

**IN DEFENSE
OF THE
BOOK OF MORMON**

By V. James Loyalvo

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INTRODUCTION

My name is V. James Lovalvo, an Apostle of The Church of Jesus Christ, organized at Greenock, Pennsylvania, with headquarters in Monongahela, Pennsylvania. As a church, we have no affiliation with any other Latter Day Restoration factions.

These tapes, entitled *In Defense of the Book of Mormon*, and the manuscript which accompanies them have been prepared for The Church of Jesus Christ in answer to some criticism of the Book of Mormon. As a church, we do not expect to convince all of the critics, although it is our sincere prayer that we could. We are convinced that the Book of Mormon is of divine origin.

Since the Restoration of the Gospel, much criticism has been launched against the Book of Mormon. The hostility of the critics has also been directed against persons and churches who believe in the book and are convinced that God did use a young man, Joseph Smith, to translate certain records given to him by an angel called Moroni. We do not intend, on these tapes or in this manuscript, to either condemn or commend Joseph Smith or any church that may be the product of his calling and instrumentality in the hands of God. Suffice it to say that we believe in the Book of Mormon and the manner in which it was brought to light.

Since the Book of Mormon was originally published, there has been a vast amount of anti-Book of Mormon literature printed, with the object in mind to destroy the faith of believers in the book. Many ministers and laymen have given discourses in public and on electronic tapes against the Book of Mormon, attempting by their histrionics and rhetoric's to cast a spell upon their audiences in order to win converts to their hostility and negativeness against the book. But, to their shame, few people have hearkened to their tirades.

It is reminiscent of a very interesting study. Of the many atheists who have exerted every effort to destroy people's faith in God and His Holy Son, Jesus Christ, very, very few have been converted to atheism. For every person who has been persuaded to become an atheist, a thousand others have embraced Christianity. The same ratio is prevalent in this anti-Book of Mormon crusade. For each person who may be convinced by the writing and oratory of eloquent critics that the Book of Mormon is not a true record divinely translated from ancient plates, there are hundreds accepting it and its authenticity. The reason for its acceptance by the latter population is that they have approached God in sincere prayer and have, as a consequence, been convinced by the Holy Spirit of its divine origin.

The opponents of the Book of Mormon have a great propensity to attack the book by targeting their venom against Joseph Smith and any person or church who may adhere to its contents and principles. These opponents are unaware, either through ignorance or ulterior motives, that there is not one thing written in the Book of Mormon which contradicts the Bible in any commandment, ordinance, or principle taught by Jesus Christ or His Apostles. If the critics would read the Book of Mormon with sincerity, they would be

amazed at the similarities to the Bible. We are not members of the Latter Day Saints Church of Salt Lake City, but we do believe in the Book of Mormon. We mention this to convey to the critics that we are not defending a religious organization but the Book of Mormon per se. In the same vein, we do not have to defend a particular Christian denomination to say that we believe in the Bible.

The opposition takes a satanic delight in slandering the name of a deceased man, Joseph Smith, who was murdered while in jail at Carthage, Illinois by a mob who professed to be Christians, negating by their action the very commandments of the Saviour, Jesus Christ. That heinous crime at Carthage will stand as one of the blackest pages in the history of mankind for all time to come.

The critics rant, rave, and write books attempting to convince any who will listen to them and hoping to persuade the unwary that the Book of Mormon is not of divine origin, that it was written by Joseph Smith or by Oliver Cowdery or by Sidney Rigdon or by the three men, and that it was fraudulently copied from *Solomon Spaulding's Manuscript*. (More on this later.)

If the antagonists of the Book of Mormon want to debase and belittle it by exposing what they believe to be errors committed by Joseph Smith or by exposing the Faith and Doctrine of any church who believes in the book, why do they not burn the Bible because of the acts of some of the leaders of a prominent church in past years, who by their approval caused millions of innocent people, whose only crime was not believing in the church's teachings, to be killed? To cite a few, there were the persecutions against the Waldenses, the Huguenots, the Spanish Inquisition, and others. Nor were the Protestants, in their acts of retaliation against Catholics, to be idly glossed over.

Why don't the opponents of the Book of Mormon destroy the Bible because of the actions of Calvin, one of the Reformers, who gave his consent to put to death by fire a man called Servetus. Calvin's only regret was that he had given his approval to death by fire; he wanted Servetus to be beheaded instead. What monstrous generosity! And what about the acts of idolatry permitted by Solomon, or the acts of murder and adultery committed by David? If the Bible had to be destroyed because of the negative acts of individuals or churches, the world would be without the glorious teachings of Jesus Christ, and it would have degenerated to the level of savages.

The antagonists of the Book of Mormon are invited to read it thoroughly. They will find a treasure of righteous doctrines in it that extol the chastity of women, of virtue and love, of the virgin birth of Jesus Christ, and of His death and resurrection. There are also many other wonderful teachings that clarify much of the Gospel of our Lord and Saviour, such as baptism, reception of the Holy Ghost, the state of the soul between death and the resurrection, the restoration of the House of Israel, and the identity and origin of the American Indian.

Will the critics of the Book of Mormon dare to discard the Bible because of the incestuous act committed by Lot with his two daughters or the adultery committed by Abraham with Hagar or the adulterous life of Jacob with his four wives? Shall the Bible be burned because the Catholic Church had, at one time, more than one Pope and attempted to convert the heathens and the Saracens by the use of sword as reflected in the history of their crusades-crusades which enlisted the use of children and female camp followers? Shall the Bible be destroyed because of the witch-hunting tactics used by some Protestants and the burning of many innocent women at the stake because they were accused of being witches? Why then do the critics want to destroy the Book of Mormon because of some unchristian acts of certain individuals? Read the book on its own merits and compare it to the teachings of Christ in the Bible. It will stand the test of the searcher of truth.

What would the opponents of the Book of Mormon have said or done if they had lived in the days of Solomon and David? Would they have discarded the Psalms and the Proverbs? Of course, I am taking for granted that the opposition believes in the Bible; otherwise, there is no common ground for comparisons or arguments.

We believe that the Bible is the Word of God, written by inspired men, who prompted by the Holy Spirit left the world a memorial to the greatness of God and His gift to the human family, Jesus Christ, His Son. We also believe that the Book of Mormon is indeed a record written by holy men of God who, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, painstakingly inscribed on plates an illustrious history of the dealings of God with the progenitors of the American Indians, who were from the Tower of Babel. It is also a record of the appearance of Jesus Christ on this land after His ascension into heaven. While He was here, He established His Church and Gospel among the people He visited.

The critics of the Book of Mormon will be well-advised to spend their time and efforts to win souls for Christ rather than trying to destroy the faith of others. One thing is certain. Criticism usually has a tendency to prompt people to search the object that is being criticized and read for themselves whether there is any justification in the reviling thereof.

True believers in the Bible are grateful to the Lord that both the strengths and weaknesses of individuals are recorded in it. Externally, it is also gratifying to know that all the evil machinations of Satan to discredit the Bible because of the ungodly acts of individuals have failed to materialize and will fail forever. The Book of Mormon will also stand the onslaughts of Satan and men regardless of the attacks against it.

In this ongoing discourse, we will endeavor to answer some of the criticisms against the Book of Mormon, and it is our hope and prayer that the opposition will be persuaded to pray to God earnestly whether the book is of divine origin or not.

In addition, we invite the critics to read the Book of Mormon sincerely and prayerfully, for they will not find anything in its contents that is doctrinally contrary to the Bible. However,

we know that if someone wants to find fault with the book, he will find something objectionable (in his own mind at least) in it.

ANSWERS TO CRITICISMS AGAINST THE BOOK OF MORMON

CRITICISM #1 - Jesus Christ born at Jerusalem.

Critics like to point out what they believe to be an error in the Book of Mormon relative to the birthplace of Jesus Christ. In Alma 7:10, it reads:

And behold, He shall be born of Mary, at Jerusalem, which is the land of our forefathers, she being a virgin, a precious and chosen vessel, who shall be overshadowed and conceive by the power of the Holy Ghost, and bring forth a son, yea, even the Son of God.

In the middle of the sentence the critics stop and with literary smugness proceed to say, "Now, everyone knows that Christ was born in Bethlehem, not in Jerusalem."

They purposely omit quoting the rest of the sentence which reads, ". . . born of Mary at Jerusalem, **which is the land of our forefathers . . .**"

Roy E. Weldon and F. Edward Butterworth, in their vast research on this matter write:

In 600 B.C., the system that prevailed was "city states." Cities took in considerable territory adjacent to them including towns and villages. Bethlehem being about four miles out of Jerusalem was within the "city state" of Jerusalem.

F. G. Britton, in his book entitled *A History of Egyptian Archeology*, writes of certain "Amarna letters" in 1887 which have now been deciphered. In this letter a statement is found reading: "A city of the **land of Jerusalem**. Bet **Ninnib** has been captured" (pp. 219-222).

The critics stop after the words "at Jerusalem," cutting the sentence without regard to the subsequent phrase, "**which is the land of our forefathers.**"

Alma is establishing a then well-known fact that Jerusalem was the land (or country) of their forefathers, and that land included Bethlehem and other small towns and villages. Notwithstanding the fact that the Bible pinpoints Bethlehem as the birthplace of Jesus Christ and refers to it as "the city of David," the same Bible calls other places "the city of David" also. For example, in I Chronicles 11:5 & 7 it reads:

And the inhabitants of Jebus said to David, Thou shalt not come hither. Nevertheless David took the castle of Zion, which is the city of David. . . And David dwelt in the castle; therefore they called it the city of David.

According to the Scriptures and the maps of ancient and modern Jerusalem, Zion was and is a distinct area within the environments of Jerusalem, yet it is called "the city of David." Read 2 Samuel 5:7, 1 Kings 2:10, and 1 Kings 8:1. There are many more references to Zion being the "city of David." Were the inspired writers of the Bible confused because they referred to Zion-which was within the area of Jerusalem-as the "city of David"? Let the critics figure that one out. Now if Zion was in the environs of Jerusalem (or the land of Jerusalem), as was the city of Bethlehem, and both places were called the "city of David," that would make the writers in the Book of Mormon (Alma 7:10) correct in saying, " . . . born of Mary at Jerusalem, which is the land of our forefathers."

If one wants to lower oneself to the level of these critics regarding the place where Jesus was born and be outrageously technical, then Micah, the prophet, must be ridiculed for saying that Christ would come forth from Bethlehem Ephratah. At the risk of appearing as ridiculous as some of the above critics, nowhere on any map of ancient or modern Jerusalem can a city by the name of Bethlehem Ephratah be found. Critics may call the foregoing statement a mere technicality; however, the criticism of the Book of Mormon in that it refers to Jesus "being born at Jerusalem" is not only a technicality but an absurdity.

CRITICISM #2 - The use of the word, adieu.

Jacob, one of the prophets in the Book of Mormon, in bidding farewell to the readers of his writings says, ". . . And I make an end of my writing upon these plates, which writing has been small; and to the reader I bid farewell, hoping that many of my brethren may read my words. Brethren, adieu" (Jacob 7:27).

The objection and criticism against the use of the foregoing word adieu, is truly a very insignificant one indeed, unworthy of an intelligent student of the Word of God.

A certain scholar, Robert F. Smith, of Independence, Missouri, has stated that the French word, adieu, has been a functional part of the English language since the 14th century. It is merely a synonym for farewell. Let us look at a very peculiar statement found in the Bible in Job 19:20:

My bone cleaveth to my skin and to my flesh, and I am escaped with the skin of my teeth.

We would ask the critics of the Book of Mormon: Did Job really use the expression, "with the **skin** of my **teeth**," or was it an idiom used in the days of the translators? We wonder how many anti-Bible critics found fault with the above idiomatic phrase. We are certain

that if the foregoing phrase had been used in the Book of Mormon, the opponents would have had a holiday in criticizing it.

CRITICISM #3 - The use of the word, molten.

It is written in the Book of Mormon:

And it came to pass that the brother of Jared, (now the number of vessels which had been prepared was eight) went forth unto the mount, which they called Shelem, because of its exceeding height, and did **molten** out of a rock sixteen small stones; and they were white and clear, even as transparent glass ... (Ether 3:1).

Critics say that Joseph Smith should have used the word quarry instead of molten, as stones can be quarried from rock but not molten. *Webster's Unabridged Dictionary* says that the obsolete word moult or molt means to melt metals.

The very fact that when the brother of Jared hewed sixteen small stones from a rock and they became "white and clear, even as transparent glass" indicates beyond a shadow of a doubt that they were melted not quarried. In a book by V. Gordon Childe, *New Light in the Most Ancient East*, is found the following:

True glass was known by the Sargonid period, commencing about 2200 B.C. (page 166). Pottery was fired at temperatures as high as 1200 degrees ... (page 111). Even iron could be smelted in that early period (page 157).

Glass is mentioned nine times in the Bible, commencing with Moses in the book of Exodus. According to the *Encyclopedia Americana*, by 1500 B.C., Egyptian glass makers were making glass ointment jars, bottles, cosmetic dishes, bowls, and even goblets. Glass objects were manufactured as early as 3000 B.C. The University of Chicago has a pale green cylinder of glass dating from this period."

(From works by Roy E. Weldon and F. Edward Butterworth.)

God has in all ages of time performed miraculous deeds that have confounded the most learned of men, that have gone far beyond the ken of the most brilliant scientists. Consider the parting of the Red Sea to allow the Israelites to cross on dry land, to the discomfiture and subsequent destruction of the Egyptian army, or the tumbling down of the walls of Jericho at the sound of the Israelite trumpets, or the swallowing of Jonah by the great fish. It should not seem a strange thing that God would give a man like the brother of Jared knowledge to "molten stones from a rock."

CRITICISM #4 - Use of the word, shock.

It is written in the Book of Mormon that while Nephi, a prophet of the Lord, was building a ship to enable a group of people to cross the waters to a land that had been promised by God, his older brothers, Laman and Lemuel, rebelled against him and sought to kill him. The Lord, however, intervened for Nephi and filled him with a great amount of His Spirit to the end that his brothers could not touch him for several days lest they would die. After several days, the Lord said to Nephi:

. . . Stretch forth thine hand again unto thy brethren, and they shall not wither before thee, but I will **shock** them, saith the Lord, and this will I do, that they may know that I am the Lord their God (1 Nephi 17:53).

This word should not shock the critics of the Book of Mormon as it is a word well-known to scholars of the English language. In *Webster's New World Dictionary of the English Language*, the word shock is defined:

A sudden powerful blow, shake, disturbance, etc.; any sudden emotional disturbance, as through great surprise.

The word shock, as used in the Book of Mormon, simply meant that when Nephi would allow his brothers to touch him, God was going to let them feel a sudden powerful blow. The blow would not harm them, but it would let them know that there was a divine power on their brother. God let Joseph Smith understand this "sudden powerful blow" in a word which could be readily understood, and that word was shock. Instead of using many words to describe what the Lord would do, as "I will give them a strong shaking" or "I will cause them to feel a powerful blow," he simply allowed all the many words suggested above (by the writer) to be reduced to one word, shock.

CRITICISM #5 - The use of the name, Sam, in the Book of Mormon.

In a book entitled *Lehi in the Desert and the World of the Jaredites* by Hugh Nibley, the author has this to say:

Sam is a noted Egyptian name. Sam Tawi was the name of an ancient king (of the 11th Dynasty). Sam Behutel was a god of a district in Egypt.

Critics say that Sam is a typical American nickname for Samuel. In the foregoing paragraph, Mr. Nibley proves that the name in question was used in Egypt many centuries ago. Will the opponents of the Book of Mormon object to someone else's name recorded in the Bible a few thousand years ago which has the flavor of a nickname? The name we are referring to is Ham, the son of Noah. Some people by the name of Hamilton are

referred to by their friends as Ham. The name Sam in the Book of Mormon should be no more of an oddity to Bible scholars than is the name Ham in the Bible.

CRITICISM #6 - Taking out of context to substantiate the Book of Mormon.

Because the believers in the Book of Mormon refer to several passages of Scripture found in the Bible to prove the prophetic fulfillment of the coming forth of the book, critics rise and shout in their indignation, "You're taking out of context." The scriptures in question are:

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. And when the children of thy people shall speak unto thee, saying, Wilt thou not shew us what thou meanest by these? Say unto them, Thus sayeth the Lord God; Behold, I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel his fellows, and will put them with him, even with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they shall be one in mine hand. And the sticks whereon thou writest shall be in thine hand before their eyes (Ezekiel 37:16-21).

And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I cannot; for it is sealed: And the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I am not learned (Isaiah 29:11,12).

And 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, Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come: and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters (Revelation 14:6,7).

We shall comment on the above scriptures later on in this recording and manuscript. We shall continue, however, to answer the criticism of "taking out of context."

If the critics of those who believe in the Book of Mormon and the Restoration of the Gospel would look well into the Scriptures, they may be astonished to discover that "taking out of context" originated many hundreds of years ago. They would have to find fault with Jesus Christ and His Apostles because they "took out of context" also. This was done to prove

the fulfillment of prophecy in a particular event, place, or time. Following are some examples:

1. When the devil sought to tempt the Lord Jesus Christ by saying, "If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread," Jesus replied: "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

Christ was "taking out of context" by referring to Deuteronomy 8:3, thereby proving to Satan that the scripture He was referring to was fulfilled at that particular moment.

2. Again, in the temptation of Our Lord, Satan said to Him:

If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down (from the pinnacle of the Temple): for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. (Satan also "took out of context" from Psalms 91:11.) Jesus said unto him: It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord, Thy God.

Christ quoted Deuteronomy 6:16. In that portion of scripture, the Lord was speaking to the House of Israel. Yet Jesus used that very same scripture to answer the wicked tempter and prove its fulfillment in that one hour of trial.

3. When the Holy Ghost descended upon the Apostles on the Day of Pentecost-which amazed the multitudes of people-Peter quoted a passage of scripture found in the book of the prophet Joel 2:28, which reads:

And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions.

Peter "took out of context" from the prophet Joel to prove to the multitudes the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy at that particular moment. Why don't the critics of the Book of Mormon adherents find fault with the Apostle Peter for "taking out of context?"

4. The same Apostle, Peter, seeking to prove the resurrection of Christ, quoted Psalms 16:8-10 which reads:

I have set the Lord always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. Therefore, my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope. For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

If taken at its face value, the above verse seems to be David speaking of himself. Peter, by the Spirit of God, however, "took out of context" and proved that it referred to Christ and was fulfilled in His resurrection.

5. The Scriptures in Matthew 27:35 and John 19:24 tell of the soldiers parting the garments of Jesus Christ and casting lots for them. Both Apostles quote Psalms 22:18 which reads:

They part my garments among them and cast lots upon my vesture.

The Apostles use this scripture in fulfillment of that which took place at the crucifixion of Christ. Yet, the reading of the above Psalm would of a certainty make one think that David was speaking of himself, not of Jesus Christ. Isn't this "taking out of context?" Of course, it is.

6. In the Gospel of John 19:28, it reads that Jesus said, "I thirst." The Apostle says that in these two words, "I thirst," the scripture was fulfilled. He quoted Psalm 69:21:

They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.

If John had not "taken out of context" the above scripture, would anyone have known that it was a prophetic prediction fulfilled in Christ as He hung on the cross of Calvary?

7. When Jesus overthrew the tables of the money changers at the Temple, He exclaimed:

Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise (John 2:16).

His Disciples remembered what was written in the Psalms:

For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up . . . (Psalms 69:9).

Before the Apostle wrote the above phrase, would anyone reading the 69th Psalm have interpreted it as referring to what Jesus said? The answer would be a definite NO. This passage of scripture, however, was also "taken out of context" to prove the fulfillment of a certain event.

8. When old Simeon, a devout man, took the child Jesus in his arms and blessed Him, he said, among other things:

. . . For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel (Luke 2:30-32).

At this instance, Simeon was quoting the prophet Isaiah 49:6, who hundreds of years prior to the birth of Christ predicted, ". . . I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles . . ." Was the prophet speaking of himself? Was Luke a literary thief to "take out of context" and apply it to Jesus Christ? The answer is NO to both questions.

If the reader is interested in searching the Scriptures about persons who "took out of context" to prove the fulfillment of certain events, let him read Luke 1:15 (quoting Isaiah 49:1), Matthew 27:9 (quoting Zechariah 11:12), Luke 4:17-21 (referring to Isaiah 61:1), and Matthew 1:23 (quoting Isaiah 7:14).

Let the critics of the Book of Mormon understand that taking scripture out of context by Christ and His Apostles was done by the inspiration of God's Holy Spirit. The prophets and holy men of yore spoke and wrote as they were moved upon by the Holy Ghost. The Lord caused words of prophecy to be put in their mouths that would relate to future events. It is very probable that when they spoke or wrote their predictions they may or may not have understood that which the Lord was inspiring them to say. Nonetheless, the Spirit of God guided them to do so. Of a certainty, the same Spirit of the Lord which inspired those holy men to speak and write and "take out of context" will also, in the years subsequent to their time, inspire holy men to "take out of context" such words and scripture that would be applicable to the circumstances and events at hand.

In these days of the Restoration of the Gospel, God has given men the same blessing to understand words spoken or written by holy men of long ago and apply them to conditions and/or events of the day or the future. When Ezekiel 37 and Isaiah 29 are used to refer to the coming forth of the Book of Mormon and some of their words and phrases are "taken out of context," it is done by the inspiration of God's Holy Spirit, the same spirit which prompted Jesus Christ and His Apostles to do so.

Ezekiel writes of two sticks (books), one for Judah and one for Joseph. These are indicative of the two histories of these two tribes. So, if it appears that one is "taking out of context," it is only because God, who is the same yesterday, today, and forever has inspired the minds of dedicated men to understand that which He gave to the prophets of old. The same spiritual formula applies to Revelation 14:6,7 and other scriptures regarding the Restoration of the Gospel and the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth.

In conclusion, if the opponents of the Book of Mormon want to criticize its believers for "taking out of context," it is only because they have not understood that the Holy Spirit also works in humble and dedicated men today as He did with holy men of old. Let the critic and unbeliever know this:

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works (2 Timothy 3:16,17).

CRITICISM #7 - The Book of Mormon is an addition to the Bible, contrary to the words of John in Revelation 22:18,19.

The foregoing scripture, which some critics like to use as a reference in direct objection to the Book of Mormon, reads:

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

Every Bible scholar knows, or should know, that the book of Revelation was written by the Apostle John **before** he wrote the Gospel. J. R. Dummelow in his *Bible Commentary* says, ". . . seems clearly to indicate that the book was written in the reign of Vespasian (69-79 A.D.) ... that it was written about 77 A.D."

Of the date when the Gospel according to John was written, the same Rev. Dummelow says, "According to all ancient authorities, this gospel was written by St. John in his old age at Ephesus, i.e. about 90 A.D."

The question of whether the book of Revelation was written before the Gospel is really irrelevant; the important issue is the meaning of John's warning, "not to add or take away" from the book of Revelation. The crux of the matter is obvious to all students of the Bible. Did John mean not to add or take away from the Bible? Of course not! The Bible had not as yet been compiled! Even the critics of the Book of Mormon know that the word Bible means "a collection of sacred writings." Aren't the critics "taking out of context" to infer that John meant the Bible. To all sincere students of the Word of God the warning of John is clearly understood to mean the book of Revelation as the Apostle definitely says, ". . . the words of the prophecy of **this book**" and ". . . take away from the words of the **book** of this prophecy." John did not refer to a book that should come forth in the future but "this book," which means the book of his revelations and prophecies.

Moses, one of the greatest of all prophets, warned the House of Israel relative to the commandments that God had given them through him:

Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it . . . (Deuteronomy 4:2).

What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it. (Deuteronomy 12:32).

Are the critics of the Book of Mormon suggesting that no more revelations, no more prophecies, nothing more should come from God? If that were so, then the confession of Peter in answer to the question which Christ posed, "But whom say ye that I am?" and the response, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God," should be annulled. However, in the light of Christ's answer, "Blessed art thou, Simon Brajona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." He showed that divine revelation was and is an ongoing and never-ending phenomenon.

Again, if no other scripture should be forthcoming since the days of Moses, then the entire teachings of Jesus Christ - his entire Gospel-must be unacceptable because He added unto the law of Moses and took away from it also. In one of His exhortations, He said:

For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak (John 12:49,50).

The Book of Mormon is neither an addition to nor a subtraction from the Bible but another revelation of God to the world.

CRITICISM #8 - The angel of Revelation 14:6,7 is not Moroni.

Critics point their literary finger with great joy and ex claim that Revelation 14:6,7 cannot be Moroni, the personage who appeared to Joseph Smith, because verses 6 and 7 follow John's vision of the Lamb and the 144 thousand Israelites sequentially. Therefore, (they say) the believers in the Book of Mormon are again taking "out of context" to prove its coming forth by referring to this particular scripture and claiming that the angel in question is Moroni.

In answer to these critics, we wish to point out one or two phenomenal occurrences which are relevant to the predictions of John and their placement, whether they follow in sequence or not.

For example, Revelation 13 speaks of a beast having seven heads and ten horns. This beast shall have great power as to make war with the saints and overcome them. Then it speaks of another beast which had an image made to the first beast which in turn would wield the power of the first one. John, however, does not describe in this chapter

the meaning of the seven heads and the ten horns; he does this in the 17th chapter where the angel is saying to him, "Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and the ten horns." The angel then proceeds to unravel the mystery.

Please note, however, that there are three chapters between the 13th and 17th chapters that, although they are filled with other prophetic visions, are unrelated to them. The exception is the first part of the 15th chapter which tells of those who gained a victory over the beast. Isn't it strange that John saw and related a victory over the beast before it happened in the 17th chapter? The sequence of events should have been as follows: Chapter 13, Chapter 17, and then Chapter 15.

In Chapter 14, it appears that the redemption of the 144 thousand Israelites is accomplished. What need is there for another angel to come from heaven and preach to all them that dwell on the earth? And if it were in the realms of possibility, how would one angel preach to all the inhabitants of the earth? Here indeed is a mystery, yet one that is understandable by the Spirit of God. The above 14th chapter should have followed the 12th chapter where one sees the woman taken into the wilderness for 1260 days (or 1260 prophetic years) and the man-child caught up to God. We believe that the woman of Revelation 12 is indicative of the Spirit and Glory of God with which He clothed the Church. The Lord took the Spirit and Glory of the Church into the wilderness because, it had apostatized from the Gospel of Jesus Christ and left but just a physical body to grow without the life of Christ. The man-child represents the authority of the Priesthood of the Son of God, which was withdrawn by the Lord because of the Apostasy of the Church. But enough of this for the moment. If anyone is interested to learn more about the woman and the man-child of Revelation 12, let him read the book entitled, *It Is Written: Truth Shall Spring Out of the Earth*, by V. James Loyalvo.

If God had the woman nourished for 1260 prophetic years it is only reasonable that He would bring her back from the wilderness at the end of that period of time. God would also restore the man-child to her; hence, this is the reason for the angel of the 14th chapter, verse 6 and 7 to fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach to all the inhabitants of the earth, warning them of the hour of God's judgment. How would an angel preach to all who dwell on the earth? The Lord would use an angel to restore the Gospel to the earth again and use man as an instrument in His Holy hands to accomplish His work.

Angels have been used as messengers of the Almighty since time began. Angels have delivered the thoughts and the will of God to men and ministered to them as well. The Bible has many instances recorded in it to substantiate this. Angels appeared to Abraham, Hagar, Lot, Moses, and many others as told in the Old Testament. In the New Testament, angels appeared to Jesus, Joseph, Zacharias, Mary, the Apostles, Cornelius, and others.

"But," say the critics, "angels are spiritual beings, not mortal beings, and men are not called angels, therefore, Moroni could not be the angel of Revelation 14:6,7."

In answer to this we reply that men have been referred to as angels. In Revelation 19:10 it reads:

And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus...

Another scripture found in Revelation 22:8,9 reads:

And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things. Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God.

Also, in Genesis 19:15,16, it reads:

And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters, which are here; lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city. And while he lingered, the **men** laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; the Lord being merciful unto him: and they brought him forth, and set him without the city.

John was commanded to write to the seven churches of Asia, and he addressed each letter to the angel of each church. It is our understanding that the angel of each individual church was the man in charge of that particular church, and whether one wants to call him a Bishop or a Presiding Officer is irrelevant. It would seem rather illogical to address a letter to an angel in heaven.

It is our understanding that Moroni never died; he was translated up to heaven like Elijah the Prophet. It does not seem reasonable to us that God would allow Moroni to die first and then resurrect him. If an angel is a messenger of God, then Moroni certainly fits this category very well. When he appeared to Joseph Smith, he said that he was a messenger sent from the presence of God and that his name was Moroni.

The woman - the church - of Revelation 12 has been restored to earth again in these latter days as well as the man-child-the authority of the Priesthood after the order of the Son of God. And the angel called Moroni has been sent to earth to deliver the plates, which he translated by the gift and power of God using the Urim and Thummim, to Joseph Smith. This translation is the Book of Mormon in which also is found the fulness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The angel of Revelation 14 is definitely Moroni. He not only had the Everlasting Gospel, which is the power of God unto salvation-that power which had

been taken away from the earth - but he also gave the world another record, the Book of Mormon, which together with the Holy Bible make up the two Sticks spoken of by the prophet Ezekiel in the 37th chapter of his book.

Critics of the Book of Mormon and especially the Restoration of the Gospel, in trying to belittle the fact that an angel (in this case the angel Moroni) appeared to Joseph Smith and delivered to him certain plates which, when translated, resulted in the Book of Mormon wherein is also the same Gospel of Jesus Christ as found in the Bible, cite Galatians 1:8,9 which reads:

But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.

The opponents of the Book of Mormon would certainly be right in their criticism if-and we repeat IF-the Angel Moroni did preach unto Joseph Smith another gospel than that taught by Jesus Christ and the Apostles. But nowhere in the Book of Mormon is found the slightest shred of difference from that which is found in the Bible. The critics are challenged to find, if they can, anything at all in the Book of Mormon which is contrary to the Gospel as taught by our Lord and His Apostles.

We will say further that the very critics of the Book of Mormon who make claims repeatedly that they believe in the Bible are probably in transgression of the teachings of Jesus Christ as found in the Bible. We will cite a few. Each critic must answer for himself.

- (A) Do their churches have Twelve Apostles and Seventy Evangelists as the Church in the days of Christ?
- (B) Do their churches baptize in the open waters (outside) as did the Church in the days of the Apostles?
- (C) Do their churches partake of feet washing as did the Apostles?
- (D) Do their churches have the gifts of the Spirit as outlined in I Corinthians 12?
- (E) Do their churches have non-salaried ministers as did the Church in the early centuries?
- (F) Do their churches believe in the reception of the Holy Ghost by the imposition of hands as in the days of the Apostles?
- (G) Do their churches believe that baptism is essential to salvation as prescribed by the Lord and His Apostles?

We could go on and on to show that the churches of today as well as yesteryear-beginning with approximately one hundred years after the death of our Saviour - have eliminated more than one commandment and doctrine from their tenets.

In Matthew 5 there are written the words of Jesus Christ, who said:

Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

Also, in the Epistle of James 2:10, is recorded:

For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.

Although James is referring to the law of Moses, he is making an analogy of the strictness of the law. Offending, in just one point, would be as though the whole law were broken. Jesus, however, is speaking of His commandments and warning the Disciples of the consequences of breaking the least one.

As a word of caution to the critics of the Book of Mormon, we quote the words of Jesus Christ:

. . . Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?

We would say to the critics, "Look well into your own beliefs and that of your churches before you start criticizing other people's beliefs and tenets."

If the opponents of the Book of Mormon are not teaching and preaching all the commandments of Jesus Christ as recorded in the Bible, that makes them, in effect, transgressors according to the words of our Lord. Before He ascended into heaven, His last commandment and exhortation was:

All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world (Matthew 28:18-20).

To the critics we repeat, "If you or your church are not keeping all the commandments of Jesus Christ, you are not in a position to criticize anyone or anything else."

Relative to the Angel Moroni, if the critics cannot accept the belief of the adherents of the Book of Mormon that Moroni was the angel referred to in Revelation 14:6,7, we pray that God will enlighten their minds on this subject. Also, if the believers in the Book of Mormon are accused of "taking out of context," the opponents are certainly correct; however, it is done only by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit of God. The conclusion of the matter is simply this: In spite of all the criticisms, Moroni is still the angel of Revelation 14:6,7.

CRITICISM #9 - (a) Joseph Smith stole the idea of writing the Book of Mormon from *Solomon Spaulding's Manuscript*.

(b) Sidney Rigdon stole and copied the Spaulding Manuscript and gave it to Joseph Smith from which he wrote the Book of Mormon.

The above criticism is not only illogical but an absurdity as well, as we shall show hereafter. The bulk of material used to answer the foregoing criticism is borrowed from the writings of Roy E. Weldon, F. Edward Butterworth, and Bruce D. Blumell.

Book of Mormon critics' most popular explanation of its origin is that it was a plagiarism of a certain manuscript written around 1810-1812 by a Rev. Solomon Spaulding. This gentleman was born in Connecticut in the year 1761. He lived in New England and New York until he moved to Conneaut, Ohio in 1809. In Conneaut, he wrote a story about some American aborigines, which he hoped to publish, which hope never materialized. In 1812, he moved to the Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania area, where he died in 1816 with his story unpublished.

In 1833, a certain Philatus Hurlbut, a former member of the Church, was hired by an anti-Book of Mormon group to collect as much derogatory material as he could against Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon. In his research, he found eight persons from the Conneaut area who willingly signed affidavits claiming that the Book of Mormon was based on *Solomon Spaulding's Manuscript*, which had been written several years previously. Hurlbut, still smarting from his expulsion from the Church for immoral behavior, sold these affidavits to a Mr. Eber D. Howe, who added them to his book entitled *Mormonism Unveiled*. Howe stated in his book that Sidney Rigdon had come across Spaulding's Manuscript and used it to help him (Rigdon) to write the Book of Mormon and promptly took it to Joseph Smith, who in turn credited himself with the writing of the Book of Mormon.

Mr. Howe admitted in his book, *Mormonism Unveiled*, that Joseph Smith was not educated enough nor had he sufficient theological understanding to have been able to write the religious parts of the Book of Mormon. So, he vented his wrath against Sidney Rigdon and said that since he (Rigdon) was knowledgeable in the Scriptures and an excellent preacher, it was he, who after copying or stealing the Spaulding Manuscript, added the religious parts to it and produced the Book of Mormon. What utter nonsense! Sidney Rigdon never met Joseph Smith nor had he any knowledge whatsoever of the Book of Mormon until **after** it was published. Until the day he died, he

affirmed his testimony that he was given the Book of Mormon by Oliver Cowdery and Parley P. Pratt in his home in Mentor, Ohio, **after** it had been published. This is found in a book written by Rigdon's son, John W. Rigdon, entitled *Life of Sidney Rigdon*.

Mr. F. Mark McKiernan, in his biography of Sidney Rigdon entitled *Sidney Rigdon, Religious Reformer*, writes that Mrs. Matilda Davison, Spaulding's widow, claimed that Sidney Rigdon had been associated with the printing office of a Mr. Patterson, a Pittsburgh printer to whom Spaulding is supposed to have submitted a copy of his manuscript, and that Rigdon pilfered it from that office. In rebuttal to this accusation, Rigdon wrote a denial in the *Boston Journal*:

It is only necessary to say, in relation to the whole story about Spaulding's writings being in the hands of Mr. Patterson, who was at Pittsburgh, and who is said to have kept a printing office, etc., etc., is the most base of lies, without even the shadow of truth . . . If I were to say that I ever heard of the Reverend Solomon Spaulding and his hopeful wife until D. P. Hurlbut wrote his lie about me, I should be a liar like unto themselves.

Rigdon's brothers testified that he had never been a printer and had not lived in Pittsburgh until 1822. Spaulding had left the city in 1814.

Relative to the *Solomon Spaulding Manuscript*, the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, Volume 18, Page 843, reads as follows:

It was a contention of the early anti-Mormons, **now however discredited**, that the Book of Mormon as published by Smith, was rewritten with a few changes from an unpublished romance, *The Manuscript Found*, written before 1812 by Solomon Spaulding, a Minister.

The above encyclopedia, in its unbiased coverage, notes that the contention of the early critics against the Book of Mormon was "now however discredited." The lies that Satan put in the hearts of Book of Mormon critics was discredited by the truth; and thus it will be today and in the years to come.

Mr. J. A. Hill, a compiler of the *New American Encyclopedia Dictionary*, Volume 3, Page 2766, tells of Joseph Smith's vision of the angel and the translation of the plates by the Urim and Thummim resulting in the Book of Mormon. Then he continues:

On this the Reverend Mr. Spaulding, a Presbyterian preacher, declares that having sometime before written a work of fiction which no publisher could be induced to print, his rejected Copy had been lost or stolen, and had reappeared as the angelically revealed Book of Mormon.

The Book of Mormon was not published until 1830. The above - quoted Mr. Hill wrote that Spaulding "complained" that his rejected Copy, after being lost or stolen, had re appeared

as the "angelically revealed Book of Mormon." Mr. Spaulding died in 1816. Now, how can a man who died in 1816 make a statement that his stolen manuscript had "reappeared" as the Book of Mormon? The critics should have a lot of fun with this one!

Critics have always delighted themselves in claiming that Joseph Smith used the Spaulding Manuscript as a basis for the Book of Mormon. Nothing could be farther from the truth. In 1884, a Mr. L. L. Rice, while living in Honolulu, Hawaii, found the manuscript in question which he had inherited from Eber D. Howe. He turned it over to the Oberlin College in Ohio, where it is on display for anyone to see. President Fairchild of that College wrote:

The theory of the origin of the Book of Mormon in the traditional manuscript of Solomon Spaulding, will probably have to be relinquished. Mr. Rice, myself, and others compared it with the Book of Mormon and could detect no resemblance between the two, in general or in detail. There seems to be no matter or incident common to the two. The solemn style of the Book of Mormon, in imitation of the English scriptures, does not appear in the manuscript.

Also, in reply to an inquiry by a correspondent, Mr. Fairchild wrote:

Oberlin College, Ohio
October 17, 1895

J. R. Hindley, Esq.

Dear Sir:

We have in our College Library an original Manuscript of Solomon Spaulding - unquestionably genuine.

I found it in 1884 in the hands of Hon. L. L. Rice of Honolulu, Hawaiian Islands. He was formerly State Printer at Columbus, Ohio, and before that, Publisher of a paper in Painesville whose preceding publisher had visited Mrs. Spaulding and obtained the Manuscript from her. It had lain among his old papers forty years or more, and was brought out by my asking him to look up anti-slavery documents among his papers.

The Manuscript has upon it the signature of several men of Conneaut, Ohio, who had heard Spaulding read it and knew it to be his. No one can see it and question its genuineness. The Manuscript has been printed twice at least - once by the Mormons of Salt Lake City, and once by the Josephite Mormons of Iowa. The Utah Mormons obtained the copy of Mr. Rice at Honolulu and the Josephites got it of me after it came into my possession.

This Manuscript is not the original of the Book of Mormon.

Yours very truly,

Jas. H. Fairchild

I have an electro-magnetic copy of *Solomon Spaulding's Manuscript* and have listened to it thoroughly. The conclusion of the matter is that there is not the slightest comparison to the Book of Mormon; however, this does not deter the critics. They will find something else to attempt to prove that the Book of Mormon is not a divine record. I imagine that as long as the world stands there will always be critics, who in their zeal-sincere or not-to discover something new against the Book of Mormon, will go to any extreme to disprove its authenticity. But as the Bible says, ". . . as when a hungry man dreameth and behold, he eateth; but he awaketh, and his soul is empty: or as when a thirsty man dreameth, and behold, he drinketh; but he awaketh, and behold, he is faint . . . so shall the multitude of all the nations be, that fight against Zion." So also, do we believe that the critics of the Book of Mormon will find to their dismay that all of their fighting and opposition will be of no avail.

Returning to *Solomon Spaulding's Manuscript* Bruce D. Blumaell, in his paper, "I Have a Question," wrote:

The similarities between this manuscript and the Book of Mormon are general and superficial at best. In the introduction of his novel, Spaulding described finding the manuscript buried in the earth, but it was a parchment written in Latin, not metal plates with a Middle Eastern language. Spaulding developed his own unique nomenclature for his story, but none of these names bear any resemblance to Book of Mormon names. The story has in it a transatlantic migration, although the group came from Rome, not Jerusalem. And there is a great war between two civilizations, both Indian, although neither succeeds in completely annihilating the other. Yet these vague similarities could have led Spaulding's neighbors, especially with prompting from Hurlbut, to believe the Book of Mormon was lifted from Spaulding's manuscript.

Sidney Rigdon never changed his testimony of his coming in contact with Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon until **after** the book was published. Despite the fact that he was excommunicated from the Church in 1844 because of his opposition to Brigham Young's appointment as leader of the Church, he still maintained that he was not the author of the Book of Mormon nor was he in any way a co-writer of it. And, in spite of all the criticisms hurled against it, the Book of Mormon still stands as a worthy companion to the Bible.

Tertullian, the great historian, once said concerning Christianity, "Whoever looked well into our cause that did not embrace it?" I want to paraphrase his statement relative to the Book of Mormon: "Whoever looked well into it that did not believe it?"

Another very important thing that stands in favor of the Book of Mormon is that none of the eleven witnesses (besides Joseph Smith) who bore testimony to the divine origin of the book ever denied it even until death.

CRITICISM #10 - Joseph Smith was an epileptic when he wrote the Book of Mormon.

The Book of Mormon has had many darts of poisonous criticisms thrown at it, but to say that Joseph Smith was an epileptic is an absurdity unimaginable. It is not worthy of any intelligent critic, notwithstanding his dislike of the book, to resort to this kind of inflammatory and derogatory remark. In the first place, Joseph Smith did not write the Book of Mormon; he translated it by the gift and power of the Holy Spirit and by means of the Urim and Thummim. Secondly, he was a man of excellent health and strength as attested to by many who knew him and by others who merely met him.

It is not a very difficult thing to get affidavits from someone's enemies who will testify against him-not caring whether they perjure themselves or not-as long as they can see the object of their hatred abased and humiliated. There was a man-and this is a true story-who kept his front lawn beautifully trimmed. His neighbor's dog would come on his lawn almost daily and dirty it. The man, at first, would clean the dirt, but after it happened several times, he complained to his neighbor about it. The neighbor was indignant. He retorted that his dog would never dirty anyone else's lawn; it was too well trained. He never spoke to the man who complained any longer. In process of time, the man with the nice lawn put his home up for sale. A prospective buyer, while looking at the house, was accosted by the irate neighbor and told that the man whose property he was examining was not a very nice person. The buyer, however, was not impressed with this negative approach and, upon further investigation, discovered that the neighbor had told a falsehood in order to prevent the sale of the property.

It is also true that some critics of the Book of Mormon have been able to get others to testify against the Book of Mormon, by some with an ulterior motive or by those who had been excommunicated from the Church who were seeking revenge in one way or another. We believe some critics have been sincere in their criticisms but only because they have perhaps not taken the time to read the Book of Mormon prayerfully.

It is said that Joseph Smith was a man of great physical vigor, singularly free from sickness. Parley P. Pratt in his Autobiography, page 47, writes:

President Joseph Smith was in person tall and well built, strong and active. He possessed a noble boldness and independence of character; his manner was easy and familiar, his rebuke terrible as the lion.

A Mr. Ford, in his *History of Illinois*-as quoted in Robert's Comprehensive History of the Church, Chapter 2, Verse 347-wrote:

He (Joseph Smith) was full six feet high, strongly built and uncommonly muscled. No doubt he was as much indebted for his influence over an ignorant people to the superiority of his physical vigor, as to his great cunning and intelligence.

In his book, *Figures of the Past*, Josiah Quincy, Mayor of Boston, Massachusetts, declared that of all the men he had ever met, Joseph Smith was one of two that "seemed best endowed with that kingly faculty which directs as by intrinsic right the feeble and confused souls that are looking for guidance". A United States Army Artillery officer wrote in his report: "Joseph, the Chief, is a noble looking fellow, a Mahomet, every inch of him."

Do the above statements sound as though the translator of the Book of Mormon was an epileptic? Indeed not. Not until many decades after the publishing of the book was there discovered medical treatment for controlling epilepsy. If there was no such controlling medication in Joseph Smith's day, common sense then dictates that he could have never been able to write a book with such orderly and sequential characteristics as the Book of Mormon. The criticism of the book being written under the influence of epilepsy reminds us of the college professor who was unable to find any fault with an essay written by one of his students - whom he didn't like - yet gave him an A-minus on his paper. When asked by the student why he had not given him a straight A on his essay, the professor answered very haughtily, "Because you did not type it on a 20 lb. paper weight." Ridiculous isn't it? It is the same with anti-Book of Mormon persons. Unable to find fault with the book per se, they will seek any excuse whatsoever to belittle it no matter how false and infantile it may be.

Thomas F. Odea, in writing his thesis for a college degree, did an extensive research on the Smith family's medical record and found no evidence whatsoever of epilepsy or neurotic instability. Dr. Odea writes of the medical explanations:

The real problem . . . is the lack of factual basis for the medical explanations, for we have little or no evidence of the hereditary or other abnormalities and nervous instabilities and none at all of the epilepsy upon which such explanations are based.

CRITICISM #11 - On the plates from which Joseph Smith translated the Book of Mormon.

Critics have said that if the plates which the Angel Moroni gave Joseph Smith were made of pure gold, he could not have carried them from one place to another, as they would have weighed over two hundred pounds.

There have been conflicting stories as to how much the plates weighed. To begin with, let us take the testimony of the translator himself:

These records were engraven on plates which had the appearance of gold. Each plate was six inches wide and eight inches long, and not quite so thick as common tin. They were filled with engravings in Egyptian characters and bound together in a volume as the leaves of a book with three rings running through the whole. The volume was something near six inches in thickness, a part of which was sealed. The characters on the unsealed part were small, and beautifully engraved. The whole book exhibited many marks of antiquity in its construction, and much skill in the art of engraving. With the records was found a curious instrument, which the Ancients called "Urim and Thummim," which consisted of two transparent stones set in the rim of a bow, fastened to a breastplate. Through the medium of the Urim and Thummim I translated the record by the gift and power of God" (From Joseph Smith, "Wentworth Letter").

Please note that Joseph Smith in the foregoing statement says, "These records were engraven on plates which had the **appearance** of gold." He didn't say that the plates were of pure gold but had the appearance of gold. Regarding the weight of the plates, William Smith, a younger brother of Joseph, was once asked how much the plates weighed. He answered, "As near as I could tell, about sixty pounds." He reiterated that statement many times. He told how Joseph "escaped to the house and brought the plates with him-wrapped up in a towfrock." On the night that Joseph Smith brought in the plates, William recounts: "I was permitted to lift them as they laid in a pillowcase, but not to see them, as it was contrary to the commands he had received. They weighed about sixty pounds according to the best of my judgment." This testimony is from a younger brother of Joseph Smith who was in the house on the night when the plates were brought in. (This is taken from Ander son's *Investigating the Book of Mormon Witnesses*, pp. 23, 24.)

We are not scientists, nor are we experts on gold; therefore, we must take the word of those who are knowledgeable in that field. Mr. J. M. Sjodahl, basing his findings on an experiment with gold coins, comes to the conclusion that the plates weighed less than one hundred pounds (Widtsoe's *Seven Claims of the Book of Mormon*). It is also the conclusion of experts on metal plates that, in all probability, the plates were a mixture of gold and other alloys. Remember Joseph Smith said that the plates had the **appearance** of gold.

Widtsoe and Harris, in their book, *Seven Claims of the Book of Mormon*, make a further statement:

It is very unlikely, however, that the plates were made of pure gold. They would have been too soft and in danger of destruction by distortion. For the purpose of record keeping, plates made of gold mixed with a certain amount of copper would be better, for such plates would be firmer,

more durable and generally more suitable for the work in hand. If the plates were made of eight karat gold, which is gold frequently used in present-day jewelry, and allowing a ten percent space between the leaves, the total weight of the plates would not be above one hundred and seventeen pounds—a weight easily carried by a man as strong as was Joseph Smith.

Joseph Smith was a very strong man. He could have handled the weight of the plates without any problem. I have seen men handle bags of cement weighing a hundred pounds with very little effort. It should not surprise anyone that the above plates could be carried as easily as it is claimed.

On the matter of gold per se, Professor George A. Cornish of the University of Toronto has this to say:

GOLD - As this metal resists successfully the action of air, water, sulphur, and ordinary chemicals, time cannot tarnish its surface: of seven thousand years, flashes forth with undimmed glory, for gold is one of the most indestructible of the earth's materials. So malleable is this precious metal that a piece much smaller than the head of a pin can be hammered into a sheet large enough to cover a good sized room. So thin are such sheets that if the Encyclopedia Britannica, consisting of twenty-four volumes of one thousand pages each were printed on gold leaves it would take one hundred sets bound together to make a book one inch in thickness. So ductile is gold that two pounds can be drawn into a fine wire long enough to encircle the earth at the equator.

Weldon and Butterworth cite a charge made by M. T. Lamb in his book entitled *The Golden Bible*, that the plates as described by Joseph Smith could not possibly have contained the more than five hundred pages of English in the translated Book of Mormon (1899 edition). The above authors respond as follows:

This argument is readily refuted. On one sheet of paper, eight by seven inches, a Hebrew translation of fourteen pages of the American text of the Book of Mormon was written in the modern, square Hebrew letters in common use. On a corresponding basis the entire text of the Book of Mormon, as American readers have it, could be written in Hebrew on 40 and 3/7 pages - twenty-one plates in all.

In a second calculation, made by the Hebrew scholar, Mr. Will Miller, seven pages of the English text of the Book of Mormon were written as one page of the "old Phoenician" or Israelite characters, which were known to Lehi and his contemporaries. This proves that even if these larger characters were used, the entire book could have been written or engraved on 80 and 6/7 pages - 41 plates in all. (Quoted from Sjodahl's *An Introduction to the Study of the Book of Mormon*).

Considering the research of the foregoing authors, the evidence is conclusively in favor of the Book of Mormon. The plates would not be too heavy to carry, and the contents of the plates was sufficient to hold the more than five hundred pages of the English translation of the Book of Mormon.

CRITICISM #12 Part 1 - The writings of Isaiah in the Book of Mormon.

Some modern critics of the book of Isaiah have indicated that chapters 40-55 were written by someone other than the prophet himself. This is called Deutero-Isaiah, or second Isaiah. It is also intimated that Chapters 55-66 were written by a third Isaiah, called Triter-Isaiah. There are also some scholars who have suggested that other chapters in the book of Isaiah are not his writings. What these scholars have done is dissect the book of Isaiah unmercifully. Dr. Chas. E. Torrey has this to say concerning the partitions of the book of Isaiah:

The paring process begun with a pen knife, is continued with a hatchet, until the book has been chopped into hopeless chunks.

According to S. B. Sperry, however, there are many scholars who maintain that the book of Isaiah was written by the prophet and no one else. Sperry shows that some of the scholars who have rejected many chapters and verses in Isaiah are G. R. Driver, G. A. Smith, Skinner, Whitehouse and others. Some of the scholars who maintain the unity of the book of Isaiah are Havernick, Stier, Keil, Loehr and others. We do not intend to go into an extensive monologue concerning the dismemberment of the book of Isaiah; we will leave that to the scholars. If someone would like to read more on this subject, we refer him to S. B. Sperry's *Our Book of Mormon*.

In answer, however, to the criticism of why does the Book of Mormon use quotations from the book of Isaiah, we reply that the above-mentioned quotations used were written on plates of brass which Lehi brought with him to this Continent of America when he left Jerusalem in 600 B.C. These Brass Plates were included in the plates which the Angel Moroni gave to Joseph Smith and were translated by the gift and power of God.

Dr. Sperry makes a wonderful comparison of phrases taken from Isaiah's writings, as recorded in the Book of Mormon, and the same phrases recorded in the King James Version of the Bible and the Septuagint or Greek Version of the Bible. He concludes that, in many instances, the phrases in the Book of Mormon are superior to the King James and Septuagint Versions.

Critics have also suggested that Joseph Smith took many phrases from the Septuagint Version. In reply, Joseph Smith did not know the Greek language, and there has never been any evidence that he had in his possession a copy of the Septuagint Bible in 1829-30 when he translated the Book of Mormon.

The Book of Mormon quotations of approximately 433 verses of Isaiah indicate that the entire book was written by one man. Messrs. Weldon and Butterworth make the following observations:

The Septuagint and other ancient versions of scripture give absolutely no hint of the multiple authorship of Isaiah. They do not give us a single name of the ten or more prophets that are assumed by various critics to have contributed to Isaiah's book. Christ and His apostles credit the book to Isaiah. The New Testament quotes from thirty-two chapters of Isaiah. There is not the slightest hint anywhere in the New Testament that any other prophet than Isaiah, the son of Amoz, was the author of the quoted passages. In fact, the emphasis is the other way (see Luke 4:18-21). Paul quotes Isaiah often and from many angles (see especially Romans). It seems passing strange that three minds so penetrating and spiritual as Christ's, Paul's, and Luke's could not see a little of what modern critics see.

The above vindicates the Book of Mormon which points unerringly to some outstanding facts:

1. The book of Isaiah was written by one man, Isaiah, the prophet.
2. The Isaiah chapters and verses quoted in the Book of Mormon are superior, in many instances, to the King James Version.

Joseph Smith did not know, in 1829-30 while translating the Book of Mormon, that the entire book of Isaiah, written on parchment scroll, would be discovered in 1947. These writings compared favorably with those found in the Book of Mormon. This is another proof of the divinity of the Book of Mormon.

We are not linguists nor scholars of ancient writings nor translators. Therefore, we must rely on the research and knowledge of those learned men who are proficient in languages and translations for the data which, when thoroughly digested, give us logical and reasonable information which we gladly pass on to you. We are indebted and grateful to those men who have supplied the above information.

CRITICISM #12 Part 2 - The use of Bible chapters and quotations in the Book of Mormon.

Believers in the Restored Gospel have never denied that there are quotations in the Book of Mormon that are similar to those in the Bible (King James Translation). There are, however, differences in words and phrases which change the entire meaning of a sentence or verse. The more reliable definition is in the Book of Mormon, indicating to the searcher its superiority over the King James Translation. Following are a few differences. The reader is invited to make comparisons for himself.

Bible Quotations

(All from Isaiah 2)

Isaiah 2:5-

"O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the Lord."

Verse 6-

"Therefore thou hast forsaken thy people the house of Jacob, because they be replenished from the east, and are soothsayers **like the Philistines, and** they please themselves in the children of strangers."

Verse 9-

, 'And the mean man boweth down, and the great man humbleth himself: therefore, forgive them **not.**"

Verse 10-

"Enter into the rock, and hide thee in the dust, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his majesty."

Verse 12-

"For the day of the Lord of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up; and he shall be brought low:"

Verse 13-

" And upon all the cedars of Lebanon, that are high and lifted up, and upon all the oaks of Bashan."

Book of Mormon Quotations

(Differences in bold letters)

II Nephi 12:5-

"O house of Jacob, come ye and let us walk in the light of the Lord;
Yea, come, for ye have all gone astray, everyone to his wicked ways."

II Nephi 12:6-

"Therefore, O **Lord**, thou hast forsaken thy people, the house of Jacob because they be replenished from the east, and **hearken unto** soothsayers like the Philistines, and they please themselves in the children of strangers."

II Nephi 12:9-

" And the mean man boweth **not** down, and the great man humbleth himself **not**, therefore, forgive **him not.**"

II Nephi 12:10-

" **O ye wicked ones**, enter into the rock, and hide thee in the dust, for the fear of the Lord and the glory of his majesty **shall smite thee.**"

II Nephi 12:12-

"For the day of the Lord of Hosts **soon cometh upon all nations, yea, upon every one; yea, upon the proud and lofty**, and upon every one **who** is lifted up, and he shall be brought low."

II Nephi 12:13-

"**Yea, and the day of the Lord shall come** upon all the cedars of Lebanon, **for they** are high and lifted up; and upon all the oaks of Bashan;"

Verse 14-

" And upon all the high mountains, and upon all the hills that are lifted up,"

II Nephi 12:14

"And upon all the high mountains, and upon all the hills, **and upon all the nations which are lifted up, and upon every people;**"

Verse 16-

" And upon all the ships of Tarshish, and upon all pleasant pictures."

II Nephi 12:16-

" And upon all the ships of **the sea**, and upon all the ships of Tarshish, and upon all pleasant pictures."

Verse 19-

" And they shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for the fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth."

II Nephi 12:19-

" And they shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for the fear of the Lord shall **come upon them** and the glory of his majesty **shall smite them**, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth."

Verse 21-

"To go into the clefts of the rocks, and into the tops of the ragged rocks, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of His majesty, when He ariseth to shake terribly the earth."

II Nephi 12:21-

"To go into the clefts of the rocks, and into the tops of the jagged rocks, for **the** fear of the Lord **shall come upon them and the majesty of His glory shall smite them**, when He ariseth to shake terribly the earth."

Please note that the above differences are taken from the same chapter of Isaiah. Anyone can see how much more beautiful is the Book of Mormon translation as compared to the Bible (King James translation).

Opponents of the Book of Mormon criticize it because it quotes from Isaiah and Malachi almost word for word. It is said also that Joseph Smith merely copied from the King James Version the Sermon on the Mount. In reply to this criticism, we ask the opponents of the Book of Mormon a question: "Did Micah, the prophet, copy verbatim the first part of the fourth chapter from the second chapter of Isaiah?" Look at it; it's almost identical. Who was the plagiarist, Micah or Isaiah?

Also, I dare say that if the prophecies of Isaiah, Malachi, and the Sermon on the Mount were different in the Book of Mormon than in the Bible, the critics would howl long and loud that the book was a farce because its characters and Jesus Christ could not quote the Scriptures correctly. So, either way, the opponents would criticize the book.

I am reminded of a story of a man who kept bumping his head against the wall, and when asked why he was doing so replied, "Because it feels so good when I stop." I suggest that the critics of the Book of Mormon would feel wonderfully well if they stopped finding fault with it.

CRITICISM #13 - The eight Jaredite vessels.

Critics have rejoiced in pointing with great derision to Ether 2 in the Book of Mormon regarding the eight vessels with a hole on top and a hole in the bottom.

Mr. Hugh Nibley, in his paper, "Strange Ships and Shining Stones," says that "nothing has elicited louder whoops and howls of derision than the account . . . of the ships of the Jaredites and their illumination by shining stones." He cites some of the absurd criticisms:

1. An imposition on the gullibility of mankind.
2. A libel on the wisdom of God.
3. Trash that sensible men cannot credit.
4. Tales to equal *Alice in Wonderland* and *Baron Mauchusen*.

All the above criticisms by so-called intelligent human beings makes one wonder if they are living in a twilight zone of their own creation and whether they have truly believed in the wonders performed by the Almighty as recorded in the Bible such as: the swallowing of Jonah by a large fish, the Red Sea parting to let the Israelites go across dry-shod, the tumbling of the walls of the city of Jericho at the sound of the trumpets and, very importantly, the building of the ark by Noah.

Do these critics wonder how Jonah was able to breathe the days and nights he was in the belly of the fish? Jonah not only breathed but was able to pray in the belly of that sea mammal. The Lord provided ventilation for the prophet and also kept the stomach juices of the fish from digesting him.

Do these critics ever think how that after the Red Sea parted the Israelites walked on the bottom of the sea without getting mired down? The Lord parted the sea and also made the bed thereof hard to enable the people, the animals, and the carts to travel without danger of becoming mired.

Do these critics believe that the walls of Jericho fell at the sound of the trumpets? Logically speaking, no kind of sound produced by any human means would be able to cause large walls made of stone and concrete to tumble. The blowing of the trumpets was an

obedience to the commandment of God who by His own means accomplishes deeds far beyond the understanding of man.

Have these critics ever wondered at the peculiar architecture of the ark which Noah built, or by what means the ark was illuminated and ventilated? If the critics of the Jaredite vessels do not believe in the above-mentioned Bible phenomena, they certainly are not in a position to judge what is recorded in the Book of Mormon. And, even if they do believe in the miraculous events written in the Bible, they still cannot judge with authority what is in the Book of Mormon as the events in both books originate within the power of God.

Rather than getting into a lengthy discourse on the Bible phenomena, we will limit ourselves to the ark of Noah which, according to the prophet Ether in the Book of Mormon, was the pattern after which the eight Jaredite vessels were built. In the writings of Ether 6:7, it states:

And it came to pass that when they were buried in the deep there was no water that could hurt them, their vessels being tight like unto a dish, and also they were tight like unto the ark of Noah.

God commanded Noah to build a vessel preparatory to the sending of the flood. The Lord instructed him how to build it. Included in the construction was a "window on the top and a door on the side." Genesis 6:16 reads:

A window shalt thou make to the ark, and in a cubit shalt thou finish it above; and the door of the ark shalt thou set in the side thereof; with lower, second, and third stories shalt thou make it.

The picture that the above description brings to mind is that the ark was built with a cover to keep the water out, was sealed with pitch inside and outside, and had a window on top.

The eight Jaredite vessels were built after the pattern of Noah's Ark, sealed on all sides. While the writer uses the expression, "tight like unto a dish," it simply means "sealed tightly" as was Noah's Ark. Ether 2:17 explains that the barges were made in the fashion of a dish that holds water. In other words, the top, bottom and sides were made in the form of a dish, sealed tightly, with the additional feature of being "peaked" fore and aft. Now, picture in your minds this architectural marvel: they were built like an elongated dish, gradually coming to a peak at both ends. The Lord also commanded the Jaredite prophet to make a "hole on the top and a hole on the bottom" of the vessels to give them air when needed.

It is logical and reasonable that God provided means for the ark of Noah to receive life-giving air when needed. How else could humans live, month after month, with the stench exuding from the animals aboard without ventilation? Impossible. Whether it was the window on top or some other phenomenon by which they received ventilation is

irrelevant. The fact is that they were provided with means to obtain air by the Lord, and also light within.

Relative to the Jaredite vessels having a "hole on top and a hole on the bottom," I will give you my opinion which I deem logical. Try to picture in your mind the "peaked" ends of the vessels extending above the waterline. If the holes were made at the peaked ends, it would be very possible to have them on the top and bottom respectively. Imagine a hole on the top of the peaked end at the fore of the vessel and a hole on the bottom of the peaked end aft of the vessel. In this manner, when the holes were unstopped, there would be a cross ventilation. Another possibility would be to have a hole on top and a hole on the bottom in the peaked end at the fore of the vessel. When the holes were unstopped, air would come in from the top hole, travel throughout the vessel and escape through the hole on the bottom thereof. Seems like a very simple solution to me.

Remember, the peaked ends were always above the waterline so, when they would travel above the water, the holes could be easily unstopped without fear of water coming into the vessels.

As to the stones that gave light inside the barges, why should it seem so strange that God would touch them to serve as lamps? Why should this appear any stranger than the pillar of fire which gave light at night to the Israelites and the cloud that hovered over them by day or Jonah praying in the belly of the fish or the dew appearing on Gideon's fleece contrary to nature?

The brother of Jared exercised his faith so greatly in bringing the sixteen stones to be touched by God so that they could give light to them in the barges, that the Lord could not refuse such a display of perfect faith. He, accordingly, touched the stones, and they became lamps to the Jaredites while crossing the great deep.

Hugh Nibley gives an excellent account of ancient traditions concerning the ark of Noah. He says that some of the Jewish Rabbis "do not settle for the **Zohar** - the light of the ark - as being simply a window: for some of them it was rather a miraculous light-giving stone. Its purpose, however, was not to furnish illumination, but to provide Noah with a means of distinguishing night from day. It is in that connection that the Rabbis come to mention the stone; for a very important point in the observation of the Law is to determine the exact moment at which night ends and day begins, and visa versa."

Mr. Nibley also says that the above tradition of the ark is found in the Palestinian Talmud and that it would have been impossible for Joseph Smith to lift any material from it because the Palestinian Talmud, to this day, remains a rare and difficult book. Only the most prominent Rabbis ever read or cite it.

In his observations, Mr. Nibley continues, saying:

The language of this book-the Palestinian Talmud-is a terrible barrier, being the difficult West Aramaic dialect, rather than the familiar East Aramaic of the Babylonian Talmud, which is fairly close to the Hebrew . . . Granted that the language of the Palestinian Talmud presented an insuperable barrier to Joseph Smith and his friends, or for that matter to any scholar in America at that time, they would have used translations. Only there were **no translations.**

Mr. Nibley also presents a very convincing theory concerning the Jaredite vessels with a "hole on top and a hole on the bottom," to wit:

For one thing, the ships had no windows communicating with the outside-'ye cannot have windows' reads the 2nd chapter of Ether, the 23rd verse . . . each ship had an airtight door, and that was all. Air was received not by opening and closing doors and windows but by unplugging air holes, this being done only when the ship was not on the surface when they were not able to open the hatches, the ships being submerged. This can refer only to a reserve supply of air, and indeed the brother of Jared recognizes that the people cannot possibly survive on the air contained within the ships at normal pressure.

The Book of Mormon records the brother of Jared as saying to God, ". . . we shall perish, for in them ye cannot breathe, save it is the air which is in them; therefore, we shall perish."

Mr. Nibley suggests that the Lord recommended a device for trapping (compressing) air by making a hole on the top and on the bottom of the ships, not referring to the ship but to the air chamber itself. "Note," says Mr. Nibley, "that the peculiar language unstop does not mean to open a door or window but to unplug a vent, here called a hole in contrast to the door mentioned in verse 17; it is specifically an air hole." In harmony with Mr. Nibley's presentation, I quote Ether 2:20 in part:

. . . and when thou shalt suffer for air, thou shalt unstop the hole thereof, and receive air. And if it be so that the water come in upon thee, behold ye shall stop the hole thereof, that ye may not perish in the flood.

We have given you two theories on the "hole on the top and the hole on the bottom," ours and Hugh Nibley's. In the two opinions you have enough material to keep you busy for a while. Remember, the ways of the Lord are not our ways. He performs in ways that are not understood by human minds. When logic says that something cannot be done, faith comes to the fore and says, "It is possible, it can be done."

CRITICISM #14 - It came to pass.

When critics cannot find too much more to say against the Book of Mormon, they start nit-picking. They take the most insignificant things and find opposition to them. In this case, the objection is that the phrase, "It came to pass," is used so often that it becomes monotonous to the eyes and ears. The critics, at least some of them, should look well into the Bible and they will be surprised at the hundreds of times this particular phrase is used. The Gospel of Luke uses this expression forty-four times. The Pentateuch uses it more than a hundred times.

We do not consider this criticism of enough importance to give it much consideration. Suffice it to say that, if people want to find fault with something or someone, they can usually find enough material, small as it may be, to write a negative article about it.

CRITICISM #15 - Against the special witnesses of the Book of Mormon.

While it is true that some of the eleven witnesses regarding the plates from which the Book of Mormon was translated either left the Church of their own volition or were excommunicated, the final analysis is that none of them ever denied their testimony as written in the forepart of the Book of Mormon.

David Whitmer and Oliver Cowdery were excommunicated from the Church with Joseph Smith's approval. If there had been any kind of conspiracy involved in the origin of the Book of Mormon other than from divine source, is it not reasonable that these two men would have denounced Joseph Smith as a fraud and a plagiarist, whether they did it in anger, frustration or resentment? But they did no such thing. In spite of their differences with Joseph Smith and other leaders of the Church, they never denied seeing the Angel Moroni nor did they deny handling the plates. The same with Martin Harris. Although he was estranged from the Church for many years, he never denied seeing the angel and the plates.

The eight witnesses, which included four Whitmers, three Smiths, and Hiram Page, never denied their testimony of seeing and feeling the plates. In spite of all the criticisms against all of the witnesses, the truth is that they all remained faithful to their testimonies relative to the divine origin of the Book of Mormon.

Some critics enjoy "making a case" against the witnesses, slandering their names and characters by concentrating on second-hand information intended to destroy the veracity of men who, in spite of the calumny heaped upon them, remained steadfast in their testimony concerning the plates and the Book of Mormon.

It is not difficult to "make a case" against any person. I dare say that even if one wanted to find fault with the critics of the Book of Mormon, a little research would possibly uncover a few skeletons in their respective closets.

Bible critics have had a lot of negative things to say about its characters: the incest committed by Lot, the polygamy of David and Solomon, the denial of Peter, the betrayal of Judas, and many others.

Bible antagonists have also made cases against believers in the Bible, including leaders of Catholicism and Protestantism. Men like Thomas Paine, Ingersol, Lewis, and others have enjoyed their hour of glory in debasing the Bible and belittling those who believed in it. Nonetheless, the Bible still rides the crest of popularity over all other kinds of books, whether they be fiction or non-fiction. It is still the best seller.

Since 1830 - beginning with Alexander Campbell - some people have apparently found great pleasure in criticizing the Book of Mormon and all of the witnesses. Whether these people became critics-or are so-because of anger, frustration, zeal, or vendetta, I do not know nor judge. I am at a loss, however, to understand why intelligent persons use their time and talents in seeking to destroy the faith of others.

I spoke to a man one day who told me that his opposition to the Book of Mormon was comparable to the zeal of the Apostles in their desire to proselyte for Jesus Christ and His Gospel. When I asked him, however, to find one item in the Book of Mormon which was different or contrary to the Gospel as recorded in the Bible, he was unable to do so.

Despite the antagonism against the Book of Mormon, it will stand on its own merits. Critics would do well to abide by the counsel and advice that Gamaliel gave to the High Priests concerning Christ and His Apostles. In Acts 5:38, 39, is recorded the following:

And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counselor or this work be of men, it will come to naught: But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God.

To the opponents of the Book of Mormon I say in the words of Gamaliel, although I am paraphrasing somewhat:

Cease criticizing the Book of Mormon, for if God is in the matter-and I believe He was and is - no man can stop its progress. If it isn't of God, it will eventually come to naught. Spend your time and talents in seeking to bring souls to Christ by applying His gentleness, wisdom, and love towards all people. For, in spite of your tirades, your papers, and your publications, you are fighting a lost cause. The Book of Mormon will still be here long after you are gone. Nevertheless, whether you criticize it until the day you die, the prophecies recorded within its pages will be fulfilled. I pray that you or your posterity will see their fulfillment. God bless you.

Critics also refer to a revelation given to Joseph Smith wherein Martin Harris is called a "wicked man." Great stress is laid on this statement and in consequence thereof, his character is completely assassinated.

Do these same critics ever think of Jesus' statement to the Apostle Peter when He told him, ". . . Get thee behind me, Satan: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men" (Mark 8:33). Was Peter a devil-a wicked man? Why did Jesus call him Satan? The answer is obvious. The fact that Peter presumed to counsel Jesus Christ-the scripture reads "rebuke" -earned him the reprimand of being called Satan (or a wicked man). Christ did not mean that Peter was altogether a Satanic person, but only that one act of rebuking Jesus.

If Peter had lived in this period of time, the same ones who have criticized Martin Harris as being totally unreliable, would have assassinated Peter's character as well. They would have pointed to the scripture in which he is called Satan, to the scripture where he denies Christ three times, and to his weakness by going fishing, forgetting, very conveniently, his remarkable life of dedication even unto death.

With the Lord there are no gray areas of judgment. A person's actions are either good or wicked, righteous or unrighteous. There is no such thing as being partially good or partially wicked. However, it does not necessarily mean that a person is totally good or totally wicked. One's actions are judged individually by God.

So it is with Martin Harris. His action of demanding and then losing the 116 pages of manuscript while in his care earned him the rebuke of being called a wicked man-no less, no more than Peter being called Satan. Because of this, critics have dug up everything they could to destroy Harris' character. The fact is, however, that in spite of all the adverse publicity, Martin Harris never denied his testimony of seeing the Angel Moroni and the plates.

I have read many articles by Book of Mormon critics - past and current - which have attempted to cast doubts upon the characters of the eleven witnesses. Whether the material presented is spurious or real, one thing stands out very noticeably: none of the witnesses ever denied their testimony. Some critics have said, or cited from other sources, that a few of the witnesses became doubtful of their testimony. However, I have not seen one sentence, or one paragraph signed by any of the witnesses who swore under oath that he became doubtful of the authenticity of the plates or the Book of Mormon. Rather, all of the evidence produced thus far has been from quotations of second or third persons or by disgruntled and disenchanted people.

Would the critics say that John the Baptist became weak and doubtful when he sent two of his disciples to Christ to ask Him if He was truly the one that should come or should they await for another? Would the critics also say that Peter became weak and charge him with doubtfulness when he denied the Lord three times? Let us, for the sake of discussion, suggest that John the Baptist became doubtful of his confession that Christ was the Lamb of God. Is there anyone can say that he became doubtful or ever denied the divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ or that Peter, after the day of Pentecost, ever denied his confession of Jesus being the Christ, the Son of God? Of course not. Of the many thousands of converts who witnessed for Christ, many retracted and denied their faith

either under the threat of punishment, death, or for personal reasons. But in spite of their denial of faith, it did not make Jesus Christ any less divine or real. Similarly, with the Book of Mormon. Whether some became disenchanted or disillusioned with Joseph Smith or some of his colleagues, it does not make the divine origin of the book any less true or real.

As I said in the beginning of this tape and manuscript, I am not a member of the Utah Latter Day Saints Church or the Reorganized Latter Day Saints Church. I am an Apostle of The Church of Jesus Christ (whose headquarters are in Monongahela, Pennsylvania), which Church believes in the Bible and the Book of Mormon.

At this juncture, I say with all sincerity to the critics of the Book of Mormon, "If you have a problem with the tenets of any church which believes in the said book as being a divine record, don't use it as a crutch to justify your negative propaganda. It is not worthy of your intelligence or your talents. Would you destroy the Bible and its contents because you may not believe in the doctrine of the Catholic Church and/or the tenets of some Protestant churches? Thank God we live in America. Give every individual and every church the right to worship according to the dictates of their hearts and as guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States without persecution and/or criticism."

The critics should be aware of a very important thing. Good salesmanship is not in knocking someone else's product, but in displaying the good features of one's own. Jesus gave very good counsel when one of His disciples complained of some who were casting out devils in His name: "Forbid him not: for he that is not against us is for us." The entire Book of Mormon is centered around Jesus Christ and His commandments. Hence, where is there any justification for judgment or criticism against it? There is none. The burden of proving that the Gospel as recorded in the Book of Mormon is contrary to that found in the Bible is upon the critics, not on its adherents.