**Mormonism: From God or Man? (3)**

*by Robert H. West*

It is a well-known fact that Truth does not contradict Truth. That the Bible is Truth, is a fact to which our Mormon friends agree-up to a point. If all of the writings held to be inspired by Mormons are consistent with the Bible, this a point in their favor. On the other hand, if it can be shown that the writings of Mormonism contradict the Bible, this will lead irresistibly to the conclusion that their religious system is false. Let us notice a few instances of how the Mormon writings compare with the Bible on subjects touched upon by both.

**WHERE WAS JESUS BORN?**

One of the most well-known and easily perceived contradictions between the Book of Mormon and the Bible is that which deals with the place of the birth of Christ. Read the following:

Bible: "Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea . . ." (Matt. 2:1).

Book of Mormon: "and behold, he shall be born of Mary, at Jerusalem, which is the land of our forefathers . . ." (Alma 7:10).

The Mormons make a futile attempt to "explain away" this obvious contradiction by observing that Bethlehem was only about six miles from Jerusalem, something of a suburb of the great city. Hence, we are told, when the Book of Mormon designates Jerusalem as the birthplace, this would include Bethlehem. Thus they contend, there is actually no contradiction between the two statements.

This explanation seems plausible until from the Bible we learn that Jerusalem was a walled city and in all of the approximately 800 references in which the city is named not one of them includes territory beyond the walls of the city! Furthermore, in Matt. 21:17-18, we learn that Jesus "went out" of Jerusalem into Bethany. Any good map of that area will reveal that Bethany was only 1 = or 2 miles from Jerusalem. If Bethany, only 2 miles from Jerusalem, was considered by the Holy Spirit as "out" of that city, then surely Bethlehem, three times as far from Jerusalem, could not be considered a part of the city! Even in the Book of Mormon, "Jerusalem" or "land of Jerusalem" is never used to include the surrounding cities. The contradiction, therefore, remains.

**WHEN WERE THE DISCIPLES FIRST CALLED CHRISTIANS?**

Bible: "And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch" (Acts 11:26).

Book of Mormon: (margin reads, "73 B.C.") "And those who did belong to the church were faithful; yea, all those who were true believers in Christ took upon them, gladly, the name of Christ, or Christians as they were called. . ." (Alma 46:15).

Yes, our Mormon friends wish us to take this statement seriously! Christians even before the coming of Christ! Take your pick. Which will you believe? You cannot believe the Bible and at the same time believe in Mormonism!

**DOES THE HEAVENLY FATHER HAVE A BODY OF FLESH AND BONES?**

Bible: "God is a spirit. . ." (John 4:24). ". . . a spirit bath not flesh and bones. . ." (Luke 24:39).

Doctrine and Covenants: "The Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man's. . ." (130:22).

Jesus said a spirit does not have flesh and bones, and that God is a spirit. This is directly contradicted by Mormonism! It will not do for Mormon apologists to say that God "has" a spirit. The Bible clearly states that He is a spirit, which cannot possess flesh and bones. This materialistic concept of God runs throughout the entire Mormon system.

These are only a few of the many available instances of contradictions between the Bible and Mormon writings. But these should be sufficient to show that Mormonism is not from God.

**It Is From Man If It Contradicts Itself**

One of the outstanding arguments for the credibility of the Bible is it consistency--the fact that it nowhere contains contradictions. This cannot be said for Mormonism, as its writings are replete with irreconcilable contradictions, thus proving that it originated with man--not God. We shall present three instances for your consideration.

**A CONTRADICTION CONCERNING POLYGAMY**

Book of Mormon: "Behold, David and Solomon truly had many wives and concubines, which thing was abominable before me, saith the Lord" (Jacob 2:24).

Doctrine and Covenants: "David also received many wives and concubines, and also Solomon and Moses my servants . . . and in nothing did they sin save in those things which they received not of me. David's wives and concubines were given unto him of me. . . and in none of these things did he sin against me save in the case of Uriah and his wife. . ." (132:38-39).

The above contradiction is so plain that it borders on the ludicrous to hear an effort to reconcile the two statements. Sometimes Mormons say that what the writer in the Book of Jacob was talking about was the "many wives and concubines" which David did not have permission from the Lord to receive. It was his "polygamy without authority," they say, which was "abominable" to God. But notice, please, in the passage in Doctrine And Covenants, it says that God gave David his wives and concubines and that the only case in which he sinned was that of Bathsheba! The contradiction remains to the chagrin of Mormon apologists.

**A CONTRADICTION CONCERNING THE STATE OF THE DEAD**

The doctrine of "baptism for the dead," i.e., baptism by proxy for the salvation of their unbaptized dead relatives, is perhaps one of the most distinctive and bizarre of the Latter Day Saints' teachings. It is enjoined upon them, among other places, in Doctrine and Covenants, Section 124. But this teaching and practice is expressly contradicted by the Book of Mormon in the following passage:

"And, in fine, woe unto all those who die in their sins; for they shall return to God, and, behold his face, and remain in their sins" (2 Nephi 9:38, see also Alma 34:3235; 40:14).

A more glaring contradiction than this is seldom found in the writings of false religions. On the one hand Mormons teach that they can be baptized in behalf of the disobedient dead and that will save them. On the other hand the Book of Mormon teaches that once people "die in their sins," they "remain" in their sins!

**A CONTRADICTION CONCERNING BOOK OF MORMON LANGUAGE**

Mormons tell us that the Book of Mormon was originally written in the "reformed Egyptian" (1 Nephi 1:2; Mormon 9:32). Since this language was entirely unknown to any other than the "now extinct Book of Mormon peoples," we are told that a divine means of translating the plates was provided. Notice:

"Professor Anthon stated that the translation was correct, more so than any he had before seen translated from the Egyptian. I then showed him those which were not yet translated, and he said that they were Egyptian, Chaldaic, Assyriac, and Arabic; and he said they were true characters. He gave me a certificate, certifying to the people of Palmyra that they were true characters, and that the translation of such of them as had been translated was also correct "'(Joseph Smith, 2:641.

"But the Lord knoweth the things which we have written, and also that none other people knoweth our language; therefore he hath prepared means for the interpretation thereof" (Mormon 9:34).

Keep it clearly in mind that even Joseph Smith did not claim to be able to translate the language of the alleged plates without these divine "interpreters." Now, we are told that Smith copied some of the characters from the plates, with the translation, gave them to Martin. Harris who then took the document to Professor Charles Anthon of Columbia University, "a gentleman celebrated for his literary attainments." We read the results of this interview in The Pearl of Great Price as follows:

Do you not see the direct contradiction? On the one hand the Book of Mormon says the language of the plates was unknown to any other people, therefore the necessity of the supernatural means of translating them, supposedly given to Smith. On the other hand, the Pearl of Great Price tells us that Professor Anthon knew the language well enough to say the translation was correct! There are many other palpable and irreconcilable contradictions in Mormon writings. The few we have presented should be enough to prove that these writings came from man and not from God.