

The
JACKSON



ILER
DEBATE

On
The Sufficiency of the Bible
and
The Inspiration of the Book of Mormon

Bill Jackson
John R. Iler, Jr

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INTRODUCTORY

In June, 1984, Mr. John R. Iler, Jr. wrote me after reading my debate with James Crackin, an atheist, as that debate was featured in an issue of THRUST magazine. A friend of Mr. Iler's, in Kentucky, had obtained a copy of THRUST and had forwarded it on to him.

Mr. Iler stated that he was involved in a missionary endeavor of the Latter-Day Saints, and was one of the "Seventy in the Church." He stated that he was currently working on a manuscript in defense of the Book of Mormon and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, and asked if I would be interested in debating "Mormonism." I then accepted, and in our correspondence plans were made to have the debate printed in this present form.

We trust that all who read this will gain benefit, and we express our thanks to Mr. Iler for his willingness to defend those things he believes.

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Proposition 1:

*The Book of Mormon is Inspired by God
and Prophesied about in the Bible*

Affirmative: John R. Iler, Jr.

Negative: Bill Jackson

ILER'S FIRST AFFIRMATIVE

At the offset of this discussion, I would like to express my gratitude to Mr. Bill Jackson for his willingness to discuss the Book of Mormon and latter-day revelation, both keystones of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Before proceeding, however, a personal disclaimer. As an individual member, I am obliged to note that I am in no way an official representative or spokesman for the LDS Church at large. Therefore, I bear full responsibility for my comments.

The story of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is not the story of the reformation of biblical Christianity, it is literally the Restoration of biblical Christianity—with apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers, deacons, evangelists and other officers. It is a living church and its leaders are guided by modern, ongoing revelation from on High. Doctrines and concepts long lost have been restored with new doctrines and insights reserved particularly for this dispensation.

In the Gospel of Mark we read: “And no man putteth new wine into old bottles: else the new wine doth burst the bottles and the wine is spilled... but new wine must be put into new bottles.” (Mark 2:22).

The doctrine of the Church of Christ has been ably described in the adage: “Where the Bible speaks, we speak; where the Bible is silent, we are silent.” But where the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has always been and will always be is that revelation is the key to the scriptures and to a knowledge of Jesus Christ as the Messiah, the Son of the living God. With all due respect, we boldly declare to the world, “Where the Bible speaks, we speak; where the Bible is silent we still speak!”

The term “Restoration” is shared by both the LDS Church and the Church of Christ, and the word necessitates a belief in the falling away or apostasy of the ancient Church—thus the need for a Restoration. It was the belief of Alexander Campbell and other able scholars associated with the American Church of Christ of the early 1800’s that biblical Christianity could only be restored through an intensive study and a tenacious adherence to the Bible. The problem, of course, was one of exegesis—how to interpret the Bible in

its proper scriptural light.

The analogy of new wine in old bottles is eminently suitable when comparing *reformation* restoration with *revelation* restoration. The knowledge lost over the centuries combined with doctrines agreed upon by political appointees to theological committees by Rome have produced many old bottles not able to accept new wine. Thus, the Lord called Joseph Smith in his youth, and spoke to him. And in the end, the prophet sealed his testimony with his own blood in a violent death.

One of the hallmarks of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is a belief in the Book of Mormon. As early believers in Christ were called *Christians* by the early Jews, so believers in the *revelation* restoration movement have been identified with a fundamental belief in the book of Mormon and called “Mormons.”

The Book of Mormon was published in 1830, and before the book was off the presses, a storm of protest swept the country and, indeed, the whole Christian world. The concepts of modern (and continuing) revelation and additional scripture were hard pills to swallow, and still are. In fact, one of the earliest and most outspoken critics of these concepts was none other than Mr. Campbell. Calling the Book of Mormon a “monstrous impiety” he said “it would be more difficult to exaggerate its enormous wickedness than any other species of delusion, fraud, or fiction ever palmed upon the world. It is much more execrable than the Koran, though because of the light of the age it has not room to plant itself in the earth...”¹

But despite his strong feelings, the Book of Mormon persisted and has proven much more of a challenge than most of its critics would care to admit. Far from being the convoluted and disjointed ramblings one would expect from an uneducated farm boy, the Book of Mormon is a concise and, to many, a thoroughly believable account of ancient Israelites brought to the Western Hemisphere by the hand of the Lord.

The book opens in Jerusalem, circa 600 B.C. Lehi, a descendant of Joseph who was sold into Egypt and a contemporary of Jeremiah, is one of the prophets raised up to warn the inhabitants of the city of impending disaster should they reject the prophets and ally them-

¹ *Millennial Harbinger*, New Series, Vol. VII, p. 267, 1839.

selves with Egypt against the combined forces of Babylon. Lehi's son, Nephi, records: "...and in that same year there came many prophets, prophesying unto the people that they must repent, or the great city Jerusalem must be destroyed." (I Nep. 1:4; see also II Chron. 36:15-16).

King Zedekiah of Judah, alarmed with these prophecies of impending doom, reacted to the sudden rash of prophets by imprisoning Jeremiah. And in a spirit of nationalism, many of the Jews sought the lives of the other prophets. Lehi, forewarned by the Lord that there were those seeking his life, was commanded to leave his home and his wealth, and flee into the desert. The Book of Mormon then records how Lehi and a small group of people, including his sons and their families, migrated to the Western Hemisphere.

The severe humidity which existed in the Western Hemisphere may be the reason the Book of Mormon was recorded on plates of thin gold; nevertheless, despite the delight of early critics of the book at finding such a fanciful way of recording scripture, it is now an established fact that the ancients did use metal plates, including brass, copper and gold, to record important writings. That no brass or gold plates used for writing had been discovered at the time the Book of Mormon was printed is powerful evidence of its divine origin.

The Book of Mormon records the history, wars and growth of Lehi's descendants over a period just over 1,000 years as well as a spectacular appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ following his resurrection. It also records the history of another people, led to the Western Hemisphere by God at the time of the great tower, circa 2400 B.C.

Some view the writings of the inhabitants of this land contained in the Book of Mormon as the feverish imaginations of an over-imaginative charlatan. And although they dismiss it with a wave of the hand, the fact is, that the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is today probably the fastest growing Christian denomination in the world. And despite Mr. Campbell's prediction that it would never find soil in which to grow, the Book of Mormon remains as much a mystery today as ever.

But if such a volume of scripture were to come forth, why was it not recorded in the Bible? The answer is that it was. Let us first

examine Gen. 49:22-26, the blessing given to Joseph by his father, Jacob.

“Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well whose branches run over the wall,” the patriarch said. “The archers have sorely grieved him and shot at him, and hated him.”

Here is an indication that a branch of Joseph’s seed would extend beyond the wall of a well (the ocean). Jacob continues in verse 26 as saying: “The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills: they shall be on the...head of him that was separated from his brethren.”

So according to scripture, Joseph gained the birthright. But we’re told in verse 10 that Judah would hold the scepter, or rule, until the coming of Shiloh, or Christ. If Jacob’s blessing to Joseph surpassed Judah’s blessing, then Joseph was given a far richer land “unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills.” Thus the Latter-day Saint view is that the land of promise beyond the ocean, the entire Western Hemisphere, was the inheritance of Joseph.

In much the same way Isaiah prophesies the coming of Christ in the 53rd chapter, he also prophesies concerning the coming forth of the Book of Mormon. In Isaiah 29 we read of a “sealed book,” which, when revealed, would constitute a “marvelous work and a wonder.” Verse 10 describes the long age of apostasy which existed since the apostles and prophets were ruthlessly murdered and revelation ceased. Verses 11-12 point out how the Book of Mormon was sealed and how “the words of a book” are delivered to a learned man to read, but he will say, “I cannot, for it is sealed.” This man was none other than Prof. Charles Anthon, of Columbia College in New York.

After inspecting a transcript with characters taken from the plates, he requested the plates be brought to him for a proper translation. “I informed him that part of the plates were sealed,” wrote Martin Harris, who had brought the transcript hoping to verify Smith’s translation, “and that I was forbidden to bring them. He replied, ‘I cannot read a sealed book.’”

Verses 13-16 say the event will be a marvelous work and a wonder and describes how it would burst upon the world to confound the wise. Verses 18-20 tell how the book would cause the eyes of the blind to see out of “obscurity, and out of darkness.”

And the prophet Ezekiel writes that in the last day two “sticks” (literally “woods”) would be joined together, one for Joseph and one for Judah: “Moreover, thou son of man, take thee one stick and write upon it, For Judah, and for the children of Israel his companions: then take another stick and write upon it, For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and for all the house of Israel his companions: And join them one to another into one stick; and they shall become one in thine hand.”

This scripture and the mysterious nature of the “sticks” have puzzled biblical scholars for centuries. It was the considered opinion of Eusebius and Jerome that the sticks were books, specifically books of scripture.¹ Latter-day Saints, of course, believe the stick of Judah is the Bible, a history of the Jews culminating with the coming of the Messiah. The stick of Joseph is the Book of Mormon, a record of the tribe of Joseph in the land of promise, the Western Hemisphere.

Thus when an angel of God appeared to the youthful prophet Joseph Smith and revealed the plates of gold in a stone box in the ground, another scripture was fulfilled: “Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other. Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven.” (Ps. 85:10-11).

¹ Nibley, Hugh, *An Approach to the Book of Mormon*, pp. 260-1.

JACKSON'S FIRST NEGATIVE

I, too, am pleased that Mr. Iler and I can have this discussion. I commend him for his willingness to present his views for examination. The area is indeed critical, for both of us cannot be right; the issue is such that if one of us is right, then the other is a teacher of error. It is as simple as that.

Mr. Iler disclaims being an “official” spokesman for the LDS church, but his teaching is that revelation continues to this day, and that LDS officials have guidance from God in their proclamations. He, then, should certainly be able to obtain the sure will of God on all questions simply by asking one of his “apostles” or “prophets” for inspired information.

He begins with the point that the LDS movement is a restoration of Biblical Christianity. We, in the churches of Christ, make the same claim, and it will be of interest to our readers to see which claim is established. Most interesting is his point about restoring “Biblical” Christianity, when his very first article is designed to direct men BEYOND the Bible itself, to “new” revelation. He makes the point that the New Testament, as we have received it, is not a reliable document, for the LDS movement has “restored” doctrines and concepts “long lost,” with new doctrines reserved for this dispensation. We fully agree that in the New Testament there are doctrines and instructions not earlier made known (Heb. 1:1, 2), but we also know that we have not “lost” any of God’s doctrines. The Lord had stated that his word would not pass away (Matt. 24:35), that God’s Word would endure forever (I Pet. 1:25), and Jude tells us that in his time the faith was ONCE—once for all (ASV)—delivered unto the saints (Jude 3). Mormonism either denies that the faith was once-for-all delivered, or they must then deny the apostolic statement that the word would not pass away, but would always abide!

Again, Mr. Iler lets us know what he believes about the Bible’s sufficiency, when he states, “...where the Bible is silent, we still speak!” In view of that, we ask Mr. Iler: “Do you believe Paul when he stated, nearly 2,000 years ago, that the Scriptures furnish a man COMPLETELY unto every good work” (2 Tim. 3:16-17)? If those in the first century had what was needed unto every good work, and

they did not have the “revelations” of Mormonism, are the claims of Mormonism legitimate—indeed, are they needed at all?

But he has a greater problem. Mormonism makes the same claim as does a dozen other religious groups—the Pope’s “ex-cathedra” statements, the United Pentecostals’ claim of “revelation” in 1901, and Herbert W. Armstrong’s claim of a “revelation” giving him the “key” to understanding the Scriptures. All these claim salvation was made known to them, by their founders, their founders’ claims, and they all have stories to tell as “testimonies” and “witnessing.” The point is, Mr. Iler, why should Mormonism’s claims be believed over these others, when it is based on no better evidence? Yes, please tell us—WHY?

Mr. Iler then begins to tell us the story of Joseph Smith, his being persecuted, and of the Book of Mormon being rejected. So, Mr. Iler, do all of these claimants to “latter-day revelation.” They each tell of their founder’s call, persecution, etc., and they all point to their “inspired” works. The Adventists claim the same for Mrs. White’s works as Mormons do for Mr. Smith’s. On what basis is Mormonism true, and Adventism false???

He says the critics are not right when they claim the Book of Mormon is a convoluted and disjointed rambling. Well, we shall see as time goes on, and as we look into that volume. In Mr. Iler’s surveying for us the content of the Book of Mormon, he reveals no information other than the same type information found in the Bible. If this is a revelation of doctrines “long lost,” will Mr. Iler please cite the doctrines now restored for us? He turns to gain credibility by pointing to the growth of Mormonism. This, Mr. Iler, is no proper criteria. Catholicism, Jehovah’s Witnesses, and Adventism would be established as true churches by that reasoning.

We now note Mr. Iler’s “proofs” regarding the Book of Mormon. But, reader, we want you to see what Mr. Iler does to get this information. In the Bible, the Old Testament pointed to the New as the law to supersede and replace it. But where, in the New Testament, does one find the lack, the deficiency, calling for yet another revelation; and where are the New Testament passages pointing to a new revelation? They are NOT THERE! Rather, we are shown that the New Testament is the FULL, FINAL, and COMPLETE revelation of God’s will to man. Indeed, the gospel of nearly 2,000 years ago was to be taken to all men, throughout the world, and for all

time (Mark 16:15-16; Matt. 28:19-20). Mr. Iler selects Old Testament passages, and then jumps over the New Testament entirely, to seek fulfillment beyond the New Testament. That, friends, is called “reaching”—a stretching of Scripture to make room for a false system.

Here are the things he abuses from the Old Testament in a search for basis for the Book of Mormon:

(1) Genesis 49:22-26. In discussing the good to come through Joseph, there is simply the picturing of a bough by a well and the life is seen in the extending of the bough over a wall. It is a picture of the fruitfulness of Joseph, and nothing at all to indicate a book, a volume of Scripture. At any rate, the fruitfulness of Israel resulted in the Christ, and the New Testament, not some latter-day “revelation.”

(2) Isaiah 29—the sealed book. Once more, an abuse of Scripture. Here, a picture of judgment against Jerusalem in the long ago, and they had not hearkened to God’s warnings; they were as men asleep (v. 10). In v. 22, the prophet said what he has presented to them had as little effect upon them as though men were given a sealed book. It was simply a figurative way of telling them how blind they had become, and he in verse 13 describes their condition. And, in the Lord’s own ministry he uses the same to rebuke his own people (Matt. 15:7-8). Notice: fulfillment in Jesus’ own time, not in a future “revelation.” The “marvelous work and wonder” of Isaiah 29:14 refers to God’s accomplishing good for his people, in spite of the blindness they had demonstrated. But, the accomplishing of this was in the Christ and in the New Testament of Christ. Nothing at all to indicate another book of Scripture!

(3) Then, Ezekiel 37, written while Ezekiel was in captivity (1:1-3), and it was a promise that God would indeed preserve a remnant, and all of Israel to be restored are pictured as Judah and Ephraim. From their scattering, they would once again be joined, and become one; it is pictured as the decree of God, to each of them, written on a stick, plank, piece of wood, etc., and then the two pieces of wood are banded, joined, welded or glued together to form that oneness. Verse 27 shows us that there was a future application, and the very language of the verse is used in the New Testament, 2 Corinthians 6:16. The point is that fulfillment was in the New Testament of Christ, and it is completely uncalled for to insert

“books” in place of “sticks,” with the promise of the Book of Mormon. Even granting “books,” the books would be the Old Testament and the New Testament, and not the Bible and some volume concerning which the Word of God says NOTHING! Indeed, Mr. Iler has “reached,” but that is what all claimants to “latter-day revelation” must do. Again we ask Mr. Iler: How do you know, by your own reasoning, that these verses do not point to the Bible PLUS Mrs. White’s “revelations.” Or, the Bible PLUS Herbert Armstrong’s “revelations”?

Dear readers, here we have something very critical. If latter-day-revelation is the rule of God, then there is no way that, with all the claims, anyone could ever know what is truth and what is error. Yet, God tells us we must all make that determination (I John 4:1). However, if the Bible is the full, complete and final revelation of God’s will, then this is the standard—it is, John 12:48—and men can use that standard and be able to distinguish right from wrong,

Mr. Iler has made some claims, and yet has to prove his proposition. We ask him to please show us the marks of inspiration in the Book of Mormon, and to please show us where either Joseph Smith or the Book of Mormon are pointed to in the New Testament of Christ.

ILER'S SECOND AFFIRMATIVE

Mr. Jackson has said he believes “Mormonism” has nothing more to offer than any other religion claiming divine guidance and seeks to put Joseph Smith in the same category as Herbert W. Armstrong, the United Pentecostals and Ellen G. White. Why then, he asks, should we accept Joseph Smith’s word when the foundation of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is based on no better evidence than the rest?

In asking this he virtually ignores the Book of Mormon, which has been staring both Christian and Jew in the face for more than 150 years and has confounded virtually every biblical scholar who has attempted to prove it a hoax. Surely a document 522 pages in length claiming to be an inspired account of a remnant of Israel and spanning nearly 1,000 years can be proven a hoax if, indeed, it is a hoax. But evidence to that effect is sadly lacking.

It is ironic that Mr. Jackson claims the Book of Mormon “reveals no new information other than the same type information found in the Bible” when no less a scholar than Alexander Campbell condemned it for the very reason that it did reveal new information. Mr. Campbell noted sarcastically that the Book of Mormon “decides all the great controversies—infant baptism, ordination, the trinity, regeneration, repentance, justification, the fall of man, the atonement, transubstantiation fasting, penance, church government, religious experience, the call of the ministry, the general resurrection, eternal punishment, who may baptize, and even the question of free masonry, republican government, and the rights of man.”¹ One wonders if Mr. Jackson has taken the time to read the volume he is so quick to condemn.

What most of Joseph Smith’s critics fail to realize is that this is the very purpose of the Book of Mormon—to dispel the error of the ages. Thus the prophetic declaration, through Isaiah, that the “deaf hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity, and out of darkness.” (Isa. 29:18).

¹ Painesville (Ohio) Telegraph, March 15, 1831, as cited in The Mormon Experience by Leonard J. Arrington and Davis Bitton, pps. 31-32.

In today's world we see nothing but religious confusion and discord. Mr. Jackson as well as anyone can see that. He is quite correct when he observes we cannot both be right, and yet others would contend that we are both wrong. He is quick to accuse me of stretching the cripture for my own ends. This is merely to say that I have attempted to put forth scripture in a manner with which he does not agree. And that, friends, is called perspective—nothing more, nothing less. The scriptures referenced in the first affirmative are abundantly clear to Latter-day Saints who understand the Book of Mormon, just as the messianic prophecies in the Old Testament are clear to Christians. And we declare we have the more sure word of prophecy.

The ancient apostles, inspired by God, pointed to the 53rd chapter of Isaiah as prophesying of Christ. In his account, Isaiah explained in vivid detail concerning the life and mission of the Savior. He would, the prophet stated, be “despised and rejected of men...wounded for our transgressions...stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.” He was, he continued, “cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he smitten.”

Here, in unmistakable detail, was a prophecy concerning the Messiah, his mission and the rejection he suffered. Yet to the Jews this is a figurative account representing, not the Messiah, but the nation of Israel. They view the ancient Jews as having rejected their God, their nation, and their heritage and by so doing went into bondage, the nation itself paying the price of its wayward people. Perhaps they would accuse Mr. Jackson of stretching the scripture in applying it to the Messiah!

The simple truth of the matter is that the 29th chapter of Isaiah is no more figurative than the 53rd. In the same detail he announced the rejection of the Messiah, Isaiah also prophesies of the coming forth of an actual book, saying “the words” of “a book” would be delivered to “one that is learned” while the book itself would be delivered to an “him that is not learned.” Prof. Anthon, as noted, was the learned man and received only the words of the book in transcript form, Joseph Smith (the unlearned man) obtaining the actual book. An amazing and literal fulfillment of prophecy!

Mr. Jackson is also unhappy with our interpretation of Ezekiel's prophetic joining of the “sticks” (Ezek. 37:16-20). The meaning of this passage has eluded biblical scholars for centuries, and has ev-

idently eluded Mr. Jackson as well. He fails to see how the sticks, or “woods,” of which Ezekiel writes, could possibly be volumes of scripture, but if so, he says, then they must represent the Old and New Testaments.

Mr. Jackson is treading on thin ice when he argues Ezekiel is talking about a gathering of the Jews, for premillennialism is not one of the pillars of his denomination.¹ Nevertheless, this theory also falls flat when one considers that the nations involved were not “Joseph” and “Judah” but “Israel” and “Judah.” If the gathering of the Jews in the latter-days was indeed the fulfillment of the scripture, why did not Ezekiel designate the sticks correctly?

Concerning Ezekiel’s mysterious sticks, Dr. Hugh Nibley of Brigham Young University, writes:

Studying the Egyptian practices, W.B. Kristensen asks, “What have the staff and the serpent and the Word of Jahwe to do with each other?” He quotes Noldeke and others who have shown that in Egypt as among the Hebrews the staff was specifically the Word of God, and the Word of God was the *Matteh ha-elohim* or Staff of God.²

Nibley also observes that L. Ginzberg, in *The Legends of the Jews*, has documented the fact that the tablets of the Law and the rod of Moses are one and the same in Hebrew tradition.³ And, as noted in our first article, it was the opinion of Eusebius and Jerome that Ezekiel’s “sticks” were books of scripture.⁴

But if they are books of scripture, why not then the Old and New Testaments? Simply because the Old and New Testaments together

¹ Howard, V.E., *The Second Coming of Christ and the Millennium* (Monroe, La.: Central Printers & Publishers); also, see THRUST, Vol. IV, Issue 5: “The Shank-Denman Exchange on Premillennialism.”

² Nibley, Hugh, *An Approach to the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Books), p. 261-262.

³ *Ibid*

⁴ *Ibid.*: “The earliest of all surviving Ezekiel commentaries, those of Eusebius and Jerome—the ablest scholars of their time and both trained in Hebrew—maintain that the ‘woods’ of Ezekiel were actually books, specifically books of Scripture.”

comprise the record of Judah. As we noted before, Joseph gained the birthright while Judah was to hold the scepter in Israel until the coming of Shiloh, or Christ.

Mr. Jackson discounts the imagery in Genesis 49 as merely representing the “fruitfulness of Joseph” and nothing more, but imagery was an important part of Hebrew tradition. We see that Joseph is symbolized as a bough, a large branch, whose branches run over a wall. As in many biblical prophecies, the interpretation becomes apparent only after fulfillment. We maintain this was a promise that Joseph’s seed would not remain in the land of Canaan, but that his “branches” would cross the ocean and inherit a land far better, one worthy of the birthright. Else where is Joseph’s birthright? And how did it surpass the blessing of the scepter of power given to Judah?

He goes through great pains to make Christianity the fulfillment of Ezekiel’s prophecy, but fails to understand one critical detail—that the Messiah came not through the loins of Joseph, but through Judah!

Mr. Jackson believes, like most religious clergy, that the Bible is the be-all and end-all of God’s revelations. He refers to II Tim. 3:16-17 to prove this: “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine.... That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” That to thoroughly furnish a man to all good works is indeed the purpose of scripture, all scripture, including the Book of Mormon. If Paul meant to preclude further revelation, why does Mr. Jackson accept as scripture the books of Revelation, I John and the Gospel of John, which were all written after this declaration?

Mr. Jackson also refers to Matthew 24:35, where Christ is quoted as saying: “Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words shall not pass away.” But surely he has read the scripture where John tells us: “And there are also many other things Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written.” (John 21:25). It is therefore impossible to have all the words of Christ. If we are to interpret the Lord’s declaration correctly, we must realize he was delivering one of the most famous prophetic discourses recorded in scripture. That his words would not “pass away” meant simply that they would be fulfilled.

But is there any evidence of the fantastic story of Lehi from New Testament times? That, of course, must be determined by the reader. We have the words of Jesus which indicate there was another fold which he would visit: “And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold and one shepherd.” (John 10:16). From the Book of Mormon we learn these “other sheep” were Lehi’s descendants in the New World.

The story of Christ’s appearance in the Western Hemisphere is recorded in the pages of the Book of Mormon. Even today, Indian legends abound concerning a great white god who once visited them. The Aztecs called him Quetzalcoatl and said he was white and bearded. According to their legends, he was born of a virgin and appeared among them in a miraculous manner and disappeared suddenly, promising one day to return. In other regions of the Western Hemisphere, he was known as Votan, Con-tici, Illa-tici, Gucumatz, Viracocha, Hyustus, Sume, Bochica, Kukulcan, Lono, Kana, Kane, Tonga-roa, Kane-Akea and Wixepechocha. Could Christ have been the basis of these legends?

There is also the statement of Origen, who puzzled over a writing of Clement, a contemporary of the apostles. Origen writes:

Clement, the disciple of the Apostles, recalls those whom the Greeks designate as *antichthonians* (dwellers on the other side of the earth), and other parts of the earth’s sphere (or circuit) which cannot be reached by anyone from our regions, and from which none of the inhabitants dwelling there is able to get to us; he calls these areas “worlds” when he says: “The Ocean is not to be crossed by men, but those worlds which lie on the other side of it are governed by the same ordinances (lit. dispositions) of a guiding and directing God as these.”¹

Who were these dwellers on the other side of the Earth Clement mentions, these *antichthonians* “who are governed by the same

¹ Nibley, *Op. cit.*, p. 271: “Here is a clear statement that the earliest Christians taught that there were people living on the other side of the world who enjoyed the guidance of God in complete isolation from the rest of the world.”

ordinances” of God as the ancient Christians?

Could they be the remnant of the tribe of Joseph, the “other sheep” Christ was to visit? And could there be more to the Book of Mormon than Mr. Jackson would care to admit? This we shall investigate later.

JACKSON'S SECOND NEGATIVE

Mr. Iler states that I seek to put Joseph Smith in the same category as other sects, and their founders. They ARE in the same category, but not because I placed them there; their own claims put them together. Mr. Iler states that I then have ignored the Book of Mormon, and wonders if I have read the volume. Read it? Mr. Iler, I have written a tract on the book¹ as well as many articles dealing with your false system! It is amazing that Mr. Iler takes Campbell's sarcastic points about the Book of Mormon, and then wants seriousness attached to those points. Of course the Book of Mormon has some "new" things in the sense of *unauthorized* and *unscriptural* material! We had earlier referred to the fact that the Book of Mormon offers no new AUTHENTIC material from God; indeed, Mr. Iler has not yet shown the failing, lack, or deficiency wherein there is a need for revelation beyond the New Testament. We wait on him to show us this deficiency!

We wonder what feature of the Book of Mormon Mr. Iler might want us to deal with—the more than 3,000 changes made since the first "inspired" edition, the atrocious grammar, the flat contradictions of the Bible, the ship "as long as a tree," the river emptying into the fountain, or the flagrant copying of the King James Version of the Bible, even to the punctuation marks! Surely the last point is one of the most damning to the entire Mormon system. The supposed plates standing as the basis of the Book of Mormon had been hidden for many centuries. Smith supposedly was guided in the translation of these plates through inspired means. Coming from a most ancient language, similarities of subject matter would in no way mean that the King James wording of 1611 would be used, and certainly not the punctuation! Yet, in many, many dozens of verses, Smith clearly copied from the King James. And yet they propose to pass this off as another inspired volume of Scripture!

Mr. Iler tries to find the Book of Mormon prophesied in Isaiah 29:18, and yet to do so he must leap over the New Testament. We

¹ Jackson, W. N., "Is The Book of Mormon From God?" (Barber Printing, Tupelo, MS) - Tract.

see very clearly in Matthew 11:5, and other verses, the fulfillment. The New Covenant fulfilled the promises of the Old Testament. Someone wants to put something over on men when they find reason to avoid the New Testament of the Christ. It is a typical move by those who claim “latter-day revelation.”

Those who read their Bibles know that there were two covenants given, and that God’s Word is composed of two portions—Old and New Testaments. We find God speaking of a first being taken away that a second might enter in (Heb. 10:9, etc.).

Mr. Iler needs to find that *third* one, and he needs to do so without leaping over the New Testament. Again, this is typical of those claiming “latter-day revelation,” and what is so terrible about it all is that such a tactic ignores and dishonors the place and work of Christ. It renders our Lord as having done incomplete work, and his apostles giving incomplete revelation.

Regarding the “sticks” in Ezekiel 37, Mr. Iler tells us the truth of this passage has eluded Bible scholars for years. Amazingly, he points to the “truth” in Mormonism, revealed only in Mormonism, Mormon scholars in a Mormon school! Highly suspect, that. Mr. Iler, Adventist teachers in Adventist schools so interpret as to “prove” Adventism; and Pentecostal teachers in Pentecostal schools and writing Pentecostal literature likewise “prove” Pentecostalism. You simply must do better than that, Mr. Iler! Once more the challenge to you: Why should Mormon claims be accepted more than those of other sects, when they are offered on no better evidence?

Regarding the gathering of all parts of Judaism, Mr. Iler can think only of premillennialism, and why? He is so accustomed to skipping over the New Testament, and pressing for Mormon fulfillment, he is hardly familiar with either the Old or New Testaments. Ezekiel’s events took place many years prior to the time of the restoration of the Jews during the days of Ezra and Nehemiah, and thus the gathering of the Jews back into the land of Palestine, and there is no premillennialism here at all!

To “make a way” for the claims of Mormonism as to Joseph, Mr. Iler tells us that both Old and New Testaments merely give us a record of Judah and that more is needed. The fact is that by the New Testament, ALL Jewish tribal and family distinctions, and ALL matters of lineage and connection by genealogy are of no consequence whatsoever! In Christ, and in the New Testament order, we

have no Jew, no Gentile (Gal. 3:28) significance. Why would anyone think otherwise, unless they had some man-made system to further, and needed thus to pick up some Jewish genealogy and then skip over the New Testament? This particular tactic of Mormonism must be followed to give “life” to the Mormon system, and thus the fanciful use of Genesis 49 and Joseph.

We then see Mormonism rejecting Christ and the New Testament system, ignoring the New Testament fulfillment of Old Testament promises. Mormonism seeks the rejection of the whole New Testament system, and is then a rejection of the Christ. All claimants to “latter-day revelation” work thusly.

Notice that, in regard to 2 Tim. 3:16-17, Mr. Iler seeks to leave the impression that I said that Scripture was completed at the time Paul penned the verses. I did not say so. I state just what Paul did: He said the Scriptures furnish a man completely, and the Lord said men would believe in him through the words of the apostles (John 17:20). The apostles did not give us Mormonism, and we have not the slightest hint that God’s revelation would continue on beyond the New Testament. Mormonism stands with Adventism, Pentecostalism and Armstrongism in trying to make room for itself by denying the completeness of the Word of God.

Once more, John 21:25 is used to cast a doubt on what God has given us. The fact is that John was stating that it was not the intention of God to give us a record of all that Jesus did; we are given sufficient to guide us in obedience and in living. Mr. Iler follows the Mormon tactic in John 10:16, regarding the other sheep. Jumping over the New Testament, he seeks fulfillment in Mormonism’s teaching. The prophecy of Isa. 56:8 is seen fulfilled in the New Testament, Eph. 3:6 and Rom. 1:16. Again, shoving the New Testament aside to make room for a latter-day doctrine, and having to cast doubt on the sufficiency of God’s revelation to man in order to squeeze in their own man-made system.

Mr. Iler introduces the need to look at EVIDENCE as to what the Book of Mormon offers us. Evidence is needed, indeed! But what does he do? He tells us of legends existing among various people over the earth! He speaks of those on the “other side of the earth” and implies that they had special need for the Lord’s appearance to them. The fact is that the Bible speaks of the whole world being lost in sin, and the New Testament gospel required for

the saving of them all (Mark 16:15,16 and Rom. 1:16). The New Testament is needed by the whole world, not just Palestine, or the Middle East, or Asia, or in the Americas. But, that one message will do it. The gospel is the power of God to save (Rom. 1:16).

Now, Mr. Iler needs to get with it! He proposes to show us that Mormonism is the system of God. In order to do this, Biblically, he needs to show wherein the New Testament of the Christ, and the gospel message thus revealed, is deficient, is lacking, is impotent and thus Mormonism is needed. He needs to show us New Testament promises as to the coming of Smith, and of the Book of Mormon. He needs to do this, and not to rely on the tactic of taking some obscure passage and jumping over the entire New Testament to then declare that Mormonism fulfills it. As of this moment, he had done just what the Adventist, Armstrong, Pentecostal, and Spiritualist teachers will do: (1) Cast doubts as to the sufficiency of the Lord's New Testament, and (2) Pick up Old Testament points, ignore the New Testament's fulfillment of them, and then seek to establish fulfillment in their own systems. Put all of these "lat-ter-day-revelationists" in a bag, and shake them up, and they all come out the same.

Now, why is it that the New Testament can so clearly be established as the fulfilling of the Old? Answer: The repeated verses so stating, and showing the deficiency of the Old in providing man what God desired for him. Abundant verses on this. Where, or where, do we find New Testament verses showing deficiency, and pointing to the Mormonism system? Yes, where? The silence is indeed DEAFENING! We hope Mr. Iler will break the silence and tell us something. We urge that he do so!

ILER'S THIRD AFFIRMATIVE

During my second affirmative, I wondered if Mr. Jackson had ever read the Book of Mormon. He tells us with much fanfare that he's written a tract on it. Well, that's very interesting, but he never answered the question. I know many atheists who berate the Bible and put forth clever arguments against it who have never bothered to read the volume they so vigorously assail. If Mr. Jackson has read the Book of Mormon, why does he not tell us?

In his first negative, Mr. Jackson begins by claiming the Book of Mormon revealed no new information. Now he seeks to modify his argument by saying it reveals no new AUTHENTIC information from God. That, Mr. Jackson, is known in the vernacular as a "cop out." If the Book of Mormon is indeed the word of God, then its contents *are authentic*, inspired of God, and binding as scripture.

In his passionate polemic against the Book of Mormon and latter-day revelation, Mr. Jackson seeks to place me in antithesis with the Bible by claiming I leap over the New Testament to find fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies. This is not only absurd, it's outrageous! The idea that the Old Testament was completely fulfilled in the early era of the New is a manmade doctrine which has no basis in the scriptures and is false. Some have claimed Joel 2:28-29 found fulfillment in the New Testament because Luke quotes it in Acts 2:16-21. But when was the sun darkened or the moon turned to blood? And when were there wonders in the heavens and in the Earth—the blood, fire and pillars of smoke (see Joel 2:30-31)? Clearly, Luke did not find fulfillment; he merely said "this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel." In other words, this is the same sort of thing spoken by Joel.

Mr. Jackson has a similar problem with Ezekiel's prophecy (Ezek. 37:21-28). After chiding me for not knowing the scriptures, he tells us the prophet cannot be referring to a premillennial gathering of the Jews because he was obviously referring to the gathering of the Jews in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah! Come now, Mr. Jackson, read the chapter again. When was "David my servant" made king over Israel in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah? When did the Lord make a "covenant of peace" with Israel that would be an "everlasting covenant"? When did the Lord establish the land for

them and their children and their children's children under prince David "forever"? When did the Lord set his "sanctuary [temple] in the midst of them evermore" and when did he establish his "tabernacle"? When did Gog arise and "come like a storm...a cloud to cover the land" against Israel as recorded in Ezek. 38:9-23? The answer is obvious. It hasn't! It's still to come.

He is also upset that I would quote from an LDS scholar to prove my point concerning the "sticks" of Ezekiel. That, of course, is his prerogative, but the sources Dr. Nibley cited were not LDS sources. The sticks were quite obviously not nations, but as we indicated, the word of God as represented in the staffs of "Judah" and "Joseph."

Because the Lord, under the Gospel, made salvation available to all, it is fallacious to assume he has cast off Israel and has forgotten the covenants he made with them. For "God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew." (Rom. 11:2). And because God said he is no respecter of persons, it is *non sequitur* to assume he was breaking his ties with them. "As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers sakes." (Rom. 11:28).

Mr. Jackson tells us Mormonism seeks to establish a covenant to supersede the New Testament. That is ridiculous. The New Testament is an everlasting covenant and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is working under that covenant today. Mr. Jackson's claims that latter-day revelation seeks to cheapen the work of Christ and the apostles is equally as ludicrous. With all the conflicting creeds and religions found in the Christian world today, how dare he say revelation is not needed? How dare he close the mouth of God and make the heavens as brass over the heads of men at this most crucial point in Earth's history? What greater evidence could Mr. Jackson want that the Bible is not the be-all and end-all of God's revelations?

Mr. Jackson tells us the Book of Mormon contradicts the Bible. Where, Mr. Jackson? He tells us the grammar is atrocious, but ignores the fact that much of the New Testament scriptures were written in barbaric Greek with bad grammar that somehow is correct when translated into English.¹ He also overlooks the fact that bad

¹ Nibley, Hugh, Since Cumorah (Deseret Books, SLC, Utah, 1968), pp. 7-8;

grammar is inherent to Hebrew writing styles and can be found in the Old Testament scriptures. Such “Hebraisms” as the *enallage*, a discrepancy between plural and singular tenses in a textual passage, is considered good form in Hebrew, but does not make good English. Therefore, how can one condemn Nephi, in the first edition of the book of Mormon, for saying, “there were a great remission of sins” (3 Nephi 1:23) when Isaiah says “surely the people is grass” (Isa. 40:7)?¹ Such Hebraisms are, if anything, strong evidence that Joseph Smith was telling the truth. They also show that Mr. Jackson is employing a double standard.

One of the most damning aspects of the Book of Mormon, Mr. Jackson tells us, is that when it quotes biblical scriptures, it is the King James Version complete with punctuation. How does this take away from the accuracy of the book? The King James Version in the days of Joseph Smith was the authorized version of the Bible. If the King James version was correctly translated, why not use its language—a language with which the people were familiar?

Mr. Jackson also mentions the more than 3,000 changes made in the Book of Mormon, but what he is loathe to mention is the fact they are editorial in nature and that no doctrine has been altered. Spelling has been corrected, grammar improved, punctuation added to clarify meaning and in some cases words added also to clarify. What, Mr. Jackson, is so scandalous about that? As to what other aspects of the Book of Mormon he would like to discuss—I leave it to his discretion.

Despite Mr. Jackson’s aversion to “legends” it is interesting to note Lloyd M. Graham, an outspoken critic of the Bible, has also noted similarities between the Aztec deity known as Quetzalcoatl and the story of Jesus. These similarities, to him, prove the New Testament false. But to Latter-day Saints it holds a great deal of significance. He writes concerning the place where Christ was crucified:

“Much of the New Testament is in barbaric Greek, and the ancient pagans often jeered at the illiteracy and bad grammar of the Disciples; yet in our English Bible their grammar is meticulously correct.”

¹ Weldon, Roy E. and Butterworth, F. Edward, Criticisms of the Book of Mormon Answered (Herald House, Independence, Mo., 1973), p. 20: “The enallage, or lack of agreement between plural and singular, is good Hebrew.”

The other name, Calvary, is the Latin equivalent from *calvaria*, a skull, and *calvus*, bald. The Aramaic *Gulgatha*, source of the Hebrew Golgotha, means “Like a skull.” As these countries are not remotely separated, it might be argued that these similarities all derive from an event, but this can hardly be the case with Mexico, some five thousand miles away. Yet the place where its great god Quetzalcoatl was crucified means “place of the skull.” These similarities come not from an event but from a common mythoplasia.¹

The Book of Mormon, besides employing “atrocious grammar” (which we have shown to be consistent with Hebrew writing) also employs another Hebraism known as chiasmus. Chiasmus, simply put, is a parallelism used anciently in both Greek and Hebrew. One example of a chiasm is found in Psalms 3:7-8 in the Bible:

- (1) Save me
- (2) O my God
- (3) For thou hast smitten
- (4) All my enemies
- (5) On the cheekbone
- (5) The teeth
- (4) Of the wicked
- (3) Thou hast broken
- (2) To Yahweh
- (1) The salvation

And in the Book of Mormon we read this chiasm: Men will drink damnation to their souls unless

- (1) They humble themselves
- (2) and become as little children
- (3) believing that salvation is in the atonement blood of Christ
- (4) for the natural man
- (5) is an enemy of God
- (6) and has been from the fall of Adam
- (6) and will be forever and ever

¹ Graham, Lloyd M., *Deceptions and Myths of the Bible* (Bell Publishing Co., New York, 1979), pp. 346-7.

- (5) unless he yieldeth to the Holy Spirit
- (4) and putteth off the natural man
- (3) and becometh a saint through the atonement of Christ
- (2) and becometh as a child
- (1) submissive, meek and humble. (Mosiah 3:18-19)¹

These chiasms are structured simply and illustrate the parallel pattern of these Hebraisms, but they are relatively simple examples. Highly complex chiasms exist in both the Bible and the Book of Mormon. We leave it to the reader to decide if Joseph Smith, with a third grade education, could have concocted such.

¹ Welch, John W., "Chiasmus in the Book of Mormon," *BYU Studies* (Brigham Young University, Autumn 1969, X;1), p. 69ff.

JACKSON'S THIRD NEGATIVE

Mr. Iler states that I, with much fanfare, announced that I had written a tract on the Book of Mormon. Fanfare? I merely mentioned that I had done so; and yes, Mr. Iler, I have read the Book of Mormon, and that's one major reason I know it to be a work of man, not God! Again we say that the Book of Mormon gives us nothing whereby we know that the New Testament system is incomplete, and that men should look for other revelation. Let Mr. Iler show the New Testament promise of either Smith or the Book of Mormon. We wait, Mr. Iler.

True to the design of Mormonism, it cannot make a place for itself unless there is reflection upon the completeness of the New Testament. Mr. Iler informs us that it is outrageous to think that the New Testament fulfills the Old. In fact, he goes on to deny fulfillment, in Acts 2, of Joel 2, though the apostle Peter announced fulfillment. Mr. Iler wonders about the "sun darkened," and yet he overlooks Joel's announcement of certain events "before" the great day of Acts 2. "Before" that day were the events of the Lord's death, including darkness. Just a little Bible reading would help you, Mr. Iler, and you'll also be helped by less reading of the Book of Mormon.

When Mr. Iler tried to press upon us a premillennial view, we informed him that Ezekiel wrote before the time of the restoration—the time of Ezra and Nehemiah—and that in the return from captivity there was a uniting of the elements of Judaism once again. But more, we showed, by the language of Ezekiel 37:27 and 2 Corinthians 6:16, that therein was a promise of a unity to be realized in the Christ, fulfilled in the New Testament. This latter fulfillment was to be under "David" (the king, David, had long since been dead) and hence was a reference to the Christ, the son of David, who was earlier prophesied to sit on David's throne (2 Sam. 7:12-16), and we find fulfillment of this in Acts 2:29-32. For whatever wonder still possesses Mr. Iler about the Gog of Ezekiel 38, the point is the perseverance of God's people over her enemies, and which was fulfilled in the coming of the Christ and the New Testament order. John uses the same symbolism in Revelation 20:8 to point to the perseverance at the end of the age. For all of it, Mr. Iler, there is

fulfillment in the New Testament will of Christ. We can, through Mr. Iler, see the mysticism and occult nature of Mormonism, if they believe in a bodily resurrection of David in the future that Ezekiel 37 might be fulfilled!

Mr. Iler reveals his own premillennial bent in his questions about Romans 11, and he shows unfamiliarity with the purpose of Romans. No, God did not cast off his people, whereas he could have left the Jews damned in their sins, but has provided the gospel as his power to save both Jews and Greeks (Rom. 1:16). Again, New Testament fulfillment of all things in Christ and the gospel.

Let us here establish once more that Mormons, along with other “latter-day revelations,” cannot make a place for themselves without minimizing the importance of the New Covenant of the Christ. Hence, Iler’s claim that revelation is still needed! By his reasoning, the rejection of the Christ would then mean we need another Christ to come! But the truth is that men need to obey the revelation they have received, the New Testament, and obey the Christ who has come!

Just a sample of the Book of Mormon’s errors would include (1) Jesus being born in Jerusalem (Alma 7:10) rather than Bethlehem (Matt. 2:1) and (2) three days darkness when Jesus died (Helaman 14:20) rather than three hours (Matt. 27:45). We will gladly give Mr. Iler more as he deals with these. We want to notice one of the most damning indictments of the Book of Mormon, and that is the copying of the King James English in hundreds of verses. Mr. Iler asks, “Why not?” and tells us that the King James was the authorized version of the Bible in Smith’s day. That is NOT the point. The plates Smith supposedly used had been hidden for centuries, and were in a very ancient language, we’re told. More, Smith was not to copy the King James Version, but the story handed out is that Smith was guided in TRANSLATING from that ancient language. If translating from an ancient language, by inspired means, there’s no way that the 1611 English of the King James would be produced, especially in so many verses and with even the PUNCTUATION being the same! Oh, it was copied, Mr. Iler, and if it was copied then it wasn’t translated as Smith and his witnesses claimed. It is amazing that direct, inspired translation directed by God has to have more than 3,000 changes from the original work, isn’t it?

Oh, it is a work of man, Mr. Iler, and how can you believe it is a

work of God??

Mr. Iler should also be reminded that in the translations of the Bible that we have, the translating was done by men, and subject to the grammar “slippages” characteristic of men. But, Mr. Iler, do remember that in the translating supposedly done by Smith, the material was written in a most ancient language, and Smith was used of God in the translating—and the translation was thus INSPIRED! And therein is the difference. Something translated under the direct operation of God in guiding Smith warrants more than 3,000 changes??

Mr. Iler also need not rejoice in the fact that some Aztec account is similar to the Bible’s record of Jesus. There are many accounts from many civilizations similar to many portions of the Bible, but that is a far cry from stating that the Aztec, and other, records are also inspired. Athenian idolatrous poets had mentioned that man is the offspring of God (Acts 17:28), but that does not mean that the idolaters wrote by God’s inspiration!

Finally, Mr. Iler points to parallelisms in the Book of Mormon, and to Smith’s lack of education, and asks, “Could such be concocted?” Surely Mr. Iler knows of the charges, existing for years, that someone wrote the book other than Smith, or that Smith copied the material from other sources, etc.? But more to the point, then what does Mr. Iler say more than others? Spiritualism for years told of the experiences and utterances of the Fox sisters, asking, “Could such have been made up?”—therefore, asking that spiritualism be accepted as being from God

The followers of Ellen White refer to her writings as being inspired, for “Could such material just be made up by a woman?”—therefore asking that Adventism be accepted as being from God. The United Pentecostals claim an experience of revelation, resulting in the proclamation of their doctrines, and the production of their Manual, and asking, “Could such a system just be made up?”—therefore, asking that Pentecostalism be accepted as being from God. Again, Mr. Iler, tell us why your claims for Smith and Mormonism should be accepted, when they are based on NO BETTER EVIDENCE than these others?

Mr. Iler has wasted space, and still has yet to prove his proposition. Mormonism being the product of Smith, he must find a place for Smith in God’s plan. He has referred to “sticks,” Joseph, and

premillennialism. He fails in finding Smith or Mormonism! Mr. Iler, where are the New Testament references to Smith, or to the point that the New Testament will be followed by other revelation? Mormonism was not given by the apostles, yet they were to be led to ALL TRUTH (John 16:13). The apostles and those on whom they laid their hands had supernatural and inspired powers, but no others and none beyond the apostolic period. Jude said the faith was ONCE FOR ALL DELIVERED (Jude 3). And that was 2,000 years ago!

Now, Mr. Iler, it is time to start getting around to show us the lack and incompleteness in the New Testament that would call for new revelation. And it is time for you to show us New Testament promises concerning Smith's coming. Unless you can do so, we are justified in finding Smith in the Lord's statement in Matthew 24:24—"...there shall arise FALSE CHRISTS and FALSE PROPHETS.... they shall deceive..."

ILER'S FOURTH AFFIRMATIVE

Mr. Jackson has accused me of wasting space. My silence on the issues he feels are important he says is “deafening” and he wants irrefutable proof here and now of Joseph Smith’s divine mission or Smith must be assumed to be a false prophet or a false Christ. Being the seasoned scholar that he is, he should know that “proof” is entirely subjective and it would be just as difficult for me to prove the inspiration of the Book of Mormon to him as to convince a Jehovah’s Witness that man has a spirit or an orthodox Jew that Jesus is the Christ. The Jewish doctors during the days of Jesus repeatedly asked the Lord for evidence of his identity and authority, yet when confronted with the scriptures, they still rejected him. So it is with Mr. Jackson and modern critics of God’s prophets.

He is quick to interpret the scriptures to his own end, but soon entangles himself hopelessly as he confuses the application of scripture with *fulfillment*. Yes, there was darkness when Christ was crucified, but those readers who take the time to look up our scriptural references will see there are three references Joel makes to these events (2:19, 31; 3:15). They will occur in the last days, during the “captivity of Judah and Jerusalem” (2:1; 3:1). And what’s more, our Lord himself said they would occur just prior to his coming in glory (Matt. 24:27-29; Luke 21:9-11). Thus the “great and...terrible day of the Lord” clearly has reference to his second coming. To complicate matters, Mr. Jackson tries to make it appear that I said the New Testament did not fulfill the Old. This I did not say. What I *did* say was that it is erroneous to assume that ALL Old Testament prophecies were fulfilled in the apostolic era of the New. That the Old Testament prophets pointed the way to Christ is beyond dispute, but we remind Mr. Jackson that Latter-day Saints very much consider the Restoration of the Gospel in our day as a New Testament event and one that is evidenced by scripture.

Mr. Jackson, in his eagerness to discredit the Book of Mormon, has resorted to peripheral arguments over whether or not the Bible is complete. One reads endlessly about leaping over the New Testament and warnings of false Christs and false prophets; but where is the substance, Mr. Jackson? Need we remind you that you will have your opportunity to argue for the completeness of the Bible when

you're in the affirmative? It is not I, but you who must "get with it" if you are to show the Book of Mormon is not of God and is not the product of revelation.

"All scripture is inspired of God," we are told (II Tim. 3:16), yet Mr. Jackson is ready to accept the bad grammar of the apostles while condemning Joseph Smith for using bad grammar in translating the Book of Mormon. How, we asked Mr. Jackson, could the apostles of old have been inspired and used poor grammar? His response was that Smith was "inspired" to translate, and this should make it an entirely different matter. But by whose standards? The Lord explained the way inspiration works in a modern revelation. "Behold, I am God and have spoken it; these commandments are of me and were given unto my servants in their weaknesses, after the manner of their language, that they might come to understanding." (*Doctrines & Covenants* 1:24).

Mr. Jackson is also gravely offended because when the Book of Mormon prophets quote biblical scriptures, the passages are apparently rendered in the King James Version. But this same Mr. Jackson, when confronted with an atheist who condemned the Bible because of discrepancies in translations, said: "He apparently does not understand the work of translation at all, and that a correct translation then conveys the same truth as the work in the original."¹ The question then becomes: Is the Book of Mormon a correct translation? If Mr. Jackson would take a closer look at the King James and Book of Mormon renderings of such prophets as Isaiah, he would see they are not so much alike as he thought.

One such change can be seen in Isaiah 2:9. In the KJV it reads: "And the mean man boweth down, and the great man humbleth himself: therefore forgive them not." The same passage, as rendered in the Book of Mormon, reads: "And the mean man boweth not down, and the great man humbleth himself not, therefore forgive them not." Are these two verses identical, Mr. Jackson?

Verse 10 of the same chapter is quoted thus in the KJV: "Enter into the rock, and hide thee in the dust, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his majesty." The Book of Mormon renders it this way: "O ye wicked ones, enter into the rock, and hide ye in the dust, for the

¹ Thrust, Vol. IV, Issue III, "Jackson-Crackin Debate," 1984, p. 74.

fear of the Lord and his majesty shall smite thee.” And in this case it is interesting to note the Septuagint version, which reads: “Now therefore enter ye into the rocks, and hide yourselves in the earth, for fear of the Lord, and by the glory of his might, when he shall arise to strike terribly the earth.”

We would like Mr. Jackson to note that any mention of smiting is found only in the Book of Mormon and the Septuagint—not in the King James Version.

Mr. Jackson is also ready to dismiss the Indian legend of Quetzalcoatl as common folklore, not to be trusted as an inspired account. But sir, who said it *was* inspired? I can hold a ball in my hand and say it is round, and it would be true, but my utterance would not necessarily be inspired—it would merely be a statement of geometric fact. I can likewise say that Jamestown was founded in 1607, and I would not necessarily be inspired, but would merely be stating a historical fact. We’ve noticed Mr. Jackson never hesitates to use uninspired historical and archaeological data to confirm the Bible. We wonder if this is more of his double standard?

The Book of Mormon, our critic notes, has Christ being born in Jerusalem. Actually, the prophet states the Messiah would be born “at” Jerusalem, “the land of our forefathers.” Apparently he does not realize that “at” (according to any comprehensive dictionary) can refer to proximity. That Bethlehem was in the “land of Jerusalem” cannot be disputed. From one ancient near-Eastern text discovered in 1887 we read: “But now even a town of the land of Jerusalem, Bit-Lahmi [Bethlehem] by name, a town belonging to the king, has gone over to the side of the people of Keilah.”¹ Where is the contradiction, Mr. Jackson?

Again, Mr. Jackson finds a contradiction between the three days of darkness that accompanied our Lord’s crucifixion in the New World and the three *hours* mentioned in the Bible. He ignores the fact that two entirely different hemispheres are being discussed and he also overlooks the fact that when Christ was born, the Western Hemisphere experienced three days of continuous light preceding

¹ Ogden, D. Kelly, *The Ensign*, Aug. 1984, “I Have A Question,” pp. 51-2. The text in question is the El Amarna letter #290. Discovered 1887 according to Nibley in *An Approach to the Book of Mormon*, p. 81.

the appearance of the new star, even though the sun set and rose as usual.¹ Such an event is not recorded in the Old World. Again, where is the contradiction?

We have attempted to offer strong evidence of the Book of Mormon's inspiration. We showed that no one knew of the use of metal plates in writing in 1830, when the Book of Mormon was translated. We have shown that non-LDS scholars have concluded the "sticks" of Ezekiel were, indeed, representative of the Word of God and that Eusebius and Jerome believed the sticks to be scripture. We have noted the Indian legends regarding Quetzalcoatl, a bearded white god, who appeared suddenly and vanished suddenly, promising one day to return. This god was born of a virgin and was crucified at the "place of the skull"—a remarkable correspondence to Golgotha ("like a skull"). We have shown the Book of Mormon contains Hebraisms, including complex chiasms and the *enallage* or "atrocious grammar" of which Mr. Jackson is so fond. We have shown the biblical prophecies of a "sealed book" that would come forth and confound the wise. Mr. Jackson bends over backward to find New Testament fulfillments of these scriptures, but fails. He is also unable to show any contradictions or errors when even the Bible contains them (see Acts 9:7 and Acts 22:9).

Another surprising discovery that may shed light on the Book of Mormon was provided by Dr. Joseph Ginat, an administrative assistant to the Minister of Arab Affairs in Israel. In 1970, Ginat came to Utah to lecture and do specialized research. While there, he met many Latter-day Saints and was introduced to the Book of Mormon. He was largely unimpressed until he got to the third chapter of I Nephi, which tells the story of Lehi's sons returning to Jerusalem to obtain the brass plates of Laban. They gathered their vast wealth and took it to Laban in an attempt to purchase the plates, but Laban took their silver and gold and threw them out: "And it came to pass that we did flee before the servants of Laban, and we were obliged to leave behind our property, and it fell into the hands of Laban. And it came to pass that we fled into the wilderness...and we hid ourselves

¹ 3 Nephi 1:19-21, "And it came to pass that there was no darkness in all that night, but it was as light though it were mid-day... and it came to pass also that a new star did appear, according to the word."

in the cavity of a rock.”

In 1974, Dr. Ginat again returned to Utah, this time with a film. Part of the text is as follows: “Twenty miles southeast of Jerusalem, in the Judean mountains... lie the ruins of an ancient village named Beith Lehi (‘The House of Lehi’).

“In 1961, in the course of the construction of a military patrol road, along what was at the time the Israeli-Jordanian border line, a bulldozer hit and partly destroyed the roof of a small cave: by mere good luck there was no damage to the walls...on which ancient drawings and inscriptions in an old Hebrew script were uncovered by astonished workers.”

One inscription, according to Dr. Frank Moore Cross, Jr., of Brandis University in Massachusetts, reads: “I am Yahweh thy God. I shall accept the cities of Judah and will redeem Jerusalem.” The film goes on to say: “As the inscription found in the cave has been dated back to THE SIXTH CENTURY B.C.—probably during the period of Jeremiah—the cave’s inhabitants may have belonged to a family who once owned property in the village and returned to the place to seek refuge.”

The film also comments on the unusual drawings: “The drawings of sailing boats found in the cave are very unusual for a mountain area so far from the sea. There is a possibility that the people who took shelter in the cave intended to reach the sea, thus drawing plans of vessels or merely expressing a hope to be delivered by God.”

Who was this Lehi who owned the land? Traditions of the bedouins maintain “the place is called after an Israelite prophet by the name of Lehi who in ancient days was sitting under an old oak tree judging his people.¹

Having been put to flight by Laban’s armed guards, it is certainly not improbable that Nephi and his brethren would flee to their property for shelter—to a cave with which they were familiar. More coincidence, we ask the reader? Or could it be something more?

¹ Skousen, W. Cleon, *Treasures of the Book of Mormon* (1971, 1974: Published by author, Salt Lake City, Ut.) pp. 1056-58.

JACKSON'S FOURTH NEGATIVE

Mr. Iler now has concluded his affirmations, and I will make this negative reply, and then will proceed with my affirmatives. We do appreciate Mr. Iler making his effort, but do not feel that he has accomplished that which his proposition required. He set out to affirm that (1) revelation is a continuing thing, and (2) the Book of Mormon is God's revelation to man, and is thus the Word of God. He has proven neither point!

We need to note first that Mr. Iler states that I must "get with it if I am to show that the Book of Mormon is not of God." Mr. Iler seems to forget that he has been in the affirmative, and it was his obligation to prove that the Book of Mormon is of Divine origin. And, he has not done so! We have been treated to an interesting story of young Smith, to a tale about metal plates, to a reference to some "sticks" in Ezekiel, to a literary device known as chiasm, and to an Indian legend of Quetzalcoat!—and that's it! Isn't it a strange thing that God made it so clear in the Old Testament regarding the coming New Order—the New Testament—in terms of law, Messiah, revelation, salvation, worship, and service, and yet in the New Testament there is absolute SILENCE as to the coming Mormon order? In order to make any room for Mormonism at all, Mr. Iler must return to the Old Testament, completely overlook the New and the fulfillment found in the New, to "root around" to find a place for Smith and his false system!

What has now been revealed, by Mr. Iler, is his true feelings about the Bible. We have seen this, time and again, in talking to the young Mormon "elders" (who in no sense meet the Scriptural qualifications for elders set forth in I Timothy 3 and Titus 1). These elders always make a place for Mormonism by casting doubt on the completeness or the accuracy of the Bible. EVERY false system does that, and it is one of the marks of a FALSE SYSTEM, every time! It boils down to this: (1) Mr. Iler does not believe that the apostles of Christ were guided into ALL TRUTH, John 16:13, and (2) He does not believe that the apostles were given ALL THINGS that pertain to life and godliness, 2 Peter 1:3. The fact remains that the apostles were NOT led to Mormonism, and thus it is not part of God's truth. They did not proclaim Mormonism, and thus it does not

pertain to life and godliness. It is as simple as that, and Mr. Iler's failure to do what his proposition obligated him to do is most obvious! But Mr. Iler has revealed a far more damaging fact, in his last article. He goes on to state that "proof" is entirely subjective! Now, that says it all! Mr. Iler does not believe in an absolute truth at all. Jesus had said that God's Word is truth (John 17:17), and that truth could be known by men (John 8:32). Mr. Iler now informs us that there is no proof at all, but that it is all subjective. Then, by his view, the Catholic system is truth if the Catholic believes it, and the Jehovah's Witness system is truth if its adherents accept it as such, and Pentecostalism is truth if its members believe it to be so. Shades of agnosticism and ultra-liberalism, Mr. Iler! Why in the world did you propose to affirm such as you did, about Mormonism, if the system cannot be proven at all! And, doesn't it say something very bad about your view of the Bible, since by the Bible you can't prove Mormonism—is it all just a subjective thing?

Notice that in order to make room for Mormonism, Mr. Iler now states that all Old Testament prophecies were not fulfilled in the apostolic era of the New Testament. Mr. Iler, that is true as to promises concerning your death, and mine, and the end of time and the day of judgment and eternity, but it is NOT true concerning matters of law, revelation, kingdom, worship, the mediator, etc. The writer of Hebrews said, "He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second" (Heb. 10:9). Mr. Iler doesn't believe what that verse establishes, but rather believes in a third, or in some other part of the second than that which we have in the New Testament. An essential difference between us is that when there is a needed restoration, Mr. Iler confuses that with needed REVELATION. What is needed is not MORE REVELATION, but a return to the REVELATION ALREADY GIVEN.

I'm sorry Mr. Iler has never understood the point about Mr. Smith citing the King James translation, even to duplicating the punctuation marks. It is to his advantage not to see the point, for it kills Mormonism as a revelation from God. Mr. Iler, the King James translation was made by uninspired men, and thus some frailty would be expected to appear. But according to Mormonism, Joseph Smith WAS inspired, and was guided by God in his work of translating the plates. His work, then, under inspiration from God should be as perfect as the original autographs of scripture.

The fact remains that Smith brazenly copied dozens of verses from the King James translation, punctuation and all, when such would never take place in inspired deliverance from God.

Mr. Iler then proceeds to prove my point in showing that, in discussion with an atheist, I pointed out that there can be variation that is not contradiction. Hence, Mormonism fails, for Smith did not have the variations in the passages we mentioned, but had deliberate copying, even to King James wording (peculiar to that version) and punctuation!

Mr. Iler states that I have dealt with peripheral arguments as to the completeness of the Bible. Peripheral? Mr. Iler, check with your own missionaries as they go about visiting in homes; they will invariably proceed to the point of denying either the completeness or accuracy of the Bible, and all to make room for their man-made doctrines. Peripheral, he says, when it happens to be one of their foremost tactics!

Most interesting is the fact that when Mr. Iler desired to comment on the contradiction between the “three days” and “three hours,” he cites the Book of Mormon as his explanation! He cites the very book under suspicion as his PROOF! PROOF, did I say? Sorry about that; let’s remember that Mr. Iler’s position is that everything is subjective. He has surrendered the debate in that very admission!

He has revealed even more about his real trust of the Bible. He is perfectly willing to FORCE “at” Jerusalem to mean “in the proximity,” etc. but then cannot see in Acts 9:7 that men could hear a voice, and yet, by Acts 22:9, did not hear with comprehension. He reveals what he thinks of the Bible when he states that the Bible contains errors and contradictions!

He then has a long citation of material from a Dr. Ginat, and of an inscription noted by Dr. Cross, and of some unusual drawings, and of a mention of a man named Lehi, etc. Mr. Iler, there have been many things found, in many caves, and many pictures drawn and inscriptions made, and many men named in various religious and secular materials, and some of those things historically accurate, but is this your PROOF (that word again) of the Mormon system?

The dilemma Mr. Iler had at the beginning, he still has. Smith and the Book of Mormon are hooked together, and he can find neither in the Bible. He finds no deficiency or lack in the New

Testament calling for a new revelation, and he likewise finds no prophecy calling for a new prophet of God to come on the scene. In those claims wherein he hopes to lay a foundation for Mormonism, he has exactly what Pentecostals and a dozen other religious sects have to offer—stories, tales, and wonder, and a pressing of dim symbolic language of the Old Testament. Our plea is that Mr. Her re-study the New Testament, that his faith might be built on God's system, and that through faith, repentance, confession of faith, and baptism into Christ, he might become a Christian and thus a member of the church that Jesus built! It has been a pleasure to follow him, and my first affirmative will shortly appear.

Proposition 2:

*The New Testament is the Final
Revelation from God*

Affirmative: Bill Jackson

Negative: John R. Iler, Jr.

JACKSON'S FIRST AFFIRMATIVE

It has been with pleasure and profit that I have had one series of exchanges with Mr. Iler; and now, as we switch roles, I am happy to be in the affirmative for our second proposition. Let neither of us minimize the seriousness of the business at hand. If the position I hold is correct, then Mr. Iler and all who are in the Mormon system are false teachers, are furthering a false system, and have greatly abused and mistreated the Word of God. On the other hand, if Mr. Iler's position is correct, then I am in grave error in holding that the Mormon system is a false one, in stating that God has no revelation to man beyond the New Testament, and in teaching others to have the same views. Souls are at stake then, and Mr. Iler and I should both be aware of this most serious point.

As is proper, I now want to state the proposition, and then define it: "The Scriptures teach that the New Testament is God's final revelation of his will to man. The Bible is the complete and inerrant Word of God, and thus the Book of Mormon is shown not to be the Word of God." In defining terms, we set forth this:

- (a) By "the Scriptures" I mean the 66 books of the Bible;
- (b) by "teach" I mean to convey information, to instruct;
- (c) by "the New Testament" I mean the portion of the Bible from Matthew through Revelation;
- (d) by "God's final revelation of his will" I mean the last of God's instructions to man,
- (e) by "complete and inerrant" I mean that the Bible as given to men is ALL that God intends that we have, and that this volume, as sent from God, is free from error, and
- (f) by "the Book of Mormon shown not to be the Word of God" I mean that if the Bible IS the full and complete revelation of God's will, then the Book of Mormon cannot be a part of God's will to man.

I trust that these definitions are sufficient, and that any further information needed by the readers will be forthcoming as the debate progresses.

I wish to further state that while we may press our points, and should, there is no ill-will felt or harbored against Mr. Iler or any other member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Indeed, their faith, their zeal, their missionary endeavors show them to be devoted to their cause, and many communities testify to their being worthwhile citizens and neighbors. Despite those qualities, I believe them to be in error, and hence this discussion.

Our Spiritual Warfare, In The Apostles' Hands

When the Lord was praying, virtually in the shadow of the cross, he spoke concerning his apostles, and then said this: “Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through THEIR WORD” (John 17:20). The Lord said that all who believe on him would do so through the words of the apostles. Concerning those apostles, Jesus had promised them the Holy Spirit, who would teach them ALL THINGS, bring ALL THINGS to their remembrance (John 14:26), guide them into ALL TRUTH, and show them the things of the FUTURE (John 16:13). Just here, the questions are appropriate:

- (1) Did Jesus cause the apostles to preach Mormonism?
- (2) When they were taught ALL THINGS, were they taught the doctrine of Mormonism?
- (3) When they were guided into ALL TRUTH, were they guided to teach the doctrines of the Latter-Day Saints?
- (4) When they were shown future things, and then when they wrote their New Testament books and pointed to those future things, did they point to Mormonism?
- (5) When the Holy Spirit descended on them, in Acts 2, and they began to speak with other tongues as directed by the Spirit, were they directed into Mormonism and did they speak of the coming of Joseph Smith and of the coming of the Mormonism system? Did they, Mr. Iler?

Later in the New Testament, the apostle Peter said that God’s divine power “hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him” (2 Pet. 1:3). Note that this was addressed to those who then, nearly 2,000 years ago, had the same like precious faith as did the apostles (v. 1). Once more we have the completeness of that which the apostles gave us set forth for us. The apostles gave us all things that pertain to life and godliness, and the apostles did not give us Mormonism!

More than that, very late in the New Testament period, Jude speaks of the need to earnestly contend “for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3). The idea, literally, is the

once-for-all-having-been-delivered faith! Of critical importance is the fact that this inspired writer said that then, nearly 2,000 years ago, the faith was delivered. He did not point down the stream of time to a future portion of it, and he did not point to a period over 1700 years later, when a “prophet” would rise up and gather the people of God unto himself. In all of this, the apostles wore the ones who declared that ONE FAITH, that ONE GOSPEL (Eph. 4:5 and Gal. 1:6-9). It is of supreme importance that we notice, in Galatians 1, that Paul was condemning ANY MESSAGE from ANY SOURCE—even if an angel from heaven should bring it—other than the message PAUL HAD DELIVERED! (v. 8). The question for Mr. Iler is this: Did Paul preach the doctrines of the Latter-Day-Saints? Did Paul preach the doctrines of Mormonism? If he did, where are those doctrines found in the New Testament? If Paul did not preach them, then such doctrines could not be from God, and cannot have God’s approval, and cannot bring about salvation, and must be perversions! Paul says so, Galatians 1:6-7.

Friends, those passages we have already cited are sufficient to let us know that the apostles of Christ were, by the Holy Spirit, guided into all truth and have presented unto us all things that pertain to pleasing God. Over and over again, we are warned not to accept any other message. The Lord himself warned against the coming of false prophets and false Christs (Matt. 24:24). We have seen Paul’s statement that any other message than that which he preached must be a perversion (Gal. 1:7). Paul also warned that beyond the message of the apostles there was simply that called the philosophies of men bred in the traditions of men and the rudiments of the world, and borne along by deceit (Col. 2:8). With such repeated emphasis on holding on to the doctrines of the apostles, we must stand with Paul in seeing that the message provided by the apostles is that which furnishes us completely unto EVERY GOOD WORK (2 Tim. 3:16-17)

Now, Where Will Mr. Iler Go?

Following our points, Mr. Iler then must nullify them by showing that the Holy Spirit and the apostles failed. He must show us the deficiency in the New Testament that thus calls for the “new” revelation he advocates. Where are those New Testament failings, Mr. Iler? But he needs also to show that Mormonism is God’s “new” system, rather than Armstrongism, Adventism, Pentecostalism or

Spiritualism. What makes his task so difficult is that all of these make the same claims as he does: roots in some veiled prophecy, the hope of their own “prophet” to come, and special revelation their “prophet” has been given. They all make the same claims, and the question is: Why should Mr. Iler be believed rather than Mr. Armstrong, when he offers his system on NO BETTER EVIDENCE than Armstrong? Indeed, WHY?

Here, friends, is the beauty of what we set forth earlier. We have the New Testament of Jesus Christ, and we thus have the complete and final revelation from God. But having that volume, the New Testament, we can thus know that all future messages, prophets and “revelations” are to be rejected. On the other hand, if Mr. Iler’s position is correct, revelation will always continue, and one could NEVER know for sure and could NEVER have the contentment and assurance that he was in possession of what God had for him at any particular time. Mr. Iler is now to deal with our passages and explain to us why, if the apostles were guided into all truth, they were not guided to Mormonism. We ask further that he find the promise of Smith, and the promise of the Mormon system, in the New Testament. We await his reply and anxiously want to see the passages he cites to us.

ILER'S FIRST NEGATIVE

“What we say here is no fantasy. It is stern and solemn reality. The heavens have been reopened. God once again converses with mankind.... We invite all men to partake of this great gospel. We declare it to be God’s truth. We realize what Paul said about preaching false doctrine, and we declare our message in all soberness. What we say is true.”

-Mark E. Petersen—of the Quorum of the Twelve
April 1970

Before beginning my first negative, I, too, wish to state it is a privilege and an honor for me to be involved in this exchange with Mr. Jackson. He is quite correct in observing that if he is right, then I am wrong and the gospel taught by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is “another gospel” and should be summarily rejected. But on the other hand, if the Book of Mormon is the product of divine revelation, as I’m convinced it is, then it constitutes the same gospel as taught by our Lord Jesus Christ and the Christian world would do well to abide by its precepts.

Mr. Jackson seems to feel I have surrendered the debate in saying that proof is subjective. He runs a great risk that our readers will go back and view my comments in context, for I did not say TRUTH was subjective—for no one believes more in absolute truth than the Latter-day Saints. What I did say was that PROOF is subjective, and that what may be proof for one may not be proof for another. I’m frankly surprised that a man of Mr. Jackson’s background would disagree with this assertion. He has boldly defended the Bible as the Word of God against all comers for some twenty-five years, and yet the evidence he cited when debating atheist James Crackin earlier this year went wholly unheeded by Mr. Crackin. Evidently what Mr. Jackson felt was sure proof of the Bible’s inspiration fell flat from Mr. Crackin’s point of view. Thus, proof *is* subjective.

“When a man asks for proof,” one prominent LDS scholar has noted, “we can be pretty sure that proof is the last thing in the world he really wants. His request is thrown out as a challenge, and

chances are that he has no intention of being shown up.”¹

Mr. Jackson argued the Old Testament made the coming of the Messiah and the new order clear, and I agree. But there are millions of Jews and Moslems who do not. Fundamentalist Christians believe they have the truth and that all who do not experience a mystical event confirming a sure salvation will be damned. They have the Bible and claim to cling to it tenaciously. Herbert W. Armstrong tells the world that he was an atheist until he discovered Bible truth. He, too, claims to follow its precepts, and yet he differs from Mr. Jackson and the fundamentalists. Likewise, the Jehovah’s Witnesses contend that they have been led to truth, and through what? The Bible. Yet their teachings are contrary to all the above. Now, Mr. Jackson, the question you put to me at the beginning of this exchange, I put to you: Why should your claims to Bible truth be accepted over the rest of Christendom’s? You see, Mr. Jackson states that God cannot speak in our day because if he did so, one could never know which revelationist sect to accept. In doing this, he denies the claims and counter-claims of a divided Christianity which does not believe in revelation, and how is he to resolve it?

Mr. Jackson believes we need no new revelation—what we need, he tells us, is a return to the revelation we have in the Bible. Well, that is fine, Mr. Jackson, but what are you to do with the rest of the Christian world groping around WITHOUT revelation, each teaching the Bible according to whatever exegesis is deemed best by each? And the overwhelming majority believe the Bible is the complete, inerrant word of God and is perfectly clear in doctrine and precept. We can only sit aghast and wonder why these sects teach conflicting doctrines if this is indeed the case!

During his assault on the Book of Mormon, Mr. Jackson criticizes me for using that volume in its own defense. When I pointed to the ancient text supporting the Book of Mormon’s terminology concerning the “land of Jerusalem,” Mr. Jackson said I was forcing that interpretation. When I pointed out the discrepancy in his claim concerning the three days versus the three hours of darkness, Mr. Jackson could only condemn me for using the Book of Mormon to get out of a tight spot. Of course I use the Book of Mormon to

¹ Nibley, Hugh, *An Approach to the Book of Mormon*, p. 2.

support my beliefs concerning it *just as Mr. Jackson uses the Bible to support his beliefs in its inspiration*. We respectfully ask that the Book of Mormon be allowed the same privilege.

In his negative arguments, Mr. Jackson accused me of stretching the scriptures to suit my own ends. He has a right to his opinions, of course, but now that he is in the affirmative he has reached into the New Testament scriptures to add and take away from their meaning in order to make them say what he wants them to say. Let us consider the following examples:

Jude 3: Throughout his negative arguments against the Book of Mormon, Mr. Jackson refers to Jude's statement and the faith "once-for-all" delivered to the saints. How, he asks, can one restore that which was once-for-all delivered?

Actually, the Greek word for "once for all" is *hapax*, and according to Liddell, Scott and Jones, the word covers the entire gamut of the English word "once" and this includes the unconditional forms of the word.¹ The same word is used again by Jude in verse 5 when he writes: "I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once (*hapax*) knew this...." Here *hapax* obviously means "formerly" or "once upon a time." The KJV renders both verses without interpretation by simply using the word "once" and leaving it at that. That the saints were losing the gospel which was once delivered is obvious from Jude's epistle (not to mention the letters of Paul).

John 17:20: Here we read the words of Christ as he prayed for the apostles and "them...which shall believe on me through their word." This simply tells us there would be those who would believe in Christ through the testimony of the apostles. Today, Latter-day Saints find the written words of the apostles powerful evidence of the divinity of Christ as are the words of the prophets. But does Mr. Jackson suppose this to mean that the apostles are the only means by which men can be brought to Christ? Do we not read that a man cannot call Jesus Lord except by the Holy Ghost? (I Cor. 12:3).

John 14:26: "But the...Holy Ghost...shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you."

¹ Liddell, Scott and Jones, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1953).

Again we must ask Mr. Jackson, how does this scripture shut the door on further prophecy, revelation and scripture? That the Holy Spirit taught the apostles in all things pertaining to their missions in life is indeed true, but it does not follow that this gift was limited to the apostles only. Wasn't the Holy Spirit given to baptized members through the laying on of hands? And did they not prophesy and receive light and knowledge from on High?

We readily concede the fact that the Lord's anointed were guided and led by the Spirit unto all truth, for the Spirit is a revealer of Christ. But where do we read that all truth was passed down in the writings of the apostles? Mr. Jackson declares it to be a fact but he has yet to show us.

Galatians 1:8: "But though we, or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel... than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." As Mr. Jackson has pointed out, we cannot both be right. Our doctrines and perceptions of what constitutes the gospel of Jesus Christ can be argued *ad infinitum*. If he is right, then I am wrong and the Latter-day Saints are teaching "another gospel" and should be accursed. On the other hand, if we are right, then it is Mr. Jackson who is teaching another gospel.

This leads us to the question of what Paul was talking about. Was he warning the world to beware the pitfalls of Mormonism, or was he arguing against the internal perversion of Gnostics and heretics that would bring about the long night of apostasy?

Already the shadows were lengthening. The Galatian saints were just one group who were beginning to lose the gospel. The Asian saints were in jeopardy and the apostles of God were facing increasing persecution that would eventually end in their martyrdom. We read of grievous wolves entering, not sparing the flock (Acts 20:29-30). And in 2 Thess. 2:3— "Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day [of the Lord's return] shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition." The saints, Paul wrote, "will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap unto themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away...from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." (2 Tim. 4:3-4). And in the Book of Revelation we read where Satan "opened his mouth in blasphemy against God... And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to *overcome them*: and power was given him

over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.” (Rev. 13:6-7).

During this long reign of the Adversary, darkness would prevail and the light of the gospel would flicker and finally die. But the servants of God looked ahead to see our day. Luke records Peter’s words that “the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: whom the heavens must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.” (Acts 3:19-21).

That there would be servants of the Lord when Christ returned in glory is also evident in that the gospel would be carried to the entire world (Matt. 24:14) and John records: “I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the Earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.” (Rev. 14:6).

Paul tells us: “For I neither received [the gospel] of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.” (Gal. 1:12). And to the Corinthians he wrote: “Wherefore I give you to understand that...no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.” (I Cor. 12:3). Revelation is the very hallmark of Christianity and man, armed only with the scriptures, can in no wise come to a knowledge of the truth.

JACKSON'S SECOND AFFIRMATIVE

I want to pay my respects to Mr. Iler's article prior to continuing with my affirmative. He begins with a citation from one in the hierarchy of the LDS church, assuring that: "What we say here is no fantasy.... what we say is true." The Lord, remember, warned of false prophets wearing sheep's clothing (Matt. 7:15). Naturally, a false teacher will not admit it, but rather will claim, "I am telling you the truth!" But John tells us not to believe such (I John 4:1); rather, we are to put them to the test. Naturally every Mormon, Witness and Adventist teacher claims, "I am telling you the truth!"

Mr. Iler then, in stating that the Book of Mormon is from God, tells us that it constitutes the same gospel as taught by the Christ. Not hardly, reader. It is contrary to the Lord's doctrine (2 John 9), which is the apostles' doctrine (Acts 2:42), in the nature of the LDS church, in name, in organization, in the priesthood, in teaching on marriage, in teaching on baptism, in teaching on Deity, etc., etc., and etc. to the 100th power! Mr. Iler further errs in his stating that while proof is subjective, truth is absolute. Yet, we lay hold on truth through proof. Mr. Iler has the wild and totally liberal view that "what is proof to one may not be proof to another." No, Mr. Iler. When dealing with God's Word, the proof is there for all. One may reject it, but he will not do so because it is not proof! Luke said that Jesus, after the resurrection, showed himself alive by MANY INFALLIBLE PROOFS (Acts 1:3). Iler will argue with Luke, telling him, "No, Luke, for it is only proof to the one who thinks it is!" Iler versus inspiration again, friends.

Young Mormon missionaries who come to the door of Bible believers must proceed in attacking the Bible, its inspiration and reliability, in order to make room for their system. Mr. Iler continues that, letting us know how wild and liberal he really is. He holds that because Jews and Moslems reject Christianity, or because Armstrong and the Witnesses pervert the message, then the Bible lacks the power God said it has (Rom. 1:16). He then asks, "How will Jackson resolve this?" Mr. Iler, Jackson doesn't have to resolve it; Jackson just has to continue to preach the Word! (2 Tim. 4:2). Let's just turn that back on Mr. Iler: (1) Most of the Jews rejected the message Jesus proclaimed in his own ministry, though Jesus

came to save them. Mr. Iler, how is Jesus going to resolve that? (2) Both Jews and Gentiles, in the majority, rejected the gospel message of the apostles—a message designed for their understanding and their salvation—and continued on in their lost condition. How were the apostles to resolve that, Mr. Iler? I'll give you the answer: "Preach the Word!" (2 Tim. 4:2). The day of judgment will "resolve" the matter of hardened hearts that reject the Word.

Mr. Iler stated that I used the Bible to support belief in the Bible's inspiration, and hence he used the Book of Mormon to the same end. But Mr. Iler, your own proposition was based on a fact you believed the Bible taught. I thought we both agreed on the inspiration of the Bible, and thus that point wasn't in dispute! Now, he really let us know what a theological liberal he is—but we remind him that the inspiration of the Book of Mormon IS in dispute here, and thus he cannot cite the very book in dispute as proof of his point. I thought we were debating whether the Bible was the full and complete revelation, and now I find out what a system of infidelity Mormonism happens to be!

Let's now see some points Mr. Iler made on verses we cited: (1) He quibbles on Jude 3, and the fact that saints were losing the gospel once delivered to them. Yes, and the same point in Galatians 1:6-7. But this still does not mean that they then needed a new revelation. They simply needed to return to the very message they were departing. They were in error, not because the message left them, but they left the message. What was needed was a return, not a new revelation. He has no point on Jude 3, but he managed to use up space. (2) On John 17:20, he asks if Jackson is saying that the apostles were the only means by which men can be brought to Christ. He did not choose to comment on Jesus' own words: "...through their word." Those apostles, and those upon whom they laid their hands for spiritual gifts, were the only ones who could thus produce inspired words. Joseph Smith missed it by 1700 years!! He then rushed to I Corinthians 12:3, whose context still has to do with spiritual gifts, by the apostles' hands. Mr. Iler has no point here at all. (3) Then on to John 14:26, where Mr. Iler flatly denies that the apostles were led to all truth. He overlooks the hands bestowing gifts were the APOSTLE'S hands only. He states that Jackson asserts that all truth was passed down in the writings of the apostles, "but he has yet to show us." I showed him in John 14:26, in John

16:13 and in 2 Peter 1:3—the latter two he chose to ignore completely. (4) On Galatians 1:8 Mr. Iler states that Paul was warning of the perversions of the Gnostics (when in actuality it was the Judaizers), and asks, “Was he warning the world to beware the pitfalls of Mormonism?” Yes, indeed, Mr. Iler, but remember you do not have ALL THE ERROR that exists today, but certainly a good portion of it. Paul was referring to error, wherever found and from whatever source!

There is yet another awful perversion Mr. Iler gives us, and it once more proves that men will go to any lengths to set forth another message to rival the gospel of the Christ. He gives us a picture of the darkness sin brings and that finally the light of the gospel would flicker and die. And, he states that servants of God looked ahead and saw our day. He, of course, thinks that Mormonism fulfills this. But he uses Peter’s statement, in Acts 3:19-21, and the promised “times of refreshing.” Well, you missed it again by 1700 years, Mr. Iler. Peter, in Acts 3, was telling his audience of the promise made by earlier prophets (v. 18), who spoke of the sending of the Christ! And, that had been done AT THE TIME PETER WAS SPEAKING! It did not point ahead, beyond all of the New Testament to the time of Smith and Mormonism. Yes sir, Mr. Iler, you continually miss the mark by 1700 years!

Mr. Iler, lastly, informs us that there will be servants of the Lord when Jesus next appears. Thank you, Mr. Iler, but when have we denied such? I Thessalonians 4:17 tells us that, but what does that have to do with denying my proposition? Our difference is that Mr. Iler doesn’t believe the Bible has such power as to keep men who obey it fully.

One of the most infidelic statements of all is his last sentence, where he tells us that man, armed only with the Scriptures, cannot have knowledge of the truth. You see, kind reader, there must be room made for the Book of Mormon, and Mr. Iler cannot find such in the Bible as we have it. Thus, he attempts to make room for it in all manner of ridicule of the Bible! We are happy to let him proceed in his debate with Paul. Paul said that through the revelation given to him, an apostle (Eph. 3:5), which revelation is the gospel (v. 6), and Paul had written it to them (v. 3), and when they read, they would understand just as he did! (v. 4). The apostle tells us that in the Word, we have full and complete guidance (2 Tim. 3:16-17), and

Peter says, yes, we have all that pertains to life and godliness (2 Pet. 1:3).

Mr. Iler is reminded that he has not shown (1) New Testament deficiency calling for Mormonism, (2) Where the apostles were led to the truth (John 16:13) as Mormonism asserts it, (3) Where the apostles being shown future things (John 16:13) were shown Mormonism, (4) Where the apostles, being given and giving to us all that pertains to life and godliness (2 Pet. 1:3), gave us Mormonism, (5) Why, if men depart from faith, a new revelation is needed rather than simply a return to the faith, (6) Why, in Paul's condemnation of any message other than the New Testament, Mormonism is not thus condemned, and (7), Why his claims to new revelation are any more reliable than similar claims from Armstrong, Adventism, Pentecostals, Spiritualists or the "Moonies."

ILER'S SECOND NEGATIVE

“Wherefore, I, the Lord, knowing the calamity which should come upon the inhabitants of the earth, called upon my servant Joseph Smith, Jun., and spake unto him from heaven, and gave him commandments... that it might be fulfilled, which was written by the prophets....”

Doctrine and Covenants 1:17-18

Thus far in our exchange, I have expressed my opinion on several occasions that Mr. Jackson is quick to employ a double standard in judging the Book of Mormon and latter-day revelation. On the one hand he tells us that proof is absolute while on the other he casually and systematically dismisses the Book of Mormon and the startling evidences that point to it as the revealed word of God. He demands to know why the claims of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints should be believed over those of other denominations claiming divine guidance, but when confronted with a divided Christendom that believes the Bible to be the complete and inerrant Word of God, he tells us he doesn't have to resolve it. He merely has to preach the Word!

Mr. Jackson argues loud and long that what we need is not new revelation, but a return to the scriptures we already have. Splendid, but Mr. Jackson, do you not suppose the Baptists, fundamentalist Christians, Jehovah's Witnesses and numerous other denominations are not trying to do the same? I have had representatives of the Witnesses visit me from time to time and they seem as convinced as you that they have the truth. They also bandy about the word “proof” as though it were an absolute and advocate that the Bible is the complete and inerrant Word of God.

Yet their doctrines differ from those you put forth. You both believe the Bible to be clear in doctrine and precept, and how is it possible that your doctrines are not the same?

Mr. Jackson argues that I have not shown the New Testament deficiency calling for Mormonism. Actually, I thought I had. The deficiency, however, is not with the scriptures, but in scriptural exegesis—for once revelation ceased, the scriptures were subjected

to the vain interpretations of men and thus ceased to be clear. The apostle Peter tells us that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation (2 Pet. 1:19-21), but that anciently it came through inspired men of God. His point, quite simply, is, "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed" (v. 19). The myriads of varying Christian denominations, all claiming to believe the Bible is staggering evidence that something is dreadfully amiss. And their conflicting doctrines are put forth as gospel truths, and by what authority? Why the Bible, of course! Therein lies the deficiency, Mr. Jackson. If the ancient saints had apostles, prophets and the scriptures and fell away, then why do you preach that the scriptures alone are sufficient?

Our critic also asks 2) if the apostles were led to the truth as "Mormonism" asserts it. This, my friends, can be debated endlessly. The Adventists reject the Book of Mormon because it fails to support their views concerning the Sabbath. The Witnesses reject it because it does not fall into line with their beliefs. Such variations between LDS doctrines and their manmade doctrines eliminate any claims the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints may have to divine guidance as far as they're concerned. We have already agreed that TRUTH is absolute, but there seems to be disagreement on whether PROOF is absolute. Mr. Jackson bases his whole argument against the Book of Mormon on the fact the Bible is the complete and inerrant Word of God. But, again, is this not what our friends the Adventists, Baptists and the Witnesses contend? If the Bible is the complete, inerrant Word of God and is indeed clear in doctrine and precept, then why do the Adventists, Witnesses and Mr. Jackson teach conflicting doctrines? Just who are we to believe?

When, he asked, 3) were the apostles shown "Mormonism" as they witnessed future events and 4) when did they give us "Mormonism"? We have already seen that Mr. Jackson objects when I quote from the Old Testament and now see he is displeased with the New Testament scriptures I quote as well.

He argues that Peter's statement concerning the "restitution of all things" in Acts 3 was fulfilled in the apostolic era, even though it is quite obvious Peter is speaking of a future event. "And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you," said Peter. "Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets

since the world began.” (vs. 20-21).

Here we are told that God will send Jesus Christ (a future event) and that the heavens must receive him until the times of the restoration of all things (also a future event). Peter also tells us that all of the holy prophets since the world began had spoken of it. Mr. Jackson is forced to deny my application of scripture because he holds to the doctrine that the Old Testament was completely fulfilled in the apostolic era of the New.

When the angel Moroni appeared to young Joseph Smith in 1823, the prophet said the angel “quoted the eleventh chapter of Isaiah, saying that it was about to be fulfilled. He quoted also the third chapter of Acts, twenty-second and twenty-third verses, precisely as they stand in our New Testament.”

We have already commented on the passage in Acts. Let us now look at Isaiah 11. Clearly, the first nine verses apply to our Lord Jesus Christ and the period we call the Millennium. Beginning at verse 10, however, we’re told of a “root of Jesse” which shall “stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious.” We’re also told that “in that day...the Lord shall set his hand a second time to recover the remnant of his people.... And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel...” (vs. 11-12). Despite Mr. Jackson’s decidedly anti-premillennial disposition, the Jews began gathering to Israel just a few decades after Moroni quoted this scripture and announced its fulfillment was nigh. And on May 14, 1948, Israel was once again established as a nation and the outcasts are still flooding in. The Lord is literally fulfilling the promises he made to their fathers.

On April 3, 1836, Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery recorded a series of angelic ministrations, one of which had to do with the gathering of Israel. For “the heavens were again opened unto us; and Moses appeared before us, and committed unto us the keys of the gathering of Israel from the four parts of the earth...” (*Doctrine and Covenants* 110:11). In March 1840, Jewish apostle Orson Hyde recorded: “The vision of the Lord, like clouds of light, burst upon my view. The cities of London, Amsterdam, Constantinople, and Jerusalem all appeared in succession before me.” The startled apostle was then given to understand the significance of what he was seeing. “Here are many of the children of Abraham whom I will gather to the land that I gave their fathers, and here also is the field

of your labors,” the Lord said.

Elder Hyde was later commanded by the Lord to visit Palestine and dedicate the land for the return of the Jews, an act for which he is today acknowledged by many as the first Zionist. And his dedicatory prayer, given by revelation, is well known to modern Israeli leaders. Undoubtedly Joseph Smith is the “root of Jesse”—the great servant of God who would be given the keys of the gathering of Israel just preceding the Millennium and the Lord’s return in glory.

Mr. Jackson also wants an explanation as to 5) why, if men depart from the faith, a new revelation is needed. We direct him to the yellow pages listing under “Churches” for the answer.

Why, he continues, 6) in Paul’s condemnation of any message other than the New Testament, is not “Mormonism” condemned? The answer is simple. Paul was preaching against other gospels, not against other legitimate revelations. The true gospel states that Jesus died for the sins of the world, that he is the Son of God, that he was crucified, resurrected, and now sits on the right hand of God. True, Judaizers were desperately clinging to their traditions and were attempting to incorporate Judaism into Christianity. Also true is the fact that Gnostics arose to teach those weak in the faith things clearly contrary to that which the apostles taught. Christ, some advocated, did not really die on the cross but had a stand-in who died instead. These heretics were the ones Paul was warning about. And if the Book of Mormon is not the Word of God, then Mr. Jackson is correct and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is perverting the gospel. But if we are right, then Mr. Jackson is wrong and Paul’s warning applies to his teachings.

Finally, 7) Mr. Jackson wants an explanation as to why LDS claims to latter-day revelation are more valid than Armstrong’s or Adventism’s, Pentecostalism’s or Spiritualism’s. I’m tempted to say, reader, that it’s not for Iler to resolve—it’s just his duty to preach the Word. But in all seriousness, this, too, I thought I had addressed. When has anyone ever produced anything like the Book of Mormon? Mr. Jackson compares it to the claims of inspiration made by the Fox sisters and the writings of Ellen G. White. With all due respect, sir, balderdash!

Mr. Jackson accuses me of ultra-liberalism for believing proof is subjective and argues that proof is absolute. He is correct in stating that Jesus showed himself alive by “many infallible proofs” (Acts

1:3) following his resurrection, but an infallible proof is hardly subjective. Christ's appearance to the apostles was infallible proof. His appearance to Saul on the road to Damascus was also infallible evidence. Similarly, when he appeared to the Nephites in the New World, that was irrefutable proof. But of what proof is Mr. Jackson speaking when he attempts to prove his views from the Bible? They are subjective proofs and are thus subject to interpretation.

We have seen the powerful evidences of the Book of Mormon's divine origins and yet our critic summarily dismisses them as inconsequential. He acknowledges that the apostles had a more sure word of prophecy and had no need of the theories and interpretations of men, but denies such revelation is necessary today. He tells us he has the truth and how does he know this? Through his intellect. Why one might accuse him of attempting to inject secular humanism into Christianity. Talk about liberalism!

Throughout his negative arguments against the Book of Mormon, Mr. Jackson continually referred to Jude's statement of the faith "once-for-all" delivered to the saints. In his first affirmative, he again referred to Jude's statement as evidence against future revelation. When I pointed out the word could just as easily mean "once-upon-a-time" delivered, Mr. Jackson, incredibly, said I was quibbling and wasting space!

I doubt not Mr. Jackson's motives nor his dedication to the principles he feels are correct, but he has yet to show us one solid passage from the scriptures that prove his assertions.

The evidence supporting the Book of Mormon and latter-day revelation is overwhelming, and the evidence continues to mount, the Christian world, meanwhile, flounders in confusion and endlessly debates the meaning of the Bible, ever learning and never able to come to the truth.

JACKSON'S THIRD AFFIRMATIVE

Entering the last half of this final proposition, may I point out that early on we showed that Mormonism cannot show the deficiency in the New Testament calling for such revelation as Mormonism claims. And we showed that there is no New Testament promise of a prophet leading to a new order, such as Joseph Smith claimed to be. We also pointed out that Mormons, thus frustrated in having a “prophet” and a “revelation” with no place to “hook onto” the New Testament, then without fail will turn to attack the Bible. Mr. Iler has done that, charging the Bible with the divisions in sectarianism, when the Bible was the RULE by which unity was to be attained (I Cor. 1:10; Phil. 3:16).

Mr. Iler says a “divided Christendom” is the product of our having only the Bible as our guide. He proposes the Book of Mormon, but he needs to remember that what proves too much proves nothing. So we look into the phone book, as he suggests, and we find “Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints,” and a separate listing: “Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints”—another group, also having the Book of Mormon, but not in fellowship with the first group! So, Mr. Iler, the Book of Mormon will not bring that unity you speak of, will it? Do you need another book revealed to you?

My friend wants to know why, if ancient saints had apostles and prophets, and scriptures, and then fell away, why do I then preach that the Scriptures are sufficient authority? I preach it because God tells us of the temporary nature of such spiritual powers (1 Cor. 13:8-10), and also God tells us that the Scriptures furnish us completely unto every good work (2 Tim. 3:16-17). There is the highlighting of our difference, reader. Mr. Iler does not believe the apostle Paul when he states the Scriptures are all-sufficient!

When Mr. Iler asks, “Just who are we to believe?” he reveals again his lack of faith in the Scriptures. Believe the Scriptures, Mr. Iler! The Scriptures will be the standard of judgment (John 12:48)! Mr. Iler shows himself really to be an agnostic, for he willingly charges all division up to the Bible; he does not consider that men DEPARTED FROM THE BIBLE! Apparently he does not believe that God made man a creature having freedom of will and right of

choice between good and evil. John had pointed out that in following the things written, one could abstain from sin (1 John 2:1). Mr. Iler does not believe John just as he does not believe Paul!

Notice Mr. Iler's ridiculous position: Those claiming allegiance to the Bible are not united, and therefore the Bible is at fault! By the same token, then, since those claiming to abide by the Old Testament books rejected the Christ, then the Old Testament Scriptures, and the Lord himself, are at fault in the matter! And going further, since, when the apostles preached the gospel in their time, and men were not faithful to the message, becoming Gnostics or Judaizers, etc., it becomes the fault of the apostles and the gospel when men were not united! Such a foolish argument, Mr. Iler!

Oh no, Mr. Iler, I do not object to either Old or New Testament Scriptures; what I object to is the WRESTING of the Scriptures and I do so because an inspired apostle warned of such (2 Pet. 3:16). And, you have to wrest them to get Smith and Mormonism in there! One example of such wresting is in his use of Acts 3:19-21, where Mormonism points to a future "time of refreshing." It is true that, in v. 21, in speaking of Christ, that his coming is yet future, but Peter was then telling a Jerusalem gathering of what the prophets had said about Jesus' suffering, and "he hath so fulfilled" (v. 18), and the demands in v. 19 were for THEN AND THERE: Repent, THEN; be converted, THEN; have sins blotted out, THEN! And, thus, in the removal of sins, one would have had that time of refreshing. Not a future event, but a NEW TESTAMENT EVENT! But, Mr. Iler, to the point of our discussion, now PROVE by the New Testament that the "times of refreshing" are those of Mormonism! Again, find Smith or Mormonism promised in the New Testament!

Now Mr. Iler comes up with a premillennial stance regarding the establishment of the Jewish nation in 1948, and their gathering together in Palestine. For shame, Mr. Iler, in that you did not know that the only Israel God has is the spiritual body of Christ, the church—those, whether Jew or Gentile, who have obeyed the gospel of Christ (Gal. 3:29; 6:16).

Mr. Iler then turns to spend time and take up space with the claimed angelic ministrations, visions, etc., and then assumes them to be "legitimate revelations." Naturally the man who is in the errors believe them to be legitimate, Mr. Iler, but you are to deny, by the Scriptures, that the Bible is the full and complete revelation from

God, Notice that our propositions begin, “The Scriptures teach...,” Now, show us by the Scriptures that the Bible is NOT the full and final revelation of God to man. You have not done so, and your time and space are running out!

Mr. Iler also wanted it known that Paul, in Galatians 6:6-7 was referring to Judaizers and Gnostics. More than that, Mr. Iler. Paul condemned ANY OTHER “gospel” (Gal. 1:6, 8). He condemned the “gospel” of Mormonism, Adventism, Pentecostalism, and all others deviating from the New Testament order!

Mr. Iler wants to know when anyone ever produced anything like the book of Mormon. Well, probably never, Mr. Iler. It surpasses all in its absurdity, silliness, contradictions, blunders, fakery and lack-of-spirituality! But, it stands with multiplied dozens of so-called “revelations” that false teachers have manufactured and passed on to men. John warned against the “spirits,” and said that we are to prove them, and so we have in this discussion (1 John 4:1).

When it comes to Jude 3, Mr. Iler tries to make room for some other “faith,” or some addition to faith, other than that of the apostolic age. Mr. Iler contradicts Jude, but Jude and Paul stand together as inspired men on the point, as Paul put it, “There is....one faith” (Eph. 4:4-5).

We are amused at Mr. Iler’s statement that the evidence is overwhelming when it comes to Mormonism and latter-day revelation. It certainly would have been proper, in this discussion, for him to present us with some of that overwhelming evidence. Mormonism bases much of its claims on archaeology, yet the real evidence, from all archaeological societies, from the National Geographic Society to all others, that not one bit of such evidence has been found! Mr. Iler sets forth his claims for Mormonism, and yet he has not given us the principal doctrines of Mormonism, wherein we can live better, nobler and more spiritual lives by following Mormon teaching. Where, Mr. Iler, is all of this “evidence”?

He tells the truth when he states that whether the apostles were led to the truth as “Mormonism” asserts it can be debated endlessly. There will be endless debate as long as there is the endless stream of false doctrines and “other” gospels” set forth at the whims and fancies of men. Mr. Iler has utterly failed to show us wherein lies the proof of Mormonism.

But, reader, I have NOT failed in showing that the apostles of

the Lord were to have the words wherein men could have faith in the Christ (John 17:20), were taught ALL THINGS (John 14:26), were guided into ALL TRUTH (John 16:13), were shown FUTURE things (John 16:13), were given ALL THINGS pertaining to life and godliness (2 Pet. 1:3), had the once-delivered faith (Jude 3), preached the one gospel (Eph. 4:5 and Gal. 1:6-9), and delivered warning that men dare not depart from it (2 John 9). Their message is that the Scriptures, of the first century, furnish us completely unto every good work (2 Tim. 3:16-17). The apostles were NOT led to Mormonism, and they presented none of the teachings peculiar to Mormonism!

ILER'S THIRD NEGATIVE

“There is no regularly constituted church on earth, nor any person authorized to administer any church ordinance; nor can there be until new apostles are sent by the Great Head of the Church for whose coming I am seeking.”

—Roger Williams

It is indeed unfortunate that Mr. Jackson interprets my arguments for the book of Mormon and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints as an assault on the Holy Bible. I say unfortunate, but in many ways his reaction is quite predictable, for his beliefs regarding the Bible as the final, complete and inerrant word of God is a fundamental doctrine held by many of today's Christian religions. The question, though, is whether this doctrine has a basis in the scriptures themselves. The answer is an emphatic and resounding NO!

We remind Mr. Jackson that the books of the Bible were compiled by political councils of Rome long after the deaths of the apostles. The very concept of a canon of scripture is also post-apostolic in nature, being foreign to both the ancient Jews and the apostolic church.¹

In his affirmatives, our critic has arbitrarily limited his defense to the 66 books contained in the King James Version and has solemnly declared them to be God's *complete* message to man.

But how does he know this? The very fact that the Bible was compiled years after its last author had departed the scene precludes Mr. Jackson from proving his point, for to do so he would have to prove not only that the apostles knew their writings would be compiled but that the compilers themselves were inspired, and this he cannot do.

Mr. Jackson notes with a certain amount of glee that there is a “Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints” and concludes that revelation is no sure protection against division. Will

¹ Nibley, An Approach to the Book of Mormon, p. 157.

it surprise him if I concur? The early Christian church, as I have taken great pains to point out, had apostles, prophets and scripture—yet there was division and apostasy. The question Mr. Jackson must address is whether a person can come to a knowledge of the truth through intellect alone. As we have noted, intellect is a poor substitute for the Spirit, for it is only by revelation that one can know the will of God, understand the nature of God and gain the sure knowledge that Jesus is the Christ (I Cor. 2:10,11; 12:3; 14:37).

Mr. Jackson is kind enough to rehash for us the scriptures he previously used to support his position. He correctly points out that the apostles were taught all things, were guided unto all truth, were shown future events and given all things pertaining to life and godliness. And he even resurrects Jude's declaration of the faith "once-for-all-delivered," even though Jude uses no such terminology in the original Greek. But reader, please note that while the apostles may have been taught all things and guided unto all truth, nowhere do we read that they passed this information down in their writings.

We recall the words of Paul, who states that he knew a man caught up to paradise, who "heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for man to utter." (II Cor. 12:4). He also frankly tells the Corinthians that he had fed them with milk and not meat, "for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able." (I Cor. 3:1). And we read the words of the Lord telling his apostles that "it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given." (Matt. 13:11). In all of these verses it is clear that something is being held back. We have noted the very idea of a formal canon is a post-apostolic concept, foreign to the ancient Christians and Jews alike, for it is an indisputable fact that both groups considered many works, later rejected, as authentic scripture.

What is Mr. Jackson to do, for example, with the *Epistle of Barnabas*, once considered scripture by the ancient church but later rejected by the Roman church? Dr. Frank Crane notes concerning this work:

It has been cited by Clemens Alexandrinus, Origen, Eusebius, and Jerome, and many ancient Fathers. Cotelierius affirms that Origen and Jerome esteemed it genuine

and canonical; but Cotelerius himself did not believe it to be either one or the other; on the contrary, he supposes it was written for the benefit of the Ebionites (the Christianized Jews).¹

And what of I and II Clement? Dr. Crane explains the controversy surrounding these writings as well. Eusebius, he writes, “...says that it was publicly read in the assemblies of the primitive church,” and notes it was later rejected by Photius, patriarch of Constantinople in the ninth century. And why? One reason, Crane tells us, is because Photius “objects that Clement speaks of worlds beyond the ocean....”² Here again we run into the ancient Christian tradition that there were others beyond the oceans, the mysterious *antichthonians* over whom Origen puzzled.

The Rev. Dr. Charles F. Potter also examines the arbitrary nature by which some writings were rejected. Discussing the final verses in the book of Revelation (vs. 18-19), which warn against adding or taking away “from the words of the book of this prophecy,” he writes:

By “this book” at the end of the Johannine apocalypse, it is commonly supposed the entire Bible is meant—most Christians not yet being aware that the rest of the Bible was long in circulation before the...Apocalypse of John was finally added. There was an Apocalypse of Peter which was preferred in Rome and the Apocalypse of Enoch, a favorite in the East. But Apocalypses were going out of style, and only one could be permitted, if any. Finally, reluctantly, and at the end of the Bible, John’s was let in.³

Until fairly recently, the foreboding verses in Revelation were

¹ Crane, Dr. Frank, *The Bible and the Forgotten Books of Eden*, (New American Library, New York, NY, 1974), p. 145.

² *Ibid.*, p. 112.

³ Potter, Dr. Charles Francis, *The Lost Years of Jesus Revealed* (Fawcett Publications, Greenwich, Conn., 1962), pp. 30-31.

standard fare in anti-Mormon literature. But it is an argument that can no longer be employed to shut the door on future revelation.

Dr. Crane comments on the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* and observes: “Saint Paul, appears to have borrowed so freely [from it] that it seems he must have carried a copy of the Testaments with him on his travels.”¹ This writing is now viewed by many scholars as highly suspect because of the graphic messianic prophecies it contains. But the renowned Dr. R.H. Charles has noted the work “has achieved a real immortality by influencing the thought and diction of the writers of the New Testament, and even those of our Lord.”²

The controversy becomes even greater when one considers the Dead Sea Scrolls, unearthed in 1947. Here we have an extensive ancient Jewish library consisting of many writings purporting to be scripture and bearing all the hallmarks of scripture. Just translating them has proven to be a substantial undertaking. And who is to evaluate them? The notion that the Bible is the complete and final word of God is rapidly losing ground, but Mr. Jackson stands resolutely by, refusing to accept anything not approved by the councils of Rome. Why, Mr. Jackson?

Our critic seeks time and again to place the Latter-day Saints in antithesis with the Bible and he goes so far as to accuse me of being an agnostic! But in this he errs greatly, for nowhere have I denied that men departed from the Bible, as he suggests. What I did say was that men departed from God, his apostles, his prophets and his scriptures. Mr. Jackson again refers to 2 Tim. 3:16-17, where we’re told the scriptures furnish a man completely unto every good work. But we remind him that when those verses were penned the Gospel of John, the epistles of John and the book of Revelation were not yet written. Are we now to reject these because “all scripture” was given at the time Paul wrote the verses in question? Indeed not, Mr. Jackson, for you misunderstand Paul’s intent. For all scripture (including the Book of Mormon) is inspired and furnish a man completely unto every good work. My disagreement, then, must be

¹ Crane, *Op. Cit.*, p. 220.

² Skousen, Dr. W. Cleon, *The Fourth Thousand Years* (Bookcraft, SLC, Ut., 1966), p. 755.

with Mr. Jackson—not Paul.

Another doctrine put forth by many denominations, and one held by my esteemed friend Mr. Jackson, is that the Bible is inerrant—or totally free from error. Certainly when the scriptures were written by inspired men they contained no historic or doctrinal errors. But as they were passed from one generation to another, the errors of men crept in. LDS scholar Dr. W. Cleon Skousen has noted in his extensive work on the Old Testament one such error that currently appears in our Bible.

In the fourth chapter of Daniel, we read of the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar being smitten with insanity for a period of seven years. Dr. Skousen notes this has troubled historians because the events so recorded do not fit in with the known records of Nebuchadnezzar's life. What they do fit, he observes, is the life history of a less well-known Babylonian king, King Nabonidus, who was absent from the throne for seven years. A fragment found in the Dead Sea Scrolls fully supports this position, for it contains a testimonial by King Nabonidus which reads:

“The words of the prayer which Nabonidus, king of Assyria and king of Babylon, the great king spoken when he was smitten with a severe inflammation by the command of the Most High God in the city of Teiman (Tema): ‘I was smitten for seven years and I was put far from men. But when I confessed my trespasses and sins he left me a seer. He was a Jew from the exiles of Babylonia. He gave his explanation and wrote that honor should be given and glory to the name of the Most High God.’”¹

Skousen goes on to explain that scholars now believe the more famous name of Nebuchadnezzar was deliberately inserted by some ancient scribe.

One may ask, does this type of discrepancy destroy the integrity of the Bible? The answer is, of course, no — unless one holds to Mr. Jackson's views of the Bible being complete and totally free from error.

¹ *Documentary History of the Church*, Vol. V:85.

Mr. Jackson wants me to show from the scriptures where the 66 books of the King James Bible are not the final and complete revelation of God to man. This, I confess, I cannot do, for the scriptures (as presently compiled) neither claim to be final and complete nor do they claim to be incomplete. But we ask our critic by what authority Rome, or Luther, or any other man not led by the Spirit can form a canon of scripture and say, "If it's not here, brethren, it's not scripture!"

Finally, Mr. Jackson claims the Book of Mormon surpasses all in its absurdity, silliness, contradictions, blunders, fakery and lack of spirituality. As for contradictions, we will appeal to the reader to determine if the ones Mr. Jackson has pointed out hold water. And as for his charges as a whole, I can only say the Book of Mormon is in splendid company, as these are the very claims leveled by atheists against the Holy Bible.

JACKSON'S FOURTH AFFIRMATIVE

I come now to my final affirmative, and may I state that it has been a great pleasure to have this discussion with Mr. Iler, and I trust the material is helpful to all who may read it. I notice, first of all, that Mr. Iler begins his last with the quoted assurance from Roger Williams (associated with the Baptists) that the church of the Lord did not exist in Williams' day, and could not exist until new apostles were sent from the Lord. Mr. Iler apparently agrees. But we have Williams and Iler against the Lord, who built his church, and said that the gates of Hades would not prevail against it (Matt. 16:18). The seed is the Word (Luke 8:11), and all that is needed is the planting of the seed, not the sending of more apostles!

Mr. Iler states that he makes no assault on the Bible, and yet he has lived up to that which I promised early on: Mormonism cannot find a place for itself in the Bible, and therefore must always attack the Bible, its accuracy, its inspiration, its completeness. Mr. Iler has done, and is doing, just that! He questions the formation of the canon of Scripture, and he wonders why such early works as the *Epistle of Barnabas*, *1* and *2 Clement*, various apocalypse declarations, etc. are not in the canon. Mr. Iler, Jesus promised that his Word would be in this world (Matt. 24:35), and Peter said that the Word would endure forever (1 Pet. 1:25). It became a Providential matter as to steps taken whereby we would in this age, and in all future ages, have the Word of God with us. Remember that for all of this—an agnostic approach, though Mr. Iler disclaims agnosticism—when he has asked his questions, he has not established Mormonism as God's new revelation! His tactic is exactly that of all of his fellow-cultists, and that is to undermine man's faith in the Bible in order to make room for a human system!

Mr. Iler states that I must deal with the fact of whether a person can come to a knowledge of the truth through intellect alone. And notice that word ALONE. I have not said so, but I do note where Paul said that when he, an apostle, received revelation of truth, that he then wrote it, and that when the Ephesians READ IT, they would UNDERSTAND THE KNOWLEDGE HE HAD! (Eph. 3:3-5). It is Mr. Iler against Paul, isn't it? Man's intellect, Mr. Iler, not ALONE, but applied to the Scriptures! That will do it, without revelation

beyond the New Testament, and without new apostles.

It is shocking to see Mr. Iler claim that while the apostles had all truth, and were taught all things, that “nowhere we read that they passed this information down in their writings.” Amazing! That revelation received by them, Paul stated, he made known to men. He stated that the will of God was revealed unto the apostles and prophets (Eph. 3:5). Paul said that to go beyond the gospel he had preached rendered one accursed in God’s sight (Gal. 1:6-9). Really, Mr. Iler! Your agnosticism is clearly showing, and you reveal yourself as a modernist of the worst stripe!

Then, Mr. Iler questions 2 Timothy 3:16-17 as not being worthwhile simply because there were yet inspired portions of Scripture to be written. Paul’s statement stands as true—Scriptures are inspired of God, and by them a man is completely furnished. It’s important to note all miraculous workings, including receiving of revelation, were only temporary, lasting just until revelation was completed (1 Cor. 13:8-10). Then, the Word is our complete Guide! (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

By Mr. Iler’s view, revelation, and the apostleship, was to continue on and on, and he is faced with the matter of wondering “Which” of the claimed “revelations”?—Pentecostal revelation? Armstrong revelation? Seventh-Day Adventist revelation? Spiritualist revelation? His agnosticism leads him there, and it becomes a matter of pick and choose, and man doing his own thing, for he could never know and therefore embrace truth. By the same token, Mr. Iler can’t know whether the Utah Branch or the Independence, Mo. revelations/apostolic authority in his own church are the correct ones. Again, the logical end to which agnosticism leads.

Next, Mr. Iler introduces the matter of inerrancy, and traipses off after Nebuchadnezzar and Dr. Cleon Skousen. Notice, Mr. Iler that our proposition does not center on the inerrancy of some man-made translation. You waste your time in pointing out something along this line, when you at the same time are so anxious to pass over all the deficiencies in the Book of Mormon. Mr. Iler, when you have turned to a dozen translations, and in each one you find something you feel is a poor or erroneous translation, you still have not proven that the Bible, as the message came from God, is not the full, complete, inspired and inerrant Word. And, more than that, you have certainly not proven that Mormonism is God’s new system and

that Smith was God's new prophet.

The reader is asked to remember that Mr. Iler now has had all the time in the world, when he was in the affirmative, to show us that Mormonism is a system approved of God. He could not do so, because he could not find New Testament deficiency requiring a new revelation, and he could not find Bible prophecy pointing to either Joseph Smith or the Mormon system. Then, when it has come his time to be in the negative, he still is impotent in that regard. He follows the expected course of slash, parry and thrust against the Bible, and even charging that the Bible is the weakness in God's plan resulting in division in the religious world! Still, he is, by use of the Bible, unable to attach the Mormon system to the Word of God found in Old and New Testaments. He stands in a great company in this regard, for human, man-made and man-serving systems have NEVER been able to find Biblical support for their doctrines! That is exactly why they must continually cast doubt upon the Bible!

I now will re-affirm those things earlier set forth wherein we can rely on what is found in the Bible, and whereby we know the falsity of the Mormon system. The apostles were guided into all truth, were taught all essential things (John 14:26; 16:13), and through the apostles came to us all things pertaining to life and godliness (2 Pet. 1:3). The Lord had said that men would believe in Him through the apostles' words (John 17:20). And, the apostles WERE NOT GUIDED INTO MORMONISM!! Therefore, Mormonism is not of the truth, and it does not lead into an acceptable godly life! One can, upon examination, immediately see the difference between the Mormon system and the New Testament system; they're as different as night and day. Yet, the apostle Paul stated that any message, even if proclaimed by an angel, differing from the gospel he had preached to the Galatians was not truth, but rather a perversion (Gal. 1:6-7)!

It is my appeal to Mr. Iler and to all who may read these articles, that we all be Christians, and not Mormons. The term "Christian" is that which the Lord gave to designate his disciples (Acts 11:26). There is no salvation in any other name (Acts 4:12). It is my appeal that men labor to duplicate the church picture on the pages of the New Testament of Jesus Christ. Concerning all men it is my desire that they would believe in the Christ (Heb. 11:6), repent of all of their past sins (Acts 17:30), confess their faith in the Christ (Rom. 10:10), and be immersed in water for the remission of their past sins

(Acts 2:38). In the New Testament when men did these things, they became Christians, and not Mormons. They were members of the church that Jesus built, added there by the Lord (Acts 2:47). They followed the teachings of the apostles in the doing of these things, and thus were conforming to the truth. The truths taught by the apostles did not include Mormonism, and the prophecies of the Old Testament pointing to the new system found in Jesus Christ involved none of the marks of Mormonism. We urge that Mr. Iler carefully consider the truths we have set forth.

ILER'S FOURTH NEGATIVE

“And no man putteth new wine into old bottles: else the new wine doth burst the bottles and the wine is spilled, and the bottles will be marred: but new wine must be put into new bottles.”

—Mark 2:22

Before beginning my fourth negative, I again wish to express my gratitude to Mr. Jackson for the opportunity of entering into this discussion. I would also like to thank my good friend W. L. (“Dub”) Beasley of Paducah, Ky., for introducing me to some of Mr. Jackson’s previous exchanges in THRUST. I have found them to be mentally stimulating and informative.

In my first affirmative, I quoted the words of Jesus regarding new wine in old bottles and pointed out that the Restoration of the Gospel of Jesus Christ came not through the efforts of an established clergy, but through the instrumentality of an obscure farm boy; it came not through a tenacious study of the scriptures, but through revelation from on High. Mr. Jackson has now concluded his arguments for the Bible being the complete and final word of God to man and has stated his position adequately enough; but reader, amidst his charges that I’m an ultra-liberal agnostic modernist of the worst stripe, has he really proven what he set out to prove? He has not, for mere man cannot dictate *if* God should speak, *what* he should speak, and *when* he should speak it!

Ah, but Mr. Jackson maintains that God does not speak because he has already spoken, and that the miraculous gifts of the Spirit came to a grinding halt once the Word was delivered.

The primary problem with such an approach, however, is that it has absolutely no basis in the scriptures. One may begin with Genesis and proceed painstakingly, page by page, to the final verse in John’s Apocalypse and will never be able to find the slightest inkling that these gifts were to cease. It is a doctrine that has its roots in the ideology of the post-apostolic church, an ideology that, also actively suppressed the scriptures. To such the prophet Mormon wrote: “Behold, I say unto you, he that denieth these things knoweth

not the gospel of Christ; yea, he has not read the scriptures; if so, he does not understand them.” (Morm. 9:8).

What Mr. Jackson has done is state his *interpretation* of the scriptures, and he is entitled to those interpretations. But, reader, go back and read the passages our critic cites to prove his point and see if they say what he claims they say. Do we hear in his arguments the sound of a breaking bottle?

The translation of the Book of Mormon was given to Joseph Smith after the manner of his language, and though it may lack the flair of the King James translation of the Bible, its message is clear and unmistakable; and more, it is of God. “Wo be unto the Gentiles, saith the Lord God of Hosts! For notwithstanding I shall lengthen out mine arm unto them [in the last days]...they will deny me....” (2 Nephi 28:32). What better way to deny the Lord, we ask, than to deny his Word?

We read further:

O ye Gentiles, have ye remembered the Jews, mine ancient covenant people? Nay, but ye have cursed them, and have hated them, and have not sought to recover them. But behold, I will return all these things upon your own heads; for I the Lord have not forgotten my people....

Know ye not that there are more nations than one? Know ye not that I the Lord your God have created all men, and that I remember those who are upon the isles of the sea; and that I rule in the heavens above and in the earth beneath; and I bring forth my word unto the children of men, yea, even upon all the nations of the earth?...Know ye not that the testimony of two nations is a witness unto you that I am God, that I remember one nation like unto another? Wherefore I speak the same words unto one nation like unto another. And when the two nations shall run together the testimony of the two nations shall run together also. (2 Nephi 29).

We have noted that when the Book of Mormon came forth, the idea of writing on “gold plates” was ridiculed by respectable scholars. Today it is an indisputable fact that the ancients wrote on metal plates. The famed golden plates of Darius were unearthed in

the ruins of Persepolis, Persia, in 1938 and date from the 5th Century B.C., where they had been deposited in a stone box similar to the one Joseph Smith described as containing the Nephite plates. Even the stone covering the Persian plates bears a striking resemblance to the one Smith described. Writings on brass and copper have also been discovered throughout the near east as well as metal plates inscribed by the Egyptians as early as 3000 B.C. Is this not evidence?

We have shown that while Judah received the scepter, or throne of Israel, Joseph was given the birthright. We asked what could be greater than the scepter, and pointed out that a branch of Joseph would extend “beyond the wall” (the ocean) to the “utmost bound of the everlasting hills.” (Gen. 49). Just imagery, our critic was quick to say, adding that it represented the fruitfulness of Israel in bringing forth the Christ. He ignored the fact that Christ was of the lineage of Judah, not Joseph, and could not tell us what the birthright was nor how it was fulfilled in Joseph’s seed.

Mr. Jackson complained of the Book of Mormon’s grammar. We pointed out that such grammar was consistent with the ancient Hebrew form of writing and that the apostles used poor grammar—yet were inspired. He maintained the Book of Mormon was full of contradictions, yet he was unable to produce even one! We showed that the Book of Mormon contained complex chiasms, a style of writing employed by the early Hebrews. Though a powerful evidence of its divine origin, Mr. Jackson could only dismiss it as inconsequential.

We reminded our critic of the many stories of a great white god who appeared in Indian tradition. The Aztecs maintain he was white and bearded, born of a virgin and crucified at a “place of the skull.” He appeared suddenly and disappeared suddenly promising one day to return. So extensive was this legend that Hernando Cortez was able to subdue the entire Aztec people when they mistakenly mistook him for Quetzalcoatl. And in Hawaii, the natives greeted Captain Cook as their returning white god, Lono. Seeing the great white sails on his ship, the natives were reminded that Lono would come in the clouds. Coincidentally, Cook landed during the *makahiki* festival, a celebration which kept alive the tradition of Lono.

We cited the words of Jesus promising to visit “other sheep,

which are not of this fold.” (John 10:16). We then noted the early Christian tradition of those living on the other side of the ocean. Origin wondered what Clement, the disciple of Peter, meant when he wrote: “The Ocean is not to be crossed by men, but those worlds which lie of the other side...are governed by the same ordinances of a guiding and directing God as these.” We can only guess why “the Ocean is not to be crossed by men,” but consider the prophecy of Lehi when he states “that there shall none come into this land save they shall be brought by the hand of the Lord.” (2 Nephi 1:6).

We also read in the Book of Mormon a remarkable prophecy of Columbus, seen in vision nearly 2,000 years before his discovery of America. The prophet Nephi records: “And I looked and beheld a man among the Gentiles, who was separated from the seed of my brethren by the many waters; and I beheld the Spirit of God, that it came down and wrought upon the man; and he went forth upon the many waters, even unto the seed of my brethren who were in the promised land.” (2 Nephi 13:12).

Is it mere coincidence that Columbus himself claimed to be inspired by the Spirit? On one occasion he wrote: “Those who heard of my enterprise called it foolish, mocked me and laughed. But who can doubt but that the Holy Ghost inspired me?”¹ And Wassermann, in his history of Columbus, observes: “When Columbus represents himself as inspired by the Holy Ghost, he is convinced from the bottom of his heart that he is speaking the truth...”²

Our critic called time and again for evidence. We recited the story of Nephi and his brethren returning to Jerusalem to obtain the brass plates of Laben, and how they hid in the cavity of a rock. We told of a cave dated to 600 B.C. on the land of an ancient prophet named Lehi. Drawings of ships were found on the walls, leading scholars to conclude the inhabitants of the cave were in hiding and most likely prophets intending to flee by ship. They puzzled because the cave was so far from the sea. Coincidence, Mr. Jackson concludes. But Dr. Ginat, who first saw the connection, was not only NOT a member of the LDS church, but was a high ranking Israeli

¹ Petersen, Mark E., *The Great Prologue* (Deseret Books; SLC, Ut., 1975), see pps. 24-31.

² *Ibid.* From Wassermann’s *Don Quixote of the Seas*, p. 62.

official and a respected archaeologist as well. We wonder how many prophets named Lehi there were in Jerusalem living in 600 B.C. and also, how non-LDS scholars could come to conclusions so close to the Book of Mormon account.

Mr. Jackson has said what we need is not new revelation, but a return to the scriptures we already have. But attempts to reform Christianity have met with failure time and again. Why? Because *reformation*-restoration is based on the doctrines and precepts of men, whereas *revelation*-restoration is based on the Holy Ghost, who is a revealer of God's will. One need only look at the Christian world floundering in ignorance and confusion to realize that man's intellect cannot bring him back to the true gospel of Christ.

In this discussion we have talked a great deal about evidence, both subjective and infallible, but the very foundation of the gospel is that knowledge of heavenly things comes from God (I Cor. 2:11). We read the admonition of James: "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." (James 1:5). This, we proclaim, is the key to the scriptures; for when God gives man wisdom, he gives man revelation. We find the same principle espoused by the prophet Moroni in the Book of Mormon (Mor. 10:4):

And when ye shall receive these things, I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you by the power of the Holy Ghost. And by the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know the truth of all things.

Although the evidence supporting the Book of Mormon is impressive, the greatest testimony of all comes from the Spirit and is available to all who will read the Book of Mormon with an open mind. It is my testimony that the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the Kingdom of God on Earth, and that the Book of Mormon is true. Thus, we are able to boldly announce: "Where the Bible speaks, we speak; where the Bible is silent, WE STILL SPEAK!"

—NOTE ON THE RLDS CHURCH—

During the course of our discussion, two references were made to the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints with world headquarters in Independence, Mo. I did not think it proper to enter into an in-depth discussion on that church then, nor do I wish to now. Suffice it to say that Joseph Smith entered the following in his journal under the date of Saturday, August 6, 1842, less than two years before his martyrdom:

I prophesied that the Saints would continue to suffer much affliction and would be driven to the Rocky Mountains; many would apostatize, others would be put to death by our persecutors or lose their lives in consequence of exposure or disease, and some...will go and assist in making settlements and build cities and see the Saints become a mighty people in the midst of the Rocky Mountains.

—History of the Church, V:85—

The RLDS church was organized in stages between 1852 and 1860 by disaffected members of the LDS church, the leadership and main body of the church having settled in the Great Salt Lake Valley of the Rocky Mountains. Not having serious claim to the apostolic authority, they have not prospered.

J.I.

RESPONSE BY JACKSON

I have consented to Mr. Iler's note, above, on the grounds that I could also add a note. The Reorganized branch of the Latter-Day Saints was mentioned because Mr. Iler had contended that religious division reflected on the Bible's being a full and complete guide for us. The point is that Mr. Iler's system certainly is not any improvement, since the Latter-Day Saints have so divided, and all the while holding that the Book of Mormon and the writings of Joseph Smith are inspired! His point, then, has failed!

Now, he cites the words of Smith as "proof" that the Missouri

Latter-Day Saints are apostates! Yet, the Missouri members state that the Utah Latter-Day Saints are the unfaithful ones—with both of them claiming inspiration when they state it! He really has no point at all to make regarding which branch has “rightful” claim to apostolic authority, since neither branch in Mormonism, nor any other system, body, or man, can claim such office and authority today! The Scriptures furnish us completely unto every good work (2 Tim. 3:16-17).