, by and large, honest, industrious, thrifty and zealous in both the proclamation and promulgation of his beliefs. One only regrets that he has accepted at face value a carefully edited "history" of the origin and doctrinal development of his religion instead of examining the excellent sources which not only contradict but irrefutably prove the falsity of what is most certainly a magnificent reconstructed history.

The "Mormon Bible"

Aside from the King James Version of the Bible, which the Mormons accept as part of the word of God "insofar as it is correctly translated," they have added the Doctrine of Covenants, the Pearl of Great Price, and the initial volume, the Book Mormon to the canon of what they would call authorized scripture--the "Four Standard Works." A great deal of research on the part of a number of able scholars and organizations has already been published concerning the Book of Mormon, and I have drawn heavily upon whatever documented and verifiable information was available. The task of validating the material was enormous, and so I have selected that information which has been verified beyond refutation and is available today in some of our leading institutions of learning (Stanford University, Union Theological Seminary, the Research Departments of the Library of Congress, the New York Public Library, and others).

The Mormons claim, Joseph Smith, Jr., unearthed Mormon's abridgment which was written in reformed Egyptian hieroglyphics upon plates of gold, and with the aid of Urim and Thummin (supernatural spectacles) translated the reformed Egyptian into English. It thus became the Book of Mormon, which was published in 1830, bearing the name of Joseph Smith, Jr., as "Author and Proprietor."

The purpose of the Book of Mormon

The purpose of the Book of Mormon and its mission generally eludes Christian theologians, archeologists, and students of Anthropology because of the many difficulties which the book introduces in the light of already established facts. But a Mormon explanation of the purpose of the book ought to be considered:

The stated purpose of the Book of Mormon, (in its introduction) is universal: to witness to the world the truth and divinity of Jesus Christ, and his mission of salvation through the gospel He taught.

(Sounds good, but that is only the tip of the iceberg.)

According to Joseph Smith then, Martin Harris, his colleague, obtained from the learned Professor Charles Anthon of Columbia University a validation of Smith's translation of the reformed Egyptian hieroglyphic characters found on the plates which Moroni made available to him. The difficulty with Smith's statement is that Professor Anthon never said any such thing, and fortunately, he went on record in a lengthy letter to Mr. E. D. Howe, a contemporary of Joseph Smith who did one of the most thorough jobs of research on the Mormon prophet and the origins of Mormonism extant. Howe has never been refuted, and because of this he is feared and hated by Mormon historians and not a few contemporary Mormons. Upon learning of Smith's claim concerning Professor Anthon, Mr. Howe wrote him at Columbia. Professor Anthon's letter reproduced here from Howe's own collection is a classic piece of evidence the Mormons would like very much to see forgotten.

New York, N.Y.
Feb. 17, 1834
Mr. E.D. Howe
Painesville. Ohio

Dear Sir:

I received this morning your favor of the 9th instant, and lose no time in making a reply. The whole story about my having pronounced the Mormonite inscription to be "reformed Egyptian hieroglyphics" is perfectly false. Some years ago, a plain, and apparently simple-hearted farmer, called upon me with a note from Dr. Mitchell of our city, now deceased, requesting me to decipher, if possible, a paper, which the farmer would hand me, and which Dr. Mitchell confessed he had been unable to understand. Upon examining the paper in question, I soon came to the conclusion that it was all a trick, perhaps a hoax. When I asked the person, who brought it, how he obtained the writing, he gave me, as far as I can now recollect, the following account: A "gold book" consisting of a number of plates of

gold, fastened together-in the shape of a book by wires of the same metal, had been dug up in the northern part of the state of New York, and along with the book an enormous pair of "gold spectacles"! These spectacles were so large, that, if a person attempted to look through them, his two eyes would have to be turned towards one of the glasses merely, the spectacles in question being altogether too large for the breadth of the human face. Whoever examined the plates through the spectacles, was enabled not only to read them, but fully to understand their meaning. All this knowledge, however, was confined at the time to a young man, who had the trunk containing the book and spectacles in his sole possession. This young man was placed behind a curtain, in the garret of a farm house, and being thus concealed from view, put on the spectacles occasionally, or rather, looked through one of the glasses, deciphered the characters in the book, and, having committed some of them to paper, handed copies from behind the curtain, to those who stood on the outside. Not a word, however, was said about the plates having been deciphered "by the gift of God". Everything, in this way, was effected by the large pair of spectacles, the farmer added, that he had been requested to contribute a sum of money towards the publication of the "golden hook," the contents of which would, as he had been assured, produce an entire change in the world and save it from ruin. So urgent had been these solicitations, that he intended selling his farm and handing over the amount received to those who wished to publish the plates. As a last precautionary step, however, he had resolved to come to New York, and obtain the opinion of the learned about the meaning of the paper which he brought with him, and which had been given him as a part of the contents of the book, although no translation had been furnished at the time by the young man with the spectacles. On hearing this odd story, I changed my opinion about the paper, and, instead of viewing it any longer as a hoax upon the learned, I began to regard it as a part of a scheme to cheat the farmer of his money, and I communicated my suspicions to him, warning him to beware of rogues. He requested an opinion from me in writing, which of course I declined giving, and he then took his leave carrying the paper with him. This paper was in fact a singular scrawl. It consisted of all kinds of crooked characters disposed in columns, and had evidently been prepared by some person who had before him at the time a book containing various alphabets. Greek and Hebrew letter, crosses and flourishes, Roman letters inverted or placed side ways were arranged in perpendicular columns, and the whole ended in a rude delineation of a circle, divided into various compartments, decked with various strange marks, and evidentially copied after the Mexican Calendar given by Humboldt, but copied in such a way as not to betray the source whence it was derived. I am thus particular as to the contents of the paper, inasmuch as I have frequently conversed with my friends on the subject, since the Mormonite excitement began, and well remember that the paper contained anything else but "Egyptian hieroglyphics." Some time after, the same farmer paid me a second visit. He brought with him the golden book in print, and

offered it to me for sale. I declined purchasing. He then asked permission to leave the book with me for examination. I declined receiving it, although his manner was strangely urgent. I adverted once more to the roguery which had been in my opinion practiced upon him, and asked him what had become of the gold plates. He informed me that they were in a trunk with the large pair of spectacles. I advised him to go to a magistrate and have the trunk examined. He said the "curse of God" would come upon him should he do this. On my pressing him, however, to pursue the course which I had recommended, he told me that he would open the trunk, if I would take the "curse of God" upon myself. I replied that I would do so with the greatest willingness, and would incur every risk of that nature, provided I could only extricate him from the grasp of the rogues. He then left me.

I have thus given you a full statement of all that I know respecting the origin of Mormonism, and must beg you, as a personal favor, to publish this letter immediately, should you find my name mentioned again by these wretched fanatics.

respectfully,
Charles Anthon, LL.D.
Columbia University.

Professor Anthon's letter is both revealing and devastating where Smith's and Harris' veracity are concerned. We might also raise the question as to how Professor Anthon could say that the characters shown to him by Martin Harris and authorized by Joseph Smith as part of the material copied from the revelation of the Book of Mormon were "Egyptian, Chaldaic, Assyriac, and Arabic" when the Book of Mormon itself declares that the characters were "reformed Egyptian," the language of the Nephites. Since the language of the Book of Mormon was known to "none other people," how would it be conceivably possible that Professor Anthon to have testified as to the accuracy of Smith's translation? To this date, no one has ever been able to find even the slightest trace of the language known as "reformed Egyptian"; and all reputable linguists who have examined the evidence put forth by the Mormons have rejected them as mythical.

(JB note: It is a historic fact that the Egyptians were pagans during the old testament era. They were also quite submersed in other demonic activity described earlier by me in my reference to the book of Deuteronomy. It is inconsistent and ludicrous to expect God to use pagans to send holy scripture to mankind - especially when he had holy prophets of old at his disposal - which he used for the "real" Bible.)

Archeological Evidence

The Book of Mormon purports to portray the rise and development of two great civilizations. As to just how great these civilizations were, some excerpts from the book itself adequately illustrate:

"The whole face of the land had become covered with buildings, and the people were as numerous almost, as it were the sand of the sea" (Mormon 1:7).

- . . . fine workmanship of wood, in buildings, and in machinery, and also in iron and copper, and brass and steel, makings [sic.] all manners of tools..." (Jarom 1:8 and 2 Nephi 5: 15).

... grain ... silks ... cattle ... oxen ... cows ... sheep..., swine ... goats ... horses ... asses ... elephants..." (See Ether 9:17-19).

- . . . did multiply and spread . . . began to cover the face of the whole earth, from the sea south to the sea north, from the sea west to the sea east" (Heleman 3:8).

... had been slain ... two millions" [Jaredites] (See Ether 15:2).

... their shipping and their building of ships, and their building of temples, and of synagogues and their sanctuaries..." (Heleman 3:14. See also 2 Nephi 5:15, 16 and Ahna 16:13).

".. there were ten more who did fall., with their ten thousand each..." (See Mormon 6:10-15).

"... swords., cimeters ... breastplates., arm-shields ... shields ... head-plates ... armor" (See Alma 43:18, 19; 3:5 and Ether 15:15).

"... multiplied exceedingly, and spread upon the face of the land, and became exceeding rich..." (Jarom 1:8).

See 3 Nephi 8:9, 10, 14 attd 9:4, 5, 6, 8: where cities and inhabitants were sunk in the depths of the sea and earth.

In addition to the foregoing statements from the Book Mormon which indicate the tremendous spread of the culture of these races, there are some thirty-eight cities catalogued in the Book of Mormon, evidence that these were indeed mighty civilizations which should, by all the laws of archeological research into the culture of antiquity, have left vast amounts of "finds" to be evaluated. But such is not the case as we shall show. The Mormons have yet to explain the fact that leading archeological researchers not only have repudiated the claims of the Book of Mormon as to the existence of these civilizations, but have adduced considerable evidence to show the impossibility of the accounts given in the Mormon Bible.

(JB note: When the holy Bible is put to these same tests, the historic fact of the cities and civilizations mentioned therein have always been proven to be authentic.)

The following letter was addressed to the Rev. R. Odell Brown, pastor of the Hillcrest Methodist Church, Fredericksburg, Virginia, an ardent student of Mormonism and its claims. Dr. Brown, in the course of his research, wrote to the Department of Anthropology at Columbia University in New York City. The answer he received is of great importance in establishing the fact that the Book of Mormon is

neither accurate nor truthful where the sciences of archeology and anthropology are concerned.

Dear Sir:

Pardon my delay in answering your letter of January 14, 1957. The question which you ask concerning the Book of Mormon is one that comes up quite frequently. However, I may say that I do not believe that there is a single thing of value concerning the prehistory of the American Indian in the Book of Mormon and I believe that the great majority of American archeologists would agree with me. The book is untrue Biblically, historically and scientifically.

Concerning Dr. Charles Anthon of Columbia University, I do not know who he is and would certainly differ with his viewpoint, as the Latter Day Saints (Mormons) tell it. What possible bearing Egyptian hieroglyphs would have on either the Book of Mormon or the prehistory of the American Indian I do not know ... I am,

Very sincerely yours,
William Duncan Strong (Signed).

The Smithsonian Institution in Washington has also added its voice against the archeological claims of the Book of Mormon. Such a highly regarded scientific source the Mormons can ill afford to ignore.

From the evidence, it is clear that the cities mentioned in the Book of Mormons are imaginary, that elephants never existed on this continent, and that the metals described in the Book of Mormon have never been found in any of the areas of contemporary civilizations of the New World. Here is not a theologian attempting to discredit the Mormons on the basis of their theology, but recognized archeological experts challenging the Book of Mormon on the basis of the fact that its accounts are not in keeping with the traditions of science. Mormon missionaries are generally reluctant to discuss these areas when the evidence is well known, but evidence it is and from most authoritative sources.

(JB note: Again, when the holy Bible is put to these same tests, they have always been proven to be authentic.)

The Mongoloid Factor

Now, if the Lamanites, as the Book of Mormon tells it, were the descendants of Nephi, who was a Jew of the Mediterranean Caucasoid type, then their descendants, the American Indians, would by necessity have the same blood factor genotypically; and

phenotypic, or apparent characteristics, would be the same. But this is not at all the case. Instead, the American Indian, so say anthropologists, is not of Semitic extraction and has the definite phenotypical characteristic of a Mongoloid. (Which is Asian!).

Corrections, Contradictions and Errors

Since the publication of the Book of Mormon in 1830, the first edition has undergone extensive "correction" in order to present it in its present form. Some of these "corrections" should be noted.

1. In the book of Mosiah, chapter 21, verse 28, it is declared that "King Mosiah had a gift from God"; but in the original edition of the book, the name of the king was Benjamin --an oversight which thoughtful Mormon scribes corrected. This is, of course, no typographical error as there is little resemblance between the names Benjamin and Mosiah; so it appears that either God made a mistake when He inspired the record or Joseph made a mistake when he translated it. But the Mormons will admit to neither, So they are stuck, so to speak, with the contradiction.

2. 1 Nephi 19:16-20:1, when compared with the edition of 1830, reveals more than fifty changes in the "inspired Book of Mormon," words having been dropped, spelling corrected, and words and phraseology added and turned about. This is a strange way to treat an inspired revelation from God!

3. In the book of Alma 28: 14-29:1-11, more than thirty changes may be counted from the original edition, and on page 303 of the original edition the statement, "Yea, decree unto them that decrees which are unalterable," has been expunged. (See Alma 29:4.)

(JB note: If you study the holy scriptures, and this was again verified in 1948 with the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, you can see that the scriptures were never altered in any way - over thousands of years!)

The testimony of the three witnesses which appear at the front of the Book of Mormon (Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, and Martin Harris) declares that "... an angel of God came down from heaven, and he brought and laid before our eyes, that we beheld and saw the plates, and the engraving thereon "

It is quite noteworthy that Martin Harris, in his conversation with Professor Anthon relative to the material "translated" from these miraculous plates, denied that he had actually seen them. In fact, when pressed, he stated that he only saw them "with the eye of faith," which is vastly different from a revelation by an angelic messenger.

The Mormons are loath to admit that all three of these witnesses later apostatized from the Mormon faith and were described in most unflattering terms ("thieves and counterfeiters") by their Mormon contemporaries.

Plagiarisms--The King James Version

According to a careful survey of the Book of Mormon, it contains at least 25,000 words from the King James Bible. In fact, verbatim quotations, some of considerable length, have caused the Mormons no end of embarrassment for many years. The comparison of Moroni chapter 10 with 1 Corinthians 12:1-11, 2 Nephi 14 with Isaiah 4, and 2 Nephi 12 with Isaiah 2 reveals that Joseph Smith made free use of his Bible to supplement the alleged revelation of the golden plates. The book of Mosiah, chapter 14 in the Book of Mormon, is a reproduction of the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah the prophet; and 3 Nephi 13:1-18 copies Matthew 6:1-23. The Mormons naively suggest that when Christ allegedly appeared on the American continent after His resurrection and preached to the Nephites he quite naturally used the same language as recorded in the Bible. They also maintain that when Nephi came to America he brought copies of the Hebrew Scriptures, which account for quotations from the Old Testament. The only difficulty with these excuses is that the miraculous plates upon which they were all inscribed, some how or another, under translation, came out in King James English without variation, approximately a thousand years before this 1611 version was written. Such reasoning on the part of the Mormons strains at the limits of credulity and only they are willing to believe it.

Added to the preceding anachronisms is the fact that the Book of Mormon not only contradicts the Bible, but contradicts other revelations purporting to come from the same God who inspired the Book of Mormon. The Bible declares that the Messiah of Israel was to be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2), and the gospel of Matthew (chapter 2, verse 1) records the fulfillment of this prophecy. But the Book of Mormon (Alma 7:9, 10) states:

..." the son of God cometh upon the face of the earth. And behold, he shall be born of Mary, at Jerusalem, which is the land of our forefathers..."

The Book of Mormon describes Jerusalem as a city (1 Nephi 1:4) as was Bethlehem, so the contradiction is irreconcilable.

There are also a number of instances where God did not agree with Himself, if indeed it is supposed that He had anything to do with the inspiration of the Book of Mormon, the Pearl of Great Price, the Doctrine and Covenants, or the other recorded utterances of Joseph Smith.

Smith declared in Doctrine and Covenants, Section 87:

"..At the rebellion of South Carolina...the Southern States will call on

other nations, even the nation of Great Britain...and then war shall be poured out upon all nations . .And...slaves shall rise up against their masters...and that the remnants...shall vex the Gentiles with a sore vexation."

Though the Civil War did break out some years after Smith's death (1844), England did not become involved in war against the United States. Prophet Smith was an extremely ineffective prophet here, as he was when in Doctrine and Covenants 124:22. 23, 59, he also prophesied that he would possess the house he built at Nauvoo "for ever and ever."

The fact of the matter is that neither Joseph nor his seed "after him" lived from "generation to generation" in Nauvoo house, which was destroyed after Smith's death, and the Mormons moved to Utah.

All concur that the Book of Mormon is probably an expansion upon the writings of Solomon Spaulding, a retired minister who was known to have written a number of "romances" with Biblical backgrounds similar to those of the Book of Mormon. The Mormons delight to point out that one of Spaulding's manuscripts, entitled "Manuscript Story," was discovered in Hawaii more than 100 years ago, and it differed in many respects from the Book of Mormon.

Regardless of what human being or beings wrote Science and Health, it is of human, not divine origin. The Book of Mormon is of human origin and uninspired, even though it were impossible to prove what particular man wrote it.

Finally. students of Mormonism must, in the last analysis, measure its content by that of Scripture, and when this is done it will be found that it does not "speak according to the law and the testimony" (Isaiah 8:20) and it is to be rejected as a counterfeit revelation doubly condemned by God Himself (Galatians 1:8,9).

Joseph Smith, the author of this "revelation." was perfectly described (as was his reward) in the Word of God almost thirty-three hundred years before he appeared. It would pay the Mormons to remember this message:

IF a prophet or a dreamer of dreams arises among you and gives you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder comes true, concerning which he spoke to you, saying, 'Let us go after other gods (whom you have not known) and let us serve them, you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams; for the LORD your God is testing you to find out if you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. You shall follow the LORD your God and fear Him; and you shall keep His commandments, listen to His voice, serve Him, and cling to Him. But that prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death,

because he has counseled rebellion against the LORD your God who brought you from the land of Egypt and redeemed you from the house of slavery, to seduce you from the way in which the LORD your God commanded you to walk. So you shall purge the evil from among you.
Deut 13:1-5.

The Book of Mormon then, stands as a challenge to the Bible because it adds to the Word of God and to His one revelation, and the penalty for such action is as sobering as it is awesome:

For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book. If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book:
And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.
(Revelation)

It was Joseph Smith who declared theological war on Christianity when he ascribed to God the statement that branded all Christian sects as "all wrong," their creeds as "abominations," and all Christians as "corrupt...having a form of godliness, but they denied the power thereof" (Joseph Smith--History 1:19).

The Truth About the god of the Mormons

In sharp contrast to the revelations of Scripture are the "revelations" of Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, and the succeeding Mormon "prophets." So that the reader will have no difficulty in understanding what the true Mormon position is concerning the Nature of God, the following set of quotations in the context, derived from recognized Mormon sources fully portray what the Mormons mean when they speak of "God."

1. "In the beginning, the head of the Gods called a council of the Gods and they came together and concocted a plan to create the world and people it" (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 349).
2. "God Himself was once as we are now, and is an exalted man ..."(Teaching of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 345).
3. "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..." (Doctrine and Covenants 130:22).

4. "Gods exist, and we had better strive to be prepared to be one with them" (Brigham Young, Journal of Discourses Vol. 7, p. 238).

5. "As man is, God once was: as God is, man may become" (Prophet Lorenzo Snow, quoted in Milton R. Hunter, The Gospel Through the Ages, pp. 105, 106).

6. "Remember that God, our heavenly Father, was perhaps once a child, and mortal like we ourselves, and rose step by step in the scale of progress, in the school of advancement: has moved forward and overcome, until He has arrived at the point where He now is" (Apostle Orson Hyde, Journal of Discourses, Vol. 1, p. 123).

7. "Mormon prophets have continuously taught the sublime truth that God the Eternal Father was once a mortal man who passed through a school of earth life similar to that through which we are now passing. He became God --an exalted being --through obedience to the same eternal Gospel truths that we are given opportunity to obey" (Hunter, op. cit., p. 104).

8. "When our father Adam came in 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 organized 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 (Brigham Young, in the Journal of Discourse~. Vol. 1, p. 50).

9. Historically, this doctrine of Adam-God was hard for even faithful Mormons to believe. As a result, on June 8, 1873, Brigham Young stated: "How much unbelief exists in the minds of the Latter-day Saints in regard to one particular doctrine which I revealed to them, and which God revealed unto me--namely that Adam is our father and our God.

The following quotations are excerpted from a sermon published in the Mormon newspaper Times and Seasons (August 15, 1844, pp. 613-614) published four months after Smith delivered it at the funeral of Elder King Follet and only two months after Smith's assassination in Carthage, Illinois. This discourse was heard by more than 18,000 people and recorded by four Mormon scribes. It is significant that the split in Mormonism did not take place for more than three and one-half years. So apparently their ancestors did not disagree with Smith's theology, as they themselves do today. Nor did they deny that Smith preached the sermon and taught polytheism, as does the Reorganized Church today. But the facts must speak for themselves: "I want you all to know God, to be familiar with him,...What sort of a being was God in the beginning? First, God himself, who sits enthroned in yonder heavens, is a man like unto one of yourselves

.... if you were to see him today, you would see him in all the person, image and very form as a man... “

Mormon theology then is polytheistic, teaching in effect that the universe is inhabited by different gods who procreate spirit children which are in turn clothed with bodies on different planets, "Elohim" being the god of this planet (Brigham's teaching that Adam is our heavenly Father is now officially denied by Mormon authorities, but they hold firm to the belief that our God is a resurrected, glorified man). In addition to this, the "inspired" utterances of Joseph Smith reveal that he began as a Unitarian, progressed to tritheism and graduated into full fledged polytheism, in direct contradiction to the revelations of the Old and New Testaments as we have observed. The Mormon doctrine of the Trinity is a gross misrepresentation of the Biblical position, though they attempt to veil their evil doctrine in semi-orthodox terminology. We have already dealt with this problem, but it bears constant repetition lest the Mormon terminology go unchallenged.

On the surface, they appear to be orthodox; but in the light of unimpeachable Mormon sources, Mormons are clearly evading the issue. The truth of the matter is that Mormonism has never historically accepted the Christian doctrine of the trinity; in fact, they deny it by completely perverting the meaning of the term. This is one of the chief reasons why they have never been accepted by any Christian council of Churches (National Association of Evangelicals, National Council of Christian Churches, World Council of Churches, American & International Council of Churches, etc.). The Mormon doctrine that God the Father is a mere man is the root of their polytheism, and forces Mormons to deny not only the Trinity of God as revealed in Scripture but the immaterial nature of God as pure spirit. The Mormons, in *Look* magazine, stated that they accepted the Trinity but as we have seen, it is not the Christian Trinity. God the Father does not have a body of flesh and bones, a fact clearly taught by our Lord (John 4:24, cf. Luke 24:39). Mormon apostle, James Talmage describes the church's teaching as follows in his book *The Articles of Faith: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* proclaims against the incomprehensible God, devoid of body parts, or passions, as a thing impossible of existence, and asserts its belief in and allegiance to the true and living God of scripture and revelation...Jesus Christ is the Son of Elohim both as spiritual and bodily offspring: that is to say, Elohim is literally the Father of the spirit of Jesus Christ and also of the body in which Jesus Christ performed His mission in the flesh...Jehovah who is Jesus Christ the Son of Elohim, is called "The Father"...That ,Jesus Christ, whom we also know as Jehovah, was the executive of the Father. Elohim in the work of creation is set forth in the book *Jesus the Christ*, chapter IV, (pp. 48,466,467).

In these revealing statements, Talmage lapses into the error of making Elohim and Jehovah two separate gods, apparently in complete ignorance of the fact that Elohim "the greater god" and Jehovah-Jesus the lesser god, begotten by Elohim, are compounded in the Hebrew as "Jehovah the Mighty One," or simply "Jehovah God" as any concordance of Hebrew usage in the Old Testament readily reveals (Lord--Yahweh; God--Elohim). This error is akin to that of Mary Baker Eddy, who, in her glossary to Science and Health With Key to the Scripture, made exactly the same error, she too being in complete ignorance of the Hebrew language. In this grammatical error, Christian Science and the Mormons are in unique agreement, though it is virtually certain that they are unaware of it.

Talmage's argument that "to deny the materiality of God's person is to deny God; for a thing without parts has no whole and an immaterial body cannot exist" is both logically and theologically an absurdity. To illustrate this, one need only to point to the angels whom the Scriptures describe as "ministering spirits" (Hebrews 1:7), beings who have immaterial "bodies" of spiritual substances and yet exist. The Mormons involve themselves further in a hopeless contradiction when, in their doctrine of the preexistence of the soul, they are forced to redefine the meaning of soul as used in both the Old and the New Testaments to teach that the soul is not immaterial, while the Bible clearly teaches that it is. Our Lord upon the cross spoke the words, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." Certainly this was immaterial, and Paul, preparing to depart from this world for the celestial realms, indicated that his real spiritual self (certainly immaterial, since his body died) was yearning to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. (Philippians 1:21--23).

The martyr Stephen also committed his spirit (or immaterial nature) into the hands of the father, crying, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit' (Acts 7:59). And there are numerous passages in both the Old and New Testaments which indicate that an "immaterial body" can exist, provided that form is of a spiritual substance as is God the Father and the Holy Spirit, and as was Jesus Christ as the pre-incarnate logos (John 1:1. cf. John 1: 14). Far from asserting their "belief and allegiance to the true and living God of Scripture and revelation" as Talmage represents Mormonism, Mormons indeed have sworn allegiance to a polytheistic pantheon of gods which they are striving to join, there to enjoy a polygamous eternity of progression toward godhood. One can search the corridors of pagan mythology and never equal the complex structure which the Mormons have erected and masked under the terminology and misnomer of orthodox Christianity, as previously demonstrated. That the Mormons reject the historic Christian doctrine of the Trinity no student of the movement can deny, for after quoting the Nicene creed and early church theology on the Trinity, Talmage, in The Articles of Faith, declares: "It would be difficult to conceive of a greater number of inconsistencies and contradictions expressed in words as here...The

immateriality of God as asserted in these declarations of sectarian faith is entirely at variance with the Scriptures, and absolutely contradicted by the revelations of God's person and attributes..."(p. 48).

After carefully perusing hundreds of volumes on Mormon theology and scores of pamphlets dealing with this subject, the author can quite candidly state that never in over a decade of research in the field of cults has he ever seen such misappropriation of terminology, disregard of context, and utter abandon of scholastic principles demonstrated on the part of non-Christian cultists than is evidenced in the attempts of Mormon theologians to appear orthodox and at the same time undermine the foundations of historic Christianity. The intricacies of their complex system of polytheism causes the careful researcher to ponder again and again the ethical standard which these Mormon writers practice and the blatant attempts to rewrite history, Biblical theology, and the laws of scriptural interpretation that they might support the theologies of Joseph Smith and Brigham Young. Without fear of contradiction. I am certain that Mormonism cannot stand investigation and wants no part of it unless the results can be controlled under the guise of "broadmindedness" and "tolerance."

To the unwary, however, they imply that they are monotheists, to the informed they defend their polytheism, and like the veritable chameleon they change color to accommodate the surface upon which they find themselves.

G.B. Arbaugh, in his classic volume, *Revelation in Mormonism* (1932), has documented in exhaustive detail the progress of Mormon theology from Unitarianism to Polytheism. His research has been invaluable and available to interested scholars for many years, with the full knowledge of the Mormon Church. To this date they have never refuted Arbaugh's evidence or conclusions . In fact, they are significantly on the defensive where the peculiar origins of the "sacred writings" are involved or when verifiable evidence exists which reveals their polytheistic perversions of the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is extremely difficult to write kindly of Mormon theology when they are so obviously deceptive in their presentation of data, so adamant of their condemnation of all religions in favor of the "restored gospel" allegedly vouchsafed to the prophet Joseph Smith. We must not, however, confuse the theology with the person as is too often the case, for while hostility toward the former is scriptural, it is never so with the latter.

Continuing with our study, apostle Orson Pratt, writing in *The Seer*, declared: "In the Heaven where our spirits were born, there are many Gods, each one of whom has his own wife or wives which were given to him previous to his redemption, while yet in his mortal state" (p. 37). In this terse sentence, Pratt summed up the whole hierarchy of Mormon polytheism, and quotations previously adduced from a

reputable Mormon source support Pratt's summation beyond reasonable doubt. The Mormon teaching that God was seen "face to face" in the Old Testament (Exodus 33:9, 11,23: Exodus 24:9-11' Isaiah 6:1,5: Genesis 5:24; Genesis 6:5-9, etc.) is refuted on two counts, that of language and the science of comparative textual analysis (hermeneutics).

From the standpoint of linguistics, all the references cited by the Mormons to prove "that God has a physical body that could be observed" melt away in the light of God's expressed declaration, "Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me and live" (Exodus 33:20).

Exodus 33:11 (face to face) in the Hebrew is rendered "intimate" and in no sense is it opposed to verse 20. Similar expressions are utilized in Deuteronomy 5:4. while in Genesis 32:30 it is the angel of the Lord who speaks, *not* Jehovah Himself. The Old Testament is filled with theophanies (literally, Godforms), instances where God spoke or revealed Himself in angelic manifestations, and it is accepted by all Old Testament scholars almost without qualification that anthropomorphisms (ascribing human characteristics to God) are the logical explanation of many of the encounters of God with man. To argue, as the Mormons do. that such occurrences indicate that God has a body of flesh and bone. as Prophet Smith taught, is on the face of the matter untenable and another strenuous attempt to force polytheism on a rigidly monotheistic religion. Progressing beyond this, another cardinal Mormon point of argument is the fact that because expressions such as "the arm of the Lord," "the eye of the Lord," "the hand of the Lord," "nostrils." "mouth," etc., are used, all tend to show that God possesses a physical form. However, they have overlooked one important factor. This factor is that of literary metaphor, extremely common in Old Testament usage. If the Mormons are to be consistent in their interpretation, they should find great difficulty in the Psalm where God is spoken of as "covering with his feathers," and man "trusting under His wings." If God has eyes, ears, arms, hands, nostrils, mouth, etc., why then does He not have feathers and wings? The Mormons have never given a satisfactory answer to this, because it is obvious that the anthropomorphic and metaphorical usage of terms relative to God are literary devices to convey His concern and association with man. In like manner, metaphors such as feather and wings indicate His tender concern for the protection for those who "dwell in the secret place of the Most High and abide under the shadow of the Almighty." The Mormons would do well to comb the Old Testament and the New Testament for the numerous metaphorical usages readily available for observation, and they must admit, if they are at all logically consistent, that Jesus was not a door (John 10:9, a shepherd (John 10:11), a vine (John 15:1) a roadway (John 14:6). a loaf of bread (John 6:51), and other metaphorical expressions any more than "Our God is a consuming fire" means that Jehovah should be construed as a blast furnace or a volcanic cone. The Mormons themselves are

apparently unsure of the intricacies of their own polytheistic structure, as revealed in the previously cited references from Joseph Smith, who made Christ both the Father and the Son in one instance, and further on indicated that there was a mystery connected with it and that only the Son could reveal how He was both the Father and the Son. Then to compound the difficulty, Smith later separated them completely into "separate personages," eventually populating the entire universe with his polytheistic and polygamous deities. If one peruses carefully the books of Abraham and Moses as contained in the Pearl of Great Price (allegedly "translated" by Smith), as well as sections of Ether in the Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and Discourses of Brigham Young, the entire Mormon dogma of the preexistence of the soul, the polygamous nature of the gods, the brotherhood of Jesus and Lucifer, and the hierarchy of heaven (telestial, terrestrial, and celestial--corresponding to the basement, 50th floor, and observation tower of the Empire State Building respectively), and the doctrines of universal salvation, millennium, resurrection, judgment and final punishment, will unfold in a panorama climaxing in a polygamous paradise of eternal duration. Such is the Mormon doctrine of God, or, more properly, of the gods, which rivals anything pagan mythology ever produced.

The Virgin Birth of Christ

One of the great doctrines of the Bible, which is uniquely related to the supreme earthly manifestation of the Eternal God, is the doctrine of the Virgin Birth of Jesus Christ. In one very real sense, this doctrine is indissolubly linked with that of the Incarnation, being, so to speak, the agency or instrument whereby God chose to manifest Himself. Time and again the Bible reminds us that Deity was clothed with humanity in the manger of Bethlehem, and Christians of all generations have revered the mystery prefigured by the cryptic words of Isaiah the prophet: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Emmanuel. For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace "(Isaiah 7:14 and 9:6).

The Apostle Paul numerous times refers to the Deity of our Lord, declaring that "In Him dwells all the fullness of the Deity in the flesh" (Colossians 2:9).

Attempts to minimize the virgin birth of Christ, or to do away with it altogether, as some liberal theologians have energetically tried to do, have consistently met with disaster. This was true because the simple narratives of this momentous event recorded in Matthew and Luke refuse to surrender to the hindsight reconstruction theories of

second-guessing critics.

Some persons have, on the other hand, decided upon a middle course where this doctrine is concerned. They affirm its biological necessity. In a word, Matthew and Luke, who had access to eyewitness testimonies (Mary, Joseph, Elizabeth, etc.), never really believed the teaching as recorded!

We see, then, the Mormon teaching concerning our Lord's birth is a revolting distortion of the Biblical revelation and one which is in keeping with the Mormon dogma of a flesh-and-bone god. In Mormon thinking, as reflected in the authoritative declarations of one of their prophets, our Savior was produced, not by a direct act of the Holy Spirit but by actual sexual relations between "An immortal or resurrected and glorified Father," and Mary--a blasphemous view which takes its place beside the infamous mythology of Greece, wherein the gods father human sons through physical union with certain chosen women.

Brigham Young further declared: "He (Christ) 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" Mormon leaders, however, while accepting the doctrine as Young declared it, are extremely careful not to allow "the Gentiles" (all non-Mormons) to understand the full impact of the teaching until they have come under extremely favorable Mormon influences. This is understood by the fact that in *Look* magazine,ⁱⁱⁱ later reproduced in Leo Rosten's *A Guide To the Religions of America* (1963, pp. 131-141), the Mormons employed the subterfuge of semantics to escape declaring this position to the general public. In the *Guide* book, the question was asked, "Do Mormons believe in the Virgin Birth?" (p. 134). To which the Mormon spokesman, a high-ranking member of the Mormon hierarchy, replied, "Yes. The Latter-day Saint accepts the miraculous conception of Jesus the Christ." (JB note: notice the "play on words" here. "Miraculous conception" is not the same as "Virgin Birth," but this wording would fly over the heads of most readers! The fictitious character Hercules was supposedly from the union of a mythological god and a human female. That union (which never happened) could be termed as "miraculous conception," and certainly was not refuted to be a "virgin birth.")

Salvation and Judgment in Mormonism

Personal salvation in Mormonism is one of the doctrines most heavily emphasized, and since Christianity is the Gospel or "Good News" of God's redemption in Christ, it is inevitable that the two should come into conflict.

The Mormon doctrine of salvation involves not only faith in Christ, but baptism by immersion, obedience to the teaching of the Mormon Church, good works, and "keeping the commandments of God (which) will cleanse away the stain of sin" (Journal of Discourses, Vol. 2, p. 4). Apparently Brigham was ignorant of the Biblical pronouncement that "without the shedding of blood there is no remission [of sin]" (Hebrews 9:22).

The Mormon teaching concerning salvation is, therefore, quite the opposite of the New Testament revelation of justification by faith and redemption solely by grace through faith in Christ (Ephesians 2:8-10).

Brigham Young, an authoritative Mormon source by any standards, was quite opposed to the Christian doctrine of salvation which teaches that a person may at any time sincerely repent of his sins, even at the eleventh hour, and receive forgiveness and eternal life. Wrote Brigham: "Some of our old traditions teach us that a man guilty of atrocious and murderous acts may savingly repent on the scaffold; and upon his execution will hear the expression--"Bless God! he has gone to heaven, to be crowned in glory, through the all-redeeming merits of Christ the Lord! This is all nonsense. Such a character will never see heaven" (Journal of Discourses, Vol. 8, p. 61).

Prophet Young never did explain the words of the Lord Jesus Christ addressed to the thief on the cross who had repented of his sins at the last moment, so to speak, crying: "Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom" (Luke 23:42). The answer of our Savior was unequivocal: "Today shalt thou be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:43).

The Book of Mormon also records the fact that Cain, the first murderer, was the progenitor of the Negro race, his black skin being the result of a curse by God. On this basis the Mormons for years avoided and ignored blacks in their missionary work, believing that preexistent souls which were considered less than valiant in the "war in heaven" between Christ and Satan were punished by being assigned to black bodies during their mortality. Until 1978 they were denied all of the "blessings" and "privileges" of the priesthood, but a revelation of convenience gave them full access to these glories and neatly removed the last major obstacle to the Mormon "evangelization" of Africa and the rest of the free world.

The Indians, who are supposedly the descendants of the Book of

Mormon's wicked Lamanites, have allegedly been cursed by the Mormon deity with dark skins as a punishment for the misdeeds of their forefathers. Mormonism, then, is clearly a religion with a shameful history of white supremacist doctrines and practices.

The Mormon Savior

The Lord Jesus offered one eternal sacrifice for all sins and His salvation comes not by the works of the law or any human works whatever (Galatians 2:16 and Ephesians 2:9), but solely by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8).

The Savior of the New Testament revelation existed eternally as God; lived a holy, harmless and undefiled life, separate from sinners, and "knew no sin." He was "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," "The Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).

The Savior of Mormonism, however, is an entirely different person, as their official publications clearly reveal. The Mormon Savior is not the second person of the Christian Trinity since, as we have seen previously, Mormons reject the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, and he is not even a careful replica of the New Testament Redeemer. In Mormon theology, Christ as a preexistent spirit was not only the spirit brother of the devil (as alluded to in the Pearl of Great Price, Moses 4:1-4, and later reaffirmed by Brigham Young in the Journal of Discourses, Vol. 13, p. 282), but celebrated his own marriage to both "the Marys and Martha, whereby he could see his seed before he was crucified" (apostle Orson Hyde, Journal of Discourses, Vol. 4, pp. 259-260).

As we have seen previously, the Mormon concept of the virgin birth, alone, distinguishes their "Christ" from the Christ of the Bible. In addition to this revolting concept, Brigham Young categorically stated that the sacrifice made upon the cross by Jesus Christ in the form of His own blood was ineffective for the cleansing of some sins. Brigham went on to teach the now suppressed but never officially repudiated doctrine of "blood atonement."

It may be difficult for some to grasp what is in fact an incredible concept, but Mormonism fits perfectly into the descriptions given by the Word of God. The greatest of the apostles, in his second letter to the Corinthian church, after mentioning a counterfeit Jesus, gospel and spirit, goes on to state that such occurrences should not come as a surprise to the Christian church:
"For such are false apostles, deceitful workmen, transforming them-

selves into apostles of Christ, and it is not surprising, for Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. It is therefore no great marvel if his servants also transform themselves as servants of righteousness whose end will be according to their works" (2 Corinthians 11: 13-15, Greek).

This is harsh language indeed, but it is the language of God's choosing and it cannot be ignored by anyone who takes seriously the revelations of Scripture and apostolic authority.

Mormonism, with the apostles, priesthood, temples, secret signs, symbols, hand shakes and mysteries, quite literally masquerades as "the church of the restoration"; but at its heart, in its doctrine of the Messiah, it is found to be contrary to every major Biblical pronouncement.

Salvation by Grace?

It is common to find in Mormon literature the statement that "all men are saved by grace alone without any act on their part." Although this appears to be perfectly orthodox, it is necessary to study all the Mormon statements relative to this doctrine in order to know precisely what they mean by what they appear to say.

In one such official Mormon publication (*What the Mormons Think of Christ* by B.R. McConkie), the Mormons give their own interpretation: Grace is simply the mercy, the love and the condescension God has for his children, as a result of which he has ordained the plan of salvation so that they may have the power to progress and become like him . . . All men are saved by grace alone without any act on their part, meaning that they are resurrected and become immortal because of the atoning sacrifice of Christ . . . In addition to this redemption from death, all men, by the grace of God, have the power to gain eternal life. This is called salvation by grace coupled with obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel. Hence Nephi was led to write: "We labor diligently to write, to persuade our children, and also our brethren, to believe in Christ, and to be reconciled to God; for we know that it is by grace that we are saved **after all we can do.**" (JB note: I put the last few words in red because this is KEY. There is NOTHING that WE do. Christ did not do 95 or even 99% of our atonement - with the remainder done by us. No....a thousand times NO. Christ did it ALL.) **For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law.**

Romans 3:28

But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace.

Romans 11:6

for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified as a gift

by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; Romans 3:23-24

Christians speak often of the blood of Christ and its cleansing power. Much that is believed and taught on this subject, however, is such utter nonsense and so palpably false that to believe it is to lose one's salvation. Many go so far, for instance, as to pretend and at least, to believe that if we confess Christ with our lips and avow that we accept Him as our personal Savior, we are thereby saved. His blood, without other act than mere belief, they say, makes us clean... Finally in our day, he has said plainly: "My blood shall not cleanse them if they hear me not"... Salvation in the kingdom of God is available because of the atoning blood of Christ. But it is received only on condition of faith, repentance, baptism, and enduring to the end in keeping the commandments of God (pp. 27-33).

The foregoing is a typical example of what might be termed theological double talk which in one breath affirms grace as a saving principle and in the next declares that it is "coupled with obedience to the law and ordinances of the gospel" and ends by declaring that confession of Christ and acceptance of Him as "personal Savior" is "utter nonsense" and "palpably false." McConkie decries the fact (puts it down) that Christ's blood "without other act than mere belief.., makes us clean" (p. 31). (double-talk)

The Biblical position is, however, quite clear in this area; we are saved by grace alone, as previously mentioned, but it in no way enables us to "have power to progress and become like Him." As we have seen, in the Mormon sense such a progression refers to becoming a god, not to the Christian doctrine of sanctification, or of the life of the believer being brought into conformity to the Holy Spirit as clearly enunciated in the epistle to the Romans (chapters 8 and 12).

Mr. McConkie's assertion, that "salvation by grace" must be "coupled with obedience with the laws and ordinances of the gospel" in order for a person to be saved, introduces immediately the whole Mormon collection of legalistic observances and requirements. In the end, salvation is not by grace at all, but it is in reality connected with human efforts: "baptism, and enduring to the end in keeping the commandments of God" (p. 33).

This is not the Christian doctrine of redemption which the Apostle Peter described graphically when he wrote:

"Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot... Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which

liveth and abideth forever" (1 Peter 1: 18, 19, 23).

In diametric opposition to the Mormon concept, the confession of Christ with the lips and the acceptance of Him as "our personal Savior" is indeed the very means of personal salvation. It is the Biblical record which states that "with the heart man believeth unto righteousness and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Romans 10:10). The gospel's command is "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31). This is, of course, totally foreign to what the Mormon would have us believe. Jesus Christ did not die merely to insure our resurrection, as Mr. McConkie declares (p. 27), but He died to reconcile us to God, to save us by grace, to redeem us by blood, and to sanctify us by His Spirit. But such Biblical doctrines the Mormons most decidedly reject. It appears that they cannot conceive of a God who could save apart from human effort, and Nephi's statement betrays this: "For we know it is by grace that we are saved *after all we can do*" (p. 28). In Mormonism it is they who must strive for perfection, sanctification, and godhood. Grace is merely incidental.

It was no less an authority than Brigham Young who taught concerning salvation:

"But as many as received Him, to them gave he power to *continue* to be the sons of God" (Journal of Discourses, Vol. 4. p. 7). In Brigham's theology, "instead of receiving the gospel to become the sons of God, my language would be--to receive the gospel that we may continue to be the sons of God. Are we not all sons of God when we were born into this world? Old Pharaoh, king of Egypt was just as much a son of God as Moses and Aaron were His sons, with this difference--he rejected the word of the Lord, the true light, and they received it."

In agreement with their doctrine of the preexistence of souls, the Mormons believe that they are already the sons of God and that the acceptance of God merely enables them to "continue to be the sons of God," a direct contradiction of the Biblical record which states: **"But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name" (John 1: 12).** The Apostle Paul points out, with devastating force, the fact that: "They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed" (Romans 9:8).

The Apostle, with equal certainty, affirms that only those who are led by God's Spirit can be called the sons of God (Romans 8:14). It is difficult to see how in any sense of the term "Old Pharaoh, king of Egypt, was just as much a son of God as Moses and Aaron were His sons," as Brigham Young declared.

The Biblical teaching is that "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:26), a fact Brigham obviously overlooked. It is one of the great and true statements of the Word of God that salvation is not "of him that wills or of him that strives, but of God who shows the mercy" (Romans 9) and that Jesus Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us. (Galatians 3: 13).

It was the teaching of our Lord that: "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37), and the salvation which He still offers to lost men is "not by any works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us" (Titus 3:5).

In the Mormon religion, they boldly teach universal salvation, for as Mr. Evans, the Mormon apostle and spokesman, put it: "Mormons believe in universal salvation that all men will be saved, but each one in his own order" (Look magazine. Oct. 5, 1954).

It is the teaching of the Scripture, however, that not all men will be saved and that at the end of the ages some shall "go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous unto life eternal" (Matthew 25:41,46).

Let us understand clearly, then, that salvation in the Biblical sense comes as the free gift of God by grace alone through faith in the vicarious sacrifice of Christ upon the cross. The Lord Jesus Christ said: "He that hears my word and believes Him that sent me has eternal life, and shall never come into judgment; but has passed out of death into life" (John 5:24, Greek).

My friend, no one who is a (sincere-hearted) serious student of the scriptures would fall prey to the many false doctrines that the Holy Bible admonishes us to stay away from. I feel that many people are "crowd-followers" and also looking for an easy way to find God. Obviously, it is much easier to listen to someone preach than to study the word ones-self. I used to know a preacher who frequently said, "if I tell you something that is not substantiated in the Bible, run away from here like the wind." The Bible is our yard-stick to measure all things. The Word of God is our protection from falling prey to the many false prophets that (not only) fill the pages of history, but are also alive today.

I wait to rejoice the day you tell me you repent of your claim to be "a Mormon," repent of your sins, and accept Jesus Christ (the "only begotten Son of God," John 3:16 and 3:18) as your personal Savior.

Your good friend,



You may contact the author through: <http://www.mormonfallacies.com/contact.php>

This article is copyright 1998 by John A. Bonin. All rights reserved. This article may be quoted, in part or in whole, without permission.

ⁱ As an example, in April of 1978 the Readers' Digest published an eight-page removable advertisement about church programs. The first of a \$12 million series aimed at nearly 50 million Digest readers.

ⁱⁱPeep stones or peek stones supposedly magical rocks which when placed in a hat and partially darkened allegedly reveal lost items and buried treasure. Divining rods were sticks supposed to lead to treasure or water, etc.

ⁱⁱⁱOctober 5, 1954